

## **Bundanoon History Group Inc.**

### **Presidents Report 2019 - 20**

**Introduction:** a pleasure for me to present my second Report as your President, chronicling this last year of the Bundanoon History Group.

When I stood here 12 months ago, I never expected 2019 to end the way that it did. Over the past 12 months, we as a community have experienced some very challenging times.

Many of us attended the Bushfires Preparation Meeting here in the Hall just a few days before Xmas. And when they said "*it's not if it comes, but when*" we were all suddenly confronted with massive life decisions, – stay or go, what's precious, what shall I take and what shall I leave? All accompanied by a huge range of emotions.

Now, after the devastating fires have torn through Morton Park and parts of Bundanoon, I believe we have all grown much stronger and closer as a community. As the feelings of fear, upheaval, grief, and shock, subside....., I feel privileged to live in Bundanoon. To be part of our community, and be a part of the Bundanoon History Group.

Now onto my report, and today I am going to cover three things:

- i) we're going to take a journey and remind ourselves of the many good things that happened over the past year.
- ii) I'll then mention some of the other 2019 activities
- iii) Lastly, I'd like to acknowledge the significant contributions made by all of you, which keeps this the very special group that it is.

**Now a look back at 2019:** as we head into our 37<sup>th</sup> year. There were three great highlights in the 36<sup>th</sup> .....: i) was the Big Mothers Day Raffle in May; ii) was the Big South Coast Trip in September; and iii) was the Big Book Sale in October.

I'll say more on these later but lets now recap on the many things done from January to December.

Traditionally, in **January**, everyone's on their summer holiday so the BHG doesn't do stuff. Last year, **January** was an exception. There were two major exhibitions in Canberra soon to close, so on 24 th we started the year with a coach trip. We went to the National Library in Canberra for *Cook and the Pacific*



exhibition, then on to the National Museum for the *Rome: City & Empire* exhibition. It was a great day out, not too hot, and I remember a very convivial lunch, sat outside on the veranda at the National Museum.

In **February** Dr Leah Day, a long time friend of the Group was our speaker and gave a presentation on the foibles of the Mittagong Ironmaster, Enoch Hughes at the Fitzroy Iron Works back in the 1860's.

At the **March** AGM Don Gray became our Vice President, and our Guest speakers were our very own Rosemary Page and John Brock on something which was destined later to become very topical "*The History of the Bundanoon RFS*".

In **April** our meeting guest was Harlan Hall, the technical whizz behind the massive fundraising at the Berrima Museum – now rebranded as "*The Story Centre*". After the meeting, many of us went up to Berrima to see their latest display "*A Butcher, a Baker, and a bunch of Makers*". We discovered a very modern 21<sup>st</sup> century museum, with impressive state of the art audio and digital displays, all of which cost a fortune to install.

At our **May** meeting we were treated to "*History of the National Parks*", by Park Ranger Chris Kayser, and Ralph Clark. This was followed by a BBQ and drinks in the Morton National Park, catered for by the Lions. Not that I can tell you much about it, as Trish and myself had bunked off to France for a couple of months. Vice President Don and ex President Ralph were in charge.

That also meant we missed another May highlight – the draw for the Mothers Day raffle. The prize was the highly valued quilt donated by Cora Frost and won by Annette Wade. The quilt was magnificent and the raffle a real financial winner. A big thanks to our "Raffle Queen" Kay Morgan for raising a staggering \$1,615!

**June** was the fundraiser for the Cancer Council. As part of Australia's Biggest Morning tea initiative, we invited the village for morning tea and scones. This is now a tradition in our calendar and proved to be our best Cancer Council effort so far. It was well attended and raised \$600 on the day – a big thanks to Neil Wright for organising. Our guest speaker at the June meeting was Luke Macdonald, from the NSW Cancer Council.

Also in **June**, we had a one-day trip to the Parramatta River. I understand it was a pretty full on day with morning tea at Hambleton Cottage followed by a talk and guided tour. After lunch the party boarded the Rivercat ferry for a cruise along the river from Parramatta to the City, then home to Bundanoon by coach.

