



The Old Courthouse Museum

PASTIMES

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

Sep/Oct 2013

FEATURED ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE OF PASTIMES:

Nelligen Part 4 – we conclude our exploration of Nelligen’s history in this issue, from 1940 to the present day. Also included are a series of photographs from the Betty Heycox collection.

New technology for the Museum – three soundscape systems will allow audio sound tracks to be triggered by movement within our timber, maritime and school display rooms.

New fund raising initiatives - It’s all about books this period!



Believed to be the Ark Hotel, formally the first hotel built at Nelligen in the 1850s and still in existence until about 1950. It was located at about 14 Braidwood Street opposite the Teacher’s residence.



Believed to have been Alfred Allan Shoebridge with his son at his store. The location of this photo is not clear, as one inscription suggests it was taken on the corner of Braidwood Street and Maisies Lane in 1896. However it is noted that Shoebridge’s Store was flooded in 1898 along the Steampacket and ISNCo shed. This would suggest it was one of the buildings south of the Steampacket Hotel, and probably the one in the centre of the following photo.



This photo was taken after construction of the Mechanics Institute in 1903, but before construction of the cheese factory in 1905.

Nelligen - Part 4

This is the last of our articles on Nelligen. Many of the accompanying photographs were copied from the Betty Heycox collection and have been arranged sequentially to assist an understanding of Nelligen’s development.

The police station closed permanently in 1940, while the SCSN Company ceased trading in 1952. In 1954 some 7,500 vehicles were ferried across the Clyde at Nelligen. In 1955/56 the old courthouse was transferred to the Church of England. Electricity was connected to the town in 1961/2. By 1963 approximately 30,000 vehicles crossed the Clyde; however the limited ferry size led to extensive queues during holiday times.

The construction of the new bridge, which opened in December 1964, required modification to the road layout and demolition of two buildings adjacent to the post office, to enable an “A-grade” road between the Highway and Braidwood Street. The store on the western side of the post office and the weatherboard house

(believed to belong to the Irelands), was demolished. Through-traffic no longer passed along Wharf Road, and in 1967 the Steampacket Hotel was relocated to a new site on the highway, to the west of the town. The school was permanently closed in 1969/70 and the post office closed in March 1982, later to re-open as a Bed and Breakfast establishment. A general store was opened between the Old Post Office Bed & Breakfast and the Mechanics Institute Hall in about 2000. A café and take-away food store also operated on the corner of Braidwood and Wharf Road (on the site of the first Steampacket Hotel), until it burnt to the ground in 2010.



An open-sided goods shed was constructed on the wharf, but from other photos does not seem to have survived for long. No trees have been planted in the street at this stage.



The Memorial, possibly at its unveiling in 1921. The courthouse is directly above, with the hipped roof of the former Watch House just visible to the right. Further right is the former school constructed of vertical timber boards. Note that the trees opposite the courthouse have not yet been planted.



The SS Moruya served on the Clyde River from 1906 – 1912. The photo shows the old Cheese factory on the left with the small Presbyterian Church slightly behind it and up the slope. There is a gable roofed shed between the cheese factory and the ISN Co building. Manning's shed is to the right of the wharf.



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.



Braidwood Street in the early 20th. Century

Source: The Story of Nelligen that has appeared in *Pastimes* is drawn from work undertaken by Pip GIOVANELLI for the Eurobodalla Shire Council. It was published in 2010 and is titled *Nelligen Main Street Study*.



The bushfires of 1939 burnt out several of the historic buildings on the south side of Braidwood Street.



The two-storey Steampacket Hotel burnt to the ground on 25 June 1925



Nelligen baths 1935-36, downstream from the Steam Packet Hotel and Punt crossing.



A paling fence has been erected around the former Steampacket Hotel site. The Mechanic's Institute Hall next to the post office is shown before the front was extended. The building uphill from the post office was demolished circa 1962 to widen the road that connects Braidwood St to the highway.

Note: The remaining pictures of Nelligen from the Betty Heycox Collection will be shown in the next edition of Pastimes (due late November 2013). I would also like to thank Ewan Morrison for his research into the history of Nelligen.

What's happening at the Museum?

ADDING A NEW 1930s STYLE KITCHEN AND UPGRADING THE LAUNDRY DISPLAY

The museum's building and maintenance team, led by members Les Smith and his trusty assistants Alick Trounson and Chris Lawler, have built an annexe to the Domestic Room to house a new 1930s style Kitchen and are upgrading the Laundry display. The contents have been sourced from our existing collections and further donations from the local community. The photo shows the completed kitchen.

Demonstrating more flair than any contestant on the BLOCK, Les is showing his talents to the maximum on this project. Not bad when you consider that most of the materials have been donated by Bunnings or rescued from the local Tip. Also, many thanks to Myf Thompson for artistic design and Troy Whelan for providing electrical expertise to install power and lighting circuits.



MUSEUM SOUNDS GREAT

Many people would be underwhelmed at the prospect of opening 7 plain cardboard boxes – but Historical Society volunteer Chris Ruzala is just happy to finally get his hands on the contents. Thanks to a grant from Museums and Galleries NSW, we are installing heat sensor-operated audio equipment for two of our major displays – Timber and Maritime. *“The two Soundscapes will create an ambience of these industries from axe chopping to whip cracking, creaking timbers to seagulls”* says Curator Myf Thompson. As the Museum’s IT officer, Chris is working with Myf to compile layered audio clips which when installed in the displays will activate as visitors cross the threshold. The soundscapes switch off after 2-3 minutes.



