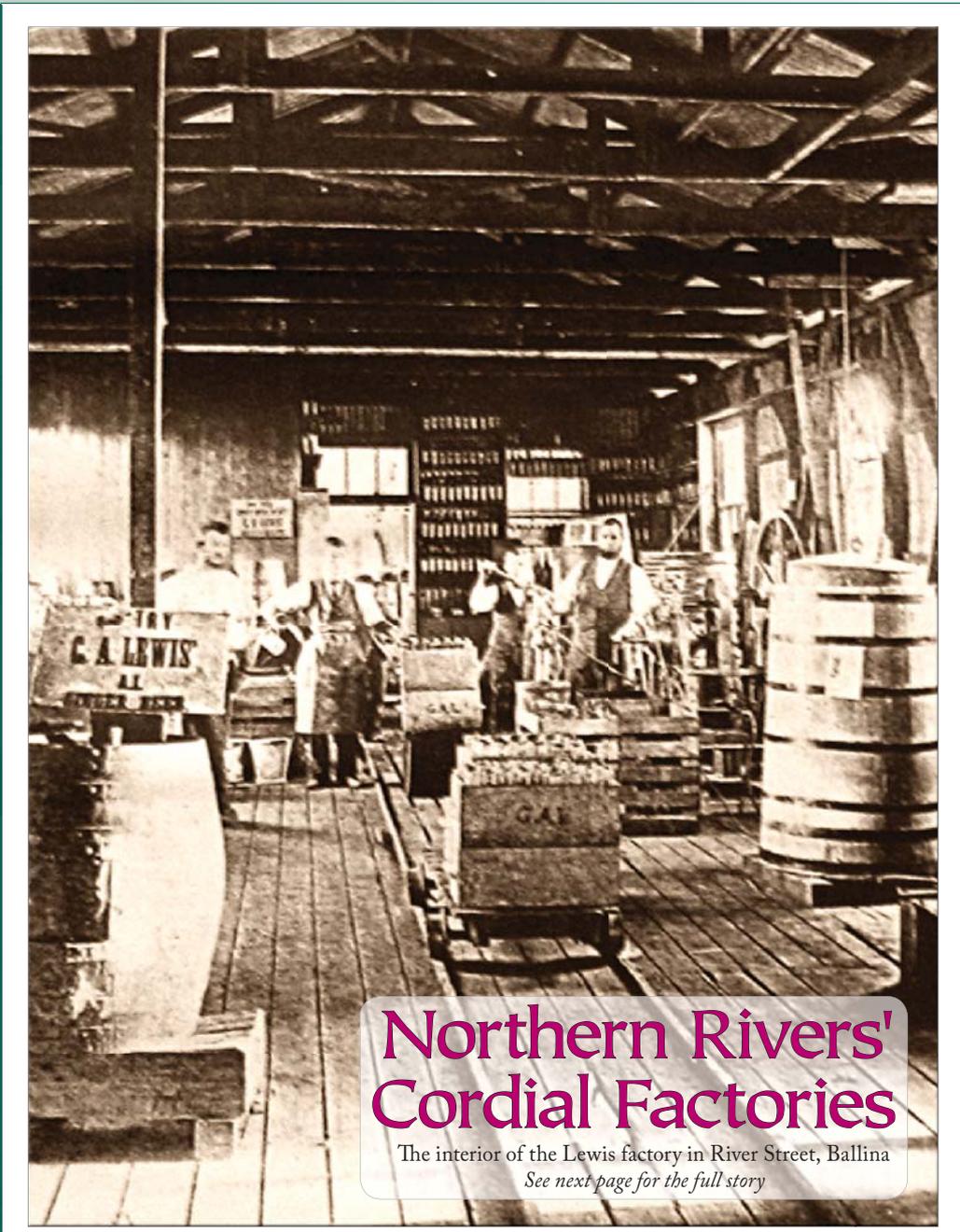




# The PIONEER



## Northern Rivers' Cordial Factories

The interior of the Lewis factory in River Street, Ballina  
*See next page for the full story*



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**Volume 12, No. 3**

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# Northern Rivers' Cordial Factories

*On Sunday 20 November 2011 Geoff Kinkead gave the society a talk on cordial manufacturing in this area, and the following is an abridged account.*

THOMAS RYAN was the first cordial manufacturer from Alstonville. He was in partnership with John Quigley at Tenterfield in 1887; then he bought him out and opened his own cordial factory at Rous Mill in 1895. Thomas Ryan used marble bottles with his name embossed on the bottle. They had a registered trademark but no place name marked on the bottles, which enabled them to be used in any town. He appeared to have left the Alstonville district in about 1900 and ended up at Mount Garnett, Queensland where he died in 1906.

The second cordial manufacturer from Alstonville was Francis Leonard Hacking who was born in England, married a girl from Kiama and lived in Sydney around the late 1800s. He appeared in Alstonville in about 1902 when he formed a partnership with John McQueen. The McQueen name is quite well known in Alstonville and John McQueen probably provided the financial backing.

Francis Hacking was also involved with the Ocean View Hotel and was hotel manager at one time. It is not known exactly where the factory was in Alstonville, but it was probably somewhere near the Ocean View Hotel, because of the close association between cordial manufacturers and hotels.



The same factory under the ownership of the Spencer family

The first factory in Ballina was started by Mr H Watson, who converted Victoria Hall to produce aerated water, cordials, vinegars, sauces, etc. The machinery was capable of turning out 400 dozen per day, quite a lot in 1884. He formed a partnership with Edward Solomon and the factory was located on the corner of Kerr and River Streets fronting the river. The partnership was dissolved in late 1884 and Edward Solomon formed another partnership with Peter Gray, who was well known in the district at that time. They managed the business until 1886 when the lease expired.

