

# 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 rather interesting connection with *Bulgamatta, Berambing & GMC Bowen*

My great-great-great-grandfather was Joseph Byrne. He was born c. 1798 - 1800 in County Carlow, Ireland. He was uneducated, could not read or write and worked as a shepherd. He was married to Catherine Breen and had five children - John, James, Mary, Patrick and Michael.

Joseph was also an Irish rebel (white boy). In 1833, he was captured in Wexford and charged with 'administering unlawful oaths'. He was convicted at the summer assizes and sentenced to transportation for life.

Joseph arrived in Sydney on 29 June 1834, via the 'James Laing'. According to the NSW convict arrival lists, Joseph and two other convicts from the 'James Laing' - Martin Byrne and Michael Byrne, were all assigned to G.M.C. Bowen, Cook County.

Martin Byrne may have been a relative of Josephs. He was also from County Carlow and convicted at Wexford at the same time. His crime was 'robbing of a dwelling house'. Martin was born c. 1806 and his occupation is listed as 'farm servant'. He could read, but not write. He was sentenced to life.

Michael Byrne was the youngest of the three, aged approx. 21. He was from Dublin and his crime was 'house robbery'. His occupation is listed as 'tin-plate worker'. Michael could read, but not write. He was also sentenced to life.

Whether the three Byrnes were all related is hard to say, but it does seem odd for a tin-plate worker to be assigned as a farm servant. Perhaps they thought the two elder Byrnes would look after young Michael.

It appears that the Byrnes worked for Bowen until he sold the property in 1836. They were then reassigned to new masters. Michael was sent to Captain Pike at the Pickering Estate, Hunter River. It appears Captain Pike was not an easy master, as in Feb 1838, Michael absconded into the bush. By 1844 he received his ticket of leave, and then in 1851, a conditional pardon. I don't know what happened to him after this.

Martin Byrne worked at the property "Mugwill" at Gundaroo, which was evidently owned by his uncle. He received a conditional pardon in 1847. Martin became an influential businessman in the Queanbeyan area. He built "Byrne's Hotel" in 1851 and held the licence until 1860. The hotel is still there, although now called "The Royal Hotel Queanbeyan". He also built Byrne's Steam Flour Mill in 1883, which is now State Heritage listed.

Martin married Sarah Nightingale and had 12 children. Many descendants still live in the Queanbeyan area. Martin died in 1892 (see the article from the Queanbeyan Age on page 5). In typical fashion of the time, they make no mention of him having been a convict.

As for my g-g-g-grandfather Joseph, he was reassigned to Dr. Thomas Braidwood Wilson in the Maneroo area (now Monaro) - in what would eventually be called the town of Braidwood. He was employed as a farm servant, until Dr. Wilson's death in 1843, the same year he received his ticket of leave. He then worked for Luke Hyland at Long Swamp - a remote area between present day Bungendore and Boro. (Boro is a rural locality in the Queanbeyan-Palerang Region, near the village of Tarago. The name is considered a variation of the Aboriginal *bora ring*). He applied to have his family brought out from Ireland and in 1849, his four sons arrived in Sydney via the 'Success'. Neither his daughter Mary, nor his wife Catherine, made the voyage. We assume that they may both have already died. Joseph eventually bought his own land at Tarago. He died there in 1869.

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K-CHS AGM & GM - 7pm, 26th September 2022

St David's Uniting Church Hall

Bells Line of Road Kurrajong Heights

Details page 12

Attachment: Committee Nomination Form 2022-2023

## President's Annual Report

Here we are at the end of another year in the Society's life. We have again been battling the Covid-19 virus, but at least we have been able to resume most of our normal activities, albeit with extra precautions and reduced numbers, with people still being cautious.

The year finished/started with our 2021 AGM held in Hanna Park, North Richmond. We were very fortunate with the weather, managing a few sunny spots in what had been a wet week. The outdoor function and BYO picnic seemed to work quite well.

Our Christmas dinner at Kurrajong Heights Bowling Club was well attended. We will be returning to the same venue this year - mark down Sat 10th December. More details to follow.

We launched our 2022 calendar, which was well received. The calendar committee has been busy preparing a 2023 edition. Stay tuned.

The Society's birthday bash in Bowen Mountain Park managed to find another sunny break in the weather but numbers were slightly down. We awarded an Australia Day award and three Life Memberships.

The committee floated the idea of an overnight excursion to Singleton. The level of interest was not enough to make hiring a coach viable and even a minibus didn't look promising. The only other option was a self-drive version which loses a lot of the appeal of travelling together and having a commentary, so we opted to shelve the idea for now.

Two guest speakers had to drop out due to Covid and other unforeseen circumstances, so I stepped in on both occasions as Trivia Master. I don't know about anyone else, but I had fun! (Evil laugh).

Our May GM held at *Glenhuntly*, included a visit to Lionel Buckett's *Wollemi Wilderness Cottages*, once again in between rain events and with good attendance.

The Mid-Winter Dinner was a very pleasant evening at *The Baan Restaurant*. Numbers were again down, but an enjoyable evening was had by all, with much conversation amongst the table groups. Due to illness our speaker Glen Townsend was an apology, so yours truly stepped in with a Trivia Questionnaire.

