

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

3 BMACHO's Glenbrook meet

Petula Samios, Director of the Heritage Branch of the NSW Dept of Planning gave a most informative talk on the finer workings of the branch at BMACHO's latest information session on heritage issues

4 The John family

Part one of a two-part series on the John family of Comleroy Road. Anne and Richard John have written a very informative and interesting story on one of the district's pioneer families

6 Kamilaroi

Betty Upton recalls her memories of the time she spent her primary schooling at *Kamilaroi*, one of the finest residences ever built in the district. It became part of Richmond Rural School but alas, it is no longer with us

8 Dates for your Diary

Final reminder for the Australia Day breakfast which will be held at Bowen Mountain Park on Tuesday, 26 January. Activities will get underway at 9 a.m.

New Members

The Society would like to welcome the following new members

DOUGLAS GREEN
NICOLE HATHERLY
JEANETTE HILL
NOELENE LINDOP
DAVID SALKELD
LIBBY SALKELD
JOAN STAGG
ROBERT STAGG

KCHS Christmas party

VALERIE HOLLAND

On the very hot dry evening of 28 November twenty-four members and four visitors were delighted to be welcomed to the property of our hosts, Carolynne and John Cooper.



Photo: Frank Holland

Louise Markus, seated with hosts Carolynne & John Cooper at the Society's Christmas function

In a very large shed which houses some historic train carriages, Carolynne had arranged an intricate Northern hemisphere festive Christmas scene laid out on a white background on a large table. Surrounding this scene wall decorations were hung on ice blue backgrounds and nearby stood a sleigh and chair for Santa which had a placard saying "Back at Christmas". Leading to this display tables had been set with red tablecloths for members to arrange their picnic teas.

Frank Holland welcomed everyone and thanked Carolynne & John for their hospitality. Frank moved that standing orders for the General Meeting be suspended and Airdrie Martin seconded the proposal. Members and friends then took advantage of this relaxed occasion to enjoy each other's company.

During the evening we were visited by the Federal Member for Greenway, Louise Markus. Her husband Jim and daughter Hannah also joined us as part of their family's evening Christmas rounds of the district.

It was pleasing to wish members a happy Christmas before the end of what has been a busy year. We wish all members and their friends a happy and safe Christmas and New Year.



President's Corner

During the last month we have received advice that we have been successful in obtaining grants of \$1,000 each from Bendigo Bank and Hawkesbury Council. The Bendigo Bank would prefer their grant be used on something such as the production of a book. The Council grant is subject to an invitation for councillors to attend the event - that fits with our thinking as these funds will be directed towards the children's event in December 2010.

Although the numbers were down on last year's Christmas gathering those attending enjoyed the evening and were much impressed by the Christmas decorations that Carolynne had created. Louise Markus and her family dropped in for a few hours during the evening. Thank you to John and Carolynne for making your premises available.

Valerie and I attended the Council Christmas Party to represent the Society. It was worthwhile to attend so that networks around the Hawkesbury could be renewed or established.

2010 is now only days away and we will soon be in full swing with our planned celebrations. Everyone should now have their calendar of events for 2010 and it would help if each member encourages other members and friends to let the secretary know of bookings as early as possible. Payment is not required at this stage.

Our next get together will be for brunch on 26 January at Bowen Mountain Park. We chose this venue as it is a location that was close to where Governor Macquarie and his party stood back in 1810 to look down on the settlement along the Hawkesbury. A very appropriate spot from which to commence this year of celebration. Valerie and I are planning to attend the Hawkesbury Historical Society's Australia Day Dinner in the evening of 26 January at the Windsor Function Centre. If you would like to join us please let me know asap so that we can attend to booking a table.

Finally, best wishes for the festive season and I hope that 2010 is a safe, healthy and successful year for all.

NORTH RICHMOND.

