

Introduction

Come - Together Braidwood is local community event marking a pivotal point in the history of Braidwood and surrounds. The entire event is free and everyone with an interest in our early history will be welcome.

Approximately 200 years ago the first European explorers set foot on country here, and Come - Together Braidwood invites the community of the Braidwood region to share stories and learn more about the history that began to unfold from that time on.

Local historian and author of “Braidwood Dear Braidwood” (self published 1989), the late Netta Ellis, wrote that the explorers who came to this area in late 1821 and early 1822 were William Kearns, Henry Marsh and William Packer, with an aboriginal guide.

She also wrote that in November 1821 Charles Throsby (a more famous explorer) and Hamilton Hume crossed the Shoalhaven River in search of a route to the coast.

And that a few weeks later (?Dec 1821) Hume and Alexander Berry were close to the Braidwood area after following the native track from the upper reaches of the Clyde R over the Currockbilly Range.

No doubt these explorers were impressed with what they saw, and their “discovery” dramatically changed the lives of all people connected to this part of the country, and as well as leading to changes in the way our land is cared for and managed.

As we know the European explorers didn’t discover anything that was not already known, inhabited and cared for by tribes of the Yuin Nation, over an unfathomable period of time. The Australian History Timeline at the Braidwood Museum dates Indigenous occupation from 60,000 years ago, with references to reported evidence.

Come - Together Braidwood invites us to explore and learn more about our local history from different perspectives: from that of the Yuin People, custodians and carers of this country for tens of thousands of years, and from that of the early colonisers and their families, many of whom remain as current custodians and carers of the land here.

A quote from the very impressive 2020-2021 exhibition at the National Museum of Australia (NMA), **Endeavour Voyage: The Untold Stories of Cook and the First Australians**, is pertinent:

“Coming together - in this anniversary year we reflect anew on the history that began to unfold on these shores 250 years ago. We invite you to learn about this story from all perspectives and think about what it means to live in this country today.

In looking honestly at our past, we have the chance to come together, to learn and share stories and views of our history, and to imagine a shared future”

And another quote from the NMA:

“We need to discuss these things in a healing way, so that we can have an understanding. It’s not a racial thing or a black and white thing ... it’s an Australian thing. All of us together.” (Milton Savage, Kaurareg, quoted at National Museum of Australia)

Come - Together Braidwood is an opportunity for our community to come together, to learn and share stories and views of our history. And to imagine a shared future where *“all people and the land are respected and cared for”* (Dhurga Rock, Braidwood 2015).

Budawang Elder Noel Butler, known to many of us in Braidwood for his generous sharing of cultural knowledge and language over many years, says of this event:

“Shared history, shared connection, shared tomorrow”

The Program

Saturday Morning

Come - Together Braidwood begins on Saturday morning (8th Oct) in Ryrie Park south, around the Dhurga Rock. A traditional **Welcome to Country** will be led by **Uncle Noel Butler**, Budawang Elder with ancestral links to the Braidwood area.

Noel is a qualified teacher, educator, mentor, horticulturist, chef and historian; and together with his wife Trish has been delivering programs, teaching and working with Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal adults and children for over 35 years. He has generously shared his cultural knowledge, including the Dhurga language, in Braidwood over past years. Noel carved the images on the north-east face of the Dhurga Rock, images much appreciated by locals, especially generations of our pre-schoolers.

Following the Welcome, the **Djaadjawan Dancers** will perform in the Park. A traditional female Aboriginal dance group from the Yuin Nation of NSW, this group includes girls, women and Elders from multiple generations from the south coast, with links to the Braidwood region. Formed in 2015 by Walbunja woman Sharon Mason, the Djaadjawan Dancers are among the most sought after Aboriginal cultural performance groups in the State. They perform regularly at festivals and events around Australia, including dancing at the Sydney Opera House, the opening of Barangaroo precinct in Sydney and the National Folk Festival in Canberra.

We will then be treated to a performance from the first (and so far only) choir to compose and sing in the local Dhurga language. The **Djinama Yilaga Choir** is an intergenerational Yuin choir, established in 2019 and led by renowned Walbunga/Ngarigo artist, Cheryl Davison. Djinama Yilaga perform songs in Dhurga language, with the aim of revitalising language through song. They are already in high demand having performed at the Four Winds Festival and to a sold-out show at the National Museum of Australia.

