

South Coast History Society Inc.

Recollections

Issue 3, August 2017

The
South Coast's
FREE History
Magazine



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A worker on the Kameruka Estate near Candelo. This photograph hangs in the historic hall on the Estate.

The First Word

I'm convinced South Coast history (or more accurately, more selfishly, South Coast History Society!) needs a patron. A patron something like John or Sunday Reed, patrons to the Australian art scene from the 1930s to the 1980s.

Now there's a novel (and historical!) idea. Patrons were 'everywhere' several centuries ago – one only needs to recall all of the most important classical music that was composed then with financial assistance from numerous patrons. But, regrettably, patronage/philanthropy to assist causes such as promoting the study and dissemination of local history seems to be less in-vogue today.

So we definitely should be encouraging the return to greater patronage!

The South Coast History Society has received much-welcomed support from Bega Cheese and the University of Wollongong Bega for several projects, as well as from a number of generous individuals – and we are particularly grateful for their assistance. And, as you will see in this issue of *Recollections*, local businesses are also now supporting us by advertising in our magazine.

Significant funding for community groups such as the South Coast History Society is, today, usually sourced from grants. But, as anyone who has been actively associated with a community group well knows, accessing grant money requires very time-consuming application procedures...and a good measure of luck. And even then, most grants to community groups are relatively small (a few hundred, maybe one or two thousand dollars). So it really would be great to meet a generous Patron!

How generous? We have been absolutely astounded by how many people on the South Coast want to know more about the history of the area and are intrigued by it – so we're talking enough to produce more issues of *Recollections* in paper form (this is top of our 'wish list' as we need to find around \$100 to print each page of *Recollections*), to hold a few more seminars, to fund some research and a few smaller things ... so really tens of thousands of dollars, rather than hundreds of thousands of dollars or millions of dollars (although receiving that sort of money would be REALLY nice!).

I'm sure (or hope!) there is someone with an interest in local history, or perhaps from a pioneering family from the area, who might see that it is appropriate to help. We'd naturally love to talk to them.

Meanwhile we are trusting that St Bede the Venerable, the Patron (there's that word again!) Saint of History and Historians [Bede was one of the early Church historians and, incidentally, is the only person in history to have the title 'Venerable'] is looking favourably on what we are striving to achieve.

Peter Lacey

The 1919 Influenza Epidemic

by Anna Weatherly

Just as Australians were breathing a collective sigh of relief for the end of World War I they had to brace themselves for another major threat to life. A highly infectious influenza virus was spreading across every continent. The 1918–1919 pneumonic influenza pandemic is the deadliest in history. Estimates of its worldwide death toll range between twenty million and a hundred million people. It is thought to have started in the USA and spread through military camps and civilian populations around the world during the final year of World War I.

It was often inaccurately referred to as the Spanish

Flu. During the war Spain was a neutral country and, unlike other countries at war, did not have the same press censorship. When the virus arrived in Spain its deadly impact on the Spanish population was fully reported and therefore the influenza pandemic became associated with Spain. (For information on the pandemic see J. Barry, *The Great Influenza*, Penguin, 2009.)

Initially, Australia managed to stay free of the virus due to strict quarantine procedures. However, in December 1918 the virus was brought to shore by medical staff treating 90 returning soldiers aboard

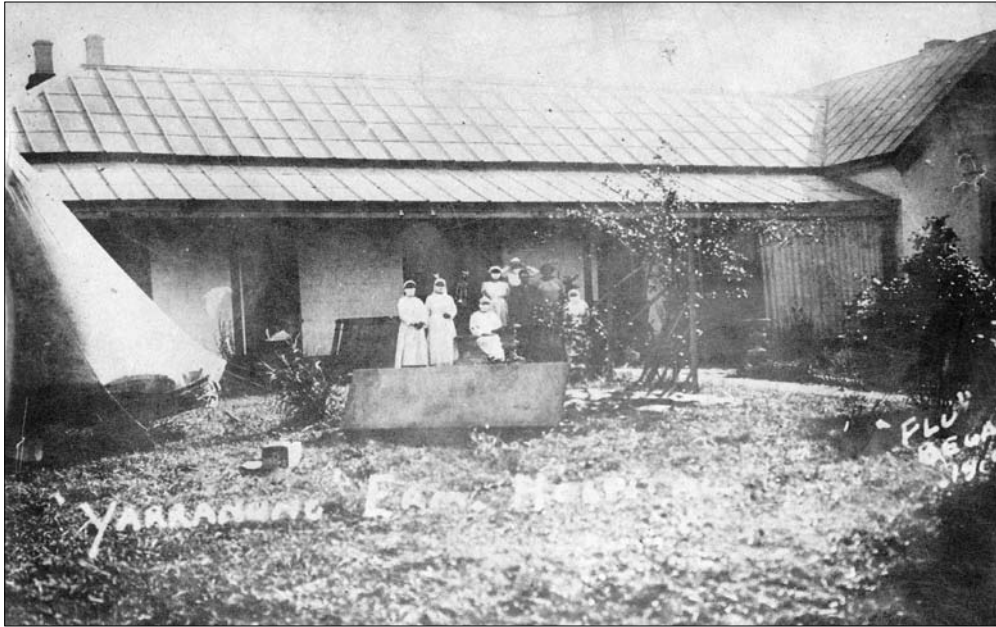
a quarantined troop ship. Fortunately, by the time it entered Australia, the virus had evolved and its lethality was lower than in other countries. Nevertheless, around 12,500 Australians died. Young, otherwise healthy adults were often the worst affected.

"Bega storekeepers are advising city houses to keep their travellers at home. Interviews are off for the present." *Cobargo Chronicle*, 19 April 1919

"The public looked askance at the Bermagui Chinese gardener when he arrived with his vegetable cart on Wednesday, and we imagine he would have the road to himself." *Cobargo Chronicle*, 28 June 1919

"Dr. Cozens [dentist] visits Central Tilba today till the following Saturday. Patients need not be afraid to consult the doctor, as he comes from "clean country," and has not touched at any of the infected areas." *Cobargo Chronicle*, 12 July 1919

In the early months of 1919 each community started to prepare for the possibility of a local outbreak. For example, in February, the small Bermagui community held a public meeting and agreed to hire a nurse, to make the School of Arts an emergency hospital if



In Bega, Mrs Wood of Yarranung (a property to the north of Bega) offered her home as an emergency hospital during the influenza outbreak. Note tent in the front garden providing accommodation. At various times, the Central Hotel and the Bank Hotel in Bega were quarantined as guests succumbed to the 'flu outbreak.

Bega Budget 18 June 1919: *"27 patients at Yarranung, 11 at the (Presbyterian) Manse and the balance in their own homes."* Photograph courtesy Bega Valley Historical Society

"The Lloyd family, Cooma, was almost wiped out by the influenza epidemic last week. First a girl aged 18 died, then three boys of ages ranging from 19 to 23 succumbed. Only the parents and a little girl survive." *Cobargo Chronicle*, 12 July 1919

The *Cobargo Chronicle* was a weekly newspaper serving the communities of Cobargo, Tilba, Bermagui, and surrounding districts, and intermittently reporting news from Moruya, Narooma and Bega. The paper gives an insight into how south coast communities responded to the epidemic.

1919 had already started out as an eventful year. Drought and bushfires preceded massive flooding. Returning soldiers dribbled back into the district. Each return was marked by community celebrations that included speeches, concerts, suppers and dancing.

In the distance, influenza was killing people in Sydney and Melbourne. While state borders were closed in an effort to contain the pandemic, country people complained they were not being offered similar protection from city visitors. At this time, rural communities relied on salesmen and professional visitors to provide services from dentistry and optometry to dressmaking.

needed, and to raise a levy on each household to cover costs.

Dr Lister, the local doctor for Cobargo, was appointed as a public medical officer, and in April, inoculation clinics were established. The Red Cross suspended the soldiers' welcomes, although in many cases these still went ahead. Public gatherings, such as travelling circuses, race meetings and country shows, were threatened. Government restrictions came and went. Fortunately, the Cobargo Show, a major event on the district calendar and already threatened by the drought, avoided an embargo and was able to take place.

But Influenza was radiating out from the cities and turning up in country communities, notably Cooma and Braidwood. All of a sudden, it arrived locally.

"Mr Snowdon, the first influenza patient in Bega, contracted the malady while attending the Oddfellows' conference in Sydney last week. A delegate from Adelong town, who also attended the Conference, returned home only to die of the same complaint." *Cobargo Chronicle*, 14 June 1919

A week later, the 21 June edition of the *Chronicle* reported 89 cases in Bega and an outbreak in Bermagui.

“A proclamation was issued by the Health Dept. on Tuesday declaring Bega municipality an area infected with pneumonic influenza. Masks must be worn in public places, in motors, shops and workshops. Billiard rooms, reading rooms, picture shows and indoor amusements closed, also Sunday schools. Indoor meetings prohibited, and no person to remain in an hotel bar more than five minutes.” Cobargo Chronicle, 21 June, 1919

By the following week Dr Lister had contracted the disease and two men at Bermagui had died –



Volunteer staff at Yarranung emergency hospital.

including the local police constable. Cobargo, Moruya and Narooma followed. It reached Central Tilba two weeks later. Tilba Tilba managed to escape it.

In Cobargo, the courthouse was used as a hospital; in Bermagui, the police station; and in Tilba, the Bates family provided a private residence where ultimately 40 cases were treated.

