

# STONEQUARRY JOURNAL

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Picton & District Historical  
&  
Family History Society Inc.

**PICTON & DISTRICT HISTORICAL  
&  
FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC.**

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**Research:** All written enquiries will be handled by a committee.  
Fees are **\$10, plus copying charges.**

**All Correspondence to:**

The Secretary  
PO Box 64, Picton. NSW. 2571.

**Library (Resource Centre):**

The "Coach House"  
Argyle Street, Picton.  
(Enter by the Menangle Street Carpark at the rear of the National  
Australia Bank.)

**Hours:** Thursday: 10 am to 2 pm  
Saturday: 10 am to 3 pm  
Sunday: 10 am to 3 pm

**Meetings:** Second Monday of each month (except January) at 7.30 pm.  
The Community Rooms  
Shire Hall  
Menangle Street, Picton.

**Membership Fees:** Pensioner: \$10  
Single: \$15  
Family: \$20

The Stonequarry Journal is published quarterly. Articles, advertisements and ideas for publication in the journal must be left at the Coach House one month before publication. Items for the September Journal are due by 12 August.

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**APOLOGY** - As acting editor of the Stonequarry Journal I wish to apologise for the late delivery of this June issue of the journal. Baring any further mishaps, the September issue should arrive on time. - Pat Shephard.

### **INCREASE IN MEMBERSHIP FEES**

Due to the high cost of photocopying and postage it has been necessary for the Society to increase its annual membership subscription. The new fees were approved at the May General Meeting and are listed on the inside cover of this journal. Thank you to those who have paid their membership renewals on time. If you have paid at the old price it would be appreciate if the balance could be forwarded to the secretary, or paid at the Coach House, as soon as possible.

**The Annual General Meeting** of the Picton & District Historical & Family History Society will be held on Monday 9 September 1996 in the Picton Community Rooms at 7.30 pm.

## DAME MARY GILMORE and PICTON.

by Jan Ross

Recently I received a letter from another member of our society, Mr John Ruffels. John had been issued an invitation to a Heritage Week function at Picton and was unable to attend. In lieu of his presence, he sent a present.

Those who know John are aware that he is an indefatigable sleuth. In fact he has been commissioned to write a book on "Spies" and is currently working on its manuscript. John was brought to Australia by the Dr Barnardo scheme and therefore spent many of his informative years at Mowbray Park. Whenever he comes upon a snippet of information relating to Picton, he sends a copy to our society. Over the years he has provided many wonderful items of interest.

His most recent present to us, is in the form of a statement on Picton's Heritage and the words were penned by none other than Dame Mary Gilmore.

According to John:-

Dame Mary Gilmore, as much as anyone, urged people to be kind to the land, record the customs and habits of the Australian Aboriginal people and to preserve the written and spoken relics of our Australian past.

On 28 September 1936, Dame Mary wrote from her flat in Kings Cross to Hugh McCrae, a humorous writer and poet who was living at Camden:

Dear Hughie,

I have just got "The Home Annual", 1936. In the name of all things wise & foolish why do you not do a whole historical "Camden Town"? Man alive! What a field you have; and what a chance for your own vital . . . scribbled illustrations to illustrate the work. And what folkstuff there must still be about the area that is Camden, Picton, Cobbity and even farther out. Old chimneys, old houses, old broken orchards, old men, old women, old histories, old cups & saucers, old table, stools & chairs! Don't tell me I ought to go up & do it: you can walk & I can't and it is walkin and talkin, and sittin down, and leanin over fences, and pokin pigs, and pattin horses, and strokin cows and No! that's wrong; you don't stroke cows: words belong where they belong, and that doesn't belong there. Anyhow that is enough of directioning . . . (1)

John was totally unaware that Dame Mary had relatives in Picton. Don Hilder's grandmother and Dame Mary were first cousins. Don and his father, also called Don (of the inscription), occasionally visited Dame Mary at her Kings Cross flat. Don remembers that his father showed photographs of their family to Dame Mary.

The anecdote was brought to my attention when the new ten dollar note was released at the end of 1993. On the first day of issue, Don's wife Robyn was at the head of the queue to collect one from the bank. The note features an image of Dame Mary Gilmore.

In the Hilder family's possession is a book which bears the following inscription:-

To my cousin, Jessie Hilder (& her daughter Ethel, also her son Donald)

Two brothers were our fathers and both were Hielan' men!  
Both were descended from that Lochiel  
Who said to Bonnie Prince Charlie,  
"Come weal, come woe,  
I'll follow thee".

