

PASTIMES

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OLD COURTHOUSE & POLICE
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TWO LIONS ESCAPE IN BATEMANS BAY

HORSES AND COW MAULED

In January 1907, when Eroni Bros Circus and Menagerie came to town, Batemans Bay suddenly featured in newspapers across every state, and Thomas Maloney of Batemans Bay won the rare distinction of being the first man to bag a lion in Australia.

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THE COLLECTOR

'I was the one of three daughters who always loved dolls. I think I've always been a 'natural' collector. As a teenager I would attend talks about coins and dolls and other collectables. I remember the enthusiasm of those speakers really appealed to me.'

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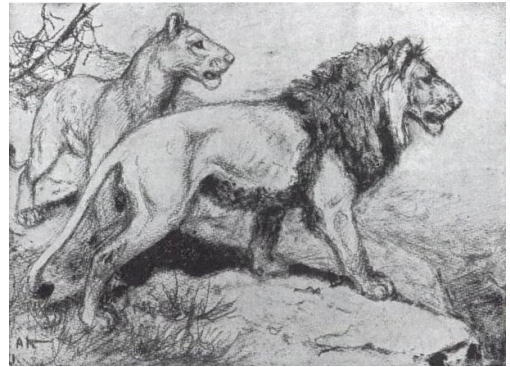
MUSEUM SET FOR GROWTH

2011 has proved a particularly important year in the Society's development. Funded jointly by the ESC and the South East Arts Region, we successfully participated in the Museums & Galleries NSW Standards Program as one of 11 volunteer museums in our region.

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An opportunity exists for a volunteer P/T receptionist with energy & enthusiasm. General reception duties, basic PC skills required. An interest in history would be an advantage.

Panthera leo persica, illustrated by A.M Kamarov, 1826.



Tony Whelan, Les Smith and Peter French working on our New display area



Dolls from the collection

The Museum's opening hours have been extended for January. We will be open from 9.00am to 3.00pm Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and from 9.00am to 12 noon on Sundays. Bring your family and friends to visit us and learn about our town.

AN EXCITING ENCOUNTER - LION AT LARGE

Batemans Bay was a relatively remote and quiet farming and timber community of approximately 60 dwellings and 300 people, rarely receiving mention in the national press. But that was about to change!

We can only imagine the excitement generated as the circus arrived in town. Eroni Bros Circus operated primarily in rural and outback areas of Australia from around the 1890s. Its theatrical entry into towns included a glittering band-carriage at the lead, followed by a procession of splendid Dallinger-built living wagons, acrobats, trapeze artists, and other performers, and an extensive animal menagerie which included monkeys and elephants, and over 50 ponies and horses.

Batemans Bay's moment of fame began under the big top on the evening of Friday 18 January 1907. Five lions and their trainer were performing in a small cage. As the lion tamer was attempting to bring a ladder into the cage, one of the lions grabbed at him. The tamer tried to save himself, inadvertently allowing the door to the cage to swing open. Lions escaped directly into the crowd, and panic ensued as terrified men, women and children stampeded for any available exit. The number of escapee lions is open to debate, as newspaper

reports at the time varied, but two or three lions were said to have escaped the cage. While one lioness, the villain of this story, escaped the circus confines, the remaining lion/s were captured quickly by circus employees. Mr Gardutt, an agent for the Illawarra Shipping Navigation Company, reported that as he left the tent he came face to face with a lioness, which made a grab for him, but he managed to avoid the "savage beast". He jumped into a wagon, and from his hiding place saw the lioness attack and savage horses tethered outside the tent before it ran off into the surrounding scrub.

The horrified audience meanwhile had dispersed to the safety of timber homes and roof-tops nearby. Newspaper reports stressed that at least every second man in Batemans Bay owned a rifle or other firearm, so there was no shortage of firepower to hunt the escapee. Some families, it was said, even took refuge in trees – from where one man, mistaking a dark object looming at the foot of his tree, accidentally shot his prize bull calf. The town was in a state of panic. *Continued on page 3*



Typical Circus of the period

Lions escaped directly into the crowd, and panic ensued as terrified men, women and children stampeded for any available exit

LION AT LARGE (continued)

Groups of volunteers, under the command of Senior Constable Kilfoyle, began to search in the darkness. After some time, those who had taken refuge from the “wild beast” were carefully escorted to their homes by townsmen with loaded rifles.

