

Vol 5 Issue 6 November–December 2007

THE MILLSTONE

Kurrajong - Comleroy Historical Society Newsletter

The Kurrajong - Comleroy Historical Society is dedicated to researching, recording, preserving and promoting the growth of interest in the history of the Kurrajong district, the area west of the Hawkesbury River bounded by Bilpin and the Grose and Colo rivers

THIS ISSUE

2 BMACHO

A summary of the talk given by Professor Barrie Reynolds at our AGM covering the aims & objectives of BMACHO.

3 Ron Madden's story

The second and final part of Ron's story 'Growing up in North Richmond'.

5 Singleton's Mills

Les & Anne Dollin's summary of the presentation given to the Dharug & Lower Hawkesbury Historical Society.

6 The Rev Henry Plume

A brief but detailed article by Mrs Betty Upton covering the life of the Reverend Henry Plume, rector of St Stephen's church and founder of Barker College.

7 From the archives

Two photos from the Society's archives, dated 1907 & 1930, for which readers may be able to supply further detail.

8 Dates for your diary

Final reminder of our Christmas gathering which will be held at Bowen Mountain Park on Sunday 25th November.

New Members

The Society would like to welcome the following new members:

MRS GAE BOURKE
ROBIN WOODS

Pansy rail line revisited

FRANK HOLLAND

The Society hosted a field trip on Sunday 14th October retracing the route of the Richmond to Kurrajong rail line. The line was opened in 1926 and in September 1952 it was closed due to a major landslide and unprofitability. It was built as a 'pioneer' line, meaning that it was cheap to construct using ash ballast and being unfenced.

Pansy, as the engine which hauled the carriages on the route was affectionately known, was one of the '20' class locomotives. Only one remains, the 2029, and it is in the NSW Rail Transport Museum at Thirlmere.

Forty-one people took part in the day's activities including our guides, David and Jenny Griffiths and our coach captain, Campbell Lewis.

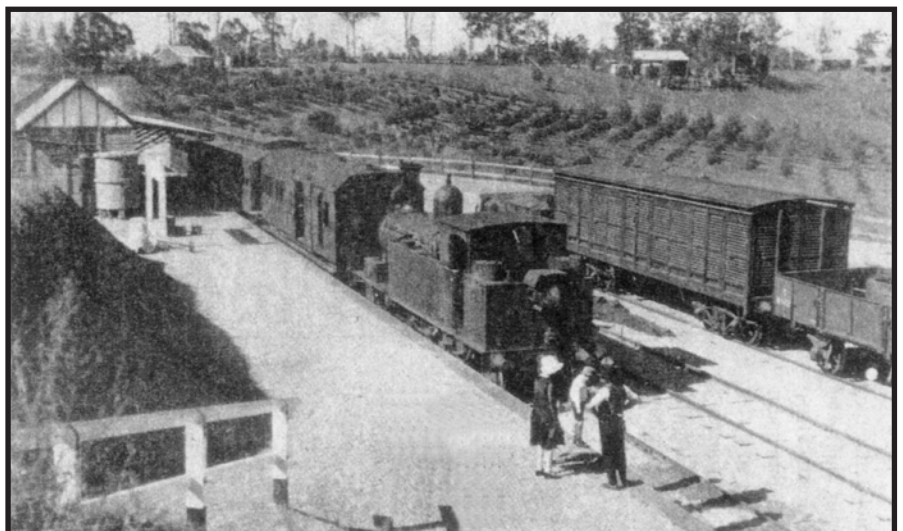
The trek commenced at the old Kurrajong station site which is now occupied by the Integral Energy sub-station. From there we walked the section of track through to where it crossed Drummond Road. Here we boarded the coach for the Greggs Road crossing.

We walked the old track line behind the houses and above the Gerry Harvey development. It was at this point that a few old relics were spotted, in the form of 'dog spikes'. We then moved on to 'Red Cutting' where we could observe the rail alignment as it crossed over Peels' dairy land. We then proceeded past the site of the old North Richmond station and down the main road, crossing over the North Richmond bridge which covers the old rail bridge, then up the cutting and over the old levee bank to Richmond station.

