

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.

The Hennesseys of "St Elmo"

By Jennifer Griffiths with the memories of Rene Reberger, daughter of Edward Hennessey.

James Hennessey (c. 1809-1870) came from Ireland as a free settler in 1838 and went to live in Hermitage Road. He may have known the McMahons who lived on the corner of Hermitage and Bells Line of Road at "Luckenough". In 1840 he married Bridget Newman (1816 - 1862) who had come out on the same ship.

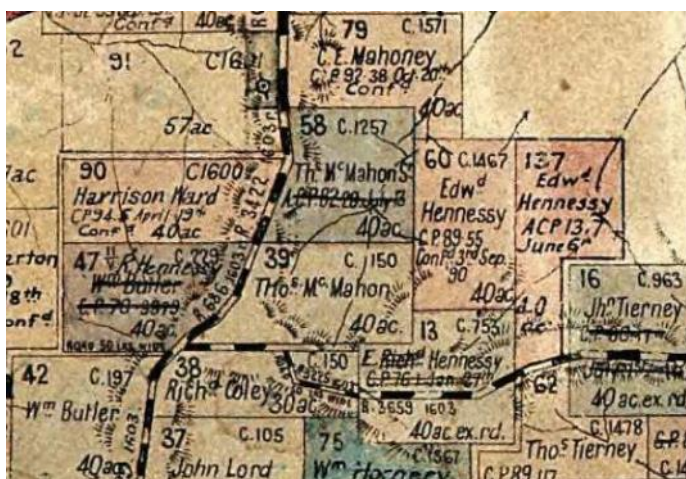
Their daughter Mary Ann (1843-1927) married Thomas McMahon and they lived on Comleroy Road at "Dural View", near Blaxlands Ridge Road.

Their son Edward, known as Ned, was born in 1850. He went to the school which was on the corner of Bells Line of Road and Hermitage Road from 1832 to 1869. When Edward was 12 his mother died. He became a teamster and drove a team of horses and wagon to Bathurst. He owned a trotting horse called Yukon and owned the first sulky in the area. In 1889 Edward took up two portions (60 and 137) of 40 acres in Blaxlands Ridge and, with another 40 acres given to him by his brother Richard (Portion 13), he had 120 acres. He cleared the land on his property, built a house and planted many acres of citrus orchard, mainly mandarin.

An item in the *Windsor and Richmond Gazette* of 25th November, 1893 read "Mr Edward Hennessey, of Comleroy Road, is erecting a nice 4-roomed weatherboard cottage on his estate at Blaxlands Ridge, and by appearances one would imagine that he is seriously contemplating matrimony."

According to Edwards's daughter Rene, he was often asked "When are you getting married, Ned?" The stock answer was always "Oh my wife isn't born yet." This was prophetic as at 44 years of age he married Rachel Norris on her 19th birthday in 1894. Rachel, an avid reader, named the property "St Elmo" after a very popular romantic novel of the time by Augusta Jane Evans Wilson.

Continued next page



Map showing Comleroy Rd left and Blaxlands Ridge Rd across

Their son, Richard (1845-1936) married Margaret Butler and lived on a nearby property on Comleroy Road called "Oaklandville", which was land given to them by Margaret's father.

THIS ISSUE

- Page 1 St Elmo
- Page 2 President's Report
- Page 3 RAAF 100th Anniversary
- Page 4 Millstones on Norfolk Is
- Page 6 Nepean Mills Pt 2
- Page 7 Woodhills
- Page 8 Dates for Your Diary
- From the Archives



"St Elmo" cottage and guests c.1930s.

President's Report

Hello everyone,

Since the last Millstone we have held our Mid Winter Lunch at Schembrae's in Kurrajong Village. Ruth put on a tasty spread. We were pleased to welcome a new member and six guests. Our guest speaker, Andy McQueen, spoke about two early explorers, George Caley and Francis Barrallier. The feedback was very positive and everyone lingered for a chat.

Next up we have the postponed visit to Riverstone & District Museum on Sunday 14th September. Jenny and I have had a visit and can definitely recommend the museum. Lots to see and well displayed. We will adjourn for lunch afterwards to the Riverstone Memorial Club, just around the corner.

