

Hunter Living Histories Meeting
3rd February 2020 1:00pm – 3:00pm

Room X701 at NewSpace, City Campus, Cnr Auckland & Hunter Streets, Newcastle
Minutes

Start: 1:00

- 1. Acknowledgement to Country** by Gianni di Gravio

- 2. Present:** Gianni di Gravio OAM (Chair), Ann Hardy (minute taker), Ron Barber, John Witte, Suzanne Martin, Leslie Gent OAM, Don Seton Wilkinson, David Dial OAM, Keith Parsons, Jessica Waugh, Ian Eckford, Mark Rigby, Robert Watson, Bob James, Ian Eckford, Kerrie Shaw, Tim Adams, Paul Newey, Tom Smith, Maree Shilling, Ken Shilling, Doug Lithgow, Isabelle Howlett, Louise Gale, Judy Lindsay, Ross Edmonds, Roland Bannister, Dennis Thurlow, Bob Parnell, Bob Donnelly, Paul Kiem.

- 3. Apologies:** Prof. Maree Gleeson, Maria Pavela, Kerrie Brauer, Peter Leven, Prof. John Fryer, Howard Dick, Brian Roach, Hugh Watt, Sarah Jansen, Garry Jones, Tim Adams, Charles Martin,

Visitors: Ashlea Oliver (UON student) and Dr Brad Bitossi.

- 4. Confirmation of Previous Minutes:** John Witte. Seconded Ron Barber

- 5. Business arising from previous minutes:** - NIL

- 6. Introductions:** Because this is the first meeting of the year, members introduced themselves and briefly spoke about their area of interest. Ron Barber (Fort Scratchley Historical Society), John Witte (Rainbow History Group), Suzanne Martin (former Physio RNH), Leslie Gent OAM (military history), Don Seton Wilkinson (UON PhD student), David Dial OAM (Military Historian), Keith Parsons (HRCNT), Jessica Waugh (UON graduate/GLAM^x Lab volunteer), Ian Eckford (Architectural Historian), Mark Rigby (Stockton Historical Society), Robert Watson (Local historian, Lambton), Bob James (Historian, Fraternal Societies), Kerrie Shaw (NCC Digitisation Officer), Paul Newey (Local history), Tom Smith, Maree Shilling (NFHS), Ken Shilling (NFHS), Doug Lithgow (P&PM), Isabelle Howlett (Development Officer- heritage,NCC), Louise Gale (Local

history), Judy Lindsay (Oral history project), Ross Edmonds (Local National Trust), Roland Bannister (Miss Porters House), Dennis Thurlow (local history, environmental), Bob Parnell (UON student), Bob Donnelly (Newcastle Industrial Heritage), Paul Kiem (NSW History Teachers Assoc.).

7. Presentations

- Ashlea Oliver (UON student) & Dr Brad Bitossi – Wallsend Hospital Museum exhibit at Andrew Nash Clinic. Dr Bitossi spoke about his association with the collection at the former Wallsend Museum and the opportunity to exhibit some pieces at his workplace at the Andrew Nash clinic that has purpose-built exhibition spaces. The project was a collaboration between the clinic, HNEAHS, UON (via GLAMx Lab) and wider Wallsend community. Ashlea's (creative industries student) major project was to curate the exhibition at the clinic. She described the scope of the project and the large and diverse collection, and also discussed how items were selected and how she devised a display plan. Dr Bitossi advised that feedback has been very positive from the general public and clients at the practice. The exhibition is on permanent display at 73 Cowper Street, Wallsend. Further information about the project is here <https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2019/12/09/wallsendhospmus/>
- Kerrie Shaw (Heritage Digitisation Specialist, City of Newcastle) – Kerrie gave some context around council's collection, there are holdings of 440,000 heritage items, including historically significant works of art. This virtual reality project will showcase the Mayoral portrait gallery, created by Tim Levy and associates. Stage 1 (1859-1938) includes 3 virtual galleries and 46 portraits of mayors. The virtual gallery will likely have the look and feel of the Newcastle City Hall and have the ability to move through and between rooms, the project will be user interactive and fun whilst maintaining a sense of space. The digital exhibit will be available at the Stewart Ave site and available on council's website. Kerrie gave a demonstration of the VR to members of the group.
- Leslie Gent – Leslie gave a presentation on the Aust. War Memorial redevelopment.

We thank all speakers for their sharing their projects.

