



# 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.

**January/February 2009 Monthly Newsletter Vol. 27 No. 1**

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

## *The Upper North Shore in World War I*

The address to the General Meeting on Wednesday 15 October was given by Tony Cuneen, local secondary school teacher, speaking about the subject of his book, *The Upper North Shore in World War I - A Great War for Small Towns*, which is one of three books he has written on the local effects of war on north shore suburbs.

The upper north shore was still largely rural in 1914 and contained a mixed population of orchardists and small farmers, as well as a fair sprinkling of middle class families who had built substantial houses following the opening of the railway in 1890. There was a general feeling of pride in the area and like many areas throughout Australia, young men were eager to enlist in the armed forces in the early months of the war. Great enthusiasm was evident at the farewell ceremonies, with patriotic speeches and the waving of flags, both locally and as the troops marched through the city prior to embarkation.

The first fatality from the area was Brian Pockley, who had enlisted as a medical officer and was killed as a member of the expeditionary force sent to New Guinea to neutralise the German forces there. Incidentally one of the later fatalities on the western front in 1918 was his brother John. Tony gave a brief account of the experiences of other soldiers from the area. One particular example of a very young man joining up will be familiar to those associated with Tulkiyan. William Donaldson, who was seventeen when the war broke out, must have enlisted soon after his eighteenth birthday and became a gas casualty.

On the home front, women were actively supporting the war effort through the Red Cross as VADs, nurses, and in small local groups who knitted woollen articles and sent comfort parcels to troops. One group was credited with dispatching 17,000 garments of various sorts in 1917.

As the casualties mounted in 1915 and 1916 there was pressure from the government to introduce conscription. But this was opposed in two referenda, so recruitment was encouraged by 'snowball' marches, whereby a group of prospective recruits marched towards the city gathering additional members in towns and suburbs as they went.

Quite early in the war, local effort was directed to the erection of memorials to those who served, which led to the observance of Anzac Day and the ubiquitous monuments which are such a feature of our cities, suburbs and towns. After the initial excitement, reaction to the return of the troops was somewhat subdued as the men who had suffered so much struggled to adjust to their new situation and resume their lives.

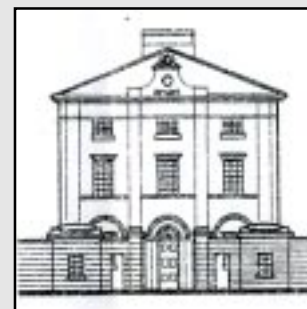
*Don Fifer*

## Coming Meetings

(Gordon Library Meeting Room)

### Next Society General Meeting

Wednesday 18 February at 7.45 pm



**Guest Speaker  
Patricia Hale  
will speak on  
"Four Convict Sites"**

Historian **Patricia Hale** of the Heritage Branch NSW Dept of Planning will speak on a current project nominating eleven Australian convict sites for World Heritage Listing.

Each of the sites has been chosen to illustrate an aspect of the broader experience of the greater majority of convicts rather than solely focussing on the often infamous secondary punishment establishments.

Come along and hear which four NSW sites have been chosen and why they are of outstanding universal value.

**Supper will be available.  
Visitors welcome.**

### Next Family History Meeting

Saturday 7 February

**11 am: New resources, including:**

- Bega Valley Pioneers.
- AGCI 3.
- 1788-1810 Deaths, Burials and Headstones New South Wales and Norfolk Island.
- 1793-1824 Old Registers of Assignments and Other Legal Instruments. (A unique insight into New South Wales' early history. This is a major new resource.)

**2 pm: "The Life and Times of Dr Thomas Parmeter and His Family"** with speaker Bill Greenhalgh. The Australian "Who do you Think You Are" team may be including Dr Parmeter's family in the 2009 series.

**Afternoon Tea will be available.  
Visitors welcome.**

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## **Vale Don Fifer**

It is with deep regret that we report the sudden passing of our Secretary Dr Don Fifer.

Not long after joining the Society, Don volunteered to undertake the role of Secretary.

However, he was much more than simply the Secretary - as time progressed, so did Don's involvement. He indexed the Newsletters, actively undertook leadership of the Oral History program, was an active member of the Research team, objectively recorded the monthly speaker's contribution (which was incorporated in the Newsletter) and coordinated articles to ensure sufficient material was available for the monthly Newsletter.

