

THE NEW ITALY GIORNALE



Issue 4 – February 2010

Welcome to our first Newsletter for 2010

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1. The President's Word

Welcome to all our friends of the New Italy Museum Complex for 2010.

I wish to thank all volunteers for their help to build the new driver reviver which was officially opened on the 21st Feb 2010; about 80 people attended. The building has been dedicated to Dot and Tony Sawatzki; Dot being a foundation member of Driver Reviver. The old driver reviver building is where the New Italy Museum Shop will go. It was completely stripped and repainted and looks quite presentable - many thanks to all the volunteers there who dedicated their time as well. Souvenirs and items to sell are needed. We are the only similar type of place that does not have a souvenir shop.

The Osteria – we are about to start on refurbishing the inside and out of the Osteria to make it into an attractive meeting room. By Anniversary Day we hope to have the Pavilion fully repainted, the Osteria, the Toilets, and all the flooring outside the Café repainted.

A big thank you to Jim Fairfull (painter and decorator) who organises all the paint and his professional time free.

We have achieved a major overhaul on the supply of water with two new tanks being erected. A huge amount of pipe work has been placed underground. It is hooked up to 4 tanks. Now we only need to flick a switch to change the water flow direction. Tony Denardi has spent days setting all of this up. The septic system needs work doing to it. We have bulldozed a clearing to rid the land of excess water. Another big step forward for the first time at New Italy is that we have contracted a person to mow the whole of the land. These are only a few things I can touch on; there has been so much more work that has been done. Big thanks to Jo (CDW) for keeping us on the ball, achieving enormous things.

Unfortunately Dot Sawatzki did not see the Driver Reviver building finished before she died. I went to see her in hospital - she could not wait to leave the hospital to see her pet project in its finished state. Also we heard this week of the sad passing away of Bruce Moody (Kathy and Bruce Moody ran the New Italy Café for years). Our sympathies are extended to Kathy and family. Also we have had the sad passing of Alicann Felicetti, Tony's wife of many years. Tony has always been a volunteer and staunch supporter and descendant of New Italy.

Gather your friends and families and come and see for yourselves what we are doing at the New Italy Museum Complex and support us in our fund raising.

Thank you

Americo Melchior, President of New Italy Museum Incorporated, 22.2.2010.

2. The Loss of New Italy Museum's Pioneer: Remembering Dorothea (Dot) Sawatzki

Pioneers appear throughout all periods of history. During the 1980s and early 1990s a new generation of pioneers developed the New Italy Museum Complex, with the Museum at its heart. In turn Dot was at the heart of the Museum, developing and encouraging the collection as the key to honouring the history of the original New Italy pioneers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.



Dot's grandmother, Maria Battistuzzi, was a passenger on the Marquis de Ray expedition and founding member of the New Italy Settlement. Her father, David Felicetti, was born there in 1902, later marrying Mary Casey. Dot was born in Woodburn. At the age of 73, she unexpectedly died in Lismore Base Hospitable on Thursday 14th January 2010. This followed the death of her husband Tony six months earlier. As stalwarts of the Mid-Richmond River community, especially in the Lions Club, New Italy Driver Reviver and the Saint Joseph's Parish, their loss has been widely reported throughout the region.

While Dot has left the New Italy Museum with a large collection of important archival material, we have lost her enormous storehouse of family history held within her, her wit and wisdom, and great energy. We will make sure the Museum thrives into the future, as Dot so clearly wished. However, it will never be the same.

3. Anniversary Day News

Sunday 11th April 2010: New Italy Museum Complex

Italian Mass will start at 10.30am in the Community Hall. Welcome speeches will start after 11.30am.

Pasta plates and bbq will be served from 11.30am and well into the afternoon with a variety of beverages. As usual we will be licensed. There will be the expected array of lively music, a Jumping Castle for the children and a surprise auction.

We will honour the tireless work of Dot and Tony Sawatzki in the annual tree planting in the Park of Peace.