Our next stop was Hanna Park via Kurrajong Road. We explored the area below the North Richmond to Richmond bridge observing the remnants of the old timber bridge, looking up at the old steel rail bridge which is now below the roadway of the current bridge. The final destination was Kemsleys halt and Redbank Creek bridge.

During the day various speakers recalled their memories of their journeys on Pansy. Fifty-five years has taken its toll on what remains of the original line, and the Society was fortunate to have been given the opportunity and permission to enter private property to observe these significant heritage sites.

We thank Jenny and David Griffiths for their planning and preparation of the tour, their video presentation of Pansy sites and their guidance throughout the day. Our first attempt at a coach outing proved very successful. ☺



Pansy standing at Kurrajong station

Courtesy: Ken Bennett

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

FRANK HOLLAND

The AGM was held on the 24th September with 32 members in attendance. The business conducted dealt with the receiving of annual reports and the election of committee and office bearers for the 2007/08 year. Thanks were expressed for the efforts of the outgoing committee in particular to those who were not standing for re-election: Kathie McMahon, Marguerite Wyborn and Robyn Fuller. These members have provided sterling service to the Society and each has indicated that they will be continuing to support the work of the Society. Congratulations to our newly elected Vice President, Airdrie Martin and new committee members, Greg Upton, John Howard and Janet Zerbin. The first tasks of the new committee will be to review our short and medium term goals and to establish an appropriate structure to help achieve those goals. Once developed, these plans will be shared and open, discussion will be sought at a general meeting.

A quick general meeting followed the AGM and then Professor Barrie Reynolds addressed the meeting (see separate report). Following on this address the secretary and myself attended a meeting of presidents arranged by BMACHO at the Everglades in Leura on 27th September.

A point of discussion was the name of the organisation. Although it commenced in the Blue Mountains its coverage now extends to include Lithgow and the Hawkesbury. This point will be further considered by BMACHO.

I believe there is considerable value in continuing our membership of BMACHO. Those wishing to know more or who would like to raise any issues may contact me on 4573 2226.

**Kurrajong - Comleroy
Historical Society Incorporated**
PO Box 174 Kurmond NSW 2757
www.kurrajonghistory.org.au

COMMITTEE

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Vice President Airdrie Martin

Secretary Valerie Holland

Treasurer Joy Shepherd

Minutes Secretary Pat O'Toole

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Greg Upton, Pat O'Toole,
John Howard, Janet Zerbin

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Webmaster Greg Upton

BMACHO

Guest speaker at our recent AGM was Professor Barrie Reynolds, secretary of the Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage Organisations.

BMACHO is essentially an association of organisations: museums, historical societies, and similar bodies concerned with our local area's cultural heritage. There are currently 22 member organisations representing in excess of 1,000 people. Its aim is to foster and support cultural heritage activities related to the Blue Mountains, with three main objectives:-

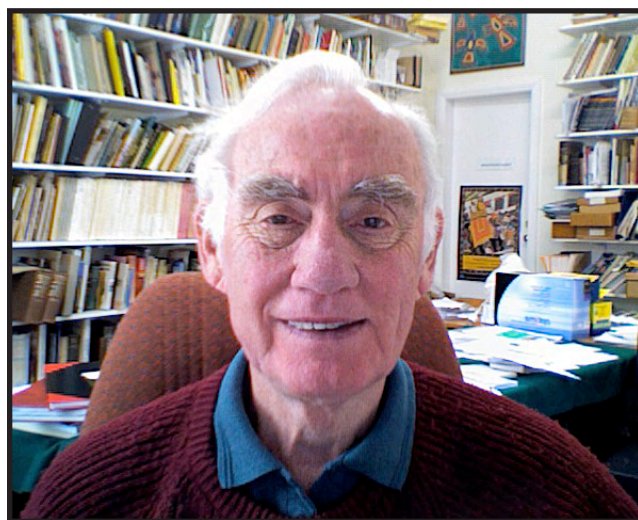
Raise public awareness of cultural heritage

Assist member organisations

Initiate heritage activities not already undertaken.

