

Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.

Bulletin of Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.

(Established March 1977)

Affiliated with Royal Australian Historical Society and
Museum and Galleries Hunter Chapter



Volume 25, Number 1

February 2018

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

Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.

Cover: The photograph was taken by Allan Thomas and shows Graham Dark at work in the Historical Society rooms.

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Location: 3 Cathedral Street Maitland (opposite Bishop's House)

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

Membership fees : \$20 (single) and \$30 (double / family)

Patrons: The Hon. Milton Morris AO
NSW Member for Maitland 1956-1980
NSW Minister for Transport 1965 – 1975
The Most Reverend Bill Wright, Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle

Current Office Bearers :

President : Keith Cockburn

Vice Presidents : Kevin Parsons, Peter Smith

Treasurer : Vacant

Secretary: Kevin Short

Bulletin Editor : Lisa Thomas

Consultant Editor : Keith Cockburn

Bulletin contributions are being sought. Please contact the Society via email
maitlandhistorical@gmail.com


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Upcoming Seminar-Workshop

The Maitland and District Historical Society and the Royal Australian Historical Society will hold a seminar/workshop on Wednesday 28 February on the topic of caring for archives. The presenter Christine Yeats has years of experience as an archivist with N.S.W. State Records and has conducted seminars to assist people keeping local records to do so with the correct methods. She will discuss collection policies, storage, arranging and describing collections, preservation, and access policies. This is an important seminar for all people involved in community and family history.

For more information or to book please contact Val.



MAITLAND & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

in conjunction with the

ROYAL AUSTRALIAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

will hold a

SEMINAR ~ WORKSHOP

CARING FOR LOCAL AND COMMUNITY ARCHIVES

Presented by Senior R.A.H.S. Vice President

CHRISTINE YEATS

at

BROUGH HOUSE

Church Street, Maitland

on Wednesday 28 February 2018

10.30 am ~ 2.30 pm

Cost: \$20
Student/Pens: \$15

A light lunch is included

Bookings by 20 February 2018
P: Val Rudkin 0417 461 602
E: rudkin@internode.on.net

The Maitland and District Historical Society AGM

The Maitland and District Historical Society will hold its Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 20 March at 5:30 in the rooms in Cathedral Street.

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Maitland's History, the Maitland U3A, and the Historical Society

Thirty-five Maitland U3A members have enrolled in a course which will cover aspects of Maitland's history. The course, which is being co-ordinated by Graham Dark, has been organised by the Maitland and District Historical Society and will run for sixteen sessions beginning on 7 February. It will be held on Wednesdays between 1:30 and 3:00 pm in the Maitland Repertory Society premises.

The course topics include Key Dates in Maitland's History, Flood Experiences, Hunter River Ports, People of Maitland, Maitland Families, Now and Then, Barbers and Bee Keeping, High Street Buildings, German Families, the Hunter Valley Training Company, the Jewish Community, the Art Gallery Site, and Collectors and Collecting.

MDHS members running the sessions are Graham Dark, Kevin Short, Chas Keys, David Atkinson, Maree Farrell, Peter Smith, Ian Sinclair, Heather Berry, Janece McDonald, Val Rudkin, Ruth Trappell, Tom Skelding, and Janis Wilton.

Publications from the Maitland and District Historical Society will be available for purchase at the sessions.

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Do You Like Jazz?

If you do you might wish to mark Saturday 14 April on your calendar. That's when Jazz on The Rectory Lawn Branxton will be held, from noon to 3pm. The rectory is opposite St John the Divine Anglican Church Branxton. Admission is a gold coin and a sausage sizzle will be available. BYO chairs, rugs, food, etc.

The next day, on Sunday 15 April, there will also be a Jazz Mass at St John the Divine Anglican Church in Branxton, starting at 9am. A morning tea will follow.

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In the August 2017 Bulletin we featured the on-line database "Photographers of Maitland 1845 - 1900", which had been compiled and documented by Judy Nicholson, the Maitland Library Local Studies Librarian. In the following submission Judy has focussed on one of the photographers in her database. The entire collection may be accessed at www.photographersofmaitland.org/.

