

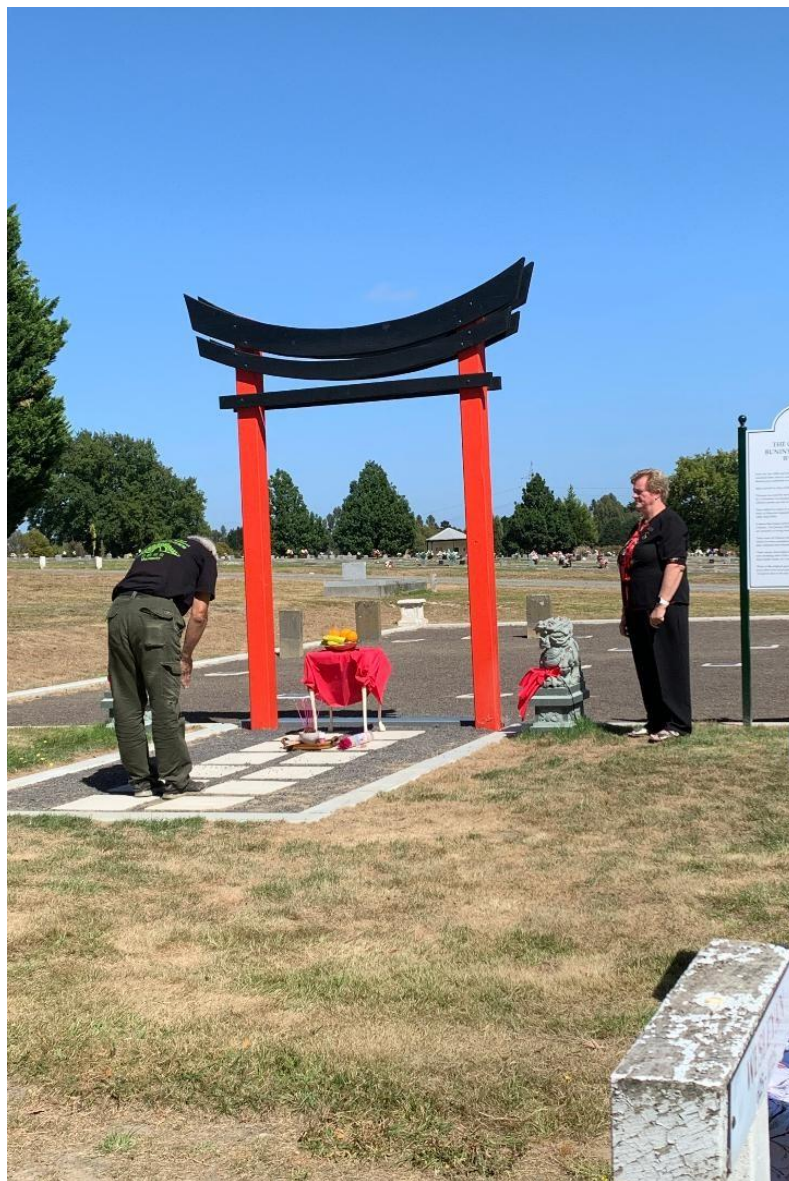
BUNINYONG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Reg. No. A0030085Y

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

Newsletter

April 2024



Blessing the new Chinese Memorial at the Buninyong Cemetery Feb 2024. Unicorns have been installed on either side of the arch.

We began the year 2024 at our February meeting with an address by Norm Houghton, who has just launched his book *The Bunny*, a history of the Buninyong to Ballarat railway that operated between 1887 and 1930. We have copies of the book for sale at \$30 each.

Our April speakers are John Gibson and Mark Courneyea, our experts in industrial archaeology, speaking about the history of brickmaking in our area. This will be followed up with an excursion to the old Ballarat Guncotton site in Elizabeth St Delacombe on Saturday 27 April at 10.00am. We will explore the role of the Ballarat Paper Mills, with clay sources from Lal Lal.

Chinese Graves Marked

During 2023, the Buninyong Cemetery Trust worked with Charles Zhang from the Chinese Australian Cultural Society of Ballarat to better honour the Chinese who were buried at the Buninyong Cemetery in the nineteenth century. In all there were 25 Chinese burials, but most of the grave stones have disappeared, so this project involved installing stone plinths and plaques to mark the graves, with names, details of birthplace and burial dates.

