



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.

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Monthly Newsletter

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

21 JULY GENERAL MEETING

President Kevin Callinan opened the meeting and briefly reported on a number of matters currently being dealt with by the Society including the forthcoming project to photograph all the headstones in Gordon's historic Church of St John the Evangelist. Jo Harris also gave advance notice of the proposed two-day tour of Lithgow and its surrounding district planned for the weekend of 27/28 October

Guest Speaker - In Search of the Pennant Hills

Trevor Patrick, co-author with James Symes and Andrew Tink of the recently published book *In Search of the Pennant Hills*, discussed the origin of the name Pennant Hills and how it had been given at various times to three areas between the Parramatta River and its present location. The name, although often thought to be associated with part of a signaling system on One Tree Hill, is attributed to the commemoration of Thomas Pennant, a prominent British naturalist with a particular interest in Australian flora and fauna. He was a friend of Governor Phillip.

Governor Phillip also gave the name 'One Tree Hill' to the high ground adjacent to Brush Farm, but this area soon became known as 'Pennant Hills' and the original road through the area was known as Pennant Hills Road, later Victoria Road. As timbergetting became the principal industry on the north shore in the early 19th century, the area from the river to the northern plateau was intensively harvested for timber and this wider area then became Pennant Hills. After basalt was discovered in the area, a mine called the Pennant Hills Quarry was established in the Dundas Valley in the 1840s.

As the timber industry declined, the plateau from the present Pennant Hills Golf Club towards Hornsby became a very successful citrus growing area, again known as Pennant Hills. When the railway arrived in the 1880s, some differentiation in naming of stations was necessary and, as the citrus growers were reluctant to change the signage on their crates, the area was divided into West Pennant Hills and the present Pennant Hills.

- based on notes by Don Fifer

NEW BOOK ON HORNSBY SHIRE

In common with Ku-ring-gai, Hornsby Shire celebrated its centenary last year. To mark the occasion it has published a book, *The Birth of Hornsby Shire*, authored by Tom Richmond and published by Deerubbin Press.

COMING MEETINGS

NEXT SOCIETY GENERAL MEETING (Gordon Library Meeting Room)

Wednesday, 19 September 2007

7.45pm - GENERAL MEETING

to be followed by the

- ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This will be the day of the Society's Annual Meeting. With that in mind we are not having a visiting Speaker and have asked Vice President Jo Harris to be our Speaker.



Jo will talk on:
Early Wireless
and
Ku-ring-gai Connections

Supper will be available
(Carolyn Darby
& Sue Ryerson)
Visitors welcome

The Memorial on the corner
Cleveland and Stuart Streets,
Wahroonga
commemorating the receipt
of the first direct radio message
from the UK to Australia.

NEXT FAMILY HISTORY MEETING

Saturday 1 September

- 11am Members Discussion

including Western Australian and general resources

- 2pm General Meeting

Topic: "My Grandmother's ..."

A Show and Tell by members about artefacts, mementos from their grandmothers.
(Great grandmothers to count as grandmothers).

Afternoon tea will be available

(Shirley Morley, Pat White)

Visitors Welcome

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice of Meeting

The Annual General Meeting will be held at the Gordon Library Meeting Rooms at 7.45pm on Wednesday 19 September 2007 following the General Meeting. Rule 23(2) sets out the business and includes confirmation of earlier minutes, receipt of committee reports, election of office-bearers and the appointment of an auditor. Only members who are financial will be eligible to vote.

Nominations for Election

A reminder that nominations for election of office-bearers and committee members must be in writing and received by the Returning Officer by mail to PO Box 109, Gordon, 2072 or by delivery to the Society's Rooms by not later than 5pm on 12 September 2007.

- D Fifer (Secretary)

HAZEL PERDRIAU HELPS

One of our Life Members, Hazel Perdriau, came along to a 23 July meeting of those members who have been researching the development of Nelson Street and some surrounding streets in Gordon. This group has been researching land ownership by reference to original records at the Land Titles Office and State Archives. The project has been led by Jennifer Harvey, Kathie Rieth and Ann Barry. Hazel Perdriau, who has been a KHS member for 30 years and President from 1986/88, was able to pass on recollections of Nelson Street because her family built one of the early homes there in 1928/29.