Don was also active in other community organisations, including Tulkiyan, where he had become a Tour Guide. It will come as a surprise to many that Don was so active notwithstanding his 88 years. It will also surprise many to know that after a long and successful career as a Scientist, Don completed a Masters Degree and later a PhD in Australian History.

The Society has conveyed our deepest sympathy to Dorothy and his family.

## **Our Latest HISTORIAN**

In December members were mailed the latest copy of the HISTORIAN. Please allow us to express our pride both as to its content and production quality. It is over 36 years since the introduction of Vol. 1 No. 1, which consisted of eight typewritten pages with a light cardboard cover. In the intervening years, a number of members have been responsible for its editorship, and each has made a contribution to lifting its standard to the excellence it displays today. As a result, its volumes now contain a remarkable amount of indexed reference material about our local history.

We are all indebted to the editorial team of John King, Kathie Rieth and Bob Ross, led by our dedicated Vice President Jennifer Harvey, who devotes hundreds of daylight and evening hours to the task. It is gratifying too, to see that a growing number of Society members are preparing articles and undertaking the considerable amount of essential research involved. It is gratifying also, to see that there is a growing team of members and others who work behind the scenes helping with typing, proofreading and all the many other tasks which have to be carried out to convert submitted copy to the printed pages of a book.

All members should be proud to be associated with a Society that produces such a wonderful publication.

## **Changes to Committee**

New Vice President - Jennifer Harvey, New Secretary - Jackie van Bergen, and two new committee members - Graham Lewis and Trevor Whitehead, have been appointed.

## **Oral History**

We will be running another oral history course in the near future, and Jenny Joyce is taking names of interested people ([jenny.joyce@writeme.com](mailto:jenny.joyce@writeme.com) or 0404 473 767).

## **New Computer Resources etc.**

The following new resources have been added to our intranet since the publication of the last newsletter:

- **1788-1810 Deaths, Burials and Headstones New South Wales and Norfolk Island** - an easy-to-use web-style application.
- **Australian Referendums** - contains historical and statistical data on the 44 national referendums held between 1906 and 1999.
- **Gold Leases** - Registers of Leases of Auriferous (yielding gold) Lands. Seven documents covering Complete NSW listing, plus the mining districts of Bathurst, Lachlan, Mudgee, New England and Clarence, Peel and Uralla, Tumut and Adelong.
- First two volumes of the **Registers of Discharge of Seamen New South Wales** covering the years 1859 to 1878.
- List of **Early Church Record Codes** used by the New South Wales Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages on their web site and in the DOS BDMs.
- Link to the **Tasmanian Convict Records Online** - The records on this web site document both the system and the lives of over 75,000 individuals.
- The online **NSW BDM Registers** were updated to 1908, 1958 and 1978.

The problem with using the "Related" button in **AGCI Volume 1** has been fixed. There are now no known issues with the AGCI Volume 1 search program.

Also, the computer named "IBBITSON" has been completely rebuilt and should be more reliable and responsive.

*Peter Stehn*

## **Sharing History**

After the last issue we received an interesting note from our member, John Wilson, about the naming of Roseville. You'll see comment on the topic in this month's HISTORY NOTES. There must be many members who have information, or even questions, about the history of Ku-ring-gai they would like to share. As this is a Newsletter, we do not have space for long items more suited to the HISTORIAN but don't let that faze you. We would work with you adapting your contribution to our Newsletter length, style and format. You can easily contact Max Farley on 9499 7113 or [mmff2@bigpond.net.au](mailto:mmff2@bigpond.net.au).

## **Survey**

A survey is included in this edition of the Newsletter.

The Society has thousands of research resources acquired over many years. Our resources are in many forms: books, photographs, maps, plus numerous computer-based data sources. These assets have been acquired with the members' interests in mind, but without wide consultation.

The aim of the survey is to allow members the opportunity to provide input on their relative priorities and preferences, to guide future resource acquisitions.

Please return completed forms to the SURVEY box in the rooms.

## **Christmas Raffle winner**

Our Christmas Raffle was won by Ann Ronfeldt.

## Australia Day QUIZ

This month we celebrate Australia's 221st birthday. This month's Quiz gives us an opportunity to check on how much each of us really knows of our country's beginnings.

