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## MACLEAY RIVER HISTORICAL SOCIETY

# NEWSLETTER

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### Presidents Report

Our "Here Comes the Bride" exhibition closed on the 2 November and was another successful collaboration with the Slim Dusty Centre. The visitor's book overflowed with names and positive comments. As well as wedding dresses ranging from Eliza Ducat's wedding of 1864 to the 1930's to 1970's, the exhibition featured many photographs and a dressmaker's corner. The exhibition originally opened on 22 October and was co-curated by Julia Morrell of the Slim Dusty Centre and our Noeline Kyle with assistance from Debbie, Shirley, Sue and Ruth.

Our condolences got out to long-serving volunteers Nikki and Dianne in their recent sad losses.

We have made an expression of interest for our Dondingalong Church replica through the Regional Cultural Fund Grant. We have a letter of support from Kempsey Shire Council and now have a builder's quote. Early in the New Year we hope to have a Development Application for this project. The beaded and tongue and groove vertical slab boards of the original Church cannot be copied exactly and will have to be plainer as in our Settler's Cottage. The slab walls would be blackbutt and the timber for the floor will be tallowwood.

We were unsuccessful in the Building Improvement Programme grant to have our Museum building assessed. The panel suggested that we apply for State Heritage Registration of our building which would open up access to other pools of funding.

I attended the October meeting of the Port Macquarie and Districts Family History Society on Saturday where I was guest speaker. My talk was on the history of our Museum and what our Society does. We received another invitation from the Port Macquarie and Districts Family History Society to provide a guest speaker for their 2018 programme on the subject of Angus McNeil and his photography.

At the time of writing, preparations for the Centenary of Rail celebrations are really doing well thanks to Garry and Debbie for their efforts, as well as the Kempsey Family History Group. After a slow start, the Centenary celebrations gained much momentum and support came in from numerous other groups and individuals

A reminder that memberships for 2018 will fall due next month and I would encourage our existing members to

renew their memberships and help us carry out our role in preserving and disseminating our local history.

As this is the last Newsletter for the year, I would like to thank all of our volunteers for their contributions and support during 2017. I also wish all our volunteers and members a Happy Christmas and prosperous New Year.

Phil Lee

### Museum Report

The security fencing has been completed and each gate has a chain and padlock which can be unlocked with a common key. The fence will hopefully lessen risks of vandalism and break-ins to our Museum and outlying buildings as well as expanding the range of activities we can hold in our courtyard area. The fence was made possible by a grant from the 2016 Community Building Programme and we acknowledge the support from the New South Wales Government in funding this project.

New installations include a display stand for our bricks, doors with branding marks fixed to the wall and the Belgrave Falls Border Police door reinstalled. Interpretive signage for these displays is being prepared. Many of our earlier bricks were made in Port Macquarie as brickmaking on the Macleay did not commence in earnest until the great fire of 1907.

The garden shed has been approved by Committee and will be ordered shortly. It will enable tools and equipment to be housed securely outside the Museum building.

Acquisitions recently have been a collection of rubber squeaky toys from the 1950's, a telephone wire insulator made in occupied Japan, Masonic Lodge artefacts of Thomas William Hennessy (1913-1944), the sign from the old Kempsey Ambulance Station, a scrapbooked history of the Judd and Sullivan families and railways memorabilia; we have also been promised the chain measure and tripod used by surveyor Herborn. Ernest William Louis Herborn was born in the Duchy of Nassau (now in Germany) and married Fanny Rudder in Port Macquarie in 1855. He was perhaps Kempsey's first registered surveyor and is credited with surveying the first subdivision of Central Kempsey, the Trial Bay grounds and the village of Nambucca. One of his sons, Otho Albert, also became a registered surveyor.

Our toy display has been temporarily retired to make way for

the Centenary of Rail display. The World War 1 scrapbooking display has also been taken down for the time being.

It has been suggested that we apply for a grant to install pavers in our courtyard area to commemorate each of the 200 Macleay war dead as part of the World War 1 Centenary.

Phil Lee

## Research Report

A large number of research requests were received over the past quarter and these were as follows:

Family names included: Ruth Rudder (artist), Taylor, Reeves, Elliott, Lake, Paton, Seargent, Love, Staynor, Ritchie, Gleeson, Mulvihill/Flanagan, Green and Fitzpatrick.

