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# Macleay River Historical Society

# NEWSLETTER

May, 2014

Number 7

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The Development Application for the shed has been approved and I am discussing the next steps with the builder. I have applied for a grant under the Clubs GRANT 2014 programme. The shed will be for storage only and will have no public access.

I completed the next stage of Museums & Galleries NSW Standards Programme. They are promising a broad range of outcomes such as improved Grant success and volunteer recruitment, training and recognition.

of our Preservation Needs Assessment Report which was completed earlier this year. I now need to start on the application for a grant for preservation materials which will have to wait until next year.

As part of our occasional series of articles to assist in family history research, we will be reprinting an article on Place Names in a later Newsletter with the kind permission of Michelle Nichols of Hawkesbury City Council Library.

Phil Lee  
President and Author



*Bellbrook Students participating in our Education Programme  
(Photo: Todd Connaughton, Macleay Argus)*

Lee Hoineville has held the first education programme with Bellbrook Public School and it has been a resounding success. We received a glowing endorsement from the School with letters from most of the children. Russell assisted by installing an old style washing line with props and a couple of replica washboards.

We have started to implement recommendations

## RESEARCH REPORT

Wayne and Vicki are researching Rev Henry Jobson and his wife Mary. She has articles relating to the Reverend but asked if we knew where he lived when he came to Kempsey in 1894. She wanted to find out more about Mary, her social life and organisations she belonged to. She particularly wanted photographs of his children and thought we may hold school photographs of them. Desley couldn't find any record of him in

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Kempsey in 1894. We passed the email to Phil for the photography angle.

Phil has since given me about 12 photocopy pages of Macleay Argus and Chronicle newspaper articles about the Reverend and his wife. It appears they arrived in Kempsey in 1904, not 1894 and left for Warialda in 1912. They lived at the Vicarage, All Saints Anglican Church. I found an advertisement for the auction of their furniture there in 1912

Peter and Susan Hourigan have accessed our services on several occasions to research their families – Hourigan, Hudson, Dukes and Sillitoe. In return, they provided us with additional research material for our family files. They are hoping to publish a family history book eventually, a copy of which they will donate to our Society in appreciation of our help in the past.

They have asked if we could publish in our quarterly newsletter a request from them for family members to get in touch with them, in the hope they may have more family information.

Adele wanted information on Pauline and Charles Edward Smith; Frances Ann and Sydney George Smith; Mary (nee Cardwell) and John Smith. Desley finalised this during April.

Chris from a walking group wrote regarding a route (track), proposed in WWII (1942) to take people, foodstuff and livestock from the coast to the tablelands should the Japanese invade. He and his walking group were considering retracing the route if they could find out more information. Garry Munday responded to this email with some information.

Robert sent an email for information on his great grandfather John Edwards. Peter Ryan was able to provide him with a partial family tree, and a death registration of John Edwards who died in 1859. Peter also sent the death notice from the Macleay Argus of Robert's father, Victor Charles who died on 13 March 2010.

Several weeks later, we received another email regarding the Edwards family, this time from Julie. She discovered that John Edwards and Agnes (nee Thomson or Thompson) were buried in Frederickton cemetery. John died aged 44 years in 1859 of pneumonia and Agnes in 1862. She drowned at age 45. Julie could not find the headstone(s) when she visited the cemetery.

Micheal Scott checked the cemetery listings, John Edwards is listed in the Anglican section but there is no marked grave; no listing at all for Agnes. We do hold death registration certificates for both of them and they both do confirm the cemetery. Rhys purchased a copy of "*Timber Tales*" in which is mentioned that in 1839 a licensing system was put in place for cedar cutters. Rhys has an ancestor, an ex-convict sawyer, Thomas Thompson who was in Kempsey around 1838 to early 1840s. He was wondering if we held any record of the licenses at the Museum. Tom Plunkett responded that we had no such records, but suggested he try State Archives for the Commissioner of Lands records.

Louise is researching the Marshall family herself and has extensive information but is looking for details on the "gaps". We could not help her with anything she did not already know. Desley referred her to the Kempsey Library Family History group.

