

E-MUSTER

Central Coast Family History Society Inc.



April 2022

Issue 32



View from the Bluff, Terrigal

***THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE CENTRAL COAST
FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC.***

CENTRAL COAST FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC.

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RESEARCH CENTRE

Building 4, 8 Russell Drysdale Street, EAST GOSFORD NSW 2250

Phone: 4324 5164 - Email admin@centralcoastfhs.org.au

Open: Tues to Fri 9.30am-2.00pm;

Thursday evening 6.00pm-9.30pm

First Saturday of the month 9.30am-12noon

Research Centre Closed on Mondays for Administration

MEETINGS

First Saturday of each month from February to November

Commencing at 1.00pm – doors open 12.00 noon

Research Centre opens from 9.30am

Venue: Gosford Lions Community Hall

Rear of 8 Russell Drysdale Street, EAST GOSFORD NSW

THE E-MUSTER

April 2022 – No: 32

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admin@centralcoastfhs.org.au

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March 20th
July 20th
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EDITORIAL

Welcome to the April 2022 *e-Muster*.

I have endeavoured to include articles in this edition that reflect events and issues relevant to our current times. March is Womens History Month and I have added the story of Kathleen Butler to the 90th birthday celebrations of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. They say “*History repeats itself*”

The story of Yarri- first Nations hero- and the flooding of Gundagai in 1852 struck a chord with me as my family are currently dealing with the same type of events in the Northern Rivers of NSW.

A close friend has been bitten by the Family History bug and was amazed to find out the details of her mothers’ ancestral line, some of the story she found is included in this issue.

As a result of the Covid pandemic many online resources continue to be available to assist in your research, some of which are outlined in this journal.

Thank you so much to the contributors who have provided articles in this latest issue of the *e-Muster* for our enjoyment and interest.

Heather Yates- Editor

PRESIDENTS REPORT

The summer is just a memory and we are now deep into autumn with cooler weather just around the corner. This is the perfect time to sit down with a hot cuppa and enjoy the articles which are in this edition of the *e-Muster*. Heather Yates has again provided a great read which you can enjoy in your downtime.

I’m sure you’ll enjoy the article about the “Coat hanger” which is celebrating its 90th birthday as well as the other interesting stories which are included.

And after you’ve read the stories, perhaps you too, can sit down and write an article to be included in the next edition in August. There’s plenty of time, so get those thinking caps on and tell the world about your discoveries.

After the last few years of lock downs and restrictions, we are now on the road to recovery with meetings in the Hall and Guest speakers in the flesh. Day trippers are being planned and there is much enthusiasm amongst the volunteers and members, so, if you’re in need of a bit of company, come on down to the cottage and meet the happy people who are there and delve into the archives and add to your story and those of you forebears.

As we approach the end of this term, I’d like to thank all the committee and volunteer members who have put in so much time and effort to make things run smoothly. It’s been a difficult year but we’re coming out on top. We’re also looking at what changes can be made to bring the operational side of things more up to date and easier to use and to look at ways which we can use the spaces provided to our advantage. We have a great deal of clutter in several rooms and storage space is at a premium so much work is required. If you have any ideas that you think will benefit the Society, please let us know.

Rod Horton1280J
President CCFHS.

LATEST NEWS

Research Centre reopened on 8th March 2022:

The Research Centre will be open on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays for research from 9.30 a.m. until 2.00 p.m. also Thursday evenings 6.00 - 9.30 p.m.

General Meetings: Lions Hall, first Sat of the month from April 2022.

The Guest Speaker for this meeting is Dr. Andrew Kwong.



The AGM will be held in the Lions Hall East Gosford on **Saturday 7th May 2022.**

The General Meeting will commence at 1pm with Guest Speaker Mark Bundy from Rookwood and after a short recess following his talk the AGM will commence.

MEMBERSHIP

The Management Committee is entrusted with the appropriate operation of the Society and this includes the health and wellbeing/safety of the members while on the premises and during activities. By law we are required to comply with the directives of the Gov. Medical Authorities.

<https://www.nsw.gov.au/covid-19/business/rules-guidance/nsw-rules>

We are also required to comply with any directives applied by our landlord, Central Coast Council/Properties. We have to consider the general age and health of our members and it is with these facts we would prefer members be double vaccinated. If members wish they can wear a mask inside and distancing is suggested.



Webinar: House Histories (ST)

5 Apr 2022

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM

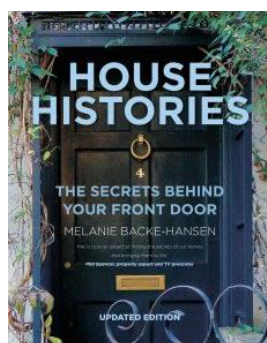
Location

Your Place!

Spaces left

337

<https://www.sag.org.au/event-4685063>



Join us in conversation with House Historian and author, Melanie Backe-Hansen, for an introduction on how to delve into house histories drawing from her experience of researching in the United Kingdom. We will be discussing some of her more fascinating case studies and her approaches to using both online and archival records.

Melanie is an Australian based in England and has written three books detailing her research on unravelling the secrets behind the bricks and mortar of our ancestors and has also appeared on British television programs including 'History of Britain in 100 Homes' with Phil Spencer and was the research consultant for David Olusoga's 'A House Through Time'. You can find out more about her work via: www.house-historian.co.uk.

