

Leongatha and District Historical Society
P O Box 431 Leongatha 3953



Newsletter

Volume 2 Number 4 November 2005

President : Geoff Michael

Secretary : Lyn Skillern Tel 56686304

The latest news

- We have a new President Geoff Michael. Thank you to Lola Bailey for her years as President. Lola is now Vice President and continues to spend many hours a week working at the rooms.
- John Murphy has written a new book on the history of the Leongatha town water. The book "Town Water" will be launched on Friday November 18th at the mechanics' Institute at 2.30pm.
- John has also written a book to celebrate the centenary of the Leongatha Butter Factory. This will be launch in early 2006
- The History of Sport Exhibition. Thank you to Pat Spinks and Lyn Skillern who have been working hard with other historical societies in the Shire of South Gippsland to organise the material for the "History of Sport in South Gippsland" exhibition. This exhibition which tells the story of sport in the area over the past 130 years will open in the Meeniyan Hall on November 20th 2005 at 12noon. The exhibition will be on display around the Shire during 2006.
- Town walk brochure. A new walk will be produced soon. The information needed was put together for the recent visit by the Motorhome's Association of Australia and will be converted into a new brochure
- History of the town's parks. Johanna Hassjes has been researching the history of the parks in Leongatha. This information will eventually be organised into a publication
- We have obtained a new digital camera thanks to a grant from the Federal Government and will be purchasing a video camera thanks to a State Government grant. The new cupboard in the hallway has been built and now houses our book collection. This was obtained with a Shire grant.
- The cataloguing is continuing. Pat Spinks has organised a system for cataloguing scrapbooks, the vertical file and newspapers and this task has begun. Thank you to Pat Spinks, Lorna Dowel and Margaret Stokes for their cataloguing work on these items. Thanks must also go to Lola Bailey who spends days in the rooms entering the cataloguing material on to the computer
- We were fortunate to have Herb Toohill, Hilda Tilson and Ron Salmon speak at our last meeting about their World War Two experiences. The report of these talks will be in the next newsletter.

The end of year celebration

We will be concluding another successful year with a visit to the Firelight Museum at Leongatha North on December 13th. Our visit will begin at 8 pm. Ted Hattam will show us around the museum and this will be followed by supper. Member are asked to bring a plate of supper. The cost will be \$4. For further information contact Lyn on 56686304

Feature Article

Tools of the Pioneers Number 6 *Digging Tools*

By Ian Lester

Digging holes in the ground and other earthworks were often required as pioneers built their houses, sheds and other structures. This work was done manually using hand tools such as shovels, spades, grafts, mattocks, hoes, picks, bars, forks and barrows. If accuracy was required a good eye was essential to maintain direction, ensure straight lines and even surfaces

Much of the work on major projects such as roads, railways, water supply and others used the same type of tools and procedures. Andrew O'Keefe the contractor for the section of the Great Southern Railway between Whitelaw and Toora employed 2000 men many of whom were locals working as labourers. For much of the earthworks manual tools were used by men who had the ability to use them. A good example of this work is the goods area at Leongatha Railway Station where enormous amounts of material was removed and used for embankments along the line.

I will continue by describing a range of digging scenarios and the tools that would be used.

1. Prepare the site for a building

The first step is to decide what area is required and whether the final surface will be sloping or horizontal. Next any surface vegetation is removed using a mattock and/or shovel and an axe or saw if trees are present. If a tree was cut down the stumps would need to be removed (grubbed out) see scenario 4. If the original surface and the objective were of similar gradient all that was required is to remove the high points and fill the hollows. A shovel and mattock would have been best here. If more material needed removing it was necessary to loosen the soil with some or all the tools mentioned earlier. If material needed to be moved any distance a barrow or dray could be used or it could be moved in stages with hand tools.

