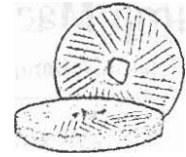


KURRAJONG - COMLERoy HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC

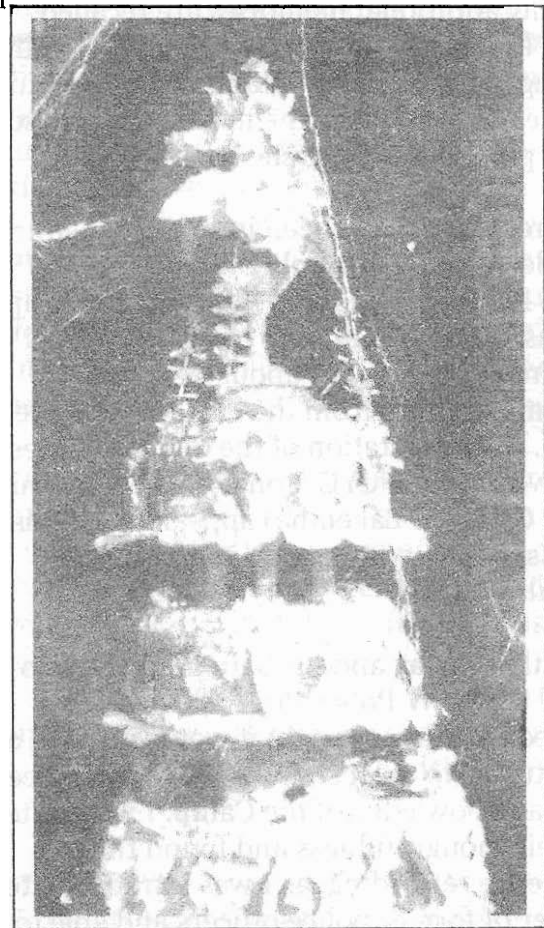
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The Millstone

2004: Volume Three, Issue Three: May- June

The Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society is dedicated to researching, recording, preserving and championing the history of "the Kurrajong", the district bounded by the Hawkesbury River at North Richmond, the Grose River, Cut Rock at Kurrajong Heights, along Comleroy and Blaxland Ridge Roads to the Putty Road at East Kurrajong, to the Colo River.



"Weddings of Yesteryear" is the theme for our guest speakers, Lorraine Hogben and Lynne Griffith of Kurrajong CWA, who will talk at our **Monday, May 22** meeting to be held at the Kurrajong CWA hall at 7.30pm.

Pic: The studio portrait of the wedding of Hjalmar (George) Ness and Helen (Nellie) Lord, of Kurrajong North (later Kurrajong Hills). The couple gained one of the original Soldier Settlement allotments after George returned from World War 1.

The elaborate wedding cake for the wedding of George Ness and Nellie Lord, from the collection of (daughter), Thelma Groch.

Camp Mackay Update, April 2004

By Valerie Holland

Research into Camp Mackay is continuing. The project remains in the gathering of information phase. Documentation is limited and difficult to locate and this has meant it has been necessary to seek information from people with first hand knowledge of the Camp. The approach adopted aims to provide a wide overview of the ideals and the activities of the Camp.

Interviewing is time consuming as it takes some time to achieve targeted outcomes, particularly as many additional memories are recalled. These additional memories add to the picture helping to give a more detailed account, which at times, also result in the need to rewrite some of the previously researched data.

Most recently I have been interviewing Murray Saunders, who was a police officer in the NSW Police Force, and is still a resident of Kurrajong. He was stationed at Camp Mackay with his wife Barbara and family for about 18 years. The time frame is from the late 1960s to the mid 1980s. Documentation of the Camp minutes (archived at the PCYC, Police and Community Youth Clubs, at Lakemba) appears to be missing for this period, so Murray's input is very helpful.

Recently Murray and Barbara invited me to attend the NSW Police Boys' Club annual luncheon, as they thought it would give me an opportunity to meet some of the older police who had knowledge of the Camp. I was grateful for their thoughtfulness and found the experience rewarding, as I was introduced to a number of former police officers and able to obtain additional contact details. It will take time to follow up on these contacts, however I am hopeful that some more of the gaps in information will be filled in through these eyewitness accounts.