I had a very interesting letter from Norm who had recently read my research report in the November 2012 Newsletter. In it, I had been trying to find out who the "Tom" was in Toms Gully. He has been researching William Fuller and Mary Leader. He confirms that Thomas Charles Waters, married in 1870 to their daughter Isabella Ann, gave part of his land on Armidale Road for a family grave yard. There were burials there from 1878 (J W Hudson) , before the cemetery was gazetted.

Kempsey Council took it over in the 1960s. It was formally known as Uralgurra Cemetery for the Parish it was in, but was always referred to by the family as Toms Gully Cemetery. I was delighted

to learn the real story and thanked Norm for the information.

We had an email from Sharon who wanted a copy of the advertisement in the Macleay Argus for the Secretarial Studies Course (1 year full time), she attended in February 1986 at Kempsey TAFE. I thought that would be a simple task of microfilm reading but there were no advertisements for TAFE courses in the paper. This was confirmed by Yvonne Small; her husband Doug was teaching there at the time. I rang TAFE myself and they had an email from Sharon too. They were going to deal with the enquiry.

Another very interesting email was from Jonathan Wooding (Sir Warwick Fairfax Professor of Celtic Studies, University of Sydney). His research interests are in the Irish language and the use of Gaelic on gravestones in Australia. He is the great, great grandson of Hubert Patrick Macklin, town clerk of Kempsey in the 1880s. He and his mother visited Kempsey in 2005 when the headstone was in storage. He was amazed at the coincidence to discover the headstone was written in Gaelic as they had no idea Hubert Macklin was an Irish speaker. He is working on a paper about the monument and is driving up to see it as it is now back in situ. He would also like to meet anyone from the Society who is interested in talking about the headstone. I referred this to Phil Lee.

I phoned Jenny Colling from Kempsey Council who was keen to meet him as she was involved in the restoration of the headstone. She has since contacted him.

Chris contacted us during May and wanted information on the Cook/Koch family and their connection to Austral Eden. Ruth sent copies of family sheets plus information on Austral Eden.

Billie Crawford left two biographies of Amy Witting in my in-tray. One was from the Amy Witting website; the other was an article from the Guardian newspaper following her death on 18 October 2001. It was an interesting read. Amy Witting is her pseudonym. She was born Joan

Austral Fraser on 26 January 1918 (Australia day, hence the middle name of Austral). She married Les Levick in Kempsey in 1948 and was a teacher in Kempsey. Thereafter, she used her pseudonym to write poetry and novels. She became an Australian poet and novelist of some note.

An email arrived from Jane who recently discovered her great great grandfather came to Australia in 1854 from Ireland with a brother and not alone as she believed. John Dwyer's widow Margaret Maria Dwyer (nee Gorman) remarried a Mr Norman and died in Kempsey in 1914. Jane doesn't know why Margaret went to Kempsey (possibly to rejoin the Gorman family?) According to Jane, Margaret's son to John Dwyer, Jeremiah Antonio Dwyer also died in Kempsey in 1908. Jane wanted information from the grave records.

I was able to give her a death certificate number for Margaret, but there was no grave number or row in the cemetery listings. I did find an obituary in the Argus of January 8, 1915. Jeremiah Dwyer is not in the combined cemetery listings and there is no microfilm of the 1908 Argus.

Jane has since responded to my findings. She now thinks the son's name is John, not Jeremiah and he died in Sydney in 1933.

Sylvia sent an email enquiring about the ROLFE family. She believes a relative Gary Robert Rolfe died around 1995 and spent his last days in a nursing home in Kempsey. He wasn't in the cemetery listings and there is no family file for Rolfe. I referred her to Bruce Cain, who replied to me on 4 May saying he couldn't help as his cemetery listings don't go as far as 1995. He suggested she contact Walkers Funeral Directors.

Ruth researched the Salmon family for John Kidston; Kathy Ebbott looked through our files for information on Timothy Frances Donovan.

Garry Munday completed his research of James Doyle, jockey and some of his successful races, in

and around Kempsey and Port Macquarie for Fran Francis from New Zealand. He was able to post the information off to her on 5 May, following some difficulty in transferring the research fee in Australian dollars.

On 7 May, another email came in from Jonathan Wooding, the Professor of Celtic Studies at the University of Sydney. Jonathan is visiting the Museum later this month and was interested to meet with any Macklin descendants.

