



Braidwood & District Historical Society

PO Box 145 Braidwood NSW 2622

Newsletter

Number 36 March 2025

President's Report

Members will have seen the various articles, including The Canberra Times on the present state of the Braidwood Heritage Centre, so I will not repeat the shameful story but state the following:

- We seek solutions, not blame. The project needs to be finished.
- It is up to the politicians to fix any mismanagement.
- The builder has been terminated by mutual agreement and has since gone into voluntary administration.
- Public Works have withdrawn from the project by agreement.
- QPRC have taken over the funding.
- Subbies unpaid by the builder will be paid by QPRC.
- QPRC will appoint a new private project manager and a new building contractor.
- There is \$1.75 million left to complete stage 1.
- It is not enough. The blacksmith shop and museum lift have been taken out of the scope of works.
- Stage 1 was never to be the end of the project. The project was only staged because of cost blow outs.
- Stage 2 requires funding for the Heritage Centre project to function. Each component relies on the others to be operational.

The blacksmith shop and artisan studios attract visitors; the accommodation generates income from visitors; the café depends on visitors, and the museum shop relies on the sale of on-site produced products.

- At best with the current available funding, we are aiming at completing the accommodation, the new entrance/reception/ shop to the museum, museum air conditioning and new museum toilets.
- We are in a race against time as the Bushfire Recovery Funding finishes on 30 June. Any unused funds will be lost to the project.

In spite of the problems with the creation of the Heritage Centre the museum is functioning well. Kerrie is having a wonderful time accessioning and sorting an impressive and extensive amount of material donated by Helen Hart. Six new display cases are being arranged. Jill and Kerrie have been putting together a new display of items from past Braidwood retail businesses.

The Dodge is taking shape. Thanks to Brendon McGrath for contributing time and expertise to the auto electrics which are now in place. There is also restoration work underway on the Apple Crusher and the Steam Engine.

Thanks- We are fortunate to have such a dedicated and industrious committee and volunteers. Our volunteers are not paid- they are priceless.

Peter Smith – President

One of Our Volunteers



Kerrie Beers Volunteer

My paternal side of the family were early settlers of Gundaroo, Jerrawa and Gunning where my father was born, although I grew up in Sydney. My grandfather was the original owner of Bailey's garage in Gunning. I visited Gunning for the first time in my 20s and just knew I had country blood running through my veins and yearned to move rural from the big smoke. My dream came true 20 years ago when we bought a property in the Braidwood district. Until my husband retired, we came to the property every weekend and have now lived here permanently for 6 years. I adore the peace and serenity I am surrounded by and love Braidwood.

I wanted to do something within the community and thought volunteering at the historical society and museum was right up my alley as I had begun researching my own family history in 1982, before it was a really popular thing to do and records weren't accessible at the touch of a computer keyboard from home. I just about lived at the Globe Street Archives at The Rocks Sydney

whenever I had spare time. This has given me a good grounding for thinking outside the box when looking for family history records.

Through researching family history I have visited many cemeteries. For the past 6 years I have volunteered to take photos of headstones for 'Find a Grave' for those who can't visit a cemetery due to distance. When I moved here, I decided to take photos of every headstone in all the Braidwood District cemeteries, and these have been gifted to BDHS.

As a bit of an organised list girl, sorting out the archive room within the museum and cataloguing for a computer database was my first task upon volunteering. With this achieved I was introduced to the accession room to do the same....Oh my, I was in heaven! I discovered my passion! What a treasure trove!

To explain accessions for anyone unsure, it is the formal process of accepting items into the collection. Any item donated is catalogued with a distinct number, the item is described in detail regarding its shape, size, material, age, provenance etc. and any conservation needed. I research many items to get as much accuracy as possible. A photo is taken, then I record a permanent storage place so it can be found easily for display purposes.

If you have an item, significant to the Braidwood district, please consider donating it to the museum.

When not ensconced in the accession room I have started a convict data bank of all the convicts who were assigned to the district or settled here as an emancipated person and hope this will be a useful resource in the future.

I truly admire the ladies and gentlemen who first set up the Braidwood Historical Society & Museum, and thank them immensely for their hard work and dedication to a true asset of our town.

Kerrie's Corner of Unique Museum Artefacts

Written by Kerrie Beers and Jill Clarke

We are very grateful to some of our local residents who have generously gifted us some very fascinating historical pieces over the last few months. Helen and Les Hart has given generously. Eric Lighfoot also dropped in with a little treasure too!

