



DONALD HISTORY
& NATURAL HISTORY GROUP



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Although no one has sought our help this month, a major historical event has been the launching here of the biography of Bettie Luxford, "Bettie has a doll", written by her son, David Luxford.

Peter Hobbs, who is married to the daughter of Bettie's twin sister, Raie Milne, was talking to David Luxford one day, and David mentioned that he was writing Bettie's story, and asked Peter if he would proof-read it for him. Peter gladly accepted, and helped David to put the book together.

As Bettie was a collector, she had a lot of letters, photographs, and memorabilia of all kinds, and that is where Noel Turner came in. A graphic designer, he was able to arrange the publication of photographs of these items, and of the dolls which form the title of the book. For many years Bettie had collected and dressed dolls, and her husband Archie, shaped the heads of wooden clothes pegs into faces so that she could make them into peg dolls, too.

In another fortunate coincidence, Noel Turner one day met a young man called Tierney, from Wycheproof, and was able to tell him that he could show him photos of his great grandfather, and great-great grandfather, with photos and military memorabilia. The young Tierneys, who knew nothing of their ancestry, were delighted. Of course, Tierney is the name of Bettie's mother's people.

It was hoped to present the book to Bettie when the twins had their 90th birthday anniversary late last year, but Bettie died suddenly before this time.

However, on Saturday, a happy crowd of Milnes and Cannards and some of our members enjoyed a good dinner and the launching of the book by Peter Hobbs, followed by an ebullient and dramatic performance from David Luxford, who also has written scripts for plays. Noel Turner explained his part.

It would be wonderful if everyone had a writer, a graphic designer and a proof-reader to write their family history –but it's not necessary. Just put together some memories, add what photos, letters and memorabilia that you may have. And some day, like the Tierneys, some young descendants will be ever so grateful.

Making news in the "Donald Times" 100 years ago

July 3, 1917: Patriotism in its best form was displayed by their six sons and one son-in-law of Capt. Naylor, an army veteran from India. The seven boys enlisted at the outbreak of the war and until last week there was no break in the loyal family, but one has died from meningitis in England.

July 3, 1917: Favourable Impressions by a Visitor: One has not to go far outside Donald to observe the agricultural progress, with innumerable teams faithfully responding to the call of their drivers in carefully tilling the fertile lands of the Wimmera. I also find that many farmers own motor cars and have the telephone installed. This speaks well for the financial solidity of the district.

July 6, 1917: An exciting bolt occurred on Tuesday when a baker's cart, owned by Mr Bale was standing in Woods St. and the horse was frightened by a motor car and bolted. It negotiated the bridge safely, but came to grief later by overturning the cart. Little damage was done and the horse received no injuries.

July 10, 1917: A very pleasant evening was spent at the Litchfield school, given by the friends of Miss Mary Cannard, who was visiting her mother. Miss Cannard enlisted in West Australia and will shortly take up military duties. A presentation was made by Litchfield friends of a Thermos flask and gold wristlet watch.

July 13, 1917: Mice are very numerous in the Ultima district, and are even attacking the pigs. Mr McColl has a sow and two pigs, and there is hardly a part of them that does not show where the pest have been nibbling.

The Donald Red Cross has decided that Tuesday will be set apart for making stretcher bearer gloves, as the branch was asked to supply 100 pairs as soon as possible. Intending workers are asked to take thimbles and bone crochet needles.

July 17, 1917: Hornsby Memorial: The price of erecting a trough was thought too high. Mr Basset had a new suggestion, to erect two seats at the post office. Mr J.L. Pearse was opposed to having a concert and they wanted a memorial that would be useful as well as ornamental. No decision was made.

July 24, 1917: Cope Cope. Before leaving the district Mr and Mrs Sutherland were made the recipients of yet another useful and beautiful present, when Mr E. Bennetto presented Mr Sutherland with a coal scuttle and basin, beautifully embossed. The district has lost a fine chap.