



The Old Courthouse Museum

PASTIMES

*Newsletter of the
Clyde River and Batemans Bay Historical Society Inc.
Issue 18 – Apr/May 2015*

STOP PRESS!!! STOP PRESS!!! STOP PRESS!!!

MUSEUM RECEIVES 2014 HERITAGE GRANT AWARD FROM RAHS

We are pleased to announce that the Royal Australian Historical Society has awarded a 2014 Heritage Grant to the Clyde River and Batemans Bay Historical Society. The award of \$2000 has been granted for one of our current projects – ‘Access to our Parish Maps – Part 1: Parish/Town Maps’. Lead by our Grants Officer, Ray Mooney, we have been able to purchase (from the NSW Government) copies of large-scale topographical maps of various Parishes within the Batemans Bay and surrounding areas.



The maps date from the late 19th. Century and include names of the original landowners. The maps will be hung from special frames and housed within a customized cabinet, allowing easy access by volunteers and Museum visitors

MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE:

11.30am, Saturday 1st August 2015 – Annual General Meeting at the Community Centre. Annual Subscription is due by the end of June 2015 – Fees: Single \$15, Couple \$25.

STOP PRESS!! STOP PRESS!! STOP PRESS!!

MOVIE NIGHT FUNDRAISER A GREAT SUCCESS

In partnership with the local Bay City Cinemas in Perry Street, the Museum presented a special performance of the new movie ‘A Royal Night Out’ on Thursday,



14th. May. Set during the VE Day celebrations in London in 1945, it tells the story of a ‘night out on the town’ taken by the Princess Royals, Elizabeth and Margaret.

Movie goers were treated to pizza, cheese and biscuits and refreshments prior to the screening. Some even rose to the occasion and dressed in appropriate hats, gloves, diamonds and fake fur!! To quote member Edna Veitch: “Darlings, we’ve had a ball!!!!”

With the success of this event, we hope to repeat it within the next six months.

FEATURED ARTICLES IN THIS ISSUE OF PASTIMES

The Jerrabat Gully Rakers: Curator Myf Thompson takes a look at the darker side of life during the turbulent 1860s of Southern New South Wales.

More memories of the Bay: Max Bradford, a former resident, recalls growing up in the Bay during the 1950s.

The Jerrabat Gully-Rakers

The 1860s were a period of intense economic activity – a major factor being the goldfields and development of trade and services to support them. Bushranging was *also* a growth industry. Amongst the better known crims of that decade were Frank Gardiner, Ben Hall, Dan Morgan, Captain Thunderbolt, and our own local lads, **the infamous Clarke Brothers**.

With its access to the goldfields of Araluen and Major's Creek, Braidwood, was a focal point for the district. Major Elrington, after whom Major's Creek is named, was a veteran of the Napoleonic Wars and was granted nearly 3000 acres around Braidwood. This grant was typical of those given in the colony to retired British military men. He was one of two magistrates appointed to enforce law and order in this 'frontier' region, where farms were largely staffed by assigned convicts.

Which is where the Clarke family enter our story. In 1827, Jack Clarke, an Irishman, and shoemaker by trade, was transported for seven years for stealing pigs, and assigned to the Major's Mt Ellington estate at Braidwood. There, Jack married Irish lass Mary Connell and leased a small block in the Jingera Mountains, in the upper reaches of the Shoalhaven River. Their three sons and two daughters grew up without schooling or religious instruction. The land proved too small to support his family and he did not actually farm it. Jack raised his children to believe in *his* view of the fair and equitable distribution of property, by selling sly-grog and initiating his sons Tom and John into theft.

The Clarke men were well trained in bushcraft, heavily armed, and expert in the art of cattle duffing and horse stealing. They relentlessly raided crops and livestock, aided by their uncles Pat and Tom Connell. This gang of relatives and friends, were known as the Jerrabat Gully Rakers, a **gully-raker** being Australian slang for a thief who steals stray or unbranded cattle.

Ben Hall was active on the trail in 1865, and one of his early members was Tom Clarke. They preyed on the gold convoys which wound up the steep road from the Araluen valley, through Majors Creek and then on to Braidwood and beyond. Tom was once arrested and gaoled at Braidwood, but notoriously escaped, broken out by family.

With their gang of family and friends, the Clarkes marauded virtually unchecked in a triangle from Braidwood to Bega, and up the coast to Moruya and Nelligen. They plundered publicans, storekeepers, farmers and travellers. They ambushed gold shipments from Nerrigundah and Araluen and the coaches that travelled from Sydney and the Illawarra.

