

South Coast History Society Inc.

Recollections on-line

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Issue 21

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



Tuna Fishing, Eden 1960. Photograph by Ern McQuillan, nla.obj-137011608


celebrate! our 21st!

We're celebrating the 21st issue of 'Recollections'. Perhaps not entirely as we might have hoped, because this issue is, again, not generally available in print format – so many thousands of our usual supporters are regrettably missing out on our party.

Some pessimists and detractors predicted that 'Recollections' would not survive beyond two or three issues and, I must admit, launching 'Recollections' was a gamble, and we were quite prepared to quietly let 'Recollections' die if the necessary support for it was not forthcoming. But the support we received from the South Coast community (and elsewhere – indeed, from unexpected places all around the world) was, and continues to be, OVERWHELMING and OVERWHELMINGLY POSITIVE – so here we are, at 21!

Our challenge now is to produce the next 21 issues – and that, of course, will depend on that widespread community support (especially the vital financial support upon which we rely) continuing – because there are many, many interesting South Coast history-based stories still to be shared.

At present it looks as though the next printed issue of 'Recollections' will be the August-September 2020 edition so, until then, another 'Recollections on-line' is likely to be produced for July.

Please enjoy reading this edition...please share it with others...and, thank you for your greatly-valued support. 

**Fantastic
Reads**

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celebrate!

The Ghost Port of Broulee

by Greg Jackson, Pam Forbes and Brad Duncan

Until the 1950s much of the goods and produce moving to and from the NSW south coast was transported by ship. Except for Jervis Bay and Twofold Bay, shipping to the south coast was handicapped by a lack of safe harbours. Shipping had to make do with small man-made harbours like Wollongong, Kiama and Ulladulla, river ports such as Batemans Bay, Narooma and Moruya (all of which had dangerous sand bars at their entrances), and make-shift harbours in the lee of any headland that gave shelter from dangerous southerly storms. One such makeshift harbour was Broulee Harbour in the lee of Broulee Island.

Today Broulee is a sleepy tourist town on the NSW south coast between Batemans Bay and Moruya, approximately 260km (140NM) south of Sydney. But it was not always so unimportant.

Broulee was, for a period, a busy port with as many as seven ocean going vessels anchored in its harbour at the one time (*The Shipping Gazette and Sydney General Trade List*, 14 August 1844).

Broulee could now be described as a ghost port. Starting in the 1840s, its harbour traffic moved to nearby Moruya and was eventually entirely replaced by road transport. Broulee's history would be similar to that of many other ghost ports on the Australian coast.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF BROULEE

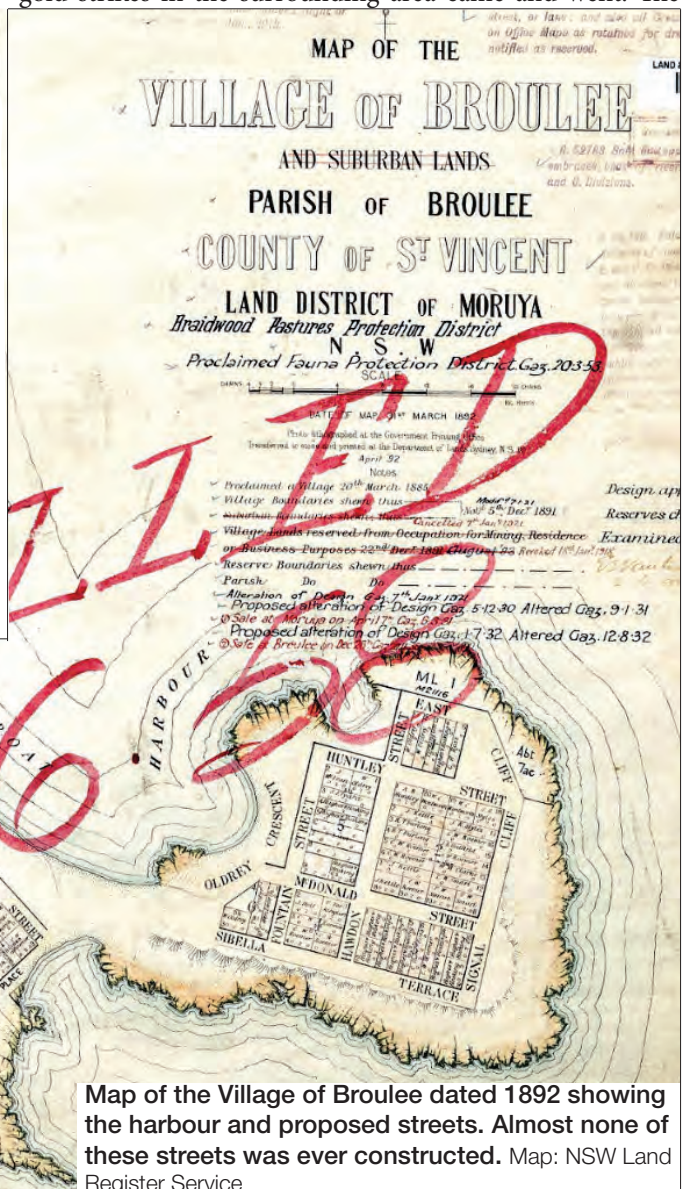
While the lee of Broulee Island offered protection from dangerous southerlies and south easterlies, it offered little protection from north easterlies. But as the 19th century progressed, the lee of this island became a port used for the transfer of agricultural produce to market and the delivery of people and manufactured goods to the surrounding area. Despite the lack of a fresh water supply, by the late 1830s the need for a town at Broulee had become apparent.

This township was surveyed and gazetted in 1837. By the time land sales commenced in 1840 a post office was opened, mail was being delivered each week and the first court in the district was established. In 1841 Broulee was

made the centre of a police district which covered the area from Jervis Bay to Eden.

