

<u>Committee:</u>	President	- Roy Hamson	Ph. 301420
	Vice Presidents	- Graham Dunlop	336221
		- Nellie Bligh	305332
	Secretary	- Geoff Cannon	
	Publicity	- Barry Alsop	301646
	Treasurer	- Lyn Dolan	334104
	Recorder	- Val Hamson	301420
	Bulletin Editor	- Henry Armstrong	327321

Meetings:

Monthly meetings of the Society are held on the first Monday evening of each month at the East Maitland Primary School, commencing at 7.30p.m. Intending members and interested persons are especially welcome.

WILLIAM HALL, SOLDIER AND PIONEER (1792-1850)

by Ron Montague

Soldiers serving with British regiments in Australia before 1843 were usually enlisted for life and only disability or old age would bring discharge from the army. But, veteran soldiers serving in New South Wales or Tasmania could apply to stay in the Colony and work a Veteran's Land Grant. Many of these were made on land around Maitland and Wollombi and one of the grantees to settle here in this way was William Hall, a non-commissioned officer of the 40th Regiment.

During the Napoleonic wars Hall joined the 40th (Somersetshire) Regiment while he was still a very young man and fought with his regiment in France until the final battle at Waterloo. He was a countryman, a devout Methodist and would have been regarded by his superiors as a steady man of good character. During the early eighteen twenties the 40th was stationed in the mid-lands of England and it was here that Hall was married to Margaret Olsen at the 'Old Church' in Manchester. Before the end of 1823 the regiment was moved to Chatham prior to embarking for New South Wales in small detachments serving as convict guards.

During its stay in Australia the greater part of the regiment

was sent to Hobart but it might be reasonable to suppose that William Hall and his young wife stayed with the company stationed at Sydney. In 1829 the 40th was ordered to India but a number of its members applied to stay, among them was Corporal William Hall.

A Government Notice published in September 1830, authorised Hall to occupy a grant of 40 acres near Okehampton but the grant did not get official sanction of the Governor until 1840. By this time the Halls had cleared the land, with the help of one convict, cultivated the larger part of it, stocked it and had raised four more children.

The economic depression of the eighteen forties effected the Halls as it did most all other colonists. A small parcel of their land was sold and eventually all the rest was mortgaged. Early in June 1850, William Hall became seriously ill with tetanus and by the morning of the 7th it was plain that he was going to die. Two friends who had called to see him helped to draft his Will. Although he was able to read and write well the agonising effects of tetanus would only allow him to mark the document with a cross. The Will is written in the quaint style of the period and devotes ten lines to his burial and only seven to the disposal of his worldly goods.

The old soldier was granted his last wish of 'A decent Christian burial' and was interred at the Wesleyan Burial Ground on the Okehampton Road. A few days after the funeral the Maitland Mercury printed the following:

'At West Maitland on 7th June, of Lockjaw, after a brief illness, Mr. William Hall age 58 years leaving a widow and five children to mourn their bereavement; Mr. Hall was a very old resident of Maitland and was universally respected in the neighbourhood as a man of sterling worth and piety.'

hall's widow, Margaret, lived for a further ten years and died of pneumonia following a stroke. Her two sons and three daughters all married and many of their descendants are known to be living in Maitland, Newcastle, Tamworth and Queensland. Some have followed distinguished careers in business and in local government. The eldest girl, Mary, was married to a Pryor and a number of their descendants are still living in and around Maitland.

Sources: Maitland Mercury 12 June 1850

Mullens Archives

Newcastle Morning Herald 14 July 1970

The following is an Address given by Miss Edith Pearce at a meeting of the Maitland and District Historical Society meeting on 4th July, 1977.

EAST MAITLAND 1828-1850

Many of the incidents I am about to relate were told to me by early settlers, one of whom was born in Banks Street the year Queen Victoria came to the throne. She was well in her nineties when she dies. Strange were the tales she told of the early settlers, free or bond; the humble and the haughty; the blacks, transport and the social life, all the phases that made up the daily life of the community.

