

PART I

1. Introduction

Gerringong, on the south coast of New South Wales, is bounded by Mount Pleasant and Omega in the north, Rose Valley, Willow Vale and Foxground in the west, and Broughton Village, Toolijooa, Harley Hill, Gerroa and Seven Mile Beach in the south. Set amidst green rolling hills that slope down to the sea, the area has long been associated with dairy farming and other agricultural production, and is also known as a tourism and residential location. The township features a number of historic buildings and retains a village atmosphere that makes it attractive to holidaymakers and residents alike. Gerringong also boasts a rich history, the evidence of which can be found in the Gerringong Historical Museum, and on heritage walks around the township.

Originally the country of the Wodi Wodi people of the Dharawal nation, European settlers first came to take advantage of the lush pastures when William Smith was granted 600 acres of land at Omega in 1825. Cedar cutting was the first industry in the area, but was soon overtaken by dairying, which continues to this day. The first permanent residents of the area, whose descendants still live here, were the Hindmarsh family of 'Alne Bank'. Michael Hindmarsh was granted 640 acres in 1827. Further settlers arrived and, in 1850 the first church, a Methodist chapel, was built, followed by the Presbyterian Church in 1854 and an Anglican Church in 1855. On 17 January 1854 Gerringong was proclaimed a village. Three years later, in 1857, the first post office opened and Gerringong became the official name of the locality. A public school, more churches and hotels followed, and on 24 April 1871 Gerringong and Broughton Vale became a separate municipality.¹ In 1888 the Gerringong Co-operative Dairy Society commenced operations, and was to become the 'oldest continually operating dairy co-operative in Australia', operating until 2007.²



Steps in Gerringong's progress in a display in Gerringong Historical Museum.

These and many other stories about the Gerringong area can be found in the Gerringong Historical Museum conducted by the Gerringong & District Historical Society. The Museum functions as both an interpretive centre for local history, with a

wide range of objects on display; and as a research centre for historians of the locality and others interested in finding out about its past.

2. Methodology

2.1 Consultation with owners of the collection

Over the course of her three-day visit from 18-20 April 2016, the consultant viewed and photographed the collection. She also held discussions with the Committee as a whole, and more informal discussions with individual members on specific aspects of the collection. Over the course of her visit she became familiar with the Museum's major themes and the objects that have been used to interpret them.

A folder of documents including the Society's Constitution and other aspects of the Museum's management was given to the consultant during her visit; and she was subsequently sent a copy of the Strategic Plan 2015-2018 (see *Appendix*). She was also shown the collection management database and was provided with a sample object entry.

2.2 Collection research in consultation with owners

The consultant had many discussions with volunteers at the Museum in regard to collection items, in particular with the Museum's Research Officer, Margaret Sharpe, who has provided information on specific items and collections verbally and in emails. Colin Sharpe also provided information, particularly in relation to the aviation displays and Sir Charles Kingsford Smith's trans-Tasman flight in 1933. Bobbie Miller, the Society's Publicity Officer, kindly provided photos and information relating to the students and teachers who created the mural of a dairying landscape that is a distinguishing feature of the Museum. The consultant also spent a day with Margaret Pottie visiting sites related to Jane Binks and her diary. She would like to thank all these people for their valued contributions to this report and for generously sharing their knowledge of Gerringong's history.

2.3 Number of visits to the collection to work on the assessment and understand the collection

As mentioned above in 2.1, the consultant visited Gerringong Museum for three days in April 2016. She made a return visit on 28-29 July specifically to research the Jane Binks Diary (see *PART II: Detailed assessments of individual items and collections*). On 10 September she gave an address, 'Objects, stories, identity: and the Gerringong Museum' at the Gerringong Museum's 25th Anniversary celebration. Her address focused on the significant themes and objects in the museum. It is available on the Society's website.



(Left to right) Consultant Roslyn Russell, first President of Gerringong & District Historical Society, Ken Miller, and the Society's current President, Helen McDermott, at the 25th Anniversary celebration of Gerringong Museum, 10 September 2016. Photo by Tony Butz.

3. History and significance of the organisation and its collection

3.1 History and description of the collection



Gerringong Historical Museum is located at 10 Blackwood Street, Gerringong.

History of the Gerringong Historical Museum and its collection

The genesis of the Gerringong Historical Museum and its collection was a meeting held on 18 May 1981 at which the Gerringong & District Historical Society was formed. The minutes of the meeting record the desire of the Society 'to be involved in generally interesting historical ideas, finding out what information we have in the community and sharing it', and suggested that members bring along 'articles of historic interest'.³

Five years later, in 1986, the Society decided to build a museum, although it had limited funds. Kiama Council gave the Society permission to use the current site, and the Society received a \$20,000 grant from the state government to build the Museum.

The slab was poured on 18 September 1987 and, with assistance from local and regional businesses, the Gerringong Apex Club and Society volunteers who gave

850 hours of voluntary labour, the building was erected. Clive Emery led the project, and the Museum owes much to the cabinet-making and model-creating skills of Eric Wagstaff, whose creations are a distinctive feature of this Museum.

The Museum was officially opened on 21 September 1991 by Mr Colin Hollis MLA. President Mr Clive Emery welcomed the large crowd of 200 people, and the Gerringong Public School children sang to mark the occasion. Six Kiama High School art students created a mural for the Museum's first exhibition on the Dairying Industry (see below). The collection has been built up by many donations over the Museum's 25 year life.

Other highlight exhibitions at the Museum have included 'The Sporting Clubs of Gerringong', 'Family Histories' and '150 Years of Weddings', to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the naming of Gerringong. The Museum has also produced a DVD, *Gerringong: Then and Now*, which consists of 700 historical and contemporary photographs.⁴



The mural was created in 2003 by professional Indigenous artists, and painted with input from Gerringong & District Historical Society and local children.

The Society has produced a number of publications, including *Time Line of Gerringong Events* and *Gerringong School of Arts*, and *Historic Sites of Gerringong Walking Tour* brochures. Members of the Society also conduct Cemetery Walks at Gerringong Cemetery. The Museum's Research Officer, Margaret Sharpe, assists people with historical enquiries. Visits by local schools can be booked and the Kings School at Parramatta brings Year 6 boys to the Museum for a visit every year in February, a tradition that began not long after the Museum opened.⁵ Gerringong Historical Museum also provides a feature on 'History' for the local monthly magazine, *Village Whispers*. Recent issues have included three articles by historian Jill Miller, on Captain Blow, distinguished Boer War soldier and leader of the 1915 Waratahs South Coast Recruiting March; and on the history of the Gerringong Council.⁶ The Gerringong & District Historical Society also created interpretive signage for the historic Boat Harbour. The website (<http://www.gerringonghistory.org.au/>) is updated regularly. It announces coming events and reports on past events (including the text of talks and photos of events) and contains a list of publications and other merchandise that can be purchased

from the Museum or online. The Museum is open from 1-4pm on Saturdays and Sundays.



Signage at the Boat Harbour created by Gerringong & District Historical Society and unveiled by Gareth Ward, State Member for Kiama, Ann Sudmalis, Federal Member for Gilmore, and Brian Petschler, Mayor of Kiama in November 2013.⁷

With membership numbers around the 30+ mark in 2015, the Gerringong & District Historical Society's volunteers maintain an impressive range of activities promoting Gerringong's history and heritage.

The collection

The Gerringong & District Historical Society's collection housed in Gerringong Historical Museum has a dual nature. The building houses an extensive museum display of historical objects, scale models and images, and also has a well-stocked Research Centre and extensive storage for archival records.

The Gerringong Museum's displays are organised thematically, with a natural progression from the area's geological structure, through its Indigenous history, to settlement and the development of primary industries – principally dairying – domestic life, aviation history, education, military history, sport and community life, and local government.

Geology and natural history



A collection of Gerringong rock types and an explanation of the evolution of the local geology introduces visitors to the geomorphology of the area.



Every museum should have a 'curiosity' such as this 'Puma head', one of several animal-like shapes in driftwood that came ashore after a heavy storm at Easter 1978.

Indigenous culture and history



(Left) Stone hand tools from the Gerringong area; (right) display on the career of Indigenous Rugby League footballer, Roy Stewart, including a football, telegram, album of press coverage, trophy and a shellwork Sydney Harbour Bridge made by Roy Stewart's mother, Mrs Jessie Stewart.

