

Linton and District Historical Society Inc

Inc.No. A 6421B

Society Notes

February 2012

Published Quarterly

Number 274

ISSN1033-9582

Lads of the Village – 1930s



From our photographic collection: this cheerful group photographed outside the Post Office (date unknown).
From left: Sam Stapleton, Ron Allen, Bob Roberts, Jim Stapleton, Spencer Grigg.

Jim Stapleton, now aged 98, will be guest speaker at our next ***History Night*** on **Monday 20 February**.

The growing popularity of cycling in the 1890s led to the establishment of a district cycle club: The Harlequins

By the late 1890s, when the development of motor car was in its infancy, cycling had arrived as the convenient and cheap way for people to enjoy an outing. It was given a big boost by the improvements in bicycle technology – the age of the penny-farthing bicycle was over, and the new sleek machines featured pneumatic tyres and the diamond shaped frame. They were also more convenient for ladies to ride, given the restrictive female fashions of the era. Mass-production reduced the prices and made the bicycle much more widely affordable. Cycling clubs sprang up throughout the western world, and Linton embraced this new popular pastime. On 6 March 1897, the Grenville Standard reported on the establishment of a district cycle club:

“The suggestion to form a bicycle club seems to have met with warm approval from cyclists, and there is every prospect of the movement being crowned with success. On Saturday an informal run was held, several intending members meeting at Smythesdale and proceeded to Linton, via Carngham, picking up two or three cyclists on the way. A meeting was held in the evening in the Victoria Hotel, there being about fifteen persons present. Dr Hoystead was voted in the chair, and explained that the meeting had been called for the purpose of forming a district bicycle club. It was proposed not only to meet for runs, but to hold social gatherings, and endeavour to promote in every way the good fellowship that should exist among cyclists. The chairman then read the rules of the Ramblers’ club, and suggested that they would serve as a guide in framing rules of their own.

Some apologies for absence, accompanied with promises to join the proposed club were received, and the intending members were estimated to number about 25 cyclists. Mr. M. Veal moved and Mr W. Baker seconded, “That a district bicycle club be formed. – Carried unanimously.”

An annual subscription of five shillings was fixed and the following were elected officers of the club: President, Dr Hoystead; vice-presidents, Mr. G. Russell, M.L.A., Mr. J Russell, J.P., Mr. P. Russell, Mr. R. Chirnside, J.P., Cr. W. T. Rowe, Rev. M. D. Williams, and Rev. Father Barrett; captain, Mr. E. C. Murphy; vice-captain, secretary, Mr. F Young; treasurer, Mr. A. J. Horan; committee, Messrs W. Baker (Carngham), L. Reitze



Red Bird the Way to Go

At the time of the establishment of the district bicycle club, an advertisement for the Red Bird bike was regularly placed in the Grenville Standard. In its issue of 6 March 1897 the Standard in its Cycle Notes column also reported favourably on the Red Bird:

“A proof of the marvellous strength of the *Red Bird* frame was given at the Learmonth Sports last week. In the Novice race F. Williams, on a 19lb racer, collided with a dog on the track, and was thrown heavily against the fence. The frame was not even bent, the only damage done being a split rim and forks slightly bent.”

The Standard also noted that: “Mr Harley Davidson, a Canadian champion professional cyclist, rides a *Red Bird*. (Editor’s note: This Harley Davidson is not connected with the famous Harley Davidson motorcycle company, which was established in 1907 in the USA by two friends, William Harley and Arthur Davidson.)

(Smythesdale), W. Murrell (Linton), F. Young (Scarsdale).

Club Uniform

The *Grenville Standard* then reported that the meeting decided “that, as a uniform, navy blue stockings and same colored cap with red piping should be worn, and other portion of attire to be left to the rider’s taste or discretion.” The *Standard* also reported that committee meetings were arranged to be held monthly on days of runs. The first run was to take place on Friday night 12 March 1897, and members were to meet at Scarsdale and run to Haddon and back.

Choosing a name

The *Standard* reported that “some difficulty arose as to the title of the club. Many suggestions were made but the names were rejected as unsuitable. Eventually it was decided that it should be either ‘Nondescripts’ or ‘Harlequins’, the result to be arrived at by ballot. Probably in view of a proposal as to attire, made earlier in the evening, the ‘Nondescripts’ was balloted out, and the club will therefore be known as the ‘Harlequins’.”

Cycle road racing was a popular sport for many years in Victoria, as is shown by the report below from the Melbourne *Sun*, 12 October 1955, commenting on Linton’s contribution to the success of the annual Sun Tour.



Linton Amateur Cycle Club

Linton later established its own cycling club. In *A Pictorial History of Linton 1839 – 1989* that was published by the Historical Society in 1989, it was reported that “The Linton Amateur Cycle Club started about 1931 and met in Arch Tonkin’s Garage”. Jim Stapleton, the guest speaker at our 20 February History Night, was, at one time, secretary of the cycle club.

