

# The PIONEER



## Charles Bulwinkel, Community Leader

There is a picturesque but now little-known part of Alstonville, due to its location at the western end of Main Street—Bulwinkel Park. The street ends here due to Maguires Creek and an area which was once the town swimming hole, but more of that later. Let us delve into the man who gave his name to the park and his history.

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# Charles Bulwinkel, Community Leader

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Charles Bulwinkel (originally Carsten, later anglicised to Charles, and the second 'l' of 'Bullwinkel' was also dropped), was born on 22 December 1844 in the Kingdom of Hanover, before it was annexed by Prussia and became part of Germany. (This was to become important for Charles later in life, as we will see.)

His father died when he was twelve years old and he went to London to join his uncle in the firm of Hall & Boyde, sugar refiners. He worked in the vicinity of Tilbury Docks and years later named his farm at Duck Creek (Alstonville), 'Tildock' because of his association with that part of London.

## Immigration

When he was twenty-one years old, he travelled by the clipper, *Mermaid*, to Lyttleton New Zealand, which was the port for Christchurch. He swore allegiance to Queen Victoria and joined the volunteer force to fight against the Maoris. (There is a legend that he was captured and imprisoned in a cage. He expected to be the victim of cannibalisation but was released by the daughter of his captor.)

Gold was discovered in Westland, New Zealand, in 1864 and it was here that Charles was able to have made a heavy signet ring, which eventually passed to his grandson of the same name.

In 1867 he left New Zealand for Australia. One of his granddaughters, Wilhelmina Blanch (née Brown) believed that he first went to Melbourne for engineering training. In 1869 he was in New South Wales working on the erection of the Colonial Sugar Refinery Company's (CSR) mill at Southgate on the Clarence River and also at the Chatsworth Mill in 1869.

The first written record after his arrival in Australia is the registration of his marriage to Wilhelmina Laufer at the Presbyterian Manse, Grafton, on 10 March 1874. His occupation



Charles Bulwinkel

was shown as 'sugar boiler' and both parties were residents of Harwood Island. CSR proceeded to build more mills, Darkwater on the Macleay River, Southgate, Chatsworth and Harwood.

Although Charles was a sugar boiler and later sugar manager, he appears to have been engaged in the actual erection of the Southgate, Chatsworth and Harwood mills. He also gained valuable experience operating the engines used in the manufacture of raw sugar.

With his employment assured, Charles and his wife had settled at Harwood and it was here that five daughters were born, Elizabeth Ann 1874, Emma Rebecca 1876, Agnes Minna 1878, Charlotte 1880 and Rose 1881. In the early 'eighties', he was engaged in the building of



Wilhelmina Bulwinkel (Photo D Brown)

Edmondson's Mill at Palmers Island, Clarence River and it was here that their first son, Charles Ludwig, was born in 1884.

## The Northern Rivers

Also in 1884 the family left the Clarence and moved to the Richmond River district where Charles became manager of the sugar mill at Rous. Another daughter, Theresa Sabina, was born in 1886 at Rous.

At the Centennial International Exhibition in Melbourne in 1888, Charles was awarded first prize—a large silver medal and certificate—for his entry in a competition for the manufacture of sugar. It was a significant victory in a section which attracted 500 competitors.

The purchase of property at Alstonville led to the transfer of the family to their new home, 'Fountaindale', which was established on 360 acres, portion 19-62. Except for 40 acres, portion 62, this land had been selected by William Robb, but was in the hands of the Bank of New South Wales when Charles took over the mortgage. Thus he turned to farming.

Four more children were born—Herbert Rheinhard 1890, Greta Ethel 1892, Rhymald Wilhelm 1897 and Irene 1899.

Once established, he became involved in local movements, and when the Alstonville Agricultural Society was formed, he was a member of the first elected committee. He was the first Life Member of the Alstonville School of Arts, a Justice of the Peace, and was on the roll of Honorary Magistrates until his death.

In 1904 he was one of nine provisional directors of the Alstonville Co-op Refrigerating Coy. Ltd and had the largest shareholding of twenty-five shares. The subsequent butter factory was built on a portion of the 'Fountaindale' farm. The road from Ballina to Lismore used an open crossing of Maguires Creek (formerly Bulwinkels Creek, locally known as Bullys Creek) prior to the

# Charles Bulwinkel, Community Leader



Picnic area at Bulwinkel Park

factory being built, but as haulage was mostly done by horses and bullocks, the steep pinch after the crossing was made easier by a deviation and bridge being built over the creek. (The current Bruxner Highway in front of the factory, now Alstonville Furniture, still uses this road.)

When they eventually left 'Fountaindale', they moved to a new home, 'Neben', which stood a short distance away, on the opposite side of the road to Lismore. It was near this site that an early sugar mill had been operated by the Melbourne Sugar Company. The farm at 'Tildock' was under the care of another son, Charles Ludwig. Other properties known to have been owned by the older Charles were on Wardell Road behind the main street, and he was granted two adjoining town blocks on the corner of Crane and Kerr Streets in Ballina.

A seaside retreat was set up at Skennars Head in 1910, and for years it was the scene of fishing parties and happy family gatherings. The timber cottages were painted white with shutters instead of windows and

tarred water tanks. All that remains now are two tall pine trees planted on Armistice Day 1918. One tree was blown down in 1988.