Anniversary Day Donations:

This year donations will go towards developing a History Walk within the grounds of the Museum Complex. We want to tell the history of New Italy through lively story boards along a trail which will take in the Memorial, Well, Park of Peace and the planned Bundjalung Bush Garden (a project with Evans River High School), and one day circle around to the reinvigorated bocce field and vine trellises. In November 2010 we can apply for a NSW Heritage Grant of up to \$20,000, but *only* if we can match dollar for dollar. So we are starting our fund raising now. Please support this exciting project.

Contribute to the New Italy Museum Cookbook

Bring your FAVOURITE RECIPES on Anniversary Day and relevant photos as we start to build a collection of recipes and their accompanying stories for our Cook Book. We will have a couple of people ready to tape your stories about the recipe and/or the person who handed it on to you. Alternatively please send your recipes, stories and relevant photos to newitalymuseum@harboursat.com.au.

4. Introducing the Community Development Worker

For those who haven't met me yet, I'm Jo Kijas. My dad was Polish; Mum is as Anglo Australian as they come. I'm a professional historian, hence my long-time interest in the stories of New Italy and how I come to be here. My role as CDW began in July last year and the Area Assistance Scheme grant extends to July 2011—two days a week (usually Mondays and Tuesdays). The central aims of the grant are for me to encourage greater volunteer participation and to reach out to the broader local community in supporting the history and heritage of the Complex. The three focus groups of the community grant are the culturally diverse, indigenous and youth populations in our region.



My email and phone contact details are:

newitalymuseum@harboursat.com.au (anytime); Ph 02 6682 2310 (Mondays/ Tuesdays and answer machine)

5. Highlights from 2009



The Pavilion: One of the most frequent comments from long-time visitors is how good the Museum Complex looks. 2009 saw many repairs completed by volunteers on the Italian Pavilion, which had been suffering from birds, termites and leaks! The outside was painted as was the floor, and replacement of the worn interpretation boards was begun.

The Gardens: Most obvious in the improved impressions of the Complex, however, have been through the lovely gardens that Evans Head volunteers Val and Kel Walker have carefully developed and nurtured.

Jambama Gallery: It was also a pleasure to welcome Raylene Shang and the Jambama Artists late last year who have opened the Jambama Gallery. They were able to open a few days a week and are looking forward to expanding the Gallery to include all Bundjalung Artists and open more often. As is so often the case, more funding is required before they can regularly staff the gallery.

The New Italy Shop: A huge effort was put in before Christmas to complete the new Driver Reviver building and spruce up the old building. That is going to become the New Italy Shop and Information Centre and we hope to have it up and running by Easter. As many of you would know, the Museum Complex's only revenue stream is through rent, donations and one-off grants. We only just keep our financial head above water, with large costs associated with infrastructure (e.g. 'miles' of gutters) and the 24 hour toilets. Our objective is to build the Shop into a thriving business that will bring some much needed funds into the Centre.

Sunday Volunteers: Veteran NIMI volunteer Tony Fellicietti (right) is seen here filling out his name tag at our first Sunday Volunteers' Morning in October 09. The NIMI Committee welcomed them with morning tea and 10 newcomers joined the ranks. They are working hard to establish the NIMI shop and plan to meet every second Sunday (10-12). Once the shop is up and running the group will turn to other projects; all interests can be catered for! Please contact Jo for more details (i.e. we are yet to confirm our regular Sundays for 2010). We are very keen to welcome more people to these mornings.



The Museum Group: A dedicated group were active under the valued guidance of the Regional Museums Development Officer, Joan Kelly. Joan assisted the group in strategic planning, conservation management and displays. Most importantly Joan gave the volunteers the confidence to move into new areas. As her funding dried up at the end of the year she was regretfully farewelled at New Italy in December.

6. Our Plans for 2010

The Italian Pavilion: During this year we plan to modernise the Pavilion so that it can engage the broader story of Italian settlement in the region and provide a small income stream to the Centre through gold-coin donations. We will build on the stories currently in the Pavilion and objects, such as the Volpatos' first cappuccino machine, through a modernised exhibition space, small theatre, family history space, children's space and possibly the museum shop. Before June we hope to be able to widely distribute our plans through public display for everyone's input. Following your feedback we will develop a costed design and seek grants to assist us. We see this as Stage 1.

