

South Coast History Society Inc.

# Recollections

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Issue 15

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LIFE OF THE GOLD FIELDS—A BALL AT ARALUEN.—(SEE PAGE 150.)

Life on the Goldfields: A Ball at Araluen, 1867 — See story page 2

Image: Natiolan Library of Australia. nla. obj — 138069581 - 1

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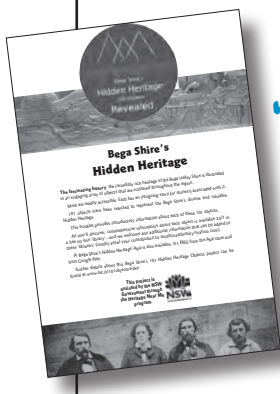
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## Araluen Valley Gold

When gold was discovered in the Araluen Valley to the north-west of Moruya in 1851, the landscape changed almost instantaneously.

The word 'Araluen' is believed to be a local Walbanga Aboriginal word meaning 'place of waterlilies', describing an originally-abundant feature of the billabongs and the waterways of the area. These rapidly disappeared!

The first Europeans explored the area in 1822, and within a few years the valley had been accurately mapped.

that in the rich gold-bearing area around Ophir near Bathurst.

Almost overnight, thousands of prospectors had moved to the area. Most usually arrived by ship at Broulee and then walked overland to the goldfields.

Many were to be richly rewarded. One history suggests that in Majors Creek in the early days prospectors were recovering an average of one ounce of gold per man per day.

Within a year, an estimated 100,000 ozs (2,830 kg) of gold had been recovered. And this was just the start!

The Araluen goldfields (which actually extend up on to the tablelands towards Braidwood and are still being worked today – for example at the Dargues Reef Mine near Majors Creek) gained a reputation of being one of the richest goldfields in Australia and the workings extended for many miles along the creeks in the area. Major gold deposits were exploited at Jembaicumbene, Majors Creek and Araluen – with Araluen itself being divided into six districts: Upper Araluen, Bourketown, Newton, Crown Flats, Redbank and Medmelong.

As it turned out, the richness of the Araluen goldfields was to be anything but the proverbial flash in the pan – with the Araluen

goldfields ending up having a longer life and being capable of supporting more miners than most other Australian alluvial goldfields.

So, significant infrastructure was built, such as a road that was constructed between 1856 and 1861 up the mountain from Araluen to Majors Creek and Braidwood.

Water races were also installed from as early as 1855 – some to feed water so that gold could be extracted from the gold-bearing sands, some to drain water away from ever-deepening shafts:

*'The great drawback to testing [penetrating] the ground has been the underground leakage. The depth is nothing, in no case exceeding forty feet, but when the fine grey sand has been reached,*



The Araluen Valley, NSW, July 1866, engraved by J R Roberts (State Library of Victoria Image No b49128)

By 1835 Henry Clay Burnell had purchased 1,280 acres in the valley for £265 and became the first settler in the area. His farm house and farm buildings were erected with the help of convicts.

The following year Andrew Badgery began grazing cattle in the area. He was later to make his fortune supplying goods to thousands of miners who flocked to the area and by charging them to prospect on his properties.

In 1848 a road was constructed using convict labour from the Valley to Moruya.

In September 1851 two Moruya men, Alexander Waddell and Harry Hicken, discovered alluvial gold in the Araluen Valley after they had noticed that local terrain resembled

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then comes the water which nothing but powerful pumps and engine-power can subdue. So it stands to reason that the ordinary miner, with his windlass and bucket, has been quite unable to bottom a shaft in this locality. (So) during this last year or so, companies have been formed with a goodly amount of capital to bring up [build] tail races of stout timber and covered over. These ... are now beginning to develop the almost inexhaustible bed of auriferous [gold-bearing] dirt composing the bottom layer on the granite.' (*Freeman's Journal*, 14th February 1880). [A long article, describing an ambitious plan to build a race along the whole length of the Araluen Valley goldfields to drain the area is included in the *Sydney Mail and NSW Advertiser* of 7th March 1896, accessible on *Trove*.]

[Water, in fact, proved to be a major and on-going challenge to the area. Either there was far too much (as described above and below) or there was too little, with significant droughts between 1875 and the 1890s posing considerable challenges to the miners and the mining companies in the area.]

At its peak in the 1860s and 1870s, 30,000 men were working the area. There were around 26 hotels, 20 butchers and numerous general stores, bakers, shoemakers, blacksmiths, churches and banks catering to the needs of residents.

It is believed around 700 Chinese were attracted to the Araluen goldfields at this time. The miners often worked in organized groups of 30 to 100 men, which resulted in their



Group of people in front of dredge at Araluen (National Library of Australia nla.obj - 137066971 - 1)

gold-digging efforts being very successful ... much to the resentment of local European miners.

Goldmining by the Chinese was very much a man's game. In 1880 there were fewer than 100 Chinese women in NSW, compared to a population of 10,000 Chinese men. Not that the gender imbalance was restricted to the Chinese miners:

*Local 'hotels nearly all had amusement halls attached to them, and grand dances were frequently advertised, the different houses vying with each other as to which could bring off the best ball - the 'best' usually meaning the wildest, for fun in those days was mostly of the furious kind. So that the miners should be afforded*

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**Araluen Proprietary Company gold dredge, 1900**

Gold Dredge at Majors Creek (Photo courtesy Norm Moore)

*some relief from the monotony of dancing with each other, the thoughtful promoters of the dances occasionally went to the trouble and expense of bringing parties of girls up from Sydney and other towns as partners for them. Such enterprises were widely advertised, and, as a rule, no doubt, brought cash as well as kudos to the promoters.'*

It seems race relations on the Araluen goldfields were unusually good – perhaps particularly thanks to the efforts of Quong Tart (see separate story).

It is estimated that by 1896 an incredible £11,000,000 worth of gold had been taken from the Araluen Valley goldfields.

On January 1st 1860 the Araluen Valley was hit by a devastating flood. 'Moruya – The First 150 Years' reported 'The loss of life was heavy. In one case a hotel and all its occupants were swept away, and the bodies of several of those in the building at the time were found afterwards on the beach at Moruya. Much later that year the workings were reopened but they never returned to their former glory or excitement.'

The wealth of the area inevitably attracted bushrangers. On 13th March 1865 Ben Hall, Johnny Gilbert and Tom Clarke unsuccessfully attempted to hold up a gold coach headed to Braidwood near the top of the mountain on the Araluen to Majors Creek Road, but were outflanked and forced to flee. One policeman was wounded in the encounter. The coach involved has been restored and is on display at the Braidwood Museum.

In 1869 reef mining (where gold is extracted from seams running through quartz rock, which is crushed by large stamping batteries) commenced in Majors Creek and by 1871 five battery crushers were operating in the area.

These were extracting over 100 oz of gold per week.

And from 1870 mechanisation in the form of hydraulic sluicing (the use of high-pressure water cannons) was introduced to the area. This made recovery of the gold very much easier because overburden above the gold-bearing strata was often up to 12 metres in depth.

In 1899 yet another major change to extracting gold in the area occurred when the first dredge started operation. This must have been a profitable undertaking because eventually 11 other dredges were working nearby. (As an indication of the profitability of dredges operating in the valley, the Araluen No. 1 Dredge, constructed in 1900, paid twenty dividends totalling £8,000 and another dredge, the Central No. 2, was able to be constructed at a cost of £4,400 from the profits it generated.)

However, by the late 1930s dredging had stopped and the valley basically returned to become a grazing and farming area – despite specific efforts being made during the 1930s

Depression to revive mining to provide employment in the area.

From the early 1900s a Cheese factory operated in the Valley. It was taking milk from 11 suppliers, 'all of them being well-to-do dairy farmers and graziers of the district' and was producing around 6,000 lb of cheese per month. And from the 1930s orchards and market gardens were established, with peach production ultimately becoming one of the main incoming-producing activities in the area – offering gold of a different form to local residents. **R**

Sources: Wikipedia and Trove; Sydney Morning Herald 8th February 2004; www.majorscreek.org.au; 'Majors Creek Gold Deposits', NSW Resources & Geoscience; Sydney Living Museum; 'Araluen, 1901 – a Town in Transition' and 'Moruya – the First 150 Years', Moruya & District Historical Society; 'Araluen, N.S.W', www.aussietowns.com.au.



**Araluen Post Office in the 1920s**

(National Archives of Australia barcode 3027383)

## Mei Quong Tart

Quong Tart was born in Canton, China, in 1850 and travelled to Australia when he was age 9 with his uncle who was escorting a shipload of coolies to the Araluen-Braidwood goldfields.

He was 'adopted' by a local Bells Creek couple, Robert Percy and Alice Simpson. From them he learned English and English ways, and they converted him to Christianity. They also encouraged him to acquire shares in local gold claims.

As a result, by 18 years of age he had become a wealthy man.

