



THE KATE KELLY PROJECT

FORBES, NSW, AUSTRALIA

www.merrillfindlay.com/projects/katekelly_project
merrillfindlay@yahoo.com

PRESS RELEASE: REGIONAL NSW

Saturday 21 June 2008

Photos available

BRAVING MID-WINTER COLD FOR INAUGURAL KATE KELLY WALK

More than twenty shivering locals from Forbes, Parkes, Warroo, and Bedgerebong braved the cold and damp on Saturday to explore Forbes' links with Kate Kelly, sister of Ned, Australia's most celebrated bushranger.

The inaugural Kate Kelly Walk hosted by local writer [Merrill Findlay](http://www.merrillfindlay.com) began at the corner of Sherriff and Browne Streets where Kate probably lived before she was reported missing on 6 October 1898. The tour then proceeded down Browne Street towards Chinaman's Bridge near where her body was found eight days later.

"The only documentary evidence we have of where Kate Kelly, or Mrs William Foster as she was then known, lived in 1898 comes from a newspaper report on the inquiry into her death published in the Forbes and Parkes Gazette the week after her body was recovered from the Forbes Lagoon," Ms Findlay explained. "Her neighbour, Susan Hurley, who reported her missing, gave her own address as the corner of Sherriff and Browne Streets and stated that Mrs Foster was 'lately residing at the opposite corner'. We can't be sure how long Kate had lived at this address, but we do know that she was coping alone with three small children and a new baby, since her husband, William 'Bricky' Foster, had been living for the past five months some fifty kilometres away at Burrawang Station where he had a job as a horse tailer. We also know from another newspaper report that in May 1898, five months before his wife's disappearance, Mr Foster had pleaded guilty in a Forbes police court to abusing her in an incident which may have involved physical violence. And, according to evidence that Bricky himself presented at the inquest, he visited Kate just two nights before she was reported missing – an overnight stopover which may have had some bearing on his wife's disappearance," Ms Findlay suggested.

The walking tour paused at Lachlan Street where Kate Kelly had lived and worked before her marriage to Bricky Foster in November 1888, and continued on to the Rankin Street corner, the site of Mrs Ryan's Carlton Hotel where her body was taken after it was recovered from the lagoon.

Ms Findlay then guided walkers to the site of the Foster family residence at No. 1 Browne Street where Bill McFeeters' wool store now stands, and recounted some of her favourite stories about the Foster brothers and their neighbours, including Quang Lee and the Mathiases. Many of the walkers also had their own Kate Kelly stories to share: Shane Wade, for example, told a family anecdote about one of

his forebears, 'Grandmother Strickland', who saw Kate walking towards the lagoon and offered her a drink - which Kate politely refused.

The final stop on the inaugural Kate Kelly Walk was to be Chinaman's Bridge on the Bedgerebong Road overlooking the site of Ah Toy's vegetable garden near where Kate's body was found, but the threat of rain forced a change of plans. Ms Findlay now looks forward to another opportunity to share her research and talk about the circumstances surrounding Kate Kelly's death.

The walking tour was conducted as part of the [Kate Kelly Project](#) to develop a community music-theatre production to be performed on and around the Forbes Lagoon in several years time. The project's research phase has been partly funded by a small grant to the Forbes Historical Society from the Royal Australian Historical Society.

For more information, please see
www.merrillfindlay.com/projects/katekelly_project

Or contact merrillfindlay@yahoo.com
Forbes, NSW