

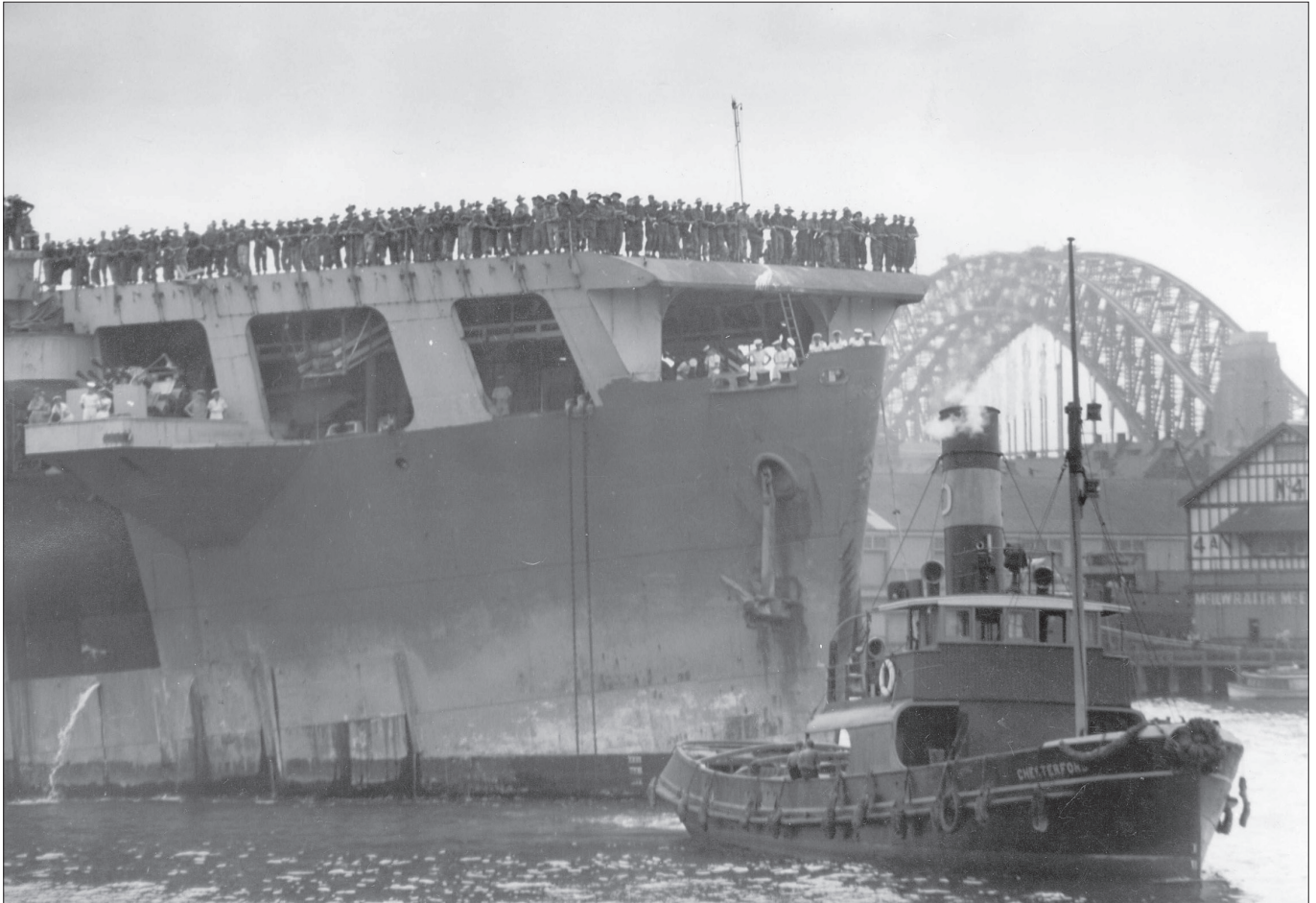
South Coast History Society Inc.

Recollections

December 2020–January 2021

Issue 25

The World's Best Value Magazine! It's FREE!



75 years ago: with Sydney Harbour Bridge in the background, the British carrier HMS Vindex noses its way to No. 14 Dock at Pyrmont on Wednesday 5 December 1945. Lining the edges of the flight deck were some 347 men coming home after the end of World War II from Wewak, New Guinea. See article page 12. (Image: State Library of Victoria H99.201/1546)

The Brown Mountain Power Station

There is an intriguing signpost near the bottom of the Brown Mountain road pointing to a Brown Mountain Power Station. Not that it's accessible; a locked gate keeps those who may want to visit well away.

The Brown Mountain Power Station produces hydro-electricity...but, today, *'it is an anomaly...an insignificant trickle...and only a sneeze worth'* of power is generated. It is probably the oldest and the smallest power station still feeding electricity into the NSW grid.

That was not always the case.

When it was planned in the mid-1930s, and when it opened in 1944, it was envisaged that it would supply power to the entire population in a 7,000 square mile area serviced by the Bega Valley County Council (basically all of the area from the Victorian border to Batemans Bay and west to Bemboka) and the initiative was proudly touted as *'the greatest single development in the history of the far south coast of New South Wales.'* [The population serviced by the Bega Valley County Council was, at that time, under 20,000; today the combined population of the Bega Valley

Fantastic Reads

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Benjamin Boyd– page 17



Cochrane Dam, presumably at its opening in 1958. Image courtesy Bega Valley Historical Society.

and Eurobodalla Shires is around 75,000.]

The Brown Mountain Hydro-Electric Scheme was the result of community pressure spearheaded by a Bemboka shopkeeper named Dan Finn. The Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme had been mooted, but local feeling at that time was that the South Coast could not wait for that to be constructed, and the success of the Brown Mountain Scheme would help demonstrate the value of building the Snowy Scheme! [Not this this was necessary, because hydro-electric power stations had already operated successfully for some time on the Nymboida and Dorrigo Rivers in Northern NSW and at the Barron Falls in North Queensland.]

The Brown Mountain Hydro-Electric Scheme commenced in 1924 when a gauging station was installed on Rutherford Creek that basically follows, but runs to the north of, the Snowy Mountains Highway down Brown Mountain. Water flow readings were taken from there for the next seven years.

In 1935 a proposal was submitted to Bega Valley County Council to construct a weir across Rutherford Creek and, two years later, a second-hand 450Kw generator was purchased from the Old Federation Tin Mine in Zeehan, Tasmania.

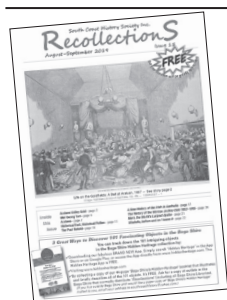
In 1942 – at the height of World War II – construction of the weir and associated power station was commenced. The work was undertaken by men who were well over military

age, and practically all of their work was performed by hand.

Power to Bemboka, then Bega and Candelo, from the Brown Mountain Hydro-Electric Power Station power station became available in 1944. (The first Snowy Hydro-Electric power became available 11 years later in 1955.)

