

# KU-RING-GAI HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.



Including:  
Ku-ring-gai Family History Group  
Patron: The Mayor of Ku-ring-gai  
Affiliated with:  
The Royal Australian Historical Society  
The National Trust of Australia (NSW)  
The Society of Australian Genealogists  
The NSW & ACT Association of Family History Societies Inc.

Research Centre:  
799 Pacific Highway, Gordon, NSW  
2072 PO Box 109, Gordon, NSW 2072  
Phone: (02) 9499-4568  
khs@khs.org.au  
<http://www.khs.org.au>  
<https://www.facebook.com/kuringgaihs>  
<http://kuringgaihs.blogspot.com.au/>  
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## June 2016 Newsletter Vol. 34 No. 5

### Saturday 4 June

#### FAMILY HISTORY MEETING

11.00am **Workshop: *Research in the UK***  
with Jean Smith

2.00pm **General Meeting**, followed by:  
***From the Netherlands to the Shed***,

Speaker: Paul Schiebaan



Paul will talk about the transition from growing up in the Netherlands to becoming the President of the Ku-ring-gai Community Workshop - known as "The Shed" - in the St Ives Showground.

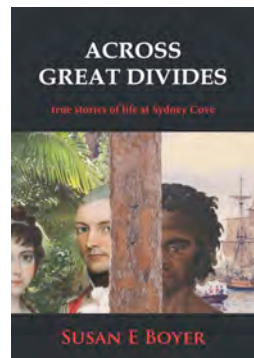
Afternoon tea will be available.  
Visitors welcome.



**SIG Meetings are held in the KHS Research Centre. General Meetings are held in the Library's meeting room.** Please check group e-mails or contact the group leader or Research Centre before attending if uncertain of any group going ahead. Room volunteers endeavour to update or correct the schedule on the Research Centre entry door with the most up-to-date information.

### Saturday 18 June

2.00pm **General Meeting**, followed by ***Across Great Divides*** a talk given by Susan Boyer who is a contemporary Australian author and currently has over twenty non-fiction educational titles in print. Her publications, include *Across Great Divides: True Stories of Life at Sydney Cove*.



Susan Boyer brings to life the diverse personal experiences of people living in and around Australia's first colony. It demonstrates the varied reactions of participants to their unique situation. It shows the situations of convict women, such as Esther Abrahams and Ann Inett and their relationships with military men. It relates the experiences of convict men like James Ruse, Henry Kable, William Bryant and others who saw and seized the possibilities of their new position. Some succeeded beyond their imagination; some failed disastrously.

After graduating with Distinction from a Bachelor of Arts degree in communication and cultural studies in 1995, she began teaching English language and literacy.

Susan's current research relates to the second book in her Australian history 'Great Divide' series, which continues the story of Bennelong as he sails back through Sydney Heads on his return from England.

## Chinese Coolies in France in WWI.

At our April general meeting we were once again entertained by Gordon Mar, an Australian born Chinese with family roots back into the late 1800s and proud to be an Australian. Gordon started his talk by noting that, "I have been in this room before!" He was a primary student at the old Gordon Public School where KHS holds its meetings, before moving on to Knox. Ever involved in promoting an understanding of the Chinese heritage, Gordon led us into some WWI history of which very few of the audience had ever heard - the story of 140,000 Coolies who went to France to aid the war effort - to dig the trenches, work on the docks and in the factories, thereby releasing men for more important work at the front line.

By the early 1900s China had suffered 100 years of humiliation and discrimination at the hands of the western powers. It was a republic divided with governments in the south and north. "China was impoverished, it had no power and no money - they were the poor men of Asia". And as *The Times* correspondent George Morrison wrote, "How could China become important when it is ruled by corruption." The Chinese rulers saw that the allies would win the war and separate the spoils between them.

