

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 11; JULY-AUGUST 2005

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 Blaxlands Ridge Roads to East Kurrajong, and to the Colo River. "The Millstone" refers to the Little Wheeny Creek millstones on display at Kurrajong Memorial Park. Logo designed for the Society by artist Tony Dixon.

IN THIS ISSUE

FEATURE STORY

➤ Our historic schools

The Kurrajong area has a wealth of history in its schools with several local primary schools celebrating major milestones - Page 4

ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

➤ The road to Comleroi

Les Dollin reports on the links between Kurrajong and the Hunter Valley discovered on the road to Comleroi - Story begins on this page

➤ Richmond's fascinating past revealed

Mary Avern led members on an intriguing stroll through some little known historic gems in Richmond - Here she shares some stories and photos - Page 3

FAMILY INFORMATION

➤ Hill and Lindsay families

The extraordinary story of Evelyn Hill, our first female university graduate, has prompted more information about the Hill and Lindsay families - Page 10

BRIEFINGS

➤ News and Information

- Page 2

➤ Dates for your Diary

- Page 12

KCHS REDISCOVERS THE ORIGINAL COMLERoy

Comleroy Road, Australia's first road north, was officially opened in 1823. Some 182 years later, a group of Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society members retraced the historic route under the guidance of expedition leader Les Dollin. In this article Les and Anne Dollin report on the adventure.

On Monday 2 May, 2005 an enthusiastic group of 33 members of the Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society gathered to retrace the historic Comleroy road to its original destination – Comleroy in the Hunter (see Comleroy Fact File).

The group left Kurrajong Brush near the site of Ben Singleton's water mill in Mill Road, Kurrajong. The original road forded Wheeny Creek at Wheeny Creek Reserve, and Colo River at Upper Colo Reserve. Due to time limitations, though, we detoured via Blaxlands Ridge and picked up the original road at Colo Heights (Parrs Brush).

We were privileged to have with our group Andy Macqueen, author of 'Somewhat Perilous'. Andy's book tells the fascinating

story of five Northern Blue Mountains explorers with transcripts from their journals and letters. We stopped at Colo Heights while Andy and Les provided a commentary on this section of the original Comleroy Road. It had taken Singleton and Parr five days to reach this point on foot in November 1817.

We continued along the original Comleroy Road, passing places with wonderful names like New Yard, Grassy Hill, Mellong Rock, The Gibba, Six Brothers Water Hole, King's Waterhole, Bullring Hill, High Wollemi, then down Staircase Hill to Putty. The middle section of this long road was once also called the Bulga Road, but now is called the Putty or Singleton Road.

Putty and hot scones and sticky date pudding

Nestled in the picturesque Putty Valley is the Clairvaux Tea Room operated by Steve and Therese Donnelly and their children Angela, Rachael, Jerome and Luke. The tea room is on the first land grant at Putty that had been given to Hannah Laycock as a

Continued on page 6



Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society members at Ben Singleton's farm in the original Comleroy district (with its many different spellings) in the Hunter. [Photo courtesy Ian O'Toole]

News

By Jennifer Stackhouse

Settlement to Federation recorded at Blacktown

The Blacktown & District Historical Society is compiling a Pioneer Register for all people who lived or worked in the Blacktown area from First Settlement to Federation (1788-1901). The society is anxious to collect family names, dates of birth, death and marriage and where people lived and worked in the area.

If you have any link with Blacktown in the 1788-1901 period, contact Jan French on (02) 9674 9745 or Maureen King on (02) 9836 0159.

Fee rise

Membership renewals are included with this newsletter. Our over 75 members will notice a slight increase in fees to cover increased postal costs. This fee rise was recommended and passed at our AGM last year. Ordinary and household membership fees remain unchanged.

Digital archiving update

Joy Shepherd reports that the Digital Archiving Project has been working overtime in 2005. Much of the impetus is due to Joy's hard work and also that of several society members including Val Birch and Valerie Holland. We have been really grateful for the help of our two hardworking assistants Faith and Jody, who have been

working on the project as part of the Work for the Dole scheme. Faith left to pursue a nursing course, while Jody has taken maternity leave. We wish them well in their future careers as nurse and mum.

During this year the society has sourced, scanned and saved on disk more than 500 images, including all of the descriptions. Thank you to all of the generous contributors.

Thanks to the generosity of Bob McCallum and the Bendigo Bank we will have a computer, our entire scanned photo collection and a printer available during the 'The Kids of the Kurrajong' exhibition.

Funding boost

Thanks to the hard work of our secretary Valerie Holland, the society is pleased to announce that we have been successful in our application for funding through the Volunteer Small Equipment Grant. The society has received \$2735 towards the purchase of a laptop computer and digital camera to enable us to continue to record local history.

Making your mark with history

Please make it a priority to write on the back of your photos, while you can remember the details, and most importantly, the date. But do it with pencil, not pen, so that the photo will not be damaged. There are special pencils available that are recommended for this task. They are high wax pencils called Staedtler Chinagraph Pencils numbered 808. Joy Shepherd has procured some in bulk at a good price, and is happy to provide

you with one for just \$1.50. If you want a pencil, call Joy on 4573 1524, or speak to her at a future function.

Railway celebrations steaming along

Member Carolynne Cooper is keen to see this society involved in the NSW Railways 150th celebrations. The event will be celebrated on the weekend of 15-16 October. We will be loaning suitable photographs from our collection and will update members of details of the event in the next newsletter so watch this space!

Read all about it in colour

Although this newsletter is printed in black and white, it is prepared in colour. If you would like to see a colour version we can arrange to email the newsletter to you as a pdf file. If you have an email address and would like to receive a colour copy contact Jennifer Stackhouse on her email jstackho@bigpond.net.au. If you register your email address with the society you will automatically be included in email updates, notes and reminders.

Constitution reviewed

When the society became an incorporated body it adopted an off-the-shelf constitution called the Model Rules, provided by the Department of Fair Trading. While useful to get the society established the committee felt the constitution needed to be adapted to better suit the needs of the society. A subcommittee headed by our public officer, Frank Holland, has now reviewed and revised our constitution. A draft constitution has been prepared for consideration.

