

BUNINYONG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Reg. No. A0030085Y

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

PO Box 98, Buninyong, Vic. 3357.



St. Mary's Catholic Church Clarendon, opened 1871. Photographed in 1975

Newsletter February 2014

Our February meeting takes place on Thursday 13 February, at the Court House History Centre, at 7.30pm. Note that this is the second Thursday, rather than the third Thursday.

National Cycling Championships a success in January

Buninyong once again hosted the Australian Cycling Championships over the second weekend in January, culminating in the Men's Road Race on 12 January. An estimated crowd of 23,000 people lined the Buninyong-Mount Buninyong-Mount Helen circuit, and SBS provided televised coverage on a beautiful summer day. Although local residents were inconvenienced by problems of access to and from their properties, the event certainly showcased Buninyong.

New Businesses in Buninyong

In January we saw much activity in Warrenheip St., with two new shops/residences being constructed in the Post Office Block, and major repairs to Middleton's Store, which has now opened as a branch of Harcourt's Real Estate Agency, a sign of the lively housing market in our area. Another development was the new Pizza outlet, established on the corner of Warrenheip and Barkly Sts, in a renovated office building. The Lions Club's wonderful initiative of a second-hand book shop in the old Adams's store is proving popular on Saturdays.

Congratulations to Christina Hindhaugh, OAM

One of our newer residents (with some very old connections) has brought honour to Buninyong with her 'Order of Australia' medal this Australia Day, 2014. Christina is the executive director of the Glenelg River Rosemary Farm, the largest commercial rosemary farm in the southern hemisphere. She is the secretary of the Friends of Buninyong Botanical Garden, former president of Balmoral's Australian Red Cross branch and patron of the Balmoral Health Appeal. Knowing how active Christina and her husband Chris have been in Buninyong affairs since their arrival a few years ago, we are delighted to congratulate Christina.

The Real Henry Joseph Desoza

At our December 2013 meeting, Adrienne Schreuder raised again her concern about the interpretative sign in the Rotunda in De Soza Park. We wrote to the City of Ballarat in 2009 expressing concern about the inaccuracies of this sign, but there was no action taken. The secretary has prepared a brief biography, and will send it to the committee chaired by David Searl looking at the future development of De Soza Park. (Note – the correct name should be Desoza Park!)

Biographical Queries

January-February 2014

VEALE – Percival was a soldier in France in World War One, and sent a post card from England in 1917. Percival Colin Veale was buried in the Buninyong Cemetery in 1949. Someone who contacted us has the postcard, and would like to share it with any relatives.

Buckle/Fancke Family of Scotsburn Reunion, 9 March 2014

The descendants of the Buckle, Fancke (Fanchi), and Lorenseni (Lorensene) families will be coming back to Ballarat on the weekend of 8-10 March 2014 (the Labour day long weekend) for a family reunion. These families have been very important in the development of farming and community in the Scotsburn area of the old Shire of Buninyong. The gathering point is the Big 4 Ballarat Caravan Park on Remembrance Drive, and it is planned to visit the Buninyong Court House History Centre between 3 and 4.00pm on Sunday 9 March, before visiting the old family property at Scotsburn. The organisers are Liz and Wendy, who can be contacted on lizandralph@bigpond.com, or by phone on 0409942203

St. Mary's Catholic Church Clarendon

The little Catholic church of St. Mary's at Clarendon, such a landmark on the Midland Highway, will be closed at a service on Sunday 9 March 2014, at 2.00 pm. Since 1968 it has been part of St. Alipius Parish of Ballarat East, and Mass has been celebrated twice each month. However the building of the new Catholic church in Buninyong has sadly signaled the end for St. Mary's. All those with a connection to this lovely church are invited to attend the final Mass and afternoon tea.

For me, as Secretary of the Buninyong and District Historical Society, and a member of the Clarendon community, it is a very sad day – in fact a day of real grief, because of my family connection which goes back to the opening of this church in 1871. The church of

Our Lady Help of Christians was blessed and opened by Bishop James Alipius Goold of Melbourne on 9 November 1871.

