

THE MILLSTONE

KURRAJONG ~ COMLERoy HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

Governor Phillip's Second Commission

Following his commissioning in October 1786 as the foundation Governor of the penal settlement in NSW, correspondence between Lord Sydney and Phillip reveals that it is Phillip alone who is due the credit for the preparations for the expedition of the First Fleet.

As his further and second commission reveals, in taking up his appointment as Governor in NSW, Arthur Phillip is once again endowed with almost absolute power. Records however show that he exercised these powers with discretion and restraint in the setting up of the remote and under resourced colonial outpost of NSW.

The group of ships that came to be known as the First Fleet arrived at Botany Bay on 18th January 1788, but it was not until the 7th February that a ceremony was held to read Phillip's commission and formally establish a government in the name of His Majesty King George the Third.

After several days surveying the site at Botany Bay, Phillip's decision to navigate further up the coast and explore Sydney Cove was a calculated one, as he was looking for a fresh water supply. Hence on the 26th January at Sydney Cove, Phillip presided over a flag-raising ceremony, and while that anniversary is today honoured (but mourned by many Aboriginal Australians), in fact the official Australian birthday may well be considered the 7th February. This was the date which established a regular form of Government on the coast of NSW, and has largely been forgotten.

According to contemporary accounts, the ceremony on 7th February 1788 was conducted with high solemnity. It provided the occasion for the public reading of both the Governor's second commission and the commission constituting the courts of civil, military and criminal jurisdiction in NSW.

On arrival at a newly prepared parade ground, the Governor was received by a party of soldiers under arms. Accompanying Phillip were the principal office-bearers of the new administration, the lieutenant governor, the judge advocate, the surveyor general and the chaplain.

Following formal compliments, the marine and military officers formed a circle around the company. The judge advocate, David Collins, proceeded to open the red leather cases



Memorial plaque to Governor Phillip in St James' Church, Sydney

containing the commissions and broke the seals before reading the documents to the assembled gathering.

The troops fired three volleys before Governor Phillip gave a short address to all those present including the convicts. He then reviewed the different companies of marines. At intervals during the ceremony, the band played airs on fifes and drums, finishing the formalities with 'God Save the King'.

At the conclusion a public holiday was declared. The convicts were dismissed to their quarters, while the newly commissioned Governor and his party adjourned to a marquee to partake of a celebratory luncheon... the mutton was flyblown, but many loyal and public toasts were proposed and drunk.

Summarised from research by John Thompson in his 2010 publication *Documents that Shaped Australia – Records of a Nation's Heritage*.

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K-CHS Annual Australia Day Breakfast - 9am

President's Report

Well another year and decade slip past! This one has ended rather badly from a heat and fire perspective. Our members David & Libby Salkeld and Roslyn and Frank Allat have been affected by the fires in the Berambing and Mt Tomah areas, but thankfully their houses were saved.

On a brighter note, our Christmas Party was well attended and we managed to have a day where the weather was good. The day after it was raining charred, burnt leaves here in the Kurrajong, fall-out from the Mt. Wilson/Mt Tomah fire.

At the party we also held our November General Meeting. I announced a plan to conduct a 'Windows Workshop' to enhance the computer literacy of our members. That is to be held on Tuesday 7th January (which may be before you receive this newsletter unfortunately), but if it isn't and you would like to attend please contact me. Also contact me if you missed the workshop and would like me to repeat it.

I also announced two planned tours for 2020. In March we plan to visit the National Maritime Museum at Darling Harbour. This will also be a Tuesday in early March. Lesley Bobrige's husband, Mal, was a submariner so he will be along to give us the good oil on the Submarine HMAS Onslow. Please book online to attend. Details also page 8 of this newsletter.

In April we are repeating our popular Pansy Tour. It is on Saturday 4th April 2020. Bookings are open online, also see The Millstone page 8 for details.

Later in the year, possibly June, we had intended a tour to Warragamba Dam and the Wollondilly Heritage Centre & Museum at The Oaks. Hopefully the current fires will not have impacted this possibility.

