



The Old Courthouse Museum

PASTIMES

*Newsletter of the
Clyde River and Batemans Bay Historical Society Inc.*
Issue 29: May – Jun 2017

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DATE ANNOUNCED FOR 2017

FAMILY FUN ('OPEN') DAY

SATURDAY 21ST OCTOBER 2017

The Exec Committee has agreed to stage this year's Open Day on a Saturday! That's right, our own little 'Carnivale' will be held on Saturday, 21st October. Similar format to last year, with same community groups invited and, perhaps, some new ones! More details to follow over next few weeks.



2017 AGM

SATURDAY 29TH JULY 2017

For your diaries, the Annual General Meeting of the Clyde River and Batemans Bay Historical Society Inc. will be held at the Community Centre on Saturday 29th July. Meet at 10.00am for 10.30am start. All elected positions can be contested at the AGM: President, Vice-President, Secretary, Assistant Secretary, Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. In addition, a Committee of up to six (6) people will be formed,

Please note that this will be followed by a Members lunch – BBQ provided, but also please bring a plate (preferably with something on it!!!!) See you there!

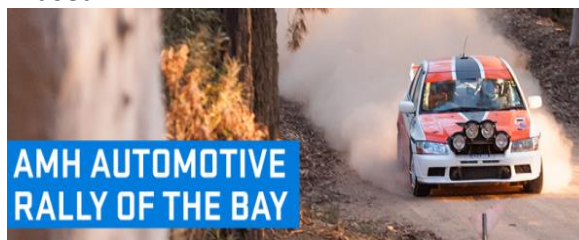
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RALLY OF THE BAY 2017

CHANGE OF VENUE

SATURDAY 12TH AUGUST

Our local Council has advised the Organiser of this years 'Rally of the Bay' that the venue for 'Service Park Operations' cannot be based at Mackay Park. The new location will be Corrigans Beach Reserve, at Batehaven. Society President Ewan Morrison and member Chris Ruzsala have inspected the alternative site and are very pleased with what we have been offered. More details will be provided closer to the date, via our website, Facebook and at the Museum.



FEATURED ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE OF PASTIMES

Memories of a Nelligen childhood – Part 1:

We begin the first of a 3-part personal journey by Bill Simpson, into life in 1920s Nelligen.

Lobster diving, crabbing and prawning:

Local Ron Edwards recounts some Memories of catching crustaceans off the Eurobodalla Coast.

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

'The tiny township of Nelligen could soon be one of the major tourist attractions of the South Coast ... By this time next year Nelligen will be a big tourist town', I read.

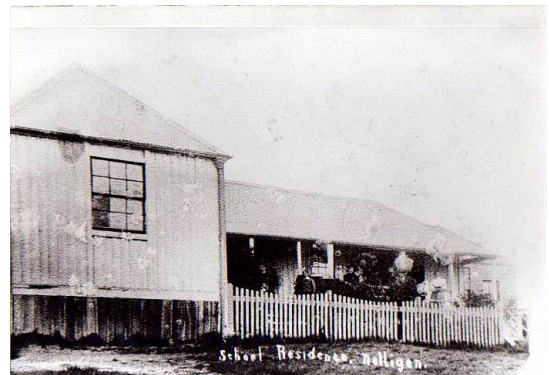
I scarcely noticed as THE CANBERRA TIMES of December 29 slipped to my lap - my mind was already back in the Nelligen that I'd known so well, more than 60 years ago, during those impressionable years that I'd lived there with my parents, when I - and the world - was young.

My father had been appointed as the local schoolteacher and so we moved from the dusty plains of the Riverina to the rambling old residence on the hill overlooking the town of Nelligen on the Clyde. For the next five years, until I was nine years old, Nelligen was the centre of my wonderful world and the images and impressions and the events of those years are still etched vividly and clearly in my mind - not in any chronological sequence but rather as a rich kaleidoscope of exciting never-to-be-forgotten experiences and impressions.

Be it a weakness, it deserves some praise.