The area around Gerringong is the country of the Wodi Wodi people. They travelled regularly between La Perouse in the north to Wreck Bay in the south, and spoke the Dharawal language. The Indigenous people knew Gerringong as a good source of the ochre they needed for ceremonial purposes.⁸

The display explains aspects of Indigenous life and culture, including bush food, Aboriginal tools and artefacts. It also features biographical material on Indigenous Rugby League legend, Roy Stewart, who lived and worked in Gerringong. Roy began his career at La Perouse and played with South Sydney before moving back to Gerringong, where he had attended school. Roy was one of the most exciting players in the history of the area. He played in four Gerringong premiership teams in 1965, 1968, 1970 and 1972. His representative career with Southern Division spanned over twelve years, playing for Southern Division in winning teams against

France in 1964 and Great Britain in 1970. The same year he was named in the Australian Aboriginal team to tour England but unfortunately the tour was cancelled for financial reasons. In 1978 he was afforded a Special Testimonial Game by Gerringong Club, the only player to be so honoured. Gerringong won the game against Jamberoo thanks to Roy's goal kicking. Sadly Roy Stewart passed away on 13 March 1997 aged 57 years.⁹

Primary industries

The first Europeans to harvest the resources of the Gerringong area came here, as they did to other parts of the Illawarra and Shoalhaven districts, to harvest Red Cedar (*Toona australis* var. *ciliata*) as timber. By the second decade of the nineteenth century cedar cutters had come to Gerringong, and the Boat Harbour was one of three south coast ports – the others were Shellharbour and Kiama – from which cedar was shipped. By the mid-nineteenth century the cedar stocks on the south coast were all but depleted, and cedar cutting moved to northern New South Wales.¹⁰ The cedar cutting had one long-term effect – it cleared the land for the next and most durable agricultural industry in Gerringong – dairy farming, which continues to this day, combined with vineyards producing award-winning wines.¹¹



This pair of well-worn handmade boots discovered under the old Catholic Church in 1995 testifies to the hard work associated with agricultural industries.



Before the Gerringong area was settled, cedar cutters were operating to harvest the rich stocks of timber in the coastal hinterland of south coast NSW. This model, donated to the Museum by Pat Owers, shows a timber jinker drawn by bullocks carrying a log.



Two early cedar cutters using a pit saw, in a model by Eric Wagstaff.

Dairying

Dairy farming became the major agricultural industry in the Gerringong area once permanent settlement had occurred. The perishable nature of milk, however, meant that individual farmers had to skim the cream from their milk and make it into butter for transport in wooden kegs by steamship to the city. The skim milk and buttermilk was fed to calves and pigs. The small amount of butter that an individual farmer could sell meant that he did not wield much bargaining power with buyers – creating a co-operative with other dairy farmers would mean a united voice in price negotiations.

The Gerringong Co-operative Dairy Society was formed in February 1888, and would become the oldest continually operating dairy co-operative in Australia. It began operating from a timber building on the site of the present Mayflower Retirement Village; its Directors were Messrs G J Hindmarsh, Miller, Lee, Bailey, Jordan, Maynes, Sharpe, Rutledge and Wilson. James Sharpe became Chairman of Directors in 1908, a position he held until his death in 1930. In 1908 also the Co-operative moved to a brick building near the railway station, and the Co-operative gained its own railway siding from which to transport its butter. It also began to develop export markets, and butter from Gerringong, marked 'AUSTRALIA', made its way across the world in wooden boxes (see *PART II: Detailed assessments of individual items and collections – 2. Butter rollers and butter box, Gerringong Co-operative Dairy Factory*).

The Co-operative expanded into a produce store in 1935, and hardware, building supplies and other merchandise in the 1970s and 1980s.¹² However, relatively small scale enterprises did not fare well in the early 2000s, and in August 2001 the Co-operative received its last delivery of milk from local farmers, with milk being

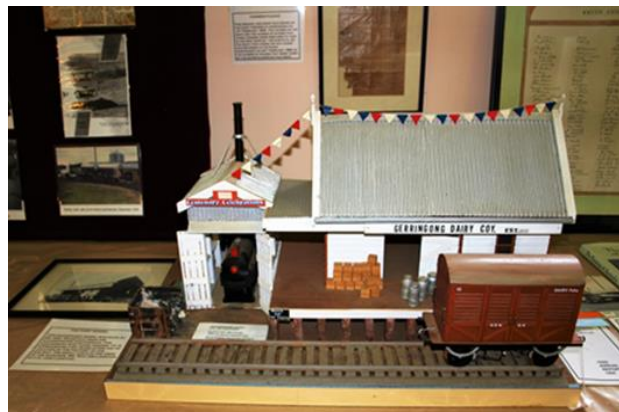
collected from farms in large tankers and taken to be processed in Nowra, Bega and Sydney. The Factory Store continued to operate until 2007, when the hardware store finally closed, bringing a long-established Gerringong institution to an end.¹³



James Sharpe was a Director of Gerringong Co-operative Dairy Society from 1901 to 1930, and Chairman of Directors from 1908 to 1930. He was also a Director of Dairy Farmers Sydney from 1913 to 1930, and Chairman of Directors from 1922-1930. He served as Mayor of Gerringong from 1918 to 1930, and was Chair of the Pastures Protection Board from 1919 to 1930.



Placing cows in the milking bails, by Eric Wagstaff.



Gerringong Co-operative Dairy Society had its own railway siding for despatching butter and milk to city markets. Eric Wagstaff model.

Gerringong Museum holds many items relating to the dairy industry and to the Gerringong Co-operative Dairy Society, from the original share pledge document to butter rollers and boxes, milk cans, photographs, reports and publications, certificates, commemorative signage and models by Eric Wagstaff showing the progression of milk from the cow to the factory and beyond.



Two signs commemorating anniversaries of the long-lived Gerringong Co-operative Dairy Society.



(Left) Milk can used up to 1967 for milk collection; (right) annual reports and other publications relating to the dairy industry.

The Mural

A striking feature of Gerringong Museum is the large mural depicting the dairying landscape of Gerringong. As well as being an effective visual feature that acts as a backdrop to the display of items relating to local agricultural industries, particularly dairy farming, the story of the mural is one of engagement with the Museum and its themes by teachers and students at Kiama High School. Two teachers, Jeff Hewett and Dennis Koks, coordinated the work carried out in 1991 by six students: Darren Gregory, Wendy George, Amanda Crone, Steve Lovegrove, Alexandra Matyear and Justin Thornton. Two of the students who worked on the mural and the two teachers were reunited on 10 September 2016 at the 25th Anniversary celebration of the Gerringong Museum.¹⁴



Kiama High School students with the mural they painted in 1991, before its installation in the Museum: Darren Gregory, Wendy George, Amanda Crone, Steve Lovegrove, Alexandra Matyear and Justin Thornton.



Former students, teachers and partners in front of the mural at the 25th Anniversary celebration at the Museum on 10 September 2016: Bernard Whitcher, Jeff Hewett, Wendy Wallace-Pannell (previously George), Alexandra Matyear, Dennis Koks and Simon Wallace-Pannell. Photo by Tony Butz.



The mural as it is today, acting as an effective backdrop to the display of agricultural equipment in Gerringong Museum.

While dairying remained the predominant agricultural pursuit in Gerringong, farmers also grew various types of grain; and raised other forms of livestock such as pigs and poultry, often for domestic purposes. Some farmers, like William Bailey of 'Homeleigh', grew corn (maize) that won prizes at prestigious International Exhibitions (see *PART II: Detailed assessment of individual items and collections – 3. William Bailey's International Exhibition medals, 1887, 1888*).



(Left) Corn sheller; (right) medals won at two International Exhibitions in the 1880s by William Bailey of 'Homeleigh' for corn grain (maize).

Domestic life

The Museum holds a large number of items associated with domestic life, from cooking utensils, storage jars, serving dishes, healthcare items, textiles, and kitchen equipment. These are often used to show schoolchildren how various tasks were carried out before the widespread use of electrical appliances.



(Left) Hazel Miller made her wedding dress on this sewing machine in 1943; the wedding dress is displayed in the cabinet alongside, with other ceremonial textile items such as christening robes.



(Left) Domestic utensils on display; (right) a comprehensive series of storage canisters.

