

# The Bega Pioneer

*Voice of the Bega Valley Historical Society Inc.*

December 2022 Edition



# Bega Valley Historical Society Inc.

*Incorporating*

## Bega Pioneers' Museum

*87 Bega Street, Bega NSW 2550*

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### COMMITTEE:

President: Helen Jauncey  
Treasurer Helen Jauncey

Secretary: Kaye Jauncey  
Research Officer: Margaret Sly

Brett Bowyer, Reg Huntington, Bill Fletcher, Shirley Sproates

### MUSEUM OPENING HOURS:

*Monday, Wednesday and Friday 10am to 2pm  
Saturday 10am to 2pm*

*Museum Entrance Fees:  
Adults \$10, Seniors and Pensioners \$5, Children \$3  
Annual Membership Fee: Ask at desk*

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. If you are unable to visit us at the Museum please contact us, we will be only too happy to help with any queries that you may have. We have an extensive collection of family histories, photographs and memorabilia as well as a vast collection of files, books and journals relating to the Bega Valley and its inhabitants. Our research officer is only too willing to help you with your enquiry.

Front Page: Bega Racecourse.



# Museum News

WE HAVE A NEW TELEPHONE NUMBER: 02 6492 0470

## MEMBERSHIP.

We thank all our members who have rejoined under the new membership scheme which takes their membership to the 31st of December 2023. A second reminder has been sent to those members who have not replied.

Under the terms of the new scheme anyone who has not rejoined by the end of January will be removed from the membership list. Please let us know if you do not wish to continue your membership of the BVHS Inc.

## RESEARCH QUERIES.

Isaac Brothers General Store Wyndham.  
Family DOWNTON - Illawarra Steam Navigation  
Co connection.

## JANUARY OPENING DAYS.

As in previous years we will be open Monday to Saturday , 10 am to 2pm in January. Thank you to the volunteers who will make this happen.

## Keith Evans.

We were saddened to here of the passing of one of our longest serving members, Keith Evans. The committee sends it condolences to Keith's wife Val and his family

## EXHIBITION

**Genealogy and Social History of three pioneering families of the Valley.  
FITZPATRICK, BLACK OF AYRDALE, HERGENHAN**

The Bega Valley Genealogy Society, Toalla Street Pambula is holding this exhibition on the weekends of the 14th and 15th and 21st and 22nd of January between 10am and 3pm.



## THE CASE OF THE NEW HOUSE

### INFORMATION ON THE STONY CREEK SCHOOL PICTURED IN THE LAST NEWSLETTER.

By: Shirley Sproats

On receiving The Bega Pioneer's September 2022 newsletter, due to research done for my Sproats and Hergenhan books, I instantly recognised the building on the front cover as the old Manning built Stony Creek school. It was later condemned and replaced by another building at another location in 1924. I felt compelled to write an article about this building.

Also, in my research, I found both spellings for Stony Creek – “Stony” and “Stoney”. I will use Stony.

The Bega District News of 27 November 1924 reported at great length on the Phillip's built new school's opening suggesting that everyone was seemingly grateful that the school had been shifted from that 'beastly hill' and was now 'on the roadside – an ornament to the locality.' Further, that teacher O'Hara now had a 'mansion to live in.' The old school on that 'beastly hill' was situated nearer to Double Creek whereas, the new school was situated on land donated in 1923 by Major Irwin of Erinna, Stony Creek. On 11 November 1932, the Department of Education bought the land from Irwin.

The old school built on that 'beastly hill' was the second Stony Creek school with the school and residence built in 1879 by Peter Manning. But back to the first school later.

As an aside, Peter Manning came to Australia from Nova Scotia arriving into Melbourne in 1858 later making his way to the Araluen Goldfields and afterwards onto Bega c1861. It has been passed down that my great-grandparents, Christopher and Elizabeth Sproats met up with Peter near Araluen and they travelled together to Bega forging a lifelong friendship. Peter became a well-known pioneer of the Valley - firstly, as a carpenter and builder and then as an undertaker when he established Manning and Son's funeral parlour in Bega.