In particular, the Chinese President Yuan Shikai wanted the return of Qingdao which had been seized by Germany in 1898. Japan had already secured a place at the peace table by providing escorts for the Mediterranean convoys. So what could China do? The Allies had imported labourers from other countries, so Yuan offered 50,000 men, but the offer was rejected. Most likely the British didn't want to be held to ransom over British investments in China, in particular the Hong Kong colony.

But then came the Battle of the Somme with terrible troop losses, 400,000 from Britain alone. With the troop situation desperate, the Chinese offer was accepted. As Gordon Mar said, they already knew what the hard working Chinese labourer was capable of. "They built the Canadian Pacific Railway!"

The French were the first to accept the offer with Chinese labourers leaving Tianjin in July 1916. The first British shipment followed in January 1917. Most of the labour force were

recruited in Shandong Province, where they were given a noncombatant contract and paid 10 pence per day, half of which went to their families in China. Stowed in the ship's hold, the British recruitment were shipped, to a camp in Victoria BC. From Vancouver, they were taken to the east coast ports by closed trains, which was an eight day trip. In great secrecy they were then shipped to France. More than 90,000 were sent via Canada. The conditions were appalling. Many died, one ship was sunk, and some Chinese even suicided.

Once in France they were housed in dormitories where they cooked their own meals (but they drew the line at horse meat). At work they dug trenches, carted supplies, repaired equipment, always in danger from bombs behind the lines.



Loading Oats at Boulogne

They were strong and good workers unlike the Africans (Lloyd George). The French treated them best, teaching them French and employing them in factories (to replace women).



Chinese working in the Tank Corps workshop

They were allowed to leave camp and more than 5,000 remained in France at the end of

the war. Many married French women, forming the Paris China town.

The Americans treated the Chinese worst, the Australians used them in the 2nd Tunneling Company and the British shot 10 Chinese for crimes. After the war many remained in France to help with the rehabilitation, clearing bombs and mines, bodies and barbed wire, filling in trenches, etc.

The last did not return to China until 1921. They were resented by the returning soldiers and suffered badly from the Spanish flu - altogether about 2,000 died. After some consideration, the Chinese Coolies were each presented with the Victory Medal - but in bronze rather than silver! Altogether a touching tale.

Doug Milne, Recorder

## May Family History Meeting

### 11.00am Session

Jo Harris opened the meeting and welcomed the 27+ attendees. Sue Holmes spoke about forthcoming tours. Jo invited Jenny Joyce to give the presentation on "Family Search – more than just the old IGI". Jenny has visited the Learning Center at Church of Latter Day Saints in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA, for research and conferences.

The IGI, (International Genealogical Index) renamed Family Search, (<https://familysearch.org/>) contains all sorts of useful (and exciting) items for research e.g. early Church records 1788-1856; how to find Birth records, but not before 1905; possibly Baptisms @ Church Records – family history research 'the Wiki.' There are Australian online records – civil registrations. All records are free. For America you need 'Counties' – check the Catalogue – the 'map' site is very good. A handout was given. Thanks to Jenny for her presentation.

### 2.00pm Session

Jo Harris opened the meeting and welcomed members, two new members and a visitor, Rachel Legge. Jo gave a special welcome to Gail Davis, the Guest Speaker from NSW State Records.

Jo reported that "On this day, 7<sup>th</sup> May 1788, a Wednesday, there were "Light north-north-west breezes with showers of rain. The temperature was 65°F =18.33333 Celsius." (from "Sydney Cove 1788 by John Cobley).

The Commemorative outing on Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> April was a great success. Those participating learnt more about Phillip's first exploration into the Ku-ring-gai area 228 years ago to the day. Then a party, led by Giles Tabuteau, descended to Bungaroo at the tidal limit and another group stayed on higher ground. At the planned time both groups drank a toast with "a little rum and a small quantity of bread" firstly "to Captain Arthur Phillip, Founder of the Colony and First Governor of New South Wales" and then a toast "to Ku-ring-gai, its Pioneers and its People". This was quite a rare occurrence with members from four different Ku-ring-gai groups being present, and so there was a great deal of interaction between the groups. [Refer to May Newsletter for report by Graham Lewis.]

