



# Newsletter of the **Scone & Upper Hunter Historical Society**

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March 2025



*Mr Bill Howey launching "The Way We Were – Scone's Historical Tapestry 1825-2025"*

## **Committee Elected in February 2025**

President:	Carolyn Carter	Treasurer:	Ann Bailey
Vice President:	Margaret MacDougall	Committee:	Carol Ray
Secretary:	Dianne Walmsley	Committee:	Val Ray
Committee:	Jayne Webster	Committee:	Don MacDougall
Committee:	Melissa MacDougall		

**Membership of the Society** – is open to everyone who is interested in Local or Family History. Subscriptions are \$25.00 for singles and \$40.00 joint membership (same address) per calendar year (January to December). Financial member's names are listed in the newsletter following the receipt of their payment.

**The Historical Museum** – is open every Wednesday from 9.30am to 2.30pm and every Sunday between 2.30pm and 4.30pm. There is always interesting historical display on view with many items connected to Scone's history.

The Museum is housed in the original Police Station and Lock-up. The displays are regularly changed.

Entry fees – Adults \$5.00 and Children \$1.

### **The Sergeant's Residence Research Centre**

Adjacent to the Museum, the Research Centre is open every Wednesday from 9.30am to 2.30pm. We have extensive resources available and there will be someone to assist you during your visit. You do not have to make an appointment to do your research. Research in person, fees are \$25.00 for Non-members and \$5.00 for Member; plus photocopying costs at 25cents per sheet.

### **Research Requests**

Research will also be undertaken by correspondence the fee is \$25.00 which includes up to 20 pages of photocopying and standard postage.

Please email the society at [sconehistorical@yahoo.com.au](mailto:sconehistorical@yahoo.com.au).

For these requests, clearly outline what it is you want researched. Our researcher will check our files and advise if we can help you and let you know then commence the research when the research fee is paid.

Our mailing address is: **P.O. Box 339 Scone NSW 2337.**

Please mark all enquires to "Attention Researcher" or 'Attention Secretary.'.

**Our Webpage can be found at:**

**[SconeHistorical.org.au](http://SconeHistorical.org.au)**

### **Scone Historical Society banking details are –**

All payments either for Membership or Research can be paid by direct deposit into our Bank Account –

Scone & Upper Hunter Historical Society

BSB: 932 000 Account: 787562

Please put your name and initials and "M'ship" or "Research" as a reference.

Or you can pay by cheque or cash.

New Members are always most welcome. Forms to become a member are available on our webpage or from the Secretary upon request.

### **Publication**

The Society has published numerous historical books pertaining to Scone and the district. A list of titles is available on our webpage or contact the Secretary for a full list of titles and prices.

### **Sense of Place Case**

The Historical Society has a small, interesting display of historical items pertaining to the Scone area at the Scone Library.

Please take time to have a look when you are next at or near the library. It is changed regularly.

### **Life Members:**

Miss E Davies Mrs A Entwistle Mrs A Miles Mrs M MacDougall

### **Welcome to New Members**

#### **Membership paid for 2025**

Ariel, Mr H

Bailey, Mr N & Mrs A

Balsdon, Ms R

Bell, Mr R

Bishop, Mr A & Mrs A

Brayshaw, Mrs H

Brooker, Mr M

Burton, Mr K

Carter, Ms C

Dangarfield, Mr P

Flegg, Mr D

Fleming, Mr P

Garland, Mr D

Garland, Mr R & Mrs Z

George, Mr E

Graham, Mrs S

Hancock, Mrs J

Holmes, M/Thompson, L

Howey, Mr W P & Mrs S

Johnstone, Mr O

Kennedy, Mr D & Mrs M

Logan, Ms G

Logan, Mr I

Lonsdale, Mrs D

MacCallum, Mr I

Martel, Mrs J

McMahon, Mrs J

McRae, Mr N

Morris, G

Morrison, Mrs P

Norris, Mr R

Paradice, Mrs R

Price, Ms L

Pring, Mr R

Ray, Mrs C

Ray, Mrs V

Scholz, Mr J

Walmsley, Mr M & Mrs D

Watson, Mr W

Williams, Ms E

Wilson, Mr B

Woodlands, Mrs M

Worrall, Mrs P

#### **Donations**

Scholz, Mr J

Brayshaw, Dr H

Johnstone, Mr O

Williams, Ms E

Martel, Mrs J

Flegg, Mr D

#### **Thank you for your support**

**Donations** – The Scone and Upper Hunter Historical Society would like to thank everyone who has made a donation of any kind, whether cash or items to be used in the Museum or Research Centre.

