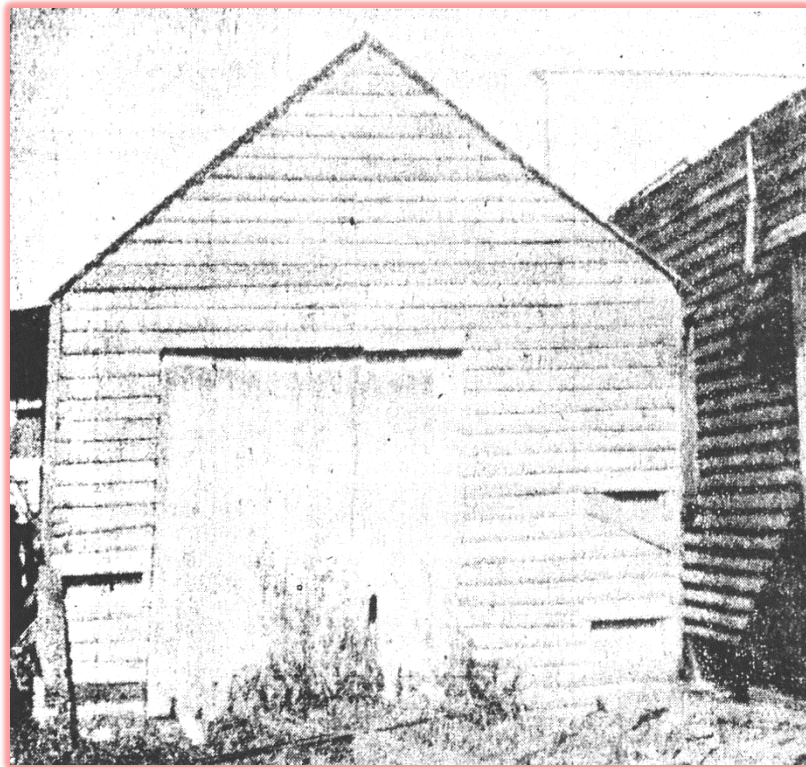


# CLARENCE RIVER ADVOCATE

March 2023

Volume 24 Number 1



## ***STONE COTTAGE and MUSEUM***

***Corner Wharf and Grafton Streets, Maclean***

**(Location address only- see inside for postal address)**

***Open 1pm – 4pm Saturdays***

***Tuesday 9am – 12 Noon.***

***(Other times by appointment)***

## MACLEAN DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| <i>Patrons</i>              | Hon. Chris Gulaptis MLA, John Wells, Kevin Hogan MP, Mayor Ian Tiley. |
| <i>President</i>            | Carolyn Cameron   |
| <i>Vice President</i>       | Ken Muller  |
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| <i>Journal Editor</i>       | Ken Muller  |
| <i>Computer Group</i>       | Peter Lowe  |
| <i>Management Committee</i> | Executive plus Peg Hawkes, Peter Lowe, Maureen Muller                 |

### BECOME AN ACTIVE MEMBER

WE CAN ALWAYS HAVE MORE HELP WITH THE MUSEUM ROSTER - SINCE WE ARE OPENING WEDNESDAY AND SATURDAY - 1.00PM TO 4.00PM -.

GENERAL ASSISTANCE WITH RESEARCH, FILING, NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS, ETC. ON TUESDAY MORNINGS 8.30AM TO 12.00 NOON.

*All correspondence to be addressed to: The Secretary*

*Maclean District Historical Society*

*PO Box 257. Maclean 2463.*

*Phone: (02) 66453416*

*Website: <http://www.macleanhistory.org.au>*

*Email: [museum@macleanhistory.org.au](mailto:museum@macleanhistory.org.au)*

EDITORS COMMENTS – Welcome to the March 2023 edition. We are back to our regular opening times and unfortunately a slow stream of visitors.

Tony Snape has resigned from the role of Public Officer. This is to convey a big thank you for all your assistance, help and support of the Maclean Bicentennial and Stone Cottage Museum.

