



The Old Courthouse Museum

PASTIMES

*Newsletter of the
Clyde River and Batemans Bay Historical Society Inc.
Jan/Feb 2014*

STOP PRESS !!!!

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MEMBERS GENERAL MEETING – TUES 11TH. FEBRUARY

An extended meeting will be held from 3.00pm – 4.45pm. Guest speaker is Sam Lloyd from the Bay Theatre Players, talking about creating period costumes. Refreshments are included.

HISTORY AND MYSTERY – FEB. 26 & MAR. 21

In partnership with Eurobodalla Adult Education, we are hosting 'brief encounters' at the Museum. Format is two-to-a-table with a mystery object, and 5 minutes to discuss it before moving on to a new partner and new object. Feb 26 10.00am -12.00 includes morning tea, or March 21 Cheese & Wine 6.00 – 8.00pm. Hope to see you! Bookings : 4472 9202 or enrolments@eaec.edu.au.

WALK AND TALK TOUR – TUESDAY 18TH MARCH

As part of the celebrations for Seniors Week 2014, the Society is conducting a "Walk and talk" tour of the Town Water Gardens, followed by a guided tour of the Museum. This event has been funded by a \$500 grant from Eurobodalla Shire Council. Entry is free and light refreshments will be provided.

MUSEUM FAMILY DAY - SUNDAY 6TH APRIL

The Museum will start its week of remembrance for the centenary of the commencement of the First World War with a special Family Open Day of events, community group displays, demonstrations, plus food and book stalls. Museum volunteers will mark the occasion by wearing period costumes. The event will run from 9.30am – 3.00pm.

DISPLAY OF WORLD WAR ONE MILITARIA AND UNIFORMS – TUE-THUR 8-10TH APRIL

The Old Courthouse Museum is hosting a special schools activity to commemorate the centenary of the commencement of World War One in 1914. The event will run over three consecutive days – 8 - 10 April. The focus will be a display of WW1 memorabilia by Sydney Militarian Paul Martin, including floor talks. Paul has an extensive collection of militaria and uniforms from various global and regional conflicts, and is very much in demand by schools and other educational organisations. By allowing free entry to schools, we acknowledge the support of the Batemans Bay Soldiers Club and RSL Sub-Branch for donations of \$600 each and the local Lions Club for \$500, towards sponsorship of this event.

A RECENT QUOTE FROM OUR VISITORS BOOK:

10th January 2014: *"Possibly the best museum I've seen ever"*. Brian Charles, Leominster, Herefordshire UK.

FEATURED ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE OF PASTIMES:

A History of the Corn Trail – Part 1: - Our Research Officer Ewan Morrison explores the significance of the Corn Trail to the communities of the Clyde Mountain and the NSW South Coast.

Photographic memories of Nelligen - Part 2: included are a second series of photographs of Nelligen, from the Betty Heycox collection.

M&GNSW Standards Program

Curator Myf Thompson goes on a road trip and visits three regional museums.

History of the Corn Trail – Part 1 (research notes provided by Ewan Morrison)

Origins

The Corn Trail was used by Aboriginal people for thousands of years as a travel route between the coast, the tablelands and beyond. Some earlier histories refer to the Corn Trail as following an aboriginal song line or dream trail, but our research does not support that. Furthermore, the Bay Bushwalkers have not seen evidence of Aboriginal artefacts during their walks in this area.



Background

For some centuries aboriginal people travelled over the escarpment to trade and engage in social events. Canberra people would be familiar with events associated with the Bogong Moth:

- An Hawaiian Researcher, Oliver DOUGLAS notes that “Many Aboriginal band groups from the lowlands travelled to exploit this tasty, high protein and high fat resource, and so at any time during the summer, the population of human foragers could be upwards of 400: and
- Moth collection activities were accompanied by appropriate ceremonies and rites of intensification, and most nearby groups held title to their own pitch for harvesting.”¹

Aboriginal people have lived on the NSW South Coast for at least 20,000 years. Evidence of this is provided by a rock shelter at Burrill Lake, which was first investigated in the 1930’s by amateur archaeologists and again in 1967/68 by Dr Ron LAMPERT from the College Street Museum in Sydney. Dr LAMPERT excavated the shelter site and found that the oldest habitat levels at Lake Burrill gave radiocarbon dates of over 20,000 years (LAMPERT, 1971).

Scientists have estimated that the last Ice Age ended approximately 11,000 years ago. At that time, sea levels in our region were about 120 meters lower than they are today. In fact, early inhabitants could walk to Tasmania, Montague Island became an island and the coastline was approximately 20km east of where it is today (allowing for ancient bays/inlets). Consequently, It is very likely that much of the Aboriginal archaeological history is deep under water.

