

# Mareeba Memoirs

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*Merry Christmas to our members and friends.  
Thank you for your support over the past year.*

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345 Byrne Street, Centenary Park Mareeba 4880

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**Opening hours:** **Tues and Wed 8am to 4pm**  
**Market Saturday 8-12**  
**Mareeba Markets 2nd & 5th Sat**

### **Mareeba Historical Society**

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### **MEETINGS**

General monthly meetings held on the **THIRD** Wednesday of each month at 2.30 pm. **EXCEPT** December.

Meeting dates on Page 9.

### **MEMBERSHIP FEES:**

Due 1<sup>st</sup> July each year.

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### **DISCLAIMER:**

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### *From the Editor*

One of the pleasures of being at the Historical Society on Tuesdays and Wednesdays is meeting the numerous people who wander in "for a look". Often they are seeking information about ancestors from this region, or have some connection to "the North" and are genuinely interested in what we do here and all aspects of our region. We ask to people sign the visitors book and most times people are happy to do so. Because we are self funded and a not for profit organisation we rely on donations and also sales from our market stall. Donations are an essential part of our survival. We need this money to conserve and preserve the objects and papers that tell the story of this region.

Sometimes people bring in articles of interest such as photos of the people and places in the region, and often they look to us for the stories or evidence that support or explain the photos. Our needs list is prominently displayed at the front desk, because we like to remind people what type material is of historical value and interest. We look for objects that help us build a broad picture of the history of this area; things like old receipts that give us a picture of what things cost at any particular time and what stores were in the town, newspapers tell us what was happening in our district, what movies were showing at the local cinema, what type of cars people were driving, what farmers were growing and how they diversified to meet a changing marketplace. Our interests cover the entire geographical, cultural and industrial diversity of the Tablelands region which is approximately the size of Tasmania.

Before you throw out any old receipts, papers, objects, think about us and bring them in for us for a look see.

For example, last week we received interesting material in the form of handwritten account books and personal journals from the seventies. **Things do not have to be a hundred years.**

History is made on a daily basis, the daily newspapers that we buy today will hold valuable clues to our past years down the track. Look twice at everything when you are having a spring clean! If in doubt, don't throw it out, bring it to us.

### Why keep a visitors book?

Our visitors book allows visitors to comment on how we operate, it reveals the locations of our visitors - and they come from far and wide. Over the last few weeks we had visitors from California, Charters Towers, Jimboomba, Cooma, New Zealand, Bli Bli and Greece, just to name a few. I could write a poem about the places in our visitors book! People are constantly amazed at the size and diversity of our collection and their comments highlight this. I believe that one of the strengths of our society is the welcome that visitors are given, and the efforts made to answer any questions that are asked. Visitors call in for a number of reasons: a relative may have lived in the area, a loved one may have been stationed here during the war. This area was an important part of the war effort with planes flying out from Mareeba airfield northward in defence of not only Australia, but the areas to our north where our forces fought a fierce battle against the Japanese. There are many reminders of the WWII here, including old airfields, and underground bunkers. Our visitors include authors researching history, people looking for the sites of old mines that were once scattered throughout the area, people researching their past and those who are just interested in this fascinating region.

#### Some snippets from "Family Tree"

The first beer brewed in Australia was produced by Mr James Squire (a retired soldier) at the "*Malting Shovel*" in Kissing Point on the Parramatta River. His beer was, by all accounts, quite a good brew; but in St John's Cemetery, there is a tombstone which says:

**He who drank Squire's beer  
Lies here!**

There is something almost threatening about this Tasmanian epitaph:

***Rest in Peace  
Until I come***



## **KNOW YOUR COMMITTEE.**

### **PRESIDENT:**

**Ann Hyde** lives and works in Cairns, one of the reasons we don't see too much of her. She is kept up to date via Email and phone. Very little happens that she does not know about within the Society. Is enjoying the position but would like to see more members join in the festivities as well as some of the work. Is available every Mareeba Market Day at the Centre.

### **VICE- PRESIDENT:**

**Joan Collins** is fairly new to the area and as a lover of history joined the Society to get to know the why and the when of how the area started. Joan is also the Mareeba Memoirs Editor and is on the look out for ANY suitable articles to be included in the publication. Joan is very keen to get YOUR story down on paper, come and have a chat to her. It is too easy to lose our important history. A wonderful computer person.

### **SEC/TREASURER.**

**Helen Kindt**, founder of this organisation, has held these positions practically since the beginning and would love to divest herself of one at least. Looking for that SOMEONE who will do that and give her a reprieve. Been interested in history since early school days, can talk the leg off an iron pot when needed and finds this area so rich in stories, people and places. A great researcher who rarely gives up. Will NEVER run out of tales nor interesting people to talk to .

