...WHERE HISTORY IS THE HERO

Colonial Surveyors: The South Coast's Unsung Heroes – see story page 3

South Coast Aboriginal Breastplates – see story page 19

You Asked for more Recollections

You've probably noticed that this issue of *Recollections* is bigger than usual – 32 pages compared to the usual 20 pages. There are a couple of reasons:

We are continually being asked to include more of the South Coast's interesting histories in *Recollections*.

And there are lots more fascinating stories we could – and should – be including.

So, our plans are to produce 32-page issues of *Recollections*, starting with this issue.

But (and there is always a catch!) we are reverting to issuing *Recollections* every three months – so the next issue will be the May-June-July issue. That is simply because we don't receive enough ongoing financial support to allow us to do otherwise.

Over a year, this change will make an additional 10 pages of space available to us for more stories and more photographs.

We'll continue to produce more of our popular booklets, along the lines of our *Concise History of the NSW South Coast* and *South Coast Shipwrecks* booklets. And stories are regularly being added to our www.southcoasthistory.org.au website, including a new 'Feature Story' that's added to the home page at the start of every month. So, you can continue to look forward to regularly discovering more great South Coast histories.

Please enjoy the stories in this and future issues... and, as always, we very much welcome any feedback you might care to provide.

The Unsung Heroes of the South Coast

The many Colonial surveyors who charted the NSW South Coast had an enormous impact on the development of – and, therefore, the history of - the area. The work they undertook and, in particular, the decisions they made, effectively 'drew the map' that determined the future of the area.

Few people today (which is no different to back in their own times) know even the names of these significant pioneers. Considering the extremely important work they did, considering the primitive conditions they endured, these trail-blazers really deserve much greater recognition. And, if nothing else, the stories associated with them are well-worth preserving.

The Surveyor General's Department

Even before the First Fleet left England, New South Wales had a Surveyor General. He was Augustus Alt, whose original title was Surveyor of Lands. On arrival in the new colony, he became responsible for laying out the settlements of Albion (later Sydney), Parramatta and Tongabby (later Toongabbie).

Originally, the main duties of the Surveyor General were to measure and determine land grants for settlers in New South Wales and to establish records of these.

Alt was succeeded by Charles Grimes (who was Surveyor General from 1803 to 1811, although George Evans acted in the position from August 1803 to February 1805) and then by John Oxley (who was Surveyor General from 1812 to 1828).

In 1828 Thomas Mitchell became Surveyor General, a position he held until 1855. During his tenure, the colony of New South Wales expanded significantly.

(To quote from the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*) *In 1827, when Mitchell and his family arrived in Sydney, the Survey Department was in an unsatisfactory condition. Surveying instruments were scarce and some surveyors were incompetent; their technical problems were rarely appreciated by the public or the government; moreover, successive surveys of small areas were made without attempt to relate them to a general survey, so small errors accumulated till they became serious. Thus, title deeds and the collection of quitrents* (taxes imposed on freehold or leased land) *were delayed and doubts and disputes arose about boundaries. Mitchell in 1828 started on the necessary but seemingly impossible task of making a general survey... During the 1830s the spread of squatting and the large number of free immigrants needing land greatly accentuated the problems of the Survey Department... In May 1834, Governor Bourke received from Mitchell a map of the colony divided into nineteen counties with a description of their boundaries, together with a memorandum emphasizing the necessity of a general survey before local surveys could effectively be made.*

Between 1828 and 1834, Mitchell and his surveyors covered almost two million of the 3½ million acres that had been alienated from the Crown since 1788. So, whilst

Thomas Mitchell was Surveyor General, huge advances were made in surveying and recording the results of this surveying in the Colony.

However, Mitchell was a poor administrator. He had too many other interests and ambitions and was too often and too long away from his department either in England or exploring the interior. He had also a fatal inability to delegate responsibility to his subordinates with whom his relations were often very bad, and thus, despite enormous labours, he never got ahead of accumulating business. There was also insufficient supervision of surveyors in the field and consequently opportunities for the lazy and dishonest. But Mitchell was not responsible for the shortage of surveyors, the unrealistically large amount of work expected of them and, in particular, the division of the department into salaried and licensed surveyors which itself was a guarantee of inefficiency.

The main problem that Mitchell faced as Surveyor General was an explosion in the demand for land that then needed to be surveyed. From the mid-1830s a trickle of squatters who simply helped themselves outside the original 'limits of location' (i.e. outside the area immediately surrounding Sydney that Mitchell had mapped in 1834) became a flood and his departmental resources simply could not meet the demand for its services. And things only became more acute when the gold rushes started in 1851 and many of those previously engaged in surveying work simply left, hoping to become richer on the goldfields.

The impact on those who were actually doing the surveying was enormous.

A letter to Thomas Mitchell from one Surveyor General's Department surveyor, Samuel Parkinson, written in Araluen in November 1851, illustrates the impact that the gold rushes had on local surveyors: *Sir—I have the honor to report to you that my party is now reduced to one man and that I am unable to engage men to assist me in carrying on my duties in the field in consequence of the high rates of wages given at the Araluen Goldfield to which place every labouring man proceeds immediately the period of his engagement expires. I have been dragging my own chain for the last month and have ridden 200 miles in different directions looking for men, but without success as the whole southern portion of the district is abandoned by the disengaged labourers for the gold mines. Under these circumstances I determined to proceed at once to Araluen, where all the people are concentrated, hoping to engage some of the unfortunate miners. I have been disappointed, the men working these rich deposits of gold are averaging from half an ounce to two and a half ounces per man per day and no offer of reasonable wages is accepted. I may state that I have been offering 20/- and rations per week to men who have been formerly in my service and, in answer to my offer, I have been shown a tin dish containing from £40 to £50 in gold. I have therefore to request you will instruct me in which manner I shall proceed as it is impossible to*

Major Sir Thomas Mitchell, once described as 'Surveyor General (from 1828 to 1855), explorer, legislator & mass murderer.' Named after him are the Major Mitchell Cockatoo, Mitchell Hopping Mouse, Mitchell Grass, the suburb of Mitchell in Canberra, the Mitchell River, the Mitchell Highway, etc..

carry on my duties without men. Interestingly, Surveyor General Mitchell's response, pencilled on the letter from Parkinson, was simply: *Patience is the only thing* – a somewhat ironic comment from a man who was constantly urging his men to send him their completed maps.

And Thomas Townsend, another surveyor employed by the Surveyor General's Department, had an experience (being immediately assigned elsewhere) that was not unusual: he was engaged on a survey in the Snowy Mountains area in October 1842 when he received a direction from Mitchell to conduct a survey at Twofold Bay because *application having been made by a gentleman* [the influential, well-funded Benjamin Boyd] *for some portion of land...* and, whist he was in the area, he was instructed to also reserve some land for a government town [which was to become Eden]! (Townsend was then unable to return to the Snowy Mountains to complete the survey he had been undertaking.)

(Before leaving Surveyor General Mitchell, we must record that he died in October 1855 from pneumonia that developed from a chill he had contracted while surveying the line of road in the extremely difficult terrain on the South Coast between Nelligen and Braidwood.)

The life of a Colonial surveyor

The task of colonial survey was not for the faint-hearted: it offered constant and unpredictable challenges. Picking their way through unknown territory, surveyors confronted massive mountain ranges, deeply forested country and often impenetrable vegetation. In Oxley's term as Surveyor General (1812 – 1828) a survey team was allocated six men, six bullocks, a dray, pack saddles (the surveyor often supplied his own horse!), a tent, cooking utensils, and three months' provisions. (From *Surveyors; Mapping the Distance, Early Surveying in Australia in the Australian Dictionary of Biography.*)

By 1827 the Surveyor General's Department employed thirteen assistant surveyors, four draftsmen, two clerks and five assigned convicts. Over the following six years the Department's teams (admittedly, somewhat augmented) surveyed almost 2-million acres of land, more than had been surveyed in all of the previous 40 years. So, they were certainly kept busy!

In Australia, survey and exploration went hand in hand. Explorers were surveyors, surveyors were explorers. (Because most surveying work was not as 'heroic' as the well-known major expeditions of discovery, the names of surveyors have never had the prominence of those of explorers. That is regrettable – but, that's history!!)

An 1864 painting by S.T. Gill depicts Colonial surveyors at work. The man in the centre and the chain man on the right are holding a 'Gunter's Chain'- 66 foot in length (the length of a cricket pitch) which was used for measuring distances and then areas (10 chain lengths x 3 chain lengths = 1 acre). This Gunter's Chain folded up easily so it could be carried by the 'chain men'.

The man crouching down is the Surveyor in Charge. He has his notebook and pencil in hand and is using a circumferentor (or a surveyor's compass) that measured horizontal angles in relation to magnetic north (so, for example, boundaries of land grants could be mapped). Circumferentors were later superseded by more-practical theodolites.
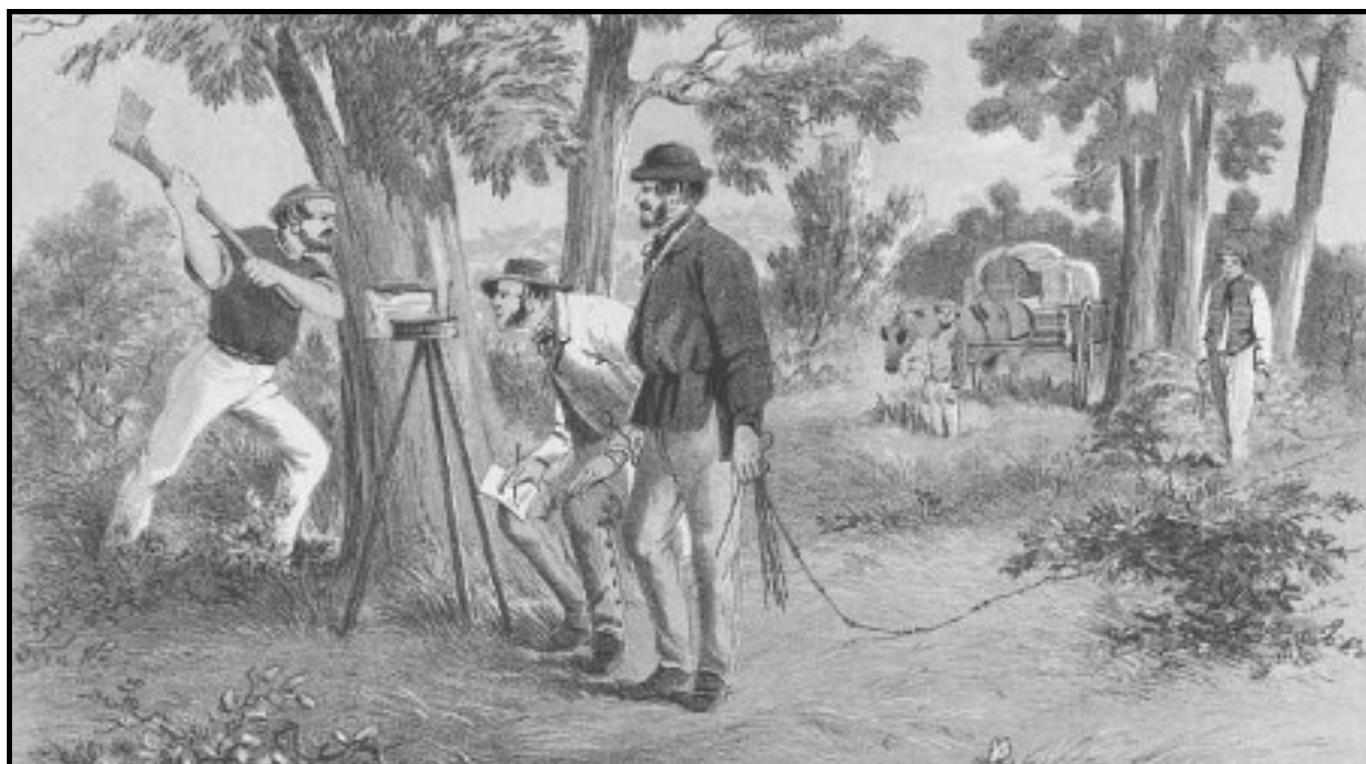
S.T. Gill's 'Surveyors', c 1864

The man with the axe is blazing a 'surveyor's tree' which would be marked with numerals. These numerals might become starting points for a surveyor changing direction (for example, when starting surveys of east-west boundaries on a property once a north-south boundary had been defined).

