



Braidwood & District Historical Society

PO Box 145 Braidwood NSW 2622

Newsletter

Number 20 March 2021

President's Report March 2021

The Braidwood Heritage Centre

Discussions are underway with QPRC who will manage the funding of the project. NSW Government under Public Works will provide a project manager with a Project Control Group to be set up. There will be some statutory issues to be addressed but at this early stage it appears the concept in principle such as the studios, accommodation, café and shop do not conflict with any regulations or restrictions for the site.

Most importantly at this stage the Council is very supportive and will ensure the project is progressed to ensure we achieve our aim and are aware the Braidwood Heritage Centre will be owned by Braidwood & District Society.

Our next meeting, scheduled for Monday 8th March, will be with QPRC plus NSW State Government, Public Works Advisory and Dept of Regional NSW. Following this meeting we should be able to advise further on timing and how the project will proceed.

Braidwood Heritage Weekend 2021 Postponed

Sadly it became evident that there were too many uncertainties and risks involved in continuing the arrangements for hosting the Braidwood Heritage Weekend. The outbreak of the Northern Beaches cluster of COVID-19 demonstrated the volatility of the situation and the unpredictable nature that the impact of COVID-19 placed on

public events and gatherings. The coordination of a large scale public event in March 2021 was too difficult to proceed with at this time.

We thank our sponsors, Braidwood Community Bank and Dargues Gold Mine for their financial assistance. Our funding from the Bank has been returned. Dargues have agreed to leave their funding with us for a future event. Promised funding from QPRC was able to be suspended, although some had been expended.

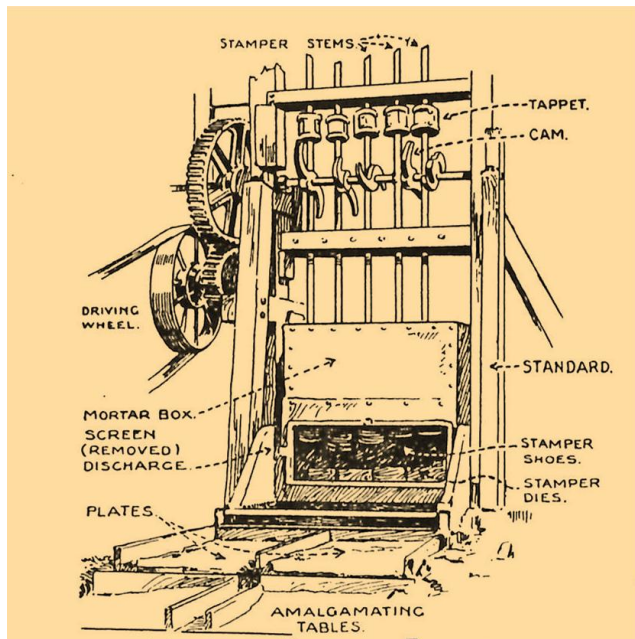
Thanks to those who contributed much time and effort in putting together the programme of proposed events. Although we are disappointed there is hope that much of the work can be utilised for a future Heritage Weekend, possibly for March 2022.

Unveiling of the Gold Crusher in Ryrie Park

One of the features of the postponed Heritage Weekend that will be going ahead as scheduled is the unveiling of the 5 Head Stamper Gold Crusher relocated from the museum to Ryrie Park, south. The removal is timely as it makes room for the development of the Braidwood Heritage Centre and also as part of the BDHS commitment to bring heritage items to the town.

This Stamper Battery was manufactured by P N Russell and Company who operated in Sydney from 1855 to 1875. It last saw service at the Alma Mine, Mongarlowe. It was donated to Braidwood & District Historical Society in 1994 and remains part

of the collection of Braidwood Museum on loan to the community.



How it Works

The iron rods (stamper stems) with heavy cylindrical stamper shoes on the bottom were raised and dropped by a series of cams on a shaft. The stamper shoes fell on the stamper dies and the ore fed into the back of the battery mortar box and crushed between the stamper shoes and dies.