- Q1. Was Captain Cook the first European to discover Australia?
- Q2. Was Captain Cook impressed by the size of Sydney Harbour and its ability to give shelter to a large fleet?
- Q3. Was 26 January 1788 the day Governor Phillip entered Botany Bay with the First Fleet?
- Q4. How did Australia gain its name?
- Q5. Who was the first locally-born person to circumnavigate Australia?

(Answers page 8.)

## NSW Heritage Volunteers Award

Friends of Ku-ring-gai Environment Inc (FOKE) have been recognised for recording Ku-ring-gai's built heritage.



Valerie Bray, Kathy Cowley, The Hon Kristina Keneally MP, Katrina Pickles, Anne Carroll at the Awards ceremony

FOKE won the award for its 400 page photographic record entitled "A Photographic Record of Sites and Streetscapes in Ku-ring-gai Impacted by LEPS 194/200/202/204/207 Residential Development Stage 1."

A copy of this record, in hard and digital forms, has been presented to our Society.

## Recent Acquisitions

**Handley 1962-2008** The History of Pymble Turrumurra Kindergarten 21 Handley Avenue Turrumurra. Contains class lists with lots of class photographs, groups, teachers and staff.

**The Dictionary of Genealogy** by Terrick V H Fitzhugh Third Edition. Researching English descent? Contains descriptions and locations of virtually all the historical records likely to be used. What is a "Knocknobbler"? Puzzled by a term, check this book.

**Gathering Strength: Brigidine College St Ives 1954-2004** catalogues the growth and development of the school with lots of photographs. Note the school assembly photograph of the 2004 Golden Jubilee Year, with all the staff and students listed.

**The Book of the Bairds** From Kirkconnel and Gumnock, Scotland. An illustrated family history from 1743 until 2008 by Kerrin Cook. Interested in the Baird, Ferguson, Black, McLanachan or McKerrow families?

## Member Profile - Trevor Whitehead

Trevor was born in Deniliquin, NSW. As a child, his family moved to Grafton, Stockton, Cessnock and Maitland, where he attended Maitland Boys High. In 1967, he graduated from the University of Newcastle with first-class honours in Economics. At first, he was a transport economist for the Commonwealth Bureau of Roads in Melbourne before taking a position as a teaching fellow at Macquarie University. In 1972, he had a wonderful year working as a consultant on a World Bank feasibility study in Sumatra. After returning to Sydney, he completed an Honours Masters Degree in 1976, with a thesis focused on measuring the value of savings in travel time.



Later, he specialized in macroeconomics, an area in which he taught for many years. In the early 1980s, he developed computer simulation policy games for the teaching of macroeconomics using mainframe computers and published articles in this area. For 10 years from 1987, he was an adjunct lecturer at both the University of Sydney's and UNSW's Graduate Schools of Management. Using his own computer games, he introduced graduate business students to the basics of macroeconomic policy.

As an academic economist, he has contributed to community service in various ways. He represented Macquarie University on the HSC Economics Syllabus and Examination Committees, and was chairperson of both for 15 years. From 1991 to 2000, he held the challenging position of Director of Undergraduate Studies of the Economics School at Macquarie. He derived much satisfaction assisting students experiencing difficulties with their studies. In this capacity, he was an active member of several policy committees and contributed to the development and implementation of new bachelor degree programs.

Trevor is married to Carol, a social worker and community health services manager. They have two daughters - Bronwen who works for a Law Firm in Vienna and represented Australia at the 1998 World Swimming Championships, and Meghan who is a graphics designer specialising in visual displays for exhibitions.

As a lad, he was a keen cricketer and was once dismissed by a 15 year-old Doug Walters "hit-wicket" whilst scoring a boundary. In recent times, he has been a volunteer and official in local swimming clubs.

His interests are wide. He is an enthusiastic bush walker and enjoys travel. He plans to combine both in 2009 by completing the 190-mile Coast-to-Coast Walk in Northern England. He appreciates good music and concerts, and reads biographies, history and crime novels for relaxation.

He began tracking down his family roots on retiring 18 months ago, and completed the KHS Family History Course in mid-2008. He admires the talents and skills of so many society members, and enjoys the happy atmosphere of KHS. He hopes to contribute by assisting others to learn how to find out about their families and the times in which their ancestors lived.

