

Coal River Working Party Meeting

3rd March, 2014 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.

Present: Gionni di Gravio (chair), Ann Hardy (minute-taker), Ron Barber, Maree Shilling, Ken Shilling, Keith Parsons, Charles Martin, Brian Roach, Russell Rigby, Doug Lithgow, Jane Ison, Julianne Tilse, Howard Dick, Sue Effenberger, Lesley Gent, Damien Egan, Tim Adams, Bronwyn Law, Anne Creevey.

Visitors Present : Andrew Dodd, Faye Dodd, Pamela Goodheart-Dodd.

Apologies: Professor Maree Gleeson, Emeritus Professor John Fryer, Brian Walsh, Kerrie Brauer, Bob Jones, John Waring, Marilla North, Sarah Cameron, Ruth Cotton, Robert Watson, Ben Greaves, Dene Hawken, Nola Hawken, Kerry Grant.

3. **Confirmation of Previous Minutes:** The minutes for 3rd February 2014 was adopted by Howard Dick and seconded – Julianne Tilse.

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

- a) At the last meeting Brian Roach suggested that Charles Martin should be nominated for NBN/Herald local heroes' award. Brian R has contacted Herald and is waiting for a response. Moved by Brian R and seconded by Howard D that the CRWP contact NBN television to consider the video fly throughs and invite Andrew Lobb to next CRWP meeting. Brian R, Howard D and Charles M to liaise regarding a media release.

5. **Presentations-**

- b) **Presentation of Family Album –(Andrew Dodd & Pamela Goodheart-Dodd)** Andrew and Pamela gave a wonderful overview of their family photo album created by their

ancestor George John Freeman (1843-1895) who came to Australia in 1857. He brought with him from England photographic apparatus, and later set up a photographic studio in Adelaide. Freeman was skilled photography using creative techniques, he often did panoramas, and double portraits were his specialty. Members of the CRWP discussed the photographs and some of them were more accurately dated due to certain architectural features being identified. There were Freeman Bros in Newcastle, however were no relation to George Freeman. The George Freeman Album will be discussed further on ABC1233 Local Treasures later in March, however there are notes and information available on the UoN Cultural Collections blog.

<http://uoncc.wordpress.com/2014/03/03/george-freeman/> Many thanks to Pamela and Andrew for sharing their family album.

- c) **'Newcastle Now' Nobbys Lighthouse project update (John Waring)**- (Unfortunately John was unable to attend meeting but forwarded a report that was read out by Ann Hardy)

In December 2013, Newcastle NOW continued their management of the Nobbys Lighthouse site when an agreement was reached with the Port Corporation to manage the site for another 12 months. Since the site was first opened for public access some 3 years ago over 97,000 people have visited the site, which is impressive considering that the site is only open each Sunday from 10.00am to 4.00pm. Activities conducted at the site to date include;

- * Wedding ceremonies and receptions
- * Wedding photographs
- * Photograph and film hiring
- * School excursions
- * Exhibitions -photography and artwork
- * Corporate events
- * Private celebrations and work functions
- * Funeral celebrations
- * Cruise ship visit openings
- * Small workshops

Recent improvements to the site include the installation of historical photographs and interpretive signage (courtesy of a Newcastle CAP funding grant) and the installation of the Victoria Lifeboat Sculpture on the walkway up to the top of the hill.

Recently Newcastle NOW signed an agreement with the Corrective Services Department which will allow us to complete the clean-up and refurbishment of the three cottages on the site. At present one of the cottages which were partly refurbished 3 years ago is used

as an exhibition space and hired out for small events. The remaining two cottages are in a considerable state of disrepair having all the ceilings removed and showing long periods of occupation by vermin (mainly pigeons). No access is permitted to these cottages due to those conditions.

Late in February 2014 Newcastle NOW signed an agreement with the Corrective Services Department which will give us a workforce of their clients who are required to complete community service hours as a result of minor offences. This will enable us to complete the full repair and restoration of all the cottages onsite to a level so that there will be full public access to all the cottages on site and the lawns and gardens will receive a restoration as well. This workforce will have their own supervisor and be under the control of Newcastle NOW's licensed works supervisor and Newcastle NOW board member Kris Leck who will be the overall project manager. At the recent media launch announcing the agreement a number of the offenders were present and on speaking to them I found that they were all excited about the opportunity to be working on such a worthwhile community project in a fantastic location.

The work required is mainly labour intensive and will consist of initial clean-up, minor repairs, painting, sanding and roof repairs. A number of Newcastle businesses are supporting the project including the Master Builders Association, Newcastle Home Timber and Hardware, Dulux, Saddingtons, NHS and Kennards. All work carried out will be internal and no structural changes of any sort will be carried out. The exterior will be repainted in its present colour palette ensuring that there will be no visual changes to its current presentation.

Our intention in the short term is to initially commence opening every Saturday and Sunday for full public access, with the assistance of volunteers and then eventually to a situation where the site is open on a daily basis with the possibility of a simple kiosk onsite.

Regarding "ownership" of the site in the future, Newcastle NOW does not have a set position on this subject at this stage but we are working hard to position ourselves as the leading contender to manage the Nobbys Lighthouse site on behalf of whoever the new owner/s may be.