In **July** we welcomed local historian Janet Black, a resident of Tallong and a few years ago Janet wrote a book on the early history of Tallong. She presented us with some interesting stories from Tallong's early beginnings.



Also on the **4 July**, and nothing to do with American Independence Day, we were invited to the Bundanoon Hotel for a “surprise”! The “surprise” turned out to be a donation to the BHG of a builders trowel, for safe keeping, made in silver and recently bought at auction.

The trowel was given to the Hon J M Dunningham to commemorate the setting of the plaque at the Bundanoon Soldiers' Memorial Hall in 1934.

It's a great find and its thanks to the generosity of the pub regulars and the owners of the Bundanoon Hotel, that it's been returned to Bundanoon. It's going on display in the Goods Shed and later this year we will pass it on for a more permanent display in the Memorial Hall.

Finally in **July** we had our Oral History Morning with excerpts from our collection of Oral Histories. Beryl had done a huge job in compiling the show - and what a great show it was. Each audio recording was augmented by Beryl's specially selected video. Marianne was the MC for the occasion and her introductions gave an interesting insight into the subjects before listening to the recordings.

**In August**, one year after the 150<sup>th</sup> Centenary of the Railway coming to Bundanoon, we welcomed back Andrew Killingsworth from Sydney Trains,. Andrew is now a good friend of the BHG and talked about other heritage projects he has done since our Station refurbishment. He told us how the success of the Bundanoon project, with the wonderful support of the Bundanoon community had served as a blueprint for many of the other heritage projects undertaken across the rail network.

Also in **August** we had a tour of the two Sutton Forest Churches, St Patrick's Catholic Church and All Saints Anglican Church. Well known local historian Linda Emery was our guide and Linda regaled us with many fascinating tales of bygone characters as we walked around the cemeteries.

Now on to the busy month of **September**. At our September meeting, Helen gave a well researched talk on *The Evolution of the Woodside Estate, Bundanoon*.

Also in **September** over 30 of us travelled by Kennedy's luxury coach down to the far South Coast of NSW. A major excursion, our first stop was the Meroogal House in Nowra, built in 1886. We then travelled on down to Moruya, famous for its granite used to build the Sydney Harbour Bridge, and finally on to Narooma where we stayed for two nights.

On Day 2 we visited Tathra, a beautiful beach ....and then on to Eden, of Killer Whale fame. We then travelled around the Bay from Eden to Boydtown, of Benjamin Boyd fame.



On Day 3 we visited Tilba Tilba, then the Bega Cheese factory and made our way home via Braidwood.

It was amazing how much we had packed into three days. A great mix of history, spectacular scenery, excellent food, fun and companionship

Well, after a hectic September, one might have expected **October** to be a little more leisurely.....but not in the BHG!

John Creighton, supported by Caitlin Gallagher, gave an excellent talk about their work with Wombats in the wild and the Wombat Care Centre in Bundanoon.

Then onto the **19 October** and another highlight, the Big Book Sale. At first we were hesitant about it, not least because it was originally conceived as a bi-annual event. We also had concerns on whether we had left ourselves enough lead time to organise and we could only have the Hall for 1 day.

We needn't have worried! It was "all hands to the pump". We were so overwhelmed by the number of book donations that we ended up turning books away. We also had many volunteers who turned out to help. Once again Kay and Graham Morgan organised a fantastic raffle which raised an extra \$700 which covered our costs, so every book we sold was profit. It was an excellent result and we banked **\$5,483.15.....** not bad for a 1 day sale.

There are plenty of books left over and we are grateful to Cora Frost for loaning us the space to store them. A special thanks also to Peter and Kerri Goulding, Don and Di Gray, and to everyone involved in collecting, sorting books, selling them and cleaning up afterwards. It was a wonderful team effort.

Now on to **November** when Dr Eric Savage, a long time resident of Berrima was our speaker. Eric told us about the origins of Berrima as an early Georgian Colonial town and their ongoing community endeavours to get the whole town Heritage listed.