We love the play-place of our early days

*In 1922, the year after our arrival, the old school residence (**photo right**) was demolished - another year or two and it would have fallen down of its own accord - and a new school and residence was built. The "new" school has long since been transported elsewhere, but the residence still stands on the hill above the town and when I saw it last, several years ago, it had become The Old Schoolhouse Pottery, conducted by Len and Lilli Bathgate. My wife and I were made very welcome by Lilli Bathgate; for me it was a most nostalgic experience to wander through the rooms I remembered so well - so familiar but now strangely modernised and oh, so different. However, we were delighted with the wonderful range of pottery, much of it made from Nelligen clays, and of course we purchased several lovely pieces as a memento of our return to "Yesterday".*



*As I stood that day on the verandah, looking down over the village and trying to superimpose what I was actually seeing on to the picture I'd held in my mind's eye for so many years, I thought of that winter's night in 1924 when my father had woken me in the middle of the night and carried me out on to the verandah to watch the original Steampacket Hotel burn to the ground. (**photo left**)*

This first of the three Steampacket Hotels had been a two-storey timber building, owned and conducted by

one James Neate. As far as I can recall, the cause of the fire was never determined, but the old "pub" certainly made a great spectacle as the flames lit up the school residence and the surroundings. Next day I remember going down with my parents to view the still-smouldering ruin and collecting "glassies" - the glass marble stoppers used to seal lemonade bottles. They'd been blown out somehow by the heat and provided us kids with marbles by the dozen.

One story was that one of the permanent boarders at the hotel, an elderly retired timber worker who acted as "general useful", kept his life savings (1000 pounds was the amount spoken of) in an old tin trunk in his room. As soon as the smoking ruins had cooled sufficiently, the old fellow located and finally opened the trunk, and was greatly relieved to see his bundles of pound notes still intact - but alas, as soon as he touched them, they crumbled away to powder! It was a good story, anyhow, and one that caught my childish imagination. I've often wondered if it were really true.

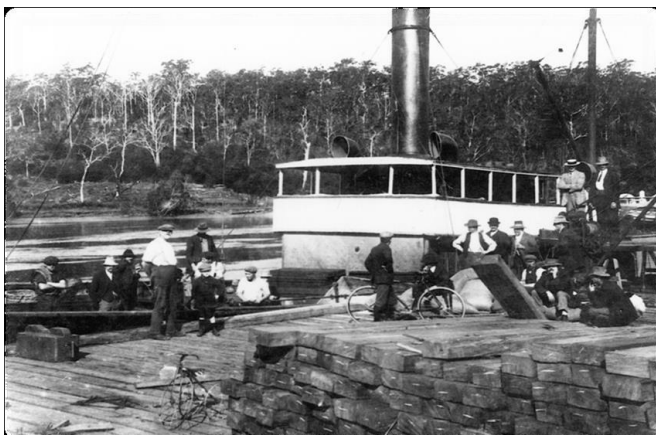


Nelligen Hotel circa 1910/16 –The first Steam Packet was built as a single-storey building in 1864. It was later renovated to double storey in 1900, so that the floor was above the height of floods. The building was destroyed by fire 1924/26.

In their first year or two at Nelligen my parents had no transport of any kind, although most of the local residents owned a horse and gig or buggy. However, our lives were changed quite dramatically when Dad, after much perusal of brochures and manuals, purchased a brand-new Harley-Davidson motorcycle and sidecar, complete with a "dicky-seat" in the nose of the sidecar for me. It came from Sydney by coastal steamer and created much interest in Nelligen - the first bike and sidecar in the village, although there were several others in the district. The Andersons, who lived at the foot of the Clyde Mountain, had one, and the policeman at Batemans Bay - I think his name was Hoole - also had one, but ours was the first in the village (7.9 horse power).

In the early 1920s there was a great deal of interest in motor bikes. I well remember my father and I getting up very early one morning, in the dark, to position ourselves on the edge of a

cutting overlooking the old road behind the police station to watch 50 to 60 bikes roar past in a national reliability trial on their way to tackle the Clyde Mountain. As it became lighter we were able to identify the different machines - the Red Indians, the Nortons, the Douglasses, the Rudge Whitworths and, of course, our chosen favourites, the Harley-Davidsons. It was a sight and an experience for a seven-year-old to savour and remember!