Jessie Hilder (nee Cameron) was born at Teralia, Goulburn in 1861. Her parents were Alexander and Sarah (nee Rankin) Cameron. Mary Jean Gilmore (nee Cameron) was born on 16 August 1865 at Mary Vale, Woodhouselee, near Goulburn. She was the eldest child of Donald Cameron, a farmer who had been born in Inverness-shire, Scotland and his Australian born wife, Mary Ann, nee Beattie.

In 1930, Mary Gilmore wrote of anguish over the ravaging of the land by white civilisation and the destruction of Aboriginal lore. She campaigned for a wide range of social and economical reforms, such as votes for women, old-age and invalid pensions, child endowment and the improved treatment of returned servicemen, the poor and deprived and, above all, of Aborigines.

William Dobell was commissioned to paint a portrait for Dame Mary Gilmore's 92nd birthday. The painting was donated to the Art Gallery of New south Wales. Dame Mary Gilmore significantly impacted upon both our literary and historical heritage. She died on 3 December 1962. It is this portrait which appears on the ten dollar note.

Jan Ross

#### REFERENCE:-

- (1) Wilde, W. H. and Moore T. I. (Compilers), The Letters of Mary Gilmore, Melbourne University Press.1988.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY:-

Mary Gilmore, Australian Dictionary of Biography, W.H. Wilde.

#### **WHITE, Sarah**

Picton Post and Advocate, 29 November 1899

We regret to have to announce the death of Mrs White mother of Mr D. White, hotelkeeper Wilton, which occurred on Sunday, the old lady being found dead in her bed. The funeral took place on Tuesday and was largely attended.

Extract from burial records of Appin, Wilton & Nepean Towers - compiled by Pat Shephard.



## WHAT'S HAPPENING

**NSW Association of Family History Societies' Conference** for 1996 will be held at Macquarie University from 27-29 September. This year it will be hosted by the Hornsby Kuring-gai Family History Society. The theme of the conference is "Towards Federation". For further information contact (02) 476 5709 or (02) 9980 7225.

**The Royal Australian Historical Society's Local History Conference** will be held this year at the Music Centre of Kinross Wolaroi School, Allenby Road off Bathurst Road, Orange, on 26 -27 October. The theme is HISTORY - Rites, Rights and Writings. Brochures are available from the Coach House.

A **Beginners Course** for Family Historians is being held by the Campbelltown Family History Group on Saturday / Sunday, 24 & 25 August. The course will be held at the Campbelltown Public Library.  
CONTACT: Carol on (046) 25 7816 or Eddie Malcolm on (046) 27 2545

**Book Launch and Back to Numeralla, Countegany, Peak View and surrounding areas**, will be held on the long weekend of 6 & 7 October 1996.  
CONTACT: The Numeralla History Group. C/- Mrs E. Schofield.  
"Greenhills". Jerangle, 2630.

## HERITAGE WEEK ACTIVITIES IN PICTON

Our Society was involved in two of these activities:

The first was conducted by the Wollondilly Shire Library Service (a special thanks to John Daly and Gabrielle Taylor) with some assistance from the historical society. The following report comes from Helen Hanger:

About one hundred people recently enjoyed the heritage week activity, **I Remember**, jointly organised by the Wollondilly Shire Library and the Picton & District Historical Society.

The audience was entertained by six guest speakers, all long time residents of the Shire. They spoke of their experiences in settling and living in the Picton district. They gave an insight into the changing highlights of the area. Much discussion followed as the audience enjoyed reminiscences with the speakers and each other while partaking of supper.

The talks were taped for future generations and will form the bases of an Oral History Collection at the Library.

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A special thank you to our president, Judy Armstrong who organised a Heritage Walk on Sunday 19 May.

Those who participated in the Heritage Walk reported that they had an enjoyable time visiting the beautiful old homes of Picton. Thank you to the owners of these much loved heritage properties:- Bob Wood and Bruce Morris of "Hillview"; Dos and Jack Pemberton of "Tollgate Lodge"; Mr & Mrs Apps of Campbell Street; Mr & Mrs Roelandts, also of Campbell Street; and Judy and Harry Armstrong of "Weardale".

## ITEMS OF INTEREST

If you have ancestors buried in any of the seven Parramatta cemeteries Judith Dunn would like to hear from you. She is gathering as much information as possible for future cemetery books of the area as well as building up files on Parramatta Pioneers for future publications. If any of the material supplied is used, due acknowledgement will be given to the person providing that information. If more than one person sends material on a family you will be put in touch with each other. For further information contact:- Judith Dunn. 37 Disraeli Road, Winston Hills. NSW. 2153.

