



Alison Homestead

NEWSLETTER

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COVER STORY

Wyong Rural Bank

It's wonderful to see buildings that offer a great sense of history but have sat vacant for quite some time...come back to life.

One such treasure is the former **Rural Bank Building*** on the corner of the Pacific Highway and Barker's Lane in Wyong Township which opened recently as a café.

It was taken over by the State Bank which was later incorporated into the Commonwealth Bank.

According to the **Wyong Shire Heritage Register** the bank was constructed in 1939 to a design that was a combination of the Inter-War Functionalist Ocean Liner style and Art Deco style....highlighted by curved corner windows and projecting window hoods.

The State Heritage Inventory describes the building as 'a simple expression of its genre and suggests it has the potential to contribute to an understanding of the scale of operations on the major banks in mid-war Wyong...and is associated with a period of major expansion and prosperity in the commercial centre of the region.'

The architect who was responsible for the design of the Rural Bank* in Wyong was arguably one of the best of his day.

Frank W Turner was head architect for the Rural Bank of NSW.

He gained his Diploma of Architecture in 1932 and joined the Rural Bank in 1933 the building of the Bank's impressive new office in Sydney's Martin Place.

In 1946 he became a member of the Board of Architects of NSW.

In 1950 he was appointed the Bank's Senior Executive with the title 'Superintendent Works and Housing'. Amongst other things in this capacity he exercised a supervisory control over certain bank activities relating to building, premises and housing matters.

He became a member of the NSW Housing Commission in 1950 and some years later went on to serve as its Deputy Chairman and Acting Chairman.

After a distinguished career he died in 1970.

My thanks to Dr Noni Boyd who is Heritage Officer with the Australian Institute of Architects for the above information which is part of an obituary in a Rural Bank file.

*The Rural Bank of NSW later fell under the banner of the State Bank of NSW before being absorbed into the Commonwealth Bank.

EDITORIAL

Hello and welcome to our latest update of what has been happening at Alison Homestead during the past three months since our last newsletter.

As usual the gardens deserve a top billing. The efforts that have gone into restoring the gardens and grounds continue to astound visitors many of whom say it's worth a visit just to see the wonderful transformation. So far this Spring season has been rewarding with blazes of colour thanks to the blooming **hippeastrums, geraniums, daisies and evening primroses** (to name but a few). The grevilleas too are creating a wonderful display and will only get better in coming years with more plantings underway.



It's been a thrill to see the birdlife returning as the native trees become established and bloom so prolifically. Native **red wattle birds** have established homes in the grounds' **grevillias** and are a delight to behold. These large and noisy birds belong to the extensive family of honeyeaters. They actually have grey and brown plumage and yellow bellies. The reference to 'red' comes from small red fleshy bits on each side of the neck. The birds are extremely territorial and go to intimidating lengths to defend their nectar supplies. It's hard to get a clear photo of one as the bottle brushes provide good camouflage but there are some excellent photos on different internet sites if you're interested in seeing just what they look like.

By the way we welcome donations of plants. We are running low on stock as so much of what we had in our little nursery has been given a pride of place in the gardens.

Having said that we do have about fifty hippeastrums for sale and in the not too distant future we will have more than two hundred juvenile cyclamen plants which have been grown from seeds donated by one of our volunteers. Our little nursery is also hoping to have quite a few herbs for sale by early December.

To help fund the purchase of some special plants for the gardens a couple of the ladies are taking it in turns to make a cake which is raffled amongst the volunteers who are here on Tuesdays. After a month we were able to give our chief gardener Dirk one hundred and forty dollars. He and Greg went plant shopping at **Wyee Nursery** and thanks to the generosity of the owner they came away with around an extra seventy dollars' worth of plants. It's not the first time Wyee Nursery has given

us more plants than we have paid for....so do consider being supportive of it as a community-minded local business.

FUNDRAISER:

Following on from the success of our quilt raffle earlier this year we now have another one underway (tickets are \$2 or 3 for \$5). This one is queen-sized and has a mushroom pink background with various patterned square inserts. As yet no date has been set for the draw but we are hoping to raise as much from this raffle as we did with the previous one from which we made around \$550. Our heartfelt thanks once again to the **Wyong Quilters' Group** which has donated the quilt to the Historical Society for fund-raising purposes.



THANKS:

The Historical Society would like to acknowledge the on-going support of one of its members **Max Farley**. Max has compiled a wonderful book about a part of the district dear to his heart the Yarramalong Valley. "**Yarramalong-History Notes**" complete with interesting photos and other print memorabilia provides the reader with an invaluable insight into history of the 'Valley'. Max takes advantage of every opportunity to promote and sell his book and donates the proceeds to the Historical Society and Museum. Just the other day he handed our treasurer with another cheque this time for \$270.

We would like him to know just how much we appreciate his support and commitment. The book would make an ideal Xmas gift for folk who have a love of history....particularly local history.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT:

The DA's (Development Applications) for the Mens' Shed and office (to replace the old on-site caravan) have been found and retrieved from Council after much heated kafuffle. The Mens' Shed DA has been fine-tuned and is about to be re-submitted. Lodgement of the Office DA will follow shortly after... as advice received suggests it is better to submit each... and have them done separately and independently by a professional third party. A company in Wyong has been engaged to do this on our behalf.

Grants:

Grants have enabled the purchase and instalment/construction of the following:

- * A ten thousand litre water tank has been installed above the main car park and trickle feeds the newly-established top gardens. The tank was generously filled by Garry Lee from Bromie's Water Wagon.
- * Fence posts, strainers and wire have recently been delivered on-site for the re-fencing of all the paddock in front of the Homestead building.
- * The installation of a picture-hanging system is a work-in-progress in the new large exhibition room.
- * A portable microphone has been purchased and security cameras are up and running.

Donations:

The Historical Society has been the beneficiary of many items since the museum was re-opened a year ago.

These donations include grandfather clocks, ploughs, cast-iron pots, plants and a very old pedal organ that folds out from a large shoe box.

One donated collection contained so much it took four vehicles with trailers to pick up!

To better display many of the remarkable old bottles at the homestead our Vice-president Wally Billington has almost completed a most impressive Bottle Tower which is already on display. The bottles are sparkling after two of our volunteers **Bernice and Karen** used a lot of elbow grease and spent a great deal of time washing them.

Dirk...our gardening guru and I have been to Wyee Nursery on two occasions recently and have purchased plants for the Homestead's expanding gardens at most generous prices. The latest buying spree was paid for with money raised by our recently introduced weekly home-made cake raffle.

The past year has been an exceptionally busy time for us and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our volunteers because without you this stuff just wouldn't happen.

Greg Denning

President Wyong & District Historical Society

VOLUNTEER PROJECTS:

The talents of the men volunteering at the Homestead are making a valuable contribution to the budget. Using timber from felled trees on the property **Morrie Matiussi** by request made a long garden bench for a local school. It was both unique and impressive. So much so it has led to further orders. Another volunteer **Ian Smith** varnished the completed seat.

The 'buddy bench' in the photo below has a personality of its own and was snapped up for the bargain price of \$200. Morrie has orders already for three more.



“Volunteers are a gift to the community”

AGM NEWS:

The Society's 2016 AGM was held in August. The new volunteer committee for the current financial year is as follows:

President.....Greg Denning

Vice-president....Wal Billington

Secretary... Margaret Boldt

Treasurer/Events Manager...Michelle O'Sheads

Grants/Webmaster....Sue Geary

I'm sure you join with us in congratulating those appointed to these positions and thank them for caring enough to take on a role which can only serve to enhance the smooth running of the Homestead.

BEST WISHES:

Volunteers at the museum are sad to hear one of our dearest characters is not at all well.

Steve Hancock is our resident blacksmith and his forging has done much to create some of the interesting effects that add so much appeal to the Homestead.

We all wish Steve the very best and want him to know someone special is missing when he is not here. May his recovery be just around the corner.

VENUE HIRE:

Don't forget the venue can be hired for special events so if you would like more information especially in the lead-up to Xmas... Michelle will be only too happy to have a chat with you. There have already been some bookings made for Xmas parties. There is a fully-equipped and user -friendly kitchen as well a barbecue and picnic facilities.

History Notes

DOORALONG 1835

There was at least one settler at Dooralong before 1835.

When Jonathon Warner was stationed at Lake Macquarie and held the position of "visiting J.P.." he commenced recording in a book copies of letters written on official business. The first letter is dated Jan. 2nd. 1835, and addressed to "His Majesty's Attorney General. Sydney". He writes "

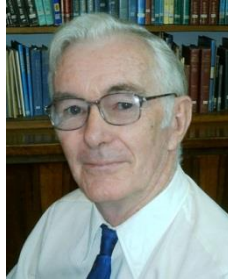
"I have the honor to state for the information of His Excellency the Governor, that Constable Moses Carroll. Henry Anderson. T.L., George Mason and Adam Rainey were concealed in Adam Rainey's hut at Duralong (near Wyong) for the purpose of apprehending some of the black natives concerned in the late robberies, who were continually lurking about the brushes near the hut, and occasionally calling and asking for milk, etc., and on Friday, the 2nd inst. six black natives entered the hut, five of whom were ring-leaders, and advertised in the Gazette. Immediately after they entered the hut the door was closed and the four white men attempted to secure them, but the Blacks being so resolute and seizing hold of their firearms, they were obliged in self defence to fire at Jack Jones, a very powerful man, and wounded him severely in the neck before any of them would surrender. During the scuffle three of them made their escape through a small hole that was cut in the slabs, and those named in the margin, (Jack Jones, Jago, Nimbo) were apprehended and conveyed safe to the Lock-up at this place (Brisbane Water) and given over by Carroll and his party on the 4th instant, and made their escape on the same day under the following circumstances. (Jack Jones has since been taken and forwarded to Sydney Gaol).

Constable William Smith, who had charge of the Lock-up, opened the door on the afternoon of the 4th instant to give the Blacks some water, and immediately the bolt was drawn, they pushed the door suddenly against him. Nimbo and Jago, who were handcuffed together, seized hold of the Constable with their leisure hands, while the third (Jack Jones) who was sitting on the floor, and was so severely wounded in his neck by the party who took him, was considered as unable to move, but as soon as one of the blacks spoke to him, in his own language, he struck the Constable a blow which nearly stunned him. The other two men then dragged the Constable from the Lock-up, tore off his jacket, and kept fast hold of him, shaking him, and occasionally striking him with the handcuffs that were fast to their hands. After about 20 minutes struggling with the Blacks, and no possibility of forcing them back to the Lock-up, the Constable with much difficulty disengaged himself. During this time Jack Jones had made his escape, and before Smith could reach his firearm, the other two made their escape also. The other Constable was at this time on board a vessel, in charge of three other blacks for Sydney gaol.

Constable Smith should in my opinion have used more precaution, by handcuffing the three blacks together, knowing what a set he had to deal with (as the leg irons were in use on the Blacks on board the vessel) as they are very determined and consequently require more caution to be looked after than the white prisoners.

Constable Carroll and his party, after risking their lives in apprehending the three blacks, are entitled to the reward offered for their apprehension and I beg leave to be informed in what manner those are to be rewarded who apprehended the Blacks thus escaped."

Profile of our Workers



Wal Billington

Started at the Men's Shed in early 2015

Born in Sydney he settled on acreage in the Jiliby Valley in Wyong district and later retired to suburban Wyong

He owned a joinery business constructing kitchens which he sold and then took up the challenges posed by the computer world and was regarded as a natural and talented software programmer

Worked as a Construction Foreman for Cable and Wireless in Suva, Fiji and was sent to the Gilbert Islands close to the equator in the Pacific. So many stories of life in this exotic location but one surely must be told. A funeral like no other...one of his co-workers died and of course had to be buried that day because of the heat. Before the burial could take place a coffin had to be built.....but from what????....there was no timber industryno milling facilities available.....so in keeping with Wally's ingenuity he fashioned a coffin from timber pallets and a packing case, finishing it off with boot polish. Because the coffin was not big enough, the poor deceased man was accommodated in his burial chamber with bent knees and on his side. Next problem....the ground was so hard it was virtually impossible to dig a hole deep enough and long enough for the coffin so on lowering the coffin into the hole it became stuck and was so jammed it wouldn't budge so the other workers, as respectfully as possible had to jump on the box to force it into place.

A born adventurer he obtained a pilot's licence and he and his wife Enid flew around much of the country.

He loved the sea as much as the skies and for many years had his own yacht. Regarded as a natural seaman he has sailed on many occasions to the Whitsunday Islands and overseas.

About fifteen years ago Wally asked to sail a yacht back to the mainland from Tasmania....but as many a good sailor has discovered the Bight can bite and the vessel was damaged. Wally and the crew were airlifted by helicopter to safety at Merimbula on the NSW south coast.

Wally has an insatiable appetite for travel and has visited most countries on all continents except Africa. Earlier this year he and his wife went to Spain on a self-drive motoring trip for five weeks and in that time covered around five thousand kilometres. His travel experiences would make great reading if he had the time to write the book many have suggested he consider.

. Anyone who knows Wally can tell you how incredibly wise and knowledgeable he is on a broad range of subjects and he has an uncanny talent for using it to the best advantage of himself and others. His computer skills alone bear testament to this.

Wally has been a member of the Masonic Lodge for many years and has held executive positions with both the Sydney and Central Coast Lodges.

Both Wally and his wife Enid are tireless workers for good causes.

When Wally joined the men's shed he saw many opportunities that would allow him to tap into his skills to advance the presentation of the museum. His restoration of an antique Burl Walnut Chest of Draws on display in the museum shows his skills at their best.

In thinking about Wally I think the following quote by Robert Byrne sort of sums up his attitude to life.

“The purpose of life is a life of purpose.”

*****DATE CLAIMER*****

WANT TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHERE YOU LIVE?

The Wyong District has a rich and colourful history and few know more about who and what has shaped it than PHIL MORLEY...a life member of the historical society.

The society has decided to have periodic talks about matters relevant to our history and other fascinating facets about life in this district.

Phil has agreed to be our first guest speaker...and we would love you to come along (and bring some friends if you wish) to his presentation at a morning tea function.

Where? Alison Homestead Museum

When? Saturday 19th November 2016

Time: 10am

Cost? No charge....just let us know if you would like to come for catering purposes.

RSVP: By Wednesday 16th November. Call the Homestead Mon.-Thurs. between 10-2 on 43521886

RECIPE :

Our first profile featured our president Greg Denning who promised to provide us with his signature *meatloaf recipe*. He's obliged so here it.

1 kg good quality mince

½ kg sausage mince

2 diced rashers of bacon

2 eggs

2 chopped onions

1 grated carrot

1 red & 1 green capsicum (medium- sized)

4 crushed cloves of garlic

Chopped chillies to taste (Greg uses a lot...Chilli Freak!)

375g tomato paste

Worcestershire sauce

Ground black pepper

Method:

Preheat oven to 180-200 degrees.

Mix together the vegetable ingredients.

Add the mixture of pepper, tomato paste, Worcestershire sauce and beaten eggs.

Knead the mince meats together and then add vegetable mix.

On a baking tray or dish shape mixture into one large or 2 smaller meatloaves and sprinkle with breadcrumbs.

Bake for 1-to 1&1/2 hours.

Yum! And Bon Appetit!

WHAT'S NEW?

The Homestead grounds are now home to a new *ten thousand litre capacity water tank*. Its purchase was made possible through a grant.



ITEM OF INTEREST:

Featuring this time is a regimental jacket worn by British-born doctor Charles Reginald Ralston Huxtable who later lived and practised medicine in Australia. It's believed he wore this jacket in both the first and second World Wars. Note the three stripes on the lower sleeves. The placement of stripes like this was changed to the upper shoulder position after it was found stripes on the lower sleeve made a soldier more easily detectable when he raised his rifle.

Given its age and the length of time during which it was worn the jacket is in extremely good condition.



CONGRATULATIONS:

The Historical Society would like to extend congratulations to the Yarramalong Valley Committee for the terrific activities it organised for its 2016 Australian Springtime Festival. We thought the **Scarecrow Competition** was a wonderful way to attract people to a special part of the district... and those of us who went along to see the creations were not disappointed. We were happy to be part of it and will definitely have another scarecrow at our front gate in 2017.



BELIEVE IT OR NOT

It's amazing how interesting are snippets of information told to us by visitors to the museum.

Recently a chap from Wollongong visited the museum with his wife and daughter. Whilst looking at an old sewing machine on display he told us they were initially only sold to men. Why? Well apparently it was thought the down and up movement of the treadling action could cause women to become 'over-excited'!

VISITORS:

Our international reputation continues to gain momentum. Apart from visitors from all over Australia the visitor's book indicates just in this last week we had tourists from Spain...no not Raphael Dadal this time!

ATTENTION PIONEER MEMBERS:

Members of the Pioneers' Association are invited to join us at the *Homestead Xmas Party*. It will be held on Tuesday 6th December starting at noon.

For catering purposes...let us know the week before if you would like to come....we would love to have you join us.

Once again I would like to remind everyone about the following local businesses and community members who have agreed to sponsor the ever-increasing costs associated with the preparation and postage of the newsletter:

Mr David Mehan M.P. ...Member for The Entrance

Mr David Harris M.P....Member for Wyong

Mr Keith Phillips...Coastal & Valleys Veterinary Hospital

Berkmans Accountants

Bendigo Bank...Wyong Branch

Wyong Shire Credit Union

Leone Frame

Wyong & District Chamber of Commerce....and

Mr Guy Luther who recently gave us a donation of \$100.

This month I would like to leave you with an especially relevant quote from noted author and speaker Sherry Anderson:

“Volunteers don’t get paid because they are worthless....but because they are priceless.”

Until next time my best wishes

Patricia Perrett

(Hon. Acting Newsletter Editor)