



Hello Everyone,

I still enjoy those stories of the early Ebenezer Church pioneers that have been passed down over the years.

The story of John Turnbull upon arrival in the colony being asked by Gov. King, "What are you doing here old man? You seem to have one foot in the grave already!" ... and John Turnbull outliving the governor, a younger man, and living to the age of 86 years!

... and of Andrew Johnston having to move his wife Mary three times during one night to escape the rising water of the 1806 flood. The day before Mary had given birth to a daughter, Hannah, and to move them, Andrew put his wife and child in a tarpaulin slung under a dray. Only last month I saw a photo of Hannah in the Hawkesbury Museum archives. Hannah lived to the age of 90 years.

At Ebenezer Church our small band of helpers has continued to share the historic site and history of Ebenezer Church at a greater scale than in previous years, in 2017 134 buses and coaches booking in for devonshire teas or lunches. Sounds a little crazy but we again accepted bookings for devonshire teas for 170+ riders participating in a vintage motor bike ride and lunch for 180 Mazda MX-5 car enthusiasts. The church and church shop were kept open daily for casual visitors except for Good Friday and a week over Christmas (although we have to admit we closed early on those 40+ degree days and headed home to air conditioning!).

In this newsletter we report on recent restoration work at Ebenezer Church, the cost of work being funded from the Diane Kemp Foundation and a bequest from Bill Arndell. Our congregation is forever grateful for the support church pioneer descendants gave us for restoration projects leading up to the bicentenary celebrations in 2009 and we seek your support again in our last major restoration project – putting back a slate roof on the Schoolmaster's House.

The returning of a cup in 2017 that was presented to Mr Albert Brown in the year 1900 posed the question – Who was Albert Brown? The results of our research are included, as are dates of approaching family reunions.

Please note that the 209th Pilgrimage to Ebenezer Church will be held on Sunday 17th June. There will an 11.30am service and lunch will follow. You are most welcome to attend.

Ted Brill

On behalf of the Ebenezer – Pitt Town Congregation

## Thoughts from Geoff



Most mornings we go for an early morning walk along the local creek with our dogs. Due to rain and other things it has been a few days since we were able to engage in this morning activity. Today we ventured out. The world was fresh from overnight rain, with drops hanging from the leaves in the bright green trees and the sky a rich blue. It was beautiful and in a world of chaos and busy-ness, I felt refreshed as I breathed in the fresh, cool air and the gentle beauty of the creek, the trees and the wildlife.

I always feel renewed and I breathe deeply again on these morning walks. As I walk I am aware of God's presence in the sky, the clouds, the creek flowing past, the trees and flowers, the lizards and insects, the birds singing, the sounds, smells and the world fresh, new and wondrous.

As I walk I am drawn into the wonder of the world around and I'm humbled. In the simplicity of this beauty I feel connected with the world that is embraced in God's deep love. I realise, yet again, that *we all live and move and have our being in God*, that everything has its life in the gracious love and heart of God.

I feel this same deep presence of God whenever I wander the grounds of Ebenezer Church and I wonder at those pilgrims so long ago and how their own experience of this precious place sustained them in faith and life. The many people who come here today experience the wonder and peace of God and find renewal and joy for their lives. I encourage you to find a place where you can nurture your own spirit and experience the loving presence of God, be renewed and know God's peace and joy.

Geoff Stevenson

*This newsletter is sent to 241 postal and 371 email addresses across Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. Should you receive the newsletter by post but now have access to email, please let us know.*

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## Who was Albert Brown?

The speaker at our pilgrimage service in 2017 was Peter Worland, Executive Director, Uniting, who brought with him a silver cup that was presented to Albert Brown in January 1900 by the congregation of Ebenezer Church. For many years the cup had been in the family of descendant Helen Keir, and they requested it be returned to the church which they felt was its rightful place. The cup is inscribed ... 'To Mr Albert Brown a token of esteem from the members of the Presbyterian Church at Ebenezer 26/1/1900'.



So, 117 years later, we asked,  
**Who was Albert Brown?**

In March 1850 James Dawbney Brown, a student of ministry under Presbyterian minister Rev. John Dunmore Lang, arrived in New South Wales. In June, 1851, he

married Sarah Hopkins, eldest daughter of William Hopkins, the proprietor of Hopkins' flour mills and bakery in Windsor.

James Brown opened a successful and popular private school in Windsor but later turned to farming. In the 1864 Hawkesbury flood James Brown, his wife and four children, passed a night in an improvised second storey in a one-storey house over rising floodwaters at a farm at Freemans Reach. The youngest of those four children was Albert Brown who at that time would have been two years of age. In the morning a rescue boat removed all to a place of safety.

