



# KU-RING-GAI HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

Incorporating the Ku-ring-gai Family History Centre • 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, and the NSW & ACT Association of Family History Societies Inc.

**March 2009**

**Monthly Newsletter**

**Vol. 27 No. 2**

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Rooms: 799 Pacific Highway, Gordon Meetings held in the Gordon Library Meeting Room - 799 Pacific Highway, Gordon

## *Australiana in the Applied Arts*

Paul Storm, a retired school teacher and currently vice-president of the Willoughby Historical Society, spoke on Australiana in the Practical Arts following the General Meeting on Saturday 15 November. Paul had addressed the Family History Group on a former occasion and proved to be a lively and entertaining speaker. He has for many years been fascinated by the adaptation of Australian flora and fauna to the decoration of buildings, as well as a great range of objects in common use.

Paul illustrated his talk by a series of objects, many of which he had rescued from demolished buildings, such as a door knob in the form of a waratah, an enamelled front panel from a gas stove with the 'Early Kooka' emblem and a ceiling decoration with Australian wildflowers in bold relief. Paul made the point that this adaptation of local motifs occurred in the early days of settlement and in New South Wales in particular continued strongly during the 19th century. He referred particularly to Sydney Town Hall, which is a veritable museum of Australian decorative art in the woodwork, stained and etched glass, and on ceilings and tiled floors.

The proliferation of this local art form in the latter half of the 19th century apparently owed much to the influence of Lucien Henry, a French immigrant designer who became enamoured of Australian flora and fauna, and was responsible for much of the decoration in the Town Hall. Many of his designs are on display in the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences. Other public buildings of the Town Hall era, such as the General Post Office, the Colonial Secretary's Office and the Lands Department, designed and built under the supervision of the Colonial Architect, James Barnett, also contain much locally inspired decoration.

The prevalence of this type of art was not replicated to nearly the same extent in Victoria, as evidenced by a comparison of public buildings in Sydney and Melbourne. It is interesting to speculate why there was a different approach to the use of Australiana between the two cities. Perhaps it was because Melbourne, established almost fifty years later than Sydney, was a much more middle class and conservative city, and hence clung more closely to its Anglo artistic affiliations.

The Australian interest in local decorative art led to the manufacture of objects in Britain containing these motifs for export to Australia. Paul exhibited a selection of fireplace tiles with both animal and floral images. The influence of Australiana also became prevalent in printed form for postage stamps and Christmas cards, where local motifs tended to displace the classical images of snow and Christmas trees.

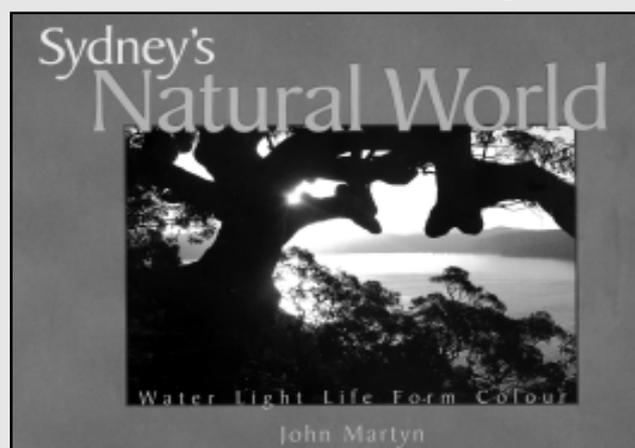
*Based on notes prepared by Don Fifer*

## **Coming Meetings**

**(Gordon Library Meeting Room)**

### **Next Society General Meeting**

**Wednesday 18 March at 7.45 pm**



**John Martyn** will speak on his recently published photo documentary book describing Sydney's natural world of flora, fauna and landscapes, taking into account aspects of local history.

A well-known local conservationist, John and his team at STEP have been responsible for a series of fine walking maps and a field guide in this area.

**Supper will be available.**

**Visitors welcome.**

### **Next Family History Meeting**

**Saturday 7 March**

**11 am:** "De-mystifying Ancestry" - Trevor Whitehead will show and answer questions on how to use this Genealogical Resource Program, that is available in the Library. Session is fully booked unless cancellations (contact Jo 9489 4393).

**2 pm:** General Meeting - Election of Office bearers. Followed by: The "2008 Thursday Group", who will report on their findings since the course.

**Afternoon Tea will be available.**

**Visitors welcome.**

**27-29 March Crookwell, Cowra, Carcoar tour** has two single cancellations. If you are interested in joining this exciting tour, contact Jo on 9489 4393.

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## Research Team Results

Over recent months the Society has had a Research Team to find answers to the increasing number of questions that people outside Ku-ring-gai ask about events, people and places figuring in our history. The Team consists of Kevin Callinan, Max Farley, Jo Harris, Jennifer Harvey and Trevor Whitehead, but needs more workers if it is not to be overwhelmed. Specialised knowledge and skills are not necessary to carry out some of the work required, but it is an opportunity to develop both.

