



AUTUMN/WINTER 2020

IL GIORNALE

CIAO E BENVENUTI AL GIORNALE!

FROM OUR PRESIDENT

If I had written this message five months ago it would have been vastly different. The COVID-19 virus pandemic which has swept the globe has changed all that we had hoped for in 2020 and also the way we live our lives.

The Historic New Italy site has been greatly affected to the extent that most of our facilities were closed.

Casa Vecchia Gift Shop is still closed while uncertainty prevails. It will reopen when they feel it is safe to do so. It is a small space and social distancing can be difficult to maintain.

The Café was in take-away mode only for a while with availability of basic supplies and services severely compromised. It is now allowing a limited number of seated tables inside and on the terrace.

The New Italy Museum and the Pavilion were closed from 31 March until 1 June. They are now open with COVID-19 preventative measures in place.

Additionally you would probably be aware that our **2020 Anniversary Day** set for Sunday 5 April was cancelled.

Ian O'Driscoll (Glassblower) has been closed since March and we look forward to Ian re-opening as soon as circumstances improve.

Thankfully we have recently been buoyed by several items of good news which include:

1. The receipt of a \$100,000 bush fire community recovery grant via Richmond Valley Council. This money is ear-marked for much needed additional water tank storage capacity, dam improvements, the conversion of bush areas

to shaded parkland and hall improvements - to include a kitchen.

2. Visitor numbers: In spite of the effects of the April 2017 flood, widespread drought, the devastating bushfires (we were lucky to survive) major highway access and visibility problems caused by roadworks and now the virus, **visitor numbers have been maintained at about 550 persons/day** - until now anyway. **Overnight we are host to some 12 – 15 camping vehicles.**

This is proof that we have achieved a reputation as a welcome and worthwhile stop-over with our name definitely "out there". Furthermore, it reinforces our view of the site's very positive potential for the future.

3. Final work is being completed for the front (highway side) car park and traffic flow through it. This significant asset (which is on RMS land) is due for completion mid-September. Curbing and guttering has recently been put in place. Since this will vastly improve our accessibility and visibility we expect visitor numbers to substantially increase.

The positive side of the virus-induced closures is that our valiant volunteers are receiving the rest they deserve and we are reassured in the knowledge that they are removed from potential contact infection. There is always a positive.

Finally, it appears that the visiting public is very respectful and observant of the virus security measures introduced at the site. The overall appreciation of efforts for the common good are commendable.

May you all stay safe in this dangerous time.

John Barnes



Moving from one catastrophe to another, bushfires first and now COVID19! New Italy Museum, Gift Shop and Pavilion have had another forced closure to endure. The highway upgrade continues, the Café has been open for a significantly diminished number of visitors. All these events continue to put pressure on existing running costs.

The Donation boxes provided have always been important but never so much as now. Give generously when next you visit OR if you are off-site go to New Italy website - newitaly.org.au - Donation page.

New Italy Museum Inc. is registered with the ATO as a Deductible Gift Recipient and cash donations of \$2 or greater may entitle the donor to an income tax deduction.

COVID19 SAFETY AND HISTORIC NEW ITALY

After a period of shut down, the Café, the Museum and the Pavilion are now open to the public, with social distancing and increased hygiene measures in place to protect our visitors and team.

Please note that both the Gift Shop and the Glass Workshop remain closed until further notice while uncertainty prevails. We apologise for this inconvenience and look forward to their reopening as soon as the shop workers feel it is safe to do so.

MEANWHILE WE ARE HERE FOR YOU

From our team to you, your family, friends and loved ones, we are hoping you are all keeping well, informed, healthy and happy during these uncertain times.

We want to keep you updated with our actions during this time and reassure you we are available to be contacted.

OUR HYGIENE POLICY

We are actively following official guidelines, and keeping up to date with the rapidly changing situation.