The crushed ore slurry was washed over copper plates dressed with mercury which absorbed the gold. When the mercury on the plates had amalgamated with as much gold as it could absorb, the plates were cleaned down and the amalgam retorted to separate the mercury from the gold. Most stamper batteries were driven by wood fired boilers and steam engines.

Placing the Gold Crusher in Ryrie Park will be a significant step in making Braidwood's story available to visitors and residents. It will serve as a monument and re-enforces the recognition of the importance of the goldfields in the development of Braidwood as the administrative and commercial centre of the Southern Goldfields.

Gold was discovered near Araluen in 1851 and was soon followed by discoveries at Bells Creek, Majors Creek,

Jembaicumbene, Little River (Mongarlowe) and elsewhere in the district. The Southern Goldfields proved to be the largest and most consistent in New South Wales. According to escort returns for six of the ten years between 1859 and 1869 the Braidwood goldfields were the biggest producers in New South Wales. Dredging continued until the beginning of WW2. Today we have Dargues Gold Mine back in operation as new technology enables old areas to become profitable.

The unveiling of the Gold Crusher will be performed by QPRC Mayor Tim Overall at 10am on Saturday 27 March.

Law and Order Exhibition

Following the unveiling of the Gold Crusher there will be the official opening of the Law and Order Exhibition at the Museum. Featured in the exhibition will be an explanation of why Law and Order was the dominant issue for Braidwood for its first 40 years.

On display will be extracts from the Braidwood Bench Books dating from 1837, relics from the Braidwood Gaol and references from the Entrance Book, the original Police Black Book of suspected harbourers and sympathisers of the bushrangers, firearms on loan used against the bushrangers and by the police, interesting documents such as the original Will of John Clarke, father of the bushrangers, the original hand written Pass issued to a Party of Special Police in pursuit of the Clarke gang and plans and photographs of the since demolished Braidwood Gaol and original Court House.

Also featured will be an exhibition of paintings by Greg Willis. Greg's paintings tell the story of the Clarke Gang, not unlike Sidney Nolan's portrayal of the Kelly Gang, except in a very different style. Greg lives at Narooma and is a direct descendant of Catherine Clarke, the youngest sibling of the bushrangers. Greg will be present to tell his story.

Peter Smith



The Braidwood & District Historical Society, in conjunction with the Australian Golf Heritage Association have organised a tournament to celebrate the game's history and the role sporting clubs have played in the wellbeing of our community.

The competition will be played with hickory shafted clubs, which were the normal equipment used until well into the C20th. Wooden drivers, brassies, niblicks and mashie niblicks will be provided by AGHS.

Players are encouraged to dress for the occasion.

In our next newsletter we will bring you a match report and the history of the Braidwood Golf Club which turns out to be one of the oldest in the country. The club started in 1913 with games being played on 'The Common'. Later, a course was laid out at the racecourse and used until 1951 when the present course was opened at the Servicemen's Club.

