

THE MILLSTONE

KURRAJONG ~ COMLERoy HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

NRMA Motor Camp - Kurrajong Heights

In the early days of the Society, we had both a talk and a Millstone article from Bev Woodman, whose family had a long association with Kurrajong Heights, especially with Lochiel, and Cherry Park/Panorama Point. Bev mentioned in passing that Cherry Park was once the "NRMA picnic grounds". The recent NRMA Centenary edition of *The Open Road* reveals that it was one of a "string of motor camps established in the 1920s, each of which offered "a fresh milk supply, boiled water and splendid sanitary conveniences".

The Sydney Sun in 1932 published this account:

The site chosen by the NRMA for a picnic and camping ground at Kurrajong Heights commends finer views of the Hawkesbury River and surrounding country than perhaps any of the mountain lookouts. About three hours run from the city by good road, Mountain View Camp, perched at the top of Kurrajong Hill, 2000ft above sea-level, affords a splendid change from the humid coastal climate. Picnic tables and other conveniences are on the ground, and hot water and seasonal supplies are obtainable. Being only 52 miles from Sydney, the Kurrajong Heights camp makes an ideal week-end trip. West of the Heights there is an interesting drive of 17 miles to the Jungle and Mount Tomah, and for the greater part is in fair condition. A round trip taking in the Blue Mountains, may be made by continuing from Mount Tomah past Bell and joining the Great Western Highway at Mount Victoria... The route to



Boiling the Billy C1930

Edward Hobbs at the front gate of Panorama Point, later Cherry Park. Edward (Ted) is boiling water for the day trippers who visit to enjoy the view from the picnic grounds at Kurrajong Heights. *Image Archive 021901*

Kurrajong Heights is through Parramatta, then along the Windsor-road to McGrath's Hill and Windsor. A splendid road is then traversed to Richmond. About two miles further on the Hawkesbury River is crossed by bridge. Soon after North Richmond is entered, from which a good road leads through picturesque farming and orchards to Kurrajong Village. About half a mile this side Comleroy is avoided [sic] on the right, and at a store a quarter of a mile beyond the railway station the road to the Heights turns to the right and shortly afterwards begins to rise. Some of the grades and a couple of the turns are severe, but with careful driving these may be negotiated without difficulty. Towards the summit, instead of turning right onto the Bell-road, almost opposite the Heights post office, motorists should continue up the hill, and near the summit proceed to the left for about a quarter of a mile to the camping ground.



A postcard produced by *Yadiloh Prints* Wallacia. The image was taken from *Panorama Point* at the top of Warks Hill Road C1940s. The postcard was sent to the Rev & Mrs Daniels from Mr & Mrs Poole's family as a Christmas Card. Norah McManus and her father ran *Yadiloh* Photographic studios from 1922-1958. *Yadiloh* is holiday spelt backwards. *Image 041909* (Courtesy Thelma Ghoch)

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GM 7pm Monday 23rd March 2020

President's Report

We're well into 2020 already. At least the fire situation has quietened down, here at least, and some much-needed rain has fallen - more needed.

Our Australia Day Breakfast was again blessed with good weather and was well attended.

We pulled a little surprise on Steve Rawling. He convenes the awards committee sub-committee, and he believed that they had chosen a recipient for the Australia Day Award. The full KCHS Committee however, had decided that the recipient was Steve! The look of shock on his face was quite distressing.

We have a couple of tours coming up. The first is the National Maritime Museum on Tuesday March 10th. If you are interested in this tour please book urgently as we need to finalise numbers

Then we have our popular Pansy Tour on Saturday 4th April. Our coaches depart from Richmond Station at 10am and the tour includes lunch in Kurrajong and a visit to the Kurrajong Station site. Further details page 8.

Both tours can be booked online, and both could do with more people, so spread the word.

Our March General Meeting is 7pm, Monday 23rd March and the speaker will be our Hawkesbury City Council Local Historian, Michelle Nichols. Her talk is "A sense of place: finding local and family history resources to tell a story".

This is an evening meeting at Blaxlands Ridge Hall. I hope a lot of you can make it.

