



Relative Thoughts

Volume 26 No. 4

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Quarterly Journal of the Fleurieu Peninsula Family History Group Inc.

REMEMBRANCE DAY

Remembrance Day falls on the 11th of November each year. On the 11th hour on the 11th day of the 11th month, a minutes' silence is observed and dedicated to those soldiers who died fighting to protect the nation.

In Australia and other allied countries, including New Zealand, Canada and the United States, 11 November became known as Armistice Day – a day to remember those who died in World War One. The day continues to be commemorated in allied countries.

After World War Two, the Australian Government agreed to the United Kingdom's proposal that Armistice Day be renamed Remembrance Day to commemorate those who were killed in both World Wars. Today the loss of Australian lives from all wars and conflicts is commemorated on Remembrance Day.

Stone of Remembrance



Source: <https://www.army.gov.au/our-heritage/traditions/remembrance-day>

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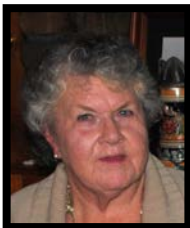


FPFHG Facebook
Group



View of Witton Bluff on Facebook and websites

PRESIDENT'S REPORT



Welcome to Volume 26 Edition 4 for 2022. It has been another interesting year for the Group. Our group continues to grow in many ways, due to the efforts by all who help in many ways. During the year we have welcomed new members and sadly said goodbye to some. We miss them. If this is your first Journal with us, we welcome you, enjoy this edition and more to come.

The year began with a challenge. Due to an upsurge in Covid cases our January meeting was cancelled. Covid 19 conditions have now been relaxed, but we are still reminded to care for each other, we continue to support some of the conditions. Slowly, we are returning to 'the old ways'. This is with some caution!

Edition 4 brings the current year to an end, another successful year with interesting speakers, activities for members to enjoy, and the continuing growth of our collection in the Resource Room. All of these have been achieved with extra ordinary work by many volunteers.

Attendances at activities in the past three months have once again been rewarding for the organisers. Cold, wet, dark nights have affected some night activities. Hopefully, when weather and conditions improve, so will the attendances at these events. The workshops which Sharon Green has organised for the first Wednesday of each month (the same day as the Resource Room is open and available for research) have been well attended. Watch out for reminders from Sharon, the topics vary and are helpful for keeping us up to date with new additions/updates to our record keeping programs.

The Resource Room has been well supported by members who volunteer their time to work on projects, stocktake and sort our collection, and also assist members who attend looking for information or assistance on how to find it. The Pioneer Project continues to grow and has become a valuable collection with Kath Fisher and her supporters Judy Dowling, Marie Noble and Sharon (who is copying the collection for safe keeping). Thank you all. Please look at our website, you may have an ancestor/ancestors who qualify for the program or maybe 'Adopt a Pioneer' and add another family. Pauline and her assistants have been 'weeding' the collection and have been able to make some duplicate copies available for members to purchase.

There are people 'who are working behind the scenes' – Kerry Edwards, Jenny Chapman, Ros Dunstall, Nola Clisby, Elizabeth Grocke, Lynette Gibson, Gay Jennings, Peter Tuck and my 'right hand' Sharon Green – many thanks to you all. Pauline Redman, Chris Grivell and Heather Boyce are not Committee members, but are always available in the Resource Room or our technical/computing issues, also many who assist each week with various tasks, Jeanette Bell, Chris Smallacombe, Jim Binning, James Usher, people who assist with the afternoon tea and tidying up required before we leave – a huge thank you. These tasks all help to make our gatherings successful.

Aussie Group held at Ros Dunstall's home has had a couple of hiccups during the year, but is now back on track and these gatherings are always entertaining, informative problem solving, sharing times for those who attend. Thank you Ros.

Our speaker co-ordinator, Elizabeth Grocke has once again presented a great variety of speakers. July—John Andrewartha from the West Torrens Historical Society – he shared stories of various activities and achievements in the district of West Torrens. August – Emily and Kelly from the National Australian Archives demonstrated what records are available and how to access them. Another handy tool for research. September – Dr Samantha Battams described how she researched and wrote *The Rhynie Poisoning Case - The True Crimes of Alexander Newland Lee*. A sad family story.

Our speaker for October will be Ron Dearing who has published *Put Some Flesh onto the Bones Discovering the ancestors on a family tree are real people who can be related*. More help for our research.

In August Sharon and I were invited to speak at the Christies Beach Probus. We were warmly welcomed to their meeting and shared the history of the group and our current activities. We met June Hill who has since joined our group. Saturday 10 September we were invited to participate in the LDS Family Day at their centre. Some members also attended where we renewed friendships. Both activities were interesting for us and we were welcomed by their members. Our Members are always welcome to visit the History Centre on Beach Road.

As the current year comes to an end, once again we are looking for some new members to join our Committee. As mentioned in this edition – forms are available and nominations close on 5 November. The AGM will be held on 19 November, the speaker will be John Brownlie from the Head Stone Project, “War Vet Head Stones”. We will advise details of the meeting in coming days.

Thank you all for your continuing support and look forward to seeing you all again soon.

Stay safe,

Joy Nieass - President

VALE—ALAN STACEY

It is with much sadness we acknowledge the passing on one of our members.

Alan Stacey passed away on 14 September 2022, aged 85 years. Our condolences are extended to his wife Jeannette and their family. Jeannette and Alan joined our Group in September 2010. We will miss them both as Jeannette is moving to Sydney to join her family. Our thoughts are with Jeannette as her life goes on without Alan.

COMMITTEE ELECTIONS FOR 2023

The election for the Committee for 2023 will be conducted at the Annual General Meeting on Saturday, 19 November 2022. Positions for re-election are President, Treasurer and four General Committee positions.

If you cannot attend the AGM and wish to vote, please contact the Secretary well in advance for a Proxy Voting Form.

Nomination forms to be lodged with **The Secretary**, Fleurieu Peninsula Family History Group Inc, PO Box 1078, Christies Beach North SA 5165 or email to *fleurpen-groupinc@yahoo.com.au* by close of business on **5 November 2022**. Nominations received after this date will not be included in the Election.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

As per the Constitution (Section 7—Membership Fees) the Executive Committee proposed an increase in fees relating to the Group's Journal *Relative Thoughts*. This was accepted by the members present at the general meeting on 20 August 2022.

The increase is effective from 1 November 2022.

