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Weather conditions kept our dedicated members on their toes from start to finish. Their efforts and the generosity of the public made it all worthwhile.

3 Yarramundi mill

An article on the establishment and later destruction of a water-driven flour mill built by George Howell.

4 Membership news

Four new members are welcomed – Robert Ellis, Ailsa Thompson, Jean Arthur and Stuart Phipps.

One of our most respected members, Vern Avern is farewelled in this obituary by Valerie Holland.

A very generous benefactor has donated a large sum to the Society to assist us in our promotional activities.

6 Mystery picture

A 1940's photo from Camp Mackay and one from Thelma Groch's collection.

An update on the development and progress of the Society's website.

7 President's corner

Keeping members up to date with the short and long term plans which the committee will be tackling.

8 Dates for your diary

Final reminders for this issue are the bi-monthly meeting on Monday 27th November, and the Christmas party on Sunday 10th December.

Annual General Meeting report

VALERIE HOLLAND

The 2006 Annual General Meeting was held on Monday 25th September at St. David's Church Hall, Kurrajong Heights. Twenty-one members and guests were in attendance with twenty-one members recording their apology.

The following reports were received, as presented in the previous issue of *The Millstone* – president, secretary, treasurer and projects officer.

The returning officer appointed for the elections was Ron Rozzoli with assistance from David Griffiths and Geoff Roberts. Elected unopposed for 2006–07 were president – Frank Holland, vice president – Kathie McMahon, secretary – Valerie Holland and treasurer – Joy Shepherd. Seven nominations were received for the five committee positions. A secret ballot was held and resulted in the election of Steve Rawling, Airdrie Martin, Pat O'Toole, Robyn Fuller and Marguerite Wyborn. Congratulations were extended to the successful nominees.

A unanimous vote of thanks was passed for the work done by retiring president Jennifer Stackhouse, who was unable to con-

tinue in her role due to a change in her work commitments. A further vote of thanks was recorded for the efforts of last year's committee, in particular the work of Les Dollin who did not stand for re-election.

Other business included the passing of a resolution to increase membership fees by \$5 commencing from the start of the next financial year. The new fees will now be: family – \$30, single – \$25 and those over 75 years of age – half rates. The increase has been kept to a minimum to cover rising costs. The other major item covered was the passing of the compulsory annual statement which will be forwarded to the Office of Fair Trading.

Some other events were discussed, items of other business from the general meeting which followed the AGM. These minutes are available on request to the secretary, and payment of costs involved.

After the general meeting and supper thirteen members stayed on to take part in an enjoyable and historically orientated trivia quiz. ■



Photo: Valerie Birch

Some of the members present at the AGM

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.

Sausage sizzle success

FRANK HOLLAND

Blustery weather tested everyone's patience but members' resolve proved fruitful for the Society

To assist with fund-raising the Society held a sausage sizzle on Fathers' Day 3rd September outside Bunnings Warehouse at McGraths Hill. Staff from the store assisted the members in setting up the barbecue and display as well as packing things up when it was time to go. They also helped us to maintain a presence during what was a very windy and at times challenging day.



Photo: Robyn Fuller

(L-R) Jenny Griffiths, Frank Holland & raffle winner Kim Lockrey

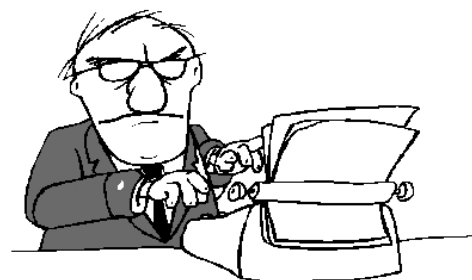
We set up a small display of photos to promote the Society but had to later take this down due to the windy weather. Later in the day the covering over the barbecue had to be removed as well due to the weather. In some respects luck was on our side as a group holding a similar function the following week were rained out.

Kathie McMahon, with the assistance of Robyn Fuller organised the successful day. Many donations for a raffle were arranged. We have thanked over twenty local businesses and individuals who donated goods and money to the cause. The Society achieved a profit of \$657.85 for the day's effort which will be of considerable assistance towards research and the operating costs of the Society.

Our members worked with good humour to attract the attention of passers-by and assist in raising the profile of the Society. Many thanks go out to those members who assisted — Kathie and husband Alex, Robyn Fuller, Jenny and David Griffiths, Jennifer Stevens and Frank and Valerie Holland. We all had some fun but were glad when the time came to pack up.

