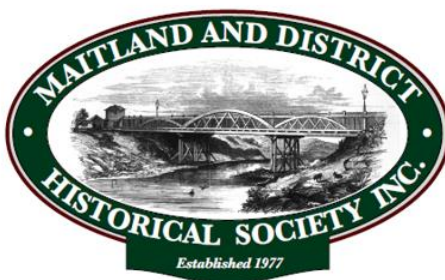


**President:**

Kevin Short OAM

**Patron:**

Dr Cameron Archer AM

Web: [www.maitlandhistorical.org](http://www.maitlandhistorical.org)**Secretary:**

Steve Bone

**Address**PO Box 333  
MAITLAND NSW 2320**Phone:**

0468 438 990

Email: [maitlandhistorical@gmail.com](mailto:maitlandhistorical@gmail.com)

ABN: 96 156 309 595

# NEWSLETTER N<sup>o</sup> 60

*29 February 2024*

It takes the Earth approximately 365 days and 6 hours to orbit the Sun. It takes the Earth approximately 24 hours or a day to rotate on its axis. This means our year is not an exact number of days so every four years we 'add' a day to February so the daily rotation can catch up with its lunar orbit – well almost!

Here's the interesting bit that I'll almost bet you're not aware of ... every hundred years we 'skip' the leap year unless the year is divisible by 400 but even this isn't a sure bet. The reason being is that the 'normal' leap year adds 44 minutes too much each time it comes about and to combat this problem, we 'leap' the leap years that are divisible by 100 but not those divisible by 400. Again, the question is why? It's because the 100 year 'adjustment' is not quite accurate either ... are you confused?

The upshot is that we skipped the leap years in 1800 and 1900 and will skip it again in 2100. The year 2000 however, was a leap year because it's divisible by 400. I guess that's reasonable though because, if you remember, the year 2000 was going to be Armageddon and that the world's *IT equipment* would become redundant. That said, the fireworks were good!

When scouting through the Internet I discovered history didn't stop just because it was a leap year. These things all happened on February 29:

## Pre-1600

- 888 – Odo, count of Paris, is crowned king of West Francia (France) by Archbishop Walter of Sens at Compiègne.
- 1504 – Christopher Columbus uses his knowledge of a lunar eclipse that night to convince Jamaican natives to provide him with supplies.

## 1601–1900

- 1644 – Abel Tasman's second Pacific voyage begins as he leaves Batavia in command of three ships.
- 1704 – In Queen Anne's War, French forces and Native Americans stage a raid on Deerfield, Massachusetts Bay Colony, killing 56 villagers and taking more than 100 captive.

- 1712 – February 29 is followed by February 30 in Sweden, in a move to abolish the Swedish calendar for a return to the Julian calendar.
- 1720 – Ulrika Eleonora, Queen of Sweden abdicates in favour of her husband, who becomes King Frederick I on March 24.
- 1768 – Polish nobles form the Bar Confederation.
- 1796 – The Jay Treaty between the United States and Great Britain comes into force, facilitating ten years of peaceful trade between the two nations.

## 1901 to the present

- 1912 – The Piedra Movediza (Moving Stone) of Tandil falls and breaks.
- 1916 – Tokelau is annexed by the United Kingdom.
- 1916 – In South Carolina, the minimum working age for factory, mill and mine workers is raised from 12 to 14 years old.
- 1920 – The Czechoslovak National Assembly adopts the Constitution.
- 1940 – For her performance as Mammy in *Gone with the Wind*, Hattie McDaniel becomes the first African American to win an Academy Award.
- 1940 – Finland initiates Winter War peace negotiations.
- 1944 – The Admiralty Islands are invaded in Operation Brewer, led by American general Douglas MacArthur, in World War II.
- 1960 – The 5.7  $M_w$  Agadir earthquake shakes coastal Morocco with a maximum perceived intensity of X (*Extreme*), destroying Agadir and leaving 12,000 dead and another 12,000 injured.
- 1972 – South Korea withdraws 11,000 of its 48,000 troops from Vietnam as part of Nixon's Vietnamization policy in the Vietnam War.
- 1984 – Pierre Trudeau announces his retirement as Liberal Party leader and Prime Minister of Canada.
- 1988 – South African archbishop Desmond Tutu is arrested along with 100 other clergymen during a five-day anti-apartheid demonstration in Cape Town.
- 1988 – Svend Robinson becomes the first member of the House of Commons of Canada to come out as gay.
- 1992 – First day of Bosnia and Herzegovina independence referendum.
- 1996 – Faucett Perú Flight 251 crashes in the Andes; all 123 passengers and crew are killed.
- 1996 – The Siege of Sarajevo officially ends.
- 2000 – Chechens attack a guard post near Ulus Kert, eventually killing 84 Russian paratroopers during the Second Chechen War.
- 2004 – Jean-Bertrand Aristide is removed as president of Haiti following a coup.
- 2008 – The United Kingdom's Ministry of Defence withdraws Prince Harry from a tour of Afghanistan after news of his deployment is leaked to foreign media.
- 2008 – Misha Defonseca admits to fabricating her memoir, *Misha: A Mémoire of the Holocaust Years*, in which she claims to have lived with a pack of wolves in the woods during the Holocaust.
- 2012 – North Korea agrees to suspend uranium enrichment and nuclear and long-range missile tests in return for US food aid.