We prioritise the health and safety of our visitors and team members, and have implemented the following measures in our Café, Museum and Pavilion:

1. Any staff or visitors who are experiencing any flu-like symptoms including fever, cough, sore throat, fatigue or shortness of breath are asked to stay away from our premises. As per official guidelines, they should **get tested, then remain home while awaiting results. Follow the precautions around self-isolation and self-care as advised by a health professional.**
2. All staff have been advised to **practice social distancing, increased and thorough hand washing**, including before and after any social interactions.

3. All facilities open to the public have **increased cleaning practices, with frequent sanitation of high touch points, with the provision of hand sanitiser gels.**

4. **A contact tracing book is available** for visitors to sign at **the entrance to the Museum and to the Pavilion, as well as the Cafe counter.**

These measures will remain in place and will continue to evolve in line with global and national policies to maintain safe and healthy work environments, showroom spaces and deliveries.

We are keen to play our part in minimising the social and economic impacts of this unprecedented situation while being safe. We hope to continue to provide a safe and enjoyable stopover in your travels.

Take care of those most vulnerable, and where possible support and champion small and local businesses during this time.

We encourage you to be generous with your cash donations during your visit to the site and/or the **website donations page ~ newitaly.org.au**

We are largely volunteer run and your generosity enables us to stay open - responsibly.

with thanks **New Italy Museum Inc.**



BIG APOLOGIES TO ALL OUR VISITORS!

Due to COVID19, we have had to temporarily close some facilities here at Historic New Italy for the safety of our volunteer staff and - YOU - our valued visitors.

However, we are cautiously working towards opening up again very soon, ensuring the safety of all who visit and enjoy this special place.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PATIENCE

For more information about re-opening and other related events go to **WWW.NEWITALY.ORG.AU**

FACEBOOK: **NEW ITALY / HISTORIC NEW ITALY**



UPGRADING THE ENTRANCE OF HISTORIC NEW ITALY

As the highway upgrade and the front carpark nears completion, attention is being given to the look of the front entrance.

1.EXTENSION OF THE COVERED WALKWAY

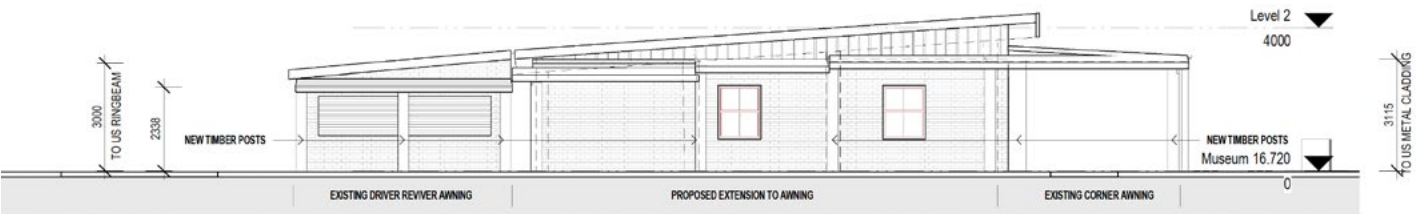
It is proposed to upgrade and extend the existing corner awning to meet the existing awning in front of the Driver Reviver. The new awning will provide covered access from the new front carpark at New Italy which is currently under construction by the RMS. The extension will form a continuation of the existing awning over the cafe area and will visually link in with the existing awning around the Casa Vecchia Gift Shop. The use of circular timber posts and beams to match the existing awning structures will give the awnings a coherent appearance.



Left to right - top to bottom: **1** Existing driver reviver awning with square timber posts to be upgraded **2** Existing awning over café and museum entry with circular timber posts. **3** The garden had taken over and was growing into the Museum ceiling! **4** The Museums Monday team release the mud brick wall from the garden. **5** A gravel aggregate drain to be installed along the base of the wall to dry and keep moist garden bed soil away from the base of the building. The extension of the colonnade will allow the garden to be relocated to the outer edge of the covered walkway. **6** Casa Vecchia Gift Shop with existing covered walkway, circular timber posts and grape vine. **7** The proposed extended covered walkway will enhance the front appearance. The carpark entrance at the beginning of the covered walkway will feature a welcome sign and way-finding interpretative signage with site map.



