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# Macleay River Historical Society

# NEWSLETTER

May, 2013

Number 3

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I apologise for the lateness of the Newsletter and Journal, hopefully we will be back on track for our next publications due in August.

We mourned the loss in April of Pamela Parmenter who had been a volunteer with us for sixteen years and Secretary for most of these. Earlier in the year we held a ceremony to award Pam Life Membership of our Society in recognition of her long, continued and outstanding service. She is greatly missed.

Our meeting with Kempsey Shire Council, which earlier had to postponed due to the floods in February, was held on 30 April. We received a very sympathetic hearing concerning some of our problems. Council has already written to Crown Lands Department re the delay in getting land for our shed approved.

Next year we have the Centenary of the beginning of the Great War. We received an email from Dr Roslyn Russell asking us to endorse a book she is planning to write on Frederickton World War 1 soldiers commemorated in the Ferry Lane Memorial Avenue. At the March General Meeting, it was moved and seconded that we give Ros all possible assistance with her publishing venture. Dr Russell is an accomplished author having with books published by Allen & Unwin

Australia, Penguin Australia, and the National Library of Australia on topics ranging from Australian literature to Federation to Prime Ministers and to astronomy.

I emailed Ros Russell on the outcome of the Meeting and also wrote a letter of support for her.

Phil Lee  
President

## RESEARCH REPORT

This report will be a little brief as I have been overseas for several weeks during March and April.

Chris was enquiring about Sloan's Bakery in Belgrave Street when his ancestors James (Jimmy) Francis Buckley and Francis (Frank) Patrick Buckley owned the shop in the 1930s, but still operated under the Sloan's name. We were able to find Macleay Argus newspaper articles about Jimmy and Frank, also information on the shop from the book *Earning a Crust in City and Country Vol II*. Desley did the research and Phil provided photographs.

Cathryn Cusack made an appointment to come in and research the history of the brig "Trial" — more specifically the convicts that overran and took over the ship in Sydney Harbour and the outcome of the shipwrecked passengers at Trial Bay. Phil was present and assisted with the research.

I finally sent off the information on the Gough family, ie Aubrey Gough and family, who was a blacksmith in Rudder Street. We did not have a Gough family file started so with the information I acquired from Argus newspaper articles, together with information from the 1902 Census, 1906 and 1908 Polling records, we were able to get a clearer picture of their lives in Kempsey. They lived in Innes Street; undoubtedly, the children went to East Kempsey School. Bruce, a descendant from Cornwall, England sent a Descendant Chart. We

## Contents

Presidents Report .....	1
Research Report .....	1
Photography Report .....	2
Museum Report .....	4
Remembering Dr Rankine.....	5
True Australians .....	6
Heritage Week .....	7
Benefits of Membership .....	8
Our Affiliations .....	8
Macleay River Historical Society .....	8

now have collated enough information to make a substantial file on the Gough family.

Peter Ryan finished research for Pam regarding her ancestors William Johnson and Catherine (nee Byrnes) of Christmas Creek and Austral Eden. He also had a visitor regarding Shelley family history, including burial site of Dan Shelley and photo of their son Reg with Smithtown premiers 1935.

Dr Stephany Steggall is writing an authorised biography of Tom Kenneally and has been corresponding by email. We sent her a photocopy of the catalogue sheet from the Kenneally family file from which she selected articles she wanted copies of. Following that, she asked if we could give her any information on the staircase that was inside Chaddies general store. She wanted to know if it was made of cedar and if it had a landing. It certainly is not there now and wasn't when Matthew Brennan bought the shop 5 years ago. Enquiries revealed that a former owner of the store had removed the staircase to give them more privacy in their upstairs quarters. The former owner is looking for photographs of the interior which may have included the staircase prior to its removal.

Angela forwarded us an email from the Visitors Information Centre from Bob who was looking for information on Richard William Johns, a pilot at South West Rocks Pilot Station, whose daughter Elizabeth was born there in 1871. I have not been able to find any information on this man from the Pilot Stations file, but I will ask Garry Munday, whom I am sure with his Macleay shipping knowledge will be able to help him. During February, Peter Ryan completed research on William and Catherine Johnson. In April we received a request for information on the Brock family from Graham. This research was completed by Garry Munday.

