



The Old Courthouse Museum

# PASTIMES

*Newsletter of the  
Clyde River and Batemans Bay Historical Society Inc.*  
*Issue 31 Sep - Oct 2017*

**STOP PRESS !! STOP PRESS!! STOP PRESS!!**

## **FAMILY FUN ('OPEN') DAY DELIVERS ON ITS PROMISE**

**SATURDAY 21ST OCTOBER 2017**

This year's Open Day was, arguably, the best ever. Feedback from the various groups that supported us on the day has been very positive. In fact, some are already talking about next year! Check out the photos inside this edition of 'Pastimes'. The weather was perfect and everyone had lots of fun!



## **XMAS/NEW YEAR HOLIDAYS**

Please note that the Museum will be closed between Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 2017 and Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> January, 2018. We wish you all a Happy Christmas and a peaceful 2018.

### **FEATURED ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE OF PASTIMES**

#### **Memories of a Nelligen childhood – Part 3:**

We complete the series with the final instalment of a three -part personal journey by Bill Simpson, into life in 1920s Nelligen.

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## **MAJOR GRANT AWARD FROM RAHS**

In early September, the Museum applied for a grant from the Royal Australian Historical Society (RAHS) for heritage research. Curator Myf Thompson spoke to the RAHS, prior to making the application, to gain confirmation if our proposal to digitize the ISNC Register (at a cost of just under \$5000) would meet their criteria for consideration of grant funding. RAHS confirmed this and, subsequently, we were awarded the grant. Congratulations to Myf and the Grants team.

## **BREAKING RECORDS AT BUNNINGS!!**



On Saturday, 30<sup>th</sup> September, the BBQ fundraising team, under Chris Ruzsala, broke our record for the highest net gain during a single session at Bunnings Warehouse in the Bay. The team **cleared** over \$1050 during a busy Saturday at the Store. Even Bunnings management was very impressed!! Can we beat this figure? We have another chance on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> December.

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## MEMORIES OF A NELLIGEN CHILDHOOD (Part 3) - by Bill Simpson (as published in the CANBERRA TIMES of 19 February 1983)

*My father and Mr Robinson became good friends and I remember the latter giving my father a sample of raw whisky to taste. it had been distilled, as an experiment, from the burrawang palm. I cannot remember my father's actual response, but I gathered he didn't consider the new product any great threat to Scotland's main export, and it was never developed further, as far as I know.*

*Yet another thriving project during my years at Nelligen was the quarrying of granite for the pylons of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. The quarry was situated on the right-hand side of the road as one approaches Nelligen after descending the Clyde Mountain, and was some six or eight miles from the township. The huge blocks of granite were transported to the wharf at Nelligen and thence to Sydney by steamer, for delivery to the contractors, Dorman Long and Co.*



Nelligen Courthouse

*Next door to the school was the police station, residence and the old Court House. The resident policeman during our time was Mounted Constable Charles Beck; he and Dad spent many pleasant hours fishing from the police boat on the Clyde. The Court House, even in those days 60 years ago, was a relic from the past - from the days when bushrangers roamed the district and gold was mined in the many shafts that dotted the hills across the river from the town.*



Nelligen Post Office, 1910

*I remember Constable Beck showing us a set of leg-irons and a genuine cat-o'-nine-tails, then held at the police station. I wonder if they're still there? We children played in the police yard, of course, and even in the old lock-up, which was always open, but we were never allowed inside the Court House, which was then still being used occasionally - although being kids, we did sneak in on several occasions, only to be overawed by the furnishings, the general atmosphere and our own temerity, and speaking in whispers as we tip-toed around.*

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*To me, Constable Beck was a truly romantic figure in his uniform: polished leather leggings and white canvas helmet, and mounted on a big chestnut horse that shone almost as much as the leather of the saddle and bridle. One of the Beck children was named Mervyn; he was several years my junior and as one of the "little kids" was somewhat lower down in the "pecking order".*

