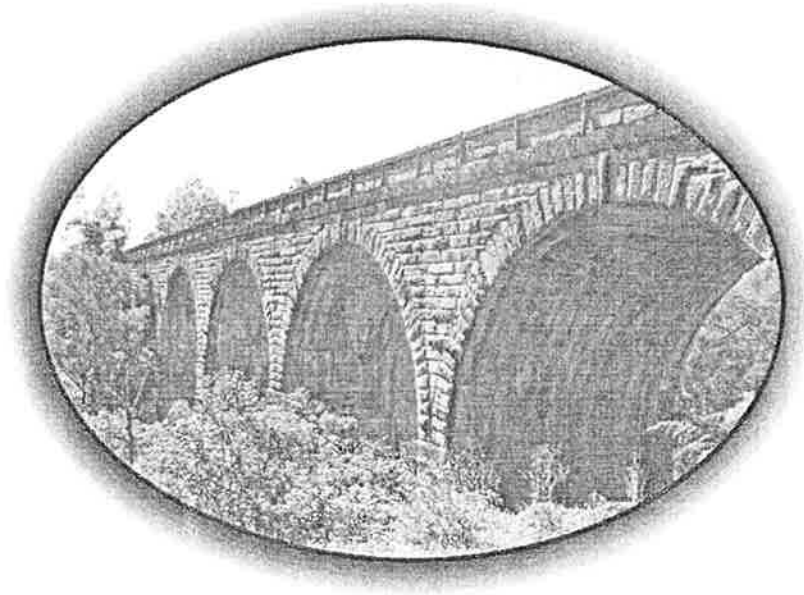


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Picton District Historical and Family History Society Inc.

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Membership fees due 1 July each year

Pensioners & school students	\$15.00
Single	\$20.00
Family	\$25.00

Meetings

Meetings held at 9.30 a.m. on the first Saturday of each month except January, on the 1st floor of Wollondilly Public Library, Menangle St., Picton. The December meeting is held at one of the members' homes, at 11 a.m. followed by lunch.

The Annual General Meeting is held on the first Saturday in September, before the monthly meeting.

Research room

First floor Wollondilly Public Library, above entrance. 10 am to 3 pm each Thursday and 10am to 12 noon, 2nd and 4th Saturday (closed on public holidays).

Research fees.

Members: Free (plus photocopying costs)

Non members: \$10.00 + photocopying. Written or emailed enquiries: \$20.00 + photocopying.

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We have just received a newsletter from the NSW Boer War Memorial Association Committee about Boer War Day on 30th May, 2010. The date is the nearest Sunday to 31st May, when the War ended in 1902. The Association suggests that a ceremony could be held wherever there are Boer War memorials, or where there are descendants/friends of those who served in South Africa. The Oaks has a memorial to the only known Wollondilly resident who died there, Phillip John Reilly who died of enteric fever (although George Brooke Forster who came to Picton in 1888 as the bank manager, was killed in action in 1901). Colin Sproule of The Oaks has done major research on the Boer War, with quite extensive biographies on all the locals who enlisted, as well as his publication *From Picton to Pretoria, The Forgotten Men of a Forgotten War*, but we have not been aware of the Boer War Day until now. Anybody interested in doing something on the day? It might be a bit late for this year, but we could all think about doing something for the centenary, in 2012.

Menangle Street, Picton looking towards the Railway Station, 1910. (See p.6-8 for more)



Report on the 2009 NSW & ACT Family History Societies Annual State Conference at Wyong, by Gail Hanger, our delegate.

Along with Helen and Joe, we arrived on Friday evening (18th September), to be treated with delightful company and lovely weather, which was a foretaste of the treats to come.

The trading tables were spread over two levels, giving all too many opportunities to spend money on new publications, or just to look at what other societies are doing.