The man near the horse is the cook or the camp man.

Surveyors had strict Departmental protocols they were required to follow. Just the year before Thomas Mitchell became Surveyor General, he published a major work, *Outlines of a System of Surveying, for Geographical & Military Purposes, Comprising the Principles on Which the Surface of the Earth May be Represented on Plans.* And woe betide any surveyor whose work did not measure up to Mitchell's exacting standards: This letter, dated 1st January 1836: *Having cause to apprehend that the marking and measuring of the portions of land applied for as purchases are conducted by some of the Surveyors in a very loose, inaccurate and unsatisfactory manner, particularly by their neglecting to trace the course of the Frontage Streams and to mark and ascertain the lengths of the lines dividing conterminous portions - I have to point out to you that - altho' even in the measurement of a Grant (a gift from the Crown) such looseness could scarcely be tolerated.*

It seems the Survey Department in Sydney was often totally insensitive to the difficulties its surveyors faced. Letters from surveyors (usually starting with the words *I have the honour to report to you...*) often complained that their men were short of 'slops' - clothes, especially boots (those supplied many have been suitable for town work, but not for the rough conditions of country surveys) – or that they were waiting for a replacement bullock or for a broken-down cart.

Providing equipment to surveyors, however, was a constant problem. As Surveyor General Oxley complained, three years could pass between ordering and receiving equipment. And, instruments built to British specifications were often unsuitable for the mountainous terrain and the rough work encountered in the colony.

But, without any doubt, Colonial surveyors endured extremely rough, challenging lives, as the experiences of George Evans, Robert Hoddle and John Mann (below) illustrate. Surveyor Townsend, too, was faced with having to trudge through snow, carrying his equipment and supplies on his back (the pack horses being unable to deal with the terrain and the snow drifts), and then having to camp out in the open without the benefit of having a tent or any bedding.

And, they were always at the ever-changing beck and call of their boss, the Surveyor General. One example was Thomas Townsend being called away from his major task of surveying in the Australian Alps to satisfy Benjamin Boyd's wish to acquire land on Twofold Bay.

Many Colonial surveyors started out with what was basically a 'blank canvas'. They had to define the boundaries of and suggest names for Parishes (Mitchell's instructions were that these should each be between 15 and 30 square miles in area; there ended up being 7,515 Parishes in NSW) within Counties, before they could survey land within those Parishes (for example, on 17 February 1863, Surveyor John W. Deering sent a sketch from Camp Urabedalla [Eurobodalla] of the proposed Parish of Nerrigundah within County Dampier to the Surveyor-General along with surveys he had made for properties within the Parish. [The Parish was named after the village of Nerrigundah in the Gulph Goldfield.] And, on 28th June 1864, District Surveyor Lewis Gordon submitted a *skeleton tracing, with proposed boundaries (subject to future modification) ... [and] names of 15 several parishes, some partially new and additional, in*

'En Route to Kiama' by Surveyor Robert Hoddle

the County of Auckland. Those new Parishes included *Bredbendoura, Cobra, Coolangubra, Kanoonah, Kokoboreeka, Mataganah, Mokoreeka, Yuglamah and Yurrammie. Parishes where portions had already been measured included Bredbendoura, Bronte, Numbugga, Ooranook, Puen Buen and Werriberri.*

And, then, at an even more local level, these surveyors were required to identify the location of villages (and, in some cases, to actually lay them out, and even survey individual blocks of land) wherever there was a demand for, or it was believed there would be a likely need for, a village. In reality, many of these village reserves never grew to become full-grown villages (as happened with, for example, Farnham and Marlow on The Wool Road that connected Braidwood and Jervis Bay).

Surveyors were always alert to the possibility of being attacked by Aboriginals. Whilst surveying along the Murray River in 1836, the Surveyor General himself had been followed for several days by a group of Aboriginals that he believed were threatening, so his party mounted a surprise attack on them: *it was difficult to come at such enemies hovering in our rear with lynx-eyed vigilance of savages. I succeeded however... Attacked simultaneously by both parties the whole betook themselves to the river, my men pursuing them and shooting as many as they could, Numbers were shot swimming across the Murray, and some ever after they had reached the opposite shore as they descended they bank.* (For taking this action, Mitchell received a minor official reprimand.)

Bushrangers were another potential threat. Surveyor Townsend was actually held up by a couple of bushrangers who, among other things, stole one of his maps (see details below) and, in his diary, Surveyor Hoddle recounts an incident in which, whilst dressed in rough bush attire and separated from his party, he was accosted by police who then took some convincing that he was not a bushranger!

Place Names
I like the native names, as Parramatta,
And Illawarra, and Wooloomooloo;
Nadowra, Woogarora, Bulkomatta,
Tomah, Toongabbie, Mittagong, Meroo;
Buckobble, Cumleroy, and Coolingatta,
The Warragumby, Bargo, Burradoo;
Cookbundoon, Carrabaiga, Wingecarribbee,
The Wollondilly, Yurumboon, Bungarribbee.
I hate your Goulburn Downs and Goulburn Plains,
And Goulburn River and the Goulburn Range,
And Mount Goulburn and Goulburn Vale! One's brains
Are turned into Goulburns! Vile scorbutic mange
For immortality! Had I the reins
Of government for a fortnight, I would change
These Downing Street appellatives, and give
The country names that should deserve to live.

wrote, John Dunmore Lang, Australian Presbyterian minister, writer, historian, politician, activist, and who was an early advocate for Australian independence and Australian republicanism. (Goulburn had been named by surveyor James Meehan after Henry Goulburn, the British Under-Secretary for War and the Colonies.)

With 141 Counties, 7,515 Parishes and many thousands of towns, villages, rivers, creeks, mountains and other localities in NSW ultimately requiring names,

there was ample opportunity for surveyors – who were most frequently charged with the responsibility of assigning names – to determine how and why places on the South Coast would be named.

The five Counties on or adjacent to the South Coast were all named after, or in honour of, popular or historically-important figures: Auckland, after George Eden the First Earl of Auckland (Auckland in New Zealand is also named after him); Dampier, after the seaman and pirate William Dampier; St Vincent after John Jervis, the First Earl of St Vincent and Admiral of the British Fleet (St Vincent's Gulf in South Australia is also named after him, as of course is Jervis Bay); Beresford, after Viscount William Carr Beresford, a British army officer and politician; Wellesley, after Richard Colley Wellesley, a Governor-General of India.

Because it was the usual practice to immediately name the Parish (even if its boundaries had still to be determined) when the first property within it was being surveyed, the names of many Parishes reflect the names of then existing properties or locations. For example, the Parish of Gulph in the Eurobodalla takes its name from 'The Gulph' (Gulph Creek), the site of early, lucrative gold diggings. The Parishes of Eden, Boyd, Bega in the County of Auckland all reflect the names of early settlements.

But, Surveyor General Thomas Mitchell directed surveyors to also use local Aboriginal names for geographical features and other places. Mitchell's biographer, Don Baker, suggests that Mitchell *had experienced their* [the Aboriginals'] *great value as guides through their own country...[He] realized the difficulties and dangers of their position as the white invaders appropriated their land... and had begun to appreciate something of the complexity and beauty of Aboriginal culture.* Mitchell, himself, was more pragmatic, writing: *The great convenience of using native names is obvious ... so long as any of the Aborigines can be found in the neighbourhood ... future travellers may verify my map. Whereas new names are of no use in this respect.* So many Parish names were taken from local Aboriginal words.

Mitchell, though, (probably aware of the advantages that short names have on maps) also directed his surveyors to limit the number of letters in place names to nine – *ensuring there were no letters as superfluous as gum trees on the hills* - which immediately led to the corruption of many Aboriginal words. For example, Illabo was derived from 'Billabong South', with the first and last two letters of 'Billabong' having simply been dropped. Surveyor John Mann in his *Notes on the Aborigines of Australia* in 1884, noted something similar: *The names of places and things are very expressive, and in most instances euphonious, though in many cases greatly distorted by European pronunciation.* He cited as an example the name Gabo Island, which was an Aboriginal attempt to pronounce Cape Howe. Similarly, Woolloomooloo was derived from an Aboriginal attempt to pronounce windmill.

'Sydney from the Western Side of the Cove' by Surveyor George Evans, c 1803

Mitchell's directive, however, did result in Colonial surveyors being among the few early settlers who took an interest in Aboriginal languages. They were, after all, working in places where local Aboriginals were still living on their traditional lands and speaking their own languages and dialects. Surveyor James Larmer (see below) compiled a *James Larmer's Vocabulary of Native Names* in 1853 that recorded words spoken by the Yuin peoples from around Batemans Bay and Ulladulla.

The naming of streets within towns and villages was different again. Most commonly they were originally named after local landholders, nearby landmarks or property names – although in December 1841 Surveyor James Larmer, whilst surveying the village of Kurraduckbidgee (another village that was surveyed but was never developed; and one given a name with more than nine letters!) was complaining *the names of all the settlers and places thereabouts are already exhausted.*

And, so who were these South Coast surveyors, these pioneers that history has largely forgotten?

There were probably others who worked on the South Coast, but our 'honor roll' includes Spencer Bransby, George Evans, Thomas Florance, Robert Hoddle, James Larmer, John Mann, James Meehan, John Oxley, Samuel Parkinson and Thomas Townsend. (If there are other significant surveyors who should be added to this list, we'd be delighted to hear about them.)

John Oxley
(1784 – 1828)

John Oxley is probably best known for having traced the courses of the Lachlan and Macquarie Rivers. His previous naval experience, however, probably fitted him better for coastal survey work than for inland exploration.

In 1812 he was appointed Surveyor General of NSW. Whilst holding this position, he undertook two major expeditions into the western part of NSW that resulted in the first detailed description of the Australian inland and paved the way for later exploration by Charles Sturt and Thomas Mitchell.

From September to December 1819 he made a trip by sea to Jervis Bay, concluding the country did not offer *the smallest inducement for the foundation of a Settlement on its shores, being ... for the most part Barren and generally deficient in Water...we saw no place on which even a Cabbage might be planted with a prospect of success.*

It seems that Oxley, as Surveyor General, was not a good administrator, with Thomas Mitchell having to clean up many departmental backlogs when he was appointed to the position in 1828.

