

Leongatha and District Historical Society

P O Box 431 Leongatha 3953



Newsletter

Volume 4 Number 3 September 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

Preserving our heritage

The latest news

The Annual Meeting

The 2007 annual meeting was held on August 21st. Thank you to those who attended. The election of office bearer was held and the executive for 2007-8 consists of:-

President; - Geoff Michael

Vice Presidents; - Lola Bailey and Ian Lester

Secretary; - Lyn Skillern

Treasurer; - Audrey Hall

Archivists; -Pat Spinks and Lorna Dowel

At the meeting there was much discussion on future planning and we are very interested in the ideas of our members. On the notice board in the middle room at the Mechanics' Institute there are two lists on which members can write ideas regarding Society priorities and the program for 2008. A committee will be working on the 2008 program in the next 2 months and this will be published in the December newsletter.

Our website.

Our Society received a grant from the Local History Grants Program to enable us to set up our own website. The website is being prepared by one of our members Andrew Cantwell. A big thank you to Andrew for his great work so far. The site should be ready very soon. Our web address is www.leongathahistory.org so you will be able to look us up soon. The website will contain information about the early pioneering days of South Gippsland as well as details about our society and its activities. Researchers, family historians and students will find excellent information on the site. Famous local identities and heritage buildings will be added to the site in the future. Look out for the new Society letterheads, logos and name tags.

Fire Brigade

An exhibition of photographs and memorabilia on the history of our fire brigade is now set up at the Mechanics' Institute.

Honour Board Replica - Lyn Skillern

On Saturday September 1st I joined Keith Hogan, his brother Geoff and sister in law Mavis for the unwrapping of the package containing the replica of the Leongatha High School World War One Honour Board. What a thrill it was. The board looks stunning and not like a replica at all. It looks like a

beautifully restored original. Keith and Geoff whose Grandfather made the original board had acquired some fine blackwood timber and organised Ron and Glen Smith on Flinders Island to make and carve it. Geoff did a wonderful job turning the pillars for the board before it went to Ron and Glen. The official unveiling will take place at Leongatha Secondary College in October. I am preparing an article for the press as we would like relations of those young men named on the board to be in attendance. Those named attended Leongatha Agricultural High School before joining the army.

Honour Board 1914-19 LAHS

Aberdeen T.E.M. 4th Light horse (was at Gallipoli)

Chalmers H.B.

Milne H.A.

Chalmers D.M.

Nelson B.I.

Russell A J. 58th Battalion killed in action

Murray E. A.

Moore C.L.

Davis H.A.

McDonald N.A.

Sutherland J.M

Daniell J M. killed in action

Dalliston R.S.

Pile G

Clough J.

Colvin W 8th Battalion killed in action (was at Gallipoli)

Spencer W.G.

Bellingham R.H.

Dixon E.W.M.

Nicholls C.H.C.

Nelson C.L.

Whitworth S.M.

If you know the relations of these men please let me know so I can invite them to the unveiling. My phone number is 56686304

Plant Specimens

The Society was indeed fortunate to acquire a fine collection of indigenous plant specimens from the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalists. The specimens were collected in the Gippsland region during the 1950's and 60's by Marjorie Wood, a noted botanist, Some of the specimens will be on display at the Mechanics' Institute from September 6th.

Guest Speaker for September

At the meeting on September 18th the guest speaker will be Ian Starkey who runs the Koorooman Plant Nursery at Leongatha North. He will be speaking about the original vegetation of the area, the places where we can still see our remnant vegetation and the growing of indigenous plants. The meeting will be at the Leongatha Mechanics' Institute at 8 pm.

Visit by Mrs Nancy McFarlane

It was a great pleasure to meet Mrs Mc Farlane who, at 95, was very knowledgeable about her grandfather William Young the founder of *The Great Southern Star* in 1891. Mrs McFarlane was interviewed by Jane Ross of *The Star* and an article will appear soon.

Movie film onto DVD

The movie film we have in our collection has been placed onto DVD and will be available for us to view on the television set at the Mechanics' Institute. Most of the film was taken of the Watson Garden Parties in the 1950's and should be of great interest to those who were at the parties and family members as well as the public in general. The films are a great record of that time in our history.

100 Years of the bowls club

At our meeting in July the speaker was John Hall who wrote the book *100 Shots Up- The History of the Leongatha Bowls Club*. John has researched the history well and it was a pleasure to hear him outline the story of the 100 year history of bowls in the town and how he went about producing the book. The Bowls Club kindly donated the Society a copy which is now in our library



Mary Davidson Victorian Champion of Champions bowler 1969



John Lardner 1907. The noted surveyor loved his bowls

Feature Article

The Search for Charlotte Swindell *by Lyn Skillern*



**Myrtle Aleindi, Robert Forest and
Rose Thorn**

Charlotte Swindell on left.

