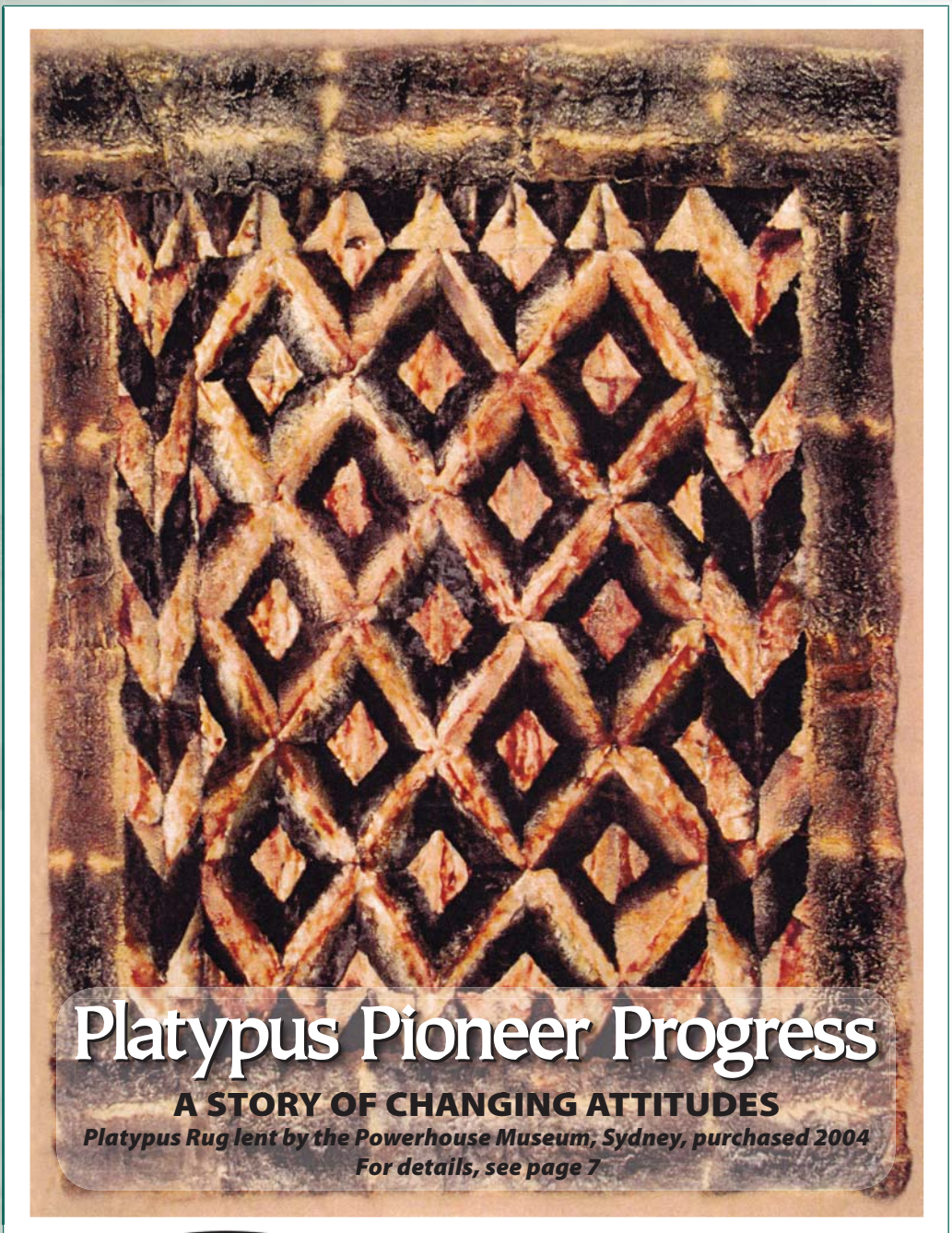


# The PIONEER



## Platypus Pioneer Progress

**A STORY OF CHANGING ATTITUDES**

*Platypus Rug lent by the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, purchased 2004  
For details, see page 7*



**SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2012  
Volume 12, No. 5**

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# The Ogilvie Story

WILLIAM OGILVIE was born in 1782 and entered the Royal Navy at the age of twelve. He gradually rose in rank and took part in the Battle of Copenhagen under Lord Nelson. He was promoted to the rank of Commander and retired from active seagoing at the age of thirty-two.

He and his family then decided to try their luck in Australia. They arrived in Port Jackson in January 1825. On the ship on the way out they became friendly with the ship's surgeon, Peter Cunningham. He also wanted to select land and settle out here. Soon after they arrived William heard that there would be land available for selection in the Upper Hunter River region and so he and Peter Cunningham went up and had a look, liked what they saw and made their selections. Peter Cunningham called his selection Dalswinton and Will Ogilvie called his Merton after his home town in England.

Commander Ogilvie had selected 2000 acres and was assigned six convicts to help him operate it. He put them to work building a cottage and outhouses. Towards the end of 1827 Will brought his family to Merton—his wife Mary (née White), sons William, Kitchenham, Edward David, Frederick Henry and daughter Mary Ellen.

The Ogilvie family worked hard and prospered. By 1835 Ogilvie had been appointed magistrate and as well as the 2000-acre Merton, he was managing two other nearby properties while their owners were away. He had also become a squatter and had squatted on several inland areas and stocked them with sheep and cattle. He gave some of them Aboriginal names—Culpa, Whyomoy, Tali Tali, Pal Lal, Gala, Oak Oak, Tarella and Terniax. They were on the Peel, Gwyder and Maranoa Rivers.

