



# HERITAGE

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*The slab hut housing Hazelbrook wood supplying saw bench business owned by Joseph (left) and Florence (centre) Taggett circa 1920s. Photograph courtesy Ken Goodlet*

## Those Amazing Slab Huts

by Paul Wheeldon

Our earliest pioneers became renowned for their building expertise in the construction of their dwellings.

The Australian outback settler was also famous for his versatile use of the closest materials at hand.

If he had easily quarried stone and little timber, even if he had only the most elementary idea of masonry, he would probably build his habitation in stone, either in perhaps a two room hut or, if his family requirements called for greater accommodation, he would construct a cottage of several rooms.

If he was somewhat of a tradesman at all he would build a pitched roof and if it were to be a better class dwelling he would roof it in split shingles in preference to perhaps a bark roof.

By comparison the majority of outback huts or small cottages were of wooden or slab construction. The early settler learnt quickly that the old English

'wattle and daub' construction was not in any way suitable for the Australian climate.

The most common early constructions were of the 'vertical slab' type.

There were of course a considerable number of variations in their construction in this type alone.



***Wingebelaley formerly Cullenbenbong, a slab hut built by Bernard O'Reilly in the Kanimbla Valley and immortalised in his son's book named like the hut. Photograph courtesy Ian Jack 1997***

Primarily the frame of the building was erected, commencing with the corner posts, good solid logs of the desired height were let into the ground at least a half metre.

According to the degree of performance required they were either left round or adzed or broad axed into square shape.

Door openings and window outlets were generally indicated by posts.

In the more permanent buildings a base and top plate were prepared again not necessarily squared, by cutting a channel of perhaps 1 ½ inches wide and two inches deep in which to set the adzed and squared ends of the split up-right slabs.

Very often the based ends of the slabs were merely let into the ground, where, of course, they ultimately rotted.

The discriminating builder always used a good base plate set up off the ground on a foundation of stones and lime mortar to prevent rotting.

# Stringy bark was the preferred timber for split slabs

The split edges of the slabs were nearly always adzed or squared off to ensure the best possible fit between slabs.

The roof frame was constructed from round timber 'saplings' (small young trees). It was a pitched roof often with 'hip' ends.

In an ordinary dwelling it was invariably roofed with stringy bark, or perhaps, if it was a fair size better class cottage, it may have used a wooden shingle roof requiring very much more roofing battens which has to be sawn.

Hence we do not find any real early primitive huts or houses with shingle roofs.

The early settler only had modest tools and labour so he built in the first instance the most modest dwelling.

The average settler's tool consisted of perhaps an adze, several sizes of augurs and the like, a hand-made driving maul and a set of splitting wedges, an axe, a broad or squaring axe, several hammers, a crosscut saw and possibly a shovel, crowbar and pick or mattock.

Possibly among the greater skills was the selection and preparation of the materials.

Stringy bark was the preferred timber for split slabs, or was it because there was a greater abundance of that timber?

Not only did the selected wood split straight but it was among the most durable of timber.

The discriminating timber worker was particularly fussy about selecting his trees.

It was generally accepted that either the white or red stringy bark was suitable but the tree that grew in the valley or creek beds was the best to split.

A chip would be struck off a tree under selection and the chip split readily in the hand it followed the tree would be a splitter.

Trees off the higher ground were generally the last choice, and if possible were to be avoided for this purpose.

The bark would be used for the roof and again called for some skill in its preparation.

The length would be cut around the top and bottom and then a zig-zag cut would be made from top to bottom and the whole sheet of bark peeled off in one piece. The art of preparing the bark for the roof so

that it would not split was often a guarded secret by some.

It consisted of keeping it rolled up and almost immediately stood over a small fire so that it was virtually a chimney.

According to the condition of the bark it would be roasted, so to speak, for perhaps half-an-hour and then probably turned end for end to complete the process.

The sheets were then carefully laid out on the ground and weighted down flat before being placed on the roof.

It was generally conceded that this heating process also increased its waterproof qualities.

When the bark was placed in position it was generally held down by further timber placed on top of it and dowel pegged to keep it together.

Later, of course, both wire and nails were often used.

The tree was felled by either axe or cross-cut saw.

The slabs were split with maul and wedges.

As regards early huts etc. nails were virtually unprocurable and all jointing was either by mortice or with tenon or dowel pegs.

Yet another variation of the slab hut was the 'drop hatch' construction.

Much more demanding in skill than its more common vertical slab brother, it

was considered a more substantial construction, though in actual fact it has not really proved to be. Slabs were mostly adzed both inside and outside.

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***The Coble family home at Yass in the 1860s (the author's paternal grandmother's family). Often the new house beside the older one and the other was used for other purposes.***

# ‘Another era of an early colonial dwelling has passed...’

All posts, door and window openings were usually channelled down each side.

The specially prepared slabs were then dropped into their correct recesses from the top of the wall and thus laid horizontally one over the other.

More often than not the fireplace was externally of slab with an interior of clay and stone.

Some refinements included the caulking between the slabs with clay mortar generally mixed with animal urine or ox blood.

Later strips of zinc or galvanised iron were tacked between the slabs.

Very often in the primitive huts the earthen floors were of clay, cow dung and urine, which made a fine hard floor.



A hut is generally considered to be a dwelling of two rooms – one portion the living quarters and the other the sleeping area.

On the other hand there have been and still are some quite substantial homes of slab.

Many of these larger slab homes provided comfortable living.

Many had wooden floors and often plaster-lined and offered many refinements.

Such places are to be seen still in use in many areas of eastern Australia.

The earlier dwellings were often lined with newspapers which were continually added to, eventually getting quite thick.

The ceiling was often just suspended hessian or calico.

A somewhat later development many of these dwellings had all refinements including glass windows.

In the primitives the windows were just small opening doors suspended on leather or green hide to act as hinges.

Often the split inside of the slab was adzed to smooth it down and often a verandah was attached over the one end and only door entrance.

It is a tribute to the builders and their selection of timbers that their durability is responsible for their continued use today.

They have outlived their bark or shingle roof and are to be seen with replaced galvanised iron.

Many of them owe the change to iron for the inclusion of an additional verandah or so.

Another era of an early colonial dwelling has passed with the advancement of time.

***Pictured above a slab hut in the village of Duramana, some 15 kilometres north west of Bathurst. Photograph courtesy Ken Goodlet.***

***At left: a slab hut in Queensland ca 1880. Courtesy Queensland State Library. Continued page 4***



## Those amazing slab huts

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### Building implements and their meanings

**Adze:** An ancient type of edge tool dating back to the stone-age.

Used for smoothing or carving wood in hand working, similar to an

axe but with the head mounted perpendicular to the handle.

**Augur:** A drilling device, or drill bit, that usually includes a rotating helical screw blade called a 'flighting' to act as a screw conveyor to remove the drilled out material.

The rotation of the blade causes the material to move out of the hole being drilled.

**Broadaxe:** A large broad headed axe used for shaping logs by hewing.

**Maul:** A large hammer, heavy wood splitting tool resembling both axe and hammer.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

PAUL WHEELDON the author of *HERITAGE's* front page story, *Those amazing slab huts* is a member of the Nepean District Historical Society and a committee member of the Nepean Family History Society.

Other memberships include the Goulburn and District Historical Society, the Goulburn District Family History Society also the Collector and District Historical Association. He has contributed articles to a number of these societies.

Paul spent almost all his working career in the University sector, mostly at the University of Sydney and the University of London. He also had some memorable years as Secretary to the Anglican Bishop of Southwark in London.

Recently he was made redundant from the University of Sydney. This has now allowed him to concentrate his time on his passion for family history and local history.

In 1988, the bicentenary year, he organised a family reunion for the Wheeldon family at Collector, releasing a book, *Another Time, Another Place* to coincide with that reunion.

Under the direction of the Anglican Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn, Paul will be releasing a book on St. Matthias' *Currawang* (near Lake George).

This will be a history of the church and those who are interred in the cemetery. It is to be released in February 2015 to coincide with the 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the church.

Following this another publication of *Currawang* local history will be released. The area covered will be Tirranna, Komungla (previously Bangalore), Thornford, Spring Valley and Currawang through to Collector.

A feature of this local history will be the Currawang copper mines, the largest copper producer in New South Wales from 1866 to 1872.

This article has previously appeared in Nepean District Historical Society's newsletter, *The Arms Chronicle* No. 64 February 2014.



**Paul Wheeldon**

## Oldest known piece of Earth

Scientists using two different age-determining techniques have shown that tiny zircon crystal found on a sheep station in Western Australia is the oldest known piece of our planet, dating back 4.4 billion years. In a recent edition of the journal *Nature Geoscience*, researchers have reported that the discovery indicates that Earth's crust formed relatively soon after the planet formed and the gem was a remnant of it. John Valley a University of Wisconsin geoscience professor who led the research, said the findings suggest the Earth was not as harsh a place as many scientists have thought. The finding supports the notion of a "cool early Earth" where temperatures were low enough to sustain oceans, and perhaps life, earlier than previously thought.



## An opinion from the editor...

# Western crossing has combined commemoration and celebration

In an address I gave at the recent annual general meeting of BMACHO and circulated to members, I may have given the impression that the activities so far in the Western Crossings 2013-15 program were more celebration and little commemoration.

On reflection it is probably fair to state that in fact there was considerable commemoration as well as celebration.

Although individuals and bodies such as National Trust and the RAHS had been floating ideas for the bicentenary celebrations, the Western Crossings commemoration had its genesis with BMACHO.

However, it was quickly and correctly recognised that this organisation did not have the resources to manage such a venture. BMACHO's committee asked the then long serving president of the Royal Australian Historical Society Associate Professor Ian Jack to explore with the RAHS Council, the idea of co-ordinating the project.

It was pleasing when the RAHS quickly took up the challenge and Professor David Carment, AM very ably took on the role of the first Western Crossings Committee chairman which he continued to do when he became the president of the RAHS.

I recall soon after David took on the task of chairman he, Ian Jack (then the president of the RAHS) and I (then president of BMACHO) met one Sunday afternoon in my home to look at objectives and parameters for the Western Crossings Committee as it was to become known.

From that informal meeting there came a strong recommendation that the commemoration of the bicentenary should be from the period 2013 – 2015 embracing the anniversary of a series of inter – related events after the 1813 exploration by Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson. George William Evans began his survey for a roadway across the Blue Mountains in November 1813 and went as far as the future Bathurst; William Cox then supervised the construction of the road from July 1814 to January 1815 and then Governor Lachlan Macquarie accompanied by Mrs Elizabeth Macquarie travelled along the new road in April and May 1815 and selected the site of Bathurst.

There is no doubt all those who attended the Western Crossings Committee meetings from the very earliest meeting, were in agreement, time and time again, that the Crossings was a commemoration of all who had crossed, from the very earliest Aboriginal crossings to the crossing by Governor Lachlan Macquarie and Mrs Elizabeth Macquarie and party in 1815.

The European crossings from 1813 are not a celebration for the Aboriginal people and there were many commemorations of Indigenous crossings held during 2014, like the Ancestral Pathways walks organised by Auntie Sharyn Halls, the official opening of The Gully at Katoomba with interpretive signage, the commemoration walk 'Jummangunda Ngunninga' walk from Bardens Lookout to Mt York.

The excellent exhibition in Hartley *A Moment in Time* curated by Joan Kent starting with a very comprehensive history of the Wiradjuri people, through to Governor Lachlan Macquarie is one of the lasting commemorations as is the Western Crossing room at the Mt Victoria Museum and there are others.

As I stated in my annual report,... 'Credit must go to the Royal Australian Historical Society for its role in overseeing through the Western Crossings Committee the co-ordination of the celebration. This committee brought together organisations from Blacktown to Bathurst; descendants of those involved with what has been described as the first crossing of the Blue Mountains by Europeans; local Indigenous groups; as well as others to promote and co-ordinate this part of the celebration and will continue to do so until 2015.

'Unfortunately, the celebration has not yet attracted major financial support from government with most of the events being funded by local organisations and sponsorship from local business and individuals.

'The State government did provide a grant of \$80,000 to the Royal Australian Historical Society and this was distributed to various groups and activities involved in the centenary. This grant was negotiated between Professor David Carment and the then Premier of NSW Barry O'Farrell.'

**John Leary, OAM – president, Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage Organisations Inc and editor of *HERITAGE*.**

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Nepean District Historical Society member Paul Wheeldon in this article writes about the earliest pioneers housing and how the early settlers became renowned for their building expertise in the construction of their dwellings.

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There are no family secrets left hidden in David Carment's descriptive narrative of Sir John Sulman, his second wife Annie and the generations of descendants over more than a century's association with the Blue Mountains.

**Page 32 The Lithgow church that helped the Chinese**

**Revolution** Ray Christison a regular contributor to *HERITAGE* who can always find something quirky in history, in writing about churches in this piece, neatly spins the yarn about a would-be builder who ended up being the personal confidante of Madame Chiang Kai-Shek.

**Page 23 Katoomba's unique World War 1 memorial**

In 1919 Gearin's Hotel was being refurbished when carpenter, Ted Stratford, was knocked unconscious when struck on the head by falling timber. Joan Edward writes, this was the catalyst for the opening of Katoomba Hospital more than a decade later.

**Page 30 What happened here 4000 years ago?** A genetic study has found ancestors of modern Indians may have come to Australia about 4,000 years before Europeans colonised the continent. Eugene Stockton proposes a possible scenario.

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### Pictorial



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# A knighted architect and patron of the arts, his wife a renowned community worker and photographer, and their family from the 18<sup>th</sup> century to today ... the Sulmans in the Blue Mountains

By Emeritus Professor of History,  
Charles Darwin University  
David Carment, AM.

