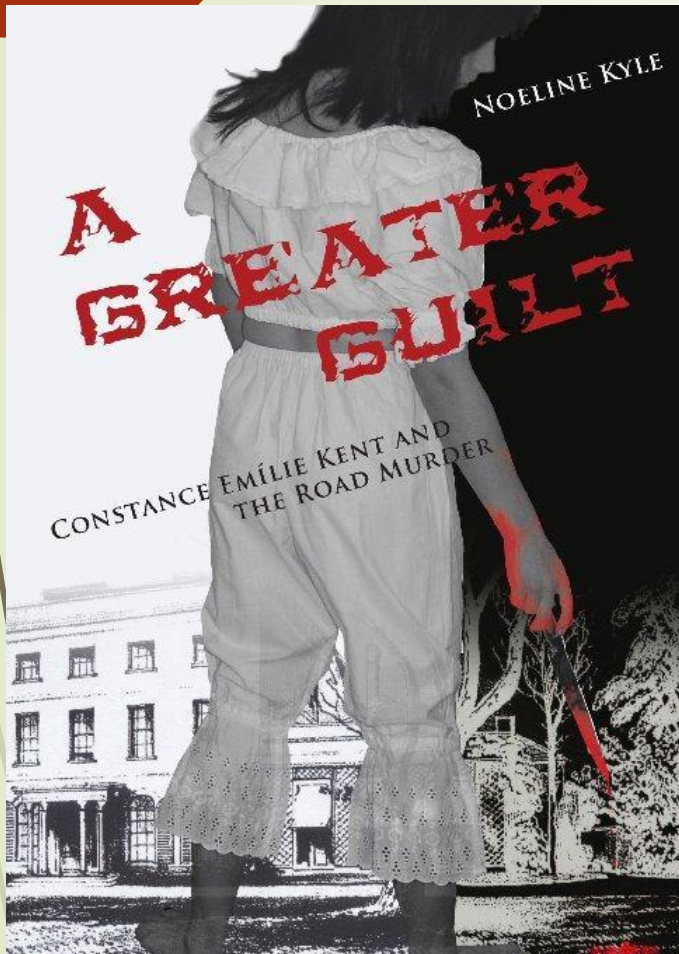


Nurses in History Noeline is interviewed for the Faces in the Street event for History Week 2013, and tells the story of Mary Kirkpatrick, [click here to watch](#) on Youtube



Prison photograph
taken 1874

I 'met' Constance Kent in 1979 when completing my Honours thesis and found Bernard Taylor's *Cruelly Murdered* in the NSW State Library. I was living in Newcastle, NSW in the Hunter Valley, and I walked the town of Maitland researching other women's lives not knowing that this was where Constance lived for much of her time in Australia. I did not return to look at her life until 2002 when I retired from university teaching to care for my mother. I knew nothing about crime nor true crime and had no inkling how 'infamous' Constance was in that oeuvre. Also, my approach was to write, not so much about the crime, but about the Kent family and Constance after she and most of her siblings immigrated to Australia (after she had served 20 years in prison for the murder of her 4 year old half brother). I wrote about a family damaged, traumatized and in flight from the awful crime and the memories of 1860 and 1865. I was also interested to look at the many myths surrounding this story. Stories of madwomen, murder and family dominate the case of middle class women charged with murder. Listen to an interview I did with Phillip Adams in 2009 [Late Night Live](#) and read reviews of the book on Amazon where the ebook has gained some popularity....[Amazon A Greater Guilt](#)



Northern Rivers Family History Writers' Group, Alstonville, see our book ***Remembering Mothers: an inspiring anthology of short stories, letters and poetry, 2005.***

This book grew out of the meetings we had from the early 2000s, find copies in the NLA, NSW State Library, Richmond Tweed Library, State Library of Victoria.

Remembering Mothers:

**an inspiring anthology of
short stories, letters and
poetry**



**Northern Rivers
Family History Writers' Group**

Ten ordinary mothers their stories written by ten women, daughters, mothers, granddaughters, great granddaughters - family historians all.

