

The Valley Genealogist



Bega Valley Genealogy Society Inc.

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Bega Valley Genealogy Society Inc.

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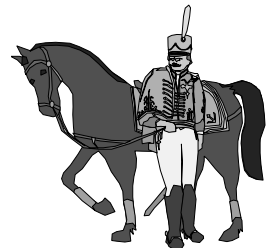
Do you, or did your ancestor, lead an interesting life?



**Is there an interesting story you
Put pen to paper or fingers to that
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WILLIAM MCCARTHY HISTORICAL PLAQUE

Lyn Ryan - Member 40

Excerpt from an article written by the Bega District News, Thursday 17th January 2004.

Residents from Candelo, Tantawanglo, Bemboka, Wolumla and beyond are invited to the unveiling of a memorial plaque in memory of William and Jane McCarthy and the Tantawanglo Mountain Inn.

The large granite rock with bronze plaque was erected by descendants of William and Jane and will be unveiled by Cr Janette Neilson on Saturday, June 19, at 11am at McCarthy's Creek, Tantawanglo on the Bombala Road.

William and Jane (nee Craigie) settled at the foot of the Tantawanglo Mountain after moving from Pambula in 1862.

William grew corn on the river and was a skilled wheelwright and blacksmith.

Along with his wife Jane, they soon established the Mountain Inn. Jane providing food, drink and accommodation, the Inn was welcomed by the coaches, teamsters and drovers using the trading route between the coast and the Monaro.

The McCarthy's raised 11 children at Tantawanglo and later moved to Candelo around 1882.

WILLIAM MCCARTHY - CONVICT

William McCarthy was born at 17th March 1818 at County Cork Ireland – he moved to England and was employed as a shoemaker's boy. He stole some clothing and was also caught as a pickpocket. He was tried at the Central Criminal Court, London, England 1837,

William was sentenced to 15 years hard labour and sent to Australia on 24th March 1838 on the convict ship Bengal Merchant. He arrived in NSW 21st July 1838. (Sydney).

As a shoemaker's boy he would have been assigned to Government Offices as his trade would have been very useful – also William



Inscription on the memorial plaque

had knowledge of hides, tanning and animal husbandry, All of which were in high demand in the colony, I suspect that William learnt blacksmithing during this time on one of the stations to which he was assigned.

In 1848 he was employed as Head Stock man at Towamba Station, near Eden. He married Jane Logan Craigie on the 4th May 1848 at Boydtown, Twofold Bay near Eden NSW. Reverend E. G. Pryce travelled from Cooma to officiate at the service.

William initially worked on properties at Twofold Bay as head stock man and at Pambula NSW he ran a butchery business but in 1862 he took his family to the base of Tantawanglo Mountain approximately 9 kilometres from Candelo on the road to Bombala which at the time was the only road access to the coast from the Cooma/Monaro district.

Here they established the Mountain Inn on the east bank of McCarthy's Creek. William was a Blacksmith-Wheelwright and Jane provided food, drink and accommodation to the lone traveller, teamsters, drovers and coaches trading between the coast and the Monaro district.

From 1849 to 1872 William and Jane had eleven children, six girls and five boys. William ran the "Mountain Inn" until 1882 when it had become run down due to William's neglect. He moved to Wyndham and later in poorer circumstances he moved to Candelo to live with his son Thomas until he (William) died on 5th May 1894.

By 1872, due to William's drinking Jane finally left the "Mountain Inn" with her children, the youngest being seven months old. She ran a boarding house in Candelo NSW. William was charged with deserting his wife and family and was ordered to pay one pound per week to Jane for the maintenance of their children. He defaulted on the payment, and was held in custody and ordered to give Jane ten cows as a final settlement.

Later Jane moved to Bowral where she was a housekeeper to Sir Robert Lucas-Tooth and while there she took up nursing. Jane died in 1906.

Added by Editor:

"William McCarthy born in London, March 17, 1820. His wife, Jean Craigie, born Strathaven, Scotland, January 2, (no year stated) married at Boydtown May 4, 1848. Eldest son born at Eden 27 March, 1849."

My mother born at Towamba, December 5, 1850.

Our grandfather was in charge of Towamba (Station) for Ben Boyd, as head stockman. We believe it was the only house there then, the remains of their old cottage was across the river opposite Bollman's.



Old fruit trees there in our time in Towamba.

What lonely times for young folk from Sydney. Grannie often told us of the wild Blacks from the tablelands meeting the coastal tribes and holding corroborees on the flats where Bollman's farm was in our time. Grannie sat up all night and watched them while Grandfather was away with cattle to Boydtown, all the company she had was a tame Black Gin. Grannie, only 18 when she married.'

From Granny McCarthy's bible.

Source: Excerpt from a letter.

Mrs. J. G. Stevenson writing to Mr. Bert Egan (former curator of Eden Killer Whale Museum) in 1958.

THE STORY BEHIND THE NAMING OF 'THE SAPPHIRE COAST'

by Pat Raymond Member 193

We are all familiar with the local area being referred to as the 'Sapphire Coast' but are any of us aware as to when and how this name was decided upon?

Back in 1958 the Imlay Shire Council was looking into how they could promote tourism in the local area. In December of that year a decision had been made by Council to print and distribute 20,000 brochures in an effort to encourage more travellers to our district. Tongue in cheek Cr. F.G. CLARE put forward the suggestion that seeing Queensland had the 'Gold Coast' that maybe our area should be referred to as the 'Silver Coast'. At that time the district was just referred to as the 'Far South Coast'. The Councillors agreed that a name should be decided upon which would be unique to the area. It was decided that the best way to do this was to organise a competition and call for suggestions which would best describe the area from Tathra to the Victorian Border and that the winning entrant would receive a trophy to the value of £10/10/0d.

The competition was run through the busy holiday period in January 1959 and the Council received approximately 250 entries from locals,



Myrtle (Pearl) Ward with nephew Peter -
photo Trevor Ward

holiday makers from Victoria and even as far north as Sydney. The Councillors were looking for a name which would help describe the beauty of our local area and assist in attracting tourists to enjoy Nature's gift to the southern area of New South Wales. Of course not all Councillors agreed to promoting a new name to describe the Imlay Shire but the majority were in favour. The most appropriate and popular name that had been

suggested was 'The Sapphire Coast' but four people had made this same suggestion – one person from Hurstville, one from Eastwood, another from Beverly Hills and one local Merimbula resident. As only one prize could be given out, the names were put in a hat and the name drawn out was local lady, Mrs. Myrtle WARD nee TASKER. Myrtle was married to Jack WARD who was an employee of the Main Roads Department and the couple lived and raised their family at South Merimbula – now referred to as the Fishpen area. So from February 1959 the coastline of the then Imlay Shire was promoted and became known as 'The Sapphire Coast' and it is still recognised by this name today.

Information from the Magnet Voice newspaper.

SPENCER LASINBY BRANSBY - ONE OF THE FORGOTTEN HEROES PT 2

by Pat Raymond - Member 193

There is one building in Bega which has strong connections with Spencer Lasinby BRANSBY. This is the second oldest hotel in Bega still being in existence and, in fact, is the Bega Family Hotel, Cnr. Auckland and Bega Sts., which has been home to the Bega Museum since 1977.



Bega Family Hotel 1875 as it was originally built prior to the extensions that Underhill and Thatcher added in 1899/1900 – Photo Courtesy B.V.H.S.

Allotments 1, 2 and 15 of Section 23 in the Town of Bega, Parish of Bega, County of Auckland were originally granted on 12 November 1856 to William THOMPSON, a carpenter from Panbula. On 17 August 1858 THOMPSON sold these blocks to Spencer Lasinby BRANSBY for the sum of £80. It was BRANSBY'S intention to build a hotel on this land. BRANSBY was already the original landholder of five other blocks of land in Section 33, one in Section 24 and two in Section 22 fronting Lagoon St. within the Town of Bega. During his residence in Bega he also became the owner of 7 lots in Section 38 which fronted Gipps St. and another lot in Section 48 fronting Parker St.

After having experienced a wooden structure that he had built, burn down, BRANSBY decided to engage Mr. HOLLAND, builder, to erect a brick hotel containing nine rooms with entrance hall, detached kitchen, as well as having substantial outbuildings. (HOLLAND was the contractor who then went on to build the Bega National School on the opposite side of Auckland St.) By February 1859 the foundations of the hotel had been completed and by the end of July 1859 the 'Public House' was ready for occupation. To mark this occasion, HOLLAND put on '*an entertainment*' for all the tradesmen who had worked on this impressive building. According to the Bega Museum's records – two months earlier in May 1859 BRANSBY mortgaged the land and premises to Henry CLARKE of Sydney, merchant, to add security to a previous mortgage he had on other properties. BRANSBY took out a further mortgage in November 1860.