The draft constitution will be circulated to members with the September newsletter, prior to the Annual General Meeting on 25 September. It must be adopted (or not) at a Special Meeting of the society. This will be held immediately after the AGM. If you have any queries about the draft constitution contact Frank Holland on 4573 2226.

Max and Gwen Doyle honoured

Society members Max and Gwen Doyle were recognised in the recent Queen's Birthday honours list with the award of an Order of Australia Medal. The Doyles were honoured for their long and outstanding contribution to the local community. Congratulations Max Doyle OAM and Gwen Doyle OAM.



Society members participate at the opening of the new library

Left: Ian Henry pipes Hawkesbury City Councillors and the Chief Librarian into the new library at its official opening at Windsor on 6th June 2005. [Photo by Joy Shepherd]



Right: Val Birch as part of the human chain of 360 people passing the final books from the old to the new library. [Photo by Joy Shepherd]

RICHMOND - KURRAJONG CONNECTION WALK

The 'Richmond-Kurrajong Connection' was the title of the Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society's Lunch Club outing held on 14 June, 2005. Mary Avern, a well-known identity who has lived in this district all of her life, led a group of interested people around many of the outstanding and historical sites of Richmond. Here she reports on the walk, which began at Bowman's Cottage in Windsor Street.

St Peter's Church

First stop was St Peter's Church. The church was opened so that the lovely windows and the very old pipe organ could be viewed. Many old time residents of the Kurrajong district rest in the nearby cemetery. Names of particular note include John Essy, Richard Skuthorp, James Douglass, George Mayo, Ed. Erwin, John Sylvester (1840), Henry Lamb (1839), Jane Hawkins, George Sunderland, Mary Leonard, Hanna Pittman (1846), Henry Lamb (1791 – 1839), William Fuller, Mary John (1835), Susan Wright (1852), Eliza Bridge (1840).

The grave of Richard Rouse was also seen. After arriving on the *Nile* in December 1801, Rouse was given a grant of land in 1802 just over the bridge at North Richmond, then called Enfield. By 1842, he had acquired 300 acres and the help of two convicts. Margaret Catchpole was at one time his overseer.

John Town is another interesting Richmond man with Kurrajong connections. Arriving on the *Royal Admiral* in 1800 the 1825 muster shows him living on land leased from Richard Rouse. His relationship with Rouse was not always smooth. There are records of Rouse objecting to Town's plan to put a road through the land and threats of court action which did not eventuate. In 1827 Town lived in a house on the corner of Windsor and Paget Streets. Later his grandson, Andrew, built a home on this site. Town built a large home that became the George 4th Inn. At one time races were held which started from the inn and covered 5000 yards to the finishing line at the Black Horse Inn further down Windsor Street. The façade of the Black Horse can still be seen today behind the row of shops on the corner of Windsor and Bosworth Streets.

In 1836 Town built the Woolpack Inn at North Richmond on land also leased from Rouse. Prior to 1830 Town purchased a piece of land from Bell, part of which he gave to build St Phillip's Church of England, where the foundation stone was laid in 1859. He also bought Ben Singleton's Mills at Kurrajong.

John Sherwood was a convict who together with two others stole sheep. Consequently he arrived here aboard the *Glutton* in March 1803. He worked for John Dight in 1806 and co-habited with one Anne Lane and took her son John as his own. They had seven children, and in 1841 he took his family to Kurrajong Heights to 'Garden Woodhill', which he had purchased and later re-named 'Woodside' (later to become the residence of the late Arthur Poole). When Sherwood died in 1850 his property passed to his youngest son James. John and Anne's grave is unmarked in St Peter's.

Up Windsor Road

As the group left the cemetery Mary gave some interesting snippets of past identities of the area, mentioning that a Blyk Sly was the first paying passenger on the Pansy and that Breaker Morant lived in Richmond for a time. As the group moved up Windsor Street, Mary pointed out Cornwell's house and butchery on the corner of Bosworth Street.

Outside the Magnolia Mall attention was drawn to the very large magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*) that was planted there about 1840 and which is still flourishing today.

The bakery, grocery store, the Army Medical Corp. Headquarters, bank, garage, saddlery and chemist were all on the site of the present Coles supermarket. The saw mill was behind the current book store and Thomas Sullivan's school and shop were next door, where Bennett's Real Estate office is now.

West Market Street

Mary then took the group into West Market Street, to St Andrew's Uniting Church built by George Bowman and where the Rev. James Cameron was the minister for 50 years. He also owned Lochiel at Kurrajong Heights, and was the minister of St David's Uniting Church at Kurrajong Heights.

A highlight of the tour was the visit to 'Eulabah' ¹, a home next to St Andrew's Church. Once the home of Rev. Cameron it is now the beautifully restored home of Mrs Maggie Kable, who allowed the group to view the downstairs area of the house. An outstanding feature of the house is the cedar staircase with its large stained glass window. Previously this house was the Richmond Community Hospital, then a maternity hospital, and finally an aged care nursing home.

On the opposite side of West Market Street Mary pointed out the site of the Presbyterian School built in 1860, which was sold to the government and became the first government school in the area about 1879. Lunch was the next stop at Walton Cottage (now Al's Steak and Pasta House). The front part of the restaurant is a modern addition. Behind can be seen the original cottage which was owned by the Mayor of Richmond, Ben Sullivan (1922).

Next to Walton Cottage in Windsor Street was the Royal Hotel and around the corner in East Market Street was the horse trough where lots of Kurrajong folk would water their horses when they came to town.

'Toxana' was the next historical point. It was built in 1841 as the home of William Bowman, the area's first Member of Parliament and brother of George Bowman. It was later the first home of the Hawkesbury Agricultural College.

Beside 'Toxana' is the Regent Theatre, restored for media identity Mike Walsh when he was the owner. The movie theatre was heavily involved in the production of live theatre as well as popular concerts.

Continued on page 9



Mary Avern (right) makes a point, with Kathie McMahon assisting with the loudspeaker. [Photo by Ian O'Toole]



SCHOOLS OF THE KURRAJONG DISTRICT

This region has a wealth of public primary schools, some with lengthy histories and many at or approaching major milestones. All are a vibrant part of the history of the district. It seems timely to begin to put together the history of our public primary schools.

Early days

The earliest schools in Kurrajong were church schools. One of the first mentions of a school for Kurrajong is an application for government funding by Bishop Broughton in 1831.

