

Leongatha and District Historical Society

P O Box 431 Leongatha 3953



Newsletter

Volume 4 Number 1 February 2007

President : Geoff Michael

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

The billiard room display gets a tidy up. Ian Lester, Pat Spinks and Margaret Kindellan have spent a lot of time recently cataloguing the tool and homewares collection. They then reorganised the displays to be more visitor friendly. Johanna Haasjes did a magnificent job setting up a display of kitchen items and laundry materials. During 2007 we hope to have a number of school groups come and see these displays. Lola Bailey was of course there as well and organised many of the display items and their labels.

Change to excursion day. The excursion to look at a number of local historic buildings in the town was set for February 24th. This has been postponed to a future date because it clashed with the opening of the newly renovated Wonthaggi Railway Station, the home of the Wonthaggi Historical Society. Members will be notified of the new date. Hopefully an article with the new date will appear in "The Star"

From the pages of "The Star" January 1940

1. Rainfall. The rainfall for December 1939 for Leongatha was 212 points (52mm). This compared to 1938 which was 269 points (65 mm). The highest rainfall recorded in December was 740 points (176mm) in 1934. The total for Mt Eccles for 1939 was 40 inches 57 points (1012 mm).
2. Mr Alex McDonald of Meeniyan had a pitch fork go through his hand while making a haystack. Earlier in the week Mr Boyle had a pitch fork go into his lung.
3. The public exam results for Leongatha High School were not quite as good as last year mainly due to there being a measles epidemic before the exams. However Maurice Gilfedder won a scholarship to Melbourne University and Maud Anthony, Walter Taylor, William Charlton and Beryl Wheeler passed all their Leaving Certificate subjects. Walter was to go on and join the air force, his brother Max was killed in Europe.
4. Mr Lachmund has an advertisement in every edition of the Star headed "Rabbits Wanted"
5. 3.2 million bushels of wheat were sold to Japan in 1938-39 by the Wheat Board.
6. Miss Ellen Byk a refugee from Europe gave a music recital at the home of Mr and Mrs Hayes
7. The Leongatha Progress and Traders Ass wanted the Shire to provide camping facilities at the Recreation Reserve. Half of the £170 needed to set up the camping was to be provided by the State Government. The community did not come up with their half and the grant lapsed.

Feature Articles

History in the Cemetery Australia Day 2007



John Murphy speaking to the gathering at the grave of Miss Hogan a little girl who died at Koonwarra in 1891. Her father was working on the railway line and the family camped near by. She was buried in a paddock belonging to Mr Holt but was moved to Leongatha Cemetery when the road was altered in 1956.

A large group of around 60 people gathered at the Leongatha Cemetery on Australia Day to go on a walk around the graves of some people who were of significance in local history. President Geoff Michael welcomed those present and led the walk. Geoff and Lola Bailey had spent a great amount of time researching the records and planning the walk and local history guru John Murphy added some interesting detail to the information outlined by Geoff. The first grave visited was that of Denis Maher who was the first person buried in the cemetery. Denis was working on the construction of the railway line and was killed when a tree fell on his tent near the railway bridge. His wife ran a coffee palace in Long Street for some time after his death before remarrying and moving to New Zealand.

Two of the people mentioned were Johann Nicholas Horn after whom Horn St was named and Harry Dannock after whom Dannock St was named.

The selections around Leongatha were taken up in 1882-3 and Horn together with others such as Shingler, Johnson and Allison took up land here. Johann Horn was a native of Schleswig- Holstein. He obtained the land on the flat heading to Mirboo North. Johann saw the possibilities of providing accommodation for new comers in the district and quickly established a small lodging house and hostelry. This facility gradually acquired the status of Post Office and the Koorooman Post Office was officially proclaimed in 1887. The settlement of Koorooman was to be at Leongatha North but the location of the future town was moved to where Leongatha is today. In the very early days the Leongatha settlement was called Koorooman.

Horn was granted the first roadside licence to sell wine and spirits and he advertised this in the Mirboo Herald. He also had some medical knowledge a valuable asset in a pioneering area where accidents happened often and doctors were far way. Johann assisted many settlers in these early days. He continued to serve the public until his death in 1897. In this edition of the newsletter is an article about Mrs Dolly Horn who was married to Johann's grandson Lou.