More details of meetings and tours on the last page.

David Griffiths

Enquiries: president@kurrajonghistory.org.au

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K-CHS members enjoy conversation around one of the early morning breakfast tables at the K-CHS Australia Day event, held at *The Hut* Bowen Mountain Park .

Guest speaker Carol Edds is in the centre of the image.

Photo courtesy David Griffiths.

KURRAJONG – COMLERoy HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au

WELCOME to NEW MEMBER

The Society would like to welcome new member

Carolyn Polson

Hawkesbury Citizen of the Year Award 2020

Congratulations to Mal Bobrige on receiving a fitting tribute for his 38 years of service to the Hawkesbury community through commitment within the NSW Rural Fire Service.

K-CHS
 AUSTRALIA DAY
 AWARD
 2020



Congratulations to Steve Rawling AM on receiving the K-CHS Australia Day Award for 2020 in recognition of his significant ongoing contributions and service to the Society since 2001. An inaugural member of the Society, Steve served for a number of years as President and has in recent years taken on the editorial role of the Millstone Newsletter. He currently serves as the Society's Vice President.

The Stories Hawkesbury's Historic Buildings Tell

On Australia Day 2020 our guest speaker was Carol Edds, Conservation Consultant and Chair of the Hawkesbury branch of the National Trust. She works with her husband Graham who is a heritage architect. She talked about what you can learn from the physical evidence of heritage items in contrast to documentary evidence. Three very significant Hawkesbury buildings were discussed.

St Matthews Anglican Church in Windsor requires constant maintenance to counteract the damage caused by salt attack and rising damp. All early building in Australia was done without damp coursing. With different soil and weather conditions to England, this, after a time, became a problem. Techniques for the treatment for salt attack and rising damp have evolved since the 1950's, with some of the previous solutions now contributing to the problem including a well-meaning parishioner deciding it would look better if the render was painted thus sealing moisture which would otherwise evaporate.

The church has been built with two very different wall thicknesses. The sanctuary is a solid three skin thick brick wall which has been treated with a series of sacrificial renders since the 1980's to remove the salts. A chemical damp proof course has been injected in this wall.

The remainder of the church walls are over 1m thick and have been built with an inner and outer brick wall with rubble infill. A layer of plaster internally or render externally applied at the base of the brick walls absorbs most of the salt impregnated moisture because it is more porous than the bricks and mortar.

In time the salt impregnated render or, indoors, plaster, flakes and falls off. This sacrificial plaster must be carefully removed to prevent the salts returning to the soil and thus back into the building.

Carol then spoke about intermittent flooding in the basement of Belmont House at North Richmond. Investigation of the usual possible causes such a failed to throw light on the problem. A sprinkler system had been installed throughout the building. The contractor had simply cut through the underground drainage when installing the sprinklers and the damage had gone unreported. Spigots had also been installed in the gutters resulting in saturating the soil during rain hence the intermittent flooding.

The Edds noticed a bow in the west wall of Windsor Court House indicating that the external skin of the wall could be acting as an independent wall as the cracking internally did not match up. Detailed crack mapping of the walls internally and externally was undertaken. The external skin of brickwork was dismantled and confirmed that the brick wall wasn't keyed back into the inner wall and so had been gradually moving out to form the bow. Sand used in the mortar wasn't washed properly and some bricks were impregnated with salt. They had to be hydrated before they could be put back into the wall. In any restoration work materials used must be as free from salt as possible to slow down any future salt attack and rising damp.

Thanks, Carol for giving us insight into the care which goes into maintaining our precious buildings.

Summary by Pat O'Toole

The Millstone Newsletter is printed by
 Hawkesbury City Council Print Room Staff



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At Ray White KURRAJONG
 Katherina Kostrzak-Adams specialises within the Hawkesbury in both acreage and residential sales. Katherina and her team work to achieve the best result for their vendors and purchasers alike. Please contact us or call in for any of your Real Estate needs, we would love to chat.



A fond farewell to Natalie & Emma of Carey & Co. Wishing them both well in their future business endeavours in Sydney. Also a thank you for their support throughout the years within the Kurrajong community. We trust they will remain friends of Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society.

