



The Old Courthouse Museum

PASTIMES

*Newsletter of the
Clyde River and Batemans Bay Historical Society Inc.*
Issue 15 - Sep/Oct 2014

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VILLAGE CENTRE MARKS 10TH BIRTHDAY IN STYLE



The Museum joined in 10th. Birthday celebrations of the Village Centre by utilizing one of their 'pop-up' shops for a week, to promote the history of the local Batemans Bay Public School. Starting in 1869 and re-locating twice, many Saturday shoppers were surprised to find themselves mentioned in the various records on display. Pictured above, teacher (Mr. Morrison) chastises young student (Christopher) for not paying attention.

THE NEW DAIRY SHED DISPLAY – FROM MOO TO YOU

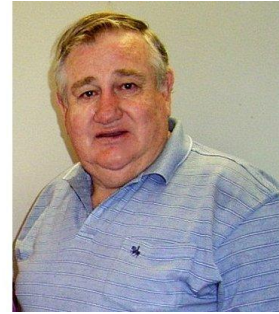


The Dairy Shed display was completed in September. It features original dairy equipment, heritage photos and a DVD of dairying industry heritage sites from across the Shire. Many thanks to Les and Chris L. for their carpentry skills, while Barb Walsh and Alison Cooper provided original artwork, and Curator Myf for research and the flat-screen TV/DVD player. The picture above shows Barb Walsh finalising the displays.

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TONY WHELAN RECEIVES M&G NSW AWARD NOMINATION FOR 2014



Former Museum President Tony Whelan has been nominated for the Individual Achievement Award (Volunteer Staff) in the Museums and Galleries of NSW 2014 IMAGInE Awards. The IMAGInE awards recognise people who work in museums and galleries across NSW and the contributions they make. Tony has been nominated for his achievements at the Museum during his tenure as President. The winners of the 2014 IMAGInE awards will be announced at a reception in Sydney on Friday 14th. November 2014.

FEATURED ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE OF PASTIMES

A History of the GUY Family – Part 2: We conclude our story of the life and times of Francis Guy and his descendants. Thanks to Ewan Morrison for providing the research.

The Cabbage Tree Hat: Curator Myf Thompson explores the history behind this remarkable piece of headwear.

Charles Columbus Helmore: Eden resident Robert Whiter recounts the life of CC Helmore, after seeing the photograph of the Old Courthouse Museum's 1930s kitchen.

New Membership Drive: Checkout the new publicity flyer on the final page. We need to attract new blood to the museum and you all can help to achieve this aim.

Story of the GUY Family – Part 2 (research notes provided by Ewan Morrison)

Forays into Shipbuilding



In 1869 Francis GUY attracted the services of a shipbuilder – William STOREY. William came from a strong family tradition of building ships (his father John had a large shipbuilding yard in Monkwearmouth, in Sunderland, England) and had been working in Jervis Bay. Both of the Francis GUY's used ships to get their timber to market and it appears that both father and son engaged shipbuilders to build vessels for them.

Owning his own ships proved lucrative for Francis GUY. Not only was he able to transport his timber to Sydney, but was able to export to Melbourne (a separate colony to NSW) and New Zealand. This advertisement appeared in the Grey River Argus in 1875. (New Zealand paper):

*BATEMAN'S BAY SAW MILLS and TIMBER Yards, N.S.WALES. Francis GUY, Proprietor, Is prepared to execute orders for Ironbark Girders, Piles or Sawn Timber in any quantity, delivered to any port in New Zealand, much below the usual rates, having suitable vessels to deliver direct from the mills, thus saving transshipment in Sydney. Having a large stock of all kinds of Timber on hand, could execute orders promptly and satisfactorily.*¹

Francis GUY was obliged to attend court in Sydney in 1869, as a consequence of entering a complex agency agreement with Alexander BURNS – a timber merchant of Sydney. The agreement provided for GUY to transport timber to Sydney, where it would be sold by Alexander BURNS on GUY'S account. To facilitate this enterprise, GUY purchased the *Atalanta* at auction for £500, but could only raise £129 in cash. The balance was covered by promissory notes from BURNS. To cover his risk, BURNS agreed a mortgage of £500 over the *Atalanta*, at 7% interest.²

When the promissory note matured for a second time, GUY was required to pay up. Having done so by bank loan, GUY wanted to transfer the mortgage over to the *Atalanta* as security for the bank. BURNS refused, unless he was paid a substantial sum of money to cover interest on the mortgage and monies allegedly outstanding from the sales of timber. In the subsequent court case, GUY was awarded £401.14s.4d. BURNS immediately appealed and was awarded a rule nisi (i.e., the judgement was set aside, due to the Judge's misdirection).