Saturday morning started with the welcome to country to the sounds of the didgeridoo before the serious business began. The Vincent John Crowe Memorial address was given by David Harris, M.P. on the history of Wyong, and revealed that times really haven't changed all that much. This was followed by Carol Baxter, talking about turning dry facts into exciting narrative: our family history should show how historical events relate to the family. Remember the changing calendar. Christine Yeats then spoke on our ancestors as they slip in and out of records – don't depend on an index, check the original records to see if indexed correctly. Remember the Freemantle records, for the "swimmers" as for many ships this was the first port of call in Australia and Freemantle may have the only record. The Colonial Secretary papers are a good source for people, and up to 1894 have been indexed by Janet Reakes. The State Records *Archives in Brief* are a good introduction and allow you to compare records and especially watch for spelling changes, as most of our ancestors were unable to read or write. Don't forget Police Gazettes, also the depasturing licence records – such licences allowed people to live, and use land beyond the limits of the original 19 counties.

There was a talk on the World Vital Records program, a pay-by-subscription site which can unlock the past; there is a 5 day free trial. A speaker from Family Search spoke on the new G.I.S. (Geographic Information System) for England. The final speaker for the day was from the National Library of Australia, who talked about the newspapers now on line – now from 1803 to 1954 and useful for family notices. The London Times 1785-1985 is another good source, but you need to register for a Library card and once you've received it you can research and view from home. Don't forget to check with your local library about inter-library loans for some material.

Sunday morning was another bright and sunny day, after a lovely dinner and entertainment on Saturday night. The meals have been lovely and summery, served on the third level of the racecourse grandstand, overlooking the racecourse. Michael Flynn started the day, talking about the First and Second Fleets and the difference between the two with the changes of government contractors. He was followed by Terry Ryan who spoke on the place the National Maritime Museum, at Darling Harbour has in family history. It is especially good if you are looking for maritime ancestors, as I do, with copies of the Lloyd's Registers. They have many pictures of ships, which could help illustrate your family story, and don't forget the ship arrival lists in the Sydney Morning Herald. Brad Marea was due to speak on the Australians in Crete during World War II, but he had been involved in an accident, so a substitute speaker was found. Brad from Ancestry spoke on some of the records now becoming available, and what's involved in using them. So look for the electoral rolls to 1954, Certificates of Freedom and the NSW Police Gazettes coming soon. The final speaker was Kim Phillips who spoke on her project Spirit of Gallipoli, and her attempt to put photos and stories to the over 7000 men

of Gallipoli who never returned home. There was scarcely a dry eye in the room, with the footage of Gallipoli and some of the photos; a fitting way to end the conference.

Saturday afternoon was set aside for the A.G.M. of the Association, with 28 delegates present. Following the reports of the President and the Secretary, there was a report from last year's conference at Dubbo which was a great success, and the percentage of the of the profit to be added to the Association's travel fund was \$1439. The proposed changes to the by-laws were passed. The election of the new committee was held and as there were three nominations from the Southern Region, this required a vote with Shoalhaven and Illawarra successful. Then the vote was taken for the 2011 conference. Berrima had withdrawn the week before, thus all societies were sent an SOS which resulted in three nominations: Botany Bay, Canberra and Inverell, with Camden putting in a late submission. After all the societies spoke to their submissions the vote was taken, with Inverell the winners.

All in all it was a great conference and well worth the time and effort put in by the organising Society. They are to be congratulated, and we look forward to Shoalhaven in 2010.

President's Report

It is hard to believe that we're already into March, it seems no time since we were celebrating Christmas.

I had the pleasure of presenting the Ruffells History Prize for 2009 at the High School Presentation Night in February, to Owen Sutcliffe. He was a most surprised and delighted winner, and received a selection of books on local history, as well as a trophy.

I have finally finished the update of the Bargo Cemetery Book; our original publication dates from 1988 when the Society did a huge amount of recording of Wollondilly cemeteries. The new book has a photograph of every grave, headstone or cross, and where there is no biographical information surviving now, I have used the original book and any other records we hold to provide this. This should be available later next month. We are having a busy time with various publications – the new *Chronicle* now at the printers, and another major publication later this year.

