



THE RHSQ

Bulletin

72 years of continuous publication

MARCH 2015 No. 794

The newsletter of The Royal Historical Society of Queensland

Patron: His Excellency the Honourable Paul de Jersey AC,
Governor of Queensland

President: Dean Prangley

Website: www.queenslandhistory.org.au

World War One Casualty Records Revealed

Story by Adrian Harrison

Few people realise that the Queensland Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages (RBDM) holds comprehensive death registrations for a large number of service men and women[1] who enlisted in Queensland and who died while on active duty during both world wars. Only the registries in South Australia and Tasmania took the trouble to compile similar archives. In total RBDM holds close to 10,000 death registrations for World War One and a further 5,000 from World War Two. These records are available for the public to [search for free in our online family history research service.](#)



Above: Some of the registers holding the 10,000 World War One death registrations in the RBDM archive. Unlike the standard registers, these are in alphabetical rather than date of event order.

The First World War registrations were compiled under the direction of George Porter, who became the Queensland Registrar-General in October 1921. Mr Porter was by all accounts a bit of a maverick who did not necessarily rely on legislation to back up his decisions, and he took it upon himself to register the deaths of all the men and women who had, in his words, ‘given their lives for Queensland’.

Continued on page 5

President's Report

Dear Members,

Exciting times for the Society following the success of *Lost Brisbane*. We are embarking on the preparation of a new book which will take in the period of 1945 to 1988.

During the last month we have received a number of donations to the museum. These include a very interesting revolver which was carried on the first survey of Poepel's Corner in 1879 (heritage listed site having been added to the register in 2012). This came complete with holster and both are in excellent condition. A framed photograph of Queensland's first polo team which defeated NSW 5 to 1 in 1900 and a book on early Queensland athletes from 1896 completed the donation. Linda Clarke, Drury's daughter in law, donated a collection of glass plate negatives which had been in the late Drury Clarke's collection. Drury was President of the Society from 1983 to 1986 and did an enormous amount of dedicated work on the museum collection. He was also a great supporter of expanding the library collection. We are now proceeding with setting up our WWI display in the museum and have new guest curators assisting us.

The museum team of volunteers have done a wonderful job identifying material to be used from our collection, however if any member has anything from WWI which they would like to lend to the Society for display please contact us.

April is our membership month and I would like all members to think of someone who would enjoy being part of the Society. I will provide details next *Bulletin* as to a special new members' welcome function we are planning.

Dean Prangley
President

Queensland News for February

(Collected by Ruth Kerr from personal Queensland contacts, Affiliated Societies and Newspapers)

Allora held its internationally known Heritage Weekend on 24 and 25 January 2015. It included historical farm machinery, earth moving equipment, international trucks and tractors. The 2015 heritage weekend featured Ford and Fordson trucks, tractors and cars, Lister stationary engines and British motorcycles. (*The Allora Advertiser* 22 January 2015 pp.2,4,6)

Leyburn – In 2013 the Kirby family at *Redbank* near Leyburn located a marked tree with an up arrow and 'PR' on it. The mark was to designate

the corner of a Police Reserve in the nineteenth century. A historic monument including the marked part of the tree was unveiled at Leyburn Police Station on 16 January 2015. The project was a joint one between the Queensland Police, Leyburn Historical Society and the Kirby family. Southern Downs Shire Mayor, Peter Blundell and the Honourable Lawrence Springborg MP, Member for Southern Downs, participated in the unveiling ceremony. (*Warwick Daily News* 17 January 2015 including photograph)

Mareeba – In November 2014 at the Community Cabinet meeting in Mareeba the Premier, the Honourable Campbell Newman MP, donated to the Mareeba Shire Council a photograph of Princess Alexandra visiting Mareeba in August 1959 and an antique kerosene lamp from the Lady Jane mine area at Mungana on the Chillagoe mining field. To enable the artifacts to be displayed the shire council donated the items on permanent loan to the Mareeba Historical Society. A photograph of the items at the Mareeba Historical Society premises appeared in the *Tablelands Advertiser* 19 December 2014 p.9)

