

# THE MILLSTONE

KURRAJONG ~ COMLEROY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

**St David's Sunday School Library** *By Dr Paula Jane Byrne*

St David's Presbyterian Sunday School at Kurrajong Heights was established in 1883 along with a number of other Sunday Schools across the region. The setting up of a Sunday School was a very formal process with committees and serious discussion long into the night. Originally Sunday Schools were male dominated with only one or two women involved, but by 1900 women were playing significant roles in organizing and teaching in the Sunday School. St David's was significant because it began its life with 231 books. These were largely donated by James Comrie of *Northfield*. Comrie was a colonial philanthropist, who had been involved in the building of St David's and had a great interest in encouraging reading in the colony.

Records of the library survive from 1883 and it is possible to follow a child's reading life through to the time they left the Sunday School. The borrowing records continue until 1921. One can also see new family members coming along. The average age of the children at the Sunday School was 11, but there are numbers of 14-16 year olds in each cohort. Children were from local extended families - the Walkers, the Pittmans, the Pecks, the Smiths and other families also listed. The borrowing register also shows that a number of local women enjoyed the library. Most of the books were published by the Religious Tract Society, but this does not mean they were overtly religious, as the hugely successful society published general books as well. Sensational novels and adventure stories were shown in the books the children read.

The borrowing registers also show the payment of the fees by the children and St David's Sunday School

library was far less exclusive than others and there seems to be given time to pay for the 1/- a year fee. These records were quite informal and it seems the money was not so important. This is perhaps because of the continued donation of books from the Comrie and other families.

*Dr Byrne analysed the books read by the children and in her article discussed their tastes in reading. Many of the titles can still be found and read online.*

*Her article "Imaginary Worlds and Child Readers at Kurrajong Heights in the 1890s" can be downloaded from <https://tinyurl.com/StDavidsLibrary>*

Name	June	June	June	June	July	July	July	July	July	July	August	Aug.	Aug.
	11	11	15	26	5	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	
	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	No.	
M <sup>r</sup> Wilson	178				191	22	177	191	22	78	25	154	742
George Walker	178				191	22	177	191	22	78	210	740	
Ronald Smith	29				178	25	177	22	44	78	181	144	74
Harold Smith	78				178	82	172	176	58	174	78	22	206
Leroy Smith	104	169	169	201	76	174	78	78	276	210	74		
May Wilson	8	172	172	229	76	174	160	74	78	168	72	76	
Edward Smith	-	51	51	77	-	74	78	78	78	69	162	77	
George Walker	178				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Arthur Litman	178				-	78	-	-	89	-	181	-	
P. Allingham	74				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
J. Allingham	76				-	-	-	-	78	-	-	-	
C. Bettington	178				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Chaslom	76				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
E. Close	178				-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Nellie Douglass	178	5	5	52	76	77	89	202	78	192	206	91	
Alice Reek	78	78	440	92	51	128	84	-	-	78	78	78	
Clara Reek	178	44	44	120	78	77	78	-	78	162	76	125	
John M <sup>r</sup> Niven	-	-	178	78	-	-	128	5	-	-	-	-	
Myrtle Pittman	-	-	-	77	-	-	123	-	-	-	78	-	
Louis Smith	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	88	78	178	178	-	
Walter Smith	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	78	78	205	78	-	

*A page from the borrowers' register.  
Each book had an accession number.*

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## President's Report

Hello everyone,

I'm sad to report that our Past President and Life Member, **Steve Rawling AM**, has passed away, at age 85. Steve had been a resident of Ron Middleton VC Gardens at North Richmond for several years. There will be a full obituary in the next Millstone. At the time of writing, details of a remembrance service have not been finalised.

Our **March GM** was held at Kingsford Smith Village Hangar and members of the Village history group hosted us and seriously boosted our numbers :-). It was the night of the truck crash on Bellbird Hill which prevented a couple of members from attending. Rebecca gave an interesting and well illustrated talk and the supper was well received. She has just advised us that she is leaving Hawkesbury Museum to take up a new role as Museum and Collections Manager with the SOSJ, who operate the St Mary MacKillop museums across Australia.

We are delighted to welcome **Bryan Wyborn** to the committee.

Our **Mill Tour** is coming up on Saturday 24th May at 09:00. See page 8 for details. We ask that you book online.

**May GM** will be held at the Kurrajong Radio Museum, 842 Bells Line of Road, Kurrajong on 26th May at 19:00 (7pm). Our speaker will be **Sam Magnusson**, publisher of Hawkesbury Post.

