

# Leongatha & District HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mechanics' Institute, McCartin St., Leongatha

*Newsletter*

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## *Preserving Our Heritage*

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### **Latest news**

• We have a new President. Robert Sage was elected at the Annual Meeting to be our President for the next 12 months. Thank you to John Hyett for his three years as President and thank you to Robert for taking up the position.

• Research into the local soldiers killed in World War One continues. We have had some success in obtaining photographs from families thanks to *The Star* publishing the list. We still need many more photos.

• Pat, Johanna and Lyn attended the RHSV support group seminar at Sale on July 26<sup>th</sup>. It was a very interesting and informative day. There were many good ideas and a few new workers would really help us implement them. One idea was small self-made booklets with lots of photos.

• A grant was received from the PROV in order to have plaques placed on 10 significant sites. A committee will need to be formed to decide on the sites for the plaques. **Please volunteer**

• **Our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebrations.** On October 12<sup>th</sup> at 12 noon we will have a finger food lunch at the Leongatha Mechanics' Institute to celebrate the Society's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary. The first President was John Murphy, Vice President Mrs Roughead, Secretary Chas Rogers and Treasurer Hubert Potter. **Please come along to this event. Members are asked to bring a plate of food to contribute to the lunch. Please let Pat or Lyn know what you are bringing.**

## **The President's report**

In this, the 50<sup>th</sup> year of the Historical Society I am honoured as President to have the chance to look back and review the last 12 months of the society.

Firstly we should pay homage to those far-sighted people who, 50 years ago, thought fit to form the Leongatha and District Historical Society and set about methodically preserving the history of the district. Without their forethought much of the early history would have been lost. Especial thanks should go to the founding President of the Society, John Murphy, who celebrated his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday earlier this year. One has only to look at his body of published works to get a glimpse of the passion John has had for the history of the area and to realise how much of the history of the area he has preserved for future generations. We thank you John.

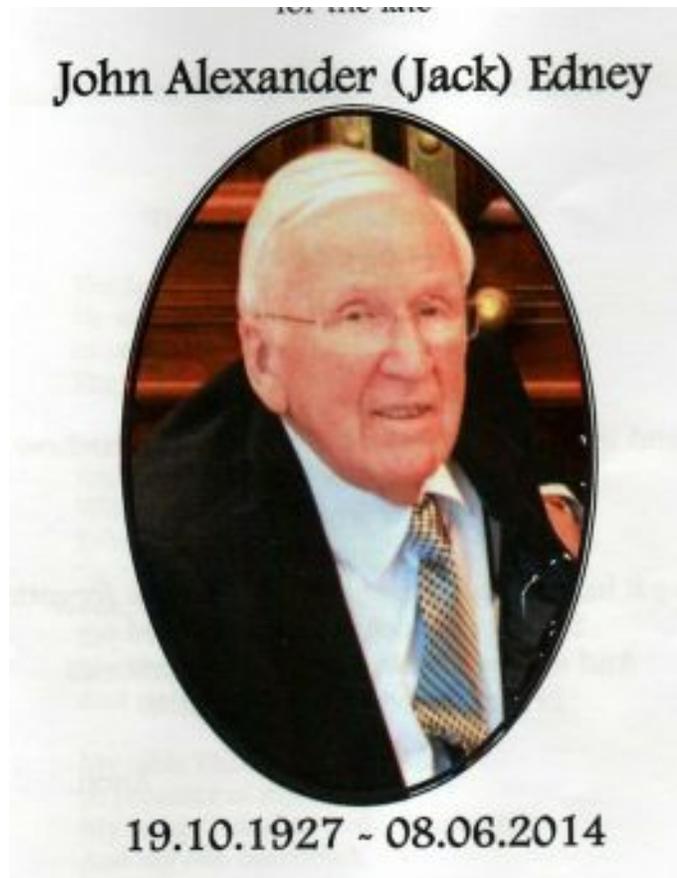
It is with sadness that we mark the passing of two members of the Society during the last year; our thoughts are with the families of Jack Edney and Margret Kindellen

There are many highlights to recall during the past 12 months some of which I will relate and hope you will excuse me if I have missed anything - during this time we have;