The PCYC continues to be a useful but frustrating source for information as reorganisation there has resulted in documents and files being moved, mislaid or lost.

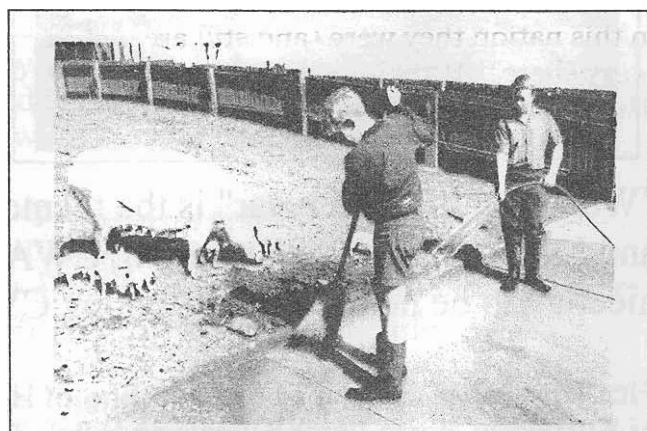


From the collection of Murray Saunders

I am in the process of making contact with the new archivist so that our group can continue the process of photocopying any appropriate records for later research. Research of photocopies of minutes already obtained is progressing steadily.

I continue to be on the look out for any photographic or documentary history of the Camp. These records help bring the project to life. Our Society is happy to accept photographs from the public or have them scanned into our computer records with the originals returned to the owner. I can be contacted on 4573-2226.

**Camp Mackay researcher,
Valerie Holland.**



**The piggery was an important part of
Camp Mackay.**

Historic Links between Richmond School of Arts and Kurrajong

Ron Rozzoli, presented to the March 22 meeting at Comleroy Community School of Arts

IT IS TOLD that 181 years ago George Birkbeck launched the London Mechanics Institute. Two thousand people attended this inaugural meeting in 1823 to embrace the ideal of the "diffusion of scientific knowledge" to workers. The movement swept around the globe as the following indicates:

Van Diemens Land Mechanics Institute, 1827

South African Mechanics Institute, 1828

Sydney Mechanics School of Arts, 1833

(The oldest in NSW)

St Johns. Canada, 1827

Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge,

Canton, China, 1837

St Petersburg Institute in Russia, 1831

Richmond in 1861 and Comleroy in 1907.

The idealistic concept that these institutions were to educate the mechanics in science and technology regardless of affluence or social status were never achieved. By 1830 this ideal had been largely abandoned in Great Britain in favour of elementary classes popular lectures and entertainment. The structure of Australian schools of arts uplifted and transplanted from the British model was adapted to the Colonial conditions.

The formerly overstated idealism was modified and adapted to local community needs providing a home for reading, attending lectures of general interest, cultural and social requirements, civil discussion and debate.

In this nation they were (and still are everywhere). At their peak there were many more than in Great Britain; in their thousands, compared to hundreds in the mother country.

Their central role in the 19th and early 20th century declined as communities grew and diversified. The early functions were supplanted by technical evening colleges (now TAFE) and by the late 20th century their social functions had largely been swamped by the growth of licensed clubs, with their access to vast amounts of revenue generated by poker machines.

As far as the Hawkesbury is concerned, it has in Richmond School of Arts a particularly vigorous variant of the concept.

At Richmond, in the beginning there was the debating society. In an issue of a briefly published "Windsor Review" at 14 August 1857, there was a report of the Richmond Young Mens' Association being formed and a library commenced.

To this day what happened over the next 12 months remains unclear, however it can be guessed that much the same group of people gravitated to the idea of the establishment of a School of Arts. What is certain is that the original subscription list in archives is the handwriting of the original secretary, Mr Withers, dated 21 Aug, 1858, is headed by a substantial list, with the largest donation at £100 from George Bowman. Little progress was made over nearly the next three years, as by 11 October, 1861, a public meeting was called to resuscitate "the society".

It is from this date that the detailed records of Richmond Literary Institute, now the Trustee and manager of the Richmond School of Arts, commence. A new committee was formed on 1st November, 1861, with George Bowman as president.

George Bowman is the first of the characters to be talked about in this Richmond-Kurrajong story tonight.