The first licensee was John NEEDHAM from Sydney, however, after his wife became terminally ill, BRANSBY advertised in January 1862 that the unexpired lease and furniture of the first-class Hotel and Grounds were for sale by tender. Catherine NEEDHAM died the following month in February

and James RIXON took over as licensee in March 1862. In March 1866 BRANSBY advertised that all of the properties that he held in the Bega and surrounding districts were for sale as he intended leaving the Colony. These properties included the

Bega Family Hotel and the corner two blocks opposite; an agricultural farm of 132 acres near Bega; three allotments in Gipp Street, Bega; two allotments in Parker St., two allotments in Lagoon St., choice building site in Eden having 88 ft frontage to Imlay St.; and an allotment at Wyndham. RIXON was still licensee of the Bega Family Hotel in December 1866. There doesn't appear to be a licensee registered for the hotel in 1867 or 1868 because by this time RIXON had moved on and had become the licensee of the Commercial Hotel in Bega. However, in January 1868 Charles ANDERSON, plumber and tinsmith, advertised that he had taken over part of the premises of the Bega Family Hotel in which to run his business. In October 1869 Thomas UNDERHILL was granted a license for the hotel and on 29 February 1871 he finally purchased the freehold of the Bega Family Hotel. The Bega Museum informs that negotiations for the sale of the Hotel were held with Henry CLARKE (the local M.L.A.) who held the mortgages and was a friend of S.L. BRANSBY.

Spencer Lasinby BRANSBY'S Final Years.

In April 1871 the residents of the Bega District decided it would be beneficial for them to form a Bega Municipality. A petition was organised to be presented to the Colonial Secretary's Office and fifty-three residents signed this, Spencer L. BRANSBY, Bega, surveyor, being one of them. He personally declared that the signatures attached to the petition were all genuine and were people liable to assessment for municipal taxes in respect of their property and household residences being within the boundaries of the proposed Bega Municipality. This attempt failed and actually it took four applications over the years spanning 1860 to 1883 to form a Municipality before this was passed and granted in 1883.

Spencer was quite a generous man over the time he was associated with Bega and often his

donation to various causes would be double that of other donors. In his retirement years he was a member of the Bega School of Arts and would attend all the meetings. On one occasion he even presented a Lecture on the life and poems of Oliver GOLDSMITH, titled 'An Hour With GOLDSMITH'.

In October 1874 BRANSBY decided to come out of retirement when he was approached to do some surveying work on the Bodalla Estate. He took up residence at COXON'S Hotel in Vulcan St. Moruya and, just when he'd completed his contract, he took ill on 23 October 1874 and Dr. E. BOOT was called. It was found that he was suffering from palpitation and irregularity of the heart which had been induced by long sustained and excessive use of alcohol. Nothing could be done for him and Spencer Lasinby BRANSBY passed away at 9.30am on 24 October, 1874 at the hotel.

COXON immediately sent a telegram advising BRANSBY'S friends of his passing and they in turn decided to organise to transport his remains back to Bega for internment as this was where he had made his home. The newspapers reported *'Poor old BRANSBY' as he was familiarly and affectionately called, was a gentleman by birth and education. A kinder soul never breathed the world's atmospheres; and though prematurely fallen into the 'sere and yellow', his many infirmities could not hide the trace of once companionship with a superior order of society than is found in most Australian towns.'*

Mr. C. ANDERSON was engaged to drive towards Moruya for the purpose of conveying the remains to Bega. Mr. WALTER, of Moruya, acted as undertaker leaving with the coffin on Sunday and got as far as Reedy Creek where Mr. James MCGREGOR came to the rescue and furnished fresh horses so that he could continue onto Cobargo where he was met by ANDERSON. Bega was reached early the next morning and the deceased was taken to Mrs. WHITE'S Victoria Inn to lay in wait for the funeral procession to start from there that afternoon. As the electoral records for 1871/72 show that BRANSBY was living in Auckland St., it is now assumed that he was boarding at the Victoria Inn.

As BRANSBY was a Unitarian his grave was dug on the Upper St. outer edge of the Church of England portion of the cemetery. It was later reported that the Rev. A.D. FAUNCE had declined to perform a proper service over him. Because there was short notice of the arrangements for the funeral service only 20 close friends attended. At the time the Editor of the Bega Gazette, W.H. BRAINE, suggested *'a fund should be raised to place a railing around the grave, and erect a neat and durable tombstone. We shall be happy to give our mite, and act as Secretary to the movement.'*

Unfortunately the support wasn't there and no headstone was erected. In 1882 the Bega Standard reported in an article on 'Bega Revisited' – *'Talking of Mr. BRANSBY, how comes it that after all the trouble of bringing his body to Bega from Moruya, no stone has been erected to his memory. I for one will gladly help to do so if others will join.'*

In August 1889 it was necessary for Council to realign part of Upper St. and whilst making a cutting in that street, north of the Church of England portion of the Cemetery, BRANSBY'S grave was disturbed, as the coffin had been placed outside the cemetery fence. Although having been buried for 16 years the coffin was in a good state of preservation and quite intact, the handles at the side being reported as *'quite good'*. Under the direction of Alderman MANNING, labourers re-interred the coffin in a more suitable location within the C of E section of the cemetery. As Mr. G. HASLINGDEN was aware that Spencer had not received the respect he deserved at the first burial, he arranged for the Rev. Mr. SPENCER to read the full burial service over the grave in the presence of several townsmen. The newspaper then reported – *'Mr. HASLINGDEN informs us that he intends to raise a subscription to be devoted towards erecting a tombstone over the grave of Mr. BRANSBY, a man with whom in bye-gone days in Bega the best were glad to shake hands.'* However, for the third time the money wasn't raised and no headstone was ever erected over his last resting place. It is rather ironic that the man who actually laid out the first Bega Cemetery was not given the honour and recognition he deserved.

As a result of his own actions Spencer Lasinby BRANSBY never got to see his son grow up, marry or to know and enjoy the companionship of his two grandsons who were born and lived on the other side of the world. He battled severe weather conditions when surveying the Monaro and South East Corner of N.S.W. in those early settlement years, his name and the huge contribution he made have almost been forgotten by all. It is possible that some reading this story may even own property that he once surveyed or attend the R.C. Church in Eden, Pambula or Bega whose land was laid out by BRANSBY. So let's spare some time in reflecting and remembering him and the other surveyors who dedicated their lives in making the early settlements possible. *They are the forgotten Heroes.*

Source of information for this article at the bottom of page 7

DOGS IN WAR
'The Sydney Morning Herald'
30 Oct 1920

In "British War Dogs" Lieutenant-Colonel E. H. Richardson deals with a phase of military operations of which little has been heard. Of course, the employment of dogs in war is no new thing. The classics and the records of the Middle Ages contain many allusions to it. In the Roman army mail-clad dogs, with

spiked collars, fought side by side with the legionaries; the Teutons possessed a particularly fierce and powerful breed, which troubled their opponents more than the Teutons themselves. But, with the invention of gunpowder, dogs were no longer of use for fighting, and not until the present century was their value for other than combatant purposes fully recognised. Several Continental countries, including Germany, had organised dog services, and for some years prior to 1914 Colonel Richardson had trained dogs with a view to their employment by the army or the police. On the outbreak of the war he offered his kennel to the War Office, which, true to its traditions, rejected such an unorthodox gift. But officers continually asked him to supply dogs, which by 1917 had definitely proved themselves most helpful auxiliaries, and in that year a "British War Dog School" was established, with the author as commandant.

Originally experiments were made with Red Cross dogs, which went out to succour the wounded. But not only did the Germans shoot them down ruthlessly but the conditions of trench war allowed them little scope.



Mercy Dog
Wikipedia



<https://media.defense.gov>

The chief functions of the dogs in the British army was to act as guards and sentries, and, above all, to carry messages from the front line. As far as sentry and patrol duty was concerned it was found that dogs were only reliable when the distance between the opposing trenches, was sufficient to ensure that the sounds of the enemy did not come to them too continually. But the messenger dogs did splendid work. Their advantages over the human runner were that they were much faster and less liable to be hit, or to lose their way. Frequently, when there was no other means of communication, they brought back most important information. Colonel Richardson mentions one, a collie, who was attached to the Australians. He went over the top with them on several occasions; in front of Douai he brought the only message received when the town was captured, as all the wires were down, covering seven miles in 55 minutes. When the Australians were attacking near Villers Bretonneux the services of "Trick" were in great demand. He reputedly brought back the first news of the progress of the attacks and requests for supplies. He and another dog, "Willard," were specially mentioned in divisional orders for their meritorious conduct. Airedales were found on the whole to be the most satisfactory breed, but setters, retrievers, collies, and Welsh terriers were also used, and Major Richardson has some fine stories to tell of their courage, fidelity, and endurance, despite wounds and fatigue.

