

Coal River Working Party Meeting

5th November, 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, Maree Shilling, Ken Shilling, Keith Parsons, Charles Martin, Brian Roach, Russell Rigby, Doug Lithgow, Jane Ison, Marilla North, Emeritus Professor John Fryer

Apologies: Professor Maree Gleeson, Kerrie Brauer, Dene Hawken, Nola Hawken, Robert Watson, Sue Effenberger, Coralie Watson, Brian Walsh, Bob Jones, Ruth Cotton, Howard Dick, Cynthia Hunter

3. **Confirmation of Previous Minutes:** The minutes for 14th October 2013 was adopted by Maree Shilling and seconded – Ron Barber.

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

5. **Presentations-**

- a) **Computer Models of Coal River (Charles Martin)** – Charles updated the CRWP with a presentation of computer modelling of early Newcastle. He is currently adding detail to buildings including, the Convict Lumber Yard (CLY) and would appreciate any information associated with terms relating to the CLY or other buildings in the area as the time. SC advise that Damaris Bairstow produced two reports relating the CLY that may be helpful. Doug Lithgow also advised that stone from the old wharf at the end of Watt Street was excavated in the 1980s and relocated to Fort Scratchley, now used as the base for the anchor there. There is no interpretation of the significance of the stone and it is important that information is documented and passed on the Fort Scratchley Historical Society aware. Gionni advised that Jeff Julian from University of Newcastle has worked

in area of animation in the USA, he has been in touch with Charles and may be able to offer some support and advice.

6. Reports and Updates:

- a) **Dual naming for Newcastle places- (Gionni di Gravio)** – Gionni welcomed Tim Adams Senior Archaeologist at Umwelt (Australia) Pty Ltd to the CRWP. Tim has offered to assist Kerry Grant on the Macquarie Pier archaeological project. Gionni advised that the problem with investigations is that there really any way of knowing what is being located until assessment afterwards. While the ground penetrating radar (GPR) results proved inconclusive and disappointing, the electrical resistivity tomography (ERT) found evidence of a structure of possible human construction around 1 metre below the surface. On the day of investigations the electrical resistivity tomography (ERT) captured the better shot. The draft results have provided some hope. On the 25th October members the University of Newcastle met on site with archaeologists Tim Adams and Kerrie Grant from RPS (Australia & Asic Pacific) to discuss archaeological research design. The team will take it on as a community project. Kerry is going to organise a meeting between Sarah Cameron (NCC) and members CRWP to discuss the next stage in the archaeological investigations. Further information about results can be found on the CRWP blog. <http://coalriver.wordpress.com/2013/10/23/university-researchers-one-step-closer-to-father-of-australia/>
- b) **National Nomination – (Gionni di Gravio)** - Gionni advised that he had received a letter via Prof Erik Eklund from Nigel Routh (Department of the Environment) to advise that the National Nomination for Coal River was unsuccessful. Gionni responded to the letter by writing to Minister Greg Hunt the Minister for the Environment about Newcastle being written out of the Australian story. Both letters are available on the Coal River blog. Sarah Cameron advised it is important that nomination addresses national heritage criteria and suggested that the nomination be reworked. Other suggestions was for a delegation to meet with the Minister to discuss the nomination. <http://coalriver.wordpress.com/2013/10/31/newcastle-rejected/>
- c) **Prof Penny Russell’s visit to Newcastle – (Gionni di Gravio)** Gionni pointed out the increasing interest by academics in the region’s history. Recently eminent Australian historian Prof Penny Russell gave a presentation titled “Death on a River: Honour and

Violence in early New South Wales” exploring the alleged killing of an Aboriginal child by white men in the Hunter Valley. The presentation was held in the Auchmuty Library’s Cultural Collections. Prior to the presentation Gianni and Ann Hardy lead Prof Russell on a quick tour of historic sites of Newcastle, including King Edward Park, the Bogey Hole, Coal River Precinct and the old gaol site.

- a) **(Ann Hardy) National Trust** – Ann advised that The Hunter Regional Committee of the National Trust AGM is on Sunday 23 November, 11am at Grossmann House at Maitland. All are welcome. Also the National Trust Heritage Festival theme for 2014 is 'Journeys' and will run from 14 April to 26 May 2014. Groups are encouraged to consider organising an event. Events will be published in printed brochures if groups register before closing date in early December 2013. Later registrations will mean that events are published on-line on the NT website. Further information is at <http://www.nationaltrust.org.au/vic/HeritageFestival2014>
Doug Lithgow suggested that a river cruise up the Hunter River to Morpeth could be an interesting event for the CRWP, showcasing history from the perspective of the river.
- b) **Update from City of Newcastle (Sarah Cameron)** – Sarah advised that several plans are on public exhibition. There are the draft Heritage Strategy 2013-17 *Fort Scratchley Plan of Management* and *Newcastle Sports Ground Plan of Management*. They are on Public exhibition during November and December –submissions are invited. The plan are on council’s website or follow these links:
Heritage Strategy
http://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0009/232488/Heritage_Strategy_2013-2017.pdf
Fort Scratchley PoM
http://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0018/232407/Fort_Scratchley_PoM_v3.pdf
- d) **Trust Fund- (Marilla North)** - Marilla provided members with a 3 page handout regarding the Trust she is establishing at the University. Marilla spoke about the legacy of her parents Evadne and Mark North who both had specific interests in aspects of Newcastle and the Hunter. Evadne was interested in conservation, landscape painting, education of disadvantaged groups and performing arts, whilst her father Mark had interests in mining, the township of Greta, Maitland Boys High and engineering. He was also very interested in migration histories associated with the coal fields. Marilla spoke of

possible projects that could be undertaken. These include archival research-based projects, restoration of historical sources, and digitalization of primary sources, collaborative cultural endeavors that reflect settler and indigenous histories, conferences, multi-media production. Other suggestion included a 'Coal river' film festival.

7. General Business

- a) ABC open object stories project** - Anthony Scully from ABC Open has invited members of the CRWP to take part in the Object stories project. The project involves telling a story about an object that has significance to Australia. Anthony is offering a workshop to members of the CRWP some time in either February, March or April 2014. The workshop will include further discussion about the project, tips on writing up stories and photographing objects. **ACTION:** Several members advised that they are interested in attending workshop. Ann Hardy to contact Anthony to arrange a workshop date in the New Year. For further discussion at February meeting.

8. Close: 3:00

Date of next meeting: Monday, 2nd December, 2013 in the IDC Building, 1-3pm.