The supply was life-changing for many. Local dairy farmers (once they had been convinced that use of electricity to milk their cows would not harm their cows) scrambled to be connected to the electricity grid; refrigerators and electric stoves became ‘must have’ appliances; all-night lighting of streets in towns such as Bega became a reality: *‘kids loved it because we had a street light right outside our place. We would gather there on summer nights with bats, balls, and skates and play for hours’*; *‘many families who had one or more members away fighting would listen to radio reports on the war to see if any ships were sunk or other developments had taken place’*; and *‘we were allowed to listen to all our favourite programmes: Dad and Dave, Blue Hills, Bob Dyer’s quiz and the concerts, which were wonderful.’*

The Brown Mountain Power Station, however, soon proved to be inadequate. The late Kevin Tetley, a local historian, recalled *‘in the early 1950s the Bega Power House in Auckland Street [sited where Sapphire Marketplace now stands] was still required to meet peak loads and I well remember how the diesels would start up around 2pm every day when the farmers began their afternoon milking.*



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Past issues are at bit.ly/RecollectionsX where X is the issue number (1 to 24, except issue 3 which is 3- and issue 10 which is 10-)



We're Indexed! 25 issues of 'Recollections', extending to a total of almost 500 pages and including over 200 articles, have now been published. It's time, we decided, for an Index to make it easier to find articles of particular interest. That's now been done and it's available at www.bit.ly/Recollectionsindex It runs to eight A4 pages, provides the titles of all articles, gives a brief clue about what each article is about, and indicates how each article can easily be accessed via the internet. We'll update this Index from time to time. [Those without computers or internet access who would like a copy of this Index might ask their friendly local librarian to download the file and print it off.]

The constant drumming of the big diesels necessitated closing the north facing windows of the Bega High School each afternoon...But regular blackouts were still necessary in order to shed some of the load and the diesels had to be constantly monitored to avoid overloading. On one occasion a large diesel did fail in the Bega Power House' and power was unavailable to the area for about a fortnight.

In 1946, feasibility studies had commenced into the possibility of expanding the facility by having a larger, 1,050 million gallon (4,800 megalitre – about half the storage capacity of Brogo Dam) dam constructed near the junction of the Bemboka River and George's Creek (further to the north of Rutherford Creek) and by installing extra generating equipment in the Brown Mountain Power Station.

This upgrade, which included a 2 mile long pipeline that dropped 1,842 feet (560 metres) from the dam (which was named Cochrane's Dam, in honour of Mr A.T. Cochrane who had been Chairman of the Bega Valley County Council for 15 years, while the construction was being undertaken) and the installation of two additional 1-Megawatt generators, was not completed until 1958.

A secondary benefit foreseen for this dam and pipeline was that it would provide a reliable supply of water for irrigation to 30 dairy farmers downstream on the Bemboka River.

It seems, however, that the new dam and upgraded power station did not provide all the benefits expected by the Bega Valley County Council.

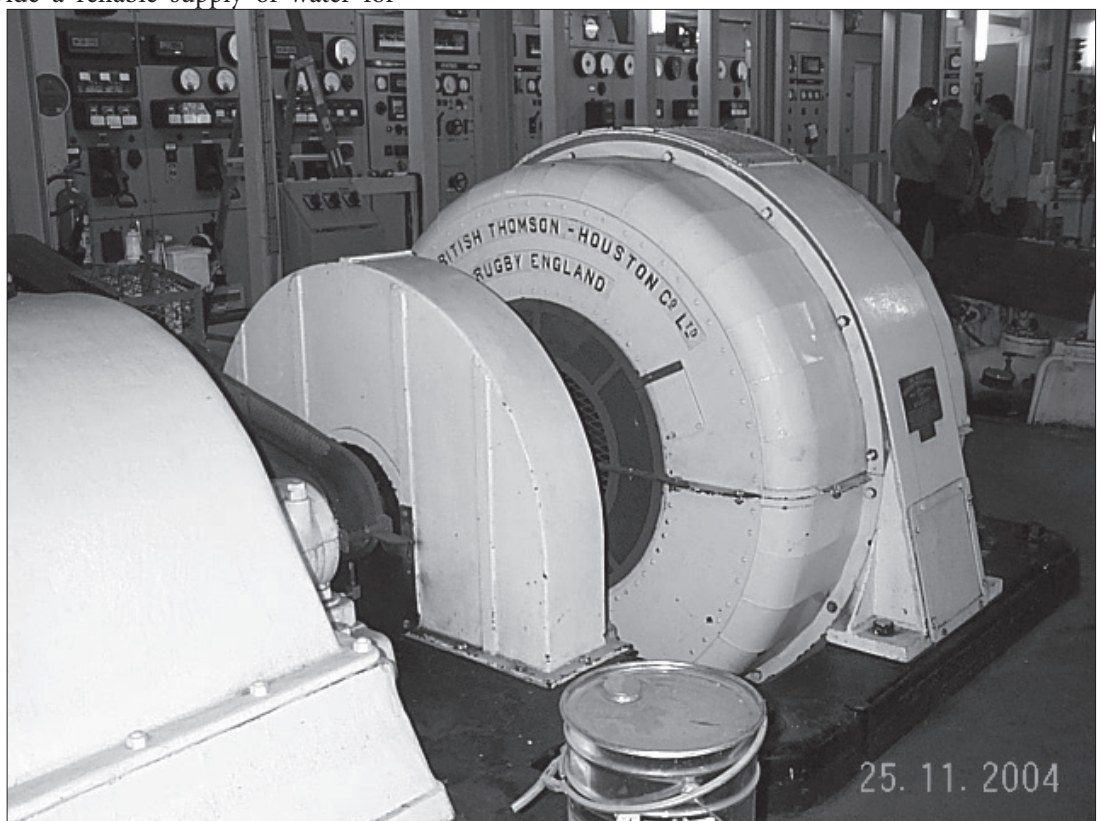
Four months after the Cochrane Dam was officially opened, the *Bega District News* was reporting that, the 'Hydro Station Needs Heavy Falls of Rain' – necessitating a rapid restart of diesel engines at the Bega Power House and in smaller power houses in other towns along the coast. (Three

months later the *Bega District News* was reporting the dam was a quarter full, such were/are the vagaries of weather in the area.) And, eventually the debts accrued by the Bega Valley County Council from construction of the dam, having to extend transmission lines over long distances, and having erected a substantial office facility in Auckland Street, Bega [now used by Services NSW] resulted in the State Government forcing it to 'amalgamate with' (i.e. be taken over by) the Illawarra County Council. At the same time, control of the power station was transferred to the Electricity Commission of NSW.

In 2007 several of the older generators were replaced by one larger 4.35 megawatt generator.

