

# NEWSLETTER

The Friends of St. John's Stroud Inc

October 2011

## Patrons:

The Rt Revd Brian Farran  
Dr Jonathan King  
Mr E C (Ted) Merewether

## Cards: Order now for Christmas

Packs of Christmas cards and notecards depicting the Stroud of 1841 and 1852 are ready now for posting.

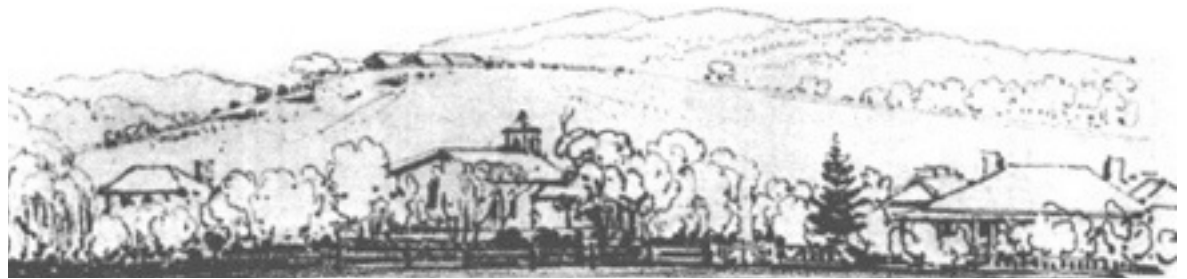
The Christmas cards, in packs of eight at \$12, show four different pencil sketches. Their message: *May the joy and peace of Christmas be with you and yours through the coming year.*

The notecards, blank inside, show in colour a broad picture of St John's, its rectory and Quambi House, price per pack of 5 is \$10.

The cards, on high quality paper are sold to aid conservation with the blessing of the State Library. The blessing of the artist, Conrad Martens, also may be assumed. He was a devoted Anglican, a pillar of St Thomas', North Sydney. His strong connection with Stroud was through friendship with Captain Phillip Parker King, Commissioner of the Australian Agricultural Company 1839-1849, and King's son Philip Gidley King, a senior officer of the company 1841-1904. An order form is enclosed.

## Vale Alan Peterson

The Friends lost a faithful member with the death on 2 July of Alan Peterson, the former *Sydney Morning Herald* news executive whose *Words* column was a much-loved weekly element of the paper for more than 12 years. With his wife Alison he was part of a valued group at St Peter's Church, Cremorne, that takes a lively and generous interest in the Friends' mission. Alan and Alison frequently visited Stroud and became acquainted with many in the St John's congregation. Replying to a letter of sympathy from the Friends, Alison expressed gratitude for friendships formed in Stroud and admiration of the Friends' work. Alan died four months short of his 91st birthday.



From left: Quambi, St John's and rectory as Conrad Martens sketched them for his 1852 watercolour,

## Mayor heads board to oversee Stroud Heritage Trust

### From the president of the Friends:

The Mayor of Great Lakes, Councillor Jan McWilliams, chairs a board of seven elected by Stroud Heritage Conservation Incorporated at its first meeting on 13 July. The board will serve as trustee of the Stroud Heritage Conservation Trust, established on the initiative of the Friends of St John's with support from Great Lakes Council and the Anglican Diocese of Newcastle.

Its purpose is in harmony with the conservation and restoration work the Friends have done since 1966, but will have wider scope. The Friends have focussed and will continue to focus on care of the three church-owned buildings - St John's, its rectory and the parish hall. The new trust, however, also takes account of graceful two-storeyed Quambi, the fourth building making up the heritage-listed St John's Group. Quambi began as a school in the 1830s. Today, council-owned, it is managed by the Stroud and District Historical Society as a museum.

The object of Stroud Heritage Conservation Incorporated (SHCI) is to benefit the Stroud community by raising and managing a long-term trust fund to help preserve and restore all four buildings. Ownership, control and use of the buildings do not change. The owners will remain responsible for initiating and managing preservation and restoration, but as the trust fund grows they will be able to seek trust funding to help their projects.

The board will judge funding priority. It will make grants only to projects designed and supervised to completion by heritage architects and engineers. The yardstick will be the Burra Charter, the nationally accepted standard for conservation of "Places of Cultural Significance".

Having set the ball rolling more than six years ago, the Friends of St John's, as an organisation, now steps aside from any trust management role. The Friends, like the other initiators, Great Lakes Council and the diocese, have an authorised representative on Stroud Heritage, but the Friends and Stroud Heritage will operate separately, obeying separate constitutions.

