

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.

THE NESS FAMILY Part 1 *as told to John Williams by Ron Ness*

Hjalmar Iversen (George) Ness

Hjalmar Ness was born in Tonsberg, Vestfold, Norway on the 17th, August, 1893. His parents were Iver Hansen Ness and Johanne Marie Ness. Hjalmar was one of 9 children. At the age 18 years he signed on to a whaling ship called the "Loch Tay". Things were very difficult in Norway in the early 1900s, and Hjalmar thought that joining a ship's crew would be a good way to make a constant living. At the time "Loch Tay" was the biggest whaling ship in the world.

The ship arrived in Sydney on the 10th August, 1912. Hjalmar was listed on the crew as an unassisted migrant. The "Loch Tay" was owned by the Australian Whaling Company but was clearly based in Norway.



Hjalmar Ness- 4th from left with Loch Tay crew 1912

Hjalmar had several voyages on board the ship to Antarctic waters seeking the capture of whales. Then, at some stage in the next couple of years, he jumped ship in Sydney. He either liked what he saw of Sydney or he was a bit fed up with being constantly at sea.

In 1914 he started a farming course at the Government Agricultural Training Farm at Scheyville.

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He graduated with the following comments:

Conduct - very good.

Working Capacity - very good.

Suitability for Farming Pursuits - very good.

Remarks: This youth did very well during his term of training. He will make a very good all-round farm hand.

Hjalmar then went to live and work in the Kurrajong area.

In 1916, at the age of 22 years, Hjalmar applied for and was enlisted into the Australian Imperial Force (AIF). On his Application to Enlist, his address was given as: c/o Mrs. Peck, Mountain View, Kurrajong Heights. Mountain View Guest House was the first guest house to be built on Kurrajong Heights.

While on the ship on the way to fight overseas, the men did many things to amuse themselves. They used to hold wrestling and boxing championships on board.



Hjalmar became the wrestling champion on the boat. Another man from Bilpin called Jack Hanlon became the boxing champion. Jack went on to become a highly successful local businessman as a farmer, a fruit carrier and a shop owner at Bilpin.

Years after they returned from the war Jack Hanlon told Hjalmar's son Ron that Hjalmar saved a man's life when they were in one of Australia's harbours. The man fell overboard, and Hjalmar dived into the harbour to save him.

Hjalmar survived the war but was deeply affected by what he went through and what he had seen, as were most servicemen. He returned home to Australia in 1918.

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President's Report

Hello everyone,

Sadly, our member Wanda Deacon passed away in January. See obituary on page 7.

Our Australia Day Birthday party went well. Our guest speakers, Sue & Ron Buxton, gave a gripping account of being in Darwin during and after the cyclone.

February was a visit to Taskforce Veteran at Scheyville National Park. It was an interesting tour, followed by lunch at the Bird in (the) Hand Inn at Pitt Town. See below and page 3.

The long awaited tour of the WB Clarke Geoscience Centre at Londonderry is on Monday 9th March at 10:00. They want to know who is coming in advance, so we need you to [register](#) online please. We will adjourn for lunch after the tour.

The March GM is a daytime event held in Kurrajong CWA hall at 13:00. Our speaker will be Richard White from the RAHS. His topic is 'The Dog on the Tuckerbox'.

In May our General Meeting is at the Kurrajong Radio Museum, on Monday 25th May at 19:00. Our guest speaker will be Mal Bobrige, speaking on his life in the navy and RFS. He has served as a submariner, Navy Police and as an RFS Group captain, among other roles.

Planning is under way for a two night, self drive tour to the upper Hunter Valley in the first week of June. Let me know if you are interested.

The Mid Winter Lunch, is on Monday 27th July, speaker will be Ron Ray from the National Maritime Museum speaking on 'Bass and Flinders'. It will be held at our favourite Bowling Club.

In the 'you learn something every day' category... did you know that using 'vale' when referring to someone having passed away is an Australian thing? It is Latin for 'farewell' or 'goodbye' and is considered more formal than RIP used elsewhere. It is pronounced 'vah-lay'.

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Scheyville photos by Peta Smith



Howitzer artillery piece, commemorative seat and NP Admin office and Obelisk. The obelisk commemorates the searchlight companies.

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Every effort is taken to ensure accuracy of articles.

If errors are found feedback is welcome.

