

Yarram & District Historical Society Inc.

MEMORY LANE

VOLUME 1

DECEMBER 2017



WARRIGAL CREEK HOMESTEAD

Built c 1864 by James Taylor with red bricks made on site. The house has since been stuccoed.

Yarram & District Historical Society Inc.

Rooms: 40 Commercial Rd, Yarram 3971- entry from Carpenter St
Disabled friendly.

Postal Address: P.O.Box 213, Yarram Vic 3971

Email: research.ydhs@gmail.com

Membership Fees: Ordinary member \$25.00

Meetings: 1st Monday of each month at the rooms 1.30 pm

Open Days: Each Wednesday 10.00am- 3.00pm or by arrangement.

Research Fees: \$15.00 per hour

Newsletter: Twice yearly December and June

Welcome to our first newsletter in a very long while.

In 2013 our President Melva James died. As a result a new committee had to be formed. The new committee soon discovered the enormity of what they had signed up for. Priorities had to be set and the focus of the society since then has been on getting all the material that is in the custody of the society, documented, repacked and relabelled.

Our members are ageing and there is not the numbers on the ground so that the undertaking has been slow.

As this is written we are contemplating our future. We are in a building currently owned by Murray Goulburn and do not know if we will be able to renew our lease which expires mid- 2018. It is causing a lot of anxiety.

This is particularly so when on 8th December 2018 Yarram will be celebrating 125 years as a Township and we would like to be a physical part of this celebration.

We have added to our display areas and now have included Sporting and School memorabilia. We have been lucky to receive a couple of State School Signs and photos of some of the early football teams.

Our collections of medical and veterinary tools of the trade are awe inspiring as we received generous donations from the Yarram hospital and a retired Veterinary Surgeon. It would make one with a vivid imagination wince.

A fair section of Church memorabilia notably the altar from St Peter's Won Wron makes up another display.

We have a room dedicated to the First and Second World Wars with many items being donated from local families. We are also lucky to have received some of the long lost Honour Boards from sheds.

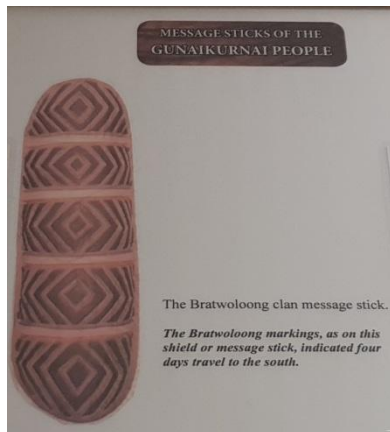
One of our members Philip Cashen, an historian, has a blog 'Shire at War' online which examines the social impact of the WW1 on the local community in the Shire of Alberton.

We now have a display to show where the first people of this district lived along with some of the names of places and animals in language.

This year we have had a few exhibitions. Wedding dresses at Easter, during the Tarra Festival, dating from the late 1800's to the 1870's and Christening Robes currently on display, dating from the mid 1800's to the 1940's. We also launched our booklet by Bill Bodman on the Aboriginal Place Names of this district.

There is really a lot to see and take in and if you are at all able, a visit would be worthwhile and our members would welcome you.

PLACE NAMES OF OUR FIRST PEOPLE



There has always been something of a gap in our records of our district in that we have not previously made any record of the first people of our land.

They have occupied this part of Australia for at least 20,000 years if not more.

Perhaps they were delayed by the cold climate of the Ice Age which existed for the first 50,000 years of their settlement.

Archaeological evidence on Flinders Island from 20,000 years ago point to this being the pathway to settlement of Tasmania.

The people of our part of Gippsland were the Bra-tua-loong clan of the Gunai Kurnai nation. (The name translates to 'Men-Fire-Belong' which

attests to their regular use of fire in managing their country, there are many spellings of this name.) Their actions have shaped the landscape we know today.

There has been no detailed record of their occupation of this land as they had no written language. The early Europeans recorded many individual words and the place names of our district which are the most obvious existing record of the Bra-two-long occupation.

Clashes with the Europeans, especially the well-known massacre at Warrigal Creek has left us with very few surviving descendants of those first people.

So, Yarram & District Historical Society decided to record what we have of the place names of the area which appear to have an indigenous derivation. Not all of those names are of the Gunai/Kurnai language but were applied by Europeans from other Australian languages. However we have researched all the recorded names which we do have and produced a display and booklet which is kept in our museum and creates considerable interest. It is well worth examining. We were assisted greatly by the Gunaikurnai Land and Water Corporation at Bairnsdale as well as the Wulgunggo Ngalu Learning place at Won Wron. We have also used many of the published works on Australian and local placenames.

Afternoon Visit to Warrigal Creek

Members and friends thoroughly enjoyed their recent visit to Warrigal Creek Homestead on Monday November 13th. With the large Georgian home serving as the backdrop, the visit began under the shade of several gums as Libby Balderstone welcomed us to the Irving family home and lead us in the acknowledgment of traditional owners past, present and



future of the Gunai/Kurnai people. A brief talk followed where Libby briefly outlined the conflict between early settlers and the local aboriginal community which resulted in the death of Lachlan Macalister's nephew Ronald, and the massacre of several aboriginal people beside the waterhole found on the property.



The talk moved on to James Taylor who secured the Warrigal Creek Run following Macalister's death and of the impressive Georgian house he built in 1864 and then the subsequent and present ownership by the Irving family. Libby explained that there had been many alterations made to the house over the years however in recent times the house has been returned to the more Georgian look of the original building.

A short walk to the waterhole offered photographic opportunities of a very scenic and idyllic place, also serving to remind us of this all important life source in the past for the local people as well as the settlers and families who more recently have farmed the land.

The homestead still boasts the manager and farm workers cottages which, while not being used as once they would have, are a wonderful reminder of the community which lived and worked together on the farm. Visitors were also delighted with the well- equipped and well used working sheds complete with many of the old tools and machinery on 'display'.



The remains of an old very large timber water tank stand and disused slaughter



house provided many more photograph opportunities as did the old fences, gates and cypress trees dotted about the farm.

At the conclusion of our visit a delicious afternoon tea was served on the back deck of the house overlooking the garden with views across the paddocks. A wonderful visit indeed and we thank Libby once again for her hospitality at Warrigal Creek.

Our current exhibition of christening robes will be on display until March. Some of these robes date from the mid 1800's



From These Beginnings- A History of the Shire of Alberton has just been reprinted. Books will be available in the New Year.

This publication is a comprehensive record of the history of the Alberton Shire from the early 1800's to the late 1990's. You can pre order books through gmail

research.ydhs@gmail.com more details will be available in the New Year.