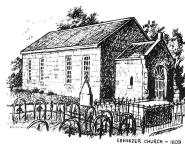


Ebenezer Church
Ebenezer Pitt Town Uniting Churches



Newsletter

No. 5 October 2008

Ebenezer Church (1809) – first Presbyterian Church – oldest existing church – in Australia

The Bicentenary of Ebenezer Church...

How big will this celebration be?

Reported attendances at the 175th anniversary of Ebenezer Church in 1984 ranged from 5 to 8 thousand people. We expect an attendance of similar size in 2009 and our committee is currently seeking the costs of hiring a stage, marquees, chairs, trestles and toilets. To meet these costs we will be producing and selling an attractive souvenir program and souvenirs. We will be taking up a collection during the service and will also be seeking a grant.

The celebrations will extend over three days (see below), with the main day being on Saturday 20 June 2009.

Interest in the church and bicentenary celebrations is still on the increase. With the winter months behind us, many bookings have been made by coach groups for Devonshire teas and lunches in the coming months. Our church website has proved popular and is attracting up to 600 visits a month.

We're most appreciative of the success of the appeal for restoration funds and look forward to the restoration program being completed.

Descendants of church pioneers, past ministers and members can be proud of the part their forebears played in the building of what was to become Australia's oldest church.

We do hope that you can join us for the celebrations in June 2009.

Ted Brill
Secretary
Ebenezer Church Bicentenary Committee

Message from the Minister

In his book 'Iron in Our Blood', historian Mark Hutchinson explores a statement made by Rev.J.D.Lang, the first Presbyterian minister in the colony:

'The world reserves all its sympathies for what is merely splendid in action'.

He goes on to say that no where is there a discussion of the fact that vital turning points in history are affected by the social background of the participants, their worldly views and their beliefs.

Though working and living in London when they made the decision to migrate to New South Wales, the Coromandel settlers were Scots borderers. The Scots model of community at Ebenezer – that of church and school - had 'a vigorously active, forceful, and energizing quality'. Joined in settlement by seven other families, this community of fifteen families focused on establishing their church, having their children educated and being successful farmers.

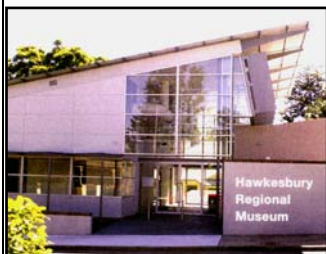
But there is also much evidence of the contribution this community made to the colony at large, particularly in the period of the overthrow of Governor Bligh when the pioneers of Ebenezer Church led the Hawkesbury settlement in partitioning to have the governor reinstated.

Although not 'splendid in action', we cannot help but being inspired by our church pioneers and those members of the church who have followed their example over the years.

We have much to celebrate and I look forward to the bicentenary celebrations in 2009.

Rev. Grant Bilbey

Ebenezer Church Display in New Windsor Museum



Nearby Windsor has a new museum building, the Hawkesbury Regional Museum. Situated in Baker Street, Windsor, it is behind the former museum in Thompson Square. Open Wednesday to Sunday, items of interest re Ebenezer Church include Andrew Johnston's level that was used to build Ebenezer Church and information on church pioneer, Captain John Grono. In the lead up to bicentenary celebrations a temporary display will be placed in the museum. Honorary museum curator Rebecca Turnbull is seeking items for this display from descendants of the church pioneer families. Please contact Ted Brill (information at the end of this

newsletter) if you can assist in this way. The museum is a modern, air-conditioned building so loaned items of interest will be secure and not subject to deterioration.

Bicentenary of Ebenezer Church

Celebrations will extend over three days in June 2009.

Friday 19 June – Static displays open in the pavilion. Devonshire teas available during the day.

Saturday 20 June – Main day – From 10.00am: Displays open, Barbecue & Food Stalls, Souvenirs, Re-enactments & Entertainment, Outdoor Service

Sunday 21 June – From 10.30am: Family Picnic Day – Displays open, Musical Entertainment, Barbecue, Devonshire teas, Historical walk-and-talks in church grounds and to the nearby quarry and beach.

Ebenezer Church

'Towards 2009' Bicentennial Appeal

Yes, we're almost there!

