



THE



NEWSLETTER

NO. 104 NOVEMBER 2016

THE GYMPIE & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

215 Brisbane Road, GYMPIE. QLD 4570

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ELECTED OFFICERS

at A.G.M. 3.8.16

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OTHER POSITIONS HELD:

Property Officer:

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with Assistant Jo Carson

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Historian: Bennett Suthers

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Historian: Chris Kapernick

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Museum Markets

at the Duck Ponds (Lake Alford)

1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays of each month

DECEMBER dates: 4TH, 18TH

(7 a.m.-12 noon)

Site Bookings to Museum Café 54 823995

Come along and browse the markets

for some bargains and catch up with friends!

The next performance of entertainment
by the Gympie Museum Re-enactment Group
will be 19TH FEBRUARY 2017 at 9.30 a.m.

→ **Steaming Day first Monday of each month**

→ *Christmas Celebration for*

Members/Volunteers on Sunday

11th December 2016 4.30 p.m.

COMING EVENTS 2017:

* **Australia Day Thursday 26th January**

* **Annual Steam Festival**

Saturday 30th September/ Sunday 1st/ Monday 2nd October (Queen's Birthday)

THE GENERAL MEETING will be held on **WEDNESDAY 7TH DECEMBER 2016**
at 7.00 p.m. upstairs of the Gold Room. Business includes: Work Projects, Forward Planning

Exhibits...

Readers, now that I have your interest in the **farm tractor** mentioned in the October Newsletter, the youngest son Errol Matthias of the maker Gordon Francis Matthias has a very detailed history of the improvised mechanical components used in the creation of this unique tractor. This 1944/45 tractor is currently housed in the implement shed - no wonder it is called a bitzer. Ed.

It was made from eight different motor trucks, hence how it got a name of Fordoverlandchevchryslerblitz, and was originally painted battleship grey.

The tractor was hand made by a young farmer originally from the Tiaro district, who left school at the age of eight. He would walk behind four Clydesdale horses ploughing alluvial soil on the flats of the Mary River on his parents farm to grow corn to feed the pigs.

He and his family later moved to Kandanga in the Mary Valley where they also farmed dairy and pigs, and a tractor was needed to grow pineapples and later on beans.

Starting from the front a mystery Overland front axle “v” veed and turned upside down.

- . Front rims are Ford 60 x 26, and the radiator also Overland with a 1927 Chevy four cylinder engine set in a “T” model Ford chassis also appx. 1927.
- . Gear box and clutch a 1927 model Chevy three speed.
- . Three speed second gearbox is a 1928 Chrysler and between the two gearboxes is a belt pulley off a 1913 model Massey Harris stationary engine.
- . A large universal after the second gearbox to correct any misalignment in the power train before the worm drive differential off a 1½ ton Ford Blitz army truck.
- . Steering box is a 1928 model Chrysler and the bonnet and fuel tank are all fabricated by hand.
- . Engine has a hand made vaporiser and the fuel tank has two compartments. Small section for petrol to start and then turn the kero tap on and run continuously on kero. Turn it back to petrol when finished work.
- . Seat is a cutdown Buick car seat and the back rest is supported by two sulky springs forged to suit the tractor.
- . Nine forward gears from extremely slow to very fast in top. Both gearsticks in reverse gives the slowest gear forwards, and that makes ten forward gears.
- . Back box in reverse has three speeds in reverse via the front gear box.
- . Engine power is maintained by a mechanical governor driven by push bike chain at the front of the ending.
- . It has an original six volt electrical system.

Other tractor exhibits in the Museum are:- the first Council’s tractor, a Fordson which is called a Canadian, Model N Fordson, and a rather rare WWII Powell Gas Producer fitted to a Model L Case tractor.

The model TE20 Massey-Ferguson wheel tractor, commonly known as the Little Grey Fergie, was purchased as a ‘work horse’. It lives up to its name, as it is light-weight and effective on minor jobs. This tractor was designed by Harry Ferguson, and manufactured from 1946 until 1956.

Exhibits (Cont.)...

