

HERITAGE

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

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HERITAGE FOREST OF WOLLEMI PINES

Many botanic gardens are increasingly becoming involved in conservation activities that integrate in situ and ex situ approaches to tree conservation, which are typically undertaken in partnership with other organisations such as national park agencies, forest services, non-government organisations (NGOs) and local communities.

(BGCI- Integrated Conservation of Tree Species: A reference manual)

**by Ross Ingram,
Acting Curator Manager,
Blue Mountains Botanic
Garden**

In the early 1990s Blue Mountains Botanic Garden acquired almost 200 hectares of wilderness, adjoining and to the north of the existing garden.

Following the discovery of the Wollemi Pine in 1994 and with the declaration of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage area a few years later the acquisition took on even greater significance and opportunity.

All of these changes precipitated the need for a review of the gardens thematics to refocus the role and function of the garden in a World Heritage area and to explore the new opportunities and possibilities arising from these changes.

Into this context came an approach from University PhD student Heidi Zimmer in conjunction with the Wollemi Pine Recovery group which stimulated interest and the immediate possibility to initiate a planting of some 200 trees. To quote Heidi's report –

To date, research of the natural populations of Wollemia nobilis has been observational.

Studies on the natural history, and morphology, biology, genetics and phylogeny of Wollemia provides a fundamental understanding of the species and is a necessary precursor to informing conservation strategies.

However, the current populations of Wollemia exist in a relatively narrow set of environmental conditions.



View into rugged a gorge and selected planting site on Blue Mountain Botanic Garden conservation area. Photograph Greg Bourke

One potential conservation strategy is to establish ex situ populations in natural environments. To maximise the effectiveness of this approach it is critical to understand how Wollemia responds to a broader range of environmental conditions. This requires an experimental approach. (Zimmer and Baker, 2011)

After careful exploration and research of a number of locations within the conservation area, a site which almost replicates the original discovery site, was identified and the challenging task of planting out began

A new visitor experience

With this planting project completed successfully, the idea arose of creating another site using some very advanced trees not utilised in the initial project to create an ex situ

forest that would provide visitors with a relatively safe and managed "wild Wollemi experience".

Access to the conservation area has to date been challenging.

The first obstacle was overcome with the donation of funding by the Friends of the Botanic Gardens for a footbridge which made safe access across the highway possible.

Visitor access has been limited to students participating in formal field study trips and to those who were prepared to book and pay for an organised tour with a guide.

The area is abundant with natural attractions ranging from lush rainforest to dry sclerophyll and heath, ancient rock formations, wildflowers, dozens of bird species and spectacular views.

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An opinion from the editor.....

Sealing of Cox's Rd is heritage vandalism by local government

Plans by Blue Mountain City Council to apply bitumen over the unsealed parts of Old Bathurst Road (Cox's Road), Woodford impregnating with tar, a road constructed of and on sandstone, 198-years ago; can at least be considered cavalier and at worst sheer heritage vandalism.

When one considers the wealth of misinformation that councillors and senior staff spread, suggesting that this roadway had no heritage significance and that 'there is no heritage listing at either local or state level', it is well time that someone should look at council's flow of information both within the organisation and to the ratepayers and residents of this city.

It has been claimed by several descendants of the explorers that pressure was brought upon them not to alert the media. as it might affect the success of the celebrations.

It is certain that every member of Blue Mountains City Council's heritage advisory committee was aware of the listings and the heritage significance of this road construction had council or its senior staff taken the trouble to consult with this body.

The simple fact is that the Cox's Road is listed on the State Heritage Inventory and in council's Local Environment Plan 1991.

At council's ordinary meeting of June 4, 2013 some councillors appeared to be in complete denial about these facts. They could not or did not want to understand, that the heritage value is in the road construction itself, not in some cast-off shoe from Cox's horse or a broken clay pipe dropped by one of his convicts.

There is a legal requirement on council to take note of this item in the SHI and LEP 1991 and certainly a moral obligation to future generations.

It is ironical, at the present time as we commemorate and celebrate the bicentenary of the Western Crossings 2013-2015, that this work which if it goes ahead will ultimately destroy one of the earliest colonial road-lines which allowed the starving settlement at Sydney to expand and open up the golden west of NSW.

It is almost like a Bacchanalian celebration of ancient Greece where after the festivities there followed a drunken orgy of crimes and conspiracies. Here in the Blue Mountains, after the commemoration and celebrations of the achievements of the three feted explorers, an orgy of destruction of one of the only major heritage structures remaining from that period will follow.

Many who live in this rustic setting would prefer it to remain an unsealed road unattractive to the hooners likely to see it as a route to a bush rubbish tip or worse. The concerns of local residents need to be taken into account. The most serious concern is drainage after summer storms. Sealing the road on its own will only make the drainage problem faster and more destructive. The drainage concerns can and should be addressed without having to seal the road.

Council will now wait on an archaeological report before taking further steps to seal the road; but until councillors accept that heritage is just more than a word to which they pay lip service, the future of heritage conservation in the Blue Mountains will sound very hollow. With a little innovative thought by council, Cox's Road could be equal to Old Great North Road - World Heritage walk which features a historic convict-built, some in chains, road overlooking the Hawkesbury River, in Dharug National Park.

John Leary, OAM - President, Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage Organisations Inc.

A wilderness walk plunging into a Wollemi gorge

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Here was the opportunity to offer a truly unique visitor experience by creating a varied wilderness walk with the chance to experience rainforest, open woodland and wildflowers, cliff edges, a magic *Angophora* forest and then finally plunging into a Wollemi gorge.

However, this is more than just about providing visitors with a pleasant, relatively safe "emersion" in wilderness.

The botanic garden of the 21st century has a role and a responsibility to address much more than simply providing visitors with pleasant experiences and displaying collections of plants in well organised high standard horticultural displays.

Here is the chance to interpret and explain conservation, the nature and importance of biodiversity, habitat, the relationship between people and plants and the understanding of place - in a botanic garden managed wilderness.

Blue Mountains Botanic Garden natural area staff have begun systematically surveying the area so that we have a good idea of what the area has to offer and what responsibilities we have in managing the site.

Tracks have been created and some preliminary guided walks have been laid out.



Horticulturists planting out and recording details. Photograph: Greg Bourke

A circular walk through a variety of ecosystems and features and across different terrains will lead walkers to the Wollemi grove which nests in a moist gully beneath sandstone cliffs.

The proposed boardwalk will minimize the impact of walkers, avoid erosion problems and enable intimate contact with the trees and associated vegetation.

Unfortunately the conservation area is difficult terrain and access will be limited to relatively fit and able persons.

At least two hours will be needed to fully enjoy the walk and the country is quite steep in places.

Because it is a heritage and conservation area, the proposal is to not intrude unnecessarily and for the infrastructure to be as unobtrusive as possible.

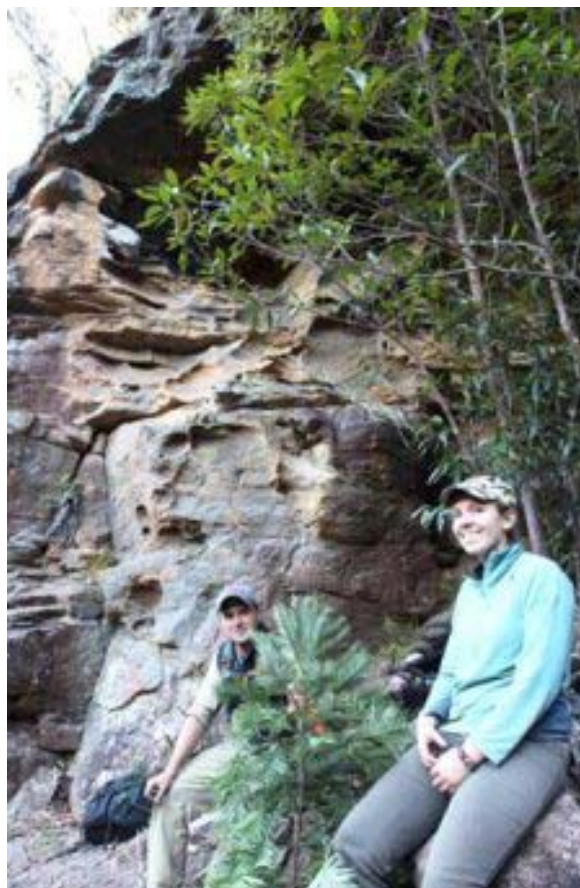
Approval was sought and received and work has started.

The project will need to attract substantial sponsorship as it will be necessary to construct a lengthy boardwalk to provide access.

The boardwalk will reduce the impact of visitors on the fragile site and provide means to maintain the highest standard of hygiene. (The disease *Phytophthora* is carried on footwear).

Wildfire and disease represent the two big threats to a project such as this.

Recently, in collaboration with the Botanic Gardens Trust, the Rural Fire Service conducted a very



Research scientist Heidi Zimmer (right) and horticulturist Chris Crottey take a break during "operation plantout". Photograph : Greg Bourke

successful hazard reduction exercise to help manage the threat of wildfire.

Part of the ongoing management plan for the site is that such exercises will need to be conducted at regular intervals as determined and recommended by ecologists to both ensure the integrity of the natural ecosystems and to protect the Wollemi plantings into the future.



Wollemi nobillis

'Crossing of the Blue Mountains' an outstanding exhibition at Mt Victoria

A remarkable and innovative engagement with the community

"There has been plenty of opportunity for celebratory activities and some of them have been memorable, such as the Blue Wave crossing re-enactment by John Sullivan and descendants of the three explorers, the spectacular flyover of aircraft and the mass circulation of the commemorative holey dollar to schoolchildren to name but a few.