SOME WORLD WAR 1 NOTES



Unusual Mascot

Australia took kangaroos as mascots to World War I. The photo here looks fake at first glance, like, why on Earth is there a kangaroo in Egypt?.....But in fact, Australian troops brought a number of different types of animals from home to the World War I battlefields. Call them mascots or just pals, these critters helped boost morale and helped Australia show off some of its natural heritage.

Youngest Australian to Enlist

The youngest Australian to enlist in World War I was 14 year old Private James Charles (Jim) Martin. He had convinced recruiting that he was 18 years of age, when in fact, at enlistment he was 14 years and three months.

Jim landed at Gallipoli on 8 September 1915 as part of the 21st Battalion. On 25 October 1915, Jim was evacuated to the hospital ship the 'Glenart Castle' due to the effects of typhoid fever. He passed away from heart failure that same evening and was buried at sea.



The Ideal Soldier

The physical characteristics of the ideal soldier during World War I were: Aged between 18 and 35 years old 168 cm in height (5 foot, 6 inches) Chest measurement of 86cm (34 inches) Later these requirements were relaxed due to the demand on soldiers needed. For enlistment in the Light Horse Regiment conditions applied for both rider and horse: The soldier must be able to ride bare-back and jump over a fence. The horse must be solid brown or grey in colour and be at least 14 ½ hands high.

<https://www.australiangeographic.com.au/history-culture/2015/04/>

Source of Information from page 5

Information from: English Parish Baptism and Marriage Records; English Newspapers – Ipswich Journal Advertiser, Morning Advertiser, Norfolk News, Perry's Bankrupt Gazette, Suffolk Chronicle; 1841 English Census; 1842 UK Poll Books and Electoral Register; 1850 and 1880 United States of America Federal Census; American Newspaper – The Columbus Commercial; Columbus Cemetery Records; NSW Government Gazettes; NSW Land Records including the Surveyors' Letters found in NSW Land Records 1811-1870 courtesy Ancestry; Australian Newspapers - Australian Town & Country Journal, Bega District News, Bega Gazette, Bega Standard, Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer, Braidwood Observer and Miner's Advocate, Empire, Freeman's Journal, Goulburn Herald and County of Argyle Advertiser, Illawarra Mercury, Monaro Mercury & Cooma & Bombala Advertiser, Moruya Examiner, Sydney Morning Herald, Twofold Bay and Maneroo Telegraph; Eden Electoral Rolls; NSW Marriage and Death Certificates; Unassisted Immigrant Passenger List; 'History of Bega' by W.A. Bayley; Several of the early maps of the Town of Bega – County of Auckland; Institute of Surveyors NSW; Assistance from Peter Guthrey; Information and Photo from Bega Valley Historical Society.

An Update to 'The Interesting Story Behind the Naming of Redfern Close, South Pambula'. by Pat Raymond – Member 193

After this story appeared in our February 2025 journal I decided to forward it to Anne SAVAGE nee McGRATH seeing that she along with her siblings grew up on the same property where Albert REDFERN moved to when working for the McGRATH families in 1939.

Anne found the story very moving as Albert had been accepted into their family as one of their own and, up until the story was published, she had never seen a photo of him. She said any time Albert's name was mentioned her Dad, Stan, would be seen to become affected. Anne had an older cousin, Maureen McGRATH, daughter of George McGRATH, who also lived on the property and Maureen in 1942 could remember the day when Albert returned to Lochiel to visit what had become his second family. She recalls him limping up the roadway into their farm as he was recovering from a gun shot wound to his leg. He was so happy and relieved to be back at his 'adopted' home and to meet up again with the family who had welcomed him with open arms. Maureen said that when he had to return to Sydney the parting was difficult as Albert sensed that he may not return again and much sadness was felt that day.

When the McGRATHS were informed of Albert REDFERN'S death, they had to pack up his belongings into a large wicker basket that he had originally brought with him on his arrival from England. Everything was returned to Albert's Mother in England with the exception of his Bible that he had brought with him – somehow this was overlooked.

The inscription inside it is:-

Albert REDFERN
Presented by Major STUART
S.A.L.I. Colony
February 1939

This would have been presented to Albert back in Essex, England before his departure to Australia. Anne SAVAGE now has his Bible and it is one of her treasured possessions and a reminder of the 'New Chum' who had been befriended by the McGRATHS who considered him a part of their extended family.

Anne later made contact with me once again as she had been going through her Grandmother's box and found a signed menu (below) from the ship T.S.S. 'Esperance Bay'. She had seen this menu a long time ago but back then she had no idea of its



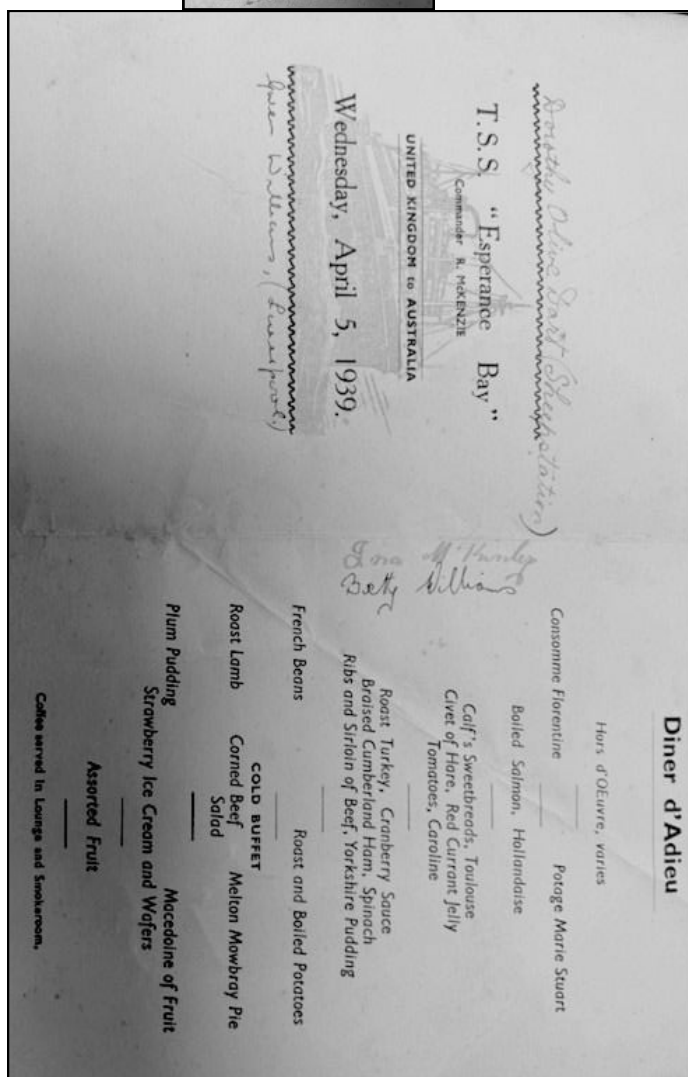
Albert REDFERN
Courtesy 'Find A Grave'

significance. Through the research that I had done on Albert REDFERN she now realised this was the ship on which he had arrived in Australia. On the back of this menu are the signatures of all his fellow travellers who arrived in their new home full of excitement and hope for the future.

Information from Maureen McGrath and Anne Savage nee McGrath



Front of ship's menu



CROSSING THE BLUE MOUNTAINS IN 1822
A LADY'S VIVID DIARY *Part 3*
Lithgow Mercury Sep 1929

The journey continues from the February Issue.

I soon after heard Tom's voice high above my head. I blamed him for keeping me so long in suspense, but he said I had desired him to call if they were safe, which he did as soon as the dray was unloaded and reloaded. Tired as we were, all were employed in breaking wood and making fires.

It was quite dark before the cart came. In it were two great coats and a shawl, a piece of bread, and a little arrowroot. I gave it to the poor children. To little Neddy I gave the arrowroot, and we hushed him off to sleep. Mother sat down with him in her lap before a fire. Ann and George were wrapped up and laid on the ground beside her. The four girls I laid in the cart with a great coat over them. I began to feel very weary and chilly. About nine, two drays arrived, but to stand and listen as I had previously done to the noise of the men endeavouring to cheer the cattle, and the dreadful rumbling with which they descended, was enough to create a sensation of terror in a very stout heart; to see them was impossible until they got close to us.

Hawkins was still at the top of the hill, remaining with the last drays, which from the darkness and the fatigue of the horses and men it was found could not be got down that night. They had now to get water and put the tea-kettle on, and some were obliged to walk up the hill and bring down our provisions, and many things which we could not do without, and two men to remain and watch the dray. Hawkins came down with the others, very much fatigued. We now had our supper and the tent pitched. It was eleven o'clock when it was ready for us. We got the children from the ground and cart into it, and laid ourselves down.

