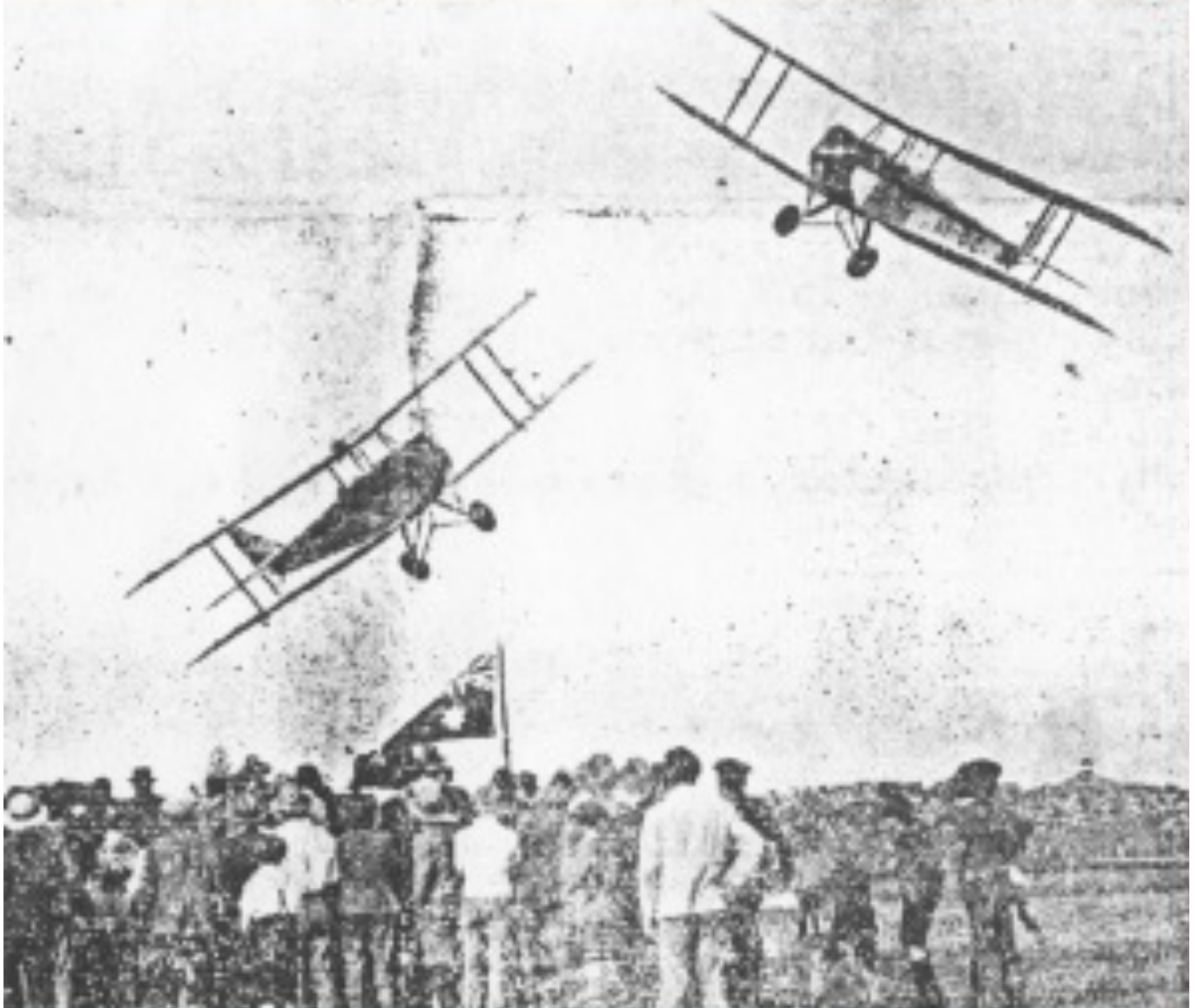


South Coast History Society Inc.

RecollectionS

Issue 53 — August-September 2025

...WHERE HISTORY IS THE HERO



*Newspaper photograph of Air Show at Bermagui Air Strip, 23rd & 24th January 1937.
Image courtesy Bermagui Historical Society. See story page 14*

SOUTH COAST TOWNS & VILLAGES

Granite Town

Granite Town, on the northern bank of the Moruya River, was built in 1924 by Dorman Long & Co. to provide accommodation to the 250 workers and their families who were engaged to quarry and shape granite for facings of the pylons and the approaches to the Sydney Harbour Bridge that was being constructed by the company at the time.

The decision to utilise granite from the Moruya area

for this project had been made on simple economic grounds: vast quantities could (relatively cheaply) be transported direct from the riverside quarry to the construction sites for the bridge on both sides of Sydney Harbour. Three shallow-draught ships, each capable of carrying 400 tons, were constructed by Dorman Long & Co. to transport this granite – the *Dorlonco*, which was later renamed the *Sir Dudley de Clair* after the NSW Governor, the *Sir Hugh Bell* and the *Sir Arthur Dorman*.

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*Above: Berry Railway Station (see story page 17).
Below: Wooden Terraces, Collins Street, Kiama (see story page 18)*



Fantastic Reads

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and Saltmarshes – page 14**

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Historic Kiama Buildings – page 18



*Granite Town workers and families in 1926.
Their wooden cottages are in the background.*

And, Dorman Long & Co. were also given free access to the quarry, which was Crown Land, and the adjacent Granite Town site.

Skilled quarry workers and stonemasons were (in a practice later adopted by the Snowy Mountains Scheme)



Granite Town on the northern bank of the Moruya River. It was built, thrived, and then disappeared within a span of about eight years.

recruited from overseas. Thirteen nationalities were represented, although most came from Scotland or Italy. And, of course, they needed to be accommodated.

The Australian historian Professor Peter Spearritt observed that *'in the best traditions of corporate paternalism, the company provided the wooden cottages for the 250 workers and their families, along with a village store, post office and social hall. The Education Department was to provide a school, and the settlement earned the name of 'Granite Town'.*

At its peak, the town comprised 72 four-room cottages (every two adjacent cottages shared a separate, adjoining bathroom and laundry), a bachelors' quarters, the school and hall, a co-op store, and a post office. The stonemasons of the town built themselves a swimming pool (the *Moruya Examiner* reporting in January 1927 that *'our friends from chilly Scotland frequently take advantage of the pool, to gain respite from the Australian sun. On hot afternoons the pool is taxed to its utmost capacity, old and young alike revelling in its coolness,*) and the town had their own tennis and cricket teams. (Bob Simpson, later the Australian cricket captain, was born at Granite Town. His father was a stonemason.)

Electricity was supplied to both the quarry and the town by two generators – years before nearby Moruya township was to receive (in August 1931) its electricity supply.

