



# RRHS Bulletin

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## A Tale of Three Hotels

In 1871 Duncan Currie selected land at the very northern limit of the parish of North Lismore. He called his block 'Dunoon' and that name came to refer to the locality even though we now call that particular area Modanville. Currie was an outstanding settler. He participated in several major inquiries, and various correspondents refer in considerable detail to the extraordinary variety of fruit he grew on that first selection of his. But I want to deal here with three successive hotels on the one site in urban North Lismore, two of which were built by Currie.

Duncan's brother Archibald arrived in Sydney as a crewman on the *Earl of Elgin* in 1853. It seems that Duncan arrived a few years later. Both worked as timber getters in the Big Scrub for a while but it was not long before Archibald opened a waterside trading store near the present Lismore racecourse. Access to the course today is through Currie Park. He married Susan Hutcheson in Sydney 1855 and had a large family, but Duncan remained a bachelor.

By the time the boundaries of the new municipality of Lismore were established about 1878, both brothers owned land in what is now called Bridge Street. At that time it was simply Street Number One<sup>1</sup>. The two major bridges were yet to be built. Meanwhile, people, horses and carts were ferried across the two rivers on a punt. Some contemporary reports refer to urban North Lismore as being 'across the Jordan'. Archibald established a retail store and Duncan built the North Lismore Hotel. Our only photo of that hotel (*above*) was taken when Coleman's Bridge across Leycester Creek was under construction around 1885.

The first advertisement found so far for the North Lismore Hotel appeared in the *Northern Star* on Saturday 12 January 1878. George Jarvis styled himself as the proprietor:

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## A Tale of Three Hotels

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... having opened the House just erected by Mr. D. Currie, on the Point, at the Junction of the Tweed Road, as an hotel.

On 8 January 1879, the Publican's Licence was transferred from Jarvis to Lott Bruggy.<sup>2</sup> Later that year the *Star* announced<sup>3</sup> that the right of collecting tolls on the Lismore Punt for two years, commencing from the 1st January next, had been bought by Mr. Lott Bruggy, of the North Lismore Hotel, for the sum of £230 per annum. The opinion was expressed that the cost of that licence was a pretty high figure considering that the lessee had to take all risks, and keep everything in good working order. It showed the large traffic expected.

There are two reports in the *Star* that highlight the importance of the ferry. Both are accounts of journeys from Lismore to the Tweed. The first<sup>4</sup> includes the following:

Leaving Lismore and crossing the ferry, you pass by Host Bruggie's, Mr. A. Currie's store, and Host Cusack's, proceed along the road following a fence for about 10 chains<sup>5</sup>, then turning short and following the telegraph line over the hill, you pass selections held by Mr. J. Gerarty and others, at intervals for about 10 or 11 miles.

It would seem that this individual started his journey in what we would call the CBD and simply had to cross

the main river. It is assumed that the next traveller quoted<sup>6</sup> did the same, but when he arrived at the punt wharf he found the punt high and dry undergoing repairs. This traveller had to remove the saddle from his horse and take it with him in the ferryman's small boat while the horse was made to swim across as the traveller held the reins.

It was not long before Duncan Currie was trying to sell the hotel. Advertisements announced a sale at Jas Stock's Exchange Auction Mart, Lismore, at 2 o'clock pm on Saturday 4th March 1882. The Iron Bridge was then in course of construction over Wilson Creek, to be followed by another bridge over Leicester Creek. The tenant was Mrs. Lott Bruggy<sup>7</sup>. Yet the *Star* had already carried in the one issue two advertisements<sup>8</sup> for auctions to wind up the estate of the late Lott Bruggy who had died intestate. Both were to take place that day at the Junction Hotel, North Lismore. It seems that the hotel had always been advertised previously as the 'North Lismore'. Mrs Bruggy may well have been the tenant now but she was selling off her late husband's farm on the Ridges in South Lismore as well as all the furniture and fittings of the hotel.

But the hotel was not sold. It was replaced. An article<sup>9</sup> in 1886 headed 'Improvements at North Lismore' began:

During a visit paid to the above, last week, we noticed that a number of improvements have taken place of late,



The Junction Hotel, second hotel on the site

in many directions, and several new buildings finished, besides a large one now in course of erection, for Mr Duncan Currie, on the site of the North Lismore Hotel, situated at the junction opposite the Fawcett Bridge. The building will be two stories high, 48 feet long by 28 feet wide, exclusive of the verandah and balcony, which are 8 feet wide.

It goes on to list various rooms and their dimensions. Even the dimensions of the 'loose boxes' in the stables are given. The stabling provided by hotels was an essential service offered to visitors from the country side even for day trips to town.<sup>10</sup> They were the parking stations of that period. The hotel stables provided another service. Mares could be left there to be taken to various stallions whose stud services were being prominently advertised. The article then goes on to mention other new buildings in the area.

