



The Old Courthouse Museum

# PASTIMES

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

Issue 27: Jan-Feb 2017

## OFFICIAL OPENING OF PERMANENT LOCAL GEOLOGY ROOM

SATURDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY 2017

Society members warmly welcomed Eurobodalla Cllr James Thomson, as he opened our new Geology Room, in the presence of ACT and locally-based geologists, and guests.

The project for a 'higher level' resource located at the Museum, was initiated by Dr Douglas Finlayson. Themed geological data was specifically compiled for the project by Doug and fellow members of the Geology Society of Australia.

*Introductory Panels mounted on the wall, link via a QR code to the comprehensive virtual display on our Museum's website.*

Also thanked for his contribution was local geologist Stewart Needham, who kindly collected and catalogued local rock specimens to complement the data.

Whilst the purpose is to provide a resource for students at high school and early University level, a third of the room is devoted to a "hands on" children's section to encourage early interest in Geology.

**Come in and see for yourselves.**

Society volunteers worked very hard to (literally) build the exhibit. Society President Ewan Morrison, noted labour and materials costs were raised by volunteers operating the Society's secondhand Book Emporium, at Bunnings BBQs, and other fund-raising activities.

*If this all looks rather formal – guests tucked into chocolate 'geology' rock cakes after the launch!*



CLLR JAMES THOMPSON AND SOCIETY PRESIDENT  
EWAN MORRISON DR DOUG FINLAYSON



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## LOCAL ABORIGINAL FAMILY RESEARCH

Member Jude Matchett was approached by Robyn Albert, one of our Bay's Aboriginal Elders, concerning the need to clarify and record family connections. With data and photographs covering numerous generations dating back to the early 1800s, the process of collating her widespread family tree is under way, with Robyn's guidance and the consultation of other family elders. When complete, it will be a visual resource on display at the Museum, in a format which can be modified immediately new information comes to hand. Robyn was motivated by recognizing the need to encourage younger generations of **local** families to identify with ancestors.



Just moved to the area, new Member **Chris Bendle** has accepted the challenge of tracking references, using her experience in librarianship and family history.

**Researching public records can be very time-consuming – and frustrating** - so such skills are very useful when the Society receives family history enquiries, and we can't pass *all* of them to Moruya Historical Society gene staff !

**Which neatly segues away to....**

## FREE STAND-ALONE UNI UNITS NOW ON LINE

by Myf Thompson

The University of Tasmania offers a really practical series of stand-alone modules from its online *Diploma of Family History*. A list of the 8 units is given opposite, but please look at the website for full details.

<http://www.utas.edu.au/arts/diploma-of-family-history>

I do not have Australian ancestry. I enrolled for the unit 'Writing Family History' because it ties in with writing *about* history - story-telling - which is what I do.

There is a creative element to writing and interpreting *and figures*, an engaging approach not always appreciated by those whose work is dominated by dates.

There is no fee to undertake 6 of the 8 courses, just allow about 3-5 hours a week for the period of 6-12 weeks (depending on the unit, and your level of interest). The excellent UNI resources and tutorials are complemented by the requirement to read and provide feedback to a number of your fellow students. This is a valuable part of the course. *I am thoroughly enjoying it.* Plus, elements of Ancestry.com are available free to enrolled students.

NB I'll need to 'borrow' my husband's convict heritage if I choose to continue with *that* particular Unit.



**The Units are:**

**Introduction to Family History**

**Writing Family History**

**Place, image, object**

**Convict Ancestors**

**The Photo Essay: An Introduction**

**Writing the Family Saga**

**Convicts in Context**

**Oral History**

**Families at War**

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I include this 1000 word assignment because we welcome equally odd stories to share. Send to [secretary@oldcourthousemuseum.com](mailto:secretary@oldcourthousemuseum.com)

## 'A PECULIAR PEOPLE'

Myf Thompson

The stranger wore floor length black and little boots; a large horn protruded from her left ear. Aged five, I was less frightened than curious. My mother's hand on my small back, gently pushed me forward with the whispered instruction, "*Say good morning to Great Grandma Harrod. And speak loudly, because she can't hear very well.*" The horn swung toward me, and I did as I was told. 1952: and it remains my sole memory of meeting Elizabeth Harrod, whose fervent faith once caused a national furore.

For a journalist, my father was unusually reticent about his Harrod antecedents. Internet searches reveal the Harrods as a prolific Essex family, and *my* branch as foundation members of a religious sect known as the Peculiar People.

In 1838, agricultural labourer John Banyard established a Sect based on the non-conformist teachings of John Wesley. Banyard was a reformed alcoholic who espoused a grass roots, revivalist movement even stricter than Methodism. When I first read that I smiled to myself, remembering the uncharitable joke about Methodists denouncing pre-marital sex, because it might lead to dancing.