One of Helen Hart's special artefacts is a children's art desk. It interests us as it allows us to see the effort that parents took to educate their children when they were home schooled.

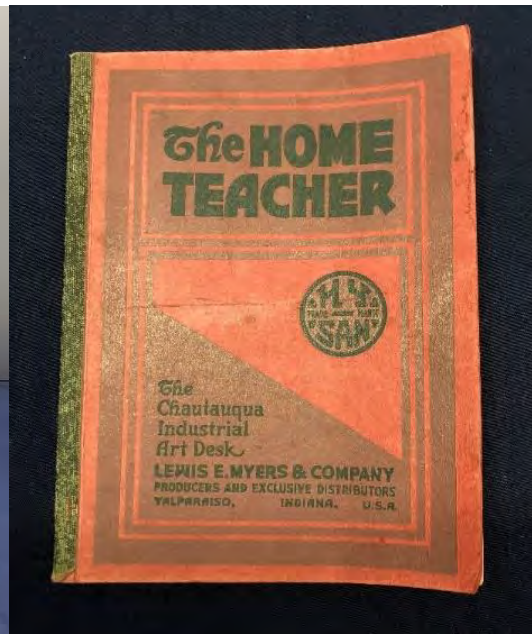


**Les and Helen
Hart**

The object that Kerrie has selected for this newsletter is called a Chatauqua Industrial Art Desk and Book c1913. It was generously donated by Mrs Helen and Les Hart. This desk was once owned by Helen's ancestors the Watt family of '**Wyanbene**' southeast of Krawarree, Braidwood.

The desk is a fold up rectangular wood box opening to an L shape, for use on a table or can be mounted on a wall by the eye screws on each side. The lid is hinged on metal arms allowing the desk to be positioned in different ways. The interior of the box is divided into 6 compartments, 2 with Plywood fronts. A spring on the left side was to hold the slate chalks or pencils. The large compartment at the top holds a paper scroll of 49 cm width. The Scroll rolls on two wooden rods with turning knobs on the exterior of the box. The educational scroll of quality thick paper contains 25 panels with various illustrations on a variety of subjects, ranging from kindergarten basic shapes all the way to electrical diagrams, business lessons, piano notes and fine art. The plywood base of the box features a map of USA, but only fragments are left. The lid is a green Hy-San Slate Board for practising the lessons.

The **Home Teacher** book has a red and burgundy cover with a cloth spine.



Thank you Jon Stuart for the excellent restoration.

The **Home Teacher** book explains by word & illustration the source pictures of vocations comprised in the Industrial Art Desk. The book is devised to help boys & girls to acquire habits of reading & study, work & play in the home.

New exhibition

Kerrie, and I headed the group of volunteers and we put together a small exhibition of the Businesses of Braidwood.



We gathered some very interesting artefacts from our collection and with generous loans from Len Mutton, Brendan McGrath, Alex Rae, Norman and Kathryn Whitfield, Helen Hart, Jill Clarke and Paul Cockram, we were able to put together a variety of artefacts connected to over 20 businesses that have iconic status in our community.

They included; Len Mutton & Co, Wehby' 's Store, Monterey Café, BRAG, Tallaganda Times, The Braidwood Chemist, Nomchongs, Braidwood Butchery, S Bevege Mechanical Repairs, Braidwood Post Office, Bank of New South Wales, John Sullivan Mobile Vet, Commercial Hotel, Royal Mail Hotel, Braidwood Newsagency, G Hockey & Co, Downe's Petroleum, M Munn Eucalyptus Oil, Hardware and Paint, Harold Young Cordials, Albion Hotel, Farmers & Graziers.

The exhibition will be available to view until the end of the QPRC Heritage Festival at the end of May 2025. We are hoping that some of the artefacts will be on permanent display after this time. A PowerPoint of business photographs and text will also be available to view when the technology is purchased and erected in the hall on the first floor.



BDHS Research Series:

The Braidwood Chinese Pioneers

After reading and researching the local Braidwood papers and discussing with local families we understand that there were many Chinese migrants living and working as labourers in the southern districts of NSW as early as 1852. After the cessation of convict transportation, the lack of labourers encouraged pioneer settlers to investigate alternatives. The use of Coolies from China was well known in other countries such as California US. As a consequence many Chinese men began to migrate to NSW to work in labour gangs. There was a well-established procurement scheme often akin to those of the slave period once seen in Africa.

