

THE MILLSTONE

KURRAJONG ~ COMLERoy HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society is dedicated to researching, recording, preserving and promoting the history of the district. Covering the area west of the Hawkesbury River - North Richmond, Kurrajong, Berambing, Bilpin, Grose Vale, Bowen Mountain, Colo, Wilberforce, Ebenezer, Glossodia, Tennyson, Freemans Reach.

A History of YOBARNIE & NEVALLAN portions of the original BELMONT PASTORAL Estate



Yobarnie in 2000

Yobarnie together with *Nevallan* and the current adjacent St John of God Hospital site, formed part of the historic core of the land grant originally developed by Archibald Bell Snr., from 1807. The properties passed from the Bell family to Henry Newcomen between the 1860s-1880s, forming the *Belmont Pastoral Estate*. Henry ran large herds of beef cattle, employing drovers to run cattle between his outback Warrego district properties and *Belmont* at North Richmond, before taking them on to the Sydney markets. Henry is buried in St Peter's Church of England Cemetery, Richmond.

The property was purchased by the young Philip Charley in 1889, following his fortuitous discovery of silver at Broken Hill along with a Syndicate of 7, who in 1885 floated a company on the stock exchange, the Broken Hill Proprietary Company (BHP). Philip Charley imported the finest blood stock available and built up the famous *Belmont Park* horse and cattle stud (See Millstone Newsletter July-August 2019). Philip passed away in August 1937 and is buried in a simple grave in Richmond Presbyterian Cemetery.

In 1943, Percival Yeomans, a retired mining engineer purchased two properties, which later became known as *Nevallan* and *Yobarnie*, and on *Yobarnie* began conducting experiments in soil conservation and enrichment based on his engineering insights. When Yeomans purchased *Yobarnie* and *Nevallan*, *Yobarnie* was already substantially cleared and this feature facilitated his early experiments there. His Keyline system of soil improvement, erosion control, water storage, cultivation and irrigation on undulating topography was first developed and demonstrated on *Yobarnie* from the mid-1940s. This design approach has since been adopted by farmers in almost every country in the world.

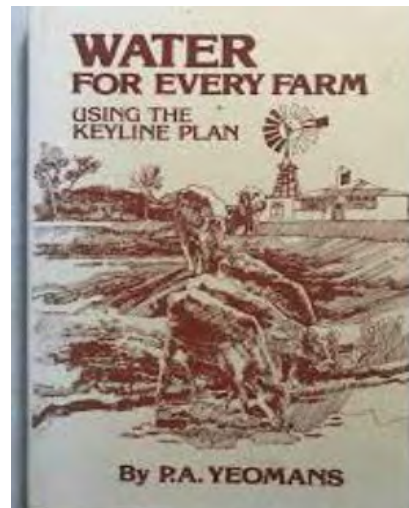
Yeomans developed a whole-system approach to sustainable design and management of the agricultural landscape. The resulting cultural landscape was considered a "technical achievement and itself aesthetically distinctive". Yeomans methods were held in high esteem by the permaculture and sustainable agricultural community world-wide.

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K-CHS MID-WINTER DINNER GM - 26 July 2021



WATER FOR EVERY FARM *Using the Keyline Plan*
One of a number of publications produced by P.A. Yeomans describing the Keyline System of Agriculture and Land Management designed for Rural Properties

President's Report

Hello everyone,

Things seemed to be making progress towards normalising and now we are having new restrictions. Fingers crossed!

Since the last Millstone, we have held our May General Meeting, which was a daytime meeting and very well attended. Our guest speaker Doug Knowles from Glenbrook & District Historical Society, gave an interesting talk on *Roads, Rails & Bridges*.

We also had a tour of Richmond RAAF on the coldest day in Sydney for decades, with drizzling rain. Brrr. For those who are wondering why they did not hear about this tour, apologies but we were only offered a small number of places and when I announced it at the May meeting, all places were instantly filled. But the good news is that Ft. Lt. Eamon Hamilton, who was our guide on the tour, will also be our guest speaker at the Mid Winter Dinner, so you will be able to hear a lot of the same history. Venue & Booking details page 8.

Membership renewal is now due (unless you joined since March). Thank you to all those who have taken care of this already. Everyone else, please go online and renew now so we don't need to send reminders. Renewal details below.

The Mid Winter Dinner is coming up rapidly. A lot have booked but there is room for plenty more, so if you are planning on coming, please book now! A great baked dinner is guaranteed so don't miss it!

