

# The Berry & District Historical Society Inc

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## Chronograph

January-March 2022

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### Dates for your Diary

12<sup>th</sup> March – Book Launch in Nowra – see details below

30<sup>th</sup> March & 31<sup>st</sup> March – Free Powerhouse Webinars – see details below

### Book Launch

The members of Shoalhaven Historical Society have invited our members to the launch of Alan Clark's latest book *On This Day in The Shoalhaven*.

The book will be launched at Nowra Museum on Saturday, March 12<sup>th</sup> at 2:20pm by local journalist Robert Crawford. The Museum will be open for inspection as well. Please RSVP to Lyn Allen at [laallen47@gmail.com](mailto:laallen47@gmail.com).

### Free Powerhouse Webinars

#### Artist in Conversation: Nicole Barakat

Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2022

11-11:45am

Bookings essential – link to <https://www.maas.museum/program/artist-in-conversationnicole-barakat/>

Join curator Sarah Rees, in conversation with artist Nicole Barakat, whose art practice engages unconventional approaches to artmaking to create intricate works that embody the love and patience characteristic of traditional textile practices. In 2021, Nicole worked with women from Lakemba's Rohingya community to co-create a work for the Powerhouse exhibition *Eucalyptusdom*. In this 45-minute webinar Sarah and Nicole will discuss Nicole's art practice, influences and the commissioning process for the artwork, It will be a memory for me, I have learnt so many things from this tree.

**Nicole Barakat** is an artist whose practice includes 20 years of collaborative community engagement, where she sees respect and equality as the leading principles that drive an exchange of experience, knowledge and skills. She has exhibited and performed throughout Australia and internationally in Seattle, San Francisco, Stockholm, and London. See more of Nicole's work at <http://www.nicolebarakat.com.au/>

**Sarah Rees** is a Curator at the Powerhouse whose inquiry is currently focused on curatorial modes for interdisciplinary practice. She also has a keen interest in architecture. She has worked across multi-arts projects for leading cultural institutions and was the inaugural Curator, Contemporary Art at Sydney Opera House. In 2020, Rees joined the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences as curator for *Eucalyptusdom*

## Museum Audio Visual Displays

31 March 2022

11–11.45am

Bookings essential – **link to** <https://www.maas.museum/program/museum-audio-visualdisplays/>

In this 45-minute webinar Powerhouse Media Technology Manager Owen Conlan and Senior AV Technician Jessica James-Moody will take you through all the basics of including audio visual displays in your exhibitions.

From display heights to installation environment, mounting and safety issues, Owen and Jessica, with their wealth of experience, will help you understand what is involved in including audio visuals into your exhibitions and displays.

This webinar is designed for staff and volunteers of smaller museums, the collecting sector and visual artists. A 30-minute presentation with slides will be followed by a 15-minute Q+A session. The webinar is free but bookings are essential. Participants can pre-register their questions.

## Maryborough Family Heritage Society – Shipping Flyer

Please see flyer for new Immigration Shipping books being produced by the Maryborough Family Heritage Institute.



MARYBOROUGH FAMILY HERITAGE INSTITUTE INC.  
cnr Wharf & Richmond Streets, Maryborough, Qld 4650  
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# 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

of the arrival of Immigrant Ships

Scottish Admiral

Scottish Wizard

Silver Eagle

Western Monarch

## EARLY TIMBER GETTING AND SAWMILLS IN BERRY

When Captain James Cook and Sir Joseph Banks visited Australia's east coast in 1770, Banks saw the local timbers as 'fit for all the purposes of home building and ship building'. After settlement however, many First Fleeters thought Australian timbers were only fit for firewood. Hence the discovery of red cedar in the Hunter region was welcome news.

The beautiful dark red, fine-grained timber was in great demand, especially for public buildings, furniture and ship building. Not only was the demand from the developing colony, but also from the Royal Navy, as the Napoleonic Wars were creating a substantial demand for ships and their repairs. So important was this timber to Britain that by 1798 cedar was the third most important export from the colony. Red Gold indeed.



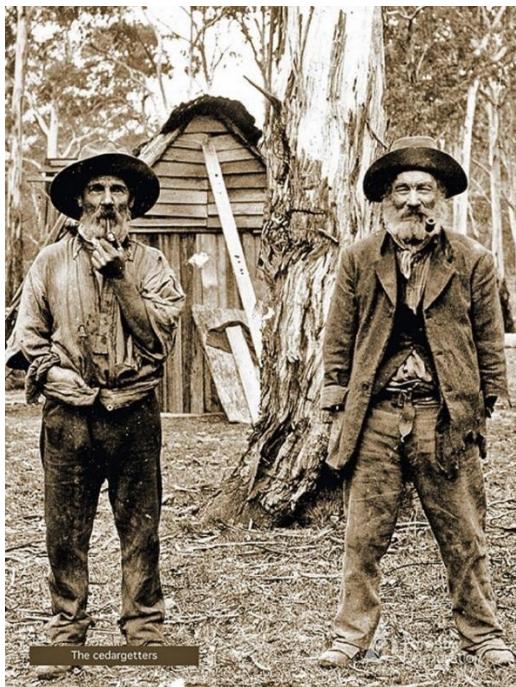
***Australian Red Cedar***

In 1812, George William Evans, Government Surveyor and explorer, conducted a surveying expedition as far south as Jervis Bay, reporting on the area's suitability for possible settlement and also on the good supply of red cedar in the area. Timber cutters visited the area and so it began.....!



