



The Kiln

Issue 21

December 2009

Caring for our Cultural Heritage and its Environment

Merry Christmas and a Happy 2010 New Year



www.vicnet.net.au/~fofkk

President's Report

Well, it's soon the end of a busy year at the Friends of Kurth Kiln. With the black Saturday fires behind us and the bush starting to regrow, plans are on the way for our Kurth Kiln 2010 Heritage Festival.

In Kurth Kiln Regional Park the areas closed following the fires have now been reopened and the Tomahawk Creek has been found to be in good health despite fire and extreme heat of summer. Melbourne Water checks on the health of the creek have left inspectors impressed with the purity of the water (see also report on page 3). Alfred and Ursula have attended a bush-fire forum on 18 October in Warburton.

A number of ongoing projects have kept us busy these last six months. The Re-vegetation and Fencing Grant from Melbourne Water for the picnic area near the Thornton Walking Track Bridge was successfully completed, with the help of school children from Gembrook Primary School Grades 5/6. Fun was had by all. Work on the Caretaker Compound picket fence is also completed, with new rails fitted, a new gate installed and new locks fitted to all the huts. Waste-water run-off treatment from the main hut has been improved. In a combined project with the Friends of Bunyip State Park and the Gembrook Fauna & Flora Group the Tonimbuk Portable Steel Kiln has had protective fencing fitted and been highlighted as a cultural heritage site with an Interpretation Board. Dick Cleary is carrying on with restoration work on some of the Kurth Kiln heritage machinery. Great job Dick, well done! Denise Brain has organised a replacement gas fridge for the main hut and Ralph had a gas fitter install it. At the last working bee some of us cleaned up dead trees and shrubs around the water wheel, which looks great now. So thank you to all. A special thank you to our Maintenance Manager Denise for her on-going mowing duty. Well done as always!

On average once a month groups of visitors are given guided tours of the Kurth Kiln facilities by our members, and taken for bush-walks. The Seniors Week Walk in October was poorly attended this year though, with only two persons turning up. 15 students from Upper Yarra Secondary College on 5/6 November was the latest group.

Plans for the coming year include steps to get a proper Water Watch program up and running. Although we have been testing water intermittently over the last 5 months and all seems well with the water health, it would be good to have an official monitoring project. We are currently working on two grant projects, one from Parks Victoria to create a portable display facility where some of our heritage machinery (like the donated Gas Producer units or the Charcoal Grader) can be on show to the public in a safe and secure environment, and a grant from Department of the Environment Water, Heritage and the Arts for assistance with publications. I have spoken to Ralph to have a working bee to fix up all the leaks in the roofs of the huts. And I am still trying to get signs put up to slow down cars and motor bikes around the Kurth Kiln site. Not only would it be safer for pedestrians, it would also reduce the dust and noise pollution. On-going discussions on an interpretation sign for the historic old water race could lead to a future grant project.

I thank all our members for their hard work and the time they put in. A big thank you to our contact Ranger Ralph Angelico and all the Gembrook staff for their help, which goes way beyond the call of duty. Maree, Denise and I will be staying in the huts the first week in January. So, to all the friends of Kurth Kiln and to Parks Victoria staff at Gembrook, have a Merry Xmas and a Happy New Year and a great 2010 and take care. Cheers for now,
Gary Pendlebury

Kurth Kiln Heritage Festival
Sunday 18 April 2010

Coming Events

The Friends of Kurth Kiln meet regularly once a month on the second Saturday for a meeting and maintenance Working Bee at Kurth Kiln. Other days as required. Friends and Visitors are welcome.

December 5 (see note below)	January 9	February 13
March 13	April 10 & 18	May 8

For our Christmas Break-up we will this year join the Friends of Bunyip State Park and the Gembrook Fauna & Flora Group at Mortimer Picnic Ground on 5 December for a friendly lunch-time Barbeque.

We welcome our new Members:

Mr. Bernie Williams; Drs Tom and Kathy Cook, and hope they will enjoy being part of the group.

