

The Shoalhaven Chronograph with Berry Newsletter

June/July 2016

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AGM Report and New Committee for 2016

The AGM of the Berry and District Historical Society was held on the evening of 10. May 2016 at the Berry Museum. The Annual Report was delivered by then President Hazel King. You can read the report in this Chronograph. Margaret Ogle our Vice-President moved a vote of thanks to Hazel for her work over the last three years as President.

Trustee Lance Sewell presided over the election of office holders for 2016-17. We thank Lance for his assistance and support as Trustee of the Society.

The office holders for 2016-17 are:

- President: Christine Currey
Deputy President: Margaret Ogle
Secretary : position unfilled
Treasurer: Jenny Clapham until June when she will hand over to Hilary Brickhill
- Committee Members: Nancy Bevan
Annette Frohling
Janet Fingleton
Christine Pretty

Membership Fees Reminder

A reminder that membership fees are due by the 30th June 2016.

Annual Fees

Family Membership	\$20.00
Family Roster Volunteer	\$15.00
Single Membership	\$15.00
Single Roster Volunteer	\$10.00

Berry and District Historical Society - Annual Report 2016

The Berry and District Historical Society exists to manage and operate the Berry Museum, to provide historical information and history based activities to our community and to its visitors.

We would not be able to fulfil this role without the help of the Society's management committee, our volunteers, trustees, members and all those supporters in the Berry community who provide us with financial and practical assistance. From the outset I would like to thank all the groups and individuals who enable us to achieve the kinds of things I will outline in this report.

I will describe our achievements in the usual areas of museum operations, collaborative partnerships, capital development and publications but later in this report I will also have something to say about two areas that have emerged as needing attention for 2015-2016. These are support for heritage preservation and developing the knowledge and commitment of our members.

Museum Operations

Our visitor numbers for last year were 7,493 adults and 1,580 children. This year our numbers are 7,010 for adults and for children at 1,508.

The desk volunteers continue to be a mainstay of our museum operations and are ably coordinated by Janice Hughes. Margaret Ogle provides training and advice to our desk volunteers.

Trish Knevitt, continues to run tours of the museum and the historical sites of the local area for outside visitors as well as for seniors groups and school children from local schools and pre-schools. Trish also updates and maintains the Kids Quiz for our child visitors. She has worked with staff at Berry Public Schools to develop specific activities for students.

The Museum collection is maintained, recorded and kept up to date by Margaret Ogle, Ros Pollard, Margaret Stephens and Julia Woinowski. One of the problems we have faced in recent years is that we have received more donated objects than we can store and handle. It has become necessary for us

to become much more selective and only accept items which have a clear provenance connecting the item to Berry itself as well as having a particular historical interest and significance to the life of the community.

This year we have received a couple of significant donated items. Irene Birks donated a horse drawn Massey Slasher and Heather Foster a WW2 pram renovated by the Men's Shed

Another issue for museum workers is the conservation of the items we have on display and in storage. The committee has committed funds to the preservation of the Berry and Bomaderry Town maps as well as the Numbaa map after the degeneration of the Berry Town map, hanging in the hall, was noted by a visiting Town Planner. Nancy Bevan has arranged for the maps to be preserved and copied and we hope perhaps to be able to market copies of these maps as part of our fundraising.

Warwick Leal, one of our very observant volunteers and Public Officer, has noticed the disappearance of some items and damage to others. He has prepared perspex covers for some of the spaces where these unfortunate events have occurred.

We continue to field a number of research requests from visitors and from emails as well as from groups and organisations such as the RMS and commercial book publishers. The interest in family history continues to be one of the main drivers of the research requests we receive. Our research management system is coordinated by Nancy Bevan with help from our team of researchers and Peter Knevitt who helps with the email requests.

Peter continues to do a sterling job in the role of coordinator of email information and general computer management. This involves constantly checking the museum mailbox, clearing the volume of irrelevant material and forwarding relevant mails to committee members for action and information.