Our AGM is Monday 22nd September. Details on back cover. We really do need some new blood on the committee. If you think you would like to come on board, please get in touch beforehand. Nominations close on 15th September.

We were sad to hear of the passing of Arthur Pearce, the speaker from the Maritime Museum, who was the guest speaker at our last AGM.

During the week of October 12th-18th the WB Clarke Geoscience Centre at Londonderry is having an Open Day. At the time of writing the exact date has not been confirmed—we will send an email. The centre maintains a drill core library from all drilling in NSW. Sounds like a geologists heaven :-)

The Wollondilly Heritage Centre and Museum is our destination on Sunday 16th November. If we have sufficient numbers morning tea will be provided, so we need you to register for the tour. It is about a one hour drive to The Oaks.

On 25th & 26th October we have been invited to have a stall at the Hawkesbury Woodcraft show at Clarendon. We will need some hands on deck, so if you can assist for an hour or two, please contact me.

David Griffiths

president@kurrajonghistory.org.au

Ph: 4567 8999 Mob: 0498 646 899

KURRAJONG – COMLEROY HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

PO BOX 111 KURRAJONG NSW 2758

ABN 68 930 834 921

Print ISSN 2201-0920 - Online ISSN 2202-6320

Committee

PresidentDavid Griffiths

Vice PresidentLesley Bobrige

SecretaryJennifer Griffiths

TreasurerPat O'Toole

Frank Holland Valerie Holland

Suzanne Smith Peta Smith Bryan Wyborn

Millstone Editor.....David Griffiths

WebmasterDavid Griffiths

Digital ArchivistJenny Griffiths

Family History

Deborah Hallam Valerie Birch

Librarian/Accessions Valerie Birch

Public OfficerDavid Griffiths

Grants OfficerFrank Holland

Hon Auditor.....Marilyn McCarthy

DISCLAIMER: Views & opinions expressed in the newsletter 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



Wollondilly
Heritage
Centre and
Museum

St Elmo—Continued from page 1

Ned and Rachel had eight children. Rene remembered her father ploughing the fields. The children had to bring the cows, whose names all began with B, from where they grazed to be milked. To break the monotony the children would choose a cow and race them to the yard.

Edward died in November 1929 and is buried in St Gregory's Cemetery, Kurrajong. Rachael continued to live on the property and run it as a guesthouse. An advert in the *Sydney Morning Herald* dated 4th January, 1930 stated:

KURRAJONG, St Elmo - Quiet, select, new,

cool house, own milk, cream, eggs, poultry, fruit, vegetables, salads, free riding, driving, shooting
Special low terms. Heaps motor mail. 45/-
Mrs HENNESSY

In 1937 the property was under new management with Mrs Burgess named on an advert in the *Sydney Morning Herald* 12th May, 1937:

ST ELMO. Under new management. Excellent cuisine. Morning afternoon teas. Riding, tennis, shooting.
Trains met. Tariff 35/- Mrs Burgess

Rachael Hennessey died in 1957, and the property was subsequently sold in 1959 to Dr. and Mrs R Dunlop.

RAAF RICHMOND 100th ANNIVERSARY *by Valerie Holland*

The Royal Australian Air force will commemorate 100 years of operation at RAAF Base Richmond with an Air Show on 27th & 28th September 2025.

Thousands of Australians will gather at the RAAF Base Richmond, to enjoy this spectacular Air Show. RAAF Base Richmond is the oldest in New South Wales, and second oldest in Australia. It was officially established by the Federal Government, after the arrival of No. 3 Squadron on 30 June 1925. Richmond grew to be a vital training base for wireless and telegraph operators. At the end of WW2, the Base became a hub for air mobility.

By 1958, RAAF Base Richmond became home to C-130 Hercules aircraft and a key location for air mobility operations. These included various activities of disaster relief, including overseas service, repatriations and retrieval during floods and fires.¹ Today the Base is again vital for defence training, during changing tensions throughout the world.

