Hello again from Tamworth! 2015 Tamworth Country Music Festival is now over, and we all have memories of a great good time and highly successful two weeks country music feast!

Roll of Renown, 2015

Our Roll of Renown presentation saw the well deserved elevation to the honour of Lee Kernaghan and it was a great surprise and joy to the Kernaghan family when patriarch Ray Kernaghan was also honoured by his elevation to the Roll of Renown for his career which included the development of the concept of marketing country music by the heavy use of TV.

Our picture shows an excited Ray and proud daughter Tanya. Jon Wolfe did his usual excellent work in producing and compèring the Roll of Renown concert held, of course, in the historic Tamworth Memorial Town Hall. Well done to Jon and his team!

Broadcasters' Hall of Fame

The induction into the Broadcasters’ Hall of Fame of broadcaster, Britton Morrison from station 2MBR Carbery Lane, Campbelltown NSW, was announced on the Roll of Renown Concert.

Britton was honoured for his promotion of country music through his Tuesday morning "Classic Country" programme.

Hands of Fame

Tamworth Regional Council, now one of our major supporters, added another large area to the Hands of Fame park display this year, and a further three worthy additions to the over 300 hand prints of famous country music identities were veteran Queensland singer Zeta Burns, Tamworth musician Alwyn Aurisch and singer Dean Perrett.

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Work on the new display

This past three months or so has seen our very small number of volunteers continuing our complete re-build and upgrade of our display in our new guitar shaped home at the corner of Peel and Murray streets in Country Music Capital. Curator, Judy Loffel, has been researching changes to our object information plaques and new designs of displays.
Volunteers Gary Collins and Kevin Lansley continue to work on display stands, and this month have exchanged their hammers and saws for paint brushes and rollers! Although Kevin is used to painting landscapes and such, he and Gary are pretty "dab" hands with the paint roller!

Gary

Kevin

The Archive Collection

All remaining items from 93 Brisbane Street are now down at Peel Street. The last to arrive were the ageing and frail floral tributes from Smoky Dawson's funeral which were brought down to Peel Street in President Eric's car with very low tyre pressure and traveling at walking pace! The team managed the entire transfer without losing track of any artefact or breaking the glass of any display cases. Our thanks to the musclemen of Peel Valley Removals who dealt with Burnie Burnett's piano and Buddy Williams truck canopy display which we couldn't handle!

Whilst this has been going on, donations from all over Australia have been continuing, of course. In fact there has been a considerable increase in surprise offerings as well as researched ones, and we are very, very grateful to everybody who has contributed. From 8th July 2014 when we closed down operations from 93 Brisbane Street, our home for the past 20 years, (my how time flies) the archive has welcomed to the collection many priceless items and here are some of them.

♦ Gerry McGinty who was for many years the Shorty Ranger Fan Club editor dropped in 47 Philips cassettes of various Australian recordings.

♦ We received from Ray Allen, a nephew of Smoky Dawson, yet more material from the estate of Smoky and Dot Dawson.

Horse grooming gear that was recovered by the family from Smoky and Dot's garage at 8 Arding Street, Lane Cove. This was used at the Smoky Dawson Ranch to show children how to look after horses.

Smoky's best boots, made for him by R.M. Williams in South Australia, used only for special occasions like the Anzac Day RSL March in Sydney. They had specially built up heels and internal instep to make Smoky appear taller.

A Horse rug bought for Smoky's famous steed "Flash". Sadly, it was never used as Flash died at the grand old age of 35 years only several days after it's purchase, before Smoky could take it to where the horse was being stabled.

Framed coloured pen drawing of "Hopalong Cassidy" (American Cowboy film star) from an American fan, Robert McMahon who was also a Smoky Dawson fan.

Smoky's favourite hat, supported by a video of Smoky wearing it.

A kerchief, general shirt, monogrammed shirt, presented at the opening of Smoky's Bar and Grill (Diggers Club) Tamworth.

10 DVDs, TV News Reports of his passing, Interviews from 2005, Biography, Biography Photos, and Dawson Chair Commercials.

By the way, Smoky's actual "Dawson Chair" will be on display here in Tamworth when we open, hopefully in time for "Hats off to Country Festival" in July.

♦ One of the important country music record labels that sprang up in the late 1960s (1968) was CM Records, an active independent record label through the 1970s and 1980s, based in Dubbo and started by Ken Cameron in Dubbo and Ross Murphy in Tamworth. Since the demise of CM Records, a friend of the late Ken Cameron, Gary Gowans, has had in his possession 57 master tapes of some of the label's releases. He kindly donated these to our collection for preservation.

♦ Country music aficionado, Peter Dowling in Sydney, called in to leave with us two private photo albums containing personal fan photographs of various country music people.