Our excursion for August was what we came to call *Arthur's Pub Crawl*, as Arthur Cooper had suggested the event. This was a lovely sunny day and the tour was well received by the 21 attendees. Images and full description elsewhere in this edition page 11.

We managed to fit in three stalls in Kurrajong Village during the year, which helps to raise public awareness of our activities and sell a few books.

The K-CHS website is very popular as always. There were just over 43,000 visits to the site for the last 12 months (averaging 123 per day). A large number of these visits would be web crawlers from the numerous search engines that are constantly probing the net, but we know from the enquiries we receive that a good many of them are genuine visits.

Our finances for the year showed a very small profit, partly boosted by monies paid in advance for the MWD. The full financial details will be presented at the AGM.

As a result of this, the committee decided to revamp our membership fees such that the fees should hopefully cover the basic operating expenses of the Society. The new structure is much simpler without a senior rate and with a separate charge for mailing the Millstone. Unfortunately this meant that some people ended up paying more but we think the fees are still very reasonable. However our membership numbers are well down on last year, possibly as a result of the fee changes or COVID distraction.

We are reverting to the more traditional indoor evening AGM this year, which will be held at St David's Church Hall, Kurrajong Heights. Glenn Townsend has agreed to present his talk on the Townsend family history research that he was unable to present at the MWD.

Having reached the topic of the AGM, I would like to thank all the committee and our FHG Co-ordinator for all their work and support during the year.

I am looking forward to seeing many of you at the AGM and our other K-CHS future events.

Best regards,  
**David Griffiths**

president@kurrajonghistory.org.au  
Mob: 04098 646 899 Ph: 4567 8999

### K-CHS Membership OVERDUE Renewal Reminder

July 2022 - June 2023

Single Adult: \$20.00

Household couple: \$30.00

Posted copy of Millstone Newsletter add \$10.00 per annum

Please note the new membership prices. Also the annual postage of the newsletter will now cost \$10.00. All members with an email address will be sent a free electronic PDF copy.

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

OR Post cheque to K-CHS PO Box 174 KURMOND NSW 2757

### WELCOME to NEW MEMBERS

The Society would like to welcome new members

**David Leach**

**Meradin Peachey**

**Jeremy Tenison-Smith**

**KURRAJONG – COMLEROY  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.**

**PO BOX 174 KURMOND NSW 2757**

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**Committee**

**President** .....David Griffiths

**Vice President** .....Airdrie Martin

**Secretary** .....Marguerite Wyborn

**Treasurer** .....Pat O’Toole

Lesley Bobrige

Jenny Griffiths

Frank Holland

Steve Rawling AM

Suzanne Smith

**Millstone Editor**.....Suzanne Smith

**Webmaster** .....David Griffiths

**Digital Archivist** .....Jenny Griffiths

**Family History** .....Valerie Birch

**Librarian/Accessions** Valerie Birch

**Public Officer** .....David Griffiths

**Grants Officer** ....Steve Rawling AM

**Hon Auditor**.....Marilyn McCarthy

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**secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au**

## Treasurer’s Annual Report 2022

After two years of COVID restrictions, it became very evident that annual membership fees were not covering expenses.. To add to the problem, the increasing age of our members was placing many in the Seniors bracket. All members now pay either the single or family rate, which is also more in line with fees charged by other historical societies. There is now a Yearly \$10.00 fee towards posting of the Millstone if requested. There is no fee for the electronic online send of the newsletter.

Millstone Advertisers were given a discounted rate over the 2021/2022, in recognition of the difficulties businesses were facing.

Street Stalls are a good chance to interact with the community and an opportunity to sell K-CHS publications. During lockdowns this wasn’t possible. However, book sales to individuals on request, continued at a steady pace.

Events were few and mostly at a cost to the Society, however the New Year 2022 was off to a good start. So hopefully the second half of the year although with fewer members, our events will generate interest, with people keen to join in activities.

A full Treasurer’s Report, Profit & Loss Statement will be available in print at the September AGM.

A thank you to Marilyn McCarthy who has once again carried out the responsibilities of Honorary Auditor for the Society.

**Patricia O’Toole**  
*Treasurer*

## Secretary’s Annual Report

The Society experienced another successful year, with good membership despite the COVID threat and floods, which once again were quite a concern. Fortunately none of our events were badly effected.

We had many requests for books to be posted, including a few to other states. Also, enquiries regarding the history of a number of properties within the area, including by a few people who intend moving to the district. I forward these enquiries on to Jenny Griffiths and Val Birch who currently look after family history research in our Kurrajong area.

Looking forward to another interesting year in 2023.

**Marguerite Wyborn**  
*Secretary.*

## Family History Report

Hello Members

The Society has not received many enquiries during the past year, but we were able to help a few people add to their family history..

After 21 years we have gained many stories of life in the early days, and the family history of our early settlers. At present we are indexing our information to make it easier to follow up. Early properties and the names of convicts that inhabited the Kurrajong are also being indexed.

**Valerie Birch**  
*Family History Co-Ordinator*

## Image Archives Annual Report

The on-line database has been well used over the past 12 months. However, it has been a very quiet year with the addition of photos of Alwin Peck and his son Neville and also images of Harry Pross, the builder of the Kurrajong Theatre.

Twenty four images were sold on request. Several people provided additional information regarding the names of people in photos and some other general enquiries were received by people exploring the image database.