- 2016 – At least 40 people are killed and 58 others wounded following a suicide bombing by ISIL at a Shi'ite funeral in the city of Miqdadiyah, Diyala.
- 2020 – The United States and the Taliban sign the Doha Agreement for bringing peace to Afghanistan.

From the long list of births and deaths on February 29, this one caught my eye. Australian cricketer Sean Abbott was born in 1992 which means that today is his 8<sup>th</sup> birthday. I wish I was that good at eight ...

~~~~~

Maitland Show has come and gone again. Our accommodation was a bit 'up-market' this year on what we've previously been allocated which made the experience a little more pleasurable. Our displays were well received with many patrons looking for themselves in the 'vintage' school photos.

The popularity of the Speedway display never ceases to amaze. Not being a 'rev-head', I'm somewhat ambivalent to hot-rods and race cars but it's obvious that many are not. Many thanks to Jennifer (Buffier) for her efforts in preparing this display.

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**Guest Speaker evening: Speaker: Bob Cameron**  
**Topic: Bolwarra House and its link to the Tolpuddle Martyrs**

Dr Cameron has lived in Bolwarra House for 30 years. His talk will cover the history of the estate and will tell the story of the Tolpuddle Martyrs, six Dorset farm workers who were sentenced to transportation in 1834 for organising trade union activities. They included John Standfield, who worked at Bolwarra, while his father Thomas worked at Maitland Vale. All six were eventually pardoned and became folk heroes.

Dr Cameron had a successful career as an executive and entrepreneur in the resources sector while holding many roles in the community and government organisations. He currently chairs Zeal Futures (formerly the Hunter Valley Training Company) and is on the State Library Council as well as committees at the Universities of Newcastle and New South Wales. In 2012 he was awarded an AO for service to the mining industry, tertiary education and the community of the Hunter Valley.

The talk is open to Historical Society members and to members of the public, who are most welcome to attend. There is no need to book a seat in advance.

**The Society asks for a donation of \$5 to cover the cost of light refreshments before and after the talk. Members of the Public are most welcome.**

**ZOOM (for financial members only) will be available.**

Whilst on the topic of Guest Speaker evenings. Something to note for your diaries.

Peter F Smith (as distinct from our own Peter Smith), who was profiled in November's newsletter, will be in Australia and has agreed to be our guest speaker in July.

Peter is of course the author of *The Footprints of Maitland's Old Hands Trilogy*, the first volume of which was launched in November and in order to accommodate his tight schedule, we have brought July's Guest Speaker Evening forward a night to **Monday 1<sup>st</sup> July**.

In another first, the evening will be held at **Easts** (Bowling Club) with a tentative booking already made. This is to accommodate what we believe will be 'bumper' crowd. Members and guests are encouraged to remain at the Club after Peter's talk and perhaps book into the restaurant. (*The pun is intended*)

Peter F. Smith