Then came George Alfred Lewis in 1886. The factory moved in to River Street and also manufactured sauces and pickles as well as ginger beers and aerated waters. He decided to get out of the cordial-manufacturing business in about 1912, and it is interesting to

note that he didn't sell the property but leased it to Angus Harold McDonald, who was born in Maclean, came up to the Northern Rivers and was farming at Dungarubba. He then went into the Miners' Arms Hotel at Broadwater before he took over the lease. He was there for about two years. After he left he went to Casino as a hotel keeper until the 1930s and after that to Lismore as a cordial manufacturer.

Charles Henry Ashwood, who was born in Tenterfield, is believed to be the first manufacturer of aerated waters and cordials in Wardell around 1894. He got himself well connected in the Ballina community by marrying Agnes Webster in 1899/1900. Ashwood was set up by 1900 and also operated in Ballina right through until about 1934 on the corner of Moon Street and Bentinck Street.

After McDonald left, the cordial manufacturing at River Street was taken over by Alfred Ernest and Arthur George Phipps, father and son, in 1914. In 1916 Arthur George enrolled in World War I and when he returned, he took over the manufacturing and lived in Ballina all his life.

After the Phipps left they sold out to Johnson Brothers—John Eric and Charles Gordon. They had the cordial factory moved onto the corner of Grant Street and River Street but the partnership didn't last very long.

In 1950 the factory was bought by Lorraine and Charles Spencer and



The Johnson Brothers cordial factory at Ballina

# The Tick Fence

their sons. Charles Spencer died in a car accident in Queensland in 1951 and his two sons, Charles and Gordon Spencer, then operated the factory through until about 1966.

After 1966 the impact of the multinationals was starting to be felt everywhere. Spencers and Pilgrims from Mullumbimby amalgamated to form NorEast Drinks out on the Pacific Highway. They faced competition and in the end the cordial factories in the area became distribution points. All the soft drinks and cordials sold by the supermarkets were made elsewhere and brought in.

Geoff Kinkead brought along some bottles to the meeting, including a 7-oz soda water marble bottle, a Niagara patent for a 4-way pour using the marble; a ginger beer bottle, cork sealed like a champagne bottle; a bottle marked with an X on the bottom indicating it came from the Sydney Glassworks. Glassmakers didn't like the colour green that was in some bottles so they added manganese oxide to the bottle mix. This made a clear glass bottle but they didn't realise that sunlight turned the glass purple. They used different bottles for ginger beer to stop the light reacting with the yeast, etc. because the ginger beer was bottled for twelve months before being released. Crown seal bottles were patented in 1912 and became one-way bottles, non-returnable, in 1950.

Geoff said he became interested in researching when he moved up to the North Coast in 1972. He found some bottles locally and wanted to know more about them and the manufacturers. No-one else in the area at the time was doing any research and the bottles couldn't even be dated. He also has a book, *Immigration, Liaisons and Effervescence*, being published.

LIZ MARSHALL



Charles Ashwood's soda water bottle

IN THE 1940S AND 1950s an attempt was made to prevent the spread of the Queensland Cattle Tick into New South Wales. It was believed that climatic conditions would not allow it to spread down the inland regions of NSW and that it was only capable of spreading along the coastal areas. To control its spread in coastal areas a strong cattle-proof barbed wire fence was constructed for the full length of the Richmond Range. It commenced at the Queensland border near Woodenbong and went all the way to the ocean south of Evans Head. It was regularly patrolled and kept in good order.

The cattle tick was about the same size and shape, when fully gorged, as the common bush or grass tick. It may have been a little paler in colour but it was easily identified. It had white legs—the bush or grass tick had brown legs. The reason for wanting to prevent it spreading into NSW was that it could carry the serious cattle disease called Red Water. The bush or grass tick did not spread this disease.

Where the various roads crossed the Richmond Range there was a manned tick gate. Beside each gate there was a cottage where the gate keeper lived. The purpose of the gates was to ensure that all livestock travelling to what was considered clean country were accompanied by the appropriate permit stating that they had received the proper tick treatment.

There was a gate on the Woodenbong–Kyogle road about ten miles from Woodenbong. There was a gate on the Casino–Tabulam road near Mallanganee and on the following roads: Rappville–Cleveland Crossing road near Mt Belmore, on Summerland Way at Banyabba south of Whiporie. There were two roads that led from the Bungawalbyn Creek area across to the Pacific Highway: they were Range Road and Glencoe Forest Road and both of them had tick gates. The Pacific Highway also had a tick gate on it just south of New Italy.

One day I had occasion to travel



Remains of the tick fence near Evans Head, c.2003

along Range Road. The gate there was fairly isolated and the gate keeper there was ready for a yarn. He told me the following story:

About two o'clock one morning a motorist arrived and needed to be let through the gate. The gate keeper got out of bed, pulled on an old pair of slippers and grabbed a torch and went to the gate. The motorist said, 'You're supposed to be fully dressed.'

The gate keeper said, 'Yes, I suppose I am. I'll have to have a bath and so I'll have to light the fire in the stove to get some hot water for it. That will take a while. I'll have to have a shave. That will take a bit longer and I will need some clean clothes and I don't happen to have any at the moment, so I will have to wash some and then wait for them to dry and then iron them. So, if you can wait two and a half or three hours I will spruce myself up a bit and then I will come and let you through.'

The motorist thought the matter over for a few seconds and then allowed himself to be let through by a pyjama-clad gate keeper.

BILL MASON



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# Sunnylands Boys' Home and the UPA

FOR VARIED REASONS after 1945 many children did not have secure homes. A railway worker, Mr Thomas Agst of Lutheran and Presbyterian background, had a great desire to provide loving homes for children needing temporary or permanent care. As he and his wife, Loretta, (née Smith—from Lismore), were transferred around NSW by the railways, he was instrumental in setting up support for children in areas such as Parramatta, Wagga, Albury, Glen Innes, Grafton (Ulmarra/Clarence) and the Lismore/Alstonville area.

