

# MAREEBA MEMOIRS

*A news periodical for Mareeba and District  
Far North Queensland*



*Mount Carbine treatment mill – 1912. Photo by Lionel C. Ball*



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MAREEBA HISTORIC SOCIETY INC.**

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**MEETINGS:** Monthly meetings are held every fourth Thursday 7:30pm, Writers Forum every third Saturday 9:30am, and Family History workshops every fourth Saturday 9:30am at the Research Centre, Centenary Park, Mareeba.

**MEMBERSHIP FEES:** Due June 30, annually

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**OPENING HOURS:** The Research Centre is open every Wednesday 8am to 2pm, plus Saturday morning on Market Days. Appointments can be made outside these hours.

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## ***FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK***



Almost half way through the year and already things are shaping up to be another bumper period in our short yet buoyant history.

Events leading up to this edition focused on decision making. The proposed, and dare I say controversial acquisition of the Marceba Railway Station building, leading the way. Although it did not eventuate, this belated offer of a second building certainly highlighted the need to tread carefully. Concerns with upgrading security, the ongoing need for grant money and the necessity for a competitive edge, as well as planning for the forthcoming "Mulligan's 100th" celebration all contributing to one of our busiest periods this year.

Our August Memoirs will have the full calendar of events for the Mulligan celebration.

This edition is highlighted by notes from the Secretary (page 2); the usual News and Views (page 3); an insight into Grant Seminars (page 6); another frank and informative member profile (page 7); the book review (page 8); archival hints (page 10); a new-look list of books for sale (page 12); plus much more.

This edition's Bulletin about legendary Wolfram Camp carrier Bill Hambling comes courtesy of Ed Healy. Nice to see member involvement. We currently have three papers waiting in the wings, and I hear there are another two being considered.

As usual, if you have something to say or to include in Memoirs please phone, fax or e-mail us. Better still, drop in to the Research Centre, have a cuppa and air your comments personally.

See you there!



John Hay  
Co-editor

*Life is not meant to be easy, but neither is it meant to be utterly impossible. George Bernard Shaw*

## ***Notes from your Secretary***

During our March meeting, when my suggestions for a five-year plan was discussed, I knew by the looks on some faces that no one was aware of what a five-year plan was.

Planning is the key for our future. This is why I called this plan our "five-year plan". Five years is long enough to see what we can achieve, yet not too long as the organisation may become bogged down and lose sight of the overall plan.

In the next five years this is what I think we should be doing and where we should be headed.

**CONSTANT:** maintain as high a profile in the community as possible; attend fetes, open days, display days, etc; continue membership drive and fund raising.

**SHORT TERM:** *within this year:* ensure the success of the J. V. Mulligan weekend, have the east wall of the Centre insulated and lined; open more days; filing system in place and working; cataloguing up and working; attend more educational seminars (meaning all members); members becoming more involved in day to day activities; more working bees such as maintaining cemeteries; more fields trips; space in Centre better organised.

**LONG TERM:** *1 to 2 years:* have telephone and internet connected; install mail box at Centre; fit gutter guard.

**LONGER TERM:** *2 to 3 years:* add a covered verandah/porch extension to the north side of the building. I haven't got beyond three years yet.

**EVEN LONGER TERM:** *3 to 5 years:* The skies the limit. How about the roof covered with solar panels so we can have our own electricity, air conditioners, etc.

None of this is set in concrete (right Bill?). Remember this is only MY thoughts, we need your input as well. We plan also to be flexible, to be able to change direction at any given moment, e.g. Mareeba Railway Station. This by the way would have been so costly for us it was out of the question. Believe it is now sold.

**All big businesses have such plans, why do you think they are so SUCCESSFUL?**

## ***News and views***

Mike Rimmer has sent us a DVD of all the images associated with the production of his book *Up the Palmerston*. Of particular interest are the photographs of J. V. Mulligan's home land in County Down, Northern Ireland, which were taken during Mr Rimmer's overseas trip researching the book. There are a total of 656 images on the DVD. We are now official distributors for Mr Rimmer's book, *Up the Palmerston*.

Apparently Mr Rimmer is busily working on Volume Two.

No sooner had Bruce returned from yet another aircraft-building sojourn in Brisbane, then he and wife Joyce jetted off to Hong Kong for a week. Isn't retirement wonderful!

The March seminar on our photographic cataloguing system focused on an examination paper designed to gauge the progress of attending members. With the system now on its own computer, members can practice their search and record skills in preparation for future operations.

Word has it that Eddie is in training for a forthcoming trek into the unknown with some visitors from Victoria. We are not quite sure when this will eventuate but we look forward to a successful trip report in the near future.

The lucky winner of our Easter Raffle was Mr C. George. When Mr George was contacted, he commented that it was the only thing he had ever won apart from his wife.

Pat and her helpers, Lorraine, Eddie and Lionel are to be congratulated for these well-conducted raffles. Incidentally, although Lionel is not a member he still helps out. The Easter Raffle brought in just over \$506.

Raffles are held on Tuesdays and Thursdays at selected sites around town. It is a competitive activity with several fund raising organisations vying for business.

We also hear that while volunteering his assistance Eddie gained an admirer. Apparently during the flurry of ticket sales at the local supermarket Eddie's "wonderful blue eyes" were commented on. And we thought he was just a pretty face! The Rodeo Raffle is next on the calendar.

This year's Heritage Week falls on May 13-20. We will be conducting an appropriate display commencing on Market Day the 12th.

Family History Week will be celebrated August 4-12. This year the North Queensland Gold Panning Competition will take place August 11, as usual next to the Mareeba Heritage Museum.

Moves are underway to upgrade our security. In the wake of the smashed front door, safety of our building has become paramount. A majority of members have endorsed the erecting of a security fence. More anon!

Seems our acquisitions just keep coming. In late March Helen and David secured what has become an extensive Rodeo Collection. Item of important memorabilia included posters, maps, photographs, documents and various oddments. These are the types of things that all too often end up at the tip. Helen accessioned over 250 items.

Following up on that windfall we received a donation of a selection of John Atherton documents. These early papers deal with occupation at Emerald End. Atherton's family Cemetery is located on the original property.

Don't forget, registration day for "Mulligan's 100th" will be held at our Research Centre at Centenary Park Friday, August 24 at 9am. Morning tea for those registering will be provided at the Art Centre next door. Although there is another newsletter due out just prior to that event, an early reminder is warranted. The Mulligan plaque unveiling will be held at the Mount Molloy Cemetery Sunday, August 26 at 10am. With the Mareeba Shire Council, as well as Cooktown, Atherton and Herberton Councils becoming involved, the celebration should prove an eye-opener.

Helen and Bill attended a recent "J. V. Mulligan meeting" and have reported that a revised schedule of events should be finalised at the next meeting (see August Memoirs).

Concerning the map cabinet, this sturdy old piece of furniture is being painstakingly repaired and is now in the process of being filled.

Another four site identification plaques were erected at Wolfram Camp during Easter weekend. That takes the total number of mounted plaques to fifteen along the main street of Bottom Camp. More will be added as material becomes available. While the last plaque was being installed, a family from Atherton arrived in their vehicle and parked at the Monument. They got out and started walking along the main street. It was only when they got closer to where I was working that I noticed that Mum had a copy of *Images of Wolfram Camp* and was showing her two children the images of the buildings that were identified by plaques.

Makes it all worthwhile!

Seems the saga of the Mareeba Railway Station building has been resolved. It has been sold for removal. Following a suggestion that the Mareeba Historical Society take over the building and have it relocated alongside the present structure, David checked out the building and was informed about the transaction.

Apparently feelers were put out to acquire the building as far back as when the Society was at Lyons Street, but this move was rejected. The low set, 26-metre-long building would have made an ideal museum, however the setup costs would have rendered the project prohibitive.

Our sincere wishes for a speedy recovery go out to Robbie Bell. Dolly informs us she is honing her nursing skills.

