

South Coast History Society Inc.

RecollectionS

October–November 2019

Issue 16

The World's Best Value Magazine! It's FREE!



Montague Island Lighthouse and Staff, c. 1900
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Shared Creation, Shared Stories

A stunning collection of decorative carved timber panels, depicting the history of Murunna Point (north of Bermagui) and surrounding areas, has recently been installed in the Bega Valley Commemorative Civic Centre.

These panels are artistically important, have enormous cross-cultural significance, and have an interesting history that dates back over twenty years.

In the 1990s a proposal was developed by the Bermagui Parks and Foreshores Committee for the construction of a walking trail connecting two existing carparks – one off Wallaga Street, Wallaga Lake Heights, and the other at Camel Rock – and to build a viewing platform on a high point midway along the track. This viewing platform would be sited on, and the walking track would traverse, Crown Land.

This land, however, had/has considerable Aboriginal significance. Aboriginal occupation of the area had, through archaeological assessments of middens, been dated back at least 8,000 years. It had, in recent times, become seriously degraded and, particularly in Aboriginal eyes, was being disrespected through unrestricted vehicle access and parking.

So, construction of the trail and viewing platform was considered a more culturally-sensitive use of the land.

A decision was made to include a series of hand-carved panels on cyprus slabs at the viewing platform. The wood

was to be locally milled from a fallen tree at Murunna Point, and the panels were to be designed and carved by local Indigenous and non-Indigenous craftsman working in partnership. They would depict the history of the immediate Murunna Point and surrounding areas.

Work on these began in 2001.

Plans to construct the walking trail and viewing platform were ultimately abandoned when a full assessment of the Murunna Point site was made. The significance of the land, particularly to the local Aboriginal community, would be severely compromised: important Aboriginal middens would be disturbed, land that had once been used for bean farming (employing substantial numbers of Aboriginal workers and therefore historically significant to them) would unnecessarily be altered.

Work on the panels, however, continued. The set of 14 panels was ultimately completed in 2005.

The project was coordinated by Rob Fitzclarence, an artist who had conducted wood carving workshops mentoring local community members. Jason Campbell, a young local Indigenous carpenter, and Rob designed and produced the 14 panels.

The Murunna Point panels were designed and developed to tell the Indigenous and non-Indigenous story of Murunna Point – a story that encompasses a shared natural and cultural heritage.



The first panel is a 'storyboard' that outlines the vision of the project and provides a preview of the scenes depicted on the remaining panels. The black and white hands (lower left) represent unified people – from Rob and Jason harmoniously working together on this project, to a country united. They

are supporting a bridge (which provides a framework extending from the start of time to reconciliation), under which flows 'water under the bridge' and tears from the past.

The four pillars of the bridge represent acknowledgment (acknowledgment that the Aboriginal people are the

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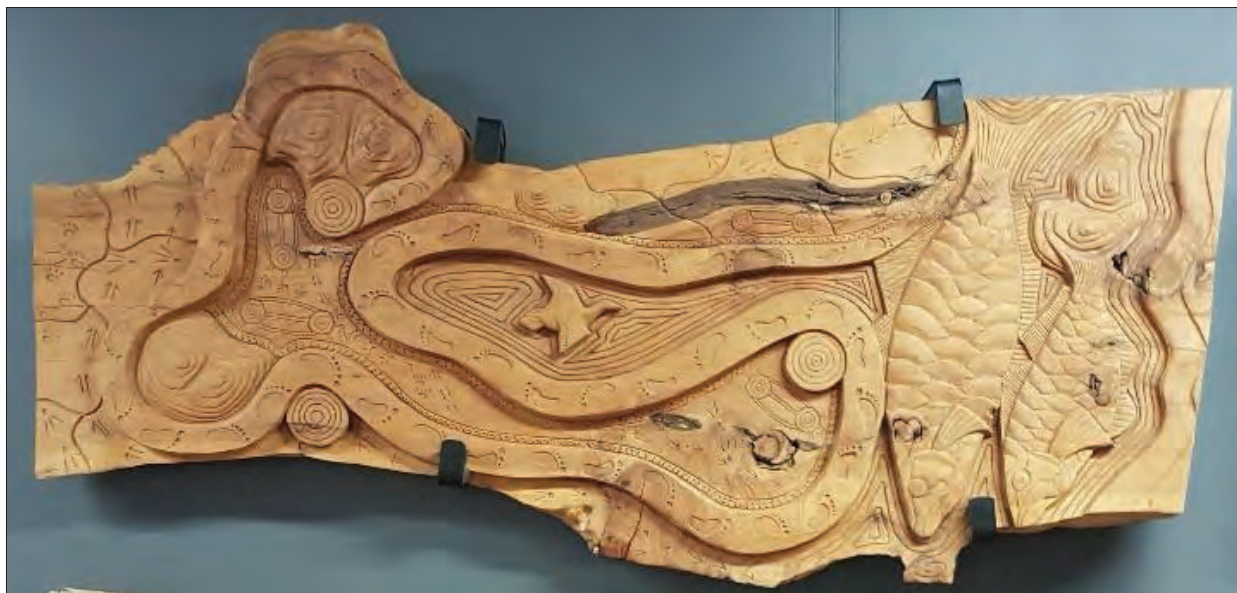
traditional occupants of the area, acknowledgment that Aboriginals connect with and view the local flora and fauna as significant to their cultural heritage, acknowledgment that Aboriginals and later settlers have a shared history which includes suffering and injustice), trust, respect, and sharing.

The feet on the bridge introduce another element. These represent the feet of local Koori kids for whom, and for generations, Murunna Point and the nearby Wallaga Lake Bridge were their playgrounds – places that were an integral

part of their lives, places where they could simply have fun such as diving off the bridge into Wallaga Lake.

The artists' basic hope, with this pivotal panel, was to raise community awareness of a need to treat peoples, cultures and the environment with respect and 'by acknowledging our common ground and collaborating, we can cross the bridge to the future together.'

The remaining panels (somewhat unromantically called panels 1 to panel 13) depict scenes from local Aboriginal



tradition, cameos of history from the past 250 years, and various cultural representations. Panel 1 depicts the Yuin/Merriman view of the world – walking from campsite to

campsite, landmark to landmark, and traditional food sources that might be gathered along the way.



Panel 2 illustrates creation, and the subsequent development of flora and fauna in the landscape that is portrayed in Panel 1. The central feature is a tree that grew in the area 300 million years ago that has been preserved locally in fossil form. Flora that has adapted over time from this original source and the animals and birds of the area (believed to have developed from original ocean creatures) are also shown.



Panel 3 shows the appearance of Aboriginal men and women, the traditional occupants of the land. Through cycles of teaching and learning, hunting and gathering, the Aboriginal inhabitants have interacted with their environment and been provided sustenance by the land and the sea.



An example if this is shown in Panel 4 which portrays an Aboriginal legend of dolphins being called up to round up fish and drive them on to the shore (in a similar way that the Aboriginals around Twofold Bay used killer whales to herd other whales close to the beaches where they could be speared).

Panels 5 and 6 provide two different cultural views of the local landscape:



Panel 5 tells the Aboriginal story of creation of Gulaga (Mt Dromedary), Nadganuka (Little Dromedary) and Baranguba (Montague Island) and of the Great Spirit's creation of Ngardi (woman) and then Tunku (man) and, as in local mythology, the relationships between men, women and landforms, and between families and creation.



Panel 6 is essentially the same view from Horseshoe Bay, Bermagui, but from the time of European arrival: so the Endeavour in the centre of the panel, with Captain Cook renaming

Gulaga as Mt Dromedary, then the steamer wharf at Dickinson Point, which was originally an Aboriginal camping ground where (to the right) an Aboriginal elder and a young man are preparing traditional food which is (at left) still a camping ground, now surrounded by Norfolk Pines.



