

MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Again I enjoyed a bicycle tour through Italy with the **Giro d'Italia** even if it reminds me of how unfit I am! What an absolute delight to see Jai Hindley bring the prestigious title home to Perth as the first Australian to win the Giro d'Italia. Where did he gain the fitness to tackle Italy's mountainous terrain? Maybe it was at the **New Italy Mountain Bike Forest** a few kilometres from Historic New Italy! I have been told there are excellent mountain bike trails winding through the dry sclerophyll forest. For mountain bike enthusiasts add that to your To-Do list on your next visit.

While it is so good to see people venturing out again and visiting our site, we would like everyone to be mindful that **COVID** is still lurking about so please use the hand sanitisers and maintain social distancing while here.

The sorrow from **the catastrophic flood** still lingers. Even so, **community generosity** has been overwhelming and heart warming with many organisations, groups and businesses sending furniture and white goods to our region from near and far. A private volunteer group used our hall to store goods and food products while they distributed it to the needy. **The Alpini Association of Australia** and the **Federazione Cattolica Italiana di Wollongong** also organised three truckloads of essential items delivered to flood victims in Lismore and beyond. Many locals are very thankful for the much needed help they received.

The New Italy Hall received a battering from the second huge weather event (29/3/22) to hit the Northern Rivers this year. The Hall received internal flooding, ensuing mould, water-damage to kitchen cupboards and to some archival treasures in the collections room. Wet and mouldy carpet was removed from the hall stage. Added to the New Italy To-Do list is to look at ways to prevent water entering the hall and kitchen during these large rain events.

Two years of COVID shut-downs have limited proposed projects but there is a lot of planning going on! We are very excited about the proposed upgrade to the **Italian Pavilion**.

The addition of an **off-leash dog park** has been delayed due to saturated ground. As it dries out, we can add new fencing.

Historic New Italy's front entrance has needed a facelift for a while now. The **covered walkway** is but one part of this (See update p.3). We have received funding to paint the Glass Art building and the Museum front wall. Delayed by the prolonged wet weather, painting is due to start 25/7/22.

With energy prices rises, we were fortunate to have had **solar panels** installed on our roof a few months ago. Most of our electricity usage is throughout the day with lights and the pump for the toilets. Now that most of our power usage comes directly from the sun, we are now enjoying lower energy bills. Funding for this project was from the Powering Communities Program.

When you visit Historic New Italy, you are now greeted by **Italian music** via the music system that plays from the gift shop. A speaker system has been extended to the Café and the Café terrace, giving a lovely Italian ambiance to the site.

Our former Driver Reviver building has been lying idle for a couple of years since Driver Reviver closed in 2018. It was given a makeover a while back. Our new tenant is a co-operative of like-minded local growers/craftspeople. They are open Mondays and Tuesdays. Follow their Instagram: **Growers and Makers Collective**. Pop in to see them when you visit on those days. We welcome a new retail outlet on site!

EOFY means that New Italy Museum Inc. membership is now due! Your membership and donations help keep Historic New Italy viable. It will give you a warm glow knowing that you are supporting the preservation of our region's early history of migration and settlement. Please see our website for payment.

<https://www.newitaly.org.au/about-us/membership/>

After two years of lock-downs and restrictions, we notice the caravans and RVs are back, some overnighting in our back car park. We have received many notes of appreciation of our facility that were left in our donation box. So lovely to get this feedback!

Rug up. Keep warm everyone. We are in for a cold winter!

Gail Williams



Left to right: Dan Allen, Allan Magnay, Janelle Saffin MP, Giovanni Foltran and Ernie Rubbo at Magnay's Lismore received donated goods for flood victims; the New Italy Hall as distribution point; our recently installed solar panels.

THE SCALA FAMILY'S JOURNEY BY SEA

We have recently been contacted by the Scala family from Raymond Terrace, who came to Australia in similar circumstances to the New Italy settlers. Here is an extract from their story by descendant Louise Evans.

Adela Scala was born in Milan, Italy in 1865, the second eldest of five children born to Angelo and Ermelinda Scala. The Scala family, along with Angelo's brother, Pasquale and his wife, Maria, were forced to leave Italy in 1877 due to war, poverty, heavy taxes and high unemployment.