Just seven km south of Broulee is the Moruya River. Its entrance was blocked by a dangerous bar. In 1841 a flood washed away this bar, making the river navigable. Settlement commenced up the river. Land at the new township of Moruya was offered for sale from 1848 and the Moruya town site was surveyed in 1850. This new town, with its sheltered port and fresh water supply, quickly became the major township in the area. In 1859 the Broulee court, including the building, was relocated to Moruya. The Erin-go-Bragh Inn, built on Broulee Island, was also shifted to Moruya where it was first used as a store and later became the storekeeper's home.

Although ship traffic at Broulee had been greatly diminished by 1847, the discovery of gold nearby in the 1850s – particularly at Araluen and Mogo – saw a modest resurgence of ship movements. This resurgence continued sporadically throughout the rest of the 19th century as gold strikes in the surrounding area came and went. The



Map of the Village of Broulee dated 1892 showing the harbour and proposed streets. Almost none of these streets was ever constructed. Map: NSW Land Register Service

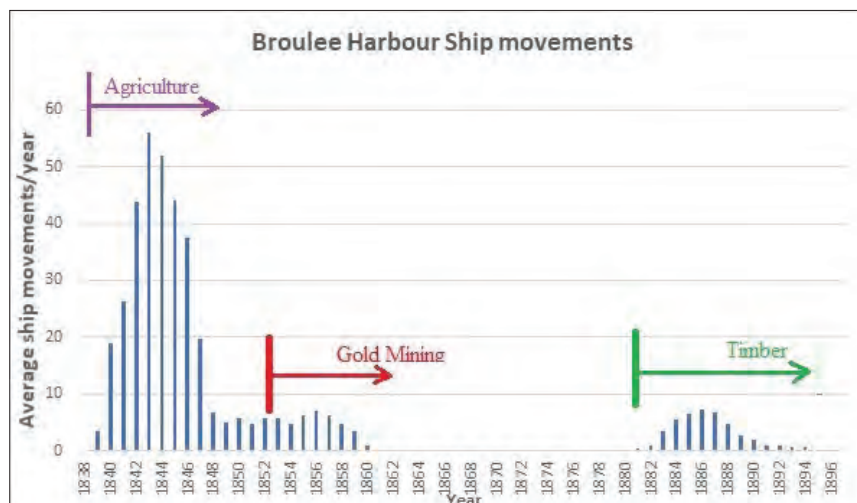
establishment of several timber mills on the Tomaga River in the late 19th century provided another resurgence in the port's activity.

Starting in the 1920s shell grit was collected from the northern side of the island for use in cement production in Sydney. After World War II, a motorised barge was used to transport the shell grit from Broulee Island to a wharf in the Tomaga River, from where it was shipped to Sydney. To enable the barge to be loaded at the island, a 15–18 metre long jetty was built together with a light rail track that carried a small dump truck at what had become known as Shellgrit Bay. This shell grit trade however produced an insignificant number of reported shipping movements.

BROULEE SHIPPING STATISTICS

A Microsoft Access database of 420 shipping movements to and from Broulee in the 19th century has been assembled from the shipping information in 19th century newspapers that are available on TROVE. Several things are noteworthy:

- The small size of the ships and the unspectacular nature of the cargoes have resulted in many shipping movements being omitted from the newspaper records.
- Although many shipping movements to and from Sydney were located, few movements to or from Melbourne or other Australian ports could be found.
- Few movements to or from New Zealand ports could be located.
- Opportunistic visits by whaling ships seeking supplies and ships seeking shelter from storms (such as the *John Penn* in 1879) are rarely recorded.
- No shipping movements between Broulee and other nearby south coast ports (such as Moruya and Batemans Bay) could be located. Many of these ships would be very small and often unregistered. For example, it is recorded that produce from Moruya was brought to Broulee by barges before the development of Moruya as a harbour in the 1840s. (Nelson J, Fisher R. 2015) but there are no details about these ships or their cargoes.



The yearly average number of shipping movements to and from Broulee from 1838 to 1896 and the start date of the major cargoes.

BROULEE SHIPPING MOVEMENTS

The average number of shipping movements/year for each year was recorded and plotted, see the graph above.

AGRICULTURAL CARGOES

Details of cargoes between 1840 and 1847 are infrequently recorded. Many of the ships stopped at other south coast ports both north and south of Broulee (e.g. Jervis Bay, Ulladulla, Batemans Bay, Moruya, Bermagui, Tathra, Eden), so some of the recorded cargo may have come from ports other than Broulee. Cargoes from Sydney to the south coast were mainly described as 'sundries', if described at all. Occasionally the ships were 'in ballast', i.e. carried no cargo. Although most ships offered passage there is little mention of passengers on board. The cargoes most frequently mentioned were potatoes (38 occasions from 1840 to 1847), wheat (24) and bark (wattle bark, used for tanning; 8 occasions). Other cargoes with between 1 and 5 mentions each, are bacon, barley, butter, hides, sheepskins, timber, staves, onions, tallow and wool.

THE SHIPS CARRYING AGRICULTURE FROM BROULEE

Some ships made regular trips to Broulee. This may be because they had some connection with the area or were owned by Broulee locals; the cutter *Brothers*, for example, was built in Broulee. These ships were all small cutters and schooners. The tonnage of nine of the ten ships known to have called into Broulee between 1840 and 1946: The *Adventure* [recorded to have visited Broulee 34 times], the *Star* [26 times], *Bards Legacy* [24], *Waterwitch* [20], *Harriet* [20], *Jane Ann* [17], *Elizabeth* [13], *Georgina* [13], *Brothers* [7] and *Hope* [7]) and they averaged 30.1 tons. A ship of this tonnage would have an average length of 13.5metres (44.3ft) and a beam of 3.7metres (12.1ft) (Forbes, Jackson, n.d.) which would give a theoretical maximum hull speed of 8.8 knots (Crunching Numbers, 2010). Therefore, the approximate minimum time to sail the 140NM (260km) from Sydney to Broulee, in favourable conditions with no stops, would be 24 hours. This time could vary considerably and there are records of this trip in small sailing ships taking up to a week (Hamon B. p71).