## A Sad Time—the 1914–1918 War

During 1916 Charles was subjected to suspicion by the local Alstonville policeman, who called for his name to be removed from the Electoral Roll, the reason being that he was a person of enemy origin. The fact that he was a highly-respected and generous person, and had been a real pioneer in the development and advancement of the district, did not prevent some mean-spirited people from trying to bring him down.

With solicitor, Mr GB Somerville of Lismore, Charles successfully defended the action. Evidence was provided that he was born in 1844 in Hanover, long before the 1866 Prussian annexation. He resided in New Zealand, swearing an oath of allegiance to Queen Victoria, and resided in Australia. In fact he had resided in the British Empire ever since he left Hanover. His sympathies had always been with Britain and he knew nothing of Germany.

## The First Grandchild

In September 1919, Charles was especially delighted by the birth of his first grandson to bear the family name. He walked from 'Neben' to son Rhymald's home, 'Myholme' near Bewers Hill, to see the baby—another Charles Bulwinkel.

## Charles' Death

A few days later he was stricken by a cerebral haemorrhage, and after a brief illness, died on 26 September 1919, aged seventy-five years. Charles was buried in the Presbyterian section of the Alstonville Cemetery, where the grave is marked by a granite column.

Wilhelmina lived at 'Neben' until her death on 18 July 1926, aged seventy years. She was buried beside Charles.

## The Final Link

After more than eighty years of Bulwinkel ownership, the final link with the 'Fountaindale' farm was broken in 1971 when Herbert's widow sold 'Bonnie Doon'. Rhymald had sold his property, 'Myholme', earlier in 1937 to a Sydney buyer.

## Bulwinkel Park, Alstonville

So we come back to the beginning of our story.

The area behind the butter factory had for years been a basic swimming hole, where many local residents learnt to swim. A number of public-spirited residents decided to do something about providing facilities for children for swimming or learning to swim. They concreted a wall across Maguires Creek, making a dam or swimming pool.

The local Lions and Apex Service Clubs for many years did splendid voluntary work caring for the swimming facility and making the surrounding area of the park into a wonderful picnic area.

In the 1970s, with Alstonville's expanding population, it was foreseen that a much better swimming facility was needed. With the co-operation of Ballina Shire Council the Alstonville Aquatic Centre near Crawford Park was built and has become a great asset for the town.

## BRIAN WORTHINGTON

References: Alstonville Plateau Historical Society Files; *Milestones & Memories* (APHS); *Duck Creek Mountain now Alstonville*, Foreman Crawford (APHS); Article by Marelle Lee in the *RRHS Bulletin*, Dec 2008; Article by Megan McMillian (née Bulwinkel) granddaughter and Miriam Davis (née Cawley) great-granddaughter, undated.



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# Governor's Visit to Alstonville

THE GOVERNOR OF NSW, Sir Philip Game, accompanied by his aide-de-camp, Lieut-Commander Gifford RN and Mr WT Missingham MLA visited Alstonville on 23 September 1931, en route from Lismore to Ballina.

The streets were decked with bunting and a large crowd assembled at the Amusu Theatre for the reception. A guard of honour was ranged at the entrance to the hall, comprised of members of the local branch of the RSSILA, marshalled by the President, Mr G McGilvray. The children of the school were also in attendance, together with representatives of the agriculture society, the churches and local bodies.

Cr Robins extended a welcome on behalf of the residents of Tintenbar Shire and Alstonville particularly, regretting Lady Game being unable to attend. He stated that although they lived in a rural district and were not perhaps in touch with conditions in the metropolitan areas, he was sure that the people of the North Coast wholeheartedly endorsed the Governor's actions as representative of the King [George V]. The district was not looking its best at the present time, as winter had just finished, but Sir Philip would see the finest dairying district in Australia. That day he would also meet some of the pioneers of the Big Scrub.

In his response, Sir Philip, who was greeted with prolonged applause, apologised for the lateness of his arrival, but explained that he was so anxious to see more of this wonderful



Bunting in Main Street for the Governor's visit (Photo Isabelle Cooke)

district that he had not followed a direct route from Lismore.

Sir Philip said it was splendid to see the loyalty which existed all over the state for the Empire. It was a revelation to one who had come to the Northern Rivers for the first time to see the progress made in the short period of forty years. In rich country such as he had passed through that morning it would be almost possible to live on the district's own resources. He also had a word for the children, saying he called them young Australians, but asked them to always remember they were also young Britishers ... association with the people of the country did much to strengthen the bond which existed between the Commonwealth and England. Sir Philip smilingly granted the children a holiday that day.

## Croquet Lawn Opened

At Lumley Park, prior to the official opening, the Governor's party was welcomed by the Patron, Mr JA Daly and the President of the Croquet Club, Mrs CW Smith, who thanked His Excellency for consenting to perform the opening ceremony. She regretted the absence of Lady Game and

expressed the hope, on behalf of the ladies, that she would be able to visit Alstonville in the future.

Morning tea was served by the Ladies of the Croquet Club and the Governor was introduced to district residents. Afterwards the party walked to the showground and inspected the Memorial Gates and Oval before proceeding to the new croquet lawns. Two courts had been built at Lumley Park for the All Ladies' Club just twelve months previously and after much work the lawns were just fit for play.