The cottage on Merton was now one of a whole cluster of buildings. There were barns, a stone store, dairy, quarters for constables, overseer, head shepherd, blacksmith and bark huts



Edward David Ogilvie (1814–1896)

for convict labourers and a courthouse. There was also a licensed inn, The Green Gate. It was in fact officially proclaimed a township though it remained a private one. It was very much the Commander's domain as land owner, magistrate and benevolent squire.

In 1825 four convicts arrived at Port Macquarie after having escaped from Moreton Bay. The most notable of these was Richard Craig. He had heard stories of a big river. It was not until about 1840 that Fred and Edward Ogilvie decided to investigate. They travelled along what became known as Craig's Line. They eventually arrived in the valley of the Big River. They liked the look of the valley. They did not stay long and got to the Crown Land Commissioner's headquarters on the Beardy River and registered their land. Within a few years the hamlet of Armidale began to take shape around the hut of Commissioner George McDonald.

Not long afterwards Edward was at Ramornie when there was an affray with Aborigines and afterwards a young boy named Purdoon the Wallaby was discovered by Edward hiding in a hollow log. He put him on his saddle and rode home to his property, now called Yulgilbar. The Ogilvies realised that if they were to establish their pastoral empire they

would need the co-operation of the local Aborigines and Edward realised he would need to learn their language. Purdoon became very attached to Edward and went everywhere with him. Edward admitted later that the main reason why he 'adopted' Purdoon was so that he could learn the local language. Edward learned to speak the local language fluently but it was two and a half years before they managed to make contact.

Edward and Fred were out riding one day when they came on a camp. Because Edward could speak the language, he told them that Purdoon was with him and the chief pointed to another tribesman and told Edward that he was Purdoon's father. Soon a reunion was organised to the delight of the tribe and Edward told them that if they wished to come to his camp, to come in friendship and nothing would happen to them and when they came to come openly and not to sneak up.

At first the tribe were reluctant to come but eventually they did. When they came the Ogilvies used to organise some athletic events such as foot races, wrestling and swimming races in the river which the tribespeople enjoyed immensely. The Ogilvies realised they would have to win or give a good account of themselves or there may have been trouble.

Eventually, the tribespeople came in genuine friendship. In the years to come Edward taught the tribespeople to speak what he considered to be 'good English' and white people always knew the Ogilvies' Aborigines by the way they spoke. The Aborigines themselves always referred to themselves as Ogilvies' Blacks.

Fred and Edward worked hard and stocked their land with cattle and sheep that they drove overland from Merton. They built a shearing shed on the banks of the Clarence River. A few years later Fred got some sort of a tropical disease and died, leaving Edward in sole command.

By 1854 Edward's mother was having eye trouble and doctors in

# The Ogilvie Story

Sydney recommended that she travel overseas to have some eye operations. Edward's father and mother made plans accordingly. By this time Edward considered that he was affluent and appointed a manager for Yulgilbar and went overseas with them. The Suez Canal had not yet been built but the Ogilvies went by steamer to Suez at the northern end of the Red Sea and toured Egypt. They then went to Malta. The Crimean War was in progress so Edward left his parents in Malta and went to the Crimea as an observer. There he saw soldiers without boots and in one place he saw about twelve hundred wounded soldiers lying in the snow. There were no roads and no carriages to move them into shelter. There were ships loaded with blankets, clothes and medical supplies cruising around aimlessly in the Black Sea because nobody had thought to order them into port to unload. Edward was appalled at the chaos so he soon got out of there.

He rejoined his parents in Malta. They then sailed for England and Edward went across to Sicily where he overindulged in Sicilian wine and was not very well for a few days. He went across to Italy and decided to visit Milan and on the way there had to endure some days in a coach accompanied by three very plain women and a lap dog. Edward toured Milan and then France and joined his parents in England. Edward's mother was told in England that she would have to go to Germany to have some eye operations which proved successful. Edward went across to Ireland and there met the 'light of his life', Theodosia de Burgh. With a surname like that, she was of Norman



The front view of Yulgilbar Castle

descent. Edward proposed and was accepted. He was forty-four and Theodosia was twenty.

Edward went to Germany and engaged some stonemasons for something that he had in mind for Australia. Then he returned to Ireland and he and Theodosia were married and he and his new bride and his mother and father all returned to Australia in early 1859.

Two days before the ship arrived in Sydney, Commander Ogilvie became seriously ill and he died soon after they arrived. Edward had to delay in Sydney for awhile while he sorted out his father's affairs, then he and Theodosia travelled to Yulgilbar.


While the Ogilvies were away, gold was discovered in the Upper Clarence area and a whole lot of new people had moved into the district. When Edward went to Grafton on business, no one raised their hat to him when he walked along the street and when he went into a shop no one stood aside and let him be served first. Now this was a bit much for a country gentleman. He had noticed that a lot of the would be gold seekers were getting off the boats at Lawrence and making their way overland. Edward decided to snub his nose at Grafton and to make Lawrence his river port. There was already a Government wharf but Ogilvie had to have his own. He began buying up land on the outskirts. He leased a large

area for cattle resting paddocks. He planned his own wharf with a cattle ramp for direct loading onto coastal steamers and he built a wool store. He had cattle yards and a slaughter house built adjacent to his wharf and soon people were complaining about the appalling stench emanating from there. Also people had to run the gauntlet of being chased or gored by cattle when alighting from boats onto his wharf. But what did he care? He was Mr Ogilvie and didn't live there.

He began to build a new hotel on the high red bluff immediately above his wharf. There now became two Lawrences a mile apart with a post office halfway between them.

