

# John & Lesley in Mackay, Queensland, Australia.

**Mackay** is a city on the eastern coast of [Queensland](#), Australia, about 970 kilometres (603 mi) north of [Brisbane](#), on the [Pioneer River](#). Mackay is nicknamed the sugar capital of Australia because its region produces more than a third of Australia's cane sugar.<sup>[2]</sup>

There is controversy about the geographic location of the region, with most people referring to it as a part of either [Central Queensland](#) or [North Queensland](#), though much confusion still lies within the Queensland Government, with government services being provided through both [Townsville \(North Queensland\)](#) and [Rockhampton \(Central Queensland\)](#).

Generally, the area is known as the Mackay–[Whitsunday](#) Region. Equally, there has always been much contention over the pronunciation of the name Mackay. Correspondence received by Mackay City Library in 2007, from descendants of John Mackay, confirms that the correct pronunciation is /mə'kai/ (rhyming with sky), from the Gaelic name "MacAoidh" which is pronounced "i" not "ay".

(Taken from Wikipedia)



## January 2012

John and Lesley are Catholics and live in Mackay and have been in email correspondence with me for over a year now. (Cjs.)

Finding the website by 'accident' they are now regular readers and through them I have learnt about their children, grandchildren and way of life in Australia.

Their parish Church is **St Francis Xavier, West Mackay**,  
<http://www.rok.catholic.net.au/Parishes/MackayWest.html>



The Church is part of the **Catholic Diocese of Rockhampton, Central Queensland**.

The Diocesan website is .... <http://www.rok.catholic.net.au/>

*(Here in the UK where it's a mere 1,000 miles between John O'Groats in Scotland and Land's End in Cornwall and not too far from the West to East coasts, it is hard to envisage the sheer size and amount of travelling time getting from one area to another in Australia. The unforgiving bush is a great danger to all who may get stranded there. Somehow nowhere in England seems so scary!*

*Catholic means Universal and reading about fellow believers on the other side of the world is encouraging, especially in these days of our own Country seemingly so secular.)*

**Read about our neighbours...Mackay is about 9 hours ahead of Orpington. (Cjs.)**

***(Dates are in reverse order.)***

## May 13<sup>th</sup> 2012

Hi Cecilia,

all sorts of activities happen in Australia as you can see by this event. Its a lovely part of Queensland where this is. Vast open spaces.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-05-07/outback-racing-harnesses-goat-power/3994782#.T6cJGaKDDhw.email>

Hi Cecilia, a little bit of local news. Calen is a small town about 60 Kilometres north of Mackay. A pretty little sugar town of about 300 people. The Catholic church there is surrounded by green sugar cane fields. The town consists mainly of one Main Street.

<http://www.dailymercury.com.au/story/2012/04/28/history-lost-in-flames-as-hotel-is-gutted/#.T50MpwVwRok.email>

22<sup>nd</sup> April

Have you read The Secret Of The Rosary by Saint Louis De Montfort. It is in two parts. There is a Rosary Confraternity website. I will send it through to you. It's beautiful reading. Will close off now and say God bless to all over there.

Lesley and John.

*Dominican Fathers*

HEADQUARTERS OF THE ROSARY CONFRATERNITY <http://www.rosary-center.org/>

**18<sup>th</sup> April 2012**

Hi Cecilia, lovely to hear from you and to receive all the interesting news from your part of the world. See links for info re Father Byles, a Catholic Priest who went down with the Titanic. [www.fatherbyles.com](http://www.fatherbyles.com) [www.catholicsistas.com](http://www.catholicsistas.com) read about why his brother converted to Catholicism.

**15<sup>th</sup> April 2012**

The Walk of Witness takes place in the streets of Melbourne

<http://www.cam.org.au/melbourne-news/streets-of-melbourne-bear-witness-to-way-of-the-cross.html>

**6<sup>th</sup> April 2012**

Hi Cecilia,

I was amused to read your comment about the crocodile and Orpington High Street. Actually we have only seen a live crocodile in a zoo. Have not seen one in the wilds. They reckon they are in some of the creeks and waterways around Mackay. Once, they used to be found only much further north than here, around Cairns, Cooktown, and the Northern Territory. Now they are protected wild life. You are not allowed to shoot them except in life threatening situations. That is the main reason there are more of them around now. Snakes here are the same now, you are not allowed to harm them unless its a dangerous situation. Crocodiles are considered to be the last living species of Dinosaur. There are both saltwater and fresh water crocodiles. Saltwater ones are the most dangerous.

Enjoyed reading all about your family. At Easter, the big stores and shops only close for Good Friday here. It's probably the same over Orpington way. When I was a kid just about everything used to close down for the full Easter break. We will go to 9am Mass tomorrow morning at Saint Francis and then across to our daughter and hubby's home in Andergrove for lunch. We usually have takeaway for that meal. Chicken, chips and vegies from Red Rooster. The Saturday Vigil Mass is very nice with all the readings and blessings.

Will close off now and head into town to do this shopping. Time in Mackay now 9am Saturday. Temp about 26c.

A Holy and Happy Easter to yourself, Bob and all your family, also all at Holy Innocents'. Lesley, John, and Paul.

**4<sup>th</sup> April 2012**

Well we don't have this in Orpington High Street!

