

Annual Conference and AGM of the NSW&ACT Association of Family History Societies

Hosted by Botany Bay Family History Society
14-16 September 2012

Article prepared by John Hely for the BBFHS Journal

After travelling the State of NSW annually, to attend and experience the premier family history event on the calendar, which is the Conference of the NSW&ACT Association of Family History Societies, the 2012 Conference was held in the heart of the Shire. The planning took over two years and was a continuous learning experience, particularly from the recent conferences held in Inverell, Shoalhaven and Wyong. It is with much appreciation that the efforts of the Family History Societies in those locations shared their knowledge, developed initiatives and experiences that has been a valuable contribution to the planning of our opportunity to host the conference.

It was a privilege being the BBFHS delegate for the NSW&ACT Association of Family History Societies. It was a privilege and proud moment to be there amongst nearly 400 avid family historians, to see our Conference 2012 Team on stage and to have all the BBFHS members attending the Conference, stand in appreciation. It was a privilege to then hear and feel the gasp of all the others attending, to see the level of active involvement and passion of BBFHS. For the Shire, for BBFHS members and for expanding the horizons of family history in NSW, this was a wonderful event and a memorable experience.

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What's On

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The Conference was held at the Tradies, in their newly refurbished facility at Gymea. The support of this Club has strengthened a building relationship of future involvement. Tradies' staff and management played a vital role in the smooth running of the event.

Introduced by the Shoalhaven FHS and built on by the Inverell FHS, the Free Family History Expo on the Friday before the Conference started, included several presentations and an extensive display of Society information. Trade tables and many other family history focused organisations were also on display. Over 200 members of the public visited on the Friday.

The presentations by Heather Garnsey, Lorraine Turtle, Marilyn Rowan, Jill Ball, Emma Kelly, Joy Murrin and Jan Gow covered a wide range of topics, in particular the availability of research information from The National Archives, NSW Births Deaths and Marriages and family history websites.

On Friday afternoon the NSW&ACT Association of Family History Societies held a Forum for interested societies. The particular topic of discussion was associated with the changing distribution of the societies' journals. Many groups and associations are transitioning to e-Journals, having them available for downloading from the website. Central Coast FHS provided information on their experience, the reasons for the change, the benefits and how the society addressed issues from members. This Forum proved to be a constructive and effective way of communication and discussion. It is hoped that such a forum becomes a regular occurrence at the Conferences and that the state representatives of the association actively promote a forum within their areas.

Friday witnessed a lot of networking; catching up with and developing new friends. A busy and successful day closed with the Meet and Greet for delegates who were welcomed by the conference team wearing costumes reflecting colonial society.

Following the enjoyable social event on the Friday night, delegates arrived in good time for the opening of the Conference doors, to take their seats for the beginning of a memorable day. The Welcome to Country was provided by Les Bursill OAM and the official opening by Sutherland Shire Mayor Carol Provan. The welcomes were followed by the Vincent John Crowe Memorial Address presented by Carol Liston on Discover On-Line Land Records. The gathering was advised by Carol of the exciting news that the NSW Torrens Title Purchase Records Index 1863-1971 is likely to be on-line by the end of 2012.

In the session before lunch, talks were presented by Ian Heads OAM - *Things Found Along the Way: Discoveries and Dilemmas of a Sporting Historian*, and Trish Levido - *Valuing Memories: Your Spoken Family History Legacy*. Ian shared with the audience some of the real dialogue behind the great pictures we have seen in the media over time. Also shared were a number of opportunities he had to interview the greats of sports and to capture those special moments. Trish followed Ian on a similar theme, the importance of the oral history and interviews. Trish highlighted that we all have a unique story of life and we are the best ones to tell it.

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In the sessions after lunch, delegates had to choose, as there were two concurrent presentations. Many delegates were observed to be hurrying to get to the presentations of their preference. The first session gave the choice of Carole Riley - *Why Family Historians Should Embrace Social Media* and BBFHS member Pat Fearnley - *An Adventure: Build Your Own Website*. Pat shared with delegates her skills and insight that have been instrumental in the BBFHS success in being awarded the Dorothy Fellowes Website Award twice for the best Society Website. Having to choose proved to be a challenge and both presentations were very well attended. The second round of choices involved Caitlin Hickie - *Preserving Your Family History Amidst the Challenges of Technology* and Kerry Farmer - *DNA Technology and Family History*. Again interest and attendance was very high in both talks. The Technology spoken about by Kerry involved DNA and concluded that likely family connections, over the generations, will become of increased interest in the future.

