

South Coast History Society Inc.

Recollections

Issue 6, February 2018

The
South Coast's
FREE History
Magazine



Water wheels used for generating power to drive a small stamper battery on Mount Dromedary in 1910. William Robert Easdown photographic collection, National Library of Australia. See story pages 12 to 15.

This issue of *Recollections* is dedicated to the memory of Kevin Tetley (1940–2017), a wonderful man who willingly shared his almost-encyclopaedic knowledge of, and his enthusiasm for, the history of the Bega area with many people over many decades.

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The First Word

The focus of historians in the early Twenty-first Century has been on place. And Twenty-first Century histories are often histories of place.

'Place' is a theme that both history and geography share (and also share with other related areas such as anthropology, archaeology and ethnicity) and explores the mutual shaping of people and environments.

Many NSW South Coast landscapes have been dramatically altered in the past 200 years, so the South Coast has a special attraction to contemporary historians interested in the history of place.

One of the earliest (and best!) examples is provided by Professor Mark McKenna's award-winning *Looking for Blackfellas' Point: An Australian History of Place*, published in 2002.

Blackfellas' Point is on the NSW South Coast. It was originally an Aboriginal meeting place in the Towamba Valley, west of Eden.

It's interesting, more than a decade later, to read the impact that Blackfellas' Point and that book have had on McKenna: *'I once thought that local history was for amateur historians and antiquarians – that only national, transnational or global history was of any consequence. But I have learnt that the personal and the local is the starting point for the type of history I strive to write – holistic history – history that is at once personal, local, regional, national and international, history that is not specialised or cordoned off as the property of one group, and history that is always marked by a sensitivity to the particularities of place ... One of the joys of writing regional history is observing the book's afterlife in local communities. I have made close friends through the book and I have met many others because of it. Stories from the book have often come back to me in casual conversation, sometimes altered around the edges, sometimes entirely unrecognisable from the text itself ... I have learnt that the history I write is not my personal possession ... (and) as the author of a regional history, I have become a vessel in which to pour the lost stories of my local communities.'* (*The Monthly*, May 2014)

McKenna is not the only well-known historian to have been attracted to, intrigued by the history, the place of the NSW South Coast. Dr Glenn Mitchell (UOW), Dr Anna Clark (UTS), John Blay and Bruce Pascoe are but several other examples of those whose enquiries have highlighted the deep riches of the area.

And we can understand why. There are just so many fascinating histories and stories in and of the South Coast.

This issue marks the first anniversary of *Recollections* – perhaps appropriately filled with histories of place, 'our place', the South Coast: a story of gold mining on Mt Dromedary, an outline of the incredible achievements of the Bermagui-based Four Wings organization, details of how the early settlers acquired land on the South Coast, accolades for the work undertaken locally by Merimbula-Imlay Historical Society that recently celebrated its 50th birthday, amusing reports of what occurred when a circus visited Batemans Bay in 1907 ... and lots more.

We hope you'll enjoy reading this issue whilst learning a little more about 'our place'.

Peter Lacey

The last issue of *Recollections* outlined the difficulties that explorers and settlers had in reaching the NSW South Coast. But how did they then acquire land in the area?

Acquiring Land

The first European settlers to the area were squatters. They simply moved on to the land in accord with the international law principle of *terra nullius* (meaning 'nobody's land'; Lt James Cook had declared NSW to be *terra nullius* in 1770 to legitimize his action of taking possession of the island, which he had been instructed to do if it was uninhabited).

The NSW government had no effective control of squatters moving onto the land. The South Coast was outside the 'limits of occupation' (the area that the government believed it was able to effectively control and police) defined by Governor Darling in 1826 and all of the area south of the Moruya River remained outside the boundaries of the 'Nineteen Counties,' later designated for settlement, in 1829.

William Tarlinton, a Braidwood squatter, first visited the area around modern-day Cobargo in 1829. He returned with cattle in 1832. Other squatters from the Monaro soon followed, and it seems they simply took up land – which appeared to them to be abundantly available – by amicable arrangement between themselves.

After much consideration, the government passed a

Crown Lands Occupation Act in 1836, providing squatters with legally recognized grazing licences. Tarlinton obtained one of these new squatter licences the next year for 'Bredbatowra' in the Cobargo area.

Meanwhile Governor Bourke visited the South Coast in 1834, subsequently writing of the area around Twofold Bay: 'Already the flocks and herds of the colonists spread themselves over a large portion of this southern country ... The excellence of the pastures in this part of the colony I am describing has induced graziers to resort to it; and much of the fine wool, which is exported to England, is taken from sheep depastured on vacant Crown Land beyond the limits assigned for the location of settlers.'

The Imlay brothers, who had ventured to Twofold Bay in 1832, were friends of Governor Bourke and Alexander Imlay joined the Governor's tour of inspection. Following this, the three brothers (Alexander, Peter and George) acquired over 65,000 acres of squatters runs and took up permanent settlement near Biggah (Bega). They subsequently added substantial parcels to this, including 'Cobargo' which

was acquired by Alexander Imlay in 1840. Ultimately the brothers were to own 3,900 square kilometres of some of the best land in NSW.

By 1844 the Imlay brothers were experiencing severe financial difficulties and were forced to sell many of their



Pioneer's House at Towamba, near Bega, built 1871. Photograph: State Library of NSW FL1687516

land holdings to their bankers, the Walker brothers of Sydney. Subsequently much of this land was purchased by the Twofold Bay Pastoral Association which had been formed by a consortium of seven businessmen in 1852. 'Kameruka' became the Association's head station.

In 1843 the County of Auckland was established, enabling land in the area to be leased for the first time by companies and individuals. And it also had the effect of paving the way for the erection of substantial, permanent buildings in the area.

In 1855 the government started actively selling off land in the area. Peter Imlay, for example, purchased land on their Tarraganda and Cobargo holdings that had previously been leased by his brothers George and Alexander by exercising pre-emptive occupation rights, and the Darcy's purchased land north of the Bega River.

The system of settling and holding Crown Land was significantly reformed by the Crown Lands Acts of 1861, introduced by Premier John Robertson. These Acts enabled lots of between 40 and 320 acres of previously unsurveyed land to be 'selected' and bought, and effectively created two classes of landowners – selectors and leaseholders.

Knowing that these Land Acts reforms were about to occur, the Twofold Bay Pastoral Association's backers transferred much of the land held by the Association into their own names and disbanded the Association in 1860. Robert Tooth, one of the seven Association members, acquired the Kameruka Estate and William Manning acquired the adjoining Arydale Estate which he then sold to John Marshall Black. Black then spent the next 20 to 30 years buying up the leases of surrounding land.

Existing lessees of land at the time of the Land Acts scrambled to secure properties and used a range of tactics, including using 'dummy' nominees (the names of share

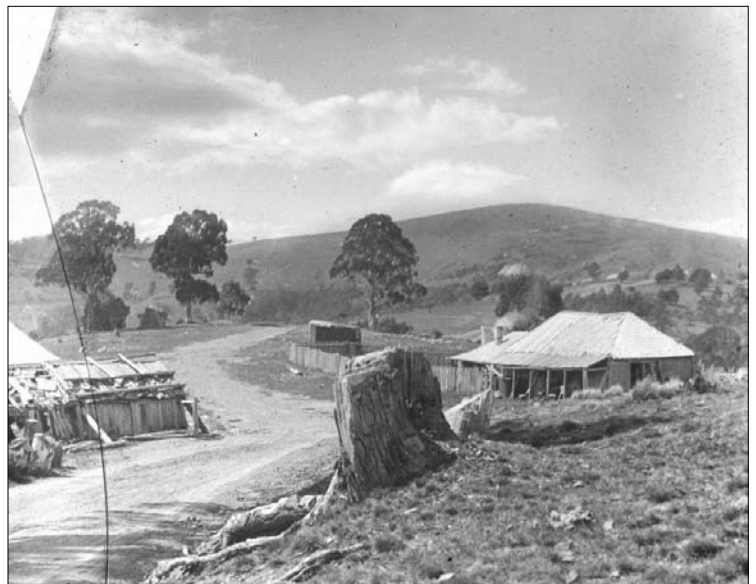
farmers and even unborn infants) to gain selections. Widespread abuses of the system ultimately forced the government to appoint a Royal Commission in 1883 to enquire into the application of the Acts.

The NSW South Coast area is considered to be one of the few areas where the Acts facilitated orderly settlement of the land – even though some individual holdings were soon amalgamated into holdings of more than 500 acres. The Acts are also considered to have helped the development of the dairy industry on the South Coast and to have contributed to a sense of community. Sir John Robertson was, in fact, praised on a visit to the area in the late 1870s for having turned the district into 'one of yeoman (freeholder) farmers'.

One of these 'yeoman farmers' was James Porter of Toothdale. Evidently whilst at the local courthouse making a rental payment on land he was working, he was advised that the property had actually been recorded in his name and because of this he might be able to purchase it as freehold. He made application to do so and was successful.

Others were attracted to the area once land became available for purchase. Richard Rogers, a surveyor's assistant from Milton, was one man who heard that an auction of land was to be held at Tarraganda (east of Bega), so he sailed from Ulladulla to Eden and then walked from Eden to Bega for the auction. He purchased 60 acres of surveyed land for £171.02.00 (one 40 acre portion later turned out to be a block of 51 or 52 acres – but that's another story!)