### **Cemeteries and Graveyards of Picton.**

Under Marlane Fairfax's guidance a group of members is working hard at upgrading and re-organising our society's burial records. Thanks to those who attended the St Mark's transcription day when full details on the headstones were transcribed. A special thank you to Ken Williams and Ken Farrell who, along with Marlane, are continuing to put in a lot of time on this project.

Helen and Dianne are holding down the fort at the **Coach House**. If you can spare a few hours occasionally than why not offer them some assistance. There is much work to be done - gardening, cleaning, indexing, filing, sorting of books, roster duty, etc.

**Wirrimbirra Sanctuary:** The April 1996 issue of the National Trust magazine has an interesting article

entitled, **Thistle Stead and Wirrimbirra: an enduring legacy.**

This article and other interesting reading material is available from our library at the Coach House.

### **Family History (from Gail Hanger):- Northamptonshire Parish Records.**

Following recent information in the Gold Coast and Albert Journal re the availability of Northamptonshire parish records and how to obtain them, I sent off a letter with a cheque for one pound and received a copy of all the parishes in the shire; nine pages in all. Listed are the names of the parish and the dates covered; included are christenings, marriages and burials, and the number of fiche for each parish. For example:- Rushden - Ch.1598-1908; M.1559-1910; B.1559-1892 - total 99 fiche. A second letter was required for a breakdown of the parishes desired; for example:- Rushden - Ch.1783-1812; B.1783-1812 - total 1 fiche; M.1837-1883 - total 22 fiche. The only restriction is that you must have all the fiche in a given period. They can't be broken up any further. Payment of one pound was sent with the invoice once the fiche were received.

I was able to fine the christening records of my great great grandfather and his siblings as well as the marriage of his parents. I hope this is a help to anyone who is looking through these journal jottings and is unsure about following them up.

P.S. The new Cairns journal shows the parish records for Lincolnshire which are now available. Another letter coming up!

## INDEX OF NEWSPAPER ANNOUNCEMENTS

Published below is another instalment of this index. We are indebted to member Colin Post who has extracted these announcements from local newspapers. The society has copies of the newspapers referenced and Colin has painstakingly transcribed the details relating to the event. They are available for viewing at the Resource Centre in the "Coach House", Picton, or by writing to the Secretary. PO Box 64, Picton. 2571. (Don't forget to include a business size stamped self addressed envelope for details.)

A:- Appreciation	B:- Birth	C:- Correspondence	D:- Death
I:- In Memoriam	L:- Legal	M:- Marriage	O:- Obituary
P:- Probate	R:- Return Thanks		

SURNAME	FIRST NAME	RESIDENCE	TYPE	DATE
Cracknell	Hannah		I	21 Sept 1950
"	"	Picton	L	16 Nov 1950
Cracknell	Frederick	Wiley Park	O	27 July 1950
Craig	James	Ryde	C	11 June 1964
Crane	Alfred	Picton	C	2 Nov 1950
"	"	"	R	9 Nov 1950
"	"	"	L	16 Nov 1950
Cranfield	C. H.	Camden	C	15 July 1953
Cranfield			R	23 Jan 1947
Creed	Patrick	Douglas Park	L	23 May 1953
Crisp	Max	Menangle	C	28 Oct 1953
Croan	Alma Charlotte	8 Archibald St Padstow	I	4 March 1965
" (nee Davis)	"	"	I	26 August 1965
Cronin	Julia Ann	Douglas Park	L	27 June 1956
Croxin	Howard Edward	Mineral Springs Boys' Welfare Home, Picton	C	27 Feb 1964
Culbert	A.M.	Tahmoor	C	9 Dec 1965
Cummins	Jack	Douglas Park	C	20 May 1948
Cunningham	Josiah	Thirlmere	C	4 March 1953
"	"	"	O	24 March 1952
Curran	John	Southern Rd Bargo	C	23 Nov 1967
Currey	Ethel May	Argyle St Redbank	C	3 Nov 1966
"	"	"	I	30 Oct 1969
Curry	Water Lionel		I	5 Sept 1963
Daly	Mary Bridgid	Bargo	L	1 July 1948
Daly	Thomas Patrick	Lumsdaine St Picton	C	30 May 1968
Danswan	Wilfred Willis	Bargo	C,R	9 Jan 1964
"	"	"	L	16 Jan 1964
Davidge	Walter	Thirlmere	C	9 July 1958
Davidson	William	Tahmoor	C	15 June 1950
"	"	"	R	22 June 1950
Davies			I	1 June 1950
Davies	Dianne Cheryl		I	6 May 1953
Davies	Jane Dorothea (Jenny)		O	4 June 1987
Davies	L.	Wilton	C	1 Dec 1966
Davies	Agnes		R	25 Nov 1953
"	"		I	17 Nov 1954



## THE SKELLETT FAMILY OF PICTON

By Syd Percival. Aged 87.

