

Clan
Turnbull



Ebenezer

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Newsletter

June 2011 Issue

Dedicated to recording and preserving the history of the Turnbull families from Ebenezer, a peacefully beautiful riverside spot on the Hawkesbury River in New South Wales.

In this month of June, Ebenezer church will have been in existence for 202 years – what a fantastic milestone for the old church and the pioneer families who assisted in creating “her”. We should not forget that as a family we Turnbolls have been here for 209 years as have the other eight pioneer families who arrived here in 1802 in the Coromandel. Nor should we forget the earlier settlers who played their part in creating Ebenezer or the convicts who assisted in the Church construction. What an intricate weaving of ancestries we have woven in 209 years. We’ve almost created a dynasty so perhaps it’s the right time to write a little about the past, so here goes!

Marie Turnbull’s Origin.

I’m a born and bred Ebenezer-ite. I was born at the old Humphrey house (I think it still languishes there, dilapidated amid the trees and shrubs) on the corner of Tizzana Rd and Coromandel Rd. where we turn off to go to Ebenezer Church. We lived there until my parents’ home was ready to inhabit a few months later. Uncle Bill Tuckerman gave them the land to build on at Sackville and the Hudson Ready Cut Home was given to them by my mother’s parents, Patrick and Edith Clune. And what a great old home it was because it’s still there to-day after being flooded many times. It is now built up to two stories to keep it out of reach of floodwaters. Missing is the wide verandah which dominated the front and side of the home.

To this day I remember the time I visited my grandmother’s (Florence Letitia Turnbull) grave in old St Thomas’s Cemetery at Sackville Reach. It was 1968 and the old cemetery was looking bad

through lack of attention, not surprising because burials may have been occurring there since about 1812. The blackberry bush had almost taken over the very old section of the cemetery and the fences surrounding some of the old headstones were almost rusted away. I wasn’t the only person visiting the cemetery that day. While I stood beside the grave an older, well dressed lady suddenly appeared beside me and asked if I was a Tuckerman or a Turnbull. I was shocked by the sudden question so just blurted out “Turnbull”. I have no idea to this day who the lady was and I never saw her again but before she walked off she said “you know the Tuckerman’s and the Turnbull’s were very powerful people on the river in those days”. I was stunned by this revelation and before I could gather my thoughts and ask questions, she was gone.

Up until about 1900 the Tuckerman and Turnbull ancestors owned much of the land from the river to almost where the school is at Ebenezer to-day. Pockets of land here and there were owned by others and more Coromandel settler descendants but by the 1950’s all this had also begun to change. By the end of 1960 only two families with the Turnbull name lived in Ebenezer, my Dad Archibald William Prosper Turnbull, known as “Pros” and the late Russell Charles Turnbull. My family have now left Ebenezer but Russell’s family is still there on Mud Island on the original Henry Lamb Grant. His wife Joan and their son Phillip live on the property, daughter Jennifer teaches at a prominent College in the city and son John and his family live close by in their new home. Many of our relatives still live in and around Wilberforce. Now only a few with the

Turnbull name remain in the district though many who descend from the female lines have married locally and remained in the Hawkesbury through the generations which surely must be some kind of record.

Many stories have been written about how or why the Coromandel settlers came here, mostly they tell a similar story, but from research I've done throughout the years I think it may be a bit different to the general belief of how it happened. Most of the family don't realise another JOHN TURNBULL was here before our John Turnbull came in 1802 and that 'other bloke' was here for a big part of 1801.

The other John Turnbull.

