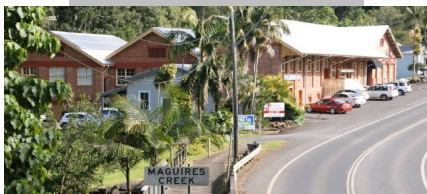


# The PIONEER



## 2024 AIRING OF THE QUILTS

**"Most Favourite Quilt"  
was Kay Fisher's  
"Cathedral Windows"**

**Inset shows Jan Allen  
presenting Kay with  
her prize.**



**Official Newsletter of the  
Alstonville Plateau Historical Society  
September 2024 • Vol 24, No 3**





# September 2024

## Featuring:

- Airing of the Quilts •
- Foreman Crawford's 1950 Darwin Trip •

## Crawford House Exhibitions

Red Cross  
**110**  
YEARS  
Everyone. Always.

26<sup>th</sup> July to 15<sup>th</sup> September 2024

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

Visit our website [www.aphsmuseum.org.au](http://www.aphsmuseum.org.au)

A joint exhibition by Alstonville Plateau Historical Society and Alstonville Red Cross



Official newsletter of the Alstonville Plateau Historical Society Inc. This work is copyright and apart from any use under the Copyright Act 1968, no part may be reproduced by any process without written permission from the society. Every effort has been made to ensure the information published is free from error and that text and photographs are attributed to their original sources, where known.

### PUBLISHED

MARCH, JUNE, SEPTEMBER, DECEMBER

Editor: John Sim:

[jdsim47@yahoo.com.au](mailto:jdsim47@yahoo.com.au)

Production: Sharon Shelley:

[sharonshelley01@gmail.com](mailto:sharonshelley01@gmail.com)

Please send contributions to John Sim or Sharon Shelley



## 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)

Email: [info@aphsmuseum.org.au](mailto:info@aphsmuseum.org.au)

Website: [www.aphsmuseum.org.au](http://www.aphsmuseum.org.au)

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/CrawfordHouse-Museum/237678339768274>

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

The Hon Secretary, Alstonville Plateau Historical Society,

PO Box 65, Alstonville NSW 2477

Phone 02 6628 1829 (Fri)

Email: [ltmarshall41@gmail.com](mailto:ltmarshall41@gmail.com)

\*\*\*

### 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)

\*\*\*

President: Bill Boyd - [aphspresident@gmail.com](mailto:aphspresident@gmail.com)

Hon. Secretary: Liz Marshall - [ltmarshall41@gmail.com](mailto:ltmarshall41@gmail.com)

Hon. Treasurer: Sharon Carver - [carversrf@hotmail.com](mailto:carversrf@hotmail.com)

Volunteers Co-ordinator: Jane Gardiner - [Gardiner2477@gmail.com](mailto:Gardiner2477@gmail.com)

Publicity Officer: Cathy Cohen - [kerrycohen@bigpond.com](mailto:kerrycohen@bigpond.com)

Committee: Ian Kirkland, Gwen Clark,

Rosemary Weaver, Kerrie Alexander, Annette Hepburn

Crawford House & CRC Booking Enquiries:

John Sim - [jdsim47@yahoo.com.au](mailto:jdsim47@yahoo.com.au)

Webmistress: Liz Marshall - [ltmarshall41@gmail.com](mailto:ltmarshall41@gmail.com)

Past-Presidents:

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

# 2024 AIRING OF THE QUILTS

Once again – and despite the inclement weather – Crawford House was transformed with good crowds and a stunning array of quilts on the weekend of July 5 6 and 7.

No doubt the countless hours of work involved in designing and making these beautiful objects would have attracted visitors, even with the rain and the increased entry fee of \$10.

Overall attendance was 350 and our raffle has so far raised about \$600. Please note that you have till the Alstonville Show (late October) to secure your chance to win one of the three quilts donated as prizes.

Voting for the favourite quilt and mini-quilt has now become a tradition and it appears to be of particular interest to families who visit with children taking pride in the different choices they can make.



Kay Fisher's "Cathedral Windows" quilt (featured on our front cover) was the people's choice for favourite and Marie Curnow's "postage stamp" (2477 - A Gardener's Delight) won the mini-quilt prize. Prizes included items donated by Sandy from her shop, the Woodcrafters and the APHS.

*Left: Marie Curnow's winning mini-quilt. A postage stamp representing the Alstonville area.*

It was particularly pleasing to have Jan Allen – the instigator of the annual Airing of the Quilts at Crawford House – present the prizes. She reminded all present that the first few quilt shows were held before the CRC was even built, so volunteers had to boil the kettle in the museum's kitchen!

This, of course, is far removed from the impressive morning and afternoon teas now provided.

My sincere thanks to both members and non-members who worked so hard over the three days providing and serving the refreshments.