In 1871, Clarendon boasted a population of 700 people, with three hotels and several stores, and an important tannery nearby. There was already a school, a Wesleyan chapel, and a Presbyterian chapel in the township, but many Irish families had settled in the area, and there was a strong demand for a Catholic church. The church was constructed of Lal Lal bricks, in the Gothic style, and faced with plaster, with a slate roof, to the cost of £500, raised locally. In the early 1900s, a sacristy was added, designed by the Shire of Buninyong engineer, C.C.P. Wilson, himself a Catholic.

At the opening in November 1871, special praise was given to Mr Vines and the Misses Vines for their work for the building. The Bishop was met by a cavalcade of horsemen, and a mind-boggling 192 children were confirmed. This shows how much local Catholic families longed for a local church, unable to travel the long distance to Buninyong, or Ballarat for religious instruction. Members of the St. Patrick's Choir from Ballarat attended to sing the Mass. One wonders how this amazing crowd fitted into the small church!

Three priests have come from this community – Fr. Martin Gleeson (ordained in 1910), Fr. Gerard Prunty (ordained in 1978), and also Father Leo Donnelly, whose mother was Veronica Emery from Clarendon, who married William Donnelly of Bungaree. Father Donnelly, a Columban missionary to South America, died just recently.

A number of young women dedicated themselves to serve the church as nuns – Sr. Isadore (Catherine Harrington, Loreto Ballarat, 1893), Sr. Padua (Mary Gleeson, Sacred Heart Ballarat), Sr. Consuela Emery (St. John of God Ballarat), Sr. Margaret McKee (St. John of God Perth) and Sr. Mary Prunty (Loreto, Ballarat, 1980)

It will be a very sad day on 9 March 2014, following the recent closure of the Elaine Catholic church. The old Catholic families of Clarendon and district – the Emerys, McKees, Gleesons and Prunties - hope that the memory of St. Mary's Clarendon can be tangibly marked in the beautiful new church of St. Peter and Paul, emerging on the eminence over Buninyong.

The Buninyong Gold Mines in 1882

In researching Henry Joseph Desoza and his gold mine, I came upon the following fabulous report on Buninyong in 1882 by Robert Brough Smyth, former Secretary for Mines in Victoria, and acknowledged scientific expert, who would become President of the Bendigo School of Mines in 1883. It is fascinating that he praises the work of the Ballarat School of Mines in this extensive article, which gives great insight into the mines working in the Hiscock's-Scothman's Lead area, enjoying great fortune at the time. He makes some astute observations on the need for a more scientific approach by some companies, compliments Mr Ochiltree, Manager of the Buninyong Bank for his astute observations, and recommends Buninyong citizens invest in a proper water supply system, something only taken up nearly a century later. It is a long article, but cogently written, and well worth reading and absorbing.

The Argus, 4 October 1882

THE GOLD MINES OF VICTORIA IN 1882.

By R. Brough Smyth, F.L.S., F.G.S.

BUNINYONG.

The town of Buninyong has an historical interest attached to it. It was here that Mr Hiscock, in the midst of snow and sleet and cold rain, began to search for gold in July, 1851. About four miles west of the mount he found enough on the 8th August to startle the inhabitants of Geelong, and to give rise to some excitement in Melbourne. The discoverer of gold and those who followed him began their pursuit in a very humble way. They had ardent hopes, but very little machinery. For some time there was only one cradle on the newly discovered gold field, and cooking utensils, bought or borrowed from people in the neighbourhood, were put to unwonted uses. The man who owned the cradle washed out one ounce and a half of gold in one day, a woman with a dish earned 30s in a few hours and children puddling the earth in pannikins got 8s worth of dust as a morning's exercise.

The yields, however, when actual hard work commenced were not at first large, and the commissioners, in obedience to instructions from the Government, began to insist on the payment of licence fees, at the rate of 30s. per month. The diggers could not pay the tax, and in order to evade payment wandered to remote and untrodden gullies and flats, and in this manner the country was prospected. Anyone who will turn over the files of the *Argus* for the latter part of the year 1851 will find numerous subjects of interest in connection with the discoveries of gold at Buninyong and other places, and in the formal proclamations in the *Government Gazette* in the same year much matter for serious contemplation.

