

THE Cedar Log

41st Year of Publication

Journal of the Richmond-Tweed Family History Society Inc.

Ballina NSW Australia



40th Anniversary cake being cut by 3 Presidents of our Society –
Victoria **Evans** (left) present President; Richard **Goss**, President 2021 – 2022;
Robyn **Hilan** (right), President 2009 -2010 & 2014 -2018.
2 December 2023, Ballina.

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We acknowledge the Bundjalung people as the Traditional Custodians of the land and rivers where this journal is produced. We pay respect to their elders past and present and honour their culture, history and tradition of storytelling.

Richmond-Tweed Family History Society Inc.

(Incorporated in New South Wales)

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The Marie Hart Library: Opening Hours:

10 am to 4 pm Monday, Wednesday & Saturday. Closed 1st Saturday of the month
1pm – 4 pm and Public Holidays.

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Editorial

By Carmel Crosby

This year will be our 40th year as a Family History Society. To mark this occasion, we will be printing some items during 2024 reminiscing this wonderful achievement. In this edition, we have printed the President's speech, made at our 40th Anniversary Luncheon on 2 December 2023, and the poem written and read by Ann **Emery** on the day. Our cover photo is a beauty of our present President and two past Presidents, cutting the anniversary cake at the luncheon. Photos and a report of the day are also included in the journal. In addition, there is a list of those who have contributed 10 years or more to the Society as a volunteer and who received an award at the luncheon.

The committee has branched out and decided to hold a **BBQ at Bunnings**, Ballina, on 10 March. It is a big undertaking for 'first-timers' but we are hoping it will progress well and be an economic success on the day. If you are unable to help at the BBQ, perhaps wander down between 9 am and 4 pm, say hello and grab a sausage sandwich.

Included in this issue we have articles on their ancestors by Victoria **Evans** and Carol **Brown**. Janine **Thomson**, our Research Officer, has transcribed an obituary from 1925, which has insights into life in the 1860s for European settlers in this area.

We were saddened to hear of the passing of **Nola Rodey**, who died on 17 January 2024 at Crowley Care, Ballina. Nola had been a member (#21) since the earliest days of the Society and had held several positions over many years, for which she received an Award last December. More is written about her life later in this journal.

Members, **Bert Clapham** and **Kevin Geaghan**, also passed away in recent months. Short articles on both of these gentlemen are included in this issue.

As 2024 progresses, keep researching and writing up your family history and if you have an interesting ancestor, perhaps you can send their story in to be published in *The Cedar Log*. All contributions welcome.

Carmel, Editor

RICHMOND - TWEED FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

President's Speech

Delivered at the 40th Anniversary Lunch, 2 December 2023

By Victoria Evans, President (pictured below)



Almost from the time I joined the *Richmond-Tweed Family History Society* (RTFHS) I began hearing of plans for the upcoming 40th Anniversary, of the members' obvious pride in the foresight, determination, and accomplishments of the founding committee and in the Society in general.

Being relatively new to the RTFHS and to the Ballina area, one of the most enjoyable aspects for me, of joining the Society, has been making a wide range of new acquaintances. Apart from the obvious research advantages, for me, this aspect alone is one of the

strongest reasons for being a member and one that we should definitely cultivate.

Having only been in the Society for two years, and on the committee for less than a year, I feel ill-equipped to speak comprehensively about the history of the RTFHS. That initial meeting held on 17 December 1983, in the home of Marie **Hart**, with fellow genealogists, Betty **Aberdeen**, Jess **Moore**, Lenette **O'Connor** and Edna **Tucker**, is an example of what can be achieved with determination, perseverance, and hard work. In the subsequent years, many members and committees have worked tirelessly to continue that dream and journey.

Not only have the members changed since 1983 but the home of the Society has changed, the manner of researching has changed and most certainly the technology has vastly changed. Our Society has been adapting to and capitalising on changes for 40 years.

Ann **Emery**, a member of the current committee, felt inspired to write and share a poem which elaborates more on the journey the Society has been on. In addition, I look forward to hearing the wonderful memories and recollections of other members.

Having said that, I instead, thought to speak about some of the more recent changes since the 35th Anniversary, and the challenges and future of our Society.

The RTFHS has endeavoured to adapt to the changing manner of modern research. In the Marie Hart Library, upgraded computers and printers, access to the NBN (National Broadband Network) and to internet platforms such as *Find My Past* and *FamilySearch*, with whom we now have Affiliate Library Status, and new resources purchased by the library committee, now provide us with economical, faster and better access to the information we seek and, in my opinion, make a strong argument for membership with the RTFHS.

Our monthly general meetings are not only a wonderful opportunity to share our research interests and to improve our skills, but also to socialise and be among like-minded friends and to make new friends.

The purchase of audio equipment, including a lapel and roving microphones has been a great improvement for the delivery of our meetings. The introduction of coordinators for the monthly topics has been a great success. Many members have found an opportunity to contribute to an interesting and engaging range of topics supported with PowerPoint presentations. The organisation of the 2024 topics is well underway and we are looking forward to members becoming involved and sharing their stories.

While costs are now a big consideration when organising guest speakers, we have been fortunate in 2023 to have had Helen **Smith** present a DNA mini-seminar via Zoom, Samantha **Elly** share her journey of uncovering Woodburn's tales from the grave, John **Tranter** who explained how to use FamilySearch more effectively and our own Carmel **Crosby** provided a thorough and practical coverage of where else to look for newspapers other than *Trove*. We will endeavour to continue to seek out

quality presenters when we can, as we believe this is an important expectation of our Society.

Our Cedar Log is an excellent journal produced by a dedicated team of Carmel Crosby, Judy **Cosgrove** and Liz **Marshall**. Our journal allows members to share their family histories and research journeys with others and provides members with new websites and databases to support their research.

John **Broadley** has undertaken a large mariner project focusing on the years 1840 to 1940. He has not only compiled a searchable database of the mariners themselves and relevant library resources, but also information about the mariners, their lives and their families, which will also be available at the Marie Hart Library to researchers via connecting links.