3D VIEW MUSEUM COURTYARD WITH AWNINGS



2. THE NEW ITALY MEMORIAL



Survivors of the ill-fated voyage gather at the opening of New Italy Memorial 1961.

There has been some concern that the New Italy Memorial at the front of the Historic New Italy site is in an increasingly worn and delapidated state. Roadworks near the front carpark have destabilised the foundations and caused a slight lean. A proposal has been put forward to replace the existing one with a new granite version with gold lettering. This would provide the opportunity to add a new list of the expeditioners who died on the voyage, currently missing on the existing obelisk.

It was noted in the souvenir booklet celebrating the opening of the Memorial in 1961, that it was created and installed 'to last forever' and was done so with materials and technology available at the time. We have been advised by a Heritage Advisor that a DA with a Statement of Heritage Impact outlining exploration of a range of conservation options would be required to pursue removal or relocation. Built on the site of the original Antonioli mud house by descendants and original voyagers, it is considered an important piece of New Italy's heritage fabric.

THE CURRENT STATE OF THE NEW ITALY MEMORIAL



From left to right: The eastern, southern, northern and western faces of the New Italy Memorial

ADVICE SOUGHT

A.K.Beckinsales, a memorial construction company in Lismore, have advised that the existing plaque lettering is beyond repair because the erosion of the marble has allowed some to fall out. Some lettering has been vandalized and the surrounding marble damaged. The monumental industry no longer uses lead lettering as better methods are available and it is considered toxic. Additionally iron impurities in the lead have reacted into the marble and caused an orange coloured staining which will increase with time. This staining cannot be removed. This condition can in time cause cracking because the reaction causes swelling within the concrete. The monument shows many instances of lime weeping from the concrete. This is caused by water leaking through the concrete cracks to cause a chemical reaction which eventually results in a formation of calcium carbonate (lime) on the surface. This appears as flaws or cracks in the concrete which may get worse over time. All corners of the concrete render are damaged. Several of the marble plaques are unreadable due to a black staining. This is caused by a mould, moss or lichen. Since marble is extremely porous, removal of this is very challenging as the growth is within the stone. We have also contacted conservators based in Sydney suggested by adviser to the Clarence and Richmond Valley Councils; **Aspire Stone Masonry** and also **Heritage Memorial Pty Ltd**.

Heritage Memorial Pty. Ltd, specialists in memorial conservation, have suggested conservation of the current New Italy Memorial could be achieved on site.

We would ask - YOU - the membership for feedback on the following options:

- 1) That the original monument stay in place unrepaired
 - 2) That we repair the existing monument in situ with advice from conservators. A quote to do so is being sought.
 - 3) That we relocate the existing monument intact with or without repair pending engineering advice to the Park of Peace or some other suitable site and a new more durable granite monument be constructed on the monument's original site. A quote to do so is being sought.
- We would welcome the opportunity to add a list of the expeditioners who died on the voyage which is currently missing from the existing memorial.

This is a matter we need to carefully consider and not rush into.

Please let us know your views AS SOON AS POSSIBLE and preferably by 11 September 2020, so we can discuss at NIMI committee meeting and relate outcomes in the next edition of 'Il Giornale'.

Send to info@newitaly.com.au

Many thanks in advance for your attention to this issue.

2. THE ANTONIOLLI WELL ... OR IS IT A CELLAR?... OR BOTH?

Alongside the desire to strengthen the appearance of the front of the Historic New Italy site, we thought we could focus on the well and look into ways of telling its story better. We recently reread Phil Pryor's MA thesis and his documented description of the mud houses and noted the presence of cellars in these houses. This 'well' has a very wide mouth and is located on a rise – an unusual location to obtain ground water. Perhaps the Antoniolli well was actually a cellar used to store cheese, salami's etc?

