

Leongatha & District HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Mechanics' Institute, McCartin St., Leongatha

Newsletter

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Preserving Our Heritage

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The latest news

• **Our rooms.** The renovation of the Mechanics' Institute is nearly completed. Thank you to the Shire (and the Commonwealth Government for the money) for the painting, repaired sky light, new electricity connections, new carpet, and most of all for the return of the awnings on the front. They look great. The big task of returning the collection to the building and setting up the new exhibitions are to be done. As yet we do not have a date for the re opening. We need help from members and friends to help move back in.. Pat Spinks is coordinating the return of the collection. If you can help please contact Pat on 56686365 A note will go into *The Star* to let you know when we reopen. See the photographs on page 2

• **The end of year celebration.** This will be held at the home of Pat and Jim Spinks on Saturday November 28th at 12 noon. The Society will be providing the cold meat and members are asked to bring a salad and or sweet. Drinks are BYO. Please contact Pat to let her know if you are coming and what you are bringing by phoning her on 56686365. The Spinks' home is on Canavans Road Leongatha North. Come and join us to celebrate what has been a very exciting year.

• **The date has been set for the Leongatha High School/Technical School/ Secondary College Centenary.** This will be April 28th and 29th in 2012. The celebration of 100 years of secondary education in Leongatha will be a big event and many of our members attended or taught at these schools. Lyn Skillern is editor and main writer of the centenary book and is keen to hear from ex students and teachers who have memorabilia or who want to share their memories of their school days. Jack Edney has lent Lyn some wonderful items and I am sure there are more out there. Lyn is particularly keen to collect the names of students from 1912 to 1933. Records were lost when the school burnt down in 1933. Please contact Lyn on 56686304 or visit the Mechanics' Institute on a Thursday or Friday when we are open



The Mechanics' Institute 1912



The Mechanics Institute October 30th 2009. Awnings restored, good things happen to those who wait !

- **Ideas for teams** a group of members attended a series of workshops run by Museums Victoria. These were very useful and many of the ideas are being implemented. The planning group is looking at forming a number of teams to help further the work of our Society. The teams will be needed to plan for events like The shingler Lecture and bus trips and also for such things as promotion and publications. If you have any idea for team projects please let the committee know. We want our member's ideas and we want our members in our teams
- **The new computer system.** It is hoped that our new computer system with a public access computer and many other new features will be installed soon. We will, if all goes well. have a demonstration of the public access at the function on Australia Day

Themes for 2010•

- **Weddings.** An exhibition of wedding gowns and other wedding memorabilia will be set up in the front room as soon as we are back in the Mechanics' Institute. The exhibition will run for around 6 months and will be there when the "Wedding Expo" is held in the Memorial Hall. If you want to join the exhibitions team you will be welcomed with open arms
- **The history of medical services in Leongatha and District.** Having prepared the section on Leongatha for the Monash University Gippsland publication on the history of medical care in

Gippsland we are now keen to put together a booklet on this subject. John Murphy, Lyn Skillern, Lola Bailey and others contributed to the project and we have collected a wonderful range of information for this new publication. I might add that other Gippsland Societies have also been inspired by Anne Dietrick and her project and are organising publications of their own on the subject. There is still much information to collect and organise and a team will be formed to coordinate this. Dr Michael Bourke, Dr Mario Croatto and Mary Eaggar (wife of the late Dr Ron Eaggar) have been helpful and they will I am sure want to add to the contributions made already. We also need to write about medical centre staff, chemists, dentists, district nurses and the professional ambulance service. Further information on St Mary's Hospital, the Bush Nursing Hospital and the aged care facilities will need to be obtained. We need our members to help. If you are interested in being on a publication team, writing or recording your memories or collecting information from others please let the committee members know.

• **The history of schools**

This subject is popular with many. With the centenary of secondary education in Leongatha being only two years away, the history of schools will be important for some time. The Society plans to ask the schools in the area to prepare timelines on their school's history for display at the Mechanics' Institute.. Our October bus tour will take in some school sites and we will hear stories from former students of these schools



The newly rebuilt Leongatha High School in 1935. The dog is named "Spot"

There are many schools no longer in existence but the story of each will can be reconstructed. The careful research of records and the collecting of stories from ex students will enable us to prepare displays on schools like Mardan South, Wooreen, Hallston, Mt Eccles, Mt Eccles South, Leongatha East, North and South, Dumbalk, Koorooman East, Milford, Dollar, Koonwarra, Middle Tarwin, Fairbank and many more. Photographic time lines look great, we just need to make them. Please help where you can.

