



NEWS

The latest from History Queensland Inc.

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VALE MARY GWENDOLINE SINCLAIR (nee Bassett)

22nd April 1930—4th October 2015

Mary was the eldest of four children, Mary, William Thomas (deceased), Margaret (deceased) and Lorna, born to William (Bill) Ernest and Gladys Bassett. Her early years were spent on "Oakleigh" a farming property nine miles out of Canowindra in the Central West of New South Wales.

For her primary education she attended a one teacher school at Nyrang Creek, a couple of miles from the "Oakleigh" homestead. Then she attended Canowindra Public School for three years before boarding in Orange. She successfully passed her Leaving Certificate exams and then moved to Sydney in 1948 to study nursing at the Royal North Shore Hospital.

Following completion of her nursing studies she gained several years experience before she travelled in 1954 to Southampton in the UK. She spent time working there, with any free time spent touring the UK and the Continent. On her return from Europe she held a number of nursing positions, including a period out at Condoblin District Hospital. She then moved back to Sydney to become Matron of one of the boarding houses at The Kings School, Parramatta. She held this position for several years.

On 12th December 1959 Mary married George Victor (Vic) Sinclair in the Chapel of The Kings School. Mary and Vic had three children, Victor Robert who died at birth, Scott and Grant.

The family moved to Rochedale in the early 1970s. Mary was eager to resume her nursing career once the boys were settled into suitable schools. Hence she successfully applied to join Blue Care Nursing (known now as Uniting Care). She then spent the next 23 years driving many miles to care for the sick in their homes.

Following in her father's footsteps, Mary was a lover of history and an insatiable reader. It was this love of history that saw Mary become extremely interested in genealogy and tracing the history of her family. So keen was she on researching her family tree she travelled to England and Scotland then on to the USA. She also visited New Zealand, Victoria and Western Australia. She held several Bassett family reunions in her home, the last being in 2013 at which time she launched her publication recording the history of the Bassett side of the family.

When she retired from Blue Care Nursing she was able to devote much more time to her passion and regularly gave lectures on how to get started tracing your family tree, she attended many conferences and it became rather frustrating for her when she was no longer able to move freely and get easily to the various conference venues.

Mary also had a love of classical music and especially the ballet.

She was very proud of all her grandchildren, Brent, Emma, Jasper, Jenna and Kaylee, always keen to know what they were doing, how they were progressing in their studies and sporting activities. I am sure these youngsters will miss their Nanna asking what they have been up to.

Mary's funeral took place on the 16th October at Holland Park.

Lorna Bassett

HARD COPY OR EMAIL

COULD SOCIETIES PLEASE ADVISE THE SECRETARY IF THEY PREFER TO RECEIVE THE NEWSLETTER AS HARD COPY OR BY EMAIL OR BOTH.

AS YOU ARE ALL AWARE, POSTAGE HAS NOW INCREASED TO 70c.

General Meeting 7th November, 2015

Thanks must go to the Crows Nest Historical Society for hosting our last general meeting. The little church was an ideal venue.

The meeting was well attended and all delegates were given a welcome package on arrival. The pack contained a number of items, including a museum buildings information pack which was no doubt of benefit to those attending as they walked through the village.

In his welcoming speech, the president Len Wilmington told us that the museum has been operating in various forms since 1978. Over that time of course changes have occurred.

In recent times audio activity has been introduced in many of the buildings and they have painted the streetscape buildings in the colour that they were originally in the old Crows Nest.

Many of the make believe people that were made of old calico and stuffed with all sorts of things from paper to straw have now been replaced with mannequins.

Thursdays are work days at the museum and while a small band of dedicated men carry out repairs on buildings, machinery etc. one of the ladies ensures that the displays are clean and the gardens maintained. All machinery on display is in working order. Everyone who had the opportunity to view the historical village went away singing its praises.



STATE CONFERENCE REPORT

In Time and Place was a 1½ day Queensland conference for local historians, family historians organised by History Queensland Inc., Genealogical Society of Queensland Inc. and Queensland Family History Society Inc. It focused on Queensland history, people and localities. With about 155 participants and another 20-25 exhibitors and speakers coming and going, the total of about 180 people exceeded our aim of 150 people involved. The ratio of family to local historians attending was approximately 70:30. We received sponsorship for the attendance of regional Queenslanders but the offer of free registration was not taken up by as many people as we would have liked.

