

THE MILLSTONE

KURRAJONG ~ COMLERoy HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Covering all of the Hawkesbury West of the River, from North Richmond to Bilpin,
Grose Vale to Colo, including Wilberforce, Ebenezer, Glossodia, Tennyson,
Freemans Reach and Bowen Mountain.

Memories of Bowen Mountain

Australia Day 2019 Presentation by
Pat O'Toole & Jennifer Griffiths

Neil Hartley has a long association with Bowen Mountain and this article is based on some of his memories recorded in a series of articles which appeared in the Bowen Mountain Newsletter in 2000 – 2001.

Some time in 1947 Neil and his wife, Margaret, set off from their home in St Ives with a set of instructions to find their way to Bowen Mountain. They had no idea where the place was and after passing the airbase it was new territory for them both. The wooden sign at North Richmond looked very old.

They passed Belmont, Duffy's Bus Depot, the General Store and then on to a dusty road. After crossing a ford they arrived at a gate and, as warned by Mark Duffy, Mr Suthers would be there to collect the toll. Neil describes him as a tall, thin gruff man, but his most striking feature was a great ring of keys which seemed to give him a lop-sided appearance. After paying a shilling, the gate was opened and as they moved on Mr Suthers bellowed "close the gate when you leave".

The track passed a beautiful dam and went through a magnificent garden of trees and shrubs many times larger than today's park. The bunya pine receives a mention but much more impressive was the giant blue spruce. Any distant views were obstructed by forests of dead black wattles.

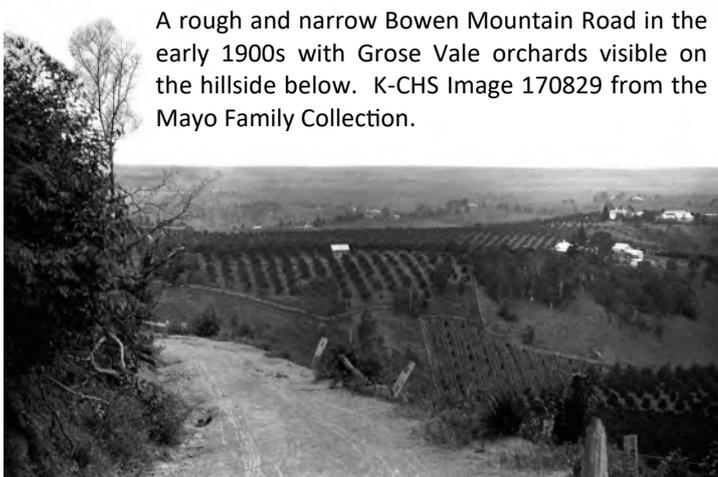
It was Margaret's father, Colin Scrimgeour and his partner, Pam, whom they had come to visit. Their house consisted of two railway pay offices bolted together to form one long room. Kitchen and bathroom were in a separate lean-to. Pam cooked them a Chinese meal for lunch and they departed with Neil failing to appreciate the beauty of the mountain.

In following years Neil and Margaret became frequent visitors. Neil met "Pud" and Flo Hough. "Pud" harvested bark from black wattle trees for sale at the Windsor tanneries. He also cleared the dead trees to create the view from the mountain which helped Neil to like the mountain a little more. Neil spent a week working with "Pud" cutting a track from Scrim's place out to the edge of the western escarpment. Scrim planned to build a house at the edge of the escarpment when his lease became freehold. This never happened and the track is now called Scrimgeour's Trail.

It must have been early spring and Neil speaks of the carpet of jonquils and daffodils flecked with snowdrops which carpeted the park. He stayed in the Bowen Mountain Hut, still there today as a residence.

Scrim bought Honeysuckle Cottage, so Neil was needed again to help "Pud" with renovations. After work on Friday he travelled by train, with his dog, to Richmond where he was met by Pam. Dogs could accompany passengers but one had to buy a ticket.

