

Coal River Working Party Meeting

2nd March, 2015 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, Russell Rigby, Maree Shilling, Ken Shilling, Jane Ison, Emeritus Professor John Fryer, Robert Watson, Ron Barber, Ken Thornton, Julianne Tilse, Doug Lithgow, Suzanne Martin, Bronwyn Law, Brian Walsh, Jude Conway, Charles Martin, Ruth Cotton, Lesley Gent.

Apologies: Kerrie Brauer, Brian Roach, Helen Denzin, Zbygniew Szyda, Marilla North, Rob Jones, Howard Dick, Kerry Grant, Emeritus Professor Maree Gleeson, Member for Wallsend Sonia Hornery, Sonia Limeburner, Peter Leven, Tim Adams, Anne Creevey, David Dial.

Visitors: Welcome to new member Chas Keys who briefly introduced himself. Two architecture students also present and interested in research related to the suburb of Carrington. Visitors Bill Stanton, Julie McIntyre, Bonnie Trongchittham and Don Seton-Wilkinson.

- 3. Confirmation of Previous Minutes:** The minutes for 2nd February 2015 was confirmed by Ron Barber and seconded – Ken Shilling.
- 4. Business arising from previous minutes:** Nil
- 5. Presentations-**
 - a) Julie McIntyre – Hunter Wine Studies-**

Julie McIntyre spoke about her Wine Studies "Vines, Wines and Identity" and supported by a ARC grant of \$170 000. Support for the project has also come from Hunter tourism and the Newcastle Museum. The Hunter Valley is the longest continuing wine region in Australia. This current project may be of particular interest to the CRWP as it looks at the early colonial history from 1820s that intersects with regional settler, convict and migrant vine dressers. Julie spoke about her book "First Vintage: Wine in colonial New South Wales", that has a chapter on Wyndham Estate, this current project will look deeper into the history of winemaking in the Hunter region.

Julie hopes to connect further with communities to gather stories, and also hold an event about migrant vine dressers, inviting descendants to come along and share their family history. Julie will also be speaking at the upcoming Newcastle Writers Festival.

b) Islington Project- Phoebe Trongchittham

Phoebe Trongchittham and Bonnie McBain are undertaking the Islington project. They received a Newcastle Council Place-making grant to explore public history of the area. They plan to have an exhibition over 2-3 weeks and invite members of the community to share their stories about the area. Members of the CRWP are invited to the launch of the project in early April, which will be a historical display in businesses in Maitland Road. Gianni advised that the suburb has a long environmental history and may be worth contacting Dr Nancy Cushing for further information. Ruth Cotton spoke about Islington's uniqueness, a suburb with many young families, a community that is dynamic, and finding out more about the suburbs history can help shape its future. If anyone has any stories or information about Islington Phoebe's email is ptrongchittham@yahoo.com.au

c) Wyndham Estate - Don Seton Wilkinson

Don is a descendant of the Wyndham family. He gave an overview of his family's history in the Hunter Valley, and spoke about Dalwood House at Wyndham Estate, near Branxton. The area has the oldest continuous vineyard in Australia. His ancestors first purchased land there in 1828, Dalwood house was designed in a similar style to the family home in England (Elizabethan floor plan). George Wyndham acquired vines from John Busby in 1830s, wanted to make good wine in the Hunter Region. The Wyndham's won many awards for their winemaking.

Currently the cellar door at Wyndham Estate has ceased operating. Grapes are still grown there, however there is not the public visitation as there previously was. The Dalwood

Restoration Association was established in 1982, and around the same time the National Trust of Australia (NSW) was given authority to manage Trust funds to assist in conservation of the property. Today Dalwood homestead is in a dilapidated condition and requires a lot of money to restore. Astizia Coppo-Jones, Heritage Architect is undertaking a Conservation Management Plan for Dalwood, this will guide future use of the site and address conservation issues. The association is a small group that now needs new members and Don would like a wider membership able to offer support. Members of the CRWP are invited to join the association. Don is contactable at donsetonwilkinson@gmail.com

d) Publication 'Journal of Surveyor George Boyle White' - Bill Stanton & John Fryer

Bill Stanton spoke about the publication *Journal of Surveyor George Boyle White*, White was assistant surveyor to Thomas Mitchell. The account of White is interesting as he documents his day to day activities and experiences with the survey party, stories that are not part of the official record. Bill believes the story of the 1831 expedition is significant and it would be great to get the story out to a much wider audience, perhaps through a documentary. He invites suggestions of further contacts and where he can assistance with e.g. business plan preparation. Gionni suggested that Annette Huber from *Screen Hunter*, or Greg Hall Director of the *Lock Out productions* may be able to help. A copy of the book was presented by Bill to Gionni for the Auchmuty Library. Gionni thanked Prof. Fryer and Bill Stanton for bringing the work to the attention of the CRWP and will write to Les Dalton to also thank him for his work.

6. Reports and Updates:

a) Updates- (Gionni di Gravio) –

- a)** Gionni advised that a special issue featuring Newcastle and the Hunter Region is planned next year in the *Journal of Australian Colonial History (JACH)*. Nancy Cushing and Julie McIntyre are involved in this and the call for abstracts has now closed.

Cultural Collections and the University Gallery have been working toward the Thomas Rodoni exhibition commemorating WW1. The exhibition will be on from the 25 March- 11 April 2015, and will be officially opened on Friday 27 March at 6pm by Andrew Parfitt, members of the CRWP are invited.

b) Update- National Trust (Ann Hardy) – Ann gave a brief update on the proposal for a car park on the parade ground at the James Fletcher Hospital. The Australian Army History Unit, Fort Scratchley Historical Society and Friends of King Edward Park were contacted, apparently the Office of Environment & Heritage (OEH) has received many submissions. A report is being compiled (reflecting submissions) by OEH to go to a delegate of the Heritage Branch who will make a final decision. Ann tabled the National Trust submission.

TANTRUM Theatre are currently preparing for a production in April, reflecting on the history of Watt Street. Both Ann and Jane Ison have spent time with the group to share their knowledge, particularly in regards to the James Fletcher site and Industrial Girls School. Ann will forward further details about when the production will take place.

c) Update – Newcastle Council (Sarah Cameron) – Nil

7. Advocacy - Nil

8. General Business-

a) **Julianne Tilse-** Julianne's PhD exhibition featuring her research of the Hunter River opens this week at the University Gallery, members are invited to the opening this Saturday at 2pm, Dr Bernie Curran will officially open the exhibition.

b) **Robert Watson (UON Communications student project)** – Robert advised that at the last CRWP the need for better communication of the group's activities was discussed. Robert contacted Dr Melanie James from the university's School of Design, Communication and IT to find out what assistance her students may be able to offer. As luck would have it, she is currently supervising student projects that involve preparation of media strategies for community groups. Projects entail interviewing members of groups to establish a communication plan, as well as recommendations. **ACTION:** Robert to liaise with Melanie to set up a meeting with students and report back to the CRWP.

9. Close: 3.00 PM

Date of next meeting will be Monday, 13th April, 2015 in the IDC Building, 1-3pm.