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...WHERE HISTORY IS THE HERO

Sam Sinclair at his blacksmith and wheelwright premises at Bermagui, 1908.
Picture by William Henry Corkhill. Image: nla.obj-140317875

Tourism Time Capsule – a Visitors Book in Bermagui

by Dr Stephen Mills, publicity officer of the Bermagui Historical Society.

A scuffed and battered journal in the Bermagui Historical Museum, its cardboard covers held together with tape, tells a remarkable tale about the origins of tourism on the far south coast.

The book dates back ninety years, to the summer of 1935, when Bermagui was waking up to a startling prospect: waves of tourists were about to descend on the small and remote coastal village, to indulge in the new global sport of big game fishing.

Just two years earlier, in February 1933, two fishermen had caught a huge black marlin off Barunguba (Montague Island) – the first time the iconic game fish had been caught in these waters. Word spread quickly, with well-heeled fisherman making their way to Bermagui from Sydney and Melbourne in pursuit of what were then called "swordfish". In March 1935, two of them caught 14 marlin and a mako shark in just two days off Bermagui.

The photograph of these prized fish, weighing perhaps more than 1.5 tonnes, hanging side by side from a gantry on the Bermagui jetty, took the town's name around the world.

In California, popular novelist-turned-game fisherman Zane Grey heard the news and set out to visit this coastal village on the other side of the world.

But with Bermagui's renown came a challenge: how can we best capitalise on this bonanza? And, do we have what these fisherfolk want?

To answer such questions, a group of self-styled "Interested Citizens of Bermagui South" decided to ask the tourists themselves what they wanted. With the best of civic intentions, they typed up a letter of appeal, and pasted it in the front cover of a plain journal:

"In asking for your impressions of the village and surroundings, we are actuated by... the genuine desire to see ourselves (as a Tourist Resort) from a Visitor's point of view hoping that it may help us to correct our faults and develop our attractions and services."

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Fantastic Reads

Over that summer and the next, no less than seventy visitors took up the invitation to write their 'impressions' of Bermagui in the lined pages of what became the 'Visitors' Book'. After the Second World War the practice continued, on and off, until 1963, with hundreds of contributions covering 77 pages.

Those visitors left a remarkable record of all the good things, and some of the challenges, about a holiday in Bermagui, and provided all sorts of suggestions about how to make it better. It's instructive (and slightly worrying given the time that has elapsed) to note that many of the impressions are entirely familiar to modern eyes.

And as the entries are signed, the journal serves as the ultimate celebrity autograph book of the day. Along with Zane Grey, there's TV personality Dolly Dyer... a German baron and his wife... a strongman known by his *nom de cirque* of Don Athaldo... the revered artist Margaret Preston... a renowned marine biologist... the Premier of NSW... and future Prime Minister, Billy McMahon: they're all here!

Zane Grey's visit, in January-February 1936, did bring fame to Bermagui, in unprecedented fashion. The man was his own publicity machine. As historian Judi Hearn relates in *Big Game Fishing at Bermagui*, Grey brought his own movie crew, gave regular radio and press interviews, and flew his personal "Z G" flag over his extensive campsite on the headland.

At the end of their stay, on 26 February, Grey and his entourage signed the Visitors' Book - in purple ink.

"Zane Grey, Altadena Calif. fine town, fine people, fine [fish?], great fishing!"

His young secretary, Maia Turnbull, also signed and commented *"Beginning of a great tourist resort"*. Three other Americans, including cameramen Ed Bowen and Emil Morhardt Jr, also praised the town – "Bermagui is well started towards fame" - while calling, in the spirit of constructive criticism, for improved launching and docking facilities.

Big game fishing was a rich man's pastime, requiring expensive kit, difficult driving, lengthy hotel stays, and the hiring of local boats and crews. In these early days, the overwhelming number of visitors were from Sydney or rural Riverina.

In the Visitors' Book, most of them wrote enthusiastically about the delights of Bermagui. One well-travelled enthusiast noted: *"I have done the coast from Yamba to Eden and find Bermagui the best for a shooting, fishing and surfing holiday"*. Another topped that, by saying he had travelled *"from Cairns to Geelong"* and still rated Bermagui highest.

The big attraction, of course, was fishing: *"deep sea, river, rock and beach fishing – no place in Australia can boast of such"*, one happy fellow wrote in that first summer of 1936. Another, less-happy, commented mordantly in 1943 that Bermagui *"was at one time a famous place for fish, but Zane Grey took them all with him."*

A few of the visitors offered their critique with - let's admit it – brutal honesty. One man from Melbourne – his signature is not legible – did not hold back in early January 1936:

"Bitterly disappointed with the lack of progress in Bermagui. I first visited Bermagui eight years ago but surprised to find no improvements made. There is no more beautiful spot in Australia and it is up to the Shire Councillors to make a move and get something done. The pavement gutters are primitive. No decent reserve for picnickers with proper conveniences. No Electric Light in fact Bermagui is more a bush town than an up-to-date Country Centre.

Bermagui blacksmith, Sam Sinclair, featured in the famous 'Here's To'ee' advertisement for Toohey's Beer. This sculpture was on the wall of Tooheys' Lidcombe brewery.

A little bitumen on the road would also assist the approach to the town. Lake Wallaga one of the beauty spots of Australia, not advertised, not even a noticeboard to advice you of its whereabouts. An up-to-date café to supply visitors with oysters and fish would be an acquisition.

"Bermagui" will be advertised more extensively than any other town in Australia during the next few months [- a reference to Zane Grey's pending visit] - and it will make itself, but a little careful thought and direct action on the part of the Councillors to improve conditions will help to make the present Bush Village one of the most noted spots in Australia for tourists [and] lovers of angling. It is a matter of grave importance that Wallaga lake should be opened up permanently; surely this can be accomplished."

Mr Brookes of Sydney suggested more publicity of the town's tourist and fishing facilities was essential to *"correct the impression Sydney and other people have regarding accommodation boats etc. Get your Progress Association working overtime."*

E E Bullen of Vaucluse said the footpath from Sinclair's store to the Hotel was *"a disgrace for even a small town."*

Others suggested better accommodation, more facilities for beach goers and picnickers, better anchorage and launching facilities, more rowboats for hire, an aerodrome, a golf course, more nighttime entertainment such as movies, and better street lighting.

But against these proponents of "more", a few voices urged "less". The familiar contest between pro- and anti-development was alive and well.

"Despite the suggestions of former visitors, I prefer Bermagui South as it is. To hell with picture shows etc: we came here to relax."

"Be sure to preserve this seaside sylvan beauty and forbid the destruction of all green timber."

"I ask for Bermagui to be as natural and unaffected as it is now."

"Bermagui, one of the few places still unspoiled."

As Bermagui's fame spread, the Visitors' Book took on an increasingly national and international flavour. More Melburnians came, many more Sydneysiders, and even a few from outposts of the Empire like "Ceylon" (Sri Lanka) and Nigeria. From Scotland came the music hall singer Sir Harry Lauder, now in retirement. Lauder was so delighted with catching a striped marlin that (as Judi Hearn records) he gave a concert for the entire town that evening.

A more shadowy visitor was Baron Klaus von Oertzen and his wife the Baroness, who visited in June 1938. Von Oertzen had served in the German armed forces during the First World War, and later quit Germany for South Africa, where he hunted big game (and represented a German car manufacturer; he is credited with designing the four interlocking "O"s in the Audi badge.) Despite the growing threat of Hitler, von Oertzen was welcomed to Bermagui. He reported in the Visitors' Book catching 96 fish in a single day, and described Bermagui as *"a little perl [sic] in the world's crown."* When war was declared soon after, he and his wife were removed as honorary members of the Bermagui Big Game Anglers Club.

