

# ~*Furphy Murrurs*~



Shepparton  
Heritage Centre Inc  
AOC7689C  
P.O.Box 137 Shepparton Vic 3632



Shepparton  
Family History Group Inc  
A0041654N  
P.O.Box 1529 Shepparton 3632  
[www.vicnet.net.au/~sheph](http://www.vicnet.net.au/~sheph)

*Newsletter No 40 October 2011*

## SHEPPARTON FAMILY HISTORY GROUP inc

### Shepparton Family History Report

Since our last newsletter another two bookshelves have been added to the library area which has greatly increased both the shelf space and the look of the library area. A new step ladder has also been purchased to give safer access to the higher shelving.

The 10th annual GMAGS Family History Expo held last November was another successful day for our group, our members had quite a few enquiries regarding families from the Shepparton area and Jenny was kept very busy answering requests for New Zealand research.

At the completion of the Expo Bruce was presented with a certificate by Margaret Sawyers from the Public Records Office Victoria, to verify that the Shepparton Family History Group is now a POD (place of deposit). This means that we are able to hold local public records which are not classified as being of major importance for the PROV archives at North Melbourne. Margaret also presented our group with a donation of archival material for the preservation of some of our own records.

Family history expo's give everyone the opportunity to do free research using all the records available on the day. Any further research can either be done in our rooms during opening hours or our researchers, for a small fee, can do the research and forward the results on.

The Shepparton Heritage Centre are compiling a book to mark the 150th anniversary of Shepparton being proclaimed as a town. Several of our members are involved with the collection of information for the book so we are all looking forward to the book launch in September? One of the local historians and former councillor, Bruce Wilson, has a segment on community radio 98.5 each Friday morning. Bruce chats about the history of Shepparton and surrounding areas in a very informative and easy listening segment.

Indexing continues. Fay has done an amazing amount of work in indexing our copies of the Shepparton Shire rate books. A data base of more than sixty thousand entries has been compiled and loaded on to our computers for quick searching of all ratepayers listed in the years from 1885 through to 1941.

Like all Goulburn Valley residents the SFHG were saddened to hear of the fire which destroyed the Toolamba primary school. All the school records were destroyed but through our policy of photo-copying as many school registers as possible, we have been able to offer the Toolamba school a copy of their original student records. We have recently asked permission from several of the schools in the district, whose records we do not have, to let us keep a copy of their older records in our rooms.

We are looking into applying for a grant to help with the cost of copying further rate books from our district. If the Rodney shire records are able to be copied it would be a valuable asset for our ever growing library.



## Recent Events

### **GMAGS EXPO**

The 10th annual GMAGS expo was once again held at Club Mulwala more than 150 people passed through the doors to browse the more than 30 stallholders tables.

The four speaker sessions throughout the day were well attended with the audience hearing about Gee-long history records, a computer Family History program, paper record preservation and 'Convicts and Criminals'.

The local family history groups were kept busy attending to the many people researching their own family histories. Many thanks to our member Jenny who made a great effort to attend the Expo and run the New Zealand research at our table, only arriving back from N.Z the previous day.

The stallholders selling books, Cd's, Wendish records, Mining accidents, and many others also had a successful day.

The GMAGS EXPO 10th birthday celebration raffle included a bonus \$300 if the lucky ticket holder was present at the draw, unfortunately the winner was not present but still won the \$300 in fuel vouchers.

Jan Parker and Maryann Hatters were asked to cut the birthday cake and given a small gift in appreciation of the many hours work they have spent in organizing the 10 GMAGS EXPO's to date.

GMAGS will not be holding a Family History Expo this year but are looking into organising a workshop with some well known speakers.

The GMAGS delegates would like to thank all the members and contributors who have supported the Expo over the past ten years. Without their co-operation and enthusiasm the event could never have been as successful as it has been.

### **Bendigo Family & Local History Expo**

As in previous years the Bendigo branch of A.I.G.S organized another successful Family History Expo. Many of our members were present with some "good finds" had by several of them.

Our table adjoined the Maryborough group, it was great to catch up with their members again.

One of our members was lucky enough to win an A.I.G.S subscription.

## Coming Events

### VAFHO State Conference

#### **'The Border and Beyond'**

**Club Mulwala. 28th-30th May 2010**

Presented by the Victorian Association of Family History Organisations in conjunction with the Yarra-wonga Family History Group.