A number of presentations took place during the evening. Firstly the NSW&ACT Association Awards. The Dorothy Fellowes Website Award was given to the Central Coast FHS and the Cynthia Foley Encouragement Award went to the Parramatta Female Factory Friends. It was great to have both Dorothy and Cynthia at the dinner to present these Awards.



Presentation on Saturday morning. (Photo from Conference Website)

AFFHO Awards were presented by President Kerrie Gray, with the Nick Vine Hall Award for the Category A Society going to the Cape Banks FHS for their Journal *Kith & Kin* and Category B to The Heraldry & Genealogy Society of Canberra for their Journal, *The Ancestral Searcher*.

Without hesitation delegates were back on Sunday morning to experience further tales of research and to hear more on technology and how it can be harnessed by the genealogical community. Brad Manera, in his talk - *Private William Irwin's Adventure: discovery of an Anzac Story*, presented this story with a passion to find the story behind the stories. You could feel the emotion in his findings. Lisa Murray followed with the presentation - *Community Connections: Technology and the Renaissance of Local and Family History*.

After morning tea, Paul Parton from FamilySearch introduced their concept plans to develop a single Family Tree for the Human Race. This was followed by BBFHS member, Paul Brunton's presentation - *The Great What-if of Australian History: the Endeavour Voyage*

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and the Charting of the East Coast of Australia. Both talks were very interesting and informative. These talks were the last of the speakers.

The Heraldry and Genealogy Society of Canberra (HAGSOC) will be hosting the 2013 Conference to be held at the Hellenic Club, Woden, ACT. For more information the conference website is: www.nswactffhs.org.

At the AGM, the Illawarra Family History Group was successful in their presentation to host the 2014 Conference.

Joy Vost of Shoalhaven FHS is the President, Gail Hanger of Picton & District Historical and FHS is vice President, Rosemary McKenzie of HAGSOC is the Secretary, Clive Smith of Port Macquarie is the Treasurer. Suzanne Voytas of Blue Mountains FHS, John Hely of Botany Bay FHS, Brian Engel of Newcastle FHS and Roslyn Townsend of Armidale FHG make up the rest of the Committee.

For further information on the NSW & ACT Association of FHS, have a look at the Association's website: www.nswactffhs.org and have your society's activities advertised on the events page.

Report from Conference 2013 Organising Group 20-22 September 2012

Kerrie Gray, Conference 2013 Convenor

PROGRAM

Attendance at Conference 2012 was very valuable to Conference 2013 organisers and helped us determine the program for 2013. One of the key lessons is the importance of a family history fair on the Friday. This was emphasised by a couple of key exhibitors who said, quite simply, that it would not be viable for them to attend otherwise.

While all elements are not yet finalised, the draft program is as follows:

- **Friday** – a family history fair open to the public with two formal presentations, a number of short talks, a workshop or two and plenty of trade tables and a 'meet and greet' at the end of the day.
- **Saturday** – Vincent Crowe memorial address to be delivered by Canberra historian David Headon, presentations throughout the day and the Conference Dinner in the evening.
- **Sunday** – presentations and panel sessions with the conference finishing at lunchtime.
- We are now in the process of approaching speakers with a view to having them all confirmed so that a program is available before early bird registrations open on 1st March 2013.

Discussions have begun with NLA and AWM about their role at Conference and other institutions will be approached shortly.

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MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE 2012-2013

The Association would like to welcome new member societies to the management committee and thank the continuing member societies.

Metropolitan Region

Botany Bay Family History Society Inc and
Picton & District Historical & Family History Society Inc

Central Region

Blue Mountains Family History Society Inc and
Newcastle Family History Society Inc

Northern Region

Armidale Family History Society Inc and
Port Macquarie & District Family History Society Inc

Southern Region

Heraldry and Genealogy Society of Canberra and
Shoalhaven Family History Society Inc

EXECUTIVE POSITIONS

PRESIDENT:

Joy Vost representing Shoalhaven Family History Society Inc

VICE PRESIDENT:

Gail Hanger representing
Picton & District Historical & Family History Society Inc

SECRETARY:

Rosemary McKenzie representing
Heraldry & Genealogy Society of Canberra

TREASURER:

Clive Smith representing
Port Macquarie & District Family History Society Inc

PUBLIC OFFICER:

Suzanne Voytas representing Blue Mountains Family History Society Inc

NEXT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

This will take place on the 24th February 2013.
Items for the Agenda should reach the Secretary
at least two weeks prior to the meeting.

Email nswact@gmail.com or mckero@netspeed.com.au

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We haven't quite finalised the budget, which in part depends on sponsorship, but believe the cost to delegates will be very similar to that of the 2012 conference.