Family Membership:

- \$35.00 (includes an email edition)
- \$42.50 (includes a printed, posted edition)

Single Membership:

- \$30.00 (includes an email edition)
- \$37.50 (includes a printed, posted edition)

Membership Fees Are Due

Members are reminded that the financial year ends on 31 October. Members must be financial before the AGM, Saturday, 17 November. Non-financial members may not vote, nominate or stand for committee positions, **and are NOT covered by PPFHG Insurance**.

Please ensure your membership subscription is paid before the AGM.

Reminder: There is a \$5.00 rejoining fee payable for any membership not paid by 28 February.

Renewal membership forms were given out at the September meeting, and posted to those not in attendance.

HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY

“I saw behind me those who had gone, and before me, those who are to come.

I looked back and saw my father, and his father, and all our fathers,
And in front, to see my son, and his son, and the sons upon sons beyond.

And their eyes were my eyes.

As I felt, so they had felt, and were to feel, as then, so now, as tomorrow and
forever.

Then I was not afraid,

For I was in a long line that had no beginning, and no end,

And the hand of his father grasped my father's hand, and his hand was in mine,
And my unborn son took my right hand, and all, up and down the line stretched
from Time That Was, to Time That Is and is not yet, raised their hands to show the
link,

And we found that we were one,

Born of Woman, Son of Man,

Had in the Image, fashioned in the womb by the will of God, the eternal Father.

I was one of them, they were of me, and in me, and I in all of them.”

Richard Llewellyn, *How Green Was My Valley*

CORNWALL: A LAND OF SUPERSISTIONS, MYTHICAL CREATURES, SAINTS AND HOLY WELLS Part 2 by Jan Lokan

In this journal about a year ago, to go with a talk I had given at one of the group's regular meetings, I wrote about several superstitions, beliefs about mythical creatures and legends that are known to have been prevalent among Cornish people over many centuries. Some customs and beliefs have persisted even to the present day, particularly activities associated with formal festivals. The second part of the talk focused on saints and holy wells, which are characteristic of many Cornish towns and regions and are the subject of this second part of the article.

Other Celtic countries such as Wales, Scotland, Ireland and Brittany, have their own traditions of saints and holy wells, as well as sharing some with Cornwall. No one has been able to produce an accurate account of how many saints there are and have been in Cornwall, but the number is agreed to be in excess of 200. Authors who have written about Cornish holy wells claim that there must be more than double that number of such sites.

In Part 1, we saw that Cornish people would have been superstitious since they evolved as a Celtic racial group by about 700 BCE, but we can't know that in detail because they had no tradition to write things down before the late Middle Ages. What we know of their customs and traditions has been passed down orally by story-tellers ('drolls') walking from village to village, rather like 'wandering minstrels'. It is only in the last 150 or so years that some classic books have been written about various Cornish superstitions, beliefs and traditions, and we can be well-informed about them nowadays.

Saints

Cornwall has many towns and a proliferation of picturesque villages scattered between them. In earlier days, however, the countryside was divided up into the estates of landowners, where their peasant workers were housed, similar to other places in days gone by in what we know as Europe. As Christianity took hold during Roman times in Britain, estates and towns each had a church in the centre of their fiefdoms, sometimes more than one. Many of the smaller groups of inhabitants would also have at least a chapel. These churches, and some of the chapels, each tended to have a saint attached to it, after whom it was named. Even today, an inspection of any map of Cornwall shows a great many towns, villages and churches with 'Saint', or 'St', at the beginning of their name.

The history of saints is peppered by vagaries of dates and places. A few saints were known of in Cornwall as early as the 4th Century CE, before the Romans had left Britain, but by the 5th and 6th Centuries there were many more who had come as missionary monks from Ireland, Brittany and Wales, intent on converting Cornish people to Christianity. They were typically referred to as Celtic rather than Cornish because they mostly did not originate in Cornwall. Some of them went on to spread their efforts to other places (Devon and Somerset in particular), but many stayed to live in Cornwall and continue their missionary work.

The most dominant source of saints at this time was King Brychan of Wales who, together

with his wife Gladwisa, is recorded as having given birth to 24 children (some say 26!). He is estimated to have been born between 490 and 550 CE and was sent to be brought up by a wise man from the age 4 – as was then the custom for a male child destined for leadership. He and at least 15 of his family moved to Cornwall during the 6th Century, where the children all became saints, busily establishing churches and trying to overcome historical pagan influences and practices still existing in Cornwall at the time. Some stayed in Wales, establishing churches there, while others moved on to do the same in Devon. The present-day region of Breconshire, in Wales, is named after him. The medieval stained-glass window shown here, from St Neot's church in Cornwall, depicts Brychan holding some of his children in his lap.



Other Celtic communities had their own saints. St Patrick, who lived from about 390 to 461 CE, actually originated in Britain but was taken, aged six, across to Ireland as a slave by pirates, was later ordained as a priest and became a missionary. He is regarded as the founder of the 'glory of Ireland' that evolved into the Catholic church. St David, well-known as the patron Saint of Wales, lived more than a century later, as his mother, a Cornish saint, was a grand-daughter of King Brychan. Whether he was born in Cornwall (said to be in the middle of a thunderstorm), or his mother had gone back to Wales before he was born, is not explained, nor is his father identified. St David founded many monasteries in Wales and is also honoured in Brittany and Cornwall, where the town of Davidstow, north of Bodmin Moor, is named after him. It is said that Irish saints visited Mynyw, the part of Wales (in the west and south) that St David frequented, to learn from his teachings.

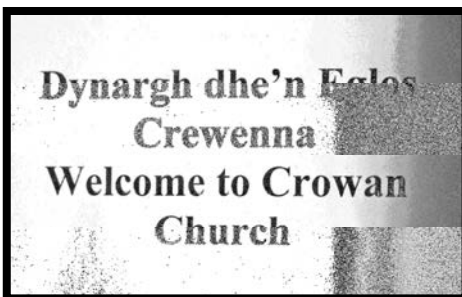
The most influential early Cornish saint was St Petroc, who has been described as 'the most distinguished gift from sixth century Wales to south-west Britain'. The grand parish church in Bodmin, where some of his relics were kept in earlier times before being pillaged, retrieved and pillaged again, bears his name. He was said to be the son of a Welsh king or chieftain (not Brychan), who vowed as a young man to devote his life to God. With several friends he went to Ireland and lived as a monk, eventually travelling to Cornwall by boat and landing in the estuary of the River Camel, where he established a monastery. He led a life of 'prayer and good deeds', healing many sick people and animals. His first monastery was at Petrocstow (later Padstow), now a very well-known north coast town. He was practical and built a mill as well as a chapel there. Several years later, after a pilgrimage to Rome, he moved to found a village in the moors, which is how the major town of Bodmin, meaning 'dwelling of monks', began. Celtic saints were not immortal, and Petroc died near Padstow, where his tomb is located. He was also influential in Brittany, where there is a large statue of him in the Cathedral at St Pol de Léon in the district of Cornouaille.