The Inverell Family History Group suffered a terrible fire some months ago - one of the dangers of having space in an old timber building. Fortunately they have found that their filing cabinets were so full of papers that the fire couldn't get started there, which must have been a huge relief. We offered them one of our unused microfiche readers, but they had plenty of equipment untouched in another building. Sad to see the destruction of the historic building in the middle of town, but at least no lives were lost.

Gail Hanger.

Vale – Jessie Molyneux Tickle

1909-2009

Jessie Molyneux Wilson was born in Picton on the 4th April 1909, the youngest of five children to Robert Beaumont Wilson and his wife Sarah Britannia (Whitfield) who had married in 1898. Robert had a saddlery shop in Picton, and the family lived on the corner of Colden and Menangle Streets; the house survives but as been renovated since the Wilson family lived there. Robert was born in England, and was left to finish his education in France when the rest of the family came to Australia. At 18 he managed to join the crew of a sailing ship, jumped ship in Sydney and met up with the family. After a stint on the Western Australian goldfield in the 1890s he returned to NSW and trained as a saddler. He did very well, charging £25 for a saddle, as well as making harnesses and carrying out repairs. Robert bought some land in Pheasants Nest, and got to know the Whitfield family of Tahmoor and so his future wife, Sarah. They seem to have moved to Picton in the early years of the 20th century.

When Jessie was only five her father joined the 7th Light Horse, but he was discharged in 1917 because of an eye wound. The house was decorated for his return, and his children thought he was a hero.

She went to Picton Central School (the public school, between Argyle and Lumsdaine Streets) and was usually near the top of the class, and she left at 14 to become the telephonist at the Picton Post Office – there was only one line to Sydney at this time. Some three years later she was interviewed by the Post Master General, J.W. Kitto and became the first female postal assistant at Picton, at the princely sum of £3 a week. She was very involved with the local Red Cross branch, even becoming the Treasurer when only 13, and became a champion baker of sponge cakes.

Jessie and her family were members of St. Mark's congregation and she became a member of the choir. She married Cecil Joseph Kingsley Tickle there on 11th February 1929 and their four children Desmond, Audrey, Barbara and Helen were all baptised there. Although Cec had been born in Harden to Joseph (an engine driver) and Louisa (Mansfield) his family was now farming at Hilton Park, Tahmoor where they had cattle, sheep, pigs, horses and an orchard. So after the honeymoon at The Carrington at Katoomba, the young couple returned to the farm, living in a second cottage. It is also interesting that both Jessie and Cec had Whitfield connections, back to the original William and his wife Caroline Philadelphia (West) - great-grandparents to both.

After the arrival of their third child in 1940 the Tickle family moved from the farm and opened a general store on the corner of Larkin Street and the then Hume Highway, where they sold everything from motor cars and building supplies to fruit and vegetables. After 8 years of hard work and no holidays they sold out to the Grants, and bought "Hiawatha" in Progress Street – a nice old house with tennis court, gardens and 5 acres of land, and surprise, their fourth child appeared. Cec then became the Shell petrol rep for the district, for some 20 years, while Jessie did the books at home. He was the Bush Fire Brigade captain, and very involved with clay pigeon shooting (winning lots of prizes), while Jessie was kept busy with the Country Women's Association, as well as traveling with Cec for the shooting competitions.

On his retirement in the 1970s they moved to a smaller house in York Street; then in 1996 they moved to Carrington, and Cec died soon after. Jessie remained in their unit until increasing physical – not mental – frailty saw her moved into the nursing home section. Jessie’s hundredth birthday was well covered in the local newspapers where she said she had had a “very interesting life”, and had tried to make the best of her situation. She was very proud of her children, 9 grandchildren, 20 great-grandchildren and 2 great-great-grandchildren. She died on Christmas Eve, 2009. Her funeral was held at St Mark’s church, as her husband’s was, and both are buried in the Upper Picton Cemetery.



