

# **BUNINYONG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY**

**Reg. No. A0030085Y**

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

**PO Box 98, Buninyong, Vic. 3357.**

## **Newsletter**



**Blackened landscape; view of Mount Buninyong, from Pryors Road, Scotsburn, taken after the bushfire of 19-21st December 2015.**

## **February 2016**

Our February meeting took place on Thursday 18 February at 7.30pm in the Court House History Centre. Our guest speaker was Phil Roberts from Ballarat, who is researching the Ballarat Avenue of Honour for his PhD at Federation University Ballarat, and he spoke about 'Conceiving Avenues of Honour in the Ballarat district'. Phil has published nine books relating to aspects of Ballarat history, is a former secondary school teacher and is the Secretary of the Ballarat Mechanics Institute. We were delighted to welcome members of the Buninyong RSL to the talk.

## **A Snippet from the *Buninyong Telegraph***

*Age*, 9 September 1864

Native Industry. — Yesterday morning, three loads of leather, weighing about six tons, left the tannery of Messrs Davies and Son, of this town, and wended their way to Ballaarat, to be then packed and sent away to England, so that even the 'ancient township' of Buninyong adds something towards the list of exports to the old country. We may indeed be well proud of our tannery, for all parties who use the leather manufactured at the establishment speak in the highest terms of commendation of it, and state that it is equal, if not superior, to any manufactured in the colony. — *Buninyong Telegraph*, September 7.

## **Hail the Buninyong CFA. Bushfire at Scotsburn-Clarendon December 2015 (a personal view from our Secretary)**

Saturday 19 December 2015, the week before Christmas, dawned an awful day. I was in Ballarat when I learned about 3.30pm that there was a fire at Scotsburn. I drove home as quickly as possible, to find a massive plume of smoke and flames to the north and west of my property at Clarendon. Emergency service vehicles were already on the road, advising residents to evacuate. The local Buninyong CFA crew were the first onto the fireground, and found themselves in very dangerous conditions.

I collected my son, a box of precious documents, a change of clothes, and the cat, and drove to my son's place in Ballarat. We could not return until Monday afternoon. It was a very anxious wait, spending Saturday night sleepless as I followed the emergency response of the CFA crews on the Fireready app.

Sunday was another very hot day, with a north wind, and predicted South-Westerly change in the afternoon that would bring the growing fire back to threaten the township of Clarendon. I attended an overflowing Community Meeting at the Buninyong Town Hall at 10.00am, and learned the devastating news that neighbours at the lower end of Clarendon had had their homes wiped out, when the fire crossed the Midland Highway below the Clarendon cemetery. I was also overwhelmed by the generous response of the Buninyong community.

I was on tenterhooks all day until the change came through about 3.00pm, with some drops of rain, and thankfully the wind was moderate. We attended another Community Meeting in Buninyong on Monday 21 December at noon, and many relief agencies were there to assist. After the meeting, the Midland Highway was re-opened, and we were able to return home. I was so relieved to find all safe and sound. But just down the highway, there was total devastation.

We visited John and Anne Smith, and heard John's remarkable story of saving his 1,000 sheep from the bush paddock up Hopgoods Lane. As the fire loomed, the 74-year-old got on his quad bike and drove up into the teeth of the smoke to his flock, and guided them to the safety of a paddock near the highway. His 300-acre paddock, which borders *Narmbool*, was black, but his sheep had been saved! Not so lucky the *Narmbool* flock, where many sheep were incinerated. Fortunately the homestead and education centre were safe.

To top off our dramatic December at Clarendon, a serious accident happened outside my house on the Midland Highway on Christmas Eve. Two cars collided and ended up almost in my house. Emergency service vehicles were quickly on the scene, including Captain Marc Cannan and his team from Buninyong. We had the drama of an air ambulance helicopter landing on the highway to take one injured victim to Melbourne. Then, unbelievably, there was another two-car accident on my corner on Australia Day, and again the Buninyong CFA crew was on hand, offering support to victims and directing traffic until the police arrived.

My three close encounters with the CFA over Summer made me vividly aware of the amazing work that our CFA volunteers – both men and women – do to protect and support our country communities.

## **St Peter and Paul's Buninyong; great days**

In January 2015 the new church of St Peter and Paul's featured as a venue for the Organs of the Ballarat Goldfields Festival. The church was packed to hear a wonderful Italian guitar duo. The wonders of the National Library's TROVE revealed the following account of another day when the church was packed:

*Advocate*, 11 October 1884, pp. 16-17.

