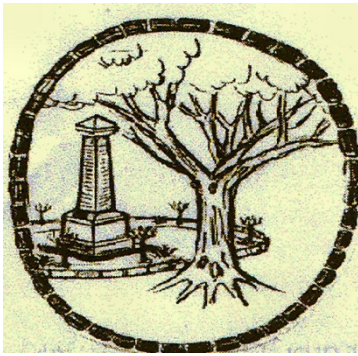




Melton Family History Group Inc

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Registered 6th Dec 1994

September - November

Meeting Times: 1:00pm on the second Thursday of every other month starting in February

Venue: Melton Library – McKenzie Street, Melton

Membership Fee: \$25 per year payable July each year prior to August A.G.M.

Correspondence: 17 Sutherland Ave, Melton Sth, Vic, 3338.

President: Pauline Stotten

Vice President

Secretary: Ian Bowey

Treasurer: Deborah Slattery

Email: sec.meltonfhg@outlook.com

Web site www.meltonfamilyhistory.org

Committee Member: Sue Morton

2026 -2007 Monthly Meetings at Melton Library in McKenzie Street.

8 th October	
10 th December	End of year break up
11 th February 2027	
8 th April	
10 th June	

All dates and times are subject to change

Update: Regular work:

The group's Annual General Meeting was held in August. Most previous committee members continue in their roles, as there were no other nominations. Cheryl Graham decided not to stand for the role of Vice President.

Our nocturnal cemetery tour in May was a great success. As I (Ian) will be overseas next year, we are thinking of holding a daytime cemetery tour when I return home, in mid-May. This depends on the dates for next year's Heritage Festival.

We recently held a display of jugs and vases in the Melton Library display cabinet. A Melton school is due to hold a display from the beginning of September, so we are hoping to hold another display in 2027. As we have more items available, we can use those when the display cabinet becomes free.



View from
the front of
the display
cabinet.



View from
the rear of
the cabinet.

Legendary Claddagh Rings: What are the True Origins of these Symbolic Irish Wedding Rings?



The Claddagh ring design of two hands holding a crowned heart is a recognizable symbol of Ireland and enduring love. It is hugely popular as a fashion accessory and a symbolic gesture. While everyone seems to know the rules of the Claddagh ring that lead up to it being worn as a wedding ring, few people know its history.

The Claddagh ring is, in fact, just one of the more popular iterations of a design used for pledges, vows, and wedding rings that goes all the way back to the ancient Romans.

Specific Symbolism of a Claddagh Wedding Ring

A Claddagh wedding ring represents friendship (the two hands), love (the heart), and loyalty (the crown). The earliest appearance of this design dates back to the early 1700s in an Irish fishing village called Claddagh (thus the name). Since that time, the village has been incorporated into the city of Galway.

The Claddagh ring is a particular example of the much broader ring category called *fede* or faith rings. The classification is shorthand for the Italian phrase *mani in fede* which means 'hands joined in fidelity.' Like modern wedding rings, these were considered tangible symbols of promises of friendship or love.

The Historic Power of Wedding Rings

The power and symbolism of rings dates back to the ancient Egyptians, who saw the circular object as a powerful symbol: "the band with no end representing eternal life and love, and its opening representing a gateway to worlds unknown" (With These Rings, 2017). Egyptians exchanged rings as signs of loyalty and similarly Greeks exchanged them as signs of endless love.

But it was the Romans who first linked the symbolism of the ring with matrimony. The most common wedding ring was a *fede* ring, showing two hands clasped together in an agreement to love and honour one another. The gesture is known as *dextrarum iunctio* in Latin. These types of rings were popular throughout Europe in the Middle Ages.



Byzantine Empire Wedding Ring. The motif of the clasped hands, signifying love, betrothal, and marriage, was first introduced in the Roman period and remained a popular symbol until the 19th century. (CC BY-SA 3.0)

The Modern Claddagh Wedding Ring

Fashions changed with time and the obvious imagery of the shaking hands gave way to wedding rings depicting images of the married couple or, after the rise of Christianity, crosses and other holy symbols to show that Jesus blessed the union.

However, the *fede* wedding ring would eventually make a comeback starting in the 1100s and lasting up until today. Interestingly, it was not until the 18th century that marriages began to take place predominantly in churches.

The British Museum explains how weddings were often held:

“Until Lord Hardwicke's 1753 Act of Marriage there was no clearly defined process for a marriage ceremony and entering the state of matrimony was governed by local customs and rituals. With the introduction of the Book of Common Prayer in 1549 by Edward VI (r.1547-53), there was a clear attempt to encourage people to marry within a church. Nevertheless, canon law prevailed and for this all that was required was the mutual consent of both parties. In addition to uttering words expressing this consent, there were certain signs and symbols that could indicate consent; the holding of hands and the giving of a ring were two of these visible (though not necessary) signs.” (The British Museum, 2017)

Keeping Claddagh Rings in the Family

The Claddagh wedding ring gained popularity as it developed a tradition of being an investment for poor fishing families. A mother would pass her wedding ring down to her daughter or daughter-in-law and so on and so on. This tradition became especially poignant during the awful years of the 19th century when millions of Irish people fled the country hoping for a better life in America or Australia.