Nelligan Wharf, 1914. Sydney de Garis Harkus (at left white shirt cap and braces) with his son Allan Sydney Harkus aged 6, Allan's tricycle near the sleeper stack. Syd had the contract to operate the punt from 1911-1926. (Photo donated by Mrs Rae Harkus Richardson)

The old hand-operated punt that carried all traffic across the river resembled a scarcely floating collection of flotsam, with an alarming list to starboard. It was operated by Sydney Harkess, a large man of few words. His wife was the postmistress for many years. It was said that he had taught his own children to swim - and many others of the village besides - by tying a rope around their middle and throwing them off the punt into the river, then towing them across as he wound the old punt to the other side. The fact that sharks were sometimes seen in the Clyde no doubt spurred the kids on to regain the punt as quickly as possible and provided the necessary motivation. Presumably no child was ever molested, but I do remember a dog being taken by a shark not far from the punt. Syd had a bunk inside the galvanised iron "shack" that hung precariously from the side of the punt, and at night he'd sleep "on board" in order to provide a 24-hour service to nocturnal travellers. (End of Part 1 – Part 2 features in the next Issue of Pastimes).

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LOBSTER DIVING, PRAWNING AND CRABBING AT PEBBLY BEACH AND DURRAS LAKE - as told by local Ron Edwards

I remember Bob Davis (Mr. Davis). He and my father were good friends, they would go lobster diving around the rocks at Pebbly Beach. No wet suits though, they both wore old wool police pants and a tight wool jumper, sandshoes and gloves. They wore old rubber facemasks and the snorkels with the ping pong ball in the top, to stop the water when a wave broke over them. Quite a sight when you think of it now, but even at that age, when I was sitting on the rocks watching them, I thought how brave (or stupid) they were, as large waves would break over them and wash them against the rocks (thus the woolen clobber). It never seemed too rough though, if they drove all the way around there on that bad dirt road, they would be going in for a feed of lobsters regardless.



I just remembered there was always three of them, the other one was Jacki Sebbons (Mr. Sebbons) - not too sure about the spelling. The three of them would go prawning together at Durras Lake on the second or third night after the full moon. They used a small drag net, stretched between two tomato stakes. There was usually a lively discussion as to who would take the tomato stake attached to the deep side of the net, because the net was walked along the edge of the shore, with one man walking in very deep water and the other walking in about knee deep water, who was always offering advice to the one doing the deep end. It got very lively towards the end of the night.

It was my job to collect dry drift wood and keep the fire going under the "copper" on the beach. It was pretty scary, because away from the fire it was pitch black, and the crabs were attracted to the fire. Mr. Sebbons gave me the scoop ring, which was made out of a frame of fencing wire

and covered with some small chicken wire. I normally used this for scooping the floating (cooked) prawns off the top of the hot water and into the cane basket. He told me to chase the "big" crabs along the beach, in the pitch black, scoop them up then drop them into the copper, to cook with the prawns.

Yeah fat chance Mr. Sebbons! I was about 5 years old at the time. But I said "OK Mr. Sebbons."

You know I also just realized, I thought they would never know that I always got the biggest prawns when I was cooking them, because I threw the prawn shells into the fire as I ate them. But sitting next to that bright fire on that otherwise black beach, eating their hard earned prawns they never said a word..... to me.

Regards,

Ron

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EXTRACT FROM ULLADULLA & MILTON TIMES 23rd Feb. 1895

The Life of a Carrier

The poor, over-worked, underpaid, benighted carriers are now compelled to take a day's rest on Sunday noleus volens. Only those which have been there can understand the hard ships of a carrier's life, exposed to all weathers — frosts, floods, and storms. His constant care is to keep the horses fed, and shield the goods from harm; he crawls along the boggy roads well satisfied if each night shows "a day's march nearer home". Home is the carriers' haven. Now, between it and them the law has raised an insuperable bar— the Sabbath. In the metropolis, trains and trails run as usual, but on Moruya's lonely mountain road the poor carrier is compelled to camp on Saturday night almost in sight of home. Two policemen are kept travelling almost all day on Sunday to see that the carriers are not travelling.

