

# THE KERNEL



Newsletter of Campbelltown and Airds  
Historical Society Inc

**March 2012**

## **From The President and Curator:**

Welcome to the first issue of the Kernel for 2012, and a very belated Happy New Year. As we are still in negotiations with Campbelltown City Council for continuing use of Glenalvon I am taking this opportunity to look back at our achievements since 2007.

The Society is currently in a strong position in many ways. We have a good group of Patrons, our membership numbers are increasing, our volunteers are working very well but more helpers are always welcome, our publications, website, speakers and displays are interesting and attract new visitors and members, and we have a high profile in the heritage field.

It is very important to recognise that the Society, its collection and Glenalvon are interrelated and at present, cannot exist independently. Society volunteers maintain the gardens, carry out regular house cleaning, guide visitors through the property – interpreting the house, people and landscape according to their audience, and many other tasks. In April 2007, when we were granted full access to Glenalvon, it was empty, cold and echoing and to a first time visitor (myself) it did not speak of its past uses and place in the community, or its occupants. This is when the collection the Society holds in trust for the community – which had been started by our founder, Dr Ivor G Thomas, in 1947 – came into its own. Glenalvon had been a home for nearly 170 years, right from early Colonial days until 1999. Lifestyles changed during those years, but Glenalvon retained its dignity and grace. Glimpses of past lives in Glenalvon's twelve rooms and original cottage have been made possible by our installation of room displays which educate, entertain and intrigue visitors. To use the "chocolate box" analogy – it is the contents that people find important in their experience of Glenalvon – the "box" is available for all to enjoy. It is interesting to note that the lovely back garden was originally a working yard with domestic animals, transport, and vegetable and fruit gardens around the central well.

The Society has a vast range of resources at Glenalvon which are available for access by the public – including research archives and an extensive reference library

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which includes our publications on many local heritage themes. Our researchers welcome telephone, email and face to face enquiries: - often with spectacular results. Recently, a couple from Cronulla came to Campbelltown to find the graves of four of their forebears – with Society assistance they were 100% successful, and as a bonus they were given an image of the long ago demolished homestead, as well as a great deal of other relevant information.

Last year was very busy with 1527 visitors through Glenalvon in the 12 months ending 30 October 2011, an increase of over 25% on the two previous years. Our wonderful volunteers work very hard to make sure that everyone was welcomed and enjoyed Glenalvon Historic House and Museum, learnt more about Campbelltown's rich heritage and how the house and its people fitted in, and saw the house and garden at their graceful best. Groups from all over Sydney have visited Glenalvon during the year, many being surprised at the wealth of historic sites in the greater Campbelltown area. Campbelltown is a wonderful place, in spite of adverse reports in the media. Groups who arrive from Sydney suburbs and are met at the Station, or come on walking tours with us, are surprised by the historic precinct at the northern end of Queen Street – featuring the 1858 Railway Station, Court House, Mawson Park and Tom Bass statue of Elizabeth Macquarie, St Peters Church and old rectory, Richmond Villa, Caversham and Glenalvon. Our Society can also provide a commentary for bus groups which includes such jewels as the Cattle Tanks and Reservoir, and the Soldiers Settlement. It is very rewarding to introduce new members of our local community to the area's heritage – especially to Glenalvon, which is regularly accessible to the public.

Our focus on education is also very important – we have developed relevant and syllabus based programs for students from 6 years old to mature adults – creating a sense of time and place (those who came before made us who we are). Even something as simple as the wind-up record player teaches that digital technology evolved from a manual background. Our programs at Glenalvon are also inclusive – being a chosen activity for clients and carers from Disability and Aged Care providers

Jackie Green. President & Curator

### **Open Days and Meeting Programme:**

The Museum is open to visitors on 1st Tuesday, 2nd Saturday, 3rd Wednesday of each month, February to Mid December, 10.00am-1.00pm; other times by appointment.

Visitors welcome at all general meetings, held on 4th Saturday of each month commencing at 1.30pm.

