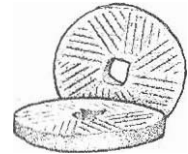


KURRAJONG - COMLERoy HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC

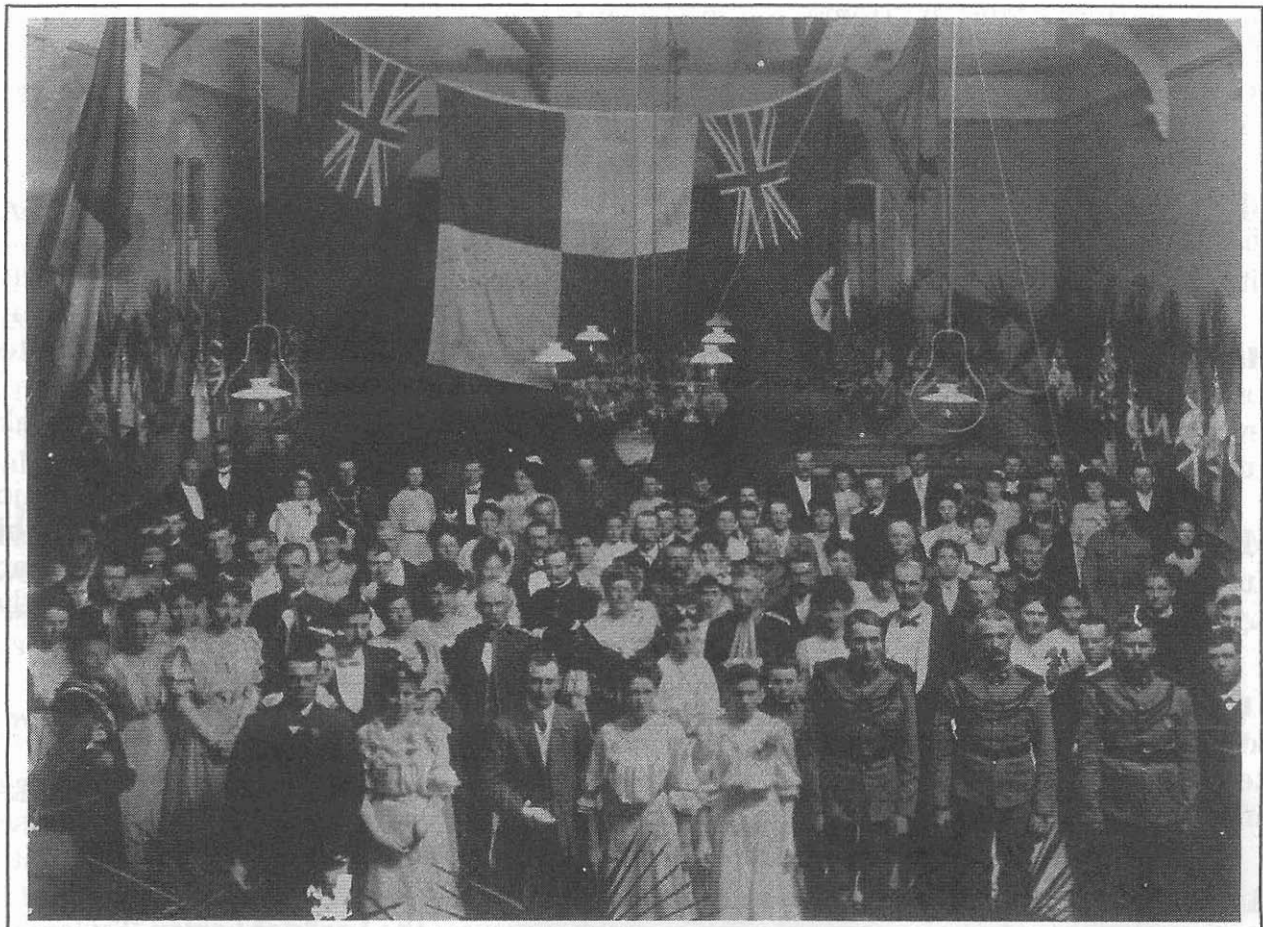
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The Millstone

