

# BUNINYONG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Reg. No. A0030085Y

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

PO Box 98, Buninyong, Vic. 3357.

## Newsletter



Our latest acquisition; A Diamond Jubilee Medal from 1897 honouring Queen Victoria, presented to the Shire President Frederick Sides. (Simon Dennis spotted it on Ebay.)

## October 2019

Our AGM will take place on Thursday 17 October 2019, at 7.30pm. At this meeting office bearers for 2019-20 will be elected, and membership fees fall due from this meeting. Our

Guest Speaker will be Phil Roberts, who has recently completed his PhD at Federation University looking at the Ballarat Avenue of Honour and how its management has reflected attitudes to war and peace. His topic will be the Arch of Victory, which was planned a century ago, and is a very unusual memorial. We will have supper after the meeting.

## **Clive Brooks and Neil McCracken; two valued members lost this year.**

On 17 September this year we were sad to hear of the death of **Clive Brooks**, a long-term member, former President and Treasurer. Clive's major contribution was to initiate the organisation of our photography collection in 1995. Clive and his wife Helen retired from Queensland to Yendon in 1987, after Clive's career in the RAAF. He had trained as a wireless operator at the Ballarat Aerodrome in the early 1950s. He joined our Society in 1991 and was an active member, and also enjoyed volunteering at Sovereign Hill where he looked very distinguished in his gentleman's costume. He also had a great love of the Ballarat Mechanics' Institute and devoted many hours to helping organise and catalogue their archival records. Clive was also an active member of the Buninyong Uniting Church. We honour his contribution to our district.

In the twenty first century, **Neil McCracken** made an outstanding contribution to Buninyong. He was deeply involved with the Old Library, the Great Dividing Trail Association, the Buninyong Community Association and our Historical Society. His special contribution has been as master indexer; using the Filemaker computer program to index our historical records of cemeteries, ratepayers, school enrolments and directories. He took a special interest in place names, and carefully documented their origin. Neil also collected an impressive personal library, rich in Australian historical titles, and he kindly donated a number of titles to our collection. He was very enthusiastic about getting the *Buninyong Telegraph* digitised on TROVE, and we are pursuing this wish. We deeply regret his death on Monday 20 May 2019. He made an enormous contribution to our Society, and to Buninyong.

### **Donation to our Collection**

In February 2019, the Society received, through our Treasurer Chris Hindhaugh, a copy of a bible presented to Eleanor Fleming, granddaughter of Rev Hastie, in 1889, under the terms of the Allen Bequest Scheme. The bible was presented to young Eleanor as a senior scholar in the Buninyong Presbyterian Sunday School. The donor is the grand-daughter of the recipient of the prize, and the recipient is the grand-daughter of Thomas Hastie. It is a lovely addition to our Hastie Collection.

### **Chan, Albert Victor (1895-1965), baker of Buninyong.**

When Albert Victor AH CHAN was born on 11 August 1895 in Ballarat, Victoria, his father, Henry Ah Chan, was 25 and his mother, Elizabeth nee Holderhead, was 29. He had five brothers and three sisters, most of whom died young. His grandfather was James Ah Chan born in

Mingzhou, Hebel, China, who was drawn to Victoria in the 1850s by the gold rushes, and married Mary Nealon at Scarsdale in 1869.

The family was settled at 1 York St. in Ballarat East by the 1890s, and the children attended the Golden Point Primary School.



**Sergeant Albert Chan, baker of Buninyong.**

When World War One broke out in 1914, young Albert, a 19 year old labourer, enlisted with the 8<sup>th</sup> Battalion on 17 August 1914, with regimental number 165. He was one of the first to embark for Europe in October 1914. He served at Gallipoli initially as a private, but was soon promoted to be a Lance Corporal, then a Sergeant. He served throughout the war, in France and Belgium, being wounded several times and awarded the Distinguished Conduct Medal. While he was serving his mother died in Ballarat, and soon after his return to Ballarat East in 1919 his father died. He continued living in York St, with his sister Annie Clarice, and learned his trade as a baker.

