

THE MILLSTONE

KURRAJONG ~ COMLERoy HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society is dedicated to researching, recording, preserving and promoting the history of the district. Covering the area west of the Hawkesbury River - North Richmond, Kurrajong, Berambing, Bilpin, Grose Vale, Bowen Mountain, Colo, Wilberforce, Ebenezer, Glossodia, Tennyson, Freemans Reach.

SUNNYSIDE Property: The Story of the Evolution from Land Grant to Historic Home

This story is concerned with the *Sunnyside* house property at North Richmond. The families of John Town and GM Pitt Jnr were involved in other land holdings as farmers, but this story does not cover the history of those other property holdings.

The original land grant was 30 acres to George Mohun, a mariner, by Governor Hunter on 18 October 1799, Lot 129 (HLRV Ser No-pg 2-354). The adjoining grant was Lot 130, 26 acres to Rachel Burton. On the other side of what is now Bells Line of Road were William Rous, Lot 128, 30 acres and Edward Merrick, Lot 127, 30 acres.

These lots are shown on the CURRENCY Parish Maps.

I have been unable to find any further information on George Mohun or when he transferred the land. However in 1814 it was occupied by a George Moore. By 1830 John Gordon Town occupied Mohun's grant. Town also acquired a portion of Rachel Burton's land and also the grant of Joseph Pheasant. In 1833 John Town built and held the license for *The Woolpack Inn* near the river. This is the building shown in Streton's painting; *The Old Inn on the Hawkesbury*.

(Sunnyside Story continued page 5)



George Mohun's Lot 129 of 30 acres granted by Governor Hunter in October 1799



Sunnyside site Nth Richmond in 2021 as highlighted

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INSERT: Committee Nomination FORM 2021-2022
K-CHS AGM - Date to be announced

Note: There are articles on *Sunnyside* in *The Millstone* Newsletters:

Vol 1. Issue 4. July 2002

Vol 1, Issue 3, May 2002

Vol 10, Issue 5, September 2012

Image below: Steps to verandah and main entrance of *Sunnyside*



President's Annual Report 2020 - 2021

Well, what a year we have had. Just when things were starting to look up and our Mid Winter Dinner was about to happen, off we went into the interminable lockdown! Current plans are to hold the dinner as soon as possible after lockdown is lifted but obviously we will have to rename to Mid Spring or Mid Summer. The latter might not be a good idea - dangerous place that Mid Summer. :-)

Jenny and I were honoured to be awarded the Australia Day Award in January.

Between lockdowns and floods we managed to squeeze in two Pansy Tours in April and May, but because we had quite a few empty seats with changed dates etc, our overall profit was well down. All in all, as you'll see in the Treasurer's report, we made a small loss for the year. Considering everything, that is not a bad result and we are in no danger of not being comfortably financial.

Our AGM is supposed to be held in September, but guess what, it won't be! Hopefully October? I don't think a Zoom meeting for so many would work well but it might come to that. Speaking of Zoom, the committee has held a number of meetings using Zoom this year.

Our member, Emma Rawling, suggested we could do a calendar. A sub committee comprising Jenny Griffiths, Lesley Bobrige and Pat O'Toole selected images and put all the details together. I helped with the layout and it is looking good. Might have to be mail order though. :-)

Thank you to Val Birch for her continuing work as the Family History Group co-ordinator and librarian. The idea of having a selection of library books at the May meeting was well received - those people who borrowed, please don't forget the books to be returned at the next opportunity.

Many thanks to all the committee for their efforts throughout the year and a special mention to Suzanne Smith for putting the Millstone newsletter together so efficiently.

I hope to see you all soon. Keep smiling and use the spare time well.

David Griffiths Mob: 0498 646 899
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David Griffiths guiding one of the many K-CHS Pansy Line Tour Groups. In this image they are in the vicinity of the rail-line route through Hanna Park, Nth Richmond

KURRAJONG – COMLEROY HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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DISCLAIMER: Views & opinions expressed in The Millstone originate from many sources and contributors. Content does not necessarily represent or reflect the views or opinions of K-CHS, its committee and members. Every effort is taken to ensure accuracy of articles. If errors are found feedback is welcome.

secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au

K-CHS MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Reminder

A thank you to all members who have renewed their membership for 2021-2022

Late online renewal: <https://www.kurrajonghistory.org.au>

Select Renew Membership

You can pay by EFTPOS, Credit Card, PayPal or post cheque to: K-CHS Treasurer PO Box 174 KURMOND NSW 2757

Family Membership \$30.00

Senior Family (either over 70) \$15.00

Single \$20.– Single Senior (70 & over) \$12.50

Your address is not necessary (unless changed), but please complete and/or update any other details, including email and phone numbers. Prices are also on the online FORM. Note: Members who have joined since March 2021 DO NOT NEED TO RENEW.

K-CHS Annual Reports 2020 – 2021

Secretary's Annual Report September 2021

In spite of COVID 19 I feel the Society had a successful year. Some of our events had to be cancelled but those which eventuated went ahead very successfully, including a trip to Meroo Centre and Camp Mackay, our Australia Day Breakfast at Bowen Mountain, and our Christmas gathering at Kurrajong Heights Bowling Club.