*Apparently, however, this did not inhibit him in later years, as he recently retired from the NSW Police as Superintendent Merv Beck, he who received much favourable publicity for his work as the tough chief of the vice squad in Sydney. I wonder if he remembers the day he jumped out of the bath when he heard my Dad start up the Harley and raced in to our place, next door, in his birthday suit, to get his usual ride from the garage to the front gate?*

*I have many more memories of the exciting years I spent at Nelligen - of great mobs of cattle swimming across the river, urged on by the drovers taking them to pastures new; of the great flood that spread across the lower sections of the town and flooded the sheds at the wharf, so that men rowed their boats directly into The sheds from the land side; of the bullock teams that hauled the cumbersome log-inkers to the wharf; of the consternation in the village when one old-timer, "fishing" with dynamite from a boat, misjudged the fuse and had his hand blown off. Thereafter he had a metal hook in place of a hand and I regarded him with much the same awe I would have reserved for Long John Silver himself.*



The Memorial, possibly at its unveiling in 1921. The courthouse is directly above, with the hipped roof of the former Watch House just visible to the right. Further right is the former school constructed of vertical timber boards. Note that the trees opposite the courthouse have not yet been planted.

*I remember going for a communal picnic far out into the hills to Bolaro, before we acquired the Harley-Davidson. My father had borrowed a horse and gig and we followed the other sulkies along the side of a mountain, along a narrow ledge of track, so close to the edge that my poor mother, physically ill from nervous exhaustion, had only to lean out from the jolting gig to be sick for 1,000 feet down the mountainside. But of that trip, I remember most of all the glorious scenery, and especially the magnificent rock-orchids and rock-lillies that had been the main reason for our journeying to such an inaccessible spot.*

*I also remember the big loquat tree that had been planted many years previously alongside the old school residence, with its clusters of yellow fruit that brought hundreds of flying foxes from their "camps" deep in the forest, some miles up-river.*

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*I recall very clearly the day that a timber worker, Clyde Heycox by name, was brought into town unconscious after a limb of a tree had fallen on his head. Dad had the only motor-vehicle available, so he closed the school for the remainder of the day. The injured man, covered in blood and roughly bandaged, was placed in the sidecar and they set off for Batemans Bay, to rendezvous with the doctor coming to meet them from Moruya.*

*This story had a happy ending, as Clyde made a good recovery and returned in due course to his wife Edie and to the rambling old house, known irreverently among the locals as The Ark, that*



Braidwood Street, early 20<sup>th</sup> Century

*was their home in what is now known as Braidwood Street. Alas, The Ark has vanished long ago. I believe it was originally a boarding house in the days when Nelligen was a bustling mining town, with cedar-getting on the side, but that was long before my day. Now very few of the old landmarks are left, but at least*

*the memories remain.*

**There are moments of life that we never forget, which brighten as time steals away.**

*Now, it seems, the "old" Nelligen - the Camelot, the Treasure Island of my distant childhood, is to be transformed into a "major tourist attraction".*

*It is satisfying to hear that the Nelligen Development Concept Plan aims "to preserve the historical-interest flavour of the township". I wish the planners well in their project and I note that a number of historical buildings have already been renovated. I really must make the effort to go down and see it all again - soon.*



(Phot left: Nelligen Punt)

**(End of Part 3 – This completes the feature article on Bill Simpson's Nelligen memories)**

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## The 2017 'Family Fun' Open Day – Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2017

A great success for all involved!! That means the organisers, the volunteers, the nine community groups which supported it and the large numbers of the public who visited the Museum on such a sunny, Spring day. On the fundraising side, the various Museum groups raised a total of over \$750 for our coffers – well done!! The choice of a Saturday was vindicated by the large number of visitors, some arriving before the official Opening Time of 9.30am. For next year's event, we will stick with a Saturday, but probably open earlier (9.00am) and finish slightly earlier.

Finally, we would like to thank the following local community groups for their attendance: Moruya Antique Tractor & Machinery Association (MATAMA); Eurobodalla Woodcraft Guild ('Woodies'); Batemans Bay Horticultural Society; Eurobodalla Canine Club; Sailability; Ukulele Seaside Orchestra; Creative Arts Society; Spinners & Weavers Society; and Animal Welfare League.