Some of the recent enquiries have included:-

**Q:** *Had there been a Greville family in Gordon?* **SHORT ANSWER:** Not significantly, but a Marion Greville operated the small Rosny School in St Johns Avenue, Gordon. The Greville family was more closely associated with Willoughby Municipality, and is commemorated by Greville Street in West Chatswood.

**Q:** *There is a small headstone in St Johns cemetery carrying the name Catherine Cook who died in 1920 aged 1 year 5 months. Was she connected with the Cook family who gave their name to Cooks Flat near the junction of Fiddens Wharf Road and Lady Game Drive?* **SHORT ANSWER:** No, but it is a mystery as to why this lonely headstone is in St Johns because the records suggest she was buried at Gore Hill.

**Q:** *I now live in Thailand. What do you know about Henry Oliver?* **SHORT ANSWER:** A lot. He was a convict with a grant at the top of Fiddens Wharf Rd. His daughter, Bridget, had an illegitimate child, Charlotte, with our first grantee, the wealthy Daniel Mathew, as the father. In Charlotte's later life she was well cared for by Daniel and by her own husband, John Johnson, the licensee of hotels in the district including the Green Gate.

**Q:** *My family bought Ferguslie at 1189 Pacific Highway in Turramurra in 1940 and I spent my childhood there. What do you know about it?* **SHORT ANSWER:** The renowned architect John Shedden Adam built it for his family soon after his 1897 marriage. It was named after a property in Ayrshire and remains today.

**Q:** *I live in New Zealand. Do you have information about a relative of mine named C Bowes Thistlethwayte?* **SHORT ANSWER:** Certainly. He was a President of Ku-ring-gai Shire Council and worked tirelessly for the community. He sought unsuccessfully to establish the suburb of Bradfield and played an important role in creating the Lane Cove National Park.

## Oral History Course

Jenny Joyce is collecting names for the next course, which we hope to start in the next couple of months.

Call Jenny on 9440 2131 if you would like to join.

Do you have information about the history of Ku-ring-gai that you could share?

Short notes for the Newsletter are invited. We can work with you to adapt your contribution to our Newsletter length, style and format.

Contact Max Farley (mmff2@bigpond.net.au or phone 9499 7113).

## New Computer Resources etc.

The following computer resources have been added since the last Newsletter:-

**Australasian Genealogical Computer Index (AGCI) Volume 3** - contains over 2.5 million names and includes 605,000 death and burial references, 864,000 names from newspapers, 270,000 names from the NSW Government Gazettes 1864-1868 and over 1.2 million NSW shipping arrivals.

**Bega Valley Pioneer Register Pre-Federation** - includes a history of the Bega shire and its settlers plus an alphabetical listing of pioneers.

**1792 Royal Admiral** - Biographies of the people (mainly convicts) on the 1792 voyage of the Royal Admiral.

Link to the newly published web resource: **1841-1925 Index to Victorian Wills, Probate and Administration Records**. The site provides links to digitised copies of these records where they exist.

Link to the **AIF Database** web site - **Australian ANZACS in the Great War 1914-1918** - contains details on the 330,000 men and women who served overseas in the (First) Australian Imperial Force.

*Peter Stehn*

## Recent Acquisitions

A souvenir program of the *Christ Church St Ives 1909-2009 Centenary Celebrations* with a brief history of the area and the church. Significant events at Christ Church are highlighted.

*Orders, Medals and Decorations of Britain and Europe in Colour* by Paul Hieronymussen. Has 450 photographs with a short description of each item.

## Volunteers Needed

- We need people to assist for 2 hour time slots on Thursday 5 March at the Seniors Week Expo St Ives Shopping Centre. If you are able to assist between 10 am and 3 pm please phone Ann (9144 6480) or Jo (9489 4393).
- **Room volunteer** for 4th Thursday each month. Training available. Please phone Ann on 9144 6480.

## Editors of Newsletter

The Newsletter is now in its 27th year, and over its life there have been numbers of editors who have not been publicly recognised for the work they did.

A full listing perhaps would be a bit boring, but in this century, the following have done sterling service:-

- Helen Davies started in 2001 with Beverley Dunstan, then from 2002-2004 was sole editor.
- Claire Schwarz took on the role for 2005, with Kevin Callinan.
- Max Farley was editor from 2006 to 2007, with Kerrin Cook doing the layout.
- Kerrin Cook then became editor, and also did the layout, for the whole of 2008.

Subsequently I've taken on the role of editor, including doing the layout. If you have any comments, criticisms, or suggestions for the Newsletter, please contact me on bob\_barry@optusnet.com.au.

*Bob Barry*

## ***Excuse to visit Brush Farm House***

**Eastwood Patchwork Quilters 2009 Exhibition  
May 1-3 10 am to 4.30 pm**

There is a chance to see a spectacular display of traditional quilts made by the members of Eastwood Patchwork Quilters, while visiting historic Brush Farm House, 19 Lawson St Eastwood.

Brush Farm House was built around 1820 by Gregory Blaxland, one of the first Europeans to find a route across the Blue Mountains. It is one of Australia's oldest and substantial houses remaining from the Macquarie era. It has been restored recently and renovated as an exhibition space by Ryde City Council.