A CASE STUDY: THE ADVENTURE

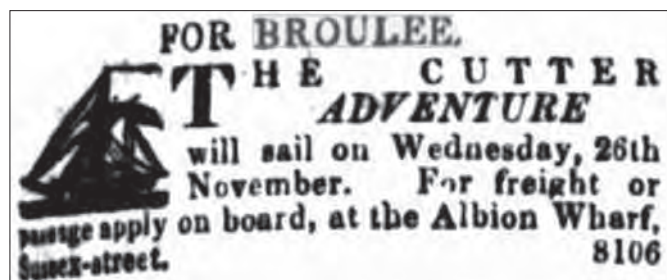
The most frequent visitor to Broulee between 1840 and 1846 was *Adventure*. She was a cutter (one mast, fore and aft rigged) and was Broulee's most frequent visitor between 1840 and 1846. Her built date is unknown. She was a small ship of 24 tons burden with a length of 10.5m (34.5 ft). This would give her a beam of 3.9m (12.9 ft) and a length to beam ratio of a low 2.7. (Forbes, Jackson, n.d.) *Adventure* was therefore a short beamy boat, good for carrying a load

– but it would not have been very fast or weatherly. A boat of this size would have a master and probably one other crew. The first of her 34 recorded visits to Broulee was reported in

The Australian Shipping News of 1 May 1843 and the last in October 1846.

An advertisement for *Adventure* from *The Sydney Morning Herald* on the 5 November 1845 clearly indicates *Adventure* carried both freight and passengers. The Albion Wharf mentioned in the advert was in Darling Harbour, Sydney. *Adventure* spent an average of nine days in Sydney between trips, although this varied considerably. This time would have been spent unloading cargo, looking for the next cargo and passengers for the next trip and relaxing. There is no record of the time spent in Broulee port or any other intermediate ports on the trip. *Adventure* left for a trip to Broulee at intervals varying between 25 and 56 days, with an average of 40 days. The weather could account for this large variation between trips to Broulee. A small ship like *Adventure* could be weather-bound in port for a considerable period. Unreported short trips may have been undertaken between visits to Broulee. The fate of *Adventure* is not known.

The cargoes of *Adventure* from Broulee to Sydney consisted mainly of potatoes and occasionally wheat and bark. The cargoes from Sydney to Broulee are described as 'sundries', sometimes just 'ballast' (no cargo). The master of *Adventure* was mentioned as Captain Law and after July 1845 Captain Gregory, but no mention was found of the names of crew or number of passengers travelling in either direction.



A typical advertisement for *Adventure*. The Sydney Morning Herald, 24th November 1845

TO BROULEE FOR GOLD

There was an increase in shipping movements to Broulee after gold was discovered at Araluen in 1851 and later near Mogo and in many of the creeks around Broulee. Gold rushes occurred here intermittently in the second half of the nineteenth century and advertisements for travel to Broulee often targeted potential gold miners.



The Sydney Morning Herald, 15 September 1857

STEAMERS TO BROULEE

Steamers became increasingly common after the 1840s and were able to keep to a timetable. Several Steamers ran sporadic passenger services to the south coast including Broulee. An example is the *Shamrock*, a 200-ton iron steamer which made 17 recorded trips to Broulee. This ship ran a passenger service to Melbourne and Launceston, often stopping at Broulee. This service started 18th November 1843 and ran irregularly till 1851. The main business of these steamers seemed to be the movement of passengers and, later, some timber.

TIMBER FROM BROULEE

The Tomaga River enters Broulee Harbour on its north side. In the late 19th century the entrance of this river became the port of Tomakin with high quality hardwood timber, like spotted gum, stringy bark and black butt being taken by barges from mills upriver down to waiting ocean-going ships at the river entrance. There was no red cedar from Broulee as it does not grow south of Ulladulla. Timber was a non-perishable relatively low value cargo and the trade was dominated by small sailing ships until well into the 20th century. Several ships are reported to have been wrecked at the entrance to the Tomaga River in the late 19th century. The first timber mill on the Tomaga River was built in 1876 by the Sydney timber firm of Jennings and Pickering with a second mill established by Curtis and Kelsie at Tomakin in 1883 (Tomakin Timeline 2017). Five mills are reported to have been operated on the Tomaga River with another mill at Mogo (Magee 2012).

SHIPBUILDING AT BROULEE

No shipbuilding appears to have taken place at Broulee prior to 1847. A list of vessels registered at the port of Sydney (in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Thursday 18 March 1847) includes no ships built at Broulee (*Brothers*, listed below as being built at Broulee in 1845 does not appear on this list). After 1847 shipbuilding was undertaken along the Tomaga River and at the port of Tomago, just inside the river mouth (Magee 2012) with shipwrights utilising the locally available quality hardwood.



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It is often assumed that timber ships were built in well-equipped shipyards, not in an isolated settlement with few facilities. Timber however is large, heavy and difficult to move so rather than have cut timber moved to a shipyard it was easier for shipwrights to build close to a timber mill. It was also important for the shipwrights to have their say in the selection of timber supplied, since so many pieces of special shape were required. The required ships chandlery would come from Sydney. Ships were built in the open, so no large building was required.