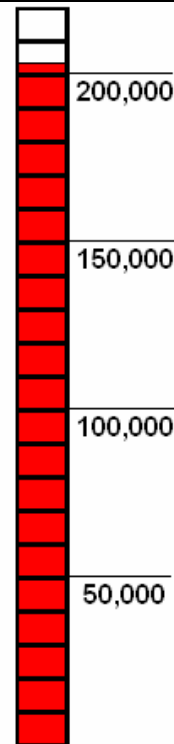
With further donations since our last newsletter in April 2008, plus a successful application to the NSW Heritage Office for \$28,500, we now have only \$16,000 to reach our goal of \$220,000.

Needless to say, we're very excited with the progress of this appeal and sincerely thank everyone who has given it support.

Donations for the 'Towards 2009' Bicentennial Appeal may be ...

- Handed to our volunteers in the Ebenezer Church Shop
- Posted to: The Secretary,
Ebenezer Pitt Town Uniting Church,
PO Box 7048,
Wilberforce, NSW, 2756.

(Please make cheques payable to Ebenezer Pitt Town UCA)



Governor Lachlan Macquarie visited Ebenezer Church in 1810

The land grants of most of the Portland Head (Ebenezer) settlers are dated April 1803. They had been farming for seven years when in 1810 Lachlan Macquarie commenced as Governor of the Colony of New South Wales. How successful were these former carpenters, storekeepers, tailors, surgeons and seamen in their farming pursuits in a strange land and in a period that was subject to devastating floods?

In his first year Governor Lachlan Macquarie made his 'Grand Tour of New South Wales'. He travelled with Mrs Macquarie to Windsor and from there made several excursions within the area. From his journals we learn that on Tuesday 4 December 1810 Governor Macquarie...

'set out this morning between 5 and 6 o'clock, accompanied by Mrs. Macquarie, Mrs. Cartwright, Mr. Cartwright, Mr. Cox, Mr. Hassall, and the gentlemen of our family, in the late Mr. Thompson's barge and another smaller boat, on our excursion to Portland Head...[Ebenezer]. At 8 o'clock we stopped at the new school-house recently erected by subscription... where we had determined to breakfast, which was accordingly prepared with all convenient haste within the new school-house, which is prettily situated on the bank of the river. Here Doctor Arndell came to pay us a visit from his farm on Caddy Creek on the opposite side of the river, and breakfasted with us. After breakfast we embarked again and prosecuted our voyage down the river...'

The 'school-house' was Ebenezer Church. Built in 1809, school had commenced in the church in 1810 with John Youl as the teacher.

Governor Macquarie was impressed with the development of the pioneers' farms during the seven years since settlement: 'The farms on both banks, especially those on the left bank, are rich and well cultivated, and make a pretty appearance from the water, being generally interspersed with extensive orchards of peaches and other fruits.'

Macquarie's journals confirm that the Ebenezer Church pioneers were successful farmers. But they were also literate, enterprising, industrious, community-minded people who were to make a large contribution not only to the Hawkesbury district but also to the colony at large.

Our church website: www.ebenezerchurch.org.au

EBENEZER CHURCH HERITAGE DAY

The story of Ebenezer Church was shared with visitors by means of walk-and-talks on Sunday 11 May 2008. While we did not attract a huge crowd, possibly because many families had Mothers' Day commitments, it was large enough to make the day interesting and worthwhile.

There were three very supportive teams of helpers on the day that provided Devonshire teas, barbecue lunches and walk-and-talks.

The photograph shows Michael Miller addressing a group near the vault of church pioneers George and Mary Hall.



199TH PILGRIMAGE TO EBENEZER CHURCH Saturday 21 June 2008

The sun shone brightly on Ebenezer Church on the occasion of the 199th Pilgrimage on Saturday 21 June. The service was held outdoors overlooking the river, trialling the area which will be used for the bicentennial service on Saturday 20 June 2009. Although this year's gathering of approx. 100 people was a small fraction of the large crowd expected in 2009, it was generally agreed that the location for the service will be suitable.

The service was led by Rev. Grant Bilbey. Preaching of the Word was delivered by the Moderator of the Uniting Church Synod of NSW & ACT, Rev. Niall Reid. The Moderator of the NSW General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, Rt Rev. David Seaman, brought a greeting and led the Prayers of Intercession.



Grono descendant Ted Books – Rowed from Brooklyn to Windsor



Ted Books, a descendant of Ebenezer Church pioneer Captain John Grono, set out from Brooklyn at 5.30am on Saturday 4 October and arrived at Windsor on Monday afternoon. He was rowing in a boat built by his grandfather Matthew Books in 1890. During the journey Ted had to battle frequently against heavy rain, plenty of river traffic, blisters and injury. As he approached Windsor a windstorm hit, bringing with it wind speeds of more than 80km/h. Ted Books had two reasons for rowing – he wanted to create awareness of the health of the Hawkesbury River and to raise funds for the Prostate Cancer Foundation of Australia. A sum of \$2,100 was raised.

