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PORT MACQUARIE HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.
Patron: Mr Keith Uptin OAM



President's Report

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I was very pleased to have our status as having an active dementia-friendly action plan confirmed by Dementia Australia and to receive our Certificate from Kara Nicholson. Elsewhere in this newsletter, Debbie reports on some of our work on becoming dementia-friendly. We still have some work to do, such as improving some of our internal signage, but I think it is probably that we have one potential barrier to achieving full dementia-friendly status—and that is our building.

I give full credit (and grateful thanks) to our predecessors for their foresight, determination and hard work in securing our premises and building the various extensions in the 1960s to 1980s. It is now 50 years since the first extensions were built (the re-built kitchen attached to the heritage building, the galleries that surround the north courtyard, the costume gallery and the meeting room upstairs), and thirty years since the last extension (the Howell Room where we store and catalogue the archives and photographs). Building codes were very different then and there was very little in the way of museum design standards. Despite our gradual improvements to lighting and layout, our galleries are tired and the layout can be confusing. Worse still, our upstairs sections are inaccessible to a proportion of our visitors (and our members and volunteers!). The stairs can be dangerous, and also make the movement of furniture and display items difficult. Our main entrance can also be difficult - even though there's only one step, it's not a small one and I see many visitors (and members) clutching at the door jamb as they enter or depart.

Rather than rush into short term solutions, we have made an application to the Regional Cultural Fund for funding for the development of a Master Plan and schematic design for our site, asking for over \$100,000. If successful, we will be engaging some professional and experienced consultants to develop a sustainable upgrade solution to deliver a well-designed regional museum building and cultural facility that is fit for purpose and will provide enduring cultural worth to the people of Port Macquarie and the region. We have nationally significant collections that need to be appropriately shared, exhibited and stored into the future.

What we want (an inviting and spacious entrance, larger and flexible exhibition spaces, public program and education spaces, the capacity for interactive exhibits and electronic displays, research nooks for visitors to look for information or photographs, secure storage spaces, appropriate environmental controls throughout, and comfortable workspaces for our volunteers) is not going to come cheap. Developing a master plan with the assistance of professional consultants (who have expertise that we lack), can ensure that when we start to seek funding (and partners) for the actual development, we will have a firm plan, a time-table, and a reliable estimate of costs (and benefits).

Our first step has been the Conservation Management Plan for our heritage-listed site, and this has now been accepted by the relevant authorities (subject to a few minor editorial changes). Having a master plan developed in the next twelve months may see us well placed to take advantage of opportunities that may arise in our area's bicentennial years.

Over the past few years, we have paid a lot of attention to our heritage building (new gutters and downpipes, new roof, new paint job), so it came as a bit of a surprise that the upper floor, at the entrance to the dining room, has decided that it wants some attention too! Des Grissell has kindly installed a temporary fix (some board to spread the load as

people step through the doorway), but it is only temporary. We are obtaining a building engineer's report, but it looks likely that we will have to install some more steel support beams. We will be discussing this with the Council's heritage adviser this month and will be looking for ways to fund the work. After all, we don't want to have to close the upper floor if it is considered too dangerous!

This month is, of course, the bicentenary of John Oxley's arrival in the area and his naming (or, should one say, re-naming) of the port and a number of other features. The Council has re-installed at Town Beach the memorial to John Oxley that was originally installed in 1929 to mark Oxley's campsite. The memorial includes the original plaque, so it still purports to mark the campsite, but the actual location of his campsite is a matter for debate. Oxley's published journal states "We pitched our tent upon a beautiful point of land, having plenty of good water and grass, and commanding a fine view of the interior of the port and surrounding country." To me, that is not a description of the Town Beach area, where there is no natural fresh water, let alone a view of the interior of the port (i.e. the area where Kooloonbung Creek meets the Hastings River). I think that the more likely site of Oxley's camp is somewhere between the Northpoint building and Clarence Street, near the stream that ran where the convict barrel drain now exists under Clarence Street and the El Paso Motel. A couple of proposals for new commemorative plaques or interpretive signs are being considered by Council.

A number of events have been organized to celebrate this part of our bicentenary period, and many of these are listed in the four-page lift out section of the local newspapers. Three members of the Society will be speaking at the Royal Historical Society's annual conference, which will take place on 20-21 October. The Society will be participating in the 200 Together event *An Exploration through Time* being held on the Town Green on October 28. And, of course, we will have our regular First Sunday Free on October 7.

Clive



Kara Nicholson presents our Dementia Friendly Certificate to President, Clive Smith.

Becoming Dementia Friendly

Our work on becoming dementia friendly continues with some recent physical improvements to our buildings and facilities. You may have noticed that we now have different coloured toilet seats! Changing over the toilet seats is one of a number of actions identified in our Dementia Friendly Action Plan for 2018/19. Thanks to Des Grissell for making the changes. Even though these changes are small they can make a big difference to people living with dementia.

We are also encouraging our volunteers and members to become Dementia Friends. This involves completing some short dementia awareness training online at <https://www.dementiafriendly.org.au/user/register>. When you have completed the training you will be issued with a certificate and badge. If you do become a Dementia Friend please let us know.

We recently hosted a museum visit by 19 people plus carers from two Omnicare respite groups as part of a program offered by Creative Ageing Practitioner, Lisa Hort. The visit will be used as inspiration for artworks to feature in an exhibition at our Museum in February next year for the 2019 NSW Seniors Festival. The visit was also filmed as part of a short documentary about local Dementia Friendly Creative Ageing Programs. A big thank you to our helpers on the day Lil Andrews, Judith Hansen, Anne Oud and Debbie Sommers.

