

*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



***Mrs Henry Fry, the First President of the  
Maitland Branch of the Country Women's Association***

**Volume 28, Number 1**

**February 2021**

***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:** This 1930 photograph of Mrs Fry has hung in the Maitland CWA hall.

**Correspondence :** P.O. Box 333, Maitland NSW 2320

**Telephone :** 0468 438 990 note this is a new number

**Email :** maitlandhistorical@gmail.com

**Website :** <http://www.maitlandhistorical.org>

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

**Lecture meetings** are held on the first Tuesday of each month from 5:30-7.00pm as a forum for lectures, talks and presentations.

**Business meetings** are held on the third Tuesday of even months from 5:30-7.00pm.

**Committee meetings** are held on the third Tuesday of odd months from 5:30-7.00pm.  
Members are invited to attend all monthly meetings.

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

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

**COVID 19 update: The rooms are open to members between 11 and 3 on Wednesdays and Saturdays. Social distancing and COVID protocols apply.**

**Patrons:** The Most Reverend Bill Wright, Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle  
Dr AC Archer AM

### **Current Office Bearers :**

**President :** Kevin Short

**Vice President :** Allan Thomas

**Treasurer :** Jennifer Buffier

**Secretary:** Steve Bone

**Bulletin Editor :** Lisa Thomas

**Consultant Editor :** Kevin Short

**Bulletin contributions** are being sought. Please contact the Society via email  
[maitlandhistorical@gmail.com](mailto:maitlandhistorical@gmail.com)

©Copyright. This publication may be used for private study and research. Please contact the Maitland & District Historical Society Inc. regarding any other use.

While every care is taken in the compilation and editing of the information contained in this bulletin, Maitland and District Historical Society Inc. and its editors do not accept responsibility for the accuracy of this information

**Editor's Notes:** The November 2020 Bulletin featured an article on Harry Hyndes' "Mindaribba Waltz". Since then, thanks to Val Rudkin's comprehensive research, additional information has come to light on Harry Hyndes' life and work which is included in this edition. It has become evident that he was a true musical talent and his early death deprived Australia of an individual who might well have developed into an international figure.

The Maitland Branch of the Country Women's Association has been an important part of the local community for decades and in this edition we look at the earliest years of the Branch. This article has been excerpted from the 2011 book (by Lisa Thomas) titled *A History of the Maitland Branch of the Country Women's Association: Service and Tradition*. It may be noted that the November 2015 Bulletin contained a related article on the role which the Maitland CWA played in supporting the troops during World War II.

It is with sadness that we note the passing of Henry Roderick Albert Armstrong on 7 January 2021. Henry was a founding member of the Maitland and District Historical Society and served as an early president. Henry had a broad interest in all aspects of history and, with his intelligence and ready wit, will be greatly missed.



1937 – 2121

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Henry “Harry” Charles Hyndes (1862-1898): his life and music**

By Val Rudkin

Henry Charles Hyndes, known to family and friends as Harry, was the son of furniture maker and retailer Robert Hyndes and Emily Susannah Hyndes, nee Jenkins. Harry's father had emigrated from Roscommon, Ireland with his family on the “Ayrshire” which arrived at Sydney on 25 October 1841.

Harry was the second of twelve children and was born on 4 December 1862 at his paternal grandmother's home at Shepherd Street, Darlington in Sydney. He lived with his parents and siblings in West Maitland, spending his early years in their residence over the shop on High Street. Educated at the schools of St. John run by the Dominican Nuns, his interest and ability on the piano was soon noticed and encouraged. He then entered St. Patrick's College at Goulburn, followed by two years study with Signor Giorza in Sydney. Although he had special talents he enjoyed the outdoors and when the family moved to “Sans Souci” in Regent Street West Maitland the house provided a large extended playground for Harry and his siblings.

His dedication to his music became obvious to his parents and at the age of seventeen his father made arrangements for him to study his passion in Italy and Harry was accepted into the Conservatoire de Musique in Milan. Here he received instruction from the best masters in Italy, considered to be second to none and he became a highly valued pupil. Prior to his departure from the Conservatoire he was presented with a piano that Senior Adreoli, one of the great masters, had had made for his pupil whom he considered to be almost perfect. This gift cost 300 guineas. Harry had the piano shipped to Sydney, and later the instrument was installed in the Palings Music Store in Sydney where Harry was teaching.

Harry played before the Queen of Italy and he dedicated his composition “Souvenirs of Italy” to her Highness. His other known composition titled “Mindaribba Waltz” was published by Palings. Mindaribba is the name the local aboriginal people gave to the Maitland area and why Harry used that name is a puzzle. A simple reason could be that Mindaribba is a much more flowing name and far more musical than Maitland.

On his return to Australia, Harry performed with other musicians in his debut concert in Sydney. The report in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (and another from the *Echo*) is an enlightening look at his abilities.