Even offering a reward for information amounting to the enormous sum of 1500 pounds, the widespread support for the gang in its own community, meant police had little success. **In January 1867, a party of 4 special constables sent in pursuit of the gang**, led by John Carroll, were ambushed near Jinden Station. Then apparently tied to a tree and shot. Tom Clarke allegedly pinned a blood soaked pound note to the leader, to warn others of the dangers of crossing them.

The run of luck ended with the conviction of brother in law Tom Connell for the robbery and assault of Moruya storekeeper John Emmott, when he stole 25 ounces of gold dust, two one-pound notes, some silver coins and a gold watch. The many other exploits, including the death

of Constable Miles O'Grady at Nerrigundah, were for some reason ignored, but his death sentence was, on appeal, remitted to life imprisonment.

Through capture and death, only Tom and John remained on the run. The government finally increased the police and resources devoted to capturing them, and public outcry led the government to offer a £5000 reward for their capture. This had the desired result, when a cousin of the Clarke brothers informed on them. On the 26 April, after a prolonged shoot-out with police at Jinden Creek, the brothers surrendered and were arraigned in Braidwood.

When you're next travelling the King's Highway, take 5 minutes to turn off down to the Nelligen waterfront and consider the remains of a once mighty tree, known locally as the Bushrangers Tree. In the heady days of the 19th century, Nelligen was a thriving port. Tom and John Clarke were tethered to that tree, waiting for the twice-weekly vessel to steam them to Sydney, and thence, Darlinghurst gaol.

The Clarkes' trial on 28 May 1867 lasted just a day. They were visited by their two sisters, their brother James (from Cockatoo Island Prison), and their uncle Mick Connell (in gaol awaiting his own trial). Tom Clarke, 26, and his brother John, 24, were hanged from twin gallows at Darlinghurst Jail on 25 June 1867, ending a reign of terror on the south coast of New South Wales which had cost the lives of at least eight men. They were buried in the Roman Catholic section of Rookwood cemetery.

The sparsely populated Jingeras were described at the time as a community little less than a den of thieves, connected either by marriage or misdeeds. The total lack of opportunities for education or religious instruction was certainly a factor in the path their lives took. As education at the time was regarded as having a strong moral effect, Henry Parkes, then the NSW Colonial Secretary, promoted the rapid injection of a new form of education into isolated rural areas, the Half-time school, to address the problem.

So perhaps we have the **JERRABAT GULLY-RAKERS** to thank for the introduction of **Half time schools** and the chance of education for all.

The Jerrabat Gully-Rakers, sourced from the Australian Dictionary of Biography, contemporary newspaper accounts, and the Tobin and Guinea family histories. Compiled and presented by Myf Thompson.

===== End of 'The Jerrabat Gully-Rakers' =====

Memories of the Bay (supplied by Max Bradford, from our Facebook Page)

A former Batemans Bay resident, Max Bradford, has shared some memories of his younger days in the Bay. I have re-produced this from a recent posting to the Museum's Facebook page. I also replied to Max, thanking him for his posting and answering a few questions.

"I remember Annetts Store in the early 1950's. The family and I moved to Bateman's Bay in 1951 where our late father, Ken Bradford took up the position of Postmaster, Grade two. The manual telephone exchange was located within the Post Office and a lady by the name of Nina Devine was one of the telephonists who worked that switchboard. (We left the "Bay" in 1957, when

dad got a promotion to a Grade Three Postmaster at Raymond Terrace.) Next to the Post Office on the Northern side of the Post Office (at the Bay) was a Dr's surgery, (Dir. Phipps) and a Chemist (Errol Lassau) then several houses, then a vacant block of ground onto which the chemist built a new store. Next to that was the storage area for railway sleepers, prior to collection by either the "Bermagui" or the "Bergalia". Next to that was the District Co-op. Memory fails me as to what was between the Co-op and the ferry. **Just down from the Co-op was a Boat Hire Store, think it was run by a chap by the name of Ladmore.**

On from Annett's Store was a Bank (Commercial, I think, but may have been the Commonwealth), A vacant block of land on which the Annual Fair was held, then the Community Hall, a Drapers Store, a Butcher and then a Baker.

Ron Prior, the local bus owner, had his Depot around the corner in Beach Rd. I think the Fisherman's Co-op was along Beach Rd. on the river side. Remember buying prawns from there for 2/- a lb for greenies and 2/3 a lb for cooked prawns. Haven't tasted prawns that matched the Bay prawns since leaving there many years ago!. They were the best.

Fish were always plentiful and rarely a weekend went past when dad, my brother and I left the edge of the baths without any fish. The exception being when the resident shark, named "Noah" was about. Often wonder if that shark was ever caught.