The next morning we all felt the effects of being exposed so long to the night air, and the great fatigue we had. After breakfast we walked up to a small rock, and, sitting down, viewed the scene around, and felt thankful that the little property we possessed was safe, for the injury caused by the dray's upsetting was trifling. Here as we sat we observed three persons winding among the trees in the valley on horseback. They proved to be a clergyman from Parramatta, another gentleman, and a servant.

They spoke in rapture of the country from which they were returning. I now felt myself so ill from fatigue that I was forced to go into the tent and lie down. I fell asleep, and did not wake until the last dray came rumbling by me. Before commencing the journey again, which we did about one o'clock, I

cannot help remarking on the extreme fatigue the men endured the preceding day without any refreshment from breakfast until their supper at eleven o'clock. One man in particular, a convict, who was the head driver of our cart, a Folkstone man, a countryman of our own, behaved uncommonly well when the dray overturned.

Nothing saved the lives of the horses and our property but the stump of a tree by the roadside. It was suspended over an immense precipice. This man was the first who got on top, and, hanging by the ropes, laboured hard to lighten the dray. He, likewise, was one who went at night to bring down our provisions. Hawkins told him his conduct had been such that he should strongly recommend him to the commanding officer, which he has done, and in all probability he will either be made an overseer of a party or have a ticket-of-leave given, so that he may work for himself, which is a reward given to them when their behaviour has been very good.

There are but few birds on the mountains, but their plumage is more beautiful than I ever beheld before. They are called 'Blue Mountaineers'. Then, with a green variety of parrots, which may be heard chattering in the trees, there are also birds called 'Laughing Jackasses' which startled us the preceding evening just at sunset. They appeared to be all round us, making their horrid noise. It was the same at sunrise. I should say there never before was such a party of females without any protection for so many hours at the foot of the mountains. Had any snakes attacked us I fear we should have lost our lives, for none of us would have had the courage to kill them.

Our journey for five miles was very good. We now had reached Cox's River, which has a bridge over it, but a very steep bank to descend, and when there has been much rain on the mountains it is rendered impassable from its overflowing the bridge. Fortunately we got safe over. We had now reached the spot we had looked forward to from the time of leaving Emu as a place of rest, as here it is customary for all drivers of cattle and luggage to rest for a day or two, as there is good grass. We were all much fatigued. We pitched our tent in a field in front of the house, which was inhabited by a corporal and his wife. She was both clean and civil. Hearing of our coming, she had procured a bucket of milk, and never was anything more enjoyed.

In the evening, Mr. Lowe, a chief magistrate, arrived, a traveller like ourselves. He commenced his journey in the morning, but we remained. I took this opportunity of giving the children all a good

washing and change of clothes. This, as the day was extremely sultry and not a tree to shade us in the tent, made it instead a day of rest, one of great fatigue to me. Being all now so completely sick and tired of the journey, we decided on setting off the next morning, more particularly as the weather was showery and from the season of the year heavy rain might be expected. We were reinforced by a cart and two horses from Bathurst, accompanied by Mr. Riley, as he had promised.

We again ascended our cart on the twenty-first. We had been sitting for some time on the banks of the river seeing the whole cavalcade cross, and when it came to our turn it was with many fears we entered the water nearly up to the horses' bellies, and the bottom covered with large pieces of rock and stone, enough to overturn the cart and jolt us to death. A man offered to carry little Neddy over in his arms. With anxious eyes I watched him through fear his feet might slip and our darling boy have his head dashed against a stone. With talking, swearing, beating our poor bullocks, we got safe on the bank on the opposite side. We had now a very long and steep hill before us, and, as usual, they refused to go. It was decided that we must have two good horses, as it was impossible we could ever get on. 'Sir Nobby Redmond' and 'Lion' (names I can never forget) were placed in a dray with a horse behind and another before them, but from it being a constant succession of steep hills, we were only able that day to perform eight miles, and rested at eight in a valley. Here we were joined by five more bullocks from Bathurst.

We set off early next morning; after going eight miles reached the Fish River; after crossing which we had to ascend our last hill, which was very long, very steep. I thought I could never have walked to the top. The drays were a considerable time in getting up and were obliged to assist each other. We now descended into a most beautiful country to Sidmouth Valley. We had to go through a very bad swamp before we got to our resting place, which was where Mr. Lowe's overseer lived, who had the care of his stock. He had desired his tent to remain for us, and we were very glad to take possession of it, as it was raining here. A gentleman from Bathurst, whom we had known in Sydney, came to meet us, and accompanied us back. We had now, my dear Ann, accomplished our journey over the mountains. The last ten miles we had hardly a spot of level ground; all was steep hills.

We were now but eighteen miles from Bathurst, the country extremely beautiful, gently rising hills covered with wood. We passed Macquarie Plains, crossed Fish River, and entered on the plains of Bathurst. The road was good, and, being determined to reach home that night, we almost trotted, which jolted us so dreadfully that I thought

every bone would be disjointed. It was as much as we could do to keep ourselves on the seats and hold the children. As if to the very last our journey was to be made uncomfortable, a fine rain began, which beat in our faces, and made us very cold. At length our house was pointed out to us. What a welcome sight! The rain was now powerful, and before we could reach home we had to cross the Macquarie River, the most dangerous of all. You descend a steep bank, and suddenly plunge into the water, which was as high as the bottom of the cart. The first dray got over, but the rest, being lower, we were obliged to seek another ford for them. We remained alone. The driver of the first brought one of his horses over, put it to ours, and in we plunged. We felt more alarmed for our personal safety at that moment than we had done during the whole journey. We reached the opposite side, and all at one moment exclaimed, 'We are over.' A few minutes brought us to our house, where there was a blazing wood fire to warm and cheer us.

On this side of the river the land is chiefly belonging to Government; on the opposite side to the settlers, or, more properly speaking, grants to gentlemen, who as yet have only huts there for the stock-keepers to reside in and they pay only occasional visits. The Governor is coming in the spring, when great improvements are expected. Two hundred men are to be employed on the roads to make them passable, and a plan for the town will be laid out, and if a chaplain and surgeon are sent we shall have a little society. They are beginning to build a very good brick house for us, which Sir Thomas, on account of our family, has consented shall be of two storeys. It will be some time before it is ready for us, but when we get in we shall be very comfortable. The one we now occupy contains three rooms and a pantry, all brick floors. The front door opens into the sitting room, immediately opposite is the back door, between the two is a ladder which leads into a loft, to which, as yet, there is no trap door. Our bedrooms, likewise, lead from the room, and where we all at present sleep is open to the roof, which is shingled slips of wood, which at a little distance look like slates. Mr. Lawson, the commandant, who resides in the Government House, has ordered two additional rooms to be added, and in another month I hope to be able to sleep in them. We shall then be much more comfortable, for though in England this would be considered a homely residence, here it is thought a very good one.

We are allowed certain rations for six months, of meat, wheat, tea and sugar, sufficient for our family and servants. In our situation, the nominal value of it is but five shillings a day, with rations for Hawkins and servant, but there are many advantages attached to it sufficient to supply the wants of our

family and prevent our wanting any ready money for housekeeping. We live very well, get excellent fish, and the wild ducks are delicious. We are supplied with vegetables from the Government garden, and we are allowed the use of two cows, which, with two we have of our own, give us butter and milk.

You must not judge of the produce of four cows here by what they give in England, for, being naturally wild, and the calves never weaned from them for fear they should not thrive so well, they can only be milked once a day. I am desired by Eliza and Mary to tell their cousin Ann they churned the first butter. The Government carts bring us a good supply of firewood, so that, altogether, my dear Ann, we have no reason to complain of our present situation, if retirement and seclusion from the world is not considered a trouble, which I am happy to say it is not. I often wish we could have beer and yeast to make bread, for not having the means of properly dressing our wheat, our bread is not English bread. Our candles we make ourselves.

I have now, my dear Bowling and Ann, brought you to the end of my journey, but I cannot close this long letter without adding a little more. I tell Hawkins that had it been possible to have gone any further (as he was always famous for moving us about) we should have done it, but beyond here there is no road. Mother bore the fatigue uncommonly well. A journey such as I have described of eighteen days was, at her age, a very great undertaking, but she has recovered from it, and is better than I am, for I am very thin and not very strong. Our children are all well and happy.

I think there can be no doubt but we shall do well, and in a few years prosper, but I would never persuade anyone with a large family as mine, and slender means as we possessed, to leave England, for not one in a thousand could expect to be as fortunate as we have been, for without the appointment we have, and the assistance of the Government to bring us here, we never could have come, or without it we must have been subject to many hardships and privations that we have never felt. But I do wish that a few respectable families, who on their arrival here would be in possession of a few hundred or one thousand pounds, would come, for with such means they must do well—there can be nothing to prevent it.