You have been the custodian of the gun collection for an extensive time as well as being the Public Officer of the Society. Your valuable input in communication with the builders of the Bicentennial Museum will always be remembered, as well as your assistance and support by being an office bearer of the society in the form of the Treasurer.

Your support has always been maintained towards the Museum in the form of your donations to the Museum and your loans were appreciated for our various displays.

*A reminder about the newspaper articles printed in our Advocate, we are required to reproduce them unaltered. This includes grammar, spelling and facts.*

## **CORRECTION**

**Please note: In our last newsletter, I mistakenly attributed Helen Britton as being the daughter of LINDA Dwyer- she was the daughter of JENNY Dwyer - I apologise for this error.**

**Carolyn Cameron**

## **CONTENTS.**

- Locals to Celebrate – Percy Dwyer.
- MDHS 2022 - President's Report.
- New fire station. Up-to-date buildings. Opened at Maclean.
- Argyle hotel.
- 100 Years Ago.

## **LOCALS TO CELEBRATE – PERCY DWYER.**

In the last newsletter we celebrated the work of Helen Britton, granddaughter of Percy Dwyer of Palmers Island.

This time, we tell his story - and it is some story indeed.

Percy a very well-known and legendary horseman. His father, John Patrick Dwyer was a horseman of some note in the Snowy River area, so it is no surprise that Percy inherited his love of horses from his father, Percy came to the Lower Clarence, first working on and leasing various properties, before purchasing the one on which his son, John, still lives and farms.

Percy worked that farm as well as using his horse skills in training and breaking horses for the Waugh family of Taloumbi Station. At the time, the Waugh holding stretched from Angourie to the Sandon River, but when some was later sold, Percy bought and also leased land at Shelley Beach, which was later resumed by the NSW State Government for a National Park.

Percy, and indeed the whole family, participated in Agricultural Shows up and down the entire East Coast winning many major events and making a name for themselves which is still talked about in Agricultural Show circles. Their interests in horses also were shown in their love of horseracing and all other horse events Australia wide.

In 1956, as a result of winning major riding and jumping events at the Sydney Royal Show, Percy was invited to attend trials for the Melbourne Olympics; however, the organisers believed him to be too old to compete.

He did achieve his goal of attending an Olympics, however, when he went to the Munich Olympics of 1972 as a groom for the horses ridden by John Fahey, who was a lifelong friend.

Percy's active life was cut short when he was injured in an accident involving a cattle truck (02/11/1981).

# STONE COTTAGE AND BICENTENNIAL MUSEUM



Maclean District Historical Society Inc.

## ANNUAL REPORT

What a relief to be back to “normal” after the last few very difficult COVID years!

We have found our visitor numbers have suddenly increased as people are feeling much more confident in moving around; our financial bottom line has improved and we look forward to that improving further; our volunteer numbers have also increased and we are finding it much easier to fill a door duty roster.

This year has been very busy once again.

Our first major activity has been the collaboration with Arts Northern Rivers and Frances Belle Parker. For a period of 6 weeks, our group met with Frances and the local Yaegl community to gather information for her artwork which featured the Old Fig Tree that stood proudly in the local showground for many centuries. It was felled in 1984 when it was decreed unsafe because of rot, causing great grief to the Yaegl community - (as well as the wider community.) The resulting artwork sits proudly in our Bicentennial Museum, along with an audio of stories, comments and songs provided for Frances by the community. The following Open Day was a success, with Frances introducing her work to the wider community of Lower Clarence.

From these meetings, the Yaegl group expressed the desire to write a history of Ulgundahi Island, which we hope will mean another collaboration with the community.

We also had an exhibition of flood photos from our collection, dating as far back as the 1890 flood. This was at the Thank You Day, or Flood Recovery Day held at Maclean Showground to thank volunteers for their flood work. Our aim was to show newcomers how Maclean was affected by past floods, and remind old residents of what had been, so future volunteers could be armed with knowledge should our levee fail or be overtopped.

