

# HERITAGE

NEWSLETTER OF THE BLUE MOUNTAINS ASSOCIATION  
OF CULTURAL HERITAGE ORGANISATIONS INC.

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## Governor opens 'The Red Admiral' exhibition at Mt Wilson

GOVERNOR of NSW, Professor Marie Bashir, AC CVO officially opened "The Red Admiral" – an exhibition of Patrick White's years at Mount Wilson last month

Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society celebrated the centenary of Patrick White's May 28, 1912 birth date with the opening of an exhibition that examines the writer's early years at Mt Wilson.

It highlights the impact of both the Australian natural environment and the influence of working class and wealthy society individuals and families that were to strongly shape White for the remainder of his life.

"He [White] was one of our greatest writers and this exhibition enriches our understanding of him," said Professor Bashir.

"The hidden yearnings of White's characters are what I have most enjoyed and now I am inspired to revisit them," Professor Bashir said.

David Marr and Barbara Mobbs, White's biographer and literary executor respectively, were also guests of the society at the opening.

A specially commissioned 25 minute DVD of White, and his relationship to Mt Wilson, premiered at the exhibition.

The film featured interviews with three Mt Wilson residents, Peter Valder, Mary Reynolds and Libby Raines. Another three local residents – Rachael Kohn (interviewer), Huw Evans (narrator) and Fiona Carruthers (producer) – also made significant contributions to the film.



**Mary Reynolds, OAM, the Governor of NSW Professor Marie Bashir AC CVO and Des Barrett at the exhibition opening**

Dr Bernadette Brennan and Dr Susan Lever, two respected academics from the University of Sydney and the Association for the Study of Australian Literature (ASAL), and David Marr were also interviewed in the video and explore Mt Wilson's influence on White's works.

Both the video and the exhibition material were enthusiastically received by attendees.

Most people were genuinely surprised at the deep affection White had for his childhood home and the profound influence it had on his work.

At the conclusion of the opening formalities, Des Barrett, president of the Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society, presented \$5,000 to ASAL for the purpose of study at post-graduate level (MA or PhD) of the literary work of Patrick White.

ASAL have nominated that the scholarship would be jointly shared by Georgina Loveridge from the University of Sydney and Lorraine Burdett from the University of NSW. Both Georgina and Lorraine attended the opening and were presented to the audience by Bernadette Brennan, ASAL's president.

The exhibition is now in winter recess and will move to the Mt Wilson Turkish Bath in September through to May 2013.

Details of opening hours during this period will be announced at a later date.

The DVD can be obtained by contacting Tim Gow at [historicalsociety@mtwilson.com.au](mailto:historicalsociety@mtwilson.com.au) or on (02) 4756 2032. A donation to the Society of \$15 to cover postage and copying costs is suggested.

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***An opinion from the editor.....***

## **The digital age and the way researchers source information**

FOR a decade or more libraries and universities around the world have been emptying their bookshelves of books as more of the bound paper objects are digitalised.

Of course some universities and to a lesser degree libraries are using the cover of a need to digitalise to dispose of publications which are not in regular demand thus freeing up valuable space for computers and work areas. Using the euphemisms of today this will mean 'the transformation of libraries from studious environments to social ones'.

Librarians have had to weigh up the pluses and minus of disposing of 'slow demand publications' from libraries and one of the more obvious downsides is this information bound between the dusty covers could be lost for ever.

So how is digitalising affecting the researchers — academics, professionals and more importantly for readers of this newsletter, people like the amateur historian and local studies enthusiasts?

Researchers face the task of acquiring technological skills to navigate the masses of information often displayed in an entirely different form of past centuries.

Generally speaking academics and professionals appear to have readily adapted to digitalisation; many predicting that with completion of indexing the time in researching

subjects has been dramatically shortened allowing time saved "looking things up" to be used for more in-depth research. One of the downsides is of course that the easy access of information by students paves the way to more plagiarism.

But how are amateur historians coping? These are the people who as this column has stated many times before form the backbone of research and recording of our local history and heritage.

They have taken surprisingly well it would seem, to change, although there are some who have been left behind with the computer age and in particular digitalisation.

BMACHO with a generous grant from the Telstra Connected Seniors program earlier this year played a significant role in assisting local historians to better navigate the Internet and other organisations continue to assist older people.

Libraries are and have changed and it is interesting that the incoming chairman of the National Library of Australia, Ryan Stokes appears to come to the job making no claims as a scholar or lover of books. But rather in a previous life, he had according to the federal minister for arts shown leadership in "driving digital content and developing the digital economy with the wireless broadband provider Vividwireless."

**John Leary, OAM - Past president, Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage Organisations Inc.**

## **What have we learned in 2067 years?**

"THE budget should be balanced, the treasury should be refilled, public debt should be reduced, the arrogance of officialdom should be tempered and controlled, and the assistance to foreign lands should be curtailed lest Rome become bankrupt. People must again learn to work, instead of living on public assistance." Cicero - 55 BC

## **Correction**

IN the May – June 2012 edition of *HERITAGE* it was reported that during the past 6 years Barrie [Reynolds] has been successful in gaining considerable funds for the work of BMACHO with more than \$12,000 from successful applications in the past financial year.

While the statement was not incorrect it could have been reported that in his [Professor Reynold's] term of office BMACHO has been successful in applications at local, state and federal levels to the tune of some \$25,000

# Crisis for regional tourist icon Zig Zag Railway

ONE of the region's premier tourist attractions the heritage Zig Zag Railway at Clarence suddenly closed last month and could be off the rails for months after its board received notice to cease operations from the Independent Transport Safety Regulator (ITSR)

Larry Zanker, chairman, Zig Zag Railways issued the following statement: "Zig Zag railway has been operating both steam and diesel rail motor trains seven days a week for many years now.

"Unfortunately this intensive running schedule is taking its toll of our locomotives and carriages.

"Zig Zag Railway is currently developing a whole new set of procedures to ensure that we will be able to return to the services we offered before."

An ISMR spokesperson said the regulatory body did not consider there was an immediate threat to safety at the attraction but action had been forced by "systemic and management difficulties."

NSW Transport Minister Gladys Berejiklian has offered to provide the Zig Zag Railway's management with the advice, expertise and assistance it needs to update its



operational systems to ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.

The Zig Zag Railway is a 19th century engineering masterpiece and a renowned tourist attraction.

The Zig Zag is a full size, narrow gauge tourist railway located at Clarence, 10km east of Lithgow.

Built in the 1860s, the line was constructed to transport people and produce from the western plains of NSW to Sydney.

John Whitton, chief engineer of the NSW Government Railways, designed a 'Zig-Zag' line - a series

of gently sloping ramps in the form of a letter 'Z' - which alternately push and pull trains down the escarpment.

The Zig Zag Railway, passes over three wonderful sandstone viaducts and through two hand-hewn tunnels plus a cutting. The views during its descent from the Blue Mountains into the Lithgow Valley are striking.

By the beginning of the 20th century rail traffic over the Blue Mountains was heavy and the single track was inadequate.

A ten-tunnel line was constructed through the escarpment and completed in 1910 bypassing the zig-zag line.

The trains, track and rolling stock are maintained and operated by the Zig Zag Railway Co-op Ltd, a voluntary, "not for profit" co-operative.

The Zig Zag Railway appeals to children and adults alike, especially those who once rode behind steam locomotives on the way to school or on holidays.



*An early photograph of the heritage Zig Zag railway*

## A BMACHO member

Zig Zag Railway is an inaugural member of BMACHO and its members wish the railway's management and volunteers a speedy return of this great attraction steeped in the heritage of this region



# Historians and friends congratulate John Low on Order of Australia award

MANY will have privately congratulated John Low on being recognised with an Order of Australia Medal (OAM) for his service to the Blue Mountains as a historian, author and librarian

HERITAGE in a salute to John an individual member of BMACHO, has invited a number of people to comment on the work of this truly quiet achiever.

