

HISTORIC

NEW
ITALY

SPRING 2020

IL GIORNALE

CIAO E BENVENUTI AL GIORNALE!

FROM OUR RETIRING PRESIDENT

NIMI would like to extend our heartfelt thanks to John Barnes OAM for his numerous organisational, entrepreneurial, inspired and generous contributions to the ongoing development of the Historic New Italy site as President: 2012 ~ 2020

We are happy to say that John will remain active on the NIMI committee.



You may be aware that I will not be seeking re-election as NIMI president at the next AGM. This will be my last “message” in our ‘Il Giornale’. I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on the past, report on the present and peep into the future.

The New Italy historical site as we know it today has grown from an inspired commemorative vision by Spencer Spinaze and Florian Volpato that took root in the early 1980’s.

In an effort to memorialise the heroic achievement of survivors of the infamous Marquis de Rays Expedition who settled at New Italy in 1882, they gathered a group of like minded volunteers. From humble beginnings, in a isolated bush setting, these volunteers and their successors have constructed, managed and partly staffed the site which has developed into an attractive, popular and unique highway stopping point with a story to tell.

Over the course of time the assets have expanded and improved as a degree of financial independence has been established. The site has been host to numerous forms of celebration, reunion and entertainment and is recognized as a local tourist attraction. On this latter point I make particular mention of our volunteer-built and staffed site history museum and Italian goods Casa Vecchia gift shop. As leaders in their respective fields, they have added immeasurably to the site’s attractiveness.

Despite recent floods, bush fires, highway reconstruction and COVID-19 restrictions, the site has not only survived but extended its potential to meet ever increasing patronage and changing circumstances. The imminent completion of the Pacific Highway reconstruction will make our site the only commercial highway stop over between Coffs Harbour and Ballina.

The committee has been busy preparing for these next big challenges. Some projects recently completed, currently underway or planned include improvement to water

storage facilities, a kitchen and alfresco area beside the hall, the establishment of fire-fighting and fire truck filling facilities, a covered entrance walkway, highway side appearance enhancement and even “tap-and-go” donation facilities. Courtesy of the RMS/Transport NSW a new front car park is to open shortly and fencing is to be erected. Also on the agenda are plans to renew or replace the monument that was erected in 1961.

Acknowledging the sites historical links have been paramount in our planning. As a consequence we have developed close links with the Richmond Valley Council, Museums & Galleries NSW, local politicians, tourism authorities and Richmond River Historical Society.

Of recent years the number of New Italy descendants with close family links to the original settlers has been rapidly diluting or even disappearing. Consequently if the New Italy story is to be propagated it is necessary for the organisation to “spread the word” as traditional “in family” history methods will no longer suffice.

The New Italy story is as the book title says, one of ‘Turmoil, Tragedy and Triumph’. It is one of many in the great stories in the tapestry of European settlement of Australia – that we have been charged with broadcasting to all our visitors. This story is more than individuals or particular families, but rather a collective one for all Australians.

I am confident that the New Italy committee possesses the skills, will and resources to succeed with the many challenges of our busy public facility.

In closing I add that during the twelve years that Ellen and I have been involved with the New Italy organisation, our sacrifices and efforts have been far outweighed by the high level of collective learning, progress and satisfaction. It has been a pleasure working with such a dedicated and skillful group of volunteers. May you all and the site have every success in the future.

Thank you, **John Barnes, OAM**

UPDATES:

FRONT CARPARK TO OPEN SOON



With the stretch of the Pacific Highway between Pimlico and Woodburn now complete and being enjoyed by north and south bound motorists, we await the finishing of the Woodburn to Maclean stretch. Meanwhile the curbing and guttering of the front carpark is almost complete with the recent additions of five giant light poles dwarfing the site.

New signage is to be installed facing the southern entrance.



FRONT ENTRANCE COVERED WALKWAY



The DA has been submitted! We look forward to creating a safe, welcoming and sheltered entrance that will reflect the style of the café terrace and Osteria to the site from the front carpark, past the old Driver Reviver and in front of the Museum.



3D VIEW MUSEUM COURTYARD WITH AWNINGS

TWO DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES ON THE FATE OF THE NEW ITALY MEMORIAL:



Remain in situ and repair.

I remember the opening of the monument as a child and guess it is because of that memory I prefer it remain where it is to reflect upon the area that once was the Wine Shop and all the Museum area. The monument represents not only the families but their spirit and how they made a go of life in the bush and all the things those families achieved both at New Italy and throughout the Northern Rivers.

The monument needs repair (particularly cleaning). Restoring it to its glory on the original site seems the most appropriate action.



Remove to other site, replace with new, interpret the old

Pending engineering advice move 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.

However, we'd suggest that you make sure that there's a digital record of the existing monument, with high quality digital images from two directions per face (to maximise readability), and with pairs of shots from almost the same place each time, to enable someone, someday, to combine them to construct a stereographic image. Shots from a couple of different distances would be good, as would an accurate record of geo-coordinates, and direction of shot. It may be a bit early yet, but no doubt holographics will be able to be applied to a sufficiently rich set of digital images to project the existing (or by then non-existing) monument into the middle of the room at some future celebration.

Cost comparisons are being sought for both outcomes.

