The road to the South Coast—actually the Brown Mountain Road from Nimmitybelle to Bega, c. 1925.
Photo courtesy Bega Valley Historical Society

The First Word

History belongs to everybody.

The NSW South Coast's history is incredibly interesting. I personally have had fun discovering some of it and have been amazed how many other people are similarly interested in the area's history.

The enthusiasm of numerous locals ultimately led to the establishment of the South Coast History Society.

The South Coast History Society aims to be a 'modern' history society. Its primary objective is to share our discoveries with as many others as possible. And, wherever possible, at no cost!

To succeed we need YOUR support. There are many ways you can help – these are all outlined on page 7.

Meanwhile, we hope you'll also learn some interesting bits and pieces about our local history from this modest magazine – the South Coast History Society's first accomplishment.

Peter Lacey

In the Beginning Was ...

Have a look around the South Coast. Our geology, our landscapes have had an enormous impact on our history.

But that geological history extends back some 500 million years! Here's a (very simplified) summary:

APPROX 450 MILLION YEARS AGO (IN ORDOVICIAN TIMES): Australia was part of the supercontinent of Gondwana (now broken up into Australia, Antarctica, India), the eastern coast of which was around present day Broken Hill - 900km west of today's south coast. Gondwana was mountainous, and vast amounts of sediment were being carried into a deep ocean trench that had formed when a tectonic plate in the Pacific Ocean was moving westwards towards and colliding with Gondwana. These sedimentary rocks - mostly clayey sandstone, shale and chert along with a small amount of volcanic basalt - make up most of the rocks we see today along our shoreline south of Durras.

Ongoing 'subduction' (the forcing of these deposited rocks under the Gondwana continental plate) gradually pushed them westwards, folding and faulting them and attaching or 'accreting' them onto Gondwana to become extensions to the land mass as a new mountain chain. For many millions of years rapid erosion and transport of new sediment into the ocean trench continued, followed by subduction and more cycles of accretion of the sedimentary rocks onto the east coast of Gondwana. Eventually Gondwana extended to at least midway across what we now call the Tasman Sea.

APPROX 390 MILLION YEARS AGO (IN DEVONIAN TIMES): The current South Coast area had become incorporated into Gondwana, and the massive pressures and temperatures that had characterized the earlier

The Glasshouse Rocks near Narooma (above) and Camel Rock near Bermagui are composed of Narooma Chert, a mix of sedimentary chert and shale deposited in Ordovician times, around 450 million years ago.

Magma rock formations at Bingie Bingie Point south of Moruya

mountain-building era had eased off. By this time fish had evolved – fossil fish now being evident in Devonian sedimentary rocks in the Eden region.

Granitic magma (liquid rock) intruded into the mountain chain, forming rocks that are loosely referred to as granites – including those from around Moruya that were used to face the pylons of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and to construct the Cenotaph in Martin Place in Sydney, as well as large areas of granite from Dignam's Creek down to the Victorian border and towards Cooma. The surrounding sedimentary rocks were squeezed and heated up to form tightly folded and commonly vertically-dipping shale, slate, meta-sandstone and quartzite.

Didthul (Pigeon House Mountain) and the Budawangs are remnants of horizontally layered Permian sandstones that once covered most of the region north of Durras.

APPROX 275 MILLION YEARS AGO (THE PERMIAN PERIOD): 295,000 years ago, the land surface north of Eurobodalla was so low that the sea spread across it to form the Sydney Basin. At the edges, coarse sediment was deposited from rapidly eroding hillsides, and from material being dumped by glaciers and from passing icebergs – forming thick sandstone sequences such as the Hawkesbury Sandstone that is a feature of many Sydney buildings, especially in the older parts of the city.

From time to time swampy forests with giant fern-like trees spread across the land, forming extensive coal measures. Those closest to the South Coast are in the Illawarra; coal has also been discovered in the Upper Clyde River Gorge, but it is too poor and too remote to be economically developed.

AROUND 240 MILLION YEARS AGO:
Some unusual igneous rocks at Bawley Point and Milton from this time show that the Earth's mantle was becoming unstable, probably marking the beginning of a process in which the crust was to split apart, with part of Gondwana being pushed eastwards by a new oceanic plate, and becoming Zealandia (a new microcontinent represented today by parts of New Zealand and the Lord Howe Rise).

Lava flows from nearby Gulaga (Mt Dromedary) formed the northern part of Montague Island offshore from Narooma

Further rifting from around 100 million years ago created a line of volcanoes along this rift. Gulaga (Mt Dromedary, between Narooma and Cobargo) was one of these volcanoes. It formed a volcanic cone three kilometres high which spread over a radius of at least 20km - so probably as far as Tuross Head.

In the 65 million years since it erupted, erosion has removed most of the lavas and ash deposits which surrounded the vents, but the harder granitic rocks near the cores of the volcanic vents remain at Gulaga and Najanuka (Little Dromedary). Montague Island is made up of volcanic rocks from Mt Dromedary: basalt lava flows form the northern half, and a granitic rock (used to construct the lighthouse) covers the southern part.

The origins of our present landscape also date back to around this time. The eastern edge of the new Australian continent was created by the rifting which

split Zealandia from Gondwana, forming a long steep cliff or escarpment around 100 million years ago - 'the Great Escarpment'. Subsequent erosion caused the crest of these cliffs to recede, forming todays coastal plains and hinterland (we know the coastal plains are this old because the Mt Dromedary volcano spread across these lower areas 65 million years ago, but not over the higher country to the west).

Guluga (Mt Dromedary) was once a volcano about 3km tall. 65 million years of erosion have removed all but the inner cores of its volcanic vents and those of nearby Najanuka (Little Dromedary).

Most of the prominent mountains rising from the coastal plains and hinterland are remnants remaining after erosional retreat of the Great Escarpment, because more resistant rocks at those places have slowed down the rate of erosion. At Mount Inlay for example, a layer of hard sandstone at the peak is expressed as a small 'pimple' in the mountain's profile, and Peak Alone (near Cobargo) is another example; Mount Durras is capped with basalt; Pigeon House Mountain is a remnant of the once extensive horizontally layered Permian sandstones which once covered most of the region north of Durras, but which have since been extensively carved and eroded into canyons and plateaus.

From around 40 million years ago (Eocene times): Since Australia separated from the other parts of Gondwana, it has been slowly drifting north at about 70mm per year. Slight warping of the continental crust associated with this drift has, from time to time, caused tension cracks to form and basalt dyke rocks have pushed into them in places. Some basalt reached the surface and then flowed down valleys - the top of Mt Durras has been formed from one such flow; Broulee Island another. These cracks are still evident on many coastal rock platforms as conjugate sets of fractures.

From Eocene times, until around 10,000 years ago,

the sea was much lower than it is today – around 125 metres lower, and the shoreline would have been at the edge of the Continental Shelf (about 20km eastwards of the current shoreline). Montague Island would then have been a hill more than 10km inland!!

As the sea level rose, lower parts of the river systems were drowned and previously high-energy erosional rivers became transformed into lower energy river systems choked with sediment, bordered by floodplains and marshlands.

The present-day coastal dunes and lagoons are less than 10,000 years old. Studies at Bengello Beach near Moruya Airport show that sand plains and swamps formed mainly between 6,000 and 3,000 years ago, and that the frontal dune has remained virtually unchanged for the last 3,000 years.

On the coastal plains where the terrain is not too steep, better soils over granitic and volcanic rocks have been cleared for agriculture; poorer soils over the usually steeper ground on Ordovician and Devonian greywacke, shale and chert are generally heavily timbered.

The profile of our shoreline is another indicator of the rock types and ages: jagged headlands and crags are made up of the old folded and faulted metasedimentary Ordovician rocks; square headlands and vertical cliffs are formed on the flat-lying Permian sedimentary rocks; sloping, boulder-strewn headlands are made up of Devonian granitic rocks.

Such are the clues that geologists use to piece together the fascinating geological history of our region!

A more comprehensive review of the geology of the South Coast prepared by Stewart Needham, including the identification of examples of places where significant geological evidence can be viewed today, is available on request and at no charge at southcoasthistory@yahoo.com.

An excellent guide to the most interesting geological sites along the coast between Narooma and Orbost, *Journeys in Australia's Coastal Wilderness – Earth History*, has recently been released and is available free from local Visitor Information Centres.

Lost: One Ship ... and the Truth!

The only enemy action that occurred in Australia and against Australia in World War I occurred on the South Coast of New South Wales. On the morning of 6th July 1917 the SS *Cumberland*, a cargo ship bound for England and laden with war materials, struck a mine off the coast between Merimbula and Eden. This mine had been laid by a German Raider, the *Wolf.* *

The crew of the *Cumberland* abandoned ship, expecting her to sink. But ten of the men later reboarded the ship and nursed it on to a beach on Gabo Island.

