



The Old Courthouse Museum

PASTIMES

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

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STOP PRESS !!!!

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ALL CHANGE IN THE DOMESTIC ROOMS



Member Barbara Walsh is shown above with two of her latest creations, adorning the 1930s kitchen display – a very realistic looking fish and a hanging turkey! When not creating for the Museum, Barbara also works as a set designer for the Bay Theatre Players.

CAN YOU SPOT THE DUMMIES?



We recently took delivery of a donation of six mannequins and two display cases from the Australian War Memorial. Cost of the transport from Canberra was kindly donated by Bay Removals. If you look carefully, four of our members are also posing in this bizarre scene - Janet Beesley, Ray ('four arms') Mooney, Sandra Smith and Aly Walsh.

NEW VENUE FOR NEXT MEMBERS MEETING: 12/8/14

Members please note: the next General Meeting will be a lunch – from 12.30pm at the Golden Dragon Restaurant on Clyde Street.

MAINTENANCE TEAM COMPLETES ANOTHER MASTERPIECE OF CONSTRUCTION

A new enclosure has been built to house a Dairy Shed display. Solidly built and mounted on concrete piers, it is free-standing and can be dismantled easily. Entry to the enclosure is via the ramp at the rear of the museum. The display will contain a cheese press, fridge, butter churn and stool, and possibly the Channel 7 Sunrise Cash Cow! Seen below by the entrance are members Chris Lawler and Les Smith, working out dimensions.



FEATURED ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE OF PASTIMES

A History of the GUY Family: We take a detailed look at the life and times of Francis Guy and his descendents. Many thanks to Ewan Morrison for providing the research.

Tragedy on the Clyde: In 1928, the local community was shocked by the drownings of the family of Reverend James Benson. Curator Myf Thompson recounts the events.

What's in a name? – Part 2: We explore some more of our namesakes from around the world, including two closer to home in Australia.

Story of the GUY Family – Part 1 (research notes provided by Ewan Morrison)

Introduction

Francis GUY looms large in the history of Batemans Bay, Nelligen and Moruya. His story is intertwined with that of his son, also Francis GUY, who expanded the family business and was an entrepreneur in his own right. Disentangling the efforts of father and son is difficult, as their efforts were often carried out together and both were capable of fitting their story to the circumstances, so as to advance their business interests.

Beginnings



FRANCIS and RITA GUY WITH JACK
THE DOG. THE HOUSE FRANCIS BUILT
IN MAIN STREET NEAR THOMPSONS
SHOP.

Francis GUY was born on 20 May 1804 in Horsley, Gloucestershire, England. He was the illegitimate son of John CLARK and Deborah GUY. Deborah did not marry CLARK; however in 1807, she did marry Josiah BANFORD. Deborah and Josiah had eight children together. Francis did not adopt his stepfather's name, preferring to keep his mother's maiden name of GUY.¹

Francis married Sarah GAZZARD, a local Horsley girl, on 7 April 1826. Francis and Sarah had eight children:² Thomas, Robert, Sarah Frances, Emily Jane (known as Jane), Elizabeth Ada, Francis, William and

James. The family emigrated to Australia in 1841, arriving in Sydney on 6 August 1841, aboard the ship *Burhampoote*³. Francis's occupation was listed on the ship's manifest as 'Labourer'.

Francis and his family emigrated to Australia as 'Bounty immigrants'. Known as the 'Bounty Reward System', the program ran from 1835 to 1841. Bounty immigrants were selected by colonists, who then paid for their passage. On arrival, a colonist would employ the immigrant and the employer would be reimbursed by the government for all or part of the cost of passage.

Francis may have been required to reimburse his employer with the balance. Francis's passage was paid for by Nicholas James and Company.



Francis Robert and Hannah Guy nee Gowan.

¹ **Source:** Jennifer BUTT'S research

² I note that an infant Sarah GUY died in 1842 (NSW BDM record V18421004 and 26B/1842) for which there is only a death record and that an infant Joseph GUY died in 1846 (NSW BDM record V184630 and 113/1846) for which there is also only a death record. Could Sarah have died from complications in childbirth?

³ **Source:** State Archives of NSW; Miscellaneous Immigrants Register Reels 2134,1321, Item [4/4788], [4/4863]

A new life in New South Wales

Francis GUY initially worked as a boot repairer in George Street, Sydney. In October 1846, he appeared before the Police Court and was fined 10 shillings, plus 5 shillings in costs, for allowing his chimney to catch fire.⁴ In the same year, his wife Sarah died at the young age of 40.⁵ In 1848⁶, Francis married Sarah's widowed sister Elizabeth WINDOW at St Andrews Baptist Church in Bathurst Street, Sydney. The marriage lasted 10 years, until Elizabeth's death in 1858. There is a death record for two women called Elizabeth M. GUY in 1858⁷.