Jo gave an account of the Society's happenings. Sue Holmes spoke about forthcoming tours. More volunteers are needed in the Research Centre. If you are interested, please attend the Centre on the first or third Monday of any month. Then experienced volunteers are on duty and can show you the ropes. If those days do not suit, please contact Geoff Little, Volunteer Coordinator, to arrange a day to suit (Phone 9449 3131).

Family History Revision Course – Jo apologised for having the incorrect *day* but correct date.

Jo recommended the December 2015 Issue of *Family Tree Connections* with its ten-page article on "Long Lost Relatives" gems from Trove. The publication is regularly sent to the Society.

Book Reports: Jo: "*Greycliffe – Stolen Lives*" by Steve Brew; Neil Falconer: "*Black Gold*" *Aboriginal People 1850-1870*; Patrick Dodd reported that he found "*Australian History for Dummies*" at Turramurra Library and indicated it was very worthwhile.

Noel Blake spoke about The Waratah Society.

**Gartrell Family Continued** - refer to the May Newsletter for initial story.

Rod and Graeme Gartrell returned to the Research Centre on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> April to add some extra names to the family information that Jo had prepared for them. The lady from the house who had given Jo the "Bible", and who had been unable to attend the April FH Meeting came and met the Gartrells. She brought with her a complete dinner set, a<sub>3</sub>

beautiful silver teapot and matching coffee pot, a lady's horse whip which was featured in a photograph being held by a lady family member riding side-saddle, which was in one of the many photo albums. Rod and Graeme Gartrell left the meeting *awestruck*, yet again.

Jo thanked members of the FH Committee, Margaret Holland and helpers for afternoon tea, Gerard Esquilant for recording, etc and to all those who help in so many ways to make this group such a happy one.

Lucky Door prizes were won by Rachel Legge who chose "*A Lady in a Thousand – Eliza Davies*" a biography by Barbara Ward; Paul Tout who chose "*North Shore Sydney*" by Les Thorne.

Jo then introduced Gail Davis, Senior Archivist, Research and Publications, at the State Records NSW. She has had a long and distinguished career at State Records NSW. Gail is in charge of the research and copying services and has undertaken numerous research projects involving the NSW State archives. Gail spoke about making the most of a visit to State Records at Kingswood.

Gail was the chief indexer on the Bicentennial Project to index the Colonial Secretary's Correspondence, 1788-1825. She has also worked on two key research projects – digital exhibitions showcasing the NSW State archives relating to Lachlan Macquarie in 2010 and celebrating State Records' 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2011. Most recently she has undertaken research for the NSW ANZAC Centenary.

Gail has written a number of guides and searching aids including *Using the Archives Resources Kit*, *State archives relating to teaching English to post-WWII migrants*; *A guide to NSW Archives relating to Federation* and *The Convict Guide*, published in 2006, which received a Mander Jones Award in the category of 'Best finding aid to an archival collection (1) held by an Australian institution, or (2) about Australia' at the 2007 Australian Society of Archivists (ASA) Conference.

Gail gave a most informative power point presentation about State Records NSW at Kingswood. She brought several of the handouts available. A special one is "*Archives in Brief*". It is recommended that users Google "State Records Website" to give

purpose, planning and preparation for a visit. "Quick Links" gives you 126 topics. An archivist is on telephone enquiries, also one on reference desk.

Four files can be requested as a pre-order for a visit, two working days are needed, then when at State Records it could take a while to order another file (realising that there are miles/kilometres of corridors of stored files) – put what you wish to research in 1, 2, 3, etc order. Lockers are provided as no bags can be taken into research area. Gail suggested that you have a coin purse in your pocket, needed for photocopying records. Security is very important; identification is needed.

Gail advised that it is better to request a Reader's Ticket before going to the State Records. Phone if you have lost your reader's ticket and they can check the number.