We would love to hear from New Italy Museum Inc. members who have connections to and memories of visits to the Antoniolli house, that once stood on the site of the New Italy Memorial and the neighbouring well.

Options for the well/cellar:

At the moment the original 'well' has an upper section and cover that was added in the 1980s. They are non-original and alterations will not impact on heritage fabric. Removal of the non-original upper walls and roof could be an option with new interpretation of the well surface. It would require a DA to do so.

Do we

a) Photograph and develop an acknowledgement panel of the making of the 1980s well structure. Then remove well structure taking it back to ground level. Clear out rubbish. Add formed concrete ring on outside. Add a top – 2 halves:

- i) Etched anodized metal interpretation panel telling story of the house and its well/cellar
- ii) A thick glass sheet allowing viewers to see exposed stonewalls below

b) OR Leave and renovate existing 1980s 'well' structure.

What do you think? We would love to hear from you.

Please send to info@newitaly.com.au AS SOON AS POSSIBLE preferably before 11/9/2020 for further discussion in the next 'Il Giornale'. Many thanks in advance.



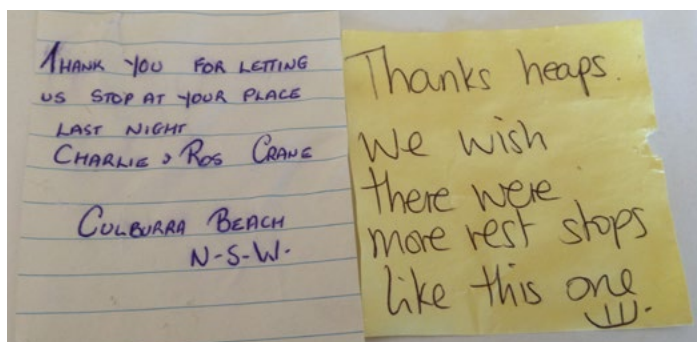
From left to right: The Antoniolli Well; the original fabric - the inside stone walls of the well with accumulated debris

HIGHWAY SERVICE CENTRE UPDATE

It is understood that a Development Application is being prepared with a view to lodgement with the Richmond Valley Council later this year. Considerable attention is being given to the many issues that arise with such a development. NIMI's management committee remains very supportive of this proposed development.

VISITOR FEEDBACK

We gather feedback in many ways. Volunteer Dot Randle's feedback books in both Museum and Pavilion contain visitor comments from all over Australia and the world. Patrons often express gratitude on site, via Facebook, email and the website. Recently these gems were found in the donations box by volunteer Ellen Barnes. How wonderful!



NEW ITALY EMERGENCY FIRE PLAN

What a year it has been! Its hard to believe that 8-9 months ago we were battling bushfires, packing up the site and then re-installing the Museum, the Pavilion and the Gift Shop!

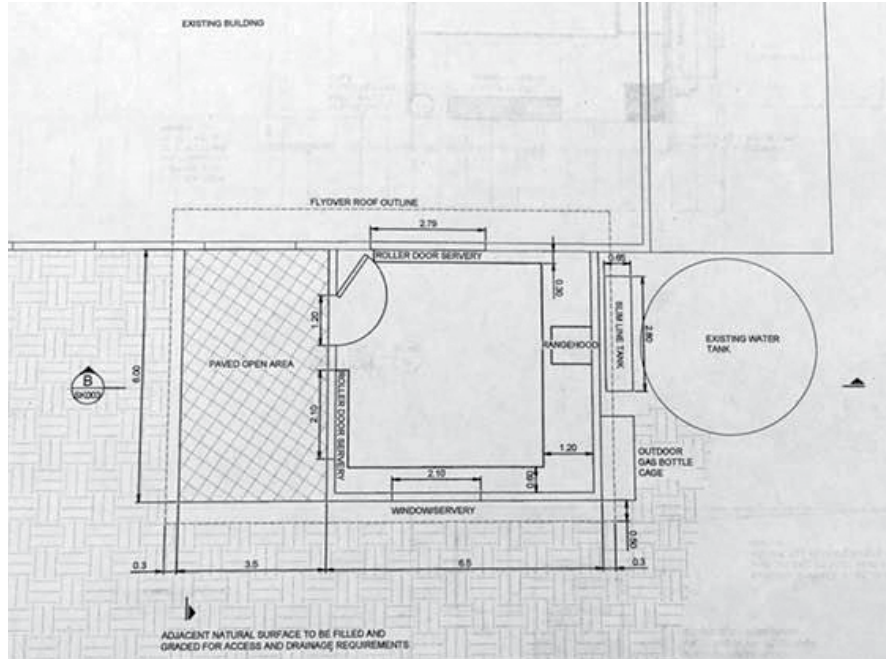
There have been many lessons learnt. We aim to put these extraordinary experiences to good use. Currently in development, is a comprehensive Fire Plan for the Historic New Italy site - ready should another emergency arise!