These authors found that while meeting in a writing group to talk about their family history, a recurring theme was about mothers; sometimes grandmothers or grandmothers. And the idea for this book emerged.

It is a historical record of how our mothers and grandmothers were born, how they experienced childhood and lived within their families, sometimes journeyed across the world, married, gave birth, grew old, suffered disappointment faced illness and forgetfulness, joy, hope and great change.

Most of the women writers herein were new to writing; the processes of editing and publishing also unknown territory. At the same time writing, with all of its exigencies, did become one of the more joyful, constant activities in their lives.

The authors:

Tanya Binning

Jill Richards Brennan

Lois Carroll

Deirdre Cox

Yvonne Hammond

Hazel Holmes

Noeline Kyle

Jan Gracie Mulcahy

Lybbie Semple

Barbara Worthington



- **Yvonne Hammond** was a writing student in the writing group I facilitated for the Richmond Tweed Family History Society in 2001 and which became Northern Rivers Family History Group meeting at Alstonville.
- Yvonne was in her 80s when she joined the group and was, from the first, a writer of talent. She was delightful, full of fun and always able to enthral the group with her stories. In 2014 Yvonne published her first book *The Challenging Journey*, which she called a 'warts-and-all' story of her and her husband Don's battle with dementia.
- Her book was an amazing success and Yvonne was launched into a blaze of publicity and speaking engagements, see her article in Readers Digest, titled [Attitude, Belief, Confidence.](#)
- Now in her 90s Yvonne continues her research and what has become her great love, writing the stories of her family, her life and the complications therein.
- See also: <http://familyhistorywrite.blogspot.com/2014/02/its-never-too-late-to-become-writer.html>

News

Dementia lessons



LESSON IN A BOOK: Yvonne Hammond, from Ballina, has penned her story of living with her husband's dementia.

SHE'S 91, but Ballina's Yvonne Hammond has written a book in the hope that others may learn about warning signs for the onset of dementia.

It's a personal story of her experience in the latter part of her life with late husband, Don, who passed away two years ago, having been diagnosed with dementia in 2002.

He was aged 91.

Yvonne, who only began a writing path at the age of 83 recording her family history, penned her story for her family.

She said she could only face writing her story now because the loss of her husband was "too raw."

But she was encouraged by friends to publish her story more widely, and the book, which is in the production process, is titled *A Challenging Journey*.

"I was writing this for the benefit of family and friends about how strongly I feel about recognising the early signs of dementia," she said.

"It's such an insidious, creeping thing, and one doesn't tend to think what's happening."

It's the little changes that Mrs Hammond can now

recognise.

She said there was a period of about a year when Mr Hammond, a former clerk working for the railways, wouldn't pick up a pen.

There were always excuses as to why, she said.

He would say "I feel nervy" or his "hands were a bit shaky".

And he put it all down to age.

Then there was a dramatic occasion when the family was playing a familiar game around the table, but Mr Hammond became confused and disorientated for days after.

Mrs Hammond titles one chapter *Divorce by Dementia*.

"That's what it felt like," she said.

The story is Mrs Hammond's experience, but

she feels that if she had acted on some of these early signs, Mr Hammond's life could have been extended – with more of the "happy days" the couple shared in 68 years of marriage.

But she said Mr Hammond did what many men tend to do, and shook off some of her concerns as "silly little things" not worth visiting a doctor about.



Left: Noeline Kyle and Lorraine Purcell. Lorraine and Noeline presented many workshops together including a tour of the Central West.



Let creative: Dr Noeline Kyle (pictured left) told Mavis Cummins of Ramsgate and other guests at a recent seminar not to be afraid to write about their family's history. Picture: Lisa McMahon



Noeline with Heather McKean (on left) and her aunt Joy (Kirkpatrick) at the National Folk Festival, Canberra, 2006.



- A cup of tea with the wonderful Billie Crawford who, apart from her long, illustrious career as research manager and heritage/history expert for the Kempsey Museum, was so interested in and so supportive of my research into the midwives of the Mid North Coast of NSW from the late 1970s to 2017.