Newcastle NOW is very excited to be a part of this extremely worthwhile community project which we feel is an opportunity of a lifetime to restore the site to its former glory, opening it up to more opportunities whilst maintaining and improving public access.

How you can help - At present we have enough volunteers to enable us to open the site each Sunday who assist our employed site manager to ensure the safety of the public, answer the many and varied visitor enquiries and distribute information about upcoming activities throughout Newcastle. We are actively recruiting additional volunteers especially those with who have a strong historical interest so that we can move forward with our plans to open both Saturday and Sunday of every weekend.

The standard volunteer shifts are either 10.00am to 1.00pm or 1.00pm to 4.00pm once a month on a set date eg 1st Sunday of each month from 10.00am to 1.00pm, this shift can be changed as circumstances dictate as long as notice is given beforehand. If you are interested or are able to distribute this information to any of your contacts who may be interested could you please John on following details: - John Waring, Newcastle NOW (w) 4929 4644 (mob) 0425 210 890 john@newcastlenow.org.au

There was a discussion about whether there is a current Conservation Management Plan (CMP) or Plan of Management guiding use and conservation of the Nobbys Headland, as this may provide conservation policies useful to managers of the site. Sue Effenberger advised that she thought a CMP was done some time ago by Suters. Ann Hardy also stated that about two years ago the State Government (Crown Lands) were preparing a PoM. Ann will explore this further.

6. Reports and Updates:

- a) **Updates-** (Gionni di Gravio) – Gionni advised of the recent post UoN blog about Newcastle’s Public Infrastructure in 1829. Gionni and Ann recently visited the State Archives of NSW and photographed three bundles of lost documents of Newcastle from the late 1820s and early 1830s. There is a digitised copy and transcription of one of these documents, and is important information to the creation of the Charles Martin’s work on the 3D early Newcastle modelling he is constructing. For further information: <http://uoncc.wordpress.com/2014/02/18/local-treasures-newcastles-public-infrastructure-in-1829/>

- b) **National Trust (Ann Hardy)** – Ann advised that The Hunter Regional Committee has organised a series of events for this year’s National Trust Heritage Festival, these are available on the Trusts website. Also at present the National Trust NSW has the Miss Fisher exhibition on at Old Government House, Parramatta.
http://www.nationaltrust.org.au/Assets/15305/1/festivalbooklet_Website.pdf
Keith Parsons and Ann are both on the National Trust NSW Policies Taskforce reviewing past policies and formulating new ones. Policies involve Coastal Heritage, Impact from coal Mining policy, Remnants of Buildings of Heritage Significance, Trees in Urban Environments and Urban Bushland Policy.
- c) **Lost Newcastle App Project**- Ann has been working on the Newcastle App project; so far she has completed approximately fifty stories. The next phase of the project will be collating photographs and images relevant to the selected stories and Keith Parsons has kindly agreed to contribute to this section. There will be a meeting with App developers in the coming weeks to update them on progress.
- d) **King Edward Park SHR nomination**- Ann has been in contact with Susan Duyker from Heritage Branch NSW who advised Gary Escourt is no longer overseeing the nomination, recently a new nominations manager has been appointed, and someone will be allocated to the Nctle/Hunter area shortly. Susan will get back to the CRWP about who this new person will be.
- e) **Underground water tanks at the James Fletcher Hospital**- Ann also advised that there may be an opportunity to investigate the underground water tanks at the James Fletcher Hospital site. The tanks are a rare and unique feature dating back to the 1840s, built by the Imperial Government. She has made inquiries with HNE Mental Health Services about access for the purpose of archival recording of the tanks for future research. The following instructions apply:-
- That all persons requesting access to the old in ground water tank located adjacent to the Carpenter's Workshop have been trained and certified to enter confined spaces, proof of certification must be shown.
 - That the necessary personal protective equipment, gas monitoring device and recovery equipment is supplied and in-place as per the regulations for accessing a confined space.

- That all persons requesting access are covered by a Public Liability Insurance Policy and that a copy of the policy is forwarded to HNEMH prior to the arranged date.

This may be a project that the CRWP can consider in the future.

7. General Business

- a) **Lesley Gent update-** Lesley advised that she is involved with the Macquarie Society in Sydney. Elizabeth Ellis is also involved with this group, as well as many other historians and others with an interest in the Macquarie era. Lesley suggested she is happy to disseminate material about the society to the CRWP and invite a representative to a future meeting. The Macquarie Pier project may be of interest to them.
- b) **Proposed Newcastle Planning Documents-** Keith Parsons advised that the Proposed Newcastle Planning Documents are now on public exhibition. Details Newcastle City Centre Urban renewal SEPP and proposed changes to the LEP are on the NSW Department of Planning website. Note the SEPP/LEP is only on exhibition for 2 weeks until 21 March. Some of the changes include increased height limits, changes to view corridors.
- c) **Fort Scratchley-** Ron Barber from Fort Scratchley Historical Society informed that Fort Scratchley has recently received some funding. Hunter Water has been very generous in providing \$20 000 towards the restoration of a gun, and \$15 000 to fire the Laycock gun daily for one year. The daily firing of the gun gives the fort a presence in the city and contributes to cultural tourism and visitor experience.

8. Close: 3:00

Date of next meeting: Monday, 7th April, 2014 in the IDC Building, 1-3pm.