



TRIBUTE

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St Marys & District Historical Society Inc - Quarterly Newsletter

PO Box 640, ST MARYS NSW 1790 – Street Address - St Marys Corner, Mamre Rd, St Marys – Parking via 29 Swanson Street.

After weeks of rain, a bright summer's day presented itself on 5th February for the 6th Anniversary of the National Service wreath laying ceremony at Victoria Park in St Marys. Photo shows our President, Caroline Volkiene making a donation on behalf of the Society. Caroline and our Treasurer Norma Thorburn, represented the Society and later enjoyed a sausage sizzle. The Vietnam Veteran's Association St Mary's members have helped the Society with an Anzac display at the Chambers, featuring photos and memorabilia which has been open to the public from 10 am to 2 pm on Wednesdays and Saturdays until after Anzac Day. *Photo courtesy of Carol Volkiene*



MEMBERS OF THE COOK – LUXFORD FAMILY VISIT THE CHAMBERS

On Friday, 6th January, 2012, Lorna Rogers, a member of the Cook family of St Marys, who has researched her ancestors, came over from Perth to spend the day with some of her family, with a visit to Mount Druitt as well as the St Mary Magdalene Church and cemetery and our WW1 display at the Chambers building. Members Caroline Volkiene, Norma Thorburn and Lyn Forde were on hand to open the building and be available for the group reunion. Emmanuel Cook came as a convict from England on the "Parkfield", transported for 10 years around 1838. He married Harriett Luxford in Australia and they are buried in the cemetery at St Marys. These members of their family are their descendants. *Photos courtesy of Lyn Forde*



VICE-PRESIDENT LYN FORDE "WALKS IN ANCESTOR'S FOOTSTEPS"

In August last year, Lyn Forde visited Plymouth steps where her 4th Great-Grand Parents, First Fleeters Anthony & Elizabeth Rope (Nee Pulley), stepped down onto a boat that took them to the ships at Plymouth Sound and the long voyage to Australia. Lyn's Irish Forde family also stepped down these steps in the 1850's to come to Australia as assisted emigrants. *Photos courtesy of Lyn Forde*



ANZAC DISPLAY - The Society held an opening presentation on Saturday, 24th February for their ANZAC display at the Chambers. The Mayor, Greg Davies was in attendance, as well as other Penrith Council members. Items in the display include photos, posters, and memorabilia from WW1, WW2, Korea and Vietnam with an authentic display from the Vietnam Veterans Association, St Marys Outpost. Also on display is a collection of Arnott's biscuit tins. The display is open to the public at the Chambers Building, Mamre Rd, St Marys on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 10 am to 2 pm until the 30th April, 2012. Enquiries: President, Caroline Volkiene (02) 9623-4785 or Vice-President, Lyn Forde (02) 8840-8771



SENIOR'S WEEK - Members of the Society participated in Senior's Week, holding a special brunch on Wednesday 21st March at the Chambers and a talk by Vice-President Lyn Forde on "Walking in their footsteps – WW1 St Mary's Gallipoli soldiers". Member Marion McLeod talked on behalf of the CWA in World War 2 and their contribution to the war years. Numerous invitations were sent out to all the district Senior's groups, but the attendance was very poor – mostly made up of members and the Encore Historical Sewing group. Very few outside senior's came. It was most disappointing to Carol Volkiene our President, who, along with Lyn Forde worked tirelessly on the preparations leading up to the day. Marion and Lyn were also disappointed with the poor attendance of local seniors to listen to the interesting talks they provided.



