

Mareeba Memoirs

Number 67 May 2015

Mareeba Historical Society



This beautiful piece of local rock was bought to its new resting place at the Mareeba Historical Society courtesy of our Mareeba Council, and the plaque was donated by the Mareeba branch of the RSL in dedication to “those who sacrificed so that we may live free”. Thanks to all who assisted us in this important endeavour.

The Mareeba Memoirs are published quarterly by the
Historical Society of Mareeba .
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
Every SUNDAY except the one AFTER Mareeba
Markets 10 till 4
Every 2nd FRIDAY starting from 8th May 2015.

Mareeba Historical Society

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MEETINGS

General/social monthly meetings held on the **First** Wednesday of each month at 930 pm.

COMMITTEE MEETING:

Meeting dates on Page 9.

MEMBERSHIP FEES:

Due 1st July each year.

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From the Editor

Your team at the Historical Society are busy putting together fascinating and historically significant displays for the coming year, raising our awareness of the role that Australians played in World War I. Make sure you have a look. It is a credit to Helen, David and Carol who have done a wonderful job

gathering information and articles to display. Thanks also to members and friends who have kindly allowed the society to display precious historical items. This is an important time to reflect on “what might have been” and the part our fledgling nation paid in ensuring that we live as a free people in a wonderful country.

Gallipoli is the place that most people associate with the ANZACs. It was a crushing defeat, that saw the loss of many lives, and yet it is one of the most commemorated battles with the wide ranging coverage of WW1 and the part that our fledgling country paid in the four year battle will remind us all of the grim conflict that was played out in Europe..

The **51st Battalion, Far North Queensland Regiment** (51 FNQR) is our Far North Queensland Regiment, and draws its lineage from an Australian AIF battalion, which was raised for service during World War I. While still training in the Egyptian desert in late 1914, the 1st Australian Division and the New Zealand Australian Division, which later included the 1st Light Horse Brigade, were re-formed into the

Sad news this week with the passing of Shirley Leswell. Shirly was one of the first people I met in Mareeba when I first ventured over to the Art Society to see what went on in the town. She had a wicked sense of humour, didn't suffer fools gladly and enjoyed and was always available for a chat and an exchange of views. She was a dab hand at her pottery wheel, taught many students the art, and her pottery is on display at the Art Society. Shirley was an integral part of market days. She livened up our days, kept us all on our toes, and her witty repertoire will be sorely missed. She contributed generously to the Mareeba Historical Society, sharing her knowledge, and loaning us precious WW1 artefacts for our displays. Rest in Peace Shirley Leswell

Cricket in Queensland—Odds and Ends

Cricket in Queensland can be traced as far back as 1864, when they played New South Wales for the first time, oddly enough in the middle of the Australian winter. A Queensland XXII went down to a NSW XI, with Queensland recording 11 ducks in their second innings and both sides having difficulties avoiding the copious potholes in the outfield. The Queensland Cricket Association was formed in 1876, but their geographical location made it impractical for them to join in as the game progressed further south, and they did not play host to South Australia until 1899 or Victoria until 1902.

Even in these early years Queenslanders took umbrage at the vagaries of the Australian selectors, claiming, even as they do today, that their players must do more than any others to force international selection. Many talented players went unnoticed, putting into perspective the achievements of Roger Hartigan, an elegant strokeplayer cum Brisbane auctioneer, who scored a hundred on Test debut in 1908.

Formation of a Branch of the Red Cross in Mareeba.

Northern Herald Saturday 26th 1914. A branch of the Red Cross was formed in 1914 at Mareeba,.. The committee cannot speak too highly of the generosity and universal courtesy from all who have given so liberally, and in November 25 pounds was forwarded to endow a Mareeba bed in the Brisbane Military Hospital, also £1 to the sub-committee of hospitals. The Committee also beg to thank the press, the School of Arts Committee, the Q.N. Bank, the local stores, the citizens of Mareeba and Biboohra generally for their assistance and Red Cross works, also Mr S. C. Anning who donated a bullock to the funds, and Mr Barber who audited the Society's books. The Hon.Secretary, Eliza. D. Fraser thanked everyone for their assistance.

SAYINGS FROM YOUR SECRETARY.

By the time you read this, our WW1 photographic display and plaque will have been opened and unveiled by Mayor Tom Gilmore. Our Vice –President John Hammond did a great job as M.C. Introducing M/s Christina Madigan to perform Welcome to Country , with Tony Hall-Matthew giving his blessing along with a short history lesson. After browsing through the many wonderful displays the pleasing number of people in attendance were invited to the Art Society’s Gallery 58 rooms for a delicious morning tea, which consisted of home made Anzac biscuits, fruit cake and sandwiches.

To cap: Carol, David and Helen worked since 2012 to get this display to the point it is today. We photographed our glass negatives, made them into photos, researched the names that applied to the glass slides then collated all the information onto A4 size paper. Laminated and they were ready for display. A wonderful collection of giant sizes posters adorn the top part of the walls lending colour and information to the rest of the display.

To thank the many people who loaned our Society their precious artefacts, we held a wine and cheeses evening later that day, so they could also view the display. Each one was pleased and surprised on how well their treasures were displayed. In all, a wonderful, interesting , fulfilling, long but tiring day. Do come and see for yourselves just what our society can do/does. It may inspire you to lend a hand now and again and take joy and pride in the valuable work we do.

Historians from south gasp in surprise when they see the varied collection which our society hold. They become green with envy.

So come look, then tell your family and friends and anyone who will listen to come on in and have a look.

YOU WILL BE SURPRISED!

Dates and times are as follows:

Tuesdays and Wednesdays 8am till 4pm.

Every second Friday starting from 8th May: 9 am till 4pm.

Mareeba Market Days, 2nd & 5th Saturdays of each month
7,30am till noon.