**Jennifer Griffiths**  
Image Archives



Mrs Bridget Hayes of Glossodia standing next to the flooded Currency Creek in 1915.  
K-CHS Image Archive Collection 141602

## The Millstone Newsletter Annual Report

A thank you to K-CHS members who contributed interesting articles over the past 2021-2022 year. In particular I wish to thank Deborah Hallam for her contributions. All members are welcome to submit articles and stories for assessment and suitability for publication in the newsletter.

The K-CHS committee also wishes to thank our local business community, whose financial assistance through advertising in the newsletter is appreciated. We trust the year ahead brings good local support to your business. We also welcome Ruth & Brian Schembri as both members of K-CHS and advertisers. Their Kurrajong *Schembrae's* restaurant, is open most days.

An acknowledgement and thank you to Hawkesbury City Council print room staff for timely print-run. Also to David Griffiths who more often than not collects the final publication and Marguerite Wyborn who folds and posts each issue to members who request the Australia Post hard-copy send.

The proposed publication of a collection of stories and articles from past Millstone Newsletter's, has now been placed on hold, although much work was done by the sub-committee in searching out and listing articles of interest and obtaining quotes for publication into book form. Hopefully a project that will come to fruition sometime in the future.

**Suzanne Smith**  
The Millstone Editor/Publisher

## National Trust Research Award

On 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2022 at the National Trust Hawkesbury Branch AGM, K-CHS member Deborah Hallam was presented with a *Meritorious Service Award* by Neil Wykes OAM, the President of the National Trust (NSW). This award is second only to Honorary Life Membership in the scale of the Trust awards. The citation read:

"This *Meritorious Service Award* is in recognition of Deborah's consistent outstanding voluntary service and dedication to the work of the National Trust (NSW) and to the Hawkesbury Branch.

Deborah has given over 20 years of service to the Hawkesbury Branch, commencing as the inaugural Deputy Chair, a position she retained until 2014 and in the role of acting Chair when required. Deborah consistently and capably organised catering for tour groups, often offering her historic home, "Goldfinders", for site visits as part of tours in the Hawkesbury region.

A keen researcher and as part of researching her family history, Deborah along with her husband Chris Hallam, was able to secure State heritage listing for the family home "Goldfinders". Her research has supported the Hawkesbury Branch by preparing well researched and soundly based articles for the Hawkesbury Gazette and government submissions regarding local heritage. Deborah's passion for local heritage means she is a valuable member of the community supporting other local heritage organisations and using her networks to promote the heritage of the Hawkesbury."

Readers of *The Millstone* would be well aware of Deborah's research contributions to the K-CHS newsletter. In 2021 she published a two part article on *The First Land Grants in Grose Vale & Grose Wold* plus another on the *Sunnyside Property: The Story of the Evolution from Land Grant to Historic Home*. To date in 2022 she has written on the naming of Kurrajong – *Whats in a Name* – a two part article on *The Story of Richmond Bridge* and with her most recent article being *Agnes Banks – A Forgotten Macquarie Town*. Congratulations Deborah and thank you for your contributions to *The Millstone* newsletter.

A rather interesting connection with *Bulgamatta*, Berambing & GMC Bowen (*cont. from page 1*)

As noted by Susan Snowdon in the page 1 text, Martin Byrne Senr., died in 1892 and in typical fashion of the time, the obituary transcript from the Queanbeyan Age below, makes no mention of him having been a convict.

**Queanbeyan Age (NSW : 1867 - 1904), Wednesday 23 March 1892, page 2**

*On Monday evening Mr. Martin 'Byrne Senr., passed away at his residence, Queanbeyan. For the last 18 months the deceased gentleman had been suffering from a weakness of the heart's action; but in spite of the warnings of the doctors he continued to live through, fully in hope, until recently the complaint developed into dropsy, which was the cause of death. The deceased gentleman was one of the oldest residents of the district, being indeed one of its founders. He has been often heard to say, that when he arrived in Queanbeyan there were only two houses built. Mr. Byrne was born in Carlow, Ireland, and was educated in Dublin. Around 1839 he took charge of a station for his uncle (Mr. Hughes) at the Snowy River. ...After being with his uncle for eight years, he opened the hotel now known as the Travellers' Arms, Gundaroo, which he kept for four years. Then (in 1851) he took the Royal Hotel, Queanbeyan, at present kept by his son, Martin. After being in the Royal for 13 years, during which time he was noted for his unsullied business uprightness, Mr. Byrne retired from business. In 1866 he received his commission as a Justice of the Peace. He then purchased the Woden Estate where his wife died and other family afflictions befell him. After a short time he sold the Woden Estate, and returned to Queanbeyan. His large steam flour mills were built in 1883, and many other buildings in the town were erected by him. During the past few years Mr. Byrne took little or no part in public business, his career being more connected with the early days of the town. The public acts of his later years have been few. But though passive in business, he was active in private life, both in generosity and large heartedness. He gave freely and largely to the Church, one of his presents being the site of land on which St. Benedict's Convent is built. The local hospital is also indebted to his private generosity, in fact it owes its existence to his exertions. In every direction his bounty was not withheld. His general good nature may be 'known by the fact that of his numerous tenants not one bears ill-will, while all speak of his desire to deal easy with them. Deceased belonged to a well-connected family which has now become thinned by death, but which helped to settle the district. The family left behind are - James Byrne, who is proprietor of the large flour mills, and Martin Byrne (son), Mrs. E. Rolfe and Mrs. G. Rolfe (daughters). Also a spinster sister of the deceased's. The funeral cortege will leave the Roman Catholic Church today Wednesday, at 3pm. National Library of Australia <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article31165612>*

