



# Braidwood & District Historical Society

PO Box 145 Braidwood NSW 2622

## Newsletter

Number 22 September 2021

### President's Report

**“Better days are coming.”** These were the words of Chief Justice, Sir Alfred Stephen when passing the death sentence on Thomas and John Clarke. He was referring to the bushranging outbreak of the 1860s. I would like to think Sir Alfred's words are appropriate for the present time, but we will apply them to drought, fire, floods and pandemic.

The pandemic makes living in regional New South Wales more attractive than the big cities but this month we were also engulfed in the NSW lockdown. Fortunately, at the time of writing there have been no cases of Covid in our district. Our best wishes are extended to our members and friends to stay safe!

Our Annual Dinner had to be cancelled at the last minute, with 2 hours notice. Firstly, our dinner speaker Cash Brown was unable to come from Melbourne and our booking numbers were down, all due to Covid, so we transferred from having Vanilla Catering at the National Theatre to dinner at the Troopers Rest. On the afternoon of the day, 14<sup>th</sup> August, our local member and Deputy Premier, John Barilaro announced the state wide lock-down. I felt very sorry for Allie and Nick at the Troopers Rest. They were very gracious in accepting the situation. Many of us at least helped by enjoying our meals as take-away.

Thanks to Paul and Annette who tried so hard to make the dinner work after having being unable to organize the dinner for last year. Our Treasurer, Cathy will arrange a full refund for all who paid.

We were intending to break the tradition of closing the Museum for August because of the low visitor numbers and the coldness of the museum. However, the decision to close until further notice was made for us.

There is some good news. The Heritage Centre Project is powering along. The project manager Liz Madew is proving an excellent choice. Liz is with Public Works Advisory | Department of Regional NSW. She has some local knowledge. Her father was a one-time Mayor of Queanbeyan. She has thrown herself into the role with conviction and passion. She was living in Sydney when she took on the role and has just moved to Braidwood.

A management committee has been set up set up for the project. It consists of two members of Public Works Advisory, two from QPRC and two from BDHS (John Stahel and myself). There have been some suggestions that should improve cash flow and enhance the practicality of the design, but most importantly our original concept will be delivered. We will have the nine artisan studios, blacksmith shop, onsite accommodation with commercial kitchen, café and shop. Thus, providing the cash flow to enable us to employ

professional staff and a surplus to invest in the museum and collection.

There is a call for tenders for construction design about to go out. Preference will be given for local professionals and trades. The project is going to be staged as the funding is thought to be a little short for the total project. Stage 2 will be improvements to the museum. That will involve the new entrance from the rear, reception area, lift to second floor and alterations to toilets. The good news is that we have already applied for the additional funding (\$500,000) under Regional Tourism Activation Fund. We have put in a very comprehensive submission with the assistance of Project Manager, Liz and we should have an answer by end of November. A positive answer means stage 1 and 2 will continue in tandem.

We are on track within the allocated time frame to have the project completed by June 2023. There are many in the broader community who can see the commercial and heritage advantages this project will deliver for Braidwood and district. Yes, **“better days are coming.”**

**Peter Smith**

## **Joshua Higgs – a Memoir**

***from Manaro Mercury 11 July  
1883***

‘Into our sanctum, on Wednesday, came an old man who said he wanted to tell us that his name was Joshua Higgs, and that he was the oldest living pioneer white man in the district.’

“I went to see a newspaper man down the street,” said Joshua, “but he wanted to be paid for putting my story in his

paper, and so I have come to ask you to let the public know that the oldest hand is now in Bega.” “Been here long?” said the Editor. “Yes”, replied Higgs. “I came to this country in 1828, in the ship ‘Marquis of Huntley the First’ commanded by Captain Askell.



**‘Marquis of Huntley’**

There were 18 boys of us, and 222 men, as far as I can remember. Did I have a free passage? Yes, but I got into trouble in a simple way. My father was a small farmer and dealer near Salisbury, not far from Stonehenge. One night as I was going home from market I met a man driving some three or four head of cattle. The man said he would give me a shilling if I would help him. I went with him. Glad enough like most boys at home, to earn a little money. But before we had gone far the constables took us in charge for cattle stealing. I and the man was sent to Winchester gaol and cast for death, but our sentence was commuted, and I was sent out here. The cattle belonged to a farmer named Blachford, who lived between Salisbury and Ringwood.

