The World's Best Value Magazine! It's FREE!
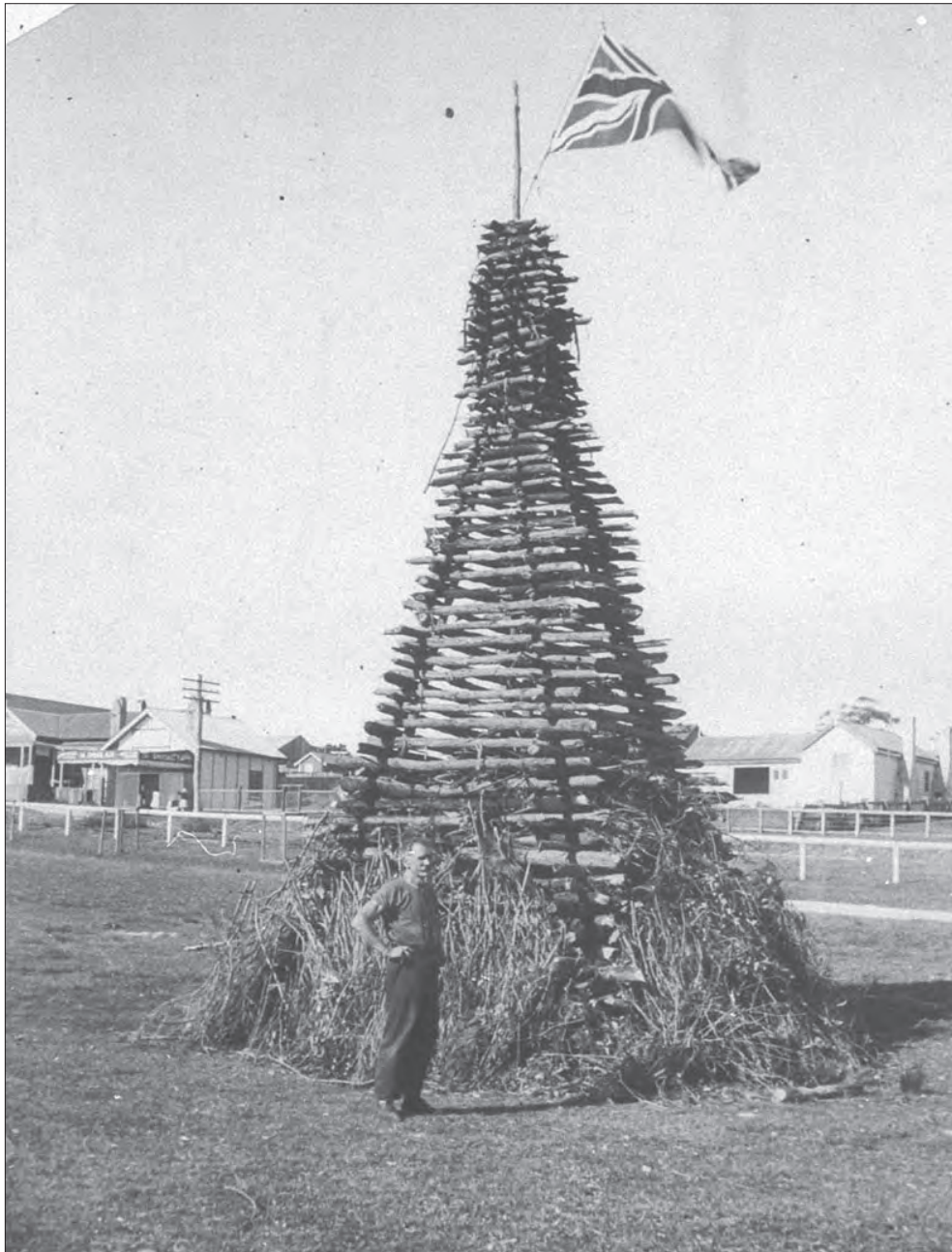
Do you remember bonfires on Empire Day? This one promises to be a REAL bonfire – constructed by Sam Sinclair (a local blacksmith and wheelwright in Bermagui) in 1910 for the local kids. Sam was a most interesting character – his sulky (now on display in the Bermagui Visitor Centre) is one of the 101 Bega Shire's Hidden Heritage objects, details of which are included on the recently-released, free Hidden Heritage App. Image: State Library of NSW, Ref 390232

Up and Down the Highways

Welcome to all those visiting the South Coast over the summer months. Whilst here, we hope you will enjoy learning a little of the area's history from 'Recollections', from our Hidden Heritage App, from our hiddenheritage.com.au website and from local museums (see their details page 10).

The major towns have fascinating histories that are not always immediately evident – so we take this opportunity to, very briefly, outline their stories:

BATEMANS BAY

Batemans Bay was one of a few places along the Australian east coast named by Capt. James Cook in 1770.

Batemans Bay was established as a settlement in the 1830s. However, Nelligen – further upstream along the Clyde River from Batemans Bay – became the major port and town in the region from the late 1850s. It provided a gateway to a land route up the escarpment to Braidwood and beyond.

A hand-powered punt was installed at Nelligen in the 1870s to provide a road crossing of the Clyde River. The Clyde was not crossed by punt at Batemans Bay until 1891 and a bridge was not built there until 1956 (by which time long lines of vehicles would often queue to cross the river; the punt at Nelligen ultimately was replaced by the bridge eight years later).

Understandably, this lack of easy road access to Batemans Bay meant that the town did not really grow until after World War II. In 1934 the population of Batemans Bay was only 450. It has since become a popular destination for holiday-makers and retirees, and has grown accordingly.

Timber-gathering and sawmilling have been the most important industrial activities in town. Timber-getting commenced in the area with convict labourers in the 1820s. The first sawmill was erected in Batemans Bay in 1858 and by 1883 there were at least 13 sawmills operating in the area – many along the River because timber was transported to major markets such as Sydney by ship. For a time, shipbuilding was also a major industry in the town.

MOGO

Alluvial gold was discovered near Mogo in 1851, leading to a gold rush that eventually extended throughout a wider Mogo-Nerrigundah-Araluen-Majors Creek area. About 7,000 Chinese were attracted to the diggings, usually working in highly-efficient teams to extract the gold.

Gold mining was to continue in the area for about a century, but by 1879 little mining was being undertaken in Mogo itself and the township was virtually deserted.

The town then reverted to become a sleepy highway town before it was revitalised as a tourist stop in the 1990s.