The number of talks submitted was greater than we could fit into the program, so there are many local and family historians willing to present. The program of 20 presentations included two streams with participants free to move from one to another. Data from the evaluation sheets was most positive with a 95% endorsement of the quality of the presentations.

The Conference was generously sponsored and well supported by exhibitors and traders. The participants liked the exhibitors' stands, which covered a wide range of family and local history interests. Keynote speakers, Dave Obee historian, genealogist and journalist from British Columbia, Professor Janis Wilton, from the University of New England and Shauna Hicks, History Enterprises were each well received.

The venue was generally suitable – compact, pleasant surroundings, accommodation facilities but the neighbouring construction site created difficulties in finding it and for parking. It provided limited space for exhibitors. The committee received more offers of stands than could be accommodated.

As a first of its type for Queensland the conference was an important event for a number of reasons – inclusion of regional people, combining local and family history, co-organisation – therefore, well worth the effort by the small committee representing the three societies. Undoubtedly, it was successful with all respondents stating on feedback sheets that the conference met or exceeded their expectations.

The final financial statement is not yet available but it is clear that the Conference account will be able to return the seeding fund amount of \$500 to each of the three societies and to add significantly to that amount.

Plans are already underway for another conference in early 2017 to be held on the Gold Coast. I urge local historians to become involved in its organisation; otherwise the interests of local historians will get lost. Personally I was disappointed with the level of support from the larger local history societies in the organisation of the one just held.

Janice Cooper
Conference Convener

DESCENDANTS OF THE AUSTRALIAN SOUTH SEA ISLANDERS ASSN.

This year marks the 150th Anniversary of the first South Sea Islanders to the Sunshine Coast 1865 - 2015 in the Bli Bli and Nambour areas. Australian South Sea Islanders are the Australian - born descendants of the South Sea Islanders brought to Australia from over 80 Melanesian Islands to work in Qld and Northern NSW cotton and sugar plantations.

The 62,000 men, women and children were considered a source of cheap labour, with many being kidnapped, tricked or "blackbirded" in the early sailing ship transportation era and lived and worked on these plantations in the State.

By 1908, many South Sea Islanders had been deported under the White Australia policy, and those who remained suffered harsh treatment and discrimination.

It was not until 1967 that Aboriginal people who included Torres Strait and South Sea Islanders were removed by legislation from the Flora & Fauna Act and were recognized as Citizens of the State. It was not until 25th August 1994 that the Australian Government formally recognized Australian South Sea Islanders as a distinct cultural group. On 7th September 2000, the Queensland Government also formally recognized the Community.

Today, the majority of Australian South Sea Islanders live in Qld and northern NSW and embrace their life and culture as proud Australians.

The 150th Commemoration Day was held in Muller Park, Bli Bli on 25th October 2015 down stream from our Cultural Land leased from the Sunshine Coast Council. The day's events commenced at 9:00 am which included South Sea Island and Indigenous music and dancing, serving of Cultural food for lunch, boat trips on the Maroochy River to Cultural Land to the "OLD PLACE", raffles, and face painting for the children.

A welcome speech was given by DASSI President - Michael Fewquandie and "Welcome to Country" by Kerry Jones. Official speeches were given by Sunshine Coast Council Mayor Mark Jamieson, Sunshine Coast Councillor Jenny McKay and DASSI patron and Life Member Tom Hulett.

Don Fewquandie introduced the recipients of the Australian South Sea Islander Community Foundation Scholarships in Tertiary Education studying at the University of the Sunshine Coast - Katrina Nielsen, Alice and Joe Meninga. Katrina and Alice have completed their degrees and Joe is in his final year.

Approximately 250 people from the local and broader community attended the day. The Commemoration Day was enjoyed by all, with complements received about the food and the day's program of events. Public participation in the dancing was great to see, particularly by the children.