Panel 7 is a continuation of Panel 6. The road from the steamer wharf to Wallaga Lake passes Murunna Point. The land is cleared and fenced and contains domestic animals and dwellings.

Before 1894 there was no Wallaga Lake Bridge. Mrs Wintle (centre), a single mother of many children, lived on Murunna Point and made a living by ferrying timber sleepers with a horse and dray from Tilba to the steamer wharf. Crossing her path is a Koori woman who is carrying cheese from Tilba to the Bermagui wharf.

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Panel 8 represents changes in livelihood at that time: the Wintle farm grew beans, employing Kooris and others, gold was panned and processed in a donkey crush at the Montreal Goldfield.



Panel 9 is a view, looking back, through a windscreen – from the earliest steam engine to the present time, and depicts goods and services that both Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal cultures share. Two sets of footprints that border the windscreen represent shared benefits as well as historic inequalities and injustices.

Panels 10, 11 and 12 depict several Aboriginal relationships with the land and sea:



Panel 10 displays marine life, such as whales and dolphins, passing Murunna Point.



Panel 11 shows the food sources available below the surface of Wallaga Lake.



Panel 12 depicts, through hunting and fishing, the Aboriginal people's relationship with the land and sea.



The final panel is a 'Resolution Panel' in which the bridge theme returns. The black and white hands join to support a bridge over a shared history which now can be best viewed as **our** water under **our** bridge. The pains of the past have been acknowledged, there is a collaborative future ahead – therefore a peaceful resolution has been achieved.

The panel also symbolises the collaboration, participation, consultation and sharing of skills, views and stories that Rob and Jason applied to this project – attributes that lead to mutual respect for people, beliefs and cultures.

It is pleasing to see these panels have finally been taken out of storage, where they have remained hidden for many years, and have now been placed on permanent public display. They present history in a refreshingly 'different' format ('different' in that they present history through art, not through the more-usual word on paper or word in computer format; something that should happen more frequently, because interest in history will only increase as it becomes available in as many different formats as possible) and they are an important reminder/record of a significant local socio-cultural issue in the period they were created.

Postscript: The history, heritage and future of Murunna Point are still being actively discussed. These Murunna Point Panels, however, inspired four carved wooden 'Four Pillars of Community' uprights which were incorporated into a pavilion that was, more recently, erected at the 'entrance' to the Murunna Point site south of the historic Wallaga Lake Bridge. **R**

The Murunna Point Panels and Wallaga Lake Bridge were selected for inclusion in the list of 101 Bega Shire's Hidden Heritage objects considered to have special historic or heritage significance. More details are at www.hiddenheritage.com.au The short walk around Murunna Point (follow the track south from the carpark at the end of Wallaga Street) must be one of the most spectacular on the South Coast, and is therefore highly recommended.



HISTORIES

Paper Emperors: The Rise of Australia's Newspaper Empires

by Sally Young

This book starts with the assertion that *'because newspapers have done such a poor job at reporting on themselves (dog does not eat dog), there is a big gap in our knowledge about who owned newspapers and why'*, implying that, if Sally Young was successful in her quest to tell the real story of Australia's newspaper empires, it was likely to be an absorbing read.



Sally's quest succeeds – brilliantly! – and this IS an absorbing read.

Not that it's an easy read. It's a massive work – 654 pages (including, as one would expect from an academic [Sally is Professor of Political Science at Melbourne University], very comprehensive notes and a bibliography) – and it is extremely detailed, so at times the overall story gets a little bogged down.

And it's only half a story - tracing the story of Australia's newspaper barons from the earliest days to those of Menzies' first Prime Ministership in 1943. A second instalment is to come, covering more recent decades when the Packers and Murdochs exerted considerable influence. I'll eagerly be reading that when it's published!!

Basically, this is a history of how and why the major Australian newspapers and a few magazines emerged, how they competed with one another, and the influence they had on business and politics in Australia. Which, in practice, means it's the story of a few remarkable 'Emperors' and their dynasties that competed for influence, prestige, power and enormous wealth which, in practice, means it's

also the true-life story of Australian crime, manipulation, ruthlessness, bankruptcy, political clout, social influence – probably everything that's appealing to the reader about the murky, grubby world of newspapers.

The book's main theme is that while the public may have believed that newspapers were free and independent (a message that the newspapers continually promoted), they were generally secretly owned, often closely connected to one another, and controlled by moneyed interests. The Melbourne-based Collins House Group, and the Baillieu family are identified as having been pre-eminent among these. News, simply, was a business ... and business is business, having one simple objective: generating profit for its owners.

And if this meant eliminating the opposition and preventing competitors from establishing themselves, then this meant eliminating the opposition and preventing new players from entering the market. And how this was done (everything from ensuring legislative or regulatory barriers were imposed by political friends, to taking control of the supply of newsprint in Australia) makes fascinating reading.

In most of the period that this book covers, newspapers provided the only way of transmitting news (and advertising and – crucially – opinions) to the general public. Radio only became a popular alternative mass medium in Australia around 1920 – and the major newspaper owners (again secretly) quickly grabbed control of it, so the 'competition' that radio provided to newspapers was largely illusory. One very fascinating section of the book describes how the newspaper moguls shackled the ABC when it was formed, effectively dictating that all ABC news must be sourced through existing Australian newspapers and then ensuring the news was not broadcast until after it first appeared in the newspapers. Another observation that Sally Young makes is that the Packers were slow to realise the value of their also owning or controlling radio networks – a lesson not lost on them when TV broadcast licences were first issued in the 1950s!

This is not just a review of the history of major Australian newspapers and their owners. It also provides some very interesting insights into the marketing strategies adopted by various publications at various times that were aimed at maximising their circulations and profits, provides some warts-and-all biographies of some leading Australian families and, quite possibly, is the most damning review ever compiled of the Australian newspaper industry and of those who, for so long, willingly supported it.

Peter Lacey

Paper Emperors: The Rise of Australia's Newspaper Empires is published by NewSouth Publishing and is available in paperback from around \$29.

Establishing an Australian Women's Newspaper

'With his reputation for being a circulation wizard and a 'newspaper builder', R C [Robert Clyde] Packer crossed the road from Smith's Newspapers to the giant building of Associated Newspapers [a major media conglomerate that was to be consumed by Fairfax Holdings in 1953] in September 1931, as its managing editor, on a declared mission to turn the company around. Associated Newspapers was now focused on just three papers: one each of a morning, afternoon and Sunday paper; the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Sun* and *Sunday Sun*. Packer freed up the display of these papers, increased their focus on news, and put in more photographs.

He also stirred up things at the management level. On arrival, Packer had quickly fired off a memo to the board scolding the directors for incompetence and accusing Denison [the founder of Associated Newspapers] of mismanagement. Three months later, he launched another written attack accusing advertising manager Fordyce Wheeler of a conflict of interest and robbing shareholders of £15,000 a year. Management tension was so high that both Packer and Wheeler reportedly had bodyguards and carried revolvers ...

Packer then proceeded to install his own son, Frank, at the company, in January 1932 ... In February 1932, Denison confirmed that he and the board would not allow Frank to stay. It was a rejection that Frank Packer never forgot, and that R C Packer was deeply offended by. ...

In October 1932, Frank Packer received a telegram. He was twenty-five years old ... The telegram was from George Warnecke, a brilliant English journalist who R C Packer had brought to Australia in the mid-1920s. Warnecke had strong connections within the Australian Workers Union (AWU) and the Labor Party, and was friends with E G Theodore, the former Labor premier of Queensland and former treasurer in the federal Scullin government. Warnecke told Frank that he had heard the *World* (an evening rival of Associated Newspaper's *Sun*, and owned by the AWU) was doing so badly that its directors were going to close it ... Warnecke suggested a syndicate should acquire the *World* and announce that it intended to convert the title into a penny newspaper, hoping Hugh Denison (well-known for being anxious about competition) would panic and offer to take over the new paper.

