

South Coast History Society Inc.

RecollectionS

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Pole Fishing, Eden 1964. There were once two fish canneries on the NSW South Coast (in Narooma from 1940 to the 1960s and in Eden from 1949 to 1999), processing tuna and other fish (particularly salmon in Narooma) and each sustaining significant commercial fishing fleets. A bamboo tuna fishing pole in the Bermagui Museum is one of 101 objects that have been included on our Bega Shire Hidden Heritage listing – a reminder of this once-thriving local industry. For more information on this project, see pages 17 to 19 ... and don't miss South Coast History Day 2019 on Saturday 27th April. See page 5 for details.

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The Mumbulla School: A One-Teacher Bush School

But first some background:

The Public Instruction Act of 1880 required all children between the ages of 6 and 14 years to attend school for a period of no less than 70 days each half year, and it reduced fees to make schooling more affordable.

Three types of schools were provided:

- Half-Time Schools, which required an enrolment of at least 10 children at each school, with two schools sharing a teacher;
- Provisional Schools, requiring an enrolment of between 15 and 25 children, which had a full-time teacher;
- Public Schools, which were established once the average attendance at either a Half-Time or Provisional School become sufficient (say 20 plus), and there was likely to be permanency in numbers.

Shifting enrolment numbers meant that the classification of some of these schools changed significantly from time to time – half-time or provisional schools being upgraded to public schools, and public schools being downgraded to provisional schools or even half-time schools.

In many cases, small schools had to be constructed by local communities, at their cost, for the Department of Education to consider providing a teacher. Needless to say, the standard of workmanship and the designs of these schools varied considerably.

But providing a school room was not all that was required. Yards where horses (which sometimes carried 2, 3, or 4 children together on their backs!) that were ridden to school by the students were an added necessity; water and heating—at least a wood supply—were required; housing for the teacher was needed.

Because students could not walk or ride long distances to school, a number of small schools were often located in fairly close proximity to one another. This also made it possible for a Half-Time Teacher to work at two schools.

Early schools, however, also became important focal points in communities, providing extra-curricular activities for children, parents and others – concerts, sports days, speech nights, picnics (a picnic in 1882 at the Stony Creek School, which then had an enrolment of 54 students, *'brought fully*



Mumbulla School, c. 1882. The teacher, presumably, is the '20 year old, rather prepossessing' Miss Farrell. Photo in collection of Bega Valley Historical Society.

six hundred people together ... and to many the novelty of this eyrie-like spot on which the school is perched, and the lovely view obtainable from it, would have amply repaid the trouble of the journey [from Bega], independent of the attractions of enjoying the hearty and almost lavish hospitality of the Stoney and Double Creek residents'), meetings and, occasionally, church services. Only when communities became more established, typically in the early 1900s, did community halls start to be built.

Mumbulla School (which it seems was located somewhere near today's Riverview Nursery in Brogo – although we stand to be corrected about this) was opened as a Provisional School in January 1882, an application for it in March 1880 having previously been rejected after the local School Inspector concluded *'the wants of the locality are already sufficiently met and that school applied for is not required'*. He pointed out that Stony Creek School had recently been opened and adding another school in the area might result in Brogo School (further north) failing.

The first teacher at Mumbulla School was Miss Kate Farrell. Kate was single and had only recently arrived with her sister from Ireland, having left Ireland due to the *'difficulty finding suitable employment.'* In September 1881 she was interviewed by the Education Department Inspector, Inspector General and Chief Inspector, with the Inspector's Report noting *'Personal appearance: 'Pleasing';*

Constitution: 'Sound'; Bodily Infirmities: 'None'; Apparent Character; 'Very Good'; Ability to read and write: 'Fair'. The Chief Inspector added *'She is 20 years old, rather prepossessing in appearance, and, though somewhat bashful and unsophisticated, is not uncultured in her manners.'* [I can't imagine such reports would be acceptable today...even if their titles were 'Inspector'!!! – Ed.]


The school building had been erected by local farmers. We learn that it was not quite finished upon Kate's arrival on 22 January 1882 but was hurriedly readied by farmer parents a week later for the opening on Monday 30 January.

Eighteen months later, in September 1883, those who had erected the building applied to the Department, in support of complaints from the teacher, for financial assistance to have repairs carried out on the building! The one tender was rejected as 'too high' and, in the Inspector's opinion, the repairs were 'not needed' even though it was obvious the design and construction had been rather rough and ready.


Miss Farrell resigned on 31 December 1883 ... and then the school was reclassified a Public School from 1 July 1884 ... and a new school was built on an 'unused road' adjoining the former school site in 1886. In 1887 there were 33 children enrolled at the school.


In February 1890, parents of children attending Mumbulla School wrote to the Minister of Public Education requesting a weather-shed as children are *'compelled to remain inside during play hours or go out under the scorching*

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sun or pouring rain. Further, that this situation *'on occasions produced sickness amongst the children.'* They also asked for a porch for the *'pupil's hats, cloaks, lunch,'* etc. as part of the classroom was being used for this purpose and, therefore, was *'scarcely large enough for its legitimate object.'*

Mumbulla residents lived on both sides of the Brogo River – eastern and western. On 20 May 1893, a request was made to the Minister of Public Education by residents and parents of children attending Mumbulla School for a boat to be *'placed at our disposal'* because of the *'serious inconvenience caused to residents on the Eastern bank of the Brogo River by frequent flooding'*. They pointed out that a boat was needed to get the children to school and for the delivery of mail and transporting residents in cases of illness. The application was declined, accompanied by a suggestion that the boat needed to be *'procured by themselves'*.

In 1886 an application was approved to conduct Evening Classes at the Mumbulla School for male pupils between the ages of 14 and 23 years, with Mr Geo Campbell, a teacher, to conduct the classes.

In May 1898 a teacher from Mumbulla School wrote to the Inspector: *'During the heavy winds that prevailed throughout the day, a portion of the school building was blown down, at the time when the business of the school was being conducted. I continued teaching the full time, although there was every danger of more of the house falling. I do not think the parents will send the children again until the necessary repairs are completed, as the house is unsafe owing to the foundation having rotted away.'*

By May 1900 enrolments did indeed drop (falling birth rates were one factor, movements from one employer to another by share-farming families, who not infrequently had 7 or 8 children, were another), and from that date until December 1903 Mumbulla School became a Half-Time School, pairing with Stony Creek School. (The same situation existed from May 1906 to August 1908.) By March 1909 it seems the Mumbulla School was unused and, for a time, it was leased to the Presbyterian Church of Australia.

In September 1913 erection of a new school building was underway and shortly afterwards was completed. The old school building, despite being in a *'dilapidated condition'*, was sold to a Mr Rheinberger for £5/10/-.

In January 1919 the Department of Public Instruction received a letter and a cheque from a passing motorist who had called into Mumbulla School to get water for their car radiator and *'being tempted to look through the window'* they were:

'Greatly struck with the attempt that has been made to make the school interesting. We cannot say anything for the

building. It is not a palatial one, but there was nothing wrong with the interior.

There is possibly something in the wishes of those interested that would make that little interior just a little more interesting, which the Two Guineas might buy; so please pass it on with our best wishes to the Teachers & Scholars.'

Corporal punishment was, of course, part of school life a hundred years ago. Teachers were instructed that it should be *'restricted to extreme cases'* – the *'failure or inability to learn is not to be regarded as an extreme case.'* The *'boxing of pupil's ears and the tapping of their head are strictly forbidden, as is the corporal punishment of female pupils 12 years and over.'* Punishments had to be recorded in a punishment book, where Shirley Sproats found records relating to several Sproats children:

'Frank Sproats aged 13-17 for 'continued deceitfulness.' Two strokes of the cane.

Stanley Sproats age 11-1 for 'disobedience and carelessness.' One stroke of the cane.

Frank Sproats age 13-9 for 'negligence in carrying out work.' Three strokes of the cane.