Warwick – The Historical Society has restored a timber Barbat & Sons of Ipswich corn thresher made in the 1880s. The restoration was funded by the Southern Downs Regional Council, including \$6,000 for a shade structure around the thresher. John Eastwell was the key person involved in the restoration along with the team of Bernie Stephens, Des McConville, Phil Wagner, Mark Siddans, Mike Ford and Peter Law. The thresher was donated by the Wiedman family. It would have produced 137 bags of corn per day. A celebratory function was held on 18 January 2015 at the Warwick Historical Society Pringle Cottage Museum. President of the Warwick Society, Janice Flood, and the Mayor, Peter Blundell, spoke at the event. The Wiedman family is also donating a wheat thresher to the Warwick Society. (*Warwick Daily News* 17 January 2015 p.10 and 19 January 2015 p.4 including four photographs)

Woodford – A Perry steam locomotive has been donated to the Australian Narrow Gauge Railway Museum Society (ANGRMS) at Woodford. It was donated by the Gold Coast's Dreamworld on 6 November 2014. The steam locomotive has been reunited with ANGRMS volunteer driver, Bob Gough. He and his son Mark drove the locomotive for Dreamworld several years ago; Bob and the locomotive starred in a Young Talent Time special with Johnny Young and the Young Talent Team during his time of driving the locomotive at Dreamworld. Moreton Bay Regional Council sponsored the transportation of the steam locomotive

to Woodford. The volunteers of ANGRMS hope to have the locomotive hauling passenger trains by mid 2015. (*Kilcoy Sentinel* 13 November 2014 page 2)

New Members

Richard Hunter	Hampton Victoria
Robert Kay	Riverhills
Caroline Hui	City East
Anne Vickers	Caboolture
Judith and Elizabeth Shaw	Kenmore
Xiaolu Wu	St Lucia

Speakers Needed

The RHSQ and the Annerley Stephens History Group are convening a history conference on the history of the Annerley Stephens area to be held in February 2016.

If you are undertaking research on a topic that is relevant to this area and are prepared to deliver a paper please call Stephen Sheaffe on 0417 770 176.

Research Report

The year started with a flourish with clients contacting us and visiting the Store as a result of the *Lost Brisbane [LB]* publication, a few pointing out what they considered discrepancies in our captions or asking for copies of photographs associated with their loved ones in the old images, and sometimes offering extra family history information for our archives. Thankfully, there have not been many of the former, but we were thrilled to receive a visit from some descendants of S H Ruddle of the firm Burton and Ruddle, pictured on p.263. While visiting Goondiwindi Museum one of the family came upon a rail ambulance built by Ruddle Engineering in the late 1920s. They donated a photograph of this unique vehicle for our collection. This is just one good news story among many as a result of the publication.

Other inquiries/requests were as follows: to view the QANTAS ticket No 1 and to ascertain the names of the first ten passengers and information on the engineer; information on Alfred Percival James Crew who, with his brother, owned bakery businesses in Winton, Biloela, Clermont and Brisbane in the 1940-50s; whether the RHSQ had digitised the WWI correspondence and index cards relating to Anne Margaret Wheeler; to access images for a future documentary on the Commissariat Store; photographs of the wool store at Teneriffe; family research relating to Sir Thomas McIlwraith for the McIlwraith reunion; image of the brig *Amity*; for Eric Callaghan's record as post master at Maryborough during 1960-70; further inquiry re

visiting to view the Pettigrew diaries; request for panorama view of Wickham Terrace (p. 22 of *LB*), for descendant showing house in which his paternal grandfather, John William Wood, lived while in charge of the reserve for the cisterns; Chinese indentured labourers who came to Australia on the *Nimrod* in 1848; QANTAS hangar at Charleville; inquiry about a female prisoner who had a baby while in Brisbane prison c1904 and had two other children in a Diamantina Orphanage – assisted with her future inquiries; Sandgate and Sandgate church; Brisbane punts or ferries 1850-1900; Brisbane WWI photos; Curr tapes' transcription; QANTAS ticket authentication; Adkins Robert Spencer, president Amateur Fishermen's Association.