During the late 1800s, Italian immigrants were being sent, by the fraudulent Frenchman Marquis de Rays (born Charles du Breil), to colonise New Ireland. The Marquis had grand ambitions of starting a great French colony named 'New France'. He offered enticements, such as 20 acres of land and 300 Francs per year, after five years work. The Marquis deliberately misled the immigrants by claiming that Kavieng, the capital of New Ireland, was a thriving settlement with public buildings, wide roads, and rich, arable land that traded in copra and mining for silver, gold and coal.

Both the Italian and French governments forbade the scam voyage to take place. Nevertheless, the Marquis arranged for the group to travel to Barcelona to avoid this ban, and the Italian Government finally gave permission for them to leave Europe. The first ship, the *Chandernagor* sailed from Holland, while the *Genil*, *India* and *Nouvelle Bretagne* left from Barcelona. De Rays never visited his colony and was eventually arrested for fraud in Spain in July 1882. He was extradited to France and sentenced to six years in prison for criminal negligence.

The Scalas sailed from Barcelona, under the Liberian flag, on 9th July 1880 on the 3,000 tons *India*, the third and largest of the four expedition ships. Of the 300 immigrants, Angelo, his brother and their families were the only Italians from Lombardy, with the majority coming from Treviso (the area around Venice). The *India* was large enough to allow passengers to bring furniture, bedding, machinery and even a "very large ready-made wooden house", 160 feet long by 35 feet wide. The second ship in the fleet the *Genil*, arrived in New Ireland two months before the *India*. When the *India* arrived in New Ireland on 14th October, 1880, there were only two passengers from the *Genil* on the island, as "the others had dispersed and left the island". The *Genil* departed for Sydney in December 1880, with the purpose of loading provisions to bring back to New Ireland. Unfortunately, the *Genil* had "many accidents" and did not return to New Ireland in time for the *India* passengers to receive their much-needed supplies.

Throughout the long voyage, rations included salt pork, horse, and soup made from weevil infested biscuits. The *India* was over-crowded and food became rotten with 80 barrels of salt beef thrown overboard. The daily diet consisted of weak coffee for breakfast, 2-3oz of boiled meat and rice plus a tumbler of wine or water for lunch, and a dinner of boiled meat and bean soup. Children under 12 years were given half rations. Although there was a French doctor on board the *India*, almost 30 people (including 20 infants) died on the sea voyage.

The first passenger to die at sea was Lucia Roder, a 28-year-old woman, who died nine days after departure. Children

and infants suffered the most during the voyage and one-year old Giovanni Nardi was the first child to die 12 days after leaving Barcelona. Fifty-three people also died shortly after their arrival in New Ireland, from 'the humidity and inclemency of the weather, and from fever'. While in New Ireland, the majority of the Italians remained on board the ship, and only 30 came ashore each day to work 12-13 hours, primarily to build roads.

Of the original group, the 200 survivors decided four months after their arrival, and with only five to six days of food remaining, that they must leave New Ireland. They commandeered their ship on 20 February 1881 to take them to Sydney. However, the *India* was not in any shape to go long distances and with minimal provisions on board, the group successfully made it to the French colony of New Caledonia. On arrival in Noumea on 12 March 1881, the French Government condemned the vessel. The survivors refused to stay in New Caledonia 'as there were only criminals in Noumea and no land to cultivate'. Angelo Scala was instrumental in persuading his fellow passengers to ask for re-settlement in NSW. This request was granted, and the survivors left Noumea on 2 April 1881 bound for Sydney. The French Government paid for the final journey on board the ship the *James Paterson*. The passengers were well treated and had plenty of food on this final part of their arduous journey, and arrived in Sydney from Noumea five days later on 7 April 1881. The Scala family's journey took four years from leaving Italy to their safe arrival in Sydney.



