

# Spreading Branches

## Narre Warren & District Family History Group Inc.

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Issue 137 – August 2023

## Then And Now: The Max Thomson Collection

We all enjoy looking at old photos and try to put stories to them. Have you ever wondered what their story would be in today's world?

## **Picnics**

Winter seems to be a strange time to write a story about picnics. However, it is a good time to reminisce about picnics that our ancestors may have attended. Annual picnics were big social occasions. Adults and children looked forward to attending them each year, and they would leave lasting memories. Sometimes the travel to a country or bayside town for the picnic was just as exciting as the picnic. These towns are now suburbs of Melbourne. And the clothes people wore, even young children, would seem eccentric if worn to a picnic today.



Annual picnic of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, Narre Warren North at Ferntree Gully - c1898



## Narre Warren & District Family History Group Inc.

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## Lorraine Taylor Research Room

We have a large collection of books, maps, microfiche, CDs and journals from all over the world available to our members and visitors.

#### Location

Cranbourne Library, 65 Berwick-Cranbourne Road, Cranbourne.

#### NW&DFHG is a member of:

Casey Cardinia Local History Reference Group Genealogical Society of Victoria

South Eastern Historical Association Inc.

Royal Historical Society of Victoria

The Narre Warren & District Family History Group gratefully acknowledge the assistance and support of Casey Cardinia Libraries and the City of Casey.

## **Opening Hours for Research**

Tuesday and Saturday 11 am to 2 pm  $\,$ 

Casual visitors \$5 per day

Research room phone number: (03) 5995 3032

## **Meetings**

October - April: 7.30 pm

2nd Wednesday of the month (except January).

May - September: 2.00 pm 3rd Saturday of the month.

## **Membership**

Single \$35, Joint \$50. Payable 1 July each year.

## Membership Renewal

You are welcome to renew your membership by Direct Deposit into our bank account.

Bank: National Australia Bank

Branch: Fountain Gate

**BSB:** 083 802

**Account No:** 539450013

<u>Please</u> don't forget to use your name as a reference. <u>Please email a copy of your renewal form</u> to the Membership Officer.

### **Research Queries**

We offer a research service for those unable to visit our Research Room personally, but please note that we can only research our own holdings and those of the local municipal libraries. The cost for this service is \$20 per hour plus photocopying expenses. All research queries can be sent to the Research Officer at the above postal address or email: research.officer@nwfhg.org.au

## **NW&DFHG Catch-ups**



Meet with other members and friends for a social chat and a bite on the last Sunday of the month at 10 am

next catch-up 24 September (Four Figs, Beaconsfield)

**Disclaimer:** Contributions made to this newsletter are accepted in good faith and the Committee does not accept responsibility for accuracy of information of submitted articles nor opinions expressed.

## President's report

It was such a relief to have the Covid restrictions behind us and return to 'normality' with the Lorraine Taylor Research Room back open. We have welcomed new members to the group and even had visitors come from inter-state. It was great seeing our members back in the room researching and chatting. Thank you to Fay for organising the excellent speakers over the past year and Eileen for her Zoom skills that kept us all connected.

Our relationship with Casey Cardinia Libraries continued until the end of 2022 with co-presented monthly history talks via Zoom. Having presented talks at Cranbourne Library for several years, in 2023 we decided that we would join Heather Arnold, president of the Koo Wee Rup Swamp Historical Society at Mallow House to co-present talks in person. These talks have been well received and have resulted in new visitors to both our groups.

In May 2023, we participated in the Casey Cardinia Local History Reference Group's Seminar Day, as part of the National Trust Heritage Festival. This year we returned to an in-person event at the Pakenham Library Hall facilitated by the local history librarians Kate Davis, Casey Libraries and Brooke Pickering, Cardinia Libraries. It was a full day of talks, displays, and book sales.

At the Berwick Cemetery Walk, in October 2022, we updated and revisited stories from previous walks. We had a wonderful response and reached bookings of 100 people quickly, so we had a standby list for any extra people. Six groups walked around the cemetery and visited 22 graves on the day. At the end of October this year, we will be presenting our first walk at the Old Dandenong Community Cemetery. We will visit the graves of early settlers with connections to the Casey Cardinia area.

Our Casey Cardinia Remembers team are continually adding to our website and we regularly get feedback and comments. Posts on our Facebook page from our Max Thomson Photographic Collection generate many comments each Monday.

We have a dedicated small team of indexers and they have been adding to our Casey Cardinia Combined Index, a project we started in 2004 to create a database of names found in the resources of our region. This year we passed 200,000 entries.

Our Processing Team made a submission to the Australian Museums and Galleries Association (AMaGA) Victoria for the Collections Community Resilience Project. We were thrilled to be one of nine Victorian organisations selected to participate in the program. The team undertook six days of training with AMaGA Vic in two three-day sessions in April/May. The skills learnt are invaluable to the team and our group as we strive to find new ways to

engage with our community and members.

We thanked our volunteers with a morning tea in May at the Bellevue Farm Gate shop and orchard at Officer. The "The Cinderfella" Shirley Award went to Bob Neal.

Thanks to Eileen for organising our Coffee Catchups to meet socially on the last Sunday of the month at various venues in the Casey Cardinia area.

In March we held our first Bunnings sausage sizzle since 2019. This year it was held at the Bunnings Clyde North Store. It was such a successful day, so we scheduled another sizzle on 7 October.

Next year we will celebrate the 35th milestone birthday of our group. We have been a very successful group for all those years, but it is only with new ideas we have been able to grow. We have to remain relevant and adapt so that we have a viable future and can continue to provide the tools and the safe and welcoming environment that is the Narre Warren & District Family History Group. It is sad to see that other groups struggle due to a lack of members, and in some cases have to merge with other groups or cease to operate.

Our strength has always been our committee and the members who volunteer for the big and small things throughout the year. To them, I say thank you, especially those who did all the extra work while I had an enforced rest this year. That 'rest' showed me the true value of being in our group is the friendship and willingness of others to care for each other. I also learnt that I procrastinate too much, thinking I have time to do things later, and then I realise later time is catching up with me.

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# Bunnings sausage sizzle at Bunnings Clyde North

We had so much fun in March, so we are doing it again!

When: Saturday, 7 October 2023, 8 am to 4 pm

Where: Bunnings Clyde North, 46S Hamersley Drive, Clyde North (near the corner of Berwick-Cranbourne Road and Thompsons Road).

Volunteers are required to fill our roster. A minimum of 3 people (preference for 4) are required to fill each 3-hour shift on the day.

