

THE MILLSTONE

KURRAJONG ~ COMLERoy HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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

Fires of Kurrajong

by David Griffiths

Prompted by the recent tragic loss of "Loxley on Bellbird Hill", I decided to recall some of the notable fires that have occurred in the area. Although there have been many houses and other buildings lost in bushfires, the most notable fires have not been due to bushfires.

St Stephen's Church Hall

Thursday 9th September 1920

FIRE AT KURRAJONG.

St. Stephen's Church Hall, Kurrajong, which faithfully served its purpose during the stressful period of war, and also in connection with church matters, is now no more, the building having been totally destroyed by fire on Thursday night of last week. The blaze was first noticed by inmates at the Grose Vale Post Office, who immediately telephoned Mr. Arthur Duns-ton's residence, but by then the structure was well alight and there was little hope of saving anything. A valuable piano which was housed in the building was totally destroyed, as well as a quantity of crockery, and a number of new seats which had only recently been purchased. The destruction of the building is a distinct loss, not only to the Church of England community, but to the Kurrajong people generally. Many bright, happy and enjoyable functions have taken place there during recent years. The origin of the fire is a mystery.

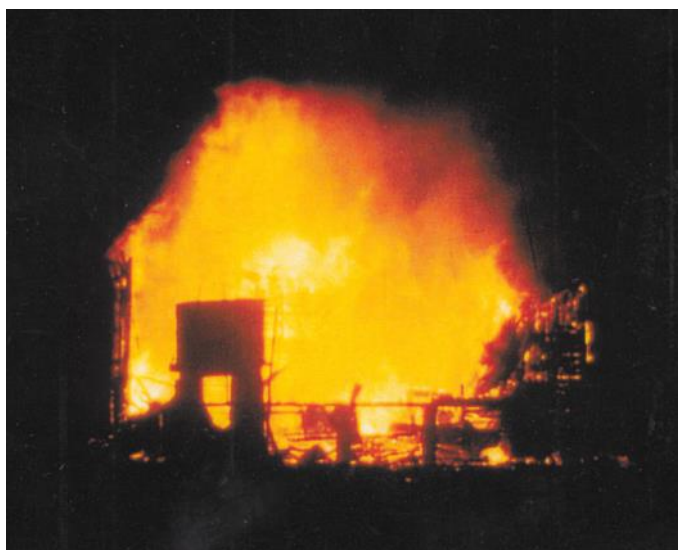
Windsor & Richmond Gazette—20th September, 1920

Kurrajong Public School

Wednesday 18th July 1962

Kurrajong Public School burns down. Everything was lost, including valuable records. The school had recently been refurbished, the gardens redone, one hundred roses planted, and a new demountable erected.

CWA offered to host classes in the CWA Hall.



Kurrajong Public School. Photo Lynn McLean Image 054509

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Kurrajong Public School remains. Photo Lynn McLean Image 054511

President's Report

Hello everyone,

Our AGM was held on Monday 22nd September. Frank & Valerie Holland stepped down from the committee and were presented with an orchid in recognition of their extensive contributions. All other committee members were returned, so we now have two vacancies on the committee. The annual reports that were presented will be included as a separate sheet with this Millstone.

Our guest speaker, Graham Hodgkins, was most interesting. None of us realised how extensive the army veterinary hospitals were. From memory, I think he said there were 17 British facilities in Belgium.

The WB Clarke Geoscience Centre at Londonderry cancelled their Open Day. We are hoping to have a private tour in December or early next year. We'll keep you posted.

We conducted a short notice trip to the Turkish Baths at Mt Wilson after we received news of their possible permanent closure. The committee all attended and Des Barrett gave an interesting talk. We adjourned to the KH Bowlo for lunch.

We had a stand at the Hawkesbury Woodcraft & Artisan Show at Clarendon (Sat 25th & Sun 26th October). Sales were disappointing but we talked to lots of people and the working water mill models were a big draw card. The stand was staffed by Pat, Lesley, Bryan, Peta, Jenny & myself.

