

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 Fire Bell returned: CFA Captain Marc Cannan explains to BDHS members how the 1883 bell, stolen in 1898, was donated by Sim's Metals, December 2014.

February 2015

Our first meeting for 2015 is held on Thursday 19 February at 7.30pm in the Court House History Centre. There has already been much activity in Buninyong this year: the Australian Cycling Championships again brought a huge crowd to Buninyong on Sunday 11 January, and the Marmalade Fair was held on 31

January. And in February the City of Ballarat introduced 2-hour parking in the centre of Buninyong, a sign of the growth of our 'Ancient Village'.

Scotchman's Lead Excursion November 2014

Our 32nd Annual General Meeting was held on 9 November 2014, at the former Wesleyan Church at Scotchman's Lead, now the home of Doug and Julie Bradby, who have beautifully restored the old church and added a very sympathetic addition. The old church is now rented as a Bed and Breakfast, with lots of history apparent via the photos, engravings and advertisements on the walls. After our AGM, we had a very interesting excursion to the old gold mine sites of Scotchman's Lead, led by Doug Bradby and Gilbert Coad, a member of one of the pioneering families.

It was an excellent afternoon, when we learnt much about the early important gold mines in the Buninyong area, including the extensive Buninyong Gold Mining Company, the De Soza Mine, and the Buninyong Dredge. Gilbert Coad, a very fit octogenarian, led a walk from his old family home, where an ancient pear tree, planted to mark the opening of the Scotchman's Lead church in 1864, still grows beside the ruins of the house. A charming back lane, leading towards Durham Lead, highlighted one of engineer CCP Wilson's iconic bridges that have mostly succumbed to Vic Roads upgrades, and behind the bridge were mullock heaps from old deep lead gold workings, with a lovely view of Mount Buninyong in the background.



Scotchman's Lead-Durham road, showing a CCP Wilson bridge from the early 1900s.

The Buninyong Bell 1883 Saved and Retrieved.

An exciting series of phone calls and meetings in December 2014 led to the rescuing of the 1883 Buninyong fire bell, cast in bronze, possibly for the opening of the new fire station in 1883, and subsequently lost in 1898, after the destruction of the original Fire Station. The bell turned up at Sim's Metal Yard in Noble park, and was about to be melted down when it was spotted by the manager, Trevor Page, who is Alison Rickard's sister (Buninyong Supermarket) and he contacted Alison, who contacted the Buninyong CFA. Captain Marc Cannan went down to Melbourne to collect the bell, a gift from Sim's Metal. We wonder where the bell has been since its disappearance in 1898!

Captain Marc Cannan is a keen historian, and has been doing further research, and now suggests a complication. According to records found on the internet, the steam ship *SS Buninyong* was built in 1883 in Barrow In-Furness (England).

The ship was a passenger transport between Sydney and Melbourne from 1883 to 1924, then it was scuttled in 1926 in Port Phillip Bay. There is a record of all furnishings being removed before being sunk, but no indication of the location or whereabouts of the ship's bell.

The issue now is that we are unsure of the true origin of the bell, and require some supporting documentation to assist in confirming its origin.

At the scrap metal processing plant where the bell was discovered the material composition was analysed and found to be 80% tin and 20% copper, which is a traditional bronze. One of our ex-brigade members was a metal worker in the early-mid 1950's-1960's and believes most inland bells were made of either Brass or Iron, with Bronze being the preferred product for marine/coastal towns due to its anti-corrosive properties.

Here is a nice mystery. Does anyone have any ideas?



Buninyong Bell, bronze, inscribed 'Buninyong 1883'

Visiting George Innes at Mt. Buninyong in the 1850s

An anonymous visitor wrote about his visit to the Ballarat Goldfields in the *Irish Metropolitan Magazine* in 1858. He gives an insight into George Innes, 'King of the Splitters'.

Mount Bunningyong (sic) formed the subject of one day's excursion, I and a friend, who was well acquainted with the country, started on horseback early in the morning, and proceeded to the station of an old pound-keeper named Ennis (sic), who lived at the foot of the mountain. After passing through a fine bush of very tall she-oaks, of light wood and stringy bark, for some considerable way, we were warned of our approach to the pound-keeper's by the loud sound of voices, and the frequent cracking of whips. On coming nearer we found a dray and eight bullocks trying to pass a creek, into which one of the bullocks had sunk to a considerable depth. The driver had been behind, and the poor animals, thirsting and exhausted, had stopped to drink and cool themselves, when one, weaker or more unfortunate than the rest, had sunk into the creek as we found him. The driver, as is usually the case, kept lashing the helpless animal in such a furious manner that all interference was useless. The cruel treatment of all beasts of burden in Australia is a matter of pain to any intelligent person.