The first official school in the district was on the site of St Gregory's Catholic Church in Kurrajong. The school building, erected in 1834, functioned as both a non-denominational school and church. Although initially non-demoninational, it was regularly referred to as 'the Catholic School'. Schools were also built at Hermitage Road in 1836 (known as the 'Anglican School'), and on the site of St Stephens Church in 1873.

Barker College was founded at Kurrajong Heights in 1890 by the Rev. H. Plume. This school relocated to its present site in Hornsby in 1896.

Schools were initially funded by the local community with additional funding provided by the government through the

Council of Education. Schools were managed by local communities or through the churches. School teachers pay rates were low and school buildings on the whole were poor with few facilities and little in the way of books and equipment. Most students did not attend school regularly.

Public school education was promoted by the introduction in 1880 of the Public Instruction Act and the making of schooling compulsory. After this date new schools were built and existing schools improved and pupil enrolments rose dramatically.

Comleroy Road Public School chalks up 125 years

In February 1879 the residents of Comleroy Road applied to the Council of Education for a school building for the area. After several false starts, land was earmarked on the corner of Comleroy Road and Wiltshire Lane. Building did not begin immediately, but teaching was soon underway at the nearby Wesleyan Chapel. The first teacher, Mr Armine Arabin Lees, was appointed in



Kurmond Public School principal Mr Clancy with pupils L to R: Robyn Armstrong (Pratt), Joan Armstrong, Jeanette Douglass (Pearce), Philip Shepherd and Alan Tombs, circa 1948 [Photo courtesy Joy Shepherd]

July 1880 and this date is taken as the establishment date for the school.

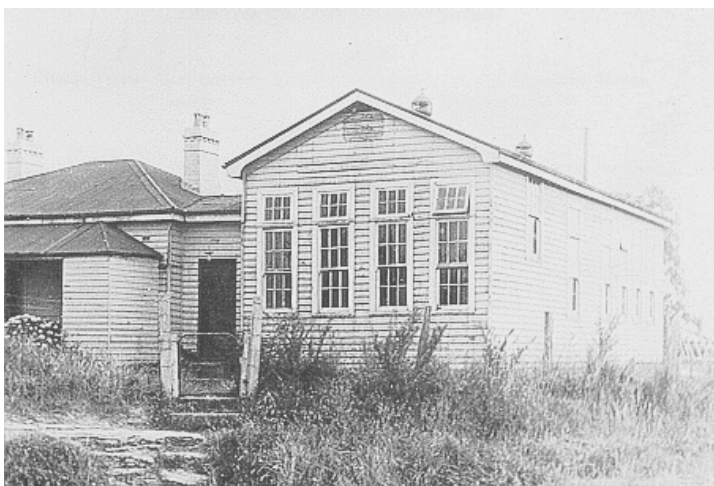
The timber school buildings (pictured), which included a classroom, teacher's residence and toilets, were tendered in May 1885. The school occupied this site for 110 years.

Comleroy Road Public School will be celebrating its 125th Anniversary at in its new buildings in McMahons Road, Kurrajong on Saturday 30 July 2005 at the school in McMahan's Road, Kurrajong between 10am and 4pm.

Kurmond School marks 85 years

Kurmond Public School is celebrating its 85th anniversary this year. Originally known as Longleat, the school enrolled its first pupils on 19 July 1920, and by the end of the month the numbers reached 26 (14 girls and 12 boys).

The school attendance grew in leaps and bounds, mainly because of the allotment of



Comleroy Road original school house and residence (1885-1966) just before demolition. [Source: <http://www.comleroyrd-p.schools.nsw.edu.au/history.htm>]

the 45 Soldier Settlement properties in the area at that time. By 1921 the small classroom was bulging at the seams with 61 pupils. Accommodation for another classroom was organised in the part of the Soldiers Settlement house next door.

The school has grown slowly over the years, and currently has an enrolment of 175 pupils.

To celebrate their 85th birthday, the pupils will cut an anniversary cake in July. Two larger celebrations are planned for a later in the year. On Saturday 3 September there will be an afternoon tea at the school. This will be a chance for the 'Oldies' to get together and swap some stories and memories. On 5 November a Country-style Fete, with extensive photograph displays, stalls, rides, and the opportunity to purchase a Commemorative Paver, will be held. There will also be an 85th anniversary book available.



Jill Renaud is proud to be on the Organising Committee, as her son David is a fourth generation pupil of the school. Her paternal grandfather, Ralph Shepherd was fourth on the boy's roll in July 1920, and her maternal grandmother, Gladys Vincent (one of our Society's Foundation members, now aged 91) enrolled the following year. Her father, Philip Shepherd spent all of his primary school days there, as did Jill.

If you have any photos or memories of the school to share, or would like to know more details about the two special days coming up, contact Jill or Joy on (02) 4571 1524.

Kurrajong North celebrates in 2006

Kurrajong North evolved from the Anglican school, one of the three original schools in Kurrajong. The school was on the corner of Hermitage and Bells Line of Road when it was converted from a denominational school to a government school in 1878 with Alexander Anderson as first teacher and 49 enrolments (and some 29 in attendance). After complaints about the state of the building and many arguments a new site was selected further up the hill, which was central for most of the families whose

Left: Four generations at Kurmond Public School: Gladys Vincent, son-in-law Philip Shepherd (whose father Ralph was enrolled on the first day), grand daughter Jill, and great grandson David Renaud. Taken in March 2002, the year that David enrolled. [Photo courtesy Joy Shepherd]

children would attend the school. The land, some two acres, belonged to a Madam Cutolo.

A school building, teacher's residence and toilets were built and ready for occupation in 1882. The school numbers grew quickly from the estimated 60 enrolments to 73 in 1890. The building was extended to accommodate 90 pupils and has continued to be used until the present day.

The committee organising next year's celebrations would like to hear from any past pupils (or descendants of past pupils). If you have photographs, anecdotes or memorabilia or would like to join the organising committee please contact Kathie McMahon on 4567 7105.

Request for information

The Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society is keen to document the history of all the schools in the region and welcomes any additional information, documents or photographs. If you have anything to contribute, contact Joy Shepherd on 4571 1524. If you would like to undertake the task of researching and documenting the schools as a project for the society contact Frank Holland, Project Leader, on 4573 2226.

