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The Robinson Heavy Dray

## From the President

In this pre-Christmas newsletter you will see we still have plenty of interesting things happening at the museum.

Firstly I am pleased to report the Black Summer Bushfire Recovery Grant has been fully acquitted and both projects associated with the grant have been completed satisfactorily and on budget. This means the Museums new admin and reception entrance is ready to open. All visitors will soon enter the museum through the new entrance on the northern side of the Muir Pavilion. The entrance will give our admin and rusty volunteers their own space instead of being on display in the museum. In addition the location of the new door provides a weatherproof entrance.

I am also happy to report that the restoration of the Robinson heavy dray is now completed. The restoration has taken 9 months and was made possible by the donation of a considerable amount of 80 year old hardwood timber out of the demolition of Timber Industries Sawmill. The museum is extremely grateful to Highlands Pine Products for this timber. The dray is still at Lowes Mount and we are hoping to bring it to the museum in the New Year and use the opportunity

to show it off and promote the museum.

The museum was also fortunate recently to receive the family history and photos of an Oberon pioneer family. This story is related in the newsletter but the donation adds to the museums great collection of local family history, and is something all members of the community should consider.

The completed annex has allowed a rearrangement of displays in the Muir Pavilion. This will continue for some time as we insulate more shed wall, but I hope you will agree it is already looking really good.

The Rusty Restorers continue to work on our rusty machinery. Come and visit to see some of the great work they are doing or join them on Wednesday mornings at the museum.

As the year winds up I hope you all stay cool and safe.

Col Roberts

## The Robinson Heavy Dray

The Oberon Museum's Robinson Dray was a sad heap of rotting wood in 2022, and a decision had to be made about its future. There was too much local history in this once mighty workhorse to take



it to the dump.

Right from the start there were some doubts about whether its restoration could be undertaken. A number of major issues had to be resolved before we could be confident of saving the dray. Firstly all 26 felloes in the large spoked wheels were rotted out and needed to be replaced. If the timber could be found without having it freshly sawn and green, then the problem of accurately sawing both sides of the felloe to the various radii of the wheels needed to be solved. If that was achieved, traditional wheelwrighting skills would then be needed to hot shoe the rim.

Things started to fall into place when the museum was offered large dimension timber from the demolition of Timber Industries Sawmill, and when a trial of an industrial water cutter produced a perfect felloe. Only with these things sorted was there any confidence of completing the restoration. Most of the iron work was in satisfactory condition, it just needed to be derusted and oiled. However nearly all of the heavy duty woodwork except the front axle had to be replaced, so after the wheels were satisfactorily hot shoed, the rest was carpentry with no plans and only minimal templates. As a result plenty of thinking and patience was needed, however with only a few setbacks, it all came together. The end result was never intended to be a new looking dray, rather an old dray back in working condition. The iron work is 110 years old and every piece made by a blacksmith, and the recycled timber which itself was over 70 years old, was suitably aged.

The persistence has been worth it. The dray is truly heavy duty and, as it stands nearly 1.8m high and 5m long, is an impressive piece of our local history. It will be stored under cover and, without having to again carry 20 tonnes of wool over rough local roads, will probably see another 100 years.



The Robinson dray before restoration

### Donation of comprehensive family history

Recently the museum was visited by Lorna Bailie-Mace (nee Rogers) and her daughter Megan. Lorna was born in Oberon in 1933 at Nurse Fox's hospital and grew up at 12 Curtis Street East. We reckon Lorna was probably born on Nurse Fox's bed which is in the background of the photo!

Lorna has spent years compiling an extensive family history which she has donated to the Museum, along with a lovely old portrait of her grandfather, Thomas Henry Rogers (who married Sabina Agnes Wilcox in 1885). Lorna now lives in Wingham but visits each year to tend to the family graves. Lorna's family history contains connections with many Oberon families - the Briens, the Baileys, the Wilcox family, the Mawhoods, and the Cunyngames as well as the Rogers family. Her research is extensive and the whole collection is beautifully presented. It's well worth a look!



Lorna Bailie-Mace (nee Rogers) with her family history

### Tribute to The Timber Industries Sawmill

Col Roberts has finished a lovely sculpture to acknowledge Timber Industries 1943 Sawmill as the source of all the recycled timber used in the restoration of the Robinson Heavy Dray. This piece of wood is the remains of the last felloes cut by the water cutter, and is a fitting reminder of the Timber Industries' contribution to Oberon, and to the Museum.

Why not come and check it out in the new year - along with all the other changes that have been happening at your museum.



Have a safe and happy Christmas and a great New Year!

