

Talking History Events 2025

LOCAL STUDIES - CESSNOCK CITY LIBRARY



MARCH

Celebrating Cessnock's hidden herstories

(International Women's Day event)

Thursday, 6 March | 10.00am – 12.00pm

Cessnock Library

We don't have to look outside our own backyard to find amazing women, doing wonderful work.

So why don't we know more about them?

Hear the inspiring stories of hidden, local heroines at this annual event. Gold coin donation to Jodie's Place.



Chelmsford Hotel: a history chat (Seniors Festival event)

Monday 3 March | 10.30am – 12.30pm

Meet at Chelmsford Hotel, Kurri Kurri

The Chelmsford Hotel is known for its hairy festival Mulletfest, but there is more to this prominent hotel which sits at the top of the hill in Kurri Kurri. In 1905 the first picture theatre in our region was built at the back of the Hotel, it showed silent films and was a hit. What other stories does the Chelmsford have? Come and find out from our Local Studies Librarian, Kimberly O'Sullivan.



MARCH cont.

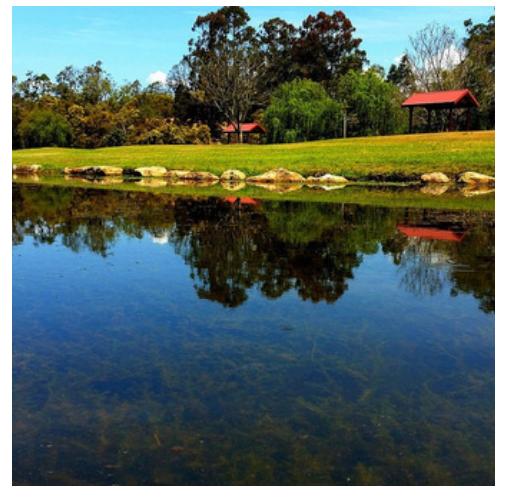
Neath Hotel: a history chat (Seniors Festival event)

Monday 10 March

10.30am – 12.30pm

Meet at Neath Hotel, Neath

Neath Hotel is a prominent landmark in the town, completed in 1914. Not long after it was opened local miner Harry Littlefair enlisted to serve in the military during World War I. He left his miner's lamp behind the hotel's bar vowing to return. Harry was killed in France and his body has never been found. His lamp still sits in the hotel and is lit every ANZAC Day. Come and hear more stories of Neath Hotel from our Local Studies Librarian, Kimberly O'Sullivan.



APRIL

Exploring Chinaman's Hollow (history walk)

Saturday 5 April | 10.00am-12.30pm

Where were the market gardens which still give the Hollow its name? Come and have a look at a hidden bridge, a forgotten road and hear other stories of the Hollow. This is an easy walk, but to participate the ability to walk without restriction is necessary. Numbers are limited, so bookings are essential. Walkers will be required to sign a waiver to participate. Full details will be available on booking.

MAY - Special Event

Author talk: Michael Adams

They'll Never Hold Me:

The life and crimes of Kevin John Simmonds

Thursday, 15 May 2025 | 6.00pm – 7.00pm

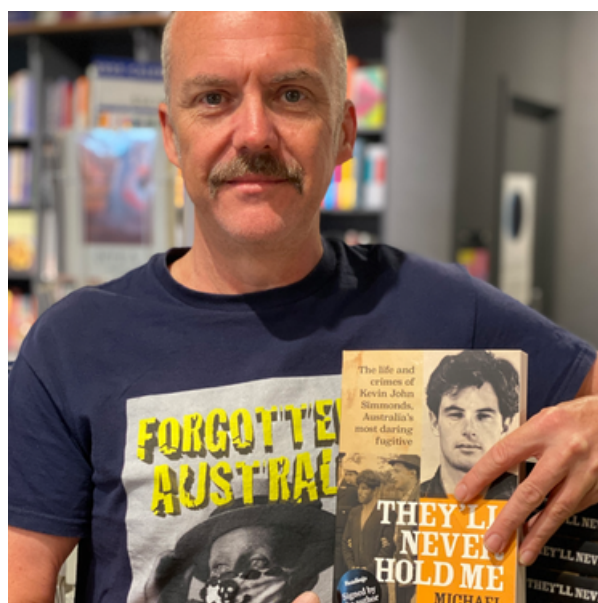
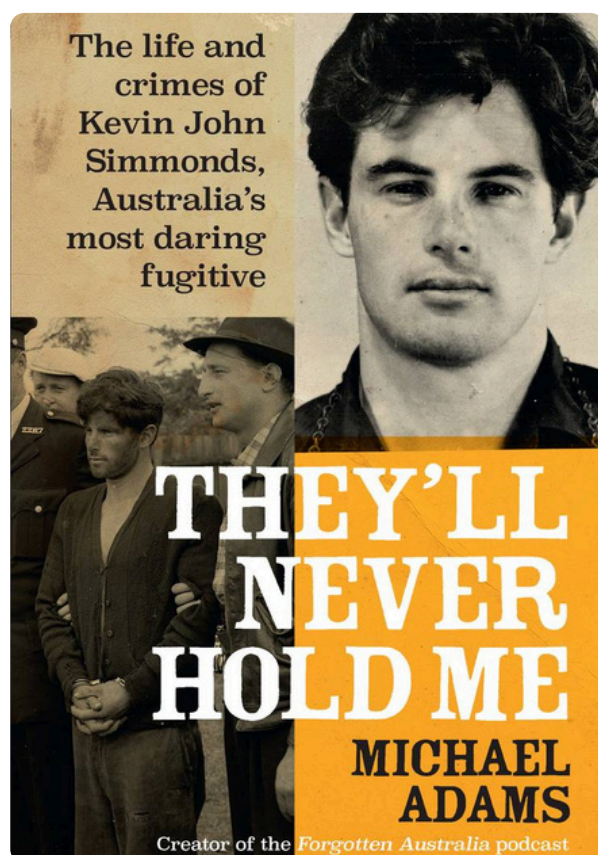
Kurri Kurri Library

In 1959, Australians thrilled to the exploits of criminal underdog, Kevin John Simmonds, a charismatic crook whose brazen crime spree scored him a lengthy prison sentence.

Two months later, Simmo staged a daring escape, going on the run for five weeks before being captured in Australia's biggest armed manhunt.

When he appeared at Kurri Kurri Police Station crowds gathered to applaud him as an outlaw hero.

Author Michael Adams has uncovered the true story and tragic end of an antihero whose code of honour captured the public's sympathy, but enraged the police and who unintendedly wrote himself into Australian criminal history.