Visitors to the Store were researching Goode Island lighthouse and a policeman investigating a robbery in the adjacent park two years ago. This visitor has sent us a photo of a gathering of men at Roma, which has been catalogued; and a gift of a Drury Clarke signed newsletter and glass plates; if relevant they will be catalogued and entered into the gift Register. The Society took delivery a Copy of eBook *Through the Eyes of Thomas Pamphlett: Convict and Castaway* by Chris Pearce.

Val Donovan
Honorary Research Officer

Reminder

The nominations for the John Douglas Kerr Medal of Distinction close on Tuesday 31 March.

Another Reminder

The Queensland Day Dinner will be held on Saturday 6 June 2015. Further details will be included in the May issue of *The RHSQ Bulletin*.

Information Correction

RHSQ member Brian Hedges reports that there is an error of fact in the February *Bulletin*. He writes: 'On page 4, it states that Colin Milson is the grandfather of Jenny Milson of Longreach. I was fairly certain that that statement was incorrect. Colin Milson is actually Jenny's uncle, a brother of her father. Jenny's father was always known as Lad Milson, whose Christian name I do not know. I have met, and have had conversations with, both Jenny and her father, quite a few years ago.'



Thinking of travelling through Queensland? The Rural Libraries Queensland (RLQ) Tourist Card is your local library network while you are on the road. RLQ is a free gateway to resources and services provided by local government and the State Library of Queensland for the travelling and rural communities. As a tourist member you can use your six-month membership to borrow items at any rural library and return them at another, search SLQ online collections, and access more than a quarter of a million books, music, movies and more. To register and view a full list of RLQ libraries, visit: plconnect.slq.qld.gov.au/services/rural-libraries-queensland/rlq-tourist-membership

Queensland State Archives Events

Advanced Catalogue Search 27 March 9.00 am - 10.00 am QSA Lecture Theatre Two

Discover how to get the best out of ArchivesSearch, the Queensland State Archives' online catalogue. This seminar will teach you more advanced techniques to locate records of interest and will give useful tips for finding what you want.

You are welcome to bring your wireless device - laptop or tablet - to join in with exercises presented during the workshop to help you learn how to use our catalogue.

To book, please call 3131 7777 or email info@archives.qld.gov.au

Find Your First World War Soldier 13 April 2.30 pm - 3.30 pm QSA Lecture Theatre Two

Join us for a workshop which may help you locate records - aside from service files - on your First World War soldier. Bring your wireless device - laptop or tablet - to join in research exercises presented during the workshop. Bookings are essential as sessions hold a maximum of 15 attendees. To book, please call 3131 7777 or email info@archives.qld.gov.au

Queensland Women's Historical Association Events

Held at 'Miegunyah', 35 Jordan Terrace, Bowen Hills, Brisbane 4006 Tel: 3252 2979 or email www.Miegunyah.org

Morning Tea and Talk 12 March 10.30 am

'Thomas Coar Dixon, Boot Manufacturer of West End'

In 1875 Thomas Dixon opened a tannery at West end Brisbane. In 1878 he expanded his business to incorporate a boot and shoe manufacturing factory in Russell Street, bringing in equipment, machinery and lasts for the new factory from Sydney. Thomas was a Quaker, beloved by his employees, who was always known to help anyone down on their luck.

Guest Speaker: Marilyn England, eminent historian

QWHA members \$10.00/ Non-members \$15.00
Includes morning tea

Morning Tea and Member's Workshop 9 April 10.30 am

Members' Exhibition Workshop

A members only talk and workshop on how we plan and develop exhibitions. This will also act as a house-guide refresher on how to show people around our exhibitions. Morning tea will be included.

Continued from page 1:

Mr Porter believed that the registration of the death, and so the ready availability of a death certificate, would provide bereaved families with some form of closure for their lost loved ones, who at best were buried on the other side of the world—the British Empire had a strict policy of not repatriating its war dead—and at worst, had no known grave at all. Copies of the completed death certificates would be made available to the relatives for two shillings.

