



The Old Courthouse Museum

PASTIMES

*Newsletter of the
Clyde River and Batemans Bay Historical Society Inc.*

Issue 13 - Apr/May 2014

STOP PRESS !!!!

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OPENING OF THE PRE-LOVED BOOK EMPORIUM



The success of second hand books sales at the local Corrigan's Beach Markets has resulted in the opening of the Museum's own permanent book store. Known as the 'Book Emporium', the photo shows its new home in what was an old Telstra shed, used for storing museum artefacts. Situated by the Water Gardens entrance to the Museum, member Chris Ruzala is eagerly trying to sell a book to new member Kerrie Rowe. All books have been donated and funds raised from sales will greatly assist the Museum in covering its operating expenses.

FAMILY OPEN DAY APRIL 6 – A GREAT SUCCESS

The unfriendly weather on the day did not dampen the spirits of all those members and visitors who attended the Family Fun Day and WW1 Centenary Commemoration at the Museum on Sunday 6th. April. In addition to the usual cream teas, handcraft stall and sausage sizzle, we launched the new Museum Book Emporium. Also there were the State Emergency Service, Eurobodalla Classic Cars, Moruya Tractor and Antique Machinery Association and music was provided by the Seaside Ukulele Orchestra. See inside for photos and more details from the day.

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MAINTENANCE TEAM COMPLETES CONSTRUCTION OF ENCLOSURE FOR LAWNMOWER & CHAINSAW DISPLAY



Member Les Smith and the boys have been at it again!! With timber from Bunnings, roller doors from Owen Mass and picket fences from the 'Waltons' final episode, the team (Chris Lawler, Alick Trounson, Peter French and Ron Windus) completed a masterpiece of urban art. As well as the contents, our visitors will marvel at the carpentry skills on show! Lined with grass matting (thanks to the Tennis Club), the mowers and chainsaws are all in working order.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

We would like to give a big 'Old Courthouse Museum Welcome' to our latest members Barbara Walsh, Kerrie Rowe, Peter Coggan, Doris Robinson and Gillian McDonald.

FEATURED ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE OF PASTIMES:

A History of the Corn Trail – Part 2: - We are proud to conclude our story of the Corn Trail. Again, many thanks to Research Officer Ewan Morrison for providing extensive research notes for this article.

The other Old Courthouse Museums:

We are not alone! Take a look at some of the impressive Old Courthouse Museums in other parts of the world.

History of the Corn Trail – Part 2 (research notes provided by Ewan Morrison)

It all changed with Gold

Gold was first "officially" discovered in Australia in 1851, near Bathurst, New South Wales. In the same year, gold was also discovered at Araluen¹ and Mogo – clearly just a coincidence! The Araluen Field² proved to be one of the three principal gold producing regions in Australia at the time and provided work for 30,000 diggers. This gold rush was mainly the result of alluvial gold being found in the waterways, which had been washed there millions of years earlier, due to the extraordinary climatic conditions which existed at the time of the Ice Ages. Some of these old waterways were still easily accessible. Around Araluen, there were approximately 7,000 Chinese workers in the goldfields. They were efficient team workers, who tended to live in groups and preferred to commute to the diggings.



The Gold Rush coincided with the arrival of ships at Nelligen and Batemans Bay. Ships would take produce from the farms to the colonial capitals of Sydney and Melbourne. They would also carry eager gold miners to Batemans Bay and Nelligen (quicker than overland routes). The availability of wood for steam ships at Batemans Bay was an initial attraction. In fact, in December 1840, the steam ship *Clonmel* was forced to stop at Batemans Bay for wood. *Clonmel* was the first steam ship to operate between Port Philip and Sydney. The advantages of loading produce at Nelligen were understood by Braidwood farmers, who transported goods down the hill to ships and on to market, more quickly than by other routes.

But Gold opened the competition for other tracks and better roads



By 1856, Nelligen and nearby Currowan Creek had experienced gold rushes, swelling the number of people in those towns. The Nelligen and Currowan Creek gold fields became connected to Braidwood by the Braidwood Road (now known as the Kings Highway) in 1856 and to the gold fields at Araluen by the Shoebridge track in 1860.