Acknowledgements

This article has been compiled by Jennifer Stackhouse, Jan Livingstone, Joy Shepherd and Kathie McMahon based on existing published information and school records.

SCHOOLS AT A GLANCE

Here are the primary schools of the district with their establishment date, number of years in operation and number of pupils that currently attend.

<u>School</u>	<u>Year established</u>	<u>Age (years)</u>	<u>Current students</u>
East Kurrajong	1878	127	141
Kurrajong North*	1878 (at Hermitage Rd)	127	94
Comleroy Road	1880	125	203
Kurmond	1920 (as Longleat)	85	175
Kurrajong	1929	75	165
Grose View	1974	31	334

* Kurrajong North is celebrating its 125th anniversary in 2006 at its Stone Terrace, North Kurrajong location

SCHOOLS NO MORE

<u>School</u>	<u>Year established (first name)</u>	<u>Status</u>
Blaxlands Ridge	1892 (although records also suggest 1906)	Building leased to KCHS in 2005
Grose Vale	1871 (as Kurrajong South)	Building sold 2005

KCHS REDISCOVERS THE ORIGINAL COMLEROI

Continued from page 1

Promise of Grant of 100 acres by Governor Macquarie.

Here Andy Macqueen, quoting from the original journals transcribed in his book, described how the explorers found a route through the maze of mountains. He said that Ben Singleton and several aboriginal guides in the earlier expeditions were not given due credit for their discoveries that led to finding a way across these ranges.

Les Dollin explained the land grant system that used to operate in the early 1800s. To bring this history to life, Les issued each person in the group with a replica Promise of Grant from Governor Macquarie so that they could select 1000 acres of land at Comleroi on the Hunter for a rent of 1/- per year. In addition each person received a replica Permit to Pass so that they could send 40 head of cattle from 'Currajong Brush' to Benjamin Singleton's farm at Comleroi.

To sustain us on our journey, the Clairvaux Tea Room supplied great home cooking just as early travellers would have enjoyed. We tucked into hot scones with jam and cream for morning tea followed by home made quiche with garden salad for lunch followed by sticky date pudding!

After our delicious pudding we slowly, slowly got back in our vehicles and reluctantly left this lovely valley. We continued our journey along the original Comleroi Road towards Bulga, passing intriguing places like Clear Farm, Wickettwees, MacDonald River (First

Branch), Howes Valley and Milbrodale.

Bulga

Family historian, Stuart Mitchell, met us at the Bulga Recreation Grounds to tell us about early days at Bulga. Stuart is a descendant of Mrs Thomas Eather who rode on a bullock carrying her infant son as she travelled 100 miles with her husband along this rough track in about 1826. No horses were available at the time. Stuart told many a great story of the pioneer families at Bulga and is presently writing a book.

From Bulga, the present day road goes north east to Singleton. Les explained how the original Comleroi Road, after fording Cockfighters Creek (now called Wollembi Brook), used to continue north through Wallaby Scrub to Comleroi (originally spelt Comleroy).



Comleroi Road signpost located on the Golden Highway between Warkworth and Jerrys Plains, west of Singleton. [Photo courtesy Les Dollin]

Comleroi

After a small deviation, we picked up the original road again at a big signpost reading 'Comleroi Road'. We had finally reached Comleroi in the Hunter!

Travelling down Comleroi Road past kangaroos grazing on the rich grass of the airstrip, we stopped outside the gates of the original farm where Benjamin Singleton had settled in 1821 (see Comleroy Fact File). We viewed the lush grazing land at the junction of the Hunter River and the Wollembi Brook. In 1825 this property was granted to John Blaxland junior (nephew of the explorer, Gregory Blaxland). Subsequently it was owned by the Spencer family then bought for dairying by the Nichols family. Finally in 1980 the Comleroi property was taken over by the adjacent coal mines.

Les Dollin explained how, in the 1880s, 2000 acres of land adjacent to this site was

designated by the Government as a massive set of yards with interlocking roads for holding cattle. These holding yards acted as a major stock interchange for the Queensland cattle being driven over the ranges to Riverstone meatworks.

So the mobs of cattle driven by Benjamin Singleton in 1821 to this Comleroi area in the Hunter were the start of a huge cattle stock interchange system that carried on for over 100 years. The historic Comleroy Road between the Hawkesbury and the Hunter became the primary stock route north for the colony of Sydney (see Comleroy Fact File).

Warkworth

To cater for all these thirsty cattle drovers, settlement began in the 1830s. Just 4 km from Benjamin Singleton's farm on the other side of Wollembi Brook, the settlement of Warkworth sprang up with five inns. As the cattle industry expanded, there were expectations that Warkworth would become the major town in the area, overshadowing Singleton. Unfortunately for Warkworth, the railway line was built into Singleton bypassing Warkworth.

We drove across Wollembi Brook to visit Warkworth. Carol Burley served a tasty afternoon tea for us in the village hall. Local historian Pauline McLoughlin told us about the five inns of the settlement in the early days. The village had been surveyed out into many small house blocks ready for the railway. Pauline received a great hand of applause for her wonderful talk. She later opened up the pretty little village church of St Philips for us to inspect. William Singleton had donated the land for this church.

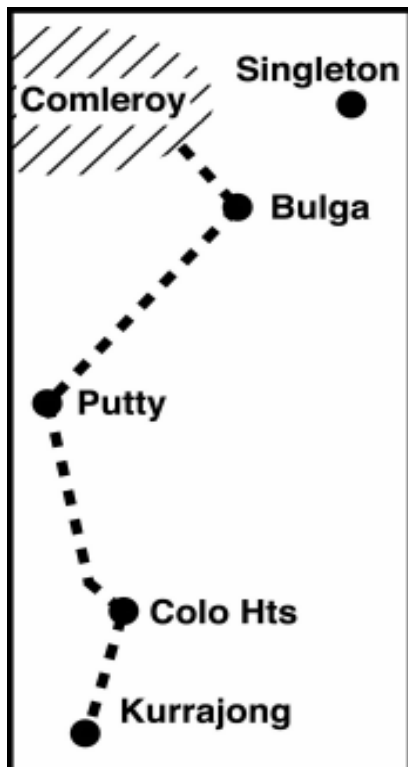
Singleton Family History Society

Travelling on into Singleton we booked into the Francis Phillip Motor Inn. In the evening we visited the Singleton Family History Society in the grand old Mechanics Institute building.