I shall not go into the very beginnings of settlement, but the period from 1828 to 1850. By 1830, Maitland was booming. It was the second-largest town in the colony. Five roads converged on it from the interior.

It was the bullock teams that marked out High Street. The first mention of bullocks was about 1826 when Samuel Clift rode two bullocks from Sydney. The teams with their heavily laden drays of wool, wheat, hides, tallow, potatoes, Wollombi wool (wattle bark) and tobacco came in from the north and west. Bypassing swamps and waterholes, they made their way to Green Hills, the navigable head of the river, where they unloaded their produce to be shipped to Sydney. On the return journey, there being plentiful supply of water and swamp grass, they camped on the river bank where Maitland now stands. The town grew and prospered. The teamsters loaded their year's supply of tea, flour, molasses, sugar, manchester, clothing, everything that was needed for man and beast on the stations in the hinterland.

No one knows why the town was named Maitland. Maybe it was in honour of Sir Frederick Maitland, Captain of the "Bellerophon", the ship that took Napoleon Bonaparte to exile on St. Helena. Many veterans of the Napoleonic Wars were settled in the area. Perhaps it was the choice of Surveyor Sir Thomas Mitchell.

In 1828 it was decided that the East, being flood-free, was the most suitable site for the government town. Following Governor Darling's approval, Surveyor White was instructed to survey the area. The streets were to be wide and parallel. Their very names are synonymous of the times:- Melbourne, Banks, William, King, George, High and later, Victoria, Brunswick. High Street, as in most English towns was to be the main street.

Apart from Melbourne Street, East Maitland grew into the residential quarter, lack of water being the drawback. If residents hadn't a well, they bought water at one shilling per cask from Farrell, the water carrier.

In 1831, the land in Banks Street was sold, mostly in acre blocks. Large allotments were necessary, as people needed land for a cow, a horse or two, a small orchard and a vegetable garden. The houses were built of stone and hand-made convict bricks. Very few of the original buildings remain.

Let us begin by travelling east along the highway from Victoria Bridge. Still standing is a small cottage covered with vines, the oldest house in Maitland. It was built by Samuel Clift. It comprises a ground floor and a loft with a trapdoor. The loft was the sleeping quarters. At night the ladder was drawn up into the loft, a precaution necessary because of the blacks.

Next to it is the Bridge House and Walli House, also built by Samuel Clift at a later date. Travelling along, we come to the Black Horse Inn, built in 1837. It was in the inn's paddocks that special events were celebrated, the roasting of an ox, horse racing, ploughing competitions and sports in general.

In 1843, Mr. Hanks built his shops and residence. In one shop he carried on his trade as bootmaker. The other was occupied by Mr. McPherson, tailor. On the other side of the road where Earp Woodcock and Beveridge have their building, was Gentleman Smith's mill and home. Portion of the mill is still in use. To many it will come as a surprise to know that wheat was grown extensively in our valley, but rust came and wiped it out forever. Situated behind the mill is an old stone cottage - Maitland's first hospital and benevolent home. It was also used by Caroline Chisholm as a home for her immigrant girls.

On the next corner is a row of four shops, originally the police barracks but later Dewar's store. Mr. Dewar was a Scot, one of the famous whisky family. The building on the opposite corner was once the Union Inn - 1827. Here the first courts were held. Apart from administering justice and providing rest for the weary traveller, it was used for divine service.

The building directly diagonal, now owned by Fry Bros., was the Bank of Australasia. The plastered dados on the inside walls are a work of art, the handicraft of a free Irish immigrant, Donnelly

by name. He was paid ten pence a yard for the dado and eight pence a square yard for the wall plastering.