Compiling and entering the records was a mammoth and complex task. The battalion in which a dead soldier was serving when he died was not necessarily an accurate reflection of where he had enlisted. Although at the outbreak of war battalions had been raised largely within individual states, as the war progressed and casualties grew, battalions were merged and reorganised and reinforcements were sent wherever they were needed.

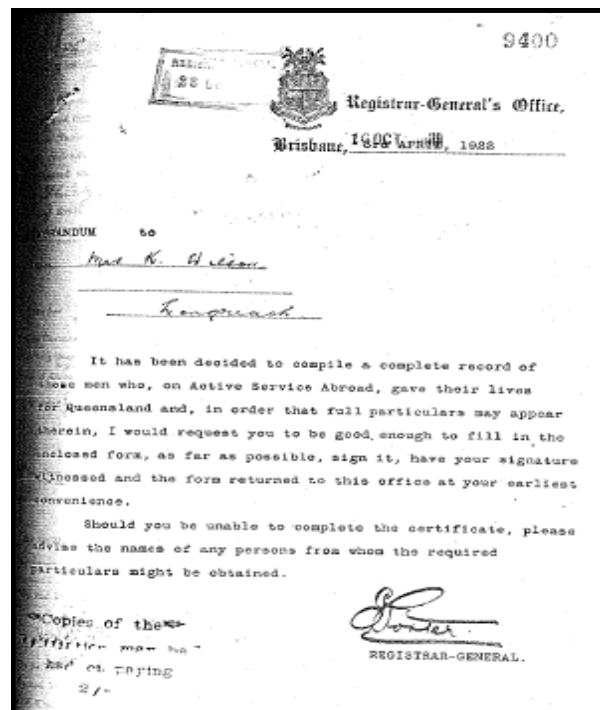
By the time a volunteer from Queensland died, he could well have been fighting in a unit raised anywhere in Australia. So not only was a list of dead service personnel needed—and Australia had suffered close to 62,000 killed and missing during the course of the war—this had to be cross checked against where the person had enlisted. There were nearly 58,000 enlistments registered in Queensland.

Once it was established that the dead soldier had indeed enlisted in Queensland, information was taken from his service record and sent to the next of kin on a death registration form. This was accompanied by a letter from George Porter explaining the work the registry was undertaking.

The next of kin were asked to add further detail and sign to certify that the information was correct, and if they could not do so, forward it to someone who could. The certified details were then entered into the registers in alphabetical order. It was a process which could take years to complete as many Queensland volunteers had been born in another state and many in a different country altogether[2].

The following photo shows George Porter's accompanying form letter sent to John Wilson's widow Kate, in Longreach. Also sent was a death registration form. John Wilson was a railway worker originally from Rockhampton. He volunteered in September 1915 and was sent to the Western Front as a reinforcement for the 26th AIF Battalion. He was killed in action on 5 November 1916 during the assault on German trenches north of Gueudecourt. It was one of the last actions of the battle of the Somme which officially ended 13 days later on 18 November.

This letter was sent to John Wilson's widow in April 1922 but the completed death registration was



not received back at the registry until October, after being sent on to the soldier's bereaved father. John Wilson has no known grave and is remembered on the Australian War Memorial at Villers-Bretonneux.

The registers themselves were compiled between 1921 and 1924; separate registers were created specifically to record the war dead. As detailed in the first issue of our [Family History Newsletter](#), [these registrations were given the prefix letter 'F' in the index, indicating an AIF death from the First World War and an 'S' indicating a Second World War death that may have occurred outside Australia; some of those registered had been repatriated to Australia and subsequently died of their wounds.](#)

Thanks to the meticulous research of the then Registrar-General George Porter and his staff, many of our brave service personnel who enlisted in Queensland now have their passing recorded at the Registry.