Loretta from Southern Cross University called inquiring about the Sherry family in Kempsey. Phil Lee found a photograph by that name and forwarded her a copy. She thought the features on one of the people looked familiar and would pass it around her relatives for further identification

Carol inquired about Arakoon House at South West Rocks where her uncle, Vincent MacLeay Sullivan was born in 1898. She purchased our publication *Trial Bay Goal* and two copies of our earlier Journal on Arakoon House.

Michael Scott completed research on Michael Fitzpatrick for John. At the first municipal election in Kempsey in 1886, Michael Fitzpatrick headed the poll. A native of Liverpool, England, Michael passed away on 7 November 1901 at the early age of fifty-three.

Raymond dropped in to the Museum and was looking for information on Burnt Bridge and the Aboriginal Protection Board from the 1890's to the present. Raymond is working on a thesis entitled *Dreaming the Keparra* for his PhD at Newcastle University. Phil Lee gave him an overview of our holdings and digitised newspaper files and he was very impressed. He will make an appointment to come back to do further research.

Peggy Gould  
Research Section

## PHOTOGRAPHY REPORT

The new Epson R3000 Printer is in action and Phil is back printing out photographs to satisfy orders. It seems never ending which is good for our budget.

Russell McKenzie is a new recruit for not only the Museum but for Photographics as well as he is here on Fridays too. We welcome him to our museum and thank him for joining our team. Russell is a handy 'dab' with a paintbrush and anything that needs repairs or freshening up. He is also producing little wooden boxes for our glass negatives which is wonderful as we were needing some more urgently. Thanks Russell.

Debbie is still scanning glass negatives and Judy is still cataloguing them into our files. John is busy with a variety of subjects and we are keeping Phil out of trouble by keeping his nose to the grindstone too. We considered we needed a reward and were happy to go on our bus trip to the Bellbrook area during April, thanks to Garry Munday.

We have had a lot of visitors on Fridays which is good. It is great to see that after the Kempsey bypass, things haven't changed as yet. The park still seems reasonably busy too.

Judy gave a talk on the Angus McNeil Collection to an interested PROBUS group at their April meeting on Wednesday 10th April. They have a large group, usually between 30 and 40, at their meetings which is a 90% attendance rate. They had quite a few outings

planned for April which kept them all together, a good idea. A nice collection of people with varying interests.

Kempsey Shire Council arranged for a washdown of the building beginning Thursday 4 April which was a disaster for us. The resource room was flooded once again, damaging quite a few albums of original photographs and catalogue sheets. The mould has already invaded some of the albums, the plastic sleeves and some of the photographs.

Each photograph has had to be removed and dried before being placed on a fresh backing sheet and a new unused sleeve, album covers were removed and cleaned but will not be used again for photographs. New 4-ring binders will have to be purchased as well as the sleeves and the albums will have to be 'rebuilt' before they go back into the resource room. All catalogue sheets will also have to be reprinted and resleeved and placed in new albums too.

The old albums are quite good for other uses, but will not be reused for photographs due to the risk of mould. This exercise will be ongoing for some time yet to ensure the photographs are completely dry. They spend most of their time on Judy's bed enjoying the electric blanket's warmth which is an ideal heat to dry them out completely, without harming them. Some of the photographs look perfect but have a sticky feel to the shiny finish. We will scan them to replace them in the albums and may have to discard them if they don't dry out completely. It is a long, tiring, time consuming and expensive exercise reprinting, resleeving and rebuilding albums of thousands of photographs.

The biggest problem now is ensuring that the resource room is completely dry otherwise mould will be a real problem not just for photographs but for anything stored there, especially paper. I would suggest we get some DampRid to see if we can dry out the area as soon as possible. We used to always use it but we don't seem to nowadays. Any other suggestions would be welcome.