All offers of assistance are very welcome and appreciated!!!!

For further details or to volunteer your time, please contact Bob Neal by phone on 0419 103 889, or email bobneal746@gmail.

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We are grateful for the support we received from the City of Casey and the Casey Cardinia Libraries. We look forward to working with the new library teams at Connected Libraries (Casey Libraries) and Myli (Cardinia Libraries) in the future.

We continue working with our fellow heritage groups, the Casey Cardinia Local History Reference Group and the South Eastern Historical Association as we all come to grips with the lingering effects of the Covid years and the uncertain future economically.

Thank you to the committee of 2022-2023 and the work that you do above and beyond the job description. And a big thank you to the family members who support you and our group throughout the year. Thank you to the volunteers who welcome visitors and members to our room and meetings, work on the cemetery walk, sizzle sausages, produce our newsletter and publications, keep our digital world up to date and somehow manage to do their own family research projects.

Jane Rivett-Carnac

# Dandenong Community Cemetery walk

Please join us on Sunday 29 October 2023 from 10 am at Dandenong Community Cemetery, Kirkham Road, Dandenong.

We will present stories of Casey Cardinia early settlers and others that followed them to the district, who are remembered in this cemetery.

Cost is \$10 for adults.

Bookings to cemeterytours@nwfhg.org.au or treasurer@nwfhg.org.au

Light refreshments included at the end of the 90-minute walk. A book of the walk will be available for sale on the day.



Next tour: Dandenong Community Cemetery 29 October 2023

## Speakers' Spot

All meetings at 65 Berwick-Cranbourne Road, Cranbourne & via Zoom Contact Eileen at secretary@nwfhg.org.au for a link to any of the meetings via Zoom

# Goronga: A hill station garden in the Dandenongs – Australian Garden History Society

Saturday, 16 September, 2 pm - General Meeting

L'Arté Central Social Enterprise Café Training Room, Cranbourne & via Zoom

Elizabeth Fraser, OAM, President Berwick-Pakenham Historical Society, will be talking about her home Goronga, at Pakenham Upper. The 60-acre farm was established in the 1870s, and twenty years later



began the establishment of gardens around the house. Elizabeth's chance encounter with a member of the Australian Garden History Society, at an open day, then lead to a two-year project to record the history of the property and the publication of a book in September 2022.

**Social Lunch:** You can join us for a delicious lunch and social gathering at 12 noon in the L'Arté Central Social Enterprise Café Training Room. Lunches do need to be pre-ordered by Thursday before the meeting and paid for on the day.

Contact Eileen at secretary@nwfhg.org.au if you would like a menu forwarded to you for pre-orders.

## Naval Graves - Lance McDermott

## Wednesday, 11 October, 7.30 pm - General Meeting

Conference Room, Admin Building, Casey Complex & Zoom

The Naval Graves Project is a volunteer group that researches, locates, photographs, and if possible tends to the last resting place of sailors of the Royal Navy, Australian Colonial Navies, Commonwealth Naval Forces, and the Royal Australian Navy pre-1914. The volunteer group has grown in membership and is looking out for all naval graves within Australian territory.

Laurance Stephenson (one of our members) is a relative of George Ritchie who in 1924 died on board HMAS Brisbane in Sydney Harbour, he was 17. George was buried at Rookwood Cemetery without a headstone. His story was found by the Naval Graves Project and they lobbied The Office of Australian War Graves who were instrumental in having the headstone put on his grave and dedicated, on 18 June 2022. Full article in *Spreading Branches – Issue 134 – November 2022* 

Lance McDermott was a member of the Royal Australian Navy from 1972 to 1998 and then became a School Officer at a college in Dandenong until he retired at the end of 2017. Lance's presentation will be covering the origins of the Naval Graves Project, who they are and what they're about.



Postkarte - Carte postale

## It is easy for you to digitise your photos and documents Wednesday, 8 November, 7.30 pm - General Meeting

Conference Room, Admin Building, Casey Complex & Zoom

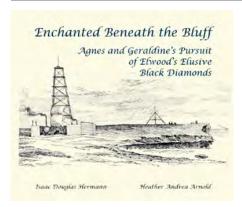
Demonstration by Val Barnett and processing team.



Have you got photos in a box that you think 'one day I should scan them' to preserve them and allow others to see? Were you given a large document with lots of information, and you would love to make it a searchable document accessible on any of your devices? Then this is a must-see presentation for you.

Val Barnett will show you how

the volunteers in the Lorraine Taylor Research Room helped her to scan and organise her large collection of postcards. And, the processing team will demonstrate how easy the scanners in the Lorraine Taylor Research Room are to use. Bring along some of your own collection so we can help you start digitising and preserving it for future generations to enjoy.



## Enchanted Beneath the Bluff

Congratulations to our friend and member Heather Arnold on the publication of her first book, *Enchanted Beneath the Bluff*. The beautifully illustrated book tells the stories of some very interesting Melbourne women, who lived their lives on their own terms.

We hope that she will join us at a general meeting next year to recount some events of the lives of Agnes, Geraldine, and their friends.

Heather was recently presented with an award of merit by the Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

## **Picnics** (continued from page 1)

To the congregation of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, Narre Warren North, attending their annual church picnic was a highlight of their year and was normally held at Ferntree Gully or Frankston.<sup>1</sup> These photos from the Max Thomson Collection give us some ideas of what people were wearing to church picnics.

1 From Tent to Township. Narre Warren North Uniting Church 130th Anniversary – 1863-1993



Annual picnic at One Tree Hill, Ferntree Gully – c1910



Annual picnic - 2 January 1900



Annual picnic at One Tree Hill, Ferntree Gully - 1 January 1901



Annual picnic at Ferntree Gully - 1920

#### **Menzies Creek**

The families of Menzies Creek enjoyed their annual school picnics. This extract from *Menzies Creek – a history* gives us some insight into organising the annual picnics, how they got to them, and how exciting they would have been to attend.

The annual picnic was usually a district event organised and financed through the School Committees. During March each year, the children eagerly anticipated their excursion to Mordialloc beach for the picnic. For most of them, it was the only time each year that they travelled out of the Dandenongs.

Mr Bill Hermon can recall travelling by train to the beach picnic during the late 1920s. He said they would start out from Menzies Creek at about 7.30 AM, change trains at Ferntree Gully and again at Richmond before finally reaching Mordialloc. The trip alone must have been quite an adventure!