In accordance with their founding document of 1996, the Friends will continue to "assist in maintaining the fabric and furnishings" of the church, rectory, parish hall and graveyard while promoting wider interest in and knowledge of St John's, "its mission, services and activities as they were in the past and are today". Thus Friends should be warned that our fund-raising and our recruitment of new members will continue unabated. But with the

parish, the diocesan council and Great Lakes Council we can all take comfort that, whatever our future fortunes, successful growth of the trust fund will ensure a measure of support for conservation for many years to come.

We expect that the Friends, with the parish council, will continue to devise restoration projects and seek state and national heritage subsidies.

The new element is that, in season, acting on behalf of the parish and the diocese, we will be able to ask the help of the new Stroud Heritage Trust.

Stroud Heritage begins with a bank balance of \$106,685 contributed over four years by the Australian Agricultural Company (AAco), the Friends of St John's, Great Lakes Council, and the Duralie Coal Community Enhancement Fund. A new phase of fund raising will begin once the association has an answer to its application for the right to accept tax deductible gifts.

The heritage board is fortunate in having Jan McWilliams in the chair. Since elected Mayor in 2008 she has encouraged each step on the long road to incorporation. Other council encouragers have included John Chadban, the previous mayor; Councillor Karen Hutchinson; and Steve Embry, Director Corporate & Community Services. Steve is the board's finance officer. The deputy chairmen are Bishop Robert L. Butters and Brian Eastoe.



Jan McWilliams

--Daphne Dobbyn

## The Revd Pam moves on

The St John's Parish has entered a time of uncertainty on the departure of the Revd Pamela Fraser. She has moved to Victoria after two and a half years as Priest-in-Charge of both Stroud and Clarence Town, parishes joined as an "experimental pastoral area". New long-term ministry arrangements have yet to be put in place. Based in Stroud, the Revd Pam had responsibility for six widely scattered centres, a task demanding long periods of driving. The Friends of St John's were grateful for her keen interest in their work, and in particular her initiative to bring about closer liaison between parish council and Friends committee.

The Revd Pam was installed on 23 September as Priest-in-Charge of St James and St Peter, Parish of Kilsyth-Montrose, on the eastern outskirts of Melbourne.

**New office-holders**

After three years' valued service, Dorothy Ingram, secretary, and Judith Dear, treasurer, stepped down at the Friends AGM on 7 May.

Dorothy has gained more time for her other work for St John's, but continues as an active Friends committee member. Judith's resignation was occasioned by her moving with her husband Fred from the Stroud district to a new home near Bulahdelah.

Elizabeth Bradhurst, the new secretary, brings to the post an inborn concern for the wellbeing of St John's. She is a descendant of both the Revd William Macquarie Cowper, first rector, and of Sarah Elizabeth White, who died in Stroud in 1841 and is remembered in the beautiful Good Shepherd window. Retired from teaching in Sydney she shares time between Sydney and Stroud.

Philip White, the new treasurer, came from Sydney with his wife Ursula two years ago in fulfilment of their 15-year plan to build and retire in Stroud. He has a background in accountancy.

Lynette Thrift retired from the committee after 10 years' service, seven of them as secretary. With her husband Robert Wilkinson she remains active for the Friends. Together they organise mailing of the newsletter while Robert continues to help in conservation management.

**Churches combine for carols**

St John's will again be the setting for an ecumenical service of Nine Lessons and Carols at 5 pm on Saturday 10 December. Hugh Knight, from Strathfield Uniting Church, is coming as guest organist and the Stroud Crowd Choir under Fran Carter, will again participate. To strengthen the service as a family event, a barbecue will follow.

St John's is a favourite venue for Fran and her choir. Their last visit was on 3 June when they gave a Best of British concert inspired by London's Last Night of the Proms. Guest soloists were Josephine Carter-May and Brian Johnston. The Friends benefited from ticket sales, with part of the proceeds going to help meet Stroud Crowd expenses for coming events. Valued support came from the Stroud Lions, whose marquee outside the west door was used to serve refreshments.

**St John's loses a good story**

There's a picturesque and frequently published legend that the "gentleman bushranger" Thunderbolt (Frederick Ward) married his consort and accomplice, Mary Ann Bugg, in St John's, Stroud. Schoolchildren were let out, it is said, to cheer the happy couple. Unfortunately for those who enjoy a good bush yarn contemporary evidence is scant and no written registration of the marriage has been found.

A 2009 book, *Thunderbolt - Scourge of the Ranges* (Phoenix Press), dates the wedding in November 1860 and names the Revd William Macquarie Cowper as celebrant. The author, G. James Hamilton, even quotes Mary Ann as telling Ward that Cowper rebuked her for "living in sin".

