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The Aims of the Society are to Discover, Record, Preserve, Advise on and Teach the History of Maitland and the District

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Cover: Edward Charles Close 1790–1866 --- Image courtesy of Ann Beaumont

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Lecture meeting is held on the first Tuesday of each month from 5:30-7.00pm as a forum

for lectures, talks and presentations

Business meeting is held on the third Tuesday of each month from 5:30-7.00pm

Meetings are held at the Society's rooms, 3 Cathedral Street Maitland

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Edward Charles Close -- From Soldier to Settler

By Ann Beaumont

Most people interested in the history of the Maitland district are aware of the contribution made to the area by Edward Close, often referred to as the *Father of the Hunter* and the founder of Morpeth.

In the past few months his life has been highlighted by two significant events: the 200th anniversary of the Battle of Waterloo and the 175th anniversary St James' Church at Morpeth which he built.

Although Close was not at Waterloo he fought in seven of the battles of the Peninsular Wars under the Duke of Wellington, and became known as one of Wellington's Men in Australia.

In May I was one of the speakers at the Waterloo Seminar organised by the Royal Australian Historical Society at History House in Sydney. My paper was entitled *The Legacy of Waterloo, Edward Charles Close – from soldier to settler*.

In that paper, and in this article, I drew on Close's own diary which he wrote from 1808 until 1816, with a few later entries in New South Wales, as well as my own extensive research on Close. A facsimile copy of the diary, with a new introduction, was published this year and is available from the Maitland Historical Society or from www.highlandhousepublications.com.au

As well as a diarist Close was also a talented amateur artist and not only wrote about his experiences but illustrated them as well.

Edward Charles Close was born in Rangamatty, Bengal on 12th March 1790. His father, also Edward Close, was a silk merchant and an agent for the East India company. His mother was Marianne Collinson who had gone to Bengal to join his brother Charles Collinson who was the Commercial Resident for the East India Company at Bauleah, north of Rangamatty.

Edward and Marianne were married in May 1789 and their son was born eleven months later. Sadly Edward senior died six months after his son's birth. He was gored by a wild buffalo and died a long and lingering death from his wounds in August 1790.

After her husband's death Marianne and her baby son went to live with Charles Collinson at Bauleah. The little boy was very close to his mother, and she no doubt influenced his early interest in art and instilled in him his love of God, as she was a very pious woman. In 1798 the pair returned to England with Charles Collinson and settled in Suffolk where he had inherited his father's estate the *Chantry*.

During these years at the *Chantry* young Edward would have observed how an estate was run and probably used it as a template for the estate he himself acquired in later life. His uncle was the High Sherriff of Suffolk in 1801 so as an eleven year old he saw how his uncle was involved in the administration of local affairs.

Initially Close was taught at home by the Rev. George Rogers the Rector of All Saints Church in the nearby village of Sproughton. Later he went to the Hackney School in London, an establishment for

middle and upper middle class families and sons of the peerage. Many of its students went on to Cambridge to read classics and theology and this was probably the path Close intended to take. Instead he opted for a military career and left school in November 1807.

In August 1808 Close recorded that his regiment left Ireland and sailed to Gibraltar. It was stationed there until ordered to proceed to Lisbon in Portugal by ship. Shortly before the soldiers left, on 2nd June 1809, Close was promoted to rank of Lieutenant.

Close's observations in the first month on the Iberian Peninsula are very interesting. He gives little military information and seems to observe the countryside and people from the perspective of a tourist.

As the journey continues he is faced with the reality of the devastation wreaked on the population by the French. He describes the town of Lodociro as a town tumbling into ruin, with nearly all the houses demolished, and its people verging on famine.

From Portugal they crossed into Spain. Life on the march was hard and they lived roughly, mainly camping out in all weathers. Yet Close still finds time to observe and record the landscape and towns. He describes the town of Corea as a pleasant town built on a hill overlooking the River Alagon. He notes the houses are much cleaner than those in Portugal and is relieved that the French had not damaged a magnificent church which he visited, noting it had a beautiful toned organ.

He was obviously equipped with not only writing materials but with art supplies as well. Quite a lot of the sketches and paintings he did while in Portugal, Spain and France have survived and are now in the Mitchell Library and the National Library in Canberra.

In late July 1809 his regiment arrived in Sentinella to link up with the 60,000-strong Spanish army under the control of General Cuesta and marched to Talavera.