Subsequent to ongoing research, another 52 photographs have been located and added to our growing collection. The images are dated from 1901 to 1939 and represent a cross-section of early-day activities in the Mareeba Shire. Our image cataloguing is fast approaching the 1000 mark.

Our May meeting will feature a presentation by Shane Masterson based on the early Mareeba Scouts' Buildings.

The John Moffat Day will be held August 4 at Irvinebank. This year's celebration will commence at midday and end with a Gala Ball that night. Everyone is most welcome.



The annual three-day Mareeba to Chillagoe wheel barrow race starts at the Mareeba Heritage Centre, May 18. Overnight stops will be at Dimbulah, Almaden and finally Chillagoe on the 20th.

A field trip to Beaconsfield is planned for June 17, and don't forget our Annual General Meeting, August 23.

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### **Grant Seminar**

Report on Grant Writing Training Seminar organised by Arts Nexus and presented by Carrie Bies at the Atherton Council Chambers, Sunday February 25, 2007 – Helen and David in attendance.

Following up on our previous newsletter, David's report, tabled at the March meeting (22/3/2007), focused on the importance of upgrading skills and finding new areas in which to apply for grants: *A large number of subjects was covered during the day including whether grants were appropriate and where to look for funding; a comprehensive section on preparing a successful application; and how applications are assessed and how long it takes. An exercise in assessing using actual applications, both successful and unsuccessful, was also included along with reporting and acquittal requirements.*

*The presenter was very knowledgeable having had twenty years experience and having raised over one million dollars for various organisations. This was a great learning experience for us as there are obviously limited grants available and very strong competition for them.*

David made the point that of the twenty five or so attending the seminar only two community groups were represented. The remainder were private organisations looking to fund their own businesses.

*Postscript:* David has since attended a DPI (Department of Primary Industry) Grants Seminar. We hear it was most informative.

\*Some organisations have a full-time person just applying for grants. *Ed*

### ***Member profile***

Jeff and Ann Smith are relatively new members. Jeff manages a business near Gordonvale, while Ann is a full-time librarian.

Q: How and when did you both get interested in history and preservation?

A: Ann: It was probably about 1979 when I was working for Coral Motors in Cairns. The boys at work used to do trips up bush and this led to the formation of the Palmer River Historic Preservation Society. When that kicked off I ended up becoming Secretary and then Treasurer until it folded in 1993. That was ten years all up.

Jeff: I joined the group when Ann became Secretary, but I was always interested in that type of thing and it seemed a really good way of being involved. We are also members of the Gordonvale Historical Society and the Cairns Historical Society mainly on a support-type basis.

Even though we live at Gordonvale, we have always had an interest in the Tableland areas such as the Hodgkinson. Both my grandmother and her sister were born at Thornborough. Ann's grandfather worked at the Tryconnell, and her Uncle worked in the Mount Mulligan mine in 1952.

Q: What about projects such as Wolfram Camp?

A: Jeff: We thought the Wolfram Camp celebration was marvellous. We first visited Wolfram Camp in 1976 but had no idea the place would ever come alive like that. It was reminiscent of our "Back to Maytown" days; good crowd, much the same as when we put up the pioneer monument and time capsule in the main street of Maytown in 1983. Seeing the turn-up at Wolfram Camp took us back a few years.

Q: What about future plans for the society such as a display, or even a museum?

A: Jeff: That depends on the aims of the individual society and whether a museum is warranted. It also depends on how big a display you want. Other societies have museums, but you have to know what your resources are. It's a lot more extra work and most members don't have the

expertise or aren't interested in doing the work.

Q: Do you walk into a society building and expect to see a museum?

A: Ann: People don't see the difference between a paper collection and a museum. People might be interested in a display, but you can't look at shelves of records and expect to see a museum. Perhaps a limited display would be enough. And then there's the problem with tampering. I think it's more interesting to see a well-managed small display based on the society's collection.

