



# COWPER 200 NEWSLETTER

1809 - 2009 - *The Cowper Family in Australia*

March 2009

## William's childhood home...



Photo courtesy: Peter Bolt

Thanks to the painstaking research of Warren Kenny (Thomas Branch) and Peter Bolt we can reveal how William's childhood home looks today. The picture shows *Sellet Hall* although when William lived there it was known as *Sellet Manor*. Local records show that it appears Samuel [William's father] paid 17 Shillings and 8 Pence Land Tax on his farm in the 1781 Return.

During his recent trip to the United Kingdom Peter continued his research into William's early history and met the current owner of our ancestral home – and the product of this research will be revealed in the soon to be published book "*The Indispensable Parson*", which will be launched during our commemorations on 17 August next.

### Watch your letterbox during May!

**During May you will be receiving another information kit in the mail.**

The May mailing will contain all the information you'll need to book for the events planned during August. This issue of your newsletter brings you up to date with the most recent planning for our family commemoration as well as other information about William's immediate family.

# Our plans for August...

## A big 'thank you'

First of all a big thank you to all our family members for your response to our previous mailings; your help has been invaluable to the steering committee when putting together the program of events scheduled for August 2009. We have been overwhelmed with your support and encouragement which has arrived by mail, e-mail and telephone. As we draw closer to August we can sense the enthusiasm and interest growing in the minds of William's descendants.

## Watch out for the mail

As indicated on the front page of your newsletter our next major communication will be during May when we will forward to family members on the mailing list booking information and procedures for all the planned activities. So watch out for the mail - needless to say, if you don't receive the details please get in touch!

## Accommodation

Can you help with accommodation for family members during August? If you can, please get in touch with the committee. We are currently building a list of people who are able to accommodate family members and those who would like accommodation. If you can help please let us know.

## A change in venue

Unfortunately the global financial crisis (and the changeability of Sydney's weather in August!) has seen a change in venue for the luncheon immediately following the Thanksgiving service at St Philip's on 16 August. After careful consideration of the costs

involved to family members, provision for wet weather and transport necessities, your committee has now switched the venue for the luncheon to the Foyer of No 1 York Street, - right next door to St Philip's. For those with an interest in history, the building is on the site of the original St Philip's School, Rectory and St Philip's church hall so historic links with the family remain.

## Rail trip

Similarly, plans for a rail trip of some kind during the period of commemoration have been curtailed. To quote from an email received from the Chairman of the Rail Transport Museum:

*As you can imagine, I'm very disappointed that we've not been able to firm up something for you, as I personally wanted to see some kind of rail event part of the Cowper 200 celebrations.*

*Our two-car diesel railcar set has, as it has turned out, and despite expectations when we took delivery of the set from RailCorp, some significant problems with one of its engines, which will take some months to rectify; thus our Operations people have been reluctant to come up with a price and a clear indication of availability. We have also curtailed our overall operations program to some degree (in response to the market, based on the economic downturn), so that the likelihood of another train at the right time and in the right place that may have provided a carriage or two for you to charter has been reduced.*

Naturally we too are disappointed at the turn of events ... but the opportunity always remains beyond the anniversary.

## Our program - August 2009

1st	Visit Stroud, Tahlee, Hunter Valley
2nd	Commemoration Service – 11.30 am Christ Church Cathedral, Newcastle
16th	Commemoration service – 10.00 am St Philip's Church
16th	Family Lunch – 1.00 pm – Foyer No 1 York Street
17th	St Philip's open for inspection for family members and their friends
17th	Book Launch – 5.30 pm for 6.00 pm State Library of New South Wales
18th	Lectures and morning tea – 9.00 am St Philip's Church
18th	Thanksgiving Service – Noon St Philip's Church
18th	NSW Parliament – launch function
19th	Cowper Places' Tours – times to be confirmed
23rd	Commemoration Service – 9.00 am St Paul's Cobbitty
23rd	Family picnic and reunion - 10.30am Wivenhoe

## A testimonial to the Venerable Archdeacon

“A meeting of the parishioners and religious friends of the Rev Dr. Cowper was held last evening in St. Philip's Grammar School Room, Church Hill, for the purpose of presenting him with a testimonial of their respect and Christian attachment, in the form of the excellent full length portrait of the Archdeacon, painted by Mr. Claxton. The painting, which was displayed at the end of the school room, is a fine work of art, and depicts the peculiar features of the venerable man's countenance with a life-like vividness.

