



# *Casino and District Family History Group Inc*

AUGUST 2024 – No. 146 – IBSN 0808 19-8535



School of Arts Building, Cnr Walker & Barker Streets, Casino, NSW.  
Home of Casino & District Family History Group Inc.

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**MEETINGS:** Second Wednesday of each month at 10.00am

Room 5, Upstairs School of Arts Building, Walker Street, Casino

## **Opening Times:**

Tuesday and Thursday 10am – 2pm  
Wednesdays 12pm – 4pm  
Saturdays open 3<sup>rd</sup> only 9am – 11.30am  
Closed mid-December – late January  
Open by appointment mid Dec – late Jan

## **Membership:**

Single \$40  
Family \$50 (2 People same address)  
Pensioner \$35 Pensioner Couple \$45  
Student \$30 (needs to show card)  
Joining Fee \$5 All prices include GST  
(Membership year Jan to Dec)

The Crossing Place

## CONTENTS

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Meetings & Opening Times<br>2. Committee & President's Report<br>3-7. Austin Bede Prat - A Casino Anzac Part 2<br>8-9. The Migrant Shepherd – A Book Review<br>10-11. Mary Alcock – S. McPherson | 11-12 Family Drownings – K. Morris<br>13. Cruise on the Clarence<br>14. Members Notice Board & Research<br>15. Roster & Quote<br>16. Publications for Sale & Quotes |
|---|---|

## COMMITTEE 2024

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## President's Report – September to October 2024

Oh! how quickly the year is going. I hope you are all having great success with research. Such inspiration can be gained from reading newsletters from other societies, local and international, which are available for borrowing at our research room. We are getting closer to releasing our updated Evans Head Burials, Deaths & Cremations book. The Clarence River Cruise was enjoyed by those who came. It was a lovely, relaxed day with an informative commentary as we went from Iluka to the Harwood Bridge. Guest Speaker at our August meeting was Adele Wessell. Adele spoke on how recipe and cookbooks can be used as historical documents and adding to the history of the family. An interesting discussion was had with members bringing in some old recipe books. Robyn Nesbitt will show members how to use the Biographical Index at our September meeting. I hope everyone is getting a table together to come to the Trivia Night in September. Have a fun evening with family and friends. See the advert in this newsletter for all the details. We are holding an open afternoon 26<sup>th</sup> September. If you know anyone who might be interested to come and see what we have in our Research Room bring them along. In October we have Michele Hurcum coming to talk to us on Land Records. Come along and see how to get the most out of these records. Don't forget that we have so much to help with your research, Access to the Biographical Index, Find My Past, Ancestry and Family Search, all available on the computers at the Research Room as well as many Newspapers on Microfilm, Pioneer Registers and Cemetery books. Please come and use them. Happy Researching!

*Cherryl Mison Vice-President*

## AUSTIN BEDE PRATT – A CASINO ANZAC PART 2

### The story continues from the May issue

Researched and written by Shirlee McPherson - Editor

After taking part in the Gallipoli landing on 25<sup>th</sup> April 1915 Austin was stricken with malaria. He was classed "Wounded" and was transported to hospital in Birmingham, England. Below are details of Austin's military medical history, some of his letters reproduced in the local papers about his combat movements, followed by his return to Australia, his subsequent discharge in 1917 and the years to follow. Apologies for any errors in Austin's medical record, as it was difficult to decipher.



### Austin Bede Pratt – No. 702 AIF 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion

Wounded Gallipoli 25 April 1915

Wounded Gallipoli Peninsula 3 May 1915 – Sprain back

Admitted to hospital 16 May 1915 – Malaria (Birmingham)

Re-joined Unit 29 July 1915

Admitted to hospital 5 January 1916 – Mumps

Discharged to Duty 27 January 1916

Re-joined unit 3 May 1916

Admitted to hospital 6 August 1916 (France) - Oedema R Foot

Admitted to hospital 14 November 1916 (England) – Rheumatism R Foot & L thigh

Remained in England, from Nov 1916 until April 1917.

During this time was transferred from 3<sup>rd</sup> Auxiliary Hospital Dartford to

4<sup>th</sup> Command Depot Wareham then 2<sup>nd</sup> Command Depot Weymouth

Returned Australia per "Barambah". Departed Plymouth 8 April 1917 – Trench Feet

Discharged as medically unfit on 17 July 1917 due to severe rheumatism.

"Following the landing of Australian & New Zealand troops, the Anzacs, at Gallipoli on 25th April 1915, casualties mounted rapidly and were initially transported to their base in Egypt, which was soon unable to cope, with wounded being sent on to England.

Here the troops found that there was no Australian base to which they could report once they had been discharged from hospital; what was needed urgently was a base in England where troops could be sent to convalesce. So, on 31st May 1915 a command depot was set up at Monte Video House in Chickerell, some two miles from Weymouth.

After April 1916, Weymouth became the Australian Imperial Forces (AIF) Command Depot No.2 which accommodated those men not expected to be fit for duty within six months, therefore, most of the Diggers repatriated as a result of wounds or sickness passed through Weymouth. During the years 1915-1919 over 120,000 Australian and New Zealand troops passed through Weymouth."

<https://birtwistlewiki.com.au/wiki/Weymouth>

A major problem in the trenches of the Western Front was a condition called trench foot, in which the foot swells up and begins to decay. It is generally caused by exposure to damp and cold conditions and where blood circulation is restricted. Soldiers were encouraged to wash their feet and change into dry socks regularly and their feet were often inspected.

