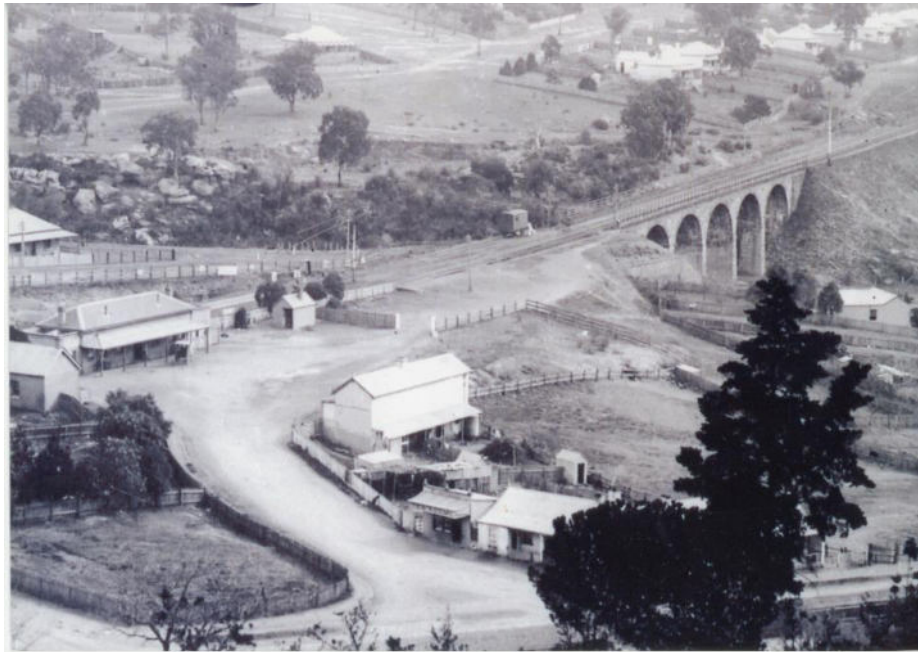


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THE STONEQUARRY JOURNAL



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The Picton and District Historical and Family History Society Inc.

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Membership

Concession	\$15.00
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We meet at 11 am on the first Saturday of each month (**except** January) in the View Room, Picton Library, 42 Menangle Street, Picton.

Research

Our Research Room is in the Susan Keohane Local History Room, Picton Library, 42 Menangle Street, Picton and is open each Thursday from 10 am until 3 pm or by appointment.

Research Fees

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Welcome to 2025 and this edition of our journal. I hope everyone had a great Christmas and a looking forward to a wonderful New Year with lots of success in your research.

The volunteers who help with research and archives of a Tuesday and Thursday, had a lovely break and are now hard back at our activities. The Helen Hanger Collection will take some time to sort out as we work out what we are doing with it. The many death notice cuttings are keeping both Bob and June busy. Helen loved to add notes onto the notice so we know how they are related to the local area, although they can take some working out as to where they belong.

We have completed our work on the Small Debts Registers for MHNSW State Archives Collection. As well as the Picton register, we also transcribed Moss Vale, Yass, East Maitland and Mittagong. There are now over 20,000 entries to view and search online at their website.

Early bird registration is now open for the NSW and ACT Association of Family History Conference in September. It is being hosted by the Illawarra Family History Group. For booking and more information go to the web site www.familyhistoryconference2025.org.au

Hope to see you there.

Gail Hanger

LIBRARIAN'S REPORT

Our team of digitisers have been very busy since September and have done amazing work. The Small Debts Court work moved from Picton to East Maitland, Moss Vale, Mittagong, Yass and more recently Carcoar. It has been quite an effort by Marlane, Pam and particularly Gail and Bob; the latter doing most of the validation of the transcripts so efficiently he was named a "Legend" by the State Archives. He has taken a break from validating, and has been adding more information on TNG from our marriage records, the 1901 census and the death notices collected by Helen Hanger. When Helen collected anything she didn't hold back – she filled seven of those sticky albums with hundreds of them. Gail did a cull of the out-of-area/family notices, which reduced the numbers slightly. To help understand why she kept some notices, she would write something around the edges. This endearing habit was very helpful when Bob came up with an interesting notice for "John Davis nee Mabbutt", at Picton in 2001. Helen had added "M.O.W." which we identified as Meals on Wheels, so Helen had known John Davis from there. But why the two names?

We found that the Mabbutt family came from Millthorpe, near Bathurst, and William and Elizabeth had six children between 1907 and 1923, with Walter John born in 1922. We checked with World War II records, and John Mabbutt had enlisted in 1941, had not gone through basic training when he went AWOL in 1942, and another brother had a similar record. Was this the reason for a name change? Our research has been limited (especially as I went off on the wrong track, thinking his sister Nita, or Neta, had married a Blacker, misreading the death notice that she was actually a Plackett! Lots of Blackers in The Oaks and Camden, and there was a Mrs. Neta Blacker).

