



Leongatha & District HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mechanics' Institute, McCartin St., Leongatha

Newsletter

Volume 11 Number 2 2014

Preserving Our Heritage

President: John Hyett

Secretary: Lyn Skillern Tel 56686304

Tel: Society number: 56622492. The Society rooms are open Thursdays and Fridays between 12 noon and 4pm

Email: leongathahistsoc@yahoo.com.au

Website: www.leongathahistory.org.au

P O Box 431 Leongatha 3953

Latest news

• The Victorian local history grants.

We were successful in receiving a grant to place plaques on historic buildings and features. The plan for the use of the money will be made in the near future

• Walking tours

This year we have been involved in taking 3 historic walking tours in the town centre. The participants came on the tourist railway from Korumburra and spent an hour looking at historic sites and visiting the Mechanics' Institute. Thank you to Geoff Michael and Lyn Skillern for taking the tours and Pat Spinks and Lola Bailey for opening the Mechanics' Institute and talking to visitors

• The Annual Meeting 2014

This will be held on Wednesday August 6th. The guest speaker will be Colin McKenzie McHarg who will talk about his family history.

• The Gippsland History awards

On Saturday May 17th Gippsland Historians Dr Meredith Fletcher and Lyn Skillern were presented with awards for their outstanding contribution to the recording and publishing of the history of Gippsland. Marion Holding of Lakes Entrance was also given a well-deserved award for her work in preserving and promoting the history of the Lakes Entrance area. Meredith Fletcher was the coordinator of the Centre for Gippsland Studies for many years and has written a number of books and articles on a variety of subjects including a biography of noted Gippsland botanist and gardener Jean Galbraith. Lyn Skillern is our secretary and the secretary of the South Gippsland Historical Network. She has written extensively about the history of secondary education, the impact of war on the local area and the pioneering days of South Gippsland.



Meredith Fletcher, Marion Holding and Lyn Skillern with the awards they received at Old Gipps town

Feature article

Making comparisons McCartin Street by Lyn Skillern

I came to Leongatha in February 1972 to take up my position at Leongatha High. I could never have dreamt back then that I would still be here all these years later. It was an interesting time, a time of mini shirts and men with long hair. I taught Geography and as part of the curriculum we studied how functions varied according to the population of a settlement. It was therefore appropriate that, in 1973, Rob and I took a series of photographs around Leongatha illustrating some of the town's functions. It is very interesting to look back at these and see how things have changed.

Back then McCartin St had parking in the middle of the road and there were no trees at least in the shopping area. The original National Bank remained until 1977 and Permuwans supermarket was where the electrical goods store is now located.

Streetscapes change all the time and it would be good if more photographs could be taken



McCartin St showing the central parking, Materia's fruit shop (originally a bank and saddlers) the National Bank, Permewans and Smiths as Hammer Hardware



McCartin Street c1900 from the other direction showing the early bank as a saddler and the first National Bank, which was demolished in 1977. The coffee palace is still standing where Gollers store was later built. That site is now a florist.



McCartin Street 2014 with trees and side angle parking.

The McCartin name has been synonymous with Leongatha from the very beginning. It is interesting that the two main streets of Leongatha were named after the first two proprietors of the towns only hotels. Hugh McCartin was born in Rostrevor Ireland in 1842. He and his brother Daniel arrived in Victoria in around 1860. The brother came to Gippsland to work as contractors on the Mirboo North Railway and saw a future in the region. Hugh McCartin started stores at the Black Spur camp at Koonwarra, Tarwin and Meeniyan. These stores supplied the railway navvies and local selectors. The selectors were supplied with packhorses by McCartin. Hugh must have thought there was something in the location of Leongatha/Koorooman because he attended the first land sale in Melbourne on April 2nd 1889 and purchased a corner block with the idea of building a hotel. Robert Bair had the same idea and purchased the site for his hotel at the second sale on June 18th 1889. He had been born in Londonderry in 1837 and made money in the gold fields in New Zealand. He named his hotel *The Otago* because of the New Zealand connection. The Bair family continued to run the hotel until the 1990s.

The two hotels were built in 1890 and were noted landmarks in the town from then on to the present day. The original Otago hotel was demolished and replaced with the art deco building we now see. McCartins has been altered considerably but the name McCartins Hotel continues to be used even though the McCartin family have long since ceased to own the business.

What happened to the sundial?

A memorial to Hugh McCartin was located in the front garden of the Woorayl Memorial Hospital. It was a small white cement fluted column topped by a metal sundial and with tablet attached to a stone. Only the base remains.

Hugh McCartin lived in Leongatha in a house called *Rostrevor* after his home town in Ireland. He contributed to many organisations and served twice as the Shire President. Hugh died in 1923 and is buried in the Leongatha Cemetery. His wife Annie died in 1911 and is buried in Leongatha as well.