Francis and Elizabeth lived in Sydney until at least 1848, as on 26 September of that year, Francis GUY's name appeared as a petitioner imploring a John NEALE to again stand for Council. They may have still been there in 1854, when Francis' daughter Sarah married George Francis BAILEY in August of that year. During this period, Francis' son, also Francis, had travelled to America and married Elizabeth Ann HARRINGTON in San Bernadino, California⁸. Both Francis senior and Francis junior later settled in the Batemans Bay area of NSW.

A change of scenery in Batemans Bay

The first documented record of Francis senior being in the Batemans Bay occurs in 1865, when on 8 September 1865, the NSW Government Gazette listed Francis GUY as the licensee of the Steam Packet Hotel (photo on the right). The license for the⁹ The Steam Packet was renewed in 1882 (a year after Francis senior's death), in the name of Francis Guy¹⁰ – clearly the son. Records of the Illawarra Steam Navigation Company (ISNC) from this time also record Mr Francis GUY as a consignee for kegs of ale.



Francis GUY was appointed as Postmaster of Nelligen¹¹ (photo below) on 15 November 1865. His occupation was listed as boot maker (the previous postmaster had lost his position because he was an innkeeper) and he gave as sureties two of his sons – Robert, a flour factor of Sydney and Francis, a wheelwright of Nelligen. Francis' application for Postmaster was sponsored by Henry Manning. Always alert to keeping jobs in the family, Francis was given permission to employ his sons Francis and later James as assistants in the Post Office. The operation of the Post Office was quite lucrative. Reynolds' research¹² informs us that in 1869 Francis



⁴ Source: *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 05 October 1846 Page 2

⁵ Source: NSW BDM record V184629 and 113/1846

⁶ Source: NSW BDM record V184818 and 89/1848 and a second record also for an Elizabeth M GUY 1504/1858

⁷ Source: NSW BDM record V18587288 and 122B/1858

⁸ Source: Jenifer BUTT's research

⁹ Source: *The Story of the Steam Packet* by Joan Lynraven, *The Canberra Times* 10 December 1966 Page 9

¹⁰ Source: Jennifer BUTT'S research

¹¹ Source: Reynolds, GT; *The History of the Port of Nelligen*; Clyde River & Batemans Bay Historical Society, 1985

¹² *Ibid*;

GUY was receiving £18 per annum for operating the Post Office, while 425 postal orders were issued by the Nelligen PO in 1869 for £2,578 12s 2d – more than either Albury or Parramatta.

In 1868, Francis opened a timber mill at Batemans Bay¹³. The timber trade remained the backbone of local industry throughout the century, with ships carrying milled timber to Sydney twice a week or more. In the same year, on 4 July 1868¹⁴, Francis married Sarah HIBBERD, a widow of Nelligen.

===== End of Part 1 – you can read Part 2 in the next issue of Pastimes =====

Tragedy on the Clyde (compiled by Myf Thompson, for broadcast on Radio 2EAR)

Eurobodalla's three major river systems, the Clyde at both Batemans Bay and Nelligen, the Moruya river and the Wagonga Inlet at Narooma, present a physical barrier which kept the Shire relatively undeveloped well into the 20th century. Residents and visitors crossing the Clyde were first rowed across, then hand winched, steamed or petrol driven across; however, such crossings were conditional on the wind and weather. In today's climate of comprehensive OH and S regulations, including Public Liability Insurance, the more pragmatic accept that it is the nature of experience which has led to today's precautionary attitudes.



The year is 1928. Imagine, you are returning from a family camping holiday. Asleep behind the drawn curtains of your car are your wife and 4 children. You must be tired, because it is now 3 o'clock in the morning, and you left Nowra at 6pm the previous evening. There are no houses in the vicinity, it is pitch black outside and no street lights, just your dim headlights.

Reverend James Benson, rector of All Saints Bodalla, has only been on this road once before,

and in daylight. He spots a red light some way ahead, and assumes that it is the Main Roads lantern, several of which he has already passed along the highway. That, indeed, is *what it is* - but it is on the **other side** of the River Clyde. Reverend Benson drives straight into the river. It is low tide, the wheels slip down the unguarded muddy slope and water laps his wheels. Realising what has happened, he manages to get out of the driver's door, rouse his wife and partly pull her from the car, before it turns on its side and rolls away – taking Berthe and the children down into deeper water.

Reverend Benson's desperate cries for help, in between diving to locate the car, are heard on the south side by Fred Ladmore, the Bay's baker, up early to start his business, and he wakes Fred Jones the punt master. Together they row across the River. Crowds gather, the news is

¹³**Source:** The Thin Blue Line information section. Originally this website was maintained by NSW Police and has since been archived at the National Library. Retrieved from their Pandora Web archive service at pandora.nla.gov.au/pan/25580/20020624-0000/www.policensw.com/regions/southeastern/fsclac/lac/fsc04.html sighted 8 March 2013

¹⁴**Source:** NSW BDM record 635/1868

phoned through to Reverend Sanders and Dr Street, who attend immediately. But nothing can be done, as the car has disappeared into deep water. Later that Friday, the car is brought to the surface and the bodies of children Peggy, Mary, and Barney Benson, are recovered with the assistance of local divers.