Described as a bright star in his profession, Harry's untimely death robbed Australia of an amazing talent that was destined for greatness. His obituary published in the *Maitland Weekly Mercury* on 28 May 1898 reveals the strong sense of loss felt by his family, friends and social contacts.

During his lifetime Harry's performances were often noted in the newspapers.

SMH Mon. 2/3/1885 p.7

*"MR. HARRY HYNDES' CONCERT"*

*Mr. Harry Hyndes, a young Australian pianist, will give his debut concert to-morrow night, at the New Masonic Hall, Castlereagh-street, under the patronage of his Excellency the Governor and Lady Augustus Loftus, Rear-Admiral Tryon and the officers of the Nelson, the members of the Ministry, and his Worship the Mayor. Mr. Hyndes who will be remembered by many Sydney and Maitland people as having displayed great talent when quite a lad, and who has been cultivating that talent in Italy for several years past, was to have given this concert some weeks ago, but was compelled to postpone it owing to an injury to his thumb, which made him unable to perform.*

SMH Tue. 3/3/1885 p.11

*"MR. HARRY HYNDES' CONCERT"*

*Mr. Harry Hyndes, the Australian pianist, who has lately arrived from England, having finished a three years study of music on the continents, will give an invitation debut concert on Tuesday evening next, the 10th of March, in the New Masonic Hall. It will be remembered that Mr. Hyndes had arranged to give a concert on the evening the 5th February last, for which a large number of invitations were issued; but owing to his sudden illness a postponement of the concert became necessary. Fresh invitations for the forthcoming concert have been issued, which alone will be available.*

SMH 11/3/1885 p.10 – Amusements

*"MR. H. HYNDES' CONCERT"*

*At the new Masonic Hall last night an entertainment was given at which Mr. Harry Hyndes made his debut as a pianist. There was a very large attendance of ladies and gentlemen who were present by invitation and who, judging by the manifestations they made of their pleasure, must have thoroughly enjoyed the programme prepared for them. Mr. Hyndes is a*

*native of Maitland, in this colony, but has studied music for four years at Milan, and he has now announced his intention of settling in Sydney and practicing as a professor of the pianoforte. The programme comprised a variety of high-class compositions of an elaborate character by Rubenstein, Mendelssohn, Costa, Pinsuti, Chopin, and composers of equal excellence. A commencement was made with a trio in G minor (adagio and acherzo) by Rubenstein, in which there took part M. de Willimoff on the violin, Herr Patek on the violoncello, and Mr. Hyndes on the pianoforte. In the first part of the composition but little opportunity was afforded to Mr. Hyndes to exhibit his abilities, but in the second that gentleman was more fortunate, and in rapid passages proved them most effectually. His part then became more prominent, and he played it with decision, and with a facility for delicately fingering intricate passages, and with an unpretentious confidence that showed him to have been subject to experienced training and long practice, and to have become a master of the noble instrument at which he intends to preside. Subsequently he played Etude No. 7, op. 25, and Valse Brillante No. 1, op 34, by Chopin. For these he was favoured with many beautiful bouquets, and, being encored, he responded with "Remembrances of Italy," a waltz of his composition, which he has dedicated to the Queen of that fair country. He also played a concerto in F minor (primo tempo) by Chopin, in which he was assisted by Mr. Fred McQuade, who undertook the orchestral part arranged by Reinecke. In this as in his other efforts he exhibited much power of facile movement over the keyboard, and in fact throughout the whole of his playing he created a very favourable voice, sang "I'm a Roatner," by Mendelssohn, a difficult composition, which, however, the singer rendered with an ease and expressiveness which won for him many and hearty manifestations of approval. The Evening Prayer, from Costa's "Eli," was sung by Miss Marie St. Clair; Mons. de Willimoff played on the violin a composition by Mendelssohn; and Mr. Morgan in a pleasant way sang Pinsuti's charming tenor song "Smile and bid me Live." With the exception of Mr. Morgan, all the performers named took part in the second portion of the programme, in which also Herr Patek played on the violoncello Schubert's "Litany" by Rover. The duties of musical director were undertaken in a very satisfactory manner by Mr. Charles Huenerbein,*

*In the Maitland Mercury and Hunter River General Advertiser,  
Sat 14 March 1885 Page 21*

*"Mr. Harry Hyndes' Concert"*

*Mr. Harry Hyndes, a native of Maitland, who from childhood exhibited great musical ability, and who, after studying under various masters here, has*



