



The Kernel

Campbelltown and Airds Historical Society

"Love and Cherish the City in which you live"

Newsletter

August, 2017

1947-2017 - Celebrating 70 years

With the twenty-seventh annual Ivor G Thomas Memorial Lecture

The annual Ivor G Thomas Memorial Lecture was certainly an appropriate celebration for the Society's 70th anniversary, as 97 members and guests gathered at St David's Presbyterian Church hall on 19th August, 2017. The presentation not only included the milestones of the Society over time but also a very warm talk from Chris Thomas who brought to life Ivor Thomas the person, who was a husband, father and uncle.

Many of the society members remember Dr Thomas and are quick to talk about his driving, his smoking, his stammer and the fact that he was a brilliant doctor and a thoroughly wonderful man. Chris, son of Ivor's twin brother, told us of his memories growing up in a close 'double' family, of often visiting a favourite uncle who challenged your thinking, encouraged your study and played many, many practical jokes.

Chris's talk was followed by Marie Holmes and Jenny Goodfellow as they looked at the Society's aims and how we have endeavoured to fill them, outlining the key events and highlights over the past 70 years. Participation in community events such as the Fisher's Ghost Festival, gathering an extensive collection of papers, objects and photographs, not to mention valuable paintings and furniture. Incredibly Keighran's Steam Mill, beside Bow Bowing Creek, was donated to the Society by Alfred Payten with the object of establishing a museum there.

Sadly that vision never happened but Dr Thomas thought it fitting that the Society should be located in a replica Georgian colonial style house. Finally, in March 2007, the Society gained the use of Glenalvon House, and after 60 years the Society was finally "at home" in Glenalvon.

Over the past 70 years many people have contributed to the Society. Kay Hayes told us of some of the key figures, out of the many people who have contributed to making it, as it continues to be, an active, busy organisation.

It was good to have Helen Thomas, David Thomas's widow, and John Seddon, the late Deborah Thomas's husband as guests for the occasion, as well as many of Ivor's grandchildren and great-grandchildren. It was also pleasing to have Dr Mike Frelander, Federal Member for Macarthur, Greg Warren, MP for Campbelltown and Deputy Mayor Meg Oates join us in the celebrations.

Afternoon tea and many catchups followed the cutting of the anniversary cake by Chris Thomas and CAHS President John White.



President's Report

by Kay Hayes



After a busy year, under John White's leadership, it is my pleasure and an honour to be back in this position again. John's achievements in the past 12 months are appreciated, especially the connection he has forged with Campbelltown City Council, to have the Local Studies Room at the Library renamed in honour of Dr Thomas and work on presenting the very successful Lecture.

As we are coming into spring, the enquiries for tour groups are increasing and we have a number in September, including school students from North Campbelltown Primary School. Our visitors are always fascinated with Glenalvon and often state how lucky we are to have such a wonderful place as home to our Society. These visits are also an ideal time to promote the work of the Society.

As a Society, our role in preserving the history and heritage of the Campbelltown area is of paramount importance, and volunteers are always welcome to help with this. Also welcome are new members and we ask all members to encourage friends and family to consider joining.



Photo: Chris Thomas, John Seddon, Helen Thomas and Bronwen Thomas

Renaming of the Local Studies Room

One of the highlights of the year was having the Local Studies room at the H J Daly Library renamed to honour Ivor G Thomas. Early in our anniversary year the executive committee threw many ideas around as to a way of recognising Dr Thomas. Street names, parks, hospital wards, until President John White put forward the idea of the local studies room. How appropriate to remember someone so passionate about local history!

The Society worked with the Council and on 6th July a gathering of both groups saw members of the Thomas family, along with Deputy Mayor Meg Oates officially cut the ribbon on the newly named area.

The evening was well attended by society members with supper after the official speeches.

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As a long time member and also life member of our society, Verlie has left a legacy of research that we still find invaluable. But Verlie's and her families' connection with Campbelltown goes back to the year the society was founded – 1947, when Merv and Kath Whitten with a young Verlie moved to town.....

Late in 1947, my parents Merv and Kath Whitten and I moved to the sleepy rural town of Campbelltown, 32 miles south of Sydney. My father had returned from serving in New Guinea. We travelled from Wollongong to Campbelltown in a small truck loaded with our possessions. My Father had already made one trip the previous day, and set up a tent in readiness for us. My parents had purchased seven acres, one rood and six perches of land on the corner of Rudd Road and Hughes Street. Because building materials were still rationed after the war, we lived in a fibro garage for over two years. I recall the unlined laundry/bathroom. On chilly winter days, in my father's words, "After bath-time your mother would scoot you straight into the garage."

My father later shared his first memories of Campbelltown. "Old Sam Bursill paid me a couple of shillings a week to agist a race horse on our land." His son Bill Bursill ordered materials needed to build fowl sheds. The sheds were built by my father with the help of Albert "Fishie" Haddock and Tony McGrath. The poultry farm produced eggs for the Egg Marketing Board and cockerels for export to England until the English no longer had meat shortages. Chickens were sourced from Hazletts at Ingleburn and reared in a brooder shed. Later Dad hatched his own chickens. I remember the crackle of winter frosts and frozen water pipes in those days.