John David Pickering

A photographer active in Maitland between 1889 and 1893



Bankruptcy proceedings were initiated against photographic artist John David Pickering of 149 Dowling Street in Sydney in April 1888, but by February of the following year, Pickering appeared as the manager of **Sullivan's** studio at Hart's buildings, High Street, Maitland, and was noted as being "late proprietor of the Dore Studio, Sydney, and who was for many years with Tuttle and Co." Pickering's name continued to be featured as studio manager in Sullivan's, taking an opportunity when at the Premier Skating Rink, to kindly '...arranged a photograph of each of the ladies who took part in the late evening and fancy dress carnival in the costumes they assumed for the occasion...'

FINE PHOTOGRAPHS.—We have been shown by Mr. J. D. Pickering, manager for Messrs. Arthur Sullivan and Company, West Maitland, some fine

specimens of photography which have recently been executed at the studio. They include a group, splendidly finished, of the Half Holiday Rugby Football Club, the post office staff at West Maitland, the officials in the Telegraph department, and several portraits of well known Maitland residents. In each case faithful portraits have been produced.

Pickering managed the Sullivan studio until November 1891, when he took over the business.

HIGH-CLASS
PHOTOGRAPHY

J. D. PICKERING
(A. Sullivan & Co.),
HART'S BUILDINGS,
WEST MAITLAND.

J. D. PICKERING begs to intimate to the residents of Maitland and vicinity that, having concluded arrangements with Sullivan and Co. to take over the above Studio, intends to carry on the business of **HIGH-CLASS PHOTOGRAPHY** only, and trusts that the liberal support given him as Manager for Messrs. Sullivan and Co. will be extended to him in the future.

His **REDUCED PRICES** for Christmas and New Year Season, and until further notice, are:—
15s. Cabinets per Dozen 15s.
SYDNEY PRICES! SYDNEY PRICES!

Also with every dozen of above Cabinets we are presenting gratis **ONE BEAUTIFUL HIGHLY MOUNTED CHRISTMAS or NEW YEAR CARD** with your Photo. printed on it. 9025

Pickering splashed out with large display advertisements and in December, enticed customers with the offer of a free Christmas card, mounted with their photo.

Cabinet photographs were also highlighted.

Pickering was on the scene with his camera as Maitland's Senior Cadet Company completed a successful drill in the park in 1892 as well as photographing Corporal McPhie's funeral, the image being copied by the Illustrated Sydney News.

The receipt of an appreciation medal for his photograph of Stockton Municipal Council speaks well for Pickering's photographic success and perhaps his public relations skills as well.

Later in the year, Pickering was praised for his image of Captain Cracknell – even the horse was worthy of special mention:

A Fine Photograph of Captain Cracknell. Mr. J. D. Pickering, the photographer of High street, has shown us a fine enlargement executed at his studio, of a picture of Captain Cracknell, D Troop of

New South Wales' Calvary, representing that officer in full uniform seated on his charger. The picture is splendidly sharp and clear, and the tones excellent. The artist has been specially happy in getting the horse in a good pose, and the animal is exceedingly life-like and natural. We have seldom seen a better enlargement.

Pickering's innovative photographs on silk were noted by the Mercury in July of 1892 and he made use of a special coupon offer to entice business from the public of East Maitland, Morpeth, Raymond Terrace and Miller's Forest, for 'beautifully finished cabinet portraits'.

Important Announcement.

MR. PICKERING,

To bring his Studio more directly under the notice of the general public,

HAS DECIDED TO PRESENT, BY COUPON, FIVE CABINETS and a BEAUTIFUL 10 x 12 ENLARGEMENT, which will be attractive and lasting, and framed ready for hanging in the drawing room. The Coupons will be distributed by our respected agent, Mr. Law, who intends canvassing the district, so that everyone will have an opportunity of securing these really splendid Pictures. Thus for the small sum of 10s 6d everyone may have an enlargement and Five Highly-Finished Cabinets, in the latest style of art; pictures which will afford a continual source of gratification to themselves and families.

THE DORE STUDIO will include WORK IN THE LATEST STYLE OF ART ONLY, and hopes to prove itself worthy of a prominent place before the Public.

NOTE ADDRESS—

PICKERING'S DORE STUDIO,
HART'S BUILDINGS,
WEST MAITLAND.

