



DONALD HISTORY
& NATURAL HISTORY GROUP INC.



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Donald History Enquiries for February

Brenda McLean rang the archives. She is the great-great-granddaughter of William Kelley, farmer of Laen. Brenda intended visiting the Kelley graves at the North Laen cemetery and also wished to see William Kelley's farm. Ron Falla's Laen Selector's booklet again came to the fore and also our Donald Times Index, which told Brenda that her great-grandfather, James Kelley (William's son), had three sisters, Annie who married Patrick Melican from Sammy's lake, Catherine married to Thomas Fox who owned an adjacent farm to William Kelley and Miss M. Kelley, who was single. Catherine and Thomas Fox were the parents of Danny Fox who farmed at Laen and raised a family of 8 children there in the 1950s and 60s. Two of the Fox children, Pat and Jim, still live in the area as does one daughter-in-law, Gladys. The family of Patrick and Annie Melican did not remain in the district. Miss M. Kelley, the third daughter, had a clearing sale, leased the land and left the district in 1918.

Leo and Helen Walsh met Brenda at the North Laen cemetery and then showed her the sites of the Fox and Kelley homesteads. There were still buildings marking each site. Kelley's farm, now owned by Milgates was behind Danny Fox's house, which was visible from the Minyip Rd and was only recently demolished by the new owner, Derek Hollis.

Bev Gilmour found the following excerpts from the "Traynor's Lagoon / Gre Gre North Back to History" written in 1986. "Traynor was a shepherd on the Mogg's Plain or Swanwater Run" page 6. "Thomas (or Joseph) Traynor was a shepherd in the district and it is stated by the local residents that during the course of his duties he would often camp near the lagoon. In those days, Traynors Lagoon swamp, the name by which it became known, covered an area of 75 acres at an average depth of four feet and was inundated with old lignum bush often up to eight feet high which, during the dry season, were used as cover by foxes." Page 20

Two separate newcomers to Donald came in the archives to ask if we knew when their recently purchased Donald houses were built. We did. Both houses were in "Now & Then" Volume Two. We charge \$5 for a photocopy of the relevant page if this is the case. If we have to research the house from the beginning the cost is \$20. Both customers were very happy to have a list of all of the previous owners of their house and the year in which it was built.

Peter Vernon from Peter Vernon Architects in Ballarat sent the following enquiry
My family has a collection of architectural drawings, including the design for a house in Donald called the Morgan Residence designed by architects Clegg and Miller in 1907. I have attached details of the front and side elevations. I was wondering if this house was ever built and if so, is it still standing?

We decided that the house was probably to be built for W.A. Morgan when he ceased running the Royal George Hotel. Morgan owned 273 Acres in the Witchipool Parish, part of which is now Aitken Avenue and this was where he planned to build the house. W.A. Morgan DID NOT build the grand two storey house in the drawings however but instead he built the grand old house, which is still standing at 23 Aitken Avenue, in 1911. He called it Bristol Park. Below is one of the drawings which Peter sent. There are more of other Donald houses in the collection which Peter will make available in due course. We await these with interest.



Bill Burgess emailed with details of the artist who painted the portraits of Henry Dunlop Donald and his wife, Mary Ann. The artist was Percy White and he was very well known in Melbourne where he was commissioned to paint portraits of several other Melbourne Dignitaries. Percy White died in Melbourne in 1967.

Blasts from the Past- March 1922.

March 3. Corack East. The friends of Miss Janet Sands assembled at the home of her parents and tendered her a kitchen tea. Many useful articles were received, and a good night's fund was enjoyed. The function terminated with dancing and the usual supper.

March 7. Insolvency. Notice has been given in the Court of Insolvency that the estate of Albert A. Dear, of Donald, dentist, has been sequestrated, and that a general meeting of creditors will be held at the court offices in St Arnaud on Tuesday next, the 14th March. Liabilities amount to 1,921 pounds 14 shillings and three pence. And assets are estimated at 1,220 pounds seven shillings and six pence; the deficiency being 700 pounds sixteen shillings and nine pence. Insolvent's solicitor is Mr C.J. Robinson, Donald. Official assignee is Mr F.J. Culls, Birchip.

March 10. Obituary. The news of the death of Miss Mary Tellefson caused widespread regret in the district on Wednesday last. Mary, who came to the district with her parents over 45 years ago, was a well-known and highly respected resident. Her bright and happy manner always made her a general favourite with all who came in contact with her. Until about a month ago she had always enjoyed good health, but on medical advice she was removed to St Arnaud, complications set in, and the news of her death came as a shock to many. Three brothers and one sister are left to mourn their loss.