Cont. page 3



A rough and narrow Bowen Mountain Road in the early 1900s with Grose Vale orchards visible on the hillside below. K-CHS Image 170829 from the Mayo Family Collection.

This Issue

- Page 2** **President's Report**
- Page 3** **KCHS Australia Day**
- Page 4 /5** **A Kurrajong Heights Lament**
- Page 6** **Growing Up on Mill Road - Part 2**
- Page 7** **From the Archives**
- Page 8** **Dates for Your Diary**

President's Corner

We are well into 2019 already!

Our Australia Day Breakfast was well attended, and we were very lucky that the hot day that was predicted didn't heat up too much before we were finished. The addition of air conditioning to the Bowen Mountain Hut was also much appreciated.

After we enjoyed breakfast, we held our Special General Meeting to discuss the revised constitution. I am not 100% sure, but I think this is probably the first SGM ever held by the Society. I detailed all the changes proposed and the motion to accept the revised constitution was passed unanimously. The new constitution has been recorded by Fair Trading NSW and is available to download on our website.

The next order of business was the presentation of our Australia Day Award, which this year we awarded to Ron & Margaret Rozzoli for their many years of dedicated and meritorious service to the Society. We presented Margaret with a Wollemi Pine in a pot.

The guest speaker we had planned was unable to attend but his topic of life in Bowen Mountain was adopted enthusiastically by Pat O'Toole and Jenny Griffiths. There is a summary of this talk elsewhere in this edition.

By the time you read this our Cockatoo Island Tour is probably over. It is well booked - see late booking details on page 3.

Don't forget to let everyone know about the Pansy Tour Sunday 28th April.

The March General Meeting also has an interesting topic of *Rayner's Sawmill*, so do come along.

David Griffiths president@kurrajonghistory.org.au



K-CHS Australia Day Award presentation to Margaret Rozzoli and the late Ron Rozzoli for their respective contributions to the Society, since the inaugural meeting in 2001.

KURRAJONG – COMLERoy HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au

WELCOME to NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome new members

David Rothery

Jennifer McCandless

Peta Smith

Cherie Sterling

The Millstone Newsletter is printed by
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Bowen Mountain Memories cont.

In the mid 50's Scrim found himself in some financial difficulty so he agreed to sell his title deeds to the mountain to Milton Grant who planned a subdivision. However Scrim was to keep three blocks and land directly opposite his blocks would be cleared as a park. A swimming pool was to be built and park and pool maintained by Scrim's son. Grant also bought Suthers' property which included the old white homestead.

Late 50's and Neil's assistance is again needed. Milton Grant planed to use the park as a cattle paddock so Neil and "Pud" spend two weeks moving as much of the garden as possible down to Honeysuckle Cottage. Pam established a nursery and garden there.

The park and some of Suthers' property became Grant's "Kurraween", Murray Grey Cattle Stud during the 1960's and 70's. Eventually the cattle were sold and Grant was now ready to subdivide his property. Colo Shire Council passed his plans, but due to the objections of land holders (the beginnings of the Bowen Mountain Association), they had to be amended to create the park of today and the Belvedere Estate.

In early 1981 the Belvedere Estate was advertised for sale.

Neil had little contact with Bowen Mountain during the 60's but in 1973 Scrim, in need of money, was able to sell the property to Neil who by this time had grown to love the mountain. Neil's son and daughter lived in the cottage until 1983 when it became Neil's permanent home. He retired from his city job and set up a dental laboratory in the front shed.

As a permanent resident he got to know and appreciate his neighbours and gives special mention to George Thompson, in his early eighties, nearly as deaf as Neil would arrive sharp on 2.30 every Sunday afternoon. They would sit and shout at one another, their voices carrying from one end of the mountain to the other. Their son, Cliff turned the garage into a mini theatre. The community enjoyed Saturday night at the movies followed by a wonderful supper provided by the ladies.

