South Coast History Society Inc.

RecollectionS

Issue 36

Yesterday. Beguiling.

Members of the 2018 Bega-Littleton Sister City Exchange receive a warm welcome as they march down Littleton's Main St during Western Welcome Week celebrations

Fostering Personal Friendships and International Understanding

This October a group from Littleton, Colorado, will visit Bega.

It will be the thirteenth delegation from Littleton to have made the journey 'down under' to Bega in a Bega-Littleton Sister City Exchange.

This international Exchange had its origins in 1954 when 'Curly' Annabel, the then owner and editor of the *Bega District News*, saw a film about the *Littleton Independent* newspaper and was astonished by how similar the two newspapers were, and how similar the roles of their Editors were in what were both relatively small country towns. So, he made contact with Houston ('Hous') Waring, the Editor of the *Littleton Independen*t and then, a year later, visited the Waring family in Littleton.

Around this time, world geopolitical tensions were increasing (1956 was the year of the Hungarian Revolution and the Suez Crisis) and President Dwight D. Eisenhower was looking for ways to lessen the chances of new international conflicts. He reasoned that local government leaders could serve as 'citizen diplomats' to share ideas and information that would deepen international understanding and foster bonds between people from different communities. He therefore advocated for the growth of a worldwide 'sister city' program.

This led Hous and Curly to move to formalize the Bega-Littleton relationship that they had established.

Curly again visited Littleton in 1960 and, in early 1961, Hous and his wife, Irene, travelled to Bega. Their visit coincided with that year's Far South Coast National Show. The American Ambassador to Australia opened the Show,

Fantastic Reads

Hous Waring and Curly Annabel at the unveiling of the plaque in Bega Park, Littleton, recording the establishment of the Bega-Littleton Sister City Exchange

An identical plaque is in Littleton Gardens, Bega.

'These Gentlemen have fostered international understanding since 1954. Thorough their inspiration, regular social and cultural exchanges maintain a lasting friendship between Bega, New South Wales, Australia and Littleton, Colorado, USA. Hundreds of personal friendships across the equator attest to their success in the formation of the Bega-Littleton Sister City Exchange. For their leadership and enlightenment, we are eternally grateful.'

Hous Waring opened a display of 285 objects from Littleton, the Littleton Chamber of Commerce provided a trophy for the best commercial exhibit at the show, and an American lunch (black bean soup, Waldorf side salad, roast duckling and gravy with sauerkraut and roast potatoes, American lemon chiffon pie), prepared in Littleton and flown to Australia by Pan Am, was served.

The Bega-Littleton Exchange was the first Australian-American Sister City relationship to be established. (The number of Australian towns with 'sister city' relationships has since grown dramatically. 112 Australian towns now have 'sister cities' – with some Australian towns choosing to establish multiple international links. Orange, for example, has four and Griffith has eight – including with six towns in Italy. 29 Australian towns or municipalities have established official links with American towns, with the seemingly most appropriate twinning being the Bland Shire in the NSW Riverina and the town of Boring in Oregon…which, incidentally, is also twinned with Dull in Scotland!) This was recognized with a letter of congratulations from President Eisenhower to Hous Waring.

The 1961 Bega delegation at the Littleton racetrack. Bega horsemen provided a saddle to the owner, a bridle to the trainer and a whip to the jockey of the winning horse of the main race.

Hous Waring and Curly Annabel at the 1961 Far South Coast National Show

In August that same year (1961) Curly took four young people from Bega to Littleton for the town's Western Welcome Week celebrations. Money for the airfare for the youngest of the group (Dell Chegwidden, then a schoolgirl at Bega High) was raised at a Country Fair near Littleton.

The first citizens' group from Littleton arrived in Bega in 1966. There were five members in that delegation and they were feted. In Bega they were greeted by a procession comprising the Bega Band, marching girls, school children, guides, brownies, scouts and cubs. This was followed by a civic reception and a dinner. In Sydney they were given a reception by the Lord Mayor, another by the Premier, and a luncheon by the Australian-American Association. In Canberra they were guests at a luncheon in Parliament House.

That 1966 visit established a practice of a group of Littleton 'Ambassadors' travelling to Bega during the first and sixth years of every decade. This, however, was disrupted in 2021 by the Covid pandemic, so this year's visit is something of a 'catch up' visit. From the 1970s, it has been the practice for a Bega delegation to visit Littleton in the third and eighth years of every decade.

The largest delegation from Littleton was 29 in 1996, and the largest group that has travelled to Littleton from Bega was 34 in 1978. Most commonly, particularly in recent years, the groups have comprised around 25 ambassadors – reflecting the popularity among residents of the two towns of participating in these Exchanges.

Participants in these exchanges often describe them as 'life-changing experiences', having been given the opportunity to experience home life in another country, join in local community events, and tour the local area (often to places not normally visited by the visitors to the area). And, of course, firm friendships are forged.

The Bega-Littleton Sister City relationship is, however, also more permanently celebrated in both towns. Littleton has a Bega Park and Bega has Littleton Gardens in the centre of the town. In both places there are (identical) plaques recording the roles played by Curly Annabel and Hous Waring in establishing the Bega-Littleton Sister City Exchange.


Hey, Hous – Hold the bat this way!

(Delegates on Bega-Littleton Exchanges are members of the local Bega-Littleton Association – details: begalittleton.au@gmail.com)

Sources: Information supplied by Paul Healey, Helen Jauncey and Kirsty MacKinnon.

Lots of Weird, Crazy Things

When Kirsty MacKinnon visited Littleton, as the student representative on the 2013 delegation from Bega, she spent a full day at the local high school.

'It blew my mind,' she recalls. 'I discovered that school in America is so different…it's just like it's portrayed in the movies…lots of weird, crazy things – it was not at all like school is over here.'

But school in America was not the only thing that amazed her.

'Shootings were another thing. The newspapers would arrive, and it seemed every day there would be a report of another shooting. But, to my surprise, these events appeared to be deemed unremarkable.'

'Littleton is beautiful. I absolutely loved it,' she said.

'And the people there really value the relationship they have with Bega. They know the sister city relationship goes way, way back, and everyone seemed to know that the Bega delegation was in town so we were made to feel very, very welcome.'

'A real effort was also made to make our visit worthwhile. Activities were tailored to suit the members of our delegation so, for example, arrangements were made so I could spend a day at the school and speak at a school assembly. This gave me the chance to say something about the people of the Bega Valley and how they have made this area what it is today.'

'It was also fabulous being in Littleton for their annual parade and seeing first-hand all those very American features – things like the marching bands, dancers and cheer leaders – that I had sort-of come to expect from having watched American movies.'