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This Newsletter is published by the Friends of Kurth Kiln: a group of people concerned with the preservation of the heritage in the Kurth Kiln Site.

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Ranger's Report

I have been doing heritage work on Wilsons Promontory near Mt Hunter at the north end of the Park with John Sullivan. Very hot and thirsty work!



Here are a couple of pictures from our activities in the area. I hope all is going well with the Friends of Kurth Kiln and will see you when we get back. Till then, cheers and good health.

Ralph Angelico

Parks Victoria Working Bee at Kurth Kiln

Ray, from Parks Victoria Gembrook Office, organised a working bee at Kurth Kiln. About 30 Staff and Rangers from the Dandenong area came to give a hand. New Kurth Kiln Regional Park signs were installed at the access roads to the park, which look very impressive, and posts were installed on the tracks.



Dan Bowen organised a BBQ for the workers, who, in small groups, came and went. During lunch a number of the helpers studied the Friends of Kurth Kiln display boards.



Volunteer and Friends Information Kit

The Friends of Kurth Kiln recently received a copy of the August 2009 Parks Victoria "Volunteer and Friends Information Kit".

The Foreword, by Mark Stone, Chief Executive, Parks Victoria and Maelor Himbury, Convenor, Victorian Environment Friends Network reads:

"Volunteering and community participation is an important avenue through which Parks Victoria and the community collaborate in the conservation, protection and interpretation of parks and reserves. Volunteers are vital in supporting Parks Victoria's vision of an outstanding parks and waterways system protected and enhanced for people forever.

Volunteering in Victoria's Parks is greatly supported through the Victorian Environment Friends Network who play a vital role in enabling healthy, diverse and rewarding volunteering to friends' groups across Victoria.

The Friends of Kurth Kiln found the Information Kit very helpful and were delighted to see the Friends of Kurth Kiln mentioned under Types of activities. "Heritage Restoration and Cultural Protection" (see insert above).

6. Heritage Restoration and cultural protection - Friends of Days Mill are dedicated to the preservation of one of Australia's oldest remaining flour mills and associated buildings. While many of the tasks require specialist techniques, the friends have been able to assist in the restoration of the shearing shed and holding pens. Friends of Kurth Kiln have collated a history of the old charcoal kiln, working to repair the accompanying water wheel and to establish a showroom of machinery and tools.

Many visitors to Kurth Kiln enjoy browsing the interpretation boards and the cultural heritage items we have on display. The group is actively involved in expanding the Kurth Kiln display facilities and has just received Parks Victoria approval of a proposal to create a Portable Show-Room to exhibit the donated Gas Producers in a safe and secure environment. It is a very rewarding feeling to see ideas become reality. □

Around the Kiln

THE TOMAHAWK CREEK

Many locals and visitors greatly enjoy an amble on the tracks along the Tomahawk Creek; delighting in hearing the water rushing and cascading over the granite rocks, listening to the birds songs, watching the Yellow-Rumped Thornbills and Fairy Wrens foraging on the path in front of us as though eager to be noticed. We delight in admiring the wild flowers, breathing the invigorating smell of the eucalypts and feeling the warm rays of the sun glistening through the trees. Then we wonder, where does the creek originate, where is it going, are there any threads to its cleanliness or weed infestation along its banks?



The Tomahawk catchment area falls from an elevation of 600m near Tomahawk Gap. The headwaters is in the Shire of Yarra Ranges, south of the McCrae Creek catchment, and west of the Bunyip River catchment. It is located on the southern boundary of the Yarra River catchment, between Gembrook and Powelltown. The catchment is composed of Devonian period porphyritic granite of the Tynong Granite group. This is relatively deeply weathered, resulting in soils containing much coarse-grained and also finer-grained material. It provides the good quality water expected from a largely undisturbed forested catchment. The flow of the creek has to date not been monitored but does continue even during the very dry summers. The Tomahawk Creek joins the Shepherds Creek west of Kurth Kiln, which flows into the Woori-Yallock Creek, a tributary of the Yarra. Forested public land makes up 97% of the catchment.