The next gathering is our Society Birthday Party on Australia Day. We will be holding this event at Bowen Mountain once again, where the facilities have been further upgraded. Last year they had installed an air conditioning unit and this year a sound system has been installed. Hope to see lots of you there!

Apart from the above doom and gloom, I hope you all enjoyed your Christmas break and New Year.

If you have suggestions for future activities or wish to comment on Society matters, you are welcome to contact me.

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President David Griffiths

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secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au



Three Committee members who manned the K-CHS photographic display in the CWA Hall at the successful Kurrajong-a-Buzz event - November 2019

K-CHS Christmas Gathering 2019



Held at the home of Jenny & David Griffiths, our 2019 Christmas gathering, with fine feasting was enjoyed by all. Following the G.M., our hostess Jenny gave an interesting summary of the history of their property *Merrajong Manor*. Further details of which can be found in Issue 3/2019 of The Millstone Newsletter Page 4-5 *Rayner's Sawmill Kurrajong*.

In acknowledgement of the work of the late Daphne Kingston

With the sad passing of Daphne Kingston in 2019, we are once again reminded of Daphne's wonderfully detailed pencil and pen drawings of a great number of buildings from the Sydney region, but more especially her sketching and love of the Hawkesbury buildings of yesteryear, a number of which we have now lost or have been significantly compromised. Daphne's sketches of past and present buildings within the region have provided us with an invaluable archival record.

In her own words "Sydney's new housing developments and roads are now spreading across the market gardens and paddocks on which these frail and vulnerable remnants languish... Floods, fire, termites, and neglect also contributing to their demise." Daphne was indeed aware of the significance, of the Hawkesbury slab barns, with no two the same and already in a state of advanced decay, a prelude to demolition by neglect, stating "they will not be built again."



The late Associate Professor Ian Jack in an introduction to *Highways & By-ways of the Sydney Region*, a publication gifted to the Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society by Daphne herself, has acknowledged the wonderful archival record held in her remarkable sketches:

"The land has played a powerful role in the shaping of Australia's self-perception. The mythologising of the bush has remained, and intensified, as the country has become intensely urbanised and farmlands depopulated. But the settlement of Australia was all about farming and the need for a stable food-supply in crops and animals. Settlement, grazing, land grants are all fundamentally associated with farming.

Architectural history and National Trust listings have more often reflected a preoccupation with signifiers of the affluent. But behind so many fine houses in the nineteenth century were vernacular buildings which were necessary to a farming economy, while the number of dwelling houses built of slab or wattle and daub or mud by ordinary folk, both in town and country was once an impelling feature of the landscape."

Professor Ian Jack reflects that many years ago, "Daphne Kingston saw the artistic potential and historical importance of these vernacular buildings, particularly those built of slabs... a striking feature of the early colonial scene preserved uncommonly well in the Hawkesbury River Valley. Like Conrad Martens, Daphne recorded these buildings and their environment with her pencil and pen... her sketches and photographs, meticulously dated and identified, have over twenty years become themselves highly significant heritage items, showing the dynamic of change and inevitable loss among these vulnerable structures."

The recognition of her work accorded by such bodies as the Heritage Office of NSW, the Historic Houses Trust (now Living Museums), and the Royal Australian Historical Society, "is a reflection of Daphne's role in awakening an informed consciousness of a whole category of neglected heritage."

A copy of *Highways & By-ways* by Daphne Kingston can be borrowed by members from our K-CHS Members Library.

Suzanne Smith



1. Lower Portland roadside barn with red corrugated iron, loft and horizontal weatherboards on the gable ends. The back overlooks the river.
2. Freemans Reach slab barn in rural setting, to right of a 19th Century house.

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An Interesting Story

Captured by the article on printing in the last issue of the Millstone Newsletter, Peter Op't Land (Publishing Manager HCC), emailed an interesting story about the ownership of an antique Chandler & Price Platen Press owned by his father.