Some of my g-g-g grandfather Joseph's descendants went on to make their mark on Australian history. His grandson, also called Joseph (Joe) Byrne, was best friends with Ned Kelly and part of the infamous Kelly Gang of bushrangers. Other grandsons befriended the Duracks and went with them on their legendary two and a half year cattle drive from Queensland to the Northern Territory. Will Byrne and his wife Elizabeth Spry established 'Tipperary Station' near the Daly River. Joseph's great-great-grandson is Michael Long, the aboriginal activist who played AFL for Essendon during the 1990's. Jack Thompson, the late champion horse jockey, was another great-great-grandson as was Oswald "Ossie" Byrne, the record producer, best known for producing the early recordings of The Bee Gees and their first international hit.

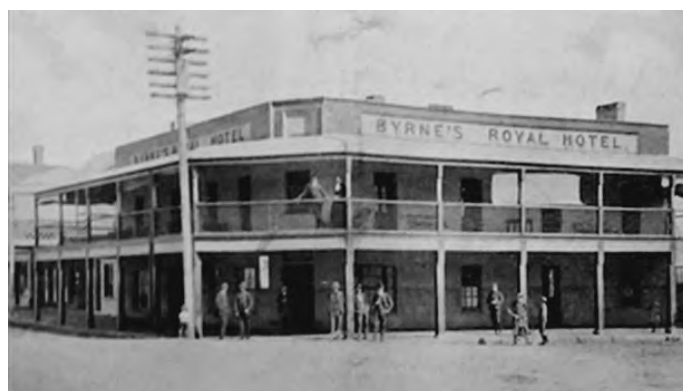
**Susan Snowdon (descendant)**

Susan Snowdon first contacted the Society a number of years ago, enquiring after any information we may have held about GMC Bowen and the *Bulgamatta* estate, including any knowledge about convicts who served under him. Susan along with her youngest daughter recently visited *Chapel Hill* (part of the original *Bulgamatta* estate). They intend visiting the section of the property recently visited by K-CHS members, now known as *The Wollemi Cabins*, owned and managed by K-CHS members Lionel Bucket & Kooryn Sheaves.

In correspondence Lionel relates that, 'he owns 624 acres or the balance of what was in 1834 Bowen's *Bulgamatta* Estate. It was a square mile about 2400 acres, with sections subdivided off over the years. Bowen had 17 convicts assigned to him and I have always wanted to know who they were. Your g-g-g- Grandfather now having been one of them. I would love to know more about Joseph, Michael and Martin Byrne. Bowen built a water powered sawmill here in the creek to cut timber, he made a road to it, about 6 or 7 kilometres long. Your relatives probably worked on the road and at the sawmill and clearing for a farm



Byrne's MILL  
1883 began  
operation  
with Martin's  
son James as  
manager.  
Listed on  
NSW State  
Heritage  
Register  
1999



Byrnes Royal Hotel - Queanbeyan Historic Images

## Harry PROSS – Builder of the Kurrajong Theatre

Harry was born James Henry PROSS on the 25<sup>th</sup> June, 1893, in Hobart, the grandson of the convict, James Pross.

Harry was a tram driver. He married Effie May LISSON on the 13<sup>th</sup> February, 1915 in Hobart, and he enlisted for World War 1 in August 1915, serving in France.

Harry was wounded twice - the second time, in March 1918, severely, by shrapnel in the head. His wife Effie received telegrams from the War Office advising her that Harry was wounded and dangerously ill. He returned to Australia in July 1918 and was discharged from the army in November. He recovered from his wounds but was left paralysed on his left side and was told that he would never walk again. However he would not accept this and taught himself how to walk, albeit with a 'drag' of his left leg and his left arm was useless. Family lore states that as soon as he was capable of walking some distance, he left the Hobart hospital, went straight to the Hobart wharf and boarded a ship to Sydney. It would seem that Harry and his wife never re-connected after he returned from the War (perhaps because of his war injuries).

In Sydney he first worked at the Fruit Market. There is a newspaper report of a H. J. Pross applying for alterations to a shop in Abercrombie Street, Sydney in May of 1922. However, he quickly realized that there was more money to be had in carting the fruit, so he bought a truck and became a carrier working between Sydney and Kurrajong. A story relates how on one journey to Sydney, an axle on his truck broke on a rough road. He removed the axle and enticed a passing truck driver to pick up a new axle in Sydney and deliver it on his return journey. The driver did this and Harry somehow replaced the axle and continued on his way. This took 3 days!

He bought land in Kurrajong with his profits. We know he was living in Kurrajong from at least 1926. There are many newspaper articles of Harry during his time in Kurrajong.

He is remembered in Kurrajong for building the 400 person capacity theatre at a cost of just over £2,100. Also in Kurrajong, three houses and three tennis courts with electric lighting, which were very popular. The theatre was a meeting/dance hall as well as a picture theatre, with a supper room on the side. When Harry was wounded in the War, he was told by doctors never to drink alcohol as it could affect his brain, so he became very anti-alcohol. Thus, Harry would not allow any alcohol on the theatre premises, and so the patrons would keep the alcohol in their car boots and go outside for a drink.