He acted as an interpreter for the significant community of Chinese miners in the Braidwood-Araluen area, was captain of the local cricket team, founded a local football team and promoted horse-racing. His activities and contacts ensured that the racism which was rife on other goldfields at the time did not extend to the Araluen-Braidwood fields.

He became the first Chinese Australian to join an Oddfellows Lodge in NSW (the Oddfellows provided sickness, unemployment and funeral benefits to members and took care of widows and orphans at a time when welfare services were otherwise unavailable) and became a Freemason in 1885.

In 1871 he was naturalized and in 1886, he married a Braidwood schoolteacher, Margaret Scarlett, even though her family strongly disapproved of the union and would not attend the wedding. Eventually they had two sons and four daughters – each baptized and raised in a different Christian denomination so that he (a devout Anglican) would not be seen as having a particular prejudice. (Incidentally, it seems Quong Tart was simultaneously supporting a wife and a number of children in China.)

After visiting his family in China in 1881, he became a successful tea merchant in Sydney and opened several restaurants in central Sydney. The most famous of these was the Elite Tearooms in the Queen Victoria Building that could cater to 500 people.

In Sydney he also acted as an unofficial Chinese Consul. This ultimately resulted in the Chinese Emperor appointing him a Mandarin.

He also became renowned for his interest in things Scottish (he often wore a kilt, played the bagpipes and recited Robbie Burns' poetry – that is, when he was not dressing up in Mandarin's robes!) and for being a generous philanthropist. He organized many charitable dinners, including one for all of Sydney's newsboys and another for local Sydney Aborigines.

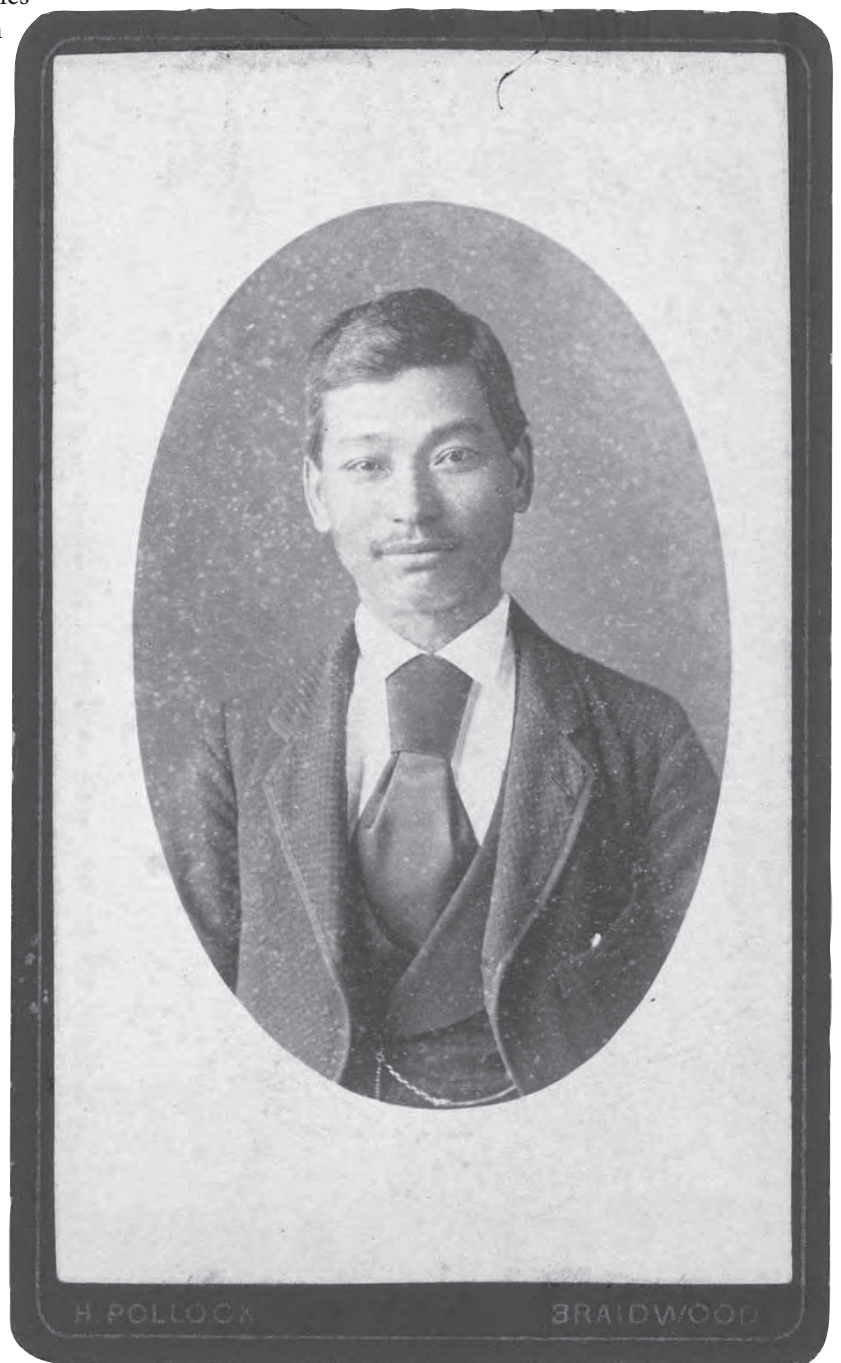
In 1883 Quong Tart served on a commission of enquiry into disturbances in Chinese camps in the Riverina. This highlighted an alarming

level of opium addiction in these camps and led him thereafter to actively campaign against the importation of opium.

In 1902 Quong Tart was savagely attacked by an intruder in his Queen Victoria Markets office. He never fully recovered and died at his Ashfield home in 1903.

He was possibly the only Chinese Australian of the time to be fully accepted and highly respected by the Anglo-Australian community. **R**

Sources: Australian Dictionary of Biography; 'Who Was Quong Tart?', State Library of NSW; Wikipedia and Trove; '(Mei) Quong Tart Fact Sheet', [www.racismnoway.com.au](http://www.racismnoway.com.au); 'Mei Quong Tart – Gold Rush', [www.sabrinaandengie123.weebly.com](http://www.sabrinaandengie123.weebly.com)



Mei Quong Tart (1850–1903)



## Araluen

by Will Carter

(as recorded in the *Sydney Mail*, 14th December 1938)

### Old Mates

When 'Araluen Paddy'  
Met with 'Dirty Butter Bill',  
A mate he hadn't heard of  
Since the days at Hawkin's Hill,  
He nearly shook his hand off,  
In a rhapsody sincere,  
Such as know the angel-diggers  
Who once were cobbers here,  
And still for gold are seeking  
In some Eldorado-sphere.

ARALUEN! The name awakens memories that lead us back to the wild, romantic alluvial gold digging-days at 'Happy Valley', 2000 feet below Araluen Mountain and seventeen miles from Braidwood. Again, we seem to hear the tramp of gold-adventurers, and see them pause on the bold summit to contemplate the sublime spectacle below, that valley of golden dreams which lured so many thousands of eager fortune-hunters in the roaring 'fifties.

A steep, often precipitous descent led to Upper Araluen settlement, and then farther down the stream was Lower Araluen, whence the track led down to Moruya along the Deua River. Kiora, now a dairying centre, was where old John Hawden lived ninety years ago. It marks the spot where T. A. Browne ('Rolf Boldrewood') wrote 'Robbery Under Arms'. Additional literary interest attaches to the fact that it was at Araluen that Henry Kendall resided for a time and tuned his lyric strings to the ripple of streams, the notes of the bush birds, and the sparkling cascades that laughed in their passage over rocks amidst the golden sands. It was there that he wrote:

*Why should I still love it so,  
Friend and brother far away?  
Ask the winds that come and go,  
What hath brought me here to-day.*

One of our earliest Australian poets of note, Charles Harpur, officiated as Gold Commissioner on the old field at one time.

### IN THE BEGINNING

There were vague rumours of gold in the vicinity in 1851, and probably before. In 1852 we learn that two prospectors, who had been unsuccessful, resolved to quit next day. That night one man dreamt that he was getting good gold at the foot of a tree near their camp. Next morn he was there with his tools and quickly discovered rich gold. Soon after that one of Dr. Bell's shepherds dislodged a tussock, exposing a rich specimen in its roots. In 1853 good gold was obtained at Deep Creek. The news soon spread and there was a speedy influx from the surrounding districts, but it was the sensational yields of 1858 and 1859 that caused the main rush.

Thousands hastened there, many having little or less knowledge of mining, content to try and do what others were doing, and trusting to luck to lead them on to the gutter. It was a wild scene. All hands were roughing it; social distinctions were disregarded in the feverish haste to achieve a fortune; rum was the chief liquid asset; possession was nine points of the law, and maintained on the dictum of the datum-pegs, supported by bluff or bare knuckles.

