



The Kernel

Campbelltown and Airs Historical Society

"Love and Cherish the City in which you live"

Newsletter

August-December, 2025

President's Report

by Stephen Coppins

Dear Members,

Sorry for the long gap between issues of *The Kernel* newsletter, but it has been a very busy couple of months.

I just wanted to thank Julie Crowley, our illustrious Editor, for handling this space where my President's report should have been in the last issue of *The Kernel*. Likewise, I would like to thank Michelle Hatfield and Chris Hayes for keeping the Society going in June, while I was overseas.



Since our last issue, the Society and our members have been part of two significant community events, involving the HJ Daley Library – including the medal transfer from the old HJ Daley Library to its new location in Queen Street on 28 June, and the official opening of the new HJ Daley Library held on 4 August. It was very nice to meet Harley Daley's daughter Cheryl and her grandson Paul, at the opening event.

The Society also held special Glenalvon Open Houses on the afternoons and evenings of Campbelltown Council's Fest of Nations event on Saturday 6 September and the Fisher's Ghost Festival Twilight Streets event on Saturday 1 November. Both of these events allowed many residents and visitors, who don't normally come to Lithgow Street or were aware of Glenalvon, to discover Glenalvon and the Society. I would like to thank all our volunteers who helped open and close up, and also welcome our visitors. A special thank you to Jennifer Strang who dressed up in historic period costume and encouraged passers-by to enter and have a look around, and Robert Strang for bringing his antique bikes, which also drew interest.

Campbelltown and Airs Historical Society Inc

Correspondence to Secretary

P.O. Box 257, Campbelltown NSW 2560

Phone: (02) 4625 1822

Email: secretary@cahs.org.au

Website: <https://www.cahs.org.au/>

The launch of the Society's latest book, *Our Legacy of Light: The History of St. Patrick's College, Campbelltown, NSW*, by Francesca Musico Rullo and Joanne Cavallin, was held on 25 October, at St. Patrick's College for Girls. A big thank you to Mary Leask, Principal and the staff and students of St. Patrick's College and our Patron Mayor Darcy Lound for taking part in the official launch, and to all our volunteers who helped with the launch, but for those who also worked on getting the book put together, including Fran and Jo (authors), students from the St. Patrick's History Club (for research, interviewing past nuns, staff and students), and of course Julie Crowley (editor and layout), and Kay Hayes, Chris Hayes, Anne Ross and Marie Holmes for proof-reading and editing. The book is available as a paperback (for \$25.00) and has just become available as an eBook (for \$15.00). This marks another milestone, being the first time the Society has published an eBook.

Julie, Fran and Jo met with Dr Mike Freeland MP, Federal Member for Macarthur, at St. Patrick's College, who congratulated the Society, the authors and the College, on the publication of the book. Thank you also to Dr. Freeland for congratulating Fran, Jo, the Society and the book in Parliament on 24 November. The Society has been presented with a transcript of Dr Freeland's speech, which appears in Hansard.

The Society was also represented at Remembrance Day Services at Campbelltown (by myself) and Ingleburn (by Chris Hayes and Fran Musico Rullo) and also at the HMAS Sydney Memorial Service, across the road from Glenalvon (by Jenny Goodfellow, at very short notice).

We unfortunately, learnt of the removal of the Campbelltown Visitor Information Centre (VIC) from Quondong, at the request of the Campbelltown Catholic Club. Although heritage-listed Quondong is now the sales office for the new Siquilla retirement residential facility to be built near Quondong and Emily Cottage. The Visitor Information Centre is now located on weekdays at the Council Civic Centre Customer Service area on weekends and at the Campbelltown Arts Centre.

The Society was able to arrange visits by members to both Quondong on 8 August, before the VIC closure and a tour of the new HJ Daley Library facilities by our member and Local Studies Librarian, Andrew Allen, on 21 August. A big thank you to the VIC staff, particularly Belinda Sacco for allowing us in and giving a very interesting talk about the history of the house and Catholic education in the area, and to Andrew and Kay Hayes for co-ordinating the Library tour, it was very much appreciated. I hope the members who took part enjoyed these visits?

