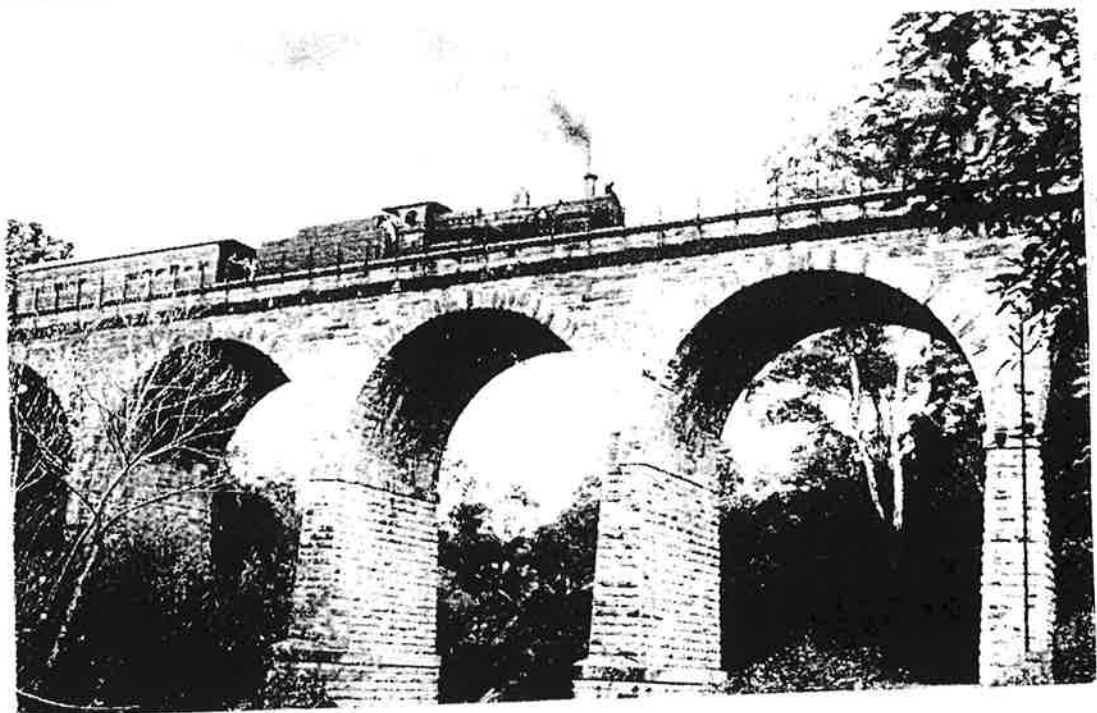


# **STONEQUARRY JOURNAL**

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## **RESPONSIBILITY**

Please note that the society does not hold itself responsible for opinions expressed or statements made by contributors to this journal. No article or item from this journal may be reproduced without the written permission of the author or the society.

### **The Stonequarry Journal is published quarterly**

The March 2000 issue of this journal is unavoidably late due to the fact that toner for the photocopier was unobtainable.

Please accept our sincere apologies.

## **RESEARCH**

All written inquiries should be addressed to **The Secretary, PDHFHS, PO Box 64, PICTON 2571.** Please include a stamped self-addressed/reply paid envelope. The cost of an inquiry is \$10.00 plus photocopying charges. Copies of photographs are also available.

While we acknowledge that today is the era of the electronic age, not all members of our society have access to Email or the Internet. Since much of our income is generated by answering inquiries we shall only respond to queries in writing. Requests for information will be accepted by telephone but responses will be "in writing" and will attract the normal fee.

We are appreciative of the fact that many frustrated researchers have over a period of time, spent large sums of money on self addressed stamped envelopes, never to receive a response. May we suggest that these people should obtain a "reply paid number" from their local post office. One then only pays normal postage plus a small surcharge for incoming correspondence.

## **MOVING?**

### **TEMPORARY or PERMANENT STORAGE?**

Contact  
**ELDERS REAL ESTATE**  
**0246 771958**  
**PICTON SELF STORAGE**  
**Unit 2/110 Bridge Street**  
**PICTON.**

## EDITORIAL

Today, we received another large parcel in the mail. It contained a number of journals produced by various family history groups. Our more recent members may not know Edna Townsend who since our inception in 1987 has been a great supporter of our efforts.