The *Chronicle* reported most cases by name, commenting on each individual's medical progress. Fortunately, most victims recovered.

“Mr. Harry Snowdon, Bega's original influenza case, the nucleus of the outbreak now well under control, has been released from quarantine after a severe bout with the malady. For some time his life was despaired of.” Cobargo Chronicle, 12 July 1919

Names of the professional medical staff and volunteer nurses were also listed. Many of them contracted the virus and the volunteer matron of the Narooma emergency hospital died as a result.

Throughout the outbreak, local committees took on various duties. “Self-appointed vigilants [sic]” enforced quarantine. Other community members were involved in setting up the emergency hospitals,

operating an ambulance service, dealing with the dead, supporting those in quarantine, and providing food, bedding and firewood. Local council, Red Cross, police officers, returned soldiers and other individuals had their contributions recognised.

“I will not dwell on names for fear of missing some, but I must specially dwell on the names of Messrs. Carl Mitchell, Dawson Hansen, John McMillan and Constable Barry, who with only the safeguard of their white robes and masks, paid all possible attention to the dying and the dead. Their duties were numerous and dangerous – no undertaker came to their assistance.”

[Narooma correspondent], Cobargo Chronicle, 2 August 1919

Once the immediate emergency abated, funds were raised to cover hospital expenses. Although patients were expected to make a contribution, donations were sought to assist with the additional costs. The paper reported on fees set for patients hospitalised in the Bates's residence at Tilba.

“About £60 has been donated for the upkeep of the hospital and to meet epidemic expenses. The committee have decided to make a charge of 30s* per week in the case of an individual patient. In the*

case where a first patient comes from a family and is followed by another or more, the fee is reduced to £1 a patient.” Cobargo Chronicle, 26 July 1919 (*£1 = 20 shillings [= \$2], so 30s = £1 10 shillings)

Throughout the epidemic, the *Chronicle* provided commentary on, and attempted to influence, community responses. It listed donors by name with details of what they gave, big or small – from dressed fowl and lemons, to guineas, shillings and pence. (A guinea = £1 1s.) It praised those who volunteered and warned those who put others at risk.

“The effect of the outbreak in Cobargo has been most depressing, but while the public should take every precaution to avoid any possibility of contact, it is no time for panic, but rather for united determination to fight the outbreak. Quarantine must be rigidly observed, and we think there is no necessity to say that any individual who menaces the public safety by foolish bravado and the takings of risk will soon have sense knocked into him. Cobargo may be slow to move, but it moves in a heap and with some wallop when fairly aroused.” Cobargo Chronicle, 28 June 1919

GOOD NEWS

More Recollections

Recollections will now be published every second month rather than every 3 months...
...so more of our fascinating stories will become available to you.

The next issue of *Recollections* will be available from early October

BUT...

**The October issue (Issue 4)
MAY ONLY BE AVAILABLE ON-LINE**

(Paper copies can only be printed if we successfully raise the necessary funding)

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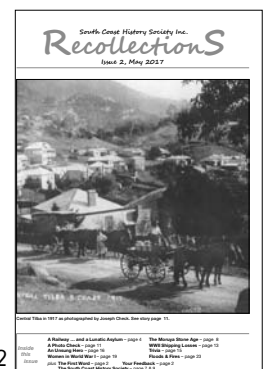
(Issue 4 may only be available on-line from early October. Issue 5 will be available on-line and in paper form in early December. Thereafter, odd number issues will possibly only be available on-line and even number issues will be available on-line and in paper form.)



Number 1

**You won't miss any issue of *Recollections*
if you email 'Send Recollections' to
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If you would like copies of issues 1, 2 or 3, they are now available on-line and on request at southcoasthistory@yahoo.com



Number 2

Continued from page 4

"Influenza has broken out in Moruya. What is wanted in Cobargo badly is a 'Cheer-O Club' as a setoff to the strong membership of 'The Pessimists'." *Cobargo Chronicle*, 28 June 1919

The epidemic filled the paper from mid-June to mid-August and then it was gone. A number of personal notices expressed thanks for the support.

"THANKS

Mr. and Mrs. A. C. Bryce hereby thank the many friends who showed them such kindness during the former's influenza attack. The gifts sent were very much appreciated by the patient and relieved Mrs. Bryce of considerable work." *Cobargo Chronicle*, 12 July 1919



"The Manse" was the Presbyterian minister's residence, unoccupied at the time, it was taken over to handle the overflow of patients from the main Yarranung hospital. Those photographed are identified as Dorie, Maunder, Percy Smith, Bertha Pell, Leo Spindler, Marjorie Sire, Sister Cole, Ann Weatherhead – all volunteers. Photograph State Library of NSW, IE1715403



'This House and Inmates Quarantined.' Photograph courtesy Bega Valley Historical Society

Perusal of the *Cobargo Chronicle* over successive weeks provides an intimate perspective on rural communities' responses to a frightening epidemic that threatened them for months and then struck with dramatic suddenness. As a reader, I witnessed their attempts to inform themselves, to organise, and to manage the outbreaks they were unable to avoid. I followed the fates of individuals, particularly those who altruistically offered their services. And I sensed the grief they felt at a time when they particularly wanted to be celebrating the end of the war.

"The depression in the town [Bermagui] was most marked, not only on account of the high regard in which deceased was held, but because that day further cases were reported in Cobargo. Constable Smith was a personal friend at this office, and it is safe to say that he had not an enemy in the district, but numbered in Bermagui and Cobargo a very large circle of warm friends, whose deep sympathy is with the bereaved wife and children. Mr. Smith was a young officer, whose broad official attitude and keen intelligence were guarantees of a successful career." *Cobargo Chronicle*, 28 June 1919

"Flags were flying at a Cobargo residence recently in honor of the return of a soldier relative. The father of the house asked one of his toddlers what the flags were for, and received the unexpected reply, 'to keep the 'flu away, daddy'." *Cobargo Chronicle*, 12 July 1919

The *Cobargo Chronicle* (NSW: 1898–1944) accessed via Trove, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-title393>, electronic reproduction courtesy of the National Library of Australia.

You can find us on

facebook



where we've recently been having fun explaining the meaning of history (see examples in this issue of *Recollections*) and have been sharing some interesting photographs from bygone times on the NSW South Coast. <https://www.facebook.com/southcoasthistory/>

Reshaping the Community

It was mid 1979 – 6 years after the Nimbin Aquarius Festival that spawned a hippy community in that area and 10 years after Woodstock – when John and Katherine Boland ‘along with a tent, brand new cement mixer, chain saw, pot-bellied stove and a whole heap of gardening tools’ arrived in Brogo. ‘Alternative lifestylers’ ready to settle on their newly-purchased, uncleared, rough 100-acre block up in the hills on Warrigal Range Road.

Their dream was to become self-sufficient. To live entirely off the land.

They were soon followed to the South Coast by other like-minded people – hundreds and hundreds of them! Couples, individuals and families with similar aspirations.

‘But we were very naïve! We hadn’t actually thought it through. We were only 22-, 23-year olds doing what we had dreamed of doing for several years ... and eventually none of us succeeded in being able to live totally off the land,’ Katherine says.

Those early 1980s ‘alternative lifestylers,’ however, had a significant impact on the South Coast.

Most of them had purchased their own blocks of land or had bought into collectives such as the Mumbullazoo commune in Brogo. They were, as Katherine explains, ‘hard core hippies. We were not just hippies who were into the smoking dope, listening to the music – the hippy philosophy. We were hard core – getting back to nature, doing it tough, building our own lives, growing our own food.’

‘But we bought these blocks of land and had to pay rates!’

Katherine remembers that these newly-arrived ‘alternative lifestylers’ may have initially been viewed as ‘different’ and ‘hippies’, but were rapidly welcomed by the local community.

Their neighbours quickly appreciated their value. ‘I took work with a neighbour as a cleaner – probably being paid at well-below minimum wages! – and John and I were taught to be dairy farmers by a neighbour, allowing him and his wife to go off on the first holiday they had been able to take in about 20 years.’

‘So we all had some spending money and the whole area benefitted. Eventually the alternative lifestyle community became so big that we almost outnumbered the ‘locals’ and we ultimately injected an enormous amount of money into the area.’

‘People came here from all walks of life, bringing different cultural values. The arts really thrived. And ‘local alternative lifestylers established businesses in Bega like, for example, ‘The Goose is Out’ (a café),

‘Cloud’ (selling hippy paraphernalia) and ‘Spiral Gallery’ (an arts and crafts gallery, still trading).’

Katherine even suggests that Bega was transformed from a ‘slow sleepy town to a really thriving community’ as a result of the arrival of so many of these new settlers.

Katherine and John Boland’s story about their time at Brogo is told in the first half of her recently-released memoir ‘*Hippy Days, Arabian Nights*’ (the second half of the memoir is the intriguing story of Katherine’s romance with a very much younger Egyptian Muslim man. The book is priced at \$29.95) and, during a recent visit to the area, Katherine also kindly provided *Recollections* with some interesting historical perspectives about the years she lived in Brogo.

Yes, they were ‘hippies’ – they looked weird, wore hippy clothes, often smoked (and grew) ‘wacky backy’, lived rough, socialised and raised their kids alongside other like-minded alternative lifestylers.