Warnecke put this cunning plan to R C Packer but, as an executive at Associated Newspapers, Packer senior knew that he would not be able to effect the deal. He decided that his son was better placed to broker it, preferably with the financial backing of the wealthy Theodore. Theodore did agree to back Frank ... Frank and Theodore then purchased the struggling *World* from the AWU, in a deal cut 'over a few lubricating drinks' with AWU leaders, on 1 November 1932 ... Theodore paid £100 ... Packer and Theodore then started publicising their plans to re-launch the paper and let it be widely known

Spring Open Garden

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that they would price it at a penny, undercutting the *Sun's* price of 1½d. On hearing this news Denison reportedly went white ...

Denison authorised R C Packer to 'fix up the matter' ... Packer duly cut a deal with his son and Theodore's new company (registered only two days before) [for] £86,500 in return for an agreement that they would not compete with the *Sun* nor publish a daily or Sunday newspaper for three years. In less than ten days, Frank Packer and Theodore had effectively turned a £100 option into £86,500 (about \$7 million in today's money). They promptly took the cash and closed the *World*, throwing 280 employees out of work during the Depression.



Frank Packer and Theodore still had the *World's* printing plant at AWU headquarters, and they had plenty of capital. They saw an opportunity to use the plant because, while the non-competition agreement prevented them from starting a daily paper, it left the path open for other publications.

Warnecke, who was still an employee of Associated Newspapers, came up with another brilliant idea. He and his wife, Nora, had spent weeks studying women's interests and shopping habits and developed a prototype of a women's newspaper, the *Australian Women's Weekly*. In one account, Warnecke developed this dummy edition when he was on sick leave and holiday leave from his position as editor of Associated Newspapers' *Sunday Sun* ...

Warnecke designed the *Women's Weekly* to be distinctly Australian, to appeal across age groups, and to be topical...the *Women's Weekly* was designed to focus on news – but news about lifestyle, homes, cooking, fashion, beauty, parenting and current affairs that were judged as being of interest to women. With advertisers so keen to reach women, as the custodians of the family purse, the publication provided a unique opportunity to capture advertising revenue.

The first issue of the *Australian Women's Weekly* appeared in Sydney on 10 June 1933. It was a forty-four page black and white newspaper (it later became a colour magazine). It was priced at two pence and boasted it was 'the biggest value in the world'. The front cover included stories on 'What smart Sydney women are wearing', 'equal social rights for sexes' and 'unique new jumpers'. There were ads for hats, insurance, gas fires, department stores, cleaning products, cars, biscuits and stout beer. Frank Packer had estimated the paper would sell 50,000 copies per week but neglected women readers bought up 121,162 copies. On its first day, it was sold out by lunchtime and the printing presses were pushed to their limit. The *Women's Weekly* was such an immediate and outstanding success that interstate editions quickly followed in Victoria and Queensland. Its average circulation grew from 260,000 in 1935, to 445,000 by 1939. It became Australia's best-selling and most profitable magazine.'

—From *Paper Emperors*

Our Summer 2019 Essay Competition

Students in years 10, 11 and 12 from the Bega Valley and Eurobodalla Shires have the chance of winning \$500 in this year's South Coast History Society Summer History Competition.

This follows the very positive response to a competition held last summer in which students were asked to submit an essay on 'Growing up in the 1950s and 1960s'.

This year, students are being asked to research any aspect of South Coast History that is likely to be of interest to readers of *'Recollections'* (i.e. the general public) and to submit a piece on that topic that is suitable for publication in *'Recollections'*.


The topic can be as broad or specific as the student wishes, provided it relates to South Coast history. Ideally it should be about 2,000 words – although shorter or longer pieces are quite acceptable – and should include details of references.

Accompanying photographs will be welcome. Any original research undertaken in preparation of the article will be highly regarded.

We are, ideally, seeking history-related articles, not biographies or family histories unless they relate to people or families that played an exceptionally significant role in the history of the South Coast.

There are so many interesting aspects relating to South Coast history and there is no shortage of source material and locals willing to assist, so we will be interested to see what stories are received.

Entries should be emailed as a Word document to southcoasthistory@yahoo.com by 10th February 2020.

First prize is \$500, second prize is \$100, and several book prizes will also be awarded. The winning entries will be published in *'Recollections'*. 

Our articles on Nelligen in Recollections 14 (accessible at bit.ly/Recollections14) resulted in our being loaned an enormous file of 19th century newspaper clippings about Nelligen (thank you, Jenny Butt). This could have led to an article on horrendous floods, horrendous roads, local gold mining...but, strangely, comments in newspapers relating to morality at the time proved a much more irresistible attraction to us for an article in 'Recollections'!

NELLIGEN NEEDS...

'The men at the Braidwood diggings are generally well-conducted, and not a few of them respectable. There are, however, some of a very loose character who, though too busy during the week to follow their pastime, give considerable annoyance on Sundays. The road to Braidwood, on the Sundays, is thronged with people. Some riding with rum kegs in bags, some carrying supplies. Some with spades and prospecting pans, some riding slow, some galloping, some going to get their letters, and some going to get a glass of rum. It is painful to see the multitudes who go out prospecting on Sunday. How can these men expect a blessing? Their irregularities are offensive to the district,

and a reproach even to the well-conducted. Surely it would be better for the whole to make a subscription to employ a party of regular prospectors ... It would be a more successful and reputable way of doing than going about digging wells on Sundays, only to be filled with water ... I hope the Araluen diggers will take the hint. I have made the above observations chiefly to discourage Sabbath profanation, yet not without regard to their advantage.' (The Goulburn Herald and Country Argyle Advertiser, 29.11.1851)

'WANTS - Notwithstanding the people here are all quiet and honest, I think where there is a public-house there ought to be a lock-up; and where there is a lock-up there should be a lock-up keeper. We have one policeman here, and he is obliged to perform double duty for the single pay. There is an old log hut here, built in the year one, which is used as a lock-up. It is not fit to put a horse in, let alone a human being, whether drunk or sober.' (From our Correspondent, Illawarra Mercury 23.12 1858. 'Our Correspondent' was subsequently to make many observations about the residents of Nelligen!)

'The inhabitants of this district are about to send in a petition to the Government ... to appropriate a sum of

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money, about £100, towards assisting the inhabitants in the erection of a public school house, and a residence for the teacher: so that the neglected, ignorant, and wild children may receive a useful and religious education. No church, no parson, no school house, no teacher, no chapel, no priest – but children, old and young, neglected. A sad state of affairs truly.’ (Illawarra Mercury, 27.12.1858)

‘It would be far easier to tame and teach the wild horses of South America than some of the [local] bush-reared children.’ (Illawarra Mercury, 23.12.1858)


‘An addition has been made to the Nelligen police force, and not before it was urgently wanting. Our town and district is daily increasing in population ... For their own credit sake, the present Government should appoint a Police Magistrate, Coroner, and a medical gentleman, all under the one head and appointment, with a chief and two assistants of good moral character – married constables.’ (Illawarra Mercury, 17.1.1859)

‘I think that the clergymen of this and the surrounding districts must be under the impression that we are not only a moral but a religious people down here, and that there is no room for improvement in us, from the fact that not one of them ever think of coming near us to enquire whether we are heathens, or what we are. I suppose they are not bound to look after the souls of any but those in the locality in which they are appointed for. It would not be reasonable to expect any of them to do any more than what they are paid for; but, as an act of charity, someone might have had the goodness to take a ride this way. I hope we will be able to send a member into the Legislature who will be in favour of State Aid to Religion for we are not able to pay one to watch over our spiritual wants.’ ([Sydney] Empire, 14.6.1859)