Stanley Sproats age 11-3 for 'continued guessing.' Four slaps of the ruler.

Winnie Sproats age 8-1 for 'copying and lying.' Three slaps of the ruler.'

Winnie actually became a good scholar, passing the High School Entrance Examination, and boarding in Bega to further her education before leaving school at 15 years of age.

Winnie told Shirley Sproats how the children went barefoot to school in those days until one day Winnie's mother, Annie, came home from town with a pair of sand-shoes for her to wear to school. Winnie said this started a trend as other girls pestered their mothers to buy sand-shoes for them to wear to school.

In 1931 Mumbulla School changed its name to Brogo School (the original Brogo School had closed in June 1919). The Mumbulla/Brogo School closed in 1968.

*Shirley Sproats' story about the Stoney Creek School in 'The Three Hergenhan Brothers' is similarly interesting. She previously wrote a small book about Wapengo School, 'A Wapengo School Story 1880 – 1910' (contact ssproats@bigpond.com). Histories/stories of other South Coast schools certainly deserve preserving and we would be delighted to receive any. These will be an appropriate addition to the library of information that is being assembled, as part of our Bega Shire Hidden Heritage initiative, about the interesting role that South Coast schools have played in times past. **R***

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SOUTH COAST HISTORY DAY 2019

Saturday 27th April at 9.30 am Wolumla Memorial Hall
Bega's Shire's Hidden Heritage
101 Objects Revealed

A morning seminar-cum-workshop will explain and examine the 101 objects that have been selected for inclusion in the Bega Shire Hidden Heritage project. These are 101 objects that epitomize and represent the fascinating history and heritage of the Bega Shire (they are listed at bit.ly/101objectsindex). Some are well-known, some are little known – but all have interesting stories related to them. This will be an informative morning of discovery for all.

After lunch (which will be provided to those attending the morning seminar) a busload of participants will spend the afternoon exploring parts of the Bega Shire – to view some of the 101 Bega Shire Hidden Heritage objects and, led by Graham Moore (Bega Shire Council's Aboriginal Liaison Officer), will be given an insight into the area 'through Aboriginal eyes'. We'll also be visiting several sites of historical importance that are not usually open to the public.

Limited seats are available on the bus. These will be allocated on a first-come first-served basis and are only available to those who attend the morning seminar. We envisage the bus will return to Wolumla Hall by 4.45pm.

This will be a day you will not want to miss.

The cost: morning seminar + light lunch \$11 (\$10 + \$1 GST); afternoon tour \$38.50 (\$35 + \$3.50 GST). Notes will be provided to participants, as will morning tea, a light lunch and afternoon tea. **TICKETS TO SOUTH COAST HISTORY DAY 2019 MUST BE PURCHASED IN ADVANCE** – we regret no tickets will be available on the day at the door.

For further information, please call 0448 160 852.



Another Initiative of
South Coast History Society



This project is assisted by the NSW Government through the Heritage Near Me program.



To reserve your seat at the 2019 South Coast History Day on Saturday April 27th, EITHER

- Transfer or Deposit \$11 for the Seminar OR \$49.50 to the Seminar+Tour into South Coast History Society's bank account (with Bendigo Bank, Bega) BSB 633 000 Account 158877472 **AND** send us confirmation you have done so along with your contact details, preferably email address.

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- Post your cheque (payable to South Coast History Society) \$11 for the Seminar OR \$49.50 to the Seminar+Tour to South Coast History Society, 90 Whitby Wilson Road, Quaama NSW 2550 along with your contact details, preferably email address.

And talking of schools...South Coast History Society set local high school students a Christmas Holidays Challenge – to write an essay on growing up in the 1950s and 1960s. We received some fabulous entries.

Lucy Little, a Year 11 student at Lumen Christi Catholic College in Pambula interviewed her grandmother about the 1950s and 1960s and, based on the information she received and after further researching the era, she produced several 'diary entries' to capture what life was like as a 'baby boomer' over eight years – a creative and interesting way of presenting history!

Growing Up in the 1950s & 1960s: Journal Extracts

by Lucy Little, Year 11, Lumen Christi Catholic College, Pambula

FEBRUARY 19TH, 1959

I watched as the buildings flew by in a blur. I had become accustomed to the lengthy train rides home from school; the boredom that each trip entailed. Although, in saying that, the train rides can also be thrilling. On occasions my friends and I will make our way to the back of the train, opening the door as it sped along, sticking our heads out, the wind twisting ferociously through our hair. I would close my eyes, imagining I was an eagle. This trip wasn't



quite so thrilling, but today was different. Today I would be returning home to something that could excite even the utmost unexcitable – we would have our very first TV. How incredible! I was busting out of my seat, my foot tapping to the Jonny O'Keefe song that, as of late, played on repeat in my mind like a broken jukebox.

I had never run home so fast in my life. I burst through the door and into the lounge room, where it sat, tall and proud. My eyes grew to the size of saucepans. My mother had set a rule in place, whereby we could only watch it if we were 'doing something' – knitting passed the test. She had taught all of my sisters and I how to sew and knit and crochet, so by now it was like second nature. I lay on my bed writing this in one of the dresses she has made me; simply beautiful.

I have my very first date tomorrow! A boy from church. In all honesty I simply just want to see the movie, *Ben Hur*, more than I am interested in seeing him! I can remember being in 6th class, standing as close as possible to the line drawn in the playground separating the girls from the boys, chatting away, a sense of rebellion swelling in my chest. I

never liked that uniform. The crisp white blouse that would cling to my skin in summer, sticky with sweat, and the heavy box pleated serge tunic that didn't allow me to run freely at recess and lunch. Although, the heavy leather lace up shoes did come in handy for one thing – kicking the odd annoying person in the shins. Have grown out of that bad habit though – ballroom dancing classes at the Rivoli definitely encouraged us to stand tall and be a lady, rather than kick people in the shins.

We learnt a great deal about the explorers and the British Empire – again – today; how they were bringing Christianity to all the heathen nations they were colonising. Little about the Aborigines again.

Mum's making roast chicken for dinner; a real treat. I'm hoping there might be some slice or cake after dinner too. I can smell it cooking in the oven, my mouth is swimming in anticipation. I hear her calling.

FEBRUARY 8TH, 1960

Today seemed to drag on for centuries. In history we were learning about the Aborigines and their nomadic lifestyle – something which we had been told in primary school, but were reminded every now and again. They wore little clothing, did not grow crops, were simple hunter and gatherers, and made these things called boomerangs. I've never seen a black person before, but I can remember when I was younger the song my sisters and I used to chant as we skipped our way to school, 'if you tread on a crack, you marry a black.' Now that I think about it, I have no idea where I learnt that from. Probably just at school.

Some of my teachers, the passionate ones, are wonderful. But others that lack such passion are simply the biggest drag. Textbook, writing, textbook, writing. I couldn't help myself, I was just so bored, that I found myself talking instead of working. Wasn't the best idea, as I discovered this afternoon as I sat writing lines over and over again for half an hour after school. I guess that comes with going to a selective school.

Jan went on her first date on the weekend. She told us how her and a boy from Church, too, went to the movie theatre.



Only difference was that she actually liked the boy! They bought milkshakes and jam drops afterwards. Now I crave jam drops.

FEBRUARY 26TH, 1961

Today we skipped Sunday school to go to the beach – the sigh of relief that escaped my mouth after my dad told me the news was worth mentioning. Although a small part of me worried about what He might think, as we were constantly reminded that He was always watching us, taking notes, remembering the bad things we did. Would this be considered a bad thing? Skipping church? I wasn't entirely sure. I'm beginning to outgrow it, I think, as the years go by and I grow older. After all, I will be turning eighteen early next year, and I believe that I am one to hold my own thought's and views upon the world around me, not be dictated by some institution. Albeit I would never tell a soul, other than my closest friends.

