



Balwyn Historical Society Newsletter

January/February 2016

Meetings

Thursday 11 February 2016

Speaker: Chris Long

**Topic: Film and Newsreels – From the Diamond Jubilee to Federation
1897 - 1901**

This talk will be a continuation of Chris Long's 2015 talk on early films and newsreels

Thursday 10 March

Speaker: Gerry Robinson

Topic Early Explorers

Gerry Robinson will compare the fame, importance, optimism, bravery and fate of three sets of explorers – Burke & Wills, Bass & Flinders and Hume & Hovell.

Thursday 14 April

Speaker: To be announced

Topic: To be announced

**All meetings are held at the Balwyn Evergreen Centre
45 Talbot Avenue, Balwyn**

Email: balwynhistory@gmail.com website: www.vicnet.net.au/~balwynhs

Recent Speaker-Ron Killeen

Ron Killeen spoke with great enthusiasm about the history of the Outer Circle Railway and the discoveries he made while researching his documentary on the railway. In 1872 all railways around Melbourne were privately owned. Politics played a big part in the decision to build the Outer Circle. The proposal, though economically unviable, was politically popular and parliament voted for it in 1884.

The land on which the railway was to be built thus became extremely valuable and a number of politicians made a great deal of money by buying sub-divided land along its route.

John Monash (later Sir John) was appointed as the engineer in charge of the railway's construction and several of the bridges he was responsible for can still be seen today.

Ron showed us a wonderful collection of photos of early stations along the railway as well as a collection of the early locomotives, including the *Deepdene Dasher* which ran along the track.

Several of our members present were also able to share their memories of the railway and of seeing the freight trains which ran along the track until 1942.

Vale Adele Barrett

We were very sorry to hear of Adele's death and extend our heartfelt sympathy to her husband, Martin Barrett our immediate past president, and to their family. Adele had been a member of BHS from its earliest years. She will be greatly missed by her many friends and family and most of all by Martin who had known her since childhood.

Christmas Lunch

Our thanks to Robin Kelly for organising this end of year event. It was well attended by members and was a most enjoyable function. Thanks Robin.

Balwyn Historical Society - Contact details

Balwyn Historical Society is a program of the Balwyn Evergreen Centre.

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The Henty family – entrepreneurs, pioneers and the first colonial settlers in Victoria. Part 1.



Thomas Henty

Thomas Henty (1775-1839) was entrepreneurial from an early age. A substantial inheritance at the age of 21 enabled him to become a landowner. In 1796 he purchased nearly 300 acres of demesne land in the parish of West Tarring, Sussex where he became known as a breeder of fine merino sheep. Thomas, together with partners, also started and ran one of Worthing's first banks - the Worthing and Sussex Bank.

An early connection between Thomas Henty and the Australian colonies was established when many of his Spanish merino flock were purchased by Mr. John Macarthur (later Governor) and shipped to the colony of New South Wales.

In the early decades of the 19th century, a great deal of interest was taken in the colonization of Australia especially when it became known that persons of means, such as Thomas Henty, were encouraged to emigrate with promises of large tracts of land.

The British government was anxious to establish a colony in Western Australia, as they were aware that the French government was also considering doing the same. The British government had made the decision that the whole of the Australian continent should be in the possession of the British and so made very generous offers of land in Western Australia to attract settlers there rather than to the more attractive Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania).

Thomas married Frances Elizabeth Hopkins also of Sussex in 1799 and they had a large family consisting of James (1800-1882), Jane (1805-1893), Charles Shum (1807-1864), William (1808-1881), Edward (1810-1878), Stephen George (1811-1872), John (1813-1868?), Francis (1815-1889) and two other sons Thomas and Henry and a daughter Frances, all of whom died young and did not come to Australia.

In 1828, Thomas Henty having been convinced that the prospects for his family would be greatly enhanced by emigration to Australia, decided to sell his land and stocks in West Tarring and send his eldest son James and two younger sons Stephen and John, to Swan River (Western Australia) to ascertain their prospects there. They had been promised 80,000 acres of land if they established themselves. The Henty brothers departed England on the chartered barque *Caroline* on June 6, 1829. Up to as many as 40 former employees of Thomas Henty from West Tarring signed on to accompany them on their expedition to Swan River. The passenger list of the *Caroline* indicates servants, labourers, stockmen, shepherds, carpenters, smiths and their families travelled with the

Henty brothers to Fremantle. An entry in the General Muster book indicates that 66 passengers arrived on the *Caroline* on October 12, 1829, together with 12 horses, 9 cows, one bull, 182 sheep and 24 pigs plus many other provisions.

After two failed summers and the loss of a considerable amount of money, the Henty brothers decided that the farming prospects in Swan River were unlikely to be successful. They, and their employees, left Swan River after two years for Launceston. Once in Launceston their father Thomas, his wife, daughter Jane and three of the four remaining sons joined them in 1832. James Henty appealed to the British government that the large land grant in Swan River should be exchanged for a smaller one in Van Diemen's Land. Pending the appeal, James and his wife the former Caroline Carter of Worthing, Sussex settled in Launceston.

