



Contact

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Yamba Museum - the Story House, River Street, Yamba NSW
Phone 02 6646 1399 - PO Box 100 Yamba NSW 2464
Email: yambamuseumnsw@gmail.com - www.pyhsmuseum.org.au

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Hello Everyone

We held our first Committee Meeting of the new guard last Friday, 18th September and it was a pleasure to welcome, for the first time, Anne-Marie Wardrop. In addition to her role as Stock Control Co-ordinator (looking after ordering of all our books), Anne-Marie has agreed, with the help of ex-Librarian/Teacher Sue Spence, to take on

the administration of our Library. Sue will continue as Education Co-ordinator and as the Committee's representative on the IT SIG, and Anne-Marie will represent the Committee on the Publications SIG.

We also welcomed back Anne Dinham, who has graciously accepted the role of Vice President. Anne, together with Marea and Sue are members of the sub-committee responsible for Grant Submissions and Acquittals. Ever mindful of the need for some testosterone, we also welcomed Keith Redman back to the Committee after an absence of many years. Keith has agreed to represent the Committee at the Maintenance SIG meetings.

When Ann Scott returns from her travels in November, she will also join the Committee as understudy to our wonderful Secretary, Anne McCallum, who has performed the role for over 15 years. We are also hoping that Ann might help out with some other duties, but we'll cross that bridge when we come to it!

A warm welcome back to returning Committee Members:

Our Treasurer, Maureen French has now completed her first year after taking over the reins from Christina, who, as we all know, stepped down after 33 years as treasurer. I know Maureen felt some trepidation in filling Christina's shoes, but she has done, and continues to do, a fabulous job.

Denise Moss has done a wonderful job in the role of Assistant Treasurer as well as acting as Secretary in Anne's absence.

Marea will be undertaking the newly created role of Museum Manager and Curator, and will continue to manage the day-to-day activities of the Museum volunteers working in the Flinders Room.

Margaret Lawrence is doing a sterling job as co-ordinator of The Old Kirk bookings, managing group tours and Editor of our Contact newsletter. We are hoping to get someone to assist Margaret in all these roles, as succession planning is now the key focus in distribution of responsibilities.

Personally, I'm still struggling to get my head around what I'm doing and what I'm supposed to be doing! I will canvass businesses (wearing my Chamber of Commerce hat at the same time) to become Friends of the Museum; will ensure that our Museum brochures are distributed all around town, particularly to motels and caravan parks; and to disseminate event information, etc. to the various media for maximum publicity and exposure.

We also have several Committee Members interested in helping out as Tour Guides and Sue Spence has offered to brief us on what is entailed. If any of our Members are interested in becoming involved in this important role, please let me know.

Robyn Tychsen's Art Exhibition commenced on Saturday, 19th September and there are signs around town advertising this event which will be open until 1st October. Later in October, Graeme Mackie's "*Pictures @ an Exhibition*" opens and will run for four weeks, and our Vision4Change event is happening before the end of the year, so there is plenty going on!

Until next month Margot

25 YEARS ON ANGOURIE ROAD

- Gary Whale

There has been a school here in Yamba since 1868, first on Pilot Hill, then on the site of what is now the Bowling Club, and for the last 25 years on its current site on Angourie Road. On Friday, August 28th the move from the old school in town to the new one was re-enacted by the whole school population.

Back in 1990 the students had Monday 27th August off from school while the teachers made the move. Then on Tuesday 28th they walked to their new premises. There were speeches from the former Principal, Geoff Gorman, the President of the P&C, Vic White, and the local member, Ian Causley MLA and – as Geoff Gorman frequently comments – “the best speech of the day was by school captain, Jonathan Whale”. Then a ribbon was cut by kindergarten students Mareka Laurie and Daniel Bebb to mark the opening.

Twenty five years later a similar ceremony was held with all 385 students seated under the “hangar” in perfect school uniform. The school’s Aboriginal Education Assistant, Andrea Laurie, welcomed everybody to Yaegl country and later Auntie Lenore Parker assisted by Kerri McLeay performed a smoking ceremony. School leaders Erin Shugg, Zahri Berry, Toby Austin and Nic Bowen chaired the proceedings and invited both the current Principal, Debbie Woods, and the Principal from 1990, Geoff Gorman, to address the gathering.



Principal Debbie Woods then organised the students and adults to leave the school from the back, walk down Coldstream Street to Yamba Street then around into Wooli Street and back to school. Back at the school the local Federal member, Kevin Hogan MHR, encouraged all the students to “aim high” before a celebration cake

was cut by Mrs Maureen Curtin and Mareka Laurie. Mrs Curtin, as the longest-serving member of staff in 1990, had closed the door of the old

school as they left (and promptly burst into tears!) and Mareka brought things full circle, having cut the ribbon twenty-five years earlier.

Mrs Lyn Eke, who was on the staff in 1990 and is still there, did a brilliant job in organising the day. Members of PYHS will be gratified to know that much of the information for the day was garnered from the records we keep here at the museum. Mrs Woods commented what a positive experience the day had been for the students and what a sense of history they had gained.

CHAPTER MEETING – Sue Spence

Bright and early on Friday 4th September, four members set off for the Lawrence Museum to participate in the Museums Australia Chapter Meeting. Paul Stephen kindly agreed to drive Marea Buist, Sue Spence and Margot Scott.

The business of the day commenced with a very brief AGM - Jane Gardiner (Alstonville), Bill Boyd (Rileys Hill Dry Dock Heritage Reserve Trust) and Marea Buist were re-elected to the positions of Chair, Secretary and Chapter Coordinator.