Former president of BMACHO John Leary, OAM has written:  
"Communities throughout Australia have men and women researching and chronicling local history, the immense product of which is and will be of immeasurable value to future students and those interested in our heritage. Most of these good people will go unheralded and John Low in his humble way might well say, 'Why me'.

"Simply ... using the hackneyed phrase, 'his award is well deserved.' He has served his community well. He has been a doer, a giver and the Blue Mountains has been a better place for his coming.

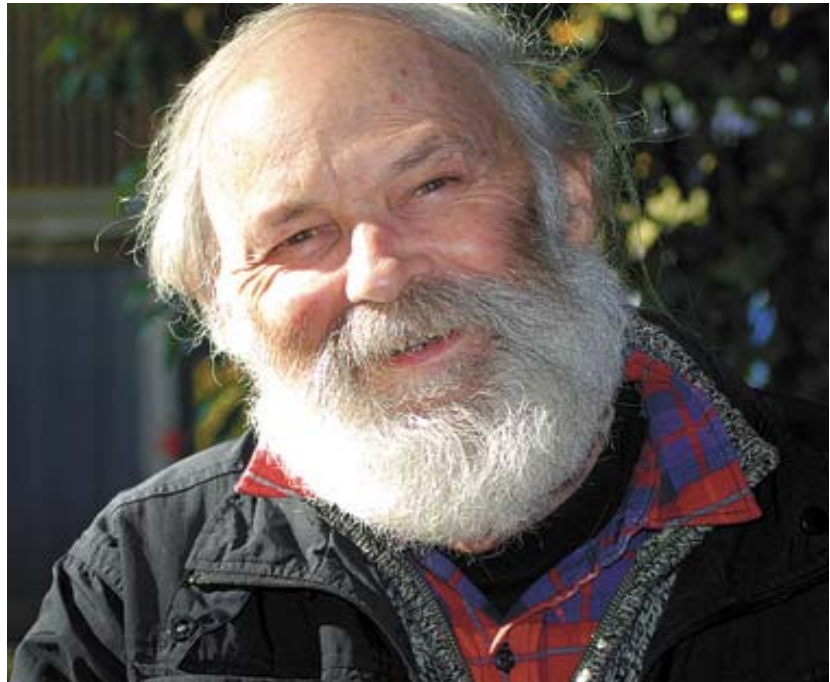
"John Low has a quality which marks him out as a person who is not only interesting but also interested.

"John as a historian, while always keen to discover the facts of our heritage portrays history in an interesting manner almost as if a raconteur.

"Not only is John interesting but he is also interested as a spectator of what is going on around him.

***"I've learnt a great deal in my time as local studies librarian and my life in the Blue Mountains has been the richer for it. Now it's time to retire and let someone else enjoy it."***

***- John Low July 2, 2007***



**John Low, OAM --- Historian, gentleman and friend to many.  
Photograph courtesy Blue Mountains Gazette**

"*Wild Ephemera* a collection of some his poems is indicative of his ability and skill as an unbiased observer of the natural and human history of the Blue Mountains.

"The opening stanza of his poem  
**LISTENING,**

*With cries like breaking glass  
five rosellas,  
blue and scarlet darts  
fire themselves  
at a hidden target  
somewhere  
in the canopy's confusion.  
My daughter is startled, but  
excited.  
She loves the bush innocently,  
pointing  
to where the birds have gone...*

evokes an image which has been part of Blue Mountains heritage since time immemorial.

"One of the most refreshing of my memories of John was in the early years of this millennium when as chairman of the Friends of Woodford Academy; I invited a number of local poets including John Low and Deb Westbury to read poetry as a fund raiser for the National Trust of Australia (NSW).

"The day had been a success, but for me the jewel in the crown of the day was to quietly talk and listen to John about Woodford Academy.

"I listened enthralled to John quietly tell me what he knew about the property. He told me in a quite humble manner what he knew about the property encapsulating in a very short time more than I could have ever hoped to have researched on my own. John has continued to give me this sort of advice and support for more than a decade and particularly as the editor of *HERITAGE*.

"His advice is highly valued by all that come in contact with him not only in the Blue Mountains but in a much wider sphere.

"His pleasing personality and unassuming manner allows those seeking the benefit of his experience to gain access to a treasure trove of knowledge.

"Others will speak and write more eloquently than I of this giant of a man in the field of Blue Mountains heritage and whose love of local history seems to know no bounds,"

**--- John Leary, OAM**

# **‘A mastery of so many unfamiliar corners of Mountains history...’**

Long term former president the RAHS and vice president of BMACHO, Associate Professor Ian Jack was one of many to respond to a request for a comment.

“All students of heritage and history in the Blue Mountains are much in the debt of John Low,” said Dr Jack

“By developing a local studies centre of excellence at Springwood Library, John has been an essential force in broadening public awareness of the diversity of surviving evidence.

“I was impressed at my first exposure to the local studies collections not only by the historical books and journals, the guide books, the rate books, the maps and the photographs, but also by the shelves of creative literature written in or inspired by the Mountains.

“The search-rooms became as a result an indispensable source for cultural history of all sorts.

“I was simultaneously pleased to find the rich files and photographs of the Springwood Historical Society cohabiting with the Blue Mountains City Council's local studies library and equally accessible.

“While John's own holdings dealt even-handedly with the whole of the Blue Mountains City, their location in Springwood implied inevitably a particular relationship with historians of the lower Mountains and the relationship of the two independent collections has benefited all potential users.

“John's amiability, unflappability and determination, combined with his own effortless mastery of so many unfamiliar corners of Mountains history, have given him a very special place in the affections of all right-minded scholars,”

--- Ian Jack.

## **“He kept me entertained with his conversation...”**

President Blue Mountains Family History Society Inc and secretary of BMACHO, Jan Koperberg writes: “I first remember meeting John Low in 1988, when I purchased two Blue Mountains City Council posters, one by H Rousel and one by Joe Booker, which I still have, framed in my home.

“At the time John was in the local studies section of Springwood library when it was in the “dungeons”, under the existing library, which now houses the librarians’ offices.

“However, it would have been a much quieter and much roomier location than the present local studies section, where it shares with Braemar Gallery.

“Over the years, when I have come into contact with John, he has always been the same. Always pleasant and always willing to provide assistance.

“He has been guest speaker at a number of Blue Mountains Family History Society meetings and I once drove John to Windsor for a meeting of the Hawkesbury Family History Group, where he was guest speaker.

“He kept me entertained with his conversation to and from Windsor.

John is ever the historian, still researching, still taking groups on tours, still guest speaking and assisting others with their research.

“His daughters say to him that he is still doing what he was doing when he was working, but now he doesn't get paid. John recalls this with a laugh.

“Congratulations John, you thoroughly deserve the OAM award.”

--- Jan Koperberg



**John Low OAM --- Simply Australia**

## **WELL DESERVED**

Manager Blue Mountains City Council's libraries and customer services Vicki Edmunds has contributed the text from an address at his retirement in 2007

John Low was employed by the Blue Mountains City Library as a local history librarian in March 1982 on a 6 month contract to establish a local history collection.

“Following an extension of this contract, he was appointed on a permanent basis in September 1983.

“From these small beginnings the local history (now studies) collection has grown into a large and valuable part of the library's reference and information service.

“It has been used by a wide variety of people – school and university students, local residents seeking explanations for place and street names, professional and local historians, authors, songwriters etc. – and has been acknowledged in numerous publications.

“Besides acquiring material and answering inquiries John enjoyed getting out and speaking to community groups and school classes and liaising with the various historical societies.

“He particularly enjoyed researching lots of hidden corners of Blue Mountains history and planned to continue doing this.”

John retired from Blue Mountains Library Service in August, 2007.

--- Vicki Edmunds

**Continued page 5**

## ***“I doff my cap to John Low, OAM”***

President of the Blue Mountains Historical Society, Graham Warmbath writes, “I doff my cap to John Low, OAM”

“As a boy in war time Britain, chortling over Sir David Low cartoons of Hitler and Musollini, if someone had told me that one day I should meet a relative, how could I have believed that? Yet it's happened.

“If Sir David ‘damaged Anglo-German relations’, John has charmed us all from his ‘head full of secrets’.