Temporary repairs were made to the hull of the vessel and an attempt (seemingly successful at first) was made to tow it into Twofold Bay. However, the 30 foot-long patch along the side of the vessel (consisting of four layers of canvas with wool packed between them) shifted and the *Cumberland* sank 15 miles off Eden on 11th August 1917.

"*It was a thrilling sight, the sinking of the Cumberland. She went down bow first, just like the Lusitania ... as the vessel rose again slowly the propellers were seen. Again she sank, but on the next lift the watchers saw right under her. Finally, higher and higher rose the stern, and with a hissing, rushing sound, the Cumberland, almost vertical, rushed headlong to the bottom, disappearing amidst a rush of boiling, bubbling waters, rising 50ft above the sea.*" (*Southern Star*, 18.8.1917)

(1,852 tons of copper, zinc and brass ingots were recovered from the wreck in 1952.)

The story of the sinking of the *Cumberland* is itself an interesting part of our history – but the most interesting aspect of the incident is how it was subsequently reported.
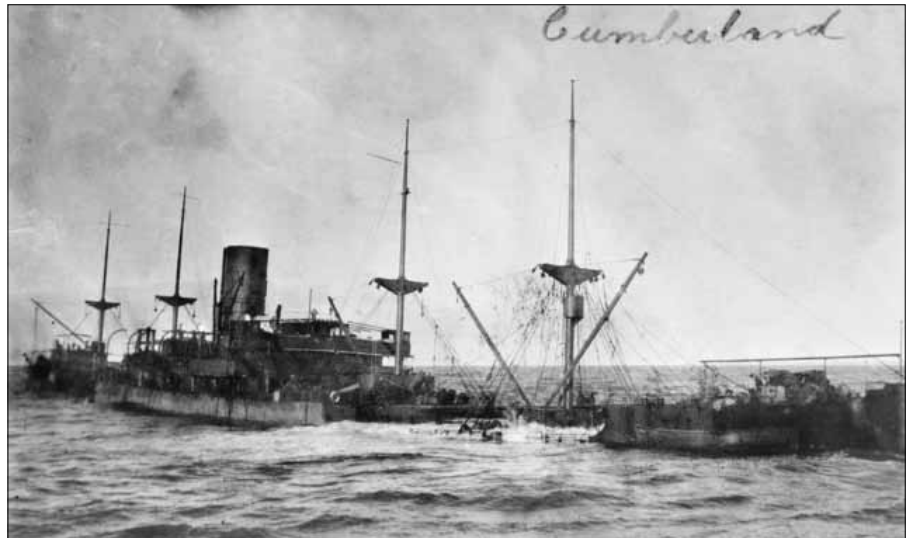
Prime Minister Billy Hughes was, at the time, attempting to introduce conscription in Australia to supply sufficient troops to replace the enormous losses that the Australian army had suffered in the Gallipoli campaign and on the Western Front. He was, in particular, waging a campaign against left-wing (and anti-conscriptionist) organisations such as the Australian branch of the International Workers of the World. So, when news was received that the *Cumberland* had hit a sea mine, an immediate ban was imposed on the press reporting the incident while the government examined the 'facts' before announcing, three days later, that the *Cumberland* had

The *Cumberland*, beached on Gabo Island in August 1917.

been damaged by an explosion that had occurred in the ship's cargo holds.

This was in spite of it being rapidly determined that the *Cumberland* had been holed as a result of an explosion outside of the vessel.

The explosion 'on board' the *Cumberland* was attributed to 'traitors' who had loaded the ship's cargo in Townsville, Bowen and Sydney.

The Sydney *Sun* offered a reward of £1,000 for the "conviction and punishment of the chief criminals." This was followed by offers of rewards of £1,000 from the NSW Government, £2,000 by the Australian Government, £1,000 by the British Board of Trade and £1,000 by the Queensland Government – each of these rewards reinforcing the Australian Government's assertion that the *Cumberland* had been sunk as the result of the work of 'traitors'.

The Minister for the Navy, Joseph Cook, when questioned in Parliament about the incident, further perpetuated the government's deliberate mistruths: "*the investigating officer had specially requested that no information should be published until he had completed his investigation. Everything pointed to foul play. He hoped that they would catch the fiends and punish them.*"

The story of sabotage by 'traitors' was then to assume a life of its own.

Even those who conducted a maritime enquiry and Australian navy officials – despite compelling evidence to the contrary – had great difficulty accepting any explanation other than the *Cumberland* had been damaged by traitors working on the Australian wharves.

(However, the inquiry ultimately reported "the

results of the investigations show conclusively that a mine was responsible for the damage."

But this finding, in turn, led to calls for the internment of Germans and those with German heritage who were living in Australia – the suggestion being that the mine had been laid by German sympathisers living in Australia!

The Melbourne *Argus* suggested "*it was apparent that mingling with local citizens are men either in the pay of Germany or associated with an unlawful*

The German Raider, the *Wolf*

organisation [the International Workers of the World had by then been declared an unlawful organisation] *doing all they can to injure the industrial and commercial interests of the Empire*".

The Sydney *Mirror* went further, observing "*the loss of the Cumberland behoves the authorities to be suspiciously on the alert. Nothing short of wholesale internment will allay public anxiety*".)

Information publicised about the *Cumberland*'s cargo was also a somewhat misleading:

"*WAR CHEST GOODS*
The hon. secretary of the Citizens' War Chest Fund stated yesterday that 9,600 pairs of socks and about 108 cases of milk, shirts, etc., from the War Chest Fund, were shipped in the Cumberland. Fortunately these were all insured. In addition, the fund had shipped in the same vessel 62 cases from battalions' comforts funds. The socks were portion of those received in response to the recent appeal."

The local Candelo newspaper, the *Southern Record and Advertiser* (which, incidentally, adopted a more-independent attitude to the War than most other newspapers of the time), presented a more accurate report of the incident:

"*The S.S. Cumberland's disaster off Gabo Island*

has a nasty look, like a Hun outrage – a hole 22 x 11 ft. was blown in her side, and a diver who went down to examine it reckons it was blown from the outside."

The authors of *The Wolf* describe this deliberate government misinformation campaign as "*a cautionary glimpse of how easily the press and the public can be manipulated towards xenophobic hatred when governments wield enormous powers of censorship and propaganda*".

The *Wolf* actually laid 30 mines off the NSW South Coast. It took some time for the government to admit there were mines in the area and to organise minesweepers to search the area. Several exploded when they drifted on to the coast, causing some concern to locals.

The *Southern Record and Advertiser* described one incident:

"*Reported that over a dozen mines have been picked up in the vicinity of Gabo. One brought up recently got away and finally drifted ashore near Black Head, where a number of men are camped procuring grass tree gum. When the mine hit the rocks, about midnight, it exploded, throwing pieces over 200 yards inland, many of which fell on the camp, and the men thought the enemy was bombing them. Needless to say there was a general stampede of men and horses.*"

* The story of the *Wolf* is, in itself, a fascinating story and is told in a book '*The Wolf. How one German raider terrorized Australia and the Southern Oceans in the First World War*' by Richard Guilliatt and Peter Hohnen (available at Bega Valley Shire Libraries). The *Wolf* was sent on a suicide mission to inflict damage on Allied shipping and, over a 15-month period, it travelled 64,000 miles, sank 16 vessels and captured another 14 ships, before returning to Germany with over 400 prisoners on board.
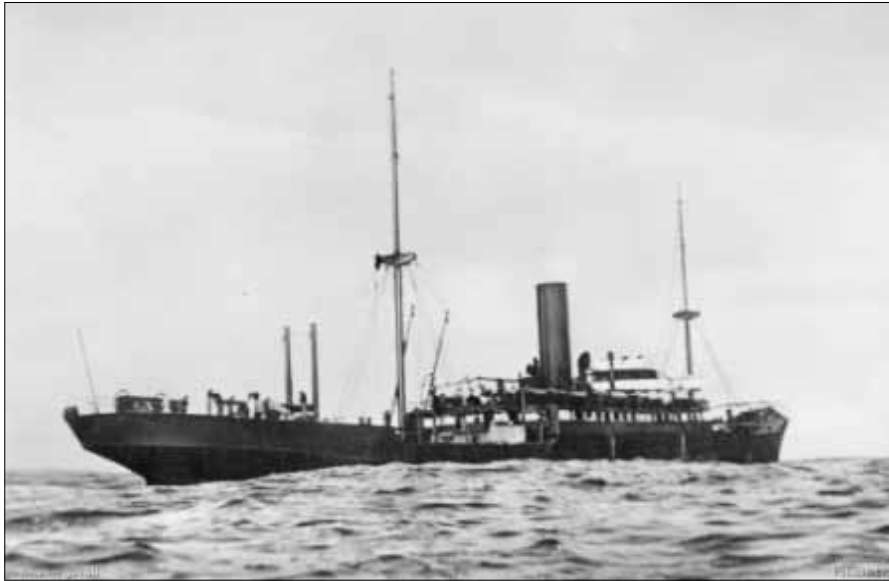
Further information:

The Wolf by Richard Guilliatt and Peter Hohnen

The Unreal Story of World War I and the NSW South Coast by Peter Lacey

A transcript of a recent talk at the Bega Pioneers' Museum *"Reporting the War: The Truths, The Lies"* is available free on request from southcoasthistory@yahoo.com.