A report to the NSW Government in 1884 recorded that 'Bega is one of the most prosperous districts in the colony,



Araleun Valley near Moruya, c.1900. Photograph: State Library of Victoria 2262384

and its prosperity is mainly attributable to the fact of the land having been thrown open to the people. Rich land, mild climate, copious and regular rainfall, and last but not least, easy and cheap communication by water with the metropolis, all these stamp it as a locality peculiarly adapted to homestead settlement, and upon which (there can be

no question) the legislation of 1861 conferred incalculable benefit.”

Further to the north around Bodalla, a large parcel of land – which gradually developed to a total holding



Dairy Herd, Bodalla late 19th or early 20th century.

Photograph: Powerhouse Museum Tyrell Collection 30450

of 56,000 acres – was acquired by Sydney businessman Thomas Sutcliffe Mort in 1860. He purchased this from John Hawdon, another squatter who had moved cattle into the area in 1834 and was then to pioneer agricultural development of the area. By 1856 more than 30 dairy farms had been established in the area.

All the while, towns were developing along the South Coast. For example:


Eden was surveyed by Surveyor Townsend in 1842 and Pambula was surveyed by him in 1843, although it was not proclaimed as a town until 1885.

Merimbula (gazetted as a town in 1912) was originally a private village belonging to the Twofold Bay Pastoral Association, but allotments were offered for sale from 1860 following the introduction of the Crown Lands Acts.

Bega was surveyed to be on what today is North Bega by government Surveyor Parkinson in 1851, but a disastrous flood in May that year resulted in the town being moved to higher ground south of the Bega River. The first allotments at the new site were surveyed in February 1854 by Assistant Surveyor Drake and offered for sale by auction in August that year.

Surveyor Parkinson also laid out a village at Bodalla in 1850–1851 but – as had happened with his North Bega township – it was never developed. Instead the town was relocated to the east and was built in 1870, after the route of the main south road was altered.

Moruya's first land sales occurred in 1852 and it was proclaimed a town in 1885.

Batemans Bay was gazetted as a town in 1854 and laid out in 1859. 

The story of local land acquisition is incredibly complex (far more so than the above suggests). This piece was compiled with considerable assistance from Kevin Tetley, Fiona Firth and Peter Rogers (with many thanks to each of them) and with reference to numerous local histories. We plan to include a piece on reading Parish Maps in a future issue of *Recollections*, which will further expand on this topic.

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Four Winds is a story of incredible success. Having just celebrated its 25th Anniversary, this organisation is now renowned for its world-leading music innovation, and Bermagui is today internationally recognised as a musical centre of excellence.

‘A Pack of Bohemians in a Paddock’

Bermagui was once world-famous for its marlin. Now it is world-famous for music excellence – due largely to the efforts of the innovative Four Winds non-profit organisation which has based itself on 30 acres of coastal bushland 9 kms south of Bermagui.



The early years: a view of the site in 1990.

The concept of Four Winds emerged when Neilma Gantner moved to the area from Melbourne and discovered she missed the pleasures of regularly attending live performances of classical music. So she gathered a group of like-minded locals together who decided they would bring outstanding musicians to the area to perform for them.

Somehow presenting those performances in the outdoors seemed to be appropriate for the area – even with the ‘distractions’ of bird and frog calls, the ocean pounding away in the background, the wind, the possibilities of extreme heat or heavy rain.

‘Sitting in the outdoors is the best way to hear a concert,’ Neilma once observed. ‘It’s acoustically splendid.’

So a ‘pack of Bohemians in a paddock’, as they were once described, set about transforming a scenically attractive natural amphitheatre on farmland at Barragga Bay into an outdoor music performance venue. They needed to erect shelter for the musicians – or, more correctly, for the musician’s instruments, some of which were worth hundreds of thousands of dollars – and also provide some rudimentary seating for the audience.

Three tiers for seating were bulldozed into the



The early years: the site in 1993 with Carrillo Gantner.

amphitheatre for the first Four Winds Festival held in 1993. Over the ensuing two decades additional tiers for seating were gradually installed up the hill.

Today the Four Winds amphitheatre can accommodate 2,000 people (close to the capacity of the Concert Hall of the Sydney Opera House) – and the Four Winds team expects to attract that number of people across this year’s Easter weekend Festival.



The early years: the sound shell and audience in 1993.

The first rudimentary stage at the bottom of the amphitheatre has also been transformed over time. The present acoustically-advanced Sound Shell was completed in 2012 and was designed by Philip Cox, a renowned Sydney architect and music-lover who has a ‘permanent camp site’ nearby that he first found while camping in the ‘70s and ‘is the place where Philip Cox goes to think and engage with his passions for landscape, art and culture.’



The early years: a closer view of the sound shell in 1993, the quartet on stage is *La Romanesca*.

And in 2014, the Windsong Pavilion, designed by architect Clinton Murray, was built at the top of the site to provide an acoustically-outstanding venue suited to more intimate live performances, artists-in-residence programs, school visits and various music workshops.

It’s apparent that Neilma Gantner and the other ‘originals’

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had very clear ideas about the future of Four Winds. ‘I’d like a whole orchestra to be here, but (currently) we’ve only got a stage that is able to cater for a small group,’ Neilma once observed, suggesting that Four Winds should ‘build it (facilities at the site) and the people (artists and audience) will come.’

They did. And the audience demonstrated their exceptionally strong support for the Four Winds concept shortly afterwards by electing to sit through significant rain to allow one of the early Four Winds Festival’s performances to continue, rather than electing to adjourn to an alternative, perhaps more-conventional (and drier!) venue such as the Bermagui Community Hall.



Dejan Lazic, piano; Richard Tognetti, violin; Giovanni Sollima, cello, performing in the Four Winds Sound Shell.



Short Black Opera in the Windsong Pavilion, 2017.

Since then the Four Winds organisation and the Four Winds (Easter) Festival have never looked back.

The original Four Winds Festival was conceived as a two-day event held over Easter every second year. It now extends over five days and attracts a total audience of around 6,000. From this year it will become an annual event.

The Four Winds organisation has, since 2014, also scheduled musical presentations year-round, providing performance opportunities for musicians ranging from local school children and emerging artists to nationally and internationally-acclaimed musicians. The music encompasses the whole range of musical genres with a focus on quality, excellence and collaboration. The year-round activities that Four Winds carries out take place both on the Four Winds site in Barragga Bay, further afield in the Bermagui township, and elsewhere on the South Coast.

Four Winds has become an organisation that does much more than simply organise public music performances.

Central to its priorities is ‘to foster a love for live music

among local young people through music education programs for pre-school to Year 6 children by providing them with at least two quality day-long experiences per child per year.’ And they have found that seemingly simple things like introducing very young children to the basics of music through singing and percussion will provide a significant advantage later in life when, for example, as teenagers some of these same children decide to learn to play a musical instrument.

Over the past 25 years Four Winds has maintained its initial commitment to music-making in a natural environment and to ‘stepping lightly on the land.’ Its outdoor venue is viewed as very much more than an attractive ‘Nature’s Concert Hall.’

Since 2013 Four Winds has been regenerating and restoring much of its site to its original native species state, enabling additional opportunities to provide education about sustainable cultivation of the local environment. This is seen as being particularly appropriate as many of the water courses, creeks and estuaries connected to the Four



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Winds site are sacred to the local Yuin community.

The most significant recent development has been Four Winds' Bermagui Project. This is aimed at raising community awareness and involvement in the ecological assets of the South Coast by creating new works of art (in music, dance, painting, sculpture, writing, and in other ways) in response to place, stories and the area's heritage. So, for example, visual artists or musicians are encouraged to visit nearby Gulaga mountain and then create a work inspired by their visit there. An exhibition of some of the most recent Bermagui Project creations opens at the Bega Regional Gallery on 2nd February, 2018.

The central focus of Four Winds has, of course, always been on music and musicians.

From the very first Four Winds Festival, internationally-renowned musicians have been appointed for short tenures to artistically direct the Festival and help develop Four Winds in other ways. These have included musicians such as Australian recorder virtuoso Genevieve Lacey, and Australian conductor and author Paul Kildea. The current Artistic Director is world renowned Scottish classical accordion player James Crabb whose first Easter Festival is being presented in March 2018. So the Festival and other events are continually benefitting from 'fresh eyes,' and the widest possible range of performers and performances from around the world have been invited to the area by the Festival's different Artistic Directors.

There have been some extraordinarily memorable performances given at various Four Winds events. One that this writer particularly recalls is a performance in 2006 of one of the first (perhaps the first) famous minimalist music works, *In C*, by the American composer Terry Riley that was performed by Riley and a group of Australian musicians including William Barton playing the didgeridoo (so this perhaps become the first-ever performance of this historic piece that included didgeridoo instrumentation). A 4 CD set was issued by Four Winds as a result of this presentation.

In a very unusual move, Four Winds does not encourage engagement of 'fly-in fly-out' musicians. They expect all artists to come to the area for at least a few days, to be energised by the local environment and to contribute more than just their scheduled performances – for example, by


participating in school visits, or by teaching one-on-one or by leading masterclasses whilst they are also rehearsing and/or composing. And, because of the unique location, the 5-star hotel rooms that are very much a part of many international musicians' lives are necessarily replaced by the artists being billeted in – often more modest – local homes.

