CLARENCE RIVER ADVOCATE

June 2024 Volume 25 Number 2



STONE COTTAGE and MUSEUM

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All correspondence to be addressed to: The Secretary

Maclean District Historical Society PO Box 257. Maclean 2463.

Phone: (02) 66453416

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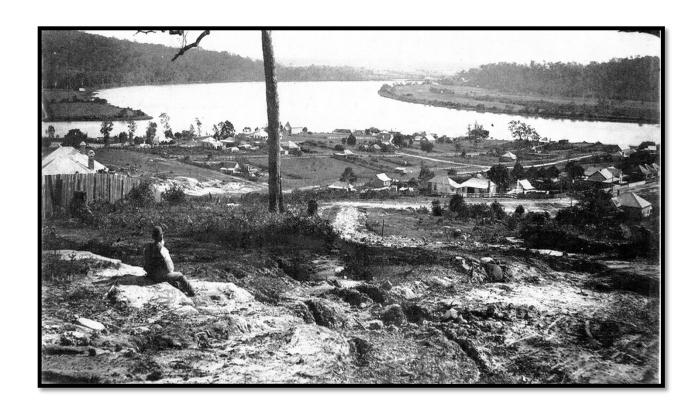
 ${\it Email: museum@maclean history.org. au}$

EDITORS COMMENTS – Sorry about the oversight last issue as it was pointed out to me, 2024 is not quite 100 years ago.

For the information of members, at the end of June 2024, this month, your membership must be renewed. Please fill out the membership renewal form each time you renew your membership, as details do change from time to time and we need to be aware, to maintain a line of communication with you.

CONTENTS.

- ➤ The Gables Part One.
- ➤ 100 Years Ago.



THE GABLES – PART ONE.

(Compiled by Trish Bowes)

The Gables (Commercial Hotel/Hotel Clarence) has a fascinating history that is linked to the very early years of Maclean (Rocky Mouth) white settlement. There are many twists and turns in its long tenure and it is almost a roll call of past pioneers. The land "Gables" is on was originally part of Portion 8 of the Taloumbi Shire owned by Roderick Shaw. In 1863, Shaw sold the 40 acres to Joseph (Da) Silva who began to build what was first known as the Commercial Hotel. (*Daily Examiner*, 27 October 1939)

Joseph Francis Da Silva (1833-1867) was a Portuguese mariner who came to Australia in 1853 and as his Naturalisation Paper states, he was a "native of Lisbon, Portugal and is now residing in Maclean Rocky Mouth Clarence River having purchased land in the said Colony". Joseph Silva married Marjory Robb (1839-1926) on 11 August 1862 at the Mariners' Church, Sydney. (SMH Aug.14 1862) Marjory was the daughter of John and Marjory Fleming Robb and was born in Kilrenny, Fife, Scotland. In the 1851 Scottish Census it states she was a seamstress; and she travelled to Australia in 1858. Her sister Euphemia Fleming Robb (1847-1937) followed eight years later.



Marjory and Joseph had three children, Euphemia Elizabeth [known as Eliza and Tottie] (1862-1915); Joseph (1864-1929), supposedly the second white child born at Rocky Mouth (*Daily Examiner* 25 Feb. 1929); and John Emmanuel (1866-1868). Joseph Silva was a mariner and he worked on both the droghers, PS Ulmarra and SS Uloom and was the licensee of the Maclean Hotel from 1864-1867.