By 1913, the Manning built school needed considerable 'repairs and improvements' and after much toing and froing with the Department over some ten years a new school was built, built by J Phillips of Parker St, Bega at a cost of: £989/10/10. Phillips bought the Manning building from the Department and on-sold it to James Bildstein. James, as it has been handed down to me, was a very clever man – a farmer, builder and an exceptionally good amateur photographer.

James relocated the old Manning built school from that 'beastly hill' to his property Brinawa at Double Creek, Brogo. This property had been selected, c1863, under the John Robertson Land Act of 1861 by his father, John Bildstein who came from Germany. By 1924, a new house was needed on the property so a re-make of the old Manning built Stony Creek school would become the “new” house on Brinawa, Double Creek/Brogo.

How do I know this? In May 1946, my father, George Verdun Sproats, known in the district as GV (his father was also George), on his return from the war bought Brinawa from James Bildstein comprising some 417 acres. So, I had the privilege to spend the first 5 or 6 years of my life living in the “new” house leaving me with very fond memories. When GV bought the property, hand-milking was done in the old dairy which formed part of the original settlement. Unfortunately, the original settlement burnt down in the 1952 bushfires but the “new” house – the rebuild of the old Manning built Stony Creek school by James Bildstein and the new dairy built by GV was saved single-handedly by GV.

Back to the first community built Stony Creek school. The Bega Gazette of 1 March 1872 informs that the Council of Education had appointed a teacher to the half-time schools of Stony Creek and Tarraganda and that the residents were about to build a school house at each location – probably, a quickly constructed vertical slab “room” at each location. The teacher appointed was a Mr Turnbull.

The first Stony Creek school was built on Portion 131 at Doctor's Creek near Stony Creek - the Crown having allocated this Portion for a school. Later, the 2 acres, Portion 131, was bought by William Jonas (Billy) Hergenhan.

On 25 October 1877, a Henry Eggins, Warragubra wrote to the Council of Education as he had been informed that the half-time schools of Stony Creek and Tarraganda would soon be vacant and that the schools would suit him as a teacher. As an aside, Warragubra half-time school opened in 1872 was situated in the historic settlement of Warragaburra near Bega. Eggins, at the time, taught at both Warragubra and Jellat Jellat half-time schools.

Eggin's candidacy was supported by the respective communities in a letter to the Department dated 22 October 1877 signed by: John Koellner, William Irwin, John Otton, William Ramsay, Archibald Spence, John Hergenhan, Andrew Koellner, Thomas Whyman, Richard Rogers and William Goetz.

The Bega Standard of 14 June 1879 informs us that Peter Manning was making 'good progress and expected it (school) to be finished in a few weeks.' Further, that the building would be adapted for a larger number of children as it would open as a public school with an enrolment of 20 plus pupils.

On 22 June 1922, teacher O'Hara wrote a letter to Perkins, MLA stating a 'few facts' re the condition of the old Manning built Stony Creek school. We learn:

Ten panes of glass were broken in the school; window sashes had rotted; five steps up to the school were dangerous; floor requires levelling. The residence has no fireplace in the kitchen or dining room; no laundry; bathroom has no door or window; bedroom floor eaten out by white ants; all locks falling off doors etc and further, that the Medical Officer had condemned the place.

Thanks to the State Archives, local newspapers and the ingenuity of James Bildstein some 143 years later this story can be told about a condemned old school and residence proudly becoming a "new" house. A circuitous story as I expect the "new" house is still standing today on Brinawa. I clearly remember the layout and the quality of the build.

The 2 acres on that 'beastly hill,' Portion 144, was sold to John Went of Double Creek upon removal of the school.