History is ever evolving. If you have additional information about the sinking of the *Cumberland*, please email details to southcoasthistory@yahoo. com

SOUTH COAST HISTORY SOCIETY Inc.

southcoasthistory@yahoo.com   0448 160 852

Who are we? South Coast History Society, quite simply, aims to share the intriguing history of the NSW south coast with as many people as possible. We're doing this through our magazine/newsletter 'Recollections', through seminars, and through other innovative means.

   We're also encouraging research and writing of local histories, and are supporting the efforts of local history societies, local genealogical societies and local museums.

You want to be involved? We hope so!
The easiest way is to email southcoasthistory@yahoo.com with the message 'send me details'. We'll do that, and then keep you updated on what's happening.
   There is no cost, no obligation.

You want to be even more involved? Wonderful.
   Tell us how you'd like to help – for example:

☑ **Help us put 'Recollections' together** – *perhaps writing articles or doing research. Even simply by suggesting topics you'd like to see us include in 'Recollections'.*

☑ **Become a Member of the Society** — *it's just $10 a year. Deposit your $10 in South Coast History Society's account BSB 633-000 Number 158877472* AND *email a confirmation that you have done so, along with your contact details, to southcoasthistory@yahoo.com. (If you'd prefer to mail a cheque, first phone 0448 160 852).*

☑ **Attend South Coast History Day 2017** *on Saturday 25th February at University of Wollongong's Bega Campus (see details on page 19) and send us your 'Shooting the Shires' photographs (see detail on page 13).*

☑ **Help us with fundraising** *… or simply send us a donation to help fund our community-oriented activities.*

☑ **And particularly, tell your family, tell your friends** *about South Coast History Society. The more people who are interested, the harder we will work to share our fascinating history of the NSW South Coast!*

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Nerrigundah Gold!

Gold plays a significant part in the history of the NSW south coast – through gold rushes at places including Araluen, Nerrigundah, Pambula and Montreal, and for south coast ports such as Eden and Merimbula which were the starting points in a long journey for those seeking their fortunes on the Kiandra (Snowy Mountains) goldfields.

The goldfields at Nerrigundah (19km west of Bodalla) are perhaps lesser-known than other Australian goldfields. But a substantial amount of gold was recovered there … and this was considered to be "of very superior description, bright, coarse, nuggetty" and "the purest gold in the colony."

There is little at Nerrigundah today to remind us that this was once a thriving mining area – apart from an impressive obelisk recording (perhaps inevitably, as in any gold mining community!) a significant encounter with bushrangers. (See details in "The One Day Bushranger" below.)

Gold was officially discovered in Nerrigundah on 23th December 1860 by George Cook, Joseph Goodenough and William Crouch. The discovery was registered in Braidwood nine days later.

Within two months there were 200 to 300 hopeful miners on the ground – in a relatively small area of just 3 square miles extending up Gulph Creek (a tributary of the Tuross River). Many were to be well rewarded … and a report to the NSW Surveyor-General in mid-March 1861 suggested "*there will be room for 2,000 diggers at least and in the course of two or three months I have no doubt that nearly that number will be there. It appears to be an extraordinarily rich auriferous field.*"

Reaching the Nerrigundah goldfield was not particularly easy, an 1861 report on the area observing "*the country is so mountainous and broken that everything has to be taken in by packhorse. It is quite impossible to get a dray near the place.*"

Eventually the goldfields extended to cover an area of 10 square miles, with a population that may have topped 7,000. In 1866, when the population had dwindled to around 1,200, 150 rough buildings had been erected in the town, including numerous shops, a school, an independent courthouse, an independent police station and 7 hotels!

But not everybody was welcome. This discovery of gold and the initial settlement at Nerrigundah came soon after the Lambing Flat (Young) riots of November 1860 to September 1861, and at least one party of Chinese prospectors was met at Sandy Level

A dredge in the Nerrigundah goldfields. Photo: Moruya and District Historical Society

on the outskirts of Nerrigundah by the European diggers and they were given a severe beating with sticks and whips.

The Chinese, however, filtered into the area and settled north of the town in an area known as Fern Flat. Soon there were about 400 Chinese miners in the area, and one of the more substantial buildings in the township was Kee Chong's Chinese General Store.

A Department of Mines report in 1882 (15 or 20 years

Nerrigundah town in the 19th century. Photo: Moruya and District Historical Society

after much of the alluvial gold in the area had been recovered, and the gold escort from the town having been withdrawn as early as June 1865) noting *"the Europeans still continue to fossick into the old alluvial workings. The Chinese (being more co-operative) get the largest share of gold … there appears to be a very good field here for the energetic prospector, and also for the introduction of machinery to re-work the alluvial ground."*

That "machinery to re-work the alluvial ground" came in 1903 in the form of the steam-driven Tuross River Bucket Dredge which worked an area for half a mile upstream from the junction of Gulph Creek and the Tuross River until 1916 – shifting, for example, an incredible 260,000 cubic yards of material in 1906 alone. And then further dredging of the creek occurred in the 1920s and again in 1943–44.

Attention then turned from recovering the alluvial gold deposits near the surface of the ground to seeking gold from reefs further underground. A number of substantial shafts were sunk at locations in and around Nerrigundah (including the Mount Pleasant mine which dropped to a depth of 350 feet, 450 feet or

"I shall feel much obliged to you if you will impress upon the powers that be the necessity that we feel of having police protection. There are about 400 diggers already on the ground, nearly all of whom are doing well and numbers now coming in every day. Among them are a number of rowdies from Snowy River and Lambing Flat, who are going on in a most outrageous manner, striking and abusing almost everyone they meet, jumping claims, etc.. The other night they attempted to pull down my store and I was obliged to get a number of people with firearms to protect it. If we do not get protection I think that murder will most likely be the consequence. This is certain now to be a large and prosperous digging." –Letter from shopkeeper Ernest Hawdon dated 30th April 1861. The official reaction was *"I am inclined to think the complaints are a much exaggerated affair"* … but seven metropolitan police were sent to the area!
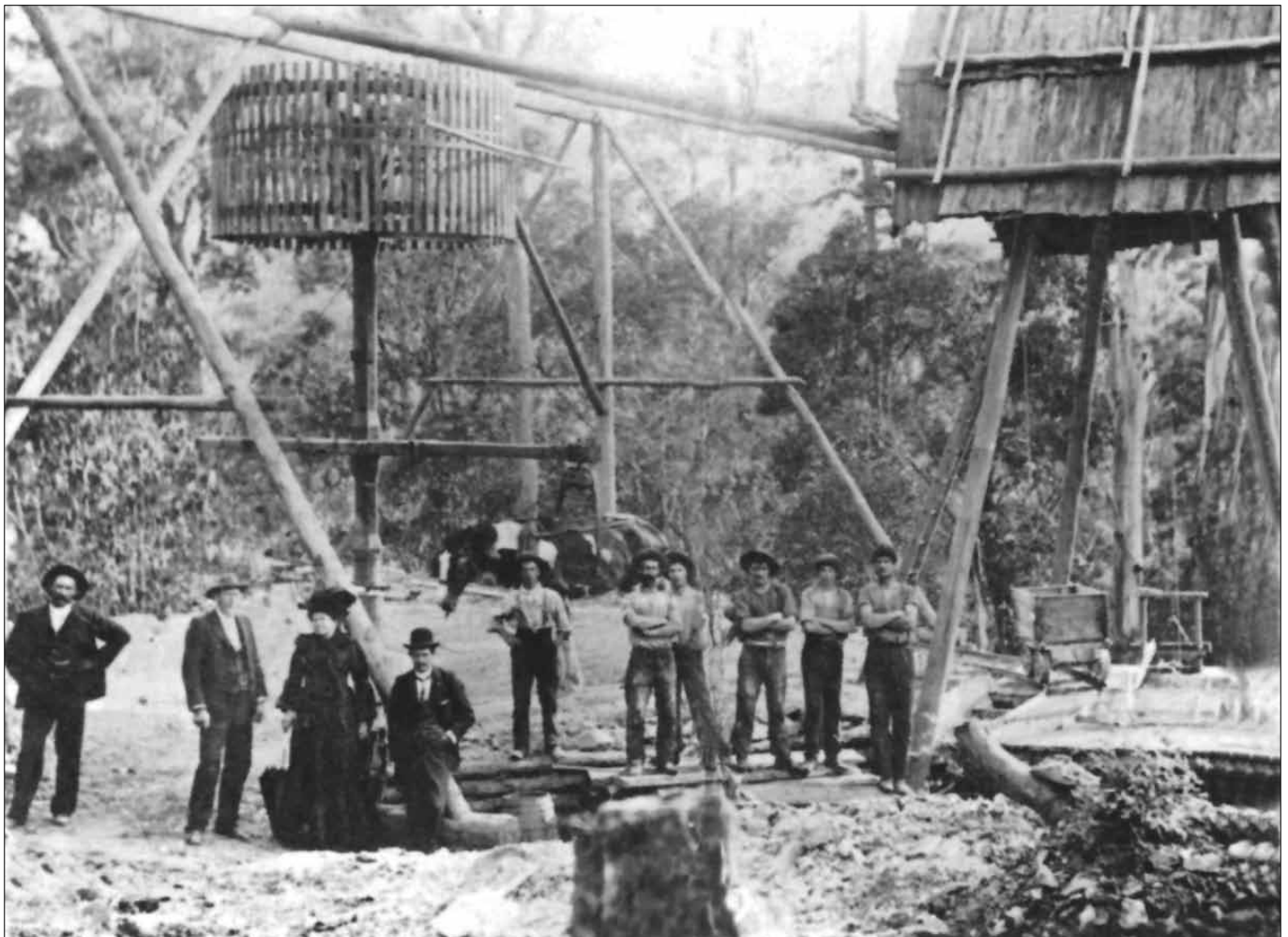
A scene at a mine, ground level. Note the two groups of people—the miners and the visitors, possibly mine owners. The horse provided power to lift the crates of ore to be transport on a small railway for processing. A rail truck can be seen towards the right of the picture. Photo: Moruya and District Historical Society