*had the advantage of four years residence and study in Milan, gave an invitation concert last night in the New Masonic Hall. A noticeable feature of the pianoforte selections was the fact that, although Mr. Hyndes has passed so long a time in the city which holds a pre-eminent place among musical centres in Italy, and that he may naturally be credited with forming his taste upon what he has had most frequently brought before him, the composers he illustrated were all from the north – the Russian, Rubinstein; the Pole, Chopin; and Raff, Swiss by birth, but now German by education; three of their compositions, at least, it is believed, were heard for the first time in Sydney. The distinctive features of Mr. Hyndes' playing are a clear, bright touch, very clean fingering, refined phrasing, an utter absence of "bang," a great facility in execution. His demeanour is singularly modest and unpretentious – a quiet confidence, the result of thorough study and mastery over what he undertakes – and there is a force in his loud passages for which the extreme delicacy in others scarcely prepares the hearer. In his opening piece Mr. Hyndes was assisted by M. de Willimoff and Herr Patek. The second and third movements were played of Rubinstein's trio in G minor. The adagio opens with a soft pianoforte accompaniment to long sustained notes by the strings, attenuated with melodious phrases given out by the violin, and repeated by the violoncello; the pianoforte during the greater part is quite subordinate, but towards the close there are brilliant passages and some difficult left hand work; the scherzo has an almost grotesque character about it; the 'cello has the opening melody, but the pianoforte part is very brilliant; there are quaint passages in unison for the strings, while the pianist has some elaborate work. In this Mr. Hyndes was particularly effective; he was well supported by his coadjutors, and the piece was enthusiastically received. The concerto in F minor, (op. 21) is one of Chopin's most important works. Herr Carl Reinecke has very clearly arranged the orchestral part for a second pianoforte. This was ably played by Mr. Fred McQuade. The concerto opens with a long introduction for the orchestra, (second piano) in which the leading themes of the first movement are heard. Beginning very softly, it rises into a loud cry as if of agony, and throughout there is a mournful character. Each burst of agitation is followed by a moan of sorrow. The introduction ends on a full chord pianissimo, and the solo instrument at once takes up the same tones fortissimo, and a long passage in double octaves follows until the sadness is heard and felt again. Throughout the movement there is the struggle of grief, rising almost at times to despair; and when in the larghetto some relief, some brightness, is expected, there is but little comfort in the continuous murmur with which the bold character of the solo part is followed. The last movement is more cheerful; and with the changing of the scale to F major and in the orchestra*

*the sound of the horns, as if summoning the revelers to a banquet, there is a quiet merriment. The concerto, besides the technical qualities of a virtuoso, demands an extremely sympathetic temperament and a highly educated audience for thorough appreciation, and it is therefore particularly creditable to Mr. Hyndes and to Mr. McQuade that the work was so warmly received, and the two pianofortes in many respects give a happier illustration than the orchestra – never a strong point with Chopin. In the etude and waltz by Chopin Mr. Hyndes showed his entire sympathy with the composer and his ability to interpret the works admirably. For this solo he was so persistently applauded that he resumed his seat at the piano, and played a melodious and graceful “Valse de Concert,” which he has composed and dedicated to her Majesty the Queen of Italy. In Raff’s nocturne and the Rubinstein etude Mr. Hyndes was equally successful, and from his first performance it may be with confidence asserted that he is a valuable acquisition to the pianists in Sydney. M. de Willimoff was greatly applauded for his playing of the andante and finale of Mendelssohn’s concerto; the last movement was far better rendered than on the last occasion he gave the same solo’ and Herr Patek’s fine tone and skill were well evidenced in Rover’s arrangement of a “Litany,” by Schubert. Miss Marie St Clair sang with fine effect the “Prayer,” from Costa’s “Eli,” and later with Mr. Hallewell the great duet from (Rossini’s opera) “Semiramide.” Mr. Hallewell has rarely been in grander voice, and his singing of the aria from Mendelssohn’s operetta, “Son and stranger,” was a great treat. This work, composed for the silver wedding of his parents, shows Mendelssohn’s dramatic ability in a most agreeable form, and makes one regret anew that no opera libretto which satisfied his taste was available for a work on a large scale. Mr. Hallewell’s rendering of this and Elliott’s fine song, “Hybrias and Cretan,” was most heartily received. For encore to the second he gave Mr. C. Huenerbein’s patriotic song, “Australia to the Front,” which was also enthusiastically applauded. It is much to be regretted that a tune with such a swing should not be allied to words more worthy the music and the subject. Mr. Hyndes was fairly laden with bouquets and floral baskets, and the frequently expressed approbation of the crowded assembly must have been highly gratifying. Mr. C. Huenerbein efficiently directed the concert.*

Harry liked to return to the family home at Maitland. It was noted in the *Maitland Mercury* on July 6, 1886 that he had been “Entertaining guests at the piano performing known works and some of his own compositions at his parent’s home.”



The *Australian Town and Country Journal* (Sydney, NSW: 1870-1907) Sat 14 Sep 1895 page 37 reported the following:

*"Sydney Social Events"*

*A very successful dance was given on September 4 by Mrs. Thomas Dalton, at Wheatleigh, North Sydney. The drawing room was converted into a ballroom, and the band was stationed on the enclosed verandah. The whole house was fragrant with flowers, and the moonlight tempted many into the garden, a set of lancers being danced on the lawn. Among the guests were:- Sir Joseph and Lady Abbott, Dr. and Mrs. Shewen, Dr. and Mrs. Sheldon, Mr. and Mrs. Creswell, Dr. and Mrs. Collins, Dr. and Mrs. Mullins, Major and Miss Dodds, Major and Mrs. Lee, Mr. Harry Hyndes and Miss Hyndes, the Misses Hay, Mackenzie, Moses, Basett, Badgery, Wilson, Messrs. Pring, Dowdell, Wardill, Mackenzie, Manning, etc.*

The *Maitland Weekly Mercury*  
Saturday 28 May 1898 / Page 10

*"Death of Mr Harry Hyndes"*

*Mr. Harry Hyndes, one of the leading lights of the Australian musical world, who had been very ill for some time, died at "Clarmore House," a private hospital in Sydney, on Saturday afternoon last, at ten minutes past five o'clock. For about a year Mr. Hyndes had been complaining of an affection of the heart, and latterly a complication of diseases set in, and laid him up at the Hotel Metropole, his ordinary residence, where Drs. Fiaschi, Jarvie Hood, and Scot-Skirving attended him, but he was afterwards removed by their direction to Clarmore. He received every possible attention from these skilful physicians and surgeons, and all the care that devoted nursing could do for him, but his case was one in which no human power could avail, and after a brief struggles he died peacefully and prepared for his end in the presence of his two sisters, Ida and Emy, and his three brothers, Theo, Bert, and Robert. Prior to his death he had been visited by Dr. Higgins, the Coadjutor Bishop of Sydney, who administered to him the last rites of his church.*

*The late Mr. Harry Hyndes, who was but 34 years of age, was the eldest son of the late Mr. Robert Hyndes, of Sans Souci, and ex-Mayor of West Maitland, and one who in his public and private capacity was loved and respected for his sterling qualities. At an early age young Harry showed a predilection for music. He received his elementary training at the hands of the nuns of the Dominican Convent in West Maitland. Leaving the*

Convent, he entered St. Patrick's College, Goulburn, and afterwards studied for two years under Signor Giorza in Sydney. Before he had reached the age of seventeen he manifested such bright promise that his father sent him to Europe to study in the Conservatoire de Musique in Milan, where he would be under the best masters in Italy, or in other words the world. Prior to leaving this great seat of learning, Signor Adreoli, one of the great masters under whom he studied, considered his pupil almost perfect. The Signor thought so highly of Harry Hyndes that he had a piano made specially for him at a cost of 300 guineas. That piano is at present at Paling and Co's in Sydney, where Mr. Hyndes used to teach his classes. On one occasion this distinguished young musician had the honour of playing before the Queen of Italy. He spent about four years in finishing his musical studies, and then had a trip round the world for the purpose of enlightenment. Returning to his native land, he took up his residence in Sydney, where for the past twelve years he has followed the musical profession with a large degree of success. His merits as a player and composer have been acknowledged in metropolitan musical circles to be of the highest order; he was of the thorough Italian school, and ranked in his profession second to none. He did not publish many of his compositions, but his well-known "Souvenirs of Italy," dedicated to the Queen of Italy, and the "Mindaribba," waltz (Mindaribba is the aboriginal name for Maitland, his native place), dedicated to Lady Hampden, give a fair idea of the gifted young gentleman's ability. He was a bright star in his profession, and both musical and social circles in Sydney will sustain by his demise, a very great loss. Numerous and touching expressions and tokens of sympathy have been received by his family, showing the high estimation in which he was held.

And finally, and poignantly, the following:

SMH Thur. 9/6/1898 p.1

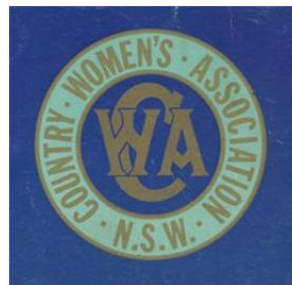
*Public Notices - In the Estate of Henry Charles Hyndes, late of Sydney, in the colony of New South Wales, Pianist, deceased. - All persons having Claims against the above Estate are requested to forward particulars of same to the undersigned on or before the 13th June, 1898.*  
*PERCIVAL MOORE WADDY, West Maitland.*

The following is a photograph of Queen Margherita, to whom Harry Hyndes dedicated his "Souvenirs of Italy". She was the wife of King Umberto I of Italy and was therefore the first queen of the unified Kingdom of Italy. She was beautiful, a near contemporary of Harry, and highly musical.