It was quite a treat for Jenny and me to talk to Neil and sorry he wasn't able to come to our breakfast, but we thank him for sharing his story with us.

Pat O'Toole

K-CHS AUSTRALIA DAY BREAKFAST 26th January 2019



Image above: Too many cooks... Below: Society members enjoying breakfast at one of the outdoor tables in Bowen Mountain Park, with *The Hut* in the background.



2019 Australia Day Award presentation to Margaret Rozzoli in the recently air-conditioned Bowen Mountain Hut.



Our thoughts are with Kath McMahon who has recently suffered a stroke. This is an enormous blow to Kath and her family. Kath as we well know has led an adventurous life and contributed greatly to our Society since inception. Kath was the first K-CHS President in 2001.

COCKATOO ISLAND TOUR Monday 4th March 2019 - for late bookings please visit KCHS website: kurrajonghistory.org.au
BOOKINGS & Pre-payment essential Tour Cost: Seniors \$14.00 Full Adult \$16.00, Non members \$18.00. Please pay in advance by EFTPOS: K-CHS Bendigo Bank A/c 118125632 BSB 633-000 (include Name) **Contact:** Suzanne 0427 410 344
 Please see Jan/Feb Millstone or website for full travel details and Cockatoo Island requirements.

A Kurrajong Heights Lament

Some members of the Society in Kurrajong Heights will remember the parents of Bruce Beresford, the film director. When his wife Lona died, Leslie Beresford continued to live at 1244 Bells Line of Road. Bruce Beresford published the following reminiscence a couple of times, most recently in his collection *The Best Film I Never Made*. Printed here is an edited extract, reprinted by permission of Bruce and the publisher, The Text Publishing Company. It is a frank, sad, and touching memory.

He insisted he stay on in the house in the country after our mother died. You'll never get him out', friends said to me, 'they never want to let go, even though they'd be much better off in a retirement home'. This was, sadly, true, even though my sister and I visited a number of places and then took him the brochures, along with improbable stories of the wonderful time he was going to have with all the other old people.

We weren't being entirely selfish. He did very little work around the house or large garden when our energetic mother was alive and I saw no reason for an onslaught of activity. I doubted if he was capable of cooking anything at all. When I was a child, on the rare occasions our mother was away for a few days, he fed my sister and me on chips. Cut very thick. Cooked in lashings of oil. For every meal. I recall being delighted at the time.

'What will you do all day?' my sister demanded. He spluttered and rambled, trotting out his usual array of unfinished sentences, though the tone was unmistakable - no pioneer home. I knew what he'd do all day. Just as he'd always done, but more of it. If there was no cricket or AFL on the television, an amble across to the general store, down to the tourist souvenir shop and/or up the

hill to the pub...where he would bore everyone he could find with half-remembered and incoherently presented stories of his life as a travelling washing-machine salesman in the 1930s.

True, there were a few local friends but I suspected they were more the friends of our mother and would now take evasive action. Perhaps there were already very few left. Most were reliant on Zimmer frames and were given to dying on the bowling green, or while sipping cups of tea, as a television newsreader described events in a world they had long ceased to understand.

The first time I visited after her death - it must have been a couple of months, as I'd been away working - I was amazed at the changes, even though I had foreseen them. The grass had grown up and either choked or hidden all my mother's flowers. The front door was jammed shut and there was glass all over the porch. It was dark and there was no light from anywhere in the house.

I walked around to the side of the house and pushed aside the pendulous passionfruit vine that hung over the kitchen door. I flicked the light switch with no result. The kitchen smelt and was filthy with empty baked-bean tins all over the floor and sink (there were no plates as he ate directly from the tins.) The living room had wet clothes strewn over the sofas and the moonlight revealed large mushrooms growing on the carpet.

