

South Coast History Society Inc.

Recollections

Issue 46 June 2024



NSW South Coast Women



**Fantastic
Reads**

NSW South Coast Women— page 2
Significant Changes to Recollections— page 3

Araluen Embraces its History— page 17
The Australian History Industry— page 18

Women of the NSW South Coast

Earlier this year, South Coast History Society had a table at a market promoting 'Extraordinary Histories'. A lady approached us and asked that we identify the parts of the book about women from the South Coast. We're not sure whether she had read the book and this was a criticism of it, or whether she was simply championing women's causes. Either way, she highlighted an omission in the first edition of 'Extraordinary Histories' - it included very little about South Coast women.

We resolved, therefore, to include a chapter on women of the South Coast in an expanded, second edition of the book. We thought this would be something that would be easy to compile because, surely, a lot had been written about the contributions of outstanding South Coast women.

WRONG!... WRONG!!... WRONG!!!

If articles have been written about significant South Coast women, they are now not easy to find. And even just compiling a list of women who might have been considered for inclusion in the Second Edition of 'Extraordinary Histories' has not been easy. We contacted other history societies along the coast and (to our amazement) received very little response. We can only conclude (and probably many would agree) that little recognition has, or is, being given to the contributions made to the South Coast's history by women. (This does not, however, mean that there is not significant community interest in these [often currently unidentified] women.)

However, we did find that two excellent books had previously been written about local women - 'They Made This Valley Home' about pioneer women from the Bega Valley, and 'Sixteen Women of Early Eurobodalla' that had been written back in 1990 and was published by the Moruya and District Historical Society. These do not extend to identifying the contributions made by local women in more


recent times - so therein remains a major (and interesting!) research opportunity for willing local historians.

The 'Kiama Who's Who' website also identifies three women - including Shirley Strickland who is included because she 'moved to the area later in her life' and Missy Higgins 'whose family has been there for many years' (neither woman, on these bases, really deserving much of a claim for being included on the list) - but, strangely, not a mention of highly-regarded Australian author Charmian Clift who was born and schooled in Kiama and then wrote extensively about Kiama.

So, it seems to us that undertaking a more comprehensive study to identify significant women from the NSW South Coast would now be an extremely valuable undertaking.

The upshot of all this is that the Second Edition of 'Extraordinary Histories' (to be released in August) includes biographies of Charmian Clift and Pearl Corkhill (these two are included below) and of pioneering woman Elizabeth 'Granny' Sproats, of contralto Eva Mylott, carrier Emily Wintle, Aboriginal activist Jane Duren, 'The Three Ladies of Tathra' who were conservationists, shopkeeper Mrs Mac, newspaper editor Olive Constable, and world-renowned economist Persia Campbell.

Other women, however, equally deserve to be acknowledged and to have their stories told. A selection of stories about some of these additional women are included below.

BUT, we have the distinct feeling that we are still not acknowledging many other significant South Coast women whose stories deserve to be recorded - which we will in future issues of 'Recollections'. YOU can ensure they are now given appropriate recognition by submitting their names, and any details if you have them, to us at southcoasthistory@yahoo.com 

Charmian Clift

Charmian Clift - a legendary Australian writer and a newspaper columnist, and a rebel who cared nothing for convention - was a Kiama girl.

She was born in Kiama in 1923. Her father was a supervisor at the Bombo Headland Quarry and she grew up in a modest quarry workers' cottage at the southern end of Hothersall Street. Her childhood home is still there and a nearby reserve is named in her honour.

Charmian was a talented student at Kiama Public School in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Even then she was exhibiting exceptional writing skills as this poem about the Kiama Blowhole, published in the Kiama Independent in 1933, illustrates:

Forever in storm or sunshine,
Changing from rage to play,
Kiama's wonderful Blowhole
Sends up a fountain of spray.

Whenever a storm is raging,
And the sea is dull and grey,

The water spouts up in a torrent
And moans as it sinks away.

But when the sun is shining,
And the waves rush through and play,
Rainbows sprinkled with diamonds
Gleam in the falling spray.

Charmian was 'discovered' in May 1941 when she won Pix magazine's NSW Beach Girl Quest. (Pix was a popular weekly magazine, known for its cover girls often posed in a swimsuit.)

That led to her moving to Sydney where she became a model to supplement her main job as an usherette at a Kings Cross theatre.

In 1942, aged 19, she became pregnant. She surrendered the child for adoption.

In April 1943, Charmian enlisted in the Australian Army, becoming a Lieutenant in charge of a group of gunners in Drummoyne, Sydney.

Significant Changes to Recollections

When *Recollections* was launched eight years ago, it was a quarterly magazine. Feedback and demand from the community soon prompted the South Coast History Society to issue a new *Recollections* every second month. And, about a year ago, *Mini Recollections* became available in the months when *Recollections* was not issued.

Lately, demand and support for *Recollections* has declined. Membership of South Coast History Society has declined, donations to South Coast History Society have significantly declined (membership fees and donations fund the production of *Recollections*; without a sufficient level of membership fees and donations it, simply, will be impossible for us to continue issuing *Recollections*, for which we now must raise about \$25,000 every year), the number of people subscribing to *Recollections* (having it posted to them) has declined, the level of feedback received from those reading *Recollections* has also declined, and we

are receiving very few suggestions about what we should include in *Recollections*. (In the last issue of *Recollections* we specifically asked readers to indicate they were reading the magazine. We distributed over 4,000 copies, we received just 41 responses — our conclusion, therefore, must be that it is no longer worth the considerable effort producing *Recollections* for this very small number of readers).

We therefore propose that *Recollections* revert to a quarterly magazine and that production of *Mini Recollections* be suspended. This proposal will be reviewed at the Annual General Meeting of the Society on July 27th. Unless it is then decided otherwise, or community support has very significantly increased in the next month, Issue 47 of *Recollections* will be the August 2024 issue, issue 48 will be the November 2024 issue and, thereafter, subsequent issues will be produced quarterly.



While editing an army magazine, she began to write and publish short stories. In 1946, she joined the staff of the *Argus* newspaper (then Australia's leading daily newspaper) and met war correspondent George Johnston. Their employer disapproved of their relationship, so Charmian was summarily dismissed; George resigned in protest.

Johnston moved to Sydney to work as a journalist, and, following his divorce, he and Charmian Clift were married in August 1947. Unable to find accommodation in Sydney, Charmian stayed with her parents in Kiama and George would catch the train to Kiama on weekends where they would work together on a novel, 'High Valley'. This won a £2,000 Sydney Morning Herald novel prize – one of the very few literary prizes available at the time.

Early in 1951 Charmian, George and their son and daughter relocated to London, and then in late 1954 to the Greek Islands. Here they were to live a somewhat hedonistic and bohemian life, George writing 'My Brother Jack' and Charmian writing 'Mermaid Singing' and 'Peel Me a Lotus', both of which were highly successful books.