The exhibition will also use additional space in the adjacent Corrective Services Training facility.

Located on bus routes 545 and 550 Chatswood/Macquarie/Eastwood/Parramatta.

Refreshments, light lunches, and quilt and craft stores will be available. Admission \$6.

### ***Display cases***

Do you check regularly to see what is in our display cases? Thanks to the work of Jocelyn Brennan-Horley and Margaret Hoekstra, the displays are changed more frequently than in the past.

They have put a lot of effort into collecting items on Roseville for the current display.

### ***Can you help: Who's Who***

We are missing 1933, 1935, 1944, 1980 editions of Who's Who. If you can help, please call Jo Harris (9489 4393).

### ***Do you have some knowledge of our Local History?***

Our Research Team receives enquiries from people in Australia and overseas wanting information about a wide range of aspects of Ku-ring-gai's history, families, homes and many other things. All the enquiries need researching and a reply. The Team knows that there are lots of members who have special knowledge about some or many of the questions asked.

We would like to hear from any member who would be willing to assist with some of questions that come to our team. If you could help please phone Trevor Whitehead on 9449 6426.

*There is also an opportunity to join an email "list" without cost or obligation, and also make a contribution to the Society's work. The list will be on a trial basis.*

List members will automatically receive an email copy of EVERY enquiry that comes along. The idea is that if you receive an email from us and it strikes a bell in your mind, you can tell us what you know. Otherwise you can ignore it.

We think you will find much of interest just in the enquiries themselves.

To put your name on the list just send a message to the Society on [khs@khs.org.au](mailto:khs@khs.org.au), or phone Trevor Whitehead on 9449 6426 to talk about it.

## **Member Profile - Susan Dunston**

Sue has always found history interesting and enjoyable. She took this interest one step further when she began researching her own family history. This led her to join the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society in 2005. Sue was on the Committee for a year and took on the task of looking after much of the publicity for the Society, a role she continues to perform today.



Sue's family connections with Ku-ring-gai began long ago. Her great-grandmother, Challis Amelia, was the daughter of Thomas Brindley and Helen Matilda Stack, an early Ku-ring-gai family. Challis married Robert Taylor and lived at "Challis" 21 Beaconsfield Parade, Lindfield from 1894. Robert was a Foundation Member and Vice President of the Lindfield Chess and Whist Club. Robert and Challis had 11 children, some of whom attended Gordon Public School. One of their sons, Leonard Stevenson Taylor, is named on the WWI Honour Board at the school. He served in the local 18th Battalion 5th Brigade, and died in 1915 after being wounded in action at the Dardenelles. Challis and Robert are buried in the St John's Anglican Church cemetery at Gordon, along with many of their children.

Their eldest son, Robert Challis Taylor, is Sue's grandfather. He married Ella Winifred Horley in 1909 and from 1934 they lived in the local area, at 10 Napier Street Lindfield. They had three children, Robert Horley, Peter Leonard and Winifred Elaine.

Sue is the eldest child of Gloria and Peter Taylor. Following in the footsteps of her mother and her aunt, Sue attended SCEGGS Darlinghurst. In 1964 the family moved back to the local area (Gordon) to be closer to Peter's family - his parents and sister at Lindfield, and his brother at Roseville.

Sue married Colin Dunston at St John's Anglican Church, Gordon. Colin also grew up in Gordon and attended Gordon Public School. Sue and Colin have three daughters, all of whom attended Ravenswood. The girls are now married (with one living locally at East Lindfield). Sue and Colin have two grandsons, with another grandson due in May.

Sue has been actively involved in Community Groups, such as Sydney Legacy, the National Trust, West Pymble and Gordon Pre-Schools, West Pymble and Gordon Brownies, Ku-ring-gai Swimming Club, St John's Anglican Church, West Pymble and Gordon East Public Schools, SCEGGS Darlinghurst and Ravenswood School for Girls.

Sue enjoys attending the ballet and the opera with her friends, as well as reading, yoga, pilates, walking and swimming. She also helps her husband in his legal practice.

This year Sue hopes that her family history research will add more branches to her family tree - that is, if she is given "a ticket of leave" from babysitting duties.

## *Inauspicious Beginnings, Happy Endings*

We have been reminded many times that in the first half of the 1800s Sydney's northern shore was the "resort of disreputable people" inhabited by "a great set of ruffians". At the top of the list was a roving band of bushrangers under the captaincy of William Geary. Some of its members were virtually full time, others part time. It was known as the Geary Gang and made its mark in Ku-ring-gai on 24 March 1821 by robbing the "Dwelling house of... James William Fish" in what is now Killara. Fish's wife Matilda, his brother-in-law William Booker and sister-in-law Eliza Booker "*being in the said Dwelling house (were) then and there put in Bodily fear and Danger of their lives*". The quotations are from a Record of Proceeding in Parramatta Court House. In August of that year William Geary and a number of his Gang were hung, not just for the Fish offence but also for "*various highway robberies and felonious entries of dwelling houses*".