## Introduction

Thank you for the invitation to speak. I am pleased to be here as I have a longstanding interest in the Blue Mountains and support the work of the Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage Organisations.

My mother's family, the Sulmans, first became associated with the Blue Mountains during the late nineteenth century and with Woodford Academy in the early twentieth century.

Today I want to explain why that association commenced through regular long summer visits and developed after the family acquired Kihilla in Lawson as their Mountains residence before focussing on three family members: my great grandfather the architect, town planner and patron of the arts Sir John Sulman; his wife the community worker and photographer Annie, Lady Sulman; and their son, my grandfather the racing car driver Tom Sulman.

All lived for long periods in the Blue Mountains. I briefly conclude by showing how the family connection continues through to the present.

## A summer retreat from the city

The historian Julia Horne explains that from the 1880s the Blue Mountains came 'to be seen as restorative for those seeking peace and quiet from the daily grind, as well as those recuperating from a range of illnesses'.

Late nineteenth century discussion 'focused on the beneficial effects of a dry inland climate at altitudes higher than sea level'. By the end of the century the Blue Mountains were particularly valued 'for their pure air and cool climate during summer months, a retreat from the hot and tiring life of the city'.<sup>1</sup>

These were the principal motivations for John Sulman's migration to Australia and his discovery of the Blue Mountains. Born in England in 1849, he was a successful architect there but migrated to Australia



Ernest Brougham Decker, *The Three Sisters, Katoomba, Blue Mountains NSW, 1898* (Macleay Museum, The University of Sydney)

with his invalid first wife Sarah Clark Sulman, formerly Redgate, and young son Arthur in 1885 after receiving medical advice that Sarah's tuberculosis was so serious that she could only survive in a warm climate.

They decided to settle in Sydney, where John quite quickly became a prominent architect and began his concerns with town planning and the arts. His other two children, Florence (known as Florrie) and Edith (known as Edie), joined John, Sarah and Arthur from England in 1886.<sup>2</sup>

Sarah's condition, unfortunately, deteriorated. She died at the end of 1888.

<sup>1</sup> Julia Horne, *The Pursuit of Wonder: How Australia's Landscape was Explored, Nature Discovered and Tourism Unleashed*, The Miegunyah Press, Melbourne, 2005, pp 135-136.

<sup>2</sup> Zenaida S Edwards, 'The Life and Work of Sir John Sulman 1849-1934', Doctor of Philosophy thesis, University of Technology Sydney, 2006, Vol II, Ch 1.

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Before then, in searching for a location that would improve her health, John first encountered the Blue Mountains.

In a letter of November 1885, he notes that 'the chief objection to Sydney is the moist enervating climate of the summer months and the more or less moisture laden sea breeze which blows all year round'.

It was necessary for the '4 hot months' that 'my wife must move to a place in the hills'.<sup>3</sup> Initially they preferred the New South Wales Southern Highlands but John also went to the Blue Mountains and writes of its 'bracing' climate.<sup>4</sup>

In summer 1886 he rented a cottage at Lawson, not far from the railway station.<sup>5</sup>

The summer of 1887-1888 was spent in Springwood, where John and Sarah made good friends. Florrie and Edie had school lessons in nearby Falconbridge with the children of a solicitor. It was during this period that John designed the Springwood Anglican church that I discuss later.<sup>6</sup>



*The Sulmans, Sydney, 1900.*

**Back row Florence (Florrie) (1876 - 1965), Arthur (1882 - 1971), front row Edith (Edie) (1878 - 1907), John (later Sir John Sulman) (1849 - 1935), Dorothy Joan (Joan) (1896 - 1973), Thomas Noel (Tom) (1899 - 1970), Annie Elizabeth (later Lady Sulman) (1864 - 1949), Geoffrey (1894 - 1916). Not present John Masefield (Jack) (1906 - 1959). (Sulman Family Archives).**

John was married again in 1893 to the Sydney born Annie Elizabeth Masefield, who while a young child was adopted into the wealthy and prominent Walker family as a companion for Eadith (later Dame Eadith) Walker, later a well-known philanthropist.

Between 1894 and 1906 John and Annie had four children: Geoffrey, Dorothy Joan (known as Joan), Thomas Noel (known as Tom) and John Masefield (known as Jack).<sup>7</sup>

Annie quickly became fond of the Blue Mountains so regular trips to them continued. Each summer was spent in one or other of the mountain resorts to save the children, John writes, 'from the enervating effects of the moist heat of Sydney'<sup>8</sup>. One year's summer stay was in a large cottage in Katoomba.

John describes a memorable walk then with some of his children and a local doctor as involving a route by: *the Narrow Neck to the State Mine under the Ruined Castle... and [Arthur's] refusal to return by the same route because of its length and insistence on making the direct cut across the valley via the wire rope trollies which carried the shale to Katoomba. It looked much shorter but was far more arduous and we had to descend quite a thousand feet to the creek and then climb two thousand to reach the Katoomba look-out where fortunately I found a buggy for hire and we drove home. It almost finished the Doctor who was short and rather stout.*<sup>9</sup>

Other locations visited during the late 1890s were Jenolan Caves and Mount Solitary.

It was also at this time that John and Annie began their interests in photography, in which Annie developed particular expertise.<sup>10</sup>

On Christmas Day 1899 their son Tom was born at the Chalet in Wentworth Falls.<sup>11</sup> The regular long summer stays in the Blue Mountains went on during the early twentieth century.

### Kihilla

To alleviate Geoffrey's digestive problems and Annie's rheumatism,<sup>12</sup> in October 1909 the Sulmans arranged to occupy Kihilla, sometimes called Kihilla Park, in Lawson with what a *Blue Mountains Echo* report describes as 'further improvements' being planned there under John's oversight.<sup>13</sup>

In February the following year he successfully applied to have a telephone service installed.<sup>14</sup> Some sources indicate that John purchased Kihilla in 1913 so until then he may have leased it.

While the Sulmans also had a home in Sydney, Kihilla was where the younger children mainly lived with servants and other staff for about 10 years. John and especially Annie were also quite frequently in residence.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>3</sup> John Sulman to English friends, 12 November 1885, in Zeny Edwards (comp), 'The Sulman Archives Held by the Family', July 1997, p 56.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p 60.

<sup>5</sup> John Sulman, 'Reminiscences', 1927, p 45, Sulman Family Archive (SFA).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 45-46.

<sup>7</sup> Edwards, 'The Life and Work of Sir John Sulman', Vol II, Chs 1-15.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p 60.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, pp 60-61.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, p 61.

<sup>11</sup> Annie Sulman, diary of births, deaths and marriages, SFA.

<sup>12</sup> Edwards, 'The Life and Work of Sir John Sulman', Vol II, pp 181-182.

<sup>13</sup> *The Blue Mountains Echo*, 30 October 1909.

<sup>14</sup> *The Blue Mountains Echo*, 26 February 1910.

<sup>15</sup> Nance Cooper, Lawson,

<http://www.dictionaryofsydney.org/entry/lawson>, accessed 10 February 2014; Edwards, 'The Life and Work of Sir John Sulman', Vol II, pp 181-182; Ln017 : Kihilla and Grounds | NSW Environment & Heritage,

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By this time Edie had died and Arthur, a pastoralist in North Queensland, was only an occasional visitor. The unmarried Florrie came more regularly.

In 1914 she published her much read two volumned *Popular Guide to the Wildflowers of New South Wales*,<sup>16</sup> which she later told me was inspired by her Blue Mountains experiences.



**The Sulmans, Kihilla about 1913. Back row Joan, Jack and Tom Back, front row Geoffery, John and Annie. Sulman Family Archive.**

Tom writes of Kihilla as: *an old mansion with verandahs all around it, big high ceilinged-rooms, standing in 22 acres of land a mile out of Lawson. There were stables, coach houses, and several outbuildings, a large orchard, and bushland – a kid’s paradise.*<sup>17</sup>

Kihilla was built in 1883. Largely unchanged since the Sulmans’ time, it is a complex of structures set in extensive landscaped grounds overlooking bushland to the north.

The principal house with its former stables and a small cottage are at the site’s north end. The former gardener’s cottage, now under separate ownership, is close to the Great Western Highway.

Kihilla’s attraction to the Sulmans must have been enhanced by its proximity to Lawson, one of the Blue Mountains’ most prosperous towns. It had a railway station, good shops, hotels, a post office, and, from 1918, electric power.

The Sulman family owned Kihilla until 1953 but ceased using it after John’s death in 1934. It was then leased out to a series of guesthouse proprietors.<sup>18</sup>

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID=1170677>, accessed 10 February 2014.

<sup>16</sup> Margaret Henry, ‘Sulman Florence (1876-1965), Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/sulman-florence-871/text15251>, accessed 12 February 2014.

<sup>17</sup> Tom Sulman, ‘Autobiography – July 1969’, pp 1-2, SFA.

<sup>18</sup> Ln017: Kihilla and Grounds.

<sup>19</sup> Personal knowledge.

<sup>20</sup> Kihilla Retreat & Conference Centre | Church Army Australia, <http://www.churcharmy.com.au/hire-conference-centre/>, accessed 11 February 2014.

Following Annie’s death in 1949, it was bequeathed to her grandchildren, the oldest of whom was my mother Diana aged only 22. They could not afford to keep the house and it was sold for what my father described as a pittance.<sup>19</sup> The Church Army Australia now uses it as a retreat and conference centre.<sup>20</sup>

Life at Kihilla was very varied. Although busy with a range of activities in Sydney, John got back as often as he could. Zeny Edwards’s biography describes him as having a ‘patriarchal disposition’ and being ‘a strict disciplinarian’ but ‘loving and fair in his duties as a father’.<sup>21</sup> He did not provide the children with pocket money but allowed them to earn as much as possible by cutting firewood, weeding the orchard and numerous other chores.

**‘The more we earned’, Tom recalls, ‘the better pleased father was’.**<sup>22</sup>

There were frequent family picnics in the nearby bush. They involved large wicker baskets full of food, rugs and other utensils. Outdoor meals also sometimes occurred under a shelter.

Until 1912, Geoffrey, whose poor health prevented regular school attendance, and Tom shared a tutor at Kihilla.<sup>23</sup> Tom, and later Jack, then attended Woodford Academy, about which I later say more.

Geoffrey loved building model aeroplanes and steam engines in his Kihilla workshop and was fascinated by motor vehicles. On one occasion he and Tom secretly built a full-sized glider, which crashed and disintegrated with Tom as its pilot. He luckily escaped with only a few bruises.<sup>24</sup>

Unable for health reasons to enlist in the Australian Imperial Force after the First World War started and unsuccessful in his attempts to work in the munitions industry, as an unmatriculated student Geoffrey attended engineering classes at the University of Sydney but was often at Kihilla until in 1916 he went to England. There he became an officer in the Royal Flying Corps before dying in an aircraft accident the following year.<sup>25</sup>

It was a tragedy from which Annie never fully recovered.

<sup>21</sup> Edwards, ‘The Life and Work of Sir John Sulman’, Vol II, pp 316-317.

<sup>22</sup> Sulman, ‘Autobiography’, p 6.

<sup>23</sup> Various photographs, SFA.

<sup>24</sup> Sulman, ‘Autobiography’, p 2.

<sup>25</sup> Keith Jones, ‘The Sulman Letters’, in *The University of Sydney Record*, no 1, 1995; National Archives (Great Britain), AIR/76/490; Students at the University of Sydney – Senate – The University of Sydney, [http://sydney.edu.au/senate/students\\_WWI\\_casualties.shtml](http://sydney.edu.au/senate/students_WWI_casualties.shtml), accessed 15 February 2014.

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Joan was dux of the Blue Mountains Girls School at Lawson in 1910.<sup>26</sup> She later married Tom's Woodford Academy friend Dr Bruce Shallard, the medical practitioner son of a well-known Glenbrook apiarist.<sup>27</sup>

In 1912 John bought a family car. Tom describes it as: *a 35 horse power seven-seater SPA, a 4-cylinder, 4-speed Italian car weighing about two tons. It was a beautiful job and quite fast for that period – 65 mph – and very up-to-date with electric side and tail lights and a siren, though it had no generator to keep the battery charged. Unluckily it had loads of brass work which was my special responsibility – no shiny brass, no ride – still, we were all very proud of it.*<sup>28</sup>

With Geoffrey as driver, it took them all over the Mountains on many enjoyable outings. In December 1913 a fire menaced Kihilla until a combination of volunteers and rain put it out.<sup>29</sup>

Another fire came close to the main house in February 1926. The Katoomba Fire Brigade was called and a 'difficult fight ensued', *The Blue Mountains Echo* reports, 'before it was beaten out'.<sup>30</sup>

After John's death, the President of the Blue Mountains Shire Council, Councillor Percy Wilson, remarked that he was 'very generous to us on the Mountains, and at Lawson especially...that fine property of his is a credit to the place'.<sup>31</sup> There is now a Sulman Road close to Kihilla.

### John Sulman's Blue Mountains designs

John's most permanent contributions to the Blue Mountains were the structures he is known to have designed there, all still standing and all with recognised heritage significance.

The first was Christ Church Anglican Church in Springwood, constructed in 1888 and 1889. Now a landmark on the Great Western Highway, it is a fine sandstone building with a simple but sensitively designed interior.

The sandstone is local and the roof is slate. Later extensions to the church to create the chancel, north

transept and tower are in keeping with John's original design.