# HISTORY NOTES

## ***Gordon's Little Acre***

One of Ku-ring-gai's most historic sites lies within an acre of land near the centre of Gordon but is unrecognised by most of the thousands who pass within metres of it daily. On the other hand there would be few Ku-ring-gai residents not familiar with the extensive grounds of Gordon's Ravenswood Girls School on the eastern side of the Highway.

*Gordon's Little Acre* of history lies within those grounds and took as its starting point the appointment of Miss Elizabeth Edwards as the first postmistress of the new *Lane Cove Post Office* in 1860.

*Lane Cove Post Office?* Yes, because the district was then known as Lane Cove and did not become Gordon until the Post Office was renamed to be the Gordon Post Office in 1879. The change became necessary to avoid confusion with the district to the south which was coming to be known as Lane Cove itself. The Post Office was at the rear of the home Miss Edwards shared with her mother Mrs Eliza Edwards. The mother had been Elizabeth Pymble, a daughter of the original Robert Pymble, and had married a convict, David Edwards in Hobart in 1842. She had two children, J G Edwards, born in 1843, and Elizabeth born in 1845 after which she returned to Sydney but without her husband. The boy was destined to become known as "The Father of Killara" and Elizabeth was to be the youthful postmistress at the age of 14 years. Of course her mother was with her.

This home, which housed the first Gordon Post Office, remains in existence as one of the oldest, if not the oldest, buildings in Kuring-gai and one of our



*Gordon's First Post Office*

heritage treasures. It is in the Ravenswood grounds just two or three metres from the Highway. Over recent years the growth of a hedge in front of it unfortunately obscures it from public view.

*Gordon's Little Acre* was not only the location of the Post Office. It was also the site of the first Wesleyan Chapel on the north side of the harbour. It came about in 1855 when a Chapel, called the Lane Cove Chapel, was opened on a quarter acre of land a few metres immediately south of the Post Office. This Chapel was built very largely as a result of the energy of William McKeown who had immigrated to Australia in 1841. He had become an orchardist at Stoney Creek (Mona Vale) Road in 1845. The chapel was "a stone structure, with narrow leadlight windows". Two rooms at the rear formed a teacher's residence and the Chapel used as a denominational day school.

The Chapel continued in use until a new church was

opened in Mona Vale Road in Pymble in 1879. From that point on the old Chapel "fell upon evil days", as a reverend gentleman was to put it. It seems that it was used, with a wooden shed built beside it, as a bakery, motor engineering business and produce store before being demolished in 1923.

*Gordon's Little Acre* has yet another claim to historic fame. The denominational day school at the rear of the Chapel became a public school in 1871. It was known as the Lane Cove Public School and was under the control of the Council of Education. The premises were rented from the Wesleyans but were soon deemed to be too small. A new building was opened in 1877 and the school moved there, still as the Lane Cove School. The name was changed to Gordon Public School in 1885. It is in this heritage building that the Ku-ring-gai Historical Society now has its Rooms.

Though the historic importance of *Gordon's Little Acre* is known to few of our residents, there are at least two marks of recognition, though the one referring to the Post Office is now invisible behind its hedge. There is, however, a pillar readily visible from the highway reading;

### **ON THIS SPOT**

**THE FIRST WESLEYAN METHODIST CHAPEL  
ON THE NORTHERN SIDE OF THE HARBOUR  
WAS OPENED IN 1855**

**A HOUSE OF WORSHIP UNTIL 1879  
IT WAS DEMOLISHED IN 1923**

**THIS PILLAR - ERECTED 1949  
IS BUILT OF  
STONE FROM THE FOUNDATIONS**

*(The phrase "Gordon's Little Acre" is of course appropriately adapted from Erskine Caldwell's 1933 novel "God's Little Acre".)*

## ***MacCabe Corner***

Back in May 2006 our Newsletter told the story of a surveyor, Francis Peter MacCabe (1817-1897), who was the grandfather of our past President Michael MacCabe (President 1991-1994). In 1988 Michael had been invited to unveil a plaque to his grandfather at the Port Curtis Historical Village near Gladstone Qld. Then, in 2003, he unveiled a monument at Gladstone to mark the 150th Anniversary of the first permanent settlement there in 1853. Francis MacCabe had led the settlement party.