The following ships are reported to have been built at Broulee/Tomago:

Brothers, 9-ton schooner, built 1845 by Thomas Ainsworth (Amsworth). Not registered in Sydney, it may have been registered elsewhere or never registered (Australian National Shipwreck Database)

Glenduart, 30-ton schooner, Master Piper, built 1847, owner P. Erwin (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 Sept 1849)

Susannah, 24-ton schooner, Master Green, built 1848, owner Green and Fitzwilliam (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 Sept 1849)

William Alfred, 117-ton schooner, Master Tinley, built 1848, owner Tinley and Fitzherbert (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 Sept 1849)

Agnes Napier, 35-ton schooner, Master Stevens, built 1848, owner Easmon and Gee (Australian National Shipwreck Database).

James' brother, John Easson, is also said to have built boats at nearby Moruya.

Un-named schooner built, 1878 at Jennings' Tomago sawmill (*Tomakin Timeline*, 2017)

C. Walker, 88-ton schooner, built 1881 by Charles Walker (*Tomakin Timeline*, 2017)

Sophia Ann, screw steamer built at Tomakin, 1883 (*Tomakin Timeline*, 2017)

Mayflower, three-masted auxiliary schooner of 149 tons, built 1885 by William Peat for Messrs Jennings, Pickering and Co. (*Tomakin Timeline*, 2017)

Florence Peat, 60-ton schooner built Tomakin, 1885 (Young M., 2016)

Anandale, 108-ton ketch, built 1899 for Messrs Alan Taylor and Co. (*Tomakin Timeline*, 2017)

Three Cheers, 120-ton schooner, built 1901 at Tomakin (*Evening News*, 5 March 1902)

This is almost certainly not a complete list of the ships built at Broulee and Tomago. Many more ships, barges and boats, especially small ones, may have been built on Broulee Harbour beach and beside the sawmills on the Tomago River, but no records have survived.

SHIPWRECKS IN BROULEE HARBOUR

Shipwrecks are a dramatic event and are reported widely in the newspapers of the day even when there is no loss of life. The list below is therefore likely to be a reasonably complete list of the wrecking of ocean-going ships in Broulee Harbour and underlines its exposed nature. The ships wrecked at the entrance to the Tomago River were engaged in the timber trade.

Rover, 87-ton schooner, wrecked 1841 with the loss of 12 of the 23 men on board (*The Sydney Monitor and Commercial Advertiser*, 25 October 1841)

Rose 28-ton cutter, wrecked 11/3/1844 after collision with the *Harriett* in Broulee Harbour (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 March, 1844)

Industry, 14-ton cutter, wrecked 1/7/1845 (*The Australian*, 1 July 1845)

Amphitrite, 17-ton ketch, wrecked 1851 (*Empire* 2 June 1851)

Jeannie Deans, 31-ton schooner, wrecked 1851 (*The Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 April 1851)

John Penn 236-ton screw steamer wrecked 1879 (Nutley, Smith 1992, Lat Long location: -35.852°, 150.183° or in deg, min, sec: Lat -35° 51' 07.7" Long 150° 11' 00.0")

Bell, 95-ton schooner, wrecked Tomago River entrance on the 4 July 1883 (*The Sydney Daily Telegraph*, 17 July 1883)

Alice Jane, 80-ton schooner wrecked Tomago River entrance (*Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate*, 17 January 1888)

Maggie Scott, 30-ton ketch, founded near Tomago River entrance (*Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners Advocate*, 17 June 1889)

Julius Vogel, 56-ton schooner, wrecked Tomago River entrance on 15 April 1890 (*Evening News*, 6 May 1890)

William Alex, 58-ton ketch wrecked Tomago River entrance (*Daily Commercial News and Shipping List*, 26 March 1892)

White Cloud, 35-ton ketch, wrecked north point, Broulee island 1893 (*The Sydney Daily Telegraph*, 22 Feb 1893 and Australian National Shipwreck Database)

Forster, 69-ton ketch ashore at Tomago River entrance 1898 (*Tomakin Timeline*, 2017)

Except for the steamer *John Penn*, these ships were timber sailing ships.

ARCHAEOLOGY AT BROULEE

Field work in November 2018 investigated some of the archaeology around Broulee.

The Island Inn – *Erin go Bragh*: Captain William Oldrey, who was a major landholder in the area and avid promoter of the virtues of the fledgling township, had an inn built on the high ground on the north west of Broulee Island during 1840–41. The Inn which was built from American redwood



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and leased by Bernard McCauley in 1842. He named it the *Erin-Go-Bragh* (Ireland Forever). The hotel is depicted in an engraving made by the colonial artist John Skinner Prout who visited Broulee in 1841. It was a low shingled weatherboard bungalow painted white.

In the 1850s the inn was moved to Moruya, purchased by Abraham Emmott and erected in Campbell Street to be used as Emmott's first 'Beehive Store'. It was later used as a residence for the Emmott family before being demolished in 1978.

Using Prouts sketch as a guide, a search above the cliff was made looking for the remains of the Inn. Brick footings from the inn were located, made from unstamped handmade bricks that had possibly come to Broulee as ballast. No mortar has survived and many of the bricks have been removed, presumably for local buildings, with few unbroken bricks remaining.

BALLAST AND BRICKS AT BROULEE

A large ballast mound was located near where the Tomago River enters Broulee Harbour. At this location the Sydney timber firm of Jennings and Pickering started exporting hardwood from the Tomago River in 1876 (Young M., 2016). Small sailing boats would come into the river in ballast and return with sawn lumber. Larger boats were supplied by lighter while waiting beyond the river mouth. The ballast the ships discarded was used to form a training wall and hard in front of the timber mill, beside the modern boat ramp, in what is now the seaside town of Mossy Point.