Education in Gerringong

The first school in the area was built at Omega Retreat in 1860, with a second, at Rose Valley, eight years later. In 1864 a small wooden school building was erected by Gerringong Catholic Church, but with enrolments falling below the minimum number by 1868, its funding ceased and it was closed in 1871.¹⁵ In the same year, 1871, the Toolijooa School began in a building built for the Berry Estate Show; and a house was also built for the teacher. A Church of England school opened in Foxground in 1873; and a Public School opened there in 1876. That same year Gerringong Public School opened in Fern Street, the last school to be built in the area. The first school to close was Rose Valley in 1908, when it was destroyed by fire. Omega School closed in 1941 Foxground Public School closed in 1949, and Toolijooa School closed in 1952. Its school room was moved to Gerringong School in 1954. In 1976 Gerringong Public School celebrated its centenary, and in 1994 a new Public School opened in Archibald Street.¹⁶



Gerringong Public School, by Eric Wagstaff; old school desk and books.

The Museum displays a model of Gerringong Public School by Eric Wagstaff, and a typical school desk of the type that would have been used by pupils at the local

schools in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. On the desk are readers, an inkwell for dip pens, and number blocks.

War and Gerringong

In common with townships and cities around Australia, Gerringong sent men to fight in two world wars. The Museum holds a number of items related to war service, including a Next of Kin medallion, or 'Dead Man's Penny', given to the parents of Stanley Packham who died in the First World War; souvenir china; Army equipment such as a runner messenger torch and boot; two vases made from shell casings (a form known as 'trench art'); a compass souvenired from a downed Royal Flying Corps aircraft in France in 1917; and a letter that displays very graphically the extent to which personal correspondence from the battlefield was censored in the Second World War.

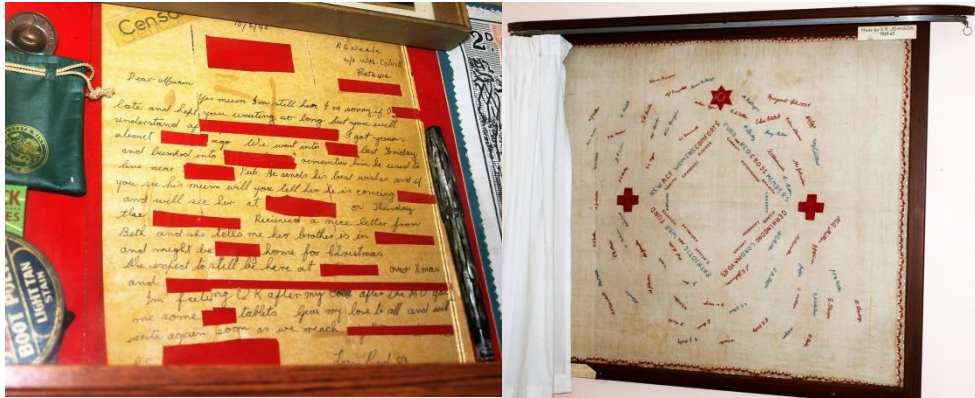
While men went to war in 1914-1918 and 1939-1945, many women set about raising funds to send 'comforts' to the troops serving overseas as their contribution to the war effort. Women knitted socks and other garments; and held functions to raise money to send goods overseas. The Museum holds a fine embroidered and appliqued tablecloth that honours and commemorates local women who worked tirelessly to support Australian soldiers overseas.



Model of Soldiers' Memorial Hall, Gerringong, with names of those who served in the Great War 1914-1918 (left); and those who died (right).



Two vases made from shell cases, fine examples of 'trench art' created by soldiers in the First World War trenches to pass the time when not in the front line. Decorated shell cases are perhaps the most common type of trench art.¹⁷



(Left) censored letter from the Second World War; (right) appliqued and embroidered cloth made by S R Johnson, 1939-1945, commemorating the NSW ACF [Australian Comforts Fund] Women's Comfort Fund/Gerrington Lord Mayor's Patriotic Fund, with names of those who worked for the Fund.

Beaches and motorsport

The Gerrington area boasts two notable beaches – Werri Beach, situated just below the township of Gerrington in view of its main street; and Seven Mile Beach at Gerroa. The latter has seen some momentous events, such as Kingsford Smith's takeoff for New Zealand in January 1933 on the first trans-Tasman commercial flight (see below). It has also been a venue for speedway racing.



Also known as Gerringong Speedway, Seven Mile Beach was first promoted as an ideal location for car racing in the early 1920s, with its length and width and hard-packed sand. At low tide it proved excellent for car racing, and crowds of between two and three thousand people would come to see speed trials and cars race on Seven Mile Beach. The photographic display in the Museum features images of the beach, the cars and the heroes of car racing of a previous era.

While these activities brought excitement and glamour to Gerrington, the beaches have also attracted a more consistent group – holidaymakers, who have come to Gerrington to swim, surf and fish, and escape the city life for a brief period. In previous times they were accommodated in the many guest houses in the area.

Motels and holiday apartments have now absorbed much of this market, but memories of the guest houses remain in the Museum.



Werri Beach, Gerringong

Community life

The Museum holds a number of items relating to life in the community of Gerringong, including records and memorabilia related to local organisations such as sporting clubs, Masonic lodges. Local agricultural shows were also major community events, and prizes won at shows are also included in Museum displays. Local businesses also played a major role in community life in Gerringong, and are represented in several displays.



Showcase displaying sporting trophies and memorabilia from agricultural shows and community events and organisations. It also holds two medals awarded at international exhibitions in the 1880s.



Charter constituting a lodge of the Independent Order of Good Templars at Gerringong on 18 May 1882.

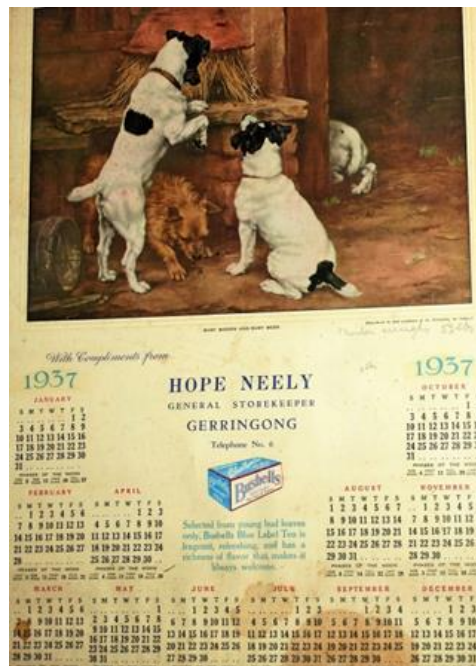
Members of the Gerringong community also took the opportunity at times to pay tribute to local business owners. One client of barber Ern Henry drew two whimsical cartoons praising his skills; while friends of storekeepers Mr and Mrs Hope Neely presented them with a 'token of esteem' in 1939, a montage of photographic views of Gerringong.



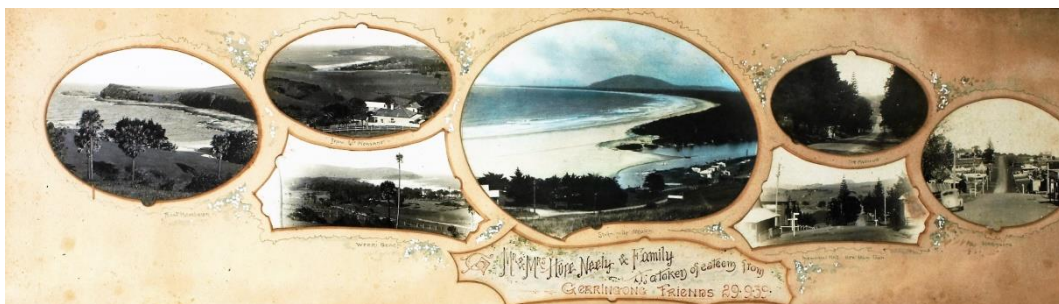
Ern Henry's barber shop display, with barber's chair, steriliser, razors, brushes and combs, shaving mug, and two cartoons drawn by an appreciative customer.



Shaving mug and brush from Ern Henry's barber's shop (See *PART II: Detailed assessment of individual items and collections – 4. Ern Henry's barber's shop display.*)



Calendar produced for local customers in 1937 by Hope Neely, General Storekeeper, Gerringong.



Views of Gerringong presented to Mr and Mrs Hope Neely as a token of esteem by Gerringong friends, 29 September 1939.