In the meantime Theodosia was settling into life at Yulgilbar where for many years childbearing became almost an annual event. Theodosia's family were as follows: 1860 Mary Isobel, 1861 Florinda Ellen, 1862 William Frederick, 1863 Theodosia Isobella, 1864 twins Jessie and Maude, 1866 Mabel Harriet, 1867 Edward David, 1870 Emmaline Martha, 1874, Kathleen Ellen, 1877 Hubert de Burgh. With the last one Theodosia had a very bad time and the baby only lived seventeen days and Theodosia was never well afterwards. And now came to light the Ogilvie curse. Somewhere in the 13th century the third son was said to have committed

*Continued on page 8*



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# Louis Armbruster of 'Lindendale'

LUDWIG, KNOWN AS Louis Frederick Armbruster was born near Stuttgart, the state of Wurtemberg, Germany in 1835. His father was a farmer but Louis was trained in the trade of cooper.

In 1855 at the age of twenty he joined 374 other German immigrants. On arrival in Australia the majority of the immigrants joined the rush to the goldfields. Louis, however, went to work on an estate on the Patterson River to gain experience in local farm work. This estate, 'Dunmore', was owned by a Mr Lang and had a commercial vineyard, also managed by a German. I have been told that he was an indentured migrant to the NSW Government and was to work in the vineyards for the period of his indentureship.

In 1858 Louis married Mary Ann Sellens who was born in Sussex, England in 1839. Louis gained a reputation as a vine dresser and his services were keenly sought in the industry.

He and Mary had nine children and had bought a farming property on Oxley Island in the Manning River. They left here in 1872 and Louis worked on the Mount Pleasant vineyard in the Hunter.

About 1878 his eldest son, William, came to the Richmond River, landed at Wardell and selected about 200 acres at Meerscham Vale. His father had also expressed interest in the Richmond River region and William looked for a suitable farm for his father to purchase. Louis visited in 1879 and purchased a 320-acre selection from the Porch Brothers.

The family arrived by SS *Lismore* at Wardell mid-1880 and two days

later arrived at their property. Louis named it 'Lindendale' because it reminded him of the countryside he had seen in Germany where linden trees grew.

The house on the property was a five-room cedar construction and had been purchased complete with contents. Because it had been vacant for some months almost all the contents had been stolen except for two chairs. When they arrived the area around the home was a wilderness with pumpkin vines growing over the back of the house. Their personal belongings had been brought overland via Walcha, Tenterfield and Casino. They also had with them some horses and dairy cattle.

When he purchased the farm there was a sugar mill on it and about 17 acres of sugar cane. He commenced making sugar in 1882 selling it as 'ration brown' for £32 per ton. To make white sugar he had to install a vacuum pan at a cost of £650. When CSR established a monopoly in the region it brought the price of sugar down to £10 per ton with the result that all the small sugar mills failed.

Louis was a hard worker and *The Northern Star* reports on 3 March 1882:

'The orchard owned and worked by Mr L Armbruster is the largest and best tended we have visited in the district, and although knowing the proprietor had both an orchard and vineyard, we were rather surprised on visiting it recently to note the extent of land under cultivation. Mr Armbruster has given up sugar growing for other crops with which he was more conversant.'

The citrus, stonefruits and grapes were sold in Lismore and Ballina. It is said that his black hamburg grapes were the finest in the district and people came from near and far to buy them.

However, after the price of sugar collapsed, another venture was needed to feed his large family. Like

many others he converted the sugar mill to a sawmill, and like many others needed to borrow money to do so. The bank debt was quickly cleared by using the many trees on the property for timber. Some of the red cedar trees were six feet in diameter. Timber from the mill was used to build the first Wollongbar school, and the first shop and post office.

Louis was diversified in his farming. Bees were kept for honey and wax, and at one time the family kept silkworms and silk was sent to the Technological Museum in Ultimo, Sydney. Louis' expertise was in growing fruits and vines but he did eventually take up dairying and was among the first farmers to send his milk to the Spring Hill Creamery.

His farming expertise was recognised by the NSW Department of Agriculture. Prior to the forming of Wollongbar Experimental Farm, he was selected to experiment with different grass seeds (before Seccombe introduced paspalum), rice and other plants. He was obviously successful as he and Mary were always successful exhibitors in the fruit and flower sections of the Lismore and Alstonville shows.

In 1900 he purchased 100 acres closer to Lismore, at Alphasdale. He set about clearing it and laying out vineyards. He let his Lindendale property when he built the new home 'Ermelo'.

Families associated with the Armbrusters by marriage include Lavis, Creighton, Davis, Tully, Rishworth, Collins, Morris, Mallet, Bryant, Knapp, Bone and Littlechild.

Louis died in August 1910 and in his obituary in *The Northern Star* on 31 August it states: '... honourable and just to all and energetic, as we have related, he has been a splendid type of colonist and citizen, in every sense a man whose removal is a great loss to the community, but nevertheless his influence has been marked and felt during his 31 years of residence.'

**KEVIN OLIVIERI**



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# Busy Time for for Peanuts



CLEANING, de-shelling and grading peanuts is not all 'beer and skittles', at least not for the management and employees of the Summerland Nut Company Pty Ltd at Alstonville.

The peanut season means hard work. Two shifts, the first from 6.30 am to 6.45 pm and the second from 6.45 pm to 3.45 am are worked from late April, when the season starts, through until Christmas.

Over forty thousand bags of peanuts pass through the factory each year. Mr S Prodger, a director of the company, said that the factory could handle twice that quantity if it were available. 'Unfortunately, only about seven thousand bags come from local growers,' he said. 'There is good money in peanut growing and we will take all the local growers can produce.'

Mr S Brown, another director of the company said, 'We will be pleased to discuss any aspect of peanut culture with any of our local farmers as we want to encourage people to grow peanuts in the area.' He stated that most peanuts come from Kingaroy because they are

not available locally but the firm would always give preference to local growers.