Mr Daly said that the ladies of the croquet club had all been hard working members of the patriotic movements during the war; in fact, on a population basis, he believed Alstonville held the record for the amount of money raised and the number of men who had enlisted. The ladies had worked night and day, and now, when some were reaching the declining years of life, some pleasure would be theirs from the lawns ... he asked Sir Philip to remember that the site of the lawns twelve months ago was virgin scrub and every effort was being made to preserve the natural foliage as much as possible.

The Governor, in reply, said he was proud to have the honour of opening the two beautiful lawns, which to his mind were in an ideal spot. He congratulated those responsible on endeavouring to preserve the trees and hoped they would continue to do so. Until recently he did not know croquet was such a popular game in Australia but he had also opened one lawn in Lismore the previous day.



Sir Philip Game opening the croquet lawn

# A Queen in Alstonville

**Air Vice-Marshal Sir Philip Woolcott Game GCB, GCVO, GBE, KCMG, DSO**

He was born at Streatham, Surrey, England in 1876. He had a distinguished career in the Royal Artillery and the Royal Air Force and held positions in the Air Ministry, 1919–1929, retiring with the rank of Air Vice-Marshal. In 1930, at the height of the Depression, he



Sir Philip Game

was appointed Governor of New South Wales. Game clashed with his Premier, JT Lang, over moves to abolish the Legislative Council and in May 1932 when Lang refused to pay State revenue to the Commonwealth, Game dismissed the Premier and his Cabinet. Game left Australia in January 1935 and was Commissioner of the London Metropolitan Police until his retirement in 1945. He died in 1961.

**MARGARETRYAN**  
(Excerpts from *The Northern Star* and biography presented to the Mitchell Library by Lady Game, 1971)

Ian Kirkland's book, *Alstonville Croquet Club*, is available at the Community Resource Centre, Crawford House, for borrowing should you wish to read more about the history of this club. Kevin Olivieri can be contacted on 6628 5597 if you would like to join the club or learn more about the game of croquet.

This article came about because Jill Condie donated the postcard 'Greetings from Alstonville AGPC (Alstonville Girls' Patriotic Club) Guard of Honour to Gov. General.'

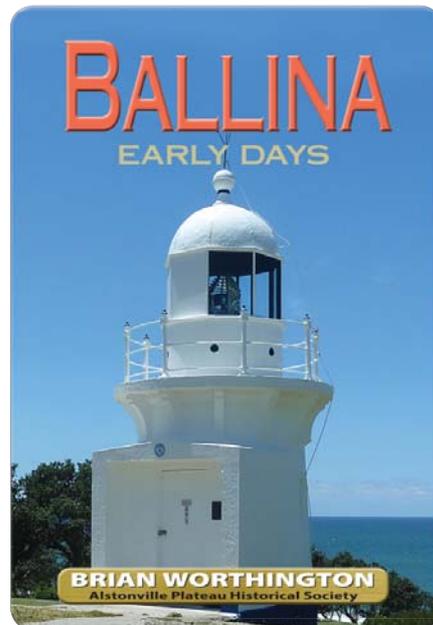
Editor

## Ballina-Early Days

THE SOCIETY'S LATEST publication, *Ballina-Early Days*, will be launched at the monthly meeting on 15 July 2012. Noted historian and author, Marlene Lester of Ballina (*The Glascott Diaries*) has agreed to present the book to the meeting.

Author Brian Worthington said the book had been 'bubbling away' for over two years due to APHS and other commitments. In general, it covers the period of 1820 to 1920. The book does not pretend to be a complete history and many areas had to be left out, e.g. the sporting clubs, Masonic lodge, School of Arts, etc.

'I hope that readers will enjoy the little book and maybe learn something that they have not encountered before or maybe forgotten,' Brian said. 'Over fifteen references were used, some of these were published over thirty years ago and I felt it was time for an update



as not many of these references are available today.'

The book will retail for \$10.00 or \$13.00 if posted. Contact Brian on 6628 1557 or APHS, PO Box 65, Alstonville 2477.



AT A TIME when we are watching the celebrations associated with the sixty-year reign of Queen Elizabeth II it should be remembered that Alstonville once had its own queen. The *Richmond River Times*, 6 October 1898, reports: 'Queen Susie Kapps, of Alstonville, has received credentials indicative of her illustrious birth and position in the shape of a handsome brass plate in crescent form, bearing the inscription, *Susie Kapps, Queen of Alstonville*, with the appropriate native emblems, the emu and the kangaroo.'

Research suggests that from the time of Governor Lachlan Macquarie (1810–1821) breastplates were presented to selected Aboriginal people who were seen as leaders in their communities. However, as Aboriginal people did not traditionally have kings or queens, the colonial powers went against the more collective form of traditional Aboriginal culture in appointing individuals to these European titles. The National Library suggests that most breastplates were given to men, so the presentation of one to Susie Kapps is unusual. It is not known who presented this breastplate but Susie must have been well known in the district. In the longer term many Aboriginal people considered these as 'paternalistic tokens' and they were discarded.

**JANE GARDINER**

Photo above: A breastplate similar to the one presented to Susie Kapps

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# Dancing in the Wyrallah Hall

MY EARLY MEMORY of the Wyrallah Hall was when it was owned by the Orange Lodge. At one time the Orange Lodge was fairly strong in Wyrallah but as the years passed on, lodge members passed on and few younger people replaced them. Then a group of local people formed the Hall Committee and raised money and bought the hall from the lodge.

