

CLARENCE RIVER ADVOCATE

September 2024

Volume 25 Number 3



STONE COTTAGE and MUSEUM

Corner Wharf and Grafton Streets, Maclean

(Location address only- see inside for postal address)

Open 1pm – 4pm Wednesday & Saturday

Tuesday 9am – 12 Noon.

(Other times by appointment)

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BECOME AN ACTIVE MEMBER

WE CAN ALWAYS HAVE MORE HELP WITH THE MUSEUM ROSTER – SINCE WE ARE OPENING WEDNESDAY AND SATURDAY – 1.00PM TO 4.00PM – WE ARE BACK TO OUR REGULAR HOURS.

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All correspondence to be addressed to: The Secretary

Maclean District Historical Society

PO Box 257. Maclean 2463.

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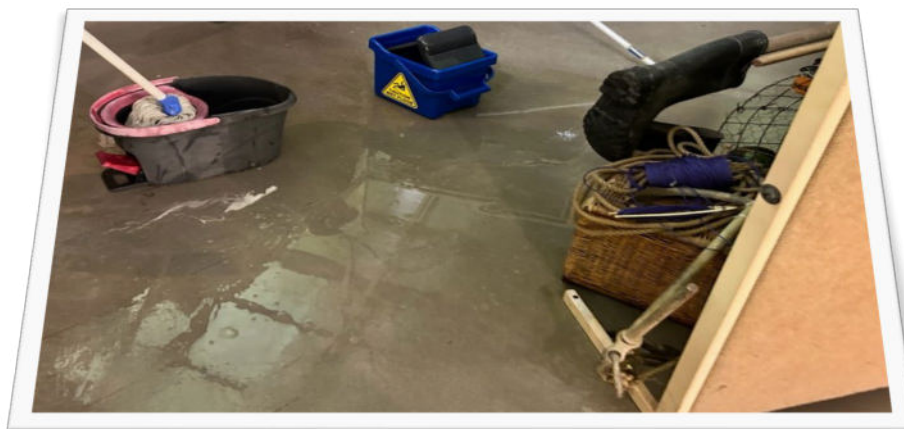
Email: museum@macleanhhistory.org.au

PRESIDENT/EDITORS COMMENTS – “Villages of the Maclean area”, this is our latest publication compiled by Carolyn Cameron. Copies are available from the Museum. A reminder that some of you are about to renew your membership. Memberships were due on 1st July 2024.

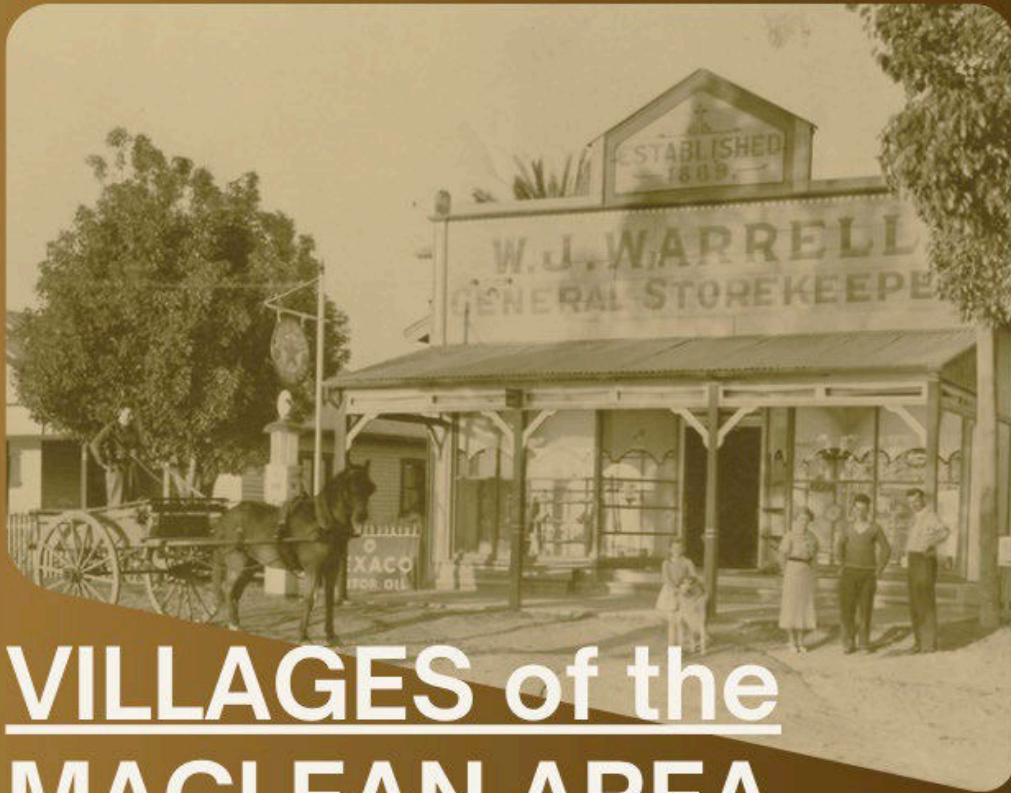
During a heavy rainstorm, last month we had a water leak from the roof, all the way to the bottom floor. We were very fortunate that damage to the collection in that part of the Museum was quite minimal. Excess water was removed and some display material had to be dried out. We were lucky and a big thanks must go to the members who assisted in the complete process of recovery.

