

BUNINYONG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Reg. No. A0030085Y

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

PO Box 98, Buninyong, Vic. 3357.

Newsletter

February 2013

Our first meeting of the year will take place on Thursday 21 February at 7.30 pm.

The year began with the excitement of the Australian Cycling Championships on 13 January, when an estimated crowd of 16,000 people thronged the streets of Buninyong and the road to Mount Buninyong to watch the race, which was broadcast on national television by SBS, sending lovely images of our 'ancient village' around the nation.

On Sunday 3 February, the Buninyong Marmalade Fair took place at the Buninyong Town Hall. We had quite a few visitors in to look at the Marmalashes, and some interesting sporting autographs loaned for the occasion.

A PERMANENT TRIBUTE TO DERICK LEATHER OF BUNINYONG?

There has been some discussion by different groups of how we should mark Derick Leather's amazing contribution to Buninyong over more than 30 years of civic engagement. Derick's daughter Janet has kindly donated some photographs, plaques and notes made by Derick to the Society, and we are proud to add Derick's portrait to our 'Presidents' Row' in the Court House. Lorraine Powell came up with the idea of a Leather Arboretum, in the Crown Reserve that has been known informally for many years as Birdwood Park. This is an excellent idea, as Derick

was always very keen on planting trees in Buninyong, particularly Oak trees. We will discuss how we can further this concept at our meeting.

Power Family Presentation

Members of the Power family presented a beautiful framed illuminated address presented to Constable J.J. Power of the Buninyong Police, who was here between 1893 and 1900.

The address reads:

Mounted Constable J J Power

Dear Sir,

We, as representing the Citizens of Buninyong and district, desire to place on record the esteem and regard in which you are held.

During a term of over seven years you have fearlessly and most conscientiously done your duty both as a private citizen and in your official capacity and we feel that the qualities you have displayed are such as must ensure your speedy promotion.

Whatever the future may hold in store for you, it must be a great satisfaction to you and yours to know that you have a host of well wishers and friends in the 'Ancient Village'.

Wishing you and yours every success, health and prosperity,

Signed Daniel Phelan, Mayor

David Kerr, MLA, JP

Edward Newman, JP

Frank Longden, MD, JP

Herbert Austin, JP

James A. Jordan, Hon. Sec.

The family also presented his police whip and stirrups.

We also acquired a copy of Gwen Pascoe's new history of nineteenth century botanic gardens in Victoria, called *Long Views and Short Vistas*, published by Australian Scholarly Publishing.

BIOGRAPHICAL QUERIES

Dec 2012-Feb 2013

GOODE – Samuel and his sons were printers and newspaper men. We had a visit from Tom Goode from WA, a descendant of Samuel.

KELLY - In 1849, Charlotte Kelly, widow, arrived with her four children – William, Margaret, Thomas and James on the *Sir George Seymour* as an assisted immigrant, and became a hut keeper for the Learmonth. Her daughter Margaret was a boarder at Hastie's School in 1850. Charlotte married John Fitzpatrick at the Buninyong Presbyterian Church in 1850.

LYNE From Roger Lyne in Enfield, UK, whose grandfather was a cousin of Percy Lyne. He sent a photo of Leonard Lyne, baker, of Enfield, showing the relatives pursued parallel careers in England and Victoria.

NOYE – Herbert Fitzwilliam Noye, born in Cornwall, was an engineer at a Durham Lead mine in the 1870s. While there, five children were born to the family.

SCANLON – Michael and Julia settled at Cargarie. From a descendant in Brisbane, enquiring about Cargarie.

TURPIE – James Turpie married Rosina Bee in the Buninyong area in about 1850.

Anyone with information about these families is invited to contact the Secretary, Anne Beggs-Sunter, at a.beggs-sunter@ballarat.edu.au

Robert Gillespie's Letter, 1854.

The following letter from Robert Gillespie of Buninyong to his fiancé Helen Ellis in Edinburgh, on 2 June 1854, gives a vivid picture of life in Buninyong in 1854:

(Courtesy of Alison Cranswell, Canberra, great granddaughter of Robert Gillespie and his second wife Martha Scott, who visited Buninyong in 2012 and gave us a copy of this precious letter.)

MY DEAR HELEN,

I HAVE JUST WRITTEN TO MY FRIEND MR KERR IN MELBOURNE ASKING HIM TO LOOK AFTER YOU WHEN YOU ARRIVE. HE IS THE PRINCIPAL MAN IN THE BAPTIST CHURCH THERE, WITH WHICH I AM CONNECTED; INDEED HE IS MORE THE KEYSTONE THAN THE MINISTER IS, SO YOU NEEDN'T BE AFRAID TO TRUST YOURSELF TO HIS COUNSEL.

LET ME CAUTION YOU AGAINST EXPECTING TOO MUCH IN COMING OUT, IN CASE YOU SHOULD BE DISAPPOINTED. THE LEARMONTHS HAVE PROMISED TO GET THE HOUSE 'PUT IN ORDER' FOR US. I DON'T KNOW WHAT THAT MAY MEAN, SO I WILL GIVE YOU THE BEST DESCRIPTION I CAN OF THE HOUSE AS IT IS. IT IS A ONE STOREY BUILDING WITH A VERANDAH, COMPRISING A PARLOUR, OFFICE, PRINCIPAL BEDROOM AND TWO OTHER BEDROOMS, WITH BATHROOM. (SKETCH INCLUDED) THE HOUSE IS BUILT OF WOODEN SLABS, AND HAS BEEN PLASTERED OVER, BUT THE PLASTER HAS MOSTLY FALLEN OFF. ON BLACK THURSDAY (A MEMORABLE DAY OF FIRE AND STORM) THE HOUSE WAS BLOWN OVER A LITTLE, AND NOW LEANS FORWARD OVER THE VERANDAH. THE PARLOUR AND THE TWO SMALL BEDROOMS ARE VERY OLD – ABOUT THE OLDEST BUSH HOUSE IN THE COLONY. MY ROOM AND THE PRINCIPAL ROOM ARE A NEW ADDITION. WE DON'T USE CARPETS IN ANY OF

THE ROOMS, ON ACCOUNT OF THE FLEAS, WHICH ARE APT TO BECOME VERY PLENTIFUL IN THIS COUNTRY WHEREVER CARPETS ARE USED. THE WALLS OF THE PARLOUR AND BEDROOMS ARE LINED WITH HOLLAND, OF WHICH THE MICE ARE VERY GLAD, AS THEY CAN SCUTTLE ALONG AND UP AND DOWN UPON IT AS IF IT WERE LEVEL ON THE FLOOR – AND AS THE CAT IS ON ONE SIDE OF IT AND THEY ON THE OTHER, THEY ARE QUITE SAFE. THE WINDOWS OF THE HOUSE ARE VERY SMALL, AND THE DOORS VERY RUGGED, BUT THE ONE LET IN THE LIGHT AND THE OTHER KEEP OUT THE COLD – AND BOTH WILL SEEM QUITE TOLERABLE AFTER YOU HAVE BEEN THREE MONTHS AT SEA. THERE IS NO COAL BURNT, NO GAS TO BE HAD, BUT GENERALLY WE HAVE PLENTY OF TALLOW FOR CANDLES AND WOOD FOR FUEL.

IN FRONT OF THE HOUSE THERE IS A GARDEN OF ABOUT A QUARTER OF AN ACRE, WITH SOME FINE FRUIT TREES AND FLOWERS – AND TRAINED AROUND THE PARLOUR CHIMNEY ARE SOME VERY GOOD VINES. THE GARDEN SLOPES DOWN TO A SMALL CREEK, WHICH RUNS PAST THE FOOT OF IT DOWN TO THE RIVER.

AT THE LEFT HAND SIDE OF THE GARDEN , ABOUT THREE FEET FROM THE PARLOUR, IS THE KITCHEN, IN WHICH THE MARRIED COUPLE RESIDE WHO ATTEND TO MY WANTS AT PRESENT, AND IN WHICH OUR SERVANTS WILL ALSO RESIDE.

ABOUT HALF A MILE FROM THE HOUSE IS A LITTLE VILLAGE OCCUPIED BY PERSONS WHO HAVE PURCHASED LAND FROM LEARMONTHS, AND ALWAYS ON THE INCREASE.

THREE MILES OFF IS THE TOWN OF BUNINYONG, CONTAINING ABOUT 100 HOUSES (I.E. HUTS) I FANCY, BUILT ON THE SLOPE OF THE MOUNTAIN. AT THE HEAD OF THE TOWN IS MR HASTIE'S CHURCH. HALFWAY DOWN IS MR BOYLE'S STORE WHERE THE BAPTIST MEETING (COMMENCED ON 12 MARCH) IS HELD. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN IS MR SCOTT'S STATION, TO WHICH I SOMETIMES GO, AND WHERE YOU WILL PROBABLY BE AN INTIMATE.

