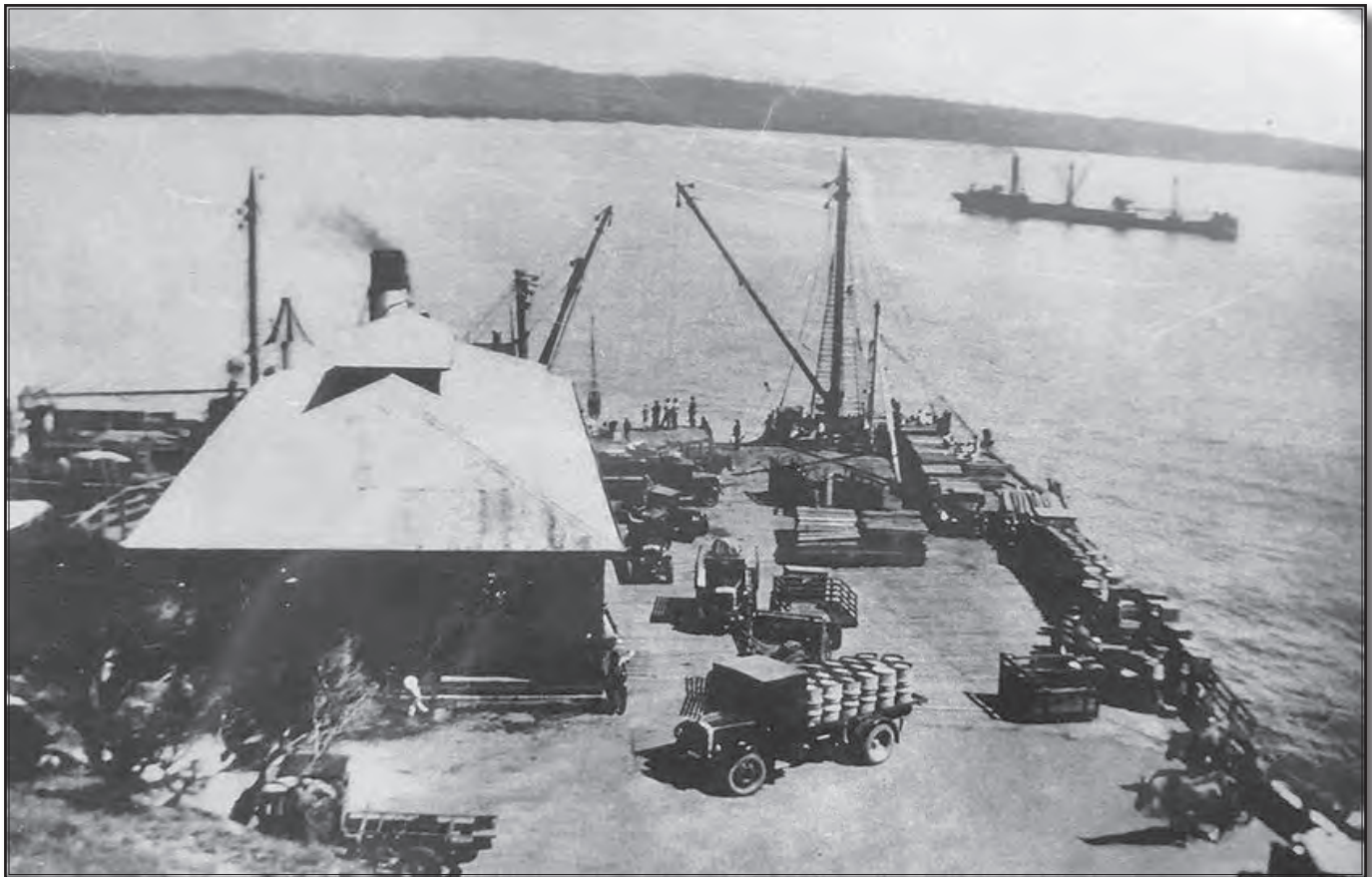


South Coast History Society Inc.

RecollectionS

Issue 38

The very best of our fascinating local history



Tathra: A Brief History

Tathra has had two overlapping eras in its modern history – first, providing a sea port to nearby Bega, and then emerging to become a popular holiday and tourist destination.

The first Europeans known to have intruded on the local Djirringanj lands were the survivors from the *Sydney Cove* that had been wrecked on Preservation Island in Bass Strait in 1797. They were walking towards Sydney, and near Tathra managed to catch some ‘skate’ and a shark ‘about 4 feet long’ – no doubt welcome supplements to the food they were then increasingly dependent upon receiving from the Indigenous groups they encountered.

Settlers started arriving in the Bega Valley area in the late 1830s/early 1840s attracted by the fertile land but, if an 1851 map of the Bega district that records the Tathra area as unmapped and unexplored is any indication, there was

initially little interest in the Tathra area.

This changed after Daniel Gowing, generally acknowledged as ‘The Father of Tathra’, purchased 500 acres of land on the Jellat Jellat flats (between what are now the townships of Bega and Tathra) in 1854, started having success as a farmer, and began looking at how to best transport his produce to markets in Sydney.

Transport overland was an impossibility in those days; the only viable option was by sea, which necessitated identifying a suitable anchorage (for Gowing, somewhere closer than the established alternative, Merimbula) and also constructing a road to reach that anchorage. Gowing, in his usual energetic style, tackled both tasks.

In 1857 the first road was cut from Bega to Tathra. This provided access to two anchorages, one at Kangarutha,

Continued on page 2

**Fantastic
Reads**

Tathra: A Brief History– page 1
2023: Highlighting History– page 2
Fascinating Bega– page 3
F.S. Goetz– page 6
South Coast History Day– page 7

‘The Window in the Rock’– page 8
10 Years Studying One Wikipedia Article– page 10
Bush Fires Near Bega– page 14
The Brown Mountain– page 19

2023: Highlighting History (our unrelenting pursuit!)

Substantial ongoing support from our local community (and thank you very much if you are one of those who is actively supporting us) is enabling us to offer a diversified program of appealing, history-based activities again this year. Highlights from the next few months include:

- ✓ The release of a major history of Bega township – the first in 80 years, and a joint initiative of Bega Valley Historical Society and South Coast History Society – on 4th February. See page 3 for details. Purchase a copy before 28th February to take advantage of a 25% Introductory Discount. Copies will be available from our display at Bega Show on 17th to 19th February.
- ✓ To support the release of 'Fascinating Bega', our popular 1½ hour bus tours of Bega town are returning – departing at 9.30am on Wednesday 22nd February and 9.30am on Saturday 25th

February. BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL (phone 0448 160 852). The cost (including morning tea at the end of the tour) is just \$7.50.

- ✓ Our series of epic history-based movies at The Picture Show Man in Merimbula continues, starting Monday 6th February at 10am with the screening of 'Casino'. This will be followed by 'First Man' on Monday 6th March at 10am, and 'Spartacus' on Monday 3rd April at 10am. Admission is FREE, there is no need to book – just turn up a few minutes before 10am.
- ✓ Then on Saturday March 25th South Coast History Day 2023 is being held at Batemans Bay Soldiers Club – an engaging full-day seminar focusing on South Coast, and especially the Batemans Bay-Moruya area's, history. See details on page 7. ADVANCE BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL.

Continued from page 1

south of Tathra, and the other at Kianinny Bay, between Kangarutha and Tathra. In 1859 Daniel Gowing had a small storehouse built at Kianinny and took 300 bushels of produce there to be shipped to Sydney on a small coastal schooner named the 'Gipsy'.

Both these anchorages, however, were somewhat less than suitable because no direct docking was possible.

