



HUNTER HERITAGE NETWORK

A PROFESSIONAL FORUM FOR HERITAGE ISSUES

President's Report 2010-2011
Monday 5 December 2011

Welcome members. Thank you for your attendance.

Firstly, I must apologise for my absence – I double booked - inadvertently creating a clash. I believe that you, members, will extract less money from me than Jet Star for this error, and hence, I find myself in Melbourne while you good people are listening to Gionni read this report on my behalf. Hopefully he has decided on the right pitch and tempo.

Suffice to say, I am with my step family for a pre-christmas rendezvous. I have a 19 year old step daughter living in Melbourne who happens to be available for her Newcastle family at this time – so it is - that I do not appear before you.

I also convey, on his behalf, the apologies of our Vice-President Mr Tim Adams, who was unable to step into the void created by my absence - he too is unavailable - being out of the country on this occasion.

I must thus convey - at the outset - my eternal appreciation to Gionni, an HHN Board member *extraordinaire* - for taking up the challenge of presiding over the 2010-2011 AGM for the Hunter Heritage Network and for tabling the President's report on my behalf.

How we fared in 2010-2011

We have been constant achievers as a network. The NSW Heritage Branch continued to refer to us as the most prominent regional network in the State. The Heritage Branch continued to under-write our activities during the year – however, given our solid financial performance, we did not have need for a subsidy from them. We continued to be contacted by politicians, journalists, the Heritage Branch and other as we have earned a reputation as an organisation for non-political heritage issues in the Hunter region. We continued to be an affiliate member of the Royal Australian Historical Society.

We continue to add to our network with new members joining every year and we continue to enjoy great support from some of our constant members in particular who I will mention individually – Don Alexander at Engineered Fire Solutions, Mark Fenwick of Suturs Architects, National Trust Hunter Regional Committee, Elizabeth Roberts of the Convict Trail Project, Henly Cox, Rod Caldwell, Doug Lithgow, Umwelt, RPS Pty Ltd, Maitland City Council, Dungog Shire Council, Lake Macquarie City Council, Mary-Jean Sutton, Sarah Mane, Max Pengilly, the staff of the former Pasminco and many other individuals who continued to be members of our network during this year.

Annual Seminar 30 July 2010 – former Pasminco smelter site hosted by Lake Macquarie City Council

Our gratitude is extended to Lake Macquarie City Council for hosting and organising our seminar on 30 July 2010 at the site of the Pasminco smelter. Ulrike Hora, Brian, and Mary Loder are to be congratulated for organising and enabling the HHN to visit this wonderful industrial site. Sadly, as of December 2011, there is very little left of those cavernous spaces and that wonderful fabric. Pasminco's past is truly a foreign country now - Lake Macquarie is the poorer in not being able to grab some of the wonderful timbers that we saw that day –

cleaned-up trusses would have made worthy structural members in landscaping or building projects. We know that it was not from want of trying.

Anyway, what we saw as a network on that day was a glimpse into an economy that is lost to us now – like many of the former industrial manufacturers in our region – the economic cycles, the booms, and the busts, means that we are left with the tangible, and intangible legacies of these cycles. The challenge for us is to recognise how these cycles are reflected in our lives today and to determine what we should be keeping as part of our cultural heritage.

In terms of the Network – we have proved again that there is strength in being an organised group with a worthwhile vision and our members allow us to connect with significant people and places. We are the peak network for heritage in the Hunter region – non-political, professional, long standing, - we gain access to places that few will ever, or have ever, seen.

Just going back to the Pasmenco seminar, that seminar for me was an amazing experience – being able to see and stand in those massive spaces was one I will never forget. I doubt that in my lifetime I will again have the opportunity of dwelling in such a large and antiquated space – bearing in mind that one of those buildings was constructed in the early 1900s.

So I am grateful to the network that we have opportunities such as these.

Board members 2010-2011

I cannot function without the support of the members of the Board of the HHN, who are committed, intelligent, proactive and passionate. In particular, Tim Adams, Jody Blake, Stephen Booker, Gianni diGravio, Ann Hardy, Mary Loder and Mary-Jean Sutton. You are all amazing and helpful. Thank you.

Ann Hardy gets a special vote of thanks. Ann constantly gives to the network with her responsiveness and willingness to contribute to each and every task that is asked of the Board members. Ann is a true treasure of our Network and if I were there, she would be getting a big kiss on the cheek. So someone, please, no tongues, just give ANN a peck of heartfelt gratitude and love. Could we all put our hands together to thank all the members of the Board.

The Future

The year ahead is already underway, and we have begun to articulate our strategic direction as a board - I hope you all familiarise yourselves with the new principles, vision, mission, and strategy which has recently been uploaded to our website.

We also have a new amazingly well organised administration officer – Melanie is a high achiever with exemplary organisational standards and she has already shown to myself and the Board what skills and focus she can have – Melanie's contribution will be a major benefit to our network.

I wish to congratulate Melanie on her appointment to the network. Please put your hands together to congratulate Melanie.

Next Seminar

The Next Seminar is at the Upper Hunter Shire Council on Friday 30 March 2012. Planning is underway so please watch the website and emails for further details.

I wish you all a wonderful and happiness-abounding Christmas – please stay safe, take a relax, unwind and love the Earth.

Sarah Cameron