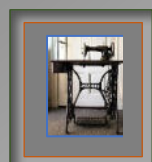


# Missing Link

Cooroy-Noosa Genealogical & Historical Research Group Inc.



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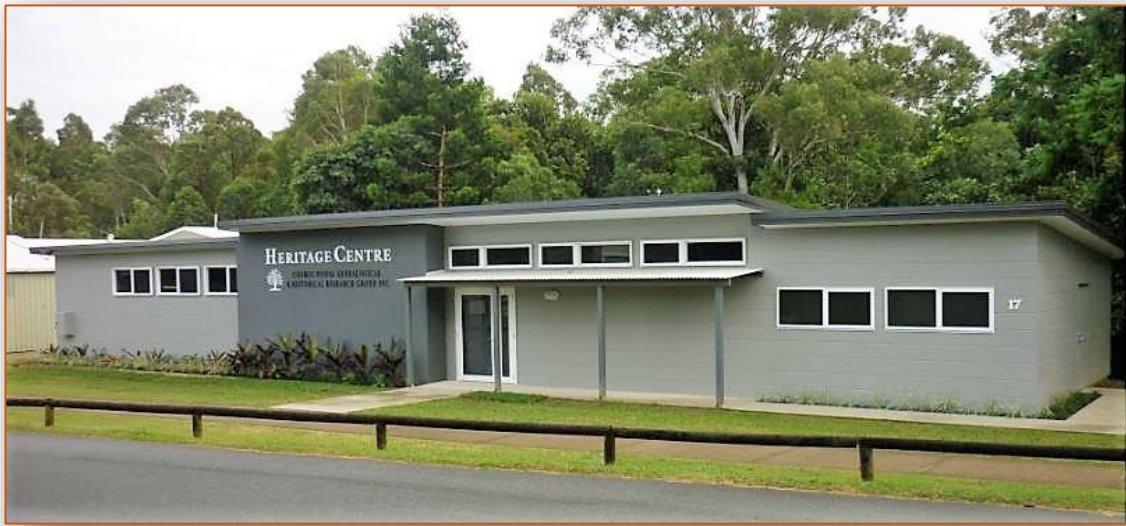
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Nov, 2024



**The Heritage Centre, 17 Emerald Street, Cooroy.**

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### ***Editorial***

Welcome to Missing Link issue 55, the journal of Cooroy Noosa Genealogical and Historical Research Group Inc. In this edition we welcome the new Management Committee for 2024-25. Read about members' searches for ancestors and learn hints to assist your search. Find out how to restore those precious but damaged photographs and explore the treasures to be found in the Group's Library.

We highlight the writings of members, their early memories, their travelling forebears and family businesses. We even have some Christmas jottings to start you thinking about the coming season.

Enjoy the read

Liz, Helga and Louise

### ***President's Report***

As the new president, I want to thank the outgoing Management Committee for their work over the last year. Some of the projects completed include fitting of solar panels, so there will be no more electricity bills, updated computers with NBN installed. We are now an Affiliated Family Search Library. With no annual Christmas lunch event this year, we invite you to our morning tea at the centre on **December 14th**.

Looking forward to next year, it is hoped that many more members will make use of the upgraded facilities at our centre. There will be several informative mornings covering topics such as how to link to Zoom meetings remotely, computer terminology, as well as using newspapers to search for your family history.

Richard Dock  
President

## Welcome to our New Committee for 2024-25



**Left to right:** Treasurer and IT specialist John Sparrow, President Richard Dock, Web Master Carmel Galvin, Secretary Heather West, Vice President Tom Heitman and Committee member Joan Sussmilch

Absent: Sharyn Reiger

At the recent Annual General Meeting of Cooroy-Noosa Genealogical & Historical Research Group Inc. outgoing President Tom Heitman thanked the 2023-24 Committee paying tribute to their hard work and dedication to our group with special reference to outgoing Treasurer Helga Hill. A new committee was elected with John Sparrow taking the position of Treasurer whilst continuing as IT Specialist. Sharyn Reiger was welcomed as a new Committee Member.



## Photo restoration: To do or not to do?

Carmel Galvin

As genealogists and family historians we may have inherited a treasure trove of family photos. Some photos may be in pristine condition, looking just like new. But what about those older ones that are faded or have scratches or folds? That was not how the photo looked when it was originally printed. Would the people in the photo really want to be immortalised with a scratchy, faded image?

This is a photo taken at the 1913 golden wedding celebrations of John O'Dea and Maria Crowley. It was taken in front of their house "Clare Villa" in Hamley Bridge, South Australia. The damage is extensive.



When digitising photos, there is a range of options for correcting the images. Most scanners have options to enhance fading and make some colour corrections. One may want to save the image as it was inherited, but a corrected and enhanced image is more likely to appeal to readers and future generations.

The first step is to get those images scanned. Decide on the resolution, at least 300 dpi but preferably 600 dpi. It is best to scan as colour. This provides the most flexibility for editing.

No scanner? Visit the Heritage Centre to scan your photos or use your phone.

## Editing

There are several programs one can use for editing and improving photos. A free alternative to Photoshop to use on your computer is [Gimp](#). If you have neither the time or the skills for detailed editing try an online tool, [Pixlr](#) or [Fotor](#). Artificial Intelligence is making rapid advancements in photo editing tools.

[Restore by Vivid-Pix](#) This single payment software for your computer provides nine options for restoring each photo or document. The introductory videos on this site provide an excellent overview of the program. A free trial is available.

