FROM THE NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Hello again and welcome to e-newsletter Issue 3 for October. The two hundredth anniversary is creating excitement amongst some of the various volunteers and organisations gearing up to put on their events next year.

The articles and snippets from last month saw readers contacting me with extra information that they had researched so thank you to those people. Also we were sent several old photos that will find their way into the ‘Snapshots in Time’ photographic exhibition that will be taking place in the Bathurst Memorial Entertainment Centre. This mammoth exhibition will be open to the public from Monday 11th to Monday 18th May, 2015.

The BATHEX 2015 Bicentenary Collectables, Gem and Mineral Exhibition - Bathurst Remembers 200 Years of History has more displays booked in including a large display of movie memorabilia and movie posters from yesteryear. Another display will be from the American Civil War which saw the Union fighting against the Confederate States of America from 1861 to 1865. It was America’s bloodiest clash which resulted in more than 620,000 being killed and millions more injured.

In the spring of 1861, after decades of smouldering opposition and argument between those in the northern and southern United States, war broke out in April. Some of the main areas of contention included slavery, expansion in the west and federal authority issues. Things came to a head when the anti-slavery Republican, Abraham Lincoln, was elected to the presidency in 1860. This saw seven states in the south to secede from the Union and form the Confederate States of America.

See the artefacts from this horrific period of America’s history and see photos, personal items, letters, banknotes, coins and banknotes, orders of the day, requisition orders, medical items, clothing, uniforms and relics from some of the famous battlefields as the brutal conflict continued over four years.

Another display will involve some of the history of the pearling industry from freshwater pearls (left) to the cultivation of the much sort after cultured pearls. It is the oyster that is used to form cultured pearls almost the same as the natural pearl. With cultured pearls a person carefully opens the oyster shell, cuts a small slit in the animal inside and inserts an ‘irritant’ into the oyster. The shells are put back in the ocean and nature takes over until the oyster shells are harvested and the pearls released.

The gemstones and jewellery people will be on hand at BATHEX 2015 to delight the ladies. Displays will abound with more collectors nominating to put their displays on show for the public to view. Not to be forgotten are the fossils with specimens from around 600 million years old. Beautiful and fascinating mineral specimens and crystals will be a delight to see in their specially-lit cases.

Seashells offer outstanding colour and beauty and there will be a display of these marine wonders to delight visitors at BATHEX 2015. Australia can boast some of the most magnificent shells in the world with shell collectors dating from the earliest days of the Colony of New South Wales. The shell above is known as the ‘Cloth of Gold’ or ‘Textile Cone’. The animal inside is a venomous species of sea snail. Mostly these shells measure less than 4 inches long though some can get to almost 6 inches but these are rare.

Most collectors instantly recognise the colouration of a yellowish brown, patterned with dark brown outlines around irregular triangulated white spots. Each shell is...
unique with these predatory molluscs living in warmer waters off Australia, New Zealand, the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

I hope you enjoy these monthly e-newsletters and that they are interesting and beneficial. It will be great to meet people in person. Please enjoy yourself whilst in Bathurst and be sure to visit some of the many other attractions that historic Bathurst and district have to offer, there is certainly plenty to do.

Feel free to pass this e-newsletter along to family, friends, work colleagues and acquaintances. If you wish to receive this e-newsletter direct just email amcrae@lisp.com.au

Alan McRae, FAIHA, Secretary Bathurst Stamp, Coin, Collectables & Lapidary Club and President Bathurst District Historical Society

BATHURST'S EARLIEST INHABITANTS

PART ONE

Billy – a Bathurst Wiradjuri – taken ca 1912

The traditional aboriginal people around Bathurst were the Wiradjuri tribe who had their own territory and lived in family groups. The earliest tribes in Australia have been here for maybe 60,000 years before the Europeans arrived and slowly took over the lands that the Wiradjuri had traversed for so long to live and locate their food. Some tribes had to cope with the last Ice Age which occurred some 20,000 years ago at which time they would have moved to the coastal regions or moved north to a warmer climate.

The local Wiradjuri people would meet other tribes as they moved around the countryside, traded or passed through mutual territory, one such tribe being the Darug (also spelt Dharug, Daruk, Dharuk, Dharuck and Dharruk) who lived in the region that had the Blue Mountains as their western border.

Wiradjuri country encompasses a large area from the eastern side of the Blue Mountains to Bathurst and Orange and out to Dubbo and Nyngan. Then the line moves south to Hay and Albury-Wodonga. With such a massive area naturally their countryside varied from very rugged, to woodlands, to open grassland, river flats and drier plains. Their area also includes the Macquarie, Lachlan and Murrumbidgee Rivers making it the largest geographic area of any tribe.

Today Wiradjuri elders talk about the “land of the three rivers” when referring to where their elders once roamed. Each river has its own traditional name such as the Wambool for the Macquarie River, Kalare for the Lachlan and the Murrumbidjeri though this was called the Murrumbidgee River by early settlers which is very similar to what the Wiradjuri name is for it.

It is thought that somewhere around 12,000 spoke the Wiradjuri language prior to Europeans arriving at Bathurst almost 200 years ago. Whilst they spoke the Wiradjuri language the Bathurst area had its own dialect.

Like other aboriginal tribes around Australia the Wiradjuri travelled and dwelled in family groups of men, women and children, generally in groups of twenty five to thirty five or so. These groups incorporated the relatives of unmarried females and other males. Sometimes raids would take place to get extra females not of the Wiradjuri tribe.