The Bishop visited Buninyong on Sunday, the 6th inst., for the purpose of administering the Sacrament of Confirmation to the Catholic children of that parish, which included Clarendon, Napoleons, and other places. Great preparations had been made for the reception of his Lordship, this being his first visit to Buninyong (one of the oldest churches in the Mission of Ballarat) since his elevation to the Episcopacy. The church was crowded, yet many persons had to hear Mass outside. A number of non-Catholics were also present. The church was beautifully decorated. The children were seated in front of the altar, the boys on the right, the girls on the left. They were all neatly attired (especially the girls, who wore white dresses, with wreaths and veils), and had on blue scarfs. They also wore Confirmation medals. After Mass, which was celebrated by the Rev. P. Murphy, the Bishop examined the children, and explained the nature and efficacy of the great Sacrament, and the great necessity of being properly prepared. The Bishop then, assisted by the Revs. P. Murphy and John Meade, administered the Sacrament to over 170 children. The Bishop then addressed them again, pointing out the necessity of their frequently receiving the Sacraments of Penance and Holy Communion, and having recourse to

prayer. He enjoined them to be particular in their devotion to the Mother of God. Most of the children confirmed have been enrolled in the Scapular of the Blessed Virgin, have lately taken the pledge, and have had the happiness of receiving their first Communion. After Confirmation, an address was presented to his Lordship by Mr. J. Higgins, J.P.: Signed on behalf of the Catholics of Buninyong, John HIGGINS, J.P., Thomas CAFFREY, Patrick. DINNEEN, Wm. RYAN, Thos. TRAIT, Wm. HAYES.

The Bishop said that their kind address had taken him by surprise, as he had not expected such a demonstration of their feelings towards him. He had always received from the Catholics of Buninyong their hearty co-operation. He remembered that when steps were being taken to enlarge and renovate their church, shortly after his taking charge of the Ballarat Mission, he had received their warm support in carrying out that object to a successful issue. As it was now getting too small to accommodate the increased congregation, he trusted they would soon take steps to still further enlarge it. The Bishop concluded by again thanking Mr. Higgins and the other gentlemen for their kind address. I may mention that before concluding this notice that the choir sang before Confirmation the hymn "Come Holy Ghost," and at the conclusion of the service "Faith of our Fathers" and "Mary Immaculate," with great taste and feeling. Miss Caffrey ably presided at the harmonium.

We will visit the old and new churches of St. Peter and Paul's on Saturday 5 March at 10.00am. Meet at the church in Lal Lal Street.

## **Unveiling the Derick Leather Arboritum**

On Sunday 31 January, a cherished dream was realised. We unveiled a memorial to Derick Leather, founding member of our Society and 'father of Buninyong', who was famous for his passion for planting trees. Thanks to the Friends of the Buninyong Botanic Gardens, and particularly Peter Hiscock, the dream came true, and we now have a living memorial to Derick.

In 1847 the Rev. Thomas Hastie in 1848 established a Presbyterian Church and the first bush boarding school in Port Phillip close to this site. On Sundays a school room served as the church, and the Hastie home was adjacent. An excellent spring provided pure water for the Hastie family and their school. In 1877 the District Surveyor of Ballarat, Mr Channey, described the tank on Allotment 91, as being 50-60 feet by 20-30 feet, paved with stone. He had been informed that the work was done 'many years before'. The site, incorporating Allotments 76 and 72, was designated as a Water Reserve and Reserve for Public Recreation in 1878.

A new Presbyterian church was built in the centre of Buninyong in 1860, and the old school closed in 1873 when it was incorporated into the new Buninyong State School. The Rev. Hastie continued to live here until his death in 1898.



The Buninyong Council erected scaffolding and a pump near the spring and at the southern end there are the remains of a flume. A seat was placed immediately inside the boundary of Allotment 76 on top of the hill which commands an excellent view of the township, and this became known as the Mayoral Seat. On 11 August 1873 the *Buninyong Telegraph* reported that 'Mr Innes, trustee of the Mount Buninyong reserve, and Mr Nettell, honorary secretary, planted on the top of the mount ten cinchona plants, supplied by the Assistant Commissioner of Lands and Survey, by way of experiment. Care has been taken to select a site that is not exposed to the hot winds, and the plants have been fenced to protect them from the cattle.'