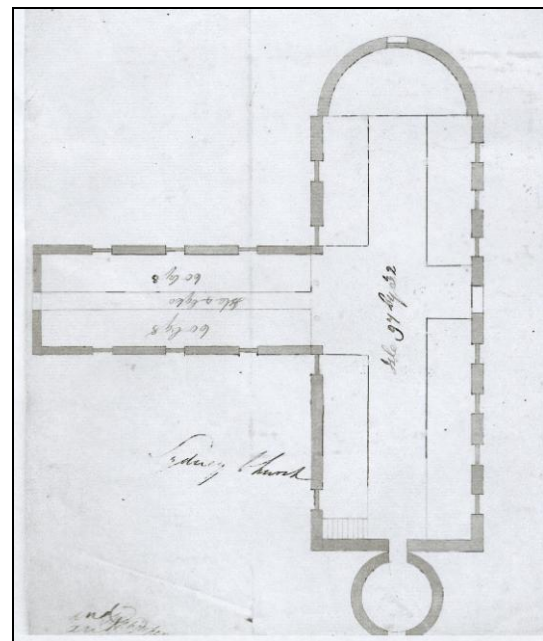


“The room was well filled with a respectable audience, of whom a large proportion were ladies. Mr. Charles Kemp, J P., took the chair, and the Rev R. L. King having read prayers, Mr. John Campbell, J.P., presented the testimonial, reading an address which expressed the affectionate regard of the subscribers for the exemplary Christian character and faithful pulpit ministrations of the Venerable Archdeacon, sustained throughout a period of forty-five years. Dr. **Cowper** then read a reply, in which he thanked his friends for their kindness, and stated his satisfaction at the generous manner in which they had accepted his endeavors faithfully and earnestly to enunciate divine truth and enforce Christian duty; concluding by offering, in Scripture language, some pastoral admonitions, particularly warning them of certain practices recently introduced into their church by those who endeavoured to prevent the pure gospel of Christ. A vote of thanks were then moved by Mr. Sheppard, and seconded by the Rev. R. L. King, to the lady through whose exertions this

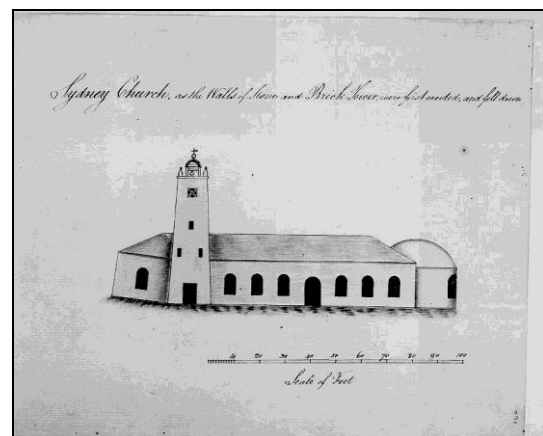
testimonial had been managed; the vote was unanimously accorded. A subsequent resolution was affirmed by the meeting, that the balance of subscriptions to the testimonial over and above the cost of the picture should be expended in presenting each of the subscribers with an engraved portrait of the Venerable Archdeacon - a copy of the original picture. The Venerable Archdeacon expressed his concurrence in the proposal. The benediction was then pronounced, and the meeting separated.”

Extract from: *The Maitland Mercury Newspaper* dated 15 March 1854, Page 4

### *From William's papers...*



Floor plan of the original St Philip's Church found among William's papers (Elizabeth Eugenie Cowper-Field bequest)



The first St Philip's showing the original tower



# William's Grandchildren

We often get questions from William's descendants about his grandchildren, and that in turn begs the question of that of his great grandchildren.

Here is a complete list of William's 23 grandchildren (and photos of a few of them!)