KU-RING-GAI'S WOMEN ARCHITECTS

Members will remember the informative talk we had last June from Dr Bronwyn Hanna about women architects in NSW and, in particular, those with a Ku-ring-gai connection. It was reported in our August Newsletter and is well worth reading if you missed it.

Dr Hanna has been in touch to clarify a point about the numbers of women architects who graduated before and after WWII. It seems that before WWII, the number of women and men graduating was quite close, with women constituting more than a third of all graduates. However, after the War the architecture school expanded ten-fold with the increase made up almost entirely of ex-servicemen. As a result the proportion of women graduates reduced substantially until the 1980s. This point just needed some tidying up and we thank Dr Hanna for bringing it to our attention.

LITHGOW TOUR

This is advance notice so you can write the date into your diary now. Most of us know Lithgow as a town we see fleetingly as we head West. Yet there is much of interest to be discovered beyond the famous zig-zag railway. Jo Harris, our Tour organiser extraordinaire, is arranging an overnight visit to Lithgow and its surrounding district for Saturday and Sunday 27/28 October. More details to come.

QUIZ

1. Q: What do Ball's Track and Pennant Hills Road have in common?

2. Q2: What activity links the following Ku-ring-gai residents:

Janet Mansfield AM; Nell and Win Holden and Margaret Tuckson AM?

OUR RESEARCH CENTRE

Our Rooms are put to many uses. It is, of course, full of documents, books, reference material and computer records focusing on Ku-ring-gai but extending in some spheres to all quarters of the globe. Members regularly work organising the Collection to make it more easily searched by enquirers and to help maintain it in good shape for posterity.

The Rooms are well used by members doing their own research and by local people wanting to know the history of their homes as well as photographs of buildings and streets of interest to them. People call seeking historical details of places and events in the Ku-ring-gai of earlier days. Historians and students come searching for information about well-known and not-so-well-known Ku-ring-gai people of the past. We have visitors from other parts of Sydney, from country NSW, interstate and even overseas.

Beyond this, the Rooms are much used for training purposes.



The photo shows a family history training course in action.

Despite all this activity, there are members who for any one good reason or another have not sighted the Centre as it has developed over the years. If you have not called in recently why not do so soon?

RECENT ACQUISITIONS

The following are among the recent additions to our Collection:

* An updated edition of the "family tree" of Ku-ring-gai pioneer *Richard Archbold*. Unlike previous issues, the names of some thousands of the entries are indexed. The loose-leaf publication has been prepared and donated by Margaret McCaw, now of Canberra.

* *The Streets of Pennant Hills* (and surrounding districts). Prepared by Trevor Patrick and published by Silicon Quill. 140 pages. It has coloured illustrations and maps in addition to text.

BUILT HERITAGE

TULKIYAN - 707 Pacific Highway, Gordon



Tulkiyan in early days

All members would have heard of *Tulkiyan* but not all know much other than that it is a heritage home in Ku-ring-gai in which the Society has a continuing interest.

Tulkiyan is just a hundred metres or so down the Highway from the Gordon township. It was built in 1913 by William Donaldson and his wife Mary Scott, of a notable flour milling company. Mr Donaldson had moved up from Melbourne with his family to work at the company's Sydney mill. There were three children - Maisie, Bill Junior (who became a doctor) and Margaret. They grew up at *Tulkiyan* and were living there when they died. All were Society members. None ever married.

The home was designed by the well known architect, Bertrand J Waterhouse, who is perhaps now best known for his *Nutcote*, the home of May Gibbs at Neutral Bay.

Margaret was the last surviving child and she decided to donate the home to Council. It is now tended to lovingly by volunteers who arrange Open Days and host tours for private groups. For this a modest charge is made.

Tulkiyan is an intact example of the Federation Arts and Crafts style, and qualifies as a "house museum" because its furniture, furnishings and content, much of which is original, are as they were in the 80 years of the Donaldson's occupancy. The family put great store on this. The property and its contents are now State Heritage listed.

