

# Tomaree Family History Group Newsletter

OCTOBER 2011



## From the Secretary

At the last workshop those who were present were entertained by John Clarke who gave a very interesting presentation about his research for his book Broughton Island and his latest book "Old Salt" which was to be launched on 25<sup>th</sup> October. Despite some technical glitches John carried on talking until the problem was finally solved. Thank you to those who provided a lovely morning tea.

**Maitland Family History Fair** was attended by 8 members. These days are always a good opportunity to talk to people from other groups. Several new resources were purchased. There is a new group from Taree who would like to hear from anyone with ancestors from that area. Gail Davies gave an informative talk about researching at State Archives.

### Christmas Function:

Tour and lunch at Fort Scratchley.

Those going need to pay \$27.00 for bus fare and tour and pay for which ever lunch you would like to have on Saturday. Michelle will attach the menu form to the newsletter for your perusal.

Christmas Raffle will be drawn at our Christmas function. There is a basket in the Resource Room for your donations. Andrea will be giving out books of raffle tickets at the next workshop or if you not at the workshop they will be posted to you. If you do not wish to receive a book of tickets [\$10] please let Andrea know.

Please give generously to the basket. We have been fortunate in getting a donation of a Parasailing ticket and a Dolphin watch cruise. All worth winning!

**Book launch "Old Salt":** Seven members were present at the book launch of "Old Salt" on 25<sup>th</sup>. John Clarke gave another interesting introduction to his book a copy of which was purchased for the group. Some members of our research team took the opportunity to make contact with family members related to our pioneers. We managed to talk to members of 6 new families who said they were only too happy to help us with the book.

**Pioneer Book:** Work is continuing and we are now at the stage of printing off several families and giving them to the families with whom we have had contact to get them to proof read what we have written. The light at the end of the tunnel is beginning to shine a little brighter.

**Members' interests:** Every time you receive a newsletter, Michelle attaches a form for members to fill in and return to her so people members are researching can be put on our website. Out of the blue a couple of weeks ago I had an email from a lady who was descended from my maternal g. grandfather's side. After a couple of days I received a package containing family photos and huge family trees. Michelle also received an email concerning an article she had written for the Tattler so you never know who is out there looking. If you need any more information please talk to Michelle at the next meeting.

**Best wishes** for a speedy recovery are sent to Terry Fitzsimmons who is in hospital.

**Birthday Greetings:** Happy Birthday to the following members whose birthdays are in November: Andrea Ryder 16<sup>th</sup>, Peter Troon 29<sup>th</sup>.

**Welcome** to Ina McMahon. We hope you have great success with your research. Don't forget morning tea on Saturday, donations always welcome. Hope to see you on there.

*Best Wishes to all*  
**Marilynne Sharp**  
Secretary

### Dates for your Diary:

**November 5** Workshop: Guest speaker Terry St George - Sandgate Cemetery  
**November 19** State Archives Trip  
**November 29** Executive meeting  
**December 3** Christmas Function : Fort Scratchley  
**February 2012** First workshop for 2012

If there is anyone who would like to go on any of these outings and has not yet paid please contact one of the Executive.

**STATE ARCHIVES TRIP:** 19 November—Please be at the Library carpark at 6.45am. The bus will leave at 7am. **Members going to Archives need to pay \$20 on Saturday to Marie**

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## Resource Room



A miser is hard  
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Andrea has been reorganizing books. Cemetery books are now altogether in new holders as are local area books.

New resources purchased recently:

Old Salt, John Clarke

Gallipoli, Les Carlyon

Pigots Directory 1830 Northumberland and Durham.....microfiche

Broughton Island, John Clarke

Tea Gardens General Cemetery

Clarence Town General Cemetery

Booral Cemetery Headstone Transcriptions

Gresford & Surrounding Districts Cemeteries

Paterson General Cemetery

Williams & Paterson River Valley Graves of Pioneers & Their Families.