## Outsourcing – Free options

There are enthusiasts willing to help. The volunteers at [Roots Chat Free photo restoration](#) produce excellent results. They often provide several alternative versions of the photo. Here is a black and white version. The corners are repaired, scratches eliminated and clarity improved.



While the face of the boy on the left is unclear, the overall image is a significant improvement on the original. Another group of volunteers providing enhancements is found on facebook at [Genealogists photo restoration](#).

## Sharing and storing

Now you have that old photo restored digitally how will you store and share it?

Store the original in an archival sleeve and use the digitised one to tell the story. So, who were those [Guests at the Golden Wedding 1913](#)? I used several versions of the enhanced photo in the story where I identified each person. The shared photos reconnected some extended family members with their ancestors as well as providing me with some missing information.



Interior of a tailor's shop, 1780.

My 3x Grandfather, Thomas Burge, was born in 1780 in Chilcompton, Somerset. He was a tailor at least until he was eighty years old. He had probably served a seven-year apprenticeship starting before he was fourteen. He was bound to his Master and given bed and board but no wages.

He spent two years doing basic jobs around the workshop, keeping the iron hot, matching materials, tidying the cutting board, running errands etc. For the next five years he moved to journeyman status by learning the necessary stitches such as basting, backpricking and forepricking stitch, serging, cross and button stitch, hemming, overcasting and button covering to name a few. He learnt to sew linings and cover buttons first before learning to put the suit together. He would not normally have learnt how to cut.

Tailors sat cross legged on a table to sew. This was called the tailor's posture which usually led to the tailor's stoop, a rounding of the shoulders from sitting bent forwards for long periods. A tailor's bunion was also common. This formed on the outside of a little toe and was caused by the foot rubbing against a hard surface for a long time. Many tailors became almost blind working long days in candlelight. It was said you could tell a tailor from how he walked.

Thomas must have made a reasonable living from tailoring as he raised six children and put both his eldest sons, Thomas William and John Henry in the trade. It was common to keep apprentices in the family. They would have finished their seven years in the late 1840s, becoming Journeymen tailors.

Journeymen tailors were paid by the day and could be out of work without warning. Work was seasonal. There was a heavy demand for tailored clothes in winter, less in summer. Master tailors were at the top of the profession sewing made to measure clothing for the well to do. Clothes for the labouring poor were cast offs or self-made by the women of the family. Cheap clothing was called slop. Seamstresses, at the bottom of the clothing trade, worked crippling long hours for barely subsistence pay.

By the 1850s, conditions for journeyman tailors were at an all-time low. Tailoring was one of the first professions to experience industrial disputes with some of the ringleaders of a strike leaving for America. Sewing machines were being invented and in the 1860s the Singer Company designed a reliable and easy to work machine. This pushed the industry towards mass production of cheap, ready-made clothing.

I found four other Thomas Burges, possibly related, from 1719 to 1839 who were tailors with apprentices. Perhaps Thomas William Burge could see the writing on the wall. None of his sons entered the trade. It was the end of an era for my Burge family.



## Singer Manufacturing Company



An early Singer sewing machine.

First established in 1851 by Isaac Singer, the Singer Sewing Machine Company, manufacturer of the famous sewing machines, began in Nashville, Tennessee. Its first large factory for mass production was built in 1863 in New Jersey. Marketing of machines on an international scale began in 1855 after they were exhibited at the Paris World's Fair. Singer was a marketing innovator and a pioneer in promoting the use of instalment payment plans.

In 1867, the Singer Company decided that the demand for their sewing machines in the UK was so high that a local factory was established in Glasgow close to iron making industries, cheap labour and shipping facilities. With 7000 employees it was possible to produce on average 13,000 machines every week, making it the largest sewing machine factory in the world.

The Singer sewing machine was the first complex standardised technology to be mass marketed.



This iconic Singer treadle machine was once found in most Australian homes.

## Earliest Memories

Richard Leonard

I don't remember the day I was born, but I'm sure the world does. It was a time of great turmoil. The world was at war with great battles raging on many fronts. My dad was in the Australian Army at the time, and I have noticed that I was born about nine months after the Japanese bombed Darwin...mmm, interesting. Shortly after my birth, my dad was shipped off to New Guinea, but in May 1945 he was back in Australia.

The earliest memory that I recall was when I was about three years old. Mum and I travelled by train to visit my dad who as yet I had not met. The train consisted of three wooden carriages pulled by a steam locomotive. Along the way the train was stopped because workmen were carrying out track maintenance. Mum took this opportunity to take me to the toilet. The country trains in those days had no holding tanks so toilet waste went straight through to the ground. During the toilet process, I managed to drop my little toy army tank down the toilet. To pacify me, Mum managed to persuade one of the workmen to retrieve my toy tank and relieve my anguish.

We left the train at Wagga in New South Wales and were accommodated in a house with brick steps leading to the front entrance. Beside the steps was a concrete wall with concrete topping which sloped down to the bottom step. I was in a lot of trouble after using that slope as a slippery dip and ruining my new shorts. Dad was stationed at Kapooka Army Base near Wagga. He was to be retrained to drive the Japanese out of Borneo. One day Mum took me to watch a convoy passing through the town. Apparently, Dad was part of that, but I had not seen Dad before. We waited at the roadside to watch many large trucks, equipment and men in uniform pass by. Suddenly Mum shouted, *there he is*, and started to wave her arms. Now, Mum was still a young woman and many young men enthusiastically waved back, so I was none the wiser about which soldier was actually my father. Eventually I met my dad when he was on leave for a couple of days. While walking in one of Wagga's parks with me sitting in a stroller licking an ice cream, we were attacked by a goose. Suddenly that ice cream was snatched from me and thrown to the goose. I don't remember but can only imagine my reaction to losing my ice cream. That same day while negotiating one of those high curbs common in country towns I was tipped out of the stroller and left sprawled on the road. That incident I have also wiped from my memory, well nearly.