Many files are closed for more than 30 years; NSW Ministry of Health files are closed for 95 years. Thanks and a gift were given to Gail in appreciation of her talk.

Afternoon tea was enjoyed by the 35+ folk.

Notes by Elaine Turnidge.

### **Treasurer's Update.**

Rallying the Troops Vol. II is still our best seller, followed by RTT Vol. I & Almost Like Home. Our net sales for April totalled \$320. We also sold 1 book bag.

We had 6 single & 4 household members join this month giving us another \$290. Copying, donations, & interest amounted to \$99.

Our tour this month was to Ansto Discovery Centre at Lucas Heights. After expense, this tour netted us \$83 bringing our total income for April to \$797.

Our general office expenses for the month amounted to \$1,879. This included purchasing some additional shelving of \$490 & our annual volunteers 'Thank You' lunch of \$639.

So once again we have a deficit of \$1,082 for April. However, this still leaves us with an overall surplus of \$2,433 to cover our expenses for May & June.

Annet Latham,  
Treasurer.

### **The Tour Desk**

Tour bookings must be made by visiting the Ku-ring-gai Research Centre rooms and



completing the bookings forms. The bookings forms and detailed instructions can be found in the special **GREEN FOLDER**. When booking your tour please be sure to come with the amount required or cheque. Change is not always available.

### **NSW Mounted Police**

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> July, 8.30 am.

Bookings open 30<sup>th</sup> May.

On September 7<sup>th</sup> 1825 the New South Wales Mounted Police unit (the Mounted Unit ) was formed by Governor Brisbane, making it the oldest continuous operational mounted unit in the world. Our tour includes the unit's museum, dating back to the 1800's and we get to 'talk' to the horses . Our hosts suggest that every guest brings with them 2 carrots and two apples – these will help the conversation! We will have our 'special Tour Picnic lunch' at Centennial Park. Cost for the day (Transport/Lunch and Donation) will be \$40.

### **Exploring Ku-ring-gai**

Monday July 11<sup>th</sup>, 8.30am

The next Exploring Ku-ring-gai Tour with vacancies will be on July 11.

Many long term Ku-ring-gai residents have enjoyed this tour led by Jo Harris and discovered places and buildings that they did not know existed. The bus tour covers 98 kilometres around the district and includes a mystery lunch.

### **Willoughby Chatswood Tour - review**

A crystal clear autumn morning on Thursday 12 May was the perfect day to enjoy a tour of Willoughby and Chatswood. Led by Paul Storm, President of the Willoughby District Historical and Museum Society.

We were initially taken to the Harold Reid Reserve on the Sugarloaf overlooking Castle Cove, Castlecrag, Middle Harbour, Seaforth and the city beyond, via the heritage area of Chatswood, where we admired rows of beautifully restored Californian bungalows.

We looked across to the castle built by Sir Henry Willis in 1906 which gave Castlecove its name, and to the site of the old H C Press pleasure grounds. On the foreshore below us we saw two old cottages, formerly used by boat builders in the area.

Paul explained that prior to the building of the Eastern Valley Way, the flat areas of Willoughby and Chatswood had been the home of orchardists and market gardeners. Further east, the topography changed to steep ridges and stony outcrops, not favoured by early builders. This land saw the development of 16 tanneries and many quarries, remnants of which were obvious as our bus drove through cuttings.

We were then taken to Castlecrag, and learnt of Walter Burley Griffin's purchase of 650 acres of land and his formation of the Greater Sydney Development Association. His design for Castlecrag included planning roads that followed the contours of the landscape, triangular spaces for vegetation at intersections, walkways between properties linking streets lower down the hill and a preference for no kerbs and guttering.

