

## **BUNINYONG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**Reg. No. A0030085Y**

**Web Site <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~buninhis>**

**PO Box 98, Buninyong, Vic. 3357.**

### **Newsletter**



Members of the Kelsall Family inspecting the remains of the Fellmongery on Williamson's Creek near Clarendon on our May excursion. The business operated from around 1855 until 1907, when operations moved to Brown Hill. The bluestone remains are still impressive.

### **June 2013**

At our June meeting, our guest speaker was Dr. Jan Croggon, Senior Historian at Sovereign Hill Museums, who spoke about the opportunities for women on the goldfields in the 1850s, and the way the living museum interprets the lives of these women. Jan's illustrated presentation was much enjoyed by all present.

## **APRIL PRESENTATION ON EUGENE VON GUERARD**

At our April meeting, we had a wonderful guest speaker in Dr. Ruth Pullin, an art historian who has a special interest in the goldfields artist Eugene Von Guerard. Ruth gave an engaging talk about Von Guerard's travels through our district, from Geelong to Buninyong and then to Ballarat in 1853. Doug Bradby kindly offered Ruth accommodation at the Old School House at Scotchman's Lead (B & B) and the next day Doug toured the locality with Ruth, trying to find the exact sites of the artist's drawings, with mixed success but much exchange of history.

## **HASTIE DESCENDANT VISITS**

In April Joy Leake from NSW visited us, a great, great granddaughter of the Rev. Thomas Hastie. It was a pleasure to take her to visit the Uniting Church and experience her pleasure in seeing her ancestor's portrait etched into the stain glass window.

## **HERITAGE FESTIVAL 2013**

On the weekend of 11-12 May, we participated in the Ballarat Heritage Weekend, opening the Court House on Saturday and Sunday, with a display of musical instruments. We also conducted walking tours around Buninyong on both days, and had quite a few visitors taking the free vintage bus from Ballarat. Thanks to those members who gave their time to volunteer over the weekend.

## **PLAQUES FOR OUR HISTORIC BUILDINGS**

This month blue metal plaques have appeared on 26 historic buildings in central Buninyong. This has been a project of the Buninyong and District Historical Society, in association with the Buninyong and District Community (formerly Progress) Association. We received grants from the Bendigo Bank and the City of Ballarat to enable the plaques to be manufactured in Ballarat, displaying historical information from our collection. The final part of the project will add QR codes to some of the plaques, which will allow people to use their smart phone to find out more about selected buildings and businesses by accessing information on our web site.

## JOHN ADAMS'S STORE

The following newspaper articles, found on the National Library of Australia's wonderful Trove website, give us some more precise information about the old Adams store, later associated with Ivan Eames, and in May 2013 hosting a display of watercolours by Melbourne artist John Hargreave, in association with the Buninyong Film Festival.

From the *Geelong Advertiser*, 14 April 1854

GOLD FIELDS. BUNINYONG.

MESSRS. BOHN & JOHNSON have purchased the Business of Mr John Adams, and laid in a very large Stock of Drapery, Provisions, Cloth clothing, Ironmongery, Hardware. Tools and all things requisite for a GENERAL WHOLESALE TRADE. They are prepared to execute orders to any extent, at a very small advance on cost and carriage, and they intend by their prices, their attention, and their punctuality in delivering goods, to prove to the storekeepers and others on the diggings, that it will be to their advantage to patronize THE BUNINYONG STORES.

Messrs. BOHN & JOHNSON'S Cart, will be on the Diggings every day, with Bread of the first quality, which will always be delivered at an early and certain hour.

Having a Wholesale License for the Sale of Spirits, Wines. Beer, &c., they can supply first-rate articles in this line cheaper than any other house in the district. The necessity of a proper supply of medicines having been repeatedly urged upon them, they have purchased a complete Stock of Drugs and Chemicals, and are prepared to supply surgeons, make up prescriptions, and transact all the Business of Chemist and Druggist.

N.B.-The Highest Price always given for Gold, and on payment for goods purchased TOWN PRICE will be lowed.

