



THE



NEWSLETTER

NO. 97 APRIL 2016

THE GYMPIE & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

213 Brisbane Road, GYMPIE. QLD 4570

P.O. Box 626, GYMPIE. QLD 4570

(07) 5482 3995, Fax: (07) 54825686

Email: info@gympiegoldmuseum.com.au www.gympiegoldmuseum.com.au

**ELECTED OFFICERS
at A.G.M. 5.8.15**

President:

Frank Lightfoot

Tel: 54833965

Secretary:

Ralph Richardson

Tel: 54839418

Mob: 0408616709

Treasurer/Editor:

Marilyn Soanes

Tel: 54845211

**Senior Vice President/
Historian:**

Bennett Suthers

Tel: 54823315

Mob: 0412263189

**Junior Vice President/
Historian:**

Allan Blackman

Tel: 54828828

Mob: 0428332291

OTHER POSITIONS HELD:

Property Officer:

& Firearms Licensee

Ron Owen

with Assistant Jo Carson

Publicity Officer:

Max Travis

Tel: 54812157

Museum Markets

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

MAY dates: 1ST, 15TH, 29TH

(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 15TH MAY 2016 at 9.30 a.m.

2016 EVENTS:

**Monday Steaming Day - 2ND May
and first Monday of each month**

Steam Festival - 1st/2nd/3rd October

THE GENERAL MEETING will be held on **WEDNESDAY 1ST JUNE 2016**
at 7.00 p.m. upstairs of the Gold Room. Business includes: 2016/7 Budget, Work Projects

Early Photographer...

Edward Hartshorne FORSTER immigrated to Australia initially living in New South Wales where he was listed as a photographer at the time of his marriage to Emily Wylie in Sydney early in 1871. It is likely Forster trained in photography under Henry Beaufoy Merlin in Sydney as they became related through marriage.

Then after several months in Queensland, Forster opened a studio in Maryborough on 4 May 1872. To entice customers, raffles, an example being every sitter taking a dozen Card Pictures were entitled to a ticket giving them a chance of a prize in an Art Union. Four weeks later Forster slugged off at his competition. A Maryborough Chronicle article on 2 June, 1872 was: "Sitters who have experienced the annoyance and disappointment of being photographer [sic] by inexperienced operators calling themselves Photos or Artists, are invited to inspect the specimens of Maryborough work now on view at the studio." Presumably this was intended for the itinerant photographers who passed through the town.

Forster stayed on as the major resident photographer in Maryborough but he expanded his business into other areas. It is likely the income from photography alone was insufficient, despite the prosperity of Maryborough and the surrounding district. The towns population at the time was around 6,000.

Later, a different trading title of The Panopticon in the name of E.H. Forster's New Establishment. (The meaning of panopticon is "drawn by the powerful sun".)

Although he was already selling and offering a number of items for sale in addition to his photography he further added pianos, the newest music, concertinas, fancy goods, and the best photographs.

In 1876 Forster opened a studio in Gympie, attempting to capitalise by the use of a business name suspiciously similar to that of his old employer - The American and Australian Portrait Studio (Opposite the Varieties Theatre, Gympie), is open for the production of first-class portraiture. Gympie being an active goldfield was a prosperous location to practice photography.

After three to four years, Forester returned to Maryborough, reopening in Adelaide Street in 1880 and then shifting to Kent Street after a couple of years.

Forster died on 24 January 1886 at the age of just 40 from tertiary syphilis in the Woongarra Asylum at Goodna (between Brisbane and Ipswich) and he was buried in the cemetery there. His wife Emily continued to operate the studio for a time after this then the premises were taken over by William McGuire. The fate of the studio negatives and equipment are unknown but may have been purchased by McGuire with the business. McGuire in turn moved to Gympie in 1887.

History of the Varieties Theatre...

Opening of the original Varieties Theatre was in August 1868 being an exciting development for the social scene of the new gold mining town, Gympie, which was booming and growing at an amazing rate

The Royal Hotel as it is presently known is an iconic building situated on the corner of Monkland and Mary Street, once being the Exchange Hotel and Varieties Theatre .