Photograph of Jessie and Cec., probably celebrating their 60th wedding anniversary in 1989 (from Frank Baker collection, held by the Society).

The family has very kindly donated a framed memento of Jessie’s postal history, including a “Best Wishes” card from the Picton Post Office staff when she left to be married. Much of the information for this obituary came from a visit to Jessie by Helen Hanger and Kate Holmes in 2008 when she was very much on the ball, as well as from family history records and the newspaper articles in April 2009.

Centenary of the Picton Public (Primary) School

8th June 2010

Having seen the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Picton High School in 2008 (all those post-War babies), now we have the centenary of the Picton Public School, between Argyle and Lumsdaine Streets. This was not the first school in the town, or even the first government school, so a brief introduction to the history of schools in Picton follows.

The very first school may have been set up at Jarvisfield, the home of Major Henry Colden Antill and his wife Eliza (nee Wills) who moved to their land grant in what was then known as Stonequarry some time between 1825 and 1829. By this time the Antills had several children (nine in all), so set up a schoolroom in or near their home. The first teacher may have been ex-convict Thomas Denkins, who was followed by William Berkely Campbell in the 1840s or possibly the 1850s. Campbell remained in the district until his death in 1904, though his teaching was only a short-term occupation. It seems that another small school was set up in the George Inn, where the son of the licensee, G.H. Commias or Cummings, taught in 1841 and 1842.

The churches of the town also played their part. Mrs. Connellan opened a school for Catholic pupils in 1852, apparently in her house in Argyle Street (on the west side, half a block up from Stonequarry Creek). When the Sisters of St. Joseph arrived in 1880, a convent was built, and the school held in the wooden church building. The present day St. Anthony's Primary School began in the first purpose built school in 1947, which has been greatly enlarged since then. The Anglicans had a hall adjacent to the present Catholic school, possibly in the 1850s, and the Presbyterians also had a school on their property in Colden Street c. 1862.

The first government school was built in Rumker Street, Upper Picton – a National School, opened in 1856. As was usual, the school had an attached residence for the schoolmaster, but when he arrived with five children, it was necessary to enlarge the house. By 1866 there was a total school population of over 130 in the various private and public schools. There was also some agitation for a government school in Lower Picton, with parents complaining that the National School was too far away, especially for the younger children. So a temporary school opened in 1868, with the new school, in Menangle Street being completed in June, 1869; it became a Superior Public School in 1890 and by 1891 had up to 172 pupils. The National School in Upper Picton closed in 1875, and now it was the turn of parents in that area to complain of the long walk to and from school. Some small private schools did operate in Upper Picton, one of the most popular being that of Miss Clarke, at Hillcrest, Argyle Street from c. 1892 to at least 1906.

The difficulties of the distance between the two towns of Picton led to further requests for a more central school site, and land was bought in 1907, and the new school was opened on the 8th June 1910. If you look at a map of Picton, it is almost exactly halfway between the two centres of population. It was a big day for the town, with the Minister for Education coming for the official opening. Sadly, the 1910 Picton newspaper did not survive, so we have no idea of what local coverage there would have been; a check of the newspapers in the nearby towns shows that few of Cambelltown's papers for 1910 were

microfilmed, and Camden does not seem to have covered the opening. All we have is a short column from the Sydney Morning Herald of 9th June, 1910:

The official opening of the new Superior Public School took place today. Mr. J.A. Hogue, Minister for Education performing the opening ceremony. Mr. G.W. Fuller, M.P., Mr. W. McCourt, M.L.A. and Mr. Cornish, inspector of schools, were also present. The Minister and other guests were met at the railway station by aldermen and townspeople, and driven through the town to the site of the new school, the police forming an escort. All along the route flags and bunting were in evidence. On arrival at the school the children performed a number of physical exercises, after which the Mayor presented the Minister with a gold key, subscribed by the children, and the school was opened for inspection. Prior to the official opening Mr. J.W. McQuiggan (Mayor) presented the Minister with a handsome album, containing an address, a short history of Picton, and photos of the principal places in the town and district. The Minister said that during the past few years the Education Department had advanced by leaps and bounds. Wherever schools were required, if possible they were erected. This was specially the case in remote districts. When the Government found means of settling people on the land they were morally bound to provide the children with modern instruction. That school was one of the most modern type, costing over £2000.