King Brychan's family comprised boys and girls in equal numbers. Among those who became saints in Cornwall, and the towns they were associated with, were Johannes (St Ive and St Ives), Endellienta (St Endellion), Menfre (St Minver), Tethe (St Teath), Mabena (St Mabyn), Wenna (St Wenn or Wenna), Morwenna (Morwenstow), Keri (Egloskerry), Keyne (St Keyne), Adwen (Advent – a place, not a time period) and Lanent (Lelant). His oldest son, Nectan, was associated with Tintagel at about the same time as the legendary King Arthur. All

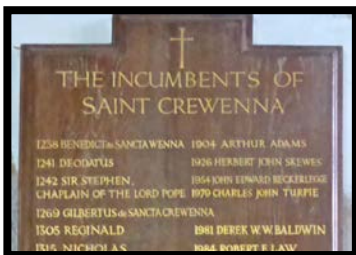


of them busily set up chapels and churches. Over time, most of their original buildings had newer ones erected at the same spots.

I am especially interested in St Wenna, connected with two churches that I have been to and which have sign boards in them mentioning the saints' names. One is in Wendron, where I initially thought my family had come from so I photographed it ('St Wendrona') and the other is in Crowan, where I now know they did come from ('St Crewenna'). Another school of thought has Crewenna coming to Cornwall with a group of Irish missionaries, led by Breaca (Breage) and Gwinear (Gwinear), other female saints.



The present church in Crowan dates from 1238, though it has been considerably refurbished since then. Inside, there is a very long board listing the 'incumbents' from 1238 to the present day, the very first being 'Benedict de Sancta Wenna', for three years, and the fourth being 'Gilbertus de Sancta Crewenna' for 36 years. Only the top part of this board is shown here, for readability.



Wenna/Crewenna was a female saint. She is shown, along with a male counterpart, in a stained-glass window inside the church. (St Michael, of St Michael's Mount fame, was in Cornwall too, but predates Brychan's offspring in that he comes from Biblical times.) Crewenna is on the right, with her name unfortunately partly obscured by a pot plant.



The Cornwall Record Office has a document prepared by the Bishop of this church in 1666, showing where various citizens of the town of Crowan sat in church services. It was very hierarchical, and wives sat in a different area from their husbands. From the record, I know that my forebear John Goldsworthy (Golserye, on the eighth line – the 's' used to look like a cursive 'f' in those days) sat in one of this group of pews half way along on the right-hand side. That gave me a rather creepy feeling, as did seeing his name among the list of parishioners that the Bishop recorded.



THE other family names given in the document are: ANEAR, ARGOLL, ARTHUR, BURLACE, BOLITHOWE, BOSANKOE, BROWNE, BRYAN, BYNNER, CARBUS, CLYSE, COALE, COATH, CONNALLY, CONNER, COMMON, DALE, DAVIE, DAWES, DONNING, ELLIS, GLASON, GOLFERYE, HART, HEARE, HIDON, HOLMAN, HOSKIN, HUE, HUMPHRYE, HUTCHINS, JEFFRYES, JORY, KEMP, KITTOWE, KNEEBONE, LIBBY, LUCAS, MAN, NICKOLLS, PAULE, PEIRSE, POLKINHORNE, POLLEOWE, PRYOR, REELYE, REIGNOLD, RICHARD, ROGERS, ROWE, SAMPSON, SAUNDRYE, SOUTHCOTT, TIERACK, TRELOOER, TRESISE, TREUREN, TREVENNING, TRUSSELL, UDYE, VISSENT, VYOLL, WALTERS, WARREN, WILLIAMS, WHEARE, YESTLES.

There are many more Cornish saints worth being mentioned, but I will restrict this part of the article to two more – St Neot and St Piran. St Neot, recorded as dating from the 9th Century, was very short, known as the ‘pygmy saint’, but had a very large soul. He was a hermit, said to have come from Glastonbury Abbey in nearby Gloucestershire, hence could well have originated from a visiting Welsh pilgrim. The Cornish church named after him was built on the ancient site of his hermit’s cell, in a beautiful wooded valley on a tributary of the Fowey River, in an area that is fairly sparsely populated even today. He was attuned to the natural world and regarded as having power over animals. The church is renowned for the stories told in its many stained-glass windows from mediaeval times. These include the one of King Brychan and his children featured earlier, and another which depicts stags offering themselves to pull ploughs after the oxen belonging to the farm on St Neot’s monastery had been stolen. Another story is of a deer, being hunted, which came to Neot for protection. Neot stopped the hounds from attacking it and the huntsman was so impressed that he gave up hunting and became a monk.

You will have heard of the patron saint of Cornwall, St Piran, who is celebrated in South Australia by people of Cornish heritage on or near 5 March each year. Cornwall’s flag, of a white cross on a black background, is known as St Piran’s flag. Several places in Cornwall are named after him, particularly Perranwell, Perranporth, and less obvious in meaning, Perranuthno (‘Perran the little’), Perranarworthal (‘Perran on the notable river’) and Perranzabuloe (‘Perran in the sands’). Like many other saints at the time, St Piran came from Ireland, where the story has it that, through his goodness, he was able to feed ten Irish kings and their armies for 10 days with three cows. Through prayers he was also able to bring back to life some hunting dogs that had been killed, and also warriors who had lost their lives in battles. Despite these deeds, he managed to anger some of the kings so much that they threw him off a cliff into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck. The wind was very strong and the sea so turbulent that he stayed on the surface and then was able to float to Cornwall when the sea became calm. Such is the mythology that surrounds some of the early saints (when you think of it, this isn’t very different from the Christian story of God creating the world in seven days). There is another more prosaic



school of thought about St Piran that he was one of the Welsh saints that made a pilgrimage through Cornwall to Brittany, as his life is celebrated in both of those regions as well as Cornwall. The superstitious Cornish prefer to stay with the floating on the millstone version.

Some story-tellers credit St Piran with the discovery of tin. He would stroll across the sands and along the sea-front collecting plants and rocks for decorations in his chapel. One day he used a particularly heavy, dark rock on which to build a fire to cook his meal. The fire became very hot, and a bright stream of white metal flowed out of it – symbolised on the Cornish flag. He was joyful that God had shown him a way to produce something that would be useful to man, and told another saint, St Chiwidden, about the discovery. Chiwidden devised a method of producing the metal in large quantities, which led to a large celebratory feast being held with the people of St Agnes, who quenched their warning beacon afterwards so that others would not be drawn to the area and their discovery would be revealed. This is pure mythology, as Cornish tin was known about much earlier than that, in Phoenician times.