The New South Wales Office of Environment and Heritage Statement of Significance notes that the church's interior 'has an unusually peaceful atmosphere created by the use of pale sandstone and stained timber and restrained detailing'. John's original conception as seen from his drawings, though, was never finished. This included an eastern and a western transept at the church's rear and a large crowning tower between the two.<sup>32</sup>

Another John Sulman church in the Blue Mountains is the former Holy Trinity Anglican Church at Wentworth Falls, also constructed in 1888 and 1889. The Office of Environment and Heritage does not acknowledge him

as the architect but Zeny Edwards's carefully researched biography does. It is a well-built wooden structure with a steeply pitched corrugated galvanised steel roof. There are a side entry porch and a single bay sanctuary. The building is now used as a hall.<sup>33</sup>



### ***A Blue Mountain outing in the family car about 1912. Back seat – Joan, Tom, Annie, Florrie; front seat – Geoffrey, Jack, John. (Sulman Family Archive).***

Perhaps the grandest of John's Blue Mountains designs is Khandala, also known as Kardinia Park, in Katoomba, completed in 1898. A picturesque house in the Federation Queen Anne style, it is situated above a terraced garden where it has uninterrupted views over the Jamison Valley to Mount Solitary, the Ruined Castle and Narrow Neck.

The house is timber framed on a brick base and clad with wide rusticated weatherboards on the ground floor. Some chimneys are topped with corbels incorporating bricks and terracotta pots. A verandah is on the house's southeast corner.

To the north of the house is the original coach house, a large gabled structure. Ernest and Margaret Young engaged John to design their Katoomba retreat in 1897. By the end of 1898 the house was ready.

<sup>26</sup> *The Blue Mountains Echo*, 30 December 1910.

<sup>27</sup> *The Richmond River Herald and Northern Districts Advertiser*, 17 January 1928.

<sup>28</sup> Sulman, 'Autobiography', p 5.

<sup>29</sup> *Nepean Times*, 11 December 1913.

<sup>30</sup> *The Blue Mountains Echo*, 19 February 1926.

<sup>31</sup> *Times*, 25 August 1934. *Nepean*

<sup>32</sup> Christ Church Anglican Church | NSW Environment & Heritage,

<http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritag>

[eltemDetails.aspx?ID=5045251](http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritag/ItemDetails.aspx?ID=5045251), accessed 10 February 2014; Edwards, 'The Life and Work of Sir John Sulman', Vol III, p 154.

<sup>33</sup> WF003 : Holy Trinity Anglican Church | NSW Environment & Heritage, <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritag/ItemDetails.aspx?ID=1170021>, accessed 10 February 2014; Edwards, 'The Life and Work of Sir John Sulman', Vol III, p 154.

Continued from page 10

In the original plan a drawing room, dining room and nursery were on the ground floor.

Before the house was completed, the Youngs had another child with a further baby expected, so a playroom was added to the original design.

More than most late nineteenth and early twentieth century retreats in the Blue Mountains, Khandala represents, according to the Office of Environment and Heritage, 'many of the attributes sought out by those who could afford to develop a summer home in the mountains'. It is also 'a particularly fine example of the Federation Queen Anne style'.<sup>34</sup>



**Khandala (also known as Kardinia Park)  
Katoomba 2011. (Century 21)**



**Christ Church, Springwood about 2013.  
(commons.wikipedia.org)**



**Former Holy Trinity Church Rectory, Wentworth Falls. No date. (pigott-gorrie.blogspot.com)**



**Former Holy Trinity Church, Wentworth Fall about 2013. (pigott-gorrie.blogspot.com)**

Very different is the smaller and far simpler former Holy Trinity Rectory in Wentworth Falls erected in 1906, still extant but no longer on its original site. Limited funds only allowed for a quite basic timber structure and there was a delay of six years between John doing the plans and the Rectory being built.<sup>35</sup>

The Honour Gardens in Lawson are most recent of John's Blue Mountains designs.

They were partly a labour of love in memory of Geoffrey. He and Annie also endowed in Geoffrey's name a memorial prize, later converted into a memorial lectureship, at The University of Sydney. From 1919 John chaired the New South Wales War Memorials Advisory Board, whose name was changed in 1921 to the Public Monuments Advisory Board.



**War memorial and entry to Honour Gardens, Honour Avenue, Lawson 2014. (David Carment)**

<sup>34</sup> K001 : Khandala | NSW Environment & Heritage, <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID=1170734>, accessed 10 February 2014;

Edwards, 'The Life and Work of Sir John Sulman', Vol III, p 172.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p 179.

### Continued from 11

The state's Local Government Act required its approval of design and site before any monument could be erected in a public space.

As the historian Ken Inglis writes, John 'put much energy into the job of influencing how other people commemorated their war dead'.<sup>36</sup>

The First World War had a major impact on Lawson as it did on other Australian small towns. Many memorial gardens were planted across Australia but Lawson's are now unusual in retaining their original form.

Working closely with the Blue Mountains Shire Engineer, John initially created the gardens in 1918 and 1919. The layout shows his love of order and symmetry.

Permission to erect a substantial archway at the Avenue's entrance was granted in 1920. Improvements John proposed to the Shire Council, including the stonewalling on the Gardens' western side, were implemented in 1928.

John supervised this work without a fee. Geoffrey's name is inscribed on the stone arch war memorial at the gardens' entrance that was designed by Sir Charles Rosenthal and completed in 1923.<sup>37</sup>

### Annie Sulman: community worker and photographer

Annie's early life was tragic.

The granddaughter of an Irish convict and the daughter of an insolvent Sydney schoolteacher who died in an asylum for the insane, before she was 12 years old her parents and both her siblings were all dead, and the Walker family adopted her.<sup>38</sup>

Her difficult early years combined with the Walkers' strong belief that wealthy people like them had a duty to help the less fortunate and participate in community activities, led to her active support of a range of worthy causes.

She took a quite prominent part in the 1913 celebrations at Lawson to mark the centenary of the first known European crossing of the Blue Mountains. At a ceremony in Lawson on May 28, 1913, she drove a peg on the spot where an obelisk to the explorer William Lawson was to be erected.<sup>39</sup>

For many years she served as President of the Lawson Branch of the Red Cross. In April 1915 she presided at a successful Red Cross fund raising concert in Lawson, at the end of which she strongly appealed to Lawson's women to join the 40 already

engaged there in Red Cross work.<sup>40</sup>

At about the same time, the Red Cross published her poem *The Call of the Red Cross* that revealed intense wartime patriotism but not any noticeable poetic skills. It begins:

*For the Love of King and Country!*  
*There cometh oe'r the sea,*  
*The call to Every Woman*  
*In our land so wide and free*  
And finishes:  
*Oh! Britain, grand old Britain,*  
*We send across the sea,*  
*Our kitchens, lorries, motors,*  
*And all for love of thee.*<sup>41</sup>

So far as I am aware, it does not appear in any poetry anthology. In an address to the Lawson and District Horticultural Show in February 1922, she expressed particular concern for the returned soldiers whose nerves were shattered at the front, strongly recommending gardening as an activity that would restore their mental well-being.<sup>42</sup>



Annie 1931. (National Library Australia)

A *Sydney Morning Herald* report of March 1925 in commenting on what it called Annie's 'unfailing service' to the Red Cross in Lawson and elsewhere remarks that no one 'has done more in quiet service to invalid retired nurses'.<sup>43</sup>

Another passion was photography, a skill that she developed during the 1880s and 1890s. In addition to taking numerous photographs of relations, friends and

<sup>36</sup> K S Inglis, *Sacred Places: War Memorials in the Australian Landscape*, The Miegunyah Press, Melbourne, 1998, p 150.

<sup>37</sup> Cooper, 'Lawson'; Edwards, 'The Life and Work of Sir John Sulman', Vol III, p 187; Ln014 : Honour Gardens Conservation Area | NSW Environment & Heritage, <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/ViewHeritageItemDetails.aspx?ID=1170564>, accessed 17 February 2014; Register of War Memorials in NSW, <http://www.war memorialsregister.nsw.gov.au/content/lawson-war-memorial>, accessed 19 February 2014.

<sup>38</sup> David Carment, research in progress for a biography of Annie Sulman.

<sup>39</sup> *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 29 May 1913.

<sup>40</sup> *The Blue Mountains Echo*, 9 April 1915.

<sup>41</sup> A.E.S., *The Call of the Red Cross*, no place or date of publication.

<sup>42</sup> *The Blue Mountains Echo*, 17 February 1922.

<sup>43</sup> *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 26 March 1925.

Continued from page 12

places, she was expert in photographing Australian wildflowers, many of which were in bush near Kihilla.

The major Australian publisher Angus and Robertson produced her two books of photographs *Some Familiar Wild Flowers* and *Australian Wild Flowers*.<sup>44</sup> Both were well received and reprinted.

In their prefaces she states her modest purposes. The first book's preface reads in part: *This small collection of wild flower photographs was originally started entirely for my own use and pleasure; but finding many others similarly interested, I am making this attempt to share it with them.*<sup>45</sup>

The second says: *As one flower-lover to others, I offer some more photographs of our most familiar and easily-found wild flowers, hoping that among them they may find some old friends and that, in looking for those unknown to them, a fresh interest may be added to their rambles in the bush. In no sense of the word am I a botanist, hence the flowers in my book are simply arranged as fancy dictated, without regard to order or family.*<sup>46</sup>

#### Tom Sulman: the beginnings of a life with motor vehicles and his education at Woodford Academy

From an early age Tom was obsessed with motor vehicles. The sections of his autobiography dealing with life in the Blue Mountains discuss little else.

He recalls in some detail how in about 1908 he had his first ride in a motorcar, which the family hired for a journey from Katoomba to Jenolan Caves.

'The trip', he writes: *was very little faster than the usual transport – a coach and four – but what a thrill! Even though it boiled furiously and numerous stops had to be made to cool down and refill the radiator, and we had to get out and walk up Victoria Pass on the return run.*<sup>47</sup>

When he was about 10 Tom decided to become a racing car driver. He built a billycart with pram wheels, a steering wheel cut out of the side of a butter box, and cable and bobbin steering.

He then constructed a track down the slope of Kihilla's orchard with various types of corners, a hard surface of rolled cinders and a fairly steep gradient. He practised for hours on this.

At weekends Geoffrey timed him with a stopwatch and started him off with a homemade flintlock pistol.



**Tom on his billy cart, Kihilla, about 1910. (Sulman Family Archive).**

Later Tom built what he called a 'de luxe' model with pushbike wheels that he used to go down a steep hill on the main road. This proved his undoing. The steering failed and as there were no brakes the billycart went over a cliff and was destroyed. Tom only just managed to jump clear.<sup>48</sup>

He entered Woodford Academy as its 83<sup>rd</sup> enrolment on February 2, 1912. The school was then only five years old.

Located in a former inn built during the early 1830s, with John McManamey as owner and rector it offered a curriculum based on the liberal arts. Commercial subjects were also available.

Rather oddly, the admissions register describes Tom as a Congregationalist<sup>49</sup> although John had abandoned Congregationalism for Anglicanism shortly after arriving in Australia, he and Annie were married in an Anglican church, and Tom described himself as Church of England when he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force in 1918.<sup>50</sup>

Tom's autobiography says very little about his schooling and does not even directly mention Woodford Academy. 'I am afraid', he observes, *I could never boast of my scholastic ability, the main trouble being that most of my schooldays were during the war and my ambition was to follow in Geoffrey's footsteps and enlist in the Royal Flying Corps, beyond this I could not think.*<sup>51</sup>

That, however, is something of an exaggeration, as Geoffrey did not join the Flying Corps until 1916. Tom's best subject was mathematics.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>44</sup> A E Sulman, *Some Familiar Wild Flowers*, Angus & Robertson Ltd, Sydney, no date [1915]; A E Sulman, *Australian Wild Flowers*, Second Series, Angus & Robertson Ltd, Sydney, no date.

<sup>45</sup> Sulman, *Some Familiar Wild Flowers*, Prefatory Note.

<sup>46</sup> Sulman, *Australian Wild Flowers*, Preface.

<sup>47</sup> Sulman, 'Autobiography', p 1.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p 3.

<sup>49</sup> Admissions register, Woodford Academy; Woodford Academy – History – Blue Mountains Australia BMPH,

[http://infobluemountains.net.au/history/wood\\_ac.htm](http://infobluemountains.net.au/history/wood_ac.htm), accessed 16 February 2014.

<sup>50</sup> Sulman, 'Reminiscences', p 47; National Archives of Australia: B2455, SULMAN THOMAS NOEL, <http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au>, accessed 15 February 2014.

<sup>51</sup> Sulman, 'Autobiography', pp 7-8.

<sup>52</sup> Display on Tom Sulman, Woodford Academy, viewed 15 February 2014.

### Continued from page 13

He also performed quite well in athletics events.<sup>53</sup> He finished school at the end of 1917<sup>54</sup> but left a permanent legacy in the form of his name prominently carved into a desk.<sup>55</sup>

By October 1918 he was studying engineering at the University of Sydney but that may have been, like Geoffrey, as an unmatriculated student.<sup>56</sup> He maintained contact with the school, in 1922 being elected to the committee of the Woodford Old Boys' Union.<sup>57</sup>

Immediately after leaving school he worked on his brother Arthur's North Queensland station.<sup>58</sup> On November 5, 1918, just before the First World War ended and with his parents' reluctant agreement, he enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force. He was discharged in early January 1919.<sup>59</sup>

During the years at Woodford Academy, Tom continued to spend as much time as he could with motor vehicles. His main reading was motorcar and motorcycle magazines.

At the age of 15 he resurrected Geoffrey's old two and a quarter horsepower motorcycle from the scrap heap. After fitting it with a magneto and carburettor, he took it out on surreptitious rides until he got his licence and had the motorcycle registered at the end of 1916.