Newspapers were piled everywhere, hundreds of them. He'd hoarded them all his life, but my mother had succeeded in keeping them out of the house, apart from a pile in the bedroom, with the result that the garage was so full of them there was no possibility of using it for the car. The car, also, was full of newspapers. The odd thing was that, although he bought newspapers every day, I could never recall him reading anything in them except the sports pages.

Cont. page 5



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The old Beresford Garage that housed Leslie's EH Holden and his collection of newspapers! (Image 2019)

A Kurrajong Heights Lament cont.

There was no point in mentioning any catastrophe, revolution, political event, murder or robbery. He'd never heard of it. He was evidently taken by complete surprise when he was called up for service at the beginning of the Second World War; he had no inkling of the approaching conflict or any clue as to the identity of the antagonists. The Australian army quickly realised that he would be a liability and sent him home.

I found him in the living room, sitting in front of the television wearing an old bean-stained dressing gown, watching the cricket...He didn't show much interest in anything else, certainly not my schoolwork. I don't think he even found out I'd been to university, although his interest perked up when I became a film director. We even went to a few movies, though plots and characters all baffled him as they'd become so much more complicated since the days of Errol Flynn and Ronald Colman. After their deaths his interest in movies lapsed.

I stayed with him a few days. I bought some light bulbs and opened all the windows. He shut them all again. I found him showering fully dressed, except for his shoes, so that he could wash clothes as well as his body. He said it saved time. I said he didn't need to save time and should use the washing machine. I couldn't even persuade him to hang the wet clothes outside. He continued to hang them over the sofa and was happy to wear them soggy.

I took him out shopping and for meals in the local town down the mountain. He was angry because I wouldn't let him drive the car. He'd always been an appalling driver and as a result had faced numerous court cases.



The Memorial gravesites of Lona & Leslie Beresford can be found diagonally across from their old Heights home, at St David's Uniting Church Kurrajong Heights

Over the years he had lost his licence a number of times, not that this prevented him from driving for even one day.

On the bridge over the Hawkesbury River I pointed out to him the spot where he's missed the bridge approach and gone straight into the river with my mother and aunt as passengers. They'd all been rescued, in the middle of the night, by some American tourists. He scoffed at this proof of his incompetence, just as he snorted and avoided my attempts at involving him in a discussion – as a prelude to reintroducing the subject of the retirement village – of the rundown house, the ridiculous diet (baked beans and ice cream), or even the fact that he'd never changed a light bulb, but was content to sit in the dark and then find his way from room to room with a torch...

As I lay in bed, in the damp sheets, I consoled myself with the thought that at least he didn't drink. Only an occasional beer. He could have been in this tumbledown house with baked beans and no lights in an alcoholic stupor. Then he could have fallen through the big picture window and rolled right down the mountain.

I phoned my sister and told her I couldn't even involve him in a conversation about moving, let alone get his agreement. The visit depressed me, not really because of him, but for all the memories of my mother. I hunted through an old chest for some pictures of her. There were only two or three. In one of them she was seventeen years old, her face unlined, her dark hair pulled back severely in the fashion of the time, her eyes sparkling with joy and youth and optimism.

Extract taken from *The Best Film I Never Made and other stories about a life in the arts.* © Bruce Beresford
Published by The Text Publishing Company 2017

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GROWING UP IN MILL ROAD - Part 2

by John Williams

When I turned 6 years old, I went to Kurrajong North Public School. Some of the children I went to school with were from the Dean Family. They lived in the very last property on Hermitage Road. There was Johannis, Hillishan, Fritz, Margaret, Gerard, Class and Dorothy. Their dad was a farmer.

Another family called the Rends lived about 200 metres north-west of Kevin McMahon's fruit stall. The children were Maria, George, Frank, Alexander, Anna and Illona. Their dad worked at Buckett's Saw Mill near Bilpin. Another 300 metres behind the Rends were the McGuires, Terrence, Pdraig, Bridget and Genevieve. Their dad was an engineer. He built the family home, which was powered by a generator. An electricity line would have been too expensive to run all the way to their house.

