

BUNINYONG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Reg. No. A0030085Y

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

Newsletter

AUGUST 2011



Opening of Queen Victoria Memorial Pavilion, 13 December 1901. Collection Buninyong and District Historical Society.

Our Annual General Meeting will take place on Thursday 20 October at 7.30 pm, at the Court House History Centre.

The Buninyong Good Life Festival is on Sunday 16 October, and we will be open between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm. With an exhibition featuring the history of the Buninyong Gardens.

Sunday 6 November - Spring Excursion to Durham Lead. Meet at the Town Hall at 1.00 pm for car pooling. Duration approximately two hours.

150th Anniversary of the Buninyong Botanical Gardens

The Friends of the Buninyong Botanical Gardens will take part in the Buninyong Good Life Festival on 16 October, when the 150th Anniversary of the Gardens will be celebrated both at the Gardens, and in our Court House where we will have a special display.

The stone entry gates to the upper botanical gardens have been completed, and a new fence encloses the reserve. The gates will be officially opened on Sunday 13 November.

Botanical Gardens – Queen’s Memorial Pavilion.

On 22 January 1901 Queen Victoria died, ending her 64 year reign as Queen of Great Britain and Empress of the British Empire. Her death put a dampener on the celebrations to inaugurate the new Commonwealth of Australia. The *Buninyong Telegraph* of 11 January 1901 announced that 400 Buninyong residents had gathered on the previous Sunday for a ‘thanksgiving service’ in the Gardens to celebrate the new Commonwealth. Ministers of the Anglican, Presbyterian and Methodist churches participated, and celebrated the British Empire in the choice of hymns that were sung. The local Australian Natives Association branch had planned a picnic in the gardens to celebrate the Commonwealth, but as this was planned for 26 January, it, along with all other celebrations on that day, was cancelled because the nation was in mourning for the late queen.

On 13 December 1901 the Queen Victoria Rotunda in the Buninyong Botanic Gardens was formally opened, possibly the first monument in Australia to Queen Victoria to be erected following her death.

It was designed by Mr E. Smith of Ballarat, at a cost of £75, the money collected from locals by a ladies' committee. The contractor was James Howard of Buninyong, who was a member of the borough council. The Mayor, Councillor A.H. Coxall, arranged refreshments and speeches in the pavilion, designed to house 200 people. It was noted that the structure was not a bandstand, but ‘for the convenience of the public at all times’. Over the entrance were emblazoned a verse from the Bible – ‘The rich and poor meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all.’ At the end of the ceremony those present gathered to be photographed by the local photographer, J.T. Moyle, and copies were available from the *Buninyong Telegraph* office for 2 shillings. (*Buninyong Telegraph* 20 December 1901).

The new pavilion excited the interest of Ballarat residents, who came by train in record numbers on Boxing Day 1901 to visit the Gardens and inspect the pavilion. (*Buninyong Telegraph*, 28 December 1901)

On the north east wall some historic graffiti was carved with a penknife in May 1916 - the names of some young men who sailed for Egypt with the 39th Battalion, including an A.B. Coxall.

The reign of Queen Victoria exactly co-incides with the foundation of Buninyong as a settlement and the inauguration of the new Commonwealth of Australia, when the colony of Victoria was replaced by the State of Victoria.

Thus Peter Griffiths, historian of Buninyong, chose the period 1837 to 1901 as the focus of his history of Buninyong, *Three Times Blest*, covering exactly the reign of Queen Victoria.

It was good to hear from John Robertson, the grandson of John Ogilvie, with memories of the Gardens in the 1950s, and swimming in the baths.

Biographical Queries

September-October 2011

LLOYD – William was employed at the Trial Saw Mills circa 1862

ROBINSON – Margaret Robinson was born at Yendon in 1882.

PHYLAND – Michael was at Lal Lal in the 19th century.

O'BRIEN/O'BRIAN – family at Whim Holes 1860s. Children killed in an accident in 1860 at Jackson's Gully.

Any clues about these families, please contact the Secretary, a.beggs-sunter@ballarat.edu.au

BUSH FIRES IN VICTORIA FEBRUARY 1913.

The following account was found by trawling the wonderful Trove database of digital newspapers on the National Library of Australia's website. The dramatic account of a bushfire in the Buninyong area was intriguingly carried by a Tasmanian newspaper.

From *North Western Advocate* (Tasmania), 10 February 1913

ENORMOUS DAMACE. MANY SENSATIONAL INCIDENTS.

The bush fires in various parts of Victoria last week were in very many cases attended by very sensational incidents. The damage done to homes and crops was widespread, and in several instances ruinous. The fires swept large tracts of country, devastating all within their reach.' Some of the settlers and others .had thrilling experiences... At Buninyong pigs and sheep were burnt owing to being unable .to escape after their release from the pens. A man named Harry Reakes, who was fighting the flames, was only saved fearful burns, if not death, by having clothes _ which had caught fire - torn from him. There were dozens of instances were paddocks of grain from 40 to 150

acres were swept by the fire, and left practically bare; only a few small patches of grass escaped.

At Ballan a perilous time was experienced. One settler lost 500 acres of grass, and other owners lost miles of fencing. All efforts to check the flames seemed to be futile, but the willing band of workers were rewarded by overcoming them successfully about a mile from the township, which appeared to be doomed to complete destruction. In one place the firefighters only succeeded in getting the flames under control a few yards from a settler's dwelling. Between Elaine and Lethbridge, in the Geelong district, 20 miles of country was swept, and thousands of sheep, perished, and also horses and cattle. So intense was the heat along the Ballarat-Geelong railway that passengers by the up and down midday and afternoon trains were overcome. The fences enclosing the railway property were destroyed, whilst haystacks and sheds were lapped up. At Buninyong the school teacher, (Miss Anderson) sent the children home when she saw the fire coming, and remained in the building. The building was soon surrounded by the flames, and at one time the smoke in the room was so dense that Miss Anderson was nearly suffocated, and she was only rescued with difficulty.

A Plea to save trees in 1864

The Ballarat *Star* of 17 June 1864 reported on the state of the main road between Clarendon and Mount Buninyong:

The Council of the Shire of Buninyong met yesterday and sat for more than four hours. A quantity of bluestone metal having been accumulated near **Corduroy**, the engineer was directed to take the preliminary steps to have six chains of the old planks taken up and replaced with as great a length of metal. He was also instructed to have cut down several gum saplings which have sprung up in the ditches and close by the roadside beyond Scott's near the Mountside Hotel. This course the engineer stated to be necessary, in consequence of their drawing much moisture about the place from the ditches, and otherwise disintegrating the material of the road. We trust that this removal will not be carried out except where indispensably necessary to preserve what is of paramount importance, the solidity and permanence of the roadway, for on the line from Ballarat to Buninyong the road has assumed even more than the beauty of an English by-lane, and we should be loath to see any of the new and luxuriant vegetation meddled with, unless with stringently utilitarian ends.

COMING EVENTS

16 October – Buninyong Good Life Festival (successor to Buninyong Gold King Festival.) Special celebration of the Botanical Gardens, at the Uniting Church, and an exhibition in the Court House History Centre 10.00 am to 4.00 pm.

20 October – AGM, 7.30 pm, Court House History Centre

22-23 October – CHHA History Fair, at the Ballarat Mechanics Institute.

6 November - Spring Excursion to Durham Lead. Meet at the Town Hall at 1.00 pm for car pooling,

13 November – Opening of the stone entrances to the Botanical Gardens.