

# HERITAGE

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## WILLIAM COX AND HIS TEAM OF CONVICT ROAD BUILDERS

*by Richard Cox, great, great, grandson of William*

Mr Cox is a Sensible, intelligent Man, of great arrangement, and the best agriculturalist in the colony.... Governor Macquarie, recommending William Cox to be the Commandant at Bathurst, after building the road, 24 June 1815'

WILLIAM COX, who forged a place for himself in Australian history by organising the building of the first road across the Blue Mountains in 1814, was a man of extraordinary personal contrasts.

On his way out to the colony in 1799 in charge of a shipload of convicts on the *Minerva* he displayed considerable humanity. Between them, he and the ship's surgeon ensured that the 196 convicts were given regular exercise and fresh air.

As a result only three elderly prisoners died en route, an unusually low percentage. When there was an attempted mutiny William only sentenced the ringleaders to six lashes each, when on many ships they would have been hung from the yardarm.

Yet on arrival, as paymaster of the New South Wales Corps he used regimental funds in London to pay for farms, building himself into the second largest landowner in the colony in two years. In plain terms he embezzled the money.

William's little empire collapsed in 1803, leaving his family penniless. He was sent home for trial and 'dismissed the service' in 1808.<sup>1</sup> But Governor King had already given him and his sons' grants of land in 1804 and after his return in 1810 he was rehabilitated when Governor Macquarie appointed him as a magistrate at Windsor.

However, as a JP he increasingly favoured himself in the allocation of

skilled convict workers, or 'mechanics', to employers and was heavily criticised for it by his contemporaries. At the same time his judgements were fair and liberal, as when he simply re-assigned convicts to new masters after punishment had been demanded by obstreperous ones.

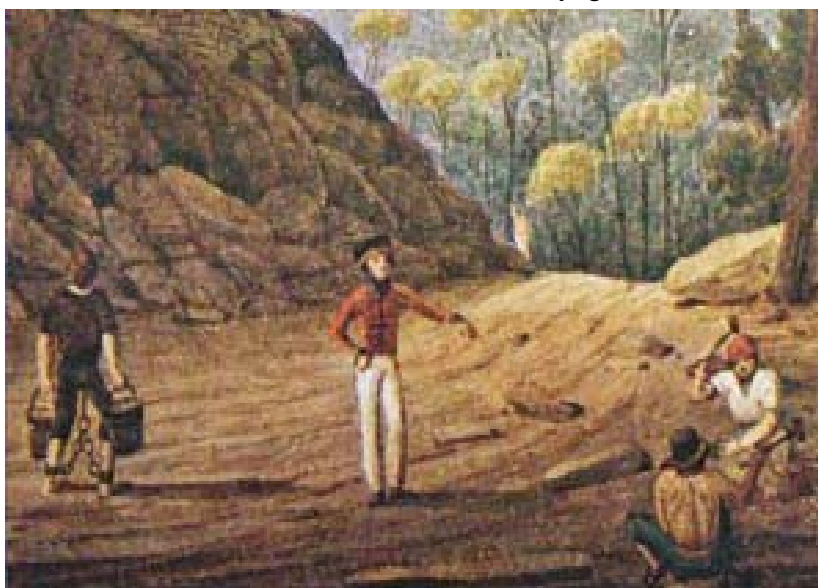
This brings one to the way in which he dealt with convicts and the building of the Blue Mountains road, which he was contracted for by Macquarie. It was a considerable task.

The range rises to over 4,000 feet and although the famous trio of Gregory Blaxland, William Lawson and WC Wentworth had found a

way over in 1813, they had in fact not traversed the main range. Blaxland's advice to William to follow the ridges very nearly defeated the entire enterprise when the road builders reached Mount York.


On July 14, 1814 Macquarie sent William a letter detailing exacting requirements. The road had to be 12 feet wide to permit two carts to pass each other 'with ease', although he preferred it to be 16 feet. In forest and brush ground the timber had to be cleared away to 20 feet. It was to run from the Emu Plains, on the Nepean River, to a 'central part' of the Bathurst Plains. Depots were to be established en route.

**Continued page 3**



**'Convicts repairing the mountain road' circa 1826.** A painting by the American Augustus Earle, reproduced with permission of the National Library of Australia

**Contents.....**  
**HERITAGE**  
**September - October**  
**2012**

- \*P1 William Cox and his team of convict road builders
- \*P2 Opinion - Educational and research body proposed
- \*P6 Professor Ian Jack launches William Cox
- \*P7 Trust walk will trace earliest crossings of Blue Mountains
- \*P8 Everglades a picture of beauty
- \*P9 Best visual memories of Scenic Railway to go on display
- \*P10 The white lady of Mt Victoria
- \*P11 Convict Female Factory Women
- \*P16 Proposal for permanent educational and research body
- \*P16 A lesson learnt from burial of the 1867 rail cutting abutment
- \*P17 All set for Blue Mountains history conference
- \*P19 Volunteer Defence Corps not a Force
- \*P19 Lithgow Small Arms Factory centenary
- \*P20 Patron's favourite Lindsays on show
- \*P20 Vintage and retro
- \*P20 More accolades for *HERITAGE*
- \*P21 Inland explorers' stamps issue launched
- \*P22 Western crossing commemoration 2013-15
- \*P23  Stolen artefacts back in Afghanistan



## **An opinion from the editor.....** **Educational and research body proposed**

DR DAVID BLAXLAND a descendant of the explorer, Gregory Blaxland has come up with a proposal which may well be seen as a lasting and welcome commemoration for the bicentenary of the '1813-15 Western Crossing' and at the same time harness the wealth of knowledge and expertise contained in the Western Crossing Committee (WCC).

He has proposed the establishment of a permanent educational and research body in this region. The main objective of such a foundation would be to facilitate and promote education and research concerning the natural history, cultural heritage and human development of this region. The idea appears to have great merit and needs to be carefully considered.

There are many in the heritage sector who strongly believe the commemoration of the 1813 -15 western crossing should have lasting benefit. The same people are becoming concerned that the opportunity to create a lasting commemoration is fast slipping away.

The WCC came into being as a result of discussions between BMACHO and the RAHS when concern was being expressed about ad hoc plans across the region. BMACHO asked the then president of the RAHS, Associate Professor Ian Jack if it might be possible for RAHS to co-ordinate the various plans and so the RAHS Council appointed Professor David Carment AM to chair the committee who recently handed over the chair to his RAHS colleague Dr Anne Whittaker. The committee under the auspices of the RAHS has from Penrith to Bathurst attracted a wide range of individuals and organisations and eventually local government .

In early discussions BMACHO and RAHS asserted that the commemoration should include projects that are of a long-term benefit. At the time it was considered possible, because of the significance of the event that application to the federal and state governments might well attract funding for projects which will remain long after the event.

It is fair to say that there has been some success in funding smaller commemorative projects. But to date there has been little success in initiating a major project such as the

much talked about walking trails along parts of the route on which William Cox and his gang of 30 convicts built the 101 miles of road between the Nepean River and the site where Bathurst now stands.

The idea in that project was to restore a substantial part of Cox's Road so this could be used as an educational tool and tourist attraction through the region. In the case of this project it is important to acknowledge the investigative work into land ownership in the Lithgow Valley carried out by members of the National Trust and the funding of signage by Lithgow City Council.

There are plenty of wonderful examples of these types of walkways or selected site access projects around Australia such as the UNESCO World Heritage listed Great North Road convict built to link Sydney with the fertile Hunter Valley, the numerous walking tracks within the Sydney metropolitan area including the Fairfax walk on North Head or the Tamar Valley Drive in Tasmania with its educational journal and audio companion for those who prefer to stay in their car.

A 'visionary' was needed to get the Cox's Road project up and running and no such person has so far been forthcoming who had the capacity to excite government, major corporations and the local community to the significance of this important milestone in the history of Australia.

This is not to say, David Carment and the WCC have not done a most commendable job coordinating the many local groups so that there will be plenty of celebrations including some educational activities. Sure, to capture the imagination of the public there will be need for some celebratory activity; but care should be taken to ensure that public funding is not all frittered away on an extravaganza of parades, plaque placements, partying and pyrotechnics.

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

# ***William Cox selected 30 convicts to work for emancipation***

## ***Continued from page 1***

William selected 30 convicts, who volunteered, in Macquarie's words, 'on the Condition of receiving emancipation for their extra Labour on the conclusion of it. This is the only remuneration they receive, except their rations'.<sup>2</sup> The supervisors were free men. William kept a journal during the six months of the job. He never referred to the men as convicts, always by names or as 'workmen', 'quarrymen' or 'carpenters'. A small guard of soldiers was there to deal with Aborigines and ward off sightseers.

On July 17, 1814 William left Clarendon, his estate, for Captain Woodruff's farm, carts and provisions arrived from Sydney, and he 'mustered the people'. They were issued with slops (working clothes). On July 24, he noted that, after crossing the Nepean, 'The workmen exerted themselves during the week, much to my satisfaction'. As reward he gave them 'a lot of cabbage' (which would also ward off scurvy).

A resting place subsequently named Springwood was created 12 miles from the ford, beyond the first depot. But soon the going became tougher. William recorded 'The ascent is steep; the soil rough and stony; the timber chiefly ironbark.'

The hardness of this wood blunted the axes. The blacksmith's forge was brought up and a chimney built for it. In effect they were progressing in a leapfrogging way, with William himself at the centre and the advance party ahead, while behind them provisions were moved slowly forward.

