

Hunter Living Histories Meeting
9th April 2018 1:00pm – 3:00pm
Room x703, UON NewSpace Building, Hunter Street, Newcastle
Minutes

Start: 1:00

1. **Acknowledgement to Country** by Gionni di Gravio

2. **Present:** Gionni di Gravio (Chair), Ann Hardy (Minute taker), Keith Parsons, Ron Barber, David Dial, Tim Adams, Jessica Waugh, Charles Martin, Bronwyn Law, Don Seton Wilkinson, Robert Watson, Suzanne Martin, John Witte, Lesley Gent, Ross Edmonds, Jude Conway, Maree Shilling, Ken Shilling, Julianne Tilse, Ian Eckford, Brian Walsh, Ron Barber, John Fryer, David Dial,

Apologies: Member for Wallsend Sonia Hornery Emeritus Professor Maree Gleeson, Joshua White, Marilla North, Rob Jones, Howard Dick, Louise Gale, Hugh Watt, Christine Brudelin, Paul Newey, Chas Keys, Sarah Johnson, Russell Rigby, Peter Sherlock, Anne Creevey, Doug Lithgow, Di Kinloch, Sue Effenberger, Brian Roach.

Visitors: Rohini Chatterjee (Griffith University) - Newcastle's Convict Coal Mines

3. **Confirmation of Previous Minutes:** The minutes for 5 March 2018 was confirmed by Don Seton-Wilkinson and seconded by Peter Sherlock.

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

5. **Presentations**

Newcastle's Convict Coal Mines - (Rohini Chatterjee- Griffith University) – Rohini spoke about the Rohini researching the early convict coal mines at Newcastle, Master's thesis, which she suggests Australia's first coal mines and surprised that there aren't already interpreted and that there is minimal about this history when visiting Fort Scratchley - most visitors don't know about this history. Rohini emphasised the link between memory, heritage and mines, suggesting there may be a collective memory and gave some comparative examples of coal mines that had been rehabilitated at Wieliczka Salt mines in Poland that operated 700 years ago, The Big Pit

mines in England, and Zollverin Coal mines in Germany, and finally Sovereign Hill, Australia which is more of a pseudo experience of the gold rush era. Russell suggested that a hole could be drilled beneath the Newcastle Museum; a camera inserted could show the extent of the coal adits and shafts and be an interesting cultural tourism experience. Tim Adams also agreed suggesting that most developments have geo technical works carried out and old coal shafts could be easily located.

Rohini thanked all for listening and for their input. Ann will forward email contact to those able to offer ongoing advice.

6. Aboriginal heritage update – NIL

Update- (Gionni di Gravio) – Gionni spoke about a recent Hunter Living Histories blog post about Toll Cottage. Toll cottage is considered to be Newcastle’s oldest building, however further research is required. The post collates information from Russell Rigby, Charles Martin and Gionni has found many other sources and curated in the blog post. Images are in high resolution and can be viewed by clicking on image. Included in the post is an analysis of the area using John Rae’s 1849 watercolour painting of Newcomen Street. There was a general discussion at the meeting about the age of the cottage; similar comparisons were made with other local buildings. i.e. bricks compared with those at nearby Claremont House, and the Military Barracks. If you have further information about the cottage, please forward to Gionni. See post here <https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2018/04/08/toll-cottage/>

-General discussion about other heritage issues in Newcastle. Newcastle Council used to have a Strategic Heritage Committee during the 2000s but this was disbanded approximately a decade ago. Buildings such as Elladale (Mayfield’s oldest house) was demolished last year and is one example of a loss of significant building and architecture. Concerns were also raised about the Maritime Centre closing in May, questions were asked about whether the centre will be relocated somewhere else. Suzanne Martin also asked about the former courthouse columns that used to stand in Parnell Place and what plans there are for them. It was suggested that these issues be communicated to Tom Smith (Newcastle Council’s Heritage representative). There are many opportunities and commemorative events that could be showcased and promoted by council. **ACTION:** Ann to forward these issues to Tom Smith and see if he is able to attend the next meeting.

7. Update- (Ann Hardy) – Ann gave a brief overview GLAMx Lab and other initiatives. A few UON representatives were on a panel discussion at Newcastle’s Writers Festival discussing the Deep Time Project. We also have a 4 Humanities students undertaking 80 hr placements with us in the Lab, as well as large group of Communication students, 73 in total who are viewing NBN television footage and writing up time codes and summaries.

8. Update - (Tim Adams) – Tim provided an update and photographs of the recent light rail works underway in Newcastle. He will explore whether images can be shared with the wider community. We thank Tim for his monthly updates.

9. Update (Museums and historical groups)

- a) Maree Shilling advised there will be a tour of Sandgate Cemetery by Newcastle Family History Society on the 20th May, further information will be available at the next meeting.
- b) Keith Parsons also provided an update on behalf of the Hunter Regional Committee of the National Trust.

10. General Business -

- a) General discussion about Wickham School of Arts and need for further historical research, particularly the social and cultural aspects. There are many entries on Trove, about the building and Jude Conway advised there is an association with Essie Wood (from the Woods brewery family), the building also contained a free community Kindergarten at one time, as well as the Newcastle Police Boys Club.
- b) David Dial advised that he would like to see WWII servicemen acknowledged (just as the WWI serviceman were acknowledged on Anzac Walk), coming up to 75th anniversary.

11. Close: 3.00 PM

Date of next meeting will be Monday, 7th May 2018 at University Council Board Room, IDC Building, University Drive, 1-3pm.