

Coal River Working Party Meeting
7th March, 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, Sarah Cameron, Doug Lithgow, Howard Dick, 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, Tim Davidson, Dael Allison

Apologies: Alan Baynham, 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, Ziggy Szyda,

Visitors: Richard & Elspeth Belfield, NewcastleNOW team Kris Leck, Scot Brown, John Webber.

3. **Confirmation of Previous Minutes:** The minutes for 1st February 2016 was confirmed by Maree Shilling and seconded – Brian Roach.

4. **Business arising from previous minutes:** - Russell Rigby advised that after last month's presentation he has learnt more about John 'Gentleman' Smith from Cynthia Hunter's publication *Bound for Wallis Plains-Maitland's Convict Settlers* describing his life in NSW and Maitland area. Smith was a convict, sent to Newcastle in 1817 and made chief constable at Newcastle soon after his arrival. Smith was the first publican in Newcastle in 1823 of the 'Newcastle Hotel'.

(Brian Roach) – Brian compiled some ideas about having UON students perform in schools to educate them about Newcastle's history, however Gionni described problems in doing this as

the various schools within the university don't often collaborate together on these types of projects (for eg. History and communication students).

5. Presentations-

a) Newcastle NOW (Kris Leck, Scot Brown, John Webber) - The team from Newcastle Now presented some concept plans for the refurbishment at the Nobbys headland and Lighthouse area. They presented a business case that considers the highest and best use and options for the historic site. The team are interested in maximising the use of the cottages by providing hospitality and catering, with a restaurant/café. This proposal has many of the cottages allocated for function and restaurant trading to increase financial sustainability, accommodation option not financially viable. Plans involve adding a commercial kitchen in the space between cottage 2 and 3, this would join the cottages. Cottage 1 would remain free standing and likely available to groups/organisations as temporary display and exhibition space - looking for community partners. A deck would be located around the lighthouse for outdoor use. It is envisaged that any profits made at the site will go back into the site. The development is zoned Special Purpose and requires Newcastle Council to consider heritage conservation and approvals based on preserving the heritage values of the site. A development application will go to Newcastle Council in April 2016. Keith Parsons asked how people will get to the site and about traffic issues. Sarah Cameron advised of the importance of best practice, particularly this site that has National significance, highlighting that plans must adhere to the Conservation Management Plan. Planning and heritage at this site must be consistent with telling a National Story. NewcastleNOW are looking for funding opportunities that may include a Newcastle Port Community Grant, Corporate sponsorship and donations, Crowd funding, sub-lease café, sub-lease gallery area (cottage 1).

Thanks to NewcastleNOW team for their presentation and any feedback can be sent to Ann who will forward to the team.

b) Ken Thornton – Ken spoke about the historic Belfield Climate Records, recording climate in Armidale region of NSW (1877-1922). Creator of the records was Algernon Belfield, squatter, grazier and citizen scientist. Other collaborators on the project are Howard Bridgeman and we were fortunate to have the grandson of Algernon, Richard Belfield and his wife Elspeth at the meeting. Russell Rigby advised that he has a colleague at Bureau of Metrology and he be made aware of these records- Russell will pass on contact.

b) Aboriginal heritage update – NIL

Update- (Gionni di Gravio) – New structure of HHI and CRWP - Gionni informed of the new structure of HHI and CRWP, all Hunter region related projects have been mapped and Gionni described how many projects come under Cultural Collections, are not specific to the CRWP and therefore makes sense to have these under the HHI banner. This frees up the CRWP to re-focus on history and heritage of the 'Coal River', advocacy, community, UON staff and student engagement. The 'Hunter (Living) Histories Initiative' involves more broad areas of research, however also includes collaboration across the university and wider community (that at times still may include members of the CRWP). Some of the projects underway are in Cultural Collection (and relevant to HHI) are:- 3D Virtual Hunter, Birdwood Flag conservation, oral histories, Radical Newcastle exhibition, transcripts of Hunter records. Jude Conway also mentioned her area of research 'Hunter Women's History' as relevant to the HHI. There was a discussion about the name 'Hunter (Living) History Initiative' (HHI) and Robert Watson thought 'living' may be misleading (as history is not living) and preferred 'Hunter History', Dael Allison liked the word 'living' and said was about story telling. Tim Davidson agreed that 'living' seems more relevant to what the group does and needs to appeal to younger people.

WordPress Updates - Gionni advised of latest CRWP WordPress posts.