We also had a Pansy Line Tour in March, a General Meeting at Blaxlands Ridge in March and a second Pansy Line Tour in May. A General Meeting was held at Panthers North Richmond and an inspection of the Richmond Air Base on 10th June.

Membership for the year has been good, and although events had to be cancelled because of COVID I think we had a successful year.

*Marguerite Wyborn
Secretary*

Treasurer's Annual Report September 2021

As we all know, it has been a very difficult year. Many events have been cancelled so opportunities to meet expenses have been few.

After several cancellations and perseverance by David, the much enjoyed Pansy Tours were held in April. Last minute changes made it necessary to run 2 tours which cost more than planned. However, an interesting aspect of local history was shared to almost 100 people, mostly from the Hawkesbury.

The Christmas Party, with Neil's Catering, was much enjoyed. Two general meetings and Australia Day took place, all well attended but at the society's expense.

With very little income and a steady stream of expenses it is not surprising that the year ended on a loss of almost \$500. A thank you is extended to Marilyn McCarthy, who continues in the role of K-CHS Honorary Auditor.

Hopefully this new year will eventually go back to normal and we can enjoy some of the planned outings and see one another at regular events.

*Patricia O'Toole
Treasurer*

Image Archives Report September 2021

The on-line database has been well used over the past 12 months.

Photos were added to the collection, including the history of the Kurrajong Heights Women's Bowling Club, the Nepean Sand and Gravel railway and the Hungerford and Power families.

Several people also left comments or added names to family images. A number of images were also purchased.

*Jennifer Griffiths
Image Archives*



The Nepean Sand & Gravel Company's Engine 1104, known as *Big Emma* crosses the Nepean River to collect sand from the Island, which was a sand island near the junction of the Grose and Nepean Rivers, at Yarramundi c1936. For a detailed history of the company and the railway see document Ref: 181200 pdf on the K-CHS Image Archives website: www.kurrajonghistory.org.au Image 210105

K-CHS Annual Reports 2020 – 2021

Family History Group Annual Report

We have had a very quiet year with our family history enquiries and our research. COVID and lockdown have not been our friends. Jenny Griffiths has been helping me with various duties and I would like to thank her.

If anyone has any early photos of the Kurrajong, or information on people who have lived in our area, we would like to hear from you. Let us hope we are out of lockdown soon.

Valerie Birch
Family History Co-ordinator

MILLSTONE Newsletter Annual Report 2021

Acknowledgement and a thank you to members who contributed interesting articles over the past year. At least we have been able to continue to publish the newsletter bi-monthly, despite cancellation of so many of our K-CHS activities including General Meetings, due to the COVID pandemic. Please contact the editor or any committee member if you wish to contribute an article.

The first edition Millstone Newsletter was published in January/February 2002 and has continued to be published on a bi-monthly basis, giving members six issues a year. A sub-committee has been formed to compile a Millstone book, for the 20th Anniversary Year in 2022, containing interesting articles from the past Millstone Collection. This initiative is progressing.

A thankyou to Hawkesbury City Council print room staff for each timely, hard-copy print run. A thank you also to Secretary Marguerite Wyborn who folds and posts each issue to members who request the traditional Australia Post mail service send.

The committee would also wish to thank our local businesses, whose support through advertising goes towards printing costs of the newsletter. Christine Mead - Kurrajong Cellars, Katherina & Gavin Adams - Ray White Kurrajong, Shane at the Village Kitchen Kurrajong. A special thank you to Paul Maher of Loxley on Bellbird Hill who has supported the work of the Society since 2006. We welcome the ongoing support of Shane & Tessa McLaughlin - Hillbilly Cider Bilpin and co-owners of Carey & Co Kurrajong Village, Michelle & Karen. We are aware that this has been a difficult year for business and that a number of our local supporting businesses have been unable to operate due to lockdown restrictions .

Suzanne Smith Millstone Editor

K-CHS MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Membership of the Society offers the following:

- Entitlement to join members-only excursions, social and information evenings organised by the Society;
- Entitlement to join the Society's program of research into the heritage of the Kurrajong district, either individually or jointly with other members;
- Receive a copy of the Society's bi-monthly newsletter *The Millstone*.
- Entitlement to vote at meetings and to nominate for an office-bearer position to help manage the Society's operations;
- Entitlement to borrow material from the Society's library; and discounts on publications.
- Along with the above, your membership demonstrates support, appreciation and respect for the preservation of the Kurrajong district's heritage.

Sir, In the early 1800s Benjamin Singleton built mills in the Windsor and Wheeny Creek (now Kurrajong) district. As wheat growing declined there and the Wheeny Creek mills fell into disuse, our forefathers painstakingly hauled, probably with bullock teams, two of the huge circular stones – splendid examples of the old millwright's art – up the ridge and laid them on their side at the Comleroy Road junction. Here they subsequently served as a base for a 1914-18 war memorial. Then Bells Line of Road was to follow a new alignment and the Department of Main Roads appeared in the district with all the power and modernity of tractors, bulldozers and earthmoving equipment. It became necessary to move the ancient stones. They now lie spread in a number of shattered segments, apparently ownerless, next to Kurrajong Park, showing how our ancestors' loving care was nullified by an in-appreciative posterity, despite every mechanical aid at its command.