So, John Davis arrived in the area at some time, settled in Bargo, did some good works, died at Queen Victoria Hospital in 2001 and the funeral service was held at the Picton Bible Church in Menangle Street. So if anyone has any information, please let us know.

Other team members have concentrated on other work: Cheryl has completed the Thirlmere School Punishment Book and the 1974 Council election rolls and just started the 1987 rolls, while Pam did the 1925 electoral roll, and has been helping proofread the book started by the late Betty Villy and completed by Marlane and Trish Hill from The Oaks Society. This book "*Children from the Shadows...with hope for the Future*" is being launched on 30 March 2025 at the Wollondilly Heritage Centre, The Oaks at 1.30 pm by Martyn Killion of NSW State Archives. It is about children fostered

under the State Children's Relief Act between 1881 and 1923 in the Wollondilly and surrounding districts, the homes and the foster carers.

Another activity saw Cheryl and myself talking to a Dementia Australia group in October, using several of our story boards that were created for the 2019 History Week display, which we've found very useful for other displays at various times. Several of the carers seemed to find both the talk and the boards interesting, and asked quite a few questions. When I was talking local history, Cheryl helped change the story boards as relevant, and we were happy to stay for the light lunch.

The Wollondilly Shire Council decided to commission a report on the Imperial Hotel in Menangle Street and propose it for State Heritage listing. The consultants asked us for information about the years it was Florence Villa, and the first consumptive home in NSW between 1877 and 1886 when Colonel Goodlet moved to what became Queen Victoria Hospital, between Picton and Thirlmere. The hotel had begun as the Terminus in 1861, and when re-opened became the Club and became the Imperial in 1934. Sadly the hotel has been unused for over ten years. We have just heard that the application for State listing has not been approved, despite seeming to tick many of the boxes.



Imperial hotel, looking very said. Photo taken 15 March 2025



Royal George Hotel c 1927. Note the bus in front of the hotel and the truck parked on the street. One of the men appears to be wearing a police or military uniform.

A donation of photographs of the George Hotel in the 1920s came through the Library – who preferred to have digital copies. They had come from the Central Coast Council, where they were donated, and covered the time when Bert Whiteman was the publican (1927-1931). The Wollondilly Shire Council has donated photos, and some reports and other paperwork that they had digitised so no longer needed the hard copies.

Frank Baker brought in some information on the Peachey family, but apologised that there was considerable argument from different family members about many details.

Another visitor was Judy Armstrong, a member in the early decade of the Society but more recently tied up with other matters. She saw Marlane and popped in to say hello and saw the Richardson shop bell and screamed "You've got my bell!" which she had lost. We reassured her that this had been donated by the Richardson family who had a shop and boarding house in the old Royal/Railway hotel on the corner of Argyle Street and Barker's Lodge Road. It is a very handsome, and piercing bell that the Richardsons thought might have been put together by Mr. Richardson himself – but this experience suggests not.



Argyle Street Picton, Photo by Phil Greer, donated by Tony Petch.

Tony Petch came in with a thumb drive of truck photos, some of which he had given us some years ago, but Bob copied some of those showing Picton Street backgrounds.

There have been three enquiries about Picton houses. One was a follow up on Marlane's title search on *Rythdale*, 222 Menangle Street, last year and we were able to show a couple of items in the building file. Then came a request for photos and possibly plans for 1 Colden Street – the narrow brick house which had recently been renovated and extended. There are plenty of

general views of Picton from Reservoir Hill, but this house just shows as a section of roof; the only photo of the house itself is in the 1976 collection of Picton houses. As for plans, we have a very small collection of house plans, none of which were relevant. However, when Marlane did the tile search, we found that the house had been built in the early 1900s, and that in the 1920s it was bought by Frederick Brown. Mrs. Margaret Brown had recorded her memories of Picton with local historian Bruce Knox, in the 1970s, and said that the family rented the house from 1916, and brought up their six children in the tiny space.

The third house was 180 Menangle Street and the owner had already done the title search, and was excited that the land had been bought from John Macquarie Antill, and was it possible that he had built it? This was unlikely, as the original land grant, Jarvisfield to John's father Major Henry Colden Antill was of 2000 acres, and the family lived on the other side of Picton. William Sayle bought the land in 1886, was employed as a railway guard and married Janet McGregor in Sydney in 1878. The couple had arrived in Picton by 1879 when their son William was born; it is not certain where they lived at first, though there was a small terrace of three houses that may have been rented by them – the first four children were born at the Railway Station. The increasing family, with at least five more, was probably the reason for buying land nearby in 1885 and building the plain cottage as soon as possible. Janet Sayle died, and William married again in 1891, and another son was born in 1894. Apart from Williams birth (1836, Islington, London) and death (1918) we have little information about the family or subsequent owners until 1955 when Frederick Huggett bought it and remained there until 1977. The request came from their granddaughter, who had fond memories of visiting them and the house. She was concerned that the house wasn't listed, but it is within the Conservation Area covering the Railway Station, Campbell Street and upper Menangle Street. Unfortunately some other research suggested that there could be a mistake, or more complications about the address or the title records. More work to be done.