Donations were received from the following businesses and individuals — Village Fruit Market North Richmond, BP Service Station Kurmond, Quigley's Newsagency Kurmond, Rob Johnston Autos Kurmond, North Richmond Bakehouse, Kurrajong Bakehouse, Newpower Newsagency Kurrajong, Crazy Daisy Nursery Kurrajong, Ernskillen Orchard Grose Vale, Bellbird Echo Centre, R & I.D. Nemetz Nursery Bilpin, Kurrajong Friendly Grocer, Great Eastern Pines Bilpin, Mr & Mrs G. Bentveltzen, Mr B. Dunston, Mrs P. Bennett, Mr & Mrs F. Holland, Mr O'Toole, Kathie McMahon, Robyn Fuller and assistance from the North Richmond Butchery.

The large raffle was displayed beautifully in a wheelbarrow. Congratulations go to the winner, a very excited Kim Lockrey from Windsor. ■



From the Editor

I was very pleased to have been able to meet some of the members at the recent AGM, especially those who helped me with the production of the previous newsletter. Your thanks, encouragement and comments humbled me.

In this issue we welcome four new members. Sadly we record the passing of one of our members Vern Avern. We also pass our sympathies to two of our members, Jennifer Stevens and Joan Peak. They have both lost their mothers recently. These two ladies were pioneers in the district. Jennifer's Mum was Winifred Wooff formerly of Grose Wold who died in Richmond Nursing Home aged 85. Joan's Mum was Doris Hagerty (nee Cox) formerly of Pitt Town who died in Hawkesbury Village Nursing Home aged 92.

The Society would not be in existence if not for the generosity of past and present members and the general community. Our latest benefactor wishes to remain anonymous, and his/her wish should be respected. I would like to take this opportunity to offer a public 'Thank You' from all members, not only for the contribution but the acknowledgement that the Society is a worthy recipient. A brief article concerning how the donation will be utilised appears on page 4.

The Scarecrow Festival activities were held too late in the month to be able to cover them in this issue. An article will appear in the New Year edition.

I wish all members and their families a very merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous New Year.

notpuc@ozemail.com.au

Correction

SOCIETY'S COMMENCEMENT

It was stated in the President's Report in the previous issue of *The Millstone* that the Society commenced in 2000.

The Society was officially incorporated in 2001.

Yarramundi water mill

ROBERT ELLIS

This article is an overview of a talk given by Robert Ellis to the Society concerning the water-driven flour mill at Yarramundi built by George Howell circa 1818 and destroyed in the flood of 1867

George Howell was born in 1760 at Staffordshire. He arrived in Sydney on 4th August 1802 after being convicted of stealing an aged horse and sentenced to transportation for life. He arrived on the *Perseus* which took 173 days to make the journey.

He had started a family in England prior to his conviction. He married Catherine Dude at Gnosall in 1794 and they raised three children – George, Mary and Thomas.

Although George at his trial gave his occupation as labourer, there is a strong probability he was a miller. His family had a strong tradition of milling — the Howells had operated four flour mills in various English counties near Staffordshire for more than 400 years. They were also amongst the earliest millers to export their knowledge to the new colony of America around 1660.

A 19 year old pregnant married woman, Hannah Hill from Wolverhampton was sentenced to seven years transportation in 1802 for the crime of stealing some calico. She arrived in New South Wales on 24th June 1804 per *Experiment* (1). She was lucky to arrive as a severe storm during the journey almost sank the ship. The ship was patched up and limped back to England.

George Howell and Hannah Hill became partners not long after Hannah arrived. In 1804 at Parramatta, George was appointed to the respected position of Government Overseer to their wheelwrights.

Prior to this time there were a number of established mills in the colony but none of them were successful. In 1814 the Government Surveyor, Meehan, made a reference to Howell's Mill at Parramatta. This was the government mill built by George. It was powered by water, had a pond, access to the river and covered an area of four acres. During this period George also built his own mill on the Parramatta River, a post mill on the bank opposite the old government dairy.

George purchased a 29 acre block of land from a John Arkell near Yarramundi opposite the Grose River confluence some time around 1818. He constructed a flour mill which cost him over £600 and the land purchase price of £225 put a considerable strain on his financial position.