George Evans
(1780 – 1852)

George Evans arrived in Sydney on 16th October 1802. He was initially given the position of store-keeper in charge of the receipt and issue of grain at Parramatta, but in August 1803 was appointed Acting Surveyor-General because the incumbent, Charles Grimes, was on leave in England. In September 1804 he discovered and explored the Warragamba River, penetrating upstream to the present site of Warragamba Dam.

In March 1812, accompanied by an Aboriginal called Bundle, he surveyed the area between Jervis Bay and Appin. This journey, which took two weeks, was particularly arduous. On two occasions the party were required to construct bark canoes, with Bundle's

assistance, to enable creek and river crossings. The first crossing was at Currambene Creek, just north of what is now Huskisson village, the second at the Shoalhaven River, at Cabbage Tree Flat, just west of current day Nowra.

Faced with the almost impenetrable bush and cliffs of the Cambewarra Range, near the present-day village of Berry, the party spent 10 hours navigating their way through dense undergrowth that nearly destroyed their clothing. ('*I am at loss for words to describe what we have gone through, we are all blood from the bites of Leeches, the Vines and Briers, have almost striped us Naked, been obliged to decend from Perpendicular clefts on the Mountain 30 & 40 feet high, by Trees and lower our baggage down by the Chain with lines fastened to it*'). Realising that it was impossible to continue climbing the Range, the party then retreated back into the valley and proceeded north along the coast through areas that are now covered by the towns of Gerringong, Kiama and Wollongong.

Turning inland on 13th April, the party commenced their climb near Mount Keira heading in a north-westerly direction towards the nearest European settlement at Lachlan Vale, near Appin. Having run out of food three days before, and with Evans suffering from cracked ribs after a fall in a river, they must have been greatly relieved to finally arrive at the Appin settlement on 15th April. Evans' pioneering exploration and survey of the area soon resulted in the settlement of the Illawarra district.

Evans' diary (now in the State Library of NSW) records details of that expedition, including this note about meeting some Aboriginals near Jervis Bay: '*on landing saw several Natives who were very friendly, they presented me a Number of fine Oysters, I gave away two Tomahawks, a Blankett, some Tobacco, and Fish Hooks. (The next day) on taking my departure an Old Man to whom Bundle gave his Shirt cried very much, I shortly after left them.*'

Evans went on to become the first European to cross the Great Dividing Range, undertook a great amount of surveying in the interior of NSW, the went to Van Diemen's Land where he became Deputy Surveyor of Lands.

He was also an artist of some note and, after he retired from surveying, he became the drawing master at The King's School. His then (second) wife conducted a finishing school for young ladies.

James Meehan
(1774 – 1826)

James Meehan was sentenced to transportation to NSW for his part in the Irish rebellion of 1798. He arrived in Sydney in February 1800 and, in April, was assigned as a servant to Charles Grimes, the-then Acting Surveyor General. While Grimes was on leave in 1803-06, George Evans (see above) was appointed Acting Surveyor General, but most of the departmental duties were performed by Meehan who by then had been conditionally pardoned. During this time Meehan measured farms for settlers who had been given grants of land, and explored parts of the Derwent (1803-04) and Shoalhaven (1805) Rivers.

Grimes had played a part in the overthrow of Governor William Bligh in 1808, so was sent to England and then was not permitted to return to NSW. So, Meehan was appointed Acting Surveyor of Lands on a salary of £182 10s. In 1814 he also became collector of quitrents and superintendent of roads, bridges and streets.

In 1818, Governor Macquarie sent him and Charles Throsby to look for a route from the Sutton Forest district to Jervis Bay. Meehan followed the Shoalhaven gorge upstream and then discovered Lake Bathurst and the Goulburn Plains. (Throsby is credited with having then recorded the local Aboriginal name for the area – 'Nou-woo-ro', meaning 'black cockatoo'. This subsequently was adapted to become the name of the local town, Nowra.)

Meehan became one of a small group of emancipists who played an important part in the affairs of the colony during Macquarie's governorship. Macquarie viewed Meehan's energy and ability as an illustration that good conduct and reformation could enable a man to regain his place in society – something that, of course, had been lost upon being sentenced to transportation. Macquarie invited Meehan to Government House, and in 1821 wrote of him: '*I have ... had an opportunity of witnessing his indefatigable assiduity in the fulfilment of his arduous duties. I believe that no man has suffered so much privation and fatigue in the service of this Colony as Mr Meehan has done ... His integrity has never, to my knowledge, been impeached; and I certainly consider him to be, both on account of his professional skill, and the faithfull and laborious discharge of his duty, a valuable man*'.

In 1821, as a result of the 'Hardships, privations and Difficulties' he endured during his early years in the colony (Meehan claiming, in 1819, at the wide-ranging Bigge Commission of enquiry into the state of the colony, that he had 'measured every farm in the early colony'), and in declining health, Meehan tendered his resignation. He was granted a pension of £100.

The contributions of Surveyors Robert Hoddle, Thomas Florance, James Larmer, Thomas Townsend, Samuel Parkinson, John Mann & Spencer Bransby will be outlined in Recollections 57.

10 Questions

Test your knowledge of South Coast history. How many of these questions can you correctly answer?
The answers are on page 27.

1. Three towns on the South Coast once had fish canneries. One was Eden, another Narooma. Which was the third? ... And, what was canned by the cannery that once operated in Wyndham... and by the cannery that once operated on the Coolangatta Estate?

2. In 1907, the residents of Bega voted to reduce the number of pubs in town. From how many, to how many?

3. What is the name of the hotel in Wolumla and why does it have this name?

4. Who was George Haiser, and what is his significance?

5. What is the Black-Allan Line?

6. What two essential South Coast resources assisted the significant expansion of railways across NSW from the 1860s through to the 1950s?

7. The English cricket team, touring Australia, played a match at Lord's Oval, Kameruka, in 1885. Who were their opponents and what was the result?

8. The first commercial trans-Tasman flight departed from a South Coast location. Where was this, and why was that location chosen?

9. Why was the 61-foot tall sandstone Cape St George Lighthouse replaced after only 39 years?

10. What was the name given to the South Coast recruiting march in World War I?

Bonus Question: Will history be killed by AI?

Arthritis and the Whale

by Ken Robinson

Doctors say there is no cure for rheumatism - rheumatoid arthritis - but there are medications that can be used if you need relief from rheumatic pain. Some of you may, for example, remember the 1950s and 1960s radio and television commercials and newspaper advertisements for *Dr MacKenzie's Menthoids – for relief of backache, rheumatic and muscular pain, take Menthoids – M-E-N-T-H-O-I-D-S,* spoken with a Scottish accent. Dr MacKenzie did not claim to cure you of the problem, but he would at least relieve some symptoms. More sophisticated, modern drug treatments are now available, leading to improvement in symptom control and reduction in progression of the disease.

Advertisement from Sydney Daily Mirror, 1951

I won't comment on how effective Dr MacKenzie's 'cure' was, but I can direct you to a famous cure used well before the good doctor got into the business. At the end of the 19th century, South Coasters were blessed with access to a 'cure', but only if you had the appropriate materials and were prepared to undertake the inconvenience of it all. This cure was a by-product of the whaling industry, requiring access to whale oil and, preferably, to a dead whale.

The "Whale Cure", as it was known, became famous worldwide. First reports of the cure appeared in newspapers in the 1890s. The *Pall Mall Gazette*, for example, published a piece which was reproduced in the *New York Times* of March 1897. The article described the event of a "gentleman of convivial habits" who launched himself into a whale on the shores of Twofold Bay and emerged two hours later, completely sober and free of the rheumatism from which he had been suffering for many years.

The *Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate* in December 1895 provided a detailed piece by its correspondent CLIO, who wrote:

The first I heard of the wonderful whale cure was some two or three years ago, when a tipsy fellow ran into a whale (right inside) and refused to come out for over two hours, his friends being unable to endure the heat and smell to attempt a rescue. When he did come out he found himself perfectly sober and quite free in the limbs. He had previously suffered from rheumatics. The shrewd folk of the bay at once took up the idea, until now it is an established and well-known thing.

The whalers dig out a huge hole in one part of the body, and the patient strips naked (in the case of women a calico gown is used), and lies in the hole, the whalers following their own work on another part of the huge carcase. Two hours is considered a sufficient time to remain in the whale. Indeed, two hours is quite long enough for any man to stay, as the body is very hot, on account of the gases generated in decomposing. No charge is made by the whalers for a dip in the whale. Dr. Eddie, of Bombala, having been to the bay and studied the process, is of opinion that the cure is effected by the heat of the whale acting as a huge poultice over the entire body.

Like many cures for disease there are sometimes unfortunate side-effects. The whale cure for rheumatism was reported in the Sydney Bulletin in 1896 where a candidate for the cure described his experiences. He particularly noted, that once he emerged from the whale:

The effect was wonderful. They rubbed me down, dressed me ... and put me in the boat; then we returned to Eden. That evening ... .the rheumatism was all gone – not a twinge! They got me a glass of rum to get a good perspiration up, but the rum refused to go below my head; the smell was too strong for it.

After four days I walked up town, and everyone I met shied at me – a leper could not have been avoided more discreetly. Girls that I knew cut me dead; men whom I considered true brothers held their noses and bolted; sometimes a man would gallop past, and, if on a fast horse, would say 'Good-day!' and vanish. Of course, being a country fellow and sensitive, I felt this - never dreaming the true cause. For exactly twelve months the rheumatism left me; then it came back again as bad as ever. The smell has never left me: that dead whale haunts me still.

Word of this miraculous cure spread and Eden, on the

A cure for rheumatism: Bob Wiles in the carcass of a whale, Twofold Bay. Image: nla.obj-148641890

shores of Twofold Bay, became a haven for patients with the rheumatism. The sufferers gathered at a local hotel which benefited from the many guests seeking a cure. When a whale was caught and available, the patients were rowed to the whaling station and were able to avail themselves of the cure.

The Sydney *Sunday Times*, July 1902, described an extract from the London Graphic which demonstrated how famous the cure was and its world-wide attraction. The pictures showed:

An Englishman who is afflicted with rheumatism reading an account of the wonderful effects of the whale bath – his departure on crutches for New South Wales – his arrival with his wife at Eden and interview with a strong-smelling individual who conducts the whale bathing – the bestowal of patients in the whale – the return of the Englishman cured and indulging in gymnastics, to the "Big Smoke".

There was also some perceived benefit in bathing in whale oil, without the need for "full immersion". This photograph, taken at Eden in the early 1900s, shows the master whaler Charlie Davidson sitting in one of two 'try pots' in the foreground as another whaler, Roy Davidson, pours whale oil over him. Two other whalers, Jack Davidson and Alex ('Allie') Greig, are standing nearby, one of them watching the process.

Despite its popularity around Eden and being famous around the world, the cure fell out of use by the First World War. This was probably due to the smell and the shortage of available whale carcasses, and well before the arrival of Dr MacKenzie's potions.

Sources: Newspapers from Trove; National Library of Australia; Australian National Maritime Museum; Eden "Killer Whale" Museum.