Saturday Lunch

Ryrie Park - bring your own picnic, or buy from local providers, with a bush tucker option.

Be entertained by **Braidwood Youth Performing Arts** - Verbatim Theatre featuring researched local stories from early colonial times.

Saturday Afternoon (1.30 - 5pm)

Sharing stories - and afternoon of cultural exchange and yarning about Braidwood's early history. This session is inclusive, and will provide opportunities for all present to participate, and to listen respectfully to the stories and views of others. We have four featured speakers, detailed below.

MC is local identity **Bill Waterhouse**.

Introduction by **Julia Green** (Two Fires Festival), followed by **Braidwood Pre-School** children singing songs taught to them by Noel Butler and his wife Trish, who will accompany them.

Featured Speakers:

Peter Smith will present the British perspective of exploration explaining the background to the first recorded Europeans to set foot on the present Braidwood district in 1821. Using the journal of the explorers Kearnes, Marsh and Packer he will trace their route and interpret their observations and contacts with Aboriginal people.

Peter Smith is the President of Braidwood & District Historical Society; Fellow of Australian Institute of History and Arts; President of Arms Collectors Guild of NSW, Committee member of Access for All.

He has a love for the bush and a keen sense of place, with particular interest in exploring and mapping the old bridle tracks of the district, many of which can be identified as Aboriginal pathways.

As an author/historian his books include 'Tracking Down the Bushrangers', a field guide to major bushranging locations, 'The Deua River Track', 'The Clarke Gang, Outlawed, Outcast and Forgotten'.

Frances Little, Yuwaalaraay woman and a descendant of the Yuin people, will speak from her family stories about the role Black Trackers played in the protection of white settlers on Yuin lands from Braidwood to Araluen and Captains Flat, and how those Black Trackers were often overlooked and forgotten.

Frances is a filmmaker, historian and musician. She has worked at the Australian Broadcasting Corporation as a television producer/director and a

Research Fellow at the Australian National University as a researcher for 8 years. Her most-recognised film is Vote Yes for Aborigines (2007).

Recently she has written several biographical entries for the Australian Dictionary of Biography and is currently a collaborating scholar in the Rediscovering the Deep Human Past Laureate Program at the ANU.

Currently she is the Managing Director of the Jimmy Little Foundation and has recently completed writing her father's biography called "Jimmy Little A Yorta Yorta Man".

Julia Rutledge, is descended from the Ryrie Family of "Arnprior", one of the early settler families in the district. Julia has the Ryrie family records, including many diaries and letters, and from these she will share some of their early experiences and impressions.

Lynne Thomas, is the daughter of the late Gabbo Ted Thomas, who was born at Jembaicumbene and well known to many Braidwood people. He was of Aboriginal and Chinese descent. Lynne has a wealth of stories from her father, and is keen to share some with the local community.

Excerpts from the historical writings of **Hermann Lau** will also be featured. A German musician and adventurer, Hermann Lau wrote in detail of his "Sojourns (1854-1859) in Sydney, Goulburn, Braidwood, Araluen, Moruya and Shoalhaven", including his interactions with Yuin people at the time. His major work is currently being translated from the German by two local women.

Closing words/ceremony by Noel Butler

Saturday Evening

A free **Concert** at the National Theatre, hosted by local maestro/musician **Michael Simic**

Sunday Morning

A **literary event** at the National Theatre.

Reimagining the past: connecting black and white views of history. Authors' talk - presentation and discussion of the 2020 book "**On a Barbarous Coast**" by award winning Canberra author **Craig Cormick**, and 2019 National Museum of Australia Fellow, Bulgun Warra man **Harold Ludwick**.

An enlightening novel contrasting First Nations' people's connection to land with that of the crew of the *Endeavour*. This fictional narrative is steeped in historical evidence, as it asks what Australia might be like today if Captain Cook's journey on the *Endeavour* ended in a shipwreck rather than colonisation?

Craig Cormick will be with us in person, Harold Ludwick by video link from Cooktown, Qld.