

MEETING REPORTS

DECEMBER 2013 MEETING

Speaker: Jenny Dixon and Harold Cosier

Topic: "Keera Vale" restoration

The speakers for our December meeting focussed on the restoration work which they are undertaking on one of Wollongong's most historic buildings, "Keera Vale", a two storey Georgian style building located at 30 Bukari Street, West Wollongong, which was built in 1843-44. The residence was built for Judge Roger Therry, who was a member of the Legislative Council representing the Electoral District of Camden (1843-1845) and a Judge in the NSW Supreme Court (from 1846). A Barrister-at-Law, he was Acting Attorney-General for NSW (1841-43).

The new owners, Jenny Dixon and Harold Cosier, took possession of the property in January 2013 and their talk provided a fascinating account of the residence itself and details of the restoration work they are presently undertaking. The house originally stood on a large holding of land and was built from Sandstock bricks – the exterior was rendered with cement in the 1930s. The home originally had French doors leading to an upper veranda which wrapped around three sides of the house.

Harold and Jenny outlined how they planned to restore this fine, historic old home over the next five years or so. Part of this plan is to restore the exterior of the building to its original appearance. Presently they are carrying out extensive renovation and restoration on the ground floor area whilst living upstairs. They supported their talk with a number of interesting images of their 'work in progress' which includes the installation of a replacement internal wooden staircase. The original internal staircase had been removed and a reinforced concrete staircase added to the rear of the building; the house had been divided into two flats.

Their talk created a lot of interest and raised a number of questions with keen discussion between the speakers and the audience. This restoration is clearly a major undertaking and has historic relevance and importance for Wollongong. We look forward to a progress report down the track and wish Jenny and Harold all the very best in their venture. **TB**