I mentioned the slide idea in my last email update. If you have any local historical images on slides, please get in touch and we can arrange to scan them and share them with members.

Regards,

David Griffiths

Email: president@kurrajonghistory.org.au

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K-CHS Tour Group with Ft. Lt. Eamon Hamilton on RAAF Base Richmond, in the hangar with a Royal Australian Airforce *Hercules*, in preparation for a mission. The *Hercules* is well known for its role in disaster relief and emergency transport, both within Australia and the region, as well as deploying troops and goods on overseas peacekeeping missions.

KURRAJONG – COMLEROY HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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Your address is not necessary (unless changed), but please complete and/or update any other details, including email and phone numbers. Prices are also on the online FORM.

Note: Members who have joined since March 2021 DO NOT NEED TO RENEW.

The MILLSTONE is printed by staff at the
Hawkesbury City Council Print Room

Yobarnie & Nevallan cont.

The original *Yobarnie* & *Nevallan* pastoral properties were located on the south side of the Redbank Creek valley and accessed from Grose Vale Road at North Richmond (in the Parish of Kurrajong, County of Cook).

In 1944, the Geography Department of the University of Sydney began using the property to facilitate student mapping exercises, which ultimately produced a complete contour map that guided future development of the Keyline System. By 1948, Yeomans had devoted himself to his experiments on a full time basis. After a further three years trialling various methods of artificial drainage, he abandoned his initial approach in favour of the system of deep soil ripping, ploughed contours and the creation of dams using the natural topography of the place, that he called the Keyline System.

The favourable results of this work on *Yobarnie* were then implemented on *Nevallan* which became the principal site for demonstrating the system. By the early 1950s, the results achieved attracted many visitors to *Nevallan*. Also *Yeomans'* publications and presentations describing his discoveries further contributed to the interest of agriculturalists and farmers worldwide. During the following decade, many farmers in every corner of the world, confronted with poor soils on steep, undulating terrain adopted the Keyline method.



Percival A Yeomans
1905 - 1984
Inventor of the Keyline System. Yeomans was the first contemporary Western agriculturalist to take a whole-system approach to sustainable design and management of the agricultural landscape.

The naming of *Yobarnie* & *Nevallan*: the former, *Yobarnie*, was named after a combination of two of Yeomans nicknames, Yoey and Barnie. *Nevallan*, was a combination of his son's names.

Percival Yeomans was awarded a Prince Phillip *Design Award* in 1974 for his Keyline System of Agriculture and Land Management.

A note of interest:

K-CHS members Frank & Valerie Holland recently visited the Longreach Winton area in Queensland ...

"We visited *Carisbrook Station* and travelled on a farm track to the *Three Sisters* lookout. Apart from the magnificent ridge line, the lookout provided extensive views of the Williams Valley. Our Guide Alan Smith (tour operator for 40 years), pointed out the tree line in the distance and spoke about Percy Yeomans who had inspired the Keyline flood-flow irrigation system to capture and direct water flow to desired areas on the *Carisbrook* property."

https://issuu.com/lucazoid/docs/yeomans_project_digital_newspaper

During the period from 1943-1964 *Yobarnie* and *Nevallan* were well able to demonstrate the Keyline system and the principles of agricultural land management, Yeoman was developing, A 2013 Heritage report states that, "the undulating terrain, the hydrology of the place, as managed by the Keyline System, i.e. how water behaves there and both the big-picture and biophysical effects of this, including the dams, the ploughed contours and the resulting increased, enriched and productive top-soil ...together, these elements formed a cohesive cultural farming landscape".

Following the death of his wife, in 1964, Yeomans was obliged to sell *Yobarnie* and *Nevallan* to pay estate taxes. The properties were purchased and operated as pasture for beef cattle (and erroneously known as "Peel's Dairy").

In 2009, *Yobarnie* was purchased by a land development company, Regent Property Group and Buildev Development Company NSW Pty Ltd, who obtained planning permission from Hawkesbury City Council to construct a Seniors' Living facility on the site. The development became known as the Redbank Development. Local residents and members of the sustainable farming ('permaculture') community became concerned that further development would obliterate the physical evidence of Yeomans' achievements and sought heritage advice.

In June, 2009, the North Richmond & Districts Community Action Association (NRDCAA), made application to the NSW Office of Environment & Heritage for the properties to be listed on the State Heritage Register, which was granted on the 8th March 2013.

Acknowledgement: the main body of information obtained for this article is from the: NSW State Heritage Register Database No. 5061775 Office of Environment & Heritage 2012.

