



BULOKE BULLETIN NO. 324 MAY 2024

Please note that we now have a new email address: donaldhistorysociety@gmail.com

Enquiries for April

Laurie Watson called in at the archives to make enquiries about his grandfather, Francis Howard Watson who was born in Donald in 1886. Francis married Amelia "Millie" Dickeson Cathcart in 1911 and their wedding, held at North Laen was reported in the Social Pages of the Horsham Times. Francis was the son of George Watson and Jane Sanders of Carron. Millie was the daughter of James Cathcart and Susan Dickeson of North Laen. Francis's father and Grandfather were both called George and George the Elder was quite active in the community. The Watsons finally left the area in 1921. The Cathcarts sold out to Griffiths Bros. in 1910.

David Pool, a bird watcher, wanted information on the local former school sites in the area. He has an idea to carry out bird watching activities at each spot where a rural school plaque is placed. We were able to sell him two copies of the fine work completed by Norm and Beth Hollis, where every rural school site is shown on a map. David is also a book binder and he returned one of the purchased copies to us, beautifully bound, as a thank you.

A visitor arrived with a fabulous story. Her father, Mr. Lazer, died recently, aged 102. He and his wife met at a boarding house in Donald in the 1950s whilst they were both staying briefly for work reasons. His wife, Mavis was performing in a travelling singing group. They later returned to Donald for their honeymoon and when their eldest child was born, they called him "Donald".

Suzanne Smith is the great granddaughter of Robert Arthur Smith and Martha Ann Smith. Robert was the postmaster in Donald from 1901 until 1915. Suzanne posted us several magnificent photos taken of their time in Donald. They were very into bowls and croquet. In Return, we were able to send Suzanne a list of "Donald Times" articles mentioning R.A Smith and members of his family. We will reprint some of the photos here.



The Donald Bowling Club. c. 1913. BACK ROW George Oakley (Solicitor), Unknown Shop assistant, Evan Gwynne Bona (solicitor), W.E. Thompson, (Chemist), an unknown Salesman, W.H. Gray (auctioneer). Edwin Lamplough (Butcher), Doctor Calhoun.

FRONT ROW Benson Charles Lewis (bank manager), G.H. Woodfall (Bank Manager), Arthur Schafer (Bank Manager), Robert Arthur Smith (Post Master). We are not sure if we have the three bank managers correctly named. If you can help with this, please contact us.



The opening of the croquet c. 1913, R. A. Smith is on the left of the photo and it may be his wife, Martha taking the opening shot. The picket fence to the right of the crowd is the dividing fence from the convent. The first convent building (formerly the Church) is shown

with the crosses on the peaks. It would later be moved across behind St Mary's Hall to be the supper room. The bowling green, with its Pavilion facing north is directly behind the crowd on the left with a Campbell St house peak just visible behind the crowd.

Blasts from the Past - May 1924

May 2. Expensive Cricket. At the Wedderburn police court, Angus Ross was fined £1 for having played cricket on the market square of that town on Sunday morning.

May 6. "The Sins of the Children ". At a recent meeting of the W.S.V.F.U., Ouyen, the secretary was instructed to write to the local school committee objecting to the great waste involved in compelling children to write out "lines "for punishment in exercise books , thereby penalising the parents, who have to replace them frequently. In a big family it was contended, this amounted to a substantial sum during the year. Members were of the opinion that in such cases slates might be used just as effectively, and the parents would not be punished for the children's shortcomings.

May 9. A "Dinkum Australian Native ". Mrs Mary Stephenson, one of the oldest aboriginals in the State, has died at the Castlemaine Benevolent Asylum. Born on the Murray River near Wodonga nearly 90 years ago she came to the first Avoca gold rush. Until quite recently "Black Mary" as she was familiarly known, was a fossicker on the Avoca diggings and she had a thorough knowledge of shallow mining. When her health failed residents advised her to go to a home, but for a long time she refused, preferring to live in her log cabin in the lonely bush. Eventually she was taken away, and she passed her last days in a comfortable home where she received the utmost attention. "Mary" was as well-known as the town clock, and had been associated with Avoca for over 60 years.

May 13. Reducing the Burden. In a statement to our Melbourne representative, Mr. F. Knight, President of the Taxpayers Association, said that that body intended agitating strongly for a 25 per cent reduction of income tax and the total abolition of the Federal Land Tax. The Federal Ministry found itself with an accumulated net surplus of something like £10,000,000. This vast sum represented money unnecessarily taken from the pockets of taxpayers. The head of the average Australian family, consisting of a wife and three children, had to work from four to eight weeks every year to raise the money which governments required to carry on and widespread resentment was being caused by the fact that governments continued to take so much more than they required. The people who had to work to earn this money could make much better use of it than governments. The abolition of Federal Land Tax was a necessary, if delayed, measure of relief to primary producers who should be encouraged and not handicapped in their efforts to increase production.