The Wollondilly Heritage Centre and Museum is our destination on Sunday 16th November. We need you to register for the tour. It is about a one hour drive to The Oaks.

Don't forget our Christmas Party on Saturday 6th December at the Kurrajong Heights Bowling Club. 17:00 (5pm) start. We are lucky to have the services of renowned cook Sarah cooking for us. The full menu is on our web site and you can book and pay there too. Christmas Party Please include your menu choices in the notes section when booking.

David Griffiths

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Old Woodhill's Store

14th August 1969

Woodhill's Store had been located at Pansy Junction Kurrajong where Ray White and adjoining shops are now. Woodhill's ceased trading in 1961 and the premises became a textile factory.

*Remains of the textile factory
Image 096400*

KURRAJONG – COMLERoy
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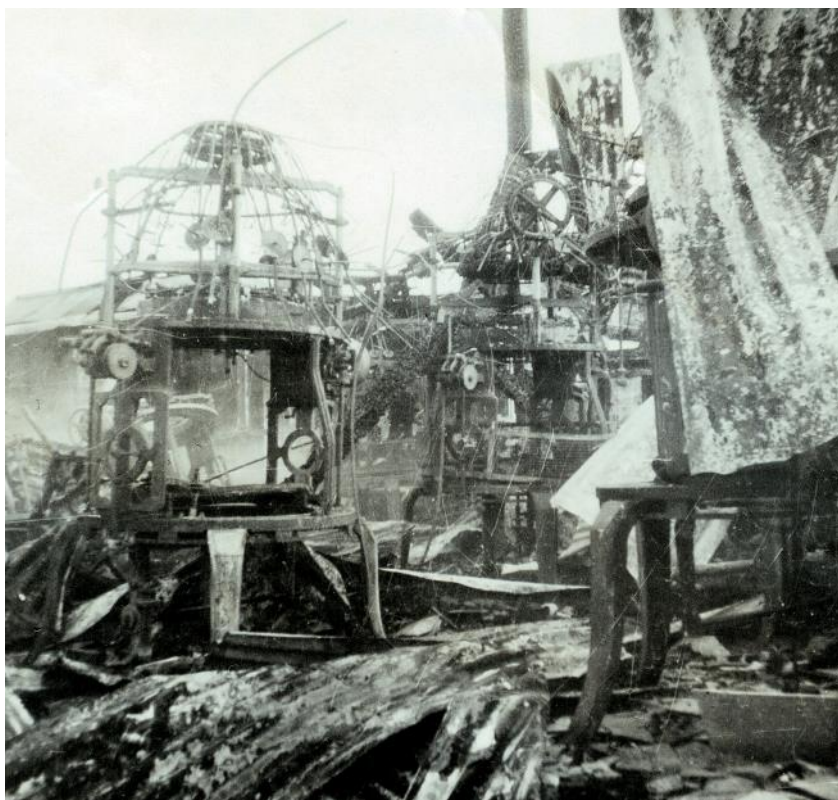
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Content does not necessarily represent or reflect the views or opinions of K-CHS, its committee and members.

Every effort is taken to ensure accuracy of articles.

If errors are found feedback is welcome.

secretary@kurrajonghistory.org.au



Spectacular Fire at Kurrajong

In a spectacular fire just on dusk last Thursday one of Kurrajong's best-known landmarks—Woodhill's was destroyed.

In recent times it was used as a knitwear factory and contained machinery and material.

The fire began as the last of the employees were leaving the factory, and maintenance of the machinery began.

In a short time, flames and smoke were rising through the roof. The siren brought the Bush Fire Brigades, and volunteers from all around.

Every possible endeavour was made to extinguish the fire, but the age of the timber building made this an impossible

task and the building was soon engulfed in flames, making it impossible to save anything inside.

Every available man assisted brigades from Kurrajong, Grose Vale, Wilberforce and Richmond to quell the fire, but when it was evident that there was no hope of saving the main building volunteers concentrated on saving the adjoining building, the butcher's shop owned by Mr John Roberts.

