

KURRAJONG ~ COMLERoy HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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 Back to the Kurrajong**

The Family History Group's 'Earning a Quid' presentation, held in conjunction with the Scarecrow Festival, was a resounding success. Joy Shepherd's article details the weekend's activities and thanks all those who helped.

4 Ivy Lodge / Lochiel House

Lochiel was recently awarded 'Regional Restaurant of the Year' by the Sydney Morning Herald. This prompted the editor to delve into the history of this building, a local landmark since the district was first settled.

5 Loxley's latest award

Historic Loxley on Bellbird Hill has been inducted into the AHA 'Hall of Fame' at their recent annual Accommodation Awards for Excellence.

6 Website update

With many tools at his disposal our webmaster, Greg Upton, is able to give a detailed account of those who are visiting the site and utilising its resources. He also explains how it has developed since its inception and his ideas for the future.

8 2011 AGM report

Carol Robert's report of the recent annual general meeting lists the names of the newly elected committee members and office bearers as well as a brief mention of the proceedings.

Dates for your diary

Final reminder for the KCHS Xmas party being held on Saturday, 26 November at Paul & Lesley Hulbert's property. Festivities get under way at 5:30 PM with the final general meeting of the calendar year.

Garden Island field trip

VALERIE HOLLAND

A beautiful and clear morning on 27 August was the ideal start for twenty-four members of KCHS to meet guides of the Naval Historical Society of Australia, (NHS of A), at Garden Island on Sydney harbour. After morning tea outside the 110 year old boathouse, home of the NHS of A, we moved inside to receive a short presentation of the history of the island.

We learned that Garden Island was originally named 'Sirius Garden Island'. The original eleven and a half acre site first occupied by the navy sixteen days after the arrival of the First Fleet, was initially prepared as a ships garden. After the loss of the *Sirius* at Norfolk Island in 1790 the name was amended by dropping the name Sirius. In 1859 the island was gazetted a naval depot and in keeping with early plans for a Victorian era dockyard the southern hill was levelled and construction completed by the early 1890s. Garden Island was joined to the mainland in 1942 as part of the construction of the Captain Cook graving dock which was completed in 1945.

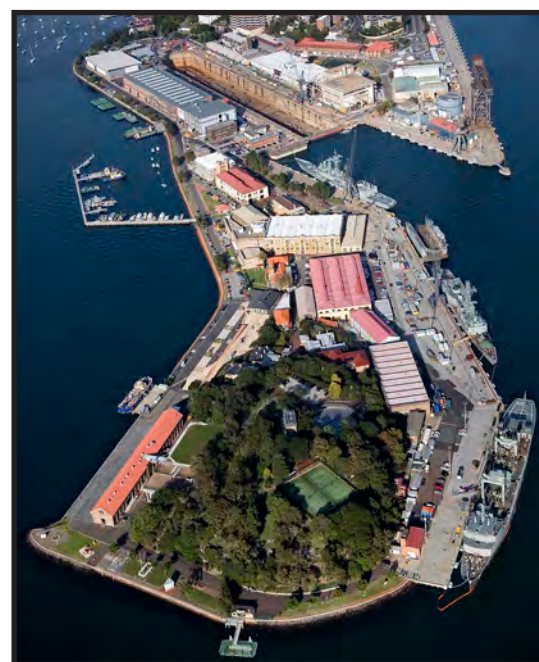
Garden Island is of particular interest to two of our members as both are descendants of First Fleeter Frederick Meredith, a steward on the *Scarborough* and one of three naval personnel who, in 1788, planted the island's first garden with onions and corn and carved their initials on rocks on the northern hill.

Members were split into three groups. Our group walked to the right of the main office building with its cupola housing a windlass clock. It was completed in 1892 as one of Sydney's finest buildings. We viewed a small street that wound up the island's hill containing seven residences built in the 1880s still in use for naval personnel employed at the island. From here we passed the former 1893 naval store with its original gantry cranes in place. These were connected to a hydraulic hoist, the largest of its type in Australia, before passing the entrance of one of the many tunnels built as air raid shelters and used as casualty clearing areas during the 1940s.

As we continued to the dock area HMAS *Success* and HMAS *Tobruk* were berthed with the former being loaded before heading out to sea. As we made our way over remnant rail tracks which were once used to carry heavy equipment over two-thirds of the island, we passed grand old storehouses with large recessed windows many now being refurbished for office space.

