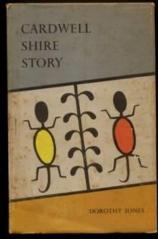
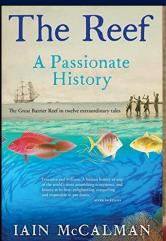
Mission Beach History A Reading Guide









WAR & BEACH

WWII in a Tiny Queensland Town
Ken Gray

A Family of Islands

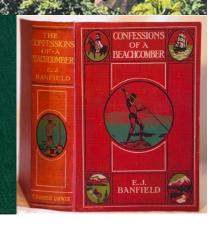
Dunk and Bedarra Island group, North Queensland

James G. Porter

50TH ANNIVERSARY

1953 MISSION BEACH STATE SCHOOL 2003

LIMITED EDITION



Published by
Mission Beach Historical Society Inc.
Document H008 Version 2.0.



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A record of this title is held at the National Library of Australia (eBook) and the State Library of Queensland (Print and eBook).

The text and opinions expressed in this book are those of the author and of people interviewed by the author and do not reflect the views of the Mission Beach Historical Society or its members.

Mission Beach Historical Society's logo designed by Leonard Andy, copyright © Leonard Andy. The design depicts a Djiru shield with a cassowary which is the endangered, iconic flightless bird living in the north Queensland rainforests.

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to Don Wheatley for loaning several of his large collection of books from his fascinating private library and museum.

The histories published by Mission Beach Historical Society Inc are as accurate as we can make them. Few accounts of history are 100% correct and there are always going to be more errors when we recall events from many years ago. We welcome suggested edits and additions or deletions and where possible we will edit where we find we are in error. However, the oral histories we record are the words of the people we interview and we can only alter those with the authorisation of the people we interviewed.

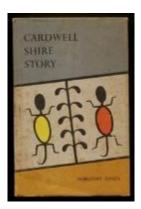
Cover

The cover features several book covers or historic photos including those of Les Alexander (image from *The Lost Plantation*, the cover of *Cardwell Shire Story* by Dorothy Jones, the cover of *The Reef* by Iain McCalman, photo of the late Nancy Wheatley from the cover of *Wheatley Tales* by Ken Gray, the cover of *War and Beach* by Ken Gray, the cover of *A Family of Islands* by James Porter, the cover of *Mission Beach State School 50th Anniversary* by Diane Bull and Judy Heath and the cover of the first edition of *Confessions of a Beachcomber* by E. J. Banfield.

For those who seek to learn a little about the history of Mission Beach, this is an evolving list of information sources. Many of these books and articles are available in the Cassowary Coast Regional Council's (CCRC) Libraries and many of those not held there can be sourced by use of the inter-library loan services or found online. Some books are in the libraries yet are not for loan because they are difficult to replace.

Wider Region History

Dorothy Jones wrote two books on this region and another for Cairns. One of the district books was focused on the Johnstone Shire and another on the Cardwell Shire. These two regions were merged in 2008 and became the Cassowary Coast Region.

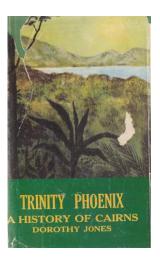


Jones, Dorothy. Cardwell Shire Story, Jacaranda Press, 1961.



Jones, Dorothy. Hurricane Lamps and Blue Umbrellas, a history of the Shire of Johnstone to 1973, G. K. Bolton, 1973.

These books are essential reading if one is serious about understanding or adding to our documented history. They are written in an earlier era where values differed greatly from today yet were well researched; both are around 400-page tomes and several copies of each are held by the CCRC Libraries. The Cardwell book is at Cardwell, Tully and Innisfail branches and the Hurricane Lamps one is at the Innisfail and Tully branches. These books are rarely available for sale as used books at a cost of around \$400. They focus mainly on the period from European arrival to 1940.



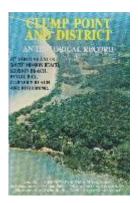
Jones, Dorothy. Trinity Phoenix: History of Cairns. Cairns Post, 1976.

Devanny, Jean, By Tropic Sea and Jungle, Adventures in North Queensland, Angus and Robertson, 1944.