'The workmen go with much cheerfulness and do their work well,' he wrote on August 2 and again 'Gave them a quantity of cabbage as a present.' But William would not take insubordination and the first victim was a supervisor named Burne, who he sacked on August 4 for refusing to accept orders from the senior supervisor, Lewis.

Despite worries about Aborigines on August 8 'two natives from Richmond joined us; one shot a kangaroo'. On August 28 Joe from Mulgoa and Coley from Richmond also joined them, promising to remain. They were employed as guides. Many years later he would also employ natives as farm workers at Mulgoa, telling a visitor that so long as they were decently fed they were as good as whites.<sup>3</sup>

Always ahead of them lay the enticing prospect of 'good forest ground down in the valley'. The problem was going to be getting to it from the long ridges which constituted the massif of the mountains, while there were many problems, not least of supply.

They ran out of food on August 12. At daylight next day William 'sent Lewis to the depot with a letter to Mrs Cox to send me out immediately 300lb of beef.' Obtaining supplies from Clarendon, rather than from the Commissariat further off in Sydney, was of immediate benefit to the workmen.



**William Cox**, Sketch courtesy of Blue Mountains Local Studies collection. File HS0\HS0589.

They now set off along a 12 mile ridge, as Blaxland had so unfortunately advised. The going through the forest was as bad as through the brush below.

The trees were gigantic, while continual rain and cold on the mountain began to make many of the workmen ill. William recorded of them tersely: 'Done well'. By August 28 they had 'removed, with all the people, to a little forward of the 16th mile'. On September 3 he recorded unemotionally: 'The road finished to Caley's heap of stones, 17 ¾ miles' (near present day Linden). It had taken from August 7 to construct nine miles of road.

On September 8 the wind was high and cold and 'blew a perfect hurricane': again a precursor of future conditions, totally different to those they had left on the Cumberland Plain. They would have liked to shoot kangaroos for meat, but saw none, only bagging three pheasants. On September 12 the 'long bridge', the first of many, was completed. It had occupied twelve men for three weeks, 'which time they worked very hard and cheerful'.

The stone in the rocky ground was too hard to break with sledgehammers and was having to be levered up. They also had a small supply of gunpowder.

***Continued page 4***



# The road plunges down, twisting between gigantic boulders, in places swerving past the very edge of cliffs

## *Continued from page 3*

By October 2 the second depot building had been weatherboarded, with gable ends. It was to become the Weatherboard Inn, giving its name to what is Wentworth Falls today. They had now reached 28 miles from the Emu ford, little more than a quarter of the way to the 'central point' of the Bathurst plains.

Forward scouting revealed that at the end of ridge there was a formidable descent. William sent men to search for a way down, unsuccessfully.

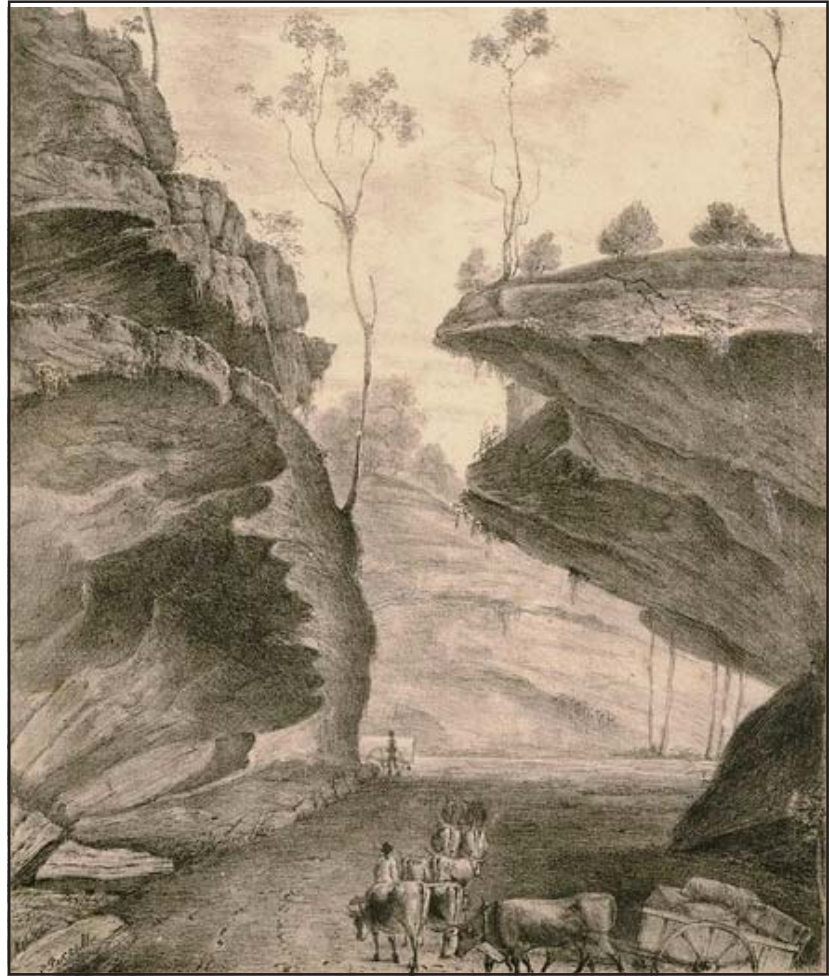
It rained a lot and the 'blankets belonging to the men were very wet and uncomfortable'. On November 2 he decided to survey it himself 'as a road must be made to get off the mountain', but found the descent 'much worse than I expected...The whole front of the mountain is covered with loose rock...the hill is so very steep about half a mile down that it is not possible to make a good road.....without going to a very great expense'.

He therefore 'made up my mind to make such a road as a cart can go down empty or a very light load without a possibility of its being able to return with any sort of load whatever'. In transport terms this was tantamount to defeat, although 'such a road would answer to drive stock down to the forest ground'.

When he managed to get down there himself he found: 'Grass of a good quality...Timber thin and kangaroos - plenty'. But 'in returning back we had to clamber up the mountain, and it completely knocked me up'.

He was now uncomplainingly close to his 50<sup>th</sup> birthday. He frequently gave the men a gill of spirits each to cheer them when they got wet. He compassionately wrote to the Reverend Cartwright on the Emu Plains asking him to 'send two of the gaol gang to cut and house Tindall's wheat at the Nepean. He has a large family and it is his all.'

There are still two small waterholes, thick with leaf mould, a few metres to the side of the track to Mount



**Part of Cox's Pass, New South Wales, 1821.** Reproduced with permission of Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales is a lithograph by E. Purcell (Ref: sv1B/Blu M /21.)

York, close to which his men slept in bark huts, as apparently did he when his caravan got stuck. The overhanging rock ledges at the top of the mountain are easily identified, too. William described them as 'so lofty and undermined that the men will be able to sleep dry'.

In the end, they did get the road down in a series of semi-circular bends. The governor's secretary John Campbell, in his account of Macquarie's tour of inspection in May 1815, described this three quarters of a mile as 'a rugged and tremendous descent in all its windings'.<sup>4</sup>

If you go to Mount York today, not far from an obelisk commemorating Cox's achievement, you will see a short section of the road, restored by the Blue Mountains City Council.

It then plunges down, twisting between gigantic boulders, in places swerving past the very edge of cliffs.

Even when it was finished horses harnessed to carriages had to be taken down backwards, because they became terrified. Great logs were attached to the rear of wagons to slow them. The historian Chris Cunningham, calls the eventual achievement 'perhaps the most noble of all the stories involved in crossing the Blue Mountains'.

The later problems of bridging rivers were much less. After reaching the Fish River William 'ordered a bullock to be killed for the use of the people, which I had issued to them in lieu of giving them a ration of salt pork ... when the men were mustered this morning they were extremely clean, and looked cheerful and hearty'.

# Cox aged 50, had certainly exhausted himself in bitter mountain weather

On January 5 the strain of the long and punishing endeavour overtook William and he fell sick himself, the last of the team to do so: 'About midnight I was taken violently ill with excruciating pains just above my left hip.' Perhaps he had spent too long in the saddle.

He had certainly exhausted himself in bitter weather and was fifty years old. Macquarie remarked that 'Mr Cox voluntarily relinquished the comforts of his own house and the society of his numerous family and exposed himself to much personal fatigue, with only such covering as a bark hut could afford from the inclemency of the weather'.<sup>5</sup> (His caravan, drawn by a horse called Scratch, could not always be negotiated up the slopes).



**William Cox in the uniform of an officer of the New South Wales Corps, circa 1797-1798**

Miniature portrait, reproduced with permission of the State Library of NSW digital order a1087001

The final diary entry, on January 7, recorded ordering the men further forward and himself riding to the head of the Sidmouth valley. 'Returned by the hills, which are very fine. An emu and a kangaroo passed quietly along'. These last words conjure up a picture of William in his paradise, riding in the wilderness.

But he was quickly back at work at home, before the road was actually finished.

On January 15, 1815 he submitted an estimate to government for the construction of two bridges and of Bridge Street at Windsor.

Campbell's account finished: 'The road constructed by Mr Cox and the party under him commences at Emu Ford ... and is thence carried 101 ½ miles to the flagstaff at Bathurst ...