The mill at Richmond was a different design to George's other established mills. It had a long overhead water race which directed water toward a five metre-high water wheel. This water-driven wheel turned the grinding stones within the mill. Children often caught fish as they dropped from the race onto the wheel. In contrast, his mill at Parramatta was driven by both wind and the tidal ebb-flow of the river.

The mill at Yarramundi was a massive structure for its time. It had huge corner posts of ironbark and the base was formed with heavy-duty slabs and large river boulders. Nearby stood two other buildings. One was an octagonal building known as the Round-house, the other was an A-frame barn built using the support of

two ironbark trees. These two trees were forty feet in height and the same distance apart. A ridgepole was placed across these two trees and slabs were leant against them on both sides. The building was used to store tobacco and flax but despite George's efforts the industry did not develop.

The principal working components of the machinery of the mill were situated on the first floor. These were primarily the grinding stones and the cog wheel, constructed from ironbark.

After the flour mill was established at Yarramundi George built a substantial house. It was located on the junction of the Castlereagh Road and the link to the Great Western Road, now occupied by several homes.

George died on 22nd February 1839 and left the Yarramundi mill to his son Thomas. Thomas kept it operational and carried out regular necessary repairs.



Extent of the floodwaters on the Hawkesbury in 1867

23rd June 1867 saw the most devastating floods ever experienced in the Hawkesbury, and other districts in the country – two days of torrential rain, 13 inches in some areas.

The massive amount of quickly running water destroyed the mill, the house and washed eight acres of land from the property down the river. The flood reached a height of 4 metres higher than any other recorded flood, prior or since. The force of the water during the flood changed the course of the river and shortened its length by almost a kilometre. ■

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

New members

JOY SHEPHERD

Robert Ellis

Robert was born in Eugowra in 1940, the youngest of 5 children to Ernest and Dell Ellis, nee Howell. At the age of 10 he went to the Masonic School at Baulkham Hills where he stayed until 1955 when he returned to Eugowra aged 15 years.

He obtained 600 acres in 1959 and spent the next 24 years as a professional shearer. He married Beverley Brown in 1960 and they had 4 children. They divorced in 1978.

Robert has been involved with many community organisations over the years including the Eugowra P&C, the Eugowra Show Committee, Apex, Eugowra Lions Club, Eugowra Football Committee and the Lachlan Valley Tourist Association. It was Robert's original ideas that developed into the Dubbo Zoo and the Forbes Vintage Village. He was instrumental in the formation of an historic museum in Eugowra in 1971, and a youth centre in 1970.

He sold the farm in 1983 following a severe drought and became manager of the tourist farm "Blue Gum Farm" at Milperra for 6 years. He has spent the past 15 years

managing a property at Oberon owned by John Fairfax, of Rural Press fame.

He and his wife Helen will be returning to their home at Molong in early 2007.

In 2002 Robert received an Australian Award for his contributions to the community of Eugowra.

Ailsa Thompson

Ailsa is a volunteer guide at the beautiful Mount Tomah Botanical Gardens. Airdrie Martin, one of our committee members is also a guide at the gardens. It was through this relationship that Ailsa learnt of our Society. It did not take much convincing on Airdrie's part for Ailsa to realise the benefits of becoming a member.

We offer her a sincere welcome and hope that we can help her, and she us, in our quest for knowledge and appreciation of our local area's heritage.

Jean Arthur

Jean Arthur is the Honorary Secretary of the Mount Victoria Historical Society. Those of us who participated in the Bells Line of Road Trip in May were fortunate to meet Jean during the outing.

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Obituary

AVERN, Milton Ramon (Vern)

8th Aug 1925 – 18th Sep 2006



Photo: Ian O'Toole

Vern was born at Petersham, New South Wales in 1925. He met his future wife, Mary in 1944 when he was aged about 19 and Mary 16. They were married at the Methodist Church in Paget Street Richmond on the 23rd June 1951 and settled in Richmond. Throughout their life's partnership Vern and Mary shared in a variety of hobbies and occupations.

Before their marriage Vern engaged in many different occupations. Although he passed the entry qualifications for pharmacy he did not open a practise as the conditions were changed and upgraded. Following this he then became a car dealer before deciding on a career as a wrestler. The wrestling career was short-lived though as Vern's mother objected. A change in employment came when Vern bought and operated the Kurrajong North newsagency, general store, Post Office and taxi service. After 18 months it was sold as it was too difficult for Vern to operate the taxi as well as managing the store. The building, still standing, is the 2nd down from the corner of Hermitage and Bells Line of Road.