Well known speakers will be in attendance and speaking on a wide range of family history subjects.

All the details for this conference can be obtained from the website at

[www.vafho.org.au/pdf/conf\\_booklet.pdf](http://www.vafho.org.au/pdf/conf_booklet.pdf)

### **Genealogy Workshop—Family History Search**

Free workshop at the LDS Church, 130 Echuca Rd Mooroopna, Saturday 26th June 2010.

Classes begin 10.00am, 11.00am, 1.00pm, 2.00pm.

### National Family History Week 2010

#### 31st July to 8th August

On Saturday 31st July, Professor Janet McCalman will be presenting a **'Founders and Survivors: Mapping former convicts from Tasmania'** workshop at the Shepparton Library.

*'Founders & Survivors will become one of the world's great historical studies of immigration, forced labour and settlement. It will eventually follow convict founders and their descendants over five generations and build a unique portrait of modern Australian society in the making. We invite you to join this first stage of our quest - to find Australia's Founders and Survivors and submit a convict you have researched.'* (From the website at [www.foundersandsurvivors.org](http://www.foundersandsurvivors.org))

The workshop is open to everyone, especially those with Tasmanian convict ancestors. Prof McCalman will firstly explain the project and then form small groups for supervised instruction on how to access the databases which list the many details of Australia's Tasmanian convicts.

Bring along your convict ancestor's details

Time: From 1.00 pm to 4.00 pm.

SFHG members to bring a plate.

### PROV resume normal opening hours

- **Monday to Friday:** 9:00 am to 4:30 pm (excluding public holidays)
- The second and fourth **Saturday** of every month: 9:00 am to 4:30 pm

Trees without roots fall over

## Library Acquisitions

### **Books**

- ...St. Augustine's Maryborough, Baptism Register Index 1851-1950, by Carisbrook Historical Society
- ...St. Patrick's Centenary 1888 – 1988, A History of Moorilim
- ...Goorambat – yesterday and today, by Judy Bassett and Joyce Latch
- ...Colac – a short history from 1837, by Colac and District Historical Society
- ...Rumba on the rise, the story of the Rumbalara Football and Net ball Club, by Craig Potter
- ...The Floating Brothel, Siân Rees
- ...The Shepparton Club Inc—The first 50 years by Ken Jackson
- ...From The Past, To the Present—A Pictorial History of Shepparton's Buildings & Businesses, Vol 2
- ...Burial at Brighton Cemetery with Shepparton Connections. (Including Personals, Obits, Inquests, Death & Funeral notices)
- ...Ragless Family Tree 1988—By Descendants

### **CD's**

- ..The mining claims and leases in Sandhurst and Echuca districts 1881 – 1883
- ..Footscray Cemetery Register, memorial register and memorial inscriptions
- ..Shepparton Technical College, Teachers and events from 1967 to 1971
- ..Ararat Hospital Records
- ..Ararat District Names and Events
- ..Passengers to N.Z from Melbourne (1852—1923)

### **Family histories**

- ..Wright family
- .. Day/O'Day family
- .. McNabb, McGifford, Martin, from County Down
- ..Davie Family

### **Microfiche**

...The SFHG were grateful recipients of a large donation of microfiche from the family of the late Barbara Mitchell. We thank them very much they will be put to good use.

## Research Requests

Some recent research requests included the names:

- Greatorex: Palling (Henry & Cornelius):
- Osboldstone: Noble / Ferguson: Dolley 1884-1953:
- Clifton: Fitzharris: Connors: Joyce (Shepparton):
- Crosier: Arcadia Cemetery: Courthouse Hotel: Fitzgerald memorial relay (Dookie): Munro (Rochester):
- Long: Ambermere Hospital: Quinlan (Caniambo):
- Tait (Cosgrove): Weston: Cruse: Cottom: Martin.