It was noted in the *Daily Examiner* 22 July 1937 and *Clarence Advocate*, 13 December 1901 that "(Catholic) Mass was celebrated at the Commercial Hotel ... In 1868 an acre of land beside the present Church of England was donated by Joseph Silva and a small wooden church was erected there." However, the dates are a bit confused here as Joseph Silva died in 1867 and the Commercial Hotel was not completed until 1868. Notwithstanding these inaccuracies it was noted that this building remained the Catholic Church until the opening of "the beautiful edifice" in 1893. (*Clarence Advocate*, 13 December 1901.) Joseph Silva was also a member of the five member Maclean Public Schools Board with the likes of Alexander Cameron and James McDonald, (*Clarence and Richmond Examiner [hereinafter CRE]*, 5 Feb. 1867)

Unfortunately, Joseph Silva died on August 12, 1867, the day after his fifth wedding anniversary. He was in Grafton and "whilst in the act of pulling a boat near Mr Fisher's wharf, was observed suddenly to fall over the seat, and almost immediately expire.... An inquest was held on the body before Mr A. Lardner, J.P., coroner, and a jury of twelve, at Mr F Gray's Tattersall's Hotel", and there were four witnesses. Maurice O'Keefe noted "that he had known the deceased for fifteen years; Da Silva slept at his house on Sunday night ... and deceased left his house for the purpose of taking a boat from Dobie Street round to the steamship "Agnes Irving"....At this stage the inquest was adjourned, and a post mortem examination made and it was determined that "the brain was tolerably healthy" but "membranes were greatly congested, the lungs were perfectly healthy" ... "the liver enlarged" but "the heart enlarged and hypertrophied, the valves and arteries thickened and ossified; death being caused by disease of the heart and ossification or atheromatous deposit in the arteries. The body in other respects was

in a healthy condition. The Jury returned a verdict of "Died from disease of the heart." (*Empire (Sydney, NSW: 1850-1875)*, 20 August 1867)

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It also noted he was a member of the Oddfellows' Lodge (full term Loyal Star of the East Lodge of Manchester Unity Oddfellows) which was established in Grafton in 1864 and had as its slogan, "Competitors may come and go, but we go on for ever." Joseph Da Silva was initiated on December 27, 1865 (with Edward Creer, engineer and captain of the SS "Uloom" – *CRE*, 14 July 1863) and "is the first name on the obituary board of the Lodge." (*Daily Examiner*, 20 Feb. 1933)



Joseph Francis Silva's broken gravestone in the Catholic section of the Grafton Cemetery

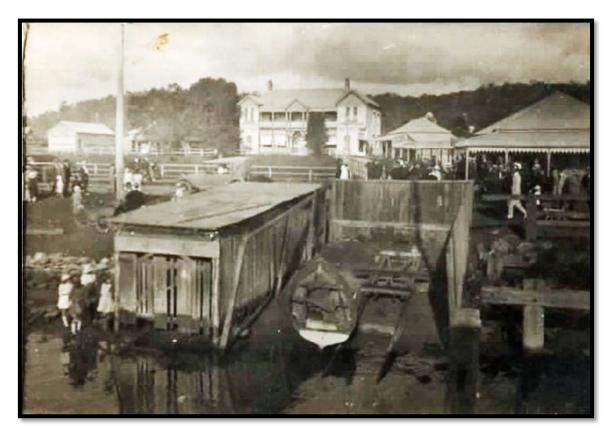
More heartbreak was to follow for Marjory Silva as although she was left Joseph Silva's total estate by the 16 August 1867 (*NSW Govt. Gazette*, 23 August 1867) their third child, John Emmanuel died on the 19 August 1868 at the age of two years and eight days; a week and one year after his father died. However, Marjory Silva became the first publican of the Commercial Hotel in 1868. It looked as if other aspects of her life were also improving as, in 1869, she married William Brownlie (1846-1883), and he became the licensee in 1870. This may partly be because they had a son, William Samuel Brownlie (1870-1947).

However, this improvement was only shortlived as William Brownlie was declared insolvent on 22 July,1873. It was stated that the cause of his insolvency was "Losses in mining speculation and depression in business and that his liabilities were twice his assets of 500 pounds."