2004: Volume Three, Issue Two: March- April

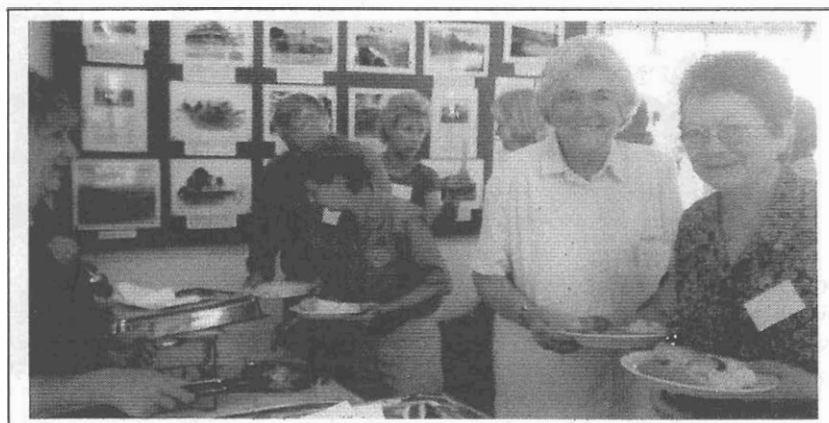
Official newsletter of the Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society. Logo and masthead refer to millstones on display at Memorial Park, Kurrajong. Originally located on Wheeney Creek, the millstones are the oldest items of European Settlement in "the Kurrajong". Logo designed for the Society by artist, Tony Dixon.



Who are these people? And what are they doing at the Richmond School of Arts? What function are they attending and when? These are just some of the questions Ron Rozzoli is endeavouring to answer. Ron is guest speaker at the **Monday, March 22** meeting of the Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society at Comleroy Community School of Arts hall at 7.30pm. Ron's topic for the evening will be the many links between the Richmond School of Arts and Kurrajong. For example, Richmond SofA was the venue for some Kurrajong Railway League meetings! And what of the Cameron and Bowman families, who were instrumental in building both the Richmond School of Arts and St David's Presbyterian Church at Kurrajong Heights.?

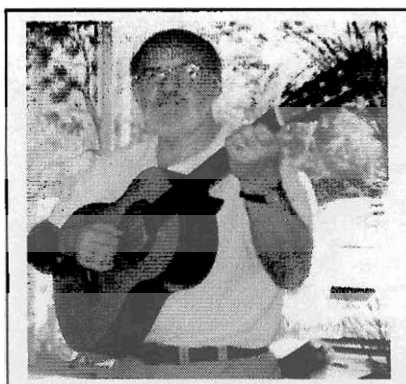
Minute Millstone Australia Day, 2004

- **March 22:** Meeting at Comleroy Community School of Arts. Guest speaker, Ron Rozzoli talking about the links between Kurrajong and the Richmond School of Arts.
- **March 27 and 28:** Weekend display of KCHS photos at the Transport and Signal Communications Museum Home of John and Carolynne Cooper, 13 Turpentine Grove. Cedar Ridge, Kurrajong
- **April 24 -26:** Heritage Week display at Creative Arts Centre, Fitzgerald Street, Windsor.
- **May 8:** KCHS fund-raising concert. St David's Presbyterian Church. Cost \$25 Kurrajong Heights.
- **May 24:** Meeting at Kurrajong CWA hall. 7.30pm. Guest speaker TBA
- **July 26: Dinner** meeting at Kurmond Wine Bar and Grill. Read next Millstone for details, time, cost bookings.
- **August 23 AGM**
Kurrajong CWA hall. 7.30pm.
- **Last minute news!!!:**
Bowen Mountain Walk,
April 17, 1pm.
See inside p7 more details....