After their marriage Vern and Mary bought the Richmond Newsagency from Mary's parents. After 12 years they were forced to change their employment when Vern developed *narcolepsy*, a medical condition resulting in involuntarily falling asleep. This was a difficult time as by now the family had grown to include sons Geoffrey and Paul.

It was suggested that the family relocate two 12'x12' prefabricated rooms which stood at the back of the newsagency to the

NEWS & INFORMATION

RAHS Certificate of Achievement 2006

We are pleased to advise members that our nomination of Joy Shepherd to receive an award of a Certificate of Achievement from the Royal Australian Historical Society has been successful.

This Certificate recognises Joy's achievements in the Work for the Dole programmes which have been instrumental in producing our photographic collection.

Well done Joy!

Major donation received

The Society has been very fortunate in being the recipient of a donation in excess of \$2,500 for the purchase of a lightweight display unit. This unit will complement our ability to stage small displays and assist our speakers at various presentations.

This is primarily an eight panel free-standing unit but can be set up as table-mounted four panel display. It will be very useful in helping us to promote the work of the Society.

The donor is a member of the Society but has asked that the donation remain anonymous. The Society is most grateful for this very significant donation.



rear of their house in March Street Richmond. They were refurbished and let to tenants, creating cash flow. After a time Vern's health improved.

Always ready for a challenge Vern undertook a real estate course and commenced a business in one of the front rooms of his home. He became one of three real estate agents in the district. Mary joined him two years later after completing what was now an upgraded real estate course. Mary

retired around 1990 and Vern maintained his real estate licence until the beginning of 2006.

As circumstances improved Vern and Mary enjoyed travelling extensively throughout Australia and overseas.

Vern's many interests included flying. He owned a vintage plane and loved flying a Cessna in which he had a half share. He flew out of smaller airports around Sydney. He was involved in lapidary and completed

a botany course to assist in his bee keeping. Aboriginal history fascinated Vern, he completed a WEA course in Aboriginal Studies, and later wrote a book covering his research.

Both Vern and Mary were actively involved with the Society for Growing Australian Plants, the Dharug and Lower Hawkesbury Historical Society, the Hawkesbury

Cont'd page 7



Photo: Anne Dollin

43 members and their guests enjoying a paddlewheeler outing on Sunday 23rd July 2006

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Mystery Picture

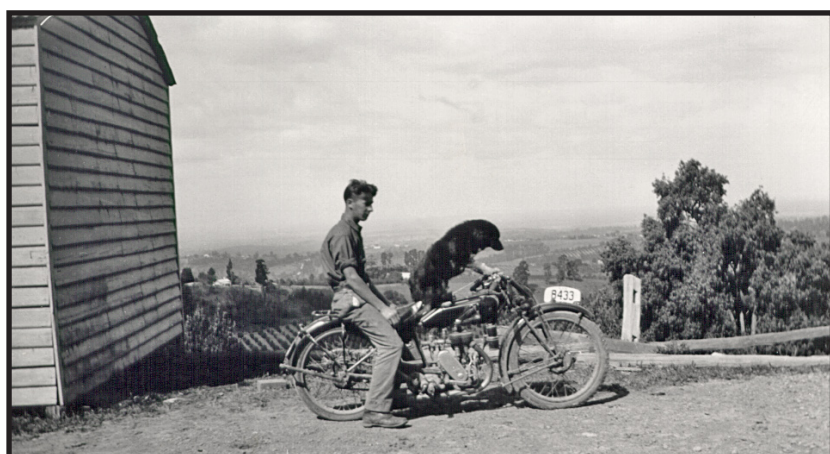


Camp Mackay circa 1940. From the Stevens collection

Constable Percival Thomas Stevens was the first Camp Superintendent at Camp Mackay. This photo could have been taken at the completion of construction, or opening ceremony of the first recreational, dining and kitchen complex built at the camp.

The most prominent person in the photo, central position no hat, would most likely be the Commissioner, William John Mackay. The two men in suits could be either the voluntary surveyor and building supervisor or the Chairman of the Controlling Committee of the Federation of NSW Police Citizens Boys Clubs.

Constable Stevens could be the man left of centre wearing a cap and holding a piece of (wood) over his shoulder. The two boys in the background are holding what appears to be a flag. Could this have some significance?