Not all the visitors came to hunt and kill the marine life. The Sydney University zoologist Professor W J Dakin visited in 1948 as he was completing his monumental book Australian Seashores. His comment in the Visitors' Book is ambiguous, slightly tart: *"The people of N S Wales do not realise what beautiful seascapes they have. Bermagui is at least unspoiled, may it long remain as delightful."*

A few years later, in Easter 1955, the painter and printmaker Margaret Preston came to town with her husband and found *"nice friendly people. Beautiful countryside with lots of walks and plenty of facilities. Good fishing. Most enjoyable holiday."*

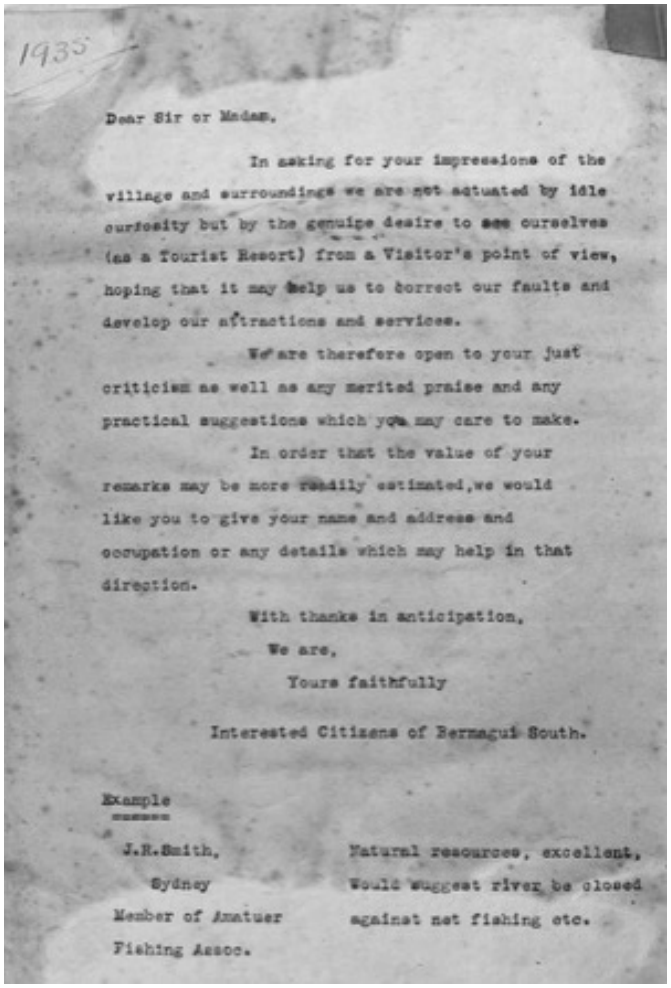
Visiting dignitaries were also encouraged to sign the book: the Premier of NSW J. J. Cahill, the Primary Industries Minister and future PM Billy McMahon, and various local members, mayors and councillors left their autographs as part of officials visits.

Almost certainly, the 'keeper' of the Visitors Book was Sam Sinclair, Bermagui's most famous resident.

Sinclair, a larger-than-life Boer War veteran who famously became the model 'strongman' in advertising for Toohey's beer, was the go-to man for any activity in town. He organised boat charters, weighed the catch, ran a blacksmith forge, operated a hardware shop, pumped petrol, kept an eye on the camping grounds, and extracted teeth.

So he met pretty well everyone who visited town. According to one reminiscence documented by the Bermagui Historical Society, the Visitors Book sat on the counter of Sinclair's shop.

It was Sinclair who offered a one-pound prize for the best essay written by the school children on the subject of "The Birth and Progress of Sword Fishing at Bermagui." The winning entry was pasted into the Visitors Book.



1935

Dear Sir or Madam.

In asking for your impressions of the village and surroundings we are not actuated by idle curiosity but by the genuine desire to see ourselves (as a Tourist Resort) from a Visitor's point of view, hoping that it may help us to correct our faults and develop our attractions and services.

We are therefore open to your just criticism as well as any merited praise and any practical suggestions which you may care to make.

In order that the value of your remarks may be more readily estimated, we would like you to give your name and address and occupation or any details which may help in that direction.

With thanks in anticipation,

We are,

Yours faithfully

Interested Citizens of Bermagui South.

Example

J.R.Smith, Sydney
Member of Amatuer Fishing Assoc.

Natural resources, excellent, would suggest river be closed against net fishing etc.

The invitation in the Bermagui visitors' book

Zane Grey with Striped and Black Marlin, Bermagui, 1936

Sinclair the blacksmith also apprenticed a young man, Wally Lyons, who later – under the stage name "Don Athaldo" - became famous for his feats of strength, including pulling a loaded car up William Street, Sydney to Kings Cross. In 1955, "Don Athaldo, Sydney" returned to town and signed the Visitors' Book with a poignant reminiscence:

"It's great to be back in the town in which I spent quite a number of my boyhood years, and to meet so many of my sincere friends to whom I am still "Wally". I'll be back, and to see especially Sam Sinclair and his lovely wife."

When Sinclair died in August 1964 – he was 82 and fell off a roof - the Visitors Book seems to have died with him. The last entry, dated in December 1963, was by Kathleen Kelly and her husband, visiting from Cooma:

"Have always enjoyed our visits to Bermagui which is one of the unspoiled beauty spots of the coast, and our visits are always complete when we have a chat with Mr. Sam Sinclair."

The Visitors Book then seems to have spent time in storage before being passed on to the Bermagui Historical Society. Today it is proudly displayed in the museum as a remarkable record of the voices and personalities of the past.

References: *Australian Dictionary of Biography* entries on Don Athaldo, W J Dakin and Margaret Preston (none of which mentions their Bermagui connections); Hearn, Judi (2000), *Big Game Fishing at Bermagui: Bermagui Big Game Anglers' Club*, a History from 1936-1996.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Road to Batemans Bay: Speculating on the South Coast During the 1840s Depression

by Alastair Greig

In his recent book '*The Road to Batemans Bay*', ANU sociologist and historian Alastair Greig gives a fascinating insight into some of the major themes, hopes and challenges of the early settlers in the first five decades of the colonization of the South Coast of New South Wales. For the new colony it was crucial to find a solution for the difficulties of overland communication. Greig's book shows that good seaports with easy access from the interior were absolutely vital for NSW, with its mountain ranges separating the inland woolgrowers from the coast and the important markets.

It was hoped that a dray road to a southern coastal port, where the wool bales could be transferred to ships, would considerably reduce the length and the cost of carting produce. This would be the business model for some very ambitious projects aimed to establish a Great Southern Port that could get produce much quicker and cheaper to the Sydney or overseas markets. Building a road connecting the producers in the highlands with a new southern port was critical in this, explaining the title of Alastair Greig's book '*The Road to Batemans Bay*', with Batemans Bay being one of the main candidates to become that Great Southern Port.

Build the Road

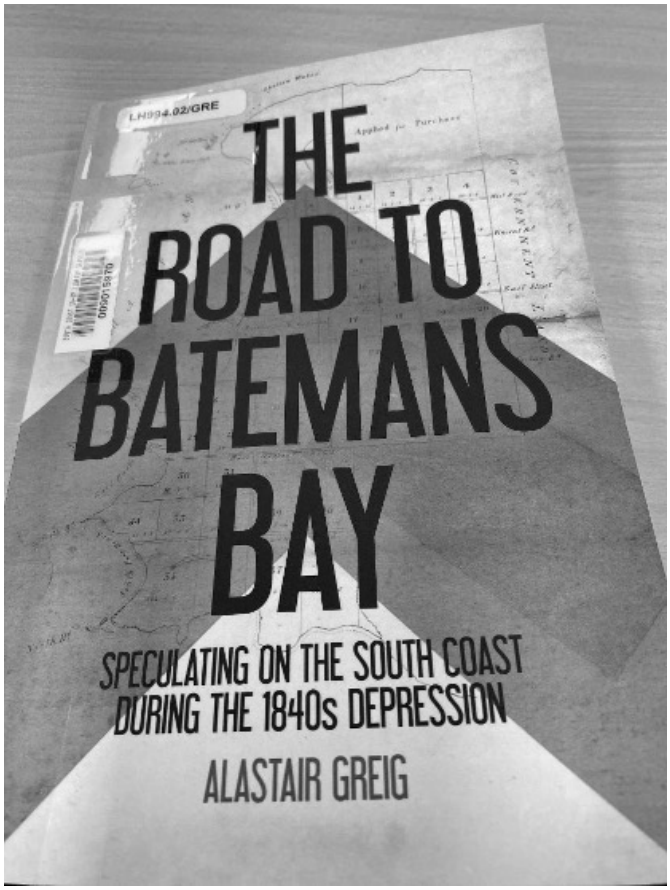
In the 1830s, the absence of a dray road over the mountain ranges was the main obstacle to transporting goods to Sydney via a southern port. The existing Goulburn route involved a long and arduous journey from Braidwood to Sydney, taking around three weeks at the bullocks' slow pace.