Some people expressed their concerns about the 'immigration' scheme in the local papers and noted it was a form of slavery. Newspaper reports had large groups of Coolies travelling through Goulburn towards stations further to the south of the city. Some stayed and worked around Goulburn too. Maybe they were put into service in the Braidwood area also, but no evidence has been found to prove this conjecture.



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Bill Nomchong



Ah Chew in his market garden at Mona

This manner of indentured labour system then would have been the very first indication that Chinese men and their families were located in the Southern District. One of our local Braidwood Chinese families, the Chu Chin/Churchin family were indeed a product of this scheme. (We will meet them later in the next Newsletter)



Another view of the “Mona” market gardens.

It was not until the late 1850s we see the numbers of Chinese migrants/ entrepreneurs, market gardeners or gold miners wend their way to the Braidwood Goldfields. Once the Clyde Mountain road was surveyed and finished this road was frequently used by the Chinese miners.

Their arrival was a reaction to the start of a sustained mining boom in the district in the previous year, the introduction of punitive taxes and immigration restrictions in Victoria and South Australia, and a reduction of the licence fee in NSW in 1857, now deemed a miner's right. By 1859 the Chinese miners were well established on the major alluvial fields in the Braidwood and Shoalhaven District, in particular Araluen, Majors Creek, Bells Creek, Jembaicumbene and Mongarlowe. At least 1500 Chinese miners at any one year between 1858 and 1862 were on the Jembaicumbene and Mongarlowe fields combined, and at least 500 on other fields. But these figures may have been considerably higher, for proportionately they were a very significant part of the mining population, and remained as such at least until the early 1870s, and on some fields, beyond. The remains of their diggings and camp sites can be found throughout the district, but in particular on the Mongarlowe goldfield and along the Shoalhaven River. Elsewhere in the district, but in particular on the Jembaicumbene and Araluen goldfields, many of the sites have been destroyed by gold dredging and farming.

In the Braidwood district the Chinese miners were, as elsewhere in Australia, willing immigrants.

There are ample books and thesis that recall the endeavours of the Chinese gold miners in the Braidwood District. We plan to produce a series of articles and as a consequence, we have set our goals on learning more of the Braidwood families that have Chinese ancestry. We also note that their life in the Braidwood District was not always easy. They encountered great hardship and some racism. We have chosen to highlight some of these families and to learn of the lives in the Braidwood District.

Many of the older Braidwood Community members are well aware of the Chinese migrant families that lived in the district and in Braidwood in particular. These families are indeed the well known Nomchong and Quong Tart families and then the lesser known families of Ah You, Chewing, Nam You and Ah Chew to name a few. We note in our records names such as Ah Foy, Ah Sing, Ah Wing, Ah Yot, Ah Hing, Ah Yin, Sam Gow, Ah Moon, Ah Kit and James Ahoy and his son and a daughter as well as others. Even though the latter names are unfamiliar maybe with assistance we can gather their stories. There are many more Chinese miners noted in various Post Office documentation at the Museum.

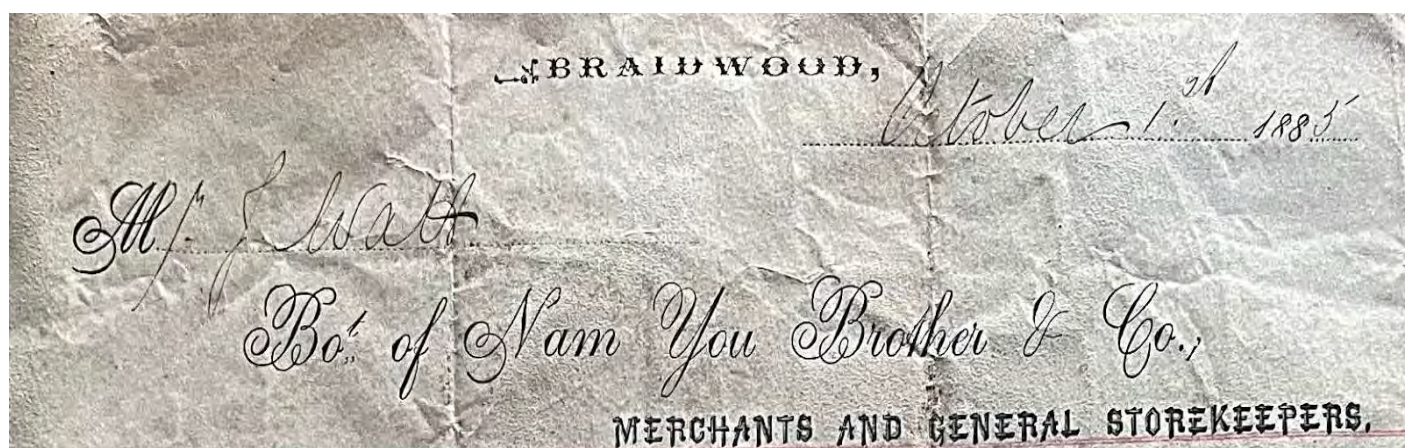
That Billy Ah You is a most obliging coach driver ; and a great favourite with the residents along the road-side from Moruya to Braidwood, as well as with travellers.