BUT THERE'S NO USE MAKING SUCH DESCRIPTIONS – YOU CAN COMPARE WHAT YOU HAVE IMAGINED WITH THE REALITY WHEN YOU SEE IT, TO BE SURE – BUT EVEN THAT IS LITTLE GOOD.

I AM GLAD YOU HAVE BEEN ACCUSTOMED TO EARLY HOURS AT HOME, AS OTHERWISE YOU WOULD HAVE FOUND OUR CUSTOMS HERE AS IRKSOME AS I DID AT FIRST. WORK BEGINS AT 7 A.M., AND BEFORE THAT HOUR EVERYONE MUST BREAKFAST OR GO WITHOUT, AS NO TIME IS ALLOWED FOR BREAKFAST AFTER IT. THERE IS AN HOURS REST AT MIDDAY, WHEN THE MEN DINE AND WE LUNCH, AND THEN GO ON WITH WORK UNTIL SUNSET, WHEN WE DINE AND HAVE TEA, AND RETIRE TO REST AT 10 P.M. I HAVE NOT GOT INTO THE WAY OF EARLY RISING, EVEN YET, BUT YOU WILL PERHAPS TEACH ME. WHEN ANY OF THE LEARMONTHS ARE HERE, THEY GENERALLY HAVE THE BREAKFAST READY BEFORE I AM DRESSED.

BEFORE THOMAS AND SOMERVILLE LEARMONTH WENT HOME IN 1851, THEY USED TO HOLD SERVICE EVERY EVENING, AT WHICH MOST OF THE LABOURERS ON THE PLACE ATTENDED. BUT ANDREW GAVE IT UP AND IT HAS NEVER BEEN RESUMED. DURING SHEARING WE USED TO HOLD A SABBATH EVENING SERVICE IN THE KITCHEN (WHICH WAS BUILT FOR A CHAPEL) BUT IT IS DISCONTINUED WHEN SHEARING WAS OVER. THE LEARMONTHS OF COURSE HAVE WORSHIP EVERY EVENING, AND THE SERVANTS ATTEND ON THE SABBATH EVENINGS. ONE OF THE MEN, A BULLOCK DRIVER, A CHRISTIAN, AND A RECENT PROSELYTE TO BAPTIST OPINION – HOLDS A SERVICE IN HIS HUT ON THE SABBATH AFTERNOONS WHEN HE IS AT HOME – READING A SERMON TO THE REST WHO ATTEND. SO MUCH FOR THE PUBLIC RECOGNITION OF RELIGION UPON THE STATION.

AT MR HASTIE'S CHURCH THERE IS SERVICE EVERY SUNDAY FROM 11.15 A.M. TO 1.30 P.M. AFTER IT I DINE WITH THEM AND THEN CONDUCT THE SABBATH SCHOOL, AND AFTER IT CONDUCT A SERVICE IN OUR LITTLE BAPTIST MEETING. SUCH IS A STATEMENT OF MOST OF THE 'OUTWARD AND ORDINARY MEANS OF GRACE' AT BUNINYONG.

I CANNOT RECOLLECT ANYTHING ELSE AT PRESENT THAT YOU MIGHT CARE TO KNOW BEFOREHAND, AND SO I WILL CONCLUDE FOR THIS EVENING.

YOUR EVERY AFFECTIONATE,

ROBT. GILLESPIE.

Robert had been a clerk in a bank in Edinburgh before arriving in Victoria on 6 February 1852. He was employed by the Learmonth brothers at *Ercildoun*, before leasing the Learmonth's Buninyong Station. He married Helen Sommerville Ellis in 1855.

He was elected MLA for Grenville from October 1859 until 1862, when he resigned to become manager of the Buninyong Bank. Always involved in church affairs, he was a trustee of the Buninyong Presbyterian Church in 1860 and a generous contributor to the building fund.

His wife Helen died on 1 October 1863, at the age of 33. She was buried in Buninyong. Robert was a widower with five children. As the above letter demonstrates, he was a frequent visitor at the *Mount Boninyong* home of the Scott family, and in June 1865 he married Martha King Scott, spinster aged 37, at the residence. They had five children.

In 1866 Robert was appointed manager of the Geelong branch of the National Bank, and later moved to Melbourne, where he became chief inspector of banks. Martha died in 1891, and Robert in 1910. They are buried at Buninyong and there is a memorial window for Robert in the Buninyong Uniting Church.

COMING EVENTS

16 February – Market Day in Buninyong

21 February 2013 - General Meeting Buninyong and District Historical Society

18 April – General Meeting

11-12 May –Ballarat Heritage Festival

Have you renewed your membership? Renewal attached.