



**Special Points of Interest:**

- *Townsville Railway Station concludes pages 8 & 9*
- *Meet Nick Shailer, member of TM&HS*
- *James Morrill Story Part 1*

**A MESSAGE FROM TRISH**

It only seems yesterday when Lydia reminded me to write my column for the June newsletter and now here it is October. The AGM was held on Sunday 28th September and was reasonably well attended. It was lovely to see Dianne Prideaux and, on behalf of everyone, Nick passed on his condolences for Ernie. The committee was returned with only a couple of changes. Fay Jones has joined us and Nick Shailer is Vice President. During the meeting, Wendy Simpkins, Lydia Morton and Fay Jones were each presented with Certificates of Appreciation for their dedication and support over the last twelve months. Gary Mann was offered Life Membership which he certainly deserves. Gary is always available, knows where everything is kept and has such a flair for doing displays. As part of the presentation Gary was given a small 'gift' from the girls...well that's another story which you can ask Gary about.

Since June we have welcomed a new volunteer, Petra Cartwright who is doing an excellent job, and the return of Bill Jones. So now we have "3 Jones" - Fay, Bill and Julie (and not related). Dell and Harvey Low have also returned to help out on Thursdays and of course, Harvey is always the 'favourite' with school visits.

The Museum is now gearing up for the opening of the photographic exhibition to be held at Museum of Tropical Queensland from 1st December to the 28th February 2015, featuring photographs from 1866 to 1914. This exhibition is the first display for the 150th Celebrations of the establishment of the site of Townsville, with additional displays, and new book releases to be held until 2016. The exhibition has received a micro-grant from Townsville City Council to assist with the exhibition. We have also completed two new displays of artefacts and books on the Department of Primary Industries 100 years of association with Townsville. DPI opened in Townsville on 25th April 1914. The other display is the 74 year old Townsville Bulletin dress, worn by Mavis Cussons to a fundraising ball in 1940, which has its own permanent cabinet and feature wall, thanks to a Gambling Benefit Fund grant.

This year has just gone so fast and I know 2015 is going to be just as busy for the Museum, as we celebrate 30 years since the commencement of Townsville Museum in 1985. I look forward to working with you all next year.

Regards,

*Trish Cronin* President

**TOWNSVILLE MUSEUM AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**BUSINESS HOURS**

Monday to Friday

9:00 am to 2:30 pm

First and Third Sundays of the month

1:30 pm to 3:30 pm

**FREE ENTRY**

**MEMBERSHIP FEES**

(12 months from 1st July to 30th June)

Single \$ 11.00

Couples \$ 16.50

Corporate \$ 32.50

Monthly committee meetings are held at the Museum on the third Monday of the month at ten o'clock. All committee members are notified a week prior to the meeting.



Hall, H. M. (1923). *Townsville Railway Station, 1923.*

John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland



Unidentified (1860). *James Morrill.* John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland

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## WICKHAM STREET

From John Mathew's "Highways and Byways"...

Wickham Street, City. Captain John Clements Wickham (1798-1864) left England aboard H.M.S. *Beagle* in 1837 to continue the survey of the Australian coast. He discovered the mouth of a large river, which he named the Wickham. It was renamed the Burdekin River by Leichhardt. Wickham retired from the navy because of ill health and returned to Britain in 1841. He became the first Government Resident at Moreton Bay in April 1843, and retained his position until Queensland became a separate colony on 10th December 1859.

From the *Australian Dictionary of Biography*....

### WICKHAM, JOHN CLEMENTS (1798–1864) BY A.A. MORRISON

John Clements Wickham (1798-1864), naval officer and magistrate, was born on 21 November 1798 at Leith, Scotland, the son of Lieutenant Samuel Wickham R.N. and his wife Ellen Susannah, née Naylor. He entered the navy as a midshipman in 1812 and from 1827 to 1830 he served as lieutenant under Phillip Parker King in a survey expedition off the coast of South America. From 1831 to 1836 he was second in command of the *Beagle* in the expedition for which Charles Darwin was the naturalist and from 1837 to 1841 he commanded the *Beagle* while charting the north-western coasts of Australia. His health was undermined by long and arduous service and he retired from the navy in 1841. He settled next year in New South Wales, where he married on 27 October 1842 Anna, daughter of Hannibal Macarthur.