Like many other family history societies, we are facing huge challenges to how we remain relevant. Many societies worldwide have ceased to exist either because of the impact of the restrictions during Covid, factors such as financial constraints, age, illness, relocation or even people no longer researching. The greatest impact has undoubtedly been caused by the monumental changes to technology, especially the arrival of platforms such as *Ancestry*, that now allow researchers to search from home – no need to join a society, no need to leave your home. However, what we offer is extremely economical and also provides a supportive community.

Membership is key to the future of our Society. Our challenge is how do we continue to make the RTFHS necessary to researchers and in doing that, grow our membership. A growing membership means more volunteers, and the funds to enable us to be current with technology.

Last year's survey (2022) highlighted some worthy ideas and possible strategies. The current committee has discussed a number of these in detail and plans to revisit them in early 2024.

These include raising the profile of the Society in the community. We believe this is essential. It has been my experience that many locals do not know we exist. Thanks to Liz Marshall we already have a website and Facebook page to highlight our activities and facilities. This has already born fruit with some non-members, both locally and from afar, beginning to contact the secretary or visit the library. Ann

Emery was recently interviewed by *Paradise FM* regarding the Society and the anniversary. Allan **Ridgewell** continues to publicise us through them as well. We are hoping to make this a more regular event. There are also plans for a promotions table at Ballina Fair in 2024 and we are putting together a package that can be presented at other organisations such as *Evening View Club*, *Probus*, and for special groups at the local library. We are already booked to do a presentation at the *Northern Rivers Chapter of the First Fleeters* in late March. Our hope is that this will stir interest and lead to new memberships.

Due to the efforts of Marie, Betty, Jess, Lenette and Edna, and subsequent members and committees, we have been gifted with a wonderful Society. Our challenge moving forward is to do our very best, so that the RTFHS continues to grow by remaining relevant to members and their research and by being a friendly and desirable organisation to belong to.



Members and guests at the 40th Anniversary Lunch

TOAST TO RICHMOND-TWEED FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY

**Written and Read by Ann Emery (pictured below) at the
40th Anniversary Lunch, 2 December 2023**

On December 17, 1983, so close to Christmas
of that year,

When 5 women met at Marie Hart's home, the
agenda was clear,

Family history was at the forefront of the
chatter over a cup of tea,

Their ideas were released and the future was set
free.

The *Far North Coast Family History Group*
was formed,

And their planning and drive we have since
learned,

Transformed the way we were taught to search,
For ancestors who left us in the lurch.

With only an oral history of who we were
And a carefully scripted version of what they shared,
Inspired a generation of curious researchers
To follow the trail to records offices and churches.

The years of letter writing and money orders to buy
The certificates we needed to follow the family line,
The microfiche, census books and births, deaths and marriages
Were transformed by the internet that became the carriage
Of information beyond our wildest imagination
From local, interstate and from every nation.

The *Richmond-Tweed Family History Society* sees incorporation,
The library was opened, stocked and ordered to perfection,



The volunteers reached out to societies across the world to bring
Information and connection that caused members to sing
Of their latest finds at the monthly meetings
Where they made new friends who shared their feelings
When they got on a flight across the world to see
The homelands of their ancestral family.

For 40 years now the Society has continued to share
The knowledge and keenness of members from everywhere,
Special interest groups on DNA and family story writing
Have helped members record their years of researching,
The seminars, so varied have shown expertise to inform
And direct us anew to records previously unknown,
That opened the doors and broke down the barriers
That ultimately saved a few of our marriages.

So today we give thanks and celebrate
All those who contributed at no small rate
Who followed the leading of Marie Hart
And played, each one, their own special part,
In creating the vibrant and relevant society
Where the library doors are open to welcome the enquiry
Of visitors and members searching their own family history
Where they will always be welcome to try solve their mystery.

Charge up your glasses and give a loud cheer
To everyone previous and everyone here,
To our Patron, Martyn Killion who joins us today
To encourage us all as we forge a new way
Into the future, whatever it brings,
We'll adapt and encompass the challenging things
And together we'll pull as an amazing team in entirety
That sets us apart as *Richmond-Tweed Family History Society*.

Let's raise our glasses and drink a toast to *Richmond-Tweed Family History Society*.

**Awards for 10 years or more of Service to the
Richmond-Tweed Family History Society were given out at
the 40th Anniversary Lunch or posted later** (We hope no one
has been left out or a position omitted. If so, please contact the Editor)

Name (member number)	Positions held – some may be concurrent	Total Years Service
Kerrie Alexander (823)	Secretary, Library Officer	12
Bonnie Bennett (829)	Treasurer	11
Carol Brown (677)	Secretary, VP, CM, Other	>20
Jackie Chalmers (925)	Editor's Assistant, CM	15
Jennifer Craddock (577)	Curator/Library Officer, CM, Research Officer	14
Carol Donaghy (862)	Secretary, Editor, PO, CM,	12
Frank Harvey (724)	President, VP, Editor, CM, Research Officer	11
Robyn Hilan (488)	President, Treasurer, CM	14
Don Howell (943)	President, CM, Research Officer, Other	>15
Martyn Killion	Patron	10
Dawn Lotty (924)	Editor's Assistant, Newsletter Production	10
Liz Marshall (941)	Editor's Assistant, CM, Web Manager	11
Leonie Oliver (610)	President, Treasurer, VP, CM,	11
Jan Ousby (477)	Membership Secretary, CM,	10
Don Page	Patron	>25
Alan Ridgewell (760)	PO, Curator/Library Officer, CM, Other	26
Nola Rodey (21)	Treasurer, Membership Secretary, CM	>30
Esme Smith (317)	President, VP, Editor,	11
Sue Warmerdam (276)	President, Secretary, Treasurer, Editor,	14
	VP = Vice President PO = Publicity Officer CM = Committee Member Other = Work with Computers, IT, Journals	

40th Anniversary Celebration



Our 40th Anniversary Celebration Luncheon, on Saturday 2 December 2023, at the Ballina Byron Islander Resort was well attended by members and guests and a great time was had by all.

Martyn Killion, our Patron, was a very entertaining Master of Ceremonies and encouraged us with our family history research and maintaining the strength of our Society. We thank him for making the journey from Sydney to be with us.