I assumed the term 'Peculiar People' arose from public ridicule of the Sect. In reality, mid-19<sup>th</sup> century familiarity with the Bible tacitly understood Banyard drew on Deuteronomy 14:2 from the King James Version, "*For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God, and the Lord hath chosen thee to be a peculiar people unto himself, above all the nations that are upon the earth.*" Quite an inheritance.

My family, together with hundreds who toiled in farming and labouring communities, fervently embraced this evangelical form of Christianity. Described at the time as, '*a religious phenomenon*', the Peculiars established forty-three unadorned chapels across the windswept soil of rural Essex, edging to the outskirts of London itself.

Membership demanded exemplary behaviour, sober clothing, and a prayerful life. Sundays were spent in all day prayer and unaccompanied singing. United meetings at central venues brought large numbers together for worship and fellowship.

When my great grandma Elizabeth Harrod was 'born again', the Peculiars' popularity was still riding high, respected for its voice in agricultural and social reforms. I picture Elizabeth in 1888, travelling with a light heart to share in joyous celebrations for the Jubilee of her religion. Presided over by Bishop Harrod, an attending journalist describes the congregation as, '*... a sea of honest faces, cheerful, smiling and pleasant*'.

Years later, in 1897, over two thousand of the remaining membership attended an annual Harvest Festival of Thanksgiving. The Sect was surviving, but under duress.

Declining popularity rested on its dogma of Divine healing through *prayer alone*, (not healing hands). The Peculiars' refusal to consent to vaccination against communicable diseases, (smallpox, cholera), created legal complications and public antagonism. English divine John Henry Blunt, described the Peculiars as, '*... a recent sect of very ignorant people*'.

If you were of an age to call a doctor, but refused, there would be criticism but no *legal* repercussions. Crucially it was *children*, in the care of adults, who bore the inevitable burden of fundamental beliefs.

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If you believe that unanswered prayers are God's Will, as the Peculiars did, and some faiths do today, that is truly 'tough love'. In the eyes of the public of the time, it went against every instinct to see a child suffer, denied medical help unto death.

No-one claimed it was *easy* to live as a Peculiar. Over some sixty years, newspapers headline coronial inquests and court cases where public, legal and medical voices are raised in outrage at the death of children; in one case, four children of the same family died within weeks. Families are brought before the courts. Fathers, rarely a mother, (considered obedient to her husband's wishes), are commonly sentenced to prison for up to 3 months for 'neglect', even 'manslaughter'.

Imagine the personal and collective trauma as one's sincere beliefs are widely held to be lunatic, or criminal, or both.

Then it was discovered Elder John Banyard had secretly engaged a doctor for his own son. Replaced by Bishop Harrod, principles collided. The Sect split in two, deeply divided between the *original*, or *Harrodite*, Peculiars, and those consenting to medical help.

My family chose the harder road - to continue in their faith as Harrodite. I've mulled over the impact of this decision on their daily life: loss of intimate friends; their chapel no longer a welcome sanctuary for shared worship.

One incident, in 1870, spoke directly to Elizabeth's daily life. A magistrate '*... wished to know whether the wives of Peculiar People were aided in childbirth by doctors*', and he was told, '*No. for the Bible declared that **Eve shall be saved in child-birth if she has faith.***'

My father's sister, (herself a life-long Salvationist), described Elizabeth as a well-respected *midwife* and herbalist, freely serving her local district of Dawes Heath, near Hadleigh. I've wondered how her rigid certainty was viewed by poor, non-Sectarian families who needed her skills.

I know Dawes Heath, slightly. I grew up in the neighbouring town, Leigh-on-Sea.

On Sundays, my father relinquished news-gathering for the *Southend Standard* for family outings. For kids, Hadleigh meant ice cream and mock fighting in the rubble of a Henry V Hunting Lodge. I was never aware how close we were to the Harrod home.

We never visited a Peculiar chapel, though I've learnt fifteen remain.

Through years of turmoil, the Peculiar People Sect retained its dignity and 'turn the other cheek' piety. It professed similar principles to the Quakers of the day [later Friends], also conscientious objectors in WW1.

In 1956, the Peculiars joined a 'Union of Evangelical Churches', as the denomination is now known. The Union retains a presence in Essex, though the original chapels are mostly re-purposed.

Great grandma Harrod died at home, aged ninety. I don't understand why family connections were lost in my childhood. Now I want to know, there's no-one left to ask. Writing brought her back from memory. Research made possible a late appreciation of her strength and character.

<http://www.essex-family-history.co.uk/peculiar> accessed 21 January 2017

<http://www.uec-churches> accessed 22 January 2017

[http://www.hadleighhistory.org.uk/page/daws\\_heath](http://www.hadleighhistory.org.uk/page/daws_heath) accessed 23 January 2017

<http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk> accessed 24 and 25 January 2017



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**Museum of the South East, or MoSE**, is an online collection of significant historical artefacts from the museums and private collections of the Bega Valley, Eurobodalla and Snowy Monaro — in the south eastern region of New South Wales, Australia. Keep visiting this site as we add more museums and collection items from around the region.

