

GERRINGONG MUSEUM - 25th ANNIVERSARY – SEPTEMBER 2016

On Monday 18th May 1981 a meeting was called for people interested in forming a Gerringong & District Historical Society. 17 people attended.

With Mr P J Noble in the chair a motion to start a Society was put forward by Mr G Bruem & seconded Mr Clive Emery. Nominations for committee were called with Mr P J Noble elected as President, Mr Clive Emery as Secretary & Mr Colin Chittick as Treasurer. Mr Winston Bailey was elected as Senior Vice President & Mrs Gwen Mercer as Junior Vice President.

The Membership fee was settled at \$1 per year & with the endorsement of Mr Doug Folkard, the Primary School Principal, meetings were set for 7.30pm on the second Tuesday each month in the school library. A cup of tea followed the meeting to encourage members to socialise.

In 1986 it was decided to build a Museum. With limited funds & no available land, the Society applied to Kiama Council. With permission given by Council to use the current site, the Society successfully proceeded to apply for a Government Grant of \$20 000.

With the advice of a Nowra building firm, the size & composition of the building were decided. The concrete slab was poured on 18th September 1987. Cleary Bros helped with the cost of the cement. With Mr Keith Mace in charge of the concrete flooring & with many volunteers on hand the Museum commenced its life.

Many members of the Society, including ladies, helped with the erection of the building. The Gerringong Apex Club also offered substantial assistance.

The Museum was officially opened by Mr Colin Hollis MLA on 21st September, 1991. Mr Clive Emery as the President of the Society welcomed the large crowd in attendance and the Gerringong School children whose singing contributed to the festivities.

The Museum's first exhibition was, appropriately, the Dairy Industry Display. Various highlights have followed including The Sporting Clubs of Gerringong; Family Histories – family trees, photos, memorabilia; 150 Years of Weddings – photos, wedding dresses – coinciding with the 150th anniversary of the naming of Gerringong.

Eric Wagstaff's models of early Gerringong buildings have been a great asset to the Museum – our thanks to the family for allowing the models to stay in the Museum. We have created an "Eric Wagstaff Room" in acknowledgement of Eric's contribution. The work of Kevin Jewell & other Society members was published this year in DVD form with the title ***Gerringong: Then and Now***, a pictorial walk back in time consisting of some 700 photographs, historical & contemporary.

Many donations have been made over the 25 years since the Museum opened – so today we have a comprehensive display of the Gerringong District and its activities. We have many books and family histories which have been donated which reside in the Clive Emery Room. John Graham's research on early Gerringong families is available through the Museum.

The Society has also conducted a number of Cemetery Walks at the Gerringong Cemetery. We usually try to have descendants of families to tell the family story. Members of the Society also research family histories from the cemetery. We have organised and invited the public to view a number of early Gerringong homes over the years.

School visits are part of our way of showing children how things were before electricity, TV & videos. The Kings School from Parramatta has been bringing their Year 6 boys to the Museum each year in February since shortly after the Museum opened. We recently had visits of 120+ Stage 1 children from Gerringong Public School.

THE FUTURE

We always need new members to carry on the great tradition that has been established – we would be happy to welcome you.

For almost nine years Kiama Council has had in mind to refurbish the old School of Arts building with a view to relocating the Museum into that building. The present site of the Museum would be used to build a Library & community space to meet the needs of our growing community.

Prepared & presented by Margaret Sharpe

On the occasion of the 25th Anniversary Celebrations of
Gerringong & District Museum & Heritage Centre

10 – 9 - 2016