### **COMMITTEE:**

**Dot Peters.** I am sure that everyone knows Dot, she does not need to be introduced. An extremely hard working person, who always seemingly without effort, comes up with some great solutions to any problems besetting the other committee members. Is such a great help, bakes the BEST sponge cakes in the entire area and is a delight to have on board.

**David Foster:** Vitally interested in history not only of this area but also of any objects, such as tools, gemstones, artifacts etc. Good researcher, will go out of his way to assist the public, knowledgeable and has the gift of the gab, so necessary in this field.

**John Hammond:** Been on board for only a couple of years but has proven to be a valuable member as he can relate to people, not only talking about the history but is also a great accessioner.

To those who don't know, every item that comes into the Centre must be recorded in special books. Eventually, all this information will be transferred onto a database, meanwhile John does this manually. One way to learn about the place and people.

#### **ALL PILLARS OF THIS SOCIETY.**

In 2013 the Society hopes to implement a couple of projects. There is a book that sits on the front desk that any member can add to with suggestions of a project you think will be suitable for the Society to do. Before grants are applied for, we must have a project in mind and money is becoming harder and harder to obtain and as you should know other than raising it ourselves, we rely on grant money to obtain our objects. So DON'T be shy, come on in and discuss any project you may have in mind. An Email may make that easier.

Our re-vamped website is coming on well, won't be long before you will be able to view it in all its glory. Carol is a clever computer person and has been our Webmaster for many years.

“It is the duty of every decent Australian to see that we never allow the politically correct to force upon us historical amnesia.” John Laws Book of Uncommon Sense.



## **SECRETARIAL SAYINGS.**

Wonderful news, our RADF grant has come through. This will enable us to have our collections assessed by a qualified person. This will start next year and take up most of the year for Jo Wills to do. A very busy but exciting time ahead. If you can spare us a couple of days per months to assist in the running of the Centre, please let us know. Not necessarily Tuesday or Wednesdays, we can fit in to suit.

## **FIRST PRIZE!**

Another bonus was our first prize win in the decorated window at the Mareeba Rodeo. We received a lovely blue ribbon, certificate and a cheque. Gave us the incentive to have another go next year. Ideas needed please.

## **COLLECTIONS:**

Our Collections are always being added to. The latest being a massive donation by Marjorie Gilmore of her father's original tobacco papers. These are the papers she used to write the book, with Mr. Veness, "Smoke and Mirrors" that has just been launched. An interesting and informative read. The papers donated combined with other original papers about the tobacco industry, take our collection to great heights. One the assessor will be pleased to look over.

To those people who have so kindly donated items of historic value to the society, you have indeed done things for posterity and have been conscious of the significance of history. To the people who may be thinking of going through and doing a big clean out, look out for items of historical interest and if in doubt, come and show us or give us a ring.

### **CHANGE OF MEETING TIME:**

Another change coming up. It was time to review the change that was made to our General Meeting time. **REMEMBER!** It was changed from a Thursday evening to a Wednesday morning early. After consideration it was decided to change again to the 3rd Wednesday of each month at 2.30 pm. Every one is welcome to attend and put your two penny 's worth in. What members require is listened to.

### **DISPLAYS:**

The gemstone display is still attracting favourable comments. The idea of having raw stones along with cut ones makes it easy for people to relate to what they look like in the rough. Goodness knows how many people have probably flung away a small fortune because they didn't know what the rough stones looked like. This will not be displayed for too much longer, so call in, say "hello", join us for a cuppa and feast your eyes.

### **ASSISTANCE:**

As usual, it will be great for more members to give a little of their time to help with the work of the our Society. I am seeking a person/people who will love to transcribe some papers we hold. Nothing hard and you can even take them home to do this in your own time. A USB comes in very handy.

### **XMAS BBQ**

Our teenage members plan to create some sort of WONDER LAND in my back yard for this. I'm completely in the dark. Don't forget, it's on Saturday Market Day, 8th December, at 9 Toll Close from about 6-6.30pm BYO EVERYTHING except salads. Sure Joan has done a much more interesting blurb on it somewhere in this Mareeba Memoirs. Great to see you there. Let us know how many so we can have enough chairs and salads.



