

Hunter Living Histories Meeting
4th June 2018 1:00pm – 3:00pm
University Council Board Room, IDC Building, University Drive
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, Jessica Waugh, Robert Watson, Suzanne Martin, John Witte, Lesley Gent, Jude Conway, Maree Shilling, Ken Shilling, Ian Eckford, Brian Walsh, Emeritus Professor John Fryer, Russell Rigby, Chas Keys, Stephen Miller, Phil Warren, Tom Smith, Bronwyn Law, Peter Sherlock, Anne Creevey, Doug Lithgow, Brian Roach, Tim Adams, Paul Newey, Deborah Wardell, Hilary Oliver, Peter Sherlock, Amir Mogadam, Russell Rigby, Tom Smith

Apologies: Member for Wallsend Sonia Hornery, Emeritus Professor Maree Gleeson, Marilla North, Rob Jones, Sarah Johnson, Di Kinloch, Sue Effenberger, Janese McDonald, Charles Martin, Don Seton Wilkinson, Amelia Gould, Kerrie Brauer, Peter Leven,

Visitors: Nil

3. Confirmation of Previous Minutes:

4. Business arising from previous minutes: -

5. Presentations

- a. Deep Time Story for Munibung Hill – (Stuart Carter, President – Munibung Hill Conservation Society). Doug Lithgow advised that Cardiff High School Magazine is named 'Munibung'; Ann Hardy suggested that UON Natural History Illustration students might be interested in documenting the area. The best access to Munibung Hill is via Farm Street, Speers Point.

- b. Florence Austral (1892-1968) Australian operatic soprano – (Phil Warren & Hilary Oliver)

- c. William and Elizabeth Paterson – (Brian Walsh).

d. Book 'Land Settlement of NSW' – (John Fryer)

ALL OF THE ABOVE PRESENTATIONS ARE AVAILABLE AT THE FOLLOWING LINK

<https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2018/06/08/4-june-2018/>

6. Reports and Updates

a. **Update- (Gianni di Gravio)** – Due to time constraints update held over until next meeting.

b. **Update- (Ann Hardy)** – Due to time constraints update held over until next meeting.

c. **Update - (Tim Adams)** – Tim advised that there might be an opportunity for this group to engage with the Port Corporation who are planning cliff stabilisation works at Nobbys Headland to investigate the historic tunnels. The site has Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal heritage significance and local traditional groups are in consultation with the Port Corporation about the works. If the tunnels were to be exposed. There will be a meeting with key stakeholders in coming weeks to discuss management issues, and input and representation from this group suggested. Ideally, if the tunnels were exposed then this would be a good opportunity to survey, photograph and document the tunnels. Peter Sherlock suggested that a camera could possibly be sent in to record tunnel, and Tim clarified that there would likely only be one tunnel exposed. Action- Chair to write to Port Corporation about

Tim also gave a short presentation on the archaeological excavation near the Toronto Hotel; it was in the general vicinity of Ebenezer the mining estate of Reverend Threlkeld during the 1840s. No evidence of Rev. Threlkeld's mine was found.

d. **Update - (Tom Smith-NCC)** – Tom informed that he is formulating the Aboriginal Heritage Strategy to be implemented across council, sensitive mapping and looking at how strategy effects whole of council. The Glebe Road Heritage Conservation Area (The Junction) is currently on public exhibition and will be gazetted soon- is the first conservation area listed in 20 years. Tom is also involved in memorial gates and time capsule upcoming commemoration, working with heritage architect John Carr.

-Tom also met with NSW Government representatives about the war memorial mapping and survey project and there will be a presentation at July meeting.

e. **Robert Watson (Lambton Park WW1 Memorial Gates/Time Capsule – Report (May 2018)**

Robert Watson reported on the Memorial Gates in Lambton Park. The Centenary of the laying of the Foundation Stone is on 19 October 2018, although the actual Gates were 'opened' in April 1919. Their construction was entirely paid for by the fundraising activities of the mothers, sisters and wives of the men who volunteered to go to the Great War. They organised a major Sports Day in the park in 1918 and a huge Gala Day in 1919, but in between, they held euchre parties, concerts, operettas, bazaars and fancy dress nights. These were in addition to Send-off parties for each soldier and Welcome Home events on their return.

Two newspaper reports at the time mentioned the burial of a time capsule containing the newspaper with the Declaration of War headline, some coins and a list of the Lambton Councillors.

Mr John Estell, MLA, laid the Foundation Stone formally and he was presented with a Gilt Trowel, which he stated would be kept as a treasured item by his family. [Late note: Robert has contacted his descendants and they do in fact still have the Trowel]

Robert's extensive research on Trove, through the Australian War Memorial, the Australian Anzac Museum and the RSL has identified only a handful of time capsules being deliberately excavated – but none from WW1. There was one from WW1, which was found *by accident* in Miranda. Therefore, the recovery of this Lambton capsule will be a very rare event and likely of National interest.

Some quirky things Robert found:

- The official opening ceremony for the Gates in 1919 was cancelled by the State Department of Health due to the Spanish flu epidemic ... but one concerned citizen wrote a letter to the paper pointing out that the Gala Day still went ahead, and attended by thousands of people!
- A local colliery donated one ton of coal as a prize for the sports.
- One event was "Killing the Kaiser, or anything else German".
- The gate hinges on the pillars have been changed, possibly because the stonemason made a mistake.

Next steps:

Robert is hopeful that NCC to recover the time capsule and to bury a new capsule will grant permission. The date would be on or close to October 19. The great grandson of John Estell (also John) is saving the date so he can attend and bring the Gilt Trowel.

Cr Andrea Rufo has been discussing this with NCC's Heritage Planner, Tom Smith. A Heritage Report has been commissioned.

7. Public Advocacy

8. General Business -

- a. David Dial – David spoke about the upcoming commemorative anniversaries, David continues to write for the Newcastle Herald each work.

- b. Doug Lithgow suggested that the Heritage Council of NSW be contacted about new knowledge about the Coal River Precinct (1764), as this group has amassed a lot of material since the precinct was listed in 2003.

- c. Suzanne Martin advised she received communication from UON representative stating that it would not be possible for the historic Court House column (managed by Newcastle council) would not be installed at the NewSpace building.

9. Close: 3.00 PM

Date of next meeting will be Monday, 2nd July 2018 at University Council Board Room, IDC Building, University Drive, 1-3pm.