So, in 1860, Gowing and the Illawarra and South Coast Steam Navigation Company (by then providing a regular service from Sydney to the South Coast) began the construction of a north-facing sea wharf and store on the headland at Tathra. It was completed in 1862. (It was extended 1873, in 1879, in 1891, in 1901 and in 1913. A two-storey shed was built on the wharf in 1908–10 and a single-storey shed [since demolished] was added in 1918. The wharf was last used by cargo ships in 1956. For further details see www.bit.ly/begahh51)

Meanwhile, in 1861, the township of Tathra was surveyed and Bega residents organized the first picnic at Tathra. 'A large party travelled on horseback. Some 50 also came in

Charles McGregor's bullock wagon. It was slow transport, and in the afternoon a rain storm developed. The party was caught in it and so stayed at Tathra for the night'.

The wharf, ultimately, led to the establishment of Tathra township – although, in 1866, the NSW Gazette recorded that there were no buildings in town except for the Receiving Store at the wharf. Ten years later, Tathra had progressed



Tathra Wharf showing extent of deterioration c. 1970. The 1918 single-story shed was later demolished.



Don't Miss a Single Issue of 'Recollections'
They're FREE!

Email 'Send Recollections' to southcoasthistory@yahoo.com and we'll email you future issues as they become available.

Past issues are at bit.ly/RecollectionsX where X is the issue number (1 to 37, except issue 3 which is 3- and issue 10 which is 10-)



Available February 4th

The first major history of Bega township in 80 years!

Fascinating Bega

THE ANATOMY OF A TOWN, 1851 - 2023



Bega Valley Historical Society
South Coast History Society

86 Pages
A4 size

Includes
55 historic
photographs

Introductory SPECIAL: Normally \$20...just \$15 until February 28

Available from Bega Pioneers' Museum, Bega Newsagency, The Publican's Wife, Bega Cheese Heritage Centre, Quaama General Store, Well Thumbed Books in Cobargo also at Bega Show and South Coast History Day

OR order direct (before February 15th) for collection in Eden, Merimbula, Narooma or Batemans Bay – simply call 0448 160 852

(OR add \$6 if you would like a copy posted to you)

little and was then being described as a 'one house township'.

The replacement, in the 1880s, of sailing ships by steamers that provided a faster, regular and reasonably reliable service between Sydney and the South Coast led to growth in the town. Two hotels were built – the first was the Brighton Hotel (sited above the present hall) in the late 1870s, the other was the Tathra Hotel which was demolished 1888 and was replaced by the Ocean View Hotel (which from 1905 again became the Tathra Hotel). The Brighton Hotel burnt down in mysterious circumstances in 1880 or 1881 and its licensee was charged with arson, but was later acquitted.

By 1885 three houses had been built in the town and the *Bega Gazette* was predicting (correctly!) that '*Tathra is destined to become not only a great shipping port, but noted marine resort for holiday makers. Sure am I that your eyes will in a few years see the 'iron horse' bring the Sydney excursionist to our delightful watering place. The precipitous sides of Tathra's headland will be dotted over with fine substantial houses.*'

The steep road down to the wharf was completed and macadamized in 1890, and in 1895 a road was constructed to the mouth of the Bega River and a small hand-operated punt, capable of carrying a horse and a dray, was installed to provide access to the coastal areas to the north. The story goes that one punt operator, Jim Preo, would regularly ask his passengers to help turn the wheel 'while I fill my pipe' – a task that would take until the punt arrived at the other side of the river! The punt crossing was replaced by a bridge in 1959.

In the early 1880s there was a proposal to build a tramway linking Tathra to Bega, but the advent of the motor car effectively killed the idea. The first motor vehicle excursion from Bega to Tathra was organized in 1911 and, the following year, a motor car service was introduced that connected Bega to the shipping service at Tathra.

That shipping service, for almost a century, shaped the town significantly. The area that is now the headland park was once a coal dump and a storage area for timber and railway sleepers that were despatched from Tathra.

A Post Office was opened in Tathra in 1880. A telegraph line to Bega was opened in 1897.

With the emergence of surf-bathing in the early 20th

century (following the lifting of prohibitions on sea bathing during daylight hours) and a rise in popularity of recreational fishing, Tathra became Bega's playground. In 1909 a Tathra Surf Club was formed, one of the earliest in the state.

And the first week-end cottages were erected, initially by keen fishermen and by the-then Manager of the Kameruka Estate, Arthur Champneys (in later years, having a holiday house at Tathra became something of a status symbol among Bega's well-to-do; and, later again, Snowy Mountains Authority staff at Cooma bought seaside houses in Tathra instead of buying in Cooma where heavily subsidized rental housing was available to them). The opening of a new Methodist Church in 1909, the Public School in 1911, and the Tathra Hall in 1913 were indications of the growth and consolidation of the town.

An increase in ownership of motor cars and the improvement in roads led to an upturn in the popularity of holiday camping, with Tathra becoming a popular camping destination. The Tathra Beach Reserve and Camping Grounds (at the foot of the hill and along the beach side of the road towards Mogareeka) were gazetted in December 1934 and responsibility for them was vested in a committee of locals. Initially a brick fireplace and kitchen area was built. Toilets were later added. A well was dug and a pump was installed to provide water to campers. And an enterprising Mrs Caddey (the wife of one of the Trustees) started selling hot water so that campers and day visitors could enjoy cups of hot tea.

At Christmas and Easter, Tathra would (and still does) regularly attract thousands of campers.

Tathra has had its fair share of natural disasters. In 1940 a major bushfire destroyed the supermarket and petrol station along with two houses near where the current Tathra Friendly Grocer is located (*'After surveying the ruins the next day, things moved quickly to get the Henderson family back to business. Within days it was "Business As Usual", with a huge canvas sign saying just that. This was made possible through the generosity of the late Paul D'Arcy and Mrs D'Arcy (and a band of willing helpers) who at the time owned a small holiday cottage on the sand dunes on Tathra Beach; this only being permitted if the structure was mounted on*



Camping at Tathra

wheels, and could be moved. This small building was quickly moved up the hill to a block adjacent to the store ruins, the petrol pumps restored over the unharmed petrol storage tanks and as the sign said, "Business as Usual" and this building was used as a store until the new store and dwelling was built by A.C. Thatcher and Co.'; in 1971 a flood washed the central spans of the Handcock Bridge north of Tathra into the ocean (it was never found, and it took seven years to rebuild the

bridge); and in March 2018 a bushfire swept through the town destroying 65 homes and 70 caravans and cabins (the town is gradually recovering).

After the coastal steamers stopped calling regularly at Tathra in 1954, the wharf fell into disrepair. In 1973 it was in such a poor state that it was proposed to demolish



The punt at Mogareeka in 1957



The Mogareeka Punt in 1898

it. The move, however, was strongly opposed by the local community and, with the support of the National Trust, an appeal was launched for it to be restored. That work was completed in 1988.