### **Dot Higginsons Story—From England to North Queensland**

In July 1952 my family departed by boat from England to start a new life in Australia—the land of sunshine, milk and honey. I was aged 12 years. We arrived in Sydney, but immediately left to join dad's brother Alec Finch Jones along with his wife and 4 children who lived at Walkamin on their peanut and dairy farm, where the Research station now is. We began our journey to North Queensland from Sydney by rail. I remember standing in the station masters office listening to him berating my parents for daring to consider taking their children to North Queensland because—in his words—“There's nothing up there to take them to”! Mind you, the station master wasn't too sure where Cairns was but after looking at his maps of railway routes, he got us on a train to Brisbane and from there we headed North again to Cairns. We travelled for 3 days through a black and charred landscape. Bushfires had scorched the countryside. We knew nothing about bushfires, or about the wet and dry seasons, everything was new and frightening. There were no restaurant cars on the northern train in those days so you stayed hungry until the train pulled into a station somewhere and we were served meals of mixed sandwiches and milky tea, before being loaded onto the carriages again. When we got to Cairns Uncle Alec hadn't arrived to meet us at the station so we were piled into a ute, kids in the back with the luggage and taken to the Barracks which in those days were way out of town. We thought it was OK, there were lots of other kids we couldn't understand, the sun was hot, the sky was blue and the white sand was endless. Luckily Uncle Alec came flying in, a cloud of white dust billowing over everything as he pulled up. In double quick time he loaded us and our gear into his ute, kids in the back and we headed for Walkamin. Uncle Alec's farm was where the two big mango trees stand linked together all alone now. The house was next to the mango trees. A few days later we went shopping in Mareeba—what a shock! It was fun, it was exciting, and a terrible culture shock for my mother.

The week we arrived the first bitumen road was being laid through the town. As the sand was being turned over, millions of sand fleas invaded every building and person. Each shop had large tin baths of water at the door so customers could wash the fleas off before entering. Of course, some still got in. I've often wondered how the shopkeepers survived it.

When I started school, the teacher decided that because I was a Pom I must have a lower standard of education than an Aussie child so he put me in grade 5. I was 12 years of age, and had already started high school in England. It took some getting used to, but the change of climate worked wonders with my health and I thrived in the wonderful warm climate of my new country. I am now a textile artist. Thank you Australia!

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**Have a wonderful festive season.  
Celebrate our historical past**

Don't forget that our Christmas party is on at Helen's place on Sat 8th Dec (market day). Come along and join us for a jolly old evening of reminiscing, catching up, laughing and frivolity. We may be historical items ourselves but we still know how to have fun.

The Historical society is a wonderfully social organisation to be a part of. We have discovered lots of things about the past history of our area. Mareeba is such a diverse area, culturally as well as historically, and it is a constant source of amazement reading through the articles, books and scrapbooks to see what has happened over the years in our region. We have a rich multicultural area, and I am sure that there are traditional festivities happen here that are linked to the counties of origin of our population. Think about joining the society, add your skills, memories, stories to our collections. There is still so much to find out. Come on, join us in our historical explorations. Tell us your story!

*There are some people who spend most of today boasting about the wonderful things they will do tomorrow. They probably spent yesterday doing the same thing.*

From the Mt Molloy, Julatten and Mt Carbine Quarterly Dollar Bulletin. March 1995



## RESEARCH ENQUIRIES

**Assistance:** A research officer may assist by searching Society records.

**NON-MEMBERS:** A minimum fee of \$44 for a 2 hour search then \$22 per hour or part thereof afterwards for researcher to search. \$15 per day for D.I.Y researchers.

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

**ENQUIRIES** All enquiries should be in writing and include a stamped self-addressed envelope. If via Email, no research will be undertaken until the fee is paid.

Mareeba Historical Society meetings are held the fourth Wednesday of each month excluding December.

### MEETING DATES FOR 2012

November 28th

December—No Meeting



**BOOKS FOR SALE AT  
MAREEBA HISTORICAL SOCIETY CENTRE**

<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>
LENNIE WALLACE	Dead Mans Gold Wild Jimmy Camels, Camelmen and Abdul Wade The Palmer Poltergeist Mt Mulligan's Highway Wheelbarrow Way Nomads of the 19th Century Goldfields Cape York Peninsula: A History of Unlauded Heroes: 1945—2003 The Battlers of Butcher's Creek From Nanango to Cooktown Bitten by the Bull Bug
JACK STRUBER	Jack's Book: 75 Years and Perfect Health: a true story of faith, believing and determination.
MULLIGAN, J.V.	A Journal of Exploration <i>Republished Aug 24, 2007</i>

**MAREEBA HISTORICAL SOCIETY PUBLICATIONS**

WW2 Diggers Book of Poetry Compiled by Helen Kindt

The Lone Wolf: Last of the old-time prospectors: The autobiography of Sam Elliott.  
 Edited by S.G. St Clair-Kendall and John C Hay

HARRIS, Ken	Bullock Hearts
HAY, John C in association with Colin and May Jones	Demise of the Typewriter: Recollections of a Queensland Era.
CLOW Margaret	The Mecca of our Desires—Kuranda and the Famous Barron Falls. First published. in 1914
RIMMER, Mike	Up the Palmerston: a history of the Cairns Hinterland up to 1920. Vol 1, 11 and 111.