

The Berry & District Historical Society Inc

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Chronograph May-August 2023

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Annual General Meeting

The Berry & District Historical Society Annual General Meeting was held on 9th August 2023 at 2pm in the Uniting Church Hall.

Elections were held for the committee members and office holders. The results were

President – Margaret Cullity

Vice President – Janet Hanson

Treasurer - Hilary Brickhill

Secretary - Gail Paton

Committee Members:

Sandra Berner

Sue Davidson

Stephen Fellows

Frank Howarth

Kay Jarrett

Congratulations to all.



L-R: Jan Hansen, Margaret Cullity, Hilary Brickhill, Gail Paton, Stephen Fellowes

Acting President Margaret Cullity's Annual Address

Thank you all for coming today.

Ros Pollard our President for nearly 3 years resigned as at 30 June 2023 for health reasons. For those of you who don't know, on 27 May last year Ros worked all morning at the Museum until lunchtime when she drove home via Cambewarra Mt and had a serious accident. She is yet to make a full recovery. On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank Ros for all her hard work and contribution to the Society

We have had a very busy year. With the relaxing of a lot of the Covid restrictions, we have been able to open our Museum every weekend and for limited days during the School holidays. A big thank you to those members who volunteer on the desk roster. Without you we would not be able to open our doors. And a big thank you to Kay Jarrett who maintains our roster. It is not an easy job. If you are in a position to help out with just one shift of 2 hours once a month, training provided, it would be most appreciated. Please speak to Kay.

We have continued to do lots of work behind the scenes this year.

The garden group continues to maintain our gardens beautifully. Thank you to that team headed by Hazel King. Some of you may know that Hazel is currently unwell and is presently living with her son and daughter-in-law. Jenny Swan is leading the group in Hazel's absence.

The garage has had a big cleanout this year, giving us more storage space. Thank you to Keith Houston and team for their efforts.

Keith has also done a lot of work on the display in the Industry room which is ongoing but presently waiting on Council to repair the water- damaged walls. He has also made a start

on the Farm machinery shelter and items displayed there and thank you Keith for your ongoing maintenance in general. We really appreciate your efforts.

This year the Library has been reorganized and hopefully now all our books and folders of information are easily found if you are doing any research. There are indexes hanging on each cupboard to help you find things. Thank you to Jan Hanson for helping with that.

Digitisation is proceeding slowly. A number of our objects have now been photographed and several are available for viewing online on our ehive platform. Thank you to Julia Woinarski and helpers for all the work on that. If anyone is interested in looking at ehive, please see me after the meeting.

Our Exhibition/Work room hosted a display to celebrate 100 years of the CWA. It also hosted an exhibition of sculptures by Wade Marynowsky for the Open Field Festival in June. It was a great success with around 500 people dropping by to look at it and also looking at our Museum. A big thank you to Annette Frohling for co-ordinating these exhibitions. Annette has also been instrumental in organizing a number of tours through our Museum this year. Thank you to Annette and her team for their efforts.

During the next year we are hoping to obtain some grants to proceed with more extensive work. Jan Hanson prepares the Grant applications which is a time consuming job. Many thanks Jan.

Top of our wish list are grants for:

- a.* replacing our lighting which is a high priority,
- b.* renovating the old bathroom to provide more storage space.
- c.* photographic equipment for our ongoing digitisation
- d.* conversion of our Microfilm
- e.* developing a new website

We will continue to sort and organise various areas of the Museum.

We will also continue to update the details of our objects on ehive , making more available for public viewing.

Work will continue on our displays. I know that Sandra Berner and Robin Houston are planning updates to the Linen room. We look forward to that.

Many members contribute to the Society and the Museum and I thank each and every one of them but in particular Margaret Ogle who keeps us all in line. I, in particular, am grateful for your knowledge, experience & guidance. Thank you, Margaret.

And finally, vale to two of our long-standing LIFE members who are very much missed. Peter Knevitt and June Robson.

Peter set up our computers, managed our electronics and organised the photograph collection among many things. He undertook Family History Research and was on the committee for many years. Peter could be relied on to help out in any situation. He is very much missed.

June Robson was very involved in the Museum. She did a lot of research, particularly in the days when there wasn't a lot digitised. She was involved in writing books as well as research for local heritage issues. She was on the committee for many years, and also did a lot of routine things behind the scenes. She will be greatly missed.

Talk by Peter Whitton

Member Peter Whitton addressed the AGM regarding the flood boat NOAH that has been 'aground' at the rear of the Museum for some time and his plans for its future.

Peter has wooden boat experience, from a rowing boat on Georges River 1955 to Historic 36 foot Montague Island lighthouse supply boat 1990-2005, timber sailing dinghies and now a 14-foot clinker Australian Cedar rowing boat on Broughton Creek. Don't think there has been any time when there has not been a timber boat of some sort in his shed at home.

