

# BUNINYONG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Reg. No. A0030085Y

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

PO Box 98, Buninyong, Vic. 3357.

## Newsletter August 2018



**Pauline Holloway, right, next to Ursula Diamond Keith, in 2009 at the opening of the Lal Lal Falls to Moorabool Falls walking track.**

### **Vale Pauline Holloway.**

In June we recorded the passing of one of our founder members, Pauline Holloway, who was the great historian of Lal Lal. The newly formed Lal Lal History Group was in contact with Pauline shortly before her death, and she arranged for copies of her records to go to that group, which will have its headquarters in the Lal Lal Hall. The above photo captures Pauline's vibrant personality and her love of the Lal Lal district, when she was a special guest at the opening of the Moorabool Falls walking track.

## Guest Speakers

We have had very interesting talks at our general meetings this year. In June our member **Susan Pilbeam gave an illustrated lecture on *Narmbool*** and its place in the landscape. Susan gave an entertaining and illuminating explanation of how to interpret the cultural landscape of *Narmbool*, with its many different overlays of settlement. She explained the problem of different local government authorities having different interests and planning provisions relating to the area. The impact of the 2015 bushfire on the property was also highlighted, and the discoveries made by recent archeological surveys of the property.

Following the landscape theme, in August we had **Andrew Miller from the Dry Stone Walls Association of Australia** to give us an illustrated history of the development of dry stone walls in Western Victoria, and to raise issues of how to conserve and protect these walls. Andrew signaled the possibility of our society working with the DSWAA to record the walls in the Buninyong area, and press for measures in the Planning Scheme to have significant walls recorded in that scheme. This is an important issue to be added to our Township Plan. (Please come to the meeting at the Town Hall on 4 September at 6.00pm. See Coming Events)

## Old Court House/ Warden's Office

In December 2017 we received notification that we had received a Federal Government Stronger Communities Program grant, through Member for Ballarat Catherine King, for \$8,750 for the restoration of the old Court House. Special thanks to Roger Permezel of the Friends of the Buninyong Gardens for initiating the application and supporting it. The requirement of the grant was that our Society should contribute an equal amount to the project, which could be cash or voluntary hours contributed. We have had a great team of members who have regularly committed to working on the building from early in 2018 – cataloguing the contents of the Butter Factory, cleaning, preparing for painting, painting, moving furniture and fittings etc. Led by our inspiring leader, Bob Skewes, the volunteers were Marg McCarty, Simon Dennis, Ron Gilchrist, Anne Beggs-Sunter, Neil McCracken, Chris Hindhaugh and Nigel Savidge, and our very welcome new member Mark Jones. Bob Skewes co-ordinated the work of contractors for repairing the rafters of the Butter Factory, putting in drainage and repairing plumbing, building a new porch for the entrance, plaster repair, brickwork repair and new carpet for the Warden's Court. We gained some good publicity in the local press for our efforts. We are deeply grateful to Bob Skewes for bringing his many skills to leading this important project, and the huge amount of his time that he had committed to the project.



Painting the Warden's Office in July 2018: President Marg McCarty, Bob Skewes and Neil McCracken on the ladder.

As we work on this building, which was opened in 1858 as a Warden's Office/Court House, we continue to puzzle about changes to the public buildings on this site. This snippet from the National Library's TROVE is tantalising:

*Star*, 23 May 1888

#### Town Clerk's Report to Borough Council

I have examined the buildings at the old police reserve, and estimate that the old court-house is in pretty good repair, but the roof requires some repairs, and the inside walls are much broken and discolored, requiring plastering and papering, the platform also requires relaying. The stone building of two rooms and two verandah small rooms requires papering all over, and the skirting boards and mantel piece repainted, also the chimney repaired and stand for tank renewed, and new door and repairs to windows. The constables' quarters skillion might be removed, floor repaired, new spouting supplied, rooms re-painted and papered. The outside fencing should all be secured with palings, and fencing put across to divide the ground into paddocks for each house. Two new tanks are required for the houses. Total cost, £36.—Received. The question of repairing the boundary road was postponed. A barbed wire fence is to be erected.