Evans River High School Project: This project will work with Evans River teachers and their Indigenous students to develop a garden and story sites about historical relations between the New Italy settlers and Bundjalung people in the area. The aim is to eventually build the garden into the larger History Walk (see below). There is much to be discussed with the Bundjalung traditional owners before proceeding further, but we have the potential to establish an exciting and broad ranging project which will benefit both groups.

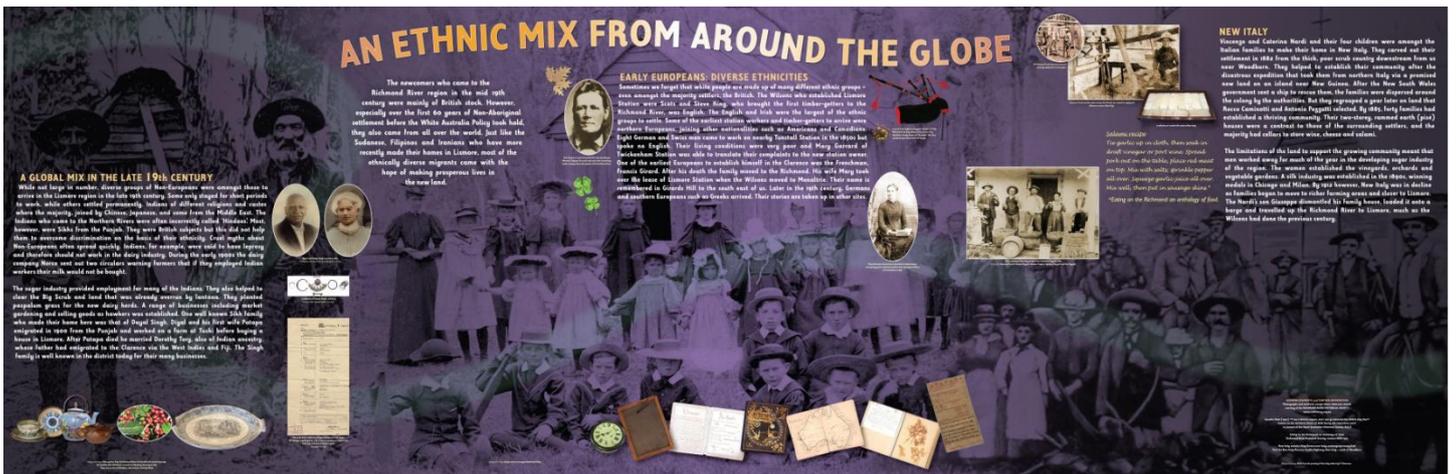
NIMI Website: The New Italy Museum Complex website was built in 2002 but has not been well used. Recently we engaged the original developer, Craig Clark of Webpub, to maintain the site and we have been updating the events page with a surprising amount of feedback – people do read it. Once we have determined our needs, Craig is going to update our site with a new home page, modernise the look with new badges and menus, allow blog, video and audio functions, and convert the site into a Content Management System which will allow us to manage the site (all within his current contract).

Shop and Information Centre: The Sunday Volunteer Group aim to have the shop functioning for the Easter holidays. There are many exciting projects attached to the project, but it is a huge task and amongst the challenges we will need volunteers to staff the shop (3 hour shifts). If you can help us, please contact Jo in the first instance.

Special meeting 14th March: New Italy Community Hall starting 9.30am. All welcome!

The History Walk: As noted in the Anniversary Day News we are at the very beginning of planning a Walk around the grounds, where we can tell the stories of New Italy through colourful story boards full of photos. At the moment it is hard to find clear directions about moving around the precinct and the walk will help direct visitors as well as share some of the many stories in a variety of ways.

The image below (courtesy of graphic designer Leonie Lane) shows one of the large story boards along the Wilsons River near the Ballina St Bridge in Lismore. A brief introduction to New Italy's story is seen on the right. Some Italian stories around the Leicester area are told on another panel called 'To the West'.