'The Governor cannot conclude this account of his tour without offering his best acknowledgements to William Cox, Esq, for the important service he has rendered to the colony in so short a period of time' and 'shall have great pleasure in recommending his meritorious services on this occasion to the favourable consideration of his Majesty's Ministers'.

In fact all William did receive was a grant of 2,000 acres at Bathurst. But he had made his name. He was indeed a 'man of great arrangement'.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> *London Gazette*, 14 April 1808.

<sup>2</sup> Macquarie to Bathurst, 7 October 1814, *HRA* 1, vol. viii, p. 314.

<sup>3</sup> Grace Karskens, *The Colony*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2009, p.537.

<sup>4</sup> Macquarie to Bathurst, 24 June 1815, *HRA* 1, vol. viii, pp. 571-576.

<sup>5</sup> Macquarie to Bathurst, 24 June 1815, *HRA* 1, vol. viii, p. 570.

## William Cox : a contradictory character

The stock, when valued, was considered worth twenty five percent more than the purchase money, consequently the farm did not stand Mr Cox in six-pence. What made things even better was that Mr Cox paid him with bills on the regimental agents

*Joseph Holt, Irish rebel and farm manager for William Cox, paymaster of the New South Wales Corps, October 1800*

Paymaster William Cox, of the New South Wales Corps, is dismissed the Service.

*London Gazette*, 16 April 1808

Mr Cox is a Sensible, intelligent Man, of a great arrangement, and the best agriculturist in the colony.

*Governor Macquarie, recommending William Cox to be the commandant at Bathurst, 24 June 1815*

Let a foreigner, a stranger, be told that it is the Convict, the refuse of our Country, that [sic] have performed nearly all the labour that has been done here in the short space of thirty years, and I think he would be astonished.

*William Cox to Commissioner Bigge, 7 May 1820*

I have received also a grant of land of 100 acres for my Service on the Western road. I have sold it to Mr Cox. He gave me £25 for it he paid me in money and a cow, and several orders, that I have paid.

*James Watson, emancipated worker on the Bathurst road, in complaint to Bigge, 29 November 1820*

There is not a magistrate in the Colony who has given so much of his time to the business of the Crown & public these ten years past as myself...If any man ever laboured amidst a den of thieves and a nest of hornets it is myself.

*William Cox to Commissioner Bigge, 4 December 1820*

Extracts from *William Cox: Blue Mountains Road Builder and Pastoralist*

# Professor Ian Jack launches William Cox

WELL KNOWN Australian historian and author, Dr Ian Jack has officially launched Richard Cox's latest book, *William Cox: Blue Mountains Road Builder and Pastoralist*.

A large gathering, many of them Cox descendants listened for more than an hour to the author talk about the Cox dynasty and his book during the launch at the Hawkesbury Regional Museum last month.

Welcoming the great, great grandson of William Cox, Dr Jack said: "It is a very real pleasure to launch the first substantial biography of William Cox and to welcome its author, Richard Cox.

"It is always good to see a family which takes account of its own history.



**The author, Richard Cox**

"Richard is particularly well placed to set the Australian story in its British context, since he is one of the members of the extensive Cox clan who have resettled in Britain.

"In Australia, William Cox is remembered by the general historically-minded population in a fairly narrow way, dependent on where they live.

"We in the Hawkesbury tend to think of him as the local magistrate and entrepreneur and we look with pride on the surviving buildings which he helped to construct, such as St Matthew's Anglican church, rectory and stables and Windsor court-house.

"People in the Blue Mountains primarily relate to Cox as the man who built the first dray road over the

Mountains and opened up the central west to European settlement: and indeed Richard's sub-title gives pride of place to Cox as a road builder.

"Folk in the Penrith area have a particular interest in the Cox houses in the Mulgoa valley, all constructed for or by sons of William Cox and their brides.

"Out at Mudgee, Cox the pastoralist is still alive and well, for alone among the estates opened up by the original William, Burrundulla is still owned by a descendent in the direct male line, and still used for its original purposes, although old William did not live to see the lovely homestead that his descendants built at Burrundulla.

"All these aspects of the heritage of William Cox have their proper place in the new biography, but the setting of the Coxes in south-west England is also deftly analysed. Here in Australia we tend to forget that William Cox was already in his 30s when he came to Sydney.

"Three formative decades had been spent elsewhere. His childhood, his formal education, his technical training in clock-making, his military experience, all this baggage which created the dominant personality we think of in Australia was gained in Britain.

"Richard's familiarity with the family circumstances of the late eighteenth-century Coxes gives a freshness of vision to the introductory chapter of his book. It also gives some unfamiliar images in this pleasingly illustrated book.

"I did not know, for example, that William Cox had actually manufactured some handsome long-case clocks until I saw Richard's colour image of a surviving one made by William in Devizes in 1791.

"So this is a well rounded biography. It is also a dispassionate account of a great-great grandfather. One of the perils sometimes attending family histories is piety. Members of a subsequent generation are not always willing to concede that their forefathers had some deficiencies as well as transcendent merits.



**Professor Ian Jack**

"Richard faces up squarely to the difficulties William Cox encountered in explaining how he had handled the finances of the NSW Corps when he was their paymaster and how these problems resulted in the sale of virtually all his substantial assets in the colony in 1804 and 1805.

"He strikes a very convincing moderate position, putting William's behaviour firmly in an eighteenth-century context, while in no way concealing that William's behaviour was not above reproach from both contemporary and modern ethical standpoints.

"As the story of William's rehabilitation unfolds, Richard draws out some significant themes. To me the outstanding theme is the family itself.

"When I gave a paper to the National Trust a couple of years ago about the Cox houses, I was struck by the number of land-grants run by William Cox which had in fact been made in the name of his children: this was how Clarendon here on the Hawkesbury had escaped the disastrous sales of 1804-1805, since it had been granted in the names of two of his sons.

"But what Richard brings out most tellingly is the way in which the whole Cox enterprise of the years up to William's death in 1837 was a family one.

"There was never any doubt who was boss, but the enterprise was a team effort.

**Continued page 7**



# Cox family unity ensured an empire

## **Continued from page 6**

"Richard makes very clear that the second marriage of William, after his first wife, Rebecca, died in 1819, did not affect the cohesiveness of the family.

"There were ten children between the two wives and the lack of any recorded animosity is very striking.

"I had noticed an odd little instance of this in my copy of *Memoirs of William Cox JP*, which was printed by the family in 1901.

"My copy is a specially bound issue for family members only and bears the signature of the widow of George Henry Cox of Burrundulla. Carefully pasted onto the inside front cover is the death notice of the second Mrs William Cox, who had died long before the publication of the *Memoirs*.

"Now Anna Blachford was not the grandmother of George Henry Cox: she was the step-grandmother. I found it rather touching that this should be pasted in at Burrundulla in 1901.

"What Richard has done is to fill out in fine detail the context of family solidarity and real affection which is reflected in my little piece of Coxiana.

"Without this family unity, the Cox empire, which encompassed Clarendon, Mulgoa, Bathurst, Mudgee and the Hunter, could not have been consolidated so successfully.

"Without it, the family could not have enjoyed the material rewards of major pastoral stations over the Mountains which followed so naturally on the road-building of 1815.

"This is not to diminish the qualities of old William himself: for example, his ability to supply thousands of bricks and forests of timber to construct public buildings and above all his large employment force of convicts and ex-convicts experienced in all sorts of useful trades, so that a conservation architect like Graham Edds can identify stylistically roofs put up by Cox's team of carpenters.

"All this made the private village of Clarendon with its 100 employees the initial heart of the Cox enterprise and the headquarters for building the Western Road.

"In this biography, we have a rounded picture of the man responsible for that Western Road, which is about to be commemorated in so many ways during its bicentenary.

"Richard, you could not have timed your publication better and you could not have chosen more appropriate publishers than David and Scilla Rosenberg.

"I am delighted to declare *William Cox* well and truly launched," concluded Ian Jack.

## **Trust walk will trace earliest crossings of Blue Mountains**

THE EASTERN escarpment of the lower Blue Mountains is steeped in history – both Aboriginal and European.

Blue Mountains Branch – National Trust of Australia (NSW) is organising a walk 'Darks Common – construction railway' walk for Monday, October 1. Those participating in the walk will meet at Lapstone Primary School car park, Explorers Road with the event starting at 10am and scheduled to finish at 1.30pm.

Focusing on the exploration and earliest crossings of the mountains by Europeans and to the early road works and ultimately to the railway, the walk embraces many aspects of the journey.

The Lapstone Hill area was part of the mountain barrier that had to be overcome in order to open the way to the pastures and agricultural land that were sorely needed by the infant colony in the early days after settlement in 1788.

The walk will highlight the efforts to overcome the barrier - referring to the Lapstone Zig-Zag, the viaduct, designed by John Whitton, Lapstone tunnel which Arthur Streeton painted in 1891 'Fire's On', one of the iconic Australian paintings. And much more!

Along the route of the 'construction railway', evidence of rock cutting, drilling, explosive 'quarrying' - embankments to carry the line over gullies, also the concrete foundation of winch gear servicing the funicular railway which extended down to the 'new' railway line will be seen.



**Lapstone tunnel which Arthur Streeton painted in 1891 'Fire's On', one of the iconic Australian paintings.**

The walk will finish at Darks Common, followed by a hearty lunch.

