

BUNINYONG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Reg. No. A0030085Y
Web Site <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~buninhis>
PO Box 98, Buninyong, Vic. 3357.

Newsletter

AUGUST 2012



John Darbyshire, circa 1970, View of the intersection of Buninyong, with the Eagle Hotel and corner store. The Eagle Hotel was built in 1856, and delicensed in 1917, after which it was used for a number of businesses, and in the 1960s was being used as a second-hand store by David Senior's father. We are all waiting hopefully for the restoration of the verandah of this building, which was damaged by a runaway bus two years ago.

Sadly, we had to cancel our August meeting because of Covid restrictions on meetings. The same ruling caused the cancellation of a Central Highlands Historical Society meeting in August. Hopefully, we will be able to gather in October for our AGM.

Barrels on Mount Buninyong dispute A Win at VCAT

In September 2020 a developer from Hepburn lodged an application with the City of Ballarat to develop five barrel-shaped luxury cabins on a ridgeline of Mount Buninyong. Our Society lodged an objection, on the grounds that such a development would degrade an area of outstanding natural significance. The RHSV supported our objection, and the Buninyong and District Community Association also objected, along with a number of neighbours. The City planning officers agreed with us that the development did not comply with the planning scheme. The developer took the matter to VCAT, and a hearing was held in May and July 2021 over a period of six days. The panel members reached their decision in August 2021, deciding that the application should be refused. VCAT found the application for 67 Yendon Number 2 Road "will form a major element in the view towards the rising slopes of Mount Buninyong. We say the cabins, by virtue of their shape, siting and configuration, will become an obvious and detracting element in this landscape setting."



We are delighted with this result.
Now we must work to get a Significant Landscape Overlay placed over our Mount Buninyong and its slopes so that it has even stronger protection from development.

Buninyong Botanical Gardens Masterplan

During the last few months, the City of Ballarat has been working on a new Masterplan for the Buninyong Gardens. On 25 June the Friends of the Buninyong Botanical Gardens invited many of us to the Bowling Club to experience a presentation from Jock Gilbert, about his *Project Botanica* that he has been working on with his students from RMIT's landscape design course. We also heard from Professor Tim Entwistle, Director of the Melbourne Botanic Gardens. The design concepts for Buninyong that attracted the most discussion involve possibilities for the Gong wall and turning Cornish St. between the Gardens and the Gong into a pedestrian walkway.

Community consultation is open on the City's MySay webpage until 5 September, so register your opinion.

Digital Storage of our archives

We have now acquitted the Local History Grant we received from the Victorian Government in 2020 to allow us to digitise our old AV audio and visual tapes. We now have a dual storage back-up system for our records, and a new monitor to experience these very interesting oral history interviews. Highlights are being able to hear the voices of Derick Leather and Beth Ritchie.

Letter from a Shepherd at Mount Mercer, 1849

An instructive letter about the management of the run appeared in the English press in 1850, when the shepherd William Warren wrote to his family in Chesterton, England. He was 34 years of age, married, and literate. He wrote:

Mount Mercer, 1 Sept 1849

Dear Mother,

With pleasure I write to inform you how I am getting on. We had a very pleasant voyage; after leaving the English Channel we expected to be lost after losing two anchors; we had a good captain and doctor; we were 5 months on the water. I have got a good master, one of the best gentlemen in the colony; I hired myself as a bullock driver at £28 a year, and we had to come 48 miles from Geelong in the bush, but my master has made a shepherd of me, with a comfortable hut to live in, plenty of fire wood, £28 a year, and the following rations once a fortnight; meat 72lbs; flour 60 lbs, tea one and a half pounds, sugar 12 lbs, and, if I cannot live upon that, who can. I have a flock to myself, 2,000 besides lambs; I go out at sunrise and come home at sunset. My wife and children run out to meet me by the barking of my dog, and I am one of the happiest men in the world. We are all of us so comfortable, had I known as much as I do now, I would not stopped home as long as I did. My wife has to wash for my master and cook

for me. We are in a pleasant spot on the plains; we are 3 miles off any hut, and 6 miles from my master's station; the blacks are very harmless but bold beggars. My son William will have a flock of sheep in 6 months time, and will bring me in £12 a year. ..My hut is open all day to any travelers for a drink of tea or a belly full of mutton. Tea is our favourite drink in the bush, as we never take any else. It would please you to see Eliza making of dampers and candles. Damper is a bread we make in the bush without barm (yeast); we bake it in the ashes and it is very sweet. I kill a sheep every week, and our overseer comes and weighs it out to me; the head and pluck goes to my dog, as we should think it a shame to rob him of it.

