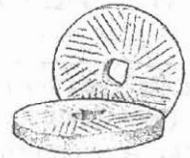


# KURRAJONG - COMLERROY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC

POSTAL ADDRESS: PO BOX 174 KURMOND, 2757



# The Millstone

Volume One, Issue Four, JULY-AUGUST, 2002

"THE MILLSTONE" REFERS TO THE LITTLE WHEENEY CREEK MILLSTONES ON DISPLAY AT KURRAJONG MEMORIAL PARK, BELIEVED TO BE THE OLDEST ITEMS OF EUROPEAN SETTLEMENT IN "THE KURRAJONG". THIS EXTRACT FROM THE FIRST EDITION OF "THE MILLSTONE", JANUARY-FEBRUARY, 2002

## MINUTE MILLSTONE

- **NEXT MEETING** IS TUESDAY, AUGUST 20 AT THE COMLERROY ROAD SCHOOL OF ARTS HALL AT 7.30PM. THIS WILL BE OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING SO ALL MEMBERS ARE ENCOURAGED TO COME ALONG AND HAVE A SAY IN THE NEXT IMPORTANT PHASE OF ESTABLISHING OUR SOCIETY.
- **MEMBERSHIPS** ARE NOW OVERDUE: \$25 HOUSEHOLD COUPLE; 20 SINGLE AND \$5 OVER 75.
- **SCARECROW FESTIVAL** IS OCTOBER 20. MORE ABOUT OUR MILLSTONE EXHIBITION PAGE 4.
- **OUR MUSEUM/GALLERY IS NOW "THE TIME CAPSULE"** DETAILS ABOUT THE SOCIETY'S AMBITIOUS PLAN TO OPEN A PERMANENT, BUT REGULARLY CHANGING, EXHIBIT - PAGE 6
- **LA TOSCA, A GROSE VALE HERITAGE-LISTED HOME IS UNDER THREAT OF DEMOLITION.** WHAT YOU CAN DO: PAGE 6.

## BUSHFIRE WORKSHOP



### OUR FIRST WORKSHOP THE GREAT BUSHFIRE OF CHRISTMAS DAY 2001 RESEARCH PROJECT

By Les Dollin, Team Leader  
Our first workshop was held in our new facility *The Time Capsule* at Bellbird Echo at Kurrajong Heights on Saturday 20th July 2002. Early birds enjoyed a cup of cappuccino in the Cafe around the open fire. We then moved into *The Time Capsule* room where we had a round table discussion about the three phases that are planned for the Bushfire Research Project:

**Phase 1:** Collect and collate tapes, photos and other documentation.

**Phase 2:** Run a display on the Christmas 2001 Bushfires at *The Time Capsule* in December/January 2002

**Phase 3:** Produce a booklet on the Kurrajong Bushfires.

As part of **Phase 1** we plan to collect interesting stories about the fires by interviewing local people on tape. An Interview Kit was put together so we don't forget anything. We also did a practice interview with a tape recorder, putting the kit into practice. We all learned a lot during the practice session and we developed ways of making it easy and fun. With the help of the creative minds of the members that attended the workshop I know we feel more confident to enter people's homes and record their wonderful stories.

In **Phase 2**, a display at *The Time Capsule* will commemorate the First Anniversary of the Great Fires of Christmas 2001.

(Cont pg 2)

## SUNNYSIDE UPDATE WITH MILDRED REYNOLDS

JOHN GORDON TOWN, THE HUSBAND OF ELIZABETH ONUS, COMMISSIONED THE BUILDING OF "THE WOOLPACK INN" (ALSO KNOWN AS THE "TRAVELLER'S REST" AND THE "RIVERVIEW HOTEL") AT ENFIELD/NORTH RICHMOND IN THE EARLY 1830S. IT WAS BUILT ON A SECTION OF GEORGE MOHUN'S ORIGINAL GRANT. JOHN PRESIDED OVER THE HOTEL FOR ABOUT 20 YEARS AND DURING HIS RESIDENCY BUILT "PLEASANT VIEW", THE TWO-STOREY HOUSE, WHICH STANDS ALONGSIDE "SUNNYSIDE" AT ENFIELD/NORTH RICHMOND. SEEMINGLY JOHN LEFT THE "WOOLPACK" IN 1853, SINCE IN THAT YEAR HIS WIFE'S UNCLE, CHARLES EATHER, TOOK OVER THE INN.