In his adult life Albert Brown was a farmer who owned land between Coromandel Road and Sackville Road, Ebenezer. Albert and his wife were highly respected in the Ebenezer community, Albert being called upon to chair community meetings. He was an accomplished singer and was often asked to perform at concerts and weddings. It was reported that the 1901 Ebenezer Church anniversary service included a delightful musical item - a quartet by Mrs Albert Brown, Miss Brown and John and Albert Brown.

In 1918 it was reported in the Windsor & Richmond Gazette: the 'immediate friends of Mrs, Hendren and family assembled at the residence of Mr. Albert Brown, on Thursday, February 21, for the purpose of bidding au revoir to Nurse Hendren, who will shortly be leaving for the front.' At this function 'musical items, rendered by Mesdames Stubbs, Brown, Hendren, Holmes, Misses Brown, Hendren, Haley, Messrs. Lewis and Albert Brown.'

One more story about the Browns ...

Albert's father James, who over the years led many services in Ebenezer Church, lived to 92 years of age and is buried here at Ebenezer.

Albert's mother Sarah lived to 97 years. She was described as 'a remarkable old lady. Right up to within a short time of her demise, ... she attended the place of worship where her late husband frequently occupied the pulpit - the Presbyterian Church at Ebenezer. The late Mrs. Brown was a well-read woman, and she enjoyed writing and sewing. In her nineties she frequently insisted on doing her share of household duties, with an occasional turn at the washtub.'

In her last years on Sundays Albert and his brothers would drive the family car right up to the doorway of Ebenezer Church. With the car door open Sarah would listen to the service being conducted in the church and no doubt join in with the singing of hymns.

Albert Brown ... a good steward of Ebenezer Church.

## Clive Brown 1924 - 2006

A more recent-day good steward of Ebenezer Church was Clive Brown who was born in Windsor in 1924. A descendant of Albert Brown's brother Raymond and also of the Johnston and Hall pioneer families, Clive grew up beside the Hawkesbury River, getting to and from Ebenezer School on horseback. He had to catch and milk the cows before riding to school. Clive completed high school at Richmond and secured an apprenticeship with Garden Island Dockyards, spending the war years building ships, a pursuit that he continued for most of his life, building and modifying a host of boats over the years.

After completing his apprenticeship in 1946 Clive returned to the Hawkesbury and worked as an electrical fitter. In 1946 Clive met Ellen (Molly) Hungerford at an Ebenezer Church function and two years later they were engaged. They were married in September 1950 at St David's, the little chapel at the top of Kurrajong Heights. Clive and Molly later opened the Ski Inn, a small general business in Ebenezer that operates today as Tractor 828.



**Clive Brown does a 'no hands' backward run in the trick section of the Australian water-skiing championships at Manly Reservoir in 1953-54.**

Clive was a keen sportsman. He played cricket and tennis at a district level and was also into motor sports. Some friends returned home from a California holiday with new-fangled contraptions called water skis. Clive immediately adopted this new sport and began building his own skis. He modified a locally built Everingham hull as a tow boat and

started practicing. He was the only skier to finish the very first Bridge to Bridge ski race that was held in 1961. Clive went on to compete at national levels in three disciplines - trick, jump and slalom, winning the national title in 1953 and running up in 1954. Clive always said it was the deep water start, backward on one ski, holding on to the rope with one foot, that did it for him.



**Clive Brown (third from left) with founding members and past captains of the Ebenezer Bush Fire Brigade at the 50th Anniversary of the brigade in 2002**

Clive captained the Ebenezer Bush Fire Brigade, was a Justice of the Peace, an elder of Ebenezer Church and a dedicated member. He was the church handy man with an extensive knowledge of ways of solving practical problems be it electrical, plumbing, grave repairs, river pumps, ... and was always willing to assist.

Clive was a quiet man who didn't curse, drink or smoke. He enjoyed the simple things in life, especially a cup of tea and a conversation.

He was held in high respect in the Hawkesbury community.



## Renovations to Ebenezer Church

It's a bit unnerving emptying your church of furniture, including the pulpit and font. But that is what happened following the service on Sunday 5th November 2017. The reason was that a painter was to commence work the following day. Over the next 13 days repairs were made to the ceiling, walls, windows and doors and painting followed. The floor had to be sanded and oiled and the carpet runner relayed before our volunteers assembled again to return the furniture. We are so pleased with the refreshed appearance and the high standard of workmanship.