Today, the wharf (only about 80% the size it was in its heyday) is Tathra's most recognizable feature – and, as the last remaining open sea timber wharf complex on the eastern coast of Australia, is an ongoing reminder of how important coastal shipping once was to New South Wales. **R**

Sources: *The History of Tathra* by W.A. Bayley in *Bega District News* 6.8.1942; *Some Glimpses of Tathra's Past* and *Further Glimpses of Tathra's Past* by Commander P.C. Card (Tathra Historical Society); *Tathra Memorial Garden & Surrounds: A Brief History* (Tathra Lions Club); *Roads to Water* by Norm Evans.

osgood civil resource engineering

OCRE

water WASTEWATER STORMWATER
DEVELOPMENT PLANNING design
MANAGEMENT CONTRACT ADMINISTRATION

po box 181 p 02 6494 0239
bermagui nsw 2546 m 0408 361 612

For local history lovers

Available Narooma Newsagency, Visitors' Centre, ABC Cheese Factory, Bodalla Bakery, bookshops and galleries from Bega to Moruya, or online from author.

www.paceymedia.com.au

the beagle

www.beagleweekly.com.au

free & independent
online news covering
the Eurobodalla

LUMEN CHRISTI CATHOLIC COLLEGE

"Be The Light Of Christ"

Part of local history since 2001
388 Pambula Beach Road, Pambula Beach

Celebrating 20 Years!

Lumen Christi Catholic College caters for Kindergarten to Year 12 students across the entire Bega Valley!

For further information please contact our Enrolment Officer on (02) 6495 8888 or email lcc@cg.catholic.edu.au

SOUTH COAST PERSONAGE

F.S. (Frederick Simon) Goetz (1880-1968)

F.S. Goetz (pronounced 'Gates') was once a well-known businessman in Bega – his name prominently displayed above several shopfronts in different locations around town.

Here's how Hedley Lawry Yelland, who compiled a short history of the Goetz family, described his uncle who - when Hedley was growing up - lived with the Yelland family in Parker Street, Bega (a street in which the well-to-do had their homes):

'Uncle Fred was the dandy of the family and knew it. He dressed smartly and drove a handsome horse and buggy outfit. With flowered waistcoat and crisp Panama hat, he was irresistible to the girls. The only big quarrel I ever experienced in the Bega home was when he announced his engagement to the prettiest girl in the town, who was considered 'too fast'. Normally grandma had her way but, this time her wishes were disobeyed and uncle married the girl, giving me an aunt Edna who captured my boyish heart.

With no education beyond primary school, uncle Fred mastered the intricacies of commerce and became a successful business-man, opening a shop in Bega and amassing considerable wealth. He was also the agent for the Illawarra and South Coast Steam Navigation Company whose ships, plying between Sydney and the port of Tathra, served the transport needs of Bega for many years. I was greatly attached to this man because I was always with him when he went on pleasure outings, particularly fishing. He also gave me one of the chief delights of my life when he introduced me to his excellent tool kit. Like all farm-trained men, he was a good

amateur carpenter and taught me woodworking skills that have helped renovate and decorate the fourteen homes that Eileen and I made together.

Uncle Fred took it for granted that, with grandfather dead, he was the man of the house and, until he married and set up home for himself, rather lorded it in Parker Street. The superior status of men characteristic of the time ensured that he enjoyed certain privileges. I remember how he occupied the best place by the fireside in winter and stretched out his long legs in masculine assurance. He was given steak when the rest of us ate the boiled meat left over from the soup. I did not mind his having butter when I had dripping, because I liked dripping on my bread (with pepper and salt), but I had a slight boyish resentment at the fact that he used a perfumed soap (Starlight was the brand) when the rest of us laboured to produce a lather with the home-made bar. But I loved and admired the man who gave me the only fathering I ever had.'

Fred Goetz's grandparents, Simon and Dorothea, and their family arrived in Eden with a number of other German immigrants on the 'Caesar' in March 1855. 'It then took the bullocks no less than 13 days to bring us [the family] from Eden to Bombala', where Simon Goetz worked as a shepherd, then as a stonemason, then as a gold prospector (his miners licence spelling 'Goetz' as 'Getts'), then as a farmer. His son (Fred's father) married Mary Spindler (the Spindlers are a well-known Bega family), who he had met as a child on the 'Caesar', before moving to Bega where the couple took up farming and became parents to a large family. Fred was the fifth child and the second son in their

Study Close to Home

UOW REGIONAL CAMPUSES

ON YOUR DOORSTEP

Gain access to all of the services and advantages for which the University of Wollongong is renowned, without leaving the South Coast. Our local connections will give you opportunities right here in Bega and Batemans Bay.

COURSES ON OFFER

- Bachelor degrees in Arts (History; English Literatures; Indigenous Studies; Sociology; Community, Culture & Environment)
- Bachelor of Business & Bachelor of Commerce
- Bachelor of Nursing
- Master of Teaching (Primary and Secondary)
- University Access Program

Find out more

bbay.uow.edu.au/study

bega.uow.edu.au/study



UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA



JOIN US AT

**BOOK
NOW!**

*Available
seats are
filling rapidly*

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 Trink**, 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 Con**, 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)**

Includes morning and afternoon teas

(Lunch for attendees is available in the Club's Vue180 restaurant from under \$10)

ADVANCE BOOKINGS ESSENTIAL. Limited places are available

(No tickets will be sold at the door on the day)

BOOK TODAY

Phone 0448 160 852 and we'll charge your Visa or MasterCard

OR Direct deposit to South Coast History Society's account BSB 633 000 Account 158877472 AND email us (southcoasthistory@yahoo.com) that it is YOU who has done so

OR Send your cheque to South Coast History Society, 90 Whitby Wilson Road, Quaama NSW 2550

Proudly presented by South Coast History Society and supported by Clyde River & Batemans Bay Historical Society and Moruya & District Historical Society

family of seven children.

In 1903 Fred purchased a single-storey, weatherboard produce store at 210 Carp Street, Bega (the location now occupied by Café Evolve), from a Mr Edward Watson. In 1912 the well-known Bega builders Thatcher and Underhill erected 'probably the most advanced and attractive commercial building in Carp Street' for Fred Goetz – his produce store occupying the right hand side of the building and the 'Sydney Oyster Saloon' occupying the left hand side.

A 1915 tourist brochure provides an insight into Fred Goetz's business:

'Mr F. S. GOETZ, who has been established as a produce merchant and grocer at Carp Street, Bega, during the past 12 years, holds large stocks of tourists' requisites, such as bags and billy-cans and camp delicacies; and sportsmen may obtain from him all they require in fishing tackle, cartridges, etc. Mr Goetz is the agent for the Illawarra and South Coast S.N. Co., Ltd., and is assiduous in attending to his duties and

imparting information to visitors and tourists.'

Fred Goetz was also an active community member. At various times he was Secretary to the Bega District Tourist Association, St John's Church Parish Council, the Trustees of the Church of England Portion of Bega Cemetery, and was a member of the Bega Dramatic and Minstrel Company (in 1906 performing, for example, a locally-written (and, today, viewed as racially offensive) 'The Coons Serenade').

World War I, however, was to have a devastating impact on Goetz's business. Strong anti-German sentiment among the local population caused the business to struggle and eventually, in 1922, he was forced to sell his business to the Bega Co-operative Society. When the Co-op opened a new store on the nearby corner of Auckland Street, Fred Goetz became its Manager. He remained the Co-Op's Manager for 19 years.


After retiring as Manager of the Co-Operative Store, F S Goetz set up an agency of the Illawarra & South Coast



This photograph of Goetz's Carp Street store was probably taken shortly after it was erected for Mr F S Goetz in 1912 (The building is still a prominent feature of the Carp Street streetscape).

Steamship Navigation Company (until it ceased operating in 1954) across the road in what is now Kristy McBain's office. He remained in business here, as an agent for an insurance company and as an agent for Arthur Love who had a daily mail contract between Bega and Towamba, until retiring around 1958–59.

Sources: *The Goetz Story* by Hedley Lawry Yelland; Notes on 210 Carp Street, Bega, compiled by Kevin Tetley.

