

BUNINYONG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Reg. No. A0030085Y

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

Newsletter



Visit to the Nicholls 'Military' Museum, Buninyong, 23 May 2009. Chris and Frank Nicholls proudly show their restored Centurion tank to Vic Bradley from the Buninyong RSL.

June 2009

Next meeting is Thursday 18 June 2009, at 7.30p.m. at the Court House History Centre, to consider the adequacy of Heritage Protection in Buninyong. Peter Hiscock to speak about the Coleman-Sutherland Study.

The Buninyong Primary School recently received an award under the Victorian Education Excellence Awards program. The \$20,000 award commends the 2008 'Story of Buninyong' initiative working with the local community to celebrate the ancient history of the area. (Courier, *20 May 2009*) We note the fine work of Doug Bradby in working with Year 4 and 5 children to investigate their local history, and we hope that the program will continue, supported by awards from local groups including this Society.

The school has also received a \$3 million grant from the Commonwealth government to extend its classroom and library facilities.

FAMILY HISTORY ENQUIRIES

May-June 2009

McINTOSH – John Grant McIntosh and his wife Jessie migrated from Scotland in 1853, and settled in the Buninyong area at Devonshire Lead, where they raised their family. In 1867 their little girl Jessie was lost in the bush just outside Buninyong in the bush towards Durham Lead, and the poor little girl was found, after extensive searching, dead of exposure at the end of October 1867. The girl was just four years old. Subsequently the grieving parents had another daughter in 1872, whom they called Jessie, and she too died in childhood. Query from a Western Australian visitor.

REDDIE – From a descendant of Helen Reddie McKay in Victoria, wanting to know more about the Trial Saw Mills. Helen married an engine driver from Ballarat, Thomas McKay, and settled in Eureka Street, where she became a leading spirit in the maintenance of the Eureka Stockade Reserve Memorial Association..

RICHARDS – Sam Richards, a miner, born in Cuba, married Louisa Thornton at Spring Creek, near Dereel, in 1864, with the marriage performed by the Episcopalian minister Rev. Garrett Russell.

WINTER, John Irving -from a descendant in NSW

ZIMMER Johannes(Jahn) Zimmer from Germany arrived in Australia in 1855. He married Mary Ann Bennett in Ballarat on 9 October.1865 and they settled at Durham Lead. Johann died mysteriously near "Hodges" on the Durham Road on 27 Feb 1878 From a descendant in Bairnsdale

Vale Stuart Skewes, 7 June 2009

It is with great sadness that we record the passing of Stuart Skewes, our first and only Honorary Life Member. Stuart died on 7 June 2009, and was buried after a service at the Buninyong Uniting Church on 9 June. This was entirely fitting, given the long association of the Skewes family with the Wesleyan and later Uniting Church in Buninyong.

Stuart was a wonderful supporter of our society, always taking a quiet background role, but popping up occasionally with a wonderful donation to our collection – an old advertisement, a copy of a photo, an artefact like the Rechabites cupboard, or a transcription of his uncle's diary. Robert, our Vice President and brother of Stuart, said that Stuart was at his computer transcribing a Buninyong archive when the ambulance came to take him to hospital for the last time. We remember him with great admiration, and extend our sympathy to family members.

Queen's Birthday Honour to Berry King.

The Queen's Birthday Honours list brought news that our new member Berry King from Scotsburn had received an OAM for his services to architecture and the RSL's aged care services. Congratulations Berry. Incidentally, Berry was an enthusiastic participant in our visit to the Nicholls museum. We hope that you and Anne can give us the benefit of your architectural eye for some of our projects.

COMING EVENTS

Meeting, Thursday 17 June, Court House History Centre

Buninyong Farmers' Market and Court House open, Saturday 20 June, 9.30a.m. to 1.30p.m.

THE OLD POLICE COURT IN BUNINYONG

With the Buninyong Primary School planning extensions to its school, the fate of the old police court in the grounds is currently being considered. Here is its story.

White settlement of the Buninyong district began in 1838, and from that time there was a need for a system of police and courts to bring law and order to the inland of Port Phillip

In June 1850 a surveyor was sent to survey the township of Buninyong, and he set aside land for public purposes which would become the future court house and gardens.

1851 marked the separation of the Port Phillip District of New South Wales and the proclamation of the Colony of Victoria, with a new administration developed. Almost immediately, gold was discovered in Victoria, turning the fledgling colony upside down.

By government proclamation, a court of Petty Sessions was established at Buninyong on 30 September 1851 and a Police Camp was established on the site reserved for public offices in the original town survey. Captain William Mair was appointed Police Magistrate for the District of Buninyong, which included the new goldfields of Ballarat. On 3 February, 1852, the first sitting took place of the Buninyong Court. But there were continual complaints about the inadequate buildings at Buninyong.

1857 was a busy year, with the new Goldfields Act to come into operation at the beginning of 1858. In December 1857 a contract was let by the Government for the building of a Court of Petty Sessions and a Warden's Office at Buninyong. The police camp continued to use this site.

These buildings served as the public administration area until 1886, when a new court house was constructed as part of the new Town Hall complex. The old court house, warden's office and police quarters were purchased by the Borough of

Buninyong for the token sum of two pounds in 1884. A new Police Station was built in Scott St. in 1887, and this building continues in service.

The old buildings beside the Gardens were used for a time by the Buninyong Butter Factory, from 1892 to 1914. The buildings were later used as a depot for the Shire of Buninyong from the 1940s until 1990.



Bill Thorpe and Beth Ritchie draw attention to the dilapidated building in 1973

In 1973, Mrs Beth Ritchie and Bill Thorpe managed to get the old police building recorded by the National Trust. In 1977, the Buninyong Primary School Council, led by principal Peter Carter and School Council President Derick Leather, restored the old police building (new roof, wiring, plastering, replacement of windows, doors and flooring). With a Commonwealth Schools Commission Innovations Grant of \$5,445, the school established a Ceramics and Photography studio in the building.



The Police court following restoration in 1977 under a Commonwealth Innovations Grant

For some time it became a school-community hub, a centre for photography and pottery. Members of the school community who enthusiastically supported this initiative were deeply disappointed when the school discontinued these community programs and turned the building into a store-room.

The old police court and the Warden's Office/Court of Mines are protected as part of the Buninyong Heritage Precinct in the Ballarat Planning Scheme. The Buninyong and District Historical Society would like to see these two important buildings restored and used as part of the art and history curriculum of the Buninyong Primary School.

Contact us:

**Web Site <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~buninhis>
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**We are open on the third Saturday of the month, from 9.30a.m. to 1.30p.m.
(This coincides with the Buninyong Farmers' Market)**