Later, in the 1950s, Mrs. Dorothy Melville (Madigan) recalls making the journey to Mordialloc in the back of Mr. Hermon's furniture van, then later again, in the U.S. Buses. It was always a full day's outing, leaving early and returning at about 7 o'clock at night.<sup>2</sup>

Annual picnics to the beach and the zoo were great fun for the students of the Garfield area as the

<sup>2</sup> Menzies Creek – a history by Menzies Creek Primary School Centenary Committee

author recalls in *Cannibal Creek to Garfield – The History of Garfield PS No 2724 – 1886-1986:* 

The Annual School Picnic was very popular. A special train was chartered (steam loco and dog boxes) and it stopped at stations from Longwarry to Nar Nar Goon and took children and parents to the beach. Head teachers sold the special tickets (very cheap rates). My father was Secretary and I remember helping to parcel tickets to be sent to

all the schools around. It was the only time many children had a train ride, or a dip in the ocean. In later years it lost favor as too many took the opportunity of cheap fares to have a shopping spree in Melbourne and expected teachers to take responsibility for their children. The last picnic I attended was in 1929 at the Zoo.<sup>3</sup>

3 Cannibal Creek to Garfield – The History of Garfield PS No 2724 – 1886-1986

#### Kalora Park Tennis Club

Members from the Kalora Park Tennis Club, enjoyed their picnics at the beach.



### Beach picnic - 1947

At rear: Harry Ackland, Bill Hall, Jack Gillingham, Don Randle, and Mary Asling

Middle row: Mary Gillingham, Jo Hall, Alf Fox, Ray Hart, Thelma Rae, Mick Randle, Alys Randle, Mrs Doug Newton, Olive Rae, and Leila Robinson

Front row: Tom Edwards, Ian Murdoch, Marjorie Asling, Dorothy 'Doff' Asling, Rhoda Ivens, Doug Newton and Grace Ackland.



#### Picnic at Sandringham - 1953

Left to Right: Peter 'Mick' McMahon, Madge Bailey, Ken Male, Peter Morris, Pat Asling, Dave Morris, Wally Kirkpatrick, Gerald Pennefather, Jill Pennefather, Beverley Ackland, John Fenton, Meryl Street, and Jim Dearing.

#### Newpapers

Newspapers are full of schools, churches, and sporting groups' picnics. So when you are going through Trove looking for your ancestors, search for the word 'picnic', and you will get over 2 million items to view, but when you drill down you may be lucky and find a picnic that your ancestor attended.

In researching picnics it did surprise me that a lot of early picnics were organised by unions and politicians. It does make sense that unionists were hoping to get you to support their cause and the politicians to obtain votes. I just can't see 'Dan' hosting a fun picnic.

William Stephen Keast was a member of the Legislative Assembly for Dandenong and Berwick from 1900 to 1904 and for Dandenong from 1904 to 1917. On 9 April 1910, he organised a District School Picnic in Beaconsfield that was reported in a full page spread in the Leader the following Saturday.<sup>1</sup>

#### 1 Leader (Melbourne, Vic.), 16 April 1910

## District school picnic at Beaconsfield (see photos on next two pages)

A highly successful gathering took place last Saturday at Beaconsfield, when the district school children assembled, in response to the invitation of Mr. Keast, M.L.A., and Mrs. Keast. A fine programme of children's races, for many suitable prizes, given by Mrs. Keast, was gone through, and during the afternoon an abundance of lemonade, lollies, cakes, &c. was distributed among the happy little guests by Mr. H. M. Cann (hon. sec.) and his host of helpers. The parents and other visitors were catered for in the Beaconsfield hall, where a substantial evening repast was done full justice to, and the health of the genial host and hostess duly honored. Dancing was then indulged in till a late hour, which brought to a close one of the most enjoyable functions ever held in the district.

## District school picnic at Beaconsfield



General group of the children and visitors



Children at tea

## With the picnickers

A short story by "Lino" published in The Argus on 3 January 1901

"Now, I'll smack your eyes if you upset that milk, and mind here, Jube (short for Jubilee), if you let Victoria out of sight——"

"Mabel is late, of course. Just like her, always spending hours over her clothes——"

"Where on earth is the basket with the cups; it's got the ham in it, too. My word, if that gets lost, there'll be a pretty how d'ye do——"

"Last year when I went picnicking,

they put me in a cattle truck with me girl to travel to Ferntree Gully; spoilt new dress of hers, new suit of mine. Never again, I says. So this year I goes to Sandringham——"

Trains rush out of the principal stations bound countrywards or seawards, all tightly packed with

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One of the children's races

#### **Narre Warren North**

This group from Narre Warren North, who looked like they were ready for the snow, gathered at the scout hall for a picnic at Mt Donna Buang in 1956.



Back Row: Lloyd Thomson, David Bailey, John Edwards, Edward Barron, Norman Fox, Ray Pearce, Ken Pearce, Clive Henderson, Brian Fox, Mrs A Murray, Peter Schneider (hidden) Middle Row: Bruce Brundrett, Bob Hill, Jim Murray, June Loveridge, Vivienne Loveridge, Mrs R Hill, Mrs J Schneider, Mrs A Harris, Mrs W Hall, Margaret Thomson, and ?..... Morton. In Front: Brent Bailey, Heather Murray, Jennifer Hall, Margaret Edwards, Gwen Brundrett, Iean Murray, Dianne Harris, Mrs A Brundrett, ?....., Judith Harris and Mr A Harris. Small Child: Barbara Hall.

With the picnickers - continued from page 8 in one corner of a carriage remarks

jolly, exited humanity off for a picnic. Such a picnic! Extending in a great half-circle all round the bay, from Williamstown to Mordialloc, with off-shoots to every adjacent country resort, and with a kind of backwash in to the Botanical-gardens and the Royal park. Fifteen or sixteen people, exclusive of babies and children, crowd into every railway carriage. Everyone is in a good humour, or nearly everyone, for an angular person

in one corner of a carriage remarks acidly, "Some do incommode, even where there's no need." A pretty girl, in a startling costume of pink crepon, trimmed with yellow lace and rows of green baby ribbon, blushes scarlet under her flower garden of a hat, for it is she who, jumping in at the last moment with someone named Bill has incommoded the angular lady. The floor is lined with packages and baskets, the racks with baskets, umbrellas, wraps, and billies. A

precocious young lady, in short skirts, with half her hair rolled up in a knob and the other half hanging over her shoulders, explains that she had meant to travel first class, but that, after all, second is more fun. "Reely, the creatures you meet going first make you positively sick with the jam they put on," she asserts, and on being told by her companions that she is a regular "cur" and no mistake, she, with much bridling and many giggles,

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Not all picnics were huge group events. We have as part of the Max Thomson Collection some picnickers from the Harkaway area. Unfortunately, we are not sure who they are or the exact location of the picnic but it does give you an idea of how people were enjoying their day out at the beginning of the 20th century.