Tenders were called<sup>11</sup> for a five years' lease of the new hotel, named the Junction Hotel, from 1 January 1887. They would be received up to 16 December 1886, addressed to A Currie, North Lismore or to D Currie, Dunoon, Tweed Road. But it seems that no lease was arranged for the beginning of the year. Instead, D Currie applied for the confirmation of a Conditional Publican's Licence already granted.<sup>12</sup> On Saturday 26 February 1887 it was announced that the application to have the publican's licence of the Junction Hotel transferred from D Currie to C Griffin was granted in the Licensing Court the previous Wednesday. In the same issue Griffin began advertising as the new proprietor. The same advertisement appeared frequently:

C.W. GRIFFIN begs to inform his old friends and acquaintances and the public generally, that he has OPENED the above well situated and Commodious HOTEL, and trusts that by attention to business, civility and cleanliness, together with the best brands of Liquor and a good table, to merit a share of your patronage.

However, it was not long before Currie was trying to sell this new hotel<sup>13</sup>. On Saturday 11 February 1888 and again on Saturday 3 March 1888 the *Northern Star* carried a prominent advertisement beginning:

To business men, Speculators and others THE BEST PROPERTY ever offered for SALE in the Richmond River District. FOR PRIVATE SALE, Owner leaving the district.

There followed a detailed description of the hotel and the statement that:

This Hotel is now under rental at £4 a week, and will be sold subject to a 4 years' lease, from 14th February.<sup>14</sup>

From Wednesday 27 June 1888 to Saturday 8 December 1888, the following advertisement appeared no less than twenty-six times:



To Let THE JUNCTION HOTEL, Lismore. For all particulars apply to A. Currie, Storekeeper, North Lismore or on the premises to C. W. Griffin. DUNCAN CURRIE.

Finally on Saturday 15 December 1888 the *Star* announced:

Another hotel change. Mr. J. Brown, late of Royal Hotel, has taken the Junction Hotel at North Lismore.

Brown was the licensee at the Junction for just four months. The *Northern Star* of Saturday 13 April 1889 reported that:

At a sitting of the Licensing Court, on Wednesday, the license of the Junction Hotel, was transferred from J. Brown to D. Rankin.

In a 'commercial' in the *Northern Star* of Wednesday 26 June 1889, James B. McDougall reported having sold during the past three months the Bridge Hotel business, on account of Messrs Tucker to Mr John Brown, for £900 cash, and on account of Mr John Brown the Junction Hotel business, furniture and stock to Mr D Rankin, for £430.

Then from Wednesday 5 November 1890 to Saturday 29 November 1890 the *Northern Star* carried an advertisement six times announcing an auction sale set for Saturday 29 November, and it appeared that Duncan Currie finally had a buyer. The new owner was Richard Cogan, but it seems that extensive alterations took nine months. The *Northern Star* of Saturday 29 August 1891 reported that the licence of the Junction Hotel had been transferred from D Rankin to R Cogan.

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## A Tale of Three Hotels

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The following advertisement appeared in the *Northern Star* of Saturday 3 October 1891 and was repeated at intervals for several years:

THE JUNCTION HOTEL North Lismore. RICHARD COGAN begs to inform the public that he has PURCHASED the above Hotel, and has considerably enlarged and renovated it. Travellers and the public will find superior accommodation at this hotel, combined with civility and all the comforts of a home. Only the Best Brands of Ales, Wines, and Spirits kept in stock. GOOD STABLING & SPLENDID PADDOCK. Charges strictly Moderate.

Richard Cogan owned the Junction Hotel for at least ten years. His licence was renewed in 1901<sup>15</sup>. Some time in the next two years Frank McCormack<sup>16</sup> became the owner/licensee. I have found no reference to the formal transfer of the licence or the real estate from Cogan to McCormack. However, there is a report on 23 December 1905 of the licence being transferred to James Milgate.

In the *Northern Star* of Wednesday 22 January 1908 and Saturday 25 January 1908 it was advertised that McCormack had instructed Carlton and Carlton to sell by public auction:

... all that piece or parcel of land, being part of Original Suburban Allotment No. 18, in the parish of North Lismore, containing one acre of land (more or less), having a frontage of 99 feet to Bridge-street, by a depth of 6 chains 67 links<sup>17</sup> to wharf reserve, on which is situated the JUNCTION HOTEL, now leased to Mr. James Milgate for six years at a weekly rental of £5 4s, and doing one of the best paying trades in Lismore. Old Style Title. Liberal Terms.<sup>18</sup>

It was bought by T C Lodge.