By the end of the war, we were back in Bondi, Sydney where we lived with Mum's parents and siblings. Dad was in hospital recovering from Malaria. Mum was also in hospital where she gave birth to my sister. I can still remember Mum and the baby arriving home in the neighbour's 1928 Buick just before Christmas in 1945. My first real memory of Dad was when he gave me my first hair cut the day he arrived home from hospital. I had a wonderful time during those years we lived with Mum's family. Her youngest two sisters were still teenagers who took me along with them on outings with their friends. We went to the beach, the movies and on picnics. Meanwhile Dad had been working and managed to save enough money for a house deposit, supplemented by a War Service Home Loan. We settled in Granville, which in those days was in Sydney's outer suburbs. I have childhood memories from our years in Granville.



Corporal Bob Leonard during  
World War Two.



## ***Koongalba*: John Low's House at Yandina**



*Koongalba*, built for John Low at Wharf Street, Yandina by Willie Grigor in 1894.

Recently a group of Cooroy Noosa Genealogists visited *Koongalba* (also known as John Low's house), during Queensland's Open House Weekend. Fortunately, John Low's Granddaughter, Audienne Blyth was there to conduct the tour of this historic home at 12 Wharf Street, Yandina.

This single-storeyed timber house was erected in 1894 for John Anthony Low, a prominent member of the Maroochy community during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Low was the eldest son of James Low who was actively involved in the development of the timber industry in the Mooloolah - Maroochy area and the development of Yandina from the 1860s.

After his father's death, John acquired two half acre allotments on opposite sides of Wharf Street from James' estate, and planned to use the allotment on the southern side for the house, and the land on the northern side for the garden.

John kept very detailed books, and his arrangements for the house are recorded in these books, including copies of orders for timber, joinery and hardware to complete the house which was built by Willie Grigor. Willie was the son of William Grigor, a longstanding family friend of the Lows, and James' former partner in the Mooloolah area. The original house had four rooms and verandah with a roof of shingles which were later replaced by corrugated iron.

The house was named *Koongalba* in 1994, to mark the 100th anniversary of the erection of the house. *Koongalba*, meaning "place of clean water" is the Aboriginal name for the area around the Maroochy River at Yandina.

To read more about the house and the families who lived there, read *John Low's House and Family Yandina: Koongalba 1894-1994* by Audienne Blyth. The book, which was donated to our group by Audienne Blyth, is in the library.

Household items preserved at *Koongalba*.



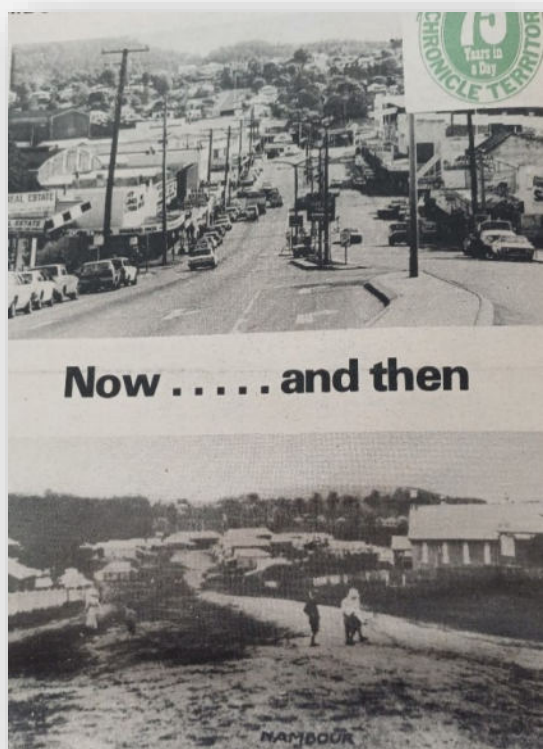
## 75 Years in a Day: Chronicle Territory

Recently a 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Supplement to the Nambour Chronicle dated August 1, 1978 appeared at our rooms. The newspaper is thick with fascinating Sunshine Coast history and will be added to the library. Helga found the following interesting pieces below.



The caption for this picture is below. James Low was the father of John Low in the previous story. This might be the Low family in the photo but they are unnamed.

*The Maroochie Hotel (now Yandina) in 1885, constructed as an inn, coach depot and post office by James Low in 1868.*



**Top:** A modern-day scene (1978) of Currie Street in Nambour, with its thriving commercial centre.

**Bottom:** The scene was a little different in this early day look at Currie Street when the town was in its infancy.



# When they went to town on a trolley



It was reported recently in the Chronicle that the last of the old Mapleton and Perwillowen tramlines had been removed.

Mr. W. McKinnon of Buderim, has since brought this photo, taken about 1915, into the Chronicle office.

Mr. McKinnon's father, the late Mr. James McKinnon, owned the western half of what was then known as Burnside Estate from 1910 to 1918.

He was engaged in cane and dairy farming, and the family home adjoined the Perwillowen line. The Mapleton line also passed through his property.

The main means of transport for the family when they went to town was the small four-wheeled trolley, shown in the above photo.