Presented by: Melanie Backe-Hansen and Ruth Graham, SAG CEO

WEBINAR: Family history fundamentals - All Sessions Package

Just started your family history or need a refresher?



The Family History Fundamentals course is a three part online course being held on Tuesdays 12 April, 10 May and 14 June, from 7.00pm-9.00pm (AEST).

This session will cover the principles of family history research, types of sources and repositories, charting, search techniques and research planning.

Family History Fundamentals is a three part course. If you want to book for all three of the sessions with the course discount of \$75 members, \$110 non-members, please book using the event called WEBINAR: Family History Fundamentals - All Sessions Package.

Participants will receive a certificate of attendance.

The course will include an e-workbook for each of the three sessions which includes exercises, templates, checklists and list of resources.

Start 12 Apr 2022, End 14 Jun 2022, Schedule 3 sessions, Location Your place, Spaces left 378



Discover SLM: talk series

After Dark at the Hyde Park Barracks is back for April, transforming the UNESCO World Heritage-listed site with live music, demonstrations, workshops and tours.

The Barracks has a long history of skilled convict artisans passing through its gates, and for *After Dark* on 28 April you'll meet the people who are embracing traditional crafts but presenting them in contemporary ways.

Demonstrations & workshops

Enjoy fascinating demonstrations of glassblowing by glass artist [Mark Elliott](#), blacksmithing by Eveleigh Works, and live tattooing by [W T Norbert](#) and [C P Martin](#) from Tattoo Rosies, as well as banjo making and intimate performances in the hammock room with musician [Joe Glover](#).

Join perfumer and scentsmith Ainslie Walker for an olfactory experience of what life might have been like at the Barracks, learn Indigenous weaving techniques led by Ngiyampaa and Guringai artist and curator [Tarni Eastwood](#) and explore artisan-related objects from the [Hyde Park Barracks](#) collection on a tour with Sydney Living Museums curators.

Live music

Independent broadcaster FBi Radio have programmed another unforgettable musical line-up with dream pop duo [Royel Otis](#), two-piece outfit [Bridge Dog](#) and FBi radio DJ's.

Food and beverage

Warm up around the fire pits and enjoy delicious food and drinks from Nighthawk Diner and [Archie Rose](#) that will be available throughout the evening.



Female Convicts Research Centre Inc.

A not-for-profit organisation run entirely by volunteers

FCRC Seminar 2022: Sunday, 1 May 2022.

Venue: Hobart Town Hall

Topic: Young female convicts in Van Diemen's Land

Call for papers

Many female convicts were under the age of sixteen. What was their experience of convict life? How did they cope, forcibly separated from their families and everything that was familiar? What was their post-sentence experience?

The next Female Convicts Research Centre seminar will focus on the experiences of young female convicts in Van Diemen's Land. Little research has been done on this aspect of female convict history. If you would like to submit a paper, either about one convict, a group of convicts, or an aspect of the life of young female convicts (including health, work, marriage and motherhood), please send an abstract to submissions@femaleconvicts.org.au by 1 September 2021.

Regards
Dianne Snowden
President
Female Convicts Research Centre Inc



<https://www.rahs.org.au/rahs-news/>

The RAHS website link above will enable you to have many hours of interesting reading and a huge amount of information where there will be sure to be something to grab your attention.

Give it a go!!

April 27 @ 13:00 - 14:00

RAHS Special Event – Dear Prime Minister: Letters to Robert Menzies, 1949-1966

Online via Zoom

In this lecture, Martyn Lyons will discuss the letters sent to Robert Menzies during his second term as Prime Minister between 1949-1966.

Get Tickets Free 93 tickets left

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION



A Gold coin donation is gratefully received when attending the Research Centre to assist in offsetting the cost of online subscription sites. A Day Research fee for Non-Members is \$10.

All Saturday workshops will incur a fee of \$10 for members unless otherwise stipulated and must be paid for prior to the day.

OUR MEMBERSHIP FORM is available to download from the website. From the front page click on the ...read more information Tab under Membership on the banner and all will be revealed. Remember the website is www.centralcoastfhs.org.au

Please read the two additional questions on your membership form regarding the Rotary Raffle to the value of \$10.00 and/or a once per year donation of \$10.00 to the Equipment Maintenance Fund. You can choose to collect the Tickets from the Centre or send in a stamped addressed envelope and we will post them to you.

Next Issue

No. 33 August 2022 E-MUSTER

Deadline for articles for the April edition of the e-Muster
20th July, 2022.

THE MEMOIRS OF Jeannie Mitchell TAYLOR nee WYPER.



Jeannie Mitchell Wyper b 29 Jan 1908 at Tollcross, Glasgow, Scotland father Isaac, coal miner, mother Elizabeth Robertson a bleach field worker. Isaac arrived in Australia in 1913 followed by Elizabeth and 3 children in 1914. Family lived in areas on the South Coast, NSW and then Leichhardt areas of Sydney. Jeannie was a widow and approx.90 years of age when she wrote these memories. She died in 2008 aged 98.

Jeannie

My name is Jeannie Mitchell Taylor nee Wyper. My father's name was Isaac Wyper and my mother's name was Elizabeth Robertson. I had two sisters: Robina Watson and Elizabeth; and one brother, Robert. This is the story of my life as I remember it.

