



Taralga Historical Society Inc

83 Orchard Street

Taralga NSW 2580



President: Michael Chalker 4843 5975

Secretary: Graham Lambert 4843 8187

Treasurer: Glennis Wright 4840 2215

Aim: To preserve history of Taralga & District for future generations

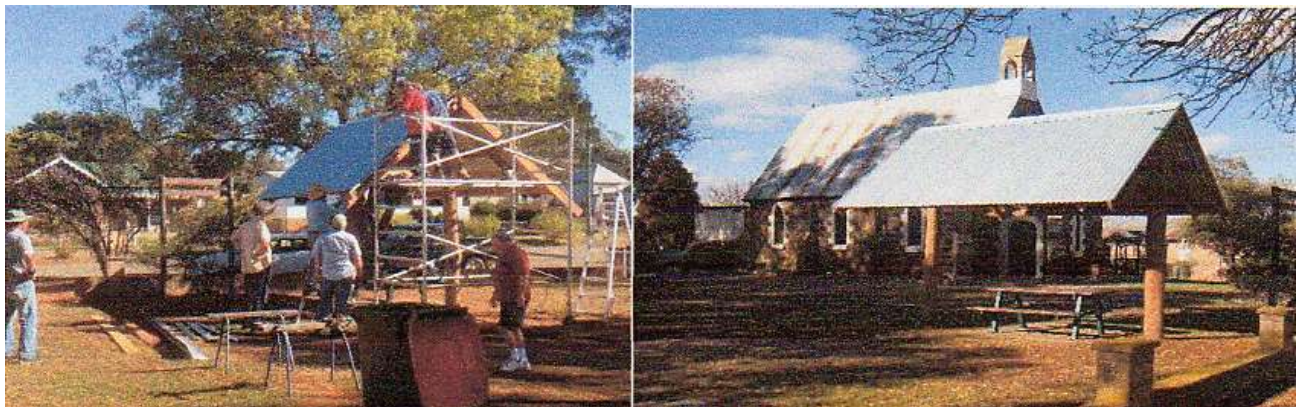
Newsletter No 2, 2018

Presidents Report June 2018

Hello all, well the year is already halfway with winter upon us and seasonal conditions in this area are ordinary at best.

Picnic Shelter: A robust shelter has been constructed over the picnic table adjacent to the front gate.

The shelter is dedicated to the long serving memories of past Historical Society Members and those who follow in acknowledgement of their wonderful contributions to the Society. Suitable plaques in recognition of Patricia Blay and Lorraine and Ian Ross are yet to be attached. The shelter was constructed for the cost of materials only. Labour and equipment was provided by local trade's people, contractors and members alike. A vote of thanks to all involved.



We have been lucky to be given an 1856 Sox Organ. It came from a large property within the Taralga district, we are still trying to identify the exact location. It came into the possession of Max Davidson of

Goulburn when he was working for Farmers and Graziers, a prominent rural agency in their day. Max sadly passed away recently, and his wife wished to dispose of the organ.

Max's good mate Perry Herden volunteered to find the organ a home, he thought of the Taralga Historical Society. The Organ will be proudly displayed within the complex

Various Aboriginal artefacts that have been held by local families for in excess of sixty years have come into our possession, the Society plans to eventually display these items in a lockable glass cabinet.

Society opening days and hours: It was decided at the February AGM to trial for three months having the complex open on Saturdays from 10am to 2pm and Sundays as normal 1pm to 4pm, the results of the trial are as follows. Over the trial period Saturday visitation stands at 86, Sundays at 33, the results are conclusive. Members must now decide at the meeting on 3rd June if they wish to change the opening days and hours. In the meantime I have prepared a roster for Saturdays only.

Taralga 2019 celebrations as discussed at the last meeting: A community meeting/workshop was held in the Masonic Hall on Sunday 20th May to discuss the bi-centenary of Taralga, a good community representation was in attendance. The workshop was chaired by Peter Davies, the workshop voted to organise a celebration to take place on the October Long Weekend 2019.

A Committee was then elected to pursue ideas and scenarios for the celebrations. The Committee will meet in June, we will publish committee member's details and organisational arrangements then.

Michael Chalker

HELEN VAUGHAN

Formerly from Myrtleville Post Office

by Ken Vaughan December 2017

We lost Helen on the 4th September 2016 after a short illness in Tumut NSW. She was 97 years old.