Melbourne Water in 2008 arranged to survey and map exotic flora species along the Tomahawk Creek riparian corridor from Gembrook-Launching Place Road to the confluence with Sheppards [Shepherds] Creek. The purpose of the survey was to provide accurate weed distribution, threat and control data for a 3.2 km stretch of the river to help with management planning. The field survey was undertaken between the 9th and 29th October 2008.

The field survey team collected data electronically whilst walking the length of the water course within the study area. Data was recorded in transects that ran approximately 50m along the water course and 20m either side from the water's edge. Photo-point monitoring sites were established at approximately 500metre intervals along the creek to assist in recording temporal changes in vegetation condition as well as other site values. Sites were positioned at points which would be easily located again such as at road crossings, walking tracks, fixed water pumps or large natural features. The aim was to include equal quantities of ground cover, mid storey and overstorey in the field of view, by positioning the camera lens parallel with the ground and target vegetation likely to show change over time i.e. vegetation eco-tones.

High quality intact areas of remnant vegetation occurred along the entire stretch of Tomahawk Creek, with a relatively small area of higher weed cover around the Kurth Kiln settlement. The high quality of this vegetation is evidenced in that 52% of the sites had no weeds recorded. The high quality of the vegetation is also evident from the presence of a number of small indigenous herbs and orchids which occurred along the creek path, such as the Green Bird Orchid (*Chiloglottis cornuta*) which grows in fern gullies, where it grows both along stream banks and

epiphytically on tree-fern trunks and rotting logs. Typically small species such as this orchid would be quickly displaced by weed invasion.

Tomahawk Creek over-storey is generally dominated by indigenous trees, with the exception of Monterey Pines around the Kurth Kiln settlement. While only 18 exotic plant species were recorded, however' if left unmanaged it is likely that many of these highly invasive species will have a transformative effects on the vegetation.

This low weed cover is evidence of the



A beautiful group of three Sun Orchids growing behind Kurth Kiln Big Shed

difficulty that introduced species have in maintaining a foothold in a landscape where the vegetation is structurally sound. The creek and its bush environment are our heritage, and it is our responsibility and obligation to ensure the sound pristine environment for the future of the Tomahawk Creek. □

The weed-mapping information and the creek picture are courtesy of Dan Robertson - Melbourne Water

GEMBROOK RIDING CLUB, NAVIGATION RIDE, KURTH KILN REGIONAL PARK 12TH JULY 2009

Very early on the morning of Sunday 12th July 2009 the Gembrook Riding Club prepared to hold their first ever official HRCav Navigation Ride, starting from the horse yards on Scout Camp Track. It had rained all night and threatened to do so for more of Sunday. However as dawn broke the rain disappeared and the sun even came out for a while. This raised everyone's spirits and as entrants started to arrive the excitement increased.



This followed weeks of planning and suggestions and a dummy run by our club members to make sure that the questions were suitable and the ride safe. A Navigation Ride is more or less the same as a car rally where pairs of riders set off at timed intervals and navigate a course answering questions on the way. The winner is the person who comes in closest to the time limit and answers the most correct questions.

Our ride was approximately 20km and headed out from the horse yards past Kurth Kiln and along Beenak Road. It then headed down Manna Gum Track, along Shepherds Creek Road to Ure Rd, all the way down Ure Road to Beenak Road again, then down Correa Rd, Boundary Rd, joining up with Shepherds Creek Rd again, then at the end turning left and heading back to the horse yards on Scout Camp Track.

We had 48 riders and everyone commented on the beautiful scenery and riding area. Riders came from all over Victoria, and everyone was thrilled to be



able to ride in our beautiful park and enjoy the facilities which have been provided by the very hard working Parks Victoria team. The praise for the area was ongoing throughout the day. One couple came from Bendigo, and as it is basically flat there, they couldn't get over the views of the hills on the way and said how lucky we are to live where we do.