The underlying objective of BMACHO is to encourage its members to communicate and interact between each other better, allowing us to achieve our common goals. The association also offers technical advice to its members and holds regular workshops covering many varied subjects. Earlier this year a seminar was held for Treasurers, and recently another for Presidents. KCHS was represented at both.

Barrie's talk started with a brief history of the association since its beginnings at the annual Local History Conference at Springwood in October 2004 and its rapid growth since the inaugural AGM in March 2006. After ensuring a firm foundation had been set in the Blue Mountains council district the association has expanded to include organisations from further afield. This year a number of new members have joined from Lithgow and the Hawkesbury.



Professor Barrie Reynolds, Secretary of BMACHO

The association has had a major impact on the cultural heritage policies of the Blue Mountains City council and is doing ongoing work to ensure the council provides quality of service concerning the heritage sector. There are various projects in the pipeline. Two current projects include a monitoring programme for historical sites to establish change and damage, and a database of activities so that fellow members can participate in each and conflicting dates can be avoided.

KCHS is a member of the association and Barrie spoke in praise of the rapid growth and productivity of our society over such a short period since its inception. Kathie McMahon's history and music project is an example of an idea developed within one local organisation which Barrie feels is too full of merit not to share with others within the cultural heritage sector.

Growing up in North Richmond

RON MADDEN

Part Two (Final)

Along from John Woolrych's blacksmith shop was Gosper's butcher shop, then on the corner was Charlie Khan's general store. You could buy almost anything there. Charlie couldn't read so he would put all the items in a row so he would know what was what. Some local boys would move them around onto different shelves to confuse him. He used a green wattle stick to clean his teeth. One night some local boys painted his bay pony with white paint. They all ended up in Court and were fined.

Across the road was Lawson's small shop run by Mrs Lawson and her sister Miss Timmins. When you went in it was always unattended, you had to ring a counter bell and yell out "Shop!" or walk out the back and find them. I don't think anything was ever stolen, not like today's way of life.

Further down the road you crossed Pansy's line again, and next was Edgar Dippel's garage, built about 1949. He was ex-RAAF and the garage was known as the Ampol garage. The next owner was Harry Golding. A United service station and car wash now occupies this site.

Further up the hill is St Phillip's church, now a private residence. We all went to Sunday school, walking across paddocks and creeks to attend. P. Franks and Sons ran a transport business down in Riverview Street (it used to be Hansford Avenue then). Once a year they would donate the use of one of the trucks to take us to Mitchell Park, Cattai, for our Christmas party. We all really enjoyed this day out. Fred Brown was the Sunday school teacher and Rev Daniels would come once a month to teach us. I think everyone was scared stiff of him.

Next, where Rural Press is now situated, was called Artillery Hill. During the war there were anti-aircraft guns mounted in the bush. I can still remember all the rubbish left behind, bully beef tins rusted and flattened lay everywhere. I also remember the sirens and search lights at Richmond RAAF base during the war and for years after they operated them.

Further up the road was Goondiwindi Guest House run by the Reeves and Norris families. Guests would come up from the city and stay weekends. They played tennis, danced, went horse riding and gambled a bit. About 1948 the Schupps, a Hungarian family, took it over and some refugees from World War II came to live there. There were twenty-six families liv-



Lin Shepherd's garage & the Lavender family home, 1948

ing there. It is still the residence of members of the Schupp family. A lot of the original building has been pulled down.

Just up the road Tom Murray ran a roadside shop and park. You could buy vegetables and get hot water for your teapot. He made orange wine and had plenty of customers who bought it. They used to say "Ten fights to the bottle." We kids used to go around rubbish tips to find beer bottles with no brand on them and Tom gave us threepence for each bottle. We also used to catch black crickets for him, he paid us sixpence a dozen and used them for fishing. We made good pocket money.

Next I remember was Jimmy Lavender's picture bus. It was a covered-in truck with long bench seats. Every Saturday night we would walk over to Maddens' corner and go to the pictures in Richmond. We did this until about 1952.

My two brothers Alan and Bruce and sister Nellie went to North Richmond School, walking both ways. Percy Neeves was the Headmaster. They did not like him, too cranky, so they left and went to Kurmond School. My younger brother Ken and I also went to Kurmond School, walking to and from. Later on we had pushbikes.