Our President, Victoria **Evans**, gave a great summary of our Society - past, present and into the future. Ann **Emery** entertained us with her poem celebrating our Society and Carmel **Crosby** handed out **Certificates of Appreciation** to members, who had provided 10 years or more of service to our Society. This awards list, speech and poem are published in this edition of *The Cedar Log*.

Richard **Goss** read the Tribute he had compiled to our founding President, Marie **Hart**, who passed away on 17 March 2023. It was published in the December 2023 edition of *The Cedar Log*.

The **Christmas Raffle** was drawn and first prize went to Carmel Crosby, second to Jill **Clark** and third to Chris **Lawson**. Thanks to everyone who supported our annual fundraiser. The Lucky Door prize of bubbly and chocolates was won by Jenny **Craddock**. The occupations competition was won by the table of Yvonne Randle, Liz Marshall, Fiona Jones, Carol Brown, Robyn Wright and Judy Cosgrove. They shared a box of chocolates for their cleverness!

A vote of thanks must go to our very capable organising Committee of Victoria Evans, Ann Emery and Joy **Conlon**. They produced a Commemorative bookmark and booklet, organised the Anniversary cake and attractively decorated the venue. Carmel Crosby found a suitable venue and organised the menu for the occasion and Bonnie **Bennett** handled the finances, which is a big job for an event like this. Altogether it was a memorable occasion for those attending.



Martyn Killion, our Patron & Master of Ceremonies



*Fiona Jones, Judy Cosgrove, Rachael Wright
& Liz Marshall*



*Jill Clark, John & Meryl
Broadley*



*Jenny Craddock, Marlene Lester
& Robyn Hilan*



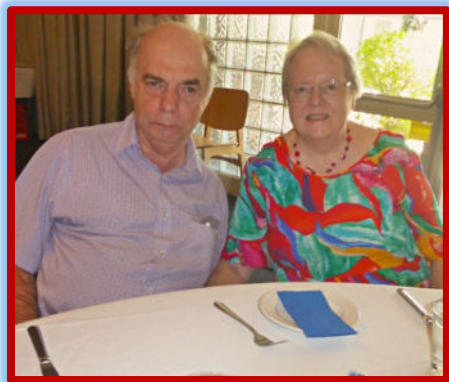
Joy Conlon, Kerrie Alexander, Cheryl Gibbes, Ann Emery & Karen Chilcott



Kerrie Alexander, Carol Donaghy, Claire (Jackie's sister) & Jackie Chalmers

Bev & Leigh Wilson





John & Shirley McAnelly



*Martyn Killion
& Richard Goss*



The lovely cake!

Vale Nola Mary Rodey (3 May 1928 – 17 January 2024)

Born Nola Mary **White**, she was the eldest child of John White and Mary nee **Giggins**. Nola grew up on a cane farm at Boundary Creek, between Wardell and Broadwater. She had a sister, Elaine, and a brother, Jack. Her maternal grandfather, Arthur Giggins, owned the Empire Hotel in Woodburn. Nola attended St Patrick's Primary School in Wardell and boarded at St Mary's School, Grafton, for her high school years. She did office work after finishing school.



Nola at the RTFHS Christmas party in December 2021

She married Keith George **Rodey**, at St Carthage's Cathedral, Lismore, in 1952. He was a clerk in the Court of Petty Sessions and had moved to Lismore from Taree. After their marriage, Nola and Keith moved to Sydney, then to Crescent Head and finally to Ballina. Keith trained as a solicitor and was appointed a Magistrate, holding that position from 1964 until 1977. He was in Perth, Western Australia, doing further studies, when he died suddenly in 1982, aged 52.

After Keith's death, Nola worked for many years in administration for Brady Brothers, a transport company in Ballina.

Nola was very close to all family members and when her sister Elaine died, Nola became like a grandmother to her nieces and nephews and their children. They in turn assisted her when she needed it in her later years. Her funeral at St Francis Xavier Church on 25 January 2024 was attended by many of her extended family.

Nola was very proud of her cousin, Robert James **Collins**, who enlisted in the Australian Infantry Force (AIF) in 1939 and later became a Rat of Tobruk during WW2. An article she wrote about his service is in the December 2022 issue of *The Cedar Log*.

Nola was a valued member of many organisations, including the Association of Independent Retirees (AIR) and St Francis Xavier Catholic Church, where she was involved in church activities and groups. She was a very capable lady and was the secretary for the strata units where she lived until recently.



*Nola at the RTFHS 8th birthday party,
December 1991*

Nola joined the forerunner of the Richmond-Tweed Family History Society (RTFHS) in 1984, soon after its inception and was member number 21. She held several positions over many years – treasurer, membership secretary, committee member and library duty officer. Her vast knowledge of the area made her an invaluable member of our Society. She was very generous with her time, assisting others with their research.

Nola was a quiet achiever and when she talked it was worth listening as she had extensive knowledge on many subjects.

She enjoyed the social activities of the various organisations she was part of and attended these and other activities, such as walking, with close friends. Recently moving into *Crowley Care* aged care facility, Nola enjoyed the various activities there. She had attended an exercise class the day before she died.

Rest in Peace, Nola.



In Remembrance of Bert Clapham

29 September 1933 - 23 November 2023

Member number 974



A service of celebration for the life of Bert **Clapham** was held at the Rainbow Chapel, Ballina, on 4 December 2023.

Bert was the husband of Society member Joann, and he enjoyed attending our Society celebrations.

Bert was remembered as a loving husband, father, grandfather, and an avid gardener. A tribute was given by Norm **Robinson** President, Northern Rivers sub-branch of the Returned Soldiers League (RSL), to honour Bert for his National Service participation, and fellow servicemen

placed a red poppy of remembrance.

Bert was a Duty Officer at the *Marie Hart Library* on a Wednesday for many years, and he enjoyed his time of reminiscing about local history with Nola **Rodey** if she visited the Library when he was on duty.



MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Have you reached the stage in your research where you would like to make contact with other people who may be searching for the same family? The Members' Interest List is an online resource to help you find others researching the same surnames in our regional area and around the world.