This book is out of print, yet some used copies are available on the web at times, and it is available in the National Library of Australia. The CCRC library at Tully has no copies but has some pages of the book photocopied. This is a novel written by New Zealand-born author, Jean Devanny, who travelled to North Queensland with her friend Rose Keith and interviewed many people in the late 1930s. While it is not a history book, it does reveal much of our past. Most chapters are set in areas from Cairns and north of there.

The first chapter is set in Townsville then come chapters on her Cardwell, Tully and Dunk Island adventures. The Cardwell interviews include a conversation with an older resident who knew the Aboriginal people and spoke of the Hull River Aboriginal Settlement. The Tully chapter is interesting reading and portrays the sugar town as a Wild-West experience. In *Dunk Debunked*, Jean interviews notable artist, Noel Wood.

District History



Mackness, Constance. Clump Point and District: An Historical Record. G. K. Bolton, Cairns, 1959; 1983 revised edition.

This 77-page booklet is the place to start if you are specifically interested in the history of the Mission Beach district. It has some words also on Kurrimine Beach. It was written by one of our early residents, Miss Constance Mackness MBE, who lived with her farming pioneer family at Narragon Beach and made a name for herself later as the first Principal of the Presbyterian Girls' College, Warwick, 1918 to 1949. On retirement, Constance returned to Mission Beach and was an active member of early progress associations. Most of the work is about the period from European discovery to 1918, but there are some chapters from 1918 to 1940. It is often not exact in terms of timelines yet is a valuable resource based on oral histories of locals of the time. There are short updates when the book was reprinted in 1968 and 1983. The book is available for loan at Tully, Cardwell or Innisfail and there are early editions not for loan at Tully and Innisfail libraries as well.

The book is no longer available to buy new, yet used copies are still available online at times.

For a brief overview of our local history, there is an excellent online piece by historian, Helen Pedley of Tully. It is merely 11 pages yet provides good information.

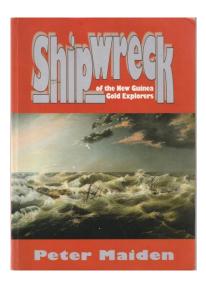
Pedley, Helen. A Brief History of Mission Beach, Cassowary Coast Regional Council, accessed July 2021 at: https://www.cassowarycoast.qld.gov.au/downloads/file/1947/brief-history-of-mission-beach

Helen Pedley worked for the council library service for many years and wrote several other excellent publications such as

- Tully Street Names Signs of History. 2010.
- Streets by the Sea: A Cardwell Chronicle. 2014.
- Storykeeping: David Lawrence remembered. 2019. The story of an Aboriginal elder of the Upper Murray (Jumbun area).
- Aboriginal Tools of the Rainforest.
- Aboriginal Life in the Rainforest.
- A History of the Hull River Settlement (copyright Girringun Aboriginal Corporation held in Cardwell).

Djiru History

Peter Maiden, The Shipwreck of the New Guinea Gold Explorers, The Wreck of the Brig Maria off Hinchinbrook Island 1872, Central Queensland University Press, 2000.



This excellent small book is the last word on what happened in 1872 when the brig *Maria* foundered on Bramble Reef. The story recounts in fine detail what happened to the people on the ship and what happened later to the Djiru people of the district. That was a key historical event for Mission Beach. So much written about this event is untrue, but in this book, we find the truth. There are three copies held in the Cassowary Coast Regional Council's libraries and one is able to be loaned.

Pentecost, Phillip, *Indigenous Cultural Significance Assessment Mission Beach*, produced for The Djiru Traditional Owners in conjunction with Girringun Aboriginal Corporation, October 2007. This includes research on the history of the Djiru people. Accessed August 2021 at: https://www.wettropicsplan.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/11/Indigenous-cultural-significance-assessment.pdf

E. P. Woolston and F. S. Colliver, *The Wildsoet Interview – Some Recollections of the Aborigines of the Tully Area.* Queensland Heritage, volume 3, pages 3-14. See page 11: Only 5 of the tribe survived after the *Maria* massacre. Accessed August 2021 at:

https://espace.library.uq.edu.au/data/UQ 246306/Qld heritage v3 no3 1975 p3 p14.pdf?Expires=1630284321&K ev-Pair-

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Mission Beach Historical Society Catalogue

The Mission Beach Historical Society is building a small catalogue of local histories, and these are available online on the webpage at mbhs.com.au.