Next we came to the Captain Cook graving (cleaning) dock. Opened in 1945 it is considered a greater engineering feat than the Harbour Bridge as it reclaimed some thirty acres (twelve hectares) between the island and Potts Point. It was built to accommodate the largest merchant ships and warships of the time.

Just before the dock was the enormous hammerhead crane, one of only six in the world. It was built in 1952 for the removal of guns and turrets from warships. At sixty-eight metres high, with an eighty-three metre boom it could lift 250 tons and



Back to the Kurrajong

JOY SHEPHERD

The Society, spearheaded by the Family History Group, decided to run our photographic exhibition once more in conjunction with the Scarecrow Festival. The theme this year was 'Earning a Quid.'

The weekend commenced with the Back to the Kurrajong evening on the Friday night. Whilst transcribing the St Stephens' records this year the Family History group noticed how the occupations had changed in the area over the years. Members Carolynne Cooper, Wanda Deacon, Val Birch and Joy Shepherd had prepared over 250 photographic images and text for the display for Friday night and over the weekend.

Our able MC for the evening was Vice-President Steve Rawling. Greg Buckett and Ron Ness were able to come along and give us some insights into the workings of the many sawmills in the area, particularly those of Buckett Bros and Ness, who commenced operations in 1941 and employed a large number of the local men over the almost fifty years they were in business at Putty and Kurrajong Heights. They were assisted with some information passed on to them by Kelly Ness who was not well enough to attend.

Ken Bennett was interviewed by Les Dollin on his rabbiting and ferreting days which commenced when he was just eight years old. He gave us some idea of the different life enjoyed by the young boys of the town as they went about bare-foot earning a few bob to help supplement the family income.



Photo: Carolynne Cooper

Steve Rawling looks on as Ken Bennett, assisted by Les Dollin, demonstrates how rabbit traps were set and captured their prey.

Bev Woodman came down from Newcastle at short notice to tell us about her grandparents' picnic grounds at Panorama Point (later called Cherry Park) Kurrajong Heights, and how selling hot water to the picnickers was one small service offered at parks and picnic grounds in those early days. Bev can recall how she would be sent off as a child to collect the ground fees from the campers and picnickers. Her great-grandparents also had *Lochiel* and the Kurrajong Heights Post Office for a number of years. Bev brought along some great images from those days.



Kurrajong – Comleroy Historical Society Incorporated

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www.kurrajonghistory.org.au

COMMITTEE

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New Members

The Society would like to welcome the following new member

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From the Editor

Members of the committee are instrumental in the production of each issue of *The Millstone*, none more so than the president and secretary. I would like to give Frank and Valerie Holland a very big thank you for their many contributions and feedback during their tenures of office. I am confident the new office bearers, John Cooper and Carol Roberts, will continue Frank and Valerie's stellar efforts in keeping all members up to date and informed on future, present and past activities of the Society.

I am also pleased that I was finally able to convince my brother Greg to give members a detailed picture of the Society's website. I utilise its resources in the production of every issue, took it for granted that others would also be regular visitors, but was surprised at just how many have also benefited from Greg's time and effort.

Researching family history or that of your district often entails searching resources outside of one's country. The Internet has enabled this task to be achieved much easier, quicker and most often proves very fruitful.

The next issue will arrive in your letterbox not long after the New Year so I will take this opportunity to wish all members and readers a jolly festive season, a safe one, a loving one, and one that gives you appreciation for the possibilities of the future as much as we appreciate the accomplishments of our past.

notpuc@bigpond.com

The Kurrajong CWA ladies regaled the group with a bountiful supper giving all those in attendance a chance to mingle and spend more time enjoying the displays.

The display continued over the weekend. Saturday was comfortably busy and it was a great chance to meet with new people and catch up with old friends. Sunday became quite frantic at times, with people coming along with their photos to have scanned on the spot, others wanting to purchase photographs, books, postcards and other items. Others just came along to ask further information or to provide some for the Society. We were pleased to gain a new member on Saturday and several others took information away with the intention of joining.

The crowd was very appreciative of the work put into the display. Many people who came on Saturday and early Sunday came back later with friends and it was mentioned several times that this was ... "the best display ever". These comments made the many hours of work and preparation worthwhile.