Before the RAAF Base was established, the early history of Ham Common Richmond told that in 1916 a training school for military flying was established on the Common. Later in 1923, the Federal Gov-

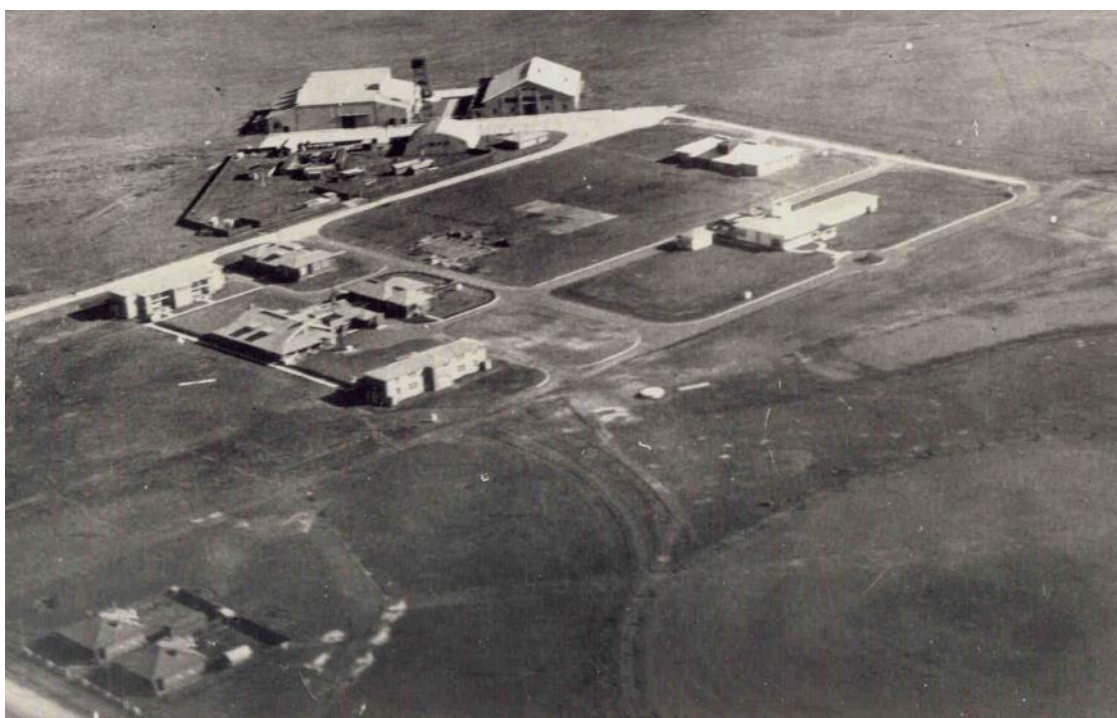
ernment took over the airfield and renamed it Richmond Aerodrome. Two years later the site became the home of the RAAF Base Richmond. Fortunately, a more recent decision to close, or repurpose the RAAF Base was rejected, as the Base is vital on many fronts.

We congratulate personnel at RAAF Airforce Base Richmond during this Commemoration year, for their service and as valued members of the Hawkesbury Community.

Note ¹, THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE ROYAL AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE Vol. 67No. 13, July 24, 2025



Hangar that housed Charles Kingsford Smith's plane c1928 Image 064283



An aerial view of the Richmond RAAF Base in early days, looking from the Percival Street side. C1931/32 Image 038802

Further to the astonishing, untold Story of the Kurrajong Millstones

An update by Frank Holland

In the last Millstone we told "The astonishing untold Story of the Kurrajong Millstones" by Les Dollin. Here is an update by Frank Holland.

By chance Valerie and I were booked to visit Norfolk Island in early August, and we offered to follow up some leads that Les and Anne provided and take photographs of selected sites.

The geology of the Island is interesting. Norfolk and nearby Phillip Island are remnants of a weathered and eroded volcanic complex that began forming some 2-3 million years ago and is part of Zealandia together with Lord Howe Island and New Zealand.

Calcarene Limestone, from which it seems certain the Kurrajong millstones were made, is thought to have formed about 120,000 years ago after volcanic activity subsided. During the Ice Age Sea levels dropped by about 100 meters exposing coral reefs which in turn were eroded by the elements with fragments blown to locations such as Point Hunter and Phillip Island. There over time the coral and shell remnants were cemented together.