Gympie-ite

Mr Chalmers, Curator of Minerals, Australian Museum advises:

I would describe Gympie-ite as a fine-grained silicified sedimentary rock. The grain size, although very fine, seems to be a little too coarse to describe it as a chert. There is a belt of sedimentary rocks of lower to middle palaeozoic age developed in the Gympie District. This means that they are in the vicinity of 400 million years old, and in such old rocks there are many formations of fine-grained sediments.

If a name is required, I don't think one could be more precise to say that it is a silicified sediment. I should think that this material would take a good polish since it is very hard and might therefore, have some attractiveness as an ornamental stone.



Gympie-ite was first found on private property in the Fishermans Pocket Road area near Chatsworth. It is prized for its beautiful grey/green colours, sometimes with swirling tinges of red, white and black. It is now quite rare, but in a setting it makes distinctive jewellery, of which a few specimens of this stone are displayed in the Tank.

The Gympie-ite rock has been donated by Jack Pearce, and polished samples have been donated by Rose Sami.

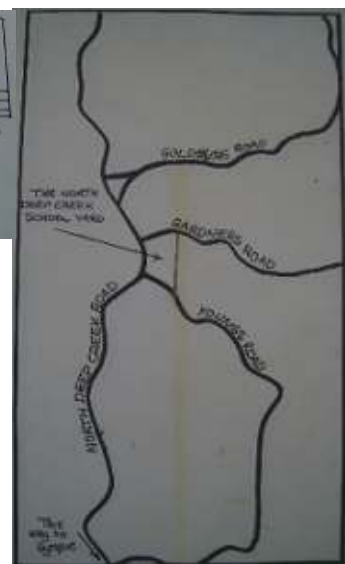
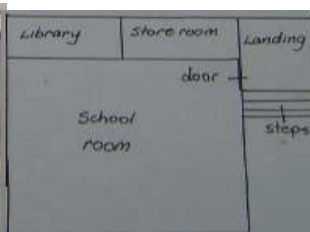
Brooches and pendants with gold or silver chains make ideal settings to suit all shapes of Gympie-ite.

Small segments of this rock can be purchased in the Cafe.

An extensive collection of rocks and minerals from around the world can be seen in the House.



Early Local School...



The school at North Deep Creek was a classic example of one whose opening date was delayed (by six years in fact).

Because parents could not come to a unanimous decision on where it should be sited. As far as residents were concerned, the schools within a ten mile radius - Tamaree, Downsfield and Enterprise were out of the question due to surrounding rough terrain. In 1920 agreement was finally reached and a list of pupils sent to the department.

The first teacher appointed when the school opened in 1921 was Daisy Simpson, who was then succeeded by Mary Koppe. In 1926 the school closed for lack of pupils, and moves to reopen it the following year were to no avail, until 1930 when Mrs Grace Colvin was appointed head teacher. As well as the school building which is now at Gympie West primary school, there was also a covered area, play shed, tennis courts and race track.

On school break-up days there was always a Christmas tree with presents hung on it. There were toys for the preschoolers and books for the older students. But again this was another school that was closed in 1969 in the course of progress.

Markets...

Vehicles of interest...



This lightweight Hot Rod/Roadster of 400 Kg is the mastermind of a Glenwood resident, created much interest for the market patrons.

“Old Muzzo” a 1922 Fiat 510S, came from the western Victoria area where it was used to cart logs to a sawmill during WW2, running on power kerosene. It was rescued in the late 1960's and has progressively been returned to its original form. The torpedo body shape is distinctive, and the original top speed claimed was 53 m.p.h., but it is known to perform a little better than this with the two wheel brakes being the main limitation.



The first market day of the month of November proved to be a very warm day with patrons taking advantage of the early morning visit to evade the heat later on.

This stallholder below regularly has a variety of interesting wares at the Museum Markets, much of which is supplied by his family members. One interesting subject for a book that was noticed is ‘There was an old bloke who swallowed a chook’! Like so many stallholders, Owen says ‘it is a great social morning’, making many friendships, and of course, a bonus if any sales are made.



Volunteers...

If we all do a little, we all accomplish a lot!



Mission accomplished in this case!!

Rob and Allan are testing the equipment.

Many people are skilled in certain areas with equipment/machinery - Allan B. has a passion for communications. He has connected a phone line from the red phone box to a phone on the verandah of the communications building. School students will have fun talking to their mates.