Can You Help? Surprisingly, for a man who was so well-known to the local community, Bega Pioneers' Museum does not have a photograph of F.S. Goetz. If you have one and would be prepared for the Museum to take a copy, they would be pleased to hear from you (telephone 6492 0470). 

THE WINDOW IN THE ROCK.

They took a car, a Balmain car*,
Some tourists from the City,
And when they reach'd Narooma lake
They vowed that it was pretty.

They lunched beside the waters bright
On oysters, fish, and hock,
And then they all went forth to see
The Window in the Rock.

They saw how lovely Nature touch'd
The scene with fairy wand,
And climbed the ridge and looked with joy
On all the blue beyond.

The girls, too, scrambled up the side,
and tore their pretty frock,

And said, "Oh, my, we'd like to buy
The Window in the Rock!"

The rippling tide came flowing in
Upon the golden sand,
So calm, so peaceful was the scene,
So noble, pure, and grand.

They left it as the sun went down,
That true unerring clock,
But far away they'll learn to love
The Window in the Rock,

For there are rocks in human lives
Which seem to have no door,
But one high Window overhead
Which stands for Evermore.

Where we can see the blue beyond
To comfort, cheer, or mock, —
Why, everybody talks about
That Window in the Rock.
—The Cobargo Chronicle 16.1.1914

* a tourist vehicle from Balmain Bros. (Bega) Limited

'The Window in the Rock' or 'The Hole in the Rock' is today promoted as 'Australia Rock'.



The Hole in the Rock.



- Superannuation
- Retirement Planning
- Full Portfolio Management
(with no entry fees)
- Estate Planning
- Dedicated Fixed Interest
and Equities Research
and Administration

Call 6495 2869

www.morgans.com.au/merimbula
Level 2, 36 Market Street Merimbula

Morgans Financial Limited
ABN 49010669726 AFSL 235410



Aussie Precast Products

Manufacturers and suppliers of:

- Septic Tanks
- Collection Tanks
- Cattle Grids
 - Stock Troughs
 - Water Tanks
- Feed Lot Troughs
- Concrete Pipes,
Pits & Headwalls
- BioSeptic Aerated
Wastewater Systems

Phone: 0427 111 082
11227 Princes Highway
Cobargo NSW 2550

Email: info@aussieprecast.com.au
Web: www.aussieprecast.com.au



Shaping history – why I spent ten years studying one Wikipedia article

by Heather Ford, Associate Professor, University of Technology Sydney

In mid-July 2008, I arrived in hot and sticky Alexandria. I had travelled to Egypt to attend Wikimania. As the name suggests, Wikimania is an event for those who share an all-consuming passion for the wiki. But not just any wiki ... the most important wiki of all: Wikipedia – the online encyclopedia.

This annual conference for Wikipedians (Wikipedia's volunteer editors) is a chance to celebrate the project, discuss important issues, and geek out on wiki lore.

I was one of 650 attendees from 45 countries that year. But the conference (held in the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, an attempt to revive the Great Library of Alexandria) had been mired in controversy. There were calls to boycott the event because of Egypt's censorship and imprisonment of bloggers. In his opening speech, Wikipedia co-founder Jimmy Wales highlighted the case of Abdel Kareem Nabil, a former university student sentenced to four years in prison on charges of insulting Islam and Egypt's then President Hosni Mubarak, and inciting sectarian strife.

Although some governments tried to impede free speech, Wales said, this was pointless in the age of the internet, where people could share ideas on platforms like Wikipedia.

"Kareem Amer has become a cause around the world," he said, showing Nabil's English Wikipedia page on the screen. "Not the best strategy for keeping his ideas out of the public eye."

Two and a half years on, in late January 2011, Egyptians took to the streets to demand the end of authoritarian rule. Less than two weeks after protests erupted, Egypt's autocrat president Mubarak resigned. Some were calling this "the Facebook revolution," others a "Twitter revolution".

Sadly, it was to be short-lived. In 2013 Egyptian army chief General Abdel Fattah al-Sisi took over in a coup. He still rules today and has imprisoned an estimated 60,000 political prisoners, including those advocating democracy and free speech.

But at the end of January 2011, as Mubarak still clung to power, the Israeli Wikipediaian Dror Kamir wrote a startling message to a mailing list about Wikipedia's role in the Egyptian protests.

Kamir pointed out that the first draft of the article about the Egyptian revolution on English Wikipedia had been published at 3:26pm local time, just hours after the first protests began. An Egyptian democracy activist and Wikipediaian with the username *The Egyptian Liberal* had published this article, apparently to influence public opinion. "It almost seems as if the article preceded the actual events," he wrote.

To Kamir, this demonstrated that Wikipedia "was losing its encyclopedic characteristics". Wikipedians pride themselves on neutrality. Neutral point of view (or NPOV), is a core content policy. Editors are called to merely summarise reliable sources rather than offering their own original analysis. Policy determines that Wikipedians should follow public opinion rather than lead it.

In a later blog post, Kamir argued Wikipedia had clearly played a significant role in the events of January 2011, but "who is going to remember...?"

REMEMBERING THE HISTORY-MAKERS

In the coming months and years, I tried to do just that: documenting how Wikipedians wrote the story of the Egyptian revolution and whether, in doing so, they influenced the revolution itself.

It has been over a decade since I started studying this single article on English Wikipedia about the 2011 revolution. At the time of writing, it runs to almost 13,000 words and more than 400 citations.

Catalytic events have always been influenced by their mediation. But few had tried to understand Wikipedia's role in history-making. When they did, they tended to present Wikipedia as hallowed ground where consensus is reached

among a myriad alternative views.

The most important thing I have learned over this time is the truly subversive role of Wikipedia. Though the Egyptian revolution sputtered out, what I have gleaned from this example has a bearing on other history-making events playing out on Wikipedia now – from the war in Ukraine to the independence movement of Taiwan.

Wales was right when he gave that prescient speech. Wikipedia tends to be ignored because it is supposedly “neutral”. One of the world’s most popular platforms, maintained by a nonprofit organisation, its mirage of neutrality is sustained by the idea that individuals may be biased but all crowds are wise.

Wikipedia supposedly reflects “common knowledge” and “collective memory”. But there are many different ways of seeing the world. There will always be an inevitable conflict between those tasked with its representation, especially when the risks and rewards are so great. How, then, did editors of the Egyptian article resolve these differences? What kind of history is the result?

A typical Wikipedia article is put together by Wikipedians – the volunteer editors who are committed to Wikipedia’s long-term maintenance. Anyone can be a Wikipedian, as long as you abide by the rules of the project (many have a long history with the site). Wikipedians tend to use pseudonyms rather than their real names – there has been no policy requiring them to identify themselves.

As well as Wikipedians, entries are generally open to anyone else to edit. Many Wikipedians volunteer to watch over articles, receiving an alert when changes have been made to assess them.

A key Wikipedia rule is that Wikipedia is not “a crystal ball”. The rule stipulates that Wikipedians should not write about events until their significance is generally known or before the event has concluded.

Soon after the revolution in 2011, I began analysing countless “talk page” discussions where Wikipedia editors discussed the reliability of sources, how to source free images and how to best summarise these events. (These discussions take place in a tab next to the article labelled “talk”.)

Over the next decade, I reviewed hundreds of edits, and interviewed leading editors. These included The Egyptian Liberal, a university student in his twenties, and *Ocaasi*, a US-based college graduate in his late twenties. Ocaasi, who suffered from anxiety and agoraphobia, told me he was editing Wikipedia obsessively at the time of the protests while sitting in his bathtub in a Philadelphia attic.

Rather than rational negotiation and broad consensus, I learned that Wikipedia articles about historic events are often the result of passionate struggle over representing what happened to whom and its consequences.