As a result of both the Library and Visitor Information Centre relocations, some records and historic objects have had to be returned to the Society. In addition to Andrew Allen and the Local Studies team and the VIC staff, and the Council's project co-ordinator, I would also like to give a huge thank you to Barney and Donna Ponsonby for helping move the Glenalvon model and also Barney and Gill Blackstone for helping moving Society display items and publications from Quondong. I would also like to thank Fran Musico-Rullo and Joanne Cavellin for agreeing to re-house some of the Society's school desks and chairs at the St. Patrick's College Archives, as part of a long-term loan.

Since our last issues, we have sadly lost a number of long-term and active members of the Society, including:

Beryl Godley, one of our Life Members and former Committee Members in July.

Rev. John Seddon passed away in August. Rev. Seddon was husband of Deborah (pre-deceased, and a Life Member of the Society), and son-in-law of the Society's first President Dr. Ivor Thomas;

Long term member Robert Milliken passed away on 9 October while former President, Secretary, Research Officer, prolific author, Editorial Committee Member and Life Member, Marie Holmes, passed away on Thursday 23 October. As previously mentioned, Marie was still volunteering, being one of the proof-readers for *Our Legacy of Light*;

On Friday 24 October, we lost Kevin Rixon. Kevin had been a committee member on a number of occasions, but is probably more familiar working on the gardens and minor maintenance around Glenalvon and has built many pieces of furniture and display aids over the year. Kevin was conferred Life Members of the CAHS at the AGM in August.

I also wish to acknowledge the unexpected passing of Rene Rem, the Secretary of the Camden Historical Society, and pass on the condolences of the Society's members to Rene's family and to the members of the Camden Historical Society. Rene was a hard-working member and volunteer of that Society, and still leaves big shoes to fill.

On more positive news, I would like to thank all the members of our Society who turned up for our Annual General Meeting at the end of August. Though I personally think that was more for Julie Crowley's impressive presentation about the life of Ken Bagley and his amazing photographs of Campbelltown. Ken's wife and two of their daughters were in the crowd, and were very appreciative of Julie's presentation

At the AGM two resolutions were endorsed by the members. The first, to make a minor change to the Constitution to allow an individual to hold more than one of the main four positions, just in case the Society of the future finds that it needs a Secretary-Treasurer (though fingers crossed, that never happens). The second resolution was to approve an increase of both individual and family member fees by \$2.00 each, effective for membership renewals and new memberships for the 2026-27 financial year.

There has been quite a bit of change to the Committee, including the retirement of three Committee Members – Anne Ross (as Treasurer), Kay Hayes and Jenny Goodfellow. I would like to thank them again for their service and continuing commitment to volunteer into the future.

I would also like to thank Michelle Hatfield. While Michelle will remain on the Committee and still be volunteering, she has stepped down from her dual roles as Vice President and Events Co-ordinator. Michelle has done an amazing job in both these roles, but alas (for us) paid employment takes priority.

I am also pleased to welcome three new committee members, Leonie Ford (as our new Treasurer!), Fran Musico-Rullo and Belinda Sacco. More details about some of our new committee members can be found in this issue.

I would like to mention Clarice Stretch, who has been a long-term volunteer, Curator, Committee Member and Life Member of this Society, who has advised she will no longer be able to volunteer on a regular basis. However, hopefully we will still see Clarice at future General Meetings and other events.

Also Dana Vale has advised that she will be stepping down from her role as Welfare Officer at the end of 2025, a position Dana has held since 1998. Thank you both Clarice and Dana!

I would like to thank again all of our Committee Members and our Volunteers who have helped keep the Society operating over the past year. The Society cannot function without you.

I would also like to thank those members who have offered to assist the Society into the future with either collection work, tour guiding, catering or gardening work. It is very much appreciated.

However, we do have a number of vacant positions on the Committee, including Vice President, Curator and Events Co-Ordinator and ideally, we would like an Assistant Editor. As mentioned, we are losing some of our regular volunteers and it is increasingly falling on the same few people who end up having multiple positions. As a result, many important tasks are not getting the attention they need, and ideally it would be good if there is a handover and training period from one person to another. We are also mindful, that a lot of tasks that fall under the responsibility of the roles such as Curator, Editor, Events Co-Ordinator and Research Officer who report to the Committee, would be better handled by a team of volunteers.

