

December 2024 Edition



MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR ONGOING SUPPORT.

Bega Valley Historical Society Inc.

Incorporating

Bega Pioneers' Museum 87 Bega Street, Bega NSW 2550

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COMMITTEE:

President: W Fletcher Treasurer: Helen Jauncey Membership: Sylvia Davey Secretary: Kaye Jauncey

Committee: Reg Huntington, Peter Guthrey, Nita Quinn, Shirley Sproats, Peter Ubrihien

<u>MUSEUM OPENING HOURS:</u>

Monday, Wednesday and Fríday 10am to 2pm Saturday 10am to 2pm

Museum Entrance Fees: Adults \$10, Seniors and Concession \$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: A Christmas postcard from our Underhill collection





MEMBERSHIP.

NEW MEMBERS: Alan Morgan, Greg and Sally Sherlock, Donna and Allan Sims, Tony Britten, Peter Heffernan, Fen Jazz.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Membership for 2025 is due in January. Reminder notices will be emailed and sent in the next two weeks.

Due to the circumstances surrounding the museums future and the number of new members this gave us we have decided that anybody who joined after the end of September will not be charged for 2025.

The committee made the decision at the October meeting to increase membership fees. New fees are \$10 concession, \$15 adult, \$25 family and \$30 corporate.

REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

The roof and support poles on the outside sheds have been repaired and replaced. New picture rails have been installed in the portrait hall and the portraits cleaned and put back in alphabetical order as

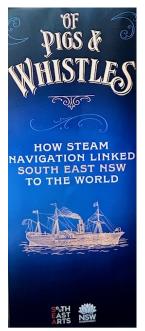
requested.

MUSEUM OPENING DURING JANUARY

As in past years the museum will be open every day in January from 10am to 2pm. The possible exception is Sunday depending on volunteer availability.



DISPLAY ON LOAN FROM SOUTH EAST ARTS.



How pigs and whistles linked South East NSW to the World.

Can you imagine a time when pigs and passengers travelled in close quarters along the NSW South Coast? The eastern seaboard steamship routes served as highways in and out of the region, sometimes before towns had been even gazetted, or roads and train-lines constructed. Now on display at the Bega Pioneers' Museum, the travelling exhibition, Of Pigs and Whistles -How Steam Navigation Linked South East NSW to the World tells the compelling story of steamship navigation in the region, in particular the Illawarra Steam Navigation Company, exploring the significant contribution the maritime industry made to the economic and social development of the

South Coast and hinterland.

Founded in 1858, the Illawarra Steam Navigation Company's is a tale spanning almost 100 years, revealing the fascinating history surrounding the corporation's role in creating a vital link to the rest of the world following European settlement.

And given that the South Coast was a rich source of produce and natural resources, ports in the region became integral to Australia's economic and social story.

Of Pigs and Whistles - How Steam Navigation Linked South East NSW to the World was curated by local heritage management and interpretation consultant Angela George with support by arts worker and writer Leah Szanto.

Angela said the exhibition gives viewers an opportunity to learn about the shared narrative which united the broader region and its populations across the expanses of geography, over many kilometres and multiple generations.

"From the time the company was formed until the time it ceased, it dominated the local maritime industry - it was the in and out of the place and the key to its survival," Angela said.

"If you had to go to a city for medical treatment or you needed clothing or other supplies, it came in on an Illawarra Company ship or went out on an Illawarra Company ship."

Captains faced the dangerous job of navigating unpredictable waters and dangerous coastlines.

There were high seas and high dramas, with some miraculous rescues, and tragic losses.

And pigs and passengers were close travelling companions.

Angela pointed out that viewers might find the link with and significance of the humble pig in the history of the company quite surprising.

"There are so many fascinating and funny stories about the pigs, from the porkers that shared cabins with passengers, to the heroic pig that played lifesaver to a shipwrecked load of passengers," she said. Comment [AG1]: Insert '

"The human side of the story so interesting in terms of the people who worked for the company and the role it played in the community. It wasn't like big businesses are these days, the Illawarra Company became a real part of all the communities it served."

She highlighted how incredibly demanding life must have been for those involved in this particular chapter of the region's history, not the least because charts and equipment during the 19th and early 20th centuries were considerably less sophisticated than they are today.

"Can you imagine steaming from Sydney to Eden a couple of times a week, stopping at just about every port, dozens along the way, then turning around and going straight back again? They must have been exhausted navigating the risks," Angela said.