### TRANSPORT DIFFICULTIES

The descent from Araluen Mountain was a three mile scramble over rocks and stumps and brakes without a road

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Raja, aged 90, has lived in Dalmeny for 25 years. He has served on six community organisations, three in leadership positions. He has been a Seeker of understanding about the place of mankind in the Universe almost all his life.

He has published six books: four on immigrant integration, one on Australian society, and one offering bicultural short, short stories.

All of them were very favourably reviewed and/or endorsed. *His seventh book is now available at the links below.*



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MY SOUL SEEMS TO HAVE GIVEN ME GLIMPSES OF PAST LIVES. WHY? TO LINK KEY FEATURES OF MY PAST TO MY FUTURE, MOST OF WHICH MAY HAVE ALREADY BEEN LAID DOWN?

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at all in the early days of the settlement. The only way they had of getting provisions down was by means of slides and ropes from Old Man Mountain and also from Sugarloaf Mountain; vehicle traffic was out of the question.

One day a consignment of butter broke loose and bolted down to the bank of a stream, where it sustained a severe gravel-rash which soiled the golden pats. It was that incident that gave Dirty Butter Creek its designation, which it has borne to this day.

#### ASHTON'S CIRCUS ARRIVES

When Ashton's circus came, its enterprising proprietor looked down upon the Valley of Promise where gold was awaiting him, but who could risk the descent with such a bulk of properties? At last an enthusiastic publican offered him £50 for a one-night performance, with as much as he could make at his disposal after. That clinched matters, and Ashton managed to get the 'running of the ropes' and slides, and down went the big marquee, poles, and other outfit by hook and by crook, with little damage, to the joy of the community and satisfaction of the proprietor, who played to record crowds for a week.

For long years after the construction of a road, the hill tried the skill and nerves of coach-drivers, whose legs often failed them for a while after they had reached their destination. For the last six or seven miles the brakes were almost constantly applied. On one memorable occasion a coach-brake broke. In an instant the coach was on to the polers and the team madly bolted. Only the coolness of the driver enabled him to steer them into a sheer face of rock. There was a crash and a spill of driver and passengers, none of whom were fatally injured, and the horses, getting clear of the wreck, dashed down the hill, where they were at length arrested, none the worse for their wild dash.

#### A HAWKER'S DIFFICULTIES

Old hands will remember Marshall and his old mare Peggy. The community at Deep Creek were isolated, and Marshall used to take up supplies of groceries and other provisions in two gin-cases, carried in corn sack saddle-bags on his old mare. He had a sort of depot at Deep Creek, and no sooner did he arrive than he was surrounded by the diggers' wives, who quickly bought his supplies.

It was probably never claimed for Forsyte's ram that the animal was descended from one of George III's prize stud at Kew, but what the animal lacked in blood or breeding he fully compensated for in his bunting ability. One evening John Welsh was coming home from his claim at Long Flat with half a pint of gold. The ram saw him coming, but the miner was too much engrossed with his wash-up to perceive the beast lurking under a bush sapling. John passed within a yard of the ram, and the next moment he was struck amidships, or in the rear, to be exact, and was sent sprawling, gold and all, among some dry thistles. He thought an avalanche had struck him at first. Then he heard three idle fellows laugh the laugh of the indolent, and he uprose and would have caught and smitten them hip and

thigh had it not been for the fact that half a pannikin of gold lay strewn around the landscape.

What he said to the ram is not recorded.

#### THE FIELD

The ground was deep, ranging from fifteen to thirty feet, which meant plenty of dry-stripping and carting. The bottom in most instances was cheesy and unstable, requiring extensive corduroy of saplings for the dray traffic. One claim was actually called 'The Wooden Bottom'. Five men constituted a set, which employed three horse-drays and two lads, one for tipping and the other for backing. They were paid 15/- per week each, and 17/6 if they served two sets of men. As for the powerful draught horses, they knew their work well and took little or no driving, working along in a string of twenty at times. The washdirt was taken to a tip and put through boxes with the usual false bottoms and ripples, etc. In the hot weather cracks sometimes appeared in their bottoms, which were filled with rendered candle-grease mixed with the white ashes of the wood of the bush apple tree, or patched with strips of tin.

Bucket-dredging was extensively carried on from the 'nineties, and marked the final phase of mining operations on the old field. It began with Tulloch's dredge at Benmanang Creek, and it is claimed that 3½ tons of gold was won in all by the various dredging companies. Some very rich patches were worked in the earlier days, and old miners love to tell about the yields along the Araluen Creek, with special reference to Primrose Point, Redbank, Big Plain, German



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### **THE BUSHRANGERS**

'Bushrangers' Rock' is two and a half miles out on the way to Braidwood. It tells its own tale. Miners taking their gold to Braidwood had to resort to all sorts of ruses in order to hide their treasure. Some carried it in little panels in the woodwork of their drays, others in their axle-grease tins under the grease. In 1865, Thomas Clarke, in eight months, stole three racehorses, robbed a post-office and three stores, stuck up numerous travellers, robbed the Araluen Mail, and shot a policeman. He and his brother John were captured in 1867 and taken from Braidwood gaol to Sydney, where they were tried and executed.

### **GOODENOUGH'S BULLOCK**

One Goodenough and another man, named Alley, went to law over a bullock. The former won the case and handed over the beast to the public, requesting that it should be roasted whole to celebrate his victory. It was done, and Araluen made a gala day of it, Goodenough supplying lashings of rum and food.

The bakers had a busy time, landing hundreds of loaves

in cornsacks. A bucket each of pepper and salt was brought along, and at it the rorty diggers went, carving and eating; and later, when the rum began to work, some of the more reckless ones began shooting lumps of the burnt sacrifice at each other, Sergeant Murphy's white helmet being knocked off his head, to the offence of his official dignity.

### **RACE DAY**

The racecourse was about half a mile from Redbank. It was the great annual sporting event. From twenty to thirty bare-knuckle fights would be seen at each meeting! If any urgent issues remained unsettled they were fought out next day at Redbank, among the sweetbriars near Dirty Butter Creek, whose pellucid waters were crimsoned after each round with the gore of the contestants.

The most amusing and exciting events were such races as the 'Saddle-and-Breeching Stakes', the 'Collar-and-Hames Mile', etc., in which heavy draughts employed at the mines competed for harness trophies.

Rival claims were interested, and backers wagered heavily as the cumbersome old sloggers thundered along, and it was good to see Old Mick McNaughton, well primed with rum, wipe his right thumb on his tongue and yell: 'Let ye come on, now! I'll back my horse for a tenner, or for fifty if ye want it.'

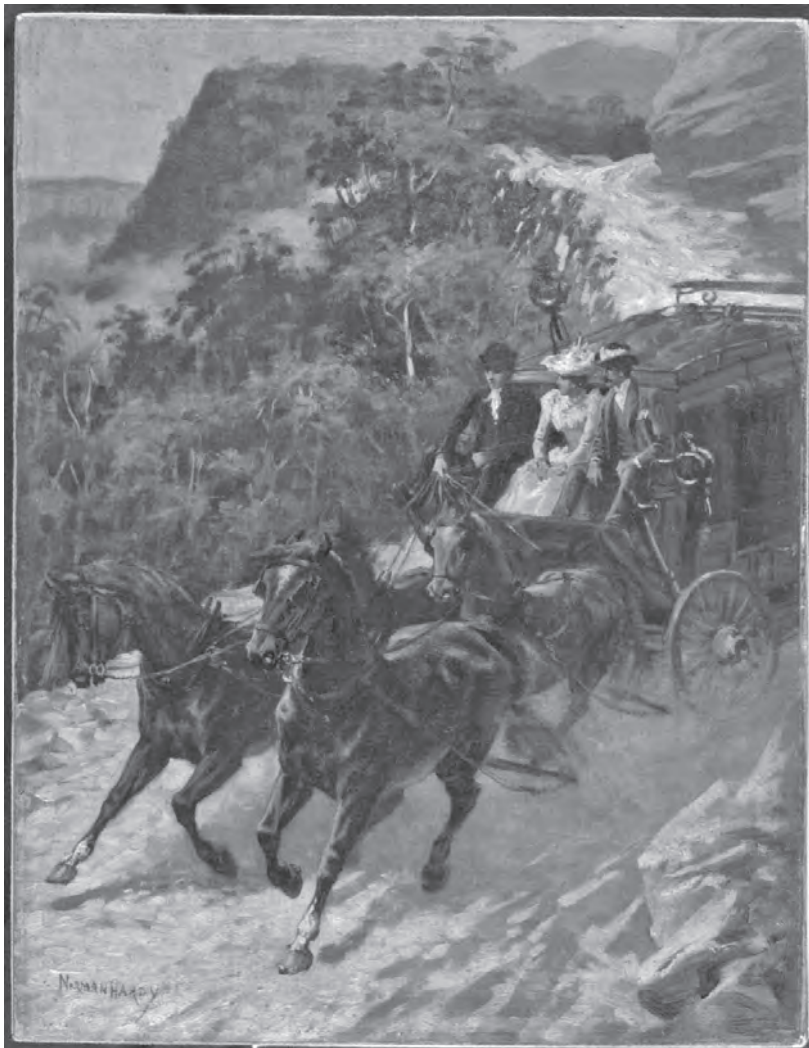
### **A TOWN OF FORTY PUBLIC HOUSES**

At one period there were forty public-houses at Araluen: there is now one, and it is conducted by Mr. John Collins. Among the old-time hosts were Tom Peace, Costello, Billy Burke, Atkinson ('The Pick and Shovel'), and Phil Madigan ('The Perseverance'), who never would allow a pack of cards to enter his house, and who graded a man's drinks down from a tumbler to a thimbleful and then said: 'Now you've had enough, get home to your wife.'

