



Life in the Bay – Back in the Day



It is our role to keep the stories of our town; equally important, as a Museum, is our ability to explore such stories in an appealing, tactile presentation that empowers inter-generational story-sharing.

It has taken a little over 5 months of hard work to create the space and curate the content of our new permanent exhibition, *'After Hours'*. You'll move from a pre-TV lounge into the history of mannequins and fashion; recall the many and varied uses of the former School of Arts; you're encouraged to period dress; and we feature a 12 seat constructed homage to the demolished Bay Picture Theatre, and of course, a jaffa rolling aisle. Films showing on loop include Chaplin classics, Newsreel across 80 years, and vintage b/w heroes such as the 1949 Superman and Captain Marvel.

We are delighted with the result, and from Preview day June 8th know it will prove a real attraction for visitors and locals alike, enabling shared anecdotes of community life before the impact of social and sporting clubs as venues for entertainment.

Our volunteers have shown inspirational commitment to complete the project to a high standard on a fund-raised budget of just over \$1,000.

Imagine what we can achieve with more financial support! Please consider annual membership or a Friends of Museum donation - details on our website.

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Picture Theatre owner Ken and Jean Annetts (with lapdog Suzie)

RE-BRANDING

As advised in our last issue, the Society has changed its trading name to better reflect the range and diversity of its stories and collections.

The new logo appears on our masthead, and in all promotional material. We appreciate the positive feedback we've received, which shows this new direction will prove a good investment in our future.



River of Art – Our Contribution

Ted Richards, local artist and photographer, ran a workshop on the *Art of Old Photography*, in our Courthouse exhibition space. It was virtually a history of photography, drawing on his own extensive collection of intriguing antique postcards, carte de visite, and other vintage techniques. **But wait there's more!** If you missed out Ted will be running **two informal workshops** at the Museum in July; a relaxed format for anyone interested in talking and sharing photography. **Check our website** for dates and details.

In a recent talk to an audience attending "Whole Histories" in Yass, our curator described the Society's policy of linking our local stories to regional and national narratives – bringing them together to create a richer history. We are therefore delighted to have secured for our district **'Cook in the Pacific'. OPENING HERE JULY 2nd**. This is a Travelling Exhibition based on the National Library's recent extensive display, re-purposed to a banner format designed specifically for our Museum. From January 2020 local content will added to place Cook's east coast exploration in focus. **Local-Regional-National – our stories grow and flow.**

Cook's 1770 set of instruments includes a sundial for telling the time, a spirit level, a compass and an astrolabe.



TRIVIA : How do you pronounce it?

The Governor-General's wife, Lady Denman, Capitol Hill, 12 March, 1913.

'I name this capital CANBERRA'.

Lady Denman permanently impressed on the minds of Australians how the name should be pronounced. Being an upper-class English gel, she said: 'CANN-BRAH'. And that was that.



Enjoying the tactile experience of a hand built valve wireless dating from 1927.

Memories of Nelligen – Part One

by Bill Simpson (published in the CANBERRA TIMES 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.*



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.

In 1922, the year after our arrival, the old school residence 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 [*part of our Museum*], but the residence still stands on the hill above the town. I thought then 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.

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.

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. It was a powerful 7.9 h.p. machine and we were the kings of the road, it seemed to me. I was allowed to "blow" the horn, a mechanical contraption of cogs that was bolted on to the bar attaching the sidecar to the bike. It was operated by a lever that was pushed up and down to produce a raucous noise reminiscent of a dehydrated sheep trying to baa and, together with the noise of the engine, was guaranteed to make the most docile horse rear up and shy as we roared past in a cloud of dust.

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! *To be continued.*



Tight-Lacing!

Why, Madam, do you know there are upwards of 30 yards of bowel squeezed underneath that girdle of your daughter's? Go home and cut it; let Nature have fair play and you will have no need of my advice.

John Abernethy, English Surgeon (1764 – 1831)

‘Tight-lacing’ or ‘corset modification’ is defined as the conscious and visible process of artificial constriction of the waist. We have an example in our ‘After Hours’ display. Why women in the 19thC did this to their bodies, and some continue to do so today in the arenas of fetish and burlesque, is scarcely worth asking when you consider how cosmetic surgery has become commonplace today.

The primary effect of tight-lacing is the decreased size of the waist. The smallest waist recorded is that of Ethel Granger, who tight-laced for most of her life and achieved a waist of 13 inches (33 cm): a reduction of more than ten inches from her natural size.

Men did not escape the vanities of the flesh – a fine military posture was often achieved by a corset. But only his batman or valet knew!



Chris Ruzala explaining the finer points of stringybark canoe construction.



RE-CYLE AND RE-USE



our new office mantra. We’ve tried, but somehow those apple cores still got mixed up with paper scraps. Thanks to an initiative by Debra Hope we have boxes dedicated to specific recycling so visitors and volunteers can do the right thing. And a compost bin is on the way.

