

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.

THE STORY OF RICHMOND BRIDGE THE FIRST CROSSINGS

The Richmond Bridge story really begins 1789 when Governor Arthur Phillip finally arrived at the then limit of navigation of the Hawkesbury River, at the foot of Richmond Hill.

In 1894 the first land grants on the Hawkesbury were issued by Lieutenant Governor Grose in 1894 in the vicinity of current day Pitt Town. Settlement moved upstream in the ensuing years with the first grants in the vicinity of the bridge being on the Richmond side. In close proximity to the current bridge is Noel's Farm granted to William Noel in July 1795. John Dight purchased this land from Noel sometime after settling on *Dights Farm* in 1802, at which stage Noel was recorded still on his own farm. It was on this land that the first of the "river inns" was constructed.



Richmond Bridge 1879 - Photo NSW Printing Office - original held by State Library NSW. Image 000420 HCC Library

Upstream riverfront grants were issued towards the Grose, Nepean, Hawkesbury confluence, where grants were made to Matthews and McManus in 1799. These grants were followed by a second round in around 1802, forming a small community in the area connected by walking and riding tracks. In 1803, Charles Palmer settled on the river between Matthews farm and James Badgery's, *Swilly Farm*.

1799 grants were taken up by Edward Merrick, William Rouse, George Mohun and Rachel Burton west of the river. Adjacent to the confluence were John and Lucy Wood, William Eaton and Obediah Ikin, all 1804 grants. This small group of settlers were also closely connected and a track quickly developed along what is now Grose Vale Road leading to the easy river crossings at Woods and Ashtons Falls.

Interestingly "Cooramill" (Samuel Boughton), refers to Ashtons Falls as being "on the highway" and Woods Falls as an inferior route further downstream but more accessible in flood times.

In 1810, Governor Macquarie toured the district, his party crossing the Hawkesbury from their campsite at Yellow-Mundie Lagoon to *Belmont* by boat while the horses crossed the river by "a bad Ford about half a mile higher up", most likely Woods Falls. After briefly visiting *Belmont* and the Kurrajong Brush, Macquarie made his return to Government House via Richmond Terrace and Thompson's Punt at Windsor. This route continued to be used for some time as in 1823 the only ferry crossings available were Windsor and Emu Ford, both Government regulated.

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K-CHS General Meeting - Monday 28th March 2022
Singleton Visit COACH TOUR (Sept/Oct 2022)

President's Report

We held our Australia Day Breakfast, with the attendance not surprisingly being a bit down. Those who did attend had an enjoyable morning. We awarded our Australia Day Award to our hard working Treasurer, Pat O'Toole, and three well deserved Life Memberships. The recipients were Steve Rawling, Les Dollin and Val Birch. See below.

As part of the Australia Day Award for Pat, most of the committee took her out to dinner at Avli Restaurant, Cranebrook (paying our own way of course, except for Pat ;-). We had a very enjoyable evening.

The Society would like to welcome new members Margaret Collins and Rhonda Knott who attended the K-CHS Breakfast.

A few days ago I sent an email to all members about a planned excursion later in the year to Singleton. Thank you to all those who have replied. We would still like to hear from everyone else before deciding whether this trip is viable. In brief we are looking at the end of September or early October, for the two day, one night coach trip. Possible cost around \$200 per person, which includes coach seat, dinner and overnight accommodation. The committee were thinking of a weekend but there seems to be a slight preference for weekday. It should be a lot of fun!

Our next General meeting is Monday 28th March, where we will have a guest speaker from our local police - details on back page. We hope many of you can attend.

Other excursions are in the planning - stay tuned.

David Griffiths

Contact:

Email: president@kurrajonghistory.org.au

Ph: 4567 8999 Mob: 0498 646 899

**KURRAJONG – COMLEROY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.
PO BOX 174 KURMOND NSW 2757
ABN 68930834921**

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Committee**

PresidentDavid Griffiths

Vice PresidentAirdrie Martin

SecretaryMarguerite Wyborn

TreasurerPat O'Toole

Lesley Bobrige

Jenny Griffiths

Frank Holland

Steve Rawling AM

Suzanne Smith

Millstone Editor.....Suzanne Smith

WebmasterDavid Griffiths

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secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au



The above Life Membership Certificate was awarded to Steve Rawling AM in recognition of his significant contributions to the Society's activities since its inception, years served as President and as a Committee Member. Steve unfortunately was unable to be with us on the 26th, due to health issues. We hope soon to hear of his recovery and return to his home, *St Clements*.