### **HEARTS OF GOLD**

The lads of Happy Valley were a lively lot and there was much drinking and fighting at times, but like the old Valley itself, their heart was of gold, ever ready with open purse and willing hand to help a man up when down in his luck. The women, too, in what grateful remembrance are they held to this day; those noble souls who were ever ready to leave their beds to take their lantern and go out into the night of rain and tempest to render a service to a stricken neighbour and take food to the needy. God rest them all!

Fortunes were made and lost, as on all goldfields, and many a man of pluck and confidence reaped his reward in the end. Among the big investors of the early period were John H. Blatchford, Edward Smith, William Henry Johnson, and Trevor Underwood Alley. Scores of others operated on a smaller scale. **R**



**Coaching in the Araluen Valley, NSW, 1893 by Norman Hardy**  
(Photograph National Library of Australia nla.obj – 134301338 – 1)



## Historical Fact, Historical Fiction

One of the ongoing challenges faced by historians is to distinguish historical fact from fiction.

Written history is usually a combination of fact and opinion ... and competent historians usually strive to ensure that the facts they present are correct and that the opinions they present are clearly identifiable as such. However, historians are reliant on the accuracy of source material available to them and, if that source material contains errors, these errors may not be corrected when new histories are compiled. The result is that, before too long, oft-repeated erroneous information becomes 'historical fact' and/or what starts out as an opinion suddenly also becomes widely accepted as 'historical fact'.

Published information relating to the local Bega Soldiers' Memorial Gates provides a classic example.

Not infrequently one hears and reads that the design of the Bega Soldiers' Memorial Gates was based on that of the Menin Gate in Belgium. As an example, the NSW Government's War Memorial Register describes the Bega Soldiers' Memorial Gates as *'Large memorial gates at the entrance of local Sports Ground. The gates are a replication of the Belgium Menin Gates. [sic - there is only one Menin Gate!!] The unveiling ceremony was performed by mothers of fallen soldiers.'* - the information that *'the gates are a replication of the Belgian Menin Gate'* in this instance clearly being presented as historical fact (and, disturbingly, an addition to the same wording about the Memorial Gates

that has been used in a report in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in 1924 about the official opening of the Bega Soldiers Memorial Gates).

Anyone who is familiar with the Menin Gate will immediately have grave doubts that the design of the Bega Soldiers' Memorial was in any way influenced by the design of the Menin Gate. Apart from both memorials incorporating arches in their design, the two structures are quite different architecturally.

When asked the source of their published information about the Bega Soldiers' Memorial Gates being 'a replication of the Menin Gate', the NSW War Memorial Register was unable to provide it. It seems they have, in this instance, simply accepted information provided to them without checking it factually.

I have been able to discover absolutely no information at all that substantiates the suggestion that the design of the impressive Bega Soldiers' Memorial Gates was in any way based on the design of the Menin Gate World War I memorial. And I would now be delighted if anyone can provide such information.

I suspect that, some time after the Menin Gate was constructed and became well-known to Australians, some Pooh-Bah suggested that the design of the Bega Soldiers' Memorial Gates was based on that of the Menin Gate purely to provide *'corroborative detail, intended to give artistic verisimilitude to an otherwise bald and unconvincing*



Bega Soldiers' Memorial Gates



The Menin Gate

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**Bega Soldiers' Memorial Gates**

*narrative*, and their mischievous suggestion has since become quite widely entrenched as historical 'fact'.

Quite apart from the two structures looking distinctly different, there is, I suggest, much compelling if circumstantial evidence that the design of Bega Soldiers' Memorial Gates was NOT based on the design of the Menin Gate:

- There was almost no interest in, or information about, the Menin Gate in Australia before it was completed and officially unveiled in late July 1927 (for example, the *Sydney Morning Herald* mentions it in passing on only 6 occasions between 1921 and the Gate's opening in 1927, the only detailed reference in any of these reports being to a complaint by the French that Commonwealth memorials in France such as the Menin Gate would overshadow French memorials in their size!). And in the



**The Arch of Constantine in Rome**

years between 1921 and the opening of the Bega Soldiers Memorial in 1924 (at which time construction work on the Menin Gate had barely commenced) the Menin Gate memorial attracts just one small mention in the *Sydney Morning Herald* – with that simply stating that the memorial was being built. The reality is that Australians only became generally aware of the Menin Gate and its significance after a painting by Will Longstaff, '*Menin Gate at midnight*' which he painted after attending the unveiling of the memorial in 1927, was presented to the Australian War Memorial and was displayed on a tour of Australia in 1928–29 alongside a model of the Menin Gate. '*When this painting was exhibited in 1928–29 it created a sensation and reproductions were sold in great numbers. The painting met the need of many at the time*

*to remember those who had died and the contemporary interest in spiritualism.'* – *Australian Dictionary of Biography*.

- There is nothing in press reports at the time of the laying of the foundation stone, or about the unveiling of the monument, or in the years that immediately followed, to indicate that the design of the Bega Soldiers' Memorial was based on that of the Menin Gate. One would expect, if its design had been based on that of the Menin Gate, that there would have been frequent mention in reports of or in speeches at these ceremonies of this significant Bega 'coup' to replicate the design of the Menin Gate.

- A popular painting in Australia at the time the Bega Soldiers' Memorial was



**Janet Cumbrae Stewart's popular painting 'The Arch of Constantine Rome' that may have provided the design inspiration for the Bega Soldiers' Memorial Gates**



being designed was Janet Cumbrae Stewart's 'The Arch of Constantine Rome' (Cumbrae Stewart was a well-known, internationally-acclaimed artist in the 1910s and 1920s. Among her teachers was Frederick McCubbin, among those who purchased and commissioned works from her was Queen Mary) and this popular work is much more likely to have provided local architect and builder Robert Thatcher with the inspiration for his design of the Bega Soldiers' Memorial.

- There is, in fact, documentary evidence suggesting that the design of the Bega Soldiers' Memorial WAS inspired by the Arch of Constantine. *The* (Melbourne) *Age* newspaper, for example, printed a scholarly article on Saturday November 12<sup>th</sup>, 1932 titled 'Emblems of Courage: War Memorials and Ancient Sculpture by E.C.' that includes a photograph of the Bega Soldiers' Memorial arch and its text reads: 'Arches and gateways have long been favorite form of memorial art. The Romans used the former freely in honoring their heroes, or in commemorating their triumphs. The solid, three-span arch in the ruins of the Forum reveals something of the magnificent architecture which glorified the "Eternal City" — the Rome of the Caesars. Those who were privileged to see Miss Cumbrae Stewart's picture of the Arch of Constantine admired a beautiful example of the three-span Roman arch which we [Australians] are copying today. Its fine proportions, with the stone so wonderfully

colored by Time's cunning brush, were faithfully shown. Whichever way one turned one was delighted with a fresh perspective. With a softly-draped, blue sky behind, the Arch formed a picture of dreaming Age, beside which the green of a living tree seemed startlingly alive ... **The Bega (N.S.W.) arch and gates are other examples of the dignified and impressive adoption in this country of old-world ideas.**' (Emphases are mine.)

The Bega community was extremely proud of its impressive war memorial at the time it was opened, and the monument attracted considerable favourable interest from outside of the local community. Robert Thatcher (its widely praised Architect) was, for example, invited to provide a 'rough sketch of a design for a double gate for the Nowra memorial' after the Bega memorial had been viewed by those involved with organising a war memorial for Nowra.

The design of the Bega Soldiers' Memorial Gates by local architect and builder R.W. Thatcher should therefore now be accepted, acknowledged and praised; this significant memorial does not deserve to have some other historically-dubious design associated with or attached to it.