When there was a flood hundreds of people would congregate down at the flooded bridge looking, talking, and listening to the old men telling their memories of previous floods. One of them was Ted Shaw. Some people went across in the flood boat to work or shop. It was driven by Mick Shepherd who worked for Windsor Council. The last flood was in 1992. No flood boats are used any more due to insurance costs. If there was a flood now there would be thousands of people looking.

In the 1940s there used to be a gymkhana each year at the oval, now called Turnbull's oval. There were horse races, kid races, apple and water races and flagpole races. Sometimes they used to grease a pig and let it go. It was nearly always caught by one of the Bennett family who needed it. Sometimes, instead of a pig it would be a rooster.

I can't forget the steam train Pansy which ran from Richmond to Kurrajong. We went on it many times. We used to meet it at North Richmond station in our horse and sulky and pick up our two aunts who came for Christmas. They always had a bag of lollies for us. I went to high school on Pansy until it stopped in 1952 due to a landslide.

About 1948 some of our relatives would come from the city. Then we would go rabbiting with ferrets. The men took shotguns, we also set rabbit traps and had to go around them at midnight to collect the trapped rabbits. Traps are illegal now.

Continued page 4

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From the Editor

My first reading of John Leary's letter, emailed to me and published on page eight of this issue, left me feeling humbled by his high praise, not just for my efforts but those of all involved in the production of *The Millstone*. One comment stuck in my mind as it is, I feel, a necessity for any quality publication, but also something I rely on the readership to provide: *"Its content is extremely interesting, informative ..."*

A newsletter does not need to mimic an encyclopaedia to be informative and it is the ideal medium for ordinary stories to be told by ordinary people. It is these stories that readers find interesting as the mundane of years past is now becoming a fading memory.

As an example, Ron Madden's story might be casual in its structure yet it is full of detail, enabling some to reminisce and younger generations to form a better picture of years past. His story has generated considerable comment and interest amongst our members and readers.

I urge all those who might have stories, photos, newspaper clippings etc. of our district's past to forward them to the secretary, treasurer, or myself for possible inclusion in future editions of *The Millstone*. Contributions would also help our society to increase its archive and to corroborate existing records.

notpuc@bigpond.com

Continued from page 3

As kids we spent a lot of time in the bush building huts, camping out overnight, and boiling the billy. You could use the water out of the creek and drink it, unlike now because of pollution. We had a great trouble-free life growing up on the farm, swimming in the creeks, building billycarts which were pulled by goats, riding the calves, milking the cows, cutting the firewood and helping with the farmwork. I was a good pea and bean picker and could keep up with most of the adults. I had a healthy bank balance by the time I left school.

In the 1940s and 50s we had all of our goods delivered. Eric Mahon delivered the ice for our ice chest before we had a kerosene fridge. Then the electricity came in 1949. Woodhills delivered our groceries and kerosene for the lamps and fridge. Edgar Phipps delivered the meat twice a week. Bread was delivered by Darce O'Connor, then Mate Gosper took over the bakehouse and bread run. The mail was delivered by Mr. & Mrs. Mutton in their horse and sulky. Daphne Roth did it for a while on her little Acme motorbike.

Burge Douglass and 'son' Riley did the road repairs with a horse and dray, blasting the rocks along the road where needed. Also there were Council Ridings, so you knew each Councillor.

From about 1970 North Richmond started to change. Sub-divisions began, large shopping centre, light industry, Rural Press, a high school, traffic lights, traffic jams, Sporting Club and sewerage works. There is little farming done now, mostly just grazing.

In 1954 I commenced work at Richmond Post Office delivering telegrams and working on the telephone exchange at night. I also delivered mail for ten years before advancing to counter duties. I retired in 1996 after forty-two years service, holding the position of Postmaster at Glenbrook NSW.

My wife Winsome (nee Churchill) also went to Kurmond school and so did our children, Mark and Michelle. Our home is built on one acre of the original family farm. We have lived here for the past forty-four years and would not want to live anywhere else.