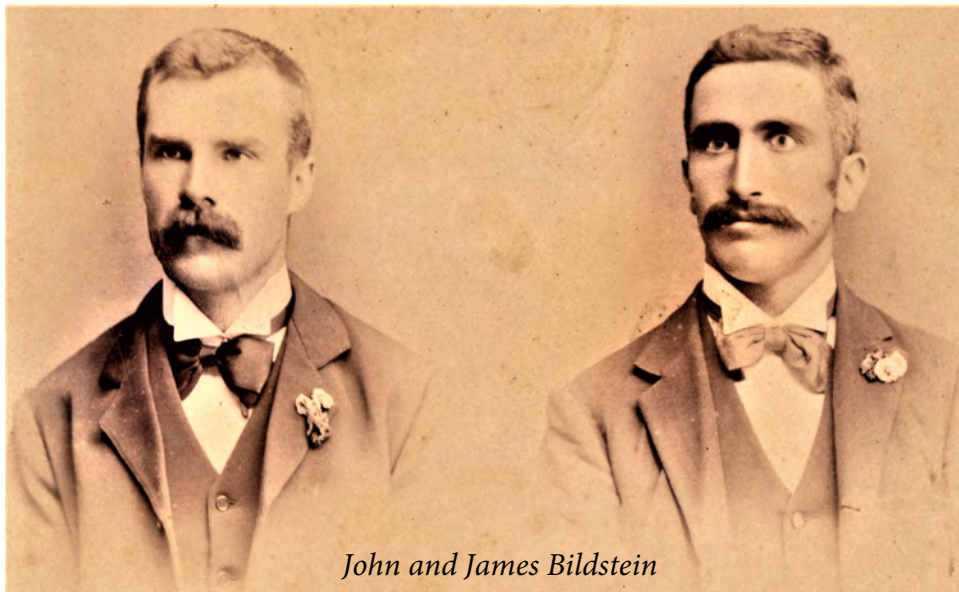
Sources:  
NSW State Records: Administrative File – Stony Creek School – 1876 – 1913 – 5/17689.3, Kingswood NSW State Records: Administrative File – Stony Creek School – 1915 – 1935 – 5/17690.1, Kingswood NSW State Records: Administrative File – Mumbulla School – Pre-1939 – 1935 – 5/17001.2, Kingswood History of New South Wales Government Schools: <https://education.nsw.gov.au/about-us/our-people> Sproats, Shirley: The Three Hergenhan Brothers from Niklashausen, Germany to the Colony of New South Wales - self-published 2018 "Death of Peter Manning," The Bega Standard, Bega 7 January 1913 Newspapers – various as stated  
LTO Crown Plans re various Portions



The "new" house at Brinawa with James Bildstein in foreground c1928 – formerly the old Stony Creek School and residence, the collection of Evelyn Stafford, (niece of James Bildstein) Kallara nr Bega



*Original settlement on 'Brinawa' built by selector John Bildstein c 1860's and bought by G V Sproats in 1946 from James Bildstein. From the Sproats collection.*



*John and James Bildstein*

**WOMEN OF BEGA**  
**MARIA PEARCE NEE WILSON.**

Maria Wilson came with her family from Adelaide to Pambula in 1861. There on the 27th of August of that year she married Joseph Pearce. She was seventeen. Joseph was from Middlesex, London, and had arrived in the colony in 1857. Maria's name was taken from Maria Island in Tasmania with the emphasis on the 'I' as 'eye'.

Maria's parents, Lewis and Caroline, settled at Frogs Hollow and the first of Maria's fifteen children was born there in 1862. At this time Maria's mother was still having children of her own.

In 1863 Joseph Pearce Sr. was granted a conditional purchase of 60 acres overlooking Merimbula Lake where he built a stone home. This is the site of the present Norfolk Pine Hotel.

Maria raised 8 sons and 4 daughters and most of them attended the Merimbula Public School - the present Merimbula Schoolhouse Museum.

In 1887 they left Merimbula and moved to Bega where they took over the running of a boarding house in lower Auckland Street next door to the cordial factory. Maria's last child was born and died in Bega in March 1888.

In the early 1890's they moved to Eden Street across the street from the Old Bega Cemetery where Joseph was a grave digger. Joseph died in 1901 and was buried in this cemetery where his remains still are today.

