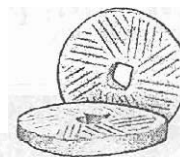


KURRAJONG - COMLERROY HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC

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The Millstone

2003 - Volume Two, Issue Six, November - December 2003

"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



JOY SHEPHERD WITH JUDY AND COLIN BAIRD, ONE TIME KURRAJONG HEIGHTS RESIDENTS. COLIN'S PARENTS OWNED BELMORE LODGE FOR MANY YEARS. COLIN'S PARENTS ALSO HAD A CONNECTION WITH "MERRINDALE", AN HISTORIC HOME AT GROSE VALE. COLIN BROUGHT LONG A PHOTO OF THE OLD SLAB BUILDING ON THE PROPERTY TO SHOW JOY AT THE LAND NEWSPAPER'S SMALL FARMS EXPO AT HAWKESBURY SHOWGROUND ON NOVEMBER 15. THE SOCIETY WAS INVITED TO PARTICIPATE AND HAD SOME 200 PHOTOS WITH A FARMING THEME ON DISPLAY, SELECTING PHOTOS COLLECTION OVER THREE YEARS.

BOTH THE SMALL FARMS EXPO AND THE "HIDDEN TREASURES OF KURRAJONG" EXHIBITION AT THE KURRAJONG CWA HALL BETWEEN OCTOBER 17 AND 19 WERE ACHIEVED WITH ASSISTANCE FROM HAWKESBURY SKILLS AND WORK FOR THE DOLE PARTICIPANTS, TERRY CHURCH, GRACE FISHER, LEUWIN TUCKERMAN AND JODY GINNS.

A few "happy snaps" from our growing society photo album



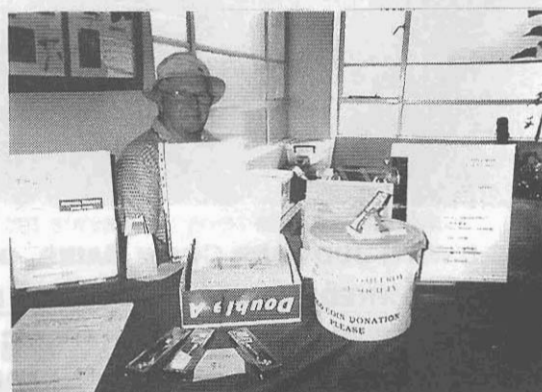
Dorothy Butler visits the Hidden Treasures of Kurrajong exhibition and enjoys a "catch up" with Joy Shepherd. The Society had close to 200 photos on display featuring then-and-now streetscapes of Kurrajong, North Richmond and Kurmond, as well as St John of God and Camp Mackay.



Vince Groch visits the Small Farms Expo at Hawkesbury Showground on November 15 and discovers a photo of his mother, Thelma Goch, taken when Thelma was a toddler living in a Soldier Settlement home.



Mr Scarecrow Festival himself, Roger Holliday drops by the CWA hall on Sunday, October 19 to see the photo exhibition and spread some cheer with Pat O'Toole, Louise McMahon, and Carolynne Cooper. The exhibition was previewed during the "Back to the Kurrajong" evening on Friday, Oct 17, and was visited by an estimated several hundred people over the weekend of October 18 and 19.



Phil Shepherd sells society merchandise at the "Hidden Treasures" exhibition. Raffle winners were, Saturday, 1st prize K Parmenter and 2nd prize, M Wyborn. Sunday, 1st, David Hegarty of Kurmond PO and 2nd, Mary Robinson.

By enthusiastic request, this issue of the Millstone includes the first of two instalments of the speech given by Mr Phil Peck at the Back to the Kurrajong evening at Valley View Restaurant on Friday, October 17, attended by some 60 members and guests.

Please respect Phil's work and generosity do not reproduce without his permission.