**Peter Lacey**

(Author of 'The Unreal Story of the NSW South Coast and World War I' and a self-confessed 'World War I Tragic')

Further information about the Bega Soldiers Memorial Gates is available at [www.bit.ly/begahh40](http://www.bit.ly/begahh40)

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## **Growing up in the 50s and 60s**

This was the winning entry, from Teagan Moses of Carroll College in Broulee, in South Coast History Society's Baby Boomers essay competition last Christmas. Two other prize-winning entries were included in the April issue of 'Recollections' (available at [www.bit.ly/Recollections13](http://www.bit.ly/Recollections13)). We were delighted by the level of interest in the competition (open to Years 10, 11 and 12 High School students from the Bega Valley and Eurobodalla Shires) and the standard of the entries received, so a similar competition will be organized for next Christmas holidays. A hint for those who might be interested: this year we will be asking entrants to submit an article suitable for inclusion in 'Recollections' on any aspect of South Coast history that might be of interest to them.

### **The Past Retold**

by Teagan Moses

**I**n Australia, the 1950s was a decade of economic growth, increased employment, and improved standard of living but for two teenagers growing up in south-eastern New South Wales, life was about understanding the type of people they would become, just like any curious child of today. The years that followed brought the swinging 60s, a social, political and cultural revolution, and yet two young boys were facing discrimination because of their Aboriginality. Recently, I had the privilege of discussing what it was like to be growing up during these times with my grandparents, Edward and Anne Murray, family man Jonathan Daly and local artist and street minister, Ray Wilson.

#### **ANNE**

Anne Wiley was a shy girl, the fourth youngest in a family of thirteen. She lived on Daisybrooke Farm, outside the town of Candelo.

Although electricity had been introduced to Candelo in the late 1940s, the dairy farm had none. My grandmother had kerosene lamps and candles for lighting. The fuel stove was on at all times, and fortunately there was plenty of wood on the farm. Upon the stove the kettle would be constantly boiling for any hot water needs; cooking, washing or bathing.

In 1953, when Anne was ten, her parents bought what would become the Royal Cafe in Candelo. Anne attended

the local Catholic school. Her friends were from Candelo—they went to the public school. She played hopscotch, went walking, climbed fences and competed in tennis, hockey, and softball. Growing up she wore only dresses, even on the farm, and the men wore suits. She went to Tupperware parties frequently. She explained that when you were invited you felt “duty-bound to buy something.” She continued, “I believe in Tupperware. My Tupperware is 45 years old and still going.”

“I don't think he ever lifted a broom,” Anne said of her father. She didn't feel the gender roles were unfair as they were just so common. Employed women were either single or had already raised a family. Being a wife was synonymous to being a mother and a housekeeper.

“I thought it was a very good time to be growing up,” my grandmother said of the 1950s. “We were free to wander around from daylight till dark. The freedom was the best part of it. You could leave your doors open, your keys in the car.”

Anne finished school at sixteen. Her plans after school were—just to leave school. “I don't know where I was when the brains were handed out. I wasn't a very good student. I



Teagan Moses author of the winning entry



didn't want to leave Candelo, I was too shy. I was ready to move on and just be a housekeeper." Aged sixteen she began work in the local telephone exchange.

#### EDWARD

Edward Murray lived with his father, mother and younger brother. When his father's brother became sick with cancer, the family moved to Hilltop Farm to support him, and the Murray household extended to his aunt and uncle.

Hilltop had a two-story building on the property, and a river abundant with trout. Unlike my grandmother, the Murrays had an electric fridge, iron and kettle. The wire electrical cords doubled as a 'disciplinary' device when the children were mischievous. The clothes were washed in a copper tub and stirred with a wooden poker. A fire would be lit underneath, for heat, then the clothes would be put through a ringer in cold water.

Eddie listened to the Jazz of Bing Crosby and the Country and Western of Tex Morton. He sat down to dinner, at the same time every night, with the whole family, just as it was at my grandmother's.

On the farm, Eddie milked cows, drove tractors and ploughed fields. He rode horses in the show. He played rugby league, well enough to make it his career. He was part of the surf club and also entertained himself with marbles.

From Hilltop Farm the distance to school, the same as my grandmother's, was 7 miles and three quarters of an hour on horseback, each way. At school Eddie enjoyed maths. This

led him to take up a clerical position in accountancy in 1954 at the age of sixteen. His weekly wage amounted to £5 2s 6d (\$10.25). In 1957 he was invited to play footy in Sydney with Western Suburbs, but declined the offer, favouring accountancy and a wage rise of 10 shillings.

In town, the Bega saleyards brought in many people. Pigs and cattle would be auctioned on alternate Tuesdays, behind the tennis courts and recreation ground. Edward reminisced the 1950s with fondness. "No concerns with drugs. Violence wasn't around that's around now. Safe to go anywhere."

The etiquette of the time was stricter than today, and different behaviour was expected for home, school, work and public. "I think that's one of the saddest things that's gone, discipline. With discipline comes respect," Eddie said. "I think men don't respect women like they used to."

Anne added, "Nobody no longer treats a female as a lady."

In Candelo the hockey girls played prior to the footy boys, and afterwards they would socialise at the pub. Except for a woman playing the piano, it was less common for women to be in the pub. One day my grandparents, almost strangers at this stage, were singing at the piano. "He must've liked my singing," my grandmother said, because at the next Saturday night ball, he escorted her home.

At the balls, a large and lively event, all would be anticipating the last dance, a slow dance, and a time for romance. The young Edward Murray approached Anne Wiley. They shared a dance. He walked her home.

## HISTORIANS!

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On the 15th of May 1965 my grandmother got her wish. She would be happily married, soon with children, to become a housewife.

### **JONATHAN**

From romance to racism, in the small town of Cloncurry, Queensland, 1952, Jonathan Daly was born into a large, Catholic family. He was one of thirteen children, and so home life was “hectic”. Cloncurry was a predominantly indigenous community, occupied by the Kalkadoon people.

Jonathan said he felt lucky to be growing up in that time “There was racism about, there was no denying that, but everyone got on really well.”

Jonathan would go hunting with his father. “The only time we killed an animal was to eat.” They ate kangaroo, wild turkey, goanna and pigeons, but he also enjoyed his steaks. In his spare time he would wander down to the river and walk through the bush, but sport was his true passion. He described his days of swimming, rugby league, cricket, gymnastics and boxing. “I was a mad sportsman!”

Although some parts of Australia were embracing racial equality, Indigenous Australians still experienced severe social and political discrimination. The colour of his skin became an insult and sometimes these comments would result in after-school fist fights. “I didn’t take too much notice of in-your-face racism.” He blamed the racist behaviour on “kids being kids.”

Jonathan was aware that the adults in his life suffered much more racism. His parents were reluctant to speak their language because “unfortunately it was sort of not accepted at that time.” His uncles were not paid the appropriate wages for the work they did, but, like the non-Indigenous men, headed to the pub after a week’s work. “My uncles and their friends were not allowed to have a beer in the public bar. They had to go out the back of the pub and have their beer.”

Jonathan is now a retired Medicare Liaison Officer, who was responsible for promoting the ‘Closing the Gap’ Strategy which aims to improve the life expectancy of Indigenous peoples through medical services. “Things have changed but there’s still a lot of struggles,” he mused.

### **RAY**

Ray Wilson also shared his story of maltreatment. Ray’s first memories are of growing up with Mum Shirl, his adoptive mother, and his two younger brothers, who he later found out were his cousins, on Erambie Mission, just outside the town of Cowra.

“Next minute the welfare wanted to take some of us away, the boys and girls.” He was taken in 1956 to Kinchela Boys’ Home, Kempsey, aged nine.

The boys suffered extreme humiliation and abuse from the very beginning. “We got dressed up as girls to go to the boys’ home. The work boys were standing at the gates whistling at us. They wanted to use us as a sex partner.”

He described his teenage years as “a mess,” explaining he was taught to believe he was white.

The boys were known by numbers, rather than by names—Ray was number 50. Every morning they got up,

made their bed, and cleaned. If the result wasn’t satisfactory they would be “clipped over the head.”

Even mealtime wasn’t without violence. “There was always plenty of tucker, and people would acquire a taste for certain food—your food.” Ray continued, “Bullies would come in and want your tucker. There would be one either side of you and you’d wait to eat what was left.”

“Everyone got abused, but they weren’t going to talk about it. When I got sexually abused, it was my uncle. I didn’t know he was my uncle until I got out.” Ray was in high school and the boy who molested him—his uncle—was twenty years old.

Ray described the rare moments when the boys tried to have fun. “We would be joking, laughing—but not sincerely. We wouldn’t laugh too much, you couldn’t laugh too much.” You couldn’t laugh too much because it would show you’re not tough, and if you weren’t tough you’d be raped.

Even after surviving his own traumatic childhood, he had maintained a perspective to consider himself lucky. “The women had it worse.” Young girls, raped by the house staff, would give birth and have their babies buried underneath the house where they stayed, and continued to be abused.