A small number of bricks were located amongst the ballast. These bricks appear to be handmade. They are approximately 200mm long, 100mm wide and 60mm deep with no frog. They are stamped and are similar to the bricks used in the piers of the Erin go Bragh Inn which have no stamp (Moruya and District Historical Society, 2014).

A small additional heap of ballast was also located a little upstream in what is now the suburb of Mossy Point. This ballast and other remains at this location suggest the location of another of the timber mills on the Tomago River.



One of several stamped bricks found amongst the sandstone ballast. Photo P. Forbes

Reading the bricks' stamp proved difficult. It appeared to be:

CA-----N
PATENT

which possibly was
CAMPERDOWN
PATENT

Pottery and brick works were established at the inner Sydney suburb of Camperdown by Enoch Fowler in 1844 following the closure of the brick pits at Brickfield Hill in 1841. It was taken over by his son, Robert Fowler, in 1879 (Ringer R., 2008). Fowlers Camperdown brick works would be the probable source of the ballast bricks at the Tomago River entrance.

As a source of ballast bricks, Camperdown is ideally located close to the industrial wharves of Darling Harbour and Blackwattle Bay. These industrial wharves were the probable destination of much of the timber from the Tomago Mills. Bricks would be a higher value ballast than sandstone because they could be sold to be used for building construction in the growing industries on the Tomago River.

Fowler was involved in protracted disputes over patents surrounding the manufacture of his bricks, and the word PATENT appears prominently on signage and on his bricks.

The rise and fall of the Port of Broulee is a story replicated in many of the early 19th century ports on the Australian coast: these smaller natural ports gradually being replaced by man-made harbours that better catered for larger steam

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powered ships; these steam powered ships, in turn, giving way to rail and road transport in the 20th century. The 13 ships wrecked in Broulee Harbour show beyond doubt that it was totally unsuitable as a port. Only the necessity to ship out local resources, initially agricultural and later gold, timber and shell grit forced traders to persevere with the port of Broulee.

There is much more archaeological work to be done in and around Broulee Harbour. Only one of the 13 shipwrecks in the harbour has been located and many of the timber mills and their infrastructure on the Tomargo River remain undiscovered. The remains of gold workings in the tributary creeks of the Tomargo River also remain to be investigated.

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Dr Brad Duncan is a Senior NSW Maritime Heritage Archaeologist and Greg Jackson and Pam Forbes are Marine Archaeologists. This article was extracted from a presentation given to the Australian Institute of Maritime Archaeology conference in Brisbane in September 2019. A copy of the full presentation is available on request to the South Coast History Society. The same team has also undertaken a study of 'The Timber Mill on Wasp Head, South Durras' (this mill being typical of many of the NSW south coast timber mills from the last half of the 19th century) and this is also available on request from the South Coast History Society. 

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CEMETERY SECRETS: THE STORIES THE TOMBSTONES DON'T TELL**Honoured in Granite**

John Alexander Gilmore (1877–1965) is honoured by a modest, polished granite headstone in Moruya Cemetery. However, his more substantial, most enduring legacies are to be found in Sydney – on the approach piers and the four pylons of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and in the Cenotaph in Martin Place.



John Gilmore was the Quarry Manager at the Moruya Granite Quarry (also known as the ‘Government Quarry’ and the ‘Public Works Department Quarry’) from the time it was taken over by Dorman, Long and Company (who were building the Sydney Harbour Bridge) in late 1924 until it was closed in early 1932.

During that period 173,000 blocks of granite were shipped to Sydney for cladding the piers and pylons of the Sydney Harbour Bridge (these were precision cut and shaped, and numbered so they could be later fitted together in Sydney like pieces of giant jigsaws) and 23 enormous blocks of granite, including one weighing 20 tons, were supplied to form the Sydney Cenotaph.

Remarkably, the level of craftsmanship at the Moruya Granite Quarry was so high that not a single one of these blocks of Moruya granite was rejected and therefore had to be replaced.

John’s role, as Quarry Manager, extended far more widely than simply supervising the cutting and shipping of stone. He initially needed to supervise the erection of all facilities on the site on the northern bank of the Moruya River (these included two wharves, a power house, three enormous sheds, an office, a blacksmith’s shop, a crushing plant, conveyor belts, a railway line to the wharf and numerous cranes; he also organized for a masonry wall to be built to protect the site from the effects of possible river flooding, which evidently resulted in him being chastised by Dorman, Long and Company. However, only minimal damage resulted in the machinery shed in the ‘frightful’ flood of 1925), the building and then the running of a town to house many of the 250 quarry employees and their families (‘Granite Town’, just to the west of the Moruya Granite Quarry, included 67 simple houses [with detached bathroom facilities shared between two families], bachelors’ quarters, quarters for the Italians, a post office, a co-operative store, a hall and a school), and the recruitment and training of the employees (which included large contingents of skilled Scottish and Italian stonemasons [one account indicates *‘the Italians had their own bachelors’ quarters, employed their own cook and lived very well’*] because there was then a shortage of stonemasons in Australia).

John was born in Scotland. He attended *‘school until the age of 13 and was taught by Mr William Alexander. One day in class, John was not paying attention so Mr Alexander threw a strap at him. Young John retorted by picking up the strap and hitting Mr Alexander with it – then promptly left school, vowing never to return.’*

John went to work at Kemnay Quarry as an apprentice with his father and returned to night school at the age of 17 to learn mathematics, a subject he required to work out the dimensions of the stone he worked...At the age of 19, he was Manager of the Rubislaw Quarry, where it was said of him “What he doesn’t know about granite quarrying, very few people are ever likely to find out”.