Image: Libraries Australia ID 25535534
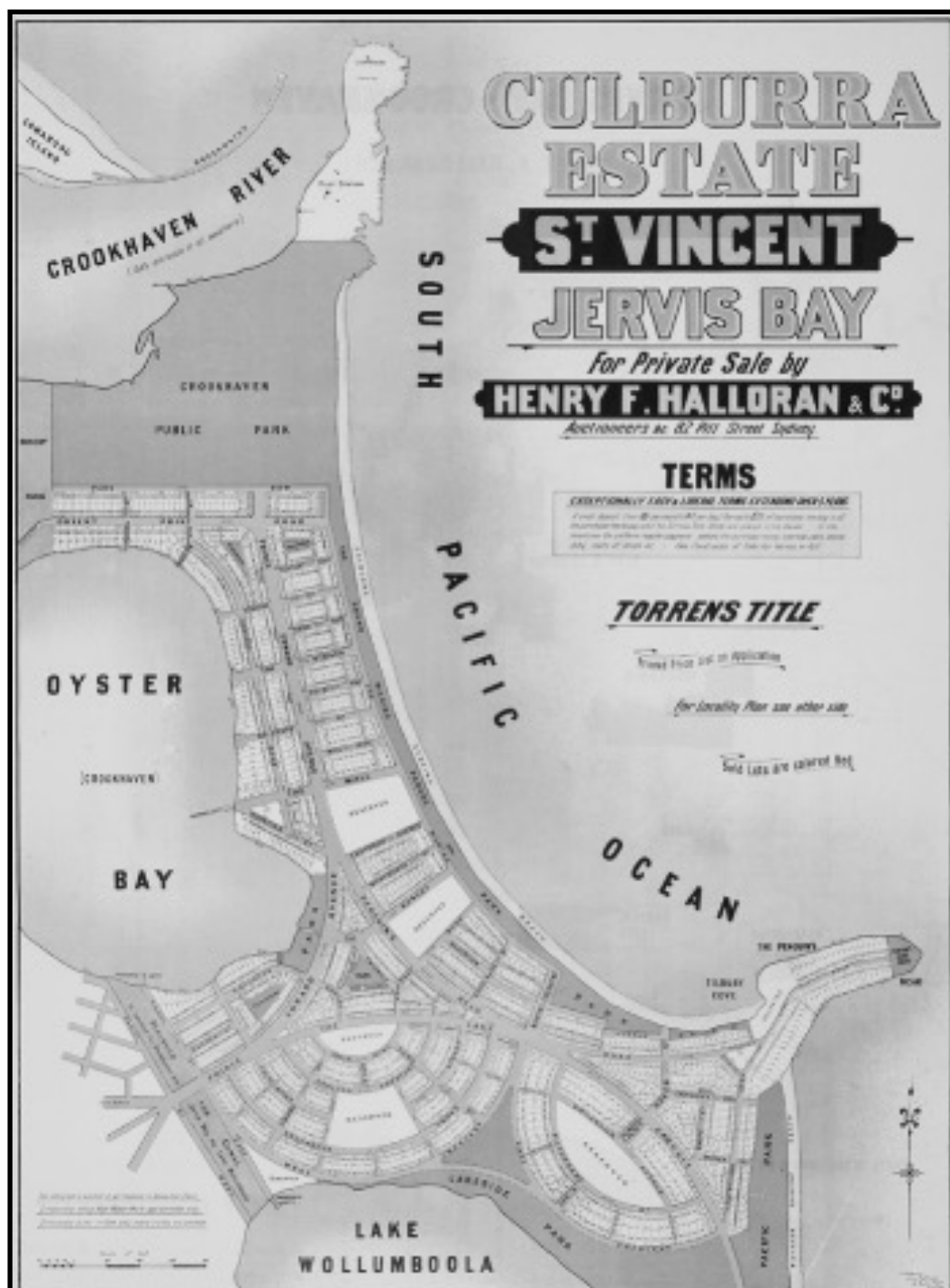
Henry Halloran's plan for Culburra Estate – very much as the township is today.

HENRY HALLORAN

Henry Ferdinand Halloran had a major impact on the development of the NSW South Coast, especially in the Jervis Bay area. Henry was a land speculator, real estate agent and surveyor.

He was born in Sydney in 1869. His great-grandfather has been transported to Australia, having been convicted of forgery. On arrival in Sydney, he was immediately given a Ticket-of-Leave by Governor Macquarie and he then helped to establish a school for 'Classical, Mathematical and Commercial Education' that later became Sydney Grammar School.

Henry attended Sydney Boys High School and Newington College, then qualified as a surveyor in 1890 and became a conveyancer and valuer. Two years later Halloran had established his own firm, Henry F. Halloran & Co., specializing in land and property dealings.

He actively subdivided large areas of land that he had previously acquired, especially along the NSW coast. These included parcels in Seaforth, Cronulla, Warriewood, Stanwell Park, Lake Macquarie, Avoca and various locations around Port Stephens.

But he is probably best remembered for subdivisions in three areas, none of which ended up resembling his dreams for the areas – 'Port Stephens City' which is now North Arm Cove at Port Stephens, 'Pacific City' and 'St Vincent City' around Jervis Bay, and 'Environa' near Canberra.

'Port Stephens City'

In 1918 Walter Burley Griffin designed a large city-style subdivision on a peninsula of Port Stephens which, at the time, was being considered to become a major seaport for NSW.

In the early 1920's, Halloran purchased large tracts of land throughout the Port Stephens area at North Arm and Pindimar, including the area that had attracted Burley Griffin's attention. These he subdivided and offered for sale. His basic marketing strategy, which was later used elsewhere, was to emphasise the large profits that could be expected in the future when economic development took place in the surrounding areas. It was suggested that a railway, naval base and significant commercial operations were likely to be established near Port Stephens City – none of which ever eventuated!

'Pacific City' and 'St Vincent City'

Between 1915 and 1924, Halloran planned a series of ambitious subdivisions around Jervis Bay. The most notable were 'Pacific City', broadly encompassing the present-day towns of Vincentia, Hyams Beach and Sanctuary Point, and 'St Vincent City' on the north side of Jervis Bay. His interest in the area was sparked by
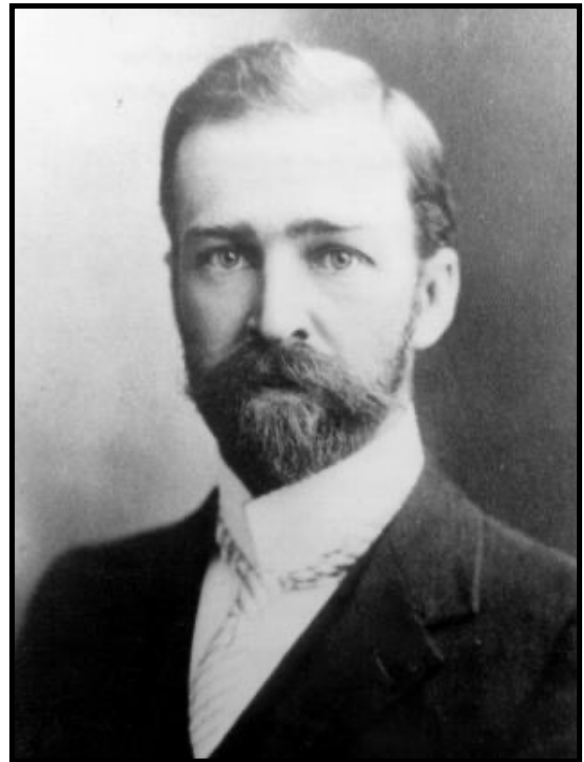
Canberra being required to have a port, and the Jervis Bay area being selected to become part of the Australian Capital Territory. Halloran speculated (and promoted as fact) that a rail line linking Jervis Bay to the capital would turn the Jervis Bay area into a major centre of commerce and industry.

(A survey of a possible route for the Canberra to Jervis Bay railway was undertaken in May 1910. In 1912 the Minister for Home Affairs, King O'Malley, clearly indicated '*Under the scheme for the establishment of the Federal Capital City it is not proposed to proceed with the construction of the Federal Port at Jervis Bay until after the completion of the (Capital) city ... the construction of a harbour with the requisite docking accommodation and equipment, also of a railway solely for the purposes of the city in its earlier stages, cannot be entertained... In view of the expenditure to which the Commonwealth is committed in connection with defence, the transcontinental railway from Kalgoorlie to Port Augusta, the Federal Capital City etc, I am not prepared to advise any present expenditure.*' This didn't stop Halloran showing possible railway routes on his maps, with branch lines into his estates. He even nominated sites for 21 railway stations to service his Pacific City and St Vincent City developments!)

Pacific City was marketed in 1915 – 1916. A 10-page brochure promoted the area as likely to become 'the Southhampton of NSW', welcome signs were erected, and a quarterly magazine the Pacific City Times was printed. Hundreds of people bought blocks over the following decade, but development never proceeded.

Pacific City, however, was not be. St Vincent City (named for being in the County of St Vincent) was

intended to be 'the jewel in the crown' when land within it was offered for sale from 1917. Its central business district was to be on the Beecroft Peninsula (on the site of the current Beecroft Weapons Range). A sprawling industrial suburb of Birmington was planned in the area south of Lake Wollumboola and it would be bisected by a canal that connected the Lake with the northern end of Jervis Bay, so that the Lake could become a major ship-building centre; and St Vincent's residential suburbs would sprawl from the northern shore of the Jervis Bay to the area that is now Crookhaven. Orient Point (marketed from 1917) and Culburra (marketed from 1922) were to become the first two (and only) St Vincent City suburbs; the unusual street layout in Culburra is today a legacy of Henry Halloran's plans.

In the end, most of Halloran's plans for Pacific City and St Vincent City became little more than 'paper subdivisions'. The railway to Canberra was never built, Jervis Bay never developed into a significant port and the industry promised for the area never materialised. The government's policy of decentralization at the time fell from fashion, and two World Wars and a Great Depression finally spelled the end to Halloran's dreams for the development of Jervis Bay.

Then it's down another Rabbit Hole… to 'Environa'

One of the problems when researching history is that there are so many rabbit holes that you can go down, which often just absorb much of your time and often lead nowhere. But occasionally they do lead to something interesting, as occurred on this occasion.

Whilst researching Pacific City and St Vincent City, I came across mentions of 'Environa'.

This turned out to be another Henry Halloran subdivision that was being promoted on the outskirts of Canberra in the 1920s, and which was described as 'a masterpiece of town planning on beautiful undulating land with far reaching views and overlooking the wonderful City of Canberra.'

In May 1925 Henry Halloran received approval from the Yarrowlumla Shire Council for a 'Letchworth' subdivision. It was on land that today is basically behind the Alexander Maconochie Correctional Centre, and was named after Letchworth Garden City in England. (Garden City designs were popular among town planners in the early 20th century.) It was never developed, but a small railway station called 'Letchworth' was built on the Queanbeyan to Cooma railway line and it operated from October 1926 to May 1956. It was demolished after the railway closed.

In 1924 Halloran bought a parcel of adjacent land at auction, and in April 1926 he received approval for its subdivision. 'Environa' was to be a grandiose subdivision - in fact, the most ambitious of Halloran's many projects – of 1,700 lots that were designed to house a population of around 7,000. (It was grandiose indeed – Canberra only had a population of 2,000 at that time!) Halloran drew up the subdivision plans himself.

Environa was not in Canberra. It was just across the border in New South Wales. But its street names were distinctively 'national capital' names: 'Parliament Boulevard', 'The Speaker's Avenue', 'Opposition Radial', 'Hansard Road', etc.. And the way the subdivision was laid out bore an uncanny resemblance to Walter Burley Griffin's sweeping circles and crescents designs for Canberra!

A number of bandstands, including one positioned on the highest point on the estate, were a feature of the development. These were envisaged to be performance venues for groups like the Queanbeyan Volunteer Fire Brigade Brass Band.