THE ANTONIOLLI WELL: STORY GATHERING

Anecdotal evidence suggests that the Antoniolli well was used for two purposes. Water was captured from the roof and stored in the well. This spot was then used as a place to keep food like butter, cheese, meat and salami cool in the days before electricity and refrigeration. Food items like these were lowered by ropes or pulleys and hung above the water in the well to keep cool. If anyone has further stories we would love to hear from you.

HIGHWAY SERVICE CENTRE UPDATE

We understand the Development Application is still being prepared - this involves the completion of numerous reports on a wide range of matters that arise from such a large development.

THE NEW ITALY BUSHFIRE PLAN

We now have a Bushfire Plan approved by the committee, to guide us about when we notify you (descendants) of a fire threat to the museum and what to do re a needed evacuation.

GOING SOLAR!

We are looking to add solar panels to the site to make NIMI more sustainable energy-wise.

NEW ITALY MUSEUMS GROUP ON ITALIAN TV

In February 2020 while in Rome, Michele Grigoletti - Consigliere ComitEs and friend to New Italy - was interviewed on the Italian TV2000, a free-to-air Catholic channel, about many aspects of Australian society. New Italy Museum appeared briefly in an episode called *Today Australia, a lost paradise?* broadcast on 6/2/2020 <https://youtu.be/PLLPiGR1JoY>. At 29.33 there is a full screen shot of the New Italy Museum team and later (56.53) Michele spoke about the Friendship agreement between Lismore and Conegliano which was renewed in Conegliano 26/1/2020.



HISTORIC NEW ITALY HERITAGE TRAIL CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT



We have recently developed a concept proposal for a Heritage Trail at the New Italy Museum site. This has been on our very long wish-list for some time. A Heritage Trail would take the stories outside of the Museum and Pavilion giving visitors more reasons to explore when they visit the site. It would enable the delivery of a larger story of place to a broader visitor audience, to be experienced as a series of static site-based interpreted displays involving researched and illustrated stories, objects from the collection and historic aspects of the site, enhanced by recorded oral histories along the designated trail. In these COVID challenged times we are hoping that this could develop towards a virtual experience - a Sound trail - as well as an on-site experience.

This map formed the basis for a concept proposal for this project submitted to the Inaugural M&GNSW Imagination Award. Wish us luck. We would also welcome your feedback!



COMING EVENTS

2020 NIMI AGM
 postponed until
EARLY 2021
 DATE TO BE NOTIFIED SOON
 APOLOGIES TO ALL

ONE FOR THE DIARY!
ANNIVERSARY DAY
SUNDAY 11 APRIL 2021
 CELEBRATE THE 140TH ANNIVERSARY OF
 THE ARRIVAL IN SYDNEY OF THE NEW ITALY
 SETTLERS

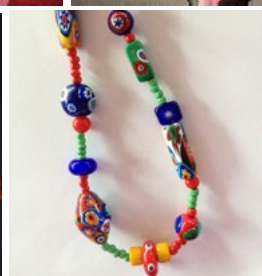
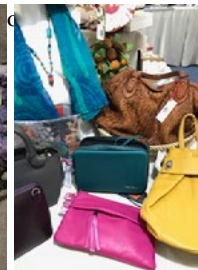
THE LISMORE ITALO- AUSTRALIAN CLUB
 Typically Italian food. Pastas our specialty. Please book 66214677
 FACEBOOK: [ItaloAustralianClubLismore](https://www.facebook.com/ItaloAustralianClubLismore)

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT NEW ITALY...

THE CASA VECCHIA GIFT SHOP

OUR GIFT SHOP IS NOW OPEN! CHRISTMAS SHOPPING ANYONE?

After six months of COVID lockdown, the Casa Vecchia Gift Shop has unlocked its doors and we are ready to welcome you back! All COVID safety measures are in place and the displays are looking fabulous. Christmas is almost here - we can't believe it! The gift shop has a large variety of gift items available to suit the tastes of all generations and interests! Drop by and have a look!



NEW ITALY MUSEUM



When next at Historic New Italy, after your coffee and browse in the Gift Shop, spend some time in the Museum and catch up on the following new displays: the Silk Industry at New Italy, the New Italy Church and the New Italy School. We extend a big thank you to Giovanni Foltran for helping us transport the cabinets to New Italy, to DSJK (Lismore) for some very fine cabinet making and to Lismore Signshop for the printed vinyl.

We are proud to say that New Italy Museum is a nominee for the 2020 M&GNSW Imagine awards.

Finessing work continues. New volunteers are always welcome! Drop in on a Monday 10-4 or drop us a line to let us know you are coming.

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



ITALIAN PAVILION



New Italy's Italian Pavilion Interpretation Plan is now complete. A big thanks to Joan Kelly, who has done an amazing job as well as being a joy to work with. It is a very detailed document and will provide strong direction to bedding down the Exhibition Plan. There are many ideas developing including installations involving soundscapes to be focal pieces within the freshly interpreted Pavilion space.

We will advise details of the Italo Club history discussions via Facebook: Historic New Italy/New Italy and Italo-Australia Sports and Recreation Club pages.

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

DONATIONS newitaly.org.au > Donation page

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

'IL GIORNALE' Summer 2020: content due 19/12/2020 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