

# Foster & District Historical Society Inc.



## PROM COUNTRY NEWS

JUNE 2018

### Office Bearers:

**President: Meg Rogers**  
**Vice-President: Mike Heal**  
**Secretary: Kerry Corcoran**  
**Treasurer: Noela Cripps**

**Curator: Jennifer Jones**  
**Archives: Noela Cripps**  
**Research: Nola Taylor**  
**Maintenance: Reg. Williams**



Museum exhibition – The Franklin River – Mountain to the Sea

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**President's Report**

The first part of the year has been busy, whether it is garage sales, working at the Foster Show, or setting up exhibitions or maintenance, - a big thank you to everyone who volunteers to keep the Museum ticking over.

Our exhibition, The Franklin River – Mountain to Sea and the book launch of Neil Everitt's " The Power of Water" was a huge success with over 75 people attending to hear Russell Broadbent launch the book and open the wonderful exhibition.

We honoured the returned soldiers from WW1 with a flag on their graveside during April and 52 flags were placed across the Foster, Toora and Welshpool

cemeteries and this was carried out in conjunction with the Foster RSL and we thank them. Richard Jones continues to place an article each month on the fallen soldiers of our area from WW1. The Foster RSL was successful in obtaining a grant to put an honour Board with all the names from WW1 in the Foster War Memorial Hall, ( so those obtaining signatures in the street on very cold days, was not in vain.)

We gave Residents of Prom Country House copies of our 2018 calendars which were very well received and Residents greatly enjoyed the memories on the calendars.

Cheryl Glowery applied on behalf of the Society and obtained a grant for a Digital Narrative Display which will update our Web Page and allow digital and photographic material to be made available.

The Museum and grounds are looking very tidy as the Crawford Hall has been painted outside by the Shire and inside by Reg and his maintenance team(the 3 R's). Agnes School is in the process of being painted with a grant obtained from the Federal Government.

Busy times but history matters.

Meg Rogers, President.

## **WHAT'S ON**

**July 3 meeting** – Launch of Nola Taylor's book, *Let's Take a Walk*.

**August 7 – Annual General Meeting.**

**September 4-** To be decided

**October 2- Heather Arnold - Koo-Wee-Rup swamp history.**

**November 6- Mike McCarthy – Port Franklin.**

**December 4 – Christmas break-up.**

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## **Exhibition Opening and Book Launch – Saturday 10 March 2018**

As our president Meg Rogers noted in her report, on a warm Autumn day in Foster, the launch of the exhibition – 'The Franklin River –Mountain to Sea' and Neil Everitt's book, *The Power of Water*, attracted an audience of more than 75 people. Russell Broadbent, MHR for McMillan opened the exhibition and launched the book. Refreshments provided by Historical Society members followed the official activities. The exhibition was a group effort; Cheryl Glowrey co-ordinated the talented and efficient team of Rob Pritchard, Neil Everitt, Rae Knee, Jennifer and Richard Jones, Meg Rogers, Noela Cripps, Nola Taylor, Reg Williams and Mike McCarthy. The exhibition is divided into ten sections under

the headings: 'The Upper Franklin', 'The Story of Kewita', 'Hydro-electricity at Toora', 'The Toora and Foster Electric Light and Power Supply Company', 'Franklin River Reserve', 'Liverpool Township - "The Town that Never Was" ', 'John Amey', 'Franklin River Sawmills 1853-63', 'The Port Franklin Tramway 1889-1937', and 'Port Franklin – Fishing Boats at Port Franklin'. The headings indicate the integral role of the river to the area and provide viewers with an insight into the workings of the Franklin river over more than one hundred and forty years.