Around the time of WW1 a number of Maria's children moved to Sydney, and three went to New Zealand. Maria moved to Sydney where she lived out her life with her daughter Myra in a 2 storey tenement house opposite the Darlinghurst Gaol in Forbes Street. She died in 1944 aged 100 years and is buried in Waverley Cemetery.



Joseph and Maria Pearce  
& their 12 Children



Pearce Sisters  
Back: Caroline Sproates, Maria Koellner  
Front: Mary Ann Guthrey, Maria Mather  
Myra Jane Willis

## EXTRACT FROM KEVIN TETLEY'S NOTEBOOKS.

**As part of the Kevin Tetley bequest we have his notebooks. This is a sample of the work**

From OBIT. G. GUTHREY 'BDN' 18.3.19

GEORGE & HENRY GUTHREY came to Bega ca. 1875-85, They took clearing contracts for P.H.Wood, Brogo and Henry RITCHIE at 'Limegrove', Tanja.

They went in for pig buying and bacon curing at Tanja. Swam pigs across river at Tarraganda & drove them to Tanja.

The Brothers later selected land at the Murrah and shipped their bacon from Bermagui. George G began a Teamster service from there to Tathra via Bega, as there was no punt at Bega River - end.

From BDN 14.6.1928 - When he sold, Wm Allen asked for an elm from 'Elmgrove' to have his coffin made,

John & Charlotte (Fegen) GUTHREY landed in Sydney 6 Jan. 1853. from England on the ship "RATTLER" George G. Was the 5th child b. Sydney 1855 - 1st Guthrey born in Aust. About 1857 the family moved to Jembecumbene, south of Braidwood where the father became a gold miner & Charlotte acted as a mid-wife to many of the families there. They next moved to Newtown-Araluen, gold mining. The road over Dr. George Mountain was a handicap being so steep and the Tarraganda Crossing was at times disastrous there being no bridge there until much later.

Geo. Married Elizabeth Sproates of Wapengo in 1886 (John Guthrey d. Araluen 1877)

They had a son & daughter were born & then they leased "Briandairy" from Emma Rogers in 1889. they made butter first, then cheese until the cheese factory burned down in 1908. Later the same year he lost £100 worth of cheese when the SS. "Bega" sank off Bunga Head.

They took over "Elmgrove" 1st Aug. 1909, there being a cheese Factory there since the 1870's. It won many prizes and was closed in 1919. Geo Guthrey retired to 50 Parker St, Bega in 1923, handing "Elmgrove" over to his sons in 1927.

Elizabeth d. 1929 & George d. 1946, aged 90.

Since 1980 the herd had been Friesians but from the early 1930's to 1980 it was pure bred Jersey.

"70 new buildings were erected in Bega during 1883-4." 10 April 1915 "Ye Olden Days" - "Candelo & Eden Union" - No IX, 1884

Mrs G. Wheatley d. Aug 1916 65 yrs. A native of Durham, England. Had 18 kids. They worked for the Wren family for years at Kameruka & Tarraganda.

"Southern Record" 12 Aug. 1916

Dr. Shiels graduated FRCS at Edinburgh University in 1857. d. 44 yrs.

ISABELLA MARGARET CUNNINGHAM was b. Bega 22 Jan 1874. daughter of Dr. & Mrs. Shiel. Born at 'Viewforth' - now B & B place. Turned 100 at 'Viewforth' now Hartimink's on corner of Carp & Union Sts.

Dr. Marshall took over Shiels' practice & former home.

Dr Shiels married Ann Isabella Murray of Eden.

Mrs Cunningham was educated at SGHS on site of David Jones' Elizabeth St Store. She married in the Shiels home to C.J. Cunningham a Solicitor from Maitland, a member of the firm Rawlinson & Bland, later to become Bland & Cunningham.

3 sons - Allan - Solicitor, Raymond Terrace

Frank - Manager Bank of NSW Waverley

Clive - Retired of Bega

Joe - deceased. She was married by Rev. James Forbes, her uncle.