Locally, Granite Town was viewed as a potential 'Garden City' – to become something like Port Sunlight near Liverpool in England that had been built by Lord Leverhulme to provide housing to workers in his soap factory. There were hopes that the Moruya Quarry would have a life far beyond that of supplying granite



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Seahorse Inn, Boydtown

for the Sydney Harbour Bridge, with Dr J.C.C. Bradfield, the engineer and planner who oversaw the construction of the Sydney Harbour Bridge, once suggesting *'there is enough granite at Moruya for all the building likely to be done in Sydney for many centuries.'*

But by the time the Sydney Harbour Bridge was completed, and there was no longer a need for Moruya granite for that project, the Great Depression had bitten. As a result, the demand for granite from governments or builders simply evaporated.

So, around 1932, Granite Town disappeared, just as rapidly as it had emerged.

The houses and other buildings were sold off and were removed. The workforce and their families dispersed. It is thought most stayed in Australia, but others returned to the U.K. with Dorman Long and Co. having committed to paying return shipping fares for anyone who came out from the U.K. to work in the quarry.

Granite Town was probably the first purpose-built multi-ethnic settlement in Australia. Its residents had a home and job security, something that was rare in rural Australia at the time. And the quarry helped shield Moruya from the worst effects of the Great Depression.

Boydtown

Entrepreneur Ben Boyd envisaged his town on the shores of Twofold Bay would become the largest port between Sydney and Melbourne and between Sydney and Hobart. It was to be the export centre for cattle and sheep from his substantial landholdings on the Monaro and in the Riverina. It would be the principal site of his whaling operations. It would be the home port for his fleet of steamships that would connect Boydtown with markets throughout the world. He may even have thought that it could ultimately become Australia's capital city.

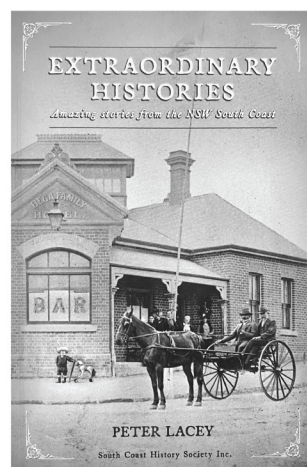
On March 8th 1843, Boyd purchased 640 acres of land on Twofold Bay at £1 per acre. This was the land for Boydtown, a town that was intended to ultimately

include cottages for up to 400 workmen, and for East Boyd, the site of his whaling station.

He also purchased substantial holdings in nearby Eden, which he refused to develop, to ensure that growth in Eden would not overshadow that in Boydtown.

Oswald Brierly, his Whaling Master, recorded the progress of construction in his diary: the Seahorse Inn (named after one of Boyd's steamboats) was commenced in March 1843 and completed in October 1844; a first set of stores was completed in June 1843, and another in September 1844; construction of a wool store was in progress in September 1844; the boiling-down

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works at his whaling station was completed in February 1844; a 400-foot wharf was completed in 1844; work stated on the Church in September 1844 and the exterior was completed in 1847.

A row of houses (which Boyd christened 'Jerusalem') was built and 45 miles of road leading into the Boydtown port were also constructed.

A 23-metre tower was constructed in 1847 on Twofold Bay's southern headland of Pymont sandstone imported from Sydney. This was intended to be a lighthouse, but the NSW Government deemed it unsuitable for the purpose. It later was used by the Davidson family to alert their whaling crews at Kiah Inlet to the presence of migrating whales.

By 1848, as a result of a combination of circumstances, Boyd had become bankrupt. The development of Boydtown ceased.

An interesting use of housing at Boydtown shortly after Benjamin Boys departed was highlighted by local historian Pat Raymond in *The Valley Genealogist*: 'the *Adelaide* was the last of the convict ships to arrive in New South Wales and when it docked in Sydney on 24 December, 1849 there were 259 male convicts on board, 40 having already disembarked at Hobart. On the 2nd January 1850, fifty of these convicts... boarded the

coastal steamer *Shamrock* bound for Twofold Bay. These convicts had been awarded their Tickets of Leave on the 30th December, 1849...

Ben Boyd had earlier departed from Boydtown so the buildings were now being leased by Edward Layton of Layton & Co. and arrangements were made for these 50 convicts to be housed at this site. At this time Anthony Falkner was the Landlord of the Seahorse Hotel and the exiles were housed in the workers' huts at the back of the Store... The whole aim of these convicts being sent en masse to Twofold Bay was for them to relieve the shortage of labourers on the coastal area as well as up on the Monaro. As employment was found, they moved away from Twofold Bay to start their lives afresh.' Pat was able to identify many of those Ticket of Leave convicts who had been shipped to Boydtown.

The 'complete' Church was never consecrated or officially used. In 1926 it lost its roof in one of the periodic bushfires that swept through the area.

In 1936 Richard Whiter, a Victorian camping-park proprietor, planned to restore Boyd's Seahorse Inn. By 1957 it had been partly restored but work was not completed until Bruce Lyon, originally a Sydney-based real estate agent, did so in 2006.



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Quaama

Most travellers along the Princes Highway bypass Quaama, because Quaama was by-passed when the highway was realigned in 1972. The village now comprises a school, a shop/post office that also retails fuel, an old School of Arts Hall, a tennis court, a park with a playground, public toilets, a bus shelter, a public telephone, a cemetery and a collection of houses. The town was badly impacted by the 2019-2020 bushfire (a number of houses were burnt down, as was the Anglican Church).

The village probably emerged in the 1860s or 1870s to serve the needs of, and to be a meeting place for, local farming families and as a convenient stopping-off point on the road from Narooma to Bega – although it would always have been destined to be overshadowed in importance by the larger township of Cobargo about 12km up the road.

In the early 1830s, the squatter Henry Badgery took up land at what was then known as Dry River and in 1841 a William Bartley became the first white child to be born in the area. In 1866 the Government Gazette recorded 'Dry River station, occupied by William Duggan Tarlinton, consisted of an area of 12,000 acres.' This basically encompassed the area between Brogo and Dry River.

Dry River village developed on the northern bank of the Murrah River and the north-south road (named The Prince's Highway from 1920) meandered through the village to a crossing, west of the current bridge. The locals called the river 'Dry River' and, being so insistent it be called this, 'Murrah River' signage at the bridge was regularly torn down by them. Eventually, the authorities realized they were waging a losing battle!

The name of the town was changed to Quaama – an Aboriginal word meaning 'squabbling ground' – in 1887.

The village was given some permanence when a school was built. This opened in 1877 with around 22 children (10 boys and 12 girls) attending. The

following year a 'postal receiving office' (post office) was established in the school.

Quaama was probably a fairly typical country village, experiencing periods of growth and periods of decline (the school closing on several occasions because of falls in enrolments; after World War I, one of the arguments advanced to have the school reopened was that 'as many as 30 men had enlisted from the Quaama area and the village people had contributed thousands of pounds to the war loans, so it seemed only fair that the young children, brothers and sisters of these men should at least have a chance of receiving an education'!).