I am mindful, that not everyone can volunteer on a Monday or Tuesday morning, if you are interested in volunteering, please let me know and also advise your availability throughout the week. Please note, any volunteering on open days or with school groups, does require a volunteer Working With Children's Check, but there is no cost for that, and the Society can assist with the application and transport to Service NSW at Gregory Hills, if required.

However, we are looking urgently for help with Gardening, Editorial (especially proof-reading and writing), and collection work (correcting spelling and formatting in the description field of collection records; and working to make the library collection more accessible for members). In January I will send out an email with more details about the Working Groups, and some of the smaller jobs, that we need help with.

The Society is also looking to establish a Heritage Committee within our Society. A bit more detail about that can be found later in this issue.

Thank you all again for your help and support of this Society, it is very much appreciated.

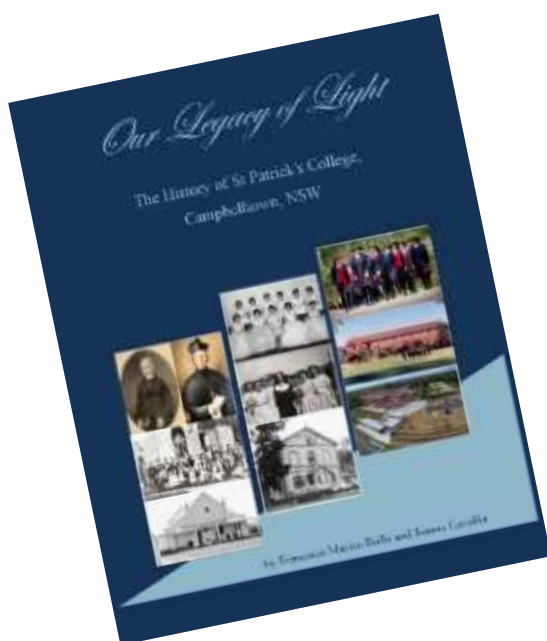
Wishing you and your loved one a Very Merry Christmas, and all the very best for a safe, happy and healthy 2026!

Kind Regards *Stephen* President, Acting Curator, Acting Events Co-Ordinator

We apologise for not publishing our normal August *Kernel*. In this issue we include some of the items that were prepared for publication in August, together with news and events in the last few months. We hope you will enjoy this oversized edition, for some light Christmas reading.



A special Book Launch



On October 25th in lieu of its monthly meeting, the Society launched its latest publication *Our Legacy of Light – The History of St Patrick's College*, in the Mary Sheil Centre at St Patrick's College for Girls, Campbelltown. It was written to coincide with the celebrations marking 185 years of Catholic education in Campbelltown.

Fran Musico Rullo; a Society member and history teacher at St Pat's and Joanne Cavallin; St Patrick's Archivist, wrote the book tracing the evolution of Catholic education in Campbelltown, from its beginnings as the colony's first privately funded Catholic school to its transformation under the Sisters of the Good Samaritan to its present mission to educate young women for today's world.

Ultimately the book is about the history of Campbelltown and the Irish people who settled here and wanted their children to receive an education.

With the aim of involving present students and past alumni in the program, the role of MC was well performed by Scholastica Captain Rebecca Murphy, capably introducing each segment, while later in the proceedings the guest speaker was Sr Geraldine Kearney sgs, from the class of 1964.

Current principal Mary Leask, in her first year as head of the school, spoke first, welcoming guests to the book launch, followed by Julie Crowley, the Society's editor who spoke about the original aims of the Society (to record the stories of people and places) and how these aims are still being upheld today, after nearly eighty years.

The first copy of the book was presented by CAHS to Ms Leask.

In an unfair quirk of fate, Fran Musico Rullo; after all the passion and hard work over, not months, but years, was unable to attend the launch due to illness. However, with the ability of modern technology, she watched the proceedings on-line and joined virtually for a Q & A



with Campbelltown Mayor Darcy Lound. She, along with Jo Cavallin, answered five questions about the College and the writing of the book. Asked to describe the College in one word, her choice was “tenacious.” Reflecting on the school’s endurance through the 1840s depression and the 1870s rust virus, she said the College had “persevered through it all.”