Today, the Brown Mountain Power Station is privately owned by Cochrane Dam Pty Ltd, a subsidiary of Hydro Power. Its output is around 5 megawatts (in contrast to the Tumut 2 Hydro-Electric Power Station which produces 286 megawatts). **R**

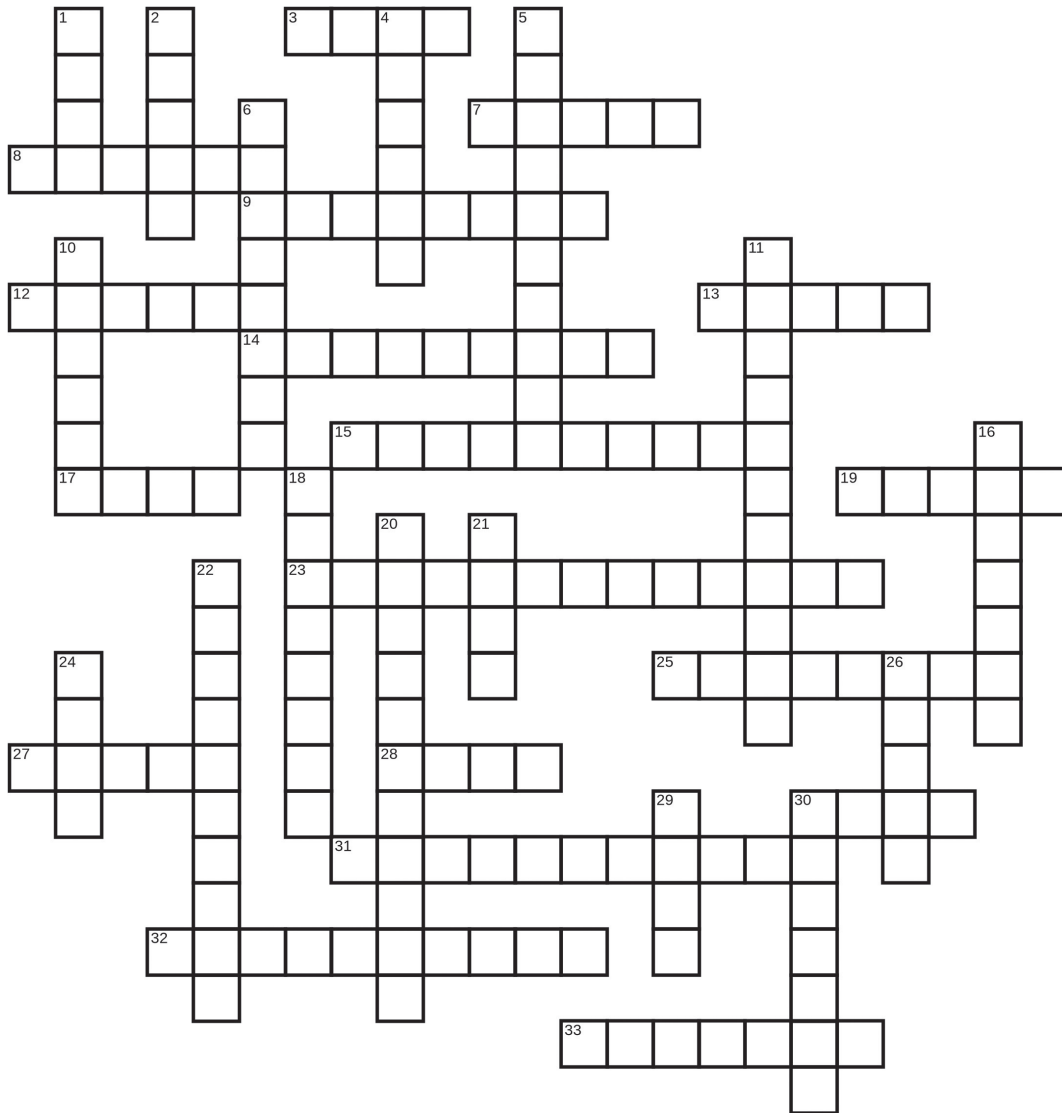
Sources: 'Brown Mountain Power Station' video (available to view at Bega Library and Bega Pioneers' Museum); *The Valley Genealogist*, June 2013; Wikipedia; *Canberra Times* 23.8.1987; *Bega District News* 19.12.1958 and 10.3.1959; Information supplied by Peter Rogers and Warwick Wilton.



Inside the Brown Mountain Power Station 2004. Image courtesy Bega Valley Historical Society.

You'll Find the Answers in this Issue of 'Recollections'

The answers are on page 11



ACROSS

3. Number of hotels in Pambula in 1856.
7. Killer Whales.
8. Old Pambula Court House's street.
9. NSW Secretary for Lands, 1893.
12. *'Cornubia'* lost one.
13. *'Seahorse'* ran aground in this river.
14. New book describing events following World War II.
15. Pitt Town Labour Settlement became...
17. Town on Twofold Bay.
19. Boyd's first significant Australian pastoral purchase.
23. *'Wanderer'* was wrecked here.
25. Boyd's ship.
27. Governor of New South Wales, 1893.
28. Boyd left NSW in 184?
30. How Bega Labour Settlement settlers arrived.
31. Boyd's first occupation.
32. ... County Council constructed the Brown Mountain Hydro.
33. Power to Bemboka, Bega and ... became available in 1944.

DOWN

1. She lost a rudder off Cape of Good Hope.
2. Pambula Police Sergeant, 1913.
4. British Carrier that arrived Pyrmont in 1945.
5. Bega Labour Settlement and Common is now...
6. Dam that provides water to Brown Mountain Power Station.
10. Brown Mountain Power Station produces "only a ... worth" of power.
11. First building in Deniliquin.
16. Horizontal spar mounted on masts.
18. In 1952, first ... War Bride was granted permission to move to Australia.
20. Boyd's waterfront home in Neutral Bay.
21. Benjamin Boyd's true love.
22. Located on southern entrance to Twofold Bay.
24. Author of *'Aftermath'*
26. Boyd's Bank was known as the ... Bank of Australia.
29. Boyd sought this in California.
30. Boyd's Tower designer.

Crossword compiled by Elizabeth Semple.

The Reality Is...

'The one thing which I ought to bring up is the sordid subject of money.'


'There is nothing sordid about money, Mr Blanfelly!'

—Peter Cook and Dudley Moore, *'The Music Teacher'*

It's been costing us significantly more to produce 'Recollections' over recent months than we've been receiving in income (the result of the continuing Covid-19 pandemic...a predicament also recently faced by many, many other community organisations and businesses)...resulting in a substantial reduction in our available funds. Regrettably, we're now printing fewer copies of 'Recollections' (so some readers are now completely missing out on receiving copies) and we're being forced to restrict the number of pages we include per issue.

Over the next six months we, somehow, need to raise \$20,000 to ensure 'Recollections' can continue to be produced. Feedback we continually receive indicates that 'Recollections' IS widely appreciated by our local community...and we still have hundreds of fascinating South Coast history-related stories to share - so it will be a real pity if 'Recollections' must reduce in size, or be produced less often, or become available only via the internet, simply because of (hopefully, temporary) financial constraints.

YOU can help. And we trust YOU WILL help. Donations to the South Coast History Society will, of course, be greatly appreciated (anything from \$1 to that \$20,000, or more, will be greatly appreciated! ... , simply phone us with your card details [0448 160 852] and we'll charge your Visa or MasterCard, or deposit your contribution in our bank account BSB 633 000 Account 158877472 [please be sure to also confirm you have done this by emailing southcoasthistory@yahoo.com], mail your cheque to 90 Whitby Wilson Rd, Quaama NSW 2550, or leave your donation with any of the wonderful outlets where paper copies of 'Recollections' can be collected)...become a Member of the Society (it's just \$15 per year)...advertise in 'Recollections' (call 0448 160 852 for details)...talk to us about possibly becoming a 'sponsor'...let us know of any other potential funding opportunity (e.g. grants currently on offer).

We guarantee that every cent of your support will be used to produce future copies of 'Recollections'. 

BEWARE INTERNET SCAMS. We've learned that some of our supporters may have been approached recently by scammers asking they purchase gift cards. As a result, we've reviewed and increased security measures associated with our internet usage (and we thank Doug Spindler of Tastech Solutions of Bega for his invaluable assistance doing this). Scams suggesting gift cards be purchased are common, and computer security experts recommend you NEVER respond to any of these solicitations.