Helen Mary Vaughan (nee Burrett) was born 22 April 1919 in Moree NSW. Her father was Lance Burrett, born in Grenfell, and her family moved to Mudgee. Helen had an older sister Clare, and three brothers, Brian and twins Bill and

John who all predeceased her.

Helen's mother, Mary died on 23 October 1924 - aged 30 years, leaving 5 children under 7 years. Unable to properly care for them, Lance placed the children into Government care 6 months later. He then went to work on various Farm Stations across Eastern Australia. The children were split up between many foster homes in Sydney.

In 1928 Helen and Clare were fostered by Percy and Irene Edwards in East Goulburn - who, when they found out about the three younger boys, brought them into their home as well. Together with their family of 12 children they raised a total of 17 children on their small farm. These were happy days for Helen as she had lots of family around and she idolised Mother Edwards who taught her everything. Helen had to leave their home when she was 14 and went to work in Sydney for a while before returning to Goulburn. She was walking home from work one afternoon when the Japanese started shelling the Sydney Eastern Suburbs - she said she had never run so fast in her life that day.

She remained in contact with the Edwards clan after they all moved to Canada, and often spoke by phone with her foster brother Ray who lived near Calgary.

However she grew up with no idea who was in her family tree, she never saw her father again, and except for her brother Brian, she really had to fend for herself. She lost her twin brothers in tragic circumstances, John in 1939 following a vehicle accident, and Bill who was serving aboard as a medic when the Hospital ship Centaur was sunk by the Japanese on 14 May 1943.

She had some reasonable schooling at Rosedale, East Goulburn, then worked as a Doctor's receptionist in Goulburn. In 1939 she met George Vaughan, a farmer's son from the Taralga area who had signed up to serve in the war. He went to the Middle East and then New Guinea, serving in the 7th Division. They were married during an R & R break in Sydney on 30 April 1942, and Ken arrived in 1943. Mother and son went to live with Granny Vaughan at her Myrtleville farm and Post Office just south of Taralga. The farm was self sufficient in produce, and there was an excellent garden and orchard near the house.

At War's end George was employed by Telecom in Sydney, and the family expanded with Lorraine and Janet arriving prior to the family purchase of the Myrtleville property in 1950. Helen became highly respected throughout the

district for her work on the telephone exchange and Post Office. She sold postage stamps and money orders, sorted and distributed mail and often she was a non-commission agent for curious postage items such as large block cheddar packs being sent to market by Annie Ross.



Helen with her son Ken in 1945

One of her proudest achievements was her 24/7 operation of the telephone exchange during a major bushfire in 1965 that started at Chatsbury and spread across the Cookbundoon range to the east. The fire burned for weeks and quick notification of wind change, new breakouts, food and medical plans, and firefighter instructions were all part of the long hours of service. The switch remained open and she made some wonderful friends during that period.



George, Helen and Ken at Myrtleville P.O. 1966

Helen's cooking was legendary, and she provided some legendary food such as scones and pavlova cooked in a Kooka wood oven where she tested the heat by putting her hand in the oven. Her vegetable cooking was old school and Mother Edwards was given the blame for the blanched greens that were always over boiled. She totally refused to learn how to use a microwave even after severe pressure from her 'greens' eating grandchildren.

After they sold Myrtleville in 1979 George and Helen moved to North Nowra, however Helen tried but could not make pavlovas on "those new-fangled city stoves".

Their time in Nowra was a good retirement decision, however Helen missed the bush. She made some wonderful friends but she did not like the hustle in the 'city'. Sadly George died on 31 July 1991, but Helen stayed on in Nowra for a few more years.

As her 80th birthday was approaching, Lorraine suggested that Helen should move to Tumut where a small new Villa was becoming available. Lorraine, who

owned a business in the town, decorated it with pink walls and carpets so it was ready when she arrived in January 1998. The Villa became an instant hit with Helen, and she was happy in the 'Pink Palace' which got decorated with pink flowers and pink flower covered china plus lot of photographs of her ever growing family. She did miss some of her friends from the past, and she remained in contact with families from Taralga and Nowra.