The united efforts succeeded in saving these buildings, but the factory was reduced to a heap of

charred iron and timber.

Throughout the week-end, local residents, with their usual co-operative spirit, worked to clean up the rubble.

The building was erected more than 75 years ago as a branch of Woodhills at Richmond. Alterations and additions were made in 1926 about the same time as the opening of the Kurrajong Railway line.

In recent times the building has served as a textile factory, the property of Messrs Gobert and Maund, and has been an asset to the district in the employment provided for a number of families.

They hope it will not be long before the factory is operating again in a new building.

The cause of the fire is unknown, but an electrical short circuit is suspected.

—Correspondent

Windsor & Richmond Gazette 20th August 1969

Rainbow Lodge

Thursday 30th September 1971 8.30pm

Formerly 'Wheeny Creek Guest House' [Wheeny was misspelt], opposite the "Goldfinders Inn", was built in 1930 for Mr Arnold Samson. The name was later changed by new management to 'Rainbow Lodge'. In the 1960s the building was later purchased by the Handicapped Childrens' Centre at Sutherland and used as a residential home until the children and staff were transferred to Woodford the year before the fire. It was unoccupied at the time. Photographs of the fire were taken by Jim Vincent and James Gobert .



Rainbow Lodge before the fire (left) and during (above) Images 012300 & 070203

Kurrajong Heights Hotel

Monday 14th April, 1975

The hotel was completely destroyed. Brigades from all around attended but due to lack of water, there was little they could do.

The blaze could be seen from Sydney.



Top: Before the fire, recently renovated about 1974 Image 070103

Left: A slide taken by Ron Ness Image 113103

Below: The morning after. Photo Peard Image 071501



Loxley on Bellbird Hill

Friday 5th September, 2025

The very well known reception centre burnt down on the Friday evening. There was no function at the time but there were three staff preparing for Saturday. RFS were on site in 10 minutes but there was little they could do, apart from protecting adjacent buildings.



Left: Well alight. Photo Jonathon Hill RFS

Above: The morning after. Photo David Griffiths

Loxley History

Reprinted from the Millstone March-April 2005

The fabulous Loxley on Bellbird Hill was the venue for our 4th birthday party breakfast, held on Australia Day 2005. During the breakfast Steve Rawling presented a summary of Loxley's fascinating history, and this article compiled by Kathie McMahon and Greg Upton gives an account of this history.

EARLY HISTORY

The original 50 acre grant on which Loxley was built was made to William Townsend in 1833 and he named the property "Mt Pleasant". His sons inherited the property and later sold it to Charles Moore in 1859.

Charles Moore was the Director of Sydney's Botanic Gardens for almost 50 years, and was a great plant collector. He is known to have visited Kurrajong in 1850 on a plant-collecting trip. During this time the property was either leased to Thomas Arkinstall, or the owners employed him to farm the land. Arkinstall was also an employee of the Botanic Gardens. He was probably responsible for many of the old plantings including the old kauri pine that is still on the property, a belief supported by Warwick Nichols from Kurrajong who is one of Thomas's descendants.

Thomas Arkinstall stayed on at Loxley when the property was sold to Mr Richard Holsworth in 1863. The property was then known as "Holsworth Estate," however Mr Holsworth later renamed the property "Loxley." He

enlarged the original house and established the property as a working farm. In the late 1890s he donated a portion of the property to help establish Kurrajong North Public School.

There is a record of fruit trees being planted at Loxley on 15 August, 1883 by Alfred Lord, although Alfred at this time did not officially own the land. Perhaps he was leasing Loxley as nine years later, after marrying Emily Peck, he purchased it in 1892. Those fruit trees were still productive nearly 100 years later, and during this period Loxley's orchards were regarded as being amongst the finest in this district.

RECENT HISTORY

In 1960 Alfred and Emily Lord's sons Harry (Henry) and Ted (Edward) split the property into two 25 acre blocks. Ted Lord sold his land and it is presently owned by Ces Hawkins. Harry and his wife Kath stayed on at Loxley but in the mid 1970s they subdivided their portion of the property and sold most of it to a Dr Bosonquet. One acre was sold to Kevin McMahon and is still owned by his daughter Susan McMahon [2005]. Harry and Kath kept a portion for themselves at the top (western) end of the property where they built a beautiful house.