SAMUEL BOUGHTON RELATED THAT "PLEASANT VIEW" (THE HOME IN WHICH JOHN LIVED) WAS BUILT IN 1854 BY "PRETTY BILLY", ALTHOUGH ALFRED SMITH SAID IT WAS BUILT BY THE CARPENTER, ALFRED BROWN.

JOHN'S LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT DOCUMENTED THAT THE LAND ON WHICH "PLEASANT VIEW" STOOD, AND THE APPROXIMATE 17-ACRES SURROUNDING IT, WAS ACQUIRED FROM THE ESTATE OF WILLIAM SIMS BELL.

FOLLOWING HIS WIFE'S DEATH, AND VIA A CODICIL TO HIS WILL, JOHN DEVISED "PLEASANT VIEW" TO ELIZABETH AND GEORGE MATCHAM PITT - AND HE FURTHER INSTRUCTED THAT AFTER THEIR DEMISE, IT WAS TO BECOME THE PROPERTY OF THEIR SON, JOHN THOMAS MATCHAM PITT. IN 1883 THE HOUSE WAS VALUED AT £750.

"SUNNYSIDE", THE SINGLE-STOREY DWELLING LOCATED ALONGSIDE "PLEASANT VIEW" WAS BUILT IN 1860 BY JOHN GORDON TOWN AS THE RESIDENCY OF HIS DAUGHTER ELIZABETH AND HER HUSBAND GEORGE MATCHAM PITT.

IT WAS SITUATED ON ABOUT 10-ACRES WHICH WAS CONVEYED TO JOHN BY THE TRUSTEES OF WILLIAM SIMS BELL.

ALTHOUGH DOCUMENTED AT TIMES AS ORIGINALLY BEING THE PROPERTY OF GEORGE MATCHAM PITT, "SUNNYSIDE" WAS THE PROPERTY OF JOHN GORDON TOWN

- AND IT REMAINED SO UNTIL HIS DEMISE IN 1883. UNDER THE TERMS OF HIS WILL, ELIZABETH AND GEORGE MATCHAM PITT THEN INHERITED IT. AT THAT TIME IT WAS VALUED AT £1500.

IN 1883, JOHN THOMAS TOWN THE ELDER, THE ONLY SURVIVING SON OF JOHN GORDON TOWN, INHERITED FROM HIS FATHER ABOUT 22-ACRES OF GEORGE MOHUN'S GRANT NEAR THE RICHMOND BRIDGE. IT WAS VALUED AT £1500 AND INCLUDED THE "WOOLPACK".

JOHN THOMAS TOWN THE ELDER BUILT THE COTTAGE OPPOSITE THE "WOOLPACK" AND LIVED IN IT FOR A GOOD WHILE. HE DIED THERE IN 1889. HIS WIFE, JULIA ELIZA CROWLEY HAD ALSO DIED THERE IN 1864.

CONSEQUENTLY, AFTER JULIA'S DEATH, THEIR SON, JOHN THOMAS TOWN THE YOUNGER - CALLED JACK - LIVED WITH HIS AUNT (ELIZABETH PITT) AT "SUNNYSIDE".

IN 1897 JOHN THOMAS TOWN THE YOUNGER REPLACED HENRY STEVENSON AS THE LICENCEE OF "THE TRAVELLER'S REST" - WHICH WAS FORMERLY "THE WOOLPACK". A YEAR PRIOR TO THIS, 1896, THE HOTEL HAD BEEN CAPTURED ON CANVAS BY SIR ARTHUR STREETON AND NAMED "THE OLD INN ON THE HAWKESBURY".

IN OCTOBER 1908, MR J.T TOWN'S PROPERTY, "GERNHEIM" AT NORTH RICHMOND WAS ADVERTISED FOR SALE. BUT FURTHER RESEARCH IS NEEDED TO ESTABLISH ITS EXACT LOCATION

AROUND THIS TIME JOHN THOMAS TOWN THE YOUNGER LEFT THE DISTRICT. HE DIED AT CREMORNE IN 1929.