The new memorial was officially opened on 24 February 2024 by Charles Zhang of the Chinese Australian Cultural Society Ballarat, with substantial contributions from the Chinese Lions Club of Melbourne, the Buninyong Community Bank, the Lions Club of Buninyong, and Buninyong Men's Shed, who made the memorial arch. Barry Fitzgerald, chair of the Cemetery Committee, was instrumental in the successful completion of the project.

Buninyong CWA Revived

It was exciting to see the revival of the Buninyong Country Women's Association in April, at a meeting held at the Community House. Prospects look bright for new members to gather at coming meetings. Our member Marg McKee is working on a history of the CWA in Buninyong.

Scott Family Diaries

We recently received a gracious gift from Celia Burnham of Mount Boninyong of digital copies of early station diaries kept by members of the Scott family from 1839 until the 1860s. They give a wonderful insight into early Buninyong, and also the Warracknabeal district, which Robert and Andrew Scott settled in the 1840s. It is very interesting to see how the family managed in the 1840s, with their house on the main road from Geelong to the Pyrenees, there were many visitors passing through, and details about controlling stock. One name that crops up frequently is John Veitch, who was the storekeeper at Buninyong from 1843. All kinds of household requisites were purchased from Veitch, and the Scotts in turn traded meat or dairy products from their farm. The diaries also record the excitement of the discovery of gold in 1851, and the disruption that caused to their lives.

Murder in Buninyong 1846: Orange and Green: The sad story of Jeremiah Connell; Murder at the Buninyong Inn,

Jeremiah Connell was a bounty immigrant who arrived in Port Phillip aboard the *Sea Queen* with his brother/relative (James) in 1844. Jeremiah was convicted for the murder of Edward Martin at the Buninyong Inn in November 1846 and was hanged on 27 January 1847 aged 27 years.

In November 1846 an altercation broke out at Veitch's Buninyong Inn when 28-year-old Jerimah Connell, an Irish bounty immigrant, picked a fight over 'Orange-Green' issues. Connell picked a fight with a young Scotchman Robert Cameron. Later Connell attacked Cameron with a poker, then Edward Martin, an Irish servant working for Veitch. Martin died of the assault to the back of his head, despite the ministrations of Dr Power. Connell was secured by onlookers and sent to Geelong for committal in the police court on 23 November 1846.

Melbourne Argus Friday 20 November 1846, page 2

MURDER. —Late last night we received information that a dreadful murder was committed at Buninyong, on the previous day (Monday last.) All the particulars that we have been able to collect are, that a person named Jeremiah Connell had called at Mr. Veitch's Inn; that he went into the kitchen and brought out a poker, and, without any previous quarrel or provocation, commenced a murderous onslaught on the bystanders. One man had his jaw broken, another was seriously cut on the head, and the de-ceased, a man named Edward Martin, a servant in the employ of Mr. Veitch, was killed on the spot. What the murderer's motive could have been is a mystery, as he had not even been drinking. He was with difficulty secured, and detained in custody, but in the course of the evening he made his escape. Next morning he was again secured by the servants of Mr. Learmonth; that gentleman immediately despatched a messenger to Geelong, with a requisition for a mounted policeman to be sent up, and a trooper will accordingly be despatched this morning. — *Geelong Advertiser*, Nov. 18 — We learn, since the above was in type, that the murder, up to the latest date, was not complete, the wounded man being still in existence, though not expected to survive. The outrage was a genuine Tipperary one, and the only offence given by the victim, who is a Scotchman, was a mild remonstrance against the furious language the murderer was using against Orangemen and Protestants generally. — Ed. M. A.]

Connell was found guilty by the Supreme Court in Melbourne in December 1846, and sentenced to be hanged at Melbourne on 21 January 1847. The following is an account of the execution:

Port Phillip Patriot and Morning Advertiser , 28 January 1847

EXECUTION OF CONNELL THE MURDERER.—Yesterday morning at about five minutes to nine o'clock, the last sentence of the law was carried into execution, upon Jeremiah Connell, convicted at the late Criminal Sessions of the wilful murder of Edward Martin, at Buninyong. From the period at which the warrant arrived from Sydney for the prisoner's execution, he has appeared perfectly reconciled to his fate, and has for some days past, expressed himself