The above article was taken the website: Ancient Origins: Unravelling the Mysteries of the Past, written by Kerry Sullivan

Whilst we are on the subject of matrimony

The following article is taken from the magazine 'Country Living' written by Maria Carter from the book

***Unmentionable: The Victorian Lady's Guide to Sex, Marriage, and Manners*, by Therese O'Neill**

Get "the talk" from mum on your wedding day

A proper Victorian lady wouldn't be expecting anything more than a "lovely cuddle" on her wedding night, says O'Neill, and if a courtship was done respectably, she adds, a newlywed wife and husband barely knew each other. The (almost entirely male) marriage experts of the day were unanimous in the belief that "a mother was downright cruel to send her daughter off to her nuptial bed without telling her what awaited her," says O'Neill. They didn't tell *mothers* what to say, O'Neill adds, but they warned that a bride could be traumatized if unprepared.

First, downplay your talents

Victorian women didn't have careers, but even in special cases where they had God-given talents—being an opera singer or writing children's storybooks about the Bible—they weren't considered marriage material, O'Neill explains. "For a wife to work was to declare that her husband was incompetent and could not provide for his family," says O'Neill.

Don't make love purely for pleasure or fun

Doing so led to diseases like cancer, or at least that's what some Victorian-era experts thought. "These doctors very seldom cited anything remotely connected to science for their beliefs, but they didn't need to," says O'Neill. "Most of the people who bought their books, thought being punished by God and nature for transgressing their designs made perfect sense."

Don't make love when you're feeling absent minded...

The thinking was that a child conceived during a less-than-exciting encounter would *itself* to be dull and absent-minded. "As evidence they pointed to how many great men in history, like Da Vinci, were bastards," says O'Neill. "As bastards it was assumed they were conceived in passion, making their father's seed more acute than in normal situations."

Or under the influence of alcohol

It was even more dangerous to try and conceive if drunk," says O'Neill, "that's how 'idiocy and numerous nervous maladies' were transferred to the child."

Don't nag your husband or ask too much of him

Nagging, like whining in kids, is a side effect of being powerless. In a world where a woman was at the mercy of her husband's mood and decisions, she might find a lot to complain about," says Oneill. But never mind all that: American reformer William Jay, reflecting on a Christian marriage, wrote during the early 19th century that women must not complain, even if there's reason to, because the man's authority "is the consequence of the sin of your own [female] sex."

Now on a lighter note

One of the Craziest and Most Interesting Figures of the Middle Ages

Byzantine Emperor Andronikos I Komnenos only reigned for 2 years but led one of the most interesting and adventurous lives on record. He was the cousin of Emperor Manuel I Komnenos and was renowned for his handsome features and personal charisma. Below is a chronological list of his exploits:

In 1152-1153 he seduced and slept with the Emperor's niece (also his own niece) Eudokia Komnene

In 1155 he was imprisoned in Constantinople for conspiring against his cousin Manuel with Geza II of Hungary.

In 1159 he dug his way out of his prison cell. When his escape was discovered his wife was locked in his cell. He then dug back into his cell to sleep with his wife before escaping again. He was captured and locked up again.

In 1164 he escaped prison AGAIN by convincing a servant to make a wax impression of his cell key.

In 1167 he turned up in Antioch where he seduced Manuel's sister in law Philippa of Antioch.

In 1168 he abandoned Philippa and became the lover of Theodora Komnene, another family relation and the widow of King Baldwin III of Jerusalem. He moved from court to court with Theodora until 1180 when he was forced to return to Constantinople.

Manuel died in 1180 and his 11 year old son Alexios II became Emperor. A regency council was set up and by 1182 Andronikos took control of the regency. He then stirred up massacre of thousands of Latins living in Constantinople.

In 1183 Andronikos forced Alexios II to sign a death sentence for his own mother Empress Maria. A few months later Alexios II was strangled and his body thrown in the sea. Andronikos then became the Emperor.

In 1184 the city of Nicaea in Anatolia rebelled against Andronikos. While putting the city under siege Andronikos had the mother of the rebel placed on top of a battering ram so the defenders wouldn't attack it.

In 1185 Andronikos was seized by the mob. He was tied to a post and tortured for 3 days. This included gouging out one of his eyes, cutting off his right hand and ripping his hair and teeth out. He was then taken to the hippodrome and tied upside down, feet apart. Two soldiers took turns seeing how deep their swords could cut until he was split in two.

According to our sources he remained conscious and alert through it all. His body was left in the dirt.

The above article was taken from the internet and is freely available.