

BUNINYONG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Reg. No. A0030085Y

Web Site <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~buninhis>

PO Box 98, Buninyong, Vic. 3357.

Newsletter



On 28 October we welcomed members of the Westh family from various parts of Australia who gathered in Buninyong for a family reunion. Here several generations are pictured visiting the old Court House, and were delighted to be photographed under the Danish flag, as Westh was originally a Danish name..

December 2013

Our Christmas meeting takes place on Thursday 19 December, at the Court House History Centre, at 7.30pm. We will celebrate the 175th Anniversary of the arrival of the Learmonth Brothers in our area.

Congratulations to our new President

At our AGM in October, Beth Kicinski was elected President of our Society. Beth has just been awarded a scholarship to allow her to undertake a PhD in History at the new Federation University of Australia, Mount Helen Campus (formerly University of Ballarat). These Federal Government Scholarships are very hard to procure, so it is a testament to Beth's achievement that she secured one to allow her to pursue her deep interest in Aboriginal-White settler relationships on the colonial frontier.

Our warm thanks go to our immediate past President, Bob Skewes, for an inspiring term as President. We depend on his expertise as we go forward. Anne Beggs-Sunter was re-elected as Secretary, and Clive Brooks as Treasurer. We have a vacancy for Vice-President, which we would very much like to fill. The Treasurer reminds us that membership renewals fell due at the AGM. Thank you to those who have sent their renewals, and please may everyone else send in their cheque to the Treasurer.

Much Building activity in the 'Ancient Village'.

It is hard to keep up with new development in our historic township. During the last few weeks we have seen the completion of a new medical centre in Buninyong. In fact this establishment, at 311 Learmonth St, has seen a 1960s residential home transformed into a new centre for Ballarat Medical Practice, previously housed at the rear of the UFS Pharmacy, a few doors down the street. A new doctor, Dr. Alana Gimpel, has arrived in Buninyong to take up her practice at the UFS building, a welcome addition to the town.

Additions to the kindergarten and infant welfare centre further up Learmonth St. are almost complete.

Handsome new township entry markers have been erected thanks to the initiative of the Buninyong and District Community Association. The signs were designed by our local

landscape designer David Turley, fabricated from sawn bluestone that has been cut by Ballarat Stone Cutters, and laid by stonemason Billy Elliot from Castlemaine. Rough-cut bluestone gives a representation of Mount Buninyong, and the markers are tastefully finished with brass lettering 'Buninyong'. Solar lighting has been installed to illuminate each of the four signs after dark. The project has been financed by grants from the Buninyong Community Bank and the City of Ballarat, and a major grant from Regional Development Victoria. It is a relief to our Society that the old markers, that wrongly declared Buninyong as the 'oldest inland settlement in Victoria', have been removed.

Another removal, very suddenly, was the old De Soza Poppet Head, erected by a group of volunteers in January 1982, who were dedicated to cleaning up and beautifying the formerly snake-infested public reserve beside the Crown Hotel and turning it into a fitting headquarters for the Gold King Festival, which started in 1976. The poppet head would associate Buninyong once again with mining. Some of the chief movers and shakers of 1982 in the project were Graham Gooding, Ron Nicholls, Ivan Eames, Derick Leather, Russell Williams, David Searl and Ed O'Loughlin. The Festival flag, which flew from the newly completed poppet head in 1982, was made by Lindsey Chambers.



Erecting the Poppet Head on a warm Summer day in 1982. Ron Nicholls's heavy truck was very important. All done without the need to apply for a planning permit!

Late in 2013, officers from the City of Ballarat decided that the Poppet Head was unsafe, and moved in stealthily to dismantle it. This came as a shock to many locals, and we hope that there will be something to replace it, that gives a graphic and sculptural representation of Buninyong's association with the early gold mining industry. A number of blocks along Warrenheip Street are being subdivided or re-developed, testament to the booming real estate market in the area.

Cycling Championships for Buninyong in January

Buninyong will once again host the Australian Cycling Championships over the second weekend in January, culminating in the Men's Road Race on 12 January, when much of the centre of town is closed down to accommodate the 'peleton' as it makes many circuits of the now famous course. There is some disruption for locals, but the event brings many visitors to Buninyong for the weekend, and puts us on the national map.