The Battle of Talavera, fought a 120 kilometres southwest of Madrid, was the blooding of Edward Close as a soldier. In his diary he describes the fight graphically as it raged over two days. The French lost 10,000 men, the British 6,000 killed or wounded, including 200 officers. The British contingent was said to be 15,000 opposed to the 60,000 Portuguese. At one stage the 48th was isolated, fighting on its own and Close records that Sir Arthur Wellesley (later Lord Wellington) personally rode along the line to thank them for their gallant conduct. "Forty eighth you are like a wall," he said.

When the battle was over there was little relief for the soldiers, weary and many injured. They camped out for the next four days nearly starving from lack of supplies. Close claimed the Spanish had seized all the provisions and the British soldiers had to survive for four days on one day's ration.

Forced to leave their wounded in Talavera the 48th moved on through wild mountainous country, once again short of supplies and forced to live on rough biscuits and river water.

As he travelled Close also observed the religious practices of the local people, although there is sometimes a touch of distain for the traditions of Catholicism.

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Throughout his years on the Iberian Peninsula Close visited many churches, convents and several cathedrals, exhibiting a great interest in all manner of religious ceremonies, and recording them in great detail. His observations are mainly respectful but they are sometimes tempered with a touch of humour and even revulsion. In May 1810 he was present at a burial in the town of Portalegre and was shocked when the body of the corpse was found to be too long for the grave. The legs were doubled up and broken, and the remains jammed into the ground, dirt thrown in and rammed down even further to make it fit.

Shortly after the Battle of Talavera the regiment was hard hit by an outbreak of dysentery, with Close having a serious dose himself. Like most of the men he had bouts of illness from time to time and in May 1810 he came off his horse and fractured his collarbone.

In September 1810 the 48th was part of the allied forces against the French at the Battle of Busaco. For the rest of 1810 Close continues his diary but it is not until 15th May 1811 that he gives a more in depth description of his involvement in the Battle of Albuera. It was later described as the most bloody battle of the Peninsular campaign.

It was at Albuera that Close was nearly killed. His close brush with death had a deep effect on him and although he does not write about it in this diary he made a vow to God that if he were spared he would build a church when he could to the glory of God. He obviously spoke of this vow to his family and friends and many years later he fulfilled this vow.

The Battle of Albuera was hard-won by the allies, with terrible loss of life and many wounded on both sides. Close records that when the 48th first and second battalions, comprising 450 men, came out of the field the muster showed that only 25 men and six officers, including himself, were left standing. The rest were dead, wounded or missing. The ranks were so depleted that on 10th of June any of the privates still fit for service were drafted into the second battalion and the officers and non-commissioned officers were returned to England a month later.

He was amongst those who arrived at Portsmouth on 12th August 1811. On the long march back to the barracks in Northampton they were regarded with suspicion by the English who took them to be French.

Edward Close had left England in 1808 as a naïve 18year old and arrived back in his homeland as a battle- scarred 21 year old veteran. He had few personal possessions left and during the three years of his first campaign he had experienced serious illness, been injured, endured near starvation and experience the savagery of battle.

In June 1812 Close started his second tour of duty on the Iberian Peninsula arriving back in Lisbon on 21st June. After a long march the 48th joined the rest of the army in Salamanca and headed to Madrid where the British army was welcomed by the local population. The French had quit the city, leaving it to the British, who took 2000 prisoners. Close was in the detachment which took the prisoners to Salamanca.

For rest of 1812 Close describes the army's progress and details some of its skirmishes with the French. In December that year he was made Adjutant, and spent the next few months bringing three years of muster rolls and payroll entitlements up to date.

Despite bouts of dysentery Close recovered enough to be with the troops that drove the French back into France in November 1813. He was at the Battle of Toulouse in 1814, the last battle of Peninsular War and in June returned to Ireland with his regiment.

The 48th was not involved in the battle of Waterloo but is obvious from Close's diary that over a five year period Wellington visited the troops on a number of occasions, and Close had a very high opinion of his leader. During this time Close was also clocking up many experiences which would serve him well in the years to come. It wasn't until 1849 that he received the Military General Service Medal with seven clasps to mark his service in the Battles of Talavera, Busaco, Albeura, Vittoria, Nivelle, Orthes and Toulouse.

