



DONALD HISTORY
& NATURAL HISTORY GROUP



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A few more queries again this month.

A lady with the attractive name of Chandelle Brien is interested in the Trollopes of Swanwater – which expands to all the Trollops and Trollopes in the district. Actually, she said the certificates she had were labelled “Swan”, and she wondered if that was a small place, or did they mean Swan Hill? This has been prepared for her, and we await her advice as to whether she would like a “Selectors of Swanwater” and perhaps “A History of Cope Cope”, but for the moment she is not reading her emails.

Stephen Brooks requested information about Terence McGannon, soldier, and was given what we found. Judy Rafferty of Warrnambool would love to know if we could help her with Keoghs of Banyena, about whom she knew nothing. Where did they come from, why Banyena? She was delighted with the result.

Then came Geoff Adcock, with a query about a Harold and Elizabeth Adcock, who came from England as immigrants in 1921 with Harold’s brother Ron. Ron was sent to a Gippsland dairy farm, and Harold to Donald. He was a blacksmith by trade, and Geoff thought he came to the town, to somewhere called “Portsdown House”, which Geoff assumed was a boarding house. He was told, not so, and as the information came from Ancestry.com, we were sceptical about it all. But it appeared the information was the electoral roll, and it was Donald EAST. That was a different story, and Geoff was told about married couples on farms, and the fact that “working men” in general very rarely got into the newspaper. In any case he did not stay long, as the brothers gave up their jobs and went to Kerang. He does not appear to have been a relative of the current Adcocks, according to Margaret Adcock.

We do not have a record of “Portsdown House”, but the Internet tells us that Portsdown Hill is an English place, looking down over Portsmouth. It was evidently the name Harold and Elizabeth gave to the house in which they lived while working for someone at Donald East.

Last, on Friday were another delightful couple, David and Janet White, who kept us entertained for some time. They are looking for the Farrell family, and were excited every time they saw one of the family names come up on the computer. So that is the next job.

Another open day this week – the last could be counted a success, except for the Ag. Museum, and it seems hardly worth while opening that.

ITEMS FROM THE "DONALD TIMES" OF ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO:

June 2, 1914: At the last Melbourne Show many farmers were interested in a new grain harvesting machine called a 'header' or "reaper-thresher", which cuts off the heads and threshes them, delivering the grain into a box which has a capacity of 5 bags. The machine takes an 8-foot cut, and with two five-horse teams will take off 15 to 20 acres per day in a fair crop.

Mr Henry West is one of the three survivors of the passengers on the "Mary Ann" which arrived in Hobson's Bay in May, 1856 after a rough voyage of 5 months, delayed for a month in the Irish Channel. On arrival in Hobsons Bay they saw hundreds of deserted sailing ships, their crews having deserted for the goldfields.

June 5, 1914: Report of the Donald Park Committee to the Council asked the Donald Tennis Club to clean up the courts and the small angular strip of land in the corner which it has cut off from the Park, and cause same to be planted with shrubs or the like, and to exercise all care to safeguard the outer fencing by the courts in the future. The Croquet Club was asked to cause borders to its green (now in grass) to be improved and beautified so as to lend attractiveness to the park lands.

June 9, 1914: Kind's Birthday is on 3rd June, but in accordance with statute is observed on the following Monday, which was therefore a holiday in Donald. The local banks and business establishments were closed, and the streets were very quiet. Beyond a couple of scratch football matches and a shooting match no amusements were provided.

The Railway Department has written to the Kara Kara Water Trust regarding a scheme for increasing the storage of the Round Lake at Cope Cope by over 2 million gallons. The cost would be £191 and the Department would pay one-half. The Kara Kara Trust will write to the Donald Trust to ask if it will join in the venture.

June 16, 1914: On Saturday last a team from the Donald Higher Elementary School met a team from Jeffcott and suffered a defeat. Though the Jeffcott lads were bigger, the local boys put up a good fight. The best players for the winners were Hogan, L. Baker, Beckham, Harrison and Coats, and for the losers Skewes (by far the best on the ground), Hodgson, Greenwood, F. Cruikshank and Meyer. The Donald boys played the better system, plenty of handball being introduced. The score was Jeffcott 2.5 to Donald 1.5.

June 19, 1914: The railway station at Maryborough (says the "Ballarat Star") was built about 14 years ago. A nice building, which is claimed to be the best in Victoria, is the station. It was only on Monday that the almost-forgotten clock was placed there. Apropos of the above, we think that Donald has now become of sufficient importance to justify the erection of a suitable town clock.

June 23, 1914: Arbor Day was celebrated by the children of the Donald State School on Thursday last, when a number of trees were planted in the school grounds under the supervision of the head teacher, Mr Skewes, the varieties being Western Australian karri, red gum, calophylla, white flowering gum and willow-leaved wattle. All these trees were grown from seed by the head teacher. A number of olive trees from Dookie College will be planted in the school grounds during the present month.

Another addition to the many fine buildings which adorn Donald's main thoroughfare is about to be made. The corner building known as Williams' Corner is being taken out and thoroughly renovated to give place to an up-to-date butcher's shop by Mr Crone. New partitions of lath and plaster are to be covered with sanitary oilcloth. The shop will have two large plate-glass windows, and the latest fittings. The sausage house and corned beef house will have large ventilators extending up through the ceilings. The walls will be ironed up 5 feet high, and the balance enamelled white. The floors are all to be bricked and cemented.

June 26, 1914: There was a very lively meeting of the shareholders of the Donald Electric Supply Co, to decide if the Council should buy the company. After many arguments for and against, a vote was taken, 29 being for selling the plant to the Shire Council and 15 against.

June 30, 1914: At the usual meeting of the A.N.A. the item for the evening was a lecturette by Mr Frank Hebbard (Higher Elementary School teacher). The subject matter, which proved most instructive and interesting, was taken from Mark Twain's book, "Huckleberry Finn. The speaker confined himself to the first 40 pages of the book, which kept him occupied for an hour and 20 minutes. He was particularly good in his imitation of the Yankee twang and slang sayings of the Americans.