Before I entirely take leave of the mountains I must tell you that the tree which we chained at the back of the last dray when descending the big hill was forty-eight feet long, and at the extremity, on the boughs, were seated three men. By this necessary precaution you will be enabled to judge better than I have described it to you the steepness and hazard for luggage to descend.

Till bridges are thrown over the river, and the road

much improved there can be little communication with this country; but that is to be done after [the governor] has crossed the mountains. The land on this side is so good for rearing cattle that nearly the whole consumption of the colony depends upon it, and many who cannot obtain land here are glad to send their cattle. In addition to our cavalcade, we had thirty-four head, which belonged to our landlord, on the following terms: One third of the produce to be ours, to be divided at the end of seven years. We have an increase of one calf since we have been here. Although we have not got our own land marked out for us yet, Hawkins has selected his spot, and applied for it, still until then we can have the use of as much as we want for any cattle we may possess.

The Commandant's eldest son took Tom last week to visit their men and cattle. They returned with a bullock to kill and put in store. Yesterday they again left us to be absent a week. He has huts on different parts of their land where their men reside who take care of their stock; at these huts they will rest at night, and he desired me to give his love to his cousin Tom, and to ask him how he would like to sleep before a large fire on a sheep-skin laid on bark, and in the day to go into the woods and hunt the kangaroos. He has gone away very happy, mounted on a large horse, accompanied by young Lawson and a man with seven or eight dogs, and he promised to bring home a kangaroo, an emu and a wild turkey. We must encourage him in this kind of life, for in a few years I hope he will be of great service to us.

The greatest drawback in this country are the snakes, which are so extremely venomous that no person who has been bitten has been known to live many moments. They will not attack you unless molested. The only one I have seen was brought home by Tom the other day. It rose to bite the dog that barked at it, and the man killed it. Tom and the children are all well; George is the most delicate; little Edward, the plaything of our leisure moments, and the darling of all. He has ever been a treasured babe from an idea that he was deprived of those little comforts attached to infants; he is a most lovely and healthy child, and it will be worthy of remark that, born in England, his first birthday was spent at Bathurst, the day on which his father took on himself the duties of commissariat. No child so young should ever travel so far. I hope, my dear friend, I have not wearied you in the perusal of this long letter, which has not been written without many interruptions, but I cannot undertake to correct its errors. And now, and forever, may God bless you all.

Bathurst is 137 miles from Sydney; we were eighteen days on the road.

Elizabeth. Hawkins.

COBARGO BRIDGE DEMONSTRATION

'The Bega Standard and Candelo, Merimbula, Pambula, Eden, Wolumla, and General Advertiser'
Sat 10 Jun 1882

To go back to the early history of Cobargo does not take us a very long stretch. A few years only are needed to fill in between the 'single hut' period and the important ceremony of Thursday last.

The very existence of Cobargo dates but a few years back,



Cobargo bridge,

Cobargo – Valley Life – Bermagui Historical Society

considering the unfavorable state of the weather, was a success.

At about eleven o'clock, the school children, together with the I.O.G.T. Lodge of Cobargo, with visitors from Brogo and Tilba lodges, formed in procession opposite the Church of England, and

when the exigencies of traffic needed that a

stopping and resting place should be established on the main thoroughfare for the extreme south coast district of the colony, and the settlements at old 'Boat Alley,' now Bodalla, and Moruya. Cobargo from its natural advantages was soon picked on as the centre, and it was then that the Government should have seen its importance, and have then taken the infant settlement in hand, but it was left to private enterprise subsequently to do what the Government neglected at the proper time. However, in spite of governmental neglect, Cobargo has made great progress, and with a wealthy and industrious body of settlers in its neighborhood the little township has steadily advanced into notice, and is now the nucleus of a thriving and important town. The private subdivision, the outcome of the foresight of our townsman, Mr. Walker, gave the opportunity of acquiring township blocks, and since the sale, a few years ago, a substantial rise in value has taken place on every lot then submitted.

It took a long time to get the Government, even to recognize the new township, but by-and-bye postal and telegraph facilities were granted, and as the first public work, the bridge that was opened on Thursday, was ordered to be constructed. That finished, there was a suggestion thrown out in this paper, that the completion of Cobargo's first public work should not be passed over in silence, and on this suggestion a meeting was called by Mr. David Henry, and the result was that a demonstration was arranged for, and an active and earnest committee was appointed to carry out the details, and right well they did their work.

We are favored with the following special report of the ceremony: "The Cobargo bridge opening,

the bridge where they formed in line to witness the opening ceremony. A goodly number of people were present as well. At noon, Mr. W. D. Tarlinton, J.P., took the stand and delivered a short but pithy address, at the conclusion of which usual ceremony of breaking a bottle of champagne and naming the bridge, "the Cobargo," was performed by him, followed by a hearty round of cheers by all present. The school children were then conducted by their teacher, Mr. O. Wrightson, to the end of the bridge where they were photographed by Mr. Besse. They then proceeded to the ground prepared for them by the committee to picnic and enjoy themselves for the rest of the day. The bridge was decorated in a most artistic manner, reflecting great credit upon the committee for the arrangements, foremost of amongst whom were Messrs. Cronch, Harpur, P. Brown, and Hoyer.

At 8 p.m., a banquet was served at Mrs. Hardy's hotel, which was also most satisfactory in every way, all present seeming to enjoy themselves most heartily, and the most perfect harmony reigning. The list of toasts comprised the usual loyal ones, and prosperity to Cobargo, gave a good opportunity for a little eloquence as to what Cobargo has obtained and what is still wanted.

In the evening an entertainment was given in Mrs. Hardy's Assembly-room, where a large number were agreeably entertained with music, songs, recitations &c. Mrs. Harpur, who has zealously worked to make this affair a success, and whose musical skill is considerable, performed some of her rarest selections on the piano, and this part alone would be worth visiting Cobargo to hear. The entertainment was a success, and the fund for the harmonium for the Catholic Church must have

received a substantial benefit. All returned to their homes well pleased with the day's amusements, and satisfied that the time had been well spent.

We have already described the bridge which has been erected by Mr. H. H. Worthing, under the superintendence of Mr. Road Superintendent Rodd, the approaches and earthworks having been put in place by Mr. P. Quinn. The timber is mostly from the Bermagui steam saw mills, Mr. Thomas

Moorhead's, the logs and square timber being of the best hard wood, and obtained close to Cobargo.

This ends the first "red letter" day for Cobargo, and the Government can surely now allow it a place on the map of the Colony, an honor that has hitherto been denied to our pushing little township on our main northern road."

COBARGO REMINISCENCES

'The Kiama Independent, and Shoalhaven Advertiser'

Tue 27 Jun 1882

At the christening of the Cobargo bridge recently, Mr. Tarlinton gave some very interesting reminiscences of the early history of Cobargo. He said he was the first white man who had set foot on the ground where Cobargo now stands; it was in February 1829, that he and three blacks first beheld the very pretty scenery of the valley and creek from the tableland. They descended with the three blacks, without who it was dangerous to travel as the then wild natives were supposed to be treacherous.

Reaching the creek they camped behind where Mr. J.J. O'Reilly's store now stands; seated around their camp fire in the evening at supper, and talking and laughing aloud (as bushmen will do) they had surprised a camp of natives a little further down the creek. The natives drew up to where our pioneers were, and were astonished to see a white man - a sight they had never seen before. Mr. Tarlinton's blacks understood some of the language of the

Cobargo blacks, and explained matters to them as well as they could, and friendly relations were soon established between them. Kangaroo and other game were hospitably offered and received, in return for which damper was offered and tasted, but rejected at once; they could not understand what it was. The gins, however, kept tasting the rejected damper until all began to relish it, and good fellowship was at once established between all parties.

Mr. Tarlinton looked well around and saw that he had made a valuable discovery. However, without taking any further notice, the party retraced their steps. Soon after that a station was formed in the direction of Bega. This was the commencement of Cobargo. In 1850 there were six or seven stations, which soon increased, until the passing of the new Land Act, and everybody knew what marked improvements have since then taken place in the lower end of the southern district.

" Bega Gazette,"

JOBS THAT NO LONGER EXIST



Life without a backspace?! We can't even imagine, but former linotype operators definitely can. These highly skilled workers used the linotype, a hot metal typesetting system, to produce the daily newspaper in the late 1880s. Phototypesetting was created in the early 1960s and rapidly replaced all operator positions.