John Clements Wickham

Photo held by State Library of Queensland

In January 1843 with a salary of £300 he became police magistrate at Moreton Bay, newly opened to free settlement. Though not in control of other government officers in the district, he was regarded as the senior. He showed much sympathy and understanding, and exercised his authority with judgment and a genuine sense of responsibility; he had the confidence of the settlers and was able to contribute much to the early development of Brisbane. In 1846-47 he added to his duties by carrying out a survey of Moreton Bay, financed by local squatters through a district improvement fund. In 1853 the increasing extent of his duties was recognized by a rise of £200 in salary and by his appointment as government resident, a post which necessitated the surrender of his magisterial duties.

To replace the tumbledown commandant's quarters allotted to him, in 1847 he bought from his brother-in-law, Patrick Leslie, a property known as Newstead, and it became an unofficial Government House. His first wife died in 1852 leaving him with two sons and a daughter, and, in 1857 he married Ellen Deering, of Ipswich, who bore him two sons.

On the eve of the formation of the new colony of Queensland Wickham was offered the post of colonial treasurer in the new administration. Fearing that he could not afford to bear the costs of an election, and that a defeat would leave him with nothing, he refused the offer and sought a pension from the New South Wales government. This was refused on the ground that the responsibility belonged to Queensland. In June 1860 he made a similar request to the secretary of state for the colonies, who passed it on to the Queensland government. Despite strong support by Governor Sir George Bowen the request was refused, the chief reasons appearing to be pique that Wickham had refused to stay and help the new colony, and a desire to push the responsibility back on New South Wales, the whole question being complicated by a quarrel between the two colonial governments on adjustment of debts. Offended by what he regarded as ingratitude and forced to live in somewhat straitened circumstances, Wickham retired to the south of France, where he died from a stroke on 6 January 1864, and was buried at Biarritz.

### References

Mathew, J. (1995). *Highways and Byways*. Townsville, Queensland: Townsville City Council.

A. A. Morrison, 'Wickham, John Clements (1798-1864)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography*, National Centre of Biography, Australian National University, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/wickham-john-clements-2790/text3977>, published in hardcopy 1967, accessed online 11 August 2014.

## NICK SHAILER—A PROFILE OF ONE OF OUR MEMBERS

It seems a long time ago that I started collecting, in fact some 43 years ago was when I became interested in antique bottles, having picked up one on a school bottle drive. The bottle was an AVH case gin bottle from the 1880-1910 period. These tall bottles with a square body (made for easy packing in a case) are Dutch in origin and held gin, although I was told many years ago by an elderly neighbour who remembered taking one as a child to the Royal Hotel in West End for her grandmother to be filled with beer. Although this bottle had an accident many years ago, it has been replaced with some 20 other versions, each bottle being made individually so every one is different. Over the years, I've dug on the old Dean Street dump and the old Town Hall site here in Townsville, and on the King Street dump in Charters Towers, meeting up with other collectors and eventually forming the North Queensland Antique Bottle and Collector's Club.

Antique bottle collecting is one of the world's top hobbies, having started in the U.S.A. then followed by Australia and the UK. Our club no longer holds shows due to the cost but there is an Australian National Show each year as well as State Shows. Over many years, I've judged shows in Townsville, Charters Towers, Mackay, Brisbane, Toowoomba, Sydney and was a judge at the 1st English National Bottle Show.

The collecting of bottles led to an interest in local history and I joined the National Trust and helped with the early work on the Historic Houses in Castling Street, West End, then I helped to set up the Townsville Museum in the old court house in Sturt Street.

My personal collection is probably the biggest in Townsville outside of a museum. When asked how many items I have, my reply is "several tons". While not all my collection is related to Townsville, there are several thousand items which are, in postcards well over five hundred, scenic china is over 100 items, invoices and letterheads from local companies number in the hundreds with some dating back to the 1890s. There are over one hundred bottles used by local cordial makers and chemists that I've added to my collection over the years.

Since moving house, I have turned the verandah into a storeroom and have been sorting and filing the collection that was stored in other locations. This is still very much a work in progress.