<https://www.iwm.org.uk/history/how-to-keep-clean-and-healthy-in-the-trenches>

## FROM THE TRENCHES – 6 November 1915

Miss M. Klaus, of Walker-street, has received the following letter from Pte. Austin Pratt, dated September 7th "From my little Grey Home in the trenches - "I received your welcome letter this morning and was very pleased to hear from you. Well, things are much quieter than they were on the day we landed. I was surprised when I returned from England to find how quiet it was. Poor old McInnes got killed a week before I came back. I was so sorry as he was a real nice fellow and a real hard case; everyone spoke well of him. He was out at the back of our trenches sitting outside a dug-out when Abdul (the Turks) sent over a shrapnel shell, and McInnes sang out to some other men who were there to get in their dug-outs, when Abdul sent another shell and it hit him though the head, and all he said was "Oh my God!" We had another bit of bad luck last night C. H. Kendall, of Casino, got wounded through the right arm and in the leg. He and three other chaps were sent out in front of the firing line to cut bushes down, and Abdul started rapid fire. They are flesh wounds and are not serious. It is very funny how a person gets used to shell fire. When I was first here, I used to duck my head and get under cover if a shell was going half a mile away from me but now, I am properly seasoned, and they have to be might close before I trouble. I was talking to Jack Wayte yesterday, he has been here for four months and has not got a scratch yet; he looks a bit thin on it though. While I was in Weymouth, I met Sam Hawkins and his wife and old Sam and I had some fine evenings together. When I was leaving Mrs. Hawkins came down to see me off, and I got her to send a cable. I suppose mother has received it long ago. Charlie Hayden is here too and is quite recovered from his wound. I forgot to tell you I spent my twenty-first birthday in the trenches, but I did not have any birthday cake. Abdul tried to present me with a lump of high explosives and a few pellets of shrapnel, but he missed. He knocked a bit of mud in my tea as I was enjoying my so-called dinner, and I cursed him as usual. Well, May, remember me to all at home, and tell Mary I will write to her soon." — *Casino and Kyogle Courier and North Coast Advertiser*, 6 November 1915, page 7

### Raiding a Hun Trench Casino boy's experience 20 September 1916

Pte. Austy Pratt, who has been in the fighting line since the commencement of the war, writes to his mother from France on July 9<sup>th</sup> - "Things have been going just the same with me; could not wish for better. I suppose you have heard of the raiding parties on the western front. Well, I had the experience of being on one of them on the 1<sup>st</sup> July. The officers called for volunteers to raid the German trenches, and I made one of them. Frank McMahon, Teddy Little, and a good few more of the northern rivers joined in. Well, we went away to a different billet to train, 158 of us all told. My special job was to keep communications with the trenches when we were in no man's land, and this was done by the aid of a telephone. Frank McMahon also had the same job. Anyway, the night came for the raid, and we started out from our own trench, and crawled within fifty yards of the German parapet without being seen. The artillery was then communicated with, and they opened up a bombardment on Fritz while we were busy cutting his barbed wire. Things were very exciting; I can tell you. The Germans opened up a few machine guns on us, but they could not see us in the dark, and their fire was ineffective. After getting through the wire the trench was rushed, and after a bit of hand-to-hand fighting our boys captured 25 Bavarians and a machine gun. It was going back to our own trenches that was the worst, and we had a few knocked by machine gun and rifle fire – 24 killed and 20 wounded. I was very sorry for this, as I had some of my best pals wounded. The prisoners we took were dressed well and well equipped, and were big men with it, but I don't think they knew what was up when we got in amongst them. It was a dirty thing to do on a dark night, you know, mother. France looks like a picture just now, and the crops look lovely. Of course, summer is right on us, and we have it warm in the middle of the day.

(Included in the letter are a "Feldpostbriefe" (field post letter)– something in the nature of a small-sized letter card – and a coloured postcard, which were taken from one of the prisoners. In the former a letter to his sweetheart was commenced. One line only was written when the interruption came, possibly just prior to the struggle in which he was captured. The postcard shows a neatly

coloured presentment of a somewhat idealised German soldier exchanging loving greetings with a very nice-looking young lady). *Casino and Kyogle Courier and North Coast Advertiser*, 20 September 1916, page

1917 - 1 June - Austin returned to Australia via Fremantle per troop ship HMAT Barambah

1917 - 11 June - Austin travelled on a troop train along with approx. 103 invalided soldiers from Sydney to Brisbane Kangaroo Point Hospital

1917 - Austin gains a mention in the *Darling Downs Gazette*, 12 June 1917, page 5.

**BACK FROM THE WAR – INVALID & WOUNDED SOLDIERS** - Although Private Austin Pratt is not a Toowoomba or even a Downs man, he was one of the most interesting personalities aboard the train, inasmuch as he proved to be an original 9<sup>th</sup> Battalion man, and that to many of the returned men who were present yesterday meant a great deal. On the outbreak of war, Pte Pratt enlisted from Casino in New South Wales and after some time in camp he sailed with the first troops for the front. The oft repeated but ever acceptable story of the arduous training of the men in Egypt was repeated and then the soldier, modestly exclaimed "I was in the landing." Nothing more was said, and nothing more could be ascertained from him. He spent five months on Gallipoli and then was sent to Lemos Island where he was detained for some time. Subsequently he was sent back to Egypt and across to Abeta. After a time, there he was transferred to France where he spent eight months. He was in the battles of Pozieres and Fleurbaux. The continued service and strain told its tale, and the gallant young soldier was stricken down and sent to England whence he came to Australia. Pte Pratt was practically right through the campaign from the entry of the Australians into it and was not once wounded or injured."