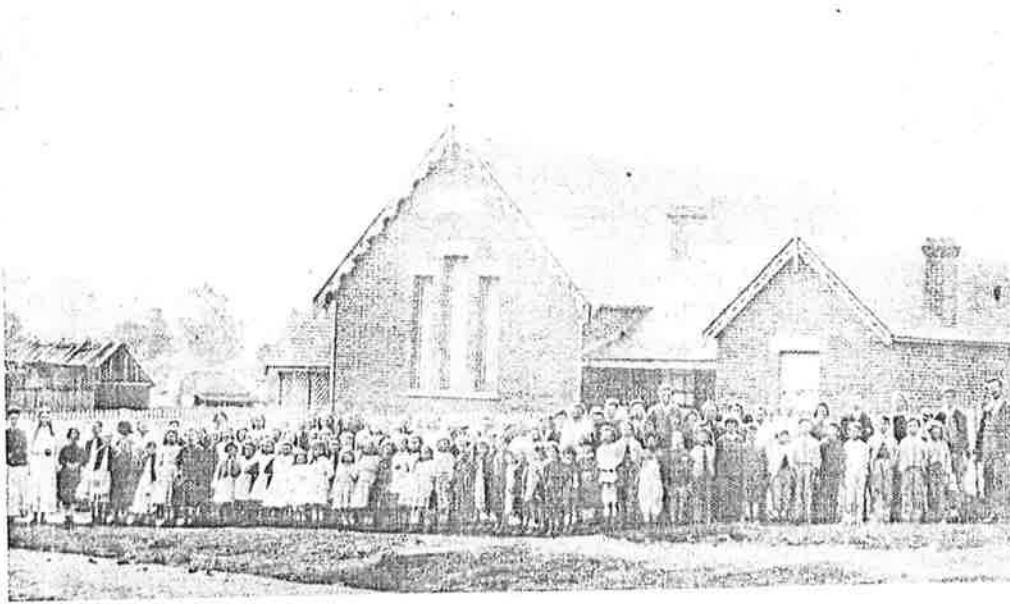
[Apologies for the white-on-black photocopy, that is all the Campbelltown Library microfilm reader/printer could do]

While this Society does not hold any photographs of the opening of the school, it is the proud possessor of the Hogue Album, referred to in the text. This had remained in the Hogue family until 1989, when negotiation through Di Davidson saw it presented to the Society in July of that year. This beautifully presented album, with gold lettering on the cover, includes an address to the Minister, and twelve photographs – including three of the schools – the old (and now abandoned) National School of Upper Picton, the less old Menangle Street school, and the new school fronting Argyle Street.