March 14. School to be remodelled. Ever since the election of the present School Committee, and probably during the regime of the old School Committee, repeated requests have been made to the Education Department for the provision of a more up-to-date school building. On the occasion of the Director of Education's (Mr Frank Tate) visit to Donald some time ago, the Committee met him and showed him over the out-of-date building. He promised the School Committee that he would see what could be done in the matter. Still further correspondence has been passing from the local authorities and the "heads" and at last some satisfactory reply has been received through the medium of the member for the district (Mr J. J. Weaver M.L.A.) which reads as follows : "I have to state for the information of your committee that the following works at the Donald school have been approved by the Honourable Minister and the Public Works Department has been requested to have them carried out as early as practicable.- Remodelling of building, erection of Manual Training and Cookery rooms, painting and renovation" .

March 17. St Patrick's Day Festival (*A section from a lengthy report.*)

... In the open high jump, one would have to go a long way to witness a better exhibition than that given by the five contestants engaged. It was not until the height of 5ft. 8 in. had been reached that the contest was narrowed down to two, Nolan and Hogan, who both failed at 5 ft. 9 in. In the jump-off, however Hogan succeeded in clearing the bar.

March 21. A Stitch in Time. Property owners and residents of the lower portion of Woods Street are pleased indeed at the council's action in having the levee banks repaired. The contractor, Mr R. Prideaux, has the work well in hand. It only required a few more floods to have altered the whole course of the river at that point. Already considerable damage has been done to the main drain, and when the river is in flood, it is far from pleasant for the residents of that quarter to have muddy, swirling stream of water passing through their properties. If the residents of Donald would only pay a visit to the river in its present state, they would plainly see that by spending a paltry sum of 100

pounds, they would be able to conserve millions of gallons of water, and would have a swimming baths second to none in the state. All that is required is a bank at the rear of the Shamrock Hotel and another small one at the rear of Messrs Oakley & Thompson's. The river in flood would fill it, and in times of drought it would prove a real blessing to the whole of the district.

March 24. Birchip Sports. On Friday last two Donald athletes in the persons of D.J. Nolan and Mart Hogan did well at the above sports. Nolan tied for first in the 130 yards handicap, was second in the 220, and was beaten in the hurdles by Mart Hogan, who jumped well and defeated him from three yards better terms. Hogan also won the 220 yds. handicap.

March 24. Holding their own. From time to time our local boys who have been sent further afield to city colleges to be educated have upheld the reputation of the district in no uncertain manner. In scholastics, good terminal reports are invariably received. In athletics our boys are always to the fore. The swimming season has just ended and the college championships have been held. Andy Sproat, son of Cr W. Sproat, J.P., swept the board at Geelong College and won the leading championship. Jack Williams, son of Rev. F. P. Williams, won the open championship and the 100 yards event and swam a dead heat in the 50 yards event at Grammar College.

March 28 Traffic Regulations to be enforced. It has long been regarded as nothing short of miraculous that a serious accident of some sort has not occurred in the streets of Donald. A new Prosecuting Officer has been appointed and from now on the provisions of the Traffic Act will be rigidly enforced. Drivers are requested specially to refrain from driving on the wrong side, cutting corners and driving without lights. As requested by the Shire Council, Senior-Constable Power has been appointed to the position.

March 28 Obituary. It is with regret that we have to chronicle the passing of yet another of our district pioneers, in the person of the late Mr Max Brown. The deceased, who was 74 years of age, was one of the oldest residents of the district and , and had been ailing for some months, and his death took place on Saturday last at his home "Pleasant side", Swanwater West. Deceased was well known and very highly respected throughout the whole district and was a brother of the late Mr Les Brown. The deceased was a long and faithful worker in the Methodist Church, and was one of the local preachers of this circuit. Much sympathy is felt for his wife and relatives.

March 31 Fire. Within a few minutes of the ringing of the fire-bell on Monday night, the main street assumed a lively appearance, and in a short space of time four or five cars were conveying loads of men to Laen. Burning off operations were being conducted on Mr Inglis' property, conditions being calm at the time. A southerly wind sprung up and drove the flames towards Mr T.P. Connellan's property, where the advance in one direction was arrested by his fallow. The next paddock threatened, however, was that of Messrs Hancock Bros., in which there were about 400 sheep. A start was speedily made to create a fire-beak by burning off a strip of stubble, and this was just effected in time to prevent the fire advancing. Although at first sight the danger was not apparent, the sudden springing up of the wind made it very real, and it was only by taking the prompt action described that a serious blaze was averted. As it was, Mr T.P. Connellan's fence suffered to some extent.