The past year has seen the updating and redesign of the Museum website by Christine Pretty. This work is ongoing and we hope to be able to make links to digitised display material on the website. If you have not visited the website for a while it is well worth a look.

Last year we applied for a grant from Maritime Museums Australia for the conservation of one of our collection's important items, the flood boat. An officer visited the museum from Maritime Museums and advised that we would need a Conservation Management Plan for the boat and that he would prepare it for us. Very good news but the even better news was that we need to do very little to conserve the boat because it has been well looked after and is in good condition.

We resumed our policy of hosting community displays in 2015-16. In December of last year we said goodbye to World War I and a display was

mounted by Landcare in collaboration with the plant propagation group working with Berry Public School.

Partnerships and Collaborations - Working with our Community

The Historical Society continues to work in partnership with and receive support from other community groups, such as the Berry Forum, Berry Alliance, the Chamber of Commerce, the Men's Shed and the Garden Club.

The Berry Alliance provides the Museum with publicity and the opportunity to publish information about issues of historical interest. In collaboration with the Alliance, the Museum has become a place where the local community can hold its celebrations and get together.

We also work with other local history organizations such as the Southern Highlands and Illawarra Chapter of Museums Australia and the Shoalhaven Family and Cultural History Fair. We have just participated in the Kiama Family History Expo. We also participate in the Shoalhaven Museums and Galleries Breakfast Program.

The establishment of the Berry Forum as the lead Community Consultative Body for Berry has provided the Historical Society with a means for progressing our ideas and needs. Our members have addressed the Forum on matters such as a Council proposal to locate public toilets in our grounds, and on a more positive note our project to install plaques on Berry's heritage buildings. I will say more about this later in this report. We were able to fend off the plan about public conveniences by the way.

The Berry Garden Club has again made a very generous \$2,000 donation. We will use the Garden Club donation to continue the development of the back yard into a heritage style garden and function space. Members of the Garden Club have also helped with garden maintenance and development tasks in the last few months.

Capital Works, maintenance and improvements

Another most important collaboration is with Shoalhaven City Council who assists us in maintaining the Museum building and which provides us with financial assistance through its grants program. Using Council grants funds we have renovated the laundry and maids rooms at the back of our building thus turning them into usable display spaces for some of the tools and domestic objects in our collection.

The year before last we received a grant to construct some garden features from the stonework left over from the repair of the museum facade. The stones are original and hence items of heritage significance, which therefore need to be preserved. We have decided, with the council funding, to use them in the garden. This has opened up several problems for the management committee. How best to place the stones as outdoor seating and at the same time to increase our outdoor meeting and function space?

We are still planning as to how this might best be done given our limited resources and have sought the assistance of a heritage advisor. Next year we hope to be able to report that an outdoor seating area has been completed.

A more easily accomplished task was the repair and painting of the front picket fence. We have also been obliged to change arrangements for our security system which with the help of Nancy Bevan has now been achieved.

Publications

Our Vice-President, Margaret Ogle continues to support the distribution and marketing of our publications. We have received a number of new publications for sale as a result of work done for the centenary of World War I, *Berry Remembers* by Robyn Florance and a book on the Waratah Marches by Alan Clarke will be of particular interest to our members. We continued to publish the *Chronograph*, edited last year by Anita Chalmers with help from Peter Knevitt.

Heritage Preservation

One of the key roles of local historical societies I believe is as guardians of the heritage of the locality. Over the last few years members of B&DHS have made interventions in relation to sites and buildings affected by the activities of successive state governments in relation to the road project. Prior to this, people have supported actions in relation to the Courthouse and School of Arts.

This year some of our members have been more proactively pursuing heritage preservation through two significant projects.

Janet Fingleton is undertaking a project to photograph the historic buildings of Berry. Mr Nick Epoff is taking the pictures with advice from Janet and her team of street walking supporters. This will give us a wonderful photographic record of the town's historic buildings at a point of significant change in our town's history.

