

Chronograph April-May 2022

In this issue:

- Dates for your Diary
- Pioneers of the Town of Berry talk
- Shoalhaven Museums Digitisation Project
- Help
- The Sea Road to Berry
- Wedding Dresses

Dates for your Diary

25th May – Talk by Bruce McLennan – see details below

30th June – Museum Fundraiser at the Berry Hotel

Pioneers of the Town of Berry – talk by Bruce McLennan

The Berry & District Historical Society is presenting “Pioneers of the Town of Berry” on Friday 27 May at 7.00 pm at the Berry Uniting Church Hall.

Guest Speaker Bruce A McLennan will be sharing stories from Rev Donald and Annie McLennan’s time in Berry, 1894- 1905 and about their friends- the pioneers of the Town of Berry.

The McLennans resided in the historic Presbyterian Manse in Victoria Street and were very involved in community activities. They were chosen by the residents to represent Berry at the Convention about Federation in Bathurst in 1896.

Copies of Bruce’s book ‘Friends, Family and Forebears’ will be available for sale and light refreshments will be served after the Talk.

A gold coin donation to the Society would be welcomed.

Please RSVP your attendance ASAP to: Berry Museum 02 4464 3097 or berrymuseum@bigpond.com



Museum Fundraiser at Berry Hotel 30th June

The Berry Hotel is holding a fundraiser on 30th June for the Berry Museum

Arrival from 6:30pm, show commences 7:00pm

\$95 - includes a 3-course meal & a 2 hour Interactive Show

Please book through the Berry Hotel - 0244 642 294 | www.berryhotel.com.au

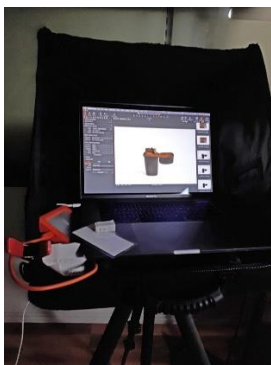
Shoalhaven Museums Digitisation Project

As some of you may know B&DHS, together with four other local museums, has been involved over the last year in a digitisation project initiated by Shoalhaven City Council. The aim is to enable us to put some of our collections on the internet so that anyone from anywhere can access an object be it for research or interest. And of course cataloguing for our records and history.

Each museum has chosen over 30 objects from their collection, which they consider significant and intrinsic to the Museum with regard to provenance. We have learnt that this is more the story of the object, how it links to local stories, people and places, how it links to other objects in the collection. It brings an object to life; it is the difference between a building full of old objects and a fascinating community museum telling engaging stories about people and place and the history that unites and informs them.

We have assessed each object based on condition, provenance, copyright and ownership (the Museum now only accepts donations, not loans). We have learnt how to clean each object using various methods according to the material, be it metal, fabric, paper etc, how to handle depending on its condition, and how to pack whether it be for storage or travel, in this case to the Regional Gallery in Nowra. A couple of weeks ago we took our objects there to be photographed, or *digitally captured*. That was another experience which we will learn about later so we can photograph objects, especially large ones such as the flood boat or the tractor, back at the Museum.

So next on the list will be the data entry or cataloguing of our chosen objects – using the new software E-Hive. And then the photography workshop – that will be us up that ladder!!



Computer



Setting up



Taking photos



Julia Woinarski

Help:

In our collection we have a leather money bag belonging to Jack Couzens, dated about the 1920s. We have all the background history but we do not know the name of the donor or when it was given to us – it must be after 1979 which is the date on our earliest Accession Sheets.

Jack was born John James Couzens in 1873 in Avebury, Wiltshire where he was a baker and manager of refreshment rooms. He migrated to NSW about 1907 with his wife and seven young children, three more being born in Australia. After a few years in Sydney he took up farming in Kangaroo Valley. He then began buying and selling cattle and bought rabbit carcasses from the rabbit trappers in Berry and the Valley which he sent by train from Berry to the Albion Park Freezing Works. He gave up working the land and moved to Albion Park, then later to Berry. His business interests extended from Dapto to Milton. He served as an alderman for many years on both the Shellharbour Municipal Council and later the Berry Municipal Council. He was also on the committee of the Berry Agricultural & Horticultural Association and “on show days could be seen with his little bag hung over his shoulder, disposing of tickets for the weight-guessing competition.” This same bag is displayed in the Museum.

The Shoalhaven News on 21 May 1941 wrote that Jack Couzens “handed out pennies to kids to buy an ice cream. When asked whose kids are they, ‘Hanged if I know, I only know they’re kids’ he’d reply. There was no twist in his make-up.”

He died in 1941, survived by two sons Harold and Cyril, and three daughters - Dorothy Clout, Eva Simpson, Phyllis Skelton, and his second wife Violet Mary Couzens and their son John James.

Which brings me to the reason for this article – **does anyone out there have any information of Jack Couzens and how the Museum acquired his money bag?** All information gratefully received.



Julia Woinarski
Accessioning

THE SEA ROAD TO BERRY

A major problem facing all settlers along the coast of NSW was communication to and from Sydney. Roads were poor or non-existent, making sea transport the most practical.