In late 1949 we moved into a fibro house built by carpenter Tony McGrath. By then, Tony was building houses for Keith Whiteman of Camden, but on weekends he worked on our house which had become a priority because of the imminent birth of my brother. Robert was born at Collingwood Private Hospital in January 1950.



Frank O'Loughlan delivered bran and pollard to the farm. Keith Longhurst carted wheat from the wheat stations out west. It was illegal to sell wheat direct to farmers in those days. The wheat was second or third grade and was soaked in water; when it started to shoot, the wheat was fed to the fowls. Some was also put through a grister.

After a torrid heat wave, hundreds of our fowls died. Dad buried them and our family doctor, Dr Abraham (Abe) Wajnryb, was horrified at what he considered a waste of food. He was Polish

born and had suffered near starvation during WW11. My father counted Dr Wajnryb as a friend, as well as our family doctor.

When we first arrived in Campbelltown, the hills overlooking our farm were alive with rabbits, some of which my father trapped for food. After rain, the hillside would sprout thousands of mushrooms, which we also ate. Myxomatosis virus was introduced in 1950 to control rabbit numbers - suddenly rabbit was off the menu!

Milk was delivered door-to-door by Ray Egelton, who poured it from a vat into my mother's jug or billy can. Later we bought a cow and heifer calf Dad named Sunshine. Using a cream separator similar to the one in the former Stables Museum, at Glenalvon, I separated cream from milk and my mother made butter.

I later asked Dad what shops he recalled; amongst others he mentioned Mulholland's Restaurant in Queen Street near Coogan's butcher shop. Bill Coogan used to deliver bones to our farm. Dad boiled them, skimmed off the lard for Bill and threw the bones to the fowls to pick off the meat. The lard was collected in 44 gallon drums.

We bought our land from Vic Ducat whose office was in Railway Street. Guy Marsden's hotel, was on the corner of Queen and Railway Street. It was off-limits to our family because dad was a non-drinker. There was 6 o'clock closing in those days.

I still recall the mouth-watering aroma of freshly baked bread from Warby's bakery near Dumaresq Street. Fruit was bought by the dozen and wrapped in old newspapers in those days. Apples were scrumptious, since then new varieties have been produced that can be transported more easily and have a shelf life that is much longer, but they cannot compare with the fresh fruit of those days.

In 1948 I enrolled at Campbelltown Public School. The walk to and from school was an adventure. There were three different routes I could take, along Moore or Lindesay Street, passing the home of Joan Ponsonby. Moore Street was unsealed until 1949, I have a vivid recollection of trudging through mud, unaccompanied, past the old Showground, when I was in kindergarten. Occasionally I walked along Sydney Road (later renamed Queen Street) where I passed the homes of Pam Lowe, and Jeanette Whitley (around the corner in Chamberlain Street). I remember playing musical chairs at Jeanette's birthday party. The Lowe sisters were members of St. Peter's Anglican Church choir, as was I. The Rev Rofe was the church rector, and Mr Barnes from Kentlyn played the organ. It was before the church was restored and the choir was moved upstairs.

In the 1940's and 50's, Fitzroy Creek (then unnamed) was lined with mature trees that were home to many birds, including kookaburras and magpies. Long-necked tortoises and echidnas sometimes visited our farm. Red-belly black and brown snakes were common. My father would drape their dead bodies over the fence and I would give them a wide berth. Superstition has it they did not die until sundown.

The Great Southern Railway ran parallel to our poultry farm. Fettleers were often seen moving back and forth on their trolleys, checking the track for maintenance. One of the fettleers was Charlie Hawkes who lived on the other side of the creek along with the Scott and Cockerill families. Like my father they grew crops of beans and other vegetables. After my mother

acquired a deep freezer, she used to slice the beans and store them to eat all year round. I still own the hand-operated bean slicer!

Neighbours of our poultry farm were the Shakoff family in Rudd Road and the other side of the railway line was the Salkinov family. Both raised poultry; there were many poultry farms on the Soldiers Settlement as well and the Farmers Co-op was located there. Close friends Syd Percival and his wife lived there as well and their daughter Jess was a school friend. My one and only holiday while I was in primary school was at the invitation of the Percivals. We stayed in a caravan at Corrimal Beach. It rained all weekend. So Jess Percival, Brenda Miller and I entertained ourselves by drawing and cutting shapes out of paper. As a farmer, my father was unable to take holidays.

I recall life was a struggle at the time, but other families lived modest lives as well. There were few Christmas or birthday presents and my father declared Easter eggs were a waste of money. However, my beloved great-aunt Ruby Pearl McLean, who lived on a large sheep and wheat station on the Darling Downs, always sent me books. My mother candied orange peel as an alternative to sweets. In one occasion, a family friend gave my parents a packet of sweets. I was offered one, but sneaked a second one and was thrashed for it! Corporal punishment was still permitted in those days.