Michael's grandfather conducted a number of surveys for the NSW Surveyor-General, Sir Thomas Mitchell, and his professional duties took him far afield including surveying the rivers of Western NSW.

Michael now tells us that on 6 September 2008 he was invited to attend the unveiling of a large descriptive plaque to his grandfather in the presence of the Surveyors General of NSW, Victoria and South Australia. It is adjacent to a newly erected boundary post on the South-West corner of NSW where it joins the State of Victoria. The ceremony marked the official naming of the corner as "MacCabe Corner".

## The Naming of Roseville

The following note has been received from our member, John Wilson. John has recently done valuable research towards confirming another part of the puzzle surrounding the naming of Roseville. He is asking if anyone can add anything new. Some questions remain such as why William McKeown, the Wesleyan orchardist, lived in a house named "Roseville" in Stoney Creek Road, Gordon, four decades or more before the suburb of Roseville got its name, and why Daniel Mathew, who had earlier owned the Clanville Estate in Roseville, chose to call his 1838 St Ives grant *Rosedale*. It was on this St Ives land that William McKeown had his house. John Wilson can be contacted on 9880 8454 or [jjwilson2@ozemail.com.au](mailto:jjwilson2@ozemail.com.au).

His note reads: "I read with interest the quiz in the October issue of the Newsletter which asked the meaning of certain Ku-ring-gai suburbs. In particular, the answer to the one on Roseville was simply "not now known".

Traditionally, the accepted view has been that the suburb was named after the house in which lived an early pioneer, George Wilson, which was later demolished to make way for the railway station. This account has been given in many historical sources over the past century.

It is reasonable to ask, however, if there is any hard evidence to support this anecdotal view. Recent research confirms that George Wilson did in fact own the land on which the railway station was built (Source: Land Dept. Records). In 1859 he purchased 50 acres of land from Richard Archbold on the Clanville Estate which was part of the 400 acres originally granted to Daniel Dering Mathew and purchased from him by Archbold senior.

George lived on and farmed this land until his death in 1880. When his wife died in 1881 the land was resold to Archbold. This land extended east from the then Lane Cove Road to approximately Archbold Road. An early map held by the Ku-ring-gai Library (Gordon) shows the railway station on this land.

What still needs to be confirmed is the question of whether there is any concrete evidence that George Wilson's house on this land was in fact called "Roseville" and why. I would be happy if anyone had such information and could pass it on. As a direct descendant, I am attracted to the image of George affixing a plate to his front door with the name Roseville on it but it would be good to have the link substantiated so that the origin of that suburb's name can be properly settled.

**John Wilson**

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](mailto:mmff2@bigpond.net.au) or 9499 7113).

## Skewers

In our last Newsletter we wrote of Flora McLeod's belief that the picture of a "swagman" outside the 1907 Lindfield Post Office (better



described as hut) was really Arthur Montrose, a respected local resident. Arthur, according to Flora, helped maintain the home he shared with his mother in Ryde Road by making skewers for the butcher. Possibly he traded them for meat. Life back then was vastly different, and Arthur and his mother probably survived adequately with a minimum of cash income supplemented by their own chooks, vegetable patch, odd jobs by Arthur, and sewing by his mother. We don't know, but suspect this would not be far from the truth.

The butchers referred to would no doubt have been the Hammonds, whose abattoirs were near the Montrose home.

We have had a note about Arthur from John Brown, the Society's 2004 Historian of the Year. John is a direct descendant of his namesake, John "The Squire" Brown, from a Ku-ring-gai family involved in the timber industry here since the 1830s. John tells us that the story about Arthur Montrose "has a strong ring of truth as butcher's skewers were in fact made by bush workers in the early days. Such skewers were preferred by butchers against the later machine-made version because they followed the grain of the timber and were less likely to split and be driven through the butcher's hand as he forced it through a roast of beef or similar".

## Bushfires Back Then

From the Maitland Mercury on 12 January 1850...

**Bush Fires:** Enormous bush fires are now raging on the North Shore, and have already destroyed much property, if not life also. Fires were burning in various directions several days ago, but within the last two or three days their volume and the area over which the devouring element rages had been greatly increased. This increase is to be attributed partially to the unusual heat and dryness of the weather, but principally to the strong and varying winds which have prevailed. Two persons are missing, and it is greatly feared that they have perished amidst the burning scrub.