I learned about the importance of Wikipedians themselves in shaping the narrative into which individual facts were made to fit. Wikipedians shaped the representation of the event not by inserting falsities but rather by framing and selecting facts that supported certain narratives rather than others.

The Wikipedians moved quickly to create a new article on English Wikipedia when crowds first swarmed into Tahrir Square on January 25, 2011, defending it from possible attack from sceptics arguing it was too soon to be covering

We remember the 60's

25% off one complete style from the \$149 range or above for over 60s



Specsavers®

Sapphire Marketplace Bega
(Near Woolworths) 6492 5000

Book an eye health
check online

In store only. Single-vision lenses only. Discount available on other lens types and any lens options. Use with other offers restricted. Excludes safety eyewear.

events. They bolstered the article's authority by quickly adding citations to source the evidence for the unfolding protests.

This first move was successful in determining that the protests were important enough to warrant their own article early on.

WRITING THE REVOLUTION INTO BEING

After the first 24 hours in the life of the article, it had been edited 130 times. Forty two editors had joined The Egyptian Liberal including two longtime Wikipedians, *Dragons flight*, a physicist educated at UC Berkeley now living in Switzerland and *Heroeswithmetaphors*, who has made over 18,000 contributions to articles on multiple topics.

Editors settled into a routine – with American editors handing over to those in Egypt and elsewhere when they went to sleep. For Ocaasi, it was a galvanizing moment. “Everything before that on Wikipedia was just playing around and this was not,” he told me.

It was also when my innocence about Wikipedia ended. It wasn't just a hobby or escape [...] There were hundreds of thousands of people reading the article and I knew that. There was a profound sense of responsibility [...] I thought the world mattered so much those days and I thought I could play a part – not in an activist sense but by documenting what was happening.

As the violent protests continued, experienced editors resisted attempts by newcomers to continuously change the article's title from “protests” to “revolution”. A move of this significance requires consensus from editors on the talk page.



A tank stands amid crowds as protesters gather on Tahrir Square in Cairo, Egypt, 1 February 2011.

But within minutes of Mubarak's resignation at 4pm on February 11, a large crowd of Wikipedia editors again tried to change key facts to reclassify the article to “revolution.” In the hour after Mubarak resigned, the number of readers accessing the page tripled from about 4,000 to 12,500. It was being edited every two minutes in the following hours, as three experienced Wikipedians struggled to hold back the flood of editors attempting to make significant changes before consensus had been reached about the title.

While this was happening, a discussion began on the talk page, with editors asked to weigh in on whether the title of the article should be changed. But an editor, *Tariqabjotu*, made the change just two hours after Mubarak's resignation

– long before the discussion had run its course.

At this time also, the article on the Tunisian protests, which had unseated long-time President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali the month before, was still merely named as an uprising. Six hours after Mubarak's resignation, another editor, *Knowledgekid87*, moved from editing the Egyptian article to the Tunisian one, changing its name to “Tunisian revolution”. This reinforced the Egyptian title change.

On February 11 alone, 125,000 readers accessed the Egyptian article. The number of editors working on it more than tripled from 25 to 84. Many were new editors from the United States, UK, Canada, the Netherlands, Portugal and Singapore, overwhelming those who had been editing it consistently from the beginning.

Other editors in the crowd repeatedly changed the date of the events in the infobox (the small fact box on the right hand side of a Wikipedia article) from “25 January – ongoing” to “25 January – 11 February”. They did this to cement the idea that the protests were over and revolution had been achieved.

In my interviews with Ocaasi, he reflected on how editors surrendered to the momentousness of the occasion. Any effort to resist changes to the article's title would have been swimming against a tide of editors, one of whom declared that Wikipedia shouldn't “deny history.”



Tens of thousands of Egyptians pray and celebrate the fall of the regime of former President Hosni Mubarak on 18 February 2011.

The crowd centred their activity on the infobox and the page name. These elements are the most important parts of a Wikipedia article because they present summarised facts that appear authoritative and stable. These facts have always been prioritised by Google and other search engines' algorithms, which often place Wikipedia at the top of search results. But the infobox came to matter even more the year after the Egyptian revolution.

In 2012, Google announced a major new project that would build a massive database of facts built from “public” information sources such as Wikipedia and the CIA World Factbook.

Google's algorithms selectively extract facts from Wikipedia's infoboxes, divorcing them from the context in which they originated. Sources and citations are often removed. The facts appear more stable than they are on Wikipedia, where they are flanked by breaking news warnings and “citation needed” tags. Wikipedians have no

control over Google's process.

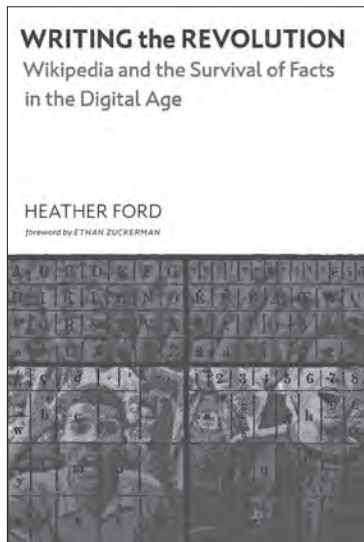
Over a decade after the 2011 Egyptian revolution, Wikipedia is still the authority for facts about the event. If you ask Google, Bing or Yahoo what happened in Egypt in 2011, they will present facts extracted from the English Wikipedia article.

But Google and other platforms extract them automatically and without understanding or debate. The result is a representation of capitalist logic embedded in the machines that have been programmed not to serve public meaning-making but rather to feed revenue sources.

For the past few years, Google's knowledge panel about the revolution has contained the words, "Deaths section below" after facts about numbers killed during the revolution. This is material lifted from Wikipedia but not linked to further information – so it becomes a meaningless phrase. It shows how Wikipedians have lost control over some of the information they carefully provide. Yet many more people will view this material now in a search engine rather than on Wikipedia.

A STRUGGLE FOR POWER

Popular accounts like *The Wisdom of Crowds* and *the End of Theory* present both crowds and algorithms as sources of truth and neutrality. By such accounts, crowds supposedly smooth out one another's biases or ignorance and Big Data enables accuracy because of our access to huge datasets.



But I discovered a passion and feverish anticipation of revolution in Egypt from the very first entry on it, just hours after the protests began on January 25. Rather than rational consensus among dispassionate observers, Wikipedia mirrored the passion, emotion and violence of Tahrir Square.

Did Wikipedia shape the political events at the time, as suggested by Kamir? Ultimately, the story of this Wikipedia entry reiterates how young people (the leading Wikipedia editors) were able to win the information war in Egypt but not transform the government. Most of the article's editors were people in favour of the revolution.

Nevertheless, Wikipedia articles about political events are important battlegrounds for interest groups vying for control over the historical record. Their impact lives on, courtesy of search engines' algorithms and the global reach of the site itself. And such struggles for power are no doubt happening, elsewhere, in other Wikipedia articles today.

Heather Ford is author of *Writing the Revolution: Wikipedia and the Survival of Facts in the Digital Age*.

[This article was first published in *The Conversation* on November 25th, 2022. It is reprinted here under a Creative Commons licence. *Writing the Revolution: Wikipedia and the Survival of Facts in the Digital Age* is available in paperback from around \$42.00]



Meals on Wheels

Bega Valley

- Meals**
- Flexible Respite**
- Social Support Groups**
- Social Support Individual**
- Veterans' Support**



One Community — One Valley

6492 4146

admin@bvmow.org.au

HISTORY – AS IT WAS WRIT

SOUTH COAST

85 Homes Lost; Vast Areas of Black Earth

Reports filtering through from the South Coast yesterday gave this picture of the bushfire destruction:

85 homes were destroyed and more than two million acres of pasture burnt out in the Bega district alone.