OVER TO BURRAGATE

'The Bega District News'

1936

The editor of the "Bega District News" recently made his first visit to Burragate, lying between Wyndham and Towamba, and about 35 miles from Bega. We had been through that part in the early hours of



morning years ago, but actually had not seen it. The road from Bega turns off near Kanoona at what was years ago

Jingera Rock
Photo K Clery

the New Yards, and thence up past the homes of Messrs Nickle, Schuback, and the old Bright Hills property, on to the Candelo-Wolumla road. From there it leads through some of the finest properties in the Candelo district, such as Collingswood and Towrigee, on to and over the Myrtle Creek mountain. The road round the mountain is good, but there are many sharp turns. Near the foot of the mountain is the property some time ago acquired by Mr Harold Wiles, President of Imlay Shire, where great improvement has been made. Previously it had almost been abandoned to bracken fern and rabbits, but Mr Wiles has effected a transformation, clearing much of the land of bracken, getting the rabbits out, and improving the pasture, and generally turning a wilderness into a profitable farm. A magnificent view of the district is obtainable from points on the mountain, taking in the whole area, extending over Bega, Bemboka, Candelo, Kameruka, Numbugga, and Wolumla. with a large expanse of the ocean looking beyond Wolumla over the Black Range. The trip is well worthwhile for the view alone. Further on you come to the old sawmill conducted some time back by Mr Raynor, who has since transferred his operation to Bombala.

From Bega to the main road running from Pambula through Wyndham and on to the tableland, is 25 miles. To get on to the Burragate road you turn to the left—which, by the way, is anything but an easy turn—go down the Pambula road over the Honeysuckle bridge for a couple of miles, and then turning to the right, on to Burragate, 7 miles. The rabbit canning works, established with great expectations years ago, was on a site right opposite the turn-off to Burragate. No sign of the factory remains to-day, and I thought of the tenner (£10) I put into it, and which with the money

of many other people went west. Many will remember the opening of the factory at which I was present with others from Bega, and what hopes were entertained of turning the rabbit to profit. H a d t h e

management been all that it should have been the factory might have proved a success. As it was, it lasted

only a few months. The road out to Burragate is for some distance through forest country, and the rocky side of the Jingera mountain makes a striking landmark, especially with the western sun shining on it. Although this mountain is known as Jingera, the correct name is Jingo, which in the aboriginal language means "place of much death," the aboriginals believing that in the far distant past there had been a big landslip which buried many blacks, and left the mountain in its present state as if a slice had been cut off. Getting into the open country, I saw a fine-looking lot of sheep on one of the holdings. Further on you pass the old home of the late George Keys, situated on a high hill, and a long descent leads you to the village, which is situated on the eastern side of the river running through Burragate and on to Towamba, Kiah; and ultimately emptying into Twofold Bay.

The area on the opposite side of the river was years ago known as "Pussycat." Burragate is probably of aboriginal origin, but I do not know the meaning of it. Mr Mersey Ryan, a frequent visitor to Bega, has a nice property on the hill beyond the school, and further down the valley towards Towamba is the farm of the late Mr D. Binnie. Mr Ryan was telling me recently that he has some interesting relics of the early days, including a set of harrows and a plough made by the late Mr Harry Brown, of Bega, a churn made by the late Mr Shegog, and a cart made by the late Mr Quain, who all carried on business in Bega in the early days. There is a nicely-situated recreation ground at Burragate, lined by huge pine trees. The village lies in a valley surrounded by high hills and mountains, and one could not help admiring the grit and enterprise of the early settlers who went in there to carve out comfortable homes. From Burragate to Eden is 26 miles, and their produce had to be

carted there or to Merimbula over bush tracks. Today the roads are good, and Burragate's only need is a bridge over the river leading to Rocky Hall, and that hope is likely to be consummated in the near future. The village comprises a public hall, store (kept by one of the Ryan clan), post office, school, and a few private residences. The people have hopes of the Snowy River hydro scheme being established some day, and I understand that the main transmission line from Paupong to Twofold Bay will pass through Burragate. Towamba lies some miles further down the river. I met many of the younger people at the ball, and was impressed with their sturdiness and virility, and I almost felt ashamed to admit that it was the first occasion on which I had really visited that part. The people are agitating for a daily mail, service to Bega, which, with the advent of the motor car, has

come to be regarded as their main business centre, and the authorities might well consider giving better mail facilities to the people who dwell in the more isolated parts. I was well pleased with my visit, and hope to go again. A noticeable feature of the trip, both over and back, was that we did not a rabbit, but some dogs put up a fine hare on Towrigee as we were returning. With skins worth about 1s each, every rabbit that shows its head is a goner.

I met an old Bega boy over there in Mr Bert Underhill, who, after spending some time in Queensland, returned to Rocky Hall, and has made good on the land. Bert is looking forward to the time when he will return to Bega to live. His brothers Harry and Arthur are also over there. They are sons of the late Mr James Underhill, who purchased the old P. M. Sheehy property at Rocky Hall years ago.

GOLD IN "DEBIL DEBIL" MOUNTAIN, EDEN.

'The Evening News' Fri 16 Jan 1931

Residents of this district firmly believe that there is sufficient gold, molybdenite, and other precious minerals in the Jingera — "Debil Debil" — Mountain, Eden, to enrich the whole of the far South Coast.

Report of a recent discovery has thrown the district into a fever of excitement, and stories of the old days, when the Wolumla gold mines gave promise of being a second Mt. Morgan, have been revived.

Formation of Jingera Mountain is said to be similar to that of Queensland's Gold Mountain, and it is likely that a prospecting party will shortly brave the impenetrable mountain; a country in search of an "Eldorado".

Jingera at one time harboured a tribe of aborigines who, when a prospecting party, some years ago, showed them gold, replied that they knew where there was plenty of it.

But the superstitious natives believed the "mountain haunted" by evil spirits, they called it "Debil-Debil" Mountain and it was some time before they could be prevailed upon to conduct a party.

The aboriginal's however, deserted the whites on the first night of the march, and the gold still remains to be discovered.

The recent discoveries have given fresh hope to those who placed credence in the story of the now long dead tribe.

NATIVE NAMES IN THE SOUTH-EASTERN DISTRICT.

'The Sydney Mail and New South Wales Advertiser'

24 Apr 1907

According to the researches of the Department of Crown Lands, the meanings of place-names in the Monaro and Twofold Bay districts are as follow: —

- * 'Monaro,' a breast, so-called on account of the cone-shaped pinnacles on the plains in the district;
- * 'Murri' (Murray), make haste — there is much evidence that the river, in its upper reaches, was called by the aborigines 'Murri,' prior to receiving its official name from Captain Sturt, who called it after Sir George Murray, Secretary of State for the Colonies in 1828-30; Hamilton Hume, the discoverer of the Upper Murray, bestowed his own name on the stream in 1824;
- * 'Kiah', a beautiful place;
- * 'Cooma', a swamp or lake;
- * 'Numeralla', valley of plenty;

- * 'Murrumbidgee', a large water, plenty of water;
- * 'Jindabyne', a valley or gorge;
- * 'Myalla' (corrupted from 'Pyalla'), a big talk, something equivalent to a 'conference of Premiers';
- * 'Bunyan', the nesting-place, or rendezvous of pigeons;
- * Bimnul', an aboriginal cemetery, a place of burial;
- * 'Cobra', a large mountain;
- * 'Jingerah', a very large mountain, one difficult of ascent;
- * 'Towamba', or 'Terrambera', a place where much lightning had been seen;
- * 'Bombala', meeting of rivers;
- * 'Bibbenluke', the meeting of waters;
- * 'Bega', a large camping-ground;
- * 'Tathra', a wild cat.

Ursula's funeral was held at St. Joseph's Catholic Church in Merimbula on the 30th January, 2025.

Joan Brown gave the eulogy.

Good Morning. I'm Joan Brown and I'm representing the Bega Valley Genealogy Society today. On behalf of the Society I would like to convey the members of the Society's sympathy to Ursula's family and friends on her passing.

When Ursula and her husband Ian moved to Tura Beach Ursula became friendly with their neighbours Joe and Joyce Cowell. Joe and Joyce were members of the genealogy Society, Ursula had an interest in genealogy and joined our fledgling society. Little did she know what she was getting herself into.

At the following AGM in August 1992 Ursula was elected as treasurer and joined the committee. She remained a member of the committee until August 2024 - a total of 32 years.

After being treasurer for 3 years Ursula took on the role of librarian in 1995 and while fulfilling this role she also held the positions of President, Vice President and Secretary at various times.

The library was Ursula's calling. She could be found in the library every Tuesday - working in the morning and ready to help visitors with their research in the afternoon. Her white Corolla could be seen parked at the Courthouse at any time during the week.

Once she became librarian Ursula regularly updated the library catalogue after assessing new and donated books and technological resources. Many hours, often at home, were spent completing these tasks. Her knowledge of the library was unparalleled.

A library project was indexing. Ursula had a small band of helpers and she was always encouraging others to become part of her indexing team. Names of people found in local books have been indexed resulting in 7 volumes on the library's shelves full of local names, all cross referenced. This is an ongoing project that many local family researchers would benefit from. Ursula often travelled to Melbourne from Merimbula on the bus and the train. Not one to waste time, Ursula was known to work on an indexing project whilst travelling on the train.