Their agricultural and smoking pursuits attracted the attention of police; their rudimentary (unauthorized) housing raised the ire of Council.

‘The first [unauthorized] wattle and daub hut we built was only ever intended to be a temporary dwelling.

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We really wanted creature comforts such as running water, running hot water, electricity, telephone and a flush toilet [Katherine vividly recalls her first winter at Brogo, living in a tent, having to ‘cart water from Brogo Dam in plastic containers, boiling the water on a fire, washing in a little enamel bowl, and then giving my face, armpits and crotch a cursory wipe with a wet cloth before quickly dressing again’] so we always planned to build a ‘proper house’ which would also have all the necessary DAs and building permits.’

“But when Council once threatened to bulldoze all of the non-compliant and illegal dwellings that were being erected throughout the district, the Brogo alternative lifestylers banded together with others from Pipeclay near Quaama, Tralfamadore north of Bermagui, Rocky Hall and elsewhere, and founded an Owner Builders’ Association (which would hold meetings at which we would bring out the marijuana, the home brew, and sit around discussing strategy). We wrote numerous letters to the *Bega District News*, arguing that the first European settlers in the area had survived successfully without any planning approvals or building permits, and informed Council we would be prepared to meet their demands provided Council guaranteed that EVERY unauthorized structure in the Shire would be subjected to the same requirements.

And, strangely enough, we never heard from Council’s Planning Department again!”

Over time these ‘alternative lifestylers’ became less ‘alternative’ and more mainstream. They got jobs in the local community – ‘we needed to get loans because we wanted proper houses’ – with Katherine, for example, becoming a ‘check-out chick at a fruit and vegetable market run by a couple of Italian guys in Carp Street and then a housing support worker, even though I had no real qualifications for that job’.

There is one long term community facility that developed directly as the result of the efforts of the ‘alternative lifestylers.’ ‘There were no services for women before we arrived, apart from a family planning clinic and whatever local doctors provided. So for four years we lobbied the government until we received funding for what became the Bega Women’s Refuge and Resource Centre.’

‘Buoyed by our success, we also secured funding from the government for a women’s housing scheme, establishing Southern Women’s Housing which provided nine fully furnished and equipped houses to women at risk in the Bega area.’

‘The Bega Steiner School was also established by local alternative lifestylers.’

‘So for a bunch of people who originally planned to ‘drop out’, we became an unusually active force within the South Coast community.’



Katherine and John Boland at Brogo in 1979

This ‘alternative lifestyle’ era is a particularly interesting and colourful time in the South Coast’s history. If you have recollections of it – and especially if you were another alternative lifestyler, we would love to hear of your experiences. Contact us at southcoasthistory@yahoo.com.

Syms Covington (1814–1861)

Syms (Simon) Covington, along with his (then) three sons and his wife, arrived in Pambula some time between 1844 and 1846. It is assumed he had been invited to the area by retired Royal Naval Captain John Lloyd who had acquired land in the Pambula area using his severance pay from the Navy.

Covington became the second Postmaster at Pambula and built the Forest Oak Inn (now a National Trust-listed building, 'Covington's House,' located just down from the shops in Quondola Street). He became a property owner, buying large tracts of land around Pambula and several blocks in Eden.

His real place in history, though, pre-dates his move to the NSW South Coast.

In 1831, when just 17 years old, Syms Covington became 'fiddler & boy to Poop-cabin' on HMS Beagle for a survey voyage to South America under the command of Capt. Robert FitzRoy. Charles Darwin subsequently joined that voyage as a self-funded naturalist.

In 1833 Covington became Charles Darwin's servant, after Charles wrote to his father asking him to pay Covington's wages and expenses: *'I am rather badly off for anyone to wait on me. The man (Covington) is willing to be my servant, & ALL the expences would be under £60 per annum. I have taught him to shoot & skin birds, so that in my main object (working as a naturalist) he is very useful.'* (Hence the title of the novel, based on Syms Covington's life, by Roger McDonald and published in 2000, *'Mr Darwin's*

Shooter.')

Covington and Darwin visited Sydney in 1836, collecting ninety-two different species of insects, thirty-one previously unknown to science. Covington wrote *'The Harbour I think is the finest & most beautiful I have yet seen'* but also wrote that Sydney was a place consisting *'princibly of convicts, or the most notorious characters of England – & a place I must say I was heartily glad to leave.'* This is a somewhat interesting observation, considering that Covington moved to Sydney several years later!

Covington was to remain in Darwin's employ until 1839 when he decided to emigrate to New South Wales. Darwin provided him with references to William Sharp Macleay (another naturalist, who was to become Trustee of the Australian Museum), Capt Phillip Parker King (an explorer and surveyor, and son of NSW Governor Phillip Gidley King) and Thomas Mitchell (Surveyor General of NSW), plus an open letter of introduction.

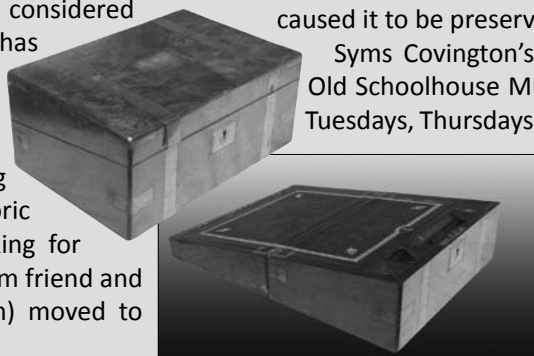
Covington and Darwin remained firm friends throughout their lives and corresponded regularly. In one letter Darwin wrote *'You have an immense, incalculable advantage in living in a country in which your children are sure to get on if industrious. I assure you that, though I am a rich man, when I think of the future I very often ardently wish I was settled in one of our Colonies, for I now have four sons (seven children in all, and more coming) and what on earth to bring them up to, I do not know ... Many people think that*

On the Origin of ...

One of the interesting items on display at the Old School Museum in Merimbula is a 'writing desk' that once belonged to Syms Covington, one-time postmaster in Pambula.

The Museum does not know when it was acquired by Syms, but they know for certain that it was his writing desk. Syms Covington's son (also named Syms) verified this and the Museum can precisely trace its chain of ownership until it was donated to the Museum.

This writing desk could be considered 'prosaic' (in fact, the Museum has a second, similar writing desk in its collection) except that Syms Covington (Snr) was assistant and secretary to Charles Darwin, acting as his 'servant' on Darwin's historic voyage on the HMS Beagle, working for him afterwards, and remaining a firm friend and correspondent after he (Covington) moved to Australia.



So – possibly – this writing desk was in use when Darwin was developing his world-changing theories that culminated with the writing and publication of 'On the Origin of Species' in 1859.

If not (and it is possible that Covington acquired this writing desk only after leaving Darwin's employ), at least it is likely that Covington used it when corresponding with Darwin after he settled in Pambula.

It is often the history of, or the history surrounding, artefacts that makes them important – and it is precisely that original ownership of this writing desk that has caused it to be preserved and displayed today.

Syms Covington's writing desk can be seen at the Old Schoolhouse Museum, Merimbula, which is open Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays from 1.30pm to 4pm.

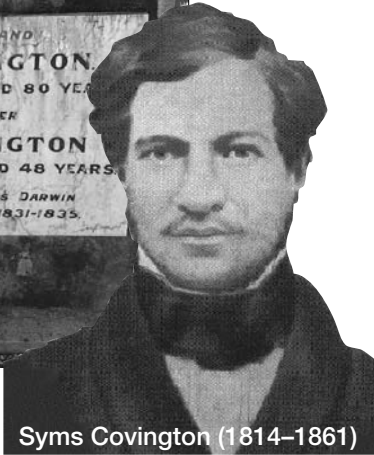
Photos: Angi High for Museum of the South East www.mose.org.au

What other interesting historic South Coast objects should we feature in Recollections? Email your suggestions to southcoasthistory@yahoo.com

Californian gold will half ruin all those who live on the interest of accumulated gold or capital, and if that



The Covington Grave in Pambula Cemetery, noting that Syms Covington Snr was Assistant to Charles Darwin. Voyage H.M.S. Beagle 1831 – 1835'



Syms Covington (1814–1861)

does happen I will certainly emigrate.

Whenever you write again, tell me how

far you think a gentleman with capital would get on in New South Wales ...?

Darwin also wrote to Covington: *'I do not know whether you live near the sea, but if so I would be very glad if you would collect me any barnacles that adhere (small and large) to the coast rocks or to shells or to corals thrown up by gales, and send them to me without cleaning out the animals, and taking care of the bases.'* In response to this request, Covington and his eldest son collected a large number of barnacles which Darwin acknowledged, indicating that one

proved to be *'a new species of a genus of which only one specimen is known to exist in the world.'*

Covington gradually lost his hearing (reputedly the result of shooting for specimens for Darwin!), so in March 1850 Charles Darwin sent him a *'new ear trumpet ... I was not able to send it sooner. You must accept it as a present from me. I presume you will have to pay a trifle for carriage,'* along with instructions on how to repair his existing ear-trumpet.