We were greeted by Peggy Richards,



Putty here we come: Expedition leader Les Dollin. [Photo by Ian O'Toole]



Map showing the expedition's route [by Les Dollin]

Secretary of the Singleton Family History Society and by Carol Carbie. Peggy had driven in from out of town especially to see us. Peggy presented us with a complete set of their Family History Society magazines and we presented them with a set of Millstone magazines and Kurrajong books. They were quite amazed by the size of our group and that we have so many active members.

We were treated to a tour of the research room and Mechanics Institute. We all started delving into the fascinating archives of the Society and the photocopier was running hot. But all too soon the dinner bell sounded and we had to get back for our night out in the motel's famous Lara's Restaurant. We enjoyed a great meal together with lively discussions of the day's events. Our President, Jennifer Stackhouse, gave an informative preview of the Hunter Valley Gardens which we would be visiting the next day.

Singleton Historical Society Museum

The next morning the President of the Singleton Historical Society, Ian Webb, opened up the Singleton Museum especially for us. We were greeted by Vice President Kaye Stacy, Secretary Diane Heuston and other key members of the society. We were allowed to go into the museum research room and see their wonderful collection of records, books and the historical Argus newspapers. We then had a tour of the museum which was once the Singleton courthouse and lock up. The collection in this museum is outstanding. The President presented us with some books from their Society and we presented them with some of our books and thanked them for their kind hospitality.

Hunter Valley Gardens

Finally we rounded off the trip with a visit to the Hunter Valley Gardens at Pokolbin. These gardens are a visionary dream created by the Roche family who have spent many millions of dollars bringing the dream to life. Spread over 25 hectares are 12 feature gardens including a rose garden, oriental garden and storybook garden, with lakes, a 10 m high waterfall and dozens of beautiful sculptures. Valerie Holland booked us on excellent trolley car garden tours. We all enjoyed our sunny afternoon in these spectacular gardens.

This two day journey was the biggest trip ever undertaken by the Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society. We traced the historic Comleroy Road from Kurrajong right through to the Hunter Valley. We enjoyed fascinating commentaries from Andy Macqueen and many other local historians. We got to know one another better as we savoured delicious meals and beautiful scenery along the way. But most of all it was an historic event - the first visit of our Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society to the original Comleroy.

COMLEROY FACT FILE

Where is Comleroy?

Comleroy is a region 15 km west of Singleton in the Hunter Valley. Comleroy was the name originally given to this area by the early settlers in the 1820s.

In 'The Australian' newspaper on 21 September, 1827, an article reported that Comleroy extends "along the main river for twenty-five to thirty miles from the mouth of the Wollombi to the mouth of the Goulburn and contains about fifty or sixty thousand acres of excellent land on both sides of the Hunter, including what is vulgarly called Jerry's Plains, and Big and Little Flat".

The book, 'Dawn in the Valley: The Story of Settlement in the Hunter Valley to 1833', devotes an entire chapter to the first coming of white men to the 'Coomery Roy' area of the Hunter in 1819-1820. For example it notes that William Simms Bell, eldest son of Lieutenant Archibald Bell, "had left his father's farm at Richmond Hill to come by Howes route to 'Boottee' (Putty). He then proceeded to 'Comori'...". 'Dawn in the Valley' lists many different spellings of the name associated with this area: Coomilary Roy, Comnaroy, Comilaroi, Comleroy, Kumleroy, Coomery.(1)

What is the History of Comleroy Road?

Comleroy Road originally led all the way from the Hawkesbury through Putty to Comleroy in the Hunter Valley. This was Australia's first road north, opened in 1823. The Comleroy area in the Hunter, with all its various spellings, "gave our first road north one of its original titles," notes HA MacLeod Morgan.(2)

"Over the years the road has taken several names," explains Andy Macqueen in 'Somewhat Perilous'. "Another name stemmed from the conception that the Singleton area was known to the Aboriginal people as Coomery Roy, probably a corruption of 'Kamilaroi'. Because the route led to Coomery Roy, it was dubbed 'Comleroy Road'."(3)

So Comleroy Road was given its name because it led to Comleroy in the Hunter. At the Hunter end of the road the spelling was later changed to 'Comleroi Road'. However, at the Kurrajong end of the road the spelling is still 'Comleroy Road', as it was originally spelt in the 1820s by the Hunter Valley settlers and the Colonial Secretary.

Where Does the Name Comleroy Come From?

Comleroy, with its various spellings, comes from the Aboriginal word Kamilaroi, the name of the Kamilaroi Nation or Kamilaroi people. The Kamilaroi Confederation was a mighty nation consisting of four tribes. Some of the Kamilaroi tribal lands were believed to have extended down the Hunter River to Jerrys Plains and to Wollembi Brook.

Aboriginal Tribes of Australia lists many alternative spellings that have been used in the literature for Kamilaroi: Kamilarai, Kamilari, Kamilroi, Kamilarai, Kamularoi, Kaamee'larrai, Kamileroi, Koomilroi, Komleroy, Gamilaroi, Gamilroi, Kahmilaharoy, Kamilary, Gumilroi, Gummilroi, Gummilray, Kimilari, Karmil, Kamil, Ghummilarai, Cammealroy, Kahmilari, Cumilri, Cam-ell-eri, Cummilroy, Cummeroy, Gunnilaroi and Comleroy. (4)

Cattle to Comleroy

In the early 1820s Benjamin Singleton was a squatter on a farm of 640 acres at Comleroy in the Hunter Valley. He regularly drove cattle along Comleroy Road from Mill Paddock at Little Wheeny Creek near Kurrajong to agist them at Comleroy in the Hunter.

Hawkesbury residents could send their cattle with Benjamin Singleton to the Comleroy on agistment at 8/- per head.(5)

Comleroy Stock Route

By the late 1800s, Comleroy Road became a designated stock route north. The government created many travelling stock reserves along the road, no more than ten miles apart so that the cattle could rest and the drovers could camp at night.