Cost \$25 members, \$30 non-members. Bookings essential by Sunday, September 23 Enquiries: Sandra 47393003 or [BlueMtsNatTr@gmail.com](mailto:BlueMtsNatTr@gmail.com)

**Blue Mountains  
History  
Conference  
October 20, 2012**

**See page 18**

# Everglades a picture of beauty for all seasons

SPRING, summer, autumn and even winter provides spectacular displays of colour, texture and design for those who visit the National Trust owned property Everglades at Leura.

Professional photographer Jonathan Miller visited this heritage property during the past autumn to produce a portfolio of about 50 photographs for the Trust.

In the delightful image at right he captured a rustic red brick edged window framing the blue-green and russet hues of the Jamison Valley and escarpments beyond.

A delight in early autumn, had he photographed this view in spring the green leaves would have made way to a purple cascade of wisteria.

Below he has captured the autumn leaves and enigmatic trunk and branches.

The gardens at Everglades under the tender care of horticulturist Guy McIlraith and his small band of volunteers are regarded as one of Australia's foremost cold climate gardens and arboreta.

This 1930s treasure unites European romanticism with the raw magic of the Australian bush.

Five hectares of valley views, bluebell woodland, lawned and flowering terraces, stone walls, winding paths, glades, pools, and fountains, art deco house, gift shop, tea rooms, art gallery, picnic spots is an ideal place for a day of relaxation.

The property is open every day between 10am and 4pm April to



September and 10am to 5pm October to March. Admission charges: Adults \$10, concession \$8, child - \$4.

Angela le Sueur in her book *Everglades at Leura* wrote that the Everglades gardens are an expression of a special partnership between the wealthy businessman, Henri Van de Gelde and the Danish horticulturist and landscape designer, Paul Sorensen, whose legendary skills created many gardens of note in Leura and Katoomba.

At Everglades the special character of each terrace 'room' is enjoyed on its own terms, as are the spectacular vistas beyond.

Brightly coloured bulbs are still a feature of the upper terrace which gently leads the visitor to the azalea drift where delicate pinks and oranges mix the more vibrant colours of azaleas and rhododendrons and on lower perimeters, to native plants.



**Both images on this page have been photographed at Everglades by professional photographer Jonathan Miller**

Sorensen planned for the future - a time when his signature trees and shrubs would grow to overshadow the first mass planting beds. Van de Gelde collected statues from Europe and some of these remain today to embellish the gardens.

Today, 70 years on Everglades is a highlight of any visit to the Blue Mountains; a place for people of all ages to gather and enjoy its special events – or to wander and contemplate alone.

## Leura Gardens Festival 2012

Eleven gardens will be open to the public including the large National Trust property Everglades, as part of the Leura Garden Festival 2012. The festival will be held from Saturday September 29 to Sunday October 7. Gardens open at 9.30am to 4.30pm daily.

Apart from Everglades, the gardens featured in the festival are all privately owned properties and visitors have an exclusive opportunity to not only see a wide cross section of the very best gardens the region has to offer but also to interact with some of the garden owners, many of whom are present in their gardens during the days of the festival.

Entry prices will be \$20pp for a multiple entry ticket to all gardens, and \$5pp for a single garden entry ticket. Children with parents are admitted with no charge



# Best visual memories of Scenic Railway to go on display

THE 25 MILLION visitors to Scenic World in the past 67 years have been invited to *Make History* at the internationally celebrated attraction, as part of a \$30 million redevelopment of the iconic Scenic Railway.

Visitors past and present have been asked to share their memories of Scenic World and the Blue Mountains through photograph and video.

The best memories will find a permanent home onsite as part of the reimagining of the Scenic Railway.

The *Make History* project is part of the major upgrade which will include a new train to transport passengers down to the ancient rainforest floor in the Jamison Valley, new top and bottom platform with interpretation and a new track.

Scenic World has offered five double tickets from anywhere in Australia to share in the official launch event, experiencing first hand the new train which will continue to be the steepest railway descent in the world at 52 degrees.

Scenic World's joint managing directors, Anthea and David Hammon, said the *Make History* project aims to herald an exciting new chapter for Scenic World while creating a time capsule of Australia's past.

"Our family has operated Scenic World for three generations over the past 67 years so history is very important to us," Anthea and David said.

"Our visitors play a key role in our history so we want to extend our interpretation program under the railway redevelopment to include visitor memories through stories, images and moving footage of the site and the greater Blue Mountains."

Submissions will be displayed on Scenic World's Facebook timeline and viewed by more than 100,000 friends. Some of the entries will also be placed on the attraction's

website with curators selecting the best entries for a permanent onsite gallery.

Competition winners, judged on entries from each decade, will experience the new Swiss-made railway first hand, scheduled to open in February 2013.

The prize also includes return domestic flights, transfers, two nights at Lilianfels Resort and Spa, double pass to the exclusive railway launch party, and annual passes.

International visitors who participate will also be in the running to win a unique Scenic World merchandise pack as a keepsake of their visit to the Blue Mountains.

To enter, participants can upload images and videos, along with a short description, on a custom-built



*Scenic railway circa 1930s*

tab on the Scenic World's Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/ScenicWorld](http://www.facebook.com/ScenicWorld) and enter via the website [www.scenicworld.com.au](http://www.scenicworld.com.au).

The competition closes on September 2, 2012.

**For more information contact;**  
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*Scenic railway, Katoomba circa 1952*

# The white lady of Mt Victoria

By John Low, OAM - Blue Mountains Historical Society

FOR PROBABLY more than 100 years the figure of a mysterious woman, carved into the face of a rock by the side of a bush track at Mt Victoria, has danced to soundless music.

Hidden for much of this time by moss and scrub, she was cleaned up and given a white dress some decades ago by an unknown admirer.

She attracted a new audience, becoming the town's celebrated 'white lady' and though her purity and visibility have waned significantly in recent years one can still find her dancing on her rock stage along the path to Fairy Bower .

But who was this woman with the power to inspire such admiration? It is a question invariably asked by those who encounter her and while a categorical answer may never be forthcoming there is at least one very good suggestion.

In the early 1990s the Mt. Victoria & District Historical Society announced that it had found in its collection a photograph of a dancing woman that matched the mysterious image in the bush behind the Toll Bar Cottage. Dated 1906, the photograph is of Emily Hutchinson-Cooper (1878-1947), the daughter of George and Margaret Cooper, owners of the 'Grand Hotel'.

Emily was born in Sydney in 1878, almost a decade before her father purchased the Fairfax family's 'Manor House' in Mt. Victoria.

On the back of the Jenolan Caves tourist boom, he developed it into the town's premier accommodation house with its own coach line and stable of 80 horses.

Emily was a talented and versatile musician, accomplished as a singer, violinist and pianist and musical entertainments were a common feature of life at Cooper's Grand Hotel.

In June 1900 she and her sister performed for a vice-regal party on their way to the Caves that included Lady Mary Lygon, well known as a friend of composer Edward Elgar and probably the subject of his *13<sup>th</sup> Enigma Variation*.

She was in Australia to assist her bachelor brother in his duties as governor and it may well have been through her influence that Emily made her debut as a soprano in Sydney the following year.



For six years from 1901 to 1907, "under vice-regal patronage", she headlined at an annual concert in the city.

The photograph, (pictured below) taken the year Emily was married in Katoomba and now displayed at the Mt. Victoria museum, depicts an attractive, vivacious young woman in a stage costume of cream dress and boots, 'kicking up her heels' and thoroughly enjoying the experience.

While somewhat faded, it bears a strong enough similarity to the image on the rock to justify serious consideration of the society's claim to have solved the mystery. In any case, until a better solution appears, it will be Emily I think of whenever I pass that rock on the way to Fairy Bower or Cox's Cave.



**This article was first published in the Blue Mountains Conservation Society's *Hut News*, No. 271, June 2010**



# Convict female factory women - You and me in a different set of circumstances....

by Gay Hendrickson

WHAT IS our connection to the convict female factory women, the lives they left, the journeys they made and what they would have experienced?

These convict women are an important part of who we are as Australians.

They are a part of our bloodlines, our lifelines and our storylines. In many ways we are them and they are us.

In order to find out who these women were and what their lives were really like involves tracing the shapes of their lives.

These convict women coming to Australia were living at a time of extraordinary junctures in British and European history.

The women lived within a web woven by the whims and idiosyncrasies of the powerful and the extreme circumstances that were the 1790s to the 1850s.

They would have been experiencing and witnessing the full effects and meaning of revolution.

Some of these women would have protested against authority against domination and lack of human rights becoming the early proponents of the social revolution.

Many would have experienced the agrarian revolution - enclosing of lands and changes in agricultural methods and machinery.

Others would have seen massive changes from living an agricultural life and dislocation from the countryside to industrialisation and life in large towns and cities, participating willingly or otherwise in the industrial revolution.

Some certainly participated in and witnessed the breaking of looms in England's north. Many of the Irish, Scottish and Welsh would have been reacting to the hundreds of years of British 'colonising'.

We know that 24,960 women were transported by ship<sup>1</sup>. Of these an estimated 9,000 went through the female factory system<sup>2</sup>.

Convict female factory women were simply convict women who for various reasons, spent time in a convict female factory.

This may simply have been because they were not assigned at the docks on arrival or it may have been because they committed some offence in the colony.

These women were considered by many as society's outcasts.

The real telling of the story of these women is to push past the stereotypes commonly described and look at particular sets of circumstances.

