



Braidwood & District Historical Society

PO Box 145 Braidwood NSW 2622

Newsletter

Number 8 March 2018

Volunteers' Christmas Lunch

We could not operate without our wonderful volunteers. Our Volunteers Program has been expanded and we have many interesting projects in which to participate or just lend a hand. This year's lunch was held at the Reidsdale Old Cheese Factory and enjoyed by all. We even had an impromptu musician. Bravo John!



Queanbeyan Palerang Council Australia Day Awards

We are very proud that the Braidwood & District Historical Society has won the 'Best Event of the Year', awarded for the Re-enactment of the 'Capture of the Clarke Bushrangers'. Many people assisted with this event, but it could not have occurred without the organising by our President, Peter Smith and some financing by Bendigo Bank.



Historical Society President, Peter Smith



Mayor Tim Overall with Peter Smith

Buried Bank Notes

The Braidwood Review on 13th October 1925 carried the story of a stash of bank notes having been found at Jembaicumbene by a lad who was digging round an old post within a few yards of the residence of Mr Costello. The notes, or the remains of them, had fallen into pieces from moisture ingress. It was estimated that about 800 pounds lay in the hole. The printing on the notes was

legible enough to decipher their numbers and the bank name. Whether they were



secreted by some lucky digger in the palmy days of Jembaicumbene, who subsequently died without having the opportunity to recover them, or whether they are a relic of the bushranging times and a portion of the booty of a mail robbery it was impossible to say. Unfortunately this fine haul of notes proved to be perfectly worthless.

The Hapless Jaunty Bowman **from the Queanbeyan Age** **25 October 1866**

A young man named Jaunty Bowman, a sawyer, was yesterday bitten on the tip of one of his fingers by a black snake which was about 18 inches in length. He and his brother-in-law, John Ashcroft, were working at their sawpit in the mountain, and Bowman, when he was bitten, was gathering wood to kindle a fire to cook their dinner. He laid hold of a piece of wood which was hollow underneath and when feeling his finger pricked he drew his hand quickly from under the piece of wood and the snake still clung to his finger. Upon seeing the snake hanging to his finger, Bowman gave his hand a sudden jerk and flung the snake from him. In the excitement of the moment he lost sight of the reptile and did not kill it. Bowman requested Ashcroft to cut the tip of his finger off, but Ashcroft did not feel equal to the task, whereupon Jaunty seized hold of an axe himself and unhesitatingly chopped off the first joint of the bitten finger. Ashcroft afterwards found Jaunty whistling with as much nonchalance as if he had been stung by a mosquito instead of a black snake.

Araluen Dramatic Club

On 22 July 1897 a meeting was held in the Oddfellows Hall Araluen to form an amateur dramatic club. Mr B McIntosh was voted to the chair. Henry Barton Madden Hon Secretary, Mr B McIntosh Hon Treasurer, H B Madden stage manager. Rose Greenwood, Jane Curran, Messrs H Thiers, B McIntosh, Jack Curran. P Madden, H Madden. Several of these persons considered themselves experienced players, and it was stated that if only they practiced and took their parts naturally, the club would be a success. A new hall with a good

floor and a stage was spoken of at the Newtown end and a discussion meeting was held at Madigan's Hotel.

The first concert, attended by 250 persons occurred October 1897, whereby many solo performances were given. The Dramatic Club slowly declined, although "various public exhibitions of the histrionic abilities of the local amateur thespians" emerged every few years.

Prior to this, there had been an Amateur Club in 1871 called the Corinthian Club. It had a Braidwood equivalent, the Garrick Club but both slowly succumbed.

In 1931, the play "Daddy Longlegs" was staged at the Araluen Federal Hall. The movie had just been released, starring Janet Gaynor and Warner Baxter.

According to the Braidwood Dispatch, Gwen Hyland played 'Judy' in a creditable manner, whilst Mrs Johnson played the stern and kindly 'Miss Pritchard'. Con Dempsey played 'Daddy' with characteristic confidence and with practice should have gained a great deal more ardour in his love making. When Lila Wallace puts more hauteur into her interpretation of 'Mrs Pendleton' she will set more dignity to the afternoon tea scenes. Mrs Pendleton's daughter was very capably played by Kathleen Collins, and Ena Blundell will certainly raise a few laughs with her interpretation of the part of the fussy old nurse. Robert Wallace played the youthful and impulsive 'Jimmy' shooting bandicoots, and he sings a good dinkum song. 'Wykoff' was played splendidly by Bill Goward. Electric lighting from car batteries went far towards improving matters and a good time was had by all.