The KCHS celebrated Australia Day (and its third birthday) at the Heavenly Bell Café . Here Elaine Schupp (Heavenly Bell's owner, Fiona Werle' s, mum, serves breakfast to Ros Hammond, Elaine Neil, Pat and Ian O'Toole.

Report submitted by Pat O'Toole:



Breakfast went down well for the large group of 60 people who came along. After **Steve Rawling's (left)** song of the rabbitohs, the guest speakers enthralled us with their stories of old kurrajong. Brian Dunston spoke of his home "Springvale", so named because of the abundantly flowing spring on the property.

As a youngster he was responsible for the family's vegetable garden near the spring. The height of the fruit trees in those days seemed staggering. Brian did suggest that much top-soil washed away from the steep hillsides because farmers were not particularly careful with it. They didn't know about soil erosion! Their neighbours were the Lords at Loxley, Taylors at Burnside and McMahons at Luckenough. Brian worked for many years with Kevin McMahon at the Bellbird Echo fruit stall. Kathie McMahon started her story in 1839 when John and Mary McMahon and their five children left Ireland to take up a grant of land at Kurrajong. Mary's brother, Thomas Higgins, an ex-convict had received it as a grant which he had given to Mary.

Australia Day 04

By Pat O'Toole

The first home at Luchenough was a slab hut at the bottom of the hill. The last child, Thomas was born here. His son, James Edward, was a Colo Shire Councillor for 35 years and McMahon Park is named after him. Kevin was the next generation and is the father of Kathie and Sue.

In 1929 it was becoming increasingly difficult to make ends meet from orchards. The Kurrajong railway, in spite of The Depression, brought a clientele looking for fun, fresh air farm produce and good home cooking (see Oct-Nov 2003 Millstone re Kurrajong Heights Hotel).

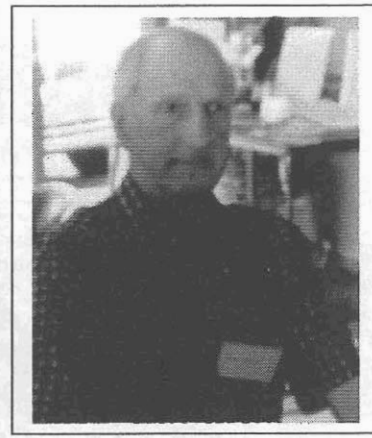
Mrs McMahon at her Bellbird Echo Guest House was able to meet all these requirements and so kept the family going. Accommodation was simple. The male guests slept on the verandah. Entertainments included tennis, horse-riding and other active pursuits. The guest house closed in 1946 as people were becoming more mobile. Around this time Kevin McMahon opened a fruit stall.

Sue McMahon recalled her youth spent working at the fruit stall. Being a family member she was not paid as much as other staff! There was no self-service in those days and as many as 10 people were regularly employed on weekends.

Both Brian and Sue recalled the Sunday bonus for workers. Mrs Betty McMahon cooked a sumptuous baked dinner followed by fresh fruit salad. Hopefully the customers also stopped for their picnic at the same time. Also mentioned was the re-routing of Bells Line of Road over the years.



Sue McMahon



Brian Dunston

Pat says: Apologies to speakers as this is only a brief account of the interesting snippets shared with KCHS members and friends.

What a vibrant and supporting community Kurrajong must have been in those active days of the past. As a newcomer to the area I find it fascinating to be able to relate these stories of days gone by to the present. Other places where I have lived not only have the stories long gone, but also the families and the land completely altered. Kurrajong has a rich and present past.