Valencias are the main type of peanut grown in this district at present. They are mainly used for roasting or the manufacture of peanut butter.

The Red Spanish variety is a more popular type of nut and is used in manufacture of chocolates and confectionery being rounder and more uniform in size.

It was thought until recently that this variety would not grow in this area, but with new cultivation methods trial plantings have been made which look as though they will prove successful. 'It will be a great boost to the industry if they can be grown here,' Mr Prodger said.

In the past twelve months the company has installed a new grader and other machinery worth £1500 and it is planned to install additional new machinery this year if supplies warrant it.

The peanut shells are milled for cattle food and this product is very popular with local farmers.

Up to thirteen men are employed at the Summerland Nut Company which has an annual wages bill in the vicinity of £8000.

Rats and mice are not a great problem at the factory due to the vigilant eyes of the family (six at present) of cats who live on the premises. The two favourites are Peanuts (he actually like them) and Gatum Gatum (he looks a little like a horse). These cats would be one of the company's most valuable assets—that is why they are well looked after.

There are many aspects of primary production that have not been tapped in this area—one of them peanut growing. There is a local ready market and peanut growing is not all 'Peanuts'—it is a lucrative occupation and would help keep some of the money, well over £70,000, paid by the company for peanuts each year, in our own district. Local industries deserve the support of local people.

**MARGUERITE FULLER**  
Excerpt from *North Coast Pilot*,  
18 June 1974

## A Wet Week in Alstonville

**Sunday 10 March 1974:** Water lying everywhere. It rained all night and today, Cyclone Zoe. All coastal roads are cut. About 10.30 Jim left for Tenterfield hoping to get to Brisbane that way. Big floods in Lismore 42.6 (1954—43.0) and in Murwillumbah. St Anne's 125 inmates were evacuated—some to City Hall and some to hospital.

**Monday 11 March:** All roads in district are cut except to Tenterfield once you pass Hollingworth Creek in South Lismore. Even to Ballina at foot of cutting. I received a letter from Jessie Batterham telling of Adaline Holder's death on 5 March. 90 years old.

**Tuesday 12 March:** Rain showers all day. Cyclone Zoe closer to Brisbane.



Wm Ambrose Crawford  
at a tree-planting ceremony

Lismore shopping area still under water from lower river. Coraki, Woodburn position very serious. Aborigines from Cabbage Tree Island evacuated to Wardell Hall. Ballina without town water. Pipelines broken. Landslip on Gower's property at Perry's Hill. One cow taken with slip.

**Wednesday 13 March:** Showery—no Bowls. The ground is waterlogged and oozes water. Mr Hiscock, Shire sewerage man, called to look over what we want, etc.

**Thursday 14 March:** Fine and sunny. After 30 inches of rain since Friday today was fine and everything drying up. I mowed the lawns. In late PM I visited Lumley Park—water is oozing out everywhere.

**Friday 15 March:** More showers, I placed Debenture Stock papers in CBC (Mr Bert Marsh) this PM for safe keeping.

I drove Dorothy to Lismore Airlines Office for flight to Sydney for Kathryn's 21st birthday party tomorrow. Dorothy rang from 24 after 9 pm. Arrived safely. Plane flew near Armidale.

**Saturday 16 March:** Showery again. I missed Bowls and cleaned up next door. Glen Johnston married at 5 pm today. Hellyar married at 4 pm Baptist Church.

**DOROTHY CRAWFORD**  
Extracts from Wm Ambrose  
Crawford's diary (see page 9)

# Did You Know ...?

## QVB Granite Column

The Queen Victoria Building in Sydney has a Lismore and subsequent Ballina connection? No? Then read on ...

I IMAGINE JUST about everyone has heard of and/or seen the magnificent Queen Victoria Building (QVB) in Sydney. It has had a most interesting history; the major points are as listed in this timeline:

- 1810 Governor Macquarie sets aside an area designating it to become a market place
- 1820 A two-storey building is constructed on the site and named Greenways Market House
- 1869 The whole area is roofed and becomes an arcade within the market
- 1887 Gordon McRae is appointed City Architect
- 1888 First plans appear for new George Street Market
- 1893 McRae submits four designs for QVB facades
- 1896 Building nears completion
- 1897 Council names it Queen Victoria Market Building
- 1898 Official opening
- 1918 Building name changed to Queen Victoria Building
- 1959 Alderman Jensen proposes to demolish building and turn area into a car park
- 1971 Sydney's new Lord Mayor Emmett McDermott commits council to restoration of QVB
- 1980 In June a Malaysian company develops a restoration scheme
- 1984 Restoration begins on the \$86 million project
- 1998 QVB celebrates 100 years
- 2008 A \$48 million refurbishment of the building commences
- 2009 Refurbishment completed

The Lismore/Ballina connection is a column (pictured) that has a plaque attached which reads: 'This hand sculptured Moruya granite column erected in 1897 at the entrance to the QVB Sydney. Moved to Lismore following alterations in 1916. Re-erected in Ballina in 1961, weight 11 tons, height 25 feet.'

Enquiries suggest that the column was brought to Lismore in 1916 by a Mr Roberts, a stonemason, who intended to make tombstones out of it. He probably bought it at auction



when alterations were being made to the building. Mr Roberts never got around to converting the column to tombstones and it lay in his yard in five pieces for about forty-five years.

It was seen by the late Cyril Wilson, who was on the original committee which established the ex-servicemen's home. Another of those original committeemen, Mr John Trench (Trenches Solicitors), recalls that Mr Wilson, a close friend of Mr Roberts, suggested it could be placed on the banks of North Creek where everyone could admire it.