A pub on every mullock heap!



History of the Varieties Theatre (Cont.)...

Those early glory days came to an end in 1875 after a cyclone destroyed part of the theatre and floods submerged most of the town.

The licence was cancelled, but in 1882 architect Hugo Durietz designed a two storey timber building for the central spot.

It was officially opened as the Varieties Hotel and Theatre and once again became the place that drew crowds looking for light entertainment. Musical companies and agents found large and enthusiastic audiences including the diggers in calm enjoyment.

The hotel became the Royal Hotel in 1885, then in 1910 it was called the Theatre Royal. Locals were treated to their first movie at the Theatre Royal which was a picture of British warships passing through Suez Canal. The movie was made realistic by men behind the screen making sounds such as waves lapping and sirens blowing.

The Varieties Theatre kept operating successfully in a building attached to the back of the Hotel. In the Gympie Mining Handbook, published in 1887, wrote the Royal's theatre and dancing room, built behind the hotel, "was crowded with audience pretty well every evening", to enjoy the fiddle and piano for the band. First class concerts, Shakespearean tragedy, roisterous comedy and even wrestling matches were big attractions at the theatre also.

Tragedy struck again in 1935, when the building was razed to the ground. The Gympie Times commiserated: "There was removed from Gympie a building which had been the scene of many social and political events, which had its historic interest, and, for the few remaining pioneers, its cherished associations. Actors, acrobats, operatic stars, politicians and statesmen had appeared at various times upon its stage."

The Gympie Times reported the disaster: "There was removed from Gympie a building which had been the scene of many social and political events, which had its historic interest and for the few remaining pioneers, its cherished associations".

The hotel was missed but not for long, as the Bulimba Brewery purchased the site in 1938, and built the new Royal Hotel at a cost believed to be £15,000, with an elegant Art Deco facade, opened its doors to eager patrons. The garage at the back of the hotel served as a temporary bar during construction.

It has been inundated with flood water countless times over the years, but each time the muddy waters have subsided, the doors have opened to customers.

In 2005 the Royal was closed down and boarded up for a couple of years and was sadly missed by the Gympie townspeople. It reopened in 2007 by Publican Wes Wright, along with his wife, daughter and her husband, having undergone a million dollar facelift which restored the hotel to its former glory.

Patrons to-day are now entertained by huge television screens, surround sound systems and live music. They can also enjoy a wonderful buffet restaurant, lounge bar, sports bar, outdoor deck areas and 11 modern hotel rooms with ensuites.

(Info. from websites E H Foster, www.royalhotelgympie.com.au)

Volunteers...

We're just counting the gold!!



Barry and Allan B. are counting out 5 and 12 1mm gold particles into the vials, which have been purchased for the Gold Panning Championships at Tennant's Creek to be held in June.

New arrival...



What a cutie!!

This little grader was made by Council many years ago, and was once at the Tozer Park Depot.

In later years it was purchased for the Gold Rush parade.

Alan Dundas proudly stands beside the new arrival, donated by the Gold Rush Committee, with festival wording on the side of this (3.7m in length) machine.

Although the blade is made of ply, it may be replaced with metal to become a working exhibit for small jobs.

Another useful feature is a Honda motor which could be used to tow some small machine behind, and has Hi and Lo range, forward and reverse, lights and indicators.



Work in Progress...



(Left) **Railway Signals**

Cleaning and painting of the railway signal tower included the blades and ironwork.

(Right) **Sturtevant Fan**

Restoration of the scroll which is now in place.

Other work in progress is painting the Aveling Barford roller, laminating of the Gympie Goldfield map in the Café, as well as plastering the walls of the Café storeroom, and signage for the medical rooms in the Cottage.



Museum News...

Due to unforeseen circumstances, the Gympie Museum Re-enactment Group will not be performing on 15th May - Next performance will be 19th June

- * Termite detection and management in buildings is continuing.
- * Gantry maintenance of replacing, sanding and painting of sleepers is on-going.
- * Progressively sorting the database folders
- * Maintaining Café, Museum and Market facebook page by Jo.
- * School holiday visitor numbers were on the increase, and it's encouraging that such interest is being shown in Gympie's rich gold mining history.