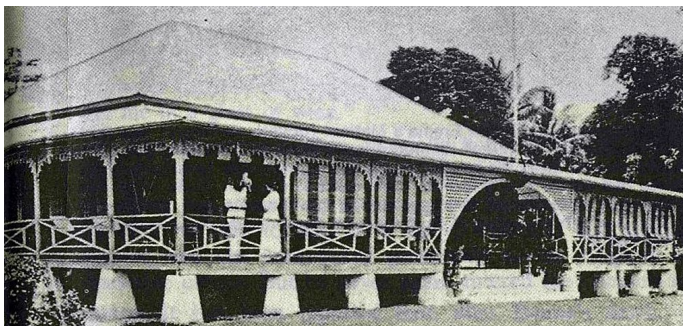
The Italian immigrants arrived in Sydney on the steamer *James Paterson*.

MAX UECHTRITZ' STORIES FROM NEW BRITAIN: PART 2 MARQUIS DE RAYS EXPEDITION BRICKS USED IN CONSTRUCTION

Less known is the connection between Queen Emma's steps and Gunantambu to one of the most notorious episodes of the era, known as the Marquis de Rays scandal.

The Marquis was a French nobleman and charlatan who swindled hundreds of Europeans out of their life savings to sail to what he called "Nouvelle France" (New France) on New Ireland. He proclaimed himself Charles I, Emperor of Oceania and promised them titles and land. Four tall ships laden with 570 colonists – French, Italian, German, Belgian and Spanish – and building materials for a Catholic cathedral landed in 1880-1881. But it was a scam. The colonists were left isolated in swamplands at Port Breton and ravaged by malaria, dengue fever and starvation.

Queen Emma helped evacuate the survivors to Australia and New Caledonia. In return she was given salvage



rights to materials from the colony, including thousands of bricks intended for the cathedral. These bricks, fashioned a world away in France, were used in the construction of the outdoor staircase at Gunantambu and are embedded in the remnants to this day.



Emma also salvaged the ornate alter intended for the Cathedral – and turned it into a cocktail bar.

Author Douglas Rannie visited Gunantambu in the 1890s and wrote: “It was a magnificent work of art and beautifully inlaid. But instead of the holy and pious use for which it was intended,

it was used as a sideboard and stocked with liquors.” Rannie described Queen Emma “with her own hands concoct strange and cunning Yankee drinks” on it.

**IN THE NEXT EDITION - PART 3:
THE ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON CONNECTION**

UPDATES

COVERED WALKWAY PROJECT



3D VIEW MUSEUM COURTYARD WITH AWNINGS

This project was conceived and planned at least 2 years ago as part of a broader objective of enhancing the front entrance to Historic New Italy. Projects such as this are beyond our financial capacity to fund from our own sources. We have made 3 unsuccessful attempts at securing funding for this infrastructure project through the ClubGrants program. A 4th grant application has been lodged and we are now waiting to see if this latest attempt will achieve success.

RECENT EVENTS

ANZAC DAY



The 13 young men from the New Italy families who served with the 1st AIF during WW1 in France, Belgium and the Middle East are not forgotten. A small Anzac Day ceremony was held at New Italy and a wreath was laid in memory of those young men and all the other men and women who served in Australia's forces in all later conflicts. Lest we forget.

NEW BENCHES INSTALLED



Built for Historic New Italy by Alstonville Men's Shed, two new recycled timber benches have been installed. They add a welcoming feature to the site. Here Ellen Barnes, Joe Testa and Evelyn Read give one a test run.

LISMORE FRIENDSHIP FESTIVAL TAKES PART IN THE 2022 LANTERN FESTIVAL



DOT RANDLE TURNS 90!

NIMI and the New Italy Museums Group celebrated the 90th birthday of our valued meet-and-greet volunteer. Highly respected retired school teacher, Dot has been volunteering at New Italy since the 1980s. She is warm, generous, a great duster and makes all visitors to the site feel welcome. Outside of New Italy she is well known to early morning listeners of ABC North Coast Radio for correctly answering the quiz! Many happy returns, Dot!



While enjoying the 2022 Lismore Lantern Festival, Lismore Friendship Festival Inc. has begun to prepare LisAmore!, another heartfelt, warm community event hopefully later this year. LisAmore! celebrates the contribution Italian settlers have made to the region's cultural heritage and Lismore's connection with two northern Italian cities, Conegliano and Vittorio Veneto.