I have two children, John and Bruce, and they gave me lovely daughters-in-law and lovely grandchildren who I am very proud of and I let people know that I am proud of them.



Bruce, Syd, Jeannie & John - 1988

I will skip a few years now.

I lost my dear husband on the 21st January, 1989, aged 80 years.

We had a happy life together. We had hard times but I think that kept us together. We never went anywhere on our own, always together and always walked arm-in-arm. If my husband had lived another three months we would have been married sixty years. I miss him terribly and wish I could have gone with him. No one will ever know the tears I have shed since he has been gone. He will be gone 9 years this coming January 1998.

I would like to live until January 1998 as then I will be 90 years old and will be glad to go and meet him in Heaven.



I sold my home at Five Dock and am living at a retirement village at Bateau Bay. The place is beautiful.

I could never go back to Five Dock but I am not happy.

I have left all my good friends and I miss them very much. I could depend on them all if I needed help.

The people living near me are a lot younger than me and they do not have time for someone my age so I live in a world on my own. I don't know what I would do without Bruce and Ailsa; they have been really wonderful to me, I feel the sooner I go they will be able to live their life their way without worrying about taking me to doctors. I know they don't mind, but I feel it very much.

It has cost me a lot to write this history I have cried all the way through it.

I was always responsible for caring for my sister Elizabeth because she was blind and just before she died she said to me, "Jean, I was always sorry for you as you were never allowed to live a normal life; you had to take me everywhere you went." She died at the age of 50 with cancer.

I remember going for a walk with my sister Robina and we came to a house situated in large grounds and the two old ladies who lived there told us this story.

When they first came to the area the place was alive with snakes and that they would be in the house and curled around the bed posts. They were not afraid of them and said that if you left them alone they would not harm you. I would not be able to sleep with snakes in the room.

I am terrified of them. When we were young my sisters and I slept in the same bed and I would tell them stories to try and keep them awake as I was scared there would be a snake on the bed if I slept. I would be still telling the story and they would be sound asleep.

We also had bush rats and you could hear them scratching. The house we lived in was made of bush slabs and painted white - I think it was a lime mix. It was just a bush shack but it was comfortable. One night my parents and some friends were sitting on the front steps and saw something white coming towards them from the bush. They were all terrified as it kept coming closer. Mum said her hair was standing on end, but it turned out to be a nanny goat. We lived in two more houses at Coledale Heights and they were built of galvanised iron and were very hot in summer.

Saturday morning was always time to clean the silver. All of the cutlery had to be polished and the handles cleaned with a bath brush or monkey soap; then I had to do the brassware. For years I polished the candle sticks and the kettle.

My daughter -in -law now has the candle sticks and when I die will get the brass kettle.

I love the brass kettle and I hope that Ailsa will love it too. (John was later given the kettle by his mother.)

Friday night used to be late shopping night and it was a very social occasion. Everybody would be out, young and old alike. The streets would be crowded with people and you would meet friends and neighbours and stop to talk. When I was keeping company with Syd we would go out as well and we always had an ice cream sundae.

My sister Robina was living with me, and my other sister, Elizabeth, came down to spend the weekend and we three went out on the Friday night. Robina was getting married soon and we went to Grace Bros on Broadway and then into the city to buy items for her glory box.

On Saturday morning Robina went to Parramatta to stay with our mother for the weekend as she wanted Mum to go shopping with her to help her choose blankets.

After tea on Saturday Robina told mum she was in severe pain and mum told her to go with dad who was going to the dairy for the milk as she thought the walk may ease the pain. She only reached the gate and returned and said she was in agony.

There was no doctor close by and they did not have a telephone, so mum made her as comfortable as she could. She told mum and dad to go to bed as she would be alright. Early next morning she went into my parents' room and told them she had been sick all night and vomited a lot. She was in a lot of pain and said to my mother, "Please let me die, I can't take any more."

Mum got up and walked to our neighbours who had a phone and asked if they could ring a doctor and tell him it was urgent. The doctor said that he would come later after church. Mum asked the friend to ring back and tell him it was very urgent so he said he would come immediately, but he didn't - he went to church and when he came mum showed him the bucket where she had vomited and it was half full of blood. He said, "My God, I am too late," and my mother said, "Yes, you are too late."

I won't go into any more detail; she died that night at midnight. The following morning was the beginning of the trial of the man who had injured her. Six months previously she had been waiting with her girlfriend at the tram stop and a car had run into them and killed her friend instantly. Robina suffered internal injuries. (The trams ran down the centre of the road and the stops were marked by posts. The driver claimed he had not seen them and, although his passengers called out to him, he said he was deaf and did not hear them. He was not punished.)

In 1996, Bruce and Ailsa took me for a visit to my old school at Coledale and, except for the verandahs being closed in, it looked very nice. The headmaster allowed the children to ask me some questions about my school days and I couldn't help smiling at the things they asked.

One asked did I ride my skateboard to school and I told him there were no skateboards then. Another wanted to know if I rode my bike to school and I told them you were lucky if you had a pair of shoes to wear. Some early school records were there and I found my name and my brother's and sisters' enrolments. I must have been among the first pupils at the school. The headmaster told me that these records had been found by someone at the tip and been returned to the school.

Very few people had cars when I was a girl and when we decided to go for a picnic a crowd would hire a lorry. It would have seats around three sides and the rest would sit on the floor. Parents, children and young people would all mix together, play games and share in making sandwiches. I remember those as very happy days.