To get to school I walked with my brothers along Mill Road, then Hermitage Road, both dirt roads at the time, and then up Bells Line of Road to the school on the hill. This was 2.5 kms. Occasionally on hot days we would stop and have a swim in the dam on our farm on the way to school.

Just before the school we were joined on the walk by Barry and Janice Lord and Albert Taylor. I remember Barry as being kind and funny. Their parents were also farmers. Julie, Bill and Helen McMahon also went to school with us. Julie's parents ran the very famous fruit stall right at the foot of the incline while Bill and Helen's parents ran a plant nursery, opposite. The Dunstan brothers lived just south of the school and their family ancestors were some of the earlier settlers in the district.

Kevin McMahon's forebears arrived in the district in 1839. Apparently four McMahon brothers were on their way to Lithgow when their wagon broke an axle. They couldn't fix it so they decided to settle in the Kurrajong / Tennyson area.

We had a Post Office at Kurrajong North (now called Kurrajong Hills and originally named Netley Hill), which also combined as a general store. This was located 100

metres east of Kevin McMahon's fruit stall. It was so good to get fresh bread every second day and make devon and tomato sauce sandwiches. What a great memory.

One of my most exciting days as a child was riding home from school in 1959 to find that we had our very first, black and white television set. I couldn't understand how the pictures could come through the air into my home. What a treat.

After leaving primary school I attended Richmond High School, the only high school in the area. We walked or rode our bikes 2 miles to the "five ways" which is where the Kurrajong traffic lights are now situated. We would then catch a Duffy's bus to Richmond. There were 1,000 children at my new school. I suffered quite a culture shock as my primary school never had a greater attendance than 23 pupils.

In 1955 my grandparents had moved from Rydalmere to Kurrajong Heights. They farmed around 600 orange trees. When my grandparents had mostly retired, my dad built a very small fruit stall (about 1961) on their farm facing Bells Line of Road. Over the years this expanded and proved to be a highly successful business.

Everywhere you went in those days there were fruit trees, mainly stone fruit. Times were difficult with everyone working hard on the fruit farms just to survive. Gradually over the years farms went out of business and people from the city bought them as land investments or to run a few animals. There was nothing more picturesque than to see a few acres of apricot trees in full bloom - a sight not to be seen in this district anymore.

When my dad retired from farming in 1980, he and my brother Brian planned and then opened the Kurrajong Heights Grass Skiing Park. It had the perfect slope for the new sport. They built high ramps for the expert skiers to take off from and many state titles were held on the property.

Cont. page 7



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Growing up in Mill Road *continued from page 6*

My nieces Justine and Kylie Williams won multiple Australian Open Grass Skiing Women's Titles as teenagers. They also competed in many European countries with Justine winning the Junior World Title. However, they refused to give her the title because she wasn't from Europe, but she was the fastest skier in the world in that competition.

When grass skiing began to fade as a sport my dad designed a grass kart. They proved most popular and this new sport entertainment continued long after grass skiing had ended. When my dad was 84 (about 2002), he decided to retire and the property was sold. Growing up in the Kurrajong area, I wouldn't have had it any different.

 **From THE ARCHIVES**



Work is well under way on the new North Richmond bridge which opened in 1905, replacing the low level bridge opened in 1860. Before that time a punt was used to cross the Hawkesbury River near to this site at North Richmond.

The view is from the North Richmond side and the gentleman is possibly Richard Skuthorp Jr. of Grose Vale.

Image: 096834

KCHS Image Archives: www.kurrajonghistory.org.au

Richmond Bridge

"In 1857 steps were first taken to build a bridge to connect Richmond with the Kurrajong Hills. A private company was formed, known as *The Richmond Bridge Company*. The directors in 1872 were, James Ascough (chairman), William Walker, G.M. Pitt, W. Bowman, and Andrew Town. A wooden bridge was completed in 1860, at a cost of ten thousand pounds. Tolls were collected until the bridge was taken over by the Government in 1876. This bridge consisted of nineteen spans. It was a low-level bridge five hundred and thirty-seven feet long. It was repaired at considerable cost in 1890. The fine Monier concrete bridge which now serves the Kurrajong side, was erected in 1905-6 (sic.), at a cost of eighteen thousand six hundred pounds, and will carry a light tramway if necessary. It is fourteen and a half feet above the ordinary river level."