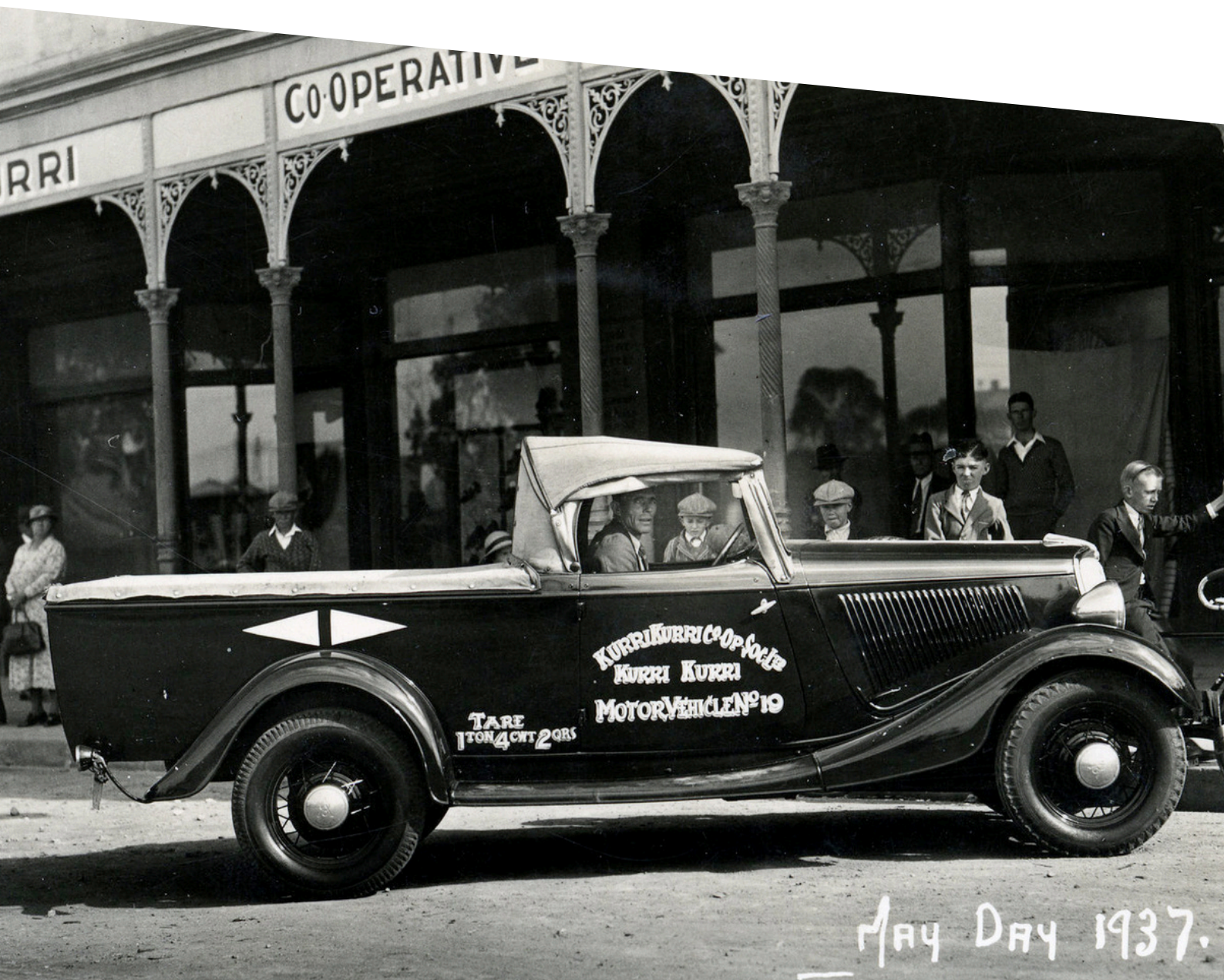
MAY

**Co-operative Stores: The Hunter's Retail Heart
(Australian Heritage Festival exhibition)**

1- 31 May

Cessnock Library foyer

The Co-operative Societies were the retail heart of the Hunter Valley. More than stores, they became social and cultural institutions whose members felt a deep sense of loyalty to them. From 1887 to 1980 Co-op Stores could be found across our Local Government Area, this exhibition digs deep into their fascinating story.



JUNE

Exploring Bridges Hill (history walk)

Saturday, 14 June | 10.00am – 12.30pm

Join us to explore the hidden history of Bridges Hill. This is an uphill walk, but it will be at a slow pace with lots of stops. To take part in this event the ability to walk uphill is necessary, so please assess your fitness level. Numbers are limited, so bookings are essential. Walkers will be required to sign a waiver to participate. Full details will be available on booking.



JULY

Cessnock in the Sixties (exhibition)

1-31 July

Cessnock Library Foyer

In the 1960s Laurel Rudd accompanied by her naturopath husband Phillip, ran a photography studio in Cumberland Street, Cessnock. A large archive of her work has been donated to the Library and this exhibition explores some of the wonderful images it contains.



AUGUST

Exploring Ellalong (history walk)

Saturday 9 August

10.00am – 12.30pm

The town of Ellalong is overlooked by the beautiful Myall Range. Cedar cutters once lived here, then coal miners and now it is a Hunter Valley haven.