Darwin had obviously also been consulted by Covington about using the services of an Aurist (a person [supposedly] skilled in treating and curing disorders of the ear), with Darwin advising: *'As to the Aurist, you may rely on it that the man is an advertising humbug. I know plenty of people, and have one relation, very deaf, and everyone in London would know if this man's power of curing is true. My father, who was a very wise man, said he had known numbers who had been injured by Aurists, and none who had benefited. A common good surgeon can do all that these humbuds can do. I am very sorry to hear about your deafness increasing, it is a very great misfortune for you, but I fear you must look at it as incurable.'*

Syms Covington died of 'paralysis' (i.e. probably a stroke) on 19 February 1861, aged forty-seven. He was/is buried in Pambula Cemetery, his tombstone (significantly) recording that he was Darwin's assistant on the *Beagle*

Our thanks to the Merimbula and Imlay Historical Society and the Museum of the South East for their assistance in our preparation of this article.

A Look Back at 'Townships of the Far South Coast'

"THERE are dozens of small 'one-horse' towns in the far south-eastern corner of New South Wales, and though they seem to be of little importance to the outside world each one has something of special importance or some special reason for existence. Most of them owe their existence to mines of various kinds, and it is safe to say of all of them that at one time they had visions of greatness; indeed, many of them still look forward to the day when there will be another local boom. Among these towns are Rocky Hall, Wyndham, Pericho, Burragate, Pambula, Towamba, Bemboka, Wolumla, Candelo, Tantawanglo, Kameruka, Tathra,



Eden c. 1930. State Library of NSW IE1714645

Merimbula, Kiah, Eden, and many little settlements that can scarcely be called townships. These boast a post-office, a dance hall, and sometimes a school. In this latter class we have Numbugga, Lochiel, Yurrammie, Toothdale, Moran's Crossing, Buckajo, Jellat Jellat, and dozens of others.

ROCKY HALL was a mail change, being at the foot of the Big Jack Mountain, the steepest road in the State. Fresh horses were put in the coaches here for the pull up the mountain. Modern cars seem to make light of this ascent, which was such a nightmare to the traveller. Most passengers got out and walked up the worst part of

Big Jack in the days of the horse-drawn coach.

WYNDHAM was once a centre famous for foot-running; the old tracks can still be seen to-day, although grass has grown over them, and they are only occasionally used for school sports and Oddfellows' sports. The prize-money ran to several hundred pounds when Wyndham was at the height of its glory. The nearby WHIPSTICK mines put this town on the map. First it was gold, then bismuth, then molybdenite. At one time the Whipstick mines were among the richest molybdenite mines in the world. Another attempt was made to win back some of the district's former glory by the establishment of rabbit and meat canning works, but these had a short life, though the product turned out was of first-class quality. Later still a factory for the extraction of eucalyptus oil was established, but this, too, was short-lived.

PAMBULA and WOLUMLA were gold mining centres, and some rich gold was discovered on these fields. Today Pambula is best known as a tourist resort and for the running of the Pambula Cup on a fine natural racecourse, while Wolumla is noted for its 'Railway Junction' Hotel, though the railway is still over 50 miles away.

BEMBOKA, at the foot of the Brown Mountain, and TANTAWANGALO, at the foot of Tantawanglo Mountain, were mail changes. Though not as steep as Big Jack, both these mountains proved great trials in the days of the mail-coach.

Tantawanglo, however, has rather another claim to fame. It was here that the now famous Tantawanglo 'tiger' was seen.

One tiny township, although of little importance, has had three names, viz., Colombo, Lyttleton, and now BEMBOKA.

KAMERUKA is really a private town ship, all the buildings being on Tooth's estate. I doubt if there is another town ship of its size so well-known everywhere. Its cheese has made it famous. Kameruka tried hard to become a resort for city folk to spend a quiet holiday, and, though elaborate arrangements were made, the venture was not a great success.

EDEN seems to live on what might have been, with anticipations of a greater future. Its harbour is second only to that of Port Jackson, and seems to be the natural outlet for the produce of that part of the State. Opposite the township the ruins of Boydtown and East Boyd, Benjamin Boyd's settlements, lend an historic interest to the locality.

MERIMBULA, if closer to a big city, would be a most popular seaside resort. Its fine lake and ocean beaches, miles in extent, make it an ideal resort.

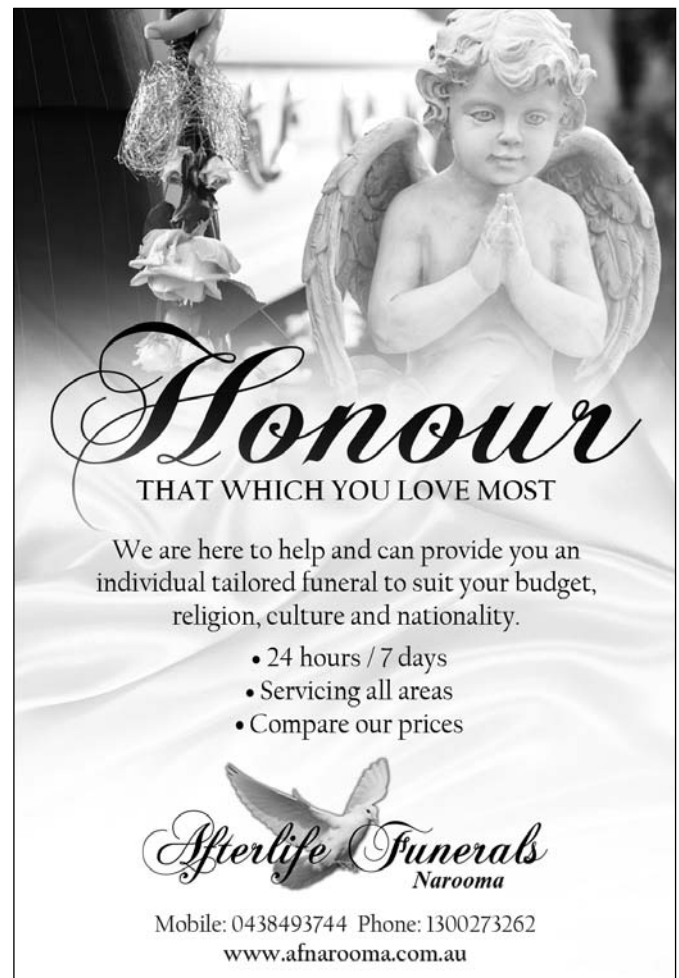
It is pleasing to note that nearly all the towns and

settlements on the far South Coast bear the local aboriginal names. Residents are quite proud of these aboriginal names, and would not change them under any consideration. An example of this was seen when it was suggested that the name of NUMBUGGA be changed to something with a more pleasing sound. Old residents, by a large majority, refused to agree to any change.

JELLAT JELLAT until recently was merely a farming settlement noted for its rich flats; but to-day it boasts an aerodrome. It is the airport of Bega. All these townships and settlements are important in their own sphere, and though there seems to be little chance of their becoming bigger, at any rate in the near future, the residents seem happy, contented, and quite proud to live in them."

The Sun, Sydney, 22nd January 1936 (with thanks to Andrew McManus of Merimbula for drawing this to our attention)

It's interesting to read how our area was looked-upon 80 years ago. Send us your word description of the South Coast today – which will provide people in the year 2100 with a valuable 'then' reference, against which they will be able to compare their 'now' assessment of the area.



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Batemans Bay in Focus

Although he didn't actually land, Lt James Cook appreciated a good Bay when he saw one, named it Bateman after a colleague, and sailed on up the south coast of NSW. The Walbunga peoples remained in comparative peace until 1821 when Lt Robert Johnston claimed explorer's naming rights and 'discovered' the Bay to be the estuary of a fine river, which he called the Clyde, after his Scottish ancestry. Local Kooris know it as Bhunduu.

The Old Courthouse Museum, operated by Clyde River and Batemans Bay Historical Society, focuses on local and social history, and is a key resource for the community. Housed in the town's former courthouse and police residence, it is located adjacent to the town's Water Gardens.

Collection themes include costume, education, healthcare, domestic life, forestry and timber tales, rural and dairy sheds, crime and punishment, and south coast geology. The Museum also maintains a keeping place for the local Aboriginal Land Council.

As forestry and fishing faded, tourism and service

industries became major economic forces, and the Museum's role as the storehouse of the community's history has become ever more important. The Museum has an active outreach program to schools, and community groups, and partners with Eurobodalla Shire's libraries program. Heritage events are supported throughout the year. An excellent second-hand bookshop had proven to be very popular. A 6-weekly newsletter is issued which can be read online.

The Museum is located at 3 Museum Place, Batemans Bay.
Phone 4472 1635.

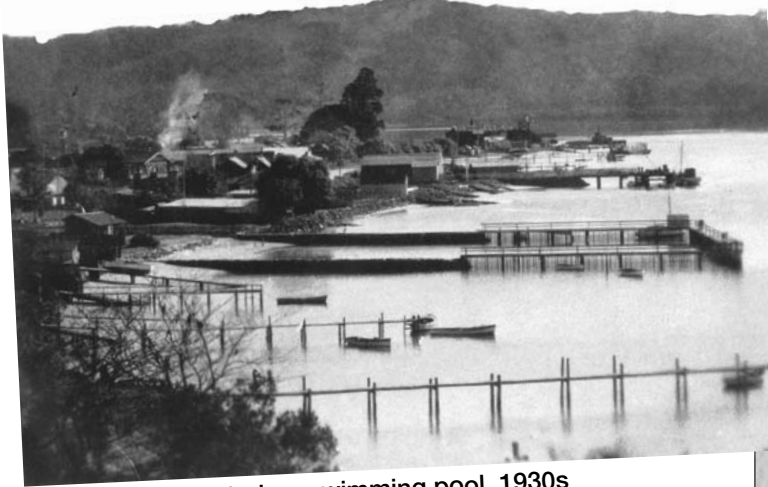
Email: secretary@oldcourthousemuseum.com

Website: www.oldcourthousemuseum.com

Open Tues/Wed/Thurs 10am – 3pm, and the 2nd Sunday of the month 10am – 1pm.

