Berry and District Historical Society Inc

www.berryhistory.org.au   email: berrymuseum@bigpond.com

The Shoalhaven Chronograph
with Berry Newsletter

April - May 2017

In this issue:

- Dates for your Diary
- Notice of AGM
- Shoalhaven International Women's Day Awards
- Public Lecture by Les Bursill, Indigenous Anthropologist
- Berry Silver Band
- Volunteers Wanted
- Trivia
- Articles Wanted for the Next Issue
- Nomination Form

Dates for your Diary

6th May   1 pm - Berry Silver Band will perform at the Museum. Please RSVP.

9th May   2 pm – B&DHS public lecture at Masonic Village Hall, Albany Street, Berry

9th May   4 pm – The B&DHS AGM will be held after the lecture by Les Bursill

Annual General Meeting of the Berry & District Historical Society

The B&DHS AGM will be held on Tuesday 9th May at 4.00 pm, after the lecture by Les Bursill at the Masonic Village, Albany Street, Berry.

Calling all Museum members and volunteers

We need some new people to nominate for the Committee. Some of our members have served on the Committee for more than 10 years. To make our Management Committee viable and for the Historical Society to continue to function we need some new Committee volunteers. We desperately need a Secretary and also a Research Coordinator. You need to complete a nomination form and send it to PO Box 153 Berry or place it in the President's in tray in the Museum by 25th April 2017.

Your President

You will find a copy of the nomination form on the last page of this newsletter.

Shoalhaven International Women's Day Awards

A group of special Shoalhaven women were acknowledged for their services to their community during the Shoalhaven City Council International Women's Day Awards on Sunday 18th of March at Meroogal House.

The event was an opportunity to publicly acknowledge and thank individuals from the community for their passion, commitment and enthusiasm in a wide variety of organisations and projects.

Among the 22 award recipients was our Vice-President, Margaret Ogle.

The Berry & District Historical Society nominated Margaret for a Shoalhaven City Council International Women's Day Award for outstanding service to the community.

Margaret receiving her award from Mayor Findley

Margaret has made a longstanding contribution to the management and maintenance of the Berry Museum and its collection. She has tirelessly supported the activities of the Historical Society, particularly through her training and support of new volunteer members. We congratulate Margaret on her award and thank her for helping us to keep the Berry Museum open.

Public Lecture by Les Bursill, Indigenous Anthropologist

The Historical Society is holding its first lecture for the year on Tuesday 9th May. The lecture will be delivered by Les Bursill (OAM), a Dharawal (Aboriginal Australian) historian, archaeologist, anthropologist, and publisher.

Come along and find out about the first people who lived in our area.

Les will share with us his extensive knowledge of the heritage of the Dharawal in the Sutherland Shire, the Illawarra and beyond. Les who has been a member of the Sutherland Shire Historical Society for some thirty years now lives in Nowra. He is a descendent of Dharawal people from the area between Kangaroo Valley and Nowra and a Resident Elder for the University of Wollongong.

Les has co-authored a book called A History of Aboriginal Illawarra Volume 1. We hold a copy in Berry Museum. He has lectured, researched and published a number of scholarly papers. His career has been very diverse and he has gained recognition in a number of areas. I urge you to look at the entry on Les in Wikipedia https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Les_Bursill

Time: Tuesday 9 May 2017 at 2.00 pm

Venue: Masonic Village Hall, Albany Street, Berry.

Berry Silver Band

On Saturday May 6th the Band will play at the Museum, starting at 1pm.

Several Band members will receive long service awards, there will be some short speeches, and afternoon tea. If you are able to attend, please arrive before 1pm, and register your attendance with Kaye, ☎4465 1240.

Get Involved

The Museum needs you!

We need members to nominate for the committee (see the notice of the AGM above).

We also need volunteers to help run the Museum, in a variety of different roles; greeting visitors to the Museum or working behind the scenes.

Do you have librarian skills? We need you.

We also need researchers to help meet the number of requests from visitors to the Museum.

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

Most of the research 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

The Wreck of the Schooner Coolangatta

Visitors to the Shoalhaven are often surprised to discover that there is a Coolangatta on the South Coast of NSW, as well as the one in Queensland. But the town in Queensland was actually named after the schooner Coolangatta, which in turn was named after Alexander Berry's Coolangatta Estate. Here's how it happened...