Nick's Antique Bottles on display at our Open Day in 2012.



Nick assessing antiques at our Open Day in 2012.

## SS CITY OF ADELAIDE PHOTO BY NICK SHAILER



SS City of Adelaide

One of my recent pick ups is the above photo of the barque, City of Adelaide which ended its life here in Townsville as a coal hulk and is now a wreck in Cockle Bay on Magnetic Island.

The City Of Adelaide was built by J. & G. Thomson for the Australian Steam Navigation Company and was launched in 1863 in Glasgow. She arrived at Port Phillip Bay for the first time in July 1864. Originally built as a steam ship, she sailed to ports in Australia, New Zealand and the U.S.A. In 1871, she underwent a refit and operated for a further 14 years before being retired from service in 1885.

She remained in Sydney until sold in 1890. The purchaser, W. A. Richie was planning to convert her into a coal hulk but after the removal of the boilers and engines, the hull was found to be still in good condition, so she was converted into a sailing vessel, emerging from the ship building yards as a four masted barque, and remained in service until 1902. She was then sold to Howard Smith Company as a coal hulk for use in Townsville where she served until there was a fire on board in 1912. She was then sold to the Butler family on Magnetic Island but the removal of the hulk did not go as planned and she ended up in Cockle Bay where she remains.

During World War II, the wreck was used as a practice target and in October 1942, a Bristol Beauford bomber struck one of the masts and crashed into the bay, killing all four officers on board.

Other coal hulks used in the Townsville Harbour have been the Victoria which in 1908 was sunk by the Yongala and later re-floated, the Josefa which was sunk off Cape Cleveland in 1924, the Koonawarra and the Moltke, and the James Patterson which shows up in many photos of the Ross Creek area.

## PHOTOGRAPHS OF TOWNSVILLE

BY NICK SHAILER



Unknown (1913). *Townsville railway yard and goods shed.*  
Held by City Libraries Local History Collection

Being interested in how Townsville has changed over the years, I have always picked up photos both scenic and of people. I have a dislike of seeing families just throwing their photos away and which I believe happens all the time. This = History lost.

The computer has made research much easier and it is surprising the number of rare and unpublished views of Townsville that are out there and where they are held.

If doing research, TROVE \*is the best place to start. From here you can access photos from the Townsville City Library, John Oxley Library, National Archives, the Australian War Memorial and the University of Queensland. The UQ Fryer Library has some very interesting views of Townsville from the 1890s which I've never seen before, although one I found listed as Townsville is not.



Unknown (n.d.) *Townsville railway station.*  
Held by City Libraries Local History Collection

Other sites of interest are "Townsville @ War", "North Queensland History" which is run by Trisha Fielding, and "Bonzle.com" \*\* on to which you can load your own photos.

If you are interested in railway history, you could look at "When there were stations", a website found at [www.stationspast.net](http://www.stationspast.net). The Railway Workshops Museum in Ipswich also has photos which were assembled by QR Heritage section although these are not available online. In our local area, besides those in the Townsville Museum's collection, there are photos in the QR Heritage volunteers collection at Stuart and in the ARHS\*\*\* collection which is at present moving to a new site in the Bohle area. Other museums in the area including Museum of Tropical Queensland and Magnetic Island, may also hold some photos. City Libraries Local History unit would also have a collection.

Another source that shows the changing face of Townsville is the humble postcard and I will do an article on the history of postcards for a later newsletter.

### \*TROVE

#### Taken from a Media release of the National Library

Finding information just got easier – thanks to Trove, a revolutionary new free search engine created by the National Library of Australia.

With just one click at [trove.nla.gov.au](http://trove.nla.gov.au) users, like never before, can access a wealth of resources - across more than 90 million items in one go - about Australia and Australians.

Trove's content, much of which is digital, comes from more than 1000 libraries around Australia as well as other cultural and educational institutions and international collections with relevance to Australia.

Trove takes users straight to the source – not just to a list of websites – and allows them to search across pictures, unpublished manuscripts, books, oral histories, music, videos, research papers, diaries, letters, maps, archived websites and Australian newspapers from 1803 to 1954.

#### \*\* Bonzle.com

Offers a digital atlas and the feature for users to create their own custom maps and add pictures to them.

#### \*\*\* AHRS Australian Railway Historical Society

## RECENT ACQUISITION— A COPY OF “THE TOWNSVILLE STORY”

*In recent weeks, we were given a range of items which once belonged to a long time resident of Townsville, Miss Grace Mills. One of the items was a book on the history of Townsville, called “The Townsville Story”, written by Rapier [Mr Les Watson], and published in 1952.*

**FOREWORD** By the Hon. Premier of Queensland, Mr. V. C. Gair

Every now and then some painstaking scribe takes it upon himself to gather together and publish all that is to be known of the history of one or other of the towns or districts in this young country of ours.

I am afraid these patient and hard-working people are seldom appreciated by their own generations, but I do know how valuable many such publications of the past have been to those whose job it is to trace back into our history and give some continuity to its record.

Mr. Les Watson may well be one of those whose work will grow in value with the passing of time, therefore I congratulate him on being enterprising enough to undertake the research which has made this book possible.

Brisbane, 1952

V.C. GAIR, Premier

### AMAZING ADVENTURES OF JAMES MORRILL

*Although there have been other instances of white men living with aborigine tribes, Australian history has no equal to the extraordinary adventures of James Morrill, first known white man to live in the Townsville area. A score of times near death following a shipwreck, he became a fully-fledged member of an aboriginal tribe, forgot how to speak English, yet eventually actually lived in the town which was built on his old hunting grounds.*

*The saga of James Morrill reads like a highly-coloured work of fiction, yet it is a true life story, and one that is worthy of ranking among the best adventure stories of early Australia.*

**O**n February 28, 1846, the barque “Peruvian” left Sydney bound for China. It was a commonplace departure of an insignificant little ship, yet the occasion was to provide the Townsville area with the first white man known to survive along the shores of Cleveland Bay.

Commanded by Capt. Pitkelley, the “Peruvian” sailed from Sydney with a crew of 14. A member of the crew was James Morrill.

There were seven passengers, Mr and Mrs Willmott, their child and a nursemaid; Mr J. B. Quarry and infant son, and Mrs Pitkelley.

Along the Queensland coast cyclonic weather clamped down on the “Peruvian”. Out of control, under bare masts, the ship reeled before the battering wind and rain.

At dawn on March 8, 1846, a giant wave sent the helpless “Peruvian” surging towards Horseshoe Reef; horror stricken, those aboard could only await what appeared to be the end; then in a smother of foam and spray the ship was smashed down, grinding and splintering on to the reef.

The cyclone shrieked and lashed around the wreck; waves battered and sucked around its timbers and efforts to launch boats were abortive. The first attempt saw the boat flung back against the deck and reduced to splintered wreckage. At the next attempt the second mate lost his life. Gallantly trying to control the boat with ropes, he and the craft were swept away while the distressed survivors watched helplessly.

The last boat was hurled back onto the deck, holed. Morrill, the ship’s carpenter and the first mate made desperate attempts to repair it, but a huge wave, careering along the deck, made them scramble for safety.

## THE TOWNSVILLE STORY—AMAZING ADVENTURES OF JAMES MORRILL CONT.

Morrill and the carpenter got clear, but the mate, fouled by a piece of wreckage, was swept overboard with the boat. [TO BE CONTINUED IN FEBRUARY 2015 NEWSLETTER]

Excerpt taken from: Rapier [Watson, L. A.] (1952). *The Townsville Story*. s.n.

## RECENT EVENTS

The launch of Townsville History Preservation Society's book "Frontier Town" by Helga Griffin was held at the Museum of Tropical Queensland in June 2014. Helga made the trip to Townsville for the occasion and spoke at the event. Mayor Jenny Hill then launched the book in front of a large group of invited guests. We thank Geoff Hansen for his tremendous effort in editing and refining this book to get it to publication. Our present and future generations appreciate this effort. Thanks to Paul Freeman for the photos used here.



Guests at the launch L to R: Noel and Trish Cronin, Peter McLeod, Geoff Hansen, Helga Griffin, Noel Loos, Lyn Hansen. Below: Left: Helga Griffin Right: Guests at the pre-launch event.