### **Lal Lal excursion 17 March 2018**

Our Society combined with the Victorian Railway Historical Society to have an excursion to Lal Lal, following the launch of Mark Cauci's new book on the History of the Lal Lal Railway. Thanks to Malcolm Baker for his research in preparing for a most successful excursion, which prompted the formation of a new Lal Lal History Group.

### **Platt family reunion, 22 April 2018**

A Platt family reunion was held at Scotsburn. The day began with a visit to the Clarendon Cemetery, where the family placed a memorial plaque to the Platt family in the Church of England Section; then to the Scotsburn Union Church, where the family worshipped, then lunch at the Scotsburn Hall. There were about 40 descendants of Robert and Matilda Platt, who immigrated from Wiggin, Lancashire, in the 1850s. He selected a small block of 4 acres of land in what is now known as Pryor's Road in 1876. Robert established a private school on his small block on Pryor's Road to educate his own children, and the children of neighbours such as the McInnes, Skewes and Chapman children. A government school opened at Scotsburn in 1879, and in 1890 the Victorian government enacted that no private school could operate within three miles of a government school, and the school was forced to close. Robert Platt acquired more land at Scotsburn, and was listed as a market gardener, and the road beside the school is now named 'Platt's Road'.



## **New Books**

This year we have been delighted to see the launch of a history of the Scott family of Mount Boninyong by our member Glen Wood. Her book, published in May, is titled *The Land We Learnt to Love*, and it is a history of the first ten years of the Scott family's settlement in the Port Phillip province of New South Wales from 1839. We have copies available for sale at \$30 a copy. We also noted a new book from Peter Griffiths (the author of our history *Three Times Blest* in 1988), his *The Welsh on Victoria's Central Goldfields; a Dictionary of Biography*. The book can be obtained from the author for \$58 (which includes postage) at PO Box 169 Ballarat North, 3350.

## **Restoration of Adams's store, Learmonth St.**

Russell Coxall has been busy this year, restoring the historic general store right in the heart of Buninyong, in Learmonth St, beside the former Whykes' butcher shop (Expresso Depot). Russell received a grant from the City of Ballarat under their Heritage Grants Program, to assist with the lengthy restoration, which has seen a new galvanised iron roof put on the building, and weatherboards and window frames replaced. We look forward to the restoration of the old bakery oven at the rear of the building, where bread was baked for local residents from the 1850s.

## **Royal Wedding Celebrations 1863**

*Star*, 22 May 1863

The royal marriage rejoicings at Buninyong on Tuesday last were carried out in a highly characteristic manner. Ale, presented by Messrs Scrase and Ainley, was dispensed by Mr Minhinnick. A bullock provided by private subscription, and a sheep presented by Mr Northage, were roasted, and distributed from a dray on a platform at the intersection of Warrenheip and Learmonth streets. Councillor Fasham acted as superintendent of the cooking department, and Mr Selleck undertook the dismemberment. The cutting up of the carcasses did not commence till half-past eight o'clock in the evening, and we are sorry to say that owing to the interference of a rowdy mob the liberality of the donors of the carcasses was entirely thrown away. A rush was made to the platform, and the operations of those engaged in the distribution of meat and beer so much impeded that Mr Selleck lost temper. The mob aimed all sorts of objects at him and his assistants, blew out the lights, and even poured the oil from the lamps upon them. Mr Selleck, anxious to relieve himself of a now odious job, gave orders that the dray containing the meat, beer, &c., should be overset, and then repaired to his own house. The bonfires on the Mount, as we have already reported,

proved failures. During the day there was a procession of the Highland Society, headed by pipers. The children were regaled in their respective schools as the unfavorable nature of the weather was held not to justify their taking part in the procession. In the evening there was a grand ball at the Odd Fellows' Hall, attended by about two hundred persons. Mr Minhinnick had a transparency representing the Prince's plume, and Mr Selleck another on which was depicted the royal pair.