## **Printed Articles of Interest**

Shepparton News October 1938

### **“News Founder's Daughter Returns Interesting Chat ”**

*The early days of “The Shepparton News” have been revived during the Centenary celebrations, as a result of Mrs. A. Scott's visit to the scenes of her girlhood. She was Emma Haslam, daughter of the late Thomas Haslam who, in September 1877, brought the first printing plant to Shepparton and founded “The Shepparton News,” of which he was sole proprietor for a number of years.*

*Mrs. Scott was a girl of 13 when she came to Shepparton with her father and her two sisters and brothers. Being the eldest daughter, it was her duty to care for the other children for Mrs. Thomas Haslam had passed away before the family came to Shepparton.*

*“It is very nice to be back and I am very glad I came back,” Mrs. Scott said.*

*Mr. Haslam came to Australia from England with his wife and three children in 1852, and held down a highly responsible position on the “Melbourne Telegraph,” receiving in remuneration £12 a week. Prior to that he was in business in Preston (Lancashire) in the printing trade.*

*At the time of Mr. Haslam's arrival in Melbourne, primitive conditions prevailed, as much as £3 being paid for a barrel of water.*

*Eventually deciding to re-enter business on his own account, he sent to England for machinery and type, which were landed at Portland where he established the “Portland Guardian”. From Portland he moved to Colac and founded the “Colac Observer”. The next move was to Echuca and the establishment of the “Echuca Daily Times.”*

*In 1877 Mr. Haslam closed down this business and in September of that year came to Shepparton with his machinery and plant.*

*There was no way of getting over from Echuca in those days other than by bullock teams, Mrs. Scott said. When*



*they reached the river here there was only as small punt. Two bullocks at a time had to be unyoked and the plant taken in sections across the river. The landing occupied two days. Mr. W. T. McCormack used to tell how he helped to unload the type from the punt.*

*That was the genesis of “The Shepparton News.”  
(Printed articles of interest continued)*

Genealogy: Tracing yourself back to better people.

"My father not only brought over a printing plant," said Mrs. Scott, "but he carried a very large stock of stationery and fancy goods. He was able to supply the school, the first teacher at which was Mr. Lievesley, as well as Rowe's and Longstaff's stores, which with Long's shop made up the whole of commercial Shepparton in its infant days."

"My father had to have an office built. It was built on the present site of the 'News' by two carpenters of the name of Lane Brothers from Pine Lodge."

"The paper was a wonderful asset to the community, and it was sold at sixpence per copy. I used to have to fold and fly the papers, as well as help with the reporting. The 'News' came out once a week, and was produced on an old hand press. It consisted of only four pages then, but its length and width were not much smaller than today. We had a circulation of about 500, and served a large area."

"Next to where my father had his office built was a medical hall. When this was closed my father acquired it and so was able to extend his office and use the hall for a stationary shop. My father was a man of integrity, which was reflected in the conduct of his paper. He was always a keen businessman, his rule being that for every £5 invested there must be a return of £20."

Mr. Haslam and his family lived in Edward street. Other members of the family were Thomas and Robert (who eventually worked for their father), Annie and Lizzie. Mr. T. Horan and Mr. Duncan Proudfoot also worked at the "News" office.

After some years Mr. Haslam, deciding that he was due to retire and steadfastly resisting a natural inclination to establish a newspaper somewhere else, went to Port Augusta to live. He died in Melbourne in 1899 at the age of 68. He lies buried with his wife and daughter, Lizzie, in the Colac cemetery. His daughter, Annie, and son, Robert, have also passed away.

Mr. Thomas Haslam, Jnr, for many years worked in the Government Printing Office, and is now living in retirement at Molesworth, Victoria.

Mr. Robert Haslam continued to work for the "News" office, both for Mr. Middleton and Mr. Colin McPherson, who became proprietors in turn, and later owned the "Numurkah Leader" before going to the Government Printing Office and subsequently to the Railways Printing Office. He died nearly two years ago.

Mrs. Scott recalled the "News" opening day. It was on a Saturday, and as Mr. Haslam carried a large stock of fancy goods, these were snapped up early by people from all parts of the district. Thirty concertinas were sold during the afternoon to young men, who also bought mouth organs, Jew's harps, flutes and other musical instruments. Mr. Haslam played the accordeon splendidly and the young fellows thought they would manage as well.

"Did Ned Kelly come to Shepparton?" Mrs. Scott was asked. "Yes," she replied, "Ned Kelly came to Shepparton. He pulled up in an old dray at Rowe's, got his groceries, and went off."

