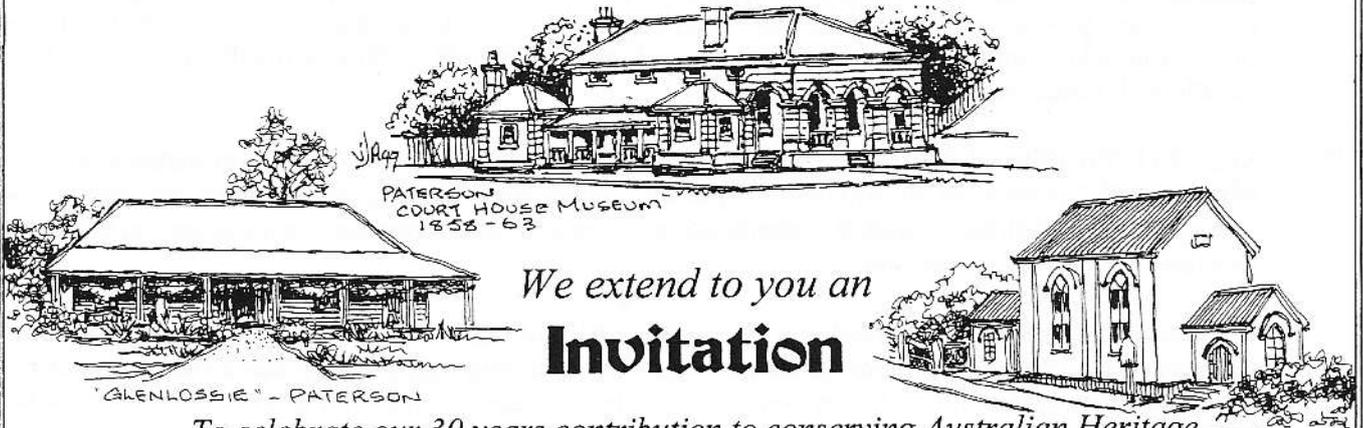




THE JOURNAL OF
PATERSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY
INCORPORATED

MUSEUM NEWS

PATERSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.
30th Anniversary



We extend to you an
Invitation

To celebrate our 30 years contribution to conserving Australian Heritage
at your museum

SUNDAY — 1.30pm
PATERSON COURT HOUSE MUSEUM
◆ 30th Anniversary Celebration
◆ Opening of Keppie Room Refurbishment
◆ Book Launch – Keppie Family History
(Ted Coyle)

18th – 19th September 2004
10am – 5pm each day

FREE ENTRY
Complimentary Tea Coffee Biscuits.

SUNDAY — 2pm
ST ANN'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
◆ Rise of Presbyterianism – (Jean Archer)
◆ History of St Ann's – (Cameron Archer)
◆ Book Launch – History of St Ann's
(A C Archer & J Sullivan)

THE AIM OF THE PATERSON COURT HOUSE MUSEUM
IS TO HOLD ITEMS IN TRUST
FOR THE PATERSON COMMUNITY
THE HUNTER VALLEY AND AUSTRALIA

PATERSON HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC. EXECUTIVE 2004

AFFILIATED with Royal Australian Historical Society Inc. and Museums Australia Inc.

PRESIDENT: Cameron Archer

SECRETARY: Pauline Clements

ASS. SECRETARY: Pam Sivyer

TREASURER: Shirley Threlfo

VICE PRESIDENT: Kathy Lyall

JOURNAL: Pauline Clements, Val Anderson & Shirley Threlfo

MUSEUM CURATORS: Val Anderson & Bill Keppie

PROJECT COORDINATOR: Bill Anderson

RECORDER: Mabs Keppie:

PUBLIC OFFICER: Cameron Archer

RESEARCH COMMITTEE: P Clements, S Threlfo, M & B Keppie, B Brown, H Boyle OAM, J Sullivan, C Archer, V Anderson.