Architect Bertrand Waterhouse's high esteem together with the family's determination to maintain *Tulkiyan* as unchanged as possible, means it appeals both because of its architectural qualities and also because it evidences the lifestyle of relatively prosperous people from the "long-since-gone" era before the Great War. It raises memories of grandma in the minds of older visitors and imaginings of great grandmother in younger ones. Children are introduced to the days of "live-in" maids, gaslight (though the Donaldsons did adapt to electricity), wet and dry pantries, morning rooms and the "tradesman's hatch".

Though our Society has no day-to-day involvement with *Tulkiyan*, it remains important to us because of its local heritage value and, perhaps sentimentally, because we played a role in helping ensure the wishes of the Donaldsons were translated into reality for the benefit of coming generations.

(A little more about Tulkiyan and the Donaldsons can be seen in the report of the August Family History meeting in this Newsletter).

MEMBER PROFILE

PETER STEHN joined the Society in 2004 and has become known as an active member of the Family History Committee. His professional life, however, gained him skills and experience that have already proven of value in the general conduct of the Society.



Peter was born, raised and schooled in Brisbane and joined the Navy as an officer cadet in 1965. Initial training was at Jervis Bay. This was followed by a year at sea as a Midshipman where, as he puts it, he was "let loose on the many exotic Asian and Pacific ports". Then came two years' training in England at the Britannia Royal Naval College at Dartmouth, Devon, and at shore establishments throughout England, Scotland and Wales. He returned to Australia in 1969. It was during his last year in England that Peter met and married Chrissie.

Service in Vietnam and in the Mine Countermeasures squadron preceded specialisation in aircraft control, maritime warfare and operational information management disciplines. After 16 years at sea, he was posted ashore in the mid-1980s as the head of the RAN operational software design centre in Canberra.

Peter managed a succession of project teams in Canberra during the 80s and 90s which led to the establishment of three new capabilities for the Australian Defence Force.

The first was the acquisition and installation of an intelligence computer system for the Navy. This system has become a major component of the Defence intelligence information infrastructure.

The second project was perhaps the greatest challenge. During the First War our forces were sent under British command to such venues as Gallipoli and France. The same occurred in the Second War, Korea, Malaysia and Vietnam. Command of our forces changed from British to American. It has always been Australia's desire to develop the capability to command our own forces in future campaigns. Peter was one of the three officers responsible for making it happen. This included acquisition of the associated computer systems and the databases to go with them. This new capability was first tested in earnest when Australia commanded the multi-national effort to restore order in East Timor following its independence.

His third and final project before retiring from the Navy was responsibility for the design, acquisition and installation of the joint operational command support computer system now installed throughout the Australian Defence Force.

Since leaving the Navy at the end of 1998, Peter has worked in private industry in the international trade and Customs compliance areas and also as a Consultant to the Department of Defence.

Peter's current interest in family history developed after leaving the Navy and began by mapping his and Chrissie's living relatives (there are more than 1,000 in Australia alone). Once that exercise was achieved, the obvious question remained – where did they all come from? Since then another 1,200 not-so-living relatives and in-laws have been unearthed (although not literally). The search continues.

HISTORY NOTES

GHOST TRAINS

An article in the Sydney Morning Herald on 21-22 July told of the many plans for Sydney railway lines that came to nothing. Among them was, as the Herald put it, “*the phantom line first envisaged by Bradfield, and, slyly, he had the first 260 metres of a tunnel cut for the line when he finished North Sydney Station in the early ‘30s*”. The line was envisaged to run through Mosman and Manly to Mona Vale.

The article brought back to mind events set in train in 1911 when the NSW Public Works Department received a delegation from Ku-ring-gai and Warringah Councils seeking a railway line from Gordon to Narrabeen through St Ives. The Councils felt a railway would improve access between residents on the North Shore Line and the coast and overcome the isolation suffered by St Ives. The Minister of the day said “no” but decided the proposal should be looked at again in ten years’ time. Then in 1920 the St Ives Progress Association took up the idea once more. The then Minister organised a study that resulted in a practical route being determined. The possibility of progress looked promising.