We were successful in identifying the quarries at Point Hunter and the old Kingston cemetery near Emily Bay (originally known as Turtle Bay). Many photographs of these sites were obtained. Contact with a local guide and members of the Department of Infrastructure provided additional information. Small books and a video were obtained from the Museum. The people of Norfolk were much interested in the connection between the Kurrajong Millstones and their Island. We were able to direct them to Les and Anne's eBook for further information.



Quarry at Hunters Point

We found it relatively easy to identify calcarenite limestone as it is abundant around the Kingston (originally known as Kings Town) area. It was used for many purposes and in the construction of beautifully restored Georgian homes and buildings throughout that area during the first and second European settlement.

In number 10 Quality Row, we were able to photograph a dripstone made from calcarenite limestone. These dripstones

were exported from the Island in large numbers. It would have been extremely hard work extracting and forming these items. It was later shown that the dripstones did not really purify water. The restoration of the buildings in Quality Row is first class.



Number 10 Quality Row



Dripstone at 10 Quality Row All photos by Frank Holland

We took over 200 photos of items and areas of interest for further study.

In the Barracks Building we were able to take detailed photos of the one remaining known millstone on the Island. It is not known when this millstone was quarried but most likely dur-

ing the first settlement (1788-1814). It appears to have never been completed.

The first European settlement led by Lt. Philip Gidley King landed near the present-day pier and established the settlement at nearby beautiful Emily Bay (originally Turtle Bay) on 6 March 1788. This group of settlers had been despatched by Captain Arthur Phillip to ensue occupation of the Island and to commence a farming, lumber and flax production operation. Nearby Arthur's Vale provided a suitable farming area. The group consisted of 7 free men, 6 convict women and 9 convict men.

One of the men was Nathaniel Lucas, a carpenter and joiner by trade. He had been sentenced to transportation for 7 years for theft. He married Olivia Gascoigne, one of the convict women, Olivia's offence had been robbery with arms of gold coins. Together they raised a family of 11 children on Norfolk Island.

Nathaniel thrived on Norfolk Island. On receiving a Ticket of Leave he was granted 15 acres of land and built his home. Later he purchased a further 60 acres. As a tradesman he was much in demand and built many of the wooden structures for the first settlers. Nathaniel built the first watermill in Arthur's Vale and also the windmill on Point Hunter. Nothing remains of these wooden structures although their locations are known. Having served his time, he became a much-respected member of society later being appointed a Watchman, Master Carpenter, and Superintendent of Convicts.

His story is not without sadness, during alterations to his

house on Norfolk Island a tree he was felling accidentally fell on the house killing his twin daughters and injuring Olivia. The grave site of the twins is located in the old cemetery at Emily Bay.



Nathaniel and family left Norfolk in 1805 for Port Jackson and Tasmania. He took with him his family and the materials for two mills, most likely also some calcarenite millstones. He went on to build more watermills and the family established a thriving business growing hops in Tasmania which were exported to Port Jackson in their own ship. The business failed when the ship foundered.

John Lucas, one of Nathaniel's sons, built two mills out of Sydney in 1822. The remnants of these watermills are State Heritage listed and well documented.

Our time on Norfolk Island was most informative and we now have a few contacts for further research if needed. It will be interesting to see how the additional information gathered will assist Les and Anne in their continuing research efforts.

Restaurant Open 6 Days

77 Old Bells Line of Road

Kurrajong

Ph: 02 4576 0500

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday,
Friday, Saturday 11.30am - 10pm
Sunday 11.30am - 4pm (Closed
Thursday)



Blending Mediterranean Cuisine using local produce

admin@schembraes.com.au www.schembraes.com.au

KURRAJONG CELLARS FINE WINE & SPIRITS

76 Bells Line of Road,
Kurrajong Village

Christine Mead J.P

Ph: 02 4573 1231 Mobile: 0418 407 501

Fax: 02 4573 1827 kurrajongcellars@bigpond.com

The Village Kitchen Kurrajong

83 Old Bells Line of Road, Kurrajong Village

Dine In Gallery – Fully Licensed

Tuesday to Sunday 8:00am - 2:30pm

Evening Friday from 6pm

For BOOKINGS phone 02 4573 0988



THE NEPEAN MILLS - PART 2 *by Deborah Hallam*

HOWELLS CASTLEREAGH MILL

The Howell family are best known as early and extensive operators of mills on the Hawkesbury/Nepean.