MANAGING THE COLLECTION

Maintaining a professional approach to managing the Old Courthouse Museum’s extensive collection is an ongoing responsibility for volunteer members of the Clyde River and Batemans Bay Historical Society. There are many aspects to cataloguing, conservation and research involved in the handling of heritage objects, many of which have significance to our local donors. A series of workshops supporting volunteers has been funded with the assistance of local councils, South East Arts and Museums and Galleries NSW, most recently a Collection Management course in Narooma.



Pictured attending are (L to r) Historical Society members Myf Thompson, Janet Beasley and Marg Henry, with course instructor Kay Soderlund of Preservation Australia at rear.

TRAVELING DISPLAYS

The Museum celebrated NSW ‘**Family History**’ Month with a display at Hanging Rock Library in Batemans Bay. Themes included getting the most out of Google for genealogy research and stories from oyster farmers to remind people that family history often crosses over with *social* history. This September features **History Week**, with a theme of ‘picture this’, and we will again be promoting ourselves and the value of heritage, thanks to the facilities and good people at Hanging Rock Library. Picture this misleading road sign in Wales.



SUPPORTING THE COMMUNITY

The Museum allocates space for temporary displays by other community groups. This year we have featured arts and crafts, patchwork, theatre, and currently a display for Eurobodalla Landcare. If you know of a group who would appreciate the opportunity, please contact us at our email address or ring 4472 8993 Tuesday and Thursday (9am to 3pm).

RENT COLLECTING – SCOTTISH STYLE



The enclosed photograph was taken by Myf, our Curator, while visiting the Skye Life Museum on the Isle of Skye in Northern Scotland. Known as a “Landlord’ s chair”, this 17th century oak chair was carried around for use by the estate manager’s representative when collecting rent from local crofters.

GUEST SPEAKER TED RICHARDS DAZZLES AT LATEST MEMBERS MEETING

Members were entertained at the last General meeting on 8th October 2013, when guest speaker Ted Richards gave a presentation on the History of Photography. Ted is well known to members as photographer of the significant items in the Museum’s collection. He was formerly employed by the Canberra Times and the Australian War Memorial.

Ted is pictured here being thanked by our President Tony Whelan.



Call for more BOOKS!

Having assisted at the last three Corrigans Beach markets, the good news is that book sales are increasing and I am gaining an understanding of the type of books and authors that interest our customers. With this in mind, I would like all members to revisit their own book collections and consider a further donation to the Museum’s book store. Perhaps you could ask your friends also. As a guide, I would greatly appreciate books which are:

- near-new or in good condition (without creases, fading print or torn edges please);
- Novels from the following popular authors:
 - Nora Roberts (also writes as J.D. Robb);
 - Ian Rankin;
 - Lynda La Plante;
 - Stuart MacBride;
 - Val McDermid;
 - Iain Banks;
 - James Patterson;
 - Bryce Courtney;
 - Stieg Larsson;
 - Kathy Reichs;
 - Daniel Silva; and
 - Janny Wurts.

- Categories such as:
 - Crime fiction;
 - Romantic fiction;
 - Science-fiction;
 - Science-fantasy;
 - True crime;
 - Biographies; and
 - autobiographies.

At the last market, I noticed customers will pay more if the books are in good condition and in larger print versions (a good example is James Patterson). Thanks in anticipation.....

Request for Ideas and contributions from Members

As this is your newsletter, I would request that all readers give some thought towards making contributions for content in future editions of Pastimes. I am looking for anecdotes and memories of local history which have an impact on current members or members of the broader Batemans Bay community. This could relate to:

- the main historical industries of the Clyde area, such as fishing, timber cutting and milling, farming of the land and oysters;
- social history which concerns our welfare, such as education, health and recreation; and
- stories of a humorous nature (suitable for all tastes please!)

Please either email your stories to me at caruszala@bigpond.com or we can do it face-to-face.

New Opening Hours for the Museum

At the last Executive meeting, changes were proposed and accepted for the opening hours of the Museum. The proposed hours were then tabled and accepted at the General Members meeting on 8th October 2013. The new hours are:

- 10.00am – 3.00pm, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday;
- 10.00am – 1.00pm on the second Sunday of every month; and
- Other openings outside of these days/hours will be by appointment only.

The changes will be made effective from Tuesday 5th November 2013.

And finally.....

Words and sayings seem to be discarded or forgotten with every decade that passes. Here 's a few to bring back some memories... As we all know, Grandmas knew everything, but the trouble was they were always dispensing advice – and children soon got sick of all their old sayings:

- *You can't make strawberry jam out of manure;*
- *Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me;*
- *Remember, all the saints are Catholics, but not all the Catholics are saints;*
- *Whatever is on a drunken man's lips is in a sober mans mind; and*
- *Good things come in small packages, like poison.*

Our Current Projects

- Schools of the District
- Recording & naming our photos
- Recording our artefacts
- Photographing our artefacts
- Researching our artefacts
- Telephony Display
- The Local Oyster Industry
- Cheese production in the district
- Blandford House
- Maritime History of the District

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

Chris Ruzsala - Editor