

The PIONEER

AN APHS BOOK LAUNCH



Past APHS President Ian Kirkland
with his new book "Uralba: A Hidden Gem"

Please join us for Christmas Drinks
and Nibbles at Crawford House
4-6pm Friday 20 December 2024



Official Newsletter of the
Alstonville Plateau Historical Society
December 2024 • Vol 24, No 4



December 2024

Featuring:

- Uralba Book Launch •
- The new Estey Organ •
- Results of the 2024 Quilt Raffle •

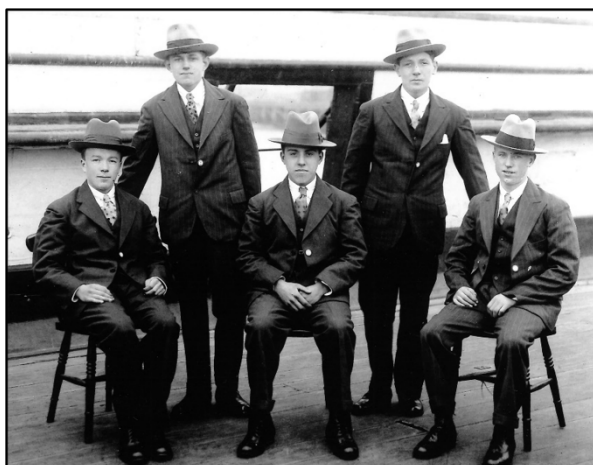
Crawford House Exhibitions

The Dreadnought Scheme – A Boy's Own Adventure

November 2024 – January 2025

Open: Friday 10 - 4 & Sunday 1 - 4
or groups by appointment 6628 1829

Visit our website www.aphsmuseum.org.au



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Alstonville Plateau Historical Society Inc.

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Affiliated with the Royal Australian Historical Society

CRAWFORD HOUSE MUSEUM & COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE

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

House-Museum/237678339768274

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:

Due 1 October each year

(Includes public risk insurance and quarterly newsletters)

Fees: Adult \$25; Family \$40; Student \$5

(Please add \$5.00 if newsletters are to be posted)

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

BOOK LAUNCH

Uralba: A Hidden Gem

Book launches (mostly for books written by past APHS President Ian Kirkland) have been a feature of our short history. These have been held in local schools, the RSL Sub-Branch, Ballina Library, the Fire Station and even as far afield as Kiama.

So it was pleasant to have Ian's latest book *Uralba: A Hidden Gem* launched in our own backyard on Sunday October 13. It was a case of standing room only with a crowd of about 70 eager to purchase a copy.

The book was actually launched by APHS member and Uralba resident Julie Chesworth.

Ian actually acknowledges that it was a lengthy interview of Claire Simpson by Julie some four years ago that was the trigger for the book. Claire's family have lived in the valley for eight generations which explains why Claire and her two sons, David and Ian, were interviewed as part of the launch and could provide such valuable material for the book.

Aware of the importance of the valley for its agriculture including dairying, sugar cane growing, bananas and other tropical fruit such as pineapples, Ian wanted to record stories from the times prior to the sub-division of such farms.



Julie Chesworth



Claire Simpson

As well as the above-mentioned Simpsons, Ian and Julie wish to thank other people for their assistance in putting the book together, especially for many wonderful photos.

These include: Jean Gillies, the Lomaxes, Warren Simpson, the Sackley sisters, Marlene Leadbetter, Bridget Curry, Carolyn Baez, Jan Aiken, David Roby, Sheryl Da-Re, Kirk Trease, Maria Heaton and the Hanson family.

Many current residents, Ian felt, would not have realised that Uralba once had a school, a hall, a post office, a church and even two tennis courts. He makes clear that it was lucky that the original site for a village beside Duck Creek never eventuated as it would have been devastated by floods.

Visitors from Queensland



Thanks also to APHS members who provided afternoon tea for the many guests while they reminisced.

Copies of the book are available from Crawford House for \$30.

The printers have acknowledged a problem with the binding and replacement copies are now available.

AUTOGRAPH BOOKS

The autograph book is a book for collecting the autographs of others.

Traditionally they were exchanged among friends, colleagues and were filled with poems, drawings, personal messages, small pieces of verse and other mementos. They were popular here at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the 20th century. After this their popularity began to wane.

An excellent example in the APHS collection belonged to Constance Muriel Burgett (nee Nutall). Her father operated a general store and newsagency in Alstonville c.1910-1920. The book contains contributions from Alstonville residents of the time. Entries include, personal messages, verses, pencil drawings, paintings and musical notations.

Contributed by
Ken Oliveri



These are two examples from Constance's autograph book



ANNUAL QUILT RAFFLE FOR 2024

This year's Quilt raffle was drawn by Show Committee member Fay Wilson on a busy Saturday afternoon. The lucky winners were as follows:

1st prize went to Lyn Crehan from Uralba who bought her tickets as the Quota Fair. Lyn chose the purple Pansy quilt.

2nd prize was won by our own Kevin Olivieri who has no doubt bought many tickets every July for many years. Kevin (and Lesley) were very happy with the red and black quilt.