My father was a coal miner and when he told me the conditions they worked under it worried me very much. Although I was just a little girl, I was always very glad when my dad got home as you never knew when there could be an accident. Cave-ins were common. He told me that to reach the place they were digging they would have to crawl on hands and knees and his back would be covered in scars and when they healed there would be coal dust still under the skin. I would help to clean them. It is a wonder he didn't become poisoned as there was not much available to kill germs. I am surprised at how we managed with old fashioned treatments 100 years ago when you see the advances in medicine today.

Most houses had gas stoves and the gas meter was on the front verandah with a box around it made of wood with a flat top which you could sit on. This was where we all did our courting.

There was a song about it and it went like this:

"I love her in the morning and I love her at night,
Oh I love her; yes I love her, when the sun is shining bright.
I love her in the springtime and I love her in the fall,
But last night on the gas box I loved her best of all."

Sixty-seven years ago, that would be about 1936; most of your food shopping would be done from home.

The butcher, baker, fishmonger, milkman and green-grocer would drive around the streets, often in a horse and cart, and the grocer would take your order and deliver to your door. The postman would deliver mail twice a day. The clothes line would stretch from one side of the yard to the other and you used a clothes prop to push the lines of washing up so they did not touch the ground. The props were thin poles about 20 feet long and the men would drive around the streets in a horse and cart calling out "clothes props". The "bottle-o" would also drive around the streets collecting empty bottles and my son John, who was four years old, would give them to him. When the man asked him what he was saving the money for, he told him he wanted to buy a baby sister. The man went away laughing.

For meals, we ate a lot of stews and soup and, on Sunday, almost everybody had a baked dinner. Mum bought a leg of mutton, not lamb, as mutton was a very large leg.

You had it baked on Sunday; Monday you had cold meat and on Tuesday you had shepherd's pie. They were poor days but you did not have to worry about keeping your doors and windows locked to keep burglars out.

Washing was done in a tub and when it was time for blankets to be washed we kids would trample on them to make them clean. At school in the lower classes we used to write on a slate with a slate pencil and it made a scratchy noise; then you would clean it with a damp cloth.

Flies were a problem and there were a few ways to control them. Fly papers were a long curly paper coated both sides with something sticky and the flies would stick to it.

Very few people had cars when I was a girl and when we decided to go for a picnic a crowd would hire a lorry. It would have seats around three sides and the rest would sit on the floor. Parents, children and young people would all mix together, play games and share in making sandwiches. I remember those as very happy days.



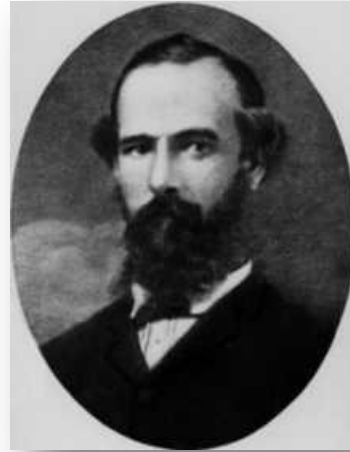
*Susan, Jeannie, Ailsa & Bruce
Front: Georgia & Sammi
2005*

Jeannie's Plaque at Rookwood Cemetery



Many thanks to **Member 596 Ailsa TAYLOR**, for sharing these memoirs with us. They have been a great insight into life in Australia through WWI and WWII and the trials and joys experienced throughout those years.

Nathaniel BUCHANAN 1826-1901.



I have accessed this story for publication in the Muster for 2 reasons:-

Firstly, because of its relevance and importance to Australian early pastoral history and secondly, because I would not have discovered it without investigating a family history link.

This was inspired by a DNA connection to a possible 1st or 2nd cousin whose name I was not familiar with.

In attempting to clarify this link I have learnt a great deal about my own family history following the BUCHANAN line.

This is a very interesting story about one brother, from the Charles Henry BUCHANAN family who emigrated to Australia in 1837 from Dublin, Ireland with their 5 sons: Charles Henry, William Frederick, Francis John, Nathaniel (Nat) and Andrew.

William Frederick was a notable pastoralist and gold prospector who became very wealthy through his diligent efforts and eventually acquired 19 properties across Queensland, New South Wales and the Northern Territory.

But as the old story goes, money isn't everything!

The 4th son Nathaniel died in 1901 with meagre material wealth but a huge legacy. As a keen overlander/explorer, he is credited with opening a great deal of Australian stock routes enabling others to "reap what he had sown".

My connection is through the youngest brother Andrew BUCHANAN's line.
Maureen PARKER

BUCHANAN, NATHANIEL (1826-1901), pastoralist and explorer, was born near Dublin, son of Lieutenant Charles Henry Buchanan and his wife Annie, née White.

Nat arrived in Sydney in January 1837 with his parents and four brothers, including William Frederick, and the family settled at *Rimbanda* in New England in 1839.

In 1849 Nat and his brothers Andrew and Frank joined the rush to the Californian goldfields; unlucky, they worked their way back on a windjammer and on their return had to surrender the station they had bought and worked before leaving. Nat took to droving between New South Wales and the Victorian goldfields.

In 1859 he joined the explorer, William Landsborough, and they set out from Rockhampton to look for grazing land. They investigated country watered by the tributaries of the Fitzroy and the Belyando Rivers and then headed further west.