• **The draft Program for 2010**

The draft program for 2010 is shown on the next page. Please feel free to make suggestion .This is a draft program. Details will be given to members in the newsletters for February and beyond. Ideas for guest speakers especially will be most welcome

Draft Program for 2010

Leongatha and District Historical Society

Program 2010

The Society holds a monthly meeting on the 2nd Wednesday of each month in the Mechanics Institute rooms. **All welcome.**

The rooms are open to the public for viewing the exhibitions and research on Thursday and Friday of each week from 12 noon until 4pm – or by appointment.

January

Wednesday Jan 13th Committee Meeting

Australia Day Tuesday January 26th An open day will commence at 1 pm and there will be short guided tours during the afternoon. The official opening of the newly renovated Mechanics' Institute and the exhibition "Weddings are Timeless" will take place as part of the day at 2 pm and afternoon tea will be served.

February

Wednesday Feb 10th General Meeting

March

Wednesday March 10th General Meeting guest speaker on the subject of medical history

Proposed bus trip to Bob Newton's collection at Korumburra South. Date to be set

April

Wednesday April 14th Committee Meeting

Wednesday April 21st In honour of Anzac Day the meeting will be held at the RSL Leongatha. Dinner will be followed by a talk on local service men and women by Lyn Skillern.

May

Wednesday 12th General Meeting guest speaker

Proposed visit to "Tullaree" by society members date to be arranged

June

Wednesday 9th General Meeting

Proposed Shingler Lecture date to be arranged

July

Wednesday 14th General Meeting Guest speaker

August

Wednesday 11th Annual/General Meeting featuring historic films

Daffodil Festival featuring an "Antique Road Show" and a display of heirloom items

September

Wednesday 8th General Meeting Guest Speaker

October

Wednesday 13th General Meeting

A bus tour to school sites, date to be arranged

History Week late October the theme will be the history of local schools. Each school will be asked to make a time line of their school's history. Former students/teachers will be invited to prepare a timeline for schools which have closed

November

Wednesday 10th General Meeting guest speaker

End of year celebration the last weekend in November

• **Prepare roster for summer holidays**

Dates and details to be advised

Members are asked to help with guest speakers. If you able to speak or know of a speaker please let the committee know.

Memories of Glenda Moulten (nee McNamara) aged 97.

Lyn Skillern interviewed Glenda at her home in Bairnsdale on May 1st 2009

Glenda's family ran the McNamara's bakery in McCartin St and she attended Leongatha State School and Leongatha High School. These are a few memories

She rode a bike to school and sometimes when her family needed help in the restaurant over the lunch hour she would ride home on her bike at top speed.

The family lived above the McCartin Street business which was a large bakery and restaurant. The Commercial Banking Company of Sydney was on one side and a newsagency on the other side. Next to the news agency was the library (our Mechanics' Institute)

McNamaras owned the land behind their shop where the Safeway car park is now. This was a paddock and they had horses which were used to pull the bread carts. The shop, was big with a fruit and ice cream part on one side and the other side was a pastry and bread set up. As you came in the door was a delicatessen and behind was a desk for the book keeper. They needed a bookkeeper as the restaurant sat 120. The whole block belonged to the McNamaras. They had a three bedroom home above the shop. The stairs were behind the bread section. The compass arcade occupies the site now. Glenda wonders how they removed the two storied brick bake house at the back when it was all rebuilt as the arcade.

While the bakery was being built the McNamaras were located in a space between the hall and the library so this space must have been the old hall site. That hall burnt down and made space for the Memorial Hall. The temporary building was tin shed type of thing with a tan floor

Very large long bread paddles were used to take the bread out of the huge ovens. These paddles are in our collection and are usually displayed in the billiard room. The flour used to come down in shoots. There was a section for making the cakes. There were two bakers in the cake sections and three in the bread area. "Dad never baked a loaf of bread in his life. He was a master baker. He used to say"

The school uniform at the high school consisted of a white blouse and navy tunic and maybe a straw hat. There was no tie for girls. Mes, as they called Mr Mesley, was insistent on good behaviour. They had an end of year social in a local hall and everyone was to be on their best behaviour.