Edna does not live in the Picton district but she continues to take an interest in our activities and every few months sends us the publications which she no longer needs. **Thank you, Edna.**

## RAFFLE

When I telephoned the winner of our Christmas raffle, Mrs Judith Crosswell of Parramatta, we spent a long time chatting despite the fact that we had never met.

Upon asking her if it would be okay if she picked up the framed photograph from my mother, it was revealed that my mother's next door neighbour was one of Judith's friends.

Small world or why am I surprised?

## INTERNET

The Picton and DHFHS has been dragged into the year 2000. Please note that I do not refer to the new millenium. (When a cricketer scores a century, is it after he or she has completed the 99th, or the 100th run?) What would the promoters of "Federation activities" have done if we had both the new millenium as well as the Centenary of Federation to celebrate in the year 2001? Cynic, aren't I?

Back to the **internet**. We are indebted to Geoff Hinde of Furry Software Pty Ltd at Bowral for creating our "very own website". It is [www.stonequarry.com.au/padhfs](http://www.stonequarry.com.au/padhfs). Our listings were uploaded on 20 January and already we have received inquiries. Thank you Geoff.

## THE OLD POST OFFICE

Contrary to some newspaper reports Picton's Old Post Office is not for sale. While Council may be discussing leasing arrangements, it resolved **not** to sell the building. A "Business Plan" is still under discussion so there is nothing to report regarding our temporary tenancy.

## AUSTRALIA DAY CELEBRATION

Along with neighbouring societies we mounted a photographic display at the Botanical Gardens on the occasion of Australia Day. Our efforts were rewarded by the enormous interest shown in our display. Unabridged versions of the reminiscences which were collected for the time capsule are printed in this journal.

Our thanks to Clare Bell (Bargo and Pheasants' Nest), Laurie Emmett (Picton), Hilton Middleton (Thirlmere) and Colin Miller (Tahmoor) for their contributions.

## HOURS of OPERATION

Due to an inability to fill our library roster we have decided to reduce the "open days" to only **Thursdays and Saturdays**. However, please contact the librarian for an appointment if you are unable to attend on either of these days.

**BARGO as I Remember it - 1938 to 1999**  
**Clare Bell (Resident)**

Wattle scrub, waratahs, wild flowers, mushrooms, snakes, rabbit plagues, tank-water, beautiful and clean Bargo River, horse drawn carts, weather-board cottages, candles, kerosene lamps, clothes-props, push bikes, high-top bread, steam trains, poultry farms, dairy farms, pig farms, nurseries, post office, grocery shops, produce store, butcher, baker, door-to-door salesmen selling materials to snake bite cures, hotel, 3 churches, Primary School (High School children caught 6.20 am train to Liverpool returning on the 6.20 pm train), power generated picture theatre showing Westerns, "Chic Salon" for ladies apparel became a Progress Association Memorial Hall for community events such as debuts, school concerts.

World War II (1939-1945) food, clothes and petrol rationing, hard times caused by lengthy drought, water carting from Bargo River, bush fires. Japanese bombed Sydney Harbour - Bargo Guest Houses cater to people leaving Sydney.

From 1946 electricity and water connected to Bargo, the community organised The Wattle Blossom fair with floats, marching girls, decorated bicycles. Bargo was serviced only by two steam trains daily - with the Hume Highway for those with cars (no buses).

1980 the South Western F5 Freeway built which bypassed Bargo. The Hume Highway renamed Remembrance Drive. 1982 houses going up three a week. Land values escalating. Diesel trains and buses improved transport for Bargo people

between Sydney and Canberra from the 1980s on.

Until the freeway bypass Bargo was a rural area. Now many acres are taken up by horse trainers, hobby farms and commercial meat bird rearing but around the shops it has become like any suburb of Sydney.

