

THE MILLSTONE

KURRAJONG ~ COMLERROY 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

HISTORY IN A PLACE – A PLACE IN HISTORY

by Steve Rawling AM

I have written in the Millstone before about the property at 1238 Bells Line of Road in Kurrajong Heights, which is now our home. Earlier items focused on the two most notable occupants of this property, Louisa Atkinson and William Harry Tietkens.

But a look at the sweep of the known record of the property reveals a picture of the area's history in microcosm, as the nature of occupancy and land use has changed over the more than 190 years of European settlement. From wilderness to residential area.

The early European history of the area was outlined in detail in the work of Trish Downes which she presented to the Society in 2004. Trish had researched the period when her ancestor, Joseph Douglass, was granted 50 acres shortly after Archibald Bell had discovered the Bells Line of Road route across the mountains. Joseph and his sons increased their holdings to 190 acres over the next few years, and cleared much of the land.

Further expansion followed, and Ivy Lodge (now Lochiel) began operation as an inn. As the road was not well developed all the way across the mountains, most of the travellers at the time were drovers, although there were others, notably Lady Jane Franklin in 1839.

In 1829, Joseph Douglass and his family were joined at the top of the hill by Samuel North, the police magistrate in Windsor, who received a grant of 320 acres in about 1829 and established Northfield Estate.

So by 1841, the original character of Kurrajong Heights, including what became 1238 Bells Line of Road, was established – a number of landowners, some clearing and farming, and a basic wayside inn.

In that year, 1841, a major change took place. Samuel North and Joseph Douglass became developers. They proposed the sub-division of about 88 acres into a village to be called Northfield. It seems somewhat bizarre that a sub-division into suburban sized blocks could be thought viable at this time, given its remoteness and the very basic transport available. Presumably Douglass and North could see the possibility of a market for produce from the farmed areas. 1238 Bells Line of Road was part of this "village". Surprisingly, sale of the lots was successful, but there does not appear to have been any building or occupancy in the following years, although many of the blocks were sold on. Another phase in the history of the area.

Then, in 1859, Lot 14 was bought by Louisa Atkinson and her mother, a house (*Fernhurst*) was built and in the years 1860-5 when they lived there, 8 other lots were purchased, eventually resulting in a property of 11 and a half acres. Clearly there had been other developments in the area, as Louisa wrote about a developing community. Louisa and her mother sold the property in 1865, to Arthur Dight, and then in 1877 to William Henry Bowman. This appears to be the orcharding period of the property, an important next phase in the nature of Kurrajong Heights. *(Story cont. page 4)*

THIS ISSUE

- Page 1 History in A Place
- Page 2 Presidents Report
- Page 3 AGM Images - Carol Liston's talk
- Page 4 History in a Place continued
- Page 5 Society activities
- Page 6 Remembering Betty Upton
- Page 7 From the Archives
- Page 8 Dates for Your Diary



New Fernhurst 3 built by Lindsay Everingham in 1918 for Jack Tietkens.

(Image supplied by the late Thelma Groch)

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Steve Rawling AM

In the month of September the Annual General Meeting of the Society and a General Meeting, were both held at Blaxlands Ridge School hall, adjacent to the Society's storage premises and meeting room.

The major business of the AGM was as usual the election of a Committee and office bearers, which was duly conducted. The new Committee bears a striking resemblance to the old, as all positions had only a single nominee, and thus the list in this issue will be familiar to all. The call for new members both for the Committee itself and for contributions to the work of the Society goes out as usual.

At the General Meeting we were privileged to be addressed by the President of the Royal Australian Historical Society, Professor Carol Liston, who has a particular interest in the early history of Western Sydney. In this case that interest was focused on the story of her ancestor, Robert Aull, which incorporated her recent discoveries (virtually up to the day before her talk) about early development in Yarramundi and Agnes Banks. It was intriguing to hear from a professional historian about the process of discovery through original records, which results in the filling of gaps in the general picture which we have in the early development of the area.

At both meetings, we were able to welcome the Member for Hawkesbury and State Minister for Finance, Dominic Perrottet who showed great interest in the work of the Society. We trust that he will continue to show sympathy with the work of Societies like ours and the general issues of history and heritage in discussions within Parliament and Cabinet.

