

Coal River Working Party Meeting

7th September, 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 Ann Hardy
2. **Present:** Ann Hardy (Chair- Minute taker), Robert Watson, Charles Martin, Helen Denzin Maree Shilling, Ken Shilling, Ron Barber, Ziggy Szyda, Russell Rigby, Emeritus Professor John Fryer, David Dial, Brian Roach, Marilla North, Rob Jones, Tim Davidson, Alan Baynham, Don Seton-Wilkinson, Chas Keys,

Apologies: Gionni di Gravio, Sarah Cameron, Peter Bergin, Anne Creavey, Kerrie Brauer, Emeritus Professor Maree Gleeson, Ian Eckford, Member for Wallsend Sonia, Peter Leven, Jane Ison, Bronwyn Law, Lesley Gent, Jude Conway, Suzanne Martin, Ruth Cotton, Keith Parsons, Dene Hawken, Nola Hawken, Julieanne Tilse.

Visitors: Welcome to newcomers Alan Baynham and Tim Davidson. Tim briefly spoke about his professional background in visual and digital media.

3. **Confirmation of Previous Minutes:** The minutes for 7th August 2015 was confirmed by Maree Shilling and seconded – John Fryer.
4. **Business arising from previous minutes:**
5. **Presentations- NIL**
6. **Reports and Updates:**
 - a) **Updates- (Ann Hardy on behalf of Gionni di Gravio)** – Attended the Aust. Society of Archivists Conference in Hobart - presented paper about the Rodoni Collection and how projects such as this can be done at minimal expense, title of paper is “Turning the Smell of an Oily Rag into the Perfumed Garden of Memory”.

Tasmanian Convict Project – At the Aust. Society of Archivists Conference Prof. Hamish Maxwell-Stewart from the University of Tasmania spoke about the ‘Founders & Survivors’ project, a partnership between historians, genealogists, demographers and population health researchers. The project seeks to record and study the founding population of 73,000 men women and children who were transported to Tasmania. Many survived their convict experience and went on to help build a new society. He compares height data of those who came to Tasmania with people who remained in Britain and Ireland, finding that often “across a population, an average height tells you a lot about the experiences that that population experienced when they were in utero and up to about the age of six.” Further information about the project can be found here <http://www.abc.net.au/news/2015-08-25/the-health-effects-of-convict-transportation-to-tasmania/6720312> After the conference Gionni contacted Prof. Maxwell-Stewart about a companion set of convict records relating to Newcastle and the Hunter Region. Last year five (5) filing cabinet drawers of transcribed convicts ticket of leave forms were located, that include over 11,500 individually numbered forms completed and ready for input into an electronic database. Information on each convict includes the Prisoners No., Name, Ship, Date, Native Place, Trade, Offence, Place of Trial, Sentence, Year of Birth, Assignment(s), Married, Religion, Ticket cancelled, Runaway, Business Trade, Conditional Pardon. These transcribed records were collected by the Newcastle Family History Society. Gionni will continue to liaise with Prof Maxwell-Stewart and Newcastle Family History Society about future collaborations.

Communication Student Project - Gionni, Ann and Robert met with Communication students recently to answer questions about the CRWP and discuss what communication strategies are currently being used, students will work in teams to develop strategies that are more focused than previous strategies compiled by students. Recommendations should help deliver a new look CRPW, relaunch next year.

National Heritage nomination – Ann advised the Gionni had received a letter from the Commonwealth Dept of Environment to inform that the National Heritage Nomination submitted some time ago by the CRWP was unsuccessful – was not one of the 5 places considered on the ‘Finalised Priority List for the National Heritage List 2015-16.’ Places that were nominated were Abbotsford Convent (VIC), Former Female Factory Parramatta (NSW), Murry Island Group (Torres Strait), Queen Victoria Markets (VIC), Willow Court Barracks Precinct & Frescati House (TAS). Ann read out the letter and provided background about the CRWP’s involvement in

National Nomination process to newcomers to the group. A lengthy discussion took place about National listing and possible strategies to gain wider support, there were many suggestions of groups and individuals who may want to get involved. Don Seton-Wilkinson spoke about the need to reinvigorate support and suggested a sub-committee be formed to work on strategies and ways to communicate more broadly the benefits of heritage listing. **ACTION:** That a sub-committee be established to develop strategies to progress National Heritage Listing of the Coal River Precinct. **Moved:** Don Seton-Wilkinson and **seconded:** Marilla North. The following people volunteered to be on sub-committee, Don Seton-Wilkinson, Marilla North, Doug Lithgow, Brian Roach, and Ann Hardy. Doug also suggested that there will be an opportunity to raise the issue at an upcoming Public Voice session at Newcastle Council in September.

