

Tomaree Museum Association

NEWSLETTER # July 2023

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT



Since our last Annual General Meeting and in accordance with our constitution we must advise that there has been a change to our committee.

Ross Carroll stood down as our Database and Web Manager. Ross has done a brilliant job setting up and managing

our webpage and database as well as providing Information Technology (IT) support to the committee.

We thank him very much for that support. Luckily, he remains a 'friend of the committee' and continues to assist with Bunnings BBQs and other tasks as they arise.

Fortunately, Noel Shang has volunteered his services as Database and Web Manager.

Noel has a wealth of experience in development of websites and digital marketing. He has coordinated corporate exhibits and worked at international trade shows throughout Australia and internationally.

- Doug Cross

Welcome Noel



A big welcome to Noel Shang, Database and Web Manager

Our committee

Office Bearers:

Chairman: Doug Cross
Secretary: Mary Sillince
Treasurer: Jennifer Gray
Database & Web Manager: Noel Shang
Historian & Grants Manager: Chris Peters

Ordinary Association Committee Members:

Asst Secretary: Elizabeth Warne
Media & PR: Nigel Dique
Volunteers co-ordinator: Warwick Mathieson

Special Purpose Group:

Graphic Design & Event co-ordinator: Gabriele Carrick
Support: Suzie Sturman

In pursuit of a permanent museum site



Tomaree Lodge

As you know, we are focused primarily on locating a permanent site for our regional museum and to that end I continue to represent you on the board of the Tomaree Headland Heritage Group (THHG).

The main aim of THHG is to work with the community to ensure the Tomaree Lodge site is transitioned to Port Stephens for appropriate community uses, one of which is the establishment of a regional museum at Tomaree Lodge.

As reported in the last newsletter, following a judgement in the Land and Environment Court of NSW, the State Government has re-affirmed its commitment to retain the Tomaree Lodge site for community use.

We are now waiting on the NSW Government to release its recommendations on the way forward based on the Concept Plan that was finalised prior to the election.

THHG has recently written to the responsible Minister and our local member, The Hon Kate Washington MP, seeking a meeting on the updated Government plans for the site.

Tomaree Headland is an iconic site on the eastern seaboard of Australia and deserves a world class museum and cultural centre while preserving the historical heritage of the area. Hence many organisations and the local community are looking forward to the decision by the NSW Government.

I will continue to keep you informed of developments. In the interim, we retain the use of Bobs Farm Hall which is currently storing the Carroll Collection of historical artifacts and other items that have been donated.

- Doug Cross



Exhibits at Bobs Farm Hall & fun assembling the new mannequin

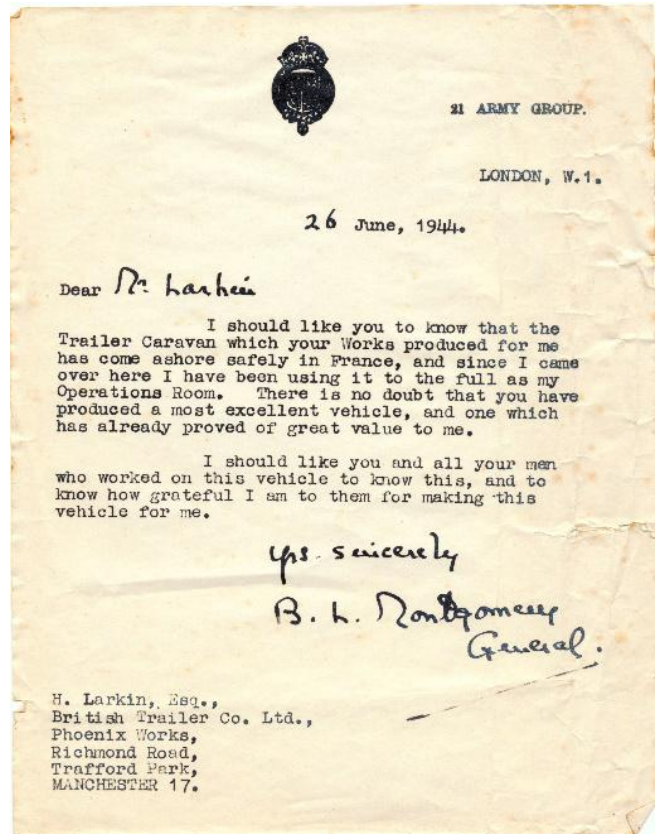
Artefact recalls Monty's makeshift Operations Room post D Day

We recently received a very interesting WWII artifact from Mr Rick Thomas (via Doug Curtiss). It is a letter written and signed by English General B L Montgomery (Monty) to the British Trailer Company Ltd, thanking them for the caravan they built for him to use in Europe just after D Day.

