



## ‘Woodville Uncovered’

Book Launch at Woodville School of Arts  
4-6pm, Sunday 21 November 2021

This November Paterson Historical Society will release a new book titled "Woodville Uncovered" by Dr Brian Walsh. Based on years of painstaking research the book reveals new insights into the history of the Woodville district. The book begins by detailing the locally known details of Aboriginal land use and life style. It then moves onto the early days of European occupation when convict gangs cut cedar along the Paterson River and rafted the logs downstream to Newcastle.

To ensure physical distancing, the book will be on sale at the Woodville School of Arts from 4 to 6pm on Sunday 21 November. *People are encouraged to stagger their arrival anytime between 4 and 6pm.* There will be no catering. Short official proceedings may take place at 5pm for those with a close interest or connection to the book, depending on health regulations at the time.

The new book explains how the Paterson River was vital to Europeans. The river boats – sail at first and then steam – became part of the pulse and fabric of everyday life as they splashed and puffed their way along the river, taking agricultural produce to market and bringing back supplies for the local community. They also provided recreation and entertainment in the form of excursions, picnics and dances.

Tenant farming characterised the district from the 1820s until well into the 1900s. Owners of the large estates, particularly "Woodville", "Clifden" and "Wallalong" worked little land themselves, preferring instead to lease out their estates in small areas. As a result, a great number of families lived in the district and battled to make a living on small blocks that they leased. In the process these families fuelled the establishment of Woodville's schools, churches, store, post office and school of arts. Up to 1856 there were even three hotels in the district. All of these are documented in the book.

"Woodville Uncovered" provides a highly readable account of the history of the district's estates, its social fabric and the fascinating mix of human endeavour, successes, failures, flaws, echoes of our convict past and an occasional murky tale. The book also divulges new information such as the link to Woodville House in Belfast, Ireland; to the McPhies on the Island of Iona in Scotland; and to the ex-convict who established the Woodville Store.

The Society hopes to see you at Woodville School of Arts on 21 November between 4 and 6pm, but please don't all arrive at 4pm.