"There has however, been few enduring things which have so far come from the three-year commemoration of the bicentenary of the 'western crossing' other than the foundation proposed by Dr David Blaxland and the splendid activities centred around the Hartley Valley.

"To its great credit the Mt Victoria Historical Society has produced another enduring legacy, which will have immense value for many years to come — the outstanding exhibition created at Mt Victoria museum in a newly dedicated Crossings Room.

"Not only has the concept and energy of Marcia Osterberg-Olsen, herself of descendant of some of our earliest pioneers been harnessed, to curate this commemorative exhibit; but it has also seen the engagement by this historical society with a much wider community including Rotarians, volunteers, professional and business people as well several generous donors.

"Other groups could well learn from this successful engagement with the community for the preservation and presentation of our heritage.

"This exhibition is as well presented and as professionally created to equal those displays found in many of larger state owned museums.

"In this article, president of the Mt Victoria and District Historical Society, Mrs Jean Winston outlines the work involved to create this exhibition. Congratulations to all concerned." **John Leary, OAM – president, Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage Organisations Inc**

An outstanding exhibition, to commemorate the bicentenary of the 'Crossing of the Blue Mountains' has been created at the Mount Victoria Museum.

The concept and execution of the exhibition were driven by the determination of Marcia Osterberg-Olsen whose family were pioneers in the Little Hartley district.

There were many pitfalls to be overcome before the display could be mounted, including renovations and painting of the designated room.

This was done by members of the historical society.

Money was limited and an application for a grant from Museums and Galleries NSW had been declined.

A graphic designer and Blackheath Rotarian, Clive Jones of Red Egg Design offered his skills free of charge, as did his wife Gabrielle.

The Blackheath Rotary Club generously offered financial and physical support to get the exhibition under way.

One Rotarian sent a letter to local residents asking for financial support and a Katoomba Rotarian erected a false wall in the exhibition room.

These efforts were gratefully received by the Mount Victoria and District Historical Society which managed the exhibition.

Marcia said that she wanted a 'wow' factor for the exhibit.

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A clever illusion: a real table and glassware in front of the graphic of Governor and Mrs Macquarie drawn by Clive Jones.

A chronology of the crossings

Cotinued from page 4

This was to be achieved through artifacts, tools of trade, stories, line drawings, pictures and photographs.

Her idea was to show the chronology of the crossings of the Blue Mountains starting with the Aborigines and ending with the journey by Governor and Mrs. Macquarie to Bathurst in 1815.

The three local Aboriginal tribes, Gundungurra, Darug and Wiradjuri had been crossing the Blue Mountains and the Great Dividing Range for centuries carrying chert and mudstone to make tools.

Examples of these objects found in the Hartley area are on display.

The routes of four earlier attempts to cross the mountains are depicted, those of Bass, a ship's surgeon, Everingham, a convict, Barrallier, a Royal Navy surveyor and Caley a botanist.

None were successful and Caley was amazed when he heard it had been done. He is depicted sitting at home in England, with a parrot on his shoulder, a virtual recluse.

Large panels of text give information on the explorers, surveyors, road makers and on the governor and Mrs. Macquarie.

The display gives extensive biographical notes on each of the men up to the time that they crossed the mountains. Blaxland aged 35, Lawson 39 and Wentworth 23 set out in 1813.

They got as far as Mount Blaxland, further west from Mount York where they stood and overlooked the western plains.

A copy of Gregory Blaxland's diary written, very legibly, on May 28, 1813 at Mount York is on display and really connects the viewer with the explorers.

To progress each day, they struggled through dense bush and had to go ahead to reconnoitre a route ahead of the main group, blazing trees as they went, and then went back to bring the horses.

Grass for the horses had to be cut where available and carried, increasing their loads to about 100kg each.

The party encountered one group of Aboriginal women and children who were frightened at first but when interest was shown in the children they all relaxed.

It was reported that both the women were blind in the right eye.

Surveyor Evans, who was thirty three years old, was asked to make a route suitable for horses and stock. He took enough stores for a two months period.

One of his tools of trade was a circumferentor which is a surveyor's compass, an earlier version of the theodolite.

The Land and Property Information Service at Bathurst has kindly lent a circumferentor to the society. The instrument measures horizontal angles. The east and west points on the face of the instrument are reversed from the normal way.

The road maker William Cox, aged fifty one later built a road of 101.5 miles on Evans route.

Details are given of the equipment used and some examples are on display: gunpowder, block and tackle, crowbars, sledge hammers, axes, two man cross-cut saws, picks and shovels.

The method of sawing used in a two man pit saw was for a saw pit to be dug to about 2.5metres deep and 1.5 metres wide.

Poles were placed across the pit and the log to be sawn was placed on the poles.

The bottom man stood in the pit and the top man or senior sawyer balanced on the log above and guided the saw in making the cut.

English artist John Lewin who travelled with Macquarie's party to Bathurst in 1815 painted scenes along the way.

A huge reproduction of his watercolour painting 'Spring Wood' stands in a commanding position on the false wall at the end of the room.

Line drawings of Governor Macquarie and Mrs Macquarie, sitting like ghosts in the scene, are superimposed on it.

In front of the figures is an actual table with a lamp, a decanter, wine glasses and a pack of cards put ready for the evening game of whist.

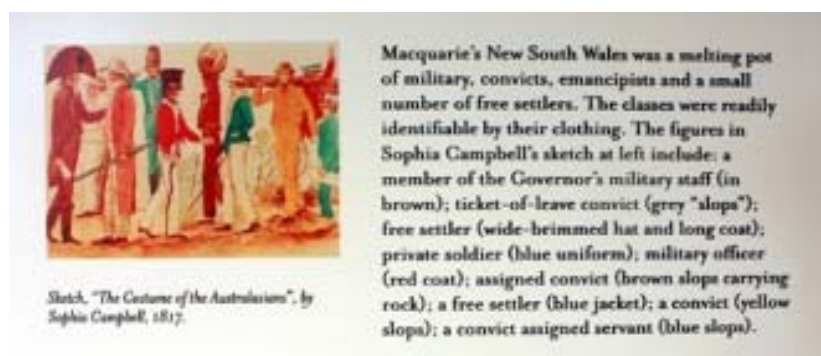
Beyond the Spring Wood scene is a beautiful chiaroscuro screen named 'Eucalypt' which was made by Marcia's daughter Vashti Gonda and donated by Creative Powerhouse Pty Ltd. It is a work of art in itself.

The following panels depict and describe Governor and Mrs. Macquarie.

It was noted that Macquarie like other governors before him had given orders that all colonists make every effort to live in friendship with the Aboriginal people.

On Thursday May 4, 1815 Macquarie's expedition reached the Bathurst Plains where the town of Bathurst was proclaimed.

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...a beautiful chiaroscuro screen named 'Eucalypt'...

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The final small picture shows how the colour of their clothes delineated the status of the wearers.

A society member assisted Marcia by doing research for the text.

A Hartley man gave money for the installation of the lighting system.

Numerous other people have assisted in preparing this exhibition and I apologise to any whom I have omitted.

The Mount Victoria and District Historical Society is immensely pleased with the final display and is most appreciative of the creative ability and determination shown by Marcia Osterberg-Olsen in seeing the project through to the finish.



Pictured is the chiaroscuro screen named 'Eucalypt' made in aluminium by Vashti Gonda and donated by Creative Powerhouse Pty Ltd.

Woodford Academy seeks grant for schools program based on service in World War 1

DURING the First World War, up to 48 graduates from the Woodford Academy enlisted in the First AIF.

They served in a variety of capacities. Two are known to have been killed in action and one was awarded the Military Medal.

The study of the Academy's records of all these veterans has not yet been undertaken.

These men and their experiences can now be seen as a mini-study of the times and experiences of men who served in that war.

There is a large collection of unprocessed recourses and records that contains information about these men and their school experience. This includes photographs, school records, fees paid, family contacts and the like.

The military records of these men are freely available from the National Australian Archives.

Their unit records are freely available from the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

Woodford Academy management committee has submitted an application for funding from the Australian Government's Department of Veteran Affairs ANZAC Centenary grants program.

The funding would be used to develop the recourses that exist at the Academy that deal with these boys and the period 1910-1918 and to add their military records to create a teaching and learning recourse for schools in the Blue Mountains.

Through the study of this history the

BLUE MOUNTAINS HISTORY CONFERENCE IN 2014

SUCCESS of the 2012 History Conference organised by BMACHO has spurred the committee into staging another in May 2014.

Three venues are currently being considered and in the meantime, a number of eminent historians are being approached to be speakers.

A good number of people interested in heritage and history attended the day long conference last October and at least this number is expected to register for the May 2014 event.

All who attended last years conference will be contacted and invited to next year's function.

Further details will be announced in coming weeks and will appear on BMACHO's website
www.bluemountainsheritage.com

Woodford Academy would like to contribute to the understanding of Australian school students about the social and political situation under which these particular men lived and enlisted and to see how this might have been affected by their First World War experience.



*Descendants wearing service medals including a Military Cross of former students of Woodford Academy at the 2006 Remembrance Day unveiling of a restored honour roll.
Photograph John Leary, OAM*

Council were set to destroy heritage integrity of Cox's Road, Woodford

by Jan Koperberg and John Leary --- photographs by Patsy Moppett taken on June 7, 2013

BLUE MOUNTAINS City Council has damaged some of Australia's oldest road construction when it graded Old Bathurst Road (Cox's Road), Woodford.