The Henty family arrived in Van Diemen's Land too late to participate in the free grant system. The government in England had decided no more land should be given away. Thomas Henty was disappointed in this decision, as he had made preparations for extensive grazing and had brought with him from England a flock of purebred sheep. The government decision that land should be sold to the highest bidder was a serious financial setback for the Hentys who had lost much of their capital in Western Australia. Thomas sent his sons on a number of expeditions to see if they could find suitable land. Edward Henty was determined to find land and on his return to Van Diemen's Land from an expedition to Western Australia he called in at Portland Bay and was pleased with the possibilities for settlement he found there. On Edward's recommendation and following an inspection by his father Thomas, the Henty family considered settlement in the little known Port Phillip district of New South Wales.

Despite the ruling that occupation of land and dispersion of the population from Sydney headquarters was not allowed, nevertheless Thomas Henty petitioned the British government to buy land and cede the Swan River grant in return. Edward Henty was impatient to begin farming and urged his father to 'squat' on land at Portland Bay anticipating that they would gain title to the land. Unfortunately, Thomas Henty's assumptions regarding the success of his application for land proved unfounded. His application was refused on the grounds that there was no authority for the occupation of the land and that the Henty case was no different from that of any other unauthorized occupiers of Crown lands. However, with his father's consent, Edward Henty sailed for Portland Bay on the *Thistle* with a cargo of labourers, farming implements, general stores, fruit trees, vines and building materials also 'six working bullocks, 20 heifers, 2 cows, 2 bulls, 5 pigs and 2 baskets of tobacco' (SLV/ergo) to establish a settlement there in November 1834. His brother Francis followed a month later bringing the first merino sheep to the Port Phillip district. The manifest for the cargo on board the brigantine the *Thistle* included:

2500 Bricks	600 feet of Flooring Boards
2 Casks Beef	600 feet of Weather Boards
2 Casks Pork	18,000 Shingles
4 Bags Flour	2000 Broad Palings
2 Bags Sugar	2 Cases of tools etc.
1 Chest Tea	3 Bundles ditto
3 Kegs Nails	1 Cask of Grape Cuttings
10 Bags Potatoes	1 Box of Plants
2 Bags Oats	1 Bale of Clothing
1 Box of Soap	1 Cask Earthenware
1 Bag of Salt	1 Whale Boat
1 Bag of Peas	1 Cask of Gunpowder
1 Keg Spike nails	1 Keg of Tobacco stores for whaling party at Portland Bay
1 Bundle Saws	1 Bag of wheat

1 Malt Mill	1 plough
1 Bundle Chains & Tools	1 pair of harrows
3000 feet of Sawn Timber	1 Bullock Dray
Frame of House	

Source MS 5081 State Library of Victoria

The Henty brothers established a small farm and also became involved in a whaling station in Portland Bay. To his surprise as he did not expect to encounter Europeans on his surveying expedition, Major Thomas Mitchell, Surveyor-General of New South Wales came across the Henty settlement in Portland. Mitchell informed them of the good pastoral land near the Wannon River and accordingly, they moved their sheep northward and by 1837 the Hentys had established a pastoral property in the Wannon and Glenelg valleys of the southwest Port Phillip district. The Henty run was known as *Merino Downs*. The land in Portland Bay settled by the Edward, John and Francis Henty proved to be the first permanent settlement by Europeans in the colony of Victoria and they are considered the founders of Portland. However, this view is somewhat contentious. William Dutton, a sea captain, had lived in Portland intermittently from 1829 when he first landed on return from a whaling trip.

Thomas Henty continued to live in Launceston where he was a magistrate and where he founded the Cornwall Agricultural Society; he was a breeder of racehorses and merino sheep. He and his wife Frances visited Portland Bay in 1838 where the Henty brothers were still unauthorized settlers. Thomas died in Launceston in 1839.

Sources

Bassett, M. 'Henty, Thomas (1775-1839)' *Australian Dictionary of Biography* <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/henty-thomas-2179>

Feest, F. 'We Have Been Here Before' Worthing History
http://www.hadesign.co.uk/worthing_history/history_pages/html/been_here_before.html

Glenelg Libraries 'William Dutton and whaling' Historic Treasures
<http://glenelglibraries.vic.gov.au/historictreasures/stories/whaling-and-william-dutton>

Malcolm, J. 'The Hentys: Pioneers this State Lost' *The West Australian*, Saturday July 14 1934 p. 6

"Merino Downs" Pastoral Run: 1837' taken from *Historic Souvenir of the Back to Merino and Henty Centenary Celebrations November, 11th to 15th, 1937* National Library of Australia <http://www.swvic.org/merino/merino-downs-01.htm>

Passenger Ships arriving in Western Australia www.perthdps.com

State Library of Victoria/ergo 'The Hentys at Portland' <http://ergo.slv.vic.gov.au/explore-history/land-exploration/pastoral-practices/hentys-portland>

Thomas Henty portrait PROV VPRS 12800P1 H 2954 (State Library of Victoria)

(With thanks to Marilyn Poole for this article)

RHSV Lost Melbourne Project

BHS has submitted information about the following "lost" buildings of Balwyn viz. St Gabriel's Babies' Home, Hoyts Time Theatre and the Holeproof Factory for possible inclusion in the RHSV project – a book of images of "lost" built environment.