Clever hunters and gatherers, the Wiradjuri learnt the breeding cycles of their prey and knew when not to take certain animals such as if kangaroo numbers were low they should leave the breeding females to allow numbers to increase. If the prey travelled they understood where they needed to be to find them. Seasonal foods found the family groups travelling around their lands to take advantage of abundant nutrition such as the Bogong moths on Wahluu (Mt Panorama) or if the rains were good and the seasons were green that over several years kangaroo numbers would increase.

“Hunting magic” was frequently employed to ensure a successful hunt and the weapons themselves were commonly smeared with the blood of the kangaroo. The decoration would relate the weapons with the ancestral spirits giving them greater accuracy and speed. The men hunted kangaroos in silence, the men whistling and signalling to indicate his intention to other Wiradjuri hunters. Animals were approached upwind and sometimes a bough screen was used to hide behind.

Fishing was another food exploited throughout the tribal area which boasted many rivers and streams which in the early days abounded in fish such as the Murray cod along with freshwater crayfish and
mussels. Various fishing methods were used from spearing, making hooks or laying out fish traps usually from stones.

The Murray Cod, below, was once plentiful and their large size astounded the early explorers and settlers. Both Surveyor Evans and road builder William Cox noted their abundance and size in their diaries.

There was generally an abundance of food with the men, women and children collecting bird’s eggs, waterfowl, wild honey, goannas, nuts, furry tailed possums, emus, seeds, platypus, tubers, bulbs and yams, echidnas, fruits, swans, kangaroos, various birds (such as the Mallee Fowl – right), wild ducks, berries, snakes, lizards, wallabies and much more. They were good climbers able to shimmy up tall trees to a bird’s nest high at the top.

Food preparation varied with some nuts needing to be soaked in running water for days before they could be cooked to be just singed over the flames, thrown into the fire or roasted on hot coals.

The Wiradjuri women were very clever with their hands and could weave several types of baskets from bark or other naturally found fibres. Commonly these could be used to carry food back to camp or for travelling to the next camp. They may be made to carry babies. The art of making baskets was handed down to the young girls.

Certain foods were traditionally caught by the men such as kangaroos, their size and strength meant that kangaroo hunting had to be men’s business. A man’s capacity to bring back meat for the campfire enhanced his status enormously.

For many aboriginal tribes and the Wiradjuri the kangaroo must be cut up by the hunter, each section going to an appropriate relative depending on his or her relationship with the hunter. It was quite normal that the hunter himself got very little, if any, so it was common that he also had to rely on the success of one of his relatives to get a kangaroo or some other food.

Other foods, such as the gathering of seeds and tubers, were left for the womenfolk. Nuts, such as those of the Black Kurrajong tree that grew in the Wiradjuri area around Bathurst, were collected in season. Some nuts were eaten raw whilst other were roasted in the ashes. Seeds could be ground into a ‘flour’ and mixed with water before being cooked into a ‘flat bread’.

Travelling around each year meant that the elders accumulated the knowledge to keep their tribe alive. This meant that they could occupy earlier campsites each year. Ceremonies, gatherings and feasts were important to these tribal people and these took place on a regular basis and have been performed for thousands of years. Wiradjuris honour and remember their ancestors and their connection with the land in which they lived. Then there were the sacred ceremonies which meant that certain members of the clan could not attend, such as females during the initiation of the young men.

To the Wiradjuri people there were no associations between men, women, children, flora and fauna that did not also involve legends of the Dreamtime. Their customs and tradition established all practices connected with collecting, cooking and devouring of their foods.

Rules were made by the elders of the tribe who also enforced them. This helped maintain the rigid order within the groups. Punishments could vary from a beating, spearing or banishment. There were no ‘chiefs’ or ‘kings’ in their hierarchy, though Europeans early on gave out breast plates indicating as such.

The Wiradjuri travelled for trade with one known item being nuts from the huge Bunya pines which bore huge cones full of nuts. They were collected by the men who climbed these giant trees. Notches have been found on such trees near Bathurst to aid climbing. These nuts were eaten either raw or cooked and were a popular item to be used in ceremonies and gatherings. Coloured ochre was also another item traded.

The Wiradjuri nation made their own tools and weapons. The Australian aboriginals are believed to be the first in the world to grind seeds using stones. They also put ground edges on their cutting tools.

All men carried hunting spears made of some suitable timber such as one of the wattles, the length required was about 9 feet long. To straighten the green timber the Wiradjuri would heat it over a low fire to dry it out and straighten them. Whilst the slow drying process is taking place a point was sharpened at one end and a dent put in the other so it can be used with a spear
thrower. The pointed end was also hardened over the flames. Sometimes a wooden or bone 'barb' would be attached, this being fastened using sinew from a kangaroo or emu and vegetable gum. Barbs might be added to fighting spears as anyone wounded by them would get a worse injury.

The lighter timber was preferred as solid wood spears were heavy and hard to throw. Unlike some other tribes, the Wiradjuri did not need to carry their spears at all times to be identified as Wiradjuri as they could be recognised by their totem marking on their cloaks.