2. Digging a hole for a pole or post.

Such a hole could be up to 18 inches (45cms) across and up to 4 feet (1200 cm) deep. As with most digging the process of loosening and removing applies. The best loosening tool is a heavy forged spade or graft with a blade parallel to the handle used on a downward chopping motion. This will ensure that the sides of the hole are straight and vertical. Obstacles such as dense soil, rocks and roots may have required the use of a pointed steel bar to dislodge them. With the soil loose it can be removed with a post hole shovel which has its blade at an angle to the handle so that the material will not fall if it is lifted from the hole. A tool called a clapper will also lift loose soil.

3. Digging a large deep hole for a mine, well, grave or large pole. The same process as for a small hole applies but the digger must stand in the hole and have enough room to do so and work the tools. At the moving stage the digger must also be able to swing a long handled shovel of earth out of the hole. A hole for a pole or grave would be approximately 6' (2m) deep and require a ladder to provide access in the later stages. Holes for long poles were often stepped to give access to the digger and make insertion of the pole easier. Deeper holes such as mineshafts and wells would require 2 operators with a bucket and windlass to deliver the tools and the digger to the bottom and remove debris. The 2 operators would most likely take turns and operating the windlass.



Using a windlass

4 Removing (grubbing) stumps

This was the most labour intensive and difficult task for the early settler but was essential if land was to be cultivated. A requirement of the government was that a selector had to have an amount of land cleared and cultivated in a certain time in order to keep the selection. After a tree was felled it left a stump and roots. When digging around the stump to get access to the roots every digging tool mentioned earlier had a potential use as the space between the roots was often quite small. As more roots were exposed they were cut with an axe or a special pick known as a pick axe. This had a spike on one side of the head and a long axe type blade on the other perhaps 12''(30cms) long. A mattock was also useful as it could dig and cut roots. As digging and cutting proceeded it would eventually be possible to roll or haul the stump away. Horses, bullocks, mechanical jacks and winding equipment could assist this process. When stumps were too big or difficult to remove they were often burnt on site (stoved). When most of the earth had been removed timber was stacked around the stump and a fire lit. As the fire reduced to a bed of hot coals it was covered with earth and would continue to burn until the stump and all the roots were burnt, often taking weeks. Charcoal from these fires can still be discovered when digging or cultivating in previously forested areas.

Forks of various types could also be used for digging, mainly at the soil loosening stage. On earthworks a fork would be used prior to shovelling. Forks for this purpose were very heavy and strong in construction usually with four tynes and a D grip handle. Garden forks are of a similar design but not as strong and heavy. In the days before mechanical harvesters all potatoes were dug with forks which had long handles and four or five tynes. Some digging forks had wide flat tynes which could lift soil more easily than a narrow tyne. Digging forks usually had the back of the head at 90 degrees to the handle so that it could be pushed into the ground with the foot. The gardeners amongst us will certainly appreciate the difficulty early excavators had making roads and cuttings with hand tools.