We are always grateful for any donations; no matter how small.

#### **Tell us your story**

We know that there are many members who have some very interesting local history stories to tell and we invite you share them with others through our Newsletter.

## **SOCIETY ACTIVITY AND NEWS**

We re-opened our doors to the Research Centre and the Museum on Wednesday January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2025 after the Christmas New Year break. This is our first Newsletter for 2025 and please accept our belated best wishes for a happy, healthy and productive 2025 for all our members. We held our AGM on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> 2025. Nothing has changed in relation to our Committee as you can see from the names listed in this Newsletter. Many thanks to Jenny Woodley for chairing the election of office bearers.

Our new storage shed has now been completed, with electricity and the stormwater system now connected and approved. We are currently waiting on a Certificate of Occupancy so that we can move in. Margaret and Don MacDougall have been working on plans to move the metal shelves from the old shed (which is to be demolished), and the metal shelves from the left hand cell, into the new shed. The plans will include which of the larger items from our collection are to go into the shed. We will have a big moving day once we get occupancy! Thanks to Carol Ray we have been approved to have St Heliers Corrective Services help with the heavy lifting.

In January, we received a locally made tennis court roller donated by the Scone Uniting Church. This roller had been used by the Tennis group who rented the tennis court from the Church for many years. At the end of 2024 the Tennis group folded and the Church decided that they would not take over maintaining the courts. According to anecdotal history the Tennis group originally found the roller too heavy to push, so they attached a motor to it, later they added a seat and a steering mechanism. The motorised roller was developed by Ray Farrell and Ron Haggerty, both of Scone and both were members of the Tennis group at that time.

At the Scone Literary Festival on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> March, Bill Howey launched his book "The Way We Were: Scone's Historical Tapestry 1825 – 2025". Bill describes this wonderful publication as a compilation and recension of several of our publications of our local history, plus other publications that record information about the various historical personalities and events that relate to the two hundred years of white settlement within a sixteen kilometre radius of Scone. Bill is being exceedingly generous and donating the money from the sale of his book to the Society. It is a lovely book of 353 pages with high quality paper and many photographs and several maps. Bill's book can be purchased from the Scone & Upper Hunter Historical Society for \$50 (please see more information about postage elsewhere in this Newsletter).

Currently, the only activity that we have planned, apart from our usual work, is to hold a stall at the Scone Grammar School Fete on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May during Horse Festival. We will be selling some of our past publications and books and items surplus to our requirements and holding a raffle. A beautiful quilt donated to the Society by Jayne Webster, our Research Officer, is the first prize, second and third prizes are framed historical photographs of Scone and surrounds.

Carolyn Carter - Editor

## WHITE SETTLEMENT COMES TO SCONE

A few years ago, one of our volunteers experienced a rather nasty encounter with a visitor who took exception to the dates and names on the timeline on exhibition in the display case on the wall of the Museum verandah. The visitor in question took exception to Henry Dangar being acknowledged as the first white person to visit the Scone area. He insisted that Allan Cunningham came before Henry Dangar.

As 2025 is the bicentenary of the first recorded white settlement in our area, I thought it relevant to consider: was the angry visitor correct in insisting the timeline in the display case was wrong? Or, is the timeline correct? A couple of our Society publications, based on the journals of Dangar and Cunningham, give an account of when both of these men first came into the Scone district, and, in his book *Dawn in the Valley*, W Allan Wood also provides some information about Dangar. See what you think after you read the following excerpts from these three publications.

### Allan Cunningham:

*"Some Upper Hunter History"* by **Nancy Rowland Gray** in "Scone & Upper Hunter Historical Society Journal: Vol 2 1961," pp.18 – 23. "...In 1823 [Allan Cunningham] set out on an expedition that brought him to the Upper Hunter from Bathurst – with all the difficulties of the bush to contend with he tramped the foothills of the range, looking for a gap that would lead through to the Liverpool Plains, as far as near Murulla [near present day Wingen] where he turned back, and crossed the Dartbrook. That's the closest that Cunningham came to us here [in 1823]. He followed the range down towards Rossgole, and just as he was about to describe his position he breaks off and draws a picture of a beautiful new plant he had just discovered with shining green leaves, white flowers and lovely scent. This is all very nice of Cunningham, but infuriating for us when we are trying to discover just where he was.