Open any day for groups by appointment.

Recollections thanks the Old Courthouse Museum and Clyde River and Batemans Bay Historical Society for providing the accompanying photographs.



Bay foreshore with river swimming pool, 1930s



Batemans Bay Carnelian Theatre, 1940s



Zane Gray, author and game fisherman, 1930s



Below: Val Simms and friend at Batemans Bay Swimming Pool, 1940s.



Batemans Bay, 2 January 1956.



Bayview Hotel being renovated, 1940s.



Above: Old Courthouse Museum

Left: Final stages of Batemans Bay Bridge construction with loaded punt, 1956.

Trivia

Test your knowledge of history with this fun Trivia Quiz about telecommunications. The answers are on page 22.

1. Who is generally recognized as having developed the first wireless telegraphy system (or 'radio')?
2. From where and to where was Australia's first official radio transmission?
3. What was the first licensed Australian radio station?
4. What is the origin of the call signs of Sydney radio stations 2GB, 2SM and 2UE and of Melbourne radio stations 3AW, 3LO and 3AK?
5. (Really obscure trivia:) What happened to radio station 4WK's grand piano, to 4GR's transmission tower, Ken Howard's binoculars when he as a race caller at 3SY, and which Sydney radio station once banned mention of the Melbourne Cup?

6. Television was introduced in Australia to coincide with the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games. Arguably the most controversial event in Australian television history occurred on March 3rd 1975 on the first episode of a new program. What was that program and what were the repercussions?
7. What was the imaginative name given by Telecom to Australia's first mobile phone?
8. For what was Facebook originally developed?

Answers on page 22.

Have some fun with history...and help us! Pick a topic (any history-related topic) and provide us with up to 10 questions and their answers. The quirkier the questions and the quirkier the answers, the happier we will be! Email your effort to southcoasthistory@yahoo.com.

History is her-story too.

A historian is only a journalist facing backwards.

People tend to forget that the word 'history' contains the word 'story'.

What's On

SATURDAY 12TH AUGUST – LIFELINES: CELEBRATING FAMILY AND LOCAL HISTORY EXPO

This is your chance to get your family or local history research started or re-started! Whether you are just beginning, you've hit a brick wall, or are unsure of where to go next with your research, come along to the Expo and get guidance and inspiration! There will be experts providing advice about family and local history research and resources, lucky door prizes and a free goodie bag to the first 100 people through the door!

Jenny Higgins from the Heraldry and Genealogy Society of Canberra will give two talks: "How to Start Your Family History" and "Finding Family History Treasures in Trove". Bush poet Peter O'Brien will perform and Jennifer Milward, researcher from the Australian War Memorial will be available to discuss AWM resources.

10 am to 4 pm at Club Sapphire, Merimbula.

Free entry, giveaways and lucky door prizes.

Information: ursulahunt@bigpond.com.

South Coast History Society will have a table at this expo – so come along and say "g'day" to us!

SATURDAY 2ND SEPTEMBER – 'OUR HISTORY, OUR HERITAGE' SEMINAR

Organised by the South Coast History Society, this all-day seminar is being held at Club Sapphire, Merimbula commencing 10.30am.

See page 17 for further details. Advance bookings are ESSENTIAL.

SATURDAY 2ND TO SATURDAY 9TH SEPTEMBER – BEGA VALLEY SHIRE 'HERITAGE NEAR ME' WEEK

Bega Valley Shire Council and the NSW Office of Environment and Heritage are working with community organisations to celebrate all things heritage in the Bega Valley.

Contact Council or visit our website for more information.

SATURDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER – '100 YEARS AGO IN BEMBOKA'

To celebrate 100 years of service by Lions Clubs, the Bemboka Lions Club is holding a '100 Years Ago in Bemboka' Day.

Further information: James Murray, begaarcher@gmail.com.

Please send information about future South Coast history-related activities to southcoasthistory@yahoo.com.

BOOK REVIEW

‘From the Edge: Australia’s Lost Histories’ by Mark McKenna

“Australians think they know their history. But the truth is that much of it remains unknown. Our colonial perspective is just beginning to recede. We have only recently discovered the richness and mystery of our Indigenous histories and cultures and the extraordinary regional diversity that so much of our nation-making and popular history making has unintentionally worked to disguise. Since the demise in the 1960s of the idea of Australia as a ‘British’ society, we have tried, sometimes desperately, to agree on an alternative national narrative ... (but) we have failed to embed our national story in the histories on our own soil ...

Perhaps we would understand Australia differently ... if we started from the ground up, from the local and the regional perspective.” (– Mark McKenna in the introduction to ‘*From the Edge: Australia’s Lost Histories*’)

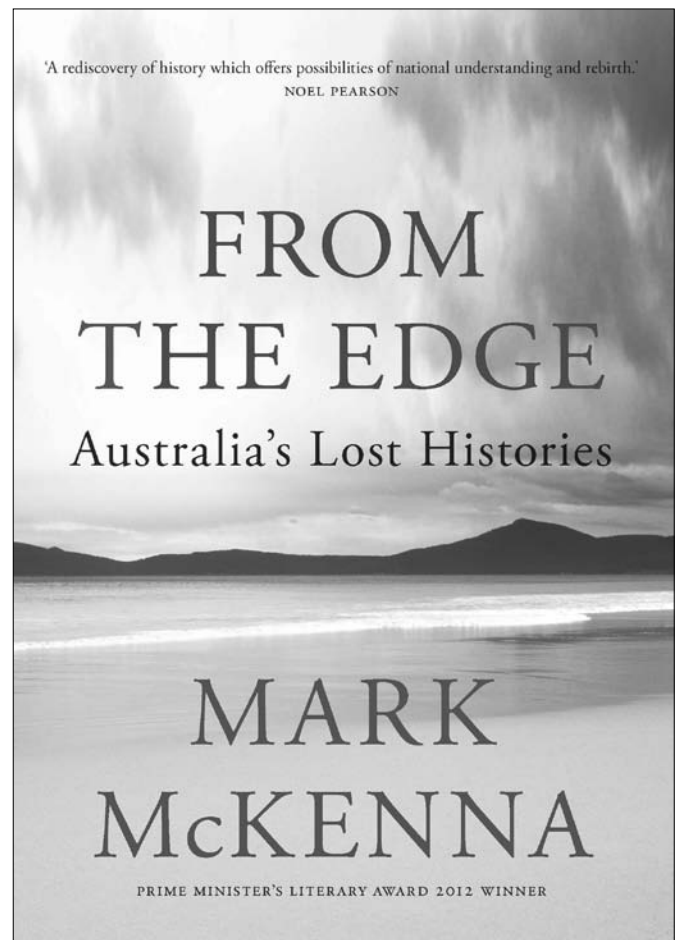
At the outset I must say ‘*From the Edge: Australia’s Lost Histories*’ is worth reading. In fact, it’s extremely interesting and very thought-provoking.

I purchased the book having listened – gob smacked, as was the rest of the audience – at South Coast History Day earlier this year as Mark McKenna related the tragic story of the murder of a half-caste girl in Cobargo in 1864 (a story not included in this book, but in another of Mark McKenna’s works, ‘*Looking for Blackfellas’ Point*’).

I particularly wanted to read the story in ‘*From the Edge*’ of the (unplanned) journey by the first Europeans who traversed the NSW South Coast from Ninety Mile Beach in Victoria to Wattamolla, just south of Sydney, in 1797 – a story that, as Mark McKenna writes, ‘*has remained largely untold since 1797*’ and is therefore unknown to most Australians.

McKenna suggests that this story is just one of ‘*myriad*’, ‘*inexhaustible*’ histories of Australia from one of ‘*the most deeply storied countries on earth*’ – ‘*a country we (have) long perceived as a “land without history”*’.

Three other little-known local stories of (European) Australian exploration and settlement are also included in ‘*From the Edge: Australia’s Lost Histories*’ – the story of efforts to establish a ‘new Singapore’ at Port Essington in West Arnhem Land in 1838, the history of exploration and recent industrialization of the Burrup Peninsula (Murujuga) near Dampier and Karratha in Western Australia, and the consequences of the



From the Edge: Australia’s Lost Histories by Mark McKenna. Miegunyah Press. Paperback, rrp \$34.99. E-Book also available from Melbourne University Press Digital.

beaching and repair of the *Endeavour* near modern-day Cooktown in Queensland and of the arrival of gold miners and graziers in the same area. All are absolutely fascinating stories.

Part of the final chapter of the book (about Capt. Cook’s repairing of the *Endeavour* and his contact with the local Aboriginals near Cooktown in Far North Queensland) especially appealed to me because it vividly illustrated one major point that Mark McKenna (I think) was making: that accepting an Aboriginal perspective on relevant Australian historical events can dramatically change everybody’s understanding of traditional (British-centric) ‘textbook’ interpretations of those events.