Mr Roberts agreed and volunteers moved it to Ballina, in its five pieces and re-erected it. Later a light was placed on top of it. (Now missing). Having regard to the amount of trouble that Mr Wilson and Mr Trench and others went through, there is likely to be plenty of opposition if an attempt is made to shift it.

References: Timeline per Google; plaque and undated *Northern Star* details supplied by Ms Laporte, daughter of Mr J Trench.

## Local Folk Tales

### THE RISK

Twelve miles from Kyogle, New South Wales, is a railway station called The Risk. Like most places with strange names there is a story attached to it.

When an early settler came to the district others advised him not to select land there because the Kyogle Aborigines were fierce.

But he answered, 'I'll take the risk.' Years later when the railway came to the district this man's descendants were given the honour of naming the station. They called it 'The Risk'.

### DUNBIBLE

A hamlet called Dunbible, on the Tweed River in New South Wales, received its name in a curious manner, at least according to local hearsay.

A good many years ago, before the present main road bridge, a preacher happened to ride across the creek accompanied by an Aborigine.

The creek was in spate at the time and the preacher had a dangerous crossing. Halfway across he lost his bible in the water.

The native saw it drop and called out: 'Mister, Done bible!'

### SEDLITZ TREASURE

The sudden outbreak of war with Germany in 1914 was responsible for a German captain burying a quantity of gold and valuables on the north coast of New South Wales.

On board the German steamer, *Seditz*, was a large quantity of jewellery, diamonds and gold, worth many thousands of pounds.

It was being taken to Germany on behalf of wealthy Germans residing in New South Wales. The captain considered that he would not be able to get to Germany with his valuable cargo, so he pulled in somewhere in the vicinity of Ballina, on the north coast of New South Wales, and buried the treasure. There is no record of it ever being reclaimed after the war.

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

**BRIAN WORTHINGTON**

# Recognising Alstonville District Citizens

## Wm Ambrose Crawford

WILLIAM CRAWFORD and his wife, Charlotte were some of the earliest pioneers of Alstonville, selecting 150 acres in 1867. One of their family was William Ambrose Crawford, known as Ambrose.

He attended Alstonville Public School before working on the family farm. He owned the first bicycle in Alstonville and in 1906 with his brother, Pearson, he rode to Sydney to see the sights. He eventually purchased most of the original selection before marrying Olive White on 7 December 1910 at Alstonville Methodist Church. He had a house called Olivene built as the family home. The builder was DC Connor and Son of Ballina. This is now Crawford House Museum.

Ambrose was very community minded. He was a dairy farmer. Like his father before him he always had Illawarra cattle, buying from the stud herds of Harry Gray and John Daley. He was an original director of the Alstonville Co-operative Butter factory and later Norco Co-operative for twenty-seven years, retiring at the age of eighty in 1960. He was also

president of the Alstonville Primary Producers Union.

He was president of the local P&C and later a patron. He played a major role in organising the school's Diamond Jubilee, the ninetieth anniversary and the centenary in 1975. Ambrose was a member of the Alstonville Methodist Church, being trustee for sixty-nine years and trust secretary for thirty-three years. He was on the committee in 1935 to preserve Lumley Park rainforest. He continued to work there until the age of ninety-five. During World War II he was president of the Alstonville branch of the War Service Fund. Ambrose was also very interested in local history and kept a diary. He opened the transport museum at Lumley Park.

Ambrose enjoyed his sport having played rugby union, cricket and tennis in his early days. He took up lawn bowls when aged fifty-nine and continued to play until his one hundredth birthday. He received life membership of the bowling club at a special celebration in July 1980.

He climbed Uluru when aged eighty-six and Mt Warning when ninety-one. His one hundredth



William Ambrose Crawford

birthday was celebrated at the Uniting Church Hall when about 500 friends attended. The Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Doug Anthony, was one of those present. Ambrose died on 6 December 1980. Olive had passed away on 13 November 1963.

Ambrose and Olive had five daughters—Verlie, Eileen, Dorothy, Lorna and Dulcie. Dorothy is a member, and great supporter, of Alstonville Historical Society.

*IAN KIRKLAND*

## PLATYPUS PIONEER PROGRESS a story of changing attitudes



**Crawford House Museum, 10 Wardell Road, Alstonville**  
**Exhibition open Fridays 10–4 pm; Saturdays & Sundays 1–4 pm**  
**Or by appointment: John Sim 6687 8469 • Groups Welcome**

Between 7 September and 26 October residents and visitors to Alstonville will have the opportunity to see a rare 100-year-old platypus skin rug.

On loan from the Powerhouse Museum, Sydney, the rug has direct links to the Alstonville village through the pioneering Bulwinkel family. Rectangular in shape, the rug is made from approximately eighty platypus skins, with the dark back fur and the gold belly fur cut and arranged to form a complex diamond pattern.

# The Ogilvie Story

*Continued from page 3*

an act of sacrilege. The local priest denounced him and told him that no third son of his branch of the family would live to have a child. They might marry and live to a great age but would never have a descendant. Facts could be made to fit.

The seventeen-day-old Hubert was inevitably childless. Edward's brother Fred died childless and Commander Ogilvie's brother was the third son and was childless when he drowned at sea.

The stonemasons that Edward engaged in Germany arrived and Edward put them to work building his big house. Edward was no architect and what he got the masons to build was described as a pure folly. It was believed to have been inspired by buildings that he saw in Milan and Florence. It was ninety-one feet by eighty-five feet. It was mostly two storeys but there were two towers slightly higher.

The outer walls were three feet thick and there was a courtyard and fountain in the centre. Including the gateway and drive it took seven years to construct. The driveway was in the shape of a complete circle near the front steps and in the centre of the circle was an orange tree which had been brought out as a cutting from Napoleon's grave on St Helena.