I thought I might try and give a thumbnail sketch of Peck history from my perspective and recollection

I will also put forward some thoughts and recollections of Kurrajong Heights from my era, so if I hop from one subject to another I hope you will bear with me.

Those of you who are readers of the Hawkesbury Gazette will have noticed an article in the October 1 edition which gave an insight into what I would touch on during this talk and I thank Louise for her effort in preparation of the Gazette article.

I must stress that history unfortunately gets distorted with time. I have tried not to rewrite it, but have endeavoured to present the following as accurately as possible. Specific dates and information are from my personal records and those of my parents and grandparents. I have the benefit of having spent at least 60 of my 76 years as a resident of Kurrajong Heights.

At the age of 6 my grandfather Henry Peck with his parents Robert and Hannah arrived in Australia on board ship the Templar in August 1844. He obviously would have been raised and educated in the English/Australian customs of the period.

Robert and Hannah came to the Hawkesbury area soon after arriving in NSW.

History tells us that early settlement of Kurrajong Heights occurred in the early 1800's.

In the 1850's George Bowen established a citrus orchard in the Burrallow Creek Valley.

Some years later a survey point was established at the six hundred metre point on the Tabaraga Ridge. This became Scott's Trig, being named after Canon Scott who in the mid 1800's established an extensive citrus orchard on the eastern side of Burrallow Road in the vicinity of an area know as Cherry Park.

The Tabaraga Ridge by way of explanation is the range running North/South we look at west of Kurrajong.

It begins to the north of Kurrajong Heights and extends south to the vicinity of Bowen Mount.

In my early days I knew the property Cherry Park as Panorama Point where Charley Hobbs and family lived.

It was then operated as a picnic ground which was very popular with day trippers. Charley had been a powder monkey during construction of sections of Bell's Line of Road.

For many years he read a water flow and height gauge located on Burralow Creek situated down stream of the bridge crossing.

Cherry Park was established and renamed in more recent times with plantings of flowering cherry trees and a general sprucing up of the area, but the view from the Trig Point is nothing short of magnificent. Today I believe Cherry Park is in some disrepair. Further south along the ridge and being one of the highest points on the Heights that vicinity has proven to be an ideal location for radio and telephony relay towers. Bush fire radio has benefited enormously from relay facility in this locations.

In August 1862 Henry and Mary Peck were married at the District Registrars Office Richmond. At that time Henry was 24, Mary 23. It is thought that they lived in Richmond for a period of time before moving to a workmans cottage owned by Canon Scott where Henry was in charge of the orchards on the estate.

The first road over Kurrajong Heights was little more than a track which was pushed through in the early 1800's. This track with almost impossible grades extended along what is now known as Wark's Hill Road to it's Western extremity and down a very steep zig zag route to the Western approach to the cut rock. This Zig Zag track was used by Telecom in the 50/60's to lay underground telephone cable extending on to Bilpin.

A second short road with a much better grade was established with access off Wark's Hill Road just North of the Wark's Hill Road/Burralow Road junction.

It curved progressively down the Western side of the mountain and again met Bell's Line Road on the Western approach to the cut rock.

This narrow road was used during reconstruction of the cut rock in 1947. It is currently used as a fire trail in emergency situations

During Depression years of the 1930's a winding realignment was pushed through Kurrajong Heights as relief work generally along the present route.

In the years 1947/48 the current alignment was constructed as an extension of a road commenced in war time coming through from Mt Tomah. This required considerable widening of the cut rock bends. From the Coach House Road junction and generally in a Southerly direction it

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required cutting, filling and straightening to give the road a much better grade through to the top of Bellbird Hill.

The first child to Henry and Mary Peck was Mary Ann born 1865. There being 6 boys and 7 girls, most married wellknown district names. In 1884 my father Leslie Charles was born. In 1917 at the age of 33 he married Constance Mortley of Windsor. Henry Peck died aged 50 in November 1888.

