

# BUNINYONG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Reg. No. A0030085Y

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

## Newsletter



The Buninyong Merryweather in the Gold King Festival Parade, February 1997. It was imported at the end of the nineteenth century from Merryweather & Sons of London, builders of steam fire engines. The founder was Moses Merryweather (1791-1872)

## June 2010

**Our next meeting is on Thursday 17 June 2010, at 7.30p.m. at the Court House History Centre. Our President Bob Skewes will address us on his memories of Buninyong in the 1950s, especially the Merryweather fire engine.**

**Ballarat's Heritage Weekend a great success.** The weekend of 8-9 May saw a major focus of Ballarat and district's heritage. Buninyong was part of the celebrations, and this Society hosted two very well patronised walking tours around the township. There were many visitors to the Old Library and the Court House, and a number of publications were sold.

**Local History Grant for our Society.** In May we received a letter from the Public Records Office of Victoria, informing us that we have been awarded a grant of \$2000 towards the cost of erecting two interpretative signs – one near the old Court House and Police building in the Gardens, and one near Hastie's Spring.

**Friends of the Buninyong Botanic Gardens** group incorporated

To celebrate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Buninyong Botanic Gardens, a new group has been formed under the chairmanship of Peter Hiscock, with Christina Hindhaugh as Secretary. The group will seek funding for the celebrations, and for some permanent addition to the gardens.

**Another Gift for our Hastie Collection.** Our friend Mrs Nance Richards of NSW, great granddaughter of Rev. Thomas Hastie, sent another wonderful little treasure for our collection. It is a little birthday book, given to Helen Hastie Fleming (the oldest daughter) as a birthday [present from her daughter Elizabeth Jane (Bessie) on 30 August 1881. It records births, marriages and deaths of immediate family members, as well as the birthdays of a number of Buninyong identities, including Annie Middlemist, a long-time teacher at the Buninyong school. The birthday book has been added to other items in the display case in the Court House.

## **FAMILY HISTORY ENQUIRIES**

### **May-June 2010**

**CHENERY** - George Chenery paying rates at Mount Misery (near Enfield) in 1866. According to a descendant, the Butler/Chenery family arrived in Geelong in 1841, and came to Enfield.

**JUDE** - Yarrowee/Scotchman's Lead area from 1860s

**LUKE** – William Luke came from Cornwall circa 1852, and settled in the Buninyong area. Joseph Luke was a gardener in the Union Jack Gully, and his daughter Ethyl married William Little, the son of a Buninyong gardener, in 1923.

**LYNE** – Percy operated a grocery and bakery in Learmonth St. Buninyong from 1900 to 1926, when he retired to Melbourne. In 1853 his father Charles Henry emigrated from London where the family had been in the grocery business. He established a business as a butcher by 1865 in the Ararat area. Percy was a member of the Presbyterian Church in Buninyong, and married Elsbeth McKenzie in 1907. They had four children who attended the Buninyong State School.

**PEARSE** – Geddie was a schoolteacher in Buninyong in the 1860s and 1870s, and a leading member of the Wesleyan Church. His siblings settled at Hardie's Hill as

farmers and storekeepers. We do not have a portrait of this important figure – we would love to hear from any family members who might possess a photograph.

**SMITH** – John Smith was born in Buninyong circa 1856, and died at Yendon in 1932. He married Helen Pakenham in Geelong in 1874, and they worked for the Fiskin family at Lal Lal Estate. They had 11 children, of whom six lived beyond infancy. John was reputed to have been an excellent gardener.

**STAFFORD** - John Stafford married Harriet Bannister Pole. They are buried at Buninyong.

Readers who know anything about any of these names, and can help, please contact the secretary [a.beggs-sunter@ballarat.edu.au](mailto:a.beggs-sunter@ballarat.edu.au)

### **Geddie PEARSE (1835-1878)** **Buninyong's Outstanding Schoolteacher**

Most of the Pearse family from Cornwall migrated to Victoria in the mid-nineteenth century. First came Geddie, then his elder brother William, then three brothers and two sisters, and finally their parents. A number of the Pearse family members settled in the Durham Lead-Hardies Hill area.

Geddie became a distinguished teacher at the Buninyong Presbyterian School in 1863. In 1857 he married in Victoria Judith Ann Taylor, and his first teaching position was at the small school of Cabbage Tree Flat, near Creswick. In a brochure advertising the Buninyong Presbyterian School No 72 in January 1871, he is listed as Head Teacher, qualified to the 'first division of competency.' (8 December 1864) The Inspector's report from 1870 is quoted, and the fact that in the Board of Education Report for that year, Buninyong, with only two other schools, was singled out for special notice. 'The discipline and tone of the school are excellent: it fully maintains its high character.'

With the formation of the new Buninyong State School in 1873, following the Education Act of 1872, Geddie Pearse was appointed Headmaster. In 1875 he was living in Winter St. and was listed in the Directory as 'schoolteacher'.

An illuminated address was presented to Geddie Pearse by the Buninyong State School, No. 1270, on the eve of his taking up the headmastership of the Daylesford Associated school. It is signed by the teachers of the school on 2 July 1875.

During his time in Buninyong Geddie Pearse was a leader of the Wesleyan Church, active as a Sunday School teacher, lecturer and trustee.

In March 1878 he was promoted to the position of District Inspector for the new Victorian Education Department. Sadly he died soon after, on 11 May 1878, aged 43. In an obituary published in the *Buninyong Telegraph* on 15 May 1878, it was noted that he died of a liver complaint, and he left a wife and three children. As a mark of respect, the scholars from the Buninyong State School joined the funeral procession. He is buried at Buninyong, and has a monument that was erected by the teachers and scholars of Buninyong and Daylesford state schools. (Wesleyan section, No 49) His wife Judith Ann, who died in Carlton in 1882 at the age of 47, is buried with him. Charles, who died in Melbourne in 1884, aged 17, of typhoid fever, is also buried with

them. In the next grave are two more children – Annie who died in 1872, aged 1, and Thomas who died in 1874 aged 1 (Wes 48, with headstone).

The surviving child was the oldest son William Taylor Pearse, born in Creswick in 1863.

Geddie died without making a will, leaving a house in Buninyong and two blocks of land in the area, as well as a life insurance policy that would have helped his wife to survive. She moved to Melbourne with her two sons, but soon followed her husband to the grave.

Geddie Pearse is mentioned in glowing terms as an exemplary Australian school teacher in the book *Australia and the Empire* (1889), by Arthur Patchett Martin, p. 178

### **Trivia from the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland**

The web site of this august body has an article about Ned Kelly, which includes a reproduction of the old Buninyong court house from the early 1850s. (No acknowledgement of artist or source!) The caption states 'Police Station and Court House at Beninyong, very much as it would have been when Kelly's gang roamed the area.' Can you spot the three mistakes in this caption? (*The moral is don't believe everything you read on the Internet!*)

### **COMING EVENTS**

June 17 – BDHS Meeting Speaker Bob Skewes

June 19 – Court House History Centre open, Farmers' Market morning in Buninyong.

AGM Dry Stone Walls Association of Australia at Buninyong Town Hall.

Inauguration of Brett Edgington as Senior Warden and Master-Elect of the Buninyong Lodge.

August 19 – BDHS General Meeting – Anne Beggs Sunter will speak on the life and influence of Rev. Thomas Hastie, at the Buninyong Uniting Church, 7.30 pm

August 21 – Hastie Heritage Walk. Meet at the Court House at 10.30 am to explore the sites related to Rev. Hastie's life.

August 29 – Celebration of the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of opening of the Buninyong Presbyterian Church in 1860.