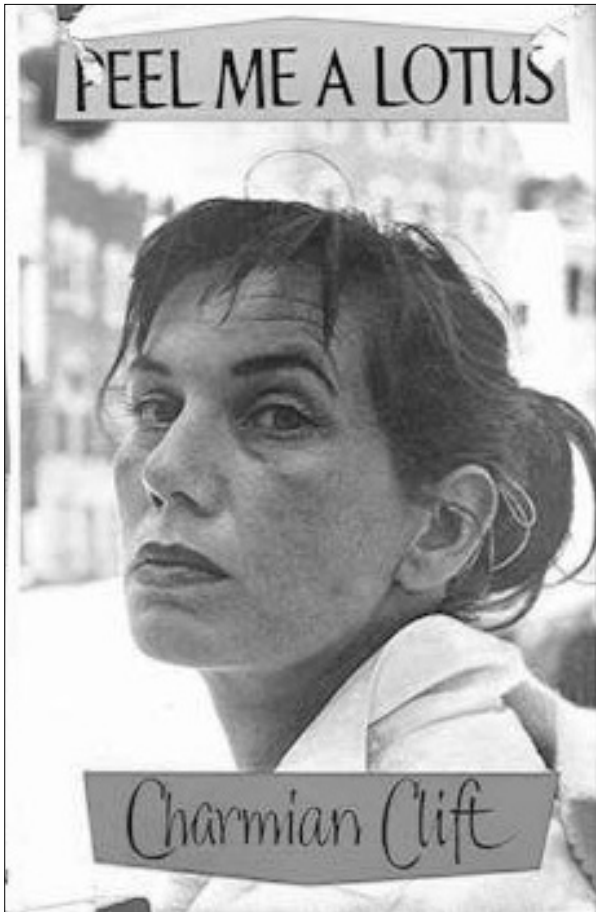
Charmian's first novel 'Walk to the Paradise Gardens' (1960) is set in her childhood Kiama (called Lebanon Bay in the book), and 'The End of the Morning' (which she never finished and was first published only in April 2024) is an autobiographical novel also set in Kiama.

Between 1964 and 1969 Charmian contributed 240 essays to the Sydney Morning Herald and The Herald in Melbourne. These were published in a regular weekly column that attracted a large and devoted readership of (as she described them) her 'Thursday ladies'.

These essays were originally intended to be 'real writing from a woman's point of view', but the subjects they encompassed were occasionally very topical, political and feminist. For example, Charmian railed against Australia's involvement in the Vietnam War and conscription, highlighted Australia's 'sexual apartheid in employment, wages, social standing and moral judgments', counted civil rights activist Faith Bandler as a friend and so



A 1941 photograph of Charmian Clift as a Grecian dancer, taken for Pix magazine



A 'starkly unadorned' photograph of Charmian Clift was used on the first UK edition of *Peel Me a Lotus*.

urged her readers to vote Yes in the 1967 referendum to give recognition to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, and even suggested that an apology to Australia's First Nations peoples was long overdue.



The photo of Charmian Clift that appeared on the front cover of *Pix*

Charmian died in Sydney in 1969 either by taking an overdose of barbiturates while considerably affected by alcohol or from suicide prompted by the impending publication of Johnston's novel 'Clean Straw for Nothing', which Charmian knew would lay bare her infidelities on the Greek island of Hydra. **R**

Olga Masters

Like Charmian Clift from Kiama, Olga Masters from Cobargo was another extremely successful author whose works drew heavily on childhood experiences of living on the NSW South Coast.

Olga Lawler was born in Pambula in May 1919. Her father, Leo, was a labourer and the family was constantly on the move as he sought work. Eventually they settled in the Cobargo area, and until age 15, Olga attended Cobargo Public School.

Her early life was affected by the poverty that had resulted from the Great Depression, but she obviously received a good education because, on leaving school, she was employed as a journalist by the local *Cobargo Chronicle*.

In 1937, at the age of 18, she moved to Sydney where she worked as a clerk and typist, and met Charles Masters, a teacher. They were married in 1940.

Numerous teaching postings led to Olga and Charles moving around the state, for example to Urbenville (north-west of Kyogle, near the Queensland border), to Lismore and Grafton, before ultimately returning to Sydney. Olga would supplement the family income in each location by writing for local newspapers.

From an early age, Olga wanted to write fiction, but her first fiction work was not published until the late 1970s.



Olga was then 58 years of age.

Success as a fiction writer and recognition quickly followed. For example, in 1979 and 1980 she received nine awards for her short stories, so from 1982 she became a full-time writer of fiction.

Olga's fiction drew mainly on her experiences being part of a poor rural family during the Depression, and on her observations of small-town life as a country schoolteacher's wife. She often wrote from the perspectives of children and women whose power to change their situation was limited but who cherished the small domestic pleasures that gave them hope.

Her collection of short stories, *A Long Time Dying: A Novel*, written with a \$20,000 grant from the Australian Bicentenary Authority and published in 1985, is centred around the town of Cobargo. *The families are large and the work roles clearly defined. The men often work outdoors,*

if they work at all, on farms that are usually too small to supply a decent living. When it comes time for meals to be prepared, they do not lift a finger. A pregnancy always results in marriage, and class and even financial barriers are rarely crossed. Its opening sentence announces the setting in time and place: *Cobargo was a terribly dull place in 1935 where if you did not own a shop or work in one, or the post office or the bank; if you did not sharefarm or own a farm, were not a nun at the convent or a teacher at the public school, there were few opportunities for employment.*

Olga enjoyed family life and often declared that her children were her greatest achievements. Six of her seven children also made careers in the media or the arts: Roy became a journalist and rugby league coach; Ian became a radio broadcaster; Quentin became a film maker; Chris became a journalist; Sue and Deb became media producers.

Olga died in Wollongong in September 1986. **R**

It's Returning!

The popular 'Extraordinary Histories: Amazing Stories from the NSW South Coast'

Last year the 320-page paperback 'Extraordinary Histories: Amazing Stories from the NSW South Coast' sold out in just 7 weeks. (And we had thought we had ordered enough copies for the book to be available for several years!!!)

We've now added 64 pages (so it's now 384 pages) with **more fascinating South Coast stories** and **more historic photographs**.

The price, however, will remain the same – just \$34.95 – so now it's even greater value-for-money!

This new, expanded, second edition of 'Extraordinary Histories' will be available in retail stores from mid August – just in time for Fathers' Day gift giving.

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



Mare Carter

Mare Carter was a journalist, author, script writer and 'model' who established a wildlife sanctuary and tourist attraction at Foxground, near Berry.

In 1952 Mary Thompson-Read-Young (known as 'Mare'), 'an expatriate American pulp-fiction author and occasional photographic model', began a de-facto relationship with one of Australia's most celebrated photojournalists, Jeff Carter. She eventually became his wife and they were to have two sons, Goth and Vandal. (Jeff had two other children by his previous marriage – Karen and Thor.)

Mare and Jeff were to travel all over Australia as 'bush journos', gathering stories while living out of their Land Rover. They were trailblazers in many ways, writing about people often ignored by the city press, including Aboriginal people.

On these trips Mare carried a suitcase of "straight" clothes which she would change into for Jeff's photos when no other suitable human subject was available.