(CRE 29 July 1873). Marjory Brownlie was still the proprietor of the Commercial Hotel and her sister, Euphemia Robb, took over as licensee. However, in January 1874 Marjory Brownlie suffered terrible burns. She had gone down to "the cellar to get some spirits for the bar, when it took fire from the candle she held in her hand" and her whole dress was burnt. "The flames from the cellar struck through the bar floor and set fire to a tea chest" but did not harm the rest of the building due to Marjory Brownlie running out of the cellar and extinguishing the flames with her hands. She suffered terrible burns to her hands and arms but was saved by the fact she was wearing woollen undergarments. (Maitland Mercury, 8 January 1874)

Unfortunately, Marjorie Brownlie suffered more heartbreak as her husband left the district in 1875 and this advertisement appeared in the *Maryborough Chronicle (QLD)* on 12 August 1880: "£25 will be paid to any Person who will give reliable information respecting one WILLIAM BROWNLIE, formerly a butcher at Rocky Mouth, Clarence River, and last heard of at Cooktown and the Palmer, in 1875. Arthur Cubitt, Missing Friends Office, 157, Pitt-street, Sydney". He never returned and he died at Georgetown, Queensland on 8 October 1881. (*QLD bdm*) In the *NSW Government Gazette* (17 Feb. 1882) it states "William Brownlie, formerly of Rocky Mouth, Clarence River, in the Colony of New South Wales, late of Georgetown, in the Colony of Queensland, butcher" died intestate. All his lands and goods were "granted to Marjory Brownlie, of Rocky Mouth, widow of the deceased" and was dated February 3, 1882.

Marjory Brownlie did, however, become the licensee again of the Commercial Hotel in November 1876. (*CRE* 5 Dec. 1876) In 1877 she built a bar on River Street because she believed she was losing passing trade. It was Licensing requirements that the bar had to be connected to the accommodation and restaurant and this is why there was a covered walkway. There is still a door in the front right-hand side of the building where people entered from the walkway. Both buildings were called the Commercial Hotel.



Possibly earliest photo of Commercial Hotel surroundings. Has to be after 1901 as that is when the second storey was added. Note size of tree. Notice the public bar on River Street (which was built in 1877) is in photo. Must have been taken from the deck of a ship. One of the few photos to show the foreshore with boatshed, slipway and part of Brownlie/Conlon's Wharf.

The NSW Licensing Acts of 1882 and 1883 reduced opening hours from 6am to 11pm six days a week, with Sunday closing and hotels had to provide public accommodation. The earlier laws stated that a hotel should have a least two sitting rooms and two bedrooms for public use and the 1882/83 Acts increased this to "two sitting rooms and four bedrooms, each not less than 1200 cubic feet in size". The result was that many hotels doubled in size in the 1880s. (https://timegents.com/a-brief-history-of-the-licensing-laws-in-nsw)

In 1886 Marjorie Brownlie attempted to sell 14 Allotments in Section 1 of the Brownlie Subdivision, of Portion 8, with the only available river "frontage sites between Rush's and McLachlan's Subdivisions; back access by lanes; ... all within a stone's throw of the wharves, banks, and in fact nearly all the business places, and for position cannot be equalled in the rising town of Maclean." (*CRE* 10 April 1886).

However, she kept most of the land but was obviously having money difficulties as in 1889, she was fined 20s, with witness expenses of £2 10s each and 13s costs for "refusing to supply sufficient provinder to Carter and Sons' horses." (*Northern Star*, 27 February 1889)

However, by February 1892, it had become a Mortgagee sale and all of the Brownlie Subdivision was put up for auction on 12 November 1892. The auctioneer was Walter J. Folbigg and there were 29 Lots. Lot 1 was 2 acres and consisted of the Commercial Hotel with 2 weatherboard cottages, the Commercial Stores and Shop adjacent. "The building known as the HOTEL is of brick, and, substantial in character, and is situated beyond the reach of the highest recorded flood. At the rear are wooden Stables, Kitchen and usual out-buildings. The COMMERCIAL STORES are immediately fronting River-street, and command one of the best positions of the town for the carrying on of any Store business." Then listed were the other 28 Lots with "Attention is directed to lots 8, 9, 10. 11. 12 and 20 as being well suited for MARKET GARDENS or ORCHARDS, while the balance of the vacant allotments would form eligible BUILDING SITES. TITLE FREEHOLD. TERMS AT SALE. (CRE, 29 October 1892) Only three Lots were sold as 26 Lots were again offered for auction in December 1899. (Clarence River Advocate, 28 November, 1899)