From the *Star*, Ballarat, 16 September 1856

Buninyong, at the present, is undergoing alteration and gradual improvement. Mr Adams is erecting a large new store in the centre of Buninyong, his present being rather out of the way, and other stores are in course of erection. There is also Mr Allan's steam flour mill, which is being rapidly proceeded with.

## BIOGRAPHICAL QUERIES

**BERGER** - Albert Berger was killed in a mining accident at Union Jack Gully near Buninyong in February 1933, aged 68.

**BULWER**, Samuel – miner at Morrisons/ Dollys Creek in the 1870s, and died in 1901 and was buried at Morrisons.

**BULL** – Henry Bull arrived in Buninyong in 1856 and became a gardener, living in Sommerville St. and probably worked for Francis Moss. His son Henry became a teacher at the Buninyong State school in the early 1870s, before the family migrated to New Zealand in the late 1870s. Query from NZ

**FIELDS** - Henry Fields Died 29 June 1909 Bunninyong. Henry lived in the area for 50 years. He was a mining agent. Query from Queensland

**KEEBLE** – Thomas, an ex-convict from Van Dieman’s Land, who was employed by Henry Baccus of Peerewur, and later settled as a farmer with his sons in the Bungaree/Dunnstown area.

**PATTENDEN** – Thomas, of Durham Lead, and family.

**SCANLON** - Michael Scanlon settled at Scots March in about 1860, then to Cargarie from c1866 to 1874, and moved to Wycheproof in 1876 where he selected land.

**THOMAS** – Thomas Thomas, from Wales, purchased land at Warrenheip in the 1860s, but by 1874 had moved to Narraport. Query from Wales

**TRAYNOR** - Three Traynor boys, sons of Thomas Traynor, shepherd, of Morangourke, baptized by Rev. Hastie in 1851.

**VESEY** – James Vesey was a miner at Durham Lead in the 1869s. Query from Queensland

**WHITE** - In 1863 Emma Long White, aged 16, died in Buninyong, Victoria and was buried in an unmarked grave. Her mother Sophia was later to be matron of the Ballarat Female Refuge. What was Emma doing in Buninyong at the time of her death?

**WHITE** – Who was Granny White whom the lane is named after?

**Anyone with information about these families is invited to contact the Secretary, Anne Beggs-Sunter, at [a.beggs-sunter@ballarat.edu.au](mailto:a.beggs-sunter@ballarat.edu.au)**

## **The Old Buninyong Court House**

*The Argus* Monday 24 March 1856 page 5-6, comments on “public excitement” over the £44,033 allocated by the Government on the new Governor’s residence at Toorak.

*Geelong Advertiser* Saturday 29 March 1856 pg 2 – In 1852, there was a vote to erect a courthouse in Buninyong. The timber was felled, split and has since been left to rot, and the monetary vote appropriated probably to bluestone the piggeries at Toorak, or provide lattice-work poultry

houses for Toorak bantams. At any rate, the vote is unexpended and Buninyong is without police, courthouse, magistrate or JPs.

There were continual complaints about the inadequate buildings at Buninyong, which were demolished by July 1856 (*Miner and Weekly Star*, 19 July, 1856) Hearings were temporarily held in a nearby house during this busy year, when over 400 cases were held in one quarter, and sixteen police were stationed at Buninyong. The cause of the increase in business was of course the opening up of the goldfields surrounding Buninyong, including Green Hills, Black Lead, Chalk Hills and Hard Hills. Crimes involved theft of horses, money, hay and food, particularly from tents, and a number of cases relate to "disorderly houses" being kept on the goldfields.

On 22 December 1857 a contract was let by the Government for the building of a Court of Petty Sessions at Buninyong. Richard Rennie, who had not previously worked for the Government, was the successful tenderer. The cost was 745 pounds (*Government Gazette*, 1857). The court was built of stone, quarried at the nearby Stone Quarry Lead.