Sunday: 10 till 4 WITH exception of the Sunday after Mareeba Market Day.

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Did You Know?

Chinese labourers were used to repair roads during WW1. The officer in charge decided to fill in one large hole with bully beef tins lying nearby. Now what if they were Biboohra bully beef tins.!

VALE

Shirley Ann Leswell.

Member. A wonderful artist and potter. President for many years of the Mareeba Art Society. Good friend, great shoulder to lean on, sage advice. You will be missed Sal.



Mustard Gas - From the frontline to Chemotherapy

One hundred years ago saw the commencement of the Great War which would leave 17 million people dead, injured or missing in action. The squalid conditions of the trenches, made life a living hell for those on the front line.

But it was made even worse by the work of industrial chemists. Soldiers reported a shimmering cloud around their feet and a strange peppery smell in the air. Within 24 hours they started to itch uncontrollably and developed horrific blisters and sores. Some started coughing up blood. They had been poisoned by mustard gas - one of the most deadly chemical weapons deployed in battle. Gas masks were of no use because the gas could be absorbed through the skin. It could take up to six weeks to die from mustard gas. It was just one of a number of poison gases developed by Fritz Haber, a Professor at the prestigious University of Karlsruhe. World War I is known to some as the chemists' war.

Towards the end of the Great War, this gas had not only killed and crippled but instilled terror across the battlefield. The first use in Ypres alone left up to 10,000 people dead, with many more injured.

As World War II loomed, scientists went back to the research conducted into an antidote for poison gases used during WWI. Two doctors researched medical records of WWI soldiers and the implications of the use of mustard gas. Many of the soldiers had a surprisingly low number of immune cells in their blood – cells that, if mutated, can go on to develop into leukaemia and lymphoma. Goodman and Gilman hypothesised that if mustard gas could destroy normal white blood cells, it seemed likely that it could also destroy cancerous ones. Further research led to the development of what we now know as chemotherapy. .

www.scienceblog.cancerresearchuk.org

“Free Drinks to Frozen Troops. *The Northern Herald*”.
Friday May 18, 1917.

What are known as the “hot free drinks to frozen troops” canteens of the Australian Y.M.C.A are reported to be one of the latest successes of that practical organisations. These canteens accompany the men to the firing line, and such dugouts and shelters that have been attacked by shell fire. Many of the Y.M.C.A. Centres themselves in France were continuously under fire for some weeks before the last mail left. There were 21 Australian Y.M.C.A. Centres in operation in France and at each of these centres an average of 3,500 free warm drinks were distributed free to men coming off duty. The hospitality was enjoyed by all grades, from Brigadier-Generals to Privates.

The First World War was the first armed conflict in which aircraft were used. About 3,000 Australian airmen served in the Middle East and France with the Australian Flying Corps, mainly in observation capacities or providing support to the infantry .

One of the first airmen to be awarded the Victoria Cross was Lieutenant Frank McNamara in Palestine in March 1917.

There are several ways to pay bills, but the majority of the big ones are paid with reluctance. The Queenslander (Brisbane, Qld. : 1866 - 1939) Sunday 15 September 1894

Taken from “Aussie” the diggers own paper of the battlefield 1914-1918 on the difficulties others had in deciphering the fine shades of meaning of Aussie slang used by soldiers in the trenches.

“ What do you boys mean, exactly, when you refer to coming a gutzer?” asked a young lady at the YMCA. I’ve heard it used a lot by the boys, but I’ve never known quite what it means.”

“It means a ‘thud”” explained Matthews.

“A fall-in” added O’Brien, helpfully.

“A bad sort of failure,” I explained.

“ A regular thud” said O’Brien.

The Aussie lingo had many scratching their heads and wondering what they meant.

1915 in Mareeba.

Through lack of financial assistance, the Mareeba District Hospital committee experienced difficulty in meeting their obligations. An S.O.S. was sent out and the first to answer the call was Mr. George Young, proprietor of the Capitol Theatre, who will give a picture benefit on April 26 in aid of this deserving institution. On this night the pictures shown will be an education for the rising generation as illustrations will be shown of the landing at Gallipoli taken from actual photos, showing Anzac Beach. Etc. The famous Treacle McFarlane, one of the first to land, and also pictures of Joe Masterson, Gill Lyons, and many others of our Mareeba soldiers as they were in 1915.

Extract from Mareeba – Meeting Place of Waters 1893 – 1946. By Huge Borland.

During the war of 1914-18 a society, “Do Our Best”, (DOB) functioned on behalf of the local home front. It was ably assisted by the Red Cross ladies group. There is a very active organisation, the Patriotic Society doing great work in Mareeba today. Its Secretary is Mrs M. Ward, and its oldest energetic member, Mrs N. Waddell, who does not find her advanced age any handicap at all.

1915 were Queenslanders, part of the 9th Battalion, in one of the landing craft that came ashore in the predawn darkness at 4.21am Australian rear-guard unit pulled out of their position on 19/20th December 1915. The Anzac evacuation was executed with perfect military precision and 35,445 Anzac's were taken off Anzac Cove beach with only one casualty, a man wounded by a stray shot. It was a sad day for these 35,445 remaining Anzacs who had to leave 7,594 of their Australian mates and 2,431 of their New Zealand mates behind, buried in Ottoman soil. - See more at: <http://www.mhhv.org.au>

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 2015

June	13
July	11
August	8
September	12
October	10
November	7
December	12

Some words of wisdom

- *Never under estimate the power of very stupid people in large groups.*
- INDECISION is the key to FLEXIBILITY.
- **A person who smiles in the face of adversity probably has a scapegoat.**
- **Plagiarism saves time**

**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
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
Republished Aug 24, 2007

MAREEBA HISTORICAL SOCIETY 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.