Certainly, businesses came and went. At various times Quaama had two small sawmills, several blacksmiths, a post office, a cheese factory, a coachbuilder, an accommodation house, a butcher and baker's shop, a bootmaker and repairer, a haberdashery store, a barber, a wine shop, a co-op store (which was not successful), a general store, a rabbit freezer (which became possible when Quaama was connected to an electricity supply, just after World War II), a Catholic Church (demolished at the end of 1959) and an Anglican Church. (The locations of many of these are shown on a map on display in the Quaama General Store.)

A Lyceum Hall was built in 1890 (at that time Quaama had a town band with 10 members) which was replaced in 1904 by the School of Arts Hall. (The Lyceum Hall was demolished and became a barn on a nearby farm.) A town sports ground was constructed that included a cricket pitch, football field, running track and tennis courts. A trotting track was added to it after World War II.

A service station has operated in Quaama from around World War I. After World War II it opened 24 hours a day – one of only two service stations south of Nowra to do so.

A distinctive timber truss bridge, built in 1895, once spanned Dry River. It replaced a low level bridge that had been washed away in a flood in 1893.



The timber truss bridge spanning Dry River

SOUTH COAST PIONEERS

The Brothers Imlay Pioneers of the Eden District

H. P. Wellings, an author and historian known for his works on the history of Eden and Twofold Bay, wrote the following about the brothers Imlay. It appeared in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on 28th June and 12th July 1930 (his original piece has been edited for inclusion here). It presents an interesting summary of the historical significances of Peter, Alexander and George Imlay:

‘The perpetuation of the name Imlay in Australia is mainly by means of the naming of an isolated mountain towering behind Twofold Bay and the main street of the little township of Eden.

The recognition of the actual pioneers of that district by means of those place-names is, in reality, the only public testimony to that splendid and successful effort made by three brothers, who pioneered the Eden-Pambula-Bega districts away back in the early 1820s.

Owing to the fact that Benjamin Boyd left behind him a remarkable testimony to his lavish expenditure of his company’s funds by erecting an Elizabethan hostelry, and an incomplete church and lighthouse, to-day rapidly falling to dust, historical recorders have allowed the glamour of Boyd’s spectacular undertakings at Twofold Bay to override the importance of the work done by the brothers Imlay, without which Boyd would not have been interested sufficiently to inaugurate his various enterprises at that sea port.

Peter Imlay was the first of the three brothers to reach Australia, and was followed at later intervals by two brothers, George and Alexander. The Imlays were born of Highland stock in Aberdeen. Of the family, three

sons came to Australia, Peter, born in 1791; Dr. George, born in 1792 (a surgeon in the Royal Navy); and Dr. Alexander, born in 1800 (a surgeon in the Army Medical Service).

Peter Imlay came out to Australia as a “free settler” in about 1820, and took up land at Bega (or Bigga, as it was then called). Drs. George and Alexander Imlay followed their brother to Australia, but under different circumstances.

Dr. Alexander Imlay came in 1824, and, after a spell of hospital work at the Sydney Infirmary, joined his brother Peter at Bigga.

Dr. George did not reach Australia until 1832.

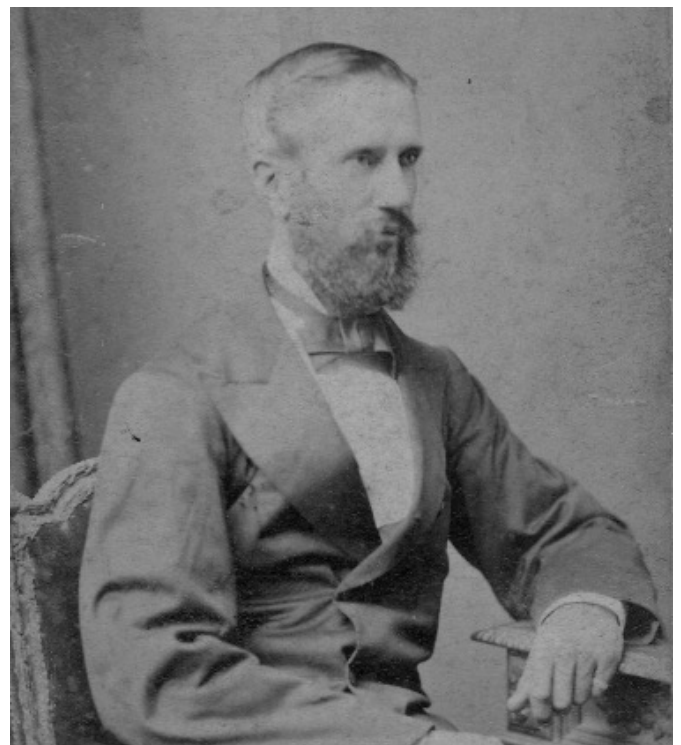
AN ADVENTUROUS FAMILY.

The spirit of adventure, or rather of discovery, was deeply rooted in the Imlays, for their forbears had all made their mark in the world. An older brother, Walter Imlay, went to America, and founded Imlay City, in Wisconsin, in 1840. Others of the Imlay family, prior generations, which survived the Jacobite rising of 1745 in Scotland, were distributed over Canada and India, Colonel Henry Imlay of the Indian Civil Service, being granduncle of Dr. George Imlay. In further evidence of the activities of the family, it is interesting to notice that the town of Imlay in Nevada, takes its name from yet another brother of the Imlays of Australia, whilst in later years Peter Imlay has to his memory a prosperous suburb of Wanganui (New Zealand) named Imlay.

Peter Imlay was the first to take up land, and his selection of agricultural land and of grazing land in the Bega-Pambula districts, and the use of Twofold Bay as his outlet for the cattle and sheep fattened on his south-



Peter Imlay



Alexander Imlay

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eastern holdings, are undoubted testimony to his fitness as a pioneer and a judge of country.

Previous to the Imlays' selection of land in that quarter of New South Wales, it would appear as if no other attempts had been made to settle the country, although there were evidently scattered settlers on the highlands of Monaro.

At this period any occupation of lands south of Broulee, carried with it no guarantee of protection from the inevitable attacks and depredations of the aborigines, as the limits of authorised settlement did not extend to within over a hundred miles of Bigga, Twofold Bay, or Monaro. Thus any settlers daring the ever-present danger of attack from natives could not safely count upon any assistance from the Government towards security from attack.

No regular and reliable communication was in existence between those areas and Sydney, and the occasional items of news which drifted in to Sydney gave little or no information as to the holdings or operations save in a very generalised manner.

Despite this meagre information, it was becoming steadily impressed upon the minds of the authorities in the early thirties that the far south-eastern section of the colony was being profitably exploited in the raising of livestock. Consequently, in 1834, Governor Richard Bourke found it advisable to suggest to the home Government that in view of the rapidly increasing activities of the squatters occupying territory adjacent to Twofold Bay, it might be advisable to give serious consideration to the authorisation of an extension of the "limits of authorised occupation" to include the country round about Twofold Bay. Sir Richard made a tour of the country he referred to, and expressed himself as surprised at the vast herds and flocks which were then depastured even as far south as Cape Howe (now the easterly end of the NSW-Victoria border). His remarks, contained in a lengthy despatch to the Home Government, are full of interest, and showed him to be a very keen observer of the possibilities of this area. In due course permission was given to the Governor to proclaim a township on the shores of Twofold Bay, but although this authority

was granted in 1836, it was not until the late 'forties that a definite move was made towards the establishment of the township of Eden.