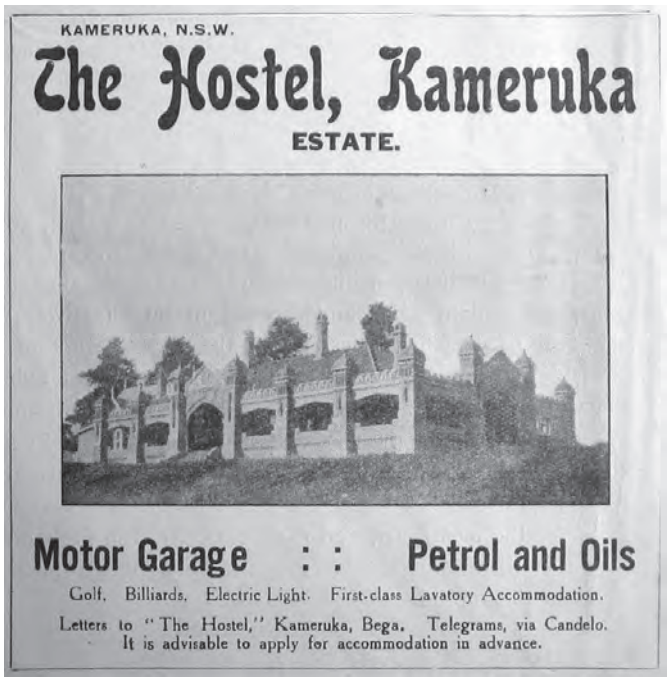
When asked what was the best aspect of being a member of the exchange delegation, Kirsty unhesitatingly replied 'lifelong friends.' 'I made friends in Littleton but also very good friends from Bega who I still message regularly and visit regularly. Some of them, now in their 80s, have become just like grandparents to me.'

And any tips to those who might be interested in joining a future Bega delegation to Littleton? 'Do it!,' Kirsty advised.

A National Treasure: The South Coast's Build-Your-Own Golf Course

Sir Robert Lucas Lucas-Tooth was a visionary.

In 1864 he purchased a leasehold of 75,000 acres known as Kameruka (believed to be an Aboriginal word meaning 'wait until I return'), near Candelo. Between 1868 and 1871 he converted 22,000 acres of this leasehold to freehold and then began developing that property into an English country estate with a small private village at its centre.



By the end of the nineteenth century the Kameruka Estate had been transformed from a grazing property to one of the state's leading dairies that supplied cream to three Estate-owned cheese factories. 30 six-room cottages were built for employees and their families. Other Estate amenities included a Church, a school, a post office, a clock tower, a village store, a butcher's shop and a village hall. A sizeable ornamental lake and large-scale plantings of English and European trees were added to ensure the Estate had a distinctly English ambience.


The Hostel, Kameruka.

In 1884-1885, the English cricket team was touring Australia. Somehow, the Candelo Progress Committee convinced the English XI to travel to Kameruka to play a two-day match against a local XXII team.

The problem, though, was that the area did not then have a cricket oval – so one was purpose-built on a flat area of Kameruka Estate's land near Candelo Creek, adjacent to a hill that conveniently provided a suitable area for spectators.

2,000 people turned up to watch the match, some travelling over 20 miles (an enormous distance in those days) to do so. The match was a huge success – despite the English XI defeating the local XXII by an innings and 12 runs! – inspiring Sir Robert Lucas-Tooth to build a permanent cricket oval on the Kameruka Estate. That Lords View Oval remains a distinctive feature of the Kameruka Estate and is now one of the oldest (and perhaps prettiest) cricket grounds in NSW.

Sir Robert then turned his attention to having a hostel built on the Estate to encourage holiday-makers to visit the Kameruka area. And, as one of the attractions to potential visitors, he decided to build a 9-hole golf course nearby. (Advertisements for The Hostel, Kameruka, listed other benefits of staying there as 'Motor Garage. Petrol and Oils. Billiards. Electric Light. First-class Lavatory Accommodation' !!!)

And as the local newspaper, the *Southern Record and Advertiser,* reported, it was also Sir Robert's intention that '*when the links are fully developed, it is proposed to get prominent golfers to come down and introduce the golf epidemic (they tell us it really is a disease when it gets you).*'

Sir Robert is reputed to have had Laurie Auchterionie (a Scottish professional golfer and winner of the US Open in 1902) design, or have input into the design, or endorse and help promote some existing design of the Kameruka course. And he engaged another professional golfer, Ernest Banks, to travel from England to Kameruka Estate to lay out and supervise the construction of the course.

Ernest and his wife arrived in Sydney in September 1914 on the *Ceramic*, which was to be last passenger ship to sail from England to Australia before the outbreak of World War I.

Banks' arrival at Kameruka Estate in November 1914 was reported in the *Southern Record and Advertiser*:

'During the week a number of our townspeople have been initiated in the game of golf, and have been enthusiastically following the ball about the river bank. The strange appearance is inspired by the presence in our midst of Mr. Banks and his wife, who arrived from England last week, and are staying at the Candelo Hotel. Mr. Banks is a professional golfer, and is specially sent out here by Sir Robert Lucas Tooth to set down links and establish golf on the Kameruka Estate. Mr. Banks reckons

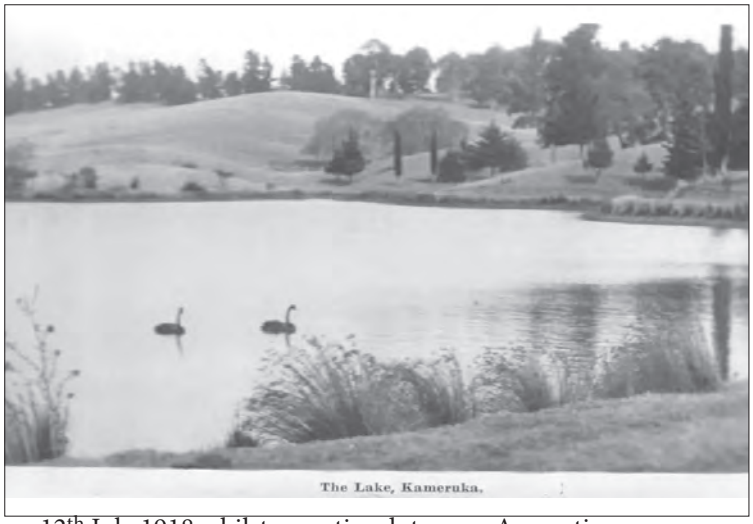
Tower Clock, Kameruka.

on having the links prepared within eight months, though he cannot calculate with any degree of certainty, not yet knowing how suitable grasses will thrive on the soil. The links will be situated, we understand, on the western side of Candelo river, opposite the cross roads. Mr. Banks considers the natural advantages of the locality admirable, and anticipates that it will be among the best and most up-to-date golfing grounds in the State. He will in all probability take up his permanent residence here, and being expert in every department of the game, may establish means to manufacture and provide golfers with the requisites of the pastime. The new hostel, now in course of erection, and the proposed links, will add largely to this already attractive centre.'

The 1885 Kameruka cricket oval area became Holes 2 and 3 of the new golf course.

Banks' estimate that construction of the Kameruka Golf Course would take eight months proved to be accurate, the *Southern Record and Advertiser* reporting on 21st August 1915 that *'The grand hostel at Kameruka is nearing completion. When finished it will be a monument to the district. It will be lighted by electricity, hot and cold water laid on to every room, and magnificently appointed generally. A fine new brick social hall and supper room is also in course of erection on the Estate. The golf links, another feature of much interest, are beginning to show the result of careful work. When finished off the links will be among the best in the State.'*

Regrettably, Sir Robert Lucas-Tooth never saw the completed Kameruka hostel or golf course because he died, reputedly of a 'broken heart', on 19th February 1915. His three sons - Keith, Selwyn and Archibald - had enlisted in the British Army at the outbreak of World War I and two of them – Douglas and Selwyn – were killed on the Western Front in September and October 1914. Archibald inherited the Kameruka Estate but he, too, later became a casualty of the War, dying of the Spanish Flu



on 12th July 1918 whilst on active duty near Armentieres.