But the Junction Hotel in North Lismore was about to lose its licence.<sup>19</sup> As a result of an 'optional vote' at the previous election there was to be a major reduction in the number of liquor licences. In the electorate of Richmond five publicans were to lose their licences with varying degrees of notice, and in Rous there were to be six closures including:

... the Junction Hotel, North Lismore, W. J. Hancock licensee, in three years from the date of the gazettal of notice of this decision.

The end of the Junction Hotel came with an auction sale on the premises on Thursday 27 April 1911 announced in the *Northern Star* several times in April 1911:

Sale by order of mortgagees: stock in trade of wines, beers, ales, cordials and other liquors, all bar and other



The Winsome Hotel, the third hotel on the site

fittings in fixtures, household furniture, stock, goods, chattels and effects, without reserve.

At the time of Duncan Currie's death in 1926 the hotel had been rebuilt as the Winsome, the licence having been transferred from a hotel of the same name in Tuncester. The Winsome Hotel has been a North Lismore landmark since 1925, and in 1980 was included on the National Trust Register.

#### Endnotes

- 1 Rate book held by RRHS.
- 2 *Northern Star*, 11 January 1879.
- 3 *Northern Star*, 6 December 1879.
- 4 *Northern Star*, 5 June 1880.
- 5 200 metres.
- 6 *Northern Star*, 26 February 1881.
- 7 Her name was Eliza. There were six children registered to Lott and Eliza Bruggy from 1867 to 1880.

- 8 *Northern Star*, 25 February 1882.
- 9 *Northern Star*, Wednesday 17 November 1886.
- 10 See article in *RRHS Bulletin*, September 2012, to mark the 100th birthday of Dulcie Parkes.
- 11 *Northern Star*, Saturday 4 December 1886.
- 12 *Northern Star*, Saturday 29 January 1887.
- 13 At various times it was claimed that Currie was planning to return to Scotland, but I have found no evidence that he ever did.
- 14 Also for sale were 2 to 3 acres of land near the hotel as well as a farm for sale at Dunoon. The farm comprised the four portions selected (1879-1882) on the eastern side of the Tweed Road (now Dunoon Road) at the northern limit of the parish of North Lismore.
- 15 *Northern Star*, Saturday 19 January 1901.
- 16 *Northern Star*, Saturday 7 March 1903.
- 17 This was almost exactly one acre. Note the confusion in the units of measurement used.
- 18 Earlier notices seemed to imply (incorrectly?) that the title was Torrens.
- 19 *Northern Star*, 13 June 1908.

DENIS MATTHEWS

## History of Lismore's First Water Supply

Early residents of Lismore relied on water from wells, tanks replenished from roof runoff, and water drawn from the river. Wells and tanks were unreliable in dry periods, and all were subject to pollution, especially the river. This unsatisfactory state of affairs was discussed in Council a few months after Incorporation in 1879 and the *Northern Star* was still complaining about the situation as late as 1882.

In March 1885, the following resolution was tabled in connection with the Lismore water supply: 'That a windmill and tanks<sup>1</sup> to hold 20,000 gallons of water with iron pipe conduits in Molesworth and Woodlark Streets, in all about 30 chains be purchased at a cost of 500 Pounds.' This of course soon proved inadequate, and had not addressed the problem of pollution.

By the following year, 1886, further moves were made in Council to request Government assistance to resolve the water supply problem. As far as can be ascertained the Lismore 'Water Works' was finally established in 1890.

The original scheme comprised a multi-tubular boiler and one pair of Worthington service pumps, pumping 18,000 gallons per hour, and was contained in a modest building. This original building is now part of the Council's Workshops, located adjacent to the Rescue Helicopter Headquarters.

Water was pumped to a reservoir of 72,000 gallons capacity, located on the ridge opposite the present site of radio 2NR Studios. Reticulation was by gravity to the town below.

However, water usage increased at such a rate that in 1904 the building had to be enlarged and another

duplicate boiler (and assumedly pumping plant) and delivery main was installed which enabled 23,000 gallons per hour to be delivered.

Demand continually increased and fuel costs became significant. In 1909 a Worthington multi-turbine pump, equal to 50,000 gallons per hour, was purchased from Messrs. Crosley Ltd., and installed, the pump being driven by a Crosley gas engine. The full pumping power of the water works plant now amounted to about 75,000 gallons of water per hour; the total storage capacity per day being 650,000 gallons. The new reservoir, No. 3, erected at this time had a capacity of 450,000 gallons.

The plant now consisted of one 100 B.H.P. suction gas engine, driving a two stage Worthington turbine pump at 1350 revolutions per minute<sup>2</sup>. The water for the town supply was pumped to a height of 200 feet, the size of the mains in connection therewith being as follows: Suction 12 inches, delivery 9 inches, and a total length 15 chains. The average depth of the suction was 16 feet, and the quantity pumped per hour 50,000 to 60,000 gallons, whilst the daily average was 320,000 gallons.