Shoebridge, who owned stores in Araluen and in Nelligen, made good use of both ships calling at Nelligen and the Track. The Shoebridge Track was built as an alternate and quicker route from the Lower Araluen area to the coast. The other route followed the Deua River and was subject to flooding with its consequent build-up of debris.³

¹ Information provided in local guidebook and sighted on the internet on 31 May 2012 at <http://www.argylecounty.com.au/towns/araluen.html>

² Information about gold mining in Mogo and Araluen was taken from the Gold Rush Colony of Mogo's website at <http://www.goldrushcolony.com.au/australian-gold-history-culture-info/gold-history-australia/gold-mogo-and-araluen> sighted on 21 April 2013

³ Source: <http://www.accessforall.asn.au/index.php/news-items/38-general/46-shoebridge-track-mapping> sighted 2 May 2013

The route through the Clyde Mountain area was surveyed by Thomas Mitchell in 1855. Subsequently, Mitchell suffered a severe attack of bronchitis and died a few days later at his residence in Darling Point. However, the route he surveyed was built by the same Green who had “discovered” the Corn Trail some years earlier.

Green built the road between Government Bend and the top of the Clyde. Its construction was recouped through a toll, by installing a Toll Gate between Gypsy’s Turn⁴ (recently given the name Pooh Bear’s corner) and the top of the Mountain. The NSW Government built the lower portion of the road from Government Bend to Nelligen. The better built and less steep Braidwood Road began to take most of the traffic between Braidwood and the Coast.

A Growth in Notoriety



The notorious bushrangers, Tom and John Clarke, photographed at Braidwood gaol.

The most infamous gang of bushrangers in the history of NSW was active around this area. Known as the Clarke Brothers gang, it operated during the 1860’s. The gang committed numerous robberies and were responsible for the deaths of at least six men, including five policemen assigned to hunt them down. The deaths of the five policemen remains the highest number of police murdered in a single ambush in the history of NSW.

The Clarke brothers were expert bushmen and horsemen, while Thomas Clarke was also a successful owner and trainer of racehorses. The Clarkes, along with the Connells and others, formed a gang called the Jingera Mob and prowled this wide area. There were rich pickings to be had, as the discovery of gold at Major’s

Creek and Araluen in 1851 increased traffic to and from the goldfields, located at Kiandra, the Coast and Goulburn. While bailing up gold coaches and travelers was their mainstay, the Mob also raided stores, post offices and private properties. They knew the country well and used the lesser travelled way of the bridle tracks – the Corn Trail among them.

In 1864 a warrant was issued for Thomas Clarke’s arrest for horse stealing, highway robbery and shooting at three Chinese men. He was remanded on bail, but failed to show up at court. He was later arrested and taken to Braidwood Gaol, but escaped. Subsequently, the Jingera Mob became known as the Clarke gang. By 1866, the gang comprised Thomas Clarke, Pat and Tom Connell, and Bill and Joe Berryman. They were later joined by Bill Scott and William Fletcher from Moruya.

On April 9 1866, the gang carried out raids at Deep Creek, robbing the hotel, store, mail boy, and John Emmett (a Moruya storekeeper). Emmett was shot in the leg, beaten and robbed of almost a kilogram of gold. Next stop for the gang was Nerrigundah, where they robbed the Wallis Hotel and several individuals, before becoming involved in a gun fight with the police. Constable O’Grady and bushranger Fletcher were both shot dead during the confrontation.

⁴ “Gypsy” Hayes was a wagon driver who lost his life in a tragic accident on this corner – the first to die on the Mountain. Sadly, he has been all but forgotten in favour of a fictional, if cute, bear. [EM]

After this outrage, the authorities had had enough and so, in June 1866, Thomas Clarke was declared an outlaw and a 500 pound reward was offered for his capture. Four undercover police, called 'Specials', were sent from Sydney to arrest the gang. However, the police cover, as a party of surveyors, was discovered by the bushrangers, who ambushed and killed all of them. It is alleged that two of the Specials were killed after surrendering.

Finally, in April 1867, Tom and John Clarke were ambushed and captured by police. They were tied to a tree at Nelligen, while awaiting transport to Sydney for trial. At their trial, they were found guilty of five murders and dozens of robberies. The death sentence was passed on 25th June 1867, following which they were hanged at Darlinghurst Gaol.

The rebirth⁵

By the 1920's the Corn Trail had become completely overgrown⁶ but, inspired by the 1988 bicentennial celebrations, a group of dedicated people decided that it should be restored. The Corn Trail preliminary research and rebuilding was carried out by the Historic Trails Research Group. Comprising over 400 members, Ricci Simpson, Peter Mass and Charlie Bond were key personnel.

A grant was provided by the Bicentennial Authority to re-build the Corn Trail, while substantial assistance was also given by the NSW Forestry Commission, who constructed access roads and parking areas. The Commission also arranged for the Trail to be totally protected by a Preservation Order, under their preferred management priority classification system.