He had a great passion for starting Sunday schools, believing they should be places of fun times and picnics as well as learning Christian teachings. The Sunnylands boys always attended Sunday school at Alstonville or Wollongbar Methodist (later Uniting) church.

In 1942 Mr Agst formed branches of the UPA (United Protestant Association) at Lismore, Clunes and Alstonville. A district council was formed as well as an auxiliary committee of ladies. This committee consisted of Mrs Dee, Mrs Bryce, Miss Speeding, Mrs Lyndon, Mrs Amy Bryant and Mrs Annie Bryant. The District Council decided to purchase a farm at Wollongbar owned by Mrs Young. Some cows were bought and a man and wife were employed to work the dairy while living in the cottage.

Mr Sharp was first District Manager, followed by Mr Habgood. It took ten years of hard work to pay off the farm. The men cleaned the farm,

with Mr Cook planting pineapples as a means of finance, while Mrs Dee started the catering side of the local UPA by serving cups of tea upstairs from Fosseys in Lismore. Later, full meals were served, and the ladies started catering for cattle sales, two Bangalow shows and weddings. Once the farm was paid for, another ten years of hard work was needed before the home was commenced. The ladies continued raising funds by catering and Mr Habgood helped in many ways.

At last the building of the home began, with Mr Bosworth as the builder and Mr Cook turning the first sod. Hon. HL Anthony laid the foundation stone. The building was officially opened by Mr RJ Martin, State President, in June 1955 with an estimated 1000 people present.

The home was opened for occupation with Mr and Mrs McPherson as farm manager and home mother and Miss Faith Stevenson as assistant. Two boys from Glen Innes were the first to arrive, but it was not long before there were fifteen boys including four from England. The number of boys in Sunnylands continued to be between twelve and fifteen up until its closure in 1997.

Mr John Wilcox followed Mr Habgood as District Manager, holding the position for ten years. During that time farm improvements were made, including subdividing, water reticulation, pasture improvement, dairy updated for bulk milk and the herd increased to approximately thirty-five cows. Mr Knowles donated

a large multi-purpose shed which proved very useful, especially as a play area for the boys during wet weather.

The Ladies' Auxiliary faithfully continued fundraising. Many weddings were catered for and many midday meals served in the rooms over Mewings (now Gibson's Pharmacy), later continuing the service at street level. Catering at the Lismore Show was done for three years.

Branches throughout the district helped Sunnylands. These were at Clunes (main supporters), Casino, Murwillumbah, Byron Bay, Ballina and Bangalow. An orchard was established with planting of peach, lemon, orange, grapefruit, orange, mango, cherry guava, pawpaw, cumquat as well as avocados, pecan and macadamia nuts. Potatoes, pumpkin, peas, beans, cucumbers, grammas and sweet corn were planted between the trees as well as several hundred pineapple suckers. Later the farm was leased and the herd sold. Beef cattle were bought.

Running the farm and caring for the boys was carried on in turn by Mr and Mrs Small, Mr and Mrs Ellis, Miss Beverley Roberts, Miss Poppy McDonald, Miss Robinson, Mr and Mrs Hodges, Clive and Grace Poole and Lynne and John Stoker. Max and Leonie Parmenter arrived in 1992. Between 1992 and June of 1993, twenty-two children were cared for, with some returning two or three times for respite.

Sunnylands continued to experience a high demand for its services, with fifty-three admissions between 1993 and 1994, and although it was difficult at times for houseparents, social workers and relieving houseparents, their personal rewards have been returned by those who have left their care. During the final years of Sunnylands operating as a children's home, seventy children were in care. Approximately 95% of these children came from the local area, and the previous year saw a reversal of what was the normal trend as 60% of residents were male and 40% female.



The opening of the home in June 1955

# Empire Vale/German Creek Post Office

REPUTED TO BE the smallest post office in Australia, this tiny building has had anything but an easy time of it. It used to be situated on the eastern side of River Road, next to the school, but was moved to the western side on the river bank. Postmaster Gary Carr thought it was some time after the Second World War.

Established post offices at Ballina, Wardell and Pimlico serviced the German Creek community, but in 1879 a petition by the residents to the Postmaster-General's Department (PMG) started the ball rolling.

They asked for a Receiving Post Office to be established. Widowed storekeeper, Mrs Harriett Purdie, kindly handled the mail bag at no recompense to herself. Letters flew back and forth from the PMG to the inspectors at Ballina and Grafton with requests to establish the population, size of area serviced, counts of mail handled both in and out, etc.

In each case recommendations were not forthcoming as: 'It's only four miles to Wardell and half a mile across the river to Pimlico.' The German Creek and South Ballina Progress Association kept plugging away, however, but it was not until 1 April 1884 that Mrs Purdie was officially appointed.

On 18 October 1888 the Progress Association requested that the Receiving Post Office be upgraded to a full Money Order Post Office, as much inconvenience was caused to the residents having to travel to the other post offices to conduct such business.