His nephew Peter "Desmond" Winch was the projectionist at the theatre for three years during World War 2, travelling up from Sydney on the train for the weekend and back to Sydney for school on Monday. The previous two projectionists had both been called up for duty in World War 2.

The Theatre building (now an Antique Centre) and the nearby houses still exist. Harry made his own bricks and quarried his own stone to use in his building projects – he was very resourceful for a man paralysed on one side. We know that he adapted tools and machinery so he could operate them with one hand. He also drove a truck. He would also buy old equipment, boats and engines and repair them and sell them for a profit.

Harry was very well known and respected in Kurrajong and many functions were held at the Kurrajong Theatre. Harry made generous donations to churches and charities in the area, although he was known within his family to be very tight with his money.

About 1927/28 Harry married Dora Caroline Jestrinski in Hobart, returning to live in Kurrajong. Sadly she died very young. We know this from a Probate Notice of her death on 20<sup>th</sup> November 1936 wherein Harry is listed as her husband. She was 38 or 39 years old – Harry would have been 43. We can find no official record of this marriage to date. There are a few references to Mrs. Pross in Kurrajong newspaper articles in 1934/5, and she was present at the Grand Opening of the Kurrajong Theatre in July 1934.

Harry supposedly had no contact with his family in Tasmania for many years. A H.J. Pross was a passenger on the 'Comorin' leaving Sydney on March 31, 1937 and arriving Hobart April 2, 1937 – this may have been the time when he re-connected with his family.

In 1938, Harry's niece Greta Winch from Hobart, who was only 14 at the time, came to stay and care for Harry in Kurrajong. Harry and Greta contributed strongly to the Kurrajong District during their time there, with Greta also joining and supporting many charities in the area. She was secretary of the Kurrajong Red Cross during the war years and involved in the C.W.A. Greta excelled in cooking and handcrafts and we read in the local papers of her winning prizes for both.

Harry and Greta moved from Kurrajong to North Entrance in November 1947 and then to Wyong Road, Killarney in 1948 until 1953. Harry bought 52 blocks of land at Killarney Vale with the money from selling the Kurrajong Theatre. He built one house and sold it for the price he paid for the 52 blocks of land. Then they moved to Long Jetty and lived for many years overlooking the jetty and the Lake.

There Harry built a block of three flats on the land behind their house at Long Jetty and he also built a shop next door to the house, which Greta operated for some time as a tea-shop. He also helped build a hall, free of charge, for the newly formed Long Jetty Branch of the CWA.

Harry passed away 26<sup>th</sup> July 1969, aged 76, and is buried at Wamberal Cemetery, NSW.

### Greta WINCH - A rather special person

Greta was born in Hobart, Tasmania on October 1922.

In 1938, just after she had completed her Primary Schooling in Hobart, aged 14, she left Hobart and travelled with her Uncle Harry PROSS to Kurrajong, for a holiday. Greta had previously been tending to her ill mother for a considerable time, being the eldest of 5 children. She apparently enjoyed living in Kurrajong and caring for Harry, who was paralysed on his left side, and although very capable in work and general activities, he was more than happy for someone to look after the home duties. Her mother Daisy, Harry's sister, and 3 of her siblings joined them in Kurrajong from Hobart after about 12 months, but they soon left and lived in Sydney, while Greta stayed on in Kurrajong.

Whilst in Kurrajong she was secretary of the Kurrajong Red Cross during the war years 1939-1945. She was also secretary of The Police Boy's Club, and also involved in the C.W.A. Greta excelled in cooking and handcrafts and we read in the local papers of her winning prizes for both.

They moved to North Entrance in 1947 and later to Killarney Vale, and some time later into a lovely house at Long Jetty on the Tuggerah Lakes, north of Sydney, near Gosford. The house was directly across from the lake



Harry PROSS - K-CHS Image Archives 221000

### The Kurrajong Theatre was built and run by Harry Pross Opened in 1934

The building was not only a cinema but also used for dances and other social functions, with a supper room on the side. In the 1960s it became a local textile factory and since 1983 an Antique Centre. K-CHS LEP Item: 358 courtesy Paul Hulbert. K-CHS Image 150619

Harry built a block of three flats on the land behind their house at Long Jetty. He also built a shop next door to the house, which Greta operated for some time as a tea-shop.

Greta was the first President of the Long Jetty branch of the CWA in 1954 (President for 25 years). She attended 5 World Conferences of the CWA. She worked for many other charities including 'Meals-on-Wheels', 'Red Cross', the Old People's Welfare Association and was an important member of the local Women's Lodge – 'Order of the Eastern Star', eventually becoming the Matron of the District Lodge. She was in training and in line to become the Grand Matron of NSW Lodge but died before this appointment occurred.

She was also a handcrafts instructor and a Patient Release Board member at the Morisset Psychiatric Hospital. Greta sold the house at Long Jetty in 1971 and then lived at The Entrance, above a frock shop that she rented and operated.

She was awarded the British Empire Medal in 1972 for 'Services to the Community'. Greta died in 1985, aged 62.