"What I know about the history of this machine is that my father bought it as part of a business along with other letterpress machinery. The business was called *Mavern Press* and was originally run by Ernie Tesser out of Cranebrook from the late 1950s, until my father bought the business in 1974.



Peter operating the antique Chandler & Price Platen Press. Opposite is a lino woodcut designed by Peter for creating block art prints.

Chandler & Price was founded in 1881 in Cleveland, Ohio, by Harrison T. Chandler and William H. Price. They manufactured machinery for printers including a series of hand-fed platen jobbing presses, as well as an automatic feeder for these presses (the Rice Feeder), paper cutters, book presses, and assorted equipment. Despite dominating the industry in the 1930s, by the 1950s the offset printing industry had eclipsed the world of movable type printing, and only Chandler & Price and Brandtjen and Kluge continued to make open platen (Gordon) presses. Chandler & Price ceased production of presses in 1964.

The New Style made by Chandler & Price was such a popular press that *The Practice Of Printing: Letterpress and Offset* by Ralph Polk, became the standard textbook for thousands of high school printing programs in the middle of the 20th century and used the press as its example, when teaching students the basics of press operation.

My father Johan Op't Land ran *Mavern Press* from 1974 until around 1998 from the family home in Lemongrove, an old part of Penrith. After that time he would often engage some minor work, such as specialised wedding stationery.

I started to use the machine in 1998 to print my lino block art prints. When my mother sold the family home in 2018 we moved the machine and all type cabinets, along with a few other smaller pieces of antique printing machinery to my house at Lawson. My 17 year old son has also carved lino blocks and printed using the old Chandler & Price press."

Peter Op't Land



Above is a Chandler & Price
10X15 New Style Printing Press
Image: www.wikipedia.org

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The Long-Lost Memorial Hall at North Richmond

On Thursday 25th February 1926, the Memorial School of Arts at North Richmond was opened by Major Philip Charley to great celebration. The *Windsor and Richmond Gazette* of the 5th March gave a detailed account of the opening of the hall and what had led to its construction.

Back in 1924 the newly formed Parents and Citizens Association of Richmond North Public School decided that it would be a good idea to have a community hall in the village of North Richmond and decided to build a Memorial Hall. A fund-raising event, called the Queen Competition, was held. The Hawkesbury Queen Competition had been started in 1918 by the Red Cross to raise money. It was not a beauty competition. Nominees competed to raise money and the Queen was the one who raised the most. This however did raise some controversy, with a certain Reverend gentleman, most probably the Rev N Jenkyn, Rector of St Matthew's Church of England (1906 – 1936), raising objections. However Queen Competitions did become a popular way to raise money.

When the Department of Education refused the P&C permission to spend the money on a hall, a new committee was formed which called their proposed hall the Memorial School of Arts.

Fund raising continued and a block of land in Grose Vale Road, opposite the school was purchased for £20. The site is now 17 Grose Vale Road. Mr Roy Bennett, a carpenter employed at the Hawkesbury Agricultural College, prepared the specifications for the building free of charge and supervised the construction which was carried out by Messrs Reay and Pearce.

The building, which cost £560, was built of timber and stood on brick piers. It was a single room 50 feet long by 30 feet wide and was a typical design for halls with an entrance porch at the front and two large exit doors either side. There were eleven windows, two dome ventilators and a dozen smaller ventilators which made "the hygienic conditions all that could be desired". A grand piano had been installed but a stage and two dressing rooms were yet to be constructed.



"A 1920 photo of Richmond North Public School which stood directly opposite the Memorial Hall. The Headmaster from 1913 to 1930, Mr Alfred Crossman, is standing in the doorway. This building was demolished in 1967."

At the opening ceremony, Major Charley gave a very rousing, patriotic speech honouring those who served in the Great War. Congratulations and thanks were extended to those who had worked hard to build this hall for the people of North Richmond.

In the 1930s newspaper items referred to the building as simply the Memorial Hall. It was used regularly for dances with the occasional drunken behaviour being reported to police. The dances were generally fundraisers for various organisations such as the Cricket and Tennis Clubs but also for the maintenance of the hall itself.