There was a tall boy who came from a farming family and rode a horse to school. He was a good dancer. Mr Mesley was giving the students a lecture about the social and he stated that he did not expect any boys to be bringing the girls home. He said for example he would not expect so and so to bring Glenda McNamara home. It was a funny thing it was such a different time. Mesley wanted everyone to reach their potential. He was the most highly respected person Glenda knew. She thought they were so lucky to have Mes. He was so interested in Leongatha. He had the hostels built and this enabled boys and girls to have a secondary education even though they lived too far from the school to enable them to come daily



Girls on the veranda at Leongatha HS 1920' This was when Glenda was at school.

At the High School there was paddock for the horses and about 12 students rode.

Two of the high school teachers, Dorothy O'Connor and Frank Cartledge were wonderful musicians. Dorothy, who came from Stony Creek, lived with the McNamaras and was a great violinist. Cartledge came from Sale and he and Dorothy together with Mrs McNamara worked hard for the recreation reserve. The two gave concerts in all the small halls to make money for the new grandstand. Everyone thought they would get married. Dorothy moved to Geelong and met and married a man of note in the

acing world. They married in Stony Creek and Glenda and her mother attended. She had a lovely life in Geelong. Terry Cullen was her son and he played for Geelong.

Another teacher from the early 1920's was Miss Dixon she was marvellous She took Glenda to lunch on a Sunday a couple of times when Glenda went to boarding school in Melbourne.

Glenda's best friend was Eileen Bair. Her father, Arthur Bair came from Otago in New Zealand and Mr McNamara was born in that area. They were good friends. for life. Sadly Eileen died at the age of 16 of meningitis a sad loss for the family and Glenda. She and Eileen were such good friends they were a pair and did not worry about anyone else. The Bairs had a home on the outskirts of Leongatha and they would alternate weekends at each others places. When Glenda went to boarding school she missed Eileen so much and visa versa that Mrs Bair came down and spoke to the nuns and booked Eileen in .

In 1941 Glenda joined the army as a nurse and was attached to the 2/22 Battalion. This battalion had a number of local young men in it. The day they were called up to go to New Guinea her father had a heart attack and she went home for about six months. This saved her life as the battalion were over run at Rabaul and many lost their lives. The nurses were taken prisoner and some ended up in Japan. When her father was getting better he and Glenda got up in the morning and tied up all the bread to go out on the cream wagons. They would come back to the bakery at 5 am and had a cup of tea. Her father would go to Bairs to have a whiskey with Arthur Bair and come home again.

In her class at Leongatha High were Marge Peterson (Glenda broke her nose playing hockey), a Dannock, possibly Vera. Beryl Marsh and Florrie Conway. Glenda also remembered a boy Peter Rutherford. He went on to be a junior teacher at the school.

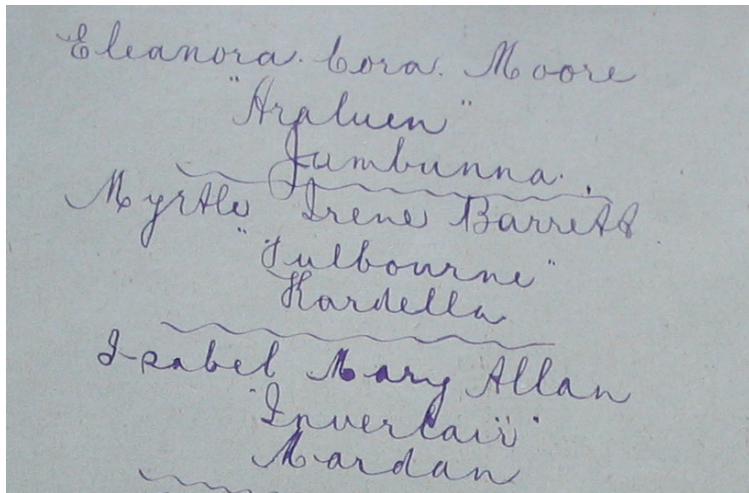
As for subjects Glenda liked anything but Maths especially English and Geography and Art. She played the piano and cello and completed grade 7 music. An examiner told her that her hands were too small. She was taught music by the Nuns at St Laurence's. School

The butcher shop opened early and someone went to the butcher to get the meat for the pies. They were famous pies. The McNamaras were famous for their pies. The pie baker later went to Melbourne and started "Four and Twenty Pies".

Easter time was very busy. They bagging hot crossed buns all day.

Glenda had a varied life she would go from washing up after a function at the restaurant to going to see Melba or Pavlova in Melbourne. She went by train to Melbourne for these events.

Glenda was an interesting person to talk to and more of her memories will be told in future newsletters



School girls at High School 1920's