They were down to boiled greenhide hobblestraps before a relief party found them but next year they reached their promised land: 1500 sq. miles (3885 km²) on the Thomson River. They secured it in 1863 when, with capital supplied by Robert Morehead of the Scottish Australian Co., Nat was sent as first manager and partner in the Landsborough River Co. to pioneer Bowen Downs station.

A few months earlier he had led a group of men to blaze a stock route from Port Denison (Bowen) to the runs, three hundred miles (483 km) inland.

He married in 1863 Catherine, daughter of John Gordon of Ban Ban station near Maryborough, and took his bride over the same track in a buggy and pair to the barely established station. She was then the only white woman in the district.



Nat continued to make excursions into the country north and west of Bowen Downs. His reputation as a bushman was already established and his sense of direction and locality was unrivalled, but he left no account of his journeys and hardly more of his activities as manager of Bowen Downs.

In 1864 the company sent him on a race against time and a Sydney syndicate to secure the best land on the Gulf near Burketown; he won, but within a few years the foothold was relinquished in the wake of fever and disease. Drought threatened the continuance of Bowen Downs and in 1867 Nat walked out, abandoning his one-eighth share to Morehead and the Scottish Australian Co. For a while he farmed a selection on the Bellinger River in New South Wales with his brother Andrew; he mined at Watson's Creek and then accepted the management of Craven station near Emerald in Queensland, and took his wife and son Gordon (b.1864) with him.

Nat was soon caught up in the renewed optimism of the 1870s when a run of good seasons sent pastoralists into the far western fringes of Queensland. As an experienced explorer and drover in the area west of the Georgina, Nat was given contracts to pilot cattle from Burketown to the head of that river.

In 1877 he and Sam Croker left Rocklands station to cross the Barkly Tableland and ride on to the Overland Telegraph Line, thus making known to city map speculators the result of their land gamble.

Almost no land was left for the two explorers when they telegraphed their claims for pastoral leases. Nat's next trip in 1878 was the famed first stocking of Glencoe station in the Northern Territory: 1200 cattle from Aramac in Queensland to the Adelaide River with no predefined route and no settlement for a thousand miles (1609 km).

On this journey he had three drays and seven white men. The cook was decapitated by hostile natives while making damper. Supplies diminished rapidly until Nat returned just in time with relief from Katherine, but the delays saved the calves and the mob increased during the journey.

The overlanders of the 1880s followed Nat's route from Burketown to the McArthur River, to the Roper and on to Katherine. Nat himself retraced his steps to Glencoe with 20,000 cattle for C. B. Fisher in 1880.

With the Gordon brothers, as on the previous trip, he organized the move in ten separate parties, each with about seven men; again there were threats of native attack, hazards and delays of flood and dry seasons, crocodiles and fever. He was first to take cattle into the Kimberley's, crossing the Victoria River country with 4000 head to stock the Ord River station in 1883. This was the route used by the motley of gold seekers flocking to the Kimberley fields in 1886, although yet another track, the Murrarji which was shorter by four hundred miles (1036 km), had been pioneered that year by Nat with his son and Sam Croker.

Nat and the Gordon brothers took up Wave Hill on the Victoria River in 1883, one of the first stations established west of the Telegraph Line, in rich but remote cattle country; their nearest neighbour was two hundred miles (518 km) away.



Wave Hill, Kimberleys.

Although then in partnership with his wealthy brother, W. F. Buchanan, Nat's fortune was still unmade, and his search for ways of solving the enormous problems facing the East Kimberley pastoralist was characteristically practical and personal.

In 1890 he shipped thirty Wave Hill bullocks from Derby to Singapore, accompanying the shipment himself but returning with a profit too small to justify a second venture.

Two years later he went to the Murchison goldfields, blazing a route which became known as Buchanan's Track, but the hoped-for market was closed to East Kimberley cattle next year.

In 1894 Nat surrendered Wave Hill to his brother. He lived for a while at Flora Valley, Chatswood, the property taken up by his son in 1887, but he went on to mine at Mount Bradley in the Kimberley's and later to manage Ord River station for a year.

At 70 he made his last big expedition, exploring land between Tennant's Creek and Sturt Creek in an effort to find a route from the Barkly Tableland to Western Australia.

The South Australian government provided him with camels, and his only assistant was a native driver who showed signs of deserting and at night had to be handcuffed to the leading camel. No practicable route was found. Nat made other shorter trips, searching for mica east of Tanami and exploring south of Hooker's Creek until in 1899, acting on doctor's orders to leave the area; he bought Kenmuir, a farm on Dungowan Creek near Tamworth. There twenty-five acres (10 ha) of lucerne kept him active until he died on 23 September 1901, survived by his wife and son.

Nat became a legend well before his death, for his feats of droving, his bushcraft and especially his peculiar powers of observation. For instance, in Landsborough's terse chronicle of daily distances, directions and temperatures, it is Nat's recorded comment on the flocks of red-breasted large parrots, small white cockatoos and top knot pigeons they sighted that brings the arid journey to life.

His explorations brought him few acquisitions. Although, as claimed by the *Bulletin*, 9 July 1881, he perhaps helped to settle more new country than any other man in Australia, he died with almost none in his possession.