These proclamations-regulating, amongst other things, the fees to be paid by persons searching for gold-are not remarkable for felicity of language, and it is scarcely a matter

for surprise that taxes, in the shape of licence fees, amounting in 1852 to nearly £400,000, and in 1853 to over £660 000, were deemed excessive. There were no "public servants" in those days, and the miners were treated with more severity than it would be safe to exercise towards criminals at the present day

Many changes have occurred since the constabulary were engaged in " digger hunting' at Buninyong. Subsequent to Mr Hiscock's discovery there were 10,000 miners employed on the Hard Hills, a little to the west of the town, and the yields were large, and the leads after a little time were opened up and a fresh impulse was given to mining. The quartz reefs attracted attention at an early date, and during the past 20 years the numbers employed in this branch of mining have been nearly the same. In 1862 there were 400 quartz miners, and at the present time there are 390. The machinery for quartz crushing in 1862 consisted of six steam engines of the aggregate of 195 horse power, and the quartz crushed was 38,930 tons, yielding 5 934} or, or at the rate of 3dwt 1gr per ton. In 1881 there were 17 steam engines of 330 horse power with 102 stamps but the quartz crushed was only 19,917 tons, which, at the rate of 5dwt 20Jgr per ton gave 5 840oz. During the half year ending 30th June the quartz treated, according to the published returns, was 10,310 tons, and the yield of gold 2,423 ozs , showing an average of 4dwt 17j,r per ton. It will be observed that now about one half the quantity of quartz is crushed for the same amount of gold as was obtained in 1862.

In place of the posse of richly decorated commissioners, attended by numbers of armed and mounted men, who formerly held sway in this district, there are now but two or three policemen, and these serve to maintain the observance of the laws amongst the small population-not more than 1,400-of the town of Buninyong. It is not a rich place. There are good buildings here and there-banks, churches, and hotels-but the streets where much trodden need repair, and where untrodden do no more than furnish succulent grasses for indolent cows. The revenue raised by the local authorities is less than £800 per annum, and how they have made that little go so far is beyond the comprehension of a stranger.

The climate, the soils, and the near connection with the chief city of the west are all in its favour, but it does not exhibit any signs of prosperity. The mines which are producing gold may in time give a new life to this rather "sleepy hollow,' but at present it is far from lively though it is only just to state, individuals seem both successful and contented.

The silurian rocks, where not covered with lava, show numerous quartz reefs, and the older drifts at Slaughterhouse Hill, the Hard Hills, and Chalk Hills, as well as the newer auriferous deposits, have yielded much gold and if water be conserved so as to admit of sluicing operations being carried out, may yet yield much more. The leads are extensive, and they are not exhausted. The Hiscock Lead, which has its source near Hiscocks Reef, unites with the Black Lead, whose main tributaries are Poor Man's Lead and Surface Lead.

The Scotchman's Lead takes its rise at a point between Slaughter house hill and the Hard Hills. The Union Jack, the Glencoe, the Stone Quarry, and the Devonshire leads are all within the same drainage area, and have been fed principally by the line of reef south of the town of Buninyong. The Green Hill Lead runs southward from the Devonshire Reef. All these tributaries fall into the main gutter, which has its source at Ballarat, where it is known as the Golden Point Lead. This ancient water channel, under different names, has an uninterrupted course for over 20 miles, and represents the old bed of the river Yarrowee or Leigh. Though the Palaeozoic rocks, as already stated, are everywhere quartziferous, many of the reefs being only a few feet apart, the proved auriferous veins are not very numerous. The most important are the Helen Reef at the head of the Union Jack Lead, 60 chains north east of the town; the Devonshire Reef south of the town, the