The plan of the subdivision clearly stated it was 'right on the boundary but not within the Federal Territory. Environa is absolute Freehold (Torrens Title) and free from the onerous restrictions applicable to the Commonwealth Leasehold Titles', but this did not stop questions about it being raised in the Commonwealth Parliament and in the British House of Commons, and one Federal Minister who was connected with Halloran's company being forced to resign.

Some development of the subdivision occurred, including the erection of a 12-metre high column that was surmounted by a bust of Sir Henry Parkes. Halloran had found the bust, the work of an Italian sculptor, in a Sydney second-hand shop; a similar bust is on display in the council chambers in Parkes, NSW. And the main topmast from the cruiser HMAS Sydney, that sank the German raider Emden in 1914, was actually erected in the central part of what might have become the city of Environa. However, it eventually rotted at the base and collapsed. It is now (appropriately, because of Halloran's links to the Jervis Bay area) on display at the Jervis Bay Maritime Museum.

Despite being widely promoted both in Australia and England, no sales ever eventuated. The subdivision simply became a casualty of the slow development of Canberra and of the Great Depression - and yet another of Halloran's many 'paper subdivisions'.

Some of the land to the north was resumed by Queanbeyan Council because of unpaid rates, and later became part of South Queanbeyan. The rest has remained largely undeveloped because of concerns that any housing might be adversely affected by aircraft noise should Canberra Airport be expanded.

Henry Halloran worked (albeit on less ambitious projects) until the day when he died, on a bus on his way to work, in October 1953. He was 84 years of age.

He did not live to see significant sections of the land in his Pacific City and St Vincent City developments resold in the 1950s and 1960s for the erection of holiday homes, or 'weekenders' – certainly not the use to which he had envisaged much of his subdivided land would be used for!

Blamey

by Brent D. Taylor

There was a lot I liked about this biography-cum-history, but there were a number of aspects that irritated me.

Brent Taylor indicates that he *'was asked by a retired major general who wanted someone to have a fresh look at Blamey'* because *'these days Blamey's reputation is dominated by two negatives'* and because *'these days, popular Australian World War II histories tend to concentrate on the experience of the Diggers. Any mention of Blamey is usually minor and disparaging'.*

I, like Taylor when he accepted the challenge, knew little of Blamey and, in fact, I knew very little generally about World War II history. When I was at school and university – where most likely I might have learned something about it - World War II was considered to be too recent to be considered 'history'; modern history then ended at the end of World War I! And my father – like most men of his era – rarely talked about World War II and he certainly never encouraged me to try to understand it. The history part of this book was, therefore, something of an education for me... and became particularly interesting because, many decades ago, I twice visited some areas in Papua New Guinea where significant World War II actions, covered by this book, had occurred. And, surely, the biographical details in this book about, as Taylor asserts, 'Australia's greatest general' must be worth a read!

Taylor presents a very comprehensive and very positive assessment of Thomas Blamey. In fact, such a positive assessment that, once I'd read the book, I turned to the Australian Dictionary of Biography to see how it had described Blamey. Its entry was compiled by David Horner, one time Professor of Australian Defence History at the ANU's Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies (so, a person with some relevant qualifications to write the biography):

'Blamey's critics have assigned personal motives to his actions. To them, he was a self-seeking, devious manipulator who struggled ruthlessly to retain his powerful position and to bolster his ego. In contrast, his supporters have called him Australia's greatest general. To them, he was a wise and forceful administrator who fought relentlessly to maintain Australian independence in military matters and who had a genuine concern for the welfare of his troops. A credible evaluation of Blamey's character lies somewhere between these two views, probably closer to the second. In retrospect it is hard to think of another Australian general with the prestige, force of personality and understanding of politics who could have filled his role. He had serious flaws in his character, but, as Curtin said, 'when Blamey was appointed the Government was seeking a military leader not a Sunday School teacher'. (Blamey had once been a Sunday School
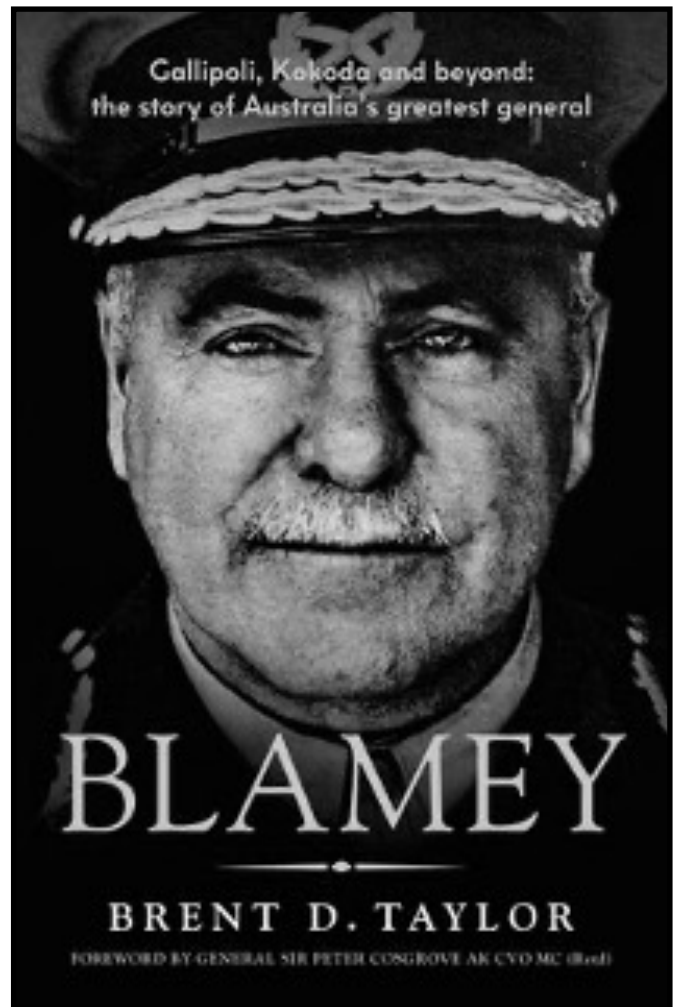
teacher. And he was about to become a probationary Methodist minister at Carnarvon in Western Australia when he saw an advertisement inviting applications for commissions in the Commonwealth Cadet Forces...and the rest is now history!)

As a biography, *'Blamey'* is certainly worth reading.

And, after reading the book, few could argue that Blamey was anything but a remarkable military commander. He certainly had the best interest of his men at heart whilst, at various times, constantly having to stand up to the demands of the Australian government, the British government and the British military, the American military – especially General Douglas MacArthur - and having to continuously battle to just get the basic supplies necessary to adequately engage the enemy.

As Taylor points out, it is therefore somewhat surprising that Blamey has been *'barely honoured... In the nation's war memorials, his presence is at best intermittent and usually nonexistent. It is not really enough for such an important historical figure.'*

But a large part of the book is also a World War I - World War II history. Or, at least, details of military actions in which Blamey had played some role (very rarely at the actual site of the battles – but that's only to be expected when one is the commander-in-chief of the Australian Military Forces). And this is where I found the book to be disappointing.

The book is, obviously, pitched at the 'general public' (I bought my copy, very soon after it was released, at my local Big W at a deliberately discounted release price), but descriptions such as *an Allied force coming over the Bulldog Track from Wau would feint towards Salamaua to draw off the Japanese from Lae... the 9th Division would be supported by the 162nd US Regiment; transported by ships into Nassau Bay, some 20 kilometres south of Salamaua; and marched into position east of Lae. Nassau Bay would be used as a supply base for the operations. More US forces would also be involved, with the US 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment assigned to capture Nazab Airfield, inland from Lae. Once the airport was secured, the 7th Division would be flown into Nazab* are barely comprehensible (even to me, who had visited this general area), particularly in the absence of detailed supporting maps identifying all of the places mentioned.

There were many occasions when I'd wished for more detailed information about things that had been included in the book, or been given more evidence to support some of Taylor's assertions. So, I had the feeling that much of the book was a 'little light on' – but it does run to 382 pages. and including more would just have made this book, that is both a biography and a history, an absolutely mammoth tome! Overall, however, it is a worthwhile read.

... And, as it transpires, Blamey had a (one week!) link to the NSW South Coast. Clue: visit the Wonboyn page at www.southcoasthistory.org.au

Review by Peter Lacey

Talks & Shows

Catch up with us at these local shows and talks:

Ulladulla Library, 11am 12th February: The unique features of the South Coast's history.

Nowra Library, 2.30pm 12th February: Unique features

Batemans Bay Library, 10.30am 17th February: Unique features

Moruya Library, 10.30am 19th February: Unique features

Narooma Library, 2pm 19th February: Unique features

U3A Bermagui, 10.30am 25th February: Extraordinary South Coast Women. 0499 818 454

Bega Show, 27th February to 1st March

U3A Batemans Bay at Moruya, 10am 7th March: Unique Features. 0407 957 145

Moruya Garden Club, 2.30pm 21st March: South Coast Shipwrecks. 0417 895 700

Canberra Zoom Presentation, 2pm 22nd March: Unique Features 0412 895 806

To reserve your seat at any of the talks, contact the library or community organisation (most encourage visitors to come to their meetings).

If your community group is interested in South Coast History Society providing a speaker, call 0448 160 852.

Aboriginal Breastplates

This is a photograph of 'King' Bud Billy II and his wife Mary Carpenter. It was taken around 1904. Bud Billy is wearing a breastplate that was simply inscribed 'BUD BILLY II, KING OF JARVIS BAY' (which may give us a clue about the proper pronunciation of 'Jervis Bay'!).

Breastplates were a form of reward given to Aboriginal peoples – a 'badge of distinction' that was engraved with their name and tribe - and were something that enabled the white community to easily identify Aboriginals who were considered to be trustworthy.

They were introduced by Governor Macquarie who was trying to foster peaceful relations between European settlers and local Aboriginals. Specifically, he wanted each 'tribe' to have a recognisable chief who would act as an intermediary between his tribe and the government. The first breastplate (or King plate as they were sometimes called) was presented in 1815 to Bungaree, 'a worthy and brave fellow' who became the first Aboriginal to circumnavigate Australia when he accompanied Matthew Flinders on his exploratory voyage of 1802-03. It was simply inscribed 'BOONGAREE – Chief of the Broken Bay Tribe – 1815'. At the same time, Bungaree was also given something more substantial – a grant of 15 acres of land on Georges Head (not on Broken Bay, but on Sydney Harbour!).

These Aboriginal breastplates seem to have been modelled on military gorgets (originally armour that protected the neck and throat but which had, by Macquarie's time, simply become symbols of rank).

Most breastplates were crescent-shaped and made of brass or copper and bronze. Some were finely-made, exquisite works of art that included depictions of Australian birds or animals (the kangaroo and emu being the most common motifs), others were simply crudely cut from sheets of metal that were then stamped with the wearers name and title. They were commonly worn from a chain around the neck.

Many hundreds, if not thousands, of Aboriginal breastplates were issued between 1815 and 1946.

Originally, they were issued by the government, but over time pastoralists and others presented them to local Aboriginals as rewards for having saved lives, for faithful service, or simply as recognition to outstanding stockmen or trackers.