Ronald Stanley Madden J.P.
June 2007



Photo: Roger Sinavan

Charlie Khan's general store 1948

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Singleton's mills

LES AND ANNE DOLLIN

On Saturday 22nd September 2007, Les Dollin gave a presentation about three tidal water mills that were built on creeks flowing into the Hawkesbury River near Wisemans Ferry. Over 30 people attended the talk given to the Dharug and Lower Hawkesbury Historical Society in the historic Lower Hawkesbury Wesleyan Chapel.

Les explained how these early colonial tidal mills worked. Water would flow up the creek on the high tide and be held by a dam. Then as the tide dropped, the miller would run the water back to the river under the giant water wheel. The turning water wheel would drive the heavy millstones through a set of huge wooden cogged wheels.

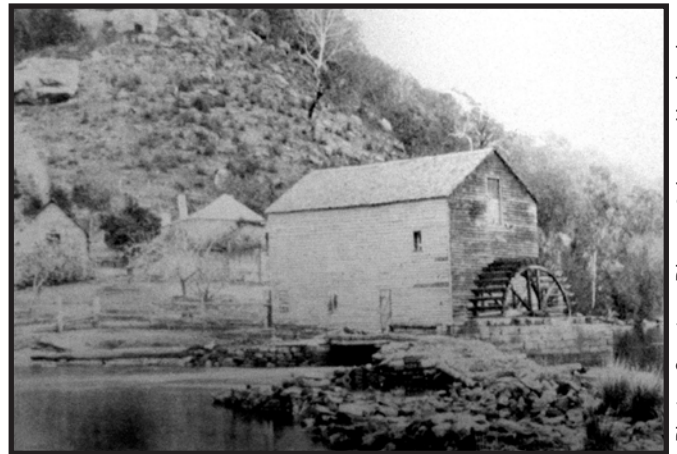
The three tidal mills in the Wisemans Ferry area were built by an early Hawkesbury pioneer, James Singleton (1777 – 1849). Albert Singleton, a direct descendant of James Singleton, had travelled from Lane Cove to be present at the talk. Les explained how important these mills were in supplying meal and flour to the struggling colony.

Then a video made by Steve Rawling was run showing two working water-operated grain mills in England. The audience enjoyed hearing the sounds of the mills and seeing the water turn the giant water wheels. Finally Les showed photographs of the ruins of two of the tidal mills and mill residences built by James Singleton at Wisemans Ferry.

James Singleton built his first tidal mill on a creek called Mill Creek on Singleton Road only a few kilometres from Wisemans Ferry. He and his brother Benjamin had applied for this land in 1817, along with the site of the lower 'Wellington Mill' at Kurrajong. Both mills were on 10 acres of crown land.

James Singleton then built a second tidal mill in the early 1820s on a creek on the other side of the Hawkesbury River. This creek was called Dillons Creek or Myrtle Creek, but later became known as Mill Creek. A stone wharf for this mill was built at the mouth of the creek and the mill was about 300 metres up the creek. James had applied for this block of land as early as 1810.

The bottom floor or cellar of this mill residence is still standing. It was built out of cut sandstone with an elaborate arched entrance. Judging by the size of the mill residence, the second mill would have been quite substantial. The remains of the dam buttress can still be seen in the overgrown creek. James also owned large amounts of land further up the creek.



James Singleton's mill & residence, Layburys Creek late 1800s

Photo: Courtesy Dharug & Lower Hawkesbury Historical Society

James Singleton built a third tidal mill called the Singleton Mill in the early 1830s. It was on Layburys Creek about 17 kilometres from Wisemans Ferry. Early photographs show the imposing old timber mill building and its wheel standing beside the Hawkesbury River. It was a prominent landmark of the area until the early 1900s.

James imported two sets of French burr millstones from Paris for use in his second and third Wisemans Ferry mills. These stones were able to produce the finest white flour. James and his wife settled in the residence at Layburys Creek for the rest of their lives. James died in 1849 aged 72 years and was buried in the Laughtondale Cemetery near Wisemans Ferry on the Singleton Road.