“Did I really think that the soldiers of the 4<sup>th</sup> King's Own Regiment of Foot would lead as harsh a life as those of the convicts? I could go on!

“John Low is a prominent member of Blue Mountains Historical Society

and of its management committee, taking responsibility for a program of ‘walks and talks’ which has attracted a community and grown membership of the society.

“Formerly, John was Blue Mountains City Council's local studies librarian, based at Springwood library. I first met John there, a genial mercurial figure with whom I felt at ease.

“Fast forward to Monday June, 11 last: *The Sydney Morning Herald* publishes the Queen's Birthday Honours List 2012... John Carlisle Low has been awarded the Order of Australia Medal ‘for service to the Blue Mountains as a historian, author and librarian’... news that melted all composure.

“Well done, friend. Hurrah from the Blue Mountains Historical Society.”

--- Graham Warmbath

## **Encyclopaedic knowledge**

Vice president of the Blue Mountains Historical Society Judy Baham writes: “As a comparative newcomer to the Mountains, I have always found John's encyclopaedic knowledge of the area inspiring.

“Little snippets of information given freely come at most unexpected times.

“I enjoy the lectures he gives. They are often on obscure events of local

history which he turns into an absorbing tale.

“As Blue Mountains Historical Society's librarian, I can always turn to John for advice and recommendations for new books and know that what he says is sound advice.

“I can never hope to acquire his knowledge of Blue Mountains authors and their works.”

--- Judy Barham



***John Low on the verandah of “Braemar”, Springwood 1987, a building in which he spent considerable time as a local studies librarian.  
Photograph Blue Mountains City Library collection.***

## **John's train trips to foster local history**

Former president Blue Mountains Historical Society and current editor *Blue Mountains History Journal* Dr Peter Rickwood writes: “It is pleasing that the contributions of the pre-eminent historian in the Blue Mountains have at last been recognised with the award of an OAM.

“One aspect of John's activities that has not been covered by others is his willingness to travel in the interest of fostering local history.

“For some years John made weekly train journeys from Leura to North Sydney to work as a volunteer at the Don Bank Museum.

“But although that is his usual mode of transport he is not restricted to the rail corridor as one of his passions is for walking.

“Thus he has been known to attend ceremonies etc. all over the Blue Mountains irrespective of their location and the prevailing weather conditions, and his presence is always appreciated.

“Congratulations John.”

--- Peter Rickwood

## **A man unstinting of his time**

President of BMACHO and co-founder Springwood Historians, Pamela Smith writes: “John deserves the award for all the hard work and dedication he put into building up the local studies collection from virtually nothing to a very valuable asset of BMCC.

“He was always unstinting in the time he gave to local schools, service organisations and people that frequented local studies (including myself) and as a result John has gained wide recognition and respect from all those with whom he came into contact.”

--- Pamela Smith



# Miles and her mates in the Mountains

A prolific writer and biographer of Miles Franklin, Professor Emerita, Jill Roe, AO (at right) will be one of a line up of first class speakers at the Blue Mountains History conference in October this year.

Professor Roe has chosen the title *Miles and her mates in the Mountains* for her 'talk'

Jill is professor emerita in modern history at Macquarie University, Sydney.

She is the author of the prize-winning *Stella Miles Franklin — A Biography* (2008, now available in paperback and as an e-book), and editor of selections of Miles Franklin's letters (*My Congenials*, 2nd edition, 2010) and her topical writings (*A Gregarious Culture*, 2001, with Margaret Bettison).

She is a long-standing member of the editorial board of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*. At present she is working on aspects of regional history

At Macquarie University, Sydney, she has most recently served as Director of the Macquarie PEN Anthology of the Australian Literature Centre.



She has published books on urban and social policy history in Australia; also on the history of alternative religious movements, and is now a leading authority on the life and works of Australian writer Stella Miles Franklin.

Professor Roe was visiting Professor of Australian Studies at Harvard University from 1994-1995, and an honorary visiting fellow at the Schlesinger Library, Radcliff College in 1999. She was chair of the editorial board of the *Australian Dictionary of Biography* from 1996-2006, an associate editor of a *Supplementary Volume* (2005), and is an ongoing member of the ADB's NSW Working Party.

From 1998-2002 she was president of the Australian Historical Association and is a life member.

From 2005 to 2008 she held leading positions in the NSW History Council. She has been a member of the Australian Nominating Committee, Harvard Chair of Australian Studies since 2005, and in 2009 was appointed a member of the editorial board of *History Australia*.

Her biography of Miles Franklin was awarded the Queensland Premier's History Book prize 2009, and the South Australian Premier's non-fiction prize and the Magarey Medal for Biography in 2010.

**Professor Jill Roe AO the author of the prize-winning *Stella Miles Franklin — A Biography***

## Major sponsors come on board for conference

IN another boost to the Blue Mountains History conference, Blue Mountains City Council has donated \$600 from its Community Donations Program.

This amount and the \$500 from the Katoomba and Upper Blue Mountains Community Bank (Bendigo Bank) will assist in defraying some of the administrative costs associated with organising this important inaugural event.

BMACHO president, Pamela Smith said government grant funds are becoming particularly difficult to obtain in this current climate.

"In addition to the two major sponsors already committed BMACHO would like to thank Blue Mountains City Council library, the Federal Member for Macquarie, Louise Markus MP,

who arranged for the printing of invitations for supporting the conference at no cost.

"Other sponsors are also being sought to keep the fee for participants within reasonable limits," Pamela said.

See comment by Robert Stock, chairman of Upper Blue Mountains Community Bank (Bendigo Bank) on page 13



**Thanks to Louise Markus, MP - Member for Macquarie**

# World War 2 in the Blue Mountains

By Joan Edwards

HOW did mountains people live during WW2?

The common view was that war would be repeat of 1914-1918; an expeditionary force would be formed, go overseas, women would send knitted socks and food parcels, and war would be "over there".

The Commonwealth enacted several pieces of legislation in the first week including banning certain imports, price controls and regulation of enemy aliens.

Within the background of international politics and events, a mere 7 million Australians occupied this island nation, many of whom still called Britain "home" even though they had never been there.

The Commonwealth Government declared the narrow coastal belt from Newcastle to Wollongong as the priority area, ignoring the small mountain settlements with dairies, poultry farms and piggeries, the holiday destinations of the upper mountains and the Lithgow Valley industrial area yet to recover from the depression.

The significance of the area was not fully realised until 1942.

Censorship determined what the public was allowed to know as well as what the government wanted them to believe – not necessarily the facts.

Many variations of the facts have emerged over the years so it has been necessary to rely on Trove's digitised major metropolitan newspapers for the wartime version to which I have been able to add released information, extant newspapers and records, oral histories, reminiscences and unexpected, once restricted, archival material.

There are several recurring themes all of which relate to the political, military, social and economic conditions at the time.

Rationing was in force, some items were on the coupon system, others



*Providing an escort to Wentworth Falls station for a patient allowed to go home*

when shopkeepers eked out their supplies to regular customers.

Creativity and ingenuity were paramount as local ladies dried used tea leaves to bulk out the official supply sufficient for two cups per day, or use golden syrup when no egg was available to bind a cake.

Similarly they could dodge the holes in Dad's worn out trousers, turn them inside out and create new trousers for the son.

One pre-war development at the Small Arms Factory, Lithgow was to revert from peacetime orders such as golf club heads and handcuffs back to guns for which they were famed in WW1.

The output of Bren guns was outstanding especially in view of strikes, not receiving full set of blue prints or tools and under trained workforce.

Lithgow's coal mines, electricity generation, woollen mills, pottery works and nearby Portland Cement Works all contributed to the war effort.

Goods to and from these locations crossed the mountains by the one direct road or rail line through the Blue Mountains.

Lithgow could not house the ever increasing workforce so shanty camps developed.

Secondary medical screening using X-rays identified tuberculosis in many recently enlisted personnel.

In numerous cases it was two or three weeks after attestation so they were discharged into the care of the Red Cross at Bodington Sanatorium at Wentworth Falls.