The Obelisk in Nerrigundah commemorating the bravery of Police Constable Miles O'Grady. The inscription reads: *'Erected by the Government of New South Wales in honour of Constable Miles O'Grady who on the 9th April 1866, while suffering from severe illness, single handed attacked five armed bushrangers and lost his life in the encounter, thus setting a noble example of bravery in the discharge of public duty.'*

500 feet – depending on which of the locals were to be believed – and the Utopia Mine that dropped to a depth of at least 260 feet).

Multi-head gold stampers were imported to crush the ore, and some ore was transported by packhorse to the Tinpot Battery and later by truck to the Utopia Battery which was sited 3 miles away on the banks of the Tuross River. (One of the two-head stampers from

the Nerrigundah area is now on display at Montreal Goldfields near Bermagui.)

Results were mixed as most reefs turned out to be quite short in length. However, a 1900 Department of Mines Report concluded "several new reefs have been discovered, and crushings have given very satisfactory results" with one new mine "*Utting and Party having a trial crushing of 23 tons, which yielded* [an amazingly productive] *91 oz of gold.*" Other challenges, though, were also noted: "*the principal mine is The Bumbo, but work was suspended for seven months of the year owing to the influx of water.*"

An attempt was even made in 1936 to recover gold from an open-cut mine on the banks of Bulimba Creek. This, however, proved to be unsuccessful and the open cut mine was abandoned in 1937.

The last remaining store in Nerrigundah closed in 1977.

Further information:

"*Mining. Gold and Silver on the Far South Coast and adjacent inland areas of NSW*" published by Moruya District Historical Society.

"*Eurobodalla. History of the Moruya District*" by H J Gibbney

"*Nerrigundah. An Anecdotal History*" by Maureen Burdett

Journal of the Moruya and District Historical Society Inc. Vol 18, No 1 (March 2016)

"*The Clarke Gang – Outlawed, Outcast, Forgotten*" by Peter Smith

Can you add to this information about Nerrigundah? Email details to southcoasthistory@yahoo.com

The NSW Police honour Constable Miles O'Grady in Nerrigundah in April 2016, on the 150th anniversary of his death.

South Coast History 101: A Timeline

Prior to 1770:   Peoples of the Yuin Nation populated the area from present-day Nowra, south to the Victorian border and west to Goulburn.

1770   Capt. Cook sighted the coastline

1797   Survivors from the ship-wrecked *Sydney Cove* walked through the area, reporting the fertile Bega Valley

1798   George Bass explored the coastline, visited and named Twofold Bay

1816   Bridal trail constructed down Brown Mountain

1822   Brown Mountain Bridal trail became "Postman's Track"

1828   W.D. Tarlinton discovered a route from near Braidwood to Cobargo and Bermagui

1828   First whaling venture established in Twofold Bay by John Raine (later taken over by the Imlay brothers, and continued in operation to 1846-1847).

1828   Francis Flanaghan became first farmer in Moruya district

1832   Peter, George and Alexander Imlay given Pastoral District of the Far South Coast for a squattage by Governor Bourke (over 1,500 square miles of land from Twofold Bay to Cobargo)

1841   Stewart Ryrie (a Monaro landowner) produced first map of the area

1843   Ben Boyd commences whaling at Twofold Bay, continuing until 1849

1843   Eden was surveyed and first land in the area was sold. Building of Seahorse Inn commenced.

1843   First cargo sent from Eden to London by Imlay brothers

1844   Ben Boyds's paddlesteamer commences mail service to Sydney

1845   A line of road constructed from the Monaro to Eden via Pambula

1847   Peter Imlay bought Tarraganda and Yarranung freeholds (near Bega)

1849   Population of Eden was 49, population of Boyd Town was 200

1849   Pambula school became one of the first National (government) Schools. Fees were 'twopence for each child, but not more than sixpence per week for each family unless they felt they could afford it."

1850   Eden – Sydney mail service commenced

1850   Moruya township established

1851   Great flood in Bega Valley claimed 17 lives

1851   First building in North Bega. First hotel at Yarranung

1854   North Bega town lots surveyed and sold

1854   Bega's Anglican school opened with 15 pupils

1855   Merimbula Wharf built by Twofold Bay Pastoral Association

1858   Illawarra Steam Navigation Company founded (the 'Pig and Whistle Line') which held a virtual monopoly on shipping on the NSW south coast and operated until the early 1950s

1859–1861 Eden became major embarkation point and provisioning centre for Kiandra goldfields miners

1860   Eden wharf built; Small wharf constructed in Tathra

1860   First Bega public schoolroom opened with 28 pupils

1860   Costing for 85-mile Cooma to Eden via Towamba horse-drawn railway (£255,000) and Cooma to Eden via Wolumla with branch line to Bega

1862   Current wharf constructed at Tathra. SS *Mimosa* was the first of the "Pig and Whistle" fleet

1862   Lighthouse built in Eden

1864   Eden Public School opened (Catholic school opened 1888)

1867   First Bank in Bega opened (Commercial Banking Company of Sydney). Photo below from 1887

1871   Ferry-punt service established across the Clyde River at Batemans Bay (later replaced by a steam ferry)

1872   Bega Catholic school opened with 72 pupils

1876   Moruya bridge opened (replaced 1900; was washed away in 1945; a 'temporary bridge' was then constructed and was replaced 1966)

1879   Tuross River bridge opened (collapsed 1954 and replaced 1957)

1881   Nowra Bridge opened (originally intended as a double track railway bridge)

1883   Bega Municipality declared

1884   £66,000 voted for construction of Eden to Bega railway line (survey undertaken 1886)

1885   Bega Municipal Gas Works opened – the first municipal gas works in NSW

1890   Coach service established from Batemans Bay to Moruya and Bodalla

1891   First oyster leases in Pambula

1892   Moruya Cheese factory opened

1893   Railway to Bomaderry opened (with view to extension to Nowra, Jervis Bay and possibly Eden)

1894   Privately-owned butter factory opened for NSW Creamery Butter Coy at Yarranung

1899   Bega Co-operative Creamery Company established

1900   Opening of new Bega Co-op

1903   Sleeper-cutting industry commenced near Eden

1907   First private car in Bega

1908   SS *Bega* sank off Tathra

1909   William Hope (Billy) Balmain commenced passenger service to Cooma via Brown Mountain

1911   Car service commenced Bega to Moruya (connecting with Moruya to Nowra service)

1913   Mail service commenced between Bega and Cooma

1921   First aeroplane landed at Bega

1924   Bombala to Eden railway proposed and surveyed

1924–1931 Granite Town (population 300, with 64 pupils enrolled in its school) on north side of Moruya

River produced granite for pylons of Sydney Harbour Bridge and Sydney's Cenotaph (earlier the Loutit quarry on the south side of the river supplied the granite for Sydney GPO and the Bank of NSW head office)

1925   Candelo to Bega bus service established by Dick Edwards

1927   Stafford brickworks established at Kalaru

1929   Pioneer Motor Service (bus/car) established from Bega to Nowra to meet the train

1930s   Whaling in Twofold Bay ceased

1931   Narooma Bridge opened

1936   Brogo River Bridge opened

1949   Eden tuna cannery opened

1956   Batemans Bay Bridge opened (the previous financial year the ferry that it replaced had made 50,149 trips, carrying a total of 233,073 vehicles).In the photo of the bridge above the vehicular ferry still in operation.