Ray was allowed to leave the home when he was nineteen. “Blackfellas only get a job as a drug dealer,” he said. He told me he had to “wheel and deal” to survive, playing Two Up until 5 am.

He came out of the home very angry. He had lost his culture, his mother, his integrity. Revenge kept him alive. He would beat people up, and scour the newspapers the next day to see if he had killed them. He wanted to “blow the world up, all the white people and all the black people” so the world could start again, without such sin.

At a point where he had, like many before him, become suicidal, he discovered his “Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” He committed his life to fulfilling God’s plan for him.

He was twenty when he met his wife. “I said this is my girl, my wife, my everything from now on.” He now has twenty grandchildren and thirteen great-grandchildren.

Now he has found his purpose. “I want to set people free. If they see that I’m set free, they’ll come over and ask ‘How did you do it?’. I’ll say ‘I asked the Lord Jesus Christ.’” He concluded, “Communication is the name of the game.”

The difference between my teenage life and the lives of those growing up in the 1950s and 1960s is polarising. In Australia, 1950, life expectancy was fifteen years lower than today, television sets hadn’t been introduced and Indigenous Australians were not even considered part of the Australian population. Some say life used to be simpler, because now everything is interconnected: trade, technology and people, but that connection allows for communication.

Communication is, indeed, the name of the game. These four teenage lives mustn’t just be condensed as stories, they must be the lens through which we see our society today, so that we can be appreciative of what we have, acknowledge the positive change that has been accomplished, and realise the future that we wish for our nation. **R**



## HISTORIES

***A New History of the Irish in Australia***

by Elizabeth Malcolm and Dianne Hall

This purportedly 'masterful book,' compiled by a couple of academic historians, seems to me to have been written in the belief that academics must 'publish...or perish.'

I purchased this book expecting to learn something about the contribution that the Irish race/nationals made to the history of Australia, simultaneously thinking the topic might be of interest to the many, many Australians (of which I am not one) who have Irish forebears.



Disappointingly, it does not include a history of the Irish in Australia. Instead it is a series of essays (I suspect taken from a series of university lectures) that explore in detail a small number of themes, such as mental health, crime, employment, politics and religion that are connected to the Irish in Australia.

And neither, as the book's title suggests, is it all new. A Google search reveals that much of the content of the book has been previously published by its authors elsewhere – so the book is really a new compilation of an odd assortment of topics related to the Irish in Australia.

Two interesting general threads, however, run throughout the book. First, the Irish in Australia historically had (and probably still have) a significant image problem and, second, general prejudices against the Irish significantly affected the type and quality of service provided to them in Australia.

At best, the Irish have been the incessant butt of cruel jokes – such as when Tony Abbott, then the federal Opposition Leader, described the Australian Labor Party as acting 'a bit like the Irishman who lost £10 betting on the Grand National and then lost £20 on the action replay.'

But, as the authors assert, 'from the despised convicts of the late 18th century to the globalised citizens of the early 21st century, the Irish-born have always been a vital element [which they then, regrettably, do not explain or describe] in the story of modern Australia.'

Yet, for many decades the Catholic Irish were perceived by the Protestant Anglo-Australian majority not just as a different ethnic group, but often as an inferior race.

In addition, they were adherents of a foreign church widely regarded as aggressive and believed to harbour authoritarian political ambitions.

In both roles, the Irish appeared to threaten Australian harmony, stability and prosperity.

Their politics too were suspect, since the Catholic Irish has a centuries long history of violent opposition to British rule. They had proven themselves an innately rebellious people, repeatedly threatening the integrity of the British Empire.

On top of all these negative attributes, Irish immigrants, being in the main young, unskilled, and from poor rural backgrounds, swelled the ranks of the working class.

But not only were many of them poor, they were frequently looked upon as the 'undeserving poor' in terms of charity, having a reputation for drunkenness, crime and general fecklessness.

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Today, the proportion of the Australian population that was Irish-born is just 0.27%.

This has not always been the case. In 1901 about a quarter of the non-Indigenous Australian population was Irish, and between 1791 and 1867 nearly 30% of all male convicts arriving in Australia were Irish, whilst Irish women comprised upwards of 40% of all female convicts. So Irish immigrants and their descendants unavoidably were to play a very significant part in shaping the society and culture of settler Australia and, indeed, in decades since.

In the 'Employment' chapter of this book – subtitled 'Bridget need not apply' – the authors vividly illustrate how widespread and entrenched prejudices were towards the Irish who migrated to Australia and how these then affected Irish-Australians:

*“No Irish Need Apply” advertisements [in the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century] for employees or tenants drew on stereotypes of the ignorant and untrustworthy Irish dating back to at least the early 19th century.'*

*'A particularly vivid description of the perceived difficulties of Irish domestic servants in Australia was provided by English-born journalist Richard Twopeny in his 1883 'Town Life in Australia'. He was not overly impressed with the quality of the colonial servants he encountered, but he reserved his most pithy criticisms for the Irish. 'Unfortunately, four-fifths of our servants are Irish – liars and dirty,' he wrote. Although the Irish were 'less impertinent than the colonials', a major problem was that the typical Irish servant had 'as often as not never been inside any other household than her native hovel, and stares in astonishment to find that you don't keep a pig on your drawing-room sofa'. Twopeny then listed the faults of various inept Irish servants, including one who put the soup, meat and pudding for the day all into one pot to serve.'*

During the 1840s, 1850s and 1860s almost half the female assisted immigrants to Australia were Irish – most listing their occupations as 'domestic servant'. *'But, at the same time, anti-Irish and anti-Catholic sentiment was strong in Melbourne, with young Catholic Irish female immigrants – just the sort of women likely to seek work as domestic servants – being prime targets for hostility ...*

*The Melbourne press was especially outspoken in its opposition. In a leading article in January 1850, the 'Argus' described the girls as 'coarse, useless creatures', whose household*

*knowledge 'barely reaches to distinguishing the inside from the outside of a potato' and whose previous 'intellectual occupation' consisted of little more than 'occasionally trotting across a bog to fetch back a runaway pig'.*

*The paper was especially alarmed at the prospect of intermarriage between Irish female domestic servants and the colony's working-class males. The 'squat, stunted figures, thick waists, and clumsy ankles' of these Irish immigrants, claimed the 'Argus', constituted a serious threat to the 'physique of the future colonists of Victoria.'*

*An even more serious threat was religion. In the 1850s there were many newspaper warnings of the dangers ahead for the Protestant colonies if large numbers of Catholic Irish women were allowed to subvert the family through 'mixed marriages'. The 'Argus' claimed in 1850 that if these Irish women married 'shepherds, hutkeepers, stockmen, &c.', who were themselves mostly 'little better than heathens', the children of such unions would almost certainly be raised as Catholics, thus diluting the Protestant British character of the workforce and threatening the colony's future 'liberty ... public happiness [and] progress'.*

*Given such fears, it is little wonder that during the gold-rush decade some of Melbourne's inhabitants preferred not to employ Catholic Irish servants in their homes.'*

Cartoons, jokes and even a song 'No Irish Need Apply' written in 1862 (now accessible on the internet) reinforced these anti-Irish employment sentiments.

Over time, 'No Irish Need Apply' was replaced in advertisements in the Australian press by 'English and Scottish Preferred', and then by 'Protestants Preferred' ... until, in the 1880s and later (presumably, by which time, many Irish in Australia had established themselves as 'respectable' Australians), 'Catholics Preferred' advertisements started to appear in significant numbers!!

Academic historians, most familiar with the modern thematic approach to studying history, will probably most enjoy this book ... as will those with a particular interest in the Australian Irish community. I suspect other readers will be like me and find some of the themes of the book to be of some interest, and others of much less interest ... and will then be faced with having to look elsewhere for a more satisfying, more comprehensive history of the Irish in Australia.

*A New History of the Irish in Australia* is available in paperback from around \$27.50.

## Volunteers Wanted

We're aiming to improve and help suss-out features, and will 'Recollections' and are looking for help plan our free 'Talking History' several volunteers to be part of an advisory committee. morning teas that are held to coincide with each new issue.

The Committee will likely meet two or three times a year, will suggest content to be included in 'Recollections'



If you're interested in assisting in this very practical way, please call 0448 160 852.

## HISTORIES

**The History of the The Moruya Jockey Club 1852–1905**

by Carlene Winch-Dummett

**Merv, the World's Largest Oyster; The Merimbula Oyster Festival Monument**

by Gary W. Selman

**Ulladulla – before and as I knew it**

by Alan Howard

I love small local histories. They provide intimate detail that is often lacking from larger histories and they often include much important historical detail. Each small local history is like a brick in a wall – perhaps modestly, each brick contributing to something much larger, with that large ‘wall’ being our understanding of society as we know it today.