Picnic c1906. Note another small group picnicking at the rear



c1908



c1906. In the background a photographer with his camera and tripod



c1908



c1908. Note the comfortable buggy seat



c1908

**Author's note:** I am aware that there is a discrepancy in the dates in the Max Thomson Collection and in some books where they were published. I endeavour to research the correct dates.





c1908. Beneath a rustic shelter, probably near a beach. Note the suspended meat safe and elegant metal teapot

Next time you attend a picnic, I hope you have heaps of fun and enjoy it as much as your ancestors did!

Eileen Durdin

With the picnickers - continued from page 9 come a delicate compliment to the

tells how some one whose name she will not mention even under severe pressure, was as wild as anything because she had arranged to go to Sandringham while he had taken tickets to go down the bay. "I'll be afraid to look him in the face after, he'll be that mad," she concludes. Two friendly babies exchange sugarsticks, and their mothers smile admiringly and then drop into conversation. When the angular lady alights at a wayside station Bill remarks to an appreciative audience that it was as well she got out, as he feared she would turn the bottle of milk sour that he carried. At each stopping place sounds of merriment come from all along the train—songs and laughter, an accordion playing "Soldiers of the Queen," trumpets and whistles. Arrived at Sandringham, the horse trams are loaded up with passengers for Beaumaris and Black Rock, and the remainder of the people stream down towards the beach. There is the shrill whistle of the merry-go-round, with its band of fine horses, all newly painted dapple grey and bearing the names of well-known racehorses. The swingingboats, with their too realistic motion,

Governor-General and the Countess of Hopetoun in bearing their names. A stout, red-faced lady stands beside a steaming boiler and cries perpetually "Boiling water all day." Inquiring if trade is brisk, she shakes her head. "Too much competition; if I had it all to myself now I'd make a fortune. The ice-carts and fruit-stalls near by do a roaring trade. So close together are the numerous picnics that they might easily be one big one. There are often only a few feet between them; never more than several yards. Dad in his shirt sleeves, Ma with her hat off, the children without boots and stockings. Many of them are seated within a few feet of the lines of horses, close to the merry-go-rounds and the waggons. Others creep into a nook under the ti-tree, where there are many flies, and the boughs annoy them when they move.

Bill, with his pretty companion, belong to a big party, and have a sumptuous meal. But Bill is disposed to grumble. "What's one to do, I says. Eat, sleep, smoke; smoke, sleep, eat. Why can't there be some sort of amusement for grown-ups. They think they've done a fat lot in putting on a few extra trains

and in cutting some paths. If they'd give you something to do, it'd be right enough coming to a picnic."

There is a good deal in this view. The children are in paradise, they bathe, paddle, make sand castles, swing on the merry-go-round, and eat ices; but for the older people there is nothing. There is not sufficient interest in exploring the country round, for the sandy cliffs from Mordialloc to the Bluff are of almost unchanging sameness; and as for Williamstown, well—. A stretch of sea, of sand, and a patch of dry grass, and some thousands of inert, bored pleasureseekers. Said one of them, a foreigner and an old man, as he sat with his wife looking at the small fry disporting in the water. "It is ver' sad. There is no pleasure in it. Good for the healt', perhaps, but so dismal, so ver' dismal. Hundr'ds of people, an' nothink to do!" And this is the case right along those miles and miles of beach, covered thickly with people who have come to enjoy themselves. Would it not be possible for the authorities to do something to help the picnickers? Could not big swards be planted with shady trees, and provided with seats

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and small tables. Round it the boots might congregate, and with a table for iced drinks, shade above, a peep at the sea beyond, and a band playing popular airs, even a Frenchman might be content. At St Kilda, where the crowd is even more dense, this kind of thing might be impossible; but even here surely something might be done for Bill and George. They are very silent and uncomplaining; they go to sleep in the sand or kick their heels

The trains are even more crowded on the return journey; for the sky is somewhat threatening. The rash ones wait to have tea on the beach.

idly on the parapet, and are not sorry

when the time comes to go home.

With the picnickers - continued from page 11 and Bill, with his little girl in pink, come scuttling up to the station in the middle of a heavy shower. "I near spoilt my dress," she gasps, as she sinks breathless on Bill's knees in the crowded carriage. She changes hats with Bill according to custom immemorial, and, as the train steams out of the station, begins a song, after much pressing, and everyone joins in the chorus. Trains are packed from end to end, and damp children are placed on the knee of anyone willing to hold them.

> "I went on the merry-go-round seven times and the swinging-boats five times, and I ate six ice-creams and three pounds of peaches," one small boy relates to a friend.

"I wouldn't like to spend all my days picnicking," says his father to an acquaintance. "It's all very well for kids; but a whole day of sleeping in the sand and eating dry sandwiches ain't good enough."

"Selfish thing," retorts his wife. "It's for the children's pleasure we come out, and I'm sure they enjoyed themselves."

"Oh, they enjoyed themselves—but what about us?"

"Lino"

"Lino" was one of the pen-names used by Frances Elmes, a journalist and author who grew up in Berwick. She died in London in 1919 during the influenza pandemic.

## The Black Box

When I started researching the history of our village, one of the books I read was the history of St John's Church, which was lost to the Ash Wednesday fires. Before John Milligan wrote the book, he said he had been given a black leather case and bundles of business papers from the time the church was built in the 1920s. He mentioned minute books, financial papers and correspondence. These records had been deposited with a bank, and thus survived the fires.

I always wondered what had happened to those records after the book was completed. Were they returned to safe-keeping in a secure place? Or were they sitting in someone's attic? I felt that there may be some snippets of history contained in those papers that Milligan may have missed, or wasn't interested in. For a while I asked around, but noone seemed to know where these records had gone.

Then, a few weeks ago, a local parishioner mentioned the up-coming 100-year-anniversary of the consecration of the old St John's Church. He said that there was a desire to update John Milligan's history to the present day, and that the church had a number of minute books that could assist with the task. Needless to say, the proximity of the October anniversary would not allow such a project to be undertaken. A meeting with the vicar was suggested, then postponed due to health reasons. About a month ago, on a Friday afternoon I visited the church's op-shop, where to my surprise I met the vicar and a member of the vestry. I brought up the conversation I had with the parishioner, and asked if I could have a look at those minute books.