Dr Bosonquet didn't live at Loxley and only owned it for a short time. During his ownership the property was rented and its name changed to "Loxley Park."

In 1977 Dr Bosonquet sold the property to Marion and George Rogan, who changed the name back to "Loxley" and worked the orchards for at least the next ten years. Over



Two early views of Loxley during its time with the Lord family:

Above: Alfred and Emily Lord pose on the veranda at the front of Loxley, circa 1902. With them are their daughters Annie (left, with Alfred) and Hellen (Nellie). Right: Charlie Lord (son of Alfred Lord) operates an old utility to drive a sawmill set up at the back of Loxley circa 1930. Note how the ute is propped up and the sawmill is driven by a belt attached to the back wheel - Very enterprising! (Photos courtesy of Thelma Groch)



Continued from page 5.

Marion Rogan described Loxley as being in a state of disrepair when they first moved there.

During their stay in the house the Rogans found a consignment note dated 1864 to Richmond Railway for the shipment of the doors ordered by Richard Holsworth when he was improving the house. This note is on display today in the bar at Loxley. The Rogans subdivided the property and today live on the upslope side (western end) on a 6.5 acre portion. There is a one acre block on a separate title where Camellia Cottage now stands. The remaining 17.5 acres which included the original house were sold to Paul Maher in 1997. Paul has restored the property and the house and has added more buildings to transform it into one of the area's premier resorts.

The LORDS of LOXLEY

Alfred and Emily Lord and their descendants have had a long association with Loxley, spanning the period 1883 to the mid 1970s.

Alfred's father was John Lord, a printer, born in Yorkshire in 1821. In 1844 John married Martha Spencer, also of York-shire and 5 years later with their first child they migrated to Sydney where they settled and had a further 5 children, of whom Alfred was the second-youngest.

The Lord family moved from Sydney to "Sunnyside" on Hermitage Rd because of their health. They suffered from "chest complaints".

In 1892 Alfred purchased Loxley, and 4 years later he married Emily Peck at St James Church. Emily's father was Henry Peck of Kurrajong Heights and her mother was Mary Hurst. Alfred and Emily had 8 children.

Alfred died on 16th November 1931 and is buried at St Stephens Church in Kurrajong. Emily remained at Loxley with her sons Harry and Ted who were running the property. She also looked after her grand daughter Dorothy (daughter of Helen) who came to Loxley as a young child to live. In 1944 at age 16 Dorothy went to work at the Kurrajong North Post Office.

Children of Alfred and Emily Lord :

- Helen - born 17th September 1897 and died 24th December 1981. Everyone used to remember the day that Helen was born because it was snowing. Helen married Hjalmar Ness in 1921 and is the mother of Thelma Groch, Dorothy Buckett, Joan Stone-man, as well as Edward and John Ness and Joyce Whitby.

- Annie - born 13th September 1900 and died 1st November 1981. In 1921 Annie married Ernest Robinson of Kurrajong. Annie is the mother of Betty Upton, Bill (Lance), Gwenda and (the late) Vic Robinson. In the mid 1950s Annie remarried to Albert Taylor of Baileys Lane, Kurrajong North.
- John - born 8th May 1903. John died at age 4 years in Windsor Hospital.
- Charles - born 5th May 1905 and died 13th January 1970. Charles married Lillian Devine of Baileys Lane in 1933 and had 7 children.
- Alice - born 2nd August 1908 and died 27th July 1980. Alice was known as "Doll", and in 1943 she married David Binnie and they had one child, David, who lives at Kurrajong Heights.
- Mary - born 19th October 1910 and died 3rd May 1977. Mary married Leonard Brocks and lived at Northfield Estate at Kurrajong Heights. They had 2 daughters, one of whom is Diane Knol. who still lives on part of the Northfield Estate. [2005]



Lord family photos during their time at Loxley:

Left: Alfred Lord and Emily Jane Peck with daughters Helen (left) and Annie, circa 1902.