The matter dragged on and the Progress Association wrote to

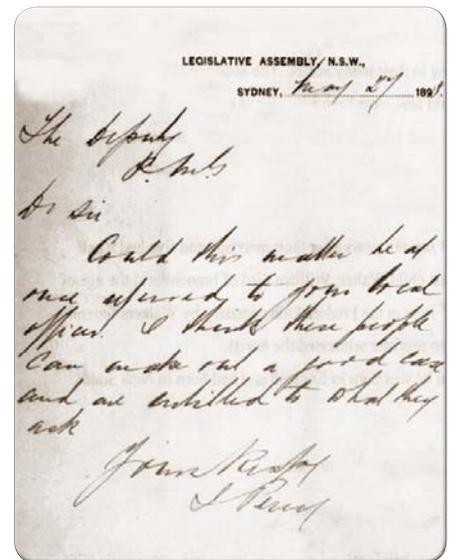


The Empire Vale Post Office, 2011

parliamentarian, John Perry (our local member), stating their case. Mr Perry wrote on parliamentary stationery to the PMG and requested action for the residents as: 'they are entitled to what they ask'. The matter still took some time to be actioned.

Mrs Purdie continued to be postmistress until illness forced her to rely on her daughter, Harriett Jane Purdie, to handle the post office affairs. Mrs Purdie senior died on 22 October 1904 but a successor, Joseph Jurd, wasn't officially appointed until 3 January 1905. Miss Purdie was recompensed for the time she conducted the post office during her mother's illness.

When the First World War began in 1914, due to the anti-German sentiment throughout Australia, many German names were changed and so German Creek ceased to exist in name on 1 May 1915. Incidentally, a number of names were put forward—Avonlea,



John Perry's letter to the PMG

Avonleigh and Empireville all being rejected.

The Empire Vale Post Office continues to operate and has been managed by Mr Gary Carr since 1970.

**BRIAN WORTHINGTON**

References: *The National Archives*, German Creek/Empire Vale Post Office; Empire Vale school secretary; interview with Mr Gary Carr

## Sunnylands Boys' Home

*Continued from previous page*

In 1997 when the Parmenters and the last three young people moved out, a chapter in the history of Sunnylands and the UPA ended. In 1996, the Department of Community Services, as part of the North Coast Area for Substitute Care Services, requested

that UPA Far North Coast submit a proposal to develop another model of service. The foster care—known then as Kids in Care and now known as Youth Care UPA—was successful and Mr Jeff McDonald later became the program manager, having previously worked as a welfare and support worker at Sunnylands.

Sunnylands, whether it was called Sunnylands Boys' Home, Sunnylands Children's Home, or Sunnylands Family Services, was known from its inception as a place where children were loved, cared for and given opportunities which might never have been available to them.

**MARGARETRYAN**

# The Wardell Ferry Murder

ON THE MORNING of 19 May 1885, Albert Robbins was operating the punt from East Wardell to the village for the Wardell ferryman. About ten yards from the village bank the ferry rope fouled. Pulling up the rope young Robbins found a body wrapped in sacking.

He got the ferryman, then Senior Constable Edwards and the three returned to the punt. The body, in its wrappings, was taken to the police station. They found a three-bushel bag drawn over the head of the corpse down to the hips. Attached to the left leg was a rope to which was attached a bag containing four stones weighing 42.5 kilograms. The bag was marked 1C in puce letters. There was about 45 centimetres of rope between the legs and the bag. The body was badly swollen and decomposed and there were several cuts on the head, the back being completely hacked.

The inquest determined the corpse was a well-built male of about thirty years of age, five feet seven inches in height and had fair hair and a medium complexion. There was no identification on the victim and his identity and the identity of the murderer were unknown.

Investigation into the murder continued. The bag marked 1C had been sold in April to a farmer contracted to work on James' cane farm at Pimlico. The farm was being worked by William Liddiard. Liddiard was married, the father of two little girls and was regarded as a

good employee. Photographs of the dead man were distributed through the district in an attempt to identify him. The murdered man was identified as Pat Noonan who had worked on a cane farm at Pimlico but had not been seen for some time. It emerged that Pat Noonan had been employed by Liddiard at around the time of the murder. This was sufficient for Sub-Inspector Garvin to visit Liddiard at the farm. In company with Liddiard was a callow seventeen-year-old youth, William James Hirlsford.

During the interview Garvin asked if Patrick Noonan had been working for him. Liddiard replied that he had but had been gone some six or seven months. Throughout the interview Garvin noted that Hirlsford appeared to be extremely nervous. It was shortly after this interview that Hirlsford left Liddiard's employ. This was for the second time that year. The first time was after Liddiard had accused him of being intimate with his wife—most likely true.

Another piece of evidence to implicate Liddiard was from a girl on Barry's farm which was across the river from Liddiard's. She had heard people out in a rowing boat on 13 May and had a splash of a heavy object hitting the water.

Although the police had their suspicions there was no further action until 10 December when Garvin was visiting Grafton Goal. Hirlsford was in custody there for procuring goods under false pretences. Garvin decided

to have a talk with him and said if he knew anything more about Pat Noonan's murder it was time he spoke about it. Garvin did promise that he would make sure things went easy on the false pretences charge.

Gavin did interview Hirlsford again, this time in Casino Goal. Gavin was convinced that Hirlsford had been lying regarding the disappearance of Noonan. He told him what the girl at Barry's had heard. He also said if he told the truth he would make sure the present charges against him would go away. Gavin also told him he was likely to hang if he was involved in murder.

A terrified Hirlsford slowly told of events on the farm. He stated that Liddiard was very jealous of his wife, having accused Hirlsford and later Noonan of having intimate relations with her. Relations between Liddiard and Noonan on 12 May worsened and Liddiard told him he would soften his Irish head for him.

Hirlsford then told of events on 13 May. The three men were out chipping cane when Liddiard returned to the house and came rushing out with a gun and tomahawk. Before Hirlsford or Noonan could do anything Liddiard rushed up and hit Noonan on the back of the head with the tomahawk and when he fell to the ground continued to hit him around the head until he was dead. Hirlsford stated he tried to stop the attack but Liddiard pointed the gun at him and said he would shoot him if he did not assist him in removing the body. Hirlsford said he had to help, as Liddiard stated he would say he had seen him have a row with Noonan and he killed him.