John Stahel

Australia's Forgotten Showman Araluen-Born

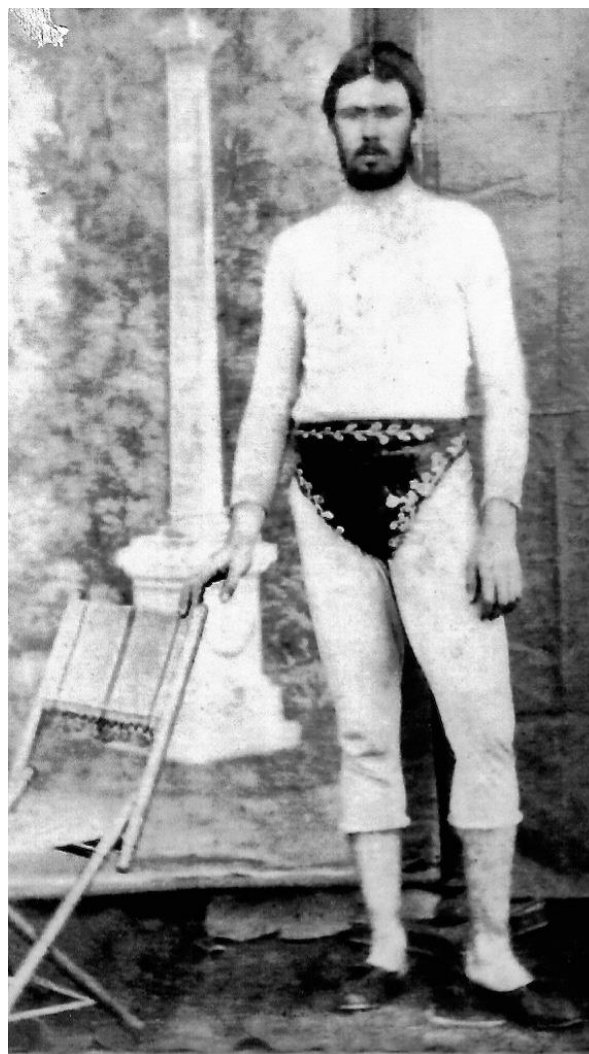
Martin Breheney

by Chris Woodland

Of Irish parentage and a gold mining heritage, Martin Breheney moved from our region into the realms of circus life and Wild West shows as 'J Martini'.

This fascinating story of our local lad Martin Breheney can be found on our Braidwood & District Historical Society website for down loading and reading at your leisure.

www.braidwoodmuseum.org.au



Martin Breheney, aka J Martini the showman, champion performer on the bars.



Martin Breheney Headstone in Waverley Cemetery

My Great Grandparents

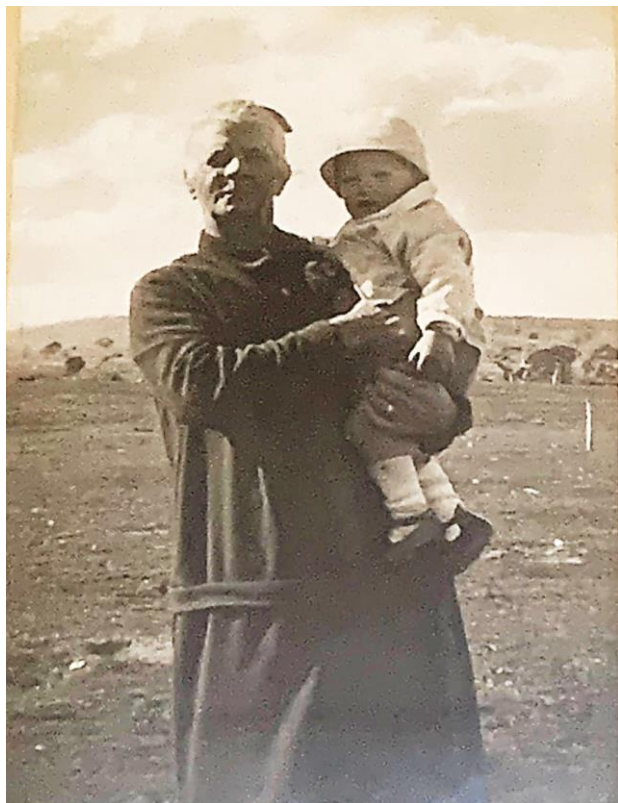
contributed by Helen Farley

It was difficult to decide on which branch of my family to write on as on every side of the family were pioneers of this area and for which I am very proud. We are 7 generations strong now.