Pews are loaded onto a truck for removal to the pavilion



Work in progress



The finished work

Following the completion of the interior of the church the painter has moved on to painting the exterior of the church and vestry and the Schoolmaster's House internally and externally. All of this work has been completed under the guidance of the Hawkesbury City Council Heritage Consultant, the cost being met from our own fundraising and from donations. So generally the church buildings are in good shape at present. **Except for one matter ...**

***and that's the Schoolmaster's House Roof which soon will have to be replaced.***

The photo below is of a wedding in 1925 and in the background is the Schoolmaster's House. The photo clearly shows a roof made of slate. Our most senior member of the congregation, Val Tuckerman, can remember the slate roof.

**We would like to put a slate roof back on the Schoolmaster's House and are appealing for donations to do so.** Our congregation is grateful for the support church pioneer descendants gave us for restoration projects leading up to the bicentenary celebrations in 2009 and seek your support again. The SM House roof is our last major restoration project.

**The estimated cost is \$40,000.**

To start us on the way we have allocated two recent donations for this appeal.

One was of \$200 from Elizabeth Jones in memory of Robert Ayling, author of the biography of Rev. John Ayling who was the minister at Ebenezer 1885-1896. The other was a bequest of \$5000 from John Sanday, a well-regarded tradesman and resident of the Hawkesbury.



***So we are on the way - \$5,200 towards a goal of \$40,000.***

***If you wish to make a donation ...***

**by Direct Deposit ...** BSB: 634634

Account No: 100028399

Account Name: Ebenezer Church Maintenance

Please use SMH and your surname as a reference and email [tedbrill@ebenezerchurch.org.au](mailto:tedbrill@ebenezerchurch.org.au) informing us of the donation.

**by cheque ...** post to Ebenezer Church

PO Box 7048,

Wilberforce, NSW, 2756

Receipts will be issued for all donations.

## Sarah Stockings

In the Ebenezer Church graveyard near the pavilion is a lone sandstone headstone for Sarah Stockings. We often wondered about Sarah Stockings. There is no Mr Stockings in a nearby grave. Did Sarah marry? Did she have a family?

Then at one stage we noticed that flowers were occasionally placed near her headstone. Did this mean that Sarah had descendants? No, our caretaker Jan had also taken an interest in Sarah and wondered about her.

When a coach group came to the church in May 2017 only half of the group came into the pavilion for their morning tea. We found the remainder clustered around the headstone of none other than Sarah Stockings and amongst the group was Robert, a great grandson of Sarah. He was so pleased to find her grave and we were equally pleased to find out that Sarah had descendants who remembered her.

Later requesting more information, Robert replied, 'Many thanks for this email and I will supply some info soon. I am on a cruise ship off Portugal just now with not much Internet ... Let me mention from memory that Sarah was married to John Stockings and that they came to Australia in 1853 and as I understand he worked as a farm labourer on the Arndell estate.'



## At Ebenezer Church in 2017 we ...

Celebrated our 208th Anniversary and 40th birthday of the Uniting Church with Uniting Churches across the Hawkesbury



Enjoyed a Jazz Evening on the riverbank and with support from the Hawkesbury Zone raised \$4000 for Clean Water Wells in West Papua.



Enjoyed the many attractions of an annual Spring Fair that included a Blessing of the Animals, some animals giving a lick in appreciation.



### JOHNSTON FAMILY REUNION

The next Johnston Family Reunion will be on  
**Saturday 25th August 2018**  
 More details in the next newsletter or from  
 Robyn Sanday 02 4392 8264  
 3 Dorrigo Street, Woongarra, 2259.  
[rlsanday@aapt.net.au](mailto:rlsanday@aapt.net.au)

### CAVANOUGH FAMILY REUNION

The next Cavanough Family Reunion will be on  
**Saturday 20th October 2018**  
 More details in the next newsletter or from  
 Pat Holdorf, 85 James Street, Punchbowl, NSW, 2196  
[patholdorf@bigpond.com](mailto:patholdorf@bigpond.com)  
 Alan Woods [alan.woods1@bigpond.com](mailto:alan.woods1@bigpond.com)

### STUBBS FAMILY REUNION

The next Stubbs Family Reunion will be on  
**Saturday 27th October 2018**  
 More details in the next newsletter or from  
 Reg Smith 02-9634-1187  
 email: [stubbs1802@gmail.com](mailto:stubbs1802@gmail.com)

### GRONO FAMILY REUNION 2019

The next Grono Family Reunion will be on  
**Sunday 5th May 2019**  
 Mandy Waller, 1 Johnston Street, Pitt Town, NSW, 2756  
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