The same thing happened a few years ago. We certainly hope the Council gets the message and this does not happen a third time. Hopefully we can recoup some of the expense from the workman's insurance cover.

Richard O'Leary from the Macleay Regional Co-op contacted us regarding historical photographs of the new IGA site they acquired on the corner of Nicholson

and Lachlan Streets. We managed to find a number of photographs depicting the history of the site from Dornan's South Kempsey Store and Post Office with Dornan's service station on the corner, through to Food Fair, South Kempsey in more recent years. The photographs were printed and mounted in a custom made display case, in time for the opening of the new IGA X-press store in March.

Glen, a former local now living in Western Australia, dropped in to share some historical photographs with us. Subjects included the 1969 Flood, the Blackmans Point car ferries, East Kempsey class photographs (1947, 1950 and 1952), Schroder's store and the Baker family. We were given digital copies of all of these to add to our collection. The Blackmans Point ferries were replaced after completion of the Dennis Bridge across the Hastings River in December 1961.

Recently our Photographic section forwarded a collection of Wauchope Public School photographs to the Wauchope and District Historical Society for their records. They were very appreciative of our donation and thanked us for our consideration. The Society is on the move and will advise of their new premises in due course.

We also forwarded a collection of 1930's photographs to hospital historian Dr Kathryn Hillier of Royal Prince Alfred Hospital's (RPA) Museum and Archives. She was delighted and promptly replied with a list of the nurses who graduated in 1931, the date of one of the group photographs, so we could add them to our copy. We had attempted to decipher the names written on the back of the photograph and have now been able to match them up. She also supplied us with an email address for the hospital's listing of RPA trained nurses and a copy of RPA Heritage News for April 2013 as well as a brochure of the Walking Tour. The museum is open free to the public and sounds as though it would be very interesting, particularly if anyone had connections to the hospital or its staff. We will file the brochure and newsletter with the photographs if anyone would like to see them.

Judy gave a talk at the Museum on the Angus McNeil Collection to John Russell's group on Sunday 26 May. The talk went over very well and some of those attending were able to identify photographs for us. A similar talk to the daytime View Club is scheduled for 21 June.

The Memorial Avenue tree planting at Ferry Lane off the South West Rocks Road has apparently been deferred until 1 June although not much has been publicised about the change of date. This ceremony is to plant young trees replacing original trees which have not survived. You might recall that the original memorial trees were planted on 30th July 1919, fifty-eight in all, twenty-six at East Frederickton and thirty-two on the Frederickton side to commemorate the Lower Macleay soldiers who served in World War 1. Four of the surviving twenty-one East Frederickton trees were removed during the recent By-Pass construction whilst a further four had to be removed due to poor health. The Road and Maritime Services will plant Crow's Ash trees as replacements and put up some interpretative signage.

Vilma donated to the Museum a large number of photographs and school records relating to West Kempsey Public School which she had used to organise a school reunion. The collection date range is from 1937 to 1940.

Brian from South West Rocks loaned us a couple of photographs of the Cox property at Boyter's lane, Jerseyville said to have been in the same family since 1862. It was from Cox's Wharf that the Rosedale left for Sydney on 11 September 1911, only to vanish without trace. Brian is a sixth generation descendant of the original owner, Henry Cox.

Judy Waters  
Photography Section

## MUSEUM REPORT

We now have two new items in our telecommunications display. The pedestal telephone is complete with its wall bell box. The paging display panel donated by Kempsey District Hospital which bears the names of doctors of the sixties and seventies is to be labelled.

Refurbishment of the "new" Display Cabinet given to us by the Trial Bay Museum has been completed and it is now housing a toy display. With the aid of my grand daughter Amber I put together the display in the restored showcase. We previously had some toys on display in the Settlers Cottage but smaller items could not be securely displayed until now. Many items have been in storage for years.

The postcard display has been taken down and moved

to an album to prevent UV damage to the postcards. Visitors can browse the collection at the front desk.

On the board where the postcards were, our World War 2 model ship recognition models are now mounted. A couple of framed pictures from the Military History Display are to be hung on the other side freeing up more drawer space.