AN OBSERVANT GOVERNOR.

The underlying reason for Sir Richard's observations was doubtless that during his tour of inspection he had been given an opportunity to see the operations of the Imlay Brothers at Twofold Bay, where cattle shipping yards had been established by them, at Pambula, where certain of their holdings were under both cattle and cultivation, and through the back country to the foot of the coastal range of mountains, where their cattle were depastured in great numbers.

The Imlays used Twofold Bay as their outlet for both cattle and sheep. As some indication of their activities in this direction it is of interest to find that during 1834 and 1835 they had a number of vessels engaged in carrying cattle and sheep from Twofold Bay to Hobart, and it is definitely proved that not less than 12,000 sheep and 1,500 head of cattle were so conveyed for them in that period.

They had quite a number of vessels engaged in the trade, amongst which might be mentioned the barque Britomart, of 242 tons register, Captain McDonald; schooner Industry, of 96 tons, Captain Dawson; the ship City of Edinburgh, of 336 tons, Captain Browne; schooner, Prince of Denmark; Merope (Captain Clinch): the James, 358 tons; brig Amity; Children, 254 tons; Craigievar, 263 tons; Caroline, 150 tons; and others of varying tonnage.

LARGE AREAS CONTROLLED.

Governor Bourke referred to his journey from Twofold Bay to the Limestone Plains (Monaro) in 1835; having been the guest of Dr. Imlay at his station about twelve miles from Twofold Bay—this being what is to-day known as Pambula. The holdings of the Imlays in that district were very extensive, and some idea of their operations might be gathered from a letter submitted to Sir George Gipps in 1844 by a Mr. William Willmington of Broulee, touching on the Squatting License system.

Mr. Willmington goes on to say “at Bigga an immense station is owned by Dr George Imlay, of 1500 square miles in extent, and employing 100 persons.” The exact truth of the statement need not be here questioned.

Suffice it to say that the area controlled by the Imlays was certainly large, but the manner of its acquirement was no different from that under which the greater bulk of the station holdings of the Colony had been acquired, and which in 1844 to 1848 formed a subject of very great difficulty to Sir George Gipps.

Not only did station activities occupy the attention of these pioneers, but the whaling industry at Twofold Bay attracted them. For it is recorded by Sir George Gipps in his despatches in 1842 that Mr. J. Lambie had reported to him in reference to the state of the aborigines of that district that “Messrs. Imlay employed three boats’ crews, eighteen aborigines, in the whale fishery at Twofold Bay”; and on another occasion “that the Imlays had the most peaceable relations with the aborigines and whites whom they employed . . . free medical services were rendered by these gentlemen to both the aborigines and whites who frequented their holdings.”

Not only did the Imlays transport their livestock to Tasmania, but they extended their operations to New Zealand, and it is not difficult to trace the various shipments made by them direct from Twofold Bay to that destination. Altogether it is open to assumption that this business was of very great importance in the trade of New South Wales.

Sir George Gipps was favourably impressed with the manner in which the Imlays handled their stations, and refused to take any steps towards breaking up their holdings, as he was so strongly urged to do.

It is of course only reasonable to state that the activities of these pioneers was more or less referred to in the newspapers of the day, and of course in due time the Home newspapers found it to be a subject of comment in their columns. Thus the news of his industrious trio’s operations became of interest to the many persons in London who were giving their attention to the possibility for their capital in New South Wales and the various subsidiary settlements which had been established in Australia.

In 1840 we find that Mr. Benjamin Boyd had so much interested himself in the possibilities for employment of his capital in Australia, that he approached the Home Government with a request that he might be permitted to make purchases of Crown lands at five or six places along the coast at a figure of £1 per acre. His request was that he might be permitted to secure from 100 to 500 acres at each place, and have a prior right to extend his purchases in those places when and where he might find it advisable.

He also drew attention to the confidence he had in the possibilities of inaugurating a coastal steamship service between Sydney and Adelaide, he having already despatched to the colony a large steamship of 250 horsepower and nearly 600 tons burthen, at his personal cost of £30,000, for the purpose of trading in those ports. His desire to secure freehold lands was explained by him in a letter addressed by him to Lord John Russell, dated October 24, 1840. Lord John Russell transmitted a copy of this letter to Sir George Gipps, with instructions that Mr. Boyd might be afforded the necessary assistance in carrying out this useful project.

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THE RISE OF "BOYD TOWN."

In order to more fully connect Mr. Boyd's project with the effects of the Imlay Brothers' activity, it might be permitted to suggest that Mr. Boyd was not in ignorance of the fact of the existing pastures adjacent to Twofold Bay, for it was common information that the rich pastures of that territory were responsible for the very excellent quality of cattle and sheep which were raised thereon and exported at Twofold Bay.

The result of his negotiations was, within two years, his inauguration of the famous "Boyd Town" on the shores of Twofold Bay. Whether or not, Mr. Boyd might have been attracted to that port and the adjacent district, had the Imlays not created its importance by their pioneering efforts, is hardly to be doubted, for every indication is that his project was based upon the necessity for a better and more reliable system of sea transport along the coast of New South Wales.

With the inception of the industry headed by Mr. Boyd, it should not be assumed that that of the Imlay brothers declined, for, as late as 1851, these brothers had vessels loading cattle at Snug Cove (Twofold Bay), and had very successfully cultivated the rich river flat lands at Bega and Pambula. It is on record that they grew wheat successfully on Pambula Flats. They were the inaugurators of the beef and mutton "boiling-down establishments" in that district, a business which was later carried on very successfully by others who followed them there.

As has so often been the case, the pioneers bore the brunt of the work and expense, whilst the succeeding people reaped much better returns.

As the "Hobart Town Courier" related in 1835, Dr. Imlay made subsequent residence in Tasmania, and there are on record certain land holdings at Wilmot Harbour, a place where much activity was displayed and with success.

Peter Imlay finally, migrated to New Zealand, and, perhaps, the finest testimonial to the name of Imlay today, in addition to the place names in New South Wales, is Imlay, a suburb of Wanganui, in New Zealand.

Wellings concludes by suggesting 'The story of the Imlays is not fully told herein but would well form the subject of a very interesting book, which would be a useful contribution to the historical records of Australia.'

Dr George Imlay, apparently having contracted an incurable disease, committed suicide on 26th December 1846 on what is now known as Dr George Mountain. His death was reported in the Sydney Morning Herald of 11th January 1847:

'We have received intelligence from Bargo [they probably meant Bega], in the Twofold Bay district, of the melancholy death of Dr George Imlay, which we regret to state took place under his own hand, under the following circumstances : On the morning of the 26th of December, he went out early, telling his family that he had received information of some bulls he had previously lost, and that

he should go in search of them and might probably be absent four or five days. He declined taking his blankets or anything to eat with him, and would not allow any person or even his dogs to accompany him. He said he should go round the mountains at Bargo, but took quite a different direction, into a small thick scrub.