George was born at 14 Oxford Street, London in 1795. He arrived in Sydney aged three, with his parents, John and Honor Bowman on the vessel, "Barwell". At the time of making his substantial donation of the previously mentioned £100 he was aged 66.

He had married Elizabeth Sophia Pierce at Kings Langley on 24 May, 1820. The wedding was at the home of his parents, "Bleak House" in Windsor Street, Richmond.

This was to become his home until his death. We now refer to this building as "Bowman Cottage" at 367 Windsor Street. It is curious to wonder about the now disused name of this house. However, a clue may be in Macquarie's arrangement of providing high ground for the settlers on the Lowlands.

Their house was commenced by George's father in 1821 on the ridge, which may have been bare, lacking colour, exposed and windswept, in a word "Bleak". It precedes the publicity of Charles Dickens famous novel of the same name by some 30 years.

George and Eliza Bowman had eight children. We are concerned here with two daughters, Eliza, born 26 February, 1832 and Mary, born 1st November 1833.

George and brother William were both very successful. George's first grant was of 100 acres at Singleton.

The process of taking up grants of land relinquished by other grantees was employed to accrue thousands of acres of property. Archerfield, Oaklands, Balmoral, Skeelter, Gorran Hills, Rotherwood, Gurely, Terry Hie Hie. He was a founder of the Bank of NSW (now Westpac). Member of the first Parliament and founding director of the Richmond Bridge Company. He was the largest contributor to the Australian College, established in 1831 by the Rev John Dunmore Lang. Rev Lang also played a leading role in establishing the Sydney Mechanics School of Arts.

George financially supported the establishment of schools at Richmond, North Richmond and Kurrajong Heights.

He gave generously to assist with the building of St David's Presbyterian Church at Kurrajong Heights. George died aged 86 on the 26 August 1878. His obituary in the Sydney Mail of 7 September, 1878 said, in part "to him Richmond is largely indebted for its public buildings and public institutions". (Some 200 years later the same can still be said for Richmond and Kurrajong).

Let us now return to January 10, 1868, a pleasant summer afternoon, a Saturday "when a large concourse of people assembled" at the corner of West Market Street, and March Streets, Richmond for the laying of the foundation stone of Richmond School of Arts. Among many others we will meet the second character in our story, James Cameron.

Punctually at 5pm, Mary Anne Bowman arrived, escorted by her father. Proceedings opened with a speech by George Bowman, stating the objects of the occasion and the satisfaction at seeing the building at last commenced. Dr Selkirk then gave an outline of events "to the present", touching on the difficulties with which the committee had had to contend. He concluded in becoming terms to present to Miss Bowman a handsome silver trowel and a mallet of myall wood, manufactured in Richmond.

A bottle containing daily papers, coins of the realm, and a parchment setting out the details of persons attending to the project was placed in the cavity prepared for it. The stone is unmarked and the whereabouts of the cavity unknown. The secretary, the Rev James Cameron, responded on Mary Anne's behalf, in part saying that, "had she been accustomed to public speaking, he felt cordial thanks would have been expressed. How much more she might have said he knew not, nor would he attempt to indicate".

The building was completed and opened by Sir Henry Parkes on the 27th August, 1866. Sir Henry made a gift of books to the library. After a considerable amount of distinguished oratory it was the term of William Walker MLA and part of his address was this: "You must not imagine that because you have completed a fine building that therefore you have consummated everything. That is but a small matter comparatively. Having got your building up, you will find it no easy matter to carry on operations successfully, but it can be done by an earnest and strong effort on the part of those amongst us who have the will and the power".
(RR: Builders of new museums, art galleries and restored hospitals, please note!)

Our second character had by now become George Bowman's son-in-law. He had married Eliza Sophia Bowman on her 25th birthday, 26 February, 1857, again at "Bleak House".

James Cameron was born on 17 June 1826 in Aberdeen Shire, Scotland. He attended parish school, then the Government School of Old Aberdeen, won a bursary to Kings College, University of Aberdeen, graduating with a Master of Arts degree in 1848. Two years of theological studies followed, then he went to Berlin. Following requests from the Colonial Committee of the Free Kirk of Scotland, he agreed to go to NSW, arriving in 1853.