This trolley was also used for conveying

cream to the railway.

Seated on the trolley are: Back row (left to right) Mr. James McKinnon, Willie McKinnon (now retired and living at Buderim), Jimmie McKinnon (also retired and living at Brighton). Front, Mrs. James McKinnon, and Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Gordon, who came from the Richmond River to visit the McKinnons. Also on the trolley is the family dog Pincher.



I was trawling through the British Newspaper Archive recently, seeking references to my paternal grandfather, Major Berriman Page. Both given names are unusual, so I have more success if I include both, rather than Major Page, which brings up too many military references. A few entries appeared, but one in particular caught my eye. It was headed *The Police Court*, an article in the *Bromyard News & Record* (Herefordshire) dated 20 November 1913. Ah yes, that's my grandfather, I thought. But why is he listed under The Police Court? It turns out he had relinquished his pub licence at The Herefordshire House Inn because he was now a farmer of 200 acres. At the time, The Police Courts issued licences to publicans as well as licences for motor vehicles. (Britain introduced the Motor Car Act in 1903.)

To my surprise, directly below Grandfather Page's name was Albert Edward Pettifer, my maternal grandfather. Two grandfathers named in the same article! Albert Pettifer owned an early motor garage business in Bromyard and was in trouble for not licencing one of his many vehicles. His name appears frequently in the newspapers because he also owned several shops and therefore advertised goods regularly.

But back to Grandfather Pettifer's misdemeanour – at the end of the lengthy article he was fined fifteen shillings, the amount of the car licence, plus ten shillings in court costs. He was a shrewd businessman so I'm guessing that he probably didn't like paying the fine.

#### How to find:

The British Newspaper Archives website can be searched at home with limited access to articles. For the full article, log on to [findmypast.com.au](http://findmypast.com.au) at the Heritage Centre, click Newspapers and search with Name and Keyword. However, keep in mind various name spellings.

**The Police Court.**  
MONDAY  
Before Col. Bourne (chairman) and Mr J. T. Lutley.

**Application.**  
On the application of Caleb Richard Jones, of The Lodge, Whittington Hall, a protection order was granted to him to carry on the license of the Herefordshire House, Stanford Bishop, now held by Major Berriman Page.

**Excise Cases.**  
Albert Edward Pettifer, motor engineer, of Bromyard, was summoned by the Excise Authorities of the County Council for using on the 13th October, at Bromyard, a certain motor car without having the necessary license for same.

Mr Watkins appeared for the County Council. Previously to the case being heard Mr Lutley, being a member of the County Council, asked Mr Pettifer if he had objection to him adjudicating in the case.

Mr Watkins: You are not a member of the Finance Committee, Sir, so I don't think it matters.

Mr Lutley then appealed to Mr Pettifer again and on receiving a reply from him in the negative the case was proceeded with. . . .

The Bromyard News & Record  
Thursday November 20, 1913 p.8

When *Marriage* was the topic for the English group, I thought it might be interesting to classify the types of marriage I found in my family.

- *Happy Ever After*

My paternal g. grandfather, George Fields, married his Agnes at age twenty-three. They stuck together through the birth of at least eight children, the death of their eldest son at Gallipoli, and their only other son dying reasonably early from war wounds. They were together for sixty-two years. Agnes died in December 1946. George only lived another couple of months, dying in March, 1947.

- *Entrapment*

Their son George W. must have been an impetuous young man. He was booked to sail to Australia on the 5<sup>th</sup> March, 1909. As he had grown up in Chippenham, at age twenty-three, he was possibly not worldly wise. He met Evelyn Heather, a Londoner. She claimed to be twenty-four but according to the records I have found, she was actually closer to thirty-three. Was she not enjoying spinsterhood? Was she wanting to leave London? Who knows? The young couple were married in the Paddington Registry Office on Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> March, two days before George sailed to Australia. Evelyn could not join him until October.

- *A Bit on the Side*

Evelyn's father, Henry Heather, had a different take on marriage. He married Mary Ann Farley when he was twenty-two and over the years, they had a family of seven, the last one born the first quarter of 1865. The only cloud on the horizon was that in April, 1865, the first child of his second family of seven was born. He did not live with this family until Mary Ann had died. Henry and Mary Frith did eventually marry in 1882, after all their children were born. Henry was twenty years older than his second wife.

- *Wait & See*

Mary Frith seemed reluctant to marry Henry even though she was a "wife" on census forms. Perhaps her parents had set an example. They didn't marry until they had a family of five with one more still to come.

- *Toy Boy*

While Mary had found an older husband, Harriet Archard found one a bit younger, fifteen years in fact. She had been married at age eighteen to Edward Archard who was forty-three. They had a family of seven. After five years of being a widow, she married Samuel Salter. He was only five years older than Harriet's eldest child. She had another two sons and died, probably worn out, aged fifty.

- *Young Blood*

Another couple with a large age difference was Samuel Banham and his second wife Jemima. Samuel, born 1769, had married a widow, Ann Fiske, in 1794, the year his second wife Jemima Edwards was born. Samuel married Jemima two years after Ann died. They had six children. Samuel lived to be eighty-eight. They had thirty-eight years together.

- *Bigamy*

Samuel's second son, George, married Hannah Rose in 1821. They lived in Occold, Suffolk and raised a family of eight, including two sets of twins. George was a licenced hawker. Warning: don't trust a travelling salesman. In 1841, Hannah and the children were living in Lancashire, the older ones working in the mills. By 1842, when her three youngest were finally baptised, she was a "widow". Meanwhile, George was living in Essex. By 1851, he was with his "wife", Faith. George was a draper. When he died Aaron Phillips was mentioned in Probate. Nothing there for his real wife and children.