A man and his wife, their clothes burnt off, sheltered in a culvert where they took refuge.

A day-long fight saved the town of Bega itself.

A man who saw the result of the fires said: "The whole countryside from the mountain range on the west of Bega to the coast, a distance of 30 miles, is almost one waste of blackened earth with no fences or pastures standing and very few farmhouses."

The Minister for Labour and Social Welfare, Mr. F. J. Finnan, said last night immediate steps were being taken to assist the fire victims.



Sisters Dead, Mother Burnt

Those who died in the South Coast fires were:

Marie Otton, 16, of Upper Brogo, 10 miles north of Bega;

Jennifer Otton, 14;

Rudolf Ogilvie, about 66, also of Upper Brogo;

John Taylor, 58, of Quaama, about 17 miles north of Bega, died after a day-long battle with the flames.

DIED IN HEAT

An elderly Bega resident, Jim Preo, collapsed and died during the heat.

Mrs. Fred Otton, mother of the two girls, is in Bega Hospital suffering from burns.

Sergeant Frank Dawson, of Cobargo police, said last night that the Otton sisters and Ogilvie were killed when fires swept the Otton property. It seemed that when the fire was approaching, the occupants of the house made for a well nearby.

"Mrs. Otton, her son Max, and the Rev. David Orange got into the well, which measures four feet by three feet," he said.

"The two girls, with Ogilvie, started up the hill.

50 YARDS OFF

The eldest girl, Marie, and Ogilvie, collapsed 50 yards from the well, and Jennifer went 200 yards further on horseback.

Whether she was struck by a limb or not we don't know. Mrs. Otton and her two companions are safe."

Sergeant Dawson said John Taylor was helping to fight an outbreak at Quaama. His companions looked around and found that Taylor had collapsed. He died of heart failure.

Sergeant Dawson said the temperature at Cobargo yesterday was 112 degrees.

"Farmers in the district have lost thousands of head of cattle," he said. "Four houses are known to be down – the Ottons, one belonging to Ogilvie, another to a Mr. Vallance, and a fourth."

"We have been fighting fires since Thursday." Sergeant Dawson said the fire got to within one and a half miles of Cobargo town.

From fire refugees and from the Forestry Commission radio reports reached Sydney only last night of bushfires which burnt out thousands of square miles of pastures between Nowra and Eden.

BEGA'S PLIGHT

Bega is in a desperate plight.

Farmers, ruined by the fires, have sent messages to Sydney relatives appealing for help.

Bega was licked by flames when Friday's fire was at its peak.

Businessmen, farmers, and women and children fought the flames on the edge of the town.

Flames destroyed one house before firefighters could reach it.

Fight To Save Hospital

Chemists converted their shops into emergency dressing stations. Other shops closed their doors.

Hundreds of people beat the fire back from the Bega Hospital, where fire victims were already being admitted. Nurses left patients to join in the fight. They beat out flames with bags and floor rugs. Bega Hospital treated scores of people for burns and injuries.

IN MOUNTAINS

By last night the Bega fires had burnt their way into the Mumbulla Mountain, 12 miles north of Bega town.

Senior-constable R. Patterson, of Bega, said late last night there was a heavy mist forming over the area and some light rain had fallen on the fires.

"If the weather continues even as it is we will be all right," he said. "There are a couple of small fires burning, but the immediate danger has passed. This morning I saw one farm near the foot of Mumbulla Mountain which is the only one standing in miles of blackened countryside."

WATER FAILURE

All the families who have been rendered homeless are living with friends and neighbours in the area.

"Supplies have been coming through and we still need some blankets, but our most desperate need now is for fodder. A lot of stock was saved in the area when it took

refuge in small creeks and swampy ground which the fire passed over.”

“Our big difficulty in Bega was the failure of the water supply. The Fire Brigade could not use its hoses. Each time the fire came to the edge of the town it was held back only by people using beaters. Twice the hospital was menaced, but sheer hard work, and once a slight change of wind, saved it. The flames were just phenomenal.”

Bega police have appealed for clothing for 75 destitute families.

Many local farmers have asked friends in Sydney for help.

Here are two typical messages:

“We are safe but the home is gone. Will send wife and children up on Monday. Do your best to obtain 1-2 tons of wheat.”

At least three-quarters of farmland in the Bega district has been burnt out.



Fodder from the Monaro district stacked in the Bega Show Pavilion in the days following the fires.

COUPLE'S ESCAPE

At Tilba Tilba, four homes, a car and a utility truck, were destroyed.

Mr. and Mrs. H. Sindel, fleeing from their blazing home, were trapped in a utility truck when a burning log blocked the roadway. They abandoned the truck and sheltered in a culvert where they were found scorched by the flames and with their clothes burnt, but otherwise unharmed.

Eleven houses were destroyed in fires which burnt right up to the edge of Eden on Friday.

At St. George's Basin, near Nowra, fires gutted two homes, each valued at £1,150. Several fishermen's cabins have also gone.

Fourteen aborigines in the Nowra district are homeless. Their settlement has been burnt out.

At Cockwhy Creek, 30 miles south of Milton, fire destroyed Mrs. F. Minnett's store, valued at £5,000.

At Bateman's Bay one of the most up-to-date sawmills on the South Coast, Bowman's Mill, was gutted in a few minutes. The owners estimate their loss at more than £10,000.

Surfmen Lose Gear, Car at Bermagui

Eight instructors touring the South Coast for the N.S.W. Surf Life Saving Association lost one of their cars and much equipment yesterday while they helped to fight bushfires near Bermagui. The team, headed by Mr. Frank Payne, superintendent of the association's Central Coast branch, were surrounded by flames for six hours.

One of their cars was destroyed while they were in the bush helping to save seven houses.

IBS INDEPENDENT
BATTERY SUPPLIES
0436 460 460
WWW.IBSBEGA.COM.AU



BATTERIES
for deep cycle,
car - truck - tractor
and motor cycle



*Battery Testing and Fitting available
12/24v Alternators, Starter Motors, etc.*

*Sourcing items for the home auto electrician with access to quality
12/24-volt engine consumables, e.g. alternators / starter motors / batteries
and more at highly competitive prices*

Forestry officers and volunteer firefighters stood by three miles south of Bermagui yesterday.

Fires have swept through thousands of acres of land.

Bermagui is still isolated to the north and south. All telephone lines are down.

All telephone and telegraph communications between Canberra and Bateman's Bay, Narooma, Milton, Moruya, and Eden were down at 4 p.m. yesterday.

Braidwood police said as far as they knew the road to Bateman's Bay was still open.

Rain was just then starting to fall in the Braidwood area. No fires were burning.

PLANE TURNS BACK

A "Sunday Herald" reporter, who tried to get to the bushfire area on the South Coast yesterday, could not get beyond Ulladulla by plane because of dense smoke. Smoke and fires covered hundreds of miles from Sutherland to Milton.

The plane was finally forced to turn back to Sydney because smoke reduced visibility to about 300 yards.

During the afternoon large fires burnt at Sutherland and south of Sutherland. A series of big fires was burning on a 10-mile front west of Heathcote. There were also big fires at Stanwell Park, Bulli, and Austinmer, west of North Wollongong, on both sides of Jervis Bay, and at Milton and Ulladulla.

RELIEF

Mr. Finnan said last night money, food, clothing, tents, and other goods were being

supplied to burnt-out families through the Bushfire Relief Committee's fund established by the Commonwealth and State Governments.