The Fires 2019-2020

The disastrous fire season this summer has affected many people in our district, and the Society extends its thanks to all of those who were involved with protecting lives and property. Principally this is of course the volunteer members of all the RFS brigades in the area (and those from far away). But there were many others who contributed in a range of ways, showing our community at its best.

When KCHS was established, the large fires of Christmas 2000-2 had recently occurred, so to some extent we have seen it all before, but the challenges were perhaps even greater this time around.

Below please find a personal account from one of our members, Frank Allatt, who with his wife Roslyn was fortunate in the end to survive the experience. Our thoughts go to any of our members who lost property or had a similar terrifying experience.

Our 15th December, 2019, Berambing Wildfire Experience - Frank & Roslyn Allatt

Our property is about 48ha and, as it is in the Blue Mountains, much of it is rugged and heavily vegetated and quite unsuitable for agriculture. We use about 4ha as a house block and for growing flowers which we sell.

The Gosper's Mountain fire had been slowly heading towards us for weeks. The RFS developed a plan to stop it by burning back towards it from asset protection lines which essentially run along the interface between private properties and the Wollemi National Park. They had been progressively doing this for more than a week.

This past Saturday they started a back-burn hoping to burn between Mt Wilson road turnoff and Bell, using Bells Line of Road as a boundary and burn up towards Mount Wilson. Weather conditions were benign. Shortly after starting the back-burn they lost control of the fire and one front burned quite quickly in the opposite direction towards Mount Tomah.

Towards evening the fire seemed to stop at Bowens Creek on the South side of Tomah where it stayed overnight and into Sunday morning. Mid-afternoon on Sunday, we received a warning email that the fire had spotted to Bowen's Creek on the north side of Tomah, which is nearby to us, but over the next ridge to the west.

At this time we (including Jeff) implemented our fire survival plan. Just after 1630hrs we received an emergency message which said 'it's too late to leave implement your fire survival plan'.

The sky to the west was red and billowing and a few minutes later a swirling wind blew and embers began to fall. We put out the first fires, and as our aim was to defend our house and sheds we stayed close to the house and put out the threatening small fires, mostly with wet chaff bags. We kept most of our 1000l of water in case one of the buildings became seriously threatened.

The sprinkler system on the roof of the house kept the roof as well as a perimeter around the house wet. The grass to the

west of the house was short we were able to put out the spot fires. Those to the east we let go as they were down wind. The real danger period for our house and sheds was over by dark.

We then watched the bush burn. There were fires burning all around us none of which were threatening until about 2300hrs when the wind changed direction and a fire came at us from the south. With our mobile water supply we doused the flames that looked as if they might threaten the house.

The bush on the rest of our property is blackened, although the rainforest in the gully (Hungerford's Creek) has survived.

On the following days there were small flare ups which the RFS took care of.

We were without power until Tuesday afternoon and our landline was out for a further two weeks. Our mobile reception has improved since the fire. The road was closed until Thursday. If we left it was likely we would be unable to return as the fire front had moved towards Kurrajong Heights.

The RFS were great to the extent that during the emergency period they regularly kept checking on us and stationed a fire truck with us for an hour or so.

We have experienced some fence damage which will be repaired over time and some damage to a part of the irrigation system, so we have lost most of the water from one of the dams as a result. Sadly, our tractor was destroyed and is the subject of an insurance claim. Most of our flower farm survived. Given time we expect the damaged plants to recover. The light rain showers we have had since, has done wonders for the plants.

It was a full-on for several hours. We are safe and wiser for the experience, and much luckier than a number of the residents on Skyline Road on nearby Mount Tomah who lost their homes. As far as I know, no one was injured and there was no loss of life.

Fire experience stories from Berambing/Mount Tomah residents at post fire gatherings indicate that every family who stayed to defend their property had a different fire experience, and some far more dramatic and confronting than ours.



Fire Approaching 1630hrs



Fire at 1645hrs flames about 30m



Next morning. Our tractor still burning

Above Images from Frank Allatt - Berambing Wildfire - Sunday 15th December

We Remember Them

Gunner Frederick Reuben Eather M.M.

