



SUMMER 2018

IL GIORNALE

CIAO E BENVENUTI AL GIORNALE!

IN THIS EDITION:

- From our President John Barnes OAM
- Recent and upcoming events
- What's happening at New Italy

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

This past week we have been saddened by news of the passing of **Spencer Spinaze** (1924 – 2018), a principle founding father of the current Historic New Italy commemorative site.

I dare say that such an occasion precipitates thoughts of just how our incorporated body and its role came to be and how it has progressed to its current physical and legal form.

So therefore a little history:

The original 3,000 acre settlement at New Italy that was established in 1882, began to decline from about 1910 as the younger generation moved away and the remaining settlers died. The closure of the New Italy school (1886 – 1933) sealed the community's fate.

The mud brick dwellings crumbled and the bush returned. Giacomo Piccoli, the last of the original New Italy settlers, died in 1955.

In 1980, Spencer Spinaze developed the idea of recognizing the centenary of the expeditioners' departure from Italy in 1880 to undertake what was the disastrous Marquis de Rays Pacific colonising expedition. In 1980, the New Italy Commemorative Committee was established to prepare for a gathering of expedition descendants with Spencer as President and with assistance by Floriano Volpato as Agent Consolare di Lismore. Such was the publicity surrounding the anniversary story that it gained national attention and was even the subject of an episode of ABC TV's 'A Big Country'.

The celebration was originally scheduled to be held on 11 May at New Italy near the monument. It was postponed due to flood to 24 August at the Lismore Showground.

It was attended by some 5,000 people and was an outstanding success with approximately \$16,000 raised. With the purpose of establishing a permanent yet functional memorial the committee purchased in 1982, 17 acres of land adjoining the existing New Italy monument (erected 1961) at the corner of the Pacific Highway/Swan Bay Road, on this site where the Antoniollis' wine shop/coach house had once stood.

Spencer then set about organising working bees of expedition descendants, service clubs and many local Italians to lay concrete, cut logs from nearby swamps and make and lay mud bricks. This six year project produced the existing museum/café building, the double-story residence/osteria (now the Gift Shop) and toilets. They were opened by the Italian Consul-General Dr Guido Scalici on September 18th 1988.

Spencer's contribution to the New Italy story can be traced to his father Joe (Giuseppe) Spinaze (1880 – 1971) who as a baby had travelled on the expedition, and his mother Maria Capelin (Tome) who was born at New Italy. Both Joe and Spencer served on the committee that erected the marble obelisk in April 1961 (on the 80th anniversary of the Sydney arrival). Spencer's active life also involved many executive positions in the district's rural and agricultural organisations.

For his work towards the recognition of the efforts and achievement of the New Italy settlers and in many other organisations Spencer Spinaze was awarded MBE in 1982 and an Italian Knighthood in 1983 (Cavaliere Del Lavoro).

We really owe him much gratitude. **Vale Spencer Spinaze.**

Wishing you all a safe and happy festive season!

John Barnes



Spencer & Doris
At rest together
in the land they loved,
"Wingara"



Left to right: Allan Trustum, Spencer Spinaze, one of Florian's volunteers from Lismore (apologies name unknown) and Toni Pedrini in 1985. Courtesy Helen Trustum; NIMI volunteer, Doris and Spencer Spinaze; Spencer Spinaze at New Italy celebrating the launches of both our book, 'Salami, Shortbread and Parrot Pie: stories of Multicultural New Italy' and the Casa Vecchia Gift Shop on 15 September 2013.

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OVER THE SUMMER BREAK STAY IN TOUCH VIA OUR WEBSITE & FACEBOOK PAGES

www.newitaly.org.au

STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

Thank you to everyone who participated in our Strategic Business Planning session and completing the online survey.

A special congratulations to **Simon from Camperdown, NSW** for winning the \$200 gift voucher from the **Casa Vecchia Gift Shop**.

We'll be releasing the strategic business plan early in 2019 as a guide to take New Italy into the future.



We have not 1 but 2 Facebook pages (yes - soon to be joined as one). So why not like us - twice! Remember to share us with your friends and family.