prepared to die; in fact, he stated to a person who visited him two days before his execution, that he should regret being reprieved, under a conviction that he would never be in a more suitable frame of mind to proceed to that home from whence no traveller returns. Connell professed the Roman Catholic Faith, and, since his condemnation, the Rev. Mr. Therry has been unceasing in his exertions for the criminal's eternal welfare, and if the fortitude with which the unfortunate man met his fate, and the penitence which he constantly expressed, for the commission of the crime for which he was condemned, may be regarded as a criterion of the success of Mr. Therry's exertions, they were eminently successful. The evidence against Connell was too clear, and the crime which he had committed too glaring, to justify a petition from those entertaining similar religious tenets to himself for a mitigation of his sentence; but at their earnest solicitation the authorities consented to deliver the body to his friends for interment, instead of consigning it to the last resting place allotted for murderers. Upwards of £15 were readily subscribed for the purpose of giving Connell a respectable funeral, and this fact being made known to the prisoner some days ago, evidently afforded him no inconsiderable delight; indeed, whenever opportunity was offered him to gaze through the grating of his cell upon the burying ground, he expressed to those around him "how happy he should be when resting there, with the sun shining upon him." On Monday night Connell slept soundly, and declared the next morning, that he never felt better or happier in his life! On the following night his last upon earth, the Rev. Mr. Therry was with him until eleven o'clock, the prisoner then appeared uneasy, and requested Sullivan the gaoler, to come and read to him; he then expressed a wish for some refreshment, and being told that he could have whatever he required, ordered a pound of steak, which he eagerly devoured with accompaniments, in fact throughout his confinement, Connell has been remarkable for a voracious appetite. Towards morning the prisoner dozed off for a short period, but quickly awoke, and complained of illness, expressing a fear that he was going to die; some warm tea was given to him, and he quickly rallied, recovered his usual composure, and continued counting the hours as they struck until six o'clock, when he observed, that for fear the gaolers should be late, he would himself remove the pads which were placed upon his legs to prevent injury from the heavy irons with which he was encumbered; this he accordingly did, remarking in reference to the gaolers 'this will save them time you know.' At about half past seven o'clock the prisoner was brought from his cell, for the purpose of having his irons knocked off. This operation, which lasted about twenty minutes, was evidently highly satisfactory to Connell; he stood without assistance, placing his foot upon an anvil, and quietly watching the work of knocking out the bolts — this done, the prisoner smiled, and shaking his legs, said, 'I've a free leg once more,' and with a firm step walked again into his cell. Connell expressed much anxiety to appear on the scaffold respectably dressed, and suitable attire had consequently been provided for him by those who sympathised with his fate. A few moments sufficed the prisoner to arrange his last toilet, who was then attended by the Reverend Mr Therry, with whom he remained in earnest prayer for about an hour. At this time it is supposed that upwards of twelve hundred persons had assembled outside the gaol to witness the execution, the reporters and parties connected with the gaol being inside the yard where the gallows was erected. This erection was in height about forty feet from the surface of the earth, and extended thirteen feet six inches beyond the summit of the wall. About seven feet from the top, the trap was placed, the bolt of which could be withdrawn at pleasure by a rope communicating with the bottom of the scaffold. At half past eight o'clock a slight stir announced that the melancholy procession was on the move, and in a moment more it emerged from the passage into the yard. In front, was the gaoler, immediately behind whom was the culprit, neatly attired in white trowsers, blue jacket, and white waistcoat; his arms were pinioned behind at the elbow, and in his right hand he carried a crucifix; he wore a white cap upon his head, and on his passage to the scaffold, continued praying with the

Reverend Mr Therry, who closely followed his steps — Mr Wintle and the executioner brought up the procession. The prisoner ascended the ladder with a firm step, and without assistance, and having arrived under the fatal beam, shook hands cordially with the gaoler, exclaiming in a loud voice 'Good bye old man,' and slightly advancing towards the edge of the platform, addressed himself to the assembled multitude in a firm voice, in the following words, 'My friends I die in peace with all men, and am prepared to die in the full belief of my faith; I owe no man malice. I will say I did not mean to kill the man, and am more sorry for having killed that young man than I am for my own fate, and may the Lord judge me mercifully.' The bolt was almost immediately withdrawn, and the fall being as nearly as possible, six feet, convulsive struggles of a few minutes duration terminated the earthly sufferings of the misguided man. Connell was born in Cork, on the 18th Sept. 1820, and was consequently in his twenty-seventh year; he was never as has been asserted transported to these colonies, and arrived here about two years and a half ago; in height, he was about five feet eight inches, of an athletic frame, and from a cursory glance at his head, phrenologists would say that intellect rather than animal passion possessed the ascendancy. Though perfectly resigned to his fate, Connell to the last was of opinion that had counsel been employed at his trial, he would merely have been found guilty of manslaughter, and expressed himself bitterly towards a party whom he declared, had previous to his trial, assured him that counsel would be employed in his behalf, and that the necessary fee had already been paid; he expressed his determination of holding up this individual to execration on the scaffold, but was ultimately induced to abandon the idea. Whilst upon the subject, it may be remarked that liberal contributions were obtained for the man's burial, but none for his defence. Connell during his imprisonment was remarkably communicative, and told one of the gaolers that when sober, no one was more quiet, but that if ever he got drunk in a public-house, he was ashamed to go into that house again for a twelvemonth— well knowing that when in a state of intoxication, his conduct was most violent and offensive. We regretted to perceive amongst the crowd of persons who witnessed the execution, a large proportion of women and children.