Medical advances in T.B. treatment were in their infancy and Bodington became recognised for its care. Other male TB patients were nearby at the Queen Victoria Homes with fewer amenities.

Activity increased in the desperate days of 1942. Brownouts were in force, and all signage removed from streets and railway stations.

Street lighting and vehicle headlights were hooded.

In addition to usual voluntary support services, volunteers undertook roles within the National Emergency Services (NES) as wardens, first aiders, ambulance drivers and filled any other positions as required.

Several centres produced hundreds of camouflage nets, while others took up the challenge and joined the Volunteer Air Observers Corps (plane spotters) and provided 24 hour service at Wentworth Falls and Blackheath.

**Continued page 9**



# Volunteer Defence Force lost its "dad's Army image

*Continued from page 8*

The Volunteer Defence Force lost its Dad's Army image as it came under military control.

They were readied for possible invasion, prepared for sabotage if required. Gun emplacements were established to defend Lithgow industries. The route across the mountains was vital.

Hundreds of SAF workers were housed in the upper Blue Mountains. The workers were transported by rail, later by buses.

It is difficult to imagine the men and women, working 12 and 8 hour shifts respectively, travelling by buses limited to 20 miles per hour due to brownout regulations, or even loaded buses travelling up Victoria Pass at that speed.

The impact of voluntary evacuations to the mountains in 1942 is difficult to comprehend.

Katoomba school (K to 3<sup>rd</sup> year high) had 830 pupils in 1941, and an extra 500 turned up on the first school day in 1942.

Up to 70 extras turned up at primary schools. Mountain boarding schools were filled to capacity and several Sydney boarding schools set up temporary boarding houses.

Teachers were called up, retirees and married women taught in classrooms or hallways or open lunch sheds or any other available space.

Victoria Barracks needed a less vulnerable location and requisitioned Burnside Homes at North Parramatta and so buildings to house another 500 had to be requisitioned in Springwood.

Leura's large bus depot was taken to store emergency food supplies and the Hydro Majestic Hotel for a U.S. army hospital.

The pros and cons of obtaining chemical weapons for retaliatory purposes was discussed from the mid 1930s as it was known the Japanese were using them in China.

It was not until the 1990s that citizens knew about Glenbrook tunnel storage, even then the extent of chemical weapon storage was not revealed. Of course, spies and enemy aliens are essential in war stories and, yes, we had them too.

All this went on within mountains life as we know it. Droughts, storms, weddings, thefts, sporting activities, movies, bushfires, late trains, lost bushwalkers, golf results and more bushfires as well as fears, uncertainty and the stress of family and friends serving overseas, the ever increasing lists of casualties and the dreaded telegram announcing missing or killed in action.

## About the author



Joan Edwards is an historical geographer with a particular interest in people and events within their total environment – physical, built, social, economic and political.

This research results from Joan's desire to place her childhood memories in the environmental context.

Joan has produced numerous publications over the years including educational texts for Oxford University Press and others.

Joan is the past president of the Blue Mountains Family History Society Inc. and currently its vice president.

*World War 2 in the Blue Mountains* will be published by Blue Mountains Family History Society in 2013.

## DAFFODILS AT THEIR BEST MOUNT TOMAH AUGUST 18-26



Blue Mountains Botanic Garden, Mount Tomah will be supporting the Cancer Council's Daffodil Day on Friday, August 24 as part of a week long festival celebrating the beauty of daffodils and in anticipation of the start of spring. For details see page 13.

### Managing your collection workshop

State Records in partnership with RAHS will conduct a regional workshop, *Managing Your Collection* on Saturday, November 24.

Being organised by BMACHO, the workshop will be held at Hobby's Reach the property of Blue Mountains Historical Society, 101 Blaxland Road, Wentworth Falls.

The workshop will commence at 10.30am and a cup of tea or coffee will be available from 10am.

Morning tea will be provided halfway through the workshop and a light lunch will be provided at 1.30pm.

Bookings are essential by e-mail to: [j.koperberg@bigpond.com](mailto:j.koperberg@bigpond.com) or phone to Jan Koperberg 902) 4754 1544.

***SAVE 10% on early bird bookings***

## **BLUE MOUNTAINS HISTORY CONFERENCE**

**To be held at the historic Carrington Hotel, Katoomba  
on, Saturday, October 20, 2012**

**Conference theme: “*Colonial Society*”  
with a great line-up of speakers and presenters**

### **PROGRAM**

Conference to be opened by former president RAHS, Prof Ian Jack.



Prolific writer and biographer of Miles Franklin Professor Emerita, Jill Roe, AO has chosen the title Miles and her mates in the Mountains for her ‘talk’



*Colonial dress* by Glynis Jones, curator fashion & dress design & society, Powerhouse Museum.



*The early years of the colony* by keynote speaker, Prof Paul Ashton, co-director Australian Centre for Public History.



*The Carrington Hotel - a return to the era of grace, elegance and charm.* A tour guided by Paul Innes.



*Nature and role of gardens in the early settlement period* by Silas Cliford-Smith archivist at the Heritage Centre, UNE



Musical interlude Jim Low, folk singer, historian and writer.

**Bookings with full payment before August 20 will be discounted to \$45 per person ---**

**Cost includes morning and afternoon tea as well as lunch in the historic grand dining room of Carrington Hotel.**

For further information and early bookings (capacity limited to 120 participants) contact Jan Koperberg at [j.koperberg@bigpond.com](mailto:j.koperberg@bigpond.com) or [bmacho.heritage@gmail.com](mailto:bmacho.heritage@gmail.com)



# ***Paddy Ryan left his mark in stone, but much of his life is an enigma***

***by Pamela Smith - Springwood Historians***

PADDY Ryan, the local Blue Mountains stonemason, remains somewhat of an enigma. Not a great deal is known about his life or origins despite being described as an 'early character of the district.'

It appears that he did not belong to any association or group in Springwood because when his name was mentioned periodically in the newspapers it was only in relation to his profession.

The earliest official record of Paddy is documented on the 1891 census, where it was said that Patrick Ryan lived in a private house on Grose Road, Faulconbridge.

A few years later the 1894-5 electoral roll confirmed again that he was still residing at Faulconbridge.

His occupation had changed, and was noted then as being a 'farmer'. Andrew Ryan, a labourer of Springwood was also listed on the same roll, but it is not known if the two were related.

It is not clear how much land he owned because his name does not appear on any early maps. However, it appears that the property he held was located in the vicinity of Grose Road and Chapman Parade.

The road that is currently Chapman Parade was known initially as Grose Road, and the present day extension of Grose Road past the high school was known then as Links Road. More specifically, it would seem that Paddy owned the property where the Norman Lindsay Gallery is currently located.

That home, along with several others in the district, attests to the high quality and enduring nature of his workmanship. Some years prior to the 1890s he is believed to have been responsible for the erection of several other buildings in the area.

At Faulconbridge/Linden he is thought to have built *Lady Martin's Bath*, *Martin's Folly* and a home for Sir Alfred Stephen.



***Everton built by Paddy Ryan for the Hon John Meeks in 1875-7 is still standing,***

Around c1882-3, in the same area, he was the stonemason who built *Eurama/Weemala* for Andrew Hardie McCulloch MP, to a design supplied by colonial architect George Mansfield.

Paddy was employed again c1885-7 for the building of *Everton* for the Hon. John Meeks. *Everton* still exists. Paddy was most fortunate to have a 'moneyed local' clientele.

According to the *Nepean Times* (June 2, 1894), the skill of local stonemason Paddy Ryan was in demand again.

This time he was erecting a stone cottage for Mrs Quarry (formerly Gibbes). The *Times* mentioned that the home was being built on land that lay along Lomatia Park Road.

A paper written many years ago by Mrs Quarry's grandson, Mr HB Gibbes, stated that 'several attempts' were made at building the cottage from stone that was quarried from a site nearby.

Unfortunately Mr Gibbes did not elaborate on what the problem was. The home later became *Stonehaven*, a home for boys,

which was demolished 1966-7 for the Great Western highway deviation.

