



ON TRACK

Newsletter of the Mid Gippsland Family History Society Incorporated

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Website: <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~mgfhs>

NOTE: Research Room CLOSED 19th March

Meetings:

Meetings are held on the fourth Thursday of each Month, except December, at the Meeting Room, entrance via the rear door of the Moe Library, Kirk Street Moe. Our Library will be open at 7pm with meetings commencing at approximately 7.30pm.

Membership fees 2007/2008: Single \$25; Family \$30 payable in July.

Library Hours:

Our Library is open to the public on *Wednesday Afternoons between 1pm and 4pm*. Volunteers from our group are available to assist with research at this time. The Library is also available to members at all times that the Meeting room has not been booked by other organizations. (Check with the Public Library Staff) The library is available to members on the first Saturday of each month.

Library Fees: Gold Coin donation per visit for non – members.

Research:

There is a minimum research fee of \$10, plus a stamped, self addressed envelope, for any enquiries requiring research, with additional charges for large amounts of photocopying and/or postage. Enquires should be clear and concise.

Cemetery Lookups

MGFHS charge a fee for lookups in their cemetery's.

For \$2 per name we will provide you with the register details plus a transcription of the head stone if there is one.

**Please send a stamped self addressed envelope with your enquiry to:
The Research Officers P.O. Box 767, Morwell, 3840**

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ROBERT BOOLEY – Chartist Pioneer

By Rodney Donnelly

Chartism was a movement established and controlled by working men in 1836 to achieve parliamentary democracy as a step towards social and economic reform. The people's charter was drafted by William Lovett in 1838 and outlined six major demands:

- Institution of a secret ballot
- General elections to be held annually
- Members of parliament not to be required to own property
- MP's to be paid a salary
- Electoral districts of equal size
- Universal male suffrage

The rapid industrialisation in England triggered an emotional reaction against a changing economy and society, which was unjust and bewildering to the workingman.

A leading figure in the Chartist agitation of 1838/1839 was Robert Booley a coach smith and ship owner from Ipswich in Suffolk, England. Robert Booley was a non-conformist lay preacher (Wesleyan) active in political life and a pioneer of both the trade union and Chartist movement in East Anglia.

Chartism was split into many different groups. The main movements were the Moral Force Chartists who were interested in peaceful protest (to which Robert Booley belonged) and the Physical Force Chartists who forced change through the use of physical force and violence.

In March 1838 Robert Booley spoke at three meetings in Ipswich in support of the secret ballot and manhood suffrage. From these meetings came the formation of the Ipswich Working Men's Association, the first formal Chartist organization in Suffolk. At the formation of the group, Booley had said ".....let us act with prudence and carry our arguments with moral energy, and such a voice will be raised that no legislature will be able to silence us". In October 1838 Robert Booley was an unsuccessful candidate for the Ipswich Town Council and later became active in collecting signatures for the charter.

Chartism began to fail almost as quickly as it arose. It was difficult to co-ordinate the various movements within it and there were too many points on the charter to introduce it at one time. It failed to gather support from the middle classes for whom the demands of Chartism were too radical.

Many of the non-conformist Moralists Chartists emigrated to Australia under a scheme launched by John Dunmore Lang who was a close friend of Dr Alex Thompson, the first Lord Mayor of Geelong. Amongst these were Robert Booley and his wife and family who arrived at Geelong on board the Berkshire in October 1848.

Booley immediately became active in the formation of the Geelong People's Association (July 1851). He was renowned as a powerful orator and the Geelong Advertiser said of him: " He is a man of the people, standing there with uplifted arms pouring out his ideas, for him the hustings are a pulpit". In 1853 Booley agreed to stand for the Victorian Legislative Council on the understanding that, should he be elected his local supporters in the People's Association would provide him with a regular wage, members then being unpaid.

He could be regarded as the first working class candidate for the Victorian Parliament as this occurred six years before James Don was elected for the seat of Collingwood. Booley failed to secure election in 1853, although it is said that he gained a majority at the hustings, where a show of hands proceeded the balloting. Voting was not by secret ballot; hence workers were threatened with dismissal if they did not vote according to their employer's wishes. Thus results did not go according to the initial show of hands.