6083

Six months after the special coupon offer, Pickering announced his intention to depart for Sydney and for one month, the prices for photographs would be reduced. He also drew attention to the new process of **platinotypes**, 'which he has been very successful with.'

In May 1893 George Kedwell announced that he had succeeded Mr. Pickering at the Dore Studio.

Eleven years later, in 1904, the roles were reversed, with Pickering returning to Maitland as manager of the **Venice Studios**, who acquired Kedwell's business after Kedwell moved to Sydney.

THE VENICE STUDIOS

HART'S BUILDINGS, 1 HIGH-STREET, WEST MAITLAND.

MR. J. D. PICKERING has pleasure in announcing his return to town as Manager of the above, and his extended experience in HIGH-CLASS PORTRAITURE, which will be a guarantee to all patrons. The most modern processes supplied at Sydney Prices.

Photographs taken by Mr. Kedwell can be supplied from the original negatives.

Kindly inspect our NEW SPECIMENS, ARTIST PROOFS, etc.



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A Report on the Royal Australian Historical Society Annual Conference Cowra 28-29th October 2017

By David Atkinson

The weekend began with a welcome, pre conference drinks, and hors *d'oeuvres* at the Japanese Gardens. The food, wine and commentary were very special and combined with a brief tour of the museum and gardens made for the beginning of a great conference.

The theme of the 2017 RAHS Conference was 'Finding Lost Places, Lost People'. Uncovering hidden stories helps us better understand the past and can challenge our understanding of how the present came to be. Historical societies have an important role to play in ensuring that their communities' history does not get lost and that members of the broader community can find out about their work so that they too can learn and contribute to this history. Lost communities can be remembered and found through written archival records, photographs and voice recordings. The digital revolution is increasing accessibility to records and providing more tools to reach a wider geographical and demographical audience.

Saturday morning's highlights were stories of the local Aboriginal past and Coura Rocks, Lost in Cowra – war prisoners and the Japanese Gardens and Finding Europa – the story of a new life in a new country.

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Europa started life as a military training camp at Cowra which fell into disuse at the end of WWII and was then used as a resettlement camp. Migrant women and children were camped here after the war while their men were off honouring their contracts in the snowy scheme et al. Europa was the largest family resettlement camp in post WWII Australia.

Questionable judgement was evident when the authorities used the Europa camp to house male farm labourers from southern European countries.

Debbie Sommers from Port Macquarie Historical Society spoke of online collections and connections and eHive, a systems software management tool for cultural collections. The 2018 RAHS conference will be held at Port Macquarie so early bookings will be needed.

Emeritas Professor at Western Sydney University and railway historian Robert Lee presented a session titled “An Illusion of Permanence: Railways as a Transient Symbol of Colonisation in the Lachlan”. He provided evidence to show this and cited the Canowindra – Eugowra lines as an example as they became obsolete as they were being constructed. They carried as much traffic to the opening as they did over many a year thereafter.

The final day of the conference was devoted to an excursion to landra Castle. landra is where “share farming” in the Australian context originated, and its success is well recorded at landra and across Australia.

landra constituted some 32,000 acres and in 1893 Mr Greene (the land owner) introduced the system which was somewhat similar to tenant farmers in the UK but much more equitable. The small town of Greenethorpe was established by Greene to service the share farmers and their families and it exists today.