Another item are the spear throwers or Woomera which is also made from timber and is generally tapered. This allows a spear to be thrown at a significantly more powerful speed at one’s prey or, if necessary, at one’s antagonist. They have a small piece of bone or wood shaped like a small peg on one end that the end of the spear is placed on. The other end often has a worked piece of white quartz held in with resin or gum and is useful for cutting. The quartz end is the end gripped for throwing the spear.

The Woomera (above) could also be used in battle to deflect a foe’s spears. They could also be employed for ceremonial occasions as well as mixing ochre for the ceremony.

Shields were made by the Wiradjuri men for warfare and gatherings. The designs of Wiradjuri shields vary a good deal as did the trees whose wood was used to make them. The men made two distinct types – one being lighter, wider and more oval in shape with a handle in the back to hold on to, this one was generally for warding off an antagonist’s spears. Commonly this larger one was decorated with white and red ochre. The other type was much heavier and narrower designed to be used for close contact fighting when clubs were being used. They can exhibit quite smooth designs to highly fluted ones.

Boomerangs are made of timber and are of two sorts, the non-return (also called throwing or killer boomerang) and the returning with one side longer than the other, the type determining their shape. Used by the Wiradjuri men for hunting their prey, they would be carried on all hunting trips. They were used on other occasions such as ceremonies and rituals, clapping two of them together for ‘music’ during corroborees, fighting, a hammer and digging tool for food.

The non-returning or ‘throwing’ boomerangs were thrown with considerable accuracy to stun or slay the prey or murder their enemy or person to be punished. Returning boomerangs were made from hardwood timbers that had a natural bend which was carved and treated over a fire to dry the timber and give it the sweptback twist to kill and return.

Another Wiradjuri tool was the wooden club. Made by the men, these varied quite a bit in size and shape. These, like the spears, would be fire-hardened. Some boasted sharpened wooden spikes or milky quartz added to injure one’s enemy in battle. Some exhibit large bulbous ends whilst other less offensive types were made for rituals and other ceremonies. They could also be used for close contact fighting if necessary. These same tools could often be used for digging and can be referred to as digging sticks.

The Wiradjuri were known to use clubs to punish members of the tribe under Wiradjuri law. The guilty was expected to stand his ground and accept any injuries or wounds he might receive.

Whilst there was warfare amongst tribal groups it involved smaller numbers and usually didn’t last long as the men needed to get food to live. Warriors would do the fighting, every initiated male becoming a warrior. Sometimes women became involved but invariably they could be injured or killed as a bystander whilst yelling encouragements to their male participants. Generally battles were not a fight to the death of the tribe but after several warriors were killed or wounded it was called off, their grievances seemingly settled. Revenge killings however were another matter and revenge parties would be formed to despatch Wiradjuri justice.

Wiradjuri lands still yield examples of stone points and other implements. Many are worked or trimmed making uniface (trimmed on one side) or biface (trimmed both sides) tools. The men of the Wiradjuri tribe manufactured stone implements. The earliest of these stone tools made by earlier aboriginals are evidence to the longevity of some aboriginal tribes on our continent. Stones were either ground or flaked into shape, some having a combination of the two methods. Sometimes fire was used to break up certain types of
stone which shattered when it got really hot or water thrown over them. Tool making could take up quite a good deal of time especially if grinding a stone axe blade.

Not all types of stone in the region was suitable for making tools. The best types of stone used by early aboriginal tribes appear to be rich in silica and hard and brittle. Whilst the most commonly found examples are made from flint, silcrete, quartzite, quartz and chert we also see examples using blue basalt, sandstone, granite, chalcedony, greywacke, limestone, ironstones and some others being worked. Where large amounts of stone occurred which the aboriginal people used extensively and regularly are referred to as quarries.

Aborigines also quarried such stone from outcrops of bedrock or collected it as pebbles from rivers and the beds of streams. Sometimes flaked stone artefacts found on Aboriginal sites are made from stone types that do not occur naturally in the area. This means they must have been carried long distances and may have been traded.

There are a number of basic types of worked pieces made by the Wiradjuri people. Flaked stone tools would just be walked over by most people who are usually unaware of them. One of the basic types were made by the men who would hit a selected piece of stone which was referred to as a core using what was called ‘hammerstone’ (a pebble used as a ‘hammer’). This invariably saw a sharp fragment of stone break off, this sharp fragment known as a ‘flake’.

These sharp pieces made good scrapers, these being important to both the men and the women of the Wiradjuri tribe. The men used them for smoothing many of their wooden weapons such as shields, diggings sticks, clubs, boomerangs and spears.

The females used scrapers to remove meat and fat off the kangaroos and possums skins that were being prepared to make into cloaks for colder weather or sometimes rugs. Some bones were used also as scrapers with long bones from the kangaroo being popular.

As flakes lost their ‘edge’ and became blunt they could be worked again by further flaking of the cutting edge a number of times, a small piece at time. If a ‘skinning knife’ was wanted a flattish piece of suitable stone was selected and knapped to a tapered sharp cutting edge. Sometimes gum would be applied to the back to make it easier to hold. These pieces could be made quite quickly by experienced Wiradjuri men.

One item used by the Wiradjuri men that took up considerable time was the manufacture of an axe head. These pieces would later have a handle attached. Most worked-edge axes are ovalish to roundish in shape with the smoothed sharpened edge at one end. They can vary in size quite considerably with some even having a narrowed end.