Suspicion having been aroused by his horse coming home, Mr. Peter Imlay, accompanied by twelve men, went in search of him, when, after a search of four days they by chance hit upon the body lying in a dreadful state. The unfortunate gentleman had apparently laid himself down, and tying the trigger of his gun to his spurs, had shot himself. There can be no doubt from the lonely nature of the place to which he retired to effect his deadly purpose, that he did not intend that his body should be found.'

The Manning Brothers (Edye, William Montague and James Alexander Louis)

The three Manning brothers all had significant impacts on the development of the NSW South Coast, but in different ways:

Edye Manning (1807–1889)

Edye Manning's principal interest was shipping.

Edye came to New South Wales from England in December 1831 with his wife and son.

In 1838 he entered the emerging steamship trade with a 103-ton paddle-steamer called the *Maitland*. He used this in the salvage of wrecks of other ships. Soon thereafter he bought the 54-ton paddle-steamer *William the Fourth* (the first coastal steamer built in Australia) and the 153-ton/50-horsepower [to illustrate how underpowered steamers were at that time, a sedan car's engine today typically develops 180 to 200 horsepower] *Sophia Jane* (the first steamer imported to NSW from England) and used its engine in a 108-ton paddle steamer, the *Phoenix*, that he had built in Sydney. The *Phoenix* serviced the NSW North Coast.

In 1858 his company amalgamated with two others to form the Illawarra Steam Navigation Company which thereafter provided the major shipping service along the NSW South Coast. Edye Manning became the company's manager and was responsible for the construction of the company's significant wharf facilities in Sydney Harbour.

William Montagu Manning (1811–1895)

William Montagu Manning was a substantial landowner, barrister and politician.

In 1837 he decided to join his brothers in NSW and arrived with his wife on 31st August on the *City of Edinburgh*. He was soon appointed a magistrate. In 1844 he became NSW Solicitor-General.

He acquired real estate from 1837: 1200 acres (486 ha) at Mulgoa, some 50 town allotments at Kiama and 1000 acres (405 ha) in the Illawarra. In 1848 he held



William Montagu Manning

63,000 acres (25,495 ha) in the Lachlan District.

He and his brothers, Edye and James, along with Robert and Edwin Tooth and T.S. Mort, became partners in the Twofold Bay Pastoral Association in 1852 that held over 400,000 acres (161,876 ha) in the Monaro and Bega districts. With Mort, William Manning financed the Maizena Co. in Merimbula.

In October 1851 Manning was nominated to the Legislative Council by Governor FitzRoy. In 1856 he

became Attorney-General in Stuart Donaldson's ministry (the Colony's first parliamentary ministry), a position he also held (at least) during governments headed by Henry Parker, John Robertson and Charles Cowper.

In February 1858 he was knighted by the Queen.

When the Twofold Bay Pastoral Association was dissolved in 1860, Manning was paid £22,000 by Robert Tooth. Much of this he used to build a substantial residence in Edgecliff in Sydney.

On 12th March 1868, as President of the Sydney Sailors' Home, he invited the Duke of Edinburgh to a picnic at Clontarf to raise funds for the home. Manning was walking beside the Duke when the Duke was shot. Manning thereafter claimed that he had saved the Duke's life by diving for the pistol brandished by Henry O'Farrell, the would-be assassin.

In February 1875 the Governor, Sir Hercules Robinson, asked Manning to form a ministry.

However, he failed to be able to do so.

In April 1876 Manning became a judge of the Supreme Court. As a result, he divested himself of many of his land holdings.

Then, in April 1878, Manning was elected Chancellor of the University of Sydney. The university expanded rapidly under his guidance and in the 1880s faculties of law, medicine, science and engineering were established. In 1881 he gained the admission of women to all university privileges on 'an equal footing with men'; the women students' union, Manning House, is named in his honour.

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James Alexander Louis Manning (1814–1887)

James Alexander Louis Manning was a pastoralist.

He became a partner in the Twofold Bay Pastoral Association which held 400,000 acres (161,876 ha) in three stations on the Monaro and three in the Bega district. From 1854, as managing partner, he lived on the Association's central estate, Kameruka. He overcame a labour shortage by introducing German families and cleared a road route from the Monaro to the coast at Merimbula, making that port the trade outlet for the southern Bega Valley.

Manning bought Kameruka in 1861, but then sold it a year later.

With his brother, William, he started over at Warragaburra near Bega in 1864 on a 2,000 acre property. He planted thriving vineyards, introduced maize to the district, initiated scientific American methods of cheese making and agitated for a telegraph between Bega and Sydney.

James Manning was a close friend of T.S. Mort (of Bodalla), with whom he shared an interest in the development of refrigeration for preserving meat whilst it was being transported.

From 1871 Manning lived in Sydney, keeping an interest in Warragaburra which was managed by his son Albert (A.L. Manning).

The Davidsons of Twofold Bay

Alexander Walker Davidson (1806 – 1897), a cabinet maker, his wife Jane (c1805 – 1892) and their seven children (all under the age of 9) left Aberdeen in Scotland aboard the *Mathesis* on 16th May 1841. It took them until 31st January 1842 to reach Sydney, mostly because they were delayed in Rio de Janeiro for 92 days whilst repairs were made to their ship following a serious fire. On the voyage, one of their daughters Isabella Collie Davidson died. She was buried at sea.

Alexander worked in Sydney for a time until, in 1843, he was employed by Benjamin Boyd who was then building Boyd Town on the shores of Twofold Bay. He would then have become very acquainted with the shore-based whaling being undertaken in the area by the Imlay Brothers and by Ben Boyd.

From 1855 to 1857, the Davidson family ran the Squatters Arms Hotel at Bunyan, north of Cooma (the building is still there, beside the Monaro Highway), and had a permit to sell liquor at the Cooma Races. In late 1857 the family returned to Twofold Bay. Alexander purchased the wreck of the *Lawrence Frost* that had been run ashore in Twofold Bay in 1856 after being in extreme danger of sinking. He used the ship's timber to build the family house.

In 1859 gold was discovered at Kiandra, so Alexander and three of his sons trekked to the goldfields to try their luck. They had limited success so returned to the coast either in 1860 or 1861.

They then turned their attention to whaling.

The family was to become the most successful, most well-known whaling family on Twofold Bay. Much of their success was derived from working with local Aboriginals who had developed a relationship with 'killer whales' (orcas) that herded migrating whales into shallow waters where they could be killed. The local Aboriginals (as they had done previously with the Imlay brothers) worked as crew aboard the Davidsons' whaling vessels.

Try works (furnaces used to heat blubber from whales to the recover their oil – then, in the days before kerosene became available, a valuable commodity) were constructed adjacent to their whaling station.