**Saturday, April 14th** - Open Morning 10am - 1pm includes working display from Airds Arts and Craft Society members.

**Saturday, April 21st** – Heritage Festival Special Event. "Two Tours and Tea". Own transport and pre-booking essential. Meet at The Cattle Tanks and Water Reservoir in Hurley Park, Hurley Street, Campbelltown at 10.00 am for a guided tour of Campbelltown's last convict construction, the first water conservation project and the first public/private joint venture. Then drive to Glenalvon, 8 Lithgow St, Campbelltown, for a lavish Morning Tea, followed by a guided tour of the classic 1840 Georgian house and associated buildings. The Rural Exhibition Shed will highlight more "firsts". Tickets \$10.00 each, must be pre-booked and paid. Walking shoes, hats and water recommended. Park in Carberry Lane multi-storey carpark or in Allman/Lithgow St free carpark for Glenalvon tour. Phone Jackie Green on 0402 008 970 to book

**Saturday, April 28th** Meeting 1.30 pm - Speaker - Jon Ponsonby - 'Old Campbelltown Showground - As I remember it.'

**Saturday, May 12th** - Open Day Special Event. Well known local identity and former Councillor, Frank Ward, will present his family published family history to the Society. Join Frank, friends and colleagues at Glenalvon from 10.00 am for the presentation, Morning Tea and reunion. For catering purposes please ring our office on 46251822 or email [secretary@cahs.com.au](mailto:secretary@cahs.com.au) if you are able to attend.

**Saturday, May 26th** Meeting 1.30 pm - Speaker - Judith Dunn - Well-known historian from Parramatta.

**Saturday, June 23rd** Meeting 1.30 pm - Speaker - Andrew Allen – Local Studies Resources at Campbelltown Library

**Saturday, July 28th** - Meeting 1.30 pm - Speaker Campbelltown Architect Ron Kydd

**Saturday, August 25th** - Annual General Meeting 1.30pm - Speakers - Kevin and Margaret Rixon 'Machine Breakers'

### **Research**

Our research team, Marie, Kay and Stella have answered enquiries about Warby's barn, Kingsclare St. Leumeah, and the church bell at Heber Chapel.

### **Condolences**

Sympathy is extended to the family and friends of Joan Ponsonby on her passing.

### **Extra News Item.**

Do you have a family member who is sight impaired? Would you like some of our Grist Mills prepared as 'Talking Books'. A friend Mr. Ted Baker, who is expert in this work has offered to do this for us. Please let us know if you are interested in the current Grist Mills, or some of our older volumes. There will be a small cost to cover discs and postage if needed.

### **Cavalcade of History and Fashion**

The next Cavalcade booking is set for 7th July at Park Central. The theme is "Between the Wars". Pre-paid tickets will be available closer to the date.

### **Tour**

The next tour on 16th June has been arranged for Carrisbrook house which is in Lane Cove and a tour of Vienna Cottage which is in Hunters Hill. We will also have a tour of the Hunters Hill area. Prices are yet to be determined.

**Volunteers** are still needed. We currently need some additional Glenalvon tour guides. Give Jackie or Jenny (0417 556 756) a ring to find the most suitable time to come. Tour guides are given plenty of training, and do not have to take up the duty alone until they feel ready.

**GRIST MILLS** Do you have a particular you would like researched and included in the Grist Mills programme. The issue you will find in this mail-out is an article by Stella Vernon on Leumeah Estate, which tells the story of the Estate from its beginnings as Warby's homestead and outbuildings, to its development as Campbelltown Estate Leumeah, the formation and growth of the Leumeah Progress Association, and the building and final demolition of the Helen Stewardson Hall. The July issue is partly completed and is entitled 'Fireworks in Campbelltown'. It contains an article by Jackie Green 'Fireworks and other Memories' as well as the memories of many people who worked at Vulcan Fireworks at Menangle Park.

If you have materials or ideas you would like considered for a future Grist Mills, please submit them to our editorial team, Stella Vernon and Marie Holmes.

### **IGT Lecture**

Saturday 18th August. 1.00 pm. At St David's Church Hall, Lithgow St Campbelltown  
Guest Speakers: Dr Carol Liston on Bradbury and Robyn Conroy on local heritage.  
Cost \$10.00 per person, includes afternoon tea.  
Bookings essential.