The ‘Marquis’ reached Sydney after a long voyage, and by and by I went up the country to Thomas Cowper’s place at Ballalaba near Braidwood, where Cowper held a grant of 2000 acres, which he afterwards sold to Andrew Badgery, who in turn sold out to Hugh

Wallace. I was about Braidwood for over 3 years. In 1843, I rode a mare, *Miss*



**Hugh Wallace**

*Phantom*, for Andrew Badgery at the first Braidwood races. I weighted out, saddle and bridle, at 8st 4lbs, and I won the 2 mile race for 100 guineas easily. Hugh Wallace was judge. The other horses entered were Dr Wilson's *Sir James*, ridden by Stephen Johnston, Captain Christie's *Woodland Water Joey*, and Mr Rutledge's grey, and maybe some others, but I forget.

Captain Rain's, of Bathurst, were the first cattle sent to Bega, under the care of John Campbell. Isaac Bentley was the stockman, and 'Yorkey' the hut keeper. They came to Brogo, made yards, and put up a hut, but the blacks hunted them and the cattle away. I came down the Eurambene mountain – there is no traffic on it now – with about 300 young cattle from Ballalaba, and our party took up 'Brogo'. John Johnstone was the overseer, John Farley

stockman, and 'Connaught Tommy' whose proper name was Thomas Meehan, was hut keeper. We broke up an acre of ground on the bank of the river, sowed it with wheat, reaped it, and ground it in a steel mill. Three weeks after us, down came Henry Badgery with cattle to Warragubra. William Bowman from Bong Bong came to Buckajo. The Warragubra men were in the habit of coming to our camp, and we went out together for mutual protection. The hut keeper at Warragubra seemed not to fear the blacks. His name was Michael Dunn, a Dublin man. But after a while we missed Dunn for 2 or 3 days and suspecting he was killed, we caught two black boys, and made them tell us where he was. They took us to a waterhole where we found his body, and we took it out and buried it.

The emus were thick in those days, and ran about in mobs. All Bega was covered with tall grass, and the waterholes had long rushes around them, and all sorts of wild fowl were plentiful, and so tame that they would almost let you walk over them. Then the Imlays came to Twofold Bay and began whaling. A party of their sailors found their way over to our station, and I drove some fat cows down to the Bay, made a yard, and killed the first fresh beef Imlays had.

I got married in Goulburn in 1842 by Parson William Sowerby. Goulburn was the only place out of Sydney where people could marry, except a priest happened to be travelling and came along at the right time. I then went back to Ballalaba. Afterwards I was at *Coolendong* for 2 ½ years, then at *Dandelong* shepherding for Henry Wallace, and I went blind and had to go to Sydney in 1877. From Sydney I walked round Cooma and came to work for Mr Champney and lately I had to