Lisa Hort and Debbie Sommers will also be presenting a short paper about the Postcard Connections exhibition held earlier this year, at next year's RED Conference to be held at Port Macquarie in March 2019. The RED (A Regional Experience in Practical Dementia Care) Conference is an Omnicare initiative and demonstrates their commitment to supporting a better quality of life for people living with dementia, those involved with their care, and the wider community.



Ken (left) and Andrew (right) with Lil Andrews during Omnicare Respite Groups visit on Friday 14 September.



Des Grissell changes the toilet seats. No we don't normally photograph people in the toilets, but thought this occasion was a worthy exception.

Around the Museum



Left: Museum guide Lee Brown with a Seniors Group visit on 6 September. Lee very kindly stepped in at the last minute to help out. Thanks Lee!

Right: Museum guide Lee Brown with a group of students from Wauchope Public School on 10 September.



Grandparents Day and 200 Together

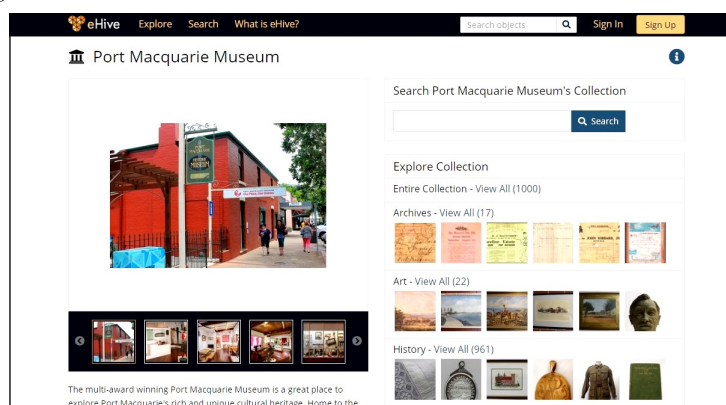
On Sunday 28 October we will be taking the Museum out of the building and down to Town Green for our 'Museum on the Green' as part of the Port Macquarie-Hastings Bicentenary '200 Together' community event. The day also happens to be NSW Grandparents Day and with the assistance of a grant from the Department of Family and Community Services, our stall will include an opportunity for grandparents, children and families to have some fun together and make a photograph souvenir of the day at our photo booth. A full program of community entertainment will be held across the day and we are making sure we have lots of 'hands on' things for grandparents, children and families to do together.

We are looking for helpers to assist on the day. If you are able to spare a couple of hours please put your name on the list on the noticeboard.



1000 and Rising

During September we hit the 1000 milestone mark on two important issues. Firstly we reached 1000 followers on Facebook. It has taken a little over 2 years to grow our Facebook audience to this level, however we are seeing a steady increase in followers. You can help us to grow this number by sharing our posts with your Facebook friends. The other milestone was that we reached 1000 objects and archives posted to eHive, our online catalogue. This has meant more of our collection items and their stories are accessible to online audiences, anywhere and at anytime. The interest from people finding our collection items online, primarily through Google or Trove searches, continues to grow.



NSW History Week

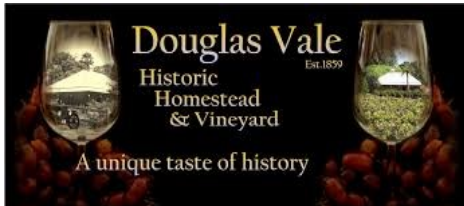
We celebrated NSW History week over 1 to 8 September with the Comings and Going exhibition in the Costume Gallery and a Curators Talk on 6 September. Museum attendances for the week totalled 263 people with 15 coming along for the Curators Talk which included an opportunity to view up close wedding and christening garments from our collection. Thanks to Margaret Blight, Anne Oud and Debbie Sommers for presenting the talk.

Right: Anne Oud talking about Archdeacon Warr's clerical outfit at the Curator's Talk on 6 September.



November Wander to Douglas Vale

Our next social outing is a guided tour of Douglas Vale Historic Homestead and Vineyard's garden and buildings together with morning tea on Wednesday 7 November at 10.30am. The cost is \$10 per person all inclusive. If anyone needs transport please advise when booking. A booking sheet is on the museum noticeboard. Please book and pay by Friday 2 November.



Recent Trip Advisor Reviews

'The Port Macquarie Museum would be the best museum I have visited in a long time. The artefacts they have are unbelievable and displayed so magically. It's a credit to the Management and all the volunteers who work tirelessly and are so proud of it all. It's a must to see.' jennifersusan54, Melbourne

'A very well presented, compact and interesting museum. Friendly guides happy to answer your questions. Whilst it looks modest from the street, it is quite extensive and occupies a number of rooms with much information about the history of Port Macquarie...' Grant T, Melbourne

Society Diary Dates

October

Sunday 7 October

First Sunday Free
11.00am to 3.00pm

Friday 19 October

5.30pm RAHS Reception

Saturday 20 & Sunday 21 October

RAHS Conference
The Westport Club

Sunday 28 October

11.00am to 5.00pm
'Museum on the Green'
Part of NSW Grandparents Day and '200 Together – An exploration through time'

November

Friday 2 November

10.00am General Meeting

Sunday 4 November

First Sunday Free
11.00am to 3.00pm

Wednesday 7 November

10.30am Morning tea and tour at Douglas Vale

Reminder: General meetings are held quarterly. The next meeting is in **November**. Meeting time is now **10.00am**.

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Our Achievements



Contributors this Month:

Anne Oud
Clive Smith
Debbie Sommers

Compiled by: Anne Oud

Australian Government