Mr. L. K. Rath, officer in charge of Social Welfare for the State, said that a relief force would leave at dawn this morning for Bega. A load of blankets also would be sent to the South Coast. Later to-day a pantechnicon loaded with clothing, bedding, food, and tents would be sent if necessary.

The first officers would have full power to get what supplies they could locally and order more from Sydney if necessary.

Other officers were already working in the Riverina on a similar mission.

Yesterday the committee issued clothing and tents to the occupants of 37 homes destroyed in the Sutherland-Stanwell Tops area.

—*Sydney Morning Herald*, 27.1.1952

Brogo Hall opened Feb 21st 1928 destroyed by fire 25/1/1952
built by residents of Brogo by voluntary labour of all local families



Photo courtesy Bega Pioneers' Museum



Post and Pier Drilling

Trenching

Tight Access Excavation

we go where the big boys can't

Discounts on full day hire

0427 742 195



OTTONS SAW FIRE BURNING IN MOUNTAINS FOR WEEKS

Death And Destruction Dealt Out By Terrifying Flames

For six weeks, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Otton and their family, from their Hillfield homestead in the hills of Upper Brogo, watched smoke curling up from fires out in the Yowrie Gap. Then, on Friday morning, a blistering north-westerly blew up a wall of burning fire, which dealt out death to Marie, 16, and Jennifer, 14, their daughters, and Rudolph Ogilvie, 64, a neighbour.

The homestead, with its contents, assembled after years of patient energy and enterprise, was reduced to black ashes and useless, tangled metal within a few minutes.

During Thursday night a distant sighing in the peaks of the mountain ranges indicated to those at Hillfield that a wind threatened for the morrow.

Morning brought the ominous heat of the north wester, and all knew that there was terror lurking in the hills and gullies.

Mr. Otton assembled a gang of staunch fire fighters from the surrounding areas, to counter attack the first onslaught of the fire which had come within a quarter of a mile of open country, three miles from the homestead.

MEN ENDANGERED

The men raked a trail with the idea of burning back as a means of turning the fire away. Before eleven o'clock, however, the flames had jumped the trail and the party had to move in a hurry to extricate itself from danger.

Everybody flew for the Brogo River for protection, but Mr. Otton, on horseback, who went back for a tucker bag, found himself trapped by a ring of fire.

He waited his chance and finally broke through, but found difficulty getting his horse down a precipitous bank on to a small sand strip in the stream.

After half an hour of looking for an opportunity to break through the flames, which were burning from the undergrowth to the tree tops, he escaped from the creek and returned to the homestead.

Son Max Otton, 20, who had been with the fire fighters all the time, was sent up to the homestead to ascertain the effects of the fire on the buildings – to call for assistance if they were threatened by any immediate danger.

COLLECTED VALUABLES

Mrs. Otton and the two girls were busying themselves in making preparations to evacuate. They had gathered bedding,

clothing, their valuables, money and important papers.

The station motor truck was brought to the house and loaded. A tarpaulin was thrown over the load and sprayed with water.

Everybody went about their tasks calmly, but nobody realized that soon, as the fire roared its unwelcome approach, a heat was being generated that would overwhelm them with inhuman intensity.

Mr. Otton, who had fought hundreds of fires in and out of the hills, said he had no fears at first that there was any danger to life, and endeavoured to save the homestead and its buildings.

Two of the men, Mr. Allie Shipton and Mr. Al. Holzhauser, were asked to protect the wool shed at Pumpkin Flat. They acquitted themselves well, for the shed was saved.

When the heat started to develop Max backed the loaded truck to the spring near the rear of the building. His plan was to have it as close to water so as any sparks could be doused should they start to burn the truck or its contents.

LAST DITCH STAND

The firefighters attempted a last ditch stand by trying to make a break, some two hundred yards from the home clearing.

However, the extreme heat and fury of the fire raced up the funnels of the hills and the weary men found themselves fighting desperately for their own lives.

Mr. Cec. Dummett, whose truck had been moved to a well trodden clearing under a grove of pine trees, saved the vehicle by throwing water on it when the cabin and seat caught fire.

WHY DO PEOPLE COME TO NAROOMA JUST TO VISIT NAROOMA NEW & USED ?

They have discovered a veritable 'Aladdin's Cave' absolutely overflowing with valuable hidden treasures and bargains – pre-loved and brand new.

Choose from thousands of books, thousands of CDs and records, imaginative gifts, homewares, objets d'art, knick-knacks and odds & ends.

And Barrie is a JP, for those needing documents witnessed!



**WE BUY ... SWAP ... AND SELL
122 Wagonga St, Narooma – ☎ 4476 1107**

The homestead wash-house began to burn, and although every effort was made gallantly to protect the main house, it also burst into flames.

Mr. Otton went through the house as it was burning to see what could be done on the other side, but he was sent reeling from the effects of the heat and smoke.

He was able to get to the shelter of the pine trees and was showered with water by Dummett, Mr. Sam Taylor and Mr. Joe Otton (who later declared that at this stage he was all in) and got him to the creek.

PROTECTION IN SPRING

Rudolph Ogilvie, who had been busy with the men fighting the fire, was caught on the northern side of the fire with Mrs. Otton and the girls.

Ogilvie, however, had a horse with him and suggested the girls take it to get to the creek.

While Ogilvie was making his suggestion about the horse, Mrs. Otton took hold of Marie's arm and said: "Jump in the spring."

Marie replied: "No, and don't you either." The girl then pulled away.

BADLY BURNT

Mrs. Otton was being badly burnt at this stage by the heat of the atmosphere, although the actual flames were still some distance away.

Jennifer dashed off and mounted Ogilvie's horse, which was extremely restless, and moved off towards the creek with Marie and Ogilvie following.

That was the last Mrs. Otton ever saw of her two daughters and the neighbour Ogilvie.

Max saw Jennifer on the horse, although she did not seem to be able to make up her mind what to do, and heard her say: "It looks as if we are trapped."

The Rev. David Orange, Rector of Cobargo, who had been one of the firefighters from the start, at this stage was forced to arrive at the terrible conclusion that nothing could be done, and that he and Max would have to race for the creek to save their own lives.

TOO LATE FOR TRUCK TO LEAVE

Max had thought he could have driven the truck down into the creek with his mother and two sisters, but the fires came at the homestead in the space of a minute, and ruined this last avenue of escape.

They bolted down the steep hill, half choked by smoke and with their skin unbearably hot from the heat of the whirlwind of fire and fell into the creek not a second too soon.

Mrs. Otton, cut off from the men, had to move quickly to save herself, and plunged into the spring.

Her dreadful experience was accentuated by the lack of a hat and she had to splash water on her head with her unaffected arm to save her hair and head from burning.

During this period petrol drums in the workshop exploded and lifted the roof off the building with a fountain of smoke and gas in an atom bomb pattern.

Although the flames had left its unholy black cloak over the Hillside homestead land Mrs. Otton does not remember having seen any fires actually burning.

SEARCH FOR GIRLS

Still obsessed with the desire to protect her girls, she climbed out of the spring, when the scorching tempest allowed her to move round without being stricken down by the heat.

Almost overcome by weakness the courageous woman searched for Marie and Jennifer, but without any result. Fearing that she might be the only one left alive she re-entered the spring in a determined effort to keep alive to tell her gruesome story.

Grasping a tin, which one of the girls had used to throw water on to the tarpaulin when there was still hope of escape, Mrs. Otton was able to protect her head better, but rubbed skin off her forehead in the process.