Come and take a wander around town while we discover some of its history. This is an easy walk, but to participate the ability to walk without restriction is necessary. Numbers are limited, so bookings are essential. Walkers will be required to sign a waiver to participate. Full details will be available on booking.



AUGUST

The best free family history resources – that you've never heard of! (Family History month)

Monday, 11 August | 10.00am – 12.00 noon

Cessnock Library

Jointly presented with the Cessnock Family History Group (Monday)

It's easy to keep on using the same genealogical resources when doing family history, but what about all the sources you don't know about? So many not-online records, or lesser-known websites often fly under the research radar.

Come and discover them!



SEPTEMBER

Café chronicles: stories of our tea shops, refreshment rooms and cafes (History Week exhibition)

1 – 30 September

Cessnock Library foyer

Heading into town for a tea date, or a luncheon, was something to look forward to. Our cafes often had their own with distinctive personalities, like the Niagara Café, which described itself as ‘The House of Civility’.

So watch your manners! This exhibition takes a dive into this delicious local history.



OCTOBER

Exploring Kurri Kurri (history walk)

Saturday, 18 October

10.00am – 12.30pm

Kurri Kurri was established as a coal mining town in 1904 and went on to be a vibrant, bustling town while Cessnock was still a sleepy hamlet. It even had its own newspaper and briefly its own Council.

Join the Local Studies Librarian on a wander around town to uncover its secret stories. Numbers are limited, so bookings are essential. Walkers will be required to sign a waiver to participate. Full details will be available on booking.



NOVEMBER

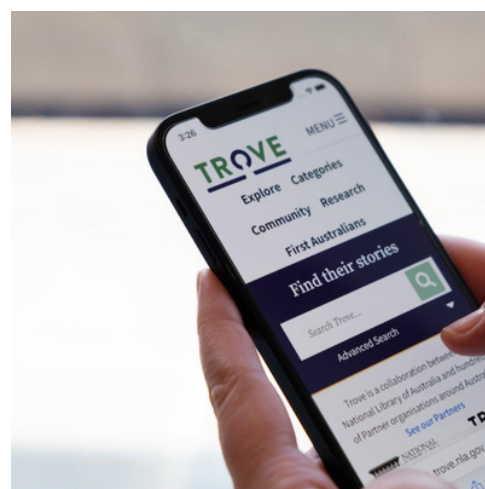
Trove Workshop

Thursday 13 November

10.00am – 12.00pm

Do you love Trove? Or does it drive you crazy? Can you easily find what you are after? Or are you swamped with hundreds of search results?

Questions, questions, questions! Come and find the answers at our 'Using Trove' workshop run by Kimberly O'Sullivan, Local Studies Librarian, Cessnock Library.



Bookings

Reservations are essential for all events. All bookings are made through Eventbrite, an online booking platform available on the Library's website: cessnock.nsw.gov.au/libraries/Home.

To book, visit the Library's homepage, select 'What's On', click on 'Adults', then scroll down, choose your event, and follow the prompts.

You will receive a confirmation email containing your tickets.

No access to a computer? Not a problem! Our friendly staff is here to assist you with your booking. You can reach Cessnock Library at 4993 4399 or Kurri Kurri Library at 4937 1638.

Event Bookings Etiquette: Cancellations

When you book a ticket for one of our events, your spot is reserved. If the event reaches full capacity, we are unable to accommodate other potential attendees.

It is essential that you inform us if you cannot attend the event, so others have the opportunity to participate.

If you have already secured tickets but can no longer attend, please notify us as soon as possible.

You can do this by:

- emailing us at library@cessnock.nsw.gov.au
- calling Cessnock Library at 4993 4399 or Kurri Kurri Library at 4937 1638
- logging into your Eventbrite account to cancel your booking

Remember, reservations are important.
We look forward to seeing you at the library!

Images

Cessnock in the 1960s. Photographer: Laurel Rudd
Opposite: A joyful group having fun on a picnic at Cedar Creek in the 1920s or 1930s. The photograph is from the State Library of NSW.