An historic aerial photo of Crescent Head used for the 1974 Telephone Directory has been added to our telecommunications display. The photo has been scanned and retouched and will be reprinted once our computer is reinstalled. It was donated by a former District Telephone Manager, the late Frank Lidgard.

We had a visit from the Kinchela Boys staff again and we supplied photographs and history for their exhibition, "No names, just numbers" which was held from 4 May to 31 May in the neighbouring Dunghutti-Ngaku Aboriginal Art Gallery.

We had a visit from a former Kempsey resident claiming to have an interesting story about her time as an aboriginal nurse at Kempsey Hospital. Margaret Jopling asked her to write it down for us which she did and we will feature it in an upcoming newsletter. We are always on the lookout for news articles like this.

Russell enjoyed a well-earned break for several weeks during May. His next project will be repairing the River Display cabinet.

Ruth Woodward, Garry Munday and myself attended the meeting of the Mid North Coast Chapter of Museums Australia held at the Kempsey Heights Bowling Club 28 May. There was a very interesting and entertaining presentation by Peter Haggarty, Manager of Security at the Australian National Maritime Museum at Darling Harbour. After the presentation, Peter visited our Museum and gave us some very useful advice.

The bus tour for Heritage Week was a great success and we made a small profit. I prepared an evaluation of our event for the Heritage Council. Thanks to Garry and Sue Munday for a well organised and informative event. See the full article on the outing elsewhere in this Newsletter.

Phil Lee

## REMEMBERING DR RANKINE

Following publication in our February 2013 of Mrs Enid Dawson's memories of Harry Reece, we now publish Mrs Dawson's recollections of Dr Rankine (from Mrs Enid Dawson) December 2012

In December 2012, Mrs Dawson wrote:

"Some mention of Dr. Rankine in your newsletter.

He was our family Dr. [sic]. It was Dr. Rankine who told my parents that if they didn't get my brother Roland to a more suitable climate because of his severe asthma they would never rear him. That is why in 1928 Mum took 4 year old Roland and 5 months old Doreen to live with her parents in Armidale to see if that was a more suitable climate for Roland. It proved to be much more suitable so Roland spent most of his childhood with relatives in Armidale. I think it must have been very difficult for my parents and Roland to be parted, however these sacrifices are made in families and being a family of letter writers, weekly letters passed between them. Quite a few children I knew when I was going to school did not know I had a brother (he was 7 years older than me) so often if I spoke about my brother children thought I was telling lies and told me I didn't have a brother, only a sister Doreen.

I remember Dr. Rankine had a bright red car and some called it the Red Terror because he drove fast, which of course was a very modest speed to what people drive these years. I was in the same class as Elizabeth, a most pleasant and fun person. I remember her sitting in the seat behind me with Tom Flanagan in 4th class. Miss Joan Ellery was our teacher. Sadly I remember her fiancé Rod Welch was electrocuted at work. Mr. Bill Pickett took over our class after this sadness for her.

Family Drs. those years knew the history of all members of a family and it seemed no effort for the Dr. to come to the homes when necessary. When I was young and able to talk so Mum could understand me that I had put a blue bead off a milk jug cover in my ear Mum and Dad not having the phone went into "Truro", Grandfather Secomb's home to ring the Dr. Of course the maiden aunts knew best and tried to get the bead out with the thin hair pins they had in their long hair without success. Mum did ring the Dr. Dr Rankine was at the hospital, got in his car and whizzed down to our home. I can remember him sitting me on the



*Dr Rodger Rankine (Photo: MRHS)*

kitchen table and syringing out my ear. He then whizzed back to the hospital and the operating theatre.

Dr. Rankine's surgery was a room in their home on the corner of Holman and Belgrave Streets and next to the Methodist Church. I remember Elizabeth, David, Joy and think there was a John and possibly another older



*West Kempsey Public School Class K1, 1B. Elizabeth Rankine in Middle Row, 4<sup>th</sup> from left; Enid Dawson (Secomb) same Row 3<sup>rd</sup> from Right (Photo: Enid Dawson Collection, MRHS)*

boy in the family. He must have worked at night sometimes as I remember Mum taking Doreen and I down to see the Dr. some nights, the waiting room seemed to be just off the verandah near the front door.

