



# HELM



## Heritage of East Lake Macquarie

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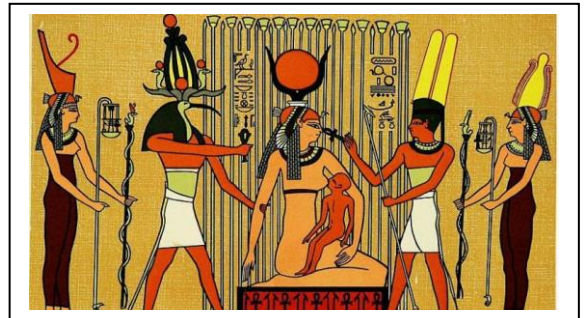
**MAY 2019**

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### MOTHERS DAY

On the second Sunday in May, many Australians will spend the day celebrating their mothers and other special women in their lives. Where did this idea to dedicate this day come from?

The earliest traceable Mother's Day dates back to 1200-700 BC. The Ancient Egyptians held an annual festival to honor Isis – one of the most popular goddesses of ancient Egypt – an ideal mother who became regarded as the mother of all pharaohs, and a symbol of motherhood. Around the area now known as Turkey, "Cybele" was celebrated as the Goddess of Nature; - mother of the Gods; people and animals. Over time this celebration spread to Greece. In the Ancient Greek version, Rhea was the mother of the Gods. A secret women's business festival was held in ancient Rome, and was totally forbidden to Roman men, even the name of the Goddess was secret and she was simply known as the "Good Goddess". In 1500s Britain, people returned to their "mother church", the local church or where they were christened. This became known as going "a-mothering". Servants were given a holiday on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday in Lent so that the whole family could get together – this became "Mothering Sunday", a day when families could get together and spend the day with their mothers. Children would often pick wild flowers and give them to their mothers as a present, as well as other tokens of appreciation – and so the tradition of gift giving began. A special fruit cake or fruit-filled pastry, known as a mothering cake was often brought to the celebrations.



"If love is sweet as a flower, then my mother is that sweet flower of love."  
*Stevie Wonder*

**TELL US YOUR SPECIAL STORIES!!!**

**4972 1066 - NOW AT SWANSEA!**  
**SWANSEA PLAZA ARCADE**  
Near Coles and Blondies.

Source: *today in history*

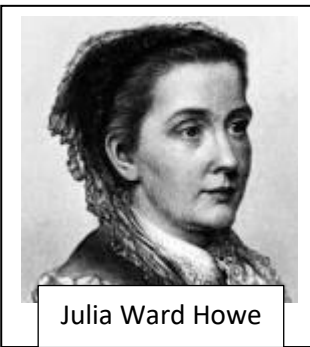


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Kindly supporting the community – including Caves Beach Surf Life Saving Club; this edition of HELM newsletter.

The modern Australian celebration of Mothers Day actually grew out of calls for peace and anti-war campaigns following the American Civil War (1861-1865). In 1870, American womens rights activist Julia Ward Howe, best known as the author of "The Battle Hymn of the Republic", appealed to women to unite and bring peace to the world. This was later known as the Mother's Day Proclamation. But the idea of Mothers Day did not gain traction until 1908, when West Virginian woman, Anna



Julia Ward Howe



Anna Jarvis

Marie Jarvis held a memorial to honour the legacy of her mother Ann Reeves Jarvis. Ann Reeves Jarvis was a peace activist who nursed wounded soldiers from both sides during the Civil War and created mothers workshops to address public health issues. After her mother's death in 1905, Anna Marie Jarvis wanted to honor and continue her mother's work; and pushed to have a day set aside to honour all mothers. She wanted all mothers to be paid respect for the sacrifices they make for their children, and campaigned for everyone to write letters to the President. In 1914 American President Woodrow Wilson officially declared the second Sunday in May to be Mothers Day. Anna wanted it to be

a family gathering to celebrate and love their mothers; and encouraged the writing of personal notes and the giving of flowers. Carnations soon became symbolic of Mother's Day. However, she became outraged at the commercialisation that had overcome Mother's day and spent the rest of her life campaigning against this. Sadly, the mother of Mothers Day, spent her personal fortune on legal fees, unsuccessfully challenging her creation, and died penniless and childless in a sanitorium in 1948, at the age of 84.