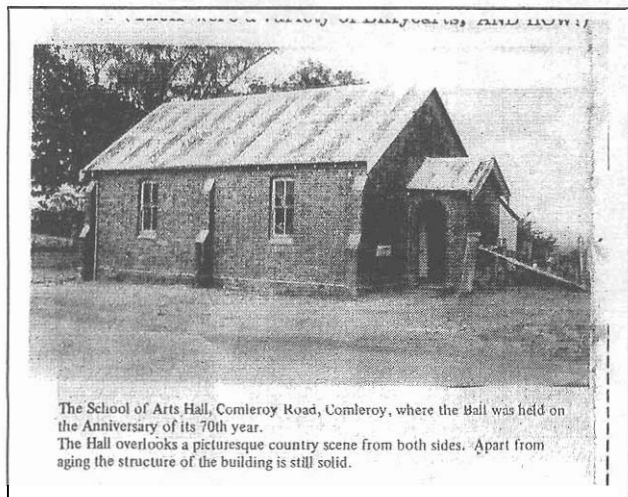
David and Jenny Griffiths

- Thanks on behalf of the KCHS to Fiona and Jop Werle for hosting our Australia Day breakfast at Heavenly Bell Café.

Australia Day is proving to be a popular event on the KCHS calendar of events.

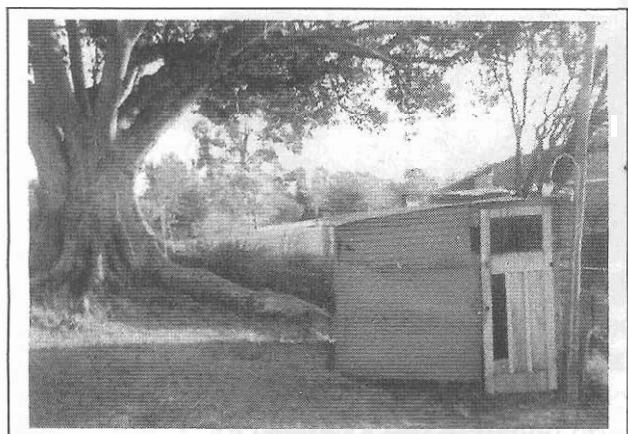
****See details about Greg Upton's Bowen Mountain historic road walk, April 17, on page 7..

Comleroy Conundrum:



The School of Arts Hall, Comleroy Road, Comleroy, where the Ball was held on the Anniversary of its 70th year.
The Hall overlooks a picturesque country scene from both sides. Apart from aging the structure of the building is still solid.

This appeared in a 1977 edition of the Macquarie Towns Review. In the 27 years since the hall's 70th anniversary ball, almost nothing in the way of repairs or maintenance has been carried out. Yet, despite this, the last statement in the photo caption: "Apart from aging the structure of the building is still solid" remains valid, due the high standards of builder Mr FJ Norris.



Artists love the quirky, "authentic" Aussie-style dunny aesthetics of look the Comleroy toots, but people wanting to hire the hall for functions aren't quite so amused.
To be a viable community venue in 2004 proper internal toilets are essential.

In December the KCHS committee was discussing the reasons why we had been unsuccessful in attaining a Federal Government through National Library Community Heritage Grant grant to purchase a computer, scanner and printer to ensure our digital collation of historic photos of "the Kurrajong" could continue.. Treasurer Joy Shepherd, who had successfully applied for the two Work for the Dole project advised that the project would soon end and we needed to plan for what would happen next with the collection.

Joy had applied for the Federal grant and when we were advised we had been unsuccessful she took up the invitation to discuss the reasons why with one of the project officers. We were told we had been unsuccessful because we did not have permanent home to store the computer, and because we scanned and returned the photos and did not retain the originals. Neither of these later stumbling blocks appeared as part of the criteria for the grant in the application. And as no-one from the evaluation committee had followed up with Joy re the application, we were left wondering why we were refused the grant on these grounds - and more to the point, how the evaluation committee could have known these things without seeking information directly from the KCHS committee.

The committee resolved to meet with Hawkesbury Councillors to see if KCHS could be assisted in overcoming the issue of a permanent home for our possessions, including a computer if we were successful in procuring one.

The meeting of the committee, plus some additional Society members and Mayor Rex Stubbs, Cr Dianne Finch, and Cr Paul Rasmussen Took place at the hall on Monday, February 23.