I decided to start with my paternal great grandmother Granny Gumm (1868-1953) and Grandmother Granny Flack (1898-1964). Both women who I never knew but for whom I feel a very strong connection. Granny Flack knew of me though she passed when I was a 1-year-old. As I walk up and down the street of Braidwood it is a nice thought that all my family have walked

the same steps. My grandmothers were true pioneers and I'd like to think I have their values and some of their strength, and Mum thinks I have (ha ha), I hope you enjoy our story....this information has been passed down

MY GREAT GRANDMOTHER Martha Hopkins, Granny Gumm died an old lady (31.1.1868 – 1953)



Martha Gumm with grandson Bob Flack at Farrington

Granny Gumm's mother, Martha (Cole) came out to Australia a young 17-year-old from Plymouth on a cold and miserable day venturing to make a fresh start and knowing she would not return. She settled at Hoskingtown NSW as a house servant where she eventually met and married Tom Hopkins and had two children Tom and Martha, naming the children after themselves. My great grandmother's mother Martha Hopkins took ill and died young and that broke up the family.

Her husband Tom did remarry to a Mrs. Charlotte Iden from Primrose Valley in the early 1870's

The children were given away and Martha my great grandmother went to live and work at the Hotel at Hoskingtown with Mrs

Cronin, and her brother went to Queensland on the Darling Downs and worked for Mr. Alec Powell from Bungendore. He was only young, and all contact was lost. Which we would be interesting to know how he fared...



Hoskingtown Hotel which became the Victoria Hotel in 1876.

They were child slaves no doubt.

Granny Gumm, Martha married George Gumm from Harold's Cross. They were the early settlers of Harold's Cross. They had three children Frank, Arthur and my father's mother Harriet Maud (Granny Flack). Granny Flack was born on 10.8.1898 in the middle of the night. It was a difficult birth and her father George had to ride through the paddocks 3 miles to a neighbour, a Mrs McCurley, a midwife, and she came by horse (Mrs McCurley was nee Clarke – her brothers were John and Tom the bushrangers and one of her sisters was Nurse Gardiner, a midwife in Braidwood that delivered all the babies)

My grandmother always said she saved her life and her mothers.

Sadly, Granny Gumm's husband George Gumm died young, when he had a fall off a horse and never recovered, dying at Kenmore hospital 21-01-1904, which left my great grandmother with 3 small children, my grandmother Harriett Maud being only 5 years old. I remember seeing Granny Gumm's wedding ring which was so large it could fit on your thumb. She wore mostly black and was a tall strong remarkable woman! She never sent her children away but kept them and worked hard to feed them, gardening and had an orchard which produced apples, quinces,

and gooseberries. She had chooks, cattle and trapped rabbits. In early days she grew wheat. There were flour mills in Braidwood and at Jembaicumbene.



Harriet Maud Flack at 'Farrington'

Good neighbours played an important role in early Australia, sharing plants and produce. Harold's Cross is fertile country, which was a blessing and as you know, sort after today.

As soon as her sons were old enough, they worked at Mt Elrington which would have been just over the hills from Harold's Cross but still a good distance and they would ride their horses. They helped construct the water race around Mt Elrington. It was a feature of the property with beautiful clean clear water. Later on, when money allowed, they had timber and erected a sawmill. Owning a sawmill is not easy work but they had the timber and were not afraid of hard work Frank and Arthur inherited their strength and height from their mother. I remember Uncle Arthur and his wife Aunty Nancy (nee Cawthorne) salt of the earth people. The sawmill was known as Gumm's Sawmill which was passed down through the family. It was the era when the bullocks drew in the logs and their cousins, on the Gumm's and Hopkins' side helped.