It has been a busy and productive time for our group, with a lot of work being done by a small number of people. Thank you all for your contributions.

Kate Holmes

BLUE GUM CREEK

Dennis Ashton

While doing research for an upcoming book on Thirlmere, I'm often distracted by connecting events and items found and, at times, having some personal connection. I suppose I should be more self-disciplined, but my natural curiosity takes over, and thus my writing gets slowed down.

I'm currently doing research and writing about Thirlmere Lakes and the surrounding area including Blue Gum Creek, its roads, proposed rail line, various properties and the timber industry of the area (any relevant information is most welcome).

For example, some time ago Wollondilly Shire Council sought input from the public about trees of significance within the shire and I nominated several within Thirlmere itself but also a large tree that I knew of in Reilly Creek in Burragorang Valley.

In the mid-1960s, the Water Board carried out a survey of all the timber within the forest area of the Warragamba Catchment Area and wrote a report (M.E.T. Wootten) and one particular area was identified as a special place of very large trees in an area that had never been logged and many trees were 200 feet tall with at least one tree being 220 feet or 67 meters and 16 foot 6 inches in girth or about 1.6 meters across the stump. The tree is a Deans Gum (*Eucalyptus deanei*) and the Thirlmere Lakes / Blue Gum Creek area is about its southernmost extent of this species in NSW.



Fred Morris Blue Gum Creek. 28 February 1964 (Photo M.E.T. Wootten)



Blue Gum Creek 2025 (photo D Ashton)

Of course, it would have grown quite a bit over the past 60 odd years since measured back in 1963 so NPWS were also informed to see if they could measure it to see if it was the tallest within NSW. To date no information from the Council or NPWS has been provided back.

Within the same Water Board report a local Thirlmere man, but at the time working from Warragamba, Fred Morris, who was a Water Board Ranger, also spoke of a very large blue gum tree that had been cut down in Blue Gum Creek, about 1910 (or thereabouts), by another local man James Davis, a sawmiller from Thirlmere. It was 36 feet in girth and entirely sound. To put this into perspective, 36 feet's girth is about 11 meters, so across the stump would be about 3.5 meters. In other words, a huge tree.

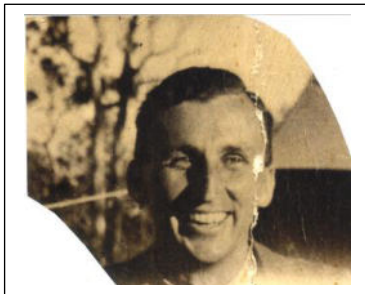
During the 1970's while working for the Water Board, I was called out to a bushfire at the end of Buxton Avenue in the middle of the night. We climbed down to the fire from Bill Cairns property into Jacobs Creek (sometimes called Buxton Creek) which runs into Blue Gum Creek. We put the

fire out then the next morning when organizing crews to go back to mop up, as was the normal procedure, some of the older blokes asked why we didn't drive there, as a track was there for logging operations previously. It turned out several of the older workers at Nepean Depot had worked or had relatives that had worked in the timber industry in the Blue Gum Creek area as there were several sawmills there in the early days. It was organized for them to show where the old track was, and a front-end loader soon had us at the site and while mopping up we found the huge stump that was still very large although having survived other bushfires and natural breakdown. All were amazed at its size and the older blokes had known of this tree.

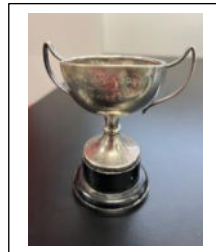
Its current state is unknown.

MY MOTHER'S WARTIME ADVENTURES – GOOD AND BAD

Kate Holmes



Dad had just finished his medical studies, enlisted in the army and joined the 2/5 Field Ambulance. He arrived in New Guinea in 1942, was sent to Milne Bay and had his first experience of the aftermath of the major battle there – absolutely terrifying. Mum, a young widow, joined the Red Cross in 1943, had some training in occupational therapy (for convalescent soldiers), and was posted to Port Moresby with her friend and colleague Norah Lynch. Their journey was unexpectedly interesting, first by finding that they were the only two women on a troopship, the Charon! Then a few days later there was an alarm and everyone



headed for the deck – except for Norah. Mum went to look for her and found her in their cabin, looking for her lipstick. She didn't want to spend days on a lifeboat surrounded by men, without looking her best. Fortunately, there was no attack, and the ship arrived in Port Moresby safely. There the captain presented them with a small cup engraved M.V. Charon and SPORTS! Probably some leftover of pre-war voyages, but it did make us wonder.

top: Dad (Roland known as Rag Holmes. below: (l to r) Mum (Katherine), Norah Lynch, unknown and Sheila Graham. And right: the "Sport" trophy.