The musicians absolutely love this and, after just one visit, an extraordinarily high proportion of them return to Four Winds to perform again, or simply attend later Four Winds Festivals.

Perhaps indicative of the high esteem in which Four Winds is held by the music world is an ever-expanding catalogue of pieces written especially for it. At the upcoming 2018 Easter Festival, for example, no fewer than five world-premiere performances of new works will be presented.



The Windsong Pavilion at dusk with quartet of kangaroos.

So over the past quarter century Four Winds has gradually become bigger, it has diversified significantly, it has developed to now be an integral and important part the local community and local economy. Illustrative of the growth it has experienced is the fact that the organisation now engages more than 250 volunteers who help in many different capacities – a far cry from the days when it was simply 'a pack of Bohemians in a paddock!' 

This piece was compiled with considerable assistance from Margaret Hansen of Four Winds. The Program for the 2018 Four Winds Easter Festival is now available at www.fourwinds.com.au. Tickets can be purchased on-line or by phoning 6493 3414. The 'Fresh Salt' exhibition at the Bega Valley Regional Galley runs until February 17.



The Four Winds site today with the Sound Shell and tiered amphitheatre at left, the Windsong Pavilion at right.

Cause for Congratulations

by Andrew McManus

Nobody knows why, in September 1967, Mr. Noel Fisk placed a notice in the *Magnet Voice* newspaper suggesting that the people of Merimbula establish a Historical Society

degrees of success. Matthew Munn's original cottage, the old Merimbula wharf, the Cherry Tree Inn and the old Lakeview Hotel have all been lost, despite the Society's, and often the community's, best efforts. However, there have been some successes. The Museum itself, the Pambula Courthouse, the old Eden Post Office, the old bank in Pambula, St Columba's church, the Back Lake tramway, the Munn Street quarry and the Pambula town well have been preserved, due in great part, to the efforts of the MIHS.



The Munn Room at the Old School Museum, Merimbula.

and that a meeting be held to that end. Perhaps he felt that the visible evidence of Merimbula's history was under threat. Perhaps he thought simply that our history needed to be preserved. Whatever his reasons, his initiative was successful. Approximately 20 people attended a public meeting on October 7th in Twyford Hall, and it was decided that such a society should be formed. The Imlay District Historical Society (IDHS) was founded with the objectives of *'the study of history in the area, the compilation of records relating to the district and the acquisition, where possible, of books, manuscripts, records and relics that may be considered to have a bearing on the history of the area'*.

Fifty years later, the Society is still going strong, incorporated and under a new name. It has held nearly 500 meetings since its founding and these meetings have generated over 1500 pages of minutes, all of which have been preserved.

The Society's achievements are considerable. It restored the 1873 Merimbula Public School building, which is now the Old School Museum and contains a collection of over 1000 artefacts, over 3000 photographs, over 8000 documents and more than 90 taped interviews with older local residents. It is highly likely that many of these records would have been lost without the Society's efforts.

The Merimbula-Imlay Historical Society has also worked with schools to enhance pupils' knowledge of their heritage, hosting school visits and donating funds for school prizes. The Society has created displays to show visitors and locals how our region has developed and been influenced by world events.

The Society has always taken an interest in local historical sites and has campaigned to preserve them, with varying

The Society has maintained contact with other historical societies, most notably, the Royal Australian Historical Society, of which MIHS is still a member, having joined in 1968. Links with the Eden Killer Whale Museum, the Bega Valley Historical Society, the Bega Valley Genealogical Society and the many societies which form the South East History Group have been maintained, to the benefit of all parties.

The Society has always been active in the community. It has set up displays for History Week and Heritage Week and has lent resources to organisations celebrating anniversaries. It has supported local events such as Merimbula Spring Festival and



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Pambula Day in the 1990s and events linked to national and international celebrations such as the Year of Darwin in 2009 celebrated with a dinner at Covington's restaurant in Pambula and the Centenary of Merimbula in 2012, commemorated by displays in the Museum, Twyford Hall and the RSL club. In 2010, the Society provided photos for display on the Rotary walk from Rotary Park to Bar Beach, Merimbula and the same year saw the visit, with the support of the RSL, of Mr Bill Minton, the sole remaining survivor of the sinking of the *William Dawes* in 1942.

from the local council and various state government bodies or donations from local businesses and clubs. The Society's relationship with the community has been mutually beneficial.

In its fifty years, the Society has made major contributions to the heritage of the local area. It could be argued that without the Society, there would be no local history. The mere fact of its existence ensured that there was always a point of contact for research, preservation, collation,

recording, education and interaction with the community. The role of the Museum volunteers in keeping the Museum open three afternoons per week has been vital. It is clear also that the Society would have made little progress had it not been for continuous public support at the national, regional and local levels. The preservation of our heritage has been, therefore, a joint effort on the part of the community and the Society, a fact which was recognised in 2012 when the Secretary of the Society, Shirley Bazley was appointed Australia Day Ambassador in recognition of her services to the community. **R**

The author, Andrew McManus, wishes to acknowledge the assistance of the Merimbula-Imlay Historical Society with his research. Andrew recently compiled a history of the Merimbula-Imlay Historical Society to coincide with the Society's 50th anniversary. Copies are available from the Old School Museum, Merimbula.

The Old School Museum in Merimbula occupies the town's former schoolhouse.

In 1869 the Rev. William Thom (a Presbyterian minister who was residing at Pambula) and his wife, Clarinda Menie, the eldest daughter of Sir Henry Parkes, were ardent supporters of public education. Pambula already had a well-established school but the Rev. and Mrs. Thom felt there was an urgent need for more schools in the district. It is known that Mrs Thom made a private approach to her father on the matter and received a sympathetic response.

Formal application for a school at Merimbula was made to the Council of Education in October 1869, signed by the Rev. W. Thom, Adam K. Page and Armstrong L. Munn. Parents undertook to pay one third of the cost of a building. School began in temporary premises in 1870.

The stone building, still standing in Main Street on land donated by William Montagu Manning, was first used on 8 October 1875 and is believed to be one of only three schools comprising both classrooms and a teacher's residence remaining in New South Wales.

In 1875 the enrollment was 39 children. School fees were set by the local board within limits of legislation. Initially parents paid a weekly fee of 9 pence for the first child and 6 pence for each additional child, but in 1893 this was reduced to 3 pence per head per week, with a maximum of 9 pence per family.

The building was vacated at the end of 1945, and the school reopened in new premises. The building was eventually abandoned. In 1969 the Merimbula-Imlay Historical Society was formed and requested permission to use the building as a museum which, after extensive repairs, was opened in 1973. The building is classified by the National Trust and is listed on the Register of the National Estate.

An important development was the establishment of the Community Showcase in the RSL club in 2005. The Showcase exhibits displays of topics of local and wider relevance on a regular basis.

This brief list of the Society's interaction with the community is not inclusive. MIHS was involved in community activities in almost every year of its history and in return, the community, both local and regional has supported the Society. Very little of the MIHS objectives could have been achieved with the support via grants

ON THE BOOKSHELF

'Australian Desperadoes'

by Terry Smyth

'*Australian Desperadoes*' appealed for two reasons. It's an intriguing, easy-to-read Australian-related history and it's full of interesting, unusual, quirky anecdotes. Odd, often marginally-relevant but colourful bits and pieces like:

'After the 1906 San Francisco earthquake, in which some 3,000 people were killed and most of the city destroyed, rubble from the streets was used as ballast for sailing ships. Ships that docked at Newcastle [NSW] dumped their ballast at Stockton, on the north side of Newcastle harbour, greatly expanding the foreshore, which is still known as the Ballast Ground.'

'In 1851, less than eight per cent of the population of California was female, and many of those women were so-called 'bad' women ... So rare were respectable, so-called 'good' women that when the first such female arrived in the mining town of Columbia, in the Sierra Nevada foothills, she was greeted by a brass band and a parade.'

'As leader of the California Association of American Women, Eliza Farnham [a writer and feminist] called for 'intelligent, virtuous and efficient' women to accompany her from New York to San Francisco as mail order brides, convinced that 'the presence of women would be one of the surest checks upon many of the evils that are apprehended there'.

Applicants were asked to provide testimonials from their clergymen, and \$250 for passage to San Francisco and other expenses.

More than 200 women responded to Farnham's call ... The 'Alta California' enthuses, 'Eliza Farnham and her girls are coming, and the dawning of brighter days for our golden land is even now perceptible'.

When the 'Angelique' docks in the bay, however, the crowds of would-be suitors lining the shore are sorely disappointed. Of the 200 women who responded to the call, only two step ashore. The rest, it seems, got cold feet and stayed home.'

'Sam Brannan had been appointed leader of the Mormon

Church in California [and had led about 300 Mormons to the goldfields]. All Mormons were obliged to contribute tithes – ten per cent of their earnings – to the church. Brannan, who collected the tithes, was suspected of pocketing the money ... and by 1850, Sam Brannan is the richest man in San Francisco. He is a major landowner and leading merchant, and his interest now include banks, railroads and telegraph companies. His influence in civic and state affairs is considerable, and that, along with a short and violent temper, makes him a dangerous man to cross.

Brannan's response to accusations that he had stolen the Lord's money was that he would repay the money if he got a receipt signed by the Lord.'