Ms Musico Rullo, as always professional, had the students from the College History Club fully primed to don historic uniforms and show the progression of dress over the time of the College’s 185-year history. This was done to precision despite the fact that Fran was not present. The oldest alumna and youngest student were next presented with copies of *Our Legacy of Light*, followed by the History Club members.



President Stephen Coppins closed the meeting, encouraging people to check out the stall and consider buying a copy of the book.

The book has been published with the help of a grant we received from the Royal Australian Historical Society. This made it all possible and we are truly grateful for their support.

Our Legacy of Light can be bought from Campbelltown and Airs Historical Society at Glenalvon or via our website: <https://www.cahs.org.au/the-society-shop>.



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A Meeting with our local Member

On the day of the launch Federal Member for Macarthur, Dr Mike Freeland was unable to attend due to commitments in Canberra, so he kindly sent a video clip to be played as part of the program, congratulating the College on the completion of their book. To follow up from this, he organized a visit to the College on 19 November, to personally meet with authors Fran Musico Rullo and Jo Cavallin. The Society was represented in this meeting by Julie Crowley, editor and designer of the book.

After Ms Mary Leask welcomed this small group, amidst a general chat, morning tea was offered. Dr Freeland was then taken to be shown the wonderful collection the College has in their archives. He was genuinely impressed and very interested in the history of the College and the local area in general.



Left: Fran Musico Rullo and Jo Cavallin with the book 'Our Legacy of Light'. Right: Jo, Dr Mike Freeland, Fran and Julie. Dr Freeland presented the authors with Congratulatory awards.

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Glenalvon Improvements.



It has often been mentioned how well the Campbelltown City Council look after our home here at Glenalvon. Our latest major change is the replacement of our back and side fencing with brand-new fences, as the old fences were starting to gain an interesting angle. Work was well underway in the first week of December.



Next it is new flooring in the kitchen and office area of the house. While the constant squeak whenever anyone walks in, has been a good warning alarm, the new flooring will make it decidedly easier to hear people speak and for Chris and Stephen when they answer the phone. JC

🔔 * 🕯 * 🔔 * 🕯 *Merry Christmas Everyone.*

A great afternoon at our CAHS Christmas party. Thanks to Ann Ross for her expertise and hard work in catering, to Barney Ponsonby and his team for setting up, to Clarice Stretch for organizing the trivia and to Chris Hayes for all her great organisation.



Some New and Newish Faces – Welcome!

Within the new committee formed after the last AGM we see some new and new-ish faces. Here is a little glimpse of the new people helping to make decisions to continue the work of the CAHS, along with the first two biographies. Thank you for agreeing to be part of this important work.



Leonie Ford, Treasurer



Belinda Sacco, Committee Member

Sharon Greene

My connections with Campbelltown started in 1962 when my family moved here. With my schooling and employment very much within the local area, I've always had an interest in history, both local and family history and have been involved with committees for both over the years. We are very fortunate to have a great connection with our early Colonial origins of this great country. I'm looking forward to working with this committee and meeting our members, please come up and say hello.



Fran Musico Rullo

I have been a member of CAHS since 2015. With a keen interest in historical research I recently published with CAHS and my colleague, Joanne Cavallin, *Our Legacy of Light - A History of St Patrick's College*. Having studied History at the University of Sydney I have been a History Teacher at St Patrick's College since 2003. At the College I established a History Club in 2017 which has won several Anzac Day Schools Awards for local military projects such as in 2019 'The Anzac Nurses of Campbelltown', 2023 on 'Campbelltown and the Vietnam War' and in 2024 'Our Local Veterans'. I have been asked to speak several times at our monthly meetings and in the 2024 RAHS Conference.

Vale

Over the last few months we have lost three of our long-time members. As Christmas approaches, we think of their families and remember them.

Robert Milliken

(12 July 1946- 9 October 2025)

Sam and Majorie Milliken were living on the corner of Moore and Genty Street when Robert, the third of their five children was born, in July 1946.

Sam was share-farming at Menangle Park. School holidays for the Milliken boys meant taking turns at working at the dairy.