‘A notorious old toper who has swallowed in the course of his life innumerable casks of brandy, and ever so many dozens of old Tom [Gin] paid the debt of nature on last Saturday night. The deceased was named John Birch, a more inveterate devotee of the bottle never existed, he fairly drank himself to death ... This is the fifth person who has lost his life through drunkenness in this district within the last two months. The first of the cases occurred at Araluen – the victim in an inebriated condition fought with another man, fell and injured himself so severely that he died. The second

man got drunk at Major’s Creek, tumbled into a water hole on his way home at night and was drowned. The third, while on his way to Long Flat, fell into a shaft and was not got out until he was dead. The fourth got tipsy in Braidwood, walked out at night, and ended his days in an unfenced water-hole, which lies contiguous to the public road; and the fifth, as already stated, met his fate on last Saturday night. Yet still the lovers of grog continue to partake of the villainous stuff that destroys reason and leads down to the chambers of death.’ (Empire, 21.7.1859)

‘There are numerous essential offices which require filling up in order to secure the good working of society. With the exception of a single constable (who is absent now without leave) none of these offices have been filled ... We want a resident magistrate, who might also act as Coroner – or, what would be better, when a medical man comes to town, let him be the Coroner; and a district constable, of sober habits, and proved moral character, with one or two assistants. In the shape of public buildings – we want a lock-up, police office, a custom-house shed and office, a public cemetery, surveyed, marked out and fenced in, to preserve the bodies of the dead from being devoured by the dogs and pigs. The well-being of society, the protection of life and property, and the common dictates of humanity demand that all these wants be properly answered.’ (Illawarra Mercury, 30.12.1858)

‘I have given expression in previous communications to the dissatisfaction felt here at the inadequate police protection for the life and property of her Majesty’s lieges here resident, and to administer the numerous, but necessary details of different laws passed for the well-being of every part of the community. This feeling has been considerably aggravated of late by what is believed to be the unsanctioned and improper absentee of the only policeman stationed here. The officer has been absent for some time, and his whereabouts are not known. What made the matter worse, he is accompanied – at least it is affirmed by everyone here – by a girl, who is the wife of another man in Sydney – and whilst neglecting his duty is committing an unpardonable breach of these laws he was sent here to see maintained, and shocking the public sense of propriety in the most barefaced and wanton manner ...’ (Illawarra Mercury, 30.12.1858) 

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’



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The World War I Patriotic Funds

The catchcry throughout World War I was 'patriotism'.

Enlisting in the army to support the 'mother country' was, of course, the most patriotic act available. But that option was not available to everybody.

For those who could not enlist (the young, the elderly, those who did not meet the army's stringent recruitment standards and, of course, almost all females) the next best way of assisting the war effort was to support various 'patriotic' causes.

This meant helping financially – or, as an alternative for farmers, providing produce or livestock that could be auctioned, with the proceeds supporting some patriotic cause – or by participating in a hands-on way in any of an enormous number of patriotic activities.

Almost overnight, numerous local 'patriotic funds' and local branches of organisations such as the Lord Mayor's Relief Fund and the Red Cross were established. These provided many vehicles through which individuals could support the war.

Local newspapers gave these funds and organisations enormous publicity and help. Every donation – down to the last halfpenny – was acknowledged ... and details were also included about who had collected each donation. So, there was no place to hide for those who were not supporting the war effort ... and no place to hide if not supporting the war effort to one's utmost.

An astounding amount of money was collected. Australians gave nearly £14 million in total to the funds – almost as much as the federal government spent on the first year of the war. There were numerous appeals, numerous occasions when collections were made, so local newspapers were continually reporting amounts such as £523.3.00 being raised by Cobargo for Australia Day (in July 1915) and Bodalla raising around £280, Bega raising £153 on Allies Day (November 1915) and Central Tilba raising £60.

But this was supplemented by the collection of an equally enormous volume of 'comforts' for those serving in the armed forces and 'relief' packages for those – particularly in Belgium and France – who had been directly affected by the war.

Many of the pieces donated and dispatched overseas were home-made. Knitting, in particular, became almost a universal national wartime occupation, with Australians knitting over 1 million pairs of socks for the troops during the war.

Support even extended to donations of hardware to the military. An Air Squadron Fund raised more than £100,000 toward the cost of building warplanes, with some machines paid for individually by wealthy rural families.

The newspapers also regularly praised individuals and communities – both locally and elsewhere in Australia – who had made particularly meritorious efforts to support

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the war. For example, Candelo's *Southern Record and Advertiser* (20.2.1915) praised Mrs. Mann, a local hotelier, for her efforts in collecting 15,000 cigarettes which she then dispatched to soldiers overseas.

Newspapers were also prepared to criticise those who they felt were not contributing their fair share to the war effort:

'Wealth has its duties as well as its privileges. Any person who reads in the most cursory way the list of contributors to the Belgian Relief Fund cannot but have noticed that nine-tenths of the money comes from the poor or moderately circumstanced people, plus the proceeds of entertainments of various kinds. School children and batches of employees have rendered good service, and these figure prominently in the lists published from day to day. The same remarks apply to the history of all the patriotic funds.'



Belgian Day Parade, Katoomba, NSW, 1916. Two boys pull a small Red Cross wagon followed by two nurses, a boy leads a billy goat with decorated horns pulling a cart. More of the parade is in the background. Image: Blue Mountains Library via Trove, National Library of Australia, image no. 26417613385.

It is shown, beyond any doubt, that the wealthy classes have given little or nothing to the Belgian or any other fund. This applies to both the cities and towns of this State, and, no doubt, to the other States as well. With regard to the country, each town has its quota of very well-to-do and wealthy people, and yet the monthly contributions range from £30 to £150 only, which shows conclusively that those who can afford to give substantial sums do not do so, and that the bulk of the money comes from the financially middle and poorer classes.

The same thing prevails with regard to our recruits – the sons of the wealthy, too often, remain at home, while the worker or his sons are periodically embarking for the front to fight the battles of the Empire and her gallant Allies. Of course, there are praiseworthy exceptions but they are few and far between. This is regrettable, and withal an absolutely mean and dishonest position.' (*Bega Budget*, 17.4.1915)

It seems that whenever a 'need' was identified, an organisation would quickly emerge to provide for that need. For example, sheepskin vests were provided when the Empire's soldiers were faced with the harsh realities of European winters, sandbags were (for a brief period) sought when it was believed these were needed by the army, and old linen was collected to be turned into bandages.

So individuals, companies and other organisations could contribute to the war effort in numerous different ways.

Among the appeals mentioned in South Coast newspapers that were seeking support from locals were numerous local Patriotic Funds, a Salvation Army Tent Fund, a Bega Chamber of Commerce War Food Fund and a Sydney Chamber of Commerce War Food Fund, a Tanned Sheepskin Clothing Fund, various Red Cross funds such as a Red Cross Appeal for the Australian Wounded, a Christmas Cheer Fund, a Belgian Fund, a Returned Soldiers Fund, an Overseas Club for Australian Troops, an Anzac Day Fund, an Irish Relief Fund, YMCA Funds, and an Overseas Club Tobacco Fund. And numerous special occasions were used for the raising of these funds, including Allies' Day, Australia Day, Anzac Day, Button Day, France Day and Belgian Day.

Schools, in particular, were patriotic supporters of Australia's war efforts and of communities overseas that had been affected by the war. For many children, school work came a poor second during the war years to serving the empire and helping war refugees.

Australian schools' support of communities overseas extended well beyond the end of the war. For example, Victorian school children funded the rebuilding of a school in Villers-Bretonneux in France in 1923–1927, which still today prominently displays the message 'Do not forget Australia.'