Visit our website www.rtfhs.net.au and in Resources, download the full list of Members' Interests. If you find a surname of interest, email us at secretaryrtfhs1@yahoo.com to ask to be put in contact with our member. This is accessible to anyone who goes to our website.

If you are a member you can log into the Members Section and use the online form to register the names you are interested in. These will then be added to the list.

First Nations Resources in the Marie Hart Library

CD088AB* Indigenous - Aboriginal – Dawn (1952 – 1969) & New Dawn (1970-1975). Magazine for the Aboriginal People of NSW. Also available online at:-

<https://aiatsis.gov.au/collection/featured-collections/dawn> AND
<https://aiatsis.gov.au/collection/featured-collections/new-dawn>

G-060: What's in a Name? Dictionary of historical facts and Aboriginal meanings of over 1200 place names of New South Wales (NSW). 1985.

A-1: The Native Tribes of South-East Australia. A. W. HOWITT – 1996. 835 pages. (original edition 1904)

A-2: Grace Roberts: Her Life - Her Mystery - Her Dreaming. Alice BECKER

A-3: Blacktown - A Name of Character: A History of Aboriginal Settlement of Black Town. Jack BROOK. 1983.

A-4: Aborigines of Western Sydney - J.L. KOHEN. 1983.

A-5: Resources for Aboriginal Family History. Rodney LUCAS (Ed.). 1986.

A-6: A Guide to New South Wales State Archives relating to Aboriginal People (1998). Updated link to similar guide <https://mhns.w.au/guides/aboriginal-resources-overview/>

A-7: A Dictionary of the Dharug Language: The Inland Dialect. J.L. KOHEN. Dharug area and language are based around Western Sydney to the Blue Mountains.

A-8: Aboriginal Fisheries of the Darling - Barwon Rivers. Peter DARGIN. 1976.

A-9: Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander resource folder. Collection of miscellaneous information, documents and resources. Includes information from: -

- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). Also available online at <https://aiatsis.gov.au/family-history>
- The State Library of New South Wales (NSW) <https://www.sl.nsw.gov.au/about-library/services/indigenous-engagement>
- State Library of Queensland <https://www.slq.qld.gov.au/collections/family-history/whos-your-mob>

- List of Australian Indigenous Servicemen WW1
- A Brief History of Government Administration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples in Queensland (14 pages)
- *Yarrabah* (North Queensland). *The People of the Early Years*. Originally called Bellenden Ker Mission. (6 pages)
- *Link-up* booklet. Assists Aboriginal people affected by past government policies; separated from their families and culture through forced removal.
<https://www.linkupnsw.org.au/>
- *ABC of Indigenous Publishing* booklet.

A-10: Werlu Wana – Be Yourself. Bertha Kapeen (nee Bolt). 1993.

A-11: Aboriginal & Islander Family Names. Robyn HOWELL (1998 -updated 2003)

A-12: The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia. Vol 1 A-L. Dr David HORTON (1994)

A-13: The Encyclopaedia of Aboriginal Australia. Vol 2 M-Z. Dr David HORTON (1994)

A-14: The Land of Ulitarra: Early Records of the Aborigines of the Mid-North Coast of New South Wales. J. S. RYAN (Revised Edition 1988)

A-15: The Aborigines of the Richmond Area, Richmond River Historical Society - Pamphlet No.2 - Marjorie J. OAKES. 1972.

Az-16: Aboriginal Women's Heritage: Ballina & Cabbage Tree Island. Compiled by Ashley MORAN. 2007. First-hand family history stories by 12 local women from Northern NSW.

A-17: Windradyne of the Wiradjuri: Martial Law at Bathurst in 1824. T. SALISBURY & P.J. GRESSER. 1971.

Az-17: Rivers of Blood: Massacres of the Northern Rivers Aborigines and their resistance to the white occupation 1838 – 1870. Rory MEDCALF. Adapted from a series published in The Northern Star newspaper. 1989.

Az-18: Rivers of Blood: Massacres of the Northern Rivers Aborigines and their resistance to the white occupation 1838 – 1870. Rory MEDCALF. Second Edition – 1993.

A-18(L): From the Dreamtime to the Iron Horse. Tamworth: A Look at the Past. Jim HOBDEN. (1988)

Sz - 147Y: Admission Register Cabbage Tree Island Aboriginal Public School 1934 - 1989 and Cubawee (formerly Tuncester Reserve) Aboriginal Provisional School 1942 - 1963

Hvic-44: Victoria - Glimpses of Early Sunshine: Dawn of a District from Aboriginal Times to 1901. Edith POPP. 1979.

Gold in The Hold

By Carol Brown – Member 677



Photo: The RMS Niagara leaving Sydney for Vancouver in 1924. Photo taken by Frederick Wilkinson (1901 – 1975). From the collection at the Australian National Maritime Museum. Accessed at Wikimedia Commons.

This is the story of *RMS Niagara*, her sinking after hitting a German-laid mine in Hauraki Gulf, north of Auckland, New Zealand (NZ) on 20 June 1940, and the retrieval of the unknown treasure in her hold.

The German raider, *Orion*, had laid 228 mines across the seas north of NZ.

My interest in this ship is that my uncle, Tom **Spence**, and my great-uncle, Jim **Surgeoner**, were both crew members on this voyage. Tom was ships carpenter and Jim was an engineer.

Niagara was built at John **Brown** Shipyard on the Clyde, Glasgow, in 1912. She was a luxury liner at the time, dubbed *Queen of the Pacific* and was built for the Sydney to Vancouver route. She had a capacity of 600 passengers, but because of the war, only 136 passengers were aboard on this last voyage.

Another permanent member of the crew was a moggie named Aussie, born on board and he knew every port between Sydney and Vancouver. The crew appreciated his value as a rat catcher, fed him milk and rabbit legs in the morning and steak in the evening.

The ship departed Auckland at 11.30 pm on a calm winters night heading for Suva. She headed into Hauraki Gulf travelling at 17 knots. One passenger travelling to Suva even had his new car stored, tied to the hatch cover of No.2 hold.

