

NEWSLETTER

Genealogical Society of Victoria, Mid-Gippsland Group.
Secretary : Dawn Cowley (Mrs.) 051-271780. Newborough, Vic.
Chairman : John Pattison, Traralgon, Victoria.
No. 21 MAY, 1985.

RECENT ACTIVITIES OF THE MID-GIPPSLAND GROUP :

Late April, early May was a very busy time for members of our group. Activity commenced during the Afternoon of April 25th when two local cemeteries were invaded. Five willing workers armed with clipboards, pens, etc. bore down on the tiny Narracan Cemetery, while a further twenty scribes took over the much larger Hazelwood Cemetery. All were intent on transcribing as many of the headstones at these cemeteries as was possible during a solid afternoon's work.

With army like precision they tackled each section : R.C., Anglican, Wesleyan, Presbyterian, Greek - row by row, interrupted only by the occasional bewildered query from a visitor to the cemetery "What ARE you all DOING?" Diligence was repaid, as, by late afternoon, both tasks had been completed, with the exception of the very small lawn section of the Hazelwood Cemetery.

Compilation and typing of these headstone transcriptions is the next step and should be completed within a couple of months.

That evening, following a brief monthly meeting, we were pleased to host the launching of a book "For King and Country", recently published by Gay Rogers. Mr. Andy Ringin from the Moe Historical Society launched the book with an extremely interesting and well prepared talk, for which we thank him.

On Saturday May 4th we opened our library to the public and members of other groups for the day. Interest was very encouraging with many visitors making use of the microfiche of pre 1900 post office directories. We were delighted to welcome members from our neighbouring Gippsland groups and hope to make such a day at least an annual event. Thanks to all helpers over those few days.

D.C.

The success of the Midvalley Centre Display was evidenced by the roll up at the April meeting where a large number of visitors attended. I am told several became members of our Group.

Roy Berryman was guest speaker at the April meeting and handed out some very interesting information on the history of photography. His wife, partner - or backer up - was just that, supplying bits and pieces to fill the gaps.

Our two day display to be held in August should occupy a corner of all minds. What can we add to the display?

It is recommended that members write individually to the A.B.C. protesting at the discontinuance of the Family Favourites.

Tom

BOOK REVIEW :

FOR KING AND COUNTRY

The 1914-18 War Diaries of J. M. Laidlaw

Edited by J. G. Rogers

Available through Mrs. J.G. Rogers, 68 Hennessey St.
Moe, 3825. Phone 274259.

Cost : Hardbound (limited edition) \$18.00
Softbound \$12.00 (plus postage) 222 pages.

J.G. (Gay) Rogers is the granddaughter of J.M. (Max) Laidlaw, whose diaries are published as a major part of this book. Until recently, Gay was unaware of the existence of the ten diaries her grandfather wrote during his years of service in World War 1. As a record of his impressions of events and conditions at the time, Gay felt they were worthy of publication and has painstakingly compiled and deciphered each, adding footnotes where clarification was necessary.

The second part of the book consists of biographical material relating to the Seager family - a family closely associated with Max Laidlaw, as Ina Seager was his sister. Ina gave wonderful service during the 1914-18 period, with this story giving just recognition to her tireless efforts.

"For King and Country" is extremely readable and gives the reader a first hand look at conditions endured by thousands during the horrendous years of the Great War.

The scrupulous care taken by Gay in the compilation of this book has resulted in an excellent publication of an interesting story and she is to be congratulated on her standard of achievement.

D.C.

IRISH FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY :

A new society to be known as the Irish F.H.S. was formed at Tullamore, County Offaly, Ireland on 22nd September 1984. The objects of the society include the promotion of Irish family history through the indexing of parish records and census returns, the collection of old wills, estate rentals, the compilation of tombstone records and other genealogical sources.

Those with family history queries are invited to use the service provided by the group and to please state the county of origin clearly so that the enquiry can be forwarded to their member best placed to deal with it.

At least two international reply paid coupons should be included to cover postage. All enquiries will be dealt with.

Address enquiries to : The Secretary, Michael J. Byrne,
Convent View, Tullamore, Co. Offaly, Ireland.

THE GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY OF TASMANIA:

Address : P.O. Box 640G, Hobart, 7001, Tasmania.

Membership : Dues are payable each year by 1st April.

Ordinary member .. \$18.00 per annum.

Joint Members (2 people at one address)

.. \$24.00

Student/Pensioner/Unemployed over 6 months

.. \$12.00

Joint Pensioners.. \$18.00

Simple queries from members of the public will be answered upon receipt of postage and envelope.

~~THE CHURCH OF THE LATTER DAY SAINTS :~~

~~For the benefit of those wishing to view the records at the Mormon Church in Kosiusko Street, Traralgon, the Centre is open daily.~~

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER IN THE JOURNAL OF THE NORTHUMBERLAND AND DURHAM FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY :

".....As a matter of interest, it is not generally realised by people tracing family history that many immigrants to Australia in the last century landed in Cooktown, Queensland. During the days of the Palmer River gold rush, Cooktown became a big port for overseas ships."

It appears many passengers disembarked at such ports, later travelling south for permanent residence.

FIRST FLEET :

Carrying Australia's first European settlers, the First Fleet left Plymouth on the morning of 13th May, 1787. There were 750 convicts, largely chosen for their agricultural, building and mechanical skills and 212 officers and men of the Royal Marines. The convicts and their guards were housed in six transports, "Alexander", "Lady Penrhyn", "Charlotte", "Scarborough", "Friendship", and "Prince of Wales". These vessels and three transports carrying supplies and livestock "Fishburn", "Golden Grove" and "Borrowdale" were chartered from private owners at 10 shillings per ton per month. The only navy ships in the Fleet were the man-o'-war "Sirius" and the armed tender "Supply". The voyage to Botany Bay by way of Rio de Janeiro and Cape Town took eight months and one week and cost the lives of 23 convicts through disease or accidents. The last of the ships was in Botany Bay by 20th January but Phillip was dissatisfied with the site and moved the fleet to Port Jackson.

RESEARCHING IN N.S.W.?

Archives Office of N.S.W.

"The State Archives"
2 Globe Street,
The Rocks,
Sydney, 2000.

"VICTORIANS RISK LOSING THE KEYS TO THEIR PAST"

The following is part of an item which appeared in "The Age" of 20th April, 1985.

"This is a dusty, musty story. It is also a scandal and a tragedy, particularly in this year of Victoria's 150th birthday. By perverse irony, the state is lavishing cash on history-related projects even while it is allowing its public records - history in the raw - to decay or be lost.

"Public Record Office's ability to do its job has been reduced. Thus, the report shows that no money for new storage shelving has been provided since the 1981 budget. In 1982, reference correspondence services were eliminated. In 1983, conservation and microfilming were cut out (some funds to resume microfilming, but not conservation, were provided in 1984). There is not even enough money to provide adequate air-conditioning which is vital to the preservation of documents.

"But money is not the only, or even the most important, issue here. Victorians are at grave risk of losing the keys to their past even while they celebrate it. Mr. Chris. Hurley, whose title is Keeper of Public Records points out that his office recently compiled a list of its holdings to comply with the Freedom of Information Act. "With some notable exceptions," he writes, "it chronicles over and over again the absence from the official archives of all but a few of those records upon which a history of this state's first hundred years can be written. Often all that survive, even for central government departments, are a scant few personnel and financial records."

"Apart from the archival material now in the hands of the PRO - Mr. Hurley estimates this is less than ten percent of the total - there is no guaranteed public access to official documents held by government agencies and other official bodies. Historians seeking to trace aspects of the state's story must plead with a multitude of bureaucrats for permission to view material which may or may not be properly catalogued and safely stored, even if it still exists."

Peter Cole-Adams
"State of the Nation"

Produced for the Mid-Gippsland Group G.S.V. by the Newsletter Committee : Tom Irvin, Frank Robinson and Lyn Sephton.