City of Whittlesea Group visits Buninyong

In November we had a large group of 90 citizens of Wittlesea, who came in two buses to visit the Yulong Lavendar Farm and Buninyong. Your Secretary gave them an introduction to the 'Ancient Village', before releasing them on Buninyong's cafes for lunch. The City of Whittlesea generously donated \$100 for our hosting their visit to Buninyong.

Biographical Queries

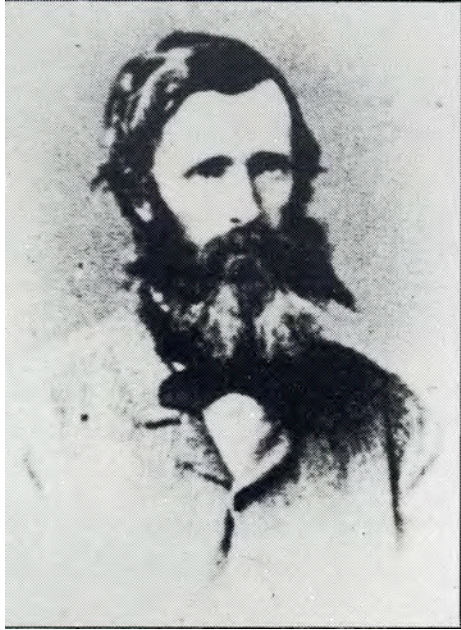
October-December 2013

GREEN – George Green married Mary Ann Ward at Buninyong in 1854. From Seville, Vic.

RICHARDS – Jane Richards of Durham Lead, miner's wife, was buried in the Wesleyan section at Buninyong cemetery in 1870. There were a number of families by the name of Richards in Durham Lead in the 1860s and 1870s – Benedict, Charles, George and William were all ratepayers, and there are a number of children attending the Durham Lead School.

We would be grateful for any further information about the various Richards families at Durham Lead.

175th Anniversary of White Settlement



Thomas and Somerville Learmonth, Buninyong's first white settlers

In January 1838 **William Cross Yuille** joined an exploring party with John Aitken, Henry Anderson, and Thomas and Somerville Learmonth when they explored the country from Bendigo across to Ballarat and Buninyong. Upon returning to their run, the young brothers Thomas and Somerville Learmonth immediately determined to move up to the Buninyong area because the Barwon had become too confined. 'At the same time (February 1838) Mr Yuille occupied Ballarat.' (Thomas Learmonth's letter to La Trobe, 1853, in *Letters From Victorian Pioneers*, p. 98)

The *Narrative of George Russell*, edited by P.L. Brown (1935) must be an authoritative source, stating that Anderson and Yuille journeyed up the Leigh to the present Ballarat in February 1838 (p. 163-4). He records a discussion with the **Learmonth Brothers**, with the decision that Anderson would settle at Winter's Flat, the Learmonth's three miles down the Leigh River, and Yuille three miles up the Leigh (or Yarrowee).

John McLeod, who settled on the Moorabool at **Borhoneygurk** (near Morrisons) in October 1837, noted that 'the Yuilles' settled near Buninyong 'about March or April'

1838, near 'the Learmonths and Henry Anderson. (McLeod, 1853, to La Trobe, p. 148). McLeod had 1,600 sheep, 8 horses and 5 men.

George Frederick Read, on the Leigh River, occupied **Cargarie** in January 1838 and applied for a license from 1 July 1838 to depasture 1500 sheep, 3 horses and 7 men. He was single, and aged 21.

George Mercer, his uncle **Major William Mercer and David Fisher**, on behalf of the Derwent Company, in May 1838 moved up the Barwon River and settled a group of stations including **Mt. Mercer cattle station**. David Fisher declared in applying for a license that he had 12,000 sheep, 600 head of cattle, 9 horses, 37 men, 3 females, and that where were 'all free'. He was one of the few married settlers. (*Historical Records of Victoria, Vol. 6, p, 143*)

William Cross Yuille applied for a license for **Ballarat** from 1 July 1838, for his 2,000 sheep, 4 cattle, 1 horse and 7 men.