In this case McKenna presented the ‘textbook’ version of Cook’s contact with Aboriginals, based on the journals written by Cook and Sir Joseph Banks – how seemingly-friendly European-Aboriginal relations broke down to the point that Cook and

his party were shooting at the Aboriginals and the Aboriginals, in retaliation, were lighting grass fires which endangered the *Endeavour's* crew.

McKenna then examined exactly the same facts, taken from exactly the same original sources, but interpreted through the Aboriginal eyes of Eric Deeral and his niece Alberta Hornsby – which instantly clarified what had actually occurred (perhaps not surprisingly, the result of misunderstandings and insensitivities on both sides to the cultural norms of the other – most dramatically illustrated when a party of Aboriginals were invited on board the *Endeavour*, discovered a quantity of turtle meat there, requested and were denied a portion of this and, as a result, proceeded to attempt to seize and jettison objects on the *Endeavour*, all because the crew of the *Endeavour* had failed to understand a very basic ‘sharing’ ethos in the culture of these Aboriginals).

What McKenna has illustrated in this one story is the value of presenting simultaneous ‘parallel’ detailed Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Australian perspectives of incidents in our history, to provide a more complete, more understandable version of what has occurred – and all based on exactly the same sources!!

Here was/is a template that could (and should) be applied to all areas of our history about contact between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians that would/will immediately and logically enhance our understanding of, and the ‘palatability’ to many of, much Australian history.

But back to ‘*From the Edge*,’ and in particular that story of the first non-Indigenous people to walk along the NSW South Coast.

Mark McKenna describes their walk (if you can call

it that!) as ‘*an ordeal*’, ‘*an epic journey*,’ and ‘*one of Australia's greatest survival stories and cross-cultural encounters*.’

Basically, what occurred was that a badly-leaking 30-metre, 2-deck and three-masted trading ship named the *Sydney Cove* was of-necessity run aground, in a storm, on a tiny island (now called Preservation Island) to the west of Cape Barren Island in February 1797. Around 47 members of the crew reached the shore.

It was then decided that the ship's surviving longboat would be repaired, and would be sailed to Sydney by some of the survivors. There they would ask Governor Hunter for help to rescue the remaining crew, who had stayed behind on Preservation Island, and for help to retrieve the cargo (mostly barrels of rum) that had been salvaged from the *Sydney Cove*.

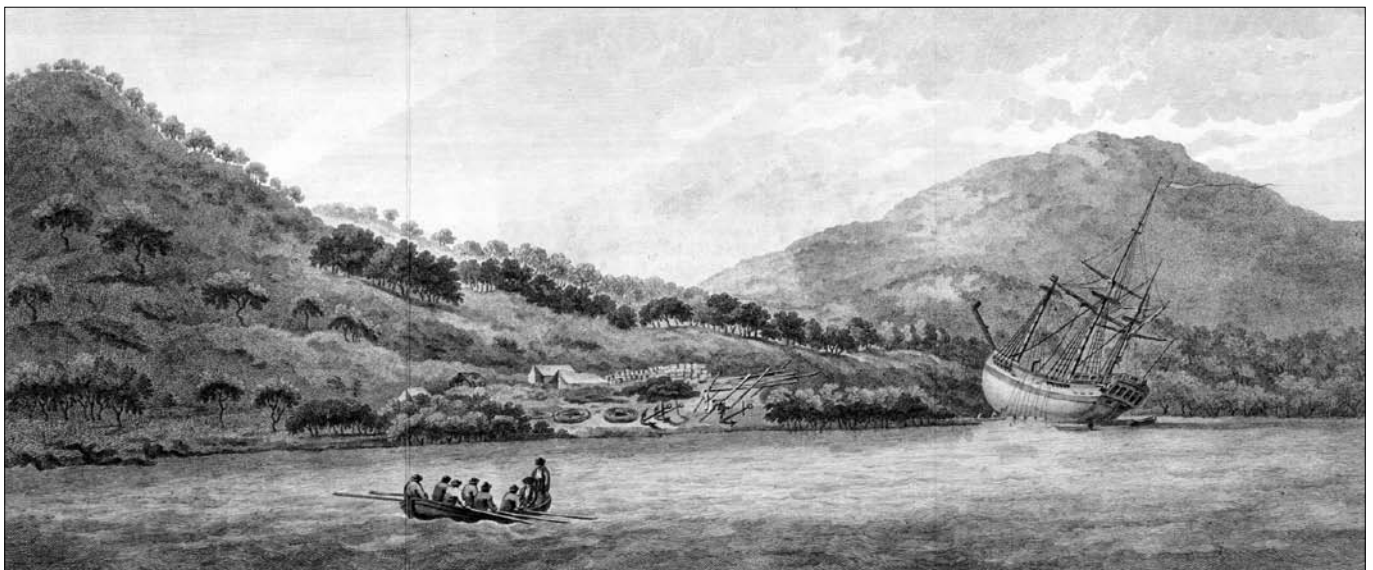
Two weeks were spent readying the longboat for the journey.

17 men (5 Britishers and 12 Bengali seamen) set off on 27th February. By 2nd March they had crossed Bass Strait (not then being aware that the Strait separated New Holland from Van Diemen's Land), whereupon the longboat was severely battered in a storm and had to be beached on Ninety Mile Beach in Victoria. The boat, however, was irreparably damaged – so the party was then faced with a 700 km trek along the coast to Sydney if they were ever to receive help, rapidly learning there was ‘*nothing British about the continent of New Holland!*’

Their trek took 64 days.

Three men reached Sydney.

Nine of the party, by then very weak and wearied, were left behind (with a promise to be rescued later) on the bank of the Moruya River, a further three were unable to continue past the Shoalhaven River,



A sketch of the *Endeavour*, beached for repairs near Cooktown, by the *Endeavour's* botanical and topographical draftsman Sydney Parkinson

and two others could not continue past the southern end of (now) Royal National Park (and just one day before the three who continued walking were sighted and rescued!). None of these 14 men was ever heard from again – but George Bass was subsequently led to the skeletons of two men, one with a ‘much fractured’ skull, by a local Tharawal man.

The trekkers became totally dependent on local Aboriginals – for food and water, for help crossing rivers (in one instance, when not having any Aboriginal assistance, the party spent three days constructing a raft to cross a river), and to be shown the way north along traditional pathways. Usually the Aboriginals were helpful (although McKenna reveals the party received a less-than-welcome reception from Aboriginals south of the Bermagui area, and were subject to an attack at Wreck Bay near Sussex Inlet).

This was the first time the Indigenous peoples had seen a white man. In at least one instance they were ‘appalled by the horrid colour of the newcomers,’ who they thought must have been ‘jumped up white’ ghosts of their departed ancestors.

The Europeans’ initial reaction to the Aboriginals was no less positive: ‘They present the most hideous and disgusting figures that savage life can possibly afford,’ they recorded ... and, upon later seeing the first female Aboriginals, one observer wrote that they

were ‘*the most wretched objects (he) had ever seen – equally filthy as the men ... so devoid of delicacy ... that they seem to have nothing even human about them but the form.*’

There are several other unexpected twists before this saga finally ends, all revealed in Mark McKenna’s absorbing story. These include ‘*a harebrained scheme*’ by 14 convicts in Sydney ‘*to escape, sail to the wreck of the Sydney Cove and attempt to claim the (remaining Sydney Cove) rum for themselves. After thieving a boat on Parramatta River they sailed down the coast ... miraculously reaching as far as Wilson’s Promontory. There, on a small offshore island, seven of the convicts stole out to sea one evening while their fellow escapees were asleep, effectively leaving (those who had been sleeping) for dead ... before George Bass spotted them while he was exploring the coast in early January 1789 ... telling them the news they did not want to hear: they would have to walk to Sydney!*’

Peter Lacey

Mark McKenna suggests there are a ‘myriad’ of other local history stories that should be told to a wider Australian audience. What NSW South Coast stories have you heard that perhaps should be better known? Email your suggestions to southcoasthistory@yahoo.com.

OUR HISTORY, OUR HERITAGE

(This year’s ‘MUST ATTEND’ event!)

An informative, not-to-be-missed full-day seminar examining the events and conditions that shaped our history and our region.

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Proudly organised by South Coast History Society Inc., supporting Bega Valley Shire ‘Heritage Near Me’ Week

Saturday September 2nd

10:30am to 5:00 pm

Club Sapphire, Merimbula

Just \$20 - includes lunch & afternoon tea

Seating at this seminar is strictly limited.

Regretfully, we were forced to turn people away from our last fabulous event, so to avoid disappointment BOOK YOUR SEAT TODAY.

Visit www.southcoasthistory.com or call 0448 160 852

Poems from Our Past

Local newspapers in the past published many poems. Many, many more than are published today.

They were 'newspaper verse,' written in the style of popular Australian poets such as A.B. 'Banjo' Peterson, Henry Lawson and C.J. Dennis, intended to appeal to a general readership.

Technically and artistically they rarely rose to great heights. Many were contributed by local 'poets', often they included lashings of wry humour, but – most importantly to historians today – they often reflected the celebrations or concerns of local society at the time.

Many are certainly worth reading, if only for their simple entertainment value. Here are several examples, starting

with one that appeared in the *Goulburn Evening Penny Post* on 8th July 1922.

At that time, local communities were considering whether and where to erect war memorials to honour those who served and those who had been killed in World War I – the government having prohibited the erection of war memorials whilst the War was being fought.