Topics included: Smithtown sporting heroes, 1<sup>st</sup> NSW Mounted Rifles, 19<sup>th</sup> Century children's pastimes, Middleton Street Train Accident, Ngaku Rugby League, 1961 Leaving Certificate Kempsey High (Barry Newport), Freedom Riders and commencement of Kempsey's town water supply.

Locations included: Crescent Head (UNSW History Group), former part of Collombatti Road (Kempsey Shire Council for new name), Cardwell Street (Arakoon), Arakoon (meaning of name), Blackberry Lane renaming (Spencer, Lewis, Hereford), Little Rudder Street, and Brindabella House.

Rehousing and organising of the Midcoast Observer newspapers is nearing completion. These papers run from 1973 (first edition) to the current and contain much interesting and useful material including business houses history.

Carol Smallman is continuing to sort the Dulcie Bowden collection into folders and we have already been able to make good use of it for at least one research enquiry.

Dianne Nolan

## Photography Report

On 31 October, the centenary of the Battle of Beersheba was celebrated all over Australia. The gallant horses and Australian Light Horsemen that were involved will long be remembered as their victory is the stuff of legends. Our thoughts go immediately to David Rowe and his collection of photographs taken in the desert on that day, just an amazing record from the camera of a boy from the Macleay. We are indebted to Ruth Woodward for her generosity in sharing the photographs with the Museum. The Photographics Section will mount a small display of these photographs in the Angus McNeil Gallery.

Almost four weeks later we are celebrating again. The centenary celebrations of the Railway coming to Kempsey are well and truly underway and we are looking forward to that too. We are having a small display at the museum and the Kempsey Family History Group will have a display at the Station. Hopefully we will gain some photographs of the occasion to add to our records. We will reproduce some photographs as postcards and, thanks to Garry Munday, a

small historical booklet. These and other items will go on sale during the celebrations.

It is good to see the Kempsey folk coming together and it should be a memorable time starting with the luncheon at the Kempsey-Macleay RSL Club on Saturday 25 November. The guest speaker will be Mrs Joan Dooley whose parents, Mr and Mrs Laurie Riggs, ran the Kempsey Railway Refreshment Rooms in the late 1930's and 1940's. Fortunately they kept quite a few interesting bits and pieces which have filtered down to Joan and her brother Milton, and they have donated some of them to the Museum. Joan's talk is bound to be well received, she is a good speaker.

On Sunday the 26<sup>th</sup>, the Station will be decked out and there will be entertainment on and around it. Food and market stalls will be there, displays of vintage vehicles and motorcycles will be held, and buskers and musical groups will perform. While this is going on, the motorised "Tin Hare" will convey passengers to and from Eungai. There will be a special Wine and Cheese return trip to Macksville.

On Monday morning the 27<sup>th</sup>, the celebrations will continue. The official part of the proceedings will continue. The official part of the proceedings will take place at the Station with official guests, school captains and choirs in attendance – and there will even be a fly-over of light aircraft. A Centenary plaque will be unveiled by the Hon Melinda Pavey, MP, and a Centenary cake will be cut and served at a special morning tea.

As of 21 November, photographs we have catalogued to date total 60,036 catalogued out of which Angus McNeil negatives make up 29,135.

For Remembrance Day, Phil had Noeline post a copy of an Angus McNeil negative of four World War 1 soldiers simply titled "Ryan". We thought all the men were Ryans until we discovered most of the Ryan had red hair. Many people viewed the post and posted comments but none could identify the men.

Judy Waters

## New Additions to our Library

Cavill, Pte H W 1916 *Imperishable Anzacs: The Story of the Famous First Brigade*

Cuffley, Peter 1981 *Buggies and Horse-Drawn Vehicles in Australia*

Maitland City Council Heritage Group *Hay Barns and Dairy Buildings of Maitland*

Reece, Ian H. (Harold), 2008 *Harold's Diary; An Australian Digger's Records from World War 1* (Harry Reece was a former Clerk of Petty Sessions at Kempsey and President of the local branch of the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League for a number of years)

Rutherford, Phillip D 2017 *Soldier: Uniforms of the Australian Army*

Sharp, W Watson *Australia's Early Dwelling and Churches* These formerly damaged books have been professionally rebound.

Ellis, M H 1955 *John Macarthur*

Monash, General John 1936 *The Australian Victories in France 1918*