THE INTERMENT. The body having hung the usual time was cut down and deposited in a handsome coffin, which had been provided for its reception, which was then placed on the shoulders of six of the deceased's countrymen, and followed by about three hundred persons to the place of interment. An attempt was made to take the body into the Roman Catholic Church, (a course under any circumstances unusual) the Rev. Mr. Therry not being in attendance, the Rev. Mr. Welsh refused to permit such a course to be pursued without the sanction of Mr. Therry. After a few minutes hesitation, the coffin was without further delay interred in the Roman Catholic burying ground.

Did Jerimiah Connell get a fair trial? What of the very large crowd who observed his execution, and the 300 Irishmen who took Connell's coffin to be buried in the cemetery? A remarkable twist to the story came a few weeks later, when it was revealed that a very special pair of rosary beads, belonging to Father Therry, had to be retrieved from Connell's coffin after the burial:

Melbourne Argus (Vic. : 1846 - 1848), Friday 30 April 1847, page 2

The Priest's Rosary.—Some thirty or forty years ago, when our venerable townsman, the **Rev.** John Joseph Therry, was leaving his fatherland to enter upon his sacred labours in the then almost terra incognita of New South Wales, he was presented by command of his Holiness the then Pope with a handsome rosary, which, in addition to the other virtues it might possess, had received the crowning grace of the Papal benediction. A gift so precious was naturally cherished

by the Rev. Father as the very apple of his eye, and in all his wanderings since it has been his bosom friend and comforter, seldom laid aside, even for a moment, excepting during the hours of sleep. Father Therry, it will be recollected, was the spiritual adviser and attendant upon the wretched man Jeremiah Connell, who not long since expiated on the Melbourne scaffold the wanton murder he had committed at Buninyong a few months previously. Connell, it will be recollected, acknowledged his guilt, and expressed his contrition on the scaffold, and it seems that in his last moments he prevailed upon the Rev. Father to allow him to use the Pope's rosary when offering up his last prayers to the Almighty for the salvation of his immortal soul. In the excitement necessarily produced by the revolting ceremonial which immediately followed, the Rev. Father forgot his rosary, and the wretched criminal was launched into eternity with the blessed relic hanging around his neck. The execution, it will be recollected, was followed up by a grossly indecorous attempt to get up a triumphal funeral, which, to their credit be it spoken, but few of the Melbourne Greeks would participate in; but it seems that in the hurry consequent upon the preparations, the Pope's rosary was again forgotten, and was actually consigned with the body to the murderer's grave. When the excitement subsided, the loss was discovered, and the Rev. Father sought, as a matter of course, the recovery of his treasure, but being no favorite with his hearers, as, indeed, no really good man could be - it was not until after hard struggling that he succeeded, and the grave being opened, and the remains of the murderer once more exposed to the light of day, he was enabled to re-possess himself of his blessed rosary, its virtue no doubt unimpaired, and its lustre undiminished by its participation in a felon's execution, and being immured in a murderer's grave.

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.

Saturday 27 April. Excursion to Ballarat Guncotton site, Elizabeth St Delacombe. Meet at Greenhouse Café at 10.00am. Also site of Ballarat Paper Mills, which sourced clay from Lal Lal.

Saturday 3 May, Ballarat Observatory, Magpie St. Presentation from officers involved with the bid for World Heritage Listing of Victorian Goldfields, 1.00pm.(Sponsored by the Central Highlands Historical Association)

Ballarat Heritage Festival From 18th to the 26th May. Anne Beggs-Sunter speaking on Scottish contribution to Buninyong at the Buninyong Uniting Church on Sunday 19 May at 3.00pm.

Eureka Centre. 22 May 2024, 1.00pm to 2.30pm. 'A New Gold Rush', Seminar on World Heritage Bid. Free event, but bookings required through Eventbrite.

Next Meeting 20 June 2024