

## **The Shoalhaven Chronograph with Berry Newsletter**

**October/November 2016**

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### **Dates for your Diary**

#### **6th December 2016 – Christmas Cocktail Party**

All our members are cordially invited to the Museum's Christmas Cocktail Party.

Venue: The Museum, Queen Street, Berry

Time: Tuesday 6th December at 6.00pm

RSVP: by 3rd December 2016 by email [berrymuseum@bigpond.com](mailto:berrymuseum@bigpond.com)

or leave a message on 4464 3097



## Mary Lidbetter (1938-2016)

Mary Lidbetter died at Berry on 13<sup>th</sup> October 2016.

The Berry and District Historical Society extends its sympathy to Mary's family.

The Historical Society owes Mary Lidbetter a great debt of gratitude.

Mary had a profound interest in local and family history which inspired her to found the Berry Museum. Through her extensive network of community connections, she worked tirelessly to build our collection of research, she prepared monographs and wrote frequently for the local press on the subject of the history of Berry. Mary was a committed community educator, running walking tours and giving lectures and talks.

Mary had a profound understanding of the particular heritage and character of the town of Berry and through her historical work helped forge the identity of the Town of Berry and its community. For this we thank her.

We are currently compiling an article on Mary's life and her contribution to the B&DHS. If you have any interesting stories or reminiscences, please forward them to the editor ([museum@cpretty.com](mailto:museum@cpretty.com)) for inclusion in our next issue.

## Researchers Wanted

The Museum needs you.

We get a lot of requests for research from visitors to the Museum.

We need researchers to help meet these requests.

Don't have any experience? That's not a problem. Our dedicated team will give you all the help you need to develop this new skill.

Most of the requests we receive are from people wishing to trace their ancestors, or from people wanting to know the history of their new home in Berry.

It is interesting and rewarding work. And you will learn more about the history of the area, as well.

Let us know if you would like to help. And if you're not sure, contact us and have a chat. Contact the Museum by phone (4464 3097) or email:

[berrymuseum@bigpond.com](mailto:berrymuseum@bigpond.com)



## Trip to Bundanon

Bundanon is a large home near Nowra. It was the home of the painter Arthur Merric Bloomfield Boyd AC OBE (24 July 1920 – 24 April 1999). Boyd was a leading Australian painter of the late 20th century. Boyd's work ranges from impressionist renderings of Australian landscape to starkly expressionist figuration, and many canvases feature both. Several famous works set Biblical stories against the Australian landscape, such as *The Expulsion* (1947–48), now at the Art Gallery of New South Wales. Having a strong social conscience, Boyd's work deals with humanitarian issues and universal themes of love, loss and shame. Bundanon served as a strong influence on Boyd's work.

The year 2016 marks the 150th anniversary since the completion of the Bundanon Homestead. To commemorate this event, a number of local historical societies were invited to a morning tea and guided tour of the property.

The area was originally inhabited by the Wodi Wodi people. The first white visitor to the area was government surveyor, James Meehan, in 1805.

In 1832, Richard Henry Brown was given a land grant to develop 55 acres in 5 years. This work was not completed and the property was sold to Dr Kenneth Mackenzie on 19 March 1838. McKenzie purchased the land and named it Bundanon, meaning "a rocky and craggy place".

Bundanon started as a single-storey weatherboard structure built circa 1840. In 1866, a two-storey sandstone house, made of locally quarried stone, was built immediately in front of the weatherboard house. The sandstone house features timber verandahs and is now listed on the Register of the National Estate.

Bundanon was home to four generations of the Mackenzie family.

Following the departure of the Mackenzie family from Bundanon in 1926 the 'Bundanon Farm' was leased to tenant farmers for the next 40 years.

Bundanon was finally sold out of the Mackenzie family in 1967 to Jim Lawrence for \$23,000. Alan Warren, with his wife Joan and young family stayed on as the tenant farmers until the property was again sold in 1968 to Sandra and Tony McGrath and Frank McDonald for \$56,000.

During this time (1968-79) the majority of the working buildings around Bundanon homestead were removed and the grounds extensively landscaped. A breezeway was added in 1969 to link the homestead to the weatherboard kitchen and servants quarters, and a pergola was added in between.

Inside, the downstairs front bedroom was converted into a library with extensive shelving, the rear room became a dining room and upstairs a bedroom was converted into a bathroom. Electricity and running water were added and much of the cedar trim for windows, doors and skirting boards was painted gloss enamel white.

The McGraths and McDonald visited Bundanon largely at weekends, bringing family and friends. McDonald was responsible for inviting Arthur and Yvonne Boyd to stay on the property for the first time. Their network of creative contacts were regular visitors who enjoyed generous hospitality.