Suzanne Smith



Government Gazette

OF THE STATE OF
NEW SOUTH WALES

Number 34
Friday, 8 March 2013

Published under authority by the Department of Premier and Cabinet

SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

HERITAGE ACT 1977

Notice of Listing on the State Heritage Register under Section 37 (1) (b)

Yobarnie Keyline Farm

108 Grose Vale Road, North Richmond

SHR No. 1826

HISTORY OF GROSE VALE Part 2

A DIFFICULT CHAPTER

On Saturday 13 July 1816 *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* reported:

Another murder was perpetrated by the natives on Monday last at the Corrajong Brush – The victim to their barbarity was Joseph Hobson, who was stated to have been the only settler remaining on that line of farms, in consequence of the excesses lately committed. – He had left his house to go in quest of a calf; and when about 200 yards distant was speared through the heart.

The article introduces a generally ignored and difficult period in the settlement of this delightful area. It also raises many questions concerning the attitudes of and relationships between the settlers and the native inhabitants.

Grace Karskens in her book *People of the River* repeats the suggestion that the warriors' raids had driven away the other settlers, but as we have seen although the farms were untended it does not appear that Native raids were a major contributor. For the most part the soil in this area is poor for cropping and there is little water on the ridge which is somewhat distant from the river. In fact the only grants which may have been occupied prior to 1816 are those of George Loder, by convict servants, Joseph Singleton and Joseph and Jane (Buckham) Hobson. Karskens again suggests, that out of fear Hobson had evacuated with his family to the *Front of the River*, referred to as a safety zone. While it may indeed be the case that he ventured from here to *plant a little barley* the Hobsons had no other family.

What of the *excesses lately committed*?

It is generally accepted that the Natives had been fairly quiet around the Corrajong Brush for some time and several were employed to help on farms, including that of Joseph Hobson. That this was not the case is perhaps indicated by the fact that a detachment of soldiers was sent in April, 1816 to clear a swathe of land from Yarramundi along Thompsons Ridge to Singleton's mills at Kurrajong. The first reported 1816 excess was the violent killing and beheading of Maria Lewis and associated killing of convict, Davis, at the Hawkesbury, Nepean, Grose junction.

The next outrage occurred in June, 1816 as reported by *The Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser*

Last Thursday night the bodies of a young man and a fine youth, a native of the colony, were found in the Corrajong Brush having been murdered a few days previously by the natives. A number of spears had entered the bodies of the unfortunate persons, one of which had penetrated the heart of the younger; whose name we are informed was Cooling, the other Gallagher.

The site of this killing was the farm of John Crowley, which fronted the Grose River at North Richmond, the safe zone previously mentioned.

The next outrage was the afore mentioned killing of Joseph Hobson. Of equal outrage seems to have been that: *The miscreants afterwards clove the head of the unfortunate sufferer, and brutally mangled the body*

It is possible to speculate that these were not random but revenge attacks. The Lewis farm was the site of the earlier killing of an aboriginal man, Charley. The younger victim at the Crowley farm was most likely Neil Cooling, son of Lieutenant Neil McKellar leader of a number of 1809 raids on Aboriginal groups. Hobson has been reported as somewhat lax in the payment of native workers on his property.

Magistrate William Cox took no time in putting together parties of soldiers, accompanied by settlers and aboriginal guides with the express intent of capturing the supposed ring leaders. A week later Cox informed Macquarie of the capture and deaths of Cocky, ButtaButta, Jack Straw and Port Head Jamie. It later became clear that at least three of these men were captured alive and hanged without trial. The hangings were authorised by local magistrates, William Cox and Archibald Bell. The sites chosen for this display are telling.

Karskens tells us that one warrior was hanged *halfway down the slope on Thompsons Ridge above Redbank Creek*. Contrary to the authors suggestion that this was a farm overlooking the Grose River it indicates a site on Joseph Hobson's farm making it even more remarkable the continued occupation of this farm by Mrs Hobson. Two other reported sites were on the Lewis Farm at Yarramundi and near the Police Camp at the corner of what is now Bells Line of Road and Comleroy Road.

Initially Jane Hobson remained on her holding and was re-granted her husband's grant in her own name. In July 1816 and again during 1817 she supplied meat from the farm to the Government Stores at Windsor. In 1817 Jane married Edward Reynolds of Wilberforce at St Matthews, Windsor. Jane then disappeared from the records in the Colony and the last of the early grants were uninhabited.