I told him there were no listings for Macklin in the phone directory. In his latest email, Jonathan told us the likely family connection would be Gosson. Val Miles knows Robert Gosson (the only listing in the directory). She spoke to his wife Helen who has done some family history research in the past, before she came to a dead end. Helen and Robert Gosson called into the Museum on 13 May with the information Helen collated. She has allowed me to copy the information for our files and for Jonathan. They are not in a position to meet up with Jonathan as Robert is undergoing cancer treatment. I replied to Jonathan and am hoping he will be able to confirm the dates when he will visit Kempsey.

Peggy Gould  
Research Section

## PHOTOGRAPHY REPORT

The Heritage Officer from Roads and Maritime Services enquired about a photograph of old Five Day Creek bridge for some interpretive signage they are putting up out there. They purchased two of these and sent us a copy of the proposed signage for review.

Ros sent us some photographs of her great grandfather, the Honourable E A T Perry and one of his sons, Harry. His residence was Lion's Court now 16 Short Street, West Kempsey. I will send Ros some recent photographs of the building.

We responded to an appeal by Ruth from the Kempsey Library for photographs and information

on indigenous servicemen for a display, "Too Dark for the Light Horse" which will be during NAIDOC Week. I supplied a list of some twenty names from our records however we only have photographs of five of these so the community may be able to come up with more.

Rob called in to order a couple of photographs and was able to identify quite a few other photos of the McGuire family. McGuire's Crossing near Crescent Head is named after this family.

We are working on photographs for a commemoration of the Macleay District Motor Cycle Club 50th anniversary in October. We found plenty of photographs in the Macleay Argus negative archive from the sixties and seventies.

Judy Waters  
Photography Section

## MUSEUM REPORT

Donations during the past month have included a combination chest of drawers which has replaced the trunk in the bedroom of the pioneer cottage.

The February Journal and Newsletter went out a little late. Faye rang to say she was thrilled to see the article on her cousin Stanley Carpenter.

Garry and his helpers have been busy with the Waterways project headed by the Port Macquarie District Historical Society and one of the outcomes has been to add to our knowledge of the artefacts.

Water damaged certificates and posters from last year have been picked up from conservator Anne Kennett's workshop in Coffs Harbour. These have been copied and only the copies will be placed on display, the originals will be kept in storage. The restored originals have been remounted and reframed by Wonderland Framing.

The Photography Manual has been completed with Debbie and Judy's help and a copy will be made available at the front desk. It will be useful for new volunteers to read if they are interested in moving on from the desk. There is also a set of

Guidelines for Cleaning and Housekeeping as recommended in the Preservation Needs Assessment.

Other publications recommended by the Standards Programme 2014 have been printed out and copies filed at the Front desk and also in the Records Room. These include *Continuous Cultures* (Principles and guidelines for Australian museums working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural heritage), *Code of Ethics for Art, History*

*and Science Museums* and *Managing Volunteers in Museums and Cultural Collections*.

I attended the launch of *The History of the Catholic Church in the Macleay Valley* yesterday and purchased a copy of the book for our library. We now also have the NSW Govt Gazettes Compendium 1841-1850 as passed by an earlier meeting and partly funded by Up-River Quilters.

Phil Lee

## Exploring Our Collection – the Woodcock Mail Coach Bugle

One of the recent additions to our collection was the bugle used on the Armidale-Port Macquarie Mail Coach in the early 1900's. The donation was from the grandson of Aaron Treve Woodcock. It is a double coil keyless bugle, made from copper and brass. No maker names evident. The mouthpiece is intact and joined to body by a chain. It has two rings for attaching a shoulder strap.

The bugle was owned by Aaron Treve Woodcock, a mail coach driver who lived at Bellbrook. Aaron was the driver of the Armidale to Port Macquarie mail coach which passed through the Bellbrook relay station before stopping at Kempsey then Port Macquarie. Aaron's son, also named Aaron was born at Uralgurra on 8 October 1905, but was

better known as Tommy, the handler of the racehorse Phar Lap.