In 1924 *‘Mary Gilmore [John’s wife] came across an advertisement for the position of ‘Quarry Manager’ whilst unpacking groceries – reading the paper wrapped around*



The Gilmore family leaving Scotland in 1924



John Gilmore

some meat. They were offering such good conditions – 5 years work, cheap housing and wages of £6.16.8 per week. On behalf of her husband, Mary wrote out an application for the position and sent it off to London...’ and soon they, and their nine children, were on their way to Moruya.

John and his family lived across the Moruya River from the quarry in ‘Tuffwood’, a house originally owned by Arthur Halley Preddey (his fascinating story is included in *Recollections 18* which is available on-line at bit.ly/Recollections18). Initially he rode a horse to work but later Dorman, Long and Company provided him with a motor launch so he could more-easily cross the river. He named it ‘The Bon Accord’, Aberdeen’s (Scotland) motto meaning ‘goodwill’.

The Gilmore home rapidly became renowned for its hospitality, and it seems that John and Mary ‘radiated a spontaneous captivating charm which had a rare quality because they were quite unaware of it themselves’.

After completing his contract with Dorman, Long and Company, John worked for the NSW Department of Main Roads and in New Zealand before he and Mary retired in Moruya.

John’s significant contribution to the construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge and Sydney Cenotaph is recognised locally with the rotunda in Moruya Quarry Park (on the northern bank of Moruya River, on the Moruya Granite Quarry site) having been named in his honour.

J.J.C Bradfield’s (the civil engineer who oversaw the construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge) observation that ‘the granite-faced abutment towers and pylons, simple and elegant, are the architectural features of the bridge – which would otherwise be an immense utilitarian steel structure’ is recognition from further afield of the enormously-important contribution that John Gilmore made from Moruya to that project. **R**

Postscript: The Australian Cricket Captain Bob Simpson’s parents were among those who lived at the Moruya Granite Quarry. Jock was a stonemason.

Sources: Information from Norm Moore of Moruya; ‘*Not Forgotten: Memorials in Granite*’ by Christine Greig; moruyastoryline.com.au; ‘*To Make a Bridge. Where Did the Granite of the Sydney Harbour Bridge Come From?*’ in *Traces* magazine, 19.4.2014; ‘*Gold-and-Granite*’ (on-line) Moruya District Historical Society; ‘*Granite Town – Moruya River. A Chronicle of Almost Forgotten People who Quarried for the Sydney Harbour Bridge*’ by Nigel Neilson; monumentaustralia.org.au

We thank Norm Moore for suggesting we include details of this memorial in ‘*Recollections*’. Your suggestions about other gravestones in local cemeteries that have interesting stories attached to them will be VERY welcome. Send your suggestions to southcoasthistory@yahoo.com or phone 0448 160 862

Christine Greig’s ‘*Not Forgotten: Memorials in Granite*’ provides an interesting overview of the Moruya granite quarries and their roles in providing granite for buildings and memorials throughout NSW and for the Sydney Harbour Bridge. It also includes numerous, little-displayed photographs of the Moruya Granite Quarry and of Granite Town. It is \$12 per copy, with proceeds benefitting the Moruya Quarry Park project and is available from christine.greigadams4@gmail.com

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History at the Movies

If you are now spending more time inside than you'd perhaps wish, maybe you could brush up on your history by watching some fabulous history-based movies. Here's an entertaining selection, in order of year of release:

1939	Gone with the Wind	1984	Amadeus	2012	Lincoln
1959	Ben Hur	1985	Out of Africa	2013	12 Years a Slave
1960	Spartacus; They're a Weird Mob	1986	The Mission	2014	Pompeii
1961	El Cid; The Guns of Navarone	1987	The Last Emperor	2015	Spotlight
1962	Lawrence of Arabia; The Longest Day	1988	Mississippi Burning	2016	Hidden Figures
1963	55 Days at Peking; The Great Escape	1989	Glory	2017	Darkest Hour
1964	Zulu	1990	Awakening	2018	Ladies in Black
1965	Dr Zhivago	1991	JFK	2019	1917
1966	A Man for All Seasons	1992	The Last of the Mohicans		
1967	Bonnie and Clyde	1993	Schindler's List		
1968	The Lion in Winter	1994	The Madness of King George		
1969	Oh! What a Lovely War	1995	Braveheart; Apollo 13		
1970	Tora, Tora, Tora	1996	Brassed Off		
1971	Mary Queen of Scots	1997	Titanic		
1972	Cabaret	1998	Elizabeth; Saving Private Ryan		
1973	Hitler: The Last 10 Days	1999	Rogue Trader		
1974	The Texas Chain Saw Massacre	2000	The Dish; Gladiator; The Patriot		
1975	Dog Day Afternoon	2001	Black Hawk Down		
1976	All the President's Men	2002	Rabbit-Proof Fence		
1977	A Bridge Too Far	2003	The Last Samurai		
1978	The Buddy Holly Story	2004	Downfall; Troy		
1979	My Brilliant Career	2005	Joyeux Noël		
1980	Breaker Morant	2006	Ten Canoes		
1981	Gallipoli; Chariots of Fire	2007	Chapter 27		
1982	Gandhi; Sophie's Choice	2008	Frost/Nixon		
1983	Phar Lap	2009	Mao's Last Dancer		
		2010	The King's Speech; Below Hill 60		
		2011	The Iron Lady		

[Footnote: I am indebted to the esteemed late Australian historian Jill Roe who, then a very young Lecturer at Macquarie University presenting its Modern British History course to final year undergraduates, would turn up with a (British) history-related movie and several casks of wine every Friday evening (not the time of the week that was the most appreciated by university students to hold a '(voluntary attendance) tutorial'!!). This was to reinforce her message that history could be accessed, and appreciated, from multiple sources other than the then more-conventional books and lectures. PL]