MacLeod MORGAN
The Sydney Morning
Herald Saturday, 13
March 1954

Image:
The restored Millstones &
Signage today in
Kurrajong Memorial Park
2021

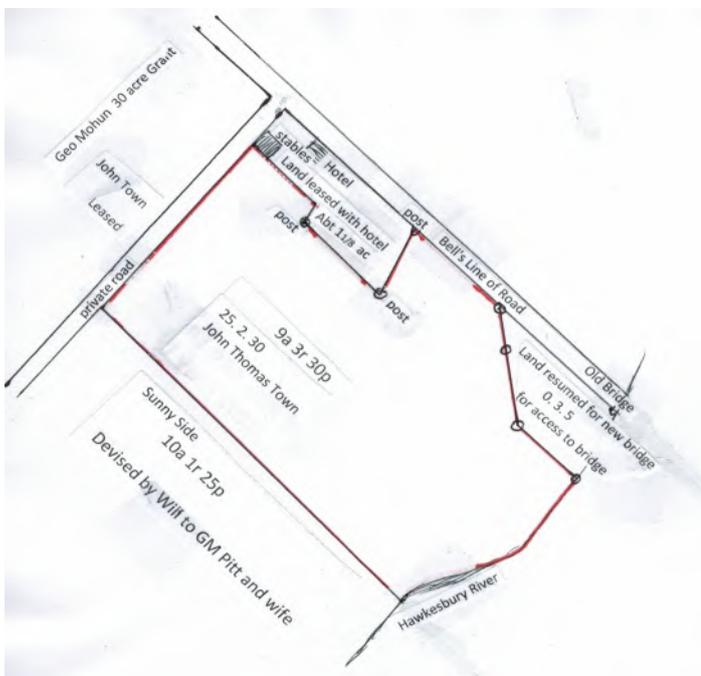


The Sunnyside Story (cont. from page 1)

It's unclear exactly when John Gordon Town built his home *Pleasant View* on the grant. It is possible that the property was really *Pheasant View*. Dates around 1854 have been suggested. The wrought iron arched gates to the current property bear the date of 1845 which has caused some confusion. However a review of the ownership of the land and the occupation of the *Travellers Rest* gives a possible answer. In 1833 John Gordon Town Jnr was licensee of the *Travellers Rest*. His father John Town Snr was the licensee of the *George the Fourth*, Richmond. It is difficult to decipher who owned the land given that John Gordon Town Jnr was 26 years old. The property on which the Inn stood was mortgaged back and forward several times until death of John Town Snr in 1846 whereupon John Gordon Town Jnr inherited the land of 30 acres outright. The fact that John Town gave up his inn license in 1853, perhaps indicates that he was building a new family home and turning his hand to farming his rather extensive lands, which he inherited from his very successful father.

It is understood that the *Sunnyside* house was built for George Matcham Pitt and Elizabeth Jessie Town in 1860 as a wedding gift from Elizabeth's father John Gordon Town. It is unclear whether any title passed to the newlyweds until after the death of John Gordon Town in 1883 at which time he died at his residence, Nth Richmond.

On his death, John G Town left *Sunnyside* to George and Elizabeth (as life tenants), with a condition of succession to their eldest son, John Thomas Matcham Pitt. *Sunnyside* occupied 10ac 1rd 25per between the Hawkesbury River and the private road connecting the property to Bell's Line of Road running from the Punt to Kurrajong. The remaining land of about 18 acres of Mohun's grant of 30 acres was bequeathed to John Thomas Town. The Hotel site of 11/8acres and a land resumption of 0.3.5 acres for the new bridge, had already been excised from the 30 acres, and the lot to north of the Pitt Lane was leased out for farming. On 20 Oct 1905 John Thomas Town sold the lot of 9.3.30 acres to west of the main road and the adjoining *Sunnyside* to John Thomas Matcham Pitt for £350. This transaction is recorded in Old Titles Book 789-829 which includes the sketch reproduced below:



George Matcham Pitt also inherited part of Merrick's grant which had been purchased by John Town in 1876 (Bk 175 No 79). Part of this land may have become the site of Kurrajong Race Club in 1896 when it was referred to as "Mr Pitt Butt's Paddock" or Mr Pitt's Bull Paddock, both being incorrect. This should of course be "Mr Pitt's butt paddock" i.e. a practice shooting range. This is the only flat area of land in North Richmond and an earlier Trove reference is made to North Richmond Race Club, of which John Town was a Trustee among others, as being on Merrick's land.

The two families occupied the adjacent houses until John Town's death in 1883. Mrs Pitt died in 1908 and GM Pitt farmer and Surveyor died in 1912 and the property passed absolutely to John Thomas Matcham Pitt who had been managing it for some time. On John's death in 1924 *Sunnyside* of 10.1.25 acres (along with about a further 260 acres of property likely inherited from JG Town) was bequeathed to his son John Matcham Pitt who leased it to Ted Turnbull who operated a dairy farm until 1945 when it was sold to Bruce Ronald Fisher. Thus Pitt-Town ownership of *Sunnyside* extended to about 112 years. At this time the wider property was described as Mohun's grant, part of Burton's grant, and 114 acres of Bell's grant, known as *Church Paddock*. Total sale price was almost four and a half thousand dollars.