The patriarch of the family was George Howell a convict who arrived in the colony in 1802, having a life sentence for horse theft. Initially assigned to Government service as a wheelwright, George received his Conditional Pardon in 1806. Although several attempts had been made to construct flour mills at Parramatta none had been successful for any period of time. George leased land from Samuel Marsden and built a wind and water mill on the Parramatta River.

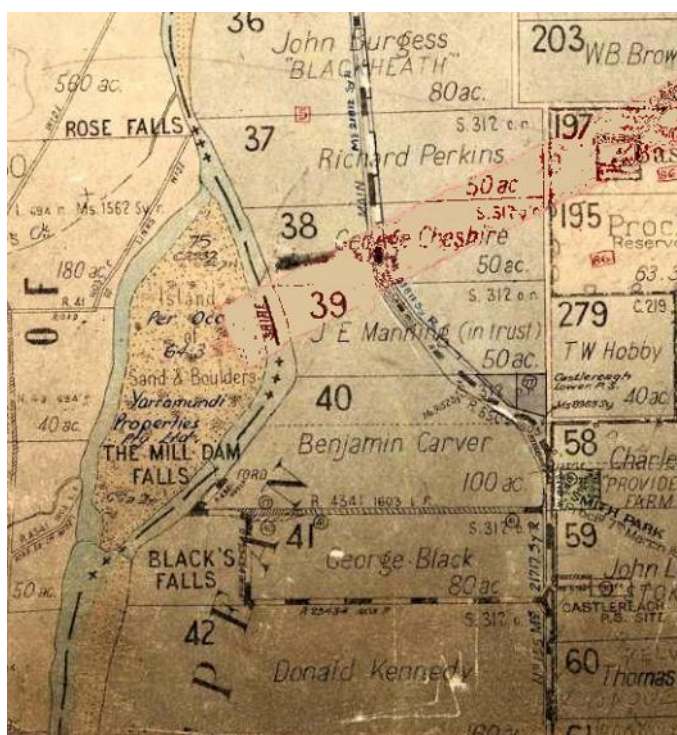
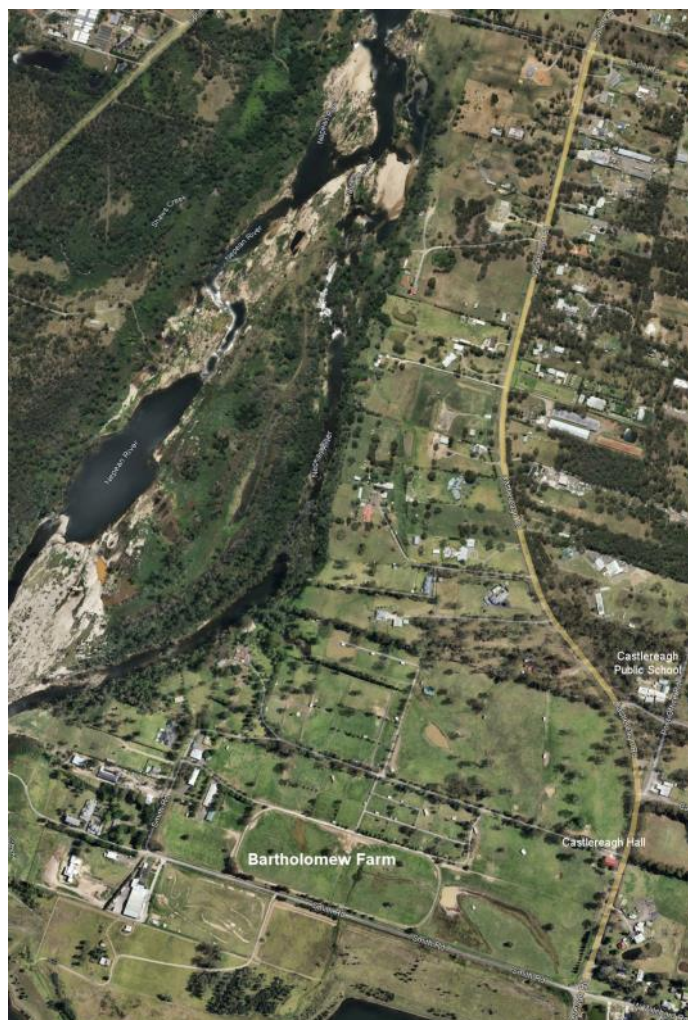
By 1828 George and his large family had moved to Yarramundi and the history of the Hawkesbury/Nepean mills had commenced. It is worth noting that accompanying Howell in his move to Yarramundi was Grose Vale pioneer, Richard Skuthorpe, who was in his service.