Our story is not, however, about the late William Geary. It is about two members of his gang, William Baker and Samuel Becket, both of whom came to Australia as convicts. William Baker was destined to renounce lawless ways. He



*Baker cottage on northern side Max Allen Drive. Photo: Mark Mealey*

married and finally settled near the Lane Cove River in West Lindfield, where he became a well respected citizen. As we now know, not all our convicts were evil at heart. Many were the victims of social conditions and abject poverty in England at the time. William proved to be one such.

We had occasion to look again at William Baker's history because one of his descendants wanted information about him. She approached the Society because she knew he had lived in Lindfield. Though she knew William had been a convict she was quite unaware of his membership of the Geary Gang. To her knowledge this had never been mentioned in the family. If some family members knew about it or that he had been a convict, it was not broadcast. Indeed one of his great grandsons was a long-time member of our Society and wrote of the Baker family in the HISTORIAN without even suggesting he was aware of anything other than unblemished respectability.

Times, however, have now happily changed and the convict "stain" is no longer viewed with unabashed shame. When we told our enquirer that her ancestor had been charged as a bushranger, she was not shocked, just extremely interested. Naturally she promptly told her husband about it. Imagine her astonishment when he announced that one of his own ancestors was the Samuel Becket who had also

been a member of the Geary Gang. They were further astonished to find that their ancestors had been before the Courts at the same time charged with the same offences.

From being partners in crime, the Bakers and Beckets are now partners in marriage, with neither having earlier known that the paths of their families had touched 188 years before.

## *A Mathew Mystery*

Daniel Dering Mathew (1787-1856) was an Irish immigrant and the first person to receive a land grant in Ku-ring-gai. He became well known for his Clanville and Rosedale Estates in Roseville and Pymble/St Ives. He was a major timber getter and businessman, but became famous throughout the colony not only for these reasons but for many other things too - as an architect, engineer and surveyor. His life-long marriage to Mary Booker failed to produce offspring, but it is accepted that he fathered an illegitimate daughter, Charlotte, to Bridget Oliver. He left land to Charlotte in his will. She married the Green Gate hotelier, John Johnson, who was the son of Frances Johnson, a wealthy convict woman. For her part, Bridget was the daughter of a convict, Henry Oliver, who had a grant on the highway at Stanhope Rd. Everything about the relationship between Daniel, Bridget and Charlotte seems to have been out in the open.

There are a lot of names in the above paragraph, but it now seems another may have to be added to those with whom Daniel Mathew had a close connection. Trish Thomson, one of our members, has come across the record of an 1849 baptism at Gordon's St Johns Church, which suggests that Daniel fathered a son, also called Daniel. The record carries an "illegitimate" notation. The mother is stated as "Mary", the wife of a "labourer" who worked at Mathew's farm at St Ives. Preliminary investigation makes it likely that Mary was a convict, Mary Ann Tansley, married to another convict, William Finch.

Nothing has so far come to light of what happened to this "son" of Daniel Mathew. Unlike Charlotte, he was not mentioned in his "father's" will. No death record has been found for him in NSW nor any marriage.

None of this would have excited any interest at all after 150 years were it not for the fact that Daniel Mathew was a very wealthy and influential settler about whom many thousands of words have been written with nary a mention of his having fathered any child other than Charlotte. It is a mystery that will not be allowed to rest.

## *Yesterday's Fashions*

This par in *The Pymble News* of 14 May 1908 caught our eye:-

*'The strange spectacle of a respectable member of the Community of Lindfield travelling to Sydney in the 8.30 train without a hat was observed one day last week.'*

Of course it was not his fault, the wind took his hat off for him. Strange that all these Railway accidents happen at Lindfield though, isn't it?

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## ***Australia's First Female "Star"***

Most of us know of the Australian 1919 movie classic *The Sentimental Bloke* based on the narrative verse by CJ Dennis. Movie buffs may have heard of Raymond Longford and Lottie Lyell. But how many know of Roseville's connection with these two people who created the film?

The story came to light when our member, Jocelyn Brennan-Horley, was collecting material about Roseville for a display in one of the display stands outside our Rooms. Another member, Beverley Dunstan, mentioned that an actress, Lottie Lyell, had earlier lived in Roseville's Lord St.

Who was Lottie Lyell? She had been born in Balmain in 1890 and, having learnt elocution in 1906, her family happily entrusted her to the care of Raymond Longford. He was an actor destined to become one of Australia's pioneering screen producers and directors. The two were to become an outstanding creative team and formed the Longford-Lyell organisation. Though Raymond was predominantly the director and Lottie the screen heroine, they both contributed in the production process. They made a number of films with *The Sentimental Bloke* being the best known. Lottie naturally played the role of Doreen.

Raymond had married in 1900, but his Catholic wife refused him a divorce. As he and Lottie could not marry, they were man and wife in everything but the law, and lived together from 1912 until her untimely death from tuberculosis at the age of 35. They spent a large part of their life living with her parents. They came to Roseville in 1919 and Raymond Longford first appears in the 1920 Sands Directory at the house *Ngurang* in Lord St, Roseville. He remained there until 1927. Lottie had died in 1925 and was buried in Northern Suburbs cemetery. He was devastated by his partner's death and never again directed. He was granted a divorce after her death and married again in 1933. When he died in 1959 his wife had the grace to have him buried beside his Lottie.