1917 - Austin is welcomed home along with other local returned soldiers. *Casino and Kyogle Courier and North Coast Advertiser*, 23 June 1917, page 2.

**HEROES RETURN** - On Tuesday evening last the Casino and District Empire League welcomed home three returned soldiers. It was a happy gathering. Outside the wind was cold, and most unpleasant conditions prevailed, but all unpleasant elements stayed outside the door, and ghosts having been well laid, everybody was merry and bright. Pte Austin Pratt, who enlisted with the first batch from Casino, and who had been invalided home with trench feet after almost three years in the thick of it at Gallipoli and the bloody fields of France was the lion of the evening. Pte. K. C. Gilmore, whose brother paid the extreme sacrifice for Australia, was one whom all were pleased to see, and a touch of romance was added by the fact that he now met another brother for the first time in twelve months. Pte. R. H. Rowe, who set such a worthy example to younger men, was also warmly welcomed.

The President (Mr. J. B. McDougall) extended a warm welcome to the guests and emphasised the necessity for spreading the news that they were always glad to see returned men and their friends. Pte Pratt was known to all the soldiers who returned from the front. He had known Pte. Pratt since he was a toddler and knew that he would do well at the front. The name of Pratt was honoured in the district, and it was a saying that if one wanted a good turn done, he should go to Pratt's. The boys who had gone to the front had made the name of Australia, and they were a credit to the country. The soldiers of other countries admitted that there were no better soldiers than the Australians. Cheers were given for the returned boys and for those at the front. Mr. J. W. Pidcock, who has three sons at the front, said it was the bounden duty of those who remained behind to show their appreciation of the men and welcome them on their return. Mr. Joseph Collins, who came all the way from Eltham, delivered a vigorous and original speech. The man who went to the front, whether he was a convicted burglar or worse, had some good in him, and was a far better man than the shirker.

Pte. Pratt in returning thanks, said that he hoped and trusted all the Casino boys would be back before Christmas. Pte Rowe said he looked upon it as a privilege to have been accepted for the service. The older men had relieved the younger men for the more active duties. The remount unit

had to put up with hardships, but they had done so cheerfully. In addition to Mr. Collins, there were two other visitors from Eltham, Messrs. Gilmore and Emery. A capital musical programme was rendered, and much enjoyed, the acoustic properties of the hall enabling the singers to be heard to advantage. Miss Dougherty recited, and so did Mrs. Alexander and Mr. Collins. Songs were given by Miss Vera Rea, and Miss Bartlett, as well as by Pte Rowe and Mr. McMonigal. A word of praise is due to the capable accompanist, Miss Ruby Machney, who ventured out in the good cause after a recent recovery from influenza.

1917- 26 June 1917 Austin left Casino for Brisbane to be examined for fitness for active service

1917- 6 July 1917 Austin arrives in Casino from Brisbane. He was granted a discharge due to unfitness.

1917 - 4 August 1917 It was reported in the Daily Examiner, page 4 that Austin was involved in a motor accident when two cars collided on the southern end of Irving Bridge. All occupants were thrown out including Austin, although uninjured, who suffered from shock.

1918 - 7 June 1918, Austin, along with many other returned soldiers from Casino (approx. 20), attended a welcome home dinner hosted by the Casino Empire League and attended by several members of Win-the War-League.

1918 - 13 September 1918, A letter regarding the Soldier Settlement Scheme is published in the Richmond River Express. Written by D. S. Raynor on behalf of the Win-The-War-League in Casino who have been helping returned soldiers repatriate in the Casino district. Raynor writes of the difficulties in the process.

1919 - Austin is approved for land settlement and Portion 103, 336 ½ acres is set aside for him in the Wooroowoolgen Soldier Settlement. *Casino & Kyogle Courier & North Coast Advertiser*, 6 September 1919, page 5

1921 - Austin finds himself in court and fined 2s and 8p for riotous behaviour in the yard of the Commonwealth Hotel on 19 November 1921.

1921 - Austin is again charged with riotous behaviour on 22 December 1921 in the Federal Hotel bar. He pleads guilty under provocation. Austin was fined 10/- and 8/- costs. *Casino & Kyogle Courier & North Coast Advertiser*, 14 January 1922, page 2

1922 - Austin married Elizabeth SCOTT in Casino. The same year they had one child Benjamin George Pratt born 27 May 1922, who was named after Elizabeth's father Benjamin George Scott.

1922 - Austin is charged with indecent language after arguing with a bus driver and refusing to pay the fare. He was fined £3 and 8/- costs. *Richmond River Express*, 19 July 1922, page 2

1922 - Austin charged with drunkenness. *Casino & Kyogle Courier & North Coast Advertiser*, 28 October 1922, page 2

**PROMISED TO GIVE UP DRINKING** -"Mr. Kissane appeared on behalf of Austin Pratt, who pleaded guilty to a charge of drunkenness. Mr. Kissane said defendant was a young man of 27 years and was one of the first to enlist for active service. Unfortunately, he was killing himself with drink. Defendant promised him that he was going to give up the drink. Apart from this the defendant was a respectable young fellow. He was going to suggest that the summons might be adjourned for three months, and if the defendant reformed within that time the police might see fit to withdraw the summons. Sergeant Wren said defendant was coming to the Police Court too frequently. He would be only too pleased to agree to the suggestion made by Mr. Kissane. The P. M. fined Pratt £2 and 8/- costs, or one month, and allowed him six months in which to pay. If the police reported to him that defendant had not been convicted for drunkenness within that time, he would recommend that the fine be remitted."