September also saw the launch of the second volume of the parish registers of St Stephen's Anglican Church in Kurrajong, transcribed by members of the Society's Family History Group and published by the Society. The records are from St Stephen's itself, St Philip's at North Richmond, St James' at Kurrajong Heights, and the churches at Salis Flats and Upper Colo.

The launch took place at the Sunday morning service at St Stephen's, and the Senior Minister of the parish of Kurrajong, Shaun McGregor, enthusiastically supported the volume, covering the years 1903-1936, as a record of the churches in the district and of their parishioners.

An inscribed copy of the volume was presented to each of the Family History Group who had worked on the project, and the volume was dedicated to our late President, John Cooper, who gave great support to the team.

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Historical Society Incorporated**
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secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au

www.kurrajonghistory.org.au

WELCOME to NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome new members

Nerelle & Albert TAYLOR

An Acknowledgement: Vera Bentvelzen has recently, very kindly, donated her research materials for her book "Diggers' Hill" to the Society. A lot of this material was in the form of Dictaphone recordings of interviews she did with Forbes Mackenzie and we are very grateful to Ian O'Toole for spending many hours transcribing this material onto CDs. The CDs will soon be accessioned into our KCHS library and available for members to borrow.
Further enquiry, email: librarian@kurrajonghistory.org.au

The Story of Robert Aull

General Meeting Presentation by Carol Liston

On the evening of the KCHS AGM 26/9/16 - summary by Deborah Hallam

Robert Aull, the subject of Carol Liston's talk, arrived in NSW in 1815, a convict on the "Francis and Eliza". He had been convicted for "uttering forged stamps" and sentenced to death, the sentence being later commuted to transportation for life.

Also on the "Francis and Eliza" was his future wife, Jane Thompson, a Catholic convict girl sentenced for seven years. A straw bonnet maker of 31, Jane had a fair complexion with freckles, light brown hair and hazel eyes.

Robert was listed as a labourer, five foot ten and three quarter inches with a sallow complexion, dark brown hair and hazel eyes. He was a protestant.

The pair married in 1817 and had 6 children before Jane died in 1828. Shortly after, Robert remarried, the ex-convict widow Mary Johnson (nee Moore) who moved to live with him with her 4 children.

In 1822 Robert Aull received two grants of land of 2 acres and 1.3.6 acres at "Little Richmond", the settlement to become known as Agnes Banks. There was a further grant of another 2 acres in 1834. It was these grants that led Carol Liston to research the unrecognised village of Agnes Banks.

It would seem that as in Richmond and the other towns, Governor Macquarie wished to ensure that farmers would have flood free land on which to build their homes and store sheds. Thus Agnes Banks became the settlement for the farmers of the area surrounding Yarramundi Lagoon. Other settlers to receive small allotments were Lucy Wood and William Farlow.



On one of his allotments Robert Aull built the "Governor Darling" public house of which he was licensee from 1830 to 1838. Will Farlow also operated a public house on his allotment. The "Governor Darling" still stands on Castlereagh Road.



An interesting sideline from Carol's talk was that Robert Aull also received an early grant in Kurrajong of 60 acres in 1823. This grant on Little Wheeny Creek was diagonally opposite Pitt's "Trafalgar" grant and Society members David and Jenny Griffiths were able to confirm they live on part of this grant.

Images: Carol Liston Robert Aull presentation, Steve Rawling AM and Steve with MP Dominic Perrottet Member for Hawkesbury presenting a *We Remember Them* book for his Hawkesbury office.

(Images from the mobile phones of Lesley Hulbert and Suzanne Smith)

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Our agents have forged strong relationships with the local community and have the knowledge and expertise to talk to buyers about their property's potential. You are welcome to contact us today to have your property appraised.