The Haven amphitheatre provided a nice spot for a brief sojourn. Then we saw many of the 14 houses designed by Burley Griffin and observed common features of the designs - flat roofs, use of stone as a building feature,



Example of Griffin's design concept

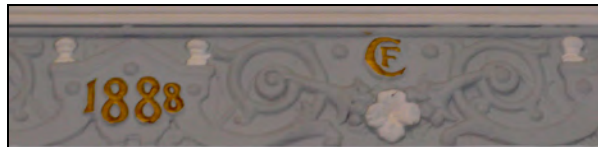
preservation of views and many more features. We learnt about the design features of Eric Nichols's work (the cutout and geometric features) and Marion Mahoney Griffin and her contribution to her husband's work.

We returned to Chatswood driving past Flat Rock Creek and Burley Griffin's incinerator, designed to solve the problems of accumulating rubbish from the growing population. Then past the Channel 9 studios and the site of a vehemently opposed plan for development of many residential units.

A picnic lunch was held in the back garden of the Willoughby District Historical and Museum Society Museum (well worth a visit - open every Sunday afternoon). Paul told us about the survival of many small cottages in the Chatswood area (outside the CBD) as

many were the long time residences of elderly people with their carers (often an unmarried daughter) who had maintained the family home in its original condition.

After lunch we ventured to Windsor Gardens, now a retirement village, but built in 1888 originally as a home "Uriquois" for Frank Coffee.



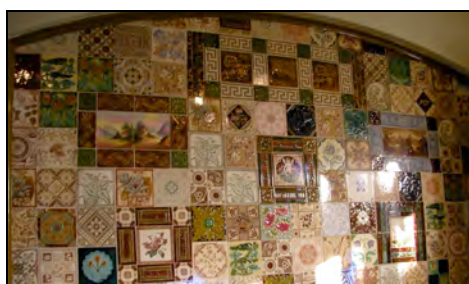
Frieze showing date and initials at Windsor Gardens

We walked through the beautiful dining room and lounge room admiring the size and style of the building and then those who were fit enough were allowed to climb the tower. "Wow" what a view!

We admired the Bunya Pine and the Compass pine (naturally leaning to the north-east) in the gardens.



Then it was in the bus again to visit Paul's own home, one of two built by a sea captain in 1895 with the home next door built as a mirror image for the second wife in 1905. Paul explained different architectural features of the two homes due to the ten years difference in their ages.



Wall of "saved" fireplace tiles in Paul's house

Paul's commentary gave us an excellent insight into the history and development of the area, and the architecture of the homes. It was a great day and we hope to continue our exploits of this suburb on a future trip.

Susan Holmes; photos Margaret Holland

## Special Interest Groups

### The Irish Group

The last Irish SIG meeting was very interesting, looking at various families of

our attendees. The next meeting will be on 10 June at 1.30pm when we will look at using Griffith's Valuation, and the associated maps.