As a tribute to the role played by the Australian Imperial Force in the War, the first seven holes of the Kameruka Golf Course were later named after battles or sites at which the A.I.F. figured prominently. (See adjacent box. Hole 8 was named 'The Kiosk' [there was a kiosk adjacent to this hole where players could enjoy refreshments] and Hole 9, appropriately, became known as 'Home'.)

Since opening, the Kameruka golf links has had its ups and its downs:

'*A party of half a dozen Bega ladies and gentlemen have started a Golf Club for play on the Kameruka links, and they report very enjoyable times.*' *Southern Record and Advertiser*, 24.6.1916

'*Last weekend the Kameruka Golf Links awoke as a giant refreshed after seven years of quiescence, and became the scene of bustling activity. Visitors attended the opening tournament in force from Bega, Narooma and Merimbula. For several weeks the local Club have been busily occupied in rehabilitating the links. The workers had an excellent foundation on which to build — although in disuse for so long the original structure was so well and truly laid down that it was still intact as far as essentials were concerned. The main items needing attention were the re-conditioning of the greens, the sanding of the bunkers, and the removal of the obvious signs of the high production of the Kameruka stock… Many club members were most industrious on the links, but without the Kameruka equipment and the help of the Kameruka staff the work could never have been put through so expeditiously…On Sunday over fifty players took part… Mr. Scarvell* [Manager of Kameruka Estate] *said to give assistance in this case had been a pleasure to him. He was particularly glad that one result had been to provide some work for the local unemployed…The district can now boast the best links on the South Coast, delightfully situated in picturesque natural surroundings. If its enthusiastic members can learn to wield the golf sticks as efficiently as they have applied the rake and shovel in the work of reconstruction, the Candelo-Kameruka Golf Club will be a factor in golf which will make its influence felt far and wide.*' *Southern Record and Advertiser*, 22.7.1932 (during the Great Depression)

'*Some of the mere male visitors, hearing the ladies apparently addressing somebody as 'little pet,' looked around with pleasure and expectation written all over their faces, only to discover that the remarks were intended for the Jersey heifers, several of which had come up close to view the proceedings. These friendly animals really deserve a vote of thanks; only for their efforts in keeping down the grass the course would have been unplayable at the present time. They are also very interested in the greens, and apparently spend a large portion of their time there; but the good work done on the fairways more than compensates for all the bad work, doubtful deeds, and other offences perpetrated on the greens. Now that the Club has a few pounds in hand, it is intended to strengthen the fences guarding the greens, so as stock of any size can not get through. Suggestions are also likely to be carried out by which the third hole will be made a little less difficult for lady players.*' *Southern Record and Advertiser*, 28.10.1932

'*Kameruka Golf Tournament. Sixty-nine men and 30 associates* [i.e. lady golfers] *took part on Sunday last in the above tournament.*' *Southern Record and Advertiser*, 29.9.1938

'*BIG fields in the recent, ever popular Candelo-Kameruka Golf Club Open forced the organisers to reduce the 27-hole men's event to 18 holes. The difficult nine hole sand-green course compromised many grass-green golfers, most of whom enjoyed the traditional hospitality.*' *Canberra Times*, 28.10.1984

In recent decades the Kameruka Golf Course has fallen into disuse. However, the original features of the golf course (holes, fairways, bunkers, etc) are still clearly discernable and, overall, the course remains in good condition. It could be readily restored to its original condition.


Crossing at Kameruka

A heritage assessment was undertaken on what 'now exists as an archaeological landscape…untouched and locked away in place and time' by respected heritage assessors Peter Freeman Pty Ltd; Conservation Architects + Planners and a recommendation (strongly supported by Council's own Heritage Advisor and endorsed by Council's planning division) was made in November last year to Bega Valley Shire Council to add Kameruka Golf Course to its Local Environmental Plan Schedule 5 (i.e. to heritage list it). Councillors (who have a lamentable track record of preserving non-Indigenous heritage within the Shire), however, totally rejected the professional expert advice they had received.

The Heritage Council of NSW is now (at the

time this article is being written) proposing to add the Kameruka Golf Course to the NSW State Heritage Register, providing the Golf Course with a significantly higher level of protection than would have been guaranteed by Council's LEP Schedule 5 listing.

Which leads to the question, should the Kameruka Golf Course have a heritage listing, the first step towards preserving something that has significant historic or cultural value?

From a history standpoint – absolutely! The Kameruka Golf Course was an integral part of a very early innovative 'package' (along with the Kameruka Hostel) aimed at attracting tourists to the NSW South Coast. And it's now the last remaining part of that historic 'package', The Hostel (with its billiards, electric light, and first-class lavatory accommodation) having been demolished in 1927.

The golf course itself is also particularly significant because it is the oldest golf course with its original design layout in Australia, and is the only remaining example of a complete golf course with a 'Penal Golf' architectural style in Australia. (There are three basic styles of golf courses: 'Strategic' where a golfer can find a way around the hazards built into the fairway; 'Penal' where the only way for a golfer to by-pass hazards on the fairway is to hit the ball over them; and 'Heroic' which combines both 'Strategic' and 'Penal' elements.) And, in the Australian context, the Kameruka Golf Course is particularly important because it is the only example of how the British 'Penal Golf' style of golf course architecture was adapted to Australian climatic and geographic conditions.

And many good golfers could potentially enjoy the unique challenges offered by this course: '*Seven of the nine holes are blind, while every green is extensively bunkered. Each hole has its own special features. The course is rather hilly, No. 5 being very severe if badly played. The drive is across a valley on to the crest of the opposite hill, which has a steep, smooth slope right on the left edge of the fairway. The result is that a pulled ball will roll down and away from the hole, the final result being that the end of a pulled drive will frequently end very much father from the hole than the tee. With ladies, their second usually finds this bunker. The hazards are nearly all artificial, and, being numerous, trap any bad shots.*' R

On the 8th hole, a kiosk where refreshments could be obtained.

Sources: Heritage Assessment of Kameruka Golf Course compiled by Peter Freeman Pty Ltd; Conservation Architects + Planners; newspaper articles as cited.

Remembering Major World War I Actions

World War I had an enormous impact on the residents and employees of the Kameruka Estate. There is reflected in the War Memorial erected adjacent to Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Kameruka, and an elaborate polished wooden Honor Roll that hangs in the Kameruka Estate Hall. Some time after the Kameruka Golf Links was opened, the first seven tees were named after 'military events in which the 1st Australian Imperial Force figured prominently.' (In reality, the 1st A.I.F. had no direct involvement at 'The Crater' or 'The Labyrinth', and was minimally involved at 'Salonika'):

Hole 1 – Gallipoli: The 1st A.I.F.'s 'baptism of fire' where Australians fought alongside the Allied Powers attempting (unsuccessfully) to cut off war supplies to Turkey by taking control of the sea route from Europe to Russia.