Ted Books near the sandy beach upstream from Ebenezer Church

**STUBBS FAMILY
30th ANNUAL REUNION
Saturday 25 October 2008**

Ebenezer Church,
Coromandel Road, Ebenezer, NSW.
TIME: From 9.30a.m.

BYO picnic lunch, folding chairs, etc...

Please direct inquiries to:

Coralie Hird
(02) 8084 3808

cdhird@optusnet.com.au

Stubbs Family Website:

<http://freepages.genealogy.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~stubb1802/>

Stubbs email: stubb1802@gmail.com

Lillyan MacDonald.
23B/95 Stanhope Road,
Killara NSW 2071.

**GRONO FAMILY REUNION
Sunday 3 May 2009**

Ebenezer Church
Coromandel Road, Ebenezer.
From 10.00am

**Hawkesbury River Cruise
Saturday 2nd May, 2009**

Please direct inquiries to:

Mandy Waller, 1 Johnston Street, Pitt Town, NSW,
2756. gronofamily@gmail.com

Same addresses for inquiries re the book...

'John Grono, 1767-1847, Our Old Colonial Neptune'

'Two Hawkesbury Sailors' Reprint – Update will be available by May 2009.

JOHNSTON FAMILY REUNION

Approximately 300 descendants attended the Johnston Family Reunion on Saturday 20 September. Organisers were pleased with the response to the day, a day when each of the families of the eight children of church pioneers Andrew & Mary Johnston were represented. Visitors were impressed with the family display in the pavilion and the restoration of church buildings. They enjoyed picnicking in church grounds.

Several graves are to be restored as a result of this day and an unmarked grave is to receive a headstone.

Many descendants expressed a desire to revisit the church on the occasion of the 200th anniversary in 2009.



OTHER CHURCH PIONEER FAMILY CONTACTS

Arndell

The Secretary
Thomas Arndell Family Association,
31 Clarinda Street
Hornsby NSW 2077
bob.davis.au@gmail.com

Hall

Dave Hall
Hallfamilyd@aol.com

Bushell

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pmtempleton@gmail.com

Turnbull

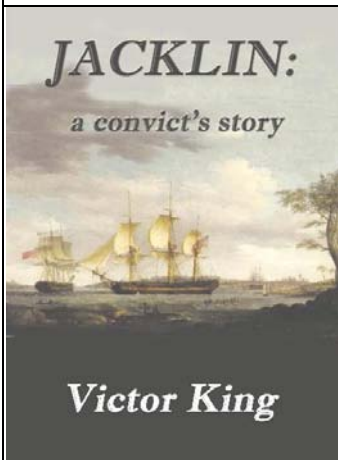
Rebecca Turnbull
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beturnbull@hotmail.com

Cavanough

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Punchbowl, NSW, 2196
p1234@tadaust.org.au

Johnston

Robyn Sanday,
3 Dorrigo Street,
Woongarah, 2259.
02 4392 8264
rsanday@exemail.com.au



You're invited to a book launch

'JACKLIN: A Convict's Story'

Saturday 15 November 2008 at 2.00pm at Ebenezer Church

While many of the fifteen pioneer families of Ebenezer Church have had active family associations that have kept contact with the church, there have been some with which we have had no contact. One such family was the Jacklins. That was until five years ago when an excited Jacklin descendant Victor King walked into church grounds with his family. Details of his family ancestry had never been passed on to Vic. Perhaps that was because church pioneer William Jacklin was a convict. If so, then perhaps it was not known that William Jacklin was extremely well-regarded, William Wentworth describing him as 'a very correct man'.

Victor King has carried out a thorough research on Jacklin and the early days of the colony. He has written an historical novel 'Jacklin: A Convict's Story'. In the book he uses the actual names of settlers such as Andrew Johnston, John Turnbull, Thomas Arndell, ...

To assist with catering, please ring Sue/Ted on 4579 9235

or email tedbrill@ebenezerchurch.org.au if you are attending this book launch.

Church Contacts

Bicentenary & this Newsletter

Ted Brill,
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02 4579 9235
tedbrill@ebenezerchurch.org.au

Minister

Rev Grant Bilbey
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02 4572 3153
grantbilbey@ebenezerchurch.org.au

Ebenezer Church Shop

Bookings & Inquiries:
02 4579 9350

Ebenezer Church Shop,
PO Box 7048, Wilberforce, 2756