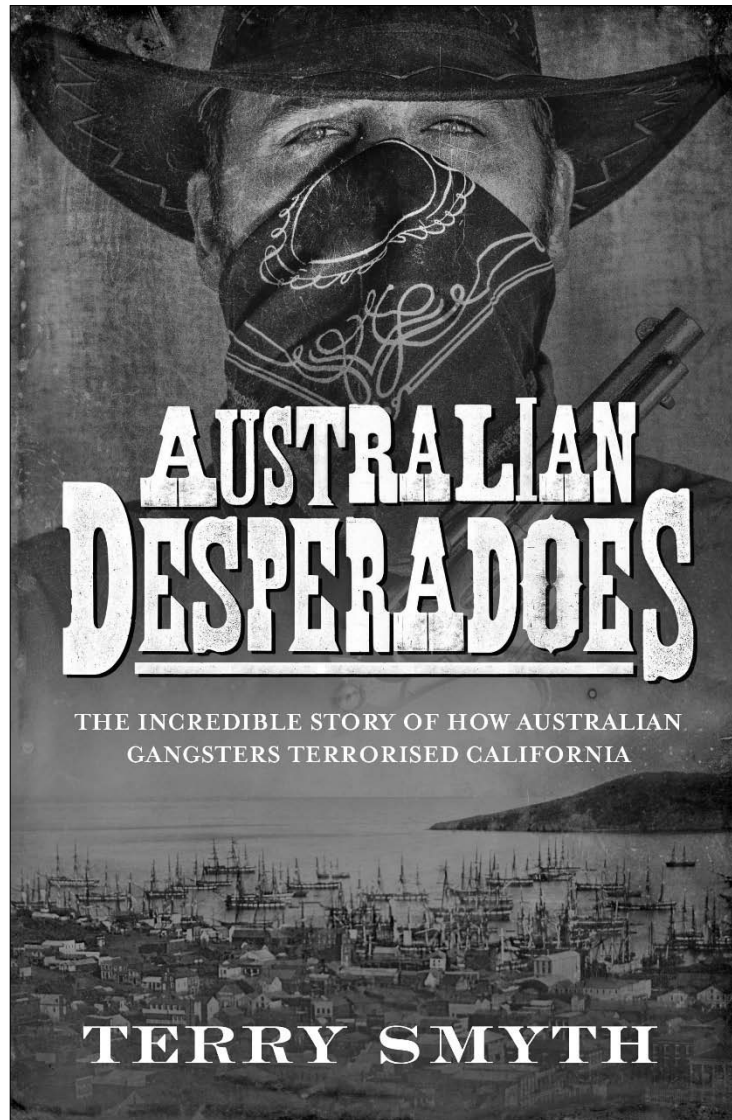
'Ah Toy, renowned for her beauty, is the most famous Chinese prostitute in San Francisco. She is also the richest, thanks to her string of brothels and her famous peep shows, which offer punters a quick glimpse of her naked body for an ounce of gold ... Ah Toy, the pay-per-view odalisque of so many men's fancy, will go back to China as a wealthy woman, but will eventually return to California to live

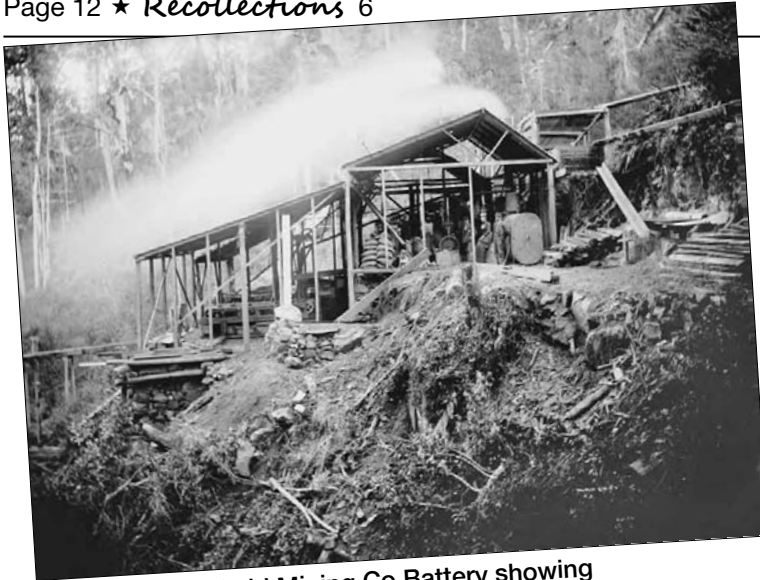
quietly and in comfort until her death.'

So what is this book really about?

When gold was discovered in California in 1848, many Australians were attracted to the area. Among them were numerous ex-convicts, felons and other undesirables, many of whom gravitated to a San-Francisco waterfront area that came to be known as 'Sydney Town.' It's little wonder it became a no-go area for police and became San Francisco's centre of robberies, murder and extortion, if this 1933 description of it is just half accurate: '(Sydney Town was) the haunt of the low and vile of every kind. The petty thief, the house burglar, the tramp, the whoremonger, lewd women, cutthroats, murderers, all are found here. Dance halls and concert saloons where bleary-eyed men and faded women drink vile liquor, smoke offensive tobacco, engage in vulgar

Continued on page 16





Mt Dromedary Gold Mining Co Battery showing concentrate in bags c. 1900. Concentrate, bagged for processing elsewhere, is clearly visible. obj-140276718

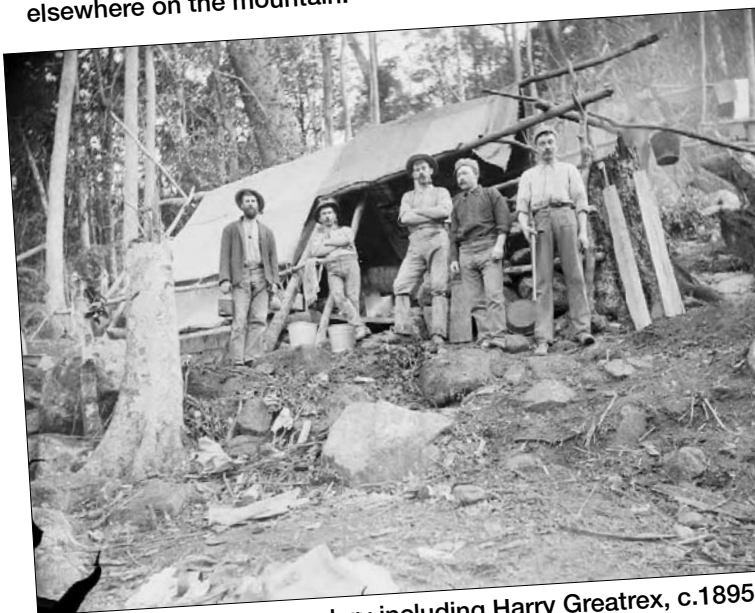


Horse teams owned by W. Wintle and Charles Precious. Among those in the picture are Norman Bate and Richard. Required to help move heavy loads up the steep mountain. Photographic Collection.



Mine Head, Flying Fox and Bucket at level 3, Mt Dromedary Gold Mining Company mine, 1895. Aerial tramways connected the mines to several stamper batteries that were situated elsewhere on the mountain.

Focus on MINING MT D



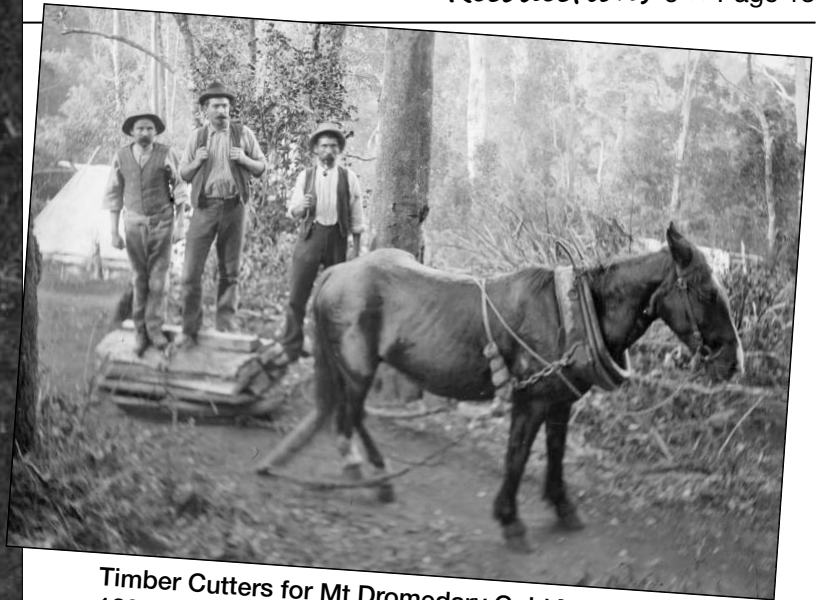
Five miners at Mt Dromedary including Harry Greatrex, c.1895.



The William Braithwaite Family in snow on Mt Dromedary c.1895. William Braithwaite and D B Pye ran the Enterprise mine on the western side of Dromedary. Braithwaite carried the corrugated iron for the roofing of his slab home up a track from Dignam's Creek one sheet at a time. After leaving Dromedary in 1905, he worked as a bricklayer, building most of the district's brick silos.