**Lane Cove:** Mr Archbold has lost his house, furniture, and out-houses, three drays, 16000 feet of sawn timber, and twelve tons of hay... The bush fires, in consequence of the continued hot winds, are still raging throughout the country. At the North Shore up to Pit Water the whole country is in flames.

We believe the "Mr Archbold" was Richard Archbold II (1823-1902) who was the eldest son of Richard Archbold I. Richard I arrived in Australia in 1814. Richard II lived in Clanville Road, Roseville.

# FAMILY MATTERS

## November Meeting

11 am session

25 members attended the morning session when Jo Harris described the discovery of 2,055 births up to 1958 “misplaced” in the 1788-1888 births on DOS. There are now on the computers as “1889-1958 Strays”.

Jo demonstrated:

- our Research Resources Home Page (on all computers in the Rooms); any item highlighted is on the internet.
- NSW BDMs. Jo uses the internet BDMs for deaths and DOS in the Rooms for births and marriages.
- Book *Sydney Cove 1791-92* by John Cobley, one of five in set.
- Search on DOS for birth of Jane Ann Bourne, tried Bouern, Bouren, Bouret - no luck.
- Electoral Rolls

2 pm meeting

About 45 were present at this meeting, chaired by Jo. She told us that on this day in 1824 the first Australian civil jury was empanelled. In 1838 the first stamped envelopes in the world were issued in Sydney. In 1842 there was the first election of Councillors for Sydney.

Reports

Tour 27/28 Sept.2008 to Hill End, Mudgee and Gulgong, with thanks to Peter Done for his delightful report in November/December newsletter.

Max Farley showed “Tree of Life” newsletter of Wyong Family History Group

Australian Family Tree Connections magazine, November issue.

News of Italian BDMs free on internet.

Warning letter about website *australian-ancestors.com*. The writer paid to join but tried for 2 weeks without success to access the site.

Accessions/Books displayed

Donbank - North Sydney's oldest Guide to Pittwater Area.

Suburban Boys at War.

The Vine and Branches (St Andrews, Wahroonga).

The Federation House.

Book Reports

Stella Green spoke about *S.S. Yongala* by Max Gleeson, which describes the disappearance of this steamer in March 1911 near Mackay Queensland in a powerful cyclone, with the loss of all 121 passengers and crew - listed in book. Wreck not found for 47 years.

Sue Ryerson told us of *The Mayne Inheritance* and its inclusion in the “Book Crossings” program in which books are read, passed on, and registered on the internet. See [www.bookcrossing.com](http://www.bookcrossing.com)

Visits: Elaine Turnidge described a visit to the Sydney Heritage Fleet with morning tea on the *James Craig*.

Cemetery Visits: Jean Smith recently visited Bourke Cemetery where the best-known grave is that of Fred Hollows. Christine Edwards spoke of seeing a grave of slate in Somerby village, Leicestershire, where a monumental stonemason explained the process.

The raffle of pre-loved books was won by Judy Vipond who chose “Growing Up at Government House”.

## Family History Meeting 6 Dec 2008

2 pm Session

Chaired by Jo Harris, the Family History Group Christmas Meeting commenced with Jo reading the Eulogy for Don Fifer, who died suddenly on Friday 28 November aged 88. Don wore several hats in the Society, including taking on the role of Secretary, training the team for Oral History, and others. Don also continued studying over many years – a man of many talents. Thank you Don.

Jo also gave a report on the Dedication of the Memorial to Ian Ramage, which was recently unveiled by our State Governor, Dr Marie Bashir at Wahroonga Park

At this meeting in December 2006, Nick Ebbeck, Mayor of Ku-ring-gai, planted the beautiful Wollomi Pine within the grounds.

Marie Rumsey told of a visit to Pejar where her GGGrandmother had been granted land – this visit for the 100th Anniversary of the stone church – Marie was shown the house with a painting of her GGGM painted in 1880.

FHG Friday Class finished on 5 December and there had been a Reunion of the earlier Thursday Group Class – Jo was very pleased to advise that this group had been very active and many had volunteered their services to the society including: Jackie van Bergen (Secretary), Trevor Whitehead (FHG Committee), Graham Crawford (Photo scanning/ Preservation), Jocelyn Brennan-Horley & Margaret Hoekstra (Display Cabinets), Lucille Taylor, and Marjory and Keith Perry – Thank you for your assistance and Jo looks forward to adding more names to the Volunteers List.