Jeff saw himself as 'the photographer of the poor and the unknown' — cane cutters, drovers, Aboriginal workers, fossickers, hop pickers, rabbit shooters, quarry workers, camel drivers, steel workers, tree fellers and cannery workers.

Mare and Jeff's stories and photographs regularly appeared in newspapers and in magazines such as *Walkabout*, *Wheels*, *Pix*, *People*, *Women's Weekly*, *Woman's Day* and *National Geographic*.

In 1962 they settled on a 45-hectare abandoned dairy farm at Foxground which they named Wild Country Park. It became, as well as being their own family home, a refuge for endangered and injured native animals and a major tourist attraction that drew over 25,000 visitors per year.

Later they became documentary filmmakers. From 1972 to 1974 their *Wild Country* series was screened by the Seven television network and was shown widely on overseas television.

For four decades, the couple's professional collaboration was acknowledged with a byline "Story by Jeff and Mare Carter".

In 2001 Mare wrote and published a book, *A Wild Life: bringing up a bush menagerie*. It was her account of coming to Australia and meeting Jeff, buying the Foxground property and developing it into Wild Country Park, and it described her very unconventional family and the harsh and hilarious realities of living in the 'wild'.

This was followed in 2007 by *Landmarks: in a travelling life* which she originally wrote for her family and was illustrated with many of Jeff's photographs.

Jeff, suffering from liver cancer, took his own life in 2010.

Over 600 of Jeff's photographs are preserved in the Jeff Carter Collection in the National Library of Australia, along with recordings of a number of interviews including several with fishermen in Bermagui and Eden. **R**



Salmon Harvest -- Eden NSW 1958 by Jeff Carter. Maurice Egan, deckhand of the *Sea Queen*, unloading baskets of salmon into a fish trailer on Eden wharf, ready for transfer to the local cannery in Eden. At that time there was little demand for fresh salmon in Australia and more than 95% of the national catch was canned. There were two canneries in NSW, both owned by Green's Products, at Narooma and Eden. In good seasons, the combined canneries could not handle the salmon catch and many fish had to be dumped. Image: NLA call number PIC/4018/1 LOC DRAWER PIC 4018



Mare Carter weighing an orphaned joey at Glenrock Farm, Foxground, NSW 1968. Picture by Jeff Carter.

Kate O'Connor

Not every South Coast author was to receive national or international recognition, but many became well-known locally. 'Kate O'Connor', as an example, was one of these, achieving her 'fame' in the Bega area.

Hilda James was born in 1888 in Sydney. Her father was killed in an accident at Pambula soon after her birth, so her mother returned to Sydney. However, she left Hilda with her grandparents David and Sarah James at Kameruka Estate where David James was employed as a horticulturalist.

Hilda attended the local Candelo School and, in 1905, she married Charles Spindler who also lived on the Kameruka Estate and had attended Candelo School.

At some point, Hilda started writing poetry about the local area and received encouragement from Walter A. Smith, the Editor of the *Bega Star* newspaper and the first Editor of the *Bega District News*. He occasionally printed her poems attributing them to 'Kate O'Connor'.

This is a poem by 'Kate O'Connor' written 100 years ago for the unveiling of the Bega Soldier's Memorial (see details in previous issue of 'Recollections'):

*A laughter-loving people
Australians still may be
But we must all remember
The men who kept us free.*

*Those boys who'd barely travelled
The golden path of youth,*

*The men who proved their manhood
In war's most bitter proof.*


*We bear our daily burdens,
The paths of toil we tread
Rememb'ring what we pledged them,
Our dear beloved dead.*

*With splendid steadfast courage
They faced the foreign foe,
They gave the key of freedom
To us - who mourn them so.*

*And we - who know their valour
Where shot and shrapnel spread
Shall keep their deeds in memory
Our Anzacs - who are dead.*

For many years, locals could only guess who 'Kate O'Connor' was. Many conjectured that she must have been the wife or sister of Captain O'Connor, the master of the local coastal steamer 'Cobargo' that regularly visited Tathra and other South Coast ports.

In 1927 a book of Kate's poems was published under the title 'Bega the Beautiful'. The money raised was donated to a fund assisting returned World War I servicemen.

Hilda died in September 1935, age 48. 



- 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

Jackie French

Having read this 'autobiography' of author Jackie French on her website, we concluded that anything we attempted would be second-rate:

'Jackie French AM is an Australian author, historian, ecologist and honorary wombat (part time); 2014–15 Australian Children's Laureate; and 2015 Senior Australian of the Year.

Jackie was born in Sydney grew up on the outskirts of Brisbane, and is still not dead. She has lived for more than 40 years at the top of the gorge in the Araluen Valley, where her ancestors lived too. Only one school she attended burned down. This was not her fault.

Some of Jackie's books have sold millions of copies and won over 60 awards in Australia and internationally. Others were eaten by the wombats.

Instead of hobbies she has: written over 200 books; built a house and power system; planted thousands of trees; eaten lunches with friends; read to her grandkids; tried to find her glasses; eaten dark chocolates, whatever fruit is in season and the odd feral species (some are very odd). She coined the term 'moral omnivore' to describe her diet. There is a dispensation for dark chocolate.

Jackie has studied over 400 wombats and been the (almost) obedient slave to a dozen of them. She is an enthusiastic cook married to an enthusiastic eater. If you visit do not bring cake. It is the duty of a guest to eat. Lots. Then eat some more. If you are worried about calories hike up the mountain and look for endangered species. But you will find more on a bush mooch than a bush walk. Watch out for the eight species of snake. Don't worry. They'll also be watching out for you.

Jackie writes for adults, young adults, and even younger humans, on history, ecology, and her award-winning historical fiction for all ages, but... write just one picture book about a wombat and no one lets you forget it. Ever.

Please do not mention *Diary of a Wombat* or the word 'prolific'. Or the story of how her first book was accepted because a wombat had left its droppings on her typewriter as, after 25 years of repeating it, she is bored.

Jackie is also dyslexic and patron of literacy programmes across Australia with a wide and deep – if accidental – experience in learning differences and methods and their outcomes for students, as well as a passionate advocate for equal-opportunity education. She still can't spell! **R**



Support South Coast History Society and *Recollections*

You can demonstrate your commitment to and support of South Coast History Society with a donation. \$25 or more will also provide you with membership of the Society.

It's easy: post your cheque to South Coast History Society, 90 Whitby Wilson Road, Quama NSW 2550, OR

deposit your donation in our account BSB 633 000 Account 158877472 (but please also email us that you have done so – southcoasthistory@yahoo.com), OR, if paying by Visa or MasterCard, call us on 0448 160 852.

And thank you in advance for your support. **R**

The Carp Street Stroll

We're often asked 'When will your next history-focussed walk along Carp Street, Bega be run?'

Well, the answer is on **Saturday June 15th from 10am to 11.15am.**

It's **FREE**, but we do ask that, if possible, you give a gold coin donation to support the South Coast History Society.

BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL. Just ring 0448 160 852 to reserve your place and to learn where the group will be meeting. **R**

Marie Narelle

Eva Mylott (who is featured in the forthcoming Second Edition of 'Extraordinary Histories') and Marie Narelle were cousins. Both became world-renowned singers – Eva as a contralto, Marie as a soprano. They occasionally performed together.

