



Blue Mountains Family History Society Inc.

Newsletter

DATE 8th February, 2019

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Here we are February 2019 already - **A WARM WELCOME** back to all our members and any visitors we might have at this, the Society's first meeting for the year. Hopefully our members will discover new information about their ancestors and perhaps breakdown a few of those elusive brick walls.

Today we are fortunate to have either Lorraine or Laurie Turtle, who are Transcription Agents, come to speak to us about ordering Birth, Death and Marriages using Transcription Agents, what is involved and where it can lead you. We are very grateful that they could talk to us today with very short notice as a previously arranged speaker was not able to come due to health issues.

Next meeting: The next meeting of the Family History Society will be held on **8th March 2019 at 10am** in our usual meeting place, the small hall behind the Presbyterian Church. Guest speaker to be advised.

The Committee met for the first time since our September meeting on Friday, **1st February 2019** to discuss the following ideas, etc. for the coming year.

*As it was some time since our last committee meeting Colin gave the committee a rundown of the correspondence he had received in the intervening months which was quite extensive. "Thank you Colin" for the great job you do.

*Springwood Library Volunteers - Ian advised that the roster has been filled for February. He is always looking for volunteers, however, so if there is any member who would be interested in being put on the roster, please contact him.

*Our last raffle which was drawn at the Christmas party was won by Jan Koperberg, much to everyone's light hearted envy. The amount raised from the raffle was \$150. Once again, we thank John for the donation of his beautiful rug.

*A discussion was held on whether to hold our usual bi-annual Seminar this year or whether to hold another High Tea instead by way of a fund raiser. It was decided to hand this item over to our members for general discussion.

*It is hoped that our social outings will get underway this year. Some of the suggested venues were an historic tour of Medlow Bath; a visit to Customs House, Circular Quay; Manly Art Gallery. Ideas from the members of places of interest to visit would be most welcome.

*Guest speakers - what would our members like to hear our speakers give a talk on? This will be put to the members at our meeting. One idea is perhaps members would find it interesting to listen to speaker from an Historical Society giving an insight into the history of their particular area.

*When it is not possible to obtain a guest speaker for a monthly meeting. The committee discussed this issue and how to fill the void. Under discussion was having a Show and Tell with members bringing along a family heirloom they would like to show and discuss with the members, perhaps a small number on each occasion. On one occasion a discussion regarding that confusing topic "DNA" and perhaps a discussion on our first memories on another occasion.

Springwood Library - Our Librarians, Anne and Alison advised that a cull of the old Journals and Newsletters will soon be needed and will be attended to sometime in March.

Raffle – To start the year off our first raffle at our February meeting will be a lovely silver tray kindly donated by Judy Barham.

Trade table - Once again our trade will be operational, so any unwanted items can be brought to our meetings, starting with our first meeting of the year.

State Records Kingswood: There have been changes made to the reading room times as from the 4th February. The Archives will no longer be open on a Monday. Also due to road works in the area surrounding the Archives access to the has now been changed and O'Connell Street is now closed to the public. Please refer to their website at www.records.nsw.gov.au for details regarding parking and buses.

Society of Australian Genealogists (SAG): The Society which is located at 120 Kent Street, Sydney recently advised that it has added another hundred NSW BDM transcriptions to its collection. These transcriptions can be searched in the MIDAS catalogue on its website www.sag.org.au. The Society will also accept donations of certificates in paper format or good quality digital images. New members to our Society might also find the SAG website worth a visit regarding online research and information about visiting the Society for personal research.

RESEARCH

We talk a lot about researching, but what about *after* we research? What do we do with it? I think that one of the most overlooked areas of family history is writing.

Are we leaving all of your discoveries in your genealogy software? If so, I can almost guarantee you that your research will not outlive you. Taking those conclusions and stories and writing about them will get them into a format that others can more easily use. Writing about your ancestors is not only a way to preserve your research, it's also a good research aid. There's nothing quite like spelling out what you know about someone to show what you *don't* know about someone!

It doesn't have to be dozens and dozens of pages. How about a couple of paragraphs explaining a probate file or how the land passed through several

generations of the family. Tell the stories. Share the discoveries. And if you prepare them for Explorers' Tree, Rhonda will love you!

What's On:

Valley Heights Locomotive Depot, Heritage Museum - Open Day **Sunday, 10th February & Sunday 24th February, 2019.**

Everglades Historic House & Gardens –Exhibition Opening: Prue Mogg - In the Wild. **Saturday, 2nd February till 24th February, 2019.**

National Trust Woodford Academy - Symposium: Turning up the Heat on Pests, **Friday, 15th February 2019.**

Springwood Historical Society - Meeting - **Friday, 15th February, 2019.**

BMACHO - Workshop: Grants - **Saturday, 23rd February, 2019.**

Item of Interest:

What to write about that will interest our members? That is the question. Some of the items of interest and snippets I put in the Newsletter come from the historical novels I read. Something crops up in the novel and, if I find it interesting, I delve into its authenticity before putting it in the Newsletter as I have done in this Newsletter.

Oakum is hemp fibre loosely twisted together and mixed with tar:

The picking of oakum was one of the most hated jobs given to inmates in the workhouses and prisons in England. The work was monotonous, unpleasant and created sores on blackened fingers. In the case of the workhouses the picking of oakum was to pay for their board and keep. Often the elderly with their arthritic fingers were forced to work at the oakum.

The inmates were given quantities of old rope which they had to pick out strand by strand. It was then mixed with tar and used in shipbuilding for caulking or packing the joints of timbers in wooden vessels and the deck planking of iron and steel ships also in plumbing and in log cabins in chinking.

It was not only in England that this hated task was performed but also here in Australia. One of my maternal great grandfather's had a stroke in 1894 and was sent to Callan Park. In a letter sent to his father-in-law after his recovery he wrote, of how he was put to picking oakum but on discovering his beautiful penmanship (he was an Auctioneer's Clerk) he was rescued from this occupation and put to work in the office.

For further information on this and other interesting items visit - historyhouse.co.uk