A number of local residents became alarmed, as were members of BMACHO and other heritage and historical societies on the Mountains, that the Blue Mountains City Council had graded the Woodford stretch of Bathurst Road (Cox's Road), ready for sealing.

Council had earlier decided to include this heritage carriageway, as part of a project to seal presently unsealed roads on the mountains.

People with knowledge of the road's heritage approached a number of councillors who had been publicly stating there was no heritage value in the roadway.

This particular section of Old Bathurst Road is listed on the NSW Heritage Branch Inventory, as 'LD 019: Remnants of Cox's Road'.

This listing covers Old Bathurst Road and Taylor Road, Woodford. It is one of the earliest colonial-era road-lines surviving in Australia.

The 1814 road is tangible evidence of the development of the colony at Sydney and the expansion of white settlement into western NSW.

This was originally listed in LEP 1991 and was updated in January, 2005, the study being done in 2003 by Dr Siobhan Lavelle and Dr Ian Jack.

When council became aware of the concerns by historians and others of the road's heritage status, a site inspection took place with the attendance of several councillors, council senior staff, council's heritage advisor, a representative of Roads and Maritime Services who had considerable knowledge about this road, and local residents.

To council staff's credit, when they became aware of the heritage listings, the sealing of the road was delayed.



Stone wall is evidence of 1820s improvements to the original Cox's Road over which council had planned to seal with bitumen.

Following protests to council by people with heritage knowledge, and after grading of the road had been finished and machinery brought in for sealing, a report by staff was presented to council.

Some damage to the original roadwork was done to the construction of the 198-year old heritage road.

The staff report stated: '...there is no heritage listing at either local or state level'.

This is clearly untrue as it is listed in the State Heritage Inventory and also in council's own LEP 1991.

It is understood a report drawing attention to the road's heritage status was not made available to councillors for the council meeting of June 4, 2013.

A number of people for the sealing and against the sealing, attended the Blue Mountains City Council meeting on Tuesday June 4, 2013.

Three people were allowed to speak in favour and three against. Those who spoke against the sealing of the road were John Leary, OAM, president of Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage

Organisations Inc, Ian Harman, chairman, Woodford Academy management committee and Jan Koperberg, secretary, BMACHO.

Those residents in favour of sealing this rural road cited dust and stormwater run-off problems.

Not all residents are in favour of the road being sealed and some are concerned that it will increase traffic movements to a property where an allegedly unauthorised commercial activity is taking place.

Cr Geordie Williamson, a Woodford resident, was the only councillor to speak in favour of retaining Old Bathurst Road as an unsealed road.

At the time *HERITAGE* was published on-line, council was seeking advice from an archaeologist.



View of the graded road to the south near the stone wall Cox's Road foundations

Devotion – Sir Joseph and Dame Mary Cook

An exhibition celebrating Lithgow's Prime Minister

AN EXHIBITION celebrating the lives and achievements of Sir Joseph and Dame Mary Cook is on display at Eskbank House and Museum until October 7, 2013 having been officially opened earlier this month.

"Lithgow is very proud to have its own Prime Minister in Sir Joseph Cook," said Lithgow City Council Mayor Maree Statham. "It is also very special to see, in this exhibition, the bond between Sir Joseph and Dame Mary and how they were able to achieve so much together."

The couple moved to Lithgow in 1886 and Sir Joseph worked in the Vale of Clwydd Colliery as he studied and worked his way up through the unions and into politics.

He was a minister in the first federal government, became prime minister in 1913, was high commissioner in London and knighted in 1918.

As well as being beside him every step of his career, Dame Mary was heavily involved in the Red Cross and was made a Dame in the Order of the British Empire in 1925 for this work.

This exhibition focuses on the lives of Sir Joseph and Dame Mary and their devotion to politics, the community and family.

As well as stories and images, several items from the couple, not exhibited before, will be on display, such as a lovely reference written by Dame Mary for one of her maids and the original letter from Her Majesty's Privy Council to Sir Joseph Cook offering him the position of Australian High Commissioner in England.

The exhibition was officially opened by Mayor Statham followed by talks from Hartley Cook (great grandson of Sir Joseph and Dame Mary), Cassandra Coleman (a member of the Sir Joseph Cook Commemorative Group) and curators Miriam Scott and Wendy Hawkes.



Joseph Cook photographed at the time he was post master general.



During Sir Joe's time as high commissioner in London both Sir Joe and Dame Mary were very active in promoting Australia's interests in Great Britain. In these photographs Dame Mary is officially commissioning the first Australian amphibian flying boat "The Seagull" in 1926. Sir Joe then took a flight in the plane. The bottom image is Dame Mary wishing him well and the top is a very relieved kiss when he landed safely. A photograph album gifted to the Cooks by the Supermarine Aviation Works Ltd. is in the National Australian Archives and is a beautifully told story of the occasion. (Photographs from the National Australian Archives M3613)

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

by John Low, OAM - Local historian

WHEN THE ENGLISH aristocracy visited the Blue Mountains, as they regularly did, the unfamiliar pleasures of the landscape often seduced them into relaxing the normal formalities of their class.

Even the future Queen Mary and her ladies took to the swings at Leura Cascades in 1901 and wandered the bush paths for longer than they should.

Almost a decade earlier, following a visit to Jenolan Caves in January 1893, Alice, Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos, alighted at the Carrington Hotel with her friend Hilda.

Having roughed it at smaller accommodation houses, they settled in to the comfort of the grand hotel, a panoramic view from their verandah and their dinner table "covered with flowers".

The following day Sir Frederick Darley of 'Lilianfels' took them to Wentworth Falls and the Three Sisters and despite the heat and flies they were not deterred from accepting an invitation the next morning for "a grand picnic expedition" to Govett's Leap.

Coach driver Harry Peckman, their guide for the day, was a man well versed in the art of introducing the aristocracy to the informalities of the bush.

Bushman, poet and raconteur, it was he who had taken Lord and Lady Carrington by horse across the Six Foot Track in 1887 and introduced them to the camaraderie of the camp fire and the delights of billy tea.

"Oh, such a beautiful, wonderful place!" exclaimed Alice on arrival at the Leap, the amphitheatre of cliffs intersected with dashing waterfalls (her words) becoming the background against which the 'theatre' of the picnic played out.

Both director and performer, Peckman always ensured that his guests were part of the action.

It began with a story, a skeleton found in the thick bush in the depths



A 19th century picnic at Govett's Leap

of the valley, a lost soul who'd wandered from his friends and died "bewildered in the endless scrub and forest".

Then a lesson in fire-making and the baking of potatoes, followed by a warning about snakes and a careful study of the ground to ensure no serpents would spoil their "excellent repast".

After lunch and an exciting scramble down to the edge of the precipice, "throwing stones to see if we could hear them fall", it was time for the ritual of 'billy tea' and the climactic flourish of the guide's own poetry.

His 'Laughing Jackass', a humorous verse and prose piece that included a reputedly faultless imitation of a Kookaburra, brought the picnic to a suitably colourful conclusion.

But the drama had not yet ended! Nature still had a few lines of her own to deliver.

"On the way home", Alice reported, "we were caught in a tremendous

thunderstorm, and got well soaked – hailstones like peas ... and sheets of rain.

It rains like a water-spout here when it once begins.

Some of the ladies were so frightened that they took refuge in a house, but most of us drove on and braved the elements".

An outing with Harry was invariably a memorable experience!

Authors note: A copy of Alice's letters, *Glimpses of Four Continents*, written during her world tour and published in London in 1894, is held in the Local Studies Section at Springwood Library.

Also, copies of Jim Smith and John Low's book on Harry Peckham, *The Prince of Whips*, are still available at the give-away price of \$5!

This article was first published in *Hut News* of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society, Issue 298, November 2012.

Longtime series

KURRAJONG Comleroy Historical Society will hold its annual general meeting on Monday, September 23 when the guest speaker will be Lesley Jane Abrahams.

Lesley will share local history from the "Longtime Series" by Hesba

Hungerford Brinsmead and other interesting research.

The meeting will be held at the Kurrajong Community Centre, McMahon Park, Kurrajong.

Sydney Rock - On the Ways to the West

SYDNEY ROCK is a striking sandstone outcrop some six metres high beside the Great Western Highway and the recently realigned railway on the eastern approaches to Lawson.

It is listed on the State Heritage Inventory and recent highway construction and railway deviations have left it more isolated and best approached from Somers Street.

On its irregular top surface it has weathered into a small-scale lunar landscape.

Beside the highway, the west side of the rock has been chipped away, probably as a result of highway widening.

Historic notes forming part of the State Heritage Inventory listing state: 'Sydney Rock was a significant landmark at the north-eastern approaches to nineteenth-century Lawson.

'In 1903 it was damaged by 'vandals who had begun to blast it out for road metal': the four drill-holes evident at the north end of the outcrop today are probably the work of these 'vandals'.

'The breaking-up of the rock was stopped in 1903 by the brisk intervention of John Geggie, the store-keeper and honorary secretary of both the Lawson Progress Committee and the Reserves Trust.

'The damage to the lower part of the rock adjacent to the highway is



Eugene Stockton at the playground which he shared with butterflies.

likely to be the result of roadworks later in the twentieth century.

'Sydney Rock was a popular picnic area, with a commanding view down to Sydney before the regrowth of the bush.

'It was a vantage point from which local people during World War II would go to watch searchlights probing the skys over Sydney or in peace-time fireworks displays on [Sydney] Harbour.'

