

BUNINYONG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Reg. No. A0030085Y

Web Site <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~buninhis>
PO Box 98, Buninyong, Vic. 3357.

Newsletter

November 2023



AMAGA Workshop at Buninyong September 2023. Caroline Wall from Australian Museums and Galleries Association Victoria expertly photographs items from the collection, assisted by Rose Harrison, Fiona Shaw and Angela Aldred.

At our 41st AGM held on 19 October, a new committee was elected for the coming year. We congratulate Simon Dennis on returning for a term as President, and Fiona Shaw on being elected Vice-President. We thanked retiring President Ron Gilchrist, who had just returned from a six month visit to Europe, and is keen to engage with our

new commitment to Victoria Collections. Anne Beggs-Sunter was re-elected as Secretary and Public Officer. We thanked Chris Hindhaugh for his services as Treasurer, and are seeking a new nomination for that position. Our Guest Speaker was Geoff McArthur, who spoke about his recent book, *Under the Red Umbrella*, a biography of the entrepreneurial Ballarat woman Margaret Muller, who developed an umbrella-making business and retail sales outlets at a time when a woman's place was ostensibly in the home.

AMaGA Workshop

We were very fortunate to have the benefit of a six day workshop conducted at our headquarters in August-September by Caroline Wall from the Australian Museums and Galleries Association Victorian chapter. Caroline worked with eight members of our Society in training us about all aspects of caring for a valuable collection, from acquisition policy to caring for collections, labelling and storage, and disaster recovery. She presented us with a comprehensive kit of items to be stored ready for recovering from a disaster such as a flood. Caroline also photographed about fifty items from our collection, which were catalogued ready for submission to Victoria Collections. Altogether a very busy but rewarding workshop.

Mount Buninyong VCAT Challenge

The application to build a 'tourist accommodation' complex in the slope of Mount Buninyong facing Yendon No 2 Road is progressing slowly. After two compulsory conferences at VCAT, where Anne Beggs-Sunter joined with four neighbours and the City of Ballarat in opposing the application to place eight 'glamtainers' (containers) on the lower slope of Mount Buninyong facing Yendon No 2 road. This came after the same applicant's application to build six 'sky barrels' on Mount Buninyong was rejected by VCAT in 2021. The matter has now been listed for a three day hearing in March 2024.

Scotsburn Union Church.

The little timber building dates from 1884, when Andrew Scott esquire granted half an acre of his land to the Presbyterian Church for the purpose of building a church, 'on condition that the Church, when built, be open for services to all the Evangelical Denominations'. Trustees were appointed, and the little timber church was built, with services alternating between the Presbyterian and Anglican denominations, serviced from Buninyong. The last Anglican service was held in 1972, and from the 1980s the congregation was served by a number of visiting ministers, of different Christian denominations, in a truly ecumenical spirit. The church was particularly associated with Howard Williams who was the deeply committed leader of the congregation, and Heather Stokes from Lal Lal.

Sadly the small congregation took the decision to close the church during Covid, and the Presbyterian Church in Melbourne put the church up for sale. Fortunately, a neighbor has purchased it, and is carefully restoring it, and will make it available for community celebrations. The records of the church have been deposited with our Society, thanks to Heather Stokes.



The former Scotsburn Union Church, being restored in October 2023, with trees cut down and new fence being installed.

Old Swimming Baths, Buninyong Gardens

Many people have been asking what is happening at the Botanic Gardens, with the old swimming baths out of bounds and the former tranquil garden becoming a rampant growth of weeds and sucklings.

In 2019, Ballarat City Council suddenly closed off the area, erected a fence around it, and declared that the walls were unstable, while they investigated leaks from the Gong wall along Cornish St. A sign was erected by BCC, saying negotiations with Heritage Victoria would be undertaken.

After many enquiries by our Society, and the Friends of the Buninyong Botanic Gardens, we have finally received advice from the City of Ballarat's Heritage Advisor that Heritage Victoria has given a permit for works to proceed in stabilising the walls. Perhaps in 2024 we will see this special space restored and again available to the public to enjoy.



Remember back to 2017, when the Bard of Buninyong used the baths to great effect for a performance of Shakespeare directed by Susan Pilbeam?

Opening of the Bunny Trail, Mount Clear

A contingent of our members attended the official opening of the 'Bunny Trail', in Recreation Road Mount Clear, on 24 October 2023. Thanks to the great work of the Friends of the Canadian Corridor, it is now possible to walk or cycle from Mount Clear

back to the Ballarat Railway Station, following the old Buninyong-Ballarat railway line. The next stage of the project will be working to open the trail from Mount Clear to Buninyong. This has been a long-held dream by our Society, and we are energised by the drive of Jeff Roots from the Friends group, who has been very successful in dealing with all levels of government in making things happen.



Opening the Bunny Trail at Recreation Road, Mount Clear Ian Corcoran from the Buninyong branch Bendigo Bank, spoke about the bank's generous support of the development of the trail, funding a new bridge, and signage along the track. Mayor Des Hudson cut the ribbon, and Jeff Roots of the Friends of the Canadian Corridor was the very proud father of the project.

Interestingly, we had a visit from Norm Houghton from Geelong, who is preparing a book on the Buninyong-Ballarat railway. Bob Skewes has been assisting the author with information and photographs. The book should be ready next year.

Remember we are open on the third Saturday of every month, from 9.30am to 1.00pm, when members will be on hand to help visitors.

Next Meeting will be our Christmas Party on Thursday 21 December 2023