



The Kernel

Campbelltown and Airds Historical Society

"Love and Cherish the City in which you live"

Newsletter

August, 2016



The Twenty-sixth Ivor G Thomas Memorial Lecture
The Campbelltown of Stella and Jim Vernon
through the eyes of their children



Neither Jim nor Stella Vernon was born in the town but both came to embrace Campbelltown as their own, they continued to embrace it for the rest of their lives and so many of that community came together to fill St David's Presbyterian Church hall on Saturday, 13 August, to listen to the four children of Jim and Stella tell of their family, their neighbourhood and the Campbelltown their parents loved.

Margaret Francis spoke of the early connections Jim's family had with the district known as Airds while Campbelltown had not been established. Later Jim was to reconnect the family ties to the town.

Meanwhile a young Stella was learning the value of community from her mother, Helen Stewardson and living in the tiny township of Leumeah.

They aptly met through St Peter's tennis club.

Philip continued, giving us a snapshot of family life of the time, activities involving the Showground, junior tennis, Campbelltown Primary School and Fishers Ghost festivals.

Robert tells of how Jim left his banking career behind to take up his love of writing and photography bringing the Campbelltown-Ingleburn News to an award winning standard as reporter and editor and later becoming Managing Editor of the Syd Richardson newspaper group. Sadly, giving so much took its toll.

Leonie talked of Stella in her widowhood, rebuilding her life through her family, her career, her church and the community. Here Stella's passion for history and the town heritage was able to grow. Moving into the townhouse in Reddall Street within view of all that was important to her, she truly did become a Campbelltown treasure.

'As the photos go on they become less and less of buildings and places and more and more of people because underneath it all was her passion for the people of Campbelltown.' When Stella was ill a remarkable thing happened. After all the time Stella had given to the community, the Campbelltown community in return, came to Reddall Street and to Stella

And last Saturday well over a hundred people came to the Ivor G Thomas lecture, to remember Jim and Stella's Campbelltown and judging by the energy and talk in the hall during afternoon tea, there were many people catching up with old friends and family and discovering that the community is still strong.

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President's Report

by Kay Hayes



As you can see from our front page story, the Ivor G Thomas Memorial Lecture was a great success. We welcomed 119 members, guests, family and friends of the Vernon and Stewardson families. A very big thank you to all our wonderful volunteers who assisted in any way to make this a memorable occasion.



Other activities since our last newsletter have included the completion of the "History Wall" at McDonalds in Queen Street. The display, from our collection, shows five photos of the historic buildings at the southern end of Queen Street. McDonalds Macarthur has generously agreed to sponsor the next edition of Grist Mills.

We welcomed visitors from the Blue Mountains Historical Society for morning tea and a tour of Glenalvon. It was so interesting to talk to people from another Society to exchange views and knowledge. Also 48 visitors from Kiama for morning tea and the tour. We have a lot of bookings for the rest of the year, so busy times ahead.

Local artist Michelle Arentz has kindly lent us some of her artworks of historic local buildings. We have on display Campbelltown Court House, the CBC bank and McGuanne Colonial House. They are in the upstairs sitting room and will be on display until the end of the year. One display in and one out, the model of Glenalvon has now been moved to Reiby Juvenile Justice Centre. It is installed in their reception area, and is of interest to the boys who come to work in the gardens. We are so grateful to Peter Giurin for allowing us to have model for so long.

As this edition of The Kernel coincides with our Annual General Meeting, may I take this opportunity to thank all members and our committee, for continued support to our Society, and to me personally. Any President is only as good as those around them, and all your help and advice have been appreciated.

VALE

We note the recent passing of two Campbelltown residents.

Margaret King

Margaret King, the widow of Dr Edward King passed away recently. Dr King was a grandson of Samuel and Mercy Bursill who lived at Glenalvon and his dental practice was located next to Glenalvon in Lithgow Street. She is survived by her daughters, Lillian and Margaret Ruth.