The *Clarence River Advocate* published an article about Yulgilbar in June 2012:

*When Edward Ogilvie was building Yulgilbar—The Big House—serpentine, freestone and handmade bricks were plentiful; sand and clay were not hard to find; the major problem was lime to use to cement the stone and bricks together. Ogilvie solved this by using a technique used by Charles Tindall, when Tindall built 'Ramornie'. Ogilvie sent drays to the coast to the huge middens of oyster shells where generations of aborigines had left piles—burning oyster shell produced lime. Over 100 dray loads were transported to Yulgilbar.*

Visitors to Yulgilbar were always



The folly at Yulgilbar

expected to dress formally for dinner. Edward kept spare dress suits for visitors and had them laid out by the butler or valet on each visitor's bed. It is not known how the lean, corpulent, short and tall all managed to adapt themselves to clothes without looking like a galah. On ceremonial occasions at Yulgilbar guests were brought into dinner by a highland piper playing suitable Gaelic airs.

One grazier's wife remarked on the rather Spartan fare, 'A manservant would appear at your elbow with a great silver dish,' she said. 'When he took the silver lid off you would find only a single mutton chop.' Edward made his own wines and brandies and he enjoyed bringing them out at the dinner table.

The stables at Yulgilbar were magnificent but the mangers were nearly always empty and visitors always had to turn out their horses with empty bellies into bare and close cropped paddocks. It was a well-known fact that visitors' horses were never fed at Yulgilbar. It may have been a hint for the visitors not to stay too long.



By the late 1860s the Ogilvie family were spending about two months every year in Sydney and they used to get on the steamers at Lawrence. The distance from Yulgilbar to Lawrence was more than fifty miles and the track in places was only suitable for pack horses.

Wellington Bundock who was Edward's brother-in-law wrote that the journey from Yulgilbar to Lawrence was always an adventure and it was quite possible for even the most intimate of lady's underwear to be scattered around the bush if a pack horse became fractious. Crinolines were fashionable in those days and they were constructed so that when the wearer sat down, they would fold up and when the wearer stood up again, they would spring back into shape again. Mr Bundock reckoned that he was the only one who knew how to pack a crinoline into a saddle bag.

In the early 1870s a railway line was slowly creeping up the northern tablelands towards Tenterfield and there was a proposal to build a railway from the Clarence to Tenterfield and several prominent people suggested that it should go from Grafton to Tenterfield and suggested various routes. Because Edward had business interests at Lawrence he wanted the railway to go from Lawrence to Tenterfield. A surveyor was engaged to check out the various routes to see if any of them were feasible.

All of those who advocated various routes from Grafton to Tenterfield lent the surveyor men and horses to assist in the surveys but when surveyor Francis was ready to check out the Lawrence-Tenterfield route, Edward would not lend him men and horses to help with the survey. It was commented at the time that this was typical as Mr Ogilvie was not noted for his public spirit.

Towards the mid-1880s Theodosia was still ill and Edward decided to take her to England to see if the doctors there could improve her health. He decided to take the entire family as well. When they got to England the



# The Ogilvie Story

doctors there told Edward that they could do nothing to help Theodosia and advised him to rent a house in Torquay, which was the warmest place in England. He did so and there on 23 March 1886 Theodosia died aged forty-seven. She had tuberculosis.

When Theodosia died Edward decreed that they must observe a period of mourning. He wore black armbands and insisted that all the girls drape black veils over their faces and they had to walk in single file behind him when they walked around the streets of London. Of course they hated it. One day one of the sons remarked to Edward that the people of London were wondering who the foreign-looking potentate was who was wandering around London accompanied by his harem. That did it. The mourning period suddenly ended and the black bands and veils were off.

Edward Ogilvie was a social climber. In 1888 he was presented to Queen Victoria and Edward was convinced that he was the rightful Earl of Seafield. The earldom was created in 1638 and lapsed in 1811. If he was the rightful earl he would then have had the right to sit in the House of Lords. He had searches done but the searchers found nothing to confirm him as the rightful earl. His son William was asked what he thought of the lost title and he said, 'How in the world could a man grow better sheep by calling himself Lord Seafield?'

In 1889 while the Ogilvie family were still in England, Edward married Alicia Georgina Frances Tottenham who was Lord Tottenham's granddaughter. Edward seemed to prefer younger women. Theodosia was twenty-four years younger than him and Alicia was thirty years younger than him.

While visiting Florence the Ogilvie family met and became very friendly with the English poet, Robert Browning. Because there were eight Ogilvie girls he called them his Australian Octet.

By 1891 Edward and his second wife were staying in Florence and Edward would probably have been happy to stay there and then he received a letter from his sister Ellen which sent him packing. She warned him that if he did not return to Australia soon, he would run the risk of losing Yulgilbar. Twenty-six boom years had ended and Australia was in the grip of a great depression.

Edward had appointed Sydney William Penrose as his manager while he was away and the arrangement was that Mr Penrose would maintain a small herd of his own on Yulgilbar. But during Edward's absence Mr Penrose's herd grew surprisingly. When they were mustering in out of the way places somehow a lot of cleanskins acquired Mr Penrose's brand.

Edward and his second wife Alicia again took up residence in the Big House where Alicia proved to be a charming hostess.

In 1894 Yulgilbar had a visit from one of Australia's foremost artists, Tom Roberts. Edward commissioned him to paint a portrait of him. When he finished it Roberts took it into the courtyard to dry and Edward's Aboriginal groom walked through from the kitchen and sighting the picture he stopped and said, 'Good morning boss'.