Daughters are

Isabelle (Mrs Butt of Bega & Mosman)



## Miscellaneous.

### Boer War, Bega Men Leaving

Cobargo Chronicle – Friday 27 October, 1899  
Departure of Bega Mounted Rifles for the Transvaal

Ever since the idea of sending a contingent of the local Mounted Rifles to the scene of war in the Transvaal was mooted, the idea has steadily gained ground, until the matter has become an accomplished fact. And what a send off they got! Who amongst us could imagine the lethargic Bega people throwing off their wonted quiescence and entering into the affair with an enthusiasm that bids fair to eclipse their more volatile New Zealand contemporaries. As impromptu affairs, Monday night's and Tuesday morning's proceedings have never been equalled in Bega.

A smoke concert was arranged as a send off, and the enthusiasm that prevailed was overpowering, this humble scribe for the nonce envying the dubious lot of the soldier bent on warfare. The National Anthem was sung with a fervor that boded ill for the brutal Boer. Patriotic speeches were delivered by the gallant Major – and a host of civilians. Staff Sergeant DALY'S rendition of 'Soldiers of the Queen' touched the audience in the right spot. The same gallant, during the course of a few remarks, stated that, as an old soldier, he placed every confidence in his men, who, although not innured to actual warfare, were made of the 'right stuff'. The young ladies of the town vied with each other in their endeavors to decorate the gallants with their colors, whilst the audience lent their approval. Songs and recitations were rendered by Messrs. Thatcher, Ford, Dorrington, W. Boardman, G. Boardman, Daly and Sinclair, whilst the irrepressible "Jersey" delighted the audience with a couple of jigs. The proceedings were somewhat marred by an attempt to introduce the snobocratic element – "the upper ten" being indulged in 'superior drinks, doncher-know', whilst the 'pore plebeians' had to rest contented with long sleeves. A great deal of adverse comment was engendered by this spasmodic attempt to emulate our puerile Governor. The proceedings on Tuesday morning were not one whit the less enthusiastic. The contingent consisted of Staff Sergeant DALY, Corporal MANNING, and Privates MAPLES, KIRKLAND, WATERSON, BULL, SIMMONS, YOUNG, HAWES, SEAGAR, ABRAHAMMS, and Farrier Sergeant WILSON. Headed by a couple of mounted troopers and the Bega band, the procession marched along Auckland, Carp and Church streets. Whilst parading the latter street, the men were saluted with a shower of roses by a bevy of pretty girls who lined the pathways, whilst three rousing cheers were given by the sterner sex. **Before leaving the town the men were put under 'fire'- having to submit to a snapshot by a local photographer – and they came out of the ordeal in real military style.** The band headed the contingent for the Bega bridge, where a halt was made and a good deal of hand shaking indulged in, the men being sent off amidst the good wishes of the great throng and to the strains of "The Girl I Left Behind Me". A few buggies and horsemen accompanied the men for a few miles along the route, where a further leave taking occurred. Major Bland made a few appropriate remarks, and wished the men bon voyage. The men bore themselves like warriors who had been through the 'mill' and did not seem dismayed at the prospect ahead of them. A gruesomely suggestive incident – the passing of a hearse – occasioned much amusing banter, especially as the hearse was driven by the father of one of the volunteers.



BEGA VALLEY LIFE. THE BEGA RACES



Bega Jockey Club Committee 1919



Bega Racecourse 1957



# Publications for Sale

<i>Bega District Band</i>	<i>\$10</i>
<i>Bega High - 50 years</i>	<i>Free</i>
<i>Bega Primary 1860-2010</i>	<i>Free</i>
<i>They Made this Valley Home</i>	<i>\$10</i>
<i>Illawarra Steam Ship Company</i>	<i>\$25</i>
<i>The Bushfires of 52</i>	<i>\$20</i>
<i>Bayleys History of Bega</i>	<i>\$20</i>
<i>A Walk Along Carp Street</i>	<i>\$2</i>