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From 'THE SYDNEY MORNING HERALD', Wed. 23rd May, 1877

PUBLIC HOUSE FOR SALE. - For SALE or LEASE, that well-known house, the UNION HOTEL, Bateman's Bay-, always doing a good business, 8 years established. The house contains six bedrooms for public accommodation, with parlour, dining room, bar, and three private rooms, all well-furnished, together with paddock about two acres, stabling, etc., situate within 200 yards of the Steamboat Jetty, and opposite the Ferry. The whole of the above will be sold on favourable terms ; or, if preferred, LET to a respectable tenant, the proprietor leaving on account of ill-health. For particulars, apply- to G. Haiser, Bateman's Bay; Mr. R. Craig, Braidwood; or Mr. Barton, Moruya.

What's been happening at the Old Courthouse Museum?

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 programme 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.

Here are the links to Edna and Gwen's stories on the ABC Open website:

<http://open.abc.net.au/projects/moment-behind-the-photo-53jq3ls/contributions/contributors/clyde+museum>

'BACK TO THE BAY' EVENING AN INCREDIBLE SUCCESS – Saturday 6th May

The Soldiers Club was a hive of activity, on this emotional night for families and friends who originated from the Bay area. With almost 400 people attending this unique event, organised by local Leah Burke, expectations were high as the recent past was brought to life through a montage of photo images on stage and some impressive displays of documents and photos provided by the organisers. The Museum



contributed with a Stand, highlighting not only some significant local family photos from its archives, but also a digital sequence of images from its rare collection of images currently on display in the Museum.

The evening proved to be a great success, raising over \$2K from sales of CD/DVD images of Batemans Bay, past and present, and programs, while Leah announced that half of the proceeds would be donated to the Batemans Bay Womens Hospital Auxiliary and the other half to the Clyde River and Batemans Bay Historical Society. What a generous gesture!

In the photo above, Leah (far left) presented a cheque for \$1085 to Museum Curator Myf Thompson (far right) on Friday, 9th June at the Museum. Many thanks to Leah and her team!

PLANNING CONTINUES FOR CATERING AT 2017 'RALLY OF THE BAY' – Saturday 12th August

As stated on Page 1, we will be catering again at this year's Rally of the Bay. Member Chris Ruzala will be coordinating our contribution to the event and planning, with assistance from many of our members! As stated on Page 1, we will now be based at Corrigans Beach Reserve.



FUNDRAISING IN MAY THROUGH TO JUNE 2017 – KEEP IT UP!!!



Bunnings BBQ – 2 nd June:	\$396
Book Emporium – May:	\$244
Book Emporium – June:	\$185
+ General donations:	\$30

That makes for an impressive total of **\$855** (clear) for the two months. Once more, well done to all of our fundraisers!

KEY DATES FOR YOUR DIARY FROM MAY TO SEPTEMBER 2017

- Ladies Stall, Bridge Plaza: 29th June, 27th July, 31st August and 28th September.
- Bunnings BBQs – Friday 28th July, Saturday 30th September, Friday 27th October.
- Annual General Meeting, Community Centre – Saturday 29th July (details TBA).
- 'Rally of the Bay', **Corrigans Beach Reserve, Batehaven** – Saturday 12th. August (details TBA).
- Moruya Antique Tractor & Machinery Association Bi-annual Rally at the Moruya Show ground – Saturday 7th (all day) & Sunday 8th (morning only) October.
- Museum Annual Family 'Open Day' – Saturday, 21st October

CLASSIC (BUT SOMEWHAT RISQUEE) ADVERTS FROM THE PAST



BUILDING AND MAINTENANCE GUYS HAVE A 'SMASHING TIME' IN THE MUSEUM LOO!!!!!!



Work has finally commenced on conversion of the Museum's public washroom and lavatory into a more user-friendly environment, suitable for both able and disabled visitors. In the photo (left), members Les Smith and Bill Keenan are about to remove a partition which housed a shower. By taking out this wall, visitors in wheelchairs and those pushing walking frames should be able to more easily access the toilet and hand basin. A great initiative by the Museum, which has been partially funded by donations at Bunnings BBQs, the Book

Emporium and Ladies Stall sales.

LOOKING FOR INFORMATION ON Perry's Mill

New Member Chris Bendle, who also happens to be our Family History Researcher, has asked the Editor to make the following request: ***"Looking for any information on Perry's Mill, Batemans Bay. We are particularly searching for information on employees of the Mill or any photographs of the Mill and its workers."*** Please contact Chris if you can assist her.

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.