



BULOKE BULLETIN NO. 248, FEBRUARY, 2017

The summer sun brought out the seekers, and we have been busy. Just after the last Bulletin, we had queries for Jessie Boorn; the Hugh Carruthers family; Bartletts (good to renew old friends, here); Moran, McGuane. Something was found for each of these, but then we struck a snag – Henry Wilson Baynes Ralph. No sign of him on our records, but he was a railwayman so we suggested VicRail history and also the Public Record Office.

Came the New Year and a something-cousin of the archivist, Ken McCarron, wanted records of Hugh and Margaret Campbell. A lady whose grandmother is connected to the Gillahans, on the wrong side of the blanket, hoped that something would emerge – but in those days, secrets were kept very close.

The next bunch were easily satisfied though – a number of Watchem people for Kay McCulloch, who was very happy, and agreed that the newspaper stories bring the ancestors to life. Kerrie Brailsford took time from her excellent recording of the schools to ask about the McPhees, and Ann Cowsgill wanted, and received, Daniel Gleeson's family records.

Our client from New Zealand, Brian Lane, --who says we are becoming penfriends! --threw in the name of an ancestor, John Tynan, not expecting much, and found a great deal. Diane Mountney, another previous client, tried for another railwayman, David Whyte, but he seems to have been a driver or guard passing through but not living here. Chris Colbert, preparing for the 50-year celebration of the opening of Watchem Swimming Pool, is collecting the details of its evolution. Lyn Stehelenberg was interested in ancestors –“Aitken is the name”. Sure, we said, James or George? No, Alexander, of whom we had not heard. All that was available were obituaries of grandfather, grandmother and the wife's mother, but she was delighted – that bit solved a name connection.

A small query from our rabbit man Bruce in S.A., who visited Ron last year and whose book is nearly at the press, has brought fervent thanks for our help.

Making news in the "Donald Times" 100 years ago:

January 5, 1917: Vida Louttit, Catherine Cockfield, Rose Boorne, Gertrude Campbell and Alice Perry, pupils of Corack East State School are all working energetically to gain their £1 for the Education Department's Workers Guild. They are selling vegetables, raising chickens, running messages, making articles and selling papers.

Jan. 19, 1917: Mr Godfrey W. Letts, of West Australia, a grandson of Mrs M.E. Morgan, who is attending Scotch College at Perth, passed in geography with distinction under the recent University examinations of West Australia.

Jan. 23, 1917: Could it not be possible for some of our leading townsmen to form a Progress Association? We have opportunities in our town, but they lie dormant. Take Warracknabeal for instance; the creek through the town was uninviting till the local Progress Association took a hand. An avenue of trees was planted, paths formed, garden plants put in. We have even more scope in Donald for such a venture, and the attractiveness of the town would be considerably more inviting. With a fine body of water at hand, it would involve little expenditure to erect a dressing room at the water's edge for swimmers.

February 6, 1917: Whist driving his team with a load of wheat to the station yard yesterday, Mr W. Leslie was placed in a very precarious situation. The king bolt of the wagon became displaced with the result that portion of the shafts were broken, and Mr Leslie was positioned low down between the wagon and the horses and was unable to bring them to a standstill. Mr McKenzie, assistant at the local post office, happened to be in the vicinity and his timely action in stopping the horses at the railway crossing prevented what might have been a most serious accident.

Feb. 9, 1917: With regard to the Honour Board to be erected at the Shire Hall, those people who have had sons or relatives killed in the war, and who were resident in the shire prior to enlisting, are asked to forward names. We understand that an Honour Roll is to be established, containing the names of all local volunteers, as well as the Honour Board.

Feb. 13, 1917: Lake Buloke will offer good sport for duckshooters this coming season as young, well-conditioned team are plentiful. No difficulty will be experienced in reaching the big lake, It is expected that shooters will be able to procure the maximum number of birds (15) in a couple of hours.

Feb. 16, 1917: Mr Hearn at Corack East Hospital Sunday said, "The farmers had a prolific season, even better than anticipated, and some had reaped as much as 20,000 bags." The statement, to our knowledge, is correct. It involved a number of farmers of the same family, and the joint return was 20,000 bags.

Feb. 20, 1917: A very pretty wedding was celebrated at St. Mary's church at Watchem, on Monday, when Mr James Bourke, of Mystic Park, was joined in the hold bonds of matrimony to Miss Mary Moore, eldest daughter of Mrs and the late Patrick Moore of Massey. The bride was prettily attired in a dress of ivory silk crepe de chene, with the usual wreath and veil, and carried a beautiful ivory and mother of pearl prayer book. She was attended by her sister, Miss Ellen Moore.

Feb. 23, 1917: A military secretary of the Young Men's Christian Association with Australian troops, reports, "One stalwart Australian requested me to write some letters for him. This I did, and when I had finished his wife's epistle he said, 'Put your loving husband and don't forget the barbed wire at the bottom'".

Feb. 27, 1917: Corporal H. Willey writes from France: "No doubt you have heard much about the great 'tanks' and seen photos of same. On the way out to our work we used to pass quite close to three of them, which are out of action on account of the mud. Fritz has the range of them to a nicety and often drops a shell, so I did not make a close examination.