Surveyors had started work to find a quick access route to a harbour on the south coast. They used Indigenous knowledge to find a possible passage, but the construction of roads for bullock drays carting wool bales and other produce would demand surveying, labour, capital and earthmoving on an unprecedented scale.

The main coastal contenders were Batemans Bay, Jervis Bay and Broulee, south of Batemans Bay. Efforts to develop a modern port caused sometimes frantic real estate activities in these locations. The availability of the road from the interior always was the main selling point of the auctioneers.

The Great Southern Township of St Vincent

In his study, Greig mainly explores the events on the northern shores of Batemans Bay, where, in the late



1830, the township of St Vincent was envisaged.

The search for that Great Southern Port reflected the air of optimism that was prevalent in the more buoyant and expansionist economic conditions of the mid to late 1830s. This optimism had promoted land speculation and an over-inflated property market. Encouraged by the ready availability of British capital, and competition between local banks seeking outlets for their funds, other landholders began promoting regional 'private towns', boasting that one day they would either rival Sydney as a centre of commerce or become a node funnelling traffic to the metropolis.

Greig looks foremost to the case of Batemans Bay where a new city was planned on the town's northern beach, today's Long Beach. In 1838 and 1839, the government had advertised its first releases of land on the northern shores of Batemans Bay. These properties would become the township of St Vincent.

The (future) road to Batemans Bay always was central to the deal. In November 1839, the press reported that Kinghorne and Green had charted a 35-mile path from Braidwood to the Clyde River that was 'passable by a dray', apart from a 1-mile stretch. They considered the road 'as good as the present road between Sydney and Goulburn'.

Thomas Stubbs, the main auctioneer in the St Vincent land sales, predicted that Kinghorne and Green's recent 'discovery of a Dray Road' from Braidwood to the Clyde River would 'ensure the best line of transit for interior productions, and give the new port a commerce little short of Port Jackson'. It would challenge Sydney's maritime dominance and also establish closer communication with Van Diemen's Land and more recent government settlements at Port Phillip and in New Zealand.

These positive messages were heard by landowners and investors. The merchant firm Hughes & Hosking purchased 320 acres at Long Beach. Merchants John Terry Hughes and John Hosking had expanded their mercantile operations during the 1830s, running a wharf, a brewery, a whaling station, a shipping agency, warehouses, a steam flour mill, an inn and Sydney's largest hotel. They also held extensive landholdings.

In 1840, the other property at Long Beach was bought by Edward Lord. Hughes & Hosking and Lord were all experienced in subdividing land.

Hughes & Hosking did not hold onto its 320 acres at Long Beach for long. Raphael Clint and J.J. Peacock purchased the land in 1841 for £800. Interesting detail is that, like John Terry Hughes and John Hosking, Edward Lord never visited his Batemans Bay properties.

In October 1840 the firm instructed the Australian Auction Company to sell a substantial number of country lands and town allotments in St Vincent. Advertisements for the township of St Vincent appeared throughout the first half of 1841. The auctioneers promoted the mercantile potential of Batemans Bay and targeted settlers in the inland counties of Argyle, Murray and King, in addition to coastal interests at Broulee, Braidwood and Ulladulla.

Focusing primarily on the commercial promise of the town, the documents of these transactions hardly mention the structure of the township itself. The auctioneers seemed to think that if this broader colonial purpose of St Vincent was appealing enough, settlers would follow, and the shape of the subsequent urban environment would spontaneously take care of social life within a familiar town-grid template.

Looking back, this campaign was built on tricky assumptions. The township was praised principally as a node connecting a *future dray road with an emerging shipping lane*. The town lots themselves were of secondary consideration. The yet-to-be-built road to Batemans Bay was the promise on which speculators banked their money. Soon nothing more was heard of this road to Batemans Bay. The Clyde Road finally opened in January 1858, marked by the arrival of nine loaded bullock teams along the 32-mile route.

Competition

From the competing projects, the Jervis Bay proposal had a group of very powerful backers from the highlands. The Wool Road was the first road, capable of being used by wheeled vehicles, linking the inland area around Braidwood to the South Coast. The road led to the foundation of the privately-owned port town of South Huskisson and the adjacent 'government township' of Huskisson.

The years 1841 and 1842 marked the halcyon days of the Jervis Bay Wool Road scheme.

A convict labour gang was 'placed at the disposal' of the committee by the government and by early 1841 it had completed sections of the 35-mile route, including dynamiting difficult passes. This road would make the Kinghorne–Green route to Batemans Bay redundant.

Promoters were again optimistic that most of the produce of the southern interior would be shipped directly to England and other markets, and that imports would arrive directly to the port of South Huskisson.

However, from 1842, there were reports of rising construction costs on the Wool Road, ongoing problems with its reliability, negligent supervision of the convict road gang, the lack of feed and water for draught animals en route and the high cost of freight from Jervis Bay. This hinted at the straitened times many southern landowners were facing as the depression of the 1840s tightened its hold on the colony.

The progress of the Wool Road scheme and land sales at Jervis Bay in the first half of 1841 had the effect were taking more wind out of the sails of the St Vincent scheme.

But the hopes in Jervis Bay to export wool directly to Britain rather than through Sydney were dashed a few years later once growers accepted the centralised wool-auctioning system based in Sydney. The opportunity to export wool to Britain directly from Jervis Bay had passed.

The third candidate town was Broulee which only had been officially surveyed and laid out in 1837. Unlike St Vincent at Batemans Bay and the Jervis Bay private towns, Broulee appeared to have the advantage of being a 'government town', laid out by a government surveyor. This, however, did not necessarily raise its appeal over its competitors and it appears that its campaign always lagged the other two. In late 1840, Broulee was still hoping that the arrival of 'steamers' would shortly raise the value of their land 'three or four-fold'. It advertised that coastal vessels could reach Sydney in a day, while steamers would soon make the journey in less than 18 hours.

But in 1841 the race was still on, though pressure started to build. Following impressive initial sales in January 1841, interest in land at St Vincent was gradually waning. The tide of speculation in Batemans Bay, as elsewhere, was ebbing.

The Badness of the Times

Early investors had been operating inside a speculative bubble, but big trouble was on the horizon. Soon, land prices would start dropping and the colony's economy would enter recessionary times presenting a severe test to the business models of merchants and landowners.

Alastair Greig quotes numerous newspaper articles showing that contemporary observers were very aware of the emerging real estate crisis and the state of the colony's economy. As 1841 advanced, the press started to raise alarm and steadily turned more attention to the tightening money crisis, the bursting property market bubble, collapsing livestock prices and rising insolvencies. At the end of April an article by 'Veritas' warned in more apocalyptic tones that: 'We have certainly seen signs; wonders; and appalling sights in the

mercantile sky; but these, I fear, are merely the shadow of coming events'. An editorial in the *Sydney Morning Herald* reflected on 'the violent panic which, during the last five or six months, has seized upon all classes of our community' caused by 'over-speculation'. It blamed *'this rage for buying land as so much merchandise'* and *'this consequent practice of chalking out townships, dividing and subdividing, and puffing off without the slightest regard for truth or common honesty'*.

The 'badness of the times' became a popular euphemism for these omens hanging over the colony. 'Money is extremely scarce, the value of property is depreciated, trade of every description is languishing and everybody, from the highest to the lowest, complains of the badness of the times'.

In the end, the movers and shakers in St Vincent would find themselves insolvent and the 'Township of St Vincent' would become another of the many speculative ventures of the period that vanished without a trace, swallowing up the money of unfortunate punters. Hughes, Hosking and Clint saw the value of their assets (land, livestock, merchandise) crash during the depression and all three faced insolvency. Hughes & Hosking would become forever associated with the early 1840s depression. To compound matters, their financial backer, the Bank of Australia, collapsed on 2 March 1843. By 26 September 1843, Hughes & Hosking was also placed under sequestration.

