



DONALD HISTORY
& NATURAL HISTORY GROUP



BULOKE BULLETIN NO. 226, OCTOBER 2014

It has been an interesting month. Alan To arrived with his four aunts and uncles on the last weekend in September, and Ann Dunstan and Ron Falla took charge magnificently and gave them a “delightful weekend”, as Alan said. Willie Dark’s garden location was identified – but now Alan has sent the titles in the hope that the rate books may show Willie as the occupier in the early 1920s. That has still to be checked.

Harvey Waddell also came as promised, and although he had most of our information, took a copy of a letter that gave something extra.

Wayne Jackson came from Horsham, asking rather hesitantly if we had anything at all on Lawler Station? While he was scanning the fat Pyers file, Dorothy was indexing 1964, and turning a page, she remarked, “Here is something about Lawler – the installation of a memorial plaque.” This met an excited response – this was what Wayne has been searching for, for some time – even found its GPS co-ordinates from the internet, but neither he nor Minyip H.S. could find it. This article showed that it had been nailed to an old tree, its position clearly shown, so we crossed our fingers and hoped that the tree still stands. But if it does not, surely the plaque would be re-erected in its place. Haven’t heard the result yet. Wayne (who told Dorothy that he was the police sergeant at Minyip at one time) will be back to finish going through this “magnificent” file on Pyers!

Earlier, Neville Booth also called in for something on Essie Burbridge, and this was supplied. And, with two people working on it, the search for items about the modern life of the Nichols family continues. But it is sparse – the lovely chatty bits that brightened the old papers are no longer there. However, the children are starting to appear therein – and coincidentally, an attractive young lady who offered to fill in the “unknowns” in one of Mary’s school photos in the window was Karyl Griemink (Nichols) – quite intrigued to find we were working on the family.

Gail Dawson, living in W.A., obtained photocopies of Willey material in the previous month, but one item, which came to us as a photo-copy of a magazine article dated 1856, was unreadable when photo-copied again. I suggested trying the National Library, where it was apparently stored, or if that does not work, I will type it out for her.

ITEMS OF NEWS IN THE "DONALD TIMES" 100 YEARS AGO.

October 2, 1914: The prospects of even fair returns from crops in the Laen district are very poor indeed, as most of the farmers have put their stock on them.

The work of regulating the Avon River and diverting it into the Batyo Catyo Swamp is well advanced, and when completed will enable a number of the districts to obtain the use of what is now a very intermittent river.

Oct. 6, 1914: E. Watts protested against Mrs McCarthy being given first prize for preserved fruit at the Show, because she admitted it was not grown within 30 miles of Donald as asked by the schedule but she got the fruit from Mildura. She said she would not bother about the protest. The Society could keep the money. First prize was awarded to Mr Watts.

Oct. 9, 1914: A hare drive organised for the purpose of providing the soldiers at the front with a change from bully beef took place at Berrivillock on Wednesday. About 30 guns assembled, and accounted for 118 rabbits and 23 hares. These were sent to Melbourne and will be credited to the Lord Mayor's Fund for the relief of distress in Belgium.

Mr W. Dixon brought to the Mount Jeffcott Hotel a fine sample of wheat grown in a small plot on his farm. This was obtained by accident from the overflow of a road., Most of the crops in the district must be pronounced as failures, and the sample is a novelty. However, farmers console themselves with the remembrance that the 1902 drought was quite as bad and are looking forward to a reversal of present conditions.

Oct. 13, 1914: A very charming wedding was celebrated at Corack Wesleyan Church when Miss Eileen Mary McCallum married Mr J. H. Green. The bride looked lovely in her beautiful bridal robe of cream messaline and Limerick lace, the train lined with the palest pink satin, with a veil of tulle and carrying a sheaf of lilies. Two charming little girls carried the train on pink cushions. The bridesmaids were Miss Mary Green and Miss Lily McCallum, who looked very pretty in white silk and lace frocks with mob caps and tulle muffs.

Oct. 16, 1914: Wednesday last was a red letter day in the annals of the Donald Methodist Church, the occasion being the laying of the foundation stone by Mr Sydney Sampson, M.H.R. It took place shortly after 5 o'clock, when Mr Sampson arrived by train from Melbourne. Mr J.Y. Pace, secretary of the Church Committee delivered an address and stated that copies of the local paper and coins of the realm would be placed under the foundation stone. In the years to come, if any of the people lived to see that edifice taken down they would see that the time in which the stone was laid was not a very peaceful one. The architect of the building was Mr Jas Irwin of Ararat and the contractor Mr J.R. Hornsby. The contract price was £1468.

Oct. 20, 1914: When the Lake Lonsdale scheme was constructed some years ago it was thought that a reservoir of such magnitude would meet the wants of settlers for many years to come and tide them over the driest seasons likely to eventuate. We are now, with prospects of an equally dry summer before us, faced with the stern fact that Lake Lonsdale is almost at the vanishing point.

Oct. 23, 1914: Supplies of water at St. Arnaud are getting very short, and the crops are perishing. There is no doubt but this is a much more serious drought than that of 1902.

Oct. 27, 1914: One of the biggest fires ever seen in Donald took place on Sunday night, the railway engine shed, a fire building built to accommodate four engines, being totally destroyed. Within a few moments the flames had gained a strong hold on the building, owing to the inflammable nature of the roof, which was built of rubberoid. With the poor pressure available for the fire hoses it was soon apparent that there was no hope of saving the building. Inside were four engines, all ready for firing up. Three had to be abandoned to their fate owing to the intense heat of the burning coal and woodwork. The firemen concentrated on the large Dd engine and the huge monster was pulled along bodily by about 50 volunteers. The large Newport engine could not be moved, but the firemen kept playing a continual jet of water and the damage to this monster will not be great. The two smaller engines were considerably damaged, but had a decent pressure of water been available the damage would have been greatly minimised. The fire burned for about three hours.

Sept. 30, 1914: Credit notes are to be issued by the sub-committee of the State Cabinet at once to enable drought stricken settlers in the Mallee to obtain provisions and materials for making a fresh start with their farms. At first sight it looked as if £300,000 or £400,000 would be required for the Mallee alone, for seed, fodder and improvements. Advances are to be made to settlers for the purpose of clearing and improving their land and conserving water. Officers are to report on the work done by settlers assisted, and progress payments will be made accordingly.