

# **THE CHALKER/CHARKER SOCIETY OF AUSTRALIA**

## **CELEBRATED THE 200<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY OF**

### **MARIA YORK née CHALKER**

**on Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2011**

**at**

**Emu Plains Community Centre,  
1 Lawson Street, Emu Plains. N.S.W.**

## **A REPORT ON THE DAY'S EVENTS**

### **Maria York's Birthday Party**

Maria Chalker was the third child of William Charker (Chalker) and Elizabeth Shackle (Sheckle). She was born at Prospect near Parramatta, NSW on the 20<sup>th</sup> November 1811 where her father, by now an emancipist, was employed as an overseer to William Lawson.

On the 21<sup>st</sup> August 1826, Maria at the age of 15 married Charles York aged 21 at St Luke's C of E Church, Liverpool and went to live at South Creek where the first three of their eight children were born. Despite Charles and his brother Henry becoming owners of huge tracts of land in remote areas of NSW, Maria seems to have remained in the settled areas of the Nepean, bearing her other children at Mulgoa and finally at Emu Plains where Charles, at first, owned a much smaller property of 56 acres. Charles also spent most of his time with his growing family at Emu Plains and left the conduct of the huge properties on the Monaro to his brother Henry, other relatives and their employees. In time, he also acquired large tracts of land along the Nepean River.

On Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> November 2011, some 20 members of the Chalker/Charker Society gathered at Emu Plains to celebrate the bi-centenary of Maria's birth. The day proved to be extremely hot (37°C) but fortunately we had the use of an excellent venue - *an air conditioned hall!* Various displays were mounted around the hall and were available for inspection throughout the day.

The day's events began at 10.30 with an Ordinary Meeting of the Society, at which we were delighted to welcome three families of Maria/Charles descendants who had not previously attended meetings. Two of the families travelled all the way from Queensland for the event. Members then had the opportunity to inspect the displays, which included much valuable research information about the York line provided by the York Line Representatives, Warren and Sylvia York, who unfortunately were unable to attend. We also had the opportunity to

view not only displays of photographic and research material provided by other members of the Maria/Charles line that had not been seen before, but also displays by members from other lines. As a result of the acquisition of the computer and copier/printer by the Society, members were able to take copies of items from the display to add to their own research files and the Society was able to download archival information, thanks to a modern invention - the USB.

A highlight of the day was an address after lunch by Guest Speaker Lorraine Stacker, a research assistant from the Penrith City Library. Lorraine gave us a wonderful insight into the early history of Emu Plains and especially the York family, including the location of their original 56 acre grant, which still remains undeveloped today, and also the huge extent of their subsequent land holdings in the Penrith/Emu Plains area.

At the conclusion of Lorraine's address it was time to cut the cake! This had been generously provided by Audrey Walford-Smith, a Maria/Charles descendant and a long-time member, who had been unable to attend on the day. (*When ordering the cake, the shop assistant wanted to know if this Maria **really** was 200 years old!!!!*) Cutting the cake provided a photo opportunity to record the direct descendants of Maria and Charles who were present at the celebration.

The final item on the programme for the day was a visit to the nearby St. Paul's Cemetery to view the monuments and gravesites of Maria, Charles and a great number of their children and other descendants.

Although the predicted very hot weather conditions on the day no doubt discouraged many members from attending, nevertheless those who did attend spent a most enjoyable and rewarding day together.

Below are scenes taken at the celebrations, showing some of Maria's descendents and the attentive audience listening to the guest speaker, Lorraine Stacker.