I haven't mentioned Elopement or Divorce. They happened in Queensland.

## An Ancestor's Journey

Victor Hill

I think that it is in my genes to travel, for ever since my Homo Erectus ancestors journeyed out of Africa, my family seems to have travelled. Both the maternal and paternal sides of the family are prone to be on the move. On my mother's side, Charles Cutts Barton toured Europe for about fifteen years in the early 1800s with his ever-increasing family, returning to England only to have his children christened. That side of the family also came to Australia in the early years of settlement. I followed their example.

My paternal Great Grandfather Edward, his wife Fanny, and their daughter Mabel were way ahead of their time when they embarked on a tourist trip from England, through Canada to Japan, then on to China. Edward was in shipping, so travel was in his blood. My Great Aunt Mabel was the quintessential Victorian spinster, and, like ladies of that era, she kept a diary. We are very lucky to have in our possession the diary of that trip. It gives us a fascinating insight into the countries and the people that she encountered on her journey.

They left Liverpool on September 8, 1892 aboard the steam ship *Sardinian*. After picking up mail off Ireland, they headed to Canada, arriving in Quebec on the 20<sup>th</sup>. Mabel was most impressed by the buildings and art galleries that she found. Next came Montreal, shooting the Lachine rapids, on through Lake Ontario to the Niagara Falls, then north through Lake Huron to Sault St. Marie, where Mabel describes the large lock, and the number of ships waiting their turn. She states that "as much tonnage goes through the Sault as goes through the Suez Canal in a year". They crossed the Rockies by train. The line had only recently been completed some seven years earlier.

They boarded the *Empress of India* on October 17, sailing from Vancouver to Yokohama. It was not a comfortable voyage, but they arrived at Yokohama on October 30. Mabel was struck by the "dainty little polite people of Japan", a far cry from the rather brash Canadians. In Tokyo it was the Emperor's birthday, which was celebrated with a large military parade, including 10,000 infantry men and a large mounted cavalry. Mabel remarks that "the military has been modeled on the German army".

In 1892 Japan was only just opening up to foreigners. Until then it had been a very closed and somewhat mysterious country to the outsider. There were only two hotels that catered for foreigners. One of those was the Kanaya Hotel in Nikko. Edward, Fanny, and Mabel arrived at the Kanaya on Friday November 4. The hotel was still being built at the time, but they stayed in the cottage inn nearby. It had been a Samurai's house.

Helga and I made a trip to Japan in 2017, and, recklessly disregarding cost, we stayed at the Kanaya Hotel! The management was very excited to have a relative of one of their first guests staying with them, and made our stay a memorable experience. We were shown the very room in which my great grandfather and party slept in the cottage inn. It was quite small, with paper walls, and matting on the floor. There was a room adjoining theirs that was slightly lower, where the travel servant would have slept. The little old lady who showed us round the building was so excited and bowed so low that I feared she would not be able to rise again.

Mabel writes of going to the nearby waterfall. We too went there. She was then carried in a chair suspended on two long bamboo poles on the shoulders of four Japanese men to the lake at the top of the waterfall. She writes "Oh that chair! I shall not forget it soon. The effect was appalling. A horrible jolt. The sort of sensation of riding Military seat bareback on two horses at once." Helga and I made the trip in an airconditioned bus. We also saw the famous Red Bridge that Mabel would have seen.

Back at the hotel Helga and I were taken into the archive room. The Japanese are very good at storing information. On the shelves were many large leatherbound books that contained the names of every guest that had stayed there since the start of the hotel. In the very first book, on page two we found the signatures of my great grandfather, great grandmother, and great-aunt Mabel. A few months after our visit we sent extracts from Mabel's diary to the hotel. They now form part of their archive.

The entourage moved south, where they stayed at the Fujiya Hotel, the only other hotel catering for foreigners. Once again Helga and I had to stay there! We were again treated like royalty. Once again, we were shown into their archive room. You guessed it; there were the signatures of my relatives in their guest book. The interesting thing is that Helga's parents Henry and Yvonne Lalor also stayed there on their honeymoon in 1937. Sure enough, their names were also in the book!

They continued southward to Kyoto, Osaka, then Kobe, and from there towards Shanghai, aboard the Canadian Pacific Railway, *S.S. Empress of Japan*, arriving safely on December 2. Of the people in China, Mabel writes "The Chinese people are kept all in their place- and they mind it. They strike me as enormous after Japan, and we sadly missed the charming Japanese politeness."



Sadly, Mabel's diary ends in Hong Kong. It is indeed a most descriptive journal to which I cannot do justice within these two pages of my prose. Mabel refers to the many times that she made sketches throughout the trip. Regrettably none of these have survived as far as I am aware. Perhaps one day they will turn up; I hope so.



The foyer of the Kanaya Hotel in Nikko, Japan.

The website describes it as "The oldest classic resort hotel in Japan" so Victor's relatives were certainly early tourists.

## A Good Read:

### ***Edenglassie* by Melissa Lucashenko**

Melissa Lucashenko is an Aboriginal author of Bunjalung and European heritage. She is the winner of many awards including the Miles Franklin Literary Award.