Several years later the *Nepean Times* (June 18, 1898) related that P Ryan, contractor, was about to 'finish off' the home that stood on property he had subsequently sold to Francis Foy of Mark Foy fame.

Paddy had long been in the process of building the home, dubbed *Erin go Brangh* ---but according to the newspaper the home stood unfinished for many years.

We have no way of knowing how Foy came to know about the property because it is so far off the main road as to make it invisible to anyone passing.

Perhaps Paddy advertised it for sale in the paper but, if he did, we have no record.

Foy subsequently owned portions 4 (80 acres), 108 (42 acres) and 110 (50 acres) along the present day Chapman Parade.

But it is not clear if Paddy Ryan was the original owner of all three lots.

***Continued page 12***



# ***Paddy before the court for having “too much powder on the job”***

In March 1898 John Lawler, a Sydney bedding manufacturer, employed Paddy Ryan to build his stone cottage on a rather uneven piece of property that he owned in Railway Parade, Springwood.

The home still stands today and is one of the finest in the district. It is listed on the Blue Mountains City Council heritage register.

The erection of Lawler's home did not pass without its share of drama. The quarryman (Paddy?) who was working on the project was served with a fine for having 'too much powder on the job', with insufficient means of storage.

He was obliged to appear before the bench at Penrith Court House where he was duly fined. The name of Lawler's home, *Eringah*, like Paddy Ryan's unfinished home (*Erin go brah*), would suggest they both had Irish connections.

In August 1903 the *Nepean Times* correspondent mentioned that 'Mr P Ryan was doing some good work as a stonemason at Mr Lawler's new buildings'.

Unfortunately, the reporter failed to specify where these buildings were! Almost a year went by without further news, and in July 1904 readers were told by the *Nepean Times* that Mr P Ryan of Vale of Avoca had lately started in the poultry farming line.

An amazing tale was told of an Orpington hen he had purchased from a Rooty Hill poultry farm that had laid 66 eggs without a break.

The poor hen rested for a week before she started this amazing feat all over again! He was reported to be very pleased with his purchase.

Paddy had a stern warning given to him via the pages of the same paper in 1906, which said that it would be advisable for Mr Ryan to keep his pigs and poultry well protected with the rifle club members so anxious to start shooting.

The exact location of Vale of Avoca is unclear, however a paperback

entitled *Exploring the Blue Mountains* mentions a place with this name as being downstream of the Grose Valley.

The first explorer into the narrow valley was William Paterson who thought it might be a gateway to the west. However, it is not known if this refers to the place of residence of our Paddy Ryan.

Paddy is known to have married Kathleen (Kate) but no details are available as to where or when this event occurred.

They had a son Patrick junior who was a contemporary of William and Percy Croucher.

The three made a return trip on foot to Jenolan Caves in 1895.

Paddy died in 1917, and proctor James CJ Ryan administered his estate. Kate was his beneficiary.

The 1920 electoral roll mentions Thomas George Ryan, railway employee, *Tyneside* Faulconbridge, Kathleen Ryan, St Martha's Home Leichhardt, and Martin Ryan, *Avoca*, Archer Street, Chatswood, as owners of allotments of land at Faulconbridge.

It seems safe to assume that Kathleen (his wife?) and Martin were relatives of Paddy but more research would be required to confirm if all three shared kinship.

## ***About the author.....***

Pamela Smith, the author of this biography of Paddy Ryan is a regular contributor to *HERITAGE*.

She has an Advanced Diploma in Local, Family & Applied History, a Bachelor of Arts (Hons.) in History and is currently studying for a Masters in History all through the University of New England Armidale.

She has studied Australian and international history, museum practices, and conservation. Her special interests are women's history, the history of education and politics and social history in general.

She is currently working through a unit on crime, punishment and servitude which encompasses the convict era, the architecture and function of early prisons, World War internment in Australia and the current day internment of asylum seekers.

She is also currently president of the Blue Mountains Association of



Cultural Heritage Organisations Inc and a founding member of Springwood Historians. She also serves on Blue Mountains City Council's heritage advisory committee.

An avid local history researcher and author she has been published on a wide range of subjects.

This article was first published on Springwood Historians blog <http://springwoodhistorians.blogspot.com.au/>

***Book before 20 August and save 10%  
Blue Mountains History Conference  
20 October, 2012 at Carrington Hotel  
Katoomba***

Contact Jan Koperberg at [j.koperberg@bigpond.com](mailto:j.koperberg@bigpond.com)

# Magnificent old giants at Mount Tomah



**School children measuring the girth of a giant *Eucalyptus fastigata* (Brown Barrels) tree trunk at Mount Tomah**

THE Blue Mountains Botanic Garden at Mount Tomah will celebrate National Tree Day as a family day with displays and walks.

National Tree Day this year is on Sunday, July 29 and activities are planned in the garden from 10.30am to 2.30pm.

Visitors to the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden can discover the magnificent old giants of Mount Tomah.

They can be guided through the ancient hollows of *Eucalyptus fastigata* (Brown Barrels) and meet dinosaur trees - the tallest living species in the world!

The Waratah Education Centre will open its doors to showcase our wonderful world of trees.

Images, barks, fruits, seeds, amazing facts about trees and their life giving properties can be seen.

Since 1996 National Tree Day has recorded over 2.8 million volunteers planting over 17 million native trees and shrubs.

National Tree Day includes a whole range of different activities around Australia including planting trees and native plants and bushes, caring for trees and plants by removing weeds, information sessions, bushwalks and more. Most of all it is lots of fun!

The Blue Mountains Botanic Garden, Mount Tomah sits on a basalt peak 1,000 metres above sea level in the World Heritage listed Greater Blue Mountains.

## Bendigo Bank supports Blue Mountains history conference

BENDIGO Bank through its local branch, Katoomba and Upper Blue Mountains Community Bank has donated \$600 towards the administration costs of the Blue Mountains History Conference

Chairman of the Katoomba and Upper Blue Mountains Community Bank, local resident Robert Stock announcing the donation said, "The bank is very pleased to have the opportunity to offer support to the Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage Organisations Inc with a contribution towards the cost of the annual history conference in October.

"It is clear that much of our cultural heritage is lost over the years as technologies change and our built environment is redeveloped.

"Hopefully with advocacy and education provided by organisations such as BMACHO, where redevelopment is necessary, it can be done sensitively and in such a way that evidence of the past is not lost.

The garden is home to thousands of species of cool climate and southern hemisphere plants

## Daffodil festival

The early bulbs are starting to appear and once again the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden will support the Cancer Council the Daffodil Festival from August 18-26.

With optimum growing conditions, the garden will be transformed by a sea of golden hues as additional plantings of daffodils erupt in bloom.

Enjoy a picnic, take some photographs or simply enjoy the mass plantings. Cut flowers and Cancer Council merchandise will be available for sale.

### Contact details for all events:

Call: 02 4567 3000 / Restaurant

Tomah 02 4567 2060

Email: [tomah@rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au](mailto:tomah@rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au)

Find us on [Facebook](#)

[www.mounttomahbotanicgarden.com.au](http://www.mounttomahbotanicgarden.com.au)

Entry to the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden, Mount Tomah is free.

"Maintaining this cultural heritage adds interest and quality to life up here in the mountains.

"It is of course also a significant theme with our local tourism industry.

As such BMACHO's efforts to understand and preserve our cultural heritage are applauded.

"We wish BMACHO every success with its conference later this year," Mr Stock said



**Robert Stock**

# Lithgow Small Arms Factory to celebrate centenary

LITHGOW Small Arms Factory Museum will celebrate the centenary of the establishment of the factory which went on to be the source of much of Australia's defence equipment for World War 1 and 2.

An exhibition of pre-federation colonial weapons will be presented by the Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum in conjunction with the Antique Arms Collectors Society of Australia from September 20 to October 27.

A series of centenary workshop talks will be conducted over the weekend October 20-21.