Sue Fewquandie



BLACKBUTT & DISTRICT TOURISM & HERITAGE ASSOCIATION

At the beginning of the year we held a luncheon in honour of Roy and Joy Emerson who both attended and also visited the Museum to open the displays. With the mayor offering \$2000 towards a life size statue of Roy to be commissioned, the challenge is on. A luncheon "An Author and An Ace" with guest speakers, Hugh Lunn and Mal Anderson was held on Saturday 21 November at the Blackbutt Hall.

Our little museum has been renamed the Roy Emerson Museum and we are endeavouring to obtain signage from the state and local governments.

For more information, contact Hazel on 0408 517 399, or email royemersonmuseum@gmail.com.

Noeleen Bird

MARY GRIGOR INTERPRETATIVE CENTRE BANKFOOT HOUSE HERITAGE PRECINCT

On Old Gympie Road in the Glasshouse Mountains, the heritage-listed Bankfoot House Precinct has been extended with funding from the Sunshine Coast Council's Heritage Levy, to include a newly opened purpose-built interpretative centre, archive and additional volunteer workroom.



Formerly the home of William and Mary Grigor, and established in 1868 as a Cobb & Co lunch stop and horse changing station, the house, contents and centre are jointly managed by the Sunshine Coast Council and the Friends of Bankfoot House, a volunteer group.

The building is suitably named. Mary Grigor was well known in the district for her hospitality, and skills as a midwife, cook and confidant to the wives of the early pioneers.

The new facility was seriously tested in May when 80 Year 3 students from Glasshouse Christian College received a guided tour of the old house and grounds.

Ron Gillinder, Friends of Bankfoot House Inc

The Friends of Bankfoot House launched their publication, a biography of local legend and last resident of Bankfoot house, the late Jack Ferris. Copies are available from the Friends, ph 54930197. Price \$10.00 or \$15.00 posted.

Image: Mary Grigor Interpretative Centre — Bankfoot House Heritage Precinct, Glasshouse Mountains, official opening June 3, 2015. Photo by Al Sim for the Sunshine Coast Council.

[Source: Queensland State Library 'Queensland Memory' July newsletter

State Library of Queensland news

If you or your organisation has 'undiscovered' First World War material containing unique Queensland content that is at risk of deterioration, not in digital form, or not easily accessible, State Library can help.

The *Q ANZAC 100* team can assist you with identification, preservation, and digitisation, all with the aim of increasing access, promoting, and encouraging engagement with your historical treasures.

Source: *Queensland Memory* November 2015.

STORIES OF STEPHENS HISTORY CONFERENCE

Annerley-Stephens History Group Inc. in conjunction with the Royal Historical Society of Queensland are presenting

STORIES OF STEPHENS

27 February 2016

A history conference is being held on Saturday 27 February 2016 at the Marymac Community Centre 616 Ipswich Road, Annerley (adjacent to Our Lady's College).

Papers will be presented on the history of the Stephens Area, local Aboriginal history, tramway history, Junction Park and Annerley history, the history of Fairfield and of eminent pioneering families of the locality. There will also be papers to assist researchers on family history and local house studies. Over ten distinguished speakers have been engaged to present papers.

Registration begins at 8.30 am and the conference commences at 9am. Morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea will be provided.

It will be a great day and you are all welcome. An invitation is extended to guests to bring and display any memorabilia and photographs.

Cost \$40pp

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FORT LYTTON NATIONAL PARK ON WORLD STAGE

The producers of Angelina Jolie's film *Unbroken* donated \$25,000 to the restoration of the Fort Lytton National Park's Magazine No. 10 and the Black Powder Rooms after a major part of the film was shot on location at the site. It is understood the Oscar-winning actor and filmmaker helped ensure the money was donated directly to the Fort Lytton Historical Association.

Minister for Environment and Heritage Protection, National Parks and the Great Barrier Reef, Dr Steven Miles, said the restoration cost about \$57,000 with additional funds coming from a State Government grant.

The Fort Lytton Historical Association received the National Trust Queensland Heritage 2015 Gold Award for the conservation of Fort Lytton's Black Powder Rooms and Magazine No 10. In the former, conservation work encompassed ceiling vents, lantern recesses, door frames and guttering; in the brickwork for the latter the wall was levered back into position before glueing, mortaring and repointing.