At 3.43am a mine detonated with massive force slamming into the hull underneath No.2 hold.

Smoke was billowing from No. 2 hold and the ship developed a list, the captain gave the order for the crew to muster passengers at boat stations. Water was pouring into the engine room when the telegraph rang "Stop engines". The force of the blast through No. 2 hold had blown off the hatch covers and the car lashed to them was gone.

There was little panic among the passengers now assembling on the boat deck in various states of dress. Many were still in their night clothes. Some men without their trousers had blankets wrapped around them. Wilfred **Wise**, wearing a coat over his pyjamas sent his wife back to their stateroom to put on a dress over her nightgown. She returned not only in a dress, but also in her furs.

In the engine room, crew kept on working. Fireman **Murray**, absorbed with his duties, didn't hear the final orders to abandon ship. He was soon alone amid the now silent machinery.

Aussie the cat darted from the arms of a crewman, who was trying to place him in a lifeboat. He avoided several people trying to rescue him, and when the last lifeboat departed, he was still aboard.

As the last boat was leaving the ship another explosion was felt. This was certainly a second mine exploding beneath the hull as the ship settled.

Suddenly from the rear deck, a beam of light flashed across the water. Fireman Murray had suddenly realised his predicament and quickly making his way to the upper deck, he confirmed he was alone on the sinking ship. No. 3 boat crew, seeing the frantic torch signals returned to rescue him.

As dawn broke, aircraft appeared, flying low over the scattered lifeboats. Rescue ships cautiously approached the scene. Taking passengers and crew aboard the rescue vessels, with the lifeboats towed behind, they sailed for Auckland.

The last victim of the sinking arrived ashore on the beach north of Whangarei some days later. The water tank on which Aussie had clung, rode through the surf depositing him among the flotsam from the wreck. He was discovered later asleep in a shed by a farmer. The exhausted moggie quickly regained his normal temperament when stuffed into a sack. For a world-travelled feline, a farmer's sack was only a temporary setback. He managed to escape and no doubt enjoyed the rest of his life among the local cat population.

The majority of rescued passengers were unaware of a greater loss among the cargo. 590 bars of gold bullion, over 8 imperial tons, stacked in a strong room had gone down with the ship. Valued at the time at £2.5 million, the bullion was desperately needed by an empire fighting for its existence. There were 295 wooden boxes, each box contained 2 bars of gold, each 400 oz. The gold belonged to the UK treasury and had come from South Africa, was shipped to Sydney, loaded into the *Niagara* and was destined for Vancouver, then to Washington. It was to pay the USA for war supplies sent to Britain.

It was June 1940, there was a war on, it was very cold, and any salvage would be very difficult, and none of today's modern recovery methods existed. The first attempt to reach the ship, was the salvage ship *Claymore*, with a diving bell winched down to the ship and a grab claw and diver with a metal helmet and breathing tubes. The ship was lying at 110 metres, too deep for divers with helmets, but the diving bell and claw managed to retrieve about 20 bars of gold.

The gentlemen of the Bank of England desperately wanted their gold back, but didn't want to pay much for its retrieval.

The *Claymore* sailed from Auckland on 9 Dec 1940, and work continued until 7 Dec 1941. 533 bars were recovered. Approx 35 still remained.

Groups of lads among the crew were given the task of scrubbing the gold bars clean, and they would occasionally drop a bar on the steel deck. They then pocketed the gold chips. When bank officials weighed the gold bars they found the total weight short by 9.1 oz. Perhaps several gold rings were made from *Niagara* gold.

After the war another salvage attempt was made in 1953, with more modern diving equipment. A further 30 bars were recovered. The value at that time was £164,000 sterling. There were still 5 bars left.

In 1975 a NZ diver wrote to the Bank of England to enquire of salvage rights. The bank prepared a contract. However, terms could not be agreed to and the 5 gold bars (5 x 400 oz) are still there. Today's value is about \$4,000,000.

NB: 1 oz = 28.4 grams

RMS = Royal Mail Ship

Interesting Obituary Includes Several Local Families and Describes Life as it was for the European Settlers in the 1860s (transcribed from the original)

Found by our Research Officer, Janine Thomson

The Northern Star, Lismore, NSW. Tuesday 6 January 1925, page 4

PIONEER'S DEATH - LATE MRS. MATILDA MOSS

The death at Lismore on Saturday, December 27 last, of Mrs. Moss, senr., at the age of 77 years severs another link with the historic past of this district.

Born at Somersetshire, England, Mrs. Moss came to Australia with her parents in 1851 in the Earl Grey, and first settled on the Hunter River. In the 1857 flood Mr. Carpenter (in later years a school inspector in Lismore and district) rescued Mrs. Moss and her family (Webbers) in a hollowed out log from the roof of their house, and paddled them to high land. They came to the Richmond in 1862 on the old Rainbow, then on her maiden voyage, and the first sea-faring boat that came to the river.

With Mrs. Schruder and Mrs. James Breckenridge they settled at Wyrallah. In 1863 she married the late Mr. Thomas Moss. At that time only one house existed in Wyrallah, most of the settlers living in tents and humpies. Later they moved to Newrybar and Tintenbar and engaged in cedar-getting. They went from place to place as the country was cleared.

Mr. Moss selected land at Wyrallah about 1864, then known as Gininbar and later Camp Creek, and now Wyrallah. They were surrounded by wild blacks.

At that time the people had to pull to Ballina for their provisions in an ordinary pulling boat [row boat – Ed.], a two days' journey, camping at Tuckombil Creek. The only house at the time on the route was on the Clarke-Irvine station. At that time flour was £5 per sack, and the people used to crush corn and mix it with flour to make it last till such time as more provisions were brought to the river. Meat was obtained by pulling to Pelican Creek, and then walking over to the South Arm and purchasing from the boiling down works.

The only store was kept by Mr. Tom Barker at Gundurimba. The mails came by pack horse from Iluka, on the Clarence, along the beach track through the Gap at South Woodburn, landing at Codrington and Casino. All business transactions, weddings, etc., were conducted at Casino.