FOLLOWING THE MILLS DOWNSTREAM.

The first of the mills referred to as "Howells Mill" was located on the river behind the old Castlereagh Council Chambers at the end of what is now Smith Road. One of 4 rapids, or falls, on the Nepean at this point, Mill Dam Falls, was at Ben Carvers' 1809 land grant. By 1820 the land had been transferred to Isaac Bartholomew and was known as Bartholomew's Farm. The river divides into two narrow channels at this point. The eastern channel flows over several falls making it ideal for the placement of a water-driven flour mill. From the south

the falls are identified as Blacks Falls, adjoining the grant of George Black, Mill Dam Falls, the site of the mill and Rose Falls.

In 1834 Walter Howell purchased, for £15, half an acre of Bartholomew's Farm on the river to construct such a mill. Immediately prior to this Walter had been operating an inn *The Joys of Life* at Upper Richmond (Agnes Banks). It's unclear exactly when the mill began operating but it is referenced to Peter Howell as builder and operator, while Walter also purchased the mill upstream towards Penrith in 1836. When Walter was declared bankrupt in 1840 Peter Howell was listed as one of seven creditors and the mill on half an acre passed into his ownership.



Of interest is also the forfeit of two blocks, each of 60 acres, at Kurrajong contiguous to Mr Town's mill. These blocks were downstream of the identified Singleton Mill sites and are adjacent to "The Islands".

Peter Howell died in 1861 although the mill continued to operate, possibly by Peter Howell Jnr. Peter Jnr owned and farmed the adjacent farm originally granted

to George Black. *The Nepean Times* of 4 April 1912 reported on the closure of the mill sometime in the 1870s, implying that the mill survived the 1867 flood. In 1881 Bartholomew's Farm was offered for sale, "except the mill thereon and 3 acres of land surrounding it". The island and some falls remain but the mill does not appear to have any remnants.

After passing through a number of owners, Bartholomew's Farm was renamed as Princes Farm, before being purchased by the race horse owner and trainer, Bart Cummings. Thus, it now bears this sign.



100 Years ago... October 9, 1925.

WINDSOR AND RICHMOND GAZETTE, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 9, 1925.

Spring is Here

BEFORE REPLENISHING YOUR WARDROBE, A VISIT TO

Woodhill & Co., Ltd.

will be time well spent, having opened their FIRST CONSIGNMENT OF SUMMER GOODS, including a large assortment of DRESS LENGTHS. (No two lengths alike).

And a large and varied range of all those charming fabrics, suitable for summer wear.

BOTH PLEASING TO THE EYE AND POCKET.

Millinery

ALL THE NEW STYLES AND CREATIONS WITHIN REACH OF ALL YOUR INSPECTION INVITED.

Woodhill & Co., Ltd.

