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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

"Singleton's Mills" by Frank Holland

Some say one - Some say two

"Singleton's Mills" have become an important symbol of early settlement in the Kurrajong area. Of course they are particularly important to the Society, as our logo, and as an historical artefact in Memorial Park.

Members of the Society have extensively researched the mills, which were originally owned and operated by Benjamin and James Singleton. These mills provided essential services to the whole colony, as they were flood-free, unlike those closer to the Hawkesbury. In fact there was extensive grain production west of the river in the early nineteenth Century.

The Morawa Historical Society in Western Australia holds a considerable amount of material on its website about mills of all kinds across Australia. In their coverage of Australian Water Mills (Flour), they state that: "It has now been established with reasonable certainty that only one watermill was ever constructed at, or in the vicinity of Kurrajong and that seeming references to the existence of two watermills in this area circa the 1830's, simply reflect a clerical error that was perpetuated in official statistics concerning the areas mills, over at least a ten year period."

K-CHS research would suggest that there really were two mills in the area of Little Wheeny Creek, within 500 metres of each other. The first or upper mill was constructed circa 1810/16 and the lower mill pre 1824.

To support the claim of two mills there is the written testimony of John Town Senior, who leased one mill in 1816 and later became the owner of both mills. An early map below, shows the location of both mills. The lower mill is on Portion 112, an original grant to James Doyle, and the upper mill on Portion 122 and designated 'Leverton's Mill'. William Leverton (Snr.), together with Hutchinson & Cooper purchased this mill and land in 1819. They were partners in the Waterloo Mill in Sydney.

Benjamin Singleton relocated his family to the Hunter River in 1823 where he built further water mills. James Singleton relocated to the tidal mill on the Hawkesbury River.

There is the written record of Sam Boughton who wrote weekly articles for the Hawkesbury Herald in the early 1900's, under the pseudonym of Cooramill: "I have often seen the two mills at Wheeney Creek. The upper one was what is termed an overshot (I have seen it at work) and the lower one an undershot. They were both owned by the Town family. I think they are down now." (Cont. page 3)

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President's Corner

Here we are already almost four months into 2016. It makes me realise how soon September will come around. And, yes, that means the 2016 Annual General Meeting, and the election of a new Committee for the Society. So it is time again to issue an invitation or a challenge, or whatever, to all members to think of contributing to the Society's work through an executive position (President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer) or as a general member of the committee.

I know we make the same call every year, but it is particularly important this year as it is clear that a number of positions will become vacant, including the Presidency. We had a particularly successful year in 2015, culminating in the publication of *We Will Remember Them,* and have maintained a steady pace of activities, and publications. Plans for the rest of 2016 look good (see elsewhere in this edition). We continue to be in a very sound financial position, so there are no knotty money problems for the Committee to wrestle with. Some of these activities are driven by individual members who are not on the Committee, and that is as it should be. But the Committee has a crucial role, indeed, if we did not have an effective Committee, we would be in danger of failing to meet our obligations as an incorporated association.

So, again the rallying cry, to build on our very successful 15 years or so, we need people on our Committee who can provide effective leadership in, as our Constitution has it, controlling and managing the affairs of the Society.

Hands up, please!

President Steve Rawling AM

Family History Groups

As you may have seen in the local press, a new family history group has been formed in our area. It is called Colo Shire Family History Group. Most of the people who have formed the new group were members of the K-CHS Family History Group, who felt they wanted the independence of their own autonomous group.

The K-CHS committee held a meeting with the new CSFHG committee to discuss our ongoing relationship and we offered CSFHG a quantity of the *Grandmothers'* book and the *St Stephen's Register Vol1* as a gesture of goodwill to provide them with some initial income, which was greatly appreciated.

K-CHS will continue to have its own FHG with Val Birch as the co-ordinator. Val was the inaugural FHG co-ordinator when K-CHS was formed and has been a very active member of the FHG ever since. She can be contacted on: familyhistory@kurrajonghistory.org.au

It is anticipated that many people will be members of both groups. We expect our FHG to work closely with CSFHG in the future and we wish the new group well.

The next meeting of the K-CHS Family History Group will be held on Monday 16th May at Blaxlands Ridge School. The group will meet at the intersection of Comleroy Rd and Roxana Rd at 10:00 (Matheson Park) and will then visit the old Wesleyan Methodist cemetery that is on Comleroy Rd, on the way to the school. All K-CHS members and visitors are welcome to attend. Please contact Valerie Birch Email: familyhistory@kurrajonghistory.org.au

WELCOME to NEW MEMBER

The Society would like to welcome new member

Lenore Walker

Kurrajong – Comleroy Historical Society Incorporated

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Committee Members

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Content does not necessarily represent or reflect the views & opinions of KCHS, its committee & members.