Write to me soon, Your affectionate son,
William Warren.

Direct reply to Wm Warren, in the care of Mr Cunningham Esq., Mount Mercer, Port Phillip District, Australia. Let my letters be put in the newspaper, as all my friends can see it.

Royal Wedding Celebration in Buninyong May 1862.

The following chaotic account of Buninyong's celebrations of the marriage of Queen Victoria's son Prince Edward, Prince of Wales, to Princess Alexandra of Denmark, at Windsor on 10 May 1863.

Ballarat 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 unfavourable 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 OddFellows' 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 Descendants visit Buninyong June 2021

Every so often, descendants of Rev Thomas Hastie visit Buninyong, and love to see inside the beautiful Uniting Church which is so much associated with his ministry. John Richards from NSW visited in June. He is the son of Nance Parke Richards, who so kindly donated some family treasures in 2006. These books and the Rev Hastie's snuff horn were brought by Hastie's widow to the property of her daughter, Helen and husband J.K. Fleming at the end of the nineteenth century. Jane Hastie died here in the Hunter Valley and her body was returned to Buninyong for burial.

John was delighted to visit the church, and climb Hastie's Hill and read our information sign near the Spring.

He reminded me that John King Fleming, who married Helen Hastie, was Celia Scott's nephew. Celia and her sisters Maria and Anne were the daughters of Daniel King and Anne Bird of Tobago, who had owned a sugar plantation which used slave labour. When slavery was abolished in Scotland, the British government compensated plantation owners for the consequences of freeing the slaves, and the three King sisters received compensation of around 1000 pounds for freeing 107 slaves. This payment would have been very useful to the Scott family when they moved to Port Phillip in 1837.

BIOGRAPHICAL QUERIES

MINHINNICK - Henry Hans Minhinnick was licensee of the Royal Exchange Hotel in Learmonth St. Buninyong, from 1862 to 1866.

He married Jane Brown, aged 19, in Melbourne in 1861. She was the daughter of William Brown, iron smelter, and Jane Brown. She was born in Coatbridge, Lanarkshire, Scotland, and came to Victoria in 1858.

Their children were Harriet, born 21 January 1862 (baptised Holy Trinity 28 March 1862), William born 1863, Henry born 1864 and Marion born 1866.

Henry was very involved in Buninyong community life, as a publican, Lodge member, member of the Buninyong Highland Society, and he stood unsuccessfully for the Buninyong Borough Council. He was also involved in promoting a mining company for Buninyong in 1865.

Life changed tragically for the family in 1866. Little Henry died on 27 June 1866, his mother two weeks later, and the two day old infant two days later. Henry was left a widower with two small children. They were buried at Buninyong in the Presbyterian section.

The name then disappeared from our records. A recent email from Canada informed us that Henry returned to his native Canada with his children.

Gunn, John Alexander – son of the Scot, Donald Gunn, who was one of the founders of the Buninyong Highland Society, formed in 1857, which later became the Buninyong and Ballarat Caledonian Society.

On 29 March 1859, Donald Gunn married Jane Surman, a teacher at the Buninyong Presbyterian School, in the School residence. Their first child John Alexander was born at Buninyong on 11 February 1860. The other nine children in the family were born at Cardigan, where Donald took up farming and was a member of the Ballarat Shire Council.

A descendant informs us that John Alexander Gunn went on to develop an anthrax vaccine in 1893.

COMING EVENTS

Buninyong and District Historical Society Annual General Meeting 21 October 2021, at 7.30pm, Court House (hopefully!)