"They are in some boxes in the church office," one of the women said. "Can I please have a look at

them?" I asked shyly. The vicar took me up to the church office, and pointed out some plastic storage boxes stuffed with paper. But then I spotted an older relic. A black metal box. On it was written "ST. JOHN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND UPPER BEACONSFIELD".

On opening the box, I saw neat parcels of papers, tied together with string. Some contained receipts from the 1950s, others correspondence and invoices from the 1920s when the old church was built. So here



they were! The records I had been looking for. I asked if I could borrow the boxes for a while, and they were only too happy to let me have them.

Since then I have been scanning or photographing these records. So far, I have created nearly three thousand digital files. I admit, I find the early records more exciting than those of the 1980s and 1990s.

We get an insight into what is involved in building

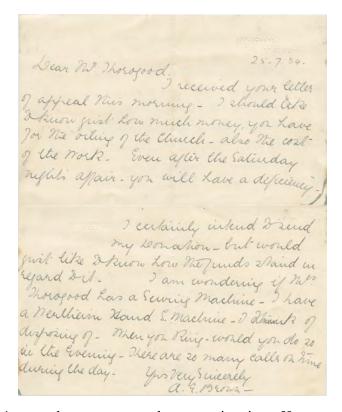
a church – both in the 1920s and in the 1980s. The secretary of the



St John's Church building committee and later of the vestry, Mr Harvey-Smith, appears to have been writing letters constantly. There is the correspondence between him and the architect of the old church, JRC Blanche, where we not only learn about the building project, but also about Blanche's private life, including his extravagant fiancee, Miss Buck.

A few years later Mrs Harvey-Smith sent thanks for the expressions of sympathy after her husband's sudden death at a public meeting in 1934.

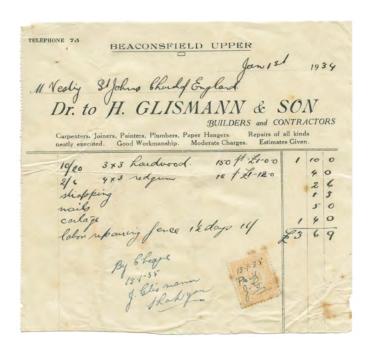
I come across many familiar names. There is a letter from Mrs Alice Brown of Applecross to Mr Thorogood, the then secretary, enquiring if Mrs Thorogood would perhaps be interested in a sewing machine she is thinking of disposing of.

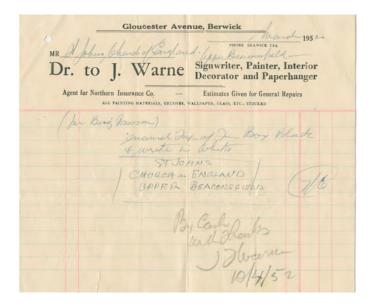


Among the papers are also many invoices. Hans Glismann & Son supplied building materials, Sydney Smith tendered to paint the church, and there is a receipt from John Nathan for a broom. Many local businesses were utilised. There are insurance documents, electricity accounts, and many other records that provide a glimpse back into the daily life in our village. Even an invoice, dated March 1952, from J Warne, signwriter in Berwick, for an enamel top of the black tin box black mentioned earlier, and the writing of "ST. JOHN'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND UPPER BEACONSFIELD" for 7 ½ shillings.

The reverse of the electricity accounts are particularly interesting, especially now when people are worried about losing their gas supply.

Marianne Rocke







## **Annual General Meeting - 19 August 2023**

A small group enjoyed a fabulous lunch and chat at the café before the meeting. Most of us had struggled to find a car park. We had not realised that Casey Stadium was hosting the CheerCon Victorian State Championships. Apparently, it was their largest cheer and dance event yet. Cheer and dance teams came from all over Victoria, and it was every man for himself on the roads and in the car parks at the complex.

We were really excited to welcome Patrick Ferry back to the family history group. Patrick is the Assistant State Manager (Victoria) at the National Archives of Australia (NAA). And he'd

come to tell us the story of the whirlwind romance between a Melbourne Socialite and a Turkish Diplomat in London just before the outbreak of the Great War.

And what a story it was.
Using public records and photographs from the National Archives Collection and family information, Patrick's natural enthusiasm and storytelling ability brought Florence and Chefik to life for us. Even if we did have to call him back to the screen every now and then!

If you haven't seen this presentation, you can read Florence and Chefik's story on the NAA blog at: www.naa.gov. au/blog/i-married-alien

Our Annual General Meeting followed a very short break. Fifteen members attended in person while two Zoomed in and five tendered their apologies.

The Treasurer and President presented their reports, but the Member of the Year was not awarded because the winner was not present





The diplomatic passport issued in the name of the Ottoman Sultan which the family used to travel from Constantinople (Istanbul) to London in early 1921.

NAA: A659, 1940/1/1640, p 31

(there's a hint) and Jane thought it would be good for those who couldn't be there on the day to hear the nice things going to be said about them.

Our committee elections were chaired by Rex McFarlane who did a great job trying to get one of the 'crowd' to nominate for the position of Correspondence Secretary – but he was not successful this time. All other committee members were reelected to their roles.

We really need a Correspondence Secretary, we can work with you to find a way for you to do it, it's not a big job. And, if you can't physically collect the mail from the Research Room each week, we'll happily work around that.

Unfortunately the internet gremlins abruptly interrupted

the afternoon's proceedings. We apologise to those who were on Zoom for the premature end to their meeting.

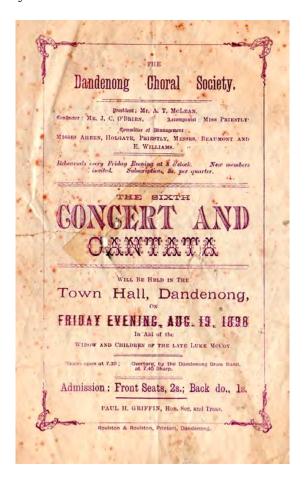
Lynne Bradley



## Dandenong Choral Society concert for family of Luke McCoy

In 2010 I was preparing a display for the Dandenong Choral Society's final concert. After much soul searching, the committee and members had resolved to wind up the Choral Society due to increasing costs and lack of members. The society had been in operation for over one hundred years.

I found a brochure for a concert to be held in late August 1898 for the widow and family of Luke McCoy.<sup>1</sup>



### Who was Luke McCoy?

Initially I searched Trove and found several articles about the sad death of Luke Simon McCoy.