The foundation stone for the new court was laid on 22 January 1858 by Governor Barkly, 'close to the old police station'. (*Ballarat Star*, 28 Jan. 1858)

A further contract was let on 18 June 1858 for a Warden's Office. The contract was let to Edmonds and Dawson for 400 pounds. The Warden's Office was the base of the Warden and the local Court of Mines, elected under the terms of the new Goldfields Act. The Warden administered the system of miners' rights, which allowed each holder of a right to one eighth of an acre of land for residential purposes. (*Ballarat Star*, 8 January 1858) Each division also had a Mining Surveyor, who was paid fees by miners for his services. (*Hansard*, 28 April 1858, p. 432) The first Warden was John Cogden, and any cases which he could not settle went to the bi-monthly sitting of the Court of Mines, which was presided over by Judge Warrington Rogers, who had recently moved into his new residence *Brim Brim*, close to the court.

A Notice in the *Government Gazette* dated 18 September 1858, signed Charles Gavin Duffy of the Public Works Office, noted that the advertisement calling for tenders for Court House, Buninyong, *is withdrawn*. This may explain the set of plans existing in the PROV for a court house at Buninyong that was never built.

## FRANCIS MOSS OF *MOSSMONT*: HIS NURSERY AND THE BALLARAT APPLE



The Ballarat Apple, also known as Stewart's Seedling

Francis Moss was born in 1834, County Durham, England, Episcopalian. His father was Abendnigo, mother Jane Hobson. His father was a gardener and Francis trained as a gardener.

He came to Port Phillip, and established the *Mossmont* nursery at Buninyong in about 1853. Francis was a nurseryman, and grew and sold red, white and yellow gooseberries, strawberries, red and black currants, plums, cherries and rhubarb. He grew many vegetables too, and learned some Cantonese so that he could converse with the Chinese he employed to work in his gardens. He imported seed from England, France and Italy, and supplied many of the Chinese market gardeners in Ballarat. He imported thousands of daffodil bulbs, and birds like thrushes and goldfinches. He advised on plantings for the Buninyong Cemetery and the Botanic Gardens.

By 1860, he was able to build his handsome residence *Mossmont* on the edge of Buninyong, on the Durham Lead road. He developed a great talent for budding and grafting fruit trees, after all imported stock suffered blight. He experimented with apple stocks, and with the help of Thomas Lang of Ballarat, developed a blight-free stock. Hence the Stewart's Seedling, or Ballarat Seedling, named by Francis Moss in the 1870s. A Mrs Stewart of Golden Point, Ballarat, showed the apple from a seedling, and Francis distributed it. It was a snow white apple, very acidic, and there is an example planted in the Old Library garden at Buninyong by the Historical Society in July 1991.

Henry Bull, who was a gardener in Buninyong in the 1860s and 1870s, and who lived in Somerville St. very close to Moss's nursery, probably worked for Moss, and according to descendants was responsible for the introduction of the Ballarat apple into New Zealand, when he moved there later in the 1870s.

An article in *The Gardener* of 12 July 1873 describes the Moss nursery, with its 17 acres of gardens. After a series of tragic family deaths, in 1881 Francis married (second marriage) Augusta Munroe, former teacher at the Buninyong school, and they had two daughters. Francis left his son William Esmond to run the Buninyong business, and in 1887 purchased 1000 acres of virgin bushland on the Tarwin River halfway between Mirboo North (the terminus of the railway from Melbourne) and Leongatha, starting the new *Mossmont*.

He appointed a Mr William Gould of Warrenheip as the manager of his nursery in South Gippsland. Gould had been trained at Brunnings Nursery in the 1860s, and supervised for Moss until 1917, with his son George assisting him from 1910 to 1917. Francis would frequently visit to superintend the development of seeds and cuttings. Later he opened another nursery in Leongatha.

Francis collapsed in 1912, and died in 1916, aged 82. In 1917 the Buninyong nursery was sold. His son William Moss owned two and a half acres at 511 Learmonth St., which was planted with 16 apple trees. There was a Five Crown, a Snow, a Russian apple, one like a Golden Delicious. The orchard was also planted with oaks, elms, wisteria and laburnum. A 1906 Directory lists William Moss, gardener, of Learmonth St. This land was sold to the Odgers family in 1917, and the apples were still cared for and in production, in the 1990s.