"People relied on the shipping line as the most reliable service. We take it very much for granted now that we can just jump in the car and be in Sydney in six hours, that wasn't an option then.

"Even by the 1950s when the company ceased to operate, there were no sealed roads and it might have taken two or three days travel, and often with no easy way to cross the many rivers along the way," Angela said.

With funding support from Create NSW, exhibition development was managed by South East Arts and design was by Workhorse Design, with valuable input from the broader region's combined museum community, including those in the Bega Valley, Eurobodalla, Shoalhaven, Wollongong City and Snowy Monaro local government areas.

Of Pigs and Whistles - How Steam Navigation Linked South East NSW will be on show at the Bega



Pioneers' Museum until April 2025.

The Illawarra & South Coast S. N. Co., Ltd., New T.S.S. "Merimbula," 1112 tons, 14 knots.



The SS Bega

The Wreck of the 'Bega' by A. B. Jauncey

Easter Tuesday, April 5, 1983, marks the 75th anniversary of the sinking to the bottom of the ocean of the S.S. Bega. She met her fate off Bunga between Tathra and Bermagui on an ill-fated voyage to Sydney.

In almost two centuries of white settlement in eastern Australia it is generally conceded that the wreck of the sailing ship Dunbar, in what is known as 'The Gap', near Port Jackson on 25 August 1857, was by far the most talked of wreck anywhere near Sydney, and also that the wreck of the Bega on the night of Sunday April 5 1908, was the most talked of wreck anywhere near these parts.

In the case of the Dunbar, with one exception, all 63 passengers and 59 crew were drowned. The sole survivor was a seaman, Alexander B. Johnson. In the case of the Bega, with one exception, all passengers and crew were saved. The sole fatality was Mr David Clarke of the Candelo area who died of shock. More of Mr Clarke later.

At that period the Illawarra and South Coast Steam Navigation Company ran weekly steamers between Sydney and the south coast ports, bringing necessary goods and supplies into the area and returning with farm and live-stock and general produce. The steamers also carried passengers.

There had been a strike and no steamer had run for a fortnight; hence there was a huge pile-up of produce and livestock. In addition, quite a number of passengers were making the trip to the Sydney Show, and quite a number of livestock – the pick of the area – were on the Bega to be exhibited there. There were also some people leaving the district and they and their families were passengers, and they also had their household furniture on the ship with them.

Because of the back-log caused by the strike, the shipping company knew it needed to send a steamer, but the usual experienced crew was not available so the company engaged a different crew made up largely of inexperienced men. This was on a Sunday afternoon and the whole afternoon was taken up with loading the ship at the port of Tathra. By dark everything was loaded. The ship could not have carried anymore, and she finally got away at about 6.30 p.m. This is a list – according to a newspaper clipping of the time – of passengers on the Bega. Mr. Ally Sharp, well-known Bega hairdresser was going to Sydney to be married to Miss Boag. (It is understood that the marriage took place a little later.) Messrs Davis, Woodruff, Brown, Dunn, Ford, Mussared, Levy, Russell, W. G. Cochrane, (brother of the late Robert Cochrane of North Bega), Jack Brunton, (brother of James Brunton now of North Bega), Mr. Brunton was in charge of Mr. A. L. Manning's Jersey cattle for the Sydney Show, and his assistant stockman was George Targett. Messrs Raynor, Freeman, Ramsay, Braitling, J. J. Gleeson, Preston, and Darragh, also David Clark who dies of shock made up the list of the other male passengers. Two Misses Richardson, Mrs. Braitling and seven children, Mrs. O'Connor, her daughter, Mrs. Taylor and child, (who is now Miss Esme Taylor of Tathra Road), Miss Margaret (afterwards Nurse) Cochrane, (sister of Mr. Robert Cochrane and later Mrs Yates of Bega), Miss Pritchard, Mrs. Kinnerley, Mrs. Parkes and child, two Misses Lucas, Miss Paterson, Mrs. Preston, Mrs. Caucan and two Misses Cassidy completed the passenger list.

Shortly after leaving Tathra, and while having dinner on the ship, some passengers noticed that the Bega had such a list that tea was spilling from the cups. About 10 p.m. the list became decidedly worse and it appeared that the ship was about to sink. It was then off Bunga Point, about half-way between Tathra and Bermagui. Captain Bishop gave the order to abandon ship: 'Man the Boats – Women and children first!'

When the captain gave this order most of the passengers were already in bed. They were only given a few seconds to come away, most of them in their night attire, barefooted, and were not allowed to bring any luggage as they lined up for the boats.