Moruya Examiner Tuesday Dec 2, 1902 page 2



The left hand coach has an oriental driver.

Barry McGowan, Chinese market gardens in southern and western New South Wales



Invoice from the storekeeper Nam You

We are sure that more information will come to light and we hope our contribution to this most interesting history and our Braidwood heritage will engender more interest and continual learning. We are always ready to learn about our district and towns. Sometimes history is uplifting but other times not so. We will aim to be positive and to highlight each family's endeavours as miners, market gardeners, business people, philanthropists and all round good citizens as well as friends and family. As usual we would accept any assistance in the collection of photos and memories. Please contact the Museum on help@braidwoodmuseum.org.au or call in and talk to our volunteers.

***We are looking forward to sharing with you the first family,
The Chu Chin/ Churchin family
of Braidwood in the June newsletter.***

Private Burials and Unmarked Graves in the Braidwood District

One of the ongoing projects that Jill Clarke and Kerrie Beers has undertaken is to endeavour to locate, photograph and research the ever growing list of isolated burials in our Braidwood District. It is a large area including, Lower Boro, Deua River, Araluen, Mongarlowe, Nerriga, Durran Durra, and along the Nowra Road, all the way to Jinden on the Cooma Road, Charley's Forest, Monga, Farrington, Ballallaba, Harold's Cross, Majors Creek Area, Bells Creek, Manar, Reidsdale and anywhere family members may have been buried close by to a homestead.

One such burial site was discussed on Jill's Historic Braidwood FaceBook site some months ago. It was send in by Tim Williams the present owner of the land near Manar where he maintains a burial site. The well-preserved burial site is that of Thomas Henderson who sadly died on Christmas Day 1895.

Consequently Leanne Houghton posted as well stating she is a descendent of Thomas Henderson. Correspondence between Leanne and Jill resulted in Leanne kindly sending us a potted history of Thomas Henderson and some wonderful photos to go with the story. We thank Leanne for this effort.

If any member or resident of Braidwood District would also like to share their story or a location of a marked or unmarked burial site, we would be grateful for your assistance

Jill and Kerrie.

CONFESSIONS OF A ST. BEDE'S OLD BOY.

by Allan McGrath 2004

(thank you Allan)

Remember in the good old days when "Plover" rang the bell
When good boys went to heaven and bad boys went to hell.
When the sisters from the convent first taught us the golden rule
And Sister Margaret Mary, was the terror of the school?

When we all marched down Wallace Street in navy blue procession
On our dreaded way to church to make a good confession
When Trudie Hearne had the pub and "Mussie" had the paper
When Chewying's had the Monterey - our life was such a caper.

Past Taffa's shop and Braidwood busses, the saddler Charlie Styles
The old men sitting on the steps would give us all big smiles.
Next came Reesons' baker shop then Tallaganda Shire,
Across the road to Paulie Nomchong's with everything for the buyer.

Next was Mr Munns garage then Wiggens's the baker
I've probably missed a few, they'll come back to me later.
We would file into the church like sheep into the pen
Make our way into the box and come out half grown men.

We would dawdle back to school comparing all our penance,
Hail Mary's and Our Fathers, but some got a longer sentence
We were all aghast when "Skinny" told, The Rosary was his fine
He was awful silly to confess, that he drank that altar wine.

For variety we would walk back up the other side
Past the Blue Moon and the butchers, we had nothing left to hide.
A quick glance at Deeb Wehby's and the cafe Mum and Dad,
Then check out all the coming flicks and grade them good or bad.