#### **MOTHERS DAY IN AUSTRALIA AND AROUND THE WORLD**

"There were so many mothers who were no longer mothers, so many wives who were now widowed because of WW1, and there were also so many women who never had the prospect of becoming mothers or wives because a whole generation had been wiped out in the trenches of the Western Front," Professor Waterhouse said. It was not until 1924, following the heavy losses of life in WWI, that Mothers Day was officially held in Australia. Janet Heyden, a resident of Leichardt, Sydney, is credited with starting the tradition of gift giving on Mothers Day in Australia. Janet began the tradition during a visit to a patient in the Newington State Hospital for Women, where she met a lot of lonely and forgotten mothers. In 1923 Janet started a campaign to collect gifts for



these women. To cheer them up, she rounded up support from local children and businesses to donate and bring gifts to the women. Every year after that, Janet Heyden raised increasing support from local businesses, and the Mayor. Donations included talcum powder, soap, knitted scarves and mittens. Confectionary companies and the fruit markets all contributed. School children were asked to make 10 x 12 inch bags with double draw-strings. She was also disappointed with growing commercialisation, but felt it did more good than harm by continually reminding people. Chrysanthemums became a popular flower choice in Aust, due to the marketing gimmick, because they end with "mum". She continued visiting the lonely mothers in Newington until she died in 1960. Her work was recognised by King George VI, Queen Elizabeth II. *Source: Aust. Womens Weekly, 1969.*

**FRANCE:** Last Sunday in May. Declared by Napoleon to reward mothers of large families; and revitalised after WWI. Children do chores, give gifts and handwritten poems, flowers and cakes; followed by a large family meal.

**INDIA:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in May for Westerners. Hindus celebrate Durga (Divine Mother) – 10 day festival in October called Durga Puja to celebrate good over evil with gifts, feasts and celebrations with family and friends.

**GERMANY:** "Muttertag" - 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in May. During WWII medals were given to women for producing children for the Fatherland. These days gifts and flowers are given; and festive meals celebrate Mothers Day.

**ETHIOPIA:** celebrated at the end of the rainy season as part of 3 day Antrosht festival with a large feast with singing and dancing. Daughters bring vegs, butter, spices, cheese; sons bring meat including lamb and bull.

**JAPAN:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in May. Carnations symbolise the gentle strength of mothers, revered in Japanese culture. Children draw pictures / cards and pamper mothers – doing chores; giving flowers; having special family meal.

**PERU:** Early August - indigenous Andeans celebrate the gifts of Mother Earth (Pachamama), bringer of fertility.

**SERBIA:** 3 family days are celebrated in December. Mothers are expected to supply treats and gifts for children.

## A TRIBUTE TO LOCAL MOTHERHOOD

**ANNE CAIN who was better known as Nurse Cain and Gran Cain.**



“All over Swansea and Belmont, and in the surrounding townships of Catherine Hill Bay, Nord’s Wharf, South Beach and Mark’s Point, “Gran” Cain is a well-known figure.....she has always been on call for maternity cases; has travelled as far as Breeza (well past Murrurundi) and Sydney to attend.” *Source: Newcastle Herald, September 1949.*

Anne was the first of twelve children born into the Isles family in 1871 at Sandy Gully, near Scone in the upper Hunter Valley, before the family moved to the Whitebridge area. In 1889 she married James Wood and they had 4 children – Dulcie (born when she was only 17), William, Ellen and Annie. Whilst living at Gateshead, in an emergency she was called upon on July 11, 1897 to assist with the birth of a neighbour’s baby. The dye was cast – the doctor suggested her help would be gratefully received by others and so she started a career as a midwife and continued to practise into her late seventies.

Anne and Daniel Cain and their family arrived in the Swansea area in 1902. Dan’s birthplace had been a home on a hill between Dudley and Charlestown, known as Cain’s Hill in 1873. They established their home just north of the bridge at Little Pelican on a property of some 28 acres in the vicinity of the Blue Pacific Motel and the Sunstrip Caravan Park. Anne became the local midwife for the surrounding area stretching from Belmont to Catherine Hill Bay. In the second stage of her family, Anne and Dan had 7 children between 1898 and 1913. - Daniel, Robert, Alice, twins Leah and Daphne, Clive and Lance.

Their income came from several sources. The farm ran as a small dairy supplying the local area with milk. Dan drove a bullock team which hauled logs for the building of the second bridge and also for the Wallarah Colliery; and supplied timber for several local bakeries. The bullocks hauled a great variety of items – ranging from houses to machinery. Great skill and patience was required to negotiate corners. This was quite a tricky exercise as bullocks can only pull in a straight line. A favourite event for the area was to ride in Cain’s Bullock Wagon, dressed in Sunday best to Caves Beach for picnics.

After the sudden death of Dan in 1920 at Fennell’s Bay, Anne had to support the family on her own. She achieved this by being a midwife, running the dairy and supplementing this with dressmaking. Her job was made easier when the first maternity hospital was established in the area in 1924.