Cecil O'Dea, a solicitor and dairy farmer, purchased the property in 1952 to run a dairy farm. There have been a number of different owners since then. The land surrounding the house property has been subdivided over the years and sold off progressively so that the remaining *Sunnyside* house title is for about 1.3acres (described in Title 1/749146) in the latest sale in 2020 for about \$1.7m.

Deborah Hallam & Jeff Pitt

Various members of the extended Pitt Family have visited the *Sunnyside* property over the years. From these visits there are a good series of photos of the house and property.

Image 1. 21 Pitt Lane entrance gate: "*Sunnyside* 1845"

Image 2. Rear view of 2 storey extension & old barn



Early history of Blaxland Ridge Rural Fire Brigade

After the Kurrajong 1944 fires the residents in Blaxland Ridge were made aware of their remoteness and vulnerability considering their distance away from Kurrajong. There was also some concern about burning around each others properties, including the road frontages owned by the then Colo Shire Council.

To address concerns raised, a brigade was formed at an inaugural meeting on 14th February 1964, and a request was sought from Council for official recognition, which was granted on 16 February 1964.

The first equipment request, which was granted included 1 x trailer unit, 1 x 120 gallon tank, 100 feet hose, 1 x rojector pump unit, 4 x rake hoes, 2 x wire cutters, 5 x axes, 1 x extinguisher, 1 x hand lantern, 2 x 2 gallon drinking containers, 1 x 12' tow chain and 1 x siren. No requests for helmets, but, apparently members were required to provide their own personal protective equipment.

The 1965 AGM was held on 22 May, possibly in the original school building. Laurie Cartwright was most likely the first Captain, after he stepped down as President.

General meetings were quarterly on the 4th Saturday of the last month. The following year was quiet, the trailer and pumps had arrived, there was \$56.06 in the bank account, and a notice board was erected on the corner of Cedar Ridge Rd and Comleroy Roads, to inform residents about meetings,

At the August meeting the building of a fire shed was discussed. The President, V.Budd approached Council and the response was favourable, with the idea that the members would build it themselves. At the December meeting the topic of radios was raised, and after discussions with Council about the shed, it was put on hold so firm quotes could be obtained.

Further meetings discussed a complaint from a neighbour regarding the proximity of the shed to her property and the proposed burning of roadsides. The Education Department was approached by the Fire Control Officer, Bill Burgess, for permission to build the shed. Even though it was approved, the \$800 allocated by Council was cut from the budget.



The AGM held in June 1968 had the usual election of office bearers and discussions about equipment purchases. Laurie Cartwright again mentioned going to the Bushfire School where a new pump was on display and subsequently ordered. After the shed build was postponed, a letter was sent to Council requesting a stop-gap vehicle to pull the trailer until a proper requisition for a permanent vehicle could be organised.

Back in 1968 the first unofficial fire truck was a ute with a 100 gallon water tank on the tray back, with two hoses running from the tank, which was used to fight the 1968 fires.

This fire revealed the shortcomings of the Blitz fire truck used by the Kurrajong brigade. Money was saved and a new Bedford fire truck was purchased, so in 1970 the Blitz was offered to Blaxland Ridge and housed at a private residence.

It is very interesting to know that the Blitz has now made it's way back to Blaxland Ridge, and is currently being restored at a private residence.

Image insert above : The first fire shed was eventually built in 1972 by Vince McMahon for \$1898. It had a gravel floor, no power and housed the Blitz and the original trailer.

Article compiled by Lesley Bobrige, with some facts taken from the book 'Blax Fax' Blaxland Ridge Rural Fire Brigade: *Its history and its people....* published in 2013.

Lesley Bobrige



The old Blitz Fire Truck



Blaxland Ridge RFB shed extension around 2000

An Early Colonial Surveyor & Pioneer

As is well known to many within the Society, *Bowen Mountain*, *Bowen's Creek* and the *Village of Bowenfels* near Lithgow, are all named after Lt. George Meares Countess Bowen. The *Village of Bowenfels*, originally named *Bowens Hollow*, developed along the western road between Mt Victoria and Bathurst, named by Surveyor General Mitchell, following surveying work G.M.C. Bowen carried out in the region.

GMC Bowen had arrived in Australia in 1827 as a Lieutenant in the 39th Regiment, in charge of a detachment guarding convicts on the ship *Midas*. Soon after arriving, Bowen entered Government service, joining the Surveyor Generals' survey staff, having been recommended by Governor Darling to serve as deputy to the Surveyor General, John Oxley. The recently arrived William Govett aged 20, was also seconded at this time.