In 1991 the world-class privately-owned Mogo Zoo was established. It specialises in caring for endangered animals.

We Appreciate Your Support

This copy of *'Recollections'* cost us more than $1 just to print, so the printing of 5,000 copies of this issue has resulted in quite a sizeable bill – understandably, something of a challenge (which we have every second month!) for a small, voluntary, not-for-profit community group. So you'll realise we REALLY appreciate EVERY bit of support that we receive.

You can help us to keep producing *'Recollections'* by sending us a donation or by becoming a member of the South Coast History Society (see details page 13), by advertising in *'Recollections'*, or simply by dropping a dollar or two into one of the tins that many of our greaty-valued distributors place beside their stocks of *'Recollections'*.

And, any feedback about *'Recollections'* is equally appreciated!
Just email your thoughts to southcoasthistory@yahoo.com

MORUYA

STEAMERS AT WHARF MORUYA

The rich Moruya river flats attracted settlers from the 1820s. They often disembarked from ships anchored in Broulee Bay and this shipping activity in the area led to Broulee being gazetted as a town in 1837.

In 1841 a flood opened up the bar at the entrance to Moruya River, enabling shipping (for a period) to proceed upstream, so Moruya village was surveyed in 1850 and gazetted in 1851. The main centre for the district then shifted from Broulee to Moruya.

Gold was discovered in 1851 at Araluen, providing an immediate impetus to the new town.

In the late 1850s a granite quarry was developed on the south bank of the Moruya River and its granite was used in the building of the General Post Office and Bank of NSW building in Sydney.

In 1876 the Moruya or Government Quarry was opened on the north bank of the river. From 1925 to 1932 over 250 stonemasons cut 173,000 blocks of granite from here to clad the pylons of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and for the base of the Cenotaph in Martin Place, Sydney. A town of 70 homes, called Granite Town, was built adjacent to the quarry.

Apart from gold mining and granite quarrying, other important local industries included timber-getting and dairying.

A punt originally crossed the river north of Moruya township, but this was replaced by a bridge in 1876. Replacement bridges were opened in 1900, 1945 and 1966.

Moruya Airport served as an advanced operational base for the airforce in World War II. Moruya is the administrative centre of the Eurobodalla Shire that stretches from north of Batemans Bay to south of Tilba.

TUROSS HEAD

From the 1830s to the 1870s, the Tuross Head area was predominantly used for farming. In 1865 a steam-powered sawmill was built and this supplied timber for the erection of the Sydney G.P.O..

Until World War II, holiday makers and fishermen provided the economic base to the town which in 1940 only had around 40 residents.

Since then the number of holiday makers visiting the town has steadily grown and community facilities have been provided.

Today the township has a permanent population of around 2,250, but the town's economy still remains largely tourist- and fisherman-based.

BODALLA

Bodalla was built on its current site in the 1870s as the township for the surrounding Bodalla Estate. It was moved eastwards from its original site to higher ground, following a massive flood in 1870, and to ensure it was adjacent to the main road south from Sydney which, at the time, was being relocated.

The Bodalla Estate owned all the buildings in the town, excepting the school, up until they were sold in 1926 – mostly to the then-occupiers of the buildings.

T.S. Mort, who owned the Bodalla Estate, strongly disapproved of alcohol, so the town originally did not have a hotel. It was not built until 1877, after it had been ascertained that alcohol was being illegally taken on to the Estate. It was demolished in 1910 and a new hotel was erected to comply with government regulations.

The impressive All Saints Anglican Church, near the bottom end of town, was erected by his family as a memorial to Thomas Mort and his first wife Theresa. It was designed by Edmund Blacket, the architect of St Andrews Cathedral in Sydney and the main Sydney University building, and is built of locally quarried granite. It was intended to have a tall spire which was never added.

NAROOMA

In 1880, gold was discovered near Narooma at Central Tilba and, for several years, a post office operated at Corunna (between Tilba and Narooma) which was called Noorooma.

The Narooma township on Wagonga Inlet was surveyed in 1883 and a year later a hand-powered punt was installed across the Inlet. This opened up road access from Narooma

to Moruya and allowed a daily mail coach service to be established from Bega to Moruya via Narooma. Previously, almost all transport to Narooma had relied on sea connections.

Timber-getting simultaneously became a significant local industry, with sawmills operating in and near the town from the 1880s. An oyster industry was also established in the area in the early twentieth century.

In the early twentieth century Narooma developed as a tourist destination. A popular activity was to visit the light station (erected in 1881) and its residents on nearby Montague Island.

In 1929 a petrol-driven punt was moved from Batemans Bay to Narooma and construction commenced on Narooma's Bascule Span Bridge. This was the Main Roads Board's first major initiative aimed at developing the Princes Highway. The bridge opened in 1931.

From 1937 to 1940 a fish cannery operated in Narooma, processing tuna and salmon caught by a local fleet of fishing vessels.

COBARGO

When first developed in the late 1860s, Cobargo was known as 'The Junction' because it was sited at the junction of Narira and Bredbatoura Creeks.

The town serviced a substantial local farming community at the time, as was demonstrated when 37 children enrolled in the local school when it opened in 1871.

Dairy farming became the area's main activity and a large butter factory opened near the town in 1901. It remained in production until 1980.

The building of a bridge over Narira Creek in 1882 and improvements to the local main roads in the 1880s and 1890s encouraged the development of the town. By the 1890s the town supported a newspaper, the *Cobargo Watch & South Coast Journal* (which in 1898 became the *Cobargo Chronicle,* and was published through to 1944).

The town declined in importance in the early 20th century as transport developed and it became easier for locals to travel to larger centres. Cobargo's interesting and historic old streetscape, however, remains very much intact.

An annual Cobargo Folk Festival is held on the first weekend in March. It is now one of Australia's major folk festivals.

BERMAGUI

The port of Bermaguee first emerged in the 1830s to serve the needs of local farmers, and by 1868 the area had been mapped and lots of land were proposed to be sold. By the 1840s a boiling-down works operated near the mouth of the river and tallow was being shipped from the port.

Gold was discovered in 1880 north of Bermagui at Montreal. This sparked a gold rush that attracted 2,000 miners in just three weeks. However, by 1884 the field had been worked-out.

From the late 1850s the Illawarra & South Coast Steam Navigation Company had been operating along the south coast, so a sea wharf was built at Bermagui in 1888 to better serve the immediate area. Enormous quantities of timber, and especially railway sleepers, were shipped from this wharf.

