

Gloucester District Historical Society Inc

Bi Monthly NEWSLETTER No 387

December 2019



ABN: 84 849 778 908

President:

Jenny Richards

65589911

Secretary:

Jane Barry

0412029499

Treasurer:

Mark Relf

0417467007

Vice President:

Effie Crawley

65581374

Email: gloucestermuseum@bigpond.com

Web site: www.gloucestermuseum.com.au

Museum Address: 12 Church Street, Gloucester.

Postal Address: PO Box 265. Gloucester NSW 2422

Phone: 0265589989

Committee Members: Gerald McCalden, Gary Smith, Pam Hebblewhite, Anne Moorcroft



and *Happy New Year*



Volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy. You vote in elections once every three years or so but when you volunteer you vote every day about the kind of community you want to live in. This is reflected in the visions of selfless volunteers during these past few weeks.

Thank you to every volunteer in making our communities as safe as possible in horrific circumstances, especially these last few weeks.

Get well wishes

Mark Relf our Treasurer was involved in a serious accident recently. Mark, all members and friends wish you well on your recovery and are soon back with us.

Thank You

A big thank you to Ron Lawler of Bellbird Quarries for providing the gravel for the parking pad.

Thank you to Anne Keen and the Gloucester Advocate for entrusting the safe keeping of the archived Advocates to the Society. A wonderful resource for the Archive Centre.

A big thank you to Alan Snedden and Jenny Richards for packing, transporting and unpacking the Advocates from the Advocate Office,

Dates for Your Diary

December 16th.2019. There will be no December meeting

January 20th.2020 – meeting at 2pm

Museum: The Museum will be on its Christmas break from 20th. December 2019 until 14th. January 2020.

President's Report –Jenny Richards

On 31st October we hosted the quarterly meeting of the Midcoast Council Heritage Commite. It was a very successful meeting and we had very good feed back about our Archive.It was good for members to atend and contribute to the meeting.

The World War 1 letters of Edward Mullholland were delivered to the Anzac memorial in Hyde Park, by Jane while in Sydney. The Memorial was grateful to receive these letters, and as they have no relevance to this area it is good to know they will be preserved for the family if they should wish to see them.

The copies of the Advocate Newspapers (1961 -2013 approx) have arrived from the Advocate Office for safe keeping with us. Thank You Alan for the help in getting them up to the Archive We are in the process of sourcing a suitable storage unit.

Gerald, Jane and myself had a very productive meeting with Angela from the Visitors Information Centre, who had some good ideas as to advertising and catering for bus groups etc. There will be further meetings with Thomas (a social media expert) from VIC about getting our message out there and advertising the Archive for family and Gloucester history and research.

The family photos from the vault have been sorted and will be either hung in the Museum or returned to stoage for easy access when needed.

I wish you all a very Merry Chistmas and a safe and healthy 2020

The Advocates 1961 - 2023



The “bound” Advocates for our care and use. Oh dear how many “wasted” hours ahead for all of us as we have a little read. I know this Editor will be spending many hours reading down memory lane.

Memories of an early Stratford Bakery

I found this gem in an old newsletter and wish to share this little bit of history of which some of you may be unaware. It is an extract from an address given by Joe Bignell of Stratford at a Society meeting in 1988. Joe’s career as a baker began after his father purchased the Stratford Bakery and Post Office. His father, Howard Bignell, had a farm prior to this on the Upper Avon – he had no knowledge of the bakery business. However Joe, then aged 16, started baking bread on the 1st March 1927 and the business known as H.S Bignell and Sons continued to operate some 25 years in Stratford. Abby Farley, who worked for the previous owner, showed Joe the tricks of the trade and younger brother Jack also gave a hand.

The flour came from Brunton’s Flour Mill in Sydney in 18-20 ton rail truck loads to Stratford Station. When rail trucks became smaller, consignments were approximately 16 tons. This was off loaded onto an old 1924 Model T Truck and taken to the flour shed for storage. With the bags holding 150lbs of flour it took some shifting. Mice and rats had to be kept under control but after breaking the cats in to catch them it was no great problem. Rat bait took care of any they missed.

The flour bags could be returned to Bruntons, these were rolled into bundles of 50, sometimes bag merchants would come around and buy them, they were sewn with very strong string which was an excellent material for making ferret nets.