Gleaning moments from the lives of some of these women and sharing their stories, Charlotte Badger, Maria Riseley, Mary Hindle, Elizabeth Browning Owen, Bridget Byrnes, Mary Field and Ellen Sweeney gives an insight into this hidden part of our history.

Charlotte Badger was born in Bromsgrove and in 1799 was transported for seven years<sup>3</sup>.

She was incarcerated for four years in Worcester Gaol before being transported.

The Ship *Earl Cornwallis* departed England on November 18, 1800, with 193 male and 95 female prisoners.



**Mary Noonan**

Mary was born on January 20, 1812 in County Waterford, the daughter of John Noonan and Mary Dobbin.

Mary was convicted of 'stealing money' in 1829, Waterford, sentenced to transportation for seven years, she had two previous convictions.

Mary married Owen Stapleton in 1835 and had seven children.

In 1876 she married Colin Rogers. She died in 1903 and is buried at Blayney

**- Image courtesy of Frances Cook**

There were 27 male and 8 female deaths on the voyage of 206 days (nearly 7 months).

Charlotte was assigned. When she had two years left to serve, she became pregnant and was sent to the Female Factory, Parramatta.

**Continued page 12**



**Continued from page 11**

Her daughter Anny was born, the father, an un-named soldier.

She was then to be assigned to masters in Van Diemen's Land and put aboard the *Venus*.

Captain Chace was cruel to crew and prisoners including flogging women.

He also wanted to do sealing on the way so the women were put ashore at Two Fold Bay and left to fend for themselves for fifteen days and when the ship returned the women were locked below decks.

The captain was also cruel to the crew who objected and were accused of mutiny by the captain.

When *Venus* arrived in Port Dalrymple in 1806 the Captain went ashore to make his report at which time the crew committed piracy - while the women were on board.

Charlotte by default became a pirate.

Last officially seen in Tonga<sup>4</sup>, however, the muster of 1823, 1824 and 1825 has this entry; Maria Badger age 10, born in colony, daughter of Charlotte Badger, Parramatta. Charlotte's story was one of being buffeted by circumstance.

## Maria became an unwanted chattel

Maria Riseley was a woman who shaped circumstance, although some of the negative attitudes toward convict women formed her life as well.

Maria was born about 1780. She was convicted of *stealing from a dwelling house*<sup>5</sup> and sailed on January 2, 1804 aboard *Experiment 1*. There was no surgeon and the ship included 2 males and 136 females. Six women died.

The women from the *Experiment 1* were assigned to the first Female Factory, Parramatta.

While there Maria gave birth to a daughter, Caroline Maria, the father stated as John Thompson.

She was assigned to Edward Lord from the Factory and travelled to Van Diemen's Land.

She had another 7 children.

Edward travelled to England often with one or more of his children, all of whom were educated in England. Maria was never allowed to go to England or have anything to do with Edward's family.

They were store owners and ship owners with retail and property interests, their homes and two hotels in Hobart.

They also had 6,974 acres, 3,400 cattle, 4,500 sheep and 41 horses.

They employed 25 free workers and 50 convict servants.

Much of his fortune was Maria's good business management.

Edward Lord was named as father to Ann Fry's child, born in the colony in 1825.

He had also established another family in England with his children's British nurse and fathered another five children.

The impact on Maria through this must have been devastating. To Edward she became an unwanted chattel.

We can find portraits of all the members of this important family...except Maria. Maria died on July 22, 1859.

Mary Hindle's life was defined by her choices over a couple of days participating in loom breaking riots.

She was born in Haslingden, Lancashire, c1799 to James and Mary Holden (nee Haworth). In 1818 she married George Hindle, a handloom weaver, and had 3 children. Elizabeth was baptised at St. James on March 21, 1819.



### **Constance de la Sablonaire,**

Constance with her cousin/sister Elizabeth were sent to Madame Morel to be taught a range of skills as was the practice of slave owners. These two were sent needlework where they were accused of trying to poison the mistress – white powder in tea.

Madame and her three-year-old son reacted to the tea, with a violent headache, dizziness and palpitations. The doctor decided they had been poisoned with arsenic. They did survive but the girls were charged with attempted murder.

Image courtesy of the National Library of Australia

There are two other children who are recorded in the burials but not baptisms, Abraham on January 10, 1822 aged 1 year and Robert on December 17, 1823, both aged 1 year.

By 1826 Mary, her husband and 7 year old Elizabeth were living at Pleasant Street, Haslingden.

Mary's trade was a laundry woman. She had lost two of her three children.

It was hard for the handloom weavers like George at the time and 72 hour weeks were not uncommon.

**Continued page 13**

# Spies had been sent among the rioters and cut small pieces of cloth from clothing to identify the culprits

## Continued from page 12

Life generally in Lancashire at the time was that of early industrialised England. Haslingden was a weaving centre and Mary's time was one of protest.

On Monday, April 24, 1826 about 1,000 workers rioted. It went on for four days.

On the first day soldiers sent did not attack them. On April 25, Mary Hindle was in the crowd at William Turner's Mill at Helmshore and she shouted encouragement and laughed: *I have won my bet; I bet a shilling that the powerlooms would be destroyed within five weeks.*<sup>6</sup>

At Chatterton the army made a stand and killed 4 people including a bystander waiting for a coach to Manchester. Over 1,100 looms were destroyed at a cost of £16,000.

Spies had been sent among the rioters and cut small pieces of cloth from clothing to identify the culprits and proffered this as evidence<sup>7</sup>. This evidence convicted Mary.

There were 53 men and 12 women tried in August. Of these people 35 men and 6 women received the death penalty but were subsequently reprieved.

Eight men and two women were sentenced to transportation for life. Mary Hindle and Anne Entwistle were the only two women to receive this punishment.

Mary Hindle was sentenced at Lancaster Assizes on August 8, 1826, term - Life<sup>8</sup>.

Almost 10 months later on June 4, 1827 Mary sailed from London with another 80 females on board the *Harmony* and arrived in September 1827.

She never settled into life in the colony as is evident in her letters to her husband and her petition she sent to the governor while in the factory.

Her petition was a plea for freedom: *I hear that pardons have been granted to the men involved in the crime [machine breaking] and I*

*humbly implore your Excellency to include me in the number of those who have received the Blessing of such Clemency...do not suffer me to languish the remains of my existence in hopeless Slavery.*<sup>9</sup>

The annotations on her petition "Is this woman one of the machine breakers? No pardon has been received for this woman. Let her be told by Mrs Leach." (Matron)

Mary was out of the factory in 1840 and assigned to the principal superintendent of convicts but absconded again.

In 1841 Mary committed suicide (verdict intoxicated). Mary was one of the women who could not cope with the dislocation, separation from family and the attitudes towards women like her.

Elizabeth Browning Owen's transportation story was shaped by her connection with her children and empathetic officials.

Elizabeth was born about 1792, most likely in the parish of Newington, Surrey.

From age 19 Elizabeth's life as a mother began when she gave birth to son John.

Every two years for the ensuing six, she gave birth to a child – Eliza, Robert and then Elizabeth.

Sometime after the birth of her fourth child she was alone caring for them.

She had skills with her hands, a good eye and a sense of precision.

She found her way into forging. Elizabeth was tried at the Surry Assizes on March 25, 1820 and sentenced to transportation for fourteen years<sup>10</sup>.



**Emma Mayner and daughters**

Emma "was found guilty of receiving a time piece valued at £2 and a shawl valued at 6 shillings, the goods of Charles Wisedale, knowing them to have been stolen. It appears that they were stolen at Aston by Thomas Shenton. Her age was given as 18 and she could neither read nor write."

Image courtesy of Shirley Moore

It was almost two months between the trial and embarkation on the *Morley*.

During this period she was separated from her children. Her children ranged from three to nine years old.

Her nine year old child was deemed too old to travel with the mother.

Elizabeth Browning Owen was extremely distressed with the prospect of separation by transportation.

The ships surgeon Thomas Reid noted her struggle at the time of embarkation.

He said that: *At 6pm ... a person arrived saying he had brought four children belonging to Browning Owen, a convict, but had left them at Woolwich, being uncertain whether they would be received on board.*

**Continued page 14**

# Her 9 year old child was deemed too old to travel with the convict mother

## Continued from page 13

*One of them happened to be three years above the age permitted [aged 9]. The case of this poor woman seems one of aggravated distress: About nine months since, her husband incited her to commit a crime; and after involving her in guilt and misery, left her with a helpless family without a friend in the world. Her conduct having been exceedingly good since she came on board, induced me to lay a statement of her case before Mr Capper, for consideration of the Secretary of State, whose benevolence granted permission for all the children to be embarked and accompany her.<sup>11</sup>*

Her children - John 9 years, Eliza 7, Robert 5 and Elizabeth 3 - boarded the ship *Morley*, were reunited with their mother and joined another 121 female prisoners.

The ship arrived in Sydney 1820 via Hobart. Elizabeth married Emanuel Marvin in 1822. Elizabeth worked with him at *The General Bourke/ Governor Bourke Hotel*, Parramatta in 1839. She died in Parramatta in 1839.

Bridget Byrne was born about 1773 in Trim, County Wicklow.

She was a mantua maker which meant she had good sewing skills and unlike so many in Ireland at the time she had an income.

Her story was not a story of petty crime gone wrong but protest against a colonial power responsible for the death of her brother during the rebellion.

The story of her crime tells us, during a rebellion, she hit a soldier on the head and killed him, in reprisal for the death of her brother at the hands of the British soldiers.