Kenmuir near Dungowan River

Select Bibliography:

C. Fetherstonhaugh, *After Many Days* (Syd, 1918); G. Buchanan, *Packhorse and Waterhole* (Syd, 1933); M. Durack, *Kings in Grass Castles* (London, 1959); D. S. Macmillan, *Bowen Downs, 1863-1963* (Syd, 1963); *Queenslander*, 6 May 1876; *Cummins & Campbell's Monthly Magazine*, Mar-May 1948; William Landsborough notebooks (State Library of Queensland). More on the resources

Author: Sally O'Neill

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HAPPY 90TH BIRTHDAY!

John Bradfield, one of Australia's most famous engineers had been working on a project to build a monumental bridge over Sydney Harbour, since he proposed it in 1912. But World War I had intervened.



By March 1922, plans were advanced, and he was in New York on his way to Britain when the future of the entire project was plunged into doubt.

The Labor Premier of NSW, James Dooley – a champion of the vastly expensive plan to build a bridge over the finest harbour in the world – lost the 1922 state election to George Fuller, leader of the Nationalist Party.

It is believed that Bradfield's confidential secretary, Kathleen Butler, had telegraphed Bradfield to warn the Fuller government was sending an official telegram ordering his return to Sydney to cancel the bridge.

But Bradfield never received a telegram; he had already left for London. The rest is history. The bridge was officially opened on March 19, 1932 – in controversial circumstances. Francis de Groot, a member of the fascist New Guard of Australia paramilitary group, burst onto the scene on horseback and slashed the ribbon before the Labor NSW premier Jack Lang could do so.

Since that moment, the bridge has gone on to become an icon recognised around the world.

Kathleen Butler is barely remembered today. But in the 1920s, she became known as 'The Bridge Girl' – she even went overseas with engineers from Bradfield's team to review tenders for the construction process. She was something of a celebrity, not just for her achievements but because she had succeeded as a young woman – and a devout Catholic – at a time in Australia when being female was as limiting to a career as not being Protestant.

Now her contribution to the successful construction of ‘The Coathanger’ is being revived, thanks in part to the University of Sydney’s decision to digitise 596 photos of the bridge’s construction from Bradfield’s three personal albums, which he had entrusted to his loyal companion and protégé in 1927.

“We don’t know exactly how Kathleen ended up with Bradfield’s albums,” says Julie Sommerfeldt, manager of rare books and special collections at the University of Sydney Library. But we do know she remained friends with Bradfield, his wife and daughter long after the bridge was completed.”

“We forget how the bridge dominated the Sydney skyline in the 1920s and ’30s. It remained the tallest construction in the city until the late 1960s. Building it was pivotal in creating a sense of national pride in Australia’s technical ability to deliver something world-class.”



National Museum of Australia photo collection

So, who was The Bridge Girl? And why is she so important – not only for the decade she spent working alongside Bradfield but also for her contribution to women’s emancipation in Australia?

Her story follows.....

Kathleen Muriel Butler was born in Lithgow, NSW in February 1891, one of seven children to an English father and an Irish mother. She spent her high school years at a convent in the Blue Mountains before training as a clerk/typist and getting a job at Lithgow’s iron works (which she later said had given her “a practical education”).

In 1910, aged 19, she joined the NSW Department of Works, transferring two years later to Bradfield's newly created department, which was charged with building a Sydney metro system and a harbour bridge.

Butler began as his filing clerk and secretary but under Bradfield's tutelage she learnt far more about the practicalities of engineering than she would have done had she been one of 115 women to emerge from the University of Sydney with science degrees by 1920.

Alex Gooding, director of Gooding Davis Consultancy Pty. Ltd. and a blogger on transport matters became intrigued by Butler's story while writing a series of articles on Bradfield.

"Kathleen Butler deserves her own biography," Gooding says. "Obviously Bradfield trusted her, giving her huge levels of responsibility. I don't think any other woman in Australia at that time had anything like the authority Bradfield gave her."

"And she had no formal engineering training. Ironically, had she studied engineering she probably wouldn't have risen so high. In London, she gave a talk to women engineers, most of whom struggled to find employment."

Confidential secretary may not sound like much of a role, "but effectively she was Bradfield's senior project manager", Gooding explains. "Not only did Butler prepare the specifications and deputise for Bradfield in dealing with prospective tenderers, she also helped review the responses and led the team which fine-tuned the successful tenderer's plans."

"Plus she wrote over a dozen articles under her name about the bridge's construction using Bradfield's notes, mainly for *The Sydney Mail*."

Gooding says his favourite line of Butler's is a particularly lyrical description of the prospective bridge, which was by then known as 'Sydney's Iron Lung' because of the employment it offered to impoverished families in the 1920s and '30s.

"Our harbour arch of 1650 feet will, with a majestic sweep of steel, gracefully span the harbour and add to its natural beauty," Butler wrote.

Unsure how to deal with such an unusual single woman who surfed, played tennis and enjoyed dancing when she wasn't studying engineering documents, the era's male-dominated media nicknamed Butler 'The Bridge Girl' and 'Godmother of the Bridge'.

1924 was the zenith of her career. In March, Butler "was the only woman present" when then NSW minister of works, Richard Ball, signed the contract appointing the British firm Dorman Long & Co to build the bridge.

In April that year she is photographed leaving for London, leading a team of three engineers charged with finalising the design details and specifications.