Coke, obtained at the municipal gas works, was used as fuel. About one load of coke was used per day, at a cost of 9 shillings 6 pence, and the cost of pumping each 1,000 gallons, with the cost of oil and waste included, amounted to .51 pence. With the old Worthington steam pumps the cost reached 1.75 pence per 1,000 gallons. The staff consisted of one engineer, one foreman, one fireman and driver, and one casual hand.

The increase of water consumption for 1910 over 1900 was 20,000,000 gallons, whilst the increase in

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## History of Lismore's Water Supply

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the following year (1911) totalled another 13,000,000 gallons. The total quantity of water consumed for 1911 was 109,635,000 gallons. There is a great deal of other information on reservoirs and the quantities of reticulating pipe laid in the same period.

Even before 1902 it became apparent that no pumping scheme could ever keep up with the growth of Lismore, and some form of gravity scheme was ultimately required. Investigations started the same year on the Rocky Creek scheme, but it was not until 1938 that the council adopted this scheme in principle. It took another two decades before it was finally completed. However, this is another story.

From 1890 until the Rocky Creek scheme came on line, Lismore's water supply was carried by the 'Water Works' with only two known breakdowns: one caused by the inundation of the 1892 flood, and a longer period with a fault in the suction - a mighty effort.

On 5 June 2002, I visited the site of the High Street reservoir. Although there had been at least 3 reservoirs on this site since 1890, only one was still visible. Next I visited the Works Depot and spoke to some of the staff. Although nobody knew anything about the history of the water works, I was graciously shown round and eventually identified the original building. I was also shown where the old staff dwelling had been demolished, and where the 'wet well' pump suction had been located. On the front of the building is affixed a marble tablet commemorating the electric generating facility opened in 1926.

LEITH MARTIN, June 2002

### SOURCES

Annual Reports by the Mayor of the Municipality of Lismore, circa 1909 to 1913, housed in the Richmond River Historical Society

Personal family research: George Daniel Knight, my grandfather, was employed by the Lismore Municipal Council from 1907 until 1918, being Water Supply and Sewerage Engineer for the last 5 years.

### ENDNOTES

- 1 A windmill would only have a maximum suction lift of no more than 20 feet. It must have been by necessity sited close to the water, and as it only serviced Molesworth and Woodlark Streets, would logically be positioned near the intersection of these two streets. Near the old Ferry approach? The tanks would have also been nearby? However, a reserve for water supply is shown on the eastern side just below the present Ballina St. Bridge. Could it have been here?
- 2 The suction gas engine operated on carbon monoxide gas generated from coke, similarly to the charcoal burning 'Producer Gas' units used on motor vehicles during wartime petrol rationing. It was a very slow revving engine, its speed being governed by the interruption of the spark ignition by the governor. This was the famous 'Hit and Miss' system. If the load was fairly constant the engine might fire consistently five times out of six, then miss one, for hours on end. If the load varied, the ratio of hits to misses would suddenly change. My grandmother, who lived nearby, stated that people would subconsciously count the number of hits, then the miss, then get a sudden jolt when the pattern changed.



**A CITY OF TOYS!**

You, a CITY OF TOYS—A city populated by bright Eyes, Curly Headed Dolls, Little Electric Trains, Fluffy Little Teddy Bear-like Pianos, Whips, Balls, Tea Sets, Comic Figures, Guns, Drums, and a whole host of Wonderful Things.

**BUT OH! THE DOLLS!**

They're here in never ending profusion—Dressed and Undressed, Jointed and Kid Bodied, Fair and Dark, English and Belgian, and Dutch and Exquisite. Delicate and Wag, Cheap and Expensive; Insect, there never was such a collection before.

It will prove an education to bring the Little ones in, and when you see their pretty eyes glisten with joy, you will be amply compensated for your trouble.

**DON'T HESITATE TO COME IN!**

You'll find the prices as enticing as the big page of Candy Peel in a Whopping Big Christmas Trade In.

**LADIES' FANCY HANDKERCHIEFS**—Hundreds of dozens to choose from, ranging from 2/6 to 4/11 each.

**LADIES' HAND BAGS** in all the newest designs. We have just opened up between two and three hundred for the Xmas Trade, and whether you buy our cheapest at 1/9, or our best at 50/6, you'll find them easily first in value.

**LADIES' BLACK PARASOLS**—A beautiful assortment up to 25/- each, with the latest handles and best frames.

**THOUSANDS OF Dainty Ornaments, Fancy Boxes, Perfumes, Photo Frames, and Nic-Nacs** to choose from, all of which are suitable for Xmas Presents. And the prices are mere midgets. DO COME.

**Artlett & Ward**  
THE FASHION CENTRE, LISMORE.



**GEO. NESBITT & CO.**  
THE NEW FIRM

(SOLE PROPRIETOR, GEO. NESBITT.)