Alexander also famed animals, grew vegetables, had fruit trees and fished to supplement his income from seasonal whaling.

Alexander's sons – John, Alexander and Archer – and his grandson, George, were all involved with the whaling industry that extended over a period of about 70 years. At its peak about 10 or 15 whales would be caught and processed each year. By 1925 only two whales were caught. The last whale was taken in 1929.



Alexander Walker Davidson

William Roohan, The Pioneer Mailman

William Roohan was an eccentric and remarkable man. His age is not exactly known, but he could not have been less than sixty-five, some say he was over seventy. He had been in the colony many years, and was the first to carry the mails overland from Monaro to Twofold Bay, procuring the services of the blacks to mark the trees along his route for his guidance.

Mailing was his hobby in life and his ruling passion in death. The Government never had a more zealous indefatigable and faithful servant as a mail contractor. Possessed of a wiry constitution - though battered and bruised and crippled in consequence of the many casualties that had befallen him - no state of weather, roads or ill-health, ever excused Roohan from fulfilling the arduous duties of his contract.

Whilst carrying mails in the Monaro district he has been known, when blocked by snow, to abandon horse and vehicle, and slinging the mailbags over his shoulders, wade knee deep through miles of snow in order to deliver the mails at their destination.

Many a time has he, too venturesome, entered swollen mountain torrents only to be swept down the stream to escape as by miracle. One night, some years ago, in attempting to cross the Bredbo, he found himself adrift, and separated from his horse, he was washed ashore on an island and his horse and the mails carried down the stream. There he remained through a bitter cold night, drenched, and without fire, refreshment, or shelter. When morning came he struck out for the river bank, cramped and stiff as he was with the cold, and although unable to swim, managed to reach the bank and pursue his way on foot. Fortunately, he had not gone far when he providentially fell in with a kind-hearted traveller, who gave him a strong glass of rum which Roohan ever after said saved his life.

In the early days of Queanbeyan, before the river was spanned by a bridge, there are those yet living who remember Roohan sending his horse laden with mailbags into the flooded stream, and (being, as we have already said, unable to swim) seizing the horse's tail, suffered himself to be carried thus across the river to pursue his way.

It must still be fresh in the memory of our readers that not so very long ago the poor old fellow experienced a broken collar bone - not the first bone by many that he had had broken in the discharge of his duty through a fall in coming over the Marked-Tree Line and more recently still, that he was, buggy and all, swept down the river at Canberra, and narrowly escaped with his life in his endeavour to keep up mail communication.

His powers of endurance were remarkable. His present contract is along a dreary road, and but few servants would stay more than a month or so in his employ. When unexpectedly left without assistance Roohan has been known frequently to leave Goulburn



on Sunday morning reaching Queanbeyan - a distance by the Gundaroo route of about seventy miles - the same evening; starting from Queanbeyan next morning, to reach Goulburn that evening; and then his next duty being to convoy a mail from Queanbeyan to Goulburn on the Wednesday following, return to Queanbeyan on Tuesday in order to fulfil his contract; resting on Thursday and starting again from Goulburn on Friday, to deliver the mails the same evening at Queanbeyan, thus performing, for a poor pittance at best, a journey on horseback of 350 miles with but little rest.

Again, he has been known to start on his route on Wednesday and continue incessantly riding till the following Friday week in carrying out his contract, travelling meanwhile a distance of about 560 miles. Nothing short of an iron constitution could stand it.

It is but just to his memory to remark that a more honest, trustworthy, and diligent man we never knew.

- *Queanbeyan Age*, 11th April 1874

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Horses, Aeroplanes and Saltmarshes

Ken Robinson

As a latecomer to the area of Bermagui (only 30 years) it has taken a while to catch up with some of the local history. I have an interest in estuarine ecology and wanted to find out about an area termed the "Racecourse Wetlands". While investigating the site I accidentally discovered this notice:

Old Race Course and Air Strip

The Bermagui District Racing Club was formed in the early 1900s and horse race meetings were held on the Bermagui River beach flats, subject to tidal conditions. Bermagui's race course, complete with a grandstand, had a 1200 metre track which was 9 metres wide, 12 metres wide in the straight and located in this vicinity at the western end of South River Road.

Most of the wealthier citizens, or those with horse teams, had race horses to enter in either the flat or hurdle events. A local citizen, Jim Engstrom, owned a horse named Sir Olsen which in 1923 was a prominent hurdler.

An air strip was established on the race course and, apart from air shows, there were regular flights to and from Sydney in various aircraft. In 1933 Adastral Airways Company was formed and flew a twice weekly service in a three seater Fox Moth.

By 1937 a weekly mail service landed on the Bermagui air strip every Saturday afternoon.

In 1937/38 the local Adastral agent, Mrs O'Shea, offered a daily service departing from Sydney at 8am, arriving Bega 10.45am, connecting with a car to Bermagui under the slogan "Fly to Fish". Cost was \$6.30 single and \$10.50 return.

On the weekend of Saturday 23 and Sunday 24 January 1937 a dual record was "flagged" – an Australian record was held when J.R. Porter landed a 472 pound marlin and the largest crowd yet seen at the port of Bermagui assembled to view the aerial display by ten visiting Sydney planes, organised by the Bermagui Airport League. During the two days, the planes gave a fine display of stunting and bombing and were kept busy with passenger flights until 6pm. It was estimated that over 600 people passed through the gate.

Air show aerobatics, 23 and 24 January 1937

Biplane on Bermagui air strip

Flying boat biplane, Bermagui River 1927

Air show biplane and spectators 1930s

The Bermagui Heritage Trail is an initiative of the Bermagui Area Chamber of Commerce & Tourism. The Chamber acknowledges the Foundation for Rural & Regional Renewal and the Murrumbidgee Foundation for provision of funding, the Bermagui Historical Society for information and images, and the contribution from local businesses, community organisations and individuals.

Using your smart phone, scan this QR code for information about other heritage trails and tales on the Sapphire Coast.
For information on things to do and accommodation in Bermagui go to www.visitbermagui.com.au

Judi Hearn's excellent book on the history of Bermagui mentioned the past use of the area for horse racing and as an aerodrome, but little else. I thought it a good idea, therefore, to see what else I could find.

It is easy to interrogate the digital library of the Bermagui Historical Society and, thanks to Trove, read extracts from the newspapers of the time. As we all know, newspapers always tell you the truth. The first reference I found was from November 1899 when a commentator in the *Cobargo Chronicle* stated that the "Cobargo racing movement was dead, and there is no reason why the Bermagui Jockey Club should not stand as the representative of the district in this kind of sport." The racecourse site on the Bermagui River at the western end of South River Road was apparently put in order, and the *Cobargo Chronicle* in January 1900 was able to report on a recent, morally uplifting and successful meeting attended by about 700 people whose pleasure was of "the most healthful and moral nature". The *Chronicle* hoped that "the Bermagui Jockey Club will always be found on the side of honest straightforward sport and then there will be no fear about the result, financially and socially, of its meetings".

