

Hunter Living Histories Meeting

6 September, 2021 1:00pm – 3:00pm

via Zoom

Minutes

Start: 1:00

1. Acknowledgement to Country ; Gionni di Gravio.

- Vale – Uncle Bill Smith and Ron Gordon, Indigenous Elders and strong community leaders recently passed away, we acknowledge their significant contributions and send our condolences to family and friends.

Gionni welcomed Paige Wright (Special Collections Librarian) to the meeting. Paige is new in this role overseeing rare books and coordinating the Living histories repository.

2. Present: Gionni di Gravio OAM, Ann Hardy, Doug Lithgow, Sarah Jansen, Assoc. Prof Nancy Cushing, Emeritus Prof. John Fryer, Emeritus Prof. Maree Gleeson, Emeritus Prof. Howard Bridgman, Sonya Hornery MP for Wallsend, Ron Barber, Judy Lindsay, David Dial OAM, Robert Watson, Sarah Xenos, Mark Rigby, Bob Donnelly, Louise Gale, Ken Thornton, Charles Martin, Jeffrey Freeman, Bronwyn Law, Cheryl Anne Bailey, Peter Sherlock, John Witte, Ross Edmonds, Shane Blatchford, Howard Dick, Ian Eckford, Don Seton-Wilkinson, Lesley Gent, Karen Crofts , Kerrie Shaw, Jenni Skulander, Paige Wright, Julie Keating, Ash Duncan, David Cameron, Dr Garritt van Dyk, Karen Crofts.

3. Apologies: Tim Adams, Mala Scorse

4. Confirmation of Previous Minutes 2 August: Don Seton-Wilkinson Seconded Doug Lithgow.

5. Business arising from previous minutes: - Ann informed presentations from August meeting will be made available as soon as onsite access is permitted.

6. Presentations –

- Jennifer Skulander (University UON Research support) – presented on ‘How to use the University Library Catalogue’ providing some helpful tips specific to local history content. Presentation will be made available online. Please contact Jennifer if you have any further questions.

- Kerry Shaw (CoN Library) – ‘Amplify’ (oral history transcribing service). Kerry gave an overview of the Amplify transcribe software and how they are using it at the City of Newcastle Library, the system is hosted by the State Library of NSW, and during lockdown there has been an uptake in online transcribing. Kerry shared the CoN landing page and demonstrated some of the functions, and oral histories relating to the Newcastle Earthquake. More information about Amplify is here <https://stage.amplify.gov.au/>

7. Reports and Updates

Fortress Newcastle Project – Bob Donnelly - The project group involved 10 community groups, started work in March 2020 and successful in grants to create an portable exhibition, also working with Glenn Dormand and Tony Whittaker who have interviewed 11 local people to produce a 45 min video. Exhibition will include 40 panels to be launched next year, free public access. Collation and design work is in progress. To date only limited number of items at National archives have been digitise, over 100 files viewed in Sydney, however due to Covid limited access to institutions has been limited. Preliminary writing has started, 10 people involved and also discussing recruitment of a professional writer and graphic designer. Team aims to progress the project as much as possible. For further information see <https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2021/09/02/fortress-newcastle-2021/>

Weather Records - Howard Bridgman – Howard is a climatologist working on historical weather datasets, spoke about Maryland and Wollong records, now have data sets for Maryland Station from 1873 to 1903, few photos of records that show how data was recorded. Acknowledged Dr Ken Thornton who is doing a lot of work on this project. As for the Wollong records there are now spreadsheets completed for

period from 1893 to 1928, working with team of 12, many challenges such as working with 6 different formats . Also confirmed Marian Wyndham's death. Plan to write a piece for The Conversation and further papers. For further information see <https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2021/06/09/maryland2/>

Lighthouse Arts Project - Karen Crofts – Karen gave an update on the Lighthouse Arts project at Nobbys-Whibayganba Headland, she shared the new website that is now live and shared parts of the project, including information about the activation of cottages for exhibitions, 'house of stories' that will involve writers and also have a visual component, gift shop with local books etc. Artists are ready to go onsite as soon as safe to do so, there are 12 studio spaces across 2 cottages, on weekends the cottages will be a live space for lectures, book launches and live music. For more information see <https://lighthousearts.org.au/> also see History page to Tell Your Story or leave a comment.

Gionni di Gravio – Update. Gionni spoke about the NBN television 'Super digitisers' achievements, thanks to Mark Rigby and Phillip Lloyd and fellow digitisers have managed to digitise all the magnetic news tape from NBN television from 1982 to 2019, including 3,699 hours containing over 112,000 local stories recorded by Channel 3 just in time for the 60th anniversary celebration next year 2022. The team were congratulated on their achievement and for reaching the 2025 Deadline. For more information see <https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2021/08/31/super-digitisers/> Ann spoke about the next steps of the project, which include a pilot project that is currently underway to more easily locate subjects and material in the thousands of hours of footage. Footage will eventually be available online.