**THE NEW FIRM'S**  
EIGHTEENTH.

**Grand Xmas Carnival**

Newspaper advertisements for Christmas in Lismore, 1912

# Christmas in Lismore a Century Ago

AS REPORTED IN THE NORTHERN STAR



1912 SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN A GOOD YEAR FOR LISMORE. In the lead-up to Christmas that year, just twenty months before the Great War would change life so irrevocably, the *Northern Star* showed more than a touch of smugness in its editorial:

Well-dressed, happy crowds filling our principal streets, bright costumes and attractive Xmas gifts alternating in the shop windows, and not a store but has made lavish provision for the approaching holiday season. Our visitors hailing from less favoured parts will see around them every token of a thriving community, with plenty of money to spend and spending it freely. Notwithstanding the increased cost of living so much is heard of nowadays: yea, in spite of it, undoubtedly the standard of comfort on the Richmond is higher than in older settlements.<sup>1</sup>

There was much competition amongst the local stores to get their share of the money that was being freely spent, and the *Star's* reporter obliged with fulsome descriptions of their Christmas wares. Here are some highlights<sup>2</sup>:

**THE RED FLAG** [Department store]: *Teddy Bears and swansdown animals of many kinds have evidently taken the place of the Noah's Arks ... in addition to the rag doll and the rubber ball 'when you and I were young.'*

**THE NEW FIRM** [Department store]: *'Daddy Tin Whiskers' is a fine Yankee toy. His pate is quite bald, being made of tin, but you rub it with a magic ring and hair sprouts. Fact!*

**F WICKS AND CO.** [Jewellers]: *For a low priced present nothing could be sweeter than some little daggers and hands which serve at once as paper cutters and book-marks.*

**ARTLETT AND WARD** [Drapers]: *Mechanical men o' war, cinematographs and magic lanterns are on view ... This firm concentrates on the fancy trade and specialises in women's stuff and offers very nobby parachutes [broad brimmed hats?] at prices ranging from 2s 11d to 25s.*

**DEAN AND SON** [Drapers]: *Lace and muslin were in evidence, clients showing a partiality for the new hailstone muslin.*

**A E ALEXANDER** [Drapers]: *A tussore silk dress for the wife, a new suit for the lad or for oneself, or any of the thousand and one requirements of a household in domestic drapery may be obtained here.*

**BROWN AND JOLLY** [Timber furniture]: *A sideboard that looks like English walnut is really blackbean, and yet another is of Queensland maple. Most of these beautiful and high-priced works of art are of the firm's own designing,*

*and Lismore should be proud to have residents with the taste to desire such things and the purses to provide them.*

**J M CHAPMAN** [Gentlemen's outfitters]: *Our lounge hats are particularly good – made of good materials and in fast dyes.*

**PALING AND CO.** [Music]: *Little portable organs would serve either for missionaries or mummies.*

**LANCE AND CO.** [Hats]: *In hats there is a big run on Panamas and the new Indian helmets, and straws are bidding fair to come in as a big feature again. This house has the sole agency for the high class Stetson hats.*

**C W WELSBY** [Hatters and clothiers]: *Gladstone and kit bags for travellers are also on hand, and Indian gauze underwear deserves special mention.*

**F S WILMOT** [Jewellers]: *Shaving mugs, tobacco pouches, stud boxes and military brushes, both in silver and E P ware, opera glasses...*

**OVERELLS, LTD.** [Department store]: *Hobby horses, rocking horses, go-carts and tricycles are plentiful and a 'toy' motor car is large enough for a child to ride in...*

**FLAVELLE, ROBERTS AND SANKEY LTD** [Jewellery, watchmaking and optical]: *... black and Fermoy opals, and the red and white cornelians from Nimbin and Chelmsford respectively...*

**M C MURPHY** [Boots and shoes]: *...a special line of men's half-guinea Balmorals [Oxford shoes] in French calf and glace kid.*

And customers came from far and wide to spend their money:

Yesterday a free steamer ran from Woodburn to Lismore in order to convey clients to the New Firm's great Christmas sale. A very large number of people patronised the steamer, and incidentally the big Christmas sale.<sup>3</sup>

However, those who wanted to know just when the shops would be operating over the holiday period may well have been scratching their heads:

Shopkeepers are invited to note the closing hours to be observed during the Christmas and New Year periods, provided the shops are closed during the whole of Christmas Day or Boxing Day and New Year's Day. Shops which usually close at 1 o'clock on Saturday, must close at that hour on Saturday, December 21st inst., but may remain open till 10 o'clock on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, as well as to that hour on Friday, December

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## Christmas in Lismore a Century Ago

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27, 1912, and January 3, 1913. They may also remain open till 6 o'clock, hair dressers' shops till half-past seven on Saturday, December 28, 1912, and Saturday, January 4, 1913. Shops which usually close at 1 o'clock on Wednesday, must close at that hour on Wednesday, Dec. 18, but may remain open till 10 o'clock on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, as well as till that hour on Saturday, December 21 and 28, 1912, and Saturday, January 1, 1913.<sup>4</sup>

Got that??