The bugle was donated by John Woodcock, grandson of Aaron senior, of Wauchope, NSW. In an accompanying note, John wrote: "*This bugle was owned by Aaron Treve Woodcock, mail coach driver from Armidale to Bellbrook relay station and stopping at Pt Macquarie & Kempsey.*"

*It was used in the event of problems such as robbery etc & also as a signal coming into relay stations that fresh horses were required.*

*It has been donated to Kempsey Museum by his grandson John Woodcock.*

*PS Aaron Treve Woodcock was also the father of Tommy Woodcock of Phar Lap fame."*

Aaron Treve Woodcock was born in Ryde, Sydney around 1873. His presence on the Upper Macleay might be explained by the marriage of his elder sister Mary Gaden Woodcock to Alfred ('Ap') Davis, the licensee of the Merriwa (later Uralgurra Hotel) and afterwards the Bellbrook Hotel. Aaron married Annie Smith in Sydney around 1896 and had moved to the Macleay in the early 1900's.

Ap Davis had established a hotel four miles (eight kilometres) downstream from Bellbrook at



*The Woodcock Coach Bugle (Photo: MRHS)*

Uralgurra in 1888 which became a staging post. The importance of Uralgurra waned with improvements to the road between Kempsey and Armidale and in 1913 Ap took over the license of the newly built Bellbrook Hotel from his brother George.

Aaron was injured when a heavy piece of luggage fell on him and injured his shoulder, according to his grandson, John. He was unable to continue his occupation as coach driver and moved his family to Port Macquarie around 1911, where he became involved in the fishing industry. He passed away there in 1952.

The bugle was used in the event of problems such as robbery, and also as a signal coming into relay stations that fresh horses were required. Inns or change stations were located along coach routes where fresh horses replaced tired ones. A bugle carried on the coach was always blown as the coach approached the inn or change station and was a familiar sound as the coach approached the town.

Change stations were usually fifteen to thirty miles apart, where fresh horses replaced tired ones. Every driver had his own call, so the groom knew which team of horses to have ready. This system

meant that changeovers could occur as quickly as possible and the coach could continue on its way. The bugle is part of the historic transport system of the early twentieth century, coaches carrying mail, passengers and luggage and other goods between isolated towns and villages. It was the forerunner of the automobile horn. It has social significance as the bugle call was a familiar sound to the inhabitants as the coach approached each town. It has been in the possession of the Woodcock family for around 100 years and its provenance is unmistakable. While showing signs of its working life, the bugle is in good condition.

The bugle is an important relic of the transport system of the early twentieth century and the coaching era with high historical and social significance. It is also associated with the father of Tommy Woodcock, who achieved fame as the faithful companion of one of Australia's most famous racehorses.

## REFERENCES

Benson, Margaret 1978 *Tommy Woodcock*, Shenley Publications, Melbourne  
NSW BDM Indexes  
National Library of Australia Trove  
Notes from Mrs Billie Crawford, MRHS

## Kempsey Centenary and Jubilee of Kempsey Municipality

At a Council meeting in early 1936 Alderman J B McElhone, a local Doctor, pointed out the urgent necessity of building a children's block at the local Hospital and suggested the organised celebration of Kempsey's Centenary in 1936 might be a way of raising funds for this project. A Public Meeting held on 7 May to celebrate the Centenary of Kempsey (1836-1936) and the Jubilee of Kempsey Municipality (1886-1936) met with an enthusiastic public reception and an Executive Committee under the chairmanship of Mayor H E Chapple was formed.

It was decided to hold the celebration during the North Coast National Spring Show in November.



*The Mayfair Theatre Float in the 1936 Kempsey Centenary Parade. (Photo:MRHS)*

A public holiday on Monday 2 November was approved and the celebrations were planned to last for a week. They were to begin on Sunday 1 November with Divine Services in various churches from 6 am, a Centenary United Service in Kempsey Park at 11 am and a Sacred Concert in the Mayfair Theatre in the evening. On Monday, the Centenary Procession was to take place with the rest of the week various sporting and social events were to be held.

At the end of October, forty-six entries for the procession had been received and placed in suitable positions with the theme of the procession being the March of Time. On the Saturday night before the Centenary, the main streets of Kempsey had been decorated with bunting and strings of coloured electric lights, against a threatening backdrop of palls of smoke from terrific bushfires due to boisterous winds and dry weather conditions.