Bermagui is the closest town on the mainland to the edge of the continental shelf and this, together with favourable sea currents, provides outstanding fishing – both for professionals and amateurs. In the 1930s American author and big-game fisherman Zane Grey visited Bermagui on several occasions. He wrote about and filmed his experiences there – and in so doing 'put Bermagui on the international map'.

In 1959 the Bermagui fishing harbour was constructed.

BEMBOKA
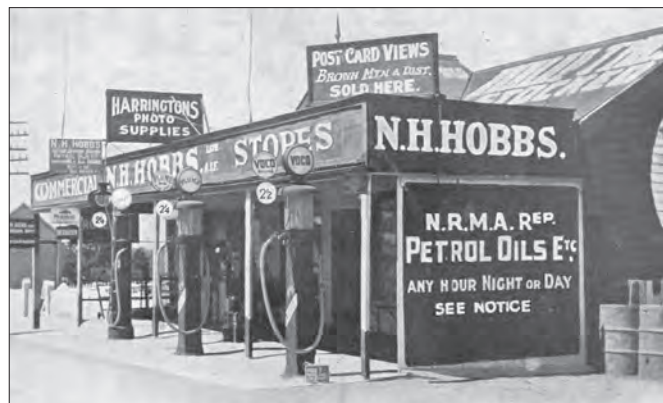
The first farming squatters arrived in the Bemboka area around 1829 and the first purchases of land by selectors were made in 1862.

The area became a rich dairying area. By the late 1890s there were six known butter and cheese factories in the

area. The last of these, the Bemboka Co-operative Factory remained in business at the eastern end of town until 1980.

The surrounding area was originally known as Benbooka, from an Aboriginal word thought to mean 'high peak'. The pioneering Imlay brothers named their property in the area 'Old Bemboka', and it is believed the town's name was derived from this.

Bemboka is the amalgamation of three towns – Brown Mountain (where the first school was established in 1871), Colombo (which was surveyed in 1876, but re-gazetted as Bemboka in 1894) and a private subdivision named Lyttleton that was incorporated into Bemboka in 1923.

Originally the township was relatively isolated. However, because it was situated half-way between Bega and Cooma, it became an important stopping-point after 1899 when a bridle trail down Brown Mountain was upgraded to take vehicular traffic. N.H. Hobbs Store then became a widely-known landmark in the town, catering to the needs of passing motorists.

The Mumbulla Shire Council had its administrative offices in Bemboka from 1906 until it became part of Bega Valley Shire in 1981. And the town had its own newspaper, the *Bemboka Advocate*, from 1904 to 1911.

The town is significant today because almost all of its old buildings are of timber construction.

Bega

The Bega Family Hotel. Image courtesy Bega Valley Historical Society Inc.

Bega is Australia's most famous cheese-making town.

The Bega Dairy Co-operative was established in the 1890s and, following improvements in transportation (particularly the introduction of motorized vehicles) gradually took over the processing of milk and milk products from smaller milk factories that were scattered throughout the area. That Co-operative is now Bega Cheese.

Bega Cheese processes over 40,000 tons of cheese and processed dairy products annually. The township of Bega, today, is sustained almost entirely by the Bega Cheese factory.

The earliest settlers arrived in the area in the 1830s. They were farmers. Among them were Drs George, Peter and Alexander Imlay. They named one property 'Biggah' which was thought to be an Aboriginal word for either 'big camping ground' or 'beautiful'.

The town of Bega was laid out and gazetted in 1851 at a convenient crossing-point of the Bega River. It was then on the north side of the river. However repeated flooding resulted in it being moved to higher ground south of the river. Town allotments were surveyed in 1854 and the first hotels were built in 1858 (the Victoria Hotel) and 1859 (the Family Hotel). Both of these buildings still stand in Auckland Street, which was then the main road into town.

Tathra

Until the 1950s the main form of transportation to the NSW South Coast was by ship or passenger steamer. Tathra, and specifically Tathra Wharf, provided that vital gateway to the area.

The farming area along and surrounding the Bega and Brogo Rivers had been settled and worked from the 1830s. The farmers sought a more convenient, more economic, faster way of transporting their produce to Sydney, Melbourne and Tasmania, so from the early 1860s organised and paid for a wharf to be constructed on the northern shores of the Tathra Headland and for a road to be built from Bega, across the Jellat Jellat flats, to Tathra. This road was intended to supersede an unsatisfactory, rough track that ran from Tathra to Merimbula (the next port south of Tathra).

The Tathra Wharf was subsequently rebuilt, extended and enhanced on numerous occasions. From 1858 to 1956 (the year that the Batemans Bay Bridge was opened and the vehicle ferry across the Clyde River was replaced) it served as a major point of call for the Illawarra and South Coast Steam Navigation Company that provided the major shipping service, and therefore the major access, to the area.

The Tathra township itself was surveyed 1861.

In the later half of the 20th century Tathra became a popular holiday destination and, for many of those working on the Snowy Mountains Hydro Electricity Scheme, provided a convenient seaside weekend destination.

After 1965 the Tathra Wharf gradually fell into disrepair. In 1973 its demolition was ordered, but this was averted after a concerted campaign was mounted by the National Trust, the local Council and local residents.

The Wharf was then restored. It now has heritage listing because it is the only one of the many original NSW coastal

steam wharves that has survived.

In June 2016 a major storm resulted in damage to and then closure of the wharf for many months.

More disastrously, a major bushfire swept through the town on 18th March 2018 destroying or damaging 108 houses. The town is still recovering from that event.

CANDELO

The Candelo area was first settled by Europeans in the 1830s, but the village really developed in the 1860s at a crossroads of tracks connecting the Monaro with the coast. This followed the passage of the 1861 NSW Land Act that permitted closer settlement of outlying areas throughout rural NSW and which led to more settlers moving to country areas.

Dairying became the major industry in the area, with farmers supplying factories in Candelo and nearby Kameruka Estate.

In its heyday, Candelo supported four general stores, seven blacksmiths, three hotels, its own newspaper, a doctor, a chemist, a tailor, a Convent and Convent-school, a maternity hospital and much more.

Today, Candelo is well-known for its community energy: organising a Candelo Village Festival, a regular program of Candelo Arts Society events, the Candelo Agricultural, Horticultural and Dairy Show and monthly community markets.