Both Raymond and Lottie have been individually recognised by entries in the Australian Dictionary of Biography. Lottie is described there as Australia's "first female star and producer".

## ***Vinegar Hill***

March 8 is the 205th anniversary of the 1804 Vinegar Hill rebellion of Irish convicts at Rouse Hill near Castle Hill. It looms large in our history. The name Vinegar Hill was not coined here, however, but imported from Ireland.

The original Vinegar Hill was a "large pudding-shaped" mound of earth outside Enniscorthy, in the Irish County of Wexford. It was where 20,000 Irish rebels faced 10,000 troops on 20 June 1798. They were soundly defeated. The rebels were called "Croppies" because they cut their hair short as the French revolutionaries had done.

Our "Castle Hill Rebellion" had its genesis in the arrival of several hundred Irish convicts after the 1798 Irish Rebellion. They were placed together, somewhat imprudently, at the then new Castle Hill settlement. The rebellion began in the evening of Sunday 4 March 1804. The rebels intended to capture Parramatta and free the prisoners at Parramatta gaol. There was also the notion of joining with other convicts, capturing Sydney, seizing ships and escaping. The scheme failed, mainly as a result of poor organisation, though in reality it had little chance of significant success no matter what. Governor King proclaimed martial law over the Parramatta district and Castle Hill, Seven Hills,

Baulkham Hills, Hawkesbury and Nepean.

Major Johnston and his NSW Corps engaged the rebels in "The Battle of Vinegar Hill", resulting in the death of 15 of the Irish. A further 9 were executed within the next 2 days. The phrase "Vinegar Hill" became the secret password for entry to the Eureka Stockade fifty year later.

## ***A Bridge to Bridge Walk***

Inspired by Max Farley's recent article in this newsletter, I have gone for a walk with some friends along the line of the Lane Cove River from Fullers Bridge to De Burgh's Bridge. Although a little rough at times, and not always suitable for the lame or unstable, the walk was most enjoyable and is recommended.

We headed off from the West Lindfield shops down Bradfield Road to the beginning of a track above Naamaroo Conference Centre near Fullers Bridge. The bush track contours above the eastern bank of the river before plunging down to the water's edge just south of the site of the former Fidden's (or Killara) Wharf. There is now nothing but a sign at this spot where the river is indeed (as Max said) overgrown with bush and weeds making it narrower here than in its heyday. The sign with an historic photo is of interest though; it says:

*Fidden's Wharf became a popular picnic area in the early nineteen hundreds. Many people travelled to the area via the river. This pathway leads to a rock slab, which was the waiting place for people wishing to use a simple timber wharf extended out into the river.*

*Two flat-bottomed "ferries", the Killara and the Native Rose, operated by the Upper Lane Cove Ferry Service brought picnickers up to Fidden's Wharf each Sunday from 1906 to 1913. Rowboats could also be hired at the Figtree Ferry terminus on the lower Lane Cove River, and many people came to camp on the reserve for weeks at a time.*

*Oral history records also indicate that large firms would arrange for their employees to have picnics at the recreation area.*

The caption to the photo, which is the same as that used in Max's article, says it shows one of the flat-bottomed boats and a picnic party at the wharf.

I wonder (and Max may be able to confirm this) whether the camping "reserve" and recreation area referred to on the sign is the current Fidden's Wharf Oval.

We remained on the eastern side of the river, which in places just north of Fidden's Wharf, near the bend at Albert's Bush, has some lovely wide stretches of water giving an indication of its former expanse and beauty. As well, you are surrounded by tranquility, divorced from the city's hustle and bustle, its urgency, its traffic noise, and you only experience the sounds of Currawongs, Kookaburras and Whip-birds with delightful sights of King Parrots, Lorikeets, Galahs, and of course the water birds. The Japanese tourist would go crazy at the sight of the water dragons sunbaking on the river bank.

The once pristine swimming "Blue Hole" just below De Burgh's Bridge is a disappointment, however, as it is now a fraction of its former size and in need of a good flushing from some heavy rains. From here we walked back into West Lindfield suburbia via Terrace Road, and always ones for giving ourselves a little reward after two and a bit hours on shank's pony, we finished at "Frendz" coffee shop.

*David Wilkins*

# FAMILY MATTERS

## February Meeting

### 11 am Session

28 members attended the morning session when Jo Harris demonstrated the following new resources:-

- Bega Valley Pioneers (Pre-Federation). We looked for Jensen, Bown, Robbie, Gowing, Davidson, Tooth, Wren.
- AGCI Vol. 3 published Dec. 2008. Names sought were Shegog, Bratby, Smith. We also looked at Vols. 1 and 2.
- 1788-1810 Deaths, Burials and Headstones NSW and Norfolk Island. Looked at children of the 'Royal Admiral' 1792, Henry Pickett 1806, Catherine Crowley 1800, George Laycock 1792.
- 1793-1824 Old Registers of Assignments and Other Legal Instruments.