His first charge was at Carcoar, where it is recorded he told of his parish extending to the Gulf of Carpentaria.

On 28 February, 1856, he became pastor to the parishes of Richmond, Castlereagh and Penrith. This included Kurrajong.

He remained secretary at Richmond School of Arts until 1867 and was vice-president in 1889 and 1890.

Subsequently, as Dr Cameron, he played a very prominent role in the Presbyterian Church in many departments, by being Moderator General on two occasions. To mark 50 years in the Church, a civic reception was held in the School of Arts on 3rd October, 1903.

It took the form of a tea meeting, followed by a speech night, interspersed with musical items. About 350 people attended sittings, of which there were three, commencing at 6pm.

Following a trip to England, the Rev Dr Cameron arrived back in Australia with his brother, Dr Andrew Cameron MD.

With an enchanting sense of family consolidation, Dr Andrew Cameron married Mary Ann Bowman on 24 May 1871, a little more than five years after she laid the foundation stone.

They made their home at Kurrajong Height. This was probably "Ivey Lodge", built on the original land grant to the earliest settler on Kurrajong Heights, Joseph Douglas.

The property was acquired by the Cameron brothers and used as their mountain retreat. It was renamed "Locheil House".

Mary Anne died aged 42 on 4 June, 1876, followed by her husband on 18 October of the same year.

In 1898 Rev Dr Cameron, his daughter, two lady friends and a Mr W Sallmon hired a wagonette from Mr S Dunston at Richmond and travelled from Kurrajong heights to Mt Tomah. Details of this journey were published in the "Windsor and Richmond Gazette", and parts of the narrative are of interest.

"After an early start they made their way down Cut Rock which was particularly rough and undergoing repairs (**RR:200 years later it still is!**) The wagonette required careful handling. Avenue of trees for 12 miles. They called on Mrs Williamson, a superior woman according to Cameron, who was too busy for idle musing.

Next they visited Mr Somerville. He had just sold up to migrate to NZ for the sake of the health of his wife. Cameron remarked: "the departure of a man of Mr Somerville's ability and culture will be a great loss". Mention is made of Mountain Lagoon Road, "a large stretch of excellent soil where settlement is going on".

He mentions the magnificence of the orchards of Peter Powell and Mr Norwood, filled with orange, apple and other trees.

He then mentions the Slingsby family workers clearing timber. On conversing with Mr Fox, the good reverend hinted that it would be an advantage to him to have a partner to share his joys and the sorrows. Fox replied: "Men who marry do well, men that don't, do better!".

They lastly visited an old man, Mr Cribble, who was illiterate. "Had lunch, bought cherries and enjoyed his company". Cameron was intrigued by the use of the word "bloomin", meaning something very hateful. It was "bloomin this" and "bloomin that".

In 1899 Dr Cameron was asked to write the centenary history of the Presbyterian Church in NSW. A gigantic task.

He had nearly finished when he died on Sunday, 8 October 1905.

The Moderator of Australia, Rt Rev Bruce presided at the very large funeral. The Church had organised a special train from Sydney to bring the visitors, in the main clergy, to Richmond.

The Rev Walker, who completed the church history, concluded his tribute to James Cameron at the end of the book with the words: "In various ways he turned the common dust of service opportunity to gold".

The School of Arts minutes of 7th November, 1905 record "The president referred in feeling terms to the death of the Rev Dr Cameron, one of the trustees of the Institution, and asked for a minute to be recorded. Mr Biddle moved and Mr McCoy seconded, it was carried: "that this committee record their extreme regret at the death of the Rev Cameron, one of the founders of the Institution, and recognise that in him Richmond School of Arts loses a staunch supporter and a warm friend".

A little more than 18 months later, at the committee meeting of 7 June, 1907, a letter was read from the secretary of the Comleroy Road School of Arts inviting this committee to take part in a stone laying function on Saturday, 8th (RR: of July?). This letter, which was addressed to the president, was replied to by him thanking the Comleroy Road School of Arts committee for their invitation and intimating that the day fixed (a Saturday) would prevent some at least from attending, himself among others, but he "hoped they would have a successful day".

On now to the year 1925. The committee meeting of 2 June, from the Kurrajong

Dramatic Club, asking that certain improvements be made to the stage for the holding of their entertainment "The Arabian Nights", on Thursday, 14 June. It was resolved that the Society be informed that the School of Arts will comply with their requests.