There was a touch of nostalgia in some of the reporting:

The time-honoured custom of decorating the awning posts and fronts of buildings with greenery in honour of Christmas has already been commenced, and yesterday afternoon a number of places in Molesworth-street presented an attractive appearance, clothed in beautiful greenery. The custom was one that was never forgotten in years gone by, but like many other customs which used to be associated with the festive season, it is gradually passing away.<sup>5</sup>

as well as the usual Christmas philosophising:

It is within the power of all at this period of bountifulness which we are now fast approaching to impart to others

### President's Christmas Message

The days are growing steadily warmer, the summer clouds are gathering, and the beautiful colours of the jacarandas and flame trees are giving way to those of the Christmas Bush: the year is fast drawing to a close and Christmas is almost upon us. It is time once again to acknowledge and thank our committee members and the rest of our hardworking volunteers for the time and energy that they have put in during the year. The work we do is important work and its importance increases as the years go on! If you are able to attend our Christmas Party on Tuesday 4 December, I will take great pleasure in thanking all of you in person.

At this time, I would like to extend to RRHS members and families, supporters, and friends all our best wishes for the Season. May you have an enriching holiday break that refreshes and inspires for the year ahead.

**ROBBIE BRAITHWAITE**  
President



some comfort or enjoyment. As we avail of this power, so will our inward joys increase, and we shall be able to recognise the blessing of being permitted to scatter around those not so happily circumstanced as ourselves some rays of the light that illumined the whole world when "Hope was born."<sup>6</sup>

However, describing an instance of such seasonal goodwill, the reporter could not refrain from a little racial wink and a nod:

There was an influx of aborigines into town yesterday morning, and all made in the direction of the Police Station. The reason of the visit was the distribution by the police of the usual festive cheer to the remnant of a fast disappearing race. The fare consisted of food and 'baccy', that indispensable article of an aborigine's outfit which, perhaps, forms the chief item of it. They were all sent away in good spirits, and whether the good spirits now kept up will be substituted for others poured down before the festive season is over must be left for time to tell.<sup>7</sup>

As usual, Christmas Eve was a very busy time:

About 7 o'clock people began to pour into the streets of Lismore in great numbers, to see and be seen. There was a very large representation of country people who came in on horseback (some double banked) and in vehicles. Every available yard was packed with vehicles, while in Keen street they were fully three deep along the western side. By half past eight o'clock the main streets were one mass of people, and as there were special trains running, the traffic over the bridges was enormous. Motor cars, four wheelers, hansoms and various kinds of private conveyances at times formed one continuous string. It was with difficulty that traffic in the main streets could be maintained with safety, and it was fortunate that only one slight accident occurred. ... About 10 o'clock a large number of persons was conveyed to the railway station to catch the special train for Byron Bay and Mullumbimby, from which place the trip was made to Brunswick Heads.<sup>8</sup>

but apparently most people behaved themselves:

Hotels did a big business, but punctually at 11 o'clock the houses were vacated, and even at that hour it was most gratifying to see so few people with the sign of liquor about them.<sup>9</sup>

Christmas Day itself turned out fine. The weather was good:

Exceptionally favoured were pleasure seekers during the holidays this year. The weather was fine, cool breezes tempered the atmosphere on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day; on Boxing Day the heat, though at times severe, was not by any means uncomfortable, and best of all the moonlight nights were so refreshingly mild and free from closeness that they savoured more of spring than midsummer.<sup>10</sup>

and many people made their customary seaside migration:

*Continued on page 11*



# THE YEAR IN REVIEW

The theme for History Week this year was 'Threads'. The society decided to mount a display called Grandma's Clothesline (1, 4), which is still mounted in our Council Room—the modern mind boggles at some of the garments worn particularly the undergarments in our collection. Another high point was the launch of *Men and a River* (2, 5, 6, 7, 8) and the display of the medicine chest from SS *St George* (7). But none of this would've been possible without our hardworking Planning Committee (3)—thanks everyone!

# Celebrating Australia

Quite often, the Historical Society is asked for information about the age of an old house. Sometimes this is simple curiosity about a recent purchase, a desire to discover the history of a house, who built it, who lived there previously, were alterations made over the years, and how it fitted into the surrounding area.

Sometimes these questions are easy to answer; sometimes it is difficult to find any information which might help.