Hole 2 – The Crater: A reference to the enormous Lochnagar mine crater, created by an underground explosion near Pozieres on the first day of the Battle of the Somme in 1916.

Hole 3 – Ypres: The Belgium town of Ypres was familiar to Australian soldiers in World War I as a gateway to the Western Front battlefields. Five major battles were fought in the area during the War. The Australians were heavily involved in the bloody Third Battle of Ypres (the Battle of Passchendaele). Stone lions that were part of the Menin Gate in Ypres now flank the entrance to the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

Hole 4 – Shrapnel Gully: The 'artery of Gallipoli' between the beach and the front line, along which troops moved and supplies were transported.

Hole 5 – Hill 60: The 1st Australian Tunnelling Company dug under Hill 60 near Ypres and laid explosives that were detonated with other mines as the opening move in the Battle of Messines in June 1917. The crater that resulted from the Hill 60 explosion was 18 metres deep and 79 metres wide, and the explosion enabled Allied forces to overwhelm the German front-line troops.

Hole 6 – Salonika: Allied forces were sent to Salonika in Greece in October 1915 to battle a German-Austro Hungarian-Bulgarian invasion of Serbia. Australian medical and nursing staff provided support to the Allied forces.

Hole 7 – The Labyrinth: Early in World War I the Germans constructed an anthill-like network of trenches, tunnels and bunkers in the shadow of Vimy Ridge (which would become the scene of a major battle and victory for the Allies in April 1917). The Labyrinth was captured in mid-1915 by French forces in perhaps the most ferocious hand-to-hand battle of the War.

Who Said That?

Answers on page 18

a. 'Dr. Livingstone, I presume?'
b. 'I will go anywhere, provided it be forward.'
c. 'I would like to die on Mars. Just not on impact.'
d. 'I have a dream.'
e. 'Life wasn't meant to be easy.'
f. 'Veni, vidi, vici' or 'I came, I saw, I conquered.'

When South Coast History Society congratulated longtime member **Lenore Coltheart** on being awarded the Medal of the Order of Australia for 'Services to Community History', the definition of community history led to an intriguing conversational trail. A long lunch at Moruya's River Café should have settled the question but instead just opened up much more.

ON 'COMMUNITY HISTORY'

Since her 1950s Canberra schooldays when every holiday was spent at Mossy Point, Lenore had gained an Honours degree in political history, and a PhD for her thesis 'Australia Misère: the Northern Territory in the 19th Century'. Around academic posts at the University of New England and the University of Adelaide, she directed a 7-volume history project for the NSW Public Works Department, before designing and managing the National Archives' innovative Centenary of Federation project, *Documenting a Democracy,* giving every Australian access to the nation's ongoing constitutional framing.

More recently, she completed the complex project behind *The Timber Truss Bridge Book* (see Recollections 18 available at www.bit.ly/Recollections18), putting on record the fast-disappearing traces of engineering heritage and everyday lives and landscapes in NSW.

So, Lenore has an interesting and even breathtaking *curriculum vitae* that prompted some direct questions:

You've been quoted as saying community history has been 'under-regarded'. Why do you say that?

Once upon a time, the credentials in applying for a job in any History Department in any University in Australia included, as well as your own qualifications and achievements, naming all the giant historians upon whose shoulders you had climbed. This certified your membership of a practice, your recognition of its elite and acceptance of the hierarchy, with academic history the pinnacle. Any interest in those lower reaches of local history or worse – family history! – must be discarded, or at least completely concealed.

My training and interest in political history was perfectly acceptable academically and I just kept my fascination with everyday lives and landscapes to myself – with some sorties there shared with friends and family. Their patience alone would limit my discourses as we walked along breakwaters, wharves, roads and bridges, or explored tiny cemeteries, remote courthouses, former quarries.

What effect has this had?

There have been waves of challenge, like the French *Annales* historians, then Ferdinand Braudel in the 1960s and in Germany, Alf Lűdtke in the 1970s. They developed a history of daily life as a perspective in historical inquiry that still has its followers, though hard disciplinary divisions have never dissolved.

In Australia this makes the work of historians like Mark McKenna or Anna Clark or Clare Wright especially important. It is still a radical call to consider that every impact on our landscapes and every family story can

potentially illuminate the many dark corners in the grand scene of political history.

The multi-million dollar question: what can or should we be doing to get community history more highly regarded? Whose primary responsibility should this be and what resources are needed? How can we best make use of modern technologies and tools such as social media?

With questions like that, we'll never wrap this up! I want to say the community historian needs the equivalent of a set of forensic torches to illuminate the 'invisible' evidence of connections between the everyday and the overarching, between our ordinary lives and governments and laws and commerce and of course the deep connections of the natural world. I'd love every local government council to appoint a community historian for, say, a three-year term. That would also direct the most cost-effective use of new technologies in the conservation and interpretation of historical materials.

What are the obvious community history topics, to you, that should be researched or written about?

Mark McKenna tells a story about inviting friends from Sydney after his family moved to their place near Eden and the visitors talking about 'down here' – predicating another, more important place 'up there'.

Arguing history '*should begin from the ground up*', Professor McKenna confessed:

'*I once thought that local history was for amateur historians and antiquarians – that only national, transnational or global history was of any consequence. But I have learnt that the personal and the local is the starting point for the type*

of history I strive to write – holistic history – history that is at once personal, local, regional, national and international, history that is not specialised or cordoned off as the property of one group, and history that is always marked by a sensitivity to the particularities of place.' (*The Monthly*, 5 August 2014)

So I'm advocating a 'Here' project, where our place is central, not secondary to somewhere else with more people or shops or schools. Or even doctors.

We might even decide no longer to call ourselves the 'south coast' or 'far south coast' but perhaps the 'Yuin coast'. And we could all start today, writing about our own place here – where we live, or a favourite spot, its lives and its landscape yesterday and today, the wellsprings of tomorrow's community history.

Dr Lenore Coltheart will be one of the presenters at South Coast History Day in 2023, talking about local roads and some of the area's once-numerous timber bridges.

JOIN US AT

South Coast History Day 2023

A complete day focusing on significant events that influenced the history of the NSW South Coast

Discover things you never previously knew about the South Coast's amazing history and how the South Coast's history has helped shaped the Nation's history.

Batemans Bay Soldiers Club
10.00am to 5.00pm Saturday March 25th 2023

Our impressive cohort of presenters include: **Dr Mat Trinca**, Director, National Museum of Australia; **Dr Richard Reid**, a local history expert with a particular interest in the history of the NSW South Coast; **Denis Conor**, Archivist for the Canberra-Goulburn Catholic Archdiocese; **Professor Lynette Russell** from Monash University and **Professor Ann McGrath** from ANU who will be talking about whaling on the South Coast and Indigenous relations; **Dr Leith Davis** who will be speaking about the Batemans Bay timber industry; **Dr Lenore Coltheart** and **Peter Smith** who will be speaking about the challenges of simply getting to the South Coast; **Allen Grimwood**, a heritage advisor with particular knowledge about heritage in the Eurobodalla; … and **others**!