Biography of Harry Pross and Greta Winch by  
**Kate and Ray Bottger**

Research acknowledgement: Desmond Austin (Peter) Winch May 2019; Desmond Austin (Peter) Winch December 2017; Probate Record discovered June 1 2022 by Kate Bottger



Greta Winch was the niece of Harry Pross. She came to Kurrajong from Hobart at the age of 14 to live with and help her uncle, who had a disability from being wounded in WWI. Greta became involved with many of the local charitable groups including the Kurrajong Red Cross, Kurrajong CWA and the Police Boys Club.

Image 221005  
K-CHS Image Archives



## ALLAMBIE GUEST HOUSE

The years 1942 to 1960

Amena Cox was a young 14 year old girl from Maitland in 1953. Family circumstances caused her mother Jane to look for work for her young daughter. Replying to an advertisement for a young girl to work at the *Allambie Guest House* at Kurrajong Heights, Amena's mother was excited when notified that she had the position. Coming from Maitland and not knowing much about Sydney they had assumed that Kurrajong Heights was a suburb of Sydney.

After leaving Maitland then travelling from Sydney by train to Richmond Station, Amena was then transported to the Heights in an open bus (unsure if this was McMahan Bros. buses or Duffy's). Amena and her mother were wondering just exactly where this place was. They were dropped off at the *Allambie Guest House*, the bus driver informing Amena's mother, that after continuing his journey to the *Kurrajong Heights Hotel*, he would be back to collect her in around 20 minutes for the return journey to the station. After travelling from Maitland to this new location and with only 20 minutes to be introduced to her new surroundings with her mother, Amena was left on her own to deal with this new part of her life. It is understandable that Amena states she often cried being so far from home and her family.

The *Allambie Guest House* opened after the *Kurrajong Heights Hotel* was completed. The Peck family owned the Heights Hotel as well as the guest house. Allambie came into being by joining two of the workers cottages that were on the property and used for accommodation during the building of the hotel. The two cottages were joined by constructing a large dining and lounge room area that would connect the two cottages. The cottages were of similar design to the soldier settlement homes. There was a third cottage at the side in Douglas Street, which apparently at this time was rented out.

Edna Dunston (nee Taylor), ran the guest house when it first opened. Both Allambie and the cottage used water pumped up from Burrellow Creek via the hotel, then piped down to Allambie.

Jim Freeman (known as Percy), owned Allambie from 1942 to 1960. He purchased Allambie and the top ground next to the guest house, which became known as the Allambie playground, including the old run down cottage *Lochiel*, opposite. It was Jim who put in the playground swings etc.

Mary Chapman (known as Nan), managed the guest house during this time, including all the cooking, fruit preserving and jam making etc. Her reputation and meals as a cook, was such, that Sunday dinner was a big event. Not only for the guests, but people from Sydney would travel to the Heights for Sunday dinner and sometimes there could be as many as 70 people served.

Roast duck and lamb was on the menu, along with roast vegetables, plum pudding or apple pie and cream.

Amena stayed at Allambie working there from 1953 to 1960. It was while she was at Allambie that she met and married her husband Don Murray in 1956. The Murray family home was *Argyll* at 305 Bells Line of Road Kurmond. The property consisted of 15 acres where the family grew crops and earned a comfortable income from vegetables, honey and eggs.

A typical day for Amena at the guest house would start at just before 7am. She would take a cup of tea to the guests in their room. Dining room breakfast was 8am. There were six long tables and on each table a jug of iced water and a large teapot full of freshly made tea. It was Amena's job to clear and prepare the tables; they were laid out with clean crockery and cutlery after each meal.

Guests were served with a choice of porridge, egg and bacon, sausages and fried tomatoes. There was also toast and home made jams, more hot tea and freshly squeezed orange juice. All served by Amena.

The other young girl that worked with Amena was the kitchen maid, so the washing up after meals was left to Robin Cunningham. Robin who was in her early twenties was also responsible for all the laundry, washing and ironing. One can only imagine the hours spent at the copper, when all the bed and table linen was washed and put through the wringer, followed by hanging them out on the old fashioned clothes line.

The morning work continued for Amena, who after clearing the breakfast tables, attended to the guests rooms, making the beds and emptying the chamber pots in all the bedrooms. The rooms throughout were then swept and the bathroom cleaned, using kerosene to make the bath look shining and clean. About every three days the floors were scrubbed and polished by hand. The dining room and lounge area were scrubbed on a weekly basis by Amena.

By this time it was 12.30pm and a hot midday meal was ready to be served. Mary Chapman prepared all the meals using a fuel stove. A typical menu consisted of soup, roast meat or corned beef along with vegetables. The desserts were usually trifle, rice pudding, baked custards, jam roley poley and preserved fruit and cream. When possible Amena was able to have a two hour break between 2.30pm and 4.30pm. Afternoon tea was provided at 3pm and was set up ready for the guests to serve themselves.

At 4.30pm it was back to work to prepare the evening meal. This was a light meal, a salad or something on toast. Amena would serve the guests and clear the tables following the meal, then reset the tables ready for the next days breakfast. Supper was set up similar to afternoon tea, and guests could serve themselves.

**Cont. page 9**





**ALLAMBIE Guest House Bells Line of Road 2001 image courtesy Val Birch**

It was always a rather busy time, depending on the number of guest bookings. Amena had a day off on Thursday and sometimes a half day break on Tuesday afternoon. There were three employees at this time and when one had a day off the other two had to pick up the extra work. When Mary Chapman took holidays, a Mrs. Valerie from Croydon would stay at Allambie and take over the cooking duties.

