

Bundanoon History Group

Monthly Newsletter

April 2022



IGuest Editor: Amy Press

From the President

This is my First President's report after taking over the role from David Brennan at the March AGM. I am pleased to be working with such a wonderful group of people with the same passion for Bundanoon History.

As I started writing, the sun began to shine and did so for the morning, followed by pouring rain! Brigadoon has been cancelled again but Robert Seckington has posted on our website a feature on days past. There is a [clip of 2017 celebration](#) so that you can sit down with a cup of tea or a wee dram, put the volume on high and pretend you are there until we can enjoy the day in the future.

Fortunately, the weather has been kinder to the BHG enabling us to visit Penrose Park to see the Black Madonna and wander the grounds.



April will be a busy month with Easter, school holidays and Anzac Day, where a wreath will be presented on behalf of the BHG. We also send a group of members to Norfolk Island with good wishes for their long-anticipated holiday. May we all look forward to sunshine, good health and scintillating tales from the returned travellers at the end of the month.

Then there was the first visit of the National Trust to Bundanoon for a walking tour of the village and inspections of several heritage properties. David Brennen and a large group of volunteers worked tirelessly for some time to make the day a success, and it was!

President: Amy Press..... **Vice President:** David Brennen.....**Secretary:** Steve Press**Treasurer:** David le Cheminant
Committee: Ralph Clark, Dianne Gray, Kerri Goulding, Beryl Seckington, Don Gray, Graham Morgan **Webmaster:** Robert Seckington
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National Trust Heritage Tour of Bundanoon

by David Brennen

On Wednesday 23 March the BHG had the pleasure of welcoming members of the local National Trust and giving a guided tour of the Bundanoon Heritage Trail, the Uniting and Anglican Churches, the Railway Station, the Bundanoon Hotel, the Pill Factory and Highball House.

It was a great team effort. Our guides were Marianne Ward, Ralph Clark, Gil Wheaton, Andrew Killingsworth (Sydney Trains), David Le Cheminant, Carol Cosgrove, Ian Smith, Beryl Seckington and myself. Cat Ayers and Ian Smith reviewed the tour scripts. Much effort was put in by the whole team to research and present the tour and the hope is the tour scripts can be used again in the future. A fun new way of promoting historic Bundanoon and raising funds for the BHG.



Amy Press welcoming our visitors in the Anglican Church at the start of the day

The 60 visitors were divided up into 4 colour coded groups. And a clever schema had been drawn up enabling them to visit all the venues in the time without colliding with each other. You may have seen these groups scattered around the village.



Train enthusiast Gil Wheaton speaking to one of the tour groups on the Railway Station

We had an excellent lunch organised by Amy and Steve Press at the Bundanoon Club which gave us a special offer for the day. Quite a feat to feed approx. 70 hungry patrons in an hour. Beryl had also produced a video to run over lunch.

Fortunately, the rain held off. We are so grateful for the venues we visited who opened up, especially for us. Our thanks to Jeremy and Danielle Tonks at the Anglican Church, Lillian Anderson and the ladies of the Uniting Church, Andrew Killingsworth of Sydney Trains, Mark at the Bundanoon Hotel, Claudia Marvin at the Pill Factory and Brent Marvin at Highball House. The whole day was a great success with very positive feedback from our guests.

Watch this space, we hope to develop the tour in whole or part sometime in the future for other groups visiting Bundanoon.

Audrey Jeffrey - A Civilian Prisoner-of-War in Japan 1942-1945

By Cat Ayers

1942. The world is at war. Packs of German cruisers patrol the Indian ocean like grey sea-wolves.

A young woman leaves her job behind the counter at G. Coles & Co. in Goulburn to embark on the adventure of her life. Not to join the military or the Land Army, not to work as a nurse, or in a munition factory. In the midst of a global war her deep faith calls her to missionary work in Kashmir, India with the World-Wide Evangelisation Crusade.

Audrey Jeffrey was the granddaughter of David and Anne Jeffery of Bundanoon, and was related to the Jennings, Phillips, and Tooth families here. She grew up with her parents Herbert and Ethel at "Willowleigh," Big Hill, near Marulan.

It was an extraordinarily courageous thing to do at that time, to venture across oceans so filled with enemies. Her faith guided her, and Audrey felt that her fate was in the hands of a higher power.

Audrey set off for India on the 17th April, 1942, aboard the S.S. Nankin out of Sydney. The ship stopped at Melbourne to take on more passengers. Among them was a twenty-five-year-old Dutch Canadian missionary named Gerhard

Bergan, also en route to the W.E.C. Indian mission.

The ship travelled west, then north. Five days out of Fremantle, the Nankin was spotted by a German plane and was soon under fire from the Thor, a German cruiser.

After a failed attempt to scuttle the Nankin, the crew and passengers were taken aboard the Thor, and reports affirm that they were treated well. Over the next few days small parties were ferried back to the Nankin to retrieve possessions, and Audrey was able to save her travelling sewing machine, a great asset in the years ahead.

The S.S. Nankin was reported as lost at sea. Two months later, the Goulburn Evening Post reported that there was still no news about Miss Jeffery, a popular local girl who was missing from her ill-fated voyage. It was known that passengers had taken to lifeboats, and hopes were held that they would have been picked up by a friendly passing vessel, but no word was heard from anyone. Meanwhile, the passengers had been transferred from the cruiser to a larger German ship, and then transferred again, and they speculated that their destination was now Germany.

Some information was eventually released by the Germans regarding the crew of the Nankin, but it was not until June 1944 that the Red Cross, working through Geneva, obtained the list of passengers who were transferred by the Germans into Japanese hands at Tokio Bay on 10th July 1942, and taken as prisoners of war to Fukushima in Japan. There were ninety-five men, thirty women and fifteen children in this group.

Prisoners of War. You might think of Colditz, or even Stalag 13. Closer to home, there is the horror of Changi. Sister Vivian Bullwinkel and the brave nurses of the Vyner Brooke, interned in Sumatra. Dutch colonial plantation owners held prisoner in Malaysia.

But the prisoner of war camps in Japan are perhaps not so well known, particularly those with non-military internees.

The camps in Japan were used partly as shields against Allied bombing raids and were placed in areas of national strategic importance. Fukushima

was a large agricultural town at that time, and the region was an important food bowl for Japan.

The Fukushima camp was established in the convent of a French-Canadian order, the nuns having been hastily removed.



Civilian prisoners were not forced into hard labour, as the military prisoners were. But they were subject to the same privations and harsh punishments under a regime of 173 petty rules and regulations. It was a punishable offence to wash other than the face, feet and hands except on Sundays, and only 59 cakes of soap were issued to the entire camp throughout their 3 years there.



In 1944 the prisoners were allowed to write a brief letter to their families. Her parents had not heard from Audrey since April 1942. Her letter, written on 7 August 1944, did not arrive in Big Hill until January 1945, and was reported in the Goulburn Evening Post.

“Miss Audrey Jeffery of Big Hill, Marulan, now a civilian internee at Fukushima, 400 miles north of Tokyo, has written her family stating that she is in good health. There was no need, she said, for any anxiety concerning her and from the tone of the letter she appeared to be in good health.”

Messages sent home were clearly written under the watchful eyes of the Japanese guards. The reality was malnutrition and humiliation. The prisoners subsisted on two 6oz bread buns per day, with the addition of a mystery “hot, coloured water” that some thought was very weak tea, others pronouncing it to be a very thin soup of parsnip heads. Although the Fukushima area was a major rice producer, the prisoners received no rice ration. Red Cross parcels were eventually delivered, and these saved the prisoners from certain starvation.

The Japanese looked down on the prisoners for the mere fact that they had been captured. The men they reviled, and the women were subjected to myriad petty cruelties. The mother of a baby born while interned begged for milk and was forced to prove she could not feed her child naturally.

The Japanese winters were bitter. Tatami mats and the meagre bedding supplied had to be rolled up and tidied away each morning. No blankets could be used for warmth through the days. Only one set of clothing and underwear was issued to the prisoners in all the time they were in Fukushima. They had the clothing they were captured in, and some cabin baggage they had been allowed by the Germans to salvage from the Nankin. Their travel trunks had been inaccessible in the ship’s hold. Clothing was shared by those who had, with those who had not, but during the first winter some prisoners went shoeless.

Much of the camp life centered on caring for and educating the 15 children. In an interview in *The Australian Women’s Weekly* in 1945, prisoners described how they had made small birthday cakes from painfully hoarded breadcrumbs, topped with toothpicks on beads as candles. Men and women prisoners were mostly segregated but managed to communicate through a steel door. Despite the separation, four engagements occurred between prisoners. Gerhard Bergan, the young man who had joined the Nankin in

Melbourne, was a comfort to Audrey. Their mutual faith and missionary zeal were a bond between them, and they held religious services in the camp. The various Christian factions were somewhat at odds in the camp, with the missionary cohort abstaining from the ‘modern’ rites practiced during the ecumenical daily services. During his time in the camp, Gerhard and his friends were able to convert a small number of Japanese guards to Evangelical Christianity, a testament to their tenacity and capacity for forgiveness.

We don’t know when Audrey and Gerhard fell in love on the Nankin, or in the camp, but their love story continued for the rest of their lives.

Fukushima was scheduled as one of sixteen targets for Allied bombing raids, due to occur in August 1945. The atomic bombs dropped at Nagasaki and Hiroshima on August 6 and 9 brought the war to an end, and Fukushima was spared. (Well, until the earthquake, tsunami and nuclear disaster of 2011.)

When the camp was evacuated, on 11 September 1945, Audrey was seriously ill. She remained on a hospital ship for a time after her friends had been returned to Australia.

Audrey made it home in time to say goodbye to her father. Herbert Jeffery died in late November 1945.

Gerhard and Audrey married and had several children. He worked as a minister in Queensland and, with Audrey and their WEC community, created a religious retreat at Mt. Tambourine. Audrey was buried near there in 2001. Gerhard Barga is still alive, aged 105, living in care at Mt. Tambourine (2021).

Audrey Jeffery Barga never saw India.

RADIO 2ST – 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF BROADCASTING



On 2nd June this year the Southern Highlands radio station – 2ST celebrates being on air for 50 years. The call sign “ST” - stands for “South Coast &

Tablelands”. It wasn’t the highlands first radio station, that honour belonged to 2MV broadcasting from Moss Vale in December 1930, but it was short lived, and its equipment was later transferred to 2GN in Goulburn.

Bundanoon forms part of the “Nowra RA1” licence area and prior to the opening of 2ST in 1972, the Wollongong radio station – 2WL (now WAVE FM) broadcast to the Shoalhaven and highlands. 2WL even had a studio in Nowra which opened in 1958 and closed when 2ST started operations.

Archive Team Report

Ian Smith – Co-Ordinator

Website and social media

Beryl prepared another short movie to go on the BHG website in March. “Shops in Church Street”.

In addition, new web pages are being created for the Bundanoon Tennis Club and Bundanoon Hotel.

Alison is conducting research for her stories of historic interest for the BHG Facebook page.

Bushfires Project

Three USBs of oral history recordings plus one CD with photos and related information will be added to the collection.

Archives

Ian added 37 new items to the collection; Beryl will add these, and other items, to the database and back-up drive. These include two television licences (dated 1965 and 1966) donated by John Hines.

Beryl added Susie Thompson photos and information about Audrey Thompson and Lillian Tooth.

Beryl has added more new photos to the database and back-up drive.

Heritage signage

Beryl has completed the final version of the heritage sign for the Bundanoon Tennis Club, it is now with ‘Armsign’ for printing. Signage for the Bundanoon Hotel is being developed.

Carol arranged with David for the heritage trail sign for the Pill Factory to be relocated from across the street to a suitable place at The Pill Factory, after liaising with the owner, Claudia Marvin.

National Trust tour of Bundanoon

This has occupied the time of all archives team members, including in researching, developing, reviewing, and presenting talks for the tour, plus organising arrangements for the event.

Heritage

Provided photos of St Brigid’s Church for Dennis McManus (Wingecarribee Council), via Carol Cosgrove, for Council’s heritage review.

Carol has also:

- liaised with Sarah Farnese (Council’s Heritage Planner) who has agreed to include the extension to the Bundanoon Conservation Area in the current heritage listing process.
- viewed the area for the site of the extension to the Bundanoon Conservation Area with Dennis McManus and discussed the issues with him. Carol provided background history and descriptions for all places.
- began compiling historical background material for separate listing of Constitution Hill & The Gullies Road. This information was requested by Dennis McManus. Photos of each location have been sent.
- prepared historical background and photos on St Brigid’s Catholic Church, which will be considered in Council’s current heritage listing process.

Oral History

Beryl provided information to Marianne Ward on the Terry family for a forthcoming oral history interview.

Enquiries

- Request received for information on why the memorial stone was put at the RSL; unfortunately, nothing relevant could be found in the archives.
- Request for information and photos about the garages and cycle repair business in Railway Avenue; only limited information could be found.
- Request for information about an Adam Bernie but again there was nothing relevant in the archives but information about Bundanoon's churches was able to be sent.
- Request for information on aboriginals in the area. Ian and Beryl responded by referring to relevant websites and books.
- Pat Guy requested information about BHG archive and storage procedures. Sent details and example files.

Research

Alison has been researching Church Street houses and people.

Meetings

An archives group meeting was held on 25 February, items discussed included:

- Installation of stairs in the Memorial Hall.
- Heritage potential of the certain properties in Church Street.
- The forthcoming sub-division of 'Spring Hill' property, including relevant heritage matters.
- Digitisation – agreed it needs priority and action will ensue to this end.
- Heritage signage ref. the tennis club and hotel.
- Potential changes to the Nancy Kingsbury reserve noted.

Opening the Old Goods Shed Again



As life gets back to normal, we are keen to open the Old Goods Shed again. Usually, the shed is opened on a Sunday to coincide with market days (1st and 3rd Sundays of each month).

Members are asked to

volunteer to staff the shed in two shifts on those days

10am to 12 noon; or 12 noon to 2pm

Volunteering to be in the shed for a shift can be an interesting and rewarding experience, allowing you to meet visitors to Bundanoon and tell them a little bit about our town. We provide volunteers with training, and we have a reference folder to assist you when chatting to our visitors.

If you'd like to volunteer, drop me an email at historygroupbundanoon@gmail.com or give me a call on 0455 155 897.

I intend to hold an information/training day for volunteers on Wednesday 4th May at 2pm in the shed – hope to see you there.

Steve Press

Morning Tea Roster for the BHG Meeting

We all enjoy morning tea at our meetings. It's a time to catch up with one another and meet new people.

Sadly, we are finding it hard to fill our roster for food. If you put your name down, you will be supported by another person. All you must do is provide a plate of sandwiches or a slice or a cake or a packet of biscuits. You do not need to carry a heavy urn for hot water.

So, please put your name on the roster at the next meeting, find your favourite recipe and cook up a storm. It will be appreciated.



Something New at the Monthly Meeting

One of our members suggested that it would be good if other members might like to share their special family stories with the BHG.

We know that not everyone likes to stand behind a microphone so it will take one of two forms.

At a meeting, choose one interesting fact from your family history and share with the group. You may also have an interesting item, give a description and state its importance to your story.

OR write down the information and we will happily include it in the Monthly Newsletter.

Email if you are interested historygroupbundanoon@gmail.com or approach anyone in the committee and we will happily help you.

We may not have all descended from Royalty, but our stories are just as important!

Upcoming Day Trip

After numerous Covid-induced postponements we have planned the first BHG coach trip for some time, to the historic town of Yass. The trip was originally scheduled for July but has been brought forward to Wednesday June 8, as one of the key inclusions will now close for Winter at the end of June.

The complex of buildings at Cooma Cottage which we will see includes the original colonial bungalow built by pioneering pastoralist Henry O'Brien and his younger brother Cornelius. The explorer Hamilton Hume bought the property, with 100 acres of land, for £601 in 1840 and spent the rest of his life there. He spent twenty years enthusiastically adding extensions, including his version of Palladian-style wings and a Greek-Revival portico, stables and other out-buildings. Cooma Cottage today stands as a great example of how pioneering families lived (or at least those with money to spend!).

Other inclusions will be announced closer to the event.

Expressions of interest for this trip are now open and should be sent to me at rlc2578@gmail.com

Ralph

Upcoming Events

Mon 28 March – 3:30pm: Committee Meeting Zoom.

Mon 4 April – 10.30 am: Members' Meeting. [Via Zoom](#)

Guest Speaker: Bud Townsing

Monday 25 April: ANZAC Day

Thursday 21-Friday 29 April: Norfolk Island

(Fully Booked)

Wednesday 8 June: A one-day coach trip to Yass Further information to follow.