Victoria has put an embargo on BDMs Births up to 1920 to bring into line the same as NSW 100Y.

John Harris has databased over 250,000 transcriptions, thank you John. Trevor Whitehead indicated difficulty in finding information from Registrar General's Office – an officer from there to be invited to address a meeting in 2009.

Copies of Maps for Sale – 1792-1892 Landowners of Sydney @ \$4.50 each and Early Sydney 1808-1810 @ \$2.50 each, were quickly purchased by members at the meeting.

Reports – Jo mentioned the quality of the Australian Heritage Magazine and the most interesting articles, also a visit to the Britannia Coach – Julie Werner spoke about Daisy Bates – others spoke about the Doomsday Book and Burke's Peerage.

As it was the Christmas Party to follow the meeting, Jo thanked all for bringing food, and all the room volunteers.

Wendy Borchers, our Guest Speaker, gave us a most interesting talk – finding a long lost cousin, Eric Wilksch. At a Wilksch family reunion at the Bethany Reserve, near Tanunda north of Adelaide on a blistering hot day in 1983, just before the Ash Wednesday fires, Wendy was speaking to an elderly relative, Bert Wilksch, who on discovering that Wendy lived in Sydney suggested that she should contact his brother, Eric. Eric and Frank Borchers, Wendy's father, were first cousins, their ancestors having been part of the great German migration to the Barossa Valley in the 1830s.

Sadly Eric and Frank never met as Eric grew up on the family farm at Seppeltsfield, SA and Frank was born in Broken Hill, NSW.

After Wendy made contact with Eric a wonderful friendship developed between them. Eric would often walk to her nearby home. Eric was an inspiration to Wendy and told her more about her German heritage from Goslar in the Hartz Mountains than anyone else. A member of the Willoughby Family History Group, he was an author, a local historian of considerable note, museum curator, conservationist and much more. Many items of his research have been given to that group. Eric was honoured when Willoughby Council named a bush walk in his beloved Flat Rock Gully, under the Suspension Bridge, Northbridge after him. Also Wilksch Lane in Naremburn was named for him.

Eric's wife died in 1980 and there were no children. Wendy became like the daughter they never had. At Eric's death in 2002, proceeds from the sale of the house went to the North Shore Heart Foundation. Wendy was bequeathed the contents of the house, which she discovered was like an Aladdin's treasure cave, a museum. Being a researcher, Wendy sifted through all the contents of the house and garden herself and discovered Tax cheques not cashed, coins, stamps, slides, books, pictures, 10 boot lasts, copper pipes and much more. Going through his vinyl record collection on the scorching January day when Canberra was suffering bushfires, she heard on the radio the sad story of a collector who had lost his prize collection, and was able to forward these to him after making contact with the radio station.

So much more could be said of Eric Wilksch, an inspirational man.

Julie Werner, who had once worked with Wendy, gave a sincere vote of thanks and presented Wendy with KHS Publication "Women of Ku-ring-gai".

*Notes by Elaine Turnidge*

## Tour change

Unfortunately, the February State Records tour has had to be postponed to 6 May.

If you had a booking there are three choices: transfer your booking to the 26 February Rookwood tour, transfer to the 6 May State Records trip, or obtain a refund.

Please ring Jo 9489 4393 with your choice.

## Updates

The online NSW BDM Registers were updated on 1 Jan. 2009 to 1908, 1958 and 1978.

Transcripts from Joy Murrin have increased to \$17.

### **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 a month could be very helpful!

Please contact Ann Barry

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

# BUILT HERITAGE

## Mount View

102 Grosvenor Street, Wahroonga

'*Mount View*', a large two storey Federation house in the Arts and Crafts style, was constructed in 1904. It is a heritage listed



item because of its cultural, architectural and municipal significance. Of note are the tennis pavilion, gardens, outbuildings and mature tree planting. The property was subdivided into 11 residential lots in 2007.

In November 1903 Rev. George Brown purchased the land (Portion 388) containing 4 acres 3 roods and 6 perches for the princely sum of £160. He sold to Bernard John Cureton, who commissioned architect James Peddle in 1904 to design the residence. Swan was the builder.