Fellowship of first Fleeters Hunter Valley – Lesley Gent brought to our attention the Coal River Bulletin no. 45 from the Chapter of the Fellowship of first Fleeters. Lesley noticed that they have a new logo similar the one the CRWP uses on WordPress. This is further evidence as to why the CRWP need to reconsider renaming and rebranding etc.

- b) Update- (Ann Hardy) – Margaret Henry Oral History** - Ann advised she has been working on the Margaret Henry Oral History Archive funded by the Vera Deacon History Fund and supported by the Cultural Collections at the UON. The project is timely as many would know that Margaret is seriously ill. The project has involved digitising over 200 oral history tapes that were done by Open Foundation students in the late 1980s. These were instigated by Margaret Henry, a History Lecturer at the UON at the time.
- c) Lambton Photo-** Helen English is in the last stages of completing her PhD, her theme is music making in Newcastle and surrounding suburbs in the 1860s and 1870s, she is after an image of the Druids Hall, or Stoker's Hotel in Lambton. Robert Watson advised that the recently published book about the history of Lambton has a photograph of Stoker's Hall. Ann will inform Helen.

Archivists Conference - Ann also attended the Aust. Society of Archivists Conference in Hobart and presented paper "Islands of the Insane – Our Records, Perceptions and the Lost Voices from the 'Asylum'" about mental health records from the 'Newcastle Asylum for Imbecile and Idiot' (1871-1900) and whether there should be greater efforts to re-connect information about the lives of individuals in asylums during the nineteenth century, with the wider community. Ann hopes to pursue this research.

d) Update- National Trust – Ann advised of the following exhibition by the Geological Survey of New South Wales, NSW & Friends of Grossmann about the story of the Australian World War 1 Tunnellers and the role of geology. This exhibition is an overview of the inception and feats of the Australian Tunnellers, including the role of eminent Australian geologist TW Edgeworth David, the geology of the Western Front and the contribution and acknowledgement of the many local men who joined the Tunnelling

PLACE: BROUGH HOUSE, CHURCH ST, MAITLAND

WHEN: FRIDAY 9th OCTOBER – SUNDAY 25th OCTOBER, 2015 (FRIDAYS TO SUNDAYS
10.00 am – 3.00 pm - gold coin entry)

CONTACTS: janece.mcdonald@newcastle.edu.au; earle@bigpond.com
mareefarrelly@yahoo.com: Janece 49334450 or Sandy 49886454

b) Update – Newcastle Council (Sarah Cameron) - NIL.

7. Advocacy – NIL

8. General Business-

- a)** David Dial advised that he continues to be very busy researching and compiling stories for the Newcastle Herald's *On this Day* feature about people of the Hunter Region involved in WWI. David is also the administrator of 'Hunter Valley Military History' Facebook page. See the following link for updates https://www.facebook.com/HunterValleyMilitaryHistory?hc_location=ufi
David spoke of the challenges of having information and discussion on social media about history, and how on occasions there can be negative comments made. Other members of the group also spoke of similar experiences, and were grateful to David for his work as a military historian at this important time of ANAZAC commemorations.
- b)** Ann advised that the City of Newcastle - Cultural Strategy (DRAFT August 2015) 2016-2019 is currently on public exhibition, David Dial gave some feedback and Ann will put something together on behalf of the CRWP.
- c)** Don Seton- Wilkinson – Dalwood House – Don advised that Dalwood House (c.1828) is the oldest Greek revival house in Australia and at present there is a Conservation Management Plan underway, Don is doing the historical analysis. Don is after any pre- 1980 photographs of the house, Ann advised that she thought Suzanne Martin may have some- she will follow this

up. Don also advised that he has enrolled in post graduate studies at the UON, plans to further his research in Wyndham family and estate.

- d) John Fryer brought in a reproduced 1834 map by Thomas Mitchell of the Hunter Region. What makes this map unique is that it has illustrations by William Keene drawn directly onto map. Keene's work was added some years later as it is signed "Examiner of Coalfields", a position he did not take up until the 1850s.

- e) Robert Watson advised of the two recent publications. The first is the "Lambton – A Nineteenth Century Mining Town" by Julie Keating recently launched in Lambton park and has some wonderful photographs, it is available for \$30 Lambton Newsagents. The second book is about the History of Lambton Public School, compiled by Robert for the schools 150 year celebrations. There are a number of newly found photographs in this book, Robert spoke about the process of publication, negotiating content etc. and the many stories told on the day by former students. Congratulations to Robert on this great achievement.

9. Close: 3.00 PM

Date of next meeting will be Monday, 2nd November, 2015 in the IDC Building, 1-3pm.