Through this act upon a 'king's man' it was considered an assault on the king and sedition.

Bridget was convicted in Meath in August 1801 for murder and transportation for Life<sup>12</sup>.

Bridget embarked on the ship *Rolla* which departed from Cork Harbour November 4, 1802 carrying 127 male and 37 female prisoners.

She was in the female factory about 1804, when she married Morgan Power.

Bridget died on November 25, 1820 and is buried at St John's Parramatta.

Mary Field's story is a part of one that appears to be 'family migration'. Mary was born 1778, Youghall, County Cork, Ireland.

She married James Field and had four children.

Mary was described as a washerwoman, nurse and a seamstress. Her daughter Margaret was a washerwoman and straw plaiter.

Mary's husband James died about 1820 in Ireland. Mary had two convictions by the time she was indicted in 1827 aged 49 for stealing from a person. Her daughter Margaret aged 18 was also accused.

This was not enough for capital punishment but was enough for transportation. They were sentenced in Cork to seven years transportation<sup>13</sup>.

Three children preceded her and Margaret to the Colony of NSW. Catherine came out on the *Brothers*, Elizabeth came on the *Lady Rowena* and James on the *Godfrey Webster*

Mary and Margaret embarked on the *Elizabeth* together with daughter Margaret, two of 194 females.

The master was Walter Cock and the surgeon was John Hughes. It sailed from Cork on August 27, 1827 taking a little over 4 months



## Anne Dunne

Anne was born c1810 Carlow, Ireland. She was tried in Dublin November 17, 1830, found guilty of 'stealing linen', and sentenced to transportation for seven years.

She had had a previous conviction, which carried a sentence of seven months. On April 16, 1835 at Christ Church Castlereagh, Anne Dunne married James Tompkins.

There were 10 children to this couple. Disheartened by flooding of the Nepean River John moved his family to Gulgong where he continued as a carrier and gold miner, until his death in 1879. Image courtesy of Maureen Upton and family

(138 days) and arrived on January 12, 1828 with 192 women.

My own female factory ancestor, Ellen Sweeny was born about 1818 to Caroline and James Sweeney.

She married a William Murphy in 1832 and had two sons, Mathew and John. Her husband died leaving her the two children.

**Continued page 15**



# These women became the silent revolution in Australia



**Parramatta Female Factory** - Image courtesy Society of Australian Genealogists

## Continued from page 14

Ellen stole money from her master and was transported in 1842. Her comment – 'borrowed' money on the 'never never' from her employer Mr Stragel who had underpaid her.

She had to leave her two boys, 5 and 8 years old, behind never to see them again. Ellen was sent to Van Diemen's Land to the Cascades Female Factory and gave birth to Sarah on August 11, 1843 at

the Cascades Female Factory known as 'The valley of death'.

John Dale was the father. Ellen was given a ticket of leave and married John in 1845 at St Georges Church, Battery Point, Hobart.

John and Ellen moved to Elizabeth Street, Hobart where Alfred was born on September 10, 1846. James was born on October 8, 1849 at Henty's sheep station

"Muntham", near Coleraine. Son, Alfred, was born in 1846.

They moved to Victoria and had one more child, James in 1849. Ellen died in 1899.

All these women became the silent revolution in Australia. Through their lives, and values the Australian character began to be shaped into what it is today. In so many ways they were the mothers of the nation. Yet they really were just you and me in a different set of circumstances.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Robson, Leslie Lloyd *The Convict Settlers of Australia: An Enquiry into the Origin and Character of the Convicts Transported to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land, 1787-1852*, Melbourne 1965, p.4

<sup>2</sup> Hendriksen, Gay *Women Transported – Myth or Reality, Women Transported – Life in Australia's Convict Female Factories*, Parramatta City Council, 2008, p.7

<sup>3</sup> England & Wales Criminal Registers 1791-1892

<sup>4</sup> 41 Badger, Angela *Charlotte Badger: Buccaneer Briar Hill*: Indra Publishing, Sydney, 2002, p.229

<sup>5</sup> England & Wales Criminal Registers 1791-1892

<sup>6</sup> *The Lancaster Gazette and General Advertiser*, Saturday August 5, 1826

<sup>7</sup> Turner, William *Riot – The story of the East Lancashire Loombreakers in 1826*, Lancaster County Books, Preston, 1992. P.76

<sup>8</sup> England & Wales Criminal Registers 1791-1892

<sup>9</sup> Hindle, Mary *Petition for Free Pardon 22<sup>nd</sup> June 1838*

<sup>10</sup> England & Wales Criminal Registers 1791-1892

<sup>11</sup> Reid, Thomas, *Two voyages to New South Wales and Van Diemen's Land*, 1822, p.117

<sup>12</sup> England & Wales Criminal Registers 1791-1892

## About the author

Gay Hendriksen is a Blue Mountains resident and has worked in the gallery and museum environment for 21 years including local history museums in Shellharbour and Sydney, Penrith Regional Gallery, Norman Lindsay Gallery and Museum and now Parramatta Heritage Centre.



She also curated the exhibition *Women Transported - Life in Australia's Convict Female Factories* which has won national and state awards in excellence and is currently touring 5 states.

She is also currently president of the Parramatta Female Factory Action Group which has the aim of saving the Greenway designed Parramatta Female Factory which was commissioned by Governor Macquarie and making it available for all to experience.

Readers are invited to view the Parramatta Female Factory Action Group's website and take a tour with experts on the history and significance of this part of our Australian Heritage.

[www.petitionbuzz.com/petitions/savethefemalefactory/o/2](http://www.petitionbuzz.com/petitions/savethefemalefactory/o/2)

## Glenbrook Walk

Glenbrook & District Historical Society walk to Dunn's sawmill site; Brookside Creek, Lennox Bridge and old quarry September 8. Contact Doug Knowles, 4751 3275 Tim Miers, 4739 2384.

# Proposal for permanent educational and research body

A PROPOSAL which would bring a lasting benefit to the region has been presented to the Western Crossing Committee (WCC) the coordinating body for the 2013-15 western crossing celebrations.

Dr David Blaxland a descendant of the explorer Gregory Blaxland who has been participating in the WCC meetings has proposed the setting up of the Western Crossings Foundation (or Trust) as a permanent body for education and research concerning the natural environment and human development of the region.

The proposal could lead to increased employment opportunities in the fields of education, care of the environment, tourism and research.

Dr Blaxland a medical practitioner living in Wagga Wagga has pastoral interests with a farm employing environmental practices at Warrnambool, Victoria.

"There would be a potentially immeasurable contribution to the canon of historical knowledge of the region.

"This could be a valuable bicentennial legacy to future members of the local community," he said.

Dr Blaxland has suggested that the objectives of the Foundation might be:

1. To facilitate and promote education and research concerning the natural history and human development of the region;
2. Through the above, to foster understanding and co-operation between local communities and groups of people; and
3. To make results of this work available for promotion of the region to visitors.

The work of the Trust would also contribute to the historical knowledge of the region.

The outgoing chairman of WCC, Professor David Carment has suggested the establishment of links with one or more tertiary educational institutes such as the University of Western Sydney or Charles Sturt University and local TAFE colleges.

The Foundation would be established in a form to accept grants, donations and bequests.

Dr Blaxland said the Western Crossings Committee was unusual consisting of members from diverse backgrounds encompassing a wide range of skills, knowledge and experience.

If there is no further action the committee will automatically disband at the end of 2015 celebrations.

Numerous ideas have been discussed including the production of films showing how tasks were performed and comparing them with modern methods including now rare trades and the construction of lost trades.

Another idea was for the production of CDs for use in motor vehicles when encompassing a large geographical area.

A small group of people who have shown an interest in the proposal will meet with Dr Blaxland before the next meeting of the Western Crossing Committee.

## A LESSON LEARNT FROM THE BURIAL OF THE 1867 RAIL CUTTING ABUTMENT

"BURIED beside the highway and railway diversion in the old railway cutting between Lawson and Hazelbrook is the last 'built' link with the original 1867 single track train line," writes local historian and author Ken Goodlet of Hazelbrook

"The entombed southern side eight-course stone abutment supported an arched masonry railway bridge over which the Bathurst road went, one of two such bridges on the mountains, according to the *Herald* of the time.

"You have to go to either the west or east escarpment to see any original stonework.

"This is just one more piece of our heritage that has been taken



*The 1866/67 sandstone abutment on the southern side of the original 1867 rail track. Note the shadow on the left that shows where the 1866-67 stone arch of the Bathurst Road bridge began.*

away from us without our [the Mountains community] permission.

"Much of it over the years was unavoidable, but not this time. Had the Roads and Maritime Service

(RMS) looked at their own guidelines for preserving heritage in their excellent 2002 Review of Environmental Factors for the mountains highway, they would have created a concrete block wall or equivalent on the southern side of the new highway as they have done on the northern side, rather than sacrificing our heritage by supporting the wall with a whopping amount of lime and blue metal strengthened rubble.

"Fortunately, the RMS's failure to follow their own heritage guidelines on the Woodford highway heritage precinct has been picked up early enough by a sub-committee of Woodford residents to give them a fighting chance of reviving their discrete community identity," Mr Goodlet said.

# All set for Blue Mountains history conference

THE BLUE Mountains History conference being organised by BMACHO will be held at the heritage listed Carrington Hotel, Katoomba on Saturday, October 20.