Another successful Bermagui Racing Carnival was reported by the *Cobargo Chronicle* in January 1902, with about £17 10s being taken at the gate. Although a small meeting at short notice, "it only serves to illustrate how popular horse racing is with the public".

The status of the Bermagui Jockey Club suffered, however. The *Chronicle* reported on "the departed glory of the Bermagui Jockey Club which, after holding one surprisingly successful day's racing, allowed itself to be blown out by an affair which should only have been considered as an obstacle overcome in a straight forward

and manly manner." I don't know what they did wrong, but it would seem it was not on the side of honest, straightforward sport.

Other successful race meetings were reported in the press, but not without problems. The *Bega Budget* on 19 June 1907 stated that: "Bermagui possesses one of the best race courses in the State, but a landholder through which the track runs has blocked its use". This presumably was fixed by going around the obstacle and the Bermagui Picnic Races in March 1913 were successfully held, although an inquiry was held into the running of Singhi in the Bermagui Handicap. The rider of the brown horse was cautioned for alleged malpractice. The club showed a profit although the Bega bookmakers did not do as well.

In 1914 there was a move through the Bega Land Court to revoke the status of the site as a recreation reserve to allow the leasing to Bermagui Race Club, as a special area at a yearly fee. It is not clear whether this happened. Although it was stated that for some time the course had not been used for racing, it was anticipated that developments would point to the establishment of a District Club.

Despite setbacks including postponement of events due to "tidal inundation", the Bermagui Race Club seems to have been active in the 1920s, and regular events were held. The *Cobargo Chronicle* reported on a five-event program held on 15 November 1924, where the racecourse had been "vastly improved", with the judge's box and appointments shifted to a hillside at the back of the course. Filling was done on the track, and it was claimed "there was now no danger of tidal inundation". A gang of sleeper cutters had removed the standing timber from the centre of the course, and a view of the race from start to finish was able to be obtained. The Bermagui track has been described as 1200m long, and 9m wide at the straight.

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The *Bega District News* reported on the annual meeting of the Bermagui Race Club which took place in January 1932. The attendance was not as good as in former years, "owing to the danger of bush fires many were afraid to leave their homes." The newspaper stated that the "Bermagui racecourse could, with the expenditure of money, be made the most picturesque in these parts, and a hill behind the winning post provides a natural grandstand, from which a complete view of the racing is obtainable". They also reported that "Fields were good, and some of the racing exciting enough for the most enthusiastic lovers of the sport".

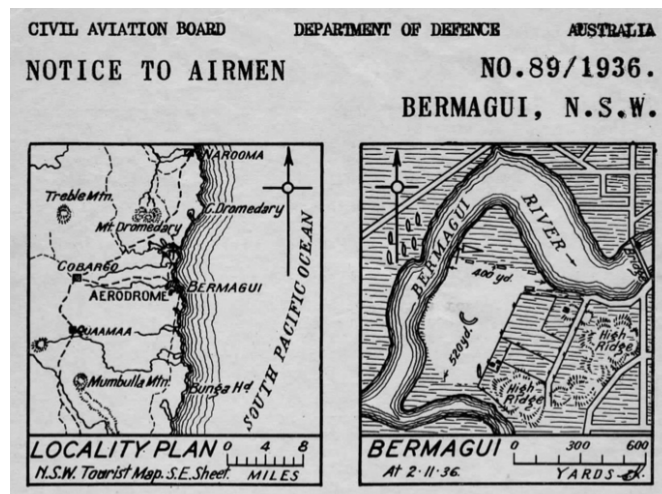
Unfortunately for some, the racecourse did not last forever. The *Cobargo Chronicle* reported that "one of the big nights at Bermagui was the winding-up ball in September 1936, organised by the Bermagui Race Club". A large crowd attended the ball, and "the hall was tastefully decorated with streamers and greens, while the stage looked delightful with marguerites, nasturtiums and arum lilies". Quaama Orchestra, assisted by members of the Strollers Orchestra, provided the music, and "the supper provided by the ladies was as usual of high quality".

For many years this club had successfully organised meetings. The principal actors during these years were President F. E. Rily and Secretary Ken O'Shea. This all had to finish, however, and "a postponement through floods on the racecourse was the beginning of those darker days". The *Chronicle* concluded that "the proceeds would enable the Race Club to wipe off the deficit. The club had given horse lovers many a good program, but the racecourse had now been taken over by the Bermagui Airport League, and the club ceased to exist".

A meeting in July 1935 saw the establishment of the Bermagui Airport League, with the intention of the purchase and preparation of the landing area proposed at the racecourse site on Bermagui River.

Bermagui was on a direct plane route from Bega to Sydney, and it was felt that if the necessary finance could be obtained, the proposed area would be ideal. With the help of the community, a landing area appeared within a year. The district business people contributed to the enterprise, and the landing ground was assured and arrangements completed for the opening.

The Bermagui Airport League, through Cr F. E. Rily, officially opened the aerodrome in May 1936. He noted in his speech that no assistance had been given by the Government or the Council, but he hoped that would be forthcoming later. Captain Adam from Adastra Airways was present at the opening and was quoted as saying "the people of Bermagui had set others a fine example of self-help and had done wonderfully well in the preparation of the landing ground. With further improvements it could be made a splendid drome. ...We will definitely call at any time to take passengers."



The aerodrome was certified by the Civil Aviation Board. Adastra Airways had a regular service between Bega and Sydney and in 1936 this was adjusted to allow a Sydney – Bermagui – Bega passenger service. The Big Game Anglers Yearbook 1936-37 advertised that a return flight from Sydney to Bermagui would cost £5, which was the average weekly wage for a factory worker at the time. If you compare that with the current return airfare between Merimbula and Sydney, progress has not made country air travel any cheaper. Similar advertisements in the 1937-38 Anglers Yearbook offered trips at the same price to Bermagui for the fishing, but there was no stopping off at the racecourse site. You flew to Bega and were driven by car back to Bermagui. Apparently, the regular passenger service to Bermagui wasn't as regular as it was supposed to be.

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Despite the irregularity of the passenger services the airstrip remained popular with the public and the flying fraternity. Following successful events in 1937 and 1938, the third annual Goodwill tour by the Royal Aero Club of N.S.W. was made to Bermagui in January 1939. The aerodrome was subjected to special preparations, with the adjacent dead trees cleared and the ferns mowed. The planes comprised a V.H. Hornet, two A. J. Tiger Moths (dual machine), Tiger Moth Y.J. and an F.V. Gipsy Moth. During the two days the planes gave a fine display of stunting, bombing and sky-writing, and not a hitch occurred during the two-day program. The pilots were said to be most efficient and courteous, doing their utmost to give everyone a pleasant time. One day was devoted to aerial antics with some pilots doing some "great bombing" at a utility, using flour bombs to hit the radiator and smash the tail. One plane with two pilots shot up to 3,000 feet and gave an exhibition of sign writing during which "they indulged, in various aerobatics which delighted the eye and which, incidentally, gave onlookers 'neckitis' on Monday. The exhibition given by nose dives, loops and spiral spins by these small planes provided thrills for the spectators by fluttering a few thousand feet up and the next minute swooping just over their head."