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TASKFORCE VETERAN at SCHEYVILLE NP *by David Griffiths*



We visited the Taskforce Veteran Group at Scheyville National Park on February 4th. The group is primarily involved with restoring historic military vehicles, but also other veterans activities and supports a mixed gender 'mens' shed doing woodwork projects. Our enthusiastic guides for the day were Alex and Graham.

Scheyville has had many roles. One of the better known roles was as a Migrant Hostel, but in fact that was only for 15 years. It is named after William Francis Schey, a prominent NSW politician, and pronounced 'Sky Ville'.

- 1804-1893 It was Nelson or Pitt Town Common
- 1896-1910 The Casual Labour Farm
- 1905-1910 Farm for Training Australian Boys
- 1911-1915 The Dreadnought Scheme—The Government Agricultural Training Farm
- 1914 Internment camp during WWI
- 1916-1917 Training for Women (transferred to Cowra)
- 1919-1939 Second Phase of the Dreadnought Scheme
- 1940-1944 Military use during WWII
 - 1942 Anti Aircraft Searchlight Companies
 - 1943-1944 Australian 1st Parachute Battalion
- 1949-1964 Scheyville Migrant Hostel
- 1965-1973 Officer Training Unit, trained officers for Vietnam
- 1977-1983 Scheyville campus of Hawkesbury Agricultural College
- 1985-1987 Various special training courses—Police Tactical Response Group and special weapons
- 1983-1996 Historic Aircraft Restoration Society, Storage of aircraft
- 1990-1995 Royal Australian Airforce Air Training Corp No. 20 Flight
- 1996 Declared a National Park



An immaculately presented British Ferret, 3 person, Scout car Photo by DG



Our group

Continued from page 1

For the next 3 years Hjalmar found work where he could. He was a "jack of all trades" and no doubt he put some of those skills to good use. Hjalmar was very adaptable.

In 1921 he married a local girl, Helen Lord. She was the daughter of Alfred Lord {1864-1931} and Emily Jane Peck {1872-1960}. Helen was their eldest child, and she had 7 brothers and sisters. Helen's father was an orchardist and lived at Kurrajong North.



Hjalmar Ness and Helen Lord on their wedding day 1921.

In 1920 Hjalmar applied for a Soldier Settlement block of land. This was a government program designed to put returned soldiers onto a farm, with an average size of 30 acres. This was done as a reward for fighting for their country in the First World War and with the intention of giving them a start in gainful employment.

Hjalmar was successful in the first ballot, securing Portion 276 which fronted Mill Road, Kurrajong North. This was the same block of land that Roy and Edna Dunston farmed in later years. It was also where Vic and June Blackmore brought up their family when they bought the property off Edna Dunston.

Hjalmar and Helen had seven children. They were: Thelma Marie (who married Jim Groch); Edward (Kelly) Hjalmar (who married Margaret Miller); Dorothy Mae (who married Jack Buckett); John Alfred (who married Vera Robinson); Joyce Emily (who married Fred Whitby); Joan (who married Jeff Stoneman) and Ron Ness who married Val Saunders. All but Ron were born when Hjalmar and Helen occupied the soldier settlement property.

Over the next few years, the couple worked very hard

at making a go of farming. They grew different crops including apricots and oranges. These were mainly sent to an agent in the Sydney Markets where they were sold to shopkeepers, and to a lesser extent the public.

Below is a picture of the cool room built by Hjalmar and Tom Mason to keep fruit in before they sent it to market. This was very innovative, as many farmers in later years also built cool rooms for their fruit and flowers to preserve them from the heat and to keep them fresh.



Two of Hjalmar and Helen's sons, Kelly and Ron Ness many years later, take a nostalgic look at Hjalmar's sandstone Cool Room.

When the Depression of 1929 hit the world, it had a devastating effect. All countries were affected. Fruit that could be picked and successfully sent to market became a rarity. Sometimes when farmers sent fruit to the markets, they got a bill back because the agents had to dump the fruit. People just didn't have enough money to buy it.

The Soldier Settlement farmers like Hjalmar had to try and earn money doing other things. The farm was not paying enough to exist on. Hjalmar would take any job he could get to help support his family. Helen would work the farm when Hjalmar was away.

There was now an enormous problem for the Soldier Settlement farmers. There were very strict rules being enforced by the man that oversaw the farmers on behalf of the government. The farmers would be fined for not having crops off the tree by a certain date - crops they couldn't sell to anyone. There were payments to be made on their properties and the equipment supplied by the government. This became an impossible task.

