



Hello Everyone,

In May I drove from Geelong in Victoria to Ebenezer in the Hawkesbury. No area appeared to be drier than Ebenezer.

Not any longer. We received 135mm of rain over the weekend of 4-5 June but were spared the damaging wind storms in Sydney, along the east coast and then Tasmania. People who live in those areas were certainly in our thoughts and the offering at this year's pilgrimage is being donated to the Uniting Church President's Storm Relief Appeal.

In this newsletter we share some recent enjoyable events at Ebenezer Church – Jazz on the Riverbank and a Heritage Day – both successful functions and most likely to be held again in 2017. There are also some interesting thoughts about the last Aborigine in the Ebenezer area, Andrew Barber.

Also, when I tell the story of the beginning of Ebenezer Church to visiting people in coach groups I find it not hard to hold their attention. It a great story and the pioneers themselves and their achievements are of much interest. But something that really captures people's interest is when it is explained how vaults were opened in the church graveyard. An article on a vault opening is included in this edition.

I should have known! Someone once told me if you are a descendant of one church pioneer you are most likely a descendant of 3 or 4. In the last newsletter I mentioned that Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull is a descendant of Ann & John Turnbull, following which I was informed that through the marriage of Grace Cavanough to Ralph Turnbull, the Prime Minister is also a Cavanough descendant. No doubt there will be another message soon.

Ted Brill

On behalf of the Ebenezer – Pitt Town Congregation

## From the Minister

I have been reading Hugh Mackay's latest book, 'Beyond Belief'. It is about the spiritual search of modern Australians. I am conscious of the inner yearning of many people who seek a deeper connectedness within themselves, with others and the world. There is also the awareness of something beyond the material that touches something deeper within us and gives a sense of well-being, wholeness and peace. The yearning leads us beyond the materialism of modern society and the certainty of science to the place of mystery, wonder and what we often call 'spiritual'.

In this search and desire for meaning, there is a growing plethora of options for people to explore, some good and many questionable. Among these is the Christian Church, which is less likely for many people as they perceive it to be irrelevant, institutional or perhaps boring (amongst other things). I thought of these things when we participated in a Quiet Day at Ebenezer Church followed by the 207<sup>th</sup> Pilgrimage service. I read and heard the beautiful words of faith and life from Jesus and the Jewish traditions. I sang hymns, old and new and contemplated the early pioneers of Ebenezer Church and their journey into this new world of NSW. They built the church and sanctified the land with their faith and commitment. They knew and experienced God in this place and grew deep in their spiritual lives.

At its best the church, like Ebenezer Church, is a beautiful space in which to gather, to be quiet, to reflect and to participate in the ancient rhythms of life, faith and deep spiritual pilgrimage.

I pray that you will take the space and time to draw down deeply, drinking in the refreshing life of the Spirit and to find your peace and life in the mystery we call God.

Grace and Peace.  
Geoff Stevenson

***This newsletter is sent to 261 postal and 334 email addresses across Australia and to New Zealand and the United Kingdom.***

***Donations to meet the costs of production and postage are appreciated and may be forwarded to the church secretary at the address as below.***

***If donating by EFT, bank details are Uniting Financial Services, BSB: 634634, Account: 100014363. Reference: Newsletter. An email informing us of your donation would be appreciated.***

***Should you receive the newsletter by post but now have access to email, please let us know.***

**Secretary: Ted Brill 02 4579 923  
Ebenezer - Pitt Town Uniting Church,  
PO Box 7048, Wilberforce, NSW, 2756  
[tedbrill@ebenezerchurch.org.au](mailto:tedbrill@ebenezerchurch.org.au)**

**Rev. Geoff Stevenson  
0473 770 683  
[geoffs81@gmail.com](mailto:geoffs81@gmail.com)**

**Rev. Rodel Palma  
02 4572 3153  
[rpalma@tpg.com.au](mailto:rpalma@tpg.com.au)**





## Jazz Night at Ebenezer Church

Held on 5 March, this was a Hawkesbury Uniting Church Zone event with Ebenezer Church preparing the venue, Windsor Uniting running a barbecue & drinks and Pitt Town small cakes. Administration was by a small committee led by Rebecca Andrews and Geoff Stevenson.

The band – Double Helix – playing R&B, Blues Brothers, Sinatra, Swing, Big Band and The Beatles, donated their time. Why? Our focus was to raise funds for installing clean water wells in villages in West Papua and the band gave us their full support. For \$2,000 a well can be constructed that will give a village clean water for at least 30 years.