We'd poke our noses thru the door at Chuchins' Cafe Royal
With Pat and Bill behind the counter and Raymond on he boil!
Charlie Wilsons' Fords for sale, a new Zephyr on the floor
We'd be very smartly hunted if we ventured through the door.

Running late we'd canter fast, a quick glance in Len Muttons'
Past Sherlock's and the paper shop then pause to do up buttons,
S.R. Buttles' on our left, then "Chungys'" barber shop
Cross over at the bank of "Wales", into the park we'd hop.

Then back into the classroom cold, our heads down for a while
At three O'clock when school came out, was when you'd see us smile.
So that's my little jaunt down old memory lane,
I know I've missed quite a few and for that, I'll wear the blame.

Alma - the Story of a Braidwood Clydesdale Who Won't be Forgotten. by Christine Ellis

This is a story of a wonderful coincidence and a 'down-the-rabbit hole' moment (or two), and how 170 years after Alma first won his class in the old country, he is being honoured with the naming of the Alma Cup for the Grand Champion Led Heavy Horse at the 2025 Braidwood and District Heavy Horse Show.

In 2024 the first Braidwood and District Heavy Horse Show was held. It wasn't the first Show in the district to feature heavy horses. The Braidwood Show has been accepting heavy horse entries for over a hundred years, and in the 1850s there were numerous ploughing competitions featuring draught horses. But it was the first to exclusively present heavy horses to the public and to showcase their versatility though lead, ridden, harness, long-reining classes. This years show will be on 3rd May.



It was a success- over 25 horses entered and over 150 members of the public came to the event. So successful that it was agreed that this wouldn't be the last Show, and off the back of that success, the Braidwood and District Heavy Horse Association was formed. Its purpose is to promote and educate the community about the role these horses have played in our community and to organise an annual event to showcase them.

At the same time as the 2024 Show was wrapping up, I was reading a locally written book on the Clarke Gang, written by Peter C Smith. It's a great read and really gives you an insight into the early days of Braidwood and surrounds. But it was a short paragraph about The Hon. Hugh Wallace's stallion 'Alma' that caught my eye. In the book Peter Smith mentions Alma was a Clydesdale stallion and the advertisement in the book from the Goulburn Herald of 1856 mentions that Alma won the 'Best two-year old stallion for agricultural purposes' at the Royal Agricultural Society Show in Carlisle (UK) in 1855. He also goes on to talk about how Alma and his offspring started the downfall of the Clarke Gang (p145). I won't go into that story- Peter Smith has recounted it in a great amount of detail and if you want to know more please get his book and enjoy the read.

Valuable additions to our imported stock have been made during the week by the safe arrival per "Catherine Adamson" of "Alma," a magnificent 3 year old cart stallion, purchased at the Great Agricultural Show at "Carlisle," England, by Hugh Wallace, Esq., of Braidwood, and intended as a stud horse for that district.

Bell's Life in Sydney and Sporting Reviewer 9 Feb 1856

What I wanted to know was how did Alma get to Wallace's property **Nithsdale** at Ballalaba. What impact did he have (if any) on the heavy horse stock in the district and do we have any of his progeny still in the district.

And this is when the rabbit-hole emerged. Not all of my questions have been answered sufficiently for me. If anyone has any additional information please let me know. I have listed all the issues below for those who want to go down the rabbit-hole with me! However, we do know the following.

The Hon. Hugh Wallace, who the main street in Braidwood is named after, moved to the district in the 1840s. He established a farm at Ballalaba called **Nithsdale** after an area in Scotland. In 1855 he bought the champion (unnamed at Carlisle): the results say his sire was **Merry Tom** and his dam '**Jess**' who was a pure Clydesdale.

Wallace transported Alma (now named) to Australia on the clipper 'Catherine Adamson' and Alma arrived in early 1856. An article in Bell's Life in Feb 1856 says that 'valuable additions to our imported stock' were made through the safe arrival of Alma.



Hon. Hugh Wallace, M.L.C

As a side bar this was not the fate unfortunately of the clipper as it foundered at North Head on its third voyage in 1857. The victims of the shipwreck were interred with the victims of the wreck of the Dunbar and there is a monument at Camperdown Cemetery. In every article about **Alma**, his victory at Carlisle and the fact that he was a magnificent dark bay stallion, is mentioned and clearly he passed on those traits to his many progeny. **Alma** went on to produce many fine horses in the district and beyond, standing at **Nithsdale** for many years, and later at Wagga Wagga, Gunnedah and Armidale. Again, his advertisements always mention his victory at Carlisle and refer to him as the prize stallion. Many of his progeny also went on to stand at stud. This includes Young Alma, Phaudrig, Black Prince, Major, Iron Duke and Romeo.