At the end of the day we packed up and went home very happy and pleased with the way the day had run and once again, to look at the area you would hardly know that anything had happened that day. All riders cleaned up after themselves and took all their rubbish with them. The tracks showed little sign of having horses on them and the bush carried on its daily routine without any disturbance. The weather even held off until after we had left!

Once again the horse riding community is so lucky to have such a beautiful area to ride in. □

Wendy Rackham

Duke of Edinburgh Hike Kurth Kiln

Upper Yarra Secondary College offers a Duke of Edinburgh Award program and teacher Bronwen Foley brought eight of these students to Kurth Kiln. The Duke of Edinburgh award is open to young people aged between 14 and 25 to participate in a number of activities over a set length of time. It is entirely voluntary and is structured so the participants can design their own unique programs centred around their interests and passions.

On the walk we met Russell Osborne and Ros Consoli on their Darwin to Melbourne "Children First Foundation" Camel Expedition, a record breaking 6,000 kms walk from Darwin to Melbourne. Bronwen Foley wrote the following report:

Two weeks ago Duke of Ed and I went hiking for two days out at Kurth Kiln in Gembrook. We had a fantastic time and shared some interesting and funny moments along the way. The first day we met with "Friends of Kurth Kiln", a volunteer group who help maintain the historical buildings and surrounds of the Park, including the hiking paths. Alfred Klink, local Kurth Kiln historian, enlightened us to the history of petrol rationing during the war years of 1940-42. Did you know that due to the lack of available petrol, people had to fit charcoal burners to their vehicles? They would burn the charcoal to produce gas which the car would run on. Amazing!!!! The charcoal was produced in kilns like the one at Kurth Kiln (developed by.....you guessed it, Professor Kurth).

Friends of Kurth Kiln, avid bushwalkers Ursula and Beverly, then escorted our group on a 4 hour hike, stopping for lunch at Gilwell Park. The evening entertainment was provided by Mr. Pan, who indulged us in some friendly card playing. The next



morning we were joined by Margret Kelsall, a member of the local Rotary club of Upper Yarra and Kurth Kiln resident. We set out for another day of hiking, lunching at Shiprock Falls.

A big thank you to all those parents, teachers and support people who made this trip possible. Did I mention the leeches? the Camels? □

Miss Foley



The Camels on Gembrook-Launching Place Road

Wastelands Van Club / Van Council of Victoria

On the August Meeting/Working bee we said "Hallo" to the Wastelands Van Club / Van Council of Victoria. When the group heard that we were going to clean up the Tomahawk Track they immediately offered to help. All the big and small logs, branches were cleared. The chain saw operator walked in front cutting up the wood and the young, strong men then cleared it off the path.

They did a magnificent job clearing the track and the Friends of Kurth Kiln thank them all for their great effort.



Sawing up the tree trunks and branched on the path



Clearing the wood off the path



Filling in the holes on the track



The team

Connor & John Robins from the Wastelands Van Club / Van Council of Victoria wrote of the day:

We would like to express our thanks for the guided tour of the Kiln and surroundings on Saturday. It was most informative and answered many questions regarding the area our members had been asking in the lead-up to the event.

We were at first disappointed this year having to relocate our annual Noojee weekend (due to a new "No Camping" regulation introduced there) to Kurth Kiln, but 10 minutes after our arrival we were more than impressed with the area and it's facilities.

The walking tracks (there are numerous) are great, and the lake and it's surrounds are just beautiful. The camping sites were ample, on flat ground for tents and the stone fireplaces generated fantastic warmth for their size.

It is a credit to all whom have put time and effort into the restoration of the kiln and all of the surrounding area and camping grounds (there are many of these, too) making the decision where to camp harder. When we heard about work to be done on the Tomahawk Walking Track, it was a unanimous and quick decision to offer our help. It was our pleasure to give something back to those who have provided these facilities for us and others to enjoy.

Again, many thanks and extra thanks to Ursula, and Pam for putting up with the mindless chatter and the hapless humour during the track clearing work. □

Army cadets, Air Force cadets, scouts, school groups etc come and practice orienteering at Kurth Kiln. The picture below shows a group of Army cadets at Possum Track.



