

Mareeba Memoirs

Number 59 August 2013



**Royal Hotel in Byrnes Street Mareeba.
Destroyed by fire 2002**

Published quarterly by Historical Society of Mareeba .
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ISSN NO: 13271015

MEETINGS

Committee meetings held on the **SECOND** Saturday of each month at 8.30 am.

MEMBERSHIP FEES:

Due 1st July each year.

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From the Editor

We have had a busy three months since the last MMs. There has been a lot of activity at the Society. We have increasing numbers of visitors wandering in to see what we get up to. We have an interesting year coming up with less than 6 months to prepare for the 2014 period when all interest will be centred on the 100th anniversary of WW1. Over the remainder of this year we will be focussing on our WW1 collection and how best to display it during 2014.

We are living in a world of constant conflict, people are fleeing their countries to escape violence and religious intolerance. Television has given us access to world wide reporting of these various conflicts, in contrast to the first world war where the fighting was distant, and communications sparse. In WW1 our loyalties were with the mother country, our troops were fighting in places we knew very little about- places far away- and listening to the wireless and reading the papers was the only way to keep up with what was happening.

Part of my role here at the society is transcribing documents so that we can store them electronically This allows me access to interviews with long term residents, articles from the Cairns Post and other relevant newspapers, and stories from our local region, and I am lucky that all this reading broadens my knowledge of this interesting area that we live in.

I was fascinated by the account of one of the dances held in 1927 at the PCYC hall, and put an abbreviated version of the story in the Memoirs along with a story about such dances in the 1950s from one of our local members. Remember the old time dances? What ever happened to such wonderful social events. They drew a town together, everyone worked as a team to make them a success—both financially and socially- and it was a chance to get out the glad rags and dance the night away. On the following page is a report of a Masquerade Ball and Euchre competition organised by the CWA. It was held in the School of Arts building in Mareeba in November 1927. It was a well organised event and one that the whole town would have enjoyed. Bring back the local dances that the whole community can participate in, bring back a time when people of all ages congregated and had fun. Cheers Editor

From the Cairns Post Tuesday 25 January 1927

This story is about the wonderful women of the CWA organising a Masquerade Ball and Euchre competition to be held in the School of Arts building in Mareeba in November 1927.

The Cairns Post dated Tuesday 15 November 1927 tells us that the ball was highly successful socially and financially, over £16 being taken.

A Dreadnought Stall was held under the supervision of the President (Mrs. P. Bliss), and treasurer (Mrs. Davidson). It was run in the reading room, while other members helped at a soft drinks stall. Miss Alma Bolton was in charge of the tickets and door. The Dreadnought Stall had opened earlier in the evening (or late afternoon) and was sold out before the Euchre started.

As it was "Poppy Day" members of the C.W.A. Committee, each wore one of the flowers of remembrance.

Eleven tables competed at euchre; Mrs Pickering and Miss Vera Broadley tied for the £1/1/- ladies prize, with seven games won out of the nine played and divided the prize. Four gentlemen tied with seven games each for the gentlemen's £1/1/- prize:- Messrs. Jack Ure, J. Davidson, K. Brownlee, and Peter Murphy. The first named was successful in the draw off.

Miss Murrane's Hawaiian Orchestra excelled in its entrancing Hawaiian melodies, mingled with other popular dance music. The Orchestra comprised Mrs. Murrane, (flexatone), Misses Rose Troughton (mandolin, and steel guitar), Katie Brown and Agnes Carey (violins), Myra Murrane (piano), and Mr. Joe Murrane (drum and jazz effects).

Miss Mona Davidson made 100 jazz caps for a jazz cap waltz, and could have sold more. Mr. and Mrs. P. Ryan won this waltz and received the prize, a beautiful bronze jardinière. Mr Ray Hood made a capable M.C. for the dance. Supper, the arrangements for which were in the hands of the C.W.A. committee, was provided by members of the local C.W.A. The successful and enjoyable function terminated at 1am.

Note: Dreadnought Stall. A numbered ticket is purchased and in exchange the winner received a prize for that number.

Looking Back on Mareeba 1902 – 1918. Jack & Newell—an edited excerpt from “Lets Look Back:” A Mareeba Jubilee Review. by Hugh A. Borland

These years in Mareeba represented a consolidation of town interests, growth and expansion as befitted the beginning of a mechanical era. From the moment the railway reached Mareeba in 1893, the town was destined to be a transport hub and this made Mareeba an ideal place for Jack & Newell to set up their flagship store. Jack & Newell stores were central to people in all the small towns in our area, including Mareeba. Jack and Newell was a respected and responsible business, and played a part in developing and supporting the towns and people wherever they had a store. Like most general stores in those days, they sold everything that was necessary to support a town, its enterprises and its surrounding camps. They were the hub of many a small mining town in the North . The Mareeba store was rebuilt and refurbished in 1957 by Rod Newell and became the headquarters and flagship. Jack and Newell’s Mareeba store was the geographic and economic centre of their retail operations. Mareeba was the junction connected by rail to Cairns and the mining towns spreading around the region and the railways were the main form of transport and delivery to the various mining towns .