The entire project took four years to complete, and as a preliminary measure, the Group searched the entire area for any form of old cutting. Ten months of actual construction time was necessary to build the lower six kilometres, while the top section was completed in only two months. Access roads to the upper and lower parking areas have been well signposted, but after rain, certain sections are likely to be suitable only for four wheel drive vehicles.

The Trail was reopened on 30 April 1988 – a rainy day. The Canberra Times reported: “Despite the downpour on Clyde Mountain, about 100 people gathered at the top, near the carpark, to witness the official opening of The Corn Trail by the Member for Eden-Monaro, Mr Snow (Lab).”⁷ Up-to-date information should be obtained from the Forestry Commission's Batemans Bay District office by any group which intends to inspect or hike the Corn Trail; however, leave your motor bikes behind, as they are prohibited. Whichever way you do it, enjoy the Buckenbowra River, temperate rainforest, eucalypt forests and the many glimpses of Mount Budawang and the sandstone peaks of Pigeon House and Castle Mountain further north.



⁵ This section sourced from : <http://www.southcoast.com.au/batemansbay/corntrail/> sighted on 17 October 2013

⁶ Source: <http://au.totaltravel.yahoo.com/listing/860776/australia/nsw/southcoastnsw/eurobodalla/11145508/>

Sighted 17 Oct 2013

⁷ Source: The Canberra Times, **Sunday 1 May 1988**; Page 1

What's happening at the Old Courthouse Museum?

VISIT BY SAM LLOYD FROM BAY THEATRE PLAYERS



During a recent Members Meeting, guest speaker Sam Lloyd gave a talk on costume design. When not designing and directing for the Bay Theatre, Sam also runs the Bargain Box store in Orient Street. Sam gave an entertaining talk on her experiences in period costume designs, both here and during her earlier years in London, when she worked for some of the UK's major opera and ballet companies. The photo shows Sam, alongside members Edna Veitch, Judy Whelan, Vicky Quinn and Chris Ruzala wearing hats and bonnets used in the recent Bay Theatre Players

production of 'A Christmas Carol'.

18 March – SENIORS WEEK WALK AND TALK TOUR OF THE WATER GARDENS



On the right, Museum Patron Edna Veitch is pictured alongside Auntie Rita of BBALC (Batemans Bay Aboriginal Land Council), who gave a 'Welcome to Country' speech. On the left, member Barbara Walsh is



deep in conversation with Peter Gow, who gave a talk on the flora and fauna of the Water Gardens. The morning event was attended by 28 guests and concluded with a morning tea (thanks to Judi Whelan and team) and a visit to the Museum.

SUNDAY 6 April 2014– OPEN DAY & WW1 CENTENARY COMMEMORATION AT THE MUSEUM



The Seaside Ukulele Orchestra entertained visitors as they arrived at the Museum, from 11.00am.



The Moruya Antique Tractor and Machinery Association demonstrated their wares to an eager audience.



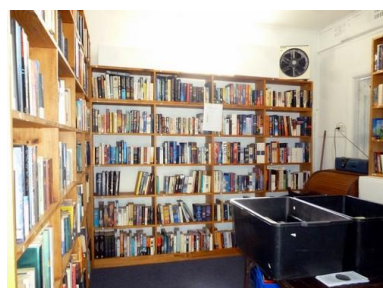
A display of model aircraft flown during WW1 was provided by Barry Hickson.



Military Expert Paul Martin answered WW1 questions from local SES volunteers.



The new signage at the front of the Courthouse: "Where our stories live".



Inside the Book Emporium: waiting for some customers!



SCHOOLS SPECIAL WW1 EXHIBIT AND FLOORTALK BY PAUL MARTIN: TUE-THU 8-10 APR. 2014

Military specialist Paul Martin gave an informative speech on the military aspects of World War One to students from the Batemans Bay Public and High Schools. Students arrived in small groups throughout the 3 days and Paul was kept busy answering questions. Using the Museum Machinery Shed as a lecture room, students also took the opportunity to view Paul's extensive collection of uniforms, weapons and equipment from WW1. We acknowledge financial support from the Batemans Bay Soldiers Club (\$600) and Lions Club (\$500), to assist in staging the event.

What's in a name? – 'The Old Courthouse Museum'

Let's take a peek at some of our namesakes from around the world.....



