

BUNINYONG AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Reg. No. A0030085Y

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

PO Box 98, Buninyong, Vic. 3357.

Newsletter



2010 Buninyong Gold King Festival – Police Highland Band entertain on De Soza Stage.

February 2010

Our next meeting is on Thursday 18 February 2010, at 7.30p.m. at the Court House History Centre. This will be a planning and information meeting.

A Buninyong Garden Harvest Lunch will be held in the Gardens on Sunday 14 March, from 11.30 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. This will be a feast of local gourmet foods, cooked by Ballarat maestro Peter Ford, accompanied by local wines. Tickets \$35, and proceeds to the 150th Anniversary of the Buninyong Gardens. If you would like to join an Historical Society table, please contact Anne.

The Buninyong Uniting Church will hold a **Car Boot Sale** on Saturday 20 March, starting at 8.30 a.m. Please come along and support the Steeple Restoration Fund.

STATE OF THE BUNINYONG GOLD KING FESTIVAL

For the first time since 1976, there will be **no** Buninyong Gold King Festival this year. Since the first Festival was held on the third Sunday of February, under the leadership of President Mike Boyd and Secretary Stan Hunter, a community committee has worked every year to orchestrate a festival which brought local community groups together to share their aims, raise funds, provide entertainment, and generally have a good time. There was always entertainment, ranging from commercial operators to local entertainers and always the Grand Parade.

Our Society has always been involved, and our rooms have always been thronged with visitors on Festival day. We sometimes dressed up to re-enact the crowing of the Gold King Henry De Soza; we won a prize in the Procession with our re-creation of Little's cabbage wagon going to market; we have sold cakes, jam, and especially lots of our books, and we have shared information with many visitors. Mrs Elinor George from Napoleons would always call in to share some reminiscences, as would Tom Trezise from Geelong, amongst many former residents.

So it is very sad to report that there will be no Festival this year. In spite of the success of the 2009 Festival, which shifted its date to late March, the Committee decided to not have a Festival this year, and seek funding from the City of Ballarat to conduct a study of the Festival and its future directions. Sadly, the Ballarat City Council refused the recommendation for a grant to the Committee, on the motion of Cr. Cheryl Bromfield. (10 February 2010)

It is a good time to reflect on the contribution of the Festival to Buninyong, and especially on De Soza Park.

DE SOZA PARK

The Park in the centre of Buninyong developed after the first Festival in 1976, when its transformation from a derelict mining site and rubbish tip began, a project of the former Buninyong Shire Council. It was named De Soza Park after a successful miner who operated a mine at Scotchman's Lead in the nineteenth century. Henry Joseph De Soza was a bachelor, who distributed much of his wealth to good causes in the community. For his philanthropy, he was crowned "Gold King of Buninyong" in 1883.

When the idea of a community festival took wing in the mid 1970s, De Soza was seen as the obvious patron for the Festival. In the 1860s the Crown Gold Mine had operated beside the hotel, and its waste used to pour over into Forest St. At the western end in the swampy surrounds of the creek, a tannery developed which operated with great success until its closure in 1926. A dam excavated for the business is called Tannery Dam. With the closure of the tannery and the end of mining, the area became a wasteland.

In 1979 Buninyong Shire Council resolved to clean up the area. Help came from the Department of Conservation, Forests and Lands, plus a number of service groups

including Keep Buninyong Beautiful, Scouts and Cubs, the Lions Club and the Festival Committee.

Hence in January 1982 a working party got together to put up a poppet head in the formerly snake-infested public reserve beside the Crown Hotel. The poppet head would associate Buninyong once again with mining. Some of the chief movers and shakers of 1982 in the project were Ron Nicholls, Ivan Eames, Graham Gooding, Derick Leather, Russell Williams, David Searl and Ed O'Loughlin. The Festival flag, which flew from the newly completed poppet head in 1982, was made by Lindsey Chambers. At the Festival in 1982, a re-enactment ceremony was held under the poppet head to celebrate the original event.