Maintenance and repairs in that time. Been around Berry since 1995 and now in town. Always have admired, as I drove out of the IGA carpark, the clinker boat in the back shed at the Museum. Now that I have learned of its history from 1889, it seems like a good time for some preservation for the future. Both NOAH and SHOALHAVEN are listed in the ANMM Register of Historic Vessels. They are the oldest surviving vessels of their type, still in original Sound condition on that National list. A flood in 1860 was followed by an even bigger flood in 1870, with disastrous losses, prompting the call for flood boats and maybe the origins of the SES.

He detailed: the NOAH HISTORY
the RESTORATION PLAN
the PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Peter's presentation will shortly be posted on our website.



DR WADE MARYNOWSKY'S ART INSTALLATION AT THE BERRY MUSEUM DURING THE OPENFIELD FESTIVAL

During the recent very successful OpenField Festival which was held in Berry from 22 to 25 June, the Museum provided the use of the Display Room for an art installation by OpenField artist, Wade Marynowsky.

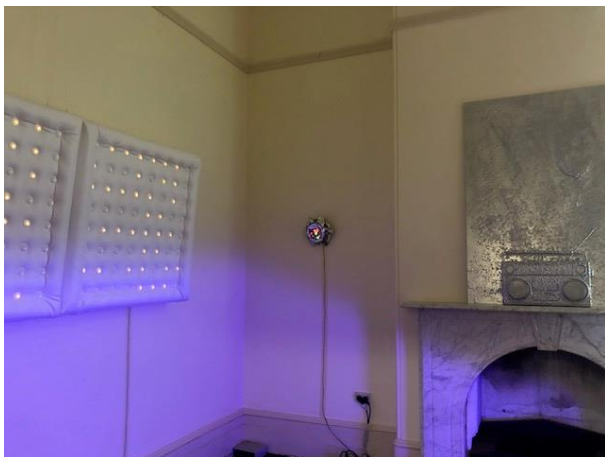
An artist, academic and researcher , Dr Marynowsky is based in Nowra and works across digital media , including robotics, immersive and interactive performances, music and video.

Dr Marynowsky's installation was called 'Future Relics ' and took two days to install. It was an innovative installation which included in part everyday household objects that he had covered in broken mirror shards to look like disco balls. Also included were some fabricated technological and everyday objects infused with embedded electronics, sound and light. The artist saw the Museum as providing the context for an installation which sought to offer a glimpse into the future of Museum collections.



The artefacts for the art installation were sourced from a variety of places including the shop at the Berry Recycling and Waste Centre and from the artist's personal collection. Each article addressed the problem of consumer waste, technological obsolescence and e-waste, by giving the items a new purpose.

For example the space orb interface on the wall was a notable artefact repurposed from a spa filter and sourced from the Berry Recycling Centre shop. It represents the growing prosperity of the Berry population in which was once a region of colonisation and hardship for both indigenous and colonial communities.



The installation also presented a futuristic science fiction theme that raised thought provoking questions about human colonisation of space. It highlighted that as we venture into new interstellar worlds and interact with alien races, we must consider whether we can learn from our past to build a better future.

The exhibit was very well received and proved to be a great drawcard for the Museum, which was open on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday of the Festival between 10 am until 4 pm. Over

those three days visitors to the Museum numbered approximately 560 adults and over 100 children.

Most of the visitors were art enthusiasts but a lot were locals who had never been in the Museum , and said how they were very impressed with our displays and would definitely be coming back for another visit.



One of the many interesting visitors

Annette Frohling

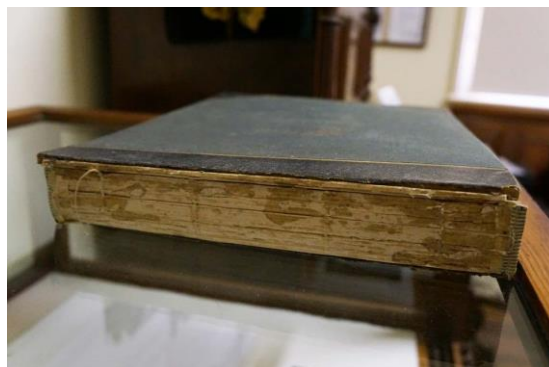
Happenings at the Museum

You may have noticed that John Stewart's Herbarium which is usually displayed in the Coolangatta Room in the cabinet by the door, has been missing since late March. The two volumes have been at Andersen's Bindery in Redfern, Sydney, being repaired. They have just been collected and are now wrapped up in acid-free tissue paper, each in its own archival box, in storage awaiting to be displayed again when we have the right supports.