We packed a picnic to take along: sandwiches, homemade cakes and biscuits, fruit, and of course, jam drops. My sisters love them too, and although we'd never admit it to her, we prefer them over mum's cakes.

The water was wonderful, its colour a reflection of the vivid, blue sky. The beach was teeming with people, and I couldn't help but smile all day long. My eyes stung from hours spent in the saltwater, my skin a slight pink from the sun. My hair had been sun-bleached over the summer, as per usual.

The traffic home was a nightmare. For almost the entirety of the drive, each car was headlight to headlight. My eyelids feel like lead; I'm absolutely exhausted. Sleep is imminent.

FEBRUARY 23RD, 1963

I'm still in shock. It almost doesn't feel real, like it is just one of the many dreams I conjure in my sleep. University. A teachers' college scholarship. How my mum and

dad's faces lit up ... I love it already. It is like a different world. Each day I catch the train to Redfern, and then walk a short distance. I've met so many new people, and my teachers are as passionate as ever. It is, in some ways, like I am back in primary school with my friends and our secret societies – university seems so socially segregated.

I have been reading so much lately, it has become one of my favourite pastimes, along with knitting. There is so much more to learn about the world, and I want to learn it all, and then, hopefully, one day become a teacher so I can pass down my knowledge.

I have been helping mum out at home quite a lot lately. This would have to be my only worry – one day I will meet a man, fall in love, get married, and no doubt have kids. But then I wouldn't be able to continue working. I would have to rear the family. Of course, I would love a family one day, but the prospect of having to sacrifice being able to work is hurtful. From the ages of nine to eleven I wished I was a boy. Realising early on that I didn't want to have a life of babies and housework, I often wondered why. Why did I have to grow up to be a lady, to cook and clean and mother? Boys are better, is what they would all say, is what they still say. Boys are the leaders.



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FEBRUARY 11TH, 1964

Woke up to some sad news today. Two warships, the HMAS Melbourne and HMAS Voyager, collided last night at Jervis Bay, 82 people losing their lives. Makes you realise how precious life is.



But anyhow, enough sad talk. Life must go on, after all.


I haven't had much time to write in my journal lately – I have been so busy with all my school work! Coming into my second year, I am used to the busy lifestyle, but I am nevertheless as grateful as ever to be here, learning. At least getting an education wasn't specified to just the male gender. Maybe when I become a teacher, I can prove that men aren't just the leaders, that women have so much to offer, too. But this is wishful thinking. We all know how it is. I watched *The King and I* again for the first time in quite a while, and was reminded of why I had fallen in love with Yul Bruner. But that's not the only reason I love the film. Anna is still my female hero. She travelled to Thailand to teach the little children and allow them to have an education. I believe that everyone deserves an education, no matter who they are. I still haven't seen an Aboriginal person, not even at university. I find it strange. What's stopping them? Or do they continue to live their nomadic lifestyles? I can

remember being taught that they have no writing and needed our help to improve their way of life. How did they live before colonisation, I wonder?

I've been trying to keep up with some exercises lately, to stay fit and healthy. Apparently it helps the mind to function. I can remember playing skipping games on the playground in primary. That definitely got the heart rate up! My favourite was double Dutch. Yoga-related exercises aren't the most interesting, and some days I wish I could return to tunnel ball and captain ball. How I miss my childhood.

FEBRUARY 14TH, 1966

The other day I saw, for the first time, an Indigenous person. His name is Charlie Perkins – apparently he's the first Indigenous person to attend university. All of the memories came flooding back the moment I laid eyes on him. The chanting. The teachings. The years of curiosity. But, as I watched him, a thought suffocated my mind – he really didn't seem so different to any of the people surrounding him, albeit the colour of his skin. In fact, he had this kindly look about him, far more so than some of the other people I have met during my short time here. I wanted to talk to him. I wanted to know more. But another thing that I've noticed in my short time is that the Church is never questioned. I don't want to lose my scholarship by rocking the boat, so I will stay in line. I will conform. My parents are awfully proud in my attending university – I wouldn't dare let them down by failing. Hopefully I'll graduate with my BA in a couple of years, then get my diploma, and eventually be sent to begin teaching somewhere. But you never know what could happen.

How could I almost forget? Today will be etched into history, for today decimal notes and coins were introduced, separating Australia from the British-style currency. How exciting! The jingle is now ringing in my mind: "in comes the dollars, and in comes the cents. To replace the pounds, the shillings and the pence ... Da da da day, on the 14th of February, 1966 ..." 

Stephanie Lunn, a Year 11 student at Moruya High School, spoke with 'Baby Boomers' before recording her impressions about the differences 'then' to 'now'. She also added several photographs to illustrate her essay

Growing Up in the 1950s and 1960s

by Stephanie Lunn, Year 11, Moruya High School

In the years following World War Two, when Australia's population and economy were booming, "Baby Boomers" led very different lifestyles to the teenagers of today. Although everyone has unique experiences in life, recollections from all Baby Boomers interviewed for this essay fit together to create a cohesive narrative about what life was like for teenagers in the 1950s and 60s. Familial circumstances differed, yet leisure time was often filled with similar outdoor activities such as camping, trips to the beach and sport. Food didn't come from a supermarket; transport networks weren't as reliable and Australian society and communities differed from what they are today. Finally, technology wasn't as readily available or as advanced as what teenagers have

today, Australian currency changed and schools were as loved by teenagers then as they are today.

In the 1950s and 60s, teenagers had to create their own fun. The multi-day, unsupervised camping trip of four teenage girls in the 1960s is a memory Deb, who grew up in Sydney, remembers fondly. "The park ranger would check on us occasionally, but aside from that, we were on our own" she recalled, and Wendy, originally from Coffs Harbour, doesn't know if society was any safer back then, but said that, for her and the people she knew, having more freedom to go as they pleased was "just what we did." In contrast to many teenagers today, teenage Baby Boomers seem to have spent most of their free time outdoors, and with a minimal

degree of parental supervision that would be envied by many teenagers today.

As many of the Baby Boomers interviewed grew up in coastal towns and cities, going to the beach was a recurring theme. Beaches and waterways are still enjoyed immensely by many teenagers today, however teenagers in the 1950s and 60s didn't have as many, if any, varieties of surf boards, snorkels, inflatables and other beach toys. Swimwear in the early 60s was also different and more conservative than swimwear today. As Debbie remembered, surfing was considered a "boys' sport" anyway, so she and her friends spent their time at the beach swimming and body surfing. She summarises the differences between teenagers today



Swimwear from today

and teenagers of her time in saying "in some ways teenagers today have more opportunities, in some ways they have less," because although more toys and equipment are available now, teenagers today don't experience the same freedom that many Baby Boomers had.

In Winter, Bruce, from Bellingen, would play rugby, while Wendy would play hockey, and in Summer they would respectively partake in cricket and swimming. Cross-generationally, teenagers seem to love being involved in sport, but teens now have a wider choice in sports because gender doesn't play as significant a role and sportsgrounds, facilities and equipment are all better than what was readily available in the 50s and 60s. That being said, sports were still greatly enjoyed by teenagers in the 50s and 60s. Bruce



Swimwear from the early 1960s

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has fond memories of interschool sporting competitions which required travelling more than 100kms away on a bus, and Wendy reminds teenagers today how lucky they are to have pools because her school swimming carnival used to be held in a creek where some lanes had a stronger current than others. On weekends, Deb, Debbie and Brett loved to play tennis dressed in their tennis whites, and remember the getting to the courts by various forms of public transport as being almost as enjoyable as the matches themselves. So, although there are generally more sporting opportunities for



Dressed for tennis

teenagers today, sport was still a pleasurable and important part of life for teenagers in the 50s and 60s.