"Writing at night in the light of the campfire Cunningham writes, 'How silent and dismal the night, no sound save the buzzing of insects, what a contrast to town life, it seems as if I were going astray in my mind, am somewhat disappointed.' But the very next day he discovered and named Pandora's Pass."

*"Allan Cunningham"* by **W Dalton** in "Scone & Upper Hunter Historical Society Journal: Vol 1 1959," pp.1-23. "...Cunningham left Bathurst with his party 15<sup>th</sup> April 1823, passed Dabee (Rylston), Mount Innes and a grassy flat called by the natives 'Nandoura'...

"On May 5<sup>th</sup> the party camped at Emu Creek, next day reached the Goulburn River. Cunningham writes 'This is Lawson's Goulburn River. Its outer channel was fifty yards wide with water marks showing twelve feet above its small stream then almost hidden with reeds.' [In 1822 William Lawson had journeyed from Bathurst east to present day Mudgee and as far as the present day Krui river near present day Cassilis].

"Leaving this camp which was near present day Cassilis, they proceeded northeasterly crossing the present Krui river originally named Wemss by Lawson and Scott, who together had explored these parts the previous year. Passing over Scott's Creek they camped within five miles of Oxley's Peak [NE of current day Merriwa].

"Cunningham's objective was to find an opening through the Dividing Range into Liverpool Plains. From his camp there appeared to be none, so he turned east along the foothills of

the main range and for six days struggled over an interminable maze of hill and dale, scrub and creek, travelling he reports, 'thirty miles and crossing nineteen creeks', one of which of course would be the Dartbrook near its source...

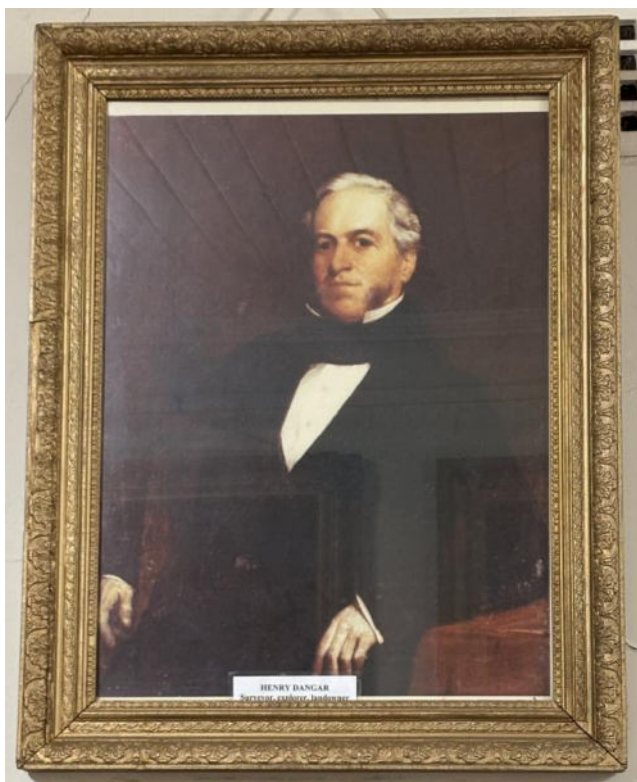
"Having failed to find a gap in the Divide as he travelled mile after weary mile of its slopes, in the vicinity of Murrurundi he decided to return to Cassilis camp by an easier route, and so, turning his back on the range, 'into more open country' he followed a southerly direction down the valley of the Kingdon Ponds to a point near Kayuga, then turning west around Mount Manobalai headed up Wybong Creek and so back to the Cassilis camp after an absence of twenty four days, tramping some of the roughest country in the Upper Hunter.

"Still looking for a break in the range to the north, he headed first in a northerly direction, and then westerly into the valley of the Talbragar River, and then the Turee Creek camping 'immediately at the base of the mountain, and within two or three miles of this apparent passage to the northern country' to which he gave the name Pandora's Pass.

"Describing the event, Cunningham writes, 'having directed a line of trees to be marked from our encampment through the passage to the verge of the nearest plain, I climbed to the summit of the eminence on the east side of the Pass, from whence I had a most beautiful and extensive view of the country before me.'"