Famous Flyer Visits Braidwood
from Braidwood Review 26 October 1932



Air Commodore Sir Charles Kingsford-Smith in the famous old 'Southern Cross'

The *Southern Cross* began life as the *Detroit*, a polar exploration aircraft. It had been abandoned for 6 months in 1926 on the icy wastes of Alaska where it had crashed and was recovered by Sir Hubert Wilkins. The wings and the fuselage lay buried under the ice and snow before being retrieved. Wilkins met with Kingsford Smith and

Charles Ulm in San Francisco and sold them the plane which was then renamed the *Southern Cross*.



Braidwood from the Southern Cross 1932

It landed in Braidwood in 1932 accompanied by a smaller machine, the *Southern Cross Midget*, in charge of pilot, Pat Hall. Originally it was intended to land in Malone's small paddock, but eventually landed on the racecourse.

Joy rides were popular, carrying 12-14 passengers per trip. The plane consumed a gallon of petrol every 2.25 miles, and cost £30 pounds per day to fly.

Kingsford-Smith died in 1935 when his plane crashed into the sea off Burma on the way to Singapore. The plane was never found.



The Southern Cross in Braidwood 1932

Mystery Unidentified Photo



This photo may have something to do with Robert Lee King. He was born in Braidwood about 1862 and died in Sydney 1947. He was employed as the government Chinese interpreter.

Any family resemblances here?

Any suggestions?

All thoughts welcome.

Shoes from Braidwood Antiques

by Derek Duffy

A recent visit to the attic of a 160 year old main street shop in Braidwood revealed a very old, and well worn ladies boot tucked away under the floorboards. Visits to the attic are rare as the only access is by an extension ladder through the manhole (the stairwell had long been removed, possibly after the fire of 1940). As if to further deter visitors to what is the third storey roof space, the two attic rooms are devoid of any wall or ceiling panelling (with the Lath and Plaster long since removed).

The dust (and accumulated rubbish) is thick on the floor and the only light is from the single dormer window facing out to the street.

The small, well worn ladies boot was located below the floor boards and behind the wall studs in an area where the sloping roof meets the floor, and just next to the only window.

Such an unusual find in this old building led my son to investigate if maybe there was some reason why this worn old boot would be there.

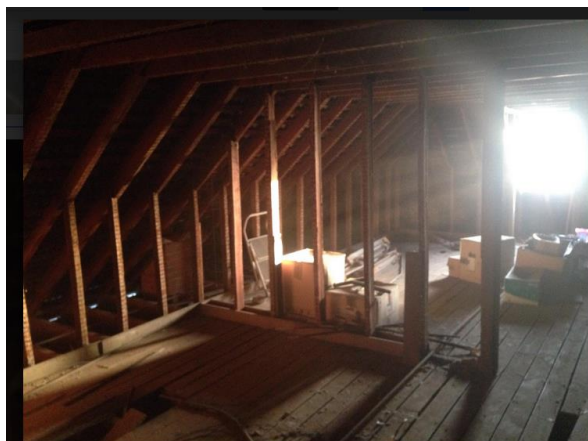


The antique ladies boot

This revealed a very interesting twist in that it was common practice in the 18th and 19th centuries to hide old worn shoes/boots (and witches bottles and even dead cats) near openings to rooms such as windows and fireplaces to ward off evil spirits, ghosts and demons. Most favoured were women's or children's shoes and always a single shoe.

Since finding this item our most interesting comment was from a lady

who suggested we should return the boot to where it came from.....



The attic of Braidwood Antiques

Could this be a long lost shoe placed near the window for this very reason? A very interesting old custom. Further information can be found at

[https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concealed shoes](https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concealed_shoes)

The theory most accepted argues that shoes were concealed to protect against evil influences such as demons, ghosts, witches, and familiars. Witches were believed to be attracted by the human scent of a shoe, and after entering one found themselves trapped, as they are unable to reverse.