***George William Evans, Government Surveyor and explorer***

The early cedar getters were legendary pioneers. Skilled axe men, or sawyers, they would seek out the cedar trees, cutting a path through the dense bush and setting up their campsite. There they would live on salted beef and damper, supplemented by a keg of rum.



***Early Cedar Getters***

They went to great extremes to find and extract the red gold. Around Fitzroy Falls for example, a series of ladders was erected on the cliff face and cedar was carried up from below to the tableland above.



***Early Timber Getters Using the Saw Pit Method with a Sawyer in the Pit Below***

Some would dig out a large Saw Pit and the sawyers would then place the huge logs which were to be cut, over this dug out pit, on planks of wood called 'dogs'. The senior sawyer stood on top of the planks and the junior one had to climb down into the pit, which was often partially filled with water and had sawdust continually raining down into it. One theory of the origin of 'top dog' and underdog' is that they came from these pit work practices.

As the colony expanded, regulations were required to control the cutting and removal of timber from Crown Lands. By 1820 timber getters needed licences which limited the amount cut, but it was a big country with few scattered administrative staff to police the regulations. When Alexander Berry first came to settle in the Shoalhaven in 1822, he was guided to massive stands of timber, including red cedar, by a local aboriginal - Toodwik, known as Broughton. By November 1825 seven free settlers, employed by Alexander Berry, had made their camp by Broughton Creek.

Until machinery was introduced bullock teams were the only way of getting the timber out of the rough terrain. The Bullock drivers were colourful characters, rough and ready types who drank heavily. They usually had a pipe in their mouths, spat 'baccy' and swore a lot, especially at their bullocks. A local Fox Ground bullocky had this ode penned to him:

Phil Brennan was a bullocky, a decent sort of bloke.

A better flaming bullocky had never touched a yoke.

He yelled 'You loafing lighters, I'm go'ner make you pull,

Till you wish your blinkin' father had never been a bull!'

The still accessible supply of cedar on his land in 1833 encouraged Alexander Berry to build a sawmill. His brothers William and David designed it and oversaw the work. It was thought to be the first major engineering work in the district with the mill being powered by water from Broughton Mill Creek and the power-driven cutting taking over from the earlier Saw Pit method. As you turn down Beach Road at the entrance to Berry, the paddocks on the left, below Mananga and the Berry View Motel, contain the last traces of the water race that carried the water from Broughton Mill Creek to power this sawmill, which was built on the flat there. Thirty men were employed and a Scottish overseer, Mr Alexander Pattison, was engaged to run the mill processing the large amounts of timber that workers had felled, sawed and dragged there by bullock teams.

By about 1850 workable cedar had been cut out of the Shoalhaven but as timber was still an important commodity, other timbers like iron bark and coachwood continued to be harvested and milled locally. Sawmills were set up in various parts of the outlying areas and the town of Berry flourished as a service centre for the industry.

Charlie Host was one of the town's earliest sawmillers, conducting his mill on what is now the Apex Park in Berry. From 1913 Arthur Malloy was running a mill at the railway end of Albany Street, formerly having had mills on Beach Road and Coolangatta Road. Later this Albany Street sawmill was rented by Curtain & Anshaw.



***Arthur Malloy's Sawmill in Albany St***

Opposite the Berry Cemetery in Kangaroo Valley Road, a sawmill was operated in 1914 by Bill Binns and by 1925 Jack Blow was operating a sawmill at the rear of 30 Prince Alfred Street. Jack's mill was later sold to Mr Blissett who moved it to the rear of his own property at 42 Prince Alfred Street.



*Bert Jorgenson's Bullock Team in Prince Albert Street. Ca. 1925*

Vous & Fox had a sawmill on the north-western corner of Albany and Victoria Street until it was moved to 36 Princess Street, where it was run by Bill Hollands Senior. His son, Bill Jnr, took over the mill in partnership with Jimmy Ebner. Later they were brought out by Len Little who also bought Mr Blisset's mill in Prince Alfred Street.



*Bill Hollands Snr and his workers at his Princess Street Sawmill*

Len moved both mills to the site that is bounded by Queen, George and Princess Streets and operated under the name of Earlwood Sawmills. Noel Williams later bought this business and ran it as the Berry Sawmill until 1978 when Davis & Herbert Pty Ltd bought the business and closed the Berry operations down.

The next time you are driving or perhaps wandering through Minnamurra Rainforest, Broughton Creek, Cambewarra, Jamberoo Mountain or Macquarie Pass keep a look out for the occasional red cedar. You may even hear whisperings from the early timber cutters as they sit around their campsites with their salted beef and damper, sharing stories over their keg of rum.

**With Thanks To Annette Frohling**