'McCoy—At Diamond Hill, Dandenong on Tuesday 2 August, Luke, third son of John McCoy, accidentally killed by a tree falling on him'.<sup>2</sup>

## Shocking death of a woodcutter

Dandenong, Wednesday.

A very sad accident occurred at the Diamond Hill, on the Cranbourne Road, Dandenong yesterday morning, which resulted in the death of Luke McCoy, a young married man with three children. Deceased was cutting wood in Mrs Delaney's paddock. As he did not return home in the evening, his brother Mr George McCoy went this morning to

the paddock and found the deceased pinned to the ground by a fallen tree.

Life was extinct when the body was discovered, and death must have been instantaneous, as the poor fellow's back was broken.

It is supposed that the deceased man, after giving the final blow, was struck in the act of stepping back.

The deceased's brother (Tom M'Coy) was killed at Longwarry, 13 years ago, through a log rolling on to him.<sup>3</sup>

#### Inquest

On 4 August 1898, a coronial inquiry was held into his death. Alexander William Pearson Esquire found that 'Luke McCoy died at Diamond Hill, Dandenong, in the said Bailiwick and Colony, on the third day of August 1898 from being accidentally crushed by a tree'<sup>4</sup>

Several persons gave evidence at the inquest.

- \* John William McAndrew, residing in Dandenong, deposed "I am a butcher and I met the deceased, Luke Simon McCoy on Tuesday 2nd Aug at about 8 am at Bangholme Railway Gates. He asked me for a ride and I took him to the slaughteryards Bangholme Road close to where he was going to work. He told me he was going to cut up a tree and had maul and wedges with him. I saw him at work about ten minutes later. He was in good health and quite sober and I did not see him again until I identified him as the person I had given a ride to on the morning of Tuesday."
- \* George McCoy, deposed "I am a laborer residing in Dandenong and I am a brother of the deceased Luke Simon McCoy, a married man, aged 29, with a wife and three children, and lived in McPherson Street, Gordon Park, Dandenong. He was a steady man and a spotter by trade. I last saw him on Monday night at 7.30 pm. He told me he was going to cut timber for Delaney at Diamond Hill. On the Wednesday morning his wife came to me and and said he had not returned home which he had never done this before, and if I knew where he was. I went to look for him where I thought he had been working. When I got to the tree I found his coat hanging on one of the logs, his dinner at the butt of tree. About ten yards away I saw him pinned to the ground, across the back and face downwards by a limb of a tree weighing about 6 ton. He was quite dead and cold. I ran to Delaneys for a shovel and I started to dig him out and got the body out, and I sent for the Police and got instructions to move him to his mother's residence where he now is. In my opinion he must have tripped and got caught as he was an experienced man at wood cutting. The ground was a bit greasy.

<sup>1</sup> Dandenong Choral Society Collection (now with Dandenong Historical Society)

<sup>2</sup> South Bourke and Mornington Journal, 3 August 1898

<sup>3</sup> The Argus, 4 August 1898

Public Record Office Victoria VPRS 24/P0000, 1898/997

\* George Bray — "I am a constable living and stationed at Dandenong. On the morning of 3rd August, Edward Delaney reported at the Police Station that Luke McCoy had been killed by a log rolling upon him (McCoy) and crushing him to death.

Under instructions from Sen. Const. Taylor, I at once proceeded to where the body was at Diamond Hill, Dandenong. I made careful enquiries re the death of the deceased. The position of the body and the whole surroundings pointed to an accident. Deceased appeared to have been sawing a very large log through when it commenced to roll towards him and to get out of the way, deceased had stepped backwards and was tripped by a projecting limb and thrown down. The log then rolled over his body and crushed him to death. One arm was broken and also his back. The body was quite cold and stiff.

After making careful enquiries I gave permission (at request of the deceased's brother George McCoy) to have the body removed to the residence of deceased's mother, which was close to the scene of the accident. I am clearly of the opinion that the death of McCoy was purely an accident, no blame being attached to anyone.

Luke Simon McCoy was born in 1868, the fourth son of John McCoy and Catherine Daly. He had five siblings: John, James, George, Thomas Edward and Catherine.

In 1891 Luke married Ann Alicia Hemmings, the daughter of Alfred Hemmings and Frances Chandler, in Dandenong. Luke and Ann had three children, Luke Vivian born 1892, Alice Daphne born 1894 and Avon Isodore born 1897.

When Ann received the shocking news of Luke's death, she must have been devastated. She was just a young, thirty-year-old mother with three very small children to care for.

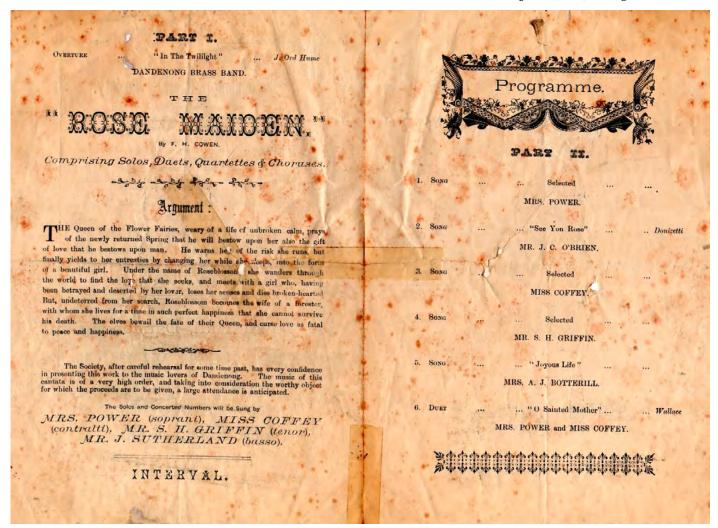
Luke was buried in the Roman Catholic section of the Dandenong Community Cemetery on 4 August 1898. (Compartment D, Section 11, Grave 50).<sup>5</sup>

How would the widow and children manage? It was hoped that friends and family would help Ann, and any funds raised at the concert given by the Dandenong Choral Society would assist greatly.

The concert was held on Friday evening, 19 August 1898 in the Dandenong Town Hall. Front seats cost 2s and back seats 1s. Prior to the concert, the Dandenong Brass Band played several selections in front of the hall.<sup>6</sup>

The hall was well filled and the audience well pleased, according to the frequent applause.

- 5 Dandenong Cemetery Index, available on FamilySearch
- 6 South Bourke and Mornington Journal, 24 August 1898



Soloists included Mrs Power (Soprano), Miss Coffey (Alto), Mr SL Griffin and Mr J Sutherland. The Cantata 'Rose Maiden' was the first part of the program, and after an interval, various solos were presented.