Robert Booley remained active in the people's association, which reached a peak of activity in the period following Eureka. Three large well-attended meetings were held in Geelong in the weeks after Eureka to protest at the treatment of the rebels by the government. It is also of note that Peter Lalor was taken to Geelong after the rising and hid there for almost six months. At one of these meetings he expressed the hope that every man would soon stand on an equal footing. He urged them to build a People's Hall to be used for the education of the working classes, not for the purpose of making learned fools, or training men to turn their learning to evil purposes. In 1857 Booley was again active in calling the first meeting to form an eight hours day committee, which later conducted the first campaign for an eight-hour day in Geelong. Throughout his political career Booley remained a constant advocate of the basic principles of the Chartist Movement, and the measures, which he advocated while a member of the Geelong People's Association, were all to be found in the platform of the Chartist Movement.

Although Booley championed Chartism and the working classes he was obviously a well-educated man. The Wesleyans encouraged working people to become lay preachers in order to improve their oratory skills. This no doubt had a profound influence on Robert Booley. Not only was he a great orator but he also gave lectures on topics such as Phrenology. The names of many English poets figure prominently among the Booley family indicating a high degree of literary knowledge. Wesley is also a prominent name and is taken from their strong faith in Wesleyanism (Methodism).

Robert and his wife MaryAnn had eight children, one of whom died in infancy and another in his twenties. The name Booley can still be found in the Geelong and Bannockburn districts. Many descendants from the male lines are to be found in Victoria, while those from the female lines predominate in Western Australia. Booley Road in the Batesford – Gheringhap area near Geelong denotes the location where the Booley families owned and farmed their land. Robert Booley died in 1876 at Lake Bolac and is buried there. The causes of death were given as constipation and exhaustion. I am a Great Great Great Grandson of Robert Booley through my maternal line.

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Mid Gippsland Family History Society Inc. Writing Competition – 2007

William Phillip Davies A True Aussie Character by Dawn Cowley

The 15th of February 1884 heralded the birth of William Phillip Davies at his father's residence, 96 Rathdowne Street, Carlton. His parents William and Elizabeth could have little imagined the long, full and interesting life young Bill was to lead. He was the fifth of their nine children, and had a similar childhood to others of the day. He attended the Brighton Rd State School, from which he claimed he was expelled, and the Brunswick State School.

He spent many hours of his childhood at the wharves where a favourite attraction was the arrival of the banana boats, with their cargoes of bananas - not yet ripe - for distribution to the local markets. The young lads took great delight in dodging around the crates and between the legs of the wharf labourers unloading the shipments, and unfailingly surfaced with their hands full of bananas which had mysteriously come loose from the cumbersome bunches. In summer he would sneak away for a swim in the waterholes at the local quarry, a pastime which was forbidden to all children for obvious reasons.

Skylarking in unknown waters of varying depths meant that danger was ever present and several children had been drowned after defying parental instructions.

He recalled many occasions when he felt the leather of his father's razor strop around his nether regions – dished out, incidentally, by his mother, for ignoring the rules she had laid down.

In 1897, just three weeks short of Bill's thirteenth birthday, his father William died. William's death placed added strain on the finances of the family, so Bill soon left school and joined the work force. His first job after leaving school was with Dunn and Franklin, shoe manufacturers, as a boot clicker and tongue cutter, earning five shillings (50c.) a week. Unfortunately, a budding interest in nicotine soon put an end to that job, as Bill's mother discovered when she made enquiries as to why he had been given the sack. She was told that Bill had virtually worn a track between his workbench and the washroom, locating cigarette butts.

Within a year of his father's death Bill had left home and taken the first giant step towards manhood. He headed for the tall timber country of South Gippsland, and found employment around the Foster and Dollar areas. The timber was being cleared for developing farmlands, and Bill observed that you could walk on the felled logs from Mirboo North to Foster – a distance of about fifty kilometres – without once having to set foot on the ground.

In later life, Bill vividly recalled the 1898 bushfires which devastated Gippsland. At that time he was working as a dairyhand at Dollar and, along with many other volunteers did all that was possible to save the many valuable stands of timber which dotted the area. Gippsland boasted some of the best trees in the world – tall and straight grained, but within a twenty-four hour period the fire had raced from Sale to Port Albert, burning and blackening all before it. Like many of the fire fighter, Bill was smoke blind for a couple of hours after the fire was finally brought under control. Stock losses were high, but the surviving cattle still had to be milked, and Bill was almost kicked out of the cowshed because many of the cows had burnt teats.

He occupied his teenage years moving from one job to another – woodcutting, working as a farmhand and mining black coal at Wonthaggi, where the miners had to scrub each others backs to remove the coal dust which lodged in the pores of their skin.