I do not know the exact size of the floor in the hall, but for a country hall it was a fair size. When the lodge owned it the floor was in poor condition. In the centre of the floor there was a section that had been repaired. Where the old section joined this the floor was very rough.

When the Hall Committee became the owners of Wyrallah Hall they made arrangements to replace the floor with specially selected teak timber from the Kyogle district.

For many years the dances were all 'Old Time' (no modern dances were allowed). Lovers of old-time dances came from all over the region.

There was no bridge at Wyrallah at that time, there was only a hand operated vehicular ferry. The ferryman's cottage was on the eastern side of the river and there was a bell on the western side for motorists to use to summon the ferryman. Many motorists just blew their car horn. I remember one ferryman, Mr Fred West, who got on well with everyone and was well liked and did not seem to

mind getting out of bed at night to put someone over the river. When there were dances at Wyrallah, there were always a few cars that would come over to the dances and this meant that they would go back again after one o'clock in the morning. On these nights the ferryman always had a bad night. After Fred left there was one ferryman who used to complain bitterly about having to get out of bed in the early hours of the morning. I heard that one night someone rang the bell on the western side and waited until he was halfway over with the ferry and then they turned around and drove away.

Some time before the floor was replaced, it was noticed that all the young people in the area came to the dances and other social functions but a lot of them did not dance and I was one of them. I think we were a bit self-conscious and were reluctant to make a fool of ourselves if we did not get it right and so old time dance classes were organised. The teacher was a local man, Mr Webber. The classes were very successful and soon all the young people were getting up and dancing and enjoying themselves.

Intoxicating beverages were strictly forbidden inside the hall and some local men brought their own and imbibed outside.

Mostly we had Hitchcock's three piece orchestra, which consisted of Mrs Hitchcock on the piano, her husband on drums, Leo Synnot on the electric steel guitar and later the

saxophone. Leo liked his wee drop and early in the night he would disappear outside between dances. We noticed as the night wore on his playing would improve.

Mr Fred Edwards had a town bus run in Lismore and whenever there was a dance in the Wyrallah Hall he would bring a bus load of people out from Lismore. The Hall Committee would pay him a certain amount of money and then the passengers would travel free on the bus. Of course, they still had to pay when they went into the hall. The bus always had a full load.

Many of the older people enjoyed playing euchre in the supper room and I must say that I sometimes enjoyed playing it, too.

As for the dances, there was the Waltz, the Chocolate Waltz and the Barn Dance which was always progressive where the dancers changed partners at regular intervals. There was the Gypsy Tap and at the Wyrallah Hall that was sometimes made progressive, too. We danced the Pride of Erin, the Schottische and the Prince of Wales Schottische. We also did the Maxena and Mazurka. One of my favourites was the Varsoviene. This is a beautiful dance of Polish origin and it has its own music and no other music can be performed to it.

Among the crowd who came from Lismore there was a young fellow who would never ask a girl for a dance. He always waited until a progressive barn dance started or a gypsy tap became progressive, then just as the dancers were on the point of changing partners he would duck into the line and he could dance with the girls without having to ask any of them. This, of course, meant that one of the other men somewhere along the line would find himself without a partner. It happened to me a few times.

One cold winter's night there was dancing in progress and he came to me and said, 'I wish they would put on a progressive barn dance. I'm freezing cold and I haven't had a dance all night.' I said, 'Well, look at all the



Wyrallah Hall, c.1994

# Wallangarra/Jennings

girls sitting down over there. Go and ask one for a dance, they're not going to bite you.' He gave me a very strange look and wandered off. He didn't ask a girl for a dance.

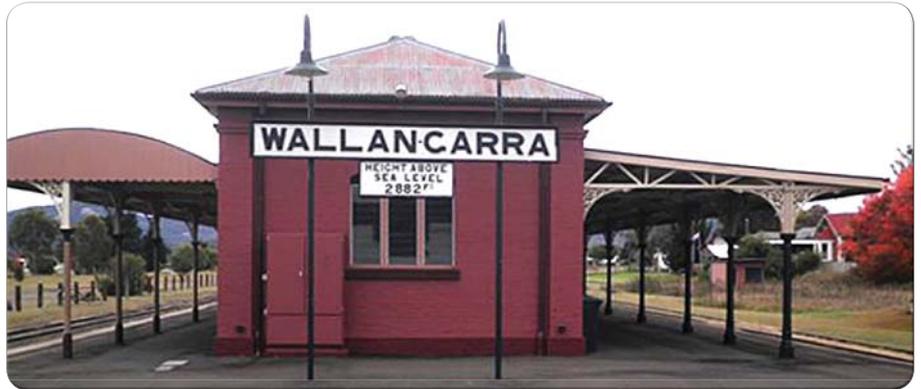
We had a master of ceremonies who was a local man. He was Mr George Smith Jnr who used to announce the dances and conduct the Chocolate Waltzes. He was not very tall but he had a very big clear voice and when he went on the stage to make announcements everyone in the hall knew what he was saying. He never needed a microphone.