Rebekka Battista, Ros Derrett, Leonie Lane, Aliison Kelly and Gianpiero Battista carry the Friendship Festival's Accordion lantern during the parade.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT NEW ITALY...

THE CASA VECCHIA GIFT SHOP



Sadly we are only able to open 5 days a week, Wednesday to Sunday 9.30 – 4.00 due to a lack of volunteers. Ideally we would love to extend to 7 days. **Interested in becoming a volunteer in our beautiful shop? Please get in touch.**

Once the 2022 stocktake is complete, we will have new stock in the shop. Many new Italian cookbooks and these colourful, whirly windmills from Italy. Ideal for events, garden, playtime, beach, parties, wind direction, deterring birds & having fun! Pop in and browse our new stock OR go to Instagram #casavecchiagiftshop



Gail Williams • giftshop@newitaly.org.au

ITALIAN PAVILION



Plans to upgrade New Italy's Italian Pavilion have begun! Meetings of interested members from the Northern Rivers Italian community with New Italy's Museums Group are being held regularly in the Pavilion.

We have some funds to work on the Italian regional displays. The 'Migration Stories' and the 'Stories from the Northern Rivers Italian Community: businesses, agriculture, and lifestyle' themes are next in line.



The building itself is due for some upgrade. Adjustments to the two entrances will be added to plans drawn up by Carl Cadonetti from Spot-On Drafting. These plans will support a DA and a grant application for the building's renovation.

If you would like to join the Italian Pavilion Reference Group or simply receive updates, please contact us by the email below OR go to the Historic New Italy website link below.

Leonie Lane • museums@newitaly.org.au

<https://www.newitaly.org.au/new-italy-museum-complex/the-italian-pavillion/>

Italian Pavilion upgrade meetings: Top: Inside the Pavilion New Italy Museums group volunteers, Leone Stibbard and Leonie Lane discuss the Exhibition Plan with Jan Norris (née Pagotto) and others. Below: Outside the Pavilion Historic New Italy volunteers, Ellen Barnes and Evelyn Read, share ideas with Linda and Pam Coiacetto, Lidia Morrissey, Loretta Gardiman, Ellie Gava, Jan Norris and Giovanni Foltran. Photos by Peter Derrett

NEW ITALY MUSEUM



In 2019 the New Italy Museums Group took part in the **M&GNSW Standards program**. From 2019 to completion in 2021, bushfires, a pandemic and a couple of floods caused many site tour cancellations by reviewers Joanna Nicholes and Tamara Lavrencic. We are pleased to announce that we are now a Standards Certified Museum! Reviewers comments were very positive: *The New Italy Museum is managed in a professional manner by committee members who demonstrate a wide range of appropriate and complementary skills.*

Lester Cooke (Museum volunteer and descendant of the Bazzo and Roder families) who co-ordinates the Genealogy and Archives on the New Italy website, delivered a slide show and talk "The Story of New Italy" to the **Society of Australian Genealogists** at their monthly online session 'Lets Talk About Italy'. Over the years, Lester has recorded and maintained information on the 1882 New Italy settlers' descendants and survivors of the ill-fated Marquis de Rays expedition to New France 1881, publishing the basic dates of Birth, Marriage, and Death at <https://www.newitaly.org.au/the-families/>

As Lester has said, "The legacy of those 64 pioneering families is not grand buildings, but their many thousands of descendants who have helped shape the way we live in Australia today." The Society found the New Italy story "moving and ... still (to a large extent) unknown so we will see what else we can do to support your activities". Wonderful affirmations!

Leonie Lane • museums@newitaly.org.au

DONATIONS <https://www.newitaly.org.au/about-us/donation/>

NIMI is registered with ATO ~ Deductible Gift Recipient

JOIN or RENEW NIMI MEMBERSHIP <https://www.newitaly.org.au/about-us/membership/>

'IL GIORNALE' Spring 2022: content due 25/9/2022 museums@newitaly.org.au

BECOME A VOLUNTEER Contact info@newitaly.org.au

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