Because of his sea faring experiences Alexander Berry was better placed than most to recognise the need to secure sea-borne links with Sydney.



Alexander Berry

Recognising Greenwell Point as a vital link in the shipping trade Alexander built a wharf there in 1829. Named Berry's Wharf, it was located at the south eastern corner of Greenwell Point's Anzac Park and was of great importance in the development of Berry's estates. Larger vessels would stop there or the nearby Broughton Creek entrance that had been constructed by Berry earlier and transfer passengers and cargo onto smaller vessels capable of navigating the shallower waters further upstream to a smaller local wharf. A chain was laid on the seabed so that the vessels could grapple it to assist with mooring. The Illawarra Steam Navigation Company used the wharf for its steamers up to 1895 and there are reports that the braking chain is still visible at low tide.

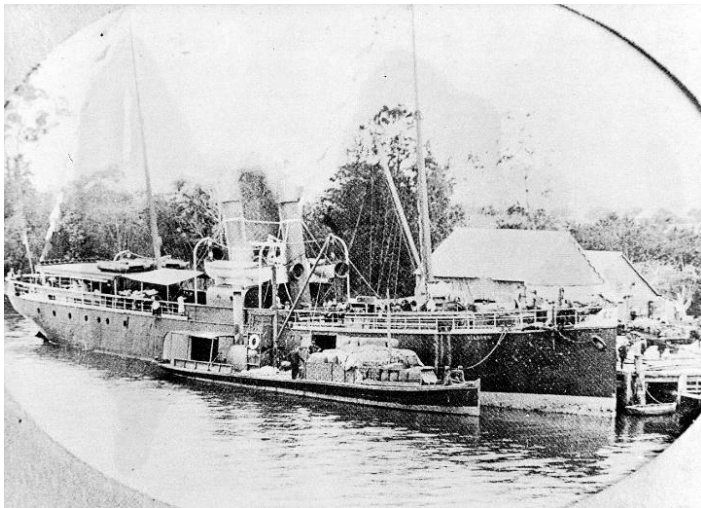
Later in 1879-80 a public wharf was built there, about 150 metres north of Berry's private wharf. Little remains of the structure but rock ballast dumped by incoming vessels may still be seen in the vicinity at low tide.

The smaller local wharves allowing the loading and unloading of supplies, so important to the early settlers, were built in specific places along Broughton Creek and two in particular were built close to Berry- The Double Wharf and the Hardwood Wharf. These were just beyond the railway crossing in Berry, where Prince Alfred Street becomes Wharf Road.

The first, the Double Wharf, or the Crooked S, was the first wharf in Broughton Creek(Berry) and built by Alexander in about 1825. The Double Wharf's name is due to the wharf's two frontages- one to Broughton Creek and the other to Broughton Mill Creek. The wharf serviced the settlers and also the early sawmill and Tannery which were located in present day Beach

Road, below Mananga and the Berry View Motel. It remained the settlement's landing place until a bridge was built downstream across Broughton Creek for a road south to the Coolangatta estate, blocking the passage of vessels to the Double Wharf and gradually the latter fell into disuse. Little traces of the structure remain.

The replacement wharf was named the Hardwood Wharf. It was built near the bridge which crosses Broughton Creek, that we drive over today. This wharf served the area for many years and allowed a steamer service to travel down the creek to the Shoalhaven River and thence to Sydney. There was a large storage shed and a wharfinger's house for the owner and keeper of the wharf. Steamers like the SS Coomonderry, Allowrie and Meeinderry used this wharf until the mid 1920s when the coastal boats finally ceased calling at Berry. In 1964 the current bridge was built over the creek and little remains of the Hardwood Wharf except some rocks that were used in its construction. Today this 'wharf' area has another use – as the launching place for scenery loving canoeists and kayakers, with pelicans, cormorants, egrets, ducks and kingfishers calling this stretch of water home.



The SS Allowrie , Being Unloaded by the Alexander Berry, at the Hardwood Wharf at Berry

Another local wharf was the Back Forest Wharf which was located at the junction of the Shoalhaven River and Broughton Creek . Its name , Back Forest, refers to its position relative to the Coolangatta homestead and it was established by Alexander Berry and frequently used by David Berry's steamers on the Sydney-Greenwell Point- Berry run. The Back Forest Punt crossed Broughton Creek and a ferry service was established between Back Forest and Numbaa.