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An Imaginative South Coast Socialist Experiment

When unemployment rises, governments invariably search for new ways to address the challenges that result. The JobSeeker, JobKeeper and JobTrainer schemes are very recent Australian examples.

Up until the mid-20th century, rural areas throughout Australia alluringly offered sites where it was believed the unemployed or underemployed could be resettled and, as long as the settlers were willing to 'bend their backs,' where they would be able to establish a permanent home for their families and then enjoy a secure lifestyle.

In 1893 the NSW Government launched an innovative labour settlement scheme immediately across the river to the west of Bega township. It was an optimistically-based scheme that was intended to be one of hundreds that would be rapidly replicated throughout the state.

The Bega Labour Settlement ultimately became only one of two settlements that were established in the State...and neither was much of a success.

Henry Copeland, the NSW Secretary for Lands from 1891 to 1894, had a dream – to give every man access to freehold land in NSW. This coincided with an economic depression, a rise in unemployment, and a government's need to be seen to be doing more than simply providing 'susso' – sustenance relief payments.

So the NSW government legislated, in 1893, to set up labour settlements in areas such as Bega, Bungedore, Pitt Town and Wilberforce (and elsewhere), where the

'disadvantaged' (i.e. unemployed) and their families could be resettled and where the new settlers would work the land and provide for themselves.

The Labour Settlements Act became law on 15th June 1893. Barely a month later, 26 families left Sydney by boat and (to quote the 'Cootamundra Herald' later) 'after the unfortunate cooperatives were got onto the boat, an official request was wired to Bega – at a day's notice – to make arrangements for the reception of the intruders...There was rather an uncertainty at the time where the families were to be dumped [but other reports at the time indicated 'the Bega settlers take tents and provisions with them, It is intended that the tents shall be returned when the men have erected huts' on the Bega Common]...the Begaites were rather indignant that a portion of their Common being confiscated for this purpose and there was a great row over the affair.'

A report from Bega, published in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, noted 'the reaction of authorities in sending these men down here is considered premature and is condemned. No proclamation has yet appeared setting apart any reserve or common. It is considered sheer madness for persons to come here in the face of no arrangements having been made for their reception. The settlers are generally said to be men belonging to the unemployed. There is too much labour here already.'

The 'unfortunate cooperatives' (cooperatives in the sense that they were joining a co-operative based farming venture) were, with one exception, age under 35 years, they were all married, many had families, most came from Newtown in Sydney ('one advantage is that the men are known to one another'; 'the settlers will still be in the midst of their own people, and not, like the unfortunates who are bound for Paraguay [Colonia Nueva Australia, also a utopian socialist settlement, established in 1893 by a private New Australian Movement], strangers among a population differing from them in blood and language') and 'a number of them have had experience in farming and bush life'.

Around 1,400 acres of what was generously described as 'first quality' land, in what is now Springdale, was carved out of the Bega Common for the Settlement. (A more apt description would probably have been 'hilly'!)

The intention of the scheme was that the area be co-operatively farmed with resulting income being shared among all families. Individuals were each to be allotted a small area on which they would build a house and 'in his own time and for his own benefit' (their 'own time' after being required to give 48 hours labour each week to the community!) grow vegetables for their own use and then sell any surplus. 'Following the English model, a common was also set aside for the rearing and grazing of sheep and cattle because it was neither practical nor felt desirable for every settler to own large tracts of land in his own right for the maintenance of large herds.' The government also provided the settlers with farming tools, some seed and some fruit trees.

The land was leased by the state government to the Labour

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Settlement Co-operative for a term of 28 years, together with an option for an extension for a further 28 years.

Every married man was provided with an advance of £20, every married man with a family was advanced £25. No repayment of this, or the money spent in providing the land, was required in the first four years; after that, it was envisaged that 8% of the loans would be repaid annually – so, with interest, the government was anticipating its investment would be fully repaid in about 20 years.

Similar Labour Settlements were established at Pitt Town and Wilberforce (then rural areas, but now on the outskirts of Sydney). However, the Pitt Town scheme rapidly failed and in 1896 the site was transformed into a farm to train unemployed city workers as farm labourers. [In 1911 the Pitt Town site was renamed Schyeville and provided the main accommodation for a Dreadnought Scheme that brought ‘boy migrants’ and young men from Britain to be trained in farming and agriculture. This scheme was abandoned in the Depression years, and the site was then used to train Australian city boys in basic farming practices. During World War II it became an army training centre and became an army officer training centre during the Vietnam War. It is now a National Park.]

The initial reaction from locals in the Bega area to the scheme was that it would become ‘a dumping ground for loafers and scoundrels’ and that ‘a very undesirable class would be introduced into the district and that fifty percent of them would commit depredations.’

The Bega and Wilberforce ‘social experiments’ (or ‘socialist experiments’, depending on one’s view) attracted



Percy Lawler from one of the Bega Labour Settlement families. Image: Bega Pioneers’ Museum

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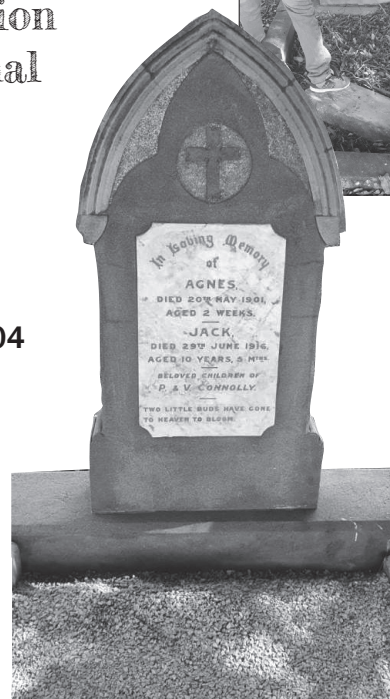
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considerable and widespread interest from newspapers of the day, some of which reported success with the scheme while others presented an opposite view:

A report from Bega in August 1893 (a month after the arrival of the settlers) indicated *'trouble is already looming over the Bega Labour Settlement. The settlers do not seem to take kindly to the co-operative system, which is the foundation of the whole thing. People here look upon the affair as a sort of farce, the failure of which is an almost foregone conclusion.'*

An August 1896 article in the *Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser*, however, trumpeted that *'in a report now to hand, the settlement has been wire-netted to protect the crops from hares, and that 2,200 specially selected fruit trees have been planted in well-prepared ground, each homestead having 110 trees on an acre of land. Crops of wheat, barley, and oats have been grown, the latter being in very forward condition,*

and on one block the yield for a few acres is estimated at £15... extensive growth of potatoes is expected this season, one ton of seed-potatoes about to be planted. On the settlement there are horses, ploughs, and cultivators, the property of the Board (controlling the settlement), and several settlers have horses and implements. Each settler has one or more cows, and milk and butter are plentiful. Poultry are numerous, and good sales are effected in poultry and eggs. The settlement is almost self-supporting... The Public School on the settlement is well attended, and good reports on its operation are to hand. The success of the settlement is now established...'

The building of the settlers' houses illustrated both the optimism and lack of practicality that accompanied the establishment of this Bega Labour Settlement:

'A number of people who find it difficult or impossible to make a living in the crowded city have determined to revert



Education Week at Springvale Public School, date unknown. Image: State Library of NSW FL1670571

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to the occupation of the first grand old squatter, Adam ... fortunately, housemaking in the Australian bush is not a difficult operation; for, with plenty of timber, bark and material for shingles, the primary want of shelter is soon supplied.'