A person may wish to restore the old house to its original splendour. Most local government councils support the restoration of older-style homes, especially those considered of heritage value. Subsidies may be provided for restoration, but this rarely covers the full cost. Complete restoration can be a very expensive exercise.

When looking at older style houses the term 'Federation house' is sure to emerge. Real estate agents often use the term loosely to describe all kinds of old houses. However, as the term indicates, the Federation house was probably built around the time federation of the Australian states was being considered, or shortly after Federation began in 1901—roughly 1890 to 1910. The term itself did not come into vogue until some years afterwards, when 'federation-type' houses were still being built.

Federation houses were so called because they usually depicted some Australian feature, perhaps a rising sun under the gable, or an Australian animal, bird or plant. Sometimes a word, like 'cooee', was written there or used as the name of the house. House names were very important in those days because they identified a house, especially if there were no street numbers.

If the house was brick and tiles it would probably have some Australian emblem on the roof. The more palatial houses could have a stained or etched glass panel on either side of the front door. Here again, an Australian emblem would be used. The owner might also like to give evidence of family origin, with an added thistle for Scotland, shamrock for Ireland, or even St George and the dragon for England!

Houses in the city areas were usually brick and tiles, while those in the country were more likely to be built



from local timbers. There were two basic floor plans; one for the more affluent, with extra bedrooms, servants' quarters and probably a larger veranda; and another for the clients wanting less pretentious houses. For both the basic feature was much the same, however, with a wide passageway down the centre of the building, with bedrooms on the left and living/utility rooms on the right, and double doors leading to a verandah and open space.

It should be remembered that these were the days when people were beginning to relish the fresh air and sunshine of Australia, so sleeping on the veranda was very popular. The veranda would perhaps be partly closed in and large canvas blinds would be used to protect the sleeper in rainy weather. Sometimes beds would be wheeled out on to the veranda at night through the double doors and returned to the bedroom in the morning. Probably most of us would not like to return to the age when these houses were built. When a house is restored we usually insist that it have a nice kitchen and bathroom—fuel stoves and tin baths are not appreciated these days. One can only wonder at the veranda sleeping arrangements—what about mosquitoes (nets would have been claustrophobic!), spiders and, worst of all, snakes?

There are several books available on heritage house styles. Some of these, including books by local author and heritage house expert, Ian Evans, should be available at local bookshops and the public library.

**MARGARET HENDERSON**

**First published in the *Northern Star*, 2 Dec 2008**

Federation houses and fences (pictured above in suburban Sydney) were built from around 1890 to 1910, and often featured Australian motifs somewhere in the architecture or decor

## Christmas in Lismore a Century Ago

Continued from page 8

Nevertheless hundreds left town to spend a few days at the coast or in other townships, and trains, river boats, and motor cars were all excellently patronised. Not a few travelled to Ballina and Byron Bay for Boxing Day excursions, whilst earlier in the week Evans River and the Brunswick found patrons from one end of the river to the other ...<sup>11</sup>

Those left in town had a large choice of religious services to attend:

Christmas Day this year was befittingly quiet, most of those able to get away being conspicuous by their absence. The churches holding the customary seasonal services, as reported below, were well filled, morning and evening, and the sacred concert at the Federal Hall on Christmas night was well patronised.

The usual Christmas Day services were held at St. Andrew's (Church of England) at 8 and 11 a.m., communion at each service. ... At St. Carthage's Cathedral, six Masses were celebrated during Christmas morning, the first commencing at 6 a.m., then 6.30, 7, 8, 9 and 11. All these services, particularly those in the early morning, were very largely attended... At the Methodist Church, the Rev. T. Parker conducted the service at 11 a.m. ... A fair congregation was present.<sup>12</sup>

and on Boxing Day there were sporting events for those so inclined:

Yesterday the chief, and in fact the only, outside attractions in town were the Coleman's Point Sports and the Cycling Competitions on the Recreation Ground. Both of these were well and deservedly patronised ... A team of bowlers journeyed from Ballina to enliven proceedings on the Bowling green...<sup>13</sup>

Overall, the Christmas period went very well for most people. A G Robertson's Red Flag Stores reported:

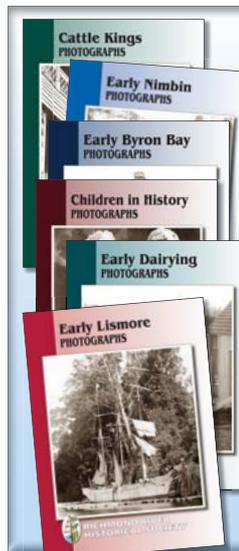
We have had an exceptional Christmas, and trust that we have not failed in our efforts to please.

But I can't help wondering, even with the largesse of food and tobacco from the Lismore police, how the local aboriginal people felt about it all.