I was so startled by this discovery at first, wondering if he may have been our ancestor and he went back to Britain and brought his family back here in 1802, but I soon realised that was impossible because of the timing involved. I found this other John Turnbull was a partner in the British Company of Turnbull, Macaulay and Gregory. The company was involved in shipping and whaling and there seemed to be a suspicion the company had been involved in the shipping of slaves though I don't know if there was any truth to it. Turnbull split from the company when Macaulay had financial difficulties in the 1790's. Some ships from the company almost became involved in the First Fleet in 1788. Members of the company appear to have had a connection with a Duncan Campbell who was in charge of the Thames Prison Hulks {all had Scottish backgrounds}. However John Turnbull disappeared from the records for a time before he popped up working as 2nd Mate aboard a ship owned by a friend and they were on their way to AUSTRALIA in late 1800.

He spent much of 1801 in Australia before leaving to spend four years sailing around the Pacific ocean visiting different Islands before arriving back to London in late 1804. I have searched for a connection between the two John Turnbolls without success. But I believe they at least knew each other. They were about the same age, London John was born in 1750 in the Holborn area and our John was also born around the same time, in Scotland. Recently I found John Turnbull's Will in London and it says he moved from Dartmouth Row in an exclusive part of London in

1796 to Guilford St. Middlesex, a short distance from our John Turnbull who was living on the corner of East Castle and Berners St., Soho at that time. All those streets still exist to-day and can be easily found on a map of London. It seems to me to be too much of a coincidence that two men named John Turnbull came to Australia about the same time.

The London John Turnbull died in Middlesex in 1816 and left his money to his eldest living son Peter. His wife, Beata Maria Turnbull, and family received his home and remaining goods and chattels. When he returned to London in 1805 he wrote a book about his travels around the world and recently I was able to read the chapters he wrote which refer to his time in Australia. The first thing in his book which impressed me was that on his arrival he wrote about the oppressive heat and the temperature, 110 degrees in Sydney Cove in January 1801 (how often in the last 60 years has Sydney been as high as 110 degrees) I didn't know until I read his book that he was back in Sydney in 1804 for a while before sailing back to London. He rarely mentioned names but he knew about the aboriginal Bennelong and had been to the Hawkesbury. He knew about MacArthur's duel and that he had been sent to London and he knew Neal MacKellar. Neal MacKellar is a story I'll tell at another time.

His opinion of the free settlers sent here before 1801 was very poor (he excluded the Army members who had been given land grants from this opinion). When back here in 1804 he wrote "nothing had changed since I was last here, the free settlers are still of a poor class, except for 8-10 settlers who arrived since I was last here". (Could he have been referring to the Coromandel settlers?). I will reread the chapters again some time.

Years ago I found Notices in the Sydney Gazette which said letters were arriving on ships in Sydney Cove for our John Turnbull from 1805 to about 1810. It's a little strange letters began arriving in 1805 at the time the other John returned to London, but as we have no idea who sent them or even if they were collected we can only guess who the sender was. I searched for ships arriving in Sydney Cove at the time each letter arrived and for a month prior to the arrival date and every ship came from London.

On the 20th of March this year the 200 year celebration by the Rose family was held at Rose cottage in Wilberforce. A big crowd celebrated the occasion and a good time was had by all. Some of our Turnbull descendants have Rose connections and recently I was pleased to hear for the first time from one of the relatives in Western Australia, John Boyle. John is related to the Rose family via the Wilberforce Buttsworth's who also have other ancestral connections to the Rose family through marriages to other Wilberforce families also related to the Rose family. (Oh what a web we weave of ancestry intrigue) John descends from Georgina Martha Turnbull and James William Buttsworth who left Wilberforce in 1897. They sailed from Sydney to Perth and settled at Mt Morley in WA. James first worked as a coach driver for Cobb and Co. Later he bought a Newsagency which eventually helped him purchase land and he began farming wheat. James Buttsworth became quite a successful farmer in Western Australia. The new home he built was named "Wilberforce" after his hometown village in NSW. His wife, Georgina Martha Turnbull, was born in 1864 in Wilberforce the daughter of George Turnbull and Maria Greentree. I look forward to hearing more about WA.