Neil Everitt's publication, *The Power of Water: History of Hydro-Electric Power on the Franklin River at Toora*: Foster, Vic: Foster and District Historical Society, 2018, offers readers a well-researched and detailed account of the establishment and life of the hydro-electric scheme on the Franklin River, which remained in existence until the SEC arrived in 1938. Foster benefitted from the scheme as well. The Toora and Foster Electric Co. managed the supply during its period of existence. The book includes many images of the people who planned and worked on the scheme, the river, the town of Toora and its inhabitants who used the electricity and the owners of 'Kewita,' the property through which the river passes. Neil Everitt has also reproduced documents which illuminate the story. It is a valuable addition to the local history of our district. Congratulations to the author and to the Historical Society for publishing it.

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**Excerpt - Chairman's Brief Notes of Official Inspection, no.11** by W Calder, Chairman of Country Roads Board, 1913-20, South Gippsland Shire, Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1913. Amey's Road, Weather fine and mild – left Foster at 9 am accompanied by Crs Hall and Gray (Shire Engineer) also Messrs Renable and McFarlane. Travelled along Amey's Track, which is graveled for a mile or so out of Foster, and is in good order. Continued along this road to its junction with Nippards Track, which was reached at 10.15. Up to this point had travelled through very fine country – not too steep and road fairly well graded. One or two deviations had been carried, one (Gardiners) not yet completed and fenced off – fine views were obtained of Wilson's Promontory and Corner Inlet. Entering Nippards Track, the road fell with a steep side cut to bridge with a steeper side and longer rise on the far side. The country was now much more hilly and the holdings smaller – from 100-150 acres. Continued along Nippards track to the junction with the Boolarra =Foster Road and about half a mile beyond the junction stopped at the Boolarong School at 12.30 where 10 or 12 ladies were waiting with tea and cake – also about 12 or more men. **(TBC)**

#### **Gippsland and Lark Force - World War Two.**

**Summary of talk by Lyn Skillern, secretary of the Leongatha Historical Society, local historian and former teacher at Leongatha Secondary College. - Tuesday 3 April 2018**

The 2/22<sup>nd</sup> Battalion was raised in 1940 and became part of the second AIF on July 1 1940. Lt/Col Howard Carr became the commander of the men who had enlisted and were taken to a camp at Mount Martha Victoria. On July 12 the Battalion received the remainder of its officers and 500 NCOs and enlisted men. The new battalion became part of the new 8<sup>th</sup> Division. The already formed 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> Divisions were by then serving in the Middle East and a new Division was

needed to protect Australian and Commonwealth interests in the South West Pacific and Far East against Japanese aggression.

The 2/22<sup>nd</sup> was to be part of a garrison force sent to Rabaul. Their task was to defend those islands close to the Australian Mainland. This Battalion together with artillery and signals groups formed Lark Force. On January 23<sup>rd</sup> 1942 the Japanese invaded New Britain, now part of Papua New Guinea. They took over the port of Rabaul and many soldiers and nurses became POWs. Others tried to escape some successfully, some not. What happened to the men of Lark force is a story with many parts.

There were sixty four Gippslanders in Lark Force and over half did not return. Of the sixty four, 17 came from Leongatha and District and 11 from Yarram and District. Of these men, 6 from Leongatha and 5 from Yarram were drowned when the Japanese POW ship The Montevideo Maru was sunk on July 1 1942. Others were executed by the Japanese and a few escaped.



Alan Cocksedge

Bellingham Brothers.

Lyn told the story of just some of these men illustrated with photographs. Bert Kuhne (Dumbalk), Harry Millsom (Tarwin), Frank James (Leongatha), brothers Tom and Bill Bellingham (Nerrena), and Jim Butterworth (Dumbalk) were all killed in a massacre of POWs at Gasmata Beach. They had been on the run for over 7 weeks. Others were lost on the Montevideo Maru. Jack Howard, Tommy Sangster, Fred Ketels and Fred Broadbent were all from Leongatha and Jimmy Kavanagh and Arthur Oliver were from Leongatha South. Yarram and district men were also on that ill-fated vessel, Badan Hibbs, Alan Cocksedge, Colin Coulthard, Edward Newton and George Thomas. David Lawson, Phil Hillis, Owen Hughes, of the Leongatha area and John and Patrick Morgan of Yarram survived by walking the length of New Britain, crossing to the New Guinea mainland by canoe and walking all the way to Mt Hagan. From there they went by plane to Thursday Island. It took them four months to reach safety.