Mrs. Scott recalls the holding of the first church service in Furphy's shop, and the subsequent building of the first

Methodist church in Welsford street. Later on her father went to the brick church (also Methodist), built in Stewart street (now Scout Hall), the first minister of which was the Rev. J. J. Brown, who, despite his commanding stature (or perhaps because of it) was termed the "Jockey Minister." Those were the days when Methodist preachers went in for forensic oratory, which was accompanied by much thumping of the pulpit. "I remember my father complaining to Mr. Brown that it was wrong of him to 'punch' the Bible in the course of his sermons," said Mrs. Scott, who also recalled the ministry of the Revs. John Nall and Samuel Cuthbert.

Prior to the building of the Welsford street church, Mrs. Scott attended the Anglican services in the Shire Hall and sang in the choir there.

Mrs. Scott remembers Jack Longstaff (Sir John) winning a scholarship with a beautiful painting, "Breaking the News."

The chat with Mrs. Scott in the "News" office was a happy one. She is staying with her niece, Mrs. W. Gracie, at "Rosebrae," Merrigum.

### Searching for an Ancestor

I went searching for an ancestor  
I cannot find him still  
He moved around from place to place  
And did not leave a will.  
He married where the courthouse burned  
He mended all his fences  
He avoided any man who came  
To take the U.S. Census.  
He always kept his luggage packed  
This man who had no fame  
And every twenty years or so  
This rascal changed his name.  
His parents came from Europe  
They should be on some list  
Of passengers to the U.S.A.  
But somehow they got missed.  
And no one else in this world  
Is searching for this man  
So I play geneasolitare  
To find him if I can.  
I'm told he's buried in a plot  
With tombstone, he was blessed  
But weather took engraving  
And some vandals took the rest.  
He died before the county clerks  
Decided to keep records  
No family bible has been found  
In spite of all my efforts.  
To top it off, this ancestor,  
Who caused me many groans  
Just to give me one more pain  
Bethrothed a girl named "Jones"  
By Merrell Kenworthy

## Members Family History story

### **'The Miners Wife'** by Eileen Torney

On October 25<sup>th</sup> 1851, 23 year old Mary Holman married Nicholas Coombe in the Cornish village of Tywardreath. In 1993, I was driven along a narrow winding lane, enclosed by high walls covered in moss and grass, to find this village, its central point being a large stone church, dedicated over 600 years ago.

Seven years after their marriage Mary and Nicholas and their two daughters, five year old Mary and baby Jane set sail for South Australia, and journeyed to the town of Burra where the skills of the Cornish miners were in high demand. Some had been sponsored by church poor relief, some attracted by agents of the mining companies. Nicholas was a blacksmith. The monster copper mine saved South Australia from insolvency, and Burra, with a population of some 5,000 people by 1850, was one of the largest towns in Australia. The climate of Cornwall is cool and damp, in contrast to the hot, dry climate of Burra, to which transport for the 96 miles (154 kilometres) from Adelaide was by an unsprung, uncomfortable wagon. One of these is preserved in the main street today. There were townships which collectively formed 'the Burra' named after the towns from which the varying ethnic groups originated, and soon after their arrival a son, John was born in one of these 'suburbs', Aberdeen, in July 1859. He died the following month. Two years later, in Kooringa, another section of Burra, another son, Joseph, was born. In 1864, a son Nicholas was born in Brompton, near Adelaide, and died the following year.

Many mining families journeyed the 111 miles (179 kilometres) west, from Burra to Moonta, on the Yorke Peninsula, after copper mining was developed there. It was here that Mary had another son, Richard, born March 1867, who died in May of the same year. The following year she had a daughter, Kessia, who died at the age of four, in 1872, at Moonta.

There is no natural water on the Yorke Peninsula and very little timber. The cottages were built of stone, and the water tanks were underground. Diphtheria and cholera were rife. When it rained the water which accumulated in the pit toilets seeped into the drinking water, leading to outbreaks of typhoid. Vendors sold water by the bucketful at exorbitant rates. In the cemetery at Moonta there is row after row of unmarked children's graves, a massive assembly of children who did not live to start school, and page after page of the funeral register consists of children only, with the occasional young man who died as a result of a mining accident. If a married man died in this way, leaving a family, the company compensated his widow by providing her with a heavy mangle, with which she could wring out the clothes of others for a penny per basket, but fortunately Nicholas and Mary Coombe were survivors. Today water is piped from the Murray River at Morgan.