Our grant committee has been successful, gaining grants for a new laptop and a Zoom recorder with which we hope to record some of the knowledge accumulated over many years by our past president and now curator, Edith Dobbin. Edith's wealth of knowledge of the collection and our history is an invaluable one that we don't want to lose. We also have applied for and received money to purchase trolleys to enable us to move objects easily, wire storage shelving for our downstairs storage area and new (and more comfortable) chairs for our volunteers. We have also been working on assessing, sorting, and entering a large collection of documents from the Estate of the Late Ruth McAulay.

We have an archivist working tirelessly, using our new laptop, to commence the mammoth job of digitising our collection, currently recorded since 1970 only in card form and Peter is doing his utmost to digitise our vast photographic collection. It will take them some years to do, I am sure. Along with these activities, we are starting a stocktake of our collection - again something that will take years - so far, our kitchen display has been checked, showing perhaps just how far we have to go.

Our new displays are of early Lower Clarence Rugby League and "Grandma's Treasures". We also note the large display Edith put up last year which shows some of the many tools and ships models used



by master shipbuilders, the Schwonberg /Towner families. The slipway, built circa 1890 and used by the family, is still visible today.

Thanks to Clarence Valley Council for the assistance with rates, water and electricity and fire safety; we hope our safety compliance will be done very soon! Thanks to them also for the prompt attention to our retaining wall and fascia boards on the cottage exterior.

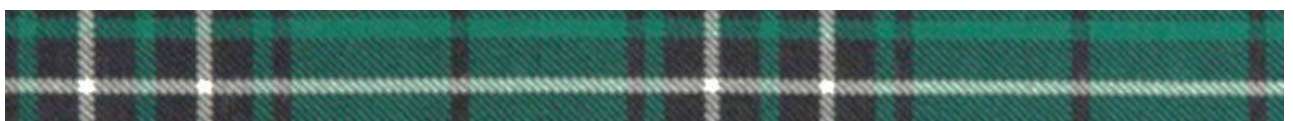
As always, continuing in the background, (particularly on our busy Tuesday mornings), we undertook many research requests, including family history research, receiving and entering many donated items and photographs, setting up displays and working to preserve the items we already hold for the future.

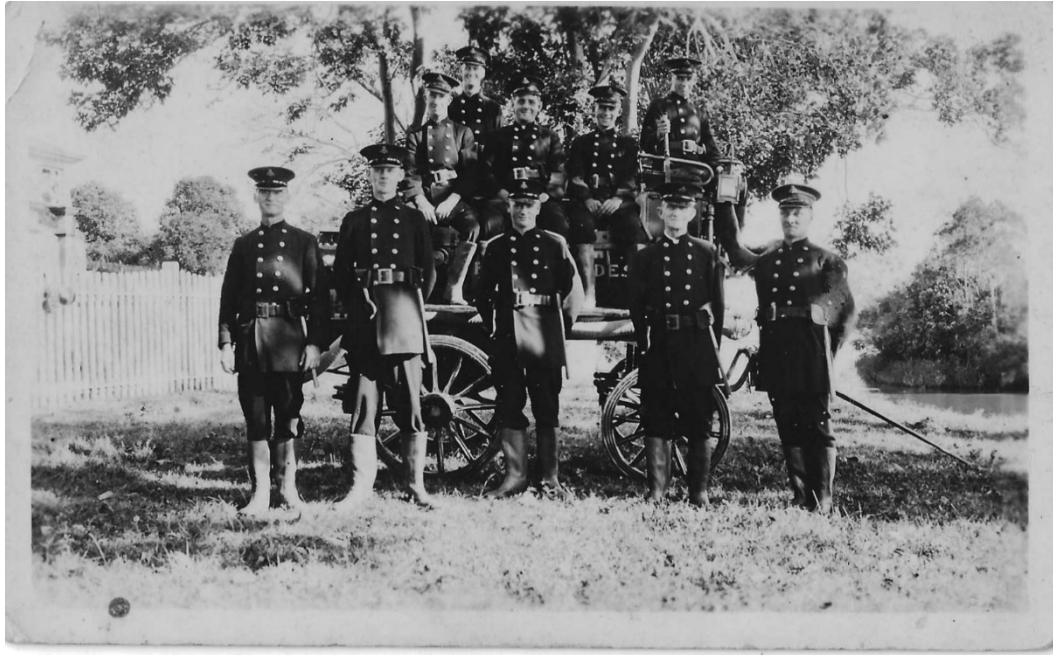
Thanks go to Joan Kelly for her advice, Arts Northern Rivers for a wonderful exercise, our curator, Edith Dobbin, for valued work in the museum, and Ken Muller who took over the reins of the Society while I was away ill for 2 months, Trish Bowes for her meticulous meeting minutes, all committee members, busy researchers, door duty volunteers and the Tuesday team for their tireless work.