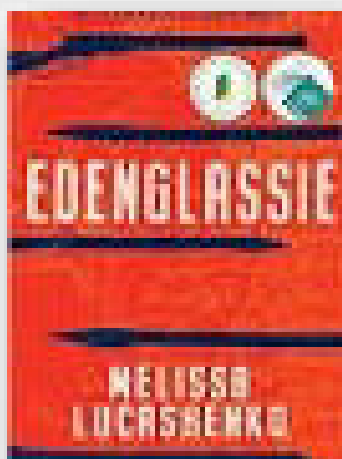
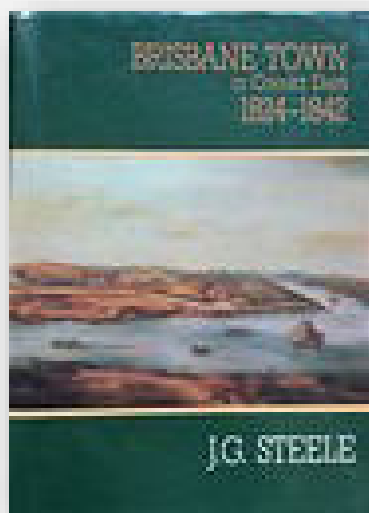
*Edenglassie* was the name given by early white settlers in the Brisbane area in the early days of the Moreton Bay Colony. This book is set both in 1855 and the present day. Through the eyes and actions of the main characters, young Tom Petrie and his Yugambeh friend Mulanyin the reader learns about life in early Brisbane and it's not always pretty. The characters observe the botched public hanging of the aboriginal warrior Dundalli and the harsh actions of the native police and their white leader. Woven through the story are the lives of the modern- day family until the unexpected climax is reached. I found this story riveting and rich in historic descriptions around early Brisbane.

Liz Diggles

### **To find more good reads...look no further than your Group's library.**

A quick scroll through the Catalogue on the website reveals the array of topics one can investigate. If Early Brisbane is of interest, then these titles jump out: *Convicts of Moreton Bay 1824-1859* by Mamie O'Keefe or *Brisbane Town in Convict Days 1824-1842* by J G Steele. Closer to home the library houses an excellent collection of Noosa Shire resources including local School Admission Registers as well as records of local clubs such as Cooroy Tennis Club and Cooroy Bowls Club. Copies of *Cooroy Rag* are archived. Australia wide and worldwide resources are also available.

Yes, much can be found online these days but there's nothing quite like delving into an interesting book, especially a very old publication containing places and names that are familiar. Search the CNGHRG library for your next *good read*.



## Writers' Group Report

Louise Ball

The Writers' Group began in 2006 and has continued for 18 years. We have welcomed the new and sadly farewelled the old, but continued to enjoy, learn and laugh. Some of the original members, including myself are probably not as prolific in terms of producing a new piece every month, but sneak a look at a writing done fifteen or sixteen years previous. We hope an older member will not remember and comment on the article and we are able to breeze through the session without discovery.

*I think I have read this piece before, they say.*

My answer is usually one of the following,

*You are joking, I can't remember that. What year? 2009 you say. Oh, I don't remember the topics from over fifteen years ago.*

Ahh, there are benefits in old age. We choose what we remember and not remember, we choose not to hear but listen anyway, we eat toast and jam for tea and forget the vegetables and openly devour dark chocolate when-ever we choose.

Now, do I remember the topics from this year? Thank goodness for diaries.

In February, we reminisced about our first job. There were jobs in a canning factory, the Ekka, a department store and the ever-popular newspaper run. March found us delving into history in which we were witnesses. Remember watching the tiny tele as man stepped from a space craft onto the moon or was it the Nevada Desert?

We continued the year remembering forgotten ancestors, objects, family deaths, coincidences and family businesses. Yes, we have done it all and sometimes cheated and repeated the same. Please do not condemn, forgetting is a privilege of the age.

Remember Writers' Group gather on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of the month, 9.15 for a 9.30 a.m. start. New members are welcome if you remember.

## Scottish Group Report

Bev Warner

This year the Scottish Group has been working on different topics using family documents, census records, birth, marriage, death records and newspapers. Group subscription websites used include Scotlandspeople, Scottish Indexes, Family Search, Genuki and Google. Some of the topics were about people and places and have provided an informative insight into another time.

In August members were asked to bring something from their own childhood, and in September the task was to write about an ancestors' childhood. In October we wrote about an ancestor's journey, where they came from and where they settled. Newspapers covered shipping intelligence however finding all the relevant information proved difficult for some.

Our group meets on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of each month and will recommence on the 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025.

## Irish Group Report

Peggy Radford

Over the last 12 months we have covered a wide range of topics. From Irish Passenger Lists, Freeholders Lists, Famine Evictions to Remittances as well as the Great Famine and Military Records.

We have also looked at how to stay up to date with new data released in the various websites and how to research using the catalogues instead of a general search.

In March we created our annual Irish Display.

We have enjoyed some great discussions around the table and Faye has kept us well supplied with morning tea!!

Consider joining the Irish Group which meets on the first Wednesday of the month at 9am.



## A Place for Artificial Intelligence? .... You Be the Judge

Liz Diggles

Recently I was keen to explore some possibilities of using AI, that is *Artificial Intelligence*, to create a story. It is said that one can easily notice the difference between a piece of writing created by the human brain and that written by AI, so I thought I'd put that assertion to the test.

Using Microsoft's free version of *Ghostwriter* to create a Word Document, one can choose from various options to craft the piece including the style, tone, length and even whether a UK or USA style of English is preferred. Of course it's also possible to translate into many other languages. After making my choices I set *Ghostwriter* to the task. In less than five seconds, yes, you heard that correctly, it returned the following essay titled *Christmas in Australia*.