Local government

Gerringong became a part of Kiama Council in 1859, but there were soon moves to form a separate municipality for Gerringong that continued throughout the 1860s. At a meeting in the Lanterrick Hotel in August 1868, Robert Miller moved a motion for a petition to be sent to the Governor stating that Gerringong people had to pay too much to use the roads to Kiama, amounting to 50 per cent of all monies expended in repairs and improvements. On 30 June 1870, again in a meeting at the Lanterrick Hotel, speakers asserted that they were 'anxious for separation'. They finally got their way: by May 1871 the Municipality of Gerringong and Broughton Vale existed as a local government authority in its own right; and the first Council election was held on 2 June 1871. The first Aldermen were James Blow, Robert Miller, M E Robson, G Tate, G J Hindmarsh, William Williams, John Wilson, Andrew Nelson and James Campbell.¹⁸

While Gerringong did well under its own council for 83 years, moves to amalgamate with the neighbouring council of Kiama and Jamberoo 'proceeded relatively smoothly and quickly', as higher rates and electricity costs were 'inevitable if Gerringong remained on its own'. On 2 June 1954 Gerringong joined Kiama and Jamberoo as one council, bringing Gerringong's independent local government to an end.¹⁹

The Museum holds objects, photographs and documents relating to Gerringong Council, including the name plate from the Council Chambers, the former Mayoral Chair, rate books and other local government records, and an illuminated address given to the Town Clerk, John Cope.



Eric Wagstaff's model of the Gerringong Council headquarters and Library (left).



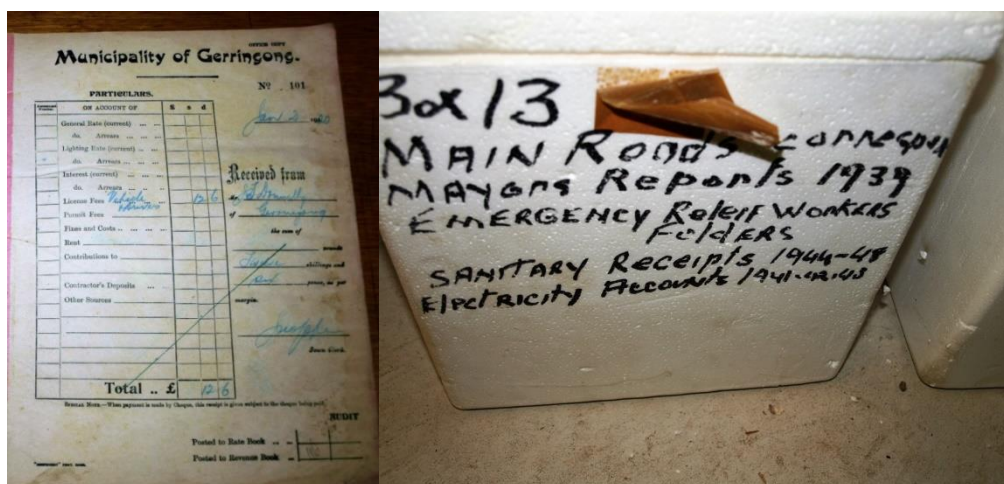
Brass name plate from Gerringong Municipality Council Chambers.



(Left) Illuminated address presented to John Cope, Town Clerk, Gerringong Municipality, 1911-1941, signed by the Mayor and Councillors.



(Left) Mayoral Chair, Gerringong Council; (right) Gerringong Councillors between 1914 and 1917.



Gerringong Council documents in the storage room: (left) rates notice; (right) a storage box holding Council documents including main roads correspondence, Mayor's reports 1939, sanitary receipts and electricity accounts from the 1940s.

Making aviation history

One of the great stories told in the Museum is that of Sir Charles Kingsford Smith and the first commercial flight in the *Southern Cross* across the Tasman Sea to New Plymouth, New Zealand, that took off from Seven Mile Beach, Gerroa, in the early hours of 11 January 1933. The comprehensive display has copious amounts of information on the event, and a DVD has been produced by the Museum, featuring personal reminiscences by local residents who were there on Seven Mile Beach on the previous day to watch the preparations, and the aircraft taking off the following morning at 2.50 am. A crowd of over 1000 people cheered 'Smithy' and his crew on the *Southern Cross* as the aircraft taxied across the sand, lifting off into the sky from a runway illuminated by car headlights and drums of burning oil. Smithy leaned from the cockpit as the plane taxied and called out 'Cheerio, everyone'.



(Left) Display on the 1933 trans-Tasman flight on the *Southern Cross*; (right) model of the *Southern Cross* by Eric Wagstaff showing the aircraft on Seven Mile Beach and refuelling drums.

This event links Gerringong with one of the notable episodes in aviation history for Australia and the world, and with one of the most significant aviation pioneers and his iconic aircraft, the *Southern Cross*. Contextual material provided in the display includes historical photographs, a model of the *Southern Cross*, and a 78rpm Columbia recording, 'Kingsford Smith, Aussie is proud of you', by Len Maurice.

There are also more personal items that link 'Smithy' to the local community and to that momentous occasion in January 1933 for Gerroa and Gerringong. Smithy and his crew enjoyed some peaches sent to them on the beach by Mr and Mrs Hindmarsh of Alne Bank, Gerringong. When the *Southern Cross* reached New Zealand, Smithy did not forget this kind gesture. He asked his Tour Manager to write to the Hindmarshes to 'express his keen appreciation and thanks for the beautiful peaches you sent him on the beach. He and the others enjoyed them thoroughly.' The letter to Mr and Mrs Hindmarsh, on display in the museum, shows a human side to the great aviator, a courteous and thoughtful aspect of a man who was fêted on all sides, but yet did not forget, in the hurly-burly of his journeys, to acknowledge the family who had sent peaches to him and his crew on Seven Mile Beach.



(Left) Thank you letter from Kingsford Smith to Mr and Mrs Hindmarsh, and route map signed by *Southern Cross* crew, souvenir teaspoons; (right) photographs of *Southern Cross* on Seven Mile Beach in January 1933. The Museum also holds Gwen Hindmarsh's autograph book with 'Smithy's' signature.

The display also includes a number of other model aircraft, made by Eric Wagstaff, associated with other aviation pioneers such as Nancy Bird Walton, who also visited Gerringong on occasion.

Lloyd Rees and Gerringong

Lloyd Rees (1895-1988) was one of Australia's best-known landscape artists of the twentieth century with a long career spanning from the 1920s to the 1980s. Influenced by European and British landscape artists such as Jean Baptiste Corot, John Constable and Joseph Mallord William Turner, Rees at first painted and sketched around Sydney Harbour. In 1939 he holidayed with his family at Gerringong and, in 1947 built a cottage, 'Caloola', at Werri Beach. He later moved to Tasmania and painted there and in Central Australia.²⁰

Rees was awarded the Wynne Prize for landscape painting in 1950 and 1982. He maintained a close connection with Gerringong and produced many paintings of the area, including 'The Road to Berry' (1947) and 'Illawarra Landscape' (1980). Art historian Sasha Grishin wrote of Rees: 'The landscape was a continuous obsession in Rees' art, from his early, meticulously worked drawings, and his late visionary oil paintings.'²¹



Display of prints of Lloyd Rees' work relating to the Gerringong area, created in conjunction with the Lloyd Rees Festival 2013, commemorating 25 years since the artist's death.

Eric Wagstaff models

A highlight of the Museum is a collection of scale models of Gerringong buildings and other items made by the late Eric Wagstaff, a skilled cabinet- and model-maker. Many of these models are housed in the Eric Wagstaff Room, a dedicated space displaying representations of early Gerringong buildings, a cedar cutting display and a model of the Paddle Steamer William IV at the Boat Harbour around 1859. Other models are associated with thematic displays in the main room of the Museum. These include representations of activities in the dairying industry, Omega Railway Station, and the *Southern Cross* and other historic aircraft mentioned above.



(Left) Gerringong Post Office; (right) Gerringong School of Arts – models by Eric Wagstaff. Gerringong Post Office was first opened in the Boat Harbour Store in 1857. The School of Arts was built in 1883, and has housed a number of activities and organisations over the years including Gerringong Silver Band practice and concerts, two lodges – the Independent Order of Good Templars (later Daybreak Lodge) and the Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes – social functions held by various churches, birthday parties, flower shows, and picture shows, such as those advertised in the posters in the photo above. Saved from demolition in 1952, the School of Arts went on to house the Scouts and Girl Guide and Cubs and Brownies until 2004. The building is now proposed as the centrepiece of a redevelopment of the site which would see the School of Arts extensively renovated and brought up to 21st century standards to house the Museum and a new Library built on the site. The two would share some common facilities. This development awaits government funding before it can proceed.²²



(Left) Omega Station and (right) rural cottage, by Eric Wagstaff.

