

**Gloucester District Historical Society Inc**

**Bi Monthly NEWSLETTER No 388**

**February 2020**



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Welcome back to 2020. With some very welcome rain, perhaps the drought is beginning to bend, lifting everyone's spirits. Much to my delight it lifted some delicious mushrooms from a long "rest" but not enough to run Craven Creek and fill my swimming hole. I have just calculated, we have had two summers without this little piece of paradise, much to the disappointment of the grand children and the big children!!

Dorothea Mackellar's poem "My Country" has often been quoted in recent times. I have read it myself quite a bit as a reflection on our current conditions and still love it and as such have included it for you as a reminder.

Isobel Marion Dorothea Mackellar was born 1<sup>st</sup>. July 1885 at Point Piper (Sydney). The third child and only girl of renowned Physician and Parliamentarian Sir Charles Kinnard Mackellar, she was privately taught until attending University. She was especially gifted in languages and spoke French, German, Spanish and Italian fluently and often acted as an interpreter for her father when travelling overseas. Her family owned several country properties near Gunnedah, where Dorothea often visited, and as an ardent horsewoman was very proud of the fact that even in the bush she could ride side saddle so well. It was during one of these visits that she witnessed the breaking of a prolonged drought and was inspired to express her deep love for the country she called her own. The first draft of what was to become Australia's most quoted and best loved poem was written in England when she was feeling homesick. Never quite content, she wanted to adequately express her love for her country, she wrote and rewrote the poem several times before the final draft. She continued to write and travel during the 1920s and 1930s. Her work appeared in Journals such as the London "Spectrum", the American "Harpers" Magazine, the Sydney "Bulletin" and others. Over the years, four volumes of verse were published, "The Closed Door", "The Witchmaid". "Dream Harbour" and "Fancy Dress". Later in life she suffered increasing ill-health and did not write anymore, her work was recognised when in 1968 she was made an Officer of British Empire. Dorothea died in February 1986

### **Dates for your Diary**

**February 17<sup>th</sup>. Meeting at 2.00pm**

**February 25<sup>th</sup>. Bus and Afternoon Tea. Cooks and helpers needed. Contact Pam if you can help**

**March 16<sup>th</sup>. Meeting 2.00pm**

**March 20<sup>th</sup>. A group arriving by train. Museum visit and afternoon tea, back to train by 4.0pm. Cooks and helpers needed**

**March 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. Gloucester Show -display and promotion of the Historical Society. Pam is coordinating this activity, some members have indicated their assistance but more are required to lighten the load. If you can spare a bit of time over the Show please contact Pam and offer your assistance.** An interesting inclusion in this year's ring programme is an expansion of the "heavy Horse" Section. We are also hoping for a number of vintage/veteran trucks to arrive.

**Volunteers and Members. This list seems to be getting shorter with fewer available for Museum Duties and our other activities. If you can help out or encourage a friend to join you, please don't hesitate in coming forward.**

## Exploration and Early Settlement of the Barrington

After almost twelve months of negotiating the traffic lights at Barrington Bridge at least twice a day, I notice that completion of the new structure is approaching. There has been considerable discussion and a Council survey as to the naming of the new bridge. It appears that it will remain "The Barrington Bridge" and the old structure will be removed. The fact that this beautiful river stopped flowing, necessitating the carting of water to supply the town has concerned many. What a wonderful site to see it once again flowing under the bridge recently. Of course a lot more rain is needed to return it to its usual glory. With this in mind I thought you may like to be reminded of a little of Barrington's history.

The Australian Agricultural Company was incorporated 1<sup>st</sup>. November 1824. The company appointed Robert Dawson as its agent and manager. The Surveyor General, John Oxley, had suggested two areas of land as suitable The Liverpool Plains and Port Stephens. On January 1<sup>st</sup>. 1826 Dawson left Port Stephens to explore the country in that region. He went as far north as the Manning River which he named after the Deputy Governor of the AA Co. He also named the Barrington River a tributary of the Manning after Viscount Barrington, the Chairman of the AA Co. Dawson made no attempt to examine the Liverpool Plains area and established the Headquarters of the AA Co. at Port Stephens. John Dunmore Lang who established the Presbyterian Church in Australia, became responsible for the emigration to Australia of the first settlers on the Barrington. Due to his efforts the ship the "Midlothian" reached Sydney in 1837 with many of Barrington's first settlers from the Isle of Skye. Eighteen shiploads of Highlanders, totalling 4,000, were brought to Australia under the "Dunmore Land Scheme and historical and family records disclose the privations, sickness and deaths which was the lot of this band of men, women and children on their long voyage on small ships. The death rate was as high as ten percent on some vessels, mainly children. From my own Ross family history, I know that Alexander (father) died on the voyage of the "Ontario" (leaving England in 1852) and a son John, died on landing and is buried at the Sydney Quarantine Station. Granny Ross and her fatherless children settled on the Hunter. The surviving son, Donald, when he had grown up, took his mother and younger sister to housekeep for him on Cooplacurripa Station before later returning to the Barrington.