Now you can be the judge!

### Christmas in Australia

Christmas in Australia is a delightful twist on the traditional winter wonderland that many envision. As December rolls around, the down under sun blazes brightly, casting a warm glow over vibrant beaches, sprawling parks, and cities alive with festive cheer. The sound of waves crashing on the shore replaces the crackling of a fireplace, while the enticing scent of barbecued seafood wafts through the air, offering a true taste of an Australian summer celebration.

Families and friends gather outside for lively barbecues, where snags sizzle on the grill as laughter fills the air. The customary Christmas feast takes a refreshing turn; think fresh prawns, watermelon, and tropical salads instead of the heavy roasts typical of the Northern Hemisphere. In many places, the iconic "pavlova" – a light, meringue-based dessert topped with fresh fruits – steals the show, adding an extra layer of sweetness to the day.

As the day unfolds, the streets come alive with colourful decorations, twinkling lights, and festive spirit. In cities like Sydney, the stunning harbour is adorned with dazzling displays, while families adorn their homes with bright ornaments. The highlight of the season is the joyous carolling in parks and on beaches, where people clad in summer attire sing familiar tunes, celebrating the season in their own unique way.

Christmas in Australia is not just a day; it's a joyous celebration of summer, family, and fun. With a great blend of cultural traditions and local flair, it embodies a spirit of togetherness and warmth that resonates deeply within the heart of every Australian. Whether you're soaking up the sun at the beach or sharing a meal with loved ones under the stars, the festive season here feels like a celebration of life itself.



**Foot Note:** Carmel Galvin reported that she recently fed certain family history facts into an AI program and it created an acceptable story about her ancestors.

Charles Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol* in December 1843. This was towards the end of what has been called the *Little Ice Age*, which lasted from 1300 till 1850. Northern Europe was still gripped by bitterly cold winters. Fairs were held on the frozen River Thames, even oxen were roasted on the ice, and snow frequently clothed the countryside. It was at this time that Christmas cards became popular. One could say that *A Christmas Carol* and Christmas cards have led to the stereotypical vision of Christmas to which we still cling today.

During the first eighteen years of my life in England, I do not recall a white Christmas. Each year we would scrape the frost from our bedroom window to see if snow had fallen, but alas no snow. Our disappointment was short lived as we raced down stairs to the great open fire place in the dining room to find the stockings, which we had hung there last night, stuffed with goodies. Back in bed we delved into those stockings. The last treasures at the toe were always a tangerine and a silver coin. Sometimes that coin was only a penny wrapped in silver paper. Father Christmas was sometimes a little cash-strapped.

We dressed in our Sunday best, and, after a light breakfast because *you do not want to be sick in church*, we headed off to the Christmas service in the little church at Calverleigh. We changed the water in the jam jar, and put fresh flowers on Father's grave, then entered the church, hoping to find a little warmth inside.

Mr. Boundy, the last of the village's bell-ringers, struggled with his rope, occasionally missing a stroke, then, with extra effort, he got the bell swinging again.

Mrs. Stutterford, the parson's wife, had lit the boiler alongside the organ, but it gave off barely enough heat to thaw her mittened fingers as she played.

Our family took our place in the stall one row from the front and directly below the pulpit. Though it was called a stall, we always referred to it as a loosebox because it had a door that we closed when we were all inside.

The little church slowly filled with familiar faces. Mr. Boundy gave up his struggle with the bell rope. Mrs. Stutterford's organ fell silent, and Parson started the Christmas service. We sang those familiar carols, spurred on by Mrs. Stutterford's playing and by her singing, which was in a key that no one could follow, not even the Rev. Stutterford.

Eventually Parson climbed up into the pulpit and started his sermon. It was always the same at Christmas; Baby Jesus; mangers; oxen; and wise men. Mother would glance furtively at her watch. If Parson took too long, the turkey would be ruined. At last, the service was over, and, after handshakes at the church door, we raced home in the canvas-topped Land Rover. We took it in turns to sit in the front, because when sitting in the back one had to put up with the exhaust fumes.

Home at last and the turkey was saved, plum pudding was put in the pot, and eventually we all sat down to a Christmas feast. It was always fun to have relatives share Christmas with us. Not only did they provide adult company for our widowed mother, but they always brought presents with them.

Not until lunch had been finished were we allowed to open our presents. They had been piling up under the Christmas tree for several days. The tree was decorated with tinsel and glass baubles. Upon the top the angel sat on what must have been a prickly perch. In place of fairy-lights we had clip-on candles which, when lit, turned our sitting room into a wonderland. Why our old thatched farm house did not go up in flames I will never know.

We all checked to make sure that no presents had been overlooked behind the tree. The grownups always went to sleep at this juncture, while we played with our new toys, feeling secure and happy in our family environment. So ended another Christmas day.

Alas Christmas is not the same today. We seem to have forgotten its meaning. Shopping centres no longer display nativity scenes, nor do they play carols. This time is commonly called the *Festive Season*. The success of Christmas is gauged by the amount of money that has been spent this year compared with the last.

I fear that the only reference to the birth of Christ this year will be when we see the date, 25<sup>th</sup> December 2016 Anno Domini. But then of course there will some who do not even know what that means.

For a different concept of presenting family stories around the word **CHRISTMAS**, Louise writes about her grandfather Christmas Evans. Born on Christmas Day, he went on to serve Great Britain in France during World War 1.