The period set the scene for institutionalising what urban planner and academic Leonie Sandercock later described as 'the national hobby of land speculation'.

Taking the Train

In the early 1840s, the claims of Broulee, Batemans Bay and Jervis Bay for southern pre-eminence rested not only on a dray road over the mountain range but also on the premise that shipping (especially the advances in steamships) would facilitate and speed up the transportation of commodities from the interior to Sydney. These arguments were disrupted by the anticipation and emergence of the steam-powered rail-roads 'that, as their promoters claimed, 'would more than double the amount that now really finds its way onto the producers' pockets'. The railway quickly opened different paths for development, but these paths bypassed the great southern harbours of NSW. They could connect the interior producers with the mercantile metropolis on the coast.

The Main Southern railway line and other rail lines were constructed in the second half of the 19th century, confining bullock drays to transporting wool from outlying areas to the new railheads particularly Goulburn (after 1869) from where the wool could be carried quickly to Sydney. As the railway crept south past Picton towards Goulburn, the inland rail route to Sydney gradually consolidated its advantage over the coastal route.

A Road to Nowhere..?

Today nothing visual remains that can testify of these exciting events. None of the schemes produced the so highly anticipated and predicted results. A Great Southern Port never was created, not in Batemans Bay, nor in Jervis Bay or in Broulee. The crucial Road to the Coast was only realised partially and much later than needed. Today only a real estate plan of the township and surrounds of St Vincent still exists.

The fall from grace of Long Beach as the 'Great Southern Township of St Vincent' could not have been starker. In 1841 it was acclaimed as a future port to rival Sydney; 10 years later it was merely unnamed residue bundled together as part of a lot in the sale of a bankrupt estate.

Was it all a scam, some 'castles in the sky', without any relevance to our history? In his book Alastair Greig states that that was not the case. There was a solid base for these daring plans, even if the timing, amid the great economic depression of the 1840s, was very unfortunate. Following and retelling the rollercoaster of events and the actions of colourful characters, Greig paints a fascinating picture of an important period in the history of the colony. He documents the hopes, challenges and ideas guiding the early settlers on the South Coast of NSW. By doing so, the book also helps to understand the wider context of the economic and political highs and lows of the early nineteenth century.

The Road to Batemans Bay by Alastair Greig.
Published by ANU Press, 2023

Review by Hans Berendsen

UPRISING: War in the Colony of New South Wales, 1838 – 1844

by Stephen Gapps

In recent decades the subject of 'Frontier Wars' (the conflicts between settlers and First Nations peoples that occurred between 1788 and the 1850s) has emerged as a popular Australia history topic, especially among Australian Academics.

Acknowledgment of the extent of these 'Frontier Wars', and the impact they had on Indigenous peoples, has also been frequently cited as one of the major objectives of the 'truth telling' process that Indigenous advocates have recently been calling for.

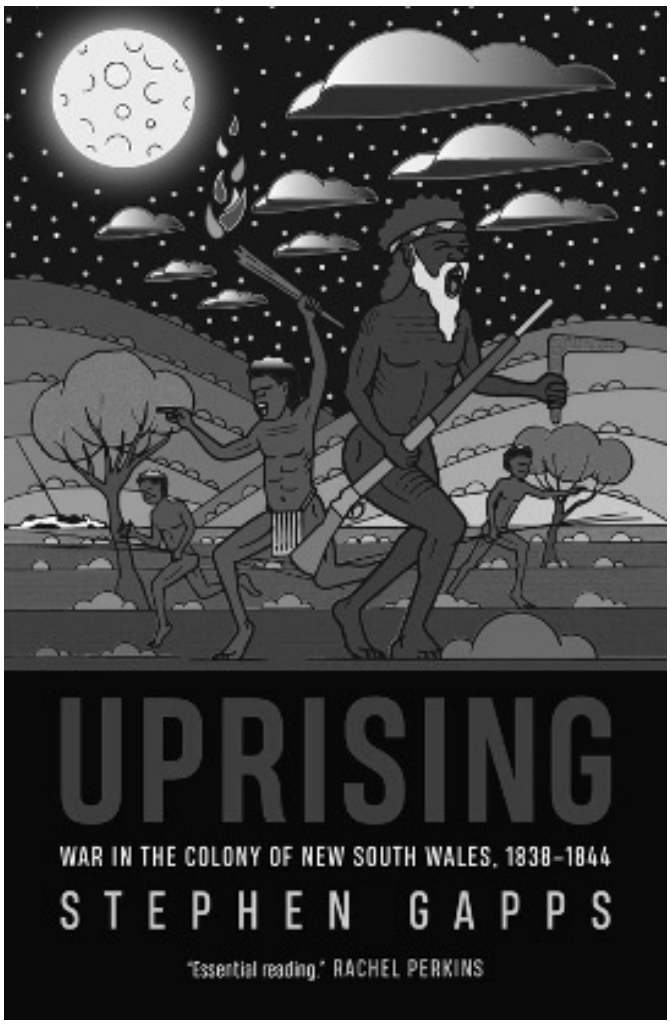
This push for a greater acknowledgment of Australia's 'Frontier Wars' has, more recently, impacted the Australian War Memorial with demands for a major, dedicated Frontier Wars Gallery to be opened at the AWM. This suggestion has certainly not been universally embraced, although it now seems some form of permanent Frontier Wars exhibition will be added at the AWM in 2027 or 2028, perhaps as part of a new Pre-1914 Gallery. (An alternative suggestion is that a National Frontier Wars Museum should be built – which, of course, presumes there is a public – or political – appetite for building yet another museum!)

Illustrating how complex the topic of the Frontier Wars is and/or illustrating how much research remains to be undertaken on the topic is the most basic question of how many lives were lost in these conflicts. The University of Newcastle estimates 10,000 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders were killed in 400 massacres (their description)... others estimate between 20,000 and 30,000 Aboriginals and 2,000 to 2,500 Europeans lost their lives in the Frontier Wars... yet others suggest there may have been up to 60,000 casualties in Queensland alone!

Uprising: War in the Colony of New South Wales, 1838 – 1844 examines 'a vast arc of conflict from present-day northern Victoria through to southeast Queenland' – those so-called 'Frontier Wars'.

Basically, it looks at several significant First Nations victories (at Broken River, near present-day Benalla in Victoria; along the Murrumbidgee River between Narrandera and Wagga Wagga; at Big River, or today the Gwydir River, near Moree; at Meewah, near Toowoomba, Queensland) and then details the colonialists' counteroffensives. This should be viewed as the 'scene setting' for numerous significant, recurring themes, including:

- The 'Frontier Wars' were, in reality, a series of conflicts between settlers and Aboriginal peoples, mostly involving guerilla-style attacks.
- These were not a series of isolated incidents (as



has often been suggested – probably because the early research into what collectively are now known as the 'Frontier Wars' focused entirely on isolated conflicts, each in an entirely different area, by historians looking at only their own local areas). Instead, they appear to have been part of a well-planned Indigenous campaign to stop European settlers moving into areas outside the 'limits of location' (the areas around Sydney and Brisbane, for example, in which settlers could legally take up land and could expect some government protection) or to remove squatters and their stock from areas they had simply 'acquired'. Between 1835 and 1838 in NSW there was a frenzied land grab that had been spurred on by high prices for wool, mostly along the fertile major river systems that had traditionally been the home territories of Aboriginal clans. This became the major catalyst for the conflicts. (The government's response to this land grab was to deem the land to be Crown Land and then to offer it for sale. Stephen Gapps wryly commented that 'in 1836 the colony's entire expenditure on the people whose lands they were taking was in the form of blankets at a cost of £904. Income to the colonial coffers that same year from land sales produced more than £130,000.')