Museum News...

- It is with sadness to hear of the passing of Society member Angus Hutton.
- Many improvements and changes were noticed by John Stark and his son during a recent visit to the Museum.
- Wishing Society member Julia a speedy recovery after a recent fall.

Thankyou to Owen for distributing Museum brochures at the Kenilworth Information Centre.

Work carried out: Placement of a garden seat in a shaded area on the northern side of the old workshop; Large sized quartz rock specimens are making an appearance outside the Gold Room; (Gold Rush) Council grader has been relocated to the Truck Shed near the Road Rollers.



Work in Progress: (Above left) Ralph is taking measurements in relation to the new entrance project of the retaining wall, and foundation . Other work is the Café upgrading in the kitchen area - installation of whirlybirds on the roof, air-conditioner, and a larger oven, painting of the eastern wall of the Calico Creek School, gantry maintenance, painting of the ramp/steps at the communications building, preparing the remaining bay for storage under the House.

Café at the Museum...

(Above right) Sharon is tending to the dining room plants.

Vicky's office desk has presently been moved upstairs of the gold room building, as a temporary arrangement while the Café entrance area is in progress. The newly constructed storeroom is accommodating the Café stock, and the Museum stock sale items of Gold Pans etc. have also been rearranged in the Café area.

Several groups have visited during the month, the last school group being the Kia Ora Primary School. Coming soon.... 'Twelve days of Christmas specials' - 'Buy one, get one free!'

Mary River...

Info. from the June 1977 Sundowner of the great water dispute .

(Story by W.E. Mulholland)

At the turn of the century, as the production of the Gympie goldfield neared its peak, the mining companies were faced with the problem of disposing of many thousands of tons of tailings sands and slimes from the crushing batteries.

One solution was to stack it on suitable land near the mines. A less costly method was to discharge it into the Mary River, which formed the western boundary of the goldfield. The surrounding area, including the river lands downstream from Gympie, formed part of the Shire of Widgee.

Sluice boxes, in several cases almost a mile long, were erected to carry the sludge to the river, the reasoning being that the periodic floods would carry it far downstream and disperse it completely. But it didn't work out that way.

The sludge was heavy and tended to set firmly, with the result that the once clean, river was soon a foul drain between banks of tailings sands and sludge.

The waste built up until it began to work its way upstream, and a barrage was erected to prevent it from affecting the town water supply, the intake of which was located about a half mile above the furthest upstream sluice boxes.

River crossings and bridges were silted, the river banks were covered with slime, and although the effluent was not poisonous, the fine thick sediment in the water made it unfit for either human or animal consumption.

First shot in the battle to obtain redress was a letter of complaint to Widgee Shire Council from a landowner downstream from Gympie on 27th April, 1901.

The result was that a combined committee representing Widgee and Gympie Councils was set up to investigate the matter. Their report, a scathing indictment of the mining companies, was received by both local authorities. Widgee Shire Council decided it was a fight to the finish to stop the pollution - Gympie Town Council decided by a majority decision that nothing must be done to interfere with the mining industry and that what occurred downstream was unfortunate, but was none of its business.

Our Christmas Tree

Poem by Ernestine Northover

Our Christmas tree, stood straight and tall,
We had it standing in the hall,
With decorations, sparkling bright,
And baubles, glittering in the light,
Rich tinsel laced around branches wide,
With bells and bows, that could be spied.

Hiding among the dark green pine,
In silver and gold, boldly they did shine,
And at the very top, such a wondrous sight,
A star was placed there, which gave delight.
The whole effect so pleased the eye.
We planted it outside, now it's 18 feet high.

Christmas Celebration...

INVITATION to Volunteers / Members.....

*YOU (and your Partner) are invited to the Christmas
Celebration on Sunday 11th December at 4.30 p.m.*

Café at the Museum for a (FREE) Buffet Meal.

*For catering purposesPhone your reply to Café at the
Museum 54 82 3995 if you are attending (By 4.12.16)*

Members and Volunteers

THANKYOU for your contribution of time and effort to the Museum



Wishing you and your family
a Merry Christmas and a safe and healthy New Year

FROM The Committee Members -
Frank, Max, Allan, Ralph and Marilyn

THE



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