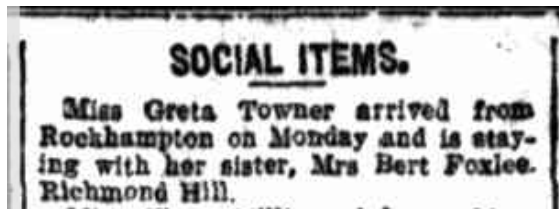


Discovering Greta – Sister Greta Towner’s Connections with Family

Sister Greta Norman Towner, a First World War nurse was born at Glencoe station, Blackall – her family had six girls and five boys. Newspaper articles reported her visiting family.

1915 Greta visited her sister Olive (Mrs Bert Foxlee) at Richmond Hill before enlisting in July

'SOCIAL ITEMS.', *The Northern Miner* (Charters Towers, Qld.: 1874 - 1954), 29 May 1915 p. 2, viewed 22 August 2015, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article79085945>



Article Text Reproduced

Miss Greta Towner arrived from Rockhampton on Monday and is staying with her sister, Mrs Bert Foxlee. Richmond Hill.

1915 Greta visited her sister Olive (Mrs Bert Foxlee) before embarkation

'OUR NEIGHBOURS.' *The Queenslander* (Brisbane, Qld.: 1866 - 1939), 14 August 1915, p. 16, viewed 22 August 2015, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article22300015>

Joseph's Church, Townsville.—Miss Greta Towner, Rockhampton, who visited her sister, Mrs. Bert Foxlee, Richmond Hill, and is a qualified nurse, has volunteered and has been accepted for active service. She has gone South and is leaving with the next contingent.—Mr. Frank Johnson, son of his Worship the Mayor, who has volunteered for active service, arrived from Cairns on Monday and is staying with his mother before leaving for Enoggera.

Article Text Reproduced

Joseph's Church, Townsville—Miss Greta Towner, Rockhampton, who visited her sister, Mrs. Bert Foxlee, Richmond Hill, and is a qualified nurse, has volunteered and has been accepted for active service.

1919 Greta arrives in Rockhampton

'PERSONAL NEWS.', *Morning Bulletin* (Rockhampton, Qld.: 1878 - 1954), 28 June 1919, p. 7, viewed 22 August 2015, <http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article53863905>

Nurse Towner arrived from Brisbane yesterday afternoon. She is staying at the Leichhardt Hotel.

Article Text Reproduced

Nurse Towner arrived from Brisbane yesterday afternoon. She is staying at the Leichhardt Hotel.

Comment

In an age before social media, local papers recorded people's visits, social events and even enlistments in the AIF (Australian Imperial Forces). These articles and similar ones found through TROVE show Greta Towner as mobile and connected to family and friends.

Her two visits to older sister Olive when read with her letter as a seven-year-old about Greta and Olive horse riding show sisters whose bond remains intact despite the distances separating them.

Similarly, Greta Towner's visit to Rockhampton in 1919 after returning from the First World War is at a time when her younger sister Christianna, is nursing at Rockhampton hospital, showing again the connection she had with family. Other articles see Greta at various times, visiting other family and

friends in Sydney and Brisbane, where her sister Clara nursed and her parents Edgar and Greta Towner retired to.

These articles give researchers a glimpse into how Greta Towner interacted with her family and reveal a strong line of independent and educated women - with some of her sisters also taking on the nursing profession.

Officially opened in 1908, the Blackall train station service would have afforded some mobility to Greta to visit family, though the travel was likely still to be far from luxurious, especially in the Queensland heat. For generations many from Blackall made the train trip to Rockhampton for educational, social and medical reasons. The railway line to Blackall closed in 2005. In 2015, the old train station building serves as a visitor information centre with one of last rail ambulances in Queensland on display. (Blackall withdrew use of rail ambulances in 1990.)



People gathered for the opening of the Blackall Railway Station. Passengers are boarding the first passenger train while a number of people wait on the platform and others are arriving in a horse drawn carriage. The Hon. George Kerr, Minister for Railways, opened the station in 1908. (Source: State Library of Queensland, John Oxley Library)



Blackall Railway Station in 1910



The Blackall Railway Station building now serves as a visitor information centre. 2015