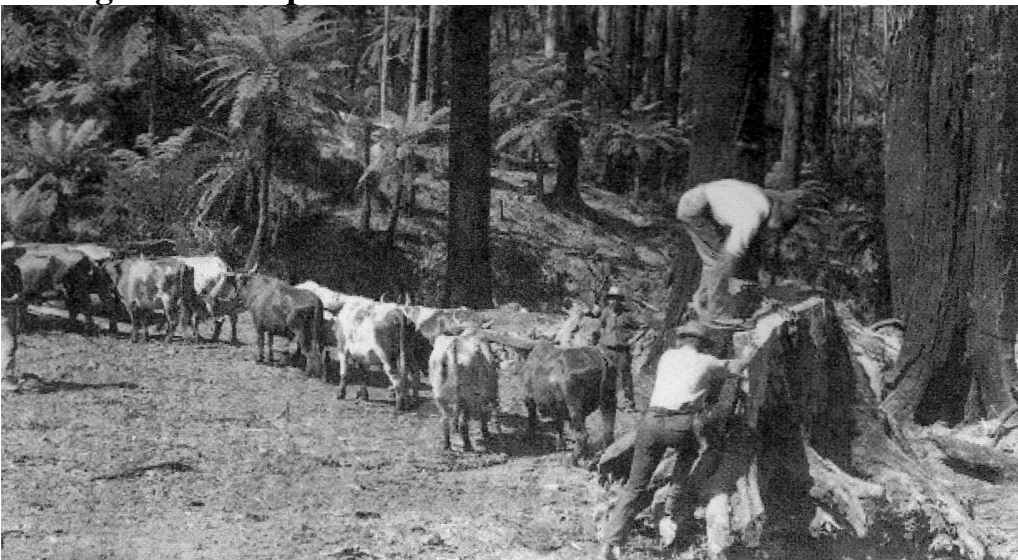
A pick axe



A clapper



Pulling out a stump with bullocks



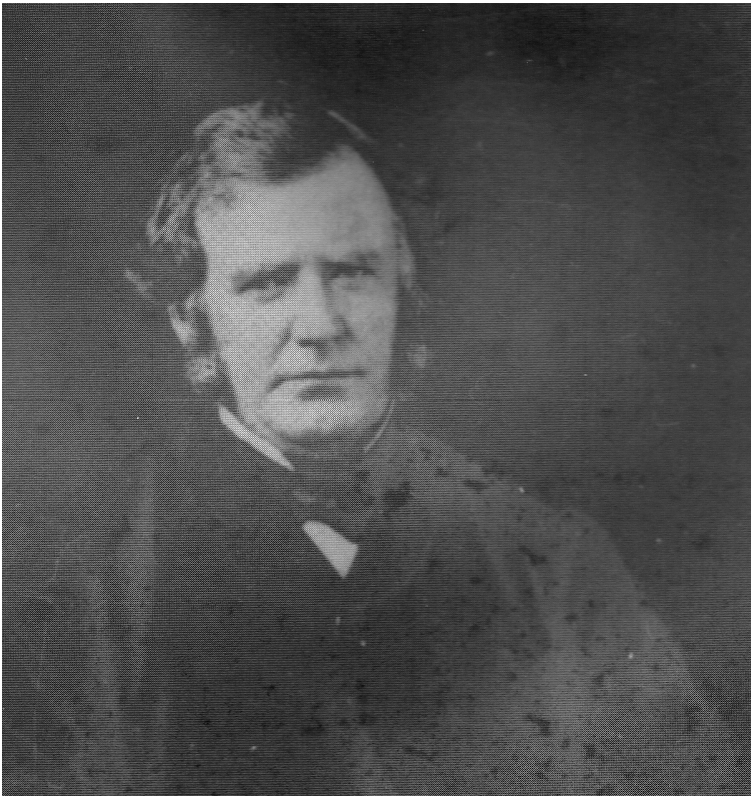
Guest Speaker in July Father Bernard Buckley

Wal Cayzer introduced Father Bernard Buckley of Buffalo, a member of a family with a long history in Australia and Gippsland.

The family has a long connection with the Catholic Church with a number of family members joining the religious life. Father Bernard was ordained a priest 13 years ago. At the moment he is the administrator of the Cathedral Parish at Sale. Bishop Coffey is strictly speaking the parish priest but Father Bernard carries out that task. He worked on the farm at Buffalo for 15 years before studying for the priesthood. This article reports on his talk to the society about his ancestors and their role in Gippsland's history. Father Bernard acknowledged the work of his cousin the late Kevin Buckley for much of the information he used for tonight's talk