A sack was pulled over Noonan's head. Some stones were put in another bag and an attempt was made to cover the legs. The sack was too small so they tied it round the legs with a rope. The body was put in the boat and dumped in the river. Liddiard told him to say that Noonan had gone to Queensland—if anyone asked.

Hirlsford left the same day but later



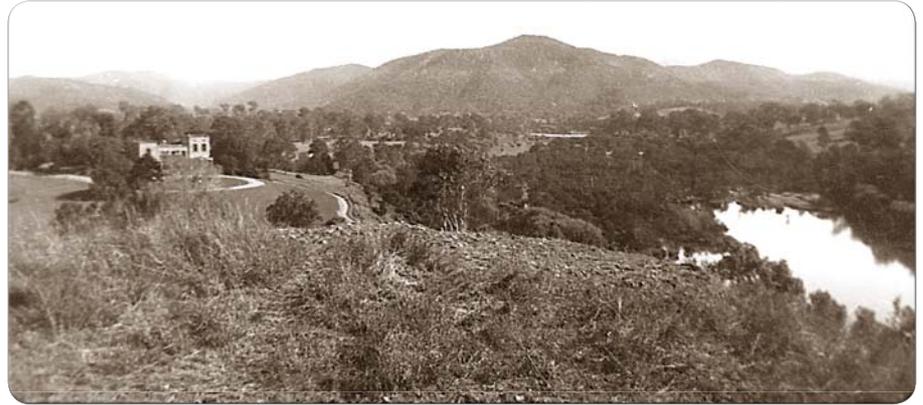
# Local Folk Tales: Yulgilbar Castle

A WELL-KNOWN LANDMARK on the banks of the Clarence River, in New South Wales, is Yulgilbar Castle. Gone however, are its glories and its former importance, and only romantic memories remain of the good old days.

The castle has more than forty rooms, all of them large. The main building has an inner court, and the walls of the towers are three feet thick. Workmen were brought out from England specially to build it. One expert, a man named Farquhar, was engaged to build a secret chamber in the castle. He must have done a very excellent job because nobody seems to know just where that secret chamber is.

Yulgilbar Castle was the home of the Honourable Edward Ogilvie, who lived there with his father, Lieutenant William Ogilvie. The latter fought with Nelson at the Battle of Trafalgar.

In the old days a big staff of liveried servants was kept. Mr Ogilvie had everything in keeping with his castle—butler, coachmen, and gardeners. The whole atmosphere was very formal



Yulgilbar Castle, overlooking the Clarence River (photo courtesy RRHS)

and correct. No one was ever allowed to come to dinner unless in formal dress. Considering the difficulties of travelling in the country in those days, it must have been quite a problem for guests to provide themselves with a suitable wardrobe, but Mr Ogilvie knew no obstacles.

He always had a large stock of dinner suits and dress wear in the castle ready; for anyone who had come unprepared. Many were the distinguished visitors who stayed there—the Earl of Belmore, Sir John Robertson, state governors,

politicians, and social leaders. It was Mr Ogilvie's intention that the castle should be occupied by his descendants for all time and that the estate should be kept intact and controlled by the head of the family, whose seat it was to be—in the manner of the English aristocracy.

Alas, he could not foresee that the modes and outlook on life of his day would vanish, never to return.

**BRIAN WORTHINGTON**

**Excerpt from *Folk Tales of Australia*,  
Bill Beatty, 1966**

## The Wardell Ferry Murder

*Continued from previous page*

returned. He said Mrs Liddiard had helped clean things up. She had washed the blood from her husband's clothes and with him had burnt all Noonan's belongings. The tomahawk handle had been scraped to remove the blood.

On 6 February 1886 William Liddiard was arrested on a charge of murdering Pat Noonan (also known as John Campbell) at or near Mr James' farm at Pimlico on or about 12 or 13 May 1885. His wife was charged as an accessory after the fact. Hirlsford was also charged as an accessory after the fact, but turned Queen's Evidence. He

admitted to assisting in the disposal of Noonan's body.

The prosecution presented their case at the Grafton Quarter Sessions over three days in April 1886. The case was based mainly on Hirlsford's evidence. Other circumstantial evidence was presented. A previous employer of Liddiard spoke of his insane jealousy of his wife. Another man employed by Liddiard prior to his arrest had heard his wife accuse him of being a murderer. Then there was the girl who had heard the boat and splash in the river on the day of the murder. Another woman had heard rustling sounds in the cane near the scene of the murder, and two agonising groans, then dead silence. All of this combined with the sack marked 1C convinced the jury to return a guilty verdict. Liddiard was sentenced to death by hanging.

During the trial Liddiard repeatedly stated that Hirlsford was the murderer. Also he maintained his wife knew nothing of the murder. The

police did not proceed with the charge against her. The judge ruled that the charge against Hirlsford not proceed.

Liddiard was hanged at Grafton Gaol. As he stood on the drop he made the following statement:

'Well, gentlemen, I have very little to say. I have been guilty as an accessory. Hirlsford is a very guilty party. I was walking by the drain first. Noonan, the man killed was second to me, and Hirlsford was walking last. He beat the man down from behind, the man partly rose again. Hirlsford continued to strike him till death took place. He beat the man's head. I helped to remove the body, and I am only guilty as an accessory. Hirlsford swore very falsely.'

It is reported that he spoke slowly and when finished, engaged in prayer with his clergyman while the hangman drew a white cap over his head. Before the prayer was completed, the bolt was drawn and death was instantaneous.

**KEVIN OLIVIERI**

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# Pines on the Plateau



AS A FOLLOW-ON from the story that appeared in the APHS *Pioneer*, January/February 2012, 'The Pines, Wollongbar', I can write about the property from January 1957. I realise that there is a huge gap between the former story until 1957 and, hopefully, there may be someone who can fill in the missing years.