**Contributed by Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society member, Mildred J Reynolds, July 7, 2002, prepared specifically for publication in "The Millstone". No reproduction allowed without written permission from the author.**

- **THE SOCIETY IS GRATEFUL FOR THE DONATION OF "SUNNYSIDE" ARTEFACTS BY FORMER OWNERS, LES AND JENNY CHALMERS**

"SUNNYSIDE" AT NORTH RICHMOND WAS VISITED BY MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY AHEAD OF ITS MAY 5 AUCTION. ONE OF THE SOCIETY'S OUT-OF-TOWN MEMBERS, MILDRED REYNOLDS, (AN EATHER FAMILY MEMBER) HAS CONTRIBUTED MATERIAL FROM HER EXTENSIVE RESEARCH ON THE EATHER FAMILY TO ASSIST THE SOCIETY IN MOUNTING A "SUNNYSIDE" DISPLAY AT OUR NEW "TIME CAPSULE".

*Continued from page one*

### Bushfire Workshop

We hope to run this display every Sunday over the Christmas holidays. The display will include photographs, newspaper cuttings and bushfire artefacts. When I was getting ready to leave for the workshop I asked my wife Anne to help me find some artefacts from the fire. 'Where are all the burnt flower pots?' I asked. 'They were all thrown out,' she said. We managed to find two flower pot bases - one we had to dig out of the ground and the other had been tossed into a rubbish heap because it was in the way of the paving contractor. So hang on to your artefacts as we need them for our Great Bushfire Display. In Phase 3 of the research project we hope to produce a booklet on the Great Kurrajong Bushfires. Copies would be sold in the *Time Capsule* to support the Society. Les, Ph: 4576 1495

## Early Days at Kurrajong Heights by Bev Woodman

The preservation of buildings and historic landmarks it seems is only something that we appreciate as we advance in years. The Hawkesbury region is virtually the birthplace of our nation and the settlement of Kurrajong Heights cannot be ignored for its importance in this history. With the crossing and surveying of a suitable route over the mountains by Archibald Bell in 1823 came the pioneering settlers, many convict families who had steadily worked their way west and had settled in the hills around Kurrajong.

St. David's Presbyterian Church was established in 1886 followed by St. James Church of England in 1889 and both are still standing and serving the community today.

The area was perfect for fruit growing, and then in the mid 1800s the Kurrajong Heights area became a popular holiday spot, catering for the wealthy Sydneysiders who came to the mountains to experience the scenery, the crisp mountain air and the many first class guesthouses.

The first accommodation available on Kurrajong Heights was at "Ivy Lodge", a hand-hewn hardwood building with a sandstone floor that was built sometime after 1825 by one of the areas earliest settlers, Joseph Douglass. Sometime in 1850 it became a popular accommodation spot that offered meals, and "stabling and fodder for a horse". This tradition was carried on by the next owner, a Joe Onus before passing into the hands of Dr. James Cameron, a Presbyterian minister and his brother Dr. Andrew Cameron, a doctor of medicine who used the house as a residence and also changed the name to "Lochiel".

It is said that my great grandfather, Thomas Walker purchased the property in 1905 on the death of Dr. James Cameron, however my grandmother, Linda May Walker was born in Lochiel House in 1888 indicating that the family were residing there before this date.

It was here that Thomas Walker ran the local post office until the new building and residence was built next door. This building that still stands today is interesting in that it was totally prefabricated in England and shipped to Australia for construction.

On the death of Thomas Walker in 1922, my grandmother Linda May Walker inherited 40 acres of his property on Buralow Road that has been known over the years as Mt. Knight, Panorama Point, NRMA picnic grounds and in latter years as Cherry Park. Linda married my grandfather, Charles Joseph Hobbs in 1909 and the family who had been living in Lochiel House, moved into the original workmen's cottages on the property in about 1924. These cottages were built when Canon William Scott surveyed the Trig station on the property in about 1860. These cottages were gradually torn down in the late 1940s and replaced by a two-bedroom cottage that my father, Edward Thomas Hobbs and his brother Ian (Jack) Desmond Hobbs built.