Windsor & Richmond Gazette Friday 11 July 1919

"A private welcome home was tendered Gunner F.R. Eather at his mother's residence at Upper Colo on June 21. At the invitation of his mother, about 70 friends and relatives turned up to do honour to the young soldier, among them being his grandmother, Mrs G Hewett of Kurrajong, who has passed the 81st milestone. About 5.30pm the guests sat down to a sumptuous tea, worthy of the occasion. Mr L Stuart JP, occupied the chair and proposed the health of the brave young soldier, congratulating him on his valuable service to his country and the Empire. Among other speakers was Mr JT Metherell JP, of Lower Portland... Gunner Eather is an ANZAC, also a Military Medallist, having gained this distinction for conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty. When the enemy's heavy shelling in the vicinity of his battery had cut all telephone wires, he and two others went out without hesitation and succeeded in keeping the most urgent line in repair... and thus rendered most vital service and enabled his battery commander to keep in communication and receive urgent tactical messages without delay. Gunner Eather received several congratulatory letters, one from Major General Rawlinson, General commanding the 4th Army. The brave young gunner is only 24 years of age now, and was over 4 years away, was once severely wounded and after returning to the front was gassed and again out of action for a short time. A younger brother Private J Eather made the supreme sacrifice after several months active service in France."

The full transcript is on page 69 in **We Remember Them**

Note: Gunner FR Eather was the father of Wanda Deacon co-researcher with Valerie Birch, Frank Holland and Chris Upton of the K-CHS publication **We Remember Them** a publication made possible through provision of an ANZAC Centenary Local Grant from the Department of Veterans' Affairs in 2015. Many more stories can be found in this excellent publication available for borrowing from the K-CHS Members Library.

My Father - F.R. EATHER M.M

(As told by his daughter Wanda Deacon nee Eather)

Dad was born in Colo on 14 May 1893. He married Florence Hulbert in 1930 at age 36, his bride was 18 years of age. I was born in 1940, Dad being 47. I had two older brothers, D'Arcy and David and we grew up on a farm at Colo. Dad rarely talked about the war. I recall doing a story on WW1 in 4th Class, around ANZAC Day and I asked Dad about the war. He briefly told me how they rigged the rifles to keep firing while they withdrew from Gallipoli and that was the end of his story. He would travel to Sydney each year for the ANZAC March; he had some good friends there that he had served with, so they all understood each other... It was later after my father's passing on a trip in 1991 to the War Memorial in Canberra with my daughter, that I found out that Dad was gassed three times and also had shrapnel wounds to his leg. During the war Dad was hospitalised in England with broncho pneumonia... and consequently suffered with bronchitis for the remainder of his life. People would suggest he apply for the pension, but his answer was always the same... *no, I can still work the farm and feed my family... there's other poor buggers much worse off than me.* I now realise that he was referring to the returned men known as the 'mental diggers'.

We never had much money. Mum used to say she put patches on patches on our clothes. I always wondered why Dad used a horse and plough while other farmers had tractors, but when the floods happened and you lost all your produce, he was able to buy seed and start again. It was a very hard life for him, up at daylight and to bed early, no electricity and then the same the next day and every day after that.

In 2012 when Valerie Birch and I visited the Western Front, I realised just what he had gone through and why he did not want to talk about the war. Dad passed away on 1st April 1964 aged 70 years.

Story extract from **We Remember Them** publication (page 68)

The First Patrols

The NRMA was born just two years after World War 1 ended, when the shadows of conflict still hung over the nation. It was a time when our governments were faced with the monumental task of building neglected roads and infrastructure. And, just as critically, there was the social challenge of creating employment for returned soldiers, many of whom carried the physical and mental injuries of war.

These returned servicemen came back to a country that had changed while they were away. Fresh from the battlefield, they had to reconstruct their lives and one of the immediate challenges they faced was finding work.

While some were able to return to their old jobs, many had to contend with the prospect of starting again. The NRMA made it a priority to employ returned servicemen and in the early years, all of the guides (patrolmen) had been in the military and many were still recovering from injuries.

