



BULOKE BULLETIN NO. 329 OCTOBER 2024

Enquiries for September

There have been very few enquiries for September. Someone who had contacted us before was hoping that we could provide further information on her family, but we can only find what was reported in the papers at the time, so were unable to help.

A second enquiry has come from Graham Cutts, whose forebear was Joseph E Cutts. Joseph was born in Retford, Nottinghamshire, UK in 1848. He came to Australia with his parents in 1852 and married in Ballarat in 1868. His 9 sons and 2 daughters were born in various towns around Western Victoria, including Miners Rest, Ararat, Donald, Charlton, Birchip and Wycheproof. Joseph started a store in Corack in 1890, expanding quickly to own stores at Birchip and Wycheproof. He employed relatives, his second cousins, to manage his stores during the 1890s and in 1905 the successful merchant bought 3146 acres close to Donald which was formerly part of the 8000 acre Beulah Estate. This was to be Joseph's retirement property, but he only stayed for 3 years and died in Geelong in 1919.

Joseph was responsible for putting the name "Retford Park" on the property, but when he left and sold it to the Mulligan family who changed name to "Ivynook Dairy". In 1935, Bob Falla bought the property and reinstated the name "Retford Park". A wrought iron sign bearing this name was attached to the front of the house, which was later owned by George, and then Kevin Falla.

During the 1990s, the old house was demolished and Kevin Falla said that he nailed the "Retford Park" sign to the shearing shed to save it. David James now owns a house on this property and James Doak owns the land, opposite the buspark at the Donald High School. The property formerly owned by Lindsay Broughton in Aitken Avenue was also part of this land. It is very satisfying to solve the mystery of the name "Retford Park", and one wonders whether the old sign has survived somewhere.

Below are two pictures of the house known as the house known as "Retford Park" and lived in by George Falla and family in the 1960s. It was originally a farmhouse, so it would be hard to trace when it was built. We'd love to hear from anyone who could help with this.



Blasts from the Past- October 1924

October 3. Well-known St Arnaud Resident Injured. Many friends will be sorry to learn that Mr. William Reither, of Gre Gre Village, met with a serious accident at the Navarre Road railway crossing on Monday at about noon. Mr Reither was driving into St Arnaud in a single seated buggy with a consignment of cream. He was approaching the crossing when the No. 12 goods train from Donald came along. The engine-driver blew the whistle of the engine which startled the horse. The animal turned sharply to the right and jumped into the cattle pit. The back of the buggy was struck by the train with considerable force, Mr Reither being thrown some distance into a drain. The buggy was completely wrecked. Several people in the vicinity rushed to the scene of the accident. It was seen that Mr Reither was seriously injured and was unconscious. Examination at the hospital showed that Mr Reither was much cut and bruised about the body and head and his ribs were fractured. His condition is serious. The goods train crew consisted of Messrs C. Morrison (driver), J. Whittaker (fireman) and W. Fell (guard).

October 10. Corack East. On Tuesday evening, a large gathering of local residents assembled at the Mechanics Institute and tendered a social evening and "kitchen tea" to Miss F. Proctor. An enjoyable evening, consisting of songs, recitations, games and dancing, provided a lengthy fund of enjoyment. Music was supplied by Misses Ryan, Cockfield, Sands and McCallum and Messrs McPharlane, Ryan and Proctor. Many useful and valuable kitchen utensils were received. Mr E. Sands, in proposing the health of the guest Miss Proctor, made reference to her popularity, and hoped that her new role would not prevent her from

assisting in social functions as she had done in the past. Mr. R. L. Madder briefly responded.

October 14. P & A Society meeting. Hay Stack competition. Messrs. H.S. Pope and G.J. Richards moved that the haystack competition be again included in the Society's programme for the year. Mr. Allen Cumming thought they should insert a clause to the effect that stacks exhibited must be built by the exhibitor or members of his family. This would prevent anyone from procuring the services of an expert stack-builder merely for the purpose of winning a "fiver". Mr. H.S. Pope agreed to the addition of this qualification and the motion was carried.

October 17. Personal. The friends of Mrs. Mehrens will regret to hear of her unfortunate accident on Wednesday evening. Slipping on the ramp at the rear of her residence, she fell to the ground and sustained a broken ankle. Medical aid was immediately summoned, and, although the injury is very painful, she is now doing as well as can be expected in the circumstances.

October 21. An Impromptu Meeting. At the local saleyards on Saturday afternoon a meeting was called together by Mr. H. J. Green for the purpose of discerning the feeling of farmers on the subject of the compulsory wheat pool. The meeting could not by any stretch of imagination be called a representative one, but was rendered fairly interesting by the occurrence of one or two heated arguments. After some delay, a show of hands was taken and as far as could be judged, 23 were for the open market and 14 for the pool.

October 24. Serious Accident. A most regrettable accident occurred on Wednesday morning, as a result of which Mrs. B. L. Parker lies in a serious condition in hospital in Donald. She was driving out from Donald after bringing the children to school, when the horse bolted, finally attempting to jump the trough below the showgrounds. It is surmised that Mrs. Parker was thrown out of the four-wheeled buggy against a tree close by. She was unconscious when picked up and conveyed to the hospital where her condition was immediately recognised as serious, she having suffered severe injuries to the head. No great change to her condition was reported late yesterday afternoon.

October 28. An Early Pioneer. Death of Mr. John Zimmer. Gradually the ranks of the district's hardy and honoured pioneers are being thinned out by the hand of Death, the latest to answer the final great call being Mr. John Zimmer of Watchem. Born 64 years ago at Geelong, he first came to the Donald district with the Baensch family about fifty years ago, he being then a lad of fourteen. A short time afterwards, he selected land at Watchem, where he has resided ever since. He subsequently married Miss Weir of Armagh, Ireland, and reared a family of sons and daughters, who are left to mourn the loss of a parent who was honoured and respected throughout the length and breadth of the district. Though taking no active part in public matters, he was keenly interested in all forms of sport, and,

until a short time ago was president of the Watchem Racing Club. He leaves a family of three sons, Gustav, Isaac and Valentine (Watchem) and Roy (deceased). The daughters are Mrs Pickering (Curyo), Mrs A.C. Walder and Mrs F.C. Blair (Watchem), and the deepest sympathy is extended to the widow and bereaved family. The funeral, which was very largely attended, took place at the Watchem cemetery on Thursday last. The service was conducted by the Rev. T. H. Whitworth of Birchip and the funeral arrangements were in the hands of Mr R.E. Carne.

October 31. Great Snakes. The very latest story of snake precocity comes from Corack, where a dog owned by Mr Sam Madder has established itself as a deadly enemy of all snakes, great and small. Its honourable record includes twenty last season, and twelve up to date during the recent spells of warm weather. Though bitten several times, the animal has put up a stout resistance against the deadly venom, and has won through in a surprising manner, probably becoming to a certain degree inoculated against the virus. Not the least aspect of the story is furnished by the latest development, wherein it is reported that the veteran is training a puppy in the audacious art. Whether the aspiring whelp will be able to withstand the effects of the first slip, which he is sure to make before long, if he takes to snake killing as a favourite hobby, remains to be seen, but he is said to be making an apt understudy, having assisted on several occasions in preventing the reptile from wriggling while his father dealt with the "business end".