Two boats were lowered on the land-side of the sinking ship. In one boat were 22 women and two boys, with three men to row. It was soon discovered – too late – that there were no rowlocks in that boat so it had to be taken in tow by the second boat which carried 22 men.

On the other side of the ship, the seaward side, two rafts were lowered and the rest of those on board managed to fit on these. Captain Bishop was the last man to leave the *Bega* and he had the remains of David Clarke wrapped in a tarpaulin and placed on his raft. One raft had to tow the other, and just as they were about to pull away, the unfortunate *Bega* appeared to take a dive and sank in about forty fathoms of water about four miles from Bunga.

It is said that the crew praised the general behaviour of the passengers, as there was no hysterics, no general panic, and the passengers did their best to follow instructions under such awkward circumstances. The passengers, on their part, reciprocated in regard to the captain, officers and seamen.

A number of lifebelts were handed out but there were not sufficient to go around. Mr Jack Brunton gave his lifebelt to another passenger who could not swim.

It would appear that there were two currents flowing in different directions when the boat sank. One current flowed in a westerly direction and carried half the passengers toward Cuttagee. The discomfort and privation were aggravated by no fresh drinking water and no provisions having been taken on board any of the lifeboats.

The towed boat containing the women was found to be leaking, and the women had to bale it out constantly. One lady used a cork helmet hat and another a boot. Despite it being a very cold night others took their dresses off and mopped up the water, succeeding in keeping the boat afloat.

It was tremendously hard work for the two sailors, who were scarcely making any headway rowing, and were hopefully steering in the direction where they thought land was. One cad of a man in the front boat produced a knife and threw it into the second boat, saying, 'Cut the rope and let us save ourselves or we'll all be drowned'. Ally Sharpe caught the knife and flung it as far as he could into the sea. Good old Ally! After several long hours of rowing, daylight appeared and land could be seen, but it was after twelve hours of hard rowing, baling and great hardship that the two boats with all passengers alive reached Cuttagee beach. The *Bega* had sunk at 10.30 p.m. Sunday night and it was about 10 a.m. that the boats were beached and the passengers gathered round in a group and offered up a hymn of thanksgiving. Exhausted as most of them were, they were able to walk inland, and after a while they came to Thornton's timber mill, where the Thornton family treated them with great hospitality.

As the *Bega* sank, the two rafts, one being towed with a rope behind the other, pulled away from danger and saw the last of the ship. Captain Bishop, Engineer McCubbin and most of the crew were on the rafts. Being on the seaward side of the ship they were caught up in a current flowing in a southerly direction. After continuous rowing for twelve hours, Captain Bishop recognised the coastal land near Wallagoot. They steered for shore and beached their rafts in a snug cave at the mouth of Wallagoot Lake. They had drifted about sixteen miles. The crew walked about a mile up to Mr Andrew Koellner's house, where they were treated with the greatest hospitality. The first news that reached Bega about the wreck was when Mr Andrew Koellner drove into town and told the story of the shipwrecked crew arriving at his place in a sad and sorry plight, and the death of Mr Clarke. Later in the day Dr Evershed and the Coroner, Mr H. O. T. Cowdroy, drove down to Koellner's and held an inquest, and then the remains of Mr Clarke were transferred to Bega by Mr M. Corrigan and later interred at Candelo, the captain and the engineer attending the burial. All the neighbours of Mr Koellner, including his family, were most helpful, and they provided food and clothes and also buggies and sulkies, and drove some of the shipwrecked people into Bega.

The crew were driven to the Tathra Hotel and the shipping company sent a steamer to bring them back to Sydney. The passengers who had landed at Cuttagee were brought back to Bega by friendly neighbours from the Bermagui side.

Mr David Clarke, who died of shock, was a gentleman who held the respect of the community. He had kept the Post Office Hotel at Cobargo and later the Royal Hotel at Candelo. He also owned a valuable property, afterwards in the possession of the H. Carpenter family, and now owned by the Hergenhan family of Bimbaya. He left a widow and a stepson, well known in later years as Mr Herbert Scott.

Following is a list of produce and stock, etc. on the Bega, most of which was lost. The list is gleaned from newspaper clippings of the time.

10³/₄ tons of butter shipped by the Bega Co-operative Society. Some of this butter was later washed up and recovered in fair order and was sold to Sargeants of Sydney.

Over 2,000 cheeses in all.