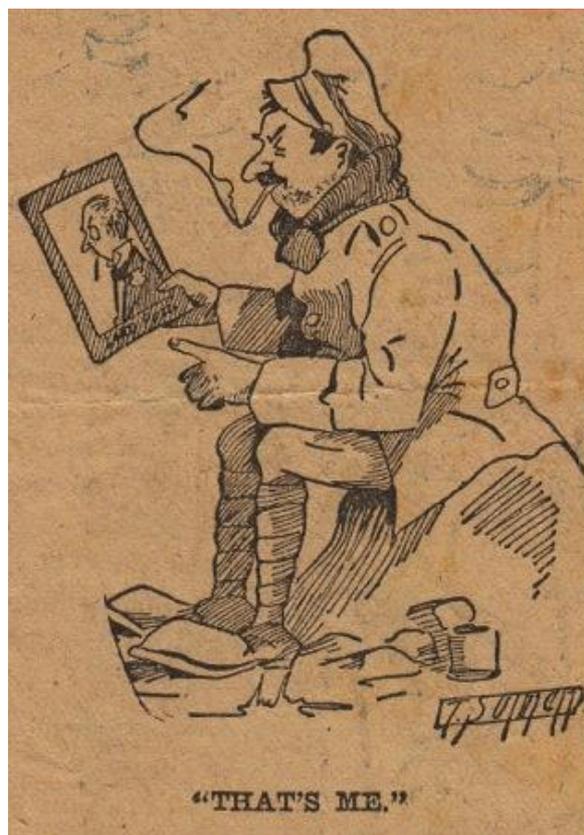
Because he could not afford much petrol, he ran the vehicle on kerosene taken from the household supply with a bottle of petrol in his pocket to start it up. The motorcycle broke down so frequently that Tom believed he must have pushed it further than he rode it.

Eventually it fell apart, sending Tom into a ditch as it did so. This was, he writes, 'the first time I broke my nose and had concussion, not the last by any means'. With John's financial help, he then bought a six horsepower racing motorcycle that proved more reliable.<sup>60</sup>

An accomplished pen and ink artist, Tom covered the costs of running this vehicle by regularly publishing cartoons in the Sydney newspaper *The World's News*.<sup>61</sup>

Geoffrey taught Tom to drive the family S.P.A. car around Kihilla's grounds in about 1914. Following Geoffrey's departure for England, John decided that once Tom got his licence he could take over Geoffrey's driving responsibilities.

Before then, because the car had been unused for quite a long time, Tom had to do a lot of mechanical work on it.



**Tom Sulman, "That's Me", cutting from "The World's News" 1917. (Sulman Family Archive)**

He then for about a year from the beginning of 1917 drove the family in the car every weekend. The first journey proved a disaster as the tyres were perished, resulting in five punctures.<sup>62</sup>

One journey involved, Tom recalls: a 1000-mile tour, quite a major undertaking in those days as all roads were un-Macadmised outside the major cities and garages few and far between.

*Luckily we had a practically no-trouble run, except for several punctures and a couple of broken springs which were expected with the bad roads, cart springs and no shock absorbers.*

*My father used to tell me to 'steady down' if the speed exceeded 40 mph, except when we were overtaking another car when he would cast a blind eye on the speedometer until we passed, explaining to my mother that the dust was not good for her.*<sup>63</sup>

Before Tom departed for North Queensland he taught Joan to drive the car. Because she was unable to start it, which required using a large handle, John replaced the S.P.A. with a 20 horsepower Dodge that was started more easily.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>53</sup> *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 19 November 1912; *Nepean Times*, 23 November 1912.

<sup>54</sup> Sulman, 'Autobiography', p 9.

<sup>55</sup> Viewed 15 February 2014.

<sup>56</sup> Certification of enrolment, University of Sydney, 9 October 1918, SFA.

<sup>57</sup> *Sunday Times*, 22 January 1922, p 2.

<sup>58</sup> Sulman, 'Autobiography', pp 9-11.

<sup>59</sup> National Archives of Australia, B2455.

<sup>60</sup> Sulman, 'Autobiography', pp 5-7.

<sup>61</sup> Tom Sulman, 'Fifty Years Racing', in *Australian Autosportsman*, January 1969, p 33.

<sup>62</sup> Sulman, 'Autobiography', p 8.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

Continued from page 14

Although mostly based in Sydney, Tom's participation in motor vehicle races and trials between 1919 and his death while racing at Bathurst in 1970 sometimes brought him back to the Blue Mountains.

He also until the late 1920s quite regularly stayed with the family at Kihilla. It was there during 1920 in Geoffrey's old workshop that he built a prototype of the Sulman Simplex cycle car that John financed.

This was a two-seater, light tourer powered by a 12 horsepower, twin-cylinder, air-cooled engine. Despite a solid rear axle, it had a sporty performance. Tom found business interests prepared to provide further finance and by 1923 had in Sydney built three more of the cars that were well received.

As the motoring journalist Pedr Davis tells the rest of the story: *Orders for the light car were most impressive and Tom stood by, ready to launch a public company and enter the production field with gusto. Unfortunately, Lord Austin chose that precise moment to invade the Australian market with his diminutive "Seven". Tom's backers panicked and cooled off abruptly. Plans for the public company disintegrated and Tom was left with a bundle of parts and a flattened bank balance.*<sup>65</sup>

## David Sulman Carment, AM

The author of this article Emeritus Professor of History, Charles Darwin University David Carment is the great grandson of Sir John Sulman and Lady Sulman who followed by their descendants have lived and/or been associated with the Blue Mountains for more than a century.

David a former president of the Royal Australian Historical Society and the inaugural president of the Western Crossings committee set up to coordinate the bicentenary of the first European crossing of the Blue Mountains activities, presented this paper at the 9<sup>th</sup> annual general meeting of BMACHO. David has had a distinguished career in academia and as the director of National Trust (Northern Territory).

He was recognised in the Order of Australia for services to the community as an advocate for the protection of Northern Territory cultural heritage, and to the scholarship and dissemination of knowledge of Northern Territory history.



## An enduring connection

Even after the Sulmans stopped using Kihilla in 1934, various family members in addition to Tom travelled to the Blue Mountains.

From the 1950s my own family went there quite frequently.

In 1957, for example, we stayed in a rented house on Cliff Drive in Katoomba, enjoying walks, picnics and car trips to various beauty spots that the Sulmans first saw during the late nineteenth century.

My mother Diana from time to time told stories of Kihilla, which she and her younger cousins once briefly owned.



**Tom's daughter Diana Inglis Carment (1927 – 2005) on holiday in the Blue Mountains, 1957. (Carment Family Archive)**

A few years ago I followed in my great grandmother Annie's footsteps by becoming involved in commemoration of the Blue Mountains' first European crossings.

A permanent family connection was re-established in 1987 when my sister Annie and her partner Vittorio Cintio bought a house in Wentworth Falls, the town where Tom Sulman was born. They have lived there ever since.

My now deceased parents regularly went to see them. My brother Tom and his family and I have done the same.

Three of Annie's five children, all educated at Korowal School in the Blue Mountains, have now left home but two live in other parts of the Mountains.

Her daughter Talulah's house is very close to Woodford Academy. They often return to Wentworth Falls, particularly for the lunches that Vittorio now organises on most Sundays where family and friends get together.

As frequently as possible these are outdoors, continuing the tradition established at Kihilla so many years ago.

<sup>65</sup> Pedr Davis, 'The Tom Sulman Story', in *Sports Car World*, December 1957, p 59.

## New faces on BMACHO management committee

There are three new faces on the management committee following the 9th annual general meeting of the association held recently at Woodford Academy recently.

They are Richard Woolley (Blue Mountains Historical Society), Suzanne Smith (Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society) and Roy Bennett (Mt Victoria & District Historical Society).

They replace Jean Winston (Mt Victoria and District Historical Society) Kevin Frappell (Glenbrook & District Historical Society who did not seek re-election and Doug Knowles (Glenbrook & District Historical Society who resigned late last year to devote more time to his society of which he has been the president for several years.

John Leary, OAM the inaugural president of BMACHO now in his 7<sup>th</sup> year at the helm returned to the office last year after a 2 year break due to ill health.

John welcomed the new committee members and congratulated those who were re-elected.

Those re-elected are Associate Professor Ian Jack (individual member) as vice president for the 9<sup>th</sup> year, Jan Koperberg (Blue Mountains Family History) as secretary/acting treasurer, Dick Morony (Springwood Historical Society) as membership officer, Scott Pollock (Everglades Historic House and Garden), Wendy Hawkes (Lithgow City Council's cultural heritage officer and manager of Eskbank House).

In welcoming them to office John said that present and past committee members had a wealth of knowledge and experience right across the heritage sector.

These committees had available to them members including those from academia,

the heritage/history professionals, and the amateur enthusiasts all of whom had proved to be invaluable.

BMACHO president John Leary has said the 2014 – 15 management committee will face many new and continuing challenges.

Among these issues will be the effect of anticipated government funding cuts, development of the proposed heritage trail promotion, the adequacy of and ability to sustain the level of service to members, a review of the association's constitution and vision, assistance to member societies in recruiting and retaining volunteers, further engagement with the Indigenous peoples and their cultural heritage and many more.

There will be many more activities associated with the 2013 – 15 Western Crossing Bicentenary commemorations in which individuals and various societies as well as BMACHO will support as the 3 year event moves further westward to Bathurst.

In presenting the president's report, John Leary praised the most improved professionalism of museum exhibits by organisation.

"I watch very little television. However, I do try to stay awake for any of David Attenborough's documentaries", Mr Leary said.

"Recently, I was enthralled when the wizardry of computer graphics, manipulated remnant fossilised bones to bring alive priceless but normally stuffy skeletal exhibits at the British Natural History Museum.

"When the museum closed for the night out came the creatures of the Jurassic era. Like the fabled wooden soldiers in the toy shop strutting their stuff as the clock struck midnight.



**Roy Bennett**



**Richard Woolley**



**Suzanne Smith**

"Instead of towering and fearsome reconstructed skeletons of dinosaurs bolted to the floor and wired to the roof, the giant brontosaurus roamed the galleries of this great museum, while menacing pterodactyls, the winged lizards flew above the exhibits and the Yeti humorously taunted the viewer from behind columns of the magnificent building.

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"I thought wouldn't it be great if local museums could produce computer graphic enhanced exhibits like those in the documentary.

"Then I was jolted out of my reverie.

"Wait a minute, I thought -- what about the Governor Macquarie Room and the dramatically improved curating of living history at the Mt Victoria Museum sufficient to attract a substantial grant from the National Library of Australia?

"What about the fabulous 'Red Admiral' exhibition on the life of Patrick White at Mt Wilson?

## **...the awesome exhibit acclaimed by the Governor of NSW**

"What about the awesome exhibit acclaimed by none other than the Governor of NSW, at Hartley Vale, the Joan Kent curated exhibit, 'A moment in time'?

"What about the innovative miners' bath house conversion into an auditorium media presentation at the Lithgow State Mines including the telling of the Fire in the Mine story which recently won two Museums & Galleries NSW awards?

"What about the ongoing first class exhibits at Norman Lindsay Gallery at Faulconbridge and 'Tarella in the grounds of the Blue Mountains Historical Society's property at Wentworth Falls?

"And how can anyone forget the visual delights of the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden at Mt Tomah and the spectacular all seasons gardens of Everglades.

"Then there is the intrigue of the Turkish Bath House again at Mt Wilson.



**Turkish Bath House at Mount Wilson**

"A century ago in 1914 a locomotive depot was established at Valley Heights and here we find perhaps not a living history but the actual locomotives that climbed the Blue Mountains in those early days of rail --- all steamed up and on show; while over Kurrajong way undergoing transformation is a spectacular collection of exhibits at the Transport Signal and Communication Museum.

"The Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society, Blue Mountains Historical Society, and the local studies units in the municipal libraries at Penrith, Springwood and Lithgow have well over 10,000 images catalogued and much of this now digitally archived.

"At Emu Plains there are thousands of photographs and local artefacts collected and curated by the Nepean & District Historical Society housed in the former Arms of Australia Inn built in 1893.



**Woodford Academy**

"Here at Woodford Academy we have a property that goes back to the 1830s as a wayside inn.

"At Scenic World in Katoomba, the Hammon family have done a fantastic job retracing and preserving the early mining cultural heritage of Jamison Valley combining it with a world class tourist attraction.

"And there's a lot more heritage sites, all of which are part of our cultural heritage, set in the wonderful UNESCO World Heritage listed Blue Mountains National Park.

"In commerce jargon we have the product let's go market it. And market it is what we are about to do.

"A bloke named Richard Woolley from Blue Mountains Historical Society attended one of our workshops in the Western Crossing Room at the Mount Victoria Museum earlier this year and in his own words came away inspired to do something about marketing a Heritage Trail and that very night e-mailed me his idea about marketing heritage throughout the region.

"I asked him to head up a working party comprising Wendy Hawkes from Lithgow's Eskbank House, Scott Pollock from Everglades and Lynn Collins BMCC museums adviser. Richard has some expertise in the field of marketing, Wendy could sell refrigerators to Eskimos, and Scott is Mr Can-do in all he aspires to do while Lynn brings a wealth of experience in museums and heritage.

### **SOME OF THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR**

"In this annual report from the president, I do not propose to go into detail on everything with which BMACHO and its constituent societies has been involved for the past 12 months, as most of it has been reported in the association's

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newsletter *HERITAGE* and  
other regular e-mailed bulletins.  
Rather I will only touch on one  
or two significant issues.

## THE FIRES

“The year 2013 will be remembered sadly as the year that nature in all her fury swept through the Blue Mountains, Lithgow and neighbouring districts destroying property including more than 200 homes. Fortunately, no lives were lost and this was in no small way due to the dedication and bravery of the volunteer firemen who often put their lives on the line to fight the insatiable monster. The fires brought out the best in people and this in itself is part of the cultural heritage of this region and in the years to come will become part of history.