Bill was nineteen when he went to Western Australia to join his mother who had earlier shifted there with the younger members of her family. He was there for only a short time when wanderlust struck him again and he purchased a "second hand ticket" on a ship to New Zealand. He explained a second hand ticket as one which had been purchased in England for a voyage to New Zealand, but the purchaser had decided to leave the ship in Perth and sell the remainder of his journey. This second hand ticket cost Bill 12/6d (\$1.25) and he travelled to New Zealand on the Waikare.

He recounted many stories of his time in New Zealand where he spent most of his working time on sheep stations. He learned blade shearing and earned his living shearing sheep. His willingness to try his hand at any job ensured that he had continual work, and the experience gained stood him in good stead in future job seeking. During the winter months he worked as a snow raker. Heavy snowfalls on the grazing fields of the Canterbury Plains made it dangerous for the sheep to negotiate the terrain.

To overcome this problem, he and other men walked single file through the snow, making a trail for the sheep to follow to reach the holding yards.

He was a very capable bike rider, and spent at least some of his leisure time following this interest. Bike riding was a sport at which he created a name for himself – of sorts!! It seems that he was disqualified when participating in the Timaru to Christchurch road race held in conjunction with the Christchurch exhibition of 1906. He accepted a bribe NOT to win, and towards the closing stages of the race he was well in the lead so he slowed down to enable others to pass him. Unfortunately for Bill, he was not too subtle in his sudden deceleration – the officials noticed, and he was disqualified.

His return trip to Australia on the Moena in 1906/07 was memorable. Another passenger aboard on the voyage was Major Joseph Perry of the Salvation Army. He was rapidly becoming internationally known as a film maker and was returning to Melbourne after completing a filming assignment. He was not idly whiling away the hours on the trip, though, as plans had been made for the Moena to enter the Milford Sound and follow this spectacular fjord to its extremity. All the while, Major Perry would film this unique piece of New Zealand coastline. This was an experience that Bill was to speak of many times, revealing scenery which he had never dreamt could be so breathtaking and awe inspiring. It was a piece of coastline which had very seldom been navigated by white man, and Bill felt extremely privileged to be part of such an historic trip. Months later, when the film was being shown in Melbourne theatres, Bill marvelled at the realism of reliving the sights again, and gazed in wonder at the images of himself appearing on screen. He enjoyed his few years in the “pig island”, as he called New Zealand, and in his later years often related stories of his time there.

Following his return he travelled extensively in Victoria and N.S.W., humping his swag and working variously as a shearer, a shearer's cook and for two years was opal mining at Lightning Ridge. Still in the possession of family members are four of his shearer's tickets, issued by the Victoria-Riverina branch of the Australian Workers Union at a cost of 15/- (\$1.50) a year. The tickets cover the period 1909 to 1913 and name several stations at which Bill had been shearing: Myrugrong, Nowra, Springfield and Kerrisdale, to mention four. He also kept tickets recording his annual one pound subscription to the newspaper published by the AWU – “Labour Daily”.

On December 22nd 1910 he married Marian Thompson at her family residence, 10 Bennie Street, Brunswick and they honeymooned at the bayside suburb of Mordialloc. For many years following his marriage, Bill was a seasonal worker, tramping from station to station. He was away from home for months at a time earning enough to support his ever growing family which finally totalled nine children. He arrived home from one stint minus the large moustache which he had worn for a number of years. His mother-in-law answered the door, and, not recognising him, refused him entry to the house. She sought out Marian saying: “There's a stranger at the door who says he is Will”. Marian was soon able to confirm his claims, and her mother was never able to live down the fact that she had refused Bill entry to his own home!

His constant friend and companion during these years was Old Sloan, and for many years his grandchildren were regaled with stories of his experiences with his loyal friend. He had always spoken of Old Sloan with such genuine friendship and admiration that I was quite shocked to learn that it was anything but a human friend. To Bill he was all that and more.

In 1916 he took his family to Ultima where he spent eighteen months sharefarming on a wheat farm. From there they moved to a farm at Carrum Downs, then eventually settled at Seaford where he worked as a self taught bricklayer, building as many as six chimneys in a six day working week. He specialised in building with his hand made concrete blocks which he made in the evenings and weekends in the back yard of the family home.

He remained in Seaford, working until his late seventies, at which time he was employed by the local council to collect parking fees on the Seaford foreshore. No-one escaped his eagle eye. If he found a car not displaying the ticket indicating that payment had been made, he would trudge along the beach until he found the offending driver, and collect from him the 2/- (20c) parking fee.