However, many challenges were thrown in her path. On Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> Sep 1928, the 6 roomed weatherboard home was destroyed by fire with nearly all its contents. Her youngest son, Lance, was woken by smoke, and called for his mother and woke up the rest of the family as the place was alight. They raced outside trying to grab clothing and save some of the contents – but only managed some bedding and one piece of furniture. Neighbours gathered but could do nothing. It took only about 20 minutes for the roof to fall in, leaving only the chimney, tank, and separate laundry still standing. No origins for the fire could be established. There was no insurance for the house or contents. The next day an appeal was launched to help Mrs Cain and her family. People soon committed to help the popular Nurse Cain; and the following Tuesday night a kitchen tea was held in Dobinson’s Hall in aid of the benefit fund. Many people attended and brought many gifts to help refurbish her kitchen. Mr Dobinson donated the hall and lighting for the good cause. *Source: Newcastle Herald, 1928*



Jan and Noel Ward to Lake Macquarie - Then and Now:  
Photos of my Great Grandmother (Nurse Cain) and her new home which was rebuilt after the fire. Nurse Cain delivered babies from Nord’s Wharf to Belmont and mostly walked or rode her horse. The Cain Ward at Lake Macquarie hospital has been named after this amazing lady.

Cattle rustling was another unsavoury practise. Obviously some men thought a woman on her own would be a soft touch and one of her jersey cows was stolen in 1930. But Annie stood her ground and the matter went to court. 1931, in court, Mrs Cain stated that she had run cattle on the land at Swansea, leased from the Crown. She missed a smokey jersey cow which was branded DC under a scroll by her son Edward. She had seen it in the accused's yard – Oscar Hansen – at New Lambton. She valued it at 7 pounds and 10 shillings. (About \$15). The brand had been blotched. However, as distinguishing features, the cow also had a turned up toe after injuring her hoof and a damaged right horn. Hansen was ordered to return the beast; or pay it's value; or be imprisoned.

Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate (NSW : 1876 - 1954) / Wed 7 Jan 1931 / Page 9 /

Like many mothers Annie anxiously watched two of her sons enter the services in WWII and nervously waited, hoping they would return. Her youngest son, Lance, enlisted first in the Royal Australian Air Force in Sydney on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1940, not long after Mothers Day. The photo on the right was taken just after he qualified for his wing in Canada. He was a wireless air-gunner. This meant that he had a dual role to play, being responsible\_for radio operations as well as the operation of the gun turret. The air gunners tasks were complex and hazardous; and their life expectancy was short. More than 20,000 air gunners lost their lives in WWII. He became a Flight Sergeant with the 354 squadron; and took part in D-Day. Sadly Lance did not return. He lost his life on 30<sup>th</sup> December, 1944. Her second youngest son, Clive, entered the Australian Army Services Corps in Sydney on 8<sup>th</sup> July, 1943. He served as a private; and returned home. *Source: Australian Women's Weekly, july, 1944*



Some of Annie Cain's recollections as a midwife over 50 years are memories of miles and miles of traveling – mostly on foot. "Many's the time I've walked home from Nord's Wharf at 1 o'clock in the morning after a case, and I've done the trip from Catherine Hill Bay on foot a few times too," she said; proud of her "good pair of legs". At other times she rode on horseback, carrying her bag in front of her on the saddle. Occasionally she drove in a sulky. Despite delivering a small number of twins, she was disappointed not to have attended at the birth of triplets.

Her main interests in later life lay with her 20 grandchildren and 33 great- grandchildren. She continued to sew for her family from evening frocks to trousers. *Source: Newcastle Herald. Sep 1949.*

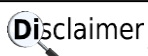
#### **OBITUARY: NURSE CAIN.**

Nurse Cain died at Swansea. She was known as Gran Cain. She had lived at Swansea since 1902 and was the only nurse in the district till 1924. She was nurse, doctor, barber and dressmaker to all the early settlers in Swansea. She started nursing in 1897. She is survived by 10 children. Mrs Cain, Mr W. Woods, Mrs A. Beecham, Mrs A. Balks (of Swansea), Mr Dan Cain (Cooranbong), Mr Robert Cain (Forster), Mrs Askew (of Newcastle), Mrs Ranger (Cardiff), Mrs Charlton (Sydney), Mrs Clive Cain (Sydney). Sgt Lance Cain was killed in World War II.

Newcastle Morning Herald and Miners' Advocate (NSW : 1876 - 1954) / Sat 4 Aug 1951 / Page 6

Anne Cain died 5<sup>th</sup> June 1951, and was laid to rest at Belmont Cemetery.

Anne Cain was truly a mother to be proud of.



: Whilst every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of the information in this newsletter, however, the accuracy of statements or opinions expressed in articles cannot be guaranteed.

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WE WOULD LOVE TO HEAR YOUR IDEAS FOR MORE HERITAGE STORIES!!!