We would like to thank the many helpers who made the weekend possible – those (some non-members as well) who assisted in getting the heavy boards from storage at Blaxlands Ridge, setting them up and returning them, others who assisted in welcoming at the door, selling raffle tickets and answering the many questions over the weekend – too many to name. It was a tiring and very worthwhile weekend.



Photo: Carolynne Cooper

The quality and content of the displays impressed all who spent time at the Society's presentation. Past memories of visitors and locals were shared as well as interest in the objectives and membership of the Society.

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Ivy Lodge ~ Lochiel House

CHRIS UPTON

LOCHIEL HOUSE, a local restaurant and the oldest building at Kurrajong Heights, was recently awarded 'Regional Restaurant of the Year' in the *Sydney Morning Herald* Good Food Guide. Originally named *Ivy Lodge* it was built and operated as a guest house for most of its life. From its inception it was held in high regard for the culinary offerings available there. This current award mirrors the ideals and values held by the original settlers. It is an opportune time for a brief reminder of some of the history of this building.

Ivy Lodge was built in 1832 by Joseph Douglass, one of the first settlers on the Heights. After getting his ticket of freedom and a land grant he sent for his wife Mary and their five children so that they could set up the first dwelling on Kurrajong Heights as a half-way house and inn. There were many conditions one had to meet in obtaining a publican's licence, including separate accommodation for travellers, but there were also generous incentives given to those setting up in remote locations.

Joseph arrived in the colony on 7 September 1815 as a convict with 300 others on board the *Baring*. He was assigned by the governor to Sir John Jamison of *Regentville* on the Nepean River near Penrith as a ploughman and seedman. He saved what little of his wages as he could so that he could settle himself and his family on their own land.

In 1817 it was announced that free passage could be available for the wives and children of deserving convicts. Mary and the five children arrived in Sydney on the *Woodman* on 25 June 1823 and by 1834 Joseph and Mary were in the boarding house business.

After Mary's death on 21 December 1857 Joseph lived with his youngest daughter Sarah while his son John, and wife Ellen, managed *Ivy Lodge*. Ellen was the daughter of an innkeeper, Michael Keenan, so she was well up to the task. She managed the house while John was away droving.

Joseph died on 21 September 1865 aged eighty-three.

Around 1867 John extended the available accommodation by building a cottage adjacent to *Ivy Lodge*. Oral history has it that the building was prefabricated and shipped from England as it differs considerably from the style of *Ivy Lodge* and other buildings of the area and time. In May of that year John parti-



Courtesy: Bev Woodman

Post Office, Kurrajong Heights

tioned off eighteen acres of the estate and sold them to William Wright for £500. William immediately built a fine dwelling which he named *Belmore Lodge* in honour of the new governor, Earl Belmore. It was set up as a guest house to rival *Ivy Lodge* and was managed by James Donnelly of North Richmond.

On 29 December 1868 John sold *Ivy Lodge*, the cottage and remaining twenty-six acres of land to George Bowman of Richmond.

In 1875 George transferred the property to his daughters Eliza and Mary Ann, and their husbands the Rev. James Cameron and Dr Andrew Cameron. Mary Ann and Andrew lived in *Douglass Cottage*. They were both ill when they moved in and just a year later, in 1876 they both died there.

James and Eliza retained the cottage and it was hoped to be used as a manse and sanatorium for clergy visiting the Heights. They installed an overseer, John Liedich in *Douglass Cottage* and he also became postmaster.

It appears most likely it was during this period that the house was renamed *Lochiel*, believed to be in honour of the homeland of the Cameron clan and its chief, Cameron of Lochiel. James died on 8 October 1905.

On 20 February 1907 Thomas Walker purchased *Lochiel, Douglass Cottage* and twenty-six acres of land from the estate of James Cameron. Thomas was the postmaster there from the mid 1870s to 1922. During 1921 he became aware of his failing health and possibly because of this on 30 June he transferred the title of *Lochiel* to his eldest son William, also known as Will. Thomas died in 1922 at *Lochiel*. Will died in 1923 and the property was passed on to his wife Maria.

On 18 December 1929 Maria sold twenty acres of land to Eben Waterhouse leaving her holding two houses and roughly two acres of land which Percy Freeman purchased from her on 30 September 1949.

In 1959 the two houses were sold as separate residences. Cyril Benton purchased *Douglass Cottage*.