The residents of North Richmond experienced an anxious time all day Sunday on account of the bush-fires which swept across the country with great rapidity about noon, and went within a few yards of Mr Merrick's door. About 30 men were kept actively employed beating the flames, and, fortunately through their indefatigable efforts, the cottage was saved. A Student of the H. A. College became insensible and was carried to Mr James Clarke's residence. The Church of England being surrounded, all the portable contents were taken into the road, the organ among the number, which the wind overturned, and which was considerably damaged by the fall. All the tomb stones in the cemetery adjoining the church were blackened. At night the scene of the hundreds of small fires was magnificent, although most of the people were unable to appreciate its beauty owing to the day's terrors. The origin of the fire is unknown.

Windsor & Richmond Gazette
18 November 1905

Wishing all our readers
a very merry Christmas
and a happy New Year



from the KCHS committee
and the very cuddly editor of
The Millstone

Kurrajong – Comleroy Historical Society Incorporated

PO Box 174 Kurmond NSW 2757

www.kurrajonghistory.org.au

COMMITTEE

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BMACHO's heritage meeting at Glenbrook

CHRIS UPTON

On Friday, 20 November the Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage Organisations (BMACHO) held the second presentation in its series of meetings concerning state heritage issues at the Glenbrook Panthers Bowling Club.

Twenty-eight people attended including six from KCHS - Frank and Valerie Holland, John and Carolynne Cooper, Steve Rawling and myself.

Petula Samios, Director of the Heritage Branch of the NSW Department of Planning, gave a most informative talk on the finer workings of the department and the various stages of how heritage is handled and assessed in various developments, whether they be of state, federal or local significance. She has had almost thirty years experience in the department, her roles covering nearly every aspect of its functions.

As Petula is also responsible for overseeing the amendments which were made to the Heritage Act and the Environmental Planning and Assessments Act in June 2009 she was able to explain in detail the work that is carried out by the Heritage Branch and how its role has changed within the Department of Planning. She was particularly pleased to mention that her workforce has increased since the legislation was passed.

Many subjects were covered and to clarify matters on each Petula was able to give examples of similar scenarios to those mentioned by the audience.



Petula Samios, Director of the Heritage Branch
NSW Department of Planning

How, why and should heritage significant items be listed or delisted from the State Heritage Register were explained. Also was how to identify whether an item is of state, federal or local government significance, as the NSW Department of Planning can only adjudicate on matters of a state level. It can, however, make recommendations on any heritage matters.

Barrie Reynolds, secretary of BMACHO and everyone involved in the day's preparation should be applauded. Public servants are often derided, but as Petula showed they are often more knowledgeable and entertaining than the elected ministers they serve.



From the Editor

This issue has arrived in your letter boxes earlier than usual as the person who I cannot thank enough for her contribution to the newsletter, our printer Lynette Parry, will be taking a well-earned break over the festive season.

A two week break of annual leave at the end of November allowed me to not only make pleasant progress compiling this issue but also to attend the BMACHO heritage meeting at Glenbrook. The drive to and from Lithgow was tiring as the day was in the middle of a heat wave, my 1973 Ford Falcon doesn't have air conditioning, but Petula's talk made the effort very worthwhile. I would highly recommend that all members give thought to attending the future meetings which BMACHO will be organising.

The short article on Kamilaroi was inspired by the two photos used in the article which were part of a large collection of Mary Avern's recently added to the Society's digital archive. Many thanks to Mary for her generosity.

Finally I would like to wish all the readers a safe and enjoyable festive season and I look forward to returning to the grindstone in the new year.

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The John family of Comleroy Road

ANNE & RICHARD JOHN

Half a century ago, when Aunt Mary was told she had convict ancestors, she was horrified. "What utter rubbish," she said, as she slammed the phone down.

Ten years ago we decided to find out more information about the names on the old headstones in the family burial plot at St Peters Church of England Cemetery, Richmond. Little did we realise then that these two names would lead us to eight convict ancestors and connections to a number of well-known early pioneer families in the Hawkesbury district, such as Luttrell, Aull, Ezzy, Roberts, Want, McQuade and Pitt to name a few.