Mrs. Moss witnessed the first crushing of cane in the district at the Wyrallah sawmill 60 years ago. The cane was crushed in rollers of the planning machine, the juice caught in a washing tub set underneath, and then boiled in a washing boiler, and a fugal was rigged on the groven spindle of a planning machine to fugal the sugar, and turned out a good sample of brown sugar. Mr. Albert Lane, of Wyrallah, was also present at this crushing.

Mr. Whitney made syrup by putting cane between two rollers turned by a handle catching the juice, which was then boiled. This interested the people, and little patches of cane were put in and small mills were introduced. This was the turning point of the real hardships of the earlier pioneers.

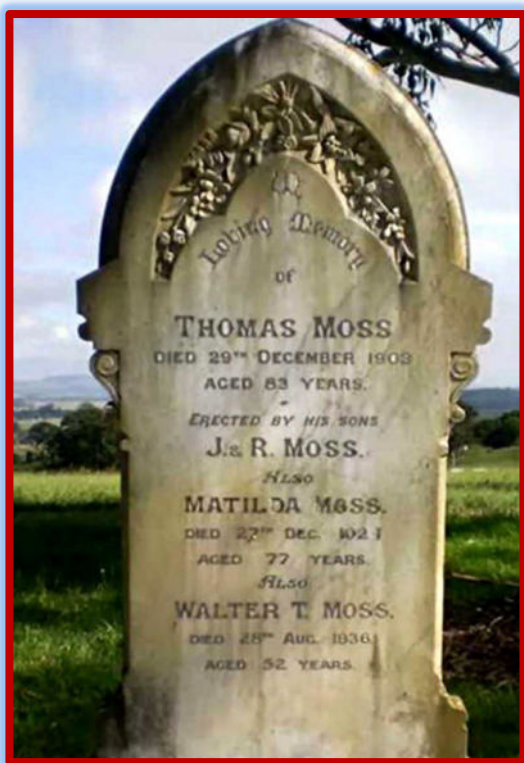
As time progressed dairying was introduced and this the family followed.

The Late Mrs. Moss's door was open to all, and she was well known all over, the district for her generosity. She reared a large family in Wyrallah, 17 in all, of whom 11 survive - James, Wyrallah; George, Sydney; Richard, Ballina; Robert, Wyangerie; Edward, Myrtle Creek; Walter, Rappville;

Charles, Ballina; Mrs. Jacobson, Lismore; Mrs. Archer, New Zealand; Mrs. Cameron, Brisbane; Mrs Castledene, Toowoomba; and Mrs. Harvey, Sydney. There are also 61 grandchildren and 21 great-grandchildren.

Deceased's husband predeceased her 21 years ago.

The funeral at Tucki cemetery was largely attended, the remains being laid to rest adjoining her late husband. Mr. John Webber, of Wyrallah; and Mr. Robert Webber, of Crabbe's Creek, are brothers.





Recent photo of the grave of Thomas and Matilda Moss (nee Webber), and their son, Walter, at Tucki Tucki Cemetery, Lismore City Council area, northern New South Wales.

How to Print or Download an Article from TROVE


By Carmel Crosby - Editor



When we find an article in our favourite Newspaper site, TROVE, <https://trove.nla.gov.au/> we might have trouble printing or downloading articles or removing the highlighted words. If so, try the tips below.

- While the article is in the Trove viewer, select **Print**  or **Download**  in the sidebar on the far left-hand side of the screen. You might have to scroll down to see the icons.
- Select format: **Image** or **PDF** (for downloads) or **Image** or **Text** (for printing). This will generate a new browser tab with the article formatted for printing or downloading. A Print or Download window will appear over this tab.
- Print (or Save) or download in the normal manner.

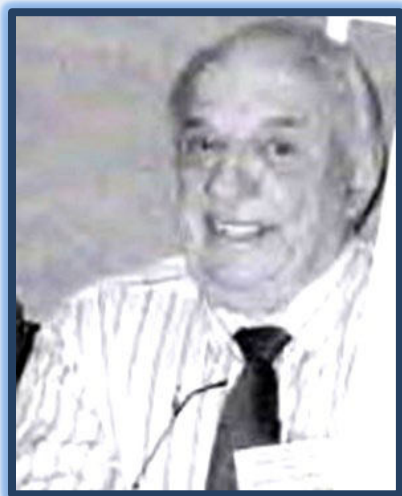
Note: Long articles will be split into several images to fit onto A4-sized pages. Images will overlap to ensure that no information is lost.

How to remove search highlighting - If you find a newspaper article as a result of a search, the keyword/s used in the search will be highlighted in the article. To remove the highlighting, select the **Cite** icon  in the sidebar on the left-hand side of the screen. In the **Cite** window that opens, select the **Article identifier** link. This opens the article without the highlight/s. The article can then be printed or downloaded as described above.



Vale Kevin Geaghan

12 May 1933 - 2 February 2024



*Kevin at our 25th Anniversary Lunch
held in 2009*

Long-term *Richmond-Tweed Family History Society* member Kevin **Geaghan** passed away in February 2024. He joined the society in early 1986 and was a member until a few years ago. Kevin was a committee member of our Society for 2 years until August 2011 and was in charge of photocopying for many years. He was also a valued member of the Society's Writers' Group.

He had the business, *Kevin Geaghan Funerals*, for many years in Ballina. When he became the funeral director in this area, he realised that no proper burial records were being kept. He had 'inherited' notebooks of earlier burials, and along with other members of our Society, a card index was created of funerals/burials. This was followed up with surveying the local cemeteries and putting together comprehensive cemetery records covering the years 1852 -1995, for our Library.

In 2003 Kevin Geaghan was chosen as *Joint Ballina Citizen of the Year* in recognition of his valuable community work. In 2011, Kevin was awarded a rare honorary Life Membership of the *Rotary Club of Ballina-on-Richmond* for his services to humanitarian projects. In 2012, he was honoured with the first Life Membership of the *Combined Services Clubs of Ballina* for his work to support youth in our shire.