Burning at the southern end of the new carpark, November 2019

RECENT EVENTS

RICHMOND VALLEY COUNCIL MAYOR, ROBERT MUSTOW AND THE FEDERAL MEMBER FOR PAGE, KEVIN HOGAN VISIT: New Italy Museum Inc. was a recipient of a Regional Bushfire Recovery Grant ~ a new Hall kitchen, water tanks and repair to dam clearances



Clockwise from top: NIMI Treasurer Peter Blackwood and President John Barnes meet with Kevin Hogan and Robert Mustow at New Italy; plans for the new Hall kitchen; Kevin Hogan and Robert Mustow near the recently installed water tanks.

100 YEAR OLD NINA NORTON AND HER CONNECTION TO NEW ITALY

NIMI would like to extend its warmest wishes and belated congratulations to Nina Norton (née Tunsted) who turned 100 on 21 May 2020!

Nina is a descendant of the Antonioli family who were among the expeditioners from Northern Italy who settled at New Italy following the ill-fated Marquis de Rays expedition in the 1880s. Nina's grandmother Margarite Antonioli, seven years of age when she arrived in Sydney, was among the 217 of the original 340 emigrants who later settled at New Italy.

Nina was born in a house at Broadwater in 1920, and educated at the New Italy school.

She married Reg Norton in Lismore on 7 March 1942 and lived at Woodburn until her recent move to Coraki. Nina had six children of which five are still living. She has 12 grandchildren, 20 great-grandchildren, and 14 great-great grandchildren.

She now lives at the BaptistCare Village at Coraki and celebrated this milestone in relative isolation. She was presented with congratulatory cards from Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II; His Excellency Governor General, the Honourable David Hurley;



Rivertown centenarian, Nina Norton, receives her 100th birthday card from HM Queen Elizabeth II at the Coraki BaptistCare Village.

Prime Minister, Scott Morrison and the Federal Member for Page, Kevin Hogan.

"Nina has been waiting for months to get a letter from the Queen", Nina's daughter, Lillian Colless said, "I handed them over to Mum using the COVID isolation protocols and they were packed into her wheelie-walker to take to lunch where she could show her friends.

COMING EVENTS

ONE FOR THE DIARY!

COME AND CELEBRATE THE 140TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARRIVAL IN SYDNEY OF THE NEW ITALY SETTLERS

**ANNIVERSARY DAY
SUNDAY 11 APRIL 2021**



**MOVIE TICKET GIVEAWAY
! BUY ONE: GET ONE FREE !**

MADE IN ITALY

**Starring LIAM NEESON, MICHEÁL RICHARDSON,
LINDSAY DUNCAN and VALERIA BILELLO**

**Screening scheduled from 16 August
PALACE CINEMAS, BYRON BAY
Call 0414 673 933 to secure your
'BUY ONE: GET ONE FREE'
(only a handful of tickets are available)**

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT NEW ITALY...