Members - Marion McLeod, Caroline Volkiene, Lyn Forde & Margaret Dwyer
(Photo courtesy of Neville Lowe)

With Anzac Day approaching, it seemed appropriate to “shine a light” on **Lance-Corporal Charles F Werner** and his unique place in the Australian history of World War One. Charlie was born in 1891, the son of William John and Jane Werner (Nee Price) of Springwood. He worked as a baker for the Brady bakery in Penrith and enlisted, on route to Egypt, into the 14th Battalion in April, 1915. He was on Gallipoli when on the 18th May 1915 he received a gun shot wound to his foot and was carried on a donkey, when the soldier leading the donkey was shot and taken away and another soldier lead Charlie on the donkey to medical attention. Charlie recovered from his wound and was later transferred to the 5th Field Bakery where he served until returning to Australia. He married, had a family, and lived in Jamison Road at Penrith. In the Nepean Times in 1955, there is an article about Charlie attending his first Anzac reunion in Melbourne in 1955. At that march he made a pilgrimage to the statue of Simpson and his donkey. It was while he was in Melbourne that Charlie found out that Simpson was mortally wounded on the 19th May, 1915 and Charlie realised that he was the soldier on the donkey that was immortalised on Wallace Anderson’s bronze statue. This statue shows the soldier on the donkey with his left foot bandaged. At the Anzac commemoration in 1955, the Melbourne Age newspaper has a photo of Charlie at the statue of Simpson and his donkey and they interviewed him. Charlie said that “he came especially to Melbourne for Anzac Day to visit the statue and march with the 14th Battalion”. The article said that “Sixty-three year old Municipal employee “Chilla” has not seen his fellow diggers since he was evacuated badly wounded in 1915.

Yesterday, he recalled his meeting and tragic parting with Simpson, the legendary Man with the Donkey”. Charlie said “I was badly wounded on the night of May 18th just three weeks after the first landing and was evacuated from the front line on the morning of the 19th. Simpson, or ‘Murph’ as we used to call him, picked me up with his donkey. Heavy shells were bursting continually and there was constant sniping from the hidden Turks. We were half way down Shrapnel Gully on the track to the beach when Simpson was hit. I did not know at the time whether he was killed or wounded, but someone else took the donkey’s reins and bought me to safety. With hundreds of the wounded I was put aboard a troopship and evacuated to Egypt. That was the last of what I saw of my battalion until this reunion. It was not until I saw the inscription on the statue that I knew officially that Simpson was killed on the morning of the 19th May, 1915 and the wounded man portrayed in the statue has a bandaged left foot. That was where I was injured”.



Sadly, in World War Two, his son Leading Aircraftman William Joseph Werner was killed in an accident at Tumut in 1941. He was with the RAAF 2nd Service Flying Training School at Wagga. He was an aircraft flight mechanic who was flying with a pilot doing a “test” flight in a Wirraway 20 plane that crashed in December, 1941 while flying low over Tumut. The aircraft hit trees and it crashed into a mountain three miles west of Tumut. Both men died instantly. William’s father Charles, died Katoomba in 1970. His mother Ivy Sybil died in 1963 and they are all buried at Penrith General Cemetery at Kingswood.

This Anzac Day will be the 97th anniversary of the start of the Gallipoli campaign that turned a “defeat” into a legend, so it is fitting that we remember what sacrifices were made by so many families across Australia. So many graveyards over the world of Australian son’s, daughters and fathers – the endless crosses, memorials and commonwealth headstones gives testimony to all those fallen in battle – whether “accidental” or not. Here in Australia we do not glorify war, but we do remember it – Lest We Forget.