Men hauling boiler to Mt Dromedary Mine, 1900. Richard Mossop Bate. Block and tackle were often used to haul heavy loads on mountain tracks. Image from William Robert Easdown

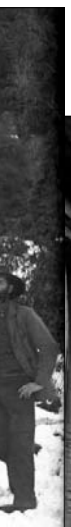


Timber Cutters for Mt Dromedary Gold Mining Company 1898. The timber was used for shoring up tunnels.



Supplies and mail were regularly transported by packhorse from the Tilbas over rough tracks, prompting one writer to observe 'if something is not done to improve the track very soon they will be found buried - not in the snow, but in the mud, with a huge boulder for a headstone.' This picture is of Charlie Mercer and Oliver Lansdowne on their return from one delivery trip.

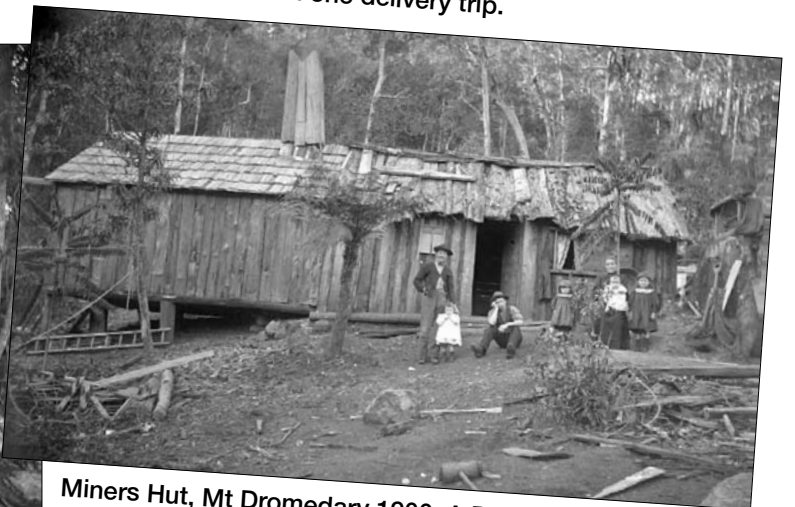
DROMEDARY



1895. The mine was closed in 1895. The mine was closed in 1895. The mine was closed in 1895.



Bill (William) Cole and others outside a miner's hut, 1898.



Miners Hut, Mt Dromedary 1900. A Department of Education school was opened on Mt Dromedary in 1903 with an enrolment of between 30 and 40 students. It closed within a year and children living on the mountain were forced to walk down to the Tilbas to attend school.

Mining the Mountain

GULAGA (Mt Dromedary) south-west of Narooma was once almost three kilometres high with a base that spread over a radius of at least 20km (see *Recollections*, Issue 1). What remains today is the inner core of that massive original volcano, rising a mere 797 metres above sea level, and remnant legacies of its geological activity in the form of Najanuka (Little Dromedary) and Baranguba (Montague Island).

Gold was abundant – evidenced by significant deposits in surrounding creek beds, and scattered as far afield as the beach to the east of Wallaga Lake and the Montreal Goldfield area.

The real prize, though, was to be the compacted veins of gold found near the summit of the mountain.

Alluvial deposits of gold in creeks surrounding the mountain were first reported by the Rev. William B Clarke (who worked as a government geological surveyor and who was later recognised by the NSW Government as the scientific discoverer of gold in Australia) in 1852. Within a decade, prospectors were earning ‘fair wages’ from claims in the area.

By 1879 these had mostly been worked out.

The first reef gold was discovered near the summit of Mt Dromedary in 1877 by Alfred, Charles, Frederick and George Cowdroy, the sons of Wagonga shopkeepers and gold buyers Alfred and Catherine Cowdroy. This prompted a new rush to the area – but one that rapidly subsided because of the difficult terrain, heavily timbered slopes, the narrowness of the gold veins, the significant capital and effort required to extract the mineral, and ‘easier pickings’ to be had at Corunna, Kianga Creek, Montreal and other nearby prospects.

Those who chose to remain to mine Mt Dromedary’s reef gold were faced with installing significant infrastructure – roads and tracks to access the mines; mine heads and mine shafts (the No 6 Shaft of the Dromedary mine was eventually extended to a length of 1,600 feet [1,460 metres]); flumes (chutes transporting slurry – one on Mt Dromedary was an

incredible 1,600 feet in length) or aerial ‘tramways’ to move the ore; mechanical crushers and sluices; boilers or generators or facilities such as waterwheels to provide power; housing and other amenities. Some of these was provided early on. The Cowdroys built three water races to enable extraction of the gold within a year of their mineral discoveries;

others needed to be installed as the mining moved deeper and the nature of the ore changed.

Initially the gold recovered from reefs on Mt Dromedary was ‘free gold,’ which simply required ore to be crushed on site and then washed. But increasingly the gold was embedded in undecomposed pyrites and needed chemical treatment for its extraction. For many years Dromedary

ore was bagged and transported from the mountain to processing facilities in Footscray in Melbourne or in Dapto, south of Wollongong. Eventually, in 1909, a cyanide processing operation was added to the infrastructure on the mountain enabling all processing to be undertaken locally.

Three main areas of reef mineralisation were identified in the 1870s – Mt Dromedary, North Dromedary and West Dromedary. By June 1879 around 90 men were mining on Dromedary, ‘some doing very well – others making wages’.

In 1878 local settlers Joe Latimer and Horrex Read pegged a lease near Cowdroy’s Mt Dromedary reef claim. It became the Mount Dromedary Gold Mining Company, growing to become the biggest mine in the area, which operated until 1910 and employed around 50 men. It drove several tunnels

into the mountain and stoped – moved up or down in steps following an inclining vein of ore, most of which averaged 15cm in diameter – over a vertical interval of 231m. It is estimated that total production from their area of mineralisation was 381kg gold. Production records indicate gold grades in the (very acceptable!) order of 30g/tonne.



Hydraulic Sluicing up Tilba Creek in 1899. Sluicing yielded some gold from areas previously worked by prospectors but caused massive environmental damage.

Left: Mining at Mt Dromedary, 1898.



Manager's Residence behind the Crushing Plant, Mt Dromedary 1900–1910.

The No. 5 tunnel of this mine was reopened in the late 1950s by Pacific Enterprises Limited, but no significant additional mineralisation was found.

The North Dromedary mineralisation comprised veins with widths of 70–80cm which broke up into narrow seams of pyrites. Its gold value was described as variable.

The West Dromedary workings were principally developed by Julius Saunders on two parallel veins, one of variable width up to 20cm and the other of just 2.5–5cm

in width. Production from these workings is estimated to be have been 136kg over the periods 1878 to 1882 and 1890 to 1915. Julius Saunders was the last miner on Dromedary. He died in 1928. Laurelle Pacey in her excellent *Tilba Times Revisited* notes 'his store of gold was never found' – so perhaps there is still gold to be discovered on the mountain!

These gold mines on Mt Dromedary led to the establishment of townships at Tilba Tilba and Central Tilba ... and, later, to the equally rapid demise of the both towns (but particularly of Tilba Tilba) when mining ceased in the early years of the twentieth century.



'The Great Mt Dromedary Strike', 1898. In January 1898, 30 of 34 men working for the Mt Dromedary Gold Mining Company went on strike objecting to a newly-appointed shift supervisor. While on strike the tents of four miners were burnt. The strike attracted the attention of Sydney newspapers when some Sydney miners supported the action.

Fortunately for historians today, the development and working of these mines coincided with the emergence of photography in Australia. The William Corkhill Tilba Tilba Collection and the William Robert Easdown Photographic Collection (W. R. Easdown purchased Cowdroy's Mt Dromedary Mine in 1907), both now held by the National Library of Australia, include many photographs of Mt Dromedary mines and miners, such as those included here.

The Mt Dromedary gold mines had a relatively short life providing reasonable returns for some, disappointment for others. The township of Central Tilba, significant because of its homogenous collection of wooden buildings all erected within a few years of one another, remains as the most obvious surviving feature from that era when gold attracted men to the mountain. **R**

Sources: National Library of Australia (trove.nla.gov.au), Geological Sites of NSW (geomaps.com.au), NSW DPI Primefact 567, *Mt Dromedary: Pretty High Mountain*, Forestry Commission of NSW and *Tilba Times Revisited* by Laurelle Pacey, which contains the most comprehensive account of mining on Mt Dromedary.



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‘Australian Desperadoes’

Continued from page 11

conduct, sing obscene songs and say and do everything to heap upon themselves more degradation, are numerous. Low gambling houses, thronged with riot-loving rowdies, in all stages of intoxication, are there. Licentiousness, debauchery, misery, poverty, wealth, profanity, blasphemy and death, are there. And Hell, yawning to receive the putrid masses, is also there.’

The Sydney Coves, the most notorious of the criminal gangs, would stop at nothing, even if it meant burning down the entire town – which it did several times: ‘Two recent fires – deliberately lit – ravaged the city centre, wiping out shanty rows, houses, hotels and offices alike. The aim of the arsonists was chaos, and amid the chaos they robbed and looted with apparent impunity. Of 70 suspects arrested after the latest fire, 48 were from Sydney.’