The McGraths and McDonald had a vision for Bundanon to become an artistic retreat but were not successful in interesting the State Government in acquiring the property, eventually selling it to the Boyds in 1979 for \$300,000.



**Bundanon Homestead**

In 1979 when Arthur and Yvonne Boyd purchased Bundanon they added it to their existing landholdings on the Shoalhaven River at Riversdale (acquired in 1973). They moved their Shoalhaven base from Riversdale to Bundanon. As a priority, Boyd built a studio west of the homestead adjacent to the sculpture garden.

For the next four years the Bundanon property was managed for the Boyds by David Blackall, then, from 1983-93 property management was taken over by Rod and Debbie Walker until it was bequeathed to the Australian people and the Bundanon Trust came into effect.



Arthur Boyd was named Australian of the Year in 1995.



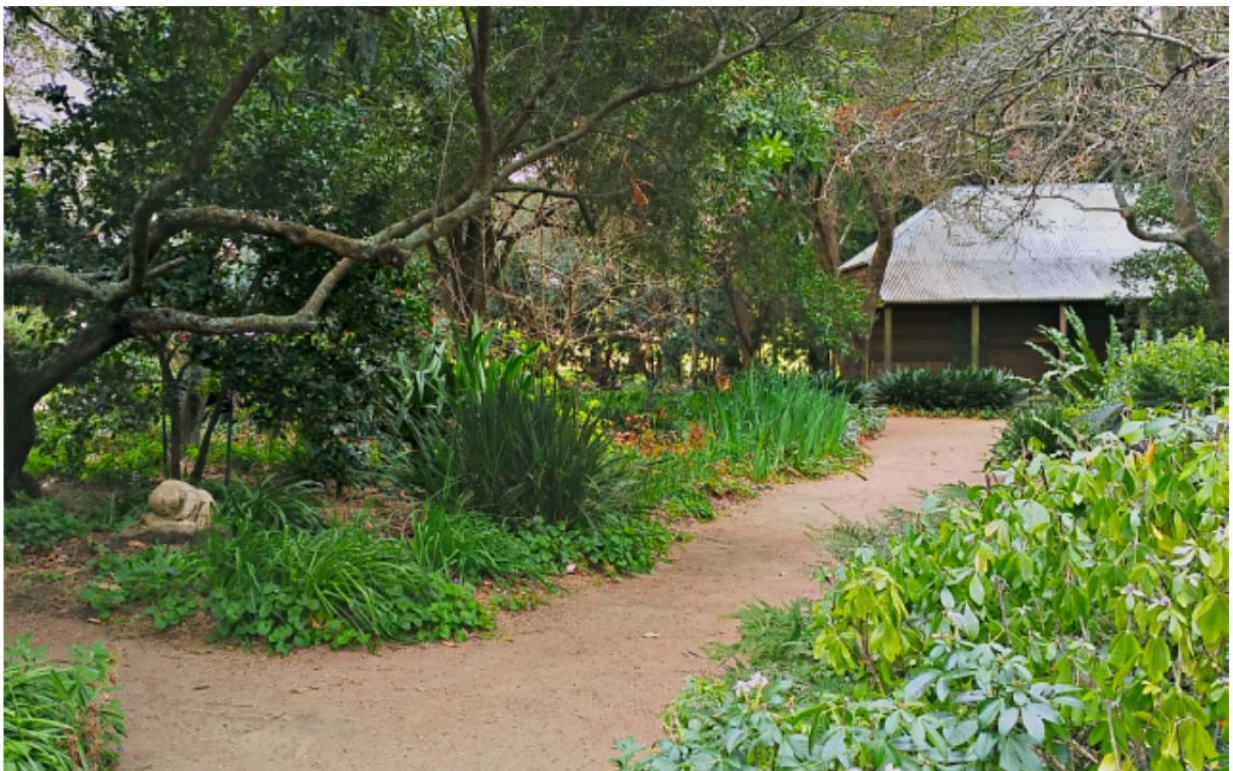
**The Swimmer - bronze sculpture**



**Inside Boyd's studio**

Bundanon now conducts an Artist-in-Residence program which is open to professional artists and thinkers from all disciplines, individually or in groups. Each year around 300 artists are able to experience Bundanon Trust's Artist-in-Residence program.

The program attracts diverse contemporary artists and thinkers from both within Australia and overseas.



**Bundanon garden and Boyd's studio**

## 25 Years of the Gerringong & District Museum

The Gerringong & District Historical Society celebrated their 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary on the 10 September last at the Gerringong Museum, with an evening lecture by guest speaker Dr Roslyn Russell.

