

BUNINYONG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Reg. No. A0030085Y

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

PO Box 98, Buninyong, Vic. 3357.

Newsletter



Coxall Pioneer sculpture, Webb's Hill Rd, erected 2018 to mark a Coxall family reunion.

February 2019

Our first meeting of 2019 will be held on Thursday 21 February, at 7.30pm, when Peter Hiscock will be our guest speaker, on the subject of Governor La Trobe and his travels around Victoria.

Once again Buninyong hosted the Australian Cycling Championships in January, and the township was decorated with bikes, and crowds of cyclists and fans. Once again, excellent publicity for our area through the television coverage.

On 1 December 2018 the City of Ballarat held a workshop at the Town Hall attended by about 80 residents of the Buninyong area, to participate in the development of a new Buninyong Township Plan. The co-ordinator of the project is John Dyke, the City's Heritage Advisor, and we made sure that heritage and environmental protection were high on the list of valued assets.

Shakespeare in the Gardens

Our talented thesbian, Susan Pilbeam, is directing and producing *Love's Labour Lost*, one of Shakespeare's romantic comedies, in the beautiful setting of our Buninyong Botanic Gardens. Our butter factory building will be used by the cast during the performances in February. This is the third season that Susan has produced in the Gardens, and we are planning a group visit with our picnic baskets on Saturday 9th February at 7.00pm. Tickets are available through Trybooking, or cash sales prior to performances.

O'Loughlin Centenary

Gerard O'Loughlin, formerly of Durham Lead, celebrated his 100th birthday recently. Gerald's life is outlined in the January issue of the Buninyong and District Community News.

Memories of Early Buninyong

The following reminiscences of David Mitchell Morrison were published in the *Geelong Advertiser* in 1906. They are particularly interesting because Morrison, as a 14 year old boy, was enrolled at the Rev. Hastie's School in 1850-51. His father, Hugh Morrison, was managing the *Borhoneyghurk* run on the Moorabool River, and the family gave their name to the locality Morrissions, where gold was discovered in 1856. He remarks on his experiences at the school, the Black Thursday bushfire of February 1851, and the gold discovery of August 1851.

Geelong Advertiser, 29 December 1906
EARLY GEELONG MEMORIES.
(By "Moye." *David Mitchell Morrison*)

Bush fires had always to be guarded against. The natives, all carriers, and travellers, as well as unknown origins, always gave us plenty to do in the

summer combating them. Black Thursday (*6 February 1851*) in the fifties was a record. I think Port Phillip was in one blaze from Mt. Gambier to Croajingolong. The loss of stock by fire was phenomenal. I well recollect being all day hard at work with a bough—a series of them—beating it out wherever practical until long after dark. Except grass, my father suffered no loss. Next day he sent me over to **Woodburn** to see how Alexander Wilson had fared. I found Mr. Wilson very cheerful; the walls of his home were intact, save for a few places where the fire fiend had temporarily effected lodgement, and which Mr and Mrs Wilson by the prompt application of blankets, had routed. But all else—garden, ferns, huts, stable, drays, carts—were either ashes or the iron work eliminated from the wood

The next notable event in my innings, was being sent to school at **Buninyong** (a school which owed its origin primarily, if not solely, to the far-seeing Messrs Learmonth). We were very happy then. Both boys and girls were accommodated. At that time, (except Geelong and Melbourne), there were no schools in Port Phillip, save this one at Buninyong. We had comfortable, slab-built, shingle-roofed buildings, a master of arts and his wife, expressly, imported from Scotland (a Mr. and Mrs. David Ballantyne), an old sea pilot, as cook and his wife housekeeper, a pair of bullocks to cart wood and water, and beef and mutton ad libitum gratis from the Messrs. Learmonth. Our cook drew extra pay for the carting, but the old shell-back soon discovered that we were his masters in the art of bullock driving, and a promise of the particular sea pie, at which he was an adept, at once secured me and W. J. Winter, and as many volunteers as there were round about. The old story of the triumph of mind over matter, which ensured a supply of the needed wood and water, without any exertion on the sea dog's part.

Then came the discovery which changed Port Phillip in a flash. Never rang the clarionet to a charge in which a nation's destiny was involved, clearer than the news, which rang out over the land of "**gold, gold.**" Upon the Tuesday, I think it was, we first heard the news, and during the week our schoolmaster (Archibald Douglas), the distinguished scholar and Highlander, went out; and he was given a piece of clay, about the size of your thumb, out of which he washed in a saucer about an ounce of gold, which he showed us. When Saturday arrived some six or seven of us, after commandeering all the school tin dishes, picks and shovels, as well as those of Mrs. Hastie's at the parsonage, guided by W. J. Winter (it was upon his father's run at Bonshaw that the gold was discovered) went to the Eldorado. We all set to work washing dishes of the dirt, same as the men were doing. We got gold, but in the excitement of starting we had forgotten to bring any lunch, and when noon arrived, we decided that the commissariat department was of more consequence than filling our pockets with gold, so we made a bee-line for home, but we had to go through the town of Buninyong, which then consisted of an hotel, a store and two blacksmiths' and a cobbler's shop, and in the outskirts several carriers' families settled. Short as the time was, the magic power of gold had caused a new store to open, among whose wares were a most enticing description of lollies. We had not a copper but we had gold, and proceeded in en masse, and proposed a barter. He

laughed, and gave us a large parcel of the coveted dainty, and although he took our gold he told us that it did not pay him for what he had given us. On the Friday night my father visited the school and brought a pony for me to ride home. His shepherds had deserted him, en masse, all save one, to help in looking after the sheep; doubtless the other squatters had fared similarly. At all events, it was the death-blow to the shepherding system, as sheep were generally turned out, and the station boundaries roughly fenced in as soon as possible. Before leaving school I remember the black (the native) police under, I think it was, Captain Dana, escorting the men with the gathered gold.

What a wonderful description of Hastie's school, and the excitement of the gold discovery. Mr Douglas, the school master, and his wife deserted the school a month later, lured by gold fever.

Seventh Generation at Buninyong School

An article in the *Courier* on 2 February 2019 noted a remarkable family link with the Buninyong school. This is through the family of George Innes, 'King of the Splitters', who enrolled his children in Hastie's school in 1850. Later generations of the family included Mavis Bath, Allan Bath, Jane Robson, her son Brent, and finally the youngest descendant, Carter Robson, who started in Prep this year.

Biographical Queries

Very quiet this summer. The Internet seems to be answering many questions these days. But one interesting one has been about Frederick Lyons (real name William Lyons) who enlisted in the AIF in World War One under his father's name, and put his age down by 16 years. He was the son of James and Bridget Lyons of Navigators. He was listed as Killed in Action in France in 1917, and there is a tree in the Buninyong Avenue of Honour dedicated to Frederick Lyons. This raises the interesting issue of how many men gave false details to the Army when enlisting.

COMING EVENTS

8, 9, 10, 16, 17 and 18 February 2019 – Shakespeare in the Buninyong Gardens

21 February - General Meeting Buninyong and District Historical Society. Guest speaker Peter Hiscock on La Trobe's travels around the Port Phillip district.

March – Excursion to Devonshire Lead and water races.

18 April 2019 – General Meeting.