Axe (left) were quite a prized item and the Wiradjuri men would have used them to bark trees to make gunyahs (a temporary shelter made of branches and bark) or for a canoe, to cut trees down, to make foot holes in trees to climb for wild honey or bird’s eggs, to cut up larger animals, for fighting or even used in ceremonies. The completed axe was also a popular trade item though these days complete axes are hard to find. This is due to the Wiradjuri using metal axes, their first given as gifts by Europeans and not having to make many since.

The stone to be used for these usually came from the best rock quarry they knew about or could find, the hardest stone being preferable. After shaping it to the rough size that they wanted, the rest of the process was invariably done elsewhere. These rough pieces are known as a ‘blank’ with these pieces sometimes being traded with other Wiradjuri clans or other tribes. Finding a nice water-worn, suitably shaped river pebble saved time in shaping a blank so these were used too.

Then came the most laborious part of the process of axe-making, a process that could take months or even years to complete. After a suitable grinding site was found warriors would begin grinding to remove any
sharp edges with the process leaving deep grooves at the site which one can still see today. Sandstone was a brilliant stone for grinding and it was usually near water which aided the process. Some Wiradjuri grinding sites have been used for thousands of years.

How much work was done in preparing the blade obviously depended on the individual. The ‘hammer stone’ (left) could be used in the process. Some axe-blades found exhibit one or more ground cutting edges. The polishing process made the blades more robust. Some have been polished smooth all over to a fine finish rather than just the usual cutting edge.

Often stone axe blades have a central groove that has been pecked out which helped in attaching the handle. The Wiradjuri would use sinew from a kangaroo and natural resin and plant fibre to attach the completed axe head onto a sturdy short wooden handle. This is now referred to as a hafted axe. If an axe blade was chipped or broken it could be reworked again.

One observation made concerning the Wiradjuri people were their ‘handsome possum-skin cloaks’. The women would stitch together a number of possum furs of the Common Possum, left, using either bush fibre made from bark of the Stringybark tree or sinuses from a wallaby or kangaroo. The Wiradjuri men would hunt the possums, ideally in colder months when their fur was thicker, with the skins given to the females to clean and sew up. Governor Macquarie noted that he was presented with one of these possum cloaks by a Wiradjuri man when he visited Bathurst in 1815 to proclaim our township.

Another unique object found in parts of Wiradjuri lands are carved trees or Dendroglyphs which were once reasonably common around the Campbell, Fish, Macquarie and Lachlan River regions with one concentration being known round the O’Connell area near Bathurst. They were carved by men who had been initiated though most of these cut trees have been sawn down over the last century. The Gundungurra people also would cut patterned incisions into tree trunks, some in concentrated numbers.

The Wiradjuri men of central New South Wales would carve complicated and involved designs into trees to indicate the site where someone important had been buried as part of the internment of the body. The men made incisions and patterns into the trunk of a single selected suitable tree, however in some cases, though rare, several are known for the one man.

Some of the early Europeans who were passing through Wiradjuri country noted burial sites. In 1817, John Oxley, an explorer, despatched by Governor Macquarie, wrote an account of a pair of carved trees as part of a Wiradjuri burial site which was located on the Lachlan River which he described the trees as having “curious characters deeply cut upon them, in a manner which, considering the tools they possess, must have been a work of great labour and time.”

Carvings were generally cut in complex geometric patterns into the main trunk of the tree after a section of bark had been detached but not so much was removed as to kill the tree. Rarely would they remove a second section of bark on the same tree, though it is known. Then the Wiradjuri men would incise, quite deeply, using a hafted stone axe, the wanted design of circles, spirals, diamonds and other involved and complicated patterns. The procedure using stone tools would be a slow and tedious process. Whilst few trees have been carved in the last hundred and fifty years and certainly far less since their land was compromised, it is likely that steel European axes would have been used.

Dendroglyphs incorporated some regular Wiradjuri clan designs as there are similarities between some trees. The special trees were used to mark particular ceremonial areas.

It is important that these Dendroglyphs or carved trees should not be confused with scarred trees which show evidence of bark and wood being removed to make items such as shields, gunyahs, coolamons and canoes or even cuts for footholds to get easier access to collect some foods such as wild honey or bird’s eggs.

Unfortunately almost all these trees, both carved and scarred, have been lost to time, some through age, some by early land clearing and by bushfires. In the 1930s those remaining were recorded and photographed and some sections were collected and housed in museums. As recent as the 1970s and 1980s further carved trees were lost as some landowners feared losing their land if a carved tree was located on their property.

To be continued in Issue 4.
MINER'S PISTOLS

Bathurst has a great connection with payable gold in Australia as it was found near the town and it was here that Hargraves announced his discovery. It was the Sydney Morning Herald that broke the news to Sydney-siders of the gold discovery at Bathurst in the west on the 7th May, 1851, and a week later on the 14th May, the Colonial Government officially announced that payable gold had been found.

On the 8th May Edward Hargraves held a public meeting at Mr. Arthur's Carrier's Arms Hotel in William Street in Bathurst to announce his discovery of gold (when in actual fact John Lister and William Tom had found the four ounces of gold near Yorkey's Corner, at the junction of Lewis Ponds and Summer Hill Creeks and this was later proved).