In the Sydney Morning Herald in February, 1927 an article appeared by Eugene D'Anglade with the title "History On the Western Road" - The Great Western road from Parramatta to the Nepean River, is perhaps the most popular tourist road in Australia, and, it is one of the most historical. Few of the thousands of motorists who travel along these eighteen miles of delightful road that runs through rich, undulating paddocks, know of its scores of historical associations. Time was when it was the most important road to the interior, and down the years, one visions the long procession of pioneers, convicts, bushrangers and diggers who, in their day and generation, made the old coach road famous. During the 1830's, his Majesty's Royal coach left Parramatta for Penrith in the forenoon, and in those days the journey possessed all the elements of adventure and romance. Attacks on travellers by bushrangers were not rare. Rev. Henry Fulton had been "bailed-up" by outlaws near the old town, and everybody in the two towns knew Old Ben Rattay, who died from the wounds received in a fight between the bushrangers and the constables under Mr. Thorne near the west mead of the Governor's domain. Passing the twin towers of old St. John's church, and the old Royal Hotel, which, although recently remodelled (1927), still stands at the corner of Church Street and the Great Western road, the Domain was seen with the signal station upon the hill near the entrance. On the left-hand side a road turned off running to the Cowpastures, and on to what has become Smithfield. Just beyond was the tollhouse, erected by Mr. Rouse by order of Governor Brisbane. When Holroyd, (formerly Prospect) and Sherwood Council was formed in 1872, this old building became the council chambers, and it is still in existence behind the old town hall. (1927). BUSHRANGERS - Between Hawkesbury road and the Toongabbie creek was dense scrub, affording a hiding place for the bushrangers who frequently sprung out upon some unsuspecting traveller and this was a favourite resort of the outlaws Walmsley and his companion Donohue. Just beyond the creek was the farm of Major Wentworth, of the 63rd Regiment; now it is the rising suburb of Wentworthville, and here 1000 Australians are now engaged in spinning Australian grown cotton into garments for Australians. From here the road climbed a steep pinch, and the horses were given a few minutes' rest in the valley of the Old Fox under the Hill Inn. The present house, long since closed to the public, was not the original Inn, although it dates from the 1830's, and is much the same in appearance. A mile farther on was the entrance to the beautiful estate of Lieutenant William Lawson. His spacious stone residence, although much neglected, still remains (1927) a memorial to those picturesque old days of the 1830's. Bungarra bee, (the burial-place of kings) was the next place of importance. The fine old house is now in ruins (1927), but time was when the parties held in its old world round dining room, were a replica of thousands of similar gatherings, reminiscent of "lace and lavender" held in English country homes, when the strains of long-forgotten airs floated out along the rose-covered verandas, while the old story was whispered over the sun-dial in the garden. Alongside the creek nearby was Mr. "Lumpy" Dean's Corporation Inn and the portly "Lumpy" would sit for hours on his outsize chairs yarning with every passer-by. On the left is Minchinbury, with its spacious vineyards, the bright green of which is comparable with the vineyards in the beautiful Doure Valley in Portugal. Minchinbury was granted to Lieutenant Minchin in the 1830's, but he soon disposed of his grant. Near the 26-mile stone, which by the way, is still standing, was Mt. Druitt, the estate of Major Druitt, whose great mansion was subsequently destroyed by fire. ST. MARYS - Two miles beyond was the tiny roadside village of St. Marys. The land in the vicinity belonged to Mrs. Putland, daughter of Governor Bligh, and to the widow and son of Governor King, who were the founders of the magnificently situated St. Mary Magdalene Church, which looks down upon the village. To the right was the estate of Dunheved, the home of Admiral P. P. King. On the left were Rev. Samuel Marsden's "Mamre" and "Erskine Park," and the farm of Blaxland the explorer called "Lee Holme". From St. Marys to Penrith the road was bordered by heavily timbered land until Penrith, called after the town in Cumberland of the same name was reached. At the entrance to the town was the Hornsey Inn kept by Mr. Tindale, who named it after Hornsey rise, immortalised by Dick Turpin. Relics of the English highwayman held places of honour on Mr. Tindale's bar. A few houses, a tiny post-office, a dignified-courthouse, a row of little buildings called "Rotten Row," and the church of St. Stephen's and the cemetery of which contains the grave of Sir John Jamison of "Regentville." were the notable features of Penrith in the 1830's, and the coach pushed on till it reached the Governor Bourke Inn, on the banks of the Nepean, near the fording place. In those days the trip occupied nearly four hours; now (1927) even the humble Ford covers the distance in less than half an hour.

The St Marys & District Historical Society meets every 4th Saturday at 1 pm - at the St Marys Precinct "Chambers" Building - Mamre Road, St Marys. No meetings in January or December.

Patron of our Society is Sister Mary Louise Petro - ALL WELCOME

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Any comments on this Newsletter are encouraged

PLEASE, DON'T THROW OUT AUSTRALIAN HISTORY. OLD PHOTOGRAPHS, BOOKS, LETTERS, RECEIPTS, DOCKETS, NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES. IF YOU HAVE ANYTHING YOU ARE NOT SURE ABOUT PLEASE CONTACT YOUR LOCAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY