



## THE FIG TREE

JOURNAL OF THE  
MANNING WALLAMBA FAMILY  
HISTORY SOCIETY Inc.  
TAREE

OPERATING SINCE 1985  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MANNING VALLEY LIBRARIES

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**MANNING WALLAMBA FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY Inc.**

Taree covers the whole Manning Region as shown in the above map and includes the following areas:

Manning Valley, Wingham, Taree, Kendall, Cooperbrook, Old Bar, Forster, Harrington, Manning Point, Nabiac, Bulahdelah, Kew, Krambach, Oxley Island, Mitchells Island, Tinonee, Moorland, Lansdowne, Killabakh, Failford, Rawdon Vale, Tuncurry, Coolongolook, Bungwahl, Smiths Lake, Wallis Lake.

**OFFICE BEARERS**

President:	G Rose		
Vice Presidents:	G Toohey	G Sawyer	
Secretaries:	J Mitchell	V Fletcher	
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Librarians	J Mitchell	C Troth	
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Committee:	P Jarman	L Walker	L Kidd
Newsletter:	G Toohey	P Jarman	G Rose
Public Officer:	L Haynes		

## President's Report for May/June 2016



Dear all 135 Members,

Firstly I am very happy to report that Gloria Toohey is back on deck after a prolonged recovery from her surgery. I wish her a full recovery as we have certainly struggled to fill her shoes. Please be patient while she catches up on her mountain of emails.

I hope you have enjoyed the new TV program starting at 8.30 pm on SBS Sundays called "DNA Nation" showing the ancestral migration history able to be teased out of the DNA of Ian Thorpe, Ernie Dingo and Julia Zemiro.

It has many Ancestry advertisements thru-out the show but the science involved - mitochondrial & Y chromosome DNA is not as yet offered by Ancestry but only by FTDNA. [www.ftdna.com](http://www.ftdna.com)

MWFHS & Wingham Historical Society (Gloria & Barbara Waters) organised Cemetery Tours to highlight cemeteries of the earliest settlers in the Manning Valley. Gloria was unable to attend due to health issues.

Members went to:

- 1) Wednesday 27th Apr           Historic Cemetery "Woodside" beside the railway on the way to Mount George, which contains the first settlers in that area. We were hosted by Arthur Cooper, a descendant of the settler Andrews & Cooper families.
- 2) Thursday 28th Apr           Historic Cemetery "Taree Estate" Cemetery Taree West off Edinburgh Drive. We were hosted by Leonie (Wynter-Betts) & Ivan Ransom who are both descendants of William Wynter.

Several members of the society attended each & we have compiled a combined report later in this Figtree.

We are very grateful to Diane Edwards who visited our Society whilst in Taree recently. She presented the Society with both print and CDs of her extensive research into the TISDELL family.

For the second year as part of the annual Scottish Festival in Wingham this year MWFHS, Wingham Historical Society & Latter Day Saints FHS organised on Thursday 26th May a "Find & Meet the Family" seminar at Wingham Services Club with excellent guest presenters.

They were:

- 1) Jody Taylor of Ancestry Australia
- 2) John Cann Archivist from NSW State Records. John has ancestors in the area.
- 3) Bruce McLennan genealogist of Clan McLennan & knowledgeable about all things Scottish.

I was only present for Bruce's talk about the history of the Scottish nation from the Picts to the first Scottish kings. Few people realise how influential Ireland was in the foundation of the Scottish nation.

As a result of the first episode of DNA nation being shown on SBS (above) all questions to me at this event were about DNA & how it could help with family "brick walls". I will give my proposed talk on "Unexpected Benefits of Wikitree" plus talk again about DNA at Taree Library.

Our BBQ fundraiser on the sunny Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> May at Bunnings Taree, turned out to be very profitable, meaning that the board can say "Yes" more often. Thank you to all those who helped make this fundraiser such a success. The next BBQ at Bunnings will be 31<sup>st</sup> of July. Any help would be appreciated as we seek to have complete shift changes to reduce the burden on any individual volunteer.

Regards  
Graeme

### **NEW MEMBERS:**

A warm welcome to all new members. Please make yourselves at home and don't be afraid to ask for help. If we can't help you with a specific question, we will at least point you in the right direction.