\*\*\*\*\*

## **The Early Years of the Maitland Branch of the Country Women's Association**



by Lisa Thomas

The Country Women's Association is and has always been a service organisation, and the Maitland Branch of the CWA has been an important part of the local community since it was founded in 1929, just seven years after the establishment of the Country Women's Association of New South Wales in 1922.

Several preliminary assemblies had been held in 1928 to interest people in forming a branch of the Country Women's Association in Maitland. The Maitland Branch, with an initial membership of 60 women, was formed at a meeting convened by the then Mayor of Maitland Alderman R. L. Pender on 15 February 1929. Mrs Henry Fry was nominated as Branch President, Miss I. Quinton as Honorary Secretary, and Miss E. Grey as Honorary Treasurer. The first meeting of the new branch was held on 11 March.

The need for a branch in Maitland had become apparent. Australia in 1929 was very different from today for women and children living in regional and rural areas. Isolation was pervasive and government assistance almost non-existent. This situation was behind the original objectives of the State CWA, and also therefore the Maitland Branch, which were aimed at improving the general welfare and conditions of country women and children.

*The Original Objects of the Country Women's Association of New South Wales*

The activities of the Country Women's Association shall be *inter alia*:-

- (a) To improve the welfare and conditions of women and children in the country and to provide better education facilities.
- (b) To arrest the drift of population from country to city.
- (c) To draw together all women, girls and children in order to make country life more attractive.
- (d) To welcome, and take a kindly interest in all newcomers in every district.
- (e) To encourage women and children to interest themselves in handicrafts and in beautifying their own homes and general surroundings.
- (f) To promote International understanding.
- (g) To support schemes providing for:-
  - (i) Rest Homes and Rest Rooms in country towns for women and children.
  - (ii) Baby Health Centres in country districts.
  - (iii) Seaside and mountain holidays for country people at moderate costs.
  - (iv) Skilled maternity treatment, proper accommodation for maternity cases and the election of women to hospital committees.
  - (v) Books, magazines and libraries in country districts.
  - (vi) Telephones at cost within reach of all householders.
  - (vii) Training domestic helpers for country homes, and tuition in Domestic Sciences.
  - (viii) Instruction in First Aid and Home Nursing and Physical Culture.
  - (ix) The formation of Hospital Visiting Committees.
  - (x) The establishment of Hostels for school children.
  - (xi) The improvement of travelling conditions for women and children.
  - (xii) Senior Citizens Projects.
  - (xiii) To establish Playtime Centres for young children.
  - (xiv) Skilled medical treatment patient/family accommodation and medical research.

Note: CWA halls were originally intended to provide country women with children with some hours of rest when in town, which is why CWA halls have generally been referred to as "rest rooms".

## *Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.*

The immediate need of the new Maitland Branch was to find a place to meet. The ladies initially met from February through to November of 1929 in *ad hoc* quarters, possibly shared with the Returned Servicemen's League over Chant's Ltd. store in High Street. A suitable location was advertised for, and a committee appointed to go into the matter. This committee reported having inspected four places, with the most suitable owned by a Mr Petherbridge. The rental was 32/6 a week.

In the meantime an offer came from the directors of Kerr and Sons Ltd. They said they would be glad to be of help by providing the Branch with fully-equipped and furnished rooms on the first floor of their department store which was located between 317 and 325 High Street. The CWA rooms would be in the middle of this line.

The December opening of the CWA Rest Rooms within Kerr's Department Store was an event to celebrate. About 300 people were in attendance, including members from other branches. The rooms were officially opened by Mrs Sawyer, State President, by the cutting of a blue and gold ribbon at the top of the stairs. Mrs Sawyer declared it to be "the best rest room in the Association". The overall colour scheme was in the blue and gold of the CWA. Furniture included a Genoa velvet chesterfield suite, 45 bentwood chairs, an oak refectory table, several smaller maple tables, and three 6ft by 3ft mirrors. The CWA monogram was embroidered in gold on cushions and curtains. Kerr's charged the Branch only 5 shillings per week and the Branch hired an attendant for £1 a week.