Condolences

Thinking of John and his family in the sad loss of Cecile, who will be missed by many Gympie organisations including the Gympie Regional Council Art Gallery and Kybong Rockfest for her strong involvement in achieving the best outcome. For many years Cecile has been a Museum member, and was known for organising the Gold Pan Painting Competition, as well as supporting Museum event days with artwork.

Café at the Museum...

What's new in the Café this month

A refrigerated cake cooler on the counter is a temptation tester with various cakes on display, a replacement drink fridge by the supplier, four blending tables and bases for the dining room, and an additional stainless steel work bench.

Vicky is settling into the busy Café routine, and is delighted with the flow of customers that have shown interest in the varied menu. School group tours have commenced, and a sausage sizzle is included if the timing permits.

Anzac Day...

Australian and New Zealand Army Corps

On 25 April each year, Anzac Day is a national day of remembrance

Anzac Day is a time to reflect on all those lives that were lost, so we Australians have the freedom what we have to-day.

The mental toll which our returned soldiers suffer, sometimes in silence, can often be greater than their physical injuries.

Most people would be aware of the important role horses played in the war effort. It is believed that 20,000 Australian horses were sent to the First World War.

The Fifth Light Horse Regimental Museum (No. 13) houses the award winning military equipment and memorabilia of all the sons and daughters of the Gympie area that went to war.

During the 1920's the 'soldier's biscuits' (Anzac biscuits) were sold at fetes and markets to fundraise for the war effort, and still are being sold in stores to-day

The Anzac Day commemoration service was held at Kandanga this year, which included the Turkish field gun - Thankyou to Frank for arranging the transportation.

Noosa Museum Heritage Day...

THANKYOU to the Museum volunteers, Ralph, Allan B., Chris, and Marilyn, attending the Noosa Museum Heritage Festival at Pomona on Saturday, 16th April. Special thanks to Ralph's impressive private collection of early pioneer days 'energy' equipment. This was a very rewarding effort, that visitors were intrigued with working displays. The National Fan Stirling Cycle Air Circulator that was operating is not shown.

Model steam engine and boiler,
and Vacuum engine



Trevor Jones Engine



Some of the groups were the Tewantin Information Centre/Historical Society, Men's Sheds, Noosa Landcare, a small variety of stalls were present and the Cooroy/Pomona Lions Club catering. The Grave Marker, Model Winding Engine and the Child's boot found on the Gympie Goldfield were the Museum exhibits. A few books were sold by the Society, much interest was shown by visitors to revisit the Gympie Museum again, and overall the friendly community made this a most enjoyable event.



The theatrical costumes worn in the Fashion Parade are part of a collection by Anne Coombes, who designed, made and donated them to the Noosa Museum, representing late 1800's clothing.

Generally, the 1880's were an age of elegance, women particularly had time to dress and prepare to go out, and they needed a number of people to help them to achieve this. This is the period of the bustle and extending almost straight out from the waist supporting a profusion of frills and ribbons, and ladies wore many layers.

(Below) The stove display has many cast iron exhibits, and the early kitchen shows numerous exhibits tightly displayed utilizing all available space.



The Early Days...

Info. from the Souvenir's of Gympie's Centenary Book -A Golden Past 1867-1967.

Election Incidents:

Political meetings in Gympie's mining days usually were rowdy. The miners were emphatic if not polite in their disapproval of certain proposals and it was a common thing for a meeting to be "wrecked."

One speaker was addressing a crowd from a buggy when a number of bystanders whipped up the horse. The speaker saved himself and his dignity by a mighty effort, but the point of his oratory was lost on the hilarious crowd. The police saved him from further indignities.

On another occasion, during an election campaign, it seemed that all the miners in Gympie were in Mary Street. One of the candidates was having a bad time, shouting above the heckling and dodging missiles of all sorts.

THE



The Gympie & District Historical Society Inc.
215 Brisbane Road, GYMPIE QLD 4570
Postal Address: P O Box 626, GYMPIE QLD 4570

NEWSLETTER