Jeff/Ann: Mareeba's an active society, which interests us more than the coastal groups. For example field trips are difficult down there because of the development over the old sites. That's why Mareeba is lucky to have such a huge area. We reckon you are doing a good job. People are sitting up and taking notice.

### ***Book review***

*"Women of Gold"* by Jean Barry  
Published November 2002

The attractive cover of this book features a backdrop of the ever imposing Mount Mulligan, and with the title, *Women of Gold*, intending readers could assume that it was yet another tale of the northern goldfields and the pursuit of the precious yellow metal.

Wrong! Although the story begins in Cooktown in 1880, crosses the Palmer River field and eventually on to the Mount Mulligan area, it is a detailed account of the trials and tribulations (and there are many) of the large Barry family and in particular the family matriarch, Mary Edith Barry. The book is a fitting tribute to the author's pioneer mother who, although bearing and raising eleven children, almost single-handedly kept the family together through very hard times. The author tells the story as it was, and the reader is right there with the family through births, deaths, flood, poverty and disaster. One cannot help but wonder how hard life must have been in those early days living in the shadow of Mount Mulligan.

*Women of Gold* is an interesting insight into the author's family life. It is a good read accompanied by many photographs of people and places. This book is highly recommended especially to those who may have an interest in the early days of the Mount Mulligan mining area.

8/10

Review by Eddie Sheerans

\*Next edition's book review will feature Mike Rimmer's *Up the Palmerston*.

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An impromptu trip to Wolfram Camp May 6 turned out to be an experience worth recording. It wasn't a regular Society field trip, but some interested members and visitors turned up that glorious Sunday morning to accompany me to the Mulligan mine.

With large scale mining about to begin, it seemed appropriate to survey and photograph the site. Nine of us made the arduous climb to the old mine, descended via six of the tower base sites to the Thermo battery, went on to inspect Moffat's mill remains, then returned to camp for an unexpected and exceptionally prepared lunch.

Early next morning, as I was preparing to leave, a hire vehicle pulled up and an elderly man got out and made his way to the monument. Feeling he knew the place, I asked him for his surname.

"My name is Victor Kruhse and I worked here in 1951. My mine was the *Lucky Hit*. Our daughter Suzie was born while my wife and I were here. After I left here I went over to Mount Mulligan to work and when it closed I took the family to Collinsville."

Victor and his daughter had come down from Darwin to attend the annual May Day visit to Mount Mulligan. Fearing he may never again get the chance, Victor extended his pilgrimage to visit Wolfram Camp.

As it was too rough for their vehicle to reach the Cemetery I took them there and watched as Victor rekindled his memories of those he had known. When shown the Wolfram Camp books, he related many and interesting stories about some of the early identities. *Ed*

### ***The benefits of gold***

A Cairns computer shop assistant was recently asked for Gold DVDs (*Digital Video Disc*).

"What do you mean by 'Gold'?" he replied.

Not that many years ago blank CDs (*Compact Disc*) came in what was termed Silver, Silver-Gold or Gold (No, not real gold!). The spiel on a Kodak CD-R (*Recordable*) case jacket informed the customer, "Silver+Gold lasts up to 6 times longer than Silver-only discs". Kodak CD-R Gold discs stated "Long Life".

But as DVDs gain popularity because of their superior memory capabilities, 4.7gb and 8.5gb, at the low end of the scale Silver – not now labelled as such – appears to be preferential as blank CDs become cheaper.

Blank "Gold" CDs and DVDs are still readily available.

The quality of computer CDs and DVDs is crucial if one wishes to store archival-type data or images for any length of time. Tests show that even the best blank CDs and DVDs can last as little as 12-18 months before they become unreadable. Cheaper blanks offer even shorter life.

Apparently the reflective layer, which quickly oxidises, and the dyes used in manufacture are the reason for failures. Factory made discs, such as music and movies, have pits pressed into a layer of aluminium based on a moulded master similar to the old vinyl records. CD-R discs use an organic dye layer in front of a reflective layer to simulate the pits in a pressed CD. When writing a CD-R the laser works on the dye to create the tracks. Because the dyes break down, especially under UV (*Ultra Violet*) light, the more the disc is used the quicker it will become unreadable.