Jenny Joyce

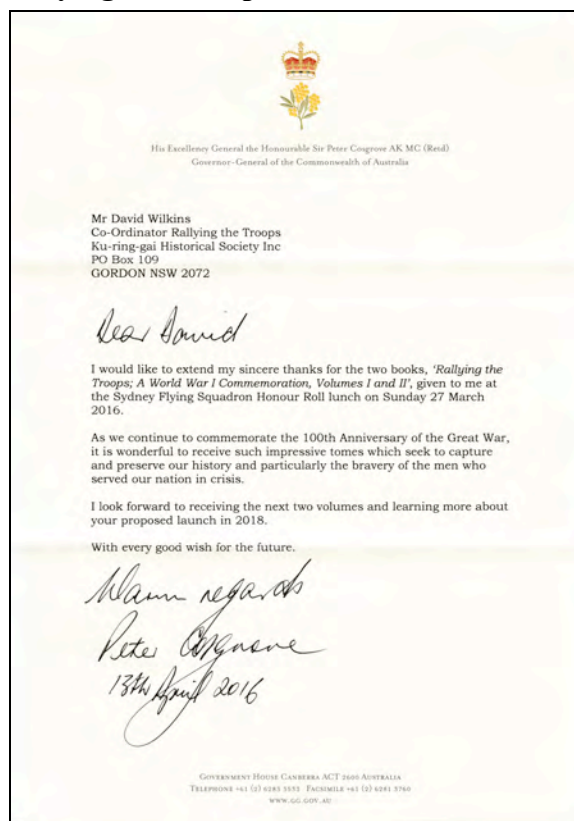
### Apple Macintosh Group

Most of the May meeting was spent helping attendees become familiar with their iPads, and Powerbooks. The group was shown a rather grand photo album made by a member through an Apple service. Next meeting 2.00pm, June 6. Attention will be paid to family tree programs.

### German SIG

The next meeting will be on June 20 at 1.30pm. The agenda will concentrate on the first draft of our group project, "German Ancestors of Ku-ring-gai Historical Society Members", which will be distributed shortly. A modest afternoon tea is also planned (please bring a small plate).

### Rallying the Troops



The distribution of the volumes is reaching the heights. Good work David. Hopefully they will remain in Government House.

More researchers and writers are needed for this project. Contact Kathie Reith to find out what is involved: frithie@netdata.com.au

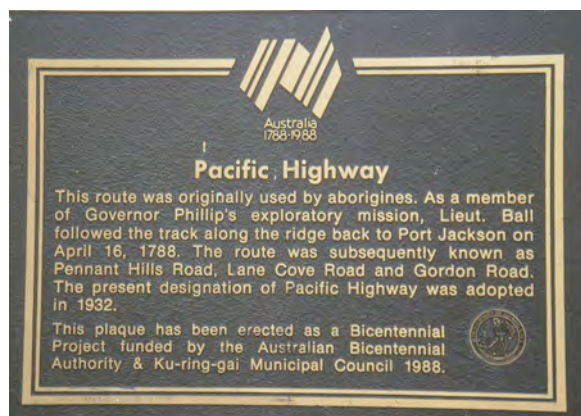
## Lions Club Award

On 15 June, Kathie Reith will be awarded the Lions Club of Ku-ring-gai Community Service Award for 2016 in the special category of Services to History on WWI. Congratulations.

## Where Is?

Answer to last month's "Where is?": One of the pride of lions on the wall pillars of "Hillview" Pacific Highway, Turramurra.

This month's question: Where would you find this Bicentennial plaque?



## Terror in Wahroonga 76 Years Ago

Trawling through Trove usually yields something interesting, particularly when it happens in your own street. That was so when I discovered that there was an explosion in my street, Browns Road, Wahroonga, which before the Comenarra Parkway was constructed, extended east across Fox Valley Road. Just after 8 pm, Saturday 20th January 1940 two brothers, contractors William and Eric Brown and a friend were driving along Browns Road, where Eric lived, when there was a loud explosion behind the car. On inspection they found an 11 inch diameter hole in the road. *Was it attempted murder?* With headlines like this the story was carried in newspapers as far afield as Perth and Cairns.

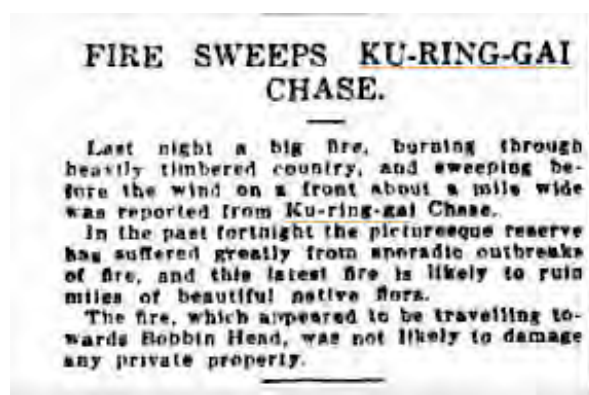
By Tuesday a suspect was arrested and appeared in Hornsby Court. A labourer John James Davis, who had worked for the Browns admitted that he had thrown a plug of gelignite behind Brown's car to frighten him but with no intention of injuring anyone. Detective White said that Davis had made a complaint to the police about the treatment he had received from the Browns. "I had to do something. They had been persecuting me."