- '*The Death of Burigon, Chief of the Newcastle Tribe (1820)*'. Thanks to historian Dr Mark Dunn who, whilst conducting research for his PhD, came across this important sketch map located within the State Records of New South Wales, showing the actual location of the attack on Burigon, Chief of the Newcastle Tribe, which resulted in his death in 1820. The full story can be found here <https://coalriver.wordpress.com/2016/02/09/burigon/>
- Coal River *True Crimes Case 6- From Whitechapel to where* by David Murray <https://coalriver.wordpress.com/2016/02/19/whitechapel/>
- Beautiful photographs of Newcastle in the 1870s. Postcard images 'Views of Newcastle' from the State Library of Victoria. <https://coalriver.wordpress.com/2016/02/23/newcastle-1870s/>

In regard to the Coal River e-press project Dr David Murray has advised he may be interested in assisting.

- c) Ann Hardy) – National Nomination**- Ann informed that the nomination "Coal River (Mulubinba) and Government Domain has been re-nominated (by having previous nomination reconsidered). The existing nomination is quite extensive therefore it was felt a new nomination

was not warranted, however a revised list of relevant owners/stakeholders was provided to the department of environment and heritage. The work that Don Seton-Wilkinson has done developing a proposal to obtain public support for Newcastle's National Heritage Listing can continue, and the CRWP can consider research and advocacy of 'Coal River'.

Newcastle Writers Festival- Writers festival will feature a few history related sessions on Friday 1st April. Including 'Bringing Family to Life' with historians Dr Nancy Cushing, Prof. Catharine Coleborne and others, 'The Father of the Hunter' a biography of Edward Close founder of Morpeth by historian Ann Beaumont and hosted by Gionni di Gravio, and book launch of 'King Edward Park, Newcastle NSW: A History by Robert Evans. For further information see

<http://www.newcastlewritersfestival.org.au/>

Ann Beaumont will also speak about her latest book a biography of Edward Close at the April meeting of the CRWP.

Update of member details – Ann advised that Bronwyn Law has kindly provided a form for members to update their (or the organisation they represent) details, information will be used by administrators of the CRWP and shared only with permission. Update form will be emailed to members.

d) Update- National Trust – NIL

e) Update – Newcastle Council (Sarah Cameron) – Sarah advised that a review is underway of Heritage Conservation areas in Newcastle, closing date is 14 March 2016. See Review of Heritage Conservation Areas in Newcastle <http://www.newcastle.nsw.gov.au/Community/Get-Involved/Have-Your-Say/Heritage-Conservation-Areas-Review-Draft-Report>

The Cathedral Project Stage 3- will progress shortly, some graves have been located near the former Mulimbimba Cottage, possibly burials of Simon and Mary Kemp. Further investigations are planned. Shepherds Hill Conservation Management Plan (CMP) is being prepared and will guide use and interpretation of this heritage site, particularly interpretation of the battery and military installations.

Heritage Network's Bona Fide Awards - Sarah informed that the Hunter Heritage Network's Bona Fide Award nominations will be open shortly, there are numerous categories and award ceremony will be Sunday 17th April in Newcastle. See website for nomination details <http://hunterheritagenetwork.org/> .

f) Sarah also advised of the proposed funding cuts to Trove (National Library of Australia) which is a very useful resource accessed by many in the community.

c) Public Advocacy –

d) General Business-

- a)** (Ann Hardy) - Ann advised that prior to meeting Ziggy Szyda left a report he had compiled 'The Earliest Known Date for Today's Newcastle'. Copies were made available.
- b)** (Jude Conway) – Jude advised that the Newcastle Herald no longer has a librarian working at their archive. The Herald offices have recently moved from Bolton Street to Honeysuckle and questions have been raised about archival/librarian support and access to archives. PLAN: Chair to write to editor of Newcastle Herald about public accessibility to newspaper's archives.
- c)** (Anne Creavey) – Anne advised she has started a project relating to Newcastle Easts history. She is researching information from census records, the early land grants to find out where people lived.
- d)** (Lesley Gent) – Lesley suggested future CRWP meetings could be held off campus at historic sites, such as Tomago House.
- e)** (Tim Davidson)- Tim advised he has been working on Charles Martins 3D model to work it into Oculus Rift- virtual reality technology. He has included some people into the model to personalise the experience. He plans to continue this work and happy to present at future meetings.

9. Close: 3.00 PM

Date of next meeting will be Monday, 4th April, 2016 in the IDC Building, 1-3pm.