#### **Henry Dangar:**

*Dawn in the Valley* by W Allan Wood, p20. "Governor Brisbane directed Surveyor General Oxley that the country in the vicinity of Newcastle be surveyed and marked out for the reception of settlers. Accordingly on 1 March, 1822 Oxley instructed Assistant Surveyor Henry Dangar on the procedure to be followed. Squares of 36 miles each were to be surveyed and subdivided into sections of one square mile, and no settler was to have more than one square mile of frontage to any river."



"Some Upper Hunter History," by Nancy Rowland Gray in "Scone & Upper Hunter Historical Society Journal: Vol.2, 1961" pp. 21-22. "This assignment [surveying the Hunter Valley] was to occupy most of Dangar's energies until late in 1826, and the records he made of that so called 'small' job fill nineteen books, all of which are in the Mitchell Library, and which enabled Dangar to write, 'I had great gratification in the first to discover the natural formation of the country at the head of the Hunter to be highly favourable to give easy access into this important district'

"In the 600,000 acres of land surveyed, in the nineteen books of records, and in his published volume, Dangar nowhere says 'I name this creek Kingdon Ponds' [or] 'I name this creek Dartbrook,' but he records as far as I can ascertain all other points which he was first to find, but no written record of Kingdon Ponds and Dartbrook. However, some explanation of this may be found in the fact that in the sequence of his field books, there are four missing days – from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> of August. On the 31<sup>st</sup> July, 1824 Dangar had gone from Fal Brook to Foy Brook. On the 5<sup>th</sup> August he was surveying the village of Ravensworth, but there is no record of where he was on the four days in between, or what he was doing.

" In another account by Dangar describing exploration he made in October 1824 from Wollombi to the Liverpool Range over the Dartbrook, he says, 'Left encampment of the 3<sup>rd</sup> August, a route we took in 4<sup>th</sup> August.' I [Nancy Gray] then went to the Lands Department who were very helpful, and they transferred to the Mitchell Library the maps of Dangar's work in October 1824. There it was, marked 'Dangar 1824.' It must have been the map of his trip from Wollombi to the head of the Dartbrook. I was elated, for at first glance I had found the map that I had been looking for for the last four years...But for me there was an anti-climax, for in the centre of the map a square was cut out which eliminated the village of Scone and the valley of Kingdon Ponds. The cut had been made in the paper quite early, perhaps in the 1820s or 1830s so there was no hope of finding its whereabouts.

"A year later another lot of maps were transferred to the Mitchell Library, and among them I found one marked 'Dangar, October 1824' the same as the other, but this one was intact, and on it I found marked Dangar's trip from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 4<sup>th</sup> of August with the dates written on it. With special permission of the Mitchell Library I am pleased to be able to show you a reproduction of this map, which I feel sure I am correct in saying, that this is the first time it has been produced in public.

"On the map were written Kingdon Ponds, Dartbrook, Holdsworthy Downs, on it is marked Tooloogan, though it is spelt 'Tuligan.' That is the only record of the first exploration of Scone and Kingdon Ponds Valley; so far, no written record has been discovered. There is, however, a written record of his expedition of October 1824 from Wollombi to the Dartbrook in which he says he 'came to Dartbrook'...he crossed 'the Ponds,' they quite clearly had been already named by him in an unrecorded trip in August 1824 when the names were written on the map."

**So who wins? Clearly both men explored our local district, Allan Cunningham perhaps more to the north and west, and Henry Dangar coming up the valley much more in the heart of the Scone district.**

In *Promised Land*, 1975, p.6 and 15, Nancy Gray, writes "Cunningham's journey offered no encouragement to new settlers who needed reasonable access to Sydney's sea port and business centre and who viewed with understandable misgiving a mountainous region that could be reached only from beyond the isolated track linking Bathurst and Mudgee.

"Henry Dangar's route, on the other hand, was one that could be readily and safely followed, while his description of the well-watered valleys and open grazing land, with easy access to Morpeth and Newcastle was soon known to many prospective settlers. [Bill Howey has pointed out that the area was also accessible from the Hawkesbury, and many new settlers came by this route]. Within a year of his discovery of the route to the Upper Hunter, the best

land along the river from Denman to Scone was selected as grants by free settlers, whose sheep and cattle were soon grazing where previously kangaroos and emus were abundant. In the Scone district the first slab huts were built in 1815 on land that had previously been the hunting ground of aborigines.

