



The Society celebrated its 50th Anniversary in June 2006 with a Garden Party for members and in December 2006 hosted a Morning Tea in the presence of its Patron, NSW Governor Professor Marie BASHIR AC, CVO and husband Sir Nicholas SHEHADIE. On both occasions the founding father of heritage conservation in the region, Dr Lionel GILBERT and his wife Margaret, were in attendance.

In 1956 teachers at Wauchope School commenced a student project to gather local historical objects and as a result of the success of the exercise a public meeting was called by Lionel GILBERT and friends at which the Hastings Historical Society was formed. Shortly after the Port Macquarie Society evolved and the first Museum opened in April 1957 before moving to its present Heritage listed site in June 1959.

The original two storey building was constructed in 1836 using convict bricks and was used as a General Store and residence. Today the building contains the old shop and kitchen on the ground floor, a parlour, dining room, bedroom and nursery upstairs displaying a range of artefacts dating back to the 1830s. The original rain water tank is the feature of one room next to the old courtyard.

The property was purchased from Hastings Council in the 1960s and today is managed by approximately 60 active volunteers from a total Society membership of over 160. The Museum was extended in 1968 and again in 1977 and contains 14 large rooms displaying over 6,000 artefacts. The second floor extension houses a meeting room, office and library. An extensive Records and Research area was opened in 1988.

The Museum is open Monday to Saturday. Tour Groups and School visits are welcome and hosted by a small dedicated number of Museum guides.

### Membership and Meetings

The Society is managed by a Committee of 10 members elected annually. Coffee Mornings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of each month and feature a guest speaker.

Well attended members meetings are held at 1.30pm on the 1st Friday of each month. A monthly Newsletter is sent to over 200 members, associates and friends.

### Records and Research

A large modern research room contains a range of records including:

- Family Files from around 1830
- Convict Records from 1821
- Local Newspaper records from the 1880s on microfiche
- Maps and Shipping Information
- A collection of over 20,000 photographs
- Birth, Death and Marriage records
- A small collection of Aboriginal Records
- Land Grant Information
- Cemetery Records
- Various early Electoral Rolls

The Society sells a range of publications, chronicles and occasional papers including the renowned *Winding Sheet*, a publication of 400 pages listing over 3,000 recorded deaths in the region from 1821 to 1886 in many cases graphically describing the circumstances and cause of their demise.

The department is managed by a small group of dedicated, highly skilled volunteers who are available to assist or carry out research by request.

For more information please contact the Society at

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