### 2 pm Meeting

About 38 were present, meeting chaired by Jo. On this day in 1788 the Colony of NSW was officially proclaimed.

### News

Murrin transcripts are now \$17, after many years with no price increase.

Victoria now makes a charge to look at BDMs on internet.

### Book Reports

- Max Farley spoke of a book titled *Growing Up at Government House*.
- Sue Ryerson reported on *Marine Officer's Convict Wife*
- Jo advised that a volunteer was needed to be a 'book tidier' - see Ann Barry

### Reports

Various members gave reports on:

- Family reunion at Prospect Dam
- Three talks on Australia Day - one was the Crystal Palace
- Degas Exhibition at Canberra, and wonderful new Portrait Gallery
- Involvement with launch of Jonathan King's book on the Western Front
- Cemetery Matters
- Jo wants to borrow cemetery transcripts
- Are you a taphophile? - excessive interest in graves and cemeteries

Our guest speaker Bill Greenhalgh gave a well-researched and entertaining talk on the 'Life and Times of Dr Thomas Parmeter and His Family'.

Dr Parmeter was many things during his life, bigamist, doctor, landowner, dramatist, scientist, convict, confidante of influential people, and more.... He was born 1790 in Gosport, Hampshire, England, joined his local regiment, went to war in France as a "dresser" (of wounds), met a lady who claimed to be a Duchess, married her, was transported in 'Fanny' for bigamy. He wrote a letter to Governor Macquarie in June 1816 appealing for better treatment.

The Governor agreed, knew more surgeons were needed. Thomas was put on the official payroll and given a job at the Castle Hill Lunatic Asylum.

Jane Meredith became the housekeeper at the Asylum and had numerous children with Thomas. Jane, a domestic servant, had been transported for stealing, made friends with sailor John Brown, was sent to the Parramatta Female Factory, had a baby which died.

Thomas had many conflicts with Dr Suttor who was in charge, and went to Windsor becoming the second GP in

Australia (Dr William Bland was the first). He was granted land at Warkworth in the Hunter Valley where he was the first settler, and named the property *De Quirosville* after the Portuguese navigator. Dr Suttor was given a grant at Bathurst.

Dr Parmeter died at Warkworth in 1836, but his gravesite is unknown. Jane later married John Rotton and had more children.

Bill grew up in Warkworth and is writing a book "Warkworth via Singleton". A vote of thanks and book presentation was given by Jacquie Van Bergen.

The raffle of pre-loved books was won by Carolyn Darby who chose "Unsung Heroes and Heroines of Australia".

*Notes by Stella Green*

## Sydney's First Street Posting Boxes

(Commonly referred to as the Bell Type Letter Receiver)

My wife's (Joan King) mother Vera Bate (nee Hinder) told of our ancestor Robert Bubb, who had a foundry in early Sydney. This started my research when we found a "Letter Receiving Box" at Goulburn, with an inscription of the maker: "BUBB & SON".

Robert Bubb, born 23 Jun 1805 in Avening, Gloucestershire, England, migrated to Australia and established a foundry in Sydney. The company changed names numerous times - originally Bubb & Temperley, which was recorded in Sands Directory - in existence by 1855. Later it became Bubb & Son, and then Bubb & Rees - "an exceptionally prolific manufacturer".

Bubb & Temperley's Victoria Iron Foundry was located at 10 Victoria Place, Sydney (the firm is listed in the Sands Directory until 1880). I believe this was in the Balmain area in the vicinity of the present Victoria Road.

Extract Australian Street Posting Boxes (from Internet)

*The first iron letter receivers in New South Wales were installed in the Receiving Houses of Sydney and its suburbs in 1856. The first was installed at Circular Quay. Others replaced some of the earlier Receiving Houses. These boxes were designed by T. W. Levinge of the New South Wales Postmaster General's Department and initially manufactured by Robert Bubb and Son of Pymont. Based upon a Belgian design, the boxes were circular with a Crown mounted upon the dome. The Crown was supported by "leaves".*

*An amendment to the NSW Postal Act in 1867 proscribed the severe maximum penalty of £50 to those convicted of damaging or destroying letter boxes.*

From Powerhouse Museum Collection Search 2.4

*"The first street posting boxes were cast in bronze by the Bubb & Sons foundry at Pymont in 1856 and soon*



## BUILT HERITAGE

became widespread, even being exported to New Zealand. It is interesting to note that they were not painted in pillar box red until the 1870s. The posting slots were vertical to facilitate posting a letter from horseback. The collection contains many later types of posting and pillar boxes including emergency boxes made during World War 2 in wood instead of metal and one of the boxes from Mt Kosciusko”.

**Boxes known still in existence:** The Rocks, Sydney, Goulburn and East Maitland. I understand there could be one still in existence in Forbes.