In 1927 he moved to Buninyong and formed a partnership with Hedrick 'Paddy' Jones, who bought the bakery operated by Ralph Parsons in a tin shed on the corner of Warrenheip and Forest Sts, where the Garage now stands. According to the memories of Don Ogilvie, Albert was a chain smoker, and would be smoking while he stirred the dough, and Don as a boy often saw the ash from Albert's cigarette fall into the dough. Don also recalled Albert striking at the rats in the roof of the building. But he made excellent bread, which Paddy Jones delivered at night to surrounding homes.

He boarded with Miss Kit O'Kane who lived up the hill in Learmonth St. He never married, but was reportedly fond of Kit, who taught at the Catholic school at Ballan for many years. Kit died in 1985, and left her property to the Sisters of mercy, who had educated her.

In 1946 a new organisation in Buninyong was the Returned Servicemen's League in Learmonth St and its first secretary was Albert Chan. In view of the rabid White Australia policy of the time, Buninyong demonstrated a true multicultural spirit in choosing Albert Chan with his Chinese ancestry. Incidentally Albert stood (unsuccessfully) for the Shire Council in 1946. He was also a keen member of the Buninyong Bowling Club.

Albert was still baking bread in the 1960s, but succumbed to lung cancer, and died on 21 July 1965 at the Heidelberg Repatriation Hospital at the age of 69, and was interred at the Ballarat New Cemetery. That was the end of the bakery.

In 2019, Margaret and Des Burke, who had been friends of the O'Kane family, donated several items to our Society, including a ping pong set in its original box, with Albert Chan's name on one of the bats.

In a Photography exhibition at the Gold Museum, part of the Ballarat International Foto Biennale 2019, there is a large framed photo presented to Mr and Mrs Mong of the Red Lion Hotel in 1919 'by the returned East End boys'. The collage includes a photo of Sergeant Chan, wearing his DCM medal.

### **An Amazing Colonist: Mary Wilson, 1875**

The following account of a truly Amazonian woman settler appeared in the *Ballarat Star* in 1875. It speaks of the Telegraph Hotel but we are unable at this time to plot the exact location of the hotel. But it seems to be on the road between Buninyong and Ballarat, through Mount Clear.

TWO STURDY COLONISTS.

*Ballarat Star*, 15 May 1875, republished in the *Hobart Mercury*, 19 July 1875

Mr. Wilson, of the Telegraph Hotel, Buninyong road, favours us with the following biographical account of himself and his wife. He says : " I will give you the history of the two of us. Married nine years last Christmas Day. Three months after we shifted the Telegraph Hotel fifty yards at a cost of £130. Mrs. Wilson then went into the bacon curing. As she could not get the butchers to please her in killing the pigs, she took the knife herself. She kept a great quantity of pigs at one time for bacon. The most she ever killed in one day was fourteen, from 9 o'clock in the morning till 5 o'clock in the afternoon, and in fourteen days they were in Hamilton and Thompson's store, and she got a penny a pound more than the butchers. She has dropped the pig-killing now. Twelve months back she shingled the house all over, shifted the stable, fowls' house, and butcher's shop at a cost of 28 pounds. Then she went to the garden and made it larger. She is spending her time now in laying out a flower garden, and digging potatoes, sowing seeds, and planting trees, shrubs, and a little of everything. There is about half an acre of it; and she is laying it off in a workmanlike manner. She complains often of being tired, but it is of no use saying anything to her; she will do it. She keeps no servant, there's only the two of us; she makes all her own dresses, she knits the stockings, and makes my shirts. She is first-class at cooking and household work of any description, washing and ironing too. She is 55 years of age, and I think her equal is not in Victoria. When she goes to Ballarat there is not one in Ballarat that has a more respectable or ladylike appearance than she. She is well respected by merchants in Ballarat, and by everyone that has ever had dealings with her. She has been 17 years in the Telegraph Hotel. I have always stuck to the wheel wrighting.