Just $30

($25 for members of South Coast History Society, Clyde River & Batemans Bay Historical Society or Moruya & District Historical Society)

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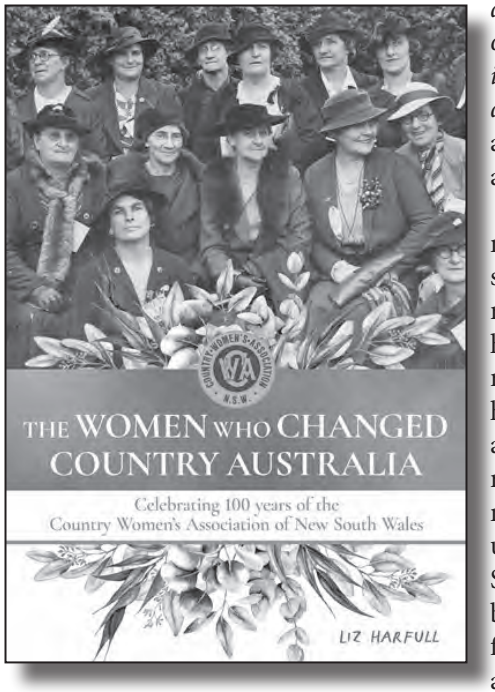
The Women Who Changed Country Australia

By Liz Harfull

Oh, how times have changed for country women.

Today, if a mother and her children had to travel from Bingara to Sydney (using an example from this book) she would pack the car, strap her children into the back seat, tune into the radio or listen to music, and embark on a 6½ hour, relatively comfortable drive to Sydney (albeit with a few stops along the way).



Not so long ago, her only practical option would have been to travel by train – a 24-hour, hot and overcrowded trip, perhaps entailing changing trains several times en route, having to purchase food during quick stops at stations along the way, and '*travelling in second-class carriages without sleeper berths, forced to sit up all night holding a heavy baby in her arms, and with, as likely as not, another fretful child crowded up against her*'.

It's hardly surprising, therefore, that campaigning for more women– and children–friendly rail travel within country areas became one of the first activities of the newly-formed Country Women's Association. '*Second-class sleeping accommodation, special counters at station refreshment rooms where women and children could be served without struggling in the general rush of other passengers trying to grab food and drink during brief stops, access to sterilized milk for infants, and cheaper fares*' were called-for. Somewhat cheekily, this bold new organization also suggested '*the farther outback a woman goes by rail the less she should pay* (because) *there are places where women ought to be paid to live*!'

'*The Women Who Changed Country Australia*' is a history of the Country Women's Association of New South Wales that is celebrating its centenary this year. And the number and breadth of causes that it has championed in those 100 years and the tasks it has undertaken (such as producing 240,000 camouflage nets for the military during World War II – the appeal for assistance from CWA members being 'good knitters make good netters') are certainly impressive. Many of these are mentioned in this book which, essentially, traces the history of the CWA **organization** in chronological order from its establishment to the present day.

The biographies of Presidents, Secretaries and other major movers-and-shakers within the CWA organizational structure are – as one would expect – included. I found these mildly interesting and somewhat formulaic – each basically also a chronological summary of their lives from birth, to receiving the inevitable OBE, to their death – so I ended up with an overwhelming feeling that 'if you've read about one of these women, you've read about them all.'

But what this '*book that is written soberly, modestly and with a strict purpose of recording the facts*' unfortunately fails to do is to reflect the real essence of the CWA. And this is a great pity because the CWA must have a thousand-and-one, if not a hundred-thousand-and-one, great stories from its 100 years that were (and still are) worth recording.

And some detailed examples of how the CWA '*has made a real difference to the lives of women of all ages and cultural backgrounds, in the spirit of friendship, co-operation and support*' would have been an appropriate and very welcomed addition to the history.

The CWA in NSW is made up of numerous (currently around 370) small, local branches. These are the real heart of the CWA. It would also have been interesting, for example, to read details about more of these – like how the Tooraweenah branch (which appeared to have about 12 members) rose to the task of distributing $1 million in drought relief that it unexpectedly received from Dick Smith after he had indicated he would be visiting the branch with a cheque for $5,000 to pay for a new kitchen… and to then learn exactly what impact his donation to that Tooraweenah CWA had on individual local farmers and businesses.

Some epic debates must also have occurred within local branches, at regional group level and at State Conferences over the past century as the organization strove to improve conditions for women in the country and then influence broader community issues. Details from a number of these (by the inclusion of a lot more detail than '*calling for a ban on poker machines (Tamworth branch, 1962), anti-litter campaigns (Glen-Mannus branch, 1963) and teaching Asian languages in all secondary schools (Crescent Head, 1965)… resolutions designed to reduce 'delinquency' – such as calls to prohibit jukeboxes and pinball arcade games in shops close to dwellings, ban midnight horror movie screenings, provide more police protection at country dances, censor 'vulgar and suggestive' paperback book covers and stop the importation of 'obscene and inferior' literature*'!) would have enlivened the narrative because, regrettably, the interesting different points-of-view on only one issue championed by the CWA (restricting the mining of coal and the extraction of gas in farming areas) are outlined to any extent in this history.

I gained the impression from reading this book that author Liz Harfull admires what the CWA in NSW has achieved, and how it has been of real benefit in many ways to country women, over the past 100 years. So the book will, no doubt, be embraced by many of those who have been associated with the CWA.

But, as an outsider (and certainly not eligible to join the CWA!), I'm not sure that it will do a great deal to enhance the organisation's image (I definitely got the impression

from this book that it is an organization that remains very rule-bound, with a membership that is very conservative and very reluctant to accept change, and [as the author of the book concedes] is '*often perceived as the bastion of conservative older women from the bush, who spend their days making scones*'), or that it will do a great deal to help overcome some of the CWA's greatest challenges (particularly topping-up its now gradually dwindling, rapidly ageing membership). So, at a time when this worthy organization could be capitalizing on the opportunities (including the publication of this book) presented by its 100th anniversary celebrations, one hugely valuable opportunity that was on offer to the CWA has been missed.

'*The Women Who Changed Country Australia*' is a hardcover book and is available for around $37.50.

Review by Peter Lacey

Footnote: One of the interesting things I did learn from this book is that Bega and Tumut were judged to be the equal second most beautiful country towns in NSW (Orange being judged the most beautiful town) in an assessment made by the CWA in 1927.

HISTORY – AS IT IS WRIT

Travel by coastal steamer on the NSW South Coast was risky. Many capsized or ran on to rocks, often with significant loss of life. When they occurred, extensive (and very detailed!) coverage was provided in newspapers throughout the country. A report of the wreck of S.S. Merimbula was reproduced in Recollections 31 (available at www.bit.ly/Recollections31). This is the report of another South Coast shipping loss – this time of the S.S. Bega in 1908.

THE FOUNDERING of the BEGA

--o--

PATHETIC SCENES.

--o--

ALL PASSENGERS SAVED.

--o--

GREAT LOSS OF PROPERTIES.