Lyn is attempting to write a book on this subject.

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**Dr Cheryl Glowrey Talk – Tuesday 5 June 2018.** Cheryl is currently a lecturer in Education at Federation University, Churchill Campus. A regional and

environmental historian, as well as an educator, she is the author of *Snake Island & the Cattlemen of the Sea*.

Cheryl delivered an entertaining and illuminating talk on A A Peverill, who as Under Secretary of the State Lands Department, was instrumental in setting up cattle agistment at Yanakie and Snake Island in 1909.

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**Continuation of Chairman W Calder's 'Brief Notes of Official Inspection no.11,' South Gippsland Shire: Wednesday 23 July 1913.**

**Foster-Boolarra Road.** After refreshments, three or four of the men and one of the ladies ( Mrs Johnson) spoke as to their difficulties and requirements as to roads (Mrs Johnson stated that they did not mind which road was adopted so long as they had one good road) which remarks were noted and replied by self. Leaving Hall returned along Boolarra-Foster Road to Mr Rendell's farm, where we were met by Mrs White who had carried lunch for Members of the Board for two miles through a bush track –so halted for tea – continued along road to new Turton-Scanlon deviation – into which we turned, but owing to roughness of country had to dismount and lead or drive horses along track, over logs etc. (think Mrs White should receive Royal Humane Society's medal for providing commissariat equipment over this country). Were joined here by three or four local settlers who accompanied Members of the Board along the new work which is now being carried out by Gray ( Shire Engineer). The grade is 1 in 15/7 and the work is being done satisfactorily. Continued along new work as far as it has progressed, near the head of the Franklin River which was reached at 3.15 pm. Were met here by another four or five settlers Jefferies, Summerhill etc. at this locality. Mr Pearce, who has a farm near Rendells showed a good sample of Dacite stone obtained from the creek about 30 chains above this spot – the sample of stone produced was the best I have yet seen in this Shire. From here we stuck up Walkers Track ( unmade) for about three quarters of a mile to the Boolarra-Foster Road where several settlers were met – Griffiths etc.etc.etc, this road evidently bears heavy traffic and is in a dreadfully bad condition. It is unmetalled with the exception of one or two small patches. The mud here is knee deep on the horses and is badly tracked by bullock wagons.

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**Foster & District Museum**

**Museum Opening Hours**

The Museum is open daily during the school holidays and on Saturdays and Sundays during term time. It is closed Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, Boxing Day and Good Friday.

Hours of Opening are: 11.00 am -3.00 pm

Other times by appointment: (03) 5682 1201/ (03) 56822297

### **Admission Fees:**

This is a volunteer run and maintained museum and FDHS relies upon the small admission fee to run and maintain the museum on behalf of the Foster & District Community.

ADULT: \$5.00

CONCESSION:(senior, pension, special & student over 15 years) \$4.00

CHILDREN : (5-15 Years) 0.50 cents

FAMILY: \$10.00

CHILDREN (under 5 years): Free

MEMBERS: Free

Foster & District Historical Society Inc.

### **Membership**

Becoming a member of the Foster & District Historical Society Inc. helps us to preserve and present the district's history. You receive free museum entry, newsletters and invitations to events and new exhibition openings.

Single: \$20.00

Family: \$35.00

Foster & District Historical Society Inc. meets at 7.30 pm on the first Tuesday of the month from February to December. The AGM is held in August. The meetings are held in the Crawford Hall ( entry rear of museum complex from the car park.) We have many interesting speakers. Visitors and new members are very welcome.

*The Foster & District Historical Society Inc. is a member of the South Gippsland Historical Network, an affiliated member of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. Foster & District Museum has been appointed by the Public Record Office as a Place of Deposit for non-permanent public records and is an accredited museum through Museums Australia ( Vic)*