Davis said, saying that Jack Brown had spat in his face and that he had had three stitches in his head after being beaten by a man named Johnson. Davis was released on £100 bail. At his trial in March, the jury acquitted Davis at the close of the Crown case after submissions had been made by Mr Clive Evatt, K.C., for the defence, asserting that Davis didn't really mean to harm anyone.

I find it strange that there was no further charge of 'exploding a stick of gelignite on a public road' - the law may have changed since then and perhaps having a top barrister helped.

*Truth (Sydney) Sunday 21 January, 1940 Page 21*

Submitted by Doug Milne



S.M.H. 11 January 1929 p.14.

## New Members of KHS

Welcome to:

Judith Bossard, West Pymble  
Rosemary Butler, Killara  
Sandra Clark, Castle Hill  
Graeme Collins, St Ives  
Ken & Marie Eddy, Point Clare  
Michael & Gillian Walker, St Ives

## Newsletter Deadline

Please send email copy for publication to [editor@khs.org.au](mailto:editor@khs.org.au) as early as possible, but no later than 15<sup>th</sup> of each month.

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## DIARY DATES

### June

Wednesday 1, 10.30am **Tour** to Sydney Conservatorium of Music

Saturday 4, 11.00am **Family History Workshop**: *Research in the UK* with Jean Smith

Saturday 4, 2.00pm **Family History Meeting** followed *From The Netherlands to The Shed*, Speaker: Paul Schiebaan

Monday 6, 2.00pm Apple Macintosh SIG

Saturday 18, 2.00pm **General Meeting** followed by *Across the Great Divides*, Speaker: Susan Boyer

Monday 20, 1.30pm German SIG

### July

Saturday 2, 11.00am **Family History**

**Workshop**: TBD

Saturday 2, 2.00pm **Family History Meeting** followed by *The Treasures of Sydney Harbour*, Speaker Patrick Dodd

Monday 4, 2.00pm Apple Macintosh SIG

Monday 11, 8.30am **Tour**: Exploring Kuring-gai

Saturday 16, 2.00pm **General meeting** followed by TBA

### August

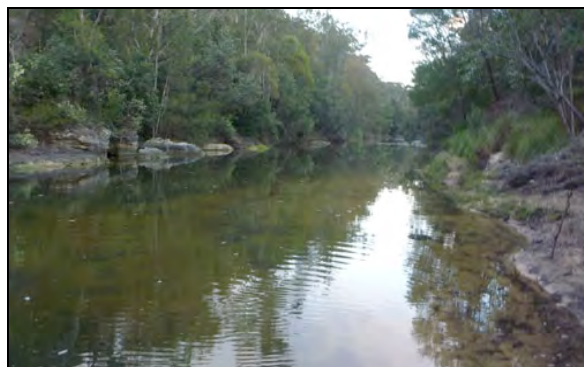
Monday 1, 2.00pm Apple Macintosh SIG

Saturday 6, 11.00am **Family History**

**Workshop**: TBA

Saturday 6, 2.00pm **Family History Meeting**, followed by speaker TBA

Saturday 20, 2.00pm **General Meeting** followed by TBA



Bungaroo Track

## Administration

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	Margaret Holland	9488 5452
	Jennifer Thredgold	9144 6320
	John Wilson	8086 1720
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Welfare Officer	Elaine Turnidge	9899 2635
WW1 Writers & Researchers Group Coordinators		
	Kathie Rieth	frithie@netdata.com.au
	David Wilkins	0411 186752

### Research Centre Hours

The Society's Research Centre is at 799 Pacific Highway, Gordon, adjacent to the Kuring-gai Library. The Centre is open to the public from 10 am to 2 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday (except the first Saturday of each month when members have a meeting).