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- Villages of the Maclean Area.
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Bottom Floor of the Museum.



VILLAGES of the MACLEAN AREA

A Short History of Some of
the Outlying Villages When
Maclean was the Hub

Maclean District Historical Society Inc.

There were many outlying villages relying on Maclean as their point of contact for court cases, hospital services, funerals and burials and other major life events. These localities were set up based on primary production alone. They developed randomly with low population density on the back of farmers' needs for services. The villages

clustered around farming areas and although the ebb and flow of life has changed them, most still exist today, but not as they once were. They did not grow larger, as most services were provided in the nearby centres.

Most (although not all) provided a school, a hall for entertainment and in which religious services were held, sporting fields of a kind, and a wharf because the river was the way to travel. Ferries later linked these villages; later still bridges joined them together.

The main thing they had in common was a cluster of buildings where community could come together, thus filling the Oxford Dictionary definition of a village as: *“Dwellings and associated buildings, larger than a hamlet but smaller than a town, situated in a rural area.”*

This is not a complete history, rather, I hope, just enough to whet the appetite of anyone who wishes to learn more or to explain to newcomers how some places adjacent to Maclean, developed. I have merely collated these brief stories from sources of information such as Trove newspapers, school centenary publications, personal recollections, books published by our museum and our own records. It is difficult to imagine how small some of these were.

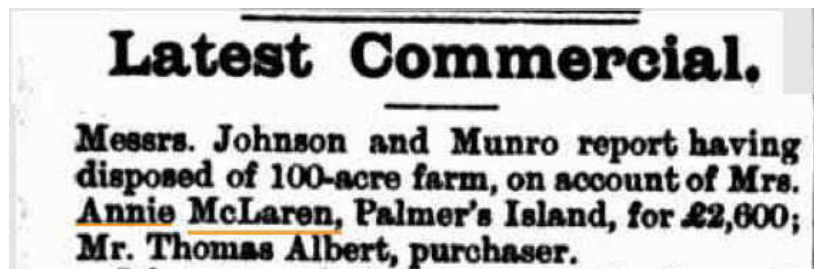
Carolyn Cameron – for Maclean District Historical Society Inc.



THE GABLES – PART TWO.

(Compiled by Trish Bowes)

In the second instalment on the Gables we begin in 1907 when the licence was transferred from Henry Joyce to Walter Imlay McLaren and his wife Annie McLaren, who was the daughter of Hugh McDermid. Lin McSwan in Maclean – The First Fifty Years 1862-1912 notes that “the sale of the farm gave her the money to buy the stock and goodwill of the hotel, which was still owned by John Read.” (p. 306)



Clarence River Advocate 9 July 1907

In 1907, Walter McLaren gave a trophy to the Maclean Rowing Club but under the condition “that it had to be won three times in succession by the same sculler” and this was achieved by Alec Bell in 1913. (*Grafton Argus*, 22 Jan. 1913) The McLarens gained permission from the Licensing Board to provide an additional bar (*Clarence River Advocate*, 10 Sept. 1907) but in 1909, due to Walter McLaren’s poor health (*Grafton Argus* 18 March 1909) they moved to Mossman, Queensland. (*Grafton Argus*, 24 Oct. 1910).