Predictably, some (a minority) argued the amount of effort and money that would be spent on war memorials could be directed in more worthwhile directions.

'Helfire Jack' emotionally and colourfully presents a dissenter's view in this poem.

(*Kenmore* was a hospital for the insane in Goulburn):

The Soldiers' Monument

Yer'll excuse, me, Mister Editor, cos I'm jest a
common tramp.
I was readin' of yer paper, as I was lyin' in me camp,
Er bout this sojers' monument that they is goin ter
place
On Rocky Hill, or in ther park, but which in any case
Don't matter much; cos what I'm goin ter talk erbout,
yer see,
Will not erfect ther monument in ther sojers' memory.

An all ther talk erbout ther site they'll put ther cussed
thing
Would drive er blokle clean orf his nut, and trubble
on him bring.
I couldn't listen to em long afore I'd git quite sore,
An then perhaps I'd end me days somewhere round
Kenmore.
An as I do not wanten go ter that there blinking place
I'll tork erbout wat's on me mind and state me
bloomin' case.

What gits me goat is why they wants er monument at
all
Ter 'rect in memory of them what answered to ther
call.
I dips me lid ter them ther men who stopped right
over there –
They're better off than them what's back, cos they is
free from care.
They face no blamed starvation, like them wot's
home again,
An' though they sleeps right over there, we sleeps in
th' Domain.

An wot I thinks wood be ther thing is look to them
wot's back,
An if they did they'd find we'd be fewer on ther track.
Instead of buying monuments, buy some of as a feed
An give us work ter keep oursel's, don't leave us be
in need,
Or if they wants to give ter them ther men who gave
ther lives –
Look after what they left behind – by thet I mean ther
wives.

And to ther blokes wat flapped ther flags to them
what went away
And promised wat they'd do for them when they cum
back sum day,
Wat have they done I'd like ter know. Have they kept
their promise well?
I thinks meself that they don't care if ther sojer goes
to h–ll.
They'll rect a blinking monument – will that help the
sojers' need?
Will he admire ther monument when he's starvin fer
a feed?
Can they wonder that a sojer takes to stealing for a
crust?
Whose fault is it, I'd like ter know, when steal he
finds he must.
They stopped at home and made ther cash – he
answered ter the call
They skited what they'd do all right, but the sojer did
it all:
And now he's back at home again, he finds that life's
a wreck;
And if he tries ter alter it – they'll git him in th' neck.

A far less serious subject was addressed by 'Em Ess' (whose *'To the Sock Knitters'* was included in our last issue of *Recollections*) in this contribution in the *Southern Record and Advertiser* of 21st September 1918:

Holiday at Kosciusko

My mate and I decided we would take a well-earned rest,
And we spent some time deciding which 'resort' would be the best;
He suggested up the mountain — I had visions of the sea.
Things were hanging in the balance when a bright thought came to me,
I recollected reading a day or two ago
What a benefit to tourists was the Government Bureau,
For helping folks who needed rest and couldn't quite arrange
Which pleasure-ground to visit, and which would be most change.

We bought a 'Tourist's Guide,' and found advice both sound and sure
Describing every likely place we'd meet with in our tour.
We voted for each place in turn — the vote for 'Kossie' won.

We packed our ports and hired a car — our journey had begun.
In less time than it takes to write, we came to Jindabyne,
A coach and pair we then engaged, for there were hills to climb.
By evening on the second day 'Old Kossie' came in view —
I've gazed upon some handsome sights, but this was something new.

To us — who'd never seen the like — it was a sight sublime.
How eagerly we made our plans for the following morning's 'climb'!

Right: 'In less time than it takes to write, we came to Jindabyne'

Photograph by John Henry Harvey.
Image State Library Victoria
H2009.100/543

Then other games and sports came in — such fun you'd never know —
There's 'ski-ing' and 'tobogganing' and football in the snow.
The days flew past, our time was up, we had to come away.
But as I left I made a vow — to come another day.
I've spent some week-ends 'round the coast in various kinds of ways,
But my trip to Kosciusko I'll remember all my days.

My mate works on the 'Record' staff — I'm in the G.P.O.;
If we're here at next vacation, back to 'Kossie' we shall go,
I feel that I could write a book about that land of snow;
I'd like to print it far and wide for folks to read and know.
I owe a vote of thanks as well to the 'Government Bureau',
For 'twas really their suggestion that to 'Kossie' we should go.
I've brought some little relics home I'll keep as souvenirs,
They'll retain a pleasant memory through the fast-approaching years.



But then in the 8th March 1919 edition of the *Southern Record and Advertiser* 'Em Ess' returned to describe the enormous February 1919 flood:

Our Creek in Flood

Talk about the floods of old! Why sure, they can't compete

With the avalanche of water that was rolling down our street.

I've lived here twenty years or more, and seen a thing or two,

But to witness such a scene as that was really something new.

We hoped for rain — we prayed for rain — but never did we dream

That we'd need to flee for safety from our humble little stream.

In less time than it takes to write, it rose and roared amain —

(And we who've suffered from the flood— don't want a flood again).

It rose above its normal height, and flooded out the park,

If the rain had lasted longer we'd have had to build an ark.

It rushed along, an angry stream, a swift relentless tide,
Creating desolation and destruction far and wide.

Each harmless creature in its path, it swept them clean away,

As far as human eye could reach it held a sovereign's sway,

It took our bridge, our cattle pens, our telephone as well;

The damage here around the town is more than I can tell.

Our ornamental trees and things in which we took such pride,

Are now a heap of debris, just lying side by side.

Who'd ever think that paltry stream, which but a week ago

Was just a trickling rivulet, would turn and rend us so.

Our recreation ground is spoiled, our park is laid in waste,

And I'm sorrowfully thinking of expenses to be faced.

Our tennis courts and picnic ground are just a field of mud.

We're never likely to forget this February Flood.

Please share your favourite South Coast poem from the past with us. Send it to southcoasthistory@yahoo.com



Photograph taken looking west along Bega Street from the Auckland Street intersection during the 1919 Bega River flood. Photo from State Library of NSW, digital ID bcp_02058

How You Can Help Us

South Coast History Society is a community-based not-for-profit organization, totally dependent upon community (i.e. your) support for our activities and totally dependent on volunteer assistance.

In particular, you can help the Society by:

CONTRIBUTING TO THE SOCIETY. We need donors, sponsors, advertisers in *Recollections* ... so anyone who can 'spare a dime' to help fund our activities! Currently, we'd especially like to continue printing copies of *Recollections*, but that costs around \$2,500 per issue – so we're encouraging anyone who might help pay for more printed issues of *Recollections* to do so. If we can't raise the necessary money, *Recollections* will continue, but every second issue will only be available on-line – a move we know will disappoint many of our readers. Every dollar we can raise really helps, is put to good use (guaranteed!) ... and we are VERY appreciative of those who have, and are, supporting us.

CONTRIBUTING TO RECOLLECTIONS. We welcome contributions that can be considered for

publication in *Recollections*, on our website and on our Facebook page – everything from 'finished' articles, to research or leads that we can turn into articles, to interesting photographs, to suggestions of topics that could be researched and eventually published. We also welcome anyone with an interest in our local history who might wish to research topics for us. Contact us at southcoasthistory@yahoo.com or by phoning 0448 160 852.

JOINING THE SOUTH COAST HISTORY SOCIETY. The more financial members we have (and the more of those members willing to serve on our Committee), the happier we are. Membership is just \$10 – which should be deposited into our bank account at Bendigo Bank BSB 633-000 Account 158877472 (but please also email or phone us to let us know that you have done this).

*And, particularly, by telling your family, your friends, about the South Coast History Society and about *Recollections*.*

www.southcoasthistory.com

*We have a fabulous, brand new website
Check it out at www.southcoasthistory.com*

It is our 'library' of stories and photographs about the history of the NSW South Coast, and is the place to go to discover what's on in the weeks and months ahead.

southcoasthistory.com includes a 'Story of the Month' page. It's worth visiting regularly just to see what fascinating event or time in our history we've been researching.