1923 - Austin charged with riotous behaviour. *Casino & Kyogle Courier & North Coast Advertiser*, 3 March 1923, page 2

### **RIOTOUS BEHAVIOUR in Barker Street on 21 February 1923 – SERGEANT'S CONDEMNATION**

"Sergt. Wren stated the police had reached the stage in this man's case where they had to protect other people. "This man," he said, "is a public house loafer." If he was a reasonably sober man, he could be independent, but instead of taking advantage of the Repatriation Department's assistance, he has only loafed about the town." A fine of £3 and costs was imposed. By consent, a prohibition order was issued against Pratt for twelve months.

1923 - NSW Government Gazette, 13 July 1923, page 3119. **FORFEITED HOMESTEAD FARMS** – Through non-payment of interest and instalments. Austin Bede Pratt, No. 1919-55, Portion 103, Wooroowoolgen.

1924 - Austin died suddenly on 6th April 1924 in Casino due to heart failure which was said at the time to be related to his war service. He is buried in the Roman Catholic Section of the Casino General Cemetery alongside his parent's graves and those of his two brothers Hubert and Arthur.

"Death of an Anzac", *Casino & Kyogle Courier & North Coast Advertiser*, 9 April 1924, page 2

1924 - NSW Government Gazette, 25 July 1924, **REVERSAL OF FORFEITURE OF HOLDINGS**. It appears that after Austin's death his forfeited holdings at Wooroowoolgen was reversed. Explanation unknown.



Above the graves and plaques of Austin Bede Pratt and his parents George & Elanor Pratt, West Street Cemetery, Casino NSW.

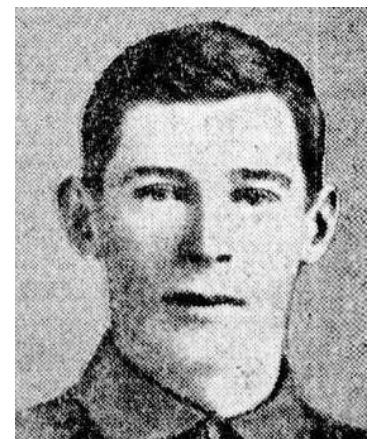
For his service in WW1 Austin was awarded the 1914-15 Star, British War Medal and Victory Medals. Austin's wife Elizabeth remained in Casino for many years moving to Wamberal where she died on 16 November 1982, aged 88 and is buried alongside her son Benjamin George Pratt who died on 14 December 1985, aged 63. George like his father joined the military and became a Lance Corporal in the Army Service Corps.

When I embarked on this article, I had no idea that I would uncover so much of Austin's life within the pages of the local papers. However, they have revealed how his short life unfolded from enlistment in 1914 to his death, at the age of 29, ironically almost 10 years exactly from when he landed on Gallipoli Anzac Day 1914. I have no doubt his war experiences contributed to his unruly behaviour in Casino after his return to Australia, his fall from grace as a local hero and his early death.

I have gathered numerous articles and images for this story and will be happy to share with members. Feel free to email me and for further reading on Austin Bede Pratt see the following links. – Editor

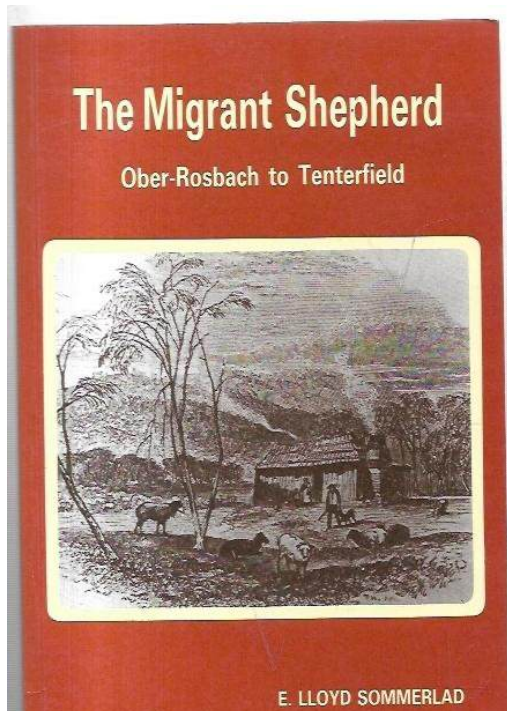
<https://www.goldcoastbulletin.com.au/lifestyle/gold-coast-130/gallipoli-veterans-letters-paint-vivid-picture-100-years-after-the-landings-at-anzac-cove/news-story/7a6c55a2b62a213435995213ed2041e4>

<https://vwma.org.au/explore/people/214029>



# The Migrant Shepherd

As reviewed by Camille Thomas - Earth Garden No. 53 – February 1987 page 37



The Migrant Shepherd details the extraordinarily self-sufficient lifestyle of a nineteenth century family of German immigrants.

John Heinrich Sommerlad sailed from Germany in 1855 to Australia. All the food for each meal was cooked in one large boiler - meat, vegetables and rice together and, to save water, several buckets of salt water were added to the fresh for cooking. A little lime juice was issued occasionally as a precaution against scurvy.

Before leaving the ship in Moreton Bay John Henry (as he was now to call himself) signed a contract to serve an employer for two years and repay his fare. So, John Henry became a shepherd on the Darling Downs. He would rise at dawn, release his flock from the fold and follow them all day as they grazed where they pleased.

Once a week he would be visited by the rations man, and this was usually his only human contact.