By the 1880s a huge stock reserve of over 2000 acres had been declared at Comleroy near Ben Singleton's original farm. This stock reserve was subdivided into multiple paddocks with many incoming roads and I believe it acted as a major interchange for cattle coming down from as far as Queensland, destined for the meatworks in Riverstone.

Continued on page 8

COMLEROY FACT FILE

Continued from page 7

Kamilaroi House at Richmond

There is one final intriguing twist to this story of Comleroy. Many of the stock passing through the cattle yards at Comleroy from as far as Queensland were destined for the meatworks at Riverstone. Riverstone meatworks was founded by Benjamin Richards in 1878.

In 1893 Benjamin Richards built an imposing two storey Victorian house in Windsor Street, Richmond. Although the house was unfortunately demolished in 1956, its imposing gates are still a well-known Richmond landmark. These gates in Richmond have 'Kamilaroi 1893 - B R' inscribed on them, but the name 'Kamilaroi' did not originally come from the Hawkesbury area. Richards actually named this grand house, 'Kamilaroi', after his favourite racehorse.(6)

The name would have also had associations for Richards because he owned extensive land near Comleroy in the Hunter Valley.

References

1. WA Wood: 'Dawn in the Valley: The Story of Settlement in the Hunter Valley to 1833', Wentworth Books, 1972.
2. HA MacLeod Morgan: 'Royal Australian Historical Society Journal and Proceedings', 44: 196, 1958.
3. Andy Macqueen: 'Somewhat Perilous: the Journeys of Singleton, Parr, Howe, Myles and Blaxland in the Northern Blue Mountains', Wentworth Falls, 2004, p129.
4. NB Tindale: University of California Press, 1974, pp 194-195.
5. HA MacLeod Morgan: 'Royal Australian Historical Society Journal and Proceedings', 44: 196, 1958.
6. J Barkley & M Nichols: 'Hawkesbury 1974-1994', Hawkesbury City Council, 1994, p124.



The expedition's first stop [Photo by Ian O'Toole]



Lots of eating and talking at Putty [Photo by Ian O'Toole]

"Then you put your left leg in" - Les had them all dancing down the road! [Photo by Ian O'Toole]



Comleroy expedition at Putty. [Photo by Ian O'Toole]

RICHMOND - KURRAJONG CONNECTION WALK

Continued from page 3

Kurrajong folk would travel to the theatre on Saturday nights on the back tray of a truck, which had two rows of seats strapped to the truck with a canvas cover for wet weather.

Across Windsor Street is Richmond Park which contains the memorial for Kurrajong identity Sam Boughton. Looking from the park across Windsor Street was the site of Woodhill's No.1 store. The newsagency in Windsor Street was once owned by Mary's family. At that time it was the agent for Anthony Hordern and a depot where people who lived across the river could collect their parcels. Next door to the present McGees Hotel and looking from the park the façade of the old Wesleyan Methodist Church can be seen above the present buildings.

On the March Street side of the park were the saleyards, the Pansy railway line and Mr Hills' home from where he ran a double decker horse-drawn coach to Kurrajong and back each day. At what is now 102 March Street was the Blue Danube, a hall used for dancing, boxing and wrestling matches of World War II.

The Richmond School of Arts on the corner of West Market Street and March Street was built in 1866. It was the home of the town library and a great entertainment centre.

There has always been a Kurrajong tree (*Brachychiton* spp.) in Richmond Park. Although several have perished over the years through wind storms one is still remaining today.

Finally Mary pointed out the site of the last two remaining rein holders where horses were tethered in the street.

Footnote:

¹ Maggie Kable believes 'Eulabah' was the original spelling but is unsure who named the house or what the name means. It was also spelt 'Yulebah' at other times.



Top: Gathering around the Magnolia tree

Centre: What a divine lot: KCHS visiting St Peter's Richmond

Above: Show and Tell in Richmond Park

Left: "Eulabah", in West Market Street

[All photos by Ian O'Toole]

LINKS TO KURRAJONG - THE HILL FAMILY

In the March issue of *The Millstone* an article by Steve Rawling was published about Kurrajong's probable first female University scholar, Evelyn Hill. There is more to discover about the Hill family as this request for any known contacts of the Hill family from Wendy Plunkett from Victoria reveals. Wendy's ancestor was John Hill, who was Evelyn Hill's uncle.

Ancestors of the Hill Family

John's father, James Hill was born in (County) Mayo in 1793 and arrived as a convict in 1816. He married Elizabeth Pearson in 1822 at the Church of England in Castlereagh, NSW. Elizabeth was born at Richmond in 1805 and christened at St Matthews in Windsor in 1810¹. Her parents were Thos (or Thomas) and Sarah Pearson (nee Eglinton) who arrived on the *Ganges* in 1797. (James and Elizabeth Hill were the great, great, great grandparents of Wendy Plunkett.)

Initially James and Elizabeth Hill lived at Agnes Banks, during which time two children were born, William on 19th May 1823 and Elizabeth on the 18th July 1825. It is thought that their third child Mary, who was born on the 8th December 1827 and the fourth child James, who was born on the 30th March 1830 may have been born on Smith Farm. This property was situated adjacent to Lynchs Creek and the Nepean River at present day Yarramundi and is now bisected by Springwood Road. James and Elizabeth were listed as living at the farm, during the 1828 Census. Wendy thought that the family was most probably leasing this property at that time.

John Smith appears to have sold 30 acres to William, the eldest son of James and Elizabeth Hill on the 9th August 1831, for the sum of 4 pounds and 12 shillings. William would only have been 8 years old at that time. Three weeks later, James Hill leased the property to Sarah Pearson, Elizabeth's mother and partner Thos Summers. The leased property, which appears to have had an interesting history regarding ownership, was supposed to eventually pass back to James Hill and his family.

Kurrajong Property

James and Elizabeth bought 60 acres land at the end of Willow Glen Road in Kurrajong in 1831. It had formerly been owned by the original grantee Thos (or Thomas) Brown. (Portion No.130 on the map on page 14 in the 'Historical Walk of Kurrajong with Ken Bennett' booklet). At Kurrajong, five more children were born, John on 3rd September 1832, Sarah on the 11th December 1834, Anne on the 20th November 1836, Thomas on the 2nd May 1839 and Rebecca on the 17th August 1841.