Gionni delivered a talk on 'Tips & Techniques for Dating Historical Photographs' to the Royal Australian Historical Society (RAHS) in association with WEA Sydney. Presentation was over Zoom and is available online. For more information see <https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2021/08/26/dating-photos/>

Another HLH post relates to Ravensworth area and compliments a project completed a few years ago by Library intern on Ravensworth Homestead. The post "A Month of

Murder in the Hunter Valley – Wonnarua People and the Ravensworth Homestead” shares videos that include Scott Franks, Archaeologist and Wonnarua Clans Member speaking about the historical events from an Indigenous perspective. For more information see <https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2021/09/01/ravensworth-wonnarua/>

Ann Hardy, GLAMx Lab update.

Ann informed that it is History Week 2021 this week – Registrations are now open for History Week 2021 – ‘From the Ground Up’. The events will take place 4 - 12 September 2021. The University of Newcastle will host several events including one from the Library’s Special Collections. See <https://hunterlivinghistories.com/2021/09/01/histweek2021/>

Ann also mentioned that Sarah Xenos had created a Wikipedia entry for the 'Newcastle Corporation baths' from information compiled by one of our former interns Ashleigh Duncan.

Haslam Collection Project – Currently we have Shellie Smith, library intern at Special Collections working on the Haslam Collection, and plans to further digitise items in this collection and make accessible.

Tim Adams (Local archaeology) –

Tim emailed the following report to be shared with group. Small portion of a brick culvert running down Wolfe Street to the harbour was recently exposed at the corner of Hunter and Wolfe Streets intersection during Council’s east end streetscape works. As well as a portion of the top of the Perkins Street Boat Harbour wall exposed during Council Wharf Road carpark works. Tim will share more details at a future meeting.

8. General Business –

Robert Watson advised of a recent publication he compiled 'Lambton’s Coronation Hall, King’s Theatre Restaurant and Lizotte’s Live n’ Cookin’, the building will commemorate 150 years in December 2021.

Judy Lindsey (Engineers Heritage Australia) upcoming book “Reshaping the Hunter” reviews engineering in the region since closure of the BHP and the reinvention of many industries. Plan for book to be launched in December 2021 or early next year.

John Fryer spoke about his latest book, a novel, [‘Victor Trumper, my brother’](#), it is a good read and the historical social background is Australian rather than Victorian English as was the case with John’s previous publication ‘Dr. Grace’s Gnome’. All proceeds go to the Lord Taverners Charity for disadvantaged children, further information is available [here](#) Thank you John for sharing your latest publication.

New members David Cameron (professional historian) introduced himself, he is an alumnus of UON researching Walsh Island, David has a focus on archaeological reporting and passion for Hunter region history.

Julie Keating spoke about her new book “Glimpsed of a Newcastle Life”, reflection on her mother’s writing that was often published in the Newcastle Herald, PhD candidate Jude Conway wrote the forward of the book. Publication would be of interest to historian’s researching women’s history. Julie offered a copy of the book to Special Collections.

Nancy Cushing – wished everyone ‘Happy History week’, she will be presenting a talk on the Sydney Observatory at History Week event. and is also working on a article about the Newcastle coal monument.

Ron Barber- Fort Scratchley Association. Fort is currently closed and will stay closed, there will be no open day for the October long weekend. Also has been assisting Glenn Dormand with images for the Fortress Newcastle film.

Lesly Gent – 100-year anniversary of the RAAF, many events moved online. Next year is the 80th anniversary of the Pacific Squadron and work has started on this.

Sonia Hornery (State Member for Wallsend) – Congratulated members on the work being done by the university and communities.

Doug Lithgow – suggested that the [Coal River Precinct Walk brochure](#) be updated, would be beneficial to those visiting Nobbys Lighthouse. Possible WIL project for student.

Kerry Shaw (City of Newcastle) – mentioned the ‘Love Lambton’ podcasts that have been created with assistance from Julie Keating and Robert Watson, other podcasts are available here <https://omny.fm/shows/newcastlelibrariesreal>

Paige Wright acknowledged all the work that has been taking place by the community, with books being published etc, however pointed out that the Library currently has no space and asked members not to send any published material to Special Collections, instead the Library will contact publishers if they need to acquire books. If anyone has any questions please contact Paige at paigewright@newcastle.edu.au

Gionni will be putting up a HLH post about the Broadmeadow Railway roundhouse, and a second post on an Aboriginal factory site identified at Shepherds Hill mentioned in early 1900s publication. If any one has any information please let Gionni know.

Bob Donnelly, regarding Delprats Cottage and Newcastle Industrial Heritage Association and advised that group has been speaking with the University of Newcastle and there is interest in holding events at the site. Also advised of the sad passing of one of Frank Kadlec who was a committee member of NIHA. Replying to Doug’s query about the Adamstown Rifle Rang, Bob advised there is a lot of resources available and will likely be part of the Fortress Newcastle project.

Close: 3.00 PM

Date of next meeting will be Monday, 11 October 2021, 1-3pm. Meeting ZOOM only.