



## **BULOKE BULLETIN NO. 325 JUNE 2024**

Enquiries for May Sandra Hodgson is the granddaughter of Walter and Florence Renfrey who lived in Donald in the 1940s. Walter worked on the Shire and died suddenly in 1943, aged 52. Sandra wanted information on the family, and our Donald Times indexes had plenty of entries for Walter and Florence and their five children for the short time that they lived in Donald.

Maria Sandbach is descended from William Davenport Hart, who settled at Watchem in the 1890s, eventually setting up as a Saddler and agent. Prior to this he had been a saddler in Cobden and before this a pastoralist on the Roper River on the Gulf of Carpentaria. William's father, Augustus was part of a group of farmers and their families who were enticed to travel on three ships to settle on the North West Coast of Australia at the Camden Harbour Colonisation Project in 1865. The scheme was ill-fated. An article in the Donald Times from July 30, 1929 tells part of the story of these unfortunate settlers. Maria came searching for family history and found a very well-researched file in the Donald Archives, as there had been previous enquiries. Ron Falla had followed up all leads for the Hart family and it was all there for Maria to peruse. Maria visited the Watchem cemetery, where William Davenport Hart and his wife, formerly Janet Mitchell, are buried. Maria thoroughly enjoyed her visit to the Donald Archives and rang back the following weekend to thank us.

Pauline O'Brien, nee Boorn contacted us. Pauline is descended from John Boorn and Jane Pole and has connections to both Corack East and Avon Plains. Pauline was disappointed that she missed out on the recent Pole family gathering in Donald as she has been researching her branch of the family for some time. Pauline, who has visited our archives in the past, purchased the Corack East Selectors Booklet and "The Cream of Corack" book to assist with her research. The Archives has been presented with a copy of "The Descendants of James and Mary Pole" compiled by Peter and Dorothy Rodgers. It makes for fascinating reading as many of the descendants still live within 50 km of Donald.

Peter Gissing wishes to research the family of Michael Furey Kean and his wife, Catherine Elizabeth O'Reilly, who both emigrated from Galway. Michael and Catherine were first recorded in the Donald Times Index in 1890 and Michael was said to have been a Railway worker. They lived at one stage in the Gatehouse, probably at the now removed McCulloch St crossing, as it was said to be the one nearest the town. The Kean daughters, Miss Mary and Miss Maggie were drapers in Donald for many years. Miss Mary started at The Beehive stores in 1912. She then set up her own business in one of the shops on the site where B.M. Basset later built (now Bev's Baubles). When Basset demolished the shops in 1920, Mary moved her business into 84 Woods St and remained there until she retired to Geelong in 1938. Mary also purchased the old Town Hall in 1925 (now the bakery) and remodelled the front of it so that it became a shop with display windows. One of the Kean sons, John, was a coach builder, blacksmith and Wheelwright. He raised his family in Donald and died here in 1951. Miss Mary and Miss Maggie didn't marry. Another son, Celestine Kean, started with W.H. Gray in Donald and eventually became a Real Estate Agent in Geelong.

Vivienne Davidson contacted us regarding the cairn, which is placed near the spot where Donald's first building, "The Shanty at the Bridge", was first erected. The cairn has been relocated, with Vivienne's blessing, by the new owners of the land and Vivienne and her cousin, John Meyer have discussed a possible addition to the cairn. They have collaborated with Brian Brasier and have come up with the following wording to be discussed at the June 11th History Society meeting.

*Johann August MEYER 1830 – 1897 Founder of Donald*

*J.A. Meyer migrated from Holstein, Germany in 1854 and for the next ten years he conducted stores on a number of Victorian goldfields. In 1861 he married Charlotte Bennetto at Navarre. They had a family of four sons and a daughter.*

*In 1864 he established a shanty-store near the then-site of the Richardson bridge. Soon afterwards the bridge was moved some distance downstream and Meyer shifted his store to the site now occupied by the Mt Jeffcott Hotel in Wood Street. This store was the first building in Donald.*

*He played a very prominent role in the growing community as a storekeeper, builder, butcher, hotelier, postmaster, Shire Councillor, Masonic Lodge member and Justice of the Peace. He was credited with providing vital financial assistance to many struggling selectors.*

*This Cairn, which marked the position of Meyer's first shanty, was relocated to this position in 2024 by the Donald History Society.*

The recent death of famous radio DJ and broadcaster, Bob Rogers, put Donald on the map, and many articles have been written about him in the past few weeks. In short, Bob was probably an early version of Molly Meldrum, in his promotion of modern music. The following is about Bob Rogers' connection with Donald.

Bob's father, Will "Freddie" Rogers was an Englishman who came to Australia in 1908. He formed a share farming partnership with Bert Trollope from Cope Cope. Freddie enlisted in the First World War from there. He served in France and whilst visiting England, met and married Winifred Fearon. In 1919, Freddie and his nineteen year old War bride came to Australia via a 9 week voyage by ship and then travelled by train to the Cope Cope Railway Siding where they were met and made welcome by Mr. Trollope. Freddie and Winifred had 3 children, Barbara, Bob and John. All were born in Donald, probably at Ivanhoe Hospital. Bob was born in 1926 and by then the Rogers family had their own Soldier settlement block in Rich Avon West.