The children of Richmond North Public School and Grose Vale Public School, with their parents, celebrated Empire Day in the hall. School concerts were also held in the hall as well as Public Meetings.

In June 1934 a celebratory banquet was held in the hall after the official switching on, at Khan's store on the corner of Bells Line of Road and Grose Vale Road, of the electricity supply to the area by the recently formed Hawkesbury Development Company.

So, what happened to the hall? On the 25th January 1942 a severe storm swept over the area and the hall was blown down. No further references can be found. It is assumed that the hall's Committee did not think the cost of rebuilding was worth it.

In 1945, at the Grand United Order of Odd Fellows' 21st Anniversary celebrations at the Richmond School of Arts, Bro. S. R. Richardson, who was a teacher at Richmond North school in 1933, gave interesting memories of when the Lodge, with three regular members, met "underneath the lamplight" and paid only 1/- per year for the rental of the "old Memorial Hall at North Richmond".

Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society does not have any pictures of the hall. If someone can find one in an old photo album, please let the Image Archivist know.

Jennifer Griffiths

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From THE ARCHIVES

A 1905 Image of trader Ali Khan, who sold clothing, hats, braces, flour, sugar, tea and boots. He had this horse and cart for many years until he changed to a motor vehicle in the 1930's. He was still travelling around with his wares until he died in the early 1940's. This photo was taken on Bells Line of Road.

The image is courtesy of the late Kathie McMahon collection, now held within the K-CHS Image Archives. Image: 010127

Visit: www.kurrajonghistory.org.au



The Fire on Comleroy Road - 1944

One oppressively hot Sunday... a dry wind carried the smell of burning gum leaves down from the mountains, where a fire had burned in the inaccessible gorges for weeks. With a wide creek, the spur of the Kurrajong foothills and miles of cleared, cultivated paddocks between us and the mountains, it was not considered a threat to us as yet.

Listless with the heat, I sat on the sliprails, waiting to be called in to lunch. Dad had retreated to his favourite chair with the Sunday papers after Mass, and mum was busy at the stove.

From my vantage point, I could see the school I attended, at the junction of Comleroy and East Kurrajong roads, and the panorama of homesteads, orchards and grazing land following the snaking lines of The Slopes and Single Ridge Road, which also merged with Comleroy further along. I imagined the teacher and his family about to sit down to their Sunday dinner. My idle gaze drifted away from the school to the paddock across the road, where a stack of split posts waited near the gate, to be used in repairing the fence, drifted on, then abruptly swung back. Wisps of smoke were beginning to rise into the suddenly still air from the stack of posts.

The significance of what I was seeing was not immediately apparent to me (I was after all, only seven), but something seemed strange, worrying. Dad had split and sold those posts just weeks before. I became aware that the sky had darkened, and the light had a strange brassy quality.

Running inside, I questioned Dad. "Why would Mr Want be burning those posts you sold him"... "Eh, what are you talking about" muttered Dad, immersed in the cricket scores, as reported by 'The Sunday Truth'. "There's smoke coming from that stack of posts, in Wants' paddock." I explained. "Smoke? Smoke! Hells Bells!" Dad rushed outside to see for himself, just as the smouldering heap of timber burst into bright orange flames, which quickly spread to the fence against which the stack was piled.

"Quick! get all the chaff bags you can find, soak them in the wash tubs!" Dad yelled as he ran to warn our neighbours at the dairy farm across the road. Their farm was on the same side of the road as the paddock where the fire started, and in a frightening short space of time, the fire had followed the fence line along to their boundary, leaving charred, smoking stumps in their wake.

Dad helped them turn out their cows already assembled for milking, and pump water from their well to wet the walls of their house, barns and dairy, but there was no time to liberate their unfortunate pigs in their sty near the furthest boundary, before it was consumed by flame. I still hate the smell of roast pork.

A phone call to the teacher had alerted him of the danger, and he worked frantically with his sons and a small band of helpers to save the school house, although the flames soon jumped the road and demolished the fences and the school toilets, which soon collapsed into piles of charred timber and corrugated iron.