*A transformed lounge room – Sandy and customer.*



Many of these same people would have been up very early making sandwiches, slices and pikelets before having to face a seemingly endless amount of washing up.

Twenty dozen scones were ordered through the Wollongbar supermarket and an impressive variety of gluten free food was constantly available.



*Volunteers Kerrie Alexander, Jan Earnshaw and Helen Saenger setting up shop.*



*The spectacular Freda Khalo quilt in the back bedroom.*



*The Amsterdam Quilt*

Thanks again to the Richmond Valley Woodcrafters who were forced to huddle together on the front verandah in an attempt to keep warm, and to Sandy from Shiralee Stitches for her presence and her publicity.

Finally, a big thank you to the hard-working committee and to the makers of the quilts for their participation. It is a huge financial boost for the work of the Alstonville Plateau Historical Society.



# FOREMAN CRAWFORD'S 1950 DARWIN TRIP

On 16-5-1950 Harold Blanch and I set out for a trip to Darwin

We travelled in Harold's V8 Ford car. It was fitted with a camping body in which we slept. We took a 10 gallon milk can for our water supply also a container of petrol in case of emergency. We intended driving all the way but when we reached Sydney we were told by the NRMA that such would not be practicable owing to the Rocket Range establishment (Woomera) and petrol not being obtainable. We therefore arranged to drive to Quorn in South Australia and send the car by train to Alice Springs, we travelling as train passengers.

We chose the tableland route to Sydney, called at Norman's at Tenterfield where we had lunch and camped near roadside before reaching Bendemeer. I did the cooking and Harold looked after the car. Next morning we travelled through Singleton, Newcastle and on to Sydney spending two night with family in Bexley. Petrol was costing about 3/6 per gallon so far. Camped at Black Range after having a drive round Canberra. Next day 20-5-50 viewed Burrinjuck Dam, passed through Tarcutta and came to Albury where we saw Muriel who was working in Albury. We camped near Wodonga.

## USING AN OLD TYRE TO BOIL THE KETTLE

The night 25-5-50 we camped near Tailem Bend. There was no firewood, so we cut strips of rubber off an old tyre we found in a rubbish tip and boiled our kettle. As the weather was showery and firewood hard to find we carried some rubber from the tyre with us and found it very useful.

Next day 26-5-50 we travelled through Tailem Bend and Murray Bridge, across Lofty Ranges and rang for RAA Pilot who found us accommodation at No 1 Close Street, Rose Park, Adelaide. Bed and breakfast cost us Twelve shillings each. We left Adelaide 29-5-50 and arrived at Quorn after crossing the Flinders Ranges some two days later. We were advised by RAA in Adelaide to strip the car of all tools, goods etc and consign them separately which we did. Cost of these goods to Alice Springs was 16/11d, transporting car £25.2.8. Our train fare 2nd class with sleeper was £6.13.10 each.

On 1st June at 8 pm we boarded the train at Quorn to Alice Springs. The train was very slow as the track was soft owing to the previous heavy rain.

In some places the line was resting on stacks of sleepers as the filling had washed away. I took a photo of Lake Eyre South with water in it. We saw a mob of 1,500 cattle at Maree. Saw a few camels in the distance.

There were no platforms where the train stopped at isolated little "stations". Passengers just got down on to the line. At one of these places there was a house which we were told was a "pub", also a couple of other dilapidated houses. Leaning on an old two rail fence was an elderly Aborigine gazing at the train. Harold and I walked over and spoke to him. After our greetings Harold asked him "Is this all cattle country here?" He seemed a bit perplexed so Harold said "I suppose this is all cattle country here?"

"No, no!" he responded vigorously, waving his hand towards the few buildings. "All town! All town!"

We arrived at Alice Springs at 6.30 pm on 3-6-50 and slept that night in a tent at Tuit's camping ground as we couldn't get the car till next day. We went to the railway station expecting to get the car and goods but on account of it being Sunday and few men working, we had to wait till 3 pm before the car was unloaded. However from about 11 am every now and then a railway employee would walk by and "chat us up" by telling us "It won't be long now."

## DINING WITH A CELEBRITY

We saw Albert Namatjira while having a meal at a café. He also was having a meal. We camped a few miles out on the road to Darwin. Next morning we had the car greased, oil changed etc. Car greasing cost 7/6d.

That night 5-6-50 we camped near central Mt Stewart. Next day we got petrol at Tennant Creek @ 5/- per gal, and sausages @ 1/- per lb. We met two cattle buyers, Lethbridge and Hogarth from Mitchell Queensland from whom we received information concerning roads in Queensland.

On the 7th we camped near the Warlock River near the turn-off to the Elsey Station, where we had to cut down more saplings and do more filling in to get the car over. Then there were creek crossings with very steep banks and one particular one, when you went down into the creek you travelled up stream among boulders, and fast-flowing water for a chain or two and then climbed a very steep bank to get out again.