Every effort is taken to ensure accuracy of articles.

If errors are found feedback is welcome secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au

Singleton's Mills (continued from page 1)

I have walked the area and it is possible to determine remnants of two separate water races and their associated mill ponds. Other documents suggest the mills ceased operation circa 1858 and fell in to disuse. The ravages of time, bushfire, regrowth, more bushfire, the scavenging of later soldier settlers and farmers, followed by further regrowth and fires, have left little to see at the sites.

It is little remembered today that the first close settlement in the Kurrajong was at little Wheeny Creek, long before today's Kurrajong Village. Around the mills were a number of dwellings, including the 'Donnybrook Fare Inn' later renamed "The Five Alls". From this central

point services were provided to the early grantees and settlers farming along the creek and along Comleroy Road. The mills were the focus of life in early Kurrajong.

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Chapter 3, P 14.

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Benjamin Singleton to Daniel Cooper Indenture 18/3/1822.
Book C 1822 No 470. Registered 2/4/1822
"Reminiscences of Richmond – from the Forties Down", Cathy McHardy 2010, page 118
"Kurrajong – An Early History" - Vivenne Webb 1980,

General Meeting April 4 History in Song

In 2007, Kathie McMahon developed a program to teach local history to children in local schools, using a suite of songs written and recorded by Steve Rawling. Some songs were settings of poems by Sid Sheldon and others, but most were composed by Steve himself.

With Kathie providing historical background playing her accordion the children responded with interest and enthusiasm. It was decided to present the programme at folk festivals, including the National Folk Festival, where it was also received with enthusiasm.

Although some of the songs are well known to KCHS members the whole program had never been presented at a society gathering. The General Meeting seemed like a last opportunity for members to hear it, with Kathie's move to Newcastle and Canada

Steve dusted off his vocal chords. Kathie had to avoid a flying car to make the venue on time! Members enjoyed hearing the stories about the songs and even joined with Steve to sing the choruses. The songs, which took us on a nostalgic trip through time in the Kurrajong included:

"Memories of the Kurrajong" is a Sid Sheldon poem set to music by Steve.

"Singleton's Mills" was written and set to music by Steve "The Wild Colonial Boy" is a traditional song known worldwide about Jack Donahue the bushranger. Steve added a verse about a little known local episode in Jack's wild career – when he killed a man along the Comleroy.

"A Song for Louisa" was written by Emma

Selkirk, the best friend of Louisa Atkinson, the Botanist of the Kurrajong.

"The Pansy" railway song was written by Steve and set to music adapted from a song about a train in Canada. Steve first heard this tune some 50 years ago. It's hard not to sing along with the "BLR" song, another of Steve's compositions, otherwise known as "Some Episodes in the History of Bells Line of Road".

More details of the project can be found in Volume 6 Issue 1 of the Millstone.

Pat O'Toole



Yesteryear - clearing & hauling timber with a Bullock Team

Memories of the Kurrajong

As I travel through the country, with sunny skies above, with fond recollections, this place I'll always love. Where the mist lifts from the meadow, and slowly drifts along A little piece of heaven, this place called Kurrajong

Chorus

Frank Holland

So sing a song of Kurrajong, Kurrajong and Comleroy From the Hawkesbury River up to the Heights, it's filled with pleasures and delights That we can all enjoy

The tall gums on the mountainside where the bellbirds sing all day with a song to greet the traveller, as he passes by the way With orchards that are white with bloom, when the country's at its best. With night shades gently falling, when the sun sinks in the west and in the verdant valleys, where the cattle graze along. It is a land of beauty, this place called Kurrajong

Their fields were ploughed with bullock teams, before the tractor came, but times are greatly altered and they'll never be the same
They cleared their farms with axe and hoe on scorching summer days
They carted all their produce with horse and bullock drays. Their memories will be cherished as we raise our voice in song. We'll think of them for evermore, in this place called Kurrajong

You may speak about your foreign lands and places you love dear But first of all just give a thought to the good old pioneer They opened up the country, their hearts were stout and strong They made this land a paradise, this place called Kurrajong

Poem by Sid Sheldon Music Steve Rawling

THE OLD INNS OF NORTH RICHMOND Part 1 by Deborah Hallam

beverages and the history of our towns can be linked to the stories of our Public Houses. North Richmond is no exception.