The Museum: As we regroup after the loss of Dot, our Museum Coordinator, we will update you on the regular monthly meeting date and future plans.

Oral History Recording: We will hear in March whether we've been successful in gaining a grant for a large oral history project to record (on video) the stories of Italian migration in the broad Woodburn, Lismore and Casino region over the past two centuries. These stories will then be developed for exhibitions in the Italian Pavilion and New Italy Museum. Regardless of our success with the grant we hope to run some oral history workshops and get people 'out there' recording stories before we lose more people with memories across the region and eras.

We would greatly value your input on any of the above projects (reply to Jo). We would also love to know if you could contribute to any of them. This could be from a distance, such as helping with the website or doing online research for the Museum and Pavilion histories. Or it could be at New Italy in any capacity from filing our large records, shop work and maintenance, to carrying out oral histories, school tours and landscaping. Anything you can do – we can find you a role!!

7. Help us name our own Daylily



Michael and Chris Grogan of the New Italy Daylily Farm are going to provide us with a delightful addition to the gardens at the Complex. When the season is right they are generously going to donate a bed of white and red daylilies. The white one is already named: *New Italy Norvica*. Michael has also bred an attractive red one that we are able to name for the Museum. **What should we call the New Italy Museum Complex Daylily?**

Please reply to newitalymuseum@harboursat.com.au or write to us (address at the end of the newsletter). Check out the Grogan's Daylily Farm website: http://www.daylilyfarm.com.au/about_us_1.html

8. Recipes for the New Italy Museum Cookbook

We will soon start work on collecting favourite recipes and accompanying stories and photographs for a Cookbook, offering old and new ideas within the established traditions of 'slow cooking', and with the belief that it will be a 'great seller' in our new shop.

Tara Luca has contributed the first recipe for 2010. She and her husband Alex and two daughters Olive and April have recently returned to live in the Woodburn district. She wrote: 'The following is a recipe for my Nona's green beans. She serves these with almost every meal and they are even better when picked straight from the garden. Her general rule seems to be the longer you cook something the better it is.... She believes in slow cooking, but these beans can really be ready in about 20 min if you are short on time. They are even better if you keep them in the fridge overnight and go beautifully with bread and cheese as a snack. If you're entertaining you can try adding a tiny sprinkle of bi-carb soda to the water at the beginning to help retain the fresh bright green colour of the beans.'

Green Beans Alla Nonna Toots

1 kg French green beans

2 cloves garlic sliced

Sea salt

Extra virgin olive oil

1 tomato sliced into chunks

Tip the ends of the beans leaving the tails. Place in a large pot and cover slightly with water, being sure to not have too much as we want it to evaporate. Add garlic and tomato and a generous sprinkle of sea salt. Bring to the boil, then let it simmer on low for approximately one hour, until the beans are soft and the water is almost gone. Drain any excess water and place on a serving plate to cool slightly. Drizzle with extra virgin olive oil and serve either warm or cold. Alternatively pop in a sterilized jar, fill with more oil and seal. It will last many months.

9. Song: Anyone for some *La Traviata*?

Soprano Peta Blyth and her husband Bill recently called into New Italy and Peta tried out the Hall for its acoustics. She liked them well enough and is interested in the idea of joining others for an afternoon of Italian Song, later in the year. Is anyone interested in organising such an event?

She and Bill have a farming property near Inverell and each year they host 'Opera in the Paddock'. 'Well known Italian tenor Rosario la Spina, at present singing *Cavaradossi* at the Sydney Opera House, will feature in this year's event with 22 other performers. Patrons arrive from 4.00 pm with their picnic dinners and enjoy a social time before the concert commences on dusk. This year's program comprises excerpts from Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, Verdi's *La Traviata*, *Macbeth*, *I Vespri Siciliani*, Massenet's *Thais*, Gounod's *Faust*, Neapolitan songs and songs from Bernstein's *Westside Story*. In addition, Friday 19th the singers and pianist David Miller will present a recital of German and Italian Song at the Inverell Town Hall 6.15pm. Inquiries and bookings www.operainthepaddock.com.au/ ph 1800 240 301

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