¹ Oliver, Douglas L; *Oceania: The Native Cultures of Australia and the Pacific Islands*; Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press 1989; pp 174-175

“Discovery” of the Corn Trail by Early Settlers



During the 1830s, settlers on the south coast began to “discover” routes over the mountains. These routes often followed aboriginal travel routes and song lines; however, the tracks (or bridle paths) were significant in that they allowed early settlers in remote parts of the high country to access ports on the coast. Secondly, early landholders around Braidwood were able to bring produce from lower paddocks up to their properties and the bigger towns “up the hill”.

The NSW public were made aware of the opening of the Corn Trail by the Sydney Gazette and NSW Advertiser on 16 November 1839: “a road has been discovered from Braidwood to

Bateman’s Bay. The road was discovered by Messrs. Kinghorne and Green, is described as only thirty-five miles long, and with the exception of one mile is practicable for a dray.²”

There is much debate around the naming of this trail. One story states that a trail of corn (presumably ears) was laid so that pigs would make the climb up the hill from the coast. This is unlikely, as pig farming was not that popular around Braidwood – it was mainly sheep (later joined by cattle) country. The generally accepted explanation, as provided by the Shoalhaven Bush Walkers, is: “the major crop carried was corn, transported by packhorse, usually led by the womenfolk. A shed was built at the top of the mountain, from which carts would transport produce to the towns of Braidwood and Araluen. The track was also used to bring cattle from the tablelands for coastal agistment.”³

Background

The NSW South Coast region contains several other important tracks, the following examples being relatively close to the Corn Trail: the Wool Road (Braidwood to Jervis Bay via Nerriga.); the Tarlinton Track (Upper Shoalhaven to Cobargo); the Shoebridge track (Nelligen to Araluen); Georges Pack Track (from the Upper Deuea to Moruya; and the Zigzag track (joins the Georges Pack track and runs from the Upper Deuea to Cooma - was used by the infamous Clarke Gang).

² Sydney Gazette and NSW Advertiser, 1839, November 16, p. 2

³ Sourced from: <http://www.shoalhavenbushwalkers.org.au/dawn3.html> sighted 17 October 2013

Initial Uses of the Corn Trail

Most histories describe the original uses of the Corn Trail as being for taking produce to Braidwood and other towns in the Southern Tablelands. To facilitate this, some of the early settlers from Bedervale, near Braidwood, were granted land in the valleys on the Bolero and Buckenbours Rivers. In support of this, "Convict labour was used to clear the lower valley flats and slopes of the Buckenbours upstream to the Bolero, as well as its tributary, Mullendaree Creek."⁴ Convicts were also responsible for building Runnymede House at Runnyford (the likely end of the original Corn Trail) in 1838. Subsequently, the house was re-built after a bushfire in 1904; however, the brick kitchen beside the house, along with the old cellars underneath, survived the fire.

Background

The 1828 Muster for Braidwood noted that of the 90 people in that district, 50% were convicts, and another 11% were ex-convicts. Braidwood received very few female convicts, as labourers were needed to clear the land and tend the flocks – this was not considered 'women's work'. Convicts were allocated to settlers based on their perceived 'value'. At the bottom of the pile were labourers and shepherds – where eight such convicts were assigned for every 640 acres. Convicts with a trade or a skill were more highly prized - a tailor was worth the equivalent of two labourers, while a blacksmith, wheelwright or shoemaker worth the equivalent of three.⁵

The Colonist newspaper (25th July 1838) advised that Special Petty Sessions would be held in Sep. 1838, to receive applications for agricultural convict labourers and mechanics. Copies of the application form could be obtained by landholders from magistrates at a number of places in NSW, including Mongendoura near Batemans Bay, west of Broulee.

----- End of Part 1 -----

Part 2 of the **History of the Corn Trail** will be included in the next issue of Pastimes.

VISIT BY QUEANBEYAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

On 6th. December, we hosted committee members from the **Queanbeyan Historical Society**. Curator Myf Thompson is pictured providing a guided tour of the Old Courthouse Museum. Our Queanbeyan colleagues were most impressed with the displays and our future projects. This type of visit consolidates the networking activities undertaken in our region of NSW.



⁴ Sourced from <http://www.southcoast.com.au/batemansbay/corntrail/> sighted 21 April 2013

⁵ Sourced from <http://www.kingshwytohistory.com.au/our-country-heritage/local-history/convicts.aspx> sighted 21 April 2013

Photographic Memories of Nelligen – Part 2



Aerial photo of Nelligen 1942, source NLA



Nelligen from the west. Undated photo but before construction of the bridge in 1963-64. (Betty Heycox collection)



Aerial photo of Nelligen at about the time the bridge was opened (1964). The ISN Co building still stands, the punt is still operating, the baths can be seen in the distance and the sheds associated with mill etc can still be seen at the southern end of Maisies Lane.



The ISN Co stores were painted white and possibly converted to flats. Benny's store on the right served fuel. All traffic over the punt went this way.



The Mechanic's Institute hall after 1964, with the "bushranger tree" still alive. The photograph on the right shows the Hall and tree under flood.



Maisies Lane continued north past the post office to this cottage which was demolished circa 1964 to make way for the bridge.