As the result of the tragic drowning of Rebecca's husband Francis Hill (a cousin) in 1970, James Hill senior drew up his will on 30th January 1871. His wife Elizabeth inherited the property and upon her death it was to pass to Rebecca, on condition that her son James Rowland Hill had not reached the age of 21, in which case it was to pass to him.

James Hill senior died on 24th November 1871 and was buried at St Stephen's Church of England Cemetery at Kurrajong. Elizabeth then aged 66, assumed the management of the farm, along with her daughter Rebecca and three children under the age of four. Elizabeth died aged nearly 90 on the 16th August 1895 and was buried in St Stephen's Church of England Cemetery at Kurrajong with her husband.

Family leaves Kurrajong

At the time of Elizabeth's death, James Rowland Hill was 27 so the Hill property passed to him. His brother Francis had previously moved to Perth when he was 16 and had become a dentist. After graduating in 1895, his sister Evelyn also decided to move to Perth where she established a school and was joined by her mother Rebecca. James Rowland no doubt missed his family, so decided to move to Perth as well. The Hill's property, then known as 'Hillsborough' was sold to Harry Arnold from Rookwood, on 17th September 1902. Thus ending 71 years of ownership by the Hills.

Wendy Plunkett believes her ancestors' property was later re-named 'Samarai' by the Arnold family who appear to have later sold it to Mr and Mrs Marshall Brown. The same property was later owned by the Lindsay family (see story this issue, page 11). In 1988 the property was owned by Bernie McInerney and called 'Shiburn Stud'. However, more recently it has been subdivided into smaller acreages.

Marriages of the children of James and Elizabeth Hill

Most of James and Elizabeth's children moved on to the Mudgee and Cobbora areas and then scattered further north. Wendy has been able to trace all of the children's marriages except the eldest daughter Elizabeth, whom she hopes someone may recognise as part of their family tree. She was born in 1825 and was shown, as living, on her Mother's death certificate in 1895. There is no record of her marriage, however it is thought that she may have married into a local family.

The nine children of James and Elizabeth Hill were:

1. William, who married Mary Jane Griffiths on 27th August 1858. (Mary was the daughter of William Griffiths and Elizabeth -nee Slemmens?)
2. Elizabeth unknown?

3. Mary, who married John Valentine Mason in 1851, (John was the son of Patrick Mason and Mary nee Burk-e? or Goldie?)

4. James, who married Sarah Giles on the 1st May 1856. (Sarah was the daughter of Thomas Giles and Sarah?)

5. John, who married Honorah Jane Ward on 9th August 1853. Honorah was also known as Norah, Hannah and Annie, daughter of ?. (Any information would be appreciated by Wendy Plunkett as this is her direct line.)

6. Sarah, who married William Stanford on the 23rd April 1858. (William was the son of Luke Stanford and Maria Summers.)

7. Anne, who Married Charles Robert Martin on 17th May 1859. (Charles was the son of Charles Homer Martin and Ann Forrester.)

8. Thomas was burned to death in a bush fire when aged 6 in 1845 and was buried in St Peter's burial ground at Richmond.

9. Rebecca, who married Francis Hill (her cousin) Francis Hill on 6th June 1867. (Francis' was the nephew of James senior and his parents were John and Margaret-nee Martin- Hill who remained in Ireland.)

Other families that are of interest

Elizabeth Hill senior's sister Rosetta married Edward Devine. Their son Edward bought the property next door to the Hill family, which had been originally granted to Laurence Harvey. (Portion 127 on map of Kurrajong 1850 p14 from 'Historical Walk of Kurrajong with Ken Bennett') Little Wheeney Creek divided the two properties.

William Hill (eldest son of James and Elizabeth) and a John Lamrock married Griffiths sisters and both families shared interests in Mudgee.

Other family names of interest to Wendy are Barwick, Elliot, Giddins, Griffiths and Mahon. Each of these families is linked to her husband's ancestry. Of particular interest is Andrew Mahon, the great, great, great grandfather of Wendy's husband John Plunkett. Wendy states, "according to Albert Smith's book 'Ups and Downs of an old Richmondite', he lived up near the Wheeney Creek racecourse. I have a little interest in Thomas Mahon, who married Massie Kennedy in 1850, because he probably brought up John James Mason (born 1848), the child that John Valentine Mason fathered to Massie Kennedy". The Mason family lived in Kurrajong well into the 1900s.

If anyone is able to assist Wendy, please contact her by writing to:

4 Grand Boulevard, Doncaster, Victoria, 3108

Footnote

¹ The original St Matthews was destroyed. The church that stands today is a later building.

THE LINDSAYS OF 'SAMARAI ORCHARDS'

By Margaret Fenn (nee Lindsay)

Lionel Lindsay attended Hurlstone Agriculture College and later studied for a degree in agriculture at Hawkesbury Agriculture College.

Lionel's mother, Louise (nee Derrick) grew up on her parents' sheep station in Temora NSW. Lionel inherited his mother's love of plants and agriculture and always wanted to become a farmer. Graduating from college during the Depression Lionel found it difficult to do so and his father helped him establish a business (grocery and general store) in Fitzwilliam Road, Vaucluse. Lionel married Phyllis Lowery who grew up in 'Minnamurra', a house in Fitzwilliam Road and was the daughter of a Port Jackson pilot. In 1952 they moved the family to 'Samarai' in Willow Glen Road at Kurrajong, where Lionel farmed until retirement.

Lionel built their retirement house on a small property ('The Crest') in Bells Road, Grose Vale, where he had stone fruit trees and an extensive vegetable garden. This kept all of the family supplied with fresh vegetables when they visited him.

Fruit Grown at 'Samarai'

- Oranges (Valencias and Navels)
- Mandarins
- Plums – various varieties
- Pears – Williams
- Apricots (10 varieties)
- Nectarines
- Peaches (various varieties)
- Necto-peaches – a new cross variety

Crops

- Winter peas
- Beans
- Potatoes
- Corn

Lionel also kept a vegetable garden for the house.