Individuals initiated 'challenges':

*Mr. L. Goldman's proposal to enrol 31 subscribers of three guineas each affords a fine chance for the well to do, and those in comfortable circumstances, to give according to their means and set an example to the district. Mr. Goldman is confident of success, and mentions a number who will probably hand in their names and inscribe themselves as money volunteers on Cobargo's Roll Of Honor – for it is an honor and a privilege to efficiently care for our own wounded countrymen who have fought so well for Empire and hearths and homes ... Mr. L. Goldman has handed us the following names of town and district residents who have fallen into line with him in an endeavor to raise £100 in Cobargo by 31 subscriptions of £3.3s each:– L. Goldman £3 3 0, Dr. Lister £3 3 0, J. H. Tarlinton £3 3 0, John Allen £3 3 0, John Whiffen £3 3 0, Jas. Jobb £3 3 0, F. W. Tarlinton £3 3 0, E. J. Tarlinton £3 3 0, Mrs. W. F. Richards £3 3 0, Mrs. E. O. Branch £3 3 0, W. E. Salway £3 3 0. Total £34 13 0. Only 20 more wanted—who'll be the next? (*Cobargo Chronicle*, 11.6.1915)*

Many of the fundraising efforts reflected the nature of the local area. For example, farmers were urged to donate a day's milk (via their local processing facility) to war funds and locals were urged to grow vegetables to help returned servicemen and the hospitals treating them.

Profits from established local activities, such as the annual horticultural shows, were also redirected during the war to funds supporting the war effort.

Companies, too, contributed to the war effort. One of the first was 'Kameruka Estate (which) donated a ton of cheese for the use of soldiers at the front' (*Cobargo Chronicle*, 28.8.1914) – about one day's production. Simultaneously the company

organised a 'distress fund' to which those working on the estate contributed on a monthly basis.

Some benefit occasionally flowed back to the local community from local fundraising efforts:

'The local branch of the Chamber of Commerce War Food Fund has ordered 7000 lb. of cheese from the manager of Kameruka Estate for direct shipment to the London Chamber.' (Bega Budget, 6.2.1915)



Knitting; Keiraville Public School 1916. Image: Wollongong City Library P02/P02066.

Even some local entertainment had specific 'patriotic' overtones. Groups of returned servicemen were formed and toured the country presenting community concerts. Among those who visited the South Coast were the *Eclipse Entertainers*, *The Gallipoli Strollers* and *The Lone Pine Band*.

These groups were very warmly received because the local press intimated that it was a patriotic thing to support these ex-servicemen – many of whom had returned to Australia because they had been wounded in action – and because the performances (which reflected, at least to some extent, the entertainment that was provided to those who were serving overseas by army concert parties) and the performers (all whom had first-hand experience of serving in the army) provided local families with the sense of a 'link' to their relatives serving overseas.

The huge cost of the war forced the Australian Government to introduce every possible measure to finance it. In mid-1915 the Australian Government launched the first of seven War Loan campaigns. These were to be very successful – every loan being oversubscribed, with a total of £250 million being raised, and almost one in four Australian households investing in the last of the Loans.

The government, very early in the war, decreed that local patriotic efforts should be centralised:

'The Legislative Council passed a Bill to consolidate the various relief funds.' (Cobargo Chronicle, 21.8.1914)

This 'nationalising' of established, successful local efforts continued throughout the war and every move to centralise fund-raising activities was – as would be expected – accompanied by considerable debate about whether locals should be supporting statewide or nationwide funds, or should simply be supporting local volunteers:

'It appears that a big battle raged at Tuesday night's patriotic meeting around the question as to whether the sum collected

should be remitted to the Lord Mayor's Fund in Sydney, or retained here in order to see if any of Bega's contribution of men to the fighting force should be injured or killed. The latter was the extremely parochial view taken by a section which is to be found in every community. Quite a considerable number of people require to be educated to the great fact that the patriotism that is required just now extends beyond the local municipal area ... a matter for congratulation that there appears to be a preponderance of public opinion in favor of central administration as against haphazard local handling of our contribution.' (Bega Budget, 29.8.1914)

However, as the war progressed, locals on the South Coast (and elsewhere) increasingly questioned the need to centralise, and the wisdom of centralising, war-support efforts. The Australian and state governments, however, continually moved more and more towards centralising these efforts.

The effects (whether intended or unintended) of some of the governments' regulation of local fund-raising efforts, and regulation of other local initiatives that were aimed at helping the war effort, were sometimes quite bizarre. The forced closure of the Candelo Knitting Class (a remarkably interesting group of women; briefly described in *Recollections* issue 2, available at bit.ly/Recollections2) is a prime example.



'Doing His Bit' – Detective Sergeant Henderson knitting a scarf in the 1910s. Image: Moreton Bay Regional Libraries.

The state government won no friends – and further alienated locals! – when it decided in February 1918 that patriotic bodies must have specific authority from the State War Committee to hold entertainment events, such as dances. Dances, in particular, were a popular social event and had become an 'easy' way for local communities to raise funds, so this move seems almost unbelievable ... especially when it occurred at a time when the seemingly increasingly-desperate authorities were advancing other hare-brained ideas under the guise of assisting the country's war effort – such as cutting all school sport during wartime, and introducing compulsory subscriptions to war loans – and against a background of numerous other 'war measures' that had already been introduced, such as six o'clock closing of

hotels and a prohibition on sending Australian newspapers to soldiers at the front.

As the *Southern Record & Advertiser* (23.2.1918) commented, 'Miss Mack is not the only one who has prostituted the patriotic appeal. The Federal Government itself is the finest example we know in this particular business'. (Miss Louise Mack was 'a war lecturer with the 'moving pictures' which don't move' ... who donated 25% of her door takings [which averaged an incredible £400 per week in 1918] to the Red Cross, until the authorities stepped in and 'deprived her of a job worth £300 a week to herself'.)

The thing that governments and government bodies failed to realise throughout the war – and even after the war – was that those 'back home' who were unable or unwilling to join the army WERE eager to contribute – and be seen to be contributing – to the war effort. The government should, therefore, have been facilitating – not hindering – every means for those 'back home' to support the war effort.

And, in particular, they should have realised that 'locals' primarily wanted to help 'locals'.

This they, clearly, failed to do. For as soon as the government closed off one way of people supporting their neighbours, another local cause emerged that attracted their support.

But the tragedy is that, even after the war had ended, the governments and government authorities continued to frustrate locals' desires to honour their neighbours who had served the country so 'patriotically' throughout the war.



Sister Susies sewing shirts for soldiers by May Gibbs, 1915. Image: nla. obj-136518598

The governments simply could not resist regulating how and where local war memorials could be erected and they restricted local repatriation efforts.

—Extracted from *'The Unreal Story of World War I and the NSW South Coast'*



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Patriotic Farce

'Wilder' has arrived with another "pome," and as the name implies, the war is getting right on his nerves. The following is 'it', and we hope he will carry out his promise "that if the war doesn't soon end he will go to the front himself", then there will be a prospect of him getting shot without the awful necessity of our Editor shooting him on sight:-

A personage of some renown,
Who lives right here in Cobargo town,
Asked me to give a small donation
To help our poor war-stricken nation.
I said "perhaps you'll think it funny,
When I tell you I've got no money."

"That makes no difference, Sir," she said
"Give something for the sale instead
It doesn't matter what you get,
We'll sell the blooming thing – you bet!
It's wonderful what men will buy
To help the wives of those who die."

That night when I went home to bed
A million things came in my head,
For something I must surely give,
If I in peace henceforth would live.
I knew that I could not refuse,
But what the h___ was I to choose!

I would have given a lizard stew,
Or little bits of Chunder Loo;
['Chunder Loo' by Lionel Lindsay was a popular book at the time]
And though I couldn't spare my duds,
I could have sent a dozen spuds,
And every patriotic gent
I knew would part up his last cent.

If only I had had a show,
I could have sent a rooster's crow;
I might have made a spider sneeze
And sent her twenty-nine of these.
For every patriotic bloke
Would buy these things 'till he went broke.