The convict graves at
St Peters Church of England Cemetery, Richmond

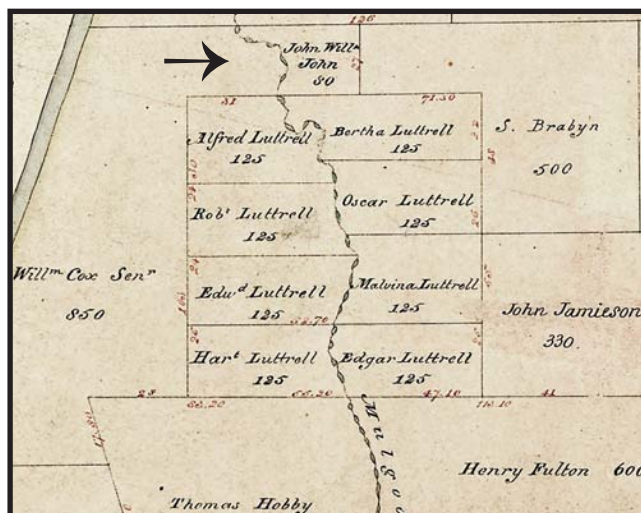
Born about 1756 in Llangyfelach, in Wales, John William John was a convict who came to Australia on the *Albermarle* in 1791. He was tried at the Court of Great Sessions at Glamorgan in March 1790 for "... stealing 18 guineas in gold and 20 shillings in silver from the purse which was inside the breeches of Jenkin Jones." He was what is commonly called a pickpocket. John was sentenced to seven years transportation and his life was about to change dramatically.

Having survived the hazardous journey, including a mutiny by the convicts fourteen days out of Plymouth, John William John arrived in the fledgling colony on 13 October 1791 with 255 other convicts. He soon became part of the convict workforce, clearing the land and growing crops to help the colony survive.

Sometime during the next four years he met Mary Jenkins, née Miller. Mary was also a convict having arrived on the *Royal Admiral* in 1792. Mary, who had been born in Cowbridge, Wales, in about 1769, was tried in Cardiff on 10 January 1792 for stealing, among other items, one thread case, one steel bodkin, one handkerchief and a tortoiseshell comb. She had pleaded not guilty to the charges but was convicted and sentenced to seven years transportation.

We could find no record of a marriage between John William John and Mary Jenkins who was a widow when she arrived in the colony. However, they were to have seven children between 1795 and 1803. These were Ann (c.1795-1838), John William (b 1796), William (1797-1881), George William (b 1798), Thomas (1800-1900), Mary (1801-48) and Elizabeth (1803-66).

In 1796 they were living on land at the Northern Boundary, now known as Pennant Hills. John grew wheat and maize and he was still listed as a settler there in 1806. In 1804 we believe he had joined the local militia and had assisted the Government troops in the quelling of the Vinegar Hill uprising. There is a story that his sword was stolen by the Irish leader of the rebellion, Cunningham, and that afterwards the sword was hung on the wall in his grandson's house at Kurrajong.



John William John's property at Mulgoa

In 1810 John William John was granted eighty acres at Mulgoa. He named his property Mount Pleasant and his neighbours were the family of Dr Edward Luttrell, an assist-

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ant Colonial Surgeon in the NSW colony. Ann John married Dr Luttrell's son Alfred in 1813 and the family, including their eleven children eventually settled in Tasmania.

The second daughter of John William John and Mary Jenkins, Mary, married James Blackman who was an early explorer of the Bathurst, Mudgee and Orange districts of NSW. After Mary's death in 1848 the family finally settled in the Mudgee district.

The third daughter of John William John and Mary Jenkins, Elizabeth, married James Roberts who was the second son of William Roberts and Kezia Brown. Two daughters of James and Elizabeth Roberts married into the Ezzy and Bootle families.

We have found no further records of John William John's sons, John and George. The only details we have for them are references to their christenings in the book *'Sydney Cove 1795 – 1800, The Second Governor'* by John Cobley.