PATRONS

Mr. M Morris OA

Mr. R Baldwin MP

Mr. J Price MP

Mr. S Lowe AM

Mr. G Semken

Mr. A Fairhall

MEETINGS PHSI meets the first Thursday of each month – 7.30 pm. – at the Paterson Court House Museum (Recess December/January)

MEMBERSHIP FEES: Annual subscriptions due February each year. \$5. single \$10. family.



CONGRATULATIONS to Kevin Hawtin and his committee following the successful launch of the Paterson Monthly Newsletter “PSST”. It is filling a much needed avenue of communication in the town and has been well received. Our society contributes regularly and appreciate the support for our museum and activities.



GUEST SPEAKERS. Ed Tonks overwhelmed us once again with his presentation on the Bridges of Paterson. (Ed has offered to come again next October – this will be his fifth year. Ed will speak on coal mines under Newcastle Harbour.) Esme Meehan gave two wonderful talks on journeys to Pacific and South American countries and at our Christmas gathering Sue and Boris Sokoloff will present one of their usually well researched slide evenings.



SPECIAL THANKS from President Cameron to Barb Brown and Shirley Threlfo for indexing the latest edition of the History of St Ann’s Presbyterian Church, Paterson launched during our Anniversary celebrations. To Shirley as well, our appreciation of her computer expertise – not to mention her willing acceptance each year as treasurer.



THE A.A. COMPANY of Stroud was featured recently on ABC Radio 1233 with great interest from listeners in the underground silos on Silo Hill. Answers to more information about these convict built silos and others in the Hunter Valley were revealed by President Cameron in an excellent interview with Lindy Burns. As we know, the 1840s Tocal silos are unique. Our old mate, Harry Boyle OAM featured in the last screening of the ABC “Rewind” Sunday T.V. programme featuring the life of Les Darcy champion Maitland boxer.



William Merchant

Photo Pauline Clements

KNOW OUR PIONEERS. — Pauline Clements
The origins of Merchants Road, Vacy – The Merchant family.

Richard Merchant was born in Farrington, Berkshire, England about 1800, and arrived in Port Jackson aboard the ship “Fairfield” in July 1826. The ship carried 79 ewes to supplement the sheep numbers on the Australian Agricultural property at Stroud, and Richard was employed as one of the shepherds to watch over the previous cargo on the voyage. He continued to work with the Company after his arrival, and remained there until he had completed his indenture with the Company.

Whilst he was at Stroud, Richard met his future wife, Elizabeth Barnes, whose father was also employed by the Company as a shepherd. Richard and Elizabeth were married at Raymond terrace on 30th December, 1827

Richard and Elizabeth lived at Stroud until Richard was freed of his indenture and it was then they moved to the Paterson river area. When Richard registered the birth of his fourth child in 1833, he described himself as a “farmer and settler on the Allyn River.” When he registered the birth of his eleventh child he gave the family address as “Elm’s Hall”, Vacy.

In the early 1850s Elizabeth became a follower of the Church of Latter Day Saints, and became so involved that she persuaded Richard and the family their future lay in the American State of Utah, headquarters of the Church. In 1856 the family travelled to Sydney intending to board ship for their new home. However, Richard and the six eldest children went sightseeing and missed the ship. Elizabeth and the younger children settled in America, founding a new branch of the Merchant family. Richard and the older children returned to the district they knew and continued with their farming life.

Richard lived until he was 62 years of age, and although his death is recorded in the Church Burial Register, family members believe his burial actually took place on the banks of the Allyn River on the property known as “Campsie” where his son William was then living.

WILLIAM MERCHANT

William Merchant was the eldest child of Richard and Elizabeth Merchant, and was born at Stroud in 1828 whilst his father was employed by the Australian agricultural Company.

William learnt the skills of farming from his father, and was employed on various properties in the district gaining further knowledge.