Following the arrival of the railway to Picton in 1863, the New South Wales Government let contracts world wide to carry out certain work in connection with the railway from Picton onwards. So it happened that a French Company was successful in winning one of these. Now a very competent Englishman, by the name of Skellett was employed by the company and lived with his family in a French town named Coville. He was selected to go to Australia to be in charge of this work which he duly did, bringing his family with him and settling in Moss Vale.

I believe his two sons were young men and soon became storekeepers in partnership in that town. However, not getting on agreeably, they sold and separated. Then both came to Picton, the eldest one obtained the license of the Menangle Street Hotel, which later became "The Imperial" and ran it for several years. The younger son, named Albert, took over a grocery shop in the lower end of Menangle Street and built a neat cottage close by, naming it "Coville" after his earlier home in France.

Soon after he married Kate Percival, daughter of John and Isabella Percival of Northampton Dale, Appin, in the year 1880. They travelled by train to Melbourne to spend their honeymoon. However, as the line to Melbourne was still not completed they had to travel a short section by coach. Returning in three weeks time they travelled home completely by train after the gap in the line was finished.

On reaching Glenrowan, the smoke was still issuing from the postholes of the hotel that was burnt down a few nights beforehand, when Ned Kelly was captured. However, they were dogged by bad luck for many years of their early married life. Soon after they had settled into their new home, the store was burnt down and Albert didn't renew it and instead became a valuable employee of the well known old time store of Pickards which had started up nearby, still in Menangle Street and kept him employed for years after his retirement age, mainly because of his popularity with the customers. I feel sure many old Picton residents will remember him on account of his most genial and pleasant nature.

Another occurrence of real tragedy was when their only son, Stanley, together with his boy cousin were drowned in the Nepean River at Maldon as teenagers. The sadness of it really shattered the townsfolk, causing the closure of all shops for a half day of the funeral. There were also two daughters of the marriage, Jessie and Madge who also went into business in Argyle Street, Picton in the late twenties with a refreshment shop. Some of their main custom came from the passengers of the busses running to and from Canberra through Picton.

In a few short years Jessie fell ill and died. Madge, still a spinster, as too was her sister, managed the shop on her own with various female help until finding it too much in her aging years, sold out and took a position at the Queen Victoria Hospital, Thirlmere, assisting in the kitchen. Then after a few more years she retired and bought a unit at Eastwood where she died about 1980. So far as I know bringing an end to the last of the Skelletts of Picton.

Madge looked after her father during the last years of his life. He loved coming with her to the shop each morning where he would sit in an arm chair in front of the fire with the big wireless set turned on for entertainment. Many of his old cobbers would join him for a yarn, especially on race days when the excitement was terrific. I believe that he died in his early eighties.

## OUT WITH THE OLD - IN WITH THE NEW

### **A Farewell Tribute to the Old Wilton Community Hall.**

On 9 April 1954 a decision was made by members of the Wilton Progress Association to make efforts to "obtain and erect a hall", (1) Forty-two years later a new Community Centre, situated within the Wilton Reserve, is nearing completion. As in other small, but growing communities, the old "local hall" is fast becoming a thing of the past. The large open plan, ideal for the once popular local dances and get-togethers, is being replaced by a more modern building better suited for a changing society.

Perhaps now is an appropriate time to pay tribute to the "old hall" and to the spirit of those residents who donated money and gave freely of their time to construct and maintain their communal meeting place.

Prior to 1954 local functions were held in a galvanised room (approximately 25'x30') attached to the post office store. For some time the Country Women's Association (C.W.A.) Christmas parties were held at Mr Whitticase's saddlery workshop. (2)

In 1911 the newly formed Progress Association wrote to the Minister for Public Instruction asking permission to use the Public School building for meetings as they had no other place available. Permission was granted and a further request for a political meeting to be held at the school, to enable the electors to hear the candidates for parliament, was also granted in May 1913. Prior to the building of the hall in 1954 the Honour Roll for the first World War was also housed in the school due to an absence of any other public building in the town. (3) 5/18136

When the Wilton school was closed in 1948 and the school buildings removed, it became even more important for the town to have a public building for meetings and other gatherings. The Progress Association had ceased to operate, but was reconstituted after a public meeting in December 1953.