Helen at her 80th with

Pat and Bob Blay, Lynette Hain, Karen Bennett and their mother Mary Robertson - Blay family 1999

During this period we started to look for Helen's true family and it became apparent that her mother's side descended from a line of long lived women averaging 85 years. Both her Sargeant and Greville heritage provided lots of relatives at the Greville family reunion in 2009. To Helens surprise she found many prominent families in her tree such as Hindmarch, Iredale and the Lassiter family that owned the hardware store that became Nock and Kirby. Two of her Uncles Gordon and Victor Sargeant were famous lawn bowlers, and her Uncle Jo Burrett was a war hero, and became the head of Sydney Hospital after the war. She found peace in knowing more about her background, although the 6 convicts she descended from came as a bit of a shock, while providing lots of interesting stories.

One of Helen's magnificent features was her sense of humour. She did not make friends easily but those she did were well rewarded. Wherever she lived she made very close friends with Peggy Haggett in Sydney, the Blay family across many generations in Myrtleville, the Jolly family in Nowra, the Goodes family and all the women in the Fitzroy Street Villas in Tumut. Once a friend, always a friend was her motto.

Helen greatly enjoyed her years living in Tumut. Her only problem was she kept outliving her peers, however she continued to live in the 'Pink Palace' and look after herself. She liked to shop for herself and had a circuit around town that included the supermarkets, nursery, jeweller, the Bank and Post Office and any store that might have a birthday present for one of the family. As she became less mobile she would push the 'walker' around the circuit and stop to chat with 'her girls' in all the shops. The girls in turn would keep a friendly watchful eye on her to ensure she was able to get home safely.

An incident in her later years at the Motor Registry illustrated her life - Lorraine decided to get a handicapped parking permit so Helen did not have to walk too much around town. They asked Helen for identification - she had not travelled so she had no passport; she had never held a drivers licence; she had never been ill; she had no bank loans and had never filed a tax return of her own. There was no records of Helen Vaughan in the modern on-line world. So imagine the strong words that came from our 'mystery' person when she was told she did not exist.....she got the permit!

One of her fondest memories was when she was asked to be the Queen Mother in the Tumut falling leaves festival. She was an ideal choice as her hair style was perfect and they dressed her with a suitable crown. She was chauffeured around town and was a centre piece in the parade. She revelled in perfecting her Queen wave and loved the recognition she received during her circuit walks thereafter.

Her main source of communication was always the telephone, probably because she had spent nearly 30 years in her role as a telephonist. Just a few weeks before she passed on she was asked, "What were the telephone switch numbers at Myrtleville?" Not only did she remember all the numbers, she knew the party line ring codes for both '3' and the '11' lines that serviced Strathaird Lane. She also remembered all the Taralga switch operators names over the years.

Her conversations on the phone with her beloved family - 3 children - Ken,

Lorraine and Janet, 6 grandchildren - Rowan, Bryson, Ty, Curtis, Karla and Kellie, and 10 great grandchildren - Callum, Chloe S, Chloe B, Kynan, Kasey, Cohen, Chase, Jenna, Oceana and Skylar were legendary and often very long and full of laughter. She loved all the little kids and she also loved all the visits from the family.



On the phone, Tumut Villa 2005



Helen with Lorraine, Kellie Shaw, Ken, Chloe Shaw and Bryson Vaughan at the Vaughan Plaque on the Taralga Pioneers Wall 2005

Helen liked to participate in town activities and she had wonderful memories of the Balls or Woolshed Dances around Taralga, the tennis competitions, Taralga show and the interschool sports held at the showground. She was also very involved in fund raising for Cystic Fibrosis for many years - making her famous scones, cakes and cupcakes for their annual street stalls.

What a journey she had - she saw the world change so dramatically,

experienced a world war and kept her sense of humour throughout all her challenges. When asked “What was the biggest change she had experienced”, she said, “electric lights, the telephone and the quality of food”. She tried to learn to drive with the expert advice of Julie Alders probably in the 1960s, but I think Julie was worried about clutch damage in the vehicle due to ‘kangaroo’ take offs.

She used to laugh about trying to park George’s ute in a horse stall at the Taralga show ground during a lesson....we never did find out what happened, and Julie was totally professional about it all and made no comment.

Her training was in service, and service with humour was a winning combination. I often have former mail collecting children who have now grown up come over and talk to me at Taralga functions. They have wonderful memories about their visits to the Post Office and they did tell me how they all liked to do this job in the late summer school holidays....”when all the fruit was ripe”. She would give each child a jellybean and a lecture. “Don’t you steal any fruit on the way home”. Now I know what really happened” There was a hole in the fence right next to the apple trees!