Extract from the *Early Days of Windsor* (1915)

Author: James Steele - MEMBER AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Note: The Windsor and Richmond Gazette records the bridge opening as Monday 4th September 1905.

Construction 1904-1905

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Dates for Your DIARY

K-CHS GENERAL MEETING

Monday 25 MARCH 2019

“Memories of Rayner’s Sawmill”

The Islands 1941-1954

Presentation: Jennifer Griffiths

Venue: Blaxland Ridge Hall 227 Blaxland Ridge Road

Time: 7pm

All welcome - Supper provided

PANSY LINE TOUR Sunday 28th April 2019

Visit K-CHS website for detailed information and bookings

www.kurrajonghistory.org.au You can pay by EFTPOS,

PayPal OR send Cheque payment to:

Treasurer K-CHS PO Box 175 KURMOND NSW 2757

COST: Members \$30, Seniors \$33, Adult \$36, Child \$25

Price includes, coach tour, guides, morning tea, and a steak sandwich lunch at Kurrajong RFB shed.

Further enquiries: Contact David Griffiths 4567 7993

Email: president@kurrajonghistory.org.au

Heritage Day in Richmond

A Then & Now Event

Saturday 27th April 2019

Organised by a small Heritage Group under the auspice of St Andrew’s Uniting Church an invitation has been extended to all Hawkesbury Historical Societies, to participate in a full day Heritage event in the West Market Street precinct.

The proposal is to have numerous photographic displays, book tables, events and tours of the Heritage buildings along a section of West Market Street, including the School of Arts, RSL Buildings, Richmond Court House & Police Station, Former CBC Bank, St Andrew’s and Eulabah, open to the public.

To date, all relevant groups have agreed to participate in the event and have met to discuss and co-ordinate all the eventualities.

There will be escorted walking tours of the precinct, St Andrew’s ladies auxiliary will be serving Devonshire Teas, Maggie will open up the grounds of Eulabah and Rod Storie (old CBC/NAB), has offered use of a main room, verandah and the beautiful garden area.

So do table this date in your diary and on your calendar. The tours will be led by professional historians and the historic displays contributed by K-CHS, Hawkesbury Historical Society and CSFHG. Our HCC Archivist, Michelle Nichols will be leading the Cemetery Tours.

K-CHS GENERAL MEETING

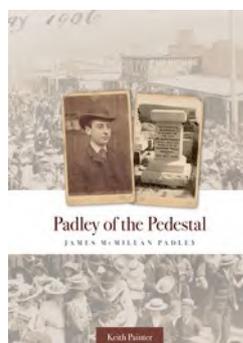
Monday 27th May 2019

2pm-4pm

Venue: The Hangar
Kingsford Smith Village
Grose Vale Road North Richmond

Guest Speaker: Keith Painter
of Mountain Mist Books

“Padley of the Pedestal”
The story of James Padley



Keith has recently completed writing the biography of a man who was the driving force behind the Lithgow Progress Association and the chief instigator of the tourism development at Hassans Walls in the early 1900s. His life story features Castlemaine (Victoria), Windsor, Lithgow and Parkes in New South Wales.

Keith will highlight James Padley’s 10 years in the Hawkesbury and his connection with Kurrajong Heights during his talk. He will also have other interesting Mountain Mist publications available, following the meeting, including: *The 1920 Mt Victoria Chert Bubble*, *The Hassans Wall Story* and *Padley of the Pedestal*, books for sale.

All welcome - Afternoon Tea provided



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