Dorothy McAuliffe

The widow of Patrick McAuliffe, Dorothy passed away on 8th August 2016 aged 94. Patrick was at one time the Society's Honorary Solicitor and also a patron. Dorothy, who passed away at home, is survived by her daughters Carmel, Maureen and Monica and their families. The Mass of Christian Burial was held at St Johns Church on 12th August.

The Society extends condolences to the families.

Dates to Remember

Monday, 5th Saturday, 10th and 24th September: Open Days at Glenalvon 10 am to 1 pm.

Saturday, 24th September Members Meeting. Time: 1.30 pm at Glenalvon

Saturday, 22nd October Members Meeting. Time: 1.30 pm at Glenalvon.

Launch of the Grist Mills: Afternoon Tea will be provided.

Saturday 26th November Members Meeting and Christmas Afternoon Tea
Campbelltown Public School 140th Anniversary. Open Day 12noon to 3pm.

People Profiled

Ask any ex-student of Campbelltown Primary from the 1960s, 70s or 80s about their memories of school and the first person they will inevitably mention is Miss West. It was almost a rite of passage through the school to have had a year in her class and the memories are centred around the feeling of security and fairness.

However, as well as the passion for teaching Val has held other interests, including travel and history. She has been involved with the Campbelltown and Airds Historical Society since about 2007 when the Society had settled in its present home and active member of the time, Bev Harrison, encouraged Val to help with the gardening. Now she can be found most Mondays in the garden pruning and weeding or serving out her delicious fruit cake for morning tea.

Volunteers are vital to the Society and to Glenalvon but when it is morning coffee time and they sit together to chat, it becomes evident that they all have their own interesting story. In this August edition of the Kernel we share....

Val's story

I was born in Parkes. My father worked on the railway and when I was about three he was sent to a small place called Glenariff, between Nyngan and Byrock. There were only two houses. My two older sisters did correspondence lessons. My mum had to manage with no facilities and four young children. I can still remember the heat and the one time it rained.

Fortunately we were only there for about two years before we moved to Condobolin, where I started school. Five years later we moved back to Parkes. After finishing High School I spent two years at Bathurst Teacher's College. My first appointment was to Belmore North Infants School where I taught for three and a half years before applying for a transfer to Campbelltown, as my mother and younger sister had moved to Kentlyn.



My thirty years at Campbelltown Primary were very rewarding and happy. There were many changes during this time under five different Principals. It is a great joy to meet former pupils who still remember me.



In 1965 I was granted Leave of Absence for all of second term in order to represent NSW at the Salvation Army's centenary celebrations in London. I joined a singing group of 25 girls who also gave timbrel displays. We performed over 50 concerts on our world tour including New Zealand, USA, Canada, UK (at the Royal Albert Hall), Norway, Sweden, Holland, Germany, and Hong Kong. We were treated as VIPs in many places – appearing on TV. Unfortunately we were so busy with concerts and appearances that there was not so much time for sight-seeing. Sometimes we were asleep on the bus.

When I arrived home (the day before third term started) it was hard to settle down and I started to think about travelling again. In 1973 I accepted an exchange position in Cardiff, Wales for one year. It was an amazing experience.



There were 25 teachers from NSW and several special weekends were arranged for us, including a civil reception in London, an Oxford weekend and afternoon tea at Buckingham Place. For our Easter holidays we had a European tour organized and a Scandinavian tour during July.

I was teaching six and seven year-olds in a school that was in a deprived area but seemed to have a lot of assistance, with plenty of equipment and teacher's aides. While there didn't seem to be any definite curriculum and I wasn't required to do any special programming, the children seemed to progress anyway. Reading was strictly monitored. Playground duty was easy, only once a week at recess, as a hot lunch was handled by the dinner ladies.

