



BULOKE BULLETIN NO. 237, NOVEMBER, 2015.

Now that we come to the end of another year of operations, it is time to review the progress of that year and see if the Archives is still fulfilling its aims of usefulness.

There have been 56 enquiries during that time; mostly for the history of families who were in the district, as is usual -- families like John Brennan, Arthur Mitchell, Eisholdt, Beckham and Guyatt, for example. There is a bit of a trend for wanting to know the history of a house, not a person – not encouraged, as we don't "do" houses! But we can only ask around and hope that someone remembers, and Anne Walsh's books are helpful.

There is not the number of queries that once there were, as most people now are computer literate and go first to Ancestor.com and Trove. With "Ancestor", there is the catch, that material put on the Net may not be certifiable, just what someone "thinks", or has been told. Trove has been concentrating on the area of the First World War, and asked for our microfilm of the "Donald Mail", which covered this time; but decided it was too frail to photograph. As far as we know, not much of the "Express" and the "Times" is on Trove yet.

The indexing of the "Donald Express" is proceeding, with the help of Dorothy and Colleen, and others have promised to have a go if they can find the time. Necessarily, it is a slow job. An essential reference for research is the collection of obituaries and biographies collected by Ron Falla, and completely indexed by Peter Falla.

The next need is for an index of the rate books of the Donald Shire. What we need is someone like Carolyn Olive in Charlton, who has the knack of writing submissions for grants that are irresistible!

During the year our equipment has been upgraded to help busy people; computers have been brought up to speed, and of course there is the new photo-copier-scanner-printer, although its colour-reproducing capacity is almost too expensive to use.

All in all, though, there is still work at the Archives and it is still being used to build family histories, so it has been a useful year.

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

November 3, 1915: The annual Sunday Schools' picnic took place on Wednesday, when the various denominations rolled up to give the children a good outing. Waggon, buggies, motors etc. were kept busy conveying their freight to Mr W.J. Leslie's paddock, about 3 miles distant from Donald. There was not a dull moment. A feature of the afternoon was the vaulting. Mr Coats, an athletic young man, succeeded in jumping 8 feet 5 inches.

November 7, 1915: Sorrow is daily entering thousands of homes, but it is useless in the daily routine of life to drift into a state of melancholy, so the outing such as that held at Watchem on Friday was looked forward to with pleasurable anticipation. The Watchem, Watchem West, Warmur, Massey and Corack schools held a combined garden fete, and about 400 people were present. A Queen competition, with four queens, was won by Nina Lavery, from the Watchem school, crowned in a brilliant spectacle. All proceeds go to the State Schools Patriotic Fund.

November 10, 1915: Owing to the heavy state of the course at Flemington through the rain which has fallen, the V.R.C. met and decided there would be no racing on Tuesday. The Cup will be run tomorrow.

Donald Shire Council: A petition, signed by 15 ratepayers asking the council to erect sanitary conveniences at the park was granted, on the motion of Crs. Wortley and Sproat.

November 14, 1915: Letter received by Mrs T. Blair of Watchem from her brother, Pte A. Pickering, who is now in the 3rd General Hospital, England: "No one can realise the horror of war till they went through it. It was terrible tramping over dead bodies. I thought my time had come when I was blown up by a shell, and I am thankful I am still spared and although knocked about, I am a 'good one still'. Six months in the trenches in France and three on Gallipoli is quite enough and surely worthy of a spell."

November 17, 1915: Mr Clarrie Coats, son of Mr Sam Coats of Jeffcott, was taken to the St. Arnaud Hospital and it was thought he had appendicitis, but on examination it was found he had strained the muscles in his side, probably as the result of a fall that he received whilst riding a horse when fell at the northern hurdle in the hunters' competition at the Donald Show.

November 21, 1915: Enquiries on the wheat trade show an overwhelming opinion that bagged wheat will command a higher market and higher prices in Britain and on the Continent than bulk, because of the selling price of the bags, now 6s 9d per dozen. Prior to the war the average price of bags was 4s.

November 24, 1915: Appeals for gifts to soldiers seem to be never ending, but the troops continue to want comforts, and the greatest of these is, and always will be, tobacco. "A good smoke ranks next to a letter from home," was the message of Capt. R.W. Thompson. For 1s paid into the Southern Cross Tobacco Fund, 50 cigarettes, two ounces tobacco and some matches are forwarded.

November 28, 1915: The undergrounding of the local telephone service is now almost completed and should be a vast improvement on the old system of overhead service. Sarcastic remarks have been made about the time spent in the work, but it entails the services of linesmen, jointers, mechanics, and an engineer to test the cables, and of course a certain time must be allowed for each to complete his respective portion. Subscribers will from now on be in possession of one of the most up-to-date telephone systems in the Wimmera.