**(...and don't forget our Facebook page at
<https://www.facebook.com/southcoasthistory>)**

Trivia Answers

1. The Italian inventor and electrical engineer Guglielmo Marconi (1874–1937) is credited as the inventor of radio for which he and Karl Ferdinand Braun (Marconi later admitting that he had “*borrowed*” portions of Braun’s work) were jointly awarded the 1909 Nobel Prize in Physics “in recognition of their contributions to the development of wireless telegraphy.”
In mid-1894 Marconi discovered he could wirelessly make a bell ring on the other side of his workshop by pushing a telegraphic button on a bench. He demonstrated his achievement to his father, who gave his son all the money he had in his wallet once he was certain that there were no wires, so that Guglielmo could buy more materials.
He then worked on the challenges of transmitting over long distances before writing to the Italian Ministry of Post and Telegraphs, explaining his wireless telegraph machine and asking for funding. A reply he received from the Minister suggested he should be sent to the insane asylum in Rome!
Marconi travelled to London in early 1896, at the age of 21. He gained the interest and support of the Chief Electrical Engineer of the British Post Office. The following year he transmitted Morse code signals over a distance of about 6 kilometres across Salisbury Plain and sent the world’s first-ever wireless communication over open sea. In 1899 he succeeded in sending a transmission across the English Channel and gave demonstrations in the United States, including wirelessly reporting America’s Cup international yacht races off Sandy Hook, New Jersey.
2. This took place in 1906 from the Marconi company’s two-way wireless telegraphy station at Queenscliff in Victoria to Devonport in Tasmania.
3. Station 2CM, owned by Charles Maclurcan, which broadcast from the Wentworth Hotel in Sydney, from 1921. Classical music concerts were broadcast on Sunday nights, and transmissions ended with the words ‘*don’t forget to wind up the clock and put out the cat.*’
4. The licence for 2GB was obtained by the Theosophical Society Adyar. Theosophists particularly admired an Italian philosopher named Giordano Bruno.
2SM is named after St Marks Church, Drummoyne. Its parish priest raised funds for Catholic Broadcast Limited to obtain its licence in 1931.
2UE started as 2EU and is the oldest existing commercial radio station in Australia. The station originally operated from the lounge room of C V Stevenson in Maroubra, who owned ‘Electrical Utilities’ in Sydney. The call sign was changed because EU sounded too much like ‘hey you!’
3AW takes its call sign from part-owners Allans Music and JC Williamson. Its first studio was in His Majesty’s Theatre (now Her Majesty’s Theatre) in Melbourne.
3LO’s call sign was copied from the call sign of a BBC radio station in London, 2LO.
3AK was originally owned by George Palmer (the father of Clive Palmer) who also owned the Akron Tyre Company.
5. The 4WK grand piano fell through a termite-ridden studio floor while being played live to air! 4GR’s transmission tower was demolished by a crop duster!! Ken Howard had his race-caller’s binoculars seized for the war effort in World War II!!! And 2CH (then owned by the NSW Council of Churches) once banned mention of the Melbourne Cup!!!!
6. The program was the first episode of Channel 9’s *The Graham Kennedy Show* when the host uttered a ‘faaaark’ ‘crow call’ over a live advertisement for a hairspray. This resulted in about a thousand calls of complaint from viewers and a warning letter from the Australian Broadcasting Control Board. The following week Kennedy asked his studio audience to give his critics a mass crow call – and they did so with gusto! Kennedy was then banned from performing live to air before abruptly leaving the program a month later, following the channel’s censorship of a pre-recorded episode.

A REMINDER

The next issue of *Recollections* may ONLY be available on-line.
To ensure you don’t miss out, email ‘Send Recollections’ to
southcoasthistory@yahoo.com NOW.

- 7 The year was 1981 and Telecom called it 'The Mobile Phone!' It weighed 14kg and the handset was 45cm long. The receiver was mounted in the boot of a car, there was an antenna on the roof, it could store a maximum of 16 phone numbers, and drivers were alerted to incoming calls because the car horn would sound and the headlights would flash! The first hand-held mobile phone was introduced in 1987 – a Mitsubishi brand 'Walkabout' that rapidly earned the nickname 'The Brick' – it weighed 1kg and was the size of a shoe box. Its batteries provided 20 minutes of talk time.
- 8 Facebook is a social networking service that was launched in February 2004. It was originally designed only for Harvard University students, but rapidly expanded to include other colleges in

the Boston Ivy League and by September 2006 was available to anyone age 13 and older with an email address. Its predecessor was Facemash, a game for Harvard students in which two students' photographs were presented side-by-side and the player was asked to decide which of the people photographed were 'hot' and which were 'not'. Mark Zuckerberg, who developed Facemash and Facebook, once noted that 'some of these people have pretty horrendous Facebook pics. I almost want to put some of these faces next to pictures of some farm animals and have people vote on which is more attractive.' (It's not recorded how many 'likes' that comment earned him!!) Today Facebook has about 2 billion active users in any month.

Readers' Responses

The article in the last issue of 'Recollections' on 'A Railway...and a Lunatic Asylum' elicited this contribution from Bob Weston of Wallagoot:

'Going back to around 1961 I was a customer of the Bank of NSW, in Beresfield between Newcastle and Maitland. The Teller, Bill Neilley, was, like me, in his mid-20s. I went to the bank one morning and noticed that Bill was wearing a very flash gold Watch chain and fob Watch. I remarked on his style.

"Have a look at the back of it Westo", he said, as he unclipped and passed the watch to me. My recollection (you'll like that word!) was that this was the inscription:

William Neilley Esq.

Presented by the grateful citizens of
Eden, Pambula and Merimbula,
in recognition, of your sterling efforts,
to obtain for us, a rail connection with Sydney.

Old Bill was young Teller Bill's Grandfather. Old Bill got the gold Watch but the grateful citizens missed out on their railway connection!

(Indeed, Mr W D Neilley was appointed Secretary of the Bega Railway League in December 1874 'to obtain a Railway from Bega to Eden, and Eden to Bombala and Cooma.')

Pat Raymond of Pambula also drew our attention to two errors in this 'A Railway...and a Lunatic Asylum' piece: It was not Rev Tonge, but Rev William Thom who was son-in-law of Henry Parkes; and Rev Thom was the third resident Presbyterian Minister of the Twofold Bay Charge, which encompassed Eden, Pambula and Bega Districts. St Andrews Presbyterian Church in Bega was built and

opened while he held that posting. Further detailed information, provided by Pat, about Rev. Thom and his family has been posted on our new website – southcoasthistory.com.

And David Elliston of Canberra was prompted by our 'Droughts and Flooding Rains' piece to draw our attention to the turosshead.org website which includes some photographs of the bridge near Bodalla that spanned the Moruya River that collapsed in April 1954. We particularly liked this photo and the information that accompanied it:



Old Timber Bridge Collapse Cuts Highway on South Coast

An old timber bridge across the Tuross River, near Bodalla, on the South Coast, collapsed on Saturday and stopped traffic on the Prince's Highway. The two centre spans of the bridge lie twisted and shattered. The bridge collapsed suddenly at midday as one car was leaving the bridge and another approaching it. Milk and supplies were brought across by rowboat for people cut off from Bodalla. (*Sydney Morning Herald* 5.4.1954)

Bridge Collapses into River

Hundreds of tourists were stranded last night after an old 200 ft. timber bridge on the Princes Highway - the main Sydney to Melbourne road - collapsed into the Tuross River. The bridge was built in the 1890's [actually it was 1879]. One car was leaving the bridge, and another just about to cross, when it suddenly collapsed 30 ft. into the river. (*The Advertiser* 5.4.1954)

The Tuross Bridge

Sir – Surely it would provide fine military training, and a vital public service, were the Army to erect two single-track Bailey bridges (one lane north, one south), at the site of the Tuross River Bridge collapse and leave them in use until a new permanent bridge is ready. Wartime experience suggests this could be done in a matter of days.

Ralph Ogden, Milson's Point. (*Sydney Morning Herald* 6.4.1954)

CANBERRA, Tuesday. The Minister for the Army, Mr. J. Francis, said today the Army had a Bailey bridge which could be used to replace the Tuross River bridge. Mr. Francis was replying to Mr. W. C. Wentworth (Lib., N.S.W.) in the House of Representatives.

Mr. Francis said the bridge was available but the procedure had always been laid down that a State should make representations to the Prime Minister.

If the New South Wales Premier, Mr. Cahill, made the request, he would "carefully consider" making the bridge available. (*Sydney Morning Herald* 7.4.1954)

Tuross Bridge Detour Open

A detour round the broken bridge over the Tuross River on the Prince's Highway was open for traffic, Bodalla police reported last night. The detour is through the property of the Bodalla Company, which has large pastoral and manufacturing interests in the district. Police said the detour could take vehicles of up to 10 tons, including buses. The Tuross River bridge collapsed on April 3 and cut communication with the far South Coast. A temporary bridge is being erected, but it will take nearly four months to complete. (*Sydney Morning Herald* 12.4.1954)

Tuross River Bridge Is Completed

MORUYA, Friday.-The temporary bridge across

the Tuross River was opened to traffic at midday today. The bridge, with bitumined approaches, was completed just four weeks and two days from the day the first pile was driven.

Forty-eight 51ft piles were driven 30 feet into the mud.

The old bridge provided most of the material. A 25-ton bulldozer was used to drag it ashore a span at a time.

Thirty men who worked on the bridge for two weekends, including Easter, celebrated their victory over time and the river with a party on the bank of the river this evening. (*Sydney Morning Herald* 15.5.1954)

From Andrew McManus of Merimbula: 'Sorry to seem picky. A minor error is on page 3 where Jack Hobbs is said to have been a Lancaster crew member in the Battle of Britain. This is inaccurate – Lancasters played no part in the Battle of Britain. The first one flew in 1941.' (Thanks Andrew for the information. We should strive to – and want to! – ensure we get our facts right.)

We are pleased our 'Photo Check' item led to the location of several additional photographs taken on the South Coast by Joseph Check in 1902 and 1904. Thanks to Joel Clyne of Lochiel for advising us of their whereabouts.

Our article on South Coast World War II Shipping Losses prompted Maxine McElvenie of Surf Beach to provide us with a particularly interesting first-hand account, written by her late husband James, who was serving on merchant ships along the NSW coast, in south-east Asia and in the Pacific during World War II which were targeted by the Japanese. And Eric Wiseman of Moruya also sent us additional information about the vessels involved and the actions that took place off the coast, for which we are very grateful. That information, along with other feedback received from readers, is posted on our website www.southcoasthistory.com.

We welcome comments about anything published in *Recollections* and generally about NSW South Coast history. Email us at southcoasthistory@yahoo.com.

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