References

www.members.pcug.org.au/~pdownes/douglass/index.htm
Joseph Douglass 1782-1865: First Settler at Kurrajong Heights
 NSW Patricia (Trish) Downes 2004

Note: An article covering the years that Thomas Walker occupied *Lochiel House* might appear in a future issue.

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Loxley on Bellbird Hill

On 17 June 2011 Loxley on Bellbird Hill was entered into the Australian Hotels Association 'Hall of Fame' at the fourteenth annual AHA (NSW) Accommodation Awards for Excellence.

More than 450 political, business and community leaders, including the premier of NSW Barrie O'Farrell, were in attendance at the prestigious awards ceremony held in the ballroom of the Westin, Sydney.

When presented with the award, Paul Maher, founder and owner of Loxley on Bellbird Hill said, "This is the most exciting day of my forty-one years in small business. We are honoured that we are being recognised by the AHA and the magnitude of being included in the AHA Hall of Fame."

Paul went on to say that Loxley on Bellbird Hill started from very humble beginnings as a homestead with significant heritage and has become a resort with a reputation as one of western Sydney's finest and most elegant romantic escapes for couples. He said that Loxley is fast becoming corporate Australia's first choice for small group conferences, weddings and special events and went on to invite everyone attending the awards night to hold their next conference at Loxley.

Also on stage to receive the award was Loxley's first general manager, Wendy Coombe. Ms Coombe said, "This is fantastic recognition not only for Loxley but also for Paul's visionary leadership, entrepreneurial spirit and total dedication to making Loxley a success."

Ms Coombe went on to say that Loxley's success was also due to a special partnership between government, industry, big business, small business and the community. It was this partnership that had led to many positive social, economic and environmental outcomes for the Hawkesbury region.

Paul concluded his speech by acknowledging the support, work ethic and 'can do' attitude of the Loxley team.



Alfred & Emily Jane Lord with daughters Annie (left) & Helen (Nellie) at the front of Loxley circa 1902

Photo courtesy: Thelma Groch

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Continued from front page



Garden Island 1939

At the left is the RAN cruiser HMAS Australia. Tied alongside is the cruiser HMAS Adelaide. Mid foreground is the steam tug Wattle and a high-speed radio-controlled battle practice target boat

was the largest in Australia. Its last tasks in 1988 were to unload the Flying Scotsman engine and electricity generator parts for NSW power stations.

We progressed to the impressive colonial styled three storey Royal Marine barracks building with verandahs on each level supported by columns. It once housed some 214 seamen and eighty-two light infantry marines. The top floor was a hospital and the kitchen and mess hall were separate, situated behind the building. The building is now mainly office space and part of the top storey is occasionally used for courts martial.

The beautiful chapel was established in 1902 in part of the old sail loft portion of the sail loft and rigging shed, built in 1887. Prisoners from the naval detention centre, which was added at the southern end of the building in 1905, attended church in the gallery, this was enclosed with wire netting to prevent the prisoners from 'accidentally' dropping items on the officers seated below. The navy band uses the gallery on ceremonial occasions since the demolition of the detention centre in 1948. The chapel has many beautiful stained glass windows most of which depict the many naval ships that have served Australia.

Beneath the chapel is the Chapel of Remembrance, a unique memorial the design of which is of '... an inverted hull held high by two masts resting on heavenly white sandstone.' It was built using 100 year old timbers from Sydney and surrounds. Memorial name plaques in alphabetical order are attached to the timber walls.

We reflected on two tragedies at Garden Island. The *Kuttabul* tragedy. Originally a Sydney ferry, the *Kuttabul* was sunk by a Japanese torpedo on the night of 31 May 1942 killing nineteen Australian, two British sailors and injuring ten Australian sailors. The second being HMAS *Tarakan*. While berthed at the cruiser wharf on 25 January 1950 an onboard explosion killed seven naval and one dockyard personnel.

We thanked our guides for an enjoyable visit and their tracing of the island's history from First Fleet, the development of infrastructure in the days when sails, masts and rigging were made and repaired, and the factory machine shop housed the power station boiler house to the present day, before completing our visit to the informative former gun mounting shop building which now houses the Royal Australian Navy Heritage Museum and Cafe.

