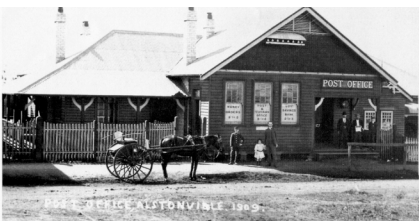


The PIONEER



Before



and



After

Official Newsletter of the
Alstonville Plateau Historical Society
September 2023 • Volume 23, No 3



September 2023

Featuring:

I Knew he was something special
One of Alstonville's Own Lies in a
Foreign Grave

Celebrating the
Centenary of Legacy

A few words to the President

Crawford House Exhibitions

Sew Inspired

December 3rd 2023 to the end of
January 2024

An exhibition of works
by
the Ballina/Byron
U3A Textile Art Group.



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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 & COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE

10 Wardell Road, Alstonville - 02 6628 1829 (Fri and Sun)

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<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Crawford>

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Museum: Open Fridays 10am-4pm and Sundays 1-4pm

Research Centre: Open Fridays 10.00-4.00pm

PATRONS: K.Hogan MP, Cr D Wright, T. Smith MP

SOCIETY'S AIMS

To collect, preserve, display and provide documents and photos of an 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 publications.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY MEETINGS

3rd Sunday of each month at 2pm

Alstonville Community Resource Centre

Crawford House, 10 Wardell Road, Alstonville.

(Guest speaker and general meeting)

CORRESPONDENCE AND ENQUIRIES

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SUBSCRIPTIONS:

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(Includes public risk insurance and quarterly newsletters)

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Corporate Membership: \$100.00 p.a.

(Incl. newsletter advertisement and full membership)

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Past-Presidents:

Marguerite Fuller, Jane Gardiner, Ian Kirkland, John Sim, Ina le Bas

I knew he was something special



Christian on the left

APHS member Julie Chesworth taught Christian Photiou English when he was in Year 7. She immediately sensed his love and respect for his family and his great pride in his little sister. His work ethic was very obvious as he regularly volunteered to help Julie clean desktops in her room. He also took great pride in his workbook returning at the year's end to collect his English Exercise book.

Christian's family migrated to Australia in 1991 with Greek Cypriot heritage fresh from operating the Trident Fish bar in Eastbourne in the UK. Settling in Queenscliff in Victoria, they converted a run-down convenience store into the Trident Fish Bar International. Members of his family still run this establishment today.

But as an 8 year old in 2001 his family relocated to Alstonville and began the Trident Fish Bar at the Big Prawn. For all sorts of reasons - not only the splendidly fresh local seafood - this became a very popular tourist attraction.

Next, in 2019, just months after the start of the Covid pandemic, the Trident Fish and Grill was established in Alstonville. This crisis necessitated very long working hours.

But more challenges were to follow with the big floods of 2022.

Christian and his team were quick to respond helping coordinate the Alstonville Evacuation Centre. On top of this they began catering for other centres in Lismore and Ballina.

It's worth quoting Christian himself on the value of his voluntary work.

"We stepped away and closed our business to lend a hand to the community. We shed tears, experienced heartache, shared laughter and smiles but were also there to listen to those who lost absolutely everything. We spent many sleepless nights at the Evacuation Centre as we didn't feel it was right going home."



Spade Work: Celebrating Gardening at Crawford House Museum

Join the Alstonville Plateau Historical Society at Crawford House, 10 Wardell Road, Alstonville for a celebration of gardening, past and present, at their latest exhibition, Spade Work, in Crawford House Museum. Explore the garden's history and award-winning gardens in the Alstonville area, with each month offering a special theme until Friday 24 November 2023.

Event Details:

Scarecrows on September 10th features fun-filled family workshops centred around crafting and displaying scarecrows. This unique and creative activity will surely captivate both the young and the young-at-heart.

Frocktober in October revolves around gardens inspiring various forms of art, furnishings, and decor. This artistic exploration of the relationship between gardens and human creativity adds a distinct touch to the exhibition, offering attendees a deeper appreciation for the intertwining of nature and culture.