'It also gave its name to a refreshment house opposite on the highway, known as the Sydney Rock Cafe long before Hard Rock Cafes were invented.'¹

Sydney Rock was long recognised as a prominent landmark along the

highway. Brian Fox in his *Blue Mountains Geographical Dictionary* records its recognition as early as 1882.²

Now a book *Sydney Rock - On the Ways to the West*, published by Blue Mountain Education and Research Trust and edited by Lawson's, Father Eugene Stockton has been released. Father Stockton may be contacted on (02) 47 591818

"Sydney Rock loomed large across the highway from my childhood home," recalls Eugene.

"In the 1940s we kids clambered over the Rock imagining ourselves as early explorers who first crossed the Blue Mountains.

"Parties often enjoyed picnics on the Rock, savouring the far distant views and the mountains breezes.

"During World War 2 one watched the searchlights waving across the Sydney horizon and the fireworks at war's end.

In those years petrol rationing severely limited traffic on the highway, but since then increasingly heavy traffic has virtually closed access to the Rock and tree growth has hidden it from the view of passing motorists.

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Pictured is Sydney Rock some years ago.

Western most outcrop of Hawkesbury sandstone

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"Now with the completion of the roadworks in 2012, Sydney Rock can be restored to public enjoyment, while the old railway cutting left partly unfilled allows inspection of the sandstone stratigraphy and of the pick marks of the rock cutters (1867 and 1902)

"The rock brings together the history of the road and railway, geology and botany – and even mating butterflies!," according to Father Stockton.

Greg McNally an engineering geologist and chartered engineer believes that Sydney Rock is the westernmost outcrop of Hawkesbury sandstone in the Blue Mountains.

"With the 2013 realignment of the road and railway, the now abandoned and partly backfilled railway cutting on its southern flank exposes contact between the Hawkesbury sandstone and the underlying Narrabeen group rocks

"The cutting is significant because it contains the only identified Hawkesbury sandstone/Narrabeen contact in the area, though other occurrences could be present in local gullies and road cuttings," Greg McNally has said.

Sydney Rock overlooked a precious pocket of bushland, according to Hazelbrook's Chris Whiteman a horticulturist for the Commonwealth Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry who is particularly interested in the preservation of the mid-Blue Mountains heathland and has completed botanical surveys of this area.

In 2007, this pocket of about 1.25 hectares was surveyed by botanists Judy and Peter Smith, who found this small area,



Cross bedding in sandstone on southern face of the cutting, beneath the third (steel) bridge.

supported a rich mix of plant communities and species, some of special conservation significance and interest.

The Smiths recorded 118 species across 47 plant families in the course of a brief survey, noting that further species, particularly grasses and orchids, could well be revealed in future searches.

Three Aboriginal sites have been recorded in the neighbourhood, including rock shelters with deposit, axe grinding grooves and rock engravings

The rock itself shows no sign of Aboriginal activities.

However, Father Stockton considers, to Gundungurra people travelling along the main ridge, Sydney Rock could well have served as marker turning north along this ridge.³

Copies of *Sydney Rock - on the Ways to the West* are available direct from the publisher at \$15 a copy plus postage and handling.

For more information about this publication, telephone Eugene Stockton, Blue Mountain Education and Research Trust (02) 4759 1034 or e-mail: olon@tpg.com.au

End notes

¹ NSW Environment & Heritage *State Heritage Inventory 25 Feb 2000*, Ld 009 Sydney Rock

² Fox, B. 2001 *Blue Mountains Geographical Dictionary* (2nd Edition)

³ Stockton, E. 2009 *Blue Mountains Dreaming. The Aboriginal Heritage* (2nd Edition).

RAHS Conference in Katoomba

The annual RAHS Conference will be held this year at Katoomba RSL.

It will begin on Friday afternoon, November 1, with a visit to State Records.

This will be followed by a *Meet and Greet* pre-dinner drinks and 'nibbles' at Hobby's Reach.

Tarella will be open for those who would like to see through the cottage.

The Conference whose theme is *The Great Divide - From Here to There* will be held on Saturday and Sunday, November 2-3.

Details of the speakers and their topics have not yet been released. For more details visit the RAHS website.

Lithgow migration and settlement study

LITHGOW CITY Council has entered a partnership with the Powerhouse Museum's NSW Migration Heritage Centre to undertake a Lithgow Region Migration and Settlement Thematic Study.

This scholarly research and resulting history will involve the research and production of a community history through researching and uncovering the hidden story of all the waves of migration and settlement to the Lithgow City Council area, with a focus of industrial and family history.

The history will research from first European settlement to the present.

It will encompass Anglo-Celtic migrations (with reference to particular diaspora) and contact history with Aboriginal Australians, including the shared labour histories on farms and in local industries.



A wonderful image of coalminers from the Lithgow Valley Colliery taken in the 1880s. Research by Ray Christison indicates these men came from Northumberland and Durham, Shropshire, Staffordshire and Cornwall. Some came to Lithgow via the goldfields, the Turon, Bendigo, Ballarat or California. A substantial proportion of the early miners were Methodists and Free Methodists. (Lithgow Regional Library 42439)

- The early pastoral economy, including settlement patterns and the use of convict labour.
- Coal, oil shale, minerals processing, electricity generation and munitions industries, and their workers.
- The impact of the railway coming to Lithgow
- Manufacturing industry, including the linen mills and more recently, Berlei.
- Hostels for contractual and migrant labour, including Lithgow and Wallerawang.
- Social groups, friendly societies, worker organisations and religious practice.
- The experience and impact of migrant women and children.
- The influence of migrant groups on political activism and ideas. Employment-driven settlement patterns and subsequent living

conditions such as housing supply.

- 19th Century Chinese migration.
- Post Second World War refugees
- Recent, ie within past 20 years, migration including refugees.
- The impact of the White Australia immigration policy and its abolition.

Research for the project will concentrate on the Lithgow City Council area including Lithgow, Wallerawang, Hartley, Portland and surrounding districts.

Among other groups Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage Organisations Inc (BMACHO) is to be consulted during the project. Other groups who will be asked for participation in the project are the Eskbank House and Museum, The City of Greater Lithgow Mining Museum Inc, Lithgow Small Arms Museum Inc, Lithgow and District Family Historical Society; (all four groups

are members of BMACHO), National Parks & Wildlife Service, and Office of Environment & Heritage.

An illustrated history is to be the outcome of the first three stages of the project.

The history will focus on key places and industries – including places of work, recreation, religion and business – that will help tell the story of the region and its distinctive migration and settlement history, township by township.

The history will include an oral history component to access the knowledge of elderly former migrants or people with recollections that will assist the project. This is a priority as many post-World War Two former migrants are aging and frail.

Lithgow City Council is currently seeking an experienced consultant with professional historian qualifications to undertake stage one of this study project.

The project is scheduled to be completed by May 31, 2014.

Capt Cook's pistol fetches \$220,000

A RARE PIECE of Australian history has gone under the hammer, netting a small but tidy profit for its seller.

A pistol belonging to Captain James Cook handed down through the family for many generations, was sold at auction in Melbourne earlier this year for almost \$220,000.

For a man who had such a profound effect on the European colonisation of Australia, there is remarkably very little physical evidence of Captain James Cook or his personal possessions.

Had he failed to make landfall in 1770, Australia might have become a Portuguese, Dutch or Spanish dependency.

While his legacy looms large in Australia's collective consciousness, only Cook's pistol remains as the one key link to his life and relationship with Australia.

If not for the efforts of former Melbourne Lord Mayor, Grand Prix impresario and philanthropist, Ron Walker AC CBE, even this would have stayed well away from our reach.

Mr Walker purchased the pistol in 2003 from the descendants of Cook at an auction in Edinburgh, Scotland.

It had been willed to the family by Cook and remained in their possession for more than two centuries.

Now, almost 250 years after his death in Hawaii, the early 18th century Continental Flintlock holster pistol was offered for sale by Leski Auctions of Melbourne under instructions from Mr Walker.

"There is a wealth of memorabilia available that is associated with the icons of Australia, be it Bradman, the Kelly Gang, Phar Lap, Kingsford Smith or Mawson," says Charles Leski.

"Yet James Cook, arguably the most significant of that group in terms of his impact on Australia as a nation, has left us virtually nothing.



This pistol is therefore the one tangible link to him personally.

"We can confidently argue that he has left his DNA on this, something that can't be said for the anchor of the HMB Endeavour which is located at the James Cook Historical Museum in Cooktown or the ship's cannon which is located at the Australian National Maritime Museum in Canberra."

The lock of the pistol is signed "Corbau-A-Maastricht", a reference to its Dutch gunmaker, Godefroi Corbau Le Jeune.

It features a plain 13 bore barrel, brass fore-sight, spurred brass pommel, brass trigger guard, replacement ramrod and pipe, and pale fruitwood full stock with carved shell behind tang. The barrel is 31cm long.

Polar trek made to measure

WHEN SIR DOUGLAS Mawson led his epic scientific expedition to Antarctica, cutting edge technology meant being able to send daily wireless messages back to Australia.

A century on, Chris Turney's six week scientific expedition will use a modern mix of Twitter, You Tube, live streaming video conferences and blog sites.

Surveying tools such as the clunky theodolite, used by Mawson's men, will be replaced by a drone that will scan the icy continent to collect data to create "bird's eye" film in 3D.

The drone will map areas of several square kilometres in a matter of hours, with an accuracy rate within 10 centimetres. In Mawson's day this would have taken days or weeks.

But despite differences in technology, the trips a century apart are motivated by the same thing: a sense of scientific curiosity.

"It's still very much science-driven, climate scientist Professor Turney said of the privately funded \$1.5 million voyage which leaves Hobart on November 25.