- 1. **H001 by Sue Foley**. A Conversation with Bob. Bob Bolton, Mission Beach, 2020.
- 2. **H002 by Ken Gray**. Our Own Gatsby: Hugo Brassey of Dunk Island, 2021.
- 3. **H004 by Ken Gray**. Naming Mission Beach, 2021.
- 4. **H005 by Ken Gray**. Bicton: The Cuttens of Clump Point, 2022.
- 5. **H006 by Ken Gray.** A Pool to be Cool. How our community won its aquatic centre, 2020.
- 6. **H007 by Ken Gray**. The Artful Activist. John Busst's Save the Reef campaign, 2021.
- 7. **H008 by Ken Gray**. This document (Mission Beach History, A Reading Guide), 2021.
- 8. **H011 by Ken Gray**. Wheatley Tales, The Wheatley family, 2022.
- 9. **H013 by Ken Gray**. The West Family, 2022.
- 10. **H014 by Ken Gray**. Naming Brookes Beach Dorothy Brookes, Brookes family, 2018.
- 11. **H015 by Ken Gray**. *The Knight of Our Rainforests*, Matthew Hyde who saved rainforests, 2021.
- 12. **H017.1 by Penelope Goward**. Jennifer Payne: Women Artists of Mission Beach, Volume 1, 2022.
- 13. **H017.2 by Penelope Goward**. Rebecca Arnall-Smith: Women Artists series, Volume 2, 2023.
- 14. **H018 by Ken Gray.** Odin's Beach: Nissen Navigates 80 Years of History, Nissen family, 2022.
- 15. **H019.1 by Ken Gray.** Noel Wood: Artists of the Islands, Volume 1, 2023.
- 16. **H019.2 by Ken Gray.** The Cohen Sisters: Artists of the Islands, Volume 2, 2023
- 17. **H021** by Valerie Boll, Penelope Goward, & Ken Gray. Founding the Society, 2022.
- 18. **H023 by Ken Gray**. Living Links: The Berry-Porters of Mission Beach, 2022.
- 19. **H024 by Ken Gray**. George's Diary: George Webb of Mission Beach, 2021.
- 20. **H025 by Ken Campbell**. Superintendent Kenny: The Hull River Settlement, 2022.
- 21. **H030 by Ken Gray**. A Soldier's Dream: Sydney Harris of Mission Beach, 2022.
- 22. AB02 by Ken Gray. Abridged version of Our Own Gatsby, 2021.
- 23. **AB05 by Ken Gray**. Abridged version of Bicton: The Cutten Family of Clump Point, 2022.
- 24. **AB06** by Ken Gray. Pivotal Moments, abridged version of A Pool to be Cool, 2021.
- 25. **AB07 by Ken Gray**. Abridged version of *The Artful Activist*, 2021.
- 26. **AB11 by Ken Gray**. Abridged version of *Wheatley Tales*, 2022.
- 27. **AB13 by Ken Gray**. Abridged version of *The West Family*, 2022.
- 28. AB18 by Ken Gray. Abridged version of Odin's Beach, 2022.
- 29. **AB19.1 by Ken Gray**. Abridged version of *Noel Wood*, 2023.
- 30. **AB19.2 by Ken Gray**. Abridged version of *The Cohen Sisters*, 2023.
- 31. **AB23 by Ken Gray**. Abridged version of *Living Links*, 2022.

- 32. **AB24 by Ken Gray**. Abridged version of *George's Diary*, 2022.
- 33. **AB25 by Ken Gray**. Abridged version of Superintendent Kenny, 2022.
- 34. **S001 by Ken Gray**. Sketch series: The Banfield's of Dunk Island, 2022.
- 35. S002 by Ken Gray. Sketch series: Our Population History, 2022.
- 36. S003 by Ken Gray. Sketch series: Buds of Tourism, 2022.
- 37. **S004 by Ken Gray**. Sketch series: Rupert's Refuge, 2022.
- 38. S005 by Ken Gray. Sketch series: First Historian, 2022.
- 39. S006 by Ken Gray. Sketch series: Deluge & Drought, 2022.
- 40. S007 by Ken Gray. Sketch series: War at Mission Beach, 2022.

