

**Coal River Working Party Meeting**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> May, 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), Emeritus Professor John Fryer, Amir Mogadam, David Dial, Robert Watson, Doug Lithgow, Maree Shilling, Ken Shilling, Ron Barber, Russell Rigby, Chaz Keys, Brian Roach, Keith Parsons, Helen Denzin, Suzanne Martin, Jude Conway, Bronwyn Law, Anne Creevey, Julieanne Tilse, Lesley Gent, Bill Robertson.

**Apologies:** Brian Walsh, Emeritus Professor Maree Gleeson, Member for Wallsend Sonia Hornery, Don Seton-Wilkinson, Ian Eckford, Kerrie Brauer, Peter Leven, Peter Sherlock, Alan Baynham, Marilla North, Robert Jones, David Campbell.

**Visitors: Nil**

3. **Confirmation of Previous Minutes:** The minutes for 4th April 2016 was confirmed by Brian Roach and seconded – Ron Barber.
4. **Business arising from previous minutes:** - NIL
5. **Presentations-**
  - a) **"William Fraser - cabinet-maker and photographer"- (Ken Shilling)** – Last month Maree and Ken spoke about the 'Remembrance: Newcastle's First World War Memorials' Project recording memorials associated with the WWI. This talk is associated with the Great War memorial theme. William Frazer (1882-1958) was a cabinet maker and photographer, known also as 'photo artist' and 'trick photographer' of Lindsey Street, Hamilton. He made WWI Honour rolls and took photographs of these before they were installed, as well as in situ. Some of his honour rolls are located in Newcastle and throughout NSW, eg. Scots Kirk Church, Hamilton. Many of William's negatives are with his grand-daughter Ann Hudson. Ken informed that many local honour rolls

missing, members offered suggestions as to possible leads to explore. If you have any information about this project Ken can be contacted at [kenandmaree@gmail.com](mailto:kenandmaree@gmail.com)

## 6. Aboriginal heritage update – NIL

7. **Update- (Gionni di Gravio)** – Gionni advised that Sarah Cameron former Heritage Strategist at Newcastle Council is now working at Office Environment and Heritage, we sincerely wish her the very best in her new position and appreciate her valuable contributions made to the CRWP over many years.
- Gionni advised of latest UONCC and CRWP WordPress posts. Firstly, *The Death of Young Moses – Were Aboriginal Massacres committed in Port Stephens and Baker’s Island (i.e., Dempsey Island, Newcastle)?* Baker’s Island was a quite a mystery, however Gionni recalled Vera Deacon recently referring to it in an interview saying that an Aboriginal man named Moses Melmonth (?), a friend of Vera Deacon’s late father, Norman Pember would often visit the family on Dempsey Island, also unofficially known as Baker’s Island. Gionni pointed out the importance of oral histories that can contribute new information, often revealing other knowledge or local legend. The full story can be found here <https://coalriver.wordpress.com/2016/04/11/bakers-island-1834/>
  - Secondly, Russell Rigby, Arthur Love and Gionni spent an afternoon filming with presenter Neil Oliver for an episode of Coast Australia, at Fort Scratchley. Many sources and archives were provided by UON Cultural Collections for the Newcastle episode. The program will be aired in 2017. The full story *The Convict Coal Mines of Newcastle (Coast Series 3 Filmshoot Backgrounder)* can be found here <https://coalriver.wordpress.com/2016/04/15/convict-mines/>
  - Thirdly, Antoinette Holm has published two works of fiction that draw upon the texture of Newcastle life, its history and heritage, to create a riveting and exciting series about an ordinary woman from Newcastle who gets caught up in corruption and political intrigue. Antoinette’s husband is Erik Ecklund (former Chair of CRWP), they are now based in the UK. Further information about novel, and earlier novel can be found here <https://coalriver.wordpress.com/2016/04/18/holm/>
  - **Update- (Amir Mogadam)** - Amir gave an update on the Birdwood Flag Project. On a Friday morning, April the 22nd a nationally significant cultural project, The Birdwood Flag Restoration Project was launched at the Christ Church Cathedral, Newcastle. Since 2012 and as a result of collaboration between the University of Newcastle and the Christ Church Cathedral, the Birdwood committee has managed to complete the significance assessment phase of the flag and negotiating resources for restoration of this nationally significant relic. The launch of the restoration

