

Coal River Working Party Meeting

1st July, 2013 1:00pm – 3:00pm

University Council Board Room, IDC Building, University Drive

Minutes

Start: 1:00

1. **Welcome to Country:** Acknowledgement of Country by Gionni di Gravio
2. **Present:** Gionni di Gravio (chair), Ann Hardy (minute-taker), Ron Barber, Lesley Gent, Jane Ison, Brian Roach, Maree Shilling, Ken Shilling, Russell Rigby, Doug Lithgow, Keith Parsons, Peter Sherlock, Julianne Tilse, Sue Effenberger, Robert McLardy, Anthony Scully, Professor Howard Dick, Charles Martin, Robert Watson, Coralie Watson, Louise le Raux, Julie Squires, Paul Walsh.

Apologies: Professor Maree Gleeson, Cynthia Hunter, Kerrie Brauer, John Waring, Ben Greaves, Dene Hawken, Nola Hawken, Marilla North, Sarah Cameron, Emeritus Professor John Fryer, Ruth Cotton, Bob Jones

3. **Confirmation of Previous Minutes:** The minutes for 3rd June 2013 was adopted by Ron Barber and seconded – Julianne Tilse.

4. **Business arising from previous minutes:**

- a) **Macquarie Pier Project- (Gionni di Gravio)** - Gionni informed that there had been two applicants interested in the archaeological brief, one has been selected and informed that they were successful. **ACTION-** Gionni di Gravio to update committee regularly.

5. **Presentations- update computer Models of Coal River (Charles Martin)**

- a. **Ken Shilling- Early Newcastle photograph search** – Ken gave an overview of the development of photography in NSW. The development included:-

- Daguerreotype (1839), a highly polished metal sheet, one off process.
- Collotype (1841) unlimited copies could be made.
- Collodion (1851) negatives on glass
- Ambrotype (1851) thin negative on glass backed with a lacquer or bleach.

The earliest photographers in Newcastle were George Barron Goodman (1846), John Rae (1847) JW Newland (1848) Elijah Hart (1854) Mrs Dewey (1862). The earliest photograph taken in Australia was of a Sydney Street scene on the 13th May 1841 by Captain Lucas 'a

traveler'. It is unknown when the earliest photograph of Newcastle was taken, could possibly be one taken of Christ Church.

Russell Rigby & Ann Hardy – Historic photograph research. Russell Rigby spoke about the Holtermann Collection held at the Mitchell library. There are 230 'plates' in the collection 'Album of photographs of Sydney & country New South Wales, ca. 1871/ American & Australian Photographic Company' (PXA 933). These include Nobbys Newcastle, view of Christ Church graveyard, Bonded Store, and a photo of the railway at port for coal loading. These are wonderful images showing what existed in Newcastle during the 1870s and 1880s. Images available on-line

<http://acms.sl.nsw.gov.au/album/albumView.aspx?acmsID=420926&itemID=991197>

Ann Hardy showed some photographs found at the Mitchell Library (PXA 365 VOL 4, Photographs of Sydney, Melbourne 1870-1880, Holtermann). These are some of the earliest photographs Ann has seen of Newcastle, dated from the early 1870s. The sand hills are shown before buildings in Newcastle East, another from Christ Church cathedral showing businesses in the old market place. Another is of offices in location of later Newcastle railway station. Robert Watson pointed out the time ball in the location of Customs House (prior to it being built). In another album a photograph was located of what is either Ferdinand Bauer's original artwork of Newcastle (1804), or the tracing of the original artwork that was completed in the 1860s. Written under the photograph is "Newcastle N.S.Wales – from a sketch by Lewin in the early days of the colony. The original is in the Colonial Institute: London." (Note: reference to Lewin probably incorrect). (PXA561 "Drawings of Major's Creek." In *Author Philip Parker King*. Sydney: State Library of NSW, 1852-1858).

- b. **Anthony Scully (1233ABC radio) Here and Now Project** – Anthony spoke about 'ABC Open' and goal to teach people to tell stories, provide a platform for the community. There will be an exhibition *Now and Then* at the Lovett Gallery in Newcastle from August 16-October 6 and members of the CRWP are welcome to come along. <https://open.abc.net.au/projects/now-and-then-series-2-44un7gn#/discover> He showed a video and how Maitland History Society has been involved in 'What's your Story' contributing to documenting the changes in the Hunter. A member of the CRWP Russell Rigby has two images in the exhibition, and will feature in a contributor's panel about using the 'Now and Then' photography technique to tell a story.

An invitation was extended to the CRWP :

- attend the official opening Friday 6 September, 6:30pm
- participation in a panel at Newcastle City Library
- to be part of a community engagement opportunity, between Lost Newcastle Facebook Group (8000+ members), ABC Open and CRWP

6. Reports and Updates:

a) Update Yirannali: The Quiet Project (Paul Walsh & Julie Squires) – Paul and Julie gave an update on the Quiet Project (a sculpture reflecting the association between Birabahn and Rev Threlkeld). The artwork will be at Newcastle South Beach (Yirannali). The project proposes two small pieces of Crown land, one for the life sized sculpture and interpretation of Birabahn and the other for a community garden. The concept is to bring openness to the place, and have a dedicated area for quiet reflection, and ‘replanting a shared future together’. Paul advised that he was very grateful that Julie Squires had accepted role at artistic director, she has significant experience in collaborating with Aboriginal communities, particularly in the Northern Territory. Paul envisages that the project will proceed in a quiet and reflective way, quiet networking with members of the community to devise ideas. By working through ideas this will bring different individuals and groups together, with the end result a ‘community in unity’. The Mulubinba (sea fern) was discussed; Julie-anne Tilse provided some feedback about the plant, that it may have grown in rivers and around islands. It is difficult to say whether it referred to bracken fern that grew on coastal lands, or ferns of the sea. Further discussion included:

- Robert Watson suggestion that the Yamuloong Aboriginal Centre at Garden Suburb may be able to shed more light on the origins of Mulubinba, that the fern may have been common near Swansea.
- Gionni i Gravio advised that Threlkeld first described the fern as a flower (1801) after a meeting with Birabahn, later referred to edible root of fern, or yam. Different groups may have had different names for the fern.
- Howard Dick asked about the use of new technology in interpretation, creating a soundscape, however Julie advised that maintenance is often problematic.

Support is needed to compile a document for contributors to better understand the landscape. Members of the CRWP may be able to survey available visual sources of Newcastle South Beach to be provided to artistic team.

b) Appeal to have Nobbys Whibayganba a Historic Site (Doug Lithgow) - Doug Lithgow raised the issue of impacts to Nobbys headland if the port of Newcastle is leased. **ACTION** – Doug Lithgow to update next meeting.

9) Close: 3:00

Date of next meeting: Monday, 5th August, 2013 in the IDC Building, 1-3pm.

'Stop Press'

1. **John Waring (Newcastle Now)** - We are expecting our 75,000th visitor to the site since it first opened for public access in Feb 2011 which is a great result. The site is now open each Sunday from 10.00am to 4.00pm. We were successful in obtaining a CAP funding grant from the City of Newcastle Council which is being used to upgrade the existing historical photos and interpretive signage within the Signal Masters cottage. Additionally there will be internal photographs of the Nobbys Lighthouse itself along with interpretive signage placed in the vicinity of the lighthouse as we do get many requests/comments that people would like to see inside the lighthouse.
2. **Newcastle Chronicle on Trove** - Dr Nancy Cushing has informed that the Newcastle Chronicle (1867-76) is now on Trove and can be viewed at:
<http://trove.nla.gov.au/ndp/del/rss/title/New%20South%20Wales/354>