“A number of our members were badly affected by the fires, Rob Cameron a former president of Mt Victoria & District Historical Society was one of those to lose his home while the Zig Zag Railway Co-op Ltd lost a great deal or had damaged a great deal of its rolling stock and equipment while the State Mines Museum at Lithgow was in direct line of the fires.

“The irreplaceable art collection at Norman Lindsay Galleries was hastily moved to safe storage and other individuals were evacuated for their own safety.

## THE WESTERN CROSSINGS 1813-1815 BICENTENARY CELEBRATIONS

“In the first year of the Western Crossings celebrations there were numerous activities to mark many aspects of the western crossing and many of these have been reported in the media and various newsletters.

“Credit must go to the Royal Australian Historical Society for its role in overseeing through the Western Crossings Committee the co-ordination of the celebration. This committee brought together organisations from Blacktown to Bathurst; descendants of those involved with what has been described as the first crossing of the Blue Mountains by Europeans; local Indigenous groups; as well as others to promote and co-ordinate this part of the celebration and will continue to do so until 2015.

“Unfortunately, the celebration has not yet attracted major financial support from government with most of the events being funded by local organisations and sponsorship from local business and individuals.

“The State government did provide a grant of \$80,000 to the Royal Australian Historical Society and this was distributed to various groups and activities involved in the centenary. This grant was negotiated between our guest speaker at today’s meeting Professor David Carment and the then Premier of NSW, Barry O’Farrell.



*Phil Hammon and Tom  
Colless celebrate the  
bicentenary*

“Measured in many regards the commemoration and celebration rather than commemoration could be judged as a success. However, with the lack of substantial funding many believe the event missed its much wider potential including that of leaving a lasting commemoration.

## BMACHO MEMBERSHIP

“In the past 12 months membership has increased with the Nepean District Historical Society and the Paragon Restaurant coming on board and as I understand it the Hawkesbury Historical Society is about to apply for membership.

“It is pleasing that at the two general meetings held in this period that members considered that BMACHO was both relevant and apart from several minor administrative issues sought no change in the management committee’s direction.

## PLANNING AND ADVOCACY

“BMACHO has continued to be affiliated with the Better Planning Network which was principally set up to oppose much of the proposed legislation by the NSW government which leaves heritage even more exposed to threat of destruction by developers.

“A major submission by BMACHO supported much of Blue Mountains City Council’s response to the mandatory ‘one size – fits all’ planning instrument in preparing the city’s Local Environment Plan 2013 for the NSW government’s planning department.

“BMACHO’s support for deviances from the standard instrument recognised the city’s unique and special characteristics.

“BMACHO’s submission drew attention to the nature of the villages and townships coupled with the renowned natural beauty of the mountains and the abundant reminders of Australia’s early history and cultural heritage which allows local residents to experience a state of satisfaction with ‘their

**Continued from page 18**  
lot' and helps create a feeling of personal wellbeing.

"BMACHO became aware towards the end of last year that Blue Mountains City Council was about to seal parts of Old Bathurst Road, (formerly Cox's Road), Woodford including some of the original construction by William Cox.



**Stone wall part of the original Cox's Road under threat**

"In collaboration with local residents, in a very short time an argument was put together, against the sealing and damage to the remnants of one of the oldest roads in Australia. A strong protest was put before council about this proposed heritage vandalism by local government. Jan Koperberg, Ian Harmon Juliana Swatko a local resident, and I addressed a meeting of the full Blue Mountains City Council objecting to the proposal last year.

"As a result council agreed to have a professional heritage archaeologist investigate the damage already done and the value of the road as a heritage site. The matter has been stalled in council for almost 6 months.

"Blue Mountains City Council has consulted BMACHO on a number of issues and most recently the future of the Stationmaster Cottage at Lawson. There has been a close relationship between BMACHO and council's heritage adviser Christo Aitkin and Museums Adviser Lynn Collins.

"BMACHO's representative on BMCC heritage advisory committee has had input in numerous issues and was on the panel which allocated funds from the Local Heritage Fund.

## **FUNDING**

"In the past 8 years BMACHO has been reasonably able to fund much of its activity including workshops, from government grants, and public authorities but for various fiscal reasons these sources are expected to be less forthcoming in the immediate future. BMACHO in the year ahead will need to look to some belt-tightening and find alternative sources for funding.

## **THANKS TO MANY**

"Finally, I thank our member organisations and individual members for the support, encouragement and trust they have placed in the association's committee. It has again been my great pleasure to work with a quite unique body of people who have led and directed the association for another year. This committee has a great mix of personnel from academia, professionals and dedicated volunteers bringing to the committee a very experienced and balanced approach in regard to cultural heritage.

'Once again this report does not allow for the real appreciation I feel for the members of the committee to be expressed. However, I know that most will be aware I trust, the few words I have to say about them now, are accepted as a mere modicum of the real esteem in which I hold them, for the invaluable work they are doing within the heritage sector.

"In previous annual reports in thanking our vice president Ian Jack I have touched on his lifetime of involvement in cultural heritage and Australian history and as each year comes and goes I wonder how Ian is able to provide an ever

increasing support for the heritage movement.

"To list Ian's achievements, the organisations he supports and the bodies which seek his professional advice would take pages. Ian your involvement as vice president for the past 8 years has been exceptional and I thank you so very much for this and for what you have helped me achieve and learn in the heritage sector.

"Our secretary Jan Koperberg never ceases to amaze me for her capacity to achieve. I have said it before but it is worth repeating:

"I have worked with many secretaries and few have come anywhere near the excellence that Jan has exhibited.

"She is on the ball all the time, her minuting of meetings leaves no doubt as to the decisions and why they were made and which appear in easy to read documents.

"Jan is not only an extremely able and efficient administrator but she also is in her own right a keen explorer of history and our heritage, contributing a great deal to this and other organisations.

"Jan's energy is also incredible and I am not sure just how many groups she belongs to or supports but I do know how much time she gives to BMACHO and this is quite staggering. Jan you are great to work with and Nanette and I enjoy your company.

"Dick Morony has again kept our membership records in a good condition and it is always a pleasure to have him along at our meetings contributing the benefit of his long experience in the heritage sector.

"Doug Knowles, Kevin Frappell and Jean Winston brought to the management committee not only a vast expertise of local history but also have a good

Continued from page 19

understanding of what the smaller historical societies need and limitations are within the heritage sector and to them. I am grateful and will miss them on the committee in the coming year.

“Patsy Moppett has continued to provide a valuable contribution to the committee. Her knowledge of local government planning is extremely valuable I and others also value the work she has done with National Trust and others to preserve the western end of the iconic Cox’s Road. Thank you Patsy for your involvement.

“Scott Pollock and Wendy Hawkes have brought to our management committee not only the expertise they have built up with the properties they so ably manage in the case of Scott, Everglades and Wendy Eskbank at Lithgow but also a vibrant enthusiasm of younger people. They both have a keen interest in cultural heritage and have been a great asset to our deliberations.



“I am delighted they will stay on the committee. Thank you Wendy and Scott.

“Most will be aware of Nanette’s ill fortune and the frustrations she is still experiencing but as she has done so lovingly for more than 60 years, 57 as my wonderful wife, she is still supportive of my involvement in activities and I am delighted she is with us today.

***A clever illusion: a real table and glassware in front of the graphics of Governor Lachlan and Elizabeth Macquarie drawn by Clive Jones***

“Thank you one and all for the support you have given us during yet another year as president of the Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage Organisations Inc.”

***John Leary, OAM***

## **THE GREAT WAR THEME FOR HISTORY WEEK 2014**

The Great War will be the theme of the History Council of NSW History Week, which this year runs from September 6-14.

It was to be “the war that will end war” as H.G. Wells commented in August 1914. From the heights of hope to the horror of the trenches, the Great War changed the world irrevocably.

It separated families and lovers, turned young men into soldiers and young women into nurses, converted friends and neighbours into enemies.

The unusual circumstances of warfare intervened with each aspect of life. In which ways did the conduct of war shape, change and inform those fighting and those remaining on the home front?

How have historians approached complex topics surrounding it, such as the scale of violence, women’s involvement in war, forced migration? What impact did the Great War have on the cultural memory of those involved – allies and enemies?

In the aftermath of 1915 Australians elevated the Gallipoli landing into a foundation story, which claims that the nation was born on this battlefield, but there are more layers of remembrance yet to be uncovered and examined. History Week 2014 will explore the impact of World War 1 abroad and at home.

## Sydney University historian Julia Horne to open Blue Mountains History Conference

**P**ursuing Wonder in the Blue Mountains” is the title of the keynote address to be delivered by Sydney University Associate Professor Julia Horne at the Blue Mountains History Conference to be held at the heritage listed Carrington Hotel, Katoomba on Saturday May 10.

Dr Horne (pictured right) has taught history at UNSW, worked as a curator in social history at the Powerhouse Museum, pioneered local history outreach programs and spent hundreds of hours interviewing people about their lives as Head of the Oral History Program in the UNSW Archives.



She has been a member of the Council of the Royal Australian Historical Society since 2007, and in 2009, was appointed member of the governing council of the Australian National Maritime Museum

Dr Julia Horne’s research interest include: The public university in Australasia 1850-1918; various aspects of oral history including memory, biography, ‘the interview’, and oral history as a form of modern personal papers; overseas students in Australia in the 1950s and 1960s and history of travel, tourism and natural landscapes.

At the University of Sydney, the role of University historian is as

public historian responsible for various university history-related tasks such as maintaining the university’s oral history program and developing strategies to promote the university, its heritage and history to the wider community.

After morning tea Associate Professor Ian Jack will speak about ‘The Heritage of Education in the Blue Mountains’ followed by heritage architect, Hector Abrahams who has chosen as a title for his paper, ‘The Heritage of Religious buildings in the Blue Mountains’.

Ian Jack is no stranger to most who have an interest in Australian history and the nation’s heritage.

Often described as a consummate scholar, Ian has been associated with local history groups throughout the region and in fact throughout NSW and farther afield in Australia, providing the benefit of his well versed advice freely to those many historians and others who frequently seek his assistance.

Ian has the greatest respect for the army of volunteers who research material, and work with collections in towns and villages around the country.

Ian Jack (pictured right) was president of the Royal Australian Historical Society for 11 years, is president or a senior member of many historical and heritage groups including being president of the Hawkesbury Historical Society and for the past 8 terms vice president of BMACHO.



The last speaker before lunch, Hector Abrahams (pictured below), also a former president of the RAHS has brought to his firm a philosophy that old buildings have to be understood, kept well and made liveable and workable for people in today’s world.

Hector has said: “Churches are for the long-term, and faith communities have such different needs from decade to decade. It is most important to recognise this.

“A good church has to be able to withstand the vicissitudes of church life, and to have an enduring aesthetic.”



Lunch will be served in the heritage dining room of The Carrington and this will be followed by a musical interlude by Christine Wheeler and Friends with songs from “Rain in the Mountains – Songs of Henry Lawson”.

Ms Robyn Parker, proprietor, The Paragon Restaurant Katoomba and Dr Ian Jack will conduct a question and answer segment about this iconic restaurant

The final speaker for the day will be Doug Knowles, whose subject is the Great Western Railway – Lapstone Hill, the first challenge.



## 31 sculptures set among an ancient rainforest

Featuring Ken Unsworth's Harlequin's shuttle

Thirty new sculptures framed by Blue Mountains ancient rainforest, artist led workshops for children, and an 8 metre commissioned artwork by renowned Australian sculptor, Ken Unsworth AM, are part of Sculpture at Scenic World 2014 now on until May 18, 2014.

*Blue Mountains Gazette* review reports, Ken Unsworth has fond memories of the Blue Mountains and has made many journeys Scenic World's rainforest during the seven day process to install Harlequin's Shuttle beneath the majestic canopy.

The 8 metre sculpture will remain in situ for the duration of the exhibition.

Two years in the waiting Harlequin's Shuttle is the first time iconic sculptor Ken Unsworth has exhibited in the Blue Mountains within his illustrious career spanning over four decades

The Jurassic landscape and mining relics at Scenic World create a unique setting for the exhibition featuring sculptures from the People's Republic of China, Hong Kong, 17 from NSW, 10 from the Blue Mountains and one from Tasmania.

David Hammon, joint managing director said Scenic World is thrilled to deliver the third annual exhibition. "Each year the artists continue to surprise and inspire us with their vision, as they collectively transform our rainforest into a stunning outdoor gallery for our visitors to enjoy," said Mr Hammon.



Exhibition manager Lizzie Marshall, said, "This exhibition is an exceptional showcase of Australia's sculptural scene and the Blue Mountains as the City of the Arts. The artists have developed different frameworks to respond to the natural environment.

"Key themes include absorptive black, reflective surfaces and architectural responses to the rainforest," Ms Marshall said.

Participating artists will also have the opportunity through a new partnership between *Sculpture at Scenic World* and the Blue Mountains Cultural Centre to exhibit at the Cultural Centre from June 9 to July 7.



**Pictured above: Ken Unsworth, Harlequin's Shuttle. Image by A Shot Above Photography.**

**Pictured at left: Louis Pratt, A Backward Attitude. Image by A Shot Above Photography.**

# Katoomba's unique World War 1 memorial

**By Joan Edwards – member,  
Blue Mountains Historical  
Society and former president  
Blue Mountains Family  
History Society**

While Blue Mountains has many World War 1 memorials, Katoomba's is unique, namely the Blue Mountains District Anzac Memorial Hospital, the only World War 1 memorial hospital in Australia.

The 1914-1918 war had come and gone and still there was no hospital between Penrith and Lithgow.

Some locals thought there should be a community hospital while others opposed the idea as there were already large sanatoria and smaller care homes.