1975   Bega River Bridge opened. Photo below shows the bridge and the vehicular ferry still operating.

"A Town Without a Band is Like a Man Without a Soul"

—Ald Roy Howard, Mayor of Bega, 1979

Alderman Howard's observation perfectly encapsulates the unique relationship that the Bega Band has enjoyed with the Bega community for well over a century.

Brass bands emerged in England in the early 19th century. They rapidly became an integral part of many towns, Churches (notably the Salvation Army from the 1870s) and of industrial concerns (especially the collieries, with the Grimethorpe Colliery Band being perhaps the best-known of those that have survived).

They represented local solidarity and the aspirations of then rapidly-growing centres … and were encouraged because band membership and band commitments kept workers occupied during their leisure hours and, therefore, away from trouble.

This tradition was transferred to the South Coast of NSW with brass bands being formed at various times in Bega, Berry, Cobargo, Cooma, Eden, Jellat Jellat, Kiama, Milton, Moruya, Nerrigundah, Nowra, Pambula, among other towns.

Today brass bands still perform in Bega and Moruya – albeit as slimmed-down versions of their former selves.

Bega Town Band, 1931. Photo: Bega Valley Historical Society

At its height, the Bega Band attracted around 30 parading musicians, and in the second half of the 1940s it amassed an impressive collection of trophies from various band competitions.

Bega has had a town band from at least as early as 1872, because in January that year "*Mr Clarke (M.L.A.) came down on the steamer on Wednesday … Mr Rixon's four-horse conveyance, carrying the Bega Brass Band, and a number of Mr Clarke's friends went out to Frog's Hollow to meet him and … the procession drove through town and halted at*

Underhill's hotel where Mr Clarke put up." (*Bega Gazette* 19.1.1872) and in February "*the Bega Brass Band kindly attended* (the inaugural Bega Agricultural and Pastoral Society Show) *in the afternoon, and their dulcet tones were highly appreciated by the visitors*" even if "*the proceedings* (at a Show Society dinner at 7pm that evening in the Bega School of Arts Hall) *were somewhat hurried and the customary amount of*

Bega Town Band outside the Kings Theatre, Bega, 1949–59. Photo: Bega Valley Historical Society

speechifying had to be omitted as the hall was wanted for the Band's Ball at 8.30pm" … prompting the Editor of the *Gazette* to note "*in fact, it is painful to record that we never had the misfortune to attend a more disorderly dinner, and we sincerely trust it will never again be our lot to witness so much riot at any public social gathering*"!!! (*Bega Gazette* 23.2.1872)

In 1882, a Salvation Army officer named Ross McKinley organised "*The Bega Ethiopian Mistrels* (to give a performance in the town's Lyceum Hall at which) *the local songs and jokes are 'side-splitting' and a good night's entertainment must result. For the sake of the Band, for whose benefit the entertainment is given, a bumper house should greet the amateurs.*" (*Bega Gazette* 8.7.1882)

Several years later, however, the Band disbanded.

The current Bega Band can be traced back to 1899. Its history includes some interesting anecdotes:

The Band played outside the Kings Theatre every Wednesday night from 1936 until the late 1960s (each bandsman then being given free tickets to the theatre for themselves and their partner). The most regular attendee at their performances was 'The Old Brown Dog' who would turn up, wherever the band might be performing in town, and 'sit in the middle of the band
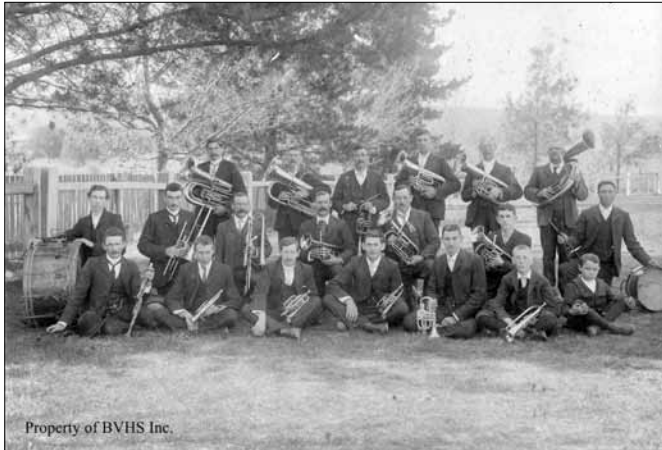
and enjoy the show' – until suddenly it became a 'no show.' None of the bandsmen claimed to ever know who owned 'The Old Brown Dog' or where it lived.

The Bega Band marched in a parade in 1961 at the Goulburn Lilac Festival. It was positioned immediately behind the local Pony Club resulting, as its history records, in its 'marching lines then becoming very wavy.'

The Bega Band in relaxed mode about 1920. Photo: Bega Valley Historical Society

The Band also played at the official opening of the Eden Harbour breakwater. On the way home, one of the cars carrying the bandsmen broke down at the top of the hill coming out of Merimbula. Another bandsman's car was used to push it to Wolumla (actually, to the Wolumla Pub!) where it was met by the NRMA. 'It took three men to sit on (the broken-down car's) boot to make our bumpers level, so I pushed them up hills, along flats and let them coast down the hills to Wolumla. No one was hurt or killed (don't know how) and there were no police about,' one bandsman records. The occupants of both cars 'stayed a while at the pub, then all (about 9 of them) crammed into my car to go home.'

Every Christmas morning until 1976 the bandsmen met at their hall at 6am, were divided into two bands (East and West), climbed on the back of trucks (often loaned by Ottons Cordials), and roamed the streets playing Christmas Carols, 'stopping for refreshments at designated homes'. The drummers would walk beside the truck collecting donations – sometimes cash, sometimes Christmas cheer! Then there would be a welcome break at Tom, and later, Jack Manning's home for 'drinks and a massive breakfast' (where they would be joined by their wives and girlfriends), before they proceeded to Bega Hospital to play a program for the patients, and then enjoy a lunch of sandwiches, chicken, cakes 'and other goodies.' The comment is recorded that 'those fellows seldom saw their kids opening their Christmas presents' and that family

Christmas dinners were, of necessity, postponed until later in the day.

At various times the Band was particularly busy. In World War I it led processions for each of the numerous locals who had enlisted when they were leaving for Sydney, it met them and accompanied them into town on their returns, and it played at a seemingly never-ending string of 'patriotic' (recruiting, fundraising, presentation) functions throughout the district.

In World War II the Bega Band would meet every bus bringing service personnel home on leave at the end of Poplar Avenue and parade it to its stop at Balmain Bros Garage in Auckland Street.

And for many years, the Bega Band was a 'fixture' at local agricultural shows – the Bega Band playing at the annual Bega Show until it was, as one history of the Band ruefully records, 'replaced by canned music in the late 1960s'.

In fact, there was considerable rivalry between local bands that wanted to perform at some shows – for example, in 1906 the Pambula and Bega Bands were both asked to tender to play at the Candelo Show … with the Bega Band winning the engagement.

As an illustration of how active the Band was at times, in 1975–76 the Band performed on Anzac Day and Christmas Day, at the Church of England Fete, at a Musical Service at St Johns, at the opening of the Candelo Bridge, at the opening of the Bega Bridge, a PSAAA Parade, several football Grand Finals, on 3 occasions at "Pleasant Sunday Evenings" in Bega Town Hall, on 3 occasions during late night shopping, at Carols by Candlelight in Candelo and Bega, in the Cooma Snowy Festival Parade, for Littleton Week in Bega, and at a Kameruka Garden Party.

Every town once had a band, this is the Jellat Jellat Band. Photo: Bega Valley Historical Society

Barely an important building, monument or bridge in the area was officially opened without the Bega Band being present: among them were the (Boer War) Soldiers Memorial in Bega in 1905, the Pambula Soldiers memorial in 1935, the Bega Ambulance

Station in 1954, the Bega Family Museum in 1977, the Bega Nursing Home in 1979, the new Merimbula War Memorial in 1985, the Bega Police Station in 1990. The Bega Bandsmen were also 'the first people to officially cross the Batemans Bay Bridge' when it was officially opened in 1956.

Whilst the Band has played an important role in the life of the town and has often been well-supported by the town's population, it has always struggled financially because it had to the meet the recurring high costs of purchasing uniforms, brass instruments, and music – and rarely received any fee for its performances.

So, at times it has had to resort to some imaginative fund-raising projects:

In 1947 the Band purchased a new Austin A40 car and raffled it off at 2/- per ticket. They sold 19,000 tickets and raised £1,013/13/9! "The Bega Showground Pavilion was packed to capacity for the historic draw", which was won by Mr Walter (Jim) Reeve. (This was a much more ambitious undertaking than in 1936 when the prize was a lounge suite valued at £20!)

In 1971 and 1972 famers were asked to donate bobby calves to the Band and then raise them for 12 months before they were sold, with the proceeds benefitting the Band.

Bega Band at the Bega War Memorial, late 1980s

In 1973, 20 members of the Bega Band doorknocked homes in Bega in an attempt to raise $2,000 to pay for new uniforms for the band to replace uniforms that had been purchased more than 20 years previously. (In reporting this event the *Bega District News* also noted that '*individual bandsmen* [will still be required to supply] *their own shirts, ties, belts and socks*"!! Those uniforms are still worn by bandsmen today.)

And in 1994 a Trail Ride (on horses) was organised near Candelo to raise funds for the band which attracted 36 riders.

Another major challenge for the Band has been mustering enough members to all its rehearsals and to its performances. They were all (and still are)

volunteers and many had full-time jobs, prompting the bandmaster, Alan Tetley, to observe in 1987 *"On the occasions we have requested employers of bandsmen to allow their employees time off for such things as school marches and Senior Citizens daytime functions, those employers have always been 100% behind us and they have willingly given bandsman time off. For this, the Band is extremely grateful and I would like to publicly thank them all."*

Bega Band playing at the Tooheys Challenge pre-season cup, February 1995

Membership of the Bega Band has been very much a 'family tradition' drawing multiple members from, for example, Bega's Britten, Burgess, Café, Clynch, Davis, Dibley, Easdown, Fuge, George, Herbert, Irving, Koellner, Manning, Newton, O'Neill, Perry, Rosevear, Russell, Sirl, Spindler, Steel, Stewart, Tetley, Twyford, Underhill and Vaughan families.

In the late 1940s, the Bega Band purchased a site in Canning Street for £23 and, after clearing the block of "a covering of hawthorn bush and a variety of undergrowth" its members erected a small hall "revelling in the fact that they would soon have permanent premises". Prior to that, the Band it was forced to move around to whatever suitable practice venues it could locate – behind a butcher's shop in Auckland Street, in the open at the rear of then-Bandmaster Bill Easdown's photographic shop in Gipps Street, the army drill hall in Gipps Street, in stables at the rear of the Central Hotel in Gipps Street, and in 'very cramped quarters' behind the Bank Hotel in Church Street.

Sources:

Bega District Band 1899–1999' by Clyde Dibley.

Archived information at the Bega Pioneers' Museum and held by the Bega Band.

We'd love to learn what you remember about the Bega Brass Band, or bands in other towns. Send your recollections to southcoasthistory@yahoo. com

Eulogising the Aussies
'Charles Bean' by Ross Coulthart

Charles Bean has a well-deserved, eminent place in Australian history for four major reasons:

1. As Australia's official War Correspondent during World War I (the major countries supporting the British war effort, including Australia, were allowed, to nominate just one official war correspondent),

2. And later as Australia's official World War I historian,

3. Simultaneously (particularly as Australia's war correspondent and reinforced whilst he was Australia's principal war historian) he enunciated and promoted a unique image that mythologised Australian servicemen for – to quote Bean – their '*valour in a good cause, enterprise, resourcefulness, fidelity, comradeship and endurance.*' This is an image that has endured to this day, and one that historically helped mould a broader self-image of Australians,

4. And he initiated a collection of relics from World War I which became the foundation of the Australian War Memorial collection, and he championed the establishment of the Australian War Memorial – arguably now the best war museum in the world.

Bean's story should be more widely known.

Ross Coulthart's *'Charles Bean'* certainly helps to make that story more accessible. It is interesting, it is readable, it is chock full of engaging anecdotes and historical effervescence.

Expert World War I historians may have some quibbles with bits of it. Anyone just wanting to learn more about this extremely interesting man will not.

Coulthart was 'embedded' as a journalist with the Australian Army in Iraq and Afghanistan, in a way that resembles Bean having been 'embedded' with the Australian Imperial Force in World War I. So Coulthart is well-placed to understand and relate to the challenges and frustrations that Bean experienced as Australia's official war correspondent.

And these were considerable. Bean had to agree that nothing he wrote would be despatched until it was specifically approved by the censor (the British censor having advised Bean on his way to Gallipoli that there was no reason to suppose approval would ever be given to **any** of his reports), and that he would 'not correspond by any other route or by any other means than that officially sanctioned.' He also noted,
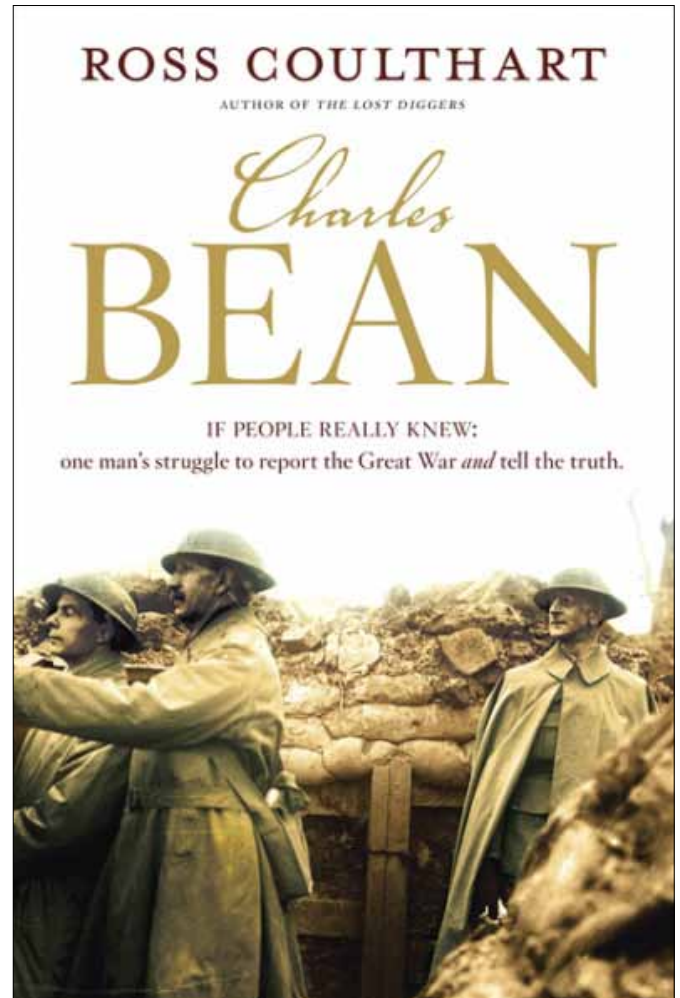
on more than one occasion, that 'it is strictly against the regulations for me to criticise.'

This book is useful, not just because of its warts-and-all biography of Bean, but because it explains the army's, the British and the Australian official censorship restrictions that Bean had to contend with – and which ultimately ensured that the Australian (and the British) people were often told anything but the truth about what was happening in World War I.

Coulthart readily concedes that Bean necessarily 'played the game' with the army and official censors, writing pieces – including things, omitting other things – to ensure the ultimate publication of his despatches.

And he credits Bean for having the courage, after the War and before he embarked on the project, of securing an agreement from the Australian government that it would not subject his official history to any form of censorship. This allowed Bean, whilst writing and editing the mammoth 12-volume '*Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–1918*', to correct many of the earlier errors, mistruths and omissions he had

made (or been forced to make) whilst a journalist – which, perhaps predictably, then elicited strong disagreement about what he was writing from some of those who had served in the War!

Bean saw his role when war correspondent (and, even more so, later when he was official historian) as one to truthfully and honestly record the facts. This was at odds with the traditional role adopted by war

Charles Bean portrait by George Lambert, 1924. Painting in the collection of the Australian War Memorial

correspondents, who usually became the most vocal cheerleaders for the war effort … and even led Sir John Monash to tell Keith Murdoch (an influential 'unofficial' Australian war correspondent) and Bean he wanted 'to see the fighting written up with a lavish hand – not too much accuracy – in the fashion of the old war correspondents.'

Coulthart comes to the conclusion that 'Bean was unable to peddle the falsehoods and mawkish bunkum spouted by so many other correspondents because, unlike most of his journalistic contemporaries, he was almost always there on the spot to witness the grim reality of the blood and the mud. Bean was obsessed with the simple truth, the fundamental journalistic tenet that the facts should tell the story.'

(It is interesting to simultaneously read assessments of Max Aitken [later Lord Beaverbrook], the official Canadian war correspondent, and compare them with what has been written about Bean. CBC News,

for example, says that 'Canadian [WWI] reporters saw themselves as advocates of the cause of war and imperialism. The purpose of their reporting was to contribute to the war effort, not to be seekers of truth' and that Max Aitken 'was both a journalist and a propagandist, and slid easily between the two roles.' And distinguished historian A.J.P. Taylor wrote of Aitken that he 'invented all the methods of publicity used by Britain to promote the war.')

Bean was fortunate to also have had the social and professional contacts which enabled him to gain unprecedented access to front-line action at Gallipoli and, to an even greater extent, on the Western Front.

For example, Bean (having been bestowed the nominal rank of Army Captain) travelled to Gallipoli on board HMAT *Orvieto*, the flagship of the AIF transport fleet, forging friendships with the Australian commander Major-General Sir William Bridges and Lieutenant-Colonel Cyril Brudenell White, who was chief of staff to both Bridges and later William Birdwood, the commander of the ANZAC forces at Gallipoli. So when, in Europe, Bean needed to get around he simply borrowed Brudenell White's car!

And access to the old-boy network that he had acquired by having been schooled at Clifton College in Bristol certainly helped him, considering that a staggering 23 Major-Generals and 52 Brigadier Generals in World War I were old boys of that school – these including William Birdwood and British Expeditionary Force commander Douglas Haig!

If Bean was well-credentialed to be our official war correspondent and official historian, he was equally well-qualified to be the man who would define and eulogise the distinctive Australian character of our World War I troops.

He was an Australia-born country boy (his father was Headmaster of a struggling All Saints College in Bathurst who often rode to farms in the district,

Charles Bean with his wife Effy in the grounds of Tuggeranong Station, probably in early 1920s. Much of his *Official History of Australia in the War of 1914–18* **was written there.**

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accompanied by his son Charles, with the intention of convincing farmers to enrol their sons at his school) who, when he became a journalist, was sent on a series of long journeys along the Murray and Darling Rivers, to outback NSW to report on possible rail routes to Broken Hill, and to compile a report on the wool industry.

Charles Bean examining Army documents while working on his official history in 1935

In his 1910 book *'On the Wool Track,'* Bean concluded 'the wool industry turns out wool and meat … (but) the most important things it turns out are men' who possessed a set of unique characteristics that would, several years later, again impress Bean when he witnessed Australian soldiers in action at Gallipoli and on the Western Front… and which he subsequently identified as being at the very heart of the 'Anzac spirit.'

'What Charles Bean realised as he roamed the hills of Gallipoli and the battlefields of the Western Front was that he was witnessing the emergence of a distinctive, proud and resilient Australian national character' is how Coulthart in his book summarises Bean's unique contribution to the emergence of our nation's identity.

Whilst Bean was in awe of the average Anzac soldier, there was one in particular who did not impress him: Lieutenant-General John Monash.

Bean felt that Monash did not fit his ideal of a quintessential Australian and also allowed his prejudices against Monash's Prussian-Jewish parentage to overwhelm his rational assessment of the man, writing in his diary 'we do not want Australia represented by men because of their ability, natural and inborn in Jews, to push themselves.'

So he and Keith Murdoch conspired to have Monash removed as commander of the Australian forces, telling Prime Minister Billy Hughes that Monash did not have the support of his senior officers. As Coulthart observes, 'Lieutenant General Monash had to fight to keep his job while also planning one of the set-piece battles of the war, the Battle of Hamel' (which turned out to be one of the few outstandingly successful battles of the war).

Perhaps thankfully for Australia (and for history) Hughes visited the Western Front just before that battle ready to replace Monash but, after speaking to senior officers and witnessing for himself Monash's outstanding powers of planning and execution, changed his mind.

Later, Bean was gracious enough to acknowledge that Monash became more effective the higher he rose within the Army, and was able to increasingly demonstrate his skills of meticulous planning and organisation, and his innovative approaches in the areas of technology and tactics.

Charles Bean's life and work are pivotal in any real understanding of Australia's involvement in World War I, so both are unusually important in the context of Australian history. Coulthart's *'Charles Bean'* is a commendable effort to comprehensively document the man's life, his significant contributions, and is (as Mark Dapin wrote in *The Australian*) 'a pacey, perceptive primer, not just to the life of Bean but to a large part of the Australian effort in World War I.'

Below: The twelve volumes of Bean's history of the war. One reviewer described the binding cloth as being 'the colour of dried blood'.

Great Reads

There are some great local histories that were published years ago. One, which tells stories related to the McGregor family who lived on various properties in the Brogo area is "*While There's Leaves in the Forest*" by Charles McGregor (published in 2002).

Basically it is a collection of family-related yarns (perhaps the logical result of, as Charles notes, "there was never much in the way of entertainment, apart from our gramophone … (so) most of the evenings in wintertime would be spent yarning in front of the open fire") – the sort of stories that provide colour to our heritage.

Here are a couple that particularly appealed, both relating to police and grog:

"That Old John the ex-soldier was a very public-spirited citizen can never be in doubt. As well as his clerical duties, he went to the trouble of setting up a whisky still in the foothills of Mumbulla. He was only providing for a need that was quite desperate at times in those days of irregular transport. Having learned the art of distillation during his time in Wellington's army, he saw no reason why he should not put his experience to good use.

Unfortunately, the law disagreed with this idea and he was lumbered.

There came the day when he was to front up to the visiting magistrate. The sergeant of police, a somewhat portly gentleman, was walking along the track that eventually became Carp Street. He was carrying the critical evidence with which the police intended to prove the crime committed by John McGregor. This was a piece of copper pipe in the form of a coil, a vital part of any distilling apparatus.

Suddenly, a masked rider who had been concealed behind a building spurred his horse forward as if catapulted. The sergeant was knocked off balance and the piece of pipe was snatched from his hand.

Almost as quickly as the mysterious rider appeared, he vanished through the bush, and all to prove that he existed was the fast receding sound of galloping hooves. The case collapsed, for the evidence was gone. The family would never reveal the identity of the masked rider but…"

"Talking of distilling, travelling north from Bega on the Prince's Highway you come to the Brogo Pass … Travelling north, when you topped the first pass hill, the original road followed the ridge instead of the river. At a spot where the ridge levels out, a gentleman named Johnny Thompson and his wife Hem had a sly grog shop. Most of the travellers would call at Johnny's for alcoholic sustenance and general revival when travelling between Bega and Cobargo.

The police had been trying for years to catch him but could never succeed. In desperation, they imported a trooper from another district and set him up as a swagman and, with black billy and blanket roll, he looked the real thing.

He called at Johnny's and said he heard back along the track that it was possible to get a drink there. Johnny said he could and served him with one. Then came the question which, if it had been wrongly answered, would have made things hard for the brewer. 'How much do I owe you for the drink?'

'Oh, we never charge policemen,' said Johnny cheerfully.

Policemen in those times wore a tunic buttoned to the neck. Johnny had spotted the pale collar mark around the imposter's neck. There was nothing the law could do, especially when there were other customers innocently sitting about."

What other South Coast histories should we be reading? Send your suggestions to southcoasthistory@yahoo.com. Or better still, send us a review of your favourite South Coast history.

Google It

a   What is the origin of 'Uncle Sam'?
b   How many people have walked the entire length of the (US) Grand Canyon?
c   In comparison, how many men have walked on the Moon?
d   How many canonised Roman Catholic saints are there?
e   How many saints has the Anglican Church canonised?
f   Who is the patron saint of boy scouts? Second-hand dealers? Beekeepers? Poor students?
g   Australia has a (fairly unusual) system of compulsory voting. When was it introduced? Who was the Prime Minister at the time? And when was compulsory electoral enrolment introduced?

History Trivia

How well do you know your Australian political history? Test your knowledge of history with this fun quiz. The correct answers are on page 21.

