

Leongatha and District Historical Society

P O Box 431 Leongatha 3953



Newsletter

Volume 4 Number 2 May 2007

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Secretary : Lyn Skillern Tel 56686304

The Society number is 56622492 and we are available on Thursdays and Fridays between 12 noon and 4pm

The latest news

A most successful excursion.

On April 15th the society held a most successful bus tour around Leongatha to look at historic sites and significant homes. Geoff Michael and Wal Cayzer did much of the planning with the help of Lola Bailey. On the actual tour Geoff Michael assisted by John Murphy did much of the talking and provided interesting commentary about the places visited. Further research will be done on the history of houses in the town for publication in the future. See an article about the tour in this newsletter.

Fire Brigade

Jack Rayson and Gary Burns spoke at our March meeting on the history of the Leongatha fire brigade which was 100 years old in January 2007. Following the official celebrations in June an exhibition on the history of the fire brigade will be set up in the Mechanics' Institute.

Who is Archie Glover?

Archie Glover, apprentice tailor of Leongatha joined the army on July 23rd 1915 aged 19 years and 8 months. He left Australia in October 1915 and went to Egypt. He is in a photograph of local boys taken in Alexandria after the Gallipoli campaign. In this photograph he is sitting next to Alan Russell who died not long after on the Somme. Mr Matthewman of Leongatha was Archie's tailor boss. Another young man in the Alexandria photograph was Mrs Matthewman's brother Percy Manders. Archie was promoted to Corporal in March 1916 and in May he was a Lance Sergeant. Wounded on the Somme he went to England and did not return to his unit until April 1917. Archie survived to return to Australia. In 1921 he married Elsie Sutherland and by 1923 they were living in Thornbury. Archie died in Heidleberg in 1975 aged 79. We had an email from a Joye Dempsey who found a photo of Archie as a soldier and wanted to give it to his descendents. She looked him up on the internet and found he came from Leongatha. If anyone knows about Archie please let us know. A photograph of Archie is on page 2 of this newsletter

Honour Board Replica

Late last year I came up with the idea of having a replica honour board made of the Leongatha Agricultural High Schools Great War Honour Board destroyed in a fire in 1933. Keith Hogan was keen on helping and has coopted his brother Geoff and his friend Ron Smith into making a new honour board. Ron's son is a carver and he will carve the gum leaves and rifles for the top of the board. The maker of the original board was Arthur Hogan the grandfather of Geoff and Keith. We are fortunate in that we have an honour board in the Mechanics' Institute that is almost identical to the High School one and also a coloured photograph of the original high school board.



The Leongatha High School Honour Board 1918 made by Arthur Hogan.

Feature Articles

Tools of the Pioneers Handling Tools and Equipment by Ian Lester

Before the days of large scale bulk transport and hydraulics manual handling was the only way to move produce and other materials. Many tools and devices were used by labourers, farmers and others to assist in the movement of such items. To deal with this subject I will describe a range of products and the tools, techniques and equipment used to move them.

1. Bagged products such as grain, coal, coke, chaff, potatoes, onions and fertilizer. Bags were made of natural fibre fabric such as jute and varied in size depending on the mass of the product. For example chaff were large where as fertilizer bags were about half their size.

The main tool used was a bag hook which had two pointed hooks with a handle which was held in one hand, this allowed the operator to grip the fabric of the bag to lift or move it. When picking up bags from the ground to place on a vehicle or onto a stack two men would work together and use a stout straight stick about 2 feet (60cms) long to pick up the full bags. Bags which needed to be moved some distance on a firm surface were usually carried on a bag trolley. This trolley had two wheels, two handles and a metal "toe" to support the bag. As bags were being filled various methods and equipment were used to hold the bag open such as rolling bags down and placing a cylinder like a drum with the bottom cut out. Other equipment such as chaff cutters, harvesters and grading equipment had hooks to support the bags. Devices were made specifically to hold bags open and these often had a quick release mechanism to allow a full bag to be removed easily. When a bag was full it was either hand sewn using a large needle and twine or machine sewn to prevent the contents falling out. If a crane was available either hand or power operated, often a cargo net would be used to lift a large quantity of bags simultaneously such as when loading a ship.

2. Baled produce eg wool and hay. Wool up to the point of sale was transported in wool packs ,large fabric containers 28 inches (70cms) square and 46 inches (117cms)deep. The wool was pressed into it twice into the pack so that it held more than a single fill. This made the bale firm and because of its rounded corners it could be easily rolled and using a ramp up to the top of a loaded vehicle as it was too heavy to lift manually. Baled hay was manually moved by picking it up by the strings that held it



Loading grain which has been bagged

together, sometimes a bale hook was used to help. The operator often wore gloves and leather chaps/aprons to protect their hand and knees.

3. Bulk products. Coal, coke, rock, gravel, earth, railway and shipping ballast, manure, fertilizer and loose hay and silage were considered bulk items. Some of these such as coal/ coke and fertilizer could be bagged but large quantities were usually transported in bulk. Tools and equipment used with bulk handling included forks, shovels, wheel barrows, drays and wagons both road and rail. Coal mines had tramways with skips to haul coal ore. Large scale earth work often required horse drawn scoops (tumbling tommies) or powered machinery such as face shovels. Equipment for handling loose hay and silage included forks, dump rakes sweeps and grab stackers (see the photo below).

4. Liquid products such as water, milk, lubricating and fuel oil, beer and whisky. Water was carried in buckets made of canvas, wood or metal. Larger quantities could be carried in a tank of the furphy type and milk was transported in a plated steel can holding 10 gallons. Lubricating and fuel oil was usually sold and transported in steel cans holding 4 gallons or 20 litres. These had screw caps to allow the contents to be removed and the container filled. Wine, beer and whisky were sold and transported in glass bottles holding 1 ¼ pints or 750 mls. Larger quantities were stored and transported in wooden barrels which ranged in size from 2 gallons (9 litres) to 100 gallons (450 litres).

5. Timber in the form of logs, billets or sown and stumps were manually handled using cant hooks, pickaroons, chocks, levers and winches (hand and powered) and jacks. Shovels and mattocks were used if digging was required. This subject was dealt with in an earlier article.

Transporting all goods was hard work and labouring type jobs were plentiful. Young men were very fit when they loaded and unloaded goods all day. There was no need for a gym.



A grab stacker in use 1940's from Lorna Dowel

Allison Street by Lyn Skillern

Allison Street is named after Matthew Allison who was a pioneer of Leongatha North. His property was called "Mavis Bank" and this became a prosperous farm. Matthew Allison was prominent in local affairs and was on the Woorayl Shire Council becoming Shire President in 1894-5. He died in 1906 following a buggy accident.

Two memories of his son Edgar Allison are reported here. The first political meeting in Leongatha North was held on a moonlight night between "Mavis Bank" and "Arrot," the property of Colin Watt. The speaker was Mr A C Groom the first member for South Gippsland. The men sat on logs or along the chock and log fence and Mr Groom stood on the road to address them. My guess is that the meeting was somewhere near the house that Gil Spencer last lived in. Watt's property was next to my place on the other side of Koorooman Rd and would be Fiddlers now.

The following photographs show "Mavis Bank" as it existed c 1900. One shows the substantial buildings with the remains of the ringbarked trees in the background. The other shows a game of rounders. The Allison family held a new years day picnic each year. Rounders was probably one of the games played at the picnic. Mavis Bank was sold in 1914. The advertisement for the clearing sale appeared in "The Star" on January 4th 1914. There was to be a clearing sale at Mavis Bank on January 21 luncheon provided. Some of the items for sale were 1 draught mare with fowl, a pair of buggy horses, 1 four year old mare with harness and saddle, 1 chestnut hack, 2 yearling geldings, 2 ponies, sheep and jersey cattle and household furniture.

Late last year we had an email from Russell Allison, who was once a real estate agent in Leongatha. Russell is a descendant of Matthew Allison and was seeking some family history information.



Mavis Bank c 1900 note the remains of trees in the background
This property has a main house, a cottage and other buildings



Rounders at Mavis Bank. Note the types of trees planted in those days

Excursion

Our Society conducted a most successful bus tour on Sunday April 15th. Nearly 50 people travelled around the town visiting sites of historic significance. At the recreation reserve the magnificent new swimming pool was mentioned as the tour passed on to the old pool site now a playground. The grandstand constructed of Koonwarra bricks in the 1920's was another building of note. One of the most interesting features seen at the recreation reserve was the Bills Trough. This is the last horse trough left in town. There were 500 Bills troughs constructed in Victoria by a member of the Bill's family. That family made their money manufacturing BBB mattresses. The BBB standing for Bills Brothers Beds. Those on the tour were very interested in the history of the Labour Colony which once occupied all the land from Mary McKillop College to Leongatha Secondary College. This was set up in the 1890's depression as an experimental farm and unemployment relief project. The farm produced many things including lavender, flax and fruit. During the Second World War there was a great demand for flax and a flax mill once existed near the council yards. Jeffery Street was another area of great interest. Those present were introduced to the name F W Morris. He was a builder in the town and was responsible for the construction of many fine homes. One of these is the home of Helen Barrow who gave the group an interesting talk on her house which was originally built by F W Morris for the noted engineer J T Knox. This home has many features unique to the Federation style of the early twentieth century.

Stories of attending the first Leongatha State School on the corner of Jeffery St and Hassett St. were told by Wal Cayzer and Geoff Michael. Gwen Hepburn spoke about teaching at both the old school and the new school in Horn Street. It took many years in the late 1950's and early 1960's to set up the current primary school and move everyone there. Mr Jeffery was the first headmaster of the school in 1889 and lived in a cottage near the school.

It was interesting to note two structures now gone. The Bridge Dairy and The Catholic Hall. The dairy was operated from the late 1940's by Dick Murphy who lived in the attached dwelling with his family. The Catholic Hall was built in 1927, the stringybark frame noticeable in the ruins.

The tour continued to Church St, Young St, and McCartin St finishing at the towns most important historic Streetscape. The Court House, Post Office, Memorial Hall and Mechanics' Institute form a unique row of buildings from the early twentieth century and all present acknowledged their great value to our community.




The Bills trough at the Leongatha Recreation Reserve

What else is happening


On May 29th a group of local retired tradesmen meet at the Mechanics' Institute to have a chat about what life was like for a tradesman in days gone by. Thank you to Jan Stewart for organising the men and helping to preserve their stories. We will hopefully be collecting more of their stories in the next few months. Some of the stories will be in the next newsletter.

John Hall will be the guest speaker at the July meeting. He will be talking about the history of the bowls club which has celebrated its centenary recently.


34 276-294 BRUNSWICK ST. FITZROY. **D. & W. CHANDLER**




WEED FORKS.
Twisted steel prongs. 14 in. handle, 1/6; 4 ft. handle, 2/- each. Heavier quality, 14 in. handle, 1/10 each.




WEED FORKS.
High grade, twisted steel prongs (as illustrated), 7 1/2 in. handle, 1/1 each. Special quality, 7 1/2 in. handle, 1/7 each. Cheaper make, 9d. each.




GARDEN TROWELS.
Short handle, 10d.; 14 in. handles, 1/1 each. Special quality, short handle, 1/2; 14 in. handle, 1/6 each. Cheaper make, short handles, 6d. each.




FERN TROWELS.
Long narrow blades, 1/6 each.




TUBULAR STEEL BARROWS.
Made of the most lasting materials to a design that gives greatest strength with lightest weight. Frame is of 1 in. steel tubing. Tray of heavy sheet steel with rounded angles, and edges rolled over heavy wire rim. Wrought iron wheel with cast boss running on fixed axle. Capacity, 3 cubic ft., 45/- each.




CONCRETE BARROWS.
4 Cubic Feet Capacity.
A strong, well-made barrow, which will give excellent service. Round-nose 18-gauge steel tray heavily wired on top. Legs and braces of heavy section bar iron. Wrought iron wheel with cast hub and fixed axle. Handle shafts of best wood. Leg braces arched for leg room. Width, 28 1/2 in. overall. 57/6 each.



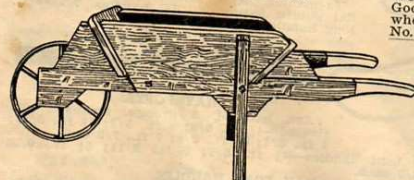
FARM AND GARDEN BARROWS.
A good serviceable barrow, having tray of 24 gauge wired on top, and tubular steel frame. Wheel has cast hub, wrought iron rim and spokes. Nice height and easy lift, and has tipping nose that lends itself to all classes of light barrow work. 18/6 each. Similar to above, excepting built on heavier lines, with galvanised tray, 25/6 each.



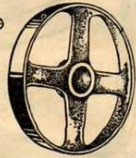
SACK TRUCKS.
Hardwood frame. Well strapped. Good wide tyred wheels.
No. 0 1 2
27/6 32/9 38/3




SPECIAL CASE TRUCKS.
With 13 in. lip, 40/- each.




GARDEN BARROWS.
Best timber, with large holding capacity, strongly constructed, 28/6. Smaller size, suitable for boys or ladies, 21/-.



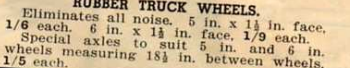
TRUCK WHEELS.
5 in. x 1 in. face, 1/6 pr.; 7 in. x 1 1/2 in. face, 2/3 pr. Axles to suit 5 in. and 7 in. wheels, measuring 17 1/2 in. between wheels, 1/9 each.




Heavy Truck Wheels.
7 in. x 1 1/2 in. face, 4/6; 8 in. x 1 1/2 in. face, 5/6 pair.
Axles to suit, measured between wheels—up to 30 in. wide, 6/6 each.




Chaffcutters
P.—2-Knife Hand-power Chaffcutter, with fixed mouth, 7 1/2 inches wide, cuts 1 in. and 1/2 in. lengths. Extra worm supplied for altering the length of cut, 47/2/6.
S.—2-Knife Hand-power Chaffcutter, rising mouth (with spring), 7 1/2 inches wide. Fitted with double worm to cut 1 in. and 1/2 in. lengths, 43/25/-.
X.—2-Knife Hand-power Chaffcutter, has a rising mouth (with lever and weight), 7 1/2 inches wide, and double worm to cut 1 in. and 1/2 in. lengths. With 42 in. flywheel, 49/10/-.



RUBBER TRUCK WHEELS.
Eliminates all noise. 5 in. x 1 1/4 in. face, 1/6 each. 6 in. x 1 1/4 in. face, 1/9 each. Special axles to suit 5 in. and 6 in. wheels measuring 18 1/2 in. between wheels, 1/5 each.



BALE HOOKS.
All steel; hollow handle, 3/3 each.



BAG HOOKS.
Double hook, wood handle. Price, 1/6 each. Single hook, wood handle, heavy. Price, 2/- each.

A page out of a Chandler's catalogue showing items mentioned in Ian Lester's article



Archie Glover