Running the Branch involved many organisational details, as indicated in this excerpt from the *Maitland Mercury* report of the Second Annual Meeting (2 December 1930) :

### *"Association's Thanks"*

*We owe a deep debt of gratitude to Mr. S. Short for auditing the books; Miss Lillian Williams, donating a duplicator for the use of the secretary, so simplifying her work; Mrs. Mollie Mackay for notepaper, and envelopes, with C.W.A. badge and name of branch; Mr. E. Paskins, hire of piano for 6 months, in recognition of the many good deeds of the C.W.A.; Maitland "Mercury" for publishing reports of monthly meetings; Sunday concert by Mrs. G. Vader, also musicale; Mrs. Chant, senior plates, cups and saucers, and Mrs. T Cooney, noticeboard...The Treasurer presented the balance sheet as follows: Subscriptions, £27; donations £23/18/; card parties, £89/3/; garden party, £30/13/; Rest Room afternoon teas, £11/13/6; Calendar sales, £25/4/; badges, £2/5/; annual reports, 11/3; com. On Betta*

## *Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.*

*Lite Lamps, £7/15/-; Rest Room box receipts, £12/18/7. The year ended with a credit balance of £68/14/3. During 1930 donations by the Assn. amounted to £95/10/-. The Rest Room expenses totalled £16/4/4.*

In its first year the Maitland Branch membership had risen from 60 to 124, which included many of the most socially prominent ladies in the local area. The meetings were held monthly on a Friday afternoon.

Its premises secured, the Maitland Branch concentrated on raising money for its community projects and charities. Card game socials were a popular and ongoing source of revenue. From the first year the Branch sold calendars featuring recipes from Branch members. Several Branch-sponsored Empire Balls and Wattle Balls were held in the Town Hall, with the proceeds going to charities.

Branch meeting notes 3 April 1936 "Empire Dance Arrangements. It was proposed by Mrs A.S. McDonald sec by Mrs L.B. Fisher that owing to Empire Day falling on Sunday this year, that the dance take place in the Supper Rooms on Monday May 25th, at the Town Hall. Also that two Committee Rooms be engaged to use at the discretion of Committee. Proposed by Mrs R. St Vincent-Heyes sec Mrs E. Fletcher that the price of tickets be 7/6 double ticket. Pro by Mrs L.B. Fisher sec by Mrs R. St Vincent-Heyes that orchestra consist of piano, saxophone, violin and drum effects or piano, saxophone, and drum effects. Price quotations to be received by Hon. Secretary. Supper to consist of patties, sandwiches, cakes & coffee which was proposed by Mrs A.S. McDonald sec by Mrs L.B. Fisher."

During this decade the ladies began to operate a rest room on the showgrounds during the Maitland Agricultural Show, and nine decades on the Branch still runs a kiosk during the Show.

Branch meeting notes 26 February 1937 at Kerr's. "Show Ground Rest Room. Pro by Mrs F. Carr sec by Mrs. G. Patterson that the Rest Room be conducted on Wednesday & Thursday & that the Secretary of the Show be asked to have it ready for the members by Tuesday morning."

Branch meeting notes 31 March 1939 at Kerr's. "It was discussed whether it was worthwhile carrying on with the Rest Room at the Showground. It was decided to continue opening the Rest Room, but not to continue providing light lunches & afternoon teas on the day before the Show."

Branch meeting notes 7 April 1939 at Kerr's. "Members expressed



dissatisfaction as regards the position given to the CWA by the Show committee for their Rest Room. It was proposed that the Secretary write to the Show committee & ask if it would be possible to give the Association a more prominent position for their Rest Room, also if possible to have it further away from the Merry-go-Round.”

The Branch supported a variety of organisations and projects during the 1930s, many of which were health and child related. These included the Maitland Ambulance, the Maitland Hospital Women's' Auxiliary, Reid's Flat Bush Nursing Fund, the Bush Nursing Association, the Far-West Children's Health Scheme, the Benevolent Society, the Girl Guides and the Boy Scouts, the Soldiers' Children and Wives Christmas Cheer Fund, and the Flying Doctor fund. The Branch contributed towards the furnishing of the maternity ward at the Maitland Hospital and sent clothing parcels to the Benevolent Home. It was during these years that visiting patients in both public and private hospitals, and giving when necessary such items as toothbrushes, became a regular feature.

Two initiatives which are illustrative of their time were the Bush Book Club and the Merewether Seaside Home. The Maitland Branch Book Club donated book parcels to isolated towns as far away as Lightning Ridge and Alice Springs. These parcels often formed the nucleus of a town library. The Branch first contributed to this project in 1933.

The Merewether Seaside Home was a combined project of all the Hunter River Group CWA branches and provided much needed breaks for women on the land and their children. The idea of a seaside home was first discussed in 1929 and the Newcastle branch was formed that year principally for its future operation. An old hotel in Frederick Street, Merewether was purchased for £750. In 1932 the Maitland Branch contributed £33/12/9 towards the maintenance of the Seaside Home and also sent Christmas parcels. In 1933 the Branch sent Christmas gifts of groceries, preserves, crockery, and kitchen utensils, and in 1935 the Branch sent Christmas presents of sheets, pillowslips, tea towels and bath towels. It was reported that many children had their first sight of the ocean thanks to the CWA.

From the “Maitland Mercury” 1 December 1938

“At the annual meeting of the Maitland branch of the Country Women's Association to be held tomorrow afternoon, Christmas gifts for the Newcastle Seaside Home will be given by the members.”