In NSW, Wilberforce village was named by Gov. Macquarie as one of his five Macquarie towns. Obviously in recognition of William Wilberforce who was responsible for banning slavery. I now note that in Western Australia there is also a town named Wilberforce. I'd like to hear from anyone in WA who may know the history of the naming of Wilberforce in WA and if there's a connection to our Wilberforce here in NSW.

I remember being very frustrated when much younger because I was left out of conversations, "I was too young to know" they would say. One time I overheard talk of a girl who was killed when a horse and cart toppled over. It was no trouble to show me where it occurred and though I asked often I was never told exactly what happened. I was at least 30 years old when I heard the full story.

In the early 1800's (I could never pin anyone down to an exact date) several "good time girls" were living in an old shack on the banks of Buttsworth Creek in Wilberforce. The girls were frequent visitors to parties. A farm worker in a horse and cart would be sent to pick up one from the shack and when the party was over would be delivered

back to the shack. On this occasion the Cart had almost reached its destination when the horse suddenly shied at something and the cart toppled over throwing the girl out, killing her instantly. On the spot where it happened a tree was planted in memory of the accident. The party house will remain anonymous. The gumtree in the picture is the spot where the tragedy occurred. Not long after the tragedy the girls moved because the river was about to flood.

In the background of the two pictures can be seen a huge shed – the shed still stands to-day, heritage



Gumtree marks where tragedy occurred.

listed on the Brown property "Blenheim" at Sackville. It was erected possibly as early as 1840. The Brown family are descendants of the Reverend James Daubney Brown and Stephen Tuckerman both of whom were highly regarded men of their time who really made their mark on the early Hawkesbury.



The Sackville Punt crossing.

The photograph is a clear picture of how the Sackville punt crossing looked at the time – note the boat tied up at the wharf possibly waiting to be loaded with produce for Sydney Markets. The photo may have been taken in the very early 1900's. There is some confusion about who built

the big stone house in the old picture – it may have been built by Andrew Doyle as it looks very similar to Ulitedinburra which is said to have been on the opposite side of the river and built by the same Andrew Doyle. In about 1936 that old stone home was replaced by the present building now known as “Blenheim”. Another stone home a bit further down river called Ulibawn was also built by Doyle. If anyone has pictures of any of these old stone homes I’d love to have a copy for our records as none of the homes exist to-day. I have a vague memory of Ulitedinburra which wasn’t knocked down till the 1950’s.

The Doyle’s were very prominent in the early Ebenezer/Sackville area. Andrew Doyle was Irish and arrived here in 1803 from Ireland. He had a doubtful start here and was convicted of fraud on more than one occasion. He was a painter and is believed to be responsible for some early water colour paintings of old stone homes and flowers of the Hawkesbury. I guess he eventually “saw the light” and became a very law abiding man. On our 1828 Census he was said to be living in Portland Head in Ulitedinburra. Andrew Doyle died at “Dargle” the last home he built. Dargle still stands to-day, and owned by the Smith family. It’s just a little further down river from Sackville and is a well known water ski park where events are held regularly. Almost opposite the Dargle property was Evansdale the last property on the river owned by George Turnbull, born in 1806.

Cupitt is another well known Hawkesbury name, but Lance Cupitt and his late wife, Diane Elizabeth (Beth) Martin, spent all their married life in the Singleton area. Beth’s mother Iris Valerie Turnbull was born in Wilberforce in 1900.



Iris Valerie Turnbull.

Harold Lochmaber Martin was born in Bulga in 1890 the son of John Martin and he married Iris Valerie Turnbull in St Mary’s Church at West Maitland on the 17th September 1920. Their daughter Beth (Diane Elizabeth Martin) married Lance Thomas Gordon Cupitt 27/12/1952 and they had a family of seven children.



Beth and Lance Cupitt.