An article in the March 1924 *Good Roads* (as *Open Road* was originally called) explained: *Whenever you see a spruce young man in double-breasted khaki uniform, some what reminiscent of the Flying Corps, and wearing a brown leather cap, you will know that he is a National Roads and Motorists' Association official guide. If you notice a motor-cycle carrying a triangular shaped light blue flag with a badge on the handle bars standing rider-less anywhere, you will know that there is a capable mechanic, with encyclopaedic knowledge of roads and traffic regulations, not very far off.*

Apart from the service, these efficient young NRMA guides can give you, and will give you free of charge, it is quite an experience to meet some of them. They are all ex-service men, and amongst them are diggers who carry quite a rainbow effect of medal ribbons on their chest.

There is a young man, an ex-RN lieutenant and RAF pilot, only 26 years of age, who earned no less than nine decorations in the war, including the DSC, AFC, DFC and Legion D'Honneur.

Another one-time captain in the King Edward's Horse and Tank Corps, proudly displays the MC and MM amongst the six medal ribbons he wears.

But it is mighty hard to get these young fellows, none of whom is over 30 years of age, to talk of their exploits. Ask them, however, about a point involving engine trouble and some mechanical mishap and they get their noses down to business, like hounds on a hot scent.

The OPEN ROAD 1920 - 2020 - 100 Years of the National Roads & Motorists Association (Collector's Edition)
 Extract published with the permission of the *Open Road* editorial team.



Image: Road Patrol Guides lead a procession across the Sydney Harbour Bridge riding Harley-Davidsons, during the 1932 bridge opening celebrations.

Note of interest: The iconic Douglas bikes the first guides rode, were used extensively in WW1. While more than capable of navigating dangerous roads in Sydney and country regions, they had no sidecar, so the fleet was phased out for Harley-Davidsons, which had a side-car suitable for holding the tools guides required to initiate any repairs to vehicles stranded with mechanical issues.



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**From
THE ARCHIVES**


Crossing the River

As the flood (either 1961 or 1964) recedes, Duffy's bus and cars begin to make their way across the Hawkesbury River from Richmond to North Richmond while there is still water on the bridge roadway. Note the spectators on the bridge footpath. How things have changed!

Image: 043203

K-CHS Image Archive Collection

(Contributed by Laurie Duffy)

North Richmond Hall – After the Storm

Family research by K-CHS member, Wanda Deacon has revealed what happened to the North Richmond Hall after it was damaged in a wind storm in January 1942.

Lloyd Rutter (1915 – 2005), a builder from Windsor, wrote a memoir before he passed away. He recalled that the Hall Committee didn't have the money to rebuild and he bought the damaged hall for £250 and the land for £50. In about 1946, over a period of six months, he moved the building to George Street, South Windsor. At the time this section of George Street was a row of houses with some vacant blocks, not shops.

Lloyd intended to build a dance hall but the Council would not approve his plans as the timber was seen as a fire hazard. However, with the help of a local business man he was able to re-erect the hall but not as a dance hall.

In 1947 he then learnt that "Speedo" was looking for a building to use as a knitting factory in Windsor and, with Council approval, he rented the building to "Speedo" for 18 years. It was then taken over by M L Morris for another 10 years. The building became vacant in 1975 and Lloyd sold it in 1976. Today the site is the IGA Grocery.



The rebuilt hall in South Windsor. Date of the photo unknown, but taken after the Knitting Factory closed in about 1975.

NT LITHGOW - Australian Heritage Festival

K-CHS Members are invited to attend the

Cooerwull Farm C1824 OPEN DAY Event

3 May 2020 10am - 4pm

Cost \$25.00pp (under 15 free)

Bookings Essential via: Trybooking.com *Cooerwull*

Enquiry: NT Lithgow 0438 570 090 Flyer available

Email Suzanne at: viewfromheights@bigpond.com

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Dates for Your DIARY

KURRAJONG RURAL FIRE BRIGADE

80th Anniversary Celebration

Saturday 7th March 2020

The Anniversary event will be celebrated with the launch of a book giving insights into the 80 Year History of the Kurrajong Brigade. Celebrations will be held at the KRFB Station, Kurrajong Village, at 2.45pm.