### **Our volunteers are all special!**

Carolyn Cameron

President - Maclean District Historical Society Inc.





*EXTRACT FROM 'The Daily Examiner' Saturday 28th of May, 1932:*

NEW FIRE STATION. UP-TO-DATE BUILDINGS. OPENED AT MACLEAN.

Wednesday was a red letter day in the history of the Maclean Fire Brigade, for in the evening was celebrated the opening and occupying of fine, up-to-date brick premises in the main street as a new home for the brigade.

The function took the form of a carnival evening, the mayor (Ald. W. Heffernan) presiding, and the principal guests were Mr. J. F Beswick, fire brigade's representative on the Board of Fire Commissioners; Inspector J. Meeve, of head quarters staff and Mr C. Broadhurst, principal electrician. Captain R. Nicholson and the fireman of the local brigade, together with a number of citizens, were also present.

After the loyal toast the Mayor proposed "The Fire Commissioners" and said the value of the work done throughout the State by fire brigades was well known and appreciated. He was pleased that the Commissioner had seen fit to provide Maclean Fire Brigade with up-to-date and comfortable quarters, which were also an ornament to the



town. He recalled the useful work done by the local fire brigade in its infancy, with primitive appliances.

Mr Beswick, in responding, said he was grateful to be there to see the transfer of the brigade into more comfortable premises. He was sorry that their President (Hon. T. J. Smith) was not with them, but they were having a busy time at the head office. The speaker briefly outlined the constitution and function of the board and said that funds were provided on the basis of municipalities and shire's 25 per cent, government 25 per cent, and insurance companies 50 per cent. Funds raised in any district was spent in that district. By being linked under one central control the board was enabled to purchase supplies in bulk at a considerable saving. For instance, there were amongst the largest purchases of hose in the world, and were able to buy cheaper on that account, and passed it on to the Fire Brigades at almost cost price. They also had their own workshops, where much material was made.

Continuing, the speaker said that Maclean had to start in a small way with primitive equipment, but it proved serviceable and effective. The board desired to have the highest form of efficiency and if there was not a reasonable prospect of obtaining this, they would advise the council accordingly. He also pointed out the advantages of standardised equipment and training, as a result of which a man could be taken from anyone brigade in New South Wales and be able to take his place in any other. The most costly equipment was useless without good men, and this they had in their volunteer service. They were very effective and efficient, and with little training could handle up-to-date equipment equal to the men in Sydney. They were equal, if not superior to the paid men and the reason was probably due to the fact that they loved their work and desired to help their town to be a better place to live in. He spoke of the work done at a recent tragic fire in Armidale, which would reflect the glory of the volunteer fireman of Australia. Although two were blown up and their leader taken to hospital, the other five men carried on and at considerable personal risk to save a magazine of explosives when practically everything else was burned.

Mr Beswick referred to the public spiritedness of one of Maclean's lady citizens, Miss E Schipp, in providing funds to build the new premises, and renting it to them at a figure that would scarcely provide bank interest. They would to see competitors from other North Coast towns as well as Maclean at the October competitions.

Mr. L. A. MacDonald, in proposing the toast of the "Maclean Fire Brigade" related some of its early history and valuable work it had done. He said they would enable the brigade to be represented at Wagga. He congratulated the captain and men on obtaining such fine premises.