Another library project was the Scrapbooks. Newspaper articles relevant to genealogy were



Ursula Hunt

collected from local Bega, Eden and Merimbula newspapers and glued into scrapbooks. The library has a collection of over 60 scrapbooks full of articles and photos about people. Each scrapbook was individually indexed and indexes were glued into the back of each scrapbook.

The Genealogy Society held seminars yearly and regular meetings except for the Covid years. Ursula often invited guest speakers to the Society's seminars and general meetings enabling members and visitors to continue learning and gaining knowledge in researching family history.

The kitchen was Ursula's second home after the library and she would often be found there whenever meetings or events were held by the Society. She took charge of the kitchen organising the food and refreshments. If she liked a plate of food that you contributed, it would be requested at the next seminar.

On 21st July, 2012 Bega Valley Genealogy Society members celebrated the 25 year anniversary of our Society from its beginnings in August 1987 at 'Thornleigh on Newtown' in Bega. Ursula, as President of the Society had organised the luncheon and presented Appreciation Certificates to a group of founding members for their support of the Society for 25 years. Many members attended and it was a very successful day.

Pat Raymond, a local historian and member of our Society is the author of *'Remembering Bega Valley Servicemen of World War 1 – Battlefield & War Related Deaths'*. Ursula's indexing skills came to the forefront and Pat describes the index she compiled as amazing. The index occupied 42 pages of the book and took Ursula months to complete. This book was published to mark the centenary of the First World War 1914 -1918 and was launched to a large audience and Ursula was again in the kitchen organising afternoon tea.

The Genealogy Society is a not for profit organisation and runs on the smell of an oily rag. It relies on its members to contribute their time and skills to offer the service we provide. Over the years Ursula was one of the team members involved in writing successful grant submissions. To enable the Society to publish the WW1 book we received grants from a number of organisations and were able to print 500 copies of the book. These books

were sold out and the book is now available digitally as an ebook.

John Liston, a local historian and author described Ursula's indexing skills as comprehensive, thorough and professional after she completed an index for his book '150 years of Catholic History in the Parish of Pambula' published in 2015. She volunteered to do this index and every name and place referred to in the book was recorded in the index. They were on a tight time schedule and Ursula completed this index in 2 days.

When the Genealogy Society was donated the Kameruka and Ayrdale Estate Records Ursula oversaw the digitising and indexing of the papers and photographs of these local properties. The Society held exhibitions in the Courtroom featuring these resources. Ursula participated in collating and displaying the wealth of historical and genealogical information the Society held on these properties. On the open days she would be found all day in the Courtroom talking to people about life at Kameruka or Ayrdale and their ancestry.

As librarian Ursula moved with the times and embraced technology. She efficiently used her computer skills to update the library's catalogue and other indexes. She was proficient at using microfiche and microfilm readers for research as well as internet sites including Births, Deaths and Marriages, Trove, Ancestry, Find My Past, Family

Search and British Newspaper Archives.

Her knowledge of the resources and her ability to find information that the Society holds about local families and communities for a visiting researcher was exceptional. Many visitors left happy and appreciative of her efforts.

To honour Ursula's long volunteer service to the Society and her retirement as librarian and committee member a lunch gathering was held at Oaklands on 25th September 2024.

Ursula welcomed visitors to the Genealogy Library with a warm smile and became "the face" of the Society to people in the community and further afield. As a volunteer, Ursula has put in hundreds of hours to the running of the Genealogy Society and the development of the library we have today. She has left a wonderful legacy for future family researchers in our local area. Ursula will be sadly missed by all of us as a hard working librarian, successful researcher and for her knowledge of the Genealogy Library.

Ursula often said she didn't have time to work on her own family history because she was too busy at the Genealogy Society. She was very interested in her finding out more about her unusual Spillard family name and writing the family history up. The Covid pandemic gave her the opportunity to do this and she said she had written up the family history and given each of the children a copy. A wonderful legacy to her family.

Q&A with Ursula Hunt 20 May 2022 re BVGS "narrative" for the booklet and Grants: (Excerpt)

Q: Why did you become a volunteer with the BVGS?

A: I had an interest in genealogy before leaving Melbourne. We moved here and heard that a genealogy society had just started as I discovered that my next door neighbours at Tura, Edwin and Joyce Cowell were founding members of the BVGS. I was pleased to join the society. At the next AGM they wanted a treasurer. It was a simple paperwork system so I became the treasurer and have been on the committee ever since. We were a younger group then; now 30 years older. It was a lot of work started with a great deal of enthusiasm. We had Court enactments taken from cases tried in court. Lorraine Hodgson compiled the court cases. The judge was an actor. People were involved with the courthouse. We had the battle to stop the courthouse getting into private ownership. We were the custodians of the courthouse. We lobbied the State Government and they responded. The government used to hold different sessions in different country towns. Police Department owned some and Government the other part of the courthouse. The courthouse gave their share to the Council. It was before computers.

Q: The importance to you of your volunteering work with the BVGS?

A: I also volunteered at Vinnies – had been doing for 30 years. I used to do Meals-on-Wheels but not now. Volunteered at the hospital too. Volunteering was about being involved and fulfilment. So much has changed in 30 years – what we take for granted now was quite new then. Used to get microfiche records through IGI – the 1881 census for England, Wales and Scotland. People contributed to part of the sections until eventually we had the whole collection. We had garage sales at the back of the courthouse with people bringing things to sell so this helped to build up our overseas microfiche records too to build a collection.

Q: The value of the volunteering work done for the Society?

A: Pat was the Research Officer. People indexed books with people are still helping to do this – surnames and Christian names. We type this up and put on a database with name of book, library number and people's name. Most of the books today are indexed – done by volunteers in the Society. They were very good. Family history was very much popular back then.

President's Report for June 2025

Dear Members,

Since February our focus has been on a much-needed cleanup and cleanout – an inward focus to include reviewing our systems and processes albeit slowly. The Magistrate's Room/reading room has been painted thanks to a donation by Rosemary Poole. So, as can be imagined, the books and shelving had to be removed and put back together again – what a mess – but what an achievement with an inviting space to do research and to read in! This was a wonderful team effort under the guidance of Librarian Lyn. The storeroom has been cleaned out with thanks to Joan.

The office cleanout is nearing completion, and the room will soon be painted. Joan and Rosemary have started sorting files and repairing filing systems in the Map Room.

The overall cleanout included many old and obsolete bits of equipment - computers, printers, scanners and other and furniture bits found here and there. A big thank you to Rod McIntyre for pick up and disposal – we learnt that a few items were recycled.

In May, computer #1 in the main library was replaced with a new computer that has allowed us to copy the very large data files of *Kameruka* and *Ayrdale* of 1+TB of data. This will be an efficient way in which to do research in these files as before they had to be copied from an external back-up that took hours to copy.

Since our February journal, Gail Gibson has resigned both from the committee and as volunteer Research Officer. We thank Gail for her many years of service to the BVGS.

In February we had a member's meeting in Bega where guest speaker, Ollie Hinde took us down memory lane with some amusing stories. On 27 April at our member's meeting at Pambula, our guest speaker was Rob Whiter, and his talk was about sleeper cutters of the region and beyond referencing his well-researched book *When the Chips are Down*. He still has copies for sale.

The May meeting of SEGHI was hosted by the BVGS and held in the Courthouse. It was largely attended by representatives of museums/historical societies from the Monaro, Cobargo, Bega, Merimbula and Eden. Committee members, Joan Brown and Liz McIntyre gave a talk on the history of the old Pambula Courthouse and Police Station along with some interesting stories of policing in the early days. Also, thank you to Pat Raymond for organising a display.

Joan Kelly, our new Museums' Advisor attended the SEGHI meeting. There is a welcome initiative with the forming of the Bega Valley Museum Advisory Group with their inaugural meeting to be held on Monday 26 May. I will represent BVGS.

As can be seen, the volunteer team has been busy. Once we complete our cleanup and cleanout program, we will be more outward focused – planning a seminar and other. But apart from the necessary inward focus, it has been business as usual. A big thank you to the committee and volunteers for their ongoing commitment and the vision we all share.

Please come by and discover what we have in our two library rooms.

Best wishes,
Shirley Sproats,
21 May 2025

Society News

Courtroom for Hire



The Courthouse is available for hire for meetings etc

Schools ½ day - \$20 Full Day - \$40
Anyone else ½ day - \$30 Full Day - \$50

Contact: Bega Valley Genealogy Society
Email: begagenealogy@bigpond.com
Phone: 02 64957794

Or The Secretary, P.O. Box 19 Pambula, NSW 2549



NEW MEMBERS

Maurice Godfrey	Chris Penglaze
Heather Penglaze	Coral Hunter
Graeme Day	Cheryl May
Lea Cowell	Larine Clarke
Deborah Martens	Robert Whiter
Rebecca Dawson	Jack Downey

Welcome to new members and successful researching.