Unfortunately, there was no compassion shown by the overseer of the settlements, no recognition that the world was in a depression, no allowance made for special circumstances. Just about all the Soldier Settlement farmers had to walk off their farms.

To further illustrate some direct evidence of harshness, you need to remember that Hjalmar graduated from

Continued from previous page

The Government Agricultural Training Farm at Scheyville with very good pass marks. In other words, Hjalmar had a good working knowledge of how and what to do on a farm. We know Hjalmar was a hard worker. His wife Helen also worked on the farm and any of his children that were old enough also helped on the farm. A whole family effort that was thwarted by a set of circumstances with a government only interested in the farmers adhering to a set of overly stringent rules. In other words, given the circumstances, they were doomed to failure. In 1937 they had to walk off the place, never to return.

Hjalmar and Helen were left penniless and with no house to live in. But, just as everything seemed hopeless, his family came to the rescue. An aunty of Helen's had a spare house, and the family moved in there. The property was called "Pinegrove". When they were in the new house their last child was born, Ron Ness.

When the depression started to ease, Hjalmar and Helen started to make a living wage again. After saving their money they eventually bought the house off the aunty to establish a family home. A home that has remained with the Ness family to this very day.

Hjalmar died in 1970, and Helen died in 1981, but they left behind a large family of descendants, many of whom still live in our district today.

Our member John Williams is writing a book on Kurrajong Heights. This is an extract of his chapter on the Ness family which he has kindly submitted to the Millstone.

An article from Windsor Richmond Gazette, Friday 11th January 1935, about Soldier Settlement farmers.

FRUIT FLY CONTROL

BIG BATCH OF PROSECUTIONS KURRAJONG GROWERS FINED

NO fewer than fourteen orchardists of the Kurrajong district were proceeded against by Mr. J. H. Hubbard, fruit inspector of the Department of Agriculture, before Mr. A. G. Hardwick, S.M., at the last Richmond Police Court, for failing to take the necessary measures to comply with the provisions of the Plant Diseases Act set out for the treatment of fruit flies and codlin moth, and for the prevention of the spread thereof.

Two charges were preferred against Hjalmer Ness, of Kurrajong, viz., (1) Failing to collect and destroy at intervals of not exceeding three days all fallen mandarins and oranges, and (2) Failing to remove all mandarins from his trees on or before September 30. He pleaded guilty. Inspector Hubbard stated that he found three or four cases of mandarins hanging on the trees at the time of his inspection, whilst probably 20 to 30 cases of oranges had been lying on the ground for more than three days. Defendant said his orchard was not a paying proposition and he had accepted a contract some 3½ miles away which had to be completed by Christmas. The magistrate imposed a fine of £1 and 8/- costs in each case.

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PLYNLIMMON *by Deborah Hallam*

In the mid-1820s the previously unclaimed land between the lower Grose River area and the future Kurrajong village became available for grant. Among the ex-convict grantees were Thomas Wooley (Woolley), Kennedy Murphy, Robert Aull and Thomas Hansey (Hancy). There was little interest in farming this land as, for the most part, the emancipists had interests elsewhere. An exception was Robert Aull who installed a convict farmer on his land in a cottage that exists today.

Plynlimmon was originally known as *Wooleys Farm*. Thomas Wooley, who arrived as a convict on the *Admiral Gambier and Friends*, 1811, was the publican of the *Tollgate Hotel* in Parramatta from 1816 when he married Ann Hancy, daughter of the neighbouring grantee. They moved to Windsor following the loss of his license for illegally opening for extended hours.

1844 young Thomas had completed religious instruction and was incumbent of Pitt Town Anglican Church.

Alfred Jones, age 24, was convicted of simple larceny at the *Old Bailey* on 14 June 1830 and transported to the Colony for seven years on *York*. On 9 October 1838 he married 33 year-old Sarah Bollester (Bottister), also a convict with a seven-year sentence, who had arrived on *Buffalo* in 1833. It is possible that they may have taken up residence at *Wooleys Farm* around the time of their marriage. I could find no records of this, however the newspaper obituary for Sarah reports a shop on the site. No date is mentioned.