There were others (at least 10) who were advertised for sale as being sired by Alma including Beauty, Blossom and Southern Star and Lucy. There were also two colts who were foaled in 1859 who were by Alma out of a Clarke mare.

Wallace died tragically in 1868. His is another interesting story of a gravesite in Braidwood Cemetery but no headstone, a headstone in Dumfries with no body, and a memorial plaque in Sydney which was moved from the old Devonshire Street Cemetery to make way for the construction of Central Station in 1900.

The next mention of Alma is him still standing at stud in 1869 but this time in Gunnedah. He was sold to the Boorolong Draught Stud in Armidale sometime after and continued to stand at stud. In 1879 he was listed in the auction for the entire Boorolong Draught Stud which included several colts and fillies by him and another draught horse 'Salisbury Tommy'. Again, he was identified as the 'well-known draught stallion'. Alma foaled in 1853 so when he was auctioned he would have been twenty five- an incredibly respectable age for such an active stallion!

The rabbit-hole I continue to go down is to find current (or at least 1900s) progeny that can be attributed to Alma. Tracking down a horse like Alma and his progeny would have been relatively easy I thought- NOT SO! He was never named in the Carlisle competition results and was only identified in the results through his owner Robert Smith from Ladyland near Dumfries (also Wallace's birthplace). Volume 1 of the UK Studbook does mention an Alma who foaled in 1853 and was owned by a Hugh Brodie but his sire and Dam were different. Somewhere between the Carlisle Royal Agricultural Show and Sydney (his first port of call) he was named Alma. One theory I have is the unnamed stallion was named, by Wallace, after the Battle of Alma which took place in the Crimea in 1854



**TO STAND THIS SEASON,
At Withsdale, near Braidwood,
The imported prize stallion,
ALMA.**

A LMA is now 3 years old, was awarded the first premium at the Royal Agricultural Society of England's Show, held at Carlisle, in July last, for the best two-year-old stallion, of any breed, for agricultural purposes.

His sire, "Merry Tom," was awarded the first prize at the same show, for the best Clydesdale stallion; also the first prize at the Royal Highland Society's Show, held at Berwick, in 1854, besides many other prizes at local shows.

His dam, Jess, a pure Clydesdale mare, gained the first prize at the Carlisle Show in 1854.

Terms £5 each mare.

Early application is necessary as only a limited number of mares will be received. No unhandled mares will be taken.

But as there was no pedigree stud book for Australian Clydesdales until the early 1900s, and horses were rarely named as coming from a stud, it's difficult to definitively identify our Alma. Even the UK studbook only started in the 1870s and while it does mention stallions from the 1850s it isn't comprehensive. Alma's stated sire 'Merry Tom' could be one of 4 Clydesdales listed on the All Breeds Pedigree database but none of them had progeny named Alma. There are no Alma's in that database either. To add to all this confusion one of Alma's progeny was named Merry Tom - clearly a popular name! So I keep looking- Alma has captured my imagination and I think there is so much more to say about him- and

pictures, etchings, drawings would help to complete the picture of a magnificent dark bay Clydesdale stallion. If there is anyone out there who can help unravel or add to some of this story please get in touch.

I would also like to say thanks to the National Library and their fantastic resource Trove, the Braidwood Museum for their amazing records and knowledge, Peter C Smith for having started me down this path through his book, and also to ShedGirl- who is a relative of Hugh Wallace and helped to fill in some gaps.

Save the Date

Our Annual Dinner this year will be held on
Saturday 21st June
at The National Theatre Braidwood

Please mark it in your diaries and social calendars.
Details will be sent out closer to the date.

*Also, if you know of anyone who would like to do some
Volunteer work incorporating some light dusting of our exhibits.
Training will be provided and a
very happy crew to work with.*



Braidwood Dodge Bulletin # 16

November 2024

'Gellibrand' Takes Shape in Dodge City

Written by John Stahel, Vice President

Our intrepid John is on holiday this time, so we look forward to the June Edition.



All articles written by Jill Clarke, unless otherwise stated.
Typesetting done by Annette Briggs

Our
Society values the support
of

Queanbeyan Palerang Council



and

Community Bank
Braidwood



and



and



and



FRRR
Foundation for Rural
Regional Renewal

and