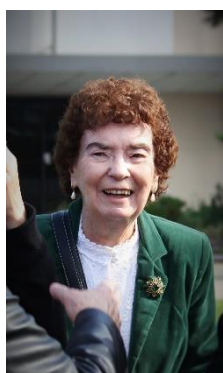
I bought a Mini Minor and did a lot of driving during the weekends. I was fortunate to have two aunts living only about 20ks each side of Cardiff who made me feel very welcome. It was great to get to know them.

Through this experience I developed a real love for the history as well as the wonderful scenery throughout the country so in 1979 I took four months long service leave and returned to the UK. I did a European tour; the highlight of this time would have to be in Switzerland and the train trip to the Jungfrau. In July I did a trip to Scandinavia to see the Midnight sun – one of my long time dreams. These two weeks will always stay in my mind as being really special. I continued my holiday through the Lakes District and Scotland.

As I read my diary it brings all of it back.

My interest in UK and Europe continued to increase as more family members decided to make England their home. In 1985 I revisited Wales and in 1996, as well as visiting family, I met up with a friend in Interlaken and had four lovely days in Switzerland before doing a tour through Scotland.

My last trip in 2011 was mainly to visit family who now live in Wales, London, Rochester in Kent and Derbyshire. Looking back on my various diaries I wish I had taken more care and written more details. Memories of the various trips seem to mix together at times.



I have loved my travel experiences. The world now seems a smaller place.

After I retired in 2000 I continued my work with the Literacy Centre that is run through the Uniting Church, helping children with reading problems. I joined U3A and soon became very involved in the History class as well as the Armchair Travel group. My activities at Glenalvon seem to expand as the years go by, although the roses are still my priority.

I am enjoying a more peaceful time in my life and feel fortunate to be able to have such an interesting and fulfilling retirement, I appreciate my friends and enjoy sharing my experiences with them.

From the Collection

Celebrating 140 years of Campbelltown Public School



Photos from our collection: A gathering of the school saluting the flag, 1910 and a J J Taylor. postcard c.1915

In 1876 Campbelltown residents found a brand new brick building taking shape in their town. Built on a site of 4 ½ acres, granted by the Department of Lands at a cost of £532, the new public school consisted of the headmaster's residence, two classrooms, staff room and verandah with a separate building of two rooms for infants and two brick shelter sheds. The land was originally gazetted for a courthouse and the design closely resembled the plan of a number of early courthouses. This apparently gave rise to the rumour that the school building was originally used for this purpose but there is no definite proof.

At the time it opened there were 89 children on the roll but that number grew to 126 by the end of the first year.

Patrick Newman was the first headmaster. He was known to be a very strict teacher, using the cane frequently to maintain discipline but was also just and considerate, especially to children who often became sleepy during lessons after having risen early to milk the cows and then walk three or four miles to school.

Subjects taught were English, arithmetic, geometry, history, geography and sewing for the girls. On Thursday morning there were Scripture lessons delivered by the clergy from the various churches. There was no organized sport and the children were only allowed to use one end of the playground, as the other end was occupied by the headmaster's horse and fowls. Cricket was a favourite game for the boys but Mr Newman would not allow them to drive stumps into the ground. He did allow them to use the stump of a box tree after they had chopped the tree down, sawn it into logs and stacked it in his backyard. They were only allowed to use soft balls but once in a while managed to sneak in a hard ball, until a misplaced hard ball hit the leg of the headmaster. One lesson Mr Newman did insist on was the identification of various snakes, especially venomous ones, and the treatment of snakebite. The surrounding area was still quite scrubby and the boys spent a lot of time on weekends in the bush.

In 1909 flags were exchanged with the school at Campbeltown in Argyll, Scotland. This exchange was followed by an official presentation ceremony.

There are so many more stories that could be told across the 140 years since Campbelltown Public School opened. Many people still living in Campbelltown could add their memories to a rich bank of stories. This report has been adapted from a booklet written by Laurel Ward of 6A, during Education Week, August 1963, so it now is also part of the school's history.

There is an open day at the Lithgow Street School on November 26, 2016 from 12.00 to 3.00pm in celebration of such a wonderful long history.
