



# Leongatha & District HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mechanics' Institute, McCartin St., Leongatha

*Newsletter*      Volume 8 Number 2 May 2011

## *Preserving Our Heritage*

**President:** Jennifer Hamilton  
**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](mailto:leongathahistsoc@yahoo.com.au)  
**Website:** [www.leongathahistory.org.au](http://www.leongathahistory.org.au)  
**P O Box 431 Leongatha 3953**

### **March**

Sixty- five people from Traralgon and district visited us on March 19th. They had a great day planned and all went well. The group travelled from Traralgon to Foster to see the museum there in the morning and then came on to visit us and enjoy lunch at the RSL. The main purpose of the visit to Leongatha was to see the Clement papers as their next destination was "Tullaree". While time was tight, they did enjoy seeing the documents and photos on the Clement family. Margaret Clement, the Lady of the Swamp, from "Tullaree" lived in Sale as a young child and her father made his money from the Long Tunnel Mine in Walhalla.

### **April**

We had our annual Anzac meal and presentation at the RSL on April 20<sup>th</sup>. Thank you to John Hyett for his excellent talk on his great uncle Fred Bond from French Island. His story is told in this edition

### **May**

Ian Lester has left us for a while and is presently visiting the United Kingdom. One thing he will be doing is meeting up with his old mate Terry Bevington who now lives in Manchester.

### **Feature Article**

#### **One Man's War from a talk by John Hyett**

One Man's War is the story of Fred Bond of French Island. The information was provided by his grand nephew John Hyett and is part of the presentation John gave at the RSL on April 20<sup>th</sup>  
Frederick William Bond was born in Fitzroy in October 1885. His parents were English migrants and his father was a bricklayer by trade. He took up land on French Island 1893 during the depression of the time. This was part of Perseverance Village Settlement Scheme.  
By the age of 14 Fred was working at Bass on the mainland. The family was quite religious and Fred wrote hymns in his youth but as he continued working and moved out of farming into quarrying and mining his views became more left wing.

By the start of the war he had been working underground in the tin mines at Ardlethon in NSW but had taken a contract clearing land. Nature made him a poet but necessity made him a farm labourer. His family has many of the poems, writings and letters he wrote to them.

It is his letters to his sister and extracts from his diary that give us this personal view of the war, the training and the battlefield. He speaks in the language of the time and with many of the prejudices regarding other people and cultures that prevailed then, many of which are no longer acceptable today. I'm pretty sure he would not speak this way today.

The British Empire, including Australia declared war on Germany on the 4<sup>th</sup> August 1914.

Below is his personal account of the war



### **Fred Bond**

This war has affected the mining industry terribly. All the mines are closing down as the European market is affected. Thousands of miners out of work in N.S.W. I hope to get another contract clearing, after this. There is good pay in it and its not hard work & one is their own boss. What do you think of the war? Is it not terrible I will send you some of my views on it? Although I do not believe in it I am not one to shirk while others fight and if they call for volunteers I shall offer myself. We had a Chinaman vegetable hawker from Wyalong yesterday. Quite a treat to get a few vegetables. I asked John what he thought of the war & he said, "War welly bad ting all the same no matter who win many people starve." He is about right. If the drought continues, the country will be in a bad way. The latest news is the Germans are copping it properly good enough for them. Teddy Carl who has had some training in the Australian Light Horse has volunteered for active service. They talk of sending 40 from Ardlethan

It is a great pity in this (so called) enlightened age there is such a thing as war. I am afraid even the

most advanced of the human races are still barbarians. Socialism has no place in its programme for war but unfortunately socialism at present is in the minority. Great leaders and great thinkers believe in & provide for war.

Christianity countenances it, submits to it & prays against it and humanity suffers. Who gains by it? Jews, moneylenders, capitalists, financiers and human sharks of all nations to the detriment of the foolish & long suffering life-giving worker. It is not the rich who feel the pinch of hard times. They can store up against it, those who live from hand to mouth cannot. Because of this blood-sucking struggle for supremacy, the avaricious grasping for riches, pride of place & love of power thousands must go to their death & women & children must mourn & suffer. Surely the lesson taught in the poverty caused by the maintenance of a great army in times of peace should be sufficient to show the folly of it. Fifty millions a year it costs Great Britain in times of peace & the people toil & starve for it. The present war is costing her a million pounds a day for maintenance alone and one of those ships that cost a million might be sunk forever in a few minutes. Truly will the next generation say, "Our parents were still savages"?

Is there one healthy minded soldier who if given his own way would not prefer to stay home with his family? Because a man is an Austrian or a German why should I murder him? May he not be the father of as pretty a child as those of my own countryman? Why does not this enlightened (?) world cry against it?

**September 6** Ellis Post Office & Coffee Palace King St Sydney

Fred joins up and sends his dog to his sister.