As the years rolled by, a new Butcher shop was built on the Eastern side of the Princes Highway, South of Beach Rd. The Bay relied on tank water until late 1956/57, when the town was connected to laid-on water. With the opening of the new bridge meant the Bay was no longer isolated whenever the Clyde River was in flood. The Official opening of that bridge was a big day for the then small coastal town of Bateman's Bay. I remember being a "patient" on the Hospital float, along with another lad, whose name evades me at present

In one year, which I cannot remember, a Game Fishing Contest was held and the weighing of the catches was done on an erected gantry opposite the Sleeper storage area. Not many marlin were caught as, if I remember correctly, it was the wrong time of the year. Many great radio personnel attended that Contest- the late Jack Davey in his ship "The Sea Mist", along with late Bob Dyer on the "Tennessee 2". A naval vessel "TRV 1" was also a competitor. There were others, but those three I can remember.

My wife and I visited the Bay some years ago and, to say the least, was surprised at just how much the place has grown. I have many photos of the Bay in days of old and when time permits I will find them and either mail or deliver them to you. They will just be tossed out when I pass on. This would be a shame to toss out photos that may be of value to your Museum.

It has been great just being able to put my memories to paper (?) and I wish your Museum and its volunteers all the best for the future. I am hoping to have another trip down that way sometime in the near future."

===== End of 'Memories of the Bay' =====

What's been happening at the Old Courthouse Museum?

MUSEUM 'MEDICAL CENTRE' GETS A 'FACELIFT' (hah hah!)



The congested medical room has finally raised its profile and increased in size, to allow easy access for all visitors, including those in wheelchairs. The pictures show displays of dental and



optical equipment and procedures, in space which was formerly occupied by period hanging garments, linen and other 'bits and pieces'. Using his superior surgical skills, chief carpenter Les Smith and his team (Bill Keenan and Chris Lawler), removed the original louvre doors, strengthened the frame and raised the internal floor to match the existing surface. All of the contents were re-hung within newly built wardrobes in the Volunteers Room. The new exhibit was designed and presented by Curator Myf Thompson, with assistance from Barb Walsh.

THOSE CURIOUS CUPBOARDS ARE GIVEN A NAME



Member Barb Walsh added a flourish of paint, to put a name to the set of brightly painted connected cupboards, situated in the Indigenous Keeping Area of the Museum. The curving arrow guides the visitor's attention to the cupboards and, hopefully, persuades the visitor to open one or all of the cupboard doors. Inside each one is a surprise artefact, with an accompanying explanation of its use and significance. Can you guess behind which door is the G'zunda? (hold your breath!)

LAUNCH OF THE NEW MILLINERY EXHIBIT

In a display which would sit proudly on the top sales floor of Myer or David Jones, volunteers Barbara Walsh, Alison Cooper and Myf Thompson have created a major exhibit of millinery ('hats' to most of us), located in the main display room of the Museum. The hats cover a period from about the 1940s onwards. As you can see from the





photos, some of our members got carried away during the 'photo-shoot' (some might think we should be 'carried away'). These shots have even made it the local papers ('Bay Post' and 'The Independent').

In the pictures are members Janet Beesley, Barbara Walsh, Chris Ruzsala, Mary Maidment and Rhonda Cooper.

GLITZ, BLING AND GLAMOUR AT MOVIE NIGHT FUNDRAISER

More from the picture show at Bay City Cinemas on 14th. May! Enjoying the pre-movie food and refreshments are Museum patron Edna Veitch and guest Violet Merrett. The ladies really went to town, determined to emulate those royal 'Ladies in Waiting'.



DATE ANNOUNCED FOR THIS YEARS' MUSEUM 'OPEN DAY'



The Executive Committee has agreed to host the annual Museum 'Open Day' **on Sunday 18th. October 2015.** This gives us ample time to arrange the day, organize events and invite other local community groups to participate. We cannot guarantee the weather, but at least we will be in the middle of Spring!

Now for the challenging part..... We are looking for a Volunteer to **coordinate** the 'Open Day'. Basically, this entails ensuring that everything which has been planned and/or booked for the day, actually happens on the day. Please contact any member of the Exec Committee if you are interested in taking on this role.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

We welcome Jennifer Mather as a new member of the Historical Society. Jennifer brings to the Museum, skills in administration and photography. And.... assisting with fundraising activities.

<p>Key dates to note:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11.30am, Saturday 1st August 2015 – Annual General Meeting at the Community Centre. • Annual Subscription due by end of June 2015: single \$15, couple \$25. <p>Chris Ruzsala – Editor (email stories or anecdotes to me at caruszala@bigpond.com)</p>	<p>Can YOU:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build things • Make things • Restore things • Research things • Talk about things. <p>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</p>
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