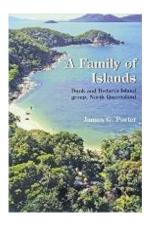
To be published in 2023 (drafts completed):

- 41. **H009.1 by Deirdre Holmes.** Mission Beach Street & Place Names: A Study of Local History through Street & Place Names, Volume 1 Maria Creeks, Midgeree Bar, Garners Beach, Bingil Bay & Narragon Beach, in progress 2023.
- 42. **H009.2 by Deirdre Holmes.** Mission Beach Street & Place Names: A Study of Local History through Street & Place Names, Volume 2, Mission Beach, in progress, 2023.
- 43. **H009.1 by Deirdre Holmes.** Mission Beach Street & Place Names: A Study of Local History through Street & Place Names, Volume 3, Wongaling Beach, in progress, 2023.
- 44. **H009.1 by Deirdre Holmes.** Mission Beach Street & Place Names: A Study of Local History through Street & Place Names, Volume 3, South Mission Beach & Carmoo, in progress, 2023.
- 45. **H003** by Helen Pedley. *Djiru History*, title to be decided, in progress 2023.
- 46. **H010** by Chris Forbes. Chris and Gary: The Forbes Family of Bingil Bay, in progress 2023.
- 47. **H012 by Ken Gray.** The Brenda and Perry Show. Story of the Harvey family, in progress, 2023.
- 48. **H016 by Ken Gray**. The Battle for Boating Facilities: Mission Beach Boating Infrastructure History, in progress, 2023.
- 49. **H029 by Ken Gray**. Bingil Bay Botanist: The Story of Norm Byrnes and his Arboretum, in progress, 2023.

Many other histories are either in progress now or planned.

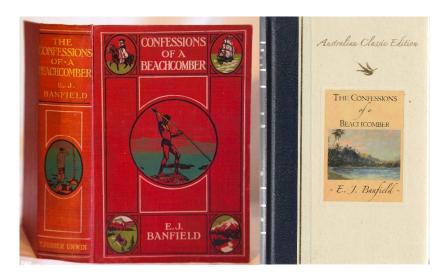
Our Offshore Islands

Porter, James G; illustrated by Kerswell, Kath. *Discovering the Family Islands: A guide to the Bedarra and Dunk Island group*, Kullari Publications, 1983, early version accessed January 2021 at: https://eastbedarra.com.au/intextimg/Discovering_the_Family_Islands_Book_1983-nc.pdf Revised and republished in 2000 by Boolarong Press as *A Family of Islands: Dunk and Bedarra Island group*, *North Queensland*.



This 136-page book is well illustrated and provides interesting accounts of the island histories and particularly of the early owners and the noted artists who lived there. It was available new online recently and as a used copy and the first version is available free online or is available in our libraries at Tully, Cardwell or Innisfail but the recent version is not able to be loaned.

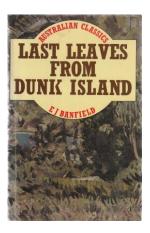
CCRC libraries have other books and files with many historical documents such as press cuttings. There is a text on the North Barnard Islands at Innisfail and another on Bedarra at Tully (not for loan). There are selections of Banfield's writings by James G Porter available at Tully and Innisfail (not for loan).



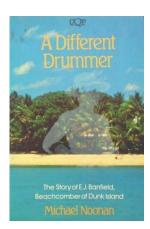
Banfield, E. J. The Confessions of a Beachcomber: Scenes and incidents in the career of an unprofessional beachcomber in tropical Queensland. London, 1908. E J Banfield wrote four novels and the first, a sensational bestseller, was this one (the original version had a black and gold cover). It has been published at least 12 more times since and the cover shown beside the early edition was by The Five

Mile Press, 2006. These are novels rather than histories yet contain so much useful history for the area, nonetheless.

The Confessions of a Beachcomber is available in the CCRC library and some copies are not for loan but one copy may be loaned. Last Leaves from Dunk Island, by Banfield is also available at Tully or Innisfail but these are not for loan. My Tropic Isle by Banfield is at Tully library but not for loan.



Banfield, E. J. Last Leaves from Dunk Island, Angus & Robertson, 1925. Edition shown above is published by Currey O'Neil, 1982 and the cover shows an unnamed painting by Edmund's friend the notable artist, Noel Wood. This was Banfield's fourth book after My Tropic Isle 1911 and Tropic Days 1918. It was published posthumously by Bertha Banfield.