The next thing she is conscious of now is the Rev. David Orange saying: "Oh, it is Mrs Otton." He helped her out of the spring into Mr. Dummett's truck which was then driven to the Rector's car, and thence into Cobargo for medical attention.

Mr. Otton and Max looked for the two girls in the spring with their mother, but to their horror they discovered that only Mrs. Otton was there.

A search revealed the shockingly charred remains of Ogilvie and one of the girls. On the following morning the other girl's body was found under a tree, approximately 150 yards from the spring.

MACABRE SCENE

On Saturday morning, when a wet mist softened all sound and gave a ghostly effect to the macabre scene of charred waste, the hills reeked death and destruction.

The search party men did not relish being there and left as soon as possible.

Mr. Otton and Max have since returned to search for the stock and found all the cattle and over half the sheep. These were moved down to Mr. Austin Flanagan's at Brogo on Wednesday, and will be moved up to Nimmitabel for agistment on Mr. George Taylor's property.

Only one of the eight horses at Hillfield was found alive.

Mrs. Otton is showing inspiring courage in her fight against a tremendous loss and experience while her burns are responding to treatment.

HUSBAND'S GIFT SAVED

Cash amounting to £100 in notes and coins was lost, the silver and copper had fused together during the fire.

Everything else of value had gone with the exception of Mrs. Otton's engagement ring, and a diamond necklet, a wedding gift from her husband.

Both articles of jewellery were found in the cinders on the brink of the spring and were undamaged, but the settings were discoloured.

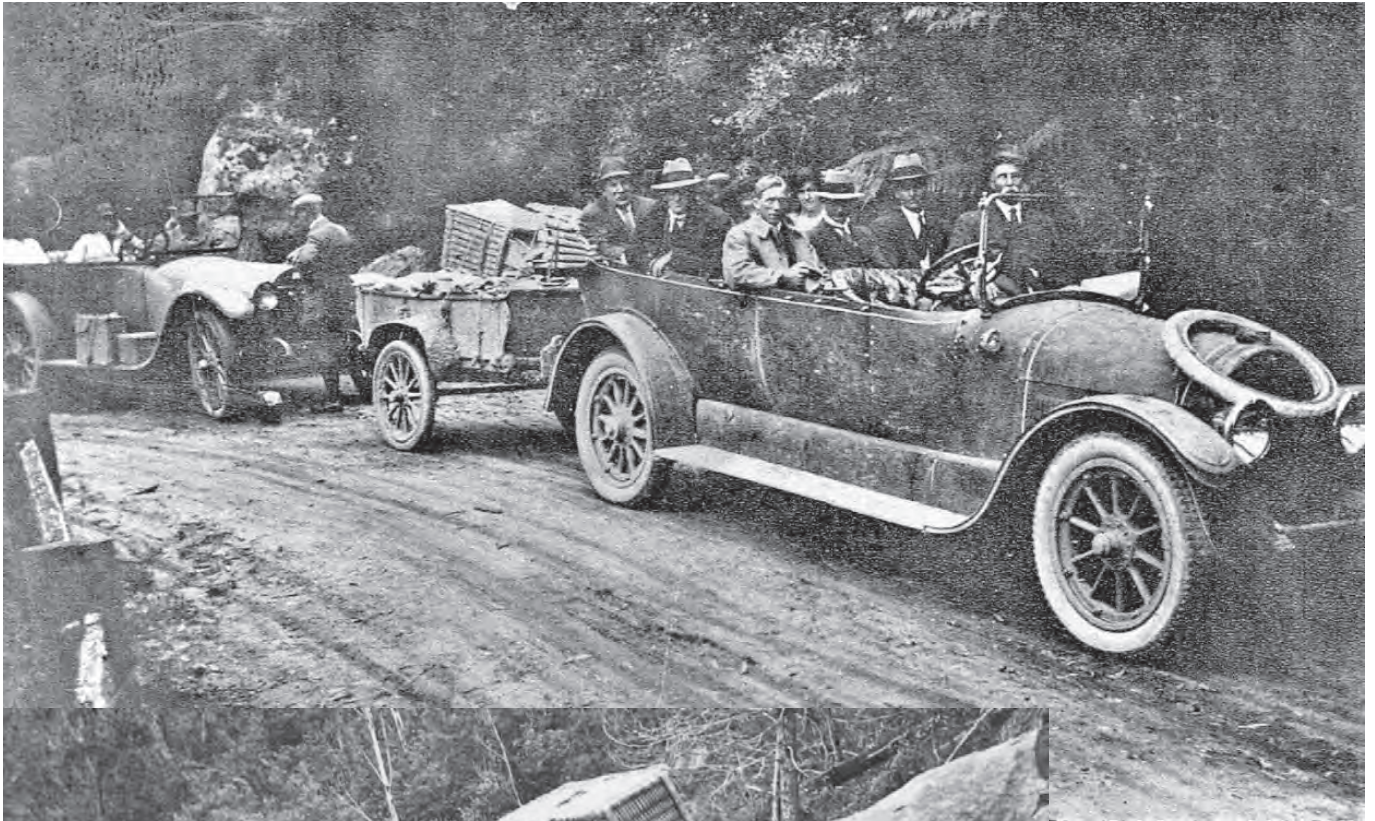
The necklet has a present day value of four figures because of the diamonds in it.

Two other tragic victims of the fire and heat on Friday were John Taylor, 58, of Quaama and Jim Preo, of Bega.

Mr. Taylor died from the effects of exertion during his fight with the flames, and Mr. Preo collapsed and died during the heat.

—*Bega District News*, 1.2.1952

The Brown Mountain Road



Images Courtesy Bega Pioneers' Museum

and finally...

- ▶ Finished reading? Please pass this copy to a friend, pop it in a neighbour's letter box, forward the email file to your contacts. Others enjoy reading **Recollections** too.
- ▶ Register to automatically receive future copies of **Recollections by email**—Simply email 'Send Recollections' to southcoasthistory@yahoo.com. It's free!
- ▶ Or subscribe and we'll post copies to you. Send your cheque for \$20 to South Coast History Society, 90 Whitby Wilson Road, Quama NSW 2550, along with your name and address, to receive paper copies of the next six issues of **Recollections**.
- ▶ And did we mention back Issues of **Recollections** are available, free, in PDF format at www.bit.ly/RecollectionsX where X is the issue number (1 to 37, except for Issue 3 which is 3- and Issue 10 which is 10-).

When Stairs Become a Challenge...

the practical solution is a **Compact Lift** from

South Coast Lifts



Our Compact Home Lifts are:

- ✓ Stylish with Quality Components
- ✓ Advanced Safety features
- ✓ Affordable
- ✓ A better alternative than a stairlift
- ✓ Much cheaper than the cost of moving house
- ✓ Compact
- ✓ Energy efficient
- ✓ Add value to your property
- ✓ Quick to install
- ✓ Whisper quiet
- ✓ Elegance – smaller lift 1-2 person, 170 kg
- ✓ Elegance Plus – Larger lift 1-2 person comfortably or 1 Person and wheelchair, 220 kg
- ✓ See Compact Home Lifts brochure on web site or South Coast Lifts can mail a brochure and standard costing to your home for your convenience

Call today for a Brochure or an obligation-free Assessment & Quote

(02) 4476 7977

<http://www.southcoastlifts.com.au>

(Member of Lift Engineering Society of Australia)

"We bought a Compact Home Lift because it has allowed us to stay in our home. It was a far cheaper solution when compared with the cost of moving house" — George, 66

"We looked at buying a stairlift but made the right decision choosing a Compact Home Lift. It has exceeded all our expectations" — Pippa, 56