We never interfere with each other's business, but we always consult each other if anything is to be done. After three applications I got my allotment of land. I began work on it in the latter part of May, grubbed it; it was all roots together; it cost me £49 16s to fence and sow one and a half acres, without my own labour being reckoned. On 20th July I was in Lydiard street at 12 o'clock in the day, and I took it in my head that I would fence my land on the other side of the road. In I went to the land office, made arrangements, and there was one load of timber on the

ground the same afternoon, and two men on fencing the next morning. I put up 50 chains of paling fencing, grubbed and drained, and ploughed and sowed with peas in five weeks. I had to be at the wheelwrighting through the day, and at night, by candle light, I cut about 7000 palings to point them. By moonlight I went and filled holes, and took out logs and roots. I was determined to keep the plough going. Mrs. Wilson and I have had at work at one time four bullocks and two horses, and eight men. In five weeks we had improvements done to the amount of £179; it has cost me a good deal since that, and the worst of it is I have a part of the timber to pay for yet, but perseverance will pull me through." By way of peroration, the devoted husband of this notable wife thus concludes :-" Mrs. Wilson is one of the best cribbage players in or about Ballarat, milks her own cows, makes her own butter, bakes her own bread, feeds, kills, and pickles the pigs; if anything is ailing with her horses, cattle, dog, or self, she is her own doctor, and if any one in the district is sick she is often called on, and she goes willingly." Really, we should say that so remarkable a body ought to be sent as a Victorian exhibit to the Centenary Exhibition in Philadelphia, only that if she were fully described in the catalogue, some enterprising Yankee might "annex" her, and her lawful husband and devoted biographer be thus robbed of his greatest earthly treasure.

### **Borough and Shire Amalgamation 1876 – Nearly!**

Here is another gem from TROVE. In 1876 there was a strong move to amalgamate the Buninyong Shire and the Buninyong Borough, but it did not succeed until 1915. The report shows that there was strong dislike of the Shire hall at Mount Clear, which it was suggested could be let as 'a lunatic asylum'.

*Star*, 16 October 1876

#### **BUNINYONG SHIRE AND BOROUGH AMALGAMATION.**

The adjourned public meeting to consider the advisability or otherwise of amalgamating the borough and shire councils of Buninyong was held on Saturday evening at Selleck's hotel, about 30 persons being present. Mr Caffrey was voted to the chair in the absence of the mayor, who was too ill to attend. The chairman having read the advertisement calling the meeting, Mr Johnstone rose and said that it looked very lukewarm of the gentleman who had moved the resolution of amalgamation, not to attend the meeting called to hear his views on the subject. Mr S. Goode thought that this was a meeting called at the instance of the ratepayers to enable them to state their opinions, and, as it were, to strengthen the hands of the council in the matter. Mr T. S. Goode said that the reason why the meeting had been called was that many of the residents wished the shire offices to be brought to Buninyong; at present all the shire business was done in the bush. If a change were made, they should not consent to have the borough business transacted at the Shire-hall, but let that building as a lunatic asylum or something of that sort. Mr S. Goode then moved "That it was the opinion of the ratepayers that the amalgamation of the borough and shire councils was advisable." It might be said that the debt of the shire, £16,000, would affect Buninyong, but that would not be the case, as Buninyong would be a fourth riding, and would only share in debts contracted after the amalgamation. The working expenses of the shire were at present divided amongst the three ridings, and as the debentures were all out Buninyong would not be put to any extra expense. If a memorial to the Governor in Council were drawn up the shire could not refuse to amalgamate with the borough and make it a fourth riding. He moved — "That a resolution in

support of Councillor Spalding's motion, to be considered at the next council meeting, be passed by the meeting." Mr W. B. Smith seconded the motion. Mr Johnstone wished to know if the back debts of the shire would have to be shared by the borough if amalgamation took place, and was answered by Mr Goode in the negative. Mr Nettell said that the act provided that when two corporate bodies united their debts became common, and the banks would hold all the councillors personally liable for these debts. It had been said that if the amalgamation took place one set of officers would do the work, but the salaries paid by the shire at present, amounted to £800, and if they became a fourth riding they would be responsible for a fourth of that sum, £200. At present they paid about £160, and where was the saving in that respect? Under the present order of things the public works were done by their own council, but in the other case they would only have three councillors to speak in their favor, and the Buninyong people would soon see the difference. He did not think if the amalgamation took place they would have such a costly building as the Shire-hall to transact their business at Buninyong. All points considered, he did not think that the amalgamation would be a good thing. Mr Gardiner said he would support the motion if they could manage to get the offices brought to Buninyong, and the business done there. Councillor Fowler thought that before any public meetings were called the subject should have been discussed by the two councils. If the amalgamation took place, the three councillors from Buninyong would be able to look after it very well. The working expenses of the borough and its rates were very heavy. The Botanical Gardens cost the borough about £100 a year, and all things considered, if Buninyong were taken in by the shire as a fourth riding it would benefit them very much, and he thought the amalgamation desirable. Mr Johnstone moved as an amendment "That no action in the matter be taken until deputations from the borough and shire councils meet to consider the matter."