So much has changed during the intervening years, but I still have a wealth of colourful childhood memories that today I share with my young granddaughter. Neighbours and



community always strongly supported each other. Despite the fact we did not own a car, friends always offered a lift to meetings and elsewhere. My father enjoyed sharing yarns with Syd Percival, Bill Coogan, Keith Longhurst and others. My mother was elected to the Egg Marketing Board and later to Campbelltown Municipal Council and eventually elected as Campbelltown's first woman Mayor.

Fond memories indeed!

Dates to Remember

Monday 4th September. Open Day Glenalvon. 10 am to 1 pm.

Saturday 9th September. Open Day Glenalvon. 10 am to 1 pm
Tours of the house and grounds.

Saturday 23rd September. Open Day Glenalvon. 10 am to 1 pm

Saturday 23rd September.

Members Meeting. Time: 1.30 pm. At Glenalvon.

Speaker: Betty Villy.

Topic: "Early Doctors of the Cowpastures".

Afternoon Tea will be provided.

Need a Justice of the Peace?

Greg Dillon can help you out!

Contact him via email on
greg.dillon38@outlook.com

VALE,

Jan King 20/8/1942-7/7/2017

Jan was born in Kurri Kurri, on the 20th August 1942.

When she was 3 years old she began to learn singing, and at age 5 she began to learn the piano, so she could accompany herself when singing. Music was her love.

In 1960 she began her Teacher Training at Alexander Mackie College in Sydney. Despite having been at East Maitland Girls High, and Bob at East Maitland Boys High, their paths had never crossed.

Teacher's College had brought them together, and on 19th December 1964 they were married.

Rebecca was born in 1969 and Marnie in 1974.

Jan and Bob were on the staff at Campbelltown North Public School for many years, and her love of music filtered into all aspects of her teaching. It became a tool in the classroom, found its way to the staff room and to school choirs and Ecumenical Services for Christmas and Easter, when Jan welcomed Scripture Teachers to her domain.

The school by this stage had Bob, Jan and their daughter Rebecca working there, and was affectionately dubbed 'The Kings School'.

She was a wonderful teacher who would not only cope, but draw the very best from any child.

Music continued to open doors, with Theatre Group Productions and playing for Physical Culture Classes and various choirsthe music rolled on into the community.

In the early 2000s Jan retired from CNPS after teaching there for some 30 years.

Her expected long term plans for retirement, were overshadowed by the onset of Alzheimer's disease, and the inability to play and enjoy her beloved music, which was so much part of her life.

She leaves Bob, her husband of almost 53 years, her daughters Rebecca and Marnie, grandchildren Gabi, Brooke, James, Alex and Ella.



Myles Roser.

Myles Roser who grew up in Allman Street Campbelltown passed away on 18th June this year. Many will remember Myles from his early years in town and at work at Bursill's store on Queen Street. It was there that he met Pat, while she was shopping and she became his wife. They first lived in Wedderburn and then Ingleburn, before returning to Bradbury. Eventually they moved to Coffs Harbour and Boambee. Myles and Pat's love of gardening won them numerous garden competitions and Myles was awarded the Ann Williams Clark Medallion, a prestigious award from Garden Clubs of Australia.

Pat was awarded an Order of Australia medal for services to the community in 2012.

At the time of his passing, Myles and Pat were living in a Retirement Village in Sawtell.



Mary Thomas, wife of Society founder, Ivor G Thomas, as a young lady and on the day of her wedding

In preparation for the IGT lecture, Chris Thomas visited Glenalvon on many occasions, joining in the sub-committee meetings and outlining his vision of how he would present his memories of his uncle, Ivor Thomas. On one of the early visits he brought with him a bag full of carefully wrapped portraits. Many were of Mary Thomas as a young woman as well as on her wedding day, some were of Deborah, Ivor's daughter, at the time of her debut. We were able to scan these beautiful photos before Chris rewrapped them ready for his return train journey.

Isabel Mary McAllan, known as Mary, was born in Aberdeen, Scotland in 1906, grew up in the Shetland Islands and came to Australia with her family as a teenager. She trained and qualified as a nursing sister, meeting Ivor in the mid-1930s at Sydney Hospital when they both worked there - he as a medical registrar, she as a nursing sister. Ivor and Mary were married in 1937.

Margaret Francis has many fond memories of Mary Thomas.

Her mother, Stella and later her Aunt Peggy had worked as Dr Thomas's assistants before they married and both formed strong and lasting ties of friendship with the Thomas family. To this end, Mary became Margaret's godmother. Margaret says her memories of her visits to the surgery to see the family doctor is mixed with memories of treats, of working her way through the surgery - the two consulting rooms with the smell of antiseptic - to the kitchen beyond where Mary would be ready to hand out a treat.

Margaret also has the memory of visiting her godmother after the death of Ivor, when she had moved into a beautiful home on the corner of Broughton and Lindesay Streets, with its elegant furniture...and a grandfather clock.

Mary eventually left Campbelltown, moving first to Ashfield and later to Mosman. Mary passed away in 1981.