**ROBBIE BRAITHWAITE**  
November 2012

### ENDNOTES

- 1 *Northern Star*, Saturday 21 December 1912
- 2 *Ibid.*, Monday 16 December 1912
- 3 *Ibid.*, Friday 20 December 1912
- 4 *Ibid.*, Tuesday 17 December 1912
- 5 *Ibid.*, Tuesday 24 December 1912
- 6 *Ibid.*, Saturday 21 December 1912
- 7 *Ibid.*, Tuesday 24 December 1912
- 8 *Ibid.*, Friday 27 December 1912
- 9 *Ibid.* 10 *Ibid.* 11 *Ibid.*
- 12 *Ibid.* 13 *Ibid.*



## Historical Photographs Series

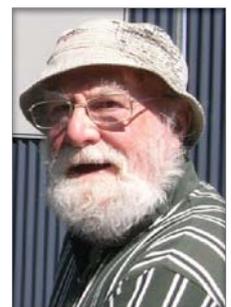
A selection of our popular Historical Photographs Series booklets have been updated and reprinted. They will be available for sale at the Museum in early December, and will make great Christmas presents or a valued addition to your library.

## Editorial

The December *Bulletin* was almost ready to be printed last year when Annette Potts passed away so suddenly. Annette brought very many qualities to her role as editor. She was not merely an indefatigable proofreader but she had so many contacts that we always seemed to have an inexhaustible supply of articles in train. When it comes to minimising errors in typing and grammar, and even in fact, I have the support of others. I have the wonderful support of Jeannette who does such an excellent job with the layout of our *Bulletin*. But what I miss most is Annette's contact with potential contributors.

In this issue the editor is also a major contributor. Fortunately, we have our very small editorial committee to ensure that the editor is not given unlimited rein to his hobby horse. Thanks to Robbie for her article on Christmas in Lismore a century ago and for her help on my own contribution. Leith continues our series on urban services. We hope to follow up soon with a story on an electricity supply for our area.

I am confident that we have many members with a story to tell. I would hope that no one is held back by a lack of confidence. I would urge all members with a potential article to make contact soon so that we can arrange if necessary to facilitate the writing of such stories.



**DENIS  
MATTHEWS**

[bulletin@richhistory.org.au](mailto:bulletin@richhistory.org.au)

# Society Matters

## Council Delegate

New Lismore City Council delegate to the Society is Councillor Glenys Ritchie. Welcome Glenys!

## New Staff Room

Volunteers will soon have a lovely refurbished staff eating area at the back of the Research Room with the replacement of the sink and cupboard, courtesy of the practical skills and initiative of Geoff Kerr, and the space-creating skills of Kerrie Alexander, Ian Murray and Robbie Braithwaite.

## Recent Grants

The Society has been the recipient of two recent grants:

1. Arts NSW Cultural Grant of \$1000 for the publication of a history of Dunoon by Denis Matthews, titled *Dunoon 2480*. The book will be published early in 2013. Congratulations Denis!

2. Commonwealth Dept of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) Volunteer Grant of nearly \$5000 which will be used to provide Computer Software, a desk/workstation, a first aid course, a printer/multifunction centre/fax/scanner, a large flat-screen television, and training courses. Thanks to Geoff Kerr!

The new photocopier for the Research Room was purchased from the Volunteers grant.

## Louise Tiffany Daley Room

Following a donation from Mr Spencer Spinaze, the People's Room (formerly the Pioneer's Room) in the Museum will now be known as the Louise Tiffany Daley Room. A sign to that effect is being put up over the doorway to the room, alongside a framed portrait of Mrs Daley containing information about her importance to the Society.

## MOSAiC Training

Geoff Foley has been running MOSAiC training sessions on 13 and 20 November.

## Next Meeting

The first quarterly meeting of the society in 2013 is planned for Sunday 17 March.

Further details of meetings to be announced.

## Season's Greetings

The Society extends greetings of



### Date:

Tuesday 4 December 2012

### Place:

Lismore City Bowling Club

### Time:

6 pm for 6.30 pm

### Cost:

\$25 per person

Bookings are necessary.  
Payment must accompany booking.

Please book by 28 November.  
Late bookings will be accepted till noon Friday 30 November.

## Christmas Closures

### Lismore Regional Museum

The Museum will be closed from Monday 17 December 2012.

It will reopen

Monday 7 January 2013.

Normal hours will then apply:  
Monday to Friday 10 am to 4 pm.

### TG Hewitt Regional Archives

The Research Archives will reopen on Monday 14 January, 2013.

Normal hours will then apply:  
Monday and Wednesday  
10 am to 4 pm

(closed for lunch noon till 12.30 pm)

the season to all our members and friends.

## Christmas Functions

Please note the important dates shown on this page for our Christmas Closures and for our Christmas Party, which is planned as usual as a fun night. This year a special presentation is planned.



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