The earliest land grants in North Richmond were those on the river which date from 1796. In the early 1800s larger grants were made to Richard Rouse and Archibald Bell. It was from these grants that land was sectioned off to form the private town of Enfield, later to become North Richmond.

From its earliest days the colony of New South Wales ran on a barter system which relied heavily on rum as a means of payment. Farmers away from Sydney and the watchful eyes of officialdom regularly produced their own alcohol, a practice banned by Governor Hunter in 1796. However private houses would often hang signs outside the door announcing a "Public House". When the grog ran out the sign was simply removed. Additionally no licence was required to purchase the liquor William Freeman operated "The Travellers Rest" at North Richthat arrived in large quantity on ships from abroad. Illicit public houses known as "grog-shops" flourished and the issuance of licences for the sale of beer, wine and liquor was erratic to say the least.

It is an easy assumption that a number of these outlets existed in Enfield prior to 1830. Certainly by 1830 the "Pack Horse" had been established on the western side of the river above the punt, a hotel licence having been issued for this hotel to Thomas Parnell in 1829.

The "Pack Horse" was also referred to as the "Ferry" for its position near the punt and the Parnells lived in "Ferry House" next door, a stone building which was destroyed in the 1867 flood. The "Pack Horse" was already regarded as a place for drovers and farmers to rest and socialise while waiting for the punt, which could be some days in times of flood.

The next North Richmond license was to Kezia Aldridge in 1832 for the "Lord Nelson" which is a rather grand name for what appears to have been a two roomed inn with a thatched roof along what is now Grose Vale Road, supposedly frequented by bushrangers and similar people. The licence was renewed the following year in the name of Kezia's second husband John Foley. Again it is likely the inn had existed for many years prior to this. No further record could be found for this hotel and John Foley died in 1837. Kezia appears to have left the district as land records indicate she later sold land in County Evans and she died in Penrith in 1870.

The Woolpack Inn can be seen on the far bank in the image below



Australians seem to have always had a taste for the alcoholic In 1833 John Gordon Town commissioned the building of the "Woolpack" on the site of the "Pack Horse" and remained licensee until 1853 when the licence was renewed to his wife's uncle, Charles Eather. In March 1858 fire destroyed the stables, barns and sheds of the "Woolpack", owned by John Town and operated by Charles Eather. Although the horses were saved, a quantity of hay and grain was burnt. Damage to the uninsured property was estimated at five hundred pounds.

> Thereafter the licence was granted on 20th April, 1858 to William Freeman. A publican's license was issued to William Freeman for the years 1854 to 1856 as "The Travellers Rest" Kurrajong. The Inn was described as the last building on Comleroy Rd. We can assume that Freeman transferred the name with his move to North Richmond as this was the first time this name was used.

> mond before he too decided to move on leading to yet another chapter in the life of the "Woolpack Inn"



Original Woolpack Inn built 1833 by John Town, renamed Travellers Rest in 1874



Side View - Woolpack Inn later known as Travellers Rest

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What's in a Name? by Jennifer Griffiths

For a period of about 20 years Bilpin was known as Norwood.

In the mid-1890s Gillman Norwood acquired a 100 acre property opposite Mountain Lagoon Road where Bilpin Village now exists. This acreage, Bilpin 9, had been given to Edward Grimes in 1830 as one of a number of grants to soldiers from the Veterans Regiment. Grimes disposed of the property around 1850.

When Gillman Norwood acquired the property in about 1894, it was an established orchard. He named it "Norwood". In October 1899 Norwood was appointed the Postmaster and the office was named Norwood Post According to local recollection Norwood was rather Office. The area then became known by that name, although the name Bilpin had been used, despite misspellings such as Belpin and Bilpen, since the earliest survey.

In 1909 the Norwood School of Arts was built with money partly raised by public subscription from the local In 1917 Norwood Polling Station was officially renamed residents. It was "1/4 mile on the other side of Norwood Post Office" and was "commodious" and with "a fairly Bilpin Provisional School in 1927, the name "Norwood" well stocked library and cosy reading room" The building had gone out of use. fronted Bells Line of Road, now called Bilpin School Lane, on the site which was to become Bilpin Public School.

This was a subsidised school (not officially a government mately where the school tennis court is now situated. By school, though a subsidy from the government was paid the late 1940s the number of school children in the disper pupil to support the teacher) and was known as trict had increased, and in 1949 the Department of Norwood School.

In 1910 the Post Office was run by John Siebenthal, who had purchased R.H Upton's property in 1904. In 1914, to avoid confusion with Norwood in South Australia, the Post Office name was changed back to Bilpin.