**Memories of PHEASANTS NEST area**  
**from 1938**  
**Clare Bell (Resident)**

In 1938 Pheasants Nest consisted of two poultry farms, one owned and operated by Bruce Knox and his mother, the other by Mr Tarlton, his sister and through WWII years, three orange clad Italian POWs. The eggs were collected by motor-lorry every week. There were two mixed farms. Mr and Mrs Gore, "Sugarloaf" sheep and cattle: "Narringa" owned by Mr and Mrs Dwyer and family, running Merino sheep, mixed cattle and pigs. Corn, oats and sorghum were grown for the "Fresh Food and Ice Co.s" dairy farm at Picton. During the war, ten truck loads of "Baker's wood" was taken from "Narringa" every week to Sydney Showground to feed soldiers stationed there. A timber cutter, Les Ford, his wife Madge and family lived on the property.

Mrs Eather, a widow, lived opposite Mr and Mrs Davis and family. Two Davis boys went to war. Both returned. Mr Davis worked at Warragamba Dam, returning home at weekends. Christy Vock, a bachelor, had a dwelling on the track running through Davis's property. Mr Vock worked with Mr Davis.

A rugged gorge with sparkling creek separated the Davis land from Trood's and

O'Brien's properties which were nearer Pheasants Nest Weir. Wild flowers bloomed abundantly. From 1942 when Japanese submarines entered Sydney Harbour, five CMF (Citizens Military Force) men were stationed at the weir to protect Sydney's water supply.

Younger children received Blackfriars Correspondence lessons while older children rode pushbikes to Tahmoor Primary School. The nearest High School was at Liverpool. Students had a twelve hour day travelling by train. (No buses). There was no public transport in the Pheasants nest area, no electricity nor town water, no mail delivery. The nearest doctor, dentist, police and picture theatre were at Picton.

Families had picnic at the Potholes between Tahmoor and P.N. on Sundays. Many children learnt to swim in the clear unpolluted waters of the Bargo River, before turkey farms and the coal mine. The population of the Pheasants nest area until after WW2 was approximately fifty souls including a dozen school children, the remaining folk being young to middle age adults. Only three people received government assistance, eg., the age pension.

### **PICTON**

#### **Laurie Emmett (E.E. Emmett & Sons - sand and soil; concrete and road construction)**

I arrived in Picton at the age of two in 1932 and I guess I have very little recollection until some time after that. My earliest memory is Picton's reliance on both the dairying industry and the railways. My guess is that there must have been some 50 dairy farms between Tahmoor and

Menangle and they had a twice-daily pickup service provided by Harry and later his son Arthur Ware. The dairying industry at that time provided important employment opportunities for the local people. Picton had been the terminus of the Southern Railway line for some time earlier, in my time it ran through to Albury. It had a busy goods yard, a Locomotive depot employing drivers, firemen, guards, engineers and maintenance crew as well as a station master and 3 assistant station masters, porters, signalmen and ancillary staff. The station also maintained a large barracks where drivers and train crew stayed overnight, as well as a Railway Institute building.

Picton was able to support 3 rather large general stores, two bakeries, two butcheries, three barbers, two doctors, two dentists and a hospital. But it was a "little town" by most standards. Penrith, Gosford and Picton were about the same distances from Sydney and while Picton was the smallest, many comparisons were being made at the time.

Picton was always prominent in the sporting arena, we always had notable Rugby League and Cricket teams, two tennis clubs of two courts each: the "Town" courts at Victoria Park and "St Pats" in Colden St as well as several private courts. Picton had a nine-hole golf course and a fully equipped Billiards Room behind the existing School of Arts building in Menangle Street. On the social scene there was a dance in Picton Town Hall every Friday night and on Saturday nights a dance was held at Tahmoor, Thirlmere and Bargo. Picton boasted a Picture theatre.

During the war years the Airforce occupied the disused railway tunnel as a munitions

depot and many of the personnel stayed in the town after the war finished.

Remembering back, I am quiet amazed about the level of preparedness exercised during the war years. Almost all houses had their own Air Raid Shelter, many of the local men were co-opted as air raid wardens and we had an air raid warning system. All of the windows were blacked out to eliminate any light from escaping into the street. All the motor vehicles were fitted with light shields that prevented any light from shining upwards. With hindsight it seems extraordinary that people felt the need to take these precautions. When you consider the big restrictions on what we could know, due to how relatively primitive the communications system was in those days, add to that the difficulty caused by all the information we were not told for security reasons, and you can understand why it happened. Austerity was the order of the day; almost all of the basic essentials were rationed and in short supply. During the war it was a very difficult time to be growing up in Australia.