For more information on these activities contact the Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum by e-mail to [lithgowsafmusesum@ozemail.com.au](mailto:lithgowsafmusesum@ozemail.com.au) or by telephone to (02) 6351 4452.

## BRIEF HISTORY OF THE SMALL ARMS FACTORY

The Federation of the Australian states in 1901 resulted in a uniform defence and armed services policy being implemented.

When the British Army adopted the .303 calibre short, magazine Lee-Enfield rifle for general issue to its forces colonial governments were "asked" to standardise and submit orders to the UK for the new weapons.

It was proposed in Australia that the country should be more self sufficient and manufacture its own defence needs in its own arsenal and a number of sites were considered for Australia's first rifle manufacturing facility.

The government received an offer in 1904 by Mr W Sandford of Eskbank Ironworks to lease land, supply cheap coal and prepare his plant to produce the steel required for the manufacture of rifles if Lithgow was chosen.

The Lithgow Progress Association also made representation to the Honorable Sir Joseph Cook MP on Lithgow's behalf.

After considerable investigations by the defence department and inspection by Lord Kitchener in 1909, Lithgow was chosen as the site to establish a small arms factory.

The ready supply of steel and coal for power were the main factors but it was also believed that Lithgow was beyond the range of the naval guns of the day.

Engineer Commander William Clarkson of the Royal Australian Navy was seconded by the defence department to supervise all operations.

A suitable parcel of land was purchased and the contract to erect the factory buildings was let to the firm of Jones and Allman early in 1910.

The contract for the power plant was given to the State Government Dockyard.

World wide tenders were called for the supply of suitable plant to manufacture 1,500 rifles per annum. Despite there being three British tenders, the contract was awarded to the Pratt & Whitney Company of Hartford Connecticut, USA because of its assurance its machinery was designed for the "American method of repetition manufacture" which is now known as "high precision mass production". Included in the contract was the supply of machine tools, tooling and gauges as well as the training of six craftsmen in America.

The factory was officially opened by the Governor General, Baron Denman on June 8, 1912.

The level of employment grew rapidly from 25 to 300 in 1913 and the onset of war in 1914 brought increased production, extra shifts and a labour force which reached 1,150 by the end of hostilities in 1918. The factory was the largest employer in Lithgow and continued pioneering the techniques of mass production with precision tools and highly trained personnel which enabled it to produce all of Australia's weapon needs.

Rifle production declined in the 1920's with a resulting reduction in the work-force but production of the .303" Vickers machine gun commenced in a newly erected building circa 1924 and staff numbers began to rise.

The 1930s' depression caused more reductions in staff with the figure reduced to around 250 employees. Despite much opposition from the private sector the factory began to undertake commercial production in an attempt to retain its workforce and keep the factory operational.

This work included the manufacture of Western Electric 'talkie' projectors, reverse engineered sheep shearing hand-sets, Slazenger golf clubs, spanners, sewing machines, police handcuffs and many other non-military items.  
**Continued page 18**



*A rifle fan display at the Small Arms Factory, Lithgow*



# Tribute to Bills horse troughs

**Patsy Moppett an individual member of BMACHO and a heritage consultant at Yethome who contributed this article writes:** 'Following up on previous articles in *HERITAGE* about Bills horse troughs, I would like to add a little more information. Having developed an interest in them elsewhere in NSW and Victoria, I began to notice them a little closer to home'

BILLS horse troughs are located in mostly in country towns throughout NSW and Victoria, although there are some to be found in the metropolitan area.

They were a feature of the Depression years, and none were made after 1940.

Many had a small dog drinking trough attached to the side. The average daily drinking water requirement for a horse is said to be about 50 litres.

Other troughs are showing signs of wear, and with most people not being aware of their significance they are sometimes inadvertently destroyed.

Some are still in pristine condition in their original locations, and others have been relocated to sites near museums etc.

Many of the troughs have had to be moved to make way for road works, and many were destroyed or dumped in rubbish tips.

Many were saved from this fate and have found their way into private ownership and with tender loving care are still preserved today.

They are very much sort after items for features in gardens

Some have been relocated to sporting grounds and are used for their original purpose for watering horses, or for garden beds.

The two at Narrandra are classic examples, being located at the pony club grounds as a flower trough, and at the show ground, possibly still being used as a drinking trough.

Within the Blue Mountains there are several, at Medlow Bath, Glenbrook, Warrimoo and Wentworth Falls.

Another unrelated trough is located at Lawson, being donated by Mrs. R D Meagher to "The dumb friends of



***A Bills horse trough at Wentworth Falls***

man" presented to the Blue Mountains Shire Council in 1921.

The Glenbrook trough has been well documented by John Low, historian, in the March-April 2011 edition of *HERITAGE*.

The history of their troughs and their origins with George and Annis Bills was related admirably by John Leary, OAM in the January-February 2010 edition of *HERITAGE*.

The troughs at Medlow Bath and Wentworth Falls are of standard design.

They are mostly a water area, a cistern with an iron lid being at one end.

There is the additional small water trough for dogs and cats at the right hand end.

The pedimented section at the rear has the usual terrazzo panel nearing the Bills' name.

The trough at Warrimoo is the same usual characteristic design, but lacking the small side trough for small animals.

The trough was relocated in 1999 from the highway frontage, and now sits within a small park, where its significance is somewhat lost, away from where horses would normally have passed through.

Much of the wider research into Bills troughs can be attributed to the work of George Gemmill, who has travelled all over with his dog Hamish, recording and photographing them.

George is the "keeper of the memories" and has recorded over 310 locations where the troughs may be found in NSW, Victoria, Western Australia and from Great Britain. He has yet to find any in South Australia or Tasmania.

As a young boy and growing up in Newport, Melbourne Australia, George sold papers on the Williamstown short road ferry. He can remember a Bills trough which was in a park over the road from the Newport Hotel near the bus stop.

As lads they used to meet around this spot, and the trough was used by the few horses which were still being used to deliver bread, milk, ice and wood around Newport. This would have been about 1948.

# Compassion for animals during the depression

*Continued from page 15*

George has dedicated a web site to the memories of Annis and George Bills, who showed such compassion for animals during the Depression.

From his travels he has collected a large library of photographs, and has displayed the images and their locations on his web site.

He has received photographs of Bills troughs from places as far away as London Ireland and Northcliffe in Western Australia, and he is always open to add in items that others find.



**A Bills horse trough at Warimoo**

The Webmaster of his site can be contacted at [billshorsetroughs@hotmail.com](mailto:billshorsetroughs@hotmail.com) and George always welcomes inquiries, and additions to the library.

There are still some to be found. Any new ones I find, I relate the information to George Gemmill, as do other people from across the globe.

He would love to hear of any others through the Blue Mountains and elsewhere that are hidden away in some back street or in a rear yard gathering moss.

As an aside, the other water trough located at Lawson at the Honour Avenue Gardens, was originally installed in the 1920s in Douglass Square and relocated to its current setting in Honour Avenue near the remnant steps of the Grand Hotel (prior to the hotel's destruction by fire) during earlier refurbishments.

The trough has a recessed trough beneath, probably for use by dogs. It has a timber post and rail buffer plank to the road, with a plate and lock fixed to the plank to prevent access.

The trough is in reasonable condition with clear lettering, painted yellow, mostly flaked off. It no longer functions as a refill trough, containing rainwater only.

The trough has a plaque on each end which reads "The Dumb Friends of Man. Presented to the Blue Mountains Shire Council by Mrs RD Meagher, Lawson 1921".

A review of the trough's history was presented by John Low in the September-October 2011 issue of *HERITAGE*.

## References:

Conservation Management Plan for Honour Avenue Gardens, Lawson, for Blue Mountains City Council 2007  
<http://billshorsetroughs.spaces.live.com>  
[www.webdotwiz.com/bills\\_horsetroughs](http://www.webdotwiz.com/bills_horsetroughs)  
NSW Heritage Office Listings

## e-mails are bouncing

IN recent times a number of members of the Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage Organisations Inc. (BMACHO) may have been missing out on e-mailed advice of activities and other information.

Secretaries of organisations are particularly asked to provide this updated information as often the secretary or contact person for the society also changes from time to time.