John Read, who owned the Chatsworth Store from 1877 to 1910, bought Lot 1 and interestingly Walter J. Folbigg became the licensee in 1893 but remained an auctioneer. Unfortunately, on the 27 June 1894 he was killed when his buggy overturned on the Maclean/Lawrence Road. (*SMH*, 28 June 1894) It was noted that he had held the positions of Council Clerk, alderman, treasurer and secretary of various societies and "took an active part in the Hospital and School of Arts, rowing, and athletic and other sports. ... He was only 32 years of age and leaves a widow with two young children... The funeral took place yesterday and was attended by about 1000 persons from all parts of the river ... On the cortege reaching the Presbyterian cemetery, the burial service was read by Rev. Mr. Scott, followed by the Masonic and Oddfellows' ceremonials". (*CRE*, 30 June 1894)



wife His Edith Folbigg then took over the licence but 1897 in "the license(sic) of the Commercial Hotel transferred was from Mrs. E.T. Folbigg to Henry Joyce, and the

license(sic) of the Maclean Hotel from Henry Joyce to Mrs. E.T. Folbigg." (*CRE*, 13 Feb. 1897) At the end of 1901 the owner, John Read made arrangements for a second-storey addition which would increase accommodation by 13 rooms. The work was executed by a Sydney builder and the 25,000 bricks used were made by Mr R, Page of Taloumbi. (*Clarence River Advocate*, 29 Nov. 1901) It was noted that after its "large and extensive additions... (that) the building bears the stamp of metropolitan architecture." (*Grafton Argus*, 16 May 1902)

In the Australian Town and Country Journal it stated: "... The building is of most commanding, proportions, standing well back in the principal street, on spacious grounds, almost in the centre of the town. It commands one of the most magnificent views obtainable on the Clarence River, and probably one of the finest river sceneries in New South Wales. From the balcony, at the rear of the building ..(there is)... an excellent view of the town and surrounding hills.... It is substantially built, and contains twenty-six rooms, including bedrooms, parlours, dining-rooms, reading and smoke rooms, two bars, and spacious sample-rooms, etc. Then there is good stabling provided, with an attentive groom to look after the horses. The whole of the house is well ventilated, splendidly furnished, and kept scrupulously clean. One very striking feature in connection with this hotel ... is that the public bar, together with some three or four parlours, have been carried out a considerable distance from the main building, thereby giving the place a deal more privacy than enjoyed by the majority of hotels." (5 July 1902) The photo below accompanied the article.



Henry Joyce was the licensee.

Photo by W. Stevenson, Grafton

It was also at this time that the old Commercial Store disappeared from the front of the Commercial Hotel. It had been built in 1875 and had been used as a store and then as an auction mart by Mr. Madgwick, Maclean's first auctioneer. P. Conlon and Co. used it for a time before moving to the new Commercial Store at the corner of River and Union Streets in 1891. The old store was then used as the office of the "Clarence River Advocate" (Mr. Dunnet) before being used as a sample room in connection with the Commercial Hotel. "Its removal greatly improves the land between the Caledonian Hall, the Commercial hotel (sic) and the street." (Clarence River Advocate, 28 July 1903)



(Clarence and Richmond Examiner (Grafton, NSW: 1889 - 1915), Tuesday 25 April 1893, page 6)

* 100 Years Ago *

APRIL 1924

COFF'S HARBOR.

