

Coal River Working Party Meeting
4th April, 2016 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), David Dial, Robert Watson, Doug Lithgow, Don Seton-Wilkinson, Ken Thornton, Maree Shilling, Ken Shilling, Ron Barber, Russell Rigby, Chaz Keys, Brian Roach, Keith Parsons, Suzanne Martin, Jude Conway, Bronwyn Law, Anne Creevey, Lesley Gent, Charles Martin, , Dael Allison, Alan Baynham, Peter Sherlock, Julieanne Tilse,

Apologies: Jude Conway, Brian Walsh, Kerrie Brauer, Peter Leven, Emeritus Professor Maree Gleeson, Member for Wallsend Sonia Hornery, David Campbell, Emeritus Professor John Fryer, Marilla North, Robert Jones, Helen Denzin, Bill Robertson, Ian Eckford, Howard Dick, Sarah Cameron, Tim Davidson

Visitors: Ann Beaumont

3. **Confirmation of Previous Minutes:** The minutes for 7th March 2016 was confirmed by Ron Barber and seconded – Keith Parsons.

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

5. **Presentations-**

Biography on Edward Close (Ann Beaumont) – Historian Ann Beaumont spoke about her recent biography, “A Man of many parts - The Life and Times of Edward Charles Close 1790 – 1866”. Close was the founder of Morpeth. Ann also participated at the recent Newcastle Writers Festival hosted by Gionni di Gravio and spoke about her book and describing her research over many years. She has used many primary sources (some from the Peninsula Wars) including dairies to gain a better understanding of Close. She accessed archives in the British Library, and various other institutions in Australia and the UK. Close married and had 4 children, there

are some descendants in Australia, many of his family returned to England, he is buried at Morpeth Cemetery. Ann thanked the UON Cultural Collections and particularly Gionni di Gravio for his support, she found the Morpeth plan overlays very helpful showing the location of properties at Morpeth. Ann's contact is hihousebooks@bigpond.com

a) Newcastle's First World War Memorials Project - (Maree & Ken Shilling) – Maree and Ken spoke about the 'Remembrance: Newcastle's First World War Memorials' Project recording memorials associated with the WWI whose origin lies within the present Newcastle Council area. There are 3 parts to the project, 'Roll Call', 'Memorials' and 'stories', and each suburb is being reviewed. Many memorials were made to recognise the effort and sacrifice of those who went overseas. The project surveys memorials that currently exist and searches those that are lost. Names from the memorials have been consolidated in a database and each memorial has a randomly-chosen serviceman or woman researched and their story attached to the appropriate memorial. Detailed individual stories have been collated, showing who served in the Great War and have a Newcastle connection. The use of TROVE has been invaluable in locating new information and writing up stories. Some interesting stories are being discovered, a significant one relates to Dudley School being the only school in the British Empire to have two former students awarded Victoria Cross medals. If you have any information about this project Ken and Maree can be contacted at kenandmaree@gmail.com

b) Coastal Industrial heritage survey - (Russell Rigby) - Russell gave a presentation on a project he has recently commenced, relating to 19th Century quarries, shafts, tunnels and drill holes along the coast from Nobbys to Bar Beach. This project is in the early stages, Russell plans to organise and list these excavations, many of which have cultural significance. He explained that quite often there is misunderstanding and confusion about what these industrial features are along the coast, when they were created, and who was responsible. With many more sources available on-line new information is available and will contribute to this survey. At present there is no plan that consolidates all of these industrial features. Russell will update the CRWP as project progresses.

6. Aboriginal heritage update – NIL

7. Update- (Gionni di Gravio) – Gionni advised of latest UONCC and CRWP WordPress posts. Historian Rosalie Bunn presentation *History & Impacts of UON's Open Foundation Program* her PhD research. The OFC started in 1974, she has carried out extensive interviews and surveys to

explore the impact of the course. The full story can be found here

<https://uoncc.wordpress.com/2016/03/22/bunn/>

- Interview with Vera Deacon- During the marathon six hour oral history interview on 10 March 2016 with Mrs Vera Deacon, Dr Ann Hardy asked her about a letter she penned back in the 1940s to the Newcastle Morning Herald. Vera had not been able to find it, while the interview continued, Gionni found the letter on his phone in TROVE. Vera had written to the Newcastle Morning Herald as a 16 year old calling for better resources for community housing, education and culture, especially for young people. The full story can be found here ‘A magic moment between Vera and TROVE” <https://uoncc.wordpress.com/2016/03/22/vera-trove/>

 - **(Ann Hardy) – Oral History Project**- Ann is working on an Oral History Guide for students, staff and the community to support them in oral history projects. The idea was inspired by the Margaret Henry Oral History Archive and work of Open Foundation students in the 1980s. The guide will be completed in coming weeks and sent to members. Anne Creevey asked whether oral history workshops in the future for the community – this is something that will be considered.

 - Planning is well underway for the Radical Newcastle Exhibition to be held at the Newcastle Museum in September 2016- during the process of gathering information certain stories/archives have be made available online, including the Noel Davies Oral History Archive containing interviews associated with the Star Hotel as well as other interviews he did during the 2000s. See <https://uoncc.wordpress.com/2016/03/24/the-noel-davies-oral-history-archive/>.
- b) Update- National Trust** – Keith Parsons informed that a development is proposed at Morpeth, and there is a heritage conservation group active in lobbying to retain the heritage significance of the town, and maintain the setting of a village within a rural landscape.

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

8. Public Advocacy – NIL

9. General Business-

- a)** (Ken Thornton) – Ken advised that he has been in contact with the Newcastle Industrial Heritage association and they have some oral histories that may be made available.

- b)** (Anne Creevey) – Spoke about the Newcastle East project she has been working on, there is interest from people living in the suburb. Anne asked whether anyone knew where the ‘Commonage’ in Newcastle was.

- c)** (Brian Roach) – Brian raised the issue of disposable cups being used at the meetings, he is aware of the significant waste and suggests members consider bringing their own cups to meeting.

- d)** (Doug Lithgow)- Doug emphasized the importance of work by the CRWP, he was recently at Nobbys Headland and someone there was referring to Ros Kerr’s work ‘Search for Nobbys Tunnels’ about the geology of the headland. Further information on this story is here <https://coalriver.wordpress.com/2011/11/15/in-search-of-nobbys-tunnels-by-roslyn-kerr-geologist/>

11. Close: 3.00 PM

Date of next meeting will be Monday, 2th May, 2016 in the IDC Building, 1-3pm.