The family are well known and fondly regarded. They moved to Bodalla from Goulburn and had served the community here for four years. A funeral service is held for the children, amongst great and widespread grief at such a tragedy. The cortege is long, for, besides every family in Bodalla and district being represented, visitors are present from Narooma, Moruya, Tilba, Bateman's Bay and the diocese of Goulburn. Some ten days after the accident, the body of 3 year old Jimmy Benson is found in Buckenbowra Creek by William Austin, and that of Mrs. Berthe Benson in the Clyde River, by Constable Collins.

In a review of the circumstances it is noted that the Bay's punt service runs day and night. When travellers need it, they ring a bell for the punt operator, living on the south side of the river. At low tide there is a sudden drop into deep water on the northern approach; had it been a high tide the family's car would have first run down a gently shelving bank into the water, and would in all probability have pulled up, with no subsequent loss of life. Shortly after the tragedy, James Benson disposes of their household belongings, and joins the Anglican Community of the Ascension at Bishopthorpe, Goulburn.

The Australian National Roads Association, which would become the NRMA, had been launched 10 years earlier. Its original aim was not to provide road service or insurance, but to obtain "reasonable and just legislation" to fund and improve roads. The Clyde tragedy instigated a specific campaign by the NRMA for improved road **safety** for drivers. Newspaper coverage and public opinion on the drownings was extensive, and a barrier gate was finally installed at the Bay punt site in 1929.

It was not just the **approaches** to the River that were considered a risk to life and limb. The **Braidwood Review** of October 1928, *reports residents of Braidwood, Nelligen and Batemans Bay are deeply incensed at the authorities intention to remove the Bay's recently renovated punt to Narooma, where that punt was in an unsafe condition. It should have gone to Nelligen.* The Nelligen Punt was in such a precarious state that the punt man needed to continually stop and bale it out, causing further delays to travelers, a trip on a good day already taking 20 minutes.

Mentioning the recent tragedy at Bateman's Bay, local identity Mr. A. M. Campbell, in a letter to the Editor of the Sydney Morning Herald, stressed the serious danger facing people who crossed the Clyde River at Nelligen: *"Over 40 years ago, the Nelligen punt was locally built, and the obsolete, dilapidated, unseaworthy derelict is still carrying increasingly large cargoes of human life over a wide stretch of the Clyde. It has been botched, patched, extemporized with plugs, pitch, sawdust, and even cement to such an extent that it is now leaking like a lobster pot."*

Authorities finally conceded and replaced punt systems with bridges, beginning with the Wagonga Inlet in 1929, *the first major bridge constructed on the Princes Highway*. To the relief of travelers on the *Kings Highway*, the Clyde was bridged at Nelligen in 1964, after 140 years reliance on punts and ferries to negotiate the vagaries of nature and our formidable waterways.

The Former Reverend Benson, whose family tragedy galvanized public outrage to the level of Parliamentary debate, took up missionary work in Papua New Guinea, surviving the Japanese invasion, and later dying in London following an appendix operation.

(Tragedy on the Clyde - sourced from the archives of The Old Courthouse Museum, and newspapers of the time accessed from the National Library's TROVE database, compiled and edited by Myf Thompson.)

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What's happening at the Old Courthouse Museum?

Cleanup and garment repair in the Health Services Room

Member Jillian McDonald is shown using her skills as a 'Needlewoman' to repair fine fabric, and strong knees to sort out the wardrobe contents in the Health Services Display room. This task has been on the 'To Do' list for quite some time, so it is now a welcome sight to open the cupboard doors, without the contents spilling all over the floor. Another job well done!!!



Museum team woos delegates at the Writers Festival weekend

With only a couple of days notice, Curator Myf Thompson and Researcher Ewan Thompson stepped in to make a joint presentation at the Batemans Bay Writers Festival during the Queens birthday long weekend at the Coachhouse Resort in the Bay. Addressing a group of almost 100 delegates, Myf spoke about the use of oral history and digital storytelling as a resource for writers, while Ewan described the impact made on the development of the Bay by the four original pioneering families. The audience response was very positive and it is looking good for a return talk in 2015.