An eagle liver, or some soda,
A dead goanna, or its odour.
A magpie's tripe, and lump of fat,
Or else an old and worn out hat.
I knew each patriotic bluff
To make 'em buy the blooming stuff.

A bull-dog ant with goo-goo eyes,
A pickle bottle filled with flies,
The tail end of a good stiff breeze –
There'd be no trouble selling these.
For patriotic men you know
Simply love to spend their dough.

A beetle pie; a cockroach sandwich,
A box or two of filthy language,
A dingo's howl, some blowflies' necks,
Or an old and broken pair of specs.
Hen's feathers would have sold, I think,
For patriots love to spend their jink.

At last I could no longer ponder,
So thought I'd go and ask Will Maunder.
I knew he'd make a good selection,
From such a jumbled-up collection.
When I asked for his opinion,
He shook his head and said to me: –

"Some empty-headed whipper-snapper,
Has got it in his silly napper,
That I'm a blasted pussy trapper."
For when I for a lark said that
I thought I'd give an old tom cat;
He went and spread about the joke,
And thought he'd done a bloomin' stroke.

I think you know the chap I mean,
A chap far lovelier than a dream.
He was "weally" never known to swear,
And I like the way he does his hair.
I think he'd wear a pale green sash,
If he thought it wouldn't look too flash!
No other word would Maunder say.
He simply turned and walked away.

A brilliant thought occurred to me,
And drove away my misery;
If Maunder gave a cat, quoth I,
[Mr W.Maunder had previously auctioned a 'patriotic cat']
I'll give a bally butterfly.
I'll paint its wings red, white and blue,
And on its tail I'll paint a view
Of the Kaiser eating lumps of glue.

Upon each leg I'll paint a nation
Nearly dead from sheer starvation;
The thing will look brand sparkling new.
Then I'll ask the lady, will it do?
I'm sure some chap'd nearly die
To buy this lovely butterfly
I also know the patriot person
Who bought the thing, would go home cursin'!

WILDER (Cobargo Chronicle, 16.10.1914)

Interested in Local History?

If you enjoy reading *Recollections*, you might be interested in visiting some of our interesting local museums:

Batemans Bay Heritage Museum, 3 Museum Place, Batemans Bay. Open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday 10 am – 3 pm.

Moruya Museum, 85 Campbell St, Moruya. Open Wednesday, Friday and Saturday 10 am – 12 noon. Open every day in January from 11 am – 2pm, public holidays excepted.

Narooma Lighthouse Museum, Narooma Visitor Information Centre, Princes Hwy, Narooma. Open Monday to Friday 9.30 am – 4.30 pm, Saturday & Sunday 9.30am – 1.30 pm.

Montreal Goldfield, 769 Wallaga Lake Rd, Bermagui. Open daily 2 pm.

Bermagui Museum, Bermagui Community Centre, Bunga St, Bermagui. Open Fri and Sat 10 am – 2 pm.

Cobargo Museum, Princes Hwy, Cobargo, Open Tuesday – Friday 10 am – 2 pm, Sat 10am – 1 pm.

Tathra Wharf Museum, Wharf Rd, Tathra. Open Friday – Monday, 10 am – 4 pm.

Bega Cheese Heritage Centre, Lagoon St, North Bega. Open Daily 9 am – 5 pm.

Bega Pioneers' Museum, 87 Bega St, Bega. Open Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10 am – 4 pm, Saturday 10 am – 2 pm.

Bega Valley Genealogical Society, Old Pambula Courthouse & Museum, 42 Toalla St, Pambula. Open Tuesdays 1 pm – 4 pm, Thursdays 9.30 am – 12.30 pm, Saturdays 1 – 4 pm.

Old School Museum, Main St, Merimbula. Open Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday 1.30 – 4 pm.

Jigamy Farm Keeping Place, 4381 Princes Highway, Broadwater. Visits by appointment.

Mary MacKillop Hall and Museum, Cnr Chandos and Calle Calle Sts, Eden. Open Daily 10 am – 4 pm.

Eden Killer Whale Museum, 184 Imlay St, Eden. Open Monday – Saturday 9.15 am – 3.45 pm, Sunday 11.15 am – 3.45 pm.

Online: **Museum of the South East** at <https://southeastarts.org.au/mose-museum-of-the-south-east/>

Library branches in the Bega Valley & Eurobodalla Shires also have valuable collections of newspapers, books and photographs.

Friendly, usually well-informed volunteers at museums should be able to answer your questions or, at the least, point you in the right direction to get any information you require.

For local history lovers

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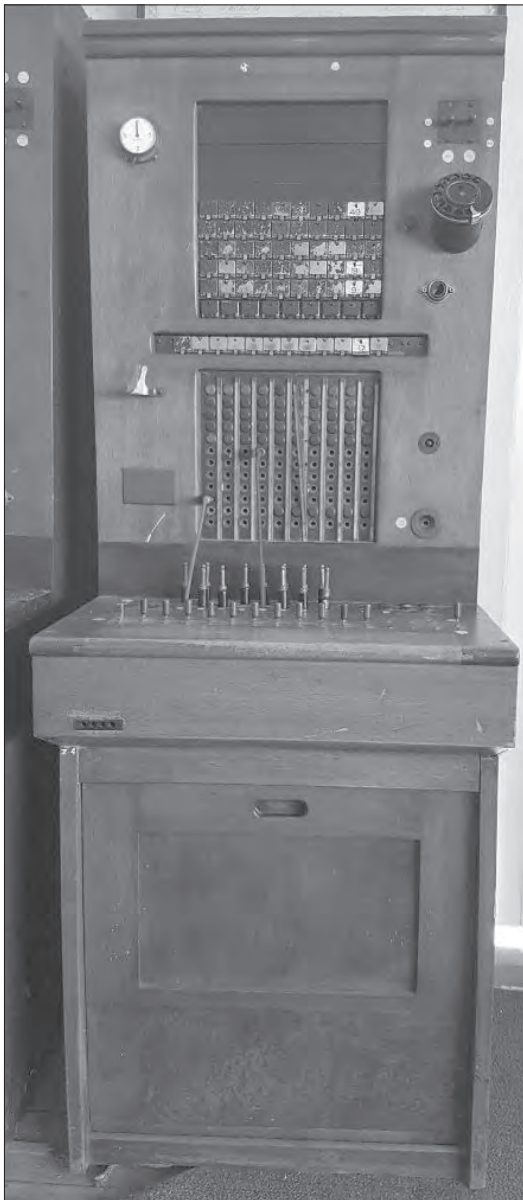
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Unexpected Discoveries

One delight of being interested in history is the discoveries it brings. These discoveries may be as simple as learning new things when reading a history book, or be much more significant when, for example, discovering something very significant in the course of undertaking detailed research. This happened to Sydney historian Sue Rosen when she stumbled across secret plans from 1942 to implement a 'scorched earth' policy in rural NSW in the event of a then much-feared invasion of Australia by the Japanese, and led to her ultimately writing her intriguing 'Scorched Earth' book (reviewed in *Recollections 4*, available online at bit.ly/Recollections4).



Recently I was compiling a dossier of information on one of the 101 objects included in the Bega Shire's Hidden Heritage selection and made several, perhaps relatively insignificant, 'discoveries' – but discoveries that illustrate the sort of things that happen when undertaking research.

The dossier was for a switchboard from a manual telephone exchange. The switchboard is in the collection

of the Bega Pioneers' Museum. This particular item was selected for inclusion in the Hidden Heritage project because it is a good example of local telecommunications from years gone by.

The Bega Pioneers' Museum believed it was a switchboard from a manual telephone exchange at Tantawangalo (south-west of Candelo). They knew little more about it and have no record of when or why it was acquired by the Museum.