In 1822, partners Alexander Berry and Edward Wollstonecraft obtained a grant of 10,000 acres and 100 convicts from the NSW Government and settled the area at the foot of a mountain near what is now known as the Shoalhaven River. This is now recognised as the first European settlement on the South Coast of NSW. Alexander Berry wrote:

> *"For my headquarters I fixed on the north side of the river at the foot of a hill called by the natives 'Collungatta'. I located the 10,000 acres grant in this locality".*

'Collungatta' was the Aboriginal word for *splendid view*, a description that Berry found most appropriate and so he named his estate "Coolangatta".

In order to provide boat access to his estate, Alexander Berry had explorer Hamilton Hume and a party of convict labourers cut a 209-yard (175 meters) canal from the Shoalhaven River to the Crookhaven River. The canal was completed in twelve days, and was the first canal constructed in Australia. After its construction, Berry set up shipbuilding facilities, completing his first vessel as early as 1824.

The Coolangatta

The ship *Coolangatta* was a topsail schooner of 83 feet (25 m) in length, built by John Blinksell in 1843 for Alexander Berry.

On July 6, 1846, the *Coolangatta* sailed from Brisbane under Captain Steele, carrying two convict prisoners (George Craig in irons, and William George Lewis), stopping to load red cedar logs at the Tweed River on its way to Sydney.

The 88-ton vessel was unable to enter the Tweed River due to silting of the bar. Five weeks later, the vessel remained at anchor off Point Danger and had been rafting cedar from Greenmount Beach.
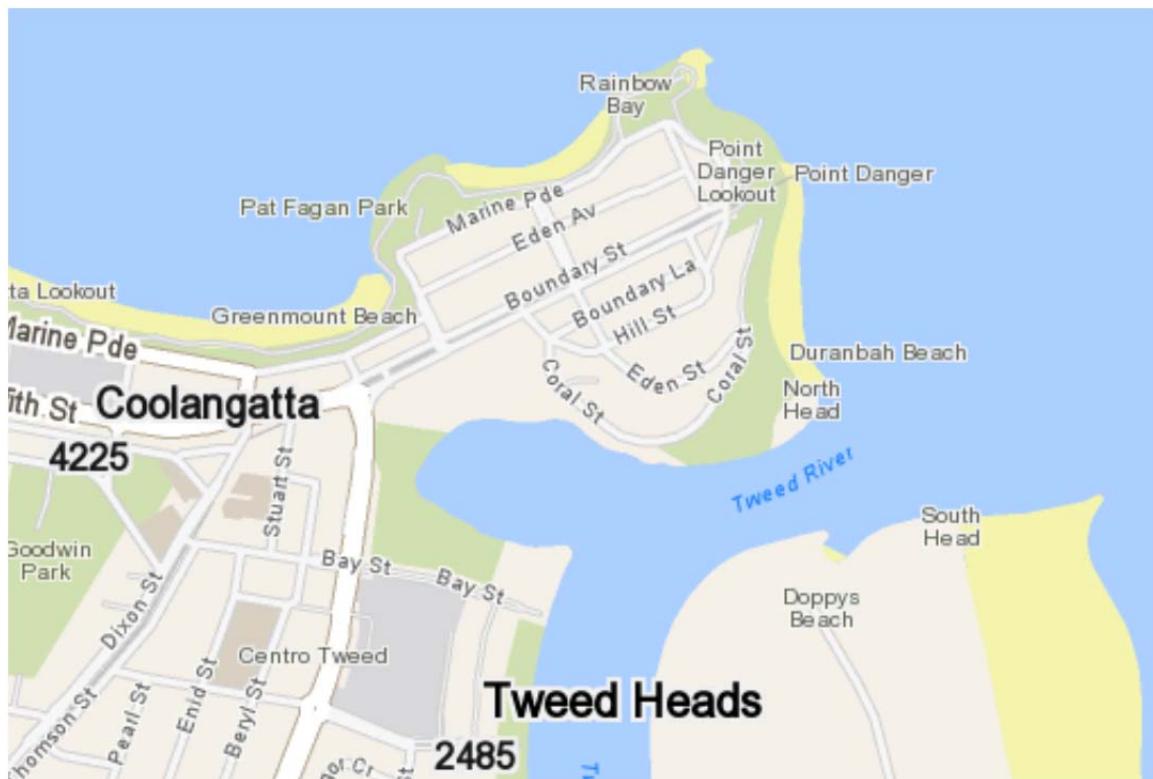
On the morning of Wednesday, 19th August 1846, the *Coolangatta* was torn from her anchors during a severe cyclone and was driven ashore northward of the River. The captain and several of the crew were ashore at the time.

The two convict prisoners on board were freed and all hands abandoned ship and swam for shore as the anchors dragged, and the ship was destroyed.