We now arrived at the old pound-keeper's who gave us a feast of biscuits and milk, and a long history of the country around for the last twelve years, during which he had been there. How he could not keep the kangaroos out of his paddocks, nor the snakes out of his bed: how he never saw a being, except when once a year, he went to town; and how often he rode over the Ballarat Flat, occupied then by a few sheep, and without a sound

or a sign of man; and how he encountered and put to flight the celebrated bushranger Melville. After we had received some information about the mountain, and much information about our way, we departed greatly gratified with our visit to the old settler. On ascending, we had a good view of the crater, it was of enormous size, and one dense mass of weed. The highest point on the top is marked by a surveyors' stage, erected for the purpose of surveying the routes for the railways about to commence in Australia. Wild-flowers grew about in remarkable abundance, and the length and luxuriance of the grass particularly attracted the attention of our horses. Having from this elevated position a commanding view, we could see for nearly one hundred miles around, the vast unpopulated, picturesque forest.

Note: George Innes (King of the Splitters) arrived at Buninyong in December 1844. This means that the visit took place around December 1856. George (1817 - 1894) came from Carnock, Cairney Hill, in Fifeshire, Scotland. He arrived in Port Phillip in 1841 with his wife Euphemia and baby Mary. The family arrived at Mt. Buninyong in December 1844, when he took up a small run on the opposite side of the mountain to the Scott family, and he named it "Cairney Hill". In 1846 Euphemia died, and he married, shortly after, Catherine Martin nee Quilty, at Geelong. She was Irish, the widow of Edward Martin, servant of John Veitch, who had been killed in a fight at Veitch's Buninyong Inn in November 1846 (Griffiths, *Three Times Blest*, 1988, p. 11).

Thanks to Dr Ian Clark for collecting this fascinating account.

Rolf Bolderwood meets Mother Jamieson.

In the Spring of 1851, Rolf Bolderwood, then a squatter in the Port Fairy area, visited Buninyong on his way to inspect the newly discovered Ballarat goldfield. He stayed a night at the Buninyong Inn.

This modest hostelry, amply sufficient for the ordinary traffic of the road, was now filled and overflowed by the roaring flood of wayfarers. The hostess, in daily receipt of profits which a month had not formerly accumulated, was civil but indifferent. 'I *might* get supper', she dared to say, 'but could not guarantee that meal. My servants were worked off their legs. I wish indeed that there was another inn; I am tired to death of having to provide for such a mob.' (Rolf Bolderwood, 'How I became a butcher', in *In Bad Company and Other Stories*, London, Macmillan, 1901, pp146-47.)

Another inn, Sellick's Crown Hotel, was opened at the end of 1851. Mrs Margaret Jamieson undertook the construction of a huge stone hotel in 1853, but the worry and expense led to her early death in August 1854.

REPRINT OF *Three Times Blest*

Our popular history of Buninyong and district, *Three Times Blest*, was written in 1988 by then Shire of Buninyong employee and Historical Society member, Peter Griffiths. 1,000 copies were printed, and another 1,000 copies in 1993. As we ran out of copies in October, we agreed to reprint 500 copies of the book in conjunction with the Old Library trust. Agreed the price should rise to \$30 a copy.

Biographical Queries

BAKER – William was a labourer who lived at Pound Creek, at the foot of Mt. Buninyong, in the nineteenth century. The house on the property was moved from Narmbool in 1910 when Thomas Scott moved to Durham Lead and sold the house.

FRASER -Hugh Montgomery Fraser, who died in 1876, was a timber merchant at Clarendon One son William was a farmer at Clarendon in 1878, and Samuel was a storekeeper in Buninyong. William's widow Agnes remarried to David Lloyd Jones, and Samuel became the curator of the Buninyong Gardens from 1898 to 1920.

HERBERT – James Herbert was a miner at Black Lead, living with his family in the 1860s.

RALPH –Ann, mother of James who discovered the Lal Lal coal deposits, was buried in Buninyong in 1891. Apparently acted as a midwife on the Sebastopol-Buninyong goldfields.

RENNIE Richard was a builder in Buninyong, who raised a large family. His descendant from Western Australia visited us in November, and he sent us a copy of The Family of Richard Hutchinson Rennie, compiled by Richard Rennie in 2004.

SHELDON- William and Susannah were ex.convicts from VDL who worked for John Wallace at *Ballark* for many years. They had three sons, who attended Hastie's Buninyong Boarding School in 1850, along with John Wallace's sons. William died at Eclipse, near Steglitz, at his sons home in 1873.

THOMSON – Robert Thomson immigrated from Dunfermline in the 1850s, and married Jane Hume at Carngham in 1864. A number of their children were born in the Buninyong area from 1867 to 1873.

COMING EVENTS

19 February – General Meeting of the Buninyong and District Historical Society.

22 February – Buninyong Market 9.00am to afternoon.

16 April – Buninyong and District Historical Society Meeting, with launch of Ballarat Genealogical Society's CD Index to Buninyong Court Records.