North of Perranporth there are rare remains of the sixth century chapel, or oratory, that St Piran built. These premises were reportedly used for about four centuries before becoming buried beneath sand dunes, where they remained for hundreds of years. Excavations were begun in 1835 and finished in 1843. At some stage a protective wall was built around the excavations, and some reinforcements were done. In 1910 a roof was placed over them and the complex was reburied, for further protection. Thorough excavations were carried out in 2014 (no wonder I couldn't find the oratory when I walked for ages on the dunes looking for it in 2010). The site and the reinforced remains are now a destination of pilgrimage for Cornish and others today, as they were in earlier centuries of the Middle Ages.



Holy wells

Holy wells existed long before the Romans, and Christianity, arrived in Britain -- most are natural occurrences though some are given supernatural origins in Cornish folklore. Going back centuries before Christian times, all kinds of water sites have been respected in Celtic communities – lakes, rivers, springs and wells in particular. After all, water is essential to life – and gained extra significance in Christian times for baptism purposes. The northern hemisphere Celtic countries would not have suffered the kinds of droughts we have in Australia, so springs and wells would have been fairly prevalent.

Many of the wells accorded 'holy' status in Cornwall from the times of the saints onwards, that is, from about the 5th Century, are simply springs bubbling up from the ground, while others are waterholes left in crevices after rainfalls. Some are subterranean, in that steps into dug-out ground are needed to reach them. Over the centuries many structures to surround the locations of wells have been built. Some of these are now very old and neglected, while others have been refurbished, particularly in the latter part of the 19th Century, as people became more mobile. Many are named after saints, especially those in or near churchyards, and a wide variety of superstitions is associated with them. The wells have been ascribed many purposes, from simply places to make wishes or to bathe, or heal infirmities and sicknesses or as baptismal fonts and, most basic, as a community's water supply.

Only a few examples are given here, beginning with St Piran's well which is at Perranarworthal, close to the sands where the excavated oratory is. This well was said to be known in pagan times. Water is collected from it by many churches, who regard it as 'holy water' and use it for baptisms. Another two nearby wells were said to be established by him, one of which has become too overgrown to reach and the other of which was lost when miners creating a mine entry (an 'adit') inadvertently tapped the spring and drained it.



St Neot's well is near where the hermit saint's cave was. It is fairly shallow, but Neot, as we've seen, was a pygmy so that when he stood in the well, the water came up to his shoulders. He was very pious and used to begin each day by standing in it and reciting psalms. The medieval stories illustrated in stained-glass windows in the present-day church, which dates from the 15th Century, mostly feature this well. The history of the church is interesting -- the original chapel was built in about 934 CE, was rebuilt and became a monastery from 1204, had its first 'vicar' in 1238 (the same year as St Crewenna's) and was again reconstructed in the 1420s. The church did not lose its windows in the centuries when zealous Protestants and Puritans were destroying church ornamentation, because the canny parishioners covered them in whitewash. The windows were not restored until the 1820s.



In St Neot's time, an angel put three fish into the well and told him that if he could eat just one fish a day, and then throw its bones back into the water, by the next day there would be three whole fish again. One day he sent a servant to get the fish, but the servant took out *two* fish and cooked them, breaking the spell which would have provided a constant lifetime supply of food for Neot. Instead of eating them, Neot starved himself and prayed earnestly for the rest of the day, sending the servant to throw the cooked fish back into the well. His prayers were answered and the fish became fresh and whole again as soon as they entered the water. The enclosure of St Neot's well was refurbished only about 30 years ago, including a yard around it to keep animals out. Inside the well is a metal cup (chained to the wall) for pilgrims to drink from.

St Meriasek's well is located next to a track within a housing estate, in behind the parish church in Camborne, which is named for 'St Martin and St Meriadc' (the latter is an alternative name for Meriasek). It is a very unassuming well which, if someone did not point it out to you, you wouldn't realise it was there. It is supposed to have healing powers, especially as a cure for madness. Another much larger well, also famous for curing madness if you bathe in it, is the well of St Non (King Brychan's daughter and mother of St David), near Altarnun at Bodmin moor.

Another well worth mentioning is known as 'Figgy Dowdy', not far from the major town of Redruth. It is kept padlocked for safety reasons and is only open at certain times, especially on Good Friday when the tradition was for girls to bathe their dolls in it. This



would bestow fertility on their owners. Probably the best-known well is St Maddern, at Madron, on the main road north from Penzance, which has large numbers of visitors because of its proximity to the well-known town of ‘pirates’ fame. It is supposed to have powers to cure lameness. The well itself is often obscured by shrubs and other growth, but there is a nearby pool which is also supposed to bring luck to anyone who ties a ribbon to the large tree overhanging it. This has the appearance of Buddhist sites that one sees in oriental countries. Still another well, at St Ludgvan, is supposed to save you from ever being hanged if you are baptised in it, while if your husband is away and you have not had news of him for some time and want to know if he will come home, you ask the well at St Gulval and have sufficient faith, he will be home soon.



The waters of the well at St Keyne have the power to ‘bestow sovereignty’ to whomever of a newly-married couple should be the first to drink from it. There is a story of a wife who won the contest by visiting the well before the wedding and putting some of its water into a bottle, which she then took to the ceremony and drank from it as soon as they were pronounced man and wife. There are several wells which are deemed to have healing powers, especially those of St Cubert and St Euny (Uny). The tradition with those, if you had children with rickets, was to dip the children three times in the water and then drag them three times around the well on the grass, in the same direction, against the sun – and then hope!



I went looking for the well of St Wendrona, also known as Trelill’s well, but this is as close as I got.

References and acknowledgements

Material for this article has been drawn from the following:

Fox, Helen (2016), *Cornish Saints and Holy Wells*, Vol. 2, Sifi Publishing, UK (particularly the photographs of St Piran’s, p. 110 and St Neot’s, p. 104 wells)

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John, Catherine R (2001), *The Saints of Cornwall*, Tabb House, Padstow, UK (particularly the photographs of St Mabyn, p. 55, King Brychan, p. 79, and the quote about St Petroc, p. 7)

Pennick, Nigel (1997), *The Celtic Saints*, Sterling Publishing Co., New York (particularly the quote about St Neot, p. 91)

britainexpress.com/counties/cornwall (Madron well pool and St Piran’s Oratory)

Other photographs are my own.