Our annual overnight tour is on Tuesday June 3rd to 5th. We are heading to the **Southern Highlands** (Goulburn, Crookwell, Berrima etc) It might be still possible to book a motel if you want to come. Contact me for details.

On Sunday July 6th we will be visiting the **Riverstone & District Historical Society Museum**. The museum is opening one hour early at 10:00 for our exclusive viewing. More details page 8.

The **Mid Winter Lunch** is on Monday 28th July at Schembrae's in Kurrajong Village. We have an exciting menu with tastings of various dishes. Please book on line. See page 8.

**What do you want?** The committee would like to hear from you, our members, about what you would like us to arrange. Any possible excursions you would like, meeting topics etc. Preferred day of the week? And we would also like to know your preference for evening or daytime meetings. We know a lot of members don't like to drive at night but we are also conscious of members who work during the day.

On **Anzac Day** myself and Vice President Lesley Bobrige laid a wreath at the Kurrajong Dawn Service, which Lesley had beautifully crafted. See the article on page 6 about this Anzac Day.

**Membership renewal** is due on 1st July. New members since March do not need to renew. Please renew online if possible.

On a technical note... the clickable links in the PDF version now actually work :-)

**David Griffiths**

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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.

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**Settlers' Muster Book, 1800 & 1828 NSW Government Census** by Suzanne Ballard-Smith

Museums of History NSW in collaboration with the NSW Parliamentary Library have digitised both the Settlers' Muster Book of 1800 and the 1828 NSW Census, an invaluable record which has been inscribed on the UNESCO Australian Memory of the World Register.

**The Settlers' Muster Book** is recognised as the earliest and most comprehensive surviving record of the colony of NSW. It provides a snapshot of life during this pivotal period of early European settlement, approximately a decade after the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788. The muster book provides insights into the inhabitants of the period, and the early administrative and economic workings of the colony.

Browse the records online: Settlers' muster book, 1800 <https://mhnsw.au/guides/settlers-muster-book-1800/>

**The Settlers' Muster Book is in fact two manuscript volumes** containing names and details of early European settlers in NSW in 1800–02. These volumes are comprised of several lists which record:

- land and stock held by free settlers and former convicts, 1800
- land and stock held by officers, 1800
- people who are off the government stores (not receiving rations), circa 1801
- lists of persons, circa 1801
- land and stock held by free settlers, officers, or former convicts, 1802
- list of convicts allowed (assigned) to officers and others for domestic purposes who were supported by the public, 1800
- servants employed by officers, 1800.

**The 1828 Census** was the first official census undertaken by NSW after it was found the Governor had no authority to compel free men to come to a muster – the previous means of counting the colony's population. Access the 1828 Census digitised records <https://mhnsw.au/guides/1828-census/>

- Browse the 1828 Census - alphabetical returns by surname The digitised records can also be accessed from Alphabetical Return, 1828 (NRS-1272) <https://tinyurl.com/yc2hxswh>

The Census covers some 36,500 inhabitants, both convict and free, and captures a social and economic picture of the Colony of NSW in November 1828, 40 years after the Colony's establishment. It covers all settlements within the jurisdiction of the then colony of NSW including Moreton Bay and Norfolk Island,

It records such detailed information for each person (including children) as name, age, if free or convict, if born in the colony or ship and year of arrival, sentence if arrived as a convict, religion, employment, residence, district, total number of acres, acres cleared, acres cultivated, horses, horned cattle, sheep, and remarks.

More info and launch video.

<https://tinyurl.com/mtcup86j>



*by Deborah Hallam*

*Sherrifs sale of Jacksons land between river and arable land with water mill and buildings plus 20a bounded on north by George Colless, west by Elizabeth Field, east by Pembroke, plus 20ac on south east corner of Fields farm and on north by rest of Fields farm (45acres).*

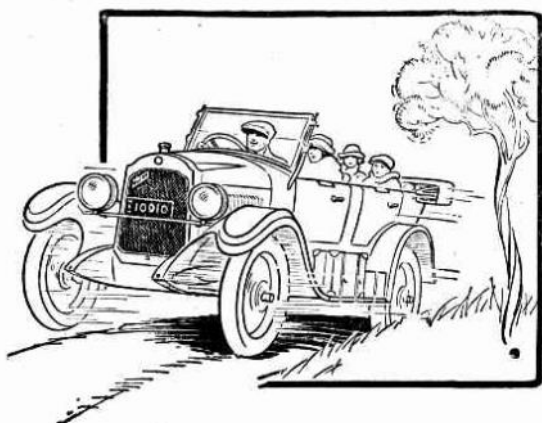
The mill was purchased by George Colless (1771-1851), an ex-convict who had arrived on *Barwell* in 1798, and his wife Ann Godwin. Having received his Conditional Pardon he leased and then purchased land on Nepean River in 1804. Their son, John (1815-1893) inherited the mill from George along with 80 acres of land.