Mr. W. E. Reeves, for many years representative of the Singer Sewing Machine Co. in this district, left during the week for Maclean, where he will represent the company on the Lower Clarence.

There arrived this week at the railway station several trucks of potatoes from Guyra. These came via Maitland and Newcastle, a distance of hundreds of miles, instead of coming 120 miles by a direct line of railway.

MACLEAN - ILUKA ROAD.

The Harwood Shire Council, in a letter on January 31, asked that a special grant be made available for the construction of a road between Maclean and Iluka. Mr. Geo. Nesbitt, M.L.A., has now received a letter from the Under-Secretary for Local Government, which states that a report has been obtained, and careful consideration given to the council's request as above. "It would appear, however, that the road for which assistance is asked is a purely local convenience," states the letter, "and that during the past 12 months the council has received Government grants amounting to £6047. In the circumstances it is not considered that a grant from State funds for this work would be justified; and the Minister regrets, therefore, that he cannot see his way to accede to the council's request in this instance."

NEW BILLIARD SALOON.

There is always entertainment of some description to go to in the evenings at Maclean. Special mention in this respect might be made of the new billiard saloon which has just been opened by Mr. Claude Munro. Having worked up a good connection, and having every confidence, in the progress of Maclean, Mr. Munro, has gone to the expense of having two of the very latest Tudor model tables erected in his new rooms at the rear of Mr. Ken Mackay's buildings fronting the Maclean Hotel. Mr. Richarsdon of Home Recreations, Ltd., fitted the tables up, and in

conversation with him, he assures us that Mr. Munro's room is the only public saloon in the State that has two of these beautiful tables. The rooms have been painted throughout with a tint that is pleasing to the eye. The walls are decorated with some of the latest and most beautiful paintings, among which are several by the local amateur artist, Mr. W. Thompson, better known as "Toosey." The seating accommodation leaves nothing to be desired and visitors from other parts of the State desiring a game of billiards are assured that they will have the pleasure of playing on the tables as used by the champions.

MAY 1924

MACLEAN. A TIMELY WARNING.

The police are desirous of warning visitors to Maclean at night time against the practice of leaving their coats and rugs, etc., in their vehicles in the side streets. On Saturday night last there were numerous vehicles left, particularly in Stanley street, and coats, etc., left lying on the seats.

One night last week the police discovered a horse, which had been tied to the boulevard fence, lying on the ground in the throes of death from strangulation, through not being tied properly.

Now that the show is coming on it is to be hoped that persons driving to town will see that there is nothing left in their vehicles that they place any value on. There are at least three large stables in the town, and visitors should avail themselves of these, because their valuables would then be under the care of a responsible person.

SOUTH ARM.

Mr. W. A. Kratz, of the Lower Coldstream, had the misfortune a few days ago to lose a valuable, farm horse from lockjaw, which was brought about by somewhat unusual circumstances. Some little time previous the animal became lame as the result of a stone bruise on the heel of the hoof and although every attention was given the injury gradually became worse with the above result.

A number of local residents were successful exhibitors of produce at the Maclean show last week. The South Arm district exhibit was considered one of the best yet shown from this centre, even though the season was a most unfavorable one, which speaks creditably for the fertility of the district.

Several light frosts have been experienced and present indications are anything but favorable for a mild winter.

JUNE 1924

LOWER CLARENCE DAIRY CO., LTD.

The new buildings in connection with the Maclean Butter Factory are being erected without any delay. The contractors are on the job and rapid progress is being made.

The chairman of directors (Mr. K. McDonald) is a busy man and is leaving no stone unturned in his efforts to push the work along.

On Monday night next he is holding a meeting at Chatsworth with a view, to enlightening the dairymen in that locality on matters concerning the welfare of the new factory. Every resident of the North Arm is requested to attend and encourage the directors in the big and none the less important work of providing the central factory for their produce.