Although food was more readily available for Baby Boomers than it was during the war, its supply wasn't always secure. Home grown vegetables and freshly-caught fish were the main things Wendy ate as a teenager. Chicken, also homegrown, was only for special occasions, and supplementary items would be delivered by the local grocer. Lois, from rural Queensland, remembers their food supply in the 60s being insecure because enough couldn't be grown at home, and if the roads were washed out food couldn't be delivered for some time. Chris, also from rural Queensland, cringes as he recalls the boils he would get when there weren't enough fruits and vegetables to provide adequate nutrition. Whilst food was still more plentiful than it was during the war, it doesn't compare to the quantity and variety of food easily accessible today. That being said, some teenagers from the 50s and 60s would know whose mother was the best cook, and "do the rounds after school," as Chris puts it, to scavenge the best food each day.

On the subject of food, one topic mentioned by all of the interviewed Baby Boomers was the Free School Milk Program which was introduced in 1950. Every Boomer laughed at their memories of the free milk which had been left in the sun for hours, but had to be consumed in an attempt by the government to boost nutrition among Australian children. For teenagers in the 50s and 60s, milk couldn't be purchased easily at a supermarket either, it was delivered by the Milkman. One of Bruce's first jobs



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School milk

was helping the Milkman, where he would remember how many pints or bottles of milk each client wanted, then run from the vehicle to their doorstep to deliver it. Brett even remembers the early 60s when milk was still delivered around his rural town in a horse drawn cart. Additionally, as plumbing was somewhat rudimentary in many places, most Baby Boomers remember the “San Man”, who would empty outdoor toilets once a week. Bruce remembers everyone trying to be on good terms with the San Man because, if he didn’t like you, the results could be quite ‘messy’.

As roads and bridges were still being built and tarred, reliable transport was often an issue, particularly in rural regions. Chris, who spent his teenage years in outback Queensland, vividly remembers a time when bridges were washed out due to torrential rain, which, on one occasion, jeopardised the visiting circus. Due to bad timing, the animals and their cages were stranded on different sides of the river, and Chris lived in the only house in town with a



Slide rules were used rather than calculators

backyard fence. As a result, giraffes and elephants were contained in his backyard, something that certainly wouldn’t happen in Australia today! However, Chris said their family “grew the best tomatoes in town after that, because of all the elephant manure”. That, at least, helped prevent the aforementioned boils!

Another significant difference between the experiences of teenagers now and teenagers from the 50s and 60s is the society and communities of the time. As put by Lois, “society was more formal and communities were a lot closer” than today. The Baby Boomers agree that, when they were teenagers, profanities weren’t used as frequently and, if they were, could result in suspension from school. Blasphemy was frowned upon and mainstream music and theatre shows were suitable for the whole family. This is not the case today. Society was also more formal in the way that people would dress up when going into town, and there were more established weekly traditions, such as Sunday lunch. Baby Boomers were teenagers in closer communities as well, with Bruce and Chris recalling community dances and the importance of choosing the right dance partner, especially for the final dance because there may have been a chance to escort the young lady home!

In the 1950s and 60s, technology and means of communication were very different as well. Baby Boomer teenagers knew slide rules not calculators, Bruce mowed lawns with a manual push mower and decanted kerosene

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each day for his family's 'fridge, and Wendy recalls using a manual wringer for the laundry. Newspapers and radios were very common, while only some of the Baby Boomers interviewed had a television or phone. Other than face-to-face, people kept in contact by writing letters, and, as a teenager, Bruce had a summer job delivering telegrams on his bike. Without the internet, phones and social media, Baby Boomer teenagers were probably better at socialising, with Chris going so far as to say "people have lost the art of social interaction." Additionally, news was not instantaneous, and Deb has some sympathy for teenagers today who are "overloaded with information" because of the internet.



Watching the first men on the moon.

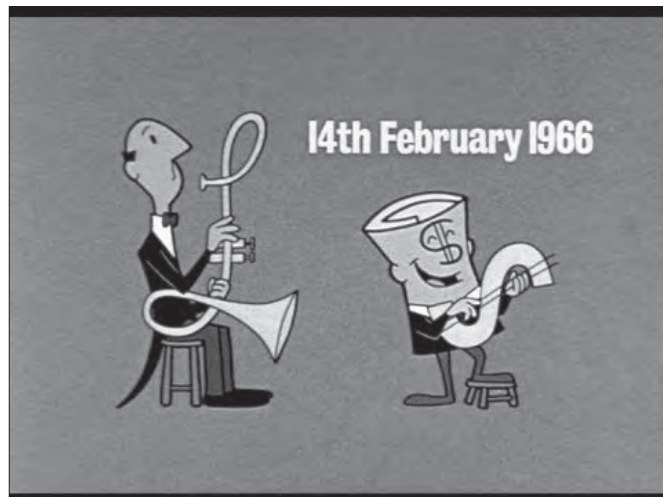
Despite this difference in everyday technology, the 1960s were ground-breaking years for space travel. Bruce remembers one night in 1961 where he looked with awe into the stars where the first man in space was orbiting. Eight years later in 1969, many Baby Boomers remember the black-and-white moon landing being broadcast on television. Such advancements paved the way for space travel today. Nowadays teenagers see so many conspiracy theories on the internet that some joke about the moon landing being fake! Despite this cynicism, we may even live to see manned missions to Mars.

On the 14th of February 1966, Australia adopted a decimal currency system, changing from pounds, shillings and pence to dollars and cents. Bruce still remembers the jingle and characters used to advertise the changing currency system, but more prominently remembers the debate over whether to call the new notes "dollars" or "royals". The transition between systems is reported to have been very smooth, and could be compared to the monetary change experienced by this generation of teenagers – cash to card. In 1966, officials allowed a two-year transition period between pounds and dollars, and, over the past few years, today's teenagers have seen, and been a part of, society's latest change from physical to online currency.

Comparable to the nation-wide installation of the National Broadband Network in recent times, in the 50s

and 60s houses were still being connected to the electricity grid for the first time. Bruce remembers how, once a house was connected to the grid, its inhabitants often weren't allowed to generate their own electricity as they needed to support the economy and new infrastructure. Teenagers today grow up with the opposite problem; people are being encouraged to explore renewable forms of electricity to help the environment and to stop being so reliant on the grid.

Perhaps the greatest thing in common between Baby Boomer teenagers and teenagers today is the necessity to attend school. A prominent part of teenagers' lives, the Baby Boomers interviewed all had memories of school. Most recalled learning French and Latin, perhaps taught because ties with Europe were stronger back then, uniforms were adhered to with Wendy remembering kneeling to have her skirt measured, and Bruce earned a Leaving Certificate instead of a Higher School Certificate. Additionally, classes at Wendy's school were streamed, with the A1 class learning French and Latin, and other classes learning home economics or agriculture. When asked about how people felt about being in streamed classes, she said "it was what it was, and there was no stigma about being in any particular class," which is not the way it is for teenagers now. Additionally, Bruce relied on public transport and hitchhiking to commute to school, which often took in excess of two hours, and he laughed as he remembered once going for two weeks without seeing his father, who was a civil engineer, because they both left so early and came home so late.



"Dollar Bill" introducing decimal currency.

Compared to teenagers today, Baby Boomer teenagers from the 1950s and 60s grew up in a very different Australia. A love of sport endures in teenagers today, but school swimming carnivals are certainly not held in creeks anymore, and current teenagers enjoy the convenience of supermarkets and reliable transport, even if that means they won't have circus animals in their backyards. Since the 1950s and 60s society has changed, technology has become more advanced and schools have been reshaped, but the future is built on history and these modern-day advancements couldn't have happened without those who grew up in the 1950s and 60s. **R**

HISTORIES

Lying for the Admiralty

by Margaret Cameron-Ash

This is an intriguing book. And, for me, it was one of those engrossing books that I simply could not put it down once I had started to read it.

Margaret Cameron-Ash is a lawyer with, she claims, 'an instinct for (identifying) when a witness is prevaricating'. And what she has done is to forensically examine James Cook's accounts of, and his charts from, his round-the-world voyage that included the 'discovery' of the east coast of Australia in 1770, and concludes they are littered with erasures, additions, omissions and fabrications.