Norwood School of Arts also served as a school & church

miffed that his name was no longer used.

Gillman Norwood sold "Norwood" in late 1915 to George Richards of "Belmore Lodge", Kurrajong Heights, and left the district.

Bilpin and by the time that the school was upgraded to

What became of the School of Arts building? In 1948 a new School of Arts Hall, in the form of a Nissen hut and The School of Arts was also used for the original school. known as the "Memorial Hall", was opened approxi-Education built a new classroom adjacent to the hall. Bilpin District Hall, on its current site, was opened in 1967.

References

Bilpin Parish Map 1889

Bilpin the Apple Country: a local history. Meredyth Hungerford. Australian Town and Country Journal 30/6/1910



William Wark of "the Ridge" Kurrajong Mountain by Airdrie Martin



The Main Gates "The Ridge" Burralow Road Image P Hulbert

In 1834 Jane Morley was given a Crown Grant of 50 acres (Portion 194) bounded by Bells Line of Road, which was first surveyed in 1823, along the Tabarag Ridge. The property changed hands two or three times until in 1864 Judge Alfred McFarland owned "The Ridge" (named for Tabarag Ridge) He built a small house. He was a lover of trees and ferns and had seats built round the turpentine trees so passers by could rest and enjoy the scenery. On 20th March, 1884, after many owners and managers, William Wark J.P. bought "The Ridge" and replaced the old building with a more "modern" one.

William was born in Glasgow in 1852 and went with his parents to New Zealand in the early 1860s. Several years later he came to Sydney and was Managing Director of Parkinson Cowan Ltd (manufacturers of gas meters) and a Director of the Manly Gas Company for many years. He was also a member of the Australia Club (the oldest gentlemen's club in the southern hemisphere). He was also known as a philosopher and humourist!

In late November 1900, William was voted to the Chair of a meeting, held at Mr Pitt's store at Wheeny Creek, Kurrajong, where between 200 and 300 people were present to agitate for a railway to Kurrajong. William didn't care which route it took - whether it came from Penrith, Windsor or Richmond. A motion was passed at the meeting "That a League be and hereby formed with the designation of the Kurrajong Railway League". It was a very successful and orderly meeting terminating with "three ringing cheers for Her Majesty the Queen".

Kurrajong Mountain was the name by which the location of "The Ridge" was known in Wark's time. The suburb of Kurrajong Heights was named later – "heights" as a descriptive term falls a long way short of the two thousand odd feet above sea level that entitles the ridge to the name of mountain!

William retired from active business in 1913 owing to ill health. However, it is here at "The Ridge" on Kurrajong Mountain that he developed his glorious garden that he opened to the benefit of the Australian Red Cross. Prose could not do justice to the rich variety of this mountain top garden.

I know a Garden on a Height, with rarest loveliness bedight,

Let's leave our troubles on the plain, and climbing to this fair demesne Find peace and beauty once again. (From a verse published in 1930)

The garden's rhododendrons and azaleas baffle description and with the hawthorns and other scented blossoms provide the bees of the district with nectar. Visitors would exhaust their adjectives at the laurels, sycamores, deodars, chestnuts, wisterias, copper beeches, maples, hawthorns, hollies and roses in his garden.

William Wark's garden had taken many years to grow to maturity when he passed away at "The Ridge" on 12th January, 1931 in his 79th year. He was buried on the property.

When Bells Line of Road was rerouted around Cut Rock in 1949, Bells Line of Road up Kurrajong Mountain was renamed Warks Road (now Warks Hill Road).

Thank you William Wark for your garden at "The Ridge" - Airdrie Martin



The Ridge - Date unknown - Image - Pieter Huveneers



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> 70 Old Bells Line of Road KURRAJONG VILLAGE open 7 days p. 4573 1920

THE ARCHIVES



"A dramatic photo of man and beast tilling the soil in the late 1930s.

The image is from the collection of Percy Stevens, the founding Superintendent of the NSW Police Boys' Club, Camp Mackay."

More Camp Mackay images can be viewed on the Society's Website www.kurrajonghistory.org.au

Image Archivist: Jennifer Griffiths

Hobby Brothers Sawmill

A team of timber workers manoeuvring a huge log at Hobby Bros Sawmill. This was situated on the Bells Line of Road, **Kurrajong Heights**, just west of Cut Rock, in the vicinity of the present Kurrajong Heights Bowling and Recreation Club. Bullock Teams were also used in this early industry.