Here are some of the images from the great day:











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## What else has been happening at the Museum?

### MUSEUM EXHIBITS AT THE 'MATAMA' HERITAGE RALLY IN MORUYA – 7<sup>TH</sup> October

Members Ewan Morrison (President), Chris Ruzala (VP) and Myf Thompson (Curator) provided an 'Historical Awareness' table at the MATAMA Heritage Rally at the Moruya Showground on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> October. The Rally was well supported by local and regional enthusiasts of traditional tractors and farming machinery. Our exhibit proved to be of great interest to the organisers and visitors.

Finally, we appreciate the assistance of member Brian Nason, for providing equipment transport to and from the venue on the day.

### IN-HOUSE PHOTOGRAPHER TED RICHARDS TAKES 1000<sup>TH</sup> PICTURE!



In the photo (left), retired commercial photographer Ted Richards, holds his 1st and 1000th artefacts. He is sitting in a patient's chair in the 'Medical Room' display at the Museum. Ted's role is very important in terms of recording artefacts, but curator Myf Thompson comments, "They are little works of art. With his eye for lighting and layout, Ted can photograph anything from a tractor part to a corset, a 1940s hat to antique fishing lines and they come alive with interest and beauty. With his permission, we are using some of his images on postcards and

posters so that his work can be more widely appreciated."



**Right:** Member Brian Nason donated 'Jacks' and a Kaleidoscope to the Museum's School Outreach Program.

**Left:** Member Michelle McKenzie 'models' our new staff aprons, as she welcomes visitors.







**Above left:** Curator Myf Thompson recently hosted a workshop for U3A members on 'The stories behind period photographs'. The main Meeting Room proved to be an ideal venue.



**Above right:** Members Ray Mooney and Bill Maidment experiment with the grant-funded GPS system, currently used in the Cemeteries Project. Looking more like dodgy gold prospectors, the equipment has accuracy to within millimetres.



**Left:** Member Judy Ramsay attempts to sell a 1950s petticoat to herself!! This is all part of the Museum's new customer service skills training initiative.

**Right :** A small visitors group from the local Uniting Church was entertained to Tea and cakes in the Domestic Room by members Sandra, Lesley and Judy.



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## FUNDRAISING THROUGHOUT SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2017 – IT'S KEEPS POURING IN!



Bunnings BBQ – 30 <sup>th</sup> September	<b>\$1131</b>
Book Emporium – September	<b>\$208</b>
Book Emporium – October:	<b>\$220</b>
Open Day, 21 <sup>st</sup> October	<b>\$760</b>
Ladies Stall – October:	<b>\$150 (est.)</b>
Bunnings BBQ - 27 <sup>th</sup> October:	<b>\$295</b>
Outreach Program to Schools:	<b>\$180</b>
Tour Bus Presentations:	<b>\$100</b>
Bingo:	<b>\$63 and \$49</b>
General donations:	<b>\$31 and \$15</b>

That makes for an impressive total of **\$3202** (clear) for the two months. Once more, well done to all of our fundraisers!

## KEY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY FROM NOVEMBER TO DECEMBER 2017

- Bunnings BBQ – Friday 10<sup>th</sup> November;
- Ladies Stall, Bridge Plaza - 30<sup>th</sup> November;
- Bunnings BBQ – Saturday, 9<sup>th</sup> December;
- Members Christmas Lunch @Soldiers Club – from 12.00, Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> December; and
- Final day of Museum opening in 2017 – Thursday, 21<sup>st</sup> December.

## VACANCIES: ENTHUSIASTIC PEOPLE FOR GARDENING, GOOGLING OR GUIDING ACTIVITIES



Do you have a general interest in our towns, our history and our cemeteries, with a few hours to commit per week/fortnight/month?

Maybe a specific interest in helping to build things; grow or mow things; sew things; restore things; display things; research things; and/or an ability to talk under wet cement (guiding and fund- raising).

Please contact us for a friendly chat on how we can get together.