While Mum was at the Moresby hospital helping patients by writing letters, reading to them and encouraging them to take up various crafts, Dad was moving between working just behind the action, and breaks back in Port Moresby. Both had met before, twice, and meeting here, Mum was impressed at Dad remembering exactly when they had met before. Mum was very pretty, but she realised over time that Dad had a very good memory.

Their courtship progressed when Dad was in Moresby for some months as his unit was not needed for the rest of 1943. The couple got to know each other better, and on New Year's Eve they went for a romantic stroll under the palms and moon, until they fell down the last slit trench in the town, and Dad sprained his ankle. (This is a famous family story). Mum helped him back to the party, and he tried to disguise his injury until going back to his quarters with colleagues he pretended to stumble when he got out of the jeep. None of them believed this, as the ankle was quite swollen, so he got a lot of teasing. Anyway, he had to stay a little longer at HQ to recover.

I don't think we ever thought to ask when Dad popped the question, he was a little uncertain because she was a widow, and he was younger, but Mum reassured him, so it must have been



Mum - Katherine Holmes (nee Body)

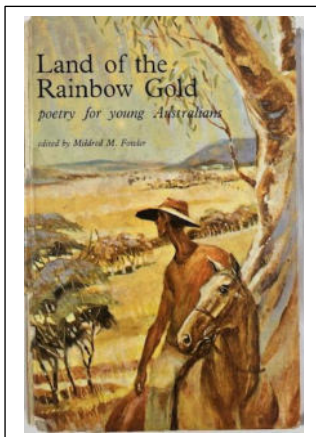
around April 1943. They both managed to organise leave – Dad had quite a bit owing – and they were in Sydney by early June. Mum's parents, Doug and Hetty Body came down from the country and the foursome had dinner on Friday night. After eating, the two men went aside, and Dad was completely dumbfounded when Grandfather Body said – well Katherine has seen many fine young men up in New Guinea, but there wouldn't have been many women, and now that you're back in Sydney, are you sure you want to marry her? (Very pragmatic, Grandfather Body). They were married a week later on 16th June 1944, and remained a very loving couple for nearly 30 years, until Mum's death.

Katherine Body (1915-1973) and Rag (Roland Adrian Glennie) Holmes (1918-2007) first met in 1936 at a dance, and before their next meeting in 1943, Mum had married Owen Stephens (always known as Tony) in 1940. Tony soon joined the RAAF, went through training and was sent to the Middle East in September 1941, flying over North Africa. In January 1942 he was reported missing, but his death was not confirmed until September. It must have been a terrible time for Mum.

ETHEL CAMPBELL LOUISE ANDERSON (NEE MASON)

Pam Beattie

A treasure of mine is a book of poetry for young Australians titled '*Land of the Rainbow Gold*', presented to me for coming first in fifth class at Picton Public School in 1968. There are many wonderful poems in this book.



Early last year I was flicking through the pages of this book when Appin and Picton jumped out at me. So, I read the poem again and wondered who the author, Ethel ANDERSON was and why she would have our local places mentioned in her poem. This led me to do some research and find out more about Ethel and I discovered a connection to '*Rangamatty*', a country property at Thirlmere near Picton, where she spent a lot of her childhood. The property was owned by her grandfather, James SCROGGIE, for whom, I believe Scroggies Road, Thirlmere is named. There were also connections with the MASON, CAMPBELL and CLOSE families, all of which appear as street names in Thirlmere. The research is continuing.

Ethel Campbell Louise MASON was born at Thirlmere, in the lake District of England on the 16 March 1883. Ethel was the eldest child of Cyrus MASON and Louisa CAMPBELL (nee SCROGGIE). Ethel's parents were married in Sydney in 1882 and then travelled to England for a short time. Ethel was the only member of the family to be born in England as her parents and siblings were all Australian born:- Her father Cyrus was born in 1854 at Collingwood, Victoria, her mother Louisa C SCROGGIE in 1864 at Morpeth, her brother Cyrus R in 1884 at Woollahra, sister Nina G in 1886 at Picton and Enid D in 1887 at Sydney.

Ethel was brought up in Sydney and on her grandfather Scroggie's property '*Rangamatty*' at Thirlmere, NSW. With her two sisters, she was educated at home and then at Sydney Church of England Grammar School for girls. Ethel was said to '*had charm, a sense of humour and a zest for living*'.

Ethel met Major Austin Thomas ANDERSON, most likely through connections of the CLOSE, CAMPBELL and SCROGGIE families and on the 8 October 1904, they were married at Christ Church, Ahmednagar, Bombay, India. Major Austin was in the Royal Artillery and Austin's father, Wm ANDERSON was managing director of the Oriental Bank and for some time served as Acting Governor of Mauritius where Austin was born in 1868. Ethel loved many things about India and would accompany Austin from the remote North-West Frontier to the Himalayan foothills. Austin and Ethel's daughter was born in 1907 in India and named, Grace Gwendoliine Bethia ANDERSON and she was called Bethia by her parents.