Catherine Mary Ryan (who became known as Molly) was born in 1870 near Temora. During her early schooling she was taught music and singing.

Molly's family moved to Candelo where she gained a reputation singing at concerts for local charities.

In 1891 she was married in Sydney, but returned to Candelo without her husband but with three small children about 1894. She became a music teacher in Candelo, often riding or travelling by horse and sulky to visit her pupils.

She was 'discovered' singing at Cobargo Catholic Church by Bishop Joseph Higgins, then the Auxillary Bishop of Sydney. She returned to Sydney where she received lessons from Madame Ellen Christian who had taught both Nellie Melba and Eva Mylott. She also opened a music studio in W.H. Paling's building (W.H. Paling then being Sydney's leading music retailer) in George Street.

Molly took the stage name 'Marie Narelle', the Narelle reputedly as a 'good luck' move from Aboriginal Queen

Narelle Merriman, the wife of Umbarra, or King Merriman, a leader of the Yuin nation.

Marie's specialty was singing Irish and Scottish ballads (hardly surprising, considering her Irish heritage!) and she became known as 'the Australian Queen of Irish Song'.

She was invited to sing at the closing of the Cork International Exhibition in 1902. In Ireland she received widespread acclaim with one opinion being that it 'took an Australian to teach the Irish to render their own songs.'


She then went to the St Louis World Fair as part of the Irish cultural delegation and, in 1906, made a wax cylinder recording for Thomas Edison.

In 1910 she settled in New York. The following year she remarried.

In 1925–26 she made a final tour to Australia which included a concert in Candelo.

Marie died in England in 1941. Her headstone is now in the grounds of the Temora Rural Museum after construction of a children's playground necessitated its

removal from what had previously been a churchyard.

Marie believed that it was 'the Australian personality that has made the Australian voice. We are a natural people ... free in all we do and say and think, and it is that freedom, I believe, that makes us good singers'. 



Now helping you hear, still helping you save

Audiology now available at Specsavers Bega



Visit [specsavers.com.au/hearing](https://www.specsavers.com.au/hearing)
Specsavers Bega Sapphire Marketplace Bega (near Woolworths) Tel 6492 5000

Rose Hunt

Rose Hunt (1882–1967) was a battler, but Rose saw the value of opportunities! For that, she deserves to be remembered.

In 1903 Rose Hannah Moffatt of Cobargo married Albert Edward Hunt. Albert was a miner who had been helping his father work the Gem Gold Mine at Womban. When Albert married, he took out a lease on the Moruya Silver Mine, which yielded both silver and gold, and he and Rose went to live at Dwyers Creek, west of Moruya. They also bought a twenty-acre allotment nearby.

When Rose was expecting their seventh child it was found that Albert was suffering from 'dusted' lungs, a disease to which many miners were prone before mines were adequately ventilated. Not long after the birth of their daughter, Albert died. He was only 47.

This meant that, in 1921, after eighteen years of contentment and security, Rose was left to provide for five children, a new baby and herself. She owned a small farm, certainly, and had a roof over her head but she now had no income with which to feed and clothe herself and her children. There was no child endowment, no supporting mother's pension, no government help whatsoever in those days.

Despite her grief, Rose set to and coped. She kept the farm going. She milked, separated it and made butter. She tilled the soil and planted vegetables, then watered them with a stirrup pump strapped to her shoulders. She went into the bush, burnt logs and bark and made charcoal.

Her children helped when they were not at school. They rounded up the cows. They collected fallen branches and they kept the wood box full of chopped wood. They rode into town with the butter in a basket and sold it door-to-door. They trapped rabbits and sold them, helped separate the cream, collected the vegetables. One son heightened the sides of the old cart and took sacks of charcoal in for sale.

When they were about 14 and 16, he and his brother used their home-made carrier to cart firewood for sale, bush firewood they had cut and sawn themselves. As the children grew Rose needed more space, so she built an extra room, cutting the logs and stripping the bark herself. Whenever the tanks ran dry she hauled water up from the creek in two kerosene tins attached to a shoulder yoke. Those children old enough would help, with buckets appropriate to their size.

When they became old enough the children attended the Dwyers Creek primary school. At first classes were held in a simple slab hut, but later a more substantial building was used. Although it was always a one teacher school (the teacher's wife, though, was expected to conduct sewing classes – but she wasn't counted!), at one stage there were thirty pupils at Dwyers Creek school.

The little settlement slowly grew during the 1920s. As well as miners, sleeper cutters and bark strippers came to live

there. More bark huts, more tents and several substantial buildings of logs appeared as the population increased.

Wondering how to increase her income, Rose noticed that many of the workers were single men who, after a long hard day, would arrive back to their tents tired and hungry and have to cook a meal for themselves. This she saw as an opportunity, so she converted the long back room of her house into a dining room and, using an 'anthill' bread oven she had built herself, and her camp oven, she cooked and served three course meals, accompanied by her home-made bread. All they could eat for 2/6 (25 cents)!

In her large soup kettle, hung over the open hearth, she made hearty soups and in her camp oven, hung the same way, she roasted meats and her home-grown vegetables. She made bread and cakes, pies and puddings in her bread oven.

The miners so appreciated her cooking it was not long before she had to employ two girls to help her.

Rose was insistent that everything be done properly. The silver was always polished and the wooden floor scrubbed white, as were the table tops. The hearth was whitewashed with pipeclay which the children found in pockets in the creeks and brought home in buckets.

Rose's day always started before dawn, yet she sat in the lamp light until quite late at night crocheting bodice tops for women better off financially than she.

Although her main concern was always to make enough money to feed and clothe her children and to give them a decent start, Rose had a strong community spirit. She was always ready to assist in the many trials that beset people living in the small, isolated area.

One thing that irked Rose was that after a week's hard work, she and her children, together with many of the other inhabitants of Dwyers Creek, had to trail into Moruya each Sunday to attend church. For her, this was just another problem to be solved. So, once again, she sawed poles, and cut 58 burrawangs for the roof. With these she constructed a small church at the front of her house. She made some stools and somehow obtained a little old pump organ. Services of various denominations were soon being held there, with the ministers travelling out from Moruya every Sunday.

Growing her own vegetables was not enough for Rose. She also grew her own fruit, putting in the orchard herself. In her eighties she was still supplying the families of her children! And her new potatoes were always ready by Melbourne Cup Day!

In what should have been her retirement with the children grown and gone their own ways, Rose Hunt gave up her home and went share-farming with her sons. When she finally acknowledged that even her capacity for hard work had limits, she moved into Moruya, channelling her energy into her vegetable and flower garden.

Rose Hunt passed away in Moruya in 1967. **R**

Rose Hunt's story was taken from 'Sixteen Women of Early Eurobodalla', courtesy Moruya & District Historical Society.