The mill may have been built by George before 1835 or by John in 1840s. In 1836 George advertised the mill for sale. Walter Howell purchased the mill and 1 acre on 4th August 1836 for £510 with a mortgage to George

Colless. Howell was declared bankrupt in 1840 and Colless retained ownership of the mill while John, who had that year entered the wheelwright business, became responsible for the construction of the Giant Colless mill which was the largest on the river.

This new large building was operated by William Garlick, a miller from Willshire, England who had been transported in 1836 for theft. His Ticket of Leave in 1840 required him to remain in the Penrith district where he married, also in 1840. William died in 1866 in Penrith.

John Colless died in Castlereagh in 1893 at which time his obituary mentioned that the ruins of the mill remained, it having been damaged beyond repair by the numerous floods.



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*One Hundred Years Ago. Advert from Windsor  
& Richmond Gazette 18th May 1925*



Vince G McMahon scooping out the dam at 'Rosendhu', Comleroy Road, Kurrajong during the 1942 drought. His father Vince S McMahon, on the left of the picture, is driving the horses.

Image 031300



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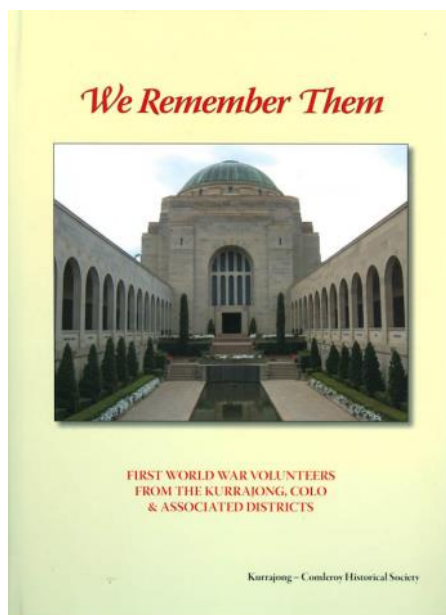
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## ANZAC DAY 2025 *by Frank Holland*

ANZAC DAY 2025 commemorated 110 years since Australian and New Zealand soldiers battled their way ashore at Gallipoli. Since then, following generations of young men and women have come forward to serve the cause of justice and defend the democracy we all enjoy today. The Anzac spirit of courage, sacrifice and mateship continues to have meaning, and relevance even though our national identity has changed over the passing years.

On the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Gallipoli landing the Society published a book titled 'We Remember Them'. It recorded details of WW1 volunteers from the Kurrajong, Colo and associated districts. The book launch was held at the Richmond RSL Sub- Branch historical meeting room and was attended by descendants of the volunteers. Major funding was by way of a Federal Government Grant. The Foreword was provided by Dr. Brendon Nelson the then Director of the Australian War Memorial, Canberra ACT.



At the book launch a copy of the book was provided free of charge to each person representing the family of a volunteer. Other copies were posted free of charge where a representative was unable to attend.

The following are brief extracts from 'We Remember Them'. It covers the remarkable contribution of one family where six brothers enlisted for service, and all survived to return home.

*"The Lavender family was well known in the Kurrajong district, especially the sons of Henry and Masie. Six of their sons volunteered to serve in the First World War and they were lucky enough to return home safely, though four of them carried gunshot wounds. Another*

*son married an English bride whom he brought back to Australia, settling on a Soldier Settlement farm at Kurmond".- Courtesy Icey Manzenberge (niece)*

The six brothers were – Clement, Dan, Andrew, Victor, Clive and George.

### **Trooper Andrew Lavender**

Service No. 285, Age 34 Years and 3 months. Enlisted 30 October 1914 in the 5th Light Horse and served at Gallipoli and in the Middle East. He was discharged on 15 November 1919 and returned to Netley Hill, Kurrajong.