History in a Place -

A Place in History (cont. from page 1)

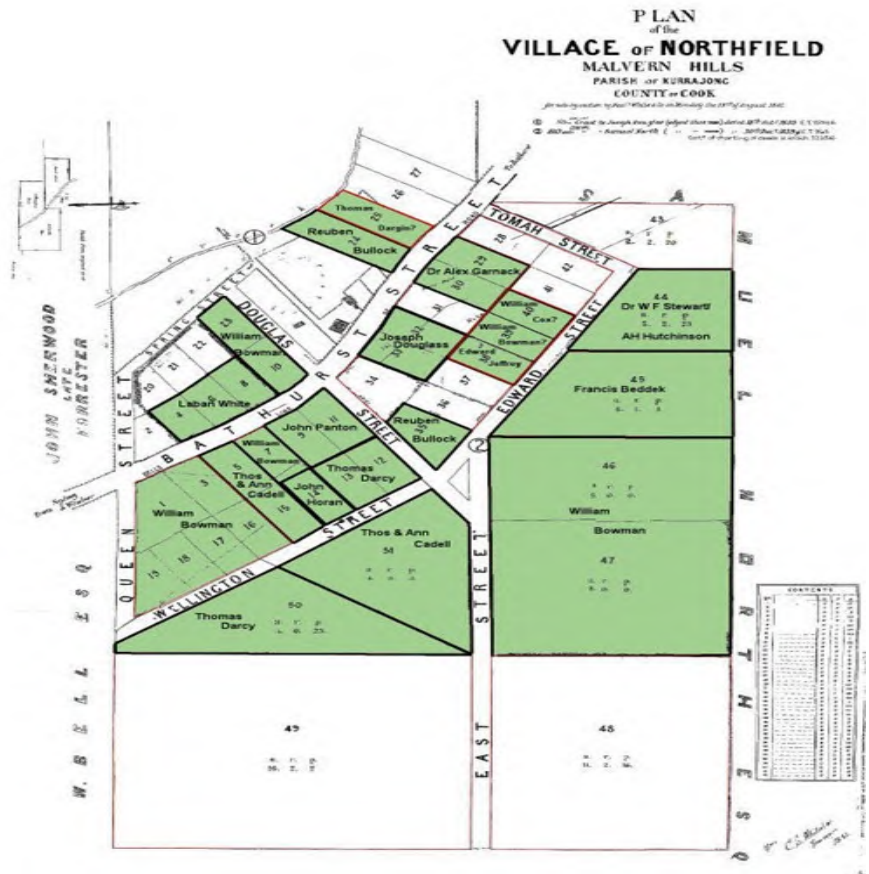
But not only orcharding, as in the 1880s, Bowman built a house below the location of Louisa's house, which became a guest house, along with other better known establishments in the area. Thus the beginning of the guest house or more grandly, the "hill station" part of the history of the area.

McKenzie Bowman eventually sold the property to Selina Doyle in 1901, and we can assume that it continued to be principally an orchard property but also a guest house. Then in 1917, it was purchased by Jack Tietkens, whose father WH Tietkens built a house – *New Fernhurst*. He demolished the two previous houses, including Louisa's cottage. When Jack Tietkens died in 1921, his father sold the property to Alwin Peck, a World War veteran from a well-known local family, who sadly took his own life in 1928. His wife, Alice, continued to live in *New Fernhurst* until 1941, as the orchard industry continued to be the major focus of activity in Kurrajong Heights. It also appears the house continued to be used as a guest house.

Then in 1941 the property was purchased by the Dangar family, (Rodney Dangar owned the famous racehorse Peter Pan) and this was the start of a new "hill station" era, as Dangar and his successor as owner, David Ritchie, were graziers in Western NSW and elsewhere, and had property in Sydney, this was clearly a "weekender". Then in 1959, a

solicitor from Sydney, James Denton Moors and his wife, bought the property, and set about arranging a sub-division into 15 lots, with *Fernhurst* remaining at the centre of it as Lot 1. His son, Phil Moors, became the Director of the Royal Botanic Garden in Melbourne, and fondly remembered the garden on the property.


sub-divisions of the 1970s. From 1966 to today, the property (at some stage re-named *St Clements*) remained in this role, passing through several hands until we purchased it in 1996, and set about re-establishing the garden. So the history of *St Clements* at 1238 Bells Line of Road encapsulates the story of Kurrajong Heights from first settlement on



This was clearly the end of the orcharding era, as it was elsewhere in the Kurrajong region. *Fernhurst* became just a residence albeit with a large garden. It remained one of really quite few houses in Kurrajong Heights until the major

Bells Line of Road through timber clearing, farming, rural guest house retreat, orchard, and sub-division, and through the hands of about twenty owners in almost 200 years.