- Adopted a new set of model rules in accordance with the Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012
- Conducted a successful Shingler Memorial Lecture with an interesting talk by our guest speaker, Patrick Morgan, on the Mysteries of Gippsland. Our congratulations and thanks to the organising committee who put a lot of hard work and many hours into organising the event.
- Enjoyed some interesting and informative talks by guest speakers, including Marg Turra, an eighth generation Gippslander on her family involvement in the region, Ian Rasmussen on the history of table tennis in Leongatha and Jack Embleton who spoke at the Anzac Day dinner.
- Had another enjoyable Christmas end of year lunch and again thanks are due to Pat and Jim for making their home available.
- Received a couple of grants for the installation of the fans and for the provision of historical plaques to be placed around the town, although the grant application to honour the World War 1 soldiers of the district is still under consideration almost 12 months after being lodged.
- Held two interesting exhibitions, hosting the Vic Roads centenary exhibition and a changing exhibition on the Pioneers of the district. Thanks to all those who contributed.
- We have worked with the tourist railway people, conducting walking tours of the town centre for their passengers, which have been well received.
- A vote of thanks should be given to the small band of volunteers who open the society rooms every Thursday and Friday afternoon – I don't get in as much as I would like but when I do I see the same faces again and again. If any of you can spare four hours of a Thursday or Friday, maybe as little as once a month, to help it would be much appreciated. The Society could not exist without the hours put in behind the scenes by a few people and I'm sure they would love a bit of assistance.

Our esteemed Secretary has picked up another honour for her work, this year receiving an award from the Gippsland Association of Affiliated Historical Societies for her significant regional contribution to history. Congratulations Lyn and keep up the good work in the agitation to keep and expand the Gippsland Archives at the recently amalgamated Federation University at Churchill. Victoria doesn't stop east of Ballarat.

I have enjoyed these last three years as president of the Society but I think it is now time to step aside and pass the job over to someone in a better position to fulfil the more public face of the role and I, along with all of us, look forward to another interesting and productive year for the Society.



## **Vale Jack Edney**

We were very sorry to hear of the passing of our dear member Jack Edney. Jack had a great knowledge of the local area's history and made a valuable contribution to our Society.

The following is a summary of the eulogy given by his son Ian.

John Alexander Edney was born on October 19<sup>th</sup> 1927 to Charley and Olive Edney. From birth John was always known as Jack. This was in honour of his father's older brother, John Edward Edney, also known as Jack. Uncle Jack died before Dad was born, unfortunately killed in action on July 19<sup>th</sup> 1916 on the first day of that terrible battle on the Western Front at Fromelle in Fleurbaix France.

Jack was the eldest of 4 children. He had one sister Barbara who died as an infant of an asthma attack, and two younger brothers, Allan and Charles who were in the congregation at the funeral.

Jack had a happy childhood, fondly recalling family gatherings and visits to his Fairbank farm of his grandparents', Alexander and Mary-Ann Calder. These were depression years and children amused themselves making their own fun, usually outdoors.

Jack attended Leongatha Primary and Leongatha High School and two years ago he enjoyed the High School's centenary celebrations as one of the oldest former students. He completed his secondary education as a boarder at Caulfield Grammar.

On leaving school Jack joined the Bank of Australasia and worked in the Gippsland area. One of his more lengthy postings was to Bairnsdale. No doubt the skills he developed with the bank over a couple of years became an important foundation for his return to Leongatha where he became office manager

in his father's garage business, which had been established in about 1925

In his twenties, the church youth fellowship group provided another social scene for Jack. It was there he met Joy Timmins. Joy had returned to Leongatha after completing secondary school to work at the Woorayl Shire Council. They danced their way into each other's hearts. Jack and Joy were married on October 10<sup>th</sup> 1953 and celebrated their 60<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary last year. They moved into their new cream brick home at 10 O'Neill St and established a beautiful garden. In 1969 they built a new house at 70 Turner St and established a new garden.

In time also came the extending of the family. Kathryn was born in 1955 and Ian in 1957. Life centred around O'Neill St in the early years of married life with a new street, full of enthusiastic newly wed homemakers with young children. Keith and Millie Wightman, Bob and Yvonne Leslie, David and Margaret Eakins and Les and Margaret Longmore formed an immediate lifelong bond. Even Kim Wells, a recent Victorian Treasurer lived in the street as a child

Meanwhile Jack was working hard in the family garage business. With his father, and brother Allan, together they built Edney's Garage into a leading South Gippsland motor business. From the original Ford franchise the business moved to BMC, British Leyland and later also added the Nissan franchise.

The original Leongatha taxi business was also run through the Garage, meaning Dad was often multi tasking after hours. Shortly after gaining his driving licence Jack had the great thrill of collecting military personal regularly from the railway station and driving them to the secret base at Wilson's Promontory.

The business included a busy workshop, tow truck and panel beating business and the RACV. This lead to a lot of afterhours work. The Golden Fleece service station was also a large part of the Edney family life. Ian can well remember Sunday mornings with Jack offering to "fill er up? super or standard, and shall I check the oil, battery, water and tyres or do your windscreen?"

The garage was also the stockiest for Malvern Star Bicycles and it was through this that Jack started his interest in the local Cycle Club. As a founding member early Cycle Club meetings were held at the garage. Jack's commitment to the cycling club continued despite that fact that he never rode for the club. He was the inaugural Treasurer and remained in that position for 40 years. He was thrilled and humbled to be awarded a life membership of the Leongatha Cycle Club and the volunteer of the year from Cycling Australia in 1998. The cycle club commitment resulted in Jack being awarded the "Australian Sports Medal" in 2000 commemorating Australian Sporting achievement. This was not bad for a man whose only "sport" was gardening.

