



DONALD HISTORY
& NATURAL HISTORY GROUP

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Enquiries & News for June:

Gordon Mills rang wanting to know if we had information the FARRELL ECLIPSE HARVESTER. We Did! Gordon Mills and Dave Williams are Wimmera Machinery enthusiasts. They liased with Harold Flett and travelled from Nhill and Longeronong to visit our archives and peruse the detailed plans and information on the harvester.

Beth Hollis met a fellow bowler, Margaret Fitchett, a descendant of the Cross family who owned the Royal and Mt Jeffcott Hotels at one time. Margaret wished for everything that we had on the Cross family and should be pleased with the amount that we had to offer.

Susan Merrick, a great granddaughter of Matilda Mitchell, sent us a Cathedral Prayer book from Donald's St George's C of E and an autograph book, which had belonged to Matilda. They are both great acquisitions and will be on display at our next meeting. Matilda and her hairdresser husband, Arthur, built the Mitchell buildings (now next to BP), in 1921 and lived in the residence behind.

Lois Spencely contacted us as she is researching a book on Trawalla First World War soldiers. Two of the soldiers she wanted were Donald men and we were able to supply her with their details. We look forward to seeing the publication.

Bruce Harvey has been doing some family history and found that his ancestors, Alexander and Isabella Harvey, are buried in the Donald Cemetery. He contacted us for any information that we might have and will visit later in the year. Alexander and Isabella lived at Green Hills Farm near the Swanwater Railway Station. Their Presbyterian Religion led to their strong involvement in the congregations of Cope Cope firstly and then Donald.

Brian Cooney emailed us for information on his grandfather, William Joseph O'Neill, who was a sheep/wheat famer at Donald. Your scribe was very excited as her grandfather, John Walsh, came up from St Arnaud in 1925 and bought the 1600 acre McNeill property at Auction. Brian and his wife, Veronica, visited the archives in early July. The McNeills were only here for 20 odd years but William was documented as an enthusiastic member of a number of local organisations. With the help of our research, Brian and Veronica were able to visit the farmhouse, built by his grandparents in the early part of last century. The house is the only one left on The Single Tree Rd, north of the Buloke Railway Crossing. Brian and Veronica were thrilled to be invited in for a tour of the house by the current owners, Jim and Flo.

Blasts from the Past- July 1919.

July 1. Jean Sproat, the youngest daughter of Cr. W. Sproat of Banyenong, met with a nasty accident on Friday afternoon. The little girl and her sister were out riding about a mile from home when, it is surmised, the horse shied and the child was thrown. She walked home and, the doctor being called in, it was found necessary to insert some stiches in a wound in the leg. She also received a great shock and some minor lacerations on the face. The little sufferer, we are pleased to state, is progressing favourably.

July 4. A very enjoyable hare drive took place around Rich Avon West on Monday afternoon. Hares are fairly numerous in most of the paddocks. In one or two instances scores of hares got away owing to shooters taking too big an area. However, at the end of the short afternoon, two hundred and twenty five had been bagged by a total of twenty guns.

July 8. Mr & Mrs Colin Campbell of "Grassyvale", Avon Plains, have received word that their son, Lance Corporal Lochie Campbell of the Machine Gun section, is returning on the transport *Rio Prado* which left England on the 27th of May. The soldier had three years of active service in France. Most of his original comrades, consisting chiefly of St Arnaud and district men, have been either killed or wounded. His many friends will be pleased to know that within a couple of weeks, he will be safely home.

July 11. WATCHEM HOSPITAL. At the Shire Council meeting on Tuesday, Cr. McNab asked what the expenses were in connection with the temporary hospital at Watchem. The Secretary – About £150 of which £75 would be refunded by the department. It would, he thought, be a charge on the whole Shire. Cr. Lavery said that a number of residents of Watchem came to their assistance and this helped to keep down expenses in many ways. He moved that the Council express its appreciation and gratitude to those people and also to the Red Cross societies and the ladies of the Catholic guild.

(This was duly passed and the Council agreed to accept the cost of this facility)

July 15. The Health Officer (Dr W.M. Lewis) reported that he had nothing of an infectious nature to report. Influenza seemed to have died out. Health conditions in the Shire were now normal so that was very satisfactory.

July 19 (Lengthy reports of the Empire wide Peace celebrations with local events in Donald, Laen, Cope Cope and Watchem)

July 25. FOOTBALL. Cope Cope journeyed to St Arnaud on Wednesday with only nine men, the rest being down with influenza. Final score St Arnaud 10.27 to Cope Cope 2.4