At the time of going to press with this newsletter there were a limited number of places available and those interested in attending should email Jan Koperberg at [j.koperberg@bigpond.com](mailto:j.koperberg@bigpond.com)

Early bird registrations are now closed and the normal fee of \$50 is payable with bookings.

The fee includes morning and afternoon tea as well as lunch in the historic grand dining room at Carrington Hotel now restored to its former glory. The conference will be held in the ballroom also restored to its original décor.

The registration desk will open at 8.30am with the conference opening at 9am

The conference will be officially opened by the well known historian Associate Professor Ian Jack former long-term president of the Royal Australian Historical Society.

Ian has been an indefatigable advocate of the importance of history and heritage of Australia. He has immeasurably increased the appreciation of heritage and has saved innumerable items from oblivion.

His vast knowledge of the history and heritage of the Greater Blue Mountains region and the Hawkesbury made him an obvious choice for the role of opening this conference.

The keynote speaker Professor Paul Ashton has chosen as his subject the 'The early years of the colony'.

Paul is a co-director of the Australian Centre for Public History (ACPH) and the Centre for Creative Practice and Cultural Economy. He is the Professor of Public History at the University of Technology, Sydney (UTS),

Paul's most recent book (co-authored with Paula Hamilton) is *History at the Crossroads*:



***Pictured front row from left BMACHO secretary, Jan Koperberg, Brigitte Mackenzie (Bendigo Bank, Katoomba branch manager), BMACHO president, Pamela Smith and Peter Carroll (Bendigo Bank); back row BMACHO committee members Doug Knowles, Judy Barham, Scott Pollock and John Leary, OAM at the cheque presentation at Everglades, Leura.***

*Australians and the Past* (Halstead Press) and he is a founder and co-editor of the refereed journal *Public History Review*, now published by UTSePress.

Professional gardener, historian and author Silas Clifford-Smith's subject for the conference is *Survival and Civilisation in a Strange Land*, which will highlight the importance of parks, gardens and cemeteries to Australian settlers from the time of settlement up to the early 20th century.

As well as working for many private clients he has been employed by the National Trust at the Norman Lindsay Museum in Faulconbridge and Experiment Farm Cottage.

Silas has also worked for the Historic Houses Trust at Vaucluse House and Elizabeth Farm, and the Governor-General at Admiralty House.

A prolific writer and biographer of Miles Franklin, Professor Emerita,

Jill Roe, AO is another of the line up of first class speakers for the conference.

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.

A Powerhouse Museum curator Glynis Jones has accepted an invitation to be presenter of textiles and fashions in the early colonial era.

Glynis is a curator in the design and society department of the Powerhouse Museum with responsibility for the museum's holdings of fashion and dress.

Local historian Paul Innes will speak and provide a tour of the heritage Carrington Hotel. His subject, 'The Carrington Hotel – a return to the era of grace and elegance and charm'.



***Hurry last chance to book.....***

## **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**

8.30am Registration

9.00am Introductions conference starts

9.15am

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



11.15am

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



2.30pm

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



9.45am

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



12.15pm

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



3.30pm

Afternoon tea

4.00pm

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’



12.45pm

Lunch in the grand dining room

1.45pm

Musical interlude Jim Low, folk singer, historian and writer in the ballroom.

10.45am

Morning tea

Cost of \$50 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)**



***Pictured at the right the heritage listed Carrington Hotel and above the grand dining room***



## Lithgow Small Arms Factory 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.

There will be an official opening of this exhibition on September 29 and the cutting of a centenary cake at 11.30am. Talks and demonstrations by expert members of the AACSA will commence at 1pm.

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

Among the speakers will be Professor Greg Patmore who will speak of 'The Factory and the Lithgow community before the Second War', Ian Kuring on 'The development of military small arms in Australia during the 20th century', Colonel Jim Burns, 'The role, organisation and tactics of the modern Australian defence force', Justin Hewitt an archaeologist, 'Weapons from the West' Tony Griffiths (author of *Lithgow's Small Arms Factory and its people*) 'Ladies of Lithgow and the SAF' and Graham Eveden 'Development of the F88 Austeyr rifle: 1988 till today and into the future'.

Saturday workshops will be of interest to military and arms enthusiasts while the Sunday program will centre on talks for history enthusiasts. For more information on these activities contact the Lithgow Small Arms Factory Museum by e-mail to [lithgowsafrumuseum@ozemail.com.au](mailto:lithgowsafrumuseum@ozemail.com.au) or by telephone to (02) 6351 4452

## Volunteer Defence Corps not a Force

AN ARTICLE titled *World War 2 in the Blue Mountains* by Joan Edwards appeared in the July-August 2012 edition of *HERITAGE*.

Bob Burnett of Mt Victoria Historical Society has drawn attention to an incorrect nomenclature of the organisation that was often known as Australia's 'Dad's Army of the day' which was in fact the Volunteer Defence Corps (not Force), also referred to as the VDC.

Thanks Bob, your information is correct. *HERITAGE* has done some research and offers the additional information.

The Volunteer Defence Corps (VDC) was an Australian part time volunteer military force of World War 2 modelled on the British Home Guard.

The VDC was established in July 1940 by the Returned and Services League of Australia (RSL) and was initially composed of ex-servicemen who had served in World War 1<sup>1</sup>.

The government took over control of the VDC in May 1941, and gave the organisation the role of training for guerrilla warfare, collecting local intelligence and providing static defence of each unit's home area<sup>2</sup>.

General Harry Chauvel, who had retired in 1930, was recalled to duty in 1940 and appointed Inspector-General of the VDC. Chauvel held this position until his death in March 1945.

Following the outbreak of the Pacific War, the Government expanded the VDC in February 1942.

Membership was open to men aged between 18 and 60, including those working in reserved occupations. As a result, the VDC reached peak strength of almost 100,000 in units across Australia<sup>3</sup>.

As the perceived threat to Australia declined the VDC's role changed from static defence to operating anti-aircraft artillery, coastal artillery and searchlights.

Members of inland VDC units were freed from having to attend regular training in May 1944 and the Volunteer Defence Corps was officially disbanded on August 24, 1945<sup>4</sup>.

### REFERENCE

<sup>1</sup> Dennis, Peter; et al. (2008). "Volunteer Defence Corps". *The Oxford Companion to Australian Military History* (Second edition ed.). Melbourne: Oxford University Press Australia & New Zealand. pp. 558–559. ISBN 978-0-19-551784-2.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*

<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> *ibid*

**Pictured below are members of the Volunteer Defence Corps in 1942 before they were issued with uniforms.** Photograph courtesy Australian War Memorial cat. no. PQ2018.087





# Patron's favourite Lindsays on show at artist's home

A SPECIAL exhibition of many of the best of the Norman Lindsay watercolours from the Howard Hinton collection is planned for the months of September to November at the Norman Lindsay Gallery in Faulconbridge.

Stunning watercolours such as *Happiness*, *Hydrangeas*, *Belshazzar*, *Hot Blood*, *Odysseus* and *Guarded* are among the works to be exhibited and seen for the first time together in the artist's home.

Howard Hinton was 'an Artist's patron' and during his lifetime he donated over 1000 works of art to various institutions including the Teachers' College in Armidale

He planned the collection to be a thorough representation of Australian art from 1880. It eventually included works by William Dobell, Hans Heysen, Margaret Preston, Thea Proctor, Tom Roberts, Arthur Streeton and the large collection Lindsays.

It was described by Norman Lindsay as 'the only complete collection of Australian art in the country'.

The exhibition will run from September 10 to November 19 and is included with normal admission to the gallery.



***Happiness*, Norman Lindsay, 1933, Watercolour**, Bequest of Howard Hinton 1948, New England Regional Art Museum, Armidale NSW

## Vintage and retro

EVERGLADES will be hosting its second Vintage and Retro weekend on November 17 and 18.

This year, vintage and retro fashion parades will be featured. While the ladies relish the fashions of the 30s and 40s, the men can lust over polished vintage vehicles.

There's plenty of lush green lawns to sprawl over while watching your kids play hopscotch or quoits.

Everyone is being encouraged to dress the part. Once you're done, you can learn to move and groove. All this and a lot more will be up for grabs.

Cost: Adult \$14, National Trust members \$10, concessions \$12, children \$8. family \$35.

Tickets/enquiries: 02 47841938



## More accolades for *HERITAGE*

From David Blaxland a descendant of Gregory Blaxland: *Thank you very much for adding my email address to your newsletter. I'm astonished by the high quality of the articles.*

*They're easy to read and very informative. Jan Koperberg mentioned that she was the secretary of BMACHO – I knew that it would consist of an interesting group of members but I had no idea that the standard of your work would be so high. I'm sure that, if it would be permissible, my fourth cousin Richard Blaxland, would also like to receive a copy of HERITAGE.*

*Richard and I both have a keen interest in history in general, and Australian history in particular.*

From Mary Reynolds, Mt Wilson and Mt Irvine Historical Society Inc: *What a mammoth effort with the latest HERITAGE newsletter.*

From Neryl Medcalf former research officer Woodford Academy: *Thank you, for the latest copy of the HERITAGE newsletter - always a great read!*

From Wendy Blaxland, great, great, great, great grand-daughter of Gregory Blaxland: *Thanks again for a most interesting newsletter; you provide such a valuable service to everyone wanting to share information about the history of this fascinating area*

From Alison Halliday: *As always a pleasure to receive and a fascinating read. Many thanks.*

From Joan and Tom Kent of Hartley Valley: *Congratulations on a particularly interesting edition of the newsletter HERITAGE - you have really excelled in difficult circumstances.*

From Ken Goodlet, local historian and author of Hazelbrook: *Congratulations, John on another wonderful newsletter. I'm particularly pleased that John Low got such a high profile in it. He is a wonderful asset and a thoroughly nice person.*

From Geoff Bates, Mt Victoria Historical Society: *Keep up the good work of recording our history - very interesting.*



# Inland explorers' stamps issue launched

AUSTRALIA POST has issued the 'Inland Explorers' series of four stamps.