A strong supporter of Education

When the court case concluded, Francis turned back his attention to Nelligen and Batemans Bay. Subsequent to a few setbacks in attempting to provide educational facilities for the children of Nelligen, Francis and others were given permission to establish a state public school.

¹ Source: Grey River Argus, 30 August 1875

² Source: The Burns Family in Australia, Family History site sighted on 23 February 2014 <http://www.distant-clansman.com/the-burns-family-in-australia/>

In November 1870, the *Empire* reported a notice that appeared in the NSW Government Gazette. The notice said that permission was granted:

*To form the public school boards of the public schools at the places specified, viz. :-
Nelligen : Messrs. Francis Guy, Thomas George Lee, Stephen Richardson, Thomas Flood,
James McCawley, and George Webber*³

Francis may have been guided in this decision by William STOREY, his shipbuilder, whose family history has consistently strong views about providing education to children. In 1873 Francis GUY was appointed to the School Board of Batemans Bay Public School.

Taking advantage of the mining boom

By 1872, Francis GUY's interests had extended to mining. He owned and operated a silver mine near Moruya and donated silver ore from that mine to the Australian Museum in College Street, Sydney⁴. Always one to find ways of making money, for a fee, Francis crushed the ore of local gold miners in his stamper battery at the silver mine.

Although his heart remained in Nelligen, Francis purchased land and built in nearby Batemans Bay. In 1873 he was given permission to purchase crown land in that village⁵. By 1875 he had built a warehouse in Clyde Street, Batemans Bay. Still standing in May 2014, that building is the oldest extant building in Batemans Bay and, in its last iteration, housed Ned Kelly's Discount Store. Next door to the warehouse, Francis built a house – remnants of which also remain in Clyde Street.

Timber completes Guy's business portfolio



(The picture shows Guy's Mill, with Nancy Guy in the foreground)

The move to Batemans Bay could have been prompted by Francis' desire to keep a watchful eye on his growing export business. While produce from the hinterland around Braidwood was being shipped from Nelligen, timber appears to have been shipped mostly from Batemans Bay. By this time, Francis and his son Francis had substantial timber interests. Francis is attributed as the biggest employer in the district. As one report about Batemans Bay notes:

The houses comprising this village are built of weatherboards, and are for the most part that is, with the exception of the post-office, police-station, and a public-house - the houses of men employed in the mill, which is in point of fact the mainstay of the locality. It is the property of Mr. Francis Guy, sen., who employs a large number of hands. The mill is fitted up with the latest appliances. In connection with it there is a large general store. Mr. Guy is also the proprietor of a saw-mill on the Milton-road, seven miles from the bay, and another at Mogo, a settlement on the Moruya-road, and at one time a proclaimed goldfield of some note. The timber from these mills is all drawn into the bay for shipment to Sydney, vessels being also occasionally chartered to convey hardwood to Victoria, South Australia, Fiji, and New Caledonia.

³ Source: *Empire* 26 November 1870 Page 3

⁴ Source: *The Sydney Morning Herald* 16 September 1872 Page 5

⁵ Source: *Empire* 20 December 1873 Page 4

In 1877, Francis GUY was able to secure a contract in Melbourne. At a meeting of the Melbourne Harbour Trust, held to discuss replacing piles for wharves in that port, GUY offered to supply 600 small piles and 100 large ones in two months. The Trust considered this a satisfactory offer and Francis GUY was awarded the contract.⁶

Francis Guy - a lasting legacy

On August 28 1881 Francis GUY died. The report of his death read:

*GUY. — August 28, at his residence, Nelligen, Clyde River, Francis Guy, of Newmarket, Gloucestershire, England, in the 78th year of his age.*⁷

Francis GUY made a large impact on the history of Batemans Bay. His vision established new industries in the district and his work was continued by his sons – particularly Francis junior. Francis junior extended the family's sawmilling interests by establishing mills at Benandarah and Pebbly Beach. He may also have begun manufacturing spokes at the Batemans Bay Mill, which he sold to the Perry family in 1901. (Note that the Perry's had relocated their spoke manufacturing business from Melbourne to Batemans Bay.)

Francis junior lived the latter part of his life in Sydney and it is unclear whether he lived in property that was previously owned by his father. The family had a warehouse in the Pymont area of Sydney that could have been purchased or built by Francis GUY senior, but equally by Francis GUY junior.



The reason why Francis came to Nelligen is unclear – perhaps he was initially attracted by the gold discoveries at Mogo in 1851. Perhaps it was the desire for a fresh start after his second wife, Elizabeth, passed away in 1858. Whatever the reason, the fact that he did come resulted in the growth of the towns of Nelligen and Batemans Bay into thriving ports, at a time when they could easily have slipped into oblivion.