Whilst trying to uncover more information about the switchboard, I sent a photograph of it to the Telecom Museum in Sydney and asked if they might know approximately when it was manufactured and by whom. They asked if I could arrange to have the back cover removed and advise of any visible manufacturing marks.

These revealed the date of manufacture and, interestingly, the names of the men who had assembled and checked the switchboard. With this information the Telecom Museum was able to confirm that the unit had been assembled in the Postal Workshops in Sydenham in Sydney.

But, taking the back off this switchboard revealed something unexpected – a list of the local subscribers served by the telephone exchange and their telephone numbers. For example, line 3 was to the local hotel, line 16 was to the police station. So, suddenly, 'real life' was being given to this inanimate switchboard.

The list of subscribers was in fading pencil and was hand-written, so I had some difficulty in accurately deciphering the names. Luckily, I sent details to well-known local genealogist Pat Raymond and asked her to verify the correct spelling of the names – which she did.

But she also informed me that these were Wyndham residents – not Tantawangalo residents – and, because original single digit or double digit phone numbers were usually incorporated into more recent phone numbers when they were progressively expanded, reference to an old Bega area telephone directory allowed her to confirm that those phone lines and therefore this telephone exchange switchboard was, indeed, from the Wyndham exchange.

Assembling the story of this old switchboard is also revealing a little of the social history of the era.

One of the lines (line 12) turns out to be a party line. For those too young to remember, party lines were local loop telephone circuits that were shared by multiple telephone service subscribers. In rural areas there could be up to several dozen subscribers whose telephone was connected to a single party line.

Each subscriber to the party line was identified by a letter and therefore had a unique telephone number (in the case of Wyndham, the telephone numbers were 12D and 12U and they were assigned to a Williams family and an Umback family).

So telephone calls would reach the correct subscriber, the telephonist at the exchange would ring all the phones on the party line using the corresponding letter in Morse code. So, to reach the Williams family at 12D the telephonist would call with one long ring followed by two short rings

EXTERNAL CABLE PAIR RECORD IN EXCHANGE.

Card No. _____

Cable No. _____ Pairs No. _____ to _____ Capacity _____ Pairs. Conductors _____ Pcs. Blocks _____

M.D.F.		Main Cable Pair No.	Branch Multiple.	Branch Conn. No.	Subscriber's No.	Cross Connection Particulars.	M.D.F.		Main Cable Pair No.	Branch Multiple.	Branch Conn. No.	Subscriber's No.	Cross Connection Particulars.	
Bay.	Terminal.						Bay.	Terminal.					Cable No.	Pair No.
		1			27	Walter Lloyd			26			10	F. Grant	
		2			28	Walter Lloyd			27					
		3			3	Walter Lloyd			28					
		4			4	Walter Lloyd			29					
		5			5	Walter Lloyd			30			31	Robertson	
		6			6	Walter Lloyd			31			9	Walter Lloyd	
		7			7	Walter Lloyd			32					
		8			8	Walter Lloyd			33					
		9			9	Walter Lloyd			34					
		0			10	Walter Lloyd			35					
		1			11	Walter Lloyd			36			22	N. Whitey	
		2			12	Walter Lloyd			37			16	Walter Lloyd	
		3			13	Walter Lloyd			38			17	Walter Lloyd	
		4			14	Walter Lloyd			39			7	D. Cotton	
		5			15	Walter Lloyd			40			24	M. S. Whitey	
		6			16	Walter Lloyd			41					
		7			17	Walter Lloyd			42					
		8			18	Walter Lloyd			43					
		9			19	Walter Lloyd			44					
		0			20	Walter Lloyd			45					
		1			21	Walter Lloyd			46					
		2			22	Walter Lloyd			47					
		3			23	Walter Lloyd			48					
		4			24	Walter Lloyd			49					
		5			25	Walter Lloyd			50					
		6			26	Walter Lloyd			51					
		7			27	Walter Lloyd			52					
		8			28	Walter Lloyd			53					
		9			29	Walter Lloyd			54					
		0			30	Walter Lloyd			55					
		1			31	Walter Lloyd			56					
		2			32	Walter Lloyd			57					
		3			33	Walter Lloyd			58					
		4			34	Walter Lloyd			59					
		5			35	Walter Lloyd			60					

But having a telephone on a party line was better than having no telephone at all!

This manual telephone exchange switchboard illustrates how basic our telecommunications networks were up until the 1980s (the Cobargo manual telephone exchange closed in 1981 and is believed to have been the last manual telephone exchange on the South Coast) when compared to what is in use today.

(U, in contrast, was two short rings followed by one long ring). The Williams family would then be able to answer the call that had been made to them.

However, party lines provided no privacy. All those on a party line knew instantly when every other subscriber on the party line was receiving a phone call and could listen-in. So, party lines often became a source of entertainment ... and subsequent gossip.

I would like to see this switchboard restored to functionality and connected to a couple of old telephones with hand-cranked ringers that the Museum also possesses, so that current and future generations can experience for themselves one of our giant leap-forwards in local telecommunications. **R**

The complete dossier of information on the Wyndham manual telephone exchange switchboard is available at www.bit.ly/begahh37 and at www.hiddenheritage.com.au

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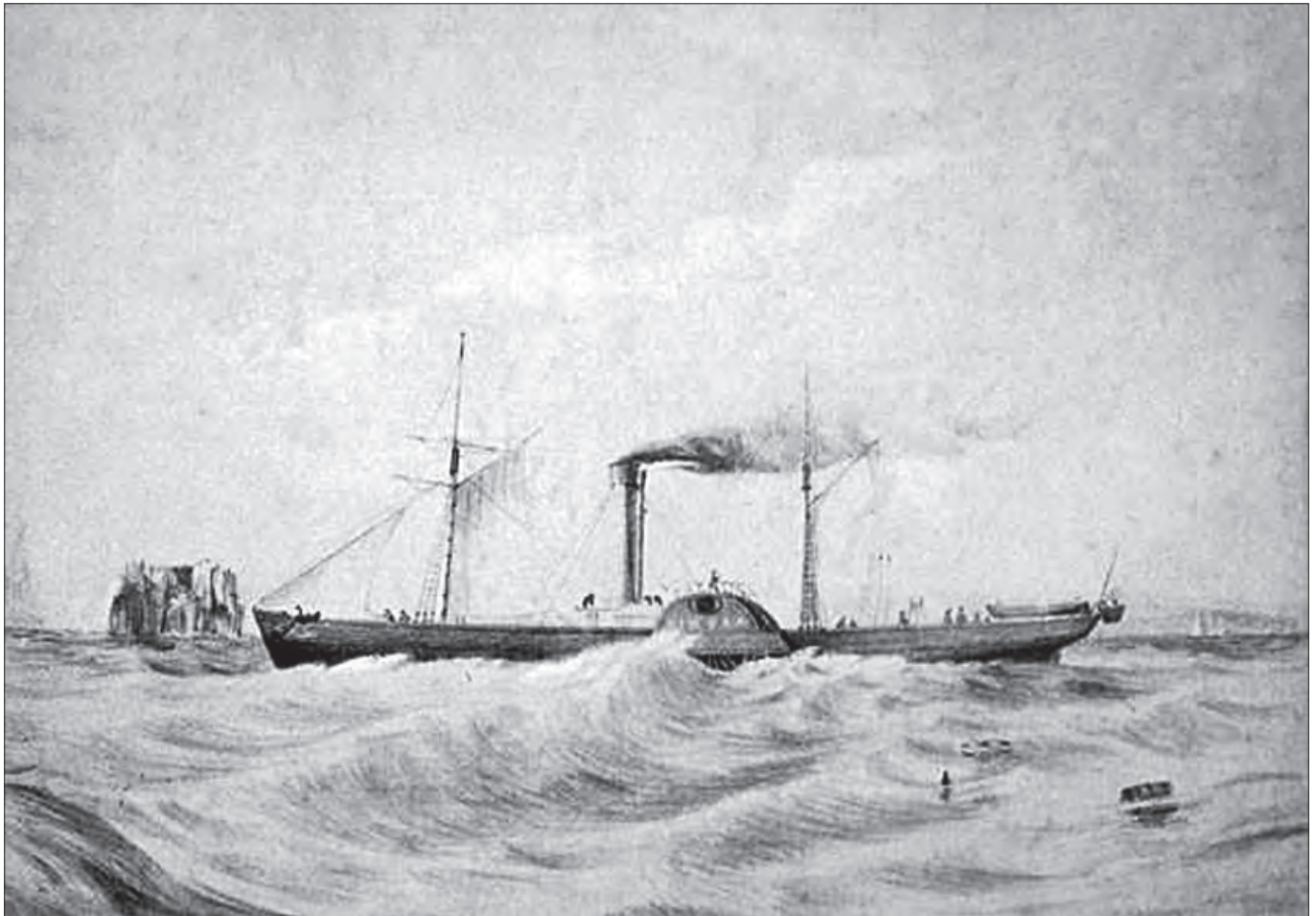
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The Wreck of p.s. Mimosa