The Cement Works came to Maldon soon after the war and proved to be a wonderful asset to the community in providing work and prosperity. Other industry was attracted to the town by virtue of relatively cheap land provided in Council's Industrial area. Because the surrounding area had rich coal deposits, the district was able to take advantage of the relatively high wages paid to the workers in that industry. The town began to prosper and in recent times it seems to have just been *discovered* as a very desirable place to live.

Picton is surrounded by very beautiful but unstable hills, this I believe, will prove to be

the town's greatest asset, the hills will limit the unsavoury sprawl that is taking place in other areas.

## **TAHMOOR**

### **Colin Miller (Retired builder)**

Growing up in Tahmoor was a very different place to what it is today. Living about 11/2 miles from school it meant very often walking to school and nearly always walking back home again.

Our school was at first a one teacher school until 3rd class when a second teacher was appointed. This was the staff for the remainder of my primary school time.

Leaving primary school it was off to Hurlstone, Liverpool or Parramatta, these being the only secondary schools at the time. I chose Hurlstone.

At this time the business part of Tahmoor consisted of a post-office store which also handled the manual telephone and another small corner store. There was a poultry farm where Tahmoor Nursery and Denfield (Villa) now is.

There were many orchards around and later on a good number of poultry farms: a carrier's business carried out by Arthur Burton and later by his son Mervyn operated and when busy in the fruit season very often made two trips overnight to the markets.

Burtons also operated a wood cutting business with a sawmill alongside the railway line where the blockwood was loaded by elevator direct into a railway truck.

As a young person our recreation was walking, exploring the surrounding bush, chasing rabbits and generally getting to know what was around. It was not unusual to walk to the Pot Holes on Bargo River or to Mermaids Pool for the afternoon and generally explore the area where wallabies, lyre birds, and all manner of birds and other small animals were to be found.

Earlier a lot of sand was pumped from the river above the Pot Holes and the sleeper tracks laid for access were to be explored. Near the river at one place, sandstone drilling cores were found, evidence of early drilling for possible coal.

In all growing up here gave us a great opportunity to learn much about our area if you were so inclined. After schooling it was work to learn a trade, and prepare oneself for later life when the 2nd World War intervened but that is another story.

### **THIRLMERE**

#### **Hilton Middleton (Retired businessman - electrical and gift retailer)**

While travelling through Thirlmere these days I become a little nostalgic when I recollect how this now quiet township has changed over the last seventy odd years that I have been associated with it. I arrived in the town as a young four year old with my parents during 1928. This was when my father took over a shop in the town which had been established around the turn of the century by a Mr Pickard, a gentleman who already had a big store up in Bowral. There had been a couple of owners in between.

At that time Thirlmere was the timber producing town of the area. There were at

least three saw mills in the village to supply local demands, while a number of workers were involved in the production of railway sleepers. The people engaged in this business used to travel down the valley, camp down there until they had cut and shaped their article, and then transport them up to Thirlmere Station, where the sleepers would be inspected, and if satisfactory, be transported by rail to wherever they were required.

The local store supplied the districts of Thirlmere, Tahmoor (which only had a post office and a small shop at that time), Buxton, Balmoral and Lakesland with most of their requirements. The store handled groceries, hardware, drapery, produce, softwood timber, and building materials to the area. It also had the local bakery. Thirlmere supplied these areas while the Picton stores serviced the areas to the north.

Deliveries were carried out by motor lorry which delivered to Buxton and Balmoral as well as large loads of produce around the district, while Tahmoor, Thirlmere and Lakesland were serviced by horse and cart. The store carried a staff composed of three men in the grocery department, one lady in drapery, one senior female accountant together with a junior girl in the office, three delivery men plus an order collector who rode around the area on a motor bike calling on customers who had no other way of contacting the store, one baker and one young rouseabout (me). Then of course there was the boss, who at that time was my father.

The store had four horses, three used for deliveries, and one draught for unloading trucks of feed from the railway station to the store. Unloading a truck of wheat, chaff, or

bran and pollard could be almost a day's work for one man and a horse and dray. Bread was delivered separately around the town by horse and cart. It was also delivered to the Q.V. Hospital and to the Barnardo Homes at Mowbray Park.

During the years between the Wars there was little transport to assist the young people to find work. Most children left school after turning fourteen so many were unemployed. The local school had about a hundred students who would stay until turning that age and leave. There was a lot of sport organised for the school children at that time. Football teams would be transported on the back of lorries out to play against the boys at Barnardo Homes, and one time that I can remember we went out to the Nepean Dam to play against the boys at the school which was there while that dam was being built.

There were some like myself who left after sixth class and travelled by train to Intermediate, or High Schools in the Liverpool area. I personally became a student at Hurlstone Agricultural High School at Glenfield after I had turned eleven as a boarder and stayed there until I achieved the Intermediate while being fourteen. At the end of that year I commenced work at my father's store.

Most of the young men stayed in the town - many working with their parents. There were a number of orchards around the district and also a number of Estonians had established poultry farms in the area. However there was not a lot of work around for the young people so many were taken into relief work which was provided by the Government in an attempt to reduce unemployment. Many of these young

people were engaged in the establishment of the road down to Thirlmere Lakes from the Couridjah station. (They were known as Picton Lakes in those days). The intention was to build a road through the valley right up to Katoomba. However the depression ended before this was accomplished. It has never been finished.

The town had many of the young men around at weekends as there wasn't enough money to allow travel. The result was that Thirlmere was able to field a couple of fairly strong Rugby League teams at the weekends. They also fielded a couple of cricket sides during the summer months. The senior team used the current oval, while the younger men played in what was known as Cash's Paddock, which was down Westbourne Avenue on the opposite side of the road from the Church of England. It was a large area which extended from where the Smash Repair business is now to the back yards of the residents of Gordon Street. The tennis courts were also well used by the younger generation.

During these years there was the dole for the unemployed. These people would be given a certificate which would allow them to purchase food from the local store. They weren't given any cash but they were allowed to buy food up to a set amount. The money would be paid directly to the nominated store in the town which in this case could supply groceries and bread. The store would then give an order to the butcher (there were two in the town at that time) and the fruit shop, who would then supply the customer and charge to the store.

The store was also the only supplier of petrol and oil in the town. They had two bowsers on the street footpath.



There were a number of other businesses in the town at that time. There was a cash and carry grocery store just up the road run by a Mr Moorhead. This shop later became the local bakery after the old store sold it off. This shop has now been dismantled.

Between these two businesses was the Post Office and at one stage a boot and shoe repair service conducted by a Mr Rackleyft. The area between the General Store and the corner of Westbourne Avenue was vacant and was part of the horse yard for the General Store's animals.

The Hotel was and still is on the opposite corner. Below this there were a number of other shops which included Mr Prior's Barber Shop, which only opened once a week. His main business was in Picton. There was Cash's Cash Shop and Newsagency, Clout's Fruit and Vegetable Shop, another small clothing shop and Denny's Butchery next to the railway line. There was another Butchery conducted by a Mrs Shaw down in Westbourne Avenue. A dairy was further up this street on the corner of Gordon Street which was run by a Mr Mann who delivered milk to residents in the main part of the village.

Thirlmere had two halls for entertainment purposes practically opposite one another in Westbourne Ave. The one next to the Church of England was called the Protestant Hall, while the one of the other side was commonly known as Cash's Hall. The Roman Catholic citizens in the village refused to enter the Protestant Hall. As they had no church in the town at that time they used Cash's Hall for their services and all their other functions. In later years the Protestant Hall's name was changed and is now known as the Thirlmere Community

Hall, while Cash's Hall became the Thirlmere Cinema.

The Thirlmere Cinema was started by a Mr Slatyer. There was no electricity in the town so he set up his own generator in the paddock next door to provide the power to operate the projectors. Later he also built a new cinema in Picton. There was already a cinema operating in Picton Town Hall by a Mr Woods. So for a short time Picton had two picture theatres. The Thirlmere and Picton Cinemas being owned by the same person screened the same programme. The films were exchanged between the cinemas by motor bike during the sessions. One evening it was found that the generator at Thirlmere had been filled with potato peel and destroyed so he closed the Thirlmere cinema down. He later sold his Picton Theatre to Mr George Parkes.

Just prior to the outbreak of the Second World War the Thirlmere township was connected to the electricity which allowed Mr Cash to re-open the local cinema which was then to continue to run for a number of years after the war until it finally closed down. The hall is now used by a smash repair business. The Picton Cinema has also been demolished and replaced by a service station.

With the outbreak of the Second World War most of the young men of the district joined the services. As the years progressed practically all males were called up when they turned eighteen. There were a lot of men who were engaged in essential services who were not allowed to join and had to stay at home to service the community. These men really had a hard time because of the lack of assistance being available.

After the War ended there was a large increase in the number of the Estonian population, most of them becoming engaged in the poultry industry. Thirlmere was to become the largest egg producing area in the State. Truck loads of feed arrived by train to the Thirlmere Railway Station and then transported by lorry out to the farms, and lorry loads of eggs were moved to the City daily.

The Estonians then decided to set up their own co-operative store in the town. They built their own business centre opposite the town's sports oval and named it "Kungla Farmers" - this became a very busy organisation for many years.

While the Estonian population who had arrived were very hard working people who made for themselves a very successful career from poultry farming, their families who were usually very intelligent children took advantage of the educational facilities now offered, especially after the opening of Picton High School, and decided that poultry farming was not for them. Most of them left the district after finishing High School and moved to the City.

The result was that eventually most of the poultry farms closed down and the owners retired. A Retirement Village was built out of town and most of them moved in, in due course. The Kungla farmers establishment also closed down. The premises are now occupied by a grocery store and service station.

During these years coal mining became a major source of employment and many of the local male population joined this industry and travelled down to the valley mines and later to the mine started in

Tahmoor. Both of these still (until 1998 - J. Ross) employ a number of local citizens.

Thirlmere is now a quiet residential area. The population has now trebled, the school has doubled in size, and is now a totally different town. The trains don't run any more (except for rides to Buxton) where there used to be two trains down the loop line daily to Sydney and two returns, as well as the daily goods train. The Station employed two staff and the financial turnover in the early post-war years was far greater than Picton Station.

Thirlmere was always well represented on the Wollondilly Shire Council. During the pre-Second World War years Mr Sep. Prosser, a local resident, was President of the Wollondilly Shire. After he moved from the district his position was taken by Mr Walter Middleton. After Walter's sudden death his position was taken by his eldest son, Roy. Roy Middleton was to serve as councillor of the Shire for twenty-five years, a large portion of the time as Shire President.

Walter Middleton did a lot to assist the progress of Thirlmere. He had built many houses on the area which he rented out for nominal rentals during these tough times. He was also responsible for the opening up of the land which is now divided by Rita and Marion Streets which were named after his daughters. These streets are now practically built out. He purchased, and then donated the Park Area opposite his old shop and named it after the RSL. He also donated the shop's horse yard between his shop and Westbourne Ave to the RSL to build a Club House. However, they couldn't raise the finance for the building so they sold it and used the money to establish their Club

Room. He also planted all the trees that line the main street of the town at present. This was before Thirlmere had a water supply so he watered them by a watering can until such time they became self supporting.

Mr Kevin Morris is another person who has done much in later years to develop the town. He is responsible for the building of the shopping area between the old store (which is now closed down) to the corner of Westbourne Avenue, and is now developing a building development between Turner Street and Tahmoor Road (Thirlmere Way).

Thirlmere has had many changes during my lifetime. To travel around the area today, it is difficult for me to believe the many changes that have happened over all these years. Undoubtedly changes will continue throughout the next seventy years. The town will never stay the same.

### PICTON PROFILE DIANNE IRWIN (Research Officer)

As I have been told it is my turn to write about myself here goes.

I am the eldest and only daughter of the late Colin and Elsie Kelso (nee Ryan) of George's Hall and this is where I grew up and went to primary school. It was a very interesting school as we had a lot of migrants. (A television program was made several years ago, about "Bolts and Screws and Kangaroos, it was shown on SBS it was about us, the George's Hall kids). In those days it was only a small area near Bankstown airport and all the children knew everyone.

I went on to Bankstown Girls' High, it was a new school then, so much larger than our primary school. I finished in 4th year; I was in the last year for the intermediate. My favourite subjects were bookkeeping and needlework. I disliked biology and history.