NEW ITALY MUSEUM



Cynthia McKeough and the Monti display.



The three graces, Leone Stibbard, Dot Randle and Ellen Barnes cleaning David in the Piazza.

Despite bushfires and COVID19 it has been a busy 2020! Thankfully we were able to put in place the reworked Monti family display after the bushfire panic and before the COVID19 lockdown. This display tells the remarkable story of New Italy's well-loved community doctor and his wonderful family. Dr Monti's grand-daughter and New Italy Museum volunteer, Cynthia McKeough, steered us in the development of this beautiful display.

February saw Leonie Lane, spending 2 weeks as an M&GNSW intern at the Albury Library Museum. Here she participated in a larger museum's processes of collection management, display planning and installation. This, together with a visit to the Bonegilla Migration Experience, was a valuable experience in Museum design.

Cautiously we reopened the Museum and the Pavilion in early June to site visitors following current safety guidelines. Hand sanitiser and contact-tracing books are available on entry and social distancing floor markers are all in place.

We have been developing two new displays: the New Italy Church display and the Silk Industry display. They are currently at the fabricators and we look forward to their installation shortly.

Meanwhile crowd favourites, David and Venus, have had a well-guided and much needed 'refresh' by Museum volunteers. A big thank you to Christine Ianna, conservator and New Italy descendant for her expert advice.

Early July we were visited by Clarence Valley Heritage Advisor, Deborah Wray and Richmond Valley Council Development Assessment Planner, Pooja Chugh who provided valuable feedback on the Museum displays and other New Italy projects.

Leonie Lane • New Italy Museum • booyongd@bigpond.net.au



WE ARE FOLLOWING CURRENT GUIDELINES REGARDING THE OPENING OF OUR MUSEUMS WITH CO-VI-D19 AWARENESS.

We would like to keep YOU (our valued visitors) and our volunteer staff safe.

AN IMPORTANT REMINDER:

- If you have recently travelled overseas or been in contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID19 you **SHOULD NOT** enter.
- If you have any flu-like symptoms or are unwell you **SHOULD NOT** enter.

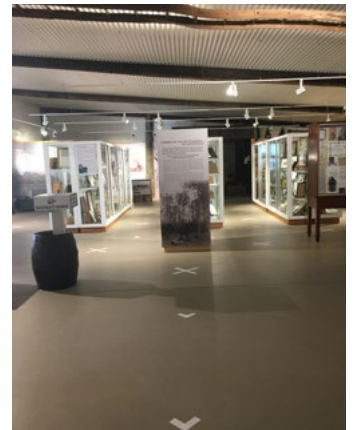
Before entering the Museum use the hand sanitiser provided.

Keep the 1.5 metre personal distance from other visitors.

Please do not touch the exhibits.

Follow the floor markings.

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR UNDERSTANDING



COVID19 advice poster and social distancing floor markers in place.



Below: Leonie Lane - Bonegilla Migration Experience

ITALIAN PAVILION



The Museums Group are fortunate to have Museums Advisor, Joan Kelly, working with us on the Pavilion Interpretation Plan and other New Italy projects.

One story to be told in the Pavilion is that of the Italo Club! Lismore's Italo-Australia Sports and Recreation Club almost became a casualty of the COVID19 pandemic/recession. A last minute reprieve prevented the Club from becoming a thing of the past. We are pleased to hear that it will open again for meals on 12/8/2020 with a delicious but limited menu.

To many locals, Italo-Australian and others, the Club has been central to Lismore and region's cultural community since 1963. It has prided itself as a venue for Lismore's community and visitors to the Northern Rivers region. It is a popular meeting place and venue for dining, dances, wakes, soccer games and festivals, providing support for many events including Anniversary Day at Historic New Italy.

Do you have memories of working at or going to the Club? Would you like to be a part of the story gathering process?

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

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT

Interested in your family's heritage? Interested in local history?

Do you have a few hours to spare one day a week?