line known as the Homeward Bound, the Desoza, Hard Hills, and Hiscock reefs; east and west of Hiscock's Reef are the Fairweather, North Star, Willoughby, and other reefs, and on the north the Magpie, Tower hill, and Indicator. From 60 to 80 chains west of Hiscocks are the Long Gully and Cobbler's Reefs. South westward of the Yarrowee are Trigg's Reef, Gympie, and the Pioneer, intersecting Kitty's diggings, and the Slow and Sure and Napoleon's Reef still further westward. Portions of all these reefs are now held under various tenures, and a large amount of work is being done, especially on the main or Hiscock's line. The lodes, I was informed, are nearly all vertical, and the thickness varies as a rule from 8in. to 8ft. Much of the stone is highly pyritous, and there are "indicators" similar to those which occur in the Black hill mine. An examination of the country shows clearly the existence of a system of reefs extending from the Homeward Bound on the south to the Black hill at Ballarat on the north, a distance of eight miles. Making due allowances for the deflection of the line of outcrops, owing to the unevenness of the surface, it is easy to trace the auriferous lode throughout this extent, and it may safely be predicted that all the veins belonging to this system will be profitably mined at greater or lesser depths. The dip and strike of the rocks, the minerals associated with the quartz, and the manner in which the gold is distributed, all serve to prove the continuity of this important line, and it is to be regretted that so little work is being done, more especially at those points where the leads which yielded much gold in former times take their rise. **There is here a great auriferous belt, and energy and capital alone are needed to develop it.** It was stated that from one mine in the White Horse Ranges on this line of reef 1cwt of quartz yielded nearly 1000 oz. of gold.

The mines now yielding gold near Buninyong-are all on this line -the Desoza, Webb Brothers, Ferguson, Democrat, Dolcoath, and the Imperial. The Desoza has eight head of stamps, Webb Brothers, 12, the Dolcoath, eight, and the Imperial, 12. The quartz from the Democrat and Ferguson is crushed at one or other of the above named batteries. These claims are within a short distance of the town, and the drive thither occupied but a short time. The Desoza mine is on private property. They have three shafts, of which the two in use are-No 1 200ft in depth and No 2 the main shaft 290ft. Two lodes have been cut and a flat leader, and it is expected when a greater depth is reached that the pyrites vein now yielding so well in Webb's ground will be found. There is one engine, winding, crushing, and pumping surface water. The battery consists of eight revolving stamp heads, each of 9cwt, and the number of men employed is 32. The gratings used vary in the number of holes per square inch, some being 100 and others 200, according as the gold is expected to be fine or coarse. Copper plates ripples, and blanket rakes are attached to the battery. The arrangements are on the old system, without much reference apparently to the character of the quartz and minerals brought out of the mine and it may safely be assumed that much gold is lost. Enough, however, is got to satisfy the owners They save about 200oz per month, and when I was present I saw the amalgam being squeezed through calico. Ordinarily chamois leather is used, but at the Desoza mine calico suffices. The pyrites they collect are sent to the nearest furnaces for treatment. Tho Desoza Company in this locality occupy a small area, having less than 700ft on the line of reef but their prospects would justify them in initiating a new system in treating their quartz. At a greater depth they will surely discover large quantities of auriferous pyrites, and they should adopt the best methods of saving this mineral, and it would be to their advantage to combine with other mine owners and erect furnaces and machinery after such models as are now approved of, for the economical treatment of all their sulphides. In this adventure there are 20 000 shares of 10s each, and the dividends declared up to the end of June last amounted to £3 910. They have crushed altogether 3122 tons of stone for a yield of 2,912oz, equal to 18dwt 15gr per ton nearly. Gold was got at a depth of 30ft from the surface, It is a registered company and no calls have been made, the profits being sufficient to defray all expenses. Some of the specimens from this mine shown to me by Mr Ochiltree were extremely rich, many with coarse clean gold, and others full of arsenical pyrites and

gold, as well as a dark almost plumbaginous schist, also carrying gold. Other samples of vein stone from the neighbouring Buninyong Estate were of the same character.

The Desoza Company have been at work for two years only, and what has been already done is creditable to the management. The mine of Webb Brothers is north of and adjoining the Desoza. The area they occupy is small and when prospecting was commenced the shafts of the Desoza and Webb Brothers were not more than 16ft apart. The main shaft of the Webbs, which is 203ft in depth, is 200ft north of the Desoza. There are two lodes one of pyrites quartz and the other, consisting nearly altogether of pyrites and blue slate penetrated by quartz is from 2ft to 6ft in thickness. It is believed that the Indicator line passes through this claim and the dark blue grey satiny clay slates which are passed through the battery support this thought.