The 48th spent the next two and half years on garrison duty in Ireland and in December 1816 was advised that it was to be sent to New South Wales to take over the garrison from the 46th Regiment. Like some of his fellow officers Close would have found the posting to the colony an attractive proposition. They were aware that land was available and once they had served their time in New South Wales they could resign their commissions, take up land and carve out a comfortable future in a new land.

Close was aboard the *Matilda* which left Cork in in March 1817, anchoring at Sydney Cove on the 3^{rrd} August. On the journey he painted a number of seascapes which have survived. In Sydney town he painted George Street Barracks which were completed a few months after the 48th arrival. These pictures and other scenes of Sydney are of great importance and give a wonderful glimpse into the early days of the colony. His sketchbooks and albums are now in the Mitchell Library and National Library in Canberra. Many of these pictures had been attributed to Sophia Campbell, a relative by marriage, but they were verified as being his work in 2009.

From the outset the 48th was kept busy in the colony not only in Sydney but the outlying areas where they were often engaged chasing bushrangers and escaped convicts.

In 1819, on the recommendation of Major James Morisset, Government Macquarie appointed Close as Assistant Engineer and Supervisor of Public Works in Newcastle. Though he had no formal engineering qualifications he was obviously considered suitable, and many of the skills attained during his army days were transferrable to civilian life. He was responsible for increasing navigation safety in the harbour, by putting down mooring chains and removing some dangerous shoals. He built a fort near the signal station, and installed a coal-burning beacon that could be seen by ships for twenty miles on a clear night. While he was in Newcastle he painted many scenes which give us a clear idea of what the town looked like at the time.

It was in Newcastle that he resolved to resign his commission and apply for a land grant. Familiar with the land along the Hunter River he wrote to Governor Macquarie in 1821 asking for a grant of land at an area called Green Hills. Promised by Macquarie shortly before he left the colony the land was granted by Governor Brisbane in 1822 in two parcels of 1030 acres and 1020 acres, with a further 500 acres later. He was allocated ten convicts and given ten government cows. A few years later he bought another two 100 acre farms to add to his estate.

Close had married Sophia Palmer, daughter of John Palmer the purser of the Sirius on the first fleet and the first Commissary in the colony, at Parramatta in September 1821. He sent in his papers to

sell out and in 1822 and he and Sophia moved to Green Hills, initially living in a hulk moored to the river bank. They called their property Illulaung, an Aboriginal word meaning a high dry place away from floods. A small timber cottage was quickly built followed by a substantial timber bungalow. Close gave part of the site to the town for the construction of the School of Arts in High Street which he officially opened in 1862.

Close prospered, and along with successful rural pursuits, he sold off blocks of town land on a 100 year lease. This meant he could keep control of how his town developed. In many ways he also ran his estate in a similar way the methods he had observed as a young man in England. He was very much the squire of the manor and on ceremonial occasions provided bonfires, bellringers for weddings and ensured all his workers were regular churchgoers. He built a schoolhouse in 1836 and employed a teacher to run the school.

By 1829 he had built and moved his family into a substantial two storey stone mansion Closebourne. He and his wife had ten children although only four survived to adulthood.

In 1837 the foundation stone for St James Anglican Church in Morpeth was laid and the building was consecrated on New Year's Eve 1840. It was the fulfilment of the promise he had made following his near death experience at Albeura in 1811. He donated the land and paid for the church's construction and was a regular worshipper there for the rest of his life.

Close believed strongly in public service and the law. He was a justice of the peace and then a magistrate from 1823 to 1827. He served in the colony's legislative council from 1829 to 1838, became warden of the Maitland District Council in 1843 and was a generous benefactor of the Maitland Hospital and was the first president of its Board. He also donated land to other denominations, including the Catholics, to build their churches, for the Court House and the School of Arts.

In 1848 he sold *Closebourne* to William Tyrell, the first Bishop of Newcastle, who changed its name to *Bishopscourt*. The family moved back to live in the large wooden bungalow from some years until he built *Morpeth House* in 1853. This was a single storey dwelling built from brick and stone and is still standing. Sophia died there in 1856 and Edward ten years later in 1866.