Along Melbourne Street we now wend our way, past old shops and the George and Dragon Hotel, built in 1837, the licence of which has been transferred to a new hotel by the same name at Green Hills. The building on the Lawes Street corner was Banfield's store, the upper floor was a ballroom. The rest of the town was mainly residential and still is. In Banks Street, facing Wallis Street, is Old Government Cottage. When Governor Macquarie visited the area in 1818 he described the cottage, which Major Morisset named "Lachlan Cottage" in honour of the Governor's son, as a neat building situated on the summit of a hill overlooking a freshwater lagoon and a wide creek, which he named Wallis Creek, and having a commanding view of the farms on Wallis Plains.

The three-storeyed house owned by James Brunker has recently been restored by Mr. and Mrs. Trent. Brunker owned a butcher's shop on the corner of Banks Street and Newcastle Road. He entered Parliament and became Minister for Lands in Parkes' government. In this section is St. Peter's Parish Hall, 1835, originally the Church of England Denominational School.

Across the street is an old convict-built coachhouse and stables, 1833. When purchased by my parents, it housed an elaborate coach, a phaeton, tins of rusty and bent convict nails, pots of dripping and enough arsenic to poison the whole town. Nails in the early days were scarce and hard to come by. They were hand-made by convict women at the Parramatta Female Factory. The dripping, with caustic soda and ash, was made into soap. Heaven alone knows what the arsenic was used for.

It is hard for us to understand conditions in those days. Take footwear. We go into a shop and buy what we require. Then, if country women's boots wore out, they went barefooted until the teams went through to Maitland. On arrival they were re-shod by Mr. Hanks.

Crossing Newcastle Road, we come to the park, which was once the cattle markets. Opposite is Rielly's (now spelt Riley's) Hotel, being restored by Mrs. Hure. Next is the Eckford home built in 1833 by Lieutenant William Eckford, retired harbour master, the father of John, Maitland's first free settler. On the Lawes Street corner is a building, now owned by Maitland City Council, which was Sam Bailey's "Cottage of Content" Inn. Opposite, Sam Clift had his

butcher's shop and facing Day Street is "Roseneath", originally the "Victoria Hotel" owned by the same Samuel Clift. On the other side of the road, recently restored, is "The Overflow", so called because it was used to accommodate extra guests from the hotel. Little else remains. In King Street is the old St. Joseph's Convent School. On the Lawes Street corner "Goonbah" and "Woodlands" 1941-43. In Day Street the Maitland Gaol 1848. It was here in 1849 that the last hanging took place. On the Morpeth Road is a split level house, this was originally Eckford's "Woolsack Inn".

As you study the history of Maitland you will find the name of Clift is very prominent. Samuel Clift was born in 1790, arrived in the colony in 1818 on the convict transport "Neptune" according to the census of 1828. Clift was a hard-working man, married to a free woman, Anne Duff. He had by then acquired sixty acres of land on Wallis Plains; he was the proud owner of one hundred and sixty cattle and three children.

Clift was making money fast, mustering cattle in the hills, adopting the motto "finders keepers". Nice little mobs were sold at the cattle markets. In 1831 he employed a ticket-of-leave man, Ben Hall. Ben had been transported for seven years, his crime, the theft of a handkerchief valued at ninepence. When freed by servitude, he married a convict girl from the Parramatta Factory. Their son, Len Hall, bushranger, was born at Wallis Creek.

As time went by, Samuel Clift and his family of five sons and three daughters became influential pastoralists. They owned large stations at Breeza and the Liverpool Plains. They were prominent in commerce, industry, mining, and shipping. They took a great interest, not only in their own church, St. Peter's, to which they gave lavishly, but in all denominations. Hats off to this worthy pioneer, who rose above adversity. It was men and women of the courage and tenacity displayed by this man who laid the foundations of our nation.

Let us now turn to the churches. All the original buildings have gone, replaced by larger and modern ones. There was St. Stephen's Presbyterian Church in Furber Street, St. Peter's Church of England 1838, on the corner of William Street and Newcastle Road, the Methodist Church opposite on the same site it occupies today, the Free Kirk at the end of William Street and St. Joseph's Roman Catholic Church on the ground where the new church now stands.

