



DONALD HISTORY
& NATURAL HISTORY GROUP



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There has been quite a bit of business for the Archives since last October, when the information in the last Bulletin was gathered.

A relative of the Gunnells of Swanwater West wanted to contact a member of the family, and was put directly in touch – a real success. Complete histories of Beckham, Patrick Hogans, and Sweeney were done. A query came for Alex Wilson, his g.g.father, and was sent information about the Wilson who was manager at Banyenong.

Then was an interesting one –query for Williams of Banyena. Our Banyena contacts are limited, and Williams were not found – but one of them married Rube Broughton, and Essie Broughton was this lady's grandmother. Copies of articles from newspapers about Essie were sent, which included photos – and these were the only photos of Essie that this lady, Anne Simpson, had seen. She was really chuffed.

A John Brennan of Castlemaine will be heard of more shortly, as he is organising a reunion of the descendants of John Brennan of Corack, and a book is being written. He will keep in touch and give us a copy of any documents received. He wanted any details of the family's early life, and was very satisfied with what we found.

That brings us to the present. The first is about Arthur Mitchell, the hairdresser, and the Bentleys, and that is the first to be done.

Tony Eishold called in, hoping for any info on the Eisholds and Baenschs – not expecting much, but surprised and pleased with what he was given, especially 2 photos of the Band containing an Eishold, printed so nicely by Mary.

Only yesterday two came together right at the end of the day, which was awkward. One was a John Ryan descendant, and will email further details and tell us exactly what he has – necessary when it is a common name. The other had McCredden queries for Birchip – but at the same time, grandfather was born in Donald, so it seems that the story originates here.

And we are transcribing the diary of Wilf Henderson for Brian Bayles – the story of his trip to England for the Victory March in 1946, and subsequent tours of Europe. It is in pencil and written cryptically, like most diaries, so is hard to read, but historically important.

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

January 8, 1915: There have been continuous duststorms for over a week, the like of which have never previously been seen in the Mallee. A train was hung up between Hopetoun and Warracknabeal, and in places the sand was a foot deep on the rails.

Jan 15, 1915: Cr. Sproat, elected to the position of President of the Donald Miniature Rifle Club which has just been started in Donald, said he felt they had taken a step in the right direction in forming a club which would be a help in the defence of Australia. The question of raising 100,000 men was one which he thought would be necessary before long.

Jan. 19, 1915: The whole of 1915 is to be declared a close season for ducks, in view of the dry season and the diminution in the numbers of birds.

Jan.26, 1915: In letter from Signaller Gro Wardley, in Cairo on way over: "All we had for three days was one cup of cocoa and a roll three times a day . . . This campaign is making thorough gentlemen of some, but I regret to say it is pulling some down. One great habit it has broken me off is the cigarette."

February 5, 1915 Mr Alfred Thorpe, the inventor of a practical sparrow trap, handed in 3000 sparrows' heads at the Rochester Shire Hall last week, The municipal grant is 25/- per 1000.

Feb. 9, 1915: A great deal of dissatisfaction exists at every station receiving water from Mildura by train. It comes most irregularly and usually in insufficient quantities. In many instances water is carted from the train in distances up to 10 miles and farmers find it very distressing to travel twenty miles with their teams for nothing. The roads are in very bad state owing to the long-continued carting and dry weather, and as fodder is anything from £8 to £9 per ton, stock are poor.

Feb.12, 1915: The Lawler homestead had a narrow escape early on the morning of the 1st. Lightning struck a telephone post near the building and running along the wires, set fire to the dining room, which is also used as a telephone exchange. Mr Lawler Duncan saw the glare and rushed in. He found the wall near the telephone instruments on fire, which he managed to extinguish, and thus saved the building. The lightning knocked the telephone post into splinters, and broke several of the wires.

Feb.16, 1915: A drastic motion was carried by the Water Trust's last meeting: The railways are asked to reduce their consumption by one half, and Donald people are notified that the use of water on gardens is prohibited except on Mondays, Wednesday & Fridays from 6-8 p.m., the Bowling Club must discontinue using the water within 7 days; and water used on the public park only once a week.

Feb. 19, 1915: A working bee will be held on the Donald Racecourse for the purpose of shooting rabbits and making improvements to the plumpton. Several residents of Donald have kindly consented to let the club have the use of their horses and wagons for carting manure to spreading on the plumpton.

Feb. 26, 1915: Traffic is exceptionally heavy at the Donald railway station. In order to relieve the congestion several special rains were run on Sunday with fodder for starving stock. Over 1000 tons of fodder are leaving Donald daily for northern station. In the farmers' grain sheds at Donald there are 7000 bags of wheat.