Just a few lines, I wrote a letter in the train coming down but I forgot to post it. I hope you got the dog all right. I came down here on Thursday with my mate, and we reported ourselves at Victoria Barracks. There is a lot of red tape business to go through. I think we will be in the 1st Battalion Infantry 2nd contingent. We have been out at the military camp at Kensington every day since drilling etc. We have not been sworn in yet or passed the military doctor but it's only a matter of form as we passed the Govt medical officer at Ardlethan.

I see several chaps have dogs and Darkie would soon be a favourite with all. It is rumored we will be away in a month and that the destination is Aldershot.

There are thousands of men in the camp. As soon as a man is attested & allocated to a company he will tucker with them. At present we get tinned stuff but there seems to be no shortage of good food vegetables etc in the camp and no dissatisfaction

**October 1**

Just a few lines. Some of our kit arrived today. We were fitted out with trousers boots hats putties & great coats. There is great fun in the camp tonight, the chaps putting on their new clothes. There are also some misfits. We have yet to get our shirts tunics belts caps etc.

**November 22**

Your wish with regard to my coming to Melbourne will be gratified as we leave here tomorrow night for Melbourne.

They are trying to get all the men together. They have pickets all over the place. Parties of men have been sent to Sydney to hunt up a few strays who have broken their leave. There is one or two missing from F Coy. I had charge of a picket in the town of Liverpool this morning. We marched all over the place visited all the pubs and took charge of all men in uniform without passes. I arrested 11 altogether and my men half a dozen. The picket escorted them over the bridge & into the camp, in ones, twos & threes as we got them.

We leave 8pm tomorrow night I suppose we will be traveling all night.

**At Sea no date**

I have been successfully vaccinated. Life at sea is a great change after being on land so much and we have plenty of pastimes. I play a lot of draughts and cribbage. There are also cricket matches and tugs of war and concerts as well as boxing, quoits and other games.

I could fill a few pages but I want my letters to reach you. If I put too much news in they will not pass the censor.

I am in good health and having a very good time. I sent you my bankbook. I hope you received it.

I am keeping a brief diary. I have made my will in my soldiers pay book. We all have identification tags (aluminium) on which our name, number, company, battalion and religion are placed.

Trusting you are all well

Love to Mother.

Your brother Fred

P.S. We are allowed to state we called at Colombo

From here Fred's view of the war and his experiences are contained in a diary. The diary is a small one, a week to a page with the chance of a brief summary each week.

**Diary** Embarked S.S.Ulyssies.

Dec 22 1914 Weather fine

Dec 23 Foggy in afternoon

Pay day & Christmas.

Dec 28 Albany Left 31<sup>st</sup>

Jan 1 Funeral at sea, cricket match in afternoon. Men sick. Vomiting and dysentery. Mild weather

Jan 10 Church Parade Reading magazines Draughts & Cards Burial at sea.

Jan 13 Anchored Colombo at breakfast time. Close to pier black divers dive for coins, no parade in afternoon slept below. Chaps getting ashore.

Jan 14 on guard great fun men getting ashore in dozens. Guard reinforced busy all day getting together the stragglers

Jan 15 Off again. Strays put on their own ships. Physical culture. Rifle drill practice section & platoon & company drill. Lecture by Colonel. No afternoon Parade Went to Cairo at night

Feb 12 Reveille at 5.30, field firing. Issued with ammunition but same taken away again tiring day

Feb 23 Foot inspection Long march. Patrol. Home at midnight. very tired

Feb 24 No early morning parade. Trench digging in afternoon

March 23 Field firing an interesting morning. Very hot, home in afternoon Photos of Pyramid group



**Lone Pine Cemetery**

**April**

12<sup>th</sup> arrived Alexandra

13<sup>th</sup> Breakfast on board ship. Left Alexandria midday

14<sup>th</sup> issued with 200 rounds of ammunition  
17<sup>th</sup> arrived in Lemnos  
18<sup>th</sup> issued tobacco and post cards. Went swimming  
21<sup>st</sup> Letters from home, officially a Corporal  
23<sup>rd</sup> Plenty of bread and cheese  
24<sup>th</sup> boats moved out  
25<sup>th</sup> Will be in it tomorrow  
26<sup>th</sup> Landed at day break, holding position on hill, Noel Hayles of Sydney shot in boat died on hospital ship  
27<sup>th</sup> Attacked by Turks, drove them back. Fred killed in action  
A thinking man who still enlisted for a war he did not agree with and lost his life. So sad!

### **From *The Star* 1919**

#### **The death of William Kelley.**

A very sad event was reported in August 1919. Returned man William Henry Kelley was accidentally shot while rabbit shooting in McCartin's paddock. He was holding his gun close to his side when his 7 year old sister pressed down on the trigger and inflicted a fatal wound. He had only been back in Australia for a week and in Leongatha for a few days. He returned on July 27<sup>th</sup> and died on August 2. The inquest was held at the Otago hotel.

#### **The Death of George Henry Howard.**

On September 1919 George Howard did not return from work and Mr Willoughby of the Labour Colony and Tom Darling went to search for him in the quarry paddock. He was found dead in the creek. The brother of Mr James Howard, George was collecting wood with his brother in law Mr Bruce Nelson and took a short cut across the paddock. When he did not return a search was set in motion. George Howard had returned safely from the war but had unfortunately lost his life just near his home. Mr Howard left a wife and four children.

There were 100 soldiers in uniform and pipers at his funeral. His father in law was a past chief of the Caledonian Soc. The coffin was draped in a Union Jack. George has a war grave in the Leongatha Cemetery

**Men arrived home.** In October it was reported that returned soldiers Lance Corp Drowley and Trooper Tuckett were entertained at the Nerrena hall

### **Influenza and the school**

During the influenza epidemic it was reported that Dr Wood wanted to use Leongatha High School as a hospital if needed. Korumburra State School was already in use as a hospital. There was discussion on what to do with the students if the school was needed. The Masonic hall was suggested as an alternative hospital but was considered inappropriate. The education department was against any more school being seconded as hospitals. Dr Wood preferred the patients being treated at home if possible. The school was not needed.

### **News from Pat**

Our Cataloguing Team continues to meet on Mondays at 9 am. Attendance has been a bit up and down over the last few months due to clashes with other meetings, illness and family commitments. We have finished cataloguing, numbering, photographing and storing various items in the Buffalo School box. Some worksheets still need to be entered into the catalogue and we are still finding names for people in photographs. You will be pleased to know I have recycled the box.

A start has been made on cataloguing items of clothing, mostly school uniforms, and there are more to come (isn't there always).

The display for the Daffodil Festival is in the planning stage. "Lets get a head" is the theme and we plan to display items from our collection to do with the head. Make up, hats, razors, pipes, collars, wigs, dental items etc etc. We have a list and the next step is to research the ideas, work out what we have and then how to display it. Watch the July newsletter for a "call to arms" as the display will be ready for the last week in August with as little disruption to normal business as possible.

### **Farewell and thanks to Shirlee McPherson**

Shirlee has been a great gain to history in the region. She first worked for the Shire in finding and cataloguing the art and memorials etc belonging to the Shire of South Gippsland. Later Shirlee became the curator at Coal Creek. Her expertise in the area of cataloguing and preservation of collections has been of great use to us all in the South Gippsland Historical Network. Shirlee has resigned from the Shire and her and partner Dennis are moving north to the warm. Thank you and good luck.

### **Our little boy is engaged**

Andrew Skillern, who at the age of four, was called Victoria's youngest museum guide and who spent many happy hours at the Mechanics' Institute is engaged. Andrew loved the sledge and the rat-trap best and rode on our wagon in the centenary parade dressed in three quarter pants held up by braces. One of his great comments came when he said of John Murphy in relation to No parallel " I actually know personally someone who wrote a hardback" . We have not seen much of him for a while at the Society but he is kept informed. Andrew is engaged to Sarah Spadetto and will marry next year. Good luck Andrew and Sarah



**Andrew in the front room 1984.**

**Roads and place names.** For some years now the Shire of South Gippsland has asked our Society to name roads and streets in the Shire. This we have done but we are not always listened to or told the outcome. Recently we were asked to use the names of men involved in World War One. Try finding names that are not already in use or have some local significance! This work is important and we are getting somewhere when it comes to new estates and the names used for streets. The other issue is more complex. The residents of Wooreen petitioned the Shire and therefore the State Government for the restoration of their placename. This will happen, but in the process Mount Eccles South will disappear and Leongatha North will become in effect, Leongatha North North and Leongatha North South. I am referring to the Mount Eccles South area being Leongatha North here. We are currently discussing this with the Shire and in the long run the State government. Perhaps our local member and deputy premier can help???. I do not think a solution will be found soon. We are still arguing over railway station (Maher) lane. This is a very slow process indeed.

### **Latest on the Leongatha High/Tech/Secondary College centenary celebrations.**

The time capsule is out of the ground. Those who remember the time capsule that was buried in front of Mesley Hall in 1972 will be pleased. In recent years concrete had been placed over it but it was located and raised to the surface by some very persistent ex student. The capsule is currently sitting in front of

the hall. The book is coming along but Lyn Skillern is still after the student names from 1912 to 1933 and the names of families with several generations at the school in any of its forms.



**Leongatha High Staff 1930s. Who are they???**

### **A basic plan for the rest of 2011**

#### **June**

Wednesday 8<sup>th</sup> General meeting

#### **July**

Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> General meeting Guest speaker

#### **August**

Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> Annual/General Meeting

Daffodil Festival Theme Lets get a head

#### **September**

Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> Guest speaker

Sister Potter plaque. **(We need to do this)**

#### **October 12<sup>th</sup>**

Wednesday General meeting

Visiting houses on a bus trip **(We need a planner)**

#### **November**

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> General Meeting

Late November our end of year celebration

**We need you !!!.** Your historical society needs your help. We cannot continue to open on **Thursdays and Fridays** without some more support. Please give us some of your time.