



DONALD HISTORY
& NATURAL HISTORY GROUP



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We have had some rather tricky questions to answer this month.

The first was easy enough – the McCredden relative in Albury wanted to know all we had so that he could align these McCreddens with his, since it is a common name. So that was done. A request about the Banyena Weir seemed out of our reach, but it appeared that the Water Trust in Horsham wants to place a plaque there, showing how the weir was of benefit to Banyena in the beginning, and what came from Ron’s records and our own answered suitably.

But then the really hard ones. We were shown the marriage certificate of a John Powell, in 1902, which stated that he was a carpenter and that his current and usual address was Donald. His witnesses were his parents, William and Julia, also apparently from Donald, and William’s occupation was train examiner. We had nothing whatever on either of them, nor did Ann Walsh, even for her current book on trades that did not have a shop. I tried to find where they died, from “Digger”, but there were too many William Powells. Then I thought of looking for children from John and his wife Agnes; our enquirer had nothing at all. The relevant CD had an error, so by diligent peering at the faint original source of fiche records, I managed to discover one child – born at Northcote; and suggested that they were probably both working for the Railways, and likely to go anywhere, so the enquirer would have to do some digging of his own.

The last one is a diligent researcher, though. His g.g.grandfather, Henry ORD was a shepherd based in Cope Cope, and died leaving his wife with a large family and no income, so she had to surrender some of her children. Later, it appeared, she married a George Allen. In my “Country Life” book was the case of a woman named ORR, four of whose 6 children had been brought to the court as without means of support. She was a washerwoman, and destitute. She had kept the oldest and youngest, but these middle ones were sent to the Industrial School. Our enquirer was ecstatic –he has Henry Ord’s death certificate, and the children’s names match. We found a George Allan on the Swanwater selectors book, but down near St. Arnaud, so he was referred to St. Arnaud for further research to see if that George was the right one – once again, a common name.

In between all that, Mary and Edna have printed off and sold some good photos, and Wilf Henderson’s diary was transcribed to the satisfaction of his people.

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

March 3, 1915: There was a field trial of the engine functioned McKay harvester at Mr A. McDonald's farm at Laen. Many of these labour-saving machines, in 8ft and 9ft sizes have been working throughout the wheat growing areas of Australia during the last harvest. The engine is a compact two cylinder.

March 7 : The farmers at Corack and the Donald tradespeople have found the Donald-Corack telephone a great convenience during harvest season, and the farmers are now anxious that a connection be established with Wycheproof. The Donald-Corack line costs £600, and the residents contributed £230 towards the estimated deficiency, which was cheaper than erecting a private line of the same class.

March 10, 1915: Tenders are invited by the Manager of the Rich Avon Estate for the removal of sand, which has banked up against fences.

The Chamber of Agriculture has resolved to make a direct appeal to landowners throughout the State to seriously consider the question of devoting selected portions of their properties to farming on the share system, for the benefit of returned soldiers.

Corporal G.A. Mills, of Dooboobetic, writing to his mother: Recently I was sent out to bring an outpost in. The hills are very steep, and steps have to be cut into them. I fell half-a-dozen times, and had to go up a gorge, where a regular torrent of water was rushing down, but I got back to the men all covered in mud from head to foot. The boys are all tip top – singing like skylarks, and quite cheerful in the trenches."

March 14, 1915: Mr Maurice Vancam, of Vancouver, Canada, who has undertaken for a wager of £7000 to walk round the world, a distance of 43,000 miles, arrived in Donald on Friday. He has worn out no fewer than 53 pairs of boots. "It is most amusing," write a correspondent, "to hear of Mr Vancam's experiences, but to people who have previously met him, the experiences have lost something of their flavour, and one begins to wonder how much longer the public will continue to tolerate these Yankee visitors."

March 17, 1915 For the new army of 50,000 53 recruits have been obtained. Donald Shire's quota is 41 with 14 recruits a month for reinforcements.

March 21, 1915: On February 9th Henry P. Perry was married to Miss Myranne Kerr of Thalia. Owing to the severity of the weather, the bridal party had to face the journey to the church through a dust storm. The bride was prettily attired in a cream crepe-de-chene coat and skirt, trimmed with lace, and carried a bouquet of beautiful white flowers.

Mr Pyers' homestead is one those comfortable old houses, built before stone was much quarried. The water tower, gathering its supply from the lake, is a great help for the garden, which supplies vegetables the whole year round, and all kinds of fruit in abundance.

March 24, 1915: His Majesty the King has declared that by their exploits in France the Irish Guards have shown that the shamrock stands for loyalty, courage and endurance in adversity. Such a lofty compliment is much appreciated by Irishmen in the Commonwealth.

Mr John Neyland, formerly of Corack, has received the following letter from the Privy Purse Office, Buckingham Palace: I have the honour to inform you that the King has heard that you have at the present moment seven sons serving in His Majesty's Forces. I am commanded to express to you the king's congratulations, and to assure you that His Majesty much appreciates the spirit of patriotism which prompted this example in one family of loyalty and devotion to their Sovereign and Empire."

March 28, 1915: On Friday and Saturday the ladies connected with the Button Fund were again in evidence. This time it was with a button bearing the very neat design of the Australian flag encircled with the words, "For our Fighting Men" and forms a very pretty memento. The local ladies entered the task, and every person without the Flag Button was attacked from all pints of feminine advantage until he felt as if he wanted to buy 100 buttons instead of one. Mrs T.W. Cantwell and Mrs A. Mitchell were the collectors, and the handsome sum of £10 had been received at the close of the campaign.

March 31: There was a fire at Carron, and Mr Percy Middleton had an exciting adventure. Mounting a young horse which had never been ridden he was trying to rescue a mob of sheep right in the track of the raging fire, but the horse, frightened by a flapping signal at the rifle range, bucked wildly and the rider was unseated. Quickly regaining his feet (but not the horse) Mr Middleton dashed into the paddock and released the sheep. A minute later the roaring flames passed over where they had been feeding. Mr Middleton was congratulated on all sides for his plucky action.