Working with Logs - image - Noreen Montgomery



KURRAJONG.

Mrs Jack McMahon is slowly improving in health. Her many friends wish her a speedy recovery.

The Wheeny Creek " Stink Inspector" smelled a smell, and he thought that smell was oozing from the financial aflairs of a certain local institution, and after sniffing about for several days, and in the still hours of night, he suddenly discovered he had been eating onions previously, hence the unpleasantness. It is to be hoped when he reads the above he won't go off pop, froth at the mouth, let his eyes roll about in his head like saucers, flap his ears till he shakes the hat off his head, and allow the sun to beam on the patch that should contain brains; then in the depth of his wrath take a whip and flog himself till he is completely exhausted, and finally, to have further revenge on his unfortunate carcase, take it and hang it from a branch of his own folly. It is to be hoped none of this will happen, as we like to hear this pup bark occasionally.

Windsor & Richmond Gazette Sat 18 Dec 1909

MIN-MIN CREEK An enquiry from Valerie Birch

I came across an article in the Cumberland Mercury dated 25th October 1879, and would like to ask for help from our newsletter readers.

Does anyone know where Min-Min Creek is on The Kurrajong?

"High on the Kurrajong, about five miles beyond Richmond, a splendid spring of pellucid water emerges from the bowels of the earth, and in its rippling course bears the appellation of Min-Min Creek. This is so pure that I made with it a nitrate of silver bath without distillation, and with which I produced beautiful collodion positives and negatives without the slightest indication of fogginess or crystallization, which cannot be accomplished without water perfectly pure, or without being contaminated by vegetable or mineral properties. Min-Min Creek is inexhaustible in any season"

Contact: Val Birch by email at:

familyhistory @kurrajonghistory.org.au



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

GENERAL MEETING Monday 7pm 23rd May 2016

St David's Uniting Church Kurrajong Heights Guest Speaker: Mr John Miller "A Review of Hawkesbury History". Members & Friends Welcome - Supper \$2.00

Members & Friends are invited to attend the

KCHS Mid-Year Luncheon Thursday, 7th July 2016 Chapel Hill BERAMBING

Time: 12 midday to 3pm

Guest speaker Deidree Morrison from the Macquarie Towns Art Society. "Art as Heritage"

Please see details on BOOKING FORM INSERT

MEMBERS please NOTE there is also a Membership Renewal Form INSERT in this Newsletter

15th June KCHS Excursion Arms of Australia Inn Museum & Valley Heights Locomotive Museum

Members & Friends are welcome to book for this regional excursion, Wednesday 15th June
Our group will leave by bus from McMahon Park Kurrajong 9.15am
Our first stop is the Arms of Australia Inn at 10am
Lunch will be at the Nepean Rowing Club
12midday - 1pm (approx. \$20.00 at own cost)
We will then travel to the
Valley Heights Locomotive Museum
for a history talk, guided tour of the facility, train ride and afternoon tea, before heading for home.

Entry COST to both Museums including bus fare per person - \$35.00 BOOINGS ESSENTIAL secretary@kurrajonghistoryorg.au
Ph: 4567 7410
KCHS PO BOX 174 KURMOND NSW 2757

FUTURE COMMEMORATIONS

- St Peter's Richmond (1841)
 The 175 Years Anniversary
 Service Sunday 24th July
 2016
- St David's Uniting Church
 (1867) 150th Anniversary will
 be celebrated with a special
 service in October 2017 (date
 to be announced).
- St Matthew's Windsor (1817) The 200th Anniversary will be celebrated 8th & 11th October 2017

Valley Heights Locomotive Depot

The original line over the Blue Mts. was built and opened in 1867 to Weatherboard (Wentworth Falls). The line included many small stations on what was then a single line operation. With the extension of the line and later duplication, Valley Heights became important as a depot that included a locomotive yard, 10-bay Roundhouse and 18 metre turntable. Join our guided 15th June excursion to see and hear more about this crucial infrastructure. An historic gem, the depot has the oldest remaining roundhouse in NSW. *All members and friends welcome*.

Arms of Australia Inn

The Arms of Australia Inn is situated in the Penrith Valley at the gateway to the Blue Mountains National Park. The inn was once a staging post for travellers making the trip from Sydney over the Blue Mountains to Bathurst and the goldfields. Built in two sections, the first in 1826, it is one of the oldest buildings in Penrith. The Inn is now the home of the Nepean District Historical Society and NSW Marine Corps, who recreate the lives and times of the First Fleet Marines, sailors, convicts, gentlemen of quality and their ladies.



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