Before:



Spine volume 1



No spine volume 2



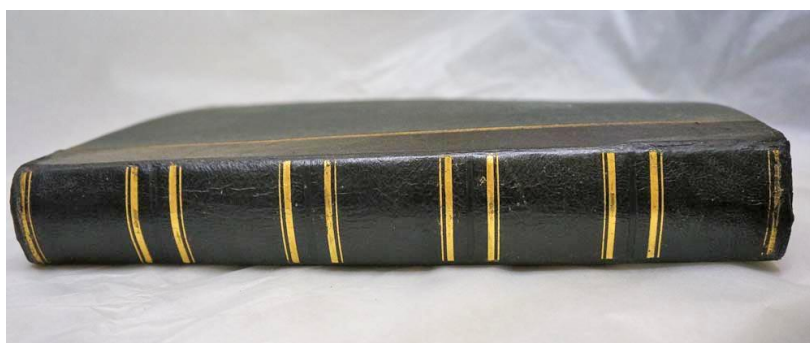
Detached cover volume 2



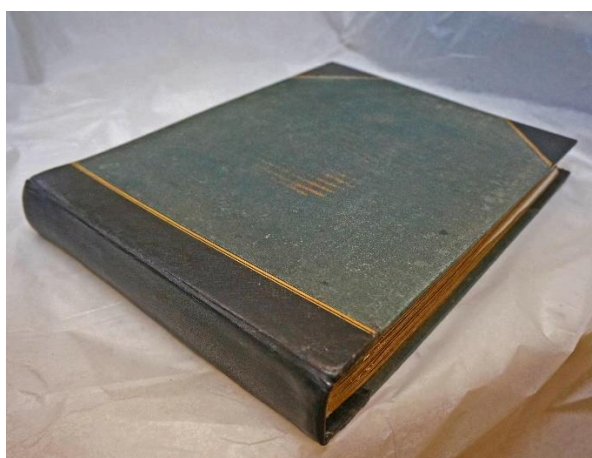
Volume 2 minus cover

Volume 2 has a new leather spine, and the spine on Volume 1 has been repaired. All the covers have had the corners repaired using Japanese tissue paper inserted under the leather, which is then reglued and stained to match – a painstaking job. The leather has been cleaned and oiled.

After:



Spine Volume 1



Volume 2

It is wonderful to see these 137-year-old books come to life again, and hopefully they will see another century, at least. So, as soon as they are on display again, only one at a time though, come into the Museum to see them.

Vanessa Keenan, one of our museum consultants, visited us in June, as part of the Shoalhaven Council Digitisation Project. Amongst other things, we discussed how to display the Herbarium. She suggested one volume at a time, changing every 6 weeks or so, the other one safely stored in an archival box. Then, if something untoward happens to the one on show there is always the other one secured.



Unwrapping the newly restored Herbarium

And now to another one of our Museum Consultants, Jules Boag, the photographer. He has visited us four times now but unfortunately the money to cover his services ran out at the end of June. Janet Fingleton and I have helped Jules photograph 33 objects in all, each one two to four shots, or more in some cases, depending on angles, hallmarks, inscriptions etc. And the photos are now on the public domain, with Shoalhaven Museums and EHive, together with descriptions, provenance, significance etc. So far, all in all, we have gone public with 65 objects as of 30 June 2023 – 4,857 to go!!

So, check them out on <https://ehive.com/search/collections>, then search for Berry Museum.

Julia Woinarski

Stories at the Museum

The stories I hear at the Museum when I'm on roster! The other day an elderly couple came in, who were caravaners off on their big trip to the Centre, Darwin and then on to Western Australia. They were fascinated by the vault and the safe and he couldn't wait to tell me the story concerning the club of which he was a member. The club's cleaner had come in to do her work late evenings after the club had closed, but one night two men followed her in and demanded the keys to the strong room where the day's takings were kept. She meekly handed them over and in they went, leaving the key in the door. She immediately slammed the door, locked them in and rang the police. A short time later they arrived and stood outside the door calling out "we know you're in there, we know you're in there!"

End of story, she was the hero, single-handedly catching two robbers.



Our safe and vault

Another time I remember a young woman coming into the Museum, rather hesitantly asking permission to enter. A long time later she came back into the front room and wanted to talk about the organ in the Coolangatta Room and its history. She explained that she was originally from Syria and when she was young her family lived in a house that had previously been a convent in which there was a similar organ. She had tears in her eyes as she recounted her childhood memories of playing it with her siblings. She told me she was still in touch with her family back home and I suggested she take a photo and send it to them. A moving story, indeed. I wondered about her background, whether she was an asylum seeker, or a refugee, and what had brought her to Australia, and to Berry – it would have been interesting to have learnt more.



The Organ in the Coolangatta Room

My third story is about a young boy, about 12 years old, doing the kids quiz. He couldn't find the picture of "The Coolangatta" so I took him into the Coolangatta Room and showed him where it was hanging.

A while later he came back with his answer – not only the date it sank but also the number of people lost, the history of the ship and anything else he could find out, his answer spilling over to the back page. He was fascinated by ships, and I was impressed. I rewarded him with two chocolate frogs that time!



"The Coolangatta"

What story will I hear next weekend? Often people just walk in and out, but there is always someone who has something to share, if you have the time to listen, that is.

So become a volunteer - you are not only sharing the history of Berry with our visitors, but you are also hearing other people's history from elsewhere.

Julia Woinarski

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