Despite the popularity of the air shows there was still a problem with the regular service to the aerodrome. At a Mumbulla Shire meeting in March 1939 a letter was read from Adastra Airways advising they could not use Bermagui as a stopping point and asked for improvements to the Bermagui aerodrome, or, failing that, another site. One Councillor noted he was at Bermagui when the aerodrome was opened with a great

flourish of trumpets, and he was given to understand that it was 100 per cent perfect. This letter from Adastra Airways was a shock to him. A regular service ceased at Bermagui at about this time.

The aerodrome was still available as a landing site until at least 1970. The Canberra Times reported in December 1970 that Dr John Lewis, of Wagga, who was cited as almost the only person who uses the old racecourse at Bermagui as an airstrip, escaped with a shoulder burn from his seat belt when his single engine Auster crashed there. Dr Lewis' two children, "travelling with him to holiday at the seaside resort, came out of the crash with bumped heads and one had a black eye, although the aircraft was badly damaged."

In more recent times the site also had a rejuvenation of sorts for racing. The Bega District News reported on the first Cobargo – Bermagui Bush Race meeting to be held at the site in 49 years. In January 1983 around 2,000 spectators attended the event, despite concerns over the tidal inundation which had occurred the night before. The tide went out and it dried in time for the running of the Bermagui – Cobargo Cup, with 20 starters. It was won by a horse called Snoopy. The tide returned that afternoon, but apparently everybody went home satisfied with a great event.

I am unable to say when the changes at the site were made, but the racing/airfield site now has two uses. The land along Racecourse Road is zoned as "Environmental Living" and has a number of houses and sheds and large paddock areas to the west. These have been used as camping sites but now have a few sheep which appear to be safely grazing, protected from the tidal inundation of the past. The area fronting the river remains Crown Land,

with an "Environmental Conservation" zoning, comprising extensive saltmarsh and mangrove areas and is signposted as the Bermagui River Conservation Area. There is also a sign identifying the wetlands area as Bermagui's South River Road Saltmarsh which shows the approximate alignment of the landing areas which intrude into the saltmarsh and notes that, "although used as a racecourse and airstrip in the past, the significance of the natural values has been recognised and it has been allowed to return to its natural state."

References – Books on Bermagui by Judi Hearn and Ron Gaha; newspaper sources – *Historic South Coast Buildings*, *Cobargo Chronicle*, *Bega District News*, *Canberra Times*, *Bega Budget* available through Trove; photos provided from the digital collection of the Bermagui Historical Society.



● "Snoopy," ridden by Kerry Cawell, wins the Bermagui-Cobargo Cup at the Bush Races on Saturday in front of a large crowd of around 2,000.

Bermagui Bush Races attracts crowd

The Bermagui River Flat was crowded on Saturday for the first Cobargo-Bermagui Bush Race meeting for 49 years.

The running of the Bermagui Cup lapsed in 1934, but after the success of Saturday's function it will certainly be held next year and will doubtless become an annual event again.



HISTORIC SOUTH COAST BUILDINGS



The 1893 Berry Goods Shed. The railway lines that once ran in front of it have since been removed.

BERRY: Railway Station and associated structures, Station Road.

A group of original, mainly utilitarian, buildings surrounding the Berry Railway Station has survived to now be something of a living legacy to this one-time important railway precinct.

The Berry Railway Station was opened in 1893. It was part of a single railway line linking Bombo (North Kiama) with Bomaderry, as an extension of the Sydney to North Kiama (Illawarra) Line that had opened in 1887. Originally, it may have been intended that this new line would run to Jervis Bay, but that would have necessitated the construction of a major railway bridge across the Shoalhaven River at Nowra. Financially that could never have been justified.



The Berry Station Master's Residence building



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A number of stations were built along the new line, of which Berry was the largest - reflecting the importance of the town.

The platform, the platform building, an out-of-room (parcels office), a goods shed, a station master's residence and a gate keeper's residence (at the level crossing, north of the Station) were all built in 1893. Generally, they were to standard Railways' designs.

Some of these were subsequently modified. For example, the platform itself was lengthened in 1915 and the height of the centre of the platform was raised. And an awning was added to the original platform building in 1901.

Other additions were later made to the area - a signal box in 1912, a produce shed in the 1940s, a goods shed in 1960, a brick toilet block in 1979.

And some other proposed additions never eventuated - including a second platform and cattle yards (which later became suggested 'trucking yards').

In 1912 the goods siding was extended to better serve the Berry Central Butter Factory, and was extended again in 1913 to facilitate the despatch of milk to the Sydney markets. These modifications illustrate how the precinct changed over times to meet changing market demands on the railways.

Interestingly, the attractive Station Master's Residence was repurposed as a Scout's Hall and most of the internal walls were removed as a result.

KIAMA: Wooden Terraces, 24 - 40 Collins Street

Basalt mining was an important industry for Kiama for many years.

In the early 1880s, a new road was constructed from Bombo, up over the hill into Kiama, linking the town centre and its main street, Terralong Street, to a relocated jetty, main quarry site and a soon-to-be-opened railway station at Bombo. This road was to become known as Collins Street and became one of the town's main roads and its northern approach.

Soon thereafter, in 1887, a train line was constructed to Bombo. An extension into Kiama township was started the following year.

In 1867 William Geoghagen, one of the first captains of trading boats that visited Kiama, purchased land



Collins Street, Kiama.

The workers' terrace houses are on the left.

in this area. In the late 1870s and early 1880s he built this row of cottages to house quarry workers and their families.

For about 30 years, Geoghagen was also a member of the local Sons of Temperance movement, advocating moderation in the consumption of or abstinence from consuming liquor. Perhaps unsurprisingly, a Temperance Hall (later the Masonic Hall) was the first building he erected on this street.

Nos 24 - 40 Collins Street were built in stages during the 1880s. No. 24 (closest to Minnamurra Street) was originally an inn, and no. 26 was the inn-keeper's residence. Numbers 28-38 housed quarry workers, and no. 40 was originally a post office.

The Depression and World War II caused the decline and closure of most of the quarries around Kiama and by the 1960s this row of cottages had become neglected and had fallen into disrepair. Proposals to remove them were considered. However, in 1972, an investment firm commenced extensive renovations that restored the verandahs of the cottages and converted the buildings into the shops and cafes that predominantly cater today to the many tourists to the town.

Collect Recollections

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(Member of Lift Engineering Society of Australia)

"We bought a Compact Home Lift because it has allowed us to stay in our home. It was a far cheaper solution when compared with the cost of moving house" — George, 66

"We looked at buying a stairlift but made the right decision choosing a Compact Home Lift. It has exceeded all our expectations" — Pippa, 56