Winifred claims that on a visit to an Eye specialist in Melbourne, in 1929, she paid a visit to the Education Department to ask for a teacher in her district as her daughter, Barbara was then 9 years old. She was told that if she could get fourteen children to attend then a teacher would be sent. She said "This I did and the school was held in the unlined Supper Room of our local (Rich Avon) Hall". This was in 1930 and two years later the Rich Avon East School was established two miles from the Rogers farm. This was where Bob Rogers went to school.

The Traynors Lagoon sports day in October 1937 is written up on the front page of The Donald Times on the 29<sup>th</sup> October. The seven Schools competing were Cope Cope, Gre Gre Nth, Marnoo East, Traynors Lagoon, Avon Plains, Rich Avon East and Gre Gre South and it is interesting to note the names that Bob Rogers, who won several running events, competed with and against. The students from the Rich Avon East school, who were placed in events are: John Rogers, Marjorie Summerhayes, Bob Geddes, K. (Shirley?) Inglis, Bill Laing, Una Pope, Elva Boak, Joyce Laing, Kevin Bunworth, Margaret Evans, Edna Geddes, A. Barber and Allan Boak. One Jack Penfold from Cope Cope ran against John Rogers in the Under 8 boys race.

The Rogers family left Rich Avon in 1940 but two years later it was announced in the Donald Times 5<sup>th</sup> May, 1942 that Bob had been appointed apprentice at the Donald powerhouse. He only stayed a month. Two years later he was a junior announcer at 3XY and his very successful career was launched.

## **Blasts from the Past- June 1924**

### **June 3<sup>rd</sup>. Kicks and Bounces**

#### **Cope Cope**

Humphries - Cope's most valuable man on the day.

Penny - a slippery centre man.

Murray - a heavyweight who will improve with every game.

Bartholomew - a solid block, who uses his weight fairly and kicks splendidly.

Tyson - took a lot of knocks and came up smiling.

Harris - a promising colt

P. Coats - hard to beat.

#### **Litchfield- Carron.**

Power - should be "Tower", good in the air and solid in the ruck.

Perrett - a high-flyer with plenty of weight. Will be one of the best in the Association if he keeps cool

E. Boschen- useful in any position.

Glen - very nippy, and plays with rare judgement

Forty - a likely looking man with the right dash.

**June 6<sup>th</sup>. Rich Avon.** There is no mistaking the popularity of the dances which are being held in the Rich Avon Hall, no less than seventy-five couples being present at the last evening which took place on Saturday, May 24. Needless to say, the hall accommodation was taxed to the utmost, but this did not deter the pleasure-seekers from enjoying themselves. The committee has decided to enlarge the hall, which, when completed will be a credit to the district. The contractors (Messrs Small Bros. of Donald), are pushing on with the work in their usual energetic manner, so that the next dance will be uninterrupted, and all will be able to take full advantage of the extra floor space.

**June 10<sup>th</sup>. Draughts Club Formed.** A pleasant evening was spent at Mr W. A. Morgan's office on Wednesday last, those present thoroughly enjoying the play (both draughts and chess) which took place. It was finally decided to form a club, the membership fee being fixed at 1/-. Tonight (Tuesday) members and intending members are invited to Messrs. Dalgety and Co.'s office, when further games will be played and officers will be elected.

**June 13<sup>th</sup>. Is your Letter Box ready?** Regarding the new postal regulations coming into force on 1<sup>st</sup> July next, which require householders to provide receptacles for their correspondence delivered by postmen, all occupants concerned are reminded that unless they comply with the conditions prescribed, before 1<sup>st</sup> July 1924, deliveries of their correspondence by postmen will be discontinued on that date and will not be resumed until letter boxes have been installed.

**June 17<sup>th</sup>. Accidents.** Master Lester McCoy, son of the Rev. McCoy, met with an accident to his knee on Sunday afternoon, through slipping on the floor of the Parish Hall. Medical advice was obtained, and it was considered that the ligaments of the knee had been torn. It was also recommended that he should undergo X-ray examination whither he went yesterday afternoon.

While playing in the yard of his home on Friday evening Master Lindsay Hickey, son of Donald's bandmaster Mr J. Hickey, fell to the ground and injured his shoulder. Medical aid was summoned, and it was discovered that his collarbone had been broken.

**June 20<sup>th</sup>. Personal.** Friends of Miss J. Reseigh of Walker Street, Donald, will be pleased to learn that she is progressing very well after her recent operation which she underwent in Melbourne, after being on a holiday trip to Deniliquin (N.S.W.). They will be wishing her a speedy return to health.

**June 24<sup>th</sup>. An Unfounded Rumour.** Towards noon yesterday, it was reported that a large number of hares had been allowed to escape from the racecourse enclosure. Several of the club members hurried to the course, found that such was not the case and that everything was intact.

**June 27. A pleasant evening.** On Friday last a concert and dance took place in the Memorial Hall, and was a great success, both socially and financially. The fixture was held under the auspices of the Donald H.E. School, and the attendance numbered about 200 students and 100 adults. The lighting of the Hall was carried out in the school colours by Mr Crighton. Proceedings consisted of games, competitions and supper for the children, followed by a dance in which their elders participated. The organiser of the evening (Mr C.W. Gooden) wishes to thank all those ladies and gentlemen, together with the local troop of the Boy Scouts, who assisted in making the function so enjoyable.

*(Mr.F.J.Crighton was an Engineer from the Donald Light Station. Mr. C.W. Gooden formed a Scouts troop in Donald in January, 1924).*