WOLUMLA

Wolumla's current location was determined by the route of the Bega to Eden road. It was the junction of that road and the road connecting the coast to the Monaro. Its name is derived from the Aboriginal word for wattle, and reflects one of the early activities common in the area – the collection of wattle bark, which was used in the tanning industry.

Originally Wolumla was about 3 miles from the current site at Three Mile Yellow Waterhole, a stopover for teamsters travelling down the Tangawangalo Mountain road from the Monaro.

In 1896 gold was discovered nearby on Mt Momsen.

The South Wolumla Butter Factory

This led to rapid growth of the town. Three batteries were reported as being fully employed crushing rock from this goldfield, and over the 12 years to 1908 (by which time gold mining at Wolumla had largely ceased) about 670 kg of gold and 100 kg of silver had been recovered.

The town then serviced and became the centre of a prosperous farming community. A butter factory was erected in South Wolumla in 1887 (it was one of the first co-operative dairy factories in the state). It operated until 1967.

On a visit to the town the NSW Premier, Sir Henry Parkes, promised that railway lines would be built from Bombala to Wolumla and from Bega to Eden, with their junction being at Wolumla. This raised optimism that Wolumla would become an important railway town and the name of a hotel was changed to the Railway Junction Hotel – the name that the town's only remaining hotel still bears.

MERIMBULA

Merimbula was originally a private village that was established in 1855 by the Twofold Bay Pastoral Association. It built a wharf adjacent to the town in the same year.

Allotments of land went on sale in 1860.

In 1867, Matthew Munn, a Scottish immigrant, turned an existing flour mill into a business producing cornflour which he called "Munn's Maizena" This became acclaimed worldwide and his factory became the major employer in the area until about 1917.

In 1922 his cornflour works were converted into a bacon processing factory.

Meanwhile, Merimbula became an important, regular port of call for vessels operated from Sydney by the Illawarra and South Coast Steam Navigation Company. These services continued until 1952.

By the 1950s, with improvements to the Princes Highway north from Melbourne and south from Sydney, Merimbula had become a popular holiday resort. It now also supports a thriving oyster farming industry that began in the area in the years following World War I.

PAMBULA

Street Scene, Pambula

It is thought the first European settlers in the Pambula area were the Imlay brothers who established cattle runs and their head station (which was originally called Panboola Station, but was changed by a later owner to Oaklands) on the Pambula River flats in the 1830s.

Pambula – which derives its name from the Aboriginal word that is pronounced 'panboola', meaning twin waters – was surveyed in 1843. However, it was relocated to its current site on higher ground in 1851 following a disastrous flood.

By 1856 Pambula had 5 hotels. It was proclaimed a town in 1885.

In 1888, gold was discovered nearby at Yowaka River and Pipeclay Creek. By 1891 there were 11 mining companies located in the Mt Gahan area (south-west of Pambula) alone. However, the fields did not survive long, and production of gold ceased around 1915.

Pambula remained the dominant town of the district for many years – mostly supported by farming activities including cattle, dairying, maize and potato cropping, oyster growing and timber-getting – until it was gradually replaced by Merimbula as the area's main commercial centre.

EDEN

Of all the South Coast towns, Eden has the longest continuous European history.

As early as 1791 – just 3 years after the first settlement of Sydney – whalers were operating in the area. Then, in 1797 and 1798, George Bass visited Twofold Bay during his historic voyage to Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) and, later in 1798, he and Matthew Flinders surveyed the bay.

Whaling became the area's first major industry. Capt. John Raine established a whaling station in 1828, as did Drs Alexander, George and Peter Imlay in 1834. Benjamin Boyd also established a significant whaling station in the 1840s at East Boyd. Whaling was to continue in the Twofold Bay area until 1930, providing the town with a solid economic base for about a century.

The Eden township was surveyed in 1842 and a wharf was built out into the cove now known as Cattle Bay, enabling cattle to be transported by ship to Hobart and elsewhere. Shipping of cattle from Eden continued until the late 1890s.

From the 1850s to the 1950s the port of Eden was serviced by regular Illawarra & South Coast Steam Navigation Company coastal steamers, providing the town with a reliable link to Australia's major cities.

The discovery of gold at Kiandra in 1859 led to an influx of would-be prospectors who often replenished their supplies in town before heading for Kiandra, and – for several years – added significantly to the town's prosperity.

Timber-getting, sawmilling, and – for a period – sleeper-cutting have also been important industries for Eden. Timber-getting and sawmilling remain significant industries today, as does export woodchipping.

In 1949 a tuna cannery opened in Eden. It operated until 1999. Today, Eden remains the largest fishing port in NSW.

Recently the Eden wharf facilities have been significantly extended to cater for an increasing number of cruise ships visiting the area – suggesting that tourism will become the next boom industry for the town. ℝ

Brogo River Bridge

Brogo Bridge, c. 1900

Brogo Bridge, 1932

**'History is an avenue lying behind …
a long ribbon of scenes and emotions'**

Brogo Bridge, 1925

Local Museums Teeming with History

Set yourself a summer resolution to visit at least one of our local museums. You won't be disappointed – because all are jam-packed with interesting pieces reflecting our history and our heritage. The usually well-informed volunteers at museums should be able to tell you more about any particular object that interests you, and will be able to answer any questions you may have.

When visiting museums in the Bega Shire, be sure to take the informative Hidden Heritage App with you – it provides comprehensive details about some of the more-interesting pieces you'll discover, and will alert you to some particularly-important nearby items you really must not miss.

Museums you can visit include:

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; during January, Monday – Saturday 10 am – 4 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 except Sundays 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.
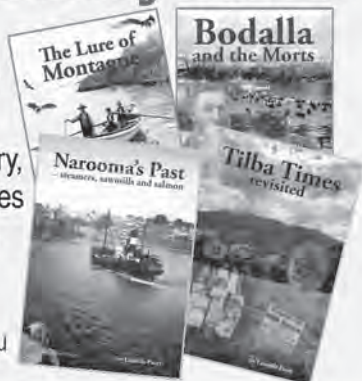
OUR SUMMER HOLIDAY COMPETITION

It's open to 2019 Years 10, 11 and 12 students who live in or attend school in the Bega Valley or Eurobodalla Shires... and you could win $500, $100 or several book prizes.

Simply write an article (ideal length around 2,000 words) on any aspect of South Coast history that's suitable for publication in 'Recollections' and email it in Word format to southcoasthistory@yahoo.com before 10th February 2020.