It would be disadvantageous to be known for hospitals instead of guesthouses in the great holiday location.

In 1919 Gearin's Hotel was being refurbished when carpenter, Ted Stratford, was knocked unconscious when struck on the head by falling timber and had to be transported to Penrith.

Fellow workers passed the hat around and collected 6/6. Stratford's accident became the catalyst for a local hospital.

The following day, contractor Fred Johnson, began organising a football match to raise funds. Leura station master, a keen footballer, organised an opposing team.

It was to be fancy dress with a procession from Leura Baths to Katoomba Falls football ground. Collections were made along the route and raised £162 to add to the 6/6.

We owe thanks to Dean Piryak, director of nursing, for early research presented as Foundation Day Speech in October 1995.

Unfortunately he found no record of which team won the match, but hopefully, it will not be too long



***The original frontage of the Blue Mountains District ANZAC Memorial Hospital***

before the local newspapers are digitised and we will be able to imagine the colour, noise, events and excitement of that day.

The momentum slowed when work was completed at Gearin's until Mr Edward Booth suggested that money raised should fund a lottery which was set up as 'Katoomba Thousand Lottery'.

The funds grew rapidly and Mr Booth formed the Blue Mountains District Hospital and Peace Memorial Committee with Dr John Allan as chairman.

The committee met solidly for a week to plan and set goals to be achieved. They decided to complete all preliminary work before petitioning the government.

The committee decided that it should be a peace memorial.

In the wording of the original committee's minutes, "No more fitting memorial to our gallant citizens who have fallen for us could be devised and we contend that a united effort to secure for us this communal blessing is much more desirable than that each township should erect drinking fountains and such like street obstructions".

The energetic and enterprising Mr Booth is credited as being the driving force that kept all working toward the final goal.

Presumably there were the card parties, fancy dress balls and so on with celebrities pressed into promotions.

Sir Ross Smith sent a notice by 'Aeroplane Post' Advice from the Clouds of a Race Meeting to be held at Medlow Bath Racecourse on Wednesday, February 25<sup>th</sup>. £50 prize money was offered.

It took a further six years fundraising that is to 1925, before they were ready to proceed.

The foundation stone was laid by the New South Wales Governor, Sir Dudley de Chair, on October 6, 1925.

Building work proceeded fairly rapidly, as did the fundraising, in spite of some opposition from residents who thought it would be filled with TB sufferers and others with long term illnesses.

As the building work neared completion, the committee thought the name should include ANZAC and the names of the fallen should be on marble tablets in the vestibule of the main entrance, in all 139 names.

They hoped, wished, that the tablets would be unveiled by the Duke and Duchess of York (later King George V1 and Queen Elizabeth).



After the usual negative responses, the authorities controlling the royal tour said they would consider the request.

It was approved with restrictions such as it was not to be included in the royal itinerary, the ceremony must *not* be advertised, and only hospital committee members and hospital management could attend. In addition it must be a very brief stop.

Mr Booth stepped out when the motorcade stopped, approached the Duke and Duchess and requested they perform the unveiling ceremony.

They agreed, alighted and the Duchess of York performed the ceremony. The Duke and Duchess inspected the hospital and signed the visitor's book before continuing their journey to Blackheath.

It was late May, 1927, just three weeks before the first patients were admitted in June.

Initially the hospital had two wards, one male, one female, with a total of 22 beds under the control of Matron E Richards, six nurses and local medical officers.

It was gazetted as a public hospital on August 5, 1927. The rather grand official opening was conducted on October 3, 1928 by Lieutenant Governor of New South Wales, Sir William Cullen.

Katoomba's Blue Mountains District Anzac Memorial Hospital is far from a drinking fountain or other street obstruction and stands today as a testament to the driving force and dedication of a community.

Indeed it is the community's ongoing good fortune that Ted Stratford was knocked unconscious at Gearin's Hotel all those years ago!

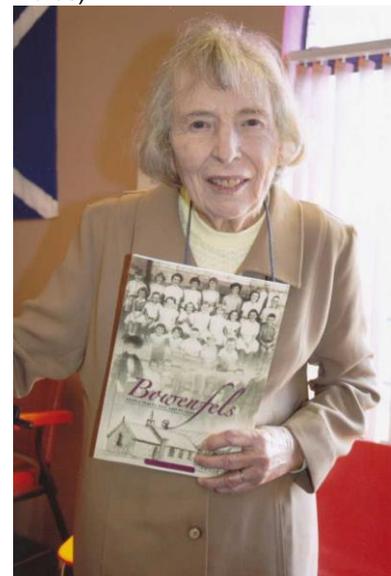
## 'My ancestor was...'

YVONNE JENKINS of Rydal was a well-known family history and author of several books of family history in the Bowenfels, Rydal and surrounding areas.

She was the convenor of the Lithgow and District Family History Society in 1986 and encouraged members to write stories about their ancestors.

The Lithgow and District Family History Society has chosen to commemorate Ms Jenkins memory each year by conducting the Yvonne Jenkins Memorial Award.

Entry is open to members and non-members of the society and is in the form of a short essay (1000 words).



*Yvonne Jenkins (pictured in 2008)*

The topic for the 2014 award is "My Ancestor was a.....".

The winner will receive a certificate and one year's membership of the society.

Entries close on April 30 and must be accompanied by an entry form, available on the society's [website www.lisp.com.au/ldfhs](http://www.lisp.com.au/ldfhs).

**Have you booked your seat for the Blue Mountains History Conference on 10 May 2014?**

## A VERY SIGNIFICANT COLLECTION

Recently the Blue Mountains Historical Society was given a very significant collection of books by one of its members, Malcolm Ferguson.

Former president and the society's librarian Judy Barham said, "The Society is indeed so fortunate and we are extremely grateful.

"Malcolm has been collecting books on all aspects of the Blue Mountains since the 1960s. The collection is very comprehensive and many of the books are no longer in print.

When one goes with John Low to look at it and he picks up a book and says, "I have heard of this and never seen a copy", you know that there are some important and rare books in the collection.

There are not only books but also maps, pamphlets and other small items relating to the area.

"The society cannot thank Malcolm enough for his very generous donation. We will value it very highly" said Mrs Barham.

# Blue Mountains History Conference

On Saturday, 10 May 2014 at the heritage listed Carrington Hotel,  
Katoomba

Opening up the Route to the West ... Architecture and the Railway  
The conference is being organised by the Blue Mountains Association of Cultural  
Heritage Organisations Inc. (BMACHO)

For 2014, the keynote speaker, Associate Professor Julia Horne, will speak about 'Pursuing Wonder in the Blue Mountains'

Associate Professor Ian Jack will give a presentation about the early educational architecture

Hector Abrahams will give a presentation on the early religious architecture.

After lunch Christine Wheeler and Friends will present "Rain in the Mountains – Songs of Henry Lawson", singing Henry Lawson poems.

This recital will be followed by a Question and Answer half hour,



when Dr Ian Jack will ask questions of the proprietor of the Paragon Restaurant, Mrs Robyn Parker.

The last speaker will be Doug Knowles and his presentation will be 'The Great Western Railway – Lapstone Hill, the first challenge'.

In addition there will be an optional afternoon tea served at an extra charge at the Paragon,

which includes a tour of the Paragon, including upstairs where the chocolates are made. Conference, including morning tea and lunch at The Carrington \$50 per head and optional afternoon tea and tour of The

Paragon an extra \$10

**For registration form** go to [bluemountainsheritage.com.au](http://bluemountainsheritage.com.au) 'Events and Activities' and click on the link or use the form attached to the email.

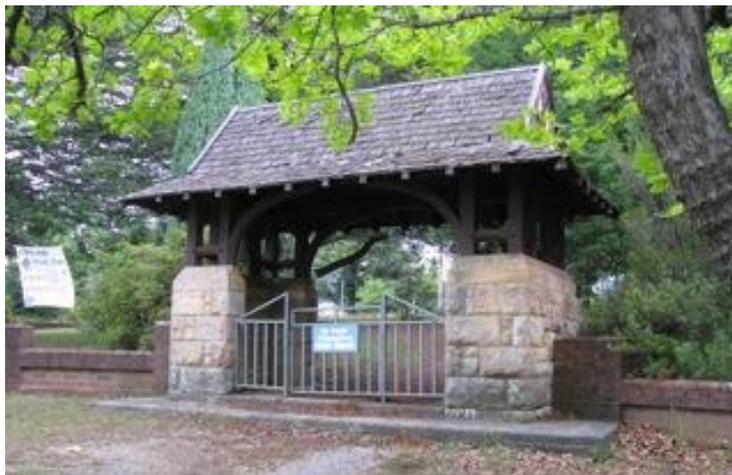
Contact Email: [committee@bluemountainsheritage.com.au](mailto:committee@bluemountainsheritage.com.au)

BMACHO thank the supporters of the Blue Mountains History Conference:



## Funds for restoration at four heritage properties

Blue Mountains Council has recently instigated a local heritage fund with the assistance of the newly established heritage committee. This is a long awaited and very welcome initiative of the council and an initiative of BMACHO.



One of the beneficiaries of this inaugural local heritage grant has been the lych gate on Falls Road, Wentworth Falls at Holy Trinity Anglican Church (photograph this page courtesy Margi Fallon, Heritage Consultant, Integrated Design Associates).

The gate was built in 1921 in memory of Douglas Gillfillan, who with his wife built "Gwandalan" in 1910 – 12 at the junction of Henderson Road (then Government Road) and Blaxland Road, Wentworth Falls.

At that time it was known as 7 Government Road. The Gillfillans built a magnificent garden on their property.

The property remained within the Gillfillan family until 1989. Mr Gillfillan died of tuberculosis in 1921, after a long illness and it is said that the room that he was in was burnt as a sterilization measure as was common at the time.

The gate at Holy Trinity is constructed of a sandstone base, with beautifully crafted timbers for the roof, which have been dowelled and pegged together.

The gate uses no nails in the main structure, with only the small nails to tack down the cedar shakes, and the timber lining boards.

There is an art nouveau styled bronze plaque placed in memory of Mr Gillfillan located on the inside.

This beautifully crafted gate will be carefully restored by the replacement of the shakes which have well and truly lived out their life, and provide for the ongoing protection of the crafted structure beneath. The sandstone base will be repointed.

The gate will then be able to continue to contribute to the visually significant streetscape of Falls Road, taking its place among the pine trees, the heritage listed 1890 Anglican Church building, and the similarly styled Presbyterian Church opposite.

The lych gate was one of four projects selected to receive assistance from this year's funding.

The other three projects were to the Paragon Restaurant for design, construction and installation of lighting to the front awning and other work to return this iconic restaurant and chocolate factory; the gatekeepers cottage at Valley Heights and restoration of sandstone footings of a building at 112 Katoomba Street, Katoomba which has heritage significance.

The funded work at the Paragon and at 112 Katoomba Street will further enhance what is substantially intact streetscape of heritage shops and residence.

The building's originality and classic façade is notable and often photographed by tourists and students of architecture.

The property at 110-114 Katoomba Street is a fine and intact example

of Federation free classical commercial. The intact copper clad shopfronts add particular interest to the streetscape at pedestrian level

The work on the gatekeeper cottage at 4 Great Western Highway, Valley Heights will include replacing two timber windows to restore external character as shown in the 1867

original drawings.

The building which is listed on the State Heritage Inventory, is being considered for adaption by its owners to provide heritage tourism accommodation.

The sandstone cottage has strong links to the Valley Heights Railway Heritage Museum.

Because the railway shared a narrow ridge with existing road systems from the 1860s onwards, there was need of numerous level crossings.

Twelve of these were guarded by gates controlled from a gatekeeper's cottage.

Six of the original stone cottages of 1867 survive, but only four of them are habitable and on their original sites.

There were two such cottages in Valley Heights. One, no. 5, was just east of the railway station and was demolished after 1902. The other, no. 4, survives on its original site, although its stone privy has been demolished.

It remained in railway ownership until 1950, then fell into disrepair, but was reroofed in 1984 and is now a residence once again.

Editors note: A lychgate, also spelled lichgate, lycugate, or as two separate words lych gate, is a gateway covered with a roof found at the entrance to a traditional English or English-style churchyard.

# TomahROMA autumn food and wine fair showcases regional producers

A celebration of nature's bounty set against the spectacular deciduous colours of the cool climate gardens at the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden, Mt Tomah .

TomahROMA promises an enjoyable experience all day as local produce, gourmet delights, wine tasting, music, free guided walking tours and plant sales will all be part of this event

Lovers of local produce and crafts shouldn't miss TomahROMA, the annual autumn food and wine fair at the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden on Saturday May 3, from 9 am to 4 pm. For enquiries 4567 3000

This year the Garden is hosting around 30 stallholders from the Blue Mountains and Hawkesbury regions.



**A stallholder at a previous TomahROMA.**



**The garden's annual blaze of autumn colour.**

Fresh juice and cider from local Bilpin apples, wine from Mudgee, handmade bags from Woodford, cupcakes from Penrith and plants propagated by the Growing Friends, volunteers at the Garden, just a small taste of the variety of lovingly made regional produce visitors will be able to sample and buy.

Coffee and hot food stalls add to a lively vibe and fun day out for all. Perfect for finding a unique gift!

Discover the many horticultural delights within the 252 hectare grounds on a free guided tour departing regularly from the visitor centre.

Run by volunteer guides, the tours will focus on the seasonal autumn highlights of the Garden.

The fair will be set against the bright autumnal colours of the turning garden, which in itself attracts thousands of visitors throughout autumn.

This is the best time to see the garden in its annual blaze of colour, which is a sight not to be missed.

TomahROMA has built a strong following with food and garden lovers alike and is now in its 11th year!