Robert attended St John the Evangelist Primary School in Lindesay Street, and since, at this time, St Greg's was not open for day students, only for boarders, he travelled to Liverpool, to the Patrician Brothers for High School.

Leaving school after the Intermediate in third form, he took up an apprenticeship with the railways becoming a fitter and machinist.

The railway had their own Institute and what was normally a four-year course, was offered in three years, however, at this time steam was being replaced by diesel and they offered a one-year course in diesel mechanics. Robert picked up this course, but once finished, he got a job with Rolls Royce Diesel at Revesby.

Around this time he married Lorraine and they built a home in Moorebank, as the area was being sub-divided in the mid-70s.

He worked with Rolls Royce for a long time, until they sold and the new owners wanted to move the company to Melbourne.

Fortunately for Robert, someone he worked with started a business, National Diesels, and took all the Rolls Royce clients and much of the equipment.

Servicing Telstra diesel generators in exchanges, he worked around NSW.

Robert was a Mr Fixit and was always interested in cars, engines and car racing.

He divorced and moved to a house in Ambarvale.

He spent 35 years with Ros, moving together to Tuncurry once he retired in 2012, loving the beach and the lifestyle on the coast.

He passed away on 9 October.

Robert with his sisters Alison and Diana



Marie Holmes

(4 June 1942 – 23 October 2025)

The notice came out on an email informing us that Marie Holmes had passed away, in Campbelltown hospital, after a short stay.

The notice read

‘Loving Mother, Historian, Teacher and friend’
And in saying that, it could not have been more perfect.

Marie was indeed to us, a valued historian, as well as a friend.

Marie was born at Baralaba in Central Queensland and completed a Teacher Training course at Kedron Park Teachers College in Brisbane.



Marie came to Campbelltown from Biloela, in Queensland, not intending to settle, simply to spend some time in NSW while Brian furthered his University studies. She stayed and settled into the community and gave much time to researching and writing about the history of the town.

She and Brian bought land on the Macquarie Heights Estate, which later became renamed as part of the suburb of Bradbury, and they moved into their new home in August 1969, with their first child, Rachelle, a newborn.

She continued to teach in Campbelltown, at St Patricks and at St Gregs and continued her studies gaining a Graduate Diploma in Special Education, working at Beverley Park in a teaching role.

For over forty years she was involved with both the Campbelltown District Family History and with CAHS. She was a committee member, Secretary, Vice President and President, while continuing the role of research officer for many years.

As part of the Editorial Committee, she proof-read the Grist Mills and had made notes on the St Patrick's book 'Our Legacy of Light'.

Marie wrote many Grist Mills for the Society, but also the list of stand-alone books is extremely impressive. She also had a regular history column in the local newspaper, the *Macarthur Chronicle*.

Her funeral was held at Macarthur Memorial Park, Varroville.



Kevin Rixon

(15 April 1943 – 24 October 2025)

Being at Glenalvon anytime in the last decade or so, you could not miss spending some time with Kevin.

From his Aladdin's cave, aka his home shed, which was packed with sheets of glass, or that piece of wood that may just come in handy, he was constantly making things to help with displays; stands, picture frames, tables.

Early in his time here he built a new display cabinet in the Ag Shed, grouping items; the planes, household irons etc, so they are easily seen and the collection appreciated. He took home pieces of farming equipment to remove the rust, using vinegar or molasses.

He was interested in history, both the local history and worldwide. He could quote the names of many local families along with their birth and death dates.

More recently he spent time tidying the garden, coming in any day of the week to move the hose around the yard on hot summer days.

Kevin grew up in Warby Street, in an 'old Campbelltown' family, a Rixon being one of the boys who discovered the body of Fred Fisher back in 1826. His maternal side were Harringtons of Mt Erin.

While still at school he spent early mornings and late afternoons helping in the dairy at Mt Erin.

He left school as early as he could, not doing so well, having trouble reading after an accident cutting wood, as a child, left him in hospital for months then with limited sight in one eye.

He picked up work at the University Farm at Menangle when he was 14 and at 16 went Jackarooing in outback Queensland, which was the start of many adventures; time spent in New Zealand on a dam construction, home to apprentice work as a butcher with Tildsley's in Camden, a term in New Guinea doing missionary work with the Franciscans under Bishop Doggett.

He taught himself to read while in the isolated outback, with no other entertainment, so becoming an avid reader.



those it bamboozled, or give good advice on the best refrigerator for your need.

He loved the years he and Margaret ran the shop in Chamberlain Street, often slipping that extra item to someone who was struggling.

Returning home, and with a little bit of help from two hopeful mothers, (Monica Rixon and Mary Confeggi) Kevin started to date Margaret Confeggi. They married and built a home in Sturt Street.

It was from here he moved to IRT, only one week short of fifty years of living in that home.

His time back in Campbelltown was as varied as his earlier life had been; he worked in Camden for his brother, Bryan, getting to know all the specs of many electrical items. He could install the new-fangled video player for



He spent time with St Vincent de Paul at Mt Druitt as well as Meals on Wheels here in town. He and Margaret also worked with the NILS Scheme giving no-interest loans to people in need. Kevin loved the bush and spent many hours walking at Wedderburn, taking photos of the native plants.

His passing was peaceful, having spent a few weeks organising the things important to him, with his family close by he spent his last moments out in the garden at the Camden palliative care unit, the end of the week, the end of the day, setting sun, the noise of the birds settling for the night. Outdoors as he liked best to be.



To keep up to date with all the latest news, make sure you check out the CAHS Facebook Page

Proposed CAHS Heritage Committee

A number of members and also members of the public have been concerned about development or neglect affecting various heritage listed buildings and localities of the Campbelltown Local Government area.

It has been proposed to seek member participation to form a CAHS Heritage Committee, to potentially undertake some of the following tasks:

- Review Development Applications (DAs) affecting Heritage Listed buildings and locations;
- Draft written responses to Das, on behalf of the Society to Council;
- Work with Campbelltown City Council staff on heritage related projects and information;
- Recommend buildings or locations, not currently under Heritage protection, to be Heritage Listed;
- Recommend buildings or locations to be included in the Blue Plaque scheme, and work on applications.

Ultimately, it will be up to the proposed Committee what roles they will prioritise and work on.

Please note, this is not a Council Heritage Committee, but will be just Society members at this stage, with the view of working closer with Campbelltown City Council heritage and planning staff.

If you are interested in being part of this Committee or to discuss this Committee further, please contact Stephen Coppins at presidentcahsinc@gmail.com or text or phone 0422269006?



John Morthern is at present on the Japanese Exchange and Teaching Program (JET) living in Sapporo City and working as an Assistant English Teacher. With this move driven by his love of history, and especially modern East Asian history he has suggested that he write a report on some of the historical places around him. This way John can stay connected to the Society and we, in turn can broaden our knowledge of Japan.

Writing for our August edition, John chose a topic vital to Japanese history, particularly this year with the eightieth anniversary of the end of WWII.

The Atomic City

At 8.15 am, on the 6th of August 1945, the US bomber Enola Gay dropped a single bomb onto the city below, Hiroshima. 44 seconds after release, the bomb detonated. A bright flash blinded witnesses for miles in all directions, followed by an intense heat and shock wave. Within the blink of an eye, most of the city was gone. In contrast to popular belief, those in the blast radius were not immediately vapourised but burnt and torn apart in an unimaginable display of destruction. Afterwards, few buildings remained. One amazing example was the Industrial Exhibition Hall (now the Atomic Dome), directly under the bombs detonation it survived the destruction.



Left: The Atomic Dome

Right: A burial mound with the cremated remains of tens of thousands of victims.

An estimated 90,000 people were killed in the initial bombing. Of these, 10,000 were military, and the rest were civilians, though most were working in direct assistance of the war effort in some manner. In the peace hall museum, now just south of the target bridge, a large focus is placed on the children who were killed, though little attention is given to the fact that almost all these children were working on a military construction project rather than attending school where they may have been further away from the hyper centre of the blast. In addition, some 20,000 of the killed were ethnic Koreans, who were largely there as forced labourers working the Japanese war machine. These Korean labourers were given no official recognition or burial until nearly 30 years after the blast.

The following day, Russia entered the war, and the day after that a second atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki. To this day it is highly debated whether the Russians or the Bomb had more impact of Japan's decision to surrender, regardless, a week later on the 15th they did. Following the surrender, US forces took over Hiroshima prefecture, though these were soon replaced by Australian troops of the British and Commonwealth Occupation Force. Commonwealth forces occupied most of Southern Japan, and by 1948 Australia was the sole contributor. The headquarters were in a smaller city to the east of Hiroshima known as Kure,

with several Australian units also garrisoned in its neighbouring town of Hiro. To the south was Iwakuni airfield where Australian RAAF units were stationed.

By 1950, there were relatively few Australians left, and they were scheduled to come home by the years end. However, on the 25th of June, as 77 Squadron RAAF celebrated their going home dinner, North Korea invaded the south and the Korean war was started. The Australians in Japan were sent to fight in Korea and the previously mentioned bases became key training hubs and depots for all Commonwealth forces in Korea. The occupation of Japan lasted until the San Francisco Peace Treaty was signed in 1951, and Australia maintained its bases in Hiroshima Prefecture until 1957, when they finally returned home.



Then and now photos taken by Australian service men in Kure, 1951.

Continuing on with two more articles written for our August Kernel

My last visit to Quondong Cottage – Friday 8th August 2025

by Sharon Greene

Our president Stephen Coppins kindly organised a visit to Quondong for our Campbelltown & Airs Historical Society members, a final visit before this historic treasure closes its doors to the public, residents and visitors to the Campbelltown Visitor Information Centre.

I have been to Quondong several times over the years and have enjoyed each visit which allowed me to step back in time ... to possibly a harder time but definitely with a slower pace, where I could appreciate the dedication of many: the Catholic church, the teachers, the early residents that lived or boarded there and especially those that later cared for its future and

survival, in our knock-down world of anything that is old, and who would call it home: to them, I say thank you.

Belinda Sacco was our guide on the day of our visit and her enthusiasm and knowledge of Quondong and Campbelltown was evident.

Belinda recounted the early history of the local Aboriginal tribe, Dharawal that roamed the area, of the early land grant to Joseph Phelps, who later sold to William Bradbury and the later sale by his daughter Mary Sheil, who sold part of the property to the Catholic Church to build the school.

Originally named St Patrick's School, it opened on St Patrick's Day, 17th March 1840, it was the first Catholic school in Australia to be built with funds that were raised by private subscription. Belinda says there were many Catholic families in and around the Campbelltown, Camden, Minto and Appin areas that gave funds, supported the school and their children attended.

The family historian in me wished to see the school register or the 'Blue Books' to discover the names of these early students. Other details found in these books would reveal parents, occupations, sometimes an address or property name, cost of their school fees and subjects taught: spelling, reading, writing, dictation, grammar, arithmetic, geography, singing and Catechism. (Oh! For the good old days of a decent education!)

Belinda told our attentive group stories of the early teachers and their wives, about the teaching and living conditions in the 5 rooms of the original building: with one large and one small room used as the school rooms, with a parlour room and bedroom for the married couples. St Patrick's teachers were Mr & Mrs Mulholland, Mr & Mrs Webb, James O'Grady, Patrick Carolan, Patrick Newman and Michael Dwyer, with the wives teaching the sewing classes.

By 1889 the Sisters of the Good Samaritan Order had taken over control of the school and education of the pupils, with the size of the school buildings almost tripling, with nine rooms plus external toilets, bath and shower rooms. (Many of these external bathrooms and back verandahs were removed when the building was extensively renovated in 1997).

Student numbers grew from 54 in 1840 to 102 in 1864, with school ages ranging from 7 years to 12 years. In 1914 a new Catholic school was built in Lindesay Street and the old building sold. Catherine Keihone, a widow, purchased the building and property for £205 in 1914, she named the building Quondong, after a native peach tree supposedly grown in the front yard.

Belinda pointed out various aspects about the construction, changes and later renovations to the building over the years. Gems like a hidden internal 'chapel window' that had been closed over, only to be rediscovered when the building was renovated in 1997. The front verandah was to reveal the original mortar and brickwork, with a section of plaster which exposed the original vibrant school house colour scheme (later replicated and visible inside today) along with furniture pieces and items that have added rooms to the stories over the years: school room, Collegians room, library and there are several pieces of furniture and items belonging

to our Society, which will be returned back to Glenalvon. Like many old buildings rising damp and lead paint are a concern.