I vaguely remember the Rankine house at Crescent Head.”

(Mrs Dawson wrote again on 20 January 2013:)

“Dr Roger Rankine and family also remain in my memory.

He was our family Dr. and I am sure like us, many other families from Kempsey would remember him, not only as their Dr. but as a trusted and helpful friend. No doubt looking back to those years when people did have a family Dr. like Dr. Rankine who knew more than one generation of families, it was a distinct advantage as far as health matters.

I particularly remember his daughter Elizabeth who was in my class at the West Kempsey Public School... One I was very fond of and greatly admired and often marvelled to do things and be herself. With three maiden aunts living beside my family, I was rather restricted in what I could do, which probably is one reason I so enjoyed seeing the things Elizabeth could do.

I was most disappointed when I couldn't attend one of Elizabeth's birthday parties because I was sick. Dad let Dr. Rankine know I couldn't go and gave him my gift for Elizabeth. Late that afternoon there was a knock on our front door and when Mum opened it, there was Dr. Rankine holding a couple of balloons on string and some other goodies, trinket for me from Elizabeth's party, that all guests had received. It was so lovely to be included.”

Ed: Rhod Welch was electrocuted in an accident at the Kempsey Power Station in November 1940. He was only twenty-two years old. (*Macleay Chronicle* 27 November 1940)

## TRUE AUSTRALIANS

We received an email from Bob of Sydney who sent us an Angus McNeil photograph, from the Australian Town and Country Journal 11 June 1898, of an aboriginal cricket team in a studio with a trophy. In researching his family history, Greg found his grandfather Possum Davis had played in the team



*Three of the True Australians with the Hart Challenge Cup 1897  
(Photo: Angus McNeil Collection, MRHS)*

during the 1890's and asked if we had a better copy of the photograph in our Angus McNeil collection. A search turned up a photograph of three of the cricketers holding the trophy which was obviously taken at the same time and place as the team photograph. Perusal of the early Macleay Argus newspapers then revealed much more about this remarkable group of sportsmen.

The trophy was the Hart Challenge Cup, donated by local businessman P M Hart, to be contested by the cricket teams of the Macleay. To win the competition and keep the Cup, a team had to win it twice in succession or three times in all.

The True Australians team appears to have first played in the competition in December 1894 against the Kempsey team. The True Australians team was as follows (in batting order): J Linwood, W Becke, E Moran, J Moylan, C Taylor, S Bullock, D Bullock, Combe, A Woodland and C Warby. The match was won by Kempsey. It was reported that the True Australians bowled and fielded very well but “failed to meet expectations” when batting.

Over the next few years the True Australians improved to the extent that they beat the Kempsey team in the semi-final played on Saturday 1 February 1896. The True Australians team for that match was as follows: Linwood, Lowry, Moylan, P Donohue, S Bullock, D Bullock, Woodlands [sic], Moran, G Davis and C Taylor. The Kempsey team was: Manchee, Boardman, Cobcroft, V Smith, C Fisher, F T Lewis, P Welsh, Warn, Gleeson, Barnett, Hardwick and D Fisher. A feature of the match was said to be the splendid fielding of the True Australians team.

There were only two entries in the Hart Challenge Cup Competition for the 1897 season, the Pioneers and the True Australians. Three matches were to be played, the first of these on Saturday 30 January 1897 was easily won by the True Australians. The Pioneers team for the first match was as follows: Cheers, Martin, Kiddle, Cook, Quilkey, S Scott, W Scott, Saul, Flannagan, Plummer, O'Connor, Alexander, Johnstone and Walsh. In the True Australians team for that match were Linwood, Bullock (2), Moran, Warby, Drew, Cook, Smith (2), Moylan, Douglas and Tapler. The second match was also won by the True Australians and the Challenge Cup became their absolute property.