In 1997 Lance and Beth visited Windsor for a few days to celebrate the arrival 200 years earlier in Sydney of George Cupitt and his wife Mary Wicks in the sailing ship “Ganges”. George Cupitt was lucky because he committed a crime in London and could have been sentenced to 7 years gaol for the crime, instead he was given the chance to join the Army. In Britain at that time there was a need of men for the Army so they could be sent here to join the NSW Army Corps. Of course he joined the Army rather than do the sentence. He spent 26 successful years in the Army. His wife Mary was one of several people who held contracts to supply meat and vegetables to the Government. In 1813 George Cupitt was granted a property at Londonderry near Windsor by the Government. It was run by his wife and only became officially his in 1833 when he retired. George Cupitt died on the 14th June, 1846 age 76. Mary his wife died earlier on the 15th June 1845 age 65. They are both buried in St. Matthews’ Church of England Cemetery in Windsor.

I am sorry to hear Judy in South West Rocks has been in the wars lately and confined to a wheelchair after cracking her tibia. A little bird told me how wheel chair races have eased the boredom. Good luck Judy, I hope you are soon back on your feet.

Also a big Cheerio and a get-well-soon to our London researcher, Patricia, who had the misfortune to fall and break her wrist as well as doing considerable damage to her face while on her way to Kew Record Office recently.

Earlier Deanne wrote about the Hawick Common Riding while in Scotland. Common Riding occurs annually in several of the Border towns in Scotland and Hawick is the first town to celebrate the occasion. A large number of people gather each June to celebrate and it lasts for several days before ending on a Saturday. On that last Saturday many people gather on horseback and ride out to recreate the days of the Border Reivers (thieves) and the men who rode the borders to protect and stop the thieving of stock on both sides of the border. The tradition began in the early 16th century when some young Scots stole an English flag. The celebrations have gathered momentum over the years and for days prior to the main week of the celebrations each year a young man is chosen (called a coronet) to lead the celebrations on horseback and the Common Riding on the final day. In 2005 a Jamie Turnbull was chosen to lead. "Common" in the Riding means an open space where cattle could be kept by the community to graze. (as young Thomas Wrights theft event on our Wilberforce Common in 1835).

It was sad to learn of the passing of Valerie Jean Marning on the 22nd of March 2011. Valerie was 77 years old and lived in East Corrimal. Valerie was the daughter of Hilton and Jean Blundell from Lower Portland on the Hawkesbury River. Hilton Blundell was the Grandson of Louisa Turnbull and Joseph Blundell and Great grandson of William Bligh Turnbull and Sarah Davis. I knew Valerie years ago when, as kids, we followed our parents around while they played on the Hawkesbury tennis circuit. The Blundell family is another of the early pioneer river families of the Hawkesbury. Our deepest sympathy is extended to her family.

I hear that several young family members have just sat or are about to sit for their entrance exam into the Police Force. Congratulations to those who may already know they are 'in' and good luck to those still 'trying' to join the number of older members who have been 'in' for years.

Because of the huge response to the Dr Harley Turnbull story I have to say that I searched for hours through all the War Memorial records for a

picture of Doctor Harley and all I could find was the picture with his group which we printed in the Newsletter. So I'd like to know IF there is anyone with a picture of Dr Harley Turnbull when an adult, could I please have a copy for our records. It would be greatly appreciated. Interestingly another relative on the north coast believes her father (who was also a doctor in the Army) was in the same medical group as Dr Harley Turnbull when they were sent to New Guinea. I look forward to hearing more of the story.

It's very sad to hear that members of our Coromandel family and other Turnbulls we correspond with are having a rough time at present with serious health issues. We wish them all the best and may good luck be with all of you.

Re: Percy Andrew Turnbull.

My sincere apology to family and friends of the late Percy Andrew Turnbull for having given him an incorrect middle name in my article in the March Clan Turnbull Newsletter.

Percy Harrison.

Bye to all until next September.

Marie Turnbull goose2fly@yahoo.com.au -
7/28 Moray Rd, Towradgi 2517
Ph 02 4285 7495.