The working day was long and there was no time off for weekends or holidays. When Christmas Day came John Henry refused to work as a matter of principle. His employer had him arrested: he was taken to Brisbane where a magistrate found him guilty of absenting himself from his hired service in breach of the Master and Servants Act, and sentenced him to 28 days imprisonment in the squalid Brisbane goal.

John Henry's situation improved when he was appointed gardener to Tenterfield Station and in 1858, aged 29, he married Louisa Wilhelmina Marsteller who was 18 years of age. Louisa and he were to toil side by side establishing the two farms they would own. Louisa would toil well into her pregnancies, and she bore 12 children. Their first cottage was made of split slab walls with sheets of stringy bark for the roof. The chimney and open fireplace in the kitchen were stone. After building the slab cottages, Louisa made curtains and lined the walls with hessian and paper to cover the cracks between the slabs.

Louisa and the girls spent long hours preserving fruit in astonishing variety . . . two kinds of quince, three of pear, three of peach, three of cherry, fourteen of plum, two of grape, one of gooseberry, one of mulberry, one of rhubarb and two of apricot. They made pickles, jellies, sauces and chutneys, and dried fruit. They peeled and cored apples by the hundred for drying in John Henry's homemade evaporator!

John Henry grew flax to use for twine. The feathers and down of chicken and geese were used for stuffing pillows. The girls made their own clothes. Louisa made soap in a big cast-iron pot slowly heating a mixture of fat, caustic soda, resin, borax and water. It was poured into boxes to set before being cut into bars.



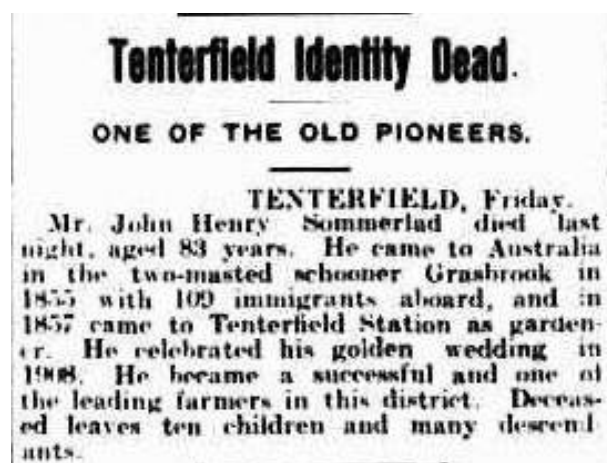
Louisa grew her own arrowroot, and John Henry grew sugar beet and a range of medicinal herbs for home remedies. They baked their bread, smoked the bacon and ham, made German sausages and fermented their own wine.

In 1892 their 'Spring Valley' farm orchards covered 12 acres and contained 1000 trees of many varieties all home grown. Some 90 acres of the farm was under cultivation, half sown with wheat and the remainder with oats, barley, rye, maize and potatoes.

The Sommerlads had built up the dairy herd to thirty cows. The boys hated the early rise in frosty Tenterfield winters for the morning milking. Having worked on dairy farms myself I could sympathise with so few pairs of hands to milk 30 cows.

The girls churned the butter and made cream in the dairy. One day a week was set aside for baking the bread in the range oven.

The resourcefulness and degree of self-sufficiency of these brave people is inspiring and many readers would find the book fascinating for the exacting historical research undertaken for the book by the author: John Henry's grandson.



John Henry Sommerlad seated at left with other family members. Image copied from The Migrant Shepherd article printed in Earth Garden No 53 February 1987 page 37

How this article came about. While getting ready for a garage sale I was sorting through a box of old magazines and picked up one which had been given to me at least 25 years ago by our long-term member Barbara Wilkes. Her name clearly written at the top. This sparked my interest to open and browse the magazine. Inside I found this interesting book review. So thankyou Barbara for this little treat. Nothing like getting articles into me a little early!!- Editor  
A few used copies of "The Migrant Shepherd" are available online –

Abe Books - <https://www.abebooks.com/9781862520738/migrant-shepherd-Ober-Rosbach-Tenterfield-Sommerlad-1862520739/plp>

Adelaide Booksellers - <https://www.adelaidebooksellers.com.au/product/176297/The-Migrant-Shepherd-Ober-Rosbach-to-Tenterfield>

Also a copy at the National Library - <https://catalogue.nla.gov.au/catalog/2058506>

**Name: Mary Alcock**  
**Born: 26 Aug 1853, Casino**  
**Bapt. 14 March 1854, Casino**  
**Died: 4 May 1939, Casino**  
**Buried: West Street Cemetery, Casino**  
**Father: George Alcock**  
**Mother: Hanora (Anne) Lawler**

**Miss Mary Alcock**



Mary Alcock was attributed with the title of the first white child born in Casino. Over the years of her life this title is mentioned in several newspaper articles and in the Casino Diamond Jubilee 1922 booklet in which the photograph at right of Mary is featured. However as white settlement in the district had been ongoing for some years prior to Mary's birth other babies born in Casino earlier were either registered in Grafton or not registered at all due to the long distance required to travel. Mary was certainly the first white child registered in Casino and baptised by the first priest Father McGinty in 1854.

Mary's father George Alcock was the first policeman in Casino and according to newspaper reports, Mary was born at the police station and residence, which was situated on the riverbank below Canterbury Street opposite the eastern end of Carrington Park and a little on the town's side of Mr. G. K. Imerson's residence. Casino was then known as "The Falls" and formed part of Tomki Station. George Alcock died under tragic circumstances when he disappeared into the bush after a long bout of heavy drinking in 1863. It is believed he became delirious and suffered heat exposure. Mary was only eleven. Her mother Hanora (also known as Anne) remarried the following year to a widow Charles McKay. There were seven other children in the Alcock family, but none outlived Mary. The children were Frank b 1849, Denis b 1851, Tessia b 1855 (married Walter Carmont) Teresa b 1857 (married Patrick Muldoon) Thomas b 1859, Timothy b 1861 and John McKay was a stepson.