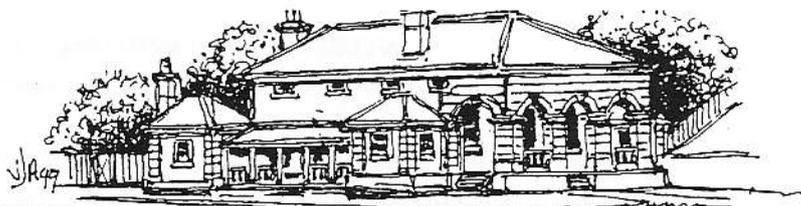
In 1857 William married a young lady named Mary Ann Smith who had arrived in the Colony in 1852 with her mother from their home in England.

In 1885 William was able to select land in the area around Hilldale, and there he built a home for his family of 10 children. William used the property for dairying and cattle-raising. The area William selected is still remembered as Merchant’s property for the road into the area is today listed as “Merchant’s Road.”

Mary Ann Merchant died in 1901, and William survived until 1920. Both are buried in St. Paul’s Church Cemetery, Paterson.



**PATERSON
COURT HOUSE MUSEUM**



30th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS.....

The 30th Anniversary of the founding of the Paterson Historical Society celebrations were carried out in great style during the weekend of 18th and 19th September, with the Museum opening at 11 am and a flow of visitors each day coming to celebrate with us

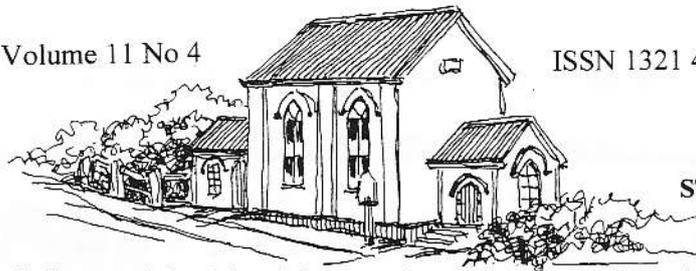
What a long way we have come since that first tentative beginning in 1974 when the Society was formed. At this time we had no place to call home, but the local Court House was still standing idle since its closure in 1967, with the Dungog Shire Council left in a care-taker role for the Public Works Department. We were fortunate that the Dungog Shire Council paid sympathetic attention to our approach to be considered suitable tenants, as there had been many others wanting the building. With approval of our application, there was now space for a meeting room and space to fill with exhibits telling the story of Paterson's history.

From the time of the Society's formation many photographs, newspaper articles, home and farm implements etc. had been received from generous residents, and it was thought that enough were now available to commence a display. None of us had any experience in cataloguing, displaying, or knew the correct way to handle such exhibits as we were given, but care and commonsense saw us through and gradually a display took shape in the wonderful surroundings of the disused Court Room. and over the years as more material was received the display grew to fill all the rooms available in the Court House building.

All of our members worked hard in those early days as there were many years of official neglect to be remedied and we were able to obtain various grants to carry out repairs, but the money never matched the long hours of voluntary work put in by our members. The most necessary work done at this time was the clearing of the years of accumulated soil, gravel etc. which was blocking the very efficient airways which had been placed in the foundations of the building to prevent rising damp. Over many weekends of work the air-vents were cleared and the Court House is now free of any rising-damp, which could have ruined displays in the building. Over the time several grants have been obtained from Government sources to repair and paint both the interior and exterior of the building, and when the flood-lighting of the building was finally done, Paterson had a real land-mark as the public was entering or leaving the town.

Our membership has never been large, and new members were welcomed with delight (as they are today) but with new members Bill and Val Anderson coming into our midst, our Museum bloomed. Val is a talented artist specialising in depicting historic buildings and floral watercolours, and over the years she has used her talents to present the items on display with easy-to-read signage and other artistic ways. Today our visitors always comment on the wonderful way our items are displayed.