Throughout the night, residents too terrified or excited to sleep would occasionally hear rifle fire as the skittish volunteers fired at possible lions.

As daylight broke on the Saturday morning, the fugitive was still at large and some adventurous volunteers from neighbouring settlements, alerted by telegraph as to the drama, had also joined the hunt. In the early hours the lioness as sighted near the Illawarra Shipping Navigation Company store in the centre of town, around the area where the Starfish Deli restaurant currently stands. Mr Thomas Maloney, in one hunting party, shot at the lioness from about 80 yards but missed and she ran off. Groups of searchers tracked the lioness as she moved south of the township towards land owned by a Mr Pickett, around the end of Cranbrook Road in Batemans Bay's modern industrial estate.

Just after 9am, one group which included Mr Eroni and Thomas Maloney was alerted by their horses to the lioness' presence nearby, and they approached slowly, some on foot. The lioness had seized a cow and was holding it down, and one of the party, a circus employee, shot at and wounded her, causing her to release the fortunate cow. The lioness ran off about 200 yards and crouched down, but the volunteers continued to approach their quarry, with Thomas Maloney and Albert Veitch on foot. Again they shot at the lioness, and at that, the wounded beast sprang into the air and in a flash charged the two men. Pandemonium ensued. As the men scrambled to retreat, Mr Eroni screamed at them to shoot the charging beast. The saga finally ended, as the Rockhampton Morning Bulletin's report relates: “They dodged her round a large oak tree, and Mr. Eroni called on them to fire again. This Veitch attempted to do but the lioness seized him by the arm and swung him round. Both men in their excitement had dropped their rifles. She then let him go and retired about twenty yards. They then regained their rifles. The

lioness charged again. As she did so, Maloney fired and placed a bullet just over her left eye, killing her instantly”.

In the aftermath, it was found that Mr Veitch's injuries were slight; the savaged horses lived; the savaged cow lived; Mr Eroni valued his dead animal at £250 but no doubt received little compensation; and Mr Maloney's unusual claim to fame was forever set. But, as one rather facetious newspaper report of the incident concluded, “*There is now a popular prejudice against circuses in Bateman's Bay.*”

Research and story by Dianne Hantas, CR&BBHS.

This story was developed using newspaper sources from right across Australia - the escape of a fierce wild beast excited the imagination of people in every in every State of the Commonwealth.

Articles in newspapers were accessed using TROVE, an online research tool of the National Library of Australia. Pictures were sourced from the internet.

Eroni was a ‘stage name’ as Mr Eroni was one of the Perry family - a famous circus family.

In knowledgeable hands ... Anita found this doll in a charity shop and as a doll collector herself recognised the loving care with which this 1940s doll had been sewn together, painted, clothed and carefully kept. Most of the doll's garments, delicately embroidered, are original.



Princess Diana and Friends

THE COLLECTOR (CONTINUED)

'My mother tells the story of how during WWII there were few dolls to be had, and I was to be given a celluloid one for Christmas. She stayed up for hours on Christmas Eve sewing clothes to make it more attractive. I was at an age when I still 'believed' and asked what she had given me, as the doll and clothes obviously come from Santa!'

'I started serious collecting at the age of around 18, with dolls in national costume.

I've had great pleasure over the years restoring hair, making patterns, dressmaking for the right period. When making garments, it's important to match the doll's hair and eyes to the costume. Wherever possible I seek the original clothing, and any original packaging also makes the doll more valuable.'

'I remember how and when I got them, and each story is part of the pleasure. I have donated these period dolls for the enjoyment of

visitors, and in the hope that others will be encouraged to also donate and help build a collection.'

From an interview with Mrs Anita Ellison, Doll Collector, recorded by Myf Thompson, CR&BBHS.

ABOUT COLLECTING

Collecting includes seeking, locating, acquiring, organising, cataloging, displaying, storing, and maintaining whatever items are of interest to the individual. Some collectors are generalists, accumulating things of interest from everywhere. Others focus on a subtopic in their area of interest, e.g., postcards from WA.