Ethel with daughter Bethia. State Library of NSW

There appears to be a connection with the CLOSE family, as Robert CLOSE and his father Edward Charles CLOSE were born at *Rangamattie* (Calcutta) in India.

At the outbreak of WWI, Austin left India with the 7th (Meerut) Division for France and Ethel and Bethia went to live in Cambridge, England. Whilst there, Ethel had drawing lessons, exhibiting her works and mixed with the Darwin's and their associates. Austin retired as a Brigadier General and they settled in Sydney, purchasing a house at Turramurra, *Ball Green*, where they lived out their lives. Ethel became quite deaf in her golden years and would use a silver ear trumpet which is now held in the State Library of NSW.



Ethel's ear trumpet and scarf. State Library of NSW

Austin died 22 February 1949 and Ethel on 4 August 1958.

Ethel was an accomplished Poet, Essayist, Novelist and Painter. Some of her poems and stories about her life experiences in India and England were published: -

Squatter's Luck – 1942; Adventures in Appleshire – 1944; Timeless Garden – 1945; Sunday at Yarralumla – 1947; Indian Tales – 1948; At Parramatta – 1956; The Little Ghosts - 1957

The poem *Mariana's Dairy*, published in '*Land of the Rainbow Gold poetry for young Australians*', was quite probably written on her experiences whilst visiting her grandfather, James SCROGGIE, at Rangamatty, Thirlmere.

Mariana's Dairy by Ethel Anderson

The Dairy, facing south, as clean as cold,
Woke to the daily round when first the gold
Noose of the sun caught the veiled hills with light,
While far away the Appin mists gleamed bright.

The milk being warmed, then, cooled the wrinkled cream,
The sanded churn, scrubbed sweet as hazel-huts,
Was then her toy. A Wooden box might seem
Archai – so it was! The handle turned

(And turned and turned) until the cream was churned.

Washed, salted, washed, pressed dry with butter-pats,
Coloured with saffron (one must live) in rounds
Stamped with her crown and thistle, quite ten pounds
Of butter went market in the dray,
To gain, in Picton, perhaps, five shillings a day.

Roses jet black tapped at her window-panes,
Birds sang. Trees flowered. Her orchard gains,
Ripe peaches, cherries, strawberries, at her door,
She did not once imagine she was poor.

Footnote: Austin Anderson served as the private secretary to three NSW Governors, Sir Dudley de Chair, Sir Philip Game and Sir Alexander Hore-Ruthven.

Bethia Anderson was an Australian non-fiction writer and artist. She is best known for *Dismissal of a Premier* a record of the 1932 dismissal of NSW Premier Jack Lang.

References:

Wikipedia, Trove, Ancestry.com, BDM (NSW), My Heritage, Land of the Rainbow Gold
Australian Dictionary of Biography – Ethel Campbell Louise Anderson and Bethia Foott
Anderson Family Photographs compiled by Bethia Foott, Call No. PXE 687, and Silver ear trumpet,
Call No. R846, State Library of NSW.

DERRY HILL AND THE BARGO HOTEL

Marjo Hallowell

The Bargo History Group is currently working on a book to celebrate the 100th anniversary of Hotel Bargo which will be launched in July 2026. We are keen to hear from anyone who has memories of the Hotel, be it as an employee or patron.

We came across this gem whilst in Canberra at a dinner in February.

A young RAAF draftee, Derry Hill, was on a training flight in a tiger moth, a very old twin winged mono plane and had been given a set route to follow. The 19 year-old became disoriented and was unsure of where he was. He spotted a railway line and decided to follow it to get his bearings. Spotting a small town, as Bargo would have been 70 years ago, he flew very low over the township and spotted the Hotel Bargo sign on the building so was able to resume his designated route.

On his return to base his punishment for flying an Air Force asset down the main street of Bargo was a week cutting the lawn outside the CEO's office with a kitchen knife. The now 90 year old still remembers it was hot when he was cutting the grass.

Mr Hill had been drafted into the RAAF at the time of the Korean War. He spent time at the Richmond Air Force base and then transferred to Williamstown, north of Newcastle. He spent six months in full time training, the initial pilot training having been in the tiger moth. He remained in the Air Force Reserve for several years and became an officer attached to Sydney University Squadron for several years.

He was born in 1935 and lived on a farm in Dubbo, attended Yanco Agricultural College and attended Sydney University completing degrees in Science and Civil Engineering. He also represented Sydney Uni at Rugby in 1st grade, played for NSW and later joined Norths Rugby Club, which he captained in his last year.

He went on and joined a Hawaiian based company and became managing director of the Australian arm of the group.