The 30th Anniversary of the founding of the Society function was an ideal way to launch a new book written by our President, Cameron Archer. The book tells the story of the history of the Presbyterian Church in Paterson, which was built in 1842 and is recorded as the oldest such church in Australia. The book was launched in the historic church itself by John Clark, well-known A.B.C. presenter, and the church was filled with an eager audience to hear Jean Archer give a concise and interesting history of the growth of Presbyterianism in the early years



ST ANN'S
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

of settlement of the Colony. A 'gold coin' donation bowl at the door benefitted St. Anne's Church by \$200.

Another book was launched on that day also. Edwin Coyle, a descendant of James Keppie, of one of the early Paterson families, titled his book "Ploughs, Pubs, and Paddle Steamers" all of which had played a part in the family's history over the years. Also on display for the first time was the refurbished "Keppie Room" which displays all manner of house-hold tools, and small farming implements given over the years by the Keppie Family, who have been staunch members of the Society since its inception.

The weekend celebrations were an outstanding success with several hundred visitors attending over the two days, with many descendants of early families returning to visit the area where their families had their beginnings. The weekend confirmed our knowledge that we were doing things the right way, and encouragement to continue into the future.

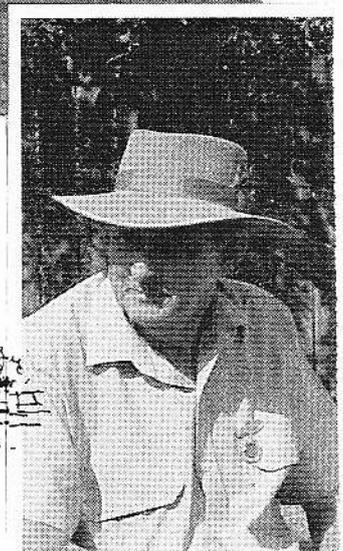
P.M. CLEMENTS
HON. SEC.