**About the Author**

PETER F. SMITH, M.A., is a versatile, veteran teacher and an experienced student of history. Smith has taught history and literature courses in Australia, the United Kingdom and in the USA for more than three decades. He is the author of a commemorative history of a leading Hunter Valley school and a contributor to an International Poetry Prize conducted by the University of Canberra. He has a Master's Degree in English from Indiana University. Smith lived in Maitland, where he restored a mid-Victorian heritage home and discovered his life-long passion for this unsung heritage city.

**Book Launch**

**THE FOOTPRINTS OF MAITLAND'S OLD HANDS trilogy**

Book One: Maitland's Rise: The Hill, The High Road and The River Flats

**THE FOOTPRINTS OF MAITLAND'S OLD HANDS TRIOLOGY**  
AN UNTOLD HISTORY FOR A NEW GENERATION

PETER F. SMITH

Discover the forgotten stories of Maitland, New South Wales, Australia. Reclaiming facts, fascinating stories and new insights into the history of the people and places, allowing readers to share this forgotten heritage.

THE FOOTPRINTS OF MAITLAND'S OLD HANDS trilogy is a series of history and a guide to the city's past. It is an accessible and comprehensive history of Maitland and its surrounding areas. The author has spent many years researching the past of Maitland, bringing to light the forgotten stories and the role of the city in the development of a nation. These stories are the history of Maitland's people, the history of the city, and the history of the region.

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Klibris

Please write this change to our 'normal' speaker evening in your diary. It promises to be a great evening. Peter is an excellent historian, excelling in his knowledge of Maitland and Maitland's history. I for one am looking forward to his talk with a great deal of relish.

Finally, our Annual General Meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> March. Please, consider taking an active part in the administration of our Society.

When our constitution was adopted in 2020, it was specifically structured to prevent the society becoming the personal domain of any individual. No individual may hold the same position for more than five consecutive terms which means that I am ineligible to remain as president, having first taken the role in 2019.

This does mean that others **MUST** step up ... please consider!

Till next time ....

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Short', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kevin Short  
President

Don't blame me for this, it was all Allan Thomas ....

1. A chicken crossing the road is poultry in motion.
2. I thought I saw an eye doctor on an Alaskan island, but it turned out to be an optical Aleutian.
3. She was only a whiskey maker, but he loved her still.
4. A rubber band pistol was confiscated from algebra class because it was a weapon of math disruption.
5. The butcher backed into the meat grinder and got a little behind in his work.
6. No matter how much you push the envelope, it'll still be stationery.
7. A dog gave birth to puppies near the road and was cited for littering.
8. A grenade thrown into a kitchen in France would result in Linoleum Blownapart.
9. Two silk worms had a race. They ended up in a tie.
10. A backward poet writes inverse.
11. When cannibals ate a missionary, they got a taste of religion.
12. Don't join dangerous cults: Practice safe sects.

Our History

## **CWA's Younger Set was a nationwide CWA-related society for unmarried women aged 18 to 30**

By Lisa Thomas

November 13



Members of the Maitland Younger Set at the 1959 State Conference in Sydney.  
Pictured from left - Georgina Buckley, Wanda Earl and Lynette Earl.