Small local histories may be family histories or family reminiscences, the stories of particular events, the stories of businesses or other organisations. It's important that as many of these as possible be researched and recorded (the more of these that are produced and the earlier they are compiled the better, because as time passes important material inevitably becomes lost and people pass on taking with them valuable information and insights!)...and, of course, these short histories can capably be compiled by amateur historians with limited time or limited resources, at the same time providing them with an immense satisfaction from their efforts.

(Incidentally, it is just as important to publish and distribute historical research as it is to undertake the

research. We know that many local histories – many perhaps partly completed – are scattered throughout the community, their potential value to other historians therefore being totally unrealised. Local historical societies, at least, would welcome copies of ALL local histories, however modest...and ‘Recollections’ provides a vehicle for publication of suitable works – so please also think about sending us copies.)

These three small local histories are representative of what can be produced.

*‘The History of the Moruya Jockey Club 1852–1905’* was originally intended to be a history of the racing industry in Moruya from the early 1800s to the present. But the author discovered there are seemingly no archived materials anywhere, many of the official records apparently now being lost, and coverage of racing in and around the town in newspaper reports was patchy. So a commendable attempt was made to document what information is still available for the period until 1905, when the town's racecourse was



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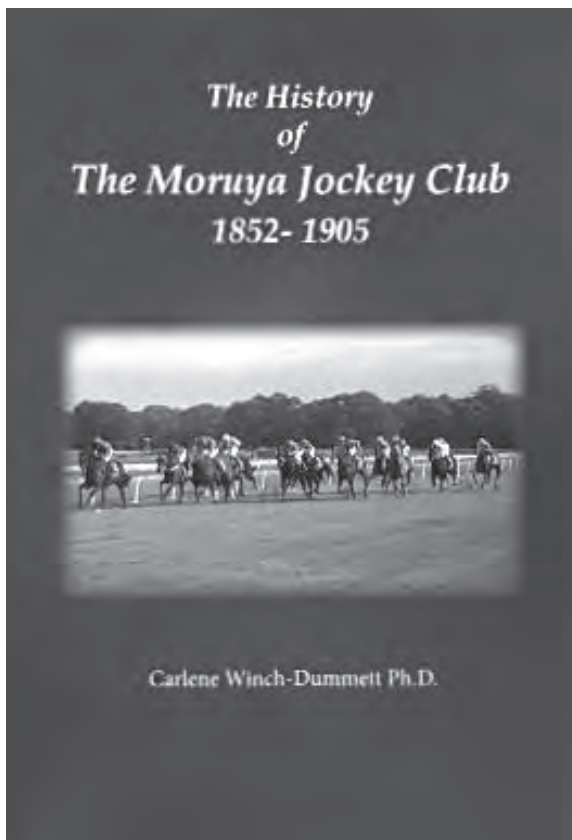
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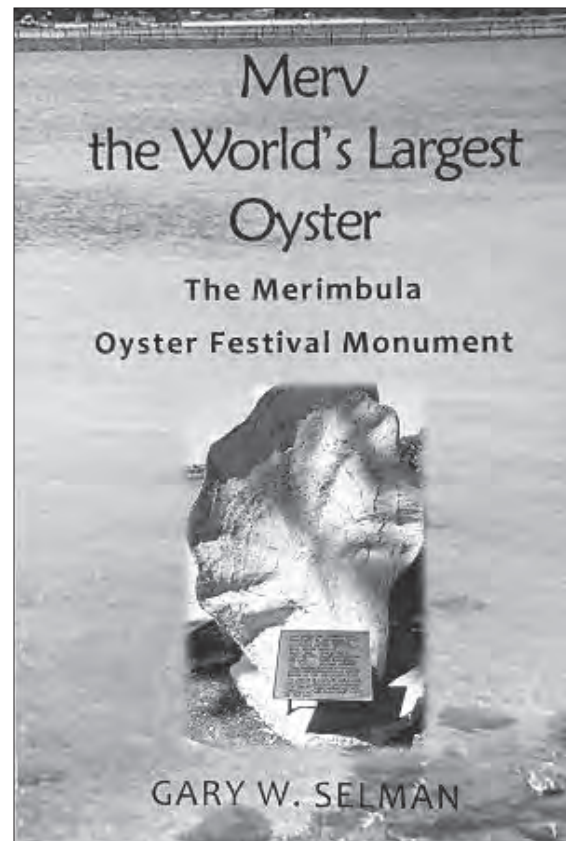
moved to Moruya Park (where races were held until 1985, after which local horse racing was moved to the current location at North Head near the Moruya airport. A heritage-listed grandstand, opened in 1905, survives at the Moruya Park location).



It seems horse racing has always been well supported in and around Moruya – right from the earliest days when races were held on nearly private properties—with two race meetings scheduled for the same day at rival properties in 1858! The author attributes this to the significant local Irish population, the Irish historically being passionate racegoers.

But racing has not been without its challenges – floods that inundated race courses and caused postponement of meetings, the lack of a bridge over the Moruya River until 1876 that meant racehorses needed to be swum across the river to reach the course (horses were too heavy for the punt), periods of boom (especially during the gold-rush days in Moruya and at nearby Araluen of the early 1850s) and bust (years of severe drought, depressions and floods). And the Moruya racing industry has witnessed its share of ‘racing scandals’ – substitution of horses with proven form by those with no form; examples of ‘walking over’ (‘The horses entered were *Dispatch*, *Astronomer* and *Light of Dawn*, but in consequence of the latter having been nominated under a false name she was disqualified, therefore there were but *Dispatch* and *Astronomer* legally entered to start. In a previous race *Astronomer* broke down, became quite lame, and was altogether in an unfit state to run a three-mile race. Notwithstanding this, *Astronomer* was brought to the post, not we contend with the view of running, but with the purpose of effecting start [to the race] and thus secure the first and second money. Both

horses were brought to the post, and did actually start, but the horses had not gone more than twenty yards when *Astronomer* pulled up short, and the owner proceeded to remove the saddle, &c., remarking he was not going to run his horse to please anybody; the other horse, *Dispatch*, then, to the great amusement of hundreds present, walked three times round the course’); and bushrangers stealing the best local racehorses.



‘*Merv, the World’s Largest Oyster*’ is really the story of the Merimbula Oyster Festival that ran from 1979 to 1981, then became a part of Merimbula Spring Festivals from 1983 to 1987, and was revived as the Merimbula Oyster Festival in 1988. These festivals incorporated a wide range of community events from oyster-eating competitions; the 1979 winner, Ron Hansen, consuming 475 oysters in 5 minutes. ‘The opened oysters were placed in trays in front of the contestants and while some chose to pick up several

## For local history lovers

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

[www.paceymedia.com.au](http://www.paceymedia.com.au)



at a time, Hansen 'picked up a tray at a time and poured them down.' The competition was replaced the following year with an oyster-opening competition 'making the event acceptable to those that were offended by the gluttonous aspect of it', to beauty competitions, exhibitions and trade shows. It sounds as though many aspects of the Festival were a real hoot.

Merv is a fibreglass representation of an oversize oyster that was created for promotional purposes. Somehow it has survived and is now embedded in a concrete base and sits 'forlornly' chained to a gum tree at the rear of the Merimbula Visitor Information Centre 'as if to prevent it from escaping'.

But, as Gary Selman notes, 'Merv has been overlooked when it came to writing the history of the town...it's role, and the role of the Oyster Festivals it commemorates, in attracting visitors to Merimbula is not being recognised'. So, this book, lavishly illustrated with photos of the Oyster Festivals, is a valuable new record of how these events contributed to the life and economy of Merimbula.

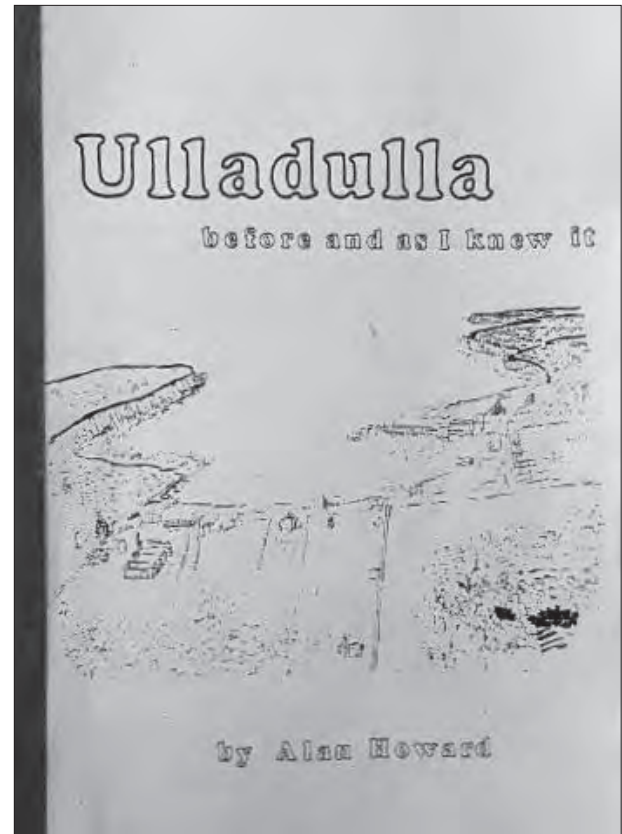
'Ulladulla - before and as I knew it' is one 85-year-old man's observations about and recollections of a town that has changed enormously in the past century. It was written back in 1985, so already much of its content has acquired extra importance because it records history of the area that probably otherwise would have since become 'lost' or 'forgotten'.

