



Family Reunions Ahead

Ebenezer Church continues to attract visitors to this historic site. They enjoy the presence and peacefulness of this well-restored, heritage property, the hospitality of our volunteer members, ... and, of course, ... the scones, jam and cream. We estimate about 500 visitors per week.

Celebrations this year have included the 150th anniversary of Scots Church Pitt Town in May, a report being included in this newsletter. Also included is Ian Jack's article on 'The Hall Family and Bungool' that was presented as part of the car tour at the Scots Church celebrations.

Our congregation has been active in maintaining our Scots Church property. In the lead up to the celebrations at Pitt Town some excellent and thorough renovations were completed to our two church halls by our Pitt Town members, a job well done.

Our other celebration was the 203rd Pilgrimage to Ebenezer Church with moderators Brian Brown of the Uniting Church and Rev. Sandy McMillan of the Presbyterian Church in attendance. How we were encouraged by Rev. McMillan's address – '*Jesus the pioneer ... Jesus Christ, the same yesterday and today and forever.*'

Some **pioneer family reunions** are approaching at Ebenezer Church. The **Stubbs family** will meet on Saturday 27th October 2012, the **Cavanoughs** are meeting on Saturday 20th April 2013 and the **Grono Family Reunion** will be on Sunday 5 May 2013. At the Grono reunion a special focus will be on commemorating the 200th anniversary of John Grono's rescue of the crew of the *Active* who were left stranded in New Zealand for over three years. Contact details for these reunions are on page 4.

During the last 12 months regular Sunday morning services have been led by Rev. Helenna Anderson and we have seen a small but encouraging growth in attendance. If coming this way, please feel free to join us.

Ted Brill, Church Secretary

A Message from our Minister

The last month has been a great time for watching sport on television with the Olympics and the Para Olympics. Now the Footy Season has come to an end. I've closely watched the response of the crowds that watch these competitions. The response of the crowd is important and can have a very real impact on the performance of the player or the team.

It's so important to have a good crowd, so important to have encouragement, and often when the players are being interviewed, they'll comment on how that influenced the game.

And so it is with life. We all need encouragement, and we need to encourage one another.

The challenges that we face in our daily lives and the challenges we face as a congregation can sometimes seem daunting.

At Ebenezer and Pitt Town Uniting Churches we are facing challenges --- and we are being given the opportunity to be transformed, renewed, reshaped. We can go forward confident in the power of God's glorious love and witness the wonder of all that can be achieved together.

Working together with confidence and enthusiasm, encouraging one another in our faith, and in our actions, and focusing on encouragement, we can achieve great things.

If travelling this way or living nearby, why not come and join us? Our Sunday Service at Ebenezer begins at 8.30am and at Pitt Town 10.00 am, with our Mid-week Meditation on Wednesday at 12.00.

Rev. Helenna Anderson

VICTOR KING

We were saddened to hear earlier this year of the death of Vic King. It was some 10 years ago that we first met Vic and his family. Vic had found that his ancestor was church pioneer William Jacklin and his family was delighted to find William's headstone in good condition in church grounds. Vic's resultant research, published as an historical novel, is a significant addition to the recording of the history of Ebenezer Church.

We extend our sympathies to Vic's wife Bronwyn and family.

SCOTS CHURCH PITT TOWN 1862 – 2012



Prepared by Ted Brill
150th Anniversary Celebrations
May 2012

SCOTS CHURCH PITT TOWN 1862 – 2012

The history of the first 100 years of Scots Church Pitt Town had been written by Ronald Macquarie Arndell, historian and church Session Clerk. This work has been reproduced and the history next 50 years has been added by Ted Brill.

The book can be posted to you for \$12. Please forward orders with payment to: Sue Brill, PO Box 7048, Wilberforce, 2756

Minister

Rev. Helenna Anderson

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Paul Bushell, Jane Sharp and the *Kitty* Connection

Contributed by Louise Wilson

Although they had both arrived as convicts, Paul Bushell and his first wife Jane Sharp are recognized as members of the group which founded the Ebenezer church. Their connection with Ebenezer was rather intriguing.