So this is their story.

But it’s also the story of how respectable citizens of the town banded together to fight the Sydney Coves and their activities – resorting to almost-daily gunfights, kangaroo courts, and lynchings – and how they ultimately drove these Australian miscreants out of town.

This is the author Terry Smyth’s description of those ‘respectable citizens’ first “success”. It’s typical of the detail included in his book:

‘At about 9 pm, a group of watermen on Central Wharf notice a large man carrying a bag containing something heavy jump into a boat and pull out from the wharf. A moment later, a shipping agent named Virgin comes puffing and panting down to the wharf. Virgin tells the watermen he is chasing a man who brazenly strolled into his office and walked out with a small safe containing a large amount of money. The watermen take to their boats and soon overhaul the thief who, on realising he can’t escape, throws the safe overboard, and, after a desperate struggle, surrenders. It’s John Jenkins [a runaway lifer from Van Diemen’s Land who runs a lodging house, bar and brothel] of the Sydney Coves.

The watermen take Jenkins to Sam Brannan’s office, where they find a select group of some 20 vigilantes busily engaged in forming an executive committee, comprised, fortuitously, of themselves. As the heart of the organisation, its role would be to consider important issues, delegate work to members of the 700-strong general committee, prepare reports and interrogate prisoners. In the running of what might well be the most corporatized vigilante group in history, Sam Brannan is to be president of both the executive and general committees.

Jenkins is handed over to the vigilantes, and the fire bell tolls to summon all committee members. About 80 turn up, and a kangaroo court is quickly convened, with a jury and prosecutor selected from among its members. No defence counsel is appointed.

The watermen testify as witnesses for the prosecution, and, after a short deliberation, the prisoner is found guilty.

And even though the safe, which has been fished out of the bay, contains only a small amount of money – making a lie of Virgin’s claim – the crime is deemed grand larceny, for which the penalty is death. Jenkins, who curses and derides his captors throughout the farcical trial, is sentenced to hang.

While some members baulk at sanctioning an illegal execution, and suggest that Jenkins be handed over to the police, one prominent member, William Howard, reminds them, ‘Gentlemen, as I understand it, we came here to hang somebody.’

Word of Jenkins’ capture has spread quickly, and, despite the late hour, a sizeable crowd has gathered outside. To test the level of public support for San Francisco’s first lynching, Sam Brannan is appointed to address the crowd. At 1 am, he steps outside and recounts the case against Jenkins and asks whether or not he should be executed at once. When the response is an ardent chorus in favour of the noose, any hesitant members of the Vigilance Committee can now rest assured they have the people’s blessing to enforce lynch law.

[After a couple of unsuccessful attempts are made to free Jenkins] hapless John Jenkins is hoisted to his death.’

It’s remarkable how much detail about the Sydney Coves and the Vigilance Committee has survived and Smyth was able to access – but newspapers of the time, in both America and Australia, were fascinated by and did report extensively on their activities.

Smyth suggests ‘there are no heroes in this story’. He’s probably right. But, even with it lacking any heroes, ‘Australian Desperados’ remains an enthralling read.

Satisfyingly for Australian readers, the book ends with details of the lead-up to the Eureka Stockade – an event in which Americans played a not-insignificant role (for example, the first shot of the Eureka Rebellion was fired by Robert Burnette of the California Rangers Revolver Brigade) and an event that was to display many hallmarks from the Californian gold-rushes.

Unsurprisingly, many of the ‘degenerate, dechristianised, disgrorified miscreants who have so shamed the noble nations of their birth [one of which was Australia] by their fiendish deeds of blood in the city of San Francisco’ (to quote the Sydney *Empire* newspaper) ‘were wise enough not to disregard the polite notice of the Vigilance Committee to leave the coast,’ and travelled back to Australia only to resurface on the rich Victorian goldfields. There they were joined by thousands of Americans from San Francisco and the Californian goldfields, even though they ‘had been told, in no uncertain terms, that they are not welcome Down Under’.

And neither of these groups brought with them experiences or entrenched attitudes that were supportive of the conventional rule of law! **R**



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‘Australian Desperadoes’ is available in paperback, is published by Penguin Random House Australia, and is priced from around \$24.

Readers' Responses

We welcome feedback about items in *Recollections* and particularly welcome additional insights into the stories that have been included. **Don Burns** (whose photograph, with bicycle, was included in Issue 4) recently wrote:

I really enjoyed reading Issue 4 of *Recollections*. The cover photograph taken on Brown Mountain sometime between 1892 and 1917 brings to mind peaceful scenes I cycle through when I traverse unsealed roads around Eurobodalla on my mountain bike.

Time appears to have stood still for over a hundred years when I travel quietly along our picturesque back roads. These roads, the scenery and the tranquillity remain much the same as our WW1 soldiers would have remembered them.

My mind turns to thinking about why and when some of these roads were first upgraded from rough tracks, how the hard men from earlier generations used muscle, picks and shovels, horses and carts to clear the bush, overcome steep gradients, skirt the waterways and improve access between the farms, forests, dairies, churches, mines, towns and ports that sustained our pioneering forebears.

Araluen Road surely ranks, and deserves to be respected, as one of the nation's oldest. It was surely one of the most heavily trodden tracks in the colony of New South Wales around the 1860s, when thousands of dreamers, desperadoes and dancing girls bustled to seek their fortunes in the fabulous Araluen valley.



Coaching in the Araluen Valley, 1893. National Library of Australia, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.obj-134301338>

A wonderful painting by Norman Hardy "*Coaching in the Araluen Valley*" confirms the road to Araluen looked much the same in 1893 as it does today – and maybe those potholes are heritage listed!

Many of the hopeful and hapless who walked or rode up the pretty track beside Deua river had voyaged to our colony from distant corners of the globe through terrifying seas in leaky boats. Crowded cemeteries near Araluen confirm, for many, travelling up Araluen road was a one-way journey.

It is now difficult to visualise Araluen with a population of around 35,000, roughly as many residents as today's Shire of Eurobodalla.

Of course our back roads have not always been as tranquil as they appear. Peter Smith, who lives on Araluen road, in his excellent book about the Clarke Gang, chronicles many robberies, murders and police pursuits that caused great anxiety for earlier residents of our district.

Reedy Creek Road, between Eurobodalla Road and Morts Folly, also has an interesting past. Some of the sturdy stonework that supports this winding road provides an example of long lost skills. I am told this portion of road was once part of the main carriageway down the south coast. Among trees beside the road, possibly within the road easement, stands a solitary tombstone marking the graves of George Bottin, who died in 1890, and his son Willie, who died 18 years later. Perhaps others know whether there are more, unmarked, graves nearby?

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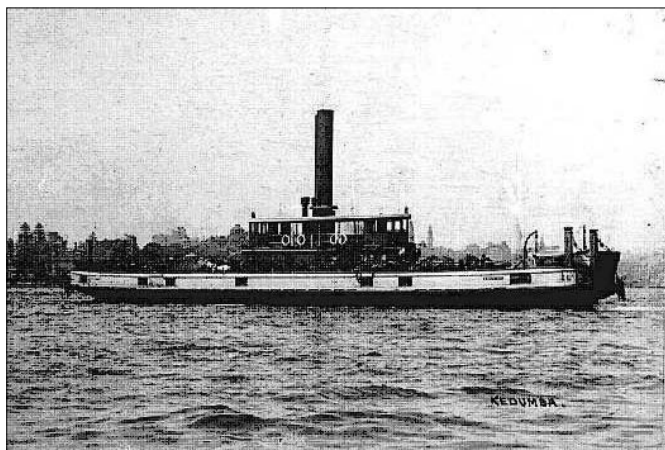
Banjo Patterson also wondered about the history of our roads. He wrote, in the last verse of 'Black Harry's Team'—

On easy grade and rubber tyre
 The tourist car goes through;
 They halt a moment to admire
 The far-flung mountain view.
 The tourist folk would be amazed
 If they could get to know
 They take the track Black Harry blazed
 A hundred years ago.



And Paul Goard from North Narooma was also prompted to write to us after reading a couple of the articles in *Recollections* 4. His complete contributions have been posted on our website; this is an edited summary of his email:

'Local history groups often suggest that older folk should record their history, which I have done to some extent in my family history book, *A Colonial Brickmaker's Family - George And Ann Morgan*, self-published in 1981. This essay records several experiences of mine and my wife, Marion's family of early events in ours and their lives, several are maritime and wartime incidents along the NSW coast.



The SS Kedumba. Photo from <http://www.ferriesofsydney.com/kedumba.html>.

First the "Kedumba" – A Name with a History: The SS *Kedumba* was the name given to one of the vehicular ferries which plied between Dawes and Milsons Points before the Sydney Harbour Bridge was opened. My wife's grandfather, William Spurway was engineer on this ferry. The name was that of Kedumba Valley and River to the south of Katoomba. It was also used by her father to name the street in North Turramurra, in which they had bought

a block of land just after WWII. A decade or so later, at Eastwood, NSW, we used it for several business names and adopted it as our house name.

The history of the ferry has also a local connection. The SS *Kedumba* was a wooden steam ship, built by David Drake Ltd., Balmain, NSW, launched in 1913, a gross weight of 294 tons, 40 x 11 x 3.2 m (or 131.50 x 36.30 x 10.40 feet), with a speed of 11 knots. She was laid up for some time after the cessation of the service, but on being purchased by Mr Sambell, the proprietor of the Westernport and Phillip Island Shipping Service, she was extensively overhauled in dock, but on its journey south foundered off Montague Island.