By the 1890s in the summer months Edward used to rent a house in Bowral in the Southern Highlands where the climate was cooler and he and Alicia used to spend the summers there. One day in 1896 he was out riding there and rode his horse under a railway bridge just as a train passed overhead. The horse bolted and Edward was thrown. On 25 January 1896 Edward died from his injuries. He was eighty-two. His body was taken to Yulgilbar and he was buried in the private cemetery overlooking his Big House. Alicia died in 1921.

It is believed that Edward intended Yulgilbar to remain in the hands of his family forever but, unfortunately, he left a very complicated and complex will which left his family at loggerheads with one another.

In 1926 Yulgilbar was sold to a syndicate for £90,000. Later it was sold again and the towers and upstairs rooms had become dangerous and were removed and much money was spent in replacing sections of the outer walls and transferring the interior into an elegant modern country home.

**BILL MASON**



Edward Ogilvie's Yulgilbar Castle



# The Reading Room

## The East Ballina Waterfront Dance Hall and Skating Rink

MARLENE LESTER

Marlene Lester recently launched Brian Worthington's new book on Ballina, commending the author for meeting a particular need with his publication.

Marlene spoke of the importance of recording and presenting details from our past—even if it is our quite recent past not only for our grandchildren and their children but also for recent arrivals in the Ballina Shire.

Her book, *The East Ballina Dance Hall and Skating Rink*, published in 2007, is a charming book providing fascinating insights into significant changes (for example, popular dances, dress codes and transport) in social life in Bangalow and Ballina from the 1920s to the 1960s.

Her book opens with the construction in 1924–25 of the swimming pool in Bangalow.

Possibly because of the success of concerts and dances as fundraisers for the new pool, it was decided to build a dance floor, diving tower and slippery-dip as well as an amenities block adjacent to the swimming pool. In this introductory section of the book, fascinating details (and times) are provided from the North Coast Swimming Championships held at Bangalow.

A large crowd attended the carnival

on 15 March 1930 to see Olympian Edna Davey compete. She easily won the 100-yards Invitation Scratch race and then completed a 200-yards time trial in 2 minutes 39 seconds. Well-attended dances followed such carnivals, with buses coming from Lismore and Rosebank and Ainsworth's Lorries from Tintenbar.

Towards the end of 1931, however, Arthur Beckinsale applied to Ballina Municipal Council to remove and re-erect the 'carnival buildings' from Bangalow to East Ballina at a cost of £600. A copy of the plans and their layout are provided from council archives.

The dance floor was 60 feet x 40 feet of 4 x 1 inch tongue and grooved dressed teak covered by a corrugated iron roof and enclosed by a railing 3 feet above the floor.

The Official Opening was held on Saturday 12 December (a week before the fall of the Scullin Government). Admission costs were: 2/- for dancers, 1/- for non-dancers. A quarter of the night's takings were donated to the Ballina District Hospital's new operating table.

The final seventy pages of the book document delightful details from and about the dance floor. Here is a selection. As well as 'chocolate waltzes' (chocolates for the winning lady, cigarettes for her partner), a 'confetti battle' was held at midnight on New Year's Eve 1931.

The advertisement for the 'Greatest Old Time Dance on the

Coast' in March 1932 featured the following dances: waltzes, mazurka, veletta, two-step, lancers and schottische. By 1964, patrons were being asked to a 'Stomp and Hootenanny' from 9 pm till 1 pm. Furthermore, these were 'Come as You Are Dances'. Girls wore a shift and sandals, boys wore shorts and a casual shirt but they were still able to dance a 'Progressive Barn Dance'. One regular remembers 'trying to guess what part of Australia dancing partners hailed from by the way they danced the old time dances'.

A special 'Coronation Gala Night' was held mid-week in 1937 to mark the crowning of King George VI. This was such a big event that buses came from Kyogle, Casino, Lismore, Nimbin, Bangalow, Byron Bay and other districts. Dances continued through the war years, some being held 'in Aid of Prisoners of War'. However, wartime blackout regulations limited their numbers considerably in 1942–44. Later several Ballina High School Farewell Formals were held at The Waterfront.

But finally, when the then owners (Jim and Hilda Ramsay) sold the land in 1966, The Waterfront was demolished. The final event was a Ballina Golf Club Cabaret Ball at 30/- a double.

This book was a real nostalgia trip to a very different world. Music lovers and dancers will particularly enjoy the experience.

**JOHN SIM**



## History of Sandals

THE OLDEST KNOWN sandals (and the oldest known footwear of any type) were discovered at Fort Rock Cave in the U.S. state of Oregon; radiocarbon dating of the sagebrush bark from which they were woven indicates an age of at least 10,000 years.

The word sandal derives from the Greek word sandalon. The ancient Greeks distinguished between baxae (singular. Baxea), a sandal made of willow leaves, twigs, or fibres worn by comic actors and philosophers; and the cothurnus, a boot sandal that rose above the middle of the leg, worn principally by tragic actors, horsemen, hunters, and by men of rank and authority.

The sole of the latter was sometimes

made much thicker than usual by the insertion of slices of cork, so as to add to the stature of the wearer.

The ancient Egyptians wore sandals made of palm-leaves and papyrus. They are sometimes observable on the feet of Egyptian statues. According to Herodotus, sandals of papyrus were a part of the required and characteristic dress of the Egyptian priests.

**BRIAN WORTHINGTON**  
Source: *Rivers Store catalogue*, 2011

# APHS Committee Report

## President's Report

There have been several pleasing pieces of news since the last *Pioneer* column.

As was anticipated by Marlene Lester at the launch of Brian Worthington's *Ballina*, sales have been particularly strong with excellent prominence given to the book and to Brian in the ABC Shop in Ballina and other outlets. As a result a reprint will occur very soon. Well done, Brian.