The Probus Club of Upper Yarra visits Kurth Kiln

After the extended period of cold and rainy weather the sun shone brightly on October 19 when the Probus Club came to Kurth Kiln. After the visit Ivan Ferguson sent us the letter below:

Dear Friends of Kurth Kiln,

On behalf of the members of our club I write to thank you for your hospitality on the day of our visit on October 19. Most of our members live within 20 or 40 minutes drive of Kurth Kiln but few of them were aware of its significance. After the interesting talk by Alfred they are now much better informed and we appreciate the good work done by the Friends including our members Henk and Riet Bouck.

The more energetic members enjoyed Ursula's guided walk along the Tomahawk Creek.

Over lunch time Alan Reardon read out a poem called "Oldies", with brought many sighs of remembrance from the audience. Here are a few extracts:

OLDIES

- First, we survived being born to mothers who smoked and/or drank while they carried us, and who lived in houses made of asbestos.
- We had no childproof lids on medicine bottles, doors or cabinets and when we rode our bikes, we had no helmets or shoes, not to mention the risks some of us took hitchhiking.
- Riding in the back of a Ute on a warm day was always a special treat.
- We drank water from the garden hose and NOT from a bottle.
- We ate cupcakes, white bread and real butter and drank soft drinks with sugar in them, but we weren't overweight, because we were always playing outside
- We would spend hours building our go-carts out of scraps and then ride down the hill, only to find out we forgot the brakes. We built tree houses, cubby houses and played in creek beds with matchbox cars.
- You could only buy Easter Eggs and Hot Cross buns at Easter time
- Footy had tryouts and not everyone made the team. Those who didn't, had to learn to deal with disappointment.
- This generation has produced some of the best risk-takers, problem solvers and inventors ever! The past 70 years have been an explosion of innovation and new ideas.
- We had freedom, failure, success and responsibility, and we learned HOW TO DEAL WITH IT ALL



Amongst Friends

The Gembrook Community

The Friends of Kurth Kiln had again several opportunities to become involved in Gembrook Community activities during the past few months. We were invited to participate in the Gembrook Craft Group "Spin-In", the launch of the \$330,000.00 Gembrook Community Centre upgrade and the Grand Opening of the refurbished Community Hall. The upgrade included extending the hall, a new concertina wall to provide smaller meeting rooms, kitchen improvements and fitting sound absorbing acoustic tiles to wall and ceiling.



On Saturday 21 November the Friends of Kurth Kiln were invited to bring their portable display and the "Got em all" ball game to the Re-opening of the Hall. It was a big event with Local Member Tammy Lobato MP, Cardinia Shire Councillors Graeme Legge and Ed Chatwin cutting the blue ribbon. The new hall looks absolutely fantastic; much

lighter and seemingly bigger with the white acoustic treatment. The new projector was showing a slide show of local involvements.

Many community groups took part in the festivities. Visitors were entertained by live music, singing, yoga and flower arrangement demonstrations. The CFA came with their information trailer, Friends and Landcare groups brought their displays, the Holden Vintage Cars Club and the Cardinia Mobile Youth bus were there. A lot of entertainment was offered for the children, a jumping castle, drawing tables, face-painting and of course our "Got-em-all" ball game. .

The Friends of Kurth Kiln appreciate these opportunities to interact with the creative community spirit of the Gembrook Community .



Reflections

TOM STEEGE REMEMBERS

The Steeges moved into the house on Beenak Road that is now the Parks Victoria Gembrook Office in 1955. The house had previously been occupied by a family named Jones. Tom was 18 months old at the time. Tom's father, Tom Senior, was the Forests Commission of Victoria Overseer at "The Camp", now known as Kurth Kiln Picnic Ground. He worked with the Forests Commission for 31 years. Tom Junior started work at Kurth Kiln at the age of 14 during school holidays and full time by the time he turned 17. Tom liked driving vehicles. He drove dozers and graders and his work included slashing and cleaning out blocked culverts.