In May 1828, less than a year later, John Oxley died and Major Thomas Livingstone Mitchell arrived in Sydney to take up the newly created appointment as Surveyor General. A year later in 1829 a settlement along Mitchell's newly surveyed section of road between the Pass of Mount Victoria and Bathurst, was named *Bowens Hollow*, later to become known as *Bowenfels* - subdivision 1839 / 1840. Bowen's plans for the village of *Bowenfels* were formally approved in 1846. *A note of interest:* The term "hollow" refers to a low lying piece of land, and the word "fel" is an old English word meaning a hill or moor.

Bowen soon became a land commissioner in the department and I quote C.H. Curry's research. "In 1829, assisted by a surveyor and his party, GMC Bowen, defined the boundaries and submitted an outline of the first country, demarcated west of the Hawkesbury River". This work determined the boundaries of the County of Cook and the Parishes therein. He then for a time became a surveyor for the Church and Schools Corporation.

In 1831 G.M.C. Bowen was appointed as a Justice of the Peace in the Windsor District and it was about this time that he was granted 2,560 acres at the base of Mount Tomah (approx.1036 ha), for services in His Majesty's Army for upwards of ten years. The property at Berambing was named *Bulgamatta*, where he began developing an area drained, in part, by the creek that bears his name and from which his son, George Bartley Bowen, was in 1867 to guide the surveyor, Edward Wyndham to Mount Wilson.

In 1839 G.M.C. Bowen was appointed to the position of Police Magistrate at Berrima along the newly created Great Southern Road. In January 1842, records show Bowen had obtained a large 83 acre block on the south side of Mount Tomah, further extending the Bowen family interests on the mountain. His mother Suzannah Parker Bowen had also acquired land on Mount Tomah in the 1830s.



**George Meares
Countess Bowen
1803—1889**

**Lieutenant in
His Majesty's
39th Regiment,
early Colonial
Surveyor,
Magistrate and
Pioneer**

Following a sojourn in England, in 1848 Bowen purchased land on Bowen Mount in the Hawkesbury, where he built a house on the highest ridge and developed well cultivated ornate European gardens and orchards. By the early 1860s, entrance avenues and extensive gardens enhanced the substantial timber home.

The *Village of Bowenfels* was also becoming a well developed township by this time. In 1886 *Bowenfels* had a thriving community of 350 people, with four hotels, a post office, an office for the mail coaches and a National School, the first public school west of the Blue Mountains, opened in May 1851. The National School remains standing to this day, not far from the Bowen Inn and Surveyors restaurant along the GWH at *Bowenfels*.

The remaining Bowen Mount property is now an area of land set aside for public use, known as Bowen Mountain Park, off Lieutenant Bowen Mountain Drive. *The Hut* in the park is where K-CHS regularly hold their Australia Day Breakfast.

Ref: H. A. MacLeod Morgan, 'George Meares Countess Bowen' *Australian Genealogist*, Vol 8. *Bilpin The Apple Country* by the late Meredyth Hungerford (Meredyth was an inaugural member of K-CHS). *A Cooks Tour Bowen Mountain Association 1st Edition* (1988). C.H. Curry *Mt Wilson NSW* (1968)

Suzanne Smith



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DAYLIGHT SAVING is an accepted, part of life for most Australians. On the first Sunday in October, people living in New South Wales, Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, and the Australian Capital Territory set their clocks forward by one hour to extend daylight hours after the working day. On the first Sunday in April, we set them back.

The practice is a controversial one, neatly illustrated by the five time zones daylight saving creates across the country, instead of our usual three. Its advocates argue for the increased availability of after-work activities and the boost in local economy this provides. Fewer animals are killed on roads during daylight saving time, as most workers no longer drive home during dusk. Daylight saving has also been proven to reduce electricity demand in the late afternoon and early evening. In fact, Tasmania was the first Australian state to introduce the practice permanently, in 1967, as an alternative to power rationing during drought.

NSW and most other states followed suit in 1971. 2021 therefore marks the 50th anniversary of daylight saving being permanently used across most of Australia. But did you know it was originally introduced during the First World War?

The *Daylight Saving Act 1916* implemented daylight saving time on the Australian home front and was initially intended as a wartime fuel-saving measure. The practice had begun in Germany and Austria in 1916, who in turn modelled it from Port Arthur, Canada, the first place in the world to employ daylight saving time in 1908. Academics had been proposing the clock change for years, notably New Zealand entomologist George Hudson in 1895.

Despite European successes, the practice did not go over well in Australia, and was repealed late 1917. Newspapers reported that "Nothing in the long record of Parliamentary

delinquency has excited more derision ... than this ill-starred attempt to divert Nature from her natural course." "It has been tried and found wanting," another printed, "like a good many of Billy Hughes' plans." The practice did not re-emerge until more than twenty years later during another world war, where daylight saving time was used nation-wide from 1942 to 1944. Following the end of hostilities, it fell into disuse for another twenty years.

Today's opponents to daylight saving argue that the practice disrupts sleep patterns, leading to health risks. It may even correlate to a spike in fatal road accidents in the first few days following the clock change as people drive while tired. When implemented in Tasmania in 1967, certain professions were affected more than others: farmers, for instance, whose work depends on daylight.