It began in 1792 aboard the ship *Kitty*. Three months after the *Kitty* arrived in Sydney with its load of stores and about 30 mostly-female convicts, a baby fathered by the ship's captain, George Ramsay, was born to Charlotte Stroud, one of the convicts in his charge. The baby was named Jane, possibly in honour of Charlotte's fellow transportee, 17-year-old Jane Sharp, who may have helped care for Charlotte's other two children during the long sea voyage. Later in the 1790s Jane Sharp formed a permanent relationship with Paul Bushell and Charlotte Stroud teamed up with the private soldier George Loder, based at Windsor. Charlotte's small daughter, who became known as Jane Loder, and two other children fathered by men aboard *Kitty* lived near the Bushells, and Jane Sharp remained friendly with their mothers.

Paul's life in Australia was exemplary, yet for many years after his arrival in Sydney with the Second Fleet in 1790 he avoided the religion presented by Rev Richard Johnson (from 1788 to 1800) and Rev Samuel Marsden (from 1794). Things changed, and Paul's need for acceptance and fellowship was satisfied, with the advent of Rev Rowland Hassall as a preacher at Ebenezer. Hassall, an age peer of Paul's, from the English Midlands like Paul, and sharing Paul's interest in horse-breeding, helped the 'Coromandel Settlers' group of Calvinistic Methodists and Presbyterians build the chapel and school at Ebenezer. Paul and Jane mixed with this group from at least April 1808. Hassall continued to preach at Ebenezer until Rev John Youl was appointed in 1809. Youl was an Anglican at this time, but was later involved with the Congregational Church.

Documentary proof does not survive, but Paul Bushell married Jane Sharp some time between August 1806 and April 1810, and it's more than likely that they were married at Ebenezer by Hassall or Youl, either under the 'great spreading tree' or in the new church. Early in 1810 Rev Youl married Jane Sharp's young namesake from the *Kitty*, Jane Stroud/Ramsay/Loder, who had come into regular

contact with Youl when he was teaching at Windsor from 1808. Through the *Kitty* connection, the Youls were most likely personal friends of the Bushells.

When William Pascoe Crook became a full-time evangelist in 1814, his wide-ranging circuit included the church at Ebenezer, and on one of these trips he visited the home of Paul Bushell, and the school at Wilberforce which Paul had helped James Kenny establish around 1807. Crook's diary implies that this was his first meeting with Paul Bushell, and Crook completely ignored Mrs Bushell's presence in her own home. Both being ex-convicts, the Bushells did not receive the deference shown by Crook to Mrs Youl a few days later. The irony of the long-standing connection between the Bushells and the Youls was clearly lost on Crook.

Evangelists of the 'fire and brimstone' variety, like Crook, may not have appealed to the Bushells but they continued to enjoy the ongoing, genuine Christian fellowship of their friends at Ebenezer. Although the Bushells lived at Wilberforce, some distance from the church, in March 1817 Paul pledged an annual contribution of £2.10.0 towards the support of the Minister at Ebenezer, the other thirteen supporters each pledging £5 annually.

Religious affiliations at this time were very fluid. By 1820, as the church at Ebenezer drifted closer to Presbyterianism, Paul turned back towards the Church of England, into which faith he'd been baptized in 1766. The attraction may have been the new chaplain working at Windsor from December 1819, Rev John Cross, a recent immigrant holding broad and liberal views. Cross had taken over from Rev Robert Cartwright, who tended to be very critical of ex-convicts and disinclined to think of them as respectable or moral. Rev. Cross buried Jane Bushell née Sharp at Wilberforce in December 1820 and married Paul to his young second wife Isabella Brown at St Matthew's Windsor in June 1822. Once Cross moved on from Windsor in the late 1820s, Paul became a regular member of the Church of England congregation in the schoolroom at Wilberforce, his wife Isabella's home parish.

© Louise Wilson . For more information, see her book '*Paul Bushell, Second Fleeter*'. Copies are available at the Ebenezer Church bookshop, or online via www.louisewilson.com.au

Scots Church 125th Anniversary *A great celebration!*

The **Friday night Bush Dance** in Maraylya Hall was well-attended and was great fun. A comment was heard – "We'll have to do it again next year – in our own hall!" A surprise visitor was past minister Grant Bilbey.

The 47 people attending the **Saturday Car Tour** included a strong representation of the descendants of the **Reverend George Macfie**. While outside we were aware of a slight cool breeze, we were grateful that the sun was shining. On the original grant of George Hall we were able to visit the buildings of Bungool and Merrimount. The lunch in Riverside Oaks Resort was well-received – in fact, we were becoming quite comfortable and were a little reluctant to move on! Stops in Pitt Town included the **Old Manse** and the memorial near Bardenarang Creek where Governor Phillip and Captain Watkin Tench met and stayed overnight with Aborigines Gombeeree, Yellomundi

and Deeimba.