Significantly, she asserts, Cook never took possession of New South Wales (the east coast of Australia) for England, as is widely believed, on Possession Island on 22nd August 1770. And he never 'missed' Bass Strait – wanting to deliberately perpetuate a myth that Van Diemen's Land was geographically joined to the Australian continent. And he was fully aware of the geography and potential value of Sydney Harbour, so deliberately by-passed the entrance to the harbour to ensure its discovery and location would remain known only to the British Admiralty. And ... and ... and ...

Cameron-Ash's arguments, along with her supporting evidence, are compelling.

Her challenge, now, is to convince us all that much of

the 'history' about James Cook's discoveries that we have accepted for the past 249 years is wrong – or, more precisely, that we have been fed and we have swallowed a sizeable dose of B.S.

So why have we been led up the garden path by Cook (who is considered – and Cameron-Ash does not dispute this – 'the greatest navigator of his age') and others?

The answer is simple: Cook was a patriot, he was a loyal 'company man' to the British Admiralty, and – in an era where international mistrust (particularly between the British and the French) was rife – the British Admiralty simply wanted to keep secret as many of its global discoveries as possible, and even wanted, wherever possible, to spread misinformation about these to rival nations.

The 'dirty tricks' that were employed by the British Admiralty and Cook (even on his own crew!) are remarkable, and much of the enjoyment that this book provides is having them, and the reasoning behind them, clearly explained.

Typical of these 'dirty tricks' are Cook's Journals – on which almost all of our history about James Cook's voyages is based. These were re-written (i.e. sanitised, censored, even turned into works of fiction at some points) several times by Cook and his clerk Richard Orton and then, before they were published in 1773, were 'edited' by 'a ghostwriter,

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Dr John Hawkesworth [employed by the Admiralty], to transform the records of all the recent Pacific voyages into a series of entertaining narratives ... so that readers could not separate Hawkesworth's editorial flourishes from the words of

Cook or the words of Banks.' (Cook 'was so mortified and embarrassed by the inaccuracies and misrepresentations that he wrote an angry denunciation of the narrative in this next journal'.) Cook's original Journal (complete with much of his redrafting) disappeared until 1923 when it was purchased by the National Library of Australia (seafarers' Journals were the property of the Admiralty and the Admiralty was not making them available to anyone else!), and really didn't become publicly accessible until 1955 when New Zealand historian J.C. Beaglehole transcribed, annotated and published it – so for over 180 years the information available about Cook's voyage was, to put it politely, suspect.

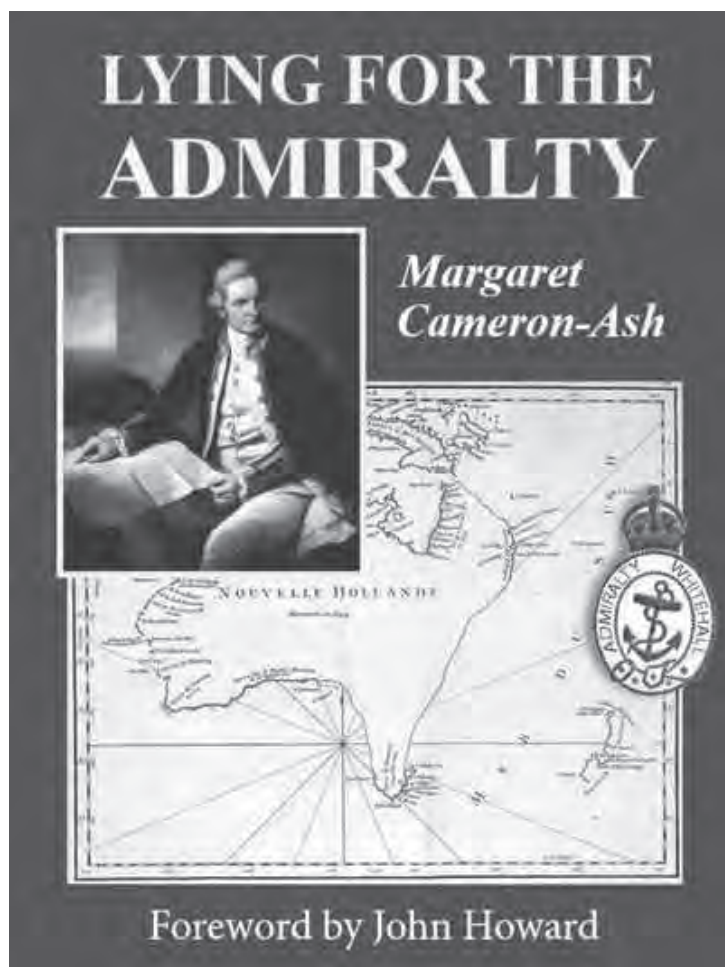
This is a history equally related to the British Admiralty in the late 18th century, Cook's many voyages (from early visits to Canada and Newfoundland to his three famous around-the-world adventures), and to his charting of New Zealand and the east coast of Australia.

Former Prime Minister John Howard wrote the Foreword to this book which, to me, captures the essence of *'Lying for the Admiralty'*:

"I can't assert that the principal claims made by Margaret Cameron-Ash are correct. But I can say that she has cogently argued the case that strategic rivalry between Britain and other colonial powers so dominated Admiralty thinking and planning that previously accepted 'errors' on the part of Cook were deliberate fabrications designed to advance Britannia.

In the process she has authored a most readable book. Her painstaking research and analytical skills are evident throughout." R

'Lying for the Admiralty' is published in paperback by Rosenberg Publishing and is available from around \$27.50.



The planting of false maps and documents has long been a legitimate ruse de guerre, but such Machiavellian arts were not confined to wartime, particularly in an age when there was very little peacetime. Cartographic secrecy was a weapon for all seasons, to be used against all rivals, political and commercial. Since Elizabethan times, the Crown suppressed the publication of new geographic knowledge. When Francis Drake sailed on his voyage round the world in 1577, he was given clear instructions that 'none shall make any charts or descriptions of the said voyage'. Furthermore, all charts made or captured from foreigners had to be delivered to the Lords of Her Majesty's Privy Council. Two hundred years later, the Admiralty's instructions to Captain Cook were almost identical.

This is hardly surprising for a nation aspiring to become, and remain, the supreme maritime power. Britain is a small island whose lifeblood was seaborne trade along the world's superhighways of the

high seas ... the early navigators left home with crude or fictitious maps of the world beyond the capes. They returned with newly constructed charts incorporating their hard-won discoveries of coasts, bays, islands, latitudes, longitudes, winds, tides, currents, depths, reefs, gulfs, ice, river mouths, capes and straits. Much of this was eventually published in new maps of the world ...

However, diligent navigators returned with much more than just new sweeping coastlines to fill the ocean void. They brought precious intelligence of new sea lanes, shortcuts, insularity, deep harbours, havens of shelter and refreshment: all of it vital for wartime battle and peacetime trade. The British Admiralty had no wish to advertise these critical strategic features until it had worked out a scheme to control them. If Cook discovered a valuable port or channel on the far side of the globe, how could he protect it from the French, short of setting up a permanent military occupation? Secrecy was the only option ...

Of course, Cook was required to keep

a journal on the Endeavour voyage. The Admiralty's instructions demanded that he make 'a full account of your Proceedings in the whole Course of your Voyage' and deliver it to the Admiralty Office immediately on returning to England ... Cook was ordered to maintain secrecy on his return to England by 'taking care before you leave the Vessel to demand from the Officers and Petty Officers the Log Books and Journals they may have Kept, and to seal them up for our inspection and enjoying them, and the whole Crew, not to divulge where they had been until they shall have Permission so to do' ...

Where professional accuracy conflicted with the national interest, the latter prevailed.

Consequently, Cook concealed important discoveries, as well as some of his actions and motives, by omission or falsification. Cook's self-censorship is clearly evident in the erasures, deletions, insertions, overwriting, blank spaces, contradictions and fabrications contained in his own journals and charts.

