



Ebenezer Church

No. 15: October 2013

Hello Everyone,

In 2013 we have seen growing interest in Ebenezer Church as a tourist destination. From January to the end of September our church members have provided teas and lunches for 98 groups of visitors. Although many of these have been small groups from retirement villages, there have been many large coach and social groups as well. The number of casual visitors varies from one day to another – some days are very quiet and at other times our shop helpers are busy all day.

Tourist authorities tell us that the best publicity is by word of mouth and we feel that is true for Ebenezer. This is not just the result of our popular teas and lunches but also from the way our helpers engage with our visitors and the care and hospitality they extend, and for that they are to be commended.

Also in 2013 regular Sunday services have been conducted by Rev. Helenna Anderson and our lay preachers, 33 children have been baptised, 18 weddings have been conducted, our Ladies Fellowship has been active in supporting church activities, the church cemetery has been efficiently managed by the Cemetery Trust, our property has been well-maintained and a small but enthusiastic Sunday School has continued to function.

But we live in a time when church congregations are ageing and over recent years have decreased in size right across our nation, and this is so for Ebenezer Church. While I believe the Ebenezer congregation will continue, the services it offers to its community may be different in the years ahead.

Ted Brill, Church Secretary

Andrew Abrahams Descendant of Ebenezer Church Pioneer Owen Cavanough World Record Holder & Co-founder of the Cairns to Townsville Bike Ride



Cove International Boat Show, Sydney International Boat Show and the Queensland Maritime Museum.

Why was Andrew Abrahams visiting Ebenezer Church? His ancestor was **Ebenezer Church pioneer Owen Cavanough**. Andrew's rowing connection thus honours a family tradition as it is believed that Owen Cavanough rowed Governor Phillip to shore from the Sirius and was the first man from the First Fleet to set foot on Australian soil.

The boat Andrew has chosen for his Atlantic expedition in December this year has been named '*Owen Cavanough*'.

More information: <http://www.adventure4cure.com>



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Johnston Family Reunion Report

by Robyn Sanday

Forty-two people attended the reunion this year. We were down on expected numbers but those who did attend had a great time from all reports. 75% of these people had never been before so that was a big surprise. Family members travelled from all over NSW, with one family coming from ACT and two members coming from Queensland. Special guests were Dorothy & Clem Rook from Clan Johnston Australia and Peter Stewart from the Jurd family association.

The main historical display was about the Johnston family members who served their country in times of war, with a special section on those who paid the ultimate price. We also had a power point presentation on Staunton Hope Johnston which was given to us in February by Cpl Hamer.

Lynn Cherry and her husband travelled from Tamworth and brought with them a wonderful collection of photos that had belonged to Marjorie

Georgina Johnston (1918-1991). The photos in the collection had not been seen outside of Lynn's family for many years.

A special presentation was made to Bill and Joan Peard from Glenbrook who had the honour of being the longest married couple to attend; they had celebrated their 60th anniversary in March. A presentation was also made to Val Tuckerman for being the most senior family member on the day and Val was thanked for her contribution to the Johnston family history. The reunion cake was cut by Bill & Joan and shared amongst everyone.

Cavanough Family Reunion Report

by Alan Woods

A reunion of descendants of First Fleeters Owen Cavanough and Margaret Darnell (Dowling) was held at Ebenezer on the 20th April 2013. The reunion was held at the Uniting Church Pavilion which is erected on land donated by Owen.

The day was a great success with people travelling from as far as Northern Territory, Western Australia, Queensland and country NSW. Numbers were down on previous years but considering the miserable weather the 62 brave souls that ventured out were well rewarded with catching up with old friends and meeting new ones. Much information was swapped by family members updating family stories and recent additions to the family tree. Browsing through the numerous displays set up by the committee, buying good old fashioned cakes and biscuits, sampling the delights of the Church tea rooms and wandering through the old graves of pioneers (between showers) were enjoyed by all.

Two books; (1) Owen and Margaret's Story and (2) Grace and Ralphs Genealogy were launched on the day. Both were well received and congratulations to Sandra Woods for all her hard work in getting them published in time for the reunion. Book 1 has sold out.

The Owen Cavanough Family History Society wish to thank those that attended on the day and making it a success.

Grono Family Reunion 2013

by Karen Mills

On Sunday 5th May at Ebenezer Church we had a wonderful time meeting other family members at our family reunion. A total of 162 family members gathered throughout the day to celebrate the 214th anniversary of the arrival of John and Elizabeth Grono and family to Australia on the *HMS Buffalo* and the 200th anniversary of the rescue of the crew of the *Active*. We had family members attend from as far away as New Zealand, Belgium, and interstate.

As part of our festivities we listened to a rendition of an old folksong which had been written about the crew of the *Active* c.1815; we heard the story of their stranding and rescue; and of their incredible courage, ingenuity and survival in the harsh environment of New Zealand's South Coast.

A highlight at this year's reunion was when we heard from Sam Bateman (a descendant of Thomas Grono, youngest son of John Grono and Elizabeth Bristow) who gave a fascinating and informative talk on "John Grono's Naval Career - Some clues to why he migrated to Australia". Sam's talk highlighted the importance of William Raven, Captain of the *HMS Buffalo*, in John's decision to make the journey to Australia.

There were numerous displays in the hall of photos, maps, newspaper articles, vital certificates and folders of information devoted to each line of family among other things. It was a wonderful day of sharing family connections and maintaining our family's link with the Ebenezer Church. The next Grono Family Reunion will be held at Ebenezer on Sunday 3rd May 2015.