- Very significant numbers of (sometimes 1,000 or more) Aboriginal attackers were involved, whole families would participate (women, for example, running into the battle area to retrieve spears so they could be reused), and some warriors travelled hundreds

of kilometers to participate. Settlers and their workers (such as shepherds employed to guard flocks of sheep) may have been killed, but attacks also were aimed at seizing settlers' property and dispersing their flocks of sheep or herds of cattle (with an enticing by-product of the conflicts being that some animals could simply be taken to be eaten!). As the 'wars' continued, traditional Aboriginal weapons such as spears, boomerangs and clubs were supplemented by rifles and handguns that had been obtained by (and, in some cases, purposely supplied to) Indigenous people. The simple objective of these attacks was to make it very clear to settlers and potential new settlers that they were not at all welcome in the area.

- The settlers, understandably, retaliated – eager to hang onto their land and their livelihoods... but also to 'teach the blacks a lesson'. Initially local settlers banded together to form significant sized raiding parties, whilst also calling on the government to provide military or police to 'control the black menace'. These bands of settlers had the advantage of firepower and the mobility provided by horses, which accounts for Indigenous casualties being significantly greater than those of the settlers. And, not infrequently, a tit-for-tat series of reprisal raids then followed.
- The government was slow to act. It did not have the manpower to deploy significant numbers of troops or policemen to far-flung locations to stop the conflicts or to protect the combatants from actions initiated by their 'enemies'. And, whilst it showed some sympathies towards squatters who were being attacked and whose livestock was being taken, it equally had obligations to the Indigenous peoples who were legally considered to be British subjects. However, the frequency and the increasing severity of Aboriginal raids on settlers and those droving cattle and sheep along inland routes eventually 'forced Governor Gipps to set aside any idea of pursuing Aboriginal rights and equality before the law.' So, forces were assembled, their numbers were supplemented by recruiting settlers - many only too eager to revenge previous Aboriginal attacks - and these were dispatched in attempts to end the conflicts. (One of their many solutions was to remove Aboriginals from the contested areas – even if, in some instances, that necessitated massacring them). The sections describing the government's responses to the 'Frontier Wars' are one of the more revealing aspects of this fascinating book.
- The dearth of reliable information about the conflicts that were part of the 'Frontier Wars' is also repeatedly highlighted in the book. First-hand accounts of the conflicts are few and far between, and much of the little information that was provided at the time is of questionable accuracy. This is hardly surprising considering that the actions of those who were participants (on both sides of the conflicts) were often clearly of a legally criminal nature (i.e. to put it simply, murders were being committed).

In *Uprising: War in the Colony of New South Wales, 1838 – 1844* 'prevailing interpretations of Aboriginal resistance are dispended with', as one earlier reviewer put it – which is why this book is so interesting. But,

as she also noted, 'unease persists about how this (chapter in our) history should become a remembered and honoured part of the nation's story'. So, it will be very interesting to see how the Australian War Memorial eventually depicts the Australian 'Frontier Wars', and to see whether its portrayal of them turns out to be accurate and balanced.

* * *

The 'Frontier Wars' did not extend to the NSW South Coast. In fact, the only entry relating to the South Coast in the University of Newcastle's Colonial Frontier Massacres in Australia, 1788 – 1930 is for 1st March 1806 (well before settlement of the area began), 'Twofold Bay. Sealers (a vessel crew of 11) killed nine Aboriginal men allegedly in reprisal from an Aboriginal day time attack seeking the return of at least one Aboriginal woman abducted by the sealers. 'To intimidate them, it was thought advisable to suspend those that fell on the limbs of trees, but before daylight the next morning, they were taken down and carried off'. (Sydney Gazette, April 6, 1806, p 2)'. And in 'the known conflicts in NSW', listed in 'Australian Frontier Conflicts 1788 – 1940s and Beyond' by Michael Organ of the University of Wollongong, all the conflicts were with seamen or survivors of just four shipwrecks: '1797, Moruya, Yuin people kill 13 survivors of the wreck of the ship Sydney Cove; 22 July 1804, Jervis Bay, sailors from the Conquest kill Aboriginal people; 27 October 1805, Jervis Bay, Report of Europeans speared

A party in search of Aboriginal Australians, Darling Downs, Queensland, approximately 1845. From a Sketchbook by Thomas Domville Taylor. Image: NLA, PIC MSR 14/1/6 Volume 1191 #PIC/20299/12

by Aboriginal people at Jervis Bay. Possible reprisal for massacre by sailors from the Conquest previous July; 5 December 1805, Jervis Bay, Aboriginal people attack survivors of the Fly shipwreck. Mr Rushworth, master of the Fly speared, Thomas Evans killed; 15 March 1806, Twofold Bay, sealers from the whaler, George, shipwrecked on 3 February, massacre Aboriginal people; 6 April 1806, Twofold Bay, report that sealers, crew of the whaler George, have shot and killed nine Aboriginal people and hung their bodies from trees; 15 May 1808, Bateman's Bay, report that five crew of the Fly speared to death by Aboriginal people at Bateman's Bay.'

Review by Peter Lacey

Old Memories

When on my way to Sydney recently, while waiting at Bermagui for the steamer to take in cargo, I strolled out on the headland, and, in the words of the poet, "summoned from the shadowy past the forms that once had been".

About the year 1858 an attempt was made by the late Mr. John Grant of Tantawanglo and the late Mr. W. Pheeney of Wolumla to come up the Bega River in the 10 ton yacht *Comet*, to take a load of wheat from Jellat Jellat to Merimbula for the late Mr. D. Gowing, I believe intended for the flour mill worked by Messrs. Burkelman and Bate, and later the maizena works carried on by the late Mr. Matthew A. Munn, and now the Merimbula Bacon Factory.

The *Comet* started from the Pambula River on her mission as above stated and, when off Merimbula, a strong wind arose and carried them out to sea, where they battled with the tempest till daylight next morning. Mr. Grant, a thorough seaman was equal to the occasion. The weather having calmed considerably, Mr. Grant took his bearings, and steered for the Bermagui River, he being well acquainted with same.

About midday an old aboriginal who used to camp about the headland, came running over to my father's place, and said a ship was coming round the point. Father asked him if it was Captain Baxter, of the *Numba*: No. *Gipsy*: No. Those were the two schooners that traded between Eden and Sydney at the time. "Well, Beemit (that was the old chap's name) what ship?" He paused for a while, and then said, "Man-o-war, I think".

Anyhow, father, my brother and I hastened down to the mouth of the river just as the *Comet* was rounding the point, being propelled with the two long sweeps. She entered the river and dropped anchor, when the two men came ashore and related their great adventure.

The first thing to be considered was how to get word to the men's wives, as there was no mail from Bermagui to Bega in those days, so my father sent a messenger with the men's letters off to the Murrah, where the Messrs. Pollack lived, and it was forwarded on to Bega, thence to Pambula, where Mrs. Grant and Mrs. Pheeney received the glad news of their husbands' safety.

Eleven days passed before a favorable breeze set in for the *Comet* to make a start for home, but on the 12th a fair breeze set in, and the *Comet* weighed anchor and took her departure. She got along well till off Tathra, when the wind freshened up, and by the time they were opposite Pambula River the wind had so increased that they had to run to Eden for shelter, where they left the *Comet* and walked home to Pambula.

Some time after the yacht was taken round to Merimbula and beached on the south side of the river, where the bridge now crosses. An old, retired sea captain (Broomhead) took up his residence in her for some years. He used to run a ferry boat across the river.

Eventually she was purchased by someone in Sydney and £10 was offered for delivery. The late Captain R.W. Sharpe undertook the contract and delivered her safely single handed. He then returned to Bega, and for some time kept a store in Auckland St. Being an enterprising man, he established the "Southern Standard" the first newspaper printed in Bega. After running the paper for some time, he sold out and removed to Candelo where he kept a store. - *Bega District News*, 5th October 1925

WWII South Coast Shipping Losses, 1942 to 1944

The public knew little about the impact that enemy submarines had on merchant vessels during WWII. Wartime secrecy kept the information from them. But Japanese submarines and even a German U-boat had significant successes whilst operating along the east coast of Australia.

Today we know that 19 merchant ships were sunk by torpedoes, gunfire or mines off the NSW coast between 1941 and 1944. Seven of these were on the NSW South Coast. A further ten vessels were damaged along the NSW East Coast but managed to make it to port for repairs.

