



# THE PICK OF THE GREAT NORTH ROAD

## Pick Volume 3.4

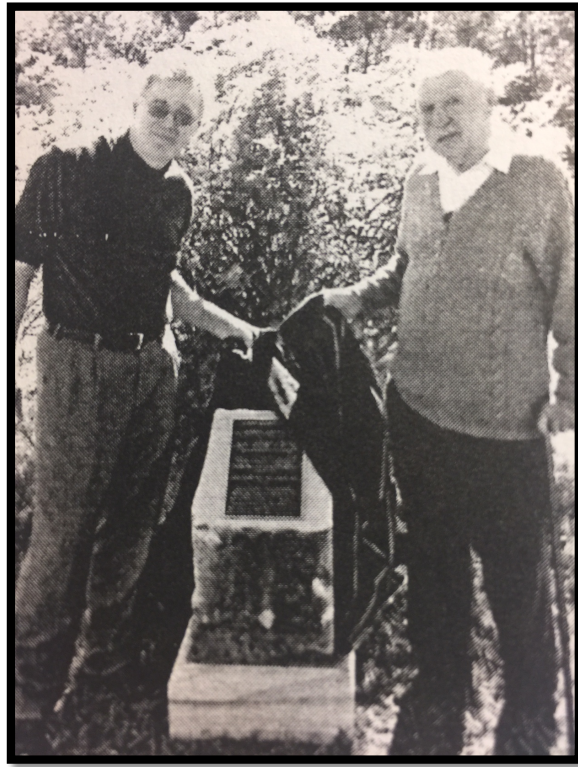
**John McDougall**  
**Gillian James**

The following amusing item was reported by the Wollombi correspondent in the Maitland Mercury on the 28<sup>th</sup> December 1844. An ex-convict, John McDougall became a substantial land-holder in the first days of Wollombi's settlement and the owner of The Sir George Gipps.

*WOLLOMBI: The monotony of our township life has been enlivened by the holiday sports which came off yesterday. An unusually large assembly gathered early, and the Sir George Gipps and its immediate vicinity presented a scene of festivity into which, in spite of adverse times, the people seemed to enter with spirit. Mine host of the Sir George Gipps had, with his usual liberality in catering for the public amusement, engaged the services of a musician and a jester, in his proper costume, who by his drollery drew forth many a hearty peal of laughter from his merry auditors. The manly games of cricket and foot-racing occupied the forenoon, the afternoon being devoted to horse-racing, when some excellent matches came off. The last match, between Mr McDougall's "George", that weekly runs in the mail, and a crack gelding of local fame, was a splendid affair, the distance being about one mile and a quarter, which was passed over in true Epsom style; the mail horse took the lead, which he kept throughout, showing powers of speed and bottom that surprised some of the knowing ones.*

*Altogether it was pleasing to observe the decorum which prevailed amidst the rivalry of the competitors in these time-honored pastimes, and we shall conclude our short report by expressing a hope that at the expiration of the ensuing year we shall have the pleasure of again recording a similar festival, concluded in the same orderly and pleasing manner.*





Ken Phelan and Ken Maheine unveil a plaque in memory of John McDougall.  
(Photo: E. Roberts)