In 1893, George Innes presented 9 allotments to the people of Buninyong as a park, naming the area near Rev. Hastie's original church and school "Mount Innes."  
(*Buninyong Telegraph*, 21 April 1893)

### **The name Birdwood Park occurs during World War One.**

The *Courier* of 21 June 1917 reported:

BUNINYONG. PROPOSED AVENUE OF HONOR A large, and enthusiastic meeting was held in the council chambers on Monday night to make final arrangements for Arbor Day, which is to be held on Saturday, 20th inst. when it is proposed to plant an avenue of trees in honor of the soldiers. Cr. Freeman, chairman of the Committee, presided, and explained to the new members the business transacted at previous meetings. Mr H. Noack reported that he and the shire engineer had that day inspected the different sites thought suitable for tree planting and the meeting decided to follow the engineer's recommendation – to start the avenue in Learmonth St. near the fire brigade and go west; also that 40 pine trees be planted on Mount Innes reserve. An article in the *Courier* on 16 July 1917 refers to a Buninyong Soldiers' memorial as 'Birdwood Grove'.

An agreement was reached, and trees were planted in the Reserve on Mount Innes. In 1918 the Shire Minutes record that fencing has been placed on Mount Innes to protect the soldiers' trees. (Shire Minutes, 4 July 1918). In 1919 the Empire Day Committee wrote to Council stating it wished to hand over 'Birdwood Grove' to the control of the Shire. (Shire Minutes, 4 April 1919). This is the first time the name 'Birdwood' is associated with the reserve in the Crown Land file. It was never officially designated. Allotments 72 and 76 were enclosed and became known locally as Birdwood Park (named after General Birdwood, Commander of the Australian forces in France.)

In the 1980s the area around Hastie's Spring was cleared, and the area incorporated into the Buninyong Walking Trail, and later the Great Dividing Trail. In 2013, the Buninyong and District Historical Society placed an interpretative sign at Hastie's Spring to mark its historical significance.

The Friends of the Buninyong Botanic Gardens held a working bee on Saturday 1 August 2015 to plant a grove of trees in memory of Derick Leather. Five beautiful advanced *Pinus Pinea* were planted on the hill, to link with the old pines on Mount Innes, and near the highway a grove of 15 advanced Scarlet Oaks. Along the edge of the reserve some small Lillypillys were planted. Later two seats were added to the area.

On Sunday 31 January 2016, the Friends of the Buninyong Botanic Gardens and the Buninyong and District Historical Society held a short ceremony to unveil a plaque commemorating the important role of Derick Leather in the Buninyong community. Speakers were Peter Hiscock, Peter Innes, Bill Pryor, Mary Akers, and Derick's daughter, Janet Leather Webber. Janet unveiled the plaque, and the company adjourned for afternoon tea at the Court House.



Peter Hiscock recalls Derick Leather, with guests Leather family members, Mary Akers, Cr. Peter Innes and Bill Pryor. 31 January 2016 (Photo courtesy of Simon Dennis)

## Biographical Queries

October 2015- Feb 2016

**Baldy, William and Charlotte** – in the Elaine/ Mount Doran area from 1848. Charlotte, widow, paying rates at Stoney Rises in 1873.

**Christie, Henry** – gold digger, married by the Rev. Hastie on 9 June 1856 at Buninyong to Caroline Lauten.

**Coad family** –Scotchman's Lead area. From Barry Coad, son of John William Coad born 1905.

**Harvey, Robert Macfarlane** – From a descendant seeking photos of his ancestor. Unfortunately, we do not have any in our collection.

**Knight, of Lal Lal** – Interested in the history of the Lal Lal Brick works, operated by Knight family, for a book being written.

**Powell, Thomas** – buried Buninyong 1869. Reputedly in the Buninyong area from about 1851. At Durham Lead, related to Nolans, Looneys.

**Wallace, Donald, and the ‘Carbine’ story** – from a sports writer in Sydney who is writing a biography of the great horse Carbine.

If anyone can help, please contact Anne at [a.beggs-sunter@federation.edu.au](mailto:a.beggs-sunter@federation.edu.au)

### COMING EVENTS

28 February – Buninyong Market Day. Historical Society open.

5 March – Visit to St. Peter and Paul’s Church at 10.00am. Coffee afterwards.

27 March – Easter Sunday – may be a Buninyong Market Day

21 April – General Meeting Historical Society. Dr. Fred Cahir Guest Speaker on Indigineous/White Settler contacts on the Frontier.

22 April – Official Opening of Old Police Station, Buninyong Primary School.  
Opening of Old Police Station

24 April – Buninyong Sunday Market Day; Court House open.

30 April – Clunes Booktown

7-8 May – Ballarat Heritage Weekend.