'The settlers immediately selected sites for their future homes in haphazard fashion, and the result is that the houses are dotted about most irregularly' which meant that, when the land was surveyed many years later, 'the surveyor had to so cut up the ground that each home would be on the required size block, the result is that the land is laid out in patchwork fashion.'

Within a couple of years, the co-operative idea was abandoned and each of the 20 settlers who then remained was allotted a block of 30 acres. 'The tools were divided up and one man keeps an auger without a point, as a memento of his share; another a broken saw; another a mortising axe, and so on.'

In reality, some settlers did make a go of the challenges they had faced, and others (who were allotted 50 to 52 acres, once it was realized the original 30 acre holdings were unrealistically small) replaced the original settlers who left. In 1907 there were 29 settlers in the Labour Settlement – 12 of the original 26, plus 17 'newcomers'. [Beattie, Curran, Cough, Cowan, Dowling, Ford, Grubb, Kirwan, Law, Lawler, McCann, McDonald, McGuire, McMahan, Morrow, Nicholls, Ponier, Rankin, Reilly, Rolfe, Smith, Targett, Tonkin, Watson and White families were the settlers in 1907. Some of their descendants still live in the area.]

At that time it was also recorded that 'the blocks are now nearly all miniature dairy farms, running from 5 to 15 cows,

and averaging about 10. The milk is separated and the cream taken to the Bega butter factory...some of the settlers do very creditable work in the way of growing feed and making hay for their stock. Having started with nothing, it is interesting to know how they acquired their cows, and at the same time managed to keep themselves and their families on their inadequate areas. They were bought with many privations and bitter struggles. Take a typical case of one of the most successful. He commenced without a penny, and in the early days had to carry his little crop of potatoes and garden stuff four miles on his back into Bega for sale. Struggling on indomitably, often times half starved, and with only an apology for clothes, he was able to buy a couple of heifer calves and rear them, while at the same time providing for his wife and family. So on until now, he has his little herd and a couple of horses and a cart. He has also built a neat little cottage, put up a hay shed, cow bails, and stable, and generally improved his block to the extent of a few hundred pounds. Men of his stamp succeed anywhere, working early and late and denying themselves everything.' (This is actually quite remarkable because, after working and improving the land for 14 years, the original settlers still had no legal tenure or title to their land!)

From the government's viewpoint, the scheme was a failure. It is not clear how much of its investment in the area and in the settlers had then been recouped, but in 1907 the government closed down the Bega and Wilberforce Labour Settlements and offered to sell the blocks to existing settlers. Those that were not purchased reverted to being Crown Land.

It seems the government learned little from the lessons



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it might have learned from the Bega and Wilberforce Labour Settlements. When it was (similarly optimistically) establishing and promoting the ambitious Soldier Settlement Scheme after World War I (another interesting story, in its own right!), the blocks provided to the settlers were again far too small to be viable (and many were in totally unsuitable areas), the wrong sort of men were again selected to become settlers, and the government again had totally unrealistic expectations about how quickly any settler might be able to earn a living from his block...and then repay what was owed to the government. **R**

Sources: 'The Copeland Village Settlement at Currency Creek' by Cathy McHardy (in 'Hawkesbury Crier', March 2009); various legislation in Government Gazettes (e.g. Bega & Wilberforce Labour Settlement Act No 13, 1917); www.industrialrelations.nsw.gov.au; 1978 Parish of Meringo map from Bega Valley Shire Council; various newspapers and journals accessible on Trove including *The Evening News* (Sydney) 24.8.1893,

Goulburn Evening Penny Post 21.12.1895, *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate* 18.7.1893 and 20.7.1893, *Sydney Morning Herald* 19.7.1893 and 22.7.1893, *The Albury Banner and Wodonga Express* 29.11.1907, *Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser* 22.8.1896 and 5.2.1898, *Richmond River Herald* 28.7.1893, *Cootamundra Herald* 10.2.1897; Bega Pioneers' Museum.

The Bega Labour Settlement and Common was in the area now known as Springvale. It extended, roughly, south from Daisy Hill Road down to Spring Creek Road, so took in the area of about 1km either side of what is now Grosses Creek Road. The Settlement Common was at the south-east corner of the Settlement and straddled Spring Creek. Four blocks in the Common, together with three to the north of the Common (including two in the 181-acre area that had been reserved in July 1879 for a Lunatic Asylum – see story at www.bit.ly/Recollections2), were later (between 1918 and 1922) reserved for allocation to Returned Soldiers from World War I. The Springvale School was situated on the southern boundary of the Labour Settlement.

Crossword Answers (see page 4)

Across: 3. FIVE, 7. ORCAS, 8. TOALLO, 9. COPELAND, 12. ANCHOR, 13. TAMAR, 14. AFTERMATH, 15. SCHYEVILLE, 17. EDEN, 19. COLAC, 23. PORTMACQUARIE, 25. WANDERER, 27. GIPPS, 28. NINE, 30. BOAT, 31. STOCKBROKER, 32. BEGAVALLEY, 33. CANDELO.

Down: 1. JUNO, 2. KELLY, 4. VINDEK, 5. SPRINGVALE, 6. COCHRANE, 10. SNEEZE, 11. WANDERERINN, 16. YARDARM, 18. JAPANESE, 20. CRAIGNATHAN, 21. EMMA, 22. BOYDSTOWER, 24. REID, 26. ROYAL, 29. GOLD, 30. BRIERLY.



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AFTERMATH: The End of the Second World War

by Richard Reid and Cheryl Mongan

We tend to think that the Second World War ran from 1939 to 1945. But, while fighting may have ceased on VP Day on 15th August 1945, in reality it took years – indeed decades – for Australia to be able to put the war behind it...and how it did so is fascinating history.

This fabulous 204-page book, published by the Australian Government Department of Veterans' Affairs and put together by Dr Richard Reid (a Canberra-based historian who will be familiar to many of our South Coast readers) and Cheryl Mongan (the President of the Yass and District Historical Society), traces the aftermath of World War II in Australia by reproducing photographs (over 300 of them) and documents that tell the history of those post-war years that now, as the introduction to the book points out, is 'in the increasingly distant past' and 'all becoming history and memory'.

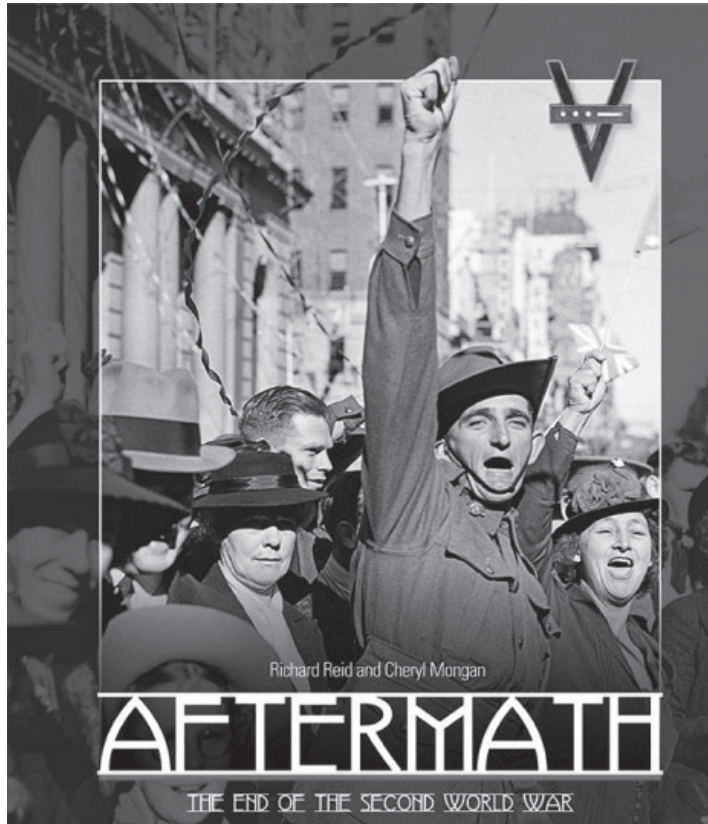
The photographs and accompanying explanations are arranged under simple themes in a chronological order from the war to the current day. Those themes are something of a fascinating checklist of mopping-up and moving forward from a cataclysmic event...things like the country's planning for war's end; handling the surrender of enemy forces; organizing the return home of serving men and women