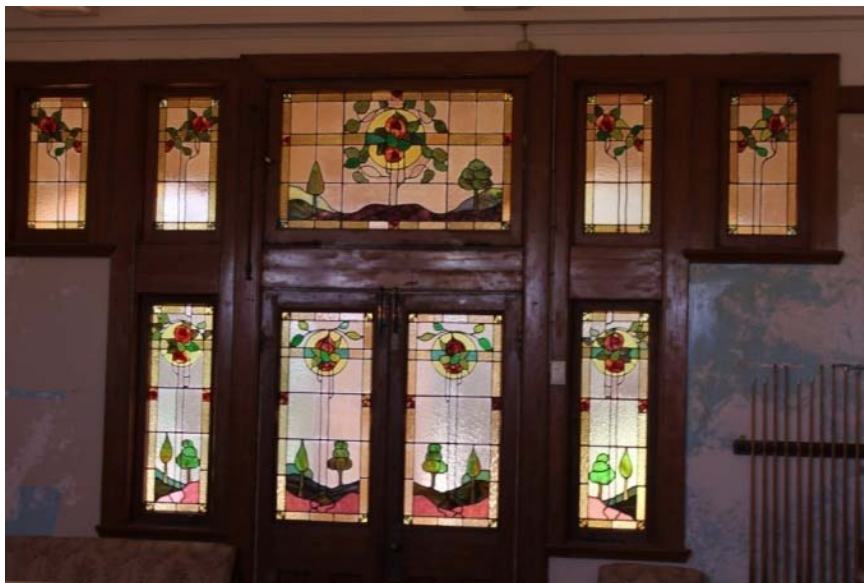
The Castle at landra is quite unique as it is of poured concrete construction as an addition to the previous Mt Oriel homestead and was completed in 1911. Designed by an English architect and Mrs Greene the building is still in excellent condition as can be seen in the following photographs.



landra Castle



Main stairway



Billiards room

landra also had services that were the dream of most cities and towns such as hot and cold water, electricity and sewerage. Water storage and reticulation were and remain features of this building. Water was filtered and recycled into gardens etc. In August 1908 the Castle and outbuildings were fitted with conduit for the electricity system.

The Crossley Bros "Gas" engine (horizontal 8" (200mm) bore) used to drive the generators has been recently refurbished by men from a machinery club in Grenfell.



landra stables and machinery shed with electric light generator and batteries
for the old 110V DC supply



8 inch single cylinder Crossley Bros, gas engine.
2m flywheel approx 2 tonne

All photographs by David Atkinson

David is an active member of the Hunter Valley Socratic Society, which is a community based philosophy discussion group which meets on the first Tuesday of the month at the East Maitland Public Library.

Although the 40th anniversary of the Maitland and District Historical Society has now passed, there are still many articles from previous Bulletins which deserve to be reprinted, including the following.

From **Bulletin Vol. 4 no. 3** (April 1980). Interview with Mr. Robert Browne, Stonemason of Regent Street, Maitland, NSW 4/6/79.

The following is an interview with Mr. Robert Browne, grandson of the founder of Thomas Browne's monumental mason works, Thomas Browne. Mr. Thomas Browne first set up business near the present Maitland Court House in 1874.

Mr. Browne: My grandfather walked from Newcastle to the quarry. There were only blacks about at the time. My grandfather's name was Thomas Browne. He examined the stone and found it was a very suitable stone for building purposes and for other purposes. They started to quarry it but they had to do it all by hand, that is work it by hand. You will notice that a lot of headstones in the cemeteries have been worked by chisel and that they had to keep the chisel cuts all parallel. They started to put shots in but the work was very slow and they got the big saw going then. They lived near the present mill near the big boiler. All the water used to go into the mill for drinking purposes. My father was keen on getting the place clean and make it look like a park and of course Aub, my brother, did the same thing. I used to go with my father and help him as much as I could. When Aub started I went out there with Aub to do a bit of clearing. We used to poison all the prickly bushes. You have to split them and let the poison go down the centre.

Interviewer: How did you bring your stone into town?

Mr. Browne: I can remember we had a big truck with five horses. One was a grey horse and he was a monster. My father used to breed his horses and he would put them into the team and train them.

Int.: What about some of the old buildings in Maitland such as Cohen's building? Did your firm build any of those?

Mr. Browne: A lot of that work was done by Frank Meek who worked for my father. He came from England and was a very talented mason and carver. When he was making out our quote for the spire of St. Mary's church he didn't double the time for hauling up the stone and we lost on it.

Int.: You supplied all the stone for St. Mary's church from Ravensfield quarries?

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Mr. Browne: Yes and for the Technical College. They had masons up from Sydney but it was too hard for them. Our masons ran rings around them.

Int.: In your factory in High Street you said thirty five men once worked there and now you the only one left?

Mr. Browne: Yes. A lady came in today and said that she could not wait any longer for their monument as she thought that Dad might be on his way but they did want the tombstone made from Ravensfield stone.

Int.: And you are 82 years old?