At one of these places there was a house which we were told was a "pub", also a couple of other dilapidated houses. We went to see the Elsey Station Homestead which is on the Roper River then returned to the highway. We overtook and spoke to a lady cyclist who had ridden from Adelaide and was on the way to Darwin. She had a little tent and would camp each night just off the highway where she would be unseen by travellers.

We met her again 5 days later when we were returning from Darwin. I took her photo with Harold at her side.

We called at Mataranka Station and passed through Katherine and camped past Lime Creek. Next day 9-6-50 we arrived at Darwin and camped at Mindil Beach. Next day 10-6-50 we drove round Darwin, took some photos of buildings damaged by bombing.

We left Darwin and camped for the weekend at Berry Springs. On 12-6-50 we left Berry Springs. From Adelaide River we branched off to Mt Bunday Station with the hope of seeing wild buffalo. We saw 3 or 4 in the distance but could not get a close look at them. We were unable to get bread at Pine Creek, Adelaide River or Katherine but we got a loaf for 1/- at Mataranka Homestead where we camped for a fee of 5/-.

### **BEWARE THE BREAD FROM MATARANKA**

The man who sold us the bread said the cook was away and an amateur baked the bread and it was "not too good." He was quite right. We couldn't eat it but carried it with us as a standby. When we were able to buy bread again we decided to discard the original loaf after we bought 3 loaves at Daly Waters. I placed the loaf behind the back wheel of Harold's car and he reversed over it and to our surprise it sprang back into shape again without breaking the loaf.

We decided to branch off the Highway and travel through the Barkley Tableland. We camped near a bore and windmill. We saw a mob of 1200 bullocks. Next day 15-6-50 we travelled through Eva Downs Station, Anthony's Lagoon and camped before reaching Alexandria Station. We spent a night at Camoweal and had a car service at Mt Isa.

Next day 19-6-50 we travelled to Cloncurry. We had a broken shock-absorber welded and enquired about the roads. Mr Lethbridge had left a message for us to travel via Hughenden which we did. We passed through Julia Creek and saw emus, wild pigs and a wool-scour. We camped 26 miles past Julia Creek.

Next day, the 20th June we passed through Maxwellton where we saw an Artesian bore, emus, plain turkeys and kangaroos. We enquired about the state of various roads in Hughenden as there had been unusual widespread rain.

### **THE WORST ROAD I HAVE EVER TRAVELLED**

Next morning we proceeded to Torrens Creek. We found that the "new" road from Torrens Creek to Portland was boggy from recent rain and quite untrafficable.

We were told that some people were using the old road so we decided to try it. It was the worst road I had ever travelled on in any vehicle. It was overgrown with young scrub about 3 ft high, there were wash-outs which had been partly filled in with saplings recently cut down presumably by truck drivers.

We arrived at Charters Towers about 6 pm having travelled only 144 miles since early morning. Near Pentland we saw cars, trucks and tractors bogged in the mud being left there till the mud dried up. We left Charters Towers for Emerald next morning 23-6-50 travelling through bush country, saw some large gidgee swamps. The cattle we saw were in fat condition. We camped at the roadside. We passed through Bluff and Dingo and camped a few miles further on. We found that the main leaf of one of the front springs was broken. Harold bound it up with rope and wire.

On 25-6-50 we drove slowly over corrugated roads to within 9 miles of Duaringa and camped. Next morning we drove into Duaringa. The garage hadn't a main leaf to suit the spring. The mechanic put a clip on, to help to hold the spring in place. We went on slowly to Wowan. On the way we saw giant prickly pear. We got a new leaf in the spring which cost £1-13-6 fitted. We passed through Banana and camped. Next morning 27-6-50 we started for Eidswold. Two shackle bolts of a rear spring and a shock absorber broke. We tied the spring and at Eidswold we got new shackle-bolts fitted at a cost of £1-14-3.

Next day we passed through Gayndah. Called at Goomeri. We visited Hardy and Allan Blanch and their wives. We camped 2 or 3 miles past Murgon. Next day 29-6-50 – the day Norman left for a trip to the Kimberleys in West Australia – we passed through Wondai and came to Kingaroy and called on Jack Kirkwood and family and Wes and Fanny Johnston. We then passed through Nanango and Toogoolawah.

We travelled through Ipswich to the Pacific Highway and camped at Half-way Creek. Next morning we left for home. It was the 30th of June 1950 and we arrived about noon. We travelled 7,000 miles including the 780 miles by train from Quorn to Alice Springs.







## A few words from the President

**I write from the other end of the world, as I travel though Britain and Europe for a few months.**

Naturally, my travels encounter great historical riches. I've bumped into Romans and Vikings, seen many versions of medieval life throughout Europe, and hiked past Neolithic and Bronze Age burial mounds. I'd love to share all of these with you, but, for the moment, will take you on tour of two English villages, Bishopthorpe (Yorkshire) and Tealby (Lincolnshire).

