

# Coal River Working Party Meeting

13<sup>th</sup> October, 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 Kerrie Brauer (Awabakal Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation).

Introduction and welcome was extended to new members, Gionni welcomed Peter Leven from the Awabakal Traditional Owners Aboriginal Corporation, as well as Ken Thornton who is a PhD candidate completing research on the history of the electricity commission in NSW. Also present was David McBride, David has a background in film and television production and has recently moved back from the UK to Newcastle.

**Present:** Gionni di Gravio (chair), Ann Hardy (minute-taker), Maree Shilling, Ken Shilling, Keith Parsons, Jane Ison, Doug Lithgow, Peter Sherlock, Ken Thornton, Damien Suzanne Martin, Robert Watson, Jane Ison, Damien Egan, Russell Rigby, Marilla North, Helen Denzin, Ziggy Szyda Lesley Gent, Kerry Brauer, Peter Leven, Peter Morris, Sarah Cameron, David McBride, Marilla North, Rob Jones

2. **Apologies:**

Emeritus Professor Maree Gleeson, Ruth Cotton, Member for Wallsend Sonia Hornery, Cynthia Hunter, Emeritus Professor John Fryer, Howard Dick, Charles Martin, Coralie Watson, Kerry Grant, Margaret Henry, Tim Adams, Lyndall Ryan, Charles Martin, Brian Roach, Bruce Cooper, Bronwyn Law

**Visitors:** Helen English (PhD candidate)

3. **Confirmation of Previous Minutes:** The minutes for 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014 was confirmed by Ken Shilling and seconded – Robert Watson.

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

**5. Presentations-**

**a) Presentation – (Doug Lithgow) –Presentation by CRWP to the Heritage Council NSW -**

Doug Lithgow suggests the CRWP make representation to the Heritage Council NSW to inform them of new work and research, particularly in terms of Aboriginal heritage. Doug also highlighted the need for a Conservation Management Plan for the Coal River Precinct. **Action-** Ann Hardy to make contact with Prof Lawrence Nield (Chair Heritage Council NSW) to request a presentation.

**b) Presentation (Helen English) “Music Making in the Mining townships, 1870-1880”**

Helen English gave a very interesting presentation about her current research on music making in and around the mining townships of Newcastle 1870-1880. Helen played several musical pieces written in Newcastle during the 1870s, pieces that would be otherwise be lost are being carefully researched and recorded. Gionni video recorded Helen’s presentation and will make it available on CRWP blog in the coming months. Many thanks to Helen.

**c) Presentation (Lesley Gent)**

Lesley Gent gave a presentation about the Paterson Corn staddle, previously owned by Fry Bros. business during the 1870s. The staddle was heritage listed in 1980 and the only corn staddle in a public park in Australia. The tin roof was put on in 1988 with assistance of a \$11,000 grant. Typically corn staddles are made of timber in Australia, some continue to exist in rural NSW, including Wilberforce and Camden. Dungog council needed to put a barricade around the Paterson corn staddle to reduce public access for safety issues. The Paterson Historical Society who saved the item from demolition having it carefully restored. Several businesses including Boom Logistics who donated the two cranes – a 50 ton one first up and an 80 ton crane for the final lift of the staddle back onto the poles. Heavy Haulage donated 2 RSJ beams, these were put in place using a 50 tonne crane, also donated. Overall the project took 18 months to complete.

**6. Reports and Updates:**

**Updates- (Gionni di Gravio)** – Gionni advised of the project about the Scott sisters of Ash Island that he has put on the CRWP blog. The story about the two sisters is an inspiring one, they produced world class botanical drawings, and recorded the flora and fauna of the island during 1840s, 50s and 60s. The island become industrialised during 20th century and it has only been over the past decades that rehabilitation has started to take place, bringing the island back to how it was in the nineteenth century. Gionni has assembled everything to date (i.e. September 2014) that he can find on the Scott property

and its location on Ash Island. He hopes to be able to sponsor a return of 3D Artist Charles Martin to recreate the Islands of the Hunter River estuary and the homestead of A.W. Scott in the coming months. The University of Newcastle has the only nature illustration tertiary course in Australia and the Scott sisters' works provide ample local inspiration. Ross Deamer's thesis from the 1970s looked at sources and remnants of the house, Deamer did a thorough investigation, however found very little relating to the Scott homestead. The Scott sisters' story, including historical sources and contemporary photographs are found here <http://coalriver.wordpress.com/2014/09/27/ash-island/>