The Old Courthouse Museum (Ewa W Davis Memorial) - Vicksburg, Mississippi USA

Construction began on a new Court House for Warren County in the summer of 1858. The building sits on one of the highest hills in Vicksburg, on land given by the family of the city's founder, Newitt Vick. It was completed in 1860 for a cost of \$100,000. Four porticos, supported by 30 foot Ionic columns flank the entrances. The courtroom on the

second floor features a cast iron judge's dias and railings, and an intricate iron stairway connects the first and second floors. Original iron doors and shutters remain on the building. After surviving Union shelling during the Civil War, a direct hit by a tornado in 1953, and years of neglect, the building was in poor condition. With construction of a new Warren County Court House in 1939, the building stood almost vacant and there were rumours of its demolition.

The Museum founder, Mrs. Eva Whitaker Davis established the Vicksburg and Warren County Historical Society, for the purpose of preserving the structure, and was elected President in 1947. In June, 1948 the Museum opened, with Eva continuing to work on a volunteer basis for many years. The name 'Eva W Davis Memorial' was added to that of the building before her death in 1974. The Museum is still operated by the Historical Society.

The Old Courthouse Museum - Sioux Falls, South Dakota, USA

Construction began on the first Minnehaha County Courthouse in 1889. The building was created by local architect Wallace L. Dow. It is constructed from native Sioux Quartzite stone, a popular local building material of the late 19th century. When completed in 1893, Dow claimed the building would be the "largest courthouse between Chicago and Denver."

The interior courthouse features include slate stairs, granite pillars, stained glass windows, and tiled fireplaces. It features 16 large murals on the walls of the hallways, painted between 1915 and 1917 by Norwegian immigrant Ole Running. The murals detail early life in Dakota, natural features, and images of Running's home in Norway.



The courthouse was used for county business until 1962, when it became too small for court and administrative activities. A new courthouse was built to the west of the original and the Old Courthouse was expected to be demolished, to make room for a car park! A local pressure group campaigned to save the Old Courthouse and in 1974, they were successful. The building was converted to a museum and merged with the Pettigrew Home and Museum to become the Siouxland Heritage Museums.

The Old Courthouse Museum - Durban, South Africa



This structure is the oldest public building in the central business district of Durban and was loop-holed during the Anglo-Zulu War of 1879. It also experienced the impacts of the South African Wars (1879 – 1915) and the Bhambatha Rebellion (1906). More recently, it was converted to a canteen and recruitment centre during World Wars One and Two and then later as a library, before being converted again into Durban's largest history Museum. It features two floors of exhibition space, depicting aspects of the region's early history. The Old Court House Museum, located close to City Hall, was often visited by the young MK Gandhi, at the time a Durban lawyer dealing with the challenges of life under British colonial rule.

The “Durban Room” contains a replica of an early sugar cane press, ‘Henry Francis Fynn’s’ Cottage, an early pharmacy and a haberdashery store. The ‘Costume Room’ depicts the fashion trends of Durban’s many cultures and attention to detail in its craftsmanship. The Museum also has a dedicated study area to view photographs and documents.

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Further request for Ideas and contributions from Members

As mentioned in previous issues of Pastimes, I am looking for anecdotes and memories of local history which have an impact on current members or members of the broader Batemans Bay community. Please email stories to me at caruszala@bigpond.com or we can do it face-to-face.

Donation request

We are looking for a **small** China cabinet to complement one of the Museum displays. If you have one which you may like to donate (or know somebody who has one), please contact our Curator Myf Thompson. Thanks for your help.

Availability of display space for other community groups

The Museum has made space available for other community groups to promote themselves for up to six weeks at a time. Currently, we are featuring the history of Portrait photography. Curator Myf Thompson can assist with information and bookings for interested groups.

And finally..... taking full advantage of social media

The Old Courthouse Museum is now on Facebook. You can access our Facebook Page directly from our website (www.oldcourthousemuseum.com), simply by clicking on the Facebook ‘Like’ button on the Home Page. Facebook allows visitors to interact more freely with the Museum, by posting comments, suggestions and questions. Furthermore, by advertising on Facebook, we can target Facebook users within a defined area, who have an interest in local history. This should increase the number of ‘Likes’. The Museum has a large presence in the virtual world: a website; a Facebook Page; a page on Museums & Galleries NSW website; Eurobodalla Council’s website - History & Heritage Page; and entries on other tourism and historical society websites.

Key dates to note: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 11.30am, Saturday 2nd. August 2014 – Annual General Meeting at the Community Centre.• Annual Subscription due by end of June 2012: single \$15, couple \$25. Chris Ruszala - Editor	Can YOU: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build things• Make things• Restore things• Research things• Talk about things. Or do you just have an interest in our towns, our history and our cemeteries? Drop us a line at: b.baymuseum@optusnet.com.au
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