JOURNALS IN:

Descent: Using Parish Registers for Irish-Australian Research

Was your ancestor in Business?

The Ancestral Searcher: Family Search

Websites

Walking in the footsteps of your ancestor

Obituaries Australia

Endeavour: May Day

Links 'N' Chains : Frank Quakernaat

James McKenzie

The Last Soldier of Pheasant Wood, FZromelles

Timespan: Pioneers of Mudgee

Starting of the Matilda Crushing Battery & C

History: Industrial Sites of Norfolk Island

Kingston – an early colonial town

Confessions of a Tour Leader

Missing Diggers

Maitland Reminiscences: Maitland Snippets

Newsletter: Raymond Terrace

Monach Museum

Drownings Maitland Mercury 5 Nov. 1867

AFTC October: Korumburra remembers

Patrick Duffy – gold digger

Alfred Denier from Mauritius

Mining Ancestors : Ford & Marshall families

Looking for Mining Ancestors

A reminder the room is open on every Monday from 9.30 -12 and on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> Saturdays from 9.30 -11.45am. Please consider giving some of your spare time to helping out in the room. Training will be given.

Andrea has redone our State Archives folder. There will be "Archives in Brief" sheets for members to take at the next workshop. The new folder will be available for members' perusal but please do not take out any sheets.

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## Getting Started in Genealogy



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### Summary of Marg O'Leary's family history journey – (from a sharing session at a recent workshop).

**The early years, history plus Elvis.** My beginning was listening when mother and great aunt (Alice Maud Mary Skead) were doing their snail mail letter writing (while I was also listening to Elvis) in the 1950 and 60s, visiting cemeteries and old home sites - "digging up" relatives all over Victoria.

In the 70s - taking over with my mother's first cousin Ken Skead (in Perth) when my great aunt and mother died. Still writing snail mail but by then it was at least airmail not sea mail.

We managed to find a cousin Jack SKEAD in South Africa who was writing the family history, based on a list of names of the 18 children born to Thomas SKEAD and his wife Jennefer Eyre SMART. Tom was a naval officer who married a Cornish lass in 1806 in Kent. Ken and Jack remained airmail letter writers to the end – I became the computer geek. They would give me tasks and I would take up the "Chase" eg Jack's last question - where did my Royal Navy ancestor go to school in England in the 1820s? That turned out to be the Greenwich Naval College as it was then.

**Accessing formal records.** In 1978 our family moved from the tropics to the Hunter, with magical access to the LDS history library in Charlestown and I spent Saturday afternoons there, perhaps following the morning at Newcastle Library - good for shipping.

As well as the LDS collection locally, you could send away to Sydney or Salt Lake City for reels. I used to use an alphabetised ledger book and jot all my findings in that – easy to jump from Skead to Rickarby to Lewis and find the information. And I photocopied all the BMD pages from the microfiche. My husband would go with

me on the odd Thursday evening when they had the St Catherine's BMD lists and we would both race through reels. I soon learnt the mantra of three confirmations of one fact, gives some certainty of its truth eg a census, a marriage, a will, that all agree.

**The computer – hooray!** Eventually the LDS had a computer, to look up CDs. For a half hour you could sit next to a young man who whizzed through it at a rapid rate and missed people of interest. Then I had a computer, and found all the people he zoomed past. I could do family trees and buy my own CD sets of various Vital Index and Census. And I become a helper on some lists, doing look ups for people who were "missing" from the census.

Acting as a transcriber for part of the Edinburgh 1841 census, helped me find some missing people and helped the Free Census project. All over the world, volunteers were, and still are, transcribing major sources to provide the information free to researchers.