The international community has recently begun to address these concerns. In 2019 the member states of the European Union voted to abolish the practice entirely. Countries had the option to choose whether to stick with 'permanent winter' (standard) or 'permanent summer' (daylight saving) time, though the decision has since been stalled by Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Australia, Queensland, Western Australia, and the Northern Territory do not practice daylight saving, despite a number of referenda and trial periods. For those living in border communities, such as in the twin towns of Tweed Heads (NSW) and Coolangatta (QLD), simply crossing the street can lead to an hour's time difference during daylight saving in NSW. Residents have even been known to celebrate two New Year's.

In 1970, ABC's *Four Corners* aired a segment on daylight saving in Tasmania. 80% of their Tasmanian viewers were in favour of the change. Others argued the government should "leave God's time alone." Bruce Grundy, host of current affairs program *Line Up*, had this to say: "Times change, obviously. I'm talking about changing times."

Daylight saving seems set to stay in NSW and most other Australian states.

Extract from the RAHS Newsletter July 2021 [Changing times: 50 years of daylight saving - RAHS](#) by Elizabeth Heffernan.

Postcard Image: [Taronga Park Zoo Clock \(RAHS Collection\)](#)

The Royal Australian Historical Society Newsletter is available to K-CHS members on request via K-CHS electronic mailout. K-CHS is an affiliated member of the RAHS.

RayWhite
Kurrajong

Katherina Kostrzak - Adams specialises within the Hawkesbury in both acreage and residential sales. Katherina and her team work tirelessly to achieve the best result for their vendors and purchasers alike. Please contact us or call in for any of your Real Estate needs.



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FAMILY HISTORY Memories

GROWING UP at KURRAJONG in the 1940s by James “Jim” Power

On the 29th December, 1941, Patrick Joseph Power purchased a 28 acre property in Comleroy Road, Kurrajong. This had been Portion 265 of the Kurrajong Soldier Settlement Scheme (established in 1920) which had been forfeited in September 1941. Pat and his wife Jessica, “Jes”, arrived in Kurrajong from Coogee with seven children: Desmond “Des”, Peter, Geraldine, Pauline, Anthony, James “Jimmy” and baby Josephine.

Below are Jim Power’s Memories.

Records show that our family acquired the property in Comleroy Road on 29 December 1941, the day after my second birthday. We left there in 1951 and so my memories of the place could well be influenced by what I’ve heard over the years from others in the family. One of the sayings often used at family gatherings is “Remember that time up at Kurra”.



Power family photo 1950:

Front row (l-r): Brendan, Terese, Christine (twin of Brendan)

Second row (l-r): Anthony, Michael, John, Josephine

Third row (l-r): Jim, Pauline, Geraldine

Back row (l-r): Patrick (father), Desmond, Jessica (mother), Peter.

We moved to Kurrajong from Randwick - of which I have no recollection - at the end of 1941. At that stage, I had three older brothers, two older sisters and a younger sister. Over the next seven years there would be five more arrivals: a boy in 1943 and 1944, twins - a boy and a girl - in 1946 and the baby, a girl arriving in 1948 - making a dozen in all. I remember Mum telling me shortly before her death that when she was having the twins, she did not have one visit to the doctor and didn't know she was having twins until they arrived. They sure bred them tough in those days.

The local Public School was at Kurmond, about a mile by road. When I started school towards the end of 1944, there was a Power in every class. I suppose, I really started in 1945 but having gone at the end of 1944, I was teased by the older kids that I repeated “bubs” as they called Kindergarten. I don't remember who my teacher was then. I do know that there were only two rooms and the classes were split between the two. The Head teacher was Greg Clancy and the older kids said he would examine their spelling while he read the Sydney Morning Herald.

Of course we walked to school and I seem to remember sometimes going barefoot. My older brother Peter acquired a pony from somewhere and used to ride it occasionally.

I seem to remember a couple of horses being tethered in the schoolyard from time to time. I'm not sure whether it was first or second class when I moved to St Monica's at Richmond. This entailed catching the local train called 'Pansy' at a bit after 8 am. Kurrajong station was about a mile from our place and we used to walk there.

Sometimes we would get a lift on McMahon's bus either to Kurrajong or North Richmond. Rowley and Jim McMahon had two buses that I remember, one was an old green Reo, I can't remember what the other one was, but I still remember the smell of a new one they got after the war. They also had a black Chev sedan SV-364 which they acquired in the late 40's and which we also sometimes got a ride in. We seemed to get the bus fairly often but I never did get to know whether we were ever paying passengers.

After five years at Richmond, in 1951, I went to Marist Brothers at Parramatta where I did my last year of primary school and then on to high school. Going to Parramatta meant getting the 6.17am 'Pansy', then changing at Richmond for Parramatta. The school was a fair way from the station and this had to be travelled both ways. We had to leave school early to get the train home at about 3.30. This was a pretty long day for an eleven year old - at least we had time to do our homework on the train.

Catching 'Pansy' to primary school brings back a few memories. The eight o'clock train must have been the school train and for some reason one carriage was designated the girls' carriage and the other the boys'. We used to go in the girls' carriage, maybe because we went to the Catholic School? When Tiger Sutton was the guard sometimes we got to travel in the Guard's compartment. He was the only one who would let us.