Project managed by South East Arts (NSW) Inc.

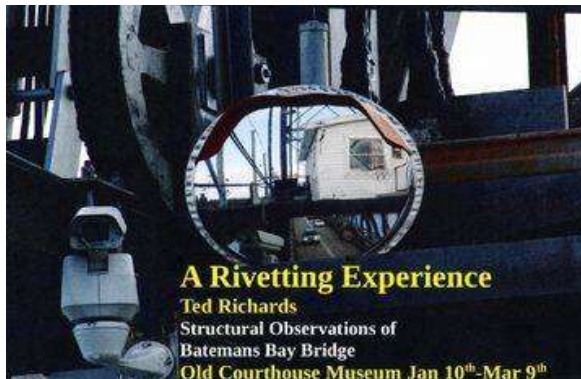
Our Museum photos taken by Ted Richards. <http://www.mose.org.au>



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## What's been happening at the Old Courthouse Museum?

### BAY BRIDGE PHOTO ESSAY



The main Courtroom (always a flexible space) now offers a grant-funded hanging system, to enhance opportunities for temporary exhibits to include artworks.

Currently we feature a photographic essay by local photographer Ted Richards, on view until March 9, 2017. In Ted's own words,

*"Public celebrations for the 60th anniversary of Batemans Bay Bridge inspired me to reflect on our use of the Bridge, and elements of its construction."*

### THE VICTORIAN TOY THEATRE



Member Zoe demonstrates.

Adding more joy to our Kids' Space, member Alison Cooper has recreated a Victorian toy theatre. The main scene (at left) depicts a hold up and murder by the notorious Clarke Brothers gang.

Characters can be moved across the stage by pulling rods, and backdrops changed by drop down from the open ceiling. Little LED lights replicate gas-lighting.

Victorian toy theatres were often based on popular plays, while the stage and scenery were mini-replicas printed paperboard, along with characters and costumes.

They would be sold for one penny for plain ones and two pennies for coloured ones. The theatres would be put together at home, so the children could re-enact the play for their families. The novel 'Oliver Twist', written by Charles Dickens, inspired the creation of one of the most popular selling toy theatres in history.

Others theatre sets were based on grisly murders of the day – always a popular theme with Victorians – and inspiration for our **Clarke Brothers** scenario. Our thanks to members: artist Alison Cooper, and Martin Daniels for construction.

For examples of fabulous sets, go to one of London's oldest providers, **Benjamin Pollock's Toy shop and Museum** <http://www.pollocks-coventgarden.co.uk>.

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**And another neat segue way to...**

### **THE CLARKE BROS PICNIC AT NELLIGEN**

Society members are working with the Nelligen community to organise a “Hands Up” picnic on the same weekend as **Braidwood’s Renactment of the Clarke Brothers’ Trial**. Our link to this dubious duo is their subsequent chaining to the Outlaw’s tree on the waterfront, awaiting transport to Sydney for trial. We have their full story in our original Cell at the Museum.

**Watch for further details as we get closer to the date of Sunday April 29<sup>th</sup>.**

### **EXPANDED AND IMPROVED BOOK EMPORIUM**

The regrettable closure of the former ABC bookshop at the Bay’s Village Centre, has proved a happy opportunity for our secondhand Book Emporium. We dug deep to purchase half a dozen book display stands which upped our professional retail image. Well spotted and sourced by fund-raising guru Chris ‘*The Bookman*’ Ruzala. Our popular book emporium now extends to two rooms; colourful signage created by member Lynda Thompson, beckons you in.

*Quality books, in genuinely good condition, are most welcome.*

**We are currently pursuing options to upload our most recent historical publications as e-books. What do you think? Let us know if you would consider buying in this downloadable format.**

### **NEW RECEPTION AREA**

The work of our building team in enclosing the verandah entrance to the Courthouse, has created a fresh new space for receiving visitors. Not only do volunteers have computer/internet access, but the furnishings (thanks to Salvos and the Reject shop) provide a welcoming space for those all-important informal chats with visitors. With reception moved onto the Verandah, the Courtroom has returned to a full display space.



### **ESC RELOCATES AN HISTORIC WINCH**

So nice when others keep an eye open on our behalf. ESC staff working on nearby sewerage maintenance noted a large winch at Corrigans beach on the site of the Gatenby family’s long gone holiday camp. It was used to manhandle the short boat trips enjoyed by holidaymakers. Would the museum like it? We would – solely because of its historic links – and a cheerful ESC crew promptly delivered it to our grounds. Thanks Boys!