Before heading to England, however, let's check in on what's happening in our own village. I'm sure you've already visited Crawford House, and joined our celebration of the 110th anniversary of the Alstonville Branch of the Red Cross. Did you see Crawford House lit up in the distinctive Red Cross red? The Branch has both witnessed and shaped much of our own village history. Its members have been there, helping and supporting our community through thick and thin, for over two-thirds of Alstonville's life - certainly something to celebrate.

Now to Bishopthorpe. The village was mentioned in the Domesday Book. However, just like Alstonville, the village was not always known by that name. I am fascinated by place names — they tell us a lot about the place's history. The village was first recorded as Torp or Thorpe, a germanic word for village ('Dorf'). By the next century, it became known by the river it sits beside: Thorp-super-Usam or Thorpe-on-Ouse (echos of Duck Creek Mountain?). In the following century, the name settled on Bishopthorpe, but not before the monks of St. Andrews had tried calling it Andrewthorpe or Thorpe St. Andrew. Naming a place after people will be familiar to Alstonvillians.

Fascinating as all this name-shifting is, what really caught my Scottish eye was a little snippet in a local history: "Bishopthorpe was the site, in 1323, of great council to agree a truce between Edward II and Robert the Bruce, whole forces had been harrying Yorkshire following the Battle of Bannockburn, ending the Scot's Great Raid of 1322."



My second village story has a more contemporary ring to it. Many of you will have enjoyed Elton John's music. Who wrote his words? A Lincolnshire man by the name of Bernie Taupin, who described himself as a "Lincolnshire 'country bumpkin' with a flair for poetry". Guess where he lived? Yes, just down the road from a little holiday cottage we hired in the Lincolnshire Wolds village of Tealby. I had to pay homage to his writing genius, so wandered up and down Beck Hill, where his house, the quirkily-named Piglet-in-the-Wild, stands. It took little imagination to see a 1970s Bernie through a cottage window penning some of Elton John's most famous and successful songs.

Talking of songs, here is some social history seen through an unusual filter. Across the world, people have long recycled old building materials. Roman stones turn up in medieval buildings,

medieval bricks turn up in Victorian houses, and so on. Lincolnshire people have long reused building stone and bricks. One of Elton John's most famous songs records just such an event. The story goes that Bernie Taupin saw a local farmer reusing the local yellow clay bricks from a derelict farm building to pave a farm track. Guess what song emerged? Goodbye Yellow Brick Road! Not your usual historical archive, I admit, but certainly most memorable.

# September Chapter Meeting at Evans Head Living Museum

The next chapter meeting of Museums and Galleries will be held on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> September at Evans Head. Our guest speaker will be talking about the travelling photographer Joseph Check (1856 – 1936).

Check visited everywhere including the North Coast. I have been looking in our collection and so far, have found 5 of his photos. We may have more but these are the only ones with his name imprinted on them.

One is a 1907 photo of Ambrose Crawford, and his fellow actors, posing for a play. Our record of this event was limited. We knew it was a play called “Area Belle” performed at an Alstonville Agricultural Society concert. Contacting Crawford relative Kathy Gilbert, we found the photograph was taken on 28<sup>th</sup> October 1907. She pointed out that the back of the photo records the fellow actors: standing from the left Clarrie McIntyre and Charlie Tunnicliffe seated Winnie Gibson, Ambrose and Jean Gibson.

So if you would like to find out more about this unusual photographer join us at Evans Head Living Museum. The event is free and a car will be going from Crawford House Museum but we need to know you are coming so tell Jane or a member of the committee.



**Australia Post**  
**Wollongbar Post Office, News and Gifts**  
*So much more than just a Post Office!*  
Friendly and professional staff, with expert knowledge on all your postal, banking and Lotto needs. Office and school supplies, gifts and home decor.  
The Palms Shopping Centre Wollongbar  
Open Mon-Fri 7am-6pm, Sat 7am-12midday  
Ph: 6628 3430  
  Official Home of Australia's Lotteries  
Find us on Facebook  
[www.giftstoyourdoor.com](http://www.giftstoyourdoor.com)

NORTHERN RIVERS  
**Health**  
[info@northernrivershealth.com.au](mailto:info@northernrivershealth.com.au)  
p: (02) 6628 0453 f: (02) 6678 0453  
**Elders** Real Estate  
**RICHMOND RW WASTE**

  
**LEASED**  
**YOUR #1 PROPERTY MANAGEMENT EXPERTS!**  
[www.rentalcentral.net.au](http://www.rentalcentral.net.au)  
2 Willie Wagtail Pl, Alstonville, NSW  
e: [admin@msrealestate.com.au](mailto:admin@msrealestate.com.au)  
m: 02 6628 1100