Bread making years ago was back breaking work. Joe said he used three 150lb bags each baking, sometimes four if it was a long weekend, mix 8 gallons of water per bag, about half a pound of salt and sugar, that helped the keeping qualities, and of course yeast – approximately 1lb per bag of flour. This was mixed in a wooden tray made from New Zealand kauri timber. It took almost three hours from start of mixing until it reached the oven. After initial mixing, the dough was allowed to rise, then knocked back and the gas expelled, then rise again, after which it was pounded up, weighed and put into 2lb tins. After rising it took about an hour to cook.

The wood fired oven was lit just as mixing commenced and reached a heat of between 1300°F and 1400°F. It was then shut down and when about 600°F the dough would be put into cook for an hour. When the bread was taken out the temperature was at about 450°. Wood for the oven was bought from the Wards River Mill, 10/- a one ton truck load. Bush wood was often used and this was drawn in a horse and cart. A windmill on the Avon River pumped water to a reserve tank at the bakehouse to supply the necessary water. The yeast was brought from Mauri Bros and Thompson. This came on the train each week and had to be kept down the well in a bucket to keep it cool, later years an ice chest was purchased to keep it cool. The ice, dusted with saw dust came by passenger train from Dungog in a corn bag.

There were about 2 hundred 2lb. loaves made from each sack of flour, prices were pegged, 4½d per loaf for years – actually 25 years on when Joe left the bakery bread sold for 11½d. Buns were 1d. each 13 in baker's dozen., pies 6d. and plain butter cake ¾for 6d. At Christmas pensioners were given a fruit cake. A number of the women in the village cooked their Christmas cakes in the oven, usually the day following bread making. Cakes were sent overseas during the war to soldiers. Bignell's cakes kept well, wrapped in paper and put into a wooden box destined for New Guinea.

Drovers and bush workers would take a week or more supply of bread, the "well" cooked or burnt loaves as these were the best keepers.

Bread was sent by rail to Sydney and entered in the Queensland and NSW Exhibition. This was baked Monday, judged Wednesday. Bignell's bread was only one place away from the overall winner, gaining 90 points. Their bread was successfully exhibited in Gloucester and Stroud Shows for years in succession.

Bread was delivered in those days and their run went down to Monkerai and Russell's mill, Johnson's Creek, Wards River – there were two mills and three at Craven that closed during the depression and one at Dog Trap. Other runs were to lower Waukivory, never to be forgotten with the broken corduroy across the low swampy area. Another bad road was to the upper Avon, again with corduroy and often covered with water. The hand throttle often had to be used. Another run was via Cut Hill to Heatherdale. No tarred roads in those days. Before petrol bowsers were installed, petrol was purchased from Street and Parish in 2 x 4 gallons tins. During the War, petrol rationing caused problems and half kerosene was used and farmers helped out if they had any surplus.

The family business continued until Joe had to give up for health reasons, when he became dusted in flour in 1952. The business was sold to Hebblewhites who moved the oven to their Gloucester business in King St. Baking concluded at Stratford where the friendly baker not only baked and delivered bread to the door but provided a much appreciated service to the country folk, delivering mail, papers and other goods



This isn't Stratford Bakery, but does anyone have a photo?

GLOUCESTER DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

MONTHLY ROSTER December 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	Jenny Gail Dianne	3 Effie Trish Dianne Gail	4	5 Jenny Gerald Gail Dianne		7 Liz Jess/Norm B
	Jenny Gail Dianne	10 Jenny Gerald Dianne Gail	11	12 Effie Jess B Gail Dianne		14 Jenny Marie Laurie
	Jenny Gail Dianne	17 Anne Pam? Dianne Gail	18	19 Gerald Jane Gail Dianne		Closed

MUSEUM OPENING HOURS

Saturdays – 10am-2pm

Tuesdays and Thursdays – 10.30am-1.30

MONTHLY ROSTER January 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 Closed		Closed
	6	7 Closed	8	9 Closed		Closed
	13 Jenny Gail Dianne	14 Jenny Gerald Gail Dianne	15	16 Gerald Jane Gail Dianne		18 Jenny Gerald
	20 Jenny Gail Dianne MEETING	21 Anne Pam? Gail Dianne	22	23 Pam Margie Gail Dianne		25 Jane Gerald
	27	28 Pam Sue Dianne Gail	29	30 Pam Donna Gail Dianne		

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