Tragically, however, the Government and bureaucracy were seemingly intent on frustrating progress and to this end proposed a Parliamentary Committee to enquire into the proposal. This was mooted in 1922 but the Railway Commissioners failed to submit a required statutory report in time. The report was received in 1923 but nothing effectively happened until 1925. Those in charge were scarcely bubbling with enthusiasm for the idea.

When the Committee finally assembled, the Railway Commissioners’ stance, not surprisingly, emphasised the negatives. They said:

- * it would take many years for there to be a population large enough to justify building the line.
- * the expenditure of money just to satisfy tourist traffic would not be warranted. This had not been proposed.
- * the idea should be deferred until after the Harbour Bridge opened. This was not for another seven years.
- * in any event, there was a proposal to build a line from North Sydney to Manly through Mosman and any line to French’s Forest should be a branch line from that. As we have been reminded, the Manly line did not happen either.

J J C Bradfield, the Railways Chief Engineer for Metropolitan Railway Construction, disagreed with the Commissioners and presented evidence to the Committee favouring the line. He also gave a cost estimate of £367,294 (\$734,588). Bradfield said this would be covered by the sale of Crown lands.

Those who put submissions to the Committee included many whose names are familiar to those who have read a little of Ku-ring-gai’s history. Among them were Messrs Fred Chilton, and C Bowes Thistlethwayte.

Why are we not surprised to find that at the end of the Committee Report came the succinct resolution:

“That in the opinion of the Committee it is not expedient that the proposed railway from Gordon to Narrabeen, as referred to them by the Legislative Assembly, be constructed”.

Unhappily, as is so often the case, those who came to this decision did live to see the folly of their lack of vision – and were no doubt well aware they would never be called to account.

FINDING GEARY’S CAVE

Last month in our article on Matilda Fish we mentioned how her home in Killara was robbed (in 1821) by Geary’s gang of bushrangers. Usually, whenever the story is told, there is mention of a cave below the Rosedale Road Bridge (often still referred to as the *Suspension Bridge*) across Stony Creek in Gordon where the gang was said to have hidden out. A query from a member prompted us to discover just exactly where that cave was and whether it is still there. It would make an excellent attraction on walking tours!

So far we have not made any progress despite checking our own records and asking quite a few people including historians and bushwalkers. But we have not given up. We wonder if anyone has some information. Or perhaps wants a challenge?

JOHN BROWN’S ANTECEDENTS

Most of us enjoy fiction from time to time but recognise that truth can often match the inventions of novelists. The truths about of Ku-ring-gai’s John (the “Squire”) Brown certainly fall into that category.

John Brown was not only the owner of large tracts of land in Wahroonga but also one of the colony’s most wealthy timber merchants – probably **the** most wealthy. Among other things he was, so far as Ku-ring-gai is concerned, a founding trustee of the Church of St John the Evangelist at Gordon and the patriarch of a family whose names remain in our everyday use.

In 1851 he married Mary Anne Waterhouse who was a sister of John Waterhouse of the Green Gate Hotel. John and Mary signed their marriage certificate with an “X” indicating both were illiterate.

John and Mary had 11 children. The names of some are now street names including Ada, Roland and Lucinda Avenues. A Douglas Avenue in Ku-ring-gai’s Wahroonga is now part of Lucinda Avenue. Siblings - May, Bruce and Gertrude had streets named after them but those street names have since been changed. Additionally, Georgina Close, Warwick Place and Cyrus and Ormiston Avenues have the names of descendants or their spouses. We also have a Browns Road in Wahroonga and another in Gordon.

FROM OUR COLLECTION

NORTH TURRAMURRA – THE STORY OF A COMMUNITY

North Turramurra and St Ives developed later than other parts of Ku-ring-gai because of their relative isolation. Today St Ives, being on a major traffic route, is quite familiar to most of us. North Turramurra, however, remains mostly known only to its residents and those relatively few “outsiders” who pass through it to the National Park and Bobbin Head.