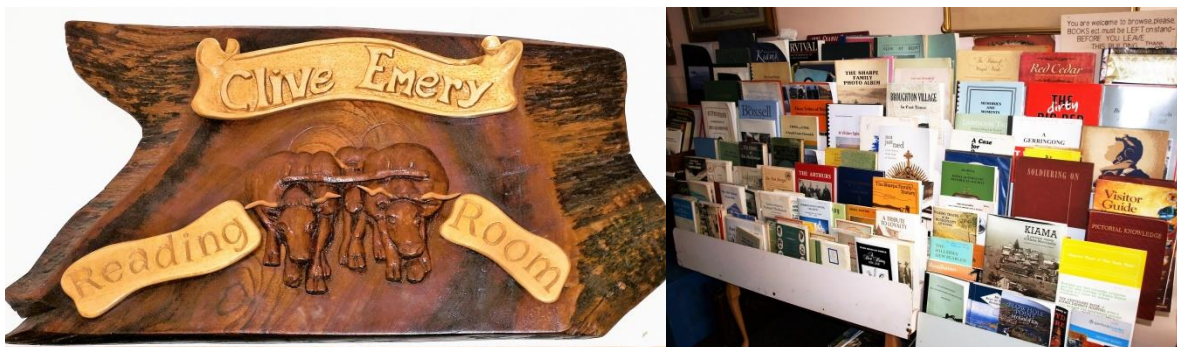


(Left) Gerringong Jubilee Congregational (now Uniting) Church and (right) Nelson's store and residence, by Eric Wagstaff.



PS *William IV* was the first ocean-going steamer built in Australia, launched at Deptford Shipyards, Clarence Town, on the West Bank of the Williams River on 14 November 1831. She left Clarence Town under sail and her engines were fitted in Sydney. Built by William Lowe and James Marshall for Sydney merchant J H Grose, her length was 80ft. (24.4m) and beam 15ft. (4.6m). The model shows PS *William IV* at the Gerringong Boat Harbour around 1859.²³

Documentary heritage and research resources



(Left) Decorative nameplate for the Clive Emery Reading Room, crafted by Sandra Hamblen; (right) display of the many local publications available for use in the Reading Room.

The Museum's research collection holds many original documents and publications relating to aspects of life in Gerringong, from family history and local government

records to serial publications on Illawarra Shorthorn cattle, as well as personal records such as Jane Binks' diary (see *PART II: Detailed assessment of individual items and collections*), photographs, plans and maps. These are housed and/or made available in the Clive Emery Reading Room, named in honour of the late Clive Emery, first President of the Gerringong & District Historical Society and the moving spirit behind the construction of the Museum building. There are also many other documents on display around the Museum, and held in a plan cabinet in the main room.

Photographs, maps, archival material, research files



Photographs of prize-winning cattle in the Dairying display.



'Aorangi', home of James and Mary Jane Sharpe, looking from Toolijooa to Coolangatta Mountain, 1919-1922.



Map and plan cabinet in the main Museum room.



Documents in the storage room. Many are held in polystyrene boxes (left) but others are on open shelves or in open boxes. Better housing of these documents in archival boxes should be a priority for the Museum.



Research files have been compiled on various topics of local interest.

3.2 Comparative collections

The consultant also visited the Pilot's Cottage Museum at nearby Kiama, which also displays material related to Kiama's early history, including shipping and shipwrecks, quarrying, railways, and dairying and cedar cutting. The Museum also features material relating to well-known Australian author Charmian Clift (1923-1969) who was born in Kiama; and three-times Oscar-winning costume designer, Orry George Kelly (1951-2014). The Pilot's Cottage Museum holds and displays an extensive

photographic collection, including a photo of the Binks property at Broughton Vale, home of Jane Binks (see *PART II: Detailed assessment of individual items and collections – 1. Jane Binks' Diary*).



(Left) Pilot's Cottage Museum, Kiama; and (right) part of the large display relating to Orry George Kelly, Oscar-winning costume designer from Kiama. Kelly designed costumes for 280 movies. This display, and the one devoted to writer Charmian Cliff, emphasise local links with significant individuals.

Similar collections to some of those held in Gerringong can be found in local and regional historical museums around New South Wales. The consultant has recently assessed the collections of a number of these, including Jindera Pioneer Museum, Deniliquin Museum, Corowa Federation Museum, Great Lakes Museum, Schaeffer House at Grafton, Murrurundi Museum, Kempsey Museum and Yarrawonga-Mulwala Pioneer Museum. These museums often have in common displays of Indigenous history, local industries, domestic life, local business and community activities, local sporting history and military history, all of which are also on display in Gerringong Museum.

3.3 Statement of significance for the entire collection

The collection of the Gerringong & District Historical Society housed in the Gerringong Historical Museum is of historical significance for its capacity to demonstrate the patterns of life and activity in Gerringong over its history, and its links to nationally significant themes, events and individuals.

The Museum displays and the extensive archival collection together provide the resources for visitors and local people to understand Gerringong's unique history within a number of thematic categories: local geology; Indigenous culture and history; primary industries, including cedar cutting and dairying (with the story of the longest-running dairy co-operative in Australia as a prominent aspect of the Museum's display); domestic life; education; Gerringong's involvement in two world wars; beaches and motorsport; community life; local government; aviation history (including Sir Charles Kingsford-Smith's first commercial flight across the Tasman in

Southern Cross that took off from Seven Mile Beach in January 1933); and the connection of famous Australian landscape artist Lloyd Rees with Gerringong.

The Museum holds a number of historically significant individual items, including the diary of a woman farmer, Jane Binks, from 1897 to 1947; two medals won at two International Exhibitions in the 1880s; carved wooden butter rollers used to mark butter for export from Gerringong Dairy Co-operative Factory; and a shellwork Sydney Harbour Bridge made by Indigenous craftswoman, Mrs Jessie Stewart.

Items of aesthetic and artistic significance are also prominent in the Museum, particularly the finely crafted models of buildings, agricultural activities, and aircraft made by the late Eric Wagstaff. These unique models play a major part in the Museum's interpretation and are an attractive and effective means of communicating history to visitors. The mural painted in 1991 by students from Kiama High School forms an attractive backdrop to the dairying display. There is also evidence of fine craftsmanship in such items as the carved wooden butter rollers; two fine examples of 'trench art' made from shell cases during World War I; finely made textile items such as Hazel Miller's wedding dress; two clever and whimsical cartoons in Ern Henry's barber's shop display; and the stylistically unusual shellwork Sydney Harbour Bridge.

The collection has a high degree of research significance, with an extensive archive relating to local government, churches and schools, and local facilities, as well as maps, plans and photographs, all of which can be investigated in a number of ways.

Items in the collection are well provenanced, and have considerable interpretive capacity. The Gerringong Historical Museum can be compared with a number of local museums in New South Wales, particularly the nearby Pilot's Cottage Museum at Kiama, which deals with some similar themes.

4. Key recommendations

- The opening statement for the Museum, located adjacent to the entrance desk, requires more information to define Gerringong and the Museum for visitors. The meaning of the name, 'Gerringong', could provide a lead-in to the Indigenous display.



The current entrance sign mostly deals with the dairy industry, and does not provide a general orientation to the whole Museum.

- A considerable number of items on display are cited as being on loan. While the large collection of building models made by Eric Wagstaff are explicitly stated as always to remain in family ownership, there are many other items where loans could potentially be converted to museum ownership. A policy document regarding permanent acquisition of objects by the Museum should be developed.
- Conservation issues:
 - A preservation needs assessment for the archival collection is recommended;
 - More appropriate housing for the Jane Binks Diary and other paper-based collection items, for example, the use of archive boxes and acid-free tissue to encapsulate fragile documents;
 - There are also a number of original photographs and documents on long-term display, to the detriment of their ongoing conservation;
 - The Gerringong Co-operative Dairy share pledge document, currently on display, for example, should be removed from display and replaced by a facsimile (the original could be displayed on special occasions).