The treasurer of the society, Mr PJ Griffin, was well pleased with the evening, and the singers and audience were thanked. The concert left a profit of £6 8s. A separate fund raised £80. The trustees of the McCoy Fund resolved that the money would be spent to build a house for the family on Ann McCoy's own land.<sup>7</sup>

In 1902 Ann Alicia McCoy married James Lee. Ann was 34 years old and James, a bachelor, was 44. Together they had three more children: Albert Edward, Maud Mercia and Alfred William Lee.

On the 1936 Electoral Roll Luke Vivian and Miriam Gertrude McCoy were still living in Dandenong, as was his brother George, and also Ann Alicia Lee and her husband James.<sup>8</sup>

James Lee died in Spotswood in 1941, possibly at the home of his son, Albert Edward Lee.

On the death of Ann Alicia Lee on 22 August 1952, the Dandenong Journal published a long tribute to her. "Dandenong Loses Early Resident". It mentioned that she had been married twice; firstly to the late Luke McCoy who died when a tree fell on him and her second husband was the late James Lee. She was survived by two sons, Luke and Albert and two daughters Daphne (Mrs Barkmeyer) and Maud (Mrs Dobney).

Her son Alfred was killed in Malaya in 1942 whilst serving with the AIF.

"Her funeral cortage was a long one with many early residents among the sorrowing mourners when her remains were laid to rest in the Dandenong Cemetery." She was buried in the same grave as her parents, who had died in 1906 and 1927.

## Families of Luke McCoy and Ann Alicia Hemmings

\* Luke Vivian McCoy married Miriam Gertrude

Walker in 1919. Luke died on 26 August 1969 and his wife Miriam died on 4 May 1972. (Luke was the father of Valda Miriam McCoy, author of the article in Gippsland Gate). <sup>10</sup>

\* Alice Daphne McCoy married Jonathan Simpson in 1917. Sadly Jonathan died in 1919.

In 1922 Alice Daphne married Joseph Edward Barkmeyer, but by the early 1940s they were living apart. Alice died in 1994 and is buried in the Frankston Cemetery, along with Gladstone (George) Denmeade who died in 1964.

\* Avon Isodore McCoy was born in 1897 and died in 1901.

## Families of James Lee and Ann Alicia McCoy (Hemmings)

Albert Edward Lee married Bertha May Pinch of Daylesford. They lived in the Newport/Spotswood area. Bertha died in 1959. He then lived with his sister Maud Dobney and her husband Charles. Albert died in Rosebud in 1977.

Maud Mercia Lee married Charles Dobney in 1937. She died in August 1997 and is buried in Altona Memorial Park.

Alfred William Lee died in Malaya in 1942 whilst serving with the AIF.

Members of the McCoy and Lee families lived on in Dandenong and have contributed to the community for many years. I have not attempted to find all descendants of Ann Alicia McCoy and her two husbands.

The final concert of the Dandenong Choral Society was held on Sunday 21 November 2010 in St Mary's Community Hall, New Street, Dandenong, just a few streets away from where Luke McCoy had lived with his family in McPherson Street.

Finally, my thanks to Marianne, our editor, who found the McCoy Family Tree on Ancestry. This helped with some facts on James and Albert Edward.

Di Christensen

#### Volunteers needed

I am looking for volunteers in the Lorraine Taylor Research Room. The times would be once a month on a Tuesday or a Saturday from 11 am - 2 pm.

The volunteers do a great job helping others with their research and at the same time learn where everything is in the room. It is also a good place to meet the other members.

There are always two volunteers on so you would never be alone. Please give it a thought. Contact Barbara Sharp research.room.mgr@nwfhg.org.au

<sup>7</sup> South Bourke and Mornington Journal, 31 August 1898

<sup>8</sup> Electoral rolls, Dandenong 1936. On Ancestry

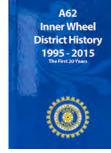
<sup>9</sup> Dandenong Journal, 27 August 1952 (Her father was Alfred Hemmings, not John)

<sup>10 &</sup>quot;A short history of the McCoy Family" Gippsland Gate Vol42. No 1, April 2015. Thanks to the librarian at PrahranMechanics Institute Library who provided me with a copy.

## New in the Lorraine Taylor Research Room

## Casey Cardinia Books

- \* Tynong: Don Jolly's Notebook by Glenn L Jolly
- \* A62 Inner Wheel District History 1995 – 2015 The first 20 years
- \* St Agatha's Parish Cranbourne Silver Jubilee1973 – 1998
- \* The history of the Devon
  Meadows Primary School and
  the community which it supports



## **Australian Books**

\* Australian Dictionary of Biography Vol 1 1788 - 1850 A to H

#### Victorian Books

- \* Victorian Municipal Directory 1951
- \* Warracknabeal: A Wimmera Centenary by Susan Priestley
- \* French Island: Preserving the future by Joan & Lyal Bognuda
- \* Enchanted
  beneath the
  bluff: Agnes
  and Geraldine's
  pursuit of
  Elwood's elusive
  Black Diamonds
  by Isaac Douglas
  Hermann and
  Heather Arnold



- \* Nathalia's History in print: Nathalia Herald 1884 onwards
- Morwell's Sacred Heart: 100 years of parish life
   1892 1992 by Jack Vines
- \* The alps at the crossroads: The quest for an alpine national park in Victoria by Dick Johnson
- \* The way it was: A history of the Mallee 1910 –
   1949 by Doris Torpey
- \* The Golden Age: A history of the colony of Victoria 1851 – 1861 by Geoffrey Serle
- \* Frankston 1950 2000: An oral/pictorial history by Kerry Watson
- \* Carnegie Primary School 1888 1988 the first 100 years

- \* A hundred years at Bank St: Ascot Vale State School 1885 -1985 by Janet McCalman
- \* A history of Point Lonsdale by N A Dunn
- \* A hundred years above Lake King: The story of St John's Metung by Molly Palmer
- \* Beechworth Cemetery: A stroll through history by Ian Hyndman
- \* Beech Forest: A century on the ridge by N Houghton
- \* Reminiscences of Fryerstown by G O Brown
- \* A visitors guide to the two Buninyong Burial Places by Robert W Bell
- \* The Pennyweight Kids by A R McMillan
- \* Port Albert: Past and Present by V W B Langhorne

#### **New South Wales Books**

\* The history of Port Macquarie and tourist information

## **Queensland Books**

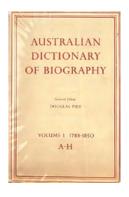
\* The confessions of a beachcomber by E J Banfield