References

Garden Island Historical Sites tour pamphlet
Garden Island Heritage & Naval Chapel CD's

A long way in a short time

GREG UPTON



Since its launch in April 2008 the Society's website has been in operation for around three and a half years and in this short time it has become very popular amongst members as well as visitors. The website is the Society's permanent public exhibit providing advice to all who visit including detailed information on who and what the Society is, what it stands for, what it has done in the past, what it plans to do in the future, and how to become a member. It is an accessible repository of all sixty-two issues of *The Millstone*, our official newsletter, as well as the ever-growing image library which is approaching 5,000 photographs. The website records details of each of the society's five publications, twenty-four research projects, fifty-four field trips, fifty presentations and displays, and even the ten birthday breakfasts celebrated on every Australia Day since the Society's formation. Through the website visitors can apply to become a member and everyone, member or not, can place orders for prints from the image library or purchase any of the Society's publications.

There is a huge array of information available to a webmaster to give feedback on website performance and usage statistics. This information is largely derived 'server-side' from the systems that host the various parts of a website. In the sample period April 2009 to September 2011 the website has been visited over 40,000 times receiving over 300,000 hits (page views). During this period the average monthly visits have been nearly 1,400 with a hectic average monthly traffic of approximately 11,000 hits. Confirmed locations for most of these visits have been within Australia 79%, but there have been a surprising number of visits from overseas. North America, USA and Canada comprise 4% of these visits, and Europe 3%. Of the European visitors, 1% are from France and 1% from the United Kingdom. Locations for the remaining 14% of the website's visitors have not been able to be identified.

Clues to the main purposes for which the website is being used are being gained through the types of searches that are being conducted within the site's search engine. Of the many thousands of searches conducted the most popular keyword searched has been, not surprisingly, 'kurrajong' with 139 hits and a further twelve mis-spellings. Other popular place keywords have been 'heights', presumably in association with 'kurrajong' with fifty-seven hits, 'richmond' with forty-one, 'grose' with 'vale' sixty-two, and 'bowen' with 'mount' or 'mountain' fifty-four.

Family history research appears to be a driving purpose with people's names featuring heavily in the popular keywords searched. 'McMahon' has received eighty-five hits, 'John' seventy-three, 'family' fifty-two, and 'Townsend' and 'Turner' each received twenty-six. Other interesting keywords searched have been 'school' or 'schools' with a total of ninety-seven hits, 'hill' with fifty-one, 'road' fifty-two and 'millstone' or 'millstones' with a total of sixty-nine hits.

The online image library has proven to be a very popular addition to the website. Since going live in February 2009 there have been over 13 million image records retrieved in queries from which over 100,000 were selected for viewing individually, and of these over 35,000 viewed at the highest resolution. The KCHS logo is watermarked on high resolution images for security and to discourage copying without placing an order to purchase.

The domain host service for the website provides a facility for email boxes to be set up and a number have been configured to provide individual email links via the website direct to the secretary, editor, webmaster, treasurer and Family History Group co-ordinator.

The website is hosted by Pair Networks on its servers in the United States. The domain name is registered by Conexim Australia to ensure that the web address 'www.kurrajonghistory.org.au' is never reallocated to another website or organisation. The site's search engine is provided by freefind.com located in the United States. The image library hosting is managed by Search Tech Pty Ltd located at Penrith in association with Media Equation Pty Ltd, an Australian digital asset management company which hosts a number of online cultural collections including those of the State Library of NSW, the Victorian Museum, other commonwealth and state government departments, and a number of local councils and historical societies. Media Equation's servers are located in Melbourne.

The annual cost to host the website over all servers in Australia and the United States is around \$700. The bulk of this cost is to cover hosting of the image library. The domain name costs around \$20 per year to maintain registration.

There are some areas where the website still needs a little tinkering around the edges such as combining the separate search tools for printed material and for the image library. Also a better facilitation of resources for the Family History Group would be useful. Sponsorship or a grant to assist with the website's operational costs would also be useful, however at present the Society is able to comfortably cover the costs from its revenue base.

Feedback on the website's performance or suggestions for additions and improvements are always welcome and may be directed to:

The webmaster – webmaster@kurrajonghistory.org.au

The secretary – secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au

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Big game hunter



Photo courtesy: Kath Dunston

Plynlimmon



Photo courtesy: Kath Dunston

The photo at left shows Kath Dunston holding a .22 rifle and a very dead goanna. Kath disturbed the goanna whilst it was feasting on eggs in her chook pen and the episode is recalled in her article 'Memories of Willow Glen and Westbury' published in the previous issue of *The Millstone*.