Professor Turney said the information collected by Mawson and his team between 1911 and 1914 would be a valuable comparative resource for modern scientists.

"They generated a vast amount of data and things like the saltiness of the water is today a very useful measure of how much the ice is melting."

Professor Turney and University colleague Chris Fog will be among 20 scientists, oceanographers and ornithologists and even a tree ring expert, to trace the steps of Mawson

The first part of the trip will concentrate on the sub-Antarctic islands down to 50 degree latitude.

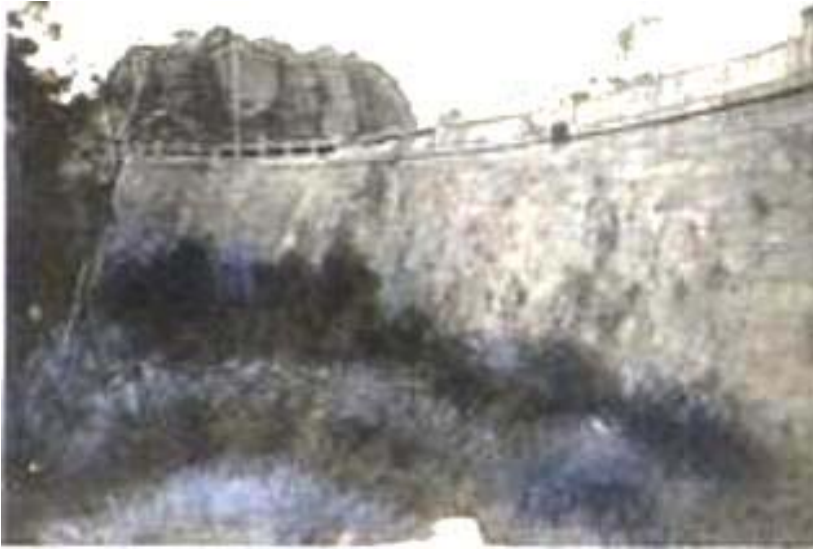
Bridie Smith, science reporter, The Sydney Morning Herald



Sir Douglas Mawson,

On his fifth trip to the Antarctic

History at your fingertips



A NEW WEBSITE full of Blue Mountains historical photographs and publications has been launched by the Royal Australian Historical Society.

The website was developed following a grant from the NSW Department of Premier and Cabinet to mark the bicentenary of the first crossing.

This fantastic collection of material is available for everyone to explore for themselves," said RAHS

Plans to bring water into museum

THE AUSTRALIAN National Maritime Museum will turn to the private sector to try and realise a major revamp of its exhibition space.

Its director, Kevin Sumption, has set out plans to 'bring water into the museum' by building exhibits that reach out to its 14 floating vessels in Darling Harbour.



Plans to float HMAS Onslow inside museum

president, Dr Anne-Maree Whitaker. Website: www.rahs.org.au/western-crossing/

There are over 300 photographs and six historical publications included and these will be added to in coming months.

Pictured from the website is: The great wall of the old Mt Victoria Pass constructed by the chain gang in 1832 when forming the old Bathurst Road. **Courtesy RAHS – The Frank Walker Collection**

The museum will seek to complete the first stage — a new pavilion to tell the story of its submarine, HMAS Onslow, and destroyer HMAS Vampire — in time for the ANZAC centenary in 2015.

More than 8 million people have visited since the Maritime Museum opened in 1991.

Government has said that the \$8 million to \$10 million required for the project over a six to 8 year cycle would need to come substantially from commercial partnerships, grants or foundations.

Later stages not yet costed, include a new exhibit to complement the museum's replicas of the HMS Endeavour and a maritime archaeological centre where visitors could don a wetsuit and step into the harbour to explore wrecks already owned by the museum. **Leesha McKenny, The Sydney Morning Herald**

Aboriginal heritage grant for Kandos Museum

THE KANDOS Museum has received a \$12,000 Aboriginal heritage grant to enable it to develop a Dabee Travelling Cultural History exhibition in partnership with the Aboriginal people of Kandos.

"The grant will help us with site identification, the building of the travelling exhibition on the Dabee people and the creation of a small introductory exhibition at the Kandos Museum, Colin Jones curator at the museum said. "The project is about recognising family ancestors of the Dabee people.

"The exhibition itself will identify individual north-eastern Wiradjuri people and their ancestors who contributed to the creation on Kandos and the culture in the region today," Mr Jones said.

Lyn Syme, Native Title cultural heritage officer at Moorlaben Coal was instrumental in getting the exhibition off the ground.

Ms Syme put forward the initial \$12,000 and it was with that money the Kandos museum was able to apply for the "dollar-for-dollar" Aboriginal heritage grant.

The exhibition will travel around to schools, other museums and cultural centres in order to educate people on the significance of the Dabee people in the local area.

"In the local area, many people are under the incorrect assumption there are no more Dabee people remaining in the district," Ms Syme said.

The exhibition will include photographs, stories and artifacts and will also include information about the descendants of these Dabee ancestors who were a large community in the Kandos area. *Laueran Stanford*

CRONJE, THE BRUMBY BRIGAND

*by John Low, OAM –
Local historian*

PIET CRONJE was a Boer General, rough of manner, ruthless, courageous and a thorn in the side of the British in South Africa.

At the same time in the vicinity of Jenolan, in the mountainous back country of the Cox and its tributaries, a brumby stallion was causing similar disruption among the European settlers.

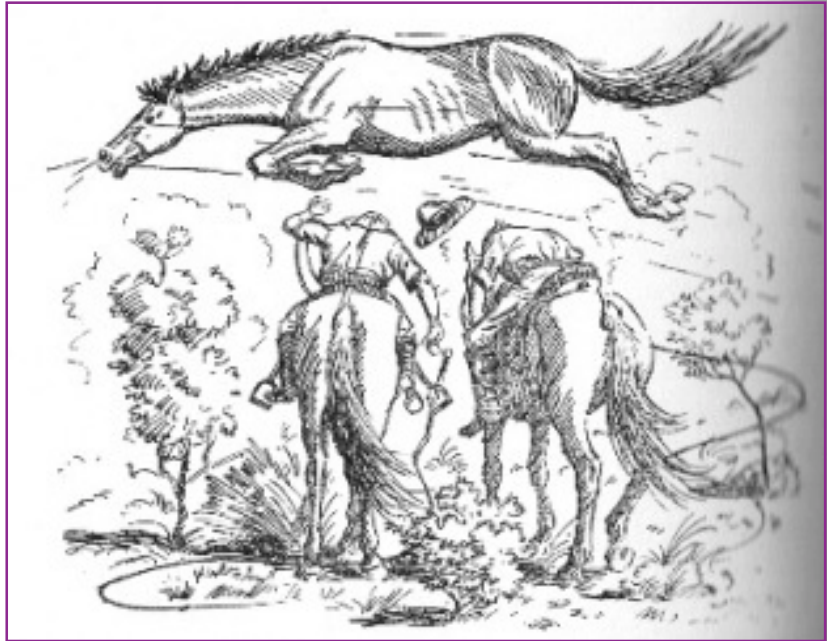
Life in this isolated part of the Blue Mountains demanded a tough resilience from its inhabitants.

They were skilled bushmen and expert horsemen, every bit as daring as the Snowy River men.

They recognised in the wild stallion the characteristics of the Boer Cronje and bestowed that name upon him with genuine, if grudging, respect.

The story of Cronje is documented in that splendid book, *Cullenbenbong*; by Bernard O'Reilly whose family settled at Long Swamp in the second half of the nineteenth century.

At the feet of his father and the older men, young Bernard (born



It is claimed "...on one occasion Cronje hurdled to freedom over two mounted men."

1903) absorbed the stories of the wild brumbies sweeping down from the mountains at night, killing tame horses and making off with the mares to replenish their breeding stock.

He learned of the brumby runners, those men of "reckless courage and riding ability" who fought these depredations with their skills in pursuit and capture and the use of assorted firearms and who, aided

by drought, gradually reduced the numbers of the marauding horde.

By the end of the century one dominant stallion remained, the last of a "long rebel line", a magnificent horse, "a brigand and a killer" but so coveted by the mountain horsemen that they set upon a reckless determination to capture him.

Drives were organised and strategies planned, issuing in dramatic displays of skill and courage, near success, injury and even death, but always failure.

Cronje was equal to the challenge, usually with a surprise in reserve.

He out-ran them, charged through lines of shouting, stockwhip wielding riders, ran pursuers into wombat holes (a rider "spinning along the ground like a football"), crashed out of timber enclosures and on one occasion hurdled to freedom over two mounted men.

The climax came when Cronje, cornered at the edge of a precipice, leapt "in a beautiful arc and disappeared into the blue air", traversed a landslide prone scree slope and in a "thrilling wild-horse run" escaped to the bottom of the gorge, leaving only "the ring of his hooves and the clatter of the rocks he took with him".

Continued page 16



On the gently-swelling ridge in the fork of two creeks stands a house – the type of house which has disappeared from the Australian scene along with the generation who built it. It is of slabs silvered by the weather; it has a thatched roof and a great stone chimney, and like nearly every other pioneer home it faces the north-east.' Bernard O'Reilly's Cullenbenbong still stands today in Kanimbla Valley, the quintessential slab hut. Photograph courtesy of Ian Jack

New Aboriginal heritage tour at the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden, Mt Tomah

AN AUTHENTIC new Aboriginal tour focusing on the Indigenous use of plants was launched at the Blue Mountains Botanic Garden recently.

The Aboriginal heritage tour provides visitors with a unique opportunity to experience the culture and plant resources of the Indigenous people of the Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area, led by an expert Aboriginal guide.