The airmail correspondence continued with Jack in South Africa. He had written his book about 1970, formal and old fashioned language, accurate for his branch, not so



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for the rest of the world. His daughter typed it into a computer for the first time. I did an edit, corrected facts, indexed, added to knowledge, and had to rewrite some sections about Skeads elsewhere. Jack was born 1912 and died 2006 - well into his nineties – he always remained astonished that the information could be found and, being an old fashioned gentleman, wondered why I was interested as he considered a woman resigned from the name when they married. That of course gave a slant to his history – (all about blokes and where they went to school and their careers, and when they married, the wife resigned her name.) An American Skead sent me his very large family tree. Every person on it had the surname Skead. Very confusing. The American style of using the maiden name as a middle name eg Hilary Rodham Clinton – was a huge problem.

**Email started!!** And with it lists and message boards, my first one being the Rand Company surname list, and then I joined everything relevant particularly from Rootsweb.

I learned to use the \* for doing searches eg Sk\*d or sk\* or sc\*d and so on, think not just of spelling variations but also spelling mistakes. Pronunciation - what does a name sound like in Scottish, Irish, German, French etc.? Snail mail GRD entries were done each year and I had success in the early days, and still get the odd letter. I joined organisations like SAG who would do a free look up each year for country members. Found a previously unknown convict that way.

**Worldwide Study and starting a web page.** I really wanted more than Jack's history of the Skeads as he did not go back beyond the Thomas RN and long as it was – it was limited and very South African based.

So I decided to do a worldwide study on the name SKEAD and all its variations. Spelling variations for Skead include: Skead, Skeed, Sked, Skedd, Shed, Shead, Sced, Sceed, Seed, Skid, Skidd, Skidds, Skade, Scade, Skate, Steed, Steel. My RN Lt. Tom Skead was born in Northern Britain in 1776 according to his naval record. (At that time I didn't realize it meant Scotland, but this eventually became clear.)

At this stage I started a web page with certain information about various Skead spellings plus associated names, and the enquiries rolled in.

**The starting point – thank you 1881 UK and 1880 USA census.** Needing a reliable starting point, I started with the 1881 census for the UK (I had the discs) - followed each and every Skead/Sked person back – all spelling - through the various census and BMD, paid for hundreds of records through Scotland's People, not too expensive over time - I learned how to get the absolutely most info for the least money, eg work out the families using the census image codes, without buying the image), also bought a minimal number of English records, (quite expensive) until the records trailed out. And knocked down or climbed huge numbers of brick walls. The census often has three generations living together – a huge bonus. At the same time I was doing research for others – the 'impossible to find' in census tasks – 'my ancestor isn't in the census!' statement was always the interesting challenge. Also did research for Apple computer owners as the discs then weren't made for them.

**Scottish records** Having completed the census data and filled everyone into the family tree program, next came the confirming BMD, starting with the Scottish deaths first, and especially those who were elderly when they died. Someone who died in 1860 may have been born in 1780. One of mine died Liverpool 1843 - born Scotland 101 years earlier.

The 1860 death of an eighty year old gave me

Name occupation and age.

Names and occupations of both parents including the mother's maiden name and whether parents living.

Person present at death or reporting death and other registration details.

Actual address where they died and their usual address.

Cause of death, Time of death – hour and minute.

Their spouse and their occupation and any previous spouse also and spouse's maiden names.

**Trawling for contacts** During Jack's last 12 years we filled out his already very long history, I checked facts, edited, indexed, taking our family back from 1806, to the 1600s in Scotland, sorting out all the others along the way. This meant correspondence worldwide through the Rootsweb list, noticeboards, Google and random email lists – business and organisations – all thoroughly trawled. If Jack had a PhD in natural history, I had one in net trawling and connecting. For instance:


a big game hunter in Africa helped with the Huguenot ROUX branch back to 1688

an unrelated medal collector and historian in Florida assisted with the military side

a bush pilot in Canada unravelled his Scade branch

a UK regimental historian, kindly placed a wreath on my relative's WW1 grave in France

the chair of a political party in UK conservatively shared his Skeda Scottish soccer coach was able to direct me to his relative



I was happy to email anyone, with a set format of offering family history information and asking to be put in touch with their family historian. When some disputed the facts, I would publish all the certs etc on my web page. Everyone wanted to be descended from the well reported and richest. But he couldn't possibly have seven sons named John born 1813 in Dunbar, all of whom survived.