During World War II many of Maitland's young women joined the Country Women's Association's Younger Set to support the war effort. The Younger Set was a nationwide CWA-related society for unmarried women between the ages of 18 and 30.

According to its 1927 charter, the Younger Set's purpose was to teach young women the skills of first aid, home nursing, mothercraft, social service and the arrangement of social functions. It was also expected to further the general aims of the CWA.

Younger Set had branches, each associated with a CWA branch which seconded women to act as mentors. The Younger Set had their own officers, state hierarchy, and held their own meetings and social functions.

By 1937 NSW had 142 Younger Sets, which making it one of the most popular organisations in NSW for young women. Younger Sets were popular in the Hunter with 16 branches including Maitland, Branxton, East Maitland and Singleton. Maitland branch was set up in 1932. While the early Maitland membership was not large, ladies held several successful fund-raisers and social functions.

Unfortunately, due to reasons never fully explained, Maitland's Younger Set disbanded in 1937. It did not remain disbanded for long, however.

The Maitland Rotary Club decided to open a service for the soldiers in the Maitland area, in particular for the thousands of young men from all over Australia in the 2AIF who were undergoing military training in the Greta Army Camp. This "Service to Soldiers" opened in February 1941 in a purpose-built hall in Bulwer Street.

The Rotary and CWA promoters of the service felt that "the success of the project, from a social point of view, would be governed by the extent of the assistance forthcoming from the young women of the community".

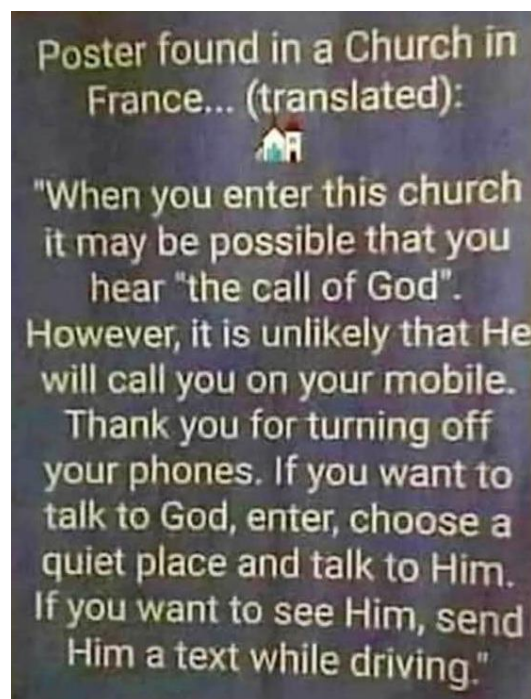
In December 1940, the Maitland Younger Set branch was re-formed specifically to assist in the "Service to Soldiers". Young women responded enthusiastically to an

appeal to join the branch. During the war years the reformed Maitland Younger Set was able to draw upon a membership of 283.

Every day during the war the Younger Set, along with the CWA and the Rotarians, hosted up to 400 men in uniform who travelled from their training camps to the Bulwer St hall. The young women participated in the singing and dancing. The Younger Set was not there late in the evenings, however, except for chaperoned functions.

After the war the membership dropped back to between 15 and 20 and branch functions became more traditional. The branch organised charitable events, garden parties and dances. Film nights and sports days were popular. There was often a guest speaker during the monthly meetings, which were usually held in the homes of members. Meetings were frequently followed by a supper prepared and served by the member hosting the meeting.

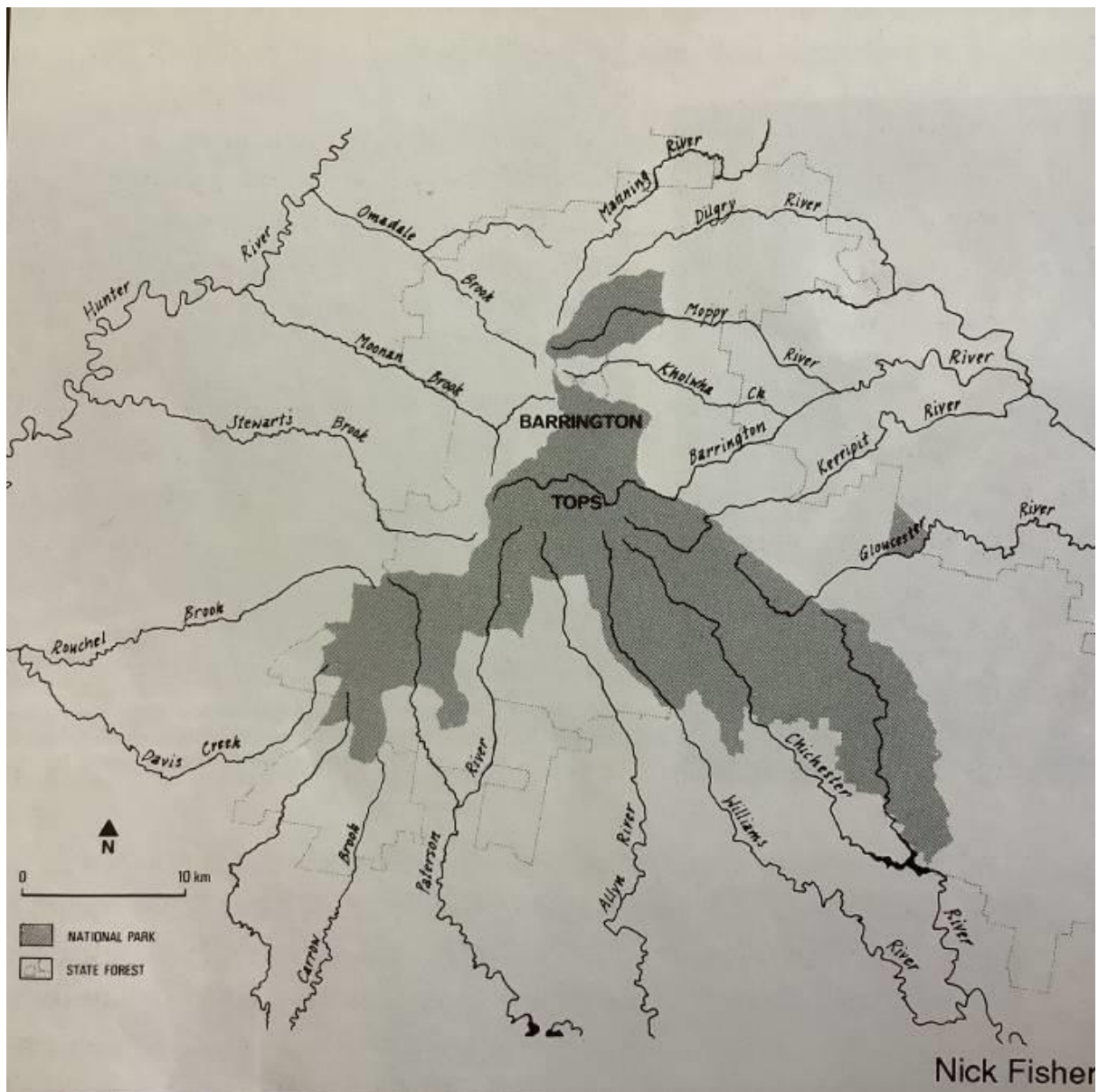
In the 1960s greater education and employment opportunities opened for young women in rural areas of NSW. As a result, by the late 1960s Younger Set numbers had declined dramatically. A 1969 directive from the CWA State Executive asked that all Younger Sets be closed.



Our History

## Tourist development plans were once flagged for Barrington Tops

By Chas Keys  
November 20 2022



Barrington Tops National Park in 1988. Image from Dulcie Hartlet - Barrington Tops a Vision Splendid.

Barrington Tops has long been an area of great developmental potential and also important for its wilderness value and as a result a long battle has been waged between developmental and conservationist interests over how the area should be treated.

Years ago Maitland played a part in the battle, largely favouring 'development'.