Next door was the Mountain View Guest House and following the death of its owner, Mary Peck in 1926 my mother's family (James and Emily Carter nee Newby) took over the management of it. Unfortunately the guesthouse was burnt to the ground in around 1932. My mother (Emily Newby Carter) then worked at Northfield for Florence Fitzhardinge and at some stage at Belmore Lodge before marrying my father in 1934. She loved to tell the story of a ghost with a bad cough that would wake her during the night at Belmore Lodge.

I am proud my family has strong links to this past era with all of my grandfather's ancestors being

convicts and all but one of my father's also boasting to be convicts. My mother's father, James Carter was a Lord Mayor of Richmond in 1924.

Many of the settlers cottages of the Kurrajong Heights area have been lost to fire or redevelopment over the years, the hotel being one example when it burnt down in 1974. My beloved grandparent's property in Buralow Road has been left derelict and vandalised for years resulting in it finally being bulldozed. My grandfather (Charles Hobbs) planted the huge pine trees on the property in 1925.

Most people have moved to this area because of its overwhelming beauty – and many of the old homes and gardens have created this atmosphere. If we lose the identity of the region then we will lose the heritage and the precious thing that attracted us here in the first place. I admit I have a sentimental link with Kurrajong Heights, a magnetism that I can't explain. I don't live in the area and have no close relatives residing there anymore but I feel because of my ancestry that I have the right to request that care be taken to protect and preserve any building or property of historic significance for us now and for future generations.

*This article always remains the property of Beverley A. Woodman ([bevwoodman@ozemail.com.au](mailto:bevwoodman@ozemail.com.au)) and cannot be reproduced or copied without the written permission of the author.*

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# Time Capsule takes off!

AFTER A BIT OF A FALSE START, SOCIETY MEMBERS ARE NOW WORKING COLLABORATIVELY TO REALISE AN AMBITIOUS PROJECT - ESTABLISHING A PERMANENT (BUT CHANGING) EXHIBITION OF HISTORICAL PHOTOS AND ARTEFACTS AT THE BELLBIRD ECHO CENTRE, KURRAJONG HILLS, IN PREMISES GENEROUSLY DONATED BY OUR PRESIDENT, KATHIE MCMAHON.

A MEETING WAS HELD AT BELLBIRD ECHO ON TUESDAY, JULY 16 AT 7.30PM. THE MEETING WAS WELL ATTENDED WITH A NUMBER OF MEMBERS SENDING ALONG THEIR APOLOGIES AS THEY REGISTERED THEIR INTEREST IN BEING INVOLVED IN FUTURE MEETINGS.

TWO MEMBERS, BEV AND PHIL WOODMAN TRAVELLED FROM NEWCASTLE ESPECIALLY TO TAKE PART, WITH BEV OFFERING HER WEALTH OF INFORMATION ON KURRAJONG HEIGHTS

AT THAT MEETING IT WAS DECIDED TO CALL THE MUSEUM "THE TIME-CAPSULE", ALTHOUGH SOME PEOPLE HAVE A FEW RESERVATIONS.

A TIME CAPSULE CONSTRUCTION TEAM WAS ESTABLISHED, WITH JOY SHEPHERD AS CONVENOR.

A FIRST MEETING TO REVIEW THE MATERIALS IN THE SOCIETY'S POSSESSION AND TO PLAN OUR OPENING AND FIRST EXHIBITION WAS HELD AT THE TIME CAPSULE ON FRIDAY, JULY 19.

IT WAS DECIDED OUR OPENING THEME WOULD BE "**SPRING INTO ACTION**", ANTICIPATING AN OPENING DATE IN (HOPEFULLY) SEPTEMBER, BUT POSSIBLY OCTOBER.

WE WANT TO BE UP AN RUNNING AHEAD OF THE KURRAJONG SCARECROW FESTIVAL WHICH IS SUNDAY OCTOBER 20 (AND THAT DATE IS ALREADY IN YOUR DIARY FOR THE SOCIETY'S DISPLAY AT THE MILLSTONES!).