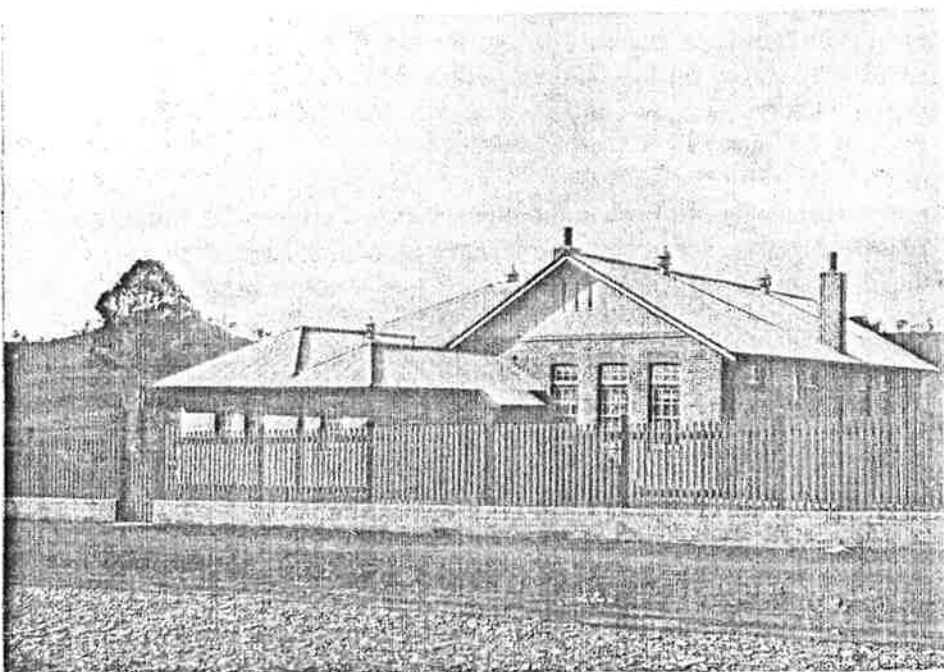
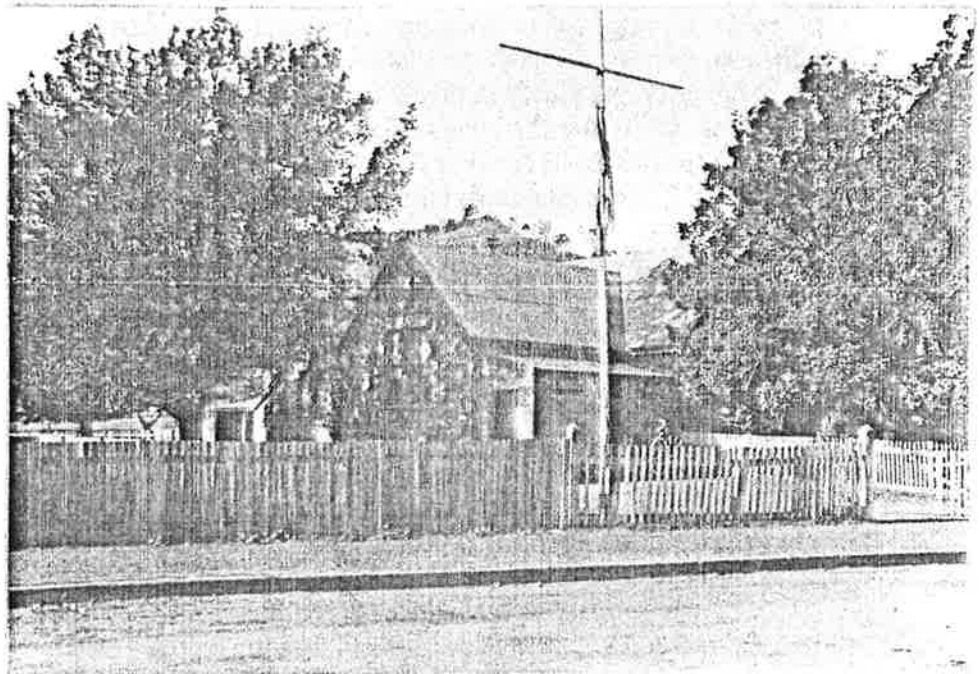
In 1988 the Picton Public School produced a publication, *Picton Then & Now*, which has a photograph of the school cadets forming a guard of honour for the official guests at the opening, as well as a drill display staged by the children. Frank Baker of Tahmoor has been collecting school photos for some time now and has a copy of the latter photograph, but does anyone have a copy of the former?

References: F.B. Knox notes; articles by Jan Ross in the Picton News, February 23, May 11, 18 1994 and May 10, 17, 24 1995; typescript *The History of Education in Picton*, donated by the then Principal, T. Davis.