Life Membership Certificate awarded to Les Dollin in recognition of his significant contributions to the Society's activities over many years. Including well researched history tour events, imaginative Scarecrow Festival participation and for his extensive and ongoing research into the Singletons Mill site. A special thank you Les and to Anne who has supported him in all these ventures.



Valerie Birch receiving her Lifetime Membership Certificate from President David Griffiths in recognition of her significant contributions to Society activities, including the role of Archivist and Family History co-ordinator. Val has also contributed to a number of K-CHS publications.

AUSTRALIA DAY Presentation & Talk by Pat O'Toole A History of GROSE VALE Hall

Around 1950 a group of Grose Vale mothers employed a kindergarten teacher, initially gathering in their homes.

Shortly after in July 1950 a group of local people gathered with the aim of building a community centre to facilitate cultural, recreational and educational experiences for the community.

Progress was rapid. By December 1950 a site donated by Mr and Mrs Kelly and their daughter, Mrs R Stewart was accepted, surveyed and fenced. Residents offered loans and plans were prepared for approval by Colo Shire Council. Many residents offered to act as guarantors with the bank. Materials for construction had been ordered.

The ceremony of laying the Foundation Stone, donated by Mr Burley of Berlie Ltd, took place on 19th May 1951. It was quite a gala day with many dignitaries attending.

The hall, a brick and tile structure measuring approximately 17 metres by 13 metres was built to a high standard for the times. It had a first class dance floor and a fully set up stage. Many events raised funds, for example a euchre evening contributed \$6.00. Construction made good progress. The estimated cost was \$6,000 but with volunteer labour the cost was reduced to half that.

The official opening, by Mr R J P Boyer, Chairman of the ABC, took place with a spectacular celebration on 14th March 1953.

The hall became the centre for community events. It was used by the kindergarten, a chess club, a discussion group, craft group and a library. Mr Jim Waters, a teacher at Richmond High School, instigated and conducted the Grose Vale Choral Society. The Grose Vale teacher, Mr R Murray worked tirelessly to make the hall a reality and instigated and ran the discussion group and a theatre group who put on regular performances.

Around 100 people attended the monthly dances with music provided by the Corners Orchestra. These events were well attended and supported by the local community. In 1953 the



Pat O'Toole receiving the K-CHS Australia Day Award 2022 in recognition of her significant ongoing contribution to the Society including several years as Treasurer. Secretary Marguerite Wyborn presented the Award Certificate.

Craft Club members organised a gala evening with activities such as chess, euchre, bridge, bobs, ping pong etc. Some 50 adult and many children attended, raising \$34.00 for the centre funds.

The hall was a popular choice for 21st birthdays, one such being, that of Margaret Jabour of Kurrajong. She was presented with her key by her father. Guests then signed the key.

Some of the more unusual events are reported in the Richmond Windsor Gazette. In November 1956 a Gypsy Carnival brought many enthusiastic attendees. Bands of gaudily dressed Romaine's erected tents and stalls from which to sell their wares to the eager visitors. Gypsy ponies gave rides to children and special dancers and musicians provided non stop entertainment. The day stretched into night with dancing and a TV showing (tele in Australia was less than 2 months old!!)

Citizenship Ceremonies with local people and Colo Shire Council representatives were a regular occurrence. The welcome included entertainment and of course, supper.

With a movie projector and operator from the Hawkesbury Agricultural College, film nights were organised by the discussion group. On other occasions slide presentations enlightened the community on visits to places unknown.

The Grose Vale Youth Group worked with the National Fitness movement to provide an enjoyable program for the young people of the district with games, gym equipment, dances and outings.

Who would have thought the Cold war was a worry in rural Australia? Civil defence lectures were conducted fortnightly and included instruction on precautions to be taken in the event of a nuclear attack.

This information has been gleaned from Richmond Windsor Gazette articles available on Trove, however they don't go past 1962.

The centre has been sold and the proceeds of the sale given to the Kurrajong Nursing Home. It is hoped to extend the story to the current day, with information from local people who have been much involved over the years, with the centre. *Assistance from readers with further history would be appreciated.*

The RICHMOND BRIDGE CROSSINGS (cont. from page 1)

The PUNT The first reference to the Richmond Punt is the Sydney Gazette of April 1827 in an article on horse theft. It is unclear who operated this evidently private ferry although it appears to have been under the ownership of Archbald Bell as during the 1840s it was controlled by his daughter, Maria Faithful. Maria's husband, William was the widower of Jemima Pitt and uncle and neighbour of George Matcham Pitt of *Bronte*. The punt was leased to George for £100 per year.