Johann Horn from *Land of the Lyrebird*

Harry Dannock's children outside the house and shop in Roughead St from *No Parallel*



Harry Dannock was an early Leongatha Plumber. He arrived in 1889 and set up a small plumbing shop next to his house in Roughead St. This business was bought by George Martin in 1945. George had worked for Harry before the Second World War. Harry was left a widower with a young family but he managed to raise them with the help of his eldest daughter. Harry loved children and took it upon himself to look after the children in the community and the playground at the recreation reserve. A drinking fountain was erected in the playground in his honour in 1955. The plaque on the fountain read "As a token of appreciation for his loving care of the children and their playground over many years. February 1955". Harry died in June 1963 aged 98. The playground and drinking fountain were taken down for the construction of the new indoor pool in 2004. A new playground with modern equipment has been built at the old pool site behind the new pool. It was pleasing to note that the drinking fountain has been restored and is now located in the new park.



The Harry Dannock Memorial which is now located in the new park behind the swimming complex. In the background is the pump house from the old pool.

Dolly Horn

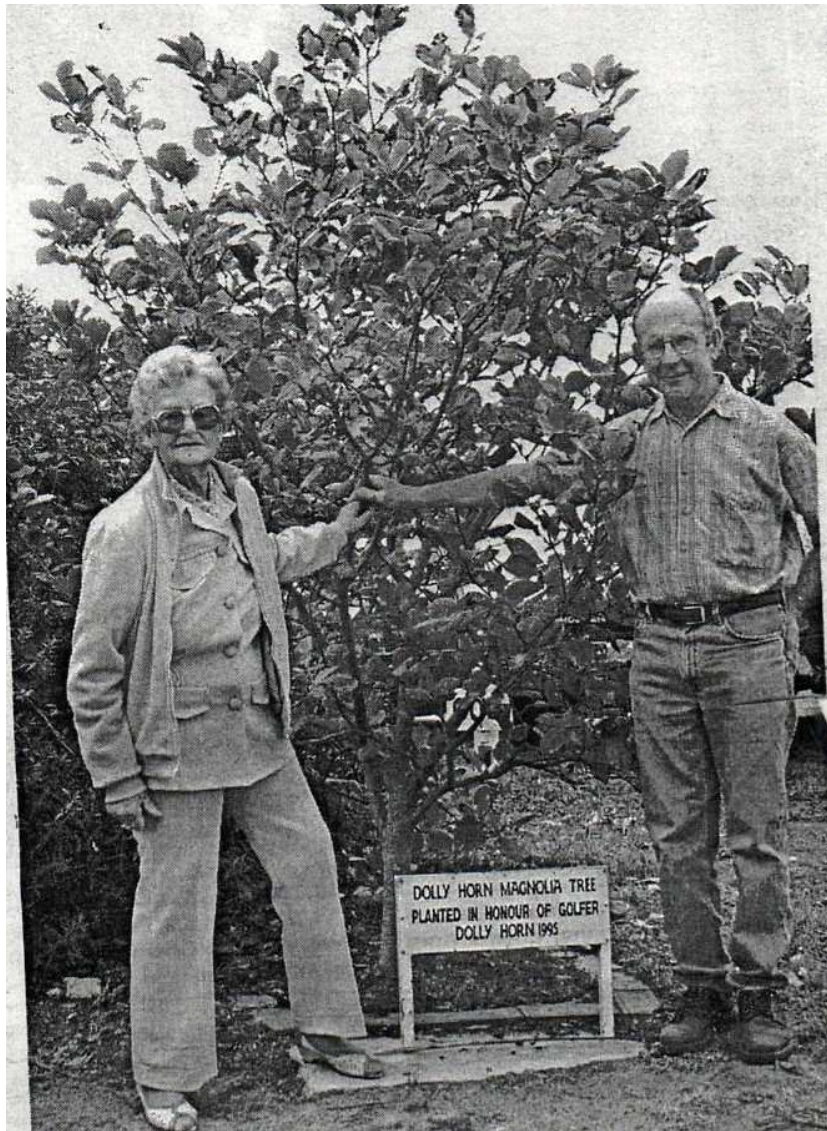
Friends of Dolly Horn gathered at the Leongatha Mechanics' Institute on February 2nd to remember her and celebrate her life. Dolly died late last year aged 96 and February 2nd would have been her 97th birthday. The function was organised by her friends at the Leongatha Historical Society and it was a great tribute to Dolly to see so many in attendance.

Dolly had always lived locally and was remembered as an excellent gardener, a good neighbour, a fine horse woman and a golfer. One of the photos on display showed Dolly as a school girl at Fairbank School. Rodney Emmerson spoke of her as a skilful gardener and a great judge when it came to the quality of flowers and plants. She was very keen on taking the judges to task if she thought they were wrong.