Fortunately Margaret Wyatt in her *North Turramurra – The Story of a Community*, details the development of North Turramurra from its very early days right through to 1980. In doing so she offers a lot of information about the people and families who created that development. These include:

* Samuel King – bought land in 1881. Became an orchardist. Built *Brooklyn*, the oldest house in North Turramurra, for his son. It is between Bobbin Head Road and the Bowling Club. Samuel supplied the stone for the Pymble Presbyterian (Uniting) Church.

* George Edwards, MHR, of Huon Park. Arrived in 1895. Tragically blew himself up when gas lighting system exploded.

* Richard Bourke. Arrived in the area in 1895. Orchardist. His land is now part of the Golf Course.

* Jim St Ledger. Arrived 1896. First bought 13 acres opposite the Milton Rd intersection with Bobbin Head Rd. A prosperous Dairyman and orchardist.

* Eccleston Du Faur. Built *Flowton* and is remembered in Ku-ring-gai as the Founder of the Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park.

* Francis Kirkpatrick. Arrived 1899. Bought 10 acres south of the High School. Built *Lynesta*. A gentleman farmer who was NSW Under Secretary for Finance and Trade from 1891 until 1904.

North Turramurra – The Story of a Community, has 100 very readable pages and is well indexed and worth a browse at the very least. It was written by Margaret with assistance from her husband, Ken, and published in 1980 by Ku-ring-gai Council. Many would know Margaret as the one-time Local Studies Librarian of Ku-ring-gai Council. She is a member of the Society and was active on the Committee for a number of years.

RAILWAY TIME TABLE - 1ST JANUARY 1890

Stations: Hornsby, Wahroonga, Eastern Road, Pymble, Gordon, Lindfield, Roseville, Chatswood, St Leonards.

Hornsby	Dep	7.40am	9.25am	12.20pm	3.55pm
St Leonards	Arr	8.15am	10.00am	1.00pm	4.35pm
St Leonards	Dep	8.30am	10.20am	3.05pm	4.45pm
Hornsby	Arr	9.10am	11.00am	3.45pm	6.25pm

Week days only. No Sunday service

The Railway opened on 1ST January 1890 but terminated at St Leonards. A Sunday service with one morning and three afternoon trains was not introduced until the line was extended to Milsons Point on 1 May 1893.

(The above information is from the HISTORIAN Vol 1 No 1 of June 1972)

For years John Brown's origins were a mystery. Born in 1825 in the Pennant Hills district, he was not a convict but that was just about the limit of our knowledge. That is, until his great grandson and Society member, John R E Brown, applied his perseverance to collate and publish the hidden truth.

In a nutshell, John Brown was the illegitimate son of a convict, William Brown. His mother, Frances Randall/Aiken was also illegitimate. She had been born in 1792 as the child of an unknown convict woman and John Randall, also a convict. John Randall was already married to a Mary Butler when Frances was born. Frances was destined to be John Brown's mother. When she took up with William Brown in about 1824, she was already married to a Jamaican free settler. He was John Aiken and Frances had a number of children by him.

It was a very tangled web indeed.

John Randall, John Brown's grandfather, was a most interesting character. It seems that John Randall was a coloured American, possibly of “white and negro origin”, who was born in Connecticut about 1764. He was known as Black Randall. It is likely he became embroiled in the American War of Independence on the side of the British. Be that as it may, he came to be recognised as a skilful shooter. He later finished up in Manchester where he ran foul of English law and was transported with the First Fleet. The colony was desperately short of food and John Randall, along with a number of other selected convicts, was appointed as a gamekeeper. His marksmanship was applied to hunt game for the officers' tables. In 1792 he received a grant of 60 acres near Parramatta. There is some evidence Frances may have come to live with her father on his grant in 1800. Randall sold this land and joined the NSW Corps where he remained until 1810. In 1814 he was recorded as owning land in Sydney but his later life remains obscure.

Such a bag of convict origin, illegitimacy, short term dalliances, unchurched liaisons and the birth of children with mixed blood was not really remarkable in the turbulent early decades of the colony. As time passed and a more ordered society established, most people made efforts to hide the unsavoury features of their past not just from outside eyes but also from family members too. This was a little easier than might be expected because many people had such problems and it was accepted as best not to ask too many questions. As a result there have been many family researchers who have been happily or unhappily surprised to unearth ancestral lines which had been concealed over several generations.