**Goulburn:** The box at Goulburn is located outside 52 Grafton Street. It was installed in 1859. A plaque adjacent to the box states: “This letter receiver was installed in 1859, designed by T.W. DeVince of the Post Office Department and made by Robert Bubb’s Victoria Foundry in Sydney. Commonly referred to as the Bell Type Letter Receiver. The design is based on the French type then in use minus the elaborate scroll work. The Posting Slot was so positioned to enable persons on horseback to post a letter without dismounting.”

**Maitland:** A letter dated 1 November 1968, from the District Postal Manager’s Office, Maitland to Mr Bubb, described a “Pillar Box” built by Bubb & Son, located in High Street, Maitland outside the Mercury Newspaper Office.

An article in the Maitland Mercury dated 30 January 1986: *On Wednesday 29 January, 1986, a collision between a coal truck and a small van in High St., Maitland, levelled a set of traffic lights and an old mail box. The truck smashed through the Hunter St traffic lights, mounted the footpath in front of the Mercury office, knocked over the century-old mail box and stopped just short of the Mercury building.*

The historic mail box was the last of its kind operating in the area and was completely demolished in the accident. It had sat on the site outside the Mercury for more than 100 years and was one of the few “Bell style receivers” used during the horse and buggy days. The box, which was originally designed so that people could post letters on horseback, was later converted for pedestrian use. The only piece of the box left whole was the “door”, with *Bubb & Son* imprinted on it. It will be kept in the historical museum.

The only other ‘Bell’ style receiver in the Maitland area is located at Melbourne St., East Maitland, and has been preserved by the National Trust.

### Postage Stamp

In Nation Stamp Week 1980, a 22c Postage Stamp featured the one and only letter box operating in the Sydney Area. A feature in the Sun Herald July 2000, described the letter receiver as located in the Rocks Area, and still being used.

*Alan King*

### Volunteers needed

Do you have some spare time?

Are you able to help with small research projects, typing, filing, or database entry? Perhaps at home? Just a few hours per month could be very helpful!

Please contact Ann Barry

(a.barry@optusnet.com.au or 9144 6480).

*Killiecrankie*, at 1 Maclaurin Parade Roseville, is listed as a heritage item on Ku-ring-gai Council’s LEP. It is a fine example of the Art Deco designs of architects Crick and Furse, who are renowned for their theatre designs of the 1930s.



*Killiecrankie* was built for medical practitioner Farquhar William Fraser and his wife Violet in 1938. The site was originally part of the curtilage of *Girrawheen*, the Gosman family home built c.1896, later owned by the Ashcrofts, and in 1919 purchased by pottery manufacturer Robert Fowler (1873-1928). In 1938 Fowler’s widow Florence sold ‘part’ of her property to Violet Kathleen Fraser. Ku-ring-gai Council resumed the eastern ‘part’ containing the Fowler house and tennis court - now containing Roseville Memorial Club and the War Memorial Garden Park.

Violet Fraser nee Hoskins (1897-1976) had married medical practitioner Farquhar William Fraser (1897-1979) in 1925. Farquhar graduated in 1922 from the Medical School of Sydney University. From 1922-1923 he was Resident Medical Officer at Royal Prince Alfred Hospital. After their marriage the Frasers moved to Alpha, Queensland, a small town halfway between Rockhampton and Longreach. They had returned to Sydney by 1937 when Farquhar was appointed to the Department of Public Health of NSW. In later years Farquhar was in charge of the Serological Laboratory, and a director of the Pathological Laboratory.

On 27 September 1938 architects Guy Crick and Bruce W Furse let the contract to build *Killiecrankie* to F Tuite, of Edgecliff. The house was to cost £1990. Crick and Furse had been in partnership since c.1934. The partnership lasted until 1940; during this period it is believed they designed up to 30 new theatres and remodelled about 50 existing theatres. At the time they designed *Killiecrankie*, their projects included theatres in Glen Innes, Ipswich, Clovelly, Artarmon, Adelaide and Sydney (Theatre Royal), and homes in Avalon, Drummoyne, Coogee and Ramsgate.

In 1938 they remodelled the King’s Theatre in Lindfield, and in 1941 Guy Crick did alterations to the King’s Theatre in Gordon. Their projects in Ku-ring-gai included remodelling the ballroom at Berith Park in Wahroonga, new residences in Killara, Pymble and Lindfield, and extensions to the Pymble Golf Club. Projects by Crick included residences in Wahroonga, Pymble, Roseville and East Lindfield.

It appears that Violet and Farquhar Fraser lived in *Killiecrankie* only until about 1943. In November 1945 Violet Fraser sold the house to Roseville company director Geza Mandel and his wife Irene.

*Kathie Rieth*

## Copy for Newsletter

General copy for publication should be lodged with the Editor, Bob Barry (at bob\_barry@optusnet.com.au), as **early as possible** but no later than the 7th of the month (except November and December), unless otherwise arranged. Copy lodged before that date **will receive preference**, all things being equal. Copy is to be submitted on the understanding that the Society has editing rights and that readers can reproduce it in whole or part with acknowledgement. Material should preferably be in electronic form.

## New Members

We are very pleased to welcome to membership:

Roger Rigby      Wairoonga  
Barbara Hogan   St Ives

We know they will enjoy their time with the Society and that membership will open the door to many friends and activities of interest.