After the death of his wife Marian in 1963, Bill lived with family members until the age of 92, when he moved to a hostel for the elderly. Here he entertained the other residents with his stories of days gone by. A favourite was his story of his first job. While still at school he was employed by the local draper as a “dog walloper”. He was armed with a stick, and when passing dogs stopped with the intention of leaving their mark on one of the bolts of material displayed outside the shop – he walloped! He remained active in his later years, each year until the age of 95, playing Santa to the children of Sale, where he was then living. He was very proud of the fact that he had never been in hospital until the age of 85 years ... in fact he wasn't even born in one.

William Phillip Davies passed away peacefully in his sleep on November 19th 1983, just three months short of his centenary. He was cremated at Springvale after a funeral service at Frankston on November 22nd.

This “character” and in many ways rough diamond of a man, who happened to be my grandfather, will be long remembered by those who were fortunate enough to have known him.

Old Stratford

By "Ancient"

My memory goes back to the long, long ago,
when Gippsland was just about starting to grow.

Old Stratford was there on the big river bank, and
its people were equals, no high or low rank.

The teams going through to Dargo and Grant
would stay more than one night if they had the
slant.

A brave lot of pioneers peopled the town,
Logue, and Cavannah, Lory and Brown,
Hazletts and Reeves and Jorgensens too and
Neddy Walsh always knew what to do.

Sam Swan, Dick and Harry, with Poole's going
strong, Jack Young and old Tarpot, who sang a
good song.

Littles and Craigs and Lathams as well, Johnnie
Morrison and Huston, some good yarns could tell.

Tom Curran taught boxing, to lots of young men,
Jack McFarlane, Power and Theo Little got
lessons then

George Crockett, H. Leaker, Charlie Dennis, Ned
Light, Dick Birtles, Jack Martin, Harry Dickens,
Tom Knight, all helped to make the town lively
and gay, what a time we had when the bridge
washed away;

Cobain built a new one, with Brodie in charge',
wth trusses and stringers, it was both broad and
large.

Andrew Burnett oft came to the bridge from the
town, and about him we jokingly teased Bridget
Brown.

Kenzie Maxwell rode races on Greenwattle
course, and no one was able to better judge horse.

John Roberts was parson, and doctor, and friend;
He rode his roan horse from the start to the end;
The Jones' walked to school from way down at
Redbank, a fine lot of fellows, they were all tall
and lank.

The Swan and Two Throttles and Shakespeare
Hotel, Royal Mail, Happy's and Orchard's as well.
Lloyd's and Frankenberg's stores. Galways
blacksmiths shop. Harry Grumley's hut with
cockey on top;

Johnnie Mathieson, Brown and Mrs. Dunlea,
while on Dargo road lived John R. Lee.

On the bridge at flood time watched Lou Jones
and Jim Brown.

Buck O'Hara and Stothers lived out of the town.
Conways and Barkers lived up on the hill, and
some of the Farrells are living there still.

Rev. Hagenauer managed at Ramahyuck there the
blacks who were fed and had something to spare.

Dishers and Hahns, Bedggoods and Shelley were
all on the road to Meerlieu. Wrigglesworths, Letts
and Tom Blake got the land which carried them
through; Boldens, Flemings, Joe Daniel, Tom
Boucher. J. Slavin, Tom Holt. Tetley and
Frederick Fenton who used to ride a young colt
down the river, where the boats used to land.
Freitags, Hamlyns oft gave them a hand, Lake had
the brickyard down on the flat. Owen McQuillen
always wore a straw hat.

Down from the Dargo, the pack horses came and
Jerome McCarthy never had one lame,
Old Mrs. Dargan, Jimmie Geddes, Joe Wild, with
Pepper at school to look after your child.

Frank Baylis and Charlie, and also Phil, as you
passed the cemetery they lived up on the hill;
Willie King and Jim, and their sisters too, were
always ready for something to do.

The flour-mill there, with Hagan and Weir, and
the tannery too, up the river was near. John
Fitzpatrick, Jim Kennelly and Alphonse Ducret
at the tannery managed to make things pay.