Donald, Angus, John and James McSwan (the latter three went to the Clarence in 1861), the McInnes's, Neil McDonald and family formed the first settlement on the Barrington in 1856 and set up homes for themselves and produced crops of wheat the following year, which were carted to Stroud by bullock teams. The teams returned with provisions, the nearest source of supplies. Shortly after the families of Donald McQueen, Donald McSwan, Kenneth Chisholm, the McLennans, the McSweens, McKinnons, John Grant and Norman Bell joined the settlement. A little later, Malcolm, Angus and Norman Beaton and Charles Shaw came to the district, bringing with them a thrashing machine so all the wheat grown was thrashed locally. On the relinquishing of the AA Company's occupancy of these lands, the farms were leased from the Crown, and from the 1870s onwards all stock was run on the unfenced country on the western side of the river. This was leased in the names of two trustees, for the use of the whole community, who paid 2d. per head per year. This remained the custom until land was taken up as homestead selections at the end of the century. By 1863 there was a community settled at Barrington River of sufficient size, in the opinion of the residents to warrant the establishment of a school. You may notice that many of these family names still farm along the Barrington or nearby, maintaining a long Barrington Heritage.

## My Country

Dorothea Mackellar

1.

The love of field and coppice  
Of green and shaded lanes  
Of ordered woods and gardens  
Is running in your veins,  
Strong love of grey blue distance  
Brown streams and soft dim skies  
I know but cannot share it,  
My love is otherwise

2.

I love a sunburnt country,  
A land of sweeping plains  
Of ragged mountain ranges,  
OF DROUGHT AND FLOODING rains  
I love her far horizons,  
I love her jewel sea  
Her beauty and her terror –  
The wide brown land for me

3.

A stark white ring barked forest  
All tragic to the moon,  
The sapphire misted mountains,  
The hot gold bush of noon.  
Green tangle of the brushes,  
Where lithe lianas coil,  
And orchids deck the tree tops,  
And ferns the warm dark soil.

4.

Core of my heart, my country!  
Her pitiless blue sky,  
When sick at heart, around us,  
We see the cattle die –  
BUT THEN the grey clouds gather,  
And we can bless again  
The drumming of an army,  
The steady soaking rain.

5.

Core of my heart, my country!  
Land of the Rainbow Gold,  
For flood and fire and famine,  
She pays us back threefold -  
Over the thirsty paddocks,  
Watch, after many days,  
The filmy veil of greenness  
That thickens as we gaze

6.

An opal hearted country,  
A wilful lavish land -  
All of you have not loved her,  
Will not understand  
Though earth holds many splendours,  
Wherever I may die,  
I know to what brown country  
My homing thoughts will fly

**GLOUCESTER DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC**

**Monthly Roster February 2010**

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Liz Jess/Norm
2	3 Jenny	4 Effie	5	6 Jenny Gerald	7	8 Jenny Marie
9	10 Jenny	11 Jenny Gerald	12	13 Effie Jess	14	15 Jenny Gerald
16	17 Jenny MEETING@ 2pm	18 Anne	19	20 Jane Gerald	21	22 Jane
23	24 Jenny	25 Sue and Pam BUS + AFTERNOON TEA	26	27 Pam Margie Donna	28	29 Pam

**MUSEUM OPENING HOURS**  
**Saturdays – 10am-2pm**  
**Tuesdays and Thursdays – 10.30am-1.30pm**

The Museum can be opened at other times by prior arrangement. Contact Pam Hebblewhite on 65581278 or 0427781278

Please note that Gail and Dianne will be there on each Monday, Tuesday and Thursday.

### Monthly Roster March 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 Jenny	3 Effie	4	5 Jenny Gerald		7 Liz Jess/Norm
8	9 Jenny	10 Jenny Gerald	11	12 Effie Jess	13	14 Jenny Marie
15	16 Jenny MEETING@ 2pm	17 Anne	18	19 Jane Gerald	20 <a href="#">BUS@10.30</a> Morning tea	21 Jenny Gerald
22	23 Jenny	24 Sue	25	26 Pam Margie Donna	27 Gloucester Show Pam, Effie, Jess +	28 Jane Gloucester Show Pam, Effie, Jess +
29	30 Jenny	31 Pam				