**An Obituary appeared in the Melbourne Argus
The Argus
Melbourne, Victoria
May 22 1911**

**Passed away peacefully on the 20th of May,
at "Rostrevor" Leongatha, Annie, the beloved
wife of Hugh McCartin, RIP.**

Quiz

Are you Street wise? By Rob Skillern

- 1. What street in the town centre was named after an early Shire Secretary?**
- 2. What street was named after the second head teacher of Leongatha State School?**
- 3. Which street was once called Corduroy lane?**
- 4. What street is named after the discoverer of coal at Coal Creek?**
- 5. What was Mr Callaway's occupation?**
- 6. What Street was named after a Lt Colonel killed at Kokoda?**
- 7. What street was named after an early plumber?**
- 8. What street was named after the founder of the Great Southern Star?**
- 9. What Street was named after pioneers who also surveyed with Lardner?**
- 10. What Society member has a lane named after her and her late husband?**

Research

We are often asked to do research for various organisation and individuals. Recently we were asked to update the information on local Mechanics' Institutes. Here is the story of Milford Hall

Milford Hall

Social history

Milford Public Hall all was erected on land donated by Thomas Harrison in 1906. Milford State School No. 3565 was conducted in the building from 1907 to 1928 when it closed due to insufficient numbers. In 1934 a mens' room was added to the main hall and ladies' cloakroom. In 1935 honorary secretary H Cordery responded to a Health Department demand that certain improvements be made to the building within two months by unsuccessfully requesting that these be waived. The committee did not have the money to carry out the required improvements as the bank would not extend on the overdraft and the committee received limited income from hall use as there were three other competing halls within a four mile radius. The Hall was used each Sunday for a church service and the occasional entertainment. The money must have been found as the required works were carried out. In 1936 the 'Milford Mechanics' Institute library' received a government library grant. The building was destroyed by fire in 1938 and a new one erected. The school re-opened in the new building in 1939 as a half-time school with Fish Creek West. In 1945-46 the 'Milford Mechanics' Institute library' received a grant of £9. In 1946 the hall was still being used in part by the school. The hall was not often used and fell into disrepair. It was finally demolished and the land used as a car park for the CFA who have a station opposite.

Denis Maher

Last week we had a visit from another descendent of Denis Maher, the man who was the first recorded burial in the cemetery. They were pleased to be able to go to the house on the corner of Jeffery and Long Streets, which was, in the 1890s, Mrs Maher's Coffee Palace. They were also able to visit Denis Maher's grave something they had been looking forward to for some time.

Advertisements from The Star



The New Roadster. In beauty of line and colour, few cars at any price are more attractive.

Adding new beauty to outstanding performance

This opinion of seasoned motorists is overwhelmingly in favour of the advanced modern design and the unusual strength and safety of the improved Ford models. Low fuel consumption, long life and slow depreciation are economy features that make a definite appeal to the thrifty owner, while in appearance the New Ford Body Styles have set a new standard of beauty for low-priced cars.

Graceful, flowing lines; colours that are strikingly attractive; smaller, sturdier wheels, and gleaming rustless steel for radiator shell, headlamps, hub-caps and other exposed metal parts, are among the many refinements presented in the new Ford designs.

Ford riding comfort—already famous—has been still further improved. Deeper cushions, special upholstery, and Houdaille double-acting hydraulic shock absorbers all make for added comfort.

A fully-enclosed six-brake system operating on all four wheels, stops the car smoothly and silently under all conditions of grade, road or weather.

We suggest that you study these and other Ford features at your leisure from behind the wheel. We should be glad to place a car at your disposal, entirely without obligation.

Easiest terms of payment under the New Ford Purchase Plan. Any make of car or truck traded in.

C. EDNEY, **Agent Leongetha**



"For National Economy"

Above is an advertisement for Edneys who sold Fords
On the next page is one for Knights who sold Chevrolets

These car dealerships still exist but the types of cars are different. The American cars are no longer and we have cars from Japan.

SENSATIONAL NEW FEATURES
and Beautiful Body Styling

NEW 1936 CHEVROLET

Chevrolet brings you all the good things of motoring at motoring's lowest cost. Check over its new features, and you'll be amazed such value could be offered. Brilliant body-styling, unbeatable performance, increased comfort and many new safety features including perfected Hydraulic Brakes and Safety Glass Windscreen. See us about Chevrolet to-day.

- * Beautiful Body Styles
- * Hydraulic Brakes
- * Longer Wheelbase
- * Box Type Frame
- * High Compression Engine
- * Safety Glass Windscreen



U. V. KNIGHT, DEALER NO. 2-12

Answers to the Quiz

- 1 Michael Place
2. Jeffrey
- 3 Long,
- 4 Shingler,
- 5 Shire engineer,
- 6 Owen,
- 7 Dannock,
- 8 Young,
- 9 Hassett,
- 10 Bailey

Memberships for the Year 2014-2015 will be due at the Annual Meeting