8. Reports and Updates

Update – Gianni di Gravio- Gianni spoke about the recent destruction of historic records at the Newcastle East Public School, due to contamination issues. This school is the earliest

continuous school in Australia and limited records now survive. The following post shows some digitized records “Newcastle East Public School Early History”

<https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2020/01/31/neps/>

Gionni also briefly mentioned the Allan Postcard collection that is underway. The collection holds about 1900 items (mostly postcards) and recent story on NBN Television described the project. Also see “Preserving a Local Collection of Early 1900s Postcards – The Allan Project” further information is at this link <https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2020/01/20/allan/>

A post during December 2019 was created about “The Bank of Newcastle The First “Country Bank” in Australia”, is quite fascinating. Mr Ian Bowrey brought to our attention the auction of an original banknote issued in 1828 by the Bank of Newcastle as reported the Topics column of the Newcastle Herald (12/12/19). For further information see

<https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2019/12/12/bank-of-newcastle/>

Thanks to a donation from the family of the late Dr Ben Champion to the Vera Deacon Regional History Fund, the complete Hunter Valley Registers spanning 1843 to 1905 have now been digitised and available on the Living Histories @ UON digital platform. The complete set are available here for free access: <https://livinghistories.newcastle.edu.au/nodes/view/99575>

Dr Champion compiled these ‘Red Books’ titled, “Family Entries, Births, Deaths, Marriages with some Personalities, Institutions and Oddments in the Hunter Valley District” (also known as the Hunter Valley Registers) into 23 volumes by meticulously researching and photographing notices from early district newspapers. The digitisation was undertaken by one of our emerging professionals Jessica Waugh, in the GLAM^x Lab.

A post was compiled celebrating the work of the Scott Sisters, their scientific and artistic documentation work were like an “ark”; the lepidoptera and the transformations they drew so skillfully were entombed within the pages, recording how these incubated a new life and identity to emerge as new creatures in a new world. To read “The Legacy of the Scott Sisters – Natural History Illustration at the UON” and view online here

<https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2019/12/10/legacy-scott-sisters/>

Ann Hardy, Glam^x Lab update: Ann advised that during December 2019 several collections have gone up online thanks to Ashleigh Miller (UON volunteer). These include ‘The Ross Edmonds Cabinet Card Collection’, images are scans of a collection of cabinet cards (also known as post cards). The collection contains portraits of people and family groups from various photography studios. We thank Ross Edmonds for allowing us to share his collection with the wider community. <https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2019/12/11/edmonds/>

Also, ‘The George Thomas Rowland Collection’ is now available online. These images are scans of glass negatives and magic lantern slides of George Thomas Rowland (1887-1972) from Merewether, NSW. This Collection contains some of the strangest assortment of photographs, illustrations, advertisements and mystery shots. View the collection online here <https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2019/12/11/rowland/>

“The Pettigrew Magic Lantern Slides” is another collection that has been digitised. These images are scans of a collection of glass plate negatives and magic lantern hand coloured slides which were believed to have belonged to William Pettigrew who worked as projectionist at Wallsend during the first half of the 20th Century. The collection was kindly donated by his grandson David Pettigrew in 2017. View the images online here <https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2019/12/11/pettigrew/>

Both Ann and Gionni spoke about the immense task in digitising the AV material at the GLAM^x Lab, and the wonderful work of volunteers (many are former NBN employees) in doing so. Digitisation is led by Phillip Lloyd and his specialist skills enable a diversity of formats to be digitised. Ann advised that she went to a two-day ‘Digital Directions 2019’ symposium at NFSA where others spoke about difficulties digitising audio-visual material. The Deadline 2025 to have vulnerable material digitised is fast approaching. The NBN Television archive is diverse, includes written documents such as Index cards and scripts, the following post outlines progress at the GLAM^x lab, and the various project goals. We sincerely thank our volunteers, students and staff involved in this important project. For further information see <https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2020/01/15/glamx-av-2020/> and NFSA Digital Directions 2019 presentations are available here <https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2020/01/28/nfsa-dd2019/>

Finally, Ann spoke about project “Florence Austral – Our forgotten Diva” that HLH/Library is doing in collaboration with Newcastle Council, via Community and Culture Committee. Florence Austral (1892-1968) was an internationally renowned singer and performed in Opera Houses

around during the early 20th century. She taught singing at the Newcastle Conservatorium (now part of UON) from 1954 until 1959 and died at Mayfield Nursing home in 1968. The project will undertake archival research and consolidate sources with plan to exhibit Florence's life in some way. Also see the following link 'GLAMx : WIL Projects 2020' for other projects

<https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2020/01/22/glamx-wil-projects-2020/>

Tim Adams, archaeological update: N/A

Tom Smith and Isabelle Howlett - Newcastle Council update: Tom introduced his colleague Isabelle Rowlett who has recently been appointed 'Development Officer- heritage' at council. Tom advised that council's new heritage strategy is currently being drafted and will be on public exhibition in coming months. The group welcomed Isabelle and invited her to attend HLH meetings.

9. Public Advocacy

10. General Business –

Doug Lithgow – On behalf of HLH members Doug congratulated Gionni di Gravio for receiving an OAM on Australia Day 2020, it is a wonderful recognition of the years of hard work and dedication towards preserving the region's history. We are very proud of his achievements that are documented here <https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2020/01/28/gdgoam/> Gionni was presented with a congratulatory card from the group.

11. Close: 3.00 PM

Date of next meeting will be Monday, 2nd March 2020 at Auchmuty Library room L329, University Drive, Callaghan 1-3pm.