John's son William married Sarah Harvey, aka Hughes, in 1818. Sarah was the daughter of Judith Hughes and Henry Howard, both of who were convicts and she was born in the colony in 1798. William and Sarah had two daughters, Ann (b 1819) who married John Michael McQuade in 1847 and Sarah (b 1820) who married Robert Pitt, the second son of Thomas Matcham Pitt and Elizabeth Laycock in 1843.

The youngest son of the family was Thomas who was born in 1800. More about Thomas later.

In the 1814 muster John William John was a landholder in the Hawkesbury district living off stores. In the 1822 and 1825 musters he was listed as a landholder at Windsor/Richmond. By 1828 John William John was a farmer at Richmond. He was known in the area as the 'Welshman'.

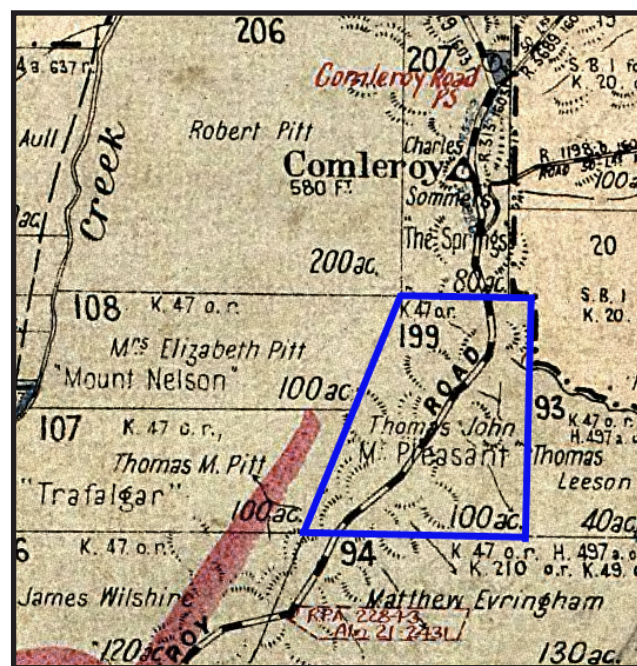
Mary Jenkins was about sixty-six years of age when she died on 5 May 1835. John William John, age approximately eighty-one, died nine days after Mary on 14 May. Both were buried at St Peters Church of England Cemetery in Richmond.

The family's youngest son, Thomas, may have spent some time in the early 1820s at Bathurst with his brother-in-law, James Blackman. James was one of ten farmers settled in the Bathurst area in 1818 by Governor Macquarie. He had married Thomas John's sister Mary in 1815 and had spent some time exploring the Bathurst district.

The 1822 muster lists Thomas as a landholder at Windsor. The 1823/1824 musters show him as a settler in Bathurst, but

by 1828 he was back again in the Hawkesbury district listed as a farmer in Richmond.

In 1827 Thomas married Caroline Thomson (1802-1876), daughter of James Thomson and Elizabeth Sawyer, who both arrived as free settlers on the *William Pitt* in 1806. Thomas received a land grant of 100 acres in Kurrajong in 1839 .. "in fulfilment of a promise made on or before the twenty-sixth day of July One thousand eight hundred and thirty by His Excellency Lieutenant Sir Ralph Darling as Governor". The land was to be called Mount Pleasant and Thomas had been given permission to take possession of this land from as early as 1831. Thomas cleared the land and planted maize. It was here that both his parents died in 1835.



Thomas John's property Mt Pleasant

Continued next issue

Norwood—the locality round the Cut Rock, beyond Kurrajong Heights—has been rechristened, and will in future be known as Bilpin.

Windsor & Richmond Gazette
18 December 1914

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KAMILAROI

"One of the finest homes ever built in the district"

Built by Benjamin Richards in 1893 and demolished by the Department of Education in 1956

CHRIS UPTON

The magnificent residence *Kamilaroi* was built in 1893 by Benjamin Richards, founder of the Riverstone Meat Works. He was born at Richmond on 12 May 1818, the first child of James Richards and his wife Mary Ann Eaton.