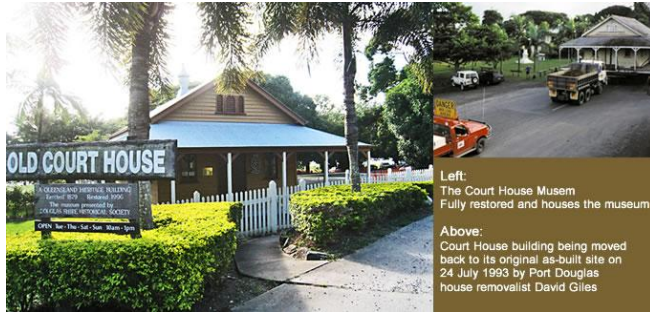
Curatorial (new word?) Assistants take painting to a new level!

Members Barbara Walsh and Alison Cooper have teamed up to create a new faux window 'perspective' of Beach Road, highlighting the many fine sights on this scenic route along our southern shoreline, during the first half of the 20th century. The painting complements the display of baby wear and ladies 'fashions through the decades' in the Domestic Room. Word is that the painting may also be nominated for next year's Old Courthouse Museum fine art award!!??

What's in a name? (part 2) – ‘The Old Courthouse Museum’

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

The Old Courthouse Museum - Port Douglas, Queensland, Australia



This timber building was constructed on the police reserve, adjacent to the waterfront at Port Douglas in 1879. It is the second oldest surviving timber courthouse to be commissioned by the Queensland Government.

Official police use ceased in 1957 and the building remained unoccupied for several

years. By 1963, the Department of Works considered the expense of repair uneconomical and the disposal of this building forced its removal from the police reserve. The building was purchased from the State Government in 1968 by Albert and Betty Whiting.

In mid-1993, the building was returned to its original as-built site and, after undergoing restoration, was opened on 5 April 1997 by the newly formed Douglas Shire Historical Society as a Museum. Today, the murder trial of the only woman to be officially hanged in Queensland is featured in the same room where the case first came before a court. Police and Supreme Court hearings, which led to the execution of Ellen Thomson by hanging, are now recreated through audio-visual and graphic displays, produced by the Douglas Shire Historical Society. The case, which was highly controversial last century, remains so to this day.

The Old Courthouse Museum - Strathalbyn, South Australia

The *Strathalbyn and District Heritage Centre* was formerly known as the *Police Station and Old Courthouse Museum, Strathalbyn*. The Heritage Centre is located in the former police station, which was built in 1858, with the courthouse added in 1867.

The collection has many historic items, including: horse buggies and carts, dating back to the early days of transportation in the district; old farming implements, including a fully restored horseworks; an original furphy water cart; a large hand-hewn wooden thresher and a working wire tie hay baler; a blacksmith's shop, including tools and a working forge; over 3000 photographs; militaria from both World Wars, including uniforms, flying suits, guns, grenades, gas masks and helmets; and items associated with the activities of the local court and police station. Individual themed rooms have been created to display items that were common in sitting rooms, kitchens, bedrooms and laundries of Victorian and Edwardian Strathalbyn. There is also a large collection of water colour and oil paintings, by artists who lived and worked locally.



The Old Courthouse Museum - Monroeville, Alabama USA



Construction began on the Monroe County Courthouse in 1903 and opened in 1904. In 1963, county offices moved to a new building, and by 1991, the local community had turned the old Courthouse into a museum. Renovation of the building also began in 1991, and completed in 2002. Restored to its 1930s appearance, the courtroom is the model for Harper Lee's fictional courtroom settings in the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*. It is now one of the most recognised courtrooms in America, due to the popularity of the

film version of the book. Although the film was not made here, the set designer came to Monroeville to measure, photograph and draw the courtroom, before recreating it on a Hollywood sound stage. Throughout her childhood, Harper Lee often sat in the balcony as she watched her father practice law in the courtroom. The museum houses two permanent exhibits: **Harper Lee: In Her Own Words**; and **Truman Capote: A Childhood in Monroeville**. Each April and May, the courtroom is the setting for Act 2 of the Mockingbird Players' production of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

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And finally..... A new exhibit in the 'Lest we Forget' Room

Meet our latest 'members' – two mannequins and a Display Case, part of a recent donation by the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. One of the mannequins is dressed in the donated uniform of a former resident of the Bay, Major-General Alan Stretton, previously Director-General of the Natural Disasters Organisation. Along with the Commonwealth Minister for the Northern Territory,



Rex Patterson, he arrived at Darwin Airport late on Christmas Day, 1974 to take charge of the relief efforts in the wake of Cyclone Tracy. On 31 December 1974, Stretton recommended that full civilian control should resume in Darwin, and handed over control of the city to its elected officials. (The photo also shows member Les Smith using his carpentry skills on the new display).

Key dates to note:

- 11.30am, Saturday 2nd. August 2014 – Annual General Meeting at the Community Centre.
- Annual Subscription due by end of June 2014: single \$15, couple \$25.

Chris Ruszala – Editor

(email stories or anecdotes to me at caruszala@bigpond.com)

Can YOU:

- 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