Sadly for Hamilton, Cowper had gone from Stroud more than four years earlier. By the time of the supposed wedding he was Dean of Sydney. What does exist is a record that Cowper on 1 June 1848 married the 14-year-old Mary Ann to Edmund Baker, an ex-convict. By the time she took up with Ward in 1860, she had separated from Baker, and had borne five children in two other relationships.

Mary Ann, born at Berrico in 1834, was the first of eight children of Charlotte, an Aboriginal from Rawdon Vale near Gloucester, and James Bugg, a convict assigned to the Australian Agricultural Company who rose to be an overseer. Apparently with the company's blessing, Mary Ann and her brother John were sent to Sydney for several years' schooling.

James and Charlotte, who married in 1848, founded a successful and respected mixed-race dynasty. One of their descendants is a new member of the Friends, June Holland, of Broadmeadow, Newcastle. June traces her line through Elizabeth, a sister of Mary Ann. She draws our attention to a new book, *Captain Thunderbolt and his Lady: the True Story of Frederick Ward and Mary Ann Bugg*, by Carol Baxter (Allen & Unwin).

Baxter, professional genealogist and adjunct history lecturer at the University of New England, says that her research to separate fact from myth led her into a minefield. She has set out to debunk the myths, she says, in the face of myth perpetuators who are "trying to shout down the evidence".

Among the stories she rejects are the wedding at St John's, Mary Ann's swimming to Cockatoo Island in Sydney Harbour to free Frederick from prison, and the common acceptance that Mary Ann died near Muswellbrook in 1867, three years before a police bullet killed Ward at Kentucky Creek near Uralla. She offers evidence that Mary Ann in 1869 renewed a relationship with John Burrows, a lover from the early fifties, and settled in Mudgee where she died aged 71 in 1905.



Frederick Ward

The war of the Thunderbolt myths seems set to go on.

Mary Ann, literate, resourceful, a skilled horsewoman, was invaluable to Ward in his career of robbery. Avoiding violence, the two were held in some public affection. The Newcastle historian James Ramsland has written that both lovers showed "dignity, dashing chivalry and pleasant politeness that the crude rough-and-ready pioneering frontier had lacked".



**October Fair Quilt Display**

St John's Church decked with quilts for the Stroud Country Fair on 1 and 2 October. In all, 55 quilts were displayed in the church and the former Great Lakes Council offices in Cowper Street, an exhibition organised by the Stroud Craft and Quilt Group. They drew visitors from a wide area. The Friends of St John's put up signboards inviting visitors to see the quilts and take guided tours of the church. Members, present as attendants and welcomers on both days, told visitors of the Friends' work, offered membership forms and sold cards.

Friends were also on duty in the church on five days in July to welcome and address groups totalling more than 200. Northern Highlands Travel of Maitland organised the visits, which included lunch at the Stroud Monastery. The Friends' conservation funds benefited from the sale of cards and from a donation by the travel firm.



**This Stroud story began in 1826**

Max Thomas Gallagher (above) was baptised in St John's Church on 28 August. It was a reminder that the Gortons are a long story in the history of Stroud and St John's. Max, born 2 June, is the great grandson of the late Max (Donald Max) Gorton of Washpool, founding and long-serving vice-president of the Friends and for many years a warden of St John's. Four generations are pictured above. Margaret Gorton, at right, is Max's widow. At left is Margaret's daughter Jill Edwards, and at centre Jill's daughter Kylie Gallagher.

The Gorton story in Australia began in March 1826 when 21-year-old George Gorton, a shepherd from Shrivenham, Berkshire, arrived in Sydney indentured to the Australian Agricultural Company. His younger brother Joseph followed him the next year. The brothers prospered and their lineage has spread far the Gorton name.

Descended from George Gorton, Max Gallagher is of the eighth generation. His great grandfather, Max Gorton, was of the "Washpool Gortons" long associated with the Glenholme Estate beside the Karuah River at Washpool. Max was the fourth generation Gorton to live there.

**Committee**

**Daphne Dobbyn, President**  
**Grace Bowen, Vice President**  
**Elizabeth Bradhurst, Secretary**  
**Philip White, Treasurer**

**Elaine Taylor, Public Officer**  
**Alan Dobbyn, Projects Officer**  
**Dorothy Ingram**  
**Jane King**

**Ken Maddocks**  
**Val Munro**  
**Maureen Rivers**  
**Tony Rivers**

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