We have invited him to the book launch in July 2026.

If you have any information, please contact marjofrombargo@gmail.com

FAMILY HISTORY CORNER

THE DIGGER FAMILY

Gail Hanger

Cheryl, one of our hardworking members who has been entering data from electoral rolls into spreadsheets, asked how many children were in the family of John and Meg Digger. John and Meg had lived in Thirlmere but for many years ran a furniture and floor coverings business in Menangle Street Picton, next door to the former hardware store operated by Ketih Corbett.

A check of our pioneer sheets only gave us a newspaper clipping of **John T** Digger celebrating his 90th birthday in 1993. Next step was to check TNG (our genealogy software program) into which Bob has been entering records from our card system of BDM records and newspaper announcements relating to BDMs. The search brought up an obituary from the Picton Post of 8 February 1962 for **John Joseph** Digger who died on 24 January 1962.

John Joseph Digger, aged 86 years, died at the home of his only son, **John Thomas** Digger, Scroggies Road, Thirlmere, on Wednesday January 24 and was laid to rest in the Thirlmere Cemetery.

After the death of his wife in 1956, he came to Australia, then 80 years of age. He enjoyed his trip over and was interested in seeing several of the lighthouses, which he had helped to build during his many years with the firm of Chance Bros. of England...His death broke a line of a few generations of John Digger's as his son, grandson and great grandson all of whom were living at Thirlmere were named John. He leaves behind one son, two grandsons and six great grandchildren...The deceased was the last survivor of nine brothers and sisters.

I decided to do some research on this local family and make some family sheets for them. Not knowing where this would lead me and what I would find.

Looking at the shipping records on Ancestry, Fremantle, Western Australia, Passenger Lists, 1897 - 1963, and entering just the name Digger without any forename, I was able to find **John** Digger who arrived in 1956 aboard "Strathmore". He was going to Mason St Thirlmere (the record appears as Theremea). But there was another Digger family listed who had arrived earlier in 1951 aboard the "Ranchi". They were Mr J T Digger, Mrs R M Digger, Master K. G Digger, Mr. J. R. Digger and Mrs M. M. Digger. Their final destination was Sydney. So, now to find out who they were and if they were connected to John Digger who arrived in 1956.

Using the UK site FreeBMD, I searched for marriages and births and was able to find the following:

Digger, **John Joseph** married **Clarke**, Kate C in 1900

Digger, **John T** married **Smith**, Rose M in 1926

Digger, **John R** married **Troath**, Margaret M in 1950

This marriage information matched the initials on the shipping records.

FreeBMD, which is a free site to use, has added mother's maiden name to the birth records after 1911 which makes searching easier. Note that in the UK the registration of events is recorded in quarters, so the birth of **John R** which is registered in the June quarter of 1929, means he was born in either April, May or June of 1929.

John Thomas Digger, the son of John and Kate, was born in 1903. Following his marriage to Rose in 1926, their children are listed as:

Digger, **John R** born in 1929
Digger, **Margaret** born in 1932
Digger, **Clifford W** born in 1936
Digger, **Kenneth G** born in 1941

Going back to our obituary notice, it told us that **John Joseph** had one son, this will be the **John T** who arrived on the ship "Ranchi" and the two grandsons referred to would be John T's sons, **John R** and **Kenneth G** who travelled with him to Australia in 1951.

The Ryerson index showed us the death at Thirlmere of **John Raymond** Digger on 22 July 1998. He was married to Margaret (Meg) and they are the parents of the six great grandchildren referred to in the obituary and were the proprietors of the furniture and floorcoverings store in Menangle Street Picton.

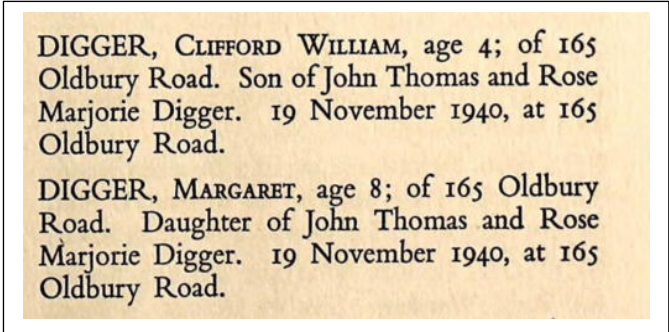
The death of **John Thomas** Digger took some finding as there was no notice in the newspaper, but eventually I was able to find that he died in 2003 just a couple of months after his 100th birthday.

What happened to the other two children of John Thomas Digger, **Margaret** and **Clifford**? So back to FreeBMD. I started with Clifford W, as that is not a very common name and was able to find both children

Digger **Clifford W** died 1940 aged 4 years
Digger **Margaret** Died 1940 aged 8 years

Both deaths were registered in Smethwick in County of Staffordshire with the same registration number. What happened to them?