ACCOMMODATION

This was an issue raised as a concern by a number of people at Gynea. We have made a block booking at the Quality Inn which is very close to the conference venue, the Hellenic Club. Our first newsletter will also include information about other accommodation within reasonable proximity of the venue. We don't believe that accommodation will be an issue as there is plenty with easy access by car and/or public transport. Information about accommodation will also be included on our website.

MARKETING

We have developed a marketing strategy which will include use of social media, advertising in relevant magazines and on websites, direct contact with NSW&ACT Societies and other organisations.

The website is operational <http://www.conference2013.org.au> and the first newsletter, *Bluebell Press*, will be distributed before the end of November.

From the Editor

My apologies for the lateness of the newsletter. I do have "L" plates on, but I do hope you enjoy it. I would appreciate feedback on content and format, along with any contributions you would like to see in the next newsletter.

I do hope you and your respective families have a wonderful Christmas and a great New Years. Travel safe and see you next year.

Rosemary McKenzie (editor) mckero@netspeed.com.au



DOROTHY FELLOWES WEBSITE AWARD WINNER

Congratulations to CENTRAL COAST FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC

Central Coast FHS were the winners of the Dorothy Fellowes Website Design Award presented at the Botany Bay Conference 2012. Dorothy Fellowes presented the website award at the dinner on Saturday. The website can be viewed at the following link.

<http://centralcoastfhs.org.au/>

CYNTHIA FOLEY ENCOURAGEMENT AWARD WINNER

Congratulations to PARRAMATTA FEMALE FACTORY FRIENDS- PARRAMATTA FEMALE FACTORY ACTION GROUP INC

Parramatta Female Factory Friends and Action Group were the winners this year of the Cynthia Foley Encouragement Award. This was also presented at the Botany Bay Conference 2012. Information about the group can be viewed on their website at

<http://pmattafemalefactoryactiongroup.wordpress.com/>

The Cynthia Foley Award is chosen by Cynthia Foley from a list of non-member societies. The prize is a 12 month membership to the Association and is designed to encourage the new membership to see the benefits of being a member and continuing their membership.

BLUE MOUNTAINS FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY SEMINAR

Following in their Footprints

Saturday 13 April 2013, Springwood Presbyterian Church Hall, 160 Macquarie Road, Springwood. The seminar will follow the theme of the crossing of the Blue Mountains by Blaxland, Lawson and Wentworth in 1813.

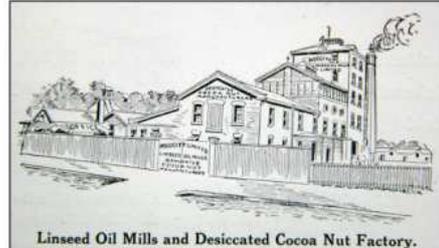
We have secured Graham Hunt, the Survey Monuments Curator from the Seniors Group of the Institution of Surveyors NSW to talk about the Footsteps in Time monuments in towns over the Blue Mountains, following the surveying of George W Evans.

We have also secured John Cann, one of the Public Access Archivists, from State Records of NSW, and his talk will focus on the most heavily used records – convicts, shipping, divorce and probates. John will also run through the procedures for pre-ordering as well as the general reading room rules. State Records will also have their digital exhibition on the crossing of the Blue Mountains online by April 2013 which John will showcase as part of the presentation.

Speakers and Program to be finalised. Keep a check on the website
<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nswbmfhs/> or email xploretree@yahoo.com.au

PARRAMATTA AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY October 2012 to February 2013

Parramatta and District Historical Society has OPENED the LUCAS GALLERY in Hambledon Cottage with an exhibition of fascinating photographs taken around 1925 of the township of Parramatta.



Everyone is invited to visit Hambledon Cottage.

Group tours can be arranged with a morning tea served in the Hambledon Coach House prior to a conducted tour. The cost is only \$5 per person.

Telephone the cottage on 9635 6924 or 9654-2224.

Trevor Patrick (02) 9654-2224 President PDHS.

CENTRAL COAST FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC 2 November 2013 - FAMILY HISTORY FAIR

Still in the planning stages - but please make a note in your diary for this event.

For further information contact Kay Radford on 4324 5164
or email kay1@centralcoastfhs.org.au

SHOALHAVEN FAMILY LOCAL & CULTURAL HISTORY FAIR Nowra School of Arts, Fri and Sat 14th & 15th June 2013

Lots of trade tables, interesting speakers and the opportunity to mingle with fellow family historians and historians. Entry is **FREE**.

A Friday evening dinner has been arranged at \$37 per person for a 3 course meal with two choices for each course. Drinks are provided.

For full details of the societies coming events refer to <http://www.nswactfhs.org/whatson/>

NSW-ACTION 27 placed on the website by:
The Webmaster—Kay Radford for the Editor, Rosemary McKenzie