come into Bega for the doctor's help. I believe Campbell gave Bega its name,



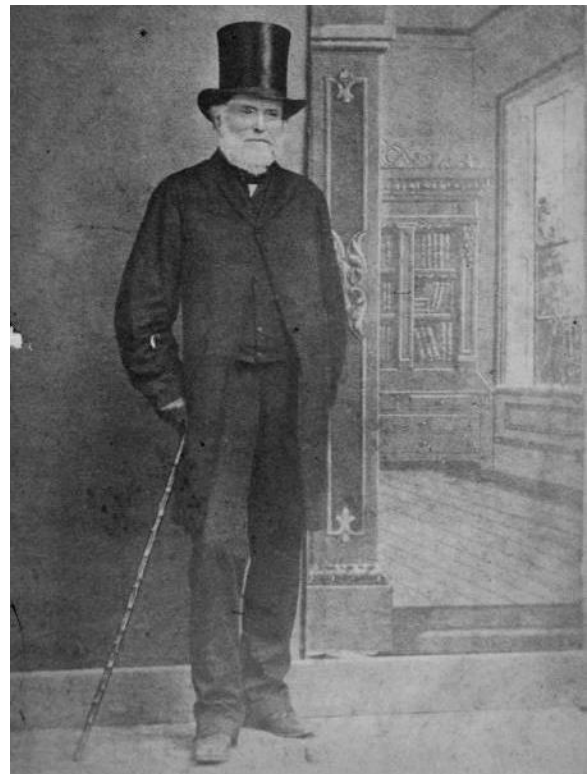
**Henry Wallace**

and I am the man who gave the name to Taraganda. We asked the blacks what they called that spot and in their quick way they said what I took to be Taraganla. It might be Tallagalla, from the turkeys, but I ain't much of a scholar, and I thought they said Taraganda. I was born on December 11, and I am 72 years of age. I have a son Thomas, now looking after Cattle, for the Bank at Watson's place on the Snowy, and one of my daughters is married to a Sydney man who is now in England, but I expect soon to hear that he has come back to Sydney. You may rely upon all this being true. All I want is to have it printed that I am the oldest resident about these parts.

**"Good morning"**

*Joshua Higgs was born in December 1807 in Downton Wiltshire.*

*He was tried in Southampton Assizes on 2 August 1824 and received a Life sentence for cattle stealing. From Winchester goal he would spend almost two years aboard the prison hulks 'Bellerophon' and 'Euryalus' before his sentence was commuted to life and he departed the shores of England on the 'Marquis of Huntley' arriving in Port Jackson on 13 September 1826 (not 1828 as Joshua claimed). The Captain was William Ascough (not Askell). The military guard on board consisted of a detachment of the 39th regiment under the orders of Major Donald MacPherson. Captain Rain of Bathurst was Captain Thomas Raine, a mariner, who also established Australia's first whaling station at Twofold Bay in Eden on the NSW south coast.*



**Dr Peter Imlay of Bega**

Name.	Age.	Religion.	History.
Stiggs Joshua	77	6 y 6	Arrived in NSW in 1826 + followed the occupation of groom + afterwards as store keeper at Braidwood Unable to work there for the last 5 years - Struck blind by falling - Has been in Macquarie St + similar Institutions for the last 6 years - Under

**Joshua Higgs entry of death in the Register of the Destitute Asylum**

Joshua's Conditional Pardon listed his original trade or calling as that of a farm labourer and shoemaker. He was a short man by today's standards at 4ft 11 inches and had a ruddy complexion with brown hair and hazel eyes. He also carried two tattoos - a ship on his right arm and the letters J H on his left arm.

Joshua was married on 23 August 1840 to Ann Cunningham (1822-1872) in Goulburn and they had 6 children, Thomas and Anne living past childhood.

Joshua and Ann would continue the nomadic shepherd life and raise their family whilst living in the Monaro area. Their son Thomas was the first, born in 1843 and he would follow his father's occupation working as a stockman until his death in 1922. A daughter Catherine was born in December 1845 at 'Coolringdon', Monaro and would live her life in the Bega district whilst Elizabeth was born in December 1847 at Cooma. A third daughter Anne was born in 1850.

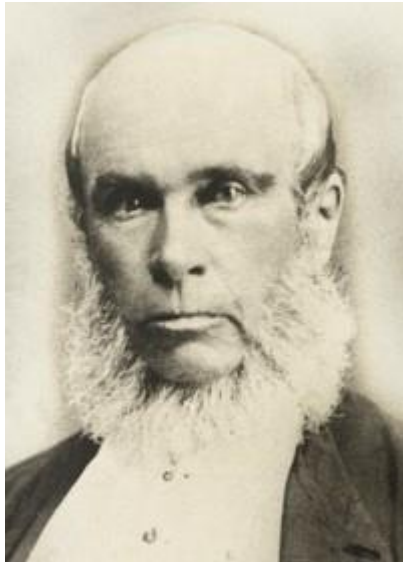
As Joshua aged, illness settled upon him which he tells in his own words, and is also borne out by various records for admissions to the Liverpool Asylum for the Infirm and Destitute in March 1884 and March 1886 before his admission to the Macquarie Asylum before his death on 30 July 1891. The cause of death was simply, Senectus or old age. He is buried at the Rookwood Cemetery in Sydney NSW.