HISTORIES

PATHFINDERS: A history of Aboriginal trackers in NSW

by Michael Bennett

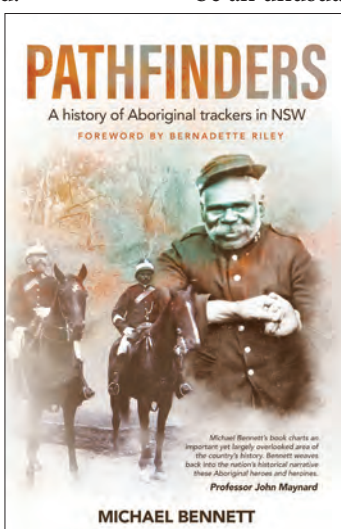
Australian history recognises few Aboriginal icons. Aboriginal trackers, as the author of this book rightly points out, deserve to be considered Australian icons and their stories deserve to be more widely documented.

Michael Bennett has made a commendable effort 'to bring the work of trackers to the forefront of NSW law enforcement history and ensure their contribution is properly acknowledged' but, unfortunately, has failed to produce an engaging book.

There are two problems. The first is that, as Bennett repeatedly observes, there is very limited information available about individual black trackers, so nine (of eleven) chapters in the book purportedly about individual trackers have been padded out with information about extended families and other contemporary black trackers who worked in the same area. To me, this detracted from the main themes of these chapters and made the book much more difficult to read.

The second problem is that the book seems to need strong professional editing (and perhaps significant re-writing) to

make it engaging. Much of the information is interesting but, to be honest, I repeatedly found the book to be soporific as I ploughed my way through what I had anticipated would be an unusually interesting Australian history.



It seems over 1,000 Aboriginals were employed as black trackers at 200 NSW police stations between 1862 and 1973, although the skills of Aboriginal trackers and guides had been frequently used from the earliest years of European settlement in Sydney. Most were men but some were women – their common strength being that they knew 'how humans and animals modified the land as they moved across it (a skill learned because 'hunting and tracking skills were taught from an early age'), creating pathways perceptible only to the trained eye as they went.' They were usually employed to track missing people, missing (read: stolen) animals, escaped prisoners and

suspected lawbreakers, but they also engaged in general police duties and performed other tasks which were as varied as undertaking, carting wood and gardening, acting

as interpreters, and cutting hair.


Interestingly some, having worked with the police and only been paid a pittance (their share of rewards, paid by police for the successful capture of criminals, were often more of attraction to them than their lowly pay), subsequently fell foul of the law and ended up in jail.

Very few were happy to track members of their own clans (dire retribution was likely to follow) and, in instances when they did, their efforts very rarely resulted in the desired result being achieved. So, in many cases, black trackers were brought in from other areas of the state or from interstate when there was a need to trace Aboriginal criminals or suspects.

Much of the tracking was undertaken in rural areas of the state, and one of the good features of this book is that maps are included to identify places (many having long since disappeared) that are mentioned in the text.

One of the chapters of the book relates specifically to a

tracker who worked on the NSW South Coast – a tracker known as Sir Watkin Wynne who was the lead tracker during the capture of the notorious Clarke gang of bushrangers (see adjacent story [not included in ‘*Pathfinders*’] and *Recollections* issue 1, available at bit.ly/Recollections1). In fact, this episode ended his police career because he was shot in the wrist by one of the Clarke gang, necessitating amputation of his arm. He received £120 from the rewards of £1,500 that were subsequently paid, which effectively provided him with an unexpected retirement fund.

Undoubtedly future historians will also be attracted by stories of Aboriginal trackers (there are others not included in this book, such as that of Tracker Patten [who receives only passing mention in ‘*Pathfinders*’] who was stationed at Tumberumba, then Wagga Wagga and then West Wyalong, that is available at koorihistory.com). This book will surely be a valuable resource to them. 

THE BROTHERS CLARKE

A SHORT CAREER, IF NOT A MERRY ONE

‘Sir Watkin Wynne’, the Black Tracker, LOSES AN ARM

Nine Mail Robberies – Thirty-six Cases of Sticking-up – A Terrible Death Roll.

[By ‘Old Chum’]

Amongst the notorious bushrangers of the ‘sixties’ were the brothers Thomas and John Clarke, who, after a short, sharp, and busy career, were executed at Darlinghurst June 25, 1867, the specific charge being the wounding of constable Walsh and ‘Sir Watkin Wynne’ the black tracker.

The elder, Thomas, was confined in Braidwood gaol on a charge of horse-stealing. Escaping from that establishment, he was joined by his brother John, and the pair kept that district in a state of terror. From June, 1866, to March, 1867, Thomas Clarke was debited with no less than

NINE MAIL ROBBERIES

and 36 thefts from individuals, John being without doubt his partner in all the transactions. Extraordinary efforts were made to capture them, without avail, large rewards were offered for their apprehension. The gold offered induced a party of four special constables to proceed disguised to the Braidwood district to make a capture. Thomas had been outlawed, and was

LIABLE TO BE SHOT ON SIGHT.

The four policemen never returned to tell the tale of their trouble. They were found dead, murdered, at Jindera [north-west of Albury] on January 9, 1867. The brothers Clarke being the suspected murderers, as they died mute without

making any public confession, the four special constables may be added to the long list of unavenged murders of which New South Wales unfortunately holds a record. The terrible

SLAUGHTER OF FOUR POLICEMEN

roused the government into action, the Premier (Sir James Martin) sending out reinforcements of police, and having the district thoroughly scoured. The result was that on April 26 a party of police, consisting of Constables Walsh, Lenehan, Wright, Egan and ‘Sir Watkin,’ the black tracker, arrived at a hut close to Jinden [about half-way between Moruya and Bredbo], which they at once surrounded. No doubt, good, old ‘information received,’ assisted by the offer of a heavy reward, led the police straight to the spot where the brothers were concealed. No time was lost on either side in commencing operations.