Captain R Nicholson responded and said that at one time they had the choice of having a fine station or improved engine and chose the latter. They now have good premises and he would be glad to move out of the old shed that they had done duty so long.

Fireman H. Redman, R. Schipp, R. Stennett and A Tunks also responded.

Mr. J. A. Polson proposed the health of Miss Schipp who made it possible for the brigade to obtain the very fine home and also made herself responsible for the very satisfactory way they had been treated that night.

Mr. MacDonald responded on behalf of Miss Schipp and expressed that lady's pleasure in doing what she could for the benefit of the town. He hoped that others would emulate her example.

Mr Meave proposed that the "Builder" and said the job was a first-class one and reflected much credit on the contractor, he was pleased to see was their Captain. He was there at the inception of the brigade 6 and a half years ago, and at different time since they had much to thank Mr. Nicholson for. The Maclean Brigade had acquitted themselves well and he was pleased to see them housed in a fine building.

Captain Nicholson and Messrs. P. Daniels (Painter), L. Schwed and A. Cameron responded.

The Mayor proposed the “Visitor” and Mr. Broadhurst responded. He said there was there to see that the electrical fittings were in order and he was pleased to find several everything satisfactory.

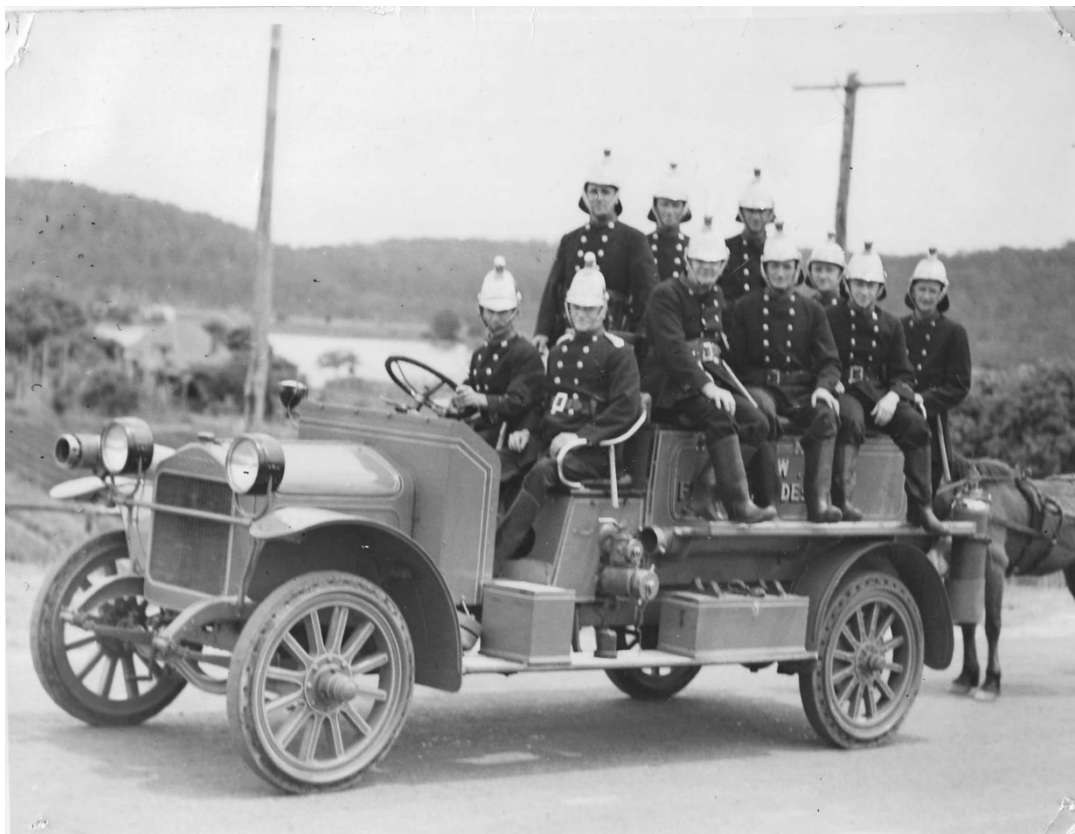
Other toasts were the “Ladies”, the “Press” and the “Chairman”.