“...On 29 June 1825 Francis Little wrote to Governor Brisbane, giving his address as ‘Holdsworthy Downs’ [later to be named ‘Invermien’], Hunter’s River and stating that he was in possession of his grant. This letter is the first known document written by a resident of the Scone district and is clear evidence that between 19 May when his land was allocated, and 29 June, when the letter was written, Francis Little became the first known [white] landholder to **occupy** a grant in the present [in 1975] Shire on Scone.”

In returning to the incident mentioned at the beginning of this item, I believe that the angry visitor misunderstood what the timeline on display outside our Museum is really about. The timeline is not so much about which white man got here first, it is about the settlement of the Scone area, this is what Henry Dangar’s presence was all about – surveying the land for the purpose of organising land grants and settling the area. Allan Cunningham’s exploration was about finding specimens of new plants (as he was a botanist connected to the Kew Gardens) as well as a way through the ranges onto the Liverpool Plains which was beyond the boundary of the officially proclaimed Nineteen Counties – not that that stopped the squatters and their huge land grab very soon after.

### **HISTORY IN THE MUSEUM**

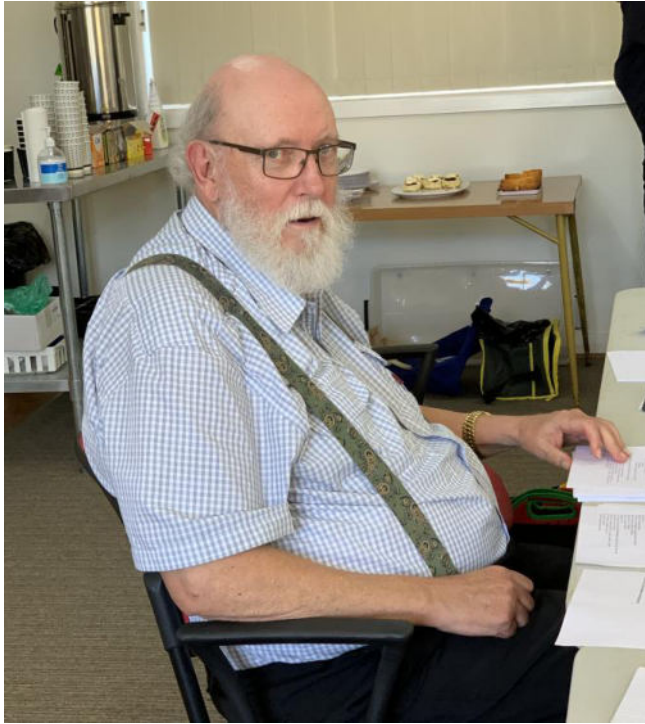
As mentioned above we have received the donation of a ‘home-made’ mechanical tennis court roller from the Scone Uniting Church. The photos below record the delivery day and also the day it was moved into position alongside the steam engine from the ‘Tinagroo’ shearing shed.



### **FAREWELL TO TWO VOLUNTEERS**

Recently we were saddened to hear that two of our former volunteers had passed away. Robert Thurgood on 17<sup>th</sup> March, and Ron Muddle on 1<sup>st</sup> April.

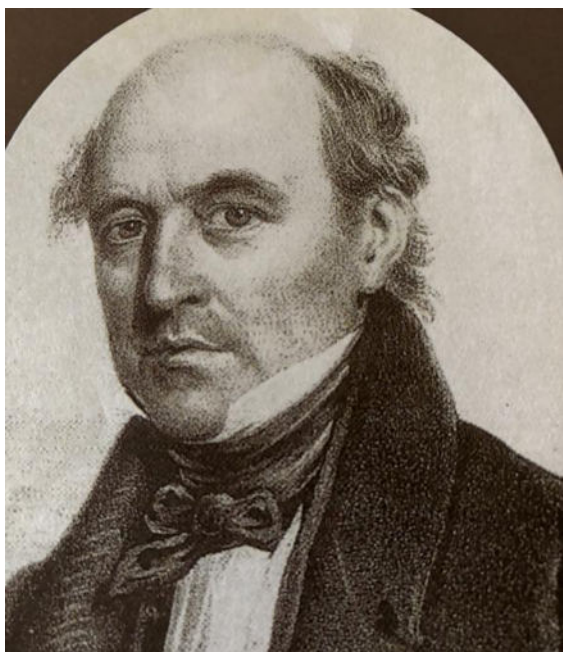
**Robert Thurgood** joined our group of volunteers in 2017 and started working on accessioning the many photographs that had been donated to the Society by *The Scone Advocate*. He also did the preparation work for our first strategic plan and ran the workshops where we developed the plan to its fruition. Robert also served on our Committee for 4 years giving good advice and always ready to take on tasks. He enjoyed telling puns and corny jokes which