James and Benjamin Singleton also built two earlier water mills on Little Wheeney Creek at Kurrajong. The Dharug and Lower Hawkesbury Historical Society are hoping to do a combined tour with the Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society in the future, exploring the remains of these historical mills. ☞



Stone archway of James Singleton's mill residence

Photo: Anne Dollin

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Kurrajong School

Kurrajong resident Lynn McLean is researching the history of Kurrajong School. If you attended the school Lynn would be interested in recording your memories.

Lynn McLean 4572 1106

The Reverend Henry Plume
Rector of St. Stephen's Church of England, Kurrajong 1888 – 1891
Founder of Barker College

BETTY UPTON

In the July – August issue of The Millstone there is an interesting snippet about 'Stokesleigh' built by Arthur Blacket in the 1880's at Kurrajong Heights. Included in this brief item there is mention of the Reverend Henry Plume.

In his own quiet way the Rev Plume was a remarkable man with an interesting history. The elder son of the Rev William Henry Plume, Henry was born on 12th of August 1851 near Norwich, England. He was educated at his father's small grammar school until 1872 when he entered Corpus Christi College, Cambridge. He graduated with a B.A. in 1876 and an M.A. in 1883. He was made deacon in 1875, ordained as an Anglican priest by the Bishop of London in 1876, and served his curacy at St. Giles-in-the-Fields, London, until 1879.

In 1879 he married Eleanor Marshall, daughter of a surgeon. Sadly this couple who obviously loved children had none of their own.

It was while he was at St. Giles that Henry came under the influence of Rev G. H. Stanton, the Bishop of North Queensland. Henry was persuaded to accompany him to Queensland as examining chaplain.

To quote from the Australian Dictionary of Biography: 'Plume was vicar of St. James' Church, Townsville, from 1879 until his appointment as archdeacon of North Queensland in 1883. He travelled widely throughout the vast diocese, acquiring sites for church buildings and encouraging the lonely and often dispirited outback clergy. Stanton found him 'so prudent, so sound-headed and whole-hearted, so capable of steering a course among the social and ecclesiastical reefs that are more numerous than the coral barriers along our coast'. As vicar-general he compiled three small service books adapted to the local needs. Henry Plume proved an able lieutenant to his bishop.'

Seeking 'fresh fields and pastures new' Henry, and his wife Eleanor moved to Sydney in 1888 where he was appointed as rector of St. Stephen's Church of England, Kurrajong, by the Bishop of Sydney the Right Reverend Frederick Barker. Henry held this incumbency until 1891. During his time there, as well as carrying out his pastoral duties in the extensive parish of St. Stephen's he was also called on to serve for some months as acting warden of St. Paul's College, within the University of Sydney.

On his return to Kurrajong he began a small class for local pupils to be coached to matriculation level. Initially this enter-

prise was carried out at St. Stephen's rectory, but by 1891 the number of pupils had increased. Henry set up a formal school in Stokesleigh on Kurrajong Heights. Out of gratitude for the help and kindness shown to him and his wife by the bishop, Henry named his new school 'Barker College'.

Initially Henry had taken only day pupils, but once established at Stokesleigh he advertised for and welcomed boarders as well. Following an outbreak of typhoid fever in 1895 the college was moved from the isolation of Stokesleigh to the Sydney suburb of Hornsby in 1896, where it remains today.

In 1905 Henry felt the school had outgrown its original purpose and sold his college to William Charles Carter who built it into a major private school. In 1919 it became the property of the Church of England.

To quote again from the ADB: "In 1905 Plume returned to England. After serving as assistant chaplain in 1909–10 at St. George's, Cannes, France, he settled at Eastbourne where he served, until 1930, as honorary curate at St. Michael's Church, Ocklynge.

Henry died on the 21st of October 1930, bequeathing scholarships at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge and the University of Sydney. Eleanor died in 1951.

Henry's life was dedicated to the fulfilment of a vocation in Church extension and in education which he found intellectually satisfying and spiritually fulfilling. He was seen, and is remembered, as 'the little, kindly clergyman, forever on the lookout for somebody or something to help.'