During the evening Mr. F. Daniels entertained the gathering with some clever paper work and sleight of hand.

**THE BUILDING.** The dimensions of the new premises are described in the following article. The ceiling is painted fibro and the walls plastered. The windows are of arctic glass. A feature in the front door is the three leaves hung with a McCabe patent doorhanger. The rooms at the rear are nicely furnished and the whole surroundings give an impression of comfort and utility.

*EXTRACT FROM ‘The Daily Examiner’, 6 April, 1932.*

Mr R Nicholson, contractor, is engaged on the construction of the new brick building which is to be the headquarters for the Maclean Fire Brigade. The building which adjoins Galloway's Garage in River Street, is composed of an engine room 24 ft. x 14 ft., at the rear of which is a watch room 10 ft. x 8 ft. and a bedroom 10 ft. by 10 ft. with a storeroom and shower room at the back and a 1000 gallon tank at the rear. The walls will be 11 ft. high and the building will be enclosed with a paling fence. The new home of the brigade should be a considerable improvement on the building in Stanley Street, which is served since the establishment of the first station a little over five years ago, when a horse drawn Turbine was in use which made way for the present Garford motor engine. It will be a pity if the present bell continues to do service as seems likely in the quarters as it would be much more advantageous to have each fireman's home fitted with a bell, as is done in some other centres, thus securing a much more efficient service.



*(Back from left): Clyde Redman, Frank Daniels, Roy Schipp, & Eric Giese (front): Arthur Tunks, Bob Nicholson, Hunter Redman, PH Philp, Charlie McKinnon & Bill Apps.*



*Argyll Hotel*



*Clarence and Richmond Examiner (Grafton, NSW: 1889 - 1915), Saturday 4 March 1893, page 4*

**ARGYLE HOTEL.** - This week, Mr. Joseph Walsh (contractor) commenced the erection of a new building to be used as an Argyle Hotel in place of the old structure, which has been shifted back to allow the erection of the new premises on the site of the old. The dimensions, according to the plan, are 70 feet by 48 feet. The ground floor, which is to be built of stone on a concrete foundation, will contain seven large rooms in the main body and two on the verandah with two spacious verandahs. The second storey, to be constructed of brick work, will contain nine rooms, with large hall, bathrooms, and balconies. Very probably the building will be roofed with slate. The ornamental work will give the new building a very pretty finish and the architect (Mr. F. Schaeffer) deserves credit for his work in designing such a useful and ornamental structure. Mr. James Cummins, the proprietor, is to be commended for his enterprise.



# \* 100 Yrs. Ago \*

**JANUARY 1923**

## **MACLEAN BUSH FIRES.**

During the last week the weather has been exceptionally hot and dry. The surrounding district is very dry, and the grass is in such a state that it burns very freely. On Thursday last a fire broke out near the Taloumbi station, and in a very short time the whole bush was burned in right to the town boundary. The residents declare it to be the largest, bushfire they have seen in the district. At times the flames reached the tops of the trees. Most of the fences in the wake of the fire were burned, and it was only by hard work on the part of the residents that some of the houses were saved.

The forest between Ashby and Tullymorgan is also burning, and the blaze on Thursday night could be seen from Maclean. Two of the culverts on the main road to Maclean have been burned right out and it was only by clearing a new road that the cream van was able to get through. Fences and everything that will burn are being reduced to ashes.

## **ACCIDENT AT MACLEAN.**

On Friday last Mr. C. Farlow had sent his lad to the factory with three cans of cream. The horse was a very fast trotting one and when rounding the corner of Farlow's lane the boy took the turn too sharply and collided with the corner post, capsizing the sulky, knocking off both wheels and spilt the three cans of cream on the road. The horse bolted and pulled up in River street minus all but one shaft and the harness.