Further details: 0448 160 852.

It's Time to Band Together!

Darren Jones, during his days as a NSW police officer, had seen it before… but, this time, realised there was something practical he personally could do to help.

The 2001 Blue Mountains bushfires had destroyed 26 homes and Darren was on the front lines, evacuating families as the fire raced up the ridge at Woodford. This highlighted to him how devastating a fire can be and how important disaster relief is to a local community in the aftermath. The only difference this time, following the Reedy Swamp-Tathra fire, was that 65 homes and numerous caravans had been destroyed, so the need for disaster relief and assistance would be very much greater.

Darren is the Director for JAM Event Management, a local event management company and has a background in the music industry. He contacted long-time friend Tim Farriss (INXS) to run the idea by him. A further phone call with Michael Marshall (Abandon Ship Productions) and the idea of Band Together: The Tathra Bushfire Relief Concert had been born.

It didn't take long for the Hoodoo Gurus and 1927 to return phone calls and throw their support and significant industry weight behind the project. 'Yes, we'll happily help' was their immediate reply, thereby setting in motion the planning for a highly successful Band Together concert that was to take place just seven weeks later on May 26. In all, 29 bands put up their hand to perform on the day. Not one of them charged a fee.

The main objective of the concert was to raise as much money as possible for the Bega Valley Shire's Mayoral Appeal Fund. In that respect, the event was highly successful, contributing $160,000 – the greatest amount of money that flowed to this fund from any single source. But the event was also designed as a '*thank you*' to the fire fighters and emergency services who had fought the blaze, and an opportunity for the families and individuals who were affected by the fires directly to be part of an event that was all about them. One resident who lost everything said afterwards, '*it was a chance for us to draw a line in the sand, to move forward, and finally have something to look forward to.*'

For Darren and the amazing team that was rapidly forming around him (including Jess Ryan, Michael Marshall, Peter Whiter, Chris Nicholls and Ken Vatcher), it was imperative that the Band Together concert be held as quickly as possible – whilst the disastrous effects of the fire were still fresh in the minds of the community. They soon discovered that the extensive Australia-wide media coverage that the bushfire had received would prove to be an absolute boon to the organisation of the concert.

Sam Stevenson of the Merimbula RFS joins The Figmentz on stage with a crowd-stopping rendition of 'With A Little Help From My Friends'. Photographs courtesy Peter Whiter of DoubleTake Photographics.

There was no need for the organisers to explain the enormity of the disaster or the need for assistance to be provided to those who had been affected. And virtually every request for help for staging the event was met with a '*yes, we'll happily help…and at no charge*' – so a concert stage that normally would cost $35,000 to hire was donated by Stage Kings and loaded on the back of a truck at their Sydney depot and transported to the Sapphire Coast Turf Club at no charge by local Pambula company DJ Cool Freight. The racecourse was made available at no charge and the guys at Green Room Canberra and Abandon Ship Productions who led the sound and production for the event, normally costing around $30,000, donated their services for free. REX Airlines flew all the artists to Merimbula from Sydney and Melbourne at no charge and Excell Printing in Pambula supplied all printing and promotional material at no charge.

And from locals, the phone started ringing. The Bega and Tathra Lions Clubs offered their services to help run the events bars, plus around thirty-five individuals volunteered their assistance on the day to ensure the smooth running of the event. WIN Television offered thousands of dollars of free advertising time, running the event's commercial up and down the south coast and into Canberra, and numerous other individuals and organisations helped in every way that was needed.

Assembling groups who were willing to perform proved relatively easy, and they were a cross-section of the very best popular groups and performers in Australia. Regrettably, a number of artists had to be turned away, such was the demand to play and be involved. 29 acts ultimately participated over

3 stages, including the Hoodoo Gurus, 1927, The Badloves, The Figmentz, Daniel Champagne, OL'55, The Fez, Jack Biilmann, Melanie Horsnell, Erin McMahon and Lochie Marson. There was also a special performance by the Wyndham School of Dance, with 20 local students putting on a magical display on the main stage.

Well-known personalities volunteered to act as announcers at the concert including Lindsay McDougall (ABC Illawarra), Heather Ewart (ABC's Back Roads) and Ian Campbell (About Regional). ABC's Simon Marnie broadcast his state-wide Saturday morning program from the Tathra Pub, providing added publicity for the event and the bushfire relief fundraising efforts.

With the concert selling out a week prior, May 26 saw over 4,000 people attend Band Together, including around 500 kids who were entertained with things like face painting and jumping castles in a special Kids Zone. It is believed around 1,000 of the attendees came from outside the immediate area and stayed overnight, thereby contributing thousands of tourist dollars to the local economy.

On the morning after the concert, an extremely well-attended 'recovery breakfast' was held in Tathra itself, providing local businesses with a much-needed, much-appreciated boost to their trade.

Band Together was the largest event ever held on the Sapphire Coast and its success has led to a long-term initiative between Darren Jones and the Bega Valley Shire Council.

It became very obvious that there are drawbacks to fundraising following a disaster such as this. In particular, it takes time to properly organise and co-ordinate fundraising efforts which leads to unavoidable delays and other impediments in rapidly getting the aid to those for whom it is intended. So, it was decided to set up a permanent disaster relief fund in the Bega Valley Shire to ensure money would be available immediately when needed in the future (which is more than likely, because the area has a history of being affected by major bushfires and floods). The fund will be held by the DGR registered (providing tax deductibility for donations) *Social Justice Advocate* group and administered by a special committee, to be formed in the coming months.

Launching this fund is Band Together 2 – the follow up music festival at Wolumla Recreational Ground on Saturday 30th November 2019 – again attracting top-name acts from around Australia including Killing Heidi, Mental As Anything, Bachelor Girl, ARC Supergroup and Imogen Clark. This time it's been 7 months in the planning! 18 bands and 2 stages. It's time for the Bega Valley to band together again! Ⓡ

Website & Tickets – www.bandtogethermusicfestival.com
Inquiries – 0448 630 136

(If you are reading this '*Recollections*' after the event, a Banding Together 3 concert is planned for 2020 to raise more funds for the Bega Valley Shire disaster relief fund.)
More details about the community response to the 2018 Reedy Creek-Tathra Bushfires will be included in the next issue of '*Recollections*'

Piper's Lookout, Brown Mountain

The Fred Piper Memorial Lookout is named after Fred Piper, a bus driver employed by Balmain Brothers of Bega and Cooma, who drove the return Bega to Cooma route six days per week for 28 years – until, on 15th August 1947, he collapsed and died of a heart attack while digging a path for his bus through a snow drift on the Snowy Mountains Highway. He was age 54.