The survivors walked 70 miles (110 km) north to Amity Point in six days, fed each night by different groups of friendly indigenous Australians, and were then taken to Brisbane on board the *Tamar*.

Government surveyor Henry Schneider named the area Coolangatta while surveying in 1883 for the land auction held in March 1884.

A sandstone obelisk has been erected on Musgrave Street, North Kirra, QLD, that marks the site of the wreck.

Inscription on the memorial at North Kirra

On the morning of Wednesday, 19th August 1846, the *Coolangatta* was torn from her anchors during a severe cyclone and 'was driven ashore high and dry' on to the beach adjacent to this memorial. The 88-ton vessel had been five weeks at anchor off Point Danger. Being unable to enter the Tweed due to silting of the bar and had been rafting cedar from Greenmount Beach. She had departed Brisbane on July 6th to load cedar bound for Sydney and was carrying two prisoners, George Craig, in irons, and William George Lewis. Several days before the storm fully developed, Captain Steele and his crew were ashore rafting timber.

When attempting to return to the ship, their small boat was severely damaged in the surf leaving them stranded on the beach. At this time five fully laden ships were bar-bound within the harbour at Tweed. Their crews "had undergone great privations. The whole of their provisions having been consumed for some time past". As the cyclone intensified the ship was torn adrift, the prisoners freed, and all aboard "saved themselves by swimming through the surf at the imminent risk of their lives"..."The captain, crew and prisoners reached the pilot station at Amity Point on Stradboke Island having walked from Point Danger along the beach". Fed nightly by friendly Aborigines, the journey of 70 miles took six days. In 1883 government surveyor Henry Schneider when sent to "plan a town at Point Danger" saw the wreck and named the adjacent "Coolangatta Creek" in field notes. It is believed that this naming was responsible for the name given to the new township when the first allotments were auctioned in 1884.

The loss of the *Coolangatta* resulted in a loss of £2,000 for Alexander Berry. He had insured the vessel with the General Insurance Company for a period of three months. However, the insurer disputed his claim, because the vessel had been chartered to sail between Sydney, Newcastle and Moreton Bay but had diverted to the Tweed River. On the 26th May 1847, Alexander Berry won a claim in the Surpeme Court for £1,000, with the judge, Mr Justice Dickinson, pointing out that there were two kinds of insurance policy. The one in question was for a period of time, and that the schooner could have called at any point between Sydney and Moreton Bay during that time.

Trivia

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

Congratulations to **Jenny Healey** and **Hazel King** for being the first with the correct answer to our last trivia question in the February-March issue:

In order to receive a grant in the colony of New South Wales, Alexander Berry and Edward Wollstonecraft were required to become permanent residents.

By 1821 when the new governor arrived in the colony to replace Lachlan Macquarie, Alexander Berry had fulfilled this condition and had applied for a grant of 10,000 acres and 100 convicts. Who was the new Governor of New South Wales?

The correct answer was:

Major General Sir Thomas Makdougall Brisbane, 1st Baronet, GCB GCH FRS FRSE (23 July 1773 – 27 January 1860). He was a British soldier, administrator, and astronomer. Upon the recommendation of the Duke of Wellington, with whom he had served, he was appointed governor of New South Wales from 1821 to 1825.

As we are coming up to the 25th April, I thought our question this issue should be related to ANZAC Day. So, here's the question for this issue...

> To celebrate the declaration of peace, and to welcome home the returned soldiers from World War I, the people of Berry organised a procession through the town. The day was called Peace Day, and was considered a great success.
>
> What was the date of Peace Day, and who was the mayor of Berry 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.
Send your answer to the editor's email address (museum@cpretty.com).

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.

Editor: Christine Pretty   ☎ 02 4480 2125   email: museum@cpretty.com

Berry and District Historical Society Inc
NOMINATION FORM FOR THE ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS
(Please return this form to the Museum by Tuesday, 25th April, 2017 by 5 pm)

We, being persons qualified to vote at an election of the above Society, nominate

………………………………………………… (full name in BLOCK LETTERS)

who is a member of the above Society, for election of

>PRESIDENT,

>SECRETARY

>VICE PRESIDENT

>TREASURER

>COMMITTEE MEMBER

Please **CIRCLE** the positions **APPLICABLE.** You may nominate for more than one position.

PROPOSER:………………………………... SECONDER: ………………………...
    (Signature)   (Signature)
Name ………………………………………….. Name ………………………………
    (Block Letters)   (Block Letters)

I, …………………………………….. the person nominated, consent to this nomination
    (Block Letters)

(Signature) ……………………………………... DATE: …………………………....