### **CELL TALK**

Richard Strong, retired police prosecutor now living locally, recently donated his 1970s police uniform. *More importantly*, he was kind enough to come in and record memories of his work in Batemans Bay, and time spent as a prosecutor, travelling the extensive Court circuit of south east NSW.

If you, or someone you know, has this kind of knowledge, *please* contact us.





### SUCCESSFUL FUNDRAISING OVER 8 WEEKS

Bunnings BBQ x 4 days – \$2157 Book Emporium \$ 472 = \$2724

An impressive total (clear).

Well done to every one of our fundraising volunteers and our public.

**We require \$1000 per month to keep our doors open, and to expand our community role.**

More members = more skills = more technology = more displays = more running costs!

**Will YOU GIVE 3 hours a month to join the teams?** If you can't donate time - **we accept Paypal.**



### IT NEWS

Our go-to IT technician, Bill Maidment, has been busy designing and implementing a Linux based system, replacing our primarily Microsoft environment. Bill has also organised the switch from Optus to Telstra, and enabled internet access at points throughout the Courthouse and major outbuildings. Bill has simplified MOSAiC, our original cataloguing software, and designed a series of databases covering membership, documentation, grants, cemeteries, etc. etc; all we admin volunteers have to do is enter the data(!). Bill recently celebrated his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday. No resting on your laurels, Bill! *A reminder our new telephone number is 44 721635.*

### GUEST CURATOR WANTED

*The Bay Post* has invited us to contribute a monthly column, based on a **non-member** guest curator reviewing an item of interest from the collection. Our January 'curator' was local geologist Stewart Needham, and February featured former farmer, Trevor Kohlhagen, president of the Bay Theatre Players. As well as the print interview, both had extended video interviews uploaded to the Bay Post's website. We have such a rich collection.

If you know someone who would enjoy taking a 'guest' role, please contact the office. **April and May available at time of writing.**

### SEEKING GRANTS

Successful grant funding is not just for the asking – *many* organisations ask – it is only given in response to confidence in the organisation's ability to maintain financial viability, and demonstrated commitment to developing the museum.

**A perfect example of why funding bodies support what we do:** Museums & Galleries have just awarded us \$7,000 we need to professionally conserve the valuable social and economic history contained in our two Illawarra Steam Navigation ledgers. It's taken around 15 months to get to this stage – but we have persevered. Those volumes are now undergoing conservation in Sydney.

Now we can apply to the Maritime Museums Support Scheme for funding to have the ledgers digitized, so the data can be made widely available online or researched in situ at the Museum.

The data will form the basis of a coastal maritime heritage project which is part of our Strategic Plan.





Member Gael, our Thursday Goddess of Cleanliness.



Member Jennifer dusts our 'Titanic'. Must feel like painting the Harbour Bridge.

## HOUSEKEEPING

### Welcome:

\*U3A Photo Album Course – renting our meeting room, and thereby supporting the efforts of the museum. Pleasure to host you.

### Big Thanks to:

- \*Member Ron Price – sign writer extraordinaire, donating his skills to update our contact signage on boards, panels and pullups.
- \*Members Sandra and Lynda – for regularly bringing in home baked and home grown goodies. Makes us feel special.

### Sending Our Thoughts and Best Wishes to:

- \*Anita and Chris Ruzala in their loss of a close family member.
- \* Les – a kilo lighter after having his appendix out. No lifting!
- \*Lee recovering from illness –keep up that cuppa with the girls.
- \*Bill recovering from operation – your chair awaits you in the Shed.
- \*Lesley B – regularly scaling Clyde Mountain for family health issues.



## KEY DIARY DATES

<b>Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> March</b>	'Clean-up Australia' Water Gardens & Creek - meet at Museum 9.30
<b>Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Seniors Week <i>Natural History</i> "Bite Sized" Event 10-11.30 <i>includes morning tea – bookings essential.</i>
<b>Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Car-Boot Sale in the Museum Grounds 9-1 <i>Book a spot and clear your garage, or come and buy\$\$\$</i>
<b>Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Fund-raising Bunnings BBQ
<b>Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Street Stall at Bridge Plaza
<b>Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> April</b>	Members' General Meeting 10am
<b>Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> April</b>	Nelligen Public Picnic on the Bank of the Clyde ( <i>links with Braidwood's 'Capture of the Clarke Brothers' Re-enactment</i> )

Keep up-to-date via our website Events diary. [www.oldcourthousemuseum.com](http://www.oldcourthousemuseum.com)

### Enthusiastic people for activities from gardening to googling to guiding.

Do you have a general interest in our towns, our history and our cemeteries, with a few hours to commit per week/fortnight/month? Maybe a specific interest in helping to *build things; grow or mow things; sew things; restore things; display things; research things; and/or an ability to talk under wet cement (guiding and fund-raising).*

Please contact us for a friendly chat on how we can get together.

Guest editor Myf Thompson