Steve Rawling AM



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Dr Rex Stubbs OAM Commemorative History Symposium

Former Hawkesbury mayor, Dr Rex Stubbs OAM, was well known for his support of the arts generally and for his love of history in particular. Council resolved to remember his contribution by funding an annual activity named after him promoting the study and appreciation of local history. This took the form of a scholarship until 2015. The scholarship has now evolved to a more inclusive history / heritage event, to be staged by Council's Cultural Services Branch.

The Inaugural Commemorative History Symposium was held on 3 September 2016 in the Tebbutt Room, Deerubbin Centre with members from the Hawkesbury LGA historical societies and related heritage groups present. Time was set aside during the event for networking, viewing of Societies image displays and perusing of the many publications available.

Dolla Merrillees, Director of the Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences (formerly The Powerhouse Museum) delivered the keynote address. The task of moving this facility from Ultimo to Parramatta will fall largely on her shoulders.

Tim Carroll, Director of Bankstown Youth Development Service offered insightful ideas in his talk on "Oral Histories as the base for new projects, new audiences".

Judith Dunn, renowned historian, tour guide and author, is a past president and served on the Parramatta and District Historical Society Council for 23 years, Judith is also a councillor with the RAHS. Judith engaged us all with her lively presentation "Every Migrant has a story".

Panel Discussion ended the day with staff from the Hawkesbury Regional Museum and Museum and Galleries NSW (MGNSW) facilitating discussion on ideas of partnerships, future projects and opportunities with local historical groups.

KCHS delegates in attendance at the Symposium: Steve Rawling, Suzanne Smith, Valerie Holland, Deborah Hallam

Image 1 above right: Dolla Merrillees, with Hawkesbury staff members Museum Curator Rebecca Turnbull and Museum & Gallery Director Diana Robson

Image 2 middle right: Tucky Coole who gave acknowledgement of Country and Tim Carroll with Manager Cultural Services Keri Whiteley.

Image 3: Symposium Delegates



The Grose View School 40th Anniversary Spring Fair K-CHS Image Display 3/9/16

This event was well attended despite inclement weather. The KCHS photo display was located in the same room as the school's photo display, which worked well. We had quite a lot of interest in the display and sold a small number of books. David & Jenny Griffiths set up and manned the display with welcome assistance from Val Birch, Lenore Walker, Rod Clewett and Bryan Wyborn.
Image: David Griffiths



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BETTY UPTON - A Kurrajong Girl

Mrs Betty Upton, who died in Sutherland Hospital on 22 September 2016 after a short illness, will be remembered by many in the Hawkesbury District. She was born and raised in Kurrajong, and in later life was actively involved in early colonial and family history research both in the Hawkesbury and the Sydney district.

Betty Upton was born in 1930 in the family home on Grose Vale Road at Kurrajong, being delivered by the famed midwife Sarah Howard. Her father was Ernest Robinson, manager of the Woodhill's store in Kurrajong, and her mother was Annie nee Lord, from the Loxley orchard in Kurrajong Hills. Betty attended primary school at Kurrajong Public School, which was located adjacent to her family home, and later attended high school at Richmond District Rural School, travelling to and from Richmond each day on the "Pansy" steam train.

As a young child Betty attended Kurrajong's St Stephen's Anglican Church Sunday School, later in her teens becoming a Sunday School teacher herself. She also took an active role in the church's youth fellowship group, was Vice President of the "Younger Set" of the Kurrajong CWA Branch, and in 1947 was an adjudicator's assistant at the inaugural Hawkesbury District Eisteddford held in the Kurrajong Theatre.

After completing school Betty spent the following ten years assisting her father in the Woodhill's general store at Kurrajong. When her father retired due to ill health in 1955 she left the store, in order to care for him.

To help provide for the household she started working as the receptionist for Dr John Bain when he established his Kurrajong practice in that same year. During her role as his receptionist Betty suggested to Dr Bain that Kurrajong needed a hospital of its own as the isolation of the districts on the western side of the Hawkesbury River during times of flood presented significant medical risk for residents. Dr Bain listened,



agreed, and after three years through his resource and influence the Kurrajong War Memorial Maternity Hospital opened in 1958. The hospital continued to serve Kurrajong until 1982 when it converted to the present Kurrajong and Districts Nursing Home.