They lived in the house for 23 years. Tom's bedroom was in the front of the house where now the main entrance is located. Behind the house was a 10 x 8ft garage used as the Forests Commission Office, with two tables and chairs. Tom Senior also cultivated a vegetable garden on the block and kept some 30 chooks. Before the house became Parks Victoria Office other staff resided in the house.

At Kurth Kiln Tom recalls that there used to be a row of small sheds located under the Big Shed roof for storing fire



A young Dorothy Kurth in 1979 standing next to one of the original log picnic ground signs

hoses and tools. The open Annexe (04) area between the Kiln and the shed [now used to display the donated Gas Producers] was used as a "smithy". Mr. Kermond, the Blacksmith, had a 400 pound anvil and his bellows there and a shed in the corner to house his tools. The Big Shed used to have a loft where gum seeds were dried for re-seeding the bush. Tom regularly had to climb up the ladder and shake the drying sheets to help the drying. Some of the seeds collected were also transported to nurseries. He remembers as a youngster he often played on the remnants of a wooden water wheel, much to the displeasure of his father. It was mounted on big logs laid across the little creek and at that time still had a wooden flume attached to it.

Each Monday morning approximately 30 workers, residing all over Melbourne, arrived in Gembrook and were picked up with a forestry truck at the shop next to **St Silas' Church** on Main Street. The shop is no longer there and it is now an empty block. The crew worked at Kurth Kiln until Friday and lived during the week in the ex-army accommodation huts. Tom Senior drove to Kurth Kiln in a forestry vehicle. Tom still remembers when, as a young boy the roads were re-aligned in Gembrook and the Gembrook-Launching place Road was sealed to Hilders Mill.

The road running through Kurth Kiln at that time divided the huts. The toilet block, the washhouse / laundry and several other huts were on the low [creek] side, the rest including the manager's hut and a first aid hut on the high side of the road. In 1967 the boiler in the washhouse exploded and in the resulting fire a number of huts burnt down.

The Forests Commission became more and more mechanised with bulldozers and front-end loaders. The first Bedford Fire Truck (Tanker) for the Park arrived ca 1962/3. Ruben Watson, a grader and truck driver was a handyman who could fix everything including the grinding wheel and saw bench that are still at Kurth Kiln. The saw-bench was used to cut wood for the stoves and the fireplaces, which was stored approximately 20 metres behind the huts. In the Park the Forests Commission constructed and maintained roads and fire tracks, installed signposts and built toilets. The first public toilets [long drops] for the Kurth Kiln Picnic Ground were built around 1970. They back-burnt small coups at a time, never more than 100 acres at a time, on rotation.

At one stage medical students lived in one of the huts. They took on the job of fire 'lookouts' on Egg Rock in summer. The remoteness gave them little opportunities to socialise and plenty of time to study. Egg Rock Fire Look-out started off as a tall tree, where the 'lookout' had to climb up on spikes hammered into the tree trunk. It was said the look-out perch at top of the tree swayed in big winds up to 15ft. Later a wooden tower with a proper accommodation room at the top was constructed, which has since been replaced by the new all-steel tower.

Tom Steege's friend Jimmy Rae lived permanently in what is now called the Caretaker's Hut. The then wood and tar paper lined hut had two rooms, with a fire place in the living room. The kitchen section was added later. After Jim died a married couple moved in. Then the Rose Brothers took residence. At that time the "Hells Angels" frequently camped at Kurth Kiln (often 300 of them); they treated the surviving Rose brother like a King, always filling up his fridge before leaving. Ron Thornton often stayed with the Rose brother at weekends and upon the second brother's death Ron moved in permanently and took on the role of honorary caretaker until he passed away in 2000.