Jack was always very community spirited. He never sought the spotlight but wanted to help wherever he could. He took an active role as: -

- a founding of Leongatha Technical School
- as an office bearer for both the Jaycee and Lions Club
- as President of the Woorayl Lodge Committee.
- as a member of the Leongatha Chamber of Commerce
- as secretary of the Leongatha Cemetery Trust for 40 years

For all his service he was awarded the Woorayl Shire Citizen of the Year in 1981

After retiring in 1979 Jack retired and at first he worked in his brother Charles' law firm in Elsternwick but then he and Joy took on a new adventure. The establishment of "The Tiny Bric a Brac Shoppe" gave them so much pleasure. Jack loved the numerous buying trips abroad, and within Australia. From humble beginnings to accommodating double containers shipped from England the antiques shop finally closed. In Joy's words "the proprietors had become antiques themselves".

After finally retiring Jack and Joy had more time for their grand children who all called Jack “Backy”. The grandchildren have wonderful memories of visiting Turner St. Jack and Joy, at 77 designed and constructed a new home and they lived happily at 22 Church St for 9 years. Jack took an active role in Probus, the Leongatha Historical Society and ‘The Men’s Shed”.

Jack spent much time with the help of others clearing and tidying the Leongatha Cemetery and making it something to be proud of and now he is to be laid to rest within its confines.

Jack had a wonderful life and we thank Ian for this eulogy. Thank you Jack for your time and in many cases your information and memorabilia.

**A copy of Ian’s entire eulogy is available at the Society rooms**

## **Surveyors article number 1 by Ian Lester**

Surveyor’s chain



A surveyor’s chain is a device for measuring linear distance; it is 1 chain or 22 yards long. This old English measure is 66 feet or 792 inches approximating to 20 metres in the metric measure. There are 100 links in a chain, which makes each link 7.92 inches long. The chain has a swivelling brass handle on each end and two additional swivels along its length to help prevent the chain twisting during use. Brass markers along the chain indicate 10 links, the markers 1 point for 10 links, 2 points for 20 links, 3 points for 30 links, 4 points for 40 links, a circular disc for 50 links and then 4 points for 60 links, 3 points for 70 links, 2 links for 80 links and 1 point for 90 links. The chain was operated by a chainmen, who were part of the surveying party. Other members of the group were axemen who cleared a path for the team to follow thus allowing a clear view from one survey point to the next. There were also cooks to provide meals and other men responsible for the transporting and erecting of tents and camping equipment mostly using packhorses. A qualified surveyor lead the party with an assistant who was responsible for calculations using the chain, a theodolite and staff and trigonometry to achieve the desired result. Survey chains were frequently used to calculate area, 1 acre = 10 square chains or 4840 square yards.

Survey teams marked out towns, roads and railways and confirmed the location of selector’s blocks of land. This ensured each had access to reliable water and their wider community. This process was responsible for opening up land for European settlement and was the basis for the development of South Gippsland.

Some significant surveyors in South Gippsland were John Lardner, G T McDonald, O P Whitelaw and Lydiard. We owe much to these men. In future editions of the newsletter we will have articles about these surveyors.

G T McDonald surveyed and cleared a track from Lang Lang to Hearn's Oak west of Morwell in 1862. Originally designed as a stock route it basically followed the spine of the Strzelecki Ranges. This was not successful due to lack of permanent water and fell out of use. As early settlers came to South Gippsland many followed McDonald's track before branching off to their selections particularly in the Poowong area. Many present day roads, which follow the route, are still called McDonald's Track.



The tracks of Gippsland 1870s. *From Mountain Forests of Gippsland* by Phyllis Reichl

**Exhibitions** Currently we are setting up two displays, one on the centenary of The Red Cross and one on World War 1. Photographs, documents and memorabilia on both subjects will be on display. This exhibition will open on for the Daffodil Festival

## We need new members

The Society needs new members to help with all our activities. We need our members to ask others to join. We need local people to come to functions and to join committees such as the one to be set up to work on the plaques project.

- We have an active **Facebook** page. Yes for those who do not know anything about social media we have a Facebook page on the Internet. We have been placing a great range of photos up on the site and over 5000 people have opened the page. The most popular photo so far has been one of Danny Van Der Burgh taken at the old outdoor pool. Hopefully we will get some new members and helpers from this page

## Membership for 2014-15 is now due

Leongatha and District Historical Society  
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Leongatha 3953

Name.....

Address .....

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Email address .....

I do not wish to have my contact details passed on to any other group

Family \$35

Single \$25

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Your donation is be most appreciated