They were issued on July 3 and Blue Mountains City Council held an afternoon tea on August 17 to launch the Crossings website and the commemorative stamps.

This stamp issue commemorates two anniversaries: in 2012 it is 150 years since John McDougall Stuart returned from his overland crossing of Australia; and in 2013 it will be 200 years since Gregory Blaxland, William Lawson and William Charles Wentworth crossed the Blue Mountains.

In 1813, Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth travelled through Dharug and Gundungurra country to establish a route across the Blue Mountains to open up the western plains of NSW for farming and settlement.

Others had attempted the crossing before, but the party's key strategy was to follow a westward-running ridge travelling for 21 days to what became known as Mt Blaxland.

Their expedition led, within a few short years, to a road across the mountains.

Some 50 years later, Stuart became the first European to make the south-north return crossing of Australia.

He left South Australia with his nine companions in October 1861, on his third attempt to cross the continent, reaching the coast at Van Diemens Gulf on July 24, 1862. Stuart raised the flag the following day, after first attempting to find the mouth of the Adelaide River.

Turning south, the party made Adelaide on December 17 that year. Stuart's success has been attributed to his experience, his egalitarian leadership style and his lighter method of travel. His expedition eventually led to the Adelaide-Darwin telegraph, (enabling telegraphic communication with the world) and the Stuart Highway.



## Collector gets three postmarks

Local lay philatelist, former president of Blue Mountains Historical Society and now editor of the *Blue Mountains History Journal*, Dr Peter Rickwood might be in other circles described as one who had won the trifecta.

Peter purchased the Australia Post first day cover envelopes with the two 60 cents stamps of Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson on the day of issue as well as that of John McDougall Stuart in the 'Inland Explorers' series.

Not content with the envelope bearing any old post office post mark, he visited post offices at Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth

Falls on July 3, 2012 the official date of issue by Australia Post and had his first day covers post marked at post offices in the three towns.

This initiative is probably almost unique. Well done Peter! Of course, the chance of it being unique would probably have been assured if Peter had flown on the same day to post offices at say Adelaide River 0846 Northern Territory, Oodnadatta 5374 or Coober Pedy 5723 South Australia all towns which came into existence after the exploration by Stuart or even Stuart Park near Darwin which seems to be the only town named in his honour.

John Leary, OAM



# 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 (pictured) the senior vice president of RAHS has now assumed the chair of the Western Crossing Committee (WCC) replacing the RAHS president Prof David Carment AM.

## Aircraft to fly over region

Mr Phil Hammon of BSB and Scenic World advised a recent meeting of WCC the planned flight path is from Bathurst, over the Grose, down to Emu Plains and then back up the route of the Great Western Highway and on to Bathurst.

## Descendants walk

Trevor Lloyd from the Blue Mountains Blue Wave has advised WCC its planned re-enactment walk from St Marys to Hartley Valley was organised to be held over 21 days. SES vehicles will accompany the walkers.

The team will be made up of descendants and their families and will be conducted from May 11 to May 31, 2013. It is hoped the walkers will be in Katoomba on May 25 for the aircraft flyover.

There are 7 people in the walk, but not the same 7 people over the 21 days. Stephen Wentworth will start the walk to represent William Charles Wentworth.

## Digital mapping project

Rosemary Sempell, Land and Property Information said that the relevant maps had now been scanned at State Records and that there would be digital delivery by the end of the year.

## Holey dollar

A holey dollar coin is to be created for distribution to 12,000 primary and high school children in the Blue Mountains area.

Phil Hammon has displayed to the recent WCC meeting a 'promo' coin in brass with the dump, which is a copy of the original coin and dump. This was in a display box, on a backing, which would show the logo of the sponsor/s.

The commemorative coin would be made in pewter. Phil said the metal used depended on whether the coin was to look new or old.

Sharon Lamb asked if school children from Blacktown to Bathurst could receive the coin and this possibility is now being considered.

## William Lawson's grave

Blacktown City Council has received a grant to restore William Lawson's grave at St Bartholomew's church at Prospect. St Bartholomew's Anniversary Day will be held on April 13, 2013.

## A moment in Time

Hartley District Progress Association will be conducting an images exhibition titled *A Moment in Time*, in the historic site for the two weeks either side of the June 1 weekend.

The yet to be named Fair Day on June 1, 2013 will run from 10am to 4pm.

There will also be guided walks on Cox's Road in May and June.

These walks will be of varying length and difficulty, limited to manageable numbers and only on those sections of the road where permission can be obtained from landholders.

Hartley District Progress Association also has a history conference scheduled for June 8, 2013.

## Katoomba RSL Club

Katoomba RSL has donated \$500 for Mt Victoria & District Historical Society to paint the museum before the bicentenary events.

## Possible Event in London

Richard Cox, a great-great-grandson of William Cox has offered to try to organise some celebrations in England in May 2013.

## 2013 William Cox Festival

Nepean Historical Society will be holding their usual William Cox Festival at the Arms of Australia Inn, Emu Plains in July 2013.

## Mount York re-enactment

Marcia Osterberg-Olsen has advised that Mt Victoria & District Historical Society had planned a parade of descendants from the beginning of Mount York Road out to Mount York, a re-enactment of the parade organised by Jean Arthur 25 years ago. There will also be horse-drawn vehicles.

The parade is being planned for May 26, which would co-incide with the 'Great Train Weekend', but organisers are now looking at May 28, to coincide with the main commemorative event.

## Parramatta and District Historical Society

Parramatta & District Historical Society, has advised the society holds an event at Hambledon Cottage, Parramatta every year in September for History Week, with school children from the district role-playing historic events and people.

For the Crossings bicentenary next year, the society will be focusing on Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth and the crossing of the Blue Mountains

## Crossing! Play

Wendy Blaxland advised that a website had been set up to give publicity about the play: [www.Blaxlandanddaughter.com](http://www.Blaxlandanddaughter.com). The names of the convicts who travelled with the three explorers are still unknown, as are the names of the Indigenous people.

For more information about Western Crossing events contact: [www.bluemountainscrossings.com.au](http://www.bluemountainscrossings.com.au)



# Stolen artefacts back in Afghanistan

HUNDREDS of looted treasures have been returned to Afghanistan with the help of the British Museum, British police and border forces.

The haul is just a fraction of what has been stolen from Afghanistan's national museum and rich archaeological sites in recent decades.

"The pieces, and their enormous range, bear testament to the incredibly rich cultural history of Afghanistan," said, Colin Crokin, Britain's consul-general in Afghanistan, at the hand over ceremony recently for the 83 meticulously catalogued items.

"In a sense, they are symbols of Afghanistan's struggle for national unity and peace - scattered by the civil war, recovered and now passed back to their own people for safekeeping."

Among the important recovered artefacts is a second century schist

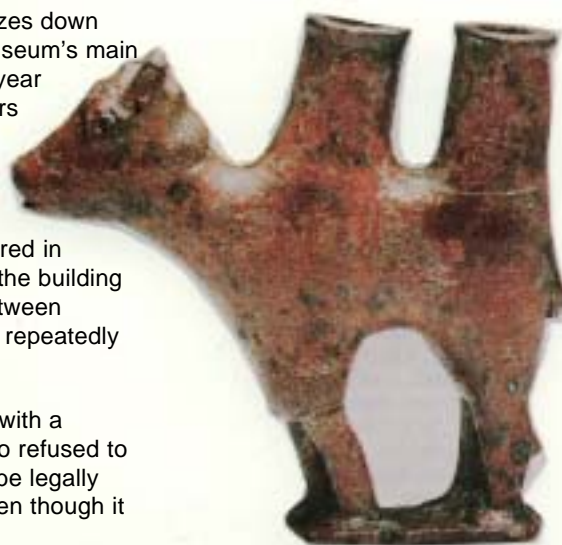
Buddha, which now gazes down from a niche on the museum's main stairwell, despite a 20-year odyssey to other corners of Asia.

The statue was part of the museum's collection but disappeared in the early 1990s, when the building was on the frontline between warring factions, which repeatedly raided its storerooms.

The Buddha ended up with a Japanese collector, who refused to return it and could not be legally compelled to do so, even though it had been looted.

But an anonymous British dealer stepped in, spending hundreds of thousands of pounds to buy for the museum.

"It is very important for us to get these artefacts back because they are part of cultural heritage and history," said Afghanistan's deputy



culture minister Sayed Masaddeq Khalili.

About 9000 looted artefacts have been returned from other countries since 2009. Guardian News & Media  
**Back home... a cosmetic flask returned to the national museum in Kabul after being looted.**

Photograph British Museum

## 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:

- i. To raise public consciousness of the value of cultural heritage.
  - ii. To encourage and assist cultural heritage activities of member organisations.
  - iii. 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., Lilianfels 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.