The third smaller quilt was won by Lenore Watson from Casino.

All quilts were made and donated by members of the Ballina Coastal quilters group and we thank them for their generosity.

This year's raffle raised \$1000 for the APHS.



Fay Wilson drawing the winning ticket



Ken Oliveri with his prize

A SIGNIFICANT DONATION

FOREMAN CRAWFORD'S ESTEY ORGAN

In September, the APHS finally collected James Foreman Crawford's Estey organ from his daughter-in-law Jill Condie. Jill married John William, Foreman and Alice's only son. It was John and Jill's son Colin (Foreman's grandson) who contacted us about the organ and we are so pleased he did.

Foreman Crawford's 'Duck Creek Mountain Now Alstonville' (p36) provides more details. He writes

"..... in March 1915 we bought an Estey Organ from Palings Lismore at a cost of 39 pounds 11 shillings and 6 pence. It is still in very good order." Colin generously provided us with a cupboard containing his grandfather's diaries and some old ledgers.

The photo below records the actual purchase.

6 Bazaar Music a/c Feb.	-	5	6
8 G.H. More a/c Feb.	2	16	10
8 A.B. McLean a/c Feb.	-	2	6
8 August Robertson (book)	-	1	1
10 Dust Coat	-	15	9 = 177.
10 Lunch drink fruit etc.		4	3
10 Horse feed	-	1	-
10 Music	-	2	-
10 Shoes	-	6	6
10 Weighing ourselves	-	-	2
10 Dust-rug & towels	-	7	1 1/2
12 Anthony Hardem (maching)	6	23	- Post payment
16 W. H. Palings & Co (Organ)	39	11	6
Cream freight	-	14	-
Butter supplied	-	10	7.
22 Hotel. Rain. & hot tea	10	6	2
Gov. Sec. Bank	26	6	8
22 D. Bailey a/c Feb.	-	2	6.
24 Anthony Hardem & Sons	1	3	- (Balance made)
24 Photo frame	-	3	6.
30 Fruit	-	1	-
29 Fruit	-	1	-

Interestingly Income for March 1915 on the adjacent page shows only one entry. "Butter for month - 657lbs 32 pounds 3 shillings and 3 pence."

According to the family, Alice was the organist not Foreman and much of the sheet music coming with the organ bears her name. We have also heard that the organ had an alteration over time. This was a Parlour organ with fine timber work and a mirror.

However, the location of the mirror was quite high and therefore difficult to clean so Foreman's girls decided it should be removed but retained. Now (after extra cleaning and polishing by in-house tradesman Eric Clark), it hangs in the front bedroom of the museum.

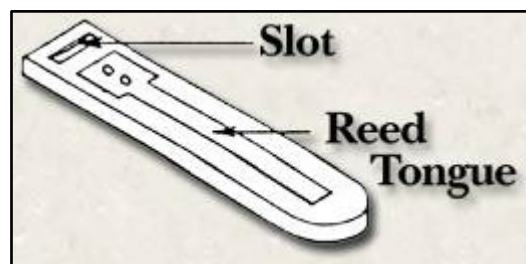
Our recently installed Foreman Crawford organ is from the factory of the Vermont Estey company, one of the largest and best known manufacturers of reed organs in the world. Commencing in 1852 it made more than 500,000 instruments, all labelled Brattleboro, Vt.[Vermont] USA, which were exported worldwide, many of them coming to Australia.

At its peak, the company employed seven hundred people.

In 1901, Estey Organ Company began making pipe organs, and became one of the largest American pipe organ manufacturers. They built and sold more than 3,200 pipe organs across the U.S. and abroad. Manufacture ceased in 1955. A cause for its demise was the popularity of new technology called 'electronic organs'.

The rather elaborate wooden case suggests it belongs to the Parlor Organ category and states a message as a piece of furniture as well as an instrument for entertainment.

It is called a reed organ because sound is created as air is blown through brass reeds.



Although a reed has two primary brass parts, it is the reed tongue that's the critical part (as seen in the illustration above). The reed tongue must be able to vibrate freely to generate the correct sound.

The only point where a reed tongue contacts its brass casing that surrounds the reed tongue is at the back where there are two small brass rivets that hold the tongue in place.

The Slot is the space where an organ tuner can connect a small tool called a 'reed puller' to remove the reed for cleaning or tuning.

Air is supplied from pumping the two pedals at the front of the organ. Air stored in bellows is channelled to the reeds when a stop knob is pulled forward. This opens a valve for the air to make a sound when a keyboard note is depressed.

A player needs to develop skill in pumping the pedals as the volume of sound can be varied to produce dynamics from soft to loud.

Above the pedals are two folding knee swell levers. The Left lever can activate all the reed stops whilst the Right one opens sound shutters allowing as much sound as possible to be heard. By using these levers together or alternatively it is possible to create a crescendo [louder] or a diminuendo[softer].

Our organ has eighteen stops. Some make sounds and others control mechanical devices to assist the player. Stops that make a sound are called speaking stops. Stops that help the player are called couplers.