Gnomevember in November invites families to partake in enjoyable workshops centred around these whimsical garden creatures, known for adding charm and character to outdoor spaces. This playful activity is bound to create unforgettable memories for both children and parents alike.

Museum Hours:

Fridays 10 am to 4 pm | Sundays 1 pm to 4 pm

Group appointments available upon request.

For more information:

One of Alstonville's Own Lies in a Foreign Grave

The Alstonville Plateau Historical Society was recently the recipient of a large box of items relating to the death of Dr. Charles Vance Smith. There are approximately 150 Sympathy cards, 250 Letters, 30 telegrams and various documents including a copy of his will.

Charles Vance Smith was the son of Charles William Smith and Isabella Annie Tryphena May Noble. Charles and Isabella, who was usually called May, were married at Kangaloon on the south Coast of N.S.W in 1899 and made their home at Crookwell. Their eldest child, Charles Vance (Charlie) was born on 4th May, 1900, followed by siblings, Edna Florence in 1902 and Gwenyth May and Wilbur Noble in 1910.

Some time soon after the birth of Gwenyth and Wilbur the family moved to Alstonville, where Charles senior had been appointed manager of the Alstonville Butter Factory. He had previously been manager of the Crookwell Butter Factory.

Charlie attended Alstonville Public School, where he won a bursary to study at Lismore High School. After successfully passing his Leaving Certificate he moved to Sydney to study medicine at Sydney University. He graduated from Sydney University in March 1924 and decided to undertake further studies in London, specialising in diseases in children. In May 1924 he departed Australia as the Ship's doctor aboard the "Zealand"er

He studied children's diseases at Coldchester and was later appointed resident Medical Officer at Maidstone Hospital in Kent, where he was extremely popular with the young children who could be heard chanting "Dr Smith, Dr Smith" as he approached their ward.

Maidstone Hospital granted him a one month holiday leave on full pay so he set off to tour "the continent". He flew from London to Paris and from there to Lausanne by train, then to Geneva by boat and Chamonix by car, then to Martigny in Switzerland, by rail. From Martigny he travelled by car through the Saint Bernard Pass and on to Montreux at the end of Lake Geneva, then on to Locarno by boat, and from there to Milan by train. It was in Milan that on the 8th August, he wrote what was possibly his last letter to his mother, in which he described his travels.

It was on a train between Venice and Vienna that he met Dr. Norman Gibson, from Sydney and his wife. They were all staying at the same Vienna hotel when Charlie complained of a sore nose. A doctor was called to the hotel and he was admitted to the Hajek Clinic described by Dr. Gibson as, "the best Ear, Nose and Throat hospital in the world", where he was operated on. His condition continued to deteriorate so he was operated on for a second time but it was found that the infection had spread to the sinus behind the eyeball and nothing could be done. He passed away on the 20th August, 1926, aged 26 from the effects of septicaemia. Dr Gibson was unable to stay with him until the end due to his travel commitments for returning to Australia but he advised the British Consul in Vienna and a University friend of Charles, Dr Findlay (who was practicing medicine in Vienna) of Charlie's condition.

Meanwhile back in Alstonville, Mr. and Mrs. Smith were unaware that anything was amiss until they received a cable expressing the sympathy of the staff of Maidstone Hospital. A cablegram from the British High Commission, in London followed later confirming what had occurred.

When Charlie arrived in London in 1924, he had visited and been befriended by his father's cousin Edith Hames, her husband, Gordon and their son, Robin. He seems to have visited them regularly. Prior to leaving Kent he took out accident insurance, for the flight to Paris, and made a will naming Gordon Hames as executor. Gordon took on the position of intermediary, between the Consul in Vienna, the British High

Commissioner and Charlie's parents in Alstonville. There are a number of letters from him and his family to Charles and May in Alstonville updating them on various matters relating to Charlie's death and the will.

Enquiries were made regarding costs of having Charles' body exhumed for reburial in England, but it was



Cards and letters of condolence

finally decided to let him rest in peace in Vienna.