On 1 August 1844 Alfred Jones purchased the 50-acre lot of Thomas Wooley from Thomas Wall Bodenham (Hall in the documents). Local gossip tells us Alf named the property *Plynlimmon* for a mountain in Wales. Again, Sarah's obituary states he was British.

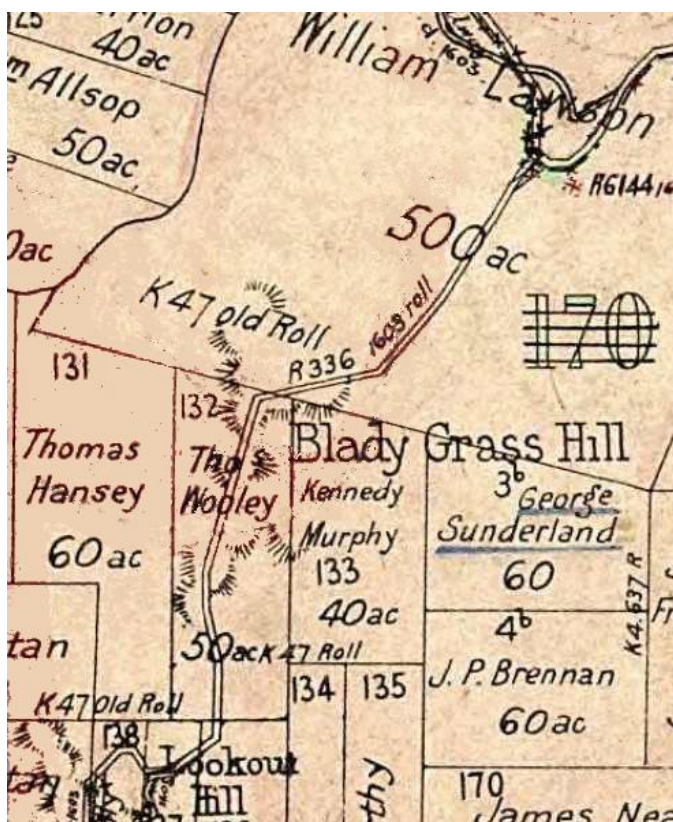
Certainly by 1846, Alfred and Sarah were well settled on the grant having become part of the local racing fraternity with his race horse, 'Jenny Muckle'. Alf had also dug the foundations in preparation for a wooden building for which he had let a contract "for the task of building a house" to Murtha Gibbons. The house was to be "62 foot long and 16 foot wide with two stalls, a rack and doors." It was to have wooden flooring. A court case ensued in November 1846 over a disagreement with Gibbons on accommodation during the building.

Although the description appears these days to indicate a stables or shed, the building was described in the court as a house. If this is the foundation of the current *Plynlimmon* is unclear, however I have been unable to find a reference to any other building work.

In December 1851 Alf Jones transferred, for 10 shillings, 3 acres 31 perches to the trustees, G.M.Pitt, John Ezzy and Robert Pitt for an Anglican Church and Burial Ground. John Lamrock was to add an adjoining 2 acres 2 roods portion for 10 shillings in 1866.

John, William and Samuel Lamrock had arrived in NSW in 1842 with John and William establishing themselves at Kurrajong at *Goldfinders* and *Lemon Forest*. They were joined in 1852, when their parents and several siblings arrived on *Agincourt* and took up residence at *Plynlimmon*, presumably renting from Alf Jones who had moved to Windsor, where he was shopkeeping. Lamrock's stay was relatively short, as by 1855 most of the family had relocated to Bathurst. I have been unable to identify any expansion of the building at this time however it does seem problematic that this large family would manage in the existing two-room cottage.

The vacancy of the property was fortuitous as Mr and Mrs Jones had had a falling out and in September 1855 Alf, by an act of transfer, granted Sarah sole use of the property for the term of her natural life due to



Map with Bells Line of Road at the top right and Grose Vale Road running through the middle of the Wooley grant (portion 132).

In May 1834 Wooley transferred his 50 acres to John Raine, who had arrived in 1827 on *Elizabeth*, and in December of the same year the land was transferred to Ruth Elizabeth Bodenham, who added her son, Thomas Wall Bodenham, to the ownership in 1840. Ruth Elizabeth died in 1845. Ruth and Thomas Bodenham, accompanied by 9-year-old Thomas Wall Bodenham, had arrived in the colony on *Medora* in 1826. The Bodenham family did not occupy *Wooleys Farm*. By

irreconcilable differences. Sarah remained in residence on the property. It seems things were not quite so serious, as Alf moved back to *Plynlimmon* where the “pretty cottage garden and 50 acre farm of Alf Jones” was recorded in a newspaper article of 1871.