Martin Carney, local archaeologist has provided heritage reports, archaeological research, and Aboriginal reports, including the report for former Kirkwood House (James Fletcher Hospital). We are very appreciate of Martin's generosity in sharing these documents as they contain important historical knowledge. Reports are available on the CRWP blog, each report has been uploaded individually under the year there were published, see 'New Research' <http://coalriver.wordpress.com/key-documents/>

David Shoebridge MLC (NSW Greens) has been instrumental in getting the Inquiry into the planning process in Newcastle and the broader Hunter Region. David is keen to speak with anyone interested in ideas as to how to improve the planning system, particularly in regard to Aboriginal heritage and cultural heritage generally. It is hopeful that the planning process can be improved to incorporate cultural, social values into planning. Aboriginal heritage is currently managed under the NSW National Parks and Wildlife service. The CRWP will not be putting in a submission, however there may be people in the group with experience and knowledge in cultural heritage and planning issues who may want to consider putting in a submission.

**National Trust (Ann Hardy)** – The NewcastleWOW App is also complete. Currently waiting for a few more images to be rescanned by the State Library of NSW and informed they may be made available for free (if only a few) or at a small fee. Ken Thornton has been assisting by geotagging images and editing stories. In total there are 90 stories, and approximately 600 images. We are also grateful to Suzanne Martin who has provided images for the App.

The Hunter Regional Committee of the National Trust is holding its AGM on Sunday 16 November at 11 am at Tomago House. Dr Victoria Haskins and Prof John Maynard will do a joint presentation on t a new book they are completing for the National Library of Australia titled '*Living with the Locals - Europeans Living Among Aboriginal People in the Nineteenth Century*'. These are people who ran away, were lost, and shipwrecked and spent time with Aboriginal people in the bush. If you would like to attend please contact Ann Hardy 0438509139.

**Update (Sarah Cameron)** – Sarah Cameron informed that Minister Rob Stokes, Minister for the Environment has placed an Interim Heritage Order on 3 former BHP buildings. These buildings are the former pattern store, medical centre and master mechanics office. Department of Environment and

Heritage has ordered a full heritage assessment, which is expected to take up to 12 months. The Newcastle Industrial Heritage Association supports the buildings preservation as a cultural monument to BHP. Bella Vista house could also be part of a serial listing of former BHP buildings because of its social significance and close association with BHP. Aubrey Brook and the Newcastle Industrial Heritage Group were instrumental in gaining the IHO. Lesly Gent advised that she did not believe that the pattern store was built from stone of the former Duckenfield House. The independent assessment will seek to clarify heritage significance.

Peter Morris also informed that the BHP Administration building is of national heritage significance because of the important meetings and decisions made there. Sarah advised that The BHP Administration building is not on the State Heritage Register. Council nominated it in 2008. The nomination was endorsed by the Heritage Council listing committee as having "potential state significance" but the Heritage Division has not progressed this any further. Council has written to the Heritage Division urging that this listing proceed. The response is that the nomination is in a backlog of nominations.

Gionni di Gravio asked Sarah Cameron what was happening with the Bogey Hole as the baths have been closed for several months. Apparently the newly restored works were damaged in July 2014 after a storm. The stainless steel platform has dislodged and now closed to the public. Sarah Cameron advised that Newcastle council controls and manages the area to the bottom of the stairway and Land and Property Management Authority is responsible for maintenance of the bogey Hole beyond the stairway.

## **7. General Business-**

- a) Ziggy inquired about primary sources relating to Newcastle.
- b) Jane Ison advised that she has been researching statements of Frederick Cane who was Clerk at the Newcastle Industrial School during late 1860s. At least 11 girls were involved in riots at Newcastle. Jane is analysing information to better understand the reasons behind the riots, and the staff involved, as well as management issues etc.
- c) Ron Barber from Fort Scratchley Historical Society thanked Gionni di Gravio and the university's Cultural Collections for permitting the reproduction of Ralph Snowball images, these include the 1903 photograph of the 'Easter Camp' and 'Shortland Park' showing locals sitting on a gun. The imaged have been enlarged and mounted in the gun emplacement. Furthermore, Rod Caldwell has located rare photographs showing tools used at the fort during the 1900s, many of the tools no longer exist, however from photographs can now be reproduced

## **8. Close: 3:00**

**Date of next meeting will be Monday, 3<sup>rd</sup> November, 2014 in the IDC Building, 1-3pm.**