My parents, Robert James and Ellen Mavis Convery (known as Bob and Mavis), purchased the property of approximately 330 acres late in 1956 and the family made the move in January 1957 in time for my sister, Ellen and me (Margaret), to begin the school year from our new address. The farm was bought from Mr Andy Roder, who together with his wife and son moved to the Boatharbour/Richmond Hill area. If my memory serves me correctly the son's name was Noel (I am not aware of any other children) and I believe that he is still in the Richmond Hill area.

My understanding of the property is that originally the land was at some stage two separate farms—with the western side of what is now known as Converys Lane being the one named 'The Pines'.

The previous story in the newsletter mentions a devastating fire that occurred in April 1915. I know that

there had certainly been a fire, as a little away from the site of the house on 'The Pines' side there was still evidence of something having been burnt down when my parents took over the property. This existing home had been rented to Mr Lex Phillips who continued living there with his wife and children until 1967—the family then moved to the Armidale area. Lex was a worker at what was known as the Wollongbar Experimental Farm.

My family lived in the larger home directly opposite the shop then owned and operated by Mr and Mrs Kevin Dufficy. Ours was a reasonably large family with three sons, Frank, Neville and (young) Bob and as mentioned above, my sister and me.

The farm was operated as a dairy farm but as my father and brothers had grown bananas where we previously lived at Wongavale, they decided to give banana growing a go as well. This was not thought to be a good idea by those who 'knew best'—the land not being as steep as where banana plantations usually grew. However, it was a success and not too long after that the Tropical Fruit Research Station just outside of Alstonville was established with bananas being one of the crops grown there.

In the early 1960s the Department of Agriculture was required to extend their property and it followed that my parents were pretty much 'required' to sell the 100-acre block opposite to the Research Station to them. This was a blow to Dad and Mum as the block was a particularly beautiful and productive expanse of agricultural land. (This

same block was auctioned around the year 2007–8 and is now owned by the Pennisi family.)

Dairying became less profitable so milking cows twice a day gave way to running beef cattle in the 1970s. Herefords were Dad's favourite breed and he had much success in showing his cattle around the far north coast show circuit.

As is the norm, gradually my siblings and I had left home to establish our own lives but in May of 1967 my husband and I moved into the rental house. This is the only home that my two children had lived in until they too settled into their own lifestyles.

As the years slipped by, many of the farms in the area were being subdivided as there was a big demand for 'hobby farms'. I guess this basically provided the farmers with their own superannuation. Our farm was subdivided in the early 1970s with Dad and Mum being left with just 3.5 acres. At this time I was the owner of the 5-acre block still known as 'The Pines'.

By mid-1989 both our parents had passed away and it was necessary to sell the family home. It was purchased by a business called Attunga Nursery in 1990. Unfortunately, this business was not a success and was placed in liquidation. Terry and Sue Prendergast purchased the house and land in 1998 and in 2002 began a successful nursery and café business using the dairy building (after renovations!) for the café, and the barn as a gift shop. In 2006 again it was sold as a going concern but failed. The property was purchased again in 2009.

My husband and I remain at 'The Pines' but over the many years extended our home and fondly call it our homestead. We were both employed in government jobs most of our working lives, retired from those positions and since 2004 we have conducted a business called 'Pines on the Plateau Boutique Lodges', offering short term self-contained accommodation.

We hope to remain here for many more years to come.

**MARGARET ORR**

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# Recognising Alstonville District Citizens

## DAPHNE NOBLE

DAPHNE NOBLE (née White) is the only daughter of Bertram and Ida Effie White (née Egging). She was born at Bonnie Doon Private Hospital in Lismore. The family home was Belle Monte, 38 Whites Lane off Ellis Rd, Alstonville. Both parents were musical, her mother sang alto and her father was a tenor.

At age six, Daphne walked to Alstonville Public School. For her tenth birthday she received her first pianola, which was bought from Palings in Lismore. Her father enjoyed playing the rolls and singing along to the music. Her mother had an Esley organ which she played on Sunday nights. Daphne's parents, her brother, Leslie (a bass) and Daphne (soprano) sang hymns and choir pieces. The family attended choir practice in the Alstonville Methodist Church every Thursday night.

Daphne received lessons from Miss Ivy Clarke from Rous. She sang with the Methodist Sunday School Choir. Mrs Dyer, the minister's wife, recognised her talent. Mrs Dyer taught Daphne piano and singing for four years. At age fourteen Daphne was chosen to perform at a Methodist Young People's Conference at the Lyceum Theatre, Sydney.

Aged sixteen she moved to Sydney to attend Sydney Conservatorium of



Alstonville School, 1931, Daphne White fifth from left, second front row, (below) in 1924

Music where she studied piano and singing and also took private elocution lessons. Her teachers included Arthur Haigh (organ) and Grace Stafford (verse speaking). She attended many church services where she played or sang. Each day she did skipping and breathing exercises. At 6.00 am she did piano scales and pieces and at 10.00 am singing practice. She performed in many music festivals and performed several times at the Sydney Town Hall.

Daphne came home during the war and performed at many concerts and farewells for soldiers in the district. She taught in the hall at Clunes for a few months before petrol rationing put an end to it. She was



married by Rev. E Bate to Ralph James Noble, who lived on Marom Dale at Lindendale, in the Alstonville Methodist Church in September 1950. Daphne began teaching piano, singing and elocution. She became involved with the Alstonville School Choir and Methodist Church Choir. The school choir achieved much success at music festivals in Lismore during this time. They also sang at the 2LM studios a couple of times.