BECOME A PART OF A PRODUCTIVE AND VITAL TEAM AT HISTORIC NEW ITALY!

**Museum upkeep • small maintenance activities • database entry • photographing the collection
• display development • newsletter preparation**

Most Mondays 10am - 4pm in the Community Hall at Historic New Italy.

contact Leonie Lane - booyongd@bigpond.net.au - 0423733569

THE CASA VECCHIA GIFT SHOP

**CASA VECCHIA
GIFT SHOP**
IS CLOSED DUE TO COVID19



**WE WILL REOPEN WHEN
RESTRICTIONS FULLY LIFT**
For any enquiries or phone purchases please contact
GIFTSHOP@NEWITALY.COM.AU
**THANK YOU
FOR YOUR PATIENCE**

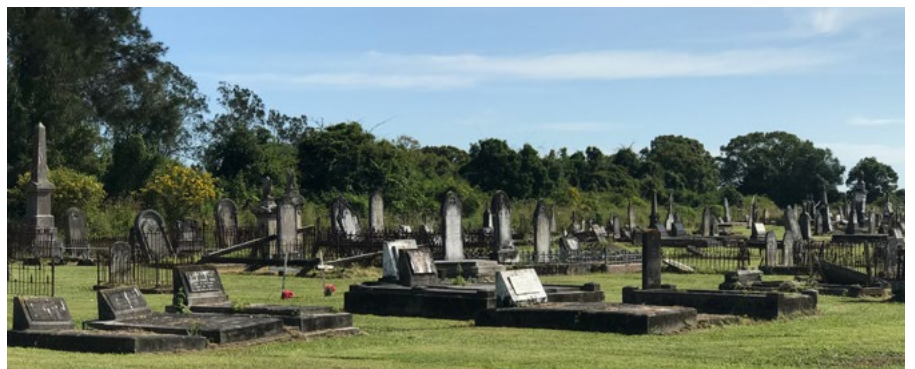
As we put this edition of *Il Giornale* together, the Casa Vecchia Gift Shop remains closed due to the ongoing COVID19 pandemic. Our lovely Shop is small with little space for visitors and volunteer staff to safely socially distance. Stay tuned to New Italy Facebook page and website, for news about reopening.

Calling all descendants! Woodburn Business & Community Chamber would like to develop a self-guided history walk through the Woodburn cemetery.

There are 47 Italian descendants from New Italy buried at Woodburn. They are from the families of Antonioli, Bazzo, Capelin, Felicietti, Gaurischi, Martinuzzi, Monti, Morandini, Nardi, Pedrini, Pellizar, Picco, Piccoli, Roder and Rosolen. Is one of them your ancestor? Would you like their story to be included in this history walk? Would you be able to tell us their story? Your, or your families passed down memories of them could bring that person to life for the reader. With your help and permission, we would like to compile as many stories as possible. When completed, this self-guided history walk booklet would be available at New Italy Gift Shop as well as tourist outlets in the region. This project encourages the idea of restoring/conserving the grave sites in the cemetery. Research is being carried out via Richmond Valley Council and the National Trust.

If interested in this project or in anything related to the Gift Shop, contact Gail.

Gail Williams giftshop@newitaly.com.au 0414 348 566



WAYS TO SUPPORT HISTORIC NEW ITALY

Memberships for 2020-21 are now due.
JOIN or RENEW NIMI MEMBERSHIP
www.newitaly.org.au/about-us/membership

CONTRIBUTE TO 'IL GIORNALE'
Spring 2020 edition: content due 18/9/2020
Contact Leonie Lane - booyongd@bigpond.net.au

BECOME A VOLUNTEER
Contact Peter Blackwood
info@newitaly.com.au
0414 673 933

STAY IN TOUCH
newitaly.org.au • PO Box 5139 East Lismore, NSW 2480
Facebook: New Italy / Historic New Italy

VISIT US
8275 Pacific Highway Woodburn NSW 2472

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Photo by Leone Stibbard