The Historical Society of Mareeba has a *Jack and Newell* website, and it is well worth visiting to find out more of the history of this iconic business empire that played a major role in the development of our region. Mareeba is also ideally situated to be a food bowl for the north, with plentiful water and good soil, and although it has gone through some downturns over the years, the grit and determination of its residents and the rural community should see it well placed to remain a hub for our region.

T.J. McMahon wrote of the opportunities open to Mareeba, with its mining heritage, rich agricultural land, good rainfall and climate. He was blunt about its flatness, barrenness heat and lack of trees, but believed Mareeba had a great future and he has proved to be right.

Good Old Fashioned Fun for the Young People of Mareeba.

One of our local girls growing up in Mareeba in the early 1950's remembers the great dances we used to have in the Church of England hall in Constance Street, the old RSL Hall, and sometimes at Emerald Creek Hall (on a Sunday Night). Dances were held on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights. Many Mareeba young people went to Atherton's Maryland's Hall on Roberts Street on a Saturday night and had the best time!

The Mareeba girls met the Atherton boys, and the Atherton girls met the Mareeba boys. Local bands (3,4, or 5 musicians) played for all these dances. Rock and Roll was all the craze at that time, as well as the very popular old time dances (Waltz, Progressive Barn Dance, Tap Gypsy Tap, the Quick Step and Foxtrot. We also loved occasionally going to Cairns to the Trocadero dances. (the fastest dance floor in the North). Something very special was the occasional "Midnight to Dawn" dance at St Josephs Hall in Atherton. Amongst all this entertainment were movies 6 nights a week at the Capitol Theatre. At half time we went to the popular cafes for Milk shakes and Spiders (soft drink and ice cream in a tall glass with a straw) which were very popular. Hot salted peanuts and dark chocolates were the other favourites. The Civic Theatre was built (with its own milk bar) in Byrnes Street, and the old Capitol Picture Theatre closed down. The Civic provided the same great entertainment, (2 movies per night, 6 nights a week plus a Saturday afternoon matinee) pleasure for their patrons. Many romances started at these much loved venues. Tennis and basketball were popular sports, swimming at the Brewery Hole on the Barron River, following the local football team. We travelled in "Mr Bethel's" horse float, (boys and girls) to the football matches all over the Tablelands, particularly before the boys were old enough to have their own cars. We were pretty lucky and had jobs with local firms and young people did not need to leave Mareeba to get a job as quite often happens now.

SECRETARY SAYINGS.

Hard to believe we will be in the 8th month when you receive this Mareeba Memoirs, where has the time gone? At the Centre the usual house cleaning has been ongoing with space cleared to start re-arranging the place. We have been busy with many visitors calling in.

PEANUTS PEANUTS PEANUTS PEANUTS

The Peanut Project is coming along well and if you know of anyone who grew them or has information and/ or photos please ask them to contact me, 4092 3599 or Em sec@mbahistsoc.org.au as we will be happy to receive.

Two of our members have donated to the Society a printer/scanner and for the kitchen a toasted sandwich maker. Both items are useful and both a great idea.

The information and photos for the Police Display were well received and the event deemed to have gone well.

Coming up this month will be 2 Market days on August 10th and 31st, and on the 24th, Multicultural Day which we will be attending.. Members: how about giving the few a helping hand occasionally. Over the past month or so we have had half our working members away on sick leave. It does place a heavy burden on those left and if you can spare a few hours we will be grateful, **THINK ON IT!**

This coming Market Day will also be the Gold Panning Championships day, which is also a very busy day for our Society. We will be putting on a display as usual both inside our Centre and out where the Championships will take place. More hands make light work! Be great to see you there.

You will find enclosed, nomination and proxy form and the agenda for the AGM which will be held in September, probably on Saturday 14th at 8.30 am. Please think if you can assist in any way. We do need President, Vice-president, Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Officer, Grant Officer, Publicity Person, usual committee members. Contact Helen at the Centre if interested to do your bit!

I was very surprised when told I had been nominated for the “Pride of Australia” award. Strangers in the street were talking to me about it. Person from the ACT contacted me to offer congratulation, same came from a family in Brisbane. The article was picked up by The Courier Mail and went Australia wide. The Tablelands Advertiser and Cairns Post started it off. Thank you for the nomination and I sincerely hope I live up to your expectations.

Discovered a gecko had died in the photocopier and so had to get Cairns Copy to come and scoop it out. That plus a new cyan toner has shaken the budget a bit. Other wise we should be in the black...just. All books at the Auditors at present so will wait and see.

Does anyone have ANY ideas on how we can bring money into the Centre. Doesn't matter how way out or wacky it seems, the idea will be listened to. While we have had more visitors then usual, most have short arms and long pockets when it comes to donations.

At present the monies coming in are from selling our second – hand books on market days, a little research and that's about it. Remember we are self-funded, no government at any level assists us , we have to raise our own to pay the bills.

IDEAS PLEASE.

We are forming a small committee of three to formulate a year long display next year, 2014. It is 100 years since World War 1 and as our society holds some interesting memorabilia from those days, it was thought we can achieve this. The three will be working hard to bring this to fruition and will need help along the way. So don't be surprised if you're tapped on the shoulder and asked to help.