Following his sudden death there was a great outpouring of grief from far and wide. His funeral procession to the Morpeth Cemetery was a mile long and shutters in houses throughout Morpeth and Maitland were closed as a mark of respect. An obituary in the Maitland Mercury read;

...his Christianity was no mere outward show of sanctity...the poor and afflicted would ever find a helping hand extended.....as a landlord he was indulgent in the extreme, especially in seasons of distress, and his tenants will gratefully venerate his memory.

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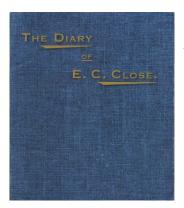
Ann Beaumont is nearing the completion of Edward Close's biography which is due for publication later this year. If you would like to be notified when its release is imminent please contact hihousebooks@bigpond.com or contact Highland House Publications on (02) 4872 1315 to register your interest.

About the author

Ann Beaumont is a writer/historian living in the Southern Highlands of New South Wales. Until 2001 she lived in the Hunter Valley and was the joint coordinator of the now defunct Heritage Network of the Hunter which had its office in the Morpeth Courthouse.

With Yvonne Maule she published *Heritage Haunts of the Hunter, an essential guide* in 1997. In 2001 the Hunter Valley Training Company commissioned her to write its 20 year history *A Heritage Built on Human Achievement*. The HVTC also commissioned her to write its 30 year history *30 Years of Enterprise*. Her next book was *Morpeth Courthouse, a place of justice a place of community,* commissioned by Maitland City Council. In 2013 she wrote *A Light in the Window, Harper's Mansion Berrima, the place and its people* which was funded with a Federal Government Heritage Grant. The book was the winner of a National Trust Heritage Award in 2014.

She is currently completing a biography of Edward Charles Close which will be published later this year.



A facsimile copy of the diary of E.C. Close, with a new introduction, was published this year and is available from the Maitland Historical Society or from www.highlandhousepublications.com.au

St James at Morpeth celebrates 175th anniversary

St James' Anglican Church, Morpeth is the Hunter Valley's first Anglican church north of Newcastle and celebrates its 175th anniversary this weekend.

The church was rebuilt after a fire in 1874 and was damaged in the 1989 earthquake, but still stands today as a symbol for the faithful in Morpeth and beyond.

The Reverend Canon Sonia Roulston has extended an invitation to all in the community to join the -celebrations for a significant milestone.

"On Sunday, we will celebrate and give thanks for 175 years of faithful life and ministry here and for the great gift the parish has been given from God, through Edward Charles Close, and in the lives of the many faithful clergy and parishioners.

[Extract from the Maitland Mercury article, July 23, 2015]

http://www.maitlandmercury.com.au/story/3231676/st-james-at-morpeth-celebrate-175th-anniversary/



A request made by a person seeking information on a guest house in Maitland called the "Trocadero" led the members of the Historical Society on a search to establish its existence.

The story begins with the "Plough Inn" a prominent licensed hotel, which for many years was owned and operated by Thomas Callaghan. When Thomas Callaghan died in August, 1925, the Maitland Daily Mercury wrote that he was one of the oldest natives of the district, being the last member of the family of Mr. John Callaghan, who was one of the real pioneers of these parts. John Callaghan had arrived in Sydney from Great Britain in May, 1828 in the 450 ton sailing vessel, Alexander Henry. He was accompanied on this journey by Captain Hungerford, a man who became well known in the district.

The Callaghan family settled in the district shortly after arriving at Sydney. They acquired property here and on areas which formed part of the South Maitland coalfield, with parts of these later becoming the town of Abermain and Weston. A farm near East Greta was held by members of this family for nearly 100 years.

Thomas James Callaghan was born on 26 July, 1836 in High-street, in premises now occupied by A. S. Mehan and Co., but which were then the Settler's Arms Inn, of which his father was the licensee. His father built the premises next to the fire station, first known as the Plough Inn. This later became known as the Tattersall's Hotel, and then as the Trocadero boarding house. It was licensed for nearly 80 years, the greatest part of the time being held by the Callaghan family. Mr. T. J. Callaghan himself was the one who held the license. Previously he was in the Metropolitan Hotel for 17 years, and the Homeville, and Courthouse Hotels. He had retired from Tattersall's Hotel 14 years prior to his death. Thomas Callaghan also conducted farming and cattle-dealing at Fishery Creek and was a noted horseman and great judge of cattle.