On 2 September, 1925, reference is made to the provision of a new "no smoking" signs in the corridor, highlighting the requirements that smoking was prohibited in licenses public halls. And from the report of the 65th annual general meeting (1926): Mr AP Biddle reported that Mr Stevenson had inspected the cracks in the walls of the billiard room and considered them of no serious nature. On being asked if the railway was the cause, he stated he did not think such was the case, but rather the foundations settling down. However he later admitted that the railway might be the cause. (The official opening of the line to Kurrajong, which passed along March Street, right along side the S of A, was 20 November, 1926.

An important part of the early 20th century role of the School of Arts was providing meeting rooms for a range of local organisations. The role of lodges was so significant that many S of A buildings included a special room for their use. Richmond was no exception.

Before 1928 it was the home of the Masonic Lodge and several lodges of the Grand United Order of Oddfellows, and the Buffalo Lodge.

Lodge Kurrajong was one that lasted into the 1960s. In their best form they were the forerunners of the medical benefits fund of today. Some actually operated pharmacies, an example was at Chatswood.

At the opposite end of the scale they were a male-only gathering for heavy smoking and loud and very unmusical renditions of some quite unmentionable ballads, accompanied by a very old honky-tonk piano.

(The remainder of Ron's talk will be printed in the July-August issue of The Millstone).

The KCHS will hold its AGM at Richmond School of Arts on Monday, August 23 at 7.30pm.

Bowen Mountain Walk,

April 17, Greg Upton

On 30 October, 1795, Matthew Everingham, accompanied by John Ramsay and William Reid set out from Parramatta to try and pioneer a route across the Blue Mountains. Everingham recorded his expedition in a series of three letters he wrote to Samuel Shepherd, a London barrister, and which had disappeared, only to be rediscovered over 150 years later in Melbourne (see Ross, 1985). The expedition lasted 12 days, and evaluation of Everingham's letters indicates that the route travelled west from Richmond Hill (the site of the present St John of God Hospital) along and close to the northern side of Grose River, then up a spur to the ridge along which runs today's Cabbage Tree Road, then up the ridge on which Bowen Mountain Road now runs, then from the top of the mountain westward along the ridge carrying today's Lt Bowen Road, thereafter descending partly down toward the Buralow valley before proceeding north along the Tabaraga Ridge to Wheeney Gap, then westward through the Mt Tootie and Mountain Lagoon area to somewhere near Mt Irvine. At this point the expedition gave up and returned.

Everingham's expedition may not have been as romanticised as those of Dawes (Penrith to Faulconbridge, 1789), Caley (Richmond to Mt Bell/Mt Calley, 1804) or Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson (St Marys to and approximately along the present alignment of the Great Western Highway in the Blue Mountains, 1813.), probably because he and his colleagues were commoners of no social standing, the expedition was unofficial and unfunded, and recorded details have only been available in the last 25 years, however it did achieve a very valuable purpose. Lt James Finucane was the secretary to Lt Governor Joseph Foveaux, who governed NSW from July 1808 (following the deposition of Governor Bligh) to January 1809. Finucane was then appointed as an assistant to Lt-Colonial William Paterson who governed the colony for the remaining period until the appointment of Lachlan Macquarie in 1810. Whitaker (1998) has analysed the journal of Finucane and recounts that Foveaux was concerned about the importance of the

Hawkesbury' region's value to the Colony for agricultural production and its vulnerability in times of drought. Successive floods in May and August of 1809 destroyed the Hawkesbury's crops requiring Government rations to be halved. Possibly to inspect the region for future agricultural use or to pursue additional arable or pastoral lands west of the Blue Mountains, Finucane notes two visits made by Foveaux to the Hawkesbury region at this time. The first was in December 1808, when he sailed up the Hawkesbury River in a government barge, and the second was six months later when he returned and went to the junction of the Hawkesbury and Grose Rivers, just west of Richmond Hill.