Helen left her mark on the people and each district she lived in, so she will be remembered with lots of joy. She would be delighted to know those children who came for the mail are helping to keep her memory alive today.

ADDRESS ON HISTORY OF THE TARALGA AREA

From Goulburn Evening Post 1955

The following address on the early history of Taralga and other parts of the southern districts was read recently to Goulburn Historical Society by Mr Dave Mullaney of Taralga.

It was written by Miss Jean Findlay of Yalbraith as an essay eight years ago.

About the Author:

Robert Scott Craig b.1899 d.1968 was the twin brother of Murdoch, he married Iris Findlay who already had a daughter named Jean. Robert and Iris had one son, Keith Gillies who died aged 37. Robert and Iris had a home at 'Cobbodong'.

Jean was a devoted horsewomen. She moved to Sydney and married,

Jean Findlay-Gower died 8th September 2017 at 87 years and is buried at Stonequarry Cemetery with her Mother, Father and Keith.

She wrote this article in 1947 when she was around 17 years of age)

Her story: (Photo inserts provided by the Editor)

Anyone who has studied Australian history remembers the name of Hamilton Hume, one of the sturdiest and most gallant of Australia's early explorers and bushmen.

People of this district have reason to honour and remember his name, for it was he that discovered the rich sheep and cattle country of what is now known as the Goulburn Plains. His discoveries led to settlement there and around here.

His first important discovery was in 1814, when he, his brother, and a black boy fought their way through the thick Bargo Brush (other attempts to penetrate it before had failed) and came in sight of the good country around Berrima and Bong Bong. Still only in his teens, he two years later safely conducted one Dr. Throsby and Surveyor Meehan to Bong Bong, where the former took up land.

GOULBURN PLAINS

Hume was a born adventurer, and in 1817 he and Meehan decided to explore further. In the autumn of that year they reached a fertile tract of plain and broken upland, the Goulburn Plains. They made their first camp at the foot of Rocky Hill on which now stands a magnificent War Memorial which over looks the whole of the city and miles of the countryside. I can't imagine a more fitting Tribute to our soldiers, both dead and alive, than an inspiring tower on the biggest hill near Goulburn, which can be seen for miles and miles from train, car, or the air, as a constant reminder of its significance.

Hume (to return to 1817) was partly persuaded to explore these plains by Governor Macquarie who later, in March 1819, undertook the trip himself. The Governor carved his initials and the date of the visit on a stringybark tree in the Cookbundoon Hills, about twelve miles (crow fly) from Goulburn.

This tree was cut down many years ago and the part bearing his initials etc, was supposed to be in Sydney Museum. On one of my visits to Sydney I went and explored Wentworth House at Vaocluse - and really enjoyed myself. In one of the enclosed "stables" was about five feet of tree - very old - which was identical with the one taken from here. So I believe "our" tree is not at the Museum, but at Wentworth House.

Quite soon after the news of the discoveries became known a small band of intrepid pioneers decided to take up land in the newly opened districts beyond the Blue Mountains. Their immediate object was to find good and extensive areas of grazing land for their rapidly increasing flocks of sheep and cattle.

JOHN MACARTHUR

One of these men was John Macarthur, remembered for his quarrel with Governor Bligh, and because he pioneered the merino wool industry in New South Wales.

As far as I can find out, the other members of the party were Messrs Oxley (explorer and later Solicitor-General), John Jamieson, Lachlan McAlister, John Hillas and Thomas Howe. (Lachlan McAlister secured land in Victoria and died there).



John Macarthur



John Oxley



John Jamieson



Lachlan McAlister



John Hillas

These explorers intended settling in the Bathurst district, and accordingly they made for this area, taking with them two ticket-of-leave men, Michael Henry and James Davis, who were later well known characters in the district.

But on reaching Bathurst the five men found that nearly all the best grazing land had already been taken up by settlers like themselves, so they decided to push further south in the hope of finding good, unsettled grazing lands.

This they did, and in all probability they were the first white men to cross the Abercrombie Ranges and river into what was called the Argyle country. They blazed a trail all the way and I have been told that the marks were still visible in places some years ago. They may still be.