THE HUT HAD BEEN PORT-HOLED

to enable the inmates to fire under complete protection. The police, notwithstanding this disadvantage, stuck grimly to their work and although their shots were ineffectual their constant fire compelled the

OUTLAW AND HIS BROTHER

to expend their ammunition very quickly, though not before they had seriously wounded Walsh and ‘Sir Watkin.’ The ammunition being expended, John appeared at the door of the hut, and throwing up his hands, exclaimed, ‘We surrender.’ Although the constables could have shot the pair down and taken no risks, they preferred to capture them alive and dispose of them as the law directed. Handcuffed together, they were taken in a cart to Braidwood Gaol, and in time, found their way to Darlinghurst, where, on May 29, they were tried before Sir Alfred Stephen, who, like Judge Windeyer, on whom it is understood Sir Alfred bestowed his Judicial robes, appears to have revelled in criminal trials.

CORRECTION

OOPS. Our apologies, we got the date of the death of Umbarra (King Merriman) wrong in our article on the Wallaga Lake Aboriginal community in *Recollections* 20. It

should be 1904, as is correctly indicated in the caption to the photograph of Umbarra on the front cover of *Recollections* 10.

The old man has been called

A HARSH JUDGE,

and no doubt he was a severe man while sentencing prisoners. In the case of the Clarkes he would appear to have topped his record. The scene at the courthouse was an extraordinary one, the gallery was filled with 'ladies', the body of the court, otherwise crowded, being also sprinkled with the fair sex, while persons of note of both sexes invaded the Bench. At the outset Sir Alfred Stephen stated that in view of the apparent excitement in court he had ordered extra police on duty, and had instructed them to bring before him any persons disturbing the proceedings. This caution he explained was rendered necessary by the unseemly conduct of some well-dressed and well-connected person during the trial of

GARDINER, THE BUSHRANGER,

deliberately raising and maintaining a cheer for that scoundrel. The caution had the desired effect; the proceedings were undisturbed. The Solicitor-General, Mr Isaacs, conducted the prosecution, and in stating the case gave a graphic description of the fight at Jinden, not forgetting to pile on the agony in every instance where the Clarkes were known to be culprits, and in many cases where they were only suspected. From the start the fate of the men was sealed, their conviction was a foregone conclusion, though their friends engaged the services of two of the most able criminal lawyers of that day to defend them, Isidore Blake, Q.C., afterwards a Judge in Queensland, defended the outlaw Thomas, while W B Dalley appeared for the brother John. Though both counsel made able speeches, there was practically no defence; the prisoners were captured red-handed in a deadly conflict with the police, one constable being badly wounded, while

'SIR WATKIN' LOST AN ARM

in the encounter. Ten minutes sufficed for the jury consultation, a verdict of guilty being recorded. Then Sir Alfred Stephen squared himself for his work, Deeming requested Justice Hodges to pass sentence without the usual homily, and the judge obliged him. In the case of the Clarkes, no such request was made, and had it been it would not have been heeded. The Chief Justice had been furnished with

A DEATH ROLL

of terrible significance. To emphasise the sentence he was about to pass (if a death sentence can be emphasised), he read a list of men shot dead, hanged, or sent on the roads for complicity in bushranging. He pointed out that from

June, 1864, to April, 1867, eight policemen were killed, and six others were wounded in encounters with outlaws—Piesley, executed; Davies, death, but commuted to 16 years; Gardiner 32 years on the roads; Gilbert, shot by the police; Ben Hall, shot by the police; Bow and Fordyce, sentenced to death, commuted to life; Manns hanged; Vane, 10 years; Gordon (Hall's mate), 15 years; Dunleavy, 15 years; Dunn, hanged; Lowry, shot dead by Senior-Sergeant Stevenson; Foley, 15 years; Morgan, shot dead; Pat Connors, sentenced to death; Tom Connolly, sentenced to death, commuted to penal servitude; Bill Scott, murdered by his mates; Burke, shot dead; O'Meally, shot dead; and 'you, Thomas and John Clarke, about to be sentenced to death'. He then enumerated a number of

WOMEN MADE WIDOWS,

and children orphaned; 'And where is the money gained. Not one of your kind has been a gainer; except Gardiner, and he is now doing 32 years.' The Chief Justice wound up his solemn harangue with the usual death sentence. The next incident was the most pathetic of the trial. Standing by the dock was an elderly, well-dressed woman of the farming class. She was unmoved during the long sermon of the Chief Justice; the Clarkes were also unmoved. As the judge concluded the woman reached her arms through the bars and embraced both men.

SHE WAS THEIR MOTHER

and at that solemn moment she took her last farewell of them on earth... It was thought that the condemned men would have made full public confession of their misdeeds, particularly of their connection, if any, with the slaughter at the four special constables, but if ever confession were made it was sealed in the breasts of

FATHER JOHN DWYER AND FATHER O'FARRELL, who prepared the brothers for death. On the scaffold both were silent but reverent. They blessed the crucifix placed to their lips, but otherwise made no sign. Catholic priests, having prepared their patients for the other world, discountenance last dying speeches...The Clarkes died without a struggle, and the rule of the bushranger may be said to have ended with them. 'Sir Watkin Wynne' was granted a pension of 2s 6d a day for life as a reward for the loss of his arm. He travelled the country on the strength of his doughty deeds, and fared well. I met him at Carcoar a short time before his death, and the old fellow took special pride in going over again the fight in which he lost his arm and became a Crown pensioner.

—'Truth', Sunday January 31st, 1897

and finally...

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