The K-CHS Committee on behalf of members will be presenting a gift cheque towards publication costs of the book and in respect of the 80 years of Service given by the Kurrajong Brigade. RSVP essential.

The publication will be available from K-CHS for purchase. Email: secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au Price: \$20.00

K-CHS GENERAL MEETING

Monday 23rd March 2020

Time: 7pm

Venue: Blaxland Ridge Community Hall
227 Blaxland Ridge Road

Guest Speaker: Michelle Nichols
HCC Archivist

Presentation: "A sense of place: finding local and family history resources to tell a story"

All welcome - Supper provided

Enquiries: David Griffiths 0498646899

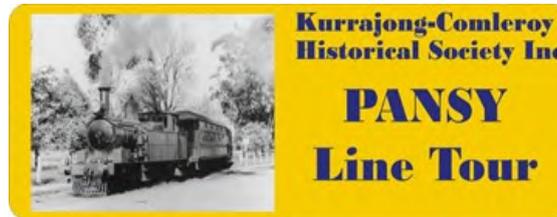
National Maritime Museum Tour Darling Harbour Tuesday 10th March, 2020

Join us as we catch the train from Richmond Station to Central and then the light rail to Darling Harbour. The tour includes HMAS Vampire & HMAS Advance. Then either the submarine HMAS Onslow for those fit enough, or SY Enya. We will have our own volunteer guides and for the submarine tour, K-CHS ex submariner Mal Bobrige will be giving us the good oil from personal experience! After lunch, there will be a 'White Glove Behind the Scenes Tour'.

- Public Transport - at your own cost - bring your Opal Card!
- Catching the 07:41 train from Richmond. Arrive at station by 07:30 please.
- Option to meet us along the way or at the Museum. Tour requires a fair bit of walking
- BYO Lunch or use the Museum's eatery - *Yots*

Booking & pre-payment required via K-CHS website: www.kurrajonghistory.org.au
Members \$23.00 Friends \$25.00

Enquiries: president@kurrajonghistory.org.au
Mobile: 0498646899



Join us when we explore the remnants of the **Richmond to Kurrajong Railway 1926-1952**. With the railway long gone, it is becoming difficult to find remnants, but our experienced local guides will show you what there is.

Our coaches will depart from the park opposite Richmond Station at 10:00am and the tour includes lunch in Kurrajong. If coming by train, you need to be on the train that arrives at Richmond at **09:30am** (ex Central 08:06am). The tour will return to Richmond Station around 15:30. (3.30pm).

Highlights include: Richmond Station and Richmond Park, Hawkesbury River Rail Bridge, North Richmond Station site, Kemsleys Halt, walk the formation between Kemsleys and Redbank Creek Bridge, visit Kurrajong Station site. **A steak sandwich lunch by the Kurrajong RFS is included.**

Order a Pansy Book at time of booking for a special price and collect on the day.

Pre-payment & BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL online at:

www.kurrajonghistory.org.au

Enquiries: pansy@kurrajonghistory.org.au Mob: 0498646899

MARCH 23rd General Meeting Speaker: Michelle Nichols has been employed as the Local History Librarian by Hawkesbury Library for nearly 40 years. Michelle has authored *Disastrous Decade: Flood & Fire in Windsor, Hawkesbury Pictorial* and co-authored *Hawkesbury 1794-1994*. She writes regularly for several local newspapers and has edited the *Hawkesbury Critter* since its inception in 1983. Her Hawkesbury Heritage blog is found at <http://hawkesburyheritage.blogspot.com/> Michelle received an OAM for her local history work in 2001.

Passionate about family history she has taught classes for thirty years. A keen photographer, she photographs and transcribes Hawkesbury cemeteries with her husband, Jonathan Auld for the Hawkesbury Cemetery Register www.hawkesbury.net.au/ Michelle is a fellow of the Society of Australian Genealogists, member of the local Heritage Advisory Committee, plus a number of other heritage based organisations. For meeting details see K-CHS March GM in blue above.