RICHLANDS BLOCK

The men were more than pleased with what they found, and without further ado proceeded to “stake their claims”. Howe took the Richlands block, McAlister one surrounding the township of Taralga, J. Macarthur settled on country a few miles from McAlister (towards Goulburn) at “Strathaird, J Hillas

settled at Bannaby.

Oxley took up land at Sutton Forest, and Jamieson at Greenwich Park. This family is still in possession of the thousands of acres property it originally had, although much is being cut up into soldier settlements. There are only one or two Jamiesons left.

Later on, Howe sold his block to Macarthur and McAlister and he exchanged estates, Macarthur taking the Taralga block, and "by virtue of grants dated from 1828" he obtained a great amount of land surrounding his other estates. All this land has since been cut up into closer settlements and has proved very fertile.

His brother, Hannibal Macarthur, selected land near Greenwich Park, near Jamiesons, and named his estate "Arthursleigh". "Arthursleigh" is now in the hands of a different family, but it is interesting to record that it was on this property that the first wheat in Argyle was grown.

"Argyle" was named after the country of the same name in Scotland, as many of the pioneers were Scotsmen.

Other pioneers quickly followed in the tracks of these men, and by their determination, had, by 1830, "knocked the corners off" the hitherto unclaimed wilderness and were laying foundations of settlement and pastoral growth.

The usual pioneering difficulties were encountered, including experiences with the suspicious natives, but even so, the tiny settlements scattered throughout Argyle survived all battles and thrived.

In telling of the growth of this district one must not underestimate the importance of the convicts to the earliest pioneers and squatters. Without them and their low paid labour, these men could not have laid the foundations of settlement.

Many people, in studying Australian history, regard convicts as the lowest of the low, and do not recognise the important part they played in the slow, hard growth of the colonies, but in another chapter I shall do my best to outline the part they played in the Taralga district's growth.

THE CONVICTS

As I mentioned, convicts supplied almost all the labour for many years in this and surrounding districts, and the majority were employed by station owners. Ticket-of-leave men who did not own small properties supplied the rest of the labour. These men, many of them transported for petty crimes, paid very dearly for them, for they were usually treated like so many sheep. Even when their master or overseer was a kind man, he was bound by orders and convention and could do little to ease the burdens cast on the unfortunate men. If he was harsh they were treated like slaves - flogged, starved, often tortured for the slightest breach, for this was the code.

Without mentioning any names, I know for a fact that a great many of the early pioneers, especially the soldiers, were unnecessarily cruel and harsh in their attitude towards the convicts. No doubt their sympathy was dulled by their own experiences and hardships. Nature was hard and unyielding and the men grew to be the same.

Even today, I notice how different our fathers are to the city dwellers. They are well able to stand up to the hard work of the bush, yet most have a very boyish streak and soft heart beneath their seemingly hard exteriors.

The convicts were put to work as shepherds, general station work and making roads and buildings, the majority of which still stand.

TARALGA BUILDINGS

For instance, both Taralga hotels, the school, doctor's residence, post office and nearly all the older houses remain, while other buildings such as the bank, E.Church and R.C.Church and out buildings have been pulled down during recent years and erected with more modern and better materials.

Often it is difficult to detect the houses that the convicts erected (especially if they are painted) for they were done remarkably well. Built out of large stone, slabs and blocks, with the cracks cemented, they still stand, and have stood, the best of time and the elements better than any other type of building. Personally, I would hate to see the time when they were willfully demolished, for they are historic monuments, and a constant reminder of that phase in our history, the convict era.

I have been told of several different places where the flogging triangles used to be, but I think that there were two. One was in front of the School of Arts -

facing the main road, and the main one was in a paddock about 400 yards from the main road, and parallel to it. There is a pile of stones here reputed to be the sole remains of the old "triangle", and it is an old legend that the grass never grows around either spot.

Taralga itself was originally called "Trial-Gang" as it was one of the chief centres in Argyle where convicts and bushrangers were tried - and condemned.

Those I mentioned were the official triangles of Taralga, as far as I can gather, and there were two more further out in the country. One was at Richlands (which then of course, belonged to Macarthur). The other was at Yalbraith, which is 10 miles from Taralga.