We all appreciated supper time. In the supper room at the Wyrallah Hall there was a chip heater and when it was nearly supper time some of the local men would fill the heater with water and light the fire. When the water was boiling, there were several huge enamel teapots and we would get them out of a cupboard and make the tea. While we were doing that someone would get the cups out of the cupboard and put them into a large basket. The basket was taken around the hall and people would take out a cup. Then we would take the tea pots around and fill the cups. I often carried a teapot. Then would follow the milk and sugar.

In the meantime some of the ladies would be getting the sandwiches and cakes ready and would take them around on plates. After supper everything was washed, put away and the dancing would begin again.

The Wyrallah Hall was also the venue for kitchen teas, farewells and concerts. One prominent Wyrallah man, Mr George Smith Snr, just loved making speeches. He was a lay preacher and on every occasion when there were speeches in the hall, he had to be one of the speakers. He would be up on the stage holding forth in preaching mode. One night my mother was in the audience and she waited for him to pause and then she said in a low voice, 'Let us pray'. Everyone sitting near her burst out laughing.

**BILL MASON**



Wallangarra/Jennings Railway Station

THESE VILLAGES ARE separated by the Queensland–New South Wales border so theoretically you could stand with one foot in either place.

The villages were created when the railway system of each state met at this point in 1888. Not only did the railway gauges differ (Qld 3 feet 6 inches, NSW 4 feet 8 inches) the two governments could not and/or would not agree on the construction of the railway station.

At the time this line was the only rail link between Sydney and Brisbane.

This ridiculous situation meant that passengers and freight had to leave the incoming train and move across the station platform to continue their journey.

## Research on the William Alexander Family

I opened the door of 'Olivene' recently to a man who inquired about the family of William Alexander. I suggested he visit our Research Officer, Alison, in the Community Research Centre. No sooner had he left and Alison had marched him back to me saying, 'He is your relative.'

It was Bill Rose who was searching for information and I have a great aunt by marriage, Fanny Cooke, née Alexander. We got chatting and it was arranged for Bill to come back to the CRC on Sunday afternoon for more family history stories. In the meantime I contacted our member, Margaret Edler, and she very kindly supplied me with a multitude of paperwork pertaining to Joseph Harris and his descendant, William Alexander. I also contacted a local person known to the

The photo shows that the Jennings (NSW) part of the building was constructed with a skillion roof whereas the Wallangarra (QLD) side had a bull-nose roof. They couldn't even agree on that!

This railway link continued until 1932 when a standard gauge system was completed.

With the completion of the Grafton Bridge, the line through Casino became the preferred Sydney–Brisbane route and the Wallangarra line ceased all services in 1997.

Wallangarra was originally Aboriginal words *Wallan Garra*, meaning 'plenty of water'.

**BRIAN WORTHINGTON**

members of the Alstonville Plateau Historical Society, Jill Condie because she is related to the Alexander family, too. Jill's grandmother, Caroline, was a sister to Fanny, so Jill met Bill on Sunday and they had lots of information to share.

I am sure we will see Bill again because he has interests in a number of Bangalow families and will share those notes with Alison.

**INALE BAS**



Bill Rose and Jill Condie at the CRC

# Internship at the Powerhouse



Jane and Ina posing(?) outside the museum

'TO DISCOVER AND be inspired by human ingenuity' is the motto of the Powerhouse Museum and I think Ina and I were inspired if not overwhelmed by our four-day internship at the museum last month. The aim of the internship was to develop skills and gain information about exhibition development and to this end we were moved through just about every museum department. Key sessions included being shown practical methods for displaying objects, interpreting an exhibition and copywriting. Other museum professionals talked to us about audience development, working with children, the use of audio-visual and the role of new technologies such as the 'smart' board.

Jane didn't feel too smart trying to interpret her own wobbly finger writing on the board after this session!

Possibly the highlight of the trip

was seeing the platypus skin rug owned by the Bulwinkel family, which is one of only three platypus skin items owned by the museum. While in the collection store we had the opportunity to see some of the other 500,000 items held by the museum. As the photograph shows the Powerhouse holds slightly more irons than Crawford House Museum but didn't have a Mrs Pott's child's iron! (a Mrs Pott's iron is the type you heat on a fuel stove).

The Powerhouse internship certainly provided us with a wealth of ideas which we hope will translate into a fantastic Bulwinkel and the Platypus Skin Rug Exhibition next September and October. Already members are responding to merchandising opportunities and platypus are appearing on scarves and bags and even on finger puppets!

Meeting so many professionals at the Powerhouse reinforced what Ina and I already knew, that is you need many people with various skills and talents to make an exhibition really work. Like the Transit of Venus, the display of the Bulwinkel Platypus skin rug at Crawford House will only happen once in a lifetime so we hope all members will rise to the occasion and support this event even if all you do is get your neighbour to see it!

**JANE GARDINER & INALE BAS**



Doug and Jean Alker with Marguerite Fuller at the CRC

## The Welsh Connection

IN MARCH, the Resource Centre entertained visitors from Wales—Mrs Jean Alker and her husband, Doug, who came to further Jean's research into the Australian part of her Brown family. They had just visited the Solomon Islands and they finished the holiday with three days in Alstonville.

I had spoken with Jean on the phone in 2006, when member Charlie Brown, who lives in Albany, Western Australia, sent money to buy our book, *Duck Creek Mountain now Alstonville*, to post to her, so it was pleasing to put a face to the voice.