1   **Who was the first Australian Prime Minister?**

a   Sir Henry Parkes
b   Sir Edmund Barton
c   Sir John Forrest
d   Alfred Deakin

2   **Who was the second Australian Prime Minister?**

a   Alfred Deakin
b   Chris Watson
c   Sir Edmund Barton
d   George Reid

3   **Which Australian Prime Minister(s) have been Prime Minister on three or more separate occasions?**

a   Alfred Deakin
b   Andrew Fisher
c   Billy Hughes
d   Robert Menzies

4   **Which Australian Prime Minister(s) have died in office?**

a   Andrew Fisher
b   Joseph Lyons
c   John Curtin
d   Harold Holt

5   **Which Australian Prime Minister(s) have belonged to two or more different political parties whilst serving as Prime Minister?**

a   Andrew Fisher
b   Billy Hughes
c   Alfred Deakin
d   Robert Menzies

6   **Which Australian Prime Minister(s) served as Prime Minister for less than 1 month?**

a   Sir Earl Page
b   Arthur Fadden
c   Frank Forde
d   John McEwen

7   **Who was Australia's first Governor-General?**

a   Baron Tennyson
b   Earl of Hopetoun
c   Baron Northcote
d   Earl of Dudley

8   **Which Australian Governor(s)-General died in office?**

a   Lord Dunrossil
b   Baron Tennyson
c   Baron Denman
d   Baron Stonehaven

9   **Which Governor(s)-General resigned their commission(s)?**

a   Lord Hopetoun
b   Sir John Kerr
c   Peter Hollingsworth
d   Baron Tennyson

10   **Who was the first Premier of NSW?**

a   Charles Cowper
b   Henry Parker
c   William Forster
d   Stuart Donaldson

11   **Which NSW Premier had the shortest term in office?**

a   Nathan Rees
b   Stuart Donaldson
c   Thomas Wardell
d   Sir Eric Willis

12   **Which NSW Premier(s) has/have been Premier on three or more separate occasions?**

a   Charles Cowper
b   Sir Henry Parkes
c   James Martin
d   John Robertson
e   Sir George Dibbs

Trivia Answers

1. b; **2.** a; **3.** a, b; **4.** b, c, d; **5.** b (Labor, National Labor, Nationalist), c (Protectionist, Commonwealth Liberal), d (United Australia, Liberal); **6.** a, c, d; **7.** b; **8.** a; **9.** a, b, c; **10.** d; **11.** c; **12.** a (5 times), b (5 times), c (3 times), d (5 times), e (3 times)

An Interesting Question

Wally Eliaschewsky of Narooma and David Elliston of Canberra have asked if we, or any of our readers, can provide information about the meaning of 'Trunketabella' – a locality north of Bodalla.

It seems they are not the only ones fascinated by this name, because Jeremy Steele from Sydney (who wrote a Master's Thesis on 'The Aboriginal Language of Sydney') has specifically looked for an Aboriginal meaning, outlining his conclusions in "Trunketabella: 'pretty trinkets'", Occasional Paper No 1., published by Australian National Placenames Survey in 2015.

Steele had no definitive answer but felt the 'bella' part of the name might derive from the Aboriginal word 'bila' meaning 'creek' and 'trunka' might be a corruption of the Aboriginal 'DaranGura' meaning 'Ironbark' – so possibly 'Trunketabella' means 'Ironbark creek'.

He, however, also noted that a word list in notes on Australian Aboriginals compiled by a John Frederick Mann in 1842 mentioned 'Bodalla', 'Eurobodalla', 'Bergalia', 'Trunkabella' (this being a different spelling, and perhaps a different pronunciation) and 'Ulladulla' as locality names, perhaps not being actual translations of anything in particular.

In their search, Wally and David sought assistance from government bodies including the National Library of Australia, the Geographical Names Board and NSW Land and Property Information, and from local historical societies, receiving several plausible explanations but have, so far, been unable to locate anything totally definitive.

They point out that "Trunketabella has a distinctly Italian sound to it" and there was an Italia Mine and there is an Italian Mine Road just west of nearby Turlinjah, so postulate whether the name is of Italian origin.

Supporting this possibility was the reaction of one elderly Italian grandmother living in Adelaide who, when asked about the name, "instantly replied "No, no, no. It is two words, 'trunko' or 'trunca' in some northern midland Italian dialects meaning farming land for crops and animals, and 'tabella' meaning flat or level."

Wally and David would appreciate any definitive information about the origins of 'Trunketabella'. If you can help, please let us know at southcoasthistory@yahoo.com.

What's On

Friday 24th February: 'HOW TO STOP WORRYING ABOUT HISTORY EXTENSION AND HOW TO FALL IN LOVE WITH YOUR PROJECT' MASTERCLASS for Year 12 History Extension students, conducted by Dr Glenn Mitchell at University of Wollongong Bega campus. FREE. Bookings essential 0448 160 852

Saturday 25th February: SOUTH COAST HISTORY DAY from 9.30am at University of Wollongong Bega campus. 8 historians discuss 'Influences that have shaped the history of the NSW South Coast' $15 including lunch, morning and afternoon teas. Bookings essential (details page 19)

Saturday 4th March: '1917 – 'THE WAR MOVES TO BELGIUM' talk at Bega Pioneers' Museum, 10.30am by World War I historian Dr Richard Reid. FREE. Information: 6492 1453

Throughout March: 'SHOOT THE SHIRES' – a fun community history-gathering project (details page 13)

Weekend 29th & 30th April: 150th Anniversary RE-ENACTMENTS OF THE CAPTURE AND TRIAL OF THE CLARKE GANG (see page 11 – sorry, no re-enactment of the hangings!!) and OFFICIAL DINNER at Braidwood. Bookings essential 4842 2310 or help@braidwoodmuseum.org.au

Please send information about any future south coast history-related activities to southcoasthistory@yahoo.com for inclusion in 'Recollections' and for inclusion in regular email updates about South Coast History Society activities.

The One Day Bushranger

On Saturday 8th April 1866 the Bega Races received a visit from the Jingera Mob – originally a family-based gang of cattle duffers and horse stealers from south of Braidwood, led by brothers Thomas and John Clarke – who relieved punters and bookmakers of their money … and perhaps selected a fast horse or two for their own use in the future. They also recruited a local, William Fletcher, before heading towards the Nerrigundah goldfields.

The gang had little regard for the police, believing the police were incapable of matching the gang's skills in bushcraft and in the handling of firearms. This belief was later shown to be well-founded when a party of plain clothes detectives tried to trap the gang near Braidwood, but were all murdered for their efforts.

The Jingera Mob (or the Clarke Gang, as they were also known) started their visit to Nerrigundah the next day by holding-up travellers on the steep mountain road leading into town. Their takings included 25ounces of gold dust, a gold watch and other valuables taken from a John Emmott who was on his way to Moruya with the gold. Six shots were fired and Emmott was wounded in the thigh.

They then rode into Nerrigundah and several of the gang help-up the patrons of Mrs Groves' London Tavern while others went to take an anticipated hoard of gold (200g to 300g) from Pollock's Store which had acted as post office, bank and was the main store in town that purchased gold from the miners.

The story is that Mrs Pollock refused to hand over the key to the gold safe, threw it out the window, and a clever young lad either stood on it in the street or moved it away by clasping it between his toes, and in the fading light of day the gang was unable to locate the key, so was never able to steal the gold held in the Store.

Three policemen were normally in town. One, Sgt Hitch, was away in Moruya that day and another, Constable Miles O'Grady was in bed with 'colonial fever' (typhoid).

When Constable O'Grady heard that the hotel and its patrons were being robbed, he got out of his sick bed and staggered down the street towards the hotel, accompanied by rookie Constable Patrick Smyth who had arrived in Nerrigundah just four days earlier, reputedly telling bystanders "I will do my duty". A gun-fight ensued and two people were killed – William Fletcher (whose bushranging activities thus lasted barely one day) and Constable O'Grady.

According to one local history, whilst they were then retrieving their horses the surviving members of the gang came across two Chinamen. One was badly beaten, the other escaping to rouse the Chinese camp. *"Ten minutes later, when a screaming mob of Chinese poured down the road wielding torches and sticks, the bushrangers fled."*

Meanwhile Sgt Hitch had learned of the gang's presence and was able to raise a posse of 10 men. They ambushed the retreating bushrangers near the junction of Belimbla Creek and the Tuross River – but again the Clarke Gang escaped.

Constable O'Grady became an instant national hero, and the obelisk in Nerrigundah was erected by the government.

Thomas (left) and John Clarke in Braidwood Gaol in 1867. Note that John's coat is draped over his wounded left shoulder. The pair were hanged two months later.

The gang were declared outlaws in June 1866.

Tom and John Clarke were eventually captured in April 1867, were tried and found guilty, and were hanged from twin gallows in Darlinghurst Gaol on June 25th 1867.