The one at Yalbraith consisted of a white gum tree and was situated near the bank of a small creek about 200 yards from Dad's old home (Bob Craig), "Blink-Bonnie". This tree was still living until a few years ago, when it was set alight. Dad told me of the rusted remains of bolts and chains on it, and the deep scars caused by them when the hapless and no doubt, struggling victims were chained to it to "take their medicine". All around it there were scars and it is an odd fact that this tree was very stunted and did not seem to grow as did its neighbours. I have heard the tales from Dad, told to him by his grandfather of the many wicked floggings performed while the convicts - and natives were chained to it.

LIVED IN TREE

Almost everyone has heard of "Cranky Tom", the convict of Yalbraith, and of the tree in which he lived until his death. It was a hollow white gum on "Woodbrook", owned by Dad's aunt Miss McKay, who used to supply the old and half mad convict with food. It must have been very large for poor Tom always lived in it and would have nothing to do with huts.

Dad told me this, but Charles McAlister (a descendent of Lachlan) in his book, describes the old flogging tree as Cranky Tom's tree. To quote - "Speaking of the Yalbraith Flogging Tree reminds the author that one day in 1847 he saw one of its former customers - under the lash - one 'Cranky Tom', invoking the curses of all the saints and devils on the old tree. The poor fellow was down on his knees with clenched fists upraised, threatening the tree as if it were responsible for all his former sufferings".

This will speak for itself. Poor Tom, along with the other convicts, died as they

lived - alone and forgotten - and unforgiven. It seems even death “the mighty leveller”, could not appease the free and release the men from their sins. Tom and those who were given burial in a churchyard, rest in the “condemned corner” of Stonequarry, the cemetery. Forever they are branded, for all generations to see, and know of the convict era here, for there are few existing records and I’m afraid the tales of the “old hands”, though very entertaining, cannot be relied upon.

Another thing I have just remembered - the little court house and gaol in Taralga was convict built. I can tell a little more of their status.

That the district was notorious, I have no doubts - “Trial-Gang” proves that. Probably it was just like any other struggling settlement in Argyle, but I think almost anyone would feel horrified if only some of the tales associated with the grim old buildings were told.



“ Image found online of a man who lived in a tree



“cat of nine tails” whip used to flog the convicts

This address will be continued in next newsletter

Vale



March 2018

Peg (Page) McAlister

Wife of Kevin (dec)

Daughter of former

Myrtleville residents

Tom and Rita Page

MEMBERSHIPS OVERDUE \$20

General Meeting is on 11th August at 2pm in Masonic Hall

Historical Society Members Duty Roster June to September 2018

PLEASE NOTE OPENING HOURS ARE FROM 10am to 2 pm inclusive

June

Saturday-9 th	Mat & Vicki Chalker, Tim Dowsley
<u>Sunday-10th</u>	Annette & Mick Chalker Peter Davies
Saturday-16 th	Maureen Long, Joan Scott, Pat Murray
Saturday- 23 rd	Judy & Jeff Chalker, Graham Lambert
Saturday- 30 th	Ken Fleming, Helena Keough, Margaret McIntosh

July

Saturday- 7 th	Margaret & Peter McAlister, Alan Robertson
Saturday- 14 th	Bob Blay, Ernie Stephenson, Geoff Seiler
Saturday- 21 st	Maureen Long, Joan Scott, Pat Murray
Saturday- 28 th	Graham & Sue Lambert, Brian Corby

August

Saturday-4 th	Ken Fleming, Jim Dean, Laurie Halpin, Brian Maloney
Saturday-11 th	Annette & Mick, Robert Rabjohns (MEETING 2pm)
Saturday- 18 th	Maureen Long, Joan Scott, Marcus Hartstein
Saturday- 25 th	Margaret & Peter McAlister, Brian Kelly

September

Saturday- 1 st	Mat & Vicki Chalker, Helena Keough
Saturday-8 th	Jeff & Judy Chalker, Brian Corby
Saturday-15 th	Maureen Long, Joan Scott, Margaret McIntosh
Saturday-21 st	Bob Blay, Ernie Stephenson, Geoff Sieler
Saturday-29 th	Graham & Sue Lambert, Alan Robertson

Folks if your name hasn't been appearing on the roster & you would like to be included please give us a call or just turn up there's always plenty to do. Also please let us know if you would prefer an alternative day or are otherwise unavailable.

Mick 48435975 or Graham 48438187

Editor: Maureen Long