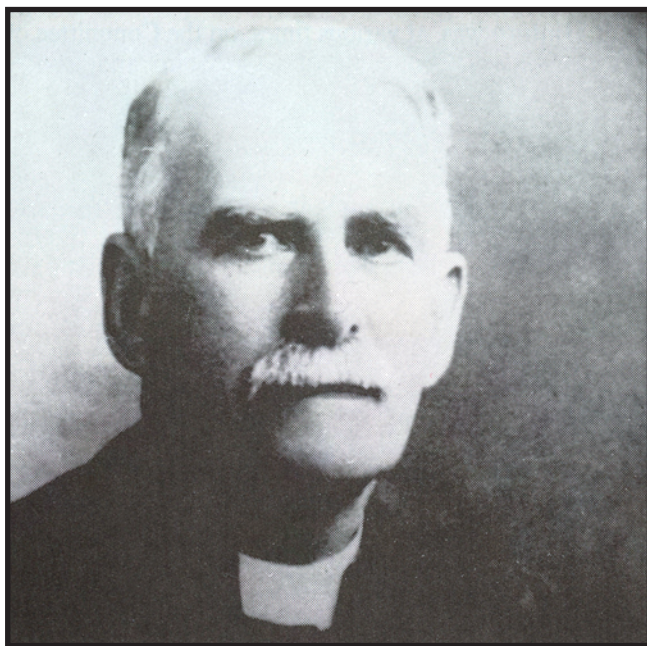


Photo courtesy: John Ferguson

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From The Archive

Road maintenance workers circa 1907

Photo courtesy: Dennis & Dorothy Simmons



This photo is of a group of road maintenance workers at Wheeney. The men pictured are from left to right:

Nat Woodbury
Joe Whatley
Jim Hulbert
Bill Woodbury
Cy Hulbert
Jack Singleton
Jim Simmons
Mich Webb

Each of the men has a pipe in their mouth, but there is a lack of *smoke*. This could point to the possibility that the photo was taken for promotional or advertising purposes.

Bulga Road relief workers circa 1930

This photo was taken during the Depression years. It shows a load of men being transported from Kurrajong to The Bulga Road, now known as The Putty Road. During the Depression years men were carted there to do relief work.

On the front of the driver's door is some small hand-drawn signwriting with the company name of the owner of the truck. On close inspection it appears to read, "A. Hill & Sons, Katoomba".

The three people in the bed of the truck could be from three generations of the same family, as their age would be relevant to grandfather, father, and grandson. They also share similarities in build and appearance.



Photo courtesy: Dennis & Dorothy Simmons

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

VALERIE HOLLAND

Sunday 25th Nov

Our Society's Christmas gathering will be held at Bowen Mountain Park. This will be our final gathering for the year. Proceedings get under way at 4:00PM and the function will have an Australian bush picnic theme. Please bring your own picnic basket, chairs and rugs.

Cost is \$5 per person which includes tea, coffee, Christmas cake and the hire of the facilities. Conveniences will be available.

Bookings need to be made by 1st November with Valerie Holland 4573 2226 or Joy Shepherd 4571 1524.

Saturday 26th Jan

The Kurrajong Heights Hotel will be the venue of our Australia Day Breakfast celebration, commencing 9:00AM.

Guest speaker will be Steve Rawling and his subject will be a former Kurrajong resident and highly acclaimed botanist, Louisa Atkinson. Entertainment will be provided by Ian O'Toole with some traditional Australian activities. It will be the ideal day to catch up with friends, meet new members, and celebrate our Australian heritage.

Bookings need to be made by 1st January with Valerie Holland 4573 2226 or Joy Shepherd 4571 1524.



Photo courtesy: Kathie McMahon

The old Kurrajong Heights Hotel; date of photo unknown

Letters to the Editor



The September – October issue of *The Millstone* was passed on to the committee members of the Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage Organisations and I must congratulate you on a magnificent publication.

Its content is extremely interesting, informative, with a professional layout, and by the look of it pays for itself with well constructed advertising.

Although now retired I spent most of my working life as a newspaper editor and consider this newsletter as one of the best publications of its kind I have ever seen.

Could I ask to be included on your email list for future publications, as I am sure it would be of considerable interest to the members of the Friends of Woodford Academy, of which I have the pleasure of being chairman.

My congratulations and best wishes.

John Leary OAM
President BMACHO



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- 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