and, importantly, of POWs; the creation of war cemeteries; financing the nation's recovery; the selling off of millions of dollars of redundant war materiel; the role of organisations such as Legacy, the War Widows' Guild of Australia, the RSL, the Repatriation and Veterans' Affairs Departments; how we provided food for postwar Britain; how Australia's international obligations changed as a result of the war; and a lot, lot more.

To me, this is 'accessible history' at its most interesting and best. Whilst reading the book, I'd hate to think how many times I thought to myself 'I didn't know that!': for example, that about 650 Japanese women married Australians who were stationed in Japan after the War with the British Commonwealth Occupation Force...and (incredibly) that it then took until March 1952 (and it cost the family about £2,000!) for the first Japanese war bride to be granted permission to emigrate to Australia, even though the couple had been married since 1948 and had two daughters.

Regrettably, you are unlikely to find this very worthwhile, elegantly presented Australian history in your local bookshop. More's the pity! It is, however, available from the Australian War Memorial Bookshop for \$24.99. See the bookshop website at www.awm.gov.au/shop/

Review by Peter Lacey



'Mayor of Ringwood, Councillor AG Levis presented Mrs Cherry Parker (nee Nobuko) with her Australian Naturalisation Certificate in January 1957 while her husband Gordon looked on. The Parkers were married in 1948 and had two daughters, but permission for her to come to Australia was not granted until March 1952. Mrs Parker was the first Japanese war bride to arrive in Australia, after her husband had lobbied extensively to have her join him in Melbourne at a cost of some £2000.' Photo: National Archives of Australia A1501, A908/1, barcode 8922745.

The Ben Boyd History Centre, Boyd Town

Arguably, Benjamin Boyd had more impact on the early development of the South Coast than did any other individual.

He was an entrepreneur...and, like many other entrepreneurs (think Alan Bond, Richard Branson, Clive Palmer), he was also a 'colourful character'. So, the many stories about the man and his endeavours are, to say the least, engaging and are well-worth re-telling.

It is fabulous, therefore, that a community-based volunteer group has recently opened a Ben Boyd History Centre right next to one of Boyd's most important surviving local buildings, the Seahorse Inn at historic Boyd Town (8½ km south of Eden).

The Ben Boyd History Centre is modest – with just enough rooms to display information about Benjamin Boyd, his luxury ship the 'Wanderer', and to outline his many interests in and the impact that these had on the South Coast. Commendably, the Centre has also developed a 1-hour easy-walking history

trail around the original Boydtown area.

Currently, the Centre is open only on Sundays and Public Holidays from 1 pm to 4 pm. Small group visits by appointment. Admission is free. It's well-worth visiting... as also, in nearby Eden, is the Mary McKillop Hall and Museum which is open 10am to 4pm. **R**



HERITAGE LISTED

The Old Pambula Court House and Police Station

The Old Pambula Court House, Police Station and adjacent cell block in Toallo Street make up the oldest complex of publicly accessible buildings in Pambula.

They are historically important because they reflect the early European history of the district, they are a reminder of the development of the region as a centre for law and order administration, and they illustrate periods of growth and contraction in the local district's population and wealth.

They are now a particularly significant part of Pambula's historic townscape, being prominently sited on the hillside overlooking the dairy flats and flood plain below.

The materials used in their construction (predominantly bricks, timber and sandstone) were locally sourced, providing an example of resources that were available in the district.

There are four distinct but connected parts in the complex – a court house, a police station, a police residence and a cell block. These were constructed or altered on a number of occasions, with the most significant construction phases being in 1861, 1895 and 1897 – so the buildings and their uses are not indicative of just a single period of time in the town's history.

But the numerous stories relating to their construction are interesting.



Originally the administration of justice in Pambula was the responsibility of the Eden police district which covered the whole of the County of Auckland (from the Victorian border in the south to the Brogo River in the north). But, following the surveying and emergence of the 'Panboola' township in the late 1840s or early 1850s, police were stationed at this local outpost.

In 1856 (by which time there were 5 hotels operating in Pambula), £100 was made available for the erection of a lock-up in the town and in 1858 a Court of Petty Sessions was established. A year later the lock-up was completed – but only after Police Magistrate Keon of Eden first had to write to the Secretary of Lands and Public Works complaining that 'the sum of £100 has been granted for some time...nothing has



The Court Room in the Old Pambula Court House, now used as a meeting room. Bega Valley Genealogical Society has given this room 'life' by providing comprehensive information about the policemen and magistrates who served in the local district. Elsewhere in the building, it has also mounted interesting displays highlighting the changes that have occurred over time to this heritage building and to Pambula township.

yet been done and, when it was completed, it was realized that a man would need to be employed to oversee it, and that accommodation was needed to house him!

That original structure (plus an added-on room for the lock-up keeper) was demolished the following year. In December 1860 a foundation stone for a new court house and watchhouse was laid by two local citizens, Peter O'Neil and Syms Covington [see 'Recollections' issue 3, available at bit.ly/Recollections3-]. The buildings - which were described as '*built after the government model of ugliness*' - were completed in September 1861.

But the '*government model of ugliness*' was not the complex's only shortcoming. During construction Police Magistrate Murray wrote that '*the present structure consists of two cells and a constable's room and sleeping room. It occurs to me that it would be advantageous to turn one of the constable's rooms into a cell, making three cells...the*

Lockup keeper could use the [additional] cell as a sleeping room...[and] in the event of a person being apprehended for a serious offense than a vagrant or perhaps a female all at the same time, there would not be convenience for them on the present plan. And, when the building was completed, Police Magistrate Murray and Justices of the Peace John Lloyd and J H Bennett were again noting that no chains or padlocks had been supplied for the cell doors, '*only the usual gaol bolts*',...and that fencing and water tanks were needed!

In 1894 the condition of the gaol attracted the attention of the local press: '*The wall, which is only about 7 foot high and could be scaled with ease by any person of average height, was erected over 30 years ago. It was made of hardwood and judging by its appearance has never been repaired since its erection. The timber is completely rotten, and some weeks ago a portion of the northern wall was blown over by the wind and broke in pieces...the doors of the yard are so warped and*



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shrunk that they cannot be closed. The walls can be swayed to and fro by a strong push with the hand...Prisoners cannot be allowed in the yard unless an officer is constantly at their side to prevent their escape.'