phase of the Birdwood Flag is the outcome of the efforts made since 2012. In this phase of the project, the Copland Foundation, Melbourne, the International Conservation Services, Sydney, University of Newcastle and Christ Church Cathedral, Newcastle are collaborating to put the pieces of the flag together again and tell the story of the community who flew an official Red Australian Ensign over their ANZACs during WWI. Amir will give further update at July CRWP/HHI meeting. Amir also advised that there has been increased interest in Aboriginal heritage, however minimal education dedicated to this area, the UON has developed a program for students and start shortly and includes field trips to rock art sites in the Hunter Valley. To address the lack of education in this area a workshop has been organised for the 20<sup>th</sup> May, *The Past Matters: Rock Art and Indigenous Heritage Workshop* was supported by Cultural Collections, University of Newcastle Library & the Hunter (Living) History Initiative. Further information can be found here <https://uoncc.wordpress.com/2016/04/19/the-past-matters-rock-art-and-indigenous-heritage-workshop/>

- **Update - (Ann Hardy) – Newcastle History App**- Ann advised that the Newcastle history App is nearing completion, there have been some technical ‘hiccups’ but all content has been compiled, graphic designer engaged and WSP Digital doing the final build. Name of app has been reviewed, a consultative group agreed on new name ‘NewyHISTORY’, and graphics refined to reflect this change. App to be launched in June to early July- TBA.
- **Lost Newcastle Oral History Project**- An Oral History Guide has been compiled and is available for students, staff and the community. It is a step-by-step guide with links to other useful sources, includes, ‘Who to Interview’, ‘Research Tips’, ‘What Questions to Ask’, ‘Tips from Conducting Interview’, ‘Ethical Practice-Granting Permission’, ‘Devices to Use’, ‘Editing and Transcribing’. Ann played a short excerpt of interview with Veronica Phillips (nee Harper) born in 1884, aged 105 at time of the interview and is an exceptional and rare interview because of her recollections pre-1900s, describing the great drought in 1898, the “suffragettes” movement, “unsinkable Titanic” and helping fundraise for soldiers going off to WWI. Short version of interview is available here <https://soundcloud.com/uoncc/a-woman-growing-up-in-the-hunter-valley-veronica-phillips-25-aug-1989-short-version> The Oral History Guide can be found here <https://uoncc.wordpress.com/2016/04/07/lost-newcastle-oral-history-project/>
- UON student and CRWP intern Patrick Lindus has been researching Newcastle’s Maritime History, focussing on the practice of Shanghaiing and blackbirding, he is integrating sources in a CRWP WordPress post, post includes a list of archives held in UON Cultural Collections, extracts from oral histories, as well as other written and visual sources.

- Recent book *History of King Edward Park* by Dr Robert Evans was discussed recently at Nctle's Writers Festival, although book is about the park, it is also about the culture of the developing city during the 1800s, perceptions and attitudes and describes the struggles in Newcastle gaining cultural institutions and park lands.

**b) Update- National Trust – Nil**

**c) Update – Newcastle Council – NIL**

**8. Public Advocacy – NIL**

**9. General Business-**

- a)** (Jude Conway) – Jude mentioned that the UON History Department has started an Intimate Histories research group supporting UON Research Higher Degree students. Convener is Dr Nancy Cushing.
- b)** (Ron Barber)- Ron has offered Fort Scratchley as a venue for future meetings, Ann will liaise with Ron to arrange a meeting.

**11. Close: 3.00 PM**

**Date of next meeting will be Monday, 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2016 in the IDC Building, 1-3pm.**