

UPPER HUNTER MUSEUM of RURAL LIFE Inc.
& ABERDEEN LOCAL STUDIES GROUP
P.O. Box 140. Aberdeen, NSW, 2336.

NEWSLETTER - December, 2017

New Committee for 2018.

The Annual General Meeting of the UHMRL was held on Wednesday, 22nd November. All positions were declared vacant and an election was held for the committee positions. Thank you to all those who attended and thank you to Max Bell for chairing the meeting for us.

The newly elected committee are;

- President - Carol Ray
- Vice Presidents - Mick Carey and Val Ray
- Secretary - Jan Wild
- Treasurer - Dianne Walmsley.

Congratulations to all the new members of the committee.

Thank you to all those who have held positions in the previous year and to all who have given freely of their own time to work as volunteers. Without our team of volunteers we would not be able to function and continue with our fundraising efforts.

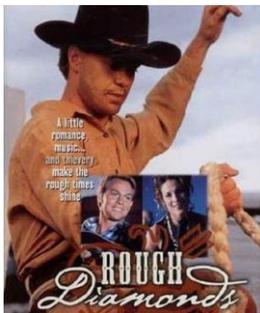
A special note of appreciation is to Australian Pacific Coal who print our newsletter and flyers every month and to Eleanor in their office.

Merry Christmas and a Very Happy New Year.

Thank you for your generosity and support throughout the past year.



Aberdeen Golden Oldies Luncheon
Tuesday, 13th February, 2018
“ Rough Diamonds ”



(DVD, 1995, 90 min.)

Bookings: Daphne 65 438 356

No advanced booking will be taken in December for the February luncheon.

Next Meeting UHMRL

Wednesday, 24th January, 2018

4.30 pm at Aberdeen Library.

New members and volunteers are always welcome.

Membership and Associated Membership fees are due for renewal in 2018.

Annual Membership is to remain at \$25.

Associated Membership is \$5.

WANTED: Someone with an interest in movies to choose & book our films on-line with the National Film & Sound Archives.

Upper Hunter Museum of Rural Life Inc. raising funds to establish a Museum and Cultural Centre in Aberdeen.

www.aberdeenmuseum.org.au

Email: uhmrl@skymesh.com.au

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EXPLORATION IN THE UPPER HUNTER VALLEY and THE OLD NORTH ROAD.

In 1804 a penal settlement was established at the mouth of Coal River (Newcastle) where convicts worked in a primitive coal mine.

In 1813 Blaxland, Wentworth and Lawson led an expedition and became the first Europeans to successfully cross the Blue Mountains west of Sydney.

By 1814 William Cox, with only 30 convict labourers and 8 guards, began construction of a road which would enable settlers to access farming and grazing lands to the west of the mountains.

With the cessation of the penal settlement at Newcastle in the 1820's, settlement along the Hunter River spread as far as Wallis Plains (Maitland).

In the early years of the colony's growth, access into the Hunter Valley from the Hawkesbury was prevented. Several attempts were made but most found they were unable to find a way out of the maze of mountain ranges and forced to turn back.

In October, 1819, John Howe and his party left Windsor hoping to discover a route from the Hawkesbury to the Hunter River. They descended into the well grassed and lightly timbered valley to follow a watercourse, now called Doyle's Creek, to the Hunter River where they camped. They returned to Windsor to report land fine for grazing and cultivation on the banks of a fine fresh water river but they were dissatisfied with the route they had discovered. In November they were finally successful as their second expedition mapped a route, which is now the Bulga Road, and reached the Hunter River, near the present day site of Whittingham, before proceeding to Maitland.

From the western region of Bathurst, William Lawson reached the head of the Goulburn River in 1822.

In 1823 Allan Cunningham followed Lawson's route from Bathurst. He traversed the upper rim of the Hunter Valley and travelled eastward as far as the stream now known as the Dart Brook. Returning northwest he found "Pandora's Pass" which would provide a route from Bathurst to the grazing lands of the Liverpool Plains.

In August, 1824, Government Surveyor Henry Dangar and his exploration party, rode north-west from his property near Singleton becoming the first colonial explorer to enter this area of the Upper Hunter Valley.

After camping overnight they were able to ford the river near what is now the village of Aberdeen and continued their journey of exploration.

Henry Dangar's favourable reports to the Colonial Government of his sightings of arable lands, available timber and good water led to the land grants and settlements that were soon to follow in the Upper Hunter Valley. Many properties were established and soon the pioneer villages of colonial days were in their foundation.

Many of the first settlers to come to areas of the Upper Hunter Valley first travelled from Port Jackson [Sydney] by ship to Newcastle and then on to Morpeth or Wallis Plains [Maitland] by boat. They then had to travel by bullock dray over open ground and along undefined tracks. On reaching this area [Aberdeen] they were able to ford the Hunter River at the same place where Henry Dangar had crossed several years before.

As time progressed and settlements spread into the Liverpool Plains and New England regions, this track now become the well travelled road to the north which was commonly called the "Great North Road" or the "Main North Road".

Thomas Potter Macqueen's Segenhoe Estate was now linked by tracks to the adjacent properties of St. Helier's Estate to the south and St. Aubin's Estate to the north and all the communities beyond.

As the North Road to the ford over the Hunter River tracked along part of the south-western boundary of Macqueen's Segenhoe Estate, he made application for a village on land adjacent to his estate and where the Segenhoe Flour Mill and Inn were both built.

Today Macqueen Street or the New England Highway through Aberdeen traces almost the same route that the old North Road followed in colonial times and the bridge at Aberdeen is near where the old ford crossed the Hunter River almost two hundred years ago.

Before the Fitzgerald Bridge was constructed over the Hunter River at Aberdeen in 1893, two earlier low level wooden bridges were both washed away by flood waters.

Close your eyes - in your imagination can you hear the sounds of the bullockies and their waggons, the coaches, the crack of the whip or the clip-clop of horses along the road. [JS]