Charlie had made his younger brother, Wilbur, beneficiary of his estate. Wilbur was still a minor so the proceeds would need to be invested in Britain as that is where the will had been executed. The best rate of interest in 1926 appeared to be 4% for a term of six years.

The cards and letters of condolence came from relatives, friends, clergy of the Methodist Church, Charlie's fellow students, friends and staff of Maidstone Hospital, business associates of Charles senior, and many others including the Directors of John Sands and W.C. Penfold Co. Ltd, both stationery suppliers. The letters generally described Charlie as "a fine young Christian lad, who had been destined to go far in his field of medicine."

Charles Smith retired from Norco Co-op in Alstonville in 1934. He and Mrs Smith celebrated their golden Wedding anniversary in Alstonville in 1949.

2023 APHS Events and Talks schedule

Sunday 17th September — General meeting talk and event

Simon Chate — Running A Choir In Alstonville

Simon is a well-known local choir master, musician, teacher and now local councillor. He has run choirs for many decades, and brings his love of music, innate enthusiasm and natural abilities as a teacher to community choirs. Simon will probably get everyone to sing along, and will be accompanied by his current Alstonville Choir, Awesome Voices.

Come along for some rollicking entertainment.

Sunday 15th October — APHS Annual General Meeting Event

The APHS Antique Roadshow — Show & Tell Your Historic Treasure

Welcome to our annual version of the antique roadshow. No experts ... just you! Bring along a treasured item from your history, and share its story with the members. It could be anything from the very ordinary to the totally mysterious. If it is the latter, see if anyone else knows what it is!

Come along for some entertaining story telling and mind-bending puzzling!

Sunday 19th November — General Meeting Talk or Event

Michelle Butler — The Historic Tintenbar Pub

Come along to hear from Michelle's research paper which delves into the socio-economic and socio-political climate during the formative years of Colonial settlement in Tintenbar. The presentation will be centred around the Royal Hotel Public House inspired by research from her family's private collection (it's a secret so you will have to come along to see what it is!) which sheds a new light onto the establishment of the village and everyday life of the villagers of Tintenbar in the late 1800's and early 1900's.

Michelle, a local born and raised in the Tintenbar surrounds, is a student at Canberra University studying a Bachelor of Culture and Heritage.

Come along and learn about our fascinating local history.

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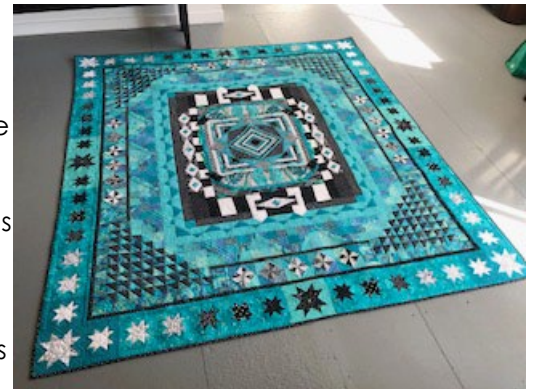
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The 2023 Airing of the Quilts

Fortunately July 7-8-9 were days of remarkable winter warmth which helped greatly to make this year's event a big success.

45 quilters provided 145 items and 18 mini quilts and this suggested lots of people had remembered our event despite three years of Covid induced closures. Entry fees amounted to \$2554 and to date the Quilt Raffle has brought in over \$500. You have till mid-October to acquire some tickets as the raffle will be finalised as usual at the Alstonville Show. The prizes are currently on display in the front bedroom in the museum. Many thanks to the two quilters who donated these beautiful prizes.

Voting for the "most popular" quilt prizes was particularly close this year. The overall winner in stunning blues and turquoises was Sarah O'Hara's "Round Robin," while the mini-challenge was won by Marie Curnow's "Satin Bowerbird." APHS is once again very grateful for the support of many local quilting groups and to the hard-working Quilt Committee. And I would particularly like to thank our members who volunteered their time and food to feed over three hundred visitors who attended this year's event.