A Vivid Description of the CLYDE OYSTER INDUSTRY 1900

A large area of the River is leased for oyster beds, the principal, lessees being Messrs. Wray Brothers and Latta. The former procure most of their oysters with the aid of a diver, and on our return. Mr. Milton drew alongside the boat in which a diver (Mr. Steele) was getting dressed to resume work. The diver remains four hours at a time under water, and as those who have never seen a diver at work may like to know how they are rigged up, I mentally jotted down the following:

The diver had on ordinary clothing over which he drew a pair of thick woollen drawers and singlet, then a waterproof suit was drawn over these by his assistant, the wrists of which are of gutta percha[latex], and have to be well moistened with soap before the diver could insert his hands. The front of the trousers for about two feet are covered with leather to prevent the knees



from being cut with the shells and rocks. Largo heavy boots are next put on, each boot is fastened by two straps and buckles, the toes of the boots are protected by thick plates of copper as the diver is most of the time crawling on all fours to get the oysters from their beds. The soles are very thick and large pieces of lead are attached to each boot, I should imagine weighing about ten or twelve pounds.

A large back and breast plate of copper is then put across the shoulders, and bolts from the dress are inserted in holes. A plate of about an inch and a half in width is screwed over the lot to make it air tight. On the top of this the large copper head gear is securely screwed and has the openings fitted with very thick glass, one on each side of the head, the third in the centre opposite the mouth and nose about four inches in diameter. This is the final piece and when the aperture is closed the man at the air pump in the boat immediately commences operations and keeps constantly pumping.

Once the mouth-piece is screwed on a large crescent-shaped piece of lead weighing about 15lbs is then hung around the neck, the life rope tied to the diver's waist, and with small iron mattock in hand he descends the ladder at the side of the boat into the water. A large basket is also sent down with him in which he puts the oysters. His whereabouts can easily be traced by air bubbles constantly ascending to the surface. In one place, which was shallow, not more than 8 feet of water, we could easily discern him at work, the fish (bream) swimming about him, almost against his hands whilst working. Mr. Wray informed me that the fish get a good deal of feed whilst the oysters are being knocked off the rocks and they are not the least bit timid of the diver.

Mr. Latta also has a large number of oyster leases and collects them mainly by dredging process. There is a great demand for the Clyde oysters and a most remunerative business is done. They are now selling at 30 shillings per bag, and at one time when there was a failure in the Melbourne fisheries, I was informed they got as high as £7 10/ per bag [equivalent to £544 today]. Mr Aldridge is the Inspector of fisheries at the Bay and only lately made that place his HQ.

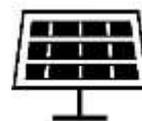
ROUND THE MUSEUM

***Stall and Book Emporium** – attracts a regular customer database, with our emphasis on quality books at very reasonable prices. *Thanks to local residents who keep us supplied and/or who buy.* Deb, Nerida and her team seem to find every opportunity to promote craft and book sales, and we thank them for their ideas and labour.

***Skiff** – our men's team 'discovered' a single person skiff under our old schoolhouse. Judging by the way they couldn't wait to restore it, we'll see her in the water gardens soon.

GRANT APPLICATIONS

* Our **Solar panels** were first installed around 9 years ago and proved very economical for the first few years. Today, with a quarterly bill of around \$350, we approached then local MP **Ann Sudmalis** for assistance in replacing our ageing panels. **SUCCESS!** We have received the OK from Council for the roof location, and are gratefully awaiting delivery of funds to forge ahead with installation. Hopefully our winter electricity bill will be substantially reduced.



MARCH 23rd AND MAY 18TH ELECTIONS - Volunteer time donated outside Museum hours

'OUR SAUSAGE GOT THE VOTE'

The BBQ team under Chris Ruzala, plus Museum and Craft Volunteers
Worked VERY HARD AND RAISED AN OUTSTANDING \$879.00!



We are good, but we're not immortal. Offering opportunities to attend training or networking events is valuable to retaining or engaging new volunteers.

On our behalf, new member Terri Roberts attended a two day seminar for museums with a maritime theme. Whilst we are not yet there ourselves, it is in our strategic plan to develop our coastal and maritime collection. Terri came back enthused with ways we can implement some of the awareness-building approaches used by, amongst others, Jervis Bay Maritime Museum.

On joining us, Terri 's skills included **Instagram Guru** – and thanks to her expertise, we add another social string to our media bow.

*Myf Thompson attended a Sydney workshop on setting up audio visual displays in Museums. Passing this on to other members, we have a clearer idea of what will work in our space, and the costs involved.

ABC'S THE OBJECT LESSON – Wednesdays 0920 on ABC south east radio with Simon Lauder

A regular series where museums in the region select a significant object from their collection and share its story. On May 29 we talk about how several objects suddenly become a collection extensive Annetts Collection, a prelude to launch of the **After Hours** exhibition.

COMES AND GO'S We welcome back president Ewan (and Di) Morrison after travelling the wilds of Scotland, and say farewell to V-P Chris (and Anita) Ruzala for a 5 week stay in the mother country.

DIARY DATES

8th June 'After Hours' xhibition launch

2nd July 'Cook in the Pacific' Exhibition launch

29th June Rally of the Bay – revhead fundraising BBQ in the Rally Crew Base at Corrigans

6th July Bunnings BBQ fund-raiser

17th Aug Annual General Meeting at the Museum

Do contact us. We welcome your comments and suggestions for stories. 😊 Myf