Around 214 merchant seamen and military personnel were killed in these attacks.

The Imperial Japanese Navy began its Australian submarine offensive on the 31st May 1942. The initial targets were Allied warships.

The first strike was a bold, coordinated attack on the Sydney harbour naval base on the night of the 31st May 1942 by five I-class Japanese submarines (I-21, I-22, I-24, I-27 and I-29), three carrying midget submarines, the Ha-14, Ha-21 and the M24. The Sydney ferry 'Kuttabul', converted to a depot ship, was destroyed by a torpedo fired from M24 whilst it was moored at the Garden Island naval base. 21 sailors were killed in the explosion and a further ten injured. All three midget submarines involved in the attack were sunk.

After the failure of the midget submarine attack on Sydney (none of the major warships that were the intended targets were sunk), three of the large ocean-going mother submarines, the I-21, I-24 and I-27, sought revenge:

The Australian freighter 'Age' was attacked by the I-24 on 3rd June 1942, 25 miles south-east of Norah Head, but escaped unharmed.

The next vessel was not so lucky. On 3rd June 1942, the 4,700 ton BHP steel screw steamer 'Iron Chieftain', sailing from Newcastle to Whyalla with a full load of coal and ship building construction material for ships being built in Whyalla, was torpedoed by the I-21 and sunk off Manly, Sydney. 13 of its crew died. The remaining 25 crew, including three who were seriously injured crew, took to a lifeboat and arrived at a beach near The Entrance 38 hours later.

Meanwhile, near Gabo Island on 4th June 1942, the I-27 chased the Australian freighter 'Barwon' with torpedoes and fire from its deck gun, temporarily damaging the vessel. There were no casualties

Also on 4th June 1942, the I-27 lined up the BHP freighter 'Iron Crown' 44 miles south-south-east of Gabo Island. There were 43 crew on board and the ship was transporting a load of manganese from Whyalla to Port Kembla. The vessel was torpedoed, a large explosion resulted, and the ship sank within 60 seconds. 38 lives were lost. The five survivors hastily grabbed lifejackets and jumped clear of the ship, then clung to floating wreckage until they were rescued. The attack was witnessed by a Hudson bomber which attempted to bomb the crash-diving submarine, without success.

The BHP freighter, 'Iron Crown'

Then on 6th June 1942, the I-24 chased the Australian freighter 'Echunga' south-east of Wollongong, without success. The submarine was kept at bay by the ship's gun, until the corvette HMAS 'Kalgoorlie' arrived on the scene. The next night the I-24 shelled the eastern suburbs of Sydney and the I-21 shelled Newcastle. Damage from both attacks was negligible.

The I-24 had slightly more luck on the 9th June 1942 when it chased the British freighter 'Orestes' for three hours south-east of Jervis Bay. The submarine fired two torpedoes that detonated prematurely and then attacked the 7,748 ton ship with gun fire. The 'Orestes' was slightly damaged.

The I-21 had another victory in the early hours of 13th June when it torpedoed and sank the Panamanian cargo ship 'Guatemala' 45 miles north-east of Sydney Heads. The torpedo was the last that the I-21 had on board. The other eight merchant ships in the same convoy escaped with their escorts. No lives were lost. The previous day the I-21 had also engaged the 'Guatemala' when it fired 10 rounds from its deck gun. On that occasion the ship was not damaged.

Towards the end of July 1942 a new fleet of attack submarines arrived off the NSW coast. These included the I-11, I-24 (again) and the I-175:

'George S. Livanos', 1942: The 'George S Livanos' was a 134-metre, 4,835-ton steel screw steamer that had been built in the United Kingdom in 1938. Carrying a cargo of army vehicles, built locally by Ford and General Motors, from Melbourne to Sydney, she was torpedoed by the I-11 and sank some 15 to 20 miles off Jervis Bay on 20th July 1942. The crew made it safely to shore in the ship's lifeboats.

The 'George S. Livanos'

'Coast Farmer', 1942: Three hours later, still on 21st July 1942, and in the same area, the I-11 torpedoed and sank (the vessel sank within 20 minutes) the 99-metre, 3,290-ton United States steamship 'Coast Farmer' when it was 25 miles off Jervis Bay. One crew member was killed in the attack, with the remaining 39 being rescued by a RAAF crash boat. After the attack, the I-11 surfaced to examine the sinking ship by searchlight and submerged a short time later.

The 'Coast Farmer'

'William Dawes', 1942: Then 27 hours later, in the early morning darkness of 22nd July 1942, the I-11 attacked the 5,576 ton American Liberty Ship*, the 'William Dawes', off Tathra. It was carrying a large cargo of ammunition, army stores, and vehicles. The 'William Dawes' had departed Adeleide on 19th July and its ultimate destination may have been New Caledonia after calling into Sydney and Brisbane. The attack occurred at 5.30 a.m about 12-miles out to sea. One torpedo struck the stern, which later separated, and a second torpedo slammed into the hull amidships and started fires that eventually raged throughout the entire hull. The I-11 surfaced nearby, to inspect the damage, and then slowly submerged. The 'William Dawes' finally sank at about 4.30p.m., stern first. Five lives were lost. An RAAF Beaufort bomber from Nowra spotted the I-11 on the surface 3 miles south of the burning ship and dropped a pattern of bombs as it submerged.

The next day, 23rd July 1942, the steamer 'Allara' was severely damaged when torpedoes by the I-175 off Newcastle. She was travelling from Cairns to Sydney. Four of her crew were killed and a further six were

The 'William Dawes'

injured. She was towed to Newcastle and then to Sydney, where she was repaired at Mort's Dock.

Then, on 24th July 1942, the I-175 attacked the Australian steamship 'Murada' off Crowdy Head, but its torpedo missed.

The next attack occurred when the I-11 chased the Australian freighter 'Collana' on 27th July 1942. The 2,197 ton vessel was shelled unsuccessfully whilst 24 miles north of Green Cape.

'Dureenbee', 1942: At about 1:30 am on 3rd August 1942, the 223-ton fishing vessel 'Dureenbee' accidentally approached the I-175 whilst on one of her fishing voyages. At the time the submarine was on the surface recharging its batteries. The trawler's crew of 11 were stowing recently-caught fish and deploying nets. They were unaware the I-175 was nearby. The I-175 opened fire on the 'Duneenbee' with their deck gun, then with their machine gun, finally destroying the vessel's wheelhouse and crippling the vessel. The I-175 circled the trawler for 45 minutes, continuing to fire on the fishing vessel. The submarine then submerged, but reappeared six minutes later travelling out to sea. The captain of the 'Dureenbee' then fired several distress flares to summon assistance. By this time one member of the trawler's crew was dead, and another two seriously wounded. The Moruya Volunteer Defence Corps unit asked the owners of another trawler, the 'Mirrabooka', to put to sea as a rescue vessel. One of the badly wounded sailors died on board 'Mirrabooka' and a third died in hospital several days later. The disabled 'Dureenbee' ultimately came ashore and was wrecked near Batemans Bay.

The 'Durunbee' after being attached by the I-175

Japanese submarines returned to the NSW coast in January 1943. The I-21, I-26, I-174, I-177, I-178 and I-180 succeeded in sinking nine vessels and damaged six others:

The I-21 deployed three torpedoes and sank the New Zealand steamship 'Kalingo', 110 miles to the east of Sydney on 17th January 1943. 32 crew and two passengers were on board the ship which had just left Sydney bound for New Plymouth, New Zealand. It was a bright moonlight night, so the 'Kalingo' would have been a clearly visible target. Two of her crew members were killed. After the attack, the submarine surfaced to confirm damage. An hour later the 'Kalingo' sank. The survivors were then faced with a 38-hour, 175-mile ordeal before eventually arriving safely back in Sydney.

The next day, the I-21 damaged the 10,222-ton tanker 'Mobilube' when it was 60 miles off Sydney. On this occasion three of its crew were killed and five injured. The 'Mobilube' was towed by HMAS 'Mildura' to Sydney where it was declared to be a total loss.