The Society members who attended were: President Jennifer Stackhouse, secretary Louise McMahon, treasurer Joy Shepherd, committee: Airdrie Martin, Kathie McMahon, Les Dollin, Val Birch. Plus Janette Lennox, Greg Upton, Valerie and Frank Holland, Bryan and Marguerite Wyborn, Jan Perks.

The meeting with the Hawkesbury Councillors who accepted the KCHS invitation was productive in that it identified the need for the Society to have a permanent home, and separated this from the need for the Comleroy School of Arts to be upgraded. Discussion on the fate of Comleroy as a viable community venue also raised the peripheral issue of the need for a larger community centre/hall in the centre of Kurrajong.

Who owns Comleroy hall?

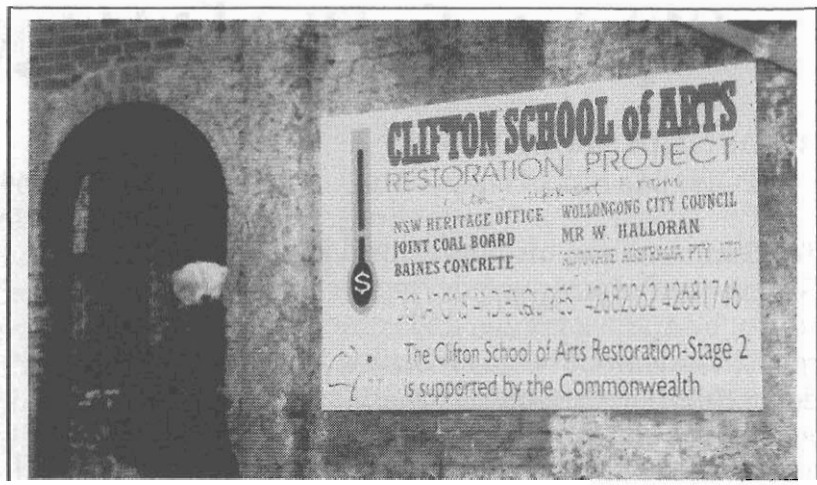
The question of ownership keeps being raised by Hawkesbury City Council administration as a reason why council cannot assist with capital works at the hall, yet as readers of the Sept-Oct 2002 issue of The Millstone know, Clifton School of Arts exists under exactly and precisely the same ownership as Comleroy, and Wollongong Council was able to help fully restore that building in 2001- 2003

The Comleroy School of Arts is administered under the Trustees of School of Arts Enabling Act 1902, as are hundred of school of arts, mechanics institutes and literary institutes across NSW.

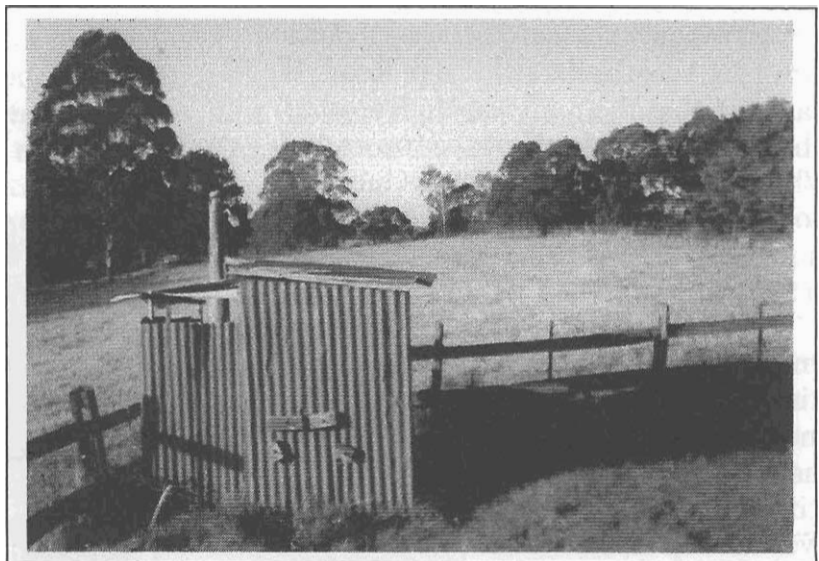
In 2002 Mr Kevin Rozzoli made representations on behalf of the Comleroy School of Arts committee and received advice from the Director General of the Department of Local Government that the Local Government Act empowered Hawkesbury Council to assist the hall under s 24 and section 365 of the Local Government Act.