In 1957 following the death of her father Betty left Kurrajong and settled in Adelaide for the next three years with her husband Bernard. During this time Betty's two sons Gregory and Christopher were born. The family moved back to Sydney in 1961. Over the next thirty years Betty worked in a number of jobs including for De La Salle Brothers at Katoomba. When the

boarding school closed in 1964 Betty was reemployed at the De La Salle Brothers monastery at Kingsgrove. Three years later she commenced working with the Medical Benefits Fund, initially as a filing clerk, but later and for the remainder of her twenty-three year career with MBF, as a tutor, training staff in how to assess medical and hospital claims.

Betty retired from the MBF in 1990 and almost immediately began researching her own family history. As her knowledge and enthusiasm grew in this field she began volunteer work at the Society of Australian Genealogists cataloguing card indexes held at Richmond Villa in Kent St Sydney.

It was through the SAG that Betty ultimately completed her Diploma in Family Historical Studies, with her thesis on Edward Robinson and Mary Harrison regarded as the authoritative work on these two emancipist Hawkesbury pioneers. They both came to the colony as convicts in 1791, Edward aboard the "Admiral Barrington" and Mary aboard the "Mary Ann". Edward's life in the colony was interesting. He was granted a conditional pardon after five and a half years of servitude and went on to become one of the Hawkesbury district's pioneer farmers, a hotel owner, and one of the first people in Australia to breed sheep. Edward and Mary had seven children, and Betty was a direct descendant.

Greg Upton (Cont. page 7)



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**From
THE ARCHIVES**



Panorama Point - Cherry Park - Circa 1938

Mary Hobbs sitting on the fence at *Panorama Point* later known as *Cherry Park* at Kurrajong Heights. The property was owned by the Hobbs family, and a favourite picnic spot. Image 080400 from the Society's Image Collection, which can be accessed by visiting www.kurrajong.org.au

Cont. from page 6

Betty Upton returned to live in the Hawkesbury District in 2001, living in Richmond. She remained active as an historian and genealogist for many years, writing a number of articles for the Kurrajong - Comleroy Historical Society, as well as assisting a number of people with their family history research.

Betty's funeral was held at St Stephen's church Kurrajong, the resting place of both her parents, all her grandparents, and also some of her great grandparents and great great grandparents.

Greg Upton

Note: Greg Upton was, in the early years of the Society, the editor and publisher of the Millstone Newsletter before handing over the reigns to his brother Chris Upton. Greg was also the Society Webmaster for many years, until 2013.

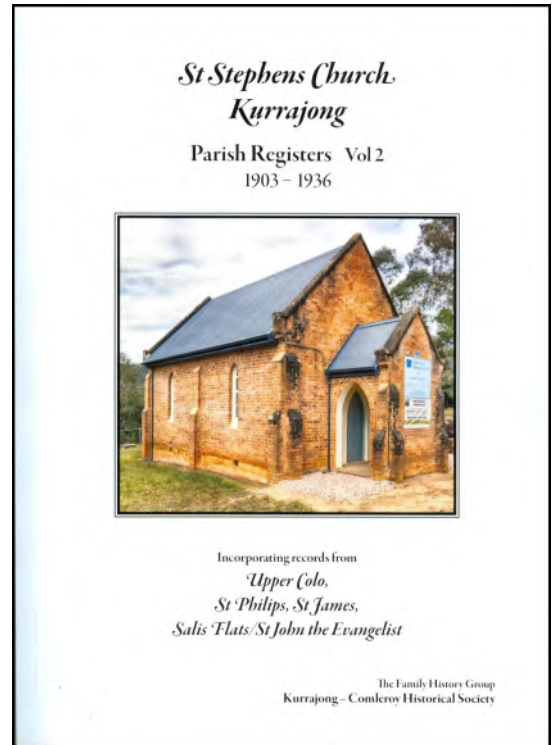
**RAHS Conference in Wollongong
22nd and 23rd October, 2016**

David and Jenny Griffiths represented the Society on the Saturday, chatting with people and selling a small number of books. The conference was well attended with about 100 people.