The above comments only touch on the intriguing John Randall and the full details of John (the “Squire”) Brown's ancestry. Those who would like to know more should make their first port of call the *Brown Family Chronicles* published by John R E Brown. A full set of the five volumes is in the Society's Rooms.

The story shows in fascinating detail how one man, born with absolutely no apparent advantages, rose to wealth and high esteem in just a few years.

FAMILY MATTERS

14 AUGUST MEETING

The **11 am session** had been about Victorian Resources and a number of more general topics. It was attended by 24 members.

At the **2pm General Session** a variety of matters were discussed, including the following:

- * Family History Week had now started.
- * Another day-course on computers and Family Tree Maker on Monday the 20th August. Cost is \$5 for members, \$10 for non-members.
- * The Society will man the Fisk Memorial on 14th September on the corner of Cleveland and Stuart Streets, Wahroonga. This will coincide with the Knox Garden Day.
- * Our volunteers are now photographing the graves at St John's Churchyard, Gordon.
- * Diana Rose is organising a tour of St John's Cemetery, Parramatta. Those interested should contact her on 9482 8303
- * Expressions of Interest are being sought for the Lithgow trip, which will take place on the 27th and 28th October. The trip will include a ride on the Zig-Zag railway, a trip to the Small Arms Factory Museum, a visit to the Lithgow and District Family History Society, and may include a guided tour of Lithgow and possibly a visit to the Hartley Valley. More details and places to come later.
- * the Family Records Centre in London will be closing at the end of October 2007, five months ahead of schedule. After that time GRO certificates will only be able to be ordered online.
- * the 2007 Genealogical Research Directory has been released. This is the last edition that will be produced.
- * *NowAndThen*, the electronic newsletter of the State Records of NSW, can be had free of charge. Googling *nowandthen* will give details or call (02) 9673 1788.
- * Additions to the Collection include *The Story of St Judes (Bowral)*, *A History of the Berrima District 1798-1961* and *University of Sydney Centenary Celebrations, 1952*
- * Ancestry.com.au has added Australian Convict records to its Pay per View web site, but may disappoint many because the information is already widely available.
- * The latest issue of "Family Tree Connections" is in the Rooms.
- * Joy Walker gave a book report on *Upon a State Unknown* by Fay Harris Attewell. It is about a First Fleet convict and his family who settled in the Hawkesbury River district.
- * Shirley Morley gave a report on her attendance at the book launch of *In Search of the Pennant Hills*.
- * Elaine Turnidge told of finding an information needle in a haystack – the arrival of her grandmother and her children on the shipping lists. It appeared on www.findmypast.com
- * There is currently an exhibition at the Mitchell Library on David Scott Mitchell, the Library's major benefactor.

* The Raffle books were "*Sydney's First Four Years*", "*Forsaken Settlement*", "*(Parramatta) Cradle City of Australia*", "*The Flying Doctor Story 1928-1978*" and "*A History of the North Shore Sydney, 1788-Today*". The raffle was won by Peter and Jocelyn Perry, who chose "*A History of the North Shore Sydney, 1788-Today*".

Guest Speaker – Helen Davies, a Society Committee member and a representative of "*The Friends of Tulkiyan*", gave a very interesting talk on The Donaldson Family and *Tulkiyan*, the State Heritage listed home at 707 Pacific Highway, Gordon.

The Donaldson family built *Tulkiyan* at 707 Pacific Highway, Gordon, in 1913 and lived there until the last member of the family, Margaret Helen Donaldson, died in 1994. At one point Margaret considered leaving it to the Historical Society but it was felt the Society did not have the resources to maintain it. As a result, the house had been deeded by Miss Donaldson to the Ku-ring-gai Council in 1985 on condition that she could continue to live in the house until she died. The contents of the house were then to be left to Ku-ring-gai Council in her will.

Helen said that the house had been designed by BJ Waterhouse and is a good example of Federation Arts & Crafts style. It is also significant because it has remained essentially unaltered since it was built and lived in by only one family for over 80 years. It therefore retains its original contents. (*More information about the home, now a House Museum, is in the "Built Heritage" section of this Newsletter*).

Helen discussed the family origins of William Donaldson and his wife, Mary Scott, including information about Mary's father Mungo Scott, a successful flour miller. She then talked about what is known of their life and the lives of their three children, Mary Isabella (Maisie) Donaldson (1892-1975), William Scott (Bill) Donaldson (1897-1973) and Margaret Helen Donaldson (1903-1994). None of the children married.

The *Friends of Tulkiyan* conduct regular tours of the house which is now a House Museum. The next Open Day will be on Sunday, 16th September.

- This report is based on notes by Jenny Joyce

RYERSON INDEX ADDRESS

Many members would regularly access the Ryerson Index which has been maintained by volunteers of the *Sydney Dead Persons Society* since 1988. It is named after our own member, Joyce Ryerson, and is compiled from newspaper entries by volunteers and constantly updated. There is no charge for its use and it is invaluable in locating information on over 1,500,000 deaths, mainly in NSW, occurring after the "cut-off" date of the official BDMs. The *DPS* advises another website has been created calling itself the Ryerson Index and includes the title "Ryerson Index" on its pages. The *DPS* has

opened a new site, www.ryersonindex.org in order to avoid confusion. The DPS encourages everyone to let their acquaintances know that www.ryersonindex.org is the address of the only true Ryerson Index.

JOYCE RYERSON

Not all members may be aware that the Ryerson Index is named after our own very active member, Joyce Ryerson. What happened was that for many years Joyce extracted information from the Sydney Morning Herald about ex-students of her old school, SCEGGS of Darlinghurst, using the Herald's information about births, marriages and death notices. She made this available to the School and kept the newspapers for later reference.



Joyce Ryerson

The *Dead Persons Society* was trying to put together death information for the time after BDM death records to 1948 ceased to be publicly available in 1948. When Joyce told the DPS of her treasure trove they leapt at her offer to let the DPS work on them. As a result they formed the basis of what is now the much-used Ryerson Index.

A FOREIGN FIELD

(Musings from Mark Mealey)

I left the car and walked upon a farmer's field, avoiding stepping on the Flanders Poppies which were growing everywhere, in this late spring of 2007. Was this IT, I asked myself. I had researched it for years and looked all morning; it had to be the place.

But the scene was magnificent. I could just see the Church steeple at Albert several kilometres away and the Somme winding its way from East to West to empty into the English Channel. The late spring crops of bright yellow rapeseed dotted the landscape everywhere. Spring sunshine. The whole thing looked like a Constable painting. It had been the best spring in memory the locals had said.

I bent down and took a handful of soil and let it run through my fingers.

I felt an atmosphere that couldn't be hidden by tilled soil, fresh green crops and magical scenery.

Nonsense my wife would say, well maybe.

But I didn't need a history book to tell me that something horrible had happened here. It was 10th June 1918 again; "I heard the shrill sound of a sergeant's whistle blown urgently and out of their trenches and "over the top" these young men went and into history.

The horror and death of this place is another story and not one for these pages.

You see it's been 90 years since this all took place here, and my Dad was one of those who went over the top that night. He survived 12 hours in "no mans land", just.

I sat there for some time ---- then, avoiding the Flanders Poppies again, quietly left that field with misty eyes.

- Mark Mealey

Notes

C.E.W.Bean in his history of the First World War commented that Morlancourt Ridge in northern France was a smallish battle with about 600 casualties!

Morlancourt Ridge wasn't so obscure after all. It was the Place where the Red Baron, Manfred Von Richthofen, number one air ace of the war, had crashed to his death a few weeks earlier: that also is another story. It is not well known that a friend of the Baron saw him crash and flew back to report on it. His name -Herman Goering. Another person was not far away either, he didn't drink or smoke and was reported to be a vegetarian. His name - Adolf Hitler. (MM)

SKELTON FAMILY REUNION IN

OCTOBER Our member, Carolyn Green, tells us that back in the 1850s Ann, Emma, Edward and William Skelton migrated to New Zealand on the "Matoaka" while brother George went to the US. They hailed from Barnetby Le Wold in Lincolnshire. Carolyn says there are now a number of related families in Sydney and Ku-ring-gai including the names Garton, Lawrie, Bradfield and Skelton. Some of these may appear as given names. Four of George's descendants are soon to visit Australia. Carolyn Green and other descendants are having a reunion at Pymble on Sunday, 28th October. For information please contact Carolyn at greenaa@ozemail.com.au or phone 9144 1351.

PHONE DIRECTORIES AS A RESOURCE

Joy Walker tells us she found old Sydney phone books very helpful when researching the houses in several streets in Gordon. This was a special project recently conducted by a members' training group led by Jennifer Harvey, Kathy Rieth and Ann Barry. The task was to trace the detailed history of each of the houses in the defined area. The Sands Directories are helpful but ceased publication in 1932. Telephone Directories are, however, available on microfiche from 1889 until June 1985. Phone ownership was relatively restricted before the 1930s but became increasingly common after that.

The phone Directories are, of course, automatically indexed and cover the whole of Sydney. Joy found them a great help in tracing the location of families in specific years and also their moves from one residence to another. They sometimes gave an indication when individuals ceased phone ownership – perhaps by death. Another benefit was the ability to locate businesses and their location.

Unfortunately the microfiche copies are not available at the Gordon Library but can be found at Hornsby and Willoughby. The Society intends to purchase a set from the 1889 until 1972. These are being specially copied for us. Members will be advised when they become available.

COPY FOR NEWSLETTER

General copy for publication should be lodged with the Acting Editor, Max Farley at (mmff2@bigpond.net.au) as **early as possible** but no later than 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 readers can reproduce it in whole or part with acknowledgement. Material should preferably be in electronic form.

NEW MEMBERS

We are pleased indeed to welcome to membership:

David Coleman (Gordon); Susan Ryerson (Epping) and Robert Smith (Beacon Hill)

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

1. Answer: The Pacific Highway was not named until after the bridge was opened. In earlier times parts of its general route were called Ball's Track, Pennant Hills Road, Lane Cove Road and Gordon Road. Lieutenant Ball (*Balls Head*) was a First Fieeter who accompanied Governor Phillip on his journey to Bungarook near Roseville Bridge in April 1788. Ball returned overland along the ridge. No doubt he followed an Aboriginal track.

2. Answer: They were all "artist potters" - Janet Mansfield (nee Anderson) of Ray St, Turramurra; Nell and Win Holden of Winton St, Warrawee; and Margaret Tuckson AM (nee Bissett) of Lucinda Av, Wahroonga. (We strongly suspect there are other widely recognised artist potters from Ku-ring-gai who are not listed here. Do you know of any?)

DID YOU KNOW?

It was timber for naval ships and for building which first attracted settlement in Ku-ring-gai. The Government established the Lane Cove Sawing Establishment at the foot of Fiddens Wharf Road in 1809. The River was the way timber and produce were sent to Sydney and supplies brought in.

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 from 10am to 2pm 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

Sat 1 Sept	Family History - 11am Members Discussion Western Australian and general resources - 2pm General Meeting: Members' Contributions Topic: <i>Show and Tell- "My Grandmother's ???"</i>
Fri 14 Sept	Fisk Memorial celebration
Wed 19 Sept	7.30pm - KHS General Meeting - KHS Annual Meeting Speaker - Jo Harris <i>Early Wireless & Ku-ring-gai Connections</i>
Sat 6 Oct	Family History - 11am Members Discussion
Wed 17 Oct	2pm - KHS General Meeting Speaker: Tony Dawson Topic: James Meehan - A Most Excellent Surveyor
Sat/Sun 26/27 Oct	Lithgow Tour
Sat 3 Nov	Family History

ADMINISTRATION

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Curator	Jennifer Harvey	9489 6390
Family History		
Leader:	Jo Harris	9489 4393
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