Rodney had known Dolly from the 1960,s and they had spent many hours judging flowers together. She was a forthright person who had a magnificent garden with a fine collection of plants. These were well looked after and beautifully mulched. Dolly was a keen collector of plants and bought them from nurseries all over.

Magnolias were her speciality and in the early 1970.s she crossed two magnolias to develop a plant which she gave to Rodney to grow. He ignored it for several years then finally planted it out and it turned out to be a magnificent magnolia. The flowers won many prices and it was eventually released as the Dolly Horn magnolia. It was a magnolia that was easy to grow from a cutting and is now sold all over. A Dolly Horn magnolia can sell from around \$12 to up to \$75. Dolly made the remark that she was famous when she saw a Dolly Horn magnolia for sale for \$75 in a plant magazine. There are many Dolly Horn magnolias around the town and a special one is to be found at the recreation reserve in the golf course.

Topsy Whinkler (nee Hoy) lived next to Dolly and the Hoy family knew and were friendly with the Horn family for a very long time. Dolly had a good but hard life and shared many of her skills with others.



Dolly Horn and Rodney Emmerson in front of the Dolly Horn magnolia at the golf course

J. N. HORN

BEGS to notify to the Public that he has opened the above HOTEL, where travellers can be supplied with every comfort.

Ales, Wines and Spirits of the best quality.

GOOD STABLING.

J. N. HORN,
Proprietor.



The Horn advertisement in the Mirboo Herald

Mary Lester (nee Johnson) 1917-2006

Mary Isabel Lester passed away on September 1st 2006 after a life lived entirely in this area. She was the daughter of Marjorie Isabel Bruce and Charles Frederick Johnson and grew up in the Mt Eccles area. Mary first attended Leongatha State School but had to live with her Bruce grandparents in order to do so. Later she transferred to Mt Eccles school and travelled to school daily on horse back with her brother Charlie who was born in 1919. Mary had two other brothers Ernest born in 1923 and Kenneth born in 1925. Ernest sadly drowned in a dam at Mt Eccles in 1955. Mary attended Leongatha High School and travelled to school by horse and jinker with her brother Charlie. Going to and from school was sometimes exciting and they had jinker races with some other students who lived in Arawata. In the morning Mary made the sandwiches while Charlie organised the horse. Mary and Charlie also made money selling rabbits but it was Charlie who was the neck ringer.

In 1940 Mary married Alan Lester and moved to live at the Lester property "Weeroona". During World War Two she volunteered to be an air observer working at the spotting tower which was located at the present site of St Peter's Anglican Church. Mary had 5 children Helen, Ian, Richard and David who were twins and Colin. Her husband died in 1985 and she also lost her son David. In the latter years of her life Mary was cared for by her son Ian who is a hard working member of our society.



Mary Lester (nee Johnson) as a baby

Leongatha and District Historical Society

Program 2007

The Society holds a monthly meeting on the 3rd Tuesday of each month in the Mechanics Institute rooms. **All welcome.**

The rooms are open to the public on Thursday and Friday of each week from 12 noon until 4pm – or by appointment. Research facilities are available at these times.

January	No monthly meeting
Friday 26 th	Australia Day Cemetery Walk
February	
Tuesday 20 th	Monthly meeting
March	
Tuesday 20 th	Guest speaker : “Fire Brigade History” Jack Rayson Opening of exhibition : Fire brigade history
April	
Tuesday 17 th	Monthly meeting
May	
Tuesday 15 th	Guest speaker : Alan Riseley. “Riseley Family History”
June	
Tuesday 19 th	Monthly meeting
July	
Tuesday 17 th	Guest speaker : John Hall. “Bowling Club History”
August	
Tuesday 21 st	AGM : Dinner – Historic film
September	
Tuesday 18 th	Guest speaker : Ian Starkey. “Local Native Plants” Opening of exhibition: “Buildings, Houses, and Gardens”
October	
Tuesday 23 rd	Monthly meeting Historic story competition presentation (date to be decided)
November	
Tuesday 20 th	Guest speaker :
December	Christmas break-up – location to be confirmed

Membership type :	Single membership : \$20	Couple/Family : \$25
	Newsletter only \$7	

Name :

Address :
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Telephone :

Email :

Membership subscription :

Your much appreciated donation :

Thank you TOTAL : \$