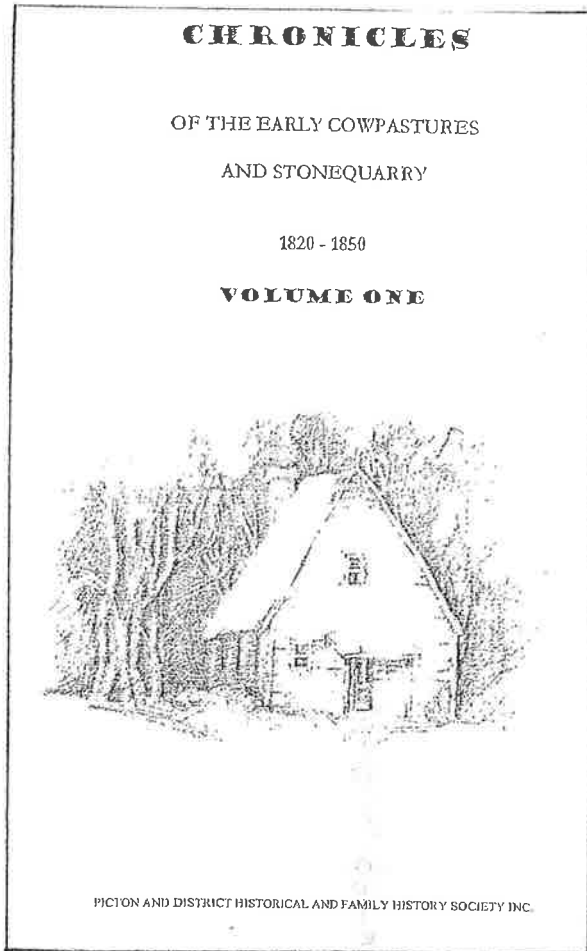
Note: the Menangle Street School was later converted into the Town Hall in 1915-16, now the Shire Hall.



The above photo of the Menangle Street School pre-dates the Hogue Album, but shows the school building more clearly. Below, the photo from the Album, and bottom, the new school facing Argyle Street.



AT LAST – OUR NEWEST PUBLICATION!



This new version of the old Coach House Chronicles includes two of the original publications now as chapters:

Park Hall – the Mitchell Connection (part 1)
by Pat Shephard and
Vault Hill, Picton (Antill family burials)
by Jan Ross

Other chapters cover as wide a range as possible of the early European occupation in the area:

Jean B.L. De Arrietta (the Spaniard who settled near present day Douglas Park)

Frances Macnamara (the life and times of a convict, Cawdor and Tahmoor area)

Francis Little (an early settler in the Burraborang Valley, briefly)

Fairy Hill (1823 grant to east of Picton)

Robert Crawford (his 1823 grant, Milton, in Razorback area)
by Ken Williams

Elizabeth Villy has contributed:

A Bushranger Hunt (in the Appin-Wilton area)

The Village Shopkeeper – John Martin (convict, worked on the building of the Great South Road, then a shopkeeper in Stonequarry/Picton, in 1841)

Early Burials in the Cowpastures (deaths in the district from 1829)

The Woolpack Inn (south of Bargo, built by John Lupton in 1830)

Andonis Manolis – the Greek Pirate (one of several Greeks sent to Australia in 1829, but one of the few to stay; lived & died in Upper Picton)

The 80 page publication includes maps, drawings and photographs

Price: \$25 plus postage and handling of \$5.00

Recent Acquisitions – Norma Sydney Ross Collection

In August 2009 a Retrospective Exhibition of the late Norma Sydney Ross (1917-2008) was held at the Shire Hall, Picton, to celebrate the life and work of this local artist. Norma died in August 2008, and her friends Carole and Jim Whitfield and Freya Jobbins worked to put the exhibition together. The sale of Norma's work will help fund an annual prize for painting at the Picton Show. After the exhibition the organising group donated documents relating to Norma's life and work to the Society; Carole helped sort them out.