The video in the school room is narrated by our local studies librarian Andrew Allen tells and shows more stories about the school and hidden aspects within. I particularly liked the high back square solid timber chairs in the school room, they are rather unique. Also interesting sketches (some by past students) and other items of interest and information surround the walls. The student tables and chairs would be a good lesson to the young students of today – no creature comforts there!

After Belinda's talk concluded she left us to wander at our leisure through the various public and 'private only' rooms, with permission to open doors or cupboards. Some of us making our final purchases of the knick-knacks for sale, while others took advantage of the great supply of the many maps and town booklets available, all for free!

Mrs Pearl Segal was the last resident in this pink (painted) house, she was always neatly dressed and often wore a beret hat, this is how I recall her and remember Quondong from my younger days. The house and adjoining land were sold to the Catholic Club following her death in June 1991.

Being a keen gardener and if my memory serves me correctly, the front garden holds the beautiful red bloom of the Macarthur Rose, along with many other treasured old-fashioned favourites, plus, possibly a quandong tree?

Here's hoping Quondong's next chapter will hold both history and charm for the future residents who will call this area home, as the sales office for Senior Living (over 60's) with 92 units, over seven floors, development by the Catholic Club, with Emily Cottage used as communal space for these residents.

The final open day for Quondong Cottage, as our Visitor's Information Centre (the VIC) was Friday 22nd August 2025.



PS: Much of this information came from Belinda's talk and past visits but as someone always keen to know more, she gave me a brochure "Quondong Cottage" produced by Campbelltown Council that gave "An insight into one of Campbelltown's oldest surviving buildings".

Visiting the new H J Daley Library by Sue Kijurina

On Thursday 21st August, twelve of us were treated to an amazing tour of our new library with Andrew Allen and Michael Sullivan. It is huge and at the moment there are 2 floors in use with more boxes being unpacked. The returns system is very simple, just place your book in one of the cubicle shelves and it automatically registers in the system.

There is free WiFi at the library; and ebooks and audiobooks can also be borrowed from your home device: phone, tablet or computer.

There are general meeting rooms, the Family History room, computer banks, a section for baby and toddler entertainment; along with lots of well catalogued books, equipment, CDs and DVDS to be enjoyed in comfortable reading and study areas. The Creative Studio is incredible with a recording area possibly for creating podcasts, a piano, a sewing area with sewing machines and mannequin, a laser cutter and 3d printer. Check the library website for activity groups in this creative space.

Our library deserves a visit and there are a few cafes close by to add to the experience.



*Wishing all our members
a Merry Christmas and a
safe and happy holiday
season*



Calendar of Events

January - March 2026

Tuesday 9 December 2025

- late January 2026

Glenalvon Closed for renovations (Completion date **TBC**)

Sunday 1 February

10am-1pm – Glenalvon Open House

Saturday 14 February
Tour

6.30pm-9.30pm – Glenalvon Paranormal History Investigation

(Sydney Investigation Ghost Tour - SIGHT) **Booked out tour, but need one more volunteer to help open and lock up**

Sunday 15 February

10am-1pm – Glenalvon Open House Handmade & Homegrown Markets – **Devonshire Teas** (with Campbelltown Country Women's Association - CWA)

Friday 20 February

10am-11.30am, Glenalvon Tour and Morning Tea
Chipping Norton Probus Club (20 guests)

Saturday 28 February

1.30pm, General Meeting
Guest Speaker: Abbey Davies, WSIG Project Co-Ordinator,
Campbelltown City Council Topic: 'Hurley Park Early Stories Project'

Sunday 1 March

10am-1pm – Glenalvon Open House

Thursday 12 March

8am-12.45pm – **Positive Aging Expo 2026 stall**, West Leagues Club, Leumeah

Saturday 14 March

6.30pm-9.30pm – Glenalvon Paranormal History Investigation Tour (SIGHT) **Booked out for tour, but need one more volunteer to help open and lock up**

Sunday 15 March

10am-1pm – Glenalvon Open House Handmade & Homegrown Markets

Saturday 28 March

1.30pm, General Meeting