.Email addresses with the contact name and telephone number of all individual and organisational members should be e-mailed to BMACHO's secretary at [j.koperberg@gmail.com](mailto:j.koperberg@gmail.com) .

## Bendigo Community Bank helps Everglades prepare for fire

A donation of \$1500 from Bendigo Community Bank will be used by Everglades Historic House and Gardens to purchase a pump to better equip the property for firefighting.

President of the Everglades fund-raising committee, sandy Luxford approached the Katoomba bank asking for a donation for the equipment and within a short time the board approved the donation.

This is the second time the Bendigo Community Bank has supported Everglades, last year sponsoring the inaugural Vintage and Retro weekend.

The National Trust property Everglades which adjoins vast stretches of national park bushland has been lucky since the 1930s to escape from bushfires.

The 2011 fire reached to within 500 metres of the property and the Gordon Creek area has not been burnt since the 1957 bushfires.

Head gardner, Guy McIlraith has always been aware of the issue and pointed out the need for a fire-fighting pump.

Everglades at Leura is set in one of Australia's foremost heritage gardens.

The house and gardens were designed in the 1930s as a week-end retreat by Danish-born architect Paul Sorensen.

The property sits on the edge of the Jamison Valley and offers breathtaking views across the Blue Mountains National Park.

The gardens themselves cover more than 12 acres and feature both European and native Australian flora.

Everglades is open from 10am to 5pm in spring and summer and from 10am to 4pm in autumn and winter.

# Cemetery walk remembers Gallipoli hero

A cemetery walk at the Lithgow Cemetery to mark ANZAC day 2012 was held by the Lithgow & District Family History Society Inc.

The walk started with morning tea in the car park and the sharing of ANZAC biscuits made by member Cecily McCarten where participants also had a discussion about returned service men and women. This was followed by the playing of the Last Post and one-minute silence before commencing the walk.

Each visitor was given a map showing the graves of 12 returned servicemen.

It was very fitting to see Sandra Haley able to lay the card on her own father Alfred Piggott's grave and Cecily McCarten lay the card on her grandfather Cecil Ford's grave.

Members visited the grave of Private Joseph Peter King who was a Gallipoli hero.

Joseph King was born in 1891 in Omaru, New Zealand and was the son of Frederick and Margaret King.

He enlisted at Rosehill, Sydney on October 2, 1914 in the 13th Battalion.

His occupation prior to enlisting was that of a coach painter.

Joseph proceeded to Gallipoli aboard the Alexandria arriving April 12, 1915. He suffered from shell shock when he was in Rest Gully and a shell exploded just behind his dugout. He and two of his mates were buried.

He was dazed at the time and was unconscious for 3 hours and suffered concussion, but did not report sick until 5 days later, when he was sent to Lemnos where he remained for 4 months before returning to Gallipoli, although he had become very nervous while resting at Lemnos.

Joseph was returned to Australia suffering from shell shock and was discharged from service on August 24, 1916 as medically unfit suffering from epileptic fits.

He never returned to New Zealand but was admitted to Lithgow Hospital in 1917 suffering from Epilepsy and his address was given as The Lansdowne Hotel. He passed away on October 2, 1917 just 26 years of age.

After hearing the story of Private King it has been decided by some members of the society to have a working bee and do some restoration and cleaning of his grave.

Lithgow Family History Society will make this an annual event.



**Cecily McCarten laying the card on her grandfather Cecil Ford's grave**



**Sandra Haley laying a card on the grave of her father Alfred Piggott**

**Text and photographs contributed by Helen Taylor**

## High tea at Everglades

HIGH tea will be served at Everglades historic house and garden on Saturday, July 28

Enjoy the ambience of the Art Deco dining room at the recently restored 1930's property at Leura.

A scrumptious home made high tea follows a welcome punch and nibbles. Leaf tea and plunger coffee will be served.

Wander around the garden before or after the tea.

Bookings essential by telephoning Anita on 4784 1974 or Liz on 0418206899.

Cost: \$25 for National Trust members, \$30 for adults and \$10 for a child.

## National Trust luminary dies

JOHN FISHER who recently passed way will be remembered for his contribution to the National Trust of Australia (NSW) in its formative years from 1960 into the 1980s.

A member of the Trust Council for 20 years, he founded and was the first chairman of the Trust's historic building's committee.



Here he worked with such luminaries as Helen Blaxland, Max Freeland, Leslie Wilkinson, Rachel Roxburgh, Morton Herman, John Mansfield, Cedric Flower, Daniel Thomas and Ted Farmer, the government architect, producing a list of significant buildings worth preserving.

John also worked on many Trust properties as an honorary architect, and worked on most of the Trust advisory committees on both built and natural heritage.

In 1959 he prepared a plan to preserve The Rocks, and in 1966 represented the Trust in advising the government on preserving Hill End.



## Lithgow Family History elects 2012-13 committee

LITHGOW & District Family History Society Inc recently held it's annual general meeting and election of officers for the coming year.

Pictured are members and office bearers for 2012-13.

Back row, L-R: Laurie Cook- secretary/public officer, Louise Dean - research officer/social secretary, Coralie McDonald - member, Ian Irvine - filing, Danny Whitty - vice president, Robyn Whitty - member, Marcie Farr - photographic convenor, Ken

Brice - committee, Helen Taylor- cemetery convenor/publicity officer, Eleanor Martin- president/ membership secretary, Jan Saunderson - publishing officer,

Seated left to right: Lea Wootton - indexing convenor/PALO convenor, Ross McDonald - journal editor, Ean Jones - special projects computer indexer, Kathy Brennan - librarian, Sandra Haley - minutes secretary.



Absent: Margaret Buckley - treasurer and Cecily McCarten - committee.

The society is hoping for another productive year with steady growth as it has had in the previous year. The library is still growing with many additions to the shelves. Anyone wishing to join the society or just call in to do some casual research will be made most welcome.

"Family history is still one of the fastest growing hobbies found today and becomes quite addictive so why not come in and research your own ancestors, said Helen Taylor.

The society's library hours are Tuesday nights 6pm – 9pm, Fridays 10am – 4pm and the 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday of every month 10am – 4pm. There is always an on duty librarian to help.

## Discover exotic plants

THE discovery of the continent of Australia with its exotic plants previously unknown to the rest of the world caused a sensation to the botanic scientists.

Mt Annan Botanic Gardens displays over 4000 of these plants in acres of hills and lakes.

The Blue Mountains branch of National Trust is organising a bus tour to Mt Annan on Saturday, August 11.

Participants will have a choice of staying on the bus for a tour of the gardens or taking a walk to scenic outlooks, lakes or bird hides.

Cost is \$35 per person for Trust members, \$40 for non members or \$25 if participants meet the tour at Mt Annan Botanic Gardens

Enquiries and bookings to Sandra at 4739 3003 or [BlueMtsNatTr@gmail.com](mailto:BlueMtsNatTr@gmail.com)

## Small Arms Factory history

### *Continued from page 13*

With the outbreak of the second world war manufacture of small arms resumed and following the evacuation of Dunkirk in 1940 the United Kingdom requested that Australia forward as many rifles as could be spared. In response, 30,000 rifles were sent, severely reducing availability of weapons.

Action was taken to expand weapon production by erecting new feeder factories, the first at Bathurst followed by Orange, then Forbes, Wellington, Mudgee, Cowra, Young, Parkes, Dubbo and Portland.

In 1943 the total personnel employed at Lithgow was 6,000 while a further 6,000 were employed at the ten feeder factories. Weekly production achieved figures of 4,000 rifles, 150 Bren guns and 70 Vickers machine guns.

To protect Lithgow's defence facilities from possible air-attack, anti-aircraft guns were sited at the east and western ends of the

Lithgow valley as well as a machine gun company stationed on the roof of the factory.

During 1945 all 'feeder factories' were closed and full production re-established at Lithgow.

When manufacture of the .303" SMLE rifle No.1 Mk.III ceased in 1956, a total of 640,000 had been produced in Australia, 415,000 of these were produced from 1939.