Keppie Family



Mabs & Bill Keppie



Photos: Kathy Lyall

30th Anniversary

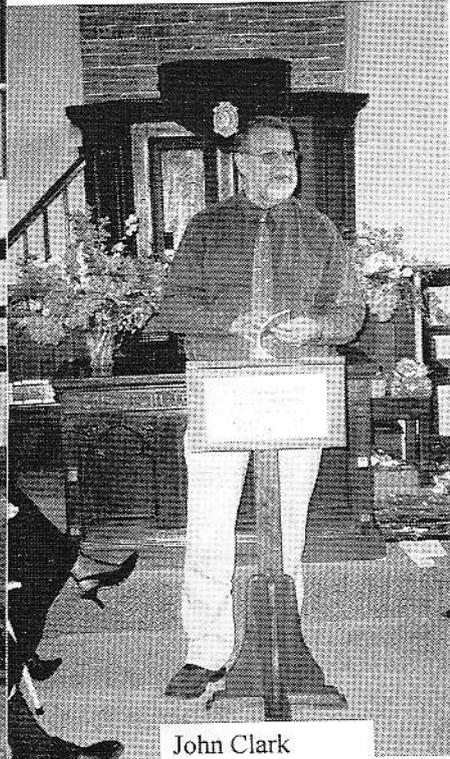
18th – 19th September 2004



Cameron Archer
President & Author



Jean Archer
Guest Speaker



John Clark
Radio ABC 1233



Zolton Lyall

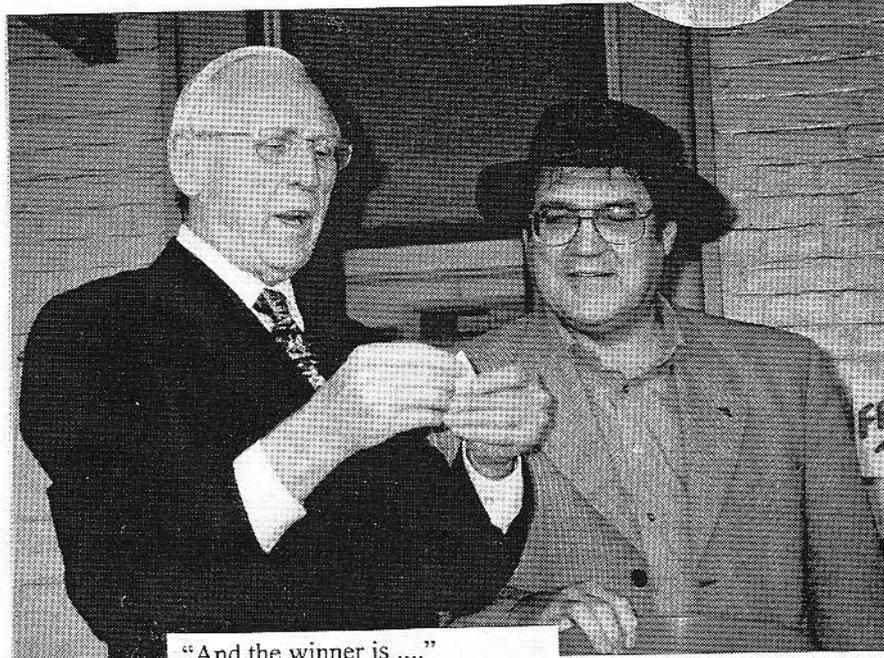


Shirley Threlfo

ST ANN'S PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



“Old Friends”
Mac & June Mayne



“And the winner is”
Keith Rudkin – Cameron Archer

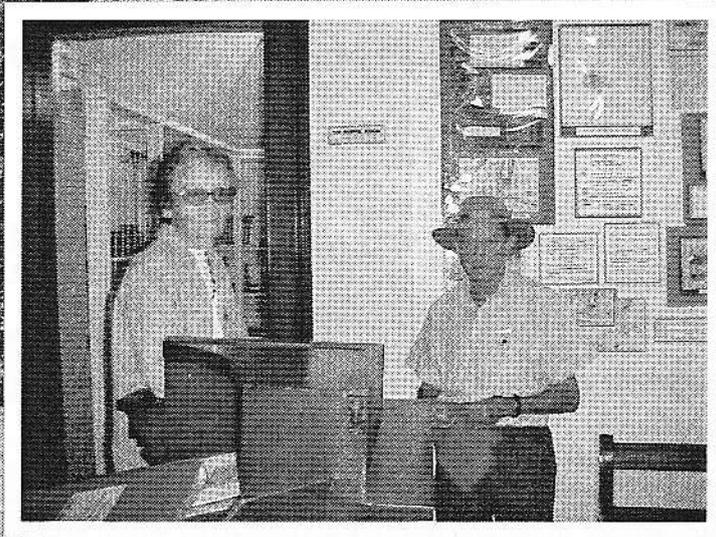
Photos: Bill Anderson



PATERSON COURT HOUSE MUSEUM



John Price MP

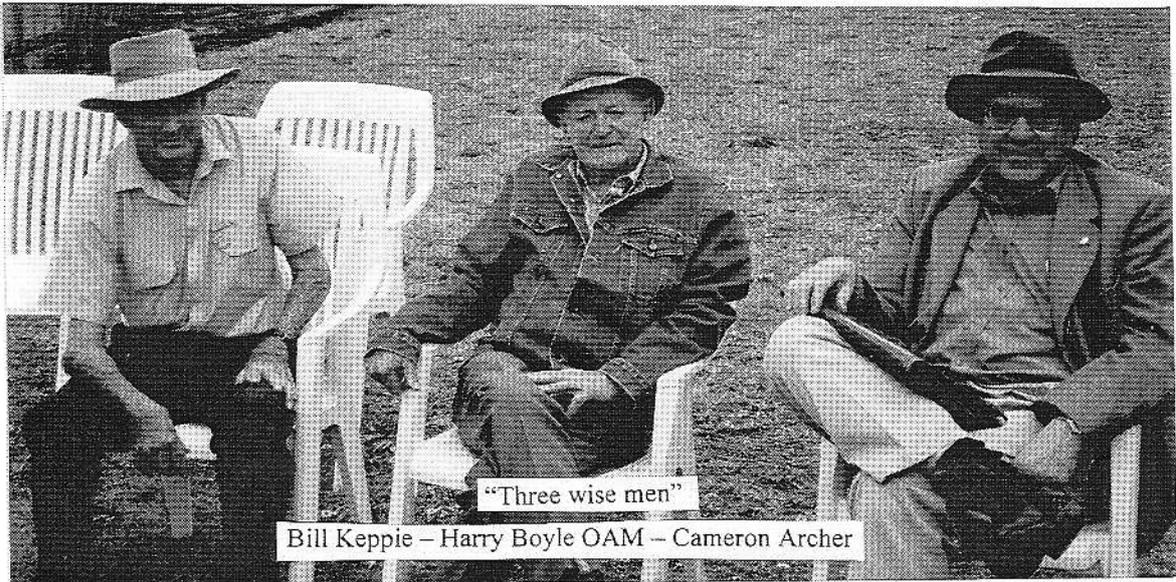


KEPPIE ROOM OPENING

Mabs & Bill Keppie



Ted Coyle – Author



“Three wise men”

Bill Keppie – Harry Boyle OAM – Cameron Archer

Photos: Bill Anderson.

Letter to the Editor – Dr Barry Chapman

I was very interested to read Mr Alex Anderson's letter to the Editor of "Museum News" concerning St Helena, with an outline of its history, present day circumstances and prospects. I wonder if any of the famous willow trees (or their descendants – I do not know how long they live) are still on the island? If not, the present inhabitants may possibly like cuttings to be sent back from Paterson – but then, again, they may not!

As well as the history of Paterson, I am also interested in military matters, so I look forward to seeing the new Keppie Room. I certainly found the previous room interesting and moving. I particularly remember with sadness a letter from King George V to the Keppie family about one of their men-folk who lost his life in the First World War.

I myself have a personal link with Presbyterianism in the early days at Paterson. My great-great-great-grandfather was Reverend Laughton, a Presbyterian Minister. I understand that he lived at Dungog, and travelled around the area to conduct church services, including at Paterson and East Maitland.