**November** also marked our final excursion of the year when we visited Bundanon, the former home of Arthur Boyd on the banks of the Shoalhaven River. We then went on to Kiama for lunch and a tour of the Museum. Another great day out.

Now I must mention that every trip we have done this year was planned and organised by Ralph Clark, and what's more amazing, on one of them, we even got a refund! Four excursions in a year is a massive amount of work. Pam Davies, Peter and Kerri Goulding, Don and Di Gray have been there to support Ralph. None of these trips would have been possible without their efforts and commitment. A huge thanks to all of them!

Finally on to **December**, the end of the financial year. Once again we held our traditional Christmas lunch in the Hall and once again wonderfully catered for by the Lions Club. Thanks to Harry Hall, his team, and our sub-committee led by



Jewel Hillier. We also welcomed Les and Lorraine Rundle as our guests. Les gave an interesting talk on growing up in Bundanoon and entertained us with his singing.

**Now , I have almost finished!** .... I daren't go on much longer in case someone decides to impeach me!

**Just a few more items to mention:**

**Membership:** Our 2019 membership remained stable .. ... our tops last year was 150 members.

**Heritage Trail:** Work continued last year on the Bundanoon Heritage Trail. There was a big delay whilst Council approved our DA Application, but thanks to Helen, Beryl and Ralph, we are now once again full steam ahead.

**Archive Team:** Thanks to Helen Clark and her Archiving team who continued to do a great job looking after our collection of historical photos and documents, cataloguing, and answering public queries.

**The Old Goods Shed:** Thanks to Jewel for organising Rostas and recording the number of visitors. We now know that we had 738 visitors between April – December which fully justifies the efforts from all who volunteer to keep the Shed open. Thanks also to Peter Goulding, Neil Wright and Graham Morgan who manage the Shed day to day maintenance. **Library:** Thanks to Helen for looking after the Library **Shed Storage:** Thanks to Peter and Don who have moved all our stuff from Moss Vale to the Storage Shed on the Up Platform. Hard physical work but great to have everything local, still with plenty of space to grow.

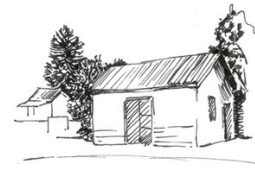
**Website:** Thanks to Robert Seckington for continuing to keep our website up to date, as well as posting monthly snippets of Bundanoon life from the past.

**Oral History Project:** Thanks to Ralph for running with this, to Beryl for doing the technical stuff, and to Irene for transcribing the interviews.

**Speakers:** Thanks also to Ralph for organising the many interesting speakers who come to our meetings

**Hall setup:** Thanks to John and Rosemary for setting up the Hall for our meetings.

**Community involvement:** When I became President I was keen to reach out to the younger generation and the community at large. Helen has been one of our ambassadors here, leading two U3A walks in the National Park. We also hosted visits of the Railway enthusiasts Society to the OGS and in December we organised with Sydney Trains the visit from Santa to the Railway Station. All are great for increasing our public profile. This coming year I hope we can do more.



Finally, **Heritage Advocacy** . Another key community role, looked after by Carol Cosgrove. Over the past year Carol has liaised with Council on a number of heritage matters. Thank you Carol.

**So that's it .....2019 done and dusted** and here we are today,... two days into Autumn, after experiencing much loss, thank full that we've made it, and witnessing Nature in a recovery overdrive.

The 2020 Morton Bushfire was a significant event in Bundanoon's history and, thanks to Francesca Beddie we have now established the *Bundanoon Bushfires 2020 Archive project* to capture and archive material about the fire for future research. You will hear more about this over the coming year.

**To conclude** 2019 was a massive year in so many ways. None of it could have been done without you the members and our fantastic Committee. Thank you all so much for your hard work, support and dedication.

I have enjoyed serving as your president. It's been a great privilege, and I look forward to the coming year.

**David Brennen**

President  
2 March 2020