Ann White

Ann White arrived in New South Wales from England with her two children on Christmas Eve 1846. Her husband, Isaac, had arrived in March 1832 as a convict, having been transported following a conviction for housebreaking. In 1842, 1846 and 1847 he was granted Tickets of Leave (these enabled him to work for himself in specified geographical areas), before receiving a Conditional Pardon (which gave him freedom to move anywhere within NSW) in 1848.

Ann and Isaac established one of the earliest, if not the earliest, businesses in the Bega district – a ‘shanty inn’ on the northern side the Bega River which a Government Gazette in 1851 recognised as ‘the first public house between Moruya and Pambula’.

By 1853 they had moved across the river (with the rest of the fledgling Bega township) and rented a building with three parlours, ten bedrooms, a kitchen, stables and a coach-house. It became the Victoria Inn.

In March 1854 Isaac was *killed by lightning one summer day while in the act of placing a cask of rum in position. The spirits caught alight, and the blaze threatened to destroy the primitive hotel, until ‘Scrammy-handed Ned’ extinguished it by the use of blankets and bedding.*

Ann took over the Victoria Inn, keeping her license until 1857 when it was not renewed *on the grounds of their having*

supplied Aboriginal natives with rum. After a public outcry and appeals to the Governor, her licence was reinstated in September that same year.

In late 1848 she moved the Victoria Inn to a new building *very substantially built of brick and contains three parlours, five bedrooms and servants’ rooms, tap-room and spacious bar, store room and pantry, with detached kitchen with a six-stall stable, wash-houses, stockyard, cow bails, calf pens, sties and...every convenience required.* This was reportedly the first brick building erected in Bega. It still stands today (although substantially altered).

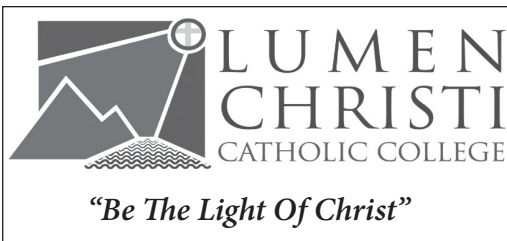
Ann White’s Victoria Inn effectively became the town’s civic centre – church services, auctions, meetings were held there, a room was used by the Commercial Bank whilst its own building was being constructed just down the road, and it served for a time as Bega’s Court House.

In 1876 Ann sold the Victoria Inn and by 1879 was operating the Tathra Hotel.

Ann was well-known for her kindness. *The good lady’s legitimate income was often overdrawn in consequence of years of open-handed hospitality to the poor and needy...and it is well-known that no poor wayfarer was ever turned away from the door by the kind old lady.*

After a good yet hard life, Ann died in 1888, age 81. 

More significant South Coast women – including extraordinary teacher Bridget Johnston, world-renowned classical musician Deborah Cheetham Fraillon, Australian Rugby League Captain Kezie Apps, and Milton’s ‘The Teddy Bear Lady’ Olive Maxwell – will be featured in the next issue of ‘Recollections’.



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 lccc@cg.catholic.edu.au

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**

Sabina Pike

Two women are often mentioned as having greatly influenced the history of Eden. One was Sabina Pike who, like Ann White, built a hotel in town and was a hotelier. The other was Flora MacKillop who never resided in or visited Eden, but whose death had a significant impact on the town.

From the 1890s, Sabina Pike (or 'Aunty Pike' as she was known) had operated Eden's Commercial Hotel and then Eden's Great Southern Hotel.

In 1904 she paid £500 for a one-acre allotment in a prime location on Imlay Street (Eden's main street). This was the highest price that had been paid for land in the town for more than 40 years.

She then had John Hines, a local builder who had previously built the impressive Bank of NSW building on the corner of Chandos and Imlay Streets, erect a two-storey, 43-room, 'up to date' hotel on this site. It was given the name 'Hotel Australasia'.

Sabina was prompted to make this investment because there was a strong belief at the time that Australia's capital would be sited at Bombala and Twofold Bay would become the Australian capital's port.

The Hotel Australasia opened in January 1906. A month later, Sabina became licensee – a capacity that she occupied for almost 20 years.


Aunty Pike's Hotel Australasia was soon renowned as 'one of the finest hotels in the State.'

Sabina was, clearly, an astute businesswoman. She promoted the hotel as 'the largest and most modern building in Eden' that was 'furnished most elaborately... with Mrs Pike having, apparently, spared no expense in placing in her new hotel a superior lot of furniture, which accords well with the style and finish of the building' and where 'everything possible (was provided) for the comforts of her guests.'

And after Australian Governor-General Lord Northcote stayed at the hotel in 1907 and NSW State Governor Sir Harry Rawson attended a public banquet at the hotel the following year, Sabina was soon advertising that the hotel was *Under the Patronage of his Excellency Lord Northcote, late Governor-General of the Commonwealth of Australia,*

and his Excellency Sir Harry Rawson, late State Governor of New South Wales.

Progressively improvements were made to the hotel – again, each extensively advertised: gas lighting was installed in 1911, making the building 'one of the best lighted on the coast'; a motor garage was added in 1916; 'a fine motor repairing pit' in 1916; electric lighting in 1922.

In June 1923 Sabina sold the hotel and moved to Sydney. But the following year she bought a 'seaside home' in Eden and returned. She remained in Eden until 1938 when she finally relocated to Sydney. 



Flora MacKillop

Flora MacKillop was the mother of Saint Mary MacKillop.

Flora was born in Scotland and, when age 24, she and her parents and siblings migrated to Melbourne.

The family was met at the wharf by Alexander MacKillop, also from Scotland, and within three months he and Flora were married.

The MacKillops had four sons and four daughters, none of whom was to marry. Mary was their eldest child.

Flora was a woman of faith. She taught her children to trust God and to see God's Will in all that happened in

their lives. By 1866, then aged 24 and having determined she wanted to live a penitential form of religious life, Mary founded a religious society, 'The Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart', its members vowing to live in poverty and dedicating themselves to educating poor children. In March 1875 she was elected Superior-General of the Sisterhood.

In 1883 the headquarters of the Sisterhood transferred to Sydney.

In May 1886, Flora was travelling on a steamer, the *Ly-ee-Moon*, from Melbourne to Sydney to help the Sisters at a fete, when the ship ran aground on rocks below Green

Cape Lighthouse. It rapidly broke up and sank. 71 of the 86 passengers and crew, including Flora, lost their lives.

Flora's body was retrieved three days later by those on board a government pilot steamer and was taken to Eden where it was lovingly laid out by the women of Eden in a room at the Pier Hotel.


Mary's cousin, John, then travelled to Eden to identify the body which was later taken to Sydney for burial in a grave beside those of Sisters of St Joseph.

When retrieved, Flora's body had been largely unmarked and the only item still on her body was a scapular (a religious necklace) identifying her as Catholic. Mary saw this as a sign from God and, as thanks to the Eden community for their care of her mother's body, she decided to send several

Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart to Eden to establish a school.

In August 1891, three sisters arrived to open the school and convent. Initially two composite classes were conducted at either end of a Church that had been built in the 1860s. A convent, large enough to cater for a small number of boarders, was built next to the Church.

Mother Mary was to make two visits to the school – the first in March/April 1899 and the second in August 1901.