Fred was not just a diligent employee but, as Don Balmain noted in 1947, 'he was a friend to all the passengers, making them comfortable and ensuring that their wants were attended to right throughout the journey.' The naming of this South Coast landmark is testament to the esteem in which Fred Piper was held by the local community.

The Balmain Brothers bus service to and from Cooma was well-known, but the business was a lot more diversified than that.

The arrival of motor transport on the South Coast in the 1900s provided new business opportunities to the area. In 1909 Balmain & Heyde and Petersen & Gjerstrup opened motor garages in Cooma and began regularly transporting passengers to Bega. In the same year, George Harrison of Pipeclay Creek near Pambula established a regular passenger service between Eden and Nowra, using an eight-passenger motor car.

In 1910 Balmain & Heyde and Petersen & Gjerstrup both opened branches in Bega. The little used Lyceum Hall at the western end of Carp Street (now occupied by Carpet Court) was purchased by Balmain & Heyde and converted into a motor garage. (In 1935 it became their showroom and the mechanical workshops were moved to their premises in Auckland Street).

Balmain & Heyde became Balmain Brothers soon thereafter – the brothers being Arthur Hope Balmain and William Hope ('Billy') Balmain. They continued to run bus services on the South Coast and maintained a large vehicle workshop and service centre. They became new car dealers (being the local representatives for General Motors becoming a particularly valuable asset to them when the

New South Wales' highest rated university

RIGHT HERE IN BEGA AND BATEMANS BAY

ON YOUR DOORSTEP

Gain access to all of the services and advantages for which the University of Wollongong is renowned, without leaving the South Coast.

LOCAL EXPERIENCES

Our local connections will give you opportunities right here in Bega and Batemans Bay. Take an internship or work placement as part of your degree, and find local employment through our careers consultant.

COURSES ON OFFER

- Bachelor Degrees in Arts, Business, Commerce and Nursing
- Master of Teaching (Primary and Secondary)
- Certificate IV Pathway Programs

Number 1
rated university in NSW[1]

5-Star
rating for overall experience[2]

Top 2%
of universities in the world[3]

Top 20
17th best modern university in the world[4]

Find out more

bbay.uow.edu.au/study
bega.uow.edu.au/study

UNIVERSITY
OF WOLLONGONG
AUSTRALIA

1 Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) 2017. 2 Good Universities Guide 2018. 3 QS World University Rankings 2017/2018. 4 QS Top 50 Under 50 Rankings 2018. UOW CRICOS: 00102E

greatly sought-after Holden brand was introduced) and eventually used car dealers. In 1915 they acquired the Cooma to Bega mail contract, replacing the much slower overnight mail coach service.

Roads in those early days were primitive, so Billy Balmain negotiated with Mumbulla Shire Council to be paid a subsidy of £50 per year for his staff to clear fallen trees and repair culverts, when necessary, along the road from Bega to Cooma.

The value of tourism was also recognized. Balmain Brothers actively promoted the area as a tourist destination, producing, for example, a 'Bega District Map; presented with the compliments of the N.R.M.A. & Balmain Brothers (Bega) Ltd', teaming up with the Victorian and NSW Government Railways to offer a 'Grand Round Tour' that linked Sydney and Melbourne (one way along the coast by railways and coach and, the other way, inland via Albury on the railways' express trains; this '*became one of the most popular tourist routes in the country and attracted many visitors from New Zealand and the Pacific Islands*'), and opening a Bega tourist bureau that not only promoted the area but doubled as an official NSW Railways ticket office and handled bookings for ANA/Ansett ANA.

The Balmain Brothers Garage in Carp Street, Bega.
Image: State Library of NSW, Ref: bcp_02102

The Balmain Brothers business was subsequently 'split' – with Billy running the Bega business and Don (Billy's son) running the Cooma business, which then expanded to include a Balmain Brothers (Bombala) branch.

The Bega business was sold in 1995 and moved to Gipps St where it now trades as Bega Valley Motors.

Two interesting reminders of Balmain Brothers (Bega) Limited, however, survive:

One, pictured above, is the elegant 1935 Art Deco façade of the workshop in Auckland Street that includes a round tower from which the company's pennant could be flown. This was included on the street frontage to complement a round tower on the corner of the Art Deco style Grand Hotel a couple of doors up the road.

The other is a set of drawings held by the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences in Sydney by W.S. Grice of Summer Hill for a 14 passenger parlour coach, utilising a Chevrolet chassis, to be built for Balmain Brothers (Bega) in 1941. The Museum comments that '*The drawings represent a time in bus design and construction when bus and coach body building was a specialist activity in which the industry responded to orders placed by specific clients, the various coach operators. The vehicle bodies were all locally built, individually designed and hand made to order on imported chassis. All of the seats are placed in a transverse position complying with the New South Wales Government Regulation of 1926. Before this practically all buses up to then had perimeter seating.*

The drawings are significant because they relate to the local motor vehicle building industry. They also reflect the changing nature of tourism in New South Wales.'

Sources: *Bega District News* 27.1.2015; Bega Valley Shire Council; Peter Rogers; Museum of Applied Arts & Sciences; artdecobuildings.blogspot.com; *Balmain Bros (Bega) Supplement, Bega District News* 29.5.1959.

The Snowy: A History

by Siobhan McHugh

From Jindabyne tunnel and round Island Bend,
We boys go to Cooma our money to spend,
And we'll buy youse one beer there if you happen to see,
Four Italians, three Germans, two Yugoslavs, and me.

Now we may not be Diggers, but we'll have you know,
We're digging the tunnels up here in the snow.

It's dark in that tunnel and work she is rough,
By the time it hits payday, we all have enough.
So we rush into Cooma to have us one spree,
Four miners, three fitters, two chippies, and me.

We pull up in Sharp Street by the Alpine Hotel,
If you've been to Cooma you'll know this place well,
And before we get inside our order rings out:
Four vinos, three schnappses, two slivovitz, one stout …

This is an absolutely terrific book. It's a book that every Australian should read… and, most likely, will thoroughly enjoy. And it's a book that, in my view, should even be compulsory reading for every Australian high school student: it's about how modern Australia was created, but it's about a time that's now long-gone.