Another burst to the gold fever came two months later when Dr. W.J. Kerr came to Bathurst to deposit gold weighing 102 pounds 9 ounces 5 pennyweights. It had been found on his station near Mudgee by three of his aboriginal employees. They led Dr. Kerr to the site and he then took the nugget to Bathurst, but not before breaking some quartz and gold away from the main nugget. On his arrival in Bathurst Dr. Kerr called upon the offices of the Bathurst Free Press newspaper to display the gold to an admiring crowd before driving to the Union Bank. Here it was weighed by the manager, David Kennedy, in the presence of W.H. Suttor and T.J. Hawkins.

Within days businesses were advertising to buy gold as one Edward Austin advertised that he was prepared to purchase gold in any quantity from one shilling to one thousand pounds. The owner of the Australian Gold Finder's Inn, Mr. Barsden, advertised that he kept a pair of adjusted gold scales with weights on the premises for the convenience of gold diggers.

Then gold began to be found in Bathurst itself such as during the digging of a well for Charles William Croaker's new store in August 1856 when the well sinker found twelve specks of gold.

Many flocked to the goldfields at Bathurst dreaming that they would make a fortune and were not too happy when in the 1860s large numbers of Chinese began to arrive. From this time they were often seen shuffling through Bathurst as they went to and from the Western Goldfields.

Travelling to the goldfields and often living amongst so many other prospectors and miners must have been a bit scary at times. With a small police force to enforce the laws, that couldn’t really keep up, most men carried firearms in the 1850s and 1860s, and even later, especially when they travelled.

Above is a typical single shot goldminer’s pistol which was very commonly carried for personal protection often secreted in one’s waistcoat. Miners would buy single shot or multiple shot pistols, though I expect few were fired in anger. Due to a shortage of firearms, the price of pistols was generally high for those on the goldfields, at least initially. Something worth say £1-5-0 in London in the early 1860s could be worth £25 on the Turon River goldfields. Something better, say a Colt revolver could sell around £35 to £40. Later with mass production and faster prices dropped, with a basic model selling as cheap as five shillings.

Almost every miner or prospector would carry some sort of protection, especially these small firearms which came to be known as a “miner’s pistol”. These small pistols could be purchased as a ‘boxed’ set complete with one or two percussion pistols, powder flask, tin of percussion caps and lead balls, even sometimes a bullet mould and cleaning equipment. The timber boxes or cases could be made of cedar, rosewood and other common timbers. Others bought themselves a percussion shotgun for protection. Some type of knife was also considered necessary and many of these old knives exist today. Most of these cheap percussion pistols didn’t have a maker’s name but those that do command a higher price today amongst collectors.

There will be several goldfield collections at the ‘BATHEX 2015 Bicentenary Collectables, Gem and Mineral Exhibition - Bathurst Remembers 200 Years of History’ at Bathurst Showgrounds on 26th and 27th September, 2015.

MAGIC BRUNSWICK BLACK BOTTLE

In the days when horses were used for transport and to pull all sorts of conveyances and machinery, many were kept behind most Bathurst’s houses.

At one time every owner of a horse would have had one of these crude darkish green glass bottles which once contained a fast drying varnish that was black in colour. It was known as “Magic Brunswick Black” which was manufactured from the 1860s to early 1900.
The black liquid would be used to paint on the horses' hooves as well as on the various items of leather that comprised the harness. The bottle has a shear top and would have been sealed with a cork that was most likely tied on to prevent spillage. The contents tended to dry out fairly quickly but could be reconstituted by heating and adding some turpentine.

Each has the embossed name “MAGIC” on one line and “BRUNSWICK BLACK” below it, embossed lengthways on one face of the bottle.

Found in many early rubbish tips, these usually crude bottles are around 14cm to 16cm in height. They all seem to have a square shouldered top and the corners are chamfered. The thickness of the glass varies. Earlier bottles had sloped sides however later versions have square sides such as the example seen here. There is no indication who made the bottle but it is English made. The base can be slightly recessed with circular indent and may have a pontil mark which is the rough scar remaining on the base of a bottle by the bottle maker’s pontil rod. Generally air bubbles can be seen in the glass.

The liquid contained bitumen which meant that it was quite hard-wearing once dry. It could be thinned with turpentine. ‘Brunswick Black’ was used in the home and around the farm and primarily this liquid was painted on metalwork such as the black kitchen pots and fountains that hung over the open fire. It was painted on the old metal stoves and heaters. The fenders in front of the open fires would have been coated in this black varnish-like liquid and it was painted on with a brush. It could be applied to sulkies and other horsedrawn equipment, however a small amount of powdered gum resin was added to the heated Brunswick Black before applying it – it made the black finish more lustrous. Mr. Rivett whose family made sulkies, carts, wagons and other horsedrawn vehicles at Kelso noted in his notebook not to add too much resin as it would later become sticky in the hot summer weather or crack in winter.

Many of these types of old bottles turn up from time to time in the older areas of Bathurst during earthworks for new homes or when digging holes for other works. They give a fascinating insight into how our forebears lived in the past and several collections of bottles will be displayed at the Bathurst Showgrounds during ‘BATHEX 2015 Bicentenary Collectables, Gem and Mineral Exhibition - Bathurst Remembers 200 Years of History’ at Bathurst Showgrounds on 26th and 27th September next year.

BATHURST DOCTOR LIVED IN EXCITING TIMES

Dr. Richard Machattie (left) was a doctor and surgeon in Bathurst in the second half of the 1800s and even during the years of the Ben Hall Gang. He had been born in Scotland in 1813 and by 1836 had graduated in Edinburgh as a surgeon. In 1838 he arrived in Sydney having been employed as a ship’s surgeon. Soon after he headed for Bathurst and travelled, with his baggage, over the man-made road through the Blue Mountains by coach. Here he took over Dr Favill’s practice and became one of the town’s prominent doctors.