Courtesy of Thelma Groch

Website progress

GREG UPTON

Development of the Society's website is progressing well and it is anticipated that by the time the next issue of *The Millstone* is published it will be up and running. In the meantime a test version of the website will be prepared for review by the committee for consideration and fine-tuning prior to endorsement and launch.

The website will provide a big boost to the Society's profile and will be a very useful resource for members. The main menu will comprise the following:

- *About Us* – our history, mission, vision and committee.
- *Archive* – previous editions of *The Millstone* and indexes of our library and photographic archive.
- *Projects* – current research projects.
- *Membership* – benefits of becoming a member and application form.
- *Sponsorship* – sponsors and bequests.
- *Calendar* – all events for the upcoming year.
- *Links* – affiliated organisations, neighbouring historical societies, other supporting bodies and areas of interest.

The Society acknowledges and is very appreciative of the support of the North Richmond Community Bank branch of the Bendigo Bank for the development and operation of the website.



There are a number of objects in this photo which might help to identify the young man. The background and small portion of the building could help in identifying the property. The make and model of the motorcycle, if it could be identified, would enable the photo to be dated at its earliest possibility. There is a chance someone might have a photo which includes the bike and has some detail recorded. The number plate reads '8433'.

The combination of young man, dog and motorcycle may be mentioned in someone's family records or correspondence.

We all have photos in our collections which have nothing recorded on the back or there is doubt as to the accuracy of the detail which is there. If members are able to shed light on any photo please pass your information to the secretary and it will be included in future issues and the details passed on to the owner of the photo.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

FRANK HOLLAND

I would like to thank members for their confidence in electing me to the role of President. I see this as an honour and a challenge. An honour because of the growing reputation of the Society, and a challenge as we are entering a period of great activity. The committee will be busier than ever.

For those of you who do not know me let me provide you with a little background. I am married to Valerie, our Secretary. I retired in 2000 and moved to Kurrajong in September of that year. I spent some 35 years in banking with over 20 years of that time devoted to the field of training and the final 15 years focussing on management development. I have managed business units with multi-million dollar budgets and with staff in excess of 300. I left the field of banking in 1994 and for the next six years was a consultant with engagements to major enterprises seeking to improve management and executive skills. I am sure that some of the knowledge and skills I have developed will be of benefit to the Society. My other interests are in singing with the Sydney Welsh Choir and serving the community through the Rural Fire Service as a volunteer at the Hawkesbury Fire Control Centre and as a member of the Grose Vale Brigade. I joined the Society in 2001, have served on the committee and was last year's Projects Officer.

I welcome all those elected to office. I found it most encouraging to note that new people were prepared to stand for election. If you missed out this year please stay in touch as there will be a need for more hands to deal with coming activities.

Our first committee meeting will be held on the 9th October at the Old Blaxland Ridge Schoolhouse commencing at 10:00AM and in addition to usual business we will be establishing or confirming roles on sub-committees.

Over the next few issues of *The Millstone* I will be outlining the short and long term plans that the committee will be tackling. These relate to our presence on the Internet, access to the Society's historic records, premises issues, our growing ability to make formal presentations and promotional activities. Naturally all of our current projects and displays will continue.

My hope is that this year will see a growing number of our members engaging in research and the writing up of some of the history of the Kurrajong area. How can you help? Involvement in Society activities, perhaps encouraging others to join the Society, writing up part or all of your family history, or assisting on a current project.

I look forward to serving the Society.

• Cont'd from page 5 OBITUARY

Family History Group and the Kurrajong – Comleroy Historical Society.

In June 2006 Vern and Mary were the recipients of the Kurrajong – Comleroy Historical Society's first Achievement Certificate, awarded in recognition of their valuable contributions to the Society since its inception.

Vern's death notice, published in the Sydney Morning Herald read in part:

"Much loved husband of Mary, loving father and father-in-law of Geoffrey and Tamara, Paul and Kerrie. Devoted Grandfather of Tim, Dhane and Mikhaela. At peace". ■

• Cont'd from page 4 NEW MEMBERS

Jean spent her childhood in East Kurrajong, her father had a weekend property there. Her stories recalling her childhood memories were both entertaining and informative.

Jean joined us on the second day of the trip. During the lunch break at the Comet Inn, Hartley Valley, Jean gave us a fascinating talk on the local history. She continued on with us to Rydal to explore the Mount Walker convict stockade. The boundless energy within this tiny lady amazed many that weekend.