A NEW BEGINNING -NEW ARRIVALS RICHARD SKUTHORPE

Richard Skuthorpe arrived in the Colony aboard the *General Hewitt* in 1814, having been sentenced to life for the theft of a bay horse. Richard was assigned to George Howell, miller, at Parramatta. By 1817 Richard had accompanied Howell to Yarramundi to work at his mill there. In 1818 Richard Skuthorpe of Upper Richmond married Eleanor Connor at St Peters, Richmond. In 1821 Richard was promised Joseph Singleton's grant of 50 acres, although this appears to have been an error for James Singletons' grant. The other Singleton grants, reissued to Robert Howard and John Wainwright were also acquired by Richard. (cont. page 5)

GROSE VALE HISTORY Part 2 (cont. from page 4)

The 1828 census shows Richard Skuthorpe, Ticket of Leave, Farmer, North Richmond, 385 acres. He had one assigned convict and a Ticket of Leave man. Present also, were Eleanor and three children.

The 1841 census gives Richard Skuthorpe, an emancipated convict, over the age of 45 years in County Cook, District of Windsor. Also on the farm are his wife, Eleanor and two youngest children together with two farm workers. Nearby are his sons, Richard, Jnr, known locally as "middle Dick" and Thomas, each listed as on their own farms.

WILLIAM LAMROCK

In 1842 three young Lamrock brothers arrived in the colony and by 1850 the two older, John and William had set up in the Hawkesbury. In 1850 William Lamrock and Elizabeth Skuthorpe, the youngest of Richard and Eleanor's children were married at St Matthews Presbyterian Church, Windsor. They set up home near Elizabeth's parents at the property that became known as *Lemon Forest*, where they built the home that still stands on what had been Joseph Hobson's land.

After Eleanor's death in 1857 Richard married widow, Sarah Douglass. The marriage did not last long as Sarah died of unknown causes barely two years later. In 1861 Richard again married. This time to Louisa McKay.

Richard Skuthorpe, Snr, died at his home, *Lemon Forest*, in 1880. The property passed to William Lamrock.

In 1928 the property, *Hilltop*, previously the home of Richard Skuthorpe, Tertius was advertised for subdivision and sale. The house, *Hilltop*, constructed in 1901 is situated on Daniel Phillips original grant. The remainder of the property stretched east to *Lemon Forest*.

JOHN EZZY

On 24 March 1817 Rebecca Lamb, daughter of Henry Lamb and Elizabeth Chamber married 19 year old John Ezzy at Windsor. The 1828 census gives John *Ezzy*, District Constable at Richmond, with 70 acres, 38 cleared, 37 cultivated, 6 horses, 33 horned cattle and 3 sheep. He and Rebecca had six children the youngest of whom had been born at North Richmond. According to Grace Douglass in her book *Along the Windsor Richmond Road*, John was farming on the Windsor Richmond Road and leasing 15 acres at North Richmond.

In 1830 John Ezzy purchased his Father-in-law, Henry Lamb's grant of 80 acres in addition to the 100 acre Loder's Farm. John Ezzy built his home *Bonnie Doon* on Henry Lamb's grant adjoining what is now Cabbage Tree Road. There may be extant ruins still on this site. Over the next few years John Ezzy received several more grant adjoining his 180 acres to a total holding of 480 acres.

John Ezzy's eldest son, William James Ezzy, acquired the Loder grant from his father and named it *Wyanbah*. This property was sold to neighbour George Cleaves who built the house still known by that name near the intersection of Grose Vale and Grose Wold roads. Of note is grant, Portion 175, of 40 acres to John Ezzy occupied from 1831 to be called *Clifton Grove*. *Clifton Grove* homestead was destroyed in the 1944 fires. The property is still known by the name.

The locality now known as Grose Vale has extended far beyond the earliest grants and many of the families have lived there for generations. They must remain a story for a later time.

Deborah Hallam

Note: Part 1 of the above article was published in the May - June 2021 Millstone Newsletter - page 4/5

ROADS, RAILS, & BRIDGES**Crossing the Nepean - Victoria Bridge & The Knapsack**

Until the 1850s travellers who wished to cross the Nepean River were required to use either the Emu Ford or a punt that was located south of the present day Victoria Bridge on Punt Road at Penrith. Frequent flooding was always an issue. So along with the discovery of gold west of the Great Divide increasing the flow of people, produce and animals, the demand for a permanent river crossing was created.