Brenden Moore, Aboriginal horticulturalist at the Garden who has developed and will be leading the tour says: "The Aboriginal heritage tour offers an opportunity for visitors to learn about the rich heritage and culture of the Aboriginal people of the region.

"Although this was thought to be an impassable mountain range by early Europeans, Mount Tomah and the surrounding Greater Blue Mountains World Heritage Area provided important trade routes for Aboriginal people.

"With a diverse array of flora and fauna, ample fresh water, rock shelters and views to the coast, it was a safe haven for many local Aboriginal people for thousands of years."

The one and a half hour walking tour takes visitors around the Garden highlighting plants that were traditionally used by Aboriginal people for food, medicine or tools.

The tour concludes with a didgeridoo performance by Brenden.

Bush tucker can be arranged if booked in advance.

The tour is available on request but bookings are essential.

To view Brenden talking about the Aboriginal heritage tour visit: www.youtube.com/user/BotanicGardensTV.

Tour details

When: Book anytime.

No minimum fee on Fridays tour runs 10 am - 11.30 am.

All tours must be pre-booked at least 24hours ahead.



Aboriginal tour guide, Brenden Moore playing the didgeridoo at Mt Tomah. Photograph by Michelle Leer.

Cost: \$36.50 pp. \$275 minimum tour cost (except Friday 10 am - 11.30 am). \$16.50 student/child. Friends and Foundation discount on request.

Bush Tucker is available at an extra charge, at the end of the tour if pre-booked.

For further details telephone (02) 45 67 3000 or e-mail: tomah@rbgsyd.nsw.gov.au

Cronje

Continued from page 15

That was enough and the pursuit of Cronje came to an end.

It's a great story, even if perhaps grown a little more colourful in the telling.

The isolated life of men and women, thrown back so often on their own ingenuity, fosters a rich tradition of legend and story.

Apparently, Cronje escaped the devastating bushfire of 1904-1905 and was last seen, still wild and free, years later in the ranges at the head of the Kowmung River.

If you look at your map you will find him remembered in Cronje Mountain, Cronje Ridge and Cronje Gully.

This article was first published in *Hut News* of the Blue Mountains Conservation Society.

“The Biggest Estate on Earth: how Aborigines made Australia”

by Bill Gammage, 2011

A Blue Mountains critique

by Andy Macqueen

IN HIS BOOK “The Biggest Estate on Earth”, Bill Gammage seeks to demonstrate, particularly through historical artworks and writings, that virtually every inch of Australia was managed by Aboriginal people by the systematic and scientific use of fire.

He discounts the role of natural wildfire arising from lightning ignitions. (Gammage 2011) Whether or not all aspects of his thesis are beyond challenge, his book is important in highlighting the significance of the traditional Aboriginal custodial role.

Gammage draws from a number of the journals of early Blue Mountains explorers and surveyors, using them to provide examples of the sorts of landscape management in which the traditional custodians engaged.

As a person familiar with the early journals and the country they concern, the writer was naturally interested to examine the references which Gammage relies on. These are all addressed below:

Firstly, on pages 72, 188 and 207 Gammage refers to two locations mentioned in the journal of Surveyor George Evans on November 30 and December 17, 1813, to support ideas concerning manufactured clearings in the Blue Mountains.

Unfortunately, neither location is in the Blue Mountains. The former date relates to the Fish River country, as Evans observed it from the Great Dividing Range near Cheetham, while the latter relates to a place on the Macquarie River 30 kilometres north-west of Bathurst. Both are today represented by farmlands. (Weatherburn 1966)

Secondly, on page 7 Gammage points out Surveyor William

Govett’s observation that the mountain summits were “clothed with grass, which circumstance, considering the barrenness and excessive sterility which pervades all the connecting ridges, and that region of the mountains, is certainly very extraordinary ... In general ... the ranges are covered with short timber and scrub.” (Govett 1977, pp3,4) Govett was referring to the basalt-capped Mounts Hay, Banks and Tomah.

However, he was working in the area in 1831, by which time there had been European impacts.

As Govett himself explains in the same piece, the top of Mount Hay had been totally cleared of all but one tree for survey purposes (Figure 1), while the eastern side of Mount Tomah “has been cleared and cultivated, and a large house and buildings have been erected”.

Govett describes the vegetation elsewhere on Tomah in similar terms to George Caley, who back in 1804 wrote that “The brush seems to occupy the whole of the summit, as well as most of the other parts ...

The part which was void of brush was thickly covered with timber”. (Andrews 1984, pp61-2)

Thirdly, on page 207 Gammage cites the “small piece of ground, which was destitute of trees, and no herbaceous brush” mentioned by George Caley, as evidence of a clearing created by Aboriginal people. (Andrews 1984, p71)

The place concerned is not really “above the Grose Valley”, as Gammage suggests, but on the west flank of Mount Tomah South, traversed by Caley on November 13, 1804.

Continue page 18



Figure 1: William Govett’s “View of the gullies of the Grose River from a cataract named Govett’s Leap” (National Library n/a.pic-an3364840_v). The mountain on the right is the basalt-capped Mount Hay, one of Govett’s “extraordinary” features. As shown by the drawing, it had been cleared of all but one tree for survey purposes.

The hardest day of Caley's remarkable expedition

Continued from page 17

That day was one of the hardest of Caley's remarkable expedition, involving scrub so thick that in places they could "scarce force a passage".

His reason for remarking on this spot was that it offered respite from the scrub and a view of the terrain ahead, including Mount Bell.

His precise route is impossible to determine, but there is no doubt that for a time he sidled above the sandstone rim of the mountain (below the basalt) and in doing so would have encountered some of the natural swamps and small bare rock areas to be found there today.

There is a bare rock area some 15 metres across about 850 metres south-west of Tomah South Trig which appears to fit all the necessary requirements with regards to Caley's account, and there are probably others.

Fourthly, on page 207 Gammage mentions the "about two thousand acres of land Clear of trees" described by Blaxland (and others) in 1813, as further evidence of

Aboriginal clearing. (Richards 1979, p71)

Again the location is wrong: the place is not "north of Katoomba".

It is the northern part of Kings Tableland, a windswept place with shallow sandstone and stony soil, typical of many natural heaths on the plateau of the upper Blue Mountains. (Figure 2)

Today it is mostly characterised by heath species of banksia and casuarina, whereas the early descriptions indicate a predominance of "coarse grass".

It is therefore apparent that the area had been subjected to more fire in the years prior to 1813 than it has been today.

To that extent, it may be relevant to Gammage's thesis, though it should be understood that today's low fire frequency is largely due to the fact that authorities actively prevent fire there. Baker (1997, p67) has suggested that "it is possible that this heath was kept in a low state by fire management perhaps to partly allow for ease of movement through the area which is known for its Aboriginal occupation and industrial sites".

That hypothesis relies on an assumption, perhaps not an unreasonable one given the place's accessibility and views, that the sites at Kings Tableland were more

significant than the hundreds of other known sites, many of which are situated in shelters in scrubby, wooded areas.

Fifthly, on page 159, Gammage quotes selectively from Evan's account of a fire on the Blue Mountains in January 1814, concluding that it was an example of a cool summer burn by Aboriginal people because Evans "walked close behind the flames."

He could not have done so behind any of Australia's recent big fires". This interpretation does not stand scrutiny, and it is worthwhile to reproduce Evans' complete description:

3 Jan [near Katoomba]: The mountains have been fired; had we been on them we could not have escaped; the Flames rage with violence through thick underwood, which they are covered with. Bad travelling the stick of the Bushes here are worse than if their leaves had not been consumed; they catch my Chain which makes the measuring very fatiguing; also tears our clothes to pieces, and makes us appear as Natives from black dust off them. The Marks in the Trees are burnt out; therefore am obliged to go over them again; Our Horses now want Grass; the herbage in this spacious Valley [Jamison Creek] is destroyed; we cut some sweet Rushes for them that grow on the edge of a stream of Water which runs through it. distance, 4 Miles.

4 Jan: The Mountains are as yesterday; fired in all directions; at 11 o'Clock I was upon the high hill: all objects Eastward are obscured by thick smoke; We stopped where there was feed for the Horses and Water. [Lawson vicinity] distance, 5¼ Miles

5 Jan: Still in thick Brush; the leaves of it are burnt. The weather is disagreeably warm and boisterous, which has been the case for the last 3 days. ... distance, 4½ Miles [stopping in Linden vicinity]
Continued page 19



Figure 2: The open heath country of Kings Tableland is extensive but not unique. It is associated with exposed and shallow rock, as is this open area on the Mount Hay Range. The grooves prove that the people clearly lingered there, but whether they fire-managed the place comprehensively is speculative. A. Macqueen 1996.

6 Jan: *The fires have been in my favour, otherwise it would be impossible to measure; the flames have consumed the foliage from the highest Trees. The Ridges continue as usual until the latter part of my journey which is Forest Land [Springwood] for ½ a Mile; the timber on it is chiefly lofty stringy Bark and Oaks; there are small patches of grass left that the fire missed. ... distance, 5¼ Miles*

7 Jan: *The Forest land continues a Mile farther; afterwards the brushy Ridge commences again, the thickest of it consumed, which I consider fortunate, had it not I should be obliged to have given off measuring; at the end of today's Journey is a Lagoon of good Water, with tolerable grass round the edge of it. [Glenbrook Lagoon] distance, 5¾ Miles. (Mackaness 1965, pp30-31)*

This was an extensive fire, ranging at least 36 kilometres in a west-east line and apparently well to the south and north.