Annette Frohling, another of our Committee members, has worked tirelessly researching and organising a project to place green plaques on the significant buildings of Berry. This has involved extensive negotiation with building owners and funding providers to gain approvals and resources for a project that will enhance the knowledge and experiences of both visitors and town residents.

Developing the knowledge and commitment of our members.

At present we have 45 members. This includes 9 new members who have joined in the last 12 months. From this group we have a dedicated band of people who mount displays, organise the roster and staff the Museum during opening hours, manage the building, organise meetings and functions, respond to research requests, prepare publications, publish the *Chronograph*, manage the collection and undertake the various tasks of the Management Committee.

Fortunately we have continued to attract new members to the Society some of whom have immediately made contributions to the operations of the Museum and the activities of the Historical Society.

Last year we committed to improving our member education activities and held two lectures on WWI: a panel talk and a lecture by a Professor from Wollongong University on the motives of young volunteers joining the armed forces in 1914-18. These were both very informative and rewarding sessions and I must acknowledge also the help provided by Peter Knevitt with IT support for our guest speakers.

Sometimes I wonder whether we do enough to develop the skills and knowledge of our members, in fact whether we give them enough for their membership of the Society. We are contemplating holding some smaller scale workshops or information sessions for members so that they might learn more about our local history from some of its ageing human repositories of local knowledge.

In concluding, I would like to thank again all those who have kept the boat afloat and who have shown such good will and friendship while doing so, particularly the members of the Management Committee.

Hazel King, 8 May 2016

Tribute to Bruce McIntosh

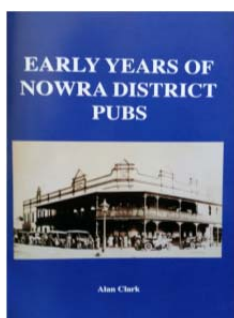
We received the sad news that Bruce McIntosh will retire as Trustee of the Historical Society. For many years Bruce has been a stalwart of the Society with experience going back to its foundation. Bruce has provided invaluable support as a trustee at AGMs, as good company at our functions and as a friend to the heritage of the town. We will miss him but hope to see both Bruce and Nora at least at our annual Christmas parties.

James Barnet Lecture

Emeritus Professor Don Napper gave a talk at Berry Courthouse on May 26th about James Barnet, colonial architect. A detailed account of that talk will appear in the next issue of the Chronograph.

New books in the Museum

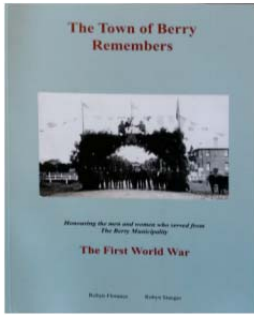
We are pleased to announce we have six new books for sale in the Museum.



Early Years of Nowra District Pubs

110 pages

Author: Alan Clark

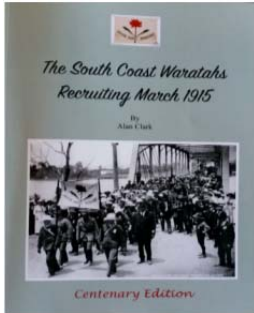


The Town of Berry Remembers: Honouring the men and women who served from The Berry Municipality