Details provided by Howard Brockington



RED CROSS - 110 YEARS EVERYONE ALWAYS

Recently a joint exhibition run by APHS and the Alstonville Red Cross Branch ran for 8 weeks to celebrate the 110 years of continuous service by the Australian Red Cross which dated from 13/8/1914.

The members and volunteers of Alstonville, Wardell and Bangalow Branches are three local branches which have served our communities without pause since 1914.

This is truly a remarkable achievement. Those branches and some others contributed photos and items for the exhibition.



Arnie Strong acting as Tour Guide

A special feature of the display was in the Drawing Room where tribute was paid to three of the longest-serving members from local branches: Mrs Elsie Johnson, Mrs Louisa Lumley and Mrs Freda Noble.

VISITOR NUMBERS

A pleasing number of visitors attended the exhibition over the 8 weeks. 105 adults attended, including three different group bookings while 235 Primary aged school students came along. Many thanks to Jane Gardiner, John Sim and Kerrie Gray (Red Cross) for helping students with their Study Guides.

A new generation now knows a little more about the continuing work of Australian Red Cross and a little more of the local contribution by their grandmothers and great-grandmothers.

A truly positive spin-off from school visits is shown in the photo left, where a student returns to the museum and acts as a tour guide for the extended family.



A few words from the President

Greetings from your peripatetic President. As you may know, I have been fortunate to travel widely this year. Some of you will have heard some of my stories at the September general meeting. I have been asked to share these with you all. As you will be aware, history is everywhere. What's more, it turns up in the most unexpected guises. Let me share two stories.

My first story concerns the Lock-in Tower of Theth, also known as the Reconciliation Tower of Theth. "Where's Theth?" you may well ask. It is a tiny mountain village in the wonderfully-named Accursed Mountain of northern Albania. Just along from my lodgings, there stood a tall solid stone tower. This is the place where crimes were resolved. A notice proclaimed that it was "The place of self-security. The guilty person waits to be substituted by reasonable actions. He believes that someone will negotiate for his fault to be judged in justice." Wonderfully translated English, but nicely summarising the purpose of this tower as a place of community-administered restorative justice.

This is where all parties were brought together, along with local elders, and kept in the tower until a satisfactory conclusion is reached. While this sounds like a most modern form of justice, it turns out that it is based on a thousand-year-old body of law, known as the Kanuni I Lekë Dukagjinit. I had the pleasure of meeting the current guardian of the tower, a man whose family has been tower guardians forever, ensuring that everyone in the reconciliation meeting was well fed and cared for. Here is a piece of living heritage.



Above: Lock-In Tower of Theth

My second story is about another surprising find — The Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania, in Vilnius. This magnificent building has all the hallmarks of a beautiful historical building. It now houses a collection of objects throughout its stately rooms, depicting the history of the city of Vilnius. What piqued my interest most of all, however, was the basement. There, stone and brick remains of the earliest buildings were on display, with narrative of the city's nearly thousand years of history. To my great pleasure, artifacts recovered from archaeological excavations were also on display. The deepest layers had been under the water table, so items dating back to medieval times, such as leather shoes, wooden bowls, fabric hats and wooden water pipes, were all preserved. Looking at them, I could feel the presence of their original owners, bringing me closer to the daily lives of these medieval people. There was, however, another surprise. The grand building is not as ancient as it appears. An earlier version of the 18th century building had been in such a dilapidated state, that in 2002, it was all but demolished. The subsequent fifteen years saw a complete re-build of the Palace, bringing it back to its former glory.

The demolition and re-building also allowed extensive archaeological excavation, revealing early layers of settlement and life in old Vilnius, and yielding well-preserved leather, cloth and wooden artefacts.

Below: Palace of the Grand Dukes in Vilnius



There was, of course, much more history to be encountered. However, in closing my few words, let's return to our own little bit of history, Crawford House, with a big thank you and a wee reminder. Many thanks to all who have renewed their membership this year. If you haven't quite got round to it yet, please don't forget to send in your renewal. Consider it a small Christmas present to yourself.

VALE PETER SANDERSON

Marguerite Fuller became acquainted with Peter in the very early days of the Alstonville Plateau Historical Society. Peter had worked for many years in Ballina and knew a lot of history of that district.

However his special interest was on the Booyong-Ballina railway which ran from 1930 to 1949. He had detailed maps and plans of the route, the stations and the bridges which he kindly donated to the society. This led to me using many of them in the book I wrote on that railway line.

Peter, however, owned one of the biggest scaled model Australian railway sets-ups in the country which he housed in a shed at Clunes. This included a model of the Booyong-Ballina line from the station near the present TAFE to in behind the Big Prawn. I conducted several very popular trips following the railway line ending the day at Clunes looking at his model trains. This tour included a visit to Tyumba Station in Kirkland Lane. He also displayed his model at Alstonville Show as part of our historical display on two occasions.

Peter also acted as a guide at Crawford House Museum when it was in its infancy. I sincerely thank Peter for his considerable involvement in helping to educate locals about a part of history which is not well-known.



Peter Sanderson Collection

Contributed by Ian Kirkland

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