The legislation exists for council to assist the hall.

All that is required is for Hawkesbury councillors to direct Council's administration to work with the Comleroy committee to agree on strategies like grants, or interest-free loans , to assist hall..



Clifton School of Arts was restored with assistance from Wollongong City Council. Comleroy and Clifton are "cousins" and have exactly the same administration structure - run for the community by community-elected trustees under the School of Arts Enabling Act, 1902.



The "ladies" toilets at Comleroy!
(Not really very "lady-like"!)

Artist and author Daphne Kingston has complete an oil painting of Comleroy Community School of Arts which she has donated to assist with fundraising for the hall. The Comleroy committee has valued the painting at \$500 and it is on display, and available for purchase at Roderick Storie's Solicitor's new Kurrajong office.

Simmons Family: Fishing at Wheeney Creek

BY DENNIS SIMMONS

(AS TOLD TO JOY SHEPERD)

Ted Simmons and his family lived in Greggs Road, Kurrajong during the 1940s. He and his family, and some of their friends would enjoy a fishing trip down to Wheeney Creek.

It required considerable organisation and a high level of fitness to go fishing. The party would usually leave home in the dark, around 3am, as daybreak was the best time to catch fish.

They would ride their push-bikes down from Kurrajong to Comleroy Road, which in those days was only tarred as far as Merindah Road, and continue on down Blaxlands Ridge Road, and then on to Ironbark Ridge. This was around 5km past Weatherboard Ridge Road. It was here that the mail was delivered to a box for the residents of the top end of Wheeney Creek. The Simmons family would leave their bikes at the top of the mountain and continue walking down to the deep water to fish.

On their way they would collect "horse stinger bushes", so called because the ends would fan out. This would enable them to hit insects, mainly horse stingers (dragon-flies) that would hover over the top of the water. The hit would stun the insects, and they could be hauled in to be used as natural bait for fishing. Crickets and beetles were also excellent perch bait.

On the cold mornings there was another way to catch dragon-flies. The extreme cold would freeze the insects to the grasses. As the day began to warm the frozen insects would fall to the ground. They could then just be picked up and used for bait.

This freezing did not affect the dragonflies, and as they warmed up, they would be able to fly away.

Once the fish was caught, bracken fern was collected and parts of the frogs were threaded through the gills of the fish. They would then be kept cool and moist, hanging in the water. If the fishermen moved their position, they would transfer the bracken fern laden with fish to the next spot in the creek. At the end of the day the fish would be scaled and cleaned, and salt inside. They would then be put into flour bags, brought along for the purpose, and wrapped, ready to be transported home. The tired and happy fishermen would then climb the mountain to collect their bikes for the return journey.



Not a fishing trip, but a day trip on sulk for the Simmons family. Photo, courtesy Dennis Simmons collection.

Vera's new toy! (or is it Gerry's?!)



KCHS members who were able to attend the Christmas party at Mackenzie Farm were impressed with the farm implements and other items members Vera and Gerry Bentvelzen have collected and restored.

Vera's latest project is a Fordson tractor which Gerry has tinkered with and is now using on the farm - but, Vera insists, the tractor is hers even if Gerry is the one who is always driving it!

Vera writes: "The tractor is a 1949 model, and in that year the manufacturer made 33,577 of them. We calculate this via deductions from page 49 of "A guide to Ford, Fordson and New Holland Tractors, 1907-1999" By Larry Gay (published by the American Society of Agricultural Engineers, Michigan, USA, 2001.