Research shows my great grandfather and some of his forefathers were farmers in their own right in England. It was therefore no coincidence that having arrived and settled in Australia that their descendants also followed a life in farming.

Most notably in the early 1900's were my uncles, that is, sons of Henry Peck owning land in such areas as North Richmond/Comleroy Road and in particular Kurrajong Heights.

Citrus production at Kurrajong Heights moved forward during the 1920's with 5 orchards producing the greatest proportion of oranges. The largest was owned by Henry Edward Peck and Sons. Henry Edward Peck was the first son of Henry and Mary Peck.

Other orchards at The Heights were owned by Mr Pemberton, Frank George, my father Les Peck, Alver Diggins and John Culver.

H.E. Peck and Sons orchard in the mid 1920's was located in an area bounded by Wark's Hill Road, Bell's Line Road and the Hotel.

The primary variety of oranges in early plantings were known as the common. It was quite round with a mass of seeds inside. Following that came the late valencia a very slightly flatter fruit, distinctive flavour, fine textured skin and at Kurrajong Heights matured when other districts had harvested.

With the railway line being extended to Richmond in 1864, pressure for a line to Kurrajong began as early as 1882. However following numerous enquiries construction of the line commenced in 1923 and it was finally commissioned in 1926.

This enhanced the districts progress by leaps and bounds, no longer was there a need to haul produce to Richmond rail head destined for the Sydney market.

The popularity of Kurrajong/Kurrajong Heights as a tourist destination was all too evident in the late 1800 and early 1900 with guest houses scattered across the district.

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One such guest house was owned and operated by my grandmother Mrs Mary Peck at Mountain View Kurrajong Heights, with the able assistance of some of her daughters for close to 40 years.

An old battered visitors book dating back to 1886 records the thanks and delights experienced by visitors at the mountain retreat.

My father Les Peck often related stories of his trips bringing visitors from Richmond rail station to Mountain View via horse and buggy, day or night/ wet or dry.

Mountain View Kurrajong Heights ceased to operate in the mid 1920's.

Mary Peck died July 1927 aged 67.

The property Mountain View was sold shortly afterwards, and was destroyed by fire in the early 1930's.

The Kurrajong Heights Hotel was opened for business in 1926, the liquor licence having been transferred from the Black Horse Hotel cnr Windsor and Bosworth Sts. Richmond. The enormous building at Kurrajong Heights being completed in 1928.

It is thought that Henry Edward Peck was instrumental in completing the Hotel, and that his son Frank became the first licensee.

The sandstone foundations of the building was won from a quarry that was established adjacent to Bells Line Rd approx. 100 metres east of Pecks Rd at the Heights. Stone masons were brought to Australia to cut, shape and lay the foundations of the building as well as stone walls and staircases.

As a child I well recall the enormity and grandeur of the building with its sweeping white marble staircase ascending to a grand entry and vestibule. The huge dining room had an outlook to Richmond Windsor and through to Sydney.

Immediately in front of the somewhat small parking area of the building were constructed long stone walled terraces containing exotic shrubs, a wide stone staircase midway descending to Bells Line Rd, below.

For those of you who have a copy of the current issue of The Millstone will see on page 2 a reproduction of a photo of the Hotel which shows the stone walled terraces I have referred to.

In front of this stood a majestic turpentine tree with a butt of mammoth proportions.

In early times Bells Line Rd wound around the western side of this tree. Subsequent realignment of Bells Line had the road on the eastern or lower side. The turpentine tree was felled in the 1960's.

Louisa Atkinson's Day of Tribute at Tomah, a Triumph



KCHS Society president, Jennifer Stackhouse acted as MC for the day at Mount Tomah Botanic Garden on Sunday, November 23. She introduced **Victor Crittenden** of Mulini Press who has published several of Louisa's novels and extracts of her "Voice from the Country" series that appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald during the 1860s. In many of these columns Louisa writes of her experiences exploring and observing the changing seasons at her home at Kurrajong Heights. Jennifer also introduced author **Patricia Clarke** who has written a book detailing Louisa's life and achievements. The two guest speakers were invited to participate in the day by Mary Reynolds, secretary of the Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society who prepared a display featuring some of Louisa's illustrations. With Mary is husband and society treasurer, Ellis Reynolds.

