

# When photo albums meet family history

Chris Bonnor

Just about everyone has one or twenty photograph albums at home, but what will happen to them when we shuffle off this mortal coil? If my ancestors are any guide, our albums might become lost forever.

One of the solutions is to scan and file all your family pics. I did this progressively over a couple of years, methodically raiding each room in the house. Negatives were long gone, of course, but scanning prints was actually faster. Quality was OK too, especially after a bit of tweaking via whatever Photoshop-type program was on the computer. These days I sometimes just use an iPad to scan the originals. Heresy....but quick!

The next step is to make them into a coffee table photobook. I use [Clickonprint](#) but there are many others. Just download the software, lay out your album, upload it onto their site - and back it comes a week or so later as a glossy. Average price is around \$100. We'd been making books of previous travel pics and everyone seems to like them....or are just being awfully polite!

The next thing was to gather together family pics going back over 100 years and make them into a family story. I'd previously traced my family tree, but this was different. There were enough pics to make an album and my late mother wrote many narratives about her times - so the album is brought to life by her story and that of my siblings who also contributed their reflections.

It's not that my forebears were anything special, apart from an Australian test cricketer in the 1880s. But the lives of Cornish tin (later gold) miners, pub owners, Methodist ministers and missionaries, the odd radical (now there's a mix!) and more all tell a story.

There are always gaps in the records....I don't think the Methodist minister kept a lot of memorabilia about his pub-owning forebears. And I wish I had George Bonnor's cricket bat, even if I wouldn't know how to use it.

But public archives occasionally come to the rescue. You would be amazed at what a search of [Trove](#) might show about your family. Whenever the clergy came to (or left) a town there would be a big write-up in the local newspaper. And I found a pic of my father in a 1938 newspaper. Now he did know what to do with a cricket bat.

I'd be very interested in tips from others on albums or family history or both. I've really enjoyed gluing all this stuff together. It is a combination of a hobby, fun, detective work, a gift for family and many hours of pleasure.

## Acknowledgements

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