

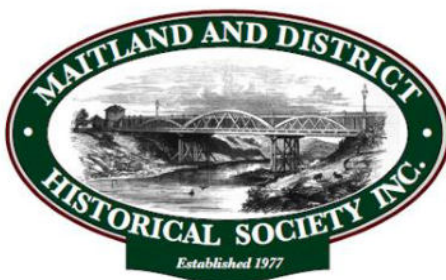
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NEWSLETTER N^o 64

30 June 2024

Heritage Fest's last activity concluded last night at *Sun Street Studios* with a piano recital featuring Erin Sweetman and teenage soloist Roeni Coates, the host the redoubtable poet and raconteur, Bill Carney. Well attended once again, it featured a presentation of *Where the Hunter River Flows* by composer Albert Tams.



Sun Street Studios in the 'old' Royal Hotel building in High Street

Albert Tams interested me, firstly as his birthplace was in Staffordshire (where my mother's father's family hail from) and his death on the *Western Front* on 29 September 1918.

My interest was around research conducted for a book I published in 1918 about a great uncle who was killed on 3rd October 1918 in what was the final action of the 20th battalion.

Albert Tams was a gunner, killed in the preparation for the action at Estrées on the Beaulieu Line in which my great uncle died. Albert missed surviving the War by six

days, Uncle Frank missed by 12 hours. One can't help but wonder what he might have contributed to Australia's musical heritage had he survived?

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This year's Heritage Fest was, put simply, great! Despite the 'run' of cold, wet and windy weather, outdoor events over the two weekends was spectacular, especially on the Sunday of the major events at St Mary's Church and in the Church Street precinct. There were a number of 'new' attractions, none more so than the carriage ride by 'Cinderella Arrivals'. I understand glass slippers were mandatory ...

All in all, Janece McDonald and her 'helpers' are to be congratulated ... well done!







By the time you get to read this, Peter F Smith will have come and gone. I've been actively involved in our Society since it was revitalised in 2009 and at no time, has a guest lecturer provided such interest. At the time of 'going to press', we are concerned that the Scarborough Room at 'Easts' may not accommodate the anticipated crowd. Fingers crossed that 120 are enough ????

In addition to Monday evening's lecture meeting at Easts, Peter is conducting two 'Walks' in High Street between Abbott and Elgin streets. Again, reflective of the interest Peter has generated, both walks were fully subscribed within hours.

We can't but look forward to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> volumes of his "Footprints Trilogy".

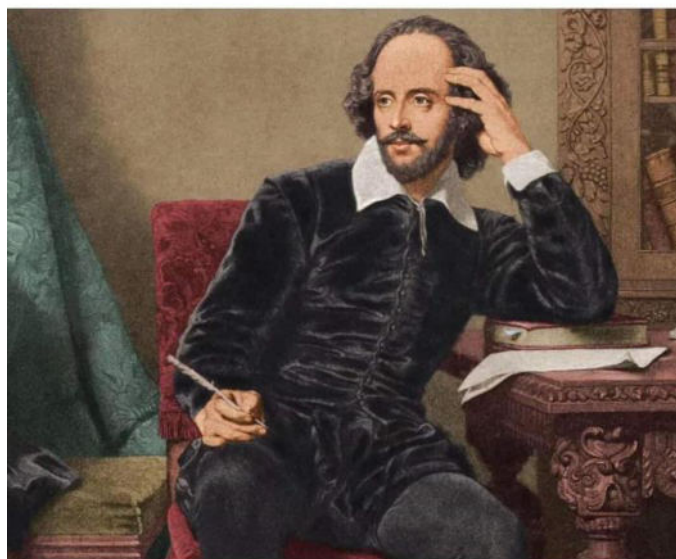
Till next time ....

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'L. A.' followed by a stylized flourish.

President

### ***Breaking News!***

Rare worn down pencil belonging to William Shakespeare has been unearthed. Experts not sure if the pencil is 2B or not 2B



# True survivors: the story of the Coleman family - from Ireland to Lochinvar

By Allan Thomas  
February 19 2023



A painting of a three-masted barque similar to the Lady MacNaghten.