Back to Ancestry, and again I started with Clifford, and to my surprise a record came up for him in the UK records of World War II Civilian Deaths 1939 – 1945.



DIGGER, CLIFFORD WILLIAM, age 4; of 165 Oldbury Road. Son of John Thomas and Rose Marjorie Digger. 19 November 1940, at 165 Oldbury Road.

DIGGER, MARGARET, age 8; of 165 Oldbury Road. Daughter of John Thomas and Rose Marjorie Digger. 19 November 1940, at 165 Oldbury Road.

Obviously, they had been killed during a bombing on the town. Looking at the Commonwealth War Graves website, we found there were 21 people buried in Smethwick cemetery who were killed on 19/20 November 1940. How lucky were the rest of the family to survive.

The web sites mentioned are all free to use expect *Ancestry*. But you can use the library edition at the local library.

Ancestry - www.ancestry.com.au
Freebmd - www.freebmd.org.uk
Commonwealth War Graves Commission - www.cwgc.org

THE DUTCH MILL



If you travel between Tahmoor and Bargo, you will surely see standing high above the road the sign for the Patpong II Thai Restaurant. The site has a history of cafes, a petrol stop and restaurants dating from 1958 for a period of 60 years.

The first to build on the property was Benjamin de Graaf, a Dutch citizen who migrated to Australia after the Second World War. Benjamin was described as a café and service station proprietor of Bargo when he bought the land in March 1953 although he was operating a kiosk on the site from 1951. Researching the history of the site has been a project of Frank Baker for many years and recently he was very fortunate to make contact with a granddaughter of Benjamin de Graaf through the Bargo History FB page. She has generously provided Frank with copies of her grandfather's photos of the buildings on the site said to be built by Ron Meuleman of Bargo.

A more detailed history of the site, and subsequent business names and owners will appear in our next Journal.



HORDERN'S TREE ON RAZORBACK

Twenty five years ago on 16 March 2000, a replacement tree was planted on the opposite side to where the original tree stood. On 16 March 2025, the Razorback Environment Protection Society/Razorback Landcare Group invited people to attend the site to commemorate that planting and the unveiling of an informative plaque. A feature on the tree and its association with the story of the Anthony Hordern Department Store will appear in the next journal.



*The 2000 planting of the Hordern Tree on Razorback.
Photo M Fairfax*

Research News

Marlane Fairfax




As reported earlier, members of our Society assisted with the digitisation of the **Small Debts Registers** held at Local Court Houses. Our members digitized the registers for Picton as well as Moss Vale and Mittagong, and because some of our members have family history interests in Yass and East Maitland, we did those as well. The Oaks Society were also involved indexing the registers for Yerranderie.

These Registers are now available on-line on the Museums of History State Archives Collection website. State Archives will be presenting a **webinar** on the Registers on 28 March from 10.30 to 11.30 am. To register for the webinar – which is **free** – go to: <https://mhnsww.au/whats-on/events/small-debts-registers/>

The **National Archives of Australia** conducted a webinar on 28 February on the digitisation of WWII records. The NAA holds 1.5 million files on WWI and WWII veterans including the Army, Airforce and

Navy. The digitization project for WWI records started in 2007 and was completed in 2010. The digitization of the WWII records commenced in 2019 and over all 99% of the records are now available online. The other 1% have been digitised but are not available on-line because there may be correspondence on the files less than 20 years old. Researchers, however, may apply to access those files.

40% of the WWII files have photographic negatives attached to them and thanks to a \$1M donation in 2021 these are progressively being developed and digitized. Some negatives are unfortunately beyond repair. To date 293,000 photos have been digitized and the work is continuing. To see if your family member has a photo, go to their record on the NAA site through Record Search and type in their name. Below the pdf file you will see a camera icon.

Control symbol	Item title	Date range	Digitised item	Item ID
108500	GOFF AMY JOAN : Service Number - 108500 : Date of birth - 27 Jul 1924 : Place of birth - CAMDEN NSW : Place of enlistment - SYDNEY : Next of Kin - GOFF JAMES Access status: Open	1939 - 1948		4824176 Issue to research centre
108500	GOFF AMY JOAN : Service Number - 108500 : Date of birth - 27 Jul 1924 : Place of birth - CAMDEN NSW : Place of enlistment - SYDNEY : Next of Kin - GOFF JAMES [Black and white ID negative - portrait - separated from parent item for preservation reasons - sub item CATEGORY: photograph FORMAT: b&w negative STATUS: preservation material] Access status: Open	1939 - 1948		203066252 Issue to research centre
108500	GOFF AMY JOAN : Service Number - 108500 : Date of birth - 27 Jul 1924 : Place of birth - CAMDEN NSW : Place of enlistment - SYDNEY : Next of Kin - GOFF JAMES - [Black and White negative - identity photograph] Access status: Open	1939 - 1948		204146646 Issue to research

The above records for my mother show her Airforce file and two photos – in one photo she is ‘in civvies’ and the other in uniform. My father’s Army file shows there is a negative but it has not yet been digitised. **NB** My mother’s record appears under her married name as she married prior to discharge.

