

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.

Research from Trove by Jennifer Griffiths

Published in *The Empire*, Sydney 6 June 1871

The following is part of the concluding description of a visit to the Kurrajong by an anonymous correspondent, published in *The Empire* newspaper in 1871. He describes an arduous journey from Kurrajong Heights which appears to be via Warks Hill Road, Buralow Road, Tabaraga Ridge Trail, Buralow Fire trail to Lieutenant Bowen Road at Bowen Mountain. He then returns to Kurrajong via Bowen Mountain Road.

VISIT TO THE KURRAJONG (CONCLUDED.)

BY OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

My rambles were continued by starting for Bowen Mount, the residence of G. M. C. Bowen, Esq. I left Benson's comfortable hostelry¹ shortly after breakfast, and again ascended "the big hill" and a little further, Douglas Hill, leading to the summit of the mountain range. I found, on again looking from this magnificent elevation, that the view is like some good paintings, and requires hours to properly examine its many details, and to arrive at a proper appreciation of the beauties with which it is embellished. Far to the right Emu Plains and the Nepean were clearly defined, and the township of Penrith was plainly visible. Presently there was a line of smoke, and one could almost believe that he heard the puff, puff, puff, so distinctly was the train seen circuitously wending its way to the Blue Mountains. Windsor and Richmond lay at our feet and resembled squares on a chess-board, while the waters of the serpentine Hawkesbury, glittering in the morning sun, relieved the monotony of the flats. To the left the whole of the undulating slopes along the Colo-road leading to the Comleroy country were clad in verdure, and in many parts were dotted with farms and homesteads.

It may be interesting to here state that this part of Bell's line of road, called Douglas' Hill, takes its name from Joseph Douglas², the pioneer and first resident of the Kurrajong. He, and his wife, each aged four score years, lie interred in a little orange grove at the bottom of the hill³, and opposite the house where they lived for many years.

I deviated to the right on the top of the hill in order to have a peep at some of the beauties of Northfield, which I had not an opportunity of seeing before, viz, the Fairy Dell, and the Fairy Well. They are just below Mr. Comrie's house, and are very romantic spots. The Fairy Dell is well guarded by tall forest trees, bright green shrubs, and endless creepers hanging in graceful festoons from tree to tree, and shrub to shrub. Among the vines I was shown the aptly-named "native lawyer," a merciless creeper, for from every part including the leaves, hooked thorns arise to detain the wayfarer. Once amongst these lawyers, and it is next to impossible to extricate yourself without serious injury. In the Fairy Dell there



Mrs Comrie in her garden at Northfield c1860 Image 081445

are beautiful fern-trees and mosses, amid which, in the warm summer evenings, fire-flies sparkle like brilliant gems, while a bubbling stream gushes from a spring, and flows through the Fairy Dell, to the valley below.

Retracing my steps I went along the mountain-path at the back of Northfield overlooking Alsopliylla Glen, and over a steep place which has been named the "Pass of Thermopylae" where a fine view of a vast scene of grandeur may be obtained. Crossing the old Cut Rock-road, and regaining Bell's line, I then left it to my right and followed a well-beaten track, at the romantically situated cottage belonging to the Rev. Warden of St. Paul's, described in my first chapter. With the exception of one difficult pass the first few miles present little worthy of particular notice, though the view is extensive, and stretches away to the right and left.

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1 The Goldfinders Inn, later known as Lamrock Inn 2 Built "Ivy Lodge", now "Lochiel" at Kurrajong Heights

3 In St. David's graveyard

Continued on Page 4

President's Report

I am sad to note the passing of Brenda Smith in February. Brenda was one of our older members at 91. She passed suddenly after contracting a gastric infection. She is survived by her husband Garth.

Our Australia Day Breakfast at Bowen Mountain looked like being another hot day but it turned out quite pleasant with cloud cover. Jan Barkley– Jack gave a very interesting presentation on the early settlement of Windsor which was called Green Hills at the time.

Her presentation, which formed the subject of her PhD dissertation, is included on page 5.

Jan has agreed to do a walking tour of the area in Windsor, which will be held on Saturday June 15th. Details in the next Millstone.