While in Alstonville the Alkers stayed with the Pretorius family. Eldred Pretorius used to babysit Jean's children in Wales, so Jean was very surprised a few years ago when Eldred's mother announced that her daughter and husband had left South Africa where they had gone to live to settle in a little place called Alstonville. She didn't suppose that Jean had heard of it.

Although the weather was terrible the three days they were here, the Alkers enjoyed visiting Crawford House, the cemetery and the area where the Browns had lived and have vowed to return and spend longer here.

**MARGUERITE FULLER**



The museum's iron display (just slightly bigger than ours!)

# Recognising Alstonville District Citizens

## KEITH K MARTIN

WHILE KEITH MARTIN contributed a great deal to the Booyong-Pearces Creek area, he also contributed much to Alstonville during WWII. He was born on 17 January 1891 at Wanaaring, NSW and came to Lismore as a child with his father who was postmaster. He went to Inverell before returning in 1912 and forming a partnership with WC Lane of Eltham. He then assumed control of the Booyong business which he sold, later buying it again in 1915. He sold it once again to McInnis in 1921 but bought it once more 1925. He then owned it for many years. His son, Bernie, and daughter, Lil, helped him work the business after WWII until it was sold on 3 October 1959.

On 8 April 1914 he married Christina Fair Kirkland, the fifth daughter of Mr and Mrs Hugh Kirkland. The ceremony took place at her parents' home, Kirkville, at Pearces Creek.

He bought the store in Main Street, Alstonville from Mr Street. The intention was for his son, George, to look after it, but unfortunately George died as a prisoner-of-war in Malaya during WWII. Bernie, his second son, left Lismore High School to work in the Alstonville store. Red Cross supplies were packed at this store.

Keith Martin also took an active part in raising funds for the war effort. Not only did he make donations from his shop to the Red Cross, but he also made several large monetary donations to the organisation. He was appointed one of the foodstuff rangers in 1942. This was when it was felt evacuation



The Martin family: (Back) George, Keith and Bernie; (Front) Chris and Lil



Martin's new store at Booyong

may need to occur in the area.

He was patron of the Booyong Cricket Club as well as being involved in the Pearces Creek Hall, Uniting Church, Pearces Creek P&C, Booyong-Pearces Creek Red Cross and he was president of both the Pearces Creek Patriotic League and Booyong Reserve Trust. He was a member of the Booyong Reserve Trust from 1931 to 1958. He was also a member of Eltham Masonic Lodge.

Keith Martin died on 3 April 1959. A service was conducted in the Clunes Presbyterian Church before the cortege proceeded to Mt Thompson Crematorium in Brisbane.

His wife, Chris, sang at many local

concerts, often with her sister, Mrs Boyd Fowler. Chris was president of the Pearces Creek Red Cross for twenty years. She was also a very active community member in many other areas. She died in Lismore on 11 January 1973.

IAN KIRKLAND

ASPEN

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# The Reading Room

## Queensland's Western Afterthought

PETER SAENGER

You may recall that at the end of March this year the APHS hosted the launching of Professor Peter Saenger's *Queensland's Western Afterthought*, a copy of which has found its way onto our library shelves. The book was published to coincide with the 150th anniversary (in June 2012) of the annexation of this tract of land that increased the size of Queensland by a further 21 per cent.

Peter Saenger has clearly achieved his stated aim 'to produce something thoughtful and accurate but not so scholarly that it would be uninteresting to the general reader.' He has done this by providing interesting information and photographs on a vast array of subjects from, for example, the enigmatic Ludwig Leichhardt, the limited achievements of Burke and Wills, the powerfully narcotic qualities of the pituri bush, to the founding of Qantas and the Royal Flying Doctor Service.

In meticulously documenting the exploration of all parts of this region, Saenger captures some of the early optimism from the journals. In 1841, impressed with what he saw, John Lort Stokes on board HMS *Beagle* travelled some fifty miles along a river he named the Albert and spoke of 'Plains of Promise'. On this apparently fertile land, Stokes saw a future involving



Camels loaded with rolls of fencing wire for the construction of the rabbit-proof fence in north-western Queensland, 1900. (John Oxley Library, image no. 18899-section only)

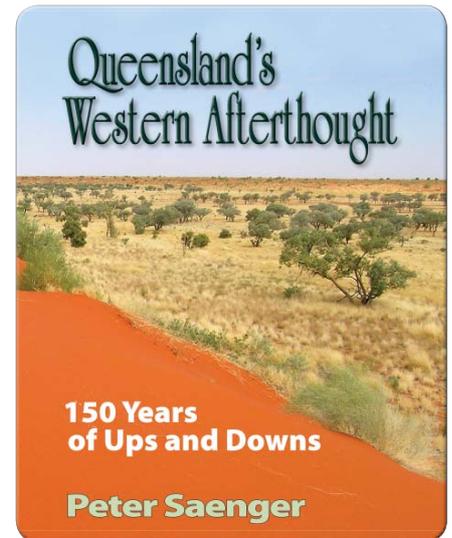
'the habitations of civilised man and the heaven-ward pointing spires of the Christian Church.'

In essence, this book records the difficulties and setbacks (some climatic, some governmental and some self-inflicted) that have dogged the hopes of the developers of this tract of land from Burketown to Birdsville during the last 150 years.