#### **Welcome to:**

MEMBER	RESEARCH INTEREST
Rhonda Sullivan	Atkins, Cox, Sullivan
Katherine Bell	
Lindsay & Paula Layton	Layton, Schubert, Mudford, Cause, Sawyer
Sandra Reid	Romeril, Jersey/Australia, 1800; Brudos, Sweden/Australia, 1800
Richard Borg	Ernest Grose, Laurel Perry
Judith Silcock	Joseph & Ann Thompson, Taree/Dingo Creek
Phyllis Smith	Parkin, England, 1854+, Dear, England, 1856+
Belinda Reeves	Croker, Nabic; Poole, Tinonee, 1850+

### **REGULAR EVENTS:**

**General Meeting:** Held at 1.30 pm every 3rd Saturday of the month.

**Workshop:** Held at 1.30 pm every 4th Saturday of the month.

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL** is now due. Please ensure that your membership remains current by renewing by the end of June.

**BARBECUES:**



Sunday 31<sup>st</sup> July                      Bunnings

Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> Sept                      Bunnings

Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> Nov                      Bunnings

**If you can help on any of these days please contact the Secretary**

**CONNECTING WITH ABORIGINAL HISTORY AND LANGUAGE RESOURCES**

**Several Society members attended these workshops which were very informative**

**Day One: Training session for Aboriginal service provider staff & library/family history staff**

This session covered:

- Overview of Indigenous Services at the State Library of NSW and launch of a new strategy to work with the public library network
- Overview of State Library collections relating to Aboriginal history, including overview of research guides and indexes relevant to Aboriginal family history
- State Library Ask a Librarian Service and assistance available
- Resources held in other collecting institutions relating to Aboriginal history – including State Records NSW, Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS), National Archives of Australia
- Administrative processes that are in place to access these collections, gaps in collections  
Question and Answer session

**Day Two: Community workshop – Connecting with Aboriginal History and Language Resources**

The State Library of New South Wales has a wealth of material that could be vital for those people engaged in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family history research.

Kirsten Thorpe and Melissa Jackson, from Indigenous Services Branch at the State Library, led a discussion about these resources and other strategies that may assist you in your research.

The State Library provides an overview of:

- Resources and techniques to search the Library collections, and other important resources for Aboriginal family history
- Significant collections held at the State Library relating to the local area
- Resources available through the Library's *Rediscovering Indigenous Languages* project.

This talk will provide people with an overview of ways to connect with Aboriginal history and language resources. Staff was also available for a question and answer session to point people in the right direction with their research.

## **IT'S ALL RELATIVE**

When you start researching your family tree you just never know when you are going to come across someone who is connected to one of the branches on that tree.

At the end of March I arranged to meet up with several other women who were all students in the University of Tasmania's online course Introduction to Family History. We were to meet at Port Macquarie Library in the Family History Room. During my online discussions with one of the women we realised that we had a possible connection. Dianne, who was from Port Macquarie, mentioned she was related to the Clarke family in the Macleay valley area. I told her that I thought there were Clarke's in my great Grandmother's mother's side of the family so I grabbed the book I had on the "Simons on the Macleay" and found the Clarkes in the index. I told her I would bring the book to our meeting.

The day came and I met Dianne and her friend Carol (also from Port Macquarie). Dianne had with her two volumes on the Clarke family. It turned out that Carol also had a connection. We checked out the names and discovered that there was a common name in each of our trees, that of Irish immigrant Ann McGiff from County Westmeath, Ireland. As we established this the fourth lady, Robyn, arrived from South West Rocks. She has been researching her former husband's family for the benefit of their children. I checked the Simon family history book index and under her husband's surname I found a couple of entries. She immediately knew one of the names. Lo and behold she also, through her former husband, had a link to Ann McGiff. Some of the significant names that have come up in our respective families have been: McGiff, O'Meara, Clarke, McMahon, Simon, Grace, Hand, Kenny and Holnholz and all of us have links to the Hastings, Macleay and Nambucca River areas.

If someone had said when I started the course that I would meet 3 other women in the course who live within an hour or so from me and would have one common ancestor with me I would have laughed. Now I think, "what are the chances?"

All four of us successfully finished our first unit and are now all undertaking the Convict Ancestors unit with another 1100 students. (Member Vicki Fletcher)



## **HISTORIC CEMETERY TOURS:**

**Woodside 27<sup>th</sup> April 2016**



After meeting at Wingham Museum at 10am we went in convoy to Woodside near Mount George.



This is the Andrews property where we were shown in by Arthur Cooper. Both his families (Cooper & Andrews) are buried there. It is maintained by friends of Woodside which consists of about 3 women. It sits just above the railway line. There is a plaque with unmarked graves.

Arthur gave a talk about the history of the area, how the settlers moved down from Gloucester initially timber getters then farmers. So the main road to the Manning was through and there was a Hotel nearby for travellers.

Isabella Kelly called a township Georgetown after the mountain Mt George but the railway pulled the town to its present location & name was always Mt George.

### Taree Estate Cemetery 28 April 2016

About 20 people attended the cemetery tour. Ivan Ransom (a direct descendant of William Wynter) gave a very informative talk about the cemetery along with Leonie Wynter Betts. The fence that runs down the left hand side of the cemetery when coming from Edinburgh Drive is in line with the fences that are on the opposite side of Edinburgh Drive which go right down to the river. Taree Estate went from that fence line right down to the river.

The first burial at the cemetery was for a tenant farmer. The cemetery had been established on land designated by Henry Flett for such a purpose and was for use by family members, the families of early settlers and tenant farmers. The cemetery was established on the hill and could be seen from the front of the Flett home. At Christmas time the sun went down over the top of the hill and the first graves were on the highest part of the hill.

Henry Flett was the son-in-law of William Wynter. He married William's daughter Mary. Henry, Mary and Mary's mother Elizabeth Wynter are all buried in the cemetery. William Wynter was not buried at Taree Estate. He was visiting Port Macquarie when he died and so was apparently buried in the grounds of St Thomas Church of England.

There are unmarked graves in the cemetery. Chris Becker from Becker's Family Funerals has walked through the cemetery and can tell that there are unmarked graves. He has equipment to determine where these unmarked graves are actually located and will assist Leonie and Anne Calvert to chart where these graves are. One gentleman at the talk believes his grandfather may be buried in an unmarked grave at this cemetery. He was a tenant farmer on Taree Estate when he died and was said to be buried in a plot where his two infant children were also buried.



Ivan's wife Joan is a direct descendant of Joseph Clarkin. He was a policeman at Tinonee. Some people say that he was the first policeman, but others dispute this. He was also a pioneer of the Nabic district which was previously known as Clarkson's Crossing. It is believed that the name Clarkson's Crossing came from Clarkin with the spelling being a corrupted form of Clarkin. Another person present told us that Clarkin's wife Harriett is supposed to have planted the figtree that still grows beside the bridge leading to Taree Estate.

Apart from the Wynter & Flett families buried at the cemeteries other names include: Abbott, Dyball, Plummer and Stitt.

There are some interesting stories that can be told of those buried in the cemetery. One grave belongs to young James Brown. He was only 17 when he died and was the son of David and Sarah Brown, an Irish family from Purfleet. He died in November 1865 and has the distinction of being the only recorded death from shark attack in the Manning River. The attack is said to have occurred on the Glenthorne side of the river opposite where the Sailo's now is. At the time of his death he had been planning to leave the area so he could study to be a Presbyterian minister.



Alan Dyball also told some stories of his family's association with the Taree Estate area and explained where the Dyball farm was.

Thomas Abbott has 2 headstones which have the same inscription. A descendant who attended the talk showed us the headstones, but could offer no explanation as to why there was the two.

## WHY NOT A COMMITTEE ROLE?

All Committee positions will be vacated at the AGM on 20 August. Why not consider becoming involved in the management of our Society?

The Management Committee manages, in an honorary capacity, the affairs of the Society including the conduct of meetings, banking and financial reporting, correspondence, membership and recruitment, meeting-day programmes and other events, fundraising activities and publicity as well as the running of the Society library.

We are fortunate to have members who assist as genealogy volunteers.

“New blood” will be very welcome - and will be offered a helping hand by old hands. **Please think about it.**

## WANTED: ARTICLES FOR THE FIG TREE

We are always looking for articles, things of interest or upcoming events to be included in “The Fig Tree”. If you have any articles you would like included, please email them to [secretary@manningwallambafhs.com.au](mailto:secretary@manningwallambafhs.com.au)



“Well I don’t know why you thought genealogy would be a relaxing hobby – You’re a rabbit for Pete’s sake!”

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