The shoe is on display in the Braidwood Antiques shop.

The Danger of Crossing Rivers from Braidwood Dispatch 1949

John Heazlett remembered that when he had charge of Nithsdale school, crossing the Shoalhaven could be fraught with danger. A boat was provided to ferry the Greenwoods, Tom Byrnes and others across the Shoalhaven. "A well developed Syrian hawker, Mary Aub, asked to be ferried across one day. When approaching the opposite bank she placed a large bundle on each arm and put one foot on the high bank, and of

course the boat moved back into the stream. Before the drift could be arrested, her little trilbies moved in opposite directions. One faced east and the other west. The situation became tense. At last she uttered a loud scream and took the forced dive into the Shoalhaven, baggage and all. She was able to scramble out with a little assistance and used some picturesque language, though her vocabulary was rather limited. She always believed it was a little joke on his part." Mary Ann Aueb died in Sydney in 1939, and her husband Shewan died in 1935.

Historical Society 2018 Annual Dinner

This year's dinner will be held in the National Theatre towards the end of June. Please keep it in mind and details will be sent out as soon as arranged.

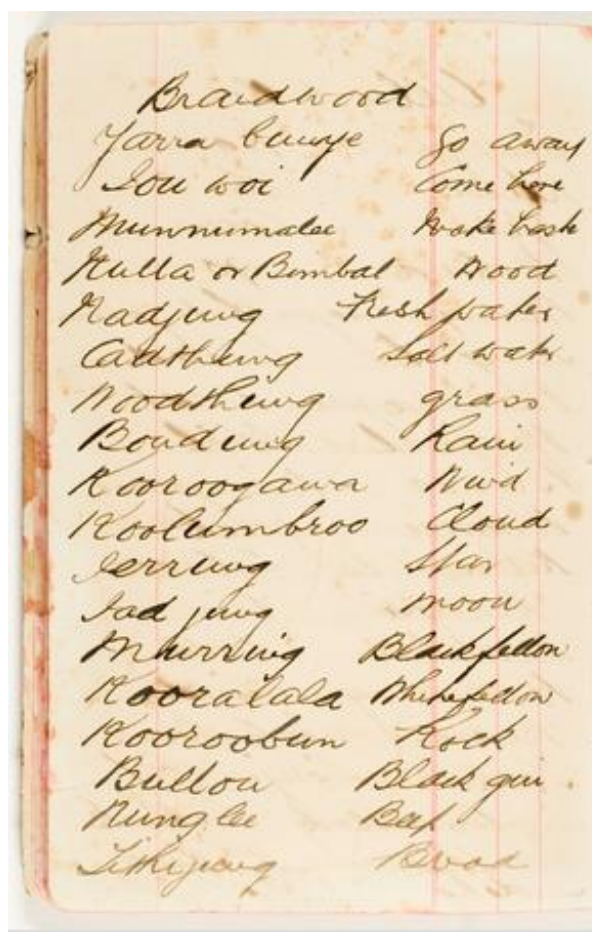
Museum with a Past

Our museum building has had a chequered past. Built in the 1840's, it is the best surviving example of convict architecture in Braidwood, along with the Mill in McKellar Street. These two buildings are the only structures in Braidwood listed on the State Heritage Register.

In 1843, the surveyor James Larmer, bought a block of land in Wallace Street and built the Royal Hotel, now the Museum.

Many of the surveying tasks undertaken by Larmer after 1835 were in the County of St Vincent, but his field books show that he worked in most of the counties existing in the Colony at that time. The area he covered is impressive. In March 1839 he surveyed Braidwood Village

Reserve. The plan was amended by Mitchell after a petition from Thomas Wilson to have a recreation area in front of the court-house.