The Keynote Address by Associate Professor Grace Karskens presented her research into early farming near Castlereagh which shows that changes to the landscape happened slowly.

Other talks centred on the Wollongong area. In the afternoon there was a presentation on making the best use of "Ancestry" and "Trove". A bus tour of Wollongong crime spots, led by Dr. Glenn Mitchell, of the University of Wollongong, provided an interesting excursion at the end of the day.

Jennifer Griffiths



The second volume of the

St Stephen's Parish Registers

has been published and covers the period 1930-1936. Volume 2 includes records from St Stephen's, St Philip's, St James', St John the Evangelist/Salis Flats Mission Church and Upper Colo Church. A selection of stories about parishioners recorded in the book adds an interesting dimension to the publication.

Volume 1 & 2 are available by contacting:

The Secretary

Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society

PO Box 174 KURMOND NSW 2757

Phone: 02 4567 7410

EMAIL: secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au

Cost per book \$20.00 Postage & Handling \$15.00



St Stephen's Vol 2 launch event 11th November 2016

Carolynne Cooper, Wanda Deacon, Kath McMahan, Rev Shaun McGregor, Joy Shepherd, Chris Upton

Dates for Your DIARY



KURRAJONG-A-BUZZ
Proudly Promoting Pollinator Week

Sunday 20 November 10am - 2pm
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- Fun activities throughout the village
- Bee specialists, insect hotels & honey
- Plants to create a pollinator paradise
- Kids zone with bug activities
- Free family event

A KURRAJONG COMMUNITY FORUM EVENT

KURRAJONG-A-BUZZ is a Kurrajong Community Forum event supported by HCC, Bendigo Bank, WSU, HEN and other community groups

Kurrajong Comleroy Historical Society will hold a Heritage Photographic Display in the CWA Hall

KCHS Members willing to assist with the exhibition for 1 or 2 hours on the day would be welcome

Please contact David Griffiths 4567 8999
webmaster@kurrajonghistory.org.au

St Matthew's Windsor
an Anglican Landmark celebrating 200 years

A new publication by Ian Jack and Jan Barkley-Jack, will be launched at a service on **Saturday 12th November 2016 at 4pm.** Professor The Honourable Dame Marie Bashir will be the guest speaker.

RSVP bicentenary@windsoranglican.asn.au



CHRISTMAS GATHERING

A thank you to Rod Clewett who will be our host this year for the Society Christmas event

Members & Friends are welcome to attend 4pm Saturday 3rd December 2016

Lemon Forest
588 Grose Vale Road Grose Vale

Off road parking is available so please follow parking signs to the rear of the property

It would be advisable to let secretary Suzanne Smith know if you will be attending for catering purpose.

Email: secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au
Ph: 02 4567 7410

KURRAJONG COMLERoy HISTORICAL SOCIETY
Annual Australia Day Breakfast

Members & Friends please diary in **Thursday 26th January 2017**

Venue details will be in the January/February 2017 Millstone

Nepean Gorge History Discovery Tour
NEPEAN BELLE Paddlewheeler
Saturday 18th March 2017

The KCHS committee is seeking members interest for participation in the above Discovery Tour

KCHS members have been invited to join a tour further into the Nepean Gorge than the Nepean Belle usually takes guests. We would be retracing the steps of The Count O'Meagher's Picnic tours on the MV Reliance

The Belle would cruise through the Gorge taking in Glenbrook Creek, Tyler's Quarry, Euroka Creek, Breakfast Creek, Fallick's Cave, and the site of the old jetty at Selfe Farm. The historical commentary throughout the Discovery Tour will be given by historian and author of "The History of the Blue Labyrinth" Bruce Cameron.

This special 5 hour cruise event will depart at 10am from Tench Reserve returning approx. 3pm. Morning Tea, beverages and the *Nepean Belle Buffet Lunch* selection will be served during the tour and is inclusive of the approximate \$100.00 Seniors Cost for the tour.

If you are interested in this event to be held on the 18th March 2017, please let KCHS secretary Suzanne know: Email secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au Ph: 02 4567 7410

Nepean Belle staff will send through further details early in the New Year which will be published in the January/February 2017 Millstone Newsletter