For those who may have forgotten, it is TIME for membership dues. Mail, or drop off at the Centre or in our mail box situated on the walk way to the Visitors Information Centre, or Direct Deposit BSB 633000 Account 113573232 Mareeba Historic Society. By doing this you will put a big smile on the face on our Treasurer. Till I see you, take care, Helen Kindt Sec/Treas.

The Diversity of Mareeba.

Mareeba is a multicultural town and its history is reflected in the styles and variety of housing that was erected over the decades. Queenslanders, houses with European influences, workers cottages, the Assay building, and the impressive mosque. . Gaze down Byrnes Street and look at the commercial buildings, the hotels and shopfronts.

We are lucky to have two great coffee venues. Skybury and Coffee Works are delightful places to visit for coffee and light refreshments and we always take visitors from out of town to one or the other. Skybury is built in a very distinctive and open modern style and the views are wonderful. Great coffee and refreshments add to the pleasure of the visit. Coffee Works is a vibrant place to visit, with great coffee, good shopping and a wonderful cosmopolitan ambience.

The first buildings of significance in a new town are often the hotels. In the period leading up to 1894, the following hotels were built in Mareeba: Paskin's Terminus; Carroll's Carriers' Arms; Tom Dillon's Mining Exchange, Peter Byrne's Imperial; Walton's Federal (Cobb & Co's booking office 1893—1903); Strattman's Railway hotel and Bushell's Mareeba Brewery were built during the 1894-97 period. Mareeba was a town that provided significant employment opportunities for local people and of course Mareeba was a hub for the rail from Cairns outward and onward.

The following story is about the **1917 Annual Railway Picnic** for railway employees in Mareeba and reflects a way of life reminiscent of that period in time. It took place on Sunday, July 8th. Two trains left Mareeba, the one down the line left at 7.30am, to join in with the picnickers going out to Babinda.; the other left at 8.30 a.m. for Wondecla. A big crowd left in the train for Wondecla. At each station on the way up the Herberton range more picnickers with their baskets and hampers were waiting, so that by the time the train arrived at Wondecla there were about 300 souls on board. They arrived at the Wondeckla Show Grounds, all disembarked and sought shady nooks along the banks of the Wild River, to enjoy the contents of their baskets.

Hot water was supplied for tea making. The sports committee set to work immediately and soon had an event started. As usual on the occasion of these popular picnics, Mr. Donald Murchison was "best man." He looked after the hot water and general comfort of everybody, doing the work of a dozen. But this year his cheery bagpipes were silent, he says he won't play them again till his son returns from the war. Children's races, skipping, hop-step, and jump, etc., were soon in full swing also, £5 being divided among them for their various events. An abundance of lollies, fruit, and soft drinks were provided for all by the railway men. The following is a list of the principal events of the day:

Picnic Handicap, 100 yards. E, Carroll 1, G. Moody 2, A. Murchison 3. Prizes, 30/-, 10/-, and 5/-. Six others started.

Railway Handicap, 120 yards. Harris 1, Moody 2, Barrett 3. Prizes, £2/10/-, 15/-, and 5/-. Three others started.

Womens Race.-Mrs. Hussey 1, Mrs. Gilman 2. Prizes, 30/-, 10/-, and 5/-. Four others started.

Hop, step, and jump.-Cronin 1, Moody 2. Prizes, 15/- and 5/-. Three others started. Cronin winning by just 2in.

Stepping 100ft.-Tait 1, Dawson 2. Prizes 15/- and 5/-. Twenty-three others started.

Old Buffers' Race, 75 yards.-Murchison 1, Cronin 2, Hussy 3. Prizes, £1/1/-, bottle of whisky and 5/-. Three others started.

Second Old Buffers' Race.-Cronin 1, Woods 2. Prize, 15/-. Four others started.

At 4.45 p.m. the whistle sounded, and there was a hasty gathering and all piled on board to head home, and agreeing that for bright and happy fun the **1917** "Railways Employees Picnic" equalled any that had gone before. Mareeba was reached at 7.55 p.m. The thanks of all who went were heartily given to the committee and all those railwaymen who worked so hard and provided such a pleasant day's enjoyment.

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 at 8.30 am on the second Saturday of each month.

MEETING DATES FOR 2013

September	14
October	12
November	9
December	14

2014

January	11
February	8

On the old trains the engineer had a lot of esteem.

A railroad engineer must be sure not to lose his train of thought or he might go down the wrong track

As I hurtled through space, one thought kept crossing my mind
- every part of this rocket was supplied by the lowest bidder.

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

Author

Title

LENNIE WALLACE

Dead Mans Gold
Wild Jimmy
Camels, Camelmen and Abdul Wade
The Palmer Poltergeist
Mt Mulligan's Highway
Wheelbarrow Way
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.

RUTH KERR

John Moffatt of Irvinebank

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

HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MAREEBA PUBLICATIONS

WW2 Diggers Book of Poetry Compiled by Helen Kindt

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.

MULLIGAN, J.V.

A Journal of Exploration
Republished Aug 24, 2007