The original Gerringong Co-operative Dairy share pledge document is fragile and should not continue to be displayed. Replace with a facsimile.

- There are plans for the Museum to move to new premises in the refurbished and extended School of Arts building adjacent to the Museum. If this eventuates, new showcases and interpretive panels will be required. Grant funding could be requested for this purpose.

- Even if the new building does not eventuate, it is a good idea to refresh the Museum displays in order to 'rest' fragile materials and to create variety for visitors.
- Consider locating some items in areas where they are most relevant; for example, the Cedar Cutters model by Eric Wagstaff would be better located in proximity to the displays on the cedar cutting industry in the main room of the Museum.
- Displays on additional themes could be part of the task of refreshing the Museum's interpretation. Possible new presentations could include more information and objects relating to beach and surfing culture; and holidaying at campsites and in guesthouses.
- Use collection items to promote the Museum by creating merchandise using images of them. Reproductions of two charming cartoons in the Barber Shop display would make good postcards for sale, for example.



Possible postcards: black and white sketches in the barber shop display.

- Security: Potentially valuable or easily damaged items are currently on display in some areas. For example, the shellwork Harbour Bridge in the Indigenous display is highly vulnerable to damage or theft. It has been enclosed in a glass case since the consultant's first visit.

PART II: DETAILED ASSESSMENTS OF INDIVIDUAL ITEMS AND COLLECTIONS



Left: Exercise books containing Jane Binks's diary; (right) first existing page of Jane Bink's diary from 1897.

1. Jane Binks's Diary 1897-1947

1.1 History and description

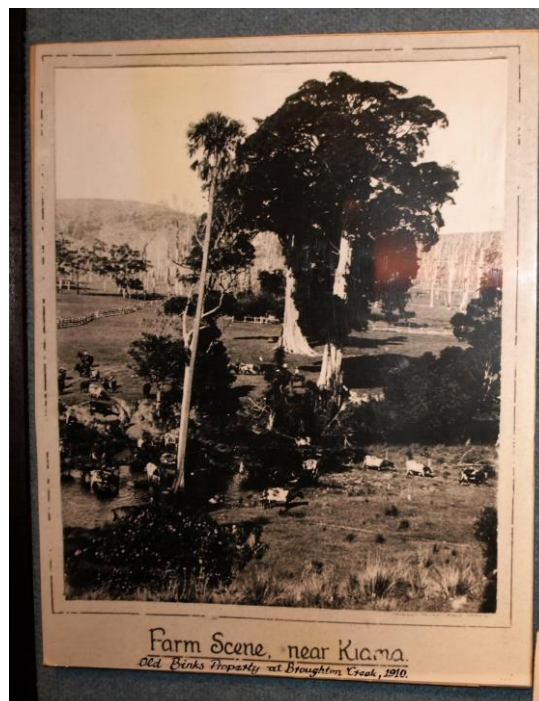
Thomas Binks was born at Sedgeford, Norfolk, England in 1841, the son of Anthony and Mary Binks. He attended school until the age of 10, then worked on his father's farm near Sandringham House royal estate, and on a sailing ship carrying Baltic pine timber. News of the discovery of gold in the Australian colonies promoted him to work his passage there on the *Hollinside*. Thomas Binks jumped ship in Sydney, caught another ship to Wollongong and, intending to walk to the Snowy River region, (probably to join the Kiandra gold rush that began in 1859), and got as far as Gerringong when his boots wore out. A Kiama stone fence builder, Tom Ewing, gave him a lift, and Thomas obtained work at Gerringong, firstly with Mr Bailey at 'Homeleigh' and then with Mr Hindmarsh at 'Alne Bank'.

While working in Gerringong, Thomas Binks met Mary Hetherington, a lass from the northern Ireland town of Irvinestown, County Fermanagh. They married at the home of Mrs Boxsell at Boat Harbour, Gerringong, on 1 March 1865. The couple proceeded to have 11 children – four sons and seven daughters. John, the first-born, was born at Hindmarsh's property in 1866, followed by Wesley in 1867. The family moved to Broughton Creek to a shack near Tomlin's Hill on land leased from the Berry Estate, and later built a home at The Glen. Jane, the eldest daughter, was born in 1869, and was followed by Thomas (1871) and Mary (1872). Alfred Noble Binks (who would go on to become a local and state politician) was born in 1873, followed by Rachel (1876), Martha (1877), Hester Ann (1879) and Louisa (1880). In 1883 Thomas Binks leased Fraser's farm at Cambewarra, and a daughter, Thirza May, was born there in 1884, completing the family. One of their daughters, 'Polly'

Eaton, died in Western Australia in February 1899, leaving a little daughter, Heather, who was brought up in her grandparents' home.

Thomas and Mary Binks were loyal supporters of the Methodist Church, and Thomas was a lay preacher for many years, conducting services in Cambewarra and Berry. Jane Binks often played the organ for the church services

Thomas Junior married Mary Ann McDonald in 1898 and purchased the Cambewarra farm. Thomas Senior attended the Berry Estate Land Sale in January 1899 and bid successfully on a property at Broughton Village which he had tenanted previously. He also bid on the adjoining property which was tenanted by the Strong family. When the family moved from Cambewarra to their new property at Broughton Village they lived in an old Berry Estate cottage until a new home was built.



Binks property at Broughton Creek, c. 1910, photo in Kiama Museum

Thomas employed a local builder, Alexander (Sandy) Gilder Johnston, to build the family's new home. Johnston lived on the site during the house's construction and he and his team of workers cut all the timber required with a pit-saw.

The house was built on sandstone foundations and the original plan contained a parlour, visitor's room, four bedrooms, dining room, kitchen, workers' room and potato room. Thomas named the house 'Sedgeford' after his birthplace and the name is etched in leadlight glass over the front door. The Binks family moved in on Christmas Day 1902. The Binks's eldest son, John (Jack) built a house beside 'Sedgeford' in 1913 and called it 'Cole Green'.



(Above) 'Sedgeford' as it is today; (below) the 'Sedgeford' name in leadlight glass above the door.

Mary Binks died at 'Sedgeford' on 3 May 1921 aged 84. Thomas Binks and his unmarried daughters, Jane and Louisa, decided to leave 'Sedgeford' and to move to Gerringong to live. 'Cole Green' cottage was moved to their property at Fern Street, Gerringong for them to live in, and the other cottage on the farm, known as 'The Glen', be also moved to be leased, to give the sisters a small income. 'Cole Green' was moved to Gerringong on 3 October 1923. On 17 May 1924 Jane Binks recorded in her diary, 'Left our old home, what memories cling to that dear old spot. Good-bye Sedgeford.' Thomas Binks died at Gerringong on 16 February 1926, and was buried with his wife in Gerringong Cemetery.²⁴

The Binks family made a contribution to local politics. Thomas Binks was an alderman on Gerringong Council, and two of his sons also served as Gerringong aldermen, John Binks from 1924-1929 and Alfred Noble Binks from 1920 to 1929 from 1920 to 1929. The latter later became The Honourable Alfred Noble Binks, Member of the Legislative Council of NSW from 1932 to 1952.²⁵

1.2 Jane Binks's Diary

A diary written in eleven exercise books, kept for many decades by Jane Binks, who started writing it in 1897 and ended it in 1947, is held in the Gerringong Museum.

Jane Binks passed away in 1950, three years after she made her last diary entry and was buried in Gerringong Cemetery.

Jane, who never married, lived at Cambewarra, then Broughton Village, and then moved into Gerringong with her niece Heather, who was raised in her parents' home when Jane's sister Polly, Heather's mother, had died in childbirth in February 1899. Jane's diary is a wonderful source of information and insights into life in the Berry-Broughton-Gerringong area over the last years of the nineteenth century and for nearly half of the twentieth century.

The diary entries are laconic – only a few lines at a time, and written on most days (although Jane sometimes misses a few days, then catches up in one burst of writing). Jane records the weather – of course, in a farming area, this was and is critical – and who has come to visit or to stay overnight, or for a longer period. She records births and deaths, and social events in the community. She reports on the Sunday sermons in the Methodist Church of which she was a faithful member, and who will be coming on rotation to take up the preaching responsibilities. The annual shows at Kiama and Berry, and the Royal Easter Show, at which her father, Thomas Binks, regularly won prizes for his cheese, are mentioned every year in Jane's diary, as is his cheese-making prowess generally. She noted occasions when people came to visit her father to see cheese being made, his trip to England to study cheese making techniques and, finally, his last day at cheese-making: '21 May 1918 Last Day for Dad to make cheese in his old dairy. He was quite doleful giving it up.'