## Family History Web Sites: Introduction

Several members have asked for recommended Web sites for family history research. There are several that provide a gateway to numerous other sites relevant to family historians. Two of the best are Cora Web ([www.coraweb.com.au](http://www.coraweb.com.au)) and Cyndis List ([www.cyndislist.com](http://www.cyndislist.com)). Cora Web is an Australian gateway site but has worldwide coverage. Cyndis List also provides worldwide coverage and has a slight American bias. Links to both sites are provided on the Society page of our Research Resources Intranet application. These sites are regularly updated and should be your first port of call.

The GENUKI site ([www.genuki.org.uk](http://www.genuki.org.uk)) is a good starting point for anyone with ancestors from the UK and Ireland. Links to this site are on the England and Wales page, plus the Ireland page, of our Research Resources.

The Family Search site ([www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org)) on-line genealogy service by the Latter Day Saints is a good site for American records, the International Genealogical Index (IGI), as well as some UK parish records and the British 1881 Census. However, before using the IGI you should understand how IGI Batch Numbers are organised.

Hugh Wallis' excellent web site (<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~hughwallis/IGIBatchNumbers.htm>) explains how to get the most from IGI Batch Numbers. Links to both these sites are on the Society page of our Intranet.

*Peter Stehn*

## Research Centre Hours

The Society's Research Centre is at 799 Pacific Highway, Gordon, adjacent to the Ku-ring-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). It is closed over the Christmas period and on public holidays.

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## Diary Dates

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>Thur 5 Mar</b>  | 10.00-3.00 Seniors Week at St Ives. Volunteers needed to man stall.                                    |
| <b>Sat 7 Mar</b>   | Family History Meeting<br>11 am "De-mystifying Ancestry"<br>2 pm General Meeting "2008 Thursday Group" |
| <b>Mon 9 Mar</b>   | 11.00 International Women's Day at Council Chambers.   |
| <b>Sat 14 Mar</b>  | Seniors and Community Living Information Day at Uniting Church Turramurra. Cost \$5.                   |
| <b>Sun 15 Mar</b>  | 2.00-5.00 National Trust Gordon Walk.  |
| <b>Mon 16 Mar</b>  | 10.00 Seniors Week - Family History Talk. Book with Council.   |
| <b>Wed 18 Mar</b>  | 7.45 pm Society General Meeting<br>Speaker - John Martyn<br>"Sydney's Natural World"                   |
| <b>Fri 20 Mar</b>  | 10.30 am "2008 Friday Group" reunion.  |
| <b>Tues 24 Mar</b> | 10.00 (meet at 9.45) "Historic Walk of Gordon" - book with Council.                                    |
| <b>27-29 Mar</b>   | Crookwell, Cowra, Carcoar tour.  |

## Administration

|                       |                    |           |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| President             | Ann Barry          | 9144 6480 |
| Vice Presidents       | Jo Harris          | 9489 4393 |
|                       | Jennifer Harvey    | 9489 6390 |
| Treasurer             | Doug Milne         | 9487 2853 |
| Secretary             | Jacquie van Bergen | 9403 3044 |
| Immed. Past President | Kevin Callinan     | 9983 1525 |
| Committee members     | Helen Davies       | 9498 3754 |
|                       | Jenny Joyce        | 9440 2131 |
|                       | Graham Lewis       | 9416 5818 |
|                       | Peter Stehn        | 9489 9488 |
|                       | Trevor Whitehead   | 9449 6426 |

### Appointees

|                           |                            |           |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|-----------|
| Accessions                | Jennifer Wallin            | 9983 1871 |
| Book Sales                | Carol Rodgers              | 9488 8789 |
| Computer Systems Manager  | Peter Stehn                | 9489 9488 |
| Curator                   | Jennifer Harvey, Ann Barry |           |
| Family History Leader:    | Jo Harris                  | 9489 4393 |
| Family History Committee: | Lyn Done                   | 9449 7715 |
|                           | Stella Green               | 9449 4388 |
|                           | Jean Smith                 | 9498 4468 |
|                           | Elaine Turnidge            | 9899 2635 |
|                           | Trevor Whitehead           | 9449 6426 |
| Historian Editors         | c/- Jennifer Harvey        | 9489 6390 |

with Kathie Rieth, John King, Bob Ross

|                            |   |           |
|----------------------------|---|-----------|
| Newsletter - Editor        | Bob Barry   | 9144 6480 |
| Newsletter - Local History | Max Farley  | 9499 7113 |
| Publicity                  | Sue Dunston   | 9498 8720 |
| Public Officer             | Helen Davies  | 9498 3754 |
| Research Team              | Kevin Callinan, Max Farley, Jo Harris,<br>Jennifer Harvey, Trevor Whitehead |           |
| "SNAP" Co-ordinator        | Helen Davies  | 9498 3754 |
| Speakers Programme         | Beverly Dunstan   | 9419 8526 |
| Volunteers Roster          | Heather Davidson  | 9144 1844 |