In the letter Montgomery states that it is a 'most excellent vehicle' and he is 'using it to the full as his Operations Room in France'.

The letter is supported by a photograph of Monty in his Operations Room caravan, accompanied by three other men. It is possible that the person in military uniform standing to Monty's left is his batman or a member of his staff.

If anyone can identify these men, we would be most appreciative.



*General Montgomery
in his makeshift
Operations Room*

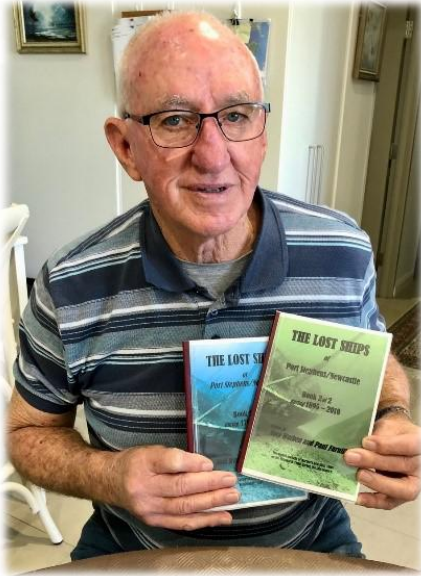


If you own or know of someone who owns museum quality artifacts relevant to our region, please let the committee know as we are always on the lookout to increase our collection.

Port Stephens Historical Society Inc., TMA amalgamate

The Port Stephens Historical Society (PSHS) committee and members have decided to request incorporation of their society with the Tomaree Museum Association.

The PSHS was established in April 1967 and has compiled 56 years of research recording the history of the Port Stephens area.



*DENNIS
CORR,
PRESIDENT,
PORT
STEPHENS
HISTORICAL
SOCIETY
WITH TWO OF
THE BOOKS
PUBLISHED BY
THE SOCIETY*

Collected artifacts include extensive photographic records and files in electronic format, held in rooms at the Salamander Library. Additionally, a large number of historical artifacts, the majority of which were donated by the Carroll family, is on display in the 'Museum' rooms at the Inner Light heritage cottage at Nelson Head.

Your committee has researched the risks, responsibilities and financial impact of this amalgamation and unanimously voted to recommend the amalgamation to the TMA membership.

A TMA Special General Meeting was held on 29 June 2023 inviting all financial members to vote on a resolution to amalgamate PSHS with the Tomaree Museum Association.

This resolution was carried and the amalgamation process is expected to be completed by mid-August this year.



Inner Light cottage

Pop-up museum exhibitions prove popular



ANZAC
exhibition

ANZAC display success

The recent ANZAC exhibition displayed for three weeks either side of ANZAC Day at the Port Stephens Visitor Information Centre (VIC) was, by all accounts, a resounding success!

As a result, Port Stephens Council has approved a program of four further TMA exhibitions to be staged during the next 12 months:

- 1-31 August 2023
Lighthouse Exhibition
- 1-30 November 2023
Ferry Exhibition
- 1-28 February 2024
Fishing Industry Exhibition
- 1-30 April 2024
ANZAC Day Exhibition

Members will be advised of details as each exhibition is finalised.

Fundraising sizzles

While our Sunday Bunnings BBQ sausage sizzles continue to provide an excellent source of revenue to pay for our organisation's day-to-day operational expenses, we are deeply indebted to our Grants Manager Chris Peters (right) for his fine efforts in gaining a number of monetary grants for TMA.



ANZAC poster



TMA Historian
and Grants Manager
Chris Peters

Multimedia equipment

The most recent grant has enabled us to purchase multimedia equipment. Grants awarded earlier this year were used to purchase new illuminated exhibition cabinets, two of which were on display at our ANZAC exhibition, together with a life-sized mannequin dressed in a WWII uniform supplied by Fortress Newcastle.

Volunteers needed for Bunnings BBQ shifts

Many hands make light work



Please consider helping out at our BBQ fund raisers. Donating just four hours of your time would greatly assist our hard-working friendly team.