**Writing the History – SKEADIANA** I wrote the Skead (and other spelling) history – SKEADIANA, as Jack called it, as a web page using FRONT PAGE.

This meant I never had to print it, just had it as a DVD, full of colour, heaps of information borrowed directly from the World Wide Web. It opens as a home page with directories and tabs to all the branches and areas of interest, it contains all the certificates and their transcriptions, family diaries, books and essays, military service, immigration, photos, prints, history and geography and of course, the family tree - covers all the relevant countries, spellings etc, back to the Norse SKADE goddess - and if I want to share it with my close cousins I can send it for the cost of posting, and for more distant connections, charge them a fee. And I can revise it regularly. So if someone sends new info, I can do a quick revision. In volume it is the equivalent of several books.

### **Goodbye Alta Vista – hello Google!**

#### **My top history sites, those I use all the time...**

1. Rootsweb lists and noticeboards and their archives, never forget the archives.
2. Family Search, (LDS) old and new, check difference between real record and LDS member submissions.
3. BMD – Australian via Ancestry Library Edition, Free BMD (UK) - now 99% complete.
4. Australian electoral rolls – can do the whole street or suburb, not just a name.
5. Scotland's People – I must own it by now!
6. Newspapers – Trove and Papers Past and international. You can cut and paste and edit.
7. NSW and National Archives, UK National Archives and other countries, some of it is free. (I learned to read Danish certificates)
8. The UK census 1881 - the discs – can use any word or number or combinations, eg name and occupation. Very fast. A good starting place for UK research.
9. All the other census via FreeCEN and Ancestry, USA, Canada, etc
10. Genes Reunited, good contact points.
11. Cyndis list for worldwide anything.
12. Google and Google Maps or Google Earth, never give up without Googling one more time.

And of course there are many more. Don't forget to share your favourites.

Last but not least - another boost to my research was joining the Tomaree Family History Group, with helpful people, forward thinking and good resources. I have also used history groups in other places, paying for research. And will it ever be finished? No. (September 2011)

Just found a heap of info on Australian Royalty – go there!

<http://www.easystreetretreat.com.au/australianroyalty/index.php?ctype=gedcom>



## Well, I didn't know that!



A miser is hard  
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1. There is an old Hotel/Pub in Marble Arch, London, which used to have a gallows adjacent to it. Prisoners were taken to the gallows (after a fair trial of course) to be hanged. The horse-drawn dray, carting the prisoner, was accompanied by an armed guard, who would stop the dray outside the pub and ask the prisoner if he would like "ONE LAST DRINK". If he said YES, it was referred to as ONE FOR THE ROAD. If he declined, that prisoner was ON THE WAGON.

2. They used to use urine to tan animal skins, so families used to all pee in a pot and then once a day it was taken and sold to the tannery. If you had to do this to survive you were "piss poor", but worse than that were the really poor folk, who couldn't even afford to buy a pot, they "Didn't have a pot to piss in" and were the lowest of the low.

3. The next time you are washing your hands and complain because the water temperature isn't just how you like it, think about how things used to be. Here are some facts about the 1500s:

➤ Most people got married in June, because they took their yearly bath in May and they still smelled pretty good by June. However, since they were starting to smell, brides carried a bouquet of flowers to hide the body odour. Hence the custom today of carrying a bouquet when getting married.

➤ Baths consisted of a big tub filled with hot water. The man of the house had the privilege of the nice clean water, then all the other sons and men, then the women and finally the children. Last of all the babies. By then the water was so dirty you could actually lose someone in it. Hence the saying, "Don't throw the baby out with the bath water!"