While most of the historical information was provided by Carol Carruthers, Ian Jack and Ted Brill, it was interesting to listen to church member Jeff Johnston (who once lived in the Old Manse) and later Judy Newland from the Historical Society.

The day ended with a delightful devonshire tea back at Scots Church and perusal of the historical display by the Ferguson Library.

Sunday 27 May - the main day of celebration – was attended by approx. 170 people and the marquee provided a pleasant setting for an excellent anniversary service held on a fine day. We thank Rev. Helenna Anderson for her organisation and leadership and Jim Mein, Past Moderator of the Uniting Church, and Paul Logan, Past Presbyterian Moderator, for their participation.

The Hall Family and Bungool

Ian Jack, May 2012

Ian Jack was one of our car tour leaders on the occasion of the Scots Church 125th Anniversary celebrations.

The Scots Church building in Pitt Town is powerful evidence of the continuing influence of free Presbyterian settlers along both sides of the Hawkesbury. Presbyterians, mostly of Scottish origin, settled the reaches from York to Gloucester, from Pitt Town to Lower Portland. It all began with the emigration in 1802 of seven families on the Coromandel. The Coromandel sailed from the Thames to Port Jackson in 1802. It took only 121 days, the fastest trip yet recorded, on the first non-stop voyage to Australia and the longest non-stop voyage of any ship of any nation at that time. As well as 138 convicts, there was a cohesive group of free settlers: nine men, seven women and 20 children. They had been given a free passage and a promise of land in New South Wales and of convict labour to work it. When they landed at Sydney, this group was given land initially at Toongabbie, but it was poor land and they quickly persuaded Governor King to give them better land on the Hawkesbury instead in 1803. The families we are particularly concerned with are the Halls and the Johnstons.

George Hall and his wife, Mary Smith, came from the north of England, were both in their 30s in 1803 and had brought with them three sons and a daughter. On the Hawkesbury they acquired not only lots of land over the next decade but also five more children.

Andrew Johnston, like Hall, had been trained as a carpenter and joiner, although Hall also had had a useful training in the making of agricultural machinery. These were practical men, with good vocational training and a good Scottish appreciation of the importance of education. Both Johnston and Hall had been living in London, but Johnston came from the Scottish borderland, where the Johnstons were all too well known. The Johnstons of Annandale and elsewhere on the borders with England were famous or notorious according to one's dealings with them over the centuries.

Although Mary Hall and Mary Johnston had had very public rows during the voyage on the Coromandel, the families maintained close contacts in their new home. One of the Hall sons married a Johnston daughter and a Johnston son married a Hall daughter. And the families continue: 400 came to a Hall reunion recently and there are still very prominent Johnstons in the area.

As well as descendants, there are several important early stone houses to remind us of the Halls and Johnstons. The stone houses built by both families owed their craftsmanship initially to convict masons in the service of Andrew Johnston. Ebenezer Church was built by two of these masons in 1808 to 1809.

Andrew Johnston built his home on the west side of Upper Crescent Reach, where New Berwick, still surviving with alterations as Portland Head Farm, was built after the 1811 flood damaged the original Johnston home of 1804. Stone houses were also built by other Coromandel settlers: you can still see the legible ruins of James Mein's house just south of Johnston's, while the Turnbulls' houses at Port Erringhi and Sackville are still occupied today. Moreover, what is likely to have been the kitchen of John Howe's first house is incorporated in a very private home down Tizzana Road at Ebenezer.

But to get back to the Johnstons and the Halls. Across the river from New Berwick Farm, a little way upstream

on the east side of Swallow Rock Reach, George Hall got his first grant of 100 acres, 40 hectares, in 1803 and he initially bred sheep there. This is the property later known as Bungool. It was from Bungool that Hall supplied the bullocks to draw the stone to Ebenezer Church in 1808: he swam the bullocks across the river. Unusually there is no trace of an early stone house at Bungool, although a brick section of the Victorian stone house may be part of Hall's first cottage.



George Hall bought or leased a lot of additional land, including the whole of Governor Bligh's model farm called Blighton here at Pitt Town. George's principal residence was at Percy Place, built on land purchased in 1815, but this two-storey brick house has disappeared. He also bought land on the west side of the river and let his son, George Smith Hall, build on it in 1829: this is the fine two-storey stone house called Lilburndale. The Halls were not anti-stone: the original Bungool and Percy Place are the odd men out, built in brick.