Amena did not wear a uniform but was required to have a clean apron on at all times. As she finished one task she would often change into a fresh clean apron for the next task. Amena had to purchase her own aprons. When she started in 1953 her wage was 5 pounds per week, of which three pounds was placed in her bank account to help support her mother Jane. Money was also taken out for board and lodging.

Also working at Allambie was Frank Telling, who was the gardener and handyman. He grew fruit and vegetables and looked after the ducks. Previous to working at Allambie, Frank had worked on the excavation work for the construction of the *Kurrajong Heights Hotel*. The milkman delivered fresh milk to the guest house every morning at around 6am. Eggs would arrive by bus in crates holding 144 eggs, weekly and more frequently dependent on number of guest bookings.

Apparently school holidays at the guest house were very busy times, families would come up to enjoy the mountain air. During quieter times, Legacy would support the accommodation of widows of soldiers, for a holiday.

During this time Amena remembers Euchre Nights held at *St Clements*, by the Haggart family. Many people from Kurrajong would be there. Other memories are of Van Treight who ran the Post Office in the early 1940s. Mr Bennett had the PO in 1953 when Amena first arrived at Kurrajong Heights. Cyril and Shirley Benton took over at a later time from the Bennett's.

Jim Freeman sold the guest house in June 1960 to Stan and Ailsa Gorham, who had worked on a sheep station at Boorowa. They ran the guest house for a while but it closed to guests not long after, becoming their family home. The property was acquired by the RTA in the late 1980s.

As mentioned earlier Jim Freeman owned the cottage *Lochiel* directly opposite *Allambie Guest House*. During Amena's time *Lochiel* was a tumbledown cottage. Half the weatherboards were missing and there was no glass in many of the windows.

The back walls were almost non-existent and part of the roof was missing. *Lochiel* was known locally as the Red House because it was painted red.

Amena's future husband Donald Murray left school at 15 and had been working in country area's of NSW for about 5 years. He returned to his family at Kurmond in about 1954 and found work around the Kurrajong district. Don and his mate Wally Shaw were soon hired by Jim Freeman to renovate *Lochiel*, as along with the above mentioned dilapidated state, it was badly damaged by white ants. Don repaired many of the boards with timber from Buckett's Mill. They then painted the house. The roof was painted green.

After finishing the renovations Don became the handyman for Jim Freeman at *Allambie Guest House*, including maintaining the vegetable garden and looking after the ducks. His wage was twelve pounds per week. It was at this time that he met and married Amena on the 14<sup>th</sup> April 1956 at St Mary's Anglican Church Maitland.

During the early years of their marriage they lived at *Lochiel*, where their five children, Rodger, Anna, Linda, Julie and Sally were born. In late 1967 the family moved to Don's old family home *Argyll*, at Kurmond. The house along Bells Line of Road, was always busy and bustling. Seeing potential in this, Donald built a small roadside stall selling home grown vegetables, breads, farm produce and homemade cordials to passing travellers. Numerous newspapers at the time reported on its popularity amongst local residents and tourists alike.

*The above article was based on an interview transcript with Amena Frances Murray by Valerie Birch at the home of Airdrie Martin, Monday 20<sup>th</sup> November 2006*



*Argyll 305 Bells Line of Road Kurmond 1960s*

**From THE ARCHIVES**



**Allambie Guest House delivery**

Frank Telling's horses, Nuggett and Jim pull the sled, which had stone wheels. This time they were carrying a load of oranges. Frank with his horses would often move or deliver items for people using this sled. In this image they are stopped outside *Allambie Guest House* where oranges were squeezed daily and the fresh juice poured into glass jugs for the guests breakfast table. Sept 1953

K-CHS Image Archives 065602



Amena & Don's wedding day the 14<sup>th</sup> April 1956 at St Mary's Anglican Church Maitland. Amena and Don met while Don was working on *Lochiel* restorations and later at *Allambie* for Jim Freeman where Amena worked.

In their early married years they resided at *Lochiel*, before moving to Don's family home *Argyle*



Enjoying the swings at the *Allambie Guest House* playground, October 1954. Left to right: Amena Cox (later Murray), Robin Cunningham (fellow worker at the guest house), and visiting guest Wilma.

K-CHS image Archives Collection 065605

**A lifetime friendship – from the pen of Airdrie Martin**

On Amena's time off from her work at *Allambie Guest House*, she would often take a walk somewhere at the Heights. On one of these walks north from *Allambie* along Bells Line of Road (which was unsealed at the time), she met and started a long-lasting friendship with my Grandmother Phyllis Minnett, at her property *Wotonga*. Phyllis had recently lost her husband Michael and enjoyed Amena's friendship.

Travelling by myself from the age of 8 on trains from Chatswood to Richmond, I looked forward to spending

school holidays with my Grandparents at *Wotonga*, so of course Amena and I became friends.

Amena continued her friendship with Grandma and myself, after she married Don Murray and with the restoration of *Lochiel* Don and Amena moved in and were soon raising 5 children. Amena pushed prams, carried and walked children up to Grandma's over the following years, on that old rough Bells Line of Road.

Grandma passed away in 1967, but Amena remains my friend to this day.