In February we had our tour of the SES Hawkesbury Headquarters and the RFS Hawkesbury Headquarters. David King, who volunteers for both organisations, gave us an informative rundown of the history of the SES and showed us around the depot. There is a summary of his talk later.

Monday 25th March is our General Meeting to be held at The Hangar in Kingsford Smith Village, North Richmond, at 19:00 (7pm). Coral Searle is our guest speaker who will talk on naval history.

On Monday April 15th we will have a mystery tour by train into Sydney. We will catch the 07:41 train from Richmond. Bring your Opal card! Please go online and make a free booking so we know who's coming (or let me know if online is too much trouble!)

Don't forget the Goldfields Tour at the end of April. If you are interested you need to make accommodation bookings now. You can contact Frank Holland for details—see Page 8.

Our May General Meeting will be an afternoon meeting and it will be held at Blaxland Ridge Rural Fire Brigade on Monday 27th May. Our guest speaker will be Christopher Reeves, Senior Heritage Officer, Hawkesbury City Council. Mal Bobrige, RFS Group Captain, has offered to show us the RFS facilities.

I hope to catch up with you soon,
David Griffiths
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Print ISSN 2201-0920 - Online ISSN 2202-6320

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Hawkesbury SES

A summary of the talk by David King from our tour on 17th February by Pat O'Toole.

In 1939 all colonial countries received a message from the British Government warning of the ever increasing aggression by Germany and that war was likely. It suggested all countries create some form of civil defence.

In response the National Emergency Service was created. NSW Roads Minister Michael Bruxner, established the scheme in NSW. Units were based on shire boundaries and they were manned by volunteers under the leadership of a chief warden. The chief warden was a local person who knew the people and the area very well. Locals guarded the Little Wheeney Creek bridge during the war in case the Japanese landed – a job for the NES.

News of people being trapped in rubble from enemy attack was received. Special rescue squads were formed as part of NES.

By 1945 11,000 people were trained and ready to assist if attacked by Japan. However with the end of the war the Labour government wanted to disband the organisation. This move was unpopular and instead the scope of the NES expanded to include cliff rescue. Training was given by a dogman employed on the Sydney Harbour bridge.

The 1955 Maitland floods and 8 floods in the Hawkesbury showed the need for emergency and disaster relief. Bruxner reformed the NES to create the State Emergency Service.

In May 1955 a civil defence organisation was formed in response to the cold war but in August of that year CD and SES were brought together to be called Civil Defence. It was still based on shire boundaries and manned by volunteers. Shortly after it became NSW State Emergency Service.

Both Windsor and Colo Shire Councils had their SES units but on the merging of both local government areas in 1981 the units combined to form Hawkesbury

SES.

Colo SES had a small building and land. With little financial support from government the volunteers raised money and worked to build their current base station. A rather uninteresting structure from the outside but within is a total contrast. Many purpose appointed rooms and garaging for numerous vehicle and boats all necessary for their tasks are within the comfortably air conditioned building. More recent disasters have given government the message that SES and Rural Fire Service are necessary so funding now is available, thus the air conditioning.



The nearest Rescue Squad in Penrith was too far away in emergencies. On 1/10/1985 Hawkesbury Rescue Squad as part of SES came into being. It has been on duty everyday since then. An SES Rescue Squad member is always with a truck ready for immediate action. Their jobs are many and varied from assisting ambulance officers to enter properties or lift patients, animal rescues, road accidents, lost or injured bushwalkers and so on. Their response is quick and the Hawkesbury unit is the busiest in the state with an average of 2 to 3 call out every week. To make their work more difficult radio contact, although very important is not always possible in the huge and sparsely settled Hawkesbury Council area.

Since the Gosper Mountain Fires in 2019 the government has reorganised communications within the emergency services. The State Operations Centre receives all emergency calls and these are then relayed to appropriate emergency services. It has greatly helped individual units as they no longer need to monitor controls 24/7.

We owe a great deal to these selfless people in both SES and the Rural Fire Service who give so generously to help others.



A VISIT TO THE KURRAJONG. Continued from page 1.