'In our last issue it was briefly stated that the Illawarra Company's steamer Bega, trading between Eden and Sydney, had foundered on Sunday night near Tanja Point, while on a voyage to Sydney. Particulars now to hand show the vessel left Tathra at 7 p.m. on Sunday night with a large cargo of passengers and freight. The night was dark and misty. The Bega had only been a couple of hours on her journey when the vessel listed to starboard. The passengers were settling themselves for the voyage, when the preparations were brought to a standstill, and the warning rang out that all hands were to prepare for the boats. As the sharp north-easter came the vessel's position grew worse, and the list increased rapidly.

Before the vessel had progressed far, the danger was upon

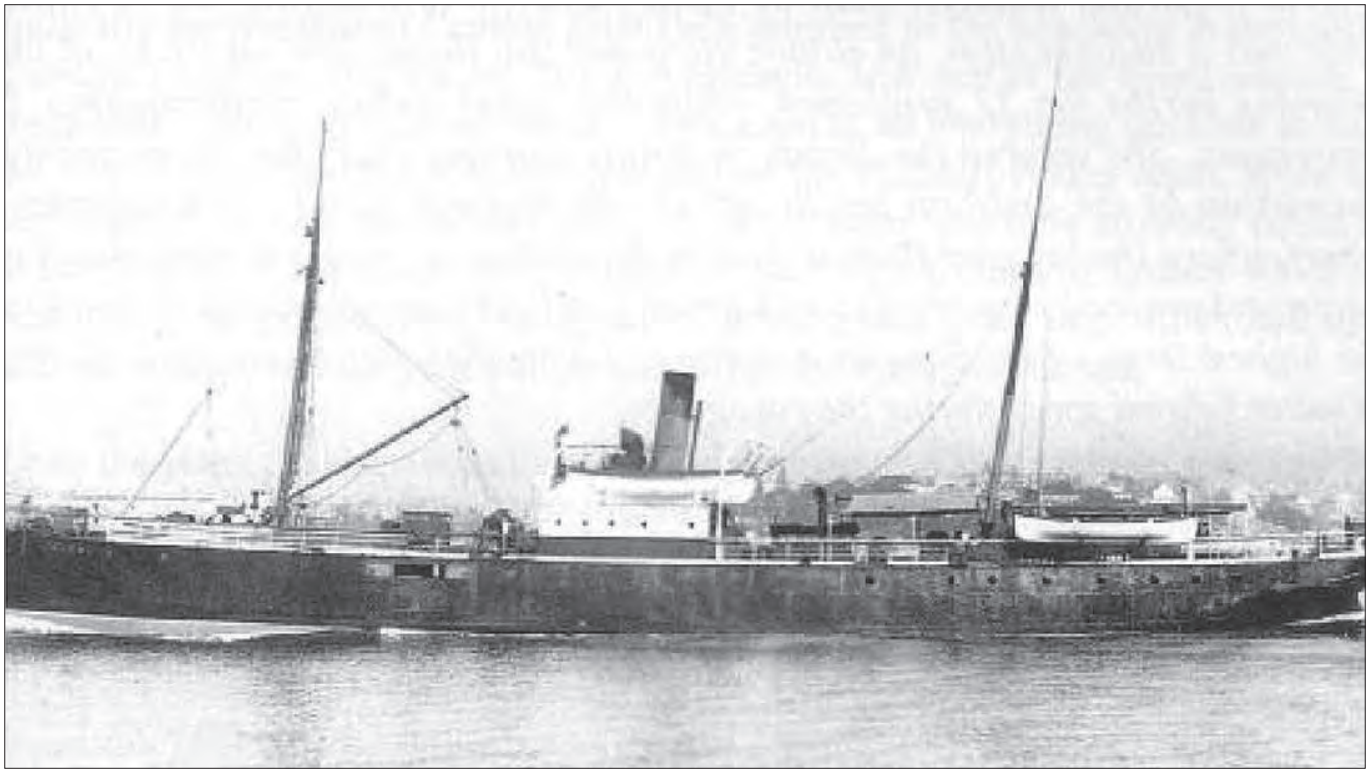
them. The helm was put over, and the vessel put about with the hope that the breeze would hold her up somewhat till the cargo could be trimmed. However, the list became more pronounced every minute.

On the passengers learning of the peril, there were some painful scenes witnessed, but nothing approaching any panic.

The unfortunate man. D. H. Clarke, fainted, but was restored to consciousness by the application of brandy and other stimulants. Efforts to cheer him were futile, and he expired just as the raft was about to leave the vessel.

The mate cut away the boats from the davits. There was hand, and out to the dark night went the frail boats with their precious burdens. The raft had shoved off, and Mr Russell and the captain were still on the vessel. Russell said his prayers and commended himself to God when a shout rang out that there was room for him on the raft. The captain had refused to leave the vessel, but the party insisted, and he was literally dragged from his post which he felt he had to hold to the death.

Cheers rang out for the indomitable and courageous officer, who had seen every soul off in safety, and who, through an exaggerated sense of duty, deemed it necessary to stand on the deck of his vessel till it sank.



no time to lower them. The women and children numbered 24. Three men were placed in the first one, and 17 men and two women were in the second. The boats rapidly drifted apart from the sinking vessel. A third boat could not be freed. The rest of the passengers and crew lashed the rafts together, and embarked.

When the boats left, the vessel was awash, and the cant of the decks made it impossible to stand on them. Captain Bishop had, on the discovery of their danger, with the other officers, fixed life-belts on all passengers.

The last to leave the vessel were Mr W. O. Russell of the Lands Department, and the captain. The raft appeared fully freighted, and these two were alone on the vessel's deck in conversation.

Mr Russell described the scene pathetically. Every moment it appeared as if the vessel could not possibly float another minute. The passengers rushed to their cabins and the saloon, but the water had invaded them, and was an effectual barrier. Portmanteaux and bandboxes were afloat in the interior.

Indeed, the danger was too great to venture far, were it possible, through the waters in the saloon, and nothing of the luggage was saved.

Affectionate and tearful good-byes were spoken on every

New dangers faced the boat party. The first to put off, containing women and children, was found to have oars but no rowlocks, and the plug in the bottom of the boat was missing. Weighted down deeply with its load, water rushed in under the planking. So crowded was the boat that the hole could not be got at to plug it up. Bailing commenced, and the women took their blouses and skirts off and used them as mops to soak up the rapidly rising water.

One lad had a cork helmet, which was requisitioned as a dipper. Others were bailing and mopping with the very clothes that should have warmed their shivering bodies through the long, dreary night. The boat containing the men was more fortunate. Oars there were in plenty, and this boat passed rope to the other, and towed it. At times a long rolling swell made it appear as if the foremost boat would be stove in by the latter.

Dissension arose among some of the members of the boats. Some, who had lost their heads, insisted that they were pulling out to sea in the darkness. Anger and discontent were visible on several faces. So slow was the passage of the leading boat, already heavily laden and towing the other deeply laden and flooded boat behind, that some despaired of ever reaching land.

Rowing continuously without a moment's cessation, 12

hours elapsed before the shore was reached. Nearing the breakers rowlocks were handed to the helpless boat, and the rope was severed. Both boats with their occupants were carried in by the breakers, and tumbled out and emptied on the Cuttagee Beach.