I left school in August 1964 and started work the following week in Sussex Street, Sydney for Victor Engineering as an accounts clerk and telephonist. It was a shock to be the only girl in the place. They later moved to Arncliffe and were taken over by Garlock Engineering.

I stayed working for the firm for ten years. This is where I met Joe. And we have been married for 29 years. We have one daughter, Sheri who is 22 and she is a pool attendant.

We moved to Picton in September 1982. I became interested in family history after both of my parents died, as I knew very little about my grandparents and gg parents, so the search began. In 1990 I walked into the Picton Society and met Pat & Jan. I asked questions and Pat handed me a journal from the Cape Banks Society with an article about my ggfather and that was it, I was hooked.

Since I joined the Society I have always had a job - Librarian, Archivist and Research Officer and I sometimes have a spare minute for my own research. I have found links to Picton on the way, with the Kelso family working on Sir Thomas Mitchell's property in 1841.

My other voluntary work is the local Vinnies' shop which I have done for the last 11 years. Now that is another interesting place to meet people.

## **STONEQUARRY SNIPPETS**

### **1-9 April 2000**

National Trust Heritage Festival

### **Friday 26 and Saturday 27 May 2000**

SHOWCASE. SAG

120 Kent Street, SYDNEY.

10.00 am to 5.00 pm.

### **Saturday 22 July 2000**

Family History Seminar

The Greenway Centre Liverpool City Lib.

George Street, Liverpool.

\$25. 9.00am to 4.30pm.

Speakers:- Dr Richard Reid, Dr Marjorie

Newton, June Penney, Martyn Killion

Hosted by Liverpool & DFHS.

### **Sunday 23 July 2000**

NSWAFHS AGM at Greenway Centre

Liverpool.

### **19-26 September 2000**

Family History Conference Ulster Historical

Foundation, Belfast and Dublin.

### **27 Sept - 1 Oct 2000**

9th Australasian Congress on Gen. & Her.

Perth WA.

## **From AFFHO (Australasian Federation of Family History Organisations Inc)**

### **STATE GOVERNMENT RECORDS**

It has been drawn to the attention of Council that records of some state government organisations that have been on open access are now being withdrawn as a result of government policy changes. Many of these records contain material of value to family historians and the closure of access to them will make it extremely difficult for us to assess their value relative to our research and to obtain copies or to extract data therefrom.

eg. Queensland - Dunwich Benevolent Asylum and Eventide (Sandgate) irrespective of date.

Health Department Records are at risk.

## **Victoria - Human Services Department**

It is felt that the Legal Unit at Queensland health does not understand the contents of the Dunwich records and they are mistakenly of the opinion that they contain sensitive medical and psychiatric details. They do not believe that "family history" is a legitimate reason for accessing the records.

AFFHO has asked individuals and societies to

1. Write regarding the Queensland situation to Minister for Health and FOI Officer Qld
2. Check with NSW Archive authority re similar proposals
3. Publicise the issue
4. Advise the Federation of any development

## **RECIPROCAL RIGHTS**

AFFHO recommends that societies who do not have reciprocal rights agreements in place give consideration to arranging same with suitable partners.

## **SAVING THE 2001 CENSUS**

AFFHO has considered the latest developments regarding the matter of census retention and believes that there is still much work to be done to ensure a satisfactory outcome to both the announced "option to retain" for 2001 and the wider recommendations of the Parliamentary Inquiry that was completed last year. A campaign to encourage the Australian public to opt for retention of the 2001 returns will be organised in the near future, as will lobbying, etc to have the Inquiry recommendations incorporated into legislation.

The first move re the 2001 census is to ask members to have the following letter (from

**Nick Vine Hall, Chairman, Census Working Party, AFFHO, Perth WA)**  
published in their respective journals . . .

Australia's 100,000 strong genealogical community (and countless others) owe a great debt to Stephen Mutch, the former Federal MP for Cook, who did much behind the scenes lobbying to bring about the recent decision by the Australian Government to store our next census in the National Archives, instead of shredding it. He did more than any other Member of Parliament to effect this very significant change in Government policy. A \$200 million asset has been saved. Without him, we would have failed.

The substantial and consistent editorial support from the Sydney Morning Herald over some 20 years also contributed greatly to the success of our lobby.