It's not a new book. It was first published in 1989 but has been reissued, with some additions, to coincide with the 70th anniversary this year of the start of the Snowy Mountains Hydro-Electric Scheme.

The history of the Snowy Scheme is fascinating. Most Australians will know it was an ambitious, enormous undertaking and one that, in a number of ways, changed – and even defined – the character of Australia. But few will know – and even fewer will remember – the details of how the Snowy was constructed.

And, to me, learning about these was one of the highlights of reading this book.

But I had also been unaware of the – almost unbelievable – behind-the-scenes machinations that occurred during the planning and construction of the Snowy. Many of these are outlined in this book – such as how Nelson Lemmon, the Minister for Works and Housing in Ben Chifley's Labor government, initiated the scheme by cunningly convincing Chifley and 'Doc' Evatt to (arguably, totally unconstitutionally) remove the project from NSW control by utilising the Commonwealth's powers under the Defence
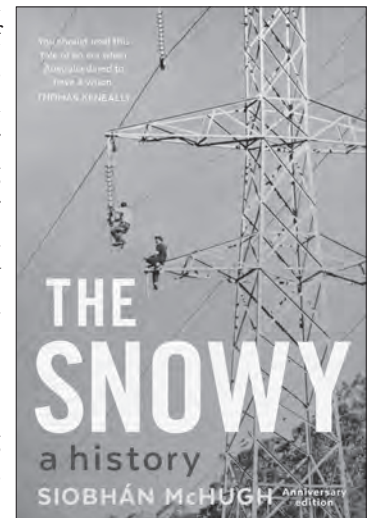
Act, and how NSW Industrial Commission President Judge Stanley Taylor later used a constitutional legal loophole (perhaps legally, but not in the spirit of the Constitution) to place Snowy arbitration matters under NSW rather than Commonwealth jurisdiction, thereby effectively making himself sole arbitrator on industrial matters relating to the Snowy scheme.

And I had not realized that the success of the scheme can really be attributed to the involvement of a relatively small handful of men (particularly Snowy Mountains Authority Commissioner Bill [Sir William] Hudson; Charlie Oliver of the Australian Workers Union; Judge Stanley Taylor; Nelson Lemmon; and 'Curley' Christman who was project manager for the American conglomerate Kaiser that built the massive Eucumbene Dam – and completed it over two years ahead of schedule!) who, fortuitously, held similar views about what was necessary to rapidly and efficiently complete the project. This book also details the roles they played.

And I had forgotten just how different things were in the 1950s through to the mid-1970s, and how that things that 'just happened' then could not possibly happen today. For example, thousands of men were recruited, sent to basic tent townships way out in the wilderness, but had to provide their own bedding, crockery, cutlery and anything else they required (essentially with the exception of food – which, while provided, was often virtually inedible) to be able to join the workforce. So, this book is a real 'eye-opener' (or a real 'eye re-opener')!

The history was compiled by Siobhan McHugh after she had interviewed many people who worked on, or were closely associated with the Snowy Scheme (including the prostitutes! – McHugh includes a lengthy, very amusing account of how they worked and contributed to the success of the Scheme). And this is the real strength of this book: it is virtually a first-hand account by those involved of the Scheme and it's jam-packed with stories about the workers themselves and stories from the workers themselves (most are factual, but some are unsubstantiated, having become part of the Snowy Scheme's folklore – like those of men being buried alive, and forever being entombed, during some of the Scheme's

massive concrete pours). So, it's anything but a conventional narrative about the Snowy Scheme.

One of the bonuses in this re-issue of the book is a section by McHugh detailing how she undertook the research for this book. Such information is always of interest to other historians, but it's also a valuable 'how to' guide for anyone thinking of embarking on the fascinating (and rewarding) journey of history discovery.

'The Snowy: A History' is well illustrated and includes several helpful maps and tables of information about the Scheme (for example, maps illustrating how the Scheme evolved; details about the dams, powers stations and tunnels; about the 120 camps and work sites; about the 121 men who were killed whilst working on the Snowy Scheme).

'The Snowy: A History' is published by NewSouth and is available in paperback from around $27.50.

There are New Men in Town!

When Barbara met Charles Eglitis, she was 15 and had never heard of Latvia. Four years later they were married. It was the story all over the region – the New Australians were dashingly different, and while parents panicked at the thought, young girls were smitten and matches made. Faye Popowski from Corryong fell for a Yugoslav. She remembered the arrival of the migrants when she was at high school:

'*Because the guys were mostly on shift work, there were always some in town, and the girls'd line up at the school fence and look at the guys in their fancy cars. They were good fun; most of them were decent guys, just out for a bit of a lurk – and the girls, being 16 or 17, were out for the same thing I suppose! They had money, they dressed in the best of clothes … anyone who went out with them drank the best champagne, ate the best food … they were exciting, willing to treat you like somebody special. They were everything the dull, staid, country boys weren't!*'

In Adaminaby, too, the girls were taken by storm. Marcia Brayshaw, daughter of the local butcher, was unable to resist the serenading of Sergio Moro and eloped with him to Broken Hill. She and her sisters, Nita and Val, had been forbidden even to dance with the New Australians, but who would turn down a tango for a barn dance? The same old Saturday night music was transformed by the stylish newcomers into rhumbas and sambas and other continental delights, to the utter confusion of the local fellows, who'd arrive late to the dance after their customary tipples in the car park, only to find all the girls had been snaffled long before. Some of the locals tried to compete in the urbanity stakes, but didn't always succeed – one evening a would-be sophisticate announced that the next dance would be a 'sambo'!

Patti and Joyce Constance were two other Adaminaby girls who married migrants. When Patti's father first heard the thick Scottish accent of Jock Wilson he grumbled about 'that funny-talking bugger', but when Joyce brought home Lithuanian Eddie Vazgelevicius, her father was totally flummoxed. Eddie was a quiet fellow, an engineer on Adaminaby Dam who, unlike some graduates, had no complaints about his acceptance by his peers. He did his two years as a labourer under the usual Displaced Persons contract, obtained his accreditation as an engineer and found his colleagues 'nearly fell over backwards to welcome newcomers, especially professionals, because they had never seen any before'. The Constance girls served in their father's general store, where the Europeans had an immediate effect:

'*Business picked up. The New Australians were always coming in to buy presents for their families overseas. We'd sew them in calico and we were forever making up parcels. It was all sign language. They didn't know their sizes, so they'd look at our feet and add a bit more. When some brought their wives out, we had to order much bigger sizes than we'd ever had before. For instance, we'd never stocked a size six shoe – Joyce wore a two and a half, I wore a three and the average size was probably four.*'

Despite their mother's advice to 'stick to the

devil you know', Patti married Jock and Joyce married Eddie – with the condition that he shorten his surname from what her friends considered an unlucky and unpronounceable 13 letters to a modest three: Vaz.