—From *'Lying for the Admiralty'*

Interested in Local History?

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

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

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

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

Bega Valley Genealogical Society, Old Pambula Courthouse & Museum, 42 Toalla St Pambula. Open Tuesdays 10 am – 4 pm, Thursdays 9.30 am – 12.30 pm, Saturdays 1 – 4 pm.

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

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

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

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

Bermagui Museum, Bermagui Community Centre, Bunga St Bermagui. Open Friday and Saturday 10 am – 2pm.

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


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

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

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

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

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

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



An early painting of the old schoolhouse in Merimbula - now the Old Schoolhouse Museum, operated by the Merimbula-Imlay Historical Society. The building is classified by the National Trust and is listed on the Register of the National Estate.

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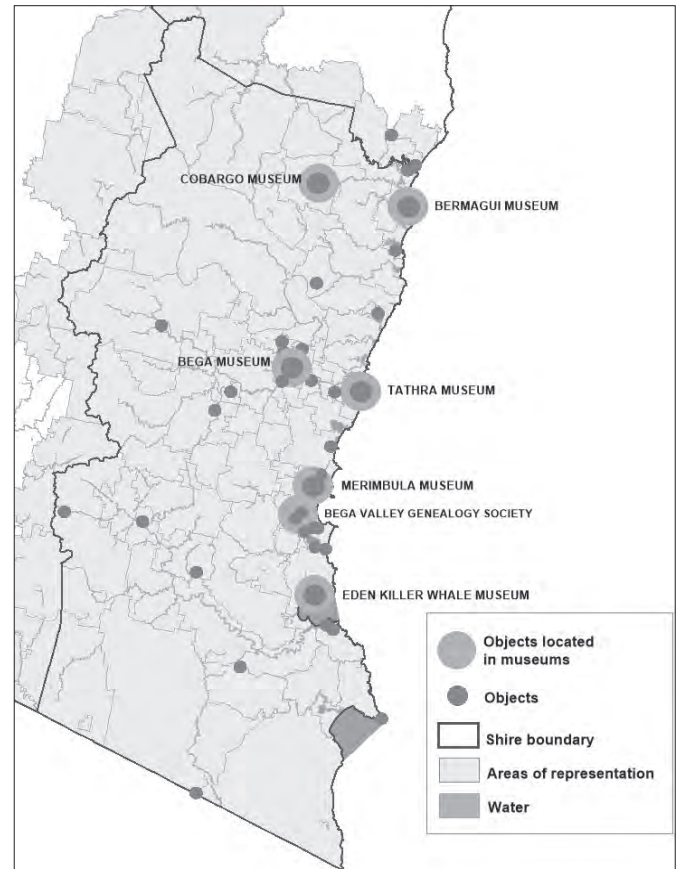
History is Happening. Comprehensive ‘dossiers’ of information on 101 objects that illustrate the fascinating history and heritage of the Bega shire are now being published.

As you will see from the accompanying map, these objects are scattered across the Shire, right from the very top to the very bottom of the Shire, from the coast to escarpment of the mountains. (Incidentally, our ‘logo’ above depicts that: it is a stylized adaptation of the way local Aboriginals depicted mountains and the waters, with the rougher ocean and calmer lakes both represented.)

A full list of the 101 objects is accessible at bit.ly/101objectsindex. This site also provides links to the detailed information about each object. It’s certainly worth checking out.

These ‘dossiers’ of information are intended to be just

the start. If YOU can add to them, we’d be delighted (details of how to do so are at bit.ly/101objectsindex). The intention of this project is that we—our community, which includes you—gradually build full libraries of information about each object, its history, and about any relevant aspects of heritage related to it.



Location of ‘objects’ of the Bega Shire’s Hidden Heritage project

Here’s another sample of subjects and objects from our Bega Shire Hidden Heritage listing:

The Wreck of the Ly-ee-Moon

The Green Cape Lighthouse - the second tallest on the NSW coast, with its light visible 40km out to sea - had been operating for three years when the Ly-ee-Moon was wrecked on rocks, virtually at its base.

Seventy-one of those on board lost their lives.

The tragedy is among the least explainable in Australian maritime history.

The Ly-ee-Moon was a well-appointed, comfortable, fast, 282-foot, coal-fuelled passenger steamer. On 30th May 1886 she was sailing north from Melbourne towards Sydney. At 9.30pm, on what was a clear, calm night, she simply ran into (or was steered into) the rocks at a comparatively high speed of 11.5 knots. Within ten minutes the hull had broken completely in two - the stern remaining fast on an outer reef whilst the bow was driven by the waves towards the shore.

It seems Captain Arthur Wynne Webber had retired to his cabin at 7.45 pm or 8.30pm (depending on which source is to be believed) and had instructed his Third Officer, who was responsible for the ship at the time, to call him at 9.45 pm

or when the ship approached Green Cape. Captain Webber evidently re-appeared on deck just a minute or two before the vessel hit the rocks and, realizing it was headed for the rocks, attempted - in vain - to put the engines into reverse.

Both Captain Webber and Third Officer Fotheringham (along with 13 others - all males and all from the bow section of the ship) survived the wreck. Fotheringham claims that he had tried several times from around 9.10 pm to summon Captain Webber from his cabin, without success; Webber denied this occurred. (There were suggestions that Webber may have been drinking and/or was ‘being entertained’ by a lady passenger in his cabin.)

The lighthouse keepers at Green Cape, to quote the Monument Australia website, ‘heroically rescued 16 [other sources say 15, ten of whom were Ly-ee-Moon crew] people from the sea, and were left to listen to cries for help though the night of other people who could not be saved. The mother of Blessed Mary MacKillop, the first Australian to be beatified by the Catholic Church, was one of those



lost during the night.’ [Now Saint Mary MacKillop having been canonised since the monument was erected.]

Twenty-four bodies were ultimately retrieved and, with the exception of one (that of Flora MacKillop; her body was taken to Sydney for burial) were buried in a small cemetery about 100 metres from the lighthouse. Few of these bodies could be identified.

An inquest in Eden on 1st and 2nd June 1886 at Eden concluded that “gross neglect has been shown, but there has not been sufficient evidence before us to point to the guilty person or persons”. (Neither the helmsman nor the lookout on the ship at the time, who may have been significant witnesses, survived.)

Captain Webber and Third Officer Fotheringham were subsequently charged with manslaughter but neither was convicted. Webber was also charged with gross negligence,



Rescuing Ly-ee-Moon Passengers and Crew. (from *The Australasian Sketcher*, 29th June 1886)

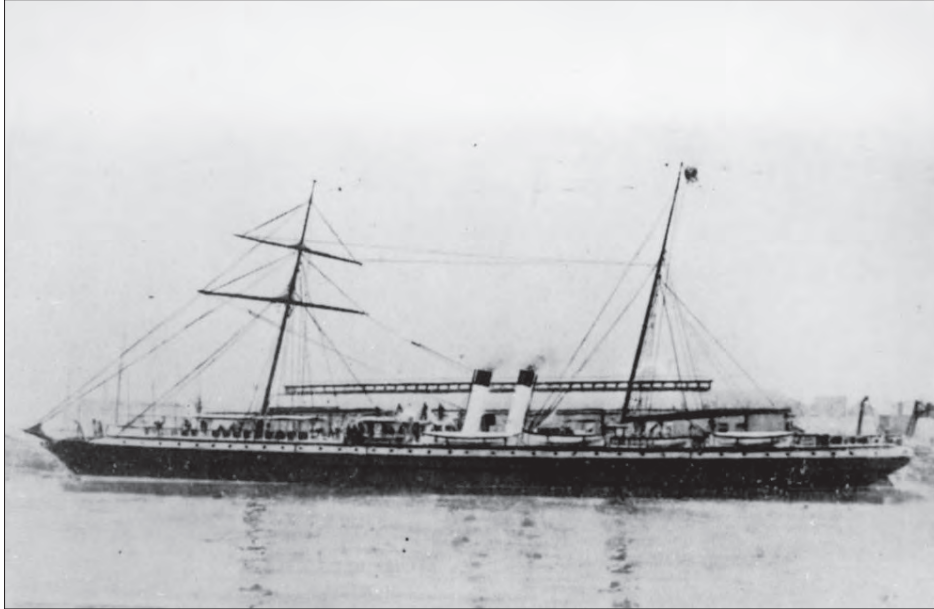
but a jury could not agree whether he was guilty or innocent of the change, and the Crown then dropped further legal proceedings against him.