**Henry Cowper and Eliza Louise** had no children

**Thomas Cowper and Eliza's** children were named Henrietta Elizabeth Harriet Hannah, Mary Eliza Matilda, Spelmania Rebecca, and Ada Rose



(L) Thomas and his children, Henrietta and Mary. (R) Thomas' fourth daughter, Ada Rose (Photos courtesy Edith Turner and the Small family)



Henrietta as a young woman (Photo John Hough)



William's great grandchildren – Henrietta and John (Joseph) and their children (Photo courtesy John Hough)

**Mary Stephena and George Brooks'** children were named Hannah Euphemia, George William, John William, and Mary Eliza

**Charles Cowper and Eliza's** children were named Charles, William Harrington, Eliza Hannah, Charlotte Eliza, Mary Sophia and Rose (and sadly, one stillborn daughter, unnamed)



Charles and Charlotte Eliza – Charles later became Sheriff of Sydney; Charlotte Eliza married Hugh Robison (Photos courtesy Keith Cowper collection and Jane Corbett-Jones)

**William Macquarie Cowper and Margaret's** children were named William, Elizabeth Jane, Margaret Louisa, Harriet Ann, Eliza Jane and Matilda

**Elizabeth Ann and George Field's** son was named Alfred Cowper



Alfred Cowper Field, his wife Maud and William's great children Alfred Jnr and Elizabeth Eugenie Cowper (Photo courtesy Keith Cowper collection)

**Sedgwick Spelman Cowper and Louisa's** daughter was named Wilhelmina



We suspect that this is Wilhelmina (Courtesy: Keith Cowper collection)

**Isabella** sadly died when she was an infant

## Thomas meets John Lynch\*, notorious murderer and bushranger

Gordon Thomson, research officer with the Goulburn District historical Society, has provided, along with other material, this extract from the book *Old Pioneering Days in the Sunny South* by Charles McAlister published in 1907.

"The series of atrocious murders committed by Lynch, who was hanged at Berrima Gaol in 1844, form about the most bloodcurdling chapter of horrors in our history. He confessed to having killed at least nine people....

"... on the road Lynch fell in with 'Cobbawn Jack' and Jack (a man named Ireland) and a blackboy, who were in charge of a horse team belonging to the late Mr. Thomas Cowper (brother of Sir Charles Cowper), which was bound for Sydney with a freight of cheese and bacon etc., for sale. Lynch journeyed along in their company, and one night at the camp at Razorback near Picton, under the pretence of looking for straying horses of the team, he took the blackboy with him, and at the first opportunity killed the lad with a single blow of his deadly tomahawk.

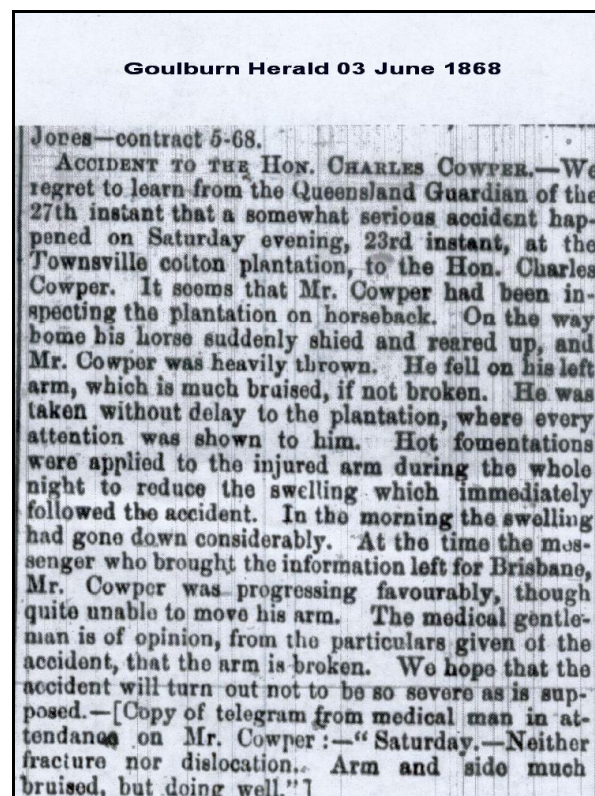
"Returning to the camp, he induced Cobbawn Jack to also join in the search for the horses, and at a favourable moment gave the man his death blow. He then burned the two bodies, and, in taking the team the miscreant made tracks for Sydney, intending to sell the property and pocket the proceeds.