May 16. Painful Accident. Working a drill on his farm at Wal Wal, Mr. R. Neal was standing on the footboard of the machine when a large stick was picked up by the wheel. He attempted to remove the stick with his foot while the machine was in motion. He was drawn into the spokes of the wheel and the leg was crushed between the wheel and the scraper of the machine. The flesh of the leg was torn from the ankle to above the knee. Mr Neal crawled a distance of five chains to the house of a neighbour, who conveyed him to his home where he received medical attention.

May 20 Successful Concert at Corack East. One of the best concerts held here for some time was given before a large audience in the local hall on Tuesday last. The effort had been organised by the committees of the local Protestant Federation and although most of the talent was local the items were well appreciated. The opportunity was taken to hear one of Melbourne's best sopranos, Miss Eleanor Simpson, who is a guest of Miss Proctor. The Corack folk are indeed highly privileged to in having had the pleasure of hearing such a talented artist. Miss Simpson has studied successfully at the Albert Street Conservatorium. Mr S. Madder acted as chairman while Miss Proctor carried out the delicate duties of accompanist. At the conclusion of the entertainment a vote of thanks to the performers was proposed by Mr E. A. Perry and unanimously accorded. The singing of the National Anthem brought a pleasant evening to a close.

The various items were as follows: Pianoforte duet , "Duet in D", Mrs and Miss Proctor; recitation, "The Twins", Doris McEwan; song "Lazy Honolulu", Miss J. Kirkpatrick; song "Annie Laurie", Miss F. Sands; flute solo "Rendezvous", Mr J. Proctor; vocal solo , "I Trust You Still", Miss Simpson, encore "Gossiping"; song, "Friend of Mine", Mr R. Madder, encore , "One of These Days"; song "Bird of Love Divine" Miss Proctor, encore, "Old Fashioned Town"; recitation "Cohen on the Phone", Miss Bailie, encore "Foolish Question"; song, "Pipes of Pan", Miss Simpson, encore "Goodbye";

May 23 Wandering Stock. Senior Constable Tully, prosecuting officer for the Shire of Birchip, proceeded against David Bryce for allowing a bull to wander to the streets of Birchip without being in charge of some competent person. The evidence disclosed that the bull was very fractious and was with great difficulty taken to the pound. Whilst there, it caused damage to the fences. Defendant was fined 10/- with £1.18/- costs

May 27. A Pioneer Passes. One of the old, true-blue pioneers passed suddenly but peacefully from our midst on Saturday evening last, when death claimed Mrs Catherine McNab Green, wife of Mr H. J. Green, of Donald. She was born 67 years ago at Nott's Bridge on the Avoca River, while her parents were on their way to the gold rush at Stawell. She lived at Sheep Hills as a girl before the first selectors came, and was married at the age of 24 to Mr H. J. Green of Stawell. She was one of the oldest pioneers in the district and Mr Geo. Pope is her one remaining schoolmate in this locality. Returning from Stawell to Litchfield when the railway only had been built to St Arnaud, she remained there for 43 years until, about two years ago she came to reside in Donald.

She was the daughter of the late Mr and Mrs Dougall McDougall, and leaves one sister, Mrs Hardingham of Melbourne, who is the one remaining member of a family of fourteen.

On Monday evening the late Mrs Green was suddenly stricken down and remained unconscious until Saturday, when death ensued in the presence of her family.

The deceased lady's demise was most unexpected as she had always been active and of a bright disposition, coming bravely through the hardships of the early days, and seeing her family grown up and well established. The deepest sympathy is felt for her bereaved husband and other members of the family in their irreparable loss.

Mr and Mrs Green reared the following family of eight ; - Thomas Arthur (deceased), James Henry, Mary, John Dougall, Archie, Grace, Henry Allan and Florence. The funeral took place on Sunday afternoon there being a very lengthy cortege. The coffin bearers were Messrs. John Green, H. Green, and James Green (cousin of Morton Plains), R. Warne (cousin of Watchem), James Jones and Fred Armstrong (nephew of Avoca). The pall-bearers were Messrs. G.A. Pope, Geo. Richards, C. Richards, E. McCallum, C. Dunn and Cr McPherson. The Rev. Billings conducted a service at the private residence, and at the graveside and the funeral arrangements were carried out by Mr W. Bandy.

May 30 A Midnight Mishap. Residents living in the vicinity of the Hammill Street railway crossing were startled at hearing a loud crash followed by a stony silence, during the dead of night on Sunday last. Messrs R. Pace and J.A. Mc Kay rose from their beds to investigate the cause of the disturbance, and found that two visitors from Charlton, who had been returning thither per medium of a motor bike and sidecar, had come to grief on the roadway. The nose of the sidecar had struck a tree growing in the gutter beside the Showground fence, and had precipitated both rider and passenger to the metal with terrific force. The sidecar was dislodged, and had shot along the road for a further twenty yards. The disabled travellers appeared to be in a bad way, and Mr McKay's car was requisitioned to take them to receive medical attention, the passenger's injuries necessitating the insertion of stiches in the scalp.

.

.