If you can help, please call Warwick on 0418 635095. *One free sanger with each shift – how can you resist?*

When we meet

TMA committee and interested members continue to meet on a regular basis at the Nelson Bay Community College, usually around 5pm to allow those members who work full time and those with young children to attend. All our members are most welcome – just email the Association to let us know you will be joining us: tomareemuseum@gmail.com

Annual membership fees now due

The annual cost to remain a financial member of the TMA falls due on 1 July. Membership is only \$10 per year and payments can be made easily by EFT.

Acc Name: Tomaree Museum
Association
BSB: 650 000
Acc Number: 538738509

Feel free to pay for more than one year and don't forget to leave your name in the description.



Cheers for now,

Doug Cross
Chairman

One final word...As editor of this newsletter I'm on the lookout for interesting articles and pictures for future editions. If you discover anything relevant to TMA's purpose, please contact me at nigedique@me.com or phone 0423 024 819.
Nigel Dique.

But there's more...

What follows is the first of a series of illuminating historical articles by John Clark about the people and events that shaped Port Stephens, including James Cook's log entry as he sailed north past the entrance to the bay. Read and enjoy!

Our noteworthy past

First in a series by John Clarke



How Cook's arrival changed everything

Living in the peaceful village of Fingal Bay, surrounded by incredible natural beauty, it is difficult to visualise the area as a centre of great volcanic activity, bubbling and hissing lava, heaving earth movement and giant blocks tumbling into the sea.

In the time of great change, the islands off our coastline were part of the mainland.

When finally, the land settled the aboriginal people arrived, roaming the beaches and headlands spearing fish, collecting oysters, gathering shellfish crabs, lobsters, pipis and abalone.

Ample evidence, through the contents of their middens, is available to suggest that aboriginal folk hunted and fished in and around Fingal Bay tens of thousands of years ago.

I am very respectful of the Worimi people and their culture and feel their very presence.

In his book "The Fatal Shore" author Robert Hughes writes of the arrival of the sailing ships - "The Aborigines and the fauna around them had possessed the landscape since time immemorial, and no other human eye had seen them. Now the protective glass of distance broke, in an instant, never to be restored."

How true.

Log entry

Things began to change in a big way for the aboriginal people on Friday 11 May 1770 when an entry into his log was made by Captain James Cook, which reads - "Winds southerly in the day and in the night westerly, a gentle breeze and clear weather at 4 p.m. Passed at a distance of one mile, low rocky point which I name Point Stephens.

"On the northern side of this point is an inlet which I call Port Stephens. That appeared to me from the mast head to be sheltered from all winds.

Three small islands

"At the entrance lay three small islands, I think two of which are of tolerable height and on the main near the shore are some high round hills that make it appear like islands in passing the bay at this distance at two or three miles from the shore."

The "three small islands" mentioned in Cook's log are Boondelbah, Cabbage Tree and Little Islands.

Systematic mapping

Cook's entry was but a small part of his systematic mapping of the east coast of Australia as he sailed north. The First Fleet was to arrive around seventeen years later.

Early in his travels, Point Stephens and Port Stephens were both named in honour of Captain Cook's mate, Sir Philip Stephens, Secretary to the Admiralty, a personal friend of Cook who had recommended him for command of the voyage.

It was not until 1845 however that the name "Fingal Bay" first appeared on a map prepared by Naval Officer and Hydrographer Captain Phillip Parker King (1791-1856).

Why Fingal?

Why the name Fingal? you may ask - as I have. It seems that the origins are Scottish Gaelic - Fionnghall meaning "fair haired

stranger". From here there seems to be some difference of opinion involving - 'The Poems of Ossian the Son of Fingal' translated by James Macpherson in 1762.

Scottish warrior

Fingal was a great Scottish warrior - a giant.

There's more - In 1772, while on a natural history expedition to Iceland, naturalist Sir Joseph Banks, who we know, discovered an amazing cave on Staffa, an island off the coast of Scotland.

This cave is known as Fingal's Cave which inspired Felix Mendelssohn's Overture - "Fingal's Cave".

Back to the point. The coastline in that region, off the coast of Scotland, is similar to the local coastline around Fingal Bay.

Identical geology

The geology around Fingal's Cave is almost identical to that at Fingal Head on the Far North Coast of NSW. I had been told that the unique rock structure, which resembles a staircase, was used by Fingal, the warrior, to emerge from the sea.

In my humble opinion, Fingal - Port Stephens - was so named as it was similar to the landform in Scotland noted by Sir Joseph Banks. Banks, incidentally, was on board the "Endeavour" when she sailed by in 1770. Don't quote me.