The Eden school operated until 2013, when it became part of Lumen Christi College at Pambula Beach that now provides a Catholic education to students from Kindergarten to Year 12. 

Sister Pearl Corkhill

Elizabeth Pearl Corkhill was born on 11 March 1887 at Tilba Tilba. She was the second of three children of William Henry Corkhill, a grazier, cheesemaker and amateur photographer, and his wife Frances.

Pearl grew up on her father's property, and received her early education from a governess. She later attended Tilba Tilba Public School. After training at Burilda private hospital in Summer Hill, Sydney, she graduated as a general nurse in 1914. On 4 June 1915 she joined the Australian Army Nursing Service, Australian Imperial Force, as a staff nurse.

She then served in Egypt and in France. From June to August 1918 Pearl was attached to the 38th British Casualty

Clearing Station, near Abbeville, France. During the week of the 27th July the CCS experienced two German air raids. Pearl Corkhill was on night duty at the time but 'she continued to attend to the wounded without any regard to her own safety, though enemy aircraft were overhead. Her example was of the greatest value in allaying the alarm of the patients.' For her 'courage and devotion' she was awarded the Military Medal, becoming one of only seven Australian nurses to receive that award during World War I.

She was to write home that she would have to face 'old George and Mary [King George V and Queen Mary] to get the medal' and that it would cost her a new mess dress as her old one was worn out. However, she never visited



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*

Buckingham Palace to receive her award, and the medal was finally presented to her in 1923 by Lord Forster, Australia's seventh Governor-General.

Pearl Corkhill returned to Australia in March 1919 and her AANS appointment was terminated on 22 June. She then held various private nursing positions both in Australia and overseas until, in 1951, she was appointed Senior Sister at Bega District Hospital. Ten years later, she retired to Akolele, overlooking Wallaga Lake.

She was highly respected in the district and was often asked to preside at local events. A skilful horsewoman, she led a parade of returned soldiers and gave a speech at the Cobargo Show in May 1919, and in 1975, when she was 88 years old, again led a parade on horseback at the Cooma Show.

In her old age, Pearl Corkhill sorted and captioned about 1,000 glass plate negatives of photographs taken by her father before donating them to the National Library of Australia. These photographs provide a rare and extremely valuable record of life in a small but thriving rural community at the turn of the twentieth century. In 1983 the Library published *Taken at Tilba*, a selection of seventy-eight of these photographs.

Pearl Corkhill died on 4 December 1985 at Dalmeny and was buried in Narooma cemetery. She had never married. Her Military Medal and other service medals are held by the Australian War Memorial in Canberra. 



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

A04728

ezyprint

DISPLAY BANNERS

BUSINESS CARDS

POSTERS

INVOICE BOOKS

FLYERS

COLOUR COPYING

A-FRAMES

DESIGN SERVICE

POSTCARDS

JUST A FEW
OF OUR
SERVICES



AND SO MUCH MORE!

sales@printmadeezy.com.au

(02) 4476 1824

'Kitty' Porter

'Kitty' Porter was another South Coast nurse who served with distinction in World War I but, unlike Pearl Corkhill, she was not to enjoy a long and fulfilling life upon her return to Australia.

Katherine ('Kitty') Porter was born in Little Forest, near Milton, in 1882.

She trained as a nurse at Sydney Royal Hospital under the surname of Lawrence, her grandmother's maiden name, because there was already another Nurse Porter enrolled at the hospital for training.

She then worked as a sister at Sydney Hospital until she decided to enlist in the Australian Army Nursing Service in April 1915. By that time, she had become engaged to marry a Dr Bullock from Sydney.

Kitty served in Egypt during the Gallipoli campaign then in France at the No 2 Australian Casualty Clearing Station near Ypres during the bloody Somme campaign, and on ambulance trains that transported wounded men away from the front. She also spent time at the general hospital in Boulogne where she was promoted to second in command of her hospital unit.

In April 1918 she was in the town of Roye on the Somme when she narrowly escaped capture by an advancing German army. In a rush to leave, she had to abandon all her personal effects and her diaries. For her tireless work in the evacuation of the injured she was Mentioned in Despatches by General Sir Douglas Haig.

Kitty returned to Australia in April 1919 and was greeted with a large public welcome-home celebration in Milton in June.

Kitty was to become Matron of the Randwick Military



Hospital. However, she contracted Influenza (one of about a quarter of Australians who were to do so) in the 1919 Influenza Pandemic and died on 16 July 1919, aged only 35 and before she could marry Dr Bullock.

She was buried with full military honours in Sydney's Waverley Cemetery.

Kitty was posthumously awarded a Royal Red Cross, a British Military honour presented only to women *recommended for special devotion and competency in their nursing duties with the Army.* **R**

Sister Bernice Smith

Bernice Smith was born in Bega in 1903. Her father, Walter Smith, was Editor of the Bega newspaper for 47 years.

Bernice attended St Joseph's Convent School in Bega before moving to Sydney to train as a nurse at St Vincent's Hospital. She then worked for the Benevolent Society and the Royal Hospital for Women before returning to Bega in 1930.

She worked as a midwife and nurse at Bega Hospital before electing to practice as a private nurse, caring for people in their homes. She delivered over 2,000 babies and became known as 'the Florence Nightingale of the Far South Coast', attending to patients and mothers-to-be at all hours of the day and night.

Bernice also had a keen interest in history, and started collecting objects of local significance or with interesting local stories attached to them. It is said that, knowing what was in the homes of those who were her patients, she would occasionally offer to waive her usual fees if she was given pieces that she had spotted and was wanting to add to her collection. Being very well respected, her requests were often met.

Ultimately, her own private collection became the basis

of the Bega Pioneers' Museum's now-extensive collection of artefacts from Bega and the surrounding districts.

Bernice was instrumental in setting up the Bega Valley Historical Society and the Bega Pioneers' Museum which, under her guidance, moved into what had originally been the historic Bega Family Hotel building (erected c 1858 and now the second-oldest surviving building in Bega) in April 1977.

Bernice's elder sister, Leila, had been Head of English and History at Bega High School. When she retired, she worked with Bernice at the Museum.

Bernice Smith was awarded a MBE in 1969.

She died in July 1980, at the age of 76. The Sister Bernice Smith Memorial Playground in Minyama Parade, Bega, perpetuates her memory. **R**



Dagmar Berne

Dagmar Berne was born in Bega in 1865 and lived with her family in Denmark House (named by her father, Frederic, after the land of his birth) at the lower end of Auckland Street, down from the Bega Primary School.

When Dagmar was about ten years old, her father drowned. He was an auctioneer who was washed from his horse near Frogs Hollow whilst riding back from a land sale at Candelo. Her mother subsequently remarried.

Whilst in her teens, Dagmar's stepfather also died and the family of eight children moved to Sydney. From this point, Dagmar's links with the South Coast end – but her interesting story does not!

At seventeen she left school to privately study science. Along with her younger sister, Florence, she then prepared to open a private girls' school. However, a few days before the school was to open, Dagmar received notification that she had passed the entrance examination to Sydney University. Florence went ahead and opened the school on her own.