In May of the following year, the Wilton Progress Association learnt that a number of Air Force huts from Camden were to be auctioned. By the next day free loans totalling 300 pounds (\$600) had been raised from the local residents. This allowed a representative from the Association to purchase a hut for 225 pounds (\$450) at the auction on May 27.

Volunteers took two days to dismantle the hut and transport the pieces to the new site. In June work started on laying the 75 piers needed before reconstruction could begin. The roof was on within a month, with the majority of labour being done on week-ends.

The total cost of dismantling, moving, erecting and furnishing the hall was 350 pounds (\$700). The cost of furnishing the kitchen with an electric copper, stainless steel sink, cupboards, lino, curtains and crockery came to 70 pounds (\$140) and was paid for by the C.W.A. Some generous residents converted their loans into free donations.

The Wilton Community Hall was officially opened in November 1954 by Mr Blake Pelly, M.L.A. for Wollondilly, who was introduced to the waiting crowd by Progress Association president Mr L. Kurtz. Secretary, Mr Ron Hannaford, presented a gift to Mr Pelly for his wife who was too ill to attend. Councillor W. A. Cleary, representing C Riding, was also in attendance.

Following the official ceremony a fete was held, with a dance in the evening.

The Picton Post, 24 November 1954 - It is officially estimated that 300 people attended the dance . . . . Old residents of the district say they have never seen such a sight as that witnessed on Saturday night. Cars lined both sides of the street for a quarter of a mile in front of the hall as well as those fortunate enough to park off the road.

The decorations were very attractive and showed up well against the cream walls. The stalls of the afternoon fete were removed to give plenty of room for dancing. Mrs Ingleton's orchestra and Mr Doug Lamb, the M.C., kept the dancers on their toes and it was the universal opinion that it was a "good show".

A couple from Appin were winners of the Monte Carlo Waltz. Supper was served buffet style in the supper room, made very attractive by heavy red curtains against the cream walls and decorated with matching red bottle brushes, gladioli and clusters of coloured balloons.

The total takings from the day and night were 149 pounds 10 shillings (\$299).

For most of this century it would be fair to say that the section of old Argyle Street between Almond and Camden was the centre of Wilton, housing the post office, general store, school, church, and later the bush fire brigade shed and community hall. Most have now been replaced by buildings elsewhere in town. The post office and school have been closed permanently. Only the old church and adjacent graveyard remain to remind us of an earlier Wilton and of its "spirited" inhabitants.

Let's hope that the new Community Centre will serve the people of Wilton as well as the old one has done and that the ever growing population of the town will imitate its past inhabitants by showing a pride in their community and a respect for its past.

Patricia Shephard  
July 1996

#### ENDNOTES

- (1) The Picton Post, 24 November
- (2) Wilton 1885-1985, Wilton History Group. 1985



Wilton Community Hall

## PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

### PUBLISHED BY THE SOCIETY

#### Coach House Chronicles

No.1	Railway Precinct Ramble (Picton), by Jan Ross	5.00
No.2	Wilton-East Bargo. A Brief History, by Pat Shephard	3.00
No.3	Lieut. General Sir Thomas Picton. K.G.C.B., by Cynthia Collison	2.00
No.4	Vault Hill (Picton), by Jan Ross	2.00
No.5	Harmony Home (Picton-Thirlmere), by Jan Ross	4.00
No.6	It Has No Definite Name - A Postal History of Tahmoor 1892-1916, by Marlane Fairfax	2.00
No.7	Antonio Manolis, The First Greek & Athenian Born Settler in New South Wales, by Jan Ross	2.00
No.8	Picton Court House & Lock-Up, by Jan Ross	2.00

(Only a few copies of each chronicle still remain in stock)

#### OTHER PUBLICATIONS FOR SALE

Glenmore Uniting Church (Formerly Methodist) Graveyard Transcript, Burial Records & Obituaries, by Marlane Fairfax	20.00
Thirlmere Public School 1888-1988	5.00
History of the Forbidden Land - Wollondilly Shire Council	5.00
The Trail Boss. The Fairley Family and Picton History, by Joan Brown	12.00

Prices do not include postage and packaging.

Allow	\$2 for 1 book
	\$3 for 2 books
	\$4 for 3 books
	\$5 for 4 books and over.

#### NOTIFICATION OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING:

All members are reminded that the Annual General Meeting of the Picton & District Historical and Family History Society will be held on Monday 9 September 1996 at 7.30 pm. All members wishing to vote must be financial for the period of July 1996 to June 1997.