One year after the death of Kessia, the eldest daughter Mary, who had made the journey from Cornwall as a five year old, married John Lawn, a Cornishman from Lanner. Lanner was originally part of the parish of St. Wenepna, now Gwennap, but became a separate entity after the increase in population in the mining areas as a result of the Industrial Revolution. The people of Cornwall, originally Celts with their own language, had been miners for many centuries, and then others joined their ranks. The church of St. Wenepna dates back to about 600 A.D. and like the rest of Cornwall became Church of England with the Protestant Reformation of the 1500s. When John Wesley preached in an open mining pit in this parish he received great support and his system of encouraging lay

preachers ensured that his work was carried on enthusiastically, as some of the clergy had done very little more than collect their stipends, often from more than one deanery at a time. The people accepted Wesley's form of worship and the parish was re-named Gwennap. The Gwennap Pit is preserved as a shrine to his memory.

Moonta, with its high proportion of migrants from this area, had many variants of Wesleyism. Captain Hancock who ruled the major mining industry saw that every miner and his family attended Church each Sunday, and if he failed to have a good reason for non attendance he didn't have a job on Monday. They also had a great love of band music.

John Lawn had come to Australia as a 19 year old youth and with some of his relatives had followed the mining runs in Maldon and Ballarat. His life was clouded by his memory of a tragedy of his own making. He had picked up a gun and playfully pointed it at his younger brother. "Shoot, John, shoot!" the little fellow laughed, and John did, not realising that the gun was loaded. I have been told this story by his descendants in New Zealand and again by relatives in Lanner. It has not been forgotten.

It was anticipated that John and his brother would return to Cornwall and fulfil their promises to marry two sisters. His brother did so, but John asked his lady to join him in Australia. Her response was that she was not going half way across the world for any man, and she never married. His brother died when his wife was pregnant with her fifth child, and this independent lady assisted her sister with their upbringing, and is fondly remembered by their descendants, whom I have met in Lanner. John looked elsewhere for a wife.

The triangle encompassing the towns of Moonta, Wallaroo and Kadina is known as Australia's Little Cornwall. Many historical relics are preserved and every second year a Cornish festival, the Kernewek Lowender takes place and participants eat Cornish pasties, drink Swanky and enjoy folk songs. At one of these, in 1993 a re-enactment of the walk from Burra was held.

Mary Coombe and John Lawn were married at the Church of England at Wallaroo in 1873, and the following year their son, Nicholas was born.

In 1877, Jane Coombe, the baby who had made the journey from Cornwall and was now a grown woman, married Thomas Edwards, at her parents' house in Moonta and the following year, on September 30<sup>th</sup> 1878, Jane died following the birth of her baby son, also called Nicholas, and she too, is buried at Moonta. The baby lived and Thomas remarried.

Mary recorded all the births and deaths in their Bible, now in the possession of her great grandson. It appears likely that Nicholas could not write.

Before, or early in 1878 John and Mary Lawn with their little son, left Australia to settle in the mining town of Reefton, New Zealand, joining others to make a total of seven members of the Lawn family to settle there, five brothers and two cousins. Their children all grew to adulthood at Reefton. Had they remained in the unsanitary conditions in Moonta, this may not have been the case, and the child who became my grandmother might have been one more of those little bodies in the Moonta Cemetery. Mary's parents, Nicholas and Mary Coombe and their sole surviving son, Joseph, joined them at Reefton.

This area is referred to as the West Coast, though it is not on the coast, but it is on the west side of the mountains which divide the South Island of New Zealand. Locals sometimes refer to it as the 'wet coast' and in this it was more akin to their native Cornwall than South Australia was. The Lawns made

Family is just accident.... They don't mean to get on your nerves.  
They don't even mean to be your family, they just are. ~Marsha Norman



their home at nearby Blacks Point, a beautiful spot where the mountains rise up immediately behind the section (as they call building blocks) and a white stoned creek flows between the mountains and the house. It contains the remains of a hydro electric plant. Reefton claims to be the first town in the southern hemisphere to be lit by electricity, an indication of the engineering skills of the Cornish miners. Around the corner a former church is now the museum and next to it is the home of their great-grandson, Peter, the curator of the museum.