Items that were once everyday objects may now be collectible since almost all those once produced have been destroyed or discarded. Some collectors collect only in childhood while others continue to do so throughout their lives and usually modify their aims later in life.

Source: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Collecting>

I started serious collecting at the age of around 18, with dolls in national costume.

I remember how and when I got them, and each story is part of the pleasure.

Museum Set for Growth (continued from page 1)

Throughout the year we attended workshops, received and offered peer reviews, developed our policies and procedures (ooh, the PAPERWORK) and received two on site visits from professional consultants who advised and recommended approaches to a range of activities from marketing to volunteer management. Their detailed feedback has proved crucial in our strategic planning for 2012 and beyond.

President Tony Whelan and his wife Judy attended the presentation of completion certificate at Cooma, in December. The final report from our consultants congratulated the Society on its ambitions and the obvious teamwork which ensured activities went from plan to action, effectively using the range of skills we have as members, and in managing partnerships with other community groups, such as Wesley Uniting.

It is a credit to the commitment and enthusiasm of our members that M&GNSW has asked curator Myf Thompson to represent the experience of this year's 'crop', and present our Society's perspective of the program's value to upcoming participants in the Riverina region.

As Easy as ABC!

The Society enthusiastically supports any member who wants to learn a little more, build on their skills or acquire new ones.

Making a digital story is a good example, and we were helped in

November by the ABC's Online (internet) public program offering a free practical workshop in audio editing, under the guidance of regional producer Vanessa Milton. The session took two short stories by Edna Veitch and Gwen Wray recorded earlier at one of our Pioneer Morning Teas and some still photos.

Vanessa demonstrated how a good photo and 'sound bite' replaces a thousand words, so learning how to edit the original audio recording from 15 minutes down to 2 or 3 is a valuable skill.

We downloaded the free Audacity software, which is an industry audio editing standard, and in conjunction with the free PC movie software, played around with it for 3 hours. Comments included, "I had no idea how easy it would be".

These volunteers can now help create audio-visual stories for the Museum, and add value to their family collections. Edna and Gwen's stories are on the ABC Open website: <http://open.abc.net.au/projects/moment-behind-the-photo-53jq3ls/contributions/contributors/clyde+museum>



Angela Greig, Gail Foggo, Ewan Morrison with Vanessa Milton at the ABC run audio editing workshop

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Old Courthouse Museum Upgrades its Display and Research Spaces

THE OLD COURTHOUSE MUSEUM

Though he didn't actually land, Lt James Cook appreciated a good Bay when he saw one, named it Bateman after a colleague, and sailed on. The Walbanja people remained in peace until 1821 when Lt Robert Johnston discovered the Bay to be the estuary of a fine river, which he called Clyde after his Scottish ancestry.

The museum is operated by Clyde River and Batemans Bay Historical Society. Our collection of local and social history is housed in the town's former courthouse, lock-up and police residence and the one-room schoolhouse from Nelligen. The Museum forms an historic precinct adjacent to the town's Water Gardens. Collection themes include costume, education, healthcare,

domestic life, forestry and timber tales, crime and punishment.

Plans for 2012 include building our commercial history archives, starting with the local oyster industry and fire service, extending our timber display, and building our relationship with our Koori community for a Keeping Place.

We are the storehouse of our community's history, and as a key resource we encourage school visits, have an outreach program to community groups, provide research, and support heritage events throughout the year.

Prospective new members are very welcome to check us out by calling in on Tuesdays which is our working bee day.

Visit www.batemansbaymuseum.com for more information.

CAN YOU HELP?

As part of the Museum's 2012 research program, a permanent display on the history of the local oyster industry is under way.

If you can contribute stories, please contact Myf Thompson, on 4472 8993

EDITORIAL TEAM

Dianne HANTAS

Ewan MORRISON

Myf THOMPSON



Rex Ingram, Tony Whelan, Les Smith, Alick Trounson and Peter French adding to our display area. Assistance for the work was generously provided by the IMB Foundation



Secretary Janet Beeskey at our display at the Seaside Carnivale