Real proof has recently been provided that our conservation facilities have gained real credibility. As a result of careful groundwork done by Alison, two quite large registered boxes arrived at the post office sent from Sydney by Peter Crawford (grandson of Norman and Ethel Crawford) containing a vast array of photographs, letters, diaries, scrap-books, official documents. Much of this memorabilia was over a hundred years old.

About a week later, Peter and his wife, Linda, visited Crawford House and our Resources Centre to officially sign over this material into our care, catch up with Dorothy and to acquire some information from Alison on the Johnston family.

In a followup thankyou letter to Alison Peter stated:

'We were very impressed by the professionalism of the society and its facilities, the captured history of Crawford House and felt specially privileged to be taken to lunch at the House with No steps—a wonderful initiative. Please thank Ina and John very much. On day two we became immersed in Crawford history with Dorothy, and gained glimpses of Johnston history with you. We got a real sense of Norman's property and



John Sim, Peter Crawford, Dorothy Crawford, Ina le Bas and Alison Draper with the Crawford Collection

existence with Dorothy, Les and Ross all together on the site.'

Peter is currently putting the finishing touches to a family history, a copy of which he has offered to provide us. In fact, he suggests we may be able to print and distribute copies under our APHS imprint. As well as for the wider Crawford family, this publication would also be of great interest to those of us with an interest in Tenterfield's history.

So, as you can see, it is our society who should be offering sincere thanks to Peter and Linda for entrusting this precious material to us.

Meanwhile, a special subcommittee under Ina's guidance has been working hard in preparation for our Platypus Rug Exhibition. To be officially opened at 4 pm on Tuesday 4 September, we plan additional opening hours (Saturdays 1-4 pm) during the months of September and October. Bookings from local clubs and schools have started to come in as well, so we may need to call on members for additional duties to facilitate this.

The final week of this exhibition

will coincide with Alstonville Show Week, so we are delighted that our special exhibition can offer something quite rare for locals to come and see in the week leading up to the show.

Thanks also must go to the staff at the Powerhouse Museum and the Australian Museum in Sydney for the efforts they have gone to, to make this initiative a success. **JOHN SIM**

## APHS Diary Dates

### SEPTEMBER 2012 MEETING

Sunday, 16 September 2012 at 2.00 pm  
Community Resource Centre,  
10 Wardell Road, Alstonville  
Guest Speaker: David Rohweder,  
who will speak about Platypus of  
the Region.

### OCTOBER 2012 MEETING

Sunday, 21 October 2012 at 2.00 pm  
Community Resource Centre,  
10 Wardell Road, Alstonville  
**Annual General Meeting**  
Guest Speakers June Williams and  
Elaine McCormack—Growing  
up, moving on and coming back to  
Alstonville.

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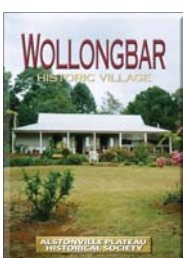
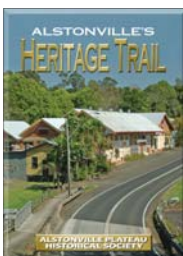
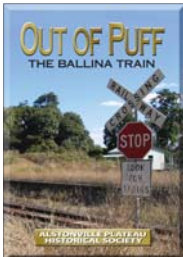
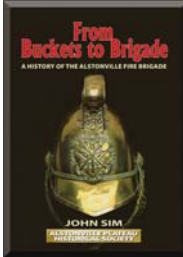
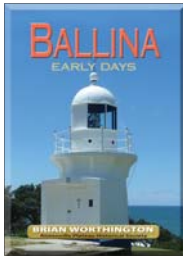
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## APHS Publications

Following a review of our publications, we have amended some of our book prices, which are shown hereunder. Postal charges apply if books are to be posted. Contact Brian on 66281557 or email us at [aphs2477@yahoo.com.au](mailto:aphs2477@yahoo.com.au)

**Alstonville District Farm Life: \$9.00**

Photographic display of farming in the area

**Alstonville High School—The 25 Years: \$20.00**

History of Alstonville High School

**Alstonville's Heritage Trail: \$9.00**

A guide to historical properties in Alstonville

**Ballina—Early Days: \$10.00**

Photos and facts about the town of Ballina

**Blanchie—Alstonville's WWII Nurse: \$15.00**

Story of the inspirational Jessie Blanch

**Duck Creek Mountain Now Alstonville: \$30.00**

Development of Duck Creek Mountain to the present day

**Effort Earns Success: \$30.00**

History of Alstonville Public School

**Forgotten Railways of the Northern Rivers: \$25.00**

History of the Ballina-Booyong and Casino-Tenterfield Railways

**From Buckets to Brigades: \$10.00**

History of the Alstonville Fire Brigade

**From Bush Tracks to Bypass: \$10.00**

Story of the Alstonville Bypass

**Memories of Alstonville: \$9.00**

Photographic record of the early days of Alstonville

**Milestones & Memories—Alstonville Dist: \$20.00**

Stories and photos from past and present residents of the area

**Out of Puff—The Ballina Train: \$9.00**

Story of the Ballina to Booyong Railway

**Rous Mill—Historic Village: \$9.00**

Historical and pictorial overview of Rous Mill

**Wollongbar—Historic Village: \$15.00**

Historical facts about the village of Wollongbar

## Local History Titles

**A Light on the Mountain—**

**Alstonville Methodist/Uniting Church: \$15.00**

**Proud Past—Lismore District Ambulance: \$25.00**

**Teams Tarts Tennis Balls: \$10.00**

**They Passed This Way (Dreadnought Boys): \$35.00**

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**Alstonville Plateau Historical Society Inc.**

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*Affiliated with the  
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**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

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