After the above meeting, the president (Mr. Harrison) and members of the Maclean Chamber of Commerce will address the gathering on matters concerning the Maclean-Iluka road.

ANTI-NEW STATERS. MEETING AT MACLEAN.

The Mayor of Maclean, Ald. D. Cameron, presided over an attendance of 80 persons at the Anti-New State meeting at Maclean last night. Forty of those present joined the Anti-New State League. It was decided to meet on Wednesday, June 11, for the purpose of collecting and allotting evidence to be given before the New State Royal Commission during its sittings in Maclean.

SHARK CREEK.

During the past week three fairly good showers of rain were experienced. On Wednesday morning a heavy white frost covered the ground, and again, on Saturday morning, killing the beans and also pumpkin vines, but not effecting any damage to the cane.

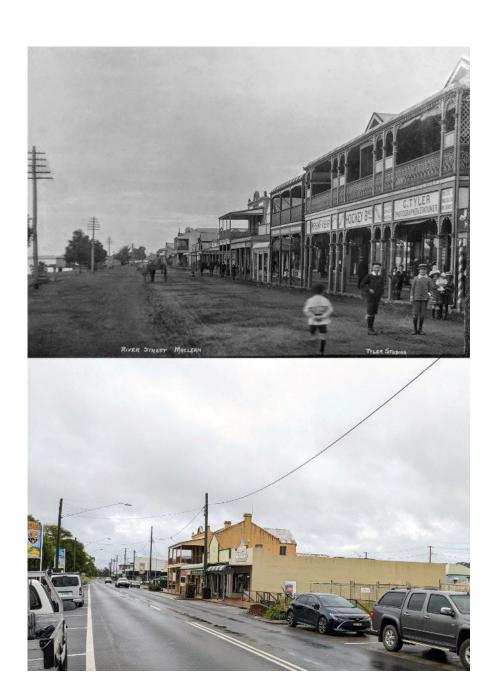
A jazz ball was held at Tara Hall on Wednesday evening last. The music of the evening was rendered by the Maclean Jazz Band. The M.C, of the evening was Mr. J. B. Gallagher, who carried out his duties to the satisfaction of everyone. Mr. Tom Lollback also rendered yeoman service in helping to make the evening a success. The chocolate waltz was won by Mr. Cooney, who kindly donated the chocolates to the ladies. Supper was served by the ladies at 110'clock. After that further dancing took place until 12.30. This being the first jazz ball of the Shark Creek and Tyndale Agricultural Bureau, the committee have every reason to be proud of it. It was the hope of the dancers that many more such social functions will take place in the future. It was announced during the evening that a jazz ball was being held at Tara Hall on Monday, June 16, in aid of the Lower Clarence Hospital and everyone was asked to roll up and give their help to such a worthy cause. The Maclean Jazz Band kindly offered their services that evening for the cause of charity.



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.

- Information on John Hill Garven (Reverend).
- Information on John James Gray and his father Samuel.
- Frederick French, one of the original teachers in Maclean and Woombah schools, family and work information requested.
- Charles Mulville: Wallaroos and Fishermen's rugby teams. Information supporting this.
- Riverland Travel, pictures/photos and information from the past 40 years.





MACLEAN DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC. ABN 73 033 923 282

The Bicentennial Museum and Stone Cottage

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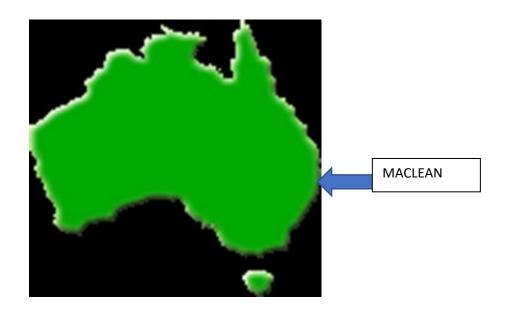
MACLEAN DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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.





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