As a young woman in her thirties Mary was engaged cleaning up the A. G. S. Bank premises in Casino. While she was making the teller's bed she pulled a loaded revolver, which was lying underneath the pillow, onto the floor. The firearm exploded, one of the bullets hitting the calf of one of her legs. Doctor Crommelin was called in and dressed the wound. The accident was reported to have affected her health in later life.

Mary enjoyed a wide reputation as a worker in the interests of churches and charity. Even as a young girl in the 1860s she was involved in fundraising for the church. *The Casino and Kyogle Courier and North Coast Advertiser* published an item titled "A Cheerful Giver" in which Mary, as a fundraiser, is mentioned: "Mr. McKellar, a squatter, met a little girl named Mary Alcock collecting money with which to assist the erection of a chapel. He asked her how much she wanted, and Mary said "Half-a-crown." Mr. McKellar said "I'll give you £10 10s" and turning round as Mary went on her way rejoicing, added "and if the money runs out before you've got the roof on call on me again." Church workers nowadays would like to meet more men than they do of Mr. McKellar's benevolent spirit."

In 1883 Mary gave birth to a daughter, Emily Frances Alcock, who later married William Austin. They had one son Charles Joseph Austin before divorcing in 1916. Their son Charles was born with disabilities and died at the age of 14 at his grandmother Mary's home in Casino. He is buried next to Mary and her mother in West Street Cemetery, Casino.

Another accident befell Mary in 1926. At the age of 76 she fell at home and fractured several ribs. In 1932 when Mary celebrated her 80<sup>th</sup> birthday a surprise party was organised by several of her lady friends. Guests included a Mrs. Lewis who attended the first national school in Casino with Mary. A happy day was shared by all with many enjoyable conversations reminiscing about those earlier years in Casino.



Mary Alcock died aged 86 on 4 May 1939 and was buried the following day in the Catholic portion of the West Street Cemetery, Casino. She was laid to rest in the same grave as her mother Honora McKay who died in 1901 of influenza during an epidemic at that time. A small, simple marble plaque affixed to the grave records Mary's details. Thanks to Pat McDonald for help with information and documents. Contributed by Shirlee McPherson



**Due to shortage of space, I have not listed the references to newspaper articles relating to Mary and her family. However, they can be supplied should anyone wish. Please feel free to contact me via email.**

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## Family Drownings - By Kaylene Morris

I'm glad I had to learn to swim when I was growing up, as 'drowning' seems to be common in my family. Mind you when I was first learning to swim, I was treading water, and the instructor said, "You can stop now", so I did, I couldn't reach the pool wall and down I went, and I didn't know how to come back up. One of the students had to jump in and grab me and pull me back to the surface, while the instructor stood and watched. I had no confidence in the instructor being able to teach me anything after that.

I did learn to swim the next summer. All my children learned to swim, eventually. My youngest had floaties on his arms when in the pool with his cousins who could all swim. He insisted he could swim too, and took the floaties off, down he went. I had to jump in fully clothed to bring him up as none of the others around him even noticed. Another time when in the river at Ballina, aged about 6yrs old, a speed boat went by, causing waves. Two of the kids (cousins) tried to get out, but the bank gave way taking them under. Each attempt at climbing out, resulted in more bank collapsing. I jumped in, and my sister using a towel helped to drag them out, while I kept them above the water. Then she had to drag me out. Thankfully we all survived.

In Sept 1972 those of you who were living in Casino at the time would most likely have heard about the two boys who drowned on their way home from school, near the footbridge that crosses the Richmond River in Casino near the corner of Barker and Hickey Streets. Craig Davis was ten years old, and his nephew Karl Davis was seven. They used to ride their bicycles to and from school, the long way over the main bridge. On this day one boy's bicycle had a punctured tyre so they decided to walk over the low foot bridge which was a much shorter route home. The family became concerned, when the boys didn't arrive home. The police were called and boys from the local under 15 football team, who had been training nearby, also joined the search. The boy's bicycles were found beside the river. Both boys were found downstream from the low-lying footbridge. Both had drowned. One of the boys knew how to swim a little, but the other didn't. It is believed that one tried to save the other and was pulled down with the panic. *Richmond River Express*, Wed 20 Sept 1972 page 1.

Craig was the adopted son of Ted Davis and Vera Davis nee King. Karl was the son of Baden Davis and Beverley Davis nee Barnett, and grandson of Ted and Vera. Vera Davis nee King's uncle was Walter Robert King, which leads me to the next drowning.

Walter Robert King, my grandfather, was on his way home from Woodburn, where he worked for the Shire Council. In 1929 Lismore had a lot of rain, and the rivers were rising fast. Walter was travelling back to Lismore on horseback, after waiting to get his pay. It was the last day of February.

## MAN DROWNED IN LISMORE FLOODS.

A press message from Lismore on Monday states: The flood waters have subsided, and the Richmond River dropped from 29ft. 7in. to 16ft. above normal last night. It is falling steadily to-day, and the water has receded from most of the low-lying parts. Crossing a flooded creek on the Coraki-South Lismore Road, Walter Robert King, an employee of Woodburn Council, was drowned. Following the discovery of his horse at Muldoon's farm, South Gundurimba, King's body was recovered at 2 a.m. to-day. Heavy seas at Byron Bay have shifted 150 feet at the end of the new jetty from 18in. to 3ft. out of position. Several piles have been broken or removed.