Granny Gumm could sew and could make their few clothes, all very basic and used whatever material they could, my grandmother Granny Flack had one dress for school, and it would be washed each

night. She also taught my grandmother to sew and she was a beautiful seamstress. Granny Gumm bought Granny Flack her Singer sewing machine on which she made all my father's baby clothes. I still have the sewing machine in my home today with the tin of old cotton reels and bobbins that I kept just as they were. Granny Gumm's home had a big open fireplace and there was an oven where she baked her bread and at Christmas after the bread came out, she would make Christmas cakes. A woman of the land that could turn her hand to everything. When her son Arthur later married, they built a new bigger home for them all, including Frank her eldest son. It was built in the late 1940's from their own timber. Frank was an incredible Uncle and son who did not marry but as they all lived together in this big house he shared equally in the expenses and work. He treated his brothers 5 children as his own and was generous to them. And in later years he took good care of his mother Granny Gumm. When Granny Martha Gumm was in her 80's she was blind with cataracts so life was difficult, but she would mark by feel the heads of her grandchildren to see how much they had grown. When Granny Martha Gumm was 83 Frank took her to Sydney by train for a cataract operation and he stayed at a hotel so he could visit and see that things were successful. This was the exception that people had this operation and even went to Sydney at this time and it was also incredible she could see again and got a whole new lease on life at her age. It was so wonderful she could see her children and grandchildren again.

The school was in their home and the teacher boarded with them until a schoolhouse was built years later, but the teacher always boarded with the Gumm family.

Granny Martha Gumm had a horse and sulky in which to drive to Braidwood from Harold's Cross. She crossed the Shoalhaven River back behind the old post

office at Ballalaba (Brick Kiln Creek area for those that are unfamiliar)

She would leave very early in the morning and she could leave her horse for a rest at Torpy's Hotel on the corner of Wallace and Lascelles St, while she did her business. They had hot lunch first in the dining room at the hotel with Mrs Torpy for 2 /- shillings for adults and free for the little girl which was my grandmother, which would have been a help but no doubt Mrs. Torpy knew she was a widowed woman alone. (in total widowed for 49 years) (Mrs. Torpy has Morgan descendants still in the district today)

My grandmother Granny Flack, Harriet Maud Gumm 1898-1964 married Austin James Flack on 8.1.1923 at St Saviour's Cathedral Goulburn.

She spent a lot of time with her mother at Harold's Cross as my grandfather went far and wide shearing. The Flacks owned land at Farrington, initially in a bungalow however a bush fire came through in 1929 and burnt it to the ground. So that was when they built their new home in 1929 which is our family property today, a working farm and my mothers' home. It has never stopped in 100 years.

Granny Flack had her mother's genes, she was a strong resilient woman. She faced everything head on and had two children Molly and my father Bob.

Granny Flack would walk from Farrington to her mother's home at Harold's Cross over the mountain with my father as a young child on the back of the pony through the bush, about 16kms or more, in isolating but familiar territory for her as she was going home. She would go up the cutting past Mount Elrington and on over the hills, spend a night or two before returning to Farrington and hoping for favourable weather conditions. My Aunt Molly, my father's elder sister spent a lot of time with her grandmother Granny Gumm because Farrington was being established and it was all work to get ahead.



Austin and Maud Flack 1923

Granny Flack worked the property herself for many weeks or months at a time as her husband Aus would be away shearing. She always had a good garden and orchard and she reared turkeys and chooks. Her father-in-law Allen Flack taught her how to graft fruit trees. These fruit trees provided food and this year we have picked from them. One of the trees is Pearmain variety, a beautiful large apple good for cooking and eating. So many buckets have been cooked over the years.

Granny Flack would rear a lot of turkeys, dress them and send them to Goulburn on the bus in the outlets she had. She trapped rabbits, gutted and skinned them and regularly sold the skins.

First and foremost was the sheep. Farrington has two miles of Shoalhaven river frontage and you always had to be on the watch for flooding and moving stock. On one night they lost 300 plus sheep because the river came up without warning. The same applies today. It was a time before a lot of fencing and my



**Frank, Arthur and Harriet Maude Gumm
1901**

Grandmother would need to watch the stock for wandering. I have kept a letter she wrote to my grandfather when he was away shearing where she would have to walk to the far end of the property from Farrington, so the stock would not go across the river into the reserve.