The Tomahawk Creek dam at Kurth Kiln has always attracted people to the Picnic Ground. Tom remembers that some twenty-five years ago the RSL and Legacy organised Father Christmas coming to the Dam on the Fire Truck, passing out lollies to the children camped on site. □

Tom Steege, 19 November, 2009



Tom Steege browsing through historic photos

FRIENDS OF KURTH KILN

a part of the Friends Groups of Parks Victoria

Application for Membership

I / we

M
First Name Last Name

hereby apply for membership in the "Friends of Kurth Kiln Group"

My/our membership category is: (tick one)

A Friend Membership at \$5:00 annual fee

A Group Membership at \$10:00 annual fee.

My/our current address is.....

City..... State..... Postcode.....

Telephone..... Fax.....

E-mail.....

Signature..... Date...../...../2009

The following details are helpful in the administration of the Group and for future reference. You may furnish this information at your discretion:

Occupation/Profession.....

Hobbies..... age.....

Marital status: married single other.....

Spouse's Name.....

Children: under the age of 18.....

We will immediately place your name on our mailing list and send you our current meeting dates and minutes. Payment of your Membership contributions can be made at the next Meeting, or included with this application and sent to:

Friends of Kurth Kiln, Post Office Box 169 WOORI YALLOCK Vic. 3139

Telephone/Fax (03) 5967 4201;

E-mail: auk@co31.aone.net.au

THE PARKER FAMILY AND ST SILAS CHURCH GEMBROOK

By Emma Savage at the 100 year Anniversary 8 November 2009

I remember coming to this church as a child with Mum and Auntie Hilda to 'help' them clean and do the flowers, although I'm sure my sister Amelia and I were more of a hindrance than a help! I would look at all the different brass plaques recording who had donated what to the church over the years, and was sometimes allowed to polish them with a bit of brasso and a cloth. [Emma is the granddaughter of Bill and Lorna Parker]

Occasionally I would come to church on Sundays with Mum. Members of the congregation would make a fuss over me and Amelia, as many of them remembered our mother Wendy coming to church as a girl.

Years later when the church came up for sale and Judy bought it I was extraordinarily pleased that a piece of Gembrook's history wasn't to disappear or be dispersed. It seemed as though it would be wrong for the various pieces donated by members of this church congregation to be distributed to other churches where they would sit out of context and unknown. I m glad Judy was able to prevent this from happening.

In 2002 Simon and I went to the UK. As most tourists do we visited a number of churches and I was struck by some of the beautiful needlework that decorated the altars, walls and pews. It was here that I started to have the idea of making a needlework piece for Judy's church.

After our return home I started to research St Silas. I found the website of Saint Silas the Matyr in Kentish Town, London. It had everything I needed to know and the gentleman who maintained the web-page, John Salmon, was very helpful in answering my many questions. He in turn was delighted to find another St Silas church that he did not already know of and asked for information to include on his website as he is collecting information on every St Silas church in the world. One page of the website had pictures of Corpus Christi street processions in the 1930s through the local streets of Kentish Town. Two beautiful St Silas banners were shown, both of which are now lost. I then knew I wanted to make a St Silas banner.

St Silas was one of the 'four heralds of Christ' along with St Paul, St Luke and St Timothy,

and travelled to Antioch, Syria, Rome and many places in Macedonia. The fact that he was a travelling prophet is represented by the sailing ship, his bag and his sandals. His cross on a long handle doubles as a walking staff to help him on his way. In Macedonia Paul and Silas are imprisoned for 'teaching customs unlawful for Romans to observe'. During the night the other prisoners heard them praying and singing praises to God. Suddenly there was an earthquake which shook the prison doors open and broke their chains, setting them free. This miracle is represented by the loose chain hanging from St Silas' hand. After many years of travelling and preaching, St Silas was martyred by the Romans in Macedonia, by being sent to the circus and gored to death by a bull, upon which he is depicted as standing.

I had a great many enjoyable hours working on this banner along with Judy, Tom, Beth, Mum and at the last minute Wendy who kindly sewed the buttons on last night so that we could hang it up today. I hope it will be enjoyed by all those who come to this church.



Blessing of the Banner

Friends of Kurth Kiln
Post office Box 169
Woori Yallock
Victoria 3139

Postage



To