The Aboriginals' views about breastplates, in the days they were being presented and worn, are difficult to evaluate because little was recorded. And published material, such as newspapers, refer to them very infrequently. Some people today portray them as despicable symbols of Colonial Aboriginal repression, but there is ample evidence that many or

most Aboriginal recipients wore them with pride, with at least one Aboriginal, an Anthony Anderson (1852 – 1914), approaching his local Birchip Council (in north-western Victoria) requesting that he be presented with a brass plate. He was subsequently awarded one that was inscribed 'King of Birchip, Morton Plains, Donald and Surrounding Country'.

And this anecdote in the Nowra Leader from 1926 illustrates how sought-after breastplates often were: *The foregoing reminds us of the time when one of the old school of aboriginals (a full-blood) roamed the high-ways and by-ways of Jervis Bay. He was a self-constituted King of his tribe... The late Mr. Monaghan had won, at a show, a diamond shape bronze tablet, five or six inches from end to end in length, with the wording engraved thereon 'First prize Durham bull.' The old abo. became possessed of this treasure and proudly wore it on his breast for years. The trophy caused a lot of amusement, particularly to strangers when they saw "King" Bundle exhibiting it on his manly chest attached by a small chain around his neck.*

We thought it would be interesting to compile a complete list of the breastplates that were presented to Aboriginals on the NSW South Coast, why they were presented, and by whom. The challenge has proven to be much greater than expected, and more breastplates have been identified than we originally expected. These are the ones we have discovered to date (undoubtedly, we have missed others):

'**BUD BILLY II, KING OF JARVIS BAY**', presented to Bud Billy (or 'Jimmy Golding', 'Monaghans Jimmy'). This breastplate is now in the collection of the National Museum of Australia. No record of the timing or circumstances surrounding the bestowing has been found. James Golding did interact with the White community: on one occasion in 1898 he 'figured very prominently' in a 'corroboree' in front of the Jervis Bay Hotel, at the conclusion of which he made a public speech indicating that further performances were to be given in Nowra. He also worked as a police tracker during the 1890s, and was attached to the Nowra Police Station.

'**KING MERRYMAN**'. This breastplate was presented to Umbarra, an elder of the Djirringanj/Yuin people of the Bermagui area, who died in 1904. It was decorated with an Emu and a Kangaroo. Umbarra lived on Merriman Island, in the middle of Wallaga Lake, while his people lived on the shores of the lake. Umbarra was believed to have clairvoyant abilities, communicating with a black duck, his moojingarl, that warned him of impending danger.

'**Wagin Chief of Shoalhaven**' and '**Yager Chief of Jervis Bay**'. Yager is the best known of the early Jervis Bay Aborigines. He met Alexander Berry soon after the first white settlement of the area in 1822. Berry at one time described Yager as "My religious friend".

In his *Recollections of the Aborigines* compiled in 1838,

Portrait of Bungaree wearing his breastplate by Augustus Earle, c 1829 – 1838

Berry wrote, *One day a large party of well armed arrived from Jervis Bay and sat down in the neighbourhood of our encampment, but did not come near us according to the native custom until they received an invitation. I went to them, asked for their chief – an old gentleman of the name of Yager – and we became immediately good friends.*

Berry also wrote: *It was several weeks from my first arrival at Shoalhaven, before any of the Natives ventured to show themselves. At length, about twenty of them encamped in my neighbourhood; and I availed myself of the opportunity to have a friendly talk with them. They were accompanied by two Chiefs, one of them was the reputed Chief of Numba or Shoalhaven, and the other of Jervis Bay. The name of the former was Wagin; of the latter Yager. The master of the cutter in which I came down from Sydney, and his mate, had been both drowned in attempting to enter the Shoalhaven river in a small boat. I therefore determined to avail myself of the services of Messrs. Wagin and Yager to assist me in navigating the vessel back. They readily agreed to my proposal that they should accompany me to Sydney, where I would give to each of them a suit of clothes, and a brass plate thus constituting Wagin King of Shoalhaven, and Yager King of Jervis Bay.*

Governor Macquarie had adopted this system and had found it beneficial; but he was very

tenacious of his prerogative, and would not allow any person, save himself, to convert Chiefs into Kings. Now, however, he had been relieved by Sir Thomas Brisbane, and I assumed the liberty of making Kings direct, rather than solicit the Governor to provide the brass plates...

...Upon reaching Sydney the Kings procured the promised rewards; and on their return to Coolangatta, with their badges and broadcloth, another Chief, who had not presented himself previously, came to the Overseer, asserted that he was the real Chief of Shoalhaven, and claimed that he also should have a plate. The Overseer told him that if any prejudice had been done to him, it was his own fault in not having claimed in time; that I
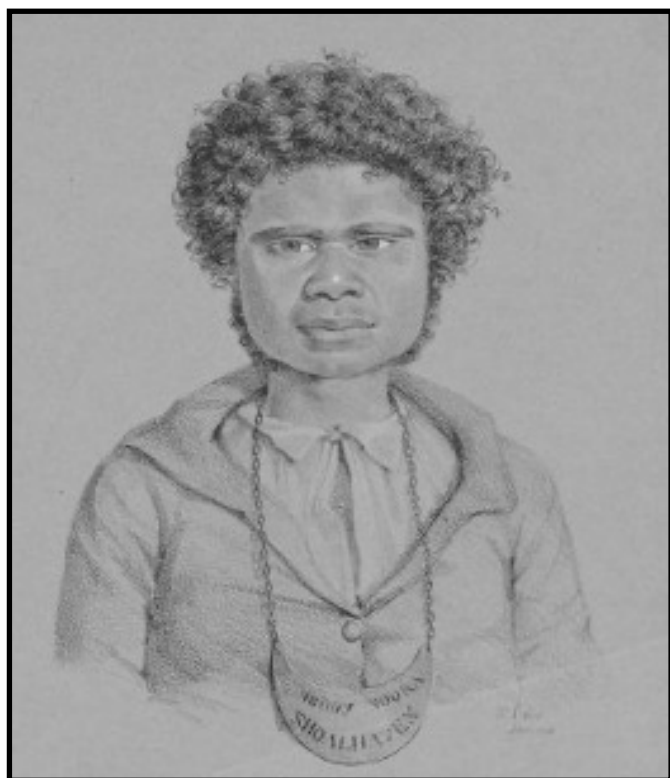
Lithograph of Neddy Noora by Charles Rodius, published in 1834

had already made Wagin the King, and could not make two Kings; but that 1 would make him a constable. He refused to be a constable. Then the Overseer said that I would make him a settler. He had no objection to that; but stipulated it must be engraved on his plate, that he was a free settler (to distinguish him from a Government man). I, therefore, gave him a plate, with "Free settler" engraved upon it, which he wore for the rest of his life.

On his death his son asked for another plate, but requested that I would 'say nothing about his father or the plate.' The Natives never speak of their dead relatives.'

'NEDDY NOORA, SHOAL HAVEN, 1834'. Neddy Noora (also spelt Neddy Noorar, Neddy Noo-ra and Neddy Noorah) of the Shoalhaven tribe was a guide to Surveyor-General John Oxley who was searching for an overland route from Sydney to Jervis Bay in 1819. This breastplate was found by a child whilst playing in Broughton Mill Creek.

'DICKY, KING OF CLYDE ROAD'. Dickey was King of the Clyde River and ruled the country from Moruya to the Clyde River to Braidwood. *His term of reign was peaceful, he was of a very peaceful disposition, given mostly to hunting and fishing, and was generally known to the tribe as 'Pretty Dickey'. He was buried on the bank of the Clyde River, near Nelligen, and was somewhere about 90 years of age when he died. Dickeys old Queen, Janie, died in December 1908, and was buried in the Catholic Cemetery at Batemans Bay. She used to say that her mother remembered the coming of Captain Cook, and she herself could remember the landing of the first white people at Broulee.* This breastplate, also in the collection of the National Museum of Australia, is decorated with a kangaroo, emu, grass tree and gum tree.

'TIMOTHY, CHIEF OF MERRICUMBENE'. This breastplate (see page 2), also in the collection of the National Museum of Australia, has an unusual design (the inclusion of a coronet) but also has a

particularly interesting history. It, quite obviously, has been repaired: the original was cut in two to provide metal to repair a boat's keel and the remaining smaller half was found in 1911 in an ash-heap near an old boat building shed at Batemans Bay, after which it was reconstructed by a Sydney silversmith. The original breastplate was presented to Timothy of Merricumbene (in the Deua River Valley) by Captain Oldrey of Broulee. An 1849 report outlines the circumstances: *Some of the tribe... greatly distinguished themselves by saving the crew of a schooner* [*the Rover* – details are at www. southcoasthistory.org.au] *which was wrecked in the surf. The white by-standers stood aghast, and could not contrive means to render any assistance; but fifteen of the aborigines formed a line, hand in hand, and went into the surf and saved all on board. A benevolent individual residing near, a captain in the navy* [Captain Oldrey], *made earnest application to the Governor for a reward for these daring fellows; but the reply received was, that there were no funds at the disposal of the Government for such a purpose. This seems a hard case, when such immense sums have been realised by the sale of waste lands! But Captain did all he could to reward these men, by making them frequent presents of little comforts, and he presented to each 'humanity man' a brass plate, having attached to it a chain, by which to hang it around the neck. On each plate he caused to be engraved the name of the wearer, and a record of the good deed he and his comrades had done. This was the more generous, as the trading vessel that was cast away contained goods and stores belonging to himself, which were all irrevocably lost.* It seems other breastplates were also presented by Captain Oldrey to (at least) 'Warragul Tom', 'Jerry, Chief of Broulee', 'Broulee Billy' and 'Boulbee'.

'COOMEE, LAST OF HER TRIBE, MURRAMARANG'. Coomee-Nulunga (also known as Maria or Moriah) was the wife of King Billy Boy. This simple breastplate, decorated only with engraved lines at each point that represented the ceremonial scarring on each of Coomee's shoulders, was given to her in 1909 by Edmund O. Milne, a railways inspector, who amassed a huge private collection of Aboriginal artefacts in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Coomee reportedly returned the breastplate because it was too heavy to wear. Coomee was not the last of her tribe - many Murramarang people still live along the South Coast.
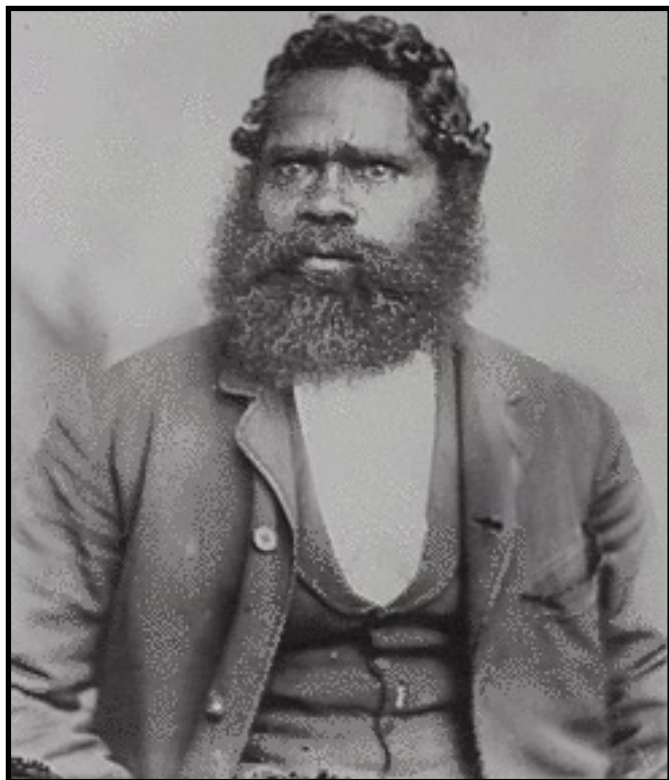

'MICKY JOHNSON, KING'. Micky Johnson (1834 – 1906) was brought to the Illawarra area from the Clarence River area, but was proclaimed 'King of the Illawarra Tribe' at the Illawarra Centenary celebrations in 1896. He was then presented with a crescent-shaped brass plate inscribed 'Mickey Johnson, King' by Archibald Campbell, the Member for Illawarra. That breastplate is now missing.