One time, on the way to catch the afternoon train at Richmond, my brother gave me threepence and told me to go to the shop to get some lollies. When the train started to pull out without me he got Tiger to stop the train in the middle of the road so I could be hauled unceremoniously up into the guard's compartment. Another time, we got to Richmond station just as 'Pansy' was pulling out. To show our anger we grabbed handfuls of the whitish sandy gravel of the platform and let fly. Just our luck a window or two was open and someone dobbed us in to the guard - Cookie this time (a cranky old coot). When we got home a few hours later, the news had spread and we were in for it.

One rather horrifying experience I remember is a bloke going between the train and the platform on Richmond station. The train was probably pulling out and he somehow slipped.

(Cont. page 10)

Jim Power Family Memories (Continued from page 9)

He was all right until the running board near the door caught up to him and spun him around. The guard saw this happening and the train stopped. I don't know what his fate was as we were herded away.

I remember the 1944 bushfires. We had a recently ploughed paddock of some four acres or more, which was quite some distance from the house and we took blankets and water and gathered in the middle of this to wait the fire out. Dad and my two elder brothers went off to fight the fire. After the danger had passed, I remember being carried on Dad's shoulders back to the house. Down near our front gate, right on Comleroy Road, was a huge dead gum tree. This caught fire and seemed to be burning for weeks afterwards. Fortunately this was as close as the fire got to the house.

Every Sunday, we got to go to Mass at St Gregory's. Fr Parker would drive up from Richmond each week. On the first and third Sundays it would be early Mass – probably 7 am and late on second and fourth probably about 10 am. I remember Dad frequently excusing himself from the sermon to have a smoke.

We didn't have a tractor and the ploughing was mostly horse drawn. Sometimes a contractor would do some mechanical ploughing. We had a slide for transporting produce around the farm and a dray to haul stuff from Kurrajong shops and the station. Woodhill's had a man who would call and take an order for whatever was available during the war and deliver next day. I've no idea how regular this was.

When Mum was away on her many confinements we were farmed out to neighbours. I remember one time going to Lorna Robinson's - somewhere on Grose Vale Road past Woodhill's. When we were collected in the dray, pulled by our horse, Dolly, sometimes we got to drive.

Dolly however came to grief. She had been tethered up near the shed and was stung by something and she bolted. She careered down the steep slope towards the dam, crashed into a tree and broke her neck. She had to be buried where it happened by heaping dirt over her. She was replaced by Trimmer – another draughthorse – Clydesdale probably – not as big as Dolly or as friendly for that matter. Dolly would let five or six of us on her back with no trouble. She was a great loss.

Feeding such a big family couldn't have been easy. Before moving to Kurrajong, as far as I know, Dad had been a clerk. He knew nothing much about farming but he was a hard worker and a quick learner. Also, other landowners nearby were very helpful. Dad often got work with one or the other for probably little reward other than experience gained. He also got permission to trap rabbits on some of their properties. All sorts of rabbit cuisine featured prominently in our diets. The rabbit skins were turned inside out and stretched on fencing wire and stored in their hundreds in the shed until a sufficient number accrued for shipping.

A fair bit of the farm was under cultivation and there was a home paddock set aside as a veggie patch. We used to have a problem getting rid of some of the veggies – pumpkin etc. – that were not to our liking. There was also a fairly large citrus orchard providing fruit for market and home consumption.

Peas seemed always to require picking and many a weekend was spent doing this. No wonder we all got bad backs. I remember large fields of corn which was used as fodder for the dairy cows. A dairy had been added to the shed and most times up to thirty cows were milked morning and night. Usually the milk was put through a separator to get the cream, which was stored in one pint wax-treated cardboard containers from "Hygienic Containers". It was usually my job to stand by the separator and change the cartons as they filled. I was not skilled enough to turn the handle, as a correct speed had to be maintained to ensure the cream was the correct consistency. I only got to turn it when the bowl had to be re-filled. The cream was transported to the city on Saturdays which was Dad's usual day at Randwick, where he worked as a 'bookie's penciller'. The surplus milk after home use, was fed to the pigs.



Image: The family on the farm with two poddy calves. Jim is on the far left.

Having to leave so early to go to school meant we got out of milking on weekdays but no such luck on weekends and school holidays. Also there seemed to be endless jobs to be done around the place. Getting wood for the stove and copper and kindling for starting the fire was one job we all tried in vain to avoid. Other jobs were chipping crops to remove weeds, stripping bark from the wattle trees to be sent off for tanning leather. We had to mind the cows when they were let in to graze to allow them in some areas and not others. We also had to mind them out on the road where the pickings were better than in the home paddocks.

I can't recall if there was water plumbed into the house but I know we had to rely on tanks to keep us going and I remember in dry times that water had to be carted in to replenish the tanks. Saturday night was bath night and water had to be heated in the copper and carried by bucket into the bathroom. Getting first use of the water was a luxury I didn't get.