She is keen to help us compile some of the earlier history of this area. Her assistance and knowledge is most welcome and her membership can only but help to spread our Society's message.

Stuart Phipps

Avondale, on the Terrace Road at North Richmond, is one of the first properties settled in the area. Stuart lives on this property in one of the oldest homes in North Richmond, dated prior to 1860.

European history of the property has been traced back to 1797 when the land was used as a dairy. Stuart continued this tradition for more than thirty years. Stuart has compiled a detailed history of Avondale which we hope to feature in a future issue of *The Millstone*.

Ron Madden, a friend of Stuart's, bent his arm enough to finally convince him to join our Society. We welcome him and encourage him to participate in the activities of the Society. ■

Kurrajong - Comleroy Historical Society Incorporated

PO Box 174 Kurmond NSW 2757

www.kurrajonghistory.org.au

COMMITTEE

President Frank Holland

Vice President Kathie McMahon

Secretary Valerie Holland

Treasurer Joy Shepherd

Minutes Secretary Pat O'Toole

Committee Members Airdrie Martin, Marguerite Wyborn, Robyn Fuller
Pat O'Toole, Steve Rawling

Project Officer TBA

Acquisitions Officer Valerie Birch

Millstone Editor Chris Upton

Webmaster Greg Upton

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

VALERIE HOLLAND

Monday 27th November

Bi-monthly meeting at Grose Vale Community Centre, Grose Vale Community Centre Road, Grose Vale at 7:30PM. The guest speaker will be Laurie Duffy. Gold coin donation for supper and please remember to bring your cup.

Sunday 10th December

Our annual Christmas party will be held at Bryan and Marguerite Wyborn's property, 16 Jacaranda Road, Kurrajong, off Blaxlands Ridge Road. You are invited to spend a delightful afternoon and evening in the shade of the wonderful trees in their garden. Some of our ladies are catering so you can be assured of an outstanding meal as well.

Coffee and tea will be provided, bring your own drinks. Proceedings get under way at 4:30PM and the cost per person is \$25.

Bookings need to be made by 27th of November. Please phone Joy Shepherd : 4571 1524.

Friday 26th January

Our annual Australia Day Anniversary breakfast will be held at Loxley on Bellbird Hill, 993 Bells Line of Road. Enjoy a sumptuous breakfast in pleasant company, good conversation and nice music. Presentation of the Society's Annual

Award of Merit, to acknowledge an individual's outstanding contribution to local history research in the Kurrajong district will follow the breakfast.

Guest speaker for the morning will be Louise McMahon, one of the foundation members of the Society.

The morning gets under way at 9:00AM and concludes at 12:00 NOON. The cost per person is \$25.

Bookings need to be made by 10th January. Please phone Joy Shepherd : 4571 1524.

Tuesday 13th February

This will be an opportunity to visit History House, the home of the Royal Australian Historical Society at 133 Macquarie Street Sydney. We will be given a talk in the library, a tour of the building and the opportunity to access the archives of the RAHS.

Cost per person is \$10 which includes morning tea. Fares and lunch at own expense. Meeting time will be 10:00AM at History House, most people will meet and catch an early train from Richmond station. Please contact the Secretary closer to the date.

For bookings and further details please contact Valerie Holland : 4573 2226.

Saturday 28th April

Les Dollin is organizing a one-day field trip in conjunction with the Dharug and Lower Hawkesbury Historical Society. We will be guests of that Society and be taken to interesting places, including the ruins of James Singleton's water mill, a convict stockade occupied during the building of the Great North Road, and the recently restored Wesleyan Chapel at Gunderman.

Meeting time will be 9:30AM at Poly's Munchies, next to the ferry at Wiseman's Ferry. Cost and booking details will be published in the next issue of *The Millstone*.

If you would like to promote your business, place a notice or advertisement within *The Millstone* please contact

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- Highly Commended Western Sydney Industry Awards for Entrepreneur of the Year 2004
- Winner Western Sydney Industry Awards for Tourism Most Outstanding Contribution to Western Sydney Tourism by a Small Business 2003
- Winner Western Sydney Industry Awards for Excellence in Tourism, Meetings & Business Tourism 2003
- Winner HMAA Best Short Break Accommodation in NSW/ACT 2003
- Winner Western Sydney Industry Awards for Excellence in Tourism, Hosted Accommodation 2002