Benjamin married Elizabeth Esther Williams on 20 April 1840 at Richmond. After the death of her father Elizabeth received a significant amount of money and some property at Bulga. Over a number of years Benjamin added to their property portfolio with holdings on the Liverpool Plains, the Namoi River, the Warrego River and the Ballone River districts.

He died on 5 March 1898 and *Kamilaroi's* ownership and the properties in the Singleton district were passed to one of his daughters, Alvina Durham. In 1926 the Department of Education acquired *Kamilaroi* when it was sold by Alvina for £4,500.

A two-storey brick block of classrooms was built at the rear of *Kamilaroi* and was officially opened in 1928. The lower levels were designed for primary classes and the upper floor for secondary classes.

Betty Upton can clearly remember her high school attendance at Richmond Rural School during the early 1940s. It involved daily travel to and from Kurrajong by 'Pansy' which were pleasant train trips. Main subjects were held in the 'new' brick building while domestic science, shorthand and typing classes were held in *Kamilaroi*.

"In hindsight one can appreciate what a beautiful and gra-



Photo courtesy: Mary Avern

cious house it had been. Rooms were spacious, windows were large and abundant and there was light and air throughout.

I well remember the gracefully curved staircase. Memories of the bathroom are dim apart from the bath itself which was large, very deep and made of amazing mottled dark green marble and must have weighed a ton.

The cookery school was held in the original kitchen area, modified to hold a large demonstration table and at least six smaller tables for the use of the students. A large wood burning range remained but was never used, instead there was a large electric range and a gas stove for use by the teacher and students.

Sewing classes were held in one of the large reception rooms at the front of the building. There were no sewing machines, all work was done by hand and was strictly monitored.

The gardens were well kept and used with care by both staff and students. I have strong memories of one particular tree, a crab apple whose rich and abundant pink blossom was a sight to behold in spring."

Joy Shepherd also attended classes in *Kamilaroi*. She can vividly recall sitting a 'Theory of Music' exam in the upstairs centre room.

Despite the fact that *Kamilaroi* was in reasonable condition, the brickwork was in excellent condition but the roof needed major repairs due to lack of maintenance, the Dept of Education demolished the building in 1956. There were few, if any protestations from the public when this occurred.



Photo courtesy: Mary Avern

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Mr Slingsby, the architect of Mr Arthur Dunston's new residence, is responsible for placing upon one of the heights of Kurrajong one of the prettiest homes to be seen in any part of the country. The house is of stone, contains about 12 rooms, and is fitted up with the latest improvements. It is situate near Mr H Dunston's, has electric bells, marble mantels, cedar finishings inside, enamel baths, water laid on, and 170 feet of tiled verandah. Mr Slingsby is also the architect and builder of Mr H Dunston's new stables and sheds, which are constructed according to the newest and most approved designs.

Windsor & Richmond Gazette
24 September 1898



From THE ARCHIVES



Photo courtesy: Philip Chapman

Navin's general store at Kurmond with *Kamilaroi* boarding house in the background, circa late 1950s. John and Ethel Navin bought the guesthouse in 1939. At the time it was named *Longview* and they changed the name to *Kamilaroi*. The property was originally owned by Ernest and Rosa Merriman who changed the name from *Salopia Orchards* to *Longview* and built the two storey guesthouse.

The guesthouse is still standing today and was featured in the May-June issue of *The Millstone*.



Photo courtesy: Kathie McMahon

Marshall McMahon on the front and his mate Tommy Druce on the rear. The photo was taken at Gulligal in 1916.

Ladies' Swimming Club.


SEVERAL members of the Ladies' Swimming Club essayed the task last Saturday afternoon of learning the art, but it was unfortunate that the tide was terribly low within the enclosure set apart for novices. Some of the more confident went out into the deeper water, but the prevalence there of weeds made the task a risky one. Mr Kelly, of Parramatta, was in attendance, and gave instruction to several ladies, all of whom looked very attractive in their pretty club costume. A number of spectators were on the banks, and some stupid lads secured a boat and pulled up and down in front of the shed, much to the annoyance of the ladies.