176 pigs. When the Captain first saw trouble staring him in the face he ordered all the pigs to be thrown into the sea to lighten the load. The pigs would have met the same fate in any case. Twelve choice Jersey heifers sent by Mr. W. Wren of Tarraganda to Mr. Denham of the Tweed River.

Mr. A. L. Manning's prize cattle, three bulls, two cows and three head of young stock, intended for the Sydney Show, in charge of Jack Brunton assisted by George Targett.

The whole of Rev. E. W. Briscombe's furniture – 22 packages.

Eight packages of Mr. H. S. Hawkin's furniture. He had been Police Magistrate in Bega.

40 bags wattle bark and eight bales of leather shipped by Mr. T Spence of Bega.

Horses, 'Lorna', 'Baywood' and 2 others shipped by Mr. T. S. Ramsay.

Mr. C. T Stiles of Kanoona lost 100 cheese.

Mr. Chas Parbery lost 112 cheese and 12 prime bacon pigs.

Messrs Denny Bros. of Yellow Pinch lost seven tons of wattle bark.

Mr. J. M. Black of 'Ayrdale' lost 90 cheese.

The little Misses Cassidy were going down to be bridesmaids for their Aunts, the Misses Bright, and had several wedding presents for them.

Kameruka Estate lost 500 cheese and also a special cheese – the latter presumable for the Sydney Show.

Mr. A. L. Manning, who was the owner of 'Warragaburra' Estate before the present Parbery family, lost 400 cheese as well as his prize cattle already mentioned.

The West End Butter Factory, situated alongside the present bridge, lost four tons of butter. Wolumla Factory lost 150 boxes which would have been about 3³/₄ tons.

Bemboka Factory lost 5 tons of butter which was unfortunately not insured.

Messrs Bright Bros. of Candelo – £200 worth of cheese.

H. Kiss of Kanoona – £90 worth of cheese. It is also known that quite a number of district farmers also lost cheese on the Bega.

Also on the "Bega" was a registered consignment of gold coin in sovereigns and half-sovereigns to the value of £1,000 being consigned by the Bega branch of the Commercial Bank, of which the late E. C. Bingeman was Manager, to Head office. It weighed 561 ounces and was insured. This gold coin is still in the 'Bega'. I have often wondered if a brave diver should succeed in recovering the gold, who, out of various claimants, Government bodies, insurance companies, divers etc. would be the legal owner – quite a fortune by now. Also lost were two mail bags containing about 50 letters and the same number of papers.

When the passengers on the Bega were about to be transferred to the lifeboats, three seamen fell into the sea. Two came to the surface and were among those that landed at Cuttagee. They thought then that their mate had been drowned. It transpired that when he did emerge from the water he was on the other side of the ship, and was picked up and placed on one of the rafts which landed at Wallagoot.

WOMEN OF BEGA.

by S Florance

Mrs. Mary Josephine Rheinberger nee Flanagan.

Mary Josephine, always known as Josie, was born at Wyndham on May 31st 1893, the third child of John Joseph Flanagan and Esther Ann Power. Her mother had eleven more children before she died of cancer in June 1903 aged 34, six months after the last child was born. Josie was the only daughter and took over the role of mother and provider. She was 10 years old.

Three years later John Joseph remarried to Miss Evelyn Dear on Boxing Day 1906. They had five children.

Josie married John Francis Rheinberger in November 1919 at St. Peter and Paul Cathedral in Goulburn. John was a tailor and he set up business behind the Grand Hotel at 125 Auckland Street. John and Josie had eight children but John died of pneumonia in September 1935 a few months after the last child was born.

The house was over 100 years old when it was demolished in 1988 after Josie's death. It had sandstone chimneys, a loft and a barn thought to be the stables for the Occidental Hotel next door. There was all arge vegetable garden and a fowl yard where John raised his prize 'chooks'. Josie kept a cow n the paddock where Woolworth's is today.

Josie was always cooking for a cause, was secretary of the Catholic Balls and organised the Bega Flower Club.

Josie passed away on July 24 1986 aged 93 years. Her Requiem Mass funeral had 26 priests, Archbishop Carroll, Bishop Power and her son Father Paul Rheinberger celebrating her life.

her children were John, Father Paul, Frank, Ted, Ron and Henry and her daughter Norma (Allen).





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EXTRACT FROM KEVIN TETLEY'S NOTEBOOKS.