And to confuse the issue further we now have "Scratch Resistant" writable discs with a "protective layer".

Using premium Gold discs will at least give the consumer the best chance possible of saving data and images for the future. As an alternative choice, it is yet to be proved if the longevity of USB (*Universal Serial Bus*) storage devices (*flash drives*) make them preferable to discs.

Photographs stored in acid-free paper in a dehumidified environment is still the best archival system available.

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## **Publications for Sale**

Up the Palmerston. Published 2006: A history of the Cairns Hinterland up to 1920; features the life and times of James Venture Mulligan. 228 pages. \$30

Riches of Wolfram Camp. Published 2005: This is an abridged history of a small mining settlement known as the "Mountain Town" west of Mareeba. 90 pages. \$17

Images of Wolfram Camp. Published 2006: A pictorial book; stories of images from early 1900s to present day. 120 pages. \$24

The Lone Wolf. Published 2002: The autobiography of a Palmer River miner 1910-1986. 204 pages. \$24

Demise of the Typewriter. Published 2002. A locally produced book covering all aspects of the trade leading up to the advent of the computer. 244 pages. \$24

Beyond Hell's Gate. Published 2000: An exciting rendition of the making of the 1979 documentary film dealing with the Palmer River gold rush. 160 pages. \$24

The Mecca of my Desires. Originally published 1914, and then republished in 2003. Well written in the early literary style it deals with the Kuranda area. 70 pages \$12

### **Corrections:**

Memoirs Number 33, p.11: Seminar held 17/2/2007. Depending on when a particular issue is printed and posted out the term "was held" or "will be held" has to be decided upon beforehand. Rather than leave it for another three months to write up, in an attempt to impart up-to-date news sometimes we slip up. Hmmm!

Bulletin Number 4: The Mareeba Cenotaph and a monument at Centenary Lakes dedicated to the eleven victims of the Mount Emerald air crash 11/5/1990 were inadvertently omitted

### **Stop Press**

Queensland has finally put their births, deaths, and marriages (bdm) indexes on-line. From 1829 to 1914.

<http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/bdm/IndexSearch.htm>

<http://www.bdm.qld.gov.au/IndexSearch/>

\*A: A person who plays the kettledrums in an orchestra

## RESEARCH ENQUIRIES

**ASSISTANCE:** A research officer will assist by searching society records

**NON-MEMBERS:** A minimum fee of \$11 per hour (GST included) and includes up to five A4 photocopies. \$5 per hour or part thereof D.I.Y.

**ADDITIONAL EXPENSES:** If a visit to a cemetery or library is deemed necessary, travelling expenses will also apply

**ENQUIRIES:** All enquiries should be in writing and include a stamped, self addressed envelope

### RESEARCH AT THE CENTRE

Rates of payment for research at the Research Centre have yet to be decided. Contact the Secretary for further information

### NEXT MEETING DATES – 2007

May 24, June 28, July 26, August 23 (AGM)

### *Computer language*

Modern computing is a wonderful tool. From the humble art of writing letters to forecasting the weather, computers have enabled us to do things previously thought impossible. But there are drawbacks. For those puritans of proper English, the phonetic minefield US English is one of them. And unless you have grown up in the digital era dealing with some of the computer terminology is quite confusing.

Unfortunately the manufacturing industry and the people who produce instruction manuals and books on learning equipment operation, as well as understanding what has become a language all of its own, are not sympathetic to the term "user friendly".

The digital dictionary has become a labyrinth of confusion, exciting in some respects, yet nonetheless daunting. Not only are terms abbreviated, most of the countless acronyms only make sense to the people who produce them.

Microsoft's anagram WYSIWYG, meaning "what you see is what you get", is no longer the benchmark. As computer jargon becomes more sophisticated in line with advances in digital technology, one could easily get left behind.