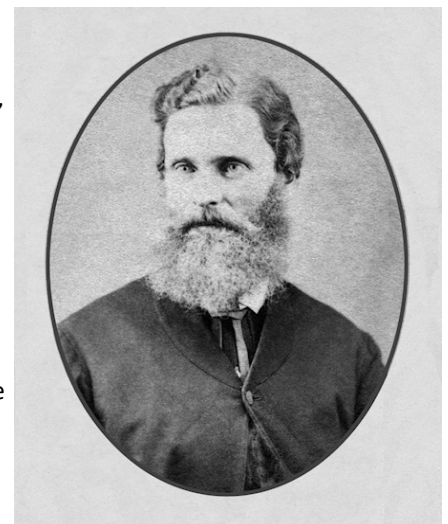
About the end of this, the traveller begins to descend along the side of a mountain, and after going south some distance the road suddenly ends, as it were, and turns in quite an opposite or northerly direction. This mountain, or rather gap or gorge in the mountain, is thus descended. After the second turning I crossed some beautiful streams (said to be excessively cold in the warmest weather), and, after cantering about a quarter of a mile along, the bottom, I began to ascend the other side by another zig-zag-road - one step or stage over-looking the other. The road was formed by the private enterprise of Sir. Bowen, and the difficulties encountered must have been very great. Huge rocks had to be cut away in some places, and serious engineering difficulties had to be surmounted. At the top are found what appear like natural fortresses of solid rock; just before getting there you reach several caves of all sorts of fantastical shapes.

At night this romantic road is lit up with myriads of fire flies, which lend a fairy-like appearance to the solemn grandeur of the rugged scene. Proceeding up this zig-zag I was shown a place known as Kelly's Mistake, from the fact that a farmer of that name was said to have made the mistake of attempting to make a better line of road past his property. On the clear table land at the top there are seats for visitors - one overlooking a yawning chasm below, while from the other a good view of the surrounding country is obtained. Along a pleasant road about a mile further on is Bowen Mount. There are two or three houses on this property, but the private residence of Mr. Bowen is the most southerly⁴. It is rather a picturesque building, surrounded with shrubs, fruit trees, and flowers. The estate is about 500 acres in extent and the scene from the verandah is quite equal to any on the Kurrajong. The whole of the country as seen from " the big hill" is also visible here; the only difference in the unrivaled panorama being that a better view of the cottages, the farms, the gardens, and maize fields, and the church, all on the Kurrajong Hills, may here be had.

Proceeding along at the back of Mr. Bowen's house, in about three miles a very grand scene, overlooking the Grose valley, strikes the eye. I have before mentioned the Vale of Avoca as seen from a lower elevation, but this nearly opposite view is still finer. The cultivated parts of the county of Cumberland are spread below, with the towns of Penrith, Richmond, Windsor, almost close at hand, while even Sydney is visible in the far distance. During flood-time, when the whole of the lowlands in the valley of the Hawkesbury are covered with water, although desolating in its effects, the striking character of the scene is considerably enhanced.

It is said that the ancient Athenians were inspired with nobility of soul and poetic fire by the beauties of " lovely Athens," and the charming scenery of the country around; so here, if the simile may not be considered too far fetched, or out of place, it struck me that the inhabitants seem to appreciate and to be elevated in mind by the natural beauties. Mr. Bowen and Mr. Comrie, particularly, have devoted much time and money in forming walks and paths to the various romantic spots, glens, waterfalls, and cascades which abound on the Kurrajong. The most striking part of the twelve miles of mountain road, formed by Mr. Bowen, is that leading to the spot on Buralow (sic) Creek, called Lightwood Hollow. The distance is about two miles, and the scenery is really magnificent.

Leaving Mr. Bowen's residence, and descending by a circuitous track, to the end of a mile is Orange Grove, the residence of Mr. John Mayo, a gentleman fifty-eight years of age, yet born within five miles of his present residence. He is a most industrious farmer, and by his own labour, aided by a good wife, has managed to make a comfortable home and rear a fine family of twelve children. The house is a well-built structure with shingled roof and verandah. The farm consists of about 220 acres, and is Mr. Mayo's freehold property; about four acres are planted as an orangery, orchard, and flower garden. The orange trees were richly laden and looked remarkably well. A banana plantation was also in full bearing. In the orchard were fine pears, figs, quinces, plums, apricots, English mulberry trees, loquats, &c. Before the house was the flower garden, and among the flowers and plants. I noticed many very beautiful specimens. Among the roses the cloth of gold, giant of the battle, the red ragged (with not a perfect leaf), were pointed out, while near at hand were the holly oak, the egg-plant, and the red rover vine. A large barn, granary, and other out offices complete a very snug establishment. Visitors in search of health often board at Mr. Mayo's. Some short distance down is another comfortable farm and cottage, owned by Mr. William Ezzy. Attached there is an orangery, orchard, and a dairy.