In the March 2012 edition of *The Cedar Log*, there was a comprehensive article titled *The Business of Burials in Ballina* written by Kevin and also *A Conversation with Kevin Geaghan*, which mainly explains terms used in the funeral and cemetery industries. Both of these articles are well worth a read. Back issues of *The Cedar Log* can be accessed in the Marie Hart Library, if you don't have a copy at home.



Gleanings of Journals in the Marie Hart Library

By Janine Thomson

“Sex, Seduction and Squatters”. Explores the legal side of sex and seduction in the early years. “Marketing Australia”. How Angus and Robertson, and Henry Lawson, created the bush legend in twentieth century Australia.

“Myall Creek Massacre”. 185 years after the Sydney Herald printed the story, the SMH apologises and tells why they got it so wrong.

HISTORY – Royal Aust. Historical Soc.- December 2023 – Page 7,14 & 18.

“The Fortress and the Castle”. Defending the nation’s coastline sometimes set the military and local communities at odds – especially when their homes were threatened.

“Affairs of Honour”. A history of the duel in colonial Australia.

“Elizabeth Morrow versus colonial misogyny”. Tells of the story of a colonial nurse’s fight against the repressive attitudes of the time. *Traces – Edition 25 – Page 16, 20 & 30*

“Local Resources for Family History Research – County Louth”. Puts an emphasis on resources specific to the county of Louth.

“Catholic Convent Schools”. Will help you in finding teachers and students in the Irish Convent Archives. *Irish Roots – Issue 128, 2023 – Pages 16 & 10.*

“Photo Solutions”. Looks at the latest online tools to help preserve, organise and share your family photographs.

“Railway Workers”. This article explains how to access & search records of workers in the British railway industry.

“Around Britain – Edinburgh & the Lothians”. Focuses on information and records available for the south east of Scotland.

Who Do You Think You Are – September 2023 - Page 14, 33 & 61.

“DNA Snips Chronical”. The second in a series of articles provides a simple introduction to DNA. *Timespan - Nepean FHS – December 2023 – Page 20.*

“A Short History of Black Rock River”. Was this the first name for the Richmond River?

The Bulletin - Richmond River HS – November 2023 –Page 5.

“The Presumption of Innocence”. A story of women and marital coercion in 19th century Tasmania. *Tasmanian Ancestry - September 2023-Page 107*

Gleanings of Australian eJournals

By Jackie Chalmers

The following journals are now received as eJournals and can be read from home or in the Marie Hart Library on the RTFHS02 computer. If they are relevant to your area of research, you may well find information that will not appear elsewhere, so do check them out.

Our Girls – Eliza Louisa Grivell (aka Greville) by Anne and Beth Matthews
AIGS Inc. Trading as Family History Connections, The Genealogist, Winter 23

A Reflection ... The First Fleet by Des Burke
Alstonville Plateau Historical Society Inc., The Pioneer, Dec 23

The CATO Conspirators - From England to Bathurst NSW by Marie Larnach
Bathurst Family History Society, Carillon Chimes, Feb 24

A History of Local Telephone Services and the Resourceful 'Hello Girls' compiled by Philip Morton,
Berrima and District FHS, Newsletter, Oct 23

Two Convicts Named Solomon *Descendants of Convicts Group, The Mail*, Jan-Feb 24

Forbes' Picture Theatres *Forbes FHG Inc., Lachlan Valley Gold*, Oct 23

Goulburn's Hidden Military History – by various contributors
Goulburn Historical & Gen. Soc. Inc., The Argyle Bulletin, Nov 23

Highland Clearances by Jillian Openheimer
Voices from the Past, Inverell District FHG, Nov 23

Railway Stations West from Roma Street Brisbane - Extract from 'Lineside Guides, Trainaway Tours', Ken Mitchell, 2008
Ipswich Genealogical Society Inc., Bremer Echoes, Nov 23 2023

2023 Yvonne Jenkins Memorial Award – Winning Essay 'My Grandfather' by Lisa Maree Patterson
Lithgow FHG, Lithgow Pioneer Press, Oct 23

The Making of a Modern Man – Jeremiah Asquith 1863–1948

Italian Mica Miners in the Northern Territory by Ruth Sheridan

Genealogical Society of Northern Territory, Progenitor, Sep 23

A Challenging Disposition - Eliza Ashton by Gay Hendriksen

Parramatta Female Factory Friends Inc., Newsletter, Feb 24

Growing Up in the 1930's by Valda Freda Jackson (nee Jones)

Picton District Historical & FHS Inc., The Stonequarry Journal, Sep 23

Skilled Hands - The Life of a Watchmaker – John Brownbill, 1738-1802 by Jon Kehrer

Queensland FHS Inc., Queensland Family Historian, Feb 24

My Favourite Somerset Genealogy Site by Marlene Hoskins

Sunshine Coast Genealogy, Kin Tracer, Dec 23

Walter Walker HANNA - 1 August 1891 to 25 April 1957

Toowoomba & Darling Downs FHS, The Gazette, Nov 23

Drouin Civic Park Stories

West Gippsland GS, Kith 'n' Kin, Oct 23

‘What’s in a Name?’ all about procedure when considering a name change for the Society

Yass & District Historical Society Inc., Newsletter Yandoo, Sep 23



New Members

We would like to extend a warm welcome to our new members.

Member No 1042

Allan Watt

Ballina

Member No 1043

Marianne Bonner

Alstonville

Member No 1044

Margaret Evans

Ballina

Concordance of Names in Unindexed Local History Books in the Marie Hart Library

By Richard Goss – Member 977

A *Concordance of Names* has been compiled over the past couple of years of unindexed local history books in the Marie Hart Library and a file with the results has been loaded onto the computers at the Library.

Margaret **Schmitt** has made a magnificent contribution to facilitating local family history research, with this project. Margaret was assisted by Carol **Brown**, who initiated the project, Kristine **Pryor**, Karen **Chilcott**, and Richard **Goss**.

More books will be added in the near future and, we hope, into the extended future as Members of the Society become engaged with the project.