A dramatic scene was enacted. Exhausted and famished, the stricken women, half-clad only, shoeless, and with only the scantiest of garb, formed themselves into a ring on the lonely beach, and sang two hymns. Tears were shed and hearts full of gratitude, gratefulness, and thanks. They raised a hymn of thanksgiving.

On the raft, lashed with cords, was the body of Mr Clark. Clinging to the raft, through the cold, dark hours out on the ocean's rim, drifted the helpless mariners, the living and the dead on the frail structure. Among the passengers were: Messrs Alley, Sharp, Mavis, Woodruff, Brown, Dunn, Ford, Mussared, Levy, Russell, W. G. Cochrane, Targett, J. Brunton, Richnor, Freeman, T. Ramsay, W. Braithling, J.J. Gleeson, Preston, and Felix Deragh; Misses Richardson (2), Mrs Braithling with seven children, Mrs O'Connor, Mrs Taylor and child, Miss Cochrane. Miss Pritchard, Miss Kennerley, Mrs Sparks and child, Misses Lucas (2), Miss Peterson. Miss Prescott, Mrs Prescott, Mrs Concom, and Misses Cassidy (2); and a large crew.

Among the cargo were 2,100 cheeses, 850 boxes of butter, 437 from Bega Co-operative Creamery Company, 176 pigs, the whole of Rev. E. W. Briscombe's furniture – who was recently transferred to William-street Methodist Church (22 packages), Mr H.S. Hawkins' 8 packages, 40 bags of wattle bark, 11 bales of leather, 4 valuable trotting horses. The Bemboka, Candelo and West End Creameries also sent 300 boxes; 2,000 cheese were loaded, 200 pigs and a large number of cattle for the Sydney markets. Mr A. L. Manning of Wandaguburra, Bega, was also sending a valuable consignment of prize stock, consisting of Jersey cattle, for the Sydney Royal Agricultural Show. This gentleman estimates his loss of prize cattle at £500 and he shipped cheese also to the value of £200. Other companies utilised all the available space.

Mr O. Blacker, a Bega stock dealer, took a number of cattle to send by the steamer, but as no space was available for them, he returned with them to Bega. A mob of pigs, belonging to the same dealer, was sold on the wharf, and shipped by another buyer. A parcel of bullion, weighing 561oz., and valued at over £2,000 was shipped on Saturday by the Bega manager of the Commercial Bank. This was covered by insurance.

Most of the wrecked people were too exhausted to comment on their experiences on arrival at Bega. Captain Bishop was too upset to discuss the matter at any length, and, like the rest of the passengers and crew from the raft, went to bed. Most of those who arrived there had only their shirt and trousers on.

Mr W. O. Russell, of the Lands Department, who has been in Bega relieving the local land agent, was a passenger, and arrived clad in his shirt and trousers. He says: "We left Tathra at 7 o'clock, and during the trip a distinct list was noticeable. Afterwards the list was reversed. As time progressed this became, more accentuated, but no danger seemed to be apprehended until the vessel's deck was only a couple of feet above water."

"Without creating any display of anxiety," said Mr Russell, "Captain Bishop sounded a note of warning, and the boats were got ready. After the women and children had been

seated, those who regard the law of self-preservation as tantamount filled up the vacant spaces. When the boats put off, the vessel's deck was only an inch or two out of the water, good-byes were spoken between the passengers. The captain's command of the passengers was simply beyond all praise. Each boatload left the vessel with a coolness as if nothing in the world could prevent them from reaching the shore. Only six were passengers, and the remaining portions of the crew, with the captain, were to be cared for. The captain would not leave his vessel, and those on the raft had to insist on his accompanying them. The raft stood by expecting to see the ship sink sideways, but the vessel started to fill at the bow portholes, and for half an hour the spectacular effect was vivid. The electric lights went out one by one as the vessel went below the waves, and as a grand finale the Bega dipped bow first, and like a bird disappeared into the depths at 9.30 p.m."

GALLANT MEN

Mr Russell had put on his life belt, he states, said his prayers to Almighty God and was prepared for the worst when the party on the raft called that they had room for him. He immediately dived from the sinking-vessel into the sea, and clambered to the already well-loaded raft. He estimates that they paddled 13 miles before touching the Wallagoot. Land was not visible, and their course was set as best they could by the big stars.

Jack Brunton. who was another passenger on the raft, was asked by a more timorous fellow passenger for a life belt, as he had not one. Brunton divested himself of his belt and gave it to him. These are the deeds that proclaim the native worth of some men. Each of these actions was done without limelight effects, and are worthy of the highest admiration that is in human nature to feel.

During the afternoon a saddened group was to be seen standing outside the Bega court-house, gazing at a waggonette. On a bale of straw, and covered with bags, was the stiff stark frame of Mr H. D. Clarke, who had not been cast adrift even in death by his fellows-in-trouble. Mr Clarke has been in feeble health of late, and received a great shock when he knew that the vessel was doomed. He kept the Royal Hotel at Candelo for many years, and was highly esteemed throughout the district. Of recent years he led a retired life on his farm at Clarkson's Crossing.

Whilst Harry Bailey was helping to remove one of the hatches, the boat gave a heavy list and he was swept overboard but was eventually rescued. His head and arm were severely injured.

Most of the passengers lost their entire belongings. There was no room in the boasts for the luggage and they saved only the few clothes they stood up in. Rev. E W. Briscombe's loss is a heavy one. All that gentleman's furniture, library, and effects – many of them coming as gifts from congregations to whom he had ministered, and which represent much.

Mrs W. Braitling of Bega, with 7 children, had an anxious time in one of the boats. They also lost all their possessions, having just sold their furniture preparatory to removing to Glebe. Many passengers lost considerable money, which was packed in their portmanteaux and trunks.

One of the passengers, by a boat which reached Cuttagee, says that their boat was without rowlocks, and had to be towed by the other boat. They were 12 hours reaching land. Women in these boats were compelled to bale out the water with their shoes and hats. Admiration and sympathy is expressed on all sides by the passengers and public for Captain Bishop, who has been in command of the vessel on the South Coast for many years past, he having had charge of the Bega for 16 years. During the whole of that time he had never had a mishap. The vessel had been occupied on the traffic to southern ports for 23 years.' R

—*The Singleton Argus*, Thursday 9th April 1908.

HISTORY HORNETS

Thank you to all who provided feedback to us about our last issue of *'Recollections'* (www.bit.ly/Recollections35) and, in particular, for your comments on our History Hornets column.

A significant number of readers contacted us (many more than had contacted us in total over the past three years) – which, pleasingly, indicates to us that 'Recollections' is still being widely read.

Your responses were interesting – and, unsurprisingly, reflected the diverse range of views that our readers hold.

Many indicated they agreed with Lincoln Brown's views and congratulated us for including the piece and for introducing the 'History Hornets' column.

Those who expressed an opposing view suggested that this opinion piece failed to recognize that a Welcome to Country is an inclusive and uniting ritual, and that republishing this article in *'Recollections'* risked offending some people and promoting divisiveness.