The following are the Family History Societies which can be found on our Computer:

Camden, Casino, Central Coast, Colac, Echuca/Moama, North Queensland, Hawkesbury, Illawarra, Ipswich, Manning-Wallamba, Maryborough (Q), Milton-Ulladulla, Newcastle, Parramatta, Port Macquarie, Queensland FHS, Singleton, Sunshine Coast, Wyong, Young.

DO WE HAVE YOUR UP-TO-DATE CONTACT DETAILS?

If you are about to change your address, change your telephone number, email address etc. Please send your current details to our Membership Secretary shown on the inside front cover of this journal, or post to:
PO Box 19 Pambula NSW 2549

Telephone in BVGS Library

For the security of our volunteers, a telephone has been installed in the Main Room of our Library. The number is **02 6495 7794**. The phone will be answered by the Volunteer On Duty during regular opening hours. Members may use the phone (40c) but STD will not be available.



Only 100 Tickets !!

Bega Valley Genealogy Society Inc.

\$10 SILVER CIRCLE

We hope our members will participate once again, in one of the BVGS major fundraisers.

Held over a period of 10 weeks.

Winning Number each week taken from the last two digits of the **First \$2 Lottery**. Winning numbered ticket, drawn every week at the NSW Lottery.

SILVER CIRCLE DRAW 2025

8 Draws of \$ 20.00

5th Draw of \$ 50.00

10th Draw of \$100.00

The first draw will be 6th **October 2025**.

The Committee would like to thank all our members who took part in our Silver Circle Draw for 2024.

We hope our members will participate once again, in one of the BVGS major fundraisers.

Members can purchase tickets when paying their memberships for 2025 - 2026 year, as it is included on the membership renewal form.

We must sell a third of the tickets to cover our prizes, which we do. We hope our members will participate once again in the 2025 draw.



The Silver Circle Draw will be available again in our June Journal 2025.

Tickets are also available for purchased at the Old Pambula Court House – research room. Winners will be notified.

All you wanted to know about the history of the Towamba Valley and surrounding areas, NSW

This website is archived with the National Library of Australia



www.towambavalleyhistory.webhive.com.au

LIBRARY NEWS June 2025

by Lyn Ryan Librarian

In early March a meeting was held for any member to attend who was either a current volunteer or anyone wanting to volunteer in the near future. The discussion focused on issues that current volunteers have and these ranged from using equipment in our library, having clear instructions for equipment use and organising some training in these items.

We have vacancies on our library roster, and unfortunately, we have had to remain closed on our scheduled library times occasionally. If you have an interest in helping out on the roster please contact me. A couple of new volunteers have started 'learning the ropes' and other people are helping to make up scrap books and indexing. Some of these jobs are able to be done at home, so if anyone would like to help in any way, please let me know.

New Acquisitions

Family History Biographies

A Mavis Singing – The Story of an Australian Family (Wauchope family)	by Cherry Cordner	Z4.WAU.01
Jerrawa – The Village That Was – the Bush Family	by Rosalie Bush	AN7.01.99

Australia

The Life & Death of An Australian Soldier in World War One – Sergeant James Gordon S/N 1090	by John Phillips	Z4.GOR.3
The Crimes of the Lady Juliana Convicts -1790	by John Cobley	A5.50.28

NSW

"Would Have Known It From The Smell" Ella Hiscocks, the Matron of Cootamundra Domestic training Home For Aboriginal Girls	by Anna Cole	Z7.06.76
The Rocks, Sydney by Unk White & Olaf Ruken		AN7.01.98
Pioneers of the Lachlan, Murrumbidgee & County King pre 1860		AN7.01.100

Local

"Why Redfern Close?"	Donated and compiled by Gary Vale	Z8.PAM.69
Minutes Folder of Sapphire Aquatic Centre		Z8.PAM.70
Newspaper Articles about Sapphire Aquatic Centre		Z8.PAM.71
Conservation of Documents		A2.24.01
From the Foothills Spring 1993		Z8.FSC.52
St Joseph's Candelo 1875-2025		Z8.CAN.33
Sleeper Cutting In Australia "When the Chips are Down" by Robert Whiter		Z8.EDE.77
River Oaks, Green Willows & Young Corn – A Brief History of the Bega Jockey Club	by Ray James & Jim Gordon	Z8.BEG.104
175 Years of Pambula Public School		Z8.PAM.72

Overseas

"Fair Delinquents?" Irish Famine Orphans of Colonial Bathurst & Beyond	by L C Blair & P McIntyre	R5.41.05
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OUR LIBRARY DESPERATELY NEEDS YOUR HELP CAN YOU HELP FOR JUST ONE HOUR A WEEK, A FORTNIGHT OR EVEN A MONTH?

* Two hours or more would be wonderful but every little helps. The absolute peak would be to come on as a Library volunteer – serving 3 hours at a certain time each month. Many of our opening times have just one person on duty and this does not allow for holidays, sickness etc.

* Most of these jobs would need to be done at the library but indexing can be done at home. If you could transfer this index to the computer it would be even better, but not necessary.

CAN YOU BE RESPONSIBLE FOR:-

* Keeping one section of the Library shelves in order. It is amazing just how often books love to change places. A list could be kept of any missing books.

* Bundling up old journals – so they can be moved to make room for overcrowded shelves. When space is made available, moving books from one section to another.

Sunday 29th June 2025

GENERAL MEETING 2.00pm at the Red Cross Rooms, 33 Church St. Bega.

Lyn Darmody will be our guest speaker and will tell the story of her direct line ancestor, William Waterson – silk weaver and convict - who arrived in Australia in 1827 at the age of 17. He came to Bega via Limestone Plains – present day Canberra – then Bibbenluke and onto Bega.

Afternoon tea will be served and there will be a raffle.

Sunday 31st August 2025

AGM MEETING: 2.00pm at the Old Pambula Courthouse & Police Station, 42 Toallo Street, Pambula

Guest speaker will be Michelle Richmond and her presentation will be on the Pambula Avenue of Honor along the Princes Hwy, Pambula.

Afternoon tea will be served and there will be a raffle.

Sunday 23rd October 2025

GENERAL MEETING: 2.00pm at the Old Pambula Courthouse & Police Station, 42 Toallo Street, Pambula

Guest speaker to be M. Davidson and his presentation will be on the Davidson Family.

Afternoon tea will be served and there will be a raffle.

VISITORS WELCOMED

SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

PUBLICATIONS:

- * **BOOK 1:** - Monumental Inscriptions, Known Graves and War Memorials in the Bega Valley Shire, covering Bega, 400 pages of information, maps and photographs. **Price \$90.00 plus p&p.**
- * **BOOK 2:-** Monumental Inscriptions, Known Graves and War Memorials in the Bega Valley Shire, covering Bondi, Boydtown, Eden, Greencape, Kiah, Lochiel, Nangutta, Rocky Hall, Timbillica, Towamba, Wangarabell, Wonboyn, Wyndham and Yambulla and Yowaka. **Price \$50.00 plus p&p.**
- * **BOOK 3:** - Monumental Inscriptions, Known Graves and War Memorials in the Bega Valley Shire, covering Candelo, Kameruka, Merimbula, Pambula, Tantawanglo, Wolumla, Yowaka and some small burial sites. **Price \$55.00 plus p&p.**
- * **BOOK 4:** - Monumental Inscriptions, Known Graves and War Memorials in the Bega Valley Shire, covering Bemboka, Bermagui, Cobargo, Quaama and some isolated graves in Bemboka and Brogo. **Price \$50.00 p&p**
Cemeteries, War memorials & Honour Rolls in the Bombala Council Area.
- * **BOOK 1:** - Bombala. **Price \$50.00 plus p&p.**
- * **BOOK 2:** - Aston, Bibbenluke, Cathcart, Currawong, Craigie, Delegate, Mount Cooper & Tombong. **Price \$45.00 plus p&p.**
- * **Bega Valley Pioneer Register Pre-Federation** Now Available as a PDF - Price \$20
- * **Remembering Bega Valley Servicemen of World War 1** – Battlefield & War Related Deaths by Pat Raymond. Now Available as an E book or PDF - Price \$20. Order on Line at www.bvgenealogy.org

Order on Line at www.bvgenealogy.org

All publications are available for purchase at the Society's **Library and Research Centre, Old Pambula Courthouse, Cnr. Monaro & Toalla Streets, Pambula, 2549**
or by mail on application to: **PO Box 19, Pambula 2549.**

Please add for postage and packing:

Under \$40.00 – cost \$5.00: \$40.00 cost - \$10.00: Over \$40.00 – cost \$13.00



The original road into Bega that crossed the Bega River at the bottom end of Auckland Street.
Photo: State Library of NSW. No Date

TO:

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