For 20 years he was an elder in the Presbyterian Church and also became a Magistrate and Coroner for the Bathurst district. In 1856 he was appointed the Bathurst Returning Officer at the first election for Responsible Government. He was an Alderman on the first Bathurst Municipal Council and Mayor four times. He died at his home in George Street in 1876.

He was known to travel great distances to see patients with one occasion being called to treat Trooper Sutton who had been shot by some of Ben Hall’s gang and was being looked after at McNamara’s Inn at Kings Plains near Bathurst.

The incident started when the Hall Gang raided the stables at Coombing Park near Carcoar, the property of Thomas Icely, Magistrate and wealthy landholder, during the evening of Sunday 2nd August, 1863. The gang was always in need of good horses so they targeted Mr. Icely’s stables near the house. They were spotted but still headed off with some horses, shooting an employee known as Charley the German who was taken into Carcoar to see Dr. Rowland. Thomas Icely posted a £100 reward four days later ‘to any person who will give such information as will lead to the conviction of the guilty parties.’ One horse from the raid on Thomas Icely’s stables was a grey colour and was claimed by O’Meally to ride.

Trooper Sutton was shot in the arm in a hold-up by the bushrangers – Gilbert, O’Meally and Vane, on the coach transferring three men suspected of helping the bushrangers in August 1863, en route to Bathurst. Sutton was put into the coach which proceeded to Kings Plains where he was left at McNamara’s Inn.
while the coach went on to Bathurst Gaol. Dr. Richard Machattie left Bathurst on the coach next morning to attend to the trooper. After dressing his wounds, the trooper and Dr. Machattie were driven into Bathurst, the former recovering over time.

Later the Bathurst City Council named the eight acre and most magnificent park in Bathurst after the popular doctor Richard Machattie. It was during the last decade of the reign of Queen Victoria that this resplendent park was created for people at the time and future generations like us to use today. It incorporated a fernery, grand fountain, band rotunda and a duck pond named, Lake Spencer, after Dr William Walter Spencer.

On early town maps of Bathurst the block of land, surrounded by William, Keppel, George and Russell Streets, was designated as land for “public use” when Assistant Surveyor James Richards arrived to finally, and officially, survey the western side of the Macquarie River so that blocks of land could be purchased in the town.

Prior to 1890 part of this block had been used for Bathurst’s ‘second gaol’. The gaol was constructed in the late 1830s and early 1840s but due to complaints of the smell and the poor state of the building it was finally demolished. It seems that the offer of suitable land on the Town Common, some ten acres in size, for another new gaol to be constructed helped N.S.W. Government officials make up their mind to move.

Both Dr. Machattie and Dr. Spencer even offered their own money, on loan of course, to the Bathurst Municipal Council so work could begin immediately. Costings were done and the N.S.W. Government offered £1,000 if the community could raise a similar amount which they managed to do. The cost of the ‘pond’ was estimated at £300.

Under the control of the Head Gardener, Mr. A.A. Patterson, work went ahead. Mr. Patterson was required to report to the meetings of Council, for example in November of 1890 he informed them that the ‘lake’ was complete and the soil removed was placed in desired areas in the park. It must have been an honour for Dr. Spencer to have this feature named after him and he attended various openings as each park feature was completed. Unfortunately his association with the planning and the park stopped when he died in 1893.

The pond soon attracted water birds, ducks and swans that normally used the Macquarie River. When pelicans and other seabirds arrived, such as seagulls, it resulted in the construction of two small low buildings for their protection.

A familiar landmark in Machattie Park is the large cast iron fountain called the “Grand Fountain” though it is often erroneously called the Crago Fountain. Its official opening took place on Wednesday 23rd December, 1891, by the Mayoress, Mrs. F. Crago “before a great crowd of the public”. Council aldermen, various clergymen, the Bathurst Progress Association, local members of Parliament and their wives had been invited. Bandmaster Lewins was conducting the Bathurst District Band which played a number of selections.

The Grand Fountain cost £650, £315 being the cost of the fountain itself and the balance was taken up with shipping from England, construction of the pool and the erection and connection of the fountain itself. The Bathurst Progress Association had managed to raise £1,000 with the aid of the project with the profit from the “Ye Fayre of Olden Tyme”. The local Member, Mr. W.H. Paul, had arranged an unconditional £1,000 grant from the New South Wales Government.

Not to be left out, a Ladies Committee was also formed as part of the Bathurst Progress Association. It was they who had actually organised the “Ye Fayre of Olden Tyme” at which the ladies attired themselves in various costumes. Old fashioned signage and temporary buildings were produced in November 1890 and located in the Skating Rink in Keppel Street to attract the “male’s gold, silver and copper”. They intended to make “a veritable olden street” like those with the gabled rooves, overhanging eaves and ivy draped porches. One entered under a large Union Jack flag.

Over one hundred volunteered to help and they were soon preparing the most ravishing and enchanting articles for conversion into coins of the realm. The women had already discussed previous fairs and bazaars which had been organised by the menfolk who invariably purchased trivial or ill-considered items that didn’t fit, that women wouldn’t use or others would never use. After an appeal was made to the public to assist by attending the fundraising ‘Fayre”. Its appeal
was so liberally responded to that the “Fayre” was opened comparatively free of charges, at least so far as the preliminary fittings and all the goods on display were concerned.