NEW ITALY

<https://www.facebook.com/NewItaly/>



HISTORIC NEW ITALY

<https://www.facebook.com/historicnewitaly/>

RECENT EVENTS

GRANDPARENTS DAY: SUNDAY 28 OCTOBER

A small but enthusiastic crowd celebrated Grandparents Day at Historic New Italy in late October on International Grandparents Day. It was a good day to remember our heritage and value our forebears. Big and small hats were popular celebrating the look of the early settlers of New Italy and their obvious love of big hats. Evidence of this historic fascination is readily seen in New Italy Museum displays.

Our president, John Barnes, delivered an evocative remembrance of his grandfather Joe Spinaze. A baby at the

time of the original expedition, he was the youngest original New Italy settler. New Italy settler family descendants were invited to be interviewed and recorded by Joe Testa and Leonie Lane. These recordings will be archived and later used in the development of an audio-visual display in the Museum. Thank you to those families who participated.

Domenico Taraborrelli was in fine form with his lovely voice and piano accordion in the Piazza under the new shade cloth. A good day was had by all!



Clockwise from top: Val Wills and Cynthia McKeough charmed Museum visitors in front of the newly installed Museum Café screen featuring the 1899 Joseph Check photo of a gathering at Nardi's Dance Hall; Tina Sheehy updated memberships; Julie de Nardi joined in with the festivities; Shirley Pirlo enjoyed herself at the BBQ; Leonie Lane seen here with a New Italy dog. Photos by Peter Derrett.



Seasons Greetings to all!
Have a safe, healthy and happy New Year!

It was wonderful to have a large crowd at the NIMI AGM this year. It's always a good opportunity to reflect on the events and progress at Historic New Italy.

It has been a busy year! Although we didn't go ahead with Carnevale Italiano, we did hold 3 events: Anniversary Day, the first Casa Vecchia Fashion Parade and Grandparents Day.

A Strategic Plan is being undertaken which will help us in many ways plan and finance developments at New Italy in the future.

The grounds and gardens are beautiful thanks to Val and Kel Walker. The old delapidated glassworks building has been demolished. Casa Vecchia continues to contribute an income and so much more. The Pavilion gathers stories to enable future displays. Museum nears completion and is looking good - we get great feedback and all are very proud of the recent additions. Driver Reviver continues to be an important highway facility but has an uncertain future with the highway upgrade. Casa Serena has all units tenanted and is an important financial contributor. *Il Giornale* is enjoyed by many. The new carpark at the rear of the site for 120 car/bus/caravan spaces is almost complete with a new path connecting it to the site. A new bus/delivery vehicle layover has been started. NIMI is reconsidering whether to proceed with the acquisition of the 2ha of land at the southern boundary. The website is used by many and our Facebook profiles have increased. As always a very big thank you goes to volunteers and others who help to assure the future of New Italy. The highway upgrade proceeds and we are still open 8am ~ 4pm daily! See you all in 2019!

Above: Several NIMI members celebrate a full and eventful 2018 in the New Italy Museum.

REMEMBRANCE DAY SATURDAY 11 NOVEMBER

The centenary of the signing of the Armistice in 1918 was commemorated at the New Italy Museum on Remembrance Day, Sunday 11 November. A simple but moving ceremony was held at the Honour Roll in the Museum. The Honour Roll is in remembrance of the 13 young men from the Italian families that settled New Italy who enlisted and served on the Western Front and in the Middle East in Australia's 1st AIF. Dr Bill Nardi, nephew of Gunner Lorenzo Nardi who died of wounds on 22 August 1917 participated in the ceremony. Mr John Barnes OAM laid a wreath on behalf of the New Italy Museum Inc.



Above: Peter Blackwood NIMI Treasurer at the New Italy Honour Roll in the Museum on Remembrance Day 11/11/18.

DONATIONS ARE IMPORTANT TO US

NIMI is a volunteer-run organisation reliant on the good will of our visitors and community.

Your generous cash donations keep us going!