The *Sydney Morning Herald* of 22 December 1932 includes a detailed description of the sinking of the SS *Kedumba*.

William Spurway continued as engineer on the Sydney Harbour Ferries, being on one on the night of 31 May 1942, when the Japanese midget submarines attacked. Passed down by the family, the helmsman, a new recruit, saw a torpedo pass an uncomfortable distance in front of the bow. He signalled to heave to and the crew came up to see what was happening. It may have been from this ferry that passengers reported seeing a submarine conning tower. The story goes that the young helmsman decided that this occupation was not to his liking.

The SS *Wollongbar*: A coastal steamer on which I travelled as a six-year old youngster was the SS *Wollongbar*, an Australian Passenger Steam Vessel of 2,240 tons built in 1922 by Lithgow's, Port Glasgow, for the North Coast Steam Navigation Company, Sydney NSW. On the 29 April 1943 she was torpedoed and sunk by the Japanese submarine I-180 off Crescent Head, NSW as she made a voyage from Byron Bay to Newcastle, NSW. Out of a crew of 37 only five survived. A cut section model of the ship is on display with story, in the Mid North Coast Maritime Museum at Port Macquarie.

A few years earlier in 1936, after my father had died earlier in the year, my mother booked herself and four children on the SS *Wollongbar* to travel from Sydney and Byron Bay, near where my grandfather and an uncle then lived at Tyagarah, for most of the summer holidays. On the way up it called into Newcastle for coal, a noisy operation near dawn, and I remember watching the porpoises, or dolphins, swimming along beside the bow.

A few years later in the spring holidays of 1939, we made the journey by train, the North Coast Mail, to and from Grafton by Second-class Sleepers and to Mullumbimby, in a 'box car' carriage, no corridor. While there we received the news that we were 'at war', and I wondered what that would mean in the years to come. In 1942 we again made the trip

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by train, first-class sit up, six-seat compartment with corridor. This time we heard that plans had been made, should the Japanese invade, to move the dairy herds west out of danger.

Hospital Ship Centaur: Just a few weeks after the *Wollongbar* sinking, Marion's father, Harcourt Spurway, was due to leave for duties up north, on the *Centaur*. However, he had been in hospital for a nephrectomy, and still not medically fit for service, so did not suffer the fate of most of medical staff on the *Centaur* when torpedoed on 14 May 1943. He sailed later for Borneo.

Foremost 17 and the SS Cumberland: Next we jump to a day early in January 1952. I had worked during 1951 at Standard Telephones & Cables, had a second-hand Austin A40, my brother had just completed his medical course, so with my brother and his friend, another new medico, did a trip from Sydney, to Canberra, then saw some of the early workings of the Snowy scheme, on to Melbourne then up the east coast, reaching at Eden, NSW about the 4th or 5th of January.

Moored at Eden wharf was a salvage vessel, the *Foremost 17* being provisioned to return to its task of salvaging copper, lead and zinc ingots from the *SS Cumberland* which had foundered off Green Cape, NSW, having hit a German mine on 15 July 1917, laid off the Gippsland coast, was beached on or near Gabo Island, patched and refloat, only to founder in 100 metres of water 20 miles north-east. With improved diving and salvage techniques, in late 1951 the *Foremost 17* commenced operations and salvaged most of the ingots. In 1953 it undertook the salvage of the last gold ingots from the *SS Niagara* sunk by a German mine off New Zealand on 19 June 1940.

And after reading the 'Scorched Earth' and 'Battle Orders' items, he wrote:


'Although at school in Sydney at the time, 1942-43, we were aware of the possibility of a Japanese invasion and in August 1942 we visited an uncle on a dairy farm at Tyagarah on the far North Coast of NSW. They had been briefed and prepared to move the stock on to the ranges to the west.

There was talk of the "Brisbane Line" at that time, but when General MacArthur took over command in the South



The *Foremost 17* at Eden Wharf, January 1952. Photo by Paul Goard.

Pacific, he took the war and the defence of Australia north to Papua-New Guinea and the surrounding seas, squashing the need for such a plan.

At home at Chatswood, my brothers and I dug a trench, fitted a timber frame to support timber floorboard at bottom and a steel frame holding several curved corrugated iron sheets for the roof, like a miniature Nissen hut. It was covered with earth, with sandbag support at the entry. A simple lift pump was made to remove water after rain. Being the youngest, I may not have done a lot of construction work, but I did a lot of pumping to empty the water from the trench. In summer we grew pumpkins over the top. The trench was dug into the heavy clay of the Triassic Wianamatta Shale. 



The writer's brother, Kenneth, standing in the shelter under construction. Photo by Paul Goard, B.Sc., taken in 1942 using his 'Baby Brownie'.

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Every two months we launch the latest issue of *Recollections* at a morning tea in one of the local libraries. Several local historians usually join us to share their favourite South Coast history stories. This article, a compilation from several local newspaper reports in 1907, was inspired by an entertaining presentation at last December's *Recollections* launch by Myf Thompson, the Curator of the Old Courthouse Museum, Batemans Bay. We thought the story was deserving of a much wider audience and thank Myf for drawing it to our attention:

Batemans Bay Circus

There is a distinct hint of intertown rivalry in the *Cobargo Chronicle's* opening paragraph of a news report from Batemans Bay in January 1907: 'The escape of a lion and a lioness from Eroni's Circus on Friday night last provided the townspeople with about as great a sensation as they have had for many a long day.'

The arrival of the circus had been much anticipated and was widely reported: 'Punting the circus over Narooma ferry occupied over seven hours.' (Bega's *Southern Star*, 23rd Jan 1907). The circus began to arrive in straggling order at about a quarter past eleven on Friday, and for some two or three hours vehicles and beasts continued to arrive. As the majority of young folk had never seen an elephant out of a picture book, the arrival of a large number of horses and vehicles and no elephant created a feeling of disappointment.

But their wishes were gratified in due course. 'The large paddock just below Guy's store, belonging to Mr. Latta, had been engaged, and in a very short time a small township of tents was erected,' the *Bega Budget*, 26th Jan 1907 reported.

Reading subsequent newspapers' reports, we learn that 'The day was cold and gloomy, with frequent light showers. This and the prices charged accounted for a very late start and a very poor house, not more than 50 people paying for admission.'

The show was as good as one could wish, the horses being particularly so. The first part was not over until 10.30. At about ten to eleven the lion's cage was pushed in by the elephant, the partition withdrawn, and the people were electrified by seeing the tamer enter the cage.

The lions, especially the lionesses, seemed in a very bad mood, and greeted him with snarls and looks of hate. He forced them through a few simple tricks, but at last they turned sulky and piled themselves in front of the door by which he entered. He endeavoured to drive them to the other end of the cage, but only succeeded in getting one to obey him. The tamer was thus placed in a very dangerous position, as he had his back to either one or three.

The ringmaster, in obedience to a signal, endeavoured to pass a small ladder into him through another door opening in the middle of the cage. This door swung inward with the opening to the three lions. Just as the door was pushed open the single lion made a rush, and in saving himself the tamer swung the door open and the lions were out in an instant. There is only record of two leaving the cage, but many are

prepared to swear that three did. However, if so, the other must have returned, frightened by the noise.

There was no mistake, however, about the two females being at liberty. Immediately the animals got clear of the cage the people lost control of themselves, and stampeded for the various exits.

One lion rushed straight across the ring and under the tent corner and back into the menagerie tent, right along a little girl who was rushing out at the time.

But the beast took no notice of her and passed on to the open and turned to the right between Mr. Guy's fence and the tents. The other turned in the ring and eyed the people, who were presently horrified to hear the scream of a horse in mortal fear. But at this moment the one in the ring was cleverly roped and fastened, the partition put in the cage, and the beast replaced.

The majority of the people had by this time made themselves scarce, most of the audience diving under the tent. Some took refuge in the surrounding houses, some in trees, and some on roofs. One, in rushing out, came face to face with the lioness. He says she made a grab at him and he sprang clear and scrambled into one of the wagons and endeavoured to pull the tailboard up after him. While doing this he saw her spring on to one of the horses, and immediately begin tearing at the throat. She must have left it soon because three horses were mauled in a very few minutes, the gashes being as if with a broad axe.

Senior Constable Kilfoyle at once organised a search party, and a rush was made to get firearms. Fortunately the rifles belonging to the defunct rifle club are still stored here, with a few rounds of cartridges, and in a very short time over a dozen men were after the beast.

Practically the whole town was in a state of panic, as it was uncertain how many of the beasts were out, and it was rumoured that three horses were killed. Many people stayed where they had taken refuge till daylight. Several ladies had fainted, and these, and the care of children, imposed a trying time on many present. The main thought of all the parents was naturally their children, and until they had assured themselves of their safety, they took risks they would not have otherwise taken.'

One newspaper reported that 'After the panic had subsided some went home in batches, mostly with men with rifles' (sic!!), another that 'visitors to the circus were afraid to return to their homes and the two hotels in the town were



consequently crowded!