Below: Helen Lord's wedding day, 16th March 1921. The photo was taken at the front of Loxley and the wedding was held in St

James Church up the road at Kurrajong Heights.

From l to r: Ernest Robinson, Hjalmar Ness, Helen Lord, Annie Lord, Alice Lord, and Mary Lord.

(Photos courtesy of Thelma Groch).



- Henry (Harry) - born 17th May 1913 and died 4th December 1987. Harry married Kathleen Parker in 1940 and they lived for many years in the little cottage in the next driveway up Bellbird Hill known as "Camellia Cottage." They also lived at Loxley for some years.
- Edward (Ted) - born 23rd February 1916 and died 11th October 1976. Ted married Jean Arnold and they lived at Loxley. Jean is now living in Richmond. She is over 90 years old and is still going strong [2005].

GARDENS AT LOXLEY

One of the features of Loxley has always been its rare and established trees. These trees and surrounding shrubs can be seen from the veranda of what is now the Loxley reception area and are also clearly seen when looking at Loxley from Bells Line of Road.

Some trees on the estate can be traced back to links with what's now Sydney's Royal Botanic Gardens. Feature plants include the existing kauri pine, now over 150 years old and thought to have come from seed from New Zealand. During the war the Lord family were offered the princely sum of twelve pounds and ten shillings for this tree.

Originally a bunya pine grew beside the kauri, which accounts for the lean on the kauri. The bunya pine was cut down because Emily Lord was afraid the big cones would fall on her children. This is where they often played and where the clothesline was situated. Progeny of that original bunya remains; the group of three pines is actually three limbs from a single trunk.

Other old plants include a large bay tree, three established camellias and a large port wine magnolia (which may be linked to one on Northfield Estate at Kurrajong Heights which is of a similar vintage). Thelma Groch talks of a red and white flowering camellia that she believes is over 100 years old. This camellia was grown from a cutting that was given to Thelma's mother Helen by the Dunstons as a birthday present. Given its age and colouring it is likely to be 'Aspasia Macarthur' an old camellia grown originally at Camden Park, the Macarthur family estate.

Several mature trees in the Loxley garden were planted by the Rogans including golden elms and a large English elm. There are also macadamia trees and jacarandas.



Top: The kauri pine still stands tall and elegantly today. One of the three juvenile bunya pines derived from the original large pine cut down by Alfred Lord can be seen in the background.

Above: Loxley circa 1930s surrounded by its orchards. The notorious kauri pine can be seen towering over the property. (Photo courtesy of Thelma Groch).

Below: The rear of Loxley today, showing some of the extensive gardens, and showing how the redevelopment has kept in good harmony with the style of the original building. (Photo by Greg Upton).



Dates for Your DIARY

WOLLONDILLY HERITAGE CENTRE & MUSEUM

SUNDAY 16TH NOVEMBER 10:00

43 Edward St, The Oaks

This is a self drive / car pool visit to this very worthwhile museum. Morning tea is included if we have sufficient numbers, so we need you to [register](#).

WB CLARKE GEOSCIENCE CENTRE

947-953 Londonderry Rd, Londonderry

This little known facility, right on our doorstep, will be giving us a private tour. Date TBA.

Let me know if you are interested.

Among other things, the centre keeps core drilling samples from all drilling in NSW.



K-CHS CHRISTMAS PARTY SATURDAY 6TH DECEMBER 17:00 (5PM)

KURRAJONG HEIGHTS BOWLING CLUB

[Book here](#) Full details and menu are online. Hoping to see lots of you there.

The Village Kitchen Kurrajong

83 Old Bells Line of Road, Kurrajong Village

Dine In Gallery – Fully Licensed

Tuesday to Sunday 8:00am - 2:30pm

Evening Friday from 6pm

For BOOKINGS phone 02 4573 0988

For all of your property needs be sure to get in touch with the team at
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