Four days later, on 22nd January 1943, the I-21 damaged the 7,170-ton United States Liberty ship 'Peter H Burnett' in a torpedo attack 420 miles east of Newcastle. One crew member was killed. The crew abandoned ship, but later returned, and the ship was then towed to Sydney by the HMAS 'Mildura' where its cargo of wool and mail were salvaged. It was then repaired at Cockatoo Dockyard.

Then, on 30th January 1943, the I-21 attempted to attack the 1,036-ton British freighter 'Giang Ann' off the NSW coast (location unspecified). However, the torpedo exploded prematurely and the vessel escaped damage.

'Iron Knight', 1943: The I-21 was more successful on 8th February 1943 when it sank the 4,812-ton BHP ore carrier 'Iron Knight' off Bermagui. Early in February 1943 the 'Iron Knight' left Whyalla, South Australia and joined a convoy of ships that left Melbourne bound for Newcastle. There were ten merchant ships in the convoy and they were escorted by the corvettes HMAS 'Mildura' and 'Townsville'. On 8th February the convoy was about 11 nautical miles (20 km) off Montague Island. At 2.30 a.m. the I-21 fired a torpedo at 'Townsville' which passed under the corvette's bow and then hit the 'Iron Knight'. She sank within two minutes, killing 36 members of her crew. (Ore carriers had a reputation of being "death ships" because the density of their cargo caused them to sink rapidly – usually too quickly for their crew to launch lifeboats.) 14 other crew members from the 'Iron Knight' survived by clinging to wreckage for 10 hours. In accordance with naval practice at the time, the remaining ships in the convoy kept sailing and did not stop to rescue survivors. 10 hours later the Free French destroyer 'Le Triomphant' arrived and rescued them. As they needed clean, dry clothes, the destroyer crew issued French naval uniforms to all of them. (In accordance with standard practice at the time, BHP then stopped the survivors' pay from the moment 'Iron Knight' was sunk. The company gave the survivors 30 days unpaid leave after the sinking, but deducted their time adrift from that 30 days!)

The 'Iron Knight'

The I-21 then moved up the coast and, on 10th February 1943, struck the US Liberty Ship 'Starr King' with two of four torpedoes that it had fired on 10 February 1943. The "Starr King' was then 154 miles off Sydney, its cargo including army supplies. The stricken vessel was taken in tow by HMAS 'Warramunga' but sank the next day.

In April 1943, four other Japanese submarines, the I-177, I-178, I-180 and I-26, were deployed to Australian waters:

'Recina', 1943: The 122-metre, 4,732-ton steel screw Yugolsav steamer 'Recina' was torpedoed by the I-26 and sank 32 kilometres north-east of Cape Howe on the 11th April 1943. The vessel sank in 1½ minutes and 32 of its crew were killed. The vessel had been on a voyage from Whyalla to Newcastle with a cargo of iron ore. Its nine survivors were picked up an hour and a quarter later by the survey vessel HMAS 'Moresby' that was escorting the convoy.

The 'Recina'

Then on 26th April 1943 the I-177 sank the British steamship 'Limerick' 20 miles SE of Cape Byron, on the NSW North Coast. Two of its crew of 72 were killed.

The I-178 is credited with having sunk the Liberty Ship 'Lydia M Child' 145 kilometres east of Newcastle on 27th April 1943. The vessel sank within eight minutes. The 'Lydia M. Child' was actually on her maiden voyage, leaving San Francisco on April 3rd 1943 bound for

Suez, Egypt with a stop in Sydney, Australia. Her cargo was a Lend-Lease load for the British of canned food, small tanks, steel plates, two locomotives and various other materials. The ship was unescorted on the long voyage. When it was hit, the 62 crew members took to five lifeboats and at least one raft. At around midnight on the 27th April, two Australian warships, the HMAS 'Warrnambool' and HMAS 'Deloraine' left Sydney to search for the survivors. Hours went by, but all were finally recovered by the two ships, Warrnambool picking up forty-three and Deloraine picking up 19, the last 7 at 4 p.m. on the 28th April. They were all landed at Sydney that night.

(The I-178 is believed to have been the Japanese submarine that sank the hospital ship HMAHS Centaur off the Queensland Coast on 14th May 1943, resulting in the loss of 258 lives. It was probably sunk as a result of an attack by a RAAF aircraft off Nambucca Heads on 17th June 1943. All 89 hands on the I178 perished.)

Then on 29th April 1943, the I-180 sank the 2,240-ton steamer 'Wollongbar' off Crescent Head on the North Coast. 32 lives were lost. Five survivors were rescued from a lifeboat.

The I-180 then backed up by sinking the 84-metre, 2,137-ton Norwegian freighter 'Fingal' off Nambucca Heads on 5th May 1943. Twelve of its 31 crew were killed.

The 5,832-ton British steamer 'Ormiston', was attacked by torpedoes off Coffs Harbour on 12th May 1943, probably by the I-180. The 'Ormiston' escaped undamaged.

That same day the Australian steamer 'Caradale' was damaged in a torpedo attack by the I-180 off Evans Head. However, the torpedo failed to explode on impact.

On 29th May 1943 the United States Liberty Ship 'Sheldon Jackson' was torpedoed, probably by the I-174, off the NSW north coast but escaped without damage. The I-174 then sailed north to Queensland waters where it unsuccessfully chased the 'Point San Pedro' (1 June 1943) and the 'Edward Chambers' (4 June 1943).

The United States Liberty Ship 'John Bartram', heading to Sydney from San Francisco, was attacked by the I-174, one hundred miles east of Sydney on 7th June 1943 but, after taking evasive action, escaped damage. The captain of the I-174 left the scene in some haste, convinced one of his torpedoes had hit their target.

Then the 5,000-ton United States Landing Ship Tank LST 469 was badly damaged in a torpedo attack by I-174 off Smokey Cape on 16th June 1943. Twenty-six of her crew were killed and ten were injured.

Torpedos from the I-174 struck the 125-metre, 5,551-ton United States motor vessel, the Portmar, also on 16th June 1943. The ship sank withing four minutes and two of the crew of 72 were killed. This was the last recorded loss of a vessel to Japanese submarines off Australia's east coast during World War II.

'Robert J Walker', 1944: However, the 'Robert J Walker', a 129-metre, 7,180-ton United States Liberty Ship, was torpedoed when on a voyage from Fremantle to Sydney and when approximately 40 miles off Bateman's Bay in the early morning of 25th December 1944. Two torpedoes, fired 3½ hours apart, struck the vessel, with another being stopped by anti-aircraft fire from the ship. This was an isolated incident in World War II history, with the 'Robert J. Walker' being the only vessel sunk in NSW waters by a German U-boat, the U-862. Two of the crew of the 'Robert J. Walker' were killed. The remaining 67 survivors were located by HMAS 'Quickmatch' at 5.45 a.m. on 26th December. (The U-862 was later gifted to the Japanese government and became I-502 which was scuttled off Singapore in August 1945.)

* Liberty Ship: Liberty Ships were mass-produced bulk cargo freighters that were constructed in purpose-built American yards during WWII. 2,751 Liberty ships were built – the fastest in under five days. They were frequently named after important US citizens, with the 'William Dawes', for example, being a revolutionary patriot in the American War of Independence who famously rode with Paul Revere in 1775.

MORE SOUTH COAST TOWNS & VILLAGES

WYNDHAM

The area around Wyndham initially attracted the attention of Europeans in 1852 after the Rev. W.B. Clarke, a geologist, claimed to have discovered gold at nearby Honeysuckle Flat and noted the presence of molybdenite between Eden and Honeysuckle. Eager prospectors followed, but were rewarded with little gold.

To cater for the needs of these original prospectors, the Honeysuckle Inn (3½ km from Wyndham) was built in 1855. It was later to prosper when it became a significant stopping-off point for miners travelling to or from the richer Kiandra goldfields.

Meanwhile, farmers were moving to the area. John Robertson was perhaps the first when, in 1853, he purchased 52 acres of land.

On 24th July 1856 the site for a village was fixed, and a survey was undertaken. It has been suggested that the village was named after a Colonel Charles Ashe Windham who had distinguished himself at the Battle of Inkerman in the Crimean War (Raglan near Bathurst and Dundas in Sydney may also have been named after other soldiers who participated in that war).