“*The Australasian Post* noted she was now on a salary of £500,” Gooding says. “That’s extraordinary – nearly half of what Bradfield himself was being paid.”

With so much talent and experience, her career should have been assured. But in 1927, the irresistible force that was Kathleen Butler hit the unmovable object all women of that era faced if they worked for the NSW government. She was about to marry and had to resign.



Her husband, Maurice Hagarty, was a Queensland grazier, six years her junior. (Their only daughter, Anne, was born in 1931 when Butler was 40.)

Bradfield presided over Butler’s leaving ceremony, singing her praises and presenting her with what would now be considered an impractical token of esteem: a grandfather clock.

His regard for her is most obvious in the photographic record purchased in 2015 by the University of Sydney Library to complement its extensive collection of archival material donated by Bradfield’s son, Bill.

The Sydney Harbour Bridge went on to be completed without further input from Kathleen Hagarty. But the records show she was in Sydney on March 19, 1932, and it seems unthinkable that Bradfield would not have invited her to the opening ceremony.

Her unique contribution to the construction of an Australian icon lives on.

NEED TO KNOW

The Bradfield albums are available for the public to explore at the University of Sydney’s digital library site, digital.library.sydney.edu.au/ also The Financial Review 18/3/2022 Steve Meacham

The words of the poem **“My Country”** by **Dorothea Mackellar** ring so true particularly over the past few years, as to what Australians have experienced and survived.

**“I love a sunburnt country,
a land of sweeping plains,
Of ragged mountain ranges,
of droughts and flooding rains.
I love her far horizons,
I love her jewel-sea,
Her beauty and her terror-
the wide brown land for me!”**

Whilst many Australians have recently suffered through fires and now flooding, it is not a new event as the following story shows:-

A Truly Great First Nations Person, "YARRI"

from a Lateline special that was shown on the ABC in 2003. It was titled, “A Frontier Story”

This true story focuses on what may be the first act of 'Reconciliation' in Australian history. The heroism exhibited by two Aboriginal tribesmen, Yarri and Jacky Jacky, in a bid to save the lives of many flood bound white settlers, is legendary. Their courage pushed the boundaries of human endeavour by any standards.

The first township of Gundagai sprang up around the short stretch of Murrumbidgee River where it was possible to cross in safety for many miles in either direction. During periods of low river flows, bullock teams and horse drawn wagons were able to carry settlers and their possessions across the river here, at 'the crossing', as they headed southward in search of new lands.

It was logical, therefore, for businesses to start up around 'the crossing', in order to service the ever-increasing number of travellers who were passing through. At first, tents were pitched and later as commerce thrived more substantial buildings were erected along the river flats and banks. The township was also surrounded by an anabranch of the Murrumbidgee known as Morley's Creek on the northern boundary of the floodplain.

Sometimes travellers had to hold up for days at a time waiting for periodic flood events to subside, in order for them to be able to cross the river in safety. These floods were of relatively minor significance. Each time the water would peak to a height of about half a metre inside the buildings. The residents became used to taking refuge in the lofts which had been designed for this purpose. Inns and hotels conducted a roaring trade accommodating guests who were temporarily unable to leave town. Doctors, dentists, shopkeepers, merchants, blacksmiths, saddlers, wheelwrights, carpenters, barbers, horse breakers, and labourers were all in constant demand for work.

The white settlers refused to heed the dire warnings of the local aborigines who told them to relocate their buildings to higher ground on the hills surrounding the river. The tribes were adamant that the 'Mother of All Floods' would eventually wash the whole town away, taking all with it. With 10,000 years or more of local knowledge, the aborigines knew that the township was built on a floodplain and that it was only a matter of time before a catastrophe would occur.

In 1844 the river actually rose to a peak of a height just over a metre inside the buildings. This should have signalled a foreboding of things to come. The residents were again forced to take refuge in the lofts and even the rooftops of some buildings. Misguided, they believed that this flood was the biggest that the town would ever experience. In spite of being warned to the contrary, they naively held to the view that the aborigines were trying to scare them off their traditional lands. In 1831 the government surveyor had even drawn up proper streets with housing blocks for Gundagai on the river flats.

By 1852 Gundagai had a white population of 250 people. There were residential buildings as well as shops, public buildings, a police station with a lock-up, banks, hotels, a school house, a flour mill and even a punt to ferry passengers and their wagons and carts across the river.

However in June 1852 it rained for nearly three weeks non-stop. On Thursday morning, June 24, Gundagai was completely isolated as both Murrumbidgee River and Morley's Creek were swollen with rising flood waters. By later afternoon of the same day most of the floodplain containing the township was under water. When the rain stopped, people thought the worst was over unaware that the full force of the floodwater in the upper catchment area was yet to hit the town. They were complacent enough to reject offers by the punt-owner to ferry them to the safety of the higher ground on the southern side of the river.



Morley Creek floodplain today

On Thursday night the water flowed through the houses at heights of above 2 metres, which had never before been experienced by the townsfolk. On Friday morning, June 25, people were climbing out of their lofts and on to the rooftops. Several drowned in the process. Logs and debris from upstream were cascading down the river at frightening speeds crashing into houses. The punt crashed into a tree whilst attempting to rescue victims and was destroyed, killing all but one aboard. For all attempts it was now too dangerous for rowboats to be of any use at all.