In 1895 a separate brick gaol with two cells 'fastened with massive bolts and locks' was built and extensive renovations and additions were made to the police residence, which was converted from only being suitable for a single man to one providing comfortable accommodation to a married man and his family.

One month later, shortcomings within the Court House were obvious so further additions and alterations to the complex were undertaken which resulted in a new Courtroom being added and the original building being converted for use as a police station and residence. In

the 1930s further renovations were undertaken to the courthouse.

The lock-up was used until 1978 and the police station was used until 1979, at which point it was converted to a residence for police stationed in Merimbula. The courthouse continued to be used every week as a Court of Petty Sessions until 1984. The government then proposed to sell the property, but in 1992 leased the building to the Bega Valley Genealogical Society, which still operates from the building. In 1994 the Bega Valley Shire Council became trustee of the building. 

Sources: NSW State Heritage Inventory (at www.environment.nsw.gov.au/heritageapp/heritagesearch.aspx); Bega Valley Genealogical Society.

South Coast Court Houses

In 1832 a NSW Offenders Punishment and Justices Summary Jurisdiction Act was passed and this established local Courts of Petty Sessions that had the power to try and impose punishment for offences such as 'theft, drunkenness, disobedience of orders, neglect or running away from work, abusive language to a master or other disorderly or dishonest conduct'. Over time, 28 of these Courts were established in a South Coast Region that extended from Kiama to Eden.

Hastily constructed timber slab buildings that were, in reality, little more than huts, local post offices, pubs, police lockups and even private homes were used by these Courts in the earliest days.

Increasing demands on the legal system led, in 1858, to

the establishment of District Courts and to the subsequent erection of many court houses – an unmistakable sign that 'civilisation' had finally arrived in NSW rural areas. A *Sydney Morning Herald* report in 1860 observed that:

'A number of additional court-houses and gaols being required in consequence of the establishment of District Courts, instructions were a few weeks ago sent to the Colonial Architect to prepare plans of buildings suited to the requirements of the different places at which these courts are held, great inconvenience having been experienced from the opening of the courts before proper provision for their operation had been made. These plans have been accordingly prepared and forwarded for approval to the office of Internal



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Communication; but no tenders for the erection of the buildings have yet been advertised for, and probably no further steps will be taken in the matter, until the estimated cost, £50,000, has been sanctioned by the Legislature. The proposed works include new gaols and court-houses at Mudgee, Orange, Wellington, Pambula, Braidwood, Eden, Tamworth, Armidale, Grafton, Yass, Gundagai, Wagga Wagga, Albury, Deniliquin; and also additional and improvements to existing buildings at Windsor, Campbelltown, Berrima, Newcastle, Muswellbrook, and Port Macquarie. The structures are to be of three classes, according to the size required, and to be built upon uniform plans, their cost varying from £2000 to £3000.' (Interestingly, only £818.13.6 was spent on building the Pambula Courthouse in 1861!!)

Court houses, police stations, police residences and lockups were often within the same complex (as was the case in Pambula) or, at least, were sited close to one another. Court Magistrates often travelled between various towns and court proceedings were held on a regular, rotating basis – necessitating, in the early days, travel between their assigned courthouses on horseback or by horse-drawn coach.

Police in towns such as Pambula usually filled many roles. In 1913, for example, Pambula's Police Sergeant Kelly also acted as the Clerk of Petty Sessions, Bailiff, Curators Agent (whatever that may have been), Licensing Inspector, Inspector of Slaughter Houses, Local Inspector and Dairy Superintendent, Mining Warden's Clerk and Mining Registrar...and was responsible for maintaining the Electoral Register. And added to this were unforseen but

necessary community-related tasks, such as establishing a community subscription list in Pambula to aid local destitute women (in 1900), monitoring 'enemy aliens' and acting as local recruiting officers during World War I (1914–1918), and issuing food and clothing vouchers during the Great Depression (late 1920s and the 1930s).

On the NSW Far South Coast court houses have operated at Batemans Bay (April 1877 – present), Bega (January 1858 – present), Bemboka (May 1889 – January 1975; the building is now a police station), Bodalla (February 1926 – July 1971; now a police station), Candelo (Sept 1882 – August 1968; now a police station), Central Tilba (March 1897 – November 1933; now a private residence), Cobargo (January 1883 – February 1974; now a police station), Eden (December 1846 to present), Eurobodalla (April 1883 – August 1895), Montreal (November 1880 – April 1883), Moruya (June 1853 – present), Narooma (August 1895 – present), Nelligen (May 1861 – July 1936; now owned by the Anglican Church); Nerrigundah (February 1862 – February 1926), Pambula (January 1858 – December 1984; now utilized by Bega Valley Genealogical Society), Wolumla (April 1894 – August 1936; now a private residence), and Wyndham (March 1888 – January 1967; now a private residence).

Sources: 'Historic and Heritage Court Houses in NSW' by Lachlan Turner (available from turner-imt@bigpond.com); 'History of NSW courts and tribunals' (at www.courts.justice.nsw.gov.au); 'Local Court History' (at localcourt.justice.nsw.gov.au)



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SOUTH COAST PERSONAGE

Arguably, Benjamin Boyd was more responsible for the early development of the NSW South Coast than was any other pioneer. At that time, most other settlers were only interested in establishing their own businesses or farms in the area, whereas Boyd had a vision for developing the whole area, had plans and the capital required to establish a major town, and intentions to provide links between the South Coast, Sydney, Melbourne...

and indeed the world. But, as the Australian Dictionary of Biography notes, 'eventually Boyd's grandiose ideas and his complicated and somewhat dubious financial transactions were his undoing. His schemes were wrecked by unfavourable public opinion, changing economic circumstances and management failure.' To suggest that he was 'a colourful character' is perhaps an understatement!

Benjamin Boyd - Stockbroker, Visionary, Entrepreneur

Benjamin Boyd was born in Scotland on August 21st 1801. He was the second son of Janet and Edward Boyd, a London merchant. His grandfather was a wealthy landowner and minister of the Church of Scotland.

In 1825, Boyd began business as a stockbroker in London and four years later was regarded as a financial wizard. He became a Director of a steamship company and an insurance company. He moved in highly respected business circles both in London and in France. Through family associations, he developed contacts with British Empire merchants in India, the Far East and the West Indies.

He planned to develop his own 'empire' through establishing a trading enterprise based on wool growing, grain, whaling and shipping.

He contacted the Colonial Secretary in London with plans to establish a large steamship operation linking Australian settlements and he asked for the right to buy land adjacent

to five or six harbours in the colony. He was promised every assistance and the NSW Governor was instructed accordingly.

He had hoped to marry Emma Green, the object of his continuing love as a young man, but she was confronted by and queried the viability of his ambitious plans. She also could not accept the likely different lifestyle that would follow, should she agree to marry him - so she declined his proposal. As a parting gesture, she allowed Benjamin to commission an artist to paint her portrait. This was then mounted in a locked cabinet in Boyd's cabin on his ship the *Wanderer*.

Apparently untroubled by news of economic difficulties then being experienced in New South Wales, Boyd departed for Australia optimistically confident of success.