It occurred in the heat of summer, and burnt through the thick scrub of which Evans, and Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth, had previously complained.

On December 29, when still in the Hartley Valley, Evans had commented that "The Natives seem to be numerous; there are fires in many parts not far from us".

This statement, together with his opening words on January 3, seems to imply that he thought Aboriginal people were responsible for the fire.

However, it is not clear whether he thought they did it deliberately, and he makes no comment on why they might have lit it or whether they were managing it in any way.

His description of the fire seems quite consistent with what one might expect from an uncontrolled summer wildfire sweeping across the Blue Mountains today: shrubbery reduced to blackened sticks, with the leaves on the highest trees being consumed in places.

Given the extensive thick scrub which Blaxland and Evans previously reported, and the "warm and boisterous" weather, it is hard to imagine that the fire could have been anything other than intense.

Gammage proposes it was a cool fire because Evans was able to walk close behind it.

However, Evans does not say that he walked close behind it. He may have been several days behind the flames.

Perhaps Gammage interprets the present-tense clause "the Flames rage with violence through thick underwood" to mean that Evans was witnessing those flames, whereas Evans may only have been making a general statement about the character of fire in scrub.

Incidentally, Evans' "forest land" with its "small patches of grass that the fire has missed", was situated on the rich Wianamatta Shale around Springwood and Faulconbridge—an area noted by Blaxland for its open grassy nature.

That is the only part of the entire Blue Mountains Ridge between Lapstone and Mount York not characterised by soils derived from the sandstones and interbedded claystones of the Triassic series.

Baker (1997, pp67-68) noted the evidence for Aboriginal burning in that vicinity and along the associated Hawkesbury Ridge. (Figure 3)

The large summer fire that Evans encountered was not unique in early accounts.

Caley's men accidentally started a November bushfire when lighting their campfire during his 1804 expedition.

He described the subsequent inferno which raged across the hills, causing trees to fall with the sound of gunfire. (Did not Aboriginal campfires ever similarly escape?)

Francis Barrallier observed what appeared to be a large wildfire in the southern Blue Mountains in December 1802, while William Parr encountered an enormous fire in the Wollemi in November 1817.

These are discussed in Macqueen (2004, ch4).

Sixthly, and finally, on page 197 Gammage raises matters from John Wilson's 1798 expeditions.

These were not in the Blue Mountains as we now generally understand them, but as he traversed rugged country of similar
Continued page 20



Figure 3: John Lewin's depiction of Macquarie's 1815 party at Springwood (NSW State Library). This was the grassy forest land which Evans (and Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth before him) remarked on. It corresponds to the rich shale-derived soils of the area which contrast with those of the surrounding sandstone country.

These were not in the Blue Mountains

Continued from page 19

geology, and because the accounts are some of the earliest of any value, it is relevant to consider the matters raised. Gammage states that on his first expedition Wilson

reached the Wingecarribee-Wollondilly junction northwest of Berrima. In what is now mostly dense forest, they crossed "fine open country, but very mountainous", grass meadows, thinly timbered plains. And scrub and vine brushes, including Bargo Brush, soon notorious for poor soil, stringybark, and tangles of scrub and fallen timber.

This interpretation relies on Cambage (1920) and Chisholm (1955).

Subsequent analyses by Andrews (1990) and Brownscombe (2004), and also by the writer (unpublished), discount that view.

The terminus of the first expedition was almost certainly in the Berrima-Bong Bong area, which now features open farming country.

The particular "fine open country, but very mountainous" country mentioned in the above quote was actually encountered on January 27, 1798 when the party appears to have been travelling up the long ramp which forms the watershed between the Bargo River and the Nepean system.

The surface geology for much of the way consists of Wianamatta Shales and would, if burnt frequently, have produced open grassy forest (as at Springwood).

Much of the area, such as around Yerrinbool, is now occupied by small farms, not scrub.

Gammage further states (still page 197):

In March 1798 Wilson led another party to Mt Towrang east of Goulburn... He found



Figure 4: Rural scene near Berrima. This is the country crossed by John Wilson on March 19, 1798, which Gammage states is "thick of timber" today. A. Macqueen 2011

"a most beautiful country, being nothing but fine large meadows with pools of water in them; fine green hills, but very thin of timber." They are thick of timber now.

The "most beautiful country, being nothing but fine large meadows ..." was nowhere near the party's Mount Towrang terminus.

It was reported by the diarist on March 19, 1798 just south of Berrima, in today's aforementioned open farmlands. It is certainly not "thick of timber" today. (Figure 4)

To conclude. The archaeological record tells us that the sandstone terrain of the Blue Mountains was of great cultural significance to the traditional owners.

However, the pattern, frequency and purpose of their occupation or visits is not well understood. (Attenbrow 2009)

Nor is the nature of their burning practices.

However, it can be said with reasonable certainty, based on the early historical accounts and on the botanical evidence, that most of the sandstone country was covered in the scrubby vegetation that we still see today, rather than the open grassy woodlands that many imagine. (Macqueen 2004, ch4; Benson & Redpath 1997)

This is not inconsistent with Gammage's thesis. He acknowledges that "people burnt the most useful land most and the most sterile or sensitive land perhaps not for generations", and that they might only have burnt dry ridges "every 15-25 years". (Gammage, pp162, 165)

However, if dry ridge country of the Blue Mountains were left alone for such periods one would expect that fire from lightning ignitions, accidental ignitions, or escaped fires, would attain more significance.

This would be consistent with palaeoenvironmental research which suggests that the frequency and intensity of fire on the Blue Mountains mainly reflected the climate. (Mooney & Martin 2009)

Setting those questions aside, it is unfortunate that Gammage's above acknowledgement is relatively hidden in the book.

By the manner in which he presents examples from the Blue Mountains historical record, he implicitly invites the reader to think that attention would have been given to all the mountains on a detailed and frequent basis.

However, from the above discussion one is entitled to conclude that the pieces of evidence cited have not been properly examined with respect to their context or relevance.

Continued page 21

‘...systematic and scientific use of fire...’

Continued from page 20

In terms of their usefulness in supporting Gammage's thesis that all of the country was managed by the systematic and scientific use of fire, they are variously not applicable to the Mountains, misleading or doubtful.

While the cited evidence suggests that part of Kings Tableland and places on the Nepean Ramp may have been burnt frequently to promote open landscape, such practice can simply be associated with the particular geological environments to be found there, in the same way that frequent burning may have been applied to the Wianamatta Shale country at Springwood, the alluvial flats of the Burragarang and other large incised valleys, the alluvial flats of Putty and Mellong, the volcanic diatremes and the upland swamps. (Figure 5)

Those examples say nothing about traditional management on the vast area of rugged sandstone country with its scrubby woodland.

It is not intended to deny that the traditional owners managed their country throughout the Blue Mountains.

However, the evidence educed by Gammage is unhelpful in understanding the nature of that management.

The writer

Andy Macqueen has spent many years analysing Blue Mountains explorers' accounts and following in their footsteps.

He has also been closely involved in the survey of remote Aboriginal cultural sites.

His knowledge of fire in the mountains derives from observations as a bushwalker, and wide reading and briefings in the course of his 18 years on the NPWS Regional Advisory Committee.

He is not a fire ecologist, but neither is Bill Gammage.



Figure 5: The explorers came across many natural clearings associated with swamps, such as this one (Burralow Swamp) encountered by Caley in 1804. Elsewhere on his journey Caley described the same scrubby vegetation that we see today.
A. Macqueen 1996

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Holey dollars - a great memento of the bicentenary of the Blue Mountains crossing celebrations
sponsorship@bicentenary.com.au
or telephone (02) 4757 1425.

Focus on the George Evans story

FOCUS WILL be on the George William Evans story, explorer, surveyor and artist seconded by Governor Macquarie to survey the newly found route over the Blue Mountains in late 1813 when Associate Professor, Ian Jack speaks at the mid-year dinner of Kurrajong-Comleroy Historical Society.

The dinner will be held at Loxley circa 1833, on Bellbird Hill Kurrajong on Friday evening, July 26.

The cost is \$55 per person and bookings should be made with Suzanne Smith on 4567 7410 by July 19.

George Evans lived in the Hawkesbury area, near the present day RAAF base.

Along with Surveyor Meehan, Evans assisted in the survey of the five Macquarie Towns.

He was the man who did the all-important surveying and mapping of the route blazed by Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson.

They had turned back at Hartley Valley, but the surveyor went much further west and created his own route to what became Bathurst.



Evans's house, 1806-1810, front. Photograph, Ian Jack 1989

The surveyor, in short, was also an explorer, and the first European to stand on the Bathurst Plains.

George William Evans was a well-educated Englishman, who came to New South Wales via the Cape of Good Hope.

He had eloped to Cape Town in 1798 with a fifteen-year old bride and moved on to Sydney in 1802, where he was soon appointed Acting Surveyor-General while Charles Grimes was in Britain.

Evans's story is not, however, a simple one of colonial success.

He was dismissed for some unspecified fraud in 1805 and went

to live on the quite large Hawkesbury farm which he had been granted in trust for his two infant daughters in 1804.

Evans's 519 acres was immediately adjacent to the 200 acres held by the young children of William Cox. This is half-way between Windsor and Richmond: the present Richmond Air Base.

The association of Evans and Cox did not begin with the planning of the western road, but had begun a decade earlier, with an unexpected intimacy.

Both the Cox and Evans farms were largely rich arable land on the Hawkesbury River flood-plain, with a small strip of high land at the south end, adjacent to the common.

The two farms, looked towards the river with the Blue Mountains evocatively in the distance.