It was suggested that it would be appropriate for us to include an Indigenous view on Welcomes to Country (which we have been able to do, below, this piece written by Cally Jetta, a Lecturer in Indigenous Studies at the College for First Nations at the University of Southern Queensland, which first appeared in *'The Conversation'* on August 23, 2022). We were also urged to 'include some left-wing views on different [but unspecified] topics' in future History Hornets columns in *'Recollections'*.

What is an Acknowledgement of Country and how is it different to a Welcome to Country?

Pauline Hanson's recent dramatic outburst and walkout from parliament as an Acknowledgement of Country was delivered has been condemned as racist and ignorant.

Social media sites reporting this incident have attracted a barrage of negative comments perpetuating misconceptions around Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country. Many clearly do not understand what they are and see them as "special treatment". Unfortunately, Hanson has been a source of this line of thinking around so-called "special treatment", as seen in her 1996 maiden speech to parliament.

Such comments reveal an Australian society still burdened with an unfounded resentment and fear of Aboriginal rights and connection to Country.

So, what is an Acknowledgement of Country? How is it different to a Welcome to Country?

What is an Acknowledgement of Country?

An Acknowledgement of Country is often made at the start of an event to pay respect to First Nations peoples as the Traditional Owners and ongoing custodians of the land.

An Acknowledgement often highlights the unique position of First Nations people in the context of culture and history, and their intimate relationship with the land.

An Acknowledgement does not exclude anyone. Anyone can deliver one. It costs nothing to give or listen to. You lose nothing from a ten second acknowledgement of the Country, language, and people that existed in a place for tens of thousands of years.

An Acknowledgement does not impact on the rights and status of other Australian people.

What is a Welcome to Country?

Acknowledgement of Country is different to a Welcome to Country. Crucially, only Traditional Owners can deliver a Welcome to Country.

Traditionally, First Nations people travelling to different Country had to seek permission to enter from the Traditional Owners. If granted, permission was given by way of a Welcome to Country.

Today, inviting an Elder to perform a Welcome is a way to recognise unceded Aboriginal sovereignty of ancestral lands. It's also a way to honour ancient and continuing First Nations customs.

Wurundjeri Elder Joy Murphy Wandin has described Welcome to Country as practised by her people:

> '*When there was a request to visit Country, the Werrigerri (a young man selected by the Elders of the community) would go on behalf of the community under the voice of the Elder, the Nurungeeta. There would be this negotiation and that could take a long time, it could take months. So that is the background of Welcome to Country. It is not a new thing. It is not because our land was dispossessed; it has nothing to do with that. It is all about respect for our culture and who we are. It is paying respect, especially to our ancestors.*'

Acknowledgements and Welcomes to Country weren't invented to divide First Nations and non-Indigenous people.

Although both have been widely revived in recent years, they are traditional protocols. When Aboriginal peoples travel from their own home Country to that of another Aboriginal group, they too acknowledge the traditional custodians.

Similarly, it's standard practice for a hosting First Nations group to perform a welcome to all visitors – Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike – as a way of being inclusive and welcoming.

In doing this, Aboriginal people are sharing their culture and social protocols and offering the opportunity to feel a deeper connection to the lands you walk upon and visit.

By learning traditional place names, you unlock important information about the character or features of that place.

Restoring and maintaining connection to Country

Many Aboriginal people have been removed from Country, or can no longer access it through development, private ownership, farming and mining.

The Stolen Generations and mission era systematically worked to eradicate Aboriginal languages and cultural traditions. For many First Nations peoples, Acknowledgement of Country can help to restore some of

this severed connection to Country and identity.

As Professor Mick Dodson explains:

'*For us, Country is a word for all the values, places, resources, stories, and cultural obligations associated with that area and its features. It describes the entirety of our ancestral domains. While they may all no longer necessarily be the titleholders to land, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians are still connected to the Country of their ancestors and most consider themselves the custodians or caretakers of their land.*'

For some Aboriginal people, Acknowledgement of Country is a constant reminder of the responsibilities of custodians to advocate for the protection of a fragile environment and its cultural heritage.

It reminds us all Aboriginal languages were the first languages spoken in this country. Many are are still spoken. Acknowledgement of Country brings us together and recognises the shared cultural history and landscape we have all inherited.

Joy Murphy Wandin, describes it as:

'*A very important way of giving Aboriginal people back their place in society, and an opportunity for us to say, "We are real, we are here, and today we welcome you to our land". It's paying respect, in a formal sense, and following the traditional custom in a symbolic way.*'

Understanding what Acknowledgement of Country and Welcome to Country are, and their history and origins can help us recognise the importance and power of continuing these practices.

It's not about being divisive. It's about continuing ancient connections to Country, history, and ancestors. It's a reminder of the responsibility of custodians to the land and its creatures; to protect and look after them.

It's about honouring and being respectful towards a custom and way of thought much older than the name or concept of "Australia" as a nation state, or any sitting of parliament.

They Said That

see questions page 8

a. **Henry Morton Stanley**, a Welsh-American journalist, uttered these famous words on 10th November 1871 on the shores of Lake Tanganyika, following a 700-mile expedition in a search for David Livingstone who was attempting to pinpoint the source of the River Nile. Livingstone is reputed to have answered: 'Yes, and I feel thankful I am here to welcome you.'

b. **Dr. David Livingstone** (yes, the same Dr Livingstone that Stanley had 'found') is reputed to have dictated these words on his deathbed in a letter to the Royal Geographical Society and various missionary societies who had been concerned about his health and were begging him to return to England. It has become one of those 'quotable quotes' now frequently employed by motivational speakers.

c. **Elon Musk**, founder of PayPal and CEO of SpaceX, in March 2013 when suggesting "space travel is the best thing we can do to extend the life of humanity."

d. **Dr. Martin Luther King Jr**, addressing a crowd of more than 200,000 from the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington DC on August 28th, 1963. That day, he actually had a number of dreams: 'I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal' … 'I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood' … 'I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice' … 'I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today.' Five years later Dr. Martin Luther King was assassinated.

e. **Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser** made this observation during an Alfred Deakin lecture on 20th July 1971, not as a gloomy explanation of life's difficulties, but to suggest a reason he was prepared, as Prime Minister, to address difficult tasks. It became a phrase that haunted him for the rest of his political life. It is actually a paraphrase from George Bernard Shaw's play 'Back to Methuselah': "Life is not meant to be easy, my child; but take courage: it can be delightful." President John Fitzgerald Kennedy had preempted Fraser's thoughts eight years earlier when he observed in a speech to the Free University Berlin: 'Life is never easy. There is work to be done and obligations to be met – obligations to truth, to justice, and to liberty.'

f. After a fast and easy victory in 47BC at the Battle of Zela, in what is now Turkey, **Julius Caesar** wrote to the Roman Senate to inform them of his success, letting them know that he came, he saw, he conquered. The words 'veni, vidi, vici' are also thought to have featured in Caesar's triumphal art that was later paraded around Rome, ensuring all the people of Rome knew about his swift, conclusive victory. The expression has been adapted numerous times with, for example, the then US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton referring to the death of Libya's Colonel Gaddafi with a terse: 'we came, we saw, he died'.

and finally...

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