Source: Most of the above photographs were copied from the Betty Heycox collection and have been arranged sequentially, to assist an understanding of Nelligen's development. **We welcome your memories of life in Nelligen, particularly of events such as floods and bushfires.**

What's happening at other Museums in our Region?

One of the ways *Museums and Galleries New South Wales* (M&GNSW) supports the volunteer museum sector, is the **Standards Program**. This offers peer reviews from peer practitioners, both professional and community based. Our Curator Myf Thompson is a member of the Review Committee, and recently hit the road with co-reviewer Kerri Ruth from Queanbeyan Museum. Myf has taken photos of some unexpected artefacts from the three museums visited. Please support these museums if you are in the area and drop in if you get the chance.



One of several rescued buildings in the grounds of the **Woolpack Inn at Holbrook**.

The Museum was fortunate to have donated some original 1940s display mannequins, together with period clothing, including underwear.



Madonna's inspiration?

Corowa Federation Museum



Bringing the early transport display alive, a life-size hessian and wire horse with tyre offcuts shaped for hooves. 'Necessity is the mother of invention.....'



Collection of handsome stoneware bottles from local manufacturers.

RSL Berrigan Sub-Branch & Heritage Museum



Is this much loved hand made toy a local interpretation of Mickey Mouse?



Berrigan racing memorabilia.

What's happening at the Old Courthouse Museum?



MAKING HOME SWEET HOME EVEN HOMELIER!

Member Gail Skeggs uses her skills in sewing and shop display to arrange artefacts around the New Home treadle machine exhibit in the Home Sweet Home room. When not involved in these activities, Gail is also a dab-hand with a vacuum cleaner and a duster!

FUNDING APPLICATION UNDERWAY FOR NEW OUTDOOR DISPLAY FACILITIES

Museum President Tony Whelan and member Ray Mooney have been busy completing a grant funding application to the IMB for a new outdoor display area, to complement the existing IMB shed. As part of the Museum's Maritime Heritage Project, the new facility would be used for the preservation and display of our maritime equipment, including the Oyster Punt and the Maritime Trunk. The current proposal is for an 18 metre long structure, made up of five bays. Each bay can be isolated and secured with a shutter door. Should the application be successful, it will be a significant improvement to our outdoor facilities. The IMB will inform all applicants of its decisions by June 2014.

CHRIS IS MY NAME AND TIMBER IS MY BUSINESS

Member Chris Lawler (slightly camera shy!?) worked for many years at the Bay's last (and recently closed) timber mill, located on the highway out of Batemans Bay. The twenty year service award he is holding encouraged him to stay on for a further seven! Chris is providing valuable stories and contacts for our timber industry display.



MUSEUM ACQUIRES CARAVAN TO SUPPORT FUNDRAISING ACTIVITIES

Danny Whitter, from the Pleasurea Tourist Resort and Caravan Park in Sunshine Bay, has kindly donated a converted caravan to the Museum. Although in need of some major TLC, the van has great potential for providing a permanent, but mobile, home for our second-hand books and BBQ equipment. On market days, it will be a simple exercise to "hook it up and take her away" to Corrigan's Beach Reserve. In the meantime, however, work will soon commence on getting it ready for inspection by the RTA. Pictured are members Les Smith and Chris Lawler in front of the beast, wondering where to begin!



PLAY IT AGAIN TERRY!

A qualified musician, member Terry McDonough was the ideal person to undertake research on one of the Society's 3 organs, in this case a harmonium which still plays beautifully! Manufactured by the Hamilton Organ Company in Chicago, USA, Terry soon had us all dancing in the aisles!!!



ROLLER DOORS DONATED TO SECURE NEW LAWNMOWER AND CHAINSAW DISPLAY

Many thanks to local farmer and Museum supporter Owen Mass, who has donated a couple of steel roller doors, to secure a new display unit, under construction by Les Smith and his team.

Request for Ideas and contributions from Members

As this is your newsletter, I would request that all readers give some thought towards making contributions for content in future editions 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 either email your stories to me at caruszala@bigpond.com or we can do it face-to-face.

Welcome our new members

We would like to give a big 'Old Courthouse Museum Welcome' to our latest member Miranda Jackson. Miranda, originally from England, recently retired to the Bay and hopes to become an active member of the Museum.

And finally.... a reminder of recently changed Museum opening hours:

- Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday: 10.00am – 3.00pm
- 2nd Sunday of each month: 10.00am – 1.00pm;
- Other openings outside of these days/hours will be by appointment only.

In regard to the roster for Wednesdays, we need more support. Can you donate 2.5 hours per fortnight of your time? Training will be provided, so please contact any members of the Executive Committee for further information.

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| Our Current Projects <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Schools of the District• Greek Community• Cemeteries• The Local Oyster Industry• Maritime History of the District Chris Ruszala - Editor | Can YOU: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Build things• Make things• Restore things• Research things• Talk about things. <p>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</p> |
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