One of Boyd's plans was to open a bank in Australia - the Royal Bank of Australia, which had been funded by a

A black and white advertisement for Specsavers. The background features a close-up portrait of an older man with grey hair and a beard, wearing glasses and a suit jacket. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

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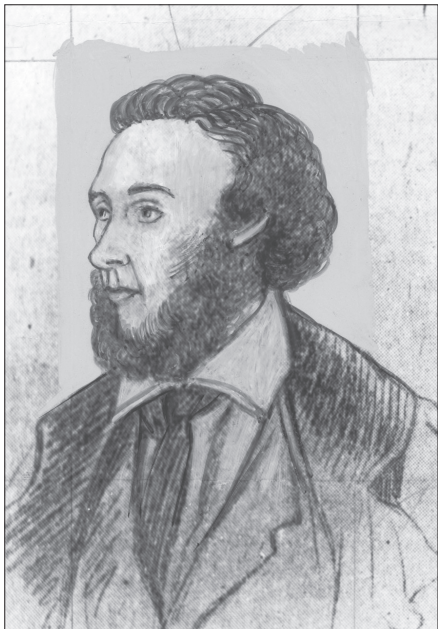
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Benjamin Boyd. Image: State Library of Victoria, H38849/448

group of London investors. Boyd organized for the Bank to give him personal responsibility for some £200,000 (today's equivalent: \$40 million) worth of gold. However, the Royal Bank of Australia never operated as such; and Boyd subsequently used its capital as a personal source of finance for his grandiose schemes.

Boyd, and a chest containing the £200,000 worth of gold, set sail in December 1841 on a leisurely 179-day voyage to Australia aboard the *Wanderer*. Three other of his own steamships carrying cargo and passengers (including Bank staff) arrived in Sydney before Boyd – ensuring he received a colourful reception on his arrival. The *Sydney Herald* reported: ‘*On coming to anchor in the cove, the Velocity schooner owned by Mr Boyd fired a salute and the neighbouring heights were crowded with spectators to witness the arrival. The Wanderer is armed to the teeth and is fitted up in a most splendid manner.*’

On his way to Sydney, Boyd stopped off in Melbourne where he made his first significant Australian purchase, the Colac pastoral station. He was later to set up a waterfront warehouse, wool stores, and a wool-washing works in Neutral Bay in Sydney. He fitted out his trading and whaling ships in nearby Mosman. He also purchased a waterfront home, Craignathan, in Neutral Bay.

Pastoral interests were to provide the backbone to Boyd's ‘empire’ and Boyd's interest in this area could not have been better timed. Vast areas of crown land were being thrown open to pastoralists who only had to obtain a certificate of character from a magistrate and pay an annual fee for leases. And with wool prices and property prices declining and bankruptcy increasing at that time – and with cash readily available! – Boyd could, as he himself remarked, ‘*acquire an immense fortune for very little outlay.*’

By 1845 Boyd had an interest in two million acres of land in the Riverina (he constructed the first building in Deniliquin – the *Wanderer Inn* – but then failed to renew the licence to it in 1847!; his connection to that area is perpetuated in two of the town's road names: Boyd Street and Wanderer Street) and half a million acres on the Monaro on which he grazed 160,000 sheep and 10,000 cattle. Two years later he personally acquired another 380,000 acres on which he paid an annual licence fee of just £80.

Boyd's good timing and good luck, however, deserted him in his attempts to provide a major shipping service in NSW. Originally he had planned to send 11 vessels to the colony and initially four were dispatched, but three of these

failed to generate good financial returns – the *Seahorse* ran aground on a bank in the Tamar River and was eventually written off, the *Juno* lost a rudder off the Cape of Good Hope and was then laid up for five years, and the *Cornubia* lay at anchor for long periods and was finally sold in 1849. Only *Velocity* seems to have received some regular work.

By the time Boyd arrived in Australia most of the profitable local coastal shipping business had already been secured by the General Steamship Navigation Company and, realistically, only routes south from Sydney then remained to be developed. Boyd only discovered this after arriving in Sydney.

Boyd's efforts to establish his own whaling industry were, for a short time, more successful. In the mid-1830s the Imlay Bros set up a rudimentary on-shore based whaling industry in Twofold Bay. By 1843 Boyd was in competition and had two boats operating. This eventually grew to nine boats and he extended his operation to include off-shore whaling.

Around the same time that Boyd's whaling operations commenced, he visited the South Coast, ‘claimed’ an area on the shores of Twofold Bay and had it cleared. This was intended to be the site of a town which Ben Boyd, perhaps unsurprisingly, named Boydtown. It was to have a hotel, church, stores, extensive shipping facilities, cottages for up to 400 workmen, and was to be the centre of his whaling operations.

Several months later, on March 8th 1843, the land that Boyd had ‘claimed’ came up for auction. Boyd was the only bidder, purchasing 640 acres for £1 per acre. Among the major buildings he then erected over the next year or two were the Seahorse hotel, several stores, a wool store, a



BOYD'S TOWER, TWOFOLD BAY.

Boyd's Tower, Twofold Bay – one of the few remaining legacies of Benjamin Boyd's grandiose plans for the area. Constructed of Pyrmont Sandstone, which was transported to the site by Boyd's ships, Boyd's Tower was originally built to serve as a lighthouse. It, however, only became a whale-spotting tower. It is now a significant feature of the southern entrance to Twofold Bay.



The upper part of Boyd's Tower. Note the name 'BOYD' in the stonework.

boiling down-works, a church and a 400-foot long wharf. 45 miles of road leading into the Boydtown port were also constructed.

Threats to Boyd realizing his dreams of developing a successful business empire came from a number of directions. His Boydtown and whaling operations were mismanaged; general economic conditions at the time in NSW were unfavourable (Sir George Gipps, the Governor of the time, reputedly advised Boyd 'you have arrived at a bad time economically'); his shipping plans were thwarted by well-established competition; whale numbers were in decline; the Government was introducing measures to limit the size of pastoral properties and to increase Government revenue from settlers (in an attempt to protect his extensive interests, Boyd nominated for and briefly served as the Member for Port Phillip in the NSW Legislative Council

in 1845 and 1846); and, following the end of convict transportation to NSW, he experienced difficulties finding sufficient labour for all of his enterprises.

In 1847 the Royal Bank of Australia collapsed and – with seven disastrous years behind him – Boyd left the Colony in October 1849 leaving behind a debt of over £400,000. As the *Wanderer* was leaving Sydney Harbour it accidentally lost its best bow anchor on a reef. This was, Boyd wrote, 'a parting legacy to the colony in which I had hoped for so much, and though in part succeeded, yet in the main failed through little of my own fault'.

Boyd's next gamble was to seek gold in California. He was again unsuccessful. Ironically, a decade later gold was discovered near Kiandra and a goldrush ensued. Twofold Bay became a major entry point for would-be miners, Eden's population swelled to around 4,000, and the local economy boomed.

In June 1851, Boyd and the *Wanderer* left San Francisco. On October 15th Boyd was shot dead by natives on Guadalcanal Island in the Solomons. His body was never recovered. The *Wanderer* was then headed back to Australia but was wrecked in a gale off Port Macquarie on 12th November 1851.

Sources: Substantial information generously provided by Peter Ayling; *Dictionary of Sydney*; *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.

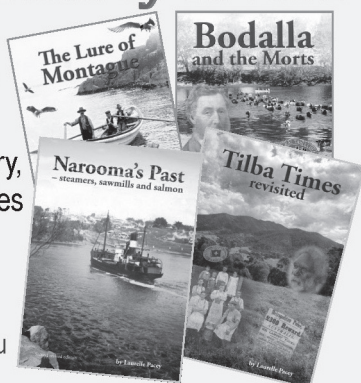
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