The foundation stone of St. Joseph's was laid by Father John Joseph Terry in 1830. This establishes its claim to be the oldest Catholic Church in Australia.

During the "Great Hunger" 1845-47 when the Irish potato crop failed, the Irish settlers contributed one pound per head to bring their kinsmen to this country. Many settled in the Maitland district and Father Terry's flock was greatly increased. The priest was renowned for his treatment of insobriety. His word was law. He was omnipotent. One of his parishioners laughingly told me the following story: One old Irishwoman complained to the priest about her husband's drinking habits. Father Terry threatened him that if he did not mend his ways he would have him turned into a rat and the cat would eat him. One Saturday demon drink won. He staggered home and begged his wife to lock up the cat. For years after, this was a great joke with his currency-born sons.

The convicts were encamped on Stockade Hill. The Gallows and Whipping Post stood opposite St. Joseph's Church. On one day, alone, Father Terry gave the last rites to three prisoners. One-third of the convicts transported were Irish. Many of them were political prisoners, rebels against England's harsh treatment. Convicts were engaged in building construction and making roads. Others were assigned to landholders. The avenue of trees in William Street was planted by the road gang.

The following is an extract from the reminiscences of the late Mr. Thomas Pryor, who died in 1915. It illustrates the treatment of the convicts.

"I was born in Harfordshire, England, on 21st December 1825. A rural worker's wage was seven and sixpence per week. Our family and another family of friends decided to emigrate. After a six months voyage we dropped anchor at Port Jackson, May 18, 1838. My father entered us into engagement with the late Mr. William Charles Wentworth, as shepherds on his property, Lambs Valley, Hunter River. We came by steam packet to Green Hills. We were then conveyed by bullock dray to our destination. On our way through East Maitland we were surprised to see a row of handcarts loaded with stones and gravel. They were drawn by men harnessed in chains and guarded by soldiers. Others were wearing leg irons, repairing the road. This, we were told, was the iron gang and that was one mode of punishment awarded to criminals.

I remeber crossing a rickety wooden bridge and seeing a straddle of yellow maize at the rear of Mr. Clift's house, This was the first we had ever seen."

Much of our history has been lost with the neglect and destruction of our old cemeteries. Fortunately, in Hiland Crescent, some headstones of outstanding value are still intact. That of Michael Ryan, convict, tells its own sad story. Here also is the family grave of John Brown, the discoverer of coal at Four Mile Creek.

In the old Glebe cemetery at Lochend is the Eckford family vault, the Clift vault and the tombstone of Edward Denny Day, the police magistrate who was instrumental in capturing the bushrangers, the Jewboy Gang, at Doughboy Hollow. All the stones bear the birth-places of the departed - native of Gloucestershire, Kent, Devon, Cornwall, Kerry, Cork, Belfast and Dublin, Aberdeen and Inverness, thus showing the origin of the City's forebears.

The descendants of the early pioneers are dispersed throughout the world. There are still Eckfords in the town; those of Gentleman Smith went to Fullerton Cove, Paris and South America and the stones from his convict-built residence on Newcastle Road are now the Banks Street fence of St. Peter's Church, 1947.

In mentioning St. Peter's Church, it is here we have East Maitland's greatest tourist attraction. One finds here a rare and costly Carrara marble pulpit given by the Eckford family, stained glass windows of great beauty equal to any to be found in old European cities, the sanctuary with communion rail and altar, the eagle lectern, the beautiful organ, the font and many other priceless treasures given in memory of those stalwart pioneers and left as a heritage to those who follow after.

Edith Pearce,
4th July, 1977.

ERRATA: Page 3 - June/July Bulletin

should read: Mary Ann - Mrs. John Button of
"Burren Junction Station".