Chandler made boots, and George Poole too, they
had a good name and got plenty to do;

Lory was chemist and baker as well, and Bullock,
school teacher, how to cure you could tell;

Newton and Ferguson both baked bread and
Ferguson carried his all on his head;

What a picnic we had every New Year's Day. and
the Ramahyuck blacks came and walked all the
way. Harry Stephenson, Don Cameron,
McCreedy and all, with their strong black feet,
used to kick the football

Thomas Lloyd, Tim Mitchell and others too, first
started the picnics and carried them through.

Dr. Matthews cured us whenever he could, and
old Connie Conn brought us good loads of wood:
Sawmills were humming and buzzing all day and
wagons were carting big loads away.

Forbes and Munro sent sawn timber down to
every place where there was a town. Others have
come since to carry things on but of course, they
are not like those who have gone.

Angus McMillan first blazed the track;
How surprised he would be if he ever came back.
And now this long record is finished at last
But it is good to recall the folks that have passed.

*This poem, published about 30 years ago, was
found recently among old documents and papers
at Glenmaggie. The published clipping is now in
the possession of Cr Alan Boyd (Avon Shire).
It was recently published on the AUS-VIC-
GIPPSLAND-L@rootsweb.com, which is where
it was copied from. ED*

'ROSES FROM THE HEART'

<http://www.christinahenri.com.au/>

The expected event in Hobart on the 8th March 2008 has been postponed due to insufficient bonnets having been made. Keep checking Christina's website for further information on a new date. A display of the bonnets received to date will be held at Mawson Pavilion, Mawson Place Hobart. The opening will be on the 9th May and the bonnets will be open to the public from 10th-13th May. Displays will continue to be held until the full 25,566 bonnets are received and then the full installation will be exhibited.



MGFHS CONVICT BONNETS PROJECT

Members of Mid Gippsland Family History Society Inc. have sent off 13 bonnets to be part of Christina Henri's collection. *Christina is most grateful for these bonnet tributes.* There are still many more needed, *please keep sewing.*

'Blessing of the Bonnets'

NEW EVENT AT THE OLD GEELONG GAOL in VIC

Friday March 14th 2008

Commencing at 1.30pm a costumed re-enactment of the 1820 Sentencing of Females to be transported to Australia will take place.

The Geelong production will be videoed and entry to the event is FREE. The event will be attended by Christina Henri who looks forward to meeting participants and supporters of her 25,566 bonnet project.

During the 19th Century over 18,000 convicts, many of them women, came ashore at Point Henry and from there settled throughout the Port Phillip District and beyond. These convict women mainly transported to Australia for minor offences, such as stealing a loaf of bread or a cheap trinket, endured primitive conditions as they struggled to establish a new life. To acknowledge the contribution made by these women to the economic and social life of the Colony an event will take place following the sentencing re-enactment entitled **'Blessing of the Bonnets'**

Tasmanian artist Christina Henri has conceived a project called *Roses from the Heart™* and the 'Blessing of the Bonnets' ceremony is a part of this project. Various groups and individuals around Victoria have made Bonnets each embroidered with the name of a convict woman and the name of the maker. These bonnets will be placed in a wooden dinghy and blessed by a local female clergy. They will be packed and freighted to Hobart to join other Bonnets made throughout Australia and further a field globally. Christina Henri the conceiver/founder/organiser of this project will co-ordinate the display of all bonnets made by participants world-wide.

After travelling overseas during 2011 and 2012 the 25,566 bonnet project will become a permanent installation when the full 25,566 bonnets have been received. For further information on the Geelong event, please contact: Pat Whitford on (03)52531866 or 0418520206 Or Dennis King on (03)52512431

Or email Christina Henri: cjhenri@gmail.com

OTHER EVENTS

A 'memorial of the bonnets' will also be held at St John's Cathedral in Parramatta on the **10th April 2008** at 2pm.

MOTHERS DAY 13th May 2008. A very special event will be held at the Cascades Female Factory Historic Site on Mothers Day. Plant some bulbs in honor of your ancestor. There will be morning tea after.

Publications for Sale by Mid Gippsland Family History Society Inc.

Address ALL enquiries regarding publications to The Secretary, Mid Gippsland Family History Society Inc.
PO Box 767 Morwell Victoria 3840 ALL checks to be made payable to Mid Gippsland F.H.S. Inc.

Books (postage cost on application)

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Gippsland Crematorium Transcriptions		1985- 1995	\$16.50
Gormandale Cemetery Transcriptions <i>NEW</i>		-2007	\$10.00
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Moe Cemetery Register		1891- 1996	\$22.00
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<http://home.vicnet.net.au/~mgfhs/publications.htm>

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