Droughts and floods dominate the ups and downs of this period but the book does cast a glimpse at the fascinating way Aborigines, plants and animals have adapted to these highly fluctuating conditions. I certainly did not know that there was a species of freshwater crab that in very dry conditions will burrow some eighty centimetres into the subsoil and assume a state of 'metabolic dormancy', and I was fascinated to read of the ingenious method employed by Aboriginal residents on the Mulligan River for netting pigeons when conditions were drying out.

For me, one of the highlights of *Queensland's Western Afterthought* involves the 'Wild West-type' stories about characters in these remote areas. One example that comes to mind involves an incident at the Brook Hotel about eighteen miles from Burketown.

'On December 11th 1884, the head drover for the Upper Nicholson River, Julius Burncastle, got into a fight with one of the drovers from a large number of bush hands ... drinking and horse-racing. During the mid-afternoon, the drover, Joseph Letrel, struck Burncastle, who retaliated by throwing a tumbler. When that missed, Burncastle went to his dray where he kept his firearms. Joseph Crawford, his cook, "an old man who was perfectly sober at the time, followed him to the dray to dissuade him from his purpose", and Burncastle shot him dead. When overpowered and disarmed, the murderer muttered: "I shot the poor old cook, and I had no grudge against him. I don't know what I did it for."' (Internal quotes from *Brisbane Courier*, 14 January 1885)



Near the end of the book space is devoted to epic projects like constructing rabbit-proof fences and a trans-continental railway. Hindsight allows modern readers some wry grins when reading of the proposals for a south-north railway line. Here is the vision of one prospective developer, Edwin Trenerry from 1879. He proposed to extend the existing Melbourne-Echuca line to Moama, Deniliquin, Hay and to Bulligal, where there would be 'the grand junction ... as Bulligal is in the midst of a fine agricultural country, and will probably become the Chicago of this part of the Australian continent.' Furthermore (with his proposed railway terminating at the Gulf), he felt that there was 'the probability of the early annexation of New Guinea to Australia [and] the founding of some important city on the gulf.'

Such visions, however, ran well ahead of political realities, despite the fact that the electorate of Burke (around Burketown) returned two members of parliament between the years 1887 and 1910. Can you imagine the outcry should any modern Prime Minister or Premier propose returning to such a system?

This review merely scratches the surface of *Queensland's Western Afterthought*. I'm sure you would find lots more fascinating details between its covers.

JOHN SIM

# APHS Committee Report

## From the President

As most of you would realise, the dominant news for our Society at the moment concerns the Powerhouse Museum's decision to allow us to borrow and exhibit Charles Bulwinkel's Platypus Skin Rug at Crawford House during the months of September and October.

Firstly, it is most important to acknowledge the huge amount of preliminary spadework done by Jane Gardiner to allow this to happen. Single-handedly, Jane was successful in winning a \$4000 grant from the Commonwealth Department of Heritage and Environment to offset costs involved in transporting the rug to Alstonville. She was then able to convince the Powerhouse staff that we could provide the space, the security and the staff to exhibit this precious item satisfactorily. Well done, Jane!

Interestingly, part of that grant money will also be spent on the development of an APHS Website. More details will be provided about this in a future journal.

Freshly back from their week at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney, Jane and Ina exhibited to our May meeting some of the additional ways of creating interest in our Platypus Rug exhibition. Stuffed toys, knitted hats, finger puppets, shoulder bags and platypus scarves have all been previewed and a special sub-committee has been established to develop appropriate



Author Peter Saenger at the launch of his book (see opposite page) at the CRC

publicity and educational activities to accompany our exhibition, the theme of which is to be: 'A Story of Changing Attitudes'.

Our June meeting was also shown the beginnings of Livia's beautiful Platypus Quilt that is to be the prize for our major mid-year raffle.

Clearly, this coup for Alstonville is creating considerable interest in our community with a number of local groups already making bookings to bring their members to Crawford House to view this extraordinary artefact. One such group will be the Far North Coast Chapter of Museums Australia in early September.

Meanwhile, other business has been continuing as usual. Interest in and sales of Ian Kirkland's *Blanchie* remain strong and the same should be the case for Brian Worthington's *Ballina-Early Days*,

to be launched at our July meeting.

Prior to that, of course, will be our fifth 'Airing of the Quilts' exhibition. This year, we will also welcome a local group of woodworkers who will be displaying their impressive skills. Many thanks, once again, must go to Jan Allen for her great work in consolidating this popular initiative.

Recently, interest has been intense from local primary schools. Eight separate classes of six to seven year olds have visited our museum, thereby enriching their study of the theme: 'Then and Now'. Glimpses of life in the past have been provided through objects like a darning mushroom, a bean slicer, butter pats and a riding crop. Many thanks to those members who have (sometimes at fairly short notice) assisted with these school visits.

We hope that many will return to discover more about the platypus, the rug and the Bulwinkel family.