Some 20,000 petitions were tabled in the Senate in favour of retention in 1995-96 and there was strong editorial support from Michele Stephens of Australian Family Tree Connections magazine, as well as commentators such as John Laws in the Sunday Telegraph (11 August 1996).

It is most exciting news that the 2001 census will be the first national survey of the Australian population to be retained for 173 years. This social data will, of course, be locked away for 100 years to ensure privacy, as is the practice in many overseas countries.

The change in Government policy is a long overdue sign that Australia is "growing up". At last, we are shedding our national inferiority complex about convict origins. It is a quantum leap forward in our understanding of ourselves. The world

outside will now view Australia as a more mature culture. Future generations in this country will bless us for this decision.

We thank the Howard Government, and in particular, the Treasurer, Hon Peter Costello, who announced a national Parliamentary Inquiry into the census retention question in May 1997. One year later, I was present in the Parliamentary Gallery, to see the chairman of the House of Representatives Standing Committee on Legal & Constitutional Affairs, Kevin Andrews, MP, table the findings of the Inquiry. The bipartisan committee was unanimous in finding that identified Australian census data should be retained in future.

All committee members deserve our gratitude for their efforts, as do the 96 members of Federal Parliament, from all parties, who supported us in the early stages. We especially thank Cheryl Kernot and Vickie Bourne and the Australian Democrats, who gave early endorsement to our campaign in April 1994. To the six members of parliament who would not support us, I say your electorate will not forgive you.

We are grateful also to the Hon. Joe Hockey, Minister for Financial Services, a long time supporter of the retention of identified census records, who made the announcement on 16 December last of the Government's decision to save the next census on an "opt in" basis.

Mr Hockey expects that at least 60 percent of Australians will choose to have their census records retained for posterity and medical research. I believe it will be more like 99 percent, IF the question is coined in a fair and balanced context.

The end result, of course, will be hugely influenced by how the Australian Bureau of Statistics puts the retention question on the census forms. . . needless to say, the next census survey paper must at the very least clearly explain the considerable historical, cultural and medical benefits of census retention and given an absolute Government guarantee of privacy during the embargo period. This is the practice with the English and US census surveys and it works well.

I urge all members of genealogical and family history societies to act now and lobby members of their extended family circles and friends to urge them to tick "yes" in the forthcoming census.

I urge them also to write immediately to their local Federal members of parliament and seek their support in writing to the Treasurer concerning the proper wording of the ABS census retention question.

And another item of correspondence requesting us to contact the Premier and our State MP regarding the State Governments' attitude to the release of Births, Deaths and Marriages. The letter is from from Redcliffe DFHG:

(I am or We are) part of a large and growing number of citizens endeavouring to find, and reveal to our children and grandchildren, accurate details of the forbears - this is their heritage, and they are asking for it! In addition, it is now part of the curriculum of most schools. We seek your assistance in making details of the Births, Deaths and Marriages available to us for that purpose.

An examination of the following tables will reveal the difficulties which confront us when we are asked for help by our descendants, and which we consider to be

most unnecessary. It is quite legal to read in the Daily Press details of Births, Deaths and Marriages **AS THEY OCCUR**, but the various Australian State Governments seem to believe that they should not be made available to genealogists and family historians for an inordinate number of years after the event. At the same time, each State seems to be placing a different limitation on the release of the required material.

The table to which we refer are a list of the require information which has been made available at this time.

	QLD	NSW	VIC	SA	WA	TAS
<b>B to</b>	1914	1918	1920	1922	1905	1905
<b>D to</b>	1939	1945	1980	1970	1980	1919
<b>M to</b>	1934	1945	1930	1937	1965	1919

(I or We) ask the question, why are the various State Governments keeping this information "private" for so long, when the Federal Senate considers 30 years privacy sufficient for their deliberations?

Please assist us in our endeavours to obtain accurate information about our ancestors by taking steps to have the information released sooner.

#### From Veterans' Affairs.

Looking for wartime memorabilia.

Robert Pounds, DIRECTOR

Australians at War Documentary Project  
PO Box 21 WODEN ACT.

While on the subject of War, a resident of Picton has just released a book based on the history of Australian military aviation.

**The RAAF and the Flying Squadrons  
by Norman Barnes - Allan & Unwin  
\$49.95**