

Coal River Working Party Meeting

2nd September, 2013 1:00pm – 3:00pm

University Council Board Room, IDC Building, University Drive

Minutes

Start: 1:00

1. **Welcome to Country:** Acknowledgement to Country by Gionni di Gravio.

2. **Present:** Gionni di Gravio (chair), Ann Hardy (minute-taker), , Sarah Cameron, Ron Barber, Lesley Gent, Maree Shilling, Ken Shilling, Keith Parsons, Julianne Tilse, Charles Martin, Howard Dick.

Apologies: Professor Maree Gleeson, Kerrie Brauer, Jane Ison, Cynthia Hunter, , Dene Hawken, Nola Hawken, Robert Watson, Sue Effenberger, Brian Roach, Emeritus Professor John Fryer, Doug Lithgow, Coralie Watson, Russell Rigby, Brian Walsh, Marilla North, Bob Jones, Ruth Cotton,

3. **Confirmation of Previous Minutes:** The minutes for 5thAugust 2013 was adopted by Ron Barber and seconded – Ken Shilling.

4. **Business arising from previous minutes:**
 - a) **Historic Photographs (Ken Shilling)** - Ken advised that he has found three other photographers who worked in Newcastle during the second half of the 1800s. These are Hutchinson, Pedigrew, and Greenham.

 - b) **Fort Scratchley Plan of Management (Ann Hardy)** - At the last meeting members of the CRWP supported that the new plan of management for Fort Scratchley should incorporate priorities set out in *Coal River Conservation and Cultural Tourism Management Plan* (Pizzey Plan) and national heritage values of the place. There is an opportunity for the working party to comment on the draft plan when on public exhibition in October 2013.

Action 1 -To have the Coal River Precinct (including Fort Scratchley) placed on the National Heritage List.

Action 2- Recognise & promote national heritage values of Fort Scratchley

Action 3- Implement interpretation strategies that show the association the fort has with other historic sites within Coal River.

Action 4- Implement the Newcastle Sky Canons interpretation concept that integrates a number of historic sites within Coal River.

Action 5- Seek funding opportunities from Commonwealth Government to enhance cultural heritage of the fort and the Coal River Precinct.

There is currently a National Nomination (Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain) being considered by the Commonwealth, it was submitted by the CRWP to the Dept. of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities in Feb 2013. This nomination also includes Fort Scratchley.

5. Presentations-

- a) **Computer Models of Coal River (Charles Martin)** – Charles has been working on computer modelling of early Newcastle. Various historic paintings have been analysed and interpreted to build further detail in the computer modelling. Interpretation of various Lycett, Wallis and Preston have been undertaken. The Convict Lumber Yard had a saw pit, coal storage area and Charles would like more visual sources if anyone knows of any. Much detail of the houses in the settlement has now been included and works by Edward Close have been particularly useful, for example the image of Government House shows a lot of the features of the house. Charles has also developed views from different aspects of the settlement, such as Flagstaff Hill. The computer modelling is a work in progress, tells story of the development of the settlement through visual images. Howard Dick suggested that it would be good to show what existed between the water and the land, such as the swamp near Kooragang. Might be helpful to also show where the marshes were in the river and towards Hexham swamp, estuary, ecology etc. AH suggested Peter Stevens may be able to assist in this area. Julianne Tilse mentioned that the mudflat ecology is significant, there was a lot of silt and may have been there for a long time.

6. Reports and Updates:

- a) **Macquarie Pier Project- (Gionni di Gravio)** - Gionni draft report GPRS pier preliminary findings show that there was something about 1 metre down, although inconclusive, can only be fully verified using a test trench. Archaeologist Tim Adams from Umwelt ad Kerry Grant met Sarah Cameron and Gionni at the Pier to discuss ways to progress this CRWP project, possible excavation. Need a official meeting to talk about progress, drill rather than dig may be the strategy. \$10, 000 has been spent, anything further will be a community and volunteer support. Gionni also met with Peter Lovett who recalls another monument that was at the pier in the early 1960s. It is quite an interesting story, and although initially believed to have been associated with the foundation, Peter's description is likely to refer to free standing rock that had a metal in-scripted plaque, possibly a council initiative. The link to this story can be found at Gionni also read out an interesting newspaper article that was recently found on Trove that described Macquarie Pier construction in 1827. **ACTION:** Send the 1827 newspaper article to members of the CRWP. Gionni also advised that Les Reedman's thesis 'The work of Frederick Menkens, Architect 18855-1910' has been digitalised and is available. Also there is a video is available on Cultural Collections blog of Brian Suters' talk on Menkens at <http://uoncc.wordpress.com/2013/09/17/local-treasures-frederick-menkens/>
- b) **(Ann Hardy) National Trust, National Nomination** – Ann advised that she had spoken to the Nominations Manager at the Commonwealth Dept. of Dept. of Sustainability, Environment, Water, Population and Communities about the National nomination that had been submitted earlier in the year. At present there is no news, mostly due the upcoming election and government being in care taker mode. Ann will contact the Dept. again in November.
- c) **Update from City of Newcastle (Sarah Cameron)** – The Cathedral Park Project has been delayed because of the work happening in Laman Street, however will commence very shortly. Fort Scratchley workshop Draft Plan of Management will be ready for public comment in Oct 2013 and Sarah again thanked members of the CRWP who had contributed to the process. Sarah also advised that the Star Hotel development has been approved, the Heritage Impact Statement (HIS) provides a good overview of the history of the site and early use as a drinking establishment. The development to reuse buildings rather than demolish is a favourable outcome, and has been approved and adopted by council. **ACTION** –The Chair requested a copy of the HIS and congratulated all those involved in a positive outcome for heritage.

Finally, Newcastle East Public School will be having their 200 year anniversary in 2016, at present the school community is undertaking fundraising efforts, sculpture competition, and there is a colonial fair coming up in October where some of the historic records will be on display.

7. General Business

- a) **Fort Scratchley (Ron Barber)**- Ron advised that a photo of the fort recently located at the Mitchell Library (Hyde Albums) shows that the location of the signals on Signal Hill, this was before they were moved to Nobbys headland. From this photo future exploration of location of metal base may be possible, as photo shows it to be further to the north. The 6 inch Guns will fire on the October long weekend at 11am, 1pm & 3pm & our 2 Pound Cannon will be fired at 10.30am, 11.30am, 12.30pm, 1.30pm & 2.30pm. Thanks to the Port Corporation who have donate \$3000 towards the fort activities. A large sized engraving by Calvert (1875) in possession of Fort Scratchley historical society and will be displayed in the Commandants Cottage at the fort.
- b) **Hunter Heritage Network AGM**- Sarah Cameron invites members of the CRWP to the Hunter Heritage Network's upcoming 2012/13 AGM will be held on Sunday 29 September at 11am. A BBQ lunch for those wishing to stay will follow. **Action**- Ann Hardy will forward further details. Blog site for the Hunter Heritage Network <http://hunterheritagenetwork.org/>
- c) The Chair also thanked the Tom Farrell Institute for their ongoing support to CRWP, this is greatly appreciated.

8. Close: 3:00

Date of next meeting: Monday, 14th October, 2013 in the IDC Building, 1-3pm.

<http://coalriver.wordpress.com/2013/09/11/the-life-and-times-of-macquarie-pier/>