Here comes the bride exhibition almost out the door, [see Macleay Argus](#), 24 October, 2017. This image taken at the Kempsey Museum as Noeline Kyle and Julia Morrell examined and selected from the fabulous array of bridal gowns held in the museum. The Here Comes the Bride Exhibition October....2018... featured wedding gowns from the Kempsey Museum beginning in the 1850s through to the present time....each decades is a reminder of not just the fashion but the economy, the social mores, the availability of fabrics, who was the dressmaker and the interesting cultural and personal preferences of the bride and her family...



My Aunt Mary Hudson seen in this picture at her Elna Diva.

Mary, at 92, is still sewing, she has 4 Elna sewing machines and she continues to sew on all of them.

Mary upgraded from her Treadle Singer many years ago and is just as passionate about her sewing now as she was many decades ago.

Mary was featured in the Here Comes the Bride Exhibition, I curated with Julia Morrell (Slim Dusty Centre) and also in an article I wrote for the Macleay River Historical Society Journal



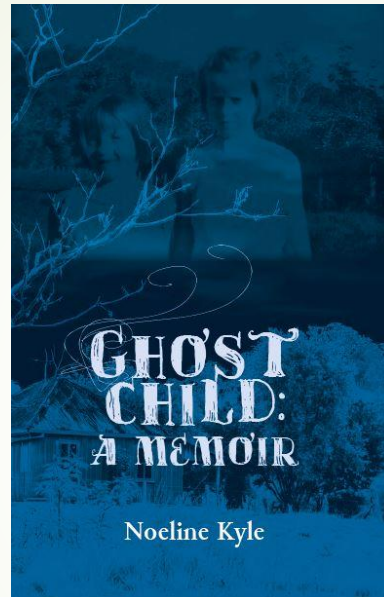
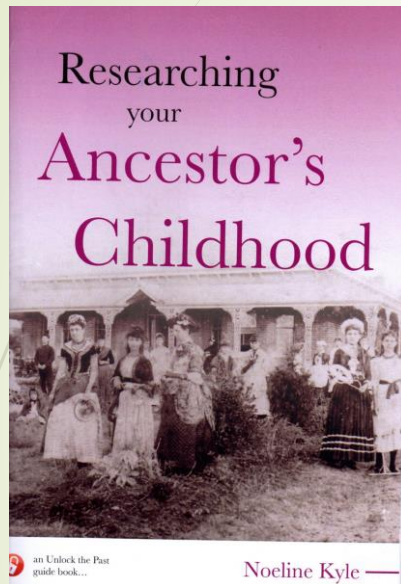
Book Signing!! Keep smiling, hope the day is not too long and that people stop and ask you questions. I have done a few and I am grateful for those generous shoppers who stopped by to talk if not to always make a purchase.



Women's Business: Midwives of the Mid North Coast of NSW, was launched at the Slim Dusty Centre in July 2017, by Professor Lesley Barclay. See [Port News](#) 27 June 2017, [Armidale Express](#) and [Macleay Argus](#).



Port News January 2018, [AO for Noeline Kyle](#),



See my article An Australian Childhood, in UnBound, <https://www.nla.gov.au/unbound/an-australian-childhood>, National Library of Australia.

Ghost Child: a memoir was published in 2014 and has become a much read book for residents of local retirement villages as evidenced here by Macleay Valley House where the following was reported:

Our residents have been enthralled each week with the latest book. Ghost Child is

a memoir of growing up in the Macleay Valley in 1940's – stories of bush schools, dairy farms, timber mills and small villages. This is the life many of our residents lived and author Noeline Kyle's stories resonates with us all here in the Valley. The readings have prompted many a recollection and stories retold. A visit to the Macleay Historical Museum is planned in the next few months. (Macleay Valley House, Newsletter, June 2017).

See also the journal article: [reconstructing childhood.pdf](#)



Providing workshops, seminars, talks to family historians, local historians and other community groups has been a lifelong journey for me. Talking, writing and publishing my work on writing women and children into family history has been a special and specific interest.