'The search was continued through the night, and about midnight the animal was sighted at the I.S.N. Co.'s store, and Tim Maloney fired at her, without effect. She disappeared at once, and later on one of the circus employees fired at her again, having sighted her at the back of the circus. This must have driven her towards the racecourse, as she was traced there.

Finding no good could be done in the dark, Mr. Kilfoyle saw to the safety of the people as far as he was able, altho' a large number continued searching.

At daylight they were reinforced and a vigorous search carried on. Every available bit of cover was beaten, but beyond finding footprints nothing definite was found until about 9 o'clock, when Harry Cooley, who was one of the horseback party, galloped into town saying he had seen her at Little Flat, on Picket's selection. He had directed others there and gave his horse to Mr. Tim Maloney who at once galloped away, reaching there in time to be of vital assistance.

The others had come on to her as she lay holding down a cow she had pounced on. One of the circus hands fired at and wounded her. She left the cow (which was apparently unhurt) and bounded about 200 yards away from the party and lay down on the grass right in the open.

Messrs. Albert Veitch and Maloney then approached a few yards closer and both fired together. She was apparently hit, as she sprang fully 10 feet into the air, but was not killed. She did not attack tho' till they fired again, when she came at them with a rush.

They fired as she ran but did not stop her, and they dodged her round and round a big oak tree. Mr Eroni called on them to fire again.

She bit at Mr. Veitch's leg, tearing his trousers, and the next moment she caught him by the left arm, swinging him round as a cat would a mouse.

He lost his rifle and for a while it appeared as if he would lose his life. Tim Maloney struck at her with his rifle butt without effect, and at this moment Veitch called on Maloney to shoot, and it is surmised his voice frightened her.

At all events she released him and he regained his rifle. She came at them again but Maloney killed her instantly with a bullet thro' the brain. The shot entered just over the left eye and came out at the throat, and the fight was over.

The elder Eroni was visibly affected. He threw his arms round both men and endeavoured in every manner possible to convey to them his gratitude. He had offered £20 reward, and was prepared to pay, but the two men generously took half and Doctor's expenses for Veitch.

Thus ended the most exciting and dangerous affair ever experienced in this district. They removed the carcass to the town and skinned it. The feeling of relief pervading the town was very marked, and we think the major part of the residents were more pleased to see the last of the circus

leaving on Sunday morning than they were to see it arrive.

Mr. Veitch was taken to town at once and his wounds washed and then he was driven to Mogo, where Dr. Quilter attended to him. He has a very sore arm, but the Doctor considers it will be alright in a week or so.

The cow the lioness had captured died on Sunday, although she didn't appear badly hurt.

The Cobargo Chronicle

VOL. IX—No. 426. Registered as Second Class Post Office. J. Nephthali.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 25, 1907. Subscription: £1 per annum booked; 16s

Escape of two of Eroni Bros' Lions at Batemans Bay.
The escape of a lion and a Moness from Eroni's Circus on Friday night last provided the townspeople with about as great a sensation as they have had for many a long day.

Subsequently it was reported that 'Mr. Eroni complained to a Sydney daily about the loss of his lioness at Batemans Bay. There was not the slightest doubt that had the matter been left to the circus people and the tamer no trouble would have been experienced in capturing her. When the lioness was found the tamer was on the point of going to her with a chain and collar, but the crowd came

along and commenced shooting operations.'

And the observation was made that 'It was an expensive incident for Mr. Eroni. He offered £20 for the capture of the lion, dead or alive, and £1 for the cow. Three of the circus horses were mauled.'

But it was also wryly noted that 'the advertisement the circus received throughout Australia was worth more than the lioness and her reward!'

However, that was not to be the end of the excitement on the South Coast for this circus:

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'On Thursday evening much excitement was caused at Moruya by the escape of a hyena, which got free in a similar manner to the lions. The circus hands were quickly to the rescue, and aided by iron bars and club, the hyena was captured before it had left the ring. The lion tamer seized the animal by the back of the neck, and hoisted it back into its cage.'

And just a week or so later it was reported that 'Eroni's circus tent was torn to shreds by the storm at Wollongong last Thursday. Eroni has had some [bad] luck on his South Coast trip.' **R**

References: *Southern Star*, 23.1.1907 and 13.2.1907,
Cobargo Chronicle, 25.1.1907,
Bega Budget, 23.1.1907, 26.1.1907 and 6.2.1907

The selection of poems in the August issue of 'Recollections' resulted in our receiving some interesting local verse. Here's one. Arch is Arch Dowie, Kameruka Estate's Manager who retired in the mid-1950s. We don't know the author (possibly he was a Kameruka Estate worker) but we surmise that, whoever he was, he was not one of Arch's most ardent fans!

Arch's Lament

Wake up and look around you Arch,
The writing is on the slate,
You've got your walking ticket,
And you must leave the old Estate.

Pack up your goods and chattels,
And take it with a grin,
Your holiday is ended,
And your troubles now begin.

The Jersey herd has petered out,
Your milking cows are dry.
There are dead calves in the paddock,
And dead pigs in the sty.

The Jersey men won't buy your bulls,
The Rats won't eat your cheese.
Now these few facts alone
Should start you knocking at the knees.

They'll be no more trips to Sydney
To pull across your wool,
No more going overseas
To buy a Jersey bull.

You'll have to pluck the ducks yourself,
You'll have to chop the wood,
There'll be no more strawberries and cream -
But this will do you good.

You are going to miss those vegetables,
So fresh, so crisp, so green,
You'll miss your home-made butter
And you'll be O.K. on margarine!

You'll have to pay top price for meat
And buy your own Benzine.

You'll drive your own car, when you're out -
Do you see just what I mean?

No more you'll live in luxury,
No more you'll drag the chain,
You'll have to work like other men,
Or you'll soon be broke again.

Those good old days are closing in,
You'll soon be on the track,
No more riding home to glory
On someone else's back!

The place has been neglected,
Your methods have been loose,
Your ignorance and stupidity
Have cooked your blooming goose.

You boast how you have improved
The Jerseys out of sight.
But any man with any sense
Knows that is only skite.

You boast about your Lucerne crops,
And the hay that's in the shed -
But the fellow who believes this
Has sadly been misled.

You boast about improvements,
But still the fact remains,
You never did and never will
Have what is known as brains.

Yes, Arch, you've been a failure
You've muddled things all through.
Now here's to you, a Sailor's Farewell:
"Good-bye and Bugger You!"

and finally...

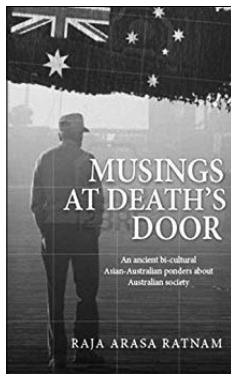
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More from Dalmeny Author Raja Arasa Ratnam

On advice from the spirit realm, Raja began to write about his observations and settlement experiences since his arrival in Australia in 1948, in the context of immigrant settlement. The spirit of his uncle suggested that he “contribute to building a bridge from where you came to where you are now.” Drawing also upon his work, as Director of Policy, in the then Department of Immigration & Ethnic Affairs, he published ‘*Destiny Will Out*’ (presented in the October issue of ‘*Recollections*’). This book brought out both community and official contributions to the successful settlement of new arrivals.

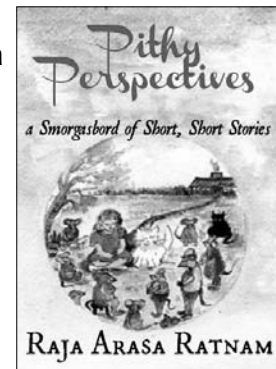
Encouraged by the fabulous reviews the book received, he published ‘*The Karma of Culture*’, and ‘*Hidden Footprints of Unity*’; both presented key issues relating to successful immigrant integration. Favourable academic endorsements and reviews then led him to publish ‘*The Dance of Destiny*’, a memoir – the most successful of his books. (All 3 books were presented in our December issue)

IN THIS ISSUE, WE PRESENT 2 MORE BOOKS BY RAJA OFFERING A BICULTURAL PERSPECTIVE.



‘*Musings at Death’s Door*’ is a rear vision mirror look at Australian society.

‘*Pithy Perspectives*’ is a smorgasbord of short, short stories.



All of Raja’s books are available as ebooks at amazon.com at \$US3 each. To read the first chapter of each book, look up ‘*First Chapter Plus*’ on the internet.

Review by Trevar Langlands, New South Wales President, Fellowship of Australian Writers.

“This is an interesting book ... to really engage the mind. Each story has a good opening and dramatic ending. The stories have a wide-ranging background: crazy, frightening, weird, some really lovely, some making fun of human ambitions, and cross-cultural issues. The last story is really intriguing – it is so different – and will have you feeling really wonderful ... It is a clever book ... one to sit back and really enjoy”

Endorsed by Prof. Greg Melleuish (History & Politics, Wollongong University) pre-publication:

“Raja Ratnam has lived a full life and made significant contributions to Australian life over six decades. His experience as an Asian in Australia from the time of White Australia to that of multiculturalism is unique. This book is a final distillation of the wisdom he has gathered over that time. He provides insight into a wide range of areas from society and culture to religion. And even better, his insights reflect his unique experience. There is wisdom here, and like all of his work, this book is rich, intelligent and provocative. A major contribution to Australian culture.”

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