

TIMELINES

In fifteen minutes

Number 21

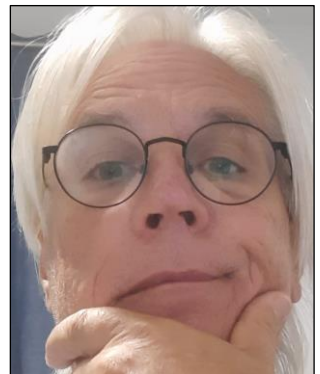
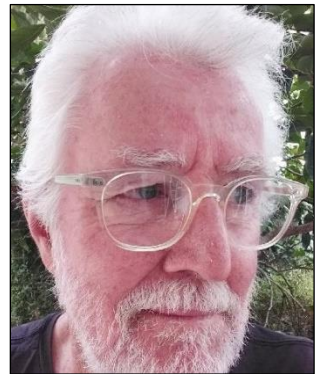
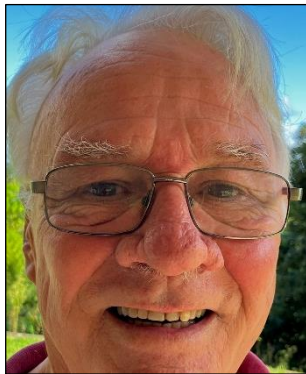
A big day at the Society



Murwillumbah Historical Society has held its 2025/2026 Annual General Meeting!

The committee for the next year is led by Bev Fairley as President, assisted by Vice-President Robert Budd. The Secretary is Natasha Green, Treasurer Ian Batten, with five additional members: Henry James (responsible for Membership); Joan Cuthel (Research); David Taylor (IT/Digital); Pauline Hibbard (Bookshop); and Māris Bruzgulis (*Timelines* editor).

The members present were presented with the President's and Treasurer's report, which were carried unanimously. In addition, the meeting received reports on membership and social activities.



Our Next Meeting

The Society warmly welcomes new members. We meet on the third Monday of every month.

1:00 pm on Monday, 19 May 2025, at the Murwillumbah Services Club, River Room.

CONTACT US: Phone: (02) 6670 2273

At the Museum: Tuesday and Thursday from 10:00 am – 2:00 pm and Wednesday and Friday 10:00 am to 3:00 pm

Web: <http://www.murwillumbahhistoricalsociety.org.au>

FB: <http://www.facebook.com/murwillumbahhistory>

Email: editor@murwillumbahhistoricalsociety.org.au

Mail: c/- Tweed Regional Museum, 2 Queensland Rd, Murwillumbah NSW 2484 or PO Box 373, Murwillumbah NSW 2484

History in a Box

Mount Warning 1875



Mount Warning, New South Wales, Fearnleigh Montague 1875.

Source: Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney Australia from Google Arts & Culture.

A challenge to our readers – where would the artist, have placed his easel to paint this view of Mount Warning? Follow us on Facebook to be part of the hunt to identify the place from which he looked up to the peak in the far distance...

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Some facts, and conjectures, about the artist Fearnleigh Leonard Montague.

The certainties (which of course depend on the accuracy of the records used) are these. A Victorian marriage certificate records his marriage to Alice Maud Smith on 12 March 1868. He was twenty-eight and born in Exeter, England. Alice was Birmingham born and twenty

one. They had three children, Alice (1869), Ernest (1870), and Minnie R (1872), who were born in New South Wales. On 19 May 1875, the *New South Wales Police Gazette* recorded that a warrant had been issued for Montague's arrest, charged with deserting his child, Alice. It also notes that when last heard of he was accompanied by a Miss Woodward, aged 18'. In 1892 his name appears in the American papers as the perpetrator of a murder/suicide pact in Washington, DC. The articles put his age in the mid-fifties, that of his wife in her early thirties.

Among the conjectures is the possibility that he was a bigamist. A number of Ancestry family trees give him the alias of Alma Woodleigh. A Victorian marriage certificate records that on 25 June 1875 Woodleigh, an artist aged thirty-six, married Eliza Sarah Angelina Woodward, aged twenty-one. They had two children, a daughter Alma Fidelia Castella De Sillifant (1876) born in Tasmania and a son Herbert Dahlrory Dawlish (1877) born in Victoria. When the latter (known as John Joseph) died at the Dunwich Benevolent Asylum in Queensland in 1946, his father's given names were written in as Fernleigh Leonard. As for Montague's death, the press reports were nearly unanimous that it was motivated by his 'despondency over a long and painful illness' (although it was also said he could not sell his pictures). The reasons for his wife's death sound like victim blaming: 'A theory is advanced that she worshiped the man to that extent that she was willing to die with him, and another is that, having waited upon him so long and being herself worn out, she too became despondent and preferred to die.'



Mount Warning, New South Wales.

'For this picture, we are indebted to Mr. F. L. Montague, whose name as an artist is familiar to most of our readers. The original, an oil painting, took a prize at the Intercolonial Exhibition.'

Source: *Town and Country Journal*, 22 January 1876, page 140 (Trove).