Part of Edmund O. Milne's collection of Aboriginal artefacts that included a number of Aboriginal breastplates

Mickey Johnson lived in the Kiama area at the time of his passing in 1906. He was widely regarded by Aboriginal people and European settlers as 'King of the Illawarra'

'BROUGHTON, NATIVE CONSTABLE OF SHOALHAVEN, 1822' Broughton (c.1798-c.1850; also known as Toodwick, Toodood or Toodwit and Billy Broughton) was an Aboriginal guide, tracker and constable who was born at Boon-ga-ree (now Berry). By 1818 he was working for Dr Charles Throsby of Liverpool and was a guide and translator on several of Throsby's explorations, and at least once for John Oxley. In 1822 Broughton started work for Alexander Berry, who called him 'my Landsman'. Berry presented him with a rectangular breastplate inscribed 'Broughton Native Constable of Shoalhaven. 1822'. On some undated occasion, the breastplate *'was discovered at Worrigee* [south-east of Nowra] *in the ashes or calcined clay of a burnt stump'.* (This appears to be consistent with a common manner of burial of local Aboriginals.) It seems that the breastplate has now been lost.

'BERRY TO BROUGHTON FOR DIGGING A CANAL SINGLE HANDEDLY, A FEAT NO WHITE MAN COULD EMULATE'. A breastplate bearing this inscription is in the collection of the Australian Museum, so it appears Broughton might have been presented with two breastplates on separate occasions by Alexander Berry.

'NEMMIT, 1825, CHIEF OF THE SUTTON FOREST TRIBE'. The reverse of the breastplate bears the inscription 'Presented by Lindon Biddulph of Arcady, Carcoar 1826.' A 1916 newspaper report indicated *The plate was found in 1876 (50 years ago), by a member of the Biddulph family, at the blacks camping ground, Sandy Point, on 'Eree' Estate, Shoalhaven River, 14 miles upstream from Nowra. 'Eree' was purchased from Mr. Hyam, of Nowra, by the Biddulph brothers (Lindon and Tregenna), and in 1855 they went to live there. Nemmit and his followers from the adjacent high country made Sandy Point, on the river, their camping ground, generally about harvest time, in order to assist in harvesting and pick up anything they could lay their hands on - square bottle rum being the main thing, with plug tobacco and old clothes next in demand.*

'WILLAM Vth EMPEROR OF ALL THE KAMERUKIANS'. This brass breastplate is decorated with a drawing of a kangaroo and an Emu. The identity of the Indigenous recipient is unknown. It was once in the possession of John Lloyd, an owner of The Grange at South Pambula. It is now in the collection of the National Museum of Australia.

'JENNY, QUEEN OF BROULEE' (see page 2) Jenny Yoothe was one of two wives of Jerry Pukkul, the King of Broulee. Jerry was involved in the *Rover* rescue (see Timothy, above), and a later report in the *Illawarra Mercury* indicates he was given a breastplate, presumably by Captain Oldrey.

'PICKERING, KING OF THE PIGEON HOUSE TRIBE'. This breastplate, presented to Charlie Pickering, was found at Yadboro in the early 1920s. An article in the *Sydney Mail* in August 1938 provides this information about Charlie Pickering: *'Mr. Cambage of Milton knew the town when it was a little village struggling to grow up. He remembers the coastal blacks and the tribe of the Pigeon House. He remembers, too, old Charlie Pickering, king of the Pigeon House blacks. The 'king' even condescended to work for him, somewhat fitfully, and Mr. Cambage recalls the agility with which Charlie Pickering could climb a tree. He was so fond of climbing that when asked to cut some wood Charlie used to spring nimbly up a large dead tree and hack off the topmost branches. He always insisted upon this procedure despite the fact that there was dead wood in plenty lying on the ground.'*

'JACK THE TRAVELLER, KING OF BENDORA BELLE VUE AND JEMBICUMBANE'. This elaborate breastplate (see page 2), now in the collection of the Museum of Australia, depicts an Aboriginal man firing a gun at a kangaroo, watched on by an emu. It is not known who 'Jack the Traveller' was, but Bendora Belle Vue is very likely to have been Bendora Station on the Shoalhaven River and Jembicumbane is certainly Jembaicumbene Creek, also on the Shoalhaven River.

'BIAMANGA, KING OF WALLAGA & BEGA DISTRICT. BORN BREDBATOURA' (see page 2). The highest peak on Biamanga (Mumbulla Mountain, north of Bega) is the dreaming place of the Yuin leader, Jack Mumbulla (c 1794 – c1869). He used to sit and meditate on the top of the mountain. He received a brass breastplate, as King Mumbulla, from Governor Bourke in 1834.
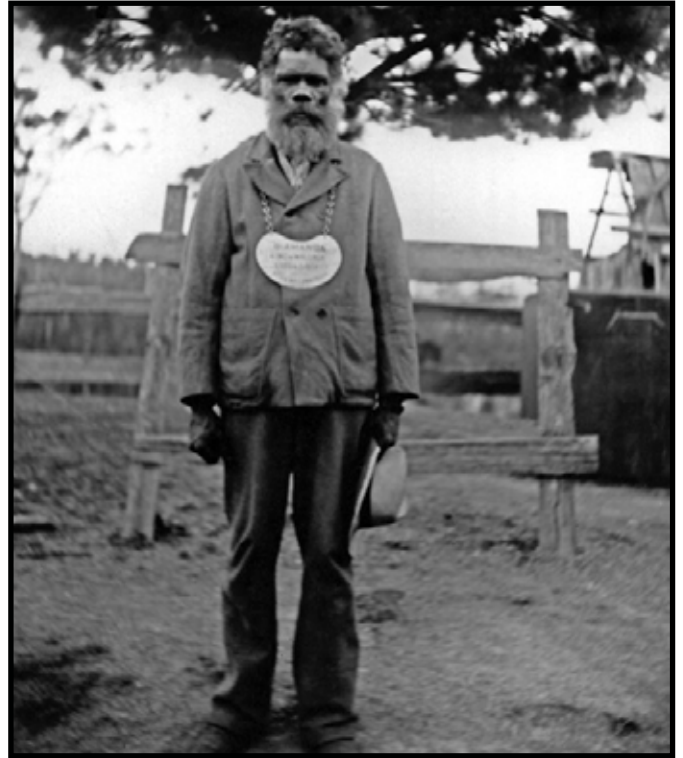
'JEMMY MUGGLE, King of Wiggley'. A Mr William McCarthy claims to have ploughed this plate from one of his paddocks that had been an Aboriginal camping place, near fresh water on Nelligen Creek. Wigly was an Aboriginal word for Braidwood, meaning plenty of fur, so it is likely Jemmy Muggle was a prominent, early 19th century Aboriginal from the Braidwood area.

'THOMAS TINBOY, KING OF NELLIGAN'. Thomas Tinboy frequented the Nelligen area in the early to mid-19th century. This breastplate was found buried in an ant hill in the ranges near Nelligen Creek. Aboriginal peoples sometimes used anthills as part of their mortuary rituals, so Thomas may have been buried with his breastplate in the anthill and his bones removed at a later date for secondary burial. The engraver's name, HC Jervis of Sydney, is (unusually) engraved in the reverse of the plate. A large waratah is part of the design – again, an unusual decoration.

'JIMMY FRIDAY'. A newspaper reported in June 1909: *'Jimmy Friday, the oldest aboriginal of the Clyde River, is shortly to be decorated and made king. We often read of silver wedding, also diamond, when sometimes even of the fourth generation take part in the celebrations, but on this occasion we understand the fifth generation will be present to participate in the festivities. Mr Smith has the order to make a shield (which will not be gold) to adorn his breast. Jimmy says he is... entitled to be crowned'* because of his age.

Jimmy Friday, seated in the car, at Nelligen c 1910 – 1920.

'JAMES IMLAY, KING OF THE TRIBE AND ADMIRAL OF THE FLEET OF TWOFOLD BAY'. James was the head whaler employed by the Imlay Brothers of Twofold Bay. There is a sketch of him wearing his breastplate in Oswald Brierley's notebook (Brierley, a noted artist, managed Benjamin Boyd's Twofold Bay whaling business). Other Aboriginal whalers were also given breastplates by the Imlays.

'Presented to Baraban by Shepherd Laidley in Remembrance of the 9th Dec 1867'. This breastplate was presented to a Shoalhaven district Aboriginal for having saved a drowning man.

'BILLY MORGAN, CHIEF HEADSMAN. TO Mr RIXON, TWOFOLD BAY'. The Rixons were a prominent Twofold Bay/Eden family. James Rixon built the Crown and Anchor hotel, the first inn on the north shore of Twofold Bay, in the 1840s.

10 Answers
to the questions on page 8

1. It was Bermagui, which had a small fish cannery on the Bermagui Steamer Wharf from the mid-1950s to 1960. Its product was marketed under a Cee-Dee Products brand. Any fish that this cannery could not handle were trucked to the larger cannery in Eden... and the cannery at Wyndham, which operated from 1911 to 1915, was a rabbit cannery... the cannery at Coolangatta Estate, which opened in 1900, produced tinned condensed milk and tinned concentrated milk.

2. In 1907 there were 9 licensed hotels in Bega. Between 1907 and 1913, mainly as a result of pressure from a then-strong Temperance Movement, voters throughout NSW were asked how many hotels they ideally wanted to have in their local towns. Bega residents voted for 5 – so, over the following years, the licenses of four hotels were not renewed. However, by August 1925 there were again 9 hotels operating in Bega!

Murphy's Club Hotel, cnr Church & Carp Sts, Bega – one of the hotels that lost its liquor licence in the late 1900s.

3. The hotel in Wolumla is the 'Railway Junction Hotel' – a seemingly strange choice of name as there is not, and never has been, a railway anywhere near the town. From the 1880s to the 1910s, locals optimistically believed that a railway line would be built from Bega to Eden and this would connect (hence the 'junction') at Wolumla to an extension of the Bombala-Cooma-Queanbeyan railway line. A route for the Bega to Eden railway was actually surveyed in 1886, so the locals had some justification for their optimism.

4. George Haiser was a major oyster grower at Greenwell Point (east of Nowra) and is considered 'the father of the Shoalhaven oyster industry'. He was a strong advocate for the expansion of the industry.

5. The Black-Allan Line is the straight line part of border between NSW and Victoria – running from somewhere in the Snowy Mountains to Cape Howe, named by Captain Cook in 1770 and which, in 1842, was nominated to be the eastern end of the border when Victoria became a separate state to NSW. The line was originally a 'paper' line, but was surveyed by three surveyors (Alexander Black, Alexander Allan and William Turton; so, why it is not called the Black-Allan-Turton Line is a mystery!) between April 1870 and March 1872. The task was incredibly difficult as the Black-Allan Line crosses some of the country's most rugged terrain. Then it seems the Line was never officially promulgated. This oversight was remedied in February 2006, when this part of the border became 'official'.