A few years after they arrived the Lawn home was burnt to the ground while Mary was drying clothes in front of the fire, and they built on land closer to Reefton, which is still in the family today.

I have in my possession a photograph of Mary Coombe, nee Holman, my great grandmother, taken in New Zealand with her son Joseph, a young man in working clothes standing beside her. She looks to be a healthy stalwart woman, considering all she had endured, with an air of quiet determination. A watch chain is across her ample bosom and her hair is neatly pinned back into a bun. She died in Reefton on October 18<sup>th</sup> 1889, aged 61.

Another photograph, taken some fifteen years later is of Joseph with his wife. He is wearing his good clothes and is seated, with his hollow cheeks and staring eyes the evidence of a very sick man. His wife is standing, and is looking at him with loving concern. His record of employment at the Wealth of Nations mine for 9/6 per day, now held in the Blacks Point museum, shows regular attendance to May 1901, then a half day, then no more. On October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1901, at the age of 37, he succumbed to the dreaded miners' disease, caused by crushed rocks corroding the lungs. He left a wife and four young children.

When I visited some of his descendants I was shown an old letter, written by a member of the other side of her family, also miners. In it the writer urges the young people to respect their grandmother. The gist of the story is as follows: When they were living 'under canvas' the young woman, who was blind, had placed a biscuit under her baby's pillow, in case he wanted it later. She was alerted by his screams and found a rat gnawing at his face. She frantically tried to beat it off, but the baby died, whether from the depredations of the rat, or the mother's attack, or both, I am not sure.

Reefton was served for many years by the heroic and dedicated Dr. Wicken. Sadly the strain of caring for miners and their families and the dreadful accidents he attended eventually destroyed his brilliant mind. His daughter is married to John Lawn's grandson and they now own and live on John Lawn's Reefton property, which they have turned into a shrine to the family, in ways too numerous to detail here. My request to visit them some years ago was met with the reply, 'One month or two?' I settled for one. Both are now frail and elderly and their devoted son cares for them.

Mary Lawn died in 1902 and her husband John died in 1905. Nicholas Coombe outlived all of his children, and died in an old men's refuge in Beaumont, an Adelaide suburb in 1915, at the age of 91 years. The descendants of his daughter Jane's son, Nicholas, were living in that area, but it still remains a puzzle to me that he should leave his New Zealand family at such an advanced age and why he died in an old men's refuge.

History books record the deeds of men but we can only look back with awe and sympathy at the lives of the women, and the heartbreak of losing not one, but many of their babies, away from their own mothers and in a land that was foreign to them.

### Family History Research Web Sites

**[www.gvrlc.vic.gov.au/wikishepp](http://www.gvrlc.vic.gov.au/wikishepp)** A site still in the developing stage, linking the history of Shepparton and district and it's people. Anyone can add verified content to this site, details are on the web page.

**[www.findmypast.co.uk](http://www.findmypast.co.uk)** London parish records available reveals Londoners' Baptisms, Marriages and Burials. from 1500's. This site also has added 75,000 WW1 Royal Marine medal recipients to its 'British military records'. Name search is free but pay as you go or a subscription is necessary to view original.

**[www.blacksheepindex.co.uk](http://www.blacksheepindex.co.uk)** An index of names taken from 1500 U.K. newspapers and journals.

### \$\$\$\$ Membership \$\$\$\$

Members please note that 2010/11 subs will be due from July and payable to the treasurer.  
P.O.Box 1529 Shepparton Vic 3632. Single \$25.00. Couple \$45.00. Joining Fee \$5.00

### Shepparton Family History Group inc

Address: 154 Welsford St. Shepparton (Cnr Welsford and High St)

Post: P.O.Box 1529 Shepparton. Vic .3632

Internet: [www.vicnet.net.au/~shepfh](http://www.vicnet.net.au/~shepfh) email: [shepfhg@fastmail.fm](mailto:shepfhg@fastmail.fm)

Meeting Times: Third Wednesday, 7.30pm at the SFHG Rooms (\*\* note change in starting time)

Research Times: Every Wednesday 12.30 pm to 3.30 pm.

Even Dated Sundays 1.00 to 4.00 pm.

Odd Dated Fridays 10.00 am to 1.00 pm.

First odd dated Sunday 1.00 pm to 4.00 pm .(For SFHG Members Research Only)