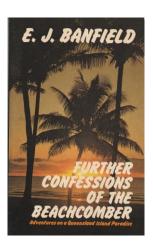


Noonan, Michael. A Different Drummer: The Story of E J Banfield Beachcomber of Dunk Island, University of Queensland Press, 1983, 1986. The definitive biography of Edmund Banfield.



Noonan, Michael. The Gentle Art of Beachcombing: A collections of writings by E. J. Banfield., UQP, 1989.

A Different Drummer and The Gentle Art of Beachcombing are also available at the library (the latter title has a copy at Innisfail that is available for loan.)

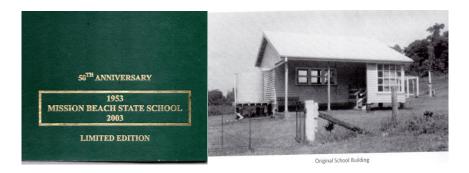


Porter, James G. Further Confessions of the Beachcomber, Angus & Robertson, 1983. This was a book that selected the best parts of Banfield's last three novels and published them as one book to make the stories more accessible.

Tully library has copies of "Mission" reports 1914 to 1918.

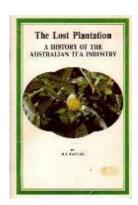
We Shared an Island by Guy Morrison, The Travel Book Company, London, 1951, is a small fiction piece written about the Morrison family's eventful stay on Bedarra Island while artist Noel Wood ('Paul') and John Busst ('Merton') lived there (1940). While it is a light story and is not a history, it does give some idea of the characters of Wood and Busst in those days. It is not available in our libraries yet is available as a used book at low cost.

Specific Local Events, Topics and Eras



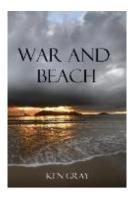
Bull, Diane and Heath, Judy assisted by Lyn and Lackie Rick, Mission Beach State School: 1953 – 2003. Bookmen Publishers, 2003.

A history of the school, with yearly highlights not only of our school, but also of our nation, our state, our capital city and our community. An excellent local resource with many photos and memories. This fine record includes a brief history of the local area, pre 1953. Available in the Tully library, not for loan.



Taylor, R J, The Lost Plantation: a history of the Australian tea industry, G. K. Bolton, Cairns, 1982.

This 64-page booklet is about the lost tea plantation grown by Herbert and Leonard Cutten (two of the Cutten brothers of Bingil Bay). The author obtained much of the history from Les Alexander a nephew of the Cutten brothers. The Camellia trees referred to remain in the forest as fully grown giants on a lot in today's Plantation Drive, Bingil Bay. Although the book is largely on the topic of tea it is one of the best sources of information on the early development of Bingil Bay. There is a copy of this (not for loan) at the Tully library. It is no longer available online even as a used book.



Gray, Ken, War and Beach, Draft2Digital, 2020.

This 154-page eBook history tells us what it was like in Mission Beach (then known as *Clump Point*) during World War II. The history was gleaned from official war records, and many references and from oral histories provided by two long-term residents. It includes information on US and RAN war ships visiting the district and conducting war exercises here and on the RAAF activities on Dunk Island as well as the Army and Air force work, and testing of gas warfare chemicals on the mainland and the Brook Islands. The book is available as an eBook in the CCRC Mission Beach branch library on *Overdrive*. It is available at most eBook sellers online such as Amazon, iTunes and Kobo. It costs \$5 on Kobo and is best seen on a colour screen (laptop, computer, phone or tablet) to easily read the graphics and images. Just download *Adobe Digital Editions* first, then the book, to read it in full colour.



Gray, Ken, A Pool to be Cool, Self-Published, 2020.

This small book of around 100 A4 pages tells the story of the 17-year struggle of the Mission Beach Aquatic and Recreation Club in their quest to have a community aquatic centre built in Mission Beach. It was written by one of the members of the community group, Ken Gray, who was President for nine years, including those years when the winning fund applications were made.