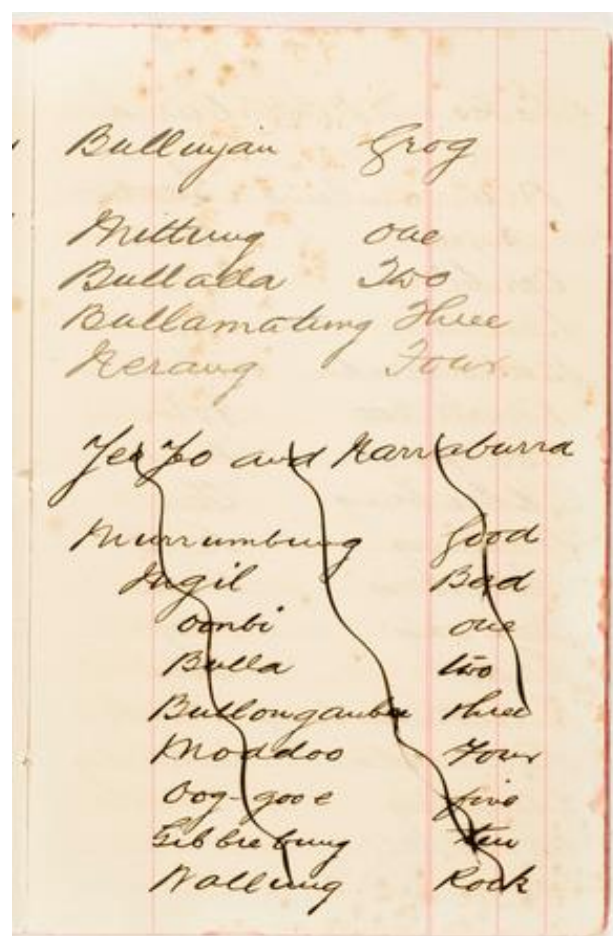


He also kept a small notebook containing lists of Aboriginal vocabularies for various regions in New South Wales. These lists would have been vital to facilitate his surveying work when encountering local aboriginal communities. The extract above appears to be a copy of Larmer's original compilation.

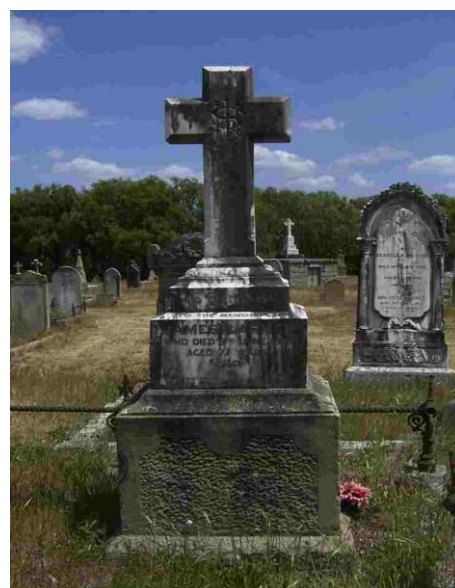
Although he arrived in Australia in 1829 on the 'Elizabeth', he did not marry until 1861 at the age of 52, when he married the widow Martha Rachael Stoyles - 15 years younger than him. In 1863 a daughter, Maritana, was born and a second daughter, Maude, was born in 1867.

James Larmer was 77 when he died. His grave can be found in the cemetery at

Braidwood. The headstone also commemorates his wife Martha who died on the 11th of November 1899 aged 75, and their daughter Maude who died on the 9th of December 1916 aged 49.



Larmer's translation of the local Aboriginal dialect.



James Larmer family headstone

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. They sold it to the Commercial Hotel in 1937 and it was divided into flats to assist the housing shortage of WW2.

In May 1966, the “Back to Braidwood” celebration brought forth a recognition 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 including 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.

The museum is a paradise for Braidwood descendants. All the items are from old local homes and sheds and to the memory of their forebears.

Volunteering at the Museum

- The Society has recently restructured its volunteer program and is seeking people to fill a number of important positions.
- We have a wide variety of specific jobs available covering exhibitions, archives, research, Collection Conservation as well as roles in Visitor Services and Events.

Join us at the museum to help out and learn about the many ways you can contribute.

See our website at

www.braidwoodmuseum.org.au

Museum Opening Hours

Friday-Sunday 11am-2pm

Address: 186 Wallace Street, Braidwood

Telephone: 4842 2310

Admission: \$5.00 adults \$1.00 children

Email: help@braidwoodmuseum.org.au