### **Private Clement Joseph Lavender**

Service No. 2307, Age 21 Years. Enlisted 17 April 1916 in the 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion. He was wounded in Belgium, remaining on duty with gunshot wound to the thigh. He was discharged 13 December 1918. He took up Portion 254 at the Kurrajong Soldier Settlement in 1921. However, due to ill health he relinquished the allotment, recommending it be offered to his brother Dan.

### **Private Clive Clarendon Lavender**

Service No. 2308, Age 27 years 9 months. Enlisted 17<sup>th</sup> April 1916 in 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion. He was wounded in the ankle in Belgium. He was discharged 23 August 1919. Clive was an orchardist.

### **Private Dan Sidney Lavender**

Service No. 2866, Age 21 Years 5 Months. Enlisted 6 November 1916 in 33 Infantry Battalion serving in France. He was wounded in the right elbow on 15 April 1918. Dan was discharged 5 October 1919. He was a farmer and returned to Grose Wold.

### **Lance Corporal George Francis Lavender**

Service No. 2309, Age 31 Years 5 Months. Enlisted 17 April 1916 in 45<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion. He served in France. George married Maisie Gotham on 17 May 1919 at 'C of E' Bredgar Milton, Kent UK. He was discharged 3 November 1919. He returned to Australia with his English bride and took up Portion 257 of the Kurrajong Soldier Settlement. Later he established a dairy and a milk run.

### **Trooper Victor Michael Lavender**

Service No. 1708, Age 29 years. Enlisted 6<sup>th</sup> September 1915 in 6<sup>th</sup> Light Horse serving at Gallipoli and in the Middle East. He suffered a gunshot wound on 10 November 1917. He was discharged 5 December 1919. He was welcomed home at Mowat's Hall by the Grose Wold Committee. Victor took up Portion 270 of the Kurrajong Soldier Settlement.



A postcard commemorating the six Lavender boys Image 150500

One can only wonder at the anguish that their parents Henry and Masie endured whilst their six sons were serving. This was one family's enormous contribution. There are many records in the book 'We Remember Them', which is still available for sale on our web site.

Part of Dr. Nelson's foreword states –

*'The people of the Kurrajong district have long lived up to those early appeals for commemoration and remembrance. This lovely district is dotted with memorials and parks dedicated to those who served and died in the First World War, many of which have for years been the sites of Anzac Day services. However, 100 years later the faces and stories of those whose names are listed on war memorials throughout our country have so often been lost to popular history -- the Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society's Anzac project has restored their words and faces to public memory, passing them on to a generation eager to connect.'*

At the 110<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli we again remembered all those who have served.



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## Dates for Your DIARY

### **MILL SITE TOUR Saturday 24th May, 09:00**

Meet at the Millstones in Memorial Park, 84 Old Bells Line of Road, Kurrajong.

In the first part of the tour, Les Dollin will give a talk at the Millstones. In the past year, Les and Anne have been doing in-depth research on Kurrajong's Singletons mills, and Les will present some of their exciting new discoveries.

In the second part of the Tour, Les will give a guided tour of the mill site in Mill Road and explain how it all worked. Bring suitable footwear for bush tracks. [Book online](#) \$5 per person

### **K-CHS MAY GENERAL MEETING**

**26TH MAY 19:00 (7PM) - KURRAJONG RADIO MUSEUM**

Guest speaker: Sam Magnusson, publisher of Hawkesbury Post.

### **SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS TOUR**

Join us for a self drive / car pool tour to Goulburn, Crookwell & Berrima.

Tuesday 3rd to Thursday 5th June. Head home after one night if you prefer.

Contact the president for booking information.

### **RIVERSTONE & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM VISIT**

**Sunday 6th July.** Museum will open one hour early for us—10:00

Self drive—car pooling. Donation at the museum.

### **MID WINTER LUNCH Monday July 28th at Noon**

**At Schembrae's—Kurrajong Village**

Share plates, including:

Chicharrones De Pollo, Pastizzi, Eggplant Falafel, Crisp Middle Eastern Potatoes, Moroccan Cauliflower, Braised Beef Cheeks, Chill Prawns and Fresh Bread. Then there is dessert!

Members \$50, Guests \$55. Please [book online](#).

### **MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL 2025/26**

Renewal is due on 1st July. Early renewal is appreciated. Rates are unchanged at \$20 single and \$30 family.

New members since March do not need to renew. Please [renew online](#) if possible.

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