THE LEARMONTH BROTHERS

Sons of Thomas Leamonth (1783-1869), from Scotland, a merchant who grew rich working for the East India Company in Calcutta. By 1835 he was a merchant in Hobart. He sent his three sons John, Thomas and Somerville to Geelong, and they established runs near Inverleigh.

In August 1837 young Thomas joined an exploration party that included Henry Anderson and George Russell and Surveyor D'Arcy to explore the Buninyong area. He returned in January 1838 with his brother Somerville, Henry Anderson and William Cross Yuille, and travelled to Mount Alexander, Burrumbeat and Buninyong and back to Geelong. This trip decided the young men on establishing runs near Buninyong.

Thomas was a youth of 20 when he occupied Buninyong in February 1838 with his brother Somerville, aged 19.

In February 1838 they established their home station on the Leigh River. They brought with them shepherds, hut keepers and overseers. There was at least one woman referred to. Most of the employees were convicts. In April 1838 a most unfortunate occurrence was the murder of their shepherd, Terence McManus, killed by Aboriginals at an outstation that became known as Murdering Gully, between Sebastopol and Ross Creek. Fortunately there were no reprisals.

The brothers set about building their station – huts for themselves, their employees, and stables for their horses. Soon there was a mill, a fellmongery and a vegetable garden.

HENRY ANDERSON (1807-1878)

Born Fifeshire, Scotland. His father Alexander came to the Swan River, WA in 1831, bringing his large family with him. He came to Tasmania in 1836, where his oldest sons Henry and John were already established at Bothwell.

In 1836 George Russell became executive officer of the new Clyde Company, formed to exploit Port Phillip, with Alexander Snr helping him select the site for the company's head station on the Moorabool, at the junction with Sutherland's Creek. As more men and sheep arrived from Tasmania, Henry moved his and Russell's flocks up from the Moorabool to the vicinity of Mt. Buninyong in February 1838. He took up a station of 26,000 acres on the Yarrowee River called *Waverley Park*.

In 1841 he married Julia Lyall. This wedding is registered within the Presbyterian church records at Buninyong. A year later the birth of a child, Alexander Thomas, to Julia and Henry, is recorded, only the third birth registered at Buninyong, baptised into the Presbyterian faith.

Henry sold *Waverley Park* to John Winter in 1842 for 1500 pounds, and the station became known as *Bonshaw*, after the Scottish family estate of Winter's wife.

The Wathaurung people of Mount Buninyong

The Wathaurung people had lived in the area of thousands of years, and must have been shocked by the sudden appearance of white men and their flocks of sheep. They had known one white man for 30 years – the convict William Buckley who escaped from Sorento in 1803 and lived with the Wathaurung people at Geelong, becoming a fully accepted member of the tribe. He took a wife, a Wathaurung woman from the Mount Buninyong tribe, who would have taught Buckley the Aboriginal names of the area, which he passed on to the surveyors who named geographical features like mountains and rivers. So we have names like Buninyong, Warrenheip and Ballarat.

The Learmonths said that there were not many Aboriginal people in the area when they arrived. Soon after, George Augustus Robinson was appointed Protector of the Aborigines in Port Phillip, and with his deputies his role was to reconcile the needs of the Aboriginal people with the exploitation of their lands by the white people.

Unfortunately their numbers declined rapidly – from a combination of violent confrontations, disease and hunger as thousands of sheep, ‘the shock troops of invasion’, destroyed their traditional food, the Murnong daisy. When the Wathaurung fought back to protect their hunting grounds, their spears were no match for the guns of the Europeans.

At least we do have the beautiful and evocative Wathaurung names for our area – Buninyong, Warrenheip, Peerwur, Lal Lal, Bungal and Moorabool

COMING EVENTS

19 December – BDHS Christmas meeting, celebrating 175 years of Buninyong

9-20 January 2014–Organs of the Ballarat Goldfields Festival

11-12 January Australian National Cycling Championships, Buninyong