Dagmar entered Sydney University in 1885, studying Arts for a year before transferring to study Medicine. She then became Australia's first female medical student.

At the end of her first year in medicine, Dagmar obtained Honours in Botany, Chemistry, Zoology and Anatomy. However, thereafter she was less successful – possibly because she lacked a strong grounding from her secondary education in science, or perhaps because the Dean of the School of Medicine, Professor Anderson Stuart, did not want women medical graduates.

In 1888 Dagmar met Dr Elizabeth Garrett Anderson of Britain (the second woman in the world to gain registration to practice as a doctor) who was on a lecture tour of Australia. She invited Dagmar to move to Britain to work in an all-women hospital that she ran.


In 1889 Dagmar joined the Royal Free Hospital, a teaching hospital, and then completed her studies at the University of London. She qualified as a doctor in 1893

then worked for two years at the North Eastern Fever Hospital in Tottenham, London.

On January 9, 1895, Dr Dagmar Berne registered with the Medical Board of New South Wales. She was the second woman to do so. (The first, Dr Constance Stone, also had to study overseas to obtain her degree.)

Dagmar set up a practice in rooms in Macquarie Street, before moving to and practicing in Trundle, NSW.

Dagmar Berne died of tuberculosis in August 1900.

To this day, an award is presented at Sydney University honouring Dr Dagmar Berne. It is presented to the female medical graduate obtaining the highest marks in her final year. No doubt, every year Professor Anderson Stuart turns in his grave! 




Is Your Community Group Looking for a Guest Speaker?

As part of our remit to publicise and share the history of the South Coast, South Coast History Society provides guest speakers to community groups of 15 or more attendees in the Kiama to Eden area. And we're now taking bookings for the August to November period. Simply call 0448 160 852 to discuss arrangements.

We can talk about South Coast shipping, or significant women from the South Coast, or broadly about the South Coast's extraordinary history and how it is being preserved, or (within reason) might be able to discuss some other topic of particular interest to your group. And

we always invite questions (which we're not always able to answer!) from those attending.

We necessarily limit the number of talks we can provide to one each week so, if your community group is interested in learning more about the South Coast's fascinating history in the next few months, contact us today – because tomorrow may just be too late!

...and, we notice ABC Radio has picked up part of a talk we've given to community groups lately. Just google *Australia's unluckiest lighthouse* –ABC listen. 

Araluen Embraces Its History

The (relatively small, relatively isolated) Araluen community has embraced its rich and unique history by recently creating an on-line 'virtual museum' – an appropriately 21st century, very practical, initiative – and installing 14 signs along a History Trail around the village.

<https://araluenvalley-history.com.au> is certainly worth visiting, providing some very comprehensive information about the Araluen Valley and its communities. For example, its 'cemeteries' page currently has a list of 603 previous residents of the Valley and, for many, also reproduces their death notices that appeared in various newspapers.

The Araluen History Trail provides details about different aspects of life in the Valley – about gold mining and dredging, living on the land, Churches and Schools, the roles of Araluen's community halls and pubs (at one time there were 37 licensed pubs and numerous unlicensed grog shops serving a community of many thousands, most

of whom were hoping to make their fortunes from the gold to be found along the creeks in the area), sports and recreation, etc.. A map of the area showing the locations of all the information boards and a detailed history time-line have also been erected in the grounds of Araluen's Federal Hall.

The Araluen Valley community came together following the disastrous Black Summer bushfires and, appreciating the Valley's rich and unique history (the Araluen Valley was once one of Australia's most lucrative gold-producing areas), decided to undertake a thorough and systematic study of its history. An Australian Government Bushfire Recovery Grant was utilised to research the area's history, to develop the Araluen history website, and to instal the information boards on the History Trail. **R**



Have you considered emailing 'Recollections' to a friend?

We can supply a PDF file

Simply request a copy by emailing southcouthistory@yahoo.com

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

The Australian History Industry

Edited by Paul Ashton and Paula Hamilton

This book was published a couple of years ago, but (sorry) I've only just become aware of it.

Basically, it is a collection of 22 essays by academics (one of its major shortcomings). Some are quite interesting and contain interesting observations, others (for example, essays on Indigenous 'genocide' [today, a predictable inclusion!], child removals from families, gender and sexuality, migrants and refugees) seem to have been included as padding, because – apart from identifying areas of history that might benefit from more attention – they seem to have little to do with the Australian history industry.

So what caught my eye?

History in Universities (or 'The Academy' as academics seem to prefer to call themselves). The Academy ('a rather dull, worthy and self-obsessed lot...who steadfastly insist that history should be left to the professional historians' is how one contributor described it) are the self-appointed arbiters of what is considered 'history' and how it should be recorded.

Interestingly, there are only 517 'academic historians' employed in our 42 Australian universities (and 173 of these – a third of them – are in just 4 universities: Macquarie, Sydney, ANU, Australian Catholic University. [These are mid-2020 figures]).

Most of the histories they produce or are responsible for (such as theses by their students) are written with The Academy as their target readership, so most never reach wider (yet potentially interested, I'd suggest) audiences.

The Academy, however, also has the responsibility of training Australian historians. They are attempting to do this, seemingly, with little encouragement and support. For example, in June 2020 the federal government introduced a Jobs-Ready Graduates package that dramatically increased fees for humanitarian degrees from \$6,800 per year to \$14,500 per year and reduced its own contribution per full time student from \$6,116 to \$1,100 – hardly a vote of confidence for those teaching history at universities. The

ramifications of the Covid-19 lockdowns and the very slow return of (the financially lucrative) overseas students have further seriously exacerbated the challenges now faced by Australian universities.

History in Schools. History is a compulsory subject for Australian students up until Year 10 – but history in high

schools is now not taught as a separate subject, having been subsumed into wider study areas such as Humanities and Social Science or Studies of Society and Environment (the latter 'could be regarded as a general knowledge timetable filler able to be staffed by 'out of field' teachers').

Surveys indicate that more than half of history teachers (about 25% of whom have not been trained to be history teachers, so they are teaching 'out of field!') are unhappy with the amount of teaching time allocated to the subject.