Sales documents show Alf Jones transferred to the Bishop of Sydney the 50 acres of land minus 3ac 31p in November 1873. The proceeds were used to buy a home in Forbes St, Windsor where they were to live until their deaths - Alf in 1883 and Sarah in 1910. They are buried at St. Matthews, Windsor.



Plynlimmon in 1988 Image 190300

Vale Wanda DEACON (née Eather) 10th August 1940 - 8 January 2026 *by Suzanne Ballard-Smith*

It is with sadness that we acknowledge K-CHS member Wanda Deacon, who passed away peacefully in Kurrajong Nursing Home on the 8th January 2026, where she had resided for the past year.

In memory of Wanda, and on behalf of the K-CHS Committee, I wish to share Wanda's commitment to the work of the Society over quite a number of years. From document records, Wanda joined the Society in 2009 and became a research member of the K-CHS Family History Research team. She also served on the K-CHS Committee from 2013-2015.

Along with her local family history research commitments, Wanda joined forces with member Valerie Birch gathering information on war service individuals. They visited War Memorial sites in the district and recorded the names, including names found on honour rolls in local Schools, Halls and Churches. Valerie and Wanda then began to follow-up individual war service histories by searching the National Archives, which included visits to the ACT, researching records held at the Australian War Memorial.

In 2012 Wanda and Valerie engaged in an informative Australian War Memorial sponsored 'Tour of the Western Front Battlefields.' Rather fortuitously in 2013 a Federal Government Centenary of ANZAC Grant Programme became available to Heritage researchers and Societies, through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

It was under the guidance of retired President Frank Holland that Valerie and Wanda's project gathered pace, resulting in a submission to the Department, by K-CHS, requesting a grant to support the publishing of the gathered research. The resulting publication “We Remember Them”, brought to life the service of the First World War Volunteers from The Kurrajong, Colo and associated districts. The descendant families were gifted a copy and invited to the launch of the book at a service held at Richmond RSL on 11th November in 2015.

Wanda also worked diligently over 10 years with the K-CHS Family History Group on the transcription of the St Stephen's Church Registers. This produced four substantial publications, which included not only the Parish records of Births, Deaths and Marriages, but much local parish and family history covering the years 1861-1999.

Wanda was a local Hawkesbury 'girl' raised on a farm and orange orchard at Colo. Her father, a returned WW1 Veteran, Frederick Reuben Eather, married her mother Florence Hulbert in 1930. Wanda had two brothers Darcy and David. Wanda attended the Richmond Rural School before commencing work at the Boot Factory in Windsor (in the old School of Arts building). Wanda married a serving defence force member and they were soon after transferred to Townsville. In later years they returned to the Hawkesbury. There is, of course, much more to Wanda's life story including her having borne three children, Glenn, Julie Anne & Nichole.

Our thoughts are offered to the surviving family.



Wanda, Carolynne & Valerie. Wanda's birthday 2025

Dates for Your DIARY

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 Mon 9th March, 10:00.

[We need you to book if you are coming.](#)

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

March General Meeting

Monday 23rd March. Our speaker is Richard White from RAHS, topic

'The Dog on the Tuckerbox'.

Venue is Kurrajong CWA Hall, 13:00 (1pm).

Optional lunch at 50 Three café at 12:00.

Mid Winter Lunch Monday 27th July, noon

Kurrajong Heights Bowling Club. Catering by Sarah.

Ron Ray from Australian Maritime Museum speaking on 'Bass & Flinders'.

Booking essential.

May General Meeting

Kurrajong Radio Museum Mon 25th May 19:00

Speaker: Mal Bobrige on his life in the Navy and RFS, including as a submariner, Navy Police and RFS Group Captain.



The 'Bellbird Echo' Fruit Stall (previously the 'Bellbird Echo' Guest House), run by the McMahon family.

With the end of WWII more people owned motor cars, and were travelling further afield. Many of the guest houses were closed after the war.

To generate additional income, oranges were sold from the side of the road and these developed into fruit stalls.

Other produce in abundant supply were peas, honey and stone fruit.



Bellbird Echo circa 1950s Image 010131

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