It was around 3.30pm on Friday 18th September 1863 when (according to a report in the *Kiama Independent & Illawarra & Shoalhaven Advertiser* newspaper – some of the details

differ in other reports) the coastal paddle steamer ‘Mimosa’ struck an uncharted ‘detached rock’ about a mile offshore from Bunga Head, between Merimbula and Bermagui.



The p.s. Mimosa. Image: State Library of Tasmania

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 fortnightly newsletter at bit.ly/SCHSNews, 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.

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' ... join our Committee ... assist us financially. We welcome donations, support for specific projects, advertising support, help with paying printing costs of 'Recollections', etc.!*

- Check our fortnightly newsletter — bit.ly/SCHSNews
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- phone us on 0448 160 852.

* Back issues of *Recollections* are at www.bit.ly/RecollectionsX. where X is the issue number (1 to 15, except issue 3 which is 3- and issue 10 which is 10-).

Captain Keft immediately stopped the engines and put the paddle steamer into reverse. However, the vessel 'commenced making water very freely forward. It was evident that she would sink, and Captain Keft tried to run her on shore, but the water continued to flow in so rapidly, that it was necessary to get the boats out. The life-boat was launched, and was in charge of the mate.'

'Captain Keft ran forward and called out if anyone was below, but receiving no answer, he concluded all were on deck, at this time the vessel was about half a mile from shore, and the captain, with the crew and remaining passengers hurried into the boats, and had just time to get clear, when the vessel settled down and sank in eight fathoms water ... Nothing was saved.'

The lifeboat under the control of the mate was steered to shore near the wreck. Meanwhile, Captain Keft headed off in another boat and made landfall that evening about six miles north of the wreck near a property inhabited by Isaac and William Pollack. He was to be joined there the next day by the passengers and crew after they walked along the coast.

'Messrs. Isaac and William Pollack supplied them with food and other necessaries and behaved very kindly to all, doing everything in their power for their comfort. The passengers speak in the highest terms of their hospitality.'

William Pollack then rode 70 miles to Braidwood to report the wreck of the 'Mimosa'.

The following Monday, all the survivors were picked up by the 'Mynora' and were transported to Batemans

Bay (the *Kiama Independent* reporting 'we are sorry to say, the (survivors) did not meet with that attention and kindness which they experienced on shore') where they were transferred to the 'Kembla' and taken to Sydney.

Two passengers – a Mr and Mrs Ivell – perished when the 'Mimosa' sank. A few weeks later their bodies were located by a diver who was sent down to examine the wreck, were recovered, and then were buried at sea.

The loss of the 'Mimosa' is something of a mystery.

It occurred during the day, in calm seas, in fine weather when a light north-easterly wind was prevailing, and 'on a coasting track that has been constantly traversed by vessels trading to and from Sydney for more than half a century' (*'Empire'*, 8.10.1863).

It seems Capt. Keft may have been closer to shore than he cared to later admit to a Marine Board enquiry, and simply ran the paddle steamer onto the rocks.

The vessels owners, The Illawarra Steam Navigation Company, tried to salvage the 'Mimosa'. This was one of the earliest maritime salvage attempts in NSW but failed because the hole in the hull was too large and sand rapidly entered it, making recovery virtually impossible.

The *Kiama Independent* concludes its report by noting that 'The *Mimosa* has recently been lengthened (originally it was 140' 6" in length but had been cut in half in 1862 and lengthened by 22' 3" – so it was a very substantial vessel; it also had a reputation for being a fast vessel) and undergone



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very extensive alterations, and, being uninsured (it was valued at £11,000) the loss will be rather severely felt by the owners.'

Sources: Contemporary newspaper reports accessed from Trove; Australian Government Department of the Environment and Energy Australasian Underwater Cultural Heritage Database; sapphire-coast.com.au; NSW Department of Planning, p.s. Mimosa, Wreck Inspection Report 1992.

An advertisement appeared in the Sydney Morning Herald on 24th September 1863 reading:—

[ADVERTISEMENT]
On board the Kembla, steamer,
22nd September, 1863
To Captain Keft

Dear Sir,— We the undersigned passengers by the ill-fated Steamer Mimosa, deem it a duty incumbent upon us before separating from you, to offer you an acknowledgment of the immense debt of gratitude which we feel we owe you for the tremendous efforts by which, under the great mercy of Almighty God, you saved our lives on the occasion of the late melancholy catastrophe.

We would also wish to express our unbounded admiration of the undaunted courage which prompted you to rush below, to the lower cabin, at the imminent peril of your life, when the ship was promptly sinking, to rescue from the terrible end then awaiting us, the two unfortunate beings who so soon thereafter were plunged into eternity.

We can never forget the wondrous self-possession evinced by you through the whole of that dreadful scene, from the moment the doomed vessel struck until all those who, by your calm and instant management, were carefully arranged in the boats and landed; nor can we ever cease to remember your kind and manly bearing, and comforting and reassuring words to us who were in such terror and excitement from the time of the fearful shock until we reached the shore.

We desire to convey through you to your crew our most grateful thanks for the almost superhuman efforts made by them to carry out your instructions from first to last; and we beg you to favour them of our high appreciation of the order and discipline observed by them, and the strong sense of duty they showed in carrying your commands to the letter, at the time when the lives of all in board were in the greatest jeopardy.

We trust it will be some satisfaction to you to hear that we have unabated confidence in you as a most careful and skillful seaman, and should have no hesitation whatever in proceeding on any passage in a vessel of which you had to command.

Deeply sympathising with you in the great personal loss you have sustained, and trusting that we may soon see you reinstated to your proper position, we would now, in taking leave of you, trust that God may bless you with health, happiness and prosperity, and that you may ever be under His almighty guidance and protecting care.

We are, dear sir,
Yours ever faithfully and gratefully,

Thomas Argent	William Bogan Wallace	James Merney
William Argent	John Carry	Thomas England
Priscilla Cousens	James King	John Alger
Mary Grealy	George Barrett	Donald Ross

Two days later the following advertisement was printed in the Sydney Morning Herald:—

[ADVERTISEMENT.]
WRECK OF THE MIMOSA.

Ladies and Gentlemen,—I am almost unequal to the task of expressing my grateful thanks for the very kind expressions of sympathy you have conveyed to my crew and myself in your letter of 22nd instant, upon the recent and calamitous loss of the steamer Mimosa under my command.

Your kind letter, under such trying circumstances is, to a certain extent, a relief to our mind, and I have the further consolation of having to be deeply grateful to the Divine Ruler of All Things, that the loss of life, under such a sudden catastrophe, was so small.

I am, Ladies and Gentlemen,
Your obedient servant,
W. KEFT.

Sydney, 21st September, 1863.

and finally...

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