Even the better informed middle-class Australians baulked at the idea of their daughters marrying foreigners. Diana Huston was an art school graduate who took a job with the Snowy Authority in Cooma because she'd enjoyed a skiing holiday in Austria and wanted to be near the snow. Jan Klima, a handsome young officer who'd fled Czechoslovakia after the coup, was also a keen skier. Having served out his DP contract in Darwin, he too got a job in Cooma with the Snowy. One night, depressed after splitting up with a girlfriend, he was walking past the rec hall, where there was a 'bad taste' dance on. Glancing through the window, he saw a smiling young woman in pyjamas. Nearly 40 years of marriage later, he confessed that the far from lofty thought that entered his head on first seeing Diana was, 'There's a girl who's ready for bed – that's the girl for me!'

Diana's relatives were not impressed by her choice of husband. Her worried father wrote, 'Fancy marrying someone from a country you don't know. If he were an Englishman, at least you'd know his background'.

And what of the 'dull, staid country boys'? Rod Bridges was one who fiercely resented the intrusion of the foreigners:

'Well I think they all wrecked what was a nice little society that we had. I never mixed socially with them – it wasn't the done thing. The Prince of Wales was the Wogs' pub; if you were Australian, you simply didn't go there. There's just that thing – the locals are more trusted in themselves and family names do mean something in this area. There was an unwritten rule that if a fella took a girl to a dance, he took her home again, but when these New Australians started coming and pinching, or attempting to pinch, our girls, it was very sad – it broke this rule.'

He conceded he was jealous of the newcomers' success with women: at the same time he pretended it wasn't happening: 'Australian girls wouldn't go out with foreigners, because if they did, they were considered soiled... and no Australian boy would take them out again'.

Bridges rationalized marriages between Australians and New Australians as merely 'a result of the girls getting pregnant and the boys doing the right thing', something he stoutly asserted was 'always done here'. He also claimed that the park in Cooma had to be cleared of shrubs because they might have provided hiding places for New Australians waiting to molest the town's womenfolk. It was not a view shared by the women, the mayor or the police, nor is it borne out by the crime statistics, which report an unusually low rate of assaults on women and children throughout the Snowy years.

To be fair to the Cooma people, Rod Bridges' views were by no means average. Few of the townsfolk were so openly unwelcoming, although they did resent the upheaval the Snowy brought to their lives. Besides the cultural shock of the Europeans, there were the Australian engineers and professional staff to contend with. They were based in a new housing development in Cooma North, while the mostly European labourers were in Cooma East. The town consisted of three virtually separate communities, and the people of the old town felt they were the meat in the sandwich. Lindsay Hain, a storekeeper and the then mayor, remembered:

'We weren't geared to handle the influx, and our facilities were overtaxed. You had to queue for the baker and the butcher and this caused resentment among the locals because they weren't used to queuing.'

The locals got their own back if they could, Jean McArthur, the wife of a Snowy employee, remembered:

'You'd go into a shop and you could stand there and you could wait – and wait – and the girls would just be talking, they wouldn't have anything to do with you. But if a local came in – well! That was a different story. If you were a Snowyite, you know, they just didn't accept us at all for a while.'

—From 'The Snowy: A History'

Kosciuszko: Two Men Lost in the Wilderness who Captured the Imagination of a Nation

by Nick Brodie

The story of the Snowy Scheme is massive and Siobhan McHugh would have had no trouble finding things about it to include in her book.

In contrast, the story in Nick Brodie's 'Kosciuszko' is threadbare, resulting in what, to me, is a disappointing book.

Basically, the story is this – two young men (Evan Hayes, an Australian, and Laurie Seaman, an American) embark on a cross-country ski trip to the summit of Mt Kosciuszko in August 1928. They do not return. It seems they reach the summit, become separated in worsening weather on the return journey, and both perish. Numerous search parties are organized but fail to find them. The body of Seaman is discovered 4 weeks later by a group of schoolboys on the logical route he would have taken for home, that of Hayes is not recovered for a further 15 months and is found on the opposite side of the mountain. Seaman's Hut (between Charlotte's Pass and the summit of Mt Kosciuszko) was subsequently erected as a memorial to Laurie Seaman.

That's not enough of a story to fill a 232 page book – so it's little wonder (and very frustrating for a reader who is eager to get to the real point of the book!) that it took 97 pages of the book to get the two adventurers to their starting point for their ill-fated day trip to the summit of Kosciuszko. And much of this 'background' or 'prelude' is devoted to the author's (to me, unnecessary) thoughts about the place that Kosciuszko has, or supposedly may have, in the Australian psyche.

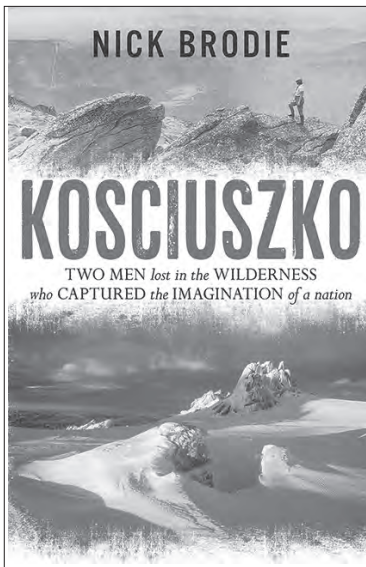I'm reasonably familiar with the Kosciuszko area, but found it necessary to go back to some old maps (thank goodness for Google!) to pinpoint the sites of some of the places named in the book – even one of the most important places in the story, Betts' Camp, that long-ago disappeared as a site of any significance in the area. So, the absence of a map in this book was a further frustration.

In short, this was an unsatisfying read. I'm just thankful McHugh's rewarding history was the next book I picked up!

'Kosciuszko' is published by Hardie Grant Books and is available in paperback from around $24.

Peter Lacey

Betts' Camp, 1906. Image: National Library of Australia nla-obj. 147474229 -1