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### K-CHS Historic Hotel Excursion "Arthur's Pub Crawl"

At the suggestion of member, Arthur Cooper, David and Jenny Griffiths organised a self-drive tour of historic hotels in the Hawkesbury area. It was held on the 22<sup>nd</sup> August, with 21 members attending.

The tour began at the *Black Horse Hotel* on the corner of Windsor and Bosworth Street, Richmond. It was licenced from 1819 to 1928. It is now hidden behind shop fronts but two proprietors showed us old doorways, stairs and an oven from the 1830s two-storey structure.



The *Black Horse Hotel* c.1880s - K-CHS Image 034908

We then moved down Windsor Street to visit the Commercial Hotel (now R G McGees) established 1891 and then the *Royal Hotel*, established in 1864, where we had morning tea.

We then travelled to Windsor beginning with the 1864, *Railway Hotel* which opened when the railway came to town. Just up the road is the *Tate's Hotel*, which was established as the *Commercial Hotel* in 1840 by Michael McQuade. In 1938 the original building was demolished and the current hotel was built by Bert Tate.

We then drove past *The Bell Inn* in Little Church Street, which was a hotel from 1845 to 1892. It is now a beautifully preserved private home. Next stop was *The Rex* on the site of a hotel dating from 1828. After burning down in the 1875 Windsor fire, it was rebuilt and run by Isabella Bushell as *The Royal Exchange*. Modernisation and rebuilding took place in 1936.

After leaving *The Rex* we drove past the ruins of the *Jolly Frog*. A hotel has stood on this site since 1833 and has undergone flooding, rebuilding and name changes. It closed in 2011 and was destroyed by fire in 2014.

We then had lunch at *The Australian Hotel* on the corner of Windsor and Pitt Town Road. It was established in 1891 by Thomas Maguire and has remained in the family until sold in July this year. Extensions and the corner section built in c.1900 have produced the current facade, while the inside has been extensively renovated.

We then drove to *The Bird in the Hand* in Pitt Town, which was built in 1841. In 1896 it closed and became a general store until, in 1987, it was restored and reopened as the hotel.

Returning to Windsor we viewed the fine timberwork and elegant staircases of the *Macquarie Arms* which opened in 1815. Between 1835 and 1874 it was an officer's mess and then a private residence, before being reopened as a hotel by the Bushell family under the name of *The Royal Hotel*. It was renamed *The Macquarie Arms* in 1961.

Just down the road is *The Fitzroy Hotel* built in 1857 by Richard Ridge and named after Governor Fitzroy (1846-1855). It was remodelled and modernised in 1955 and had the oldest continuous licence in Windsor.

On our return journey we stopped at *The North Richmond Hotel*. The original hotel, opened in 1833 as *The Woolpack Inn* which remained until demolished in the 1960s and the carpark constructed on the site. The existing hotel was built in 1933. The front façade was covered in, in 1970 and it is now being restored to its 1933 appearance.

A good time was had by all, exploring features of buildings we might take for granted.



The *Traveller's Rest* at North Richmond with the ice house on the right c.1920s K-CHS Image 025810

**Jennifer Griffiths**

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## Dates for Your DIARY

### Kurrajong - Comleroy Historical Society Notice of the Annual General Meeting 7pm Monday 26th September 2022

The business of the meeting is to receive the Annual Reports, elect Office Bearers and Committee Members and confirm appointments. The AGM will be followed by a General Meeting with guest speaker Glenn Townsend speaking on *The Townsends of Kurrajong*.

Venue: St David's Uniting Church Hall  
Bells Line of Road Kurrajong Heights

All Welcome - Supper provided

[A Nomination Form is attached with the newsletter](#)

### Historic Wanderings Kurrajong Heights

10am Monday 24th October 2022

Visit Historic *Uplands*, with Airdrie Martin, followed by a visit to *St David's Uniting Church* and a history talk by Don & Helen Webster. Onto *The Ridge* for lunch, followed by a visit to historic *Fernhurst*. Meet at St David's Car Park 10am

Bring your own lunch & thermos (and a chair), to have in the delightful grounds of *The Ridge* at Kurrajong Heights.

COST \$5.00

Bookings please: <https://www.kurrajonghistory.org.au>  
Enquiries: Suzanne Email: [viewfromheights@bigpond.com](mailto:viewfromheights@bigpond.com)  
Ph: 4567 7410 Mob: 0427 410 344

### K-CHS Photographic Exhibition 8th / 9th October 2022

Venue: Kurrajong Heights Bowling Club  
Saturday & Sunday 10am - 4pm

This event is being held at the invitation of and in conjunction with the Bilpin Flower Show

Please contact President David if you are available to assist with setting up and/or a roster over the 2 day event.

Ph: 4567 8999 Mob: 0498 646 899  
Email: [president@kurrajonghistory.org.au](mailto:president@kurrajonghistory.org.au)

### K-CHS CHRISTMAS Party & GM 2022

Will once again be held at the Kurrajong Heights Bowling Club

Saturday evening 10th December 2022

Note: the date is already listed on your 2022 K-CHS Calendar

Members & Friends welcome  
Booking details & cost next newsletter issue

### 60th Annual Bilpin Flower Show & Spring Fair October 2022

Sat 8th 11am - 4pm / Sun 9th 10am - 3pm

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