*Macleay Argus* 5 March 1929 page 2

It wasn't flooding yet in Woodburn, so Walter didn't realise how high the rivers upstream had risen, even though his wife, Agnes, my grandmother, had rung the council office to let him know that Lismore was in flood. Agnes said he could come home by the river boat, but Walter didn't want to leave his horse behind. Walter had travelled as far as Loftville, having crossed several creeks before he had to cross a flooded road to get home. Loftville is a small village just out of Lismore, on the now Bruxner Highway, just south of Lismore airport. Many farmers had spoken to Walter on his journey, each telling him of the dangers with the flood waters. After extensive searching over a few days by the Police and locals, Walter's body was found, he was wearing a heavy military coat. The horse that Walter was riding had signs of barbed wire cuts on his legs when found. It is presumed that Walter was hanging onto the horse's tail and the horse had been caught on the fence wire and kicked out to free himself, thus kicking Grandfather Walter in the chest and head. Walter left a wife and three young children, the

youngest being my mother aged 7 months. The Inquest stated the cause of death "Asphyxia from drowning". Information was sourced from *The Northern Star*, Monday 11 March 1929 and State Archives file no. 469, NRS 345 [2/10503], *The Northern Star*, Wed 20 Mar 1929 page 8, *The Daily Telegraph* 4th Mar 1929 page 3, *The Northern Star* 5 Mar 1929 page 8 plus various other reports in *The Northern Star* and other newspapers.

Walter's father Robert Percy King died in 1925, but not from drowning, nor did Walter's grandfather Caleb King who died in 1927 but Caleb's wife Annie King nee Wynn, also had a drowning in her family. Annie's younger sister, Jane was found drowned early in the morning in the well, near her home, after she had disappeared during the night. Her husband Phillip Whiteman had found her wandering through the house in the middle of the night and had sent her back to bed. Jane went back to bed, but later got up and went outside to the well and either climbed or fell in the well and drowned. After an extensive search inside the house next morning, she was found, when it was noticed that the lid on the well was removed. This was in 1901. *The Dubbo Liberal and Macquarie Advocate*, Sat 6 July 1901, page 6.

Edmund King, father of Caleb and great grandfather of Walter, was another of the family who drowned. It was in 1882. According to an advertisement in the *Sydney Morning Herald* Tuesday 23 May 1882 page 1,

**"STRAYED from his home early on Sunday morning, an old MAN, named Edmund King, aged 82; had on narrow striped tweed trousers, long dark coat, hard black felt hat. Anyone seeing him will greatly oblige by letting his anxious friends know. 509, Riley-street South. A. Qunisey"**

When I read this in the newspaper my first thought was it sounded like an advertisement for a lost puppy. Edmund must have had dementia and kept wandering off. I guess he was found as he didn't die until August of 1882. He was found, yes, you guessed it, drowned on or about the 6 August 1882. Marilyn Rowan Transcription death certificate 1882/7775. Just as well I learned to swim!



## - Cruise on the Clarence River -

On Friday 9<sup>th</sup> August several members of our group drove to either Yamba or Iluka to take a trip by ferry up the Clarence River. Our Captain gave us information on different parts of the river. This reminded me that some of my ancestors had arrived on this river in the 1860's. They had originally come from Ireland. Also, descendants of some convicts on the 3<sup>rd</sup> fleet, ended up in different places along this river. All who ventured onto this ferry cruise enjoyed the day. Our organiser for the day Mavis was unable to attend as she ended up in hospital the night before. Thank you, Mavis, we all enjoyed the day and missed you. – Kaylene Morris



Some images of our members, and a few spouses I see there, on the group outing day cruising the Clarence River from Iluka to the Harwood bridges. Thanks to Kaylene and Roseanne for sending the pictures.

Looks like you all had a great day!! – Editor

<https://www.clarencriverferries.com.au>

## MEMBER'S NOTICE BOARD – September - November 2024

28 August – Workshop – Completion of Aub Lavis Collection - 10am  
11 September – General Meeting – Wed 10am – Robyn Nesbitt will give a talk on using the Biographical Index of Australia  
21 September – Trivia Night, St Mary's Anglican Hall – 6.30pm - \$10 per table 6  
9 October – General Meeting – Wed 10am  
11 October – Workshop - NSW Land Records – Fri 10am Cost \$5.00  
26 October Open Day - Sat 1.30pm  
13 November – General Meeting - Wed 10am

### A BIG WARM WELCOME TO NEW MEMBER – Ann Small

#### Trivia Night Raffle

Ticket books of 5 per book were distributed to members at the August meeting and others will receive a ticket book in this newsletter.

Tickets are \$1.00 each

Tickets will also be sold in Casino on:

6 September - Woolies

13 September – Scrivener & Webb

20 September - Woolies

Please support your group.



### RESEARCH – General Information

(per family name e.g.: Mr and Mrs Smith and children)

\$25 for initial enquiry using resources available at rooms with 10 photocopies included in initial fee.

You will be advised of any additional information available over the fee with extra photocopies charged at 20 cents per page. Please supply basic information i.e., BDM dates and parents if known. Inform research officer **exactly** what you are looking for and what you already know so time is not wasted doubling up on research.

Research will not be undertaken until research fee is received. Research may take 4-6 weeks depending on number of enquiries received and availability of the research team.

**Research where reference given from book or newsletter:** \$5.00 includes 2 photocopies – 20 cents each for any additional pages.