There was some reluctance however by the Hart Challenge Cup Committee to hand over the Cup to the winners. The donor of the cup, Mr P M Hart, intervened and on Saturday 16 October 1897 he presented the Cup to J Linwood of the True Australians and praised their sportsmanlike qualities. It was recorded that M Hurrell made a neat speech of thanks on behalf of the True Australians.

The True Australians apparently continued to play cricket on the Macleay until just before the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. Our thanks to Bob for sending us this photograph and thereby enabling us to identify another photograph from our Angus McNeil collection.

*References: Macleay Argus Newspaper files.*

## HERITAGE WEEK 2013

This year's Heritage Week activity by our Society was a rollicking bus tour to Bellbrook Hotel on the Upper Macleay to celebrate that hostelry's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. The theme was "Community Milestones" and the activity was the brainchild of Garry and Sue Munday who are to be commended for a well organised and very

successful event. The tour was sold out days before the event.

The tour started from South Kempsey Park at 9.00 am Friday 19 April, with participants registering and taking a short tour of the Museum. Then it was on the bus and past Rotary Park the site of the historic home of Enoch Rudder, Kempsey's founder. A short detour through Kempsey took us past the site of various early shipbuilding industries on the north bank of the Macleay River, before rejoining Armidale Road and on through the village of Greenhill. We then travelled to the historic site of the old Border Police Station at Belgrave Falls before heading west again and past the Steuart McIntyre dam, the source of Kempsey's water supply.



*President Phil Lee with Bellbrook Hotel Manager, Dale cutting the Cake (Photo: MRHS)*



*Organisers Garry and Sue Munday preparing the Birthday Cake at Bellbrook Hotel (Photo:MRHS)*

At Willawarrin Showground we stopped for morning tea and a talk by local Maurice O'Neill on camp drafting. The tour stopped briefly at the site of the old Uralgurra Hotel and we were also shown the location of the former school there.

At Bellbrook the party took a short walking tour of the village before adjourning to the Bellbrook Hotel for lunch. The Hotel's birthday would actually be on 13 October this year but we had decided to get in early for the celebration. After lunch, Garry and Sue produced a birthday cake which was cut by the Society President Phil Lee, and Bellbrook Hotel manager, Dale.

On the way home we stopped at the old Toorooka Butter Factory. First opened in 1906, the Butter Factory was responsible for increasing the productivity of many farms on the Upper Macleay as more farmers turned to dairy farming. A bacon factory was built alongside the Butter Factory in 1921.

We arrived back at South Kempsey Park around 4.00 pm after a very enjoyable outing. Garry's commentary, illustrated by still photographs along the way, was both educational and entertaining.

## Benefits of Membership

Membership Applications and Renewals start from February in the New Year. Members of the Macleay River Historical Society now enjoy the following benefits:

- Quarterly Journal (posted or pick up from Museum)
- Quarterly Newsletter (posted, emailed or pick up from Museum)
- Discount of 20% on basic Research Fee (\$20.00 instead of \$25.00 per subject)
- Discount of 10% on Photograph orders (excluding postage)

## Our Affiliations

- Australasian Federation of Family History Organisations
- Australasian Telephone Collector's Society Inc
- Australian National Maritime Museum
- Historic Houses Trust
- Museums Australia
- Museums and Galleries NSW
- Royal Australian Historical Society



## Macleay River Historical Society

### *Office Bearers:*

**President**  
Phil Lee

**Vice President**  
Garry Munday

**Secretary & Public Officer**  
Ruth Woodward

**Treasurer**  
Barbara Coughran

**Patrons**  
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**Membership**  
\$18.00 single  
\$23.00 plus journal and postage

**Committee Meetings**  
Meetings are held at 3pm  
every third Tuesday of the month

**Research**  
*Monday:* Ruth Woodward  
*Tuesday:* Peggy Gould  
*Thursday:* Garry Munday

**Photographic**  
*Friday:* Judy Waters, Debbie Reynolds, Phil Lee

**MUSEUM OPEN**  
10.00 am to 4.00 pm daily except  
Good Friday and Christmas day