===== End of the Francis Guy Story =====

A Head of Cabbage (compiled by Myf Thompson, for broadcast on Radio 2EAR)

The first thing any European notices on arrival in Australia – is the SUN. In early colonial times, you could not just waltz into a shop and buy an appropriate hat. Fortunately, England's rural craft of straw plaiting was taught to Convicts awaiting transportation on the prison hulks of the Thames, and over here they quickly adapted the techniques to *Livistona Australis*, the cabbage tree palm.



Its fan like glossy leaves are a distinguishing feature of the Illawarra landscape and rainforest gullies, and in solitary glory on cleared dairying lands further

⁶ Source: *The Argus* (Melbourne, Vic.) 13 November 1877 Page 9

⁷ Source: *The Sydney Morning Herald* 5 September 1881 Page 1

south. The leaves were used by Aboriginals to make their shelters waterproof. Early settlers in Australia copied this and the first Sydney Cove buildings had rooves thatched with cabbage-tree palm leaves. In fact, every part of this palm was exploited for housing, food, furniture ... and HATS.



First recorded in 1799, cabbage tree hat-making was suited to occupations and circumstances where there was plenty of time and limited resources, such as felons and shepherds. From the 1850s, both men and women were occupied in cabbage hat manufacture, from Sydney factories selling to the gentry, to housewives and rural workers, whose market was drovers and other travellers. Women were able to supplement their income by making and selling the hats,

direct or at markets. They also sold plaits ready to be made up into your preferred style.

The material was free, and the process was simple. First of all, collect your palm leaves, remembering that a mature tree can grow to 25 metres high. There are recorded instances of Aboriginals climbing the palms to pick leaves, in exchange for damper. The leaves are then boiled and bleached. A Mrs Brooks of Kangaroo Valley notes putting the leaves on her laundry roof, to be bleached to a straw colour by sun and frost.

The leaves are stripped into narrow lengths, the width affecting the fineness of the plait and quality of the hat. The strips are plaited together and wound from the crown out, overlapping the plait beneath, then sewn down to make the crown and brim. Additional blocking and steaming refines the shape from high crown to boater. You might add a plaited band, or ribbon.

Cabbage tree hats were a characteristic feature of men's clothes in the 19th century and are historically significant as being the only distinctly Australian item of dress made entirely of local materials. Very finely worked cabbage tree hats were displayed in numerous international exhibitions.

The journals of explorers such as Matthew Flinders and, later, Ludwig Leichhardt show they wore them. The Likely lads of the Sydney Rocks' area were marked by their headwear and called the *Cabbage Tree Mob*.

In Edward Micklethwaite Curr's *Recollections of Squatting in Victoria*, he says: "*Of the gentlemen one saw, a good sprinkling were squatters...many of them, I noticed, indulged in blue serge shirts in lieu of coats, cabbage tree hats, wide belt supporting leather tobacco pouches, and in some cases a pistol...*"

Now you know what to look for you will notice the hats feature in many paintings of life in the goldfields and in the bush. In stories written by Henry Lawson, all men appear equal under a cabbage tree brim, discoloured by sun and battered through constant use.

There is an Australian ballad, too, that sums up that egalitarian feeling:

*There's something neat in a cabbage-tree hat,
When it fits the wearer's crown;
There's in it a sort of jaunty look,
With its streamers hanging down.
Let others boast of the felt or brab,
I cannot with them agree,
For nobody looks so like a swell,
As a man with a cabbage-tree.*

*Go where you will round Lambing Flat,
Every digger wears his cabbage-tree hat,
The rich look down on the poor man's coat,
If but seedy it appear;
But a cabbage-tree hat is a different thing,
For it's free from a wealthy sneer,
New chums will wear it to ape old hands,
And get bush logic pat;
Yet, where would they be twixt you and me,
If minus the cabbage-tree hat.*



I think I feel a cottage industry coming on ... would any of our local craft groups be interested?

(Sourced from the archives of Batemans Bay and the Illawarra Historical Societies, and the Powerhouse Museum website. Compiled and edited by Myf Thompson.)