The CWA has always been known for its cooking. In December 1932 the Branch co-sponsored a cake competition with the proceeds going to charities.

<h2>Xmas Cake Competition</h2>	
<p>In order to give the ladies of Maitland an opportunity of once more displaying their culinary skill, and at the same time to assist three worthy institutions—the Hospital, Orphanage, and Benevolent Home—the "Daily Mercury" has decided to conduct a Christmas Cake Competition.</p> <p>This competition will be open to all readers of the "Mercury," and there is no entrance fee. The cakes will be judged by a competent cook, and after being displayed in a window of Kerr's, Ltd., will be distributed equally between the Hospital, Orphanage, and Benevolent Home.</p> <p>The conditions are as follow:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) Every competitor must write to the Editor of the "Daily Mercury" not later than Monday, December 12, notifying of an intention to compete.</li><li>(2) All cakes must be brought to the C.W.A. Rest Room, Kerr's, Ltd., not later than noon on Friday, December 16. Judging will take place the same afternoon, and the winners' names will be announced in that afternoon's "Mercury." The cakes will be displayed in a window of Kerr's, Ltd., the same night, and on Saturday morning will be distributed amongst the institutions named.</li><li>(3) All cakes submitted become the property of the "Daily Mercury."</li><li>(4) There will be two divisions—Iced and un-iced cakes.</li><li>(5) Prizes for the iced cake will be: 1st, 30/-; 2nd, 10/-; 3rd, 7/6; 4th, 5/-.</li><li>(6) Un-iced cake prizes: 1st, 20/-; 2nd, 10/-; 3rd, 7/6; 4th, 5/-.</li><li>(7) The Judge's decision will be final.</li><li>(8) Prizes will be paid at the "Mercury" Office at 4.30 p.m. on the day of the competition, or will be posted to winners.</li></ol>	
<h3>XMAS CAKE COMPETITION</h3>	
<p>To the Editor, "Daily Mercury."</p> <p>Sir,—</p> <p>I hereby notify you of my intention to place an entry in your Xmas Cake Competition. I agree to abide by the Judge's decision.</p> <p>Name .....</p> <p>Address .....</p> <p>NOTE:—This Coupon must be posted to reach the Editor, "Daily Mercury" not later than December 12.</p> <p>All Cakes must be at the C.W.A. Rest Room, Kerr's, Ltd., by Noon on December 16.</p>	

The Maitland CWA ladies were also noted for their socials, which often centred around dances and garden parties held at the homes of the members.

## *Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.*

As reported in the *Maitland Mercury* (11 December 1937) Miss Ivy Quinton was honoured at a function in Lorn. She was the first secretary of the Maitland Branch and only resigned the position in March 1938 due to ill health. As an aside, the hostess Mrs. P.B. (Amy) Cohen was a foundation Branch member. She had been made an MBE (civil division) at a ceremony at Admiralty House on November 16, 1937, just a month before this party. Mrs. Cohen, the wife of a dentist, was well known for her entertainments in her beautiful gardens.

### *Presentation Miss Ivy J. Quinton*

*This afternoon Miss Ivy Quinton was entertained at "Sharrow" Lorn, the residence of Mrs. Amy Cohen, M.B.E., by a number of friends. On arrival Miss Quinton was presented with an attractive posy, and later on was handed a floral horseshoe, from which hung dainty ribbons in delicate shades at the end of which was a small card bearing a contributor's name. Many letters were received testifying to the marvellous work done by Miss Quinton for the people of Maitland and district, and she is being presented with a cheque in recognition of her services. A delightful musical programme was arranged, Mrs. Dutton being the pianist. The soloists were Mesdames Will Johnston and C. Scobie, Misses P. Raisbeck and Mary Atkinson.*

From the *Maitland Mercury* 4 October 1938

### *C.W.A. Garden Party*

#### *Brandon Function*

*The beautiful old home of 'Brandon' looked its best for the CWA garden party held there on Thursday last, when many friends from the Maitland district as well as Seaham attended. The gardens were full of blooms of all kinds, and were much admired, as were the floral decorations in the rooms of the home so generously lent by Mrs. Fisher, president of the Maitland branch of the C.W.A. for the occasion. A most successful afternoon ensued both socially and financially, and all those who gave such happy and willing help to the president are to be congratulated on the brilliant success of the afternoon, which even a threatening storm could not mar. Tea, served on the lawn, was much appreciated, and the various stalls and competitions were well patronised. The all-day tennis tournament attracted a number of players, who were entertained at lunch by Mrs. Fisher. The successful competitors were: Mrs. M. Bolling and Miss Isabel Logan, and the runners-up were Misses Nell Young and Margaret Sparke. Miss Ruth Graham was successful at the dart throwing, and Mrs. Accola won the guessing competition. Among the fortunate winners of gifts were: Mrs. V. Reynolds a card table and Mrs. Sparke a beautifully iced cake. Mrs. Kauter secured the 'dinner'."*

For almost a decade Kerr's provided the Branch with rooms. However, many of the ladies desired to one day possess their own building on their own land and had been raising money towards the purchase of a block of land. This issue ran on for several years as evidenced by the following selections from the Branch meeting notes which, it may be hoped, provide a reasonably coherent narrative of how the Branch dealt with this topic.