"Near Liverpool, however, to Lynch's surprise, he was met by Mr. Cowper the owner of the team. To Cowper's enquiry, Lynch said that Ireland and the boy had gone into the bush after whip-handles, and he was only driving the team until they overtook him. Mr. Cowper, strange to say, accepted the story, and on leaving, told Lynch that he would expect the team at a certain place in Sydney on an appointed day. Lynch however, travelling day and night, to Sydney long before the date appointed, and having quickly disposed of the team and produce, he started up country again ...."

\* **John Lynch**, was believed to have committed at least nine murders before being hanged at Berrima (aged 29) in 1841.

## Charles has an accident

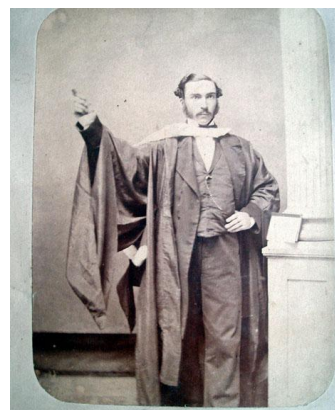
We are indebted to Warren Kenny for this snippet from the Goulburn Herald of 3 June 1868



## Sedgwick's appointment

Extract from the Moreton Bay Courier, Thursday March 28, 1861

"Mr. Sedgwick Spelman Cowper, A.B., the youngest son of the late Archdeacon, has been selected from a large number of applicants to fill the office of secretary to the New South Wales Commission of the International Exhibition of 1862."



Sedgwick in his University days – Photo: Keith Cowper collection



## A message from the Thomas Branch

Contact has recently been made by John Hough (Thomas Branch) here's a copy of a recent e-mail.

"Thanks John & hello Warren and Liz

"It's good to find others to share information with.

"We would love some more information on Thomas as there appears to be little written about him. We know he was a School Master and Grazier at Tyndale, but we don't why he came to the area. The area adjoining Tyndale is known as Cowper, but I believe this was named after Charles Cowper from whom you are descended.

"I have only one scanned photo of Thomas in our collection, (it had 'Thomas Cowper' written on the back of it from memory), I scanned it some time ago though I can't remember if it was an original or copy. I think the photo may be here somewhere but I'm pretty sure it came from a great aunt whom researched a lot of family history and was a granddaughter of Henrietta. I remember her telling me that when she was a little girl, Henrietta wanted to see her before she died and that she held her hand in hospital before she passed away.

"I've attached the photo of Thomas, a photo of Henrietta and a photo of John Joseph Hough, Henrietta and their family. John and Henrietta are in the centre. My great grandfather John Clarence Cowper Hough is to the right of Henrietta.

Cheers

**Cousin John  
Thomas branch**

(Some of the photos referred to are shown on page 4 – Ed)

## An artist in the family

On the right we reproduce a photograph of a painting hanging in the dining room at Tahlee. The inscription states that it was painted by A H Cowper – Annie Brownrigg – wife of William Macquarie's eldest son, William. A little research indicates that Annie was from a family of artists, and in her day was well known for her works.

**We'll be able to view the painting personally when we visit Tahlee in August**

## Mary Stepheana and George Brooks

WE have located a well written and most informative article containing a long description of the history of the locality in which Maryland Public School in the Hunter Valley is situated. The article includes the following paragraphs about the landholdings of William's son-in-law, George Brooks and William's eldest daughter Mary Stepheana.

*"Dr. George Brooks, assistant surgeon at Newcastle, obtained a grant by purchase of 320 acres from Gov. Darling in 1830. This grant today approximates an area bounded on the south by Cowper Street, west by Nelson Street, east by Robert Street and extended north to the old racecourse. Brooks later bartered 50 acres of this land for 50 head of cattle. This 50 acres formed the Lemongrove Estate and is now the main shopping centre of Wallsend. It is interesting to note here that Dr. Brooks, who was appointed to Newcastle in 1822 at a salary of 273 pounds and 15 shillings a year, and, at first, served as overseer and wardsman at the hospital remained as surgeon until 1847. He was largely responsible for the early development of Newcastle Hospital."*