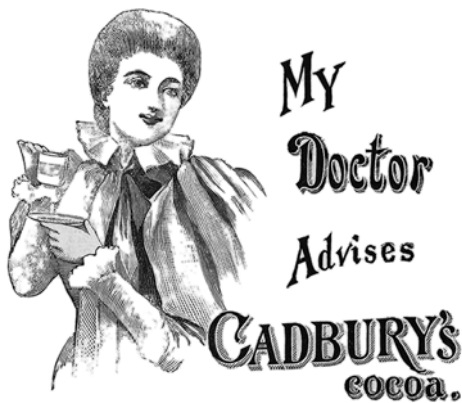
The photo above is of *Plynlimmon* on Grose Vale Road and was taken in 1953. Kath and Joe Dunston bought the property from Les Dunston and they referred to it as 'number two house'. Kath, Joe and the children lived there for many years while Joe worked at the dairy alongside. It was a guest house at one stage and was named after a mountain in Wales. The house is still standing today.

Horses and cart



Photo courtesy: Dennis & Dorothy Simmons

Taken circa 1890 this photo is thought to be of James (Jim) Simmons with his horses and cart, somewhere in the Kurrajong and Colo districts.



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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Saturday, 26 November

THE KCHS CHRISTMAS PARTY will be held at the home of Paul and Lesley Hulbert, 81 Warks Hill Rd, Kurrajong Heights. Festivities get under way at 5:30PM beginning with the final general meeting for 2011. Please bring meat, poultry or fish for the BBQ and drinks, nibbles and chairs. Salads and bread will be provided. Please advise the secretary on 4577 6552 if you will be attending.

Thursday, 26 January

FOR THE AUSTRALIA DAY FUNCTION KCHS will be participating in the Hawkesbury Bells Line Lions Club function at McMahon's Park in Kurrajong. To be held from 8:30AM to 11:30AM the event will be a community day to raise funds for Kurrajong Nursing Home, Kurrajong Rural Fire Service and 180TC Yarramundi, an organisation that assists males at risk between twenty-five and thirty years of age. There will be games and face painting for the children, a raffle and static displays by the RFS, the police and several community organisations. Breakfast of sausage sandwiches, bacon and egg sandwiches, and steak and egg sandwiches will be available for a small cost.

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Windsor & Richmond Gazette
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Annual General Meeting

CAROL ROBERTS

The KCHS Inc Annual General Meeting was held on Tuesday, 20 September at Comleroy Road Public School with twenty-five members in attendance. After the annual statement and financial reports were read all positions were declared vacant by President Frank Holland. Ron Rozzoli then took the chair to conduct the election of office bearers and committee for 2011/2012.

The new committee was elected as follows:

President:	John Cooper
Vice-President:	Steve Rawling AM
Secretary:	Carol Roberts
Treasurer:	Marguerite Wyborn
Committee Members:	Airdrie Martin, Suzanne Smith, Peggy McCarr-Israel, Patricia O'Toole and Carolynne Cooper.

The following appointments were also confirmed:

Library/Acquisitions:	Valerie Birch
Webmaster:	Greg Upton
Hon. Auditor:	Paul Nelson
The Millstone Editor:	Chris Upton
Grants Officer:	Garth Smith

Ron Rozzoli was recommended to the incoming committee for confirmation as Public Officer.

Frank Holland thanked the outgoing committee for its dedication and support and wished the new committee every success. A formal vote of thanks to the outgoing committee was received from all members present and Ron Rozzoli moved a vote of appreciation to the outgoing president and secretary which was carried by acclamation. A bouquet of flowers was presented to Valerie Holland and a thank you card was presented to both Valerie and Frank.



Seasons Greetings

To all readers of the newsletter
The Editor



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- Hills Excellence in Business Awards for Excellence in Customer Service Environmental Management & Sustainability 2008
- Parramatta Regional Awards for Business Excellence in Sales & Marketing Customer Service, Chairman's Choice Contributing to the Environment 2005 '06 '07 & '08
- Western Sydney Industry Awards Excellence 2002 '03 '04 '05 '06 '07 & 08
- Hotel Motel & Accommodation Association Best Short Break Accommodation in NSW 2003