They can be made to New Italy by

- New Italy Museum Complex on-site donation boxes
- New Italy website has an easy to use donation form - go to www.newitaly.org.au/about-us/donation/
- Our Facebook page provides a link to that page
- Cheques can be sent to **New Italy Museum Complex, PO Box 5139, East Lismore NSW 2480**
- Bequests

WE THANK YOU IN ADVANCE

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT NEW ITALY...

MUSEUM UPGRADE UPDATE ... DECEMBER 2018



The Museum Monday group has completed several projects that have used all our various skills; the New Italy Kitchen, the Heritage Fabric Cabinet and the Community Wall. Finishing touches on the kitchen included the installation of the beautiful highchair, complete with New Italy toddler. The heritage fabric cabinet is proudly in place. Much work went into designing a closed set of drawers to house the fragile silk and cotton collection. Selection of fabrics and organisation into drawers took much consideration.

The other large task completed is the Community Wall of images. Our aim was to include one or more members of every family we could find images for. Firstly, a list of every family was created from a variety of sources. Then every photograph in the Museum's collection, from the hardcopy books, the family cabinets and digital archives were scoured. Requests for images were placed on the website. We wanted to make sure we had a good mix of gender and age. A draft copy of the list of names on the community wall will remain over the busy period for visitors to review.

SCU student, Narelle Johnson, is developing two soundscapes for us for the pioneer kitchen and the tool wall displays while another, Kailie Hetherington, is working on a storyboard with John Barnes to be developed into a part of the museum's audio-visual display. Keep an eye and an ear out for all new developments when visiting the Museum.

Jo Kijas, Museum • Jo.Kijas@scu.edu.au



Clockwise from top: Museum volunteers Margaret Robinson and Dot Randle prepare the Heritage Fabric Cabinet drawers; detail of the glass covered drawers; a small section of the Community Wall.

THE ITALIAN PAVILION



Detail of the window mural at the entrance of Pavilion featuring the Ros family bean-picking at Fernside.

A big congratulations to New Italy friends and Southern Cross University academics, Jo Kijas and Adele Wessell, who won the 2018 'Engaged Learning' category for the SCU Community Engaged awards for the Community History Project unit. Speaking of which, we are fortunate to have another of their SCU Community History students, Trudy Boan, working with us this semester. From a supplied list of topics in the Italian Pavilion plan, Trudy will be researching Fernside - a typical Northern Rivers Italian farming community. This research will enable the ongoing development of new displays in the Pavilion. If interested, please contact us.

Leonie Lane, Italian Pavilion • booyongd@bigpond.net.au • 0423733569

THE CASA VECCHIA GIFT SHOP



Now that the plastic bag ban is here, we all need a supply of an alternative. For those of you who like to add a bit of glam to your shopping, we have a variety of shopping bags for you. Large and roomy, these bags are adorned by famous Italian artists' paintings. They fold up flat into their own stylish carry bag for easy storage. Be prepared - grab a couple for your glove box. With Christmas just around the corner, come visit and select from our range of Italian-themed gifts - something for all the family! Buon Natale a tutti!

Gail Williams • Casa Vecchia Gift Shop • giftshop@newitaly.org.au

JOIN OR RENEW NIMI MEMBERSHIP
www.newitaly.org.au/about-us/membership

CONTRIBUTE TO 'IL GIORNALE'

Autumn 2019 edition:
content due 19/3/19

BECOME A VOLUNTEER

Contact Peter Blackwood (Secretary)
info@newitaly.com.au
0414 673 933

VOLUNTEER PROFILES: VAL AND KEL WALKER

Val is a descendent of the original expeditioners, Andrea and Giovanni Piccoli and also Louisa Roder. She was born at Woodburn to Kate (née Piccoli) and John Moore. She later moved to the Blue Mountains where she met and married Kel. They returned to the Richmond River area to help care for Val's mother (who passed away at the tender age of 108 years!) Their love of gardening prompted them to volunteer at New Italy. Over the past 10 years they have enjoyed the challenge and have met many new people. We thank you for making us look beautiful, Val and Kel!