Water tanks were kept filled with water from Wheeny Creek. In those days Lionel was told by the Agriculture Department that Wheeny Creek was one of the clearest sources of drinking water in the Hawkesbury. Water from Wheeny Creek was also used for irrigation. Parts of the creek were wonderfully cool in summer making it a great place for summer picnics and swimming. In one area there is a large cave-like overhang of rock where the creek was crossed by large old tree trunks that were covered with emerald green mosses and also tangles of vines from overhead trees. One summer in this area my cousin Rodger and I found a large freshwater crayfish. On two other occasions my mother and I saw the head and bill of a platypus in a small water hole. This was part of a small stream that flowed into Wheeny Creek, under the little bridge on Willow Glen Road in Joe Dunston's property ('Plynlimmon'). This little stream in later years when I saw it had completely dried up.

Bowen Mountain (when there was only one house on the mountain) was a popular riding

destination, especially when the waratahs were in flower. 'Navua' on the Grose River was also popular for picnics and swimming. Many school day weekends were spent home riding with Rosemary Dunston (who later spent some time as Matron of Kurrajong Community Hospital).

What happened to the Lindsay children?

Anne trained as a teacher and then studied at the Anglican Deaconess House (opposite Moore Theological College in King Street, Newtown). She married Rev Arthur Horrex, son of well-known gladioli and pig farmer of Branders Lane North Richmond.

Geoffrey trained as a teacher, never married, and lives on part of his parents' property in Bells Road, Grose Vale.

Margaret trained as a nurse at RPAH. She married Kevin Fenn, a Technical Officer of Electrical Engineering at Aust Nuclear Science and Technology Organisation. (AUSTO).

Dorothy trained as a nurse at RPAH and married Dr William Sorby, now of Royal North Shore Hospital. Bill's mother was Sylvia Dunston, and the family were brought up in 'Westbury' at Grose Vale.



The Lindsay family pictured outside their home in Willow Glen Road in 1955. Front, L to R: Anne, Geoffrey, Dorothy and Margaret. Back, L to R: Parents Phyllis and Lionel. [Photo courtesy Joan Peak]



Phyllis Lindsay drives the tractor, while her children Geoff, Anne, Dorothy and Margaret sit amongst the chaff, winter feed for the horses. Circa early 1950s. [Collection of Margaret Fenn]



Lionel Lindsay (on left) sets out with some of his family and the Sorby boys to pick fruit at "Samarai Orchards" at Kurrajong. The trailer is laden with wooden boxes for the fruit. Circa early 1950s. [Collection of Bill and Dorothy Sorby (nee Lindsay)]



Dates For your diary

* Monday 25 July 2005 – Dinner meeting and guest speaker

Come along to our regular bimonthly meeting and enjoy a delicious meal at a local Kurrajong restaurant. We will be joined by guest speaker Cathy McHardy who will talk about this district in a talk titled 'The Bull Ridge: The development, people, buildings and places of East Kurrajong'.

Where: Kurmond Wine Bar and Grill, Bells Line of Road, Kurmond

Time: From 7.00pm

Cost: \$33

* Monday 9 August 2005 – Expedition to State Records, Kingswood

Learn how to find out more about our history when we join archivists at the State Records at Kingswood for a tour and introduction to this valuable historical repository. There will also be time available to search the records.

Where: Meet in Kurrajong Village at the Bennett's carpark to car pool at 9.15am or at State Records, 143 O'Connell Street, Kingswood (there is ample parking)

Time: From 9.15am at Kurrajong (10am at Kingswood)

Cost: \$10 (for morning tea) bring your own lunch (tea and coffee available)

More information: Val Birch on (02) 4573 2346 (numbers are limited so be quick)

* Monday 26 September 2005 – Annual General Meeting and Special General Meeting

Join us to celebrate the continued growth and success of the society as we hold our

Annual General Meeting including election of office bearers. The AGM will be followed by a Special General Meeting at which we consider amendments to the constitution.

Where: Comleroy Road Public School, McMahons Road, Kurrajong

Time: 7.30pm

Cost: Gold coin donation

More information: Jennifer Stackhouse (02) 4573 0836

* Friday 21 October 2005 – Back to the Kurrajong celebration – launch of pictorial exhibition 'Kids of Kurrajong'

As part of the annual Scarecrow Festival in Kurrajong Village, the society is staging a fascinating photographic exhibition about growing up in Kurrajong. 'Kids of Kurrajong' will be held in the CWA Hall with a supper at Valley View Café. As part of the event, listen to a panel of Kurrajong Kids reminisce about growing up in the village.

Where: CWA Hall, Kurrajong and after at Valley View Café.

Time: 6pm-9pm

Cost: \$15 (supper)

More information: Joy Shepherd (02) 4571 1524 or Jennifer Stackhouse (02) 4573 0836 for bookings.

Coming events

- **Scarecrow Festival, Kurrajong Village** 22-23 October
- **November meeting with guest speaker Max Doyle** 28 November from 7.30pm
- **Christmas party and 'Pig Out' barbecue at the home of Bryan and Marguerite Wyborn, Kurrajong** 11 December, 2005 from 5pm
- **Australia Day breakfast** 26 January, 2006 from 9am

Bookings

To book for any of these events, call Joy Shepherd on (02) 4571 1524. All cheques should be made out to the Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society and posted to KCHS, PO Box 174, Kurmond, 2757. Include your name, address and phone number along with the event you are booking for and the names of those attending.

Venues

Activities will be scheduled at different venues to make use of halls, meeting rooms and restaurants throughout the district. Check venues carefully before setting off. Any problems en route contact Jennifer on 0417 692 133.

Next newsletter

The next issue of 'The Millstone' will be published on 5 September. If you have an item to include in the newsletter please contact Jennifer Stackhouse on 4573 0836. Copy deadline 26 August.

2004/2005 COMMITTEE

President: Jennifer Stackhouse

Vice President: Kathie McMahon

Secretary: Valerie Holland

Treasurer: Joy Shepherd

Publicity Officer: Robyn Fuller

Research Project Officer: Frank Holland

Acquisitions: Val Birch

Minute Secretary: Pat O'Toole

Millstone Editor: Greg Upton

Committee Members: Airdrie

Martin, Marguerite Wyborn



Oldest known class photo from Comleroy Road Public School, 1908. [Source: <http://www.comleroyrd-p.schools.nsw.edu.au/history.htm>]