By 11 am on Monday morning however weather conditions had eased somewhat as the officials assembled the procession at its starting point in Forth Street. Later stages of the procession were lined up along both sides of Smith Street. Thousands of people thronged the footpaths to watch what was described as easily the most extensive procession ever staged in Kempsey.

The procession moved off at 12 noon, from Forth Street down Smith Street into Belgrave Street and then proceeded to the Kempsey Showground. It was led by the Mounted police followed by the Macleay Caledonian Pipe Band with S B Lacey as Drum-Major. Mr J P Partidge mounted high on a buggy was dressed as Father Time in a robe with his white beard brandishing a scythe. Behind him walked Aboriginals carrying shields and spears and these were followed by a float with Aboriginals from Bellbrook in a bush camp and also a gum leaf band. The Rudd Family (organised by Mrs Debenham) in a horse drawn vehicle then led a group of pioneers in various conveyances.

There was a bicycle built for two with a comely

Daisy played by Bert Chamberlain with H McKenzie providing the other half of the motive power. Misses Gwen Sheridan, Doreen Prior and Jaqueline Hollander were equestriennes riding side saddle in the tasteful older style. Other participants were R Knauer as an older style mounted trooper, George Tweddle as the bushranger Thunderbolt, and M Perrin as a mounted mailman with saddlebags.

Other floats included those of the Kempsey-Crescent Head Surf Club, the Returned Sailors' and Soldiers' Imperial League, the Mayfair Theatre, Baby Health Centre, Macleay Plaster Works, Miss N King's Dancing School and the District Hospital. Trade Displays included a float by Sloan's Bakery representing an enormous Vienna Loaf. On the Peace float arranged by Mr S B Lacey, Della Lacey was posed as the Angel of Peace.

The procession made its way to the Kempsey Showground where they paraded for the judging. First prizewinners in the procession were the District Hospital (Best Local Institution Float), North Coast Steam Navigation Company and Macleay Co-op Dairy Company (shared best Trade Float), Mr Ern Wooderson and Municipal Council employees' Bark Shack erected on a lorry (Best Old-Time Float) and Bellbrook Float with Natives on the March ( shared Best Aboriginal Display).

After lunch there was an exhibition of maypole dancing by the Smithtown convent pupils, champions of the Mid-North Coast. The pupils were dressed in the costumes of 1836 whilst the maypole ribbons were green and gold, the Centenary colours. A sports programme followed with events such as athletics, woodchopping, cycling, Tug of War and novelties such as musical chairs and pillow fights.

At 2 pm Mayor Chapple and Shire President Johnson welcomed their official visitors. The Centenary was officially opened by the Commonwealth Minister for Defence, Sir Archdale Parkhill, who spoke at some length on

the history and importance of the Macleay District. The Honorable Dr Earl Page, Member for Cowper and Minister for Commerce, then moved a vote of thanks to Sir Archdale Parkhill and recounted some notable Macleay citizens including Drs Lancaster and Casement.

Fortunately, rare film footage of the event was discovered by Dr Robert Smith of Southern Cross University at the National Film and Sound Archives (NFSA) in Canberra and it is hoped we will shortly be able to link to this outstanding day via our website.

## New Acquisitions to our Library

Recent acquisitions to our library included the following:

Encyclopedia of Aboriginal Australia  
History of Catholic Church in the Macleay Valley  
NSW Government Gazettes 1840-1849 (CD-ROM)

## 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  
Macleay Valley Coast Tourism  
Museums Australia  
Museums and Galleries NSW  
Royal Australian Historical Society



## Macleay River Historical Society

*Office Bearers:*

**President**

Phil Lee

**Vice Presidents**

Garry Munday

Tom Plunkett

**Secretary & Public Officer**

Ruth Woodward

**Treasurer**

Barbara Coughran

**Patrons**

Billie Crawford

Terry Eakin

Geraldine Yabsley

**Postal Address**

P.O. Box 390, Kempsey, NSW 2440

Phone: (02) 6562 7572

*Email:* [mrhs5@bigpond.com](mailto:mrhs5@bigpond.com)

*Website:* [www.kempseymuseum.org](http://www.kempseymuseum.org)

**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