Dr Russell's topic was 'Objects, Stories, Identity & The Gerringong Museum' and she mentioned certain objects and memorabilia at the Gerringong Museum that were from the early days of the area, and how these items gave a great insight into the times and its people. She explained how major museums now chose museum objects for the story they told and their connection to families and people. Earlier in the year, Dr Russell had done a specially applied for "Gerringong Museum Significance Assessment".

The very well attended evening was held at the Museum which features, on one of its walls, a large painted mural of the area's early farming community. This mural had been painted, when the museum was built, by teachers and students from Kiama High School's Art class of 1991. To especially mark the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, two of the school's former teachers, and two of the actual 5 students who had painted the mural, had come along to the evening.



Gerringong Museum

Also present were three gentlemen who had been part of the actual building process of the Museum.

President Helen McDermott, Research Officer Margaret Sharpe and Publicity Officer Bobbie Miller told of the history and the building of the Museum, relating how certain displayed items had been donated and acquired. Their stories told of lots of hard work by passionate and caring individuals over the last 25 years.

Some of the memorable items specifically mentioned by Dr Russell were:

**1. An amazingly handcrafted model of the Sydney Harbour Bridge made from sea shells.**

Jessy May Stewart, the mother of the famous local footballer Roy Stewart, made the bridge in the style of the famous shell craft workers at La Perouse.



Roy's father had had an accident ,at the Gerringong sawmill and could not work, so in 1953 the family all went to live in La Perouse. They returned to the area later when Roy was playing foot ball for Gerringong Rugby League 1963-69.

## 2. Two very elaborate bronze international exhibition medals

These were won by William Bailey of 'Homeleigh', Gerringong, for corn grain (maize) at the Adelaide Jubilee Exhibition in 1887, and the Centennial International Exhibition in Melbourne in 1888. The writing on the medals reveal a little bit of the story of Gerringong and how it was honoured at these exhibitions.

## 3.The diary of a former local lady writing at the turn of the century.

The Museum has the fascinating diary of former local lady Jane Binks ,who kept a daily diary from 1897 till 1947. Jane , who is buried in Gerringong Cemetery, has revealed so much of the history of the area and of its peoples. Excerpts from her diary, some from the time of the First World War, were read out during the lecture

## 4.The Barber's Chair.

The very well preserved Barbers Chair was owned by Ern Henry, who was also the Butter Maker at the Gerringong Factory. After he finished at the factory about 4 pm, he became the hair dresser. His family donated the chair to the museum, plus two very enjoyable cartoon drawings, done at the time by a friend of Ern. They are of a little dog saying, "I know you can fix me up" , and a rooster crowing, "Sure of a good trim here".

## 5.A Letter from Charles Kingsford Smith ( Smithy)

When Charles Kingsford Smith took off from Seven Mile Beach ,Gerringong, for his flight to New Zealand in 1933, a letter was received from him and his crew thanking the local ladies for a box of local peaches that they delivered to the plane for the crew's refreshment.

One of the gentlemen present at the evening's lecture was Colin Sharpe. When Colin was almost 5 years old he had gone to the beach with his family to see Smithy and the plane, where his father had lifted him up to see in the cockpit. Very early next



Excerpt from The Kiama Independent on display at the Kingsford Smith Memorial

morning, from their home on the hill at Toolijooa, Colin and his family saw the plane ,with its lights on ,take off on its epic flight for New Zealand



**Kingsford Smith Memorial at Gerroa overlooking Seven Mile Beach.**

**The outline of his plane, the Southern Cross, is  $\frac{3}{4}$  scale**

Vice President Tony Butz, who moved the vote of thanks to the Guest Speaker Dr Russell , presented her with a specimen plant propagated from Gerringong's own Gallipoli pine.

## **Books for Sale in the Museum**

We have a limited number of copies of 'To the Editor' available at the Museum.



### **To the Editor**

*The Letters of William Cooke to the Newspapers 1872-1907*

54 pages

Author: John Brown



## Trivia

Each issue, there will be a trivia question, and you are invited to join in the fun.

Our winner last issue was **Peter Knevitt**, who tells us that the town changed its name from Broughton Creek to Berry in 1889. Congratulations, Peter.

And here's the question for this issue...

Arthur and Yvonne Boyd's gift of Bundanon to the Australian people has given Australia a unique cultural and environmental asset. It was born out of Boyd's often stated belief that 'you can't own a landscape' and the wish that others might also draw inspiration from this remarkable place.

Who was Prime Minister of Australia at that time?

First correct answer will win the honour of being recognised in our next issue.

The judge's decision is final, and no correspondence will be entered into.

Please email your answer to the editor ([museum@cpretty.com](mailto:museum@cpretty.com)).

## Articles for the Next Issue

We are currently compiling an article on Mary Lidbetter's life and her contribution to the B&DHS. If you have any interesting stories or reminiscences, please forward them to the editor for inclusion in our next issue.

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