Sarah O'Hara's "Round Robin"

John Sim



Marie Curnow's "Satin Bowerbird"



Celebrating the Centenary of Legacy

Hazel Bridgett, a local representative of Legacy, was the speaker at our June monthly meeting. She became a Legatee in 1994 and told us about how Legacy started locally in 1928 in Molesworth Street, Lismore, before moving recently to Alstonville.

Legacy volunteers are from all walks of life and are called Legatees. They personally support the dependants of all veterans who died on operational service or subsequently, in their time of need.

Legacy is uniquely Australian. It currently cares for around 52,000 and does some wonderful work.

In this centenary year, there will be a Legacy Torch Relay. It started in France and after travelling through London, which is the only Legacy Club outside of Australia, the Torch will travel to all 44 Legacy Clubs in Australia arriving in Sydney on the 19th July.





A few words to the President

The observant reader will notice a slight change to my usual heading, a few words to the president rather than from the president. "Why to, and not from?", you may be asking. The reason is simple. Following my few words in the last edition of the Pioneer, I was contacted by several people following up on several aspects of the Crawford family history. They all help us fill out the Crawford family history, which is, of course, the *raison d'être* for Crawford House.

The first communication I received followed my comments about Ross Smith's donation of his mother Lorna's wedding dress. I happened to mention that Lorna was the youngest daughter of Ambrose and Olive Crawford. You can see why the Society is so delighted to have received this gift from Ross.

Up stepped Stan Dudgeon. Stan now resides in Brisbane, but retains a keen interest in the Crawford family and Crawford House. And just as well, since he picked up an error in my account in the previous Pioneer. Thank you, Stan. Stan wrote that I had written that Lorna was the youngest daughter of Ambrose and Olive Crawford. This, Stan reminded me, is incorrect. Lorna was the second youngest. The youngest was Dulcie. Stan's Smith cousins would, he suggests, have no personal memory of Dulcie as she died in 1963 from cancer and they were born between 1961 and 1966.

Stan continued by telling me more about wedding dresses. "You have Dulcie's wedding dress as part of the collection. My mother was Verlie, and she married my father thirteen months after Dulcie was married and my mother wore Dulcie's wedding dress as it fitted her and suited her. This simply means that this wedding dress became her wedding dress as well as Dulcie's."

Stan also mentioned that he and Ross have been looking through photos of the White Family — their grandmother Olive was a White. They have scanned a lot of them, some of which are the original photos that Dorothy Crawford was keeping and Stan now has. Stan is working on the Crawford/White Family as well as other families, when he gets time. I wish Stan all the best with his project. I am sure he will be able to help anyone interested in the Crawford and White families.

Shortly after receiving Stan's email, what should pop into my email inbox but another email, this one from Kathy Gilbert? Kathy also helps us fill out the Crawford family story. Kathy's mother was Eileen Jamieson, nee Crawford. Like Stan, Kathy lives well away from Alstonville, in Sydney, but retains her interest in our Society. She tells me that several people in the family are researching and writing up their family history, and that she has been researching family history for over 50 years! "Still so much more work to do on it!" she tells me.

In her email, Kathy shared some interesting snippets about her family history. She notes that Adeline was born in 1884, but died in 1890, and that the order of Ambrose and Olive Crawford's children is Verlie, Eileen, Dorothy, Lorna, and Dulcie. And with a link to the next story, Kathy mentioned that "Mum mentions in her diary for 10 July 1943 receiving a telegram of Charlotte's death, and even in her (future) sister in law's diary Eva Jamieson also mentioned the telegram. However Mum was rather distracted as she and Jim Jamieson (my father) announced their engagement not long after that."

Readers will recall that in the previous edition of the Pioneer, I also talked about an article published in 1943, entitled Nearly 70 years on Richmond, which described the experiences of the then recently deceased Charlotte Crawford. I need to make a correction, with apologies. I stated that it was authored by L.J. Clothier, when indeed it was written by Ida Clothier. Stan quite rightly mentioned to me that "a correction is needed. Not for my benefit, but for your record and in a Pioneer as people in the future looking at the Pioneer will get the wrong information unless they look closely." Stan is quite right in ensuring that we get the historic record correct. It is so easy for an error to become established simply by repetition or reportage from someone who should know better. My apologies and thanks. Stan also drew my attention to the fact that that part photocopy of the article clearly states "By I. Clothier". Mea culpa.