His daughter, Marianne Laughton, married Robert Studdert. Their eldest child Charles Fitzgerald Studdert, was born in Paterson, married Sophia Cordell, also from the same vicinity and ultimately became Postmaster of Bathurst.

One of their children was my grandmother, Elizabeth Sophia Pearl O'Shea, nee Studdert. Several members of her mother's family were also called Elizabeth and she herself was known as Pearl. To us she was Nanna. (One of her brothers Gordon Studdert, was head of Cobb and Co after they diversified their business away from coaching.)

My mother, Winifred Cordell Chapman, nee O'Shea, born at Bathurst, was one of Nanna O'Shea's four daughters.

When he was an old man, my great-grandfather C.F. Studdert (see above) used to tell my late mother, when she was young, about the really good oranges which were grown at Paterson when he was a boy.

Yours faithfully,
Barry Chapman
(Dr B.L. Chapman)



30th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS —

Who would have thought that Paterson, a country town with about 300 residents, could have realised a vision in 1974 to transform the old courthouse into a gem of excellence, a museum with attractions and lasting appeal to those who visit.

Thirty years is a long time – not one Sunday opening missed – a proud moment and a tremendous feeling of contribution and achievement by society members and the community.

Over 400 visitors thoroughly enjoyed the two museum open days which is very satisfying for all those involved.

In the words of Secretary Pauline (inaugural secretary of the 1974 Founding Committee) "...it is a very special place."



**HAVE A WONDERFUL AND FESTIVE SEASON
MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL**