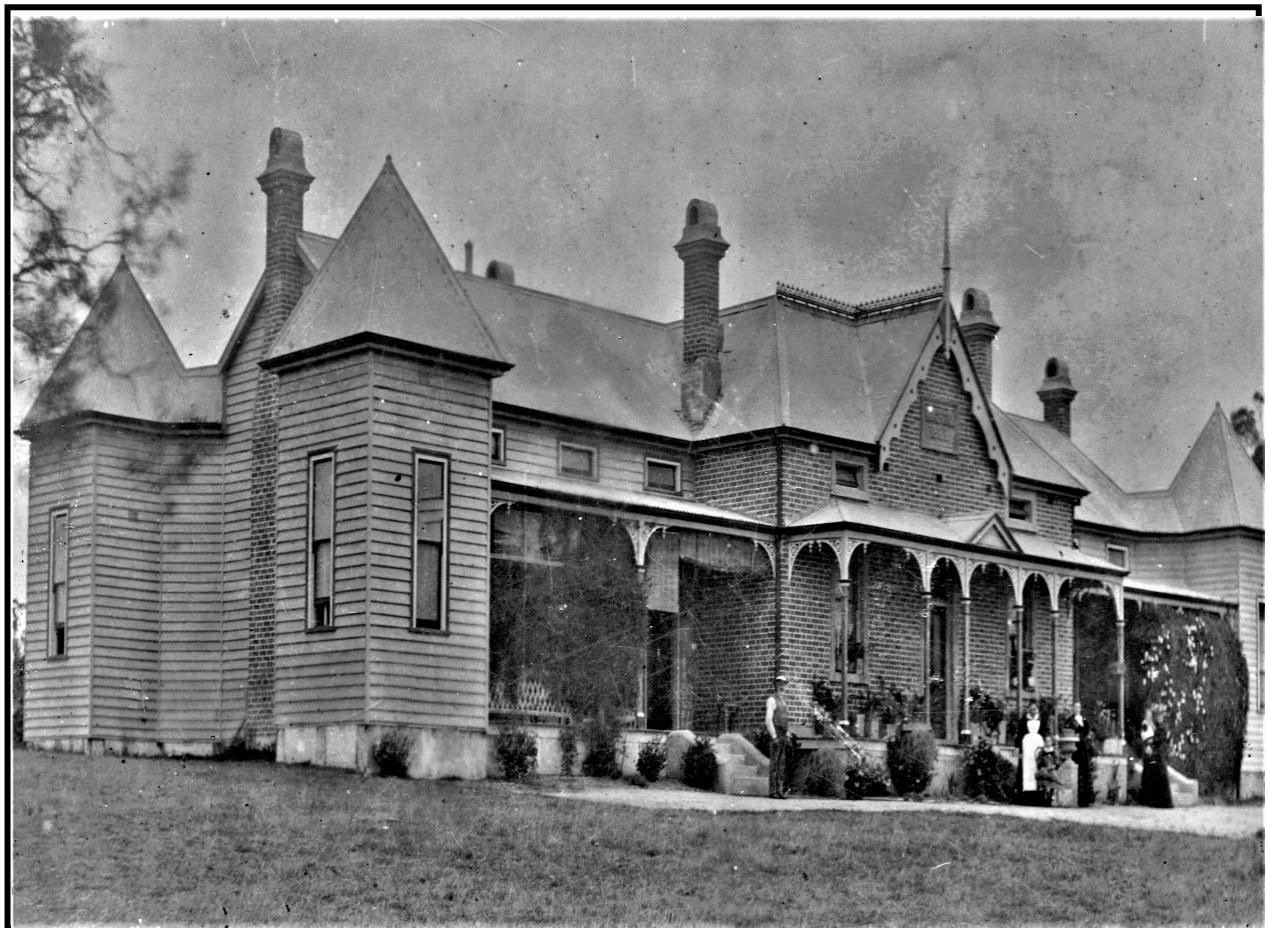


The Bega Pioneer

Voice of the Bega Valley Historical Society Inc.



First Bega Hospital

December 2020 Edition



MUSEUM NEWS

FAREWELL AND BEST WISHES

Committee member Indi Wood is leaving us for greener pastures. We wish him all the best in his future endeavours.

VALE.

The society extends its deepest sympathy to Sandra Florance, her husband Peter, and their families on the passing of Sandra's mother Joan.

TELEPHONE.

The museum currently has no telephone due to an NBN issue. We have had no luck getting a diversion placed on the line so if you need to contact us please ring **0408 237 738** and speak to Bill.

RESEARCH.

We have had some issues regarding research fees. Members are entitled to FREE FAMILY RESEARCH. All other research is charged at \$10 per hour + photocopying at 50c for plain paper \$1 for photo paper

*Have You Changed your
Email Address?*



*Please let us know
call 64921453 or
email museum25@tpg.com.au*

NEW MEMBERS AND VOLUNTEERS

We welcome to our museum family new members Cheryl and Bill Pym, Bernie Miller and Tony Smith.

We wish all our members and friends a wonderful 2021.

Check us out on

facebook

CHANGE IN MUSEUM OPENING HOURS

The days remain the same but we are closing at 2pm.

JANUARY OPENING HOURS

As in previous years we will be open every day with the exception of Sunday from December 21st until the January Australia Day Weekend. Hours will be 10am to 2pm.

New Display Medical

To commemorate what has been a momentous year and to mark 101 years since the Spanish Flu Pandemic of 1919 a medical display highlighting the various events and local medical personnel has been setup. It will run until mid 2021.



Dr Joseph Marshall



The History Of The Bega Pioneers' Museum Building.

Research done by Sandra Harding on behalf of Sandra Florance dated 11 April 2006.

1. The premises were erected on land which was originally granted to William Thompson on the 12th of November 1856. The land measured two acres and was shown on the Plan of the Town and Parish of Bega, County of Auckland as Allotments 1,2, and 15 of Section 23.
2. On the 17th of August 1858 William Thompson of Pambula, carpenter, sold the land to Spencer Lasinby Bransby of Bega, Surveyor, for 80 pounds.
3. The Illawarra Mercury in October 1858 advised of the destruction of the Vision on the bar at the mouth of the Pambula River. "The Cargo, among which was a quantity of building material for Mr. Bransby's New Inn, was all landed safely.
4. The building was commenced in February 1850 by Henry James Holland, contractor. It was to be a brick building containing nine rooms and an entrance hall, with substantial outbuildings etc.
5. The new "Public House" was completed in July 1859. The first licensee was Mr. John Needham of Sydney. He was under lease from August 12th 1859 for a term of seven years for a rent of 110 pounds per annum.
6. In the interim in May 1859 Spencer Lasinby Bransby mortgaged the land and premises to Henry Clarke of Sydney, merchant, to add security to a previous mortgage he held for other properties. He took out a further mortgage in November 1860.
7. On February 6th 1862 Catherine Needham, wife of John Needham of the Family Hotel, died.
8. In March 1862 James Rixon took over as licensee of the Bega Family Hotel. He was still the licensee in 1865 but by 1867 he was licensee of the Commercial Hotel.
9. There does not appear to be a licensee of the hotel between 1867 and 1869. No person was listed as gaining or renewing a licence in the State Government Gazette. In 1868 the hotel was listed for sale in the Bega
10. In October 1869 the licence for the hotel was granted to Thomas Underhill. He continued as licensee and finally purchased the building on February 29th 1872. The sale was negotiated with Henry Clarke. Spencer Bransby had several properties which were sold by the mortgagee. Thomas Underhill continued as owner until his death in 1898
11. The property was left to his wife, Jane. In 1905 she leased it to John Robert Rixon, husband of her daughter Jane. Jane senior died in 1915 and left the property to Jane Junior. John and Jane Rixon continued the business until 1920. They sold the property to Cornelius Buckley of Nimmitabel, farmer, who ran the hotel until 1927.

11. In July 1927 Cornelius Buckley sold the property to Patrick Vincent Stokes, gentleman, of Sydney. Stokes leased the hotel to Walter Edwards of Bega from 1927 to 1930 and then to Leslie Land until 1935.
12. In 1935 Patrick Stokes subdivided the property into several lots and sold them. The hotel was sold to George Edwards, Clerk, of Bondi and then to Tooheys Ltd in October 1935.
13. Maurice Stevens was the hotel keeper until 1938. He became the hotel keeper at the Grand Hotel in 1939.
14. In November 1944 Tooheys sold the property to William Henry Scanes, blacksmith, of Bega.
15. William Henry Scanes died in 1975 and left the property to Carmel Rixon and John Scanes.
16. On November 2nd 1976 they sold the property to The Council of the Municipality of Bega.
17. The Bega Valley Historical Society Inc. purchased the property and restored it as a museum which they formally opened on April 16th 1977
18. The building was listed on the National Trust in 1987. LEP 2002 (5)

The History of the Bega Valley Historical Society.

With the current plans of the BVSC around formal tenure arrangements for museums and galleries we are including the information we have for the museum building. We are currently waiting for BVSC to have a meeting with all the museums and galleries and will keep you informed as to the outcomes of these meetings.

18 February 1976 – The then unincorporated Bega Valley Historical Society borrowed \$40,000 from the Bega Valley Shire Council to buy the building and grounds from the estate of the late Harry Scanes.

2 November 1976 the title was registered to the BVSC.

2 November 1990 the Bega Valley Historical Society was Incorporated.

12 March 1992 the loan to the BVSC was repaid in full but the title remained in the name of the BVSC.

February 2000 the BVSC reconfirmed that they held the title in trust – there is no available paperwork to confirm this.

Over the years the question of ownership was raised on a number of occasions but was always turned down on the basis of cost. The BVHS Inc do not pay rates or insurance of the building however they do pay waste and water rates and have third party insurance covering visitors and volunteers. The collection is not insured.

2015 – the committee decided to pursue the matter of ownership of the building being returned to the Society and entered into talks with the BVSC.

25 May 2015 a meeting was held with BVSC to discuss the matter with no result.

9 November 2015 the committee moved that a letter be sent to the BVSC by the President asking for the building to be returned. BVSC refused.

2016 – the matter continued on the agenda through this year with no moves either way. Legal advice was obtained and this was then forwarded to the BVSC along with other paperwork that the BVSC asked for.

2017 – BVSC offered the building back to the BVHS for the sum of \$1 with caveats that the BVSC had to give permission if the building was sold and the proceeds from any sale could only be spent on another museum.

Stamp duty – the stamp duty on this sale for \$1 had to be paid by the BVHS Inc and this was on the value of the building not the \$1. The estimated stamp duty was \$15,000 which the Society could not afford given the financial situation at that time. There was thought that the BVHS Inc would be exempt from stamp duty however enquiries showed that this was not so.

4 May 2017 – the BVHS Inc formally declined the offer from BVSC.

Precarious start to Bemboka Post Office

by Olive Robinson

Prior to 1894 Bemboka was officially two adjacent villages, Colombo, and the private village of Lyttleton. The name was changed from Colombo to Bemboka on July 14, 1894. Lyttleton was not included within the town boundaries of Bemboka until October 12, 1923, in the Local Government Act.

It was when Bemboka was two villages in January, 1871, that local residents started petitioning for a Post Office between Nimitybelle and Kameruka.

The petition was signed by forty-six people including two women, and the occupations listed were principally farmer-labourer, grazier-labourer, farmer or grazier.

Post offices already in the region were those at Twofold Bay, opened in 1844, Cooma and Eden in 1847, Bombala in 1849, Bega in 1856, Merimbula in 1857 and Nimitybelle in 1858.

The earliest record of postal services in the Bemboka region is in the Postmaster-General's report for 1867, when E. Reed of Bombala was awarded the contract from Kameruka to Nimitybelle with mail being conveyed once weekly by horse-back for the sum of 65 pounds per annum. In 1868 the contractor was Alexander McNaught for 70 pounds, followed by W. R. Hopkins in 1869 for 50 pounds, and later P. Brown in 1872 for only 46 pounds per annum. In 1876 the contract was broken up into two sections, Nimitybelle to Brown Mountain once a week, and Brown Mountain to Kameruka twice a week, with a contract price of 100 pounds per annum, and both contracts were performed by Brown on horseback.

It was the practice of the Postal Department on receiving a request for a Post office from an isolated community to seek the opinions of local Postmasters, and the Postal Inspector, Vickers Moyses. Moyses did not consider a post office needed at Bemboka or Brown Mountain and suggested that "mail could be left in care of Mr J. B. Evans, Storekeeper". Neither of the postmasters at Kameruka nor Nimitybelle were in favour of it either.

On April 7, 1871, J. B. Evans wrote complaining that Mr Whyte, the Nimitybelle Postmaster, was not giving all the mail to the mailman and was demanding five shillings from each person before handing over the mail detained. An instruction was apparently issued directing that the mail line, and the Postmaster was bound to hand over such letters to the contractor without a charge being made.

A second petition was sent on June 14, 1871, arguing that the previous petition was unsuccessful possibly because of the fact that a township had not been surveyed in the locality, and pointing out that Kameruka was not a township, but had a post office only one mile from Candelo, while the petitioners were 25 miles distant from Nimitybelle and 16 miles from Kameruka.

The postmasters were again consulted and the results of the questionnaire sent came back with varying replies from the officials. The Candelo Post Master thought about 30 to 40 families could be served, Kameruka Post Master thought 20, Nimitybelle Post Master thought 30 to 40 residents.

As a result of these reports the Department decided to open a Post Office under the name of Brown Mountain, and appointed John Lucas Mangan as Post Master from September 1, 1871, with a salary of 10 pounds per annum. Two residents, Thomas Kiss and Patrick Brown were nominated as sureties, and Louisa Mangan (John's wife?) as unpaid assistant. It was obviously not a lucrative appointment for Mangan only remained in it for 18 months and his successor, Thomas Kiss for four months. The

newly appointed Post Master, Thomas McGrath, asked for an increase of salary to 11 pounds per annum, pointing out there was now a bi-weekly mail from his office to Kameruka. However the business figures showed that there were only six mails dispatched weekly, with an average of twenty letters, also no night dispatches or receivals and he was told he was being fairly paid for the amount of work performed. In reply he wrote "I did not complain of the amount of work, but of time. May I respectfully ask, how long am I supposed to continue as Post Master in case I resign as I do not know of any person here whom I can recommend as my successor.

The Departmental decision following this letter was that the office revenue did not pay the Post Master's salary and suggested the closure.

Once again residents wrote saying that if the office were closed 70 families would be deprived of postal communications, and asked that McGrath's salary be raised to 15 pounds in an effort to encourage him to remain in office. Surprisingly on September, 1875 the Department agreed.

If ever a Post Office was dogged by bad luck, it was this one. McGrath died only months after receiving his salary raise, and the local schoolmaster, John Phillip Hanville received the appointment as it was agreed that the Post Master's salary was not sufficient to make it worthwhile to give the office full attention, and the Post Office was set up in the school.

Not for long, however, as Hanville advised "that the owners of the land and premises wherein the school and Post Office business is transacted had served him notice to quit the premises within one month".

Hanville resigned, but as the Council of Education said they had no intention of closing the school, his resignation was refused. There were numerous letters to and fro, including a reference to the intrusion of calves and swine in the night through the dilapidated slab walls. Finally a letter from Edward Coman, who owned a store two miles from the existing office, stated that "the present Post Master positively refuses to continue, and that as all the inhabitants were in favour of Colombo as a site, he had fitted up a room in his store on Colombo reserve as a Post office", and requested his appointment to the position. With such a "fait accompli" he gained the appointment, and the situation remained unchanged until July, 1883, when a letter was received from Coman's unapproved assistant, Edward O'Connor, who wrote "enclosed please find voucher for a quarter's salary ended June 30. Mr E. J. Coman left the district nine months ago at which time I purchased the business and premises where the Post Office is kept. At the time I took the business over he told me he had tendered his resignation as Post Master in my favour, which I believe he has not done, so therefore I return voucher as I don't know where he is residing."

The Postal Inspector confirmed O'Connors remarks and recommended his appointment, which took effect on July 1, 1883, however he resigned two years later as he was converting the premises to a hotel and suggested that the next appointee be David Allen, storekeeper.

So in the period of twelve years, this Post Office changed premises four times with seven Post Masters – but the mail did get to the residents!

Wolumla's "Yellow Pinch" Ghost

By Edward Athelstan 'Bon' Wrightson

Wolumla is a small town situated on the Far South Coast of N.S.W. – it has an aboriginal name meaning "Water Hole". It is an historical township, although practically a ghost town now. It thrived in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Gold mining and wattle bark for tanning purposes were the two main industries – latterly it is principally dairy farming. The town boasted of having six pubs and several boarding houses in the prosperous days, to cope with the influx of many miners, together with their families, who came seeking work in the gold mines. All goods and passengers to and from Sydney in those days were transported by large steamers, calling at several coastal ports enroute – finally terminating at Eden, which is situated on Twofold Bay. Wool, butter and many other commodities were carried by teamsters from as far away as Cooma in the Snowy Mountains, Bombala and Nimmitabel, via Candelo and Wolumla to the seaport of Merimbula. All kinds of goods for business people, as well as personal belongings for residents, kegs of beer, rum and spirits for hotels, were carried on the return trip. These teamsters drove their horse and bullock teams through the township of Wolumla, enroute to their destination – they rested their horses and bullocks for the night on a property named "Yellow Pinch" on the outskirts of this town. Some of the drivers of these teams indulged in a drinking spree throughout the night. Besides tapping the beer kegs, many of them were heavy rum drinkers and would tap the kegs of rum.

At daybreak, while rounding up the bullocks and horses, many of them would see Wolumla's "Yellow Pinch" ghost. Although not as prominently known as many other ghosts, this was a black ghost and could only be seen in daylight, mainly just after daybreak, other ghosts throughout the world being white. The aboriginals living on this property claimed that one of their number was murdered there many years ago – consequently this black ghost used to appear every morning, just at daybreak. Several of us youngsters, a little on the curious side, visited this spot on occasions, but were eluded by the ghost. On bellowing "Were you murdered by someone", to our astonishment a voice would reply 'Yesssss'. It transpired that this voice that said "Yessss" was two trees growing together on the very spot where the murder took place, and when the wind was blowing they would make a grinding noise, which sounded like the word 'Yesssss', consequently we couldn't get back home quick enough and report what we had heard. The local Chinese gardener named Lammy was driving his horse and cart along the road early one morning on his vegetable run and to his surprise spotted the ghost. He turned back and was galloping his horse and cart through the township yelling out at the top of his voice 'I saw the ghost! I saw the ghost!' The residents heard the commotion and tried to console him, as Lammy was a favourite with everybody, but it was too much for the Chinaman. The following week he sold out and returned to China (pigtails and all). The Chinese people are very superstitious, especially where ghosts are concerned, and Lammy, not taking any more risks, couldn't catch a boat fast enough for his home country.

In the year 1928 the local School Master, Mr. Jack Mulholland, who was visiting his neighbours' place next door, was shot while walking through his friends' front gate on his return home – they were courteously seeing him safely out the front gate. As he struck a match to light his cigarette, someone blew his head off with a shotgun. Although all available police from the surrounding towns were called to try and locate the murderer, he was never caught – it is still one of the State's unsolved crimes. Many local residents were suspected and questioned, but the evidence

wasn't enough for a conviction. Everyone who lived in the township was spellbound and shocked at the atrocity, this schoolteacher being very popular with the majority of residents. As soon as the word of his murder was broadcast around the district, everyone was saying "I wonder will there be another ghost" but Wolumla's "Yellow Pinch" ghost is still in existence and can be seen to this day.

The town's only bushranger, by the name of Tom Jones, thought out a brainy idea. He built a house on top of a very high tree, not far from where the ghost appears, the reason being that no policeman or prospective captors would go within cooee of his hideout. He used the ghost as his protection. This bushranger never bailed up anyone for money or valuables, he only pinched goods that were edible. When captured he had thousands of tins of foodstuffs stacked away in the house on the tree. The story is told that the ghost paid him a visit one morning, and Tom was so surprised and shocked he immediately went to the local police station and gave himself up to the policeman on duty. The locals suggested the ghost should be given Royal honours for the part he played in the capture of the bushranger.

In the latter part of the last century the State elections were being held and several would-be politicians were offering their services for the position. One spruiker and orator (of no mean ability), made many promises to the electors if returned as their member for the Far South Coast of New South Wales, (incidentally he beat all his opponents by a large majority, and became their representative in Parliament for a number of years.) One of the promises made by him was the continuation of the Railway service from Cooma on the Snowy Mountains and Nowra on the coast. Both these railway lines were to junction at Wolumla and continue to Eden, via Merimbula and Pambula townships. A local resident seized the opportunity and built a pub, naming it "Railway Junction Hotel". This hotel is the only one left in Wolumla and is still in business, but was purchased by Toohey's brewery some years ago. The old premises were pulled down and a new hotel erected on the same site, renamed the 'Wolumla Hotel'. This politician maintained that the new railway would be paid for in a very short space of time, attracting thousands of tourists and sightseers to the district to get a glimpse of the ghost, which was very much in the headlines at that time. The residents are still waiting for the railway to be completed from both Cooma and Nowra, just one more of thousands of promises made by Parliamentarians which never eventuate.

Garage SALE

[dreamstime.com](https://www.dreamstime.com)

ID 141068474 © Anutaberg

The museum will hold a garage sale on Saturday January 16th commencing at 9am.

Due to social distancing requirements all attendees will be required to sign in either with a QR code or entry onto a database.

[A Whiz Through 170 Years of Bega's History in 90 Minutes](#)



Don't miss the bus. It will be leaving the Bega Pioneers' Museum at 9.30am on Saturday February 27th on a 90 minute bus tour of Bega township. Discover how the Bega township has evolved and hear the stories behind many of the fascinating historic buildings and sites that now make Bega such an interesting town.

Seats on the bus are limited so reserve yours today. The cost is \$10 per seat inclusive of morning tea at the end of the tour.

Telephone Peter on 0448 160 852 to make your reservation. Have your credit/debit card details handy when you call.

This tour has been arranged jointly by the South Coast History Society and the Bega Valley Historical Society and is part of an ongoing project to document the town history and buildings.

Publications for Sale

Bismark House	\$20
Bega District Band	\$5
Bega High - 50 years	\$5
Bega Primary 1860-2010	\$10
They Made this Valley Home	\$25
Illawarra Steam Ship Company	\$25
Remembering Bega Valley Serviceman of WWI	\$20



LIST OF EXCESS BOOKS - FREE TO A GOOD HOME

TANJA PUBLIC SCHOOL CENTENARY 1846-1978	1
CANDELO RECOLLECTIONS	1
COOMA COUNTRY	1
DRY RIVER - QUAAMA. The Past Hundred Years 1877-1977	1
EUROBODALLA - History of the Moruya District	1
FROM BEYOND THE ELBE - the story of a people - BATEMANS	1
HISTORY OF ST JOHN'S CHURCH BEGA	2
KEEVERS WILLIAM AND SARAH	1
MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS IN THE BEGA VALLEY SHIRE -	SET OF 4
PICTURES FROM THE PAST - photographs of Moruya and District	1
RIVER OAKS AND YOUNG CORN. A brief history of the Bega District Jockey Club	2
SIRL - A QUEENSLAND PERSPECTIVE	2
TANTAWANGALO PUBLIC SCHOOL 1871-1961 Reunion 1991	1
THALIA'S WAY - PARBERY FAMILY	1
THE CHICHESTER CONNECTION - The Florance Family 1700-1997	1
THE PIONEERING COLLINS - from the South Coast	1

These books and pamphlets have recently come into the museum's possession and are surplus to requirements. They are as stated free to a good home. Call in or send an email if you would like any of them.

New Acquisition



Deadmans Penny, Bible and 1914-1918 Medal Belonging to Arthur Clifford Evershed. Donated to the museum by Robyn Evershed.

Bega Valley Historical Society Inc.

Incorporating

Bega Pioneers' Museum

87 Bega Street, Bega NSW 2550

Committee

President: Peter Rogers
Secretary: Kaye Jauncey
Treasurer : Helen Jauncey
Research Officer: Margaret Sly
Committee Members:
Doug Russell
Bill Fletcher
Regina Huntington
Aly Walsh
Brett Bowyer

Please address all correspondence to:

The Secretary, Bega Valley Historical Society Inc,
P O Box 1052 Bega, NSW 2550.

Phone: 02 6492 1453.

Email: museum25@tpg.com.au

Website: begavalleyhistoricalsociety.com.au

MUSEUM OPENING HOURS:

Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10am to 2pm

Saturday 10am to 2pm

The Society's Newsletter is published quarterly and is free to all members and to kindred societies.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the Bega Valley Historical Society Inc. The Society cannot accept any responsibility for any action taken as a result of the statements herein. Copyright: Bega Valley Historical Society Inc.

d a t e s to REMEMBER

Garage Sale

Saturday January 16th

Bus Tour

Saturday February 27th

Advertise with Us

for more information call 64921453

or email museum25@tpg.com.au