A Business Notice published in the Maitland Daily Mercury on Wednesday 18 October 1911 headed "The Trocadero, (late Tatts Hotel) High-Street, West Maitland. This notice announced the premises had been thoroughly renovated and was now open to the public as Residential Chambers, with Private and Public Dining Rooms. Refreshments provided in well-appointed rooms. Afternoon Teas, Banquets, and other functions catered for, under special supervision by Mrs. W. G. Moore. The Mercury also published that day the following details. "The premises in High-street occupies for many years as Tattersall's Hotel, the license of which was cancelled some few months ago in consequence of the Local Option vote, having been taken by Mrs. W. G. Moore, late of the Royal Hotel, have undergone extensive renovation and transformation, and will henceforth be known as the "Trocadero." There are two very large dining rooms, drawing room, and smoke room on the ground floor, with a good number of bedrooms and private furnished apartments upstairs, the whole forming commodious, convenient, and most desirable residential chambers, with private and public dining rooms and apartments where ladies may entertain their friends at afternoon tea. Refreshments will be provided daily, and afternoon teas, banquets, and other functions catered for Mrs. Moore's geniality and popularity as a host are so well known that it is certain she will make a success of the "Trocadero," more especially as everything will be under her direct supervision.

On reading the above, it is easy to imagine the ladies arriving arrayed in their best dresses, matching hats and gloves to partake of tea served on fine English china, in congenial surroundings. The ownership of the Trocadero later passed to Mr. Thomas Doyle who ran the guest house with his wife. Thomas Doyle died suddenly in January 1919 and the premises were again sold.

The next name associated with the Trocadero is Meyer. Mrs Amy Meyer, wife of Mr E. L. Meyer ran the guest house until her death in January 1924.

On Wednesday 29 December 1926, a notice printed in the "Wanted" column stated that the Trocadero, 288 High-st., had been taken over by Mrs. J. Bonnett who stated she offered superior board and residence at reasonable charges. Country visitors specially catered for.

The last mention of the Trocadero at 288 High Street as a guest house found in the Mercury was a sale held on September 22, 1928 by Newcastle Auctions. This notice advertised that wardrobes, sideboard, piano, wash-stand, tables, chairs, dressers, carpets, lino, dining-room suite, crockery, etc. and other items too numerous to mention would be on offer.

A notice in the Mercury on 19 September 1934 under the heading "Boys' Club, Old Trocadero Buildings, Catholic Young Men" stated that about 18 months ago, a movement was commenced to establish a club in West Maitland for Roman Catholic Boys, and during the time that has since elapsed, the proposal has been kept in mind, until now the time is approaching when the club will be an established fact. Work has commenced on the old Trocadero buildings, next to the old West Maitland fire station, where alterations are being made so that it may be used as the quarters for this club. It is proposed to equip the buildings with a gymnasium, and establish a small circulating library to cater for the athletic and literacy tastes of the members. Those who will be admitted to membership will be young Roman Catholic men of the district. There is already a St. John's Debating Society in existence, and it is intended to make this part of the club.

So there ends the life of a building, well almost. We know this building no longer exists and the actual time of demolition is not at this time known. Two factors came into play. One was the alteration made to Charles Street which introduced Cathedral Street, and to the grounds of St. Peter's School, the former Marist Bros. Does anyone know?

Val Rudkin

29 May 2015

Note:

The obituary for Thomas James Callaghan published in the Mercury in 1925 mentioned he was born in 1836 at the Settler's Arms, the premises of his father and now occupied by A. S. Mehan & Co. This is somewhat confusing as the building named as The Settler's Arms had been demolished and replaced with a grand new building in 1914. The old building was the premises of William R. Norman as far back as 1878 when listed in the West Maitland Borough Council rate listing as owned by William Mudie and occupied by Norman as showroom, shop and residence. Alexander Mehan moved into this old building in 1909 and became the tenant of the new building. Then in 1935 he opened in the premises next door erected by John Lee in 1865. The building erected in 1914 became known as the Maitland Gas Company offices.

Journals for sale

The Society has the following unique (now out of print) publications available for sale:

Journal of Hunter Valley History. Vol.1 No.1 1985, 141 Pages

Contents; Dean Lynch; Catholic Priest and Community Leader.

Railway Builders in the Hunter Valley 1854—1878.

The Glendon Stud

Marriage and Settlement of Hunter Valley 1818 – 1838

Michael Scobie 1802 – 1903

The Establishment of Secondary Education in Newcastle, Maitland District.