===== **End of 'A Head of Cabbage'** =====

Charles Helmore - resident of Batemans Bay

(Email gratefully received from Robert B Whiter, Volunteer at the Eden Killer Whale Museum)

"Congratulations on the content and compilation of your recent newsletter. Seeing the dressed fowl hanging up alongside its creator took my mind instantly to my dear Grandfather Charles Columbus HELMORE. C C Helmore was the shipping agent for the "Illawarra Company" at the "Bay" when I was a young boy in the 50's and for "Father Charles" (as we knew him) the killing and dressing of a fowl was an absolute ritual. The Helmore home was situated in North Street, alongside the Batemans Bay Hospital in those days, on the south side. We could walk along the street to the Clyde and sit on the bank watching the COBARGO loading hand hewn railway sleepers off the skids on the vacant land between the Princes Highway and the river. A "sling" of about 8 to 10 sleepers at a time would go crashing into the river to re-appear on the surface at the ships side, when they would be hoisted just clear of the water to drain for a minute or so.

When it came time to light the stove in the Helmore household, reject meat skewers from Perry's factory (downstream) were used as Kindling. With Spotted Gum timber as the main resource, that factory also produced axe handles.

Another delight for small boys was to walk upstream to the crossing and ride the punt back and forth, on each occasion to watch drivers of heavy transports and passenger coaches gingerly

sneaking their vehicles aboard the punt and into correct position. It is wonderful to think that in those days, the Punt master was permitted (or was he?) to allow the boys to ride the punt, as long as they behaved themselves.

Walking away, or riding our uncle's bicycle, away from the river along North Street we soon arrived at the shack of TUNDY LAWSON, located alongside the mangroves (and mosquitoes), about where the present KFC is now located. The secret recipe with 11 herbs and spices would have provided a nice alternative for Tundy back then!!! Long before we met the old fellow, he had been a fish agent at Twofold Bay, where we lived.

A man with very little formal education, our grandfather spent his entire working life with the "Illawarra Co" (in the early stages caring for the welfare of animals at the Pyrmont Depot). About 1928, the company's agent at Eden (Twofold Bay) retired and C C Helmore was offered the posting. Somewhat reluctant, because of doubts about his ability to deal with paperwork, Father Charles accepted the position and relocated his family to Eden in 1929. My mother Jean was aged 9. 25 years later we had to journey to Batemans Bay to visit her Dad."

===== End of 'Charles Helmore – resident of Batemans Bay' =====

What's happening at the Old Courthouse Museum?



The wandering House Sitters strike again!!!!

Our friends Marg and John, house-sitting in the area to avoid their winter in Omeo, volunteered a month with us again this year (July), and sorted out the Annetts Room. Many thanks to you both again, for a great job. John is particularly knowledgeable about bottles, even empty ones! We hope to see you again during the next twelve months, so Myf promises to have another challenging project waiting to be started.

Gail Skeggs - Domestic Goddess of the Old Courthouse Museum

Not a title to be taken lightly or even ignored (at your peril!). Gail literally sweeps all before her, hides nothing under the carpet and gets into every nook and cranny! This is cleaning on an industrial scale, with a laugh, a smile and a few funny stories to mop away the time. Gail is shown here cleaning out the new crockery cupboard in the Volunteers' kitchen, while enjoying at least seven cups of tea!



Vintage Cameras adorn the Temporary Display area

Former professional photographer Ted Richards has put together a collection of cameras from the past 60-70 years and, together with Myf Thompson and Barb Walsh, have created a new presentation in the Museum's temporary display area. In addition to a fine Pentax SLR and a Ricoh, those lovers of 'simple' cameras will be impressed by all the Kodaks and Polaroids on show!

Museum assists local Radio Station.

We recently received a letter of thanks from Radio 2EARFM, for the assistance provided by Myf Thompson, Kerrie Rowe and John Clement, to tidy up their archives.

2014 Xmas Lunch date announced

This year's OCM Christmas Lunch will be held at the Soldiers Club on Tuesday, 9th. December. Meet from 12.00 Noon, upstairs by the 'Bubble'. More details nearer the time.

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Chris Ruszala – Editor (email stories or anecdotes to me at caruszala@bigpond.com) And finally.... Here's some advertising for our latest recruitment drive: please spread the word.

The Bay's Historical Society invites active people like yourself to volunteer with us at The Old Courthouse Museum!



**Society Membership
values your experience:**

**Building/Maintenance
Book Shop Sales
Internet & Data Entry
Research & Photography
Gardening/Landscape
Collection Care
Museum Guide
Stall/BBQ fund-raising**

*** Training in all areas
available**

Volunteer as little as 3 hours a week - up to 15!

***New projects all the time *Good coffee *Good company
*Centrelink approved *Interesting and creative environment
*Monthly get-togethers *Outings *Newsletter**

**Try before you buy! Book in for an 'obligation free'
(we promise) guided tour, and see how membership can
benefit both you and our local heritage.**

Open Tues/Wed/Thurs 10-3 Ph 4472 8993

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