## **CHATSWORTH HOTEL DESTROYED BY FIRE.**

About 3 o'clock yesterday morning the Britannia Hotel, at Chatsworth Island, comprising two weatherboard single-storied buildings, was burned to the ground, despite the strenuous efforts of 200 neighbours who attempted to quench the flames with buckets.



## **CHATSWORTH**

The storm on Thursday afternoon was very severe in places, rooting up trees at Mororo, whilst a tank which was empty at Mr. Hammond's Mororo, was blown right across the North Arm lodging at last in Mr. H. Fischer's canefield on Chatsworth Island. The side was blown out of Mr. Joe Kenny's barn on Warregah Island, besides doing damage to other buildings in the locality.

**February 1923**

## **LOWER CLARENCE HOSPITAL.**

The residents of the Lower Clarence are reminded that a meeting of those interested in the local hospital carnival will be held in the Shire Hall to-night at 8 o'clock. Since, the decision of the public to erect a new hospital which has been endorsed by the subscribers there is a deeper interest being taken in the local institution. A £30 programme has been put on for the sports carnival and the total amount has already been donated by local residents. The decision of the ballot for the election of committeemen on Saturday next is being awaited with the keenest interest. Quite a number of new men have been nominated this year, and it is anticipated that a good percentage of these will be elected. The ladies are reminded that at the meeting to-night arrangements are to be made for the carrying out of their part of the programme on the day of the carnival.

## **MACLEAN SCHOOL BUILDING**

The Education department has accepted the tender of Till and Robertson of Maclean, for the kindergarten room at the Maclean school.

## **MACLEAN TELEPHONE SYSTEM.**

The underground cable system in connection with the Maclean telephone service has been completed, and the overhead wires have been removed. This is much appreciated by local business people. The removal of the bulky overhead cables has improved the general appearance of River street.



*Britannia Hotel*



## RESEARCH ENQUIRIES

*Email us with details of what you already have plus what you would like, and we will endeavour to help. Research fees are \$25 per family, postage extra. If it is a large body of research, we may ask for a little more.*

1. Email enquiry re old dam in hill behind Illarwill hamlet from Paul Mallard. It was to supply water to village pre-main water line connection.
2. Another enquiry about Civic Hall. This time by a heritage firm from Queensland.
3. Visit by Harold O'Keefe – re. "Turrawan" Private Hospital and his family – Phillip O'Keefe and Michael Joseph O'Keefe (not local family).
4. Thank you from Cam McConnell and some more information on his family.
5. Request for photo of old NSW Bank from Allan Gibson – editor of Westpac's National Communicator Magazine.
6. Request for "Hayward" Family History. We sent him all of the family history. It was a big job.
7. Gina Scheer (Virtus Heritage) photos of early events at Civic Hall – sent one of 1924. Also sent six photos of various renovations of the Hall up to today. We had the Drama book.
8. John Thomas Watkins born Woodford Island. Knew nothing about this Record of family in Clarence Pioneer History.
9. There was another enquiry about the Civic Hall and whether flooring has been replaced and what date.
10. Further enquiry re flooring of Civic Hall from Virtus Heritage. Reply was one floor in 1975 was "down to tongue of tongue groove." Replaced in 1983. Question was asked, did that mean the floor was in a bad state of repair but was not replaced until 1983? Carol Cameron stated she had sent the reply and the information about the original flooring being worn down to the "tongue of the tongue and groove" and was replaced came from Museum cards, which would have been written by Lin McSwan. The 1975 date came from another book. Main thing to note was that original floor had been replaced.
11. Enquiry re Thomas and Elizabeth Field family and why son Gordon Sidney Field was born, October 1899, at Palmers Island considering the family came from Sydney. Only connection found was that Elizabeth Field's parents were at Palmers Island in the late 1880s. Her father was Dr John Govett Smith and maybe their daughter was visiting them. Email sent re information on Dr John Govett Smith and an obituary for Mrs Smith.
12. Greg Marsh asked for copies of early Harwood ferry photos. Peter Lowe helped Yvonne to find the photos.
13. Enquiry from Vicki Schipp about John Schipp Senior who married Emma Davis; and John Schipp Junior who married Margaret Gibson and their families.