The detail in this book is incredible - right down to naming the person who showed residents of the area how to collect sand worms (and in the process, winning for himself a bet that he would be able to collect one that was four foot in length) - and it is valuable because it also documents changes that occurred in the area over the decades of the author's life ('today you would be lucky to find one pippy

on the beach and the worms are as scarce as the proverbial fowls' teeth').

This is the sort of book which anyone who has a basic knowledge of local history and a good memory of events that have occurred locally during their lifetime could (and, indeed, should) write. It provides a really interesting word picture of twentieth-century life, the town, the area, the residents and local business.

*Peter Lacey*



## SOUTH COAST HISTORY SOCIETY Inc. Who Are We?

We're just a bunch of locals committed to sharing the fascinating history of the NSW South Coast with anyone and everyone who is interested — putting many of the dramatic old photographs of the area out on public display — learning what we can about region's history — helping uncover things from our past that we didn't previously know — and, along the way, hoping to enthuse others who have similar interests.

Currently we are doing this through *Recollections*, our free magazine that's published every second month, through our website,

*You can help us most by:*

- *Telling your family, friends and neighbours about us and what we do.*
- *Becoming a Member of the South Coast History Society, and that's just \$15 per year.*
- *Contributing — simply contribute ideas ... or contribute an article for 'Recollections' ... perhaps join our Committee you could even assist us financially. We welcome donations, your support for specific projects, printing 'Recollections', advertising support, etc.!*

- Visit our website— <https://www.southcoasthistory.com/>
- visit us on Facebook— <https://www.facebook.com/southcoasthistory>
- email us— [southcoasthistory@yahoo.com](mailto:southcoasthistory@yahoo.com), or
- phone us on **0448 160 852**.

on our Facebook page, at our informal 'talking history' morning teas, and at seminars we hold in the area from time-to-time.

Email us with "Send Recollections" in the subject line and we will send you future issues of *Recollections* as soon as they are available.

We're a local community-based, incorporated, not-for-profit organisation which simply aims to benefit our community. Our ABN is 42 492 574 578 — so we're legally established, with clearly-defined responsibilities. And we're also currently actively seeking funding to enable us to progress some other innovative local initiatives.

\* Back issues of *Recollections* are at [www.bit.ly/RecollectionsX](http://www.bit.ly/RecollectionsX), where X is the issue number (1 to 14, except issue 3 which is 3- and issue 10 which is 10-).



## Your Vote is Needed - NOW!

'My Community Project' is giving NSW residents the chance to direct grant money from the NSW Government to worthwhile local projects of their choice.

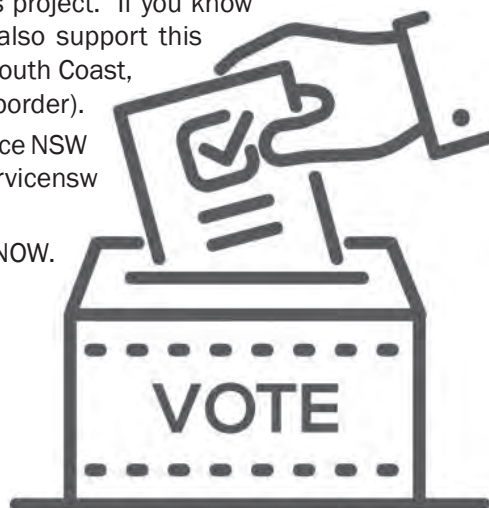
South Coast History Society has applied for a grant to fund a 12-month appointment of a professional **South Coast Historian-in-Residence**, an innovative position aimed at promoting and enhancing history on the South Coast. The area's history will benefit, a Historian-in-Residence's activities will ensure more of the area's fascinating history becomes available to you, and an enormous number of individuals and local organisations will benefit – including all local universities, all local schools, museums and historical societies, libraries, local Aboriginal communities, historians and numerous other community groups.

If you live in the **Bega Valley Electorate** please direct your vote to this project. If you know someone living in the Bega Valley Electorate please ask them to also support this project. (The Historian-in-Residence will be working throughout the South Coast, benefitting all communities between Batemans Bay and the Victorian border).

To cast your vote – and to SIGNIFICANTLY ASSIST US – please visit a Service NSW Centre (that's the old motor registry) or vote on-line using your myservicensw account.

Voting closes 15th August 2019...so PLEASE support us with your vote NOW.

THANKING YOU IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR SUPPORT.  
(Detailed information about this community project, championed by the South Coast History Society, is available on request from 0448 160 852)



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South Coast History Society's Annual General Meeting will be at 2pm on Saturday 17th August 2019 at the Bega Pioneers' Museum.


All are welcome to attend and to join our discussions about the Society's year ahead. Members will be sent a formal Agenda and copies of annual reports in advance. These are also available to non-members on request. (We hope you will then choose to become a member of the Society!!)

## ACTIVITIES

**Batemans Bay Heritage Museum** recently unveiled a new permanent exhibition that highlights different forms of community entertainment in pre-television days. It's fabulous, and well-worth visiting. It includes everything from a 1940s living room that's complete with (playing) radio, to a tribute to the Batemans Bay Theatre (screening period short films, including one treasure of Julie Andrews as a small girl leading a choir singing 'God Save the King'), to a 'dress-up' corner in the 'local School of Arts', to a display of mannequins and fashions from the days when 'window shopping' first became a leisure activity (yes, shop window displays, and therefore 'window shopping, are a relatively recent introduction), to a 1920s display of Berlei 'intimates'.

Also at **Batemans Bay Heritage Museum** is a 'Cook in the Pacific' exhibition. For the remainder of this year it concentrates on Cook's three voyages to the Pacific, and then from early next year until it closes in December

2020 it will have a much more local focus (Captain Cook named Batemans Bay in 1770 – so next year is the 250th anniversary of his sailing past Batemans Bay. Incidentally, the Clyde River and Bateman's Bay Historical Society have a number of intriguing commemorative events planned for next year – including a 'Warrigal Greens Scurvy Dinner'!).

And talking of anniversaries, it's 150 years since the pioneering **Bate family** arrived in Tilba, so a 'family reunion' (which is open to the general public) will be held in Tilba on 5th and 6th October. Details are available from [hbate@bigpond.net.au](mailto:hbate@bigpond.net.au). To coincide with the Bate family celebrations, the very impressive book 'Negatives of Glass' (displaying the photographs from around 1890 to 1910 by William Corkhill of Tilba, who married Frances Bate) is being reprinted. Copies will be available at the reunion. 

### Holiday at Tathra (Summer 1973)

There were quiet dawns of grey pearl and sea gull wings, and other dawns when seas ran high  
 And kookaburras sang their silly song to a bruised and angry sky.  
 There were pools formed from quartz-veined rock (see how it sparkles in the brilliant light?)  
 And shells and starfish and anemones and a young shark, bleached and bled of its capacity to fight.  
 There were breathless noons of unrelenting heat when time stood still, and yesterday and tomorrow  
 Were as remote as events commemorated in snapshots taken long ago.

We have returned to potted plants and curtains and pictures on the walls  
 And bank statements and pantyhose and china dishes and telephone calls  
 And ice cream and carpets and linen napkins and letters to be answered  
 And appointments to be kept and promises to be honoured (a never-ending stream)  
 And I wish, oh, how I wish, that Tathra was the reality and all else the foolish dream.

VALERIE ELLISTON (Reprinted from The Canberra Times, 10th March 1973)

## and finally...

- ▶ **Finished reading?** Please pass this copy to a friend, pop it in a neighbour's letter box, forward the email file to your contacts. Others enjoy reading *Recollections* too.
- ▶ **Register to automatically receive future copies of *Recollections* by email**—Simply email 'Send *Recollections*' to [southcoasthistory@yahoo.com](mailto:southcoasthistory@yahoo.com). It's free!
- ▶ **Or subscribe and we'll post copies to you.** Send your cheque for \$30 to South Coast History Society, 90 Whitby Wilson Road, Quaama NSW 2550, along with your name and address, to receive paper copies of the next six issues of *Recollections*.
- ▶ **And did we mention back Issues of *Recollections*** are available, free, in PDF format at [www.bit.ly/RecollectionsX](http://www.bit.ly/RecollectionsX) where X is the issue number (1 to 14, except for Issue 3 which is 3- and Issue 10 which is 10-).