We were impressed by the attendance of approx. 400 adults and 100 children who brought their chairs, rugs, picnics, ... or bought food from our outlets ... and settled on the riverbank. Total funds raised were \$10,500.

The next day minister Geoff Stevenson wrote ...

I would like to thank you all very much for the brilliant effort in getting to and through last night. It was much, much bigger and more successful than I think any of us could have imagined just two months ago when we first met.

For me, the biggest learnings were that Ebenezer Church is a venue. By this I mean that it is bigger and more significant than we perhaps realise. It is a beautiful place people can gather for reflection and retreat but also for large community gatherings and concerts. It is a wonderful place, a gift of God! ... Thank you all and really well done!!



An email after the event:

We just wanted to let you know we had such a wonderful evening at the Jazz - if you are doing it again we will definitely come ... We appreciate all the hard work so many people put into the event, it was amazing, and the Jazz band are fantastic.

Many thanks for all your hard work and congratulations on a great night!!!

Thank you all,  
Dawn

## Heritage Day



We shared our heritage on 5th March as part of the Hawkesbury Historical Society's 60th anniversary. 60 participants enjoyed a talk in the church, a two-course lunch and walk-and-talks around the graves and to the Historic Tree, the quarry and historic riverside beach.

## Garden Seats

Four garden seats have recently been erected in church grounds. One seat is in memory of church member and Hall descendant Kel Case and another in memory of Cavanough descendant Jean Elaine McKenny, their families contributing towards their cost.

A third seat – the Stubbs Seat - was funded by donations from the Stubbs Family Association and the fourth, a seat near the columbaria, was donated by the Ebenezer Church Ladies Fellowship.

We thank these families and organisations for their support.





# Questions about Ebenezer's colonial graveyard

Visitors to Ebenezer Church find the graveyard to be of great interest and questions often arise. Which is the oldest grave? On the Hall vault, what does the word 'relict' mean? The sandstone vaults have more than one person buried in them; how do they place the second, third, ... person in the vault? It was this third question that was on my mind the first time I visited Ebenezer Church. With today's machinery we could remove the large horizontal stone on the top... but in the 1820's?

It was in 2009 that a request was made from a family to open a vault, the reason being that they were almost certain a relative was buried there. The person's name was not inscribed on the vault, nor was there an entry in the cemetery register. With Cemetery Trust and church members present the vault was opened.



Soil was removed from outside the iron fence to reveal sandstone slabs.



The slabs were lifted and put aside.



Sandstone steps were exposed.



The interior had a sandstone floor and walls and a domed sandstone ceiling.

Great care was taken not to disturb anything in the interior of the vault in any way but by examining the metal name plates from the coffins we were able to determine who was buried there.

The family was correct. There had been an additional burial - that of Mary Elizabeth Johnston who died on 16th March 1950 at 88 years of age.

The vault was then closed and later a separate granite plaque was placed beside the vault that included an inscription for Mary Elizabeth Johnston.

Looking along the lines of vaults in the section of the cemetery to the right of the driveway, and noticing the dips in the ground, it appears that access to all of the vaults is similar to the one opened.

## An inquiry about Aboriginal Andrew Barber

Hello: I am hoping you can help me. Yesterday I visited your lovely church at Ebenezer and schoolhouse museum. On the wall I noticed with interest a small photograph of an Aboriginal man who had lived near the Ebenezer Church for many years. His name was Andrew as I recall. He also had a surname which I do not recall. Do you happen to know what it is? or whether there is a way I can find out without putting you to too much trouble.

Congratulations on the really stunning restoration and creation of a tranquil and beautiful place.

Kind regards

M. Brandl



*The information being filed on my computer, a response was quick and easy:*

### Andrew Barber

Born c. 1850, died 1943. Aboriginal Andrew Barber was reported as being 'one of the best

known residents of the district, in which he had been a popular figure for almost a century.' He always took pride in his appearance and was courteous and obliging.

One local farmer remarked that Andy could turn his hand at anything. Ploughing, fencing and horse-breaking he performed with equal facility. In his old age, Andrew spent a great deal of time camped below Ebenezer Church, near the river, fishing.

M. Brandl replied:

Ted Brill:

I really did not expect you to find this information and send it so quickly. I am delighted.

I suspect (but of course I do not know for sure) that Andrew Barber would have thought of that place as his "country" - his spiritual country actually. I think the fact that Presbyterians had also chosen it to be a spiritual place would have been a thought he enjoyed, even if only to himself.