The First World War

146 pages

Authors: Robyn Florance and Robyn Stanger

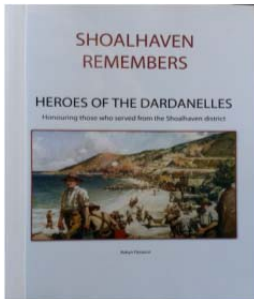


The South Coast Waratahs Recruiting March 1915

Centenary Edition

138 pages

Author: Alan Clark

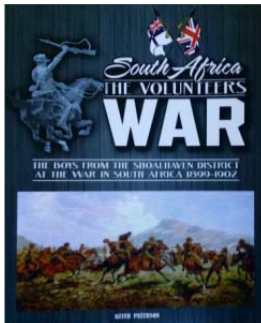


Shoalhaven Remembers: Heroes of the Dardanelles

Honouring those who served from the Shoalhaven District

104 pages

Author: Robyn Florance

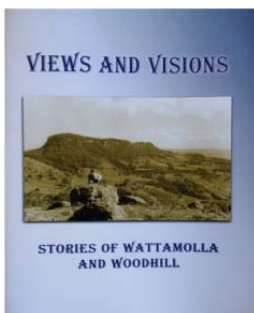


South Africa – The Volunteers War

The boys from the Shoalhaven District at the war in South Africa 1899-1902

124 pages

Author: Keith Patterson



Views & Vision (New Edition)

Stories of Wattamolla and Woodhill

Stories by local residents

244 pages

Compiled by Joan Bray and Ray Price

CIRCUS: The Australian Story

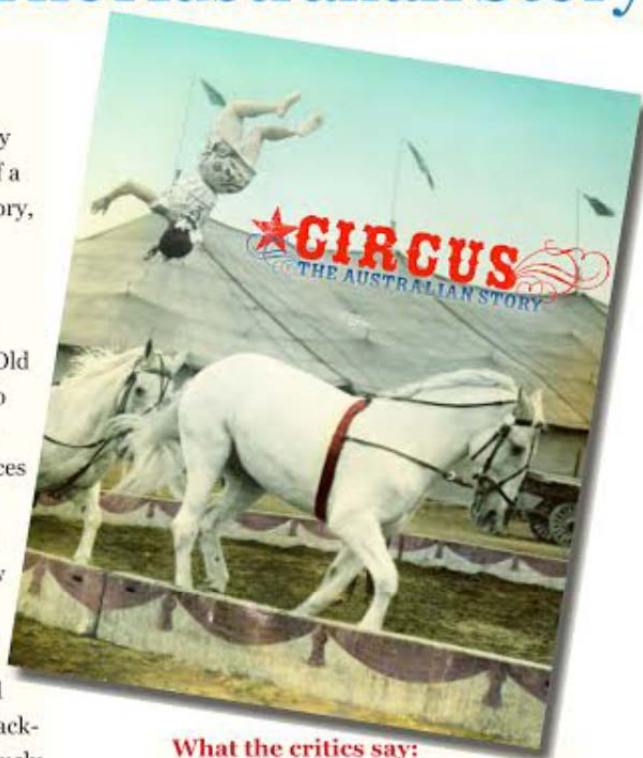
Author Mark St Leon recently gave a talk on this book for the Shoalhaven Historical Society.

CIRCUS: The Australian Story

In *Circus: The Australian Story*, Mark St Leon presents a comprehensive, entertaining and visually stunning history of circus in Australia. It is the outcome of a lifelong interest in Australia's circus history, sparked by his own family's celebrated circus past.

Within its 288 pages, you can read how a colonial circus industry developed from Old World roots; how the circus is woven into the historical fabric of modern Australia; how circus in Australia absorbed influences from America, Japan and Europe; how Australia has been visited by some of the world's major circus companies; and how Australia became a significant source of international circus talent.

The crisply-written text is complemented with almost 300 rare colour, sepia and black-and-white photographs, many not previously published.



What the critics say:

- "A triumph."
— *Australasian Drama Studies*
- "A big, handsome book, teeming with illustrations of all kinds."
— *Spectacle* (US)
- "An art object — one you'll surely hold onto."
— *Sideshow* (UK)
- "Shines a light onto a wonderful, inventive and previously ignored area of Australian entertainment."
— *ArtsHub* (Australia)



Items for next issue

Do you have an item to include in the Chronograph?

If you have any items that might interest members of the Berry and District Historical Society, please send them to the Editor.

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