BACK FOREST PUNT

In 1855 Fiona Campbell McLean left her home in Scotland and followed her husband Neil to the Shoalhaven to become tenants on the Berry estate. In 1900 Mrs McLean shared some of her early experiences.... *... "Today the launches cover the distance between Back Forest and Berry in one hour. In 1859 it took 3 days. The voyage was made in a sailing vessel towing a punt. Several small settlements had sprung up along the flats and at each stopping place the entire population turned out to welcome the 'liner'. Kegs of rum were opened. Logs were not kept, so time was of no account and the carousals lasted for several hours.....On the third day we reached the Crooked S. The first business -after the securing of the ropes- was the opening of the rum kegs and it was only after much pleading that a man was prevailed to transport us to the little home built by Captain Rice but left for us. His conveyance was a slide drawn by a pair of bullocks. We followed on foot carrying the babies. It was a narrow bush track. I kept my eyes on the case containing my new set of crockery of which I was very proud. The mans' sobriety as well as his heart was left at the landing and as the track grew narrower the bullocks more unmanageable..... I bore up until the crockery case was hurled against a great cedar and not a cup was left unbroken. Himself was so excited about the farm which was to yield a small fortune that broken crockery seemed all in a day's experience and when our destination was reached at last he proudly pointed out our future home. Home! That structure of split cabbage tree palm logs. Was it for that I had left a two story stone house in the Highlands of Scotland? And yet when I was drinking a cup of tea out of a borrowed tin pannikin it did seem home somehow....."*

The building of the SS Meeinderry and Coomonderry in 1883 and 1886 in Glasgow was arranged by David Berry to assist his tenants, allowing goods to be transported in and out of the area at a reasonable price. The SS Meeinderry would sail from Berry to Sydney on Saturdays and Wednesdays, making the return trip on Mondays and Thursdays. The SS Coomonderry would make the trip from Bomaderry to Sydney on Thursdays, calling at Greenwell Point and Back Forest and returning on Fridays.



The SS Meeinderry



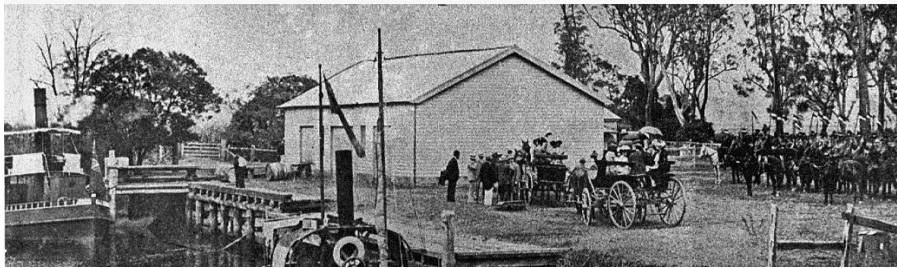
The SS Coomonderry at the Back Forest Wharf

The Shoalhaven Telegraph in January 1884, reported that the Meeinderry had a cargo hold and was able to carry horses or livestock on deck. The Saloon on the main deck carried ample room and accommodation for 28 passengers with the berths being open, well-lit and ventilated. The ladies' cabin which ran off the main saloon on the port side had room for 4 passengers and on the starboard side was the captain's cabin. The Saloon, on the whole, was a comfortable apartment, and was fitted up with lavatories and every convenience.



The SS Meeinderry Steaming Along Broughton Creek

In November 1888, Sir Henry Parkes, accompanied by a group of Ministers of the Crown, arrived at the Hardwood Wharf in the SS Coomonderry. The Coolangatta Brass Band played a welcome and a procession into Berry was followed by a banquet in the new Showground pavilion. On the return trip Sir Henry disembarked at Back Forest and travelled to Coolangatta by road where he was the guest of David Berry. Another important visitor who landed at the Hardwood Wharf was Governor Rawson who came to open the Berry Show.



Governor Rawson's Arrival at the Hardwood Wharf for the Opening of the Berry Show

Then in 1893 with the opening of the railway to Nowra, a new era of transport to Berry and surrounding areas began.

Annette Frohling

Pictures by Peter Knevitt

WEDDING DRESSES

The Museum now has quite a collection of wedding dresses.

We recently acquired the 1891 Wedding dress of HARRIET LUMSDEN (nee Huxley) with excellent provenance. She married Robert Lumsden, a farmer from Kangaroo Valley.



Her great grandfather William Huxley on arrival in Australia in 1839 and was employed by Alexander Berry as an Overseer and as such, lived in the Coolangatta village complex provided by Alexander Berry.

Note: Harriet had an 18 inch waist!



James Wilson and Robina Tait - 1875

An even earlier dress in the Museum's collection, that of ROBINA TAIT who married James Wilson in 1875, is presently being restored in Sydney after the Museum was able to obtain a grant to fund this.

There may be another Wilson wedding dress in the offing and this is being investigated by our President Ros.



EDITH CRAWFORD'S (nee Newman) wedding dress and veil is also in our collection. She made the dress herself for her marriage to Eric Crawford on the 13th September, 1939.



Another beautiful dress and veil is that of IRIS AGAR (nee Walker) who married Athol Agar on the 1st September, 1951. They lived all their married lives at the family property in Agars Lane Berry.

Iris presently lives in Nowra.

We also have another two dresses – one from the 1930's with no detail of the owner, and another unfortunately not accessioned, but of a similar style and period, that nevertheless will be ideal for display.

It is the hope that by the end of this year after Mrs. Wilson's dress has been returned from conservation, we could have a display in the Linen Room of Wedding dresses and trousseaus.

Sandra Berner

Articles for the Next Issue

If you have any interesting stories about the Berry region or its history that you would like to share, please forward them to the editor for inclusion in our next issue.

Email: berrymuseum@bigpond.com