That day the lone figure of full-blood aborigine name Yarri, crouching down on his knees on the bottom of his frail bark canoe, headed out into the flooded Murrumbidgee which was by now a kilometre wide. His canoe could only hold himself and one other. Again and again, Yarri forced his way across the raging torrent. Without the courage and superb skill of Yarri, the canoe would have been smashed to pieces or sunk.

One by one, he rescued flood victims and brought them to land. As darkness closed in people were forced to cling the highest rooftops and chimneys or swim to the nearest treetops still above the water. By Friday night the river was rapidly rising at the rate of over a metre an hour. Many families were separated never to be reunited again. With soaked clothing many succumbed to hyperthermia and frost bite due to the freezing cold winter temperatures.

In the early hours of Saturday June 26, the river peaked at around 6 metres and had swollen to a width of nearly 2 kilometres. Guided only by the cries for help and the moonlight, Yarri continued to fight his way through the ferocious waters skilfully paddling to avoid the surging logs, debris and dead cattle. One mistimed stroke would have meant sudden death. With tireless endeavour he continued to pluck one survivor after another from treetops and chimneys and ferry them back to land.

By Saturday morning Gundagai was no more. The only building to survive the flood intact was the flour mill on Morley's Creek. On Saturday another brave aborigine called Jacky Jacky, joined the rescue bid, in a larger bark canoe which could hold more than one person. He was able to rescue several people at a time.

Yarri and Jacky Jacky continued to rescue those who were still clinging to life in treetops during the night and through the next day Sunday June 27. The epic rescue took three days and two nights of exhausting effort. Yarri had rescued 49 people and Jacky Jacky another 20. History does not record names of all the people rescued or drowned because there were many strangers passing through town. Only about one third of the bodies were recovered. However the number of lives lost was estimated to be between 80 and 100.

Yarri and Jacky Jacky saved 69 people between them. They were motivated to do so out of love for another human, who was in a time of need irrespective of race or colour.

They were well aware of the white settler's suspicions and folly in not heeding the aboriginal warnings. They knew such a disaster was inevitable. The rescues are an important demonstration of the common humanity and goodwill that the Aborigines had towards the white settlers in spite of the diseases, depopulation and social disruption they had suffered since the arrival of the Europeans.

Many Gundagai descendants owe their very existence today to the bravery of these two great heroes. If the situation had been reversed one can only hope that the white settlers would have risked their own lives to save the aborigines.

For their efforts Yarri and Jacky Jacky were presented with inscribed bronze medallions to be worn around their necks. Both are now exhibited in the Gundagai museum. Jacky Jacky's was lost for many years until it was unearthed by a farmer was preparing to cultivate one of his paddocks.

In 1990 the medallion awarded to Yarri was handed to the Gundagai Museum by a resident of Cootamundra who found it in an old house in Sutton Street, 25 years earlier.

For the remainder of their lives, Yarri and Jacky Jacky were entitled to demand sixpences and other trifles conducive to Aboriginal comfort from all Gundagai residents - which demands, when in reason, were not refused.

Although Yarri was well treated by most white people as he got older, he did not get the same respect from everyone, as an article in the Gundagai Times dated 29 June 1879 shows:

“A gentleman, who passed through South Gundagai on Monday, complains that he saw some individuals whom, he supposes, would expect to be considered men, maltreating and teasing an unfortunate blackfellow, whom he subsequently ascertained was Old Yarri. He reminds us that this blackfellow was instrumental in saving the lives of many white people in the disastrous flood of 1852, and that the only thanks he received was to be kicked around by a lot of white rascals. Through the passing of time we have come to respect the Aboriginal people of this land and we hope for the future that Australia will be as one.”

Jacky Jacky's actual date of death is not known, however he pre-deceased Yarri. He was buried under an orange tree near the homestead owned by Peter Stuckey at South Gundagai. At that time Jacky Jacky was employed as a station hand on the property. His wife was grief stricken and sat under a tree further up the hill in Eagle Street, where she commenced the death chant. She too died within a few days. Unfortunately, the orange tree and surrounds were demolished by the Department of Main Roads at the time of the highway by-pass in 1976. Jacky Jacky's burial site is now covered by the Hume Highway near where the present McDonalds Restaurant is situated.

Yarri's wife, Black Sally, died on a walkabout in March 1873. Yarri died on July 24 1880 and is buried in the Catholic Section of the North Gundagai General Cemetery.



Today there are a number of monuments in Gundagai which honour the memory of Yarri. The flood plain from which he brought so many people to land is now called Yarri Park and the bridge over Morley's Creek marks the spot where he brought them ashore. Descendants of Fred Horsley who was saved by Yarri erected a sundial in town in his honour and also called one of their rural properties "Yarri".

The flood plain is now called Yarri Park.

Lateline ABC c.2003

A Different Type of Tree.

I am a tree lover, both my genealogical family tree and also the horticultural variety. I often gaze upon particularly beautiful specimens around the Central Coast.

This e-Muster I have included the beautiful flowering gum which is directly outside our Research Centre at East Gosford. It is spectacularly beautiful.



Also, a huge Liquid Amber tree situated in Wamberal. There were three of them in a row in the 1990's but unfortunately due to house construction only one remains.



I am inviting you to share a tree with us in each issue of the *E-muster*, one that has enraptured you or one that is your favourite. Please email details and a photograph to our email address and we will feature them in our Journal.

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