Show and Tell night produced fascinating stories, demonstrating the 'Secret Life of Things'

Our History Night on Monday 21 November, our last one for 2011, was one of our popular 'Secret Life of Things' evenings, where we ask members to bring along old objects, artefacts, documents, keepsakes or photos, and tell us the stories behind them. We had a good attendance and most members brought at least one historic object or piece of memorabilia to talk about. The extent to which such objects can elicit people's memories and promote discussion is remarkable. Some of them had a local Linton connection, but not all of them; some were family heirlooms or reminders of members' youthful experiences.

Of general historical interest were three 19th century lamps brought by Deirdre Nicol from her husband Roy's collection – a miner's lamp made in Ballarat, another unusual British lamp made in 1916 that had provision for both oil and candlelight, and an intriguing ship's lamp thought to date to 1820. Jan and Susie Cooke brought an original poster for the sale of the Emu Hill estate in 1908, a piece of our local history that was amongst the family's memorabilia. The property was being sold at that time as part of the deceased estate of Edward Morey MP. On a more personal note, Graeme Stanton showed a framed 'Honour pocket' from a Powerhouse club blazer he wore as a young man. He was awarded the pocket for his outstanding contribution to the Powerhouse water polo team. Graeme talked about how important his association with Powerhouse had been and the lifelong friendships he had made there.



Jenny Stuart and her sister Cheryl Morris (pictured above) brought a wonderful old wall clock in a wooden case that had been in the Caldwell family home; and Mal Chubb entertained us with stories relating to enlargements of some old photos of the Chubb family in and around Linton.

Rosemary Manion brought a pair of very old earrings made from Ballarat gold that belonged to her great-aunt. She also brought a framed etching of a rural scene – it appeared to be a Dutch landscape – which had belonged to her grandfather, and a ‘mystery object’ that kept us all guessing as to its origins and purpose. Bill Armstrong produced an old wallet that still contained some of his personal papers, including his Baptism card, papers dating back to WWII, and others relating to his and Letty’s emigration in 1961.

Jill Wheeler showed an old Hoadley’s confectionery jar and a shop bell that had been in her father’s General Store in Glenthompson in the 1930s; and Drew Hopkins talked of memories of his travels in India as a young man in the early 1970s that were brought back to him by a small stone statue of an Indian goddess he had bought there in 1971 and a silver ring he had bought in Kathmandu in 1973. Possibly the most personally poignant object was brought by Helen Pope - a beautiful album of photographs and other biographical information, published as a glossy book, that her daughter had compiled about Helen’s late husband, Les.

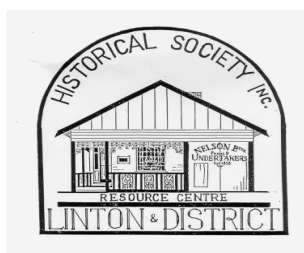
History Night Monday 20 February : Stories from the Elders Series

Our first History Night for the year will be held on Monday 20 February, 2012 at the Letty Armstrong Resource Centre, Sussex St, Linton, 7.30 pm.



We are thrilled to have as a guest speaker for the night one of our members, and ex-resident of Linton, **Mr Jim Stapleton, who is aged 98**, and who is coming all the way from Echuca to talk to us of his memories of Linton in the 1920s and 30s! Jim evidently has a remarkable memory and will share with us first hand a wealth of Linton history. Some of Jim’s memories were published in our November edition of *Society Notes*. He is one of the “Lads of the Village” pictured on the front page of this edition.

This is a meeting not to be missed by all our members! Visitors are most welcome.



Society Notes

Society Notes is now a quarterly publication. The next issue will be published and posted to you in May 2012.

Contributions are welcome – photos, articles stories. Please contact Drew Hopkins 0439 895 007 email: drewhopkins47@gmail.com

Christmas Dinner at the Linton Railway Hotel



Members Jan Cooke (Treasurer), Deirdre Nicol (Secretary) and Susie Cooke at the Christmas Dinner

The twenty-one members of the Society who attended the **Society's Christmas break-up on Friday 16 December** celebrated the occasion in style at the Linton Railway Hotel. We all enjoyed very much the warm and friendly atmosphere and were treated to a lovely traditional Christmas Dinner with all the trimmings. Kris Kringle gifts were exchanged, with most people looking pleased with what they received. It was a great way to conclude a most successful year for the LDHS.



Engaged in animated conversation at the Christmas Dinner: Jenny Stuart, Kaye Draffin, Howard Draffin, Roy Nicol, Ken McBeath (obscured), Diane McBeath, Jill Wheeler, Susie Cooke and Deirdre Nicol. (Photos Joan Giles)

The Linton Fire Brigade: A brief history

The Linton CFA, which celebrated its 125th anniversary in 2010, has undergone various name