Mrs. Machattie, Mrs. Spencer, Mrs. J.H. Stewart and Mrs. Edgley, along with scores of other damsels, were dressed up to run “Cheapside” fitted out as a shop in the old English style selling toys, doll’s houses, drapery, a splendid rocking horse and other sundries to tempt the eye. Mrs. Marriott’s lottery table where everyone wins a prize was popular. Another stall “Ye Icey Regione” was decorated with alpine heights and sold jellies and ices, white frosted cakes and cream and other nice things including Mr. James’s ginger beer which was operated by Misses Bassett and Kenna.

HORSE ACCIDENTS

Few of our younger generation today would be fully aware, if at all, that once, if one wanted to travel from Bathurst to Orange or just travel across town one would have to saddle up their horse before leaving. Thus when researching my various projects I come across numerous horse accidents around Bathurst and district just as car accidents are reported nowadays.

Then one comes across other interesting facts such as it was Governor Macquarie who ordered all vehicles to be driven on the left side of the road, this rule is still in force today.

In late March 1852 as “Mrs. Keele was driving a gig from Bathurst en route to Mudgee, containing in addition to herself, her infant, and a Miss Corry, Mr. Keele being in company on horseback. The horse she was driving being young and spirited, took fright at the jolting of the vehicle in crossing a rut a few miles beyond Diviack’s Inn and started off at full gallop. Mrs. Keele was thrown out and fell longitudinally into a rut and though the wheel of the gig went over her, she sustained no injury. The horse continued his flight, Miss Corry, with singular presence of mind dropped the infant out the back of the gig and was herself shortly after precipitated out and both she and the infant were providentially unhurt. The vehicle is so much damaged, we understand, that it cannot be mended.”

On 20th November, 1853, Thomas Fitzpatrick, brother of James Fitzpatrick, saddler of William Street, was killed in a cart accident when it precipitated into a deep abyss near Mount Victoria.

Another accident was reported on 15th November, 1861, when Elliott, Chapman and Foreman’s coach and horses ran off the road and rolled over into a steep gully near Frying Pan toll bar (now called Yethome).

Another melancholy accident took place on 5th June, 1882, when Mr. Alfred Pechey died whilst on his way home to his residence “Gestingthorpe”. He had reached Piper Street near the intersection of Bentinck Street, when a local dog ran out attacking his horse and upsetting his gig with Mr. Pechey being violently thrown out. He hit the ground with great force injuring him. He was removed to Mr. Joseph Bardsley’s, Bentinck and Piper Inn, where he died from severe concussion, aged 46. The dog owner, James Wooderson, was later fined for keeping a ferocious dog.

BOOK LOCAL ACCOMMODATION EARLY!

Many events will take place during 2015 and Bathurst will host many visitors who will require accommodation so don’t forget to book your accommodation early for any event or occasion you may be attending, including the ‘BATHEX 2015 Bicentenary Collectables, Gem and Mineral Exhibition - Bathurst Remembers 200 Years of History’ at Bathurst Showgrounds on 26th and 27th September, 2015. In the Bathurst Region we have a full assortment of accommodation from motels, hotels and a caravan park to quaint bed and breakfasts, serviced apartments and self-catering properties if you are not camping at the Bathurst Showgrounds for the BATHEX 2015 Exhibition. For a list of what accommodation is available during next year contact the Bathurst Visitor Information Centre on Kendall Avenue for brochures and information or Freecall 1800 68 1000 or email visitors@bathurst.nsw.gov.au

WEBB & CO - PERFUMERS

Webb & Company in George Street became Bathurst’s largest general store in Bathurst over time. Edmund Webb, who began the shop, arrived in Bathurst in 1849 and found a job immediately. About a year later he approached his boss proposing he pay some money and they form a partnership. Upon receiving a refusal he opened his own store in Dr. Connell’s old surgery and opened his small shop in mid-November 1851. When he learnt Mr. J. Gordon next door was retiring he took over his lease and opened his extended drapery store, opening in mid-1854. Immediately he undertook alterations and soon opened a grocery section.

Several years later Mr. Webb advertised that he was moving from lower George Street to the large, new, two storey premises recently erected by Kerr and Rae, builders, for Dr. Richard Machattie. Known as Webb Bros, but still trading as Webb & Co, the entrepreneurs could now try out their ideas such as illuminating the front windows at night. It wasn’t long
before the men decided to design and construct their own building.

By 1861 construction of their commodious premises was underway next door to the Bank of New South Wales. When finished they transferred to the new two storey store, with basement, and opened in October 1861. Later their new additional three storey premises was built next door. By the late 1880s Webb and Co had a branch in Keppel Street. Their store sold almost everything from underwear to farm machinery, harnesses to hats, boots to nails, fresh fish to gelignite and everything in between.

For those with some excess money to spend on perfumes, especially French and English perfumes, E. Webb & Co stocked it in the 1890s. The company enjoyed the patronage of Queen Victoria who had her own blend – No. 1280 ‘Queen’s Violet’ perfume.

Breidenbach’s choice English Perfumes were shipped out to Australia and a large variety of Messrs. Breidenbach & Company’s productions were constantly in stock in Bathurst. Many were sold in ornate glass bottles and packaged in presentation boxes as seen by some of these illustrations from one of Webb & Co’s catalogues. Many of their fragrances and designs were registered to stop the competition copying them – though this did not stop some of them!