A rather battered scrapbook contains a medley of mementoes and newspaper clippings, all mixed up and often undated. Most touchingly it includes a neatly written poem which won a school prize in 1929. Norma's mother, Lillian Susanna Barratt excelled at needlework and flower arranging, and seems to have passed some of this talent to her daughter. Norma won prizes for embroidery in the 1936 Picton Show, and in 1937 and 1940 Camden Shows, and first prize for the Best Three Towels Hand embroidered, in the 1937 Women's Industrial Exhibition organised by Grace Bros. in Sydney. The David Jones Staff Guidance Card is a reminder of Norma's first job as an embroidery/tapestry demonstrator.

Norma married Malcolm Ross on 5th October 1940 at Tahmoor; he had enlisted in the army, but after his discharge in 1941, Norma herself enlisted in the RAAF in July 1943, being discharged in March 1945. Her scrapbook contains two group photos of aircraft-women, as well as such important items as a ration card, a railway pass, and a humerous menu from a 1944 mess dinner. The marriage may have been short-lived, as after the war she worked at the Sydney Dental Hospital before returning to Tahmoor in the early 1950s and was then being referred to as "Miss Ross". She worked at Clark's Pharmacy and then as secretary to Dr. Johnson at Macquarie Cottage, in Picton until retiring to nurse her mother, who died in 1977.

She continued her embroidery, and during the early 1950s became involved with the Picton Amateur Theatrical Club, doing the stage décor and painting scenery and props. Many newspaper clippings and some photos relate to this time, along with notes of thanks and congratulations on her work. While still continuing with her embroidery, her interests seem to have shifted to painting. A small notebook lists the paintings she entered into various shows and galleries, both local and in Sydney, from 1961 to 1985. Her crowning achievement came early, with a painting hung in the 1960 Sulman Prize. She kept the catalogues of the exhibitions she entered, which remain part of the collection; she entered many paintings at the Royal Easter Show over 23 years winning first and second prizes in 1961 and 1962.

An addition to her papers has come from Jim Whitfield, who has donated several photos of Picton taken by Norma in the 1950s, in both black-and-white and colour. They include photos of the old Fur & Feather/Cheese factory at Picton Railway Station, now the restaurant Vaby's, which fills a hole in our collection. Several views of the town from Vault Hill and Picton Hill show how things have changed since then, while others of individual buildings have now been changed, or demolished. A most important addition to our photographic collection, for which we are very grateful.

PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

Cemetery Transcripts

Bargo General Cemetery	10.50
Burial records of St. Mark's Anglican Church, Picton	12.00
Redbank Uniting Church – A Pictorial view	20.00
Upper Picton General Cemetery	20.00
Thirlmere	20.00

Marriage Transcripts

St. Mark's Anglican Church - Vol.1	15.00
St. Mark's Anglican Church - Vol.2	15.00
St. Mark's Anglican Church – Vol.3	20.00

Other Publications

Along the Menangle Road (2 nd Illustrated edition)	15.00
A stroll through St. Mark's Churchyard	8.00
The Antills of Jarvisfield Picton	10.00
Post Cards	5 for 1.00
Fact sheets	0.50

Tea Towel	10.00
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The new Chronicles book (details inside) is now being printed, and the Bargo Cemetery update and with photographs will be out shortly. Another major publication should be available later this year.

Meanwhile, we still have copies of *The History of the Picton District Agricultural Horticultural and Industrial Society Inc* from Jan Wilton & Jan Ross ((\$15.00), as well as *The Old Razorback Schoolhouse 1882-1899* by Elizabeth Villy (\$12.50) [plus postage in both cases].

And we are now carrying *A Brief History of COURIDJAH in the Wollondilly Shire* by one of our members, Karyn Chalk at \$15 + postage.

If undelivered please return to

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