[To commemorate the ANZAC centenary RBDM has released two commemorative death certificates. The certificates each feature a different design \(poppies and a soldier silhouette\).](#)

[You can search our records for free and order a World War One or World War Two ANZAC commemorative death certificate online.](#)

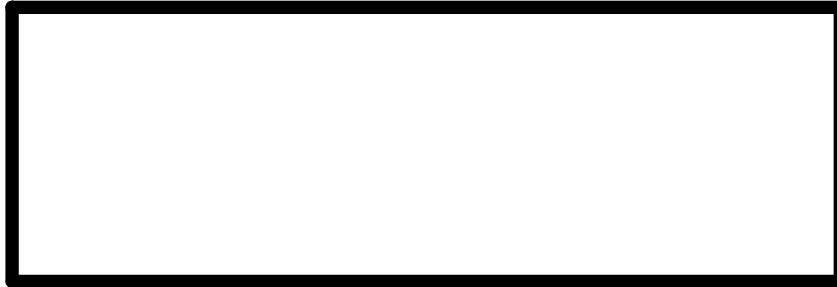
[1] There are at least two nurses listed in the records as dying in the line of duty; Norma Mowbray from St George and Rosa O'Kane from Charters Towers.

[2] Close to 20 percent of those who served in the AIF during World War One had been born in the United Kingdom

Royal Historical Society of Queensland
 PO Box 12057 Brisbane, George
 Street QLD 4003
 RHSQ Bulletin: PP100004098
 RHSQ Journal: PP100004097

**PRINT
 POST**

**POSTAGE
 PAID
 AUSTRALIA**



IMPORTANT EVENTS AND FUNCTIONS
MARCH 2015

Wednesday 11 March - Talk 12.30 pm
 'Early Bulimba - The development of a community in
 colonial Queensland'
 Russell Turner
Thursday 12 March - Council Meeting
Sunday 15 March - *Bulletin* deadline
Tuesday 31 March - Nominations for the John Douglas
 Kerr Medal of Distinction close

YOUR WEDNESDAY SPEAKER FOR
MARCH

Russell Turner is a retired history teacher
 having taught with Education Queensland for 43
 years. He is the secretary of the Queensland History
 Teachers' Association and is a member of numerous
 history groups and societies. The presentation
 places Bulimba in the context of the development of
 the Brisbane community from the 1840s to 1901
 with an introduction examining the area prior to
 1840.

Contact details:		Bulletin articles only:		Subscriptions:	
Location:	Historical Museum and Welsby Library at the Commissariat Store, 115 William Street, Brisbane	Editor A/editor	Dr Graeme Nicholson Marjorie Shackleton	Ordinary Member	\$66.00
Manager:	Christina Michie	E-mail:	info@queenslandhistory.org.au	Partner of Member	\$22.00
Phone:	07 3221 4198	Phone:	07 3221 4198	Junior Member (U18)	\$11.00
Fax:	07 3221 4698	Fax:	07 3221 4698.	Full-time Student (U25)	\$33.00
E-mail:	info@queenslandhistory.org.au	Postal:	RHSQ, PO Box 12057, Brisbane George Street, 4003	Affiliated Society	\$55.00
Website:	www.queenslandhistory.org.au			Subscription fee for libraries	\$66.00
ABN:	34 217 251 028			Corporate/Institutions	\$275.00
Postal:	The Royal Historical Society of Queensland, PO Box 12057, Brisbane George Street, 4003			Life membership – purchased after 10 years	\$5,500.00
Open:	Tuesday to Friday 10.00 am - 4.00 pm, Closed Saturday, Sunday, Monday as well as Christmas Day, Boxing Day and Easter	The Society acknowledges financial assistance from: The Department of Multicultural Affairs; The National Library of Australia Community Heritage Grant; Queensland Government Gambling Community Benefit Fund; Lord Mayor Graham Quirk, The Lord Mayor's Suburban Initiative Fund, Brisbane City Council; Jupiters Casino Community Benefit Fund; Queensland State Archives; Blocksidge and Ferguson Real Estate; Our Honorary Auditor, Grant Thornton Audit Pty Ltd.			