Cureton died in 1905 and the property was sold to Philip Hart of Sydney, a café proprietor, in August of the same year. Hart immediately commissioned architect Charles Harding to begin "clearing and ploughing land" and also to construct "stables in Grosvenor Rd". To irrigate his large fruit and vegetable garden, Hart installed the *Nunan's Patent Spraying System*. The produce of this garden was said to have been used in the cafes he owned and operated.

In April 1917 Frederick Bowman Fleming, a grazier, purchased the property and extended the north side of the building in the same style.

The residence was described in the 1921 valuations as a brick on stone two-storey house of 15 rooms, kitchen and offices with a tiled roof. There was a fibro on brick garage with a slate roof, a weatherboard on brick laundry with an iron roof, a weatherboard on brick stable and room with an iron roof, and tennis court, orchard, etc. Surprisingly, the original residence was designed with very little shade areas, such as verandahs or balconies. It had a sweeping roof from the semi-circular brick arched entrance to the ridgeline.

Fleming's son Ian is remembered as an early leader in the field of remotely piloted vehicles and guided weapons development. He designed the Jindivik/Pika target drone.

In 1943 Charles Danvers of Lindfield became the owner. However, he died the following year and in 1946 his widow sold the property to Alfred Wenkart. During Alfred and Juliska Wenkart's occupation, *Mount View* became a cultural centre for music and the arts. It was during this period that the house was "modernised" with the semi-circular entry arch being removed, glass sliding doors replacing the chimney and the stone bay windows replaced. A lasting legacy of this family is the Wenkart Foundation, which was established by Dr Tom Wenkart in 1976.

*Jennifer Harvey*

(From: Primary sources, Rieth Index, Davey thesis and the late Ian Ramage.)

## 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:

David & Pru Anthony	Turrumurra
Cath Bishop	Wahroonga
Peter Bonner	Waitara
Mary Tranter	Turrumurra
Marina Mar	Roseville
Judy Vipond	Turrumurra
Kathy Vaughan	Cherrybrook
Ian White	Roseville
Barry Easy	Warrawee
Kathy Cowley	Lindfield
Heather Rae	Westleigh
Noeline Porman	Turrumurra
Helen Downs	Hornsby Heights
Ken & Rosemary Rowe	Turrumurra

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

## Quiz Answers

A1. Most definitely not. There is evidence that the Portuguese, certainly the Dutch (hence *New Holland*), and even the Englishman William Dampier saw Australia long before Cook. Cook's contribution was that he mapped a great part of the east coast more precisely than earlier explorers.  
A2. No. He sailed right past Port Jackson in 1770 without knowing it existed.  
A3. No. Phillip entered Botany Bay on 18 January. The rest of the Fleet had arrived by 20 January. Phillip believed the site unsuitable and had the Fleet move to Sydney Cove, where he formally established the settlement at a ceremony on 26 January 1788.  
A4. The ancient Greeks believed there must be a large land to balance the known northern lands. They called it *Terra Australis* – the great south land with "Australis" meaning "south". Though he was not the first to use the word "Australia", it was Matthew Flinders who started using the name "Australia" for the continent he circumnavigated. Governor Macquarie then adopted the name himself.  
A5. It was the Aborigine *Boongaree* who accompanied Flinders on the Navigator in 1802/1803.

## 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.

## Diary Dates

<b>Sat 7 Feb</b>	Family History Meeting 11 am New resources 2 pm Guest speaker Bill Greenhalgh
<b>Thurs 12 Feb</b>	10.30 am "2008 Thursday Group" reunion
<b>Wed 18 Feb</b>	7.45 pm Society General Meeting Speaker - Patricia Hale "Four Convict sites"
<b>Fri 20 Feb</b>	10.30 am "Family Tree Maker" Q&A Session. \$5 members, \$10 non-members
<b>Mon 23 Feb</b>	10.30 am - 2 pm Attendance at the rooms for anyone requiring plot locations for their relatives at Rookwood (in anticipation of tour Thurs 26 Feb).
<b>Thurs 26 Feb</b>	9 am sharp: Pick-up at Bannockburn Oval for Rookwood Cemetery Participants.
<b>Wed 18 Mar</b>	7.45 pm Society General Meeting Speaker - John Martyn "Sydney's Natural World"

## Administration

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