An Act was passed in 1851 authorising the formation of a company for the construction of a timber bridge and the charging of a toll for its use. Following this act the Penrith Nepean Bridge Company was formed in 1854 by 8 local entrepreneurs. Construction of the bridge was under the supervision of David McBeth, a Scottish surveyor. The bridge was completed in December 1855 and opened in January 1856.

This first timber bridge was 213 metres long and 9 metres wide.

Unfortunately the success did not last long. In August 1857 a flood carried away the four centre spans. A new bridge was constructed using some of the piles from the first bridge. This second bridge withstood its first flood, but in 1860 the most devastating flood in NSW history, washed away the entire superstructure and deposited it on a bank down river.

Following the destruction of this second bridge the Government supplied two punts to convey people and goods across the river. The punts were irreparably damaged by a flood in 1867. Fortunately, the Great Western Railway was in the advanced planning stage for the construction of a bridge over the Nepean River to link Penrith with Bathurst to the west. It was decided that the required bridge would carry both a railway line and a single lane road over the river.

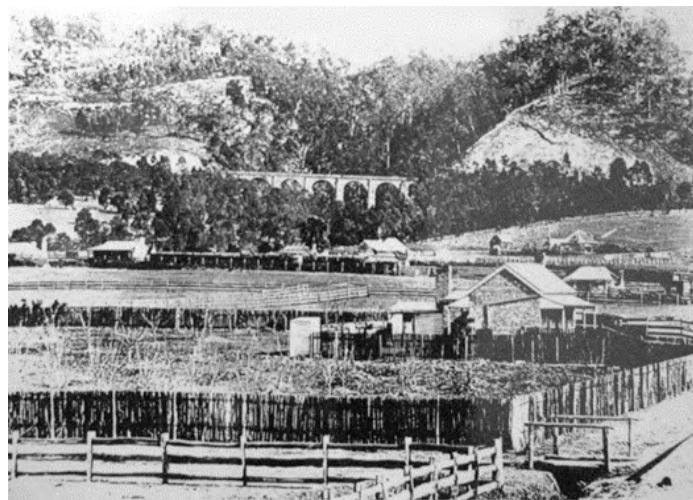
(Cont. Page 6)

ROADS, RAILS & BRIDGES (cont. from p 5)

Victoria Bridge was designed by the Engineer-in-Chief of NSW Railways, John Whitton. The bridge was designed to carry two railway tracks as it was intended that the road on the bridge be only a temporary arrangement. The flood of 1860 that had carried off the previous bridge influenced Whitton to raise the bridge deck by two metres.

The design of the bridge using half through girders, which are actually tall boxes made of riveted wrought iron plates, was driven by the need to keep the underside of the bridge as shallow as possible to maximise for flood clearance. The configuration of the boxes with their tall web plates, and upper box for lateral stability, reflected cutting edge design for the period.

Once across the Nepean River the ascent of the first range of the Blue Mountains, was a challenge for the Engineer John Whitton. To cross the deep ravine of Knapsack Gully at the head of Jamison Creek, Whitton designed a sandstone arched viaduct, 5.5m in width, to carry a single line of rail. Its length was 118 metres and its height at the centre 38 metres above the creek bed. So on the 11th July 1865, the line was opened as far as Weatherboard (now Wentworth Falls).



The Knapsack Rail Via-duct – View from Russell St farms Emu Plains 1880s Image: Glenbrook Historical Society

High floodwaters struck soon after the bridge was opened in 1867, when the highest flood recorded damaged the western timber approaches and washed away a portion of the spans and the river bank. The main span however withstood this first major test and the flood waters did not reach the underside of the deck. The bridge was in operation as a rail bridge during the repair works and was re-opened to road traffic in 1869.

The railway was extended to Bathurst in 1876. The predictable increase in traffic meant that a bottleneck was caused by the time-consuming reversal of trains up and down the Lapstone Zig Zag. This was overcome by the first Glenbrook Tunnel, opened on 8th December 1892, which emerged at the top of Knapsack Creek. This tunnel had its drawbacks though, being single lined, on a steep gradient, it created a slow up-hill journey through the length of the tunnel.

Following the increase in rail traffic on the Great Western Railway and the increase in the weight of locomotive engines, options were considered for the duplication of the railway line and of the Victoria Bridge. It was decided that the construction of a steel truss bridge alongside the Victoria Bridge would be more appropriate and construction was undertaken.