Webber did not return to sea. Some years later he was destitute, so was awarded £50 by the Shipwreck Relief Society, for whom he worked for 28 years.

Artefacts from the Ly-ee-Moon, which are now in the Eden Killer Whale Museum's collection, are among the

101 objects included on our Bega Shire Hidden Heritage list, as is the Green Cape Lighthouse. **R**

Sources: ABC South-East, NSW Office of Environment and Heritage, Fiona Dixon/State Library of Queensland, Monument Australia, Michael McFadyyn's Scuba Diving, Eden Community Access Centre websites; 'Recollections' issue 8 (available at www.bit.ly/Recollections8)



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World Class Maizena

Munn's Maizena Company Ltd of Merimbula was awarded this medal at the 1878 Paris International Exhibition (Universelle Internationale) for their entry in 'Class 49, maizena.'

Maizena was the generic name for corn flour, and maizena was manufactured between 1867 and 1918 at Munn's Maizena works in Merimbula. The factory occupied a site in Beach Street, opposite the waterfront (roughly the area adjacent to the present-day Harris Scarfe store) and, at its peak, employed several hundred people. At busy times, most families in Merimbula had some work-related connection with the company.

Maize grew prolifically on the fertile river flats of the far south coast where it had been cropped from at least 1842. The opening of the factory delighted local farmers who were provided with a ready market for their produce and were thereby relieved of the expense and risk of shipping their maize to Sydney or other destinations. 800 bushels

(approximately 20 tonnes) of corn was accepted by the factory each week and from this the factory could produce up to eight tons of maizena.




This was packed on site. Initially twelve girls were employed at 5s a week each plus rations, boarding and lodging "... under the immediate eye of their employer ..." (Male labourers in the factory were paid 15s per week plus rations!)

Bran was a residue from the milling process. Some of this found a ready market in Sydney and Wollongong and the remainder was used for pig fattening. So pig breeding rapidly became a profitable side industry. Up to 500 pigs reputedly were kept at any time and around 40 were killed a week, the cured ham and bacon being sent to metropolitan markets.

From the very earliest of days, Munn's Maizena were securing international as well as Colonial awards for their product. A visitor to the factory in 1871 reported that "... the first objects that attracted attention were the walls, decorated with gold and silver medals, honourable mentions, testimonials and certificates from the leading chemists in Australia, and many from Europe, all bearing testimony to 'the purity, the excellence, the strength, the freshness, and the nutritive qualities of Munn's Maizena.' A closer inspection showed that the gold and silver medals were from the Paris, Dublin, Melbourne and Sydney Exhibitions..."

After changing hands in 1913 and then being closed for a period whilst extensions took place, the Munn's Maizena Works closed down in 1918.

This medal is a valuable illustration of the worth of agricultural and industrial activities in the local region from the mid-19th century. It is now in the collection of the Merimbula-Imlay Historical Society and is on display at the Merimbula Old School Museum.

A comprehensive library of information about this Medallion, the Munn's Maizena Company and associated topics is available at www.bit.ly/begahh69 

Original package of Munn's Maizena, from the collection of the Merimbula-Imlay Historical Society Inc. Images by Angi High for Museum of the South East, © South East Arts (NSW) Inc.

Three Ocean Baths

There are three historic ocean swimming pools in the Bega Shire, set in a marine environment on natural rock platforms. Each incorporates both natural and man-made elements.

They are **Thompson's Point Baths** on the north-western shore of Snug Cove, Eden, the **Blue Pool** in Bermagui, and **Aslings Beach Rock Pool** at the south-western corner of Aslings Beach, Eden.

Australia's beach culture began to emerge in the early 20th



Thomson's Point Baths Image courtesy of and © Angela George. All rights reserved

century, alongside the development of seaside tourism. A demand for improved beach access and safer swimming facilities accompanied this, so ocean baths were constructed up and down Australia's east coast to provide smooth, calm swimming conditions that provided protection for swimmers from the possibilities of drowning or being attacked by sharks.

These three Bega Shire ocean baths are particularly important because, while 'retaining their traditional irregularly shaped layout and appearance, the baths are all set in aesthetically spectacular bay locations, providing an important physical link with, and documenting the development and use of local foreshores for social and public recreational facilities. They are also important illustrations of ingenious design solutions to exploit and alter the natural environment for the provision of amenities for human use and enjoyment.'

The Thompson's Point Baths were constructed in 1904–05 and enlarged in 1907 after grants were received from the NSW Lands Department and public donations were raised locally. Thereafter, and up until the 1960s, there were several further attempts to extend the facility – but ultimately the Aslings Beach Rock Pool was constructed and effectively replaced the Thompson's Point Baths. The remains of the baths can now only be accessed along the rocky shoreline



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at low tide. Thompson's Point Baths has the distinction of being the oldest non-metropolitan ocean pool in NSW.

Bermagui's Blue Pool was built in 1937–38 following approaches by local residents to the then NSW Minister for Works & Local Government, Mr. E S Spooner, to transform the natural Blue Hole into a suitable, saltwater swimming pool. Reputedly the cost of construction exceeded £700 of which the government contributed £250 and local residents (and in particular 'Bill' Dickinson – after whom the Dickinson Oval in Bermagui is named) contributed the remainder.

For decades Eden residents sought an alternative site to the Thompson's Point Baths for an ocean pool and their campaigning occurred in fits and starts: in 1948, for example, public school headmaster Mr. J. Tierney pointed out that it was '... almost impossible to teach the children to




The Blue Pool Image courtesy of and © Bega Valley Shire Council. All rights reserved



Aslings Beach Rock Pool Image courtesy of and © Angela George. All rights reserved

swim with the present facilities ...'; in 1953 the *Eden Magnet and Voice* newspaper was imploring the community to act 'before a tragedy forces our hand' after there were reports of three-foot-six Blue Pointer sharks swimming under the wharf where children were bathing and a 'large school of sharks ... cruising just beyond the breakers at Aslings Beach'; in 1955 the *Magnet and Voice* renewed its call to action noting 'sharks are more numerous and, because of hunger, more ferocious than they have been for years' at a time when 48 youngsters were participating in Learn to Swim classes in the sea adjacent to Eden Wharf. Eventually, in 1958 the Eden RSL sub-branch sponsored the formation of the Eden Memorial Swimming Pool Association which successfully had the Aslings Beach Rock Pool built in 1961. It was then dedicated to the 'gallant men and women' who gave their lives in service during WWII.

More fascinating information about these three historic ocean baths is now available at www.bit.ly/begahh12 

SOUTH COAST HISTORY SOCIETY Inc.

Who Are We?

We're just a bunch of locals committed to sharing the fascinating history of the NSW South Coast with anyone and everyone who is interested — putting many of the dramatic old photographs of the area out on public display — learning what we can about region's history — helping uncover things from our past that we didn't previously know — and, along the way, hoping to enthuse others who have similar interests.

Currently we are doing this through *Recollections*, our free magazine that's published every second month, through our website,

You can help us most by:

- *Telling your family, friends and neighbours about us and what we do.*
- *Becoming a Member of the South Coast History Society, and that's just \$15 per year.*
- *Contributing – simply contribute ideas ... or contribute an article for 'Recollections' ... perhaps join our Committee you could even assist us financially. We welcome donations, your support for specific projects, printing 'Recollections', advertising support, etc.!*

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on our Facebook page, at our informal 'talking history' morning teas, and at seminars we hold in the area from time-to-time.