Usually one sees at a quartz mine white or ferruginous stone, with more or less pyrites but here what seems to be ordinary bed rock is sent to the hoppers. The stuff passing over the blanket rakes is blue black, and quite unlike the ordinary auriferous vein stones. The flume flowing away from the compound, in which sparkle here and there crystals of pyrites. In treating this material it is scarcely necessary to state that no quicksilver is put in the stamper boxes, the few appliances are designed to save the pyrites, and they are rude and it may be conjectured altogether insufficient to prevent loss. At one time this dark coloured material was neglected, the quartz only was crushed, but when Mr Ochiltree the manager of the National Bank at Buninyong, saw the blue pyrites slate he thought it advisable to have it tested, and he handed two or three specimens to the analyst at the School of Mines in Ballarat. It was then ascertained that the stuff yielded gold at the rate of 2oz, and 3oz per ton, and large quantities are now being crashed with results in every way satisfactory to the owners.

This discovery is important, and those mining on the north and on the south are anxious to cut a lode so profitable. The auriferous pyrites are placed in bags, and some are sent to Ballarat East and some for treatment. I brought away a few pieces from the lode which Mr Webb was kind enough to break out for me on the spot, and Mr Cosmo Newbery has examined them. He says that these samples of vein stone are composed of granular quartz and clay with arsenical pyrites. When the pyrites are separated from the matrix the gold may be seen attached to the pyrites crystals, in some cases partly covered by the pyrites. The black slate, he adds, contains strings and small bunches of arsenical pyrites, which allow gold on being treated with acid, and strongly resembles the black slate casing of the Hustler's Reef at Sandhurst, which in places is very rich. The discovery of the value of this unpromising material, due to the sagacity of Mr Ochiltree, aided by the ready means for analysis at the School of Mines, opens the way to much profitable work in this locality, and serves at the same time to indicate the direction in which prospecting operations should be carried on.

If Mr Flude had done no more than this work in connexion with the School of Mines, the subscribers to this institution in Ballarat might well rest satisfied that this is only one of the many benefits which he and his colleagues have conferred on the mining community. This mine had been worked for two years and a half, and the weight of the gold already got is 2,374oz. Mr Webb informed me that they employ six miners, two brake men, two trackers, and five engine drivers, and that the yield from the quartz veins is about 154dwt per ton.

The Buninyong Estate Company hold a large area immediately south of the Desoza from north to south on the line of reef it measures half a mile. Air Macdougall, the manager of the mine, and Mr J A Chalk, the legal manager, courteously furnished interesting facts connected with the operations of the company. They are now erecting a battery and setting pumps preparatory to the commencement of active work below and on the surface. The depth of the main shaft is 310ft, and they have cut one lode, quartz

from which, crushed at Webbs battery, yielded over 8dwt per ton. They will have to carry their shaft to a greater depth to cut the Desoza lode and the pyrites vein of Webbs' claim but there is already a large quantity of stone in eight. The Desoza lode will be found probably at a depth of 420ft. The dip of the reef they have now in their several levels is south about 5in or one to the foot longitudinally, and where first struck was about 6ft in thickness. Elsewhere it is from 4ft to 8ft in width. There is a good deal of pyrites with the quartz. Near the northern boundary a whip was put up, and gold was seen in the quartz about 57ft above the hill of the drive. In addition to the main shaft, there are two others near the Boothera boundary, one of 320ft and the other of 200ft.

Having regard to the large extent of reef this company holds, the results obtained from quartz mining on the north and on the south, and the character of the alluvium in the adjacent lead, it is reasonable to suppose that, with economical management, there will be satisfactory returns for the capital involved. They have a winding engine of 22 horse power, a battery engine of 14-horse power, and a pumping engine of 14 horse power. The bed logs (stringy bark) were being set in place when I was at the mine, and it is anticipated that the battery will be at work within a brief period

The Homeward Bound Company's mine adjoins, and is south of the Buninyong Estate. They have erected a battery of 10 stamp heads, and those acquainted with the locality entertain a favourable opinion as to their prospects.