The members held a meeting at the residence of the Secretary (Miss Ada Dunstan) for the purpose of electing officers to the vacant positions, passing accounts, &c. Accounts to the amount of £6 were passed for payment. The following officers were elected:—Patrons, His Worship the Mayor and Aldermen; President, Mrs J J Paine; Vice-Presidents, Mesdames Rodda, Holland, J D Smith, Fitzpatrick, Lobb, W H Dean, Norton, Callaghan, and Fielding. After some discussion, it was decided to have tea on the banks every Saturday afternoon, all members of the club to be invited. A vote of thanks to donors of subscriptions brought the meeting to a close.

Windsor & Richmond Gazette
1 February 1896

The local Protectionists produced at the banquet on Saturday night last a real native industry — namely, a perfect string orchestra, every member of which was born in the district. There is no need to import musicians from Sydney while the Misses Boughton, Pryke, and Dunston and the ever youthful "Sam" Boughton live near us. But unfortunately for their faith in the efficacy of the policy they so strongly advocate—for "the other fellow"—most of our local Protectionists are Freetraders when they want to purchase anything — whether it be a tin of jam or a suit of clothes.

Windsor & Richmond Gazette
24 September 1898



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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Tuesday, 26 January

Come and join us to celebrate Australia Day at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, 26 January and to commence the celebrations for our Macquarie 2010 programme. This function will be a BYO breakfast at Bowen Mountain Park, Lieutenant Bowen Road, Bowen Mountain. Barbeque facilities are available for those members who would like to cook a hot breakfast. Tea and coffee will be provided.

Please bring your own food, plates, cups and cutlery. Cost will be \$2 per person on the day to assist with the cost of hiring the park.

Monday, 22 March

A general meeting will be held at St David's Uniting Church Hall at Kurrajong Heights. Proceedings will get underway at 7.30 p.m. and the guest speaker will be advised in the next issue of *The Millstone*.

Bullridge.

Our Morgan Hills writer seems to stick to his old hobby—Morgan Hills. It seems a pity some people cannot forget such silly ideas. There is no such place as Morgan Hills. Somebody ought to be kind enough to let him know that, for he is always in trouble.

Windsor & Richmond Gazette
23 March 1901

Letters to the Editor



To the editor.

I write regarding the mystery photo in the November - December issue of *The Millstone*.

For me the caption of the knife sharpener brought to mind memories from my early childhood of just such a man. He was standing at the back door of our home in Kurrajong and he was asking my mother if she had any knives to be sharpened. As I recall, the sunlight was strong, he had a moderate and tidy white beard and he carried a bag similar to the one in the photo. Looking back now I feel there was a lorry of dubious age and condition on the roadway at the front of the house.

This would have been about 1933 during the Great Depression years when it was not unusual to have men 'passing through' seeking work however menial in exchange for a meal, a few shillings or a billy of tea and some bread. I remember once watching my mother fashion a billycan out of a jam tin and a strand of wire for an old chap who had chopped a pile of wood for our kitchen stove. Those men were never turned away empty-handed.

And by the way, the knife sharpener did get some of our knives to sharpen.

Betty Upton

ANNE SHIRLEY McPHERSON

10 May 1935 – 7 September 2009

Anne McPherson passed away on 7 September 2009. She is sadly missed by sons, John and Michael, and their families and her many friends.

As her son John described her, "She was the doer, the quiet achiever".

From her first position working for the World Council of Churches in Geneva, to her leadership of Wellspring Community and her retirement job as lay preacher at Bidwell Church she was dedicated to helping those in need.

Her *Bellbird Cottage* at Kurrajong Heights became the venue for small groups to spend weekends experiencing the use of video equipment and community radio in an atmosphere of respect for others particularly people of other cultures. She was involved with the establishment in Richmond of a Community Youth Support Scheme.

As editor of *Views From the Heights* Anne helped bring the community together. She was also an elder of St David's Uniting Church at Kurrajong Heights.

All who knew her will remember a kind, warm hearted, generous lady who was never judgemental and always supportive.

Pat O'Toole



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