To this day Daphne continues to teach children. Her contribution to music in this district has been enormous. Daphne has also been a keen supporter of the Alstonville Plateau Historical Society.

IAN KIRKLAND



Daphne at home, 2008



# The Reading Room

*True patriots all, for be it understood,  
We left our country for our country's good.*

I REMEMBER quoting these lines after Delma McDonald's speech in January about her convict forbears. Delma's talk set me thinking about cultural pursuits in the early years of this convict community. Would this community of prisoners have valued the efforts of poets? Back in England, some of them may have been familiar with Thomas Gray's beautiful 'Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard', or some of Robbie Burns' more scurrilous verse or, possibly, William Blake's 'London':

*How the Chimney-sweeper's cry  
Every blackening Church appals;  
And the hapless Soldier's sigh  
Runs in blood down Palace walls.*

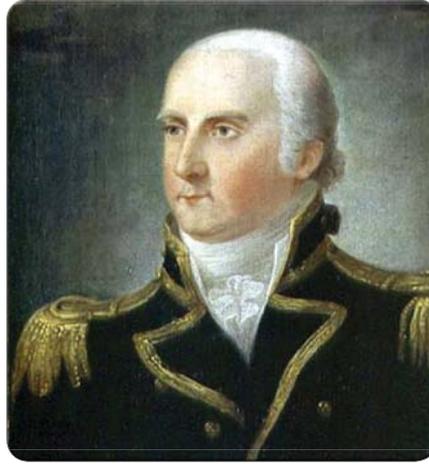
After all some of the greatest Romantic poems of Wordsworth and Coleridge were being written and recited while a steady stream of convict ships made their way to Sydney.

## Our First Poet Laureate

Undoubtedly, one of the most interesting of our convict-poets was the colony's first Poet Laureate, Michael Massey Robinson (1744–1826). Once again, most of my information is taken from the relevant volume of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.

It was, in fact, one of Robinson's poetic quips that led to his transportation to NSW in 1798 on a charge of extortion. Oxford educated and a practising lawyer, his piece 'Old Ham Fresh Drest' was an attack on London city alderman James Oldham over an earlier (unproved) charge that Oldham had murdered a former employer. When he threatened to publish his poetic propaganda, Oldham prosecuted him for blackmail. Robinson was sentenced to death at the Old Bailey, but was granted a reprieve.

On the trip to Sydney, his education and superior manners enabled him to have his meals with the petty officers and a regular bottle of wine courtesy



Governor Philip Gidley King

of the ship's captain. Furthermore, Robinson ingratiated himself on board with the colony's newly-appointed Deputy Judge Advocate (Richard Dore). On arrival, Robinson was appointed as the judge's secretary and immediately given a conditional pardon! Such was the paucity of legal talent in the colony.

Upon Dore's death in 1800 and his replacement's (Richard Atkins) lack of knowledge of the law, Robinson effectively ran the office, finding it easy to forge Atkins' signature and pocket the 'considerations'. Corruption caught up with him again in 1802 when he was convicted of 'wilful and corrupt perjury' after having 'most unjustifiably and oppressively demanded' a gallon of rum as a fee! He was sentenced to a stint on Norfolk Island.

The new Governor, Philip Gidley King, seeing that the culprit was indispensable in his position, held the sentence in abeyance and restored him to his post. After further legal transgressions and aged sixty-four, he married Elizabeth Rowley and fathered three children.

In April 1810, he was appointed chief clerk in the secretary's office under Governor Macquarie and for the eleven years of Macquarie's term annually composed the Birthday Odes for both the King and the Queen. Published in the *Government Gazette*, it became the author's practice to recite his verse at each birthday celebration held at Government House. In 1818

and 1819 he was granted two cows from the government herd 'for his services as Poet Laureate'.

After Macquarie's resignation in 1821, Governor Brisbane terminated his official poetic services. While the odes stopped, several ballads followed lamenting the departure of Macquarie and referring scornfully to his successor. This did not, however, prevent him from spending his last five years as principal clerk in the Colony's police office.

So, if your rostered duty is really quiet and you need something to read, can I suggest you dip into the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*? There are some quite extraordinary stories there. **JOHN SIM**

## Alstonville Creek Pool

Several years ago, using voluntary labour, the local Alstonville RSL Sub-Branch made a swimming pool in Maguires Creek behind the old butter factory. This was done by damming a portion of the creek with a concrete wall, clearing and deepening the creek.

During 1963 the then McLean Ridge's Parents and Citizens Association constructed a wading pool for small children, also with the use of voluntary labour.

Many youngsters from Alstonville and surrounding districts have been taught to swim in the pools, which receive constant use by children and adults during the warm weather.

The pools have constantly flowing water passing through them and the only maintenance needed is clearing of twigs and small branches from overhanging trees. Land surrounding the pool is owned by Tintenbar Shire Council and with council co-operation, could be quite easily turned into a pleasant, natural area providing a much-needed amenity for the town.

**MARGUERITE FULLER**  
From *North Coast Pilot*, 18 June 1964

# APHS Committee Report

## Vice-President's Report

In our president John Sim's absence while he was sailing around the West Australian coast, we all 'waded in' to cover for him and his role—from putting out the garbage bins to conducting a meeting and accepting the Signature Tablecloth from St Mary's Anglican Parish in Ballina.

Jane Gardiner, Kevin Olivieri and I were warmly greeted by the St Mary's Anglican Church representatives on Thursday, 23 February when we were guests at their church to receive the historic signature tablecloth, dating from 1909, which is now in the care of Alstonville Plateau Historical Society.

The March meeting when Brian Tate talked about his book, *The Gallipoli Samurai*, was well attended and Brian proved to be a very talented speaker. Thanks also to John, his very informative review of the book made an excellent preview, before hearing Brian speak.