When the rains come in earnest, all that lowland as far as the Blue Mountains can be under water, even today. Cox prudently built his house, Clarendon, on the strip of high land.¹

Reference

¹ Jack, RI. In an Australia Day 2013 address to the Royal Australian Historical Society.

THE SEX LIVES OF AUSTRALIANS: A HISTORICAL REFLECTION (and other topics)

For those interested in topical history beyond the Blue Mountains, the Blackheath History Forum will be hosting the first of its 2013 lectures on Saturday August 3.

The speaker will be Frank Bongiorno, author of the recent book "The Sex Lives of Australians: A History".

The History Forum will be held every second Saturday until October 26, at 4pm at the Blackheath Public School hall. Anyone is welcome. Entry is just \$5.

For more information on this year's program visit

www.blackheathhistoryforum.org.au

Walk to the Cattle Rustlers' Yards

with members of Glenbrook & District Historical Society on Saturday 10 August
For information Doug Knowles 4751 3275 or Tim Miers 47439 2384

Lynn Collins to facilitate museums workshop

THERE ARE still some vacancies for those wishing to register for the Museums Workshop being sponsored by Blue Mountains Association of Cultural Heritage Organisations Inc. on Saturday, July 20.

The workshop is to be held at the Mt Victoria & District Historical Society's Museum, Station Street, Mt Victoria and will commence at 10am and finish at about 3pm.

This workshop will be facilitated by Lynn Collins, (pictured at right) the BMCC Museums & Galleries Adviser.

Lunch will be provided by BMACHO, at the Blue Mountains Manor House, Montgomery Street, Mt Victoria.

The objectives of the meeting is for members of other societies/ organisations to exchange information, and to identify possible joint ventures, for instance -

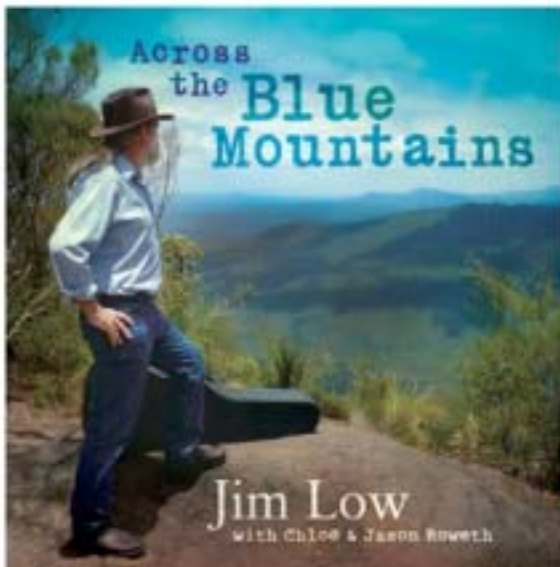
- skill based workshops (eg interpretation/display techniques, collection management issues, marketing)
- combined displays and promotions, linking with tourism industries
- research and publishing opportunities
- collection development
- the feasibility of well-appointed, shared storage
- building numbers and users
- succession planning and support
- making best uses of all resources in the Mountains and beyond



Each participant is asked to come to the workshop with three issues presently concerning their group and/or where your society/ organisation is/will be in five years' time.

RSVP to Jan Koperberg by email: j.koperberg@bigpond.com or by phoning 02 4751 5834 (if unanswered, please leave a message).

Across the Blue Mountains ... the new CD by Jim Low



Jim Low is a singer/songwriter and author. He presented some of his songs and observations of the region at last year's Blue Mountains History conference produced by BMACHO

Across the Blue Mountains is his latest CD released on Undercover Music's Rouseabout label and it contains 18 songs about the area and its history.

Many of Jim's songs have been inspired by the Blue Mountains where he lives.

The human impact has made the Mountains rich in history.

Jim has captured some of it in his music with songs about exploration (Cayley, Evans, Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth) road and rail building (Cox and Whitton), travellers (Mrs Elizabeth Hawkins) and bushfires.

Also included are songs in response to the natural beauty of the landscape.

Along with the CD there is a website which is also called *Across the Blue Mountains*. It can be found at: <http://acrossthebluemountains.com.au>

As well as links to the songs, it contains articles and resources pertaining to the Mountains and the Crossing.

The CD is available from the website, selected Blue Mountains outlets and digitally on iTunes.

Western crossing commemoration 2013-15

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

Coins still available

More than 14,000 school students and teachers throughout the area have received a set of commemorative coins as part of Businesses Supporting the Bicentenary co-founder Scenic World owner Philip Hammon's lasting legacy of the Blue Mountains Crossings Bicentenary 2013-2015.

The holey dollars will be a reminder of the first recognised European crossing of the Blue Mountains by explorers Gregory Blaxland, William Lawson and William Charles Wentworth in 1813.

Mr Hammon personally underwrote the cost of the holey dollars, which he and descendants of the explorers, presented to students at special school assemblies.

Each holey dollar accompanied by an inspirational message to students from NSW Governor Her Excellency Professor Marie Bashir.

The coins are also available to individual members of the community at \$10 plus postage. Orders for 6 or more are free of postage.

All enquiries to sponsorship@bicentenary.com.au or telephone (02) 4757 1425.

Festival of Walking

The bicentenary Festival of Walking will be launched in The Gully, Katoomba in conjunction with the Gully Traditional Owners, Gundungurra Heritage Association, National Parks & Wildlife Service and Blue Mountains, Lithgow and Oberon Tourism at 9am on Saturday, October 9, 2013.

Activities will include: self guided interpretive walks, indigenous gallery exhibition, bush tucker, cultural performances and launches of Aboriginal Cultural Experience Guide, iconic Six Villages Walk and the latest bush trackers guides for children.

Aboriginal insight in crossings walk

A Gundungurra Ancestral Pathways Walk will take place in the Blue Mountains later this year as part of the bicentenary commemorations.

Participants will walk from west to east following the Aboriginal pathways.

The walk which is expected to take place in October will make use of the traditional and post-contact Aboriginal pathways and cover 67 kilometres of country in seven days and six nights.

The official Crossings website says the walk "affirms the ongoing presence of Aboriginal people in the

Mountains, connected to and walking their country, looking after it and utilising it for cultural purposes.

It recognises the ongoing stories and beliefs that account for Country."

The walk is also open to "non-Aboriginal people to participate and experience the Blue Mountains from a different perspective".

Participants will experience first-hand Aboriginal cultural heritage and traditional sites of the Mountains, the website states.

Bathurst looks to 2015 proclamation celebrations

The crossing of the Blue Mountains was significant for the development of inland Australia. In the same year that a route was found, the explorer Evans mapped the way to the plains which he named the Bathurst Plains.

Bathurst Regional Council is looking forward to acknowledging the importance of the first crossing in opening up of the towns of inland Australia. Between 2013 and 2015 a series of events and activities will be developed to follow on from the celebrations and re-enactment of the success of the first explorers.

We look forward to history buffs and tourists retracing the steps of those brave men who made that first crossing and the subsequent road builders. We have already welcomed surveyors to come to Bathurst to recreate and replicate the original surveys using old and modern techniques.

The first Sunday in May is called Proclamation Day in Bathurst which marks the date when the



Monica Morse

first flag was raised, the site of a new town to be called Bathurst was proclaimed and the first divine service was held west of the Blue Mountains. The flag staff which was erected on May 7, 1815 remained in place until the 1850s and served as the survey point for all exploration inland.

I am sure that the energy and enthusiasm which have been generated by the interest in the early crossing of the Blue Mountains will continue until 2015 when we plan to have many celebrations to mark the history of Australia's first inland settlement.

CLR MONICA MORSE
Mayor of Bathurst

Ancient Syrian sites imperilled by war

Across much of Syria, the country's archaeological heritage is imperilled by war, facing threats ranging from bombing and bullets to opportunistic digging by treasure hunters who take advantage of the power vacuum to prowl the country with spades and shovels,

Ebla has been celebrated for insights it offers into early Syrian civilisation. Now it is a prime example of the scores, if not hundreds, of archaeological sites often built and inhabited millennia back, because of their military value, puts them at risk as they are once more put to military use.

In the 1960s and 70s Ebla became well known among archaeologists when the city-state's long-buried archives of more than 16000 stone tablets were discovered. Ebla was the most important kingdom in the era of 3000BC.

Translated from cuneiform script, these tablets have shed light on life in a city from another time

First settled more than 5000 years ago, Ebla became a fortified walled city whose residents traded olive oil and beer across Mesopotamia. Destroyed about 2200BC it flourished anew centuries later and was then destroyed again.



Part of the excavated city of Ebla

The latest disruption came after war began in 2011. Once the rebels pushed the army back and into nearby garrisons, the outcrop which is Ebla made it ideal for spotting government planes that in turn the MiG and Sukhoi jets have repeatedly bombed on towns that have fallen from Assad's control

Maamoun Abdul-Karim, who leads the Directorate-General of Antiquities and Museums in Syria, has appealed to combatants on both sides to avoid using ancient sites for military purposes, and to protect the ruins from vandals, looters and thieves.

"A whole civilisation belonging to all humanity is being destroyed," he says. **New York Times**

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 Mountain Education and Research Trust, Blue Mountains Historical Society Inc., Blue Mountains Family History Society Inc., Blue Mountains World Heritage Institute, 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, 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 Historical Society Inc. (including Turkish Bath Museum), Mudgee Historical Society Inc., 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 2013-14 is: John Leary, OAM (president), Ian Jack (vice president), Jan Koperberg (secretary), Kevin Frappell, Wendy Hawkes, Doug Knowles, Dick Morony (public officer), Scott Pollock and Jean Winston.

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.