JOHN SIM

## APHS Diary Dates

### JULY 2012 MEETING

Sunday, 15 July 2012 at 2.00 pm  
Community Resource Centre,  
10 Wardell Road, Alstonville  
Guest Speaker: Marlene Lester  
Launch of *Ballina-Early Days*

### AUGUST 2012 MEETING

Sunday, 19 August 2012 at 2.00 pm  
Community Resource Centre,  
10 Wardell Road, Alstonville  
Guest Speaker: Don Brown  
'A Family Connection to Charles and  
Wilhelmina Bulwinkel'



A visit from a group from Rotary to Crawford House Museum



## A Complicated Tale

REFERRING TO Brian Worthington's story on page 8 in the March/April *Pioneer* regarding the hardships of the convict Joseph Smith: My great-great-grandfather, John Hannabus, was a convict who was transported to Australia in 1797. His daughter Mary was, for a time, housekeeper for Joseph Smith and then married his son, also Joseph Smith. They had numerous children, one of whom, Charlotte, was a friend of my great-great-grandfather's sister, Eliza Staff, who at the age of fifteen years, did the tapestry of the three-decker pulpit of St John's Church in Parramatta, which still hangs in the church today.

Mary and Joseph Smith and their infant daughter, Elizabeth, are buried in the old St James' cemetery at Pitt Town. The youngest daughter of John Hannabus, Ann, married Samuel Chaplain. They were the grandparents of my grandmother, Charlotte Crawford née Staff (pictured).

**DOROTHY CRAWFORD**

## APHS Publications

Alstonville District Farm Life

Alstonville High School: The First Twenty-Five Years

Alstonville's Heritage Trail • Duck Creek Mountain—Now Alstonville Ballina—Early Days • Blanchie—Alstonville's WWII Inspirational Nurse

Effort Earns Success: History of Alstonville Public School

Forgotten Railways of the Northern Rivers

From Buckets to Brigade: History of the Alstonville Fire Brigade

From Bush Track to Bypass • Memories of Alstonville

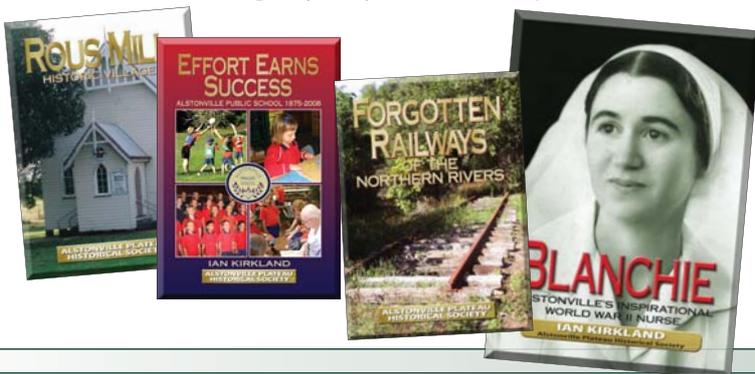
Milestones and Memories: Alstonville District

Out of Puff: The Ballina Train • Rous Mill—Historic Village

Six or Nothing: History of Rous Cricket Association

Wollongbar—Historic Village

All these books are available from APHS monthly meetings, Crawford House Museum (Fridays 10–4 pm & Sundays 1–4 pm), selected outlets including Get Hooked on Books at Alstonville Plaza, and Alstonville Newsagency or by mail order. Enquiries: 02 6628 1829



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## Alstonville Plateau Historical Society Inc.

Established 21 October 2001 • ABN 14 079 187 469

Affiliated with the  
Royal Australian Historical Society

### CRAWFORD HOUSE MUSEUM & ALSTONVILLE COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE:

10 Wardell Road, Alstonville—02 6628 1829 (Fri & Sun)

Email: aphis2477@yahoo.com.au

#### Museum Opening Hours:

Fridays 10.00–4.00 pm and Sundays 1.00–4.00 pm

**Research Centre:** Fridays 10.00–4.00 pm

#### PATRONS:

J Saffin MP, D Page MP, T George MP, Cr P Silver

#### SOCIETY'S AIMS:

To collect, preserve, display and provide documents and photos of a historical nature of the Alstonville Plateau and Ballina Shire for current and future generations. We welcome stories, photos and family histories for our records and newsletter publication.

#### HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETINGS:

3rd Sunday of each month at 2.00 pm  
Alstonville Community Resource Centre  
Crawford House, 10 Wardell Road, Alstonville  
(Guest speaker and general meeting)

#### CORRESPONDENCE & ENQUIRIES:

The Hon. Secretary,  
Alstonville Plateau Historical Society Inc.,  
PO Box 65, Alstonville NSW 2477  
Phone: 6628 1829 • Email: ltmarsh41@gmail.com

#### SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Due 1 October each year  
(Include Public Risk Ins. and newsletter)  
**Fees:** Single \$20; Family \$40; Student \$5  
(Please add \$6.00 if newsletter to be posted)  
**Corporate Membership:** \$100.00 p.a.  
(Incl. newsletter displays and full membership)

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**Vice President:** Ina le Bas 6628 5457

**Hon. Treasurer:** Alison Draper 6628 1024

**Assist. Treasurer:** Brian Worthington 6628 1557

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Margaret Kennedy 6686 0027, Cathy Cohen 6628 8671

#### Past-Presidents:

Marguerite Fuller, Jane Gardiner, Ian Kirkland

**Volunteers Co-ordinator:** Jane Gardiner 6628 3925

#### Booking Enquiries:

Crawford House & Community Resource Centre  
John Sim 6687 8469