**Blue Mountains Botanic Garden, Mount Tomah is an inaugural member of the Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage Organisations Inc.**

## Make your Mark in History

To commemorate the Centenary of the ANZAC, the Woodford Academy Management Committee (WAMC) is undertaking extensive research on the Academy boys' who fought in the Great War and the impact that this had on their lives. Over 300 students were educated at the Woodford Academy between 1907 and 1925.

Fifty three of these students served in World War 1. The research being undertaken is informing the preparation of a secondary school program and new interpretive material for the Academy's museum.

'Make your Mark in History' is the first in a series of interpretive presentations developed by the WAMC that provide a glimpse into these boy's experiences. For further information: [woodfordacademy@gmail.com](mailto:woodfordacademy@gmail.com)

This work has been made possible with the assistance of a NSW Department of Communities – Veteran Affairs grant.

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## Bicentenary of the building of Cox's Bathurst Road to be celebrated at Hartley

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The Hartley District Progress Association as trustee of the Western Crossings Trust, has announced its intention to mark the bicentenary of the building of Cox's Road through the launch of its exhibition *A Moment in Time II* and by conducting an enhanced series of guided walks on Cox's 1814 road.

Some 3000 visitors attended the Trust's 2013 projects, many, who were disappointed by the short run of the 2013 program, have already pre-booked for this year's event.

*A Moment in Time II* will be conducted at the Historic Hartley Schoolhouse, 10am-4pm on weekends from Saturday, September 13, to Sunday October 12, 2014 and by appointment, for large groups, on any week day in that period.

Cox's Road walks will be conducted on Sunday September 14, Sunday September 21, Thursday October 2, Saturday October 4, Sunday October 12 ; with bookings accepted for large parties on any day between September 14 and October 12.

The exhibition *A Moment in Time*, curated by professional historian Joan Kent, captures what existed before and what came shortly after the 1813 crossing of the Blue Mountains by Europeans.

It begins with a consideration of the rich and ancient geology of the landscape into which the explorers intruded, before exploring many aspects of the crossing story from the indigenous peoples whose country was being traversed, through the explorers, the road building and early settlement west of the Blue Mountains

'A Moment in Time II' builds on the original exhibition drawing widely



on the contemporary Cox's Road research to present a comprehensive vision of 'the road'.

The Cox's Road walks, run in conjunction with the exhibition, represent a unique opportunity to walk some of the country traversed by Blaxland Lawson and Wentworth 1813, Evans 1813 – 14, Cox 1814 – 15 and Macquarie 1815.

Led by informed local guides, these walks offer a great opportunity to learn about the early traverses, the rich colonial heritage of the Hartley Valley and the array of heritage assets the valley harbours.

Bookings for walks and arranged openings of the exhibition will be taken from August 1. Early enquiries and pre bookings can be addressed to Barbara Johnson on 0458 552 017.

For further information contact Tom Kent, president Hartley District Progress Association (02) 6355 2393 e-mail: [joankent@bigpond.com](mailto:joankent@bigpond.com) or Ramsay Moodie, (02) 6355 2259 or (02) 9983 0134 e-mail: [ramsaymoodie@bigpond.com](mailto:ramsaymoodie@bigpond.com)

***Pictured above: Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir, Governor of NSW with her aide examining an exhibit after opening *A Moment in Time's* 2013 season.***

### GLENBROOK HISTORY WALKS



**The Great Western Railway 1867 Lapstone Hill Zig Zag and Knapsack Gully Viaduct will be the destinations on Sunday, May 25 walk and talk series.**

**Adults \$10 children free**

**Bookings essential to Doug Knowles 4751 3275**

# Crossing the play 2014 season

Plans are well underway for presentation of Wendy Blaxland's play *Crossing* to children during the 2014 season in Term 3 2014, mid-July to mid-September.

*Crossing* will play to schools in Sydney, the Blue Mountains and Bathurst, with a short public season for families in Sydney at Brush Farm House.

Thousands of schoolchildren saw the play during 2013 as part of the Western Crossing celebration in 2013. Schools booking forms are available.

For bookings Wendy Blaxland phone 9489 4955 m 0411 071 273

[wendyblaxland@optusnet.com.au](mailto:wendyblaxland@optusnet.com.au)  
[www.blaxlandanddaughter.com](http://www.blaxlandanddaughter.com) or  
Jessica Blaxland Ashby phone 0438 241 126 or 9489 4955  
[jessica@blaxlandanddaughter.com](mailto:jessica@blaxlandanddaughter.com)

*Crossing* was the brainchild of Wendy Blaxland who gathered around her a talented experienced team of theatrical artists and



production people to produce this memorable play. The 2014 budget is leaner, but there is still a \$25,000 shortfall for pre-production costs. Another play is planned for 2015. *Pioneers in Petticoats* will be a one-woman show looking at the women who crossed the mountains.

***Pictured are Wendy Blaxland and Jess Blaxland Ashby at Brush Farm House, Eastwood, the restored original home of explorer Gregory Blaxland.***

## Rain in the Mountains

Rain in the Mountains - Songs from Henry Lawson' is a unique musical performance of poems from Australia's iconic poet.

Featuring the classic folk voice of Blue Mountains resident Christine Wheeler, the CD also features a number of exceptional local musicians with backgrounds from classical to jazz and world music. Influences from Celtic music underpin the whole sound.

The title track is derived from two poems written by Henry Lawson aged 21, when he lived and worked at Mt Victoria.

His gift for conveying powerful feelings in the straightforward language of ordinary people is

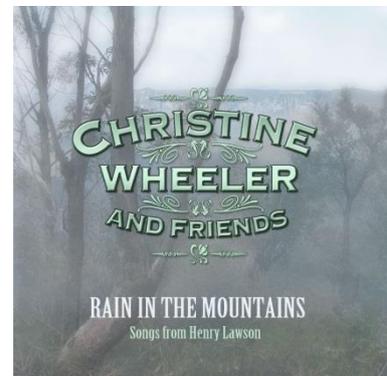
highlighted by the varied musical settings on this album - writers as diverse as Slim Dusty, John Schumann, jazz composer Ade Monsborough and folk icon Chris Kempster, as well as several of Christine's originals.

The CD has received considerable airplay on ABC Classic Drive FM and on ABC Local Radio's Australia All Over.

For information about performances or to purchase the CD, contact Christine [www.christinewheeler.net.au](http://www.christinewheeler.net.au)

Graham McDonald, Recorded Sound Archivist, National Film and Sound Archive of Australia has said of the CD: "There are subtleties, skill and impressive

musicianship in the way these songs have been put together. I suspect the CD and the live shows which Christine is planning will become a landmark in the interpretation of Australian folk song."



# What happened here 4,000 years ago?

The *Sydney Morning Herald* of 16/1/2013 carries this news item:

A genetic study has found ancestors of modern Indians may have come to Australia about 4,000 years before Europeans colonised the continent . . .

A genetic analysis of more than 300 Aborigines, Indians and people from Papua New Guinea and island south-east Asia has found a "significant gene flow" from India to Australia about 4,230 years, or 141 generations, ago.

The study's lead researcher, Irina Pugach, from the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany, said the arrival of these people during the period known as the Holocene coincided with many changes in Australia's archaeological record.

"[There was] a sudden change in plant processing and stone tool technologies, with microliths appearing for the first time, and the first appearance of the dingo in the fossil record," Dr Pugach said.

"Since we detect inflow of genes from India into Australia at around the same time, it is likely that these changes were related to this migration". .

The Aboriginal DNA used in the study comprised more than 10 per cent Indian genetic markers, which suggested there had been substantial interbreeding between the groups. "[The Indians] could have been sea traders," said Professor Allan Cooper, Director of the Australian Centre for Ancient DNA at the University of Adelaide.

The researchers said it was possible Indian ancestry came to Australia indirectly, through south-east Asian populations that had trade links with northern Australia and Indonesia. But the analysis found no evidence of this in the genes of the island south-east Asian populations. . .

**This paper by Father Eugene Stockton** proposes a possible scenario. It is known that about this time there was a highly developed civilisation in the Indus Valley, centred on the large settlements of Mohenjo Daro and Harappa.<sup>1</sup> The economy was based on mixed agriculture. The technology included well-established painted pottery, incipient metallurgy (simple copper and bronze objects) and the manufacture of stone tools. Such an assemblage is familiar to me from the excavation of the Chalcolithic site of the Teleilat Ghassul in the lower Jordan Valley.<sup>2</sup> Other Chalcolithic sites have been found east of the Indus Valley.

The stone tool technology included the mass production of chert blades, ground stone tools, beads (of lapis lazuli and carnelian) and pre-eminently inscribed square seals of steatite. The beads and seals were traded over long distances to the Persian Gulf, Mesopotamia, Iran, Afghanistan and Turkmenia, offset by imports of lapis lazuli, turquoise and jade. Trade was conducted both overland and by sea. Models exist of both carts and boats.

This civilisation was eventually eclipsed by the Aryan invasion in the second millennium BC.

The possible scenario proposed here is that a trading vessel ventured or drifted far to the east and was shipwrecked on the coast of North Australia. The survivors lacked the means to return home, perhaps lacking the skills and resources for ship-building, pottery and metallurgy. Settling down and interbreeding with the local inhabitants, they were able to pass on the finer techniques of working stone current in their homeland. Aborigines have shown that in matters of interest to them, such as religion and art, they are very receptive of new ideas and ready to pass them on to other communities. As long time workers in stone they would have welcomed the skill and artistry of the new technology.

Archaeological excavation at six Blue Mountain sites, and particularly at Shaws Creek, shows a sudden change in stone tool making at about 4,000 years ago. The relevant strata show a remarkable increase in the amount of flaked stone, a corresponding decrease in flake size, new techniques to control flaking to the desired shape and the production of exquisite small tools.<sup>3</sup> Although differences in tool type occurred from region to region, throughout Australia at about this time there was a similar intensification of flaking stone and the production of small tools (which may have been hafted).

I have suggested that such tools did not offer notable economic advantage, but were rather the expression of skill and artistry, a leisure time activity.<sup>4</sup> What spread quickly was not so much a useful addition to the tool kit as an *idea*, a *fashion*, that was quickly copied and taken up by neighbouring groups. The north-western expression was the surface-flaked point and adze, while the south-eastern expression was the backed-blade implement (for which there were already rough antecedents). I have suggested that this intense activity was conducted around the campfire and was the accompaniment of intense social intercourse, out of which developed the complexities of religion, ceremony, law and kinship relationships for which Aborigines were renowned.

## References

1. Lacking ready access to libraries I have drawn on Dilip Chakrabati "Early agriculture and the development of towns in India." *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Archaeology*, C.U.P. 1980, pp.162-7.
2. E. Stockton, "The Stone Industry" in J. B. Hennessy "Preliminary Report on a First Season of Excavations at Teleilat Ghassul." *Levant* Vol. 1, 1969, pp.17-21.
3. E. Stockton, "Archaeology of the Blue Mountains" *Blue Mountains Dreaming: The Aboriginal Heritage* (2nd Edition), Lawson 2009, pp.41-71.
4. *Ibid.* pp.66-7. This is argued in more detail in E. Stockton, "Reflections around the Campfire," *The Artefact* Vol. 6, 1981, pp.3-16.

## Hartley District Progress Association has new president, Tom Kent

‘...a strong feeling in the community that the enthusiasm generated by our 1813 commemoration activities should be maintained and enhanced...’

TOM KENT (pictured below) has been elected as president of the Hartley District Progress Association and at the request of *HERITAGE* has outlined in this article some of the objectives of the group in coming years.

He writes: ‘After two years of intense organisation and activity focussing on the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the crossing of the Blue Mountains by Europeans, and in response to its constitutional requirements, a number of new faces have appeared on the executive of the Hartley District Progress Association, including myself as president for 2014.



**Tom Kent**

‘Although I grew up in a small rural community in the Wagga area, the lifestyle at Hartley is a far cry from my subsequent career in accountancy and ultimately petroleum marketing for a large international oil company, leading to postings across Australia and then to responsibility for Europe and Asia, based in Central Offices in London.

‘Retirement in Hartley with my wife Joan and a small herd of alpacas is an appropriate episode in an interesting life’s journey.

‘Apart from the natural beauty of the area, Hartley has a sadly unappreciated heritage of its’ crucial role in the expansion of European settlement and an impressive array of nineteenth century buildings and road construction relics.

‘I believe the Hartley District Progress Association has a responsibility to make this irreplaceable heritage known and appreciated by the wider community.

‘Drawing upon my previous life experience, I envisage the HDPHA expanding its activities beyond the financial requirements necessary for its continuation.

‘There is a strong feeling in the community that the enthusiasm generated by our 1813 commemoration activities should be maintained and enhanced, adding to the existing social events such as the children’s Christmas treat and the annual Boot Sale - projects such as the completion of the ‘Signing Our Heritage Places’ initiative, the ongoing restoration and internal painting of the 1881 Old School House, the conservation of the old school map and the completion of the Honour Rolls acknowledging the service and sacrifice of local servicemen and women and their families since the Great War of 1914 -18.

‘Following the acclamation which followed our 1813 commemoration activities we are

now planning our future activities – revisiting the popular Cox’s Road walks and the companion horse trail rides which had to be abandoned last year for veterinary reasons.

‘We anticipate further heritage seminars and a possible extension of the ‘A Moment in Time’ exhibition to include the subsequent history of the Hartley Valley as a centre of administration and education, its’ shale and coalmining and apple growing industries and the rich family history of the early settlers in the district.

‘Initially a 200<sup>th</sup>-year commemoration of the vice regal progress through Hartley to Bathurst is also contemplated for 2015.

‘In an immediate sense it is imperative that we find a permanent ‘home’ in the Valley for our exhibition - which raises a number of issues - it requires 90 square metres of floor space and the security and management of such a venture poses problems for such a small albeit dedicated group.

‘I believe that these are worthy ambitions for the Progress Association and look forward to the challenges ahead with optimism and enthusiasm.



**Hartley court house. Photography John Leary OAM**

# The church that helped the Chinese Revolution

**By Ray Christison**

The construction of St Mary's Presbyterian Church in Lithgow had quite unforeseen consequences for the son of its builder George Donald, and for the development of China in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

George McGarvie Donald was a master stonemason and builder who helped to create the City of Lithgow.

He was born at Paddington, Sydney in 1846<sup>1</sup>, the son of Scottish stonemason George Donald. George senior had been encouraged to migrate to New South Wales by Governor Lachlan Macquarie who wished him to assist with government building works<sup>2</sup>.

After completing a basic education young George McGarvie Donald was apprenticed as a stonemason to his father and uncle.

After completing his apprenticeship George was engaged on the railway construction projects undertaken by Thomas Higgins in the Bowenfels district during the late 1860s.

He worked on the stone railway bridges at the Great Zig Zag and at Marrangaroo, and married Marion Miles, daughter of one of the construction foremen.

Following completion of the railway contract George moved to Hill End where he worked on a number of construction projects.

Among these was the Hill End Methodist church, which was constructed using basalt rubble from the gold mines.



***Church of St John the Evangelist at Wallerawang***

This building is currently used as the Hill End Anglican Church.

After the failure of the deep lead gold boom of the 1870s George returned to the Lithgow Valley and established a construction business with Thomas Crowe.

In the early 1880s George constructed St Mary's Presbyterian Church for Thomas Brown. The church was built as a memorial to Brown's wife Mary.

He also constructed Coorerull Academy for Andrew Brown and the Church of St John the Evangelist at Wallerawang

Other projects included Lithgow Town Hall, Wallerawang Public School, the Lithgow Oddfellows Hall and many residences. Donald & Crowe also built Mort's freezing works.

George Donald was extremely active in community affairs and had a great sense of social justice. He was a founding member of the GUIOOF Lily of the Valley Lodge and the Good Templars Lodge.

Popular amongst his fellow citizens he was elected the first mayor of Lithgow after the establishment of the Municipality of Lithgow in 1889.

<sup>1</sup> Reid, W., 1973 *George Donald, First Mayor of Lithgow*

<sup>2</sup> Thompson, P., 2011. *Shanghai Fury*. p.82

### Continued from page 32

George Donald held the seat of Hartley in the New South Wales Legislative Assembly jointly with Joseph Cook from 1891.<sup>1</sup>

Donald was at times invited to address the celebration dinners held by the Coal Miners' Mutual Protective Association and other public meetings dealing with contentious labour issues.

In early 1893 he and Joseph Cook were responsible for arranging assistance for miners and their families made destitute by the closure of the Katoomba Colliery<sup>2</sup>.

As magistrate he presided over the case brought against fifteen Zig Zag colliery miners for working on the Sabbath.

In administering penalties he fined the miners and their employer, indicating that all of the fines should be paid by the mine manager who had instructed the men to work.<sup>3</sup>

George died at Marrickville on May 30, 1930 aged 84, his wife Marion having died three years earlier. He was buried at Woronora Cemetery.<sup>4</sup>

William Donald was born to George and his wife Marian in 1875. It was intended that he follow his father into the building trade until an accident at St Mary's Presbyterian Church left him with a permanent impairment:

*... Bill, always a boisterous boy, joined other young parishioners in jumping from a platform in the bell tower and swinging on the bell rope. One day he missed the rope and fell heavily, breaking his collarbone. ... the fracture left him with a permanent weakness in his left arm.*<sup>5</sup>

William's injury precluded him from following his father's vocation and he was apprenticed into the



printing trade at the Lithgow Mercury.

**St Mary's Presbyterian Church, Lithgow**

Under the mentorship of Lithgow Mercury editor James Ryan he learned the craft of journalism and eventually moved to Sydney where he worked as a court reporter.

Through various contacts he obtained the position of sub-editor of the China Mail in Hong Kong in 1903.<sup>6</sup>

This move launched William on a trajectory that placed him at the heart of the Chinese revolutionary movements of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

After the 1911 Revolution William provided some advice to the government of Sun Yat-sen and during the 1920s he became the personal confidante of 'Young Marshall' Chang Hsueh-liang in Manchuria.<sup>7</sup>

From the mid 1930s William became the personal confidante of Madame Chiang Kai-shek. His career at the heart of the Chinese revolution earned him the title "Chinese" Donald.

## About the author

The author of this article Ray Christison of Lithgow is a regular contributor to *HERITAGE*

He is another contributor who can turn an otherwise story about the history of a couple of churches into an interesting heritage piece which readers will enjoy reading avidly from the opening sentence to mystery connection revealed in the last couple of paragraphs.

Ray was invited to become an inaugural individual member of BMACHO and served on the management committee for several terms.

Ray Christison is an archaeologist who conducts a heritage consultancy business High Ground Consulting, based in Lithgow.

He is president of the City of Greater Lithgow Mining Museum Inc and has served on the Board of this organisation since 1992.

Ray won the coveted 2013 IMAGInE award for individual achievement for its the exhibit *Fire in the Mine*.

<sup>1</sup> Reid, W., 1973 George Donald, First Mayor of Lithgow

<sup>2</sup> The Lithgow Mercury 20 April 1894

<sup>3</sup> Sydney Morning Herald 10 January 1895

<sup>4</sup> Reid, W. 1973 George Donald, First Mayor of Lithgow

<sup>5</sup> Thompson, P., 2011. *Shanghai Fury*. p.85

<sup>6</sup> Thompson, P., 2011. *Shanghai Fury*. p.95

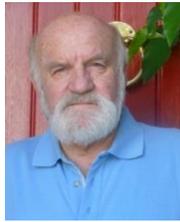
<sup>7</sup> Lewis, W., 1981. Australian Dictionary of Biography [Online]

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# The built heritage of Kurrajong-Comleroy

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**By Steve Rawling AM**



Some time ago (2009 in fact), I wrote a piece in the *Millstone* which was then republished in *HERITAGE* about the various levels of "heritage listing" pointing out that while all such lists are of interest, most of them do not confer any real protection for heritage buildings or other material items. To summarise them again:

Council lists items of heritage interest in its local environment plan (LEP), which then requires council to consider heritage factors when assessing development applications.

The State Heritage Office has a State Heritage Inventory, which draws on council's list (but does not include all items) and is again simply "items of interest".

For an item to be strongly protected, it must be chosen to be listed on the State Heritage Register, as being of "State significance".

Then there is the National Heritage List, which contains only a small number of items, but is gradually being added to.

The World Heritage List of course contains the Greater Blue Mountains, close to us, but that is a natural rather than a built item.

Perhaps the best known of all is the listing by the National Trust. It is certainly the longest-established, and it is often thought to confer protection on items it contains, but again it doesn't – it simply identifies important buildings and natural areas which are of genuine heritage interest, judged by people with expertise.

So how does our area – Kurrajong-Comleroy, fare in all of this? The sad fact is that very little in our

area appears on any list which would confer real protection.

There are 99 Hawkesbury items on the State Heritage Inventory, and 51 on the State Heritage Register. Of the latter, only half a dozen are in our area, mostly in Wilberforce and Ebenezer.

But we should start at the beginning, with council's LEP which is fairly inclusive, containing over 600 items in the Hawkesbury, about 120 of which appear to be in our area.

Notable inclusions, which everyone would expect to appear, are Westbury at Grose Vale, Reibycroft at Freeman's Reach, Goldfinders in Kurrajong Village, Lochiel at Kurrajong Heights, St John of God at North Richmond, Sunnyside at North Richmond, Rose Cottage, Stannix Park and Australiana Pioneer Village at Wilberforce, and of course the church and former school house at Ebenezer.

There are also various other churches, cemeteries, substantial early houses, and quite a few smaller houses and cottages.

When the Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society was first formed, I attempted to locate all items on the list, but was frustrated by the fact that the old street numbering was used.

The current version of the LEP can be accessed on the Web by googling Hawkesbury Local Environment Plan 2012.

It has to be said that the original compilers of the list did a pretty comprehensive job. However, what is most surprising and disturbing is what is not on the list.

Two items in particular, of great significance to anyone interested in the history of our area, are conspicuously absent. They are the Comleroy Road School of

Arts and the Singleton's Mills sites. How these were overlooked is hard to understand.

The School of Arts has of course a special place in our society's history and is a significant element in early twentieth century social history of the area.

It is to be hoped that it can be rescued from its present poor state, whether or not the society can be involved that process.

The Mill sites on the other hand are almost 100 years older, and were central in the thinking of the founders of our society – hence the logo - representing as they do the earliest history of the Kurrajong, and a vanished industry of grain growing and milling.

The proposal to apply for State Heritage listing, which is being co-ordinated by Frank Holland, will leapfrog other levels and, if successful, guarantee future protection of the remains of what we believe is of genuine state significance.

Any member with an interest in or knowledge of our built heritage is very welcome to contact the committee to discuss any action we might take on this front. For example, a project involving a photographic record of the items on the LEP could be of interest for someone with a camera!

In this article Steve Rawling, AM president of Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society debunks some of the myths built up about the protection (or lack of it) afforded the state's built heritage. Although he deals specifically with the Hawkesbury City Council's LEP the matter in principle is generic and can be applied to any local government area in NSW.

## LATE NEWS

### ELECTION TO RAHS COUNCIL

BMACHO's hardworking, efficient, popular and effective secretary, Jan Koperberg has been elected as a councillor of the Royal Australian Historical Society with a very large percentage of the vote.

The election was for four councillors, with the president Dr Anne-Maree Whitaker and Hazelbrook heritage archaeologist Dr Siobhan Lavelle, OAM being re-elected and Chris Maxworthy filling the fourth position up for election.

## Treasures from home

Do you have a treasure at home ?

The Museums of Lithgow would like to learn about individual's treasure and help the owners work out its significance.



As a part of International Museums Day 2014 ABC Open will be joining staff and

volunteers to photograph treasure, write up its history and upload it to their Object Stories online Museum.

Treasures should be brought to Eskbank House, Lithgow on Sunday, May 18, 10am to 2pm.

For further information telephone 6351 3557 or [www.lithgow.com/esbank/](http://www.lithgow.com/esbank/).

**Image: Trooper George Cecil Green's Welcome Home Medal owned by Lindsay Green**

## BLUE MOUNTAINS ASSOCIATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE ORGANISATIONS INC.

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ABN 53 994 839 952

**THE ORGANISATION** Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Organisations Inc (BMACHO) was established in April 2006 after local historical and heritage societies and individuals recognised the need for the creation of a cultural heritage strategy for the local government area (LGA) of Blue Mountains City Council. The constituency now embraces but is not limited to the LGAs of Blue Mountains, Lithgow, Hawkesbury, Penrith and Mudgee. BMACHO membership includes historical and heritage groups, museums, commercial enterprises with an historical or heritage component in its core business, local government (local studies units, library collections) and a limited number of individual members by invitation such as but not necessarily academics. The objectives of the organisation are i. to raise public consciousness of the value of cultural heritage; ii. to encourage and assist cultural heritage; iii. to initiate and support cultural heritage activities not already covered by member organisations. One of the aims of BMACHO is to bring the various bodies into closer contact to encourage them to work more closely together and to provide a combined voice on matters of importance within the heritage sector.

**AFFILIATIONS** BMACHO is a member of the Royal Australian Historical Society and is affiliated with the Better Planning Network.

**PUBLICATIONS** BMACHO's official newsletter *HERITAGE* is edited by John Leary, OAM; the annual refereed *Blue Mountains History Journal* is edited by Dr Peter Rickwood and occasional papers are published from time to time.

**MEMBERSHIP** The following organisations are members of BMACHO: Blue Mountains Botanic Garden - Mount Tomah, Blue Mountains City Library, Blue Mountains Cultural Heritage Centre, Blue Mountain Education and Research Trust, Blue Mountains Historical Society Inc., Blue Mountains Family History Society Inc. Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute, Eskbank Rail Heritage Centre, Everglades Historic House & Gardens, Friends of Norman Lindsay Gallery, Glenbrook & District Historical Society Inc., Hartley Valley District Progress Association, Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society Inc., Lithgow and District Family History Society Inc., Lithgow Mining Museum Inc., Lithgow Regional Library – Local Studies, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum Inc., Mt Victoria and District Historical Society Inc., Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society Inc. (including Turkish Bath Museum), Mudgee Historical Society Inc., National Trust of Australia (NSW) – Blue Mountains Branch, National Trust of Australia (NSW) – Lithgow Branch, Nepean District Historical Society Inc., Paragon Restaurant – Katoomba, Scenic World Blue Mountains Limited, Springwood & District Historical Society Inc., Springwood Historians Inc., Transport Signal and Communication Museum Inc., The Darnell Collection Pty Ltd, Valley Heights Locomotive Depot and Museum, Woodford Academy Management Committee, Zig Zag Railway Co-op Ltd. The following are individual members: Ray Christison, Associate Professor Ian Jack, Joan Kent, John Leary OAM, John Low OAM, Ian Milliss, Patsy Moppett, Professor Barrie Reynolds, Dr Peter Rickwood and Dr Peter Stanbury OAM.

**COMMITTEE:** The management committee for 2013-14 is: John Leary OAM (president), Ian Jack (vice president), Jan Koperberg (secretary/acting treasurer), Roy Bennett, Wendy Hawkes, Patsy Moppett, Dick Morony (public officer), Scott Pollock, Suzanne Smith and Richard Woolley.

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