31,242	Surnames	22 Books
275	Brown	18
153	Johnson	17
157	Campbell	16
104	Daley	16
100	Sharpe	16
278	Smith	16
87	Taylor	16
100	Williams	16
164	Wilson	16
94	Jones	15
140	McDonald	15

Today, there are 31,242 references to names mentioned in 22 unindexed books.

For example (see table): there are 275 references to the surname '**Brown**' in 18 of the 22 books. There are more references to the surname '**Smith**', but only in 16 of the 22 books, and, while '**Taylor**' has only 87 references in total, the surname appears in 16 books, too.

Housed in an Excel table format, searching is available using column filters and the 'Ctrl+F' search function. Each entry also records, when available, given and 'nick' names, book, page number, and notes.

If you are reading local history books from the Marie Hart Library, that do not have an index, please talk with Richard Goss (0418 356 527) about making a contribution.

Monthly Speakers



4 November 2023 – Carmel Crosby gave a presentation on **Newspapers – Where Else to look Besides Trove**. Finding anything from birth, marriage and death notices of our ancestors to their being mentioned in businesses, local events, court appearances and more, is why we need to search for them in newspapers. *Trove* <https://trove.nla.gov.au/> is a collection of many Australian newspapers, but if ancestors cannot be found there, we might need to look further afield.

The *State Library of New South Wales* (NSW) can be accessed from home with a NSW local library card (or by joining the State Library). Nearly all of their many newspaper databases can be searched from home (one at a time as they are huge!). These resources include current and historical newspapers from Australia, New Zealand and around the world and can be found at <https://eresources.sl.nsw.gov.au/>. Several unlocked databases can be searched without logging in, or directly from a search engine, including *Welsh Newspapers Online* and *Gazettes Online UK*.

Information was given about where to access *The Sydney Morning Herald*, from 1842 up to the present day, and also *The Northern Star*, which has serviced our local area since 1876, until it closed in 2020.

The British Newspaper Archive is available on *Find My Past*, which can be accessed in our *Marie Hart Library* in Ballina. It has newspapers from 1699 from many areas including The Caribbean, India and Ireland, as well as, regional UK newspapers.

Information was given about free and subscription Irish and Scottish newspaper sites, though many of the newspapers on these sites are available on the large databases already mentioned.

The USA Library of Congress has a free site <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/> covering most States from 1770 – 1963.

We were told about Boolean operators, which narrow or expand parameters when searching newspapers and can make it more efficient.

And last but not least, we were reminded that we cannot re-publish something written until 70 years from the death of the creator, or after its creation, or when it was first made public, whichever is most applicable. This also applies to material produced overseas.

A handout with detailed information was sent to members prior to the presentation in November.

There was no meeting in December or January.

The Richmond-Tweed Family History Society Inc. was established in 1983 to serve the family history needs of researchers initially with a special interest in North East New South Wales, Australia, in the area bounded by the Richmond and Tweed Rivers, often referred to as the Northern Rivers.

The Marie Hart Library (MHL) holds numerous local records including the Local Schools Admission Registers, Cemetery and Burial Records, Honour and Memorial Rolls from many locations within the Northern Rivers, plus death and funeral notices and obituaries from *The Northern Star* (1876 – 2020).

Over the years, the library has expanded and now holds a wealth of information from across Australia including electoral rolls, historical and pioneer records, war records, shipping lists, probate records, landholder returns, Colonial Secretary papers and cemetery books. There are family history journals from within Australia or overseas countries, either as hard copies or in electronic form. The latter can be accessed on the computers in the MHL or from home.

Access is available to microfiche, CDs and computers connected to genealogical websites, to which we subscribe, including *FindmyPast* and the *Biographical Database of Australia*. We are also a *FamilySearch* affiliate, which gives access to more than the standard *FamilySearch* site. Ask the member on duty, during opening hours, if you need assistance with any of the library's resources.

Family History Research Requests can be done by the Society for a fee of \$15 per hour. Please include a 22x11 cm stamped, addressed envelope and research fees where applicable. Email the secretary or send details to our PO Box (addresses are on the inside front cover)

THE Cedar Log

Journal of the Richmond-Tweed Family History Society Inc.

Published March, June, September & December

The Editor would be pleased to accept articles for inclusion in this journal. Ideally, they should be sent by email to editorcedarlog@gmail.com but typed hard copy is also welcomed. The format preferred is Times New Roman font; 11 point; single spacing. Please add your contact details as the Editor may need to discuss editing of material submitted for publication. It is your responsibility to ensure that your article does not infringe copyright.

Items remain the copyright of the Richmond-Tweed Family History Society and the author. *Members' input is important and makes for interesting and diverse reading and you might be lucky enough to connect with someone who has read your article, either in Australia or overseas. We would love to hear about how you broke down those brick walls or any interesting information you have found out about an ancestor or research sources or techniques that others may find helpful.*

The society does not accept responsibility for opinions and statements published by individual contributors. Material and articles in this journal may only be reproduced with written permission from the Society. Please contact the editor via email.



SOCIETY EVENTS

Society meetings are at the Players Theatre, 24 Swift Street, Ballina at 2pm on the first Saturday of each month. There is no meeting in January or December.

DATES TO REMEMBER 2024

Contact the Secretary or the Co-ordinator if you would like to participate in one of the presentations listed below.

Saturday 2 March Meeting: One talk by Dawn Lotty – The Black Sheep of the Family.

Topic of the afternoon: DNA Connections: People You have Connected with through Testing your DNA – Co-ordinator- Ann Emery

Saturday 6 April Meeting: “We Need You!”, Military Stories – Co-ordinator - Judy Cosgrove

Saturday 4 May: The Women Who Shaped Us: Occupations, Interests, Family Traits that we Inherited – Co-ordinator - Victoria Evans.

Saturday 1 June Meeting: Antiques Roadshow – bring in an Heirloom and there will be an interactive display with members talking about their treasure, if they would like to. Coordinator – Joy Conlon.

Saturday 6 July Meeting: Connecting with Family Lines Online. Zoom Presentation by Brisbane-based Genealogist, Rosemary Kopittke

MEMBERSHIP

Membership fees for the year 1 January to 31 December 2024 are \$40 Individual or \$50 Joint Membership. Journals will be sent to financial members only.