

ON TRACK
**Newsletter of the Mid Gippsland
Family History Society Incorporated**
ABN No. 88 735 748 406
P.O. Box No 767
Morwell 3840

Issue # 135 May 2007 – July 2007

Website: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~mgfhs>

President:

Helen McLennan

Telephone 03 51274526



helenmclennan@net-tech.com.au

Vice President:

Jeanette Rennie

jeanetterennie@optusnet.com.au

Secretary:

Vacant

Treasurer:

David Grant

Box 78 Moe 3825

Telephone 0351271505

dgrant45@optusnet.com.au

Publicity:

Vaughan Knox

bvknox@tadaust.org.au

Editor/Webperson:

Kaye O'Reilly

Telephone 0351221282

macore@tadaust.org.au

Librarian:

Dawn Cowley

Telephone 0351271780

gdcowley@iprimus.com.au

Hostess: Vicki Evans

victoria@sympac.com.au

Committee:

Wes Halket

mowesh@bigpond.net.au

Meetings:

Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each Month, except December, at the Meeting Room, entrance at the rear door of the Moe Library, Kirk Street Moe. Our Library will be open at 7pm with meetings commencing at approximately 7.30pm.

Membership fees 2005/2006: Single \$25; Family \$30 payable in July.

Library Hours:

Our Library is open to the public on *Wednesday Afternoons between 1pm and 4pm*. Volunteers from our group are available to assist with research at this time. The Library is also available to members at all times that the Meeting room has not been booked by other organizations. (Check with the Public Library Staff) The library is available to members on the first Saturday of each month.

Library Fees: Gold Coin donation per visit for non – members.

Research:

There is a research fee, minimum of \$10 plus a stamped addressed envelope for any enquiries requiring research, with additional charges for large amounts of photocopying and/or postage. Enquires should be clear and concise.

Please direct all enquires to The Secretary, P.O. Box 767, Morwell, 3840 and mark the envelope "Research Enquiry".

In This Issue:

MGFHS Writing Competition 2007; The Winning Entries

There's a Doctor in my Family, *Sandra Dumble*

The Clock from Dunoon, *Sandra Dumble*

Family History Seminar. Saturday 6th October 2007

Best Anzac Biscuit recipe, *Wes Halket*

The make a bonnet tribute, *Roses from the Heart*

Contributors:

Kaye O'Reilly, Sandra Dumble, Leonie Freeman,
Vicki Evans, Wes Halket

Mid Gippsland Family History Society Inc. Writing Competition - 2007

First Prize

Congratulations go to Sandra Dumble, the writer of

“There’s a Doctor in my Family”

“This essay provided evidence of personal research, had excellent presentation with a clear and interesting story line”. Leonie Freeman

THERE’S A DOCTOR IN MY FAMILY

The Ovens and Murray Advertiser of September 30, 1905, reported “Intense cold has been the rule this month, such rigorous weather having never been suffered in the experience of the oldest resident of Beechworth. The weather during Sunday was an alternation of rain, sleet, and snow, which descended heavily during the night...” . The Sunday in question, September 24, 1905, was the day Dr. Henry Augustus Samson was laid to rest in the Beechworth Cemetery. An article appeared beside the weather, reporting on the burial. “The Late Dr. Samson...The obsequies of the late Dr. Samson, medical superintendent of the Beechworth Hospital for the Insane, were performed on Sunday afternoon...The interment took place at the Beechworth Cemetery...” . Dr Samson, aged 50 years, died prematurely while in Melbourne on the 22nd September, and was farewelled on a day of extreme weather conditions.

Henry Augustus Samson began his life on July 17th 1855 in Leigh-On-Sea, Essex, England, the first child of Edmund Augustus and Sarah Mary Samson. Edmund and Sarah were both teachers and had married at St. Dunstons’s in the West, London.

The Samson’s took up residence at Bedford Place, London, while Edmund studied at King’s College. Henry’s sister, Eleanor Augustine, was born in March 1859, but unfortunately contracted Bronchitis and died aged 2 years in 1862. During 1865 Edmund was appointed English and Elocution Teacher at Scotch College, East Melbourne, and set sail aboard the “Yorkshire”, leaving Henry and Sarah to follow at a later date. They arrived in February, 1867, and joined Edmund at East Melbourne.

Henry became a student at Scotch College leaving to study medicine at Melbourne University. He received his Bachelor of Medicine (M.B.) and Bachelor of Surgery (B.S.) in 1880. While studying medicine, and living in Fitzroy, he met nursing assistant, Mary Savage who was also living in Fitzroy. They were married in 1879 with their first child, Francis Henry, born 1880 the same year Henry received his degrees.

Dr Samson’s stint as a general practitioner came when he arrived in Omeo in 1882. By this time his father, Edmund, was suffering ill health and Henry moved his parents to Omeo to be closer to him and his family.

The life of a doctor in the high country created a challenge and called for a person with a strong disposition. Newspaper articles collected during Samson’s time at Omeo show just how diverse a Doctor’s life was. The Omeo Telegraph of February 20, 1885, reported on “a little child belonging to a highly-esteemed townsman, Mr. Odell, attacked by bronchitis. Dr Samson is constantly attending to it and it was hoped the little sufferer will be restored to health”. The same edition reported on the son of Mr. Spencer who met with an accident while playing in the street. He was knocked down by a mule and trampled upon before the rider noticed. Samson was close by and attended to the child. “It is a miracle that many more such accidents haven’t occurred, as persons are allowed to drive both mobs of horses and cattle through the streets at a furious rate” it was reported.

Dr Samson was relied upon to perform a variety of medical duties. The following were reported in the Omeo Telegraph ...A post mortem on the body of a gentleman who had been struck down while felling trees.... Attending to a victim of blood poisoning who was in danger of losing an arm Accompanying Constable Walsh to Swifts Creek after a Cobb & Co coach driver had been thrown from the coach and was suffering serious head injuries.

Being a medical “Jack of all Trades” also included being appointed Health Officer for the Shire of Omeo in March 1883. During 1885 there was an outbreak of pneumonia caused by contaminated drains running beside a watercourse. Dr. Samson had the job of disinfecting the houses. This same year saw the death of his father, Edmund Augustus, and the birth of another son, William Lionel. Henry and Mary now had a family of three sons and one daughter.

Dr Samson decided to specialise in Psychiatry and during 1886 left general practice in Omeo. His first Government appointment came in 1887 when he was appointed Senior Medical Officer at the Kew Asylum. This was followed by a move to the Beechworth Hospital for the Insane, otherwise known as May Day Hills. Another two sons, Edmund Augustus and Eric James, were born at the asylum during 1887 and 1888. Families of the medical staff lived at the institution. By 1890 the Samson’s were living at Ararat where Henry had the position of Medical Officer at the Ararat Asylum. The year 1890 brought sadness, with the death of their son William Lionel aged 5 years in June and the death of 3 year old Edmund Augustus in August, both from Croup. The family moved to the Ballarat Lunatic Asylum during 1893 where they remained until 1896 when Dr Samson was promoted to Medical Superintendent of the Beechworth institution.

The book ‘Early Victorian Psychiatry’, C.R.D. Brothers, mentions “Samson as a rather interesting figure because of his many ideas, not all of which were practicable in his time, but some of which may have received more attention today. An example of his interest in the industry of patients was his suggestion of the planting of willows for basket-making.”

The family took up residence on the top two floors of the Administrative Building. The accommodation was “very comfortable” in fact has been described as “palatial”, with patients attending to all the housekeeping duties, including keeping the fires stoked. The young Samson’s were cared for by an inpatient called “Scottie” and Mary’s life became easier. Three daughters, Stella, Phyllis and Marjory had arrived between 1891 and 1897. The family joined the Beechworth community and enjoyed life for the next 9 years until Henry’s premature death changed their lives. He had remained close to his mother, Sarah, who continued to live close to the family after her husband’s death in Omeo. Sarah died in 1903, just two years prior to Henry, and is buried in the Beechworth Cemetery with her son. Henry’s journey began at Leigh-On-Sea, Essex, in the year 1855 and ended in Beechworth, Victoria, 1905.

As the family had lived in accommodation provided by the institution, they didn’t own property or have their own home. Mary was left with seven children, the youngest 5 years of age, with no home and little income. Her circumstances had turned upside down overnight. From living a comfortable existence with very little to do, she now had to find a means of caring for her children and providing a roof over their heads. She decided to return to East Melbourne and moved the family to Gipps Street where she ran a boarding house. None of the Samson children followed in their father’s footsteps. Henry was the one and only Doctor in this branch of the Samson family.

Photograph of Dr. Henry Samson taken from ‘Early Victorian Psychiatry 1835-1905’

Second Prize

Congratulations go to Sandra Dumble, the author of
“The Clock from Dunoon”.

“This was an interesting story with good presentation and also evidence of personal research”. Leonie Freeman

THE CLOCK FROM DUNOON

It isn't a decorative timepiece. In fact, it's quite plain, standing 7 inches high and 7½ inches wide with the black case showing some wear. There is no inscription or marking as to the date it was made. It's face is yellowing and the hands have stood still at 10.27 for as long as I can remember. There has been no sound coming from the Clock, it's ticking stopped years ago. Despite it's inactivity, it has enjoyed a position of prominence on the mantelpiece of my grandmother, my mother, and now with me.

As a child I was told, “You will be given the Clock. It is passed to the eldest child in each generation regardless of whether the eldest is male or female. The family Bible, on the other hand, MUST be passed to the eldest male.” I was out of the running with the Bible, but the Clock would come to me. I was told it had come from Scotland with the Rankin's and had been passed to my grandmother, Ruby Samson (nee Rankin) who in turn had passed it to my mother. I didn't give the Clock much thought until a few years ago when my mother gave it to me. My turn as “caretaker” had arrived. When it was in my home I examined it closely and wondered about the origin of this timepiece.

My mother was an only child, my grandmother, Ruby born in Colac 1891, the eldest child of Dugald Rankin and Annie (nee Lawes) of Cororooke near Colac. Dugald, my Great Grandfather, born at Larpent in 1863 was the eldest child of Malcolm Rankin and Mary (nee McKenzie). The family tradition of passing it to the eldest in each generation appeared to have been followed, but where and when did it start? When had the Clock from Dunoon arrived in this country?

Malcolm Rankin had been born in Sandbank, Dunoon, Argyll, Scotland, on October 25, 1837, the first child of Dugald Rankin and Janet (nee Bell). His sister Anne was born in 1839 and another brother, Dugald born 1843. Sadly, his mother, Janet, died shortly after Dugald was born in 1843 and Dugald Senior remarried later the same year to Mary McIntyre. It is said Malcolm did not get on with his step-mother and by 1851 he is 13 years of age, living and working on a farm of 130 acres run by his Great Uncle, Alexander Bell. By 1861 Malcolm has arrived in the Western District and has married Mary McKenzie. My research has shown that Malcolm is the eldest child of Dugald and Janet of Dunoon and he is the first Rankin to reach these shores, thus the Clock must have arrived with my Great Great Grandfather, Malcolm Rankin.

It is said that Malcolm arrived aboard the *Austral*, passenger or crew member yet to be uncovered. He is supposed to have deserted the ship in Geelong and travelled with his friend, Hugh McKay, who was heading for Larpent to see his sweetheart who was working there. Malcolm was given employment at Larpent by John and Jessie McKenzie, where he met their daughter, Mary, whom he married in 1861. The young Rankin's took up land at Irrewillipe, calling the property “Clady Banks”, and between 1863 and 1887 had a family of four sons and seven daughters. Now, where was the Clock? Did it arrive with Malcolm just prior to 1861 or was it still in Dunoon? As Malcolm had jumped ship, I assumed he was travelling light and would not have been carrying the Clock. If so, it remained in the Dunoon residence of Dugald and Mary Rankin, “Clady House”, Sandbank awaiting Malcolm's return.

I assumed the Clock had passed from Malcolm's father, Dugald born 1812 in Renfrew, Inverkip, to Malcolm, however, further research uncovered the fact Dugald was not the eldest. He was the third child of Dugald Rankin born 1784 Lochgoilhead, Argyll, and Mary (nee McDougald). They married in Dunoon on June 17, 1806. This would mean the Clock did not originate in the Rankin family but had come from Malcolm's mother, Janet Bell.

Janet was christened in Dunoon on July 7, 1814. She was the eldest child of Malcolm Bell and Ann (nee McPherson). Malcolm and Ann were married on August 30, 1813 in Broxwood, Dunoon & Kilmun, Argyll. Malcolm Bell, however, is not the eldest child in his family and the McPherson line remains unresearched. The origin of the Clock came to a standstill. When did the tradition of handing it down to the eldest child begin? Was the Clock in existence at the time of Malcolm and Ann's marriage? These questions remain unanswered. I do know it had been given to Malcolm Rankin and he brought it to Australia.

Malcolm returned to Dunoon after establishing a successful grazing property at Irrewillipe near Colac in the Western District. He is said to have returned home during the late 1800's to "make amends" with his father and stepmother. A photograph of a distinguished Malcolm was taken at the time to record his voyage. It would seem likely he was given the Clock during this visit and it travelled with him on his return voyage, arriving at "Clady Banks" Irrewillipe, Colony of Victoria, to begin its journey in this country.

The Clock has lived in a variety of homes. Some humble, some grand. During 1841 Dugald, Janet and 4 year old Malcolm were living at the Old Inn, Sandbank, Dunoon. Dugald's occupation was Vinter or Spirit Merchant. By 1851, Dugald, his second wife, Mary, and their six children had moved to "Clady House", Sandbank, and Dugald's occupation is Ferryman. Photographs of "Clady House" taken in recent years show a whitewashed, two story house with a stone fence and lush green lawns.

From "Clady House" the Clock travelled in Malcolm's luggage until it arrived at "Clady Banks" Irrewillipe. Photographs of Malcolm and Mary sitting in front of their home show a modest timber cottage set in a rambling garden surrounded by large trees. From Great Great Grandfather Malcolm, who died in 1917, it went to my Great Grandfather, Dugald Rankin, who with his brother John had taken over "The Hill" not far from Colac. Dugald, his wife Annie and family were living in the grand bluestone residence which had been built by William Robertson in 1857-59. No doubt the Clock took it's place on a mantelpiece or kitchen shelf. "The Hill" was surrounded by garden including a magnificent palm tree planted by Prince Alfred Duke of Edinburgh during his visit in 1874.

Next in line was my Grandmother, Ruby Samson (nee Rankin). The Clock went with Ruby and my Grandfather Eric, their first home being Molesworth Street, Auburn. It travelled to various suburbs around Melbourne ending up in Kew during the 1960's. This is where I first remember its presence and the message, "You will be given the Clock". After my Grandmother's death in 1969, the Clock came to live with my parents at Moe. It sat on the mantle above the fireplace and from time to time my father would tinker with its workings to see if it would "go again". To no avail. It refused to tick and remained sitting silently in the room.

The Clock continues on it's journey through the generations of my family, acting as a link between the past and the present. It's working life has finished, no longer needed to tell the time, but it stands as a reminder of past family members and their connection to us.



"Clady House" – Home of the Clock 1850's

The judging of the Mid Gippsland Family History Society Inc. 2007 Writing Competition was carried out by members from The West Gippsland Genealogical Society.

Special Commendations:

"The Reverend John Gregson" by Helen McLennan..

"Martha Barr" by Vaughan Knox.

"Robert Booley" by Rodney Donnelly

PRIZES 1st Prize \$100 cash 2nd Prize \$50 book voucher

THANKS

West Gippsland Genealogical Society

Our thanks go to Leonie Freeman, and her team from the West Gippsland Genealogical Society for providing the panel of Judges for our 2007 writing competition.

“Congratulations to all participants for taking the time to put pen to paper and contribute to your society’s competition. Your stories will now be available for others to read and please pass them on to other members of the family so they can be kept for future generations. Far too often we genealogists collect data and discover family backgrounds but, do not put them in readable forms for non genealogists to enjoy. So well done everyone!

The West Gippsland Genealogical Society Judges have enjoyed reading all your stories and making a decision was not easy as all had merit and we could certainly feel your excitement and pride in relating your family tale. The essays covered a variety of topics, all were very interesting and enjoyable to read.”

Leonie Freeman WGGS

All the 13 entries received for the MGFHS 2007 Writing Competition, will eventually be featured in this Newsletter. *ED.*

VICKI'S FINDS on the NET

My mother's maiden name was "Mabee." Upon admitting her to the hospital several years back, my sister was asked by the administrative worker if she could tell her Mom's maiden name.

"Mabee," my sister responded.

"Can you tell me it or not?"

"Mabee."

Valerie J. Wood

Humor/Humour:

I had occasion to research the Pickell family in Barry County, Michigan. In the 1860 census I found the family with a young son named "Cucumber" Pickell.

Gordon Mitchell

WES WINS!

Our April Members Meeting saw a great response for our

Anzac Biscuit Cookery Competition.

After the judging by Lesley Scanlon, a member of the Country Woman’s Assoc., the 8 (6 biscuit) entries were well received as supper by those present.



Lesley Scanlon (right) presents Wes Halket his prize for baking the Best Anzac Biscuit

Wes’s winning recipe

The recipe:-

- 2 cups rolled oats
- ½ cup sugar
- ¼ cup plain flour
- 1½ tablespoons golden syrup
- (I added extra ½ because I like flavour)
- 1 teaspoon bicarb soda
- 2 tablespoons boiling water
- ½ cup melted butter

Mix oats, flour and sugar

Mix boiling water, soda and golden syrup, while frothing, add butter and pour into dry ingredients. Mix thoroughly.

Bake at 160°C 18 – 20 minutes *Wes*

GOOD NEWS!

FREE SEARCH QUEENSLAND BDM’S

Now online

The Queensland Department of Justice and Attorney-General website now have their historical BDM index’s available to search online, for FREE!

<http://www.justice.qld.gov.au/bdm/home.htm>

At the top right hand of the screen you will see [Queensland historical index search](#) now available online.

Click on the underlined and you get to Queensland historical index search Historical birth, death and Marriage records (1829-1914) *Happy hunting! Ed.*

ROSES FROM THE HEART

www.christinahenri.com.au

MGFHS is getting behind Christina Henri's project, Roses from the Heart. Celebrate our history and be a part of a very significant contemporary art project that commemorates the lives of our female convict forebears.

The make a bonnet tribute, Roses from the Heart conceived and curated by artist Christina Henri is an installation of 25,266 bonnets (taken from an original 1800's servant's bonnet pattern) that pays tribute to the lives of the 25,266 convict women transported from the British Isles and Ireland to Australia. Although it specifically looks at the women sent to Australian shores it encompasses commemoration of all convict women. These convict women were huge contributors, both socially and economically, to the land in which they found themselves.

Christine hopes that after you make a cloth bonnet, from her pattern, you will photograph yourself wearing it and mail her the photo along with your bonnet; these will then become a part of her exhibition. You could decorate the bonnet with Roses and/or Hearts and put your chosen convicts name in a corner of the brim, you could also place the Ship's name and year of arrival into Australia on the other corner.

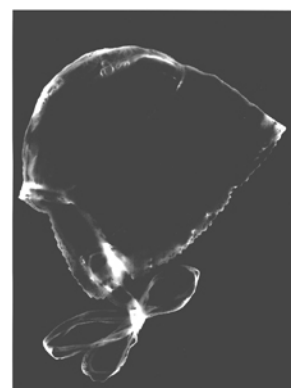
The first Roses from the Heart exhibition will be in Hobart on the 8th March 2008 (International Women's Day). The installation will then travel around Australia, then Overseas before becoming a permanent exhibition in Hobart.

MGFHS has a copy of the bonnet pattern and instructions. Just call into the family history research room at the Moe Library, on any Wednesday's between 1 – 4 pm for a copy of the pattern (\$1, to cover photo copy costs). If you don't have a female convict you can adopt one. MGFHS has a list of Tasmanian convicts you can choose from. You can email: cjhenri@iinet.net.au for the pattern, or download it from the female factory website www.femalefactory.com.au/ but be careful that all the images are of equal % before the download. Or check the MGFHS web site.

Mailing address for the completed bonnets is:- C. Henri, P.O. Box 1020, Sandy Bay, Tasmania 7006



Bonnet pictures taken from <http://www.femalefactory.com.au/exhibit.htm#henri>



REMEMBER THE DATE!
6th October 2007
SEMINAR

The date has now been set to hold our Family History Seminar. Saturday 6th October at the MOE TOWN HALL 10AM – 4PM

Come along to find out what's new in Family History research; Australian, International and Local. Further details will be in the AUGUST Newsletter. *Sponsored by Latrobe City Council*

RESEARCH STARTER KITS

Interested in researching family from **DENMARK, SWEDEN, NORWAY, FINLAND or the NETHERLANDS?**

The International Settlers Group, a service group of the GSV has Research Starter Kits for Sale. \$7.70 ea (includes GST) or \$9.20 posted.

All enquiries:- Yvonne Izatt

☎ (03)98998136 📧 yvon@alphalink.com.au