Pic 2: Victor Crittenden, Jennifer Stackhouse, Name, Meredith Hungerford, Pat O'Toole, and Patricia Clarke.

Letter from Coral Francis

I am doing some family history and am seeking some information on my grandfather, Alfred Slingsby and grandmother Gertrude, (nee Cattle) who lived on Blaxland Ridge about 1889. Their children were Arthur and Alfred were born in Lincoln, England. Others, born here, were Henry, (Joyce Bullock's father, I think) and Edith (who I think died in infancy). Then Gertrude, Alicia, Beatrice (Mrs Bullock from Bilpin), Oswald (my father) William, Irene, Leonard (born at Bilpin, I think). I believe grandfather built the school of arts or local school at Blaxland Ridge (?????). I would be interested to find where they had their property and anything on the time they spent at Blaxland Ridge. They moved to Bilpin about 1903. **Anyone with info, contact Joy Shepherd on 4571 -1524.**

STATE RECORDS VOLUNTEERS

Do you have an interest in Australian history? And would like to help State Records make its collection more accessible to the people of NSW? We are looking for volunteers to work three hours every two weeks at the Western Sydney Record Centre, 143 O'Connell Street, Kingswood. Do you have any experience in word processing or data entry? Are you accurate, methodical, have a good sense of humour and are not easily bored? Then we would love to hear from you. Contact the volunteer co-ordinator, Deborah Sims on 9673-1788 or email, Volunteers@records.nsw.gov.au

Millstone Milestones

***Welcome to all our new members,
Thanks for joining KCHS, and
come along to our special
Christmas meeting, December 16.***



Mackenzie Farm, Kurmond

Special members-only Christmas get-together BBQ and final 2003 meeting at Mackenzie Farm, Kurmond, home of Gerry and Vera Bentvelzen, ~~567~~ Bells Line of Road. (No 567) There is no charge for this event, but Vera has asked that people book ahead with Joy Shepherd on **4571-1524**. This is strictly **members-only**. Arrive from 6pm and enjoy a BBQ ahead of our society meeting at 7.30pm. BYO everything like meat and bitz.

Special news for 2004

At the ordinary meeting of Tuesday, October 21 members resolved to alter the meeting cycle for 2004.

From 2004 meetings will be held on the fourth Monday of every first month, instead of the third Tuesday of every second month.

The first meeting of 2004 will Australia Day, January 26, 2004, at a venue yet to be advised.

Meetings for 2004 will be:

- **January 26,**
- **March 22**
- **May 17**
- **July 19**
- **August 16 - AGM**
- **September 20**
- **November 15**

The reason for the change is to better fit in with both our Australia Day and October Scarecrow Festival events.

The change should also allow our Rotarian members who have a scheduling clash on Tuesdays to attend our meetings.

- Carols at Comleroy
- Friday, Dec12.
- Comleroy hall
- committee.
- BBQ from 6pm,
- singing from
- 7.30pm. Cost \$5
- adults, kids free.
- Bookings essential
- **Megan 4576-0033**

A might big "thank you" to Michelle at Valley View Restaurant, Kurrajong Village for hosting the Back to the Kurrajong evening for us on Friday, October 17. Michelle did us an extremely generous deal, and then topped that up with an excellent spread - a great night - Thanks

Thanks also to our two "Back to the Kurrajong" guest speakers, Phil Peck, who spoke on Kurrajong Heights Hotel, and Geoff Taylor who recalled some escapades from the Kurrajong of his youth. Thanks to Phil for allowing us to print his speech from that night.
Part 2 will appear in 2004.