



DONALD HISTORY
& NATURAL HISTORY GROUP



BULOKE BULLETIN NO. 230, APRIL 2015

Those that have come in since the last meeting are a mixture of well-known and obscure. First we had the Andison and Gouldthorpe families together; then one I had not heard of -- William Custance, blacksmith of Wooroonook. However, as long as the "Donald Express" lasted, there was quite a lot of news about the Custance family, which was quite involved in public affairs. When we switched to the "Times", there was no more "Wooroonooke News" and I advised the client to contact Charlton.

But the next presented no difficulty, as it was the Munro family, well-known; followed by Thomas Stevens of Jeffcott, who was not quite so well documented.

Another familiar name requested was that of Leslie, prominent in Laen in the early days.

But then on Easter Monday came a visit from Brad Smith, grandson of Norma Smith, and his family, chasing the Smith side of the family, not the Boldens, who would be so easy. Apparently John Joseph Smith was a mechanic at Boldens, which is how Norma met him -- but not a word in the press. He was obviously just a hard-working man who did not have time to play sport or take a part in anything that would be noted. So please -- if anybody knows anything of John Joseph Smith, tell us!

Among all that was a query for the history of 29 Meyer Street, from the people who now inhabit it. But of course we document people, not houses. However, with the help of Ann Walsh, and what Mary knew, we were able to fill in some of it.

During the week there was a phone call from David Bush, living near Kenya, between Rupanyup and Marnoo, but he was giving information, not asking for it. The purpose of his call was to compliment the person responsible for those signs on each of the Woods Street buildings -- fantastic! So Norm, take a bow. In reading the sign on St. George's Hall, he noted that there was mention of Melba Pictures, and that was run by his uncle. He told me much interesting information about the film company, and I urged him to write it down, as it was valuable history. Here he shied off -- "I'm the world's worst speller!" He comes to Donald every now and then, and on his next trip will come to see us and tell more. We will need the tape recorder when he comes . . .

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

April 2, 1915: The Donald Patriotic League received from Lance-Corporal Hamilton, in Egypt "A few days ago I received a cholera belt. I am writing to let you know that we are pleased the way the ladies of Australia are working for our comfort. In orders we were advised to wear these belts, as they have even now proved themselves as being a valuable article in our underwear."

April 9: The protection of kangaroos has been lifted, and anyone can shoot them and dispose of their skins from July to 31st December.

The victory of 6 o'clock in the hotel bars closing referendum is assured.

Soldiers at the front are now allowed to send home letters uncensored, on declaring upon their honour that the contents are only private affairs. This is an enormous relief to the censor.

April 13, 1915: The Donald Shire Council's one way horse-drawn road roller was in evidence for the first time in the main street yesterday, and is undoubtedly a great credit to the Council. What is greatly needed now is a water cart, and the town and district should not then have any cause to complain about their streets not being repaired thoroughly.

April 16, 1915: The long dry spell was broken on Saturday, when the falling of rain caused a revival of hopes and produced a spirit of gladness. The first fall produced 37 points, but early on Saturday morning a steady downpour set in and the dry and thirsty soil was well saturated, bringing the total to 53 points.

April 20, 1915. The Lyric Picture Co. will screen the following programme on Saturday night next: "A Long Way", a great star drama of 3000 feet; "How Willie Licked the Germans", comic; "The Turning Point", drama; "Bear Facts", comedy; Ganmont Graphic, topical; "Fatal Sweet Tooth", an evergreen Keystone comedy. Patrons will do well to remember that this company screens its first picture at 8 p.m., which in itself is something of an innovation for Donald.

April 23, 1915: The police horses throughout the district are being removed, due to the high price of fodder. Lately six horses from Boort, Sea Lake, Charlton, Donald, Korong Vale and Inglewood were entrained for the barracks in Melbourne. No substitute has yet been provided.

If Mr Fisher placed Australia unreservedly at the call of Lord Kitchener's recruiting sergeant, the Chancellor of the Exchequer had to place the Australian money market at the call of Australia, which means Mr Fisher. One needs to study the unimportant sentences of Mr Fisher's financial statements to get at his mind. "If we win," he said on Friday, referring to the growth of the Note Issue, "we will meet the debt easily. If we lose it does not matter."

April 27, 1915: The season 1914 will long be remembered in our agricultural history as the driest season ever experienced throughout the wheat belt of Australia – it was not so much the total rainfall as the seasonal distribution that was responsible for the comparative failure of the crop in Victoria, South Australia and the Riverina.

Mr W. Sproat & Co. of Banyenong were heavy losers in re trucking sheep (starvers) from the southern pastures. About six trucks arrived at the Donald railway station, about 40 of which were either dead or dying, and the loss is expected to be greater.

April 30, 1915: Six young men of Donald, who had applied to the military authorities to join the Expeditionary Forces, faces the examiner, Messrs H. Beard, Alf Eishold and C. Westmore being the successful candidates to pass the test. This makes a grand total of four officers and 75 men who have joined the forces in Donald up to date.

Mrs Tom Green on Wednesday last, with her infant son, was driving into Donald, and whilst crossing the Donald-Witchipool bridge was met half-way by a trolley driven by a son of Mr Ben Hudson, the trolley being drawn by two horses in chains. The young man endeavoured, by every means possible, to stop the horses, but having no pole or shaft, the conveyance continued to run forward and eventually struck the wheel of the gig, throwing the occupants heavily on the bridge. Mrs Green fell under the wheel, but her shoe saved her foot from being smashed. The child was thrown under the gig. We are pleased to report that apart from a severe shaking and painful bruises, Mrs Green and her son will in a few days be none the worse for their narrow escape.