Civilian War Graves WWII

Did you know that the Commonwealth War Graves Commission also maintains graves of civilians killed during WWII?

From the Commonwealth War Graves website:

The Commonwealth War Graves Commission (CWGC) keeps complete records in its *Debt of Honour Register* of the official commemorations to the 1.7 million members of the Commonwealth forces, including Australians, who died during the world wars. **It also details 67,000 Commonwealth civilians who died due to enemy action during the Second World War.**

RAHS There are some interesting lectures and workshops coming up hosted by the Royal Australian Historical Society. A free lecture on 2 April 2025 at 1 pm at History House will be ‘The True Story of the Dog on the Tuckerbox’ by Richard White.

Carol Liston will present a workshop on 9 April at 11 am ‘Using Maps in Local History Research’. There is a cost of \$35.

JOURNAL

As the costs of printing and especially postage have increased dramatically in the last 12 months, I have been having discussions with other members as to how we can produce an interesting and full Journal without increasing membership or asking members to pay extra if they required the Journal to be posted to them. If we increase the length of the Journal, then that of course leads to additional printing and postage costs. While most members receive their Journal via email, we also exchange journals with other societies, 15 by post. The consensus is that we should only provide *digital* copies

of our Journal to other societies. The only exception will be our obligation to comply with Legal Deposit requirements.

Serendipitously, a few days later I received a call from a member of The Oaks Historical Society inquiring as to the number of copies we print for our Journal and an offer to our Society to print our Journal on their photocopier (we supply the paper). The offer was of course gratefully accepted and approved by members of The Oaks Historical Society at their meeting on 3 March 2025. This will be a saving of approximately \$300 per year.



Four of our members share a regular roster day at the Wollondilly Heritage Centre, The Oaks, a museum managed by The Oaks Society. We can strongly recommend a visit to the Centre which is open on weekends and public holidays. The entry fee is a minimal \$3 with so much to see. Barbecue facilities are available. They also have a large archive. Visit their website for details.

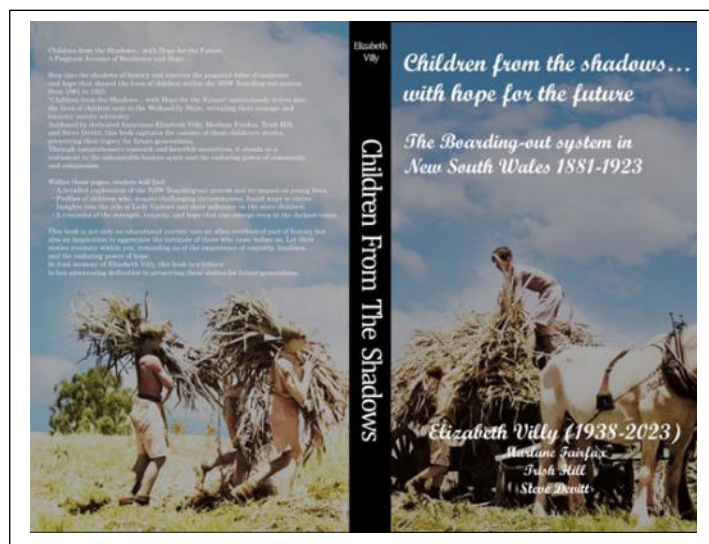
<https://wollondillymuseum.org.au/>

REMINDER – JOURNALS FROM OTHER SOCIETIES

You can access Journals from other Societies via the Members Only page of our website. To access the Members Only page, which also gives you access to many of our digital resources, you first need to register on the website.

Go to https://www.pictonheritage.org.au/?page_id=1159 and complete your details including creating a username and password. Don't forget to tick the 'I'm not a robot box' and then click 'register'. This will send a notification to our webmaster who will in turn email you confirming your registration. You will then need to log in to the Member Area from the top bar on the website.

INVITATION TO BOOK LAUNCH



The Oaks Historical Society combined with Picton and District Historical and Family History Society extend an invitation to you to attend the official launch of ***Children from the shadows...with hope for the future*** the legacy of Betty Villy, commenced by her prior to her death on 12 March 2023.

This publication is a poignant account of children in the boarding out system from 1881 until 1923 in Wollondilly and the surrounding district and tells the story of resilience and hope that shaped the lives of these children.

The book *Children from the Shadows...with*

hope for the future will be launched by **Martyn Killion, Director, Collections and Executive Director, State Records NSW.**

When: Sunday 30 March 2025 at 1.30 for 2 pm followed by afternoon tea

Where: Wollondilly Heritage Centre, 43 Edward Street, The Oaks

RSVP: **21 March 2025** tohs1988@bigpond.net.au Trish 0432 689 034 Marlane 0427 659 340