Jan Lokan

LOOK WHAT YOU MISSED!!! By Elizabeth Grocke



July 2022 *John Andrewartha —West Torrens Curiosities.*

Many unusual events and personalities have 'enlivened' the history of the West Torrens Council area over its long history from the days of the pioneering settlers through to more recent times.

Amongst these are a balloon launch that failed, fortification of the River Torrens bridges, a journey to Morphettville by the famous racehorse Pharlap - by tram! We heard about the invention of indoor cricket, the arrival of The Beatles and Queen Elizabeth, an unusual attempt at an air flight in Thebarton, an escaped whale in the River Torrens, ghosts at The Brickworks and the shooting of one of Australia's earliest and controversial silent movies.



August 2022 *Kelly and Emily —National Archives of Australia*

Kelly and Emily gave an overview of what can be found in the National Archives. Records from 1901—2001. Some of the information available includes records from WWI, WWII, passenger arrivals (although for arrivals from 1972 you will need to apply to Canberra), photos. Records that are not in the National Archives, but are State/Territory based are births, deaths and marriages, as

well as local government records. The help page is very detailed and can be a valuable resource. Only 20-30% of the records in the archives have been digitised. Records from WWI have been digitised and can be accessed/searched through recordsearch.naa.gov.au. WWII records are currently being digitised. You are welcome to visit the State office in person. Kelly and Emily gave a brief overview on how to use RecordSearch.



September 2022 *Dr Samantha Battams—The Rhynie Poisoning Case*

Was Lee a callous murderer, or innocent as he maintained? At the end of the First World War, Alexander Newland Lee was accused of poisoning his wife and three children. Born at World's End, Lee was a destitute labourer who severely injured his hand in a farm accident. Recovering at The Willows Hospital in the Barossa Valley, he fell in love with nurse Dolly Scholz, an attractive young woman of Prussian-German descent. The setting was post World War I, a time when her community was ostracised.

When Lee was arrested for murder at Rhynie and put on trial, the case attracted strong interest from members of the community. They crawled over the gates of the Supreme Court to try to get a seat in the public gallery and a glimpse of the accused. It was deemed one of the most sensational criminal cases in South Australian history, and people waited outside the court in their hundreds to learn of Lee's fate.

Strangely, a generation earlier, his Auntie Martha Needle, known as 'The Richmond Poisoner,' was hanged in the Old Melbourne Gaol for a similar crime. Did Lee know about his infamous Auntie?

Alexander always maintained his innocence, claiming that his wife had committed the crimes. Lee's death sentence led to the first protest against capital punishment in South Australia, in what the press dubbed a 'Proposed Execution Holiday.' The date of the hanging was set for 15 July 1920, the day H.R.H. Prince of Wales was visiting the state.

This story explores Lee's crimes and trial set amidst the post WWI social context.

Elizabeth Grocke

How I wish that our speakers from the August meeting had visited us previously. Ros and I had been trying to find the AIF records for Dad's brother, our Uncle Tom (William Thomas Charles SAUNDERS SX8522). We had on various occasions visited the National Archives of Australia web page, searched the various options, but specifically Name Search with the link to World War 2, then All Categories but without a result. So we shot off an email to NAA, explained what we knew about his war service and eventually made contact with Gerard Poed Archives Officer who asked the right questions, sought the right responses and advised what we needed to do to get a digitised copy of a military record that wasn't showing up on the NAA web page.

Not only did Uncle Tom enlist in the AIF and fought at Tobruk, but at the end of WW2 he continued in the RASR then RAE, went to Japan (4/9001), did a stint in Korea and eventually returned to Australia and was discharged in 1962. All of this information was contained in a secure file transfer consisting of 73 pages- I SNIPPED and printed each and every page – no shortage of paper in our house!

Last month I found out that I could download an entire file by just clicking onto the ICON at the bottom right of the first sheet of a digitised record held in Canberra – Uncle Tom's was held in Melbourne; that is the reason we kept getting a No Record on NAA.

Imagine how much time we could have saved when we were doing our ANZAC book.

Mary Ann Minor

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

We would like to welcome new members:

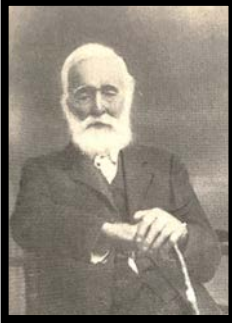
Susan Steer, June Hill, Rosemary Chalmers

We would like to welcome back a rejoining member:

Margaret Anderson

Nola Clisby

REMEMBERING A WIREMAN FROM THE OVERLAND TELEGRAPH LINE by Shirley Frost



John Wylie Wauchope

The 150th anniversary of the completion of the Overland Telegraph Line was commemorated on 22 August 2022. The anniversary caused me to pause and reflect on this time in our history and recall one of our early pioneers, and my three times great uncle, who was part of this amazing feat. The building of the Overland Telegraph Line connected Australia to London via the telegraph line from Port Darwin to Adelaide in 1872.

It was 25 May 1914 and three men met together in North Adelaide. They gripped each other's hands and greeted each other heartily. It had been such a long time since they had seen each other. These men had come together for a reunion. They had all worked on the Overland Telegraph Line that was completed forty-two years beforehand. The men were Richard Knuckey (now seventy-one), John Cleland (now sixty-six), and John Wylie Wauchope (now ninety years old).

After their initial greetings, Richard Knuckey said to John Wauchope,

"Do you remember Wauchope's creek?" John was taken aback a moment, until the memory of it came flooding back to him.

"Mr Harvey, the leader of the party," said Mr Knuckey, *"christened the creek."* He then added, *"Eight months ago I camped on its bank. It is 120 miles down from Tennant's [sic] Creek".¹*

Richard Knuckey, was a former surveyor for the construction of the Overland Telegraph Line, and John Cleland and John Wauchope worked together in the construction party of Section E. They were some of the last surviving men who worked on the line. The naming of Wauchope's creek by William Harvey, the overseer of Section E, was recorded in the newspaper in 1871.² Today the town of Wauchope, in the Northern Territory, is better known than the creek.

So, who was John Wauchope after whom the creek was named?

John Wylie Wauchope was born in Glasgow, Scotland and arrived in South Australia as a 15-year-old on the *Glenswilly* on 18 September 1839 with his family. His father, Captain John Wauchope, settled on Section 462 in O'Halloran Hill shortly after the family arrived and later purchased Section 471.