By the late 1820s inns had begun to spring up on the tracks near the river crossings. The first noted being *The Pack Horse* on the Richmond, or right bank, of the river and licensed to Thomas Parnell. The track past the inn to the ferry was on Noel's Farm, now under Dight ownership, a situation that was to become problematic in the future. In the 1830s other inns included the *Lord Nelson*, innkeeper Keshia Aldridge, on what was to become Grose Vale Road, and John Town's *Travellers Rest*. On the opposite bank near the falls were the *Governor Darling* of Robert Aull and Walter Howell's *The Joys of Life*.

There were many issues with operating a punt over the frequently flooding Hawkesbury. On one particular occasion, in 1853, the punt slipped its moorings and was rounded up at Ebenezer Church. Those who know the river may be entertained by the thought of men towing a punt upstream by ropes from the bank.

In 1855 having upgraded and realigned the access road, the Richmond Road Trust took ownership of the wharf and advertised the lease for auction at Windsor. The winning bid was £283 per year for three years to George Matcham Pitt. As the lessee had to supply the punt and all equipment it was no longer such a profitable operation.

Much to the disgust of the west of the river settlers there was no agreement or responsibility to maintain the western road.

THE RICHMOND BRIDGE COMPANY It was perhaps these sorts of difficulties that resulted in the formation by Act of Parliament in 1857, of the *Richmond Bridge Company*, the directors being local business men. The act defined the position, at the Richmond Ferry, the width, not less than 26 feet, the tolls, completion within 2 years and numerous other conditions. One of the businessmen was Benjamin Richards, recently publican of the *Pack Horse* then renamed *The Archer*. Leased by Richards from Dight, the land was being used as resting paddocks for cattle destined for the Sydney markets.

The extensive Act included such clauses as protection from pecuniary loss for the lessee of the ferry, the voting rights of "lunatic or idiot" shareholders and the fine for the toll collector abusing a traveller. Finally, the Act allowed for the Government purchase of the completed bridge after 7 years for the total cost of construction plus 10%.

Table of TOLLS	£ s. d.
Single person crossing the bridge on foot	0 2
Horse mare gelding ass or mule drawing or not	0 6
Every Ox or head of nest cattle drawing	0 4
Every ox or head of nest cattle in drove	0 1
Every sheep lamb pig or goat	0 ¼
Every carriage on springs with two wheels	1 0
Every carriage on springs with four wheels	2 0
Vehicle with two wheels without springs	1 0
Vehicle with four wheels without springs	1 4
Unbroken horses in drove	0 3

Directors & Shareholders in the Richmond Bridge Company William Bowman, Robert Fitzgerald, John Hoskinson, George Bowman, William Lamrock, James T Ryan, William Parnell, Richard Skuthorpe, George Douglass, Benjamin Richards, John Town, Thomas Case, Thomas Eather Snr, Charles Eather and all and every other person and corporation who shall hereafter become subscribers to the undertaking and their several and respective successors, executors, administrators and assigns shall be and are united into a company for making, building, completing and maintaining a substantial bridge ...at or near the Richmond Ferry, to continue the present line of the public road in the County of Cumberland on the east side of the River Hawkesbury, with the road on the opposite or west side of the same in the Country of Cook and for that purpose shall be one body corporate by the name, style and title of The Richmond Bridge Company

Construction commenced in 1858 with the Foreman of Works, James Dear, living on site and Mr F. O. Moriarty as Engineer. Twenty-five men were working on the bridge and extra labourers were always in demand. The timber for the bridge was sourced by contractor, Mr Eather, from the Richmond area, a sideline being a number of ongoing court cases concerning removal of timber from private land without appropriate permission or accounting.

The lease for the tolls was auctioned on 29th July 1859 for £775 to Mr Charles F Davis, from 1st August 1859. The punt was immediately dismantled with all surplus materials from both the bridge and punt being auctioned the following week.

Needless, it did not take for the first flood of January, 1860 to overflow the new bridge by 3 feet and in February the same year the river rose before the toll-keeper had time to lower the railings.

Owing to increasing difficulty in finding toll keepers, successful application was made to double the livestock toll to 2d for cattle and 1/2d for smaller stock in 1861. This increase seems to have been adequate as a regular lessee was found in William Parnell at around 1006 pounds per annum.

Cont page 5

The Richmond Bridge Crossings cont.

The Bridge which is constructed of ironbark, although free from artificial ornamentation, is as strong and substantial as wood and iron can make it. It spans the river in one of its most magnificent reaches, at a breadth of 650 feet, standing on massive piles of ironbark driven into the bed of the river to a depth of not less than 15 feet, secured against the ravages of the cobra by a covering of Muntz metal. It happens sometimes however, in seasons of flood that the water rises much higher than the platform of the bridge, which unprotected would cause serious damage. To help obviate this the hand railings on each side are removable and can be placed horizontally on the platform ...besides there is a row of piles immediately above the bridge to intercept such logs and masses of timber as would by violent collision destroy any edifice. This structure and its approaches has cost the company upwards of 11,000 pounds.

REPAIRS Although the flood of 1867 did not substantially damage the bridge the eastern approaches were eroded over the next few years and in June 1868 the Commissioner for Roads called for tenders for the repair of the bridge approaches. Awarded to J. Dixson and D. McPherson. Twelve months later the bridge had become a political issue as the Richmond Bridge Company, unable to fund continuing maintenance, looked to sell to the Government. As there was also a push for a publicly funded bridge to be built at Windsor the approach was not looked on with favour.

By 1870 the approaches were again flood eroded as the river changed channel through the embankment so that the only crossing was by small punt, for which an extra, higher charge was made. Large flocks of sheep and herds of cattle stranded on the western side of the bridge were in danger of starvation and the community called for the Government to take control.

The correspondence discussing the responsibility or otherwise of the Company to supply a punt over the river to the UNDAMAGED BRIDGE, "standing in the middle of the river", and to repair the eroded road makes for entertaining reading. (Trove, Letters to the Editor, Sydney Morning Herald Nov, Dec 1870). It was noted that the Bridge Company owned no land for approaches on the eastern side of the river.

On 7th December, 1870 it was reported that the Richmond Bridge Company would offer to the Government the bridge that had cost them £12,000 for the sum of £9000 and that should the offer be refused, should fight any attempt to make them financially responsible for the repairs. As the government refused to purchase the bridge but agreed to subsidise some repairs and construct an approach road the bridge was repaired as follows.

According to "Cooramill", G. M. Pitt filled the gap with 10,000 tons of stone, returning the river to the original channel.

SALE Almost immediately there was pressure from the residents of *The Kurrajong* for the sale of the bridge and the Company again offered it to the Government, this time for £7000 The Toll lease had also substantially reduced to £770, with G Watts, Lessee.

The Bridge Company made no secret of the fact they were infuriated by drovers moving cattle via the Yarramundi Falls and pressured for a toll on Yarramundi bridge. In what may have been a counter-play the Government allocated substantial funds to build and upgrade the road from North Richmond to Woods Falls. This is the road now known as River Road leading to Navua Reserve.

When the motion finally came to parliament in 1874 members objected to the purchase of an "old bridge" likely to fail, pushing instead for the construction of a new bridge. The sale of the Bridge to the NSW Government was finalised in April 1875.

Deborah Hallam

This article is Part 1 of the Richmond Bridge story up until the sale of the bridge to the Government in 1875. Part 2 of the story will be continued in the May-June 2022 issue, with full references. Thank you to Deborah for her research.

Note of interest: The name of the Richmond Bridge Crossing of the Hawkesbury River is just that, and continues to this day to be known as the Richmond Bridge crossing by the RMS. Although generally referred to by local residents as the North Richmond Bridge, this is legally incorrect.

Ashton's Falls were first recorded by John Hunter during the 1789 expedition along the Hawkesbury River. They must have been a reasonably significant waterfall / cascade because they could be heard from the expedition camp on Richmond Hill. There is no evidence of the falls now, they were probably gradually destroyed during sand and gravel extraction in the 1900s, and flood scouring. There is now no physical evidence of the ford, however, the roadway on the north-western side of the river adjacent to Navua Reserve preserves the original road alignment leading down to the former ford crossing. Information from: *The Yarramundi Reserve Archeological & Cultural Heritage Assesment for HCC 2007*

[FROM OUR CORRESPONDENT.]
SEPTEMBER 28TH.—FATAL ACCIDENT.—On Friday, the 17th instant, a labouring man, named William Clark, employed on the works of the Richmond Bridge, met with his death in the following shocking manner: He was driving a timber truck near the crossing at the Grose River, when the hindmost wheel came in contact with a tall sapling, which, coming down in great force, struck the poor man, who was a little in front, on the head and side, fracturing his skull and several of his ribs. He lived for a few miles of the remainder of his journey, but died before he could be brought to Richmond. An inquest was held on his body at Yellow Monday's, the next day (Saturday), when a verdict of accidental death in accordance with the foregoing facts, was returned.

We Remember Them
The Medical Side of War & Conflict

Of course the result of conflict and fighting in any war results in injury of all kinds. During the First World War in the Middle East and at Gallipoli and on the Western Front in France, injury caused by small arms, machine guns, grenades, bayonets, bombs, mines, gas and artillery shells, along with the issue of psychological trauma required the formation of clearing stations and hospitals for all sides involved in the fighting.

Australia as one of the fighting forces, established both static and mobile general hospitals (AGH), with the mobile hospitals closer to the battle fields. These hospitals were manned by doctors and trained nursing staff. Closer to the fighting were the advanced and main dressings stations and casualty clearing stations (CCS). The front line casualties were carried from the fighting by rather brave medical officers to the regimental aid post (RAP), for treatment and assessment.

Front Line Casualty
 Regimental Aid Post (RAP)
 Advanced/Main Dressing Station &
 Casualty Clearing Station (CCS)
 Hospital & Convalescent Depot
 Hospital Ship & Evacuation
*At any point the casualty, once treated,
 could be returned to their unit.*

The 1st Australian General Hospital (1AGH), was formed in Queensland in August 1914. It took over the Grand Heliopolis Palace Hotel in Cairo. They attended to all war cases from both the Egypt and Gallipoli campaigns, as well as treating disease, accidents and shell shock cases. In 1916 they relocated to Rouen, France. Then on 7 December 1918 the hospital relocated to Sutton Veny in England.

The 2nd Australian General Hospital (2AGH), was formed in NSW, August 1914. The unit departed for France via Egypt on 28 November 1914. The 2AGH was a tented hospital located in Boulogne, with patients from the battles along the Western Front. The hospital experienced many air-raids during the war. Towards the end of 1918 due to a major outbreak of influenza there was little celebration of the signing of the armistice.



Nurses of the 2nd Australian General Hospital (2AGH) arriving in Cairo, Egypt. (Image: AWM J06857)

The 3rd Australian General Hospital (3AGH), was formed in NSW in 1915, departing Sydney on the 5 May 1915. This hospital was formed as a request from the British War Office and was established on the island of Lemnos in the Aegean, 50 miles from Gallipoli. 3AGH was commanded by Thomas Henry Fiaschi, well known Hawkesbury doctor and surgeon of Italian descent, who established Tizzana Winery at Ebenezer. After troop withdrawal from Gallipoli, 3AGH relocated to Abbasia in Egypt in January 1916, before staff relocated to Brighton, England to operate the Kitchener war hospital. In May 1917 they once again relocated to Abbeville in France to operate from tents and huts with many of the patients being treated for gas poisoning.

Prior to federation each state raised its own nursing service. The NSW Nursing Service was created in 1898, with 60 nurses serving during the Boer War. In 1902 the name was changed to the Australian Army Nursing Service (AANS). During the First World War, 2,562 joined the service. They served in Egypt, Lemnos, Palestine, England, Greece, France, Belgium, Salonica, Mesopotamia and India and at home in Australia.

The above texts are extracts from *We Remember Them (1st WW Volunteers from the Kurrajong, Colo & Associated Districts)*. A publication of the Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society. A copy can be borrowed from the members library. Copies are also available for sale by ordering on-line at: <http://www.kurrajonghistory.org.au> and selecting Publications.



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Image 1



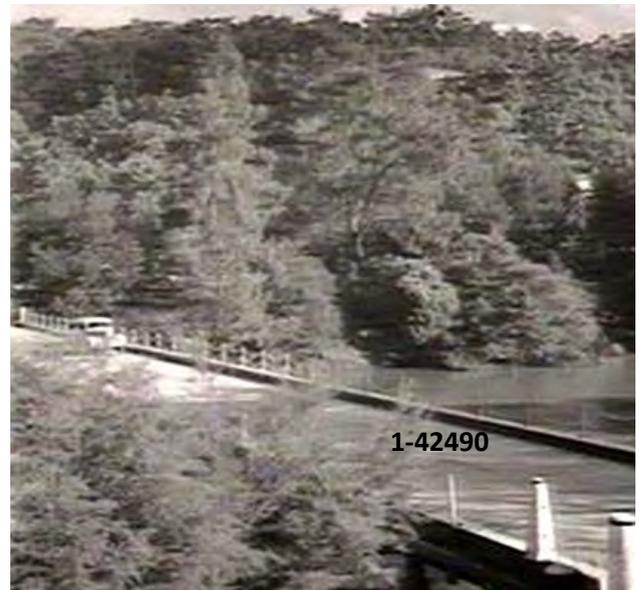
Image 2

COLO River Bridge - A low level timber bridge over the *Colo River at Central Colo*, NSW, located 25 km north of Windsor, was constructed during World War 2 by the NSW Department of Main Roads during the period 1941-1942 as part of an inland route from Sydney via Windsor to Singleton and the Hunter Valley and on up in to the New England Region. Formerly known as the Bulga Road (an historic route originally explored by Ben Singleton and John Howe), the road is now known as the Putty Road. The southern terminus of the Putty Road is Wilberforce and the northern terminus Singleton. The timber bridge was damaged by successive flooding of the Colo River and was replaced by a higher concrete span bridge in 1994, seen under construction in **image 1**. Thank you to Wanda Deacon and Cathy McHardy for assistance with information and image search.

The replacement bridge was proposed in September 1993 and completed in December 1994 and officially opened to traffic early in 1995. **The new bridge image 2**, is a 7 span (5 x 28 m internal, 2 x 22 m end spans) double tee beam bridge, incrementally launched from one bank of the river to the other side. For further information on the construction of the bridge visit: http://www.structuraltechnologies.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/NEWS_1995_1.pdf (P7/8)



1-42491



1-42490

Colo River Timber Trestle Bridge Putty Road
1948 NSW Printing Office photos

Image 1-42491 & 1-42490 held by State Library of NSW

K-CHS proposed SINGLETON COACH TOUR
Celebrating 200 Years since Benjamin Singleton left *The Kurrajong* to settle in the area that would become known as the town of Singleton. By 1827 Benjamin had built a residence on a 200 acre grant, established the first Inn in the district, constructed a flour mill and was district constable. The idea is that we link in with the Singleton Historical Society & Museum Group, to tour historic areas of the Singleton region. Contact President David if you are interested in this overnight stay, dinner & exploration of Singleton's History. president@kurrajonghistory.org.au

Owner Karen Chapman
70 Old Bells Line Of Road
Kurrajong
Phone: 45 731920
Email: kmcareyandco@gmail.com



Dates for Your DIARY

K-CHS MARCH GENERAL MEETING

Monday 28th March 2022
Time: 7PM

Venue: Blaxland Ridge Community Hall
227 Blaxland Ridge Road

Guest Speaker: Inspector Karl Stone
Windsor Area Police Command

All Welcome - Supper provided

K-CHS EXCURSIONS 2022

A number of Society excursions for the year are currently being organised and negotiated by committee members. Although most activities are planned to be held within our local Hawkesbury region, a few out of area tours are proposed. One of our first will be to the Prospect Historical Society Site at Prospect. President David Griffiths will notify details via email.



18th January 2022 Mill Site Visit
Pictured are Christopher Reeves (HCC) back to camera. David Hoffman (left) and Brad Welsh (right). Erin Wilkins was further down the creek and is not in the photo.

Second KURRAJONG MILL SITE VISIT 18th January 2022

Following on from the earlier visit to the Mill Site in October 2021, David Hoffman (Senior Heritage Officer, Dept. of Heritage, Premier and Cabinet Office) together with his assistant Brad Welsh, Christopher Reeves (Senior Heritage Officer, Hawkesbury City Council) and Erin Wilkins (Darug Custodian Aboriginal Corporation) were welcomed to the area by President David Griffiths. Frank Holland then led the group to the lower mill race and to Little Wheeny Creek. The object of this visit was to examine, verify, measure and photograph grinding grooves in flat rocks along the creek near the race. This work was completed despite the wet conditions on the day.

David Hoffman advised that his research suggested that the meaning of the word 'Merroo' was possibly pathway. The Aboriginal spelling suggested was 'Murru'. At this stage, the meaning of 'Wheeny' (sometimes spelt Wein or Winny) remains a mystery. The State Heritage Listing Nomination of the site is still being considered.

A further meeting with Christopher Reeves is being arranged to discuss other heritage sites in the Kurrajong area.

Frank Holland



K-CHS Committee group share a celebration dinner with Pat O'Toole in acknowledgement of her work for the Society and as part of her Australia Day Award. (9 Feb 2022)

WELCOME to NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome new members

Margaret Collins

Rhonda Knott

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