On this second visit to the Hawkesbury is highly possible that it was Foveaux's intention for he and his party to inspect a possible means of crossing the Blue mountains, and to achieve this by following the route pioneered by Everingham from Richmond Hill to the top of Bowen Mountain. Possible evidence of this is the date "AoDi 1809" carved on a rock face at the northern end of a ridge on Bowen Mountain. Writing above this date is unfortunately too worn to be decipherable. Foveaux would have had the option also to proceed to the northern side of Devils hole Creek to connect with the route pioneered five years earlier by George Caley, however the lack of any documented account by Finucane of what exactly he did, or indeed if he at all proceeded further past Richmond Hill, allows us only to speculate on these possibilities.

Another, but less probably source of this engraved date could have been by Lt Archibald Bell, who in 1808 received a land grant of 500 acres at Richmond Hill, adjacent to an earlier grant of 40 acres by Governor King six years earlier to John Bowman. In 1809 Bell bought Bowman's 40 acres and received a further grant of 1000 acres from Lt Colonial William Paterson, governor at that time and who apparently was a good friend. Bell built a home on this grant and renamed the hill "Belmont" before returning to England in 1810 after being implicated in the overthrow of Governor Bligh. Whitaker, A (1998). *Distracted Settlement, NSW after Bligh. From the Journal of Lieutenant James Finucane, 1808-1810.* Melb Uni Press. Ross, V (1985) (ed) *The Everingham Letterbook. Letters of First Fleet Convict.* Anvil Press.

Minute Millstone

Thanks to contributors to the Millstone this month: Valerie Holland, Ron Rozzoli and Greg Upton.

The **Monday, May 24** meeting will be held at the Kurajong CWA hall and we will hear from Lynne Griffith and Lorraine Hogben who will talk about collating the Weddings of Yesteryear exhibition that will be at the CWA hall on the weekend of May 29 and 30. The KCHS is contributing a display of photos for this exhibition. Meeting starts at 7.30pm members and guests welcome.

The KCHS participated in John and Carolynne Cooper's open day of their transport communications museum on the weekend of March 27 and 28. Thanks to members **David and Jenny Griffiths** who manned our display on the Saturday. I believe there are pictures which may be available for the next Millstone.

Two walks to visit the site of the Singleton mills will be lead by Les Dollin. The first is on Saturday, May 15 and the second is Friday, May 21. Both start at 9am, meet at the carpark on Mill Road, Kurrajong at the entrance to Merroo Conference Centre.

Both walks are **STRICTLY "MEMBER'S ONLY"**. The walk is to a scrubby, bush environment. It is essential for participants to take responsibility for their own safety and comfort by wearing sturdy boots or walking shoes, bring drinking water, hat, sunscreen and a jacket. The walks will be cancelled if it is raining. To book, and for a weather check on the day, phone Les: 4576-1495.

Members are advised that all authorised and endorsed KCHS events are discussed at committee and society meetings. The details are then published in the Millstone, with the event open to all members. KCHS members who organise their own excursions and activities beyond those discussed at meetings and advertised in the Millstone are not covered by KCHS insurance.



Greg Upton leads the Bowen Mountain walk.

The next issue of The Millstone will publish the details of researcher, Louise Wilson who is interested in the Forrester, Bushell and Brown families. This material had to be held over as this issue of the Millstone was already committed to Ron Rozzoli's talk and Greg Upton's walk. This is the stuff a newsletter's editor's dreams are made of - an oversupply of contributed material! Thanks to all.

Work for Dole Photo Project

Project leader Joy Shepherd reports that the second six-month term of the Work for the Dole project has been completed. Joy says there is support from Hawkesbury Skills for KCHS to apply for a third lot of Work for the Dole funding, but as Joy has now been working on this project for 12 months (two lots of six months) and it has involved a huge time commitment on her part, she says she needs to have break. Unfortunately the second term of the project was nowhere near as successful as the first, with lots of gremlins in the computers and photos being scanned to the wrong resolution, therefore necessitating a lot of redoing of the same work again and again, rather than moving forward. Despite the enormous frustrations with the second project, Joy has been a champion of patience and dedication, and her doggedly determined efforts saw some results achieved. Thanks Joy.

July Dinner meeting: Will be held at Kurmond Wine Bar and Grill on Monday, July 26. Details still have not been confirmed, so see the July-August edition of The Millstone.

The Millstone is the official newsletter of the Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society. Send contributions to the editor, Louise McMahon.