In 1954 the Australian government adopted the 7.62mm L1A1 rifle (Australia's version of the Belgian FAL rifle) and entered into a manufacturing agreement with the Fabrique Nationale d' Armes de Guerre of Belgium to produce the rifle at Lithgow.

Again the factory was completely re-organised, new buildings erected, and new machine tools procured for its production. When production ceased in the mid 1980s, some 230,000 units had been issued.

# Western crossing commemoration 2013-15

great ideas - thoughts - just being talked about or it's really going to happen

## New chair



Dr Anne-Maree Whitaker, senior vice president of the RAHS (pictured above) will take over as chair of the Western Crossing committee at its August meeting.

She replaces Prof David Carment who has been the inaugural chairman for a number of years.

As a descendant of William Cox the road builder, she has a personal interest in the 2013-15 commemorations.

Anne-Maree is an independent professional historian who undertakes research in a wide range of topics.

She is the author of several books including histories of Marrickville, South Sydney, Appin and St Vincent's Hospital.

Her biography *Joseph Foveaux: power and patronage in early NSW* was short-listed for the NSW Premier's Literary awards in 2001. She won the National Trust Heritage award for the Sydney Parks Project in 2010.

\*\*\*\*\* Commemorative postage stamps are to be launched after the Western Crossing meeting at Blue Mountains City Council chambers on August 17. The BMCC Crossings Committee had argued that the \$1.20 stamp was not appropriate, not as widely used, and so it was decided to issue a 60c stamp.

\*\*\*\*\* Andrew Tink would be willing to give talks pertaining to his book the *Biography of William Charles Wentworth*. (A number of local societies and organisations have had Andrew Tink as their guest speaker since the book was published.)

\*\*\*\*\* Lithgow City Council had put aside \$10,000 for the Western Crossings and a further \$20,000 for interpretive signage for Cox's Road.

\*\*\*\*\* William Cox and William George Evans had both lived in the Hawkesbury area and the Hawkesbury Historical Society in conjunction with Hawkesbury City Council has indicated they would like to be involved in the Western Crossing Committee commemorations.

\*\*\*\*\* Richard Cox a great great grandson of William Cox who recently published a book will speak about the work and significance of the crossings at the August 17 meeting of the Hawkesbury Historical Society.

\*\*\*\*\* Graham Hunt a member of the Seniors Group, Institution of Surveyors NSW, the group which maintains the *Pillars in Time* monuments, had received \$10,000 for restoration work.

\*\*\*\*\* The BMCC Crossings committee has received a grant of \$23,000 for the Mt York interpretive signage.

Australian actor Jack Thompson will be the face of the Penrith crossing celebrations.

He recently joined members of the Penrith District Historical Society and St Marys and District Historical Society and descendents of the original three explorers on the banks of the Nepean River to launch next year's program of events marking 200 years since Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson trekked across the Mountains.

The two descendents of Gregory Blaxland, Gregory Blaxland and Wendy Blaxland were present at the launch as were the Blue Mountains mayor and Penrith mayor Greg Davies.

Pictured at right are members of the St Marys and Nepean District Historical Societies

**Photographs courtesy of Rosemary Weaver - Penrith and District Historical Society**

## PENRITH LAUNCH OF CELEBRATIONS



**John Kelaher and Craig Werner (NDHS) with Jack Thompson**





# Timbuktu World Heritage shrine under attack

TIMBUKTU'S fabled shrines listed by UNESCO as endangered sites only days before have been attacked by Islamic fundamentalists.

The gunmen reported to be from a militant group with ties to al-Qaeda had attacked tombs and vowed to destroy every last shrine standing in an act similar to the 2001 destruction of the ancient giant Buddah of the Bamiyan Valley in Afghanistan.

Timbuktu is thought to have been founded towards the end of the 5th century.

Legend has it a temporary camp was established guarded by an old woman, Buktu.

Gradually Tim-Buktu (the place of Buktu) became a small sedentary village at the crossroads of several trade routes. Quickly converted to Islam, the market city of Timbuktu reached its apex under the reign of Askia (1493-1591).



It then became an important centre of Koranic culture with the University of Sankore and numerous schools attended, it is said by some 25,000 students.

As an intellectual and spiritual capital, its three great mosques, Djingareyber (1325), Sankore (1578-1582) and Sid Yahia (circa. 1400), recall Timbuktu's golden age.

In the 16th century Moroccan invaders began to drive scholars out, and trade routes slowly shifted to the coast. The city's importance and prestige waned and scholars drifted elsewhere.

French colonisation at the close of the 19th century dealt another serious blow to the former glories of Timbuktu. Source: UNESCO World Heritage Committee

## BLUE MOUNTAINS ASSOCIATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE ORGANISATIONS INC.

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**THE ORGANISATION** Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Organisations Inc. (BMACHO) was established in April 2006 following a unanimous response to a proposal from Professor Barrie Reynolds at the 2004 Blue Mountains Local History Conference which sought from Blue Mountains City Council the creation of a cultural heritage strategy for the city. BMACHO in its constitution uses the definition: "Cultural heritage is all aspects of life of the peoples of the Blue Mountains which was later changed to cover Lithgow and the villages along the Bell's Line of Roads. It therefore involves the recording, preserving and interpreting of information in whatever form: documents, objects, recorded memories as well as buildings and sites."

The objectives of the organisation are:

- To raise public consciousness of the value of cultural heritage.
  - To encourage and assist cultural heritage activities of member organisations.
  - To initiate and support cultural heritage activities not already covered by member organisations.
- One of the aims of BMACHO is to bring the various bodies into closer contact, to encourage them to work more closely together and to provide a combined voice on matters of importance within the heritage sector.

**AFFILIATIONS** BMACHO is a member of the Royal Australian Historical Society Inc.

**HERITAGE** BMACHO's official newsletter is edited by John Leary, OAM.

**Blue Mountains History Journal** is edited by Dr Peter Rickwood.

**MEMBERSHIP** The following organisations are members of BMACHO: Blue Mountains Botanic Garden, Mount Tomah, Blue Mountains City Library, Blue Mountains Cultural Heritage Centre, Blue Mountains Historical Society Inc., Blue Mountains Family History Society Inc., Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Oberon Tourism Limited, Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute, Cudgegong Museums Group Inc., Eskbank Rail Heritage Centre, Everglades Historic House & Gardens, Friends of Norman Lindsay Gallery, Glenbrook & District Historical Society Inc., Hartley Valley District Progress Association, Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society Inc., Lillianfels Blue Mountains Resort, Lithgow and District Family History Society Inc., Lithgow Mining Museum Inc., Lithgow Regional Library – Local Studies, Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum Inc., Mt Victoria and District Historical Society Inc., Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine History Society Inc. (including Turkish Bath Museum), Mudgee Historical Society Inc., Mudgee Regional Library, National Trust of Australia (NSW) - Blue Mountains Branch, National Trust of Australia (NSW) - Lithgow Branch, Scenic World – Blue Mountains Limited, Springwood & District Historical Society Inc., Springwood Historians Inc., Transport Signal and Communication Museum Inc., The Darnell Collection Pty Ltd, Valley Heights Locomotive Depot and Museum, Woodford Academy Management Committee, Zig Zag Railway Co-op Ltd. The following are individual members: Ray Christison, Associate Professor Ian Jack, Joan Kent, John Leary OAM, John Low OAM, Ian Milliss, Patsy Moppett, Professor Barrie Reynolds, Dr Peter Rickwood and Dr Peter Stanbury OAM.

**COMMITTEE** The committee for 2012-13 is: Pamela Smith (president), Ian Jack (vice president), Jan Koperberg (secretary), Judy Barham, Joan Kent, Doug Knowles, John Leary, Dick Morony (public officer), and Scott Pollock.

**DISCLAIMER** Views and opinions expressed in **HERITAGE** originate from many sources and contributors. Every effort is taken to ensure accuracy of material. Content does not necessarily represent or reflect the views and opinions of BMACHO, its committee or members. If errors are found feedback is most welcome.