Email us with "Send Recollections" in the subject line and we will send you future issues of *Recollections* as soon as they are available.

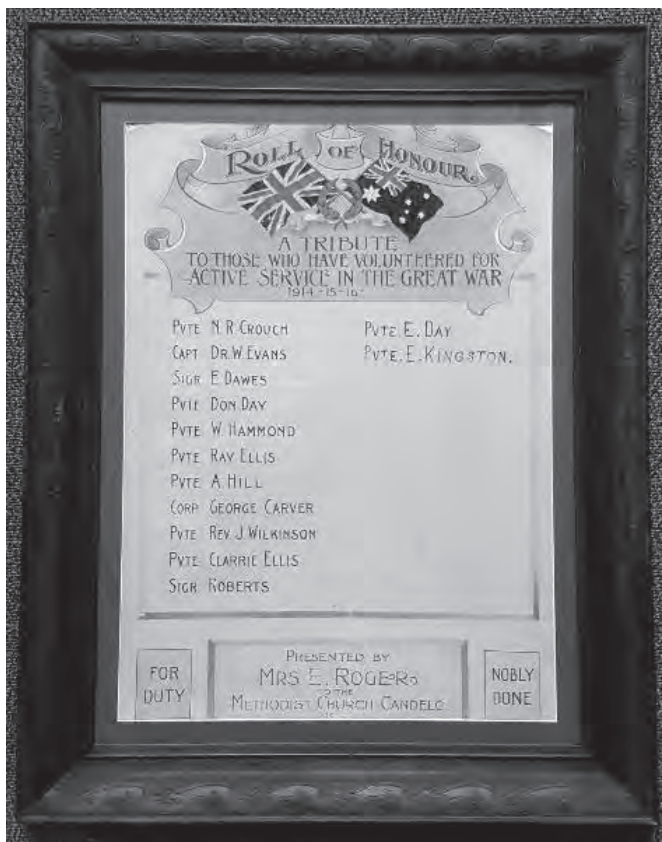
We're a local community-based, incorporated, not-for-profit organisation which simply aims to benefit our community. Our ABN is 42 492 574 578 – so we're legally established, with clearly-defined responsibilities. And we're also currently actively seeking funding to enable us to progress some other innovative local initiatives.

* Back issues of *Recollections* are at www.bit.ly/RecollectionsX. where X is the issue number (1 to 12, except issue 3 which is 3- and issue 10 which is 10-).

The Candelo Methodist Church Roll of Honour

Men who volunteered to serve in the Australian army in World War I were considered by locals to be heroes. They were often presented with community medallions in appreciation of their (forthcoming) service, they were frequently feted at farewell functions and with parades or cavalcades of motor vehicles when they left for overseas, and they were remembered on Rolls of Honor that communities, Churches and other organisations erected.

This Roll of Honour, produced by the Candelo Methodist Church and honouring those from local Methodist Churches who enlisted, is an example – albeit a modest example – of such Rolls of Honor. At least 19 Rolls of Honor were erected in various locations across the Bega Shire during World War I.



This particular Roll of Honour is especially interesting because, when it was unveiled in September 1916, it proved (in contrast to the usual reception accorded to the unveiling of other local Rolls of Honor) to be a 'keen disappointment' to Candelo Methodist Church parishioners. The local newspaper, the *Southern Record & Advertiser*, records the occasion:

“Memorial Unveiled.


The local Methodist Church was filled at last Sunday night's service, when a Roll of Honour was unveiled as a tribute to the men who have enlisted from the Methodist churches of the circuit, with the addition of others in whom the local Church had special interest. The names of the men are: Dr. W. Evans, Rev. J. Wilkinson, Corporal S. Carver (Pambula), Ptes. R. Ellis, C. Ellis, W. Hammond, E. Dawes, D. Day, C. Roberts, Hill (Wolumla), Edgar J. Kingston (nee Holzhauser). [The

newspaper does not include the names of Ptes. N.R. Crouch and E. Day.]

It was a matter for regret that the memorial on view did not represent the wishes of the generous donor, Mrs. Rogers, nor the plans of the Church officers. Those to whom the work was entrusted failed to accomplish what was intended, and instead of a substantial memorial worthy of a permanent place in the church and a tribute to the men whose names it would perpetuate, a flimsy bit of lithographic work in a frame was opened up, to the keen disappointment of everybody. We understand that this is to be immediately replaced by a memorial in keeping with the original intention.”

No additional names of locals who subsequently enlisted in the army were added to this Roll of Honor and, as far as we know, this Roll of Honor was never 'replaced by a memorial in keeping with the original intention'... and it certainly did not remain in 'a permanent place in the church'! (It – along with several other World War I Rolls of Honor – is now in the Bega Pioneers' Museum's collection.)

This particular Roll of Honor is also interesting because an extraordinarily high proportion of the 13 men named on it lost their lives: Norman Crouch received a shrapnel wound in France and died on 13 February 1917; Don Day died on 6 June 1917 from wounds inflicted by a bullet penetrating his chest during the second Battle of Bullecourt on 3 May 1917; Ray Ellis was severely injured on 15 May 1918 at Villers-Bretonneux, when his spinal cord was severed by a shell, and he died in hospital in England on 12 June 1918; Rev. John Wilkinson was struck by lightning and died at Maitland Showgrounds on 3 February 1916, before he was to be formally enlisted; Clarrie Ellis died from shrapnel wounds to the head during an attack on 7 May 1917; Ernest Day died from broncho-pneumonia whilst on final leave in Candelo on 7 December 1916 and is buried in Candelo Cemetery.

Like so many of the other 101 objects that have been included on our Bega Shire's Hidden Heritage listing, this seemingly simple Roll of Honour has some fascinating stories associated with it. More details are available at bit.ly/begahh33 



This project is assisted by the NSW Government through the Heritage Near Me program.



THE LAST WORD**How Should We ‘Celebrate’ the 250th Anniversary of 1770?**

One of our members has asked us how we plan to celebrate the 250th anniversary, next year, of Captain James Cook’s ‘discovery’ of Australia. It’s a good question.

We’d welcome your suggestions (to southcoasthistory@yahoo.com).

Cook simply sailed up the south coast of NSW – and along the way renamed Gulaga as ‘Mt Dromedary’ (which, recently seems to have widely reverted to being called ‘Gulaga’) and renamed Didthul as ‘Pigeon House Mountain’ (which now, seemingly, is still most commonly called Pigeon House Mountain). He put these two geographic features and the area (well, the coastline) on his map – but seemed to have, otherwise, basically ignored it.

Should we do anything special to mark this 250th anniversary?

For historians, it’s a convenient ‘peg’ on which to revisit a significant era in our history (so Margaret Cameron-Ash’s book, *Lying for the Admiralty* [see page 13] could not have been better timed).

But do we need to do so?

It could be argued that, should we choose to recognise any of the first European contacts with Australia, it would be far more appropriate for Australians to salute Willem Janzoon who is recorded to have stepped onto Australia soil in 26th February 1606, or Dirk Hartog who did so on 25th October 1616, or even the ‘first Europeans to become resident in Australia’, Wouter Loos and Jan Pelgrom de Bye, who were abandoned on the Western Australian coast on 16th November 1626 for their part in the ‘Batavia’ mutiny.

Or are we, by celebrating Cook’s arrival in any way, simply providing a ‘free kick’ to those who argue Cook’s arrival in 1770 (and Governor Phillip’s subsequent arrival in 1788) is nothing other than British invasion and, therefore, should certainly not be celebrated?

My suggestion? Declare 2020 the year to celebrate Australian History (in general), and provide significant community support to those who contribute to the advancement of interest in Australian history.

Peter Lacey

**and finally...**

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