## MACLEAN DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

ABN 73 033 923 282

The Bicentennial Museum and Stone Cottage

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

Please complete form to enable us to maintain accurate up to date records.

Family Name: .....

Given Name: .....

Other Given Name: .....

Address: .....

Postal Address: (If Different) .....

Telephone: .....

Mobile: .....

Email: .....

SIGNATURE: .....

Date: ..... / ..... / 2023

#### Membership

\$10 per year (.....)

#### Newsletter

Email No Cost (.....)

Pick-Up Museum

No Cost (.....)

Posted \$10 (.....)

#### BANK DETAILS

Maclean District Historical Society Inc.

BSB: 533 000

Account: 32853877

Include SURNAME and 'SUBS' in payment information.

PLEASE EMAIL THIS FORM TO [museum@macleanhistory.org.au](mailto:museum@macleanhistory.org.au) if making a direct deposit.



## MACLEAN DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

### PUBLICATION COSTS

| Book Title   | Total Cost Posted (\$) | Book Cost (\$) |
|--|------------------------|----------------|
| Maclean, The First Fifty Years                                   | 54.35                  | 40.00          |
| History of Education on the Lower Clarence - Past Schools        | 25.95                  | 15.00          |
| History of Education on the Lower Clarence - Maclean             | 25.95                  | 15.00          |
| History of Education on the Lower Clarence - Maclean High School | 30.95                  | 20.00          |
| A Tour Among the Mills (Sugar Industry)                          | 25.95                  | 15.00          |
| Lower Clarence Cemetery List                                     | 25.95                  | 15.00          |
| Discovery and Settlement of the Lower Clarence                   | 16.75                  | 6.00           |
| Ferries of the Lower Clarence                                    | 20.95                  | 10.00          |
| Ferries of the Lower Clarence - CD                               | 20.95                  | 10.00          |
| Ferries of the Lower Clarence - CD and Book                      | 25.95                  | 15.00          |
| Shark Creek Tales  | 17.75                  | 7.00           |
| Champions in Sport   | 15.95                  | 5.00           |
| McFarland Bridge Centenary                                       | 5.00                   | 5.00           |
| Fishing Industry Lower Clarence River                            | 30.95                  | 20.00          |
| Amateur Dramatics - Maclean to 1962                              | 20.95                  | 10.00          |
| Brooms Head Revisited  | 25.95                  | 15.00          |
| Brooms Head Revisited - CD                                       | 20.75                  | 10.00          |
| Maclean Scottish Connection                                      | 30.95                  | 20.00          |
| Maclean To the Reef and Back                                     | 18.75                  | 8.00           |
| Maclean and the 'Great War'                                      | 21.35                  | 10.00          |
| Clarence Valley WW1 Volunteers                                   | 47.95                  | 30.00          |
| Maclean Brass Band   | 25.95                  | 15.00          |
| From Canefields to Battlefields                                  | 35.95                  | 25.00          |
| Wings Over Calliope  | 25.95                  | 15.00          |
| Twins of Townsend  | 20.75                  | 10.00          |
| Rivers, Rowing, Racing and Regattas                              | 39.35                  | 25.00          |
| Do You Remember Them?  | 52.95                  | 35.00          |
| Michael Rush - champion Australian sculler                       | 55.95                  | 38.00          |

The Museum has published a substantial list of publications on different aspects of the history of Maclean and the surrounding area. Including the areas, World War 1 history and the Schwonberg publications. This updated list of our publications shows the total cost of sending the publications to interested parties via the post. Total cost is a combination of the cost of the publication itself, plus the packaging costs and postal costs. These two costs are based on the size of the publication.



# MACLEAN DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.



***LIKE US ON FACEBOOK (Maclean Museum/Facebook)***

***INSTAGRAM-macleanmuseum2463***

***Our Society meets on the third Tuesday of every month in  
our meeting room at the Museum at 9.30 am.***