The Loose Threads Display was so successful that it was extended for a week and attracted visitors from all over, especially those on the network of the Embroiderers' Guild. On behalf of the society I wish to thank these ladies for their contribution—not only for their creative work on display, but also for being present on the open days to talk to and explain their lovely work to the visitors. Because we had



John Sim, Ian Kirkland, Shirley White and Daphne Noble at the 2012 Quota Women Dinner



Historic handover—Alstonville Plateau Historical Society vice-president, Ina le Bas, and Ballina St Mary's Anglican Church Women's Guild president, Yvonne Wright, with the signature cloth made in 1909. (Photo: Doug Eaton, *The Northern Star*)

244 visitors through the door and with the sales of the ladies' work, Crawford House benefited by \$891.

Seven members met on Wednesday 29 February for what is hoped will be a regular monthly Sewing Circle workshop. In conserving our precious collection we need to be aware of good conservation practices so we have started covering cardboard cylinders with cotton material which in turn will be covered with acid-free paper then table cloths, doyleys, collars, etc. can be stored in this careful manner. Another sewing job was to make book pillows to rest our old books on when they are on display.

Future tasks will be to make cloth bags for the suits and clothing hanging in the wardrobe in Crawford House. We looked at other crafty things as future money-raising ideas so please come along to our meetings on the fourth Tuesday of each month. There is some hand sewing to do, besides machining and a host of other jobs which require willing workers.

Jane Gardiner conducted a Training Session for Crawford House Tour Guides on 20 March and she put in a lot of preparation to give these guides as much information as possible

to make their task a pleasant one and to make the visitors' experience one of a history lesson and an enjoyable visit.

Jane and I have been invited to a week's internship with the Power House Museum in Sydney during May. The title of the workshop is Exhibition Development so we are hoping to gain lots of ideas so we can make positive plans for future displays.

INALE BAS

## APHS Diary Dates

### MAY 2012 MEETING

Sunday, 20 May 2012 at 2.00 pm  
Community Resource Centre,  
10 Wardell Road, Alstonville  
Guest Speaker: Kate Gahan  
'The Gahan Family of Meerschaum Vale'

### JUNE 2012 MEETING

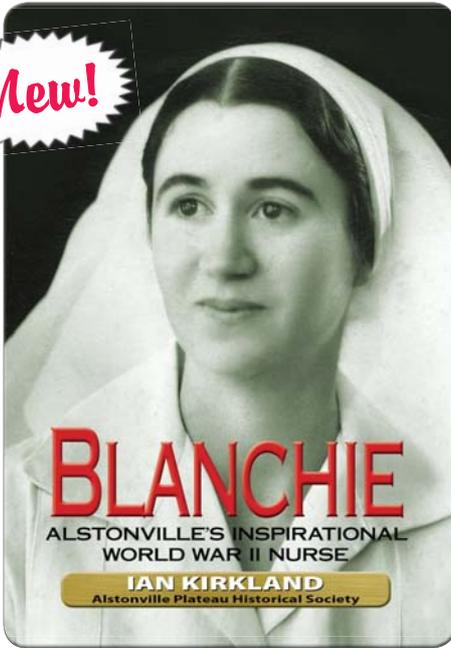
Sunday, 17 June 2012 at 2.00 pm  
Community Resource Centre,  
10 Wardell Road, Alstonville  
Guest Speaker: Leonie Oliver  
'Research Resources in the Public Domain'

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Jessie Eaton-Lee (née Blanch) was one of the Australian army nurses held captive by the Japanese in Indonesia for nearly four years during the Second World War. They lived under appalling conditions—their beds were concrete slabs, there was one dripping tap in the camp for water, the lavatory was a public, putrid open drain and rations were two tiny serves of rice a day—and many of them died, before they were finally liberated in 1945 by the RAAF.

Years later, Jessie put her survival down to her sense of humour and will to live: *There was no way I was going to be beaten. There was no way the Japanese soldiers were going to get the better of me.*

## APHS Publications

Alstonville District Farm Life

Alstonville High School: The First Twenty-Five Years

Alstonville's Heritage Trail • Duck Creek Mountain—Now Alstonville

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

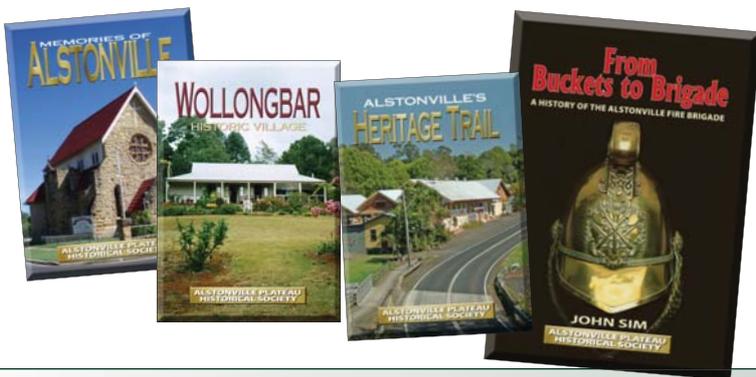
Milestones and Memories: Alstonville District

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: [aphs2477@yahoo.com.au](mailto:aphs2477@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: [ltmarshall41@gmail.com](mailto:ltmarshall41@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)

**President:** John Sim 6687 8469

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

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

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

**Hon. Secretary (Mins):** Kevin Olivieri 6628 5597

**Hon. Secretary (Correspondence):**  
Liz Marshall 56 150515–[ltmarshall41@gmail.com](mailto:ltmarshall41@gmail.com)

**Public Officer:** Brian Worthington 6628 1557

#### Management Committee:

Jane Gardiner 6628 3925, Isabel Leach 6628 6830,  
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