'Farrington'

This reserve is across the road from my home at Appleby's on the Cooma Rd, so will give you an indication of the distance she was looking after and what a capable and responsible country woman she was. For her relaxation she had the wireless and enjoyed listening to the serials Blue Hills and The Lawsons, which followed each other at 1pm each day. Her Blue cat Smokey lived for years after she passed. She was an animal lover and reared many poddy lambs.



**At Dads sister Molly's on her 21
birthday 1944. A gathering of Gumms
and Flacks.**

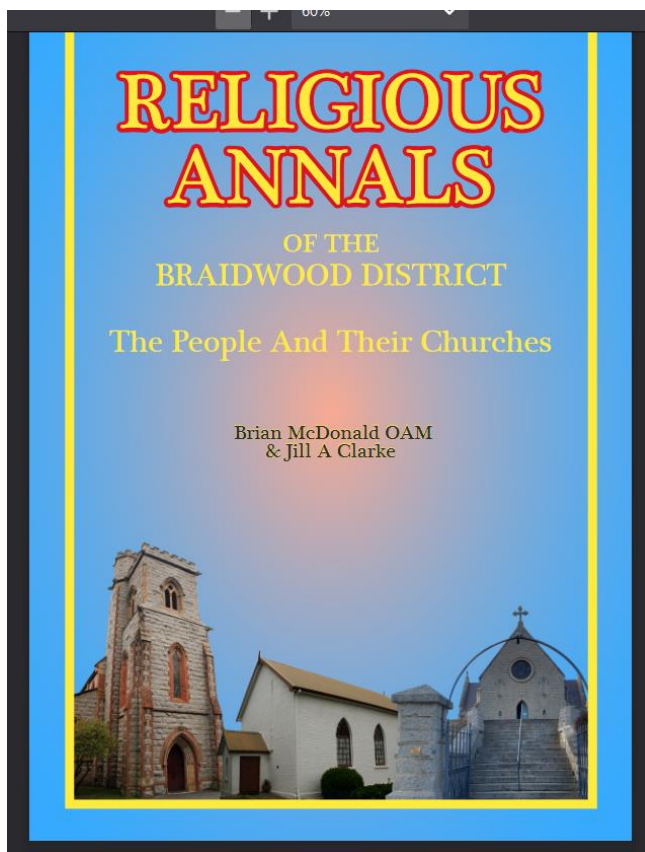
Granny Flack had a network of family in the surrounding properties and neighbours for support. Church at St Paul's at Ballalaba once a month and afterwards the Gumm family would visit Farrington for lunch or afternoon tea and picnics at the river (Farrington Crossing) with the Flack family.

On cleaning up the house, we found receipts, one for a new sewing machine, cattle sale records, property purchases etc which indicated to me she was a very good manager and they all lived very simply. Much of her furniture remains at home. Over the kitchen mantle is her collection of tea caddies and the photo of my great grandmother and father still hangs in the same spot in the lounge room, only taken down to paint and put back in its place since it was framed. We have great respect for our history and

many of descendants still live in the Braidwood district.

Thanks for reading
Helen & Norma

New Book Release



For many years Brian and Jill have been piecing together information, photos and stories about the churches of Braidwood and the little churches of the surrounding districts. Not only does this book record the milestones of the various churches in their region, it also gathers information about the people who have helped and aided the growth of the community that were established alongside the church buildings. Each church comprised of various families that attended service or mass each weekend, ran the Sunday Schools, helped the various ministers to find funds to build their churches, schools or community halls. They also aided the liturgical ministries, visited the public school and local hospital,

cleaned and decorated the church and churchyards, while also supporting their communities through membership of a variety of solidarities and committees.

The Braidwood men and women and their children were and still are the backbone of each local districts. Even though the churches are not frequented as they were over the last 150 years, they are still admired for their active community fellowship.

Cost: \$25 at the Museum

Our Society values the support of

Queanbeyan Palerang Council



And

Braidwood & Districts Community Bank