OWEN CAVANOUGH



Owen Cavanaugh had joined the First Fleet as an able seaman on the flagship the 'Sirius.'

It is believed that Owen Cavanaugh was the first man ashore at Sydney Cove. He was 26 years of age.

The *Sirius* left the colony at Port Jackson on 2 October 1788 when she was sent back to the Cape of Good Hope to get flour and other supplies. The voyage took more than seven months and returned just in time to save the near-starving colony. Two years later, on 19 March 1790, the *Sirius* was wrecked on a reef at Norfolk Island while landing stores. *Sirius's* crew was stranded on Norfolk Island until 21 February 1791, when they were rescued and eventually taken back to England.

However Owen Cavanaugh remained on Norfolk Island and in 1791 he was given a land grant of 60 acres that was on the southern side of Cascade Bay (*Photo above*). It was there that Owen Cavanaugh and Margaret Dowling began their life together. They returned to Sydney in 1796 and in April 1803, along with the Coromandel settlers received a 100 acre grant at Portland Head.

When the Portland Head settlers began meeting for Sunday services led by James Mein, it was usually on Cavanaugh's property and under the shade of the historic tree. In inclement weather they met in Cavanaugh's home or across the river in the home of Thomas Arndell. When the proposal was discussed to build a church, Cavanaugh donated 4 acres of his land for the church site.

It is interesting to note that the settlers of Portland Head put aside their denominational differences in religion and formed one community, one congregation. Owen was Anglican and Margaret Catholic and there were also Presbyterians, Calvinists and Congregationalists.

Owen Cavanaugh later sold his property to neighbour James Davison and moved to Wheeney Creek. In 1841 he drowned in Wheeney Creek during flooding of the Hawkesbury River. Margaret had predeceased him in 1834.

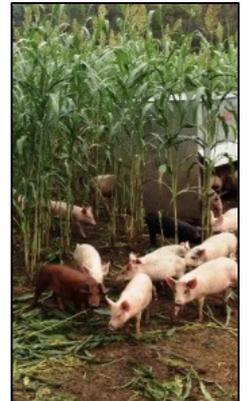
They were both buried at Sackville Reach but their headstones were later removed to the Ebenezer Church cemetery by the Owen Cavanaugh Fellowship.

WHAT GOES AROUND ...

In September 1808 when the pioneers of Ebenezer Church met in Thomas Arndell's house they formalised their society and each family committed £10 towards the construction of the church. Currency not being readily available in 1808, they agreed to pay the stonemasons and carpenters with the produce of their farms. They set prices – wheat 10 shillings a bushel, salted pork 1/3d a pound, fresh pork 1/- a pound and live pigs 9d a pound.

John Turnbull was one farmer who raised pigs and it is interesting to know that what was originally Turnbull property at Ebenezer is again being used in this way. Free range pork is being produced by Matt & Sue Simmonds who allow pigs to live out their lives in paddocks with a reasonable amount of pasture. Their farm is not just a pig farm but an integrated system that uses pigs to help control weeds and to fertilise the soil to grow better vegetable crops.

In the church paddock behind the Historic Tree the Simmonds cut and bale African love grass and use it as matting in shelters for the pigs. In this way Ebenezer Church is kept safer in times of bush fires and it also provides a modern day link between John Turnbull and the church he helped build.



Above right: Pigs grazing on the Simmonds property

Left: The church paddock – originally part of Owen Cavanaugh's grant. Owen would be pleased to see that his former land is still being used for agricultural purposes. The area from the lagoon to the top of the picture was the grant given to James Davison.

Below: Matt Simmonds baling the grass in the paddock opposite Ebenezer Church.



MAZDA MX5 CAR CLUB

President's Picnic + Bits 'n' Bling + Concours

Our church volunteers do not undertake many weekend catering bookings but we did accept this one. It was held in brilliant Spring sunshine in the grounds of Ebenezer Church on Saturday 14 September.

Not being car enthusiasts, a search was necessary on the meaning of 'concours' – and we found it was 'a meeting at which classic or vintage cars are exhibited and prizes awarded'. Mazda MX5 Car Club members had an opportunity to show their cars in three categories, vote for the People's Choice Award and take advantage of selling excess MX-5 parts as part of a Boot Sale. The 60 cars entered came from an area bounded by Newcastle and Canberra. Many people were visiting Ebenezer for the first time and comments such as 'I will have to bring my Mum here...' were frequently heard.

In the first place we were looking at catering for lunch for 80 people, but slowly the numbers grew ... to 100 and finally stopped ... at 120. We found car club event organiser Lesa Bunn and her helpers to be easy to work with. Our small Team Ebenezer worked co-operatively and efficiently to ensure our visitors had an enjoyable day. It was 'so good' to share to share this historic property with so many people.



STUBBS FAMILY 35th ANNUAL REUNION

Saturday 26 October 2013

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:

Coralie Hird (02) 8084 3808

cdhird@optusnet.com.au

Stubbs Family Website:

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

Stubbs email: stubbs1802@gmail.com

CAVANOUGH FAMILY REUNION

A Cavanaugh family re-union will be held on

Norfolk Island

14 - 21 March 2014

to coincide with the 224th Anniversary
of the Wrecking of the Sirius.

For more information:

Contact Debbie - free call 1800 1400 66

or Pat - 02 9790 0389

or go to www.travelcentre.nf/cavanaugh.htm

EBENEZER CHURCH PIONEER FAMILY CONTACTS

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