## **The Bush Grave at Lal Lal**

On Sunday 7 April 2019 some of our members joined an outing by the newly formed Lal Lal History Group to visit the bush grave of the little girl Mary Paterson, and to learn about Indigenous plants and enjoy an Indigenous-inspired afternoon tea in the bush. It was a lovely afternoon, with about 60 participants. It was a fascinating excursion, to explore a local legend about the little girl Mary Paterson who was buried in the bush in 1867 (or was it 1863?) Different accounts had her suffering from typhoid, or Scarletina or Bubolic Plague, and that she died whilst her parents, shepherds from Mount Doran, were taking her to the doctor in Buninyong. Another story from Ursula Diamond Keith was that she caught the flu and died, and her parents were trying to take her to the Mount Egerton cemetery, but were blocked by the flooded Moorabool River, and had to bury her in the bush. This illustrates the problems with oral history. I did a search on Ancestry.com, and the nearest match was a six year old Mary Paterson who died in 1863, but the problem was that she died at Eganstown. It is quite possible that Mary's death was never officially registered. A newspaper search on TROVE did not reveal anything about the little girl. The Mount Egerton cemetery was not gazetted until 1872. So many mysteries still remain about Mary Paterson.

There is no doubt however about the affecting nature of the carefully tended grave in the bush, covered with white quartz and surrounded by a timber barrier. The site continues to present a fascinating historical challenge – who was Mary, who were her parents, why was she buried in the bush, who tendered her grave through bush fires and mining activity over many generations? There is another connected mystery. At nearly Mount Doran, there are two graves in a paddock off the Mt Doran-Mt Egerton road, on the edge of the Borhoneyghurk Common, near the water race. Local history contends that these are the graves of Mary's

parents, who succumbed to the illness after burying their daughter. These deaths occurred before the Morrison's and Clarendon cemeteries had opened. The graves are unmarked. Are they the parents of Mary Paterson, or are they some other early settlers?

## **Geelong to Buninyong in the 1850s.**

Mary Gaunt describes travelling the Geelong-Buninyong road in her chapter for the *Picturesque Atlas of Australia*, 1888:

In the fifties there was then a continual stream of passengers between Geelong and the golden land of the Caledonian Lead and the 'jewellers shops' of Ballarat East and as there were no railways to carry them, and Messrs Cobb and Co had not yet systematised the passenger traffic by coach, most of the adventurers effected their journey on foot, while paying carriers and draymen for the conveyance of their baggage. A hundred horse and bullock teams would be timed to arrive at Buninyong by nightfall, and then brisk business ensued during the hours of the evening, the travellers purchasing their provisions and other necessaries at the stores, while the drivers attended to the wants of their cattle. When the American coaching firm had got into fair working order with their springless vehicles supported on leather thorough braces after the manner of 'outwest' stages, they rapidly came into a large business at high rates, and made money as rapidly. They began with four-horse teams, which soon gave place to teams of six and eight, and some of their drivers were eminent public characters. 'Cabbage Tree Ned' and 'Gin-and-bitters' were as well known as Governor La Trobe or Charles Hotham. Though they were rough men, given to 'cussing up grades', they were exceedingly skilful whips, and could control a team of half-broken horses in a way that an English coachman, though perhaps more skilled in the higher branches of his art, would have hesitated to attempt.

### **Threats to trees on Geelong to Ballarat Road 2019**

**Red Alert;** VicRoads has a plan to install safety barriers and extra turning lanes between Clarendon and Buninyong, which has drastic ramifications for hundreds of beautiful Eucalypts along the route. We have written to the Minister for Roads expressing our concern.

## **COMING EVENTS**

**Gold Museum Photography Exhibition, featuring Albert Chan, until 20 October.**

**Buninyong and District Historical Society AGM Thursday 17 October, 7.30pm.**

**26-27<sup>th</sup> October. Buninyong Festival Weekend. We will be open both days, and taking a walking tour on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> at 11.00am.**