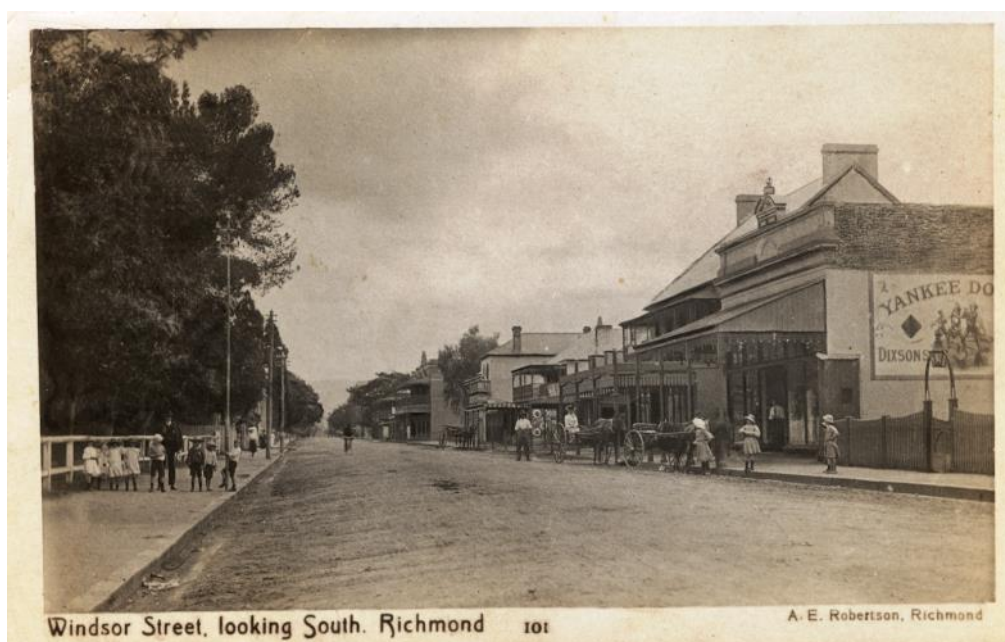
'Phone Windsor 9. WHERE VALUE REIGNS SUPREME.

Woodhill's Richmond branch at 211 Windsor Street. It was purchased by Alfred Woodhill in 1887 and re-furbished in 1892. It sold a great range of goods, from clothing to farm produce. It closed its doors in the early 1970s and the building was demolished in 1985. 'Park Mall' now stands there.

Woodhills also had a Kurrajong store at "Pansy Junction".

The advert gives the phone number as Windsor 9, which suggests there was no telephone exchange in Richmond at the time.

The photo says it is looking south but seems to be looking north west, with the park on the left. Woodhill's store is the first building on the right.





Victor Clouting feeding the White Leghorn chooks behind the tractor shed. They are on his property 'Longleat Farm' in Longleat Lane, Kurmond. c. 1924 Image 074811



Dates for Your DIARY



RIVERSTONE & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY MUSEUM VISIT

Sunday 14th September. Museum will open especially for us—10:00

This is a very comprehensive museum, with lots to see.

81 Garfield Road East. Self drive—car pooling.

Donation at the museum.

Followed by lunch at the Riverstone Memorial Club.

K-CHS ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

22ND SEPTEMBER 19:00 (7PM) - ST DAVID'S, KURRAJONG HEIGHTS

Speaker: Graham Hodgkins Author of "Saving the War Horses" on WW1 Army Veterinary Corps

We need new members to join the committee! If you are interested, please contact the President or Secretary before 6th September.

WB CLARKE GEOSCIENCE CENTRE

947-953 Londonderry Rd, Londonderry

This little known facility, right on our doorstep, is having an open day. Date to be confirmed in the week

October 12th-18th.

Among other things, the centre keeps core drilling samples from all drilling in NSW.

WOLLONDILLY HERITAGE CENTRE & MUSEUM

SUNDAY 16TH NOVEMBER 10:00

43 Edward St, The Oaks

This is a self drive / car pool visit to this very worthwhile museum. Morning tea is included if we have sufficient numbers so we need you to register.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL 2025/26

Renewal is now overdue. There are a small number of members who have not yet renewed. Please attend to this immediately. If you are unsure if you have renewed, send the secretary an email. Rates are unchanged at \$20 single and \$30 family. New members since March do not need to renew. Please renew online if you can.

Supported by

Community Bank
North Richmond and Richmond

📍 North Richmond 4571 2988
Richmond 4578 0055

Bendigo Bank

CAREY
and co.

Specialty boutique & Giftware

Shop 1/64 Old Bells Line of Rd,
Kurrajong NSW 2758
(02) 45731920