Branch meeting notes 2 October 1936 at Kerr's. "The Hon. Treasurer Mrs. A. Sparke proposed and Mrs. L. Dilly seconded that £100 be put in the bank at fixed deposit for one year which was supported by Miss Lillian Williams with the object in view that one day we might have a Rest Room of our own at some future date. At the same time not forgetting that every member is filled with gratitude & admiration for the firm of Kerr's Ltd for their marvellous kindness at all times to the Maitland Branch of the Country Women's Association."

Branch meeting notes 26 February 1937 at Kerr's. "Pro by Mrs. F. Noble sec by Mrs E. Fletcher that a card party be held at the Rest Room on Friday March 12th in aid of the proposed Rest Room funds & that members be asked to provide afternoon tea & saleable gifts for the provision stall to be held in conjunction...Rest room discussion. Pro by Mrs F. Carr sec by Mrs E. Fletcher that the land 55 X 110 situated in Bulwer Street be purchased at a cost of £300, with the object of building our own Rest Room, which was carried unanimously."

Branch meeting notes 7 May 1937 at Kerr's. "Rest Room land discussion. To open up the discussion the proposer Mrs. F. Carr & the seconder Mrs E. Fletcher rescinded their motion, "that the piece of land 55 X 110 situated in Bulwer St be purchased at a cost of £300, with the object of building our own Rest Room", which was carried unanimously at a meeting held on Friday February 26th 1937. It was proposed by Mrs F. Carr sec by Mrs E. Fletcher that the piece of land in Bulwer St be purchased. As an amendment it was proposed by Mrs R. St Vincent-Heyes sec by Mrs R. Ebbeck "that the piece of land under offer in Church St 35 X 100 be purchased at a cost of £250 on easy terms" which was supported by Mrs T. Drinan. Mrs R. St Vincent-Heyes kindly offered to lend £100 free of interest if sufficient money was not raised within twelve months she would make up the balance. Mesdames F. Carr, A. Sparke, & A.S. McDonald spoke in favour of the land in Bulwer St owing to its position being more central & nearer to High St. It was proposed by Mrs T. Drinan sec by Mrs R. St Vincent-Heyes that the piece of land in Church St be purchased, as it was the street more used by the travelling public & was the coming business street. After much discussion & due consideration it was decided to purchase the land in Bulwer Street (carried). At this juncture it was proposed by Mrs J.E. Murray sec by Mrs A.B. Crothers that the discussion close."

## *Maitland and District Historical Society Inc.*

For unknown reasons for a short period the Branch sought a temporary meeting space although it did later return to Kerr's.

The Ninth Annual Meeting notes 3rd December 1937 at Kerr's. Rest Room Notice. Pro by Mrs. W. Johnston sec by Mrs W.J. McDonald that Kerr's Ltd be given three months notice commencing from 1 January 1938. Also that Miss Dimmock Rest Room attendant be notified that her services will no longer be required at the termination of three months."

Branch meeting notes at Pastoral Chambers 5 May 1938. "Meeting Place. Pro by Mrs J. Capp sec by Mrs L. Agnew that Mr Kerr be approached regarding the holding of their monthly meetings in their former 'Rest Room', which they feel sure he will still kindly offer to the Branch if they so desire."

The land on Bulwer Street was ultimately acquired by the Maitland Branch and, thanks to the Maitland Rotary Club, a Pender designed building was constructed.

Branch meeting notes 5 June 1940 at Kerr's "The Rotary Club had since come forward with a very generous offer to the Branch, stating that if the Branch would provide their block of land & money in hand (£200) they, the Rotary Club, would supply the remainder of the means to erect a building which, apart from one room assigned to the CWA, would be used to entertain soldiers for the duration of the war & twelve months afterwards. After that time the building would become the sole property of the Maitland Branch of the Country Women's Association. After a short discussion in the meeting it was proposed...that the generous offer of the Rotary Club be accepted. The motion was carried unanimously by the meeting."

During World War II the Maitland CWA and the Rotarians jointly operated a hugely successful service for soldiers. Ah, but that's another story. And that story was in the Historical Society Bulletin of November 2015 (Vol 22, no 4) "The Maitland Branch of the Country Women's Association in World War II", which is on the homepage.