6. The two South Coast resources that enabled the rapid expansion of railways across NSW from the 1860s were timber sleepers and blue metal, or as it was known 'rail ballast', used in stabilising the rail tracks. Hundreds and hundreds of thousands of railway sleepers were cut from South Coast forests and were shipped from South Coast ports and other riverside locations, not just for the railways in NSW but for use elsewhere in Australia, as well as in New Zealand, India, Pakistan, China, South Africa and Europe. And the Kiama-Bombo area became the primary source of crushed basalt (blue metal) that was once transported on a railway line down the main street of Kiama and was then taken to Sydney by a fleet of small ships.

7. The 1884-1885 English cricket team played a two-day match at Kameruka between the Second Test in Melbourne and the Third Test in Sydney. Their opponents were a 22-man team from Candelo who were beaten by an innings and 12 runs. *'The most astonishing part of the matter was the attendance – where they came from is a mystery. At least 150 buggies and 600 horsemen and horsewomen, besides foot people were on the ground – in all at least 2,000, and certainly almost everybody within an area of 15 miles must have been there, some coming much further, and a few as many as 100 miles, one of the players riding 100 miles through the bush, and another, with his wife, driving 90 miles.'*

8. The first commercial trans-Tasman flight, with Charles Kingsford Smith piloting the Southern Cross, departed from the northern end of Seven Mile Beach (near Gerroa) at 2.30am on 11th January 1933. The flight took 14 hours and 10 minutes. More than 1,000 people turned up to watch the departure of the plane. The Southern Cross was very heavily laden (including carrying 660 gallons of petrol and 30 gallons of oil), so needed a long distance to become airborne. At low tide, the sand on Seven Mile Beach was compacted enough to be a makeshift airstrip.

9. The Cape St George Lighthouse, on the southern peninsula to Jervis Bay, operated from 1860 to 1899. Ships travelling south could not see the light and ships travelling north could barely see the light. Between 1864 and 1893, 23 ships were wrecked in the vicinity of the Light. The lighthouse, simply, had been built in the wrong place – 4km north of where it was intended to be, supposedly because it would be closer to where the sandstone used in its construction was being quarried. It was replaced by a 304-foot lighthouse on Point Perpendicular, the northern peninsula to Jervis Bay.

10. 'Snowball' marches (so called, because like a snowball rolling down a hill, they were anticipated to grow the further the distance they travelled) were organised from nine locations throughout NSW to recruit men to join the Australian army in World War I. Each had a distinctive name. Those who joined the South Coast march, that commenced in Nowra on 30th November 1915, were called the Waratahs. In farewelling the initial 50 men, the organising secretary of the State Recruiting Committee expressed a wish: 'May the Waratahs grow in strength, flourish while temporarily transplanted in foreign soil, and return to us rich in achievements for the King and country, no less conspicuous and brilliant than their namesake, the crimson monarch of the Australian bush.' A banner, depicting a Waratah, was made by the Nowra Branch of the Red Cross Society and was presented to the marchers as they left Nowra (it is now part of the Australian War Memorial's collection). 120 men were recruited by the end of the march.

The Southern Cross on Seven Mile Beach Image: nla.obj-147706483
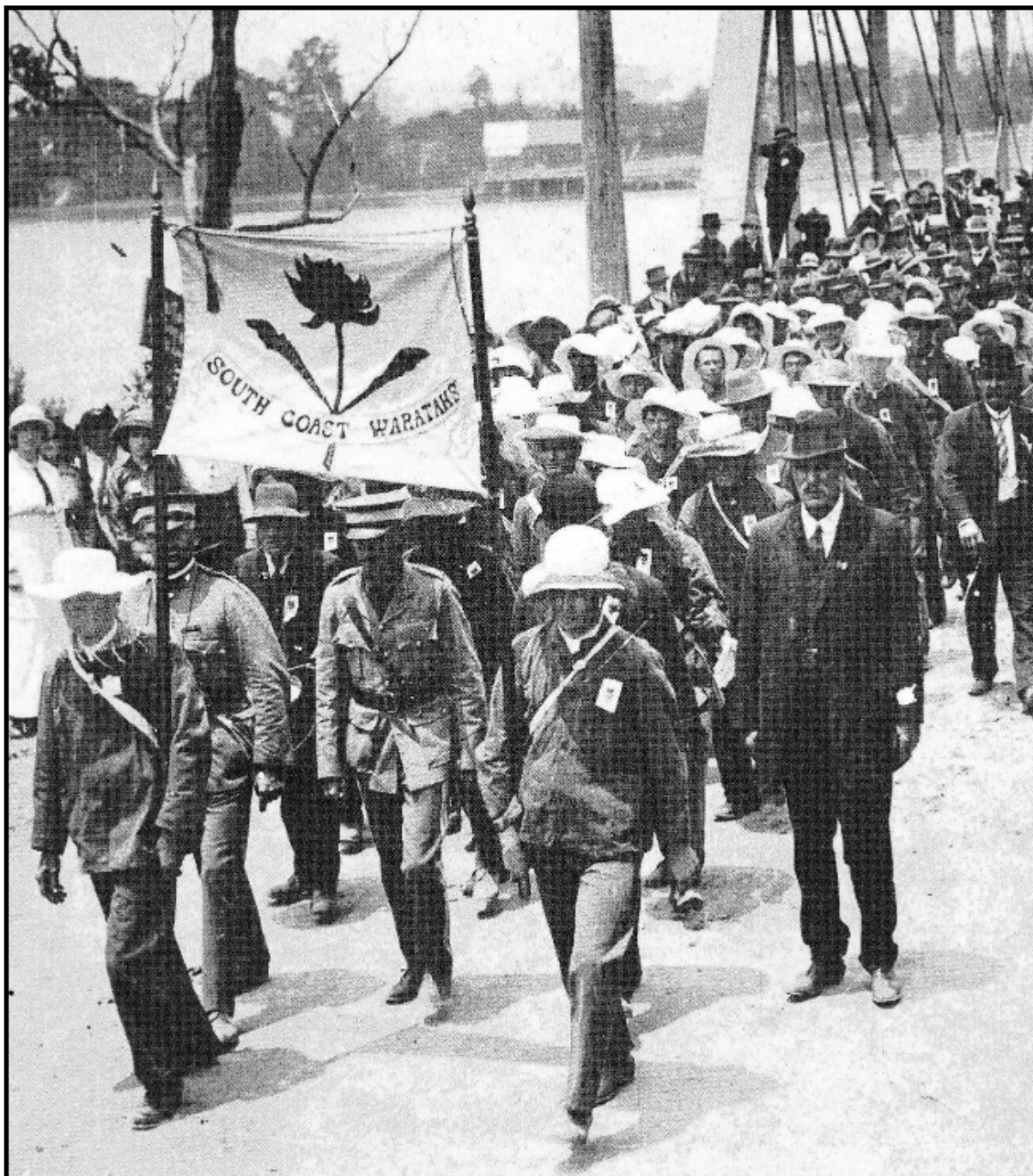
Will A.I. Kill History?

The answer is definitely yes if the doomsayer futurists are to be believed. They are predicting that A.I. (Artificial Intelligence) will lead to 'a 99.9% chance of human extinction due to A.I. within the next century.'

The answer, however, is probably or possibly, if the more moderate futurists are to be believed.

History has been something that has never been static. The study of history, the sharing of history (for example, the teaching of history) has evolved over time... and it is still changing.

Not too many years ago, if you were to research and then write an article about a history topic – let's say, about Aboriginal breastplates – you would probably have spent many, many hours trawling through paper-based material in numerous libraries or museums.

That, of course, has changed. Much of that material has been 'digitised' (transformed into a computerised format) which then became available, 24/7, 365 days of the year, via the internet.

Then 'search engines' were developed – things like Google, or specialised search engines like the National Library of Australia's remarkably-useful Trove. These instantly identify history sources relating to whatever topic might be of interest: Google, for example (at the time of writing this) could direct me to 39,200 references to Aboriginal breastplates; Trove could identify 909 references to Aboriginal breastplates in Australian newspapers and gazettes alone.

Whilst both these (and other) search engines have made the process of researching history topics very much easier, they have not eliminated the need to perhaps read all the sources they have identified – in this example, up to 39,200 articles!

Which is why the recent development of A.I. has been so significant. Now A.I. can review all of those references and prepare a summary from them. For any researcher, this makes life very much easier, and researching so much more efficient. A.I., essentially, can be like having two, three, four or more research assistants simultaneously working on the one project.

The problem, though, is A.I. cannot always differentiate fact from fiction.

Misinformation (or mistakes) has always been a problem for history and historians. Unfortunately, once something (factually correct, or incorrect; or simply an historian's opinion) is published it tends to become viewed as 'fact', and this situation has only been exacerbated by the increased use of media such as Facebook where anything (factually correct or total rubbish) can and is so easily published.

So, if A.I. cannot, or does not, ensure its resulting histories are factually accurate, over time 'history' may well become little more than collections of fiction!
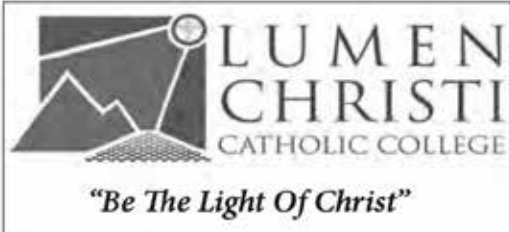
Traditionally, historians have revealed the sources of what they are publishing. This, at least, enabled a reader to go back and verify the facts. With A.I., sources are not necessarily documented, so if A.I. picks up some 'garbage fact' and then presents it as 'fact', truth and accuracy become the casualties. (In A.I.-speak, these errors are called 'hallucinations'!) And what's to stop the radical Right or the looney Left developing A.I. 'black boxes' that simply churn out histories reflecting their own extreme points of view?

A.I., however, has many benefits apart from simply being able to process vast amounts of information. For a historian, it provides instant translations from other languages. It can also be asked to 'fill in the gaps' of damaged or illegible documents. And it can even efficiently do things that would take a human years to do (if they were successful at all!) like reassembling a badly smashed vase from its various small fragments... or even reconstituting entire 'lost' Aboriginal languages from multiple surviving sources that had each recorded just a little of the original language.

Traditional histories have also suffered from being based on partial evidence and cultural prejudices. A.I.-generated histories, in theory at least, should be more objective (so no longer will it be a case of 'history is written by the victors') and it is more likely to include material relating to the 'peripheral, the obscure, the marginalised.'

And A.I. can provide a valuable 'brainstorming' facility to historians – suggesting new leads that might be explored, suggesting alternative ways of looking at events that happened in the past (the article on the Bermagui Mystery in *Recollections 52* [available at www.southcoasthistory.org.au] presenting a good example of this).

The internet has certainly made history more accessible to the general community. The question now is whether A.I. will make it even more accessible and will make more people interested in history (by, for example, being able to provide a history on any specific topic of interest to an individual; go on – type into your search engine something esoteric like 'write me an essay on the history of propellers' and you'll be instantly gratified!!!)), or whether increasing misinformation will ultimately consign history to the 'dustbin of history'.

Henry Halloran's plan for 'Environa', a development between Canberra and Queanbeyan – see story page 15