A crocodile near Mackay.

<http://www.dailymercury.com.au/story/2012/04/04/wayward-croc-stops-traffic/#.T3wQtQcbx5Y.email>

**3<sup>rd</sup> April 2012**

Hi Cecilia,

a lovely website for Medjugorje. [www.medjugorje.ie](http://www.medjugorje.ie)

Have any of the parishioners of Holy Innocents visited this beautiful area? Some of the visionaries have visited Australia in past years. The alleged apparitions are under investigation by the Vatican at the present time.

Will close off now.  
God bless and all our love,  
John & Lesley.

### **30<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

The weather has really settled down here now, All the heavy rain has gone. Daylight Saving finishes here in the states that have it next Sunday morning. The clocks go back an hour at 2am. An extra hour in bed.

Easter in a week's time. The year is flying by. Lesley and I both well. Not much else happening here.

Best wishes and God bless to all your family and also everybody at Holy Innocents.  
Love from Lesley and John.

### **21<sup>st</sup> March 2012**

Hi Cecilia,

today the sun is actually shining. The Big Wet might be gone for a while. From 9am last Saturday until 9am today Tuesday I measured 461 mills on our backyard rain gauge.

Some places got a lot more than that. All well here.

John.

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/2012-03-21/drenched-mackay-avoids-flood-devastation/3903218#.T2lMgrPIW9w.email>

### **19<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

Hi Cecilia,

we might send some of this water over to you people. It sounds like Kent could do with it, especially the Bowling Greens. I have measured about 260 millimetres in our rain gauge since Saturday morning last. Seriously though, it is just typical wet season weather in north Queensland, although it's a bit later than usual this year. All well here, John.

Courier Mail

Cyclone threat eases but rain brings strife

From: CourierMail

Mon Mar 19 12:46:13 EST 2012

Highways are cut off and townships isolated as torrential rainfall swamps the state's north from Mackay to the tip of Cape York.

Alternatively, you can copy and paste this link into your browser:

<http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/threat-from-low-pressure-system-tipped-to-form-into-a-cyclone-is-downgraded-by-weather-bureau/story-e6freoof-1226303488974>

### **15<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

Hi Cecilia,

Mackay calling again. Hope this message finds you and your family all well and fit as we are here. Although it has been a bit on the rainy side today and they are forecasting quite a lot of rain in the next week or so in the Mackay area. The rain has been late in coming this year. I measured 63 millimetres in the rain gauge in our backyard today. That's about two and a half inches in the old scale. I was driving in to town when the rain started and had to stop the car.

The rain was that heavy you could not see where you were going. It eased off after a while, though. I see Summer Time starts in England very shortly. Summer getting closer for you people.

We have also put C's name in the prayers for the sick column in Saint Francis parish bulletin. Saint Francis have their own website now. Will close off now and send all our love and God bless to yourself, family and all over there. Lesley and John.

**March 14<sup>th</sup> 2012**

Hi Cecilia, an item in today's Melbourne. All sorts of things happen here. Not a dull country.  
Best Regards, John.

Herald Sun

Daredevils leap from Rialto Towers

From: HeraldSun

Wed Mar 14 10:24:23 EST 2012

UPDATE: FOUR daredevils ordered cocktails before they were seen BASE jumping from the Rialto Towers in Melbourne's CBD last night.

Alternatively, you can copy and paste this link into your browser:

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/more-news/four-darevils-base-jump-from-rialto-towers/story-fn7x8me2-1226298889956>

**March 13<sup>th</sup> 2012**

Funeral to be held for Golinski family

From: CourierMail

**March 13, 2012**

MATT Golinski's wife and three daughters will be farewelled on the Sunshine Coast on Sunday, but the celebrity chef is still too unwell to attend.

Alternatively, you can copy and paste this link into your browser:

<http://www.couriermail.com.au/news/queensland/sunshine-coast-funeral-for-matt-golinskis-wife-and-three-daughters-who-died-in-boxing-day-fire/story-e6freoof-1226298521988>

Hi Cecilia,

I am sending this item on to you. The Archbishops letter has made the news in Australian newspapers also.

John.

HeraldSun Catholic Church anger over gay marriage

From: HeraldSun

Mon Mar 12 00:00:00 EST 2012

THE Catholic Church stepped up its campaign against civil gay marriage, with a letter from two senior archbishops being read out at services in 2,500 churches on Sunday.

Alternatively, you can copy and paste this link into your browser:

<http://www.heraldsun.com.au/news/more-news/catholic-gay-marriage-anger-grows-in-britain/story-e6frf7lf-1226296501603>

**March 11<sup>th</sup> 2012**

Hi Cecilia,

glad you enjoyed All Down Under website. Its very good.A wide range of information.On that website click on to Voice Of Aussies, then click on to Voices Of The Past. When you get there click on to John O'Brien. Beautiful poetry written about the early day Australian Catholics living mainly in the bush. Its very natural of those times.

You can also Google John O'Brien. There is a lot more information there about him and quite a few more of his poems. In real life he was Father Patrick Hartigan. I can personally relate to some of the incidents and situations described in his poetry although living long after those times. My mother was born and grew up in the country outside of Melbourne. The period that John O'Brien poetry is set in would be roughly the eighteen eighties to the nineteen twenties.

Best regards, John