This area is now known as Trott Park. By 1852 John and his brother William had jointly purchased Section 501 at Happy Valley, and Section 471 from their father.³

In 1851, at the age of twenty-six, John married nineteen-year-old Charlotte Catherine Parker at O'Halloran Hill and after fifteen years in O'Halloran Hill and Happy Valley, the family

moved to the Little Para/Salisbury area. John, and his brother William, purchased a farm from Charlotte's stepfather in 1855.⁴ Later in life he recalled that there were some challenges during his time in the south, but moving north, farming was even more difficult.

*"We went north and ran into bad years of drought. In the south there was never a failure. In the north there was never a success."*⁵

They suffered many hardships in their farming pursuits, as did many other early settlers, and endured not only drought but a disease of wheat, called red dust, which reduced the yield of the crop. They also suffered the personal loss of four infant children between 1852 and 1869.

By the late 1860s, John began a new endeavour by working as a wireman for the Telegraph Department.⁶ From 1855 after the arrival of Charles Todd, appointed Superintendent of Telegraphs, many telegraph lines were built both between the colonies and within South Australia, including a line from Adelaide to Port Augusta. In 1870, a new telegraph line known as the Overland Telegraph Line, which would enable communication from London via Port Darwin to Adelaide, was embarked upon. It was an extraordinary undertaking – extraordinary because the line between Port Augusta and Port Darwin contained vast tracts of land which were largely unknown to the non-Indigenous people of Australia. There was a short timeframe to plan the logistics of such a large undertaking. The agreed deadline for the completion of the line with the British-Australian Telegraph Company, who were laying an undersea cable to Port Darwin, was 1 January 1872. Charles Todd, the architect of the overland component, planned the route of the telegraph line to follow the track taken by the explorer John McDouall Stuart who had successfully crossed the continent from south to north in 1862. However, Stuart had left only rudimentary maps of his journey, so the nature of the country was still relatively unknown. The proposed line would be approximately two thousand miles long.⁷



Charles Todd, SLSA B 69996/18

Todd divided the project into three sections – Southern, Central and Northern – each covering a distance between six hundred and seven hundred miles. Private contractors were employed to construct the Southern and Northern sections, whereas the Central section, deemed to be the most difficult, was to be constructed by the South Australian Government.



The Central Section was divided again into five sections – referred to as A, B, C, D and E. The construction party for each of these sections consisted of about twenty men, all with different skills – well-sinkers, wiremen, carpenters, saddlers, blacksmiths, bullock drivers, sawyers, teamsters, gangers, and cooks, as well as surveyors. A senior surveyor was designated the overseer of each section. John Wauchope was employed as a wireman, responsible for the correction installation of the wire, and assigned to Section E. William Harvey was his overseer.⁸

Map of Overland Telegraph Line, SLSA B 78437

John was forty-five years old when he was recruited for the Overland Telegraph Line. It provided him with a steady income of seven shillings per week.⁹ However, by joining the construction party he was not only leaving his four children, William, aged sixteen, George, aged fifteen, John, aged eleven and Charlotte, aged nine, but also his wife Charlotte who was three months pregnant. The completion date for this project was 1 January 1872 – about sixteen months away. But this was not how it worked out. It would be more than two years before he was reunited with his family.

The Overland Telegraph Line Expedition left Adelaide during August and September 1870 with the last of the construction teams, D and E, leaving on 5 September 1870. Many well-wishers, including family and friends, gathered to farewell them and rousing speeches and wishes of 'God speed' given from Charles Todd and the Governor of South Australia. Most men travelled in horse-drawn wagons loaded with supplies, rations, and camping equipment while others rode on horseback. They received good wishes for the success of the expedition as they travelled through many country towns.¹⁰ It took three months to reach the base of the expedition, the Peake, a small outstation with no settled land beyond it. This outstation became a depot for the supplies brought up from Port Augusta for the expedition.¹¹

Not long after their arrival at the Peake, the construction parties loaded their rations and supplies on the wagons and drays, with bullocks and horses hauling the load, for their journey northwards. Each construction party, firstly Section A, then Section B, etc, set up camp at their designated starting points and commenced poling and wiring. Finding enough water, timber, and grazing areas for the animals, was always the priority for setting up their camps. Throughout their journey, they endured extremes of weather – cold and thunderstorms to blistering heat. Flies and mosquitoes were an ever-present annoyance for both the men and the animals.

The parties for Sections C, D and E continued their trek northwards but came to a halt when they reached the MacDonnell Ranges. Difficulties in finding a suitable pathway through the Ranges for their convoy required them to stay in their camp for a few weeks until the surveyors found a suitable route.

By the time John Wauchope and the other men of the Section E construction party reached their starting point near Barrow Creek, nine months had passed since leaving Adelaide. They began the work on their section on 1 June 1871.¹² Spinifex and light scrub vegetated the area and it became evident that suitable timber for poling was scarce. There was little surface water, so the well sinkers had to find water and sank wells between 10 to 20 feet deep. Camels brought extra supplies to the construction parties, and not long after they settled in their camp, coils of wire were delivered by camel. Another challenge befell them– to find a way through the



Horses and wagon with supplies for OTL, SLSA B 18699

Davenport Ranges. It was on this survey trip that Harvey found, not only a way through the ranges, but an unnamed creek. He called it Wauchope's Creek, after John Wylie Wauchope.¹³

The whole corridor for the telegraph line, although relatively unexplored by white people, was the home of Indigenous people whom the teams encountered at different points along the way. Some were inquisitive, some were frightened, and others showed their dislike of any intruders and raised their spears and waddies towards them. Some also waved to them as a symbol of peace. Charles Todd had instructed the men to treat all Aboriginal people with respect but also to keep a safe distance from them.¹⁴ Unfortunately some confrontations still occurred. Aboriginal people were intrigued by the telegraph wires and insulators used. John recalled that coils of wire and insulators were sometimes taken by them, and it was believed that stolen insulators were used for sharpening their implements. He also recalled that a parallel line, in imitation, was built by some Aboriginal people, by using the wire which had been taken.¹⁵

The track created by the clearing of the bush for the telegraph line became a well delineated path through the Centre of Australia. Even hawkers from the south took advantage of this south-north road by selling their wares to the construction parties 'at exorbitant prices'.¹⁶ Life was never going to be the same, particularly for the remote Aboriginal people of Australia.

By 1 December 1871 they were at Tennant Creek and the construction party of Section E had completed their section. The Central and Southern sections were on schedule to finish the line by 1 January 1872. Charles Todd, however, had received disastrous news on the progress of the Northern Section, and this news impacted John Wauchope and the rest of his construction party. Todd was informed that the Northern Section contract, which covered the area between Port Darwin to Tennant Creek, was cancelled by the Government overseer of that section. Initially their work had progressed well, but when the wet season set in and massive flooding occurred, work ground to a halt. A dispute arose between the Northern Section contractors and the South Australian Government overseer, and it led to the cancellation of the contract. This was a catastrophe, not only because the project could not finish on time, but the British-Australian Telegraph Company had the right to impose a fine for failure to finish by the agreed date.