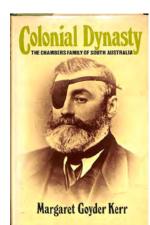
#### **South Australian Books**

- \* Hahndorf: A journey through the village and its history by Anni Luur Fox
- \* Australia's little Cornwall by Oswald Pryor

### Family histories and Biographies

- Elizabeth Robertson's
   Diary Norfolk Island 1845
   by Merval Hoare
- \* Pioneer Child: Gippsland memories of a bush childhood by Hilda Gell Phayer
- \* The men behind the myth: The fighting Leanes of Prospect by Carol Rosenhain
- Not Only in Stone by Phyllis Somerville
- \* Colonial Dynasty: The Chambers family of South Australia by Margaret Kerr
- \* The diaries of Sarah Midgley and Richard Skilbeck: A story of Australian settlers 1851 –
- No rugged landscape by Mary Karney
- \* Ferguson Plarre Bakehouses: A recipe for success by Ari Unglik





## Magazines

- \* Ancestor June 2023
- \* Family Tree June 2023
- \* Irish Roots Issue No 126
- \* The South Australian Genealogist May 2023
- \* Tasmanian Ancestry Issue 44 June 2023

\* Traces: Uncovering the Past Edition 22

\* Western Ancestor March 2023

Happy Reading

Moreyn Dimsey Librarian

## Lorraine Taylor Research Room Roster Tuesdays and Saturdays 11 am-2 pm

Please find a replacement yourself if you cannot do duty.

September 2023					
Tuesday	11 am-2 pm	Saturday	11 am-2 pm		
		2	Jane Rivett-Carnac Barbara Sharp		
5	Barbara Sharp Eileen Durdin	9	Lynne Bradley Robyn Jones		
12	Barbara Sharp Maureen Abbott	16	CLOSED for meeting		
19	Moreyn Dimsey Jane Rivett-Carnac	23	Barbara Sharp Eileen Durdin		
26	Jane Rivett-Carnac Moreyn Dimsey	30	Lynne Bradley Barbara Sharp		

October 2023					
Tuesday	11 am-2 pm	Saturday	11 am-2 pm		
3	Fay McCoubrie Eileen Durdin	7	Barbara Sharp		
10	Barbara Sharp Eileen Durdin	14	Jane Rivett-Carnac Lynne Bradley		
17	Jane Rivett-Carnac Maureen Abbott	21	Robyn Jones Fay McCoubrie		
24	Eileen Durdin Jane Rivett-Carnac	28	Eileen Durdin Lynne Bradley		
31	Moreyn Dimsey Barbara Sharp				

November 2023					
Tuesday	11 am-2 pm	Saturday	11 am-2 pm		
		4	Lynne Bradley Jane Rivett-Carnac		
7	CLOSED Melbourne Cup	11	Barbara Sharp Eileen Durdin		
14	Maureen Abbott Fay McCoubrie	18	Robyn Jones TBA		
21	Eileen Durdin Jane Rivett-Carnac	25	Eileen Durdin Barbara Sharp		
28	Barbara Sharp Moreyn Dimsey				

**Spreading Branches November 2023** We would like to read your articles or stories. Please submit your contributions by 15 October 2023

## Publications for sale



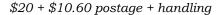
## Revisiting stories of Berwick Cemetery (2022)

Our latest book re-visits fifteen graves at Berwick Cemetery to find out more about the people buried here. They include the families of a publican, a doctor, a policeman and many other pioneers. Some died in tragic circumstances, others after long and fulfilled lives.

\$20 + \$10.60 postage + handling

## No time to say goodbye: a walk in Cranbourne Cemetery (2022)

This book tells the stories of twenty-six people who died suddenly, without giving them or their families a chance to say goodbye. Some died in accidents at work or on the road. Others' deaths were caused by unexpected illness, murder or by their own hands.





## Life and death on the edge of the swamp: a walk in Bunyip Cemetery (2019)

The official burial register of Bunyip Cemetery didn't begin until 1894 when six-year-old William Henry Barnes was buried. Nineteen of the first twenty recorded burials were of children. We believe the first actual burial to take place here was of Henry Manley in August 1886 – his story is featured in this book.



Thirty-one more stories of life and death on the swamp are also told in the book. Elisha Grose, winner of the second Stawell Gift is buried here in an unmarked grave, as is Mary Clifford, a poor deserted child of fourteen years of age who met a cruel and untimely death.

\$20 + \$10.60 postage + handling

## Ordinary people, interesting lives: A walk in the historic Harkaway Cemetery (2016)

Abounds with people who needed to grow crops or nurture their livestock to be able to eat, neighbours who no longer remained strangers, faces who became familiar at church or school or the general store or railway station.

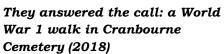
Our volunteers researched and wrote the stories of families that travelled thousands of miles to a country on the other side of the world. A country with people who didn't necessarily speak the same language or held the same beliefs.

\$20 + \$10.60 postage + handling

## World War 1 walk cemetery books

# Peace at last: a World War 1 walk in Lang Lang Cemetery (2018)

Stories of 98 soldiers from the Lang Lang district and the 48 families who waved goodbye to them and prayed for their safe return.





We tell the stories of courage and sacrifice of 111 men and one woman with Cranbourne area connections.

## For some the bell tolled: a World War 1 Walk in Harkaway Cemetery (plus Harkaway Avenue of Honour) (2017)

This book contains the stories of 36 families of Harkaway who watched, waited and pined for the 66 men and 2 women who enlisted and tried to make it safely back to home. Ten did not return.

## Sacrifice and Patriotism: a World War 1 Walk in Pakenham Cemetery (2016)

Includes stories of sets of brothers, a father and his son, a nurse and a sailor along with two Indigenous soldiers.

## 100 men, 100 years: a World War 1 Walk in Berwick Cemetery (2015)



Our stories embrace 100 men from over 70 families – all linked to Berwick Cemetery and the community it served

Each book \$25 + \$14.50 postage + handling

## **Cemetery Tour booklets**

Pakenham (2011), Cranbourne (2012), Lang Lang (2013) \$15 each

Berwick (2014), Pakenham (2015) \$20 each Add \$10.60 for postage + handling.

## Other books

**Kindred Spirits. NW&DFHG 1989 – 2009** \$25 + \$14.50 postage + handling

Early Settlers of the Casey-Cardinia District (2010) \$30 + \$14.50 postage + handling (last copy)

More details, order forms and indexes are available on our website at nwfhg.org.au/publications-2/