There are two members in the Buckley family who loom large in the history of the family in Gippsland. The second one, the less important will be mentioned first. Patrick Coady (1816 to 1872) who later called himself Patrick Coady Buckley. He was in East Gippsland before 1839 having he travelled down through the Monaro and entered South Gippsland around 1844. Patrick Coady was never far from the public eye, he was born in a jail in Dublin in 1816, his mother Eleanor or Ellen was awaiting transportation to Australia. If he was not a babe in arms when he arrived he was not far from it when he landed on our shores later in 1816. His mother married Edmund Buckley in 1818 and there were no other children from their marriage. He was well known in early Gippsland as a hard working pioneer of Coady Vale Station or Prospect Station which is where Seaspray now is. He was different to the other pioneers of early Gippsland because he was an Irish Catholic and had a convict background. He remained unmarried and kept a diary from 1844 to his death in 1872. These diaries have been a valuable resource for those researching the early history of that area of Gippsland. The Catholic Church has drawn on those diaries extensively to trace the movement of priests around the area. His mother died in 1837 and from then he associated with Edmund and was a great partner with Edmund in the family story. He ended up with substantial land holdings and became quite wealthy. Edmund settled at a property called "Greenmount" outside Yarram in the 1840's. More important to the family is Edmond who was born in around 1782 and was Bernard's Great Great Grandfather. Earlier generations of Buckley's would not thank Bernard for speaking publicly about Edmond. A mysterious man, there are no stories about him and the family know little about him. He was born in Ireland and at some point came to England. On a memorable Sunday on the 20th of May 1810 he was drinking with a group of Irishmen at the *Eagle and Child* public house in the Parish of West Ham in the county of Essex. A brawl erupted which involved a number of Englishmen and Irishmen. The Irish arrived to avenge an injury that had happened to one of their countryman. The landlord was severely injured and died a few days later. Only a few of those involved in the brawl were located and arrested four were exonerated and six, including Edmund were found guilty. Of those six, two were executed and four were sentenced to transportation for life. Fleming, Brunig, Sullivan and Buckley were sent to Australia. Edmond left London on September the 3rd 1811 and arrived in Sydney on January 18th 1812. His servitude must have been short. Governor Macquarie needed to save money and convicts were released to find work for themselves. Edmond worked on a farm in Parramatta for a couple of years. In 1815 he petitioned for his freedom and received it in 1817. He then acquired a farm in 1821 5 miles west of Parramatta. He married for a second time (as he was believed to be married in Ireland) to Patrick Coady's mother Ellen or Eleanor in St John's Church of England Parramatta by the Reverend Samuel Marsden. In 1837 Edmond is recorded as acquiring a licence to depasture stock in the Monaroo District now the Monaro area of NSW and so the journey south had begun some time before then. He was at Woolbine Station near Buckley's Crossing now Dalgety in 1831 and had 700 cattle. They say it was there that Edmund crossed the Snowy River on his way to Gippsland. This was one of the main routes when travelling down south to Gippsland. It seems he was as far south as Ensay in 1835 but none of his holdings were in his name but registered in the name of his step son. It is said that McMillan and Strzelecki passed through the properties of the Macalisters, McFarlanes and Bucleys while they were exploring.

Edmund was only semi literate and his signature looked like the writing of a small child. By 1840 he was in the flat country around Sale, Woodside, Yarram and finally settled at Greenmount at Yarram. He was there until his death in 1859. He married for a third time in Sydney in 1840 at the age of 57 and he and his third wife Ellen produced eight children. The last child was born in 1850. Ellen died in 1851 and he married for a fourth time to a woman called Mary Brady. The family pray for Ellen but they really pray for Mary who brought up those children. Edmund died in 1859 at the age of 76. According to Patrick Coady,s diary Edmund was thrown from his horse after attending a cattle show at Tarraville. He was buried a couple of days later and his was the first burial in what was called the Greenmount Catholic Cemetery. By then it had been consecrated by Archbishop Gould of Melbourne. There are only two pieces of consecrated catholic ground in Victoria. This consecrated Catholic cemetery is just a couple of acres in the corner of Edmond's property. His will left money to his two sons in Ireland, his wife Mary and the 2 daughters and six sons from his third marriage. Father Buckley and his family are descended from his third son Paul, who was to become a well known identity in Fish Creek. And this is how the family came to be still associated with Buffalo district. Paul married Johanna Cotter and they had a son Bernard who married Ada Moore of the Yarram family. One of their children was Father Bernard's father Alan who married Betty Jenkin. Edmond had a remarkable life and has some entitlement to recognition as having played a part in the early settlement and development of this marvellous tract of land we call Gippsland.



Patrick Coady Buckley

What is coming up

- On Australia Day January 26th we will hold an historic walk around the town centre beginning at the Mechanics' Institute at 11 am.