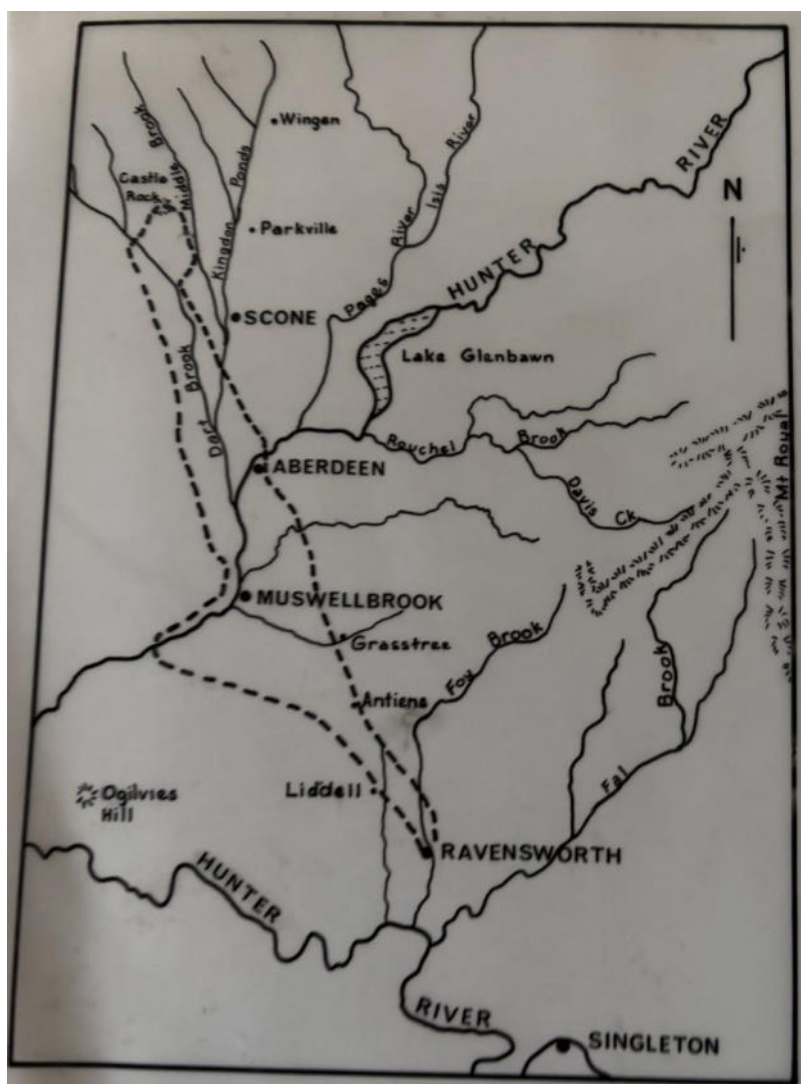
usually brought a few groans from the rest of us. Unfortunately, it became physically too difficult for Robert to regularly attend the Society to carry out his volunteer work, however, he was able to continue to assist by being a judge for the Bishop's History Award for a few more years after. His grandfather was well known bootmaker Arthur Saunders, and Robert donated to our collection several items that had belonged to his grandparents.

**Ron Muddle** started volunteering at the Museum when he moved to Scone from the Blue Mountains a little over twenty years ago. Ron was very practical and always seemed to know how things worked. He was good with machines and had a particular interest in fixing old clocks - he used to keep our clock in the kitchen Museum and the clock in the reception area of the Museum wound and keeping accurate time. Ron was good at identifying the function of various old wares and tools in our collection. He was handy at maintenance and keeping the courtyard clean until he found it too physically difficult. Ron also gave visitors very informative tours of our Museum, showing them how things worked and giving a run down of the provenance of many of the items on display. He was a loyal hardworking volunteer and when he could no longer attend he left a big gap in our organisation.





Alan Cunningham – Botanist and Explorer



Showing Henry Dangar's route of August 1824