Hall was generous to his children. In 1819 he bought the land at South Maroota where Pacific Park now is and gave it to his daughter Mary who was marrying a son of Andrew Johnston from just across the river on Upper Crescent Reach. And the wooden house he built for the young couple was erected on foundations carved out of superbly smoothed bedrock, which still survives near Pacific Park kiosk today. That called for really good skills in stone masonry and the skills probably came from the Johnstons. The house was called Collingwood Cottage after a Northumbrian friend who had been a witness to the issue of the licence for the wedding of George and Mary, away back in 1791.

Collingwood is to the north of Bungool. Immediately to the south of Bungool, George Hall expanded his holdings by two judicious purchases. On one of these he built another two-storey stone house called Merrimount soon after 1815 and it was there that George Smith Hall and his bride, Frances Grono, began married life before moving to Lilburndale in 1829.



Merrimount still exists in ruins and is on one of the best situations I know along the Hawkesbury. Because of

clearing or the extension of the Riverside Oaks golf-courses, the view from the ridge behind Bungool across to Merrimount is now very striking indeed. But the remains of the out-buildings around Merrimount have now been removed and the house itself is in urgent need of conservation.

What one sees at Bungool today belongs to later generations of the Hall family. When George Hall died in 1840, his lands were divided up among the family: his second son, William, got Bungool. But William died unmarried and childless in 1871 and the property then reverted to his elder brother, George Smith Hall. He was the eldest son of George, born in England in 1795, who had been given the middle name Smith, his mother's family name. In 1815 George Smith Hall married Frances Grono, the daughter of the local ship-builder, who was on the way to becoming the foremost ship-builder in the colony and a figure in the sealing trade. Frances and George Smith Hall gave all their eleven children the middle name Smith. Frances Grono was clearly less dominating than a personality than her mother-in-law, Mary Smith, had been. No other child of the first George Hall had Smith incorporated in his or her name and the Smith Hall generation did not incorporate the Smith in their own third generation family. So we have a single new generation of Smith Halls through the whole Victorian period. But none of the children of that generation perpetuate the double-barrelled name. George Smith Hall senior himself died in 1882 and

Bungool passed to his third son. This was William Smith Hall, who lived from 1819 until 1894, and it is he who seems to have built the single-storey stone house which survives today. This was in the mid-Victorian period, in the early 1880s. Some of you may know the house by the name The Court House, but this seems to be a later mistake. William Smith Hall, and his son Brinsley Hall were both local magistrates and did indeed preside at courts, but Bungool was not a regular court house, unlike the buildings at Windsor and at St Albans.

Bungool did not leave the Hall family hands until 1935, when, I think, Brinsley Hall, who usually lived in Windsor, sold it. After passing through a number of hands, Bungool then became Paradise Gardens until 1985: lots of people still remember the Jungle Boat cruise. Whatever hazards George Hall had faced at Bungool in the early 1800s, he was not troubled by dinosaurs in his lagoon. But Paradise gave way to golf and Riverside Oaks resort.

Further reading:

Russell Mackenzie Warner, ed., *Over-Halling the Colony: George Hall - Pioneer*, Australian Documents Library, Sydney, 1990.

Russell Mackenzie Warner, ed., *The Colony Over-Halled: a Family Tree of the Descendants of Pioneers, George and Mary Smith Hall*, Australian Documents Library, Sydney, 1995.

R. Ian Jack, *Exploring the Hawkesbury*, Kangaroo Press, Kenthurst, 2nd ed., 1990.

**STUBBS FAMILY
34th ANNUAL REUNION
Saturday 27 October 2012**

Ebenezer Church, 95 Coromandel Road, Ebenezer, NSW.

From 9.30am

BYO picnic lunch as well as any family details, photographs or items of interest.

Please direct inquiries to:

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Stubbs Family Website:

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~stubbs1802/>

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GRONO FAMILY REUNION 2013

**The next Grono Family Reunion will be on
Sunday 5th May, 2013
Ebenezer Church, 95 Coromandel Road,
Ebenezer, NSW.**

At this reunion there will be a special focus on commemorating the 200th anniversary of John Grono's rescue of the crew of the Active who were left stranded in New Zealand for over 3 years. More details to follow in future newsletters.

Contact: Mandy Waller, Secretary

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