♦ Australia's funny man and great character, Chad Morgan, forwarded to us one of his famous stage outfits and hat. At the same time, we received a large framed montage of two Chad Morgan records and a photograph. This was a tribute prepared by fans to commemorate his 50 years as an entertainer.

♦ It was great to receive a visit from country gospel entertainers Richard and Shirley Pearce. Lovely to see them again after quite a few years. Being pretty well retired from their entertainment career, they left with us cassettes, records,
banners, shirts and even stage signs; mementos of their lifetime's work for their church and country music.

♦ From long time retired entertainer Michael Cooke, at last we have been able to acquire stage clothing, a jacket, shirt and hat that recalls his days on stage as "Mr. Country Excitement." Michael still lives in Tamworth and we remember well his successful career during the Sixties and Seventies.
♦ From Pat Hansfeld, the archive now has the addition of a private collection of 108 long play records - both Australian and American.
♦ Broadcaster Ian Crombie, who is a major and well-known broadcaster on country music FM radio, collected on our behalf a large number of boxes of periodicals and video recordings of historic country music shows etc., collected over many years by the late Bob Spence who was also a long time FM radio presenter of many years standing and who passed away just before Christmas.

There is more to come from this collection.
♦ Ray and Mary Dryden, rescued for us a memorial bronze plaque recognising Victorian country personality - singer, collector and pioneer, Tex Baines.

The plaque, is mounted on a large quartz (and heavy!) rock from a property in Eildon, Victoria where Tex used to visit every year and spend a great deal of time. Thanks to Graham Cahill who brought it up from Victoria by car and trailer.

♦ We appreciate a donation from our team member Larraine Howard, of 22 long play records of American and Australian country music, and also a quantity of EP (45rpm) records.
♦ Fred Wright brought us a further quantity of items from the estate of the late Keith Blinman. A quantity of country music books and publications - and including a professional master tape of shots of Johnny Chester and others from a Woodstock event that took place on 3rd April, 1983.
♦ From Henry Hollis in, Tamworth, a quantity of records. 166 of them are 78s, 99 are 45s and 53 are LPs. Most are of country music so will add nicely to our ever growing library.

I have to say that it is wonderful to add all these artefacts to the collection so they will never be lost to our recorded history.

♦ Motorcycle enthusiast and collector, David Lewis and his wife Robyn came to Tamworth especially to view Geoff Mack's 1954 Panther motorcycle on which Geoff and Tabbi journeyed from England back to Australia in 1954. Being a specialist/owner of this type of British machine he readily recognised that one part was not "kosher" and having a couple of correct spares, made a gift of an original sump plug which replaces a "bodgie" plumber's plug fitted after the loss of the original. During his annual visit to Tamworth at Festival time, I spoke to Geoff about the future of his precious Panther which has been on loan to Council for years and can be seen residing in the "Walk A Country Mile" exhibit. (or it will be once again when we re-open the museum!)

Historic life story

♦ This is the text of an email received from Katrina Ellis in South Australia.

Hi, my great uncle Jim Ellis has left me with some documents which I thought you might like a copy of? One being a poem by Tex Morton called "The Flying Doctor". The other document is titled "Where have all the old riders gone". It's written by Jim and documents his life between 1940-42 when he met Tex Morton and tells about life in the show and with the Gill brothers. My grandfather Alfred Ellis later joined after Jim left to join the war. He rode until injury prevented him.

If interested please let me know.

Regards, Katrina Ellis.

I spoke to Katrina, and she is keen to source photos and information for us.

RAFFLE RESULTS

2015 Festival raffle, drawn 7.00pm Monday 19th Jan. at Hog's Breath Cafe, Tamworth.
Prize Winners

1st Prize: Two Gold tickets to the Gold Guitar Awards. Won by Di Oliver (left) pictured with our Margaret Lansley.

2nd prize: the winner Rachael Harry was unable to accept the prize so Rachael gave it to (Left) Brady Heywood (Right) Angela Tricket. Pictured (Centre) singer is Amber Lawrence, with whom dinner at Hogs Breath was the prize.

3rd Prize: Family pass to the Australian Bushmen’s Campdraft and Rodeo Association Finals Margaret and Darryl Johnson.

Finally, I must wish your regular Newsletter editor, Peter Izod, all the best with his present health problems. Some very nasty surgery didn’t stop him wanting to work on this issue. But we all here at the Country Music Hall of Fame thought we should tell him to look after himself first and take a break until he has fully recovered from his ordeal. Your dedication is appreciated, Peter!

Eric Scott (President.)

Acknowledgements: Thank you to our generous Sponsors and Supporters …