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

The Oldest Horse-Drawn Ambulance in the District

The Ambulance Committee requires that those requiring the Ambulance will kindly sign the 'undertaking' (held by the Secretary or any member of the Committee) to become responsible for hire of horses, etc. Where the Ambulance is requested by wire, such wire must embody an undertaking to become responsible for payment for horse hire. Further, the Committee desires those owing any sums for such horse hire to kindly forward the amount to the Hon. Secretary at once as the funds are not buoyant.

The Ambulance can be arranged for with any of the sub-committee; Messrs. James Rixon, P. Fraser and A.F. Ritchie.

The Bega Budget, 29 January 1908

OTTONS had 'Pumpkin Flat' (now Brogo Dam) and 'Honeysuckle' - next door, in early days. The large LUCAS Family was raised on 'Honeysuckle'. The original John Otton leased from Peter Imlay - including 9,000 sheep. He was a shearer back in England. He came to 'Corridgeree' in 1846. Keith's grandfather HENRY OTTON was the original owner of the oyster Lease at Wapengo when Keith's sons now have. Henry Otton also owned 'Nelson' and LIN OTTON finally sold it for £500. H.O. also owned the hill at Mogaruka which was sold to Tom Bower and was last owned by Noel P. FORD.

REEVE ENGINE

6½ h.p. Blackstone Oil engine. Made in England 1906. Shipped by steamer to Tathra and brought to Bega by horses for use in irrigating at Tarraganda. Donated by John Reeve & Family.

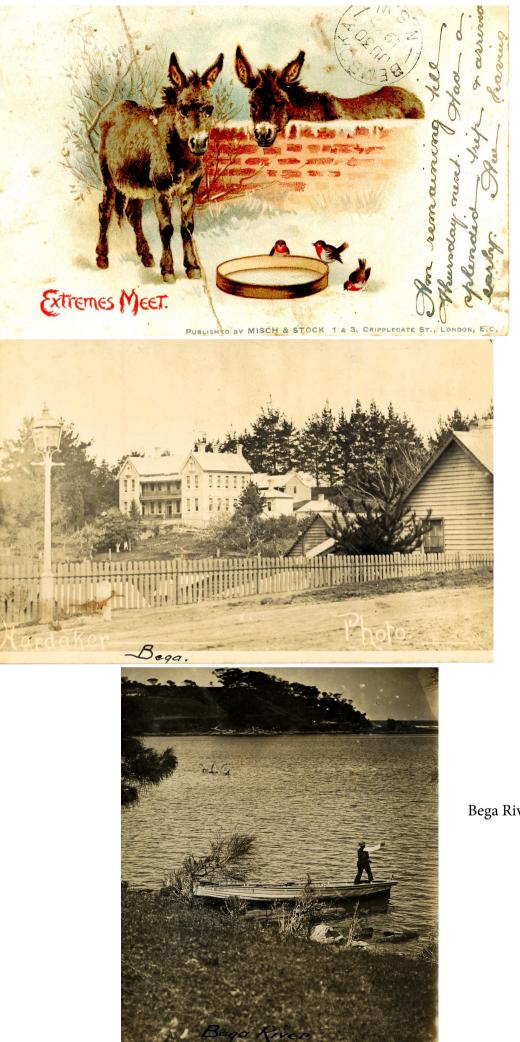
ARTHUR BLYTON d. 7 MAY 1962 aged 88 yrs Also ALICE LAVINIA BLYTON d. 15 AUG 1967 aged 87 yrs

OLIVE THELOY THISTLETON Wife, mother & grandmother Died 22 OCT. 1981

HAROLD VIVIAN DIXON Husband & father, accidently killed 7 MAY 1975 Aged 40 years.

VIOLET MAY GOODWIN Died 23 OCT 1979, aged 75 years, daughter of Mr. & Mrs. W. Dansey; Also CECIL GOODWIN, Died 21 MAY 1978, aged 73 years.

ERNEST A. MEYER B. 26 Feb. 1903, died 2 Feb. 1983 Postcards in our collection



Bega River Mouth

Publications for Sale

Bega District Band	\$10
Bega High - 50 years	Free
They Made this Valley Home	\$10
Illawarra Steam Ship Company	\$10
The Bushfires of 52	\$25
Bayleys History of Bega	\$20
A Walk Along Carp Street Fascinating	\$20
Bega Scrummaging On The Sapphire	\$20
Part	

Coast

The "Braine" Book \$30

Days of Long Ago by Harold Braine The left over military books from the centenary of ANZAC are free to a good home.