The many people involved in the campaign are recognized and their individual contributions are acknowledged. Several photos are included of people, plans, events (eg Aquatic Festivals) and the pool construction. There was an incredible amount of interaction and fierce debate with Councils and much controversy over the preferred designs and locations. The difficult politics are revealed with few reservations. Eventually, in 2015, \$7 million in funding was won from Federal and State governments and the facility was completed in late 2018. Ken donated a hard copy to the Mission Beach branch of our library and it is available for loan but is held at the Tully branch as it is a regional

resource. An abbreviated version (*Pivotal Moments*) is available on the Mission Beach Historical Society web page, as is the full version.

C4's webpage has an excellent article on the **Hull River Aboriginal Settlement** accessed July 2021 at: http://www.cassowaryconservation.asn.au/indigenous-history.html

Nikki Harris, grand-daughter of the late Perry Harvey and of Brenda Harvey wrote several blogs about her 'Pop' including one about his many tourist boats. That is available online and was accessed July 2021 at:

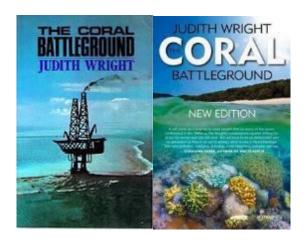
https://themanystoriesofperryharvey.weebly.com/blog/boats



Smith, L W, The Trees that Fell, Self-Published, 1991.

This 78-page booklet does not include the small Mission Beach timber mills but describes the timber industry of North Queensland, mainly focusing on the Tablelands. It starts in 1898 and ends with the Heritage listings of the wet tropics in 1988. 1988 was when the first sawmills were described in the book, but they speak of cedar getters active as far back as 1874. We know that there was logging in the Mission Beach area earlier than 1888 of course and the Cutten brothers built a sawmill in Bingil Bay in 1890 and they exported logs before that. The Freshney brothers logged in the Narragon area in 1878 but had no mill here. Ted Garner took over the Cutten mill. Other locals had sawmills in our district later, mainly for fruit cases, and these operated up until the 1960s. This book is available at the Innisfail and Tully libraries (the Tully copy is not for loan). A few used copies are still available online.

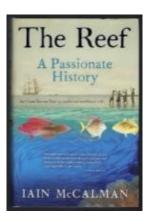
Reef and Conservation Books



Wright, Judith, The Coral Battleground 1997 (latest edition, Spinifex, 2014).

This is the most detailed history of the Save-the-Reef campaign available. Judith worked with our local conservationist, John Busst of Bingil Bay, to save the Reef from mining and oil exploration.

This 205-page book describes the campaign to save the Reef so is a vital piece of Mission Beach history and John Busst of Bingil Bay was the campaign leader and main protagonist. Unfortunately, a copy is not available in the Wongaling library but there is a copy at Innisfail. It is still available to buy new.



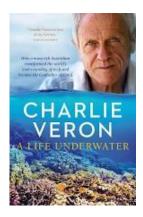
McCalman, Iain, The Reef: A passionate history, Viking, 2013.

This quality book of around 400 pages is an interesting, easy read on the history of the Reef since Captain Cook's expeditions. There are two copies in the CCRC library, one at Tully and one at Innisfail. There is one chapter on the Save-the-Reef campaign. It is available as a new book as a soft or hard cover title.



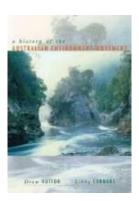
Bowen, James and Margarita, *The Great Barrier Reef: History, Science, Heritage*, Cambridge University Press, 2002.

This is the complete modern history of the Reef and is a fine book, well researched and covers the Reef's history since Europeans came to Australia, including a comprehensive account of all early Australian explorations by Europeans. It is not available in our library. It is available used or new.



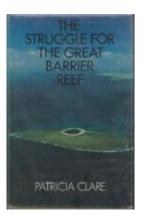
Veron, Dr Charlie, A Life Underwater, Penguin, 2017.

This is an interesting and easily read autobiography by this famed Australian Reef scientist, known as 'the Godfather of Coral', who was the first Chief Scientist of the Australian Marine Science Institute. It is not available in our CCRC libraries but can be purchased new.



Hutton, Drew and Connors, Libby, A history of the Australian Environmental Movement, Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Includes some references to the save the Reef campaign. Not available in our libraries. Available online as a new or used book in hard and soft cover versions.



Clare, Patricia, The Struggle for the Great Barrier Reef, Collins, 1977.

An account of the Reef campaign with some references to local activist, John Busst. It remains available as a used book but is not available in local libraries – it can be obtained from them on interlibrary loan.