This news filtered through to the construction parties of the Central Section that the Government would now ensure the completion of the Northern Section. Harvey, the overseer of Section E, was instructed to continue northwards with his construction party until the two lines met.¹⁷

The final gap was completed by the construction party of Section E and several other construction teams on 22 August 1872. At last, the line was completely operational from Port Darwin to Adelaide – but not from London. The undersea cable had been damaged in the meantime and was not operable until October 1872. The fine was not enforced.

John Wauchope and his co-workers were now free to come home. The *SS Omeo* brought them back from Roper River in the Northern Territory to Adelaide and arrived at Port Adelaide on 30 October 1872. Did Charlotte and family meet him

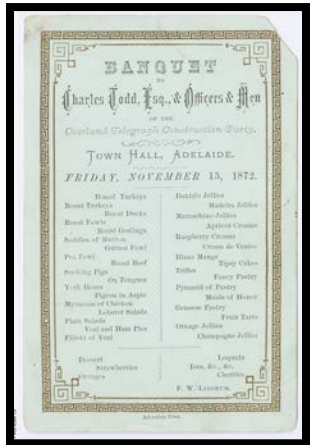


Roper River Camp 1872, SLSA B4635

on the wharves? We do not know, but it would not have taken him long to be acquainted with his new daughter, who was now twenty months old, and to see how much his older children had grown. The return of the men did not go unnoticed. Two weeks later, the men marched in a procession from the Post Office, with a band leading the way. Many speeches were given, and games and sports were played in the afternoon. To complete the day, a banquet was held at the Town Hall, and more speeches made – but the best of all was a bonus paid to the men of the construction parties.¹⁸

For John Wylie Wauchope, it must have felt a momentous achievement. His time as a member of the Overland Telegraph Line Expedition was a special memory throughout his life. As John lived until he was almost one hundred years old, he had plenty of time to share his stories as he reminisced.¹⁹

Within a short time from his return to Adelaide, he pursued farming once again – firstly in Mundoora and later in Wandearah, South Australia.



Menu for the Banquet, SLSA PRG 630/13

The reunion in 1914 was a wonderful occasion for these three men to remember their roles on the Overland Telegraph Line Expedition. It was a remarkable achievement for the men who constructed the line, but also for Charles Todd, who later became Sir Charles Todd, the architect of the line. He was a man of incredible vision and ability. These men helped to develop our State of South Australia in a significant way.

Shirley Frost, Great-great-great niece of John and Charlotte Wauchope

Sources:

- ¹ 'Interesting Reunion', *The Register*, Adelaide, SA, 27 May 1914, p9.
- ² 'The Trans-Continental Telegraph', *South Australian Register*, Adelaide, SA, 30 November 1871, p6.
- ³ SA Government Gazette, 3 October 1839, p8; 'Government Land Sale', *South Australian Register*, Adelaide, SA, 17 April 1847, p3; Lands Services SA, Old Land System Memorial 432/9, 414/9, 119/24.
- ⁴ Land Services SA, Old Land System Memorial 133/80.
- ⁵ 'Obituary', *Observer* Adelaide, SA, 24 May 1924, p45.
- ⁶ His occupation as Wireman given death registration for Agnes Wauchope, 15 June 1867.
- ⁷ Miles used throughout as it was the measurement used at this time. 1 mile = 1.6 km (approx)
- ⁸ 'The Northern Telegraph', *The Express and Telegraph*, Adelaide, SA, 5 September 1870, p2.
- ⁹ 'Obituary', *Observer*.
- ¹⁰ 'The Overland Telegraph Expedition', *South Australian Register*, 5 September 1870, p5; 'The Overland Telegraph', *Evening Journal*, Adelaide, 10 September 1870, p2.
- ¹¹ *Diary of Thomas Smith, 1870-1872*, SLSA.
- ¹² 'Overland Telegraph', *Adelaide Observer*, SA, 30 April 1871, p4.
- ¹³ 'Overland Telegraph', *South Australian Register*, 30 November 1871, p6.

¹⁴ NLA, *Overland Telegraph Line commemorative kit*, J3088, QPT316.

¹⁵ 'Overland Telegraph', *Adelaide Observer*, SA, 17 June 1871, p4; Taylor, Peter, *An end to Silence: The Building of the Overland Telegraph Line from Adelaide to Darwin*, Sydney, 1980, p147; 'Interesting Reunion'.

¹⁶ *Diary of Thomas Smith*; 'Overland Telegraph', *South Australian Register*, 30 November 1871, p6.

¹⁷ NLA, 'The Port Darwin Line', in *Overland Telegraph Line commemorative kit*, J3088, QPT316.

¹⁸ 'The Overland Telegraph Banquet', *Border Watch*, Mount Gambier, SA, 20 November 1872, p3.

¹⁹ 'Mr Osborne's memories', *Recorder*, Port Pirie, SA, 25 September 1950, p3.

WHY ENGLISH IS HARD TO LEARN

We'll begin with *box*; the plural is *boxes*,
But the plural of *ox* is *oxen*, not *oxes*.
One fowl is a *goose*, and two are called *geese*,
Yet the plural of *moose* is never called *meese*.

You may find a lone *mouse* or a house full of *mice*;
But the plural of *house* is *houses*, not *hice*.
The plural of *man* is always *men*,
But the plural of *pan* is never *pen*.

If I speak of a *foot*, and you show me two *feet*,
And I give you a *book*, would a pair be a *beek*?
If one is a *tooth* and a whole set are *teeth*,
Why shouldn't two *booths* be called *beeth*?