In the following general meeting it was explained that the workshop to follow was partially funded by a grant from NSW Museums & Galleries. Marea then gave a report on the Museums Australia annual conference held in Sydney. She was only able to attend the Regional Museums Day but urged other museum representatives to attend the next one as bursaries are available to cover costs.

Other items discussed were the Intellectual copyright policy (that we have already implemented) and Research fees. Other museums charge \$20-\$25 for their research service; some also offer the service at a discount or for free if they join as a member.

A Paper Conservation Workshop was held after morning tea. Anne Kennett has worked as a paper, prints and drawings Conservator in Oxford before coming to Australia and now runs a successful studio in Coffs Harbour. Anne introduced us to the art and science of paper conservation – stabilising, cleaning, mending and repairs. Each Museum in attendance

brought a sample paper item and Anne provided general advice on the conservation of these items. Since conservation rather than restoration is standard museum practice, in some cases she recommended no work except appropriate display and storage. She also warned against laminating items!

After a simple lunch of sandwiches and cake provided by Lawrence Museum volunteers, we concluded the meeting by sharing 'good news' stories. Sue Spence spoke of our successful National Apology Anniversary Ceremony in February this year. Jane from the Alstonville Plateau Historical Society invited everyone to the 150 years celebrations at Alstonville to be held the following week and which their museum had played a key role in organising. Bill from Rileys Hill Dry Dock Heritage Reserve Trust was optimistic that his museum would soon be open to the public, while other museums spoke of how they had celebrated the Centenary of World War One.

The next Chapter meeting will be held on March 4th 2016, hosted by the New Italy Museum. The program is set to include a hands-on workshop in paper conservation for a representative from each museum while others participate in a session on how to effectively interpret museum displays. We heartily recommend that other members attend this next meeting if only to get an inside look on how New Italy operates!

REJECTED! – Gary Whale

The theme of History Week 2015 was *War: Nationalism and Identity*, and we were fortunate enough to have Dave Earl from the University of Sydney come to us on September 13th to share his research on the wartime lives of Australian men found unfit for service in the First World War.

Since June 28th last year (the centenary of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir to the Austria-Hungarian throne, and his wife Sophie) we have been inundated with commemorations – and sometimes inappropriate celebrations – of the Great War. Dave Earl suggested that, as historians, we need to take a more nuanced view.

He reminded us of the “Social Darwinism” of the time – the belief that people and nations achieve advantage over others as the result of genetic

or biological superiority, and that different nationalities have evolved different characteristics, such as the British being “plucky” and Germans being “efficient”. There was thus, at the beginning of the twentieth century, considerable interest in measuring how different racial “types” reacted in a new environment, such as the British in Australia.

Being British and Australian was seen as complementary. Australia and England might be rivals on the cricket field, but were one as members of the British Empire. Nevertheless there was an enthusiasm for “measurement”, and all Australian volunteers underwent a physical examination – which 34% of them failed! Although there was an imperial fervour in the marches of the time (such as the 1915 Gilgandra to Sydney “Cooee” March and the Copmanhurst to Maitland “North Coast Boomerangs” March), those who were rejected by the medical examination were left to feel they were not “worthy sons of Empire”.

The reasons were many and varied including poor vision, irregular heartbeats, poor lung capacity and varicose veins. Many of the volunteers didn’t even know they were unfit until they’d been medically examined – they worked hard on the land and were devastated by the rejection. Some of the criteria were outdated – for instance, it had been necessary to have good teeth because the standard procedure for loading a musket involved biting open the waxed paper cartridge before ramming it down the bore. However, the advent of metallic cartridges in the mid-nineteenth century made good teeth irrelevant for fighting. Nonetheless a popular cartoon of the time showed a rejected volunteer exclaiming “I want to shoot Germans, not bite them!”



*Volunteered for Active Service
Badge*

Rejection led to many suicides; others were the target of “white feather” campaigns. Soon Rejected Volunteers Associations began to be formed. They provided certificates to indicate that the wearer had attempted to voluntarily enlist for military service for Australia and the British Empire. They were issued to men who had been officially deemed medically unfit for duty. Some of those who had been rejected wanted something more tangible than a piece of paper, however, and badges

with the word “Volunteered” on them began to emerge.



*War Memorial
Montville Queensland*

War memorials the length and breadth of the nation record the names of those who gave their lives “for King and Country” in the First World War. Many such memorials also record the names of all who volunteered. But Montville in the Sunshine Coast hinterland has the only memorial with the names of “Rejects”.

SEPTEMBER WEDDING IN OLD KIRK

After the AGM on September 11th, the Old Kirk was transformed to accommodate the wedding of a bride from Lismore. She arrived with her large entourage in a Combi van which was beautifully outfitted in lime green and white upholstery and the van in similar colours. A piper in full regalia signalled the conclusion of the ceremony which was attended by 90 guests.



AUDIT OF MUSEUM KEYS

Anne McCallum has been keeping a register of the keys to the Museum held by Guides and other Museum users.

To ensure that the register is up to date, a list has been placed on the front desk and members who hold a key to the museum are asked to please write their name on the register list.

DIARY DATES - October

Monday 1st	Close Robyn Tychsen's Exhibition
Monday 5th	Yamba Tours - 9am
	Kirk - Wedding - 4.30pm
Tuesday 6th	Staff St James Primary School - 11.45am
Friday 9th	Members Meeting - 2pm
Monday 12th	Maintenance SIG - 9am
Friday 16th	Committee Meeting - 2pm
Friday 23rd	Opening Graham Mackie "Pictures @ an Exhibition" - 5.30pm
Monday 26th	Yamba Tours - 9am