However ... there is more on this story. Shortly after receiving Stan and Kathy's emails, yet another one popped into my inbox. This was from Yvonne McLoughlin, now residing in Maitland, who informed me that her grandma, Ida Clothier (nee Crawford) was the author! How exciting! Stan also reminded me that "I. Clothier was (Myrtle) Ida Myrtle Clothier and she was a sister of Ambrose Crawford so was our great Aunt and CL Crawford was our great grandmother. Ida took many of the old photos that we have."

And ... there's more! Yvonne sent me a scanned copy of a letter Ida wrote to her mother Charlotte in 1941, which forms the basis of parts of the article. I have included a picture here of page three of the letter, with its lovely clear writing. Yvonne provides further details of her family, which, along with the letter, help answer my query about the local aboriginal people mentioned in the 1943 article.

"After Charlotte's death in 1943, letters were returned to Ida. My mother was Ida Myrtle (Myrtle) Algie (nee Clothier). Mum was the eldest of five children. I now have this special letter, which mentions Ida's siblings Bena, Linda and Ambrose. Robena Margaret (Bena) was born 22 July 1876, Ida was born 6 September 1878, William Ambrose (Ambrose) was born 8 June 1880 and Linda was born 4 April 1886."

With this information, especially Ida's birth date, I note that in the letter Ida states "Even when I was old enough to go to school the blacks used to walk across Mr Mellis's place and then up in front of our house to hunt for paddy melons in our big patch of scrub." This puts these events, I suggest, in the 1880s. Yvonne also remembers her Aunt Dorothy (Crawford) talking about the aboriginals who used to walk through their property. She commented that they seemed to co-exist happily with the white people, but did not interact much at all.

Ida goes on to describe the scene: "A few hours later they would return, usually about a dozen in single file; every blackfellow with one or two paddymelons slung over his shoulder by the tail, and about as many dogs as men, and nearly every gin with a piccaninny sitting on her shoulder, holding by its mother's curly hair."

Letters are wonderful sources of information. There is so much more in Ida's letter, but let me finish on a further observation, a description that reminds us of the huge contrast between the Alstonville our settlers lived in and our modern Alstonville. Ida talks about their "big patch of scrub": "That was a great patch of real scrub, it extended from the Wardell road, Ballina road to Mr Kemp's boundary, right back to where Ambrose's bull paddock is now" (Ida underlined the words real scrub, so probably suggests that this was still thick forest in parts).

I leave you with this image of 1880s Alstonville. But not before I send a great big thank you to Stan, Kathy and Yvonne for their communications.

(3)
many groups of cattle 'hiking' to the show. Others were comfortably carried in motor trucks. What a change from the early days when you first went out to the selection on horseback; and all the roads were rough bullock tracks, or bridle tracks. When the paddymelons bounced across the tracks, and dingoes howled at night. Even when I was old enough to go to school, the blacks still used to walk across Mr Mellis's place and then up in front of our house to hunt for paddy melons in our big patch of scrub. A few hours later they would return, usually about a dozen in single file; every blackfellow with one or two paddymelons slung over his shoulder by the tail, and about as many dogs as men, and nearly every gin with a piccaninny sitting on her shoulder, holding by its mother's curly hair. That was a great patch of real scrub, it extended from the Wardell road, Ballina road, to Mr Kemp's boundary, right back to where Ambrose's bull paddock is now. On Saturdays it was mine and Bena's job to take the children for a walk, the baby always in the

Membership

Membership dues for the coming year are now due.

Please add \$5 if you would like the Pioneer posted.

Membership can be paid by cheque posted to: PO Box 65, Alstonville NSW 2477 or pay at a monthly meeting.

Pay by Direct Credit to:
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Bill Boyd, President, Alstonville Plateau Historical Society
I acknowledge that the Crawford House Museum sits on Bundjalung Land

Disclaimer: Views and opinions expressed in articles in this Pioneer are those of the contributor and not the views of the Alstonville Plateau Historical Society.