# Member's Roster

It is the Roster volunteer's responsibility to find a replacement if they cannot do their Roster.

If you cannot get a replacement for your roster, please ring the rooms or ring Roseanne on 0414 397 474 and leave a message as soon as you know you are not available.

**WE URGENTLY NEED ROSTER PEOPLE. We will place you with an experienced person.**

September 2024			
Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Saturday
3 <sup>rd</sup> September R Nesbitt, P McDonald	4 <sup>th</sup> September M Goodlad, C Houlihan, G McAteer	5 <sup>th</sup> September C Mison, L Reynolds,	
10 <sup>th</sup> September Y Stevenson, M Goodlad, N Cowen	11 <sup>th</sup> September M Goodlad, C Houlihan, G McAteer	12 <sup>th</sup> September C Houlihan, N Cowen,	
17 <sup>th</sup> September J Gorry, K Morris	18 <sup>th</sup> September R Nesbitt, J Griffiths	19 <sup>th</sup> September K Francis, Y Downes, J. Rowe	21 <sup>st</sup> September L Yates G Rooney
24 <sup>th</sup> September K Morris, R. Birmingham, L Lill	25 <sup>th</sup> September R Nesbitt, C Mison	26 <sup>th</sup> September K Morris, J Wilton,	
October 2024			
Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Saturday
1 <sup>st</sup> October R Nesbitt, P McDonald	2 <sup>nd</sup> October M Goodlad, C Houlihan, G McAteer	3 <sup>rd</sup> October C Mison, L Reynolds,	
8 <sup>th</sup> October Y Stevenson, M Goodlad, N Cowen	9 <sup>th</sup> October M Goodlad, C Houlihan, G McAteer	10 <sup>th</sup> October C Houlihan, N Cowen,	
15 <sup>th</sup> October J Gorry, K Morris	16 <sup>th</sup> October R Nesbitt, J Griffiths	17 <sup>th</sup> October K Francis, Y Downes, J. Rowe	19 <sup>th</sup> October L Yates, G Rooney
22 <sup>nd</sup> October K Morris, R. Birmingham, L Lill	23 <sup>rd</sup> October R Nesbitt, C Mison	24 <sup>th</sup> October K Morris, J Wilton,	
29 <sup>th</sup> October M Goodlad, N Cowen, Y. Stevenson	30 <sup>th</sup> October C Mison, B Hollis	31 <sup>st</sup> October N. Cowan, C. Houlihan	
November 2024			
Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Saturday
5 <sup>th</sup> November R Nesbitt, P McDonald	6 <sup>th</sup> November M Goodlad, C. Houlihan, G. McAteer	7 <sup>th</sup> November C Mison, L Reynolds,	
12 <sup>th</sup> November Y Stevenson, M Goodlad, N Cowen	13 <sup>th</sup> November M Goodlad, C Houlihan, G McAteer	14 <sup>th</sup> November C Houlihan, N Cowen,	16 <sup>th</sup> November L Yates, G Rooney
19 <sup>th</sup> November J. Gorry, K. Morris	20 <sup>th</sup> November R. Nesbitt, J. Griffiths	21 <sup>st</sup> November K. Francis, Y. Downes, J. Rowe	
26 <sup>th</sup> November K Morris, R. Birmingham, L. Lill	27 <sup>th</sup> November R. Nesbitt, C. Mison	28 <sup>th</sup> November K. Morris, J. Wilton	

**"To forget one's ancestors is to be a brook without a source, a tree without a root."**

**Author: chinese proverb**



## PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

### Postage

Under 500 gms = \$9.00 p&h per book  
Over 500gms & under 3kg - \$15.00 p&h for up to 2 books (If ordering more than 2 books contact group for postage costs)

All prices include GST

Please allow 3-4 weeks for delivery

### Books – Weight under 500gms

Coraki Deaths & Burials - \$25.00

West of the Range Cemeteries - \$20.00

Woodburn Cemetery - \$15.00

Recipe Book – 98 pages 400 recipes - \$15.00

Yorklea Public School 1894-1994 - \$5.00

### Books – Weight over 500gms & under 3kg

Casino West St Cemetery - \$37.50

Casino Lawn Cemetery - \$37.00

Casino & District Pioneer Register Pre-1900 - \$37.50

Casino & District Pre 1925 Pioneer Register - \$37.50

## Casino & District Family History Group CORPORATE MEMBERS

- Gill Engineering
- F. Kwong Sing & Co Pty Ltd
- Pinkertson's Hourglass Jewellers
- Casino Pest Control

*Please support our Corporate Members*

## SECOND-HAND BOOKS FOR SALE

Bridges of Fairymount	\$5.00
Casino - The Rocky Crossing Meeting Place 1855 -2012	\$50.00
Casino School Magazine – Onward 1998	\$2.00
Casino Show – 100 Years	\$10.00
Cheshire's Modern Real Property	\$2.00
Directory of Art & Archaeology	\$3.00
Family History Research Manager	\$3.00

## Family History Quotes

**"The future belongs to those who give the next generation reason for hope." - Author: Pierre Teilhard de Chardin**

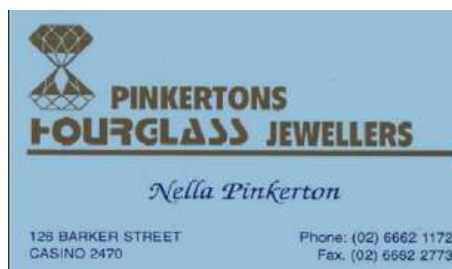
**"Starting then, continuing today, Family never goes out of style, only changing to the trends of the age." - Author: Ann Halstead**



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