## **Hastie Grandaughters; Missionaries in Korea**

We received a very welcome copy of a new book, written by John Thompson-Gray, from Apsley, Qld, called *How Great Thine Aunt; the life and times of missionary sisters Margaret Sanderman Davies and Ellice Jean Davies*.

This tribute from the nephew of the sisters is a biography of their lives of service to the Presbyterian Church, both in Victoria and as missionaries in Korea, the New Hebrides, and in Central Australia. Margaret and Annie Davies were the daughters of Annie Hastie, youngest daughter of Rev. Thomas Hastie, and her husband the Rev. J.G. Davies, who were married at Buninyong in 1886. Margaret Spalding, sister of the assistant minister to Hastie from 1885 to 1887, was present at the wedding and leaves a lovely impression of the old manse on the hill:

One day in that garden I shall always remember; a wedding scene. The youngest daughter of the manse had that day wedded to a young and promising minister after a ceremony which took place in the church for which occasion loving hands and warm hearts had decorated it tastefully. The wedding party and guests drove up to this garden. A large marquee was erected in which refreshments, dainties not to forget the wedding cake – were ready for each and all. Being about four o'clock and the sun still warm after congratulations, speeches, jokes and wedding cake, we sat in groups chatting for a time.' (Margaret Spalding's journal 1885-1887, copy held by the Buninyong and District Historical Society)

They had three children, the two daughters becoming missionaries for the church in Korea. In fact their uncle Rev. J.H. Davies had been the first Australian missionary to go to Korea in 1889. Jean Davies, who was born in Buninyong, studied medicine at the University of Melbourne in the early years of the twentieth century, and devoted her life to helping children as a Presbyterian missionary in Korea (1918-41) and in the Northern Territory and New Hebrides. When Rev. J.G. Davies completed his second term of ministry at Buninyong (1917-1923) he and his wife joined their daughters in Korea. The Davies were indeed a remarkable family. The children of their son Henry continued the family tradition of scholarship and involvement with the Church.

Margaret became a teacher, taking her BA and Dip Ed. at the University of Melbourne, and becoming a missionary in Korea in 1910, when she travelled there with the mother Annie. In

1917, newly qualified as a doctor, Jean also travelled to Korea. European Christians had great difficulties operating schools and hospitals in Korea from 1910 till World War Two because of the Japanese presence. In 1939 Margaret was expelled from Korea and her school for girls closed down. In imminent danger of internment by the Japanese, she escaped to Melbourne, and became editor of a Presbyterian magazine.

In April 1941 Dr Jean Davies left Korea, and began her career serving Aboriginal missions in Queensland and the Northern Territory. By 1945 she was in the New Hebrides, where she carried out a survey of leprosy in the islands. She then went back to South Australia, where she served at Ernabella at the time of British nuclear testing at Maralinga.

Margaret died in Melbourne on 23 June 1963, after 19 years as editor of the Presbyterian *Missionary Chronicle*. Jean died on 15 June 1981, aged 92.

The new book by John Thompson-Gray has been added to our Hastie collection.

### **Treasures available on PROV Website**

On 22 August Anne Beggs-Sunter and Chris Hindhaugh attended a seminar in Ballarat explaining the many digital treasures available through the PROV website, which is in evolution. We invite members to spend time with this website, and of particular interest is the 'Battle to Farm' website, which makes available the files of 11,000 returned soldiers from World War One who became soldier settlers. <http://soldiersettlement.provic.gov.au/>

### **COMING EVENTS**

**4 September 2018 – Launch of Buninyong Township Plan consultation by City of Ballarat, at the Town Hall, 6.00pm, with community BBQ to follow.**

**18 October 2018 – AGM of Buninyong and District Historical Society, 7.30pm**

**22-28 October 2018 – Springtime in Buninyong Festival**

**3 November 2018 – CHHA AGM at Buninyong, 9.30am for 10.00am.**

**3 December 2018 – Open Garden Day at *Narmbool* homestead.**

**20 December 2018 – Christmas Meeting, Buninyong and District Historical Society.**