It is amazing where a simple request can lead. Some months ago we received an email from a Sue Dahlke who was looking into the story of two relations Charlotte and Ann Swindell. Sue wanted to know why her relation Charlotte was buried in Leongatha cemetery with Jane Forrest. Jane Forrest died in 1907 and Charlotte in 1954. These two women were not related. We could only give her the information that Charlotte had been the house keeper for Jane Forrest's son Robert who owned the property at Wooreen currently owned by David Thompson. Sue was able to find out more. Charlotte received an equal share of the estate of Jane Forrest with her children. It seems there was some connection between Jane and Charlotte who may have been brought up by Jane after her mother's death in 1870. Charlotte was around 5 at the time her mother died. When Robert Forrest died he left the farm to Charlotte Swindell and it was run by her niece Myrtle Aleinde and her husband Tony. The farm became the property the Aleindi family and Ron Aleindi, the son of Myrtle and Tony, sold it to the Thompsons. Myrtle was the daughter of Ann Elizabeth Swindell who married a Wilson. When the Society received the request from Sue the only thing we had in our files with the name Swindell was a shawl brought out from England in 1854 by a Nellie Swindell (Charlotte's mother). After a lot of confusion re Nellie and Charlotte and more research by Sue the story fell into place.

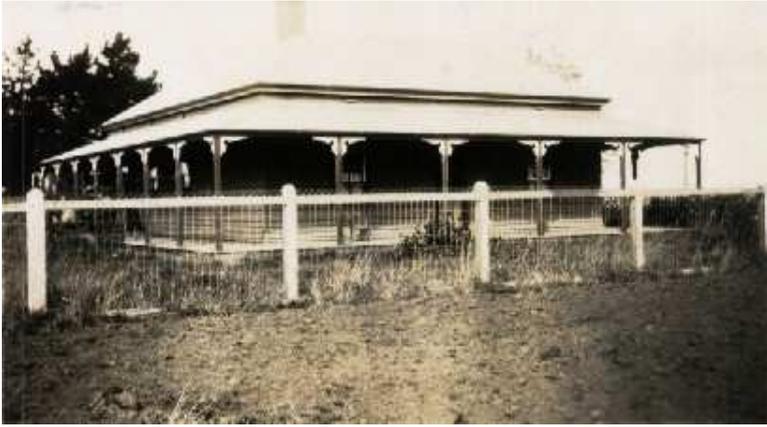
The shawl was given to the Society by Hilda Tilson, who received it from Myrtle Aleindi. A chat with Hilda revealed more. After leaving the farm to be run by her son Ron, Myrtle Aleindi lived in McCartin St Leongatha over the road from Hilda Tilson and they were very good friends. Ron Aleindi and his wife sold the farm and went to Tathra to run a motel. Myrtle and Hilda's mother went with them. After a short time Hilda brought her mother back to Leongatha. According to Myrtle a Mrs Batty made the shawl for Nellie Swindell who in turn brought it to Australia. Sue does not know who Mrs Batty was. Pat Spinks did remember playing tennis against Ron Aleindi in the 1950's but did not know what happened to him until Hilda filled us in.

As a result of much research and the discussions with Sue Dahlke we now have some very nice photographs and copies of the wills of Robert and Jane Forrest. The Forrest family were quite well off and had a property at Rosedale as well. Tony Aleindi who lived in the Mt Eccles area worked for Robert Forrest and went to the Rosedale property often. He may have met Myrtle on his trips to Rosedale or even when Tony was ill in Sale Hospital. One can piece together an interesting, and hopefully true story if you have the basic information to start the search. Birth and death records, wills, cemetery records, diaries, photographs and artefacts (well labelled) all played a part in this search.



Myrtle Aleindi (nee Wilson) niece of Charlotte Swindell and Grand daughter of Nellie Swindell

Our society is receiving many more requests for information than in previous years. It is rewarding that in many cases we are able to help. As a result of these requests we also gain new information and great stories unfold.



The home of Robert Forrest at Wooreen, now owned by David Thompson

The South Gippsland Historical Network Conference

The South Gippsland Historical Network, which represents the historical groups in the South Gippsland Region, will be running a conference on Saturday February 23rd at Coal Creek Heritage Village. The conference theme is “No history, no culture” and speakers from around South Gippsland and elsewhere will be present. Our own John Murphy and Ian Lester will be two of the speakers. Further details will be in our next newsletter.

Guest Speaker for November

Our guest speaker in November will be Dr Allen Hulls. Allen is an ex local who attended Leongatha High School in the 1930's. He will be speaking about the Hulls Family History as it relates to South Gippsland. The meeting will be on November 20th at the Leongatha Mechanics' Institute commencing at 8 pm.

We need you!

Your historical Society needs your help. We are preserving the heritage of the area for future generations and we have many tasks that need doing.

- **We need a typist who would be willing to transcribe audio tapes.**
- **You may like to help us :-**
 - **record your memories.**
 - **record the stories of our more recent migrants.**
 - **tell the stories of our pioneer women**
 - **research the histories of our many historic homes**
 - **continue the recording of tradesmen**

Above all we need our members to tell us what they find interesting and what might attract new blood to our group. Sadly those of us who research and write history, catalogue and organise research material and record our valuable heritage in many ways cannot last forever.