The Tops, occupied for millenia by the Gringai people, were first explored by Europeans during the 1820s. Settlers, surveyors and scientists followed.

Cattle were taken to the high country to graze by the 1840s, gold strikes attracted fortune-seekers, and bushrangers like Captain Thunderbolt and the Governor brothers (Jimmy and Joe) used its isolation to hide from authorities.

The extensive timber resources of the southern slopes were being exploited. By the 1870s sawmilling dominated the valleys of the Paterson, Allyn and Williams rivers for

decades and council and commercial interests in Gloucester, Dungog, Newcastle, Maitland, Singleton and Scone were soon dreaming of great development possibilities.

What emerged, especially from the 1920s, was a partly co-operative, partly competitive effort between these interests to open the Tops for exploitation. Transport was critical. There was much lobbying of the state for funding to improve access.



Pender and Foster Timber Mill in the Upper Allyn. Picture Doug Brown.

What was envisaged was a health resort and tourist resort area with facilities including large hotels, racecourse, trout-stocked streams and lakes - even skiing. People saw Barrington Tops as the 'Katoomba of Newcastle'. Even an airfield was proposed. Skiing, in fact, did take root for a time. By 1933 the Northern Ski Club was formed in Newcastle. Its members made trips to the ski runs they fashioned from the bush.

West Maitland Municipal Council and Maitland Chamber of Commerce, with support from the Maitland Mercury, lobbied for grand-scale development. In 1924 a future Mayor, Alexander (Sandy) McDonald, was instrumental in organising a trip to the Tops for a large group of parliamentarians, local government leaders, businessmen and media figures. The purpose - to garner support for the road development which, it was hoped, would open investment possibilities.

The councils were competing for limited resources because there could not be a road to the Tops from every direction. Maitland was at a disadvantage here, because routes up the valleys of the Paterson and Allyn rivers would have been extremely difficult to construct through the most rugged country of the whole area. Eventually, in 1978, an east-west road was built across the Tops linking Gloucester and Scone. No road all the way to the peaks and the plateau was ever built from the Maitland side.

By 1978 the energy directed to major recreation-based development had abated. Conservation interests had gathered strength and preservation was being emphasised: hence there was lobbying for a 'primitive reserve' or a National Park.



## WHY ENGLISH IS SO HARD

We'll begin with a box, and the plural is boxes,  
But the plural of ox becomes oxen, not oxes.  
One fowl is a goose, but two are called geese,  
Yet the plural of moose should never be meese.  
You may find a lone mouse or a nest full of mice,  
Yet the plural of house is houses, not hice.

If the plural of man is always called men,  
Why shouldn't the plural of pan be called pen?  
If I speak of my foot and show you my feet,  
And I give you a boot, would a pair be called beet?  
If one is a tooth and a whole set are teeth,  
Why shouldn't the plural of booth be called beeth?

Then one may be that, and three would be those,  
Yet hat in the plural would never be hose,  
And the plural of cat is cats, not cose.  
We speak of a brother and also of brethren,  
But though we say mother, we never say methren.  
Then the masculine pronouns are he, his and him,  
But imagine the feminine: she, shis and shim!