William married Charlotta Pask, the daughter of Buninyong gardener Lambert Pask, in 1890, and continued the Gippsland business with his son William Edward. In 1946 the family sold out at Leongatha, and established a new *Mossmont* at Monbulk. In 1990 the 5<sup>th</sup> generation of the family established a new branch of the business at Griffith in NSW, which allows improved plant hygiene, and the development of stone fruits.

**Thanks to Stephen Bull from New Zealand for adding another piece to the story of Francis Moss and his wonderful work as a nurseryman. A search of the Internet shows that the 'Ballarat Apple' can today be purchased in New Zealand and the UK.**

## **The Clarendon/ Burnt Bridge Fellmongery**

In 1856 there was a fellmongery operating near Clarendon (close to Burnt Bridge village) on Williamson's Creek. A fellmongery prepares hides or skins, particularly sheepskins, for tanning, by removing the wool or hair from the hides. The name is derived from the Old English 'fell' meaning skins and 'monger' meaning dealer. Fellmongery is one of the oldest professions in the world and since ancient times, man has used the skins of animals to clothe himself, and for making domestic articles.

John Kelsall (1825-1904) was a woolsorter from Bradford, Yorkshire, who arrived at Geelong on 29 June 1849 on the *Saxon* as an immigrant sponsored

by Niel Black. He settled at Buninyong soon after where he worked for the Learmonth's, who had a fellmongery. His son John was born at Melbourne in 1852, and Joseph James was born at Buninyong in 1854. The 1856 Electoral Roll lists John Kelsall, fellmonger, at Buninyong Station (leasehold).

The 1856 Civil Statistics for Victoria shows that a fellmongery was operating at Clarendon, and two at Buninyong. The 1857 census lists 3 tanners at Clarendon – one was Joseph Graham. We do not know the name of the operator, but the following advertisement appeared in the *Ballarat Star* on 18 April 1860:

FELLMONGERY at CORDUROY BRIDGE, 14 miles front Ballarat, on the main Geelong road. The undersigned have for Sale the above Premises, which are admirably situated for carrying on the Fellmongery or tanning business, having a never failing supply of running water, and conveniently situated for the Ballarat district. The plant stands on about two acres of land, and consists of all the appliances suitable for either of the above trades.

For further particulars apply to J.H. CLOUGH & Co. 111, 118, and 115 Collins Street west, Melbourne

It seems likely that the Kelsalls purchased the operation and were leasing a 40 acre block at Burnt Bridge fronting Williamson's Creek (Parish of Narmbool, section A4), which was purchased by J. Kelsall on 12 February 1876. A report on a coursing event at Burnt Bridge in April 1876 indicates 'half-a-dozen Kelsalls' were enthusiastic members of the hunt (*Ballarat Star*, 19 April 1876). An entry on John Kelsall junior (born 1852) in *Victoria and Its Metropolis* 1888 Vol 2 p. 110 notes that when he was old enough he worked with his father for several seasons, then managed the Burnt Bridge fellmongery for five years before he went to the Wimmera 'to gain colonial experience'. In 1885 Charles P. Kelsall and John Junior were listed in *Wise's Directory* as fellmongers, Clarendon. A 1888-9 Directory lists Charles P. Kelsall, fellmonger, at Clarendon, but there was no Kelsall listed at Clarendon in 1890 Directory, indicating that they must have sold the business. William Bloxham was working at the fellmongery in 1874, and his son Reuban worked at the Clarendon fellmongery until 1907 when it closed and moved to Brown Hill.

On 26 May 2013 the Buninyong and District Historical Society had an excursion to the site of the fellmongery, on the banks of Williamson's Creek. Impressive bluestone remains of the fellmongery remain, of solid blue stone cut into blocks. We speculated on where the stone might have been quarried - possibly from a stone reserve on Williamson's Creek, on the Mt. Doran side, from which stone was later carted to the railway.

Next to the site are some old fruit trees, and stone paving indicating the site of a house and garden. Nearby is the site of a horse works, with a stone circle and indentation in the middle, where a shaft would have been operated by a horse going round in circles. This would have provided power to lift water from the creek to a storage tank, and then send it down to the fellmongery, with signs of a channel and reservoir constructed to hold water before it was washed down into Williamson's Creek.