### **James Larmer – Colonial Surveyor 1809 - 1886**

Had James Larmer not come to Braidwood in March 1839 to survey the Braidwood Village Reserve, we would not have the Museum we do today.

James was a government surveyor in the NSW colony. Between 1830 and 1859, he surveyed land, roads and settlements in NSW. He was an Assistant Surveyor to the Surveyor-General, Sir Thomas Mitchell, from 1835 to 1855. In 1835, he was second in

command of Sir Thomas Mitchell's second expedition to prove that the Darling River flowed into the Murray River. He is also noteworthy for his recording of Aboriginal words from various parts of New South Wales, including the Braidwood area.



**James Larmer**

In 1843, James bought a block of land in Wallace Street and built the 'Royal Hotel', now the Museum. It is the best surviving example of convict architecture in Braidwood, along with the Mill in McKellar Street. These two of seven buildings in Braidwood listed on the State Heritage Register. This is apart from the town Heritage Listing. He also laid out the Town Plan for Majors Creek.

Although he arrived in Australia in 1829 on the 'Elizabeth', he did not marry until 1861 at the age of 52, when he married the widow Martha Rachael Stoyles - 15 years younger than him. In 1863 a daughter, Maritana, was born and a second daughter, Maude, was born in 1867.

In May 1882 the 'Royal Hotel' was sold to the Grand United Order of Oddfellows for £700. They added a staircase and upper and lower halls. After, they sold it

to the 'Commercial Hotel' in 1937. It was divided into flats to assist the housing shortage of WW2.

In May 1966, the "Back to Braidwood" celebration brought a recognition of the fact that Braidwood's future lay in its past and pressure was initiated to establish a local museum, preferably within the old hotel structure. In 1970 the Braidwood Historical Society bought the building, in all its decaying glory. That began many years of fund raising, especially with street stalls.

Eventually the Society received a \$30,000 Bicentennial Grant which allowed major work to commence, but the building still needed further repairs and restoration. It was not until 2017 that once again, major repairs were accomplished with the generous assistance of regional council grants.

So this year, with our successful grant application of \$2.5 million, we begin perhaps the sixth life of this wonderful building and bring it fully into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century with an enhanced purpose, a self supporting income and a revitalisation of development for that end of Wallace Street.

We think James Larmer would be very pleased.



**Memorial in Braidwood Cemetery**

### **The Late Mr. James Larmer.**

THE Death is reported, on Saturday last, of Mr. James Larmer, J.P., of Braidwood. The deceased gentleman was one of the oldest surveyors in the colony, and he was one of the original party that journeyed to Bourke, and laid out that township. Mr. Larmer, has been ailing for some time past, but his death was rather sudden, as up to 1 o'clock on Saturday he did not appear any worse than usual. During the afternoon he took a change and expired about 7 o'clock. He leaves a family and a wide circle of friends. The late Mr. Larmer was the officer who laid out the old portion of Queanbeyan more than 40 years ago.

*Queanbeyan Age 10 June 1886*

Our Society values the support of

**Queanbeyan Palerang Council**



And

**Braidwood & Districts Community Bank**



## **Postponement of AGM**

### **Date to be advised.**

At our last Committee Meeting we decided to hold this year's AGM and election of officers on Friday 17th September. Our constitution requires 14 days' notice for our members. We delayed sending the notice not knowing what restrictions would be in place. Under current regulations the meeting would not be possible and it is likely the restrictions will be extended.

Therefore, we have decided to postpone the AGM.

Rather than speculate on a date at this time we have decided to wait until we have a clearer view of the possibilities. We do not want a repeat of the disappointment of our annual dinner cancellation on the day.

Our Constitution requires us to hold our AGM within six months of the end of the financial year. Let's hope before year-end we can enjoy a social event with members and friends, with the advantage of more people having been vaccinated.

**Peter Smith**

## **Membership Renewals**

Emails will be sent soon to all members, offering renewal of their respective memberships.

Our records show who has 5 year etc memberships, and so not everyone will receive a reminder.