On November 5, 1836, the 'Lady MacNaghten' left Cork (Ireland) on a non-stop sailing to NSW. The experiences of the passengers and crew have made that voyage infamous in the history of free migration to the colony.

The Lady MacNaghten was a 588-ton three-masted barque, built in 1824. Originally designed to carry 300 convicts, it was converted in 1836 to carry more than 400 free passengers. The sailing that year was both the last to carry female emigrants and the first to carry emigrant families from Ireland under a new bounty scheme. The majority of the passengers were Irish families who had paid a standard rate of £4 per family for the voyage.

In one area 50 bunks were built to house 120 males. The female compartment had 106 small berths and six 'hospital berths'. These accommodated 185 women and children. Emigrants and crew totalled around 450. The passengers included 47-year-old Cork native Denis Coleman, his 36-year-old wife Johanna, and their children Johannah (15), John (11), William (8), Mary (7), and baby Edward. Denis shared one berth in the men's section with

sons John and William. A female berth was occupied by mother Johanna, daughters Johanna and Mary and baby Edward.

Women and children were ordered below to their bunks at 5pm and not allowed to emerge until 8am. No washing was permitted and few passengers had a change of clothing. Daily provisions were limited to a biscuit, a few potatoes and a few ounces of meat per adult.

The first death happened after three days. Ultimately 54 people died of typhus. Other deaths were attributed to measles, encephalitis, and whooping cough. When Lady MacNaghten arrived in Sydney on February 26 a further 80 people were dangerously ill and Captain Hustwick too sick to be moved.

All the Colemans survived unscathed. By 1845 they had settled in Lochinvar. Denis worked at 'Windermere' and in 1853 he signed an 18-year lease for 40 acres from WC Wentworth. In 1850, son John married the daughter of Lochinvar's 'Cross Keys' publican. John became the publican there between 1854 and 1858 and the father of a large family. The Colemans survived the Lady MacNaghten to become some of the earliest free Irish settlers in Lochinvar.





# The rise and fall of Maitland's trams

By Chas Keys

February 26 2023



The last tram departs with 'in loving memory' inscribed on the motor.

The steam tram inaugurated in 1909 was an important piece of publicly-owned and operated infrastructure for the two Maitlands. Initially the line ran from Victoria St, East Maitland to Hannan St in the West. At the Victoria St depot, the four motors and eight trail cars were housed under cover. Light repairs and painting were undertaken there.

By May, 2009, the line was extended to Regent St, Campbells Hill, via the Long Bridge. A trestle was added on the bridge's northern (Oakhampton) side to accommodate it. The track was now four miles, five chains (about 6.6k) long. The following year a spur line of 37 chains (roughly 740 metres) from High St along Church St to the West Maitland Railway Station was added.

In 1915 the level crossing just east of the High St Station was replaced by a bridge over the railway line. A proposal in 1921 to electrify the system came to nothing, and likewise it was never extended to Rutherford as some had hoped. The original line was divided into three 'sections' (Victoria St to Fitzroy St, Fitzroy St to High St Station and High St Station to Hannan St) with the fare a penny per section. Sunday patrons were charged double. The extensions to the West Maitland Station and Regent St were incorporated within the original sections.

No trams operated on Sundays between 10.30am and 12 noon or between 6.30pm and 8.00. These were 'Church Hours'. In those days church services were 'protected' from potential 'competing' activities including sport and travel.

Maitland's trams never succeeded financially. They never competed effectively with privately-run motor buses operated by the East and West Maitland Motor Bus

Company, and during the 1920s rising car ownership took a toll on patronage. The state government eventually decided that the "costly and wasteful" tram service would be closed. Local lobbying failed to overturn the decision. Probably, the combined population of East and West Maitland (about 11,000 in 1914) was insufficient to make the service viable.

The final trip occurred on the last day of 1926, Rube Digby at the controls. He blew the tram's whistle the whole way from Victoria St, and cars on the streets responded with their horns. The removal of the rails began in 1927 and the rolling stock went to Newcastle.

Only because it's an Olympic Year .... promise, I wouldn't have done it otherwise!