This row Left to Right: Mayor Jenny Hill, Guests at the launch, Geoff Hansen addressing the group.

## GARY MANN – LIFE MEMBERSHIP OF TOWNSVILLE MUSEUM

At our recent AGM, President Trish Cronin announced the awarding of a Life Membership to Mr Gary Mann. Gary has been a hardworking and dedicated volunteer at the Museum for very many years, undertaking the role of Manager which attracts many extra duties. Thank you Gary for your perseverance and dedication to the history of the town, and we hope the braces do their job!



Gary Mann with his Life Membership [and braces]. Certificate of Appreciation receivers: Fay Jones, Lydia Morton, Wendy Simpkins

## LOOKING BACK AT THE TOWNSVILLE RAILWAY STATION—PART II

The second floor will be wholly devoted to the General Traffic Manager's department. The rooms are lofty and large, and are finely ventilated and plentifully lighted. A balcony runs the entire length of this floor on the Flinders Street front. The second floor will be occupied by the Maintenance Engineer and staff, and is equally commodious and well fitted. The main entrance to the departments is situated on the front, but two private staircases connect with both from the platform for the use of staff.

Amongst the features of the building are the fittings and furniture, which have been made on the premises from northern grown silky oak. A telephone room and special switchboard will be erected, which will enable all departments to be in mutual communication as well as with the town exchange.

The stores of material in the front of the building are being removed to enable the formation of the garden approach to be carried out as rapidly as possible. The whole work reflects the highest credit on the architect and builder, and the premises throughout will not only stand as the finest building in Townsville, but the point of the roominess and fittings of the offices will challenge supremacy with any in the State. The General Traffic Manager expressed his opinion that the station would be open in time for the Christmas traffic."



Unknown. (n.d.). Festivities outside Townsville Railway Station. Photo held in CityLibraries Local History Collection

And so it was, opening for its first day on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> December, 1913. The building was not fully completed, however it was operational and opened for business.

A report in the Townsville Daily Bulletin on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1913 states:

"Passenger traffic on the Great Northern Railways was yesterday transferred from the old station to the new premises. Workmen are still busily engaged in putting the finishing touches to the building, and the present approach is only temporary, and will later

give way to a picturesque and spacious driveway. The traffic and maintenance departments have been removed to the new building, from which all business will be transacted."



Unknown (1926). The Empire Parliamentary Delegation at the Townsville Railway Station, October 1926.

Photo held in CityLibraries Local History Collection

## LOOKING BACK AT THE TOWNSVILLE RAILWAY STATION - PART II CONTINUED

The movement of Christmas passenger traffic was anticipated and on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> December 1913, this small article appeared in the Townsville Daily Bulletin.

“As originally announced, admission to the new passenger station platform is regulated by ticket. On Monday, the opening day of the station, about 250 platform tickets were sold.’



Unknown (n.d.). Townsville, Railway Station, ca 191?. Photo held in CityLibraries Local History Collection.

In the Northern Miner on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1913, a report stated that the traffic was not abnormally heavy and cited these numbers travelling through the new station on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1913:- in the region of 400 people on the Cloncurry mail, 200 from Selwyn to Hughenden which connected with the 8.10a.m., and another full complement of seven carriages from Charters Towers.

### IN RECENT TIMES



Alterations to the station were carried out in 1969 where the large metal carriage shade was replaced with a cantilever awning. The corrugated iron roof and front awning were replaced and a four storey brick extension to the western end was completed in 1965. Largely intact, the main building houses a World War I roll of honour board in the foyer. Some modifications to the offices on the second floor were undertaken to make them smaller rooms. Some administrative offices still work out of this railway station building.

Unknown (n.d.). Extension being added to the Townsville railway station.

Photo held in CityLibraries Local History Collection

### REFERENCES

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Townsville Daily Bulletin (Qld.:1885-1954), Saturday 25 October 1913, page 2. Accessed 7/10/2013 [www.trove.nla.gov.au](http://www.trove.nla.gov.au)

The Northern Miner (Charters Towers, Qld.: 1874-1954), Tuesday 9 November 1880, page 2. Accessed 6/10/2013 [www.trove.nla.gov.au](http://www.trove.nla.gov.au)



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