## Christmas Evans

Louise Ball

**C** is for my grandfather, Christmas Bertrand Evans, born on Christmas Day 1885 in Narberth, Pembrokeshire, Wales. Christmas is a common Welsh Christian name.

**H** is for hero who served his country from 1911 to 1918 and reared three children following the death of his wife from breast cancer.

**R** is for respect and reward. Christmas spent three bitter winters in the trenches of France and Belgium. He watched as half of his fellow infantry men were wounded or died in the Battle of Arras in April 1917. At the completion of the war four campaign medals were issued as reward.

**I** is for immigration to Tasmania in 1920, to forget and begin a new life as a prospective settler.

**S** is for service. Christmas joined the Queen's Westminster Rifles in 1911 and paraded in the Strand at the Coronation of King George V and then continued with his regiment until the termination of WW1 in 1918.

**T** is for Thomas Evans, father to Christmas and seven daughters. He was a Baptist Minister and farmer at Narberth in Wales. The air force requisitioned part of his farm and created an air force base in WW1.

**M** is for Margaret Morris, mother to eight children and working alongside Thomas Evans in his ministry work.

**A** is for army. Christmas landed in France in 1914 as one of the first soldiers to go into battle for Britain and her allies. These soldiers were known as *The Old Comtempibles*.

**S** is for suffering gruesome warfare, the physical pain of two wounds, mental anguish whilst participating in four years of bitter warfare.



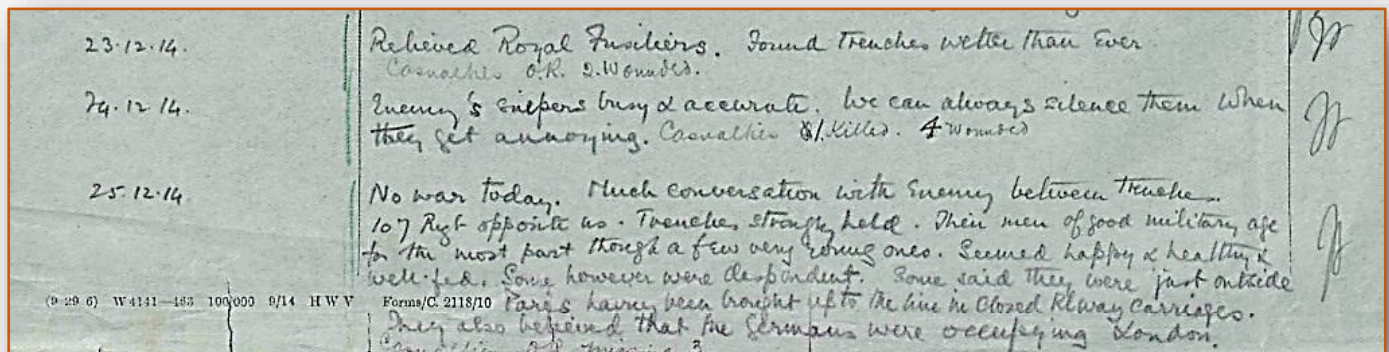
British and German soldiers in No Man's Land on Christmas Day 1914 during the unofficial truce of World War 1.

*Credit Imperial War Museum*



## World War I and the Christmas Truce

Did Christmas Evans hear of the Christmas Truce when he served in the trenches of France? Yes, he participated in the truce according to his regimental history.



25.12.14 No war today. Much conversation with Enemy between trenches. 1/16 Q.W.R 16<sup>th</sup> Battalion

Apparently one of the most famous events of World War I occurred late on Christmas Eve 1914, when British soldiers of the British Expeditionary Force heard German troops in their trenches opposite, singing carols and patriotic songs. They saw lanterns and small fir trees along the German trenches. Messages began to be shouted between the trenches.

After sunrise on Christmas Day, British and German soldiers met in no man's land to exchange gifts and take photographs. Some even played an impromptu football game. They also took the opportunity to bury their dead and repair the trenches.

The truce was not observed everywhere along the Western Front. In other places the fighting did continue and casualties did occur on Christmas Day. Some officers opposed the truce believing that it would undermine the fighting spirit.



After the event in 1914, the High Commands on both sides tried to prevent any future unofficial truces. Despite this, there were isolated incidents of soldiers holding brief truces later in the war and not only at Christmas.

British and German soldiers fraternising during the Christmas Day truce of World War 1.

Credit: Imperial War Museum

## Cooroy-Noosa Genealogical & Historical Research Group Inc.

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Winner of The Centenary Medal 2019

### Aims and Objectives of the Group

Promote and encourage the study of genealogy, heritage and local history, record and index local monumental inscriptions, parish records and historical material. Conduct workshops and social events, share resources amongst members, extend and maintain our library holdings and hold regular monthly meetings

### Benefits of Membership

Members may use research room resources at a reduced rate. Magazines and books are available for borrowing as well as access to the internet and major genealogical websites. Our magazine *Missing Link* publishes Members' Interests and is distributed twice a year. Experienced researchers are available to help new members.

### Subscriptions

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### Client Research Service

Our Client Research Team is currently undertaking research for clients and members.

If you are interested in this service, please contact the Client Research Coordinator, PO Box 792, Cooroy, Qld 4563 or email [info@genealogy-noosa.org.au](mailto:info@genealogy-noosa.org.au) to request an application form.

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### Reciprocal Research arrangements

Your current membership card allows you access to the facilities of the following societies

Caloundra Family History Research Centre

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### Publications for sale

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*Echoes of the Past* \$25 (plus \$15 postage & handling).

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