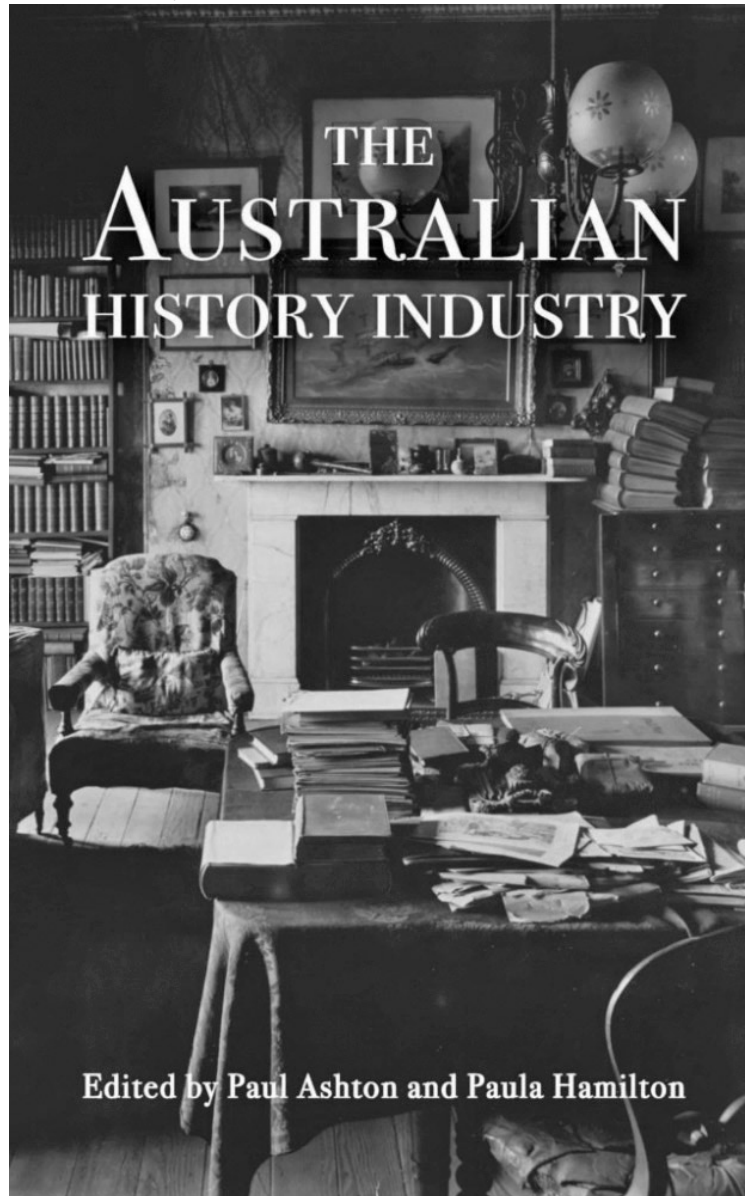
Only 26.5% of students (in 2020) continue to study history in Years 11 and 12 – and this dropped significantly in NSW from 33.8% in 2006.

The problem (apart from history not being taught as its own subject, and not enough time being allocated to the teaching of the subject) seems to be that history

is not perceived as being as vocationally-oriented as other subjects, and the academic-orientation of the subject has limited appeal to students not headed for university. 'What does seem evident is the need for more courses with a public or applied history orientation if we are to cater for larger number of senior students.'

So, it could be argued, all is not well for history in our education institutions.

Community History or, as it is referred to in this book, Public History (which, basically is any pursuit of history outside of the universities; however, ironically, the Australian Centre for Public History is run by the University of Technology Sydney). About 350 people are employed in Australia as professional historians other than in universities



or schools (so, by museums, by organisations such as the National Parks and Wildlife Service, by a few councils, within companies, and a handful who professionally write histories for publication; so employment prospects in Australia for professional historians are not great).

There are also 1,200 history societies (including small museums and heritage groups) in Australia, with their interest in community history being dominated (if one sets aside the pre-occupation that many have with collecting and displaying objects) by a focus on local history. Most of these have been established within the past 50 to 75 years; most are perceived as (and in reality are) demographically *'heavily skewed towards members age 60 and upwards, predominantly from Anglo-Australian backgrounds...congregated around collections of relics'*.

Whilst community history is the area in which Australian history seems to be most 'alive and well', research is undertaken by members in only 20% of history societies and *'sales of local and specialist histories can be measured in the dozens'*, with closures of local bookshops and newsagencies, local newspapers, and special-interest magazines in recent years leaving very few commercial outlets available to community historians.

Politicians and History. (Regrettably) politicians have the most influence on how history is undertaken and presented in Australia.

In recent times, Prime Ministers Keating, Howard and Morrison have all had strong but different views on what Australian history should emphasise or seek to portray; Howard, for example, *'wanted Australians to be untroubled by the less savoury aspects of Australian history...wanted Australians to feel 'comfortable' about their past, present and future...[and] reaffirmed a traditional Australian identity through his appeal to a less confronting Australian history. The triumphs of the early colonists, the heroic deeds of Gallipoli, the genius of Bradman and the good-ness of Weary Dunlop were staples...[and] he remained troubled by the teaching of Australian history throughout his time in office... [and] attempted to impose a more uplifting curriculum [in schools]'*.

Budgetary and policy decisions constantly have enormous impacts: changes to university fee structures, funding cuts to universities, the underfunding of institutions such as the National Library (which, in turn, seriously threatened the continued viability of *Trove*, now the most singularly valuable Australian history resource), the National Archives, the ABC and SBS, and the Morrison government's determination to then spend \$550 million+ on extensions to the Australian War Memorial that many believe are unnecessary (one enquiry received 601 submissions – 3 were in favour of the extensions, 8 were neutral, 590 were against the work and expenditure!) are examples.

The present, the future. Most history today is (still) recorded and disseminated in print – in journal articles, in booklets, in books.

When it comes to publishing their work, academics still

look on print as their preferred 'gold standard'.

Trove (the National Library's electronic, on-line search facility), in the past decade or so, has dramatically changed the Australian history landscape. It has made history (both primary and secondary sources) easily and freely available to everyone with access to a computer, and it was an absolute saviour to researchers during the Covid-19 lockdown.

Trove (and other search facilities such as the National Archives of Australia's *RecordSearch*) has effectively made indexes or catalogues obsolete – they've gone, or are rapidly going, the same way as encyclopedias.

But now material that is on *Trove* (newspapers, for example) is more likely to be utilised by history researchers than other material (other newspapers, for example) that is not on *Trove*.

And the Melbourne *Argus*, one of the few Australian newspapers that has been entirely digitised and uploaded to *Trove*, has suddenly become one of the most cited sources by historians! This vividly illustrates, to restore balance, the necessity and urgency of now adding much more Australian historical 'source material' to this valuable facility...but the question then is, where is the funding to come from to enable this to occur?

The study of history was originally the preserve of an elite – those with learning, resources and money, and available time. Today, ordinary people have immediate and ready access to historical sources, and to the web and social platforms such as Instagram and Twitter. This will further *'shake up outmoded institutions and bring the plurality of unheard voices to the fore'*, whilst simultaneously allowing new 'amateur historians' to easily and immediately publish histories and things like historic photographs.

Not all of these, of course, will present 'accurate history' because these 'amateur historians' are not always seeking *'to uncover the way the world is [or was], but instead are aiming to promote the way participants want it to be or find the most exciting'*.

An increasing challenge for the future, therefore, will be distinguishing fact from fiction in 'histories'... 'histories', though, that will certainly be consumed by a greatly increased proportion of the population.

The Australian History Industry is available in paperback from around \$40.

Review by Peter Lacey

Paul Ashton, Adjunct Professor of Public History at the University of Technology Sydney, and Peter Lacey, President of the South Coast History Society, will be two of the three principal speakers at a 'Family History – Community History' mini conference on Saturday 10th August from 9am to 1pm. It's being held in Canberra and has been organised by Family History ACT, but you can join it on-line via Zoom. For more details and to register go to www.familyhistoryact.org.au

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