Jane also reflects briefly on external events and situations, making connections to the world outside the local area, and the implications of what happens there for her life and the life of the community. Local and state politics form part of the diary entries, as do other momentous events in the life of the nation and of the British Empire of which she was a proud member – the Federation referendum in June 1898 and Federation itself, on 1 January 1901, for example. Before that there is the outbreak of the South African War, the recruitment of local men as soldiers for the NSW Contingent, patriotic bazaars, the news of the relief of Mafeking.

It is fascinating to read, in particular, Jane's diary entries on the outbreak and then the course of the First World War. At the outset this is a distant occurrence, troubling, to be sure, but it has not yet impacted on her life and the life of the community. Then men begin to enlist, and their send-offs are recorded, as is the Waratahs South Coast recruiting march of December 1915. The many events held to raise funds for the war effort, for the Red Cross and the various comforts funds are all mentioned in the diary, including the attendance levels.

At times Jane mentions major battles such as the naval Battle of Jutland and the siege of Verdun. The first Anzac Day in 1916 is also noted in the diary. As the war continues, its human cost begins to register – some local men are killed or wounded, and memorial services are held for them, all of them faithfully recorded in Jane's

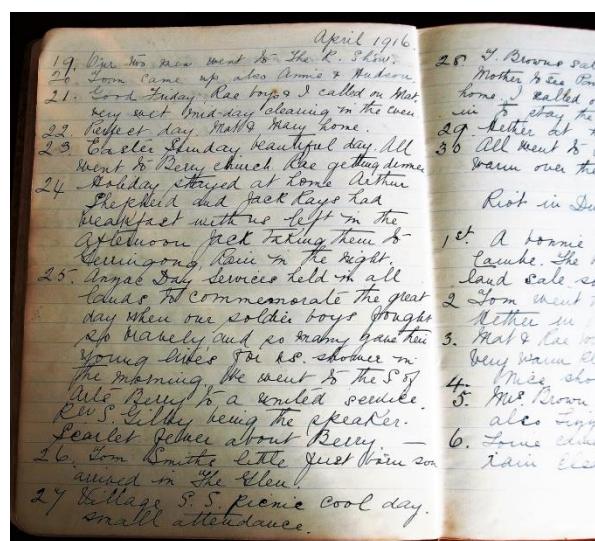
diary. In 1917 a general strike occurs, and male members of her family and friends travel to Sydney to volunteer to maintain essential services. Finally, in 1918, Jane records the great joy at the declaration of peace, and the continued work of the community to support those who had been wounded, and the families of those who had died. Then she records the outbreak of the Spanish influenza pandemic that followed hard on the heels of the war's end, and caused the deaths of over 11,000 Australians and between 20 and 40 million people worldwide. It made an impact in this area too, and that impact is recorded in the pages of Jane Binks's diary, which continues on in the same vein until it stops in 1947, several years before her death in 1950.

Statement of significance

Jane Binks' diary is of historical significance for Gerringong and Berry, as a personal account of the day-to-day life of a long term resident who had a wide circle of friends and acquaintances, and took a lively interest in their activities. It is also of wider historical significance as a woman's account of pivotal events in Australia's history – Federation and its aftermath, both world wars, and the years of the Great Depression.

As well as being a relatively uncommon extended account of a woman's daily life over a significant period of Australian history, the diary is also written from the viewpoint of a person living in a rural community, and reflects the rhythms of country life, its dependence on the weather, the importance of being neighbourly, and the key events in the yearly calendar such as agricultural shows.

Jane Binks' diary provides a narrative background to the items on display in Gerringong Museum, and is a source of anecdotes and information for people researching the history of the district.



Pages of Jane Binks' diary for April 1916, describing the first commemoration of Anzac Day on 25 April 1916.

2. Butter rollers and butter box, Gerringong Co-operative Dairy Factory



(Left) Butter rollers in display stand made by Eric Wagstaff; (right) butter box with lid showing the pattern made by a roller. This box was also discovered by Eric Wagstaff, and renovated for display in Gerringong Museum.

2.1 History and description

Three butter rollers carved from cedar are set in a display stand made by Eric Wagstaff, who 'saved' the rollers when they were headed to the tip. The butter rollers make a striking display in the Dairying exhibit in Gerringong Museum. The butter rollers story is told in the display, on the interpretive label that accompanies them: 'These rollers were used in the Gerringong Factory to roll the top of the butter before covering with parchment paper and sealing the box.' A mirror has been placed under the rollers so that the word 'Australia' can be seen, and the rollers have been set in a polished timber armature for display purposes.

The dairying display also features a butter box found under the factory and reconstructed by Eric Wagstaff, with the design made by the rollers, including the word 'Australia', embossed on the top. The interpretive label says that the last time that butter was made in the Factory was in 1954.

Statement of significance

The butter rollers are beautiful and useful objects that tell a story of how Gerringong-made butter was exported with the name 'Australia', thus connecting this community to the nation. They are of historical significance for their role in an export industry located in Gerringong, the export of butter by the Gerringong Co-operative Dairy Society which began in 1888 and continued until 1954.

The butter rollers have aesthetic/artistic significance as utilitarian objects that display qualities of fine design and craftsmanship. These butter rollers are pleasing to the eye, with their fine carving complementing the warm tones of the wood from which they are made.

3. William Bailey's International Exhibition medals, 1887, 1888



Two bronze medals won by William Bailey of 'Homeleigh' at two international exhibitions in the late 1880s.

3.1 History and description

Two bronze international exhibition medals won by William Bailey of 'Homeleigh', Gerringong, for corn grain (maize) at the Adelaide Jubilee Exhibition in 1887, and the Centennial International Exhibition in Melbourne in 1888. The medals bear the image of Queen Victoria (1837-1901) in relief, wearing a crown, and the title of each exhibition.

International exhibitions were a familiar part of the cultural landscape of western countries in the nineteenth century and in the twentieth century before the Second World War. From 1851, when the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations, the brain-child of Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert, was held in the Crystal Palace in London's Hyde Park, international exhibitions – also known as 'world's fairs' – burgeoned around the globe. The first to be held in the Australian colonies was the Sydney International Exhibition held in the Garden Palace in the Sydney Botanic Gardens in 1879. It was followed a year later by Melbourne's first international exhibition, held in the purpose-built Royal Exhibition Building in Carlton Gardens. The Royal Exhibition Building survives as one of the world's oldest exhibition pavilions representing the nineteenth-century international exhibition movement. Just about all the others, including London's Crystal Palace and Sydney's Garden Palace, burned down later on. The Royal Exhibition Building was inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage list in 2004, becoming the first building in Australia to achieve World Heritage listing.

William Bailey entered samples of his corn grown at 'Homeleigh' in the Adelaide Jubilee International Exhibition in 1887. It was held in Adelaide's new Exhibition Building on North Terrace, which had been built to celebrate 50 years since the colony of South Australia had been founded in 1836. It was also, by a happy coincidence, Queen Victoria's Jubilee year, the 50th anniversary of her coronation. There were more than 2,200 displays of objects and materials from 26 different countries. From the exhibition's opening to its conclusion on 7 January 1888, nearly 790,000 people visited the site. The awards ceremony was held on the evening of 30 November 1887. The bronze medal awarded to William Bailey carried the image of the Queen whose reign was celebrated in the exhibition. It is not known whether he was there to collect the medallion, or whether he ever saw his corn on display in Adelaide.