THE "SPRING INTO ACTION" THEME WILL FEATURE THE RICH AGRICULTURAL HERITAGE OF "THE KURRAJONG", AND WILL LOOK AT THE CHANGING TYPES OF AGRICULTURE OVER THE CENTURIES AND DECADES.

IT IS APPROPRIATE THAT THE FIRST THEME FOCUS ON AGRICULTURE BECAUSE IT WAS AGRICULTURE THAT BROUGHT PEOPLE TO SETTLE IN "THE KURRAJONG".

THE "SPRING INTO ACTION" THEME ALSO LINKS IN WITH THE KURRAJONG SCARECROW FESTIVAL AND STRENGTHENS THE SOCIETY'S ASSOCIATION WITH THE KURRAJONG COMMUNITY FORUM.

## La Tosca Update

THE EXTENDED DUNSTON FAMILY WERE INFLUENTIAL IN KURRAJONG BUILDING UP TO NINE HOMES IN THE AREA BETWEEN 1860 AND 1910. ONE OF THESE, "**LA TOSCA**" AT **GROSE VALE** IS UNDER THREAT AS THE OWNERS (WHO LIVE AT AUSTRAL) HAVE LODGED A DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION WITH HAWKESBURY COUNCIL TO DEMOLISH THE HERITAGE-LISTED BRICK HOME. FINANCIAL ISSUES FORCED SUE DUNSTON AND HER TWO SISTERS TO SELL THE PROPERTY IN MAY 2001. SUE AND HER SON WERE LIVING IN THE HOME UNTIL THE FINAL DAY OF SETTLEMENT AS, SHE SAID, IT BROKE

HER HEART TO LEAVE. SOME OF THE SELLING FEATURES LISTED BY THE REAL ESTATE AGENT INCLUDED THE PRESSED METAL CEILINGS, AND ORIGINAL FLOOR AND SKIRTING BOARDS. BY AUGUST THE HOME HAD BEEN GUTTED AND THE DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION STATES THE HOME IS NOW WITHOUT CEILINGS, FLOORS, WINDOWS, DOORS AND PARTS OF THE ROOF HAVE BEEN REMOVED. SOCIETY MEMBERS CAN WRITE TO **HAWKESBURY CITY COUNCIL** TO REJECT THE DEMOLITION OF THE HOME AND INSTEAD ORDER THE OWNERS TO RESTORE THE PROPERTY TO ITS ORIGINAL CONDITION. THIS HAS HAPPENED IN 1995. AT THE **NEW INN**, BOSWORTH STREET, RICHMOND DEVELOPERS ALLOWED A 1838 COTTAGE TO FALL INTO A DERELICT CONDITION, BUT COUNCIL ORDERED A FULL RESTORATION AND THE COTTAGE NOW FEATURES IN THE MOTEL'S ADVERTISING MATERIAL.

## "MUMMA WHITE'S COTTAGE" (ALSO CALLED *THE PALMS*, *NORTH RICHMOND*)

THE FATE OF THIS HERITAGE-LISTED HOME ON BELLS LINE OF ROAD AT NORTH RICHMOND IS ALSO IN THE BALANCE. THE OWNER WANTS TO DEMOLISH THIS 1910 COTTAGE AND BUILD 10 SHOPS BETWEEN THE OLD POLICE STATION AND GROSE VALE ROAD.

THERE DOESN'T SEEM TO BE THE SAME PASSION TO PRESERVE THIS HOME. THE CASE OF "LA TOSCA" HOWEVER SEEMS TO HAVE STIRRED PEOPLE. HAWKESBURY COUNCIL'S COMMUNITY SURVEY FOUND "HISTORIC BUILDINGS" RATED NO3 ON PEOPLE'S LIST OF WHAT THEY VALUE ABOUT LIVING IN THE HAWKESBURY

.....  
: **Carnivale is Sunday**  
: **September 15 in Richmond**  
: **Park. This is a great way for**  
: **the Society to promote itself**  
: **to the wider Hawkesbury**  
: **community. Help us man the**  
: **stall for a few hours from**  
: **11am Contact Roger Holliday**  
: **4567 7237**  
: .....