Constructed a few metres to the north, the piers of the new bridge lined up with Victoria Bridge's existing piers in an attempt to minimise stresses on the structures during high river flows. In 1907 the railway bridge that now stands alongside Victoria Bridge was completed. With its completion the Victoria Bridge was converted to carry two lanes of traffic and a footway. while the new bridge carried two rail lines. So in 1907 a new double track railway was opened. (Cont. page 7)



New Railway Bridge across the Nepean 1907 (Testing day, before Official Opening) Image: Glenbrook Historical Society

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Snowy and son Mark Dubois (1979), preparing their handsome trusty horses for a ride up into the Gosper Mountain Region, where they had mustered cattle for years. Marks horse is *Fury* and the packhorse was *Rex* owned by Bob Want.

The story of the *Last Big Cattle Drive along Comleroy Road*, can be read in the Nov/Dec 2017 Millstone Newsletter pages 4/5.

Visit the K-CHS website:

<https://www.kurrajonghistory.org.au>

Select Archives/Millstone Newsletters

ROADS, RAILS & BRIDGES (cont. from p 6)

Finally, in 1913, the present route was opened with the railway proceeding lower down the Lapstone Hill and negotiating a tunnel of lesser gradient than the original Glenbrook tunnel. It was a double-tracked tunnel and emerged above the Glenbrook Gorge to arrive at the present site of Glenbrook station.

The age of the motor car prompted the original Knapsack Viaduct. closed in 1913 to be opened for vehicular traffic in 1926, with the remaining (now abandoned), formations of much of the original railway line on the eastern face of Lapstone Hill being used in the construction of the Great Western Highway from Emu Plains to Glenbrook.

The first Glenbrook Tunnel has been used for mushroom growing and, during the Second World War was used to store non-explosive weapons components. In the present age, the land around about the Zig Zag is a popular recreation and bushwalking area.

Regular tours of the area are led by Doug Knowles & Greg Nowland from Glenbrook & District Historical Society on most Saturdays. Bookings essential, contact: Doug on 4751 3275

Thank you to Doug Knowles for his concise presentation to the Society at the 24th May GM, illuminating with all the wonderful archive images the development of the road, rail and bridge crossings of the Nepean River up to Glenbrook.

Presentation Summary - Suzanne Smith



The original Glenbrook Single track Token, Staff & Key demonstrated by Doug Knowles at the K-CHS May GM
Item courtesy Carolynne Cooper

Adjacent image: Single Line Glenbrook Tunnel (1892)





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Dates for Your DIARY

K-CHS MID-WINTER DINNER & GM

MONDAY 26th July 6pm for 6.30pm

Venue: Kurrajong Heights Bowling & Recreation Club
1530 Bells Line of Road



Guest Speaker:
Flt. Lt. Eamon Hamilton
RAAF Centenary 1901-2021
"Celebrating 100 years"

Bookings Essential: <https://www.kurrajonghistory.org.au>

Cost: Members \$35.00 Friends \$40.00

Enquiries: secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au
Marguerite Ph: 4576 1371

Guest Speaker: Join Flight Lieutenant Eamon Hamilton for an evening of Air Force history and discover the importance of Richmond's RAAF Base in the history of aviation.

Flight Lieutenant Eamon Hamilton has been a Public Affairs Officer with Air Mobility Group at RAAF Base Richmond since 2006. He is also currently serving as the Air Force Centenary 1901-2021 Base Liaison Officer for Sydney.

RAAF Base Richmond was established as the Air Force's second base in July 1925, however its roots in aviation extend back to 1901. Over the Centenary of the Royal Australian Air Force, RAAF Base Richmond has supported important operations both here in Australia and overseas.

Please note: The K-CHS events published on this page are dependent on the COVID 19 situation. Including distancing requirements, limits placed on numbers and of course any extension in lockdown requirements. An email will be sent to members by President David Griffiths informing of any changes, or view updates on K-CHS website: <https://www.kurrajonghistory.org.au>

WELCOME to NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome new members

Lionel Bucket

Kooryn Sheaves

Annette & John Bryant

Susan Walker

Robert Sterry

Kerry Funnell

Raelene Borchers

Phil Alcorn

Vicki Gillett

Jenny Anson

KURRAJONG PUBLIC SCHOOL FAIR

29th August 2021

Please contact President David Griffiths if you are available to assist on a K-CHS book stall roster during the school fair event.

president@kurrajonghistory.org.au
mob: 0498 646 899



Nepean Victoria Bridge opened 1907

RayWhite

Kurrajong



Katherina Kostrzak - Adams specialises within the Hawkesbury in both acreage and residential sales. Katherina and her team work tirelessly to achieve the best result for their vendors and purchasers alike. Please contact us or call in for any of your Real Estate needs.

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