Mr. Browne: Yes but I have good eyesight. I can see way over there with no trouble. (Mr. Browne looked over the lucerne flats towards Maitland). The secret is no beer, no alcohol of any type. Well any doctor will tell you it ruins your insides. Another thing if a man is always drinking his brain is muddled. You know what I mean. He is not really clear. He is always off the track.

Int.: What sort of people have you carved monuments for? Any important people?

Mr. Browne: Well that's pretty hard to say. A lot of people think they are important and you are a bit doubtful about it. The best carving I did was a big Maltese cross, all marble, and it went to Tenterfield. It opened the men's eyes at the shop. I worked along side two men and you can call them champions. Frank Meek was the foreman, a little short chap and he could fight like a son of a gun. The other was Rosconi, an Italian. He was the man who did the Dog on the Tucker Box at Gundagai. He worked at our works but later I went to see him at Gundagai and he was very pleased to see me for he was with our firm for a good many years. He was a first class carver, or tradesman I should say. He made a clock too. The last time I saw the poor fellow he had lost an eye. I do pottery and I can do casts with clay and he was wanting to make some little Dogs on the Tucker Box to sell to people and he wanted to know if I could get the proper plaster for him. He passed away later and a thorough gentleman I can only say.

I was at Odlings in Sydney, where I was apprenticed just before the war, about 1910. I was there for seven years but I was apprenticed for five years. They brought in the proper men from overseas, men that were skilled at their work. If you are under a man skilled at his work you have a chance to learn the trade properly.

Odlings would bring a 19 feet slab of marble from the wharf to their factory and I would have to cut from them the many sizes required for the headstones. At that time they were very popular but they have gone out of fashion now. They got all their goods from overseas

like granite but now they cannot get enough of it. Odlings have gone out of business now. They've gone back to Italy, to that big quarry I showed you a picture of. Several monumental masons have come to Maitland but they have never stayed. It's like this. If you do a job for a person that's a bit dear then there must be something special that's been done to it to make it dear. See? You've made a good job of it. But if you slum it you can do it cheap because you have not put enough work into it. Well, that's no good to me. I've got to make a good job of everything I do and that might have been the cause of a lot of people going out of business.

Int.: Did your father ever come into contact with Edgeworth David?

Mr. Browne: Yes. He used to come to our works once a year and he used to bring a lot of students from the University. He used to take them out to the quarry and show them the various fossils and rocks.

Int.: Can you recall any humorous incidents like delivering the wrong tombstone to the wrong grave?

Mr. Browne: A professor came to me in the shop and asked me if I could cut a foundation stone for the metallurgical college. I said I could and told him how it could be done. I said "Do you want a granite one?" He said no and that he wanted an ironstone one to represent the metallurgical faculty. I told him what I wanted and he went down to Sydney and got everything I wanted. They brought the stone from Whyalla. I could only cut it at the rate of half an inch in one day. I cut it with an emory wheel. I told him they would have to have a separate piece of metal with all the writing on it as they would never be able to cut letters on the ironstone. So they did that. It was a difficult thing to do but as long as I did the job that he wanted then I was satisfied.

At the quarry a load of stone was brought into Maitland nearly every day. A load was about five tons and was brought in by a lorry with five horses driven by Jack Little, A nice old chap. Poor old Jack was very fond of the drink and the horses knew it too because they used to pull up at all the pubs along the way. At that time there were a good many pubs. Anyway Jack landed at the works one day and he really did have too many in. My father was in the shop and he told Jack he could have the sack and so Jack quietly took his team away. Of course his team would take him home; he wouldn't have to drive it. Jack turned up the next day and he went to my father and said "I'll give you another chance Mr. Browne." Jack used to be there all the time. He used to dig stumps out at the quarry. We used to dig all the dirt from around the stumps and clear all the roots you see. Then any trees that were knocked down we would pile up around the stumps and burn the lot. And then we used to fill them in and grow grass seed. Paspalum was one of the seeds. Jack finally just got old and went home and rested.

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The Maitland and District Historical Society Inc. has a number of publications for sale at the rooms at 3 Cathedral Street Maitland. For details of the publications for sale, or to purchase, please visit the rooms during open hours on Saturday between 11 AM and 3 PM. Alternatively, contact the Society on 0438 623 299 or email maitlandhistorical@gmail.com.