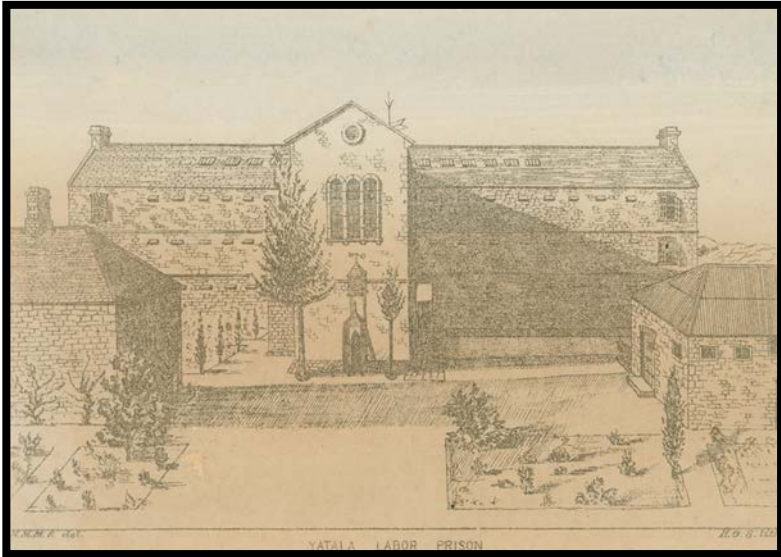
If the singular's *this* and the plural is *these*,
Should the plural of *kiss* be ever called *keese*?

We speak of a *brother* and also of *brethren*,
But though we say *mother*, we never say *methren*.
Then the masculine pronouns are *he*, *his*, and *him*;
But imagine the feminine . . . *she*, *shis*, and *shim*!

- ANONYMOUS

[via LoveThisPic.com](http://viaLoveThisPic.com)

JOHN KEARNEY, aka CAPTAIN THUNDERBOLT



South Australia had its own Captain Thunderbolt in the form of John Kerney, the son of a cabinet maker. Living in Adelaide, 22 year old Kerney decided to follow in the footsteps of the infamous highwaymen of New South Wales, teamed up with his brother David and a friend called Thomas Field and stole a shotgun before going bush in 1866. Along the way they added Thomas Creamer, John Martin, and Robert Allen to their number. The gang would stick up travellers in the usual fashion and four innocent were arrested and convicted for the crimes. The bushrangers took to wearing black masks and on the night of 19 May 1866 broke into the home of Ann Taylor, a widow, firing their guns indiscriminately and forcing the terrified woman to the floor. They made off with Taylor's watch and jewellery. The robberies continued with one victim refusing to back down and lashing out at Kerney with a whip. In October of 1866 the wild career of the Thunderbolt Gang came to an abrupt end when the Kerneys and Field were arrested. The boys were tried and in March 1867 they were found guilty of armed robbery and sentenced to death. This sentence was later commuted to life imprisonment in Yatala Prison, Dry Creek.

Sources:

Photo - *Pittwater Online News*

A Guide to Australian Bushranging

Article submitted by Ros Dunstall, and printed with permission from Aiden Phelan, *A Guide to Australian Bushranging*.

UPCOMING SPEAKERS & EVENTS



All meetings are held at 1.15pm, Uniting Church Hall, 23 William Road, Christies Beach. If you have a suggestion for a suitable speaker please contact Elizabeth Grocke with details.

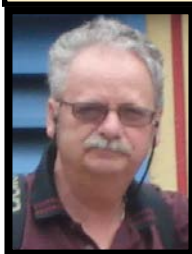
15 October—Ron Dearing, *Some Flesh on the Bones*—Family History

ry

19 November—AGM, John Brownlie, *The Head Stone Project “War Vet Head Stones”*

21 January—Guest Speakers Show and Tell—Joe Cain, *Model of the City of Adelaide*; Barry Treleaven, *Old Camera*

RESOURCE ROOM OPENING TIMES



The Resource Room is available to members for research. During the opening time before the Saturday general meetings, Resource Room volunteers will not be available to give assistance with ‘Family Research’, but books, newsletters and magazines can be borrowed from 12.00pm to 1.15pm, and during the afternoon tea break.

Other opening times for the Resource Room will be the 1st and 3rd Wednesday afternoons during February to October, and the 1st Wednesday in November, from 1.00pm—3.30pm.

Members wishing to access *findmypast* during resource room openings, are now requested to contact Chris Grivell and book a specific time. Chris’s contact details may be found at the front of the journal.

Opening dates for this quarter are: 5 October, 15 October, 19 October, 2 November, 16 November and 19 November (returns only).

EVENING COMPUTER GROUP



The evening computer class is held in the Uniting Church Hall, 23 William Street, Christies Beach. A \$5.00 donation is requested to help cover the cost of the hire of the hall. The Group meet monthly on the second Monday night of the month at 7.30pm.

The program consists of a presentation on a specific topic followed by a question and answer session. Bring a tagged laptop from home but if you cannot you will be seated with someone

who has a similar operating system to you.

Contact Heather Boyce if you are interested.

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VOLUNTEER RESEARCH

Research can be undertaken for anyone seeking information on ancestors in our local area. Please forward requests to Volunteer Research, PO Box 1078, Christies Beach North SA 5165.

EDITOR'S NOTE by Christine Keen



As another year comes to a close, I'd like to say thank you to the members who have contributed to the journal by sharing their wonderful and interesting stories with everyone.

However, the countdown is on—four more editions and I will be stepping down as Journal Editor. So I'd like to encourage someone to step up and take on the role. I'm happy to have someone work with me next year to 'learn the ropes'.

If you are interested, please feel free to contact me for more information or reach out to a member of the Executive Committee.

Alternatively, if you are interested in being a proof-reader, please contact me.

Christine Keen

Journal Editor

WHEN & WHERE

MEETINGS

The monthly Meetings are held on the 3rd Saturday of each month from January—October at 1.15pm, Uniting Church Hall, 23 William Street, Christies Beach. The Resource Room is open from 12.00pm each meeting day.

Annual General Meeting is held on the 3rd Saturday in November commencing at 1.30pm. Committee elections are held at this time.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

Aussie Interest Group—meets at 1.00pm on the 2nd Saturday of each month. For information contact Ros Dunstall.

United Kingdom and USA Interest Group—usually meets at 7.30pm on the 3rd Tuesday of each month but may vary. For information contact Sharon Green.

Evening Computer Group—meets at 7.30pm on the 2nd Monday of each month. For information contact Heather Boyce.

DNA Evening Group—usually meets at 7.30pm on the 1st Tuesday of each month but may vary. For information contact Sharon Green.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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Family (2 people) - \$35.00

Single—\$30.00

Membership with Printed Journal:

Family (2 people) - \$42.50

Single—\$37.50

A \$5.00 joining fee applies to all new and lapsed memberships.

Fees should be paid to the Treasurer prior to the November AGM each year.

PUBLISHING This journal is issued quarterly to members. Items for inclusion should be submitted to the Editor by March, June, September and December. FPFHG shall not be held responsible for statements made or opinions expressed by the authors of submitted materials, or shall FPFHG vouch for the accuracy of any genealogical data, offers, services or goods that appear herein. The Editor reserves the right to edit any articles proffered for publication.

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