Mr Meagher, who is largely interested in the mines of the district, communicated some facts respecting the Imperial Company's workings. They hold about 7 chains on the line of reef, the southern boundary of their claim being nearly a mile north of Webb Brothers' property. The depth of their deepest shaft is 410ft, and they have sunk another of 200ft. Stone much mixed with pyrites is being raised from both. They have taken out quartz from a lode over 60 ft in thickness, all of it gold bearing. The underlie is from 30deg to 45deg to the east. There is a cross course, or Bilde, at a depth of 200ft, and a mundic vein has been cut, but information as to the yield from the latter was not given. They have engine power sufficient for present purposes. Their battery consists of 12 square stamps.

In the Devonshire claim they have, it is said, cut three lodes Their shaft at present is 300ft in depth, and they are now preparing to sink 100ft deeper. The reef is nearly vertical

The Dolcoath Company, with 9,000 shares of 5s each, holding land south of the Imperial, have crushed from the 20th June, 1870, to the 12th August, 1880, 1,592 tons of quartz. Their battery of eight heads of stamps, with a 12in cylinder engine and a whim, are all that they employ as machinery.

The Democrat Company, whose claim is south of and adjoins the Dolcoath, have crushed from the opening of their claim on the 12th July, 1881, to the 11th August, 1882, 702 tons of quartz with a gross yield of 200oz 4dwt 13gr They are working at present with a whim.

Mr Ochiltree, the manager of the National Bank, **Mr Chenhall** (Manager of the Desoza) and Mr Graham, mining managers, **Mr Macdonald**, **Mr Harvey**, mining surveyor, and all others from whom I sought information, were prompt in supplying it, and the managers of the several mines I examined gave help in like manner.

In conclusion, it is only right to state that the mines near Buninyong offer strong inducements to capitalists who have sufficient knowledge of the district to invest wisely, and with better machinery, and with better means of saving pyrites and gold, there are prospects before the companies whose claims are already yielding fairly which should

encourage all those now engaged in prospecting in further efforts to develop the resources of the great auriferous belt already referred to.

And there is much to be done in alluvial mining The deep leads will in time be reopened, and when the mining laws shall be altered as to permit of large areas being acquired by capitalists in localities long since abandoned by the digger and the fossicker, and such regulations in force as will give secure tenures for terms of years to those willing to construct works for water supply to the older drifts at Buninyong-the Slaughter- house hill, the Hard Hills, and the Chalk Hills will be sluiced down to the bed rock and a large proportion of the gold they contain extracted.

A brief survey of the country does not enable one to suggest the best site for a reservoir ample in capacity and with a sufficient drainage area to supply water for such works as are referred to, but many believe that water could be conserved at a short distance from these hills at a small expense, and in quantities equal to all requirements. If the mine owners and people of Buninyong were less prosperous they would, perhaps, urge their representatives in Parliament to snatch a portion of the large sums proposed to be expended **in schemes of water supply for their needs**, or, what would be much more sensible, obtain the sanction of the Legislature for works to be constructed at their own coat. It is believed by everyone acquainted with the district that such works would be very profitable

COMING EVENTS

3 February – Monday fortnightly cataloguing group resumes, 9.00am to 11 am,

13 February - BDHS Meeting, 7.30 pm

15 February – Market Day and Open day at Historical Society

9 March – Buckle-Fanche Reunion, with a visit to our Society at 3.00pm.

Closing service at St. Mary's Catholic Church, Clarendon, at 2.00pm.

Cup of tea afterwards.

15 March – Market Day, and Car Boot sale at Uniting Church Grounds,

Buninyong

April – Scott Family of Mount Buninyong 175th Anniversary reunion

11 April - Scottish Exhibition at Art Gallery of Ballarat.

Newsletter Editor Anne Beggs-Sunter, a.beggs-sunter@ballarat.edu.au