Journal of Hunter Valley History. Vol.1 No. 2 1985, 112 Pages

(Note; This Volume limited supply, only sold in set of four volumes)

Contents; The Life and Times of Henry Reeves of "Segenhoe" and Maitland.

The Hunter as it was: Documents and News Items.

Journal of Hunter Valley History. Vol. 2 No. 1 1986, 176 Pages

Contents; German Immigration to the Hunter Valley in the Mid—19th Century.

John Earl of Glenridding.

Hunter Valley Inns and Innkeepers Part 1: 1820's

Enduring Fabric: Life and Society in the Upper Hunter.

Impressions of Early Newcastle 1825 – 1840.

John Gillies: Member for Maitland.

Government Cottages at Hunter's River.

Charles Hughes: An Early Innkeeper at Newcastle, Maitland and Black Creek.

Scottish Influence in the Upper Hunter

Journal of Hunter Valley History. Vol. 2 No. 2 1986, 154 Pages

Contents; Gold Fever in the Hunter. Part 1 "Off to California".

The Life and Times of John Herring Boughton.

Down Memory Lane: The Victoria, Newcastle's First Grand theatre.

From Convict's Surgeon to Settler. The Life and Times of Dr. William Evans.

The Governor Comes to Town: Official Tours of the Hunter Valley in the 1830's—1840's

William Vile 1812 - 1907.

Hunter Valley Inns and Innkeepers Part 2: 1830's.

The four abovementioned Journals are available for \$20.00 each plus Postage through Australia Post.

Also Available:

Hunter Valley Directory 1841

By Elizabeth Guilford. Pub. 1987. 248 Pages, Hard Cover.

Contents; Part A: the General Directory; Population, Police Districts, Civil Establishments,

Aust. Agric. Co., Education Establishments, Businesses, Industries, Professions, Shipping, Mail and Coach Services, Societies and Associations.

Part B: The directory of Inhabitants.

Cost: \$25.00 Plus Postage

To order, please email <u>maitlandhistorical@gmail.com</u> or phone 0438623299

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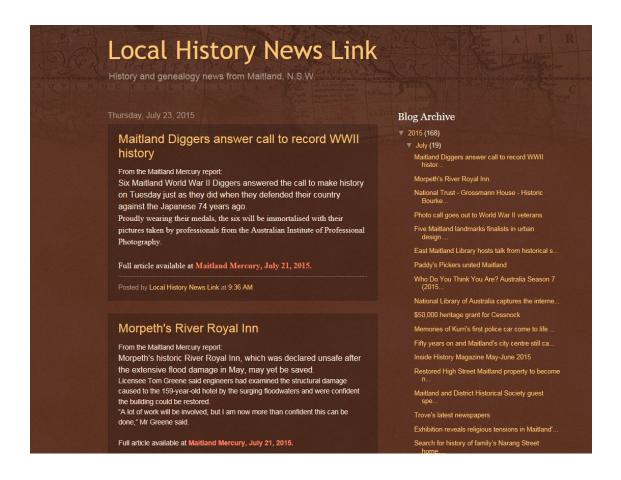
Local History News Link

The *Local History News Link* blog, produced by Librarian and Maitland Historical Society member Judy Nicholson, keeps up to date with local history news.

Available online at http://localhistorynews.blogspot.com.au/

You can access the blog from the website, or you can easily subscribe to the blog by entering your email address and *Local History News Link* is then sent directly to your email.

Local History News Link compiles history and genealogy news from a range of sources including the Maitland Mercury, Maitland and District Historical Society, the National Trust, Society of Australian Genealogists, National Library, State Records, National Archives, Maitland City Library and Maitland and District Historical Society.



Diary Dates 2015

Meetings are held at the Historical Society's rooms, 3 Cathedral Street

Rooms are also open each Wednesday and Saturday, 10am to 3pm.

August

Tuesday 4th Guest speaker 5.30

Tuesday 18th Business meeting 5.30

September

Tuesday 1st Guest speaker 5.30

Tuesday 15th Business meeting 5.30

October

Tuesday 6th Guest speaker 5.30

Tuesday 20th Business meeting 5.30



Victoria Bridge

Spanning Wallis Creek, Maitland
Linking East and West Maitland

(1852-1896)