

BUNINYONG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Reg. No. A0030085Y
Web Site <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~buninhis>
PO Box 98, Buninyong, Vic. 3357.

Newsletter



Snow fight, Learmonth St. Buninyong, circa 1907

December 2009

Seasons Greetings to all our members and friends. Our new President Bob Skewes invites you to our Christmas meeting on Thursday 17 December, at 7.30p.m. at the Court House History Centre. An evening of frivolity, with a history quiz, and a Festive supper. Please join us to sum up 2009.

The above photo circa 1907 shows the sign of J.T. House, Watchmaker and Jeweller, on the corner of Learmonth and Warreheip Streets. . The *1906-7 Directory* lists T. House, Learmonth St. (see photo 2004-1362)

It is interesting that the *Ballarat Courier* published its first news photo in 1907 recording a very heavy snow fall in Ballarat. Perhaps this is the same event. It is a fascinating photo, showing the old toll booth in front of the Town Hall, the old fire station, and Calf's Refreshment rooms between the fire station and the church grounds. Proceeding up the hill towards Mount Buninyong is the stately row of Cyprus trees, which were removed around 1980 and replaced by a plantation of indigenous species. Imagine the young lads of the town having a snowball fight today in the centre of the busy Midland Highway!

Later uses of the Corner Store

Circa 1910 Sarah Cereni, fruit and confectionary, where you could buy Silver Sammies for a half penny, and Sherbert Suckers for a penny.

1914 – Sarah Cereni, Fruiterer

1917-28 Alexander Andrews, Fruit Shop (Mary Andrews, nee Cameron, was the sister of Rachael Kerr, whose husband David owner the property in 1925. Alexander Andrews died in 1925, and Mary carried on till 1927.

1936 – appeared to be empty. Nothing in rates.

Late 1930s? Howards, assisted by Miss Caffrey, remembered for their excellent sponges.

1946 – Thorntons, greengrocer, home-made pies and cakes, drinks and lollies.

1953 – Thorntons, confectioner.

1955 – Bill Brown, storekeeper.

1963 - Miss True Sincerity, milk bar and sweets.

1997-8 'Out of the Ordinary' (gifts, craft, garments)

2000 – Video store

2007 Beauty salon

This reminds me that the National Trust Ballarat Branch has just published an excellent little book of the *Corner Shops of Ballarat*, recording all those wonderful little neighbourhood institutions during the twentieth century!

At the AGM of the National Trust Ballarat Branch in November 2009, a recommendation was made to the State Branch to recognise Pat Hope for his work on behalf of the National Trust. We are truly delighted to acknowledge this honour for Pat, and to congratulate him most warmly.

Our AGM

Our AGM took place on Thursday 22 October. Bob Skewes was elected as our new President. Anne Beggs-Sunter, who was re-elected as Secretary, Pat Hope as Treasurer. Anne presented an illustrated talk about the development of the Geelong-Ballarat Railway, and some historical sources from the Internet which have enhanced this topic. The *Argus* newspaper is now on line via the National Library of Australia website, and the Victorian Government Gazettes are available through the State Library of Victoria website. These are marvellous resources, fully searchable.

Budding Historians at Buninyong Primary School

At our regular November open day, we had the great pleasure of seeing a number of grade four students from Buninyong Primary School, with their parents, seeking

information on Buninyong's history. It was spine-tingling to ease-drop on a conversation between our President Bob Skewes and a fourth grader, who wanted information on the Buninyong Butter Factory. Now it just happened that Bob's ancestors had been closely allied with the Butter Factory, and in answer to the query 'How do you make butter?', Bob was able to give a marvellously comprehensive, yet simple, explanation. It was spell bounding! (For your information, all you need is good quality cream, and a little salt.)

The grade four member asked what happened to the butter? Good question, young man! Boxes of Buninyong Butter Factory butter were sent on the Buninyong-Ballarat railway to the market in Ballarat, and sometimes to the market in Melbourne, where the product was highly desirable and won numerous awards, until the closing of the Buninyong factory in 1926, when it was sold to the Wallace Butter Factory. In its turn, Wallace closed in 1994. Now local milk goes to the Warrnambool Butter Factory – a very long daily round.

Girl killed at Imperial Mine in accident.

We are all aware that there were many mining accidents in the nineteenth century, highlighted by Sovereign Hill opening its latest experience, the Creswick Mining Disaster. There were many deaths in the Buninyong mining district caused by mining accidents, but none more extraordinary than the death of 17-year-old Martha Williams on 23 April 1885, when she fell from a bucket whilst going down the Imperial Mine at Hiscocks, near Buninyong.

Of course, females did not go down mines, a profession restricted to males! But it seems that this young lady and her friend prevailed on young Tom Tresize, who worked under his father at the mine, to allow them to descend the shaft. The Imperial had no winding mechanism with cages, and the men descended the mine by means of ladders to a depth of 104 feet. However 20-year-old Tom Tresize, son of the mining manager, decided that the two girls could descend the shaft by holding on to a bucket. Martha began the descent, but her dress caught in the signal hammer, and she immediately afterwards fell to her death. An inquest was held at the Buninyong Police

Court, presided over by mayor David Davies, reported in the *Ballarat Courier*. The incident would have weighed on Tom Trezise's conscience ever after. It is the only instance known in the Ballarat area of a young woman dying in a mining accident.

McCOLL, Constable Leonard J.

Victoria's Last Mounted Constable, Buninyong.

Constable Len McColl (born 1910) was appointed to Buninyong as a mounted constable in 1946. He was born in New Zealand, around horses, and had served at Sunbury and Warrendyte before his appointment to Buninyong. As a mounted trooper, he was part of the Queen's guard in 1954, and the Olympic Games guard in 1956. An article in the *Weekly Times* on 12 September 1962 declared that he was the last mounted constable in Victoria.

The Victoria Police finally de-mounted Constable McColl in 1965, and for his last five years of service in Buninyong he used a motor vehicle for his patrols.

His was a remarkable record of 25 years of service as the Buninyong policeman. He became a much-respected member of the community in that time, active in a number of organisations. He was a member of the Buninyong Masonic Lodge (see photos in BDHS collection)



Mounted Councillor McColl, Buninyong Police Station, circa 1960
(Photo from Buninyong and District Historical Society Collection)

COMING EVENTS

Buninyong Farmers' Market and Court House open, third Saturday of the month

17 December, 7.30p.m. Christmas meeting.

NB. Membership fees are due from the date of the AGM. Form attached overleaf.

BUNINYONG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

Dear Member,

Annual subscriptions fell due at the October AGM. We invite you to renew your membership for 2009-10. Your membership is highly valued so that we can continue to collect and conserve the history of the Buninyong district, and advocate for the protection of our heritage assets.

Your subscription provides the following benefits:

- Opportunity to promote the study, recording, collection and preservation of the history and heritage of the area covered by the former Shire of Buninyong.
- Regular mailing of bi-monthly newsletters
- Regular bi-monthly meetings
- Excursions
- Free access to the Society's Research collection of documents, indexes and photographs.
- Opportunity to work as a volunteer indexer
- Opportunity to become a volunteer guide at the Court House History Centre

Please detach this section and return with your subscription to:

The Buninyong and District Historical Society Inc., PO Box 98, Buninyong, 3357.

Subscriptions are due at the AGM October each year.

Subscription

Ordinary Members	\$25
Families	\$30
Students and Concession Card Holders	\$20
Corresponding Members	\$20

(A Corresponding Member is unable to attend meetings)

PLEASE PRINT

Name(s)-----

Address-----

Post Code..... Phone No.....

Email Address.....