The late F.H. Breidenbach had made the remarkable achievement in the manufacture of his subtle odours about the year 1832 having a particularly keen sense of smell. After his death various other makers had used his title and had even tried to imitate the manufacture of the Wood Violet but the particular secret had never been discovered by its imitators.

Products were being made in their New Bond Street manufactory in London where Webb & Co had agents arrange for them to be shipped out to Sydney then sent on the train to Bathurst. There was ‘Glycerine and Cucumber’ and ‘Buttermilk’ toilet soap, Eau de Cologne in assorted sizes, Lavender Water in a range of sizes, Leatherette in assorted odours, Rose Sublime spray perfume, Trefle (smelled like fresh cut clover), Wood Violet (a concentrated distilled essence), Sweet Pea and Geisha Bouquet, the latter was made as Japan was a novelty.

Have you ever had relations or relatives who once lived in Bathurst or district? In 1988 the Bathurst City Council created a Heritage Wall located in the immediate vicinity of the cairn at the lower end of William Street, at the entrance to the Macquarie River Bicentennial Park.

Any family having connections with the Bathurst district may apply to have a plaque (example above) made and placed on the Heritage Wall. Wall plaques commemorate the pioneers and early settlers in the Bathurst district and also include more recent contributors to the development of the area. The Bathurst District Historical Society manages this wall plaque service.

Applications are available from the Museum or by phoning (02) 63308455 – best time is between 11am and 2pm Tuesday to Sunday or by emailing info@bathursthistory.org.au. You can also email amcrac@lisp.com.au. Applications should be lodged at least 12 weeks prior to the proposed unveiling date to allow verification and manufacture of the plaque. Payment is currently $550.00 (includes GST) and must accompany the application.

We hope that some families will use 2015 to incorporate a family reunion, maybe even hold it over a weekend and incorporate the unveiling of your family’s plaque on Bathurst’s Pioneer Wall. The Society can help you organise the unveiling and can send a local representative along to say a few words if required. Why not discuss the possibility with some other family members!

If you have any questions or wish to get more information then email info@bathursthistory.org.au or
write to the Bathurst District Historical Society, PO Box 237, Bathurst N.S.W. 2795, to arrange for the information, pricing and application form.

PLACES & ATTRACTIONS TO VISIT

Holy Trinity Church at Kelso was the first church to be constructed west of the Blue Mountains.

The local Anglican parish was established in 1825 with its territory basically from the Blue Mountains westward. The first rectory was built in 1827 and the Holy Trinity Church constructed in 1835 with part of the latter’s costs met by the New South Wales colonial government. The balance was raised by the parishioners. Many early pioneers of Bathurst and Kelso are buried in the adjacent churchyard. A new rectory was built in 1878 after many complaints about the dilapidated condition of the first one. This church is well worth a look and have a wander around the cemetery.

DID YOU KNOW?

# The first Christian service at Bathurst was Sunday 7th May, 1815, when Governor Macquarie proclaimed the town of Bathurst. The service was held in his tent on the banks of the Macquarie River.

# Bathurst had several soap and candle manufacturing works over the years. One such business was conducted in 1845 when Mr. Robert Rae operated his Soap and Candle Works in Bentinck Street. Rae was an entrepreneur and hotelier and continued to operate his factory for a number of years before letting the business to Nestor Hansard, Snr, in August 1861. Hansard ran the factory till late December 1862 or early January 1863.

# In 1823 Mr. Robert Fopp applied to open an inn at Kelso and to sell liquor to visitors but he was refused by the Governor as the Colonial authorities were reluctant for wholesale consumption of beer, ales and spirits as it may get into the wrong hands. Inns were needed to provide accommodation, meals and stabling, so necessary when people travelled in the early days but despite this the authorities were reluctant to issue licences for inns or hotels.

# The early residents of Bathurst asked the Colonial New South Wales Government for a cricket ground for the town. A number of local citizens had signed a petition requesting the Government to see their way to grant a block of land to be used as a public cricket ground. The petition was presented by Mr. Oliver and Mr. Arthur at a dinner in May 1862 in honour of the Colonial Secretary, the Honourable Charles Cowper.

# By 1872 Bathurst had 51 hotels for a population of just 5,000 residents and the local Police Magistrate was very concerned about the number of drunkards brought before him at the very small Court House in Russell Street.

I hope you enjoy these monthly e-newsletters and that they are interesting and beneficial. It will be great to meet people in person next year. Please enjoy yourself whilst in Bathurst and be sure to visit some of the many other attractions that historic Bathurst and district have to offer, there is certainly plenty to do.

Feel free to pass this e-newsletter along to any family, friends, work colleagues and acquaintances. If you wish to receive this e-newsletter direct just email amcrae@lisp.com.au

BATHEX 2015 CONTACTS

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Selling Space Applications, Dealers and Tailgating Enquiries or Bookings

Bathurst Stamp, Coin, Collectables and Lapidary Club Applications, PO Box 1351, Bathurst NSW 2795 or email any email in this box.

Publicity & e-newsletter

Alan McRae email amcrae@lisp.com.au or phone 63315404 - evening is best.

For other information go to the following website at www.bathursthistory.org.au for the weekend programme and more information.

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