➤ Houses had thatched roofs, thick straw piled high, with no wood underneath. It was the only place for animals to get warm, so all the cats and other small animals (mice, bugs) lived in the roof. When it rained it became slippery and sometimes the animals would slip and fall off the roof. Hence the saying "It's raining cats and dogs."

➤ There was nothing to stop things from falling into the house. This posed a real problem in the bedroom, where bugs and other droppings could mess up your nice clean bed. Hence, a bed with big posts and a sheet hung over the top afforded some protection. That's how canopy beds came into existence.

➤ The floor was dirt. Only the wealthy had something other than dirt. Hence the saying, "dirt poor." The wealthy had slate floors that would get slippery in the winter when wet, so they spread thresh (straw) on floor to help keep their footing. As the winter wore on they added more thresh until, when you opened the door, it would all start slipping outside. A piece of wood was placed in the entrance-way. Hence: a threshold. (Getting quite an education, aren't you?)

➤ Sometimes they could obtain pork, which made them feel quite special. When visitors came over they would hang up their bacon, to show off. It was a sign of wealth that a man could, "Bring home the bacon." They would cut off a little to share with guests and would all sit around talking and "chew the fat".

➤ Those with money had plates made of pewter. Food with high acid content caused some of the lead to leach onto the food, causing lead poisoning and death. This happened most often with tomatoes, so for the next 400 years or so, tomatoes were considered poisonous.

➤ Bread was divided according to status. Workers got the burnt bottom of the loaf, the family got the middle, and guests got the top, or "The Upper Crust".

➤ Lead cups were used to drink ale or whisky. The combination would sometimes knock the imbibers out for a couple of days. Someone walking along the road would take them for dead and prepare them for burial. They were laid out on the kitchen table for a couple of days and the family would gather around and eat and drink

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and wait and see if they would wake up. Hence the custom of "Holding a Wake".



4. England is old and small and the local folks started running out of places to bury people, so they would dig up coffins and would take the bones to a bone-house and reuse the grave. When reopening these coffins, 1 out of 25 coffins were found to have scratch marks on the inside and they realised they had been burying people alive. So they would tie a string on the wrist of the corpse, thread it through the coffin and up through the ground and tie it to a bell. Someone would have to sit out in the graveyard all night (the graveyard shift) to listen for the bell; thus someone could be, "Saved by the Bell "or was considered a "Dead Ringer"

And that's the truth. Now, whoever said history was boring !!!

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### *Thoughts on Belonging*

Some keep their organizations strong,  
While others join just to belong,  
Some volunteer and do their share,  
While some there are who barely care.  
On meeting nights some always show  
While some there are who never go,  
Some who do their best, some build, some make;  
Some lag behind, just let things go,  
And never help their group to grow;  
Some drag, some pull, some don't, some do.  
Consider : Which of these are you?

*Author anonymous.*

*Taken from : Voices from the Past – Newsletter of the Inverell District Family History Group Inc. June 1990*



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*Committee 2011-12*



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*Member Services*

**FOR NEW MEMBERS:**

- Books and magazines can be borrowed from the Resource Room [not cds], please see the duty person.
- Photocopying/printing in the Resource Room must be paid for. [money to duty person]
- Stuck for a gift for a special occasion? Enquire about our Family Tree Certificates
- Tomaree Family History Group's first book "The Lives and Crimes of the Convicts who arrived in Sydney in 1791 on the Salamander" is available for \$25.
- Donations of food for morning tea are always welcome.
- The Secretary writes the monthly newsletter and the Tomaree Tattler. It is then sent to Michelle for distribution. Any correspondence should be sent directly to Marilynne not Michelle.
- Transcription order forms are available in the Resource Room.
- Please give the names you are researching to Michelle who will put them on our website. Fill out the details on the My Research Interests Form at the end of this newsletter. If you are unsure of what is held at the repositories have a look at their website or the Archives folder in the Resource Room.

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