I suspect this because in one of my lives I was an anthropologist working with the indigenous people in the Northern Territory - the Tiwi in particular. Indigenous people always go back to their country - especially for restoring their spirit and they live near it if they can.

Thank you for sending that. It is very special.

Kindest regards  
Maria Brandl

# Grono Family Vault Repair Appeal Karen Mills



We need your help to raise \$12,000 to repair the burial vault of John Grono and his wife, Elizabeth Bristow.

By supporting the repair you will be contributing to the preservation of the resting place of the earliest ancestor of Grono family descendants in Australia which lies within the NSW Heritage Listed Ebenezer Churchyard Cemetery.

## The repairs that the Burial Vault requires

The burial vault has decorative sandstone pillars on each corner. One pillar has broken and another two have cracked and will eventual break as a result. Our aim is to replace all three affected pillars.

The Grono Family Association is not in a financial position to undertake the repairs alone and so are seeking donations from Grono family descendants and any other interested parties in order to undertake these works.



If any funds remain following the repairs of the vault they will be donated to the Ebenezer Uniting Church.

**To make a donation** please click on the following Google form link provided, complete the form and you will be given details about how to make your donation: <http://goo.gl/forms/IBB5u1sPGU>

If you would like any further information or have any questions about this project please email the Grono Family Association at [gronofamily@gmail.com](mailto:gronofamily@gmail.com) or call Karen Mills on 02 9898 1717.

## HOW TO CHECK THE PROGRESS OF OUR APPEAL...

You can check the progress of our fundraising efforts to repair the vault on the Grono Family Association website: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~gronofamily/index.htm>

OR our Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/gronofamilyassociation/>

Thank you for your support!

Karen Mills  
Coordinator

## GRONO FAMILY REUNION

The next Grono Family Reunion will be on  
**Sunday 7th May 2017**  
at Ebenezer Church

Mandy Waller, 1 Johnston Street, Pitt Town, NSW, 2756  
email: [gronofamily@gmail.com](mailto:gronofamily@gmail.com)  
web: <http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~gronofamily/index.htm>

## STUBBS FAMILY REUNION

The next Stubbs Family Reunion will be on  
**Saturday 29th October 2016**  
at Ebenezer Church

Coralie Hird 02 8084 3808  
email: [stubbs1802@gmail.com](mailto:stubbs1802@gmail.com)  
<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~stubbs1802/>

## EBENEZER CHURCH PIONEER FAMILY CONTACTS

### Arndell

Thomas Arndell Family  
31 Clarinda St,  
Hornsby, 2077  
[bob.davis.au@gmail.com](mailto:bob.davis.au@gmail.com)

### Bushell

Patsy Templeton  
30 Carcoola Road,  
St Ives, NSW, 2075  
[pmtempleton@gmail.com](mailto:pmtempleton@gmail.com)

### Cavanough

Pat Holdorf, 85 James Street,  
Punchbowl, NSW, 2196  
[patholdorf@bigpond.com](mailto:patholdorf@bigpond.com)  
Sandra & Alan Woods  
[alan.woods1@bigpond.com](mailto:alan.woods1@bigpond.com)

### Davison

Lorraine Younger  
02 4588 6891  
30 Hereford Street,  
Hobartville, NSW, 2753

### Grono

Mandy Waller,  
1 Johnston Street,  
Pitt Town, NSW, 2756.  
[gronofamily@gmail.com](mailto:gronofamily@gmail.com)

### Hall

Dave Hall  
25 Amherst Road  
Swan View WA 6056  
[Hallfamily@aol.com](mailto:Hallfamily@aol.com)

### Howe

Anthea Mitchell  
[ventry@bigpond.com](mailto:ventry@bigpond.com)

### Johnston

Robyn Sanday  
02 4392 8264  
3 Dorriga Street,  
Woongarah, 2259.  
[rlsanday@aapt.net.au](mailto:rlsanday@aapt.net.au)

### Jacklin

Glenda Jacklin  
[glenjacklin@hotmail.com](mailto:glenjacklin@hotmail.com)  
3 Spiller Lane, Stanthorpe,  
Qld, 4380  
Kathryn Horner  
[kathrynm@live.com.au](mailto:kathrynm@live.com.au)

### Mein

Jim Mein 02 9980 8670  
2 Powell Retreat,  
Westleigh, NSW. 2120

### Stubbs

Coralie Hird 02 8084 3808  
[stubbs1802@gmail.com](mailto:stubbs1802@gmail.com)

### Turnbull

Rebecca Turnbull  
0412 757 625  
[becturnbull@hotmail.com](mailto:becturnbull@hotmail.com)