Stop Press!!!: Greg Upton's Walk is ON!
Visit an very early 1800s road in Bowen Mountain. Greg is researching this road as very little seems to be known about it.
DATE: Saturday, April 17 Time: 1pm
Place: Meet at Bowen Mountain Park community centre Lieutenant Bowen Road.
No charge, but bookings are ESSENTIAL
Book with Greg on 4572 1559
Or uptong@ozemail.com.au

Ours was no 14256 off the production line.

It is a Fordson Major E27 with steel wheels. It used to be painted blue with orange steel wheels. It was built in England. (There is also a spiked wheel version).

In October Gerry took me for a drive to Forbes to buy **ME** an old tractor for the property. Funny thing is **HE** is the one that fiddles with it and drives it, but he tells everyone it's mine! Roger Mackenzie - or should I say Mackenzie Farm, used to house a Fordson 1962 model with rubber tyres (diesel).

But the Fordson Major is the closest to it. Ours runs on kerosene and petrol mixed.

The tractor was delivered in early December at 1am. It was driven off the truck via ramps, then the fellow guided Gerry across the road with a torch as the tractor has no lights. It cost \$1800 delivered - not bad, I think.



Cooper's Hill open day



Dick Smith visited John and Carolynne Copper's museum in 2001
The 2004 open day is March 27 and 28.
13 Turpentine Close, off Lawrence Road, off Comleroy Road.
Time 10am to 4pm both days.

A special musical fundraiser

In December Kathie McMahon made an offer the KCHS committee couldn't refuse!!!

She would organise a concert featuring historical music which she anticipated would raise between \$500 \$1000! Naturally we all thought her offer a great idea!

According to Kathie's publicity material:

"The wrong side of the World (George Loveless)" at St David's Presbyterian Church, Kurrajong Heights, on **Saturday, May 8** will feature the history of early white settlement in Australia, and particularly Kurrajong, told through the traditional songs and through the words of poets like Henry Lawson, Frank MacNamara, George Loveless and contemporary song writers. The concert includes the story of the Tolpuddle martyrs (James Loveless was known to be the 'Kurryjung' area in 1834, as a convict). "We are also touching on songs of local interest like the rabbitos, bushfires and millstones. Appearing will be John Dengate, balladeer, raconteur and satirist, Margaret Walters, a strong, pure voice. Songs have a sense of truth and immediacy. Ruth Hart and Kim Poole - musicians and singers".

Bookings with Kathie, **4567-7105. \$25**
Includes supper and an art exhibition.

The Millstone is written and edited by KCHS secretary, **Louise McMahon**. Contributions are always welcome. Thanks to Vera Bentvelzen, Joy Shepherd, and Pat O'Toole for articles to be included in this edition.
BACK ISSUES FOR NEW MEMBERS:
A limited number of back issues are available to members who have joined in 2003. If you would like a back copy, contact Louise, the newsletter editor directly on **4573 1823**.

KCHS Merchandise:

(Please make contact with the correct person, as listed, for each of these items)

Chambray shirts with KCHS logo:

- **Order from Pat O'Toole:**

The society has made available to members a blue check chambray shirt with millstone logo and the wording "Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society".

Cost is \$35 for logo only left side. You can also choose to have you name embroidered.

- **Talk to Pat about sizes on 4573-0601**

- **Teaspoons:** With the KCHS logo, the Kurrajong millstones featured. Cost \$6. Postage extra.

Contact Joy Shepherd: 4571 1524

- **Photos:** Millstone photos and others from the KCHS collection are available for purchase. Contact Joy Shepherd: 4571 1524.

- **"On the Kurrajong"** Extracts from the Windsor Richmond Gazette compiled by Val Birch. Themes of agriculture, timber-getters and the Comleroy School of Arts, taken from KCHS first "Back to the Kurrajong" event in 2001. Cost \$15 Postage extra.

Joy Shepherd: 4571 1524

- **The Millstone back copies:**
Louise McMahon 4573 1823.