It is also not known whether he was able to attend the next international exhibition in which his corn was on display: the Centennial International Exhibition held in Melbourne in 1888 in the Exhibition Building to mark the centenary of British settlement in Australia. William Bailey's corn (described in the exhibition catalogue as 'maize') would have been exhibited in the grand New South Wales Court inside the Exhibition Building. The *Official Record of the Exhibition* described the splendour of the NSW Court:

A row of Venetian poles bearing the colonial standard and the coat-of-arms of New South Wales marked the limits of the area occupied by the colony; massive arches bearing the names of the principal towns, and elegant and costly canopies indicated the entrances to the several bays; rich trophies of minerals lined the front of the mining section, whilst a royal coat-of-arms and a splendid pavilion dedicated to Lord Carrington ornamented the centre ... the main feature of the court was the remarkable show of raw materials, such as timber, cedar, different species of eucalyptus, and many other valuable woods, metals, and minerals ... marble, freestone, and other building stones, breadstuffs and other grain, wool and skins ... Other features of interest were the representations of the Jenolan Caves done in cork work; the landing of Captain Cook, with life-size figures in wax and an exact reproduction of the surrounding scenery; and a model of Sydney Harbour and its environs.²⁶

Statement of significance

These two medallions won by William Bailey of 'Homeleigh' in 1887 and 1888 at two international exhibitions are of historical significance for their association of Gerringong with these nineteenth-century spectacles of industry and agricultural production. Winning a medal at these events was prestigious for a primary producer such as William Bailey and for his locality; and links Gerringong to these important events in Australia's pre-Federation history.

4. Ern Henry's barber's shop display



Detail of Ern Henry's Barber Shop display, showing his tools of trade, sterilizer and two cartoons drawn by an appreciative client.

4.1 History and description

Ernest Oswald Henry ran a barber's shop in Victoria Street, and then in Belinda Street from 1930, at which time he applied to the Mayor for a transfer of his Hairdresser's License on 21 July 1930 (his letter requesting this is on display). Ern Henry passed away on 30 January 1966. On 4 October 2006 his family donated the equipment from his barber's shop to the Gerringong Museum on the occasion of its 15th anniversary on 4 October 2006.

Ern, as his clients called him, doubled as a butter-maker at the Gerringong Dairy Co-operative Society for 57 years, and as a barber. The display features the old barber's chair that Ern's clients used when they came in for a shave or a hair trim, clearly to the satisfaction of one client, who drew the two delightful little cartoons that are such a distinctive feature of the display.

A cartoon of a little dog is captioned 'Well, I'm sure of a good trim here'; while a cartoon rooster says, 'Now Ern, I know you can fix me up'. The label does not reveal the name of the cartoonist.

The barber's chair, the equipment and steriliser, brushes, razors and razor sharpeners and mug, as well as the cartoons, form a most effective ensemble that evokes a barber's shop of the early to mid-twentieth century.

Statement of significance

The Ern Henry Barber's Shop display is of historical significance as a representation of a mid-twentieth century local barber's shop. While many museums have similar

displays of barber's chairs, razors, brushes, combs and the like, the charm and the personal touch conveyed by the two little cartoons drawn specifically for Ern Henry give this display a distinctive quality that sets it apart from the usual style of museum exhibit of this type of material culture. The well-provenanced story of Ern Henry and his barber's shop also adds to its significance.

5. Shellwork Sydney Harbour Bridge



Shellwork Sydney Harbour Bridge made by Mrs Jessy Stewart.

5.1 History and description

This shellwork Sydney Harbour Bridge was one of two given to Mr P J Noble by Mrs Jessy Stewart, local Aboriginal footballer Roy Stewart's mother, and it forms part of a larger display in Gerringong Museum about Roy Stewart's life and footballing career. It was given to the museum by Mr Noble's family after his death in 2005. The label also states that the Bridge was made with shells collected from local beaches, and that local Indigenous people have made other similar works.

Shellwork of this kind, made by Indigenous women, has a history dating back to the nineteenth century. Documents from the 1880s record that Aboriginal women sold shell baskets at Circular Quay and Botany Bay. These had been made from shells that the women had collected, using their traditional knowledge of the beaches and the times of the year at which particular shells were likely to be deposited by the tides.

The Aboriginal reserve at La Perouse on the northern side of Botany Bay, established in 1895, was a focal point for what became a craft industry, whereby people living there were encouraged by missionaries to produce popular items for sale. Indigenous men at La Perouse carved boomerangs with designs burned onto them with heated wire, and other souvenir items, and gave demonstrations of boomerang throwing, while the women made shellwork. The sale of souvenirs at La

Perouse became one of the major sources of income for these Aboriginal people in the first half of the twentieth century. Nowadays, their descendant, Bidjigal man Laddie Timberly, carries on this practice at his gallery in the grounds of the Jervis Bay Maritime Museum at Huskisson.

Shellwork was popular in both Britain and Australia in the late nineteenth century, and the missionaries helped the La Perouse women to find outlets for their work. Bidjigal woman 'Queen Emma' Timberly, from La Perouse, was a noted shellworker, and her wares were displayed and sold at the Royal Easter Show, and even travelled to England in 1910 as part of an Australian crafts exhibition. As the twentieth century progressed, city department stores and gift shops stocked these items. They found one of their biggest markets during the Second World War, when American servicemen came to Australia in large numbers and purchased them as souvenirs.

The most common objects made with shellwork are jewellery boxes, boomerangs, miniature shoes, and models of the Sydney Harbour Bridge. A contingent of Aboriginal people from La Perouse came to the opening of the Bridge in 1932. They were impressed by this new structure, and went home and carved images of the Bridge on rocks that already held ancient engravings of fish and a 12-metre long shark. The men carved and decorated boomerangs with images of the bridge and the women began to make model Sydney Harbour Bridges decorated with shells, similar to the one on display in Gerringong Museum.

One of the most celebrated shell artists from La Perouse is Esme Timberly, the great-grand-daughter of 'Queen' Emma Timberly. Esme's work, and that of her daughter Marilyn Russell, has been collected by museums and galleries across Australia, including the National Gallery, the Museum of Contemporary Art, the National Museum, the Australian Museum and the Powerhouse Museum. Esme Timberly has described how she travels around the south coast to find the shells she wants to use:

Every beach has different shells and they've got different names, you know, for the shells. I like to put them all in different containers. Different shells, because I know what I want to use and when I want to use them and I know where to find them. Well, that's pennywinkles. These shells here, I got them at Cape Banks ... These buttons come from Hyams Beach. The stars come from Gerringong. These fingernails come from Hyams Beach.²⁷

These same shells can be seen on the Sydney Harbour Bridge model by Mrs Jessy Stewart. There is a link between the shellwork makers at La Perouse and Mrs Jessy Stewart, the maker of the work in the Gerringong Museum. Jessy May Campbell was born in Gosford in 1912, and married Richard Stewart. Their son Roy Stewart was born in 1939. The family came to Gerringong, where Richard was injured at Gerringong Sawmill in 1953. The family moved to La Perouse that same year and, I imagine, this is where Jessy Stewart learned to make shellwork items. Roy Stewart worked with the Railways and was transferred to Gerringong in 1963, and

presumably his mother Jessy came to Gerringong as well. The Stewart family traded fish for sugar and flour as they walked past the Noble home on their way home from fishing at Warri Beach. And around 1980 they gave Mr Noble the two Harbour Bridge models. Jessy Stewart passed away in March 1996, and a year later her son Roy, the local Rugby League hero, also died.²⁸

5.2 Comparative examples

The majority of examples of shellwork Sydney Harbour Bridges, including those made by Esme Timbery and Marilyn Russell that have been collected by state and national museums and galleries, including the National Gallery, the Museum of Contemporary Art, the National Museum, the Australian Museum and the Powerhouse Museum, are modelled in one solid piece, as shown in the illustration below. The example in Gerringong Museum, made by Mrs Jessy Stewart, actually shows the Bridge as it is, with a free-standing arch and roadway.



Shellwork Sydney Harbour Bridge made by Esme Timbery

Statement of significance

The shellwork Sydney Harbour Bridge made by Mrs Jessy Stewart in Gerringong, and given, along with another example, to Mr P J Noble around 1980, and then donated by his family to the Gerringong Museum in 2005, is a fine representative example of a popular novelty craft item made by Indigenous people in the period after European colonisation, after the technique of shellwork had been taught to them by missionaries. It is essentially an adaptation of a European craft form, with the shells that form its distinctive decoration having been collected using Indigenous knowledge of the seasons and tides at which the shells were likely to come ashore.

Shellwork Sydney Harbour Bridges are popular items for acquisition by museums and art galleries as examples of a contemporary Indigenous craft form, and have been collected by major museums and galleries across Australia.

The example here in Gerringong Museum, made by Mrs Jessy Stewart, the mother of celebrated local Indigenous football hero, Roy Stewart, actually shows the Bridge

as it is, with its free-standing arch and roadway, a distinctive variation from the usual style favoured by such makers as Esme Timberly and Marilyn Russell. This departure from the more commonplace design makes this example even more significant.

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