



## Riversdale

Dawn Giles asks: Why is it worth our support?

Riversdale Goulburn is a ten acre property bought by the National Trust in 1967 from the last surviving Twynam occupant, Miss Alice Joan Twynam. The Twynam family had first moved to the property in 1872.

The property comprises two paddocks, one fronting the Wollondilly river and the other along Twynam Drive on the gaol side. There is a park, a large meandering garden, sweeping lawns and a purpose-built heritage permaculture vegetable garden.

There are four buildings on the property, a large stone stable built by ex-convict innkeeper Matthew Healey c1833, a small two storey red brick coach house built c1840, a small

modern brick caretaker's cottage built in 1970 and the pièce de résistance, the classic Georgian double-winged brick dwelling, built as a coaching inn c1840.

Riversdale is built on the site of one of Governor Lachlan Macquarie's visions of the future for the colony of New South Wales. He personally chose the site for the township of Goulburn Plains. The river has possibly changed course several times since then so it's not known exactly where the river was forded but the main road of old Goulburn, Wayo Street, now the property driveway, crossed the river and met up with the Great South Road from Sydney, hence it being a perfect spot for a wayside inn. Can you imag-

ine the hustle and bustle, the lowing of bullocks, the barking of dogs, the neighing of horses, the flies, the heat, the dust, the general hubbub of a thriving little slab hutted community? There are still echoes of the past lingering at Riversdale: the violence, the tears, the laughter, the endeavours. Real people battling the elements, taming the land.

The people who love Riversdale are still battling the elements, taming the land, preserving as far as possible this unique rich past for the future. The volunteers have all been infected with a passion for all its past lives, indeed we all say "hello" to various ex-inhabitants as we enter the house; indeed they are our family and friends and we would do anything to keep them and our Riversdale secure. We need help to preserve this wonderful scene of the triumphs and tragedies of our colonial past, there are so few of them left.

When the National Trust bought the property, while the coffers weren't running over there was sufficient funding available to do the groundwork of preservation, repair and maintenance but over the years funding has shifted away from the sector and the current National Trust of New South Wales has had to reinvent itself. A massive restructuring programme is underway including the whittling down of headquarters staff by a massive 70 odd percent. Some property leases have been sold and the money invested but the real crunch for the individual properties: we now must become viable, each and every one of us, we have to pay our own running costs, including the rather vast insurance bills, and of course if you own a very old property you'll know how often the roof leaks, or a door sags or something needs painting or the driveway needs resurfacing, indeed we are best friends with the plumber.

We work incredibly hard to make money, we have our two major fairs a year, the Heritage Fair and the Rare Plants & Growers Garden Fair, we welcome countless bus trips, cater for lunches and morning teas and conduct guided tours. We have weddings. We sell plants. We make jams. Just when we think we're breaking even we discover the elm trees need vaccinating against the elm beetle or a limb needs lopping from the 180 year old honey locust or the rabbits are on the rampage again! And so it goes. Is it worth it?

Come to Riversdale and see for yourself. Fall in love. Help preserve the past for the future. ■



## A passion for creating, and life in general

Fiona Hammond exuberates

Life can be so engrossing and uplifting, don't you think? Well that's how I choose to see it anyway. Of course I've had my pains, problems and doubts along the way, but I choose not to dwell on these. So here I am, a happy sixty-something, launching into my new career as shop owner. And where better to do this than beautiful Braidwood.

I'm only a pseudo local though — currently living, as I do, at Lake Bathurst with my husband. However, I have close family living in and around Braidwood, so I feel more 'local' than I can perhaps claim to be.

There are several recurring themes in my life thus far:

**TEACHING:** I knew at the age of three that I wanted to be a teacher. I just didn't realise at the time that being a school teacher wasn't going to work for me. I only lasted 4 years, back in the late 1970s. Since then, I've taught English in Tokyo in the mid 1980s, Diploma of Aromatherapy courses 2000–2005, and assorted craft classes, from 2005 onwards.

But let me tell you, the latter is definitely my favourite of the lot. Oh the joys of sharing my knowledge and skills with those keen to learn.

**CRAFTS:** Again, a lifelong passion for me. As a very young person I was likely to answer "making stuff" when asked what I liked to do — and nothing's

changed, really. Mum always kept us supplied with crafty materials such as paper, cardboard, scissors, glue, pencils etc. You can make a lot with just a few items. One wet summer holiday at the beach in the 1960s, my sister and I made a whole shop out of white paper, cardboard, sticky tape, glue and pens — little milk cartons, food packets etc. plus the shop counter. We then had such fun playing 'shops' for the rest of the time.

I have a strong memory from around the age of seven or eight. Christmas morning — up ridiculously early — into the lounge room to see what Santa had left for us. Beside my Christmas stocking was a bag filled with fabric scraps, mostly satins and organzas. My eyes must surely have gone very wide upon seeing this treasure trove, and I still remember thinking, "how did Santa know?". For many years thereafter my Barbie Doll was kitted out with all manner of elegant gowns which I made myself from these glorious fabric scraps.

Like many of my generation, I learnt sewing and knitting in primary school, and these skills have given me a lifetime's pleasure already, and I hope they will for many more years to come.

I've made things to sell to shops, hand-sewn felt finger puppets at age fourteen when such items weren't readily available, to markets and galleries, and plenty for gifts. Making jewellery is particularly pleasing for me. Each time I learn a new creative technique I'm inclined to think firstly of how I can use it to make jewellery.

Oh the happiness that a goodly selection of beads can bring. I particularly love using the small Japanese seed beads that require specialist needle and thread to join them together or stitch them onto textiles. Beads always bring me joy.

Then there's fabric.

Yes, I am a self-confessed fabricaholic. It's just so tactile, colourful and jolly lovely — who could ever resist such marvellous stuff?

In 1998, following a lifetime of sewing by hand and machine, I 'discovered' patchwork quilting, at the Braidwood Quilt Event no less. I have been creatively consumed by this fascinating and broad set of techniques ever since. These days I would describe my