I don't know how old I was when one of the cats went up into the loft to have her litter and we went up to have a look, I must have stayed a bit longer than the others and it having got dark, I went down the wrong way and instead of going down the stairs fell through the opening into the pit prepared for fodder storage. I was unhurt but fearing concussion, I was under observation for a few days. Some of the other kids often tell me I never recovered from the fall! (Cont. page 11)



A Soldier Settlement Home

The house on Comleroy Road (Portion 265) Kurrajong, was purchased by Patrick Joseph Power in December 1941 from the Soldier Settler Harold Ewins, after it had been forfeited in September 1941.

K-CHS Image Collection 210501
www.kurrajonghistory.org.au

Jim Power Family Memories (Continued from page 10)

On another occasion, I was chasing my sister Josephine and to escape she darted down the stairs at the front of the house. To cut her off I scaled the verandah railing and jumped. I hit my chin on my knee and bit my tongue rather badly. This required a visit to Windsor hospital where I received several stitches. It was not all bad news, however, as I had to live on ice cream and jelly for a week or so.

One of the classmates of my elder brother Tony was John Corrigan, whose father was Constable Corrigan of Camp MacKay, the Police Boys Camp nearby. Because of this we were invited to go to the camp cinema to see pictures when they were on. This usually meant getting home cross country in the pitch dark. I remember one Sherlock Holmes movie – a

particularly scary show that had me seeing things in the shadows for days to come. Occasionally, we got a lift to school on the back of the Camp’s flat top truck. We would be somewhat windswept by the time we arrived.

On the very rare occasions that we got to buy our lunch with sixpence at the school tuckshop, we could get a pie and sauce for threepence halfpenny and a tomato roll for twopence halfpenny. When we had an adequate supply of tomatoes we would help ourselves to some, which we would barter at the tuckshop for lunches. No wonder some of my schoolbooks had dried tomato stains on them!

The family moved to Liverpool in 1951 when I was eleven.

Jim Power April 2010.

FOR SALE BY PRIVATE CONTRACT. THE LOWER CURRAGONG WATER MILL, a weather-board and shingled house, and ten acres land; the mill is now in first rate working order; it has a pair of four feet six inch French burr stones as good as any in the Colony; a smutting machine and dressing machine, complete, nearly new. The Currajong is a populous district, and a retail shop would answer well at the mill. A liberal credit will be given for two-thirds of the purchase money, on good endorsed bills.

For further information apply to the owner, Mr. JOHN TOWN, senior, Richmond. February 2.

The Sydney Herald Saturday, 19 February 1842

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Query! Following the article on the Nepean Victoria Bridge, in the July/August Issue, a query was received re the original design and construction of the bridge.

The bridge is one of the oldest railway bridges in the State. One legend has it that the Victoria Bridge was originally constructed for the Crimea and was bought by the N.S.W. Government. **Not so!** The bridge was designed in the colony by the Engineer-in-Chief, John Whitton, who sent the design to England for checking by John Fowler. The construction was undertaken by a number of NSW contractors. **Nepean Library Archives**

Dates for Your DIARY

Please note: The K-CHS events published on this page are dependent on the COVID 19 lockdown situation. Including distancing requirements, limits placed on numbers and of course any extension in lock-down requirements.

An email will be sent to members by President David Griffiths giving dates and venue, or view updates on the K-CHS website: <https://www.kurrajonghistory.org.au>

NOTICE of K-CHS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2021

President David Griffiths will inform members via email of the AGM date, time & venue, given current lockdown restrictions.

The business of the meeting is to receive the Annual Reports, elect Office Bearers and Committee Members and confirm appointments. The AGM will be followed by a General Meeting.

**INSERT: Please fill in and return the Committee Nomination FORM to any member of the current committee or post to:
The Secretary K-CHS PO Box 174
KURMOND NSW 2757
Enquires: David Griffiths 0498 646 899
president@kurrajonghistory.org.au**

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A database list of interesting books available for borrowing by members, can be viewed on the K-CHS website, along with a list of available Society publications for sale.
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THE EVENT DATE WILL BE NOTIFIED BY EMAIL

Venue: Kurrajong Heights Bowling & Recreation Club
1530 Bells Line of Road



Guest Speaker:
Flt. Lt. Eamon Hamilton
RAAF Centenary 1901-2021
"Celebrating 100 years"

Bookings Essential: <https://www.kurrajonghistory.org.au>
Cost: Members \$35.00 Friends \$40.00

Enquiries: secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au
Marguerite Ph: 4576 1371

Guest Speaker: Join Flight Lieutenant Eamon Hamilton for an evening of Air Force history and discover the importance of Richmond's RAAF Base in the history of aviation.

Flight Lieutenant Eamon Hamilton has been a Public Affairs Officer with Air Mobility Group at RAAF Base Richmond since 2006. He is also currently serving as the Air Force Centenary 1901-2021 Base Liaison Officer for Sydney.

RAAF Base Richmond was established as the Air Force's second base in July 1925, however its roots in aviation extend back to 1901. Over the Centenary of the Royal Australian Air Force, RAAF Base Richmond has supported important operations both here in Australia and overseas.

A Note for K-CHS MEMBERS

As also requested by the Family History Group - articles and images of past times are welcome for documentation in our archives and/or publication in the Millstone Newsletter. Images will be scanned and returned to families. Please contact any member of the K-CHS Committee or Suzanne Smith Newsletter Editor 4567 7410

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