In September 1856 the first town land was offered for sale in Eden, but little was sold, and none of those blocks was developed. A further land sale was held at Pambula on July 19th 1860 (the position of the Wyndham township by then having become attractive because it was on the popular route from Eden to the Kiandra goldfields) and most of the remaining blocks were sold, mainly to Pambula and Eden citizens.

The village developed at two ends – at Honeysuckle to the east and two miles to the west on land that had been purchased by a Ferdinand Diversi. Around 1870 he built a store there and later opened the first Post Office. A blacksmiths, assembly room and hotel were also constructed.

However, from around 1880, when the public school was built, the town developed in its current position: the cemetery was opened in 1881; the Wyndham Hall and School of Arts, a new post office, and an Anglican Church were all erected in 1888 (the Anglican Church on a different site - it was moved to its current location in 1947); The Robbie Burns Hotel (replacing one that had been built after the original Scottish Chieftain Inn was burnt down in 1865) and a Royal Hotel (which was, around 1934, pulled down and rebuilt in Candelo as a private residence) were both built in 1891; and a new police station and court house and the Catholic Church were built in 1898.

By the end of the 19th century, dairying in the area was well established (a creamery was established at Honeysuckle, opening in October 1899), a sawmill was operating (including providing boxwood timber for bridge building), and mining was being undertaken at nearby Whipstick.

Wyndham, 1958

The Wyndham area, however, has not been without its problems:

As the Melbourne *Argus* reported, around Wyndham *'rabbits were so thick about 1911 that many of the farmers were in danger of having to walk off their properties and leave them to the rabbits. A co-operative rabbit canning company was formed, and a small canning factory built on the bank of the pretty Honeysuckle Creek. (It opened in October 1908.) Soon dozens of men were trapping rabbits for the factory, receiving 8d a pair of rabbits in good condition... this canned rabbit was an excellent product, and there was a big demand for it. Soon the rabbits were under control. Indeed, it became difficult to keep the supply of rabbits up to the factory. Motor transport was in its infancy in those days, and the rabbits had to be carted to the factory in horse-drawn vehicles. This meant that the area covered was limited.. (but) the Wyndham canning factory did not last long, its failure being due to a number of factors which could easily have been avoided, and a month or so after this factory closed I actually saw rabbits living in burrows underneath the factory building.'*

Bushfires, too, have been a regular occurrence, with Wyndam affected at least in 1898, 1904, 1905 (when a sawmill was destroyed) and 1929. The *Sydney Morning Herald* of 11th January 1929 reported *'Racing down to the grass plains from Mount Darragh, a bush fire swept through Wyndham, and completely wiped out the homes of Messrs. Jacob Umback and Mrs. W. Pheeney. Twenty pigs belonging to Mrs. Pheeney perished, and her motor car was destroyed. Driven by a strong wind, the fire travelled on to Whipstick mines, where every building, except the school house, was reduced to ashes. The wattle bark extraction plant, which had cost £30,000, and the dwellings of Messrs. Taylor, Jones, David Robertson, Thomas Jones, Charles Tasker, and George Grant were among those that were burned out. At Whipstick mines the wind caught up the burning debris, and carried it 10 miles away on to the properties at Lochiel of Messrs. Buckett, W. Smith, and McCabe, who saved their homes after desperately fighting the flames, but lost all their grass.')*, 1993-1994, 2009 *(the Eden Magnet reporting: 'Residents of the Wyndham and Burragate areas have been watching an aerial battle unfold this week as fire-fighting*

activity has kept the skies abuzz above these normally quiet and peaceful rural locations. In scenes that recall airfield battle preparations, the Wyndham sports ground has become a fire staging area, helipad and refuelling site for the seven helicopters and on-ground firefighters that are engaging in battle on a daily basis... On Sunday fire retardant was being dropped by fixed wing aircraft to create fire break lines. The steep and rugged terrain has challenged pilots to lay down a good retardant line but according to those on the ground they have done a great job. On Australia Day (Monday) the sports ground was a hive of activity with helicopters landing and taking off every 10 or so minutes. Activity continued right up until 8 pm when the last water bombing runs were made') and 2019-2020.

WHIPSTICK

'The little township of Whipstick (5 km east-south-east of Wyndham) ... received its name from the teamsters who used to camp there on the trip from Monaro to the seaboard with the Monaro wool clip. It was here that they cut their whip-handles for the place was famous for its young mountain ash, stringybark and she-oak trees. The teamsters called these young trees whipsticks.'

Whipstick was a mining settlement. Bismuth, molybdenum, gold and silver were its attraction.

A Dan Crawley discovered gold at Whipstick in 1891 and the Great Jingera Pty. Silver Mining Co. took out lease on the area. It was to work the area for about 40 years.

In 1897 a small one-room, one-teacher school opened at Whipstick - an indication that the settlement might be assuming some permanence. Mirroring the fortunes of the mine, it sometimes operated as a full-time school, sometimes as a provisional full-time school, and sometimes as a half-time school. It struggled on until finally closing in July 1929.

In its early days, Whipstick was basically a tent township. But it did take on an air of permanency in the early 20th century with, in addition to the school, a general store, an array of miners' bark huts, weatherboard cottages and two boarding houses being built. At its peak, the town became home to around 60 men who were to work the mines in the years leading up to World War I.

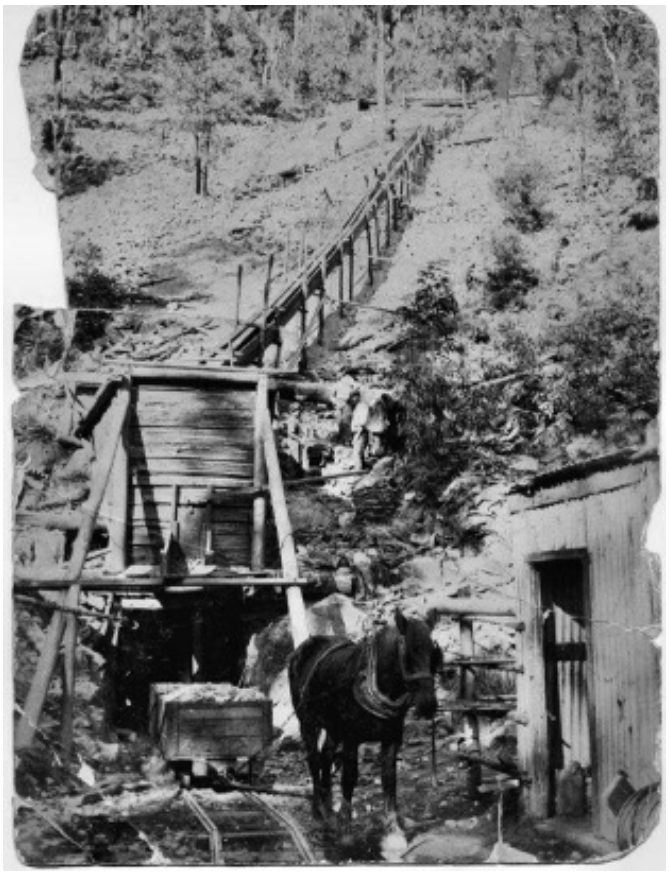
From 1922 to 1927, the Australian Tanning Extract and Bismuth Company had a wattle bark tannin extraction plant (the tannin being used in leather tanning) in Whipstick.

In January 1929, *'Driven by a strong wind, (a bushfire)... travelled on to Whipstick mines, where every building, except the school house, was reduced to ashes. The wattle bark extraction plant, which had cost £30,000, and the dwellings of Messrs. Taylor, Jones, David Robertson, Thomas Jones, Charles Tasker, and George Grant were among those that were burned out. At Whipstick mines the wind caught up the burning debris, and carried it 10 miles away on to properties at Lochiel...'*

The school building that survived the 1929 fires succumbed to another major bushfire that swept through the area in 1952.

A world-wide shortage of molybdenum during World War II resulted in BHP briefly reopening the Whipstick mines – but only from 1941 to 1943.

Today the township of Whipstick has simply become 'a locality'.



The entrance to a Whipstick mine.