Our own fence had caught alight by now, and Dad rushed back to help Mum try to smother the flames with those wet sacks from the washtubs, while I was sent aloft to clean out the dead leaves from the guttering, lest flying sparks ignited them.

We lost our front fence and part of our side one, but our house and our pets were safe. Others were not so lucky. By the time that terrible afternoon was over, 25 homes and two churches had been burned to the ground, two people had lost their lives, and acres of timber and grazing land, miles of fences and countless outbuildings had been destroyed.

We children were given an unscheduled holiday. With the school toilets destroyed, we were allowed to stay home until they could be replaced.

For many weeks, the stumps of huge trees which had burnt to the ground, continued to smoulder underground, and the glowing coals in the craters they created seemed, to my fertile imagination, like the volcanoes we learnt about in Geography, or more frighteningly, like the Hell of our scripture lessons.

For those whose homes and livestock perished in the flames, and for those who lost their lives, the fire on Comleroy Road was truly Hell on earth.

The above story was sent to the Society by Linda Tierney in November last. It is a graphic detailed story of a 1944 Kurrajong region fire, written by her Mother, Mary Tierney.

Dates for Your DIARY



Kurrajong-Comleroy
Historical Society

19th Annual
Australia Day Breakfast
9am Sunday 26th January 2020

Venue: *The Hut* Bowen Mountain Park
(via Bellbird Cres, left into Lt. Bowen Road)

General Meeting followed by:

Guest Speaker: Carol Edds
Hawkesbury NT President
'Stories of Historical Houses
within our Hawkesbury Region'

Barbecue available for cooking your own meat,
bacon, eggs, tomatoes, toast etc.

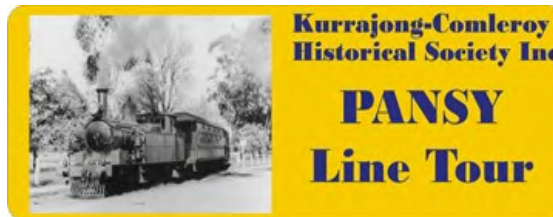
Tea/Coffee supplied

Further details contact: President David Griffiths

Email: president@kurrajonghistory.org.au or

Ph: 4567 7993

All Members & Friends welcome



Saturday
4th April 2020

Join us when we explore the remnants of the **Richmond to Kurrajong Railway 1926-1952**. With the railway gone for so long, it is becoming difficult to find remnants, but our experienced local guides will show you what there is.

Our coaches will depart from the park opposite Richmond Station at 10:00 and the tour includes lunch in Kurrajong. If coming by train, you need to be on the train that arrives at Richmond at **09:30** (ex Central 08:06). The tour will return to Richmond Station around 15:30.

Highlights include: Richmond Station and Richmond Park, Hawkesbury River Rail Bridge, North Richmond Station site, Kemsleys Halt, walk the formation between Kemsleys and Redbank Creek Bridge, Kurrajong Station site. **A steak sandwich lunch by the Kurrajong RFS is included.**

Order a Pansy Book at time of booking for a special price and collect on the day.

Pre-payment & BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL online at:

www.kurrajonghistory.org.au OR contact:

David Griffiths president@kurrajonghistory.org.au Ph: 4567 8999

K-CHS GENERAL MEETING

Monday 23rd March 2020
Time: 7pm

Venue: Blaxland Ridge Community Hall
227 Blaxland Ridge Road

Guest Speaker: Michelle Nichols
HCC Archivist

All welcome - Supper provided

KURRAJONG RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

80th Anniversary Celebration
Saturday 7th March 2020

The Anniversary event will be celebrated with the launch of a book giving insights into the 80 Year History of the Kurrajong Brigade. Celebrations will be held at the Kurrajong Rural Fire Brigade Station, Kurrajong Village.

The K-CHS Committee on behalf of members will be presenting a gift cheque towards publication costs of the book and in respect of the 80 years of Service given by the Kurrajong Brigade.



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