*"1839 saw the granting of 1280 acres to Mrs. George Brooks (Mary Cowper, daughter of Rev. William Cowper, Colonial Chaplain and the minister who preached the first sermon in Newcastle (1818). This grant, a "marriage portion" from Gov. Gipps as an encouragement for the marriage of 'free and respectable' people, adjoined her husband's and extended from Nelson Street West to Boundary Road taking in the Plattsburg area of Wallsend and north past the old racecourse to Harges' dairy farm of later years. Mrs. George Brooks later divided her property, "Mary Land," among her children, one portion going to a daughter who married Mr William Platt. This area, when subdivided in 1861, thus became Plattsburg."*

You can read the entire piece here:

<http://www.maryland-p.schools.nsw.edu.au/areahistory.htm>



## Who's doing what?

As in our November newsletter, we thought it was appropriate at this point to give you an idea of the 'key people' looking after each event on the calendar.

Whilst the steering committee has overall responsibility for the commemoration we are fortunate to have family members who have stepped up to plan and organise each individual activity and to take responsibility for its progress. And for this we are most grateful!

*The key 'event management' people are (in order of appearance!):*

**The Hunter Connection:** Roger Goldfinch  
**St Philip's activities:** Jill Auld, John Kerrigan  
**Family Lunch:** Mick Cowper  
**Book Launch:** Jill Auld  
**Cowper Places tour:** Janet Hay, Peter Cowper  
**Family Reunion (Wivenhoe):** David Cowper  
**Parliamentary Connection:** John Cowper  
**Railway Trip:** Jim White and John Cowper  
**Event co-ordinator:** Chris Cowper

*In addition the following have volunteered to look after specific activities:*

**History sub-committee:** Warren and David Kenny, Sarah Cowper, Bill Brooks, Angela Lind, John Cowper  
**Family tree review and publication:** Warren Kenny and Angela Lind  
**Oral history project:** Angela Lind  
**Photography, historic photos, event photos:** Michelle Pain  
**Book project:** Jill Auld, Charles Cowper  
**Publicity sub-committee:** John Cowper, Jane Corbett-Jones, Roger Goldfinch  
**Website development:** Sarah Cowper, David Kenny, John Cowper  
**UK Ambassador at large:** Stephen Kenny

No doubt other family members will emerge to take on responsibilities as 2009 rolls on – we will keep you informed through the pages of your newsletter.

## Keep in touch online:

Visit our website:

[www.cowper200.com.au](http://www.cowper200.com.au)

Visit our blog:

[www.cowper200.bigblog.com.au](http://www.cowper200.bigblog.com.au)

## Your steering committee

**Chairman** – John Cowper  
**Secretary** – Liz Pawsey  
**Treasurer** – Michael Moore  
**Database/Asst Treasurer** – Mick Cowper  
**Committee Representative** – Jill Auld  
**Function Co-ordinator** – Chris Cowper  
**Publicity** – Jane Corbett-Jones

Warren Kenny	Peter Cowper
Bill Brooks	Sarah Cowper
Sibella Lee	Lisa Lambert
Louise Cowper	Charles Cowper
Roger Goldfinch	David Cowper
Janet Hay	Rod Hirst
	Jim White

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### Privacy Notice

#### Database and family tree

The organising committee (the committee) for the Cowper200 celebration is seeking to collect a range of personal information from descendants of William Cowper, and his children. The information will be held in a database managed by a member of the committee and will be used to:

- send family members information and updates about the events for the Cowper200 celebration; and
- include information about you and your family on a family tree.

The information to be included on the family tree will be name, dates of birth, marital or defacto details and children's names and dates of birth. The committee proposes to make a copy of the family tree available to family members and it may be published in some form. No contact details or personal information, other than that listed above, will be included in the family tree or will otherwise be disclosed by the committee without your consent. The information on the database will be retained by the committee indefinitely and will be used solely for the purpose of contacting people about Cowper family functions. If you wish to see the personal information about you held by the committee, please contact the Secretary, Cowper200.

#### Web log (blog) and website

In the lead up to the celebrations, the committee is running a blog and will publish a website which will include information about the organising process, including committee meetings and celebration events and may include stories and photos. If you provide information to the committee, please let the committee know if it can be published on the blog or on the web.