John Mayo c1850 Image 170800

After a ride of about three miles, and just before coming to the church, I passed the pretty little cottage, garden, and fifty-acre farm of Mr. Alfred Jones, and a few miles further I again reached Mr. Benson's, from the opposite direction to that in which I started.

In the evening I took a walk to the residence of Mr. John Lamrock, whose property I have already mentioned, and who was formerly postmaster and the host of the hotel lower down, which now bears the name of Lamrock's Hotel. Mr. Lamrock's residence is one of the best built on the Kurrajong, and much taste is evidenced in the laying out of the flower garden around the house. The fields are planted with vines, maize potatoes, wheat, oats, and barley, and in the paddocks were some very superior stock. I should mention that Mrs. Lamrock has just cause to be proud of her dairy (the largest in the district); and famous for butter.

4 The house, built about 1860 and destroyed by fire in 1914, was where Bowen Mountain Park is now located.

NORTHFIELD, KURRAJONG HEIGHTS by Deborah Hallam

“Northfield” has variously been the name of a property situated on the western edge of Kurrajong Heights and the first name for the village of Kurrajong Heights.

PART 1 – SAMUEL NORTH OF NORTHFIELD

Samuel North was born in Ireland in about 1791. In 1815 while serving with the British Army he married Susannah Campbell in New Brunswick, Canada.

In 1826 North arrived in the Colony of New South Wales as a Lieutenant of 102 Regiment, becoming a Civil Servant in 1827 with an appointment as Superintendent of Government Warehouses. In 1829 he transferred to Windsor to take up an appointment as Police Magistrate. The North family remained in Windsor, living in Old Government House until a move to Berrima in 1844.

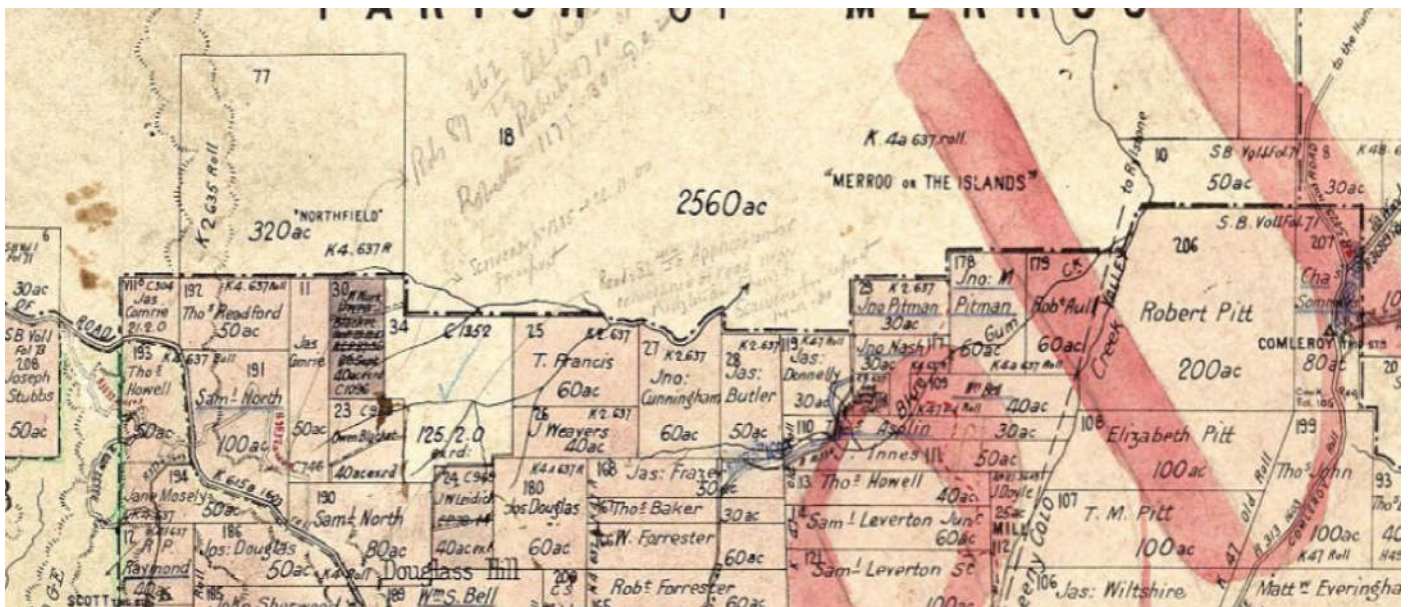
It would seem that along with many lowland residents the North family found the Windsor summers uncomfortable and in 1829 Samuel North took a grant of 320 acres beyond the Big Hill as Kurrajong Heights was known at the time. This is the site of the property still known as *Northfield*.

During 1832 North was assigned at least seven convicts in addition to those already working for him. These convicts were listed as brickmaker (2), turner, carpenter,

stonemason, painter, plumber, ploughman and shoemaker. The emphasis on the building trades implies a date for the construction of the house at *Northfield*. While mentioning convicts it was also recorded that during the 1830s at least four convicts absconded from his service.

Also, in 1832 North extended his land holding by purchasing the 80acre neighbouring grant of Orr Douglass for £52/10/-. Orr was the son of Joseph Douglass, the first grantee at the Heights, and had by 1829 cleared 10 acres of this grant and cultivated 5 acres. The map shows the grantee as Samuel North, however the property name, *Orrville*, remained unchanged. North had also purchased the other adjoining grant of Thomas Readford, *Amyville* for £30 in 1830 and acquired the 100-acre lot promised to James Lewers in 1829, shown as Lot 191, Samuel North on the map

In 1844 Samuel North moved to Berrima and advertised the *Northfield* estate for lease, with 40 acres of wheat, maize and potatoes, an orchard, a vineyard and a cottage. On 1st January 1948, Charles Enderby, of Bathurst, took a seven-year lease for £25 pounds a year, required to keep it all in good repair.



Government Order.
COLONIAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE,
 (No. 9.) **27th FEBRUARY, 1829.**
HIS EXCELLENCY the GOVERNOR
 has been pleased to appoint
SAMUEL NORTH, Esq. to be Superintendant of Police, at Windsor, in the Room of **ARCHIBALD BELL, Esq.** who has resigned.
 By His Excellency's Command
ALEXANDER M'LEAY.

Sydney Gazette & NSW Advertiser 3 March 1829

The Green Hills Village: an appropriate place to revisit on Australia Day.

Summary of Australia Day presentation by Jan Barkley-Jack

Today I want to take us back to the year 1806 to share with you the results of new research that I have conducted recently for a PhD.

Prior to 1806, the long residence on Deerabbun lands of the Boorooberongal clans had been disrupted badly by the Europeans. In some ways 1806 stands as a year of peculiar contrasts relating to treatment of Indigenous clans by the British. It followed orders by the governor to Andrew Thompson, the local Chief Constable, to massacre a group of once-friendly Aboriginals near Yarramundi. In the years just previous, and in great contrast, Thompson's former boss, Thomas Rickaby and his partner Catherine Smith had adopted with love, a part-Aboriginal boy into their family with permission from his mother whom the clan had cast out because of her union with a white man.

It was also a year when grants for grazing farms took away even more Country from the Aboriginal community than previously. Every European in this far-flung district lived on a farm whether they owned, rented or leased it, laboured on it or practised a trade like shoe making or blacksmithing.

To be SOLD by AUCTION

BY MR. DAVID BEVAN

At the house of Mr. And. Thompson, at the Green Hills, Hawkesbury, Thursday 1st May next at 11 in the forenoon,

Twenty Lots of Ground, pleasantly and elegantly situate for building & measuring four rods in front and eight in depth;

lying on the south side of the public road across the Green Hills, and comprising a part of the Farm originally granted to Thomas Rickerby.

The purchaser may be accommodated.

With twelve months credit.

***Sydney Gazette* 6 April 1806.**

It was a year when Governor King's struggle to retain the vision set out by the British government for the colony as a penal settlement was handed to Governor Bligh. It was indeed a year of consequence, both harmfully to the Aboriginal people and more beneficially to the European settlers.

Yet, in the midst of this turmoil, one humble farmer was considering a revolutionary idea for the central reaches of the Mulgrave Place settlement where Indigenous people were already displaced. Thomas Rickaby, an ex-convict and ex-Chief

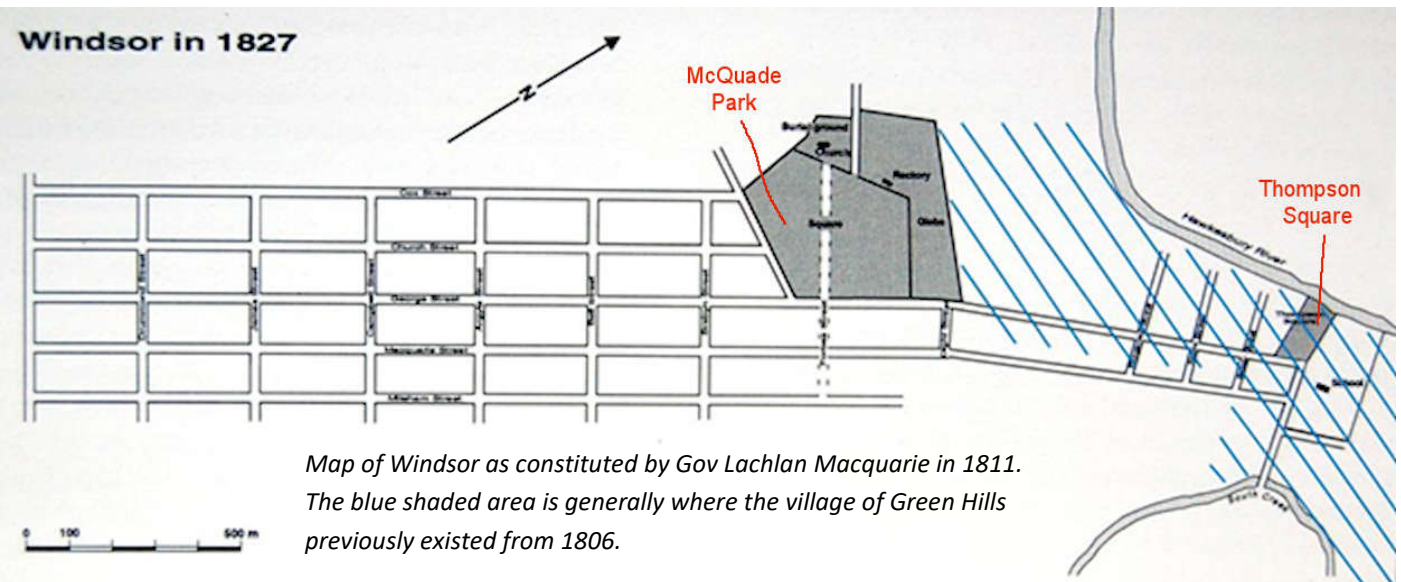
Constable of the district was planning the creation of a village amongst the farms. It was not to be a grand, elite affair but one proposed by a fellow-settler to help the ordinary farmers on low grounds along the Hawkesbury River. It began in 1806 when Rickaby put an advertisement in the *Sydney Gazette*, for the sale of 20 small lots of 32² rods each, on his two high farms. There was to be an auction in May of the lots, all on the southern side of the main track (later known as George Street) which ran through his properties.

It would seem many were sold as Rickaby went on to advertise around 30 more allotments soon after. There was no official way Rickaby could at that time give ownership papers to those who purchased, but a handshake deal sufficed for most Hawkesbury farmers. In fact in the Register of Assignments and other Legal Instruments the only three allotments I found with specific 'Lot' numbers to indicate they were sold at the auction in 1806, were registered in 1807 and 1809 when they again changed hands. Originally Lot 4 had been purchased by John Embrey and Lots 11 and 12 by the Reverend Samuel Marsden. However, it was not until I studied the field notes of Surveyor James Meehan that I found the location for one of them- for Lot 4- which allowed me to see the shape of the village in its first section-block below what was to be named Fitzgerald Street.

Other allotments that I found were sold or likely to be sold in July 1806 were on the northern side of the main track although definite proof of this was difficult, particularly in the case of purchaser, Richard Fitzgerald, the agent of John Macarthur and once head of the Government Farms. However, when Fitzgerald bought three blocks in what was to become Fitzgerald Street, this ownership was clearer to document. This was particularly so with the lot on the north-western corner of Fitzgerald and today's George Street as Fitzgerald required written proof from Paul Bushell that he had purchased it in 1806 before Fitzgerald would agree to buy it in 1809. The lots on the northern side of the main track and in Fitzgerald Street near the river, formed section-block 2 in the village, also below today's Fitzgerald Street.

When Matthew Everingham came to live in the Green Hills Village, the other owner of high land in the central reaches of the Hawkesbury River, Storekeeper William Baker, had decided to follow Rickaby's lead and to also subdivide his land into small lots, though slightly larger than Rickaby's. Matthew bought one on the eastern side of Fitzgerald Street about where the Old Post Office stands in Windsor today. On it was to be built a grand house on credit, but when payment was due Everingham could not find the funds and found himself having to sell to settler William Baker, receiving the enormous sum of £110.

Green Hills Continued from Page 6



Map of Windsor as constituted by Gov Lachlan Macquarie in 1811. The blue shaded area is generally where the village of Green Hills previously existed from 1806.

Everingham next bought land with a very attractive house on it as well as the old bakery of John Kelly in today's Baker Street, also on credit. He again could not pay when the amount became due in 1810. Everingham also sold this property to Settler William Baker. Thus section-blocks 3 and 4 were established between the Government Precinct and civic square (later Thompson Square) and Fitzgerald Street.

The village rapidly expanded, housing tradesmen, single women with families and small retailers. Boat building, brewing, inn-keeping and retailing were conducted there by Andrew Thompson, and later others. The sale of Storekeeper Baker's lots meant the village stretched from the brewery in Arndell Street, and contained the Government Precinct, Storekeeper Baker's lots and those of Thomas Rickaby, as a ribbon development of around two kilometres, almost to where Macquarie's 'great square' (today's McQuade Park) is located.

Ground has also been measured at the Green Hills, for building a School House 100 feet in length by 24 feet wide, for the Education of the Youth on the Banks of the Hawkesbury; for which purpose Government has undertaken to make the Bricks, and to give such other Assistance as may be admissible, to effectuate so desirable an Institute in that quarter of the Colony.

Sydney Gazette & NSW Advertiser 3 July 1803



From THE ARCHIVES

Landmark Tree c1920s K-CHS Image Archives 010206

The tall turpentine tree on Bells Line of Road, which was something of a landmark from the time when Kurrajong Heights was settled. This photo was taken prior to the building of Kurrajong Heights Hotel. It was called the trysting tree, because lovers and courting couples would sit under it. The realigning of the road caused its demise.

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Dates for Your DIARY

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K-CHS GOLDFIELDS TOUR 2024

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More details are on the website.

Like to know more – contact Frank Holland 0428 759 588. Or email - frank.holland2@optusnet.com

MARCH GENERAL MEETING

Monday 25th March 19:00 (7pm)

The Hangar, Kingsford Smith Village,
North Richmond.

Take the Highland Entrance off Grose Vale Road, Collins St then Pathfinder Way.

Guest speaker **Coral Searle**. Her topic:
A brief history of the WRANS—Women’s Royal Australian Navy Service and some personal experiences.

MAY GENERAL MEETING

Monday 27th May 14:00 (2pm)

Blaxland Ridge RFB

Our guest speaker will be

Christopher Reeves, Senior Heritage Officer - Hawkesbury City Council. His topic:

“An introduction to heritage management in the Hawkesbury with particular emphasis on heritage matters west of the Hawkesbury River.”

There will also be an opportunity to inspect the facilities of the brigade and Blaxland Ridge School House.



Green Hills Walking Tour

(Windsor)

Expertly guided by Jan Barkley-Jack

Saturday June 15th

10:00-Noon followed by lunch in a local pub.