

FRASER COAST Chronicle

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2011

\$1.30

FARE THEE WELL

By MAT NOTT

AUSTRALIA'S oldest woman has passed away. Miriam Schmierer turned 112 years old last August. Relatives reported that Mrs Schmierer died in her sleep at Masters Lodge, her home of more than 20 years, in Hervey Bay. A funeral service will be held in Hervey Bay on a date to be fixed.

REPORT PAGE 3



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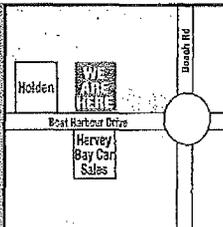
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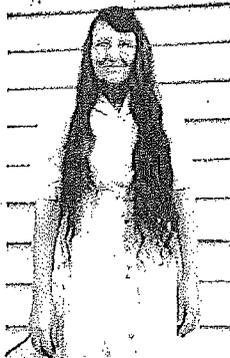
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WISE OLD SOUL: Mrs Miriam Schmierer, pictured celebrating her 111th birthday, expressed the wish to be buried in Gayndah alongside her husband Grenville. PHOTO: ALISTAIR BRIGHMAN



Mrs Schmierer in her earlier years. PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED



With her great-great grandchildren. PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

What the grease was to the wagon wheel, my Bible is to me every day of the week.

I stay in one place and hear a lot of travel but do not see the distances between places, therefore all countries are close to my heart

TIMELINE

An approximate timeline of Mrs Schmierer's life

1899 Born at Mt Whitestone, near Grantham

1912 Aged 13, leaves school and becomes involved with Salvation Army

1914 First World War begins

1918 Attends Salvation Army meetings in Brisbane with father

1921 Meets future husband Grenville Schmierer in Gayndah

1923 Marries Mr Schmierer

Some years later, Mr Schmierer builds a two-bedroom home in the Woodmillar district

Spends Sundays for five years visiting hospital patients

1928 Son Austin born.

1929 Great Depression

1931 Son Mervyn is born

1939 Second World War

1961 Settles in Torquay

1965 Mr Schmierer dies

1976 Son Austin dies

1991 Moves to Masters Lodge

2005 Son Mervyn dies

September 29, 2011 Mrs Schmierer dies

Coast mourns death of country's oldest woman

THE Fraser Coast has lost a wonderful, wise old soul.

Australia's oldest woman, and one of the oldest women in the world, Mrs Miriam Schmierer, has passed away.

Friends and relatives reported that Mrs Schmierer died at Masters Lodge, her Harvey Bay home for 20 years, on Thursday, September 29, about 3pm.

Her great niece, Cecily White, said yesterday all the family was still engaged in spreading the news across five generations of blood relatives living in several countries.

Although the family was shocked, it was the memories of Mrs Schmierer that were sustaining them.

"I often said to my aunty that if I could get a computer lead and plug it into her brain and down-



MAT NOTT

load what she had seen and done during 112 years - it would have been unbelievable," Mrs White said.

"We all used to laugh when she would tell the story about how on the day that she saw her first motor car that she was terrified and ran and hid because she did not know what it was.

"She was an amazing woman who had an amazing life; the things that she lived through were marvellous."

Mrs Schmierer would make headlines across Australia each year as she passed another milestone.

Yesterday, news of her death

dominated nightly national news reports and swept the internet.

This reporter, having interviewed Mrs Schmierer on the eve of her 112th birthday in August, suspects these sorts of happenings would have held little significance.

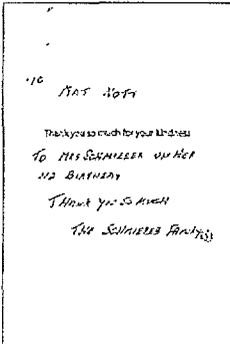
Her views of the world, and her conversation, were deeply informed by her Christian faith.

There was no doubting that she retained her love of conversation and company until the end.

Mrs White said one of Mrs Schmierer's grandsons, a priest, would fly from overseas to conduct the funeral service.

Mrs White said it was planned at this stage to hold a funeral service at a Pialba church Mrs Schmierer used to attend.

Mrs Schmierer expressed the wish to be buried in Gayndah alongside her husband Grenville.



Thank you card sent to Mat Nott after Mrs. Schmierer's 112th birthday. PHOTO: ALISTAIR BRIGHMAN

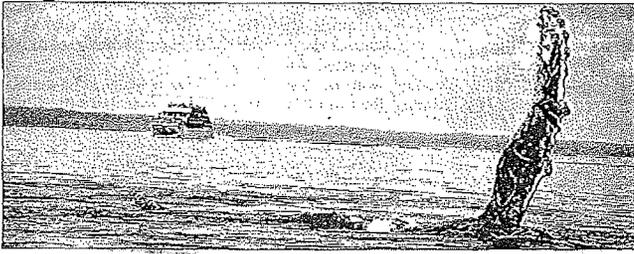
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Extra protection for special white whales



Boats and jetski's must cut their engines at least 500 metres from a humpback whale with 90 per cent or more white colouration according to a state government declaration.

Extra protection for 'special interest' whales like the famous all-white humpback Migaloo automatically extends to the new star of Queensland's coast, the recently sighted baby white whale.

Acting Environment Minister Rachel Nolan assured whale watchers along the coast that the calf was fully covered by the annual special interest declaration which is in force until December 31.

"All humpback whales with 90 per cent or more white coloration have 'special interest' status in Queensland waters to help them swim freely and safely on their annual migration," Ms Nolan said.

"That means no-one can bring a boat or jetski closer than 500 metres or fly an aircraft closer than 2000 feet to the whale without

specific written permission.

"We're all hoping to catch a glimpse of this very special baby as it heads south with its mum over the coming weeks but it's also important to remember that getting too close can be dangerous, for people and whales."

Ms Nolan urged all boat users to take extra care on the water, keep an eye out and reduce speed if whales are sighted.

"Remember, if the whale shows any sign of being disturbed or there is a risk of separating a mother from her calf, you should slowly move away," she said.

"If you are on a boat and a whale surfaces nearby you must disengage the gears and leave the motor idling or move away at a speed of less than 4 knots until the whale is at least 300m away."



Australia's oldest person, Hervey Bay's Miriam Schmierer, died in her sleep in her Masters Lodge suite, aged 112 last month.

Country's oldest dies in her sleep after making 112

Forty days after celebrating her 112th birthday, Hervey Bay's Miriam Schmierer, Australia's oldest person and number 30 on the world's super centenarians list, died peacefully in her sleep.

She outlived many of her relatives including her older sister who died aged 103, her two sons

Austin and Mervyn, and her husband, Grenville Schmierer, who died in 1965.

She retired to Hervey Bay with her husband in 1961 and moved into Masters Lodge 30 years later.

She attributed her long life mostly to her strong faith, modest lifestyle and good diet.

Although she drank a cup of parsley tea every day, she doubted it made any difference to her longevity.

She wrote more than 80 letters each year to family and friends and wrote regularly for the Masters Lodge newsletter.

She became Australia's oldest person in 2009 aged 109.

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