Commercial Hotel 1907. On the back it states "When Annie McLaren had it. Signed Mrs M. Brown"

They sold the license to James McAteer who had had run the Federal Hotel at Alstonville for three years previously. (*Grafton Argus*, 25 March 1909) He had time to make extensive alterations to the bar premises in River Street and added several parlors. (*Grafton Argus* 3 Nov. 1909) James McAteer also held the very "fashionable wedding" of his daughter Nora Millicent (1889-1952) to Charles Bulwinkel (1884-1917) at the Commercial Hotel. It was a Catholic ceremony and was the 145th wedding that Archpriest Walsh had celebrated in the Clarence (*Richmond River Herald* 17 Dec. 1909). Among the guests were Mr and Mrs P. Conlon, H.G. Lobban, JB McKay HE See, W.I. McLaren and P. O'Shannessey, After the ceremony were escorted to the lawn where "under the shadows of the pines, camphor laurels, magnolias and the sweet-smelling honey suckle and gardenias – which even and anon cast a shadow of privacy and homeliness about the Commercial Hotel – several photographs were taken by Mr G. Tyler, Maclean's well-known photographer." (*Grafton Argus*, 9 November 1909)

John Read, after 33 years in the Lower Clarence, sold all his businesses and retired to Sydney in 1910. He had owned the Commercial Hotel since 1893 and although there were a number of licensees in the time of his tenure, he was steadfast in his support of the Lower Clarence. Before leaving he was given a “dinner and smoke social at the Commercial Hotel.” (*CRE* 12 Feb.1910)



John Read and his two daughters. Front of Postcard.

A “smoke social or concert” was originally an almost exclusively male form of entertainment that could include anything from classical orchestra to vaudeville. Smoke concerts were originally offered by male-only music clubs but the practice was soon adopted by male sporting clubs, political and community groups to mark social occasions. They waned in popularity with the advent of war and also with the efforts of women to “promote more wholesome forms of entertainment without alcoholic beverages.” (Fiona Fraser, “A City for Music Lovers”, pp148-152, 2018)

William Thomas Wallwork (1850-1939) of Woodford Island then owned the Hotel from 1910 until at least 1912. Sergeant EH Thompson, the District Licensing Inspector, reported that “Premises, fittings and furniture in excellent order; well conducted and frequented by

commercial travellers and respectable public.” (*Grafton Argus*, 18 July 1910) The licence valuation was £247, and the fee was £30. (*CRE*, 17 June 1911). William Wallwork was a farmer at Woodford Dale for over 40 years. He sold out his interest to take over the freehold and licence of the Commercial Hotel, Maclean. After leasing the Commercial Hotel, Maclean he acquired the lease of the Commercial hotel, Ulmarra. (*DE*, 19 Sept. 1939)



Wallwork is above the entrance to the foyer which makes this 1910. Also “Commercial Hotel” is written on the wall of the front building and there is no sign to the side of the driveway.

The grounds of the Commercial Hotel were used for a variety of purposes. These ranged from Perry’s Jubilee Circus which spent “2 nights in Mrs Brownlie’s paddocks” (*CRE* 26 April 1892) to Holly and Creamer Golden Shoe Dancers who were the first theatrical company to visit Maclean and was held in the dining room of the Commercial Hotel when owned by Mrs Brownlie (*DE* 31 August 1920). An unusual but quaint usage was whereby the Maclean Brass Band had “rounds to go to different places, put up stands and play. It was noted in the *Clarence Richmond Examiner* (17 May 1902) that “the stands for the next round of playing were fixed as follows – Criterion hotel, public wharf, Commercial hotel, Pearce’s, Clare Castle hotel and Australian

Joint Stock Bank.” There was also an anti-conscription meeting held in 1916 that “ended in disorder” (DE 9 October 1916); a mass meeting of 80 canecutters held in the sample room whereby a general strike was declared (DE 14 October 1918); and ventriloquists, conjurers, travelling companies and circuses also providing entertainment at the Commercial hotel over the years. (DE 31 August, 1920)



Maclean Brass Band/Town Band in 1893. Imlay McLaren is far right in second row, holding a flute and Frederick McLaren is front row right holding the euphonium

George William Austen (1873-1949) took over the licence of the Commercial Hotel in 1912 and it was noted that the “Hotel has extensive grounds attached to it, including the Caledonian Hall.” (*Grafton Argus*, 28 August 1912) It was also noted that “this commodious hotel is built where it commands delightful views of the Clarence River, and being open and free from obstruction of any kind must in the summer months be the coolest place in Maclean.” (*CRE*, 1914)



Left: Ella, Marjorie, George and Alma Austen

He had a long association with Maclean. He first had the lease on the Royal Hotel (1897-1900) at Chatsworth. He then took over the Britannia Hotel at Chatsworth (1900-1905) before acquiring the lease of the Argyle Hotel, Maclean (1905-1912) He subsequently purchased the freehold and licence of the Commercial Hotel (1912-1922), Maclean before buying the newsagency and stationery business in Maclean, which he sold to Mr R.B. Savage of Rose Bay in 1940. (DE, 13 April 1940)

In 1921 there were two big floods in May and July. The July flood was the biggest and was accompanied by a terrific gale that uprooted trees and detached roofs. On the 24 hours ending 9am Saturday five and a half inches fell which made 9 and a half inches for the past two days. Soon after midday the river began to rise rapidly and broke over the bank in the vicinity of the Royal Hotel. "The water rose gradually throughout the night until the whole of the main road from the butter factory inclusive, in Lower River street to the Argyle Hotel was completely under water in some parts to the length of 4ft.... At the front bar of Austen's Commercial Hotel there is a depth of 3ft."

For some reason George Austen decided to sell the Commercial Hotel in 1922 as in the *Daily Examiner* it stated “A pleasant little social function when Mr. G.W. Austen, of the Commercial Hotel, invited a few representative citizens to meet Mr. A. Pope, the new owner and incoming lessee of that favorite hostelry.” (18 Feb.1922) Alfred Harry Pope (1872-1942) was well established by June 1922 when “Pope’s Commercial Hotel” was used for the auction of 3 Lower Clarence cane farms (DE, 21 June, 1922) and he became an Alderman and Deputy Mayor of the Maclean Municipal Council at the end of 1922. However, by November 1923 the license of the Commercial Hotel was transferred back to Mr G. Austen. (DE, 24 Nov. 1923) There were a number of licencees from 1927. Edward McGregor took over as licensee in 1927 and then John A. McGregor from February 1928. He only remained licensee until John Walter Salmon bought it on the 19 July 1928, which was after the flood.

1928 was a big year for both Maclean and the Commercial Hotel. First of all there was a major flood in February and this was followed by the burning down of Conlon’s Store. In February 1928 it was stated “The water entered the premises of the Bank of New South Wales at 7.30 tonight, and the street below the bank to the butter factory is a sheet of water. The business premises here, excepting the Commercial Hotel residential portion and the Royal Hotel, are invaded by water. In places the water is fully four feet deep, and is over the footpath at the Commercial Bank and Wicks' corner, and over the street towards the Argyle Hotel. Nearly all the farms are under water, just the stock is sheltered on the ridges near the Harwood mill.... The business houses of Maclean have arranged to supply provisions for those living in the outlying. localities and are being assisted by the police, whilst the post office is keeping everyone well informed.” (DE, 21 Feb. 1928)

Less than three weeks after the major flood Conlon’s Store burnt down which was a major calamity for Maclean. Conlon’s store was built in 1891 and was called the Commercial store after the hotel; but became better known as Conlon’s Store. Peter Conlon, who had commenced business in Maclean in the 1880s, “carried on the business until 1922, when it was floated into a company, the members of the family taking

over the business.” (*DE* 10 March 1928) However, this all came to an end on Saturday, 10 March, 1928 at 1.30am when the store, with all its contents was burnt to the ground. “Mr. Jim McGregor, licensee of the Commercial Hotel, which adjoins the site of the store premises” was the first to raise the alarm. “He rang up Captain R. Nicholson, who ...continued ringing the firebell Everyone expected the Commercial bar building to be consumed by the flames, and it was only through the good work of the brigade that it was saved. The bar premises of the Commercial Hotel present a surprising aspect, as the only damage done, to the building is that the paint is considerably charred, while most of the windowpanes are broken on the side adjoining the fire. (*DE*, 10 March 1928)



1928 Flood. Sign for Commercial Hotel with NRMA badge next to lower Commercial Hotel and Conlon's Store next to it three weeks before it burnt down.



This is a great photo showing some of the outbuildings and the walkway. It shows the bottom window has “BAR” which was where the bar was until 1929

It is at this point that we leave the chronology for a while as there is a large section on John Walter Salmon (1879-1958) who took over as licensee and owner of the Commercial Hotel in February 1928 until October 1930. After Conlon's Store burnt down John Salmon bought the block of land it was situated on (it was originally part of the Brownlie's subdivision but was sold as part of 1891 subdivision). He then built the new brick two-storeyed “Hotel Clarence” which became the name for the accommodation section as well. John Salmon, although only in Maclean for a short while also established the first Maclean Bowling Club on rinks in front of “The Gables” and built a pavilion/club house. Salmon also established two tennis courts on the Howard Street side of the accommodation section of the Hotel Clarence.



Commercial Hotel after Conlon's store burnt down on March 10 1928. This photo was taken between this date and May 1929 when they started building the "Bottom Pub" and the Commercial Hotel became known as the Hotel Clarence.

In February 1930 there was much excitement when the Canberra Pup aeroplane, flown by Frank Mitchell arrived in Maclean. However, it had its crankshaft broken and it was "removed to the garage of the Hotel Clarence, where the necessary repairs were effected by Mr Taylor, a mechanic Mr Mitchell had it taken to Central Avenue at the rear of the hotel and from that street made a perfect take-off, the runway being only about 80 yards. After circling the town for some time and looping the loop, he went to the Common, picked up Mr Taylor and proceeded to Lismore. (*DE* 18 February 1930)



Canberra Pup owned by Mr JH Bettington and piloted by Frank Mitchell at Narromine in April 1930. The Canberra is the larger plane to the left with the Canberra Kitten (VH-ULV) at the back and the Canberra Pup (VH-UKR) at the front.



Left: Pilot Frank Rewi Mitchell (1894-1930) joined the Australian Flying Corps in 1916 and his occupation was listed as engineer. He went to London in 17 March 1917 for instruction and then to France where he was a ground engineer. After the war he worked at Rover Motors, Coventry before returning to Australia with his English-born wife, Ametta Rollason (1894-1972). [WW1 records NAA] He was the chief mechanic for the Canberra Aero Club and he accompanied Captain Les Holden in the “Canberra” when they found the “Southern Cross” in North-West Australia in 1929. (*Coffs Harbour Advocate*, 3 June 1930)

During 1930, the Canberra Pup, piloted by Frank Mitchell flew to Wingham and Coffs Harbour in March, Muswellbrook, Narrabri and Moree in April and Tamworth in May. Frank Mitchell was stationed at Moree in connection with the Holden School of Flying. On 31 May, 1930 he and a Manilla man, Harry West were killed instantly when their plane nose-dived from 1000 feet and crashed to the ground. Mr. Mitchell occupying the front cockpit and Mr. West, a keen student of

aeronautics and the holder of a Sydney Aero Club license, being in the back. The plane was flying at an altitude of about 700 to 800 feet, and from a “corkscrew” developed a nose dive that resulted in the plane striking the ground with terrific force. (*North West Champion* 2 June 1930)

The plane crashed into Dennison Street, and forty minutes were taken to extricate the body of Mr. Mitchell. The *Manilla Express* (3 June 1930) reported “Nearly the whole of the fuselage had been driven into his body, a mass of twisted machinery having been thrust into his stomach. His head was badly crushed and his back broken in four places. Legs and arms were also broken, and the sinews and muscles laid bare. The wreckage had to be levered up to allow the body to be removed. The boots of both airmen were burst open. Coins found in their pockets were defaced and every tool in the plane was bent, with the exception of a spanner.”

* 100 Years Ago *

JULY 1924

NEW ENGLAND MOTOR COMPANY
DAILY MOTOR SERVICES.
RUNNING BETWEEN GRAFTON-LISMORE, ALSTONVILLE-BALLINA,
CASINO-TABULAM-TENTERFIELD, AND MURWILLUMBAH-TWEED HEADS.
CAR LEAVES LISMORE 7.50 a.m. (after arrival of train from Murwillumbah)
for Coraki, Woodburn, Maclean, Ulmarra, and arrives Grafton 1 p.m. Pass-
engers travelling by this Car can catch the Train for Sydney, which
leaves South Grafton at 1.40 p.m.
CAR LEAVES GRAFTON (catching 12 noon punt) and SOUTH GRAFTON
RAILWAY STATION at 1 p.m. (after arrival of train from Sydney) for
Ulmarra, Maclean, Woodburn, and arrives Lismore at 6 p.m.
Further information can be obtained from the proprietors:—
THE NEW ENGLAND MOTOR COMPANY,
HEAD OFFICE: LISMORE. 'PHONES, 374 and 363.
Or their Agents at Grafton:—ROBINSON BROS. LTD, 'PHONES, 232, 241.
Or their Agents:—ROBINSON BROS, LT D, 'PHONE, South Grafton, 55.

"MONITOR" OIL ENGINES.

The price of the 1¾ h.p. "Monitor" oil engine is £37/10/ cash, and £40 on terms.

The cost of benzine for an hour's run will be under 4d.

An "Alfa-Laval" 88-gallon Separator handles nearly HALF A TON of Milk per hour.

Turning a large separator day after day by hand is needless drudgery, and during the very hot weather, is exhausting to the operator.

Operating a large separator by hand is not economically sound, as a man's labor is worth several times the value of benzine required for an hour's run.

The "Monitor" Oil Engine will operate a separator much more steadily than turning by hand.

The "Monitor" is most simple to operate, and will pump water, grind corn, and cut chaff, and within its power, there is no limit to the range of usefulness of these little engines.

Messrs. A. J. Gazzard, Prince street, Grafton; M. McKinnon, Maclean.

ERNEST ARCHER COMPANY TOUR.

The popular Ernest Archer Comedy Company will play at Copmanhurst tonight, and on Monday, 28th inst., will present "The Bad Boy of the Family" at Ulmarra. On Tuesday, the comedy will be presented at Lawrence, on Wednesday at Harwood, and at Maclean next Saturday; also they will play at Brushgrove and Iluka as soon as dates can be arranged. This company has completed a six nights' successful season at Grafton, and "The Bad Boy of the Family" is a wonderful laugh-maker, so that patrons of comedy all along the Clarence should not miss seeing this company.

AUGUST 1924

MACLEAN.

It is not often that the touring concert and music companies come Maclean way, and when it was learned that the Laszlo Schwarty Concert Company were to visit Maclean, seats were eagerly sought by the music-lovers of the town. The entertainment was given in the Literary Institute on Thursday night. Mr. Schwartz pleased the audience with his sweet

interpretation of Hungarian folk music, while his comments on the gypsy and his music were amusing and very instructive. Miss Dawn Assherton's rendering of several operatic songs was fully appreciated by the audience. Miss Aida Elliott, in addition to her, beautiful accompaniment, rendered several piano solos, which were enjoyed by everybody.

MACLEAN MASONIC BALL.

Elaborate arrangements are being made to make the Maclean Masonic ball, to be held on Monday next, the most successful social event of the year. The hall and supper room will be tastefully decorated. The Uneeda Jazz Band has been engaged for the occasion, and will supply the very latest dance music. The supper, which is in very capable hands, is to be equal to the occasion. The members of the fraternity will be in attendance in regalia and the grand march should prove a very interesting spectacle.

SEPTEMBER 1924

MACLEAN'S BIG EVENT THIS WEEK.

Weather conditions and complete preparations seem to ensure that the Methodist big annual fair will be a big success. Tremendous interest has been shown for some months in the "Popular Man Competition," and no one can yet pick the winner from amongst the keen bunch, namely the farmers man, the Rovers man, the Ramblers' man, the Tyndale district man and the tennis man.

The musical competitions for 14 and under, also 16 and under, will be held at Wednesday afternoon's session with finals, in the evening session at 7 o'clock and the 18 and under and the mouth organ competition at similar times on Thursday.

There will be a fine display, gorgeous decorations, numerous side shows and competitions, refreshments at all times and tea 5.30 p.m. to 7 p.m.

MORORO BRIDGE PROPOSAL.

In reference to his representations on behalf of the Maclean District Chamber of Commerce, with respect to the construction of a bridge over the Clarence River at Mororo crossing, Mr. Roy Vincent, M.L.A., has received a letter from the Under-Secretary for Local Government, which states that "the construction and maintenance of public roads and bridges

are matters for the consideration of the Municipal and Shire Councils in whose areas the roads or bridges are situated. It is suggested, therefore, that the Chamber of Commerce should make its representations to the council concerned in the first instance. Any representations which the council itself may make to the department in the matter (which, of course, would be supported by you), will receive consideration on their merits. If it is desired that the proposed bridge should be constructed as a national bridge, it is pointed out that the matter will be one for the consideration of the Department of Public Works, and the application by the council in the matter will need to be made to that department."



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.

- Three photos of Wherrett Park area in the early days for J. Scully.
- Robert William Thorne, his wife and children, butcher on Palmers Island.
- Sanctus Brewery, enquiring about beer styles and recipes of old Maclean brewery.
- Argyle Hotel pictures & information.
- Any information on Peter Sidney Farlow and when he settled on 'Sunnyside' at James Creek.
- Information on life and times of Hugh Grant and John MacDonald Grant.
- What was on the site prior to Merv Sheehan's garage.
- McDermid family history.
- Inscription on 'Shortty' plaque, memorial at the Beardmore.
- Norm Kibble, chemist in Maclean, dates of operation.
- Geroqe Martin, family history and sugar mill.
- Margaret Elizabeth Campbell, where buried, Maclean or Lawrence.
- Mary Jean Gregory where did she complete her midwife duties (Grafton).





MACLEAN DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

ABN 73 033 923 282

The Bicentennial Museum and Stone Cottage

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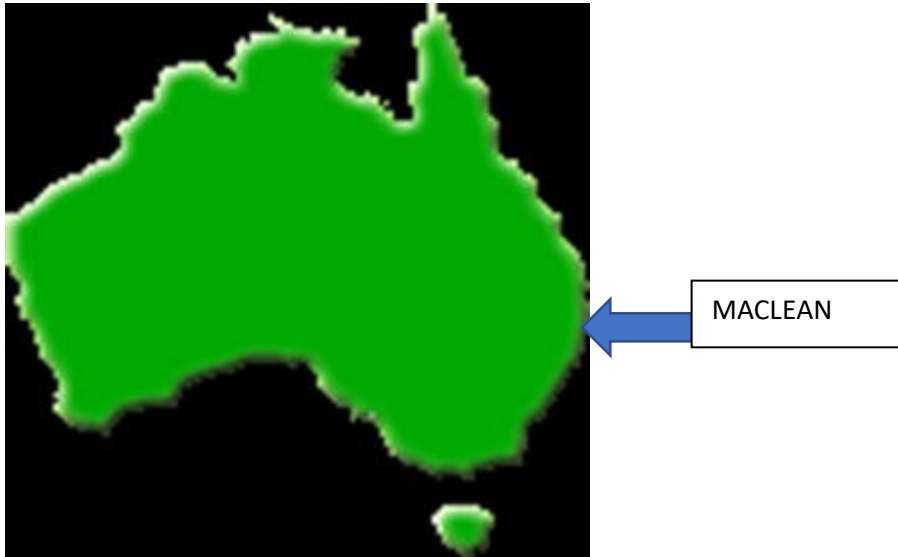
MACLEAN DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

PUBLICATION COSTS

Book Title	Total Cost Posted (\$)	Book Cost (\$)
A Tour Among the Mills (Sugar Industry)	25.95	15.00
Amateur Dramatics - Maclean to 1962	20.95	10.00
Brooms Head Revisited	25.95	15.00
Brooms Head Revisited - CD	20.75	10.00
Champions in Sport	15.95	5.00
Clarence Valley WW1 Volunteers	47.95	30.00
Discovery and Settlement of the Lower Clarence	16.75	6.00
Do You Remember Them?	52.95	35.00
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
Fishing Industry Lower Clarence River	30.95	20.00
From Canefields to Battlefields	35.95	25.00
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
History of Education on the Lower Clarence - Past Schools	25.95	15.00
Lower Clarence Cemetery List	25.95	15.00
Maclean and the 'Great War'	21.35	10.00
Maclean Brass Band	25.95	15.00
Maclean Scottish Connection	30.95	20.00
Maclean To the Reef and Back	18.75	8.00
Maclean, The First Fifty Years	54.35	40.00
McFarland Bridge Centenary	5.00	5.00
Michael Rush - champion Australian sculler	55.95	38.00
Rivers, Rowing, Racing and Regattas	39.35	25.00
Shark Creek Tales	17.75	7.00
Twins of Townsend	20.75	10.00
Villages of the Maclean Area	38.00	25.00
Wings Over Calliope	25.95	15.00

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.***