The following year, the Park was officially blessed and named. A temporary stage was erected for performers. A more permanent stage was built before the 1985 Festival, when a cement foundation was erected, and poles set in place so that a temporary canvas roof could shade the performers.

In 1986, to mark Victoria's Sesquicentennial, a rotunda was erected, designed by Ballarat architect Ewan Jones. Elizabeth Gilfillan, then of "Eyre Cottage", designed the rose garden and surroundings. The sculpture, a Chilean gold crushing mill, was completed by Nicola Pammett whilst a sculpture student at the Ballarat College of Advanced Education.

For many years the Festival Committee worked to build a permanent stage, a project which came to fruition in 1996. Around the same time, the City of Ballarat added playground equipment.

The Park is now a showpiece of Buninyong, enjoyed by locals and visitors, and a continuing focus of community events. It is to be hoped that the Buninyong Gold King Festival will make a return to its home in 2011.

FAMILY HISTORY ENQUIRIES

Nov 2009-February 2010

CRESWELL – William was a farmer at Scotsburn in the nineteenth century. His adopted son Frederick married Isabella Lumsden in 1882. Query from Mordiallic.

JONES, Robert – a miner, from Cambrian Hill, buried at Buninyong in 1871, aged 36. Cause of death drowning. Descendants would like to put a plaque on his unmarked grave.

LYONS, James – Married Bridget Healey in Ballarat in 1856, then farmed in the Navigators area from 1863. From Darwin

NICHOLSON – John Nicholson was a flour miller in Ballarat in the 1870s, and his son John Smith was baptized at Holy Trinity Buninyong in 1873. In 1872-3 he gave his occupation as miller, Buninyong. Query from Queensland. (*Where was the flour mill in Buninyong?*)

TAYLOR - John Charles Taylor married Annie **McGillivray** at Green Hills, Mount Doran, in 1871. Annie died at Casterton in 1875, followed soon after by her baby. She left two little girls, who were raised by McGillivray relatives at Mount Doran. John Taylor subsequently married and had 10 children, and died at Warrnambool.

Descendant would like to know of his movements before he married Annie McGillivray.

Readers who know anything about any of these names, and can help, please contact the secretary a.beggs-sunter@ballarat.edu.au

The intriguing Thomas Thomas of Mount Buninyong

From Cardiff, we had an interesting communication about Thomas Thomas, a Welshman, who purchased two prime parcels of land on the Yendon No 2 Road, on either side of Wiggins Lane, in 1870.

I was reading through some of your past Newsletters and came across the surnames EASON, HEDRICK and RAINBOW and had to write to tell you that these surnames are mentioned in my great great great uncle, Thomas Thomas' will. He emigrated to Australia from Wales around 1854 and bought land in Buninyong (maybe after finding a little gold) - which he farmed. He lived with his house keeper, Julia Rodgers and her three grandchildren and they all took the surname of Thomas, although they never married! Thomas died in 1897 and left his farm to his house keeper but stating that on her death it was to go to a Ellen EASON of Scotsburn, wife of Francis Eason, farmer and market gardener. He also bequeathed £150 to a Mabel RAINBOW of South Gippsland, wife of William Rainbow.

Looking at the Parish Plan, Thomas's land was next door to the farm of Matilda Rainbow, whose children all settled in South Gippsland.

Prahran Mechanics Institute Victorian Short History Prize

The Prahran Institute, established in 1854, is conducting an exciting prize for a short local history of up to 15,000 words, with a prize of \$500 to the author and \$500 to the historical society to which they belong. Entries are due by 27 August. The criteria state that the work should be non-fiction, and previously unpublished. Details at <http://www.pmi.net.au/events.htm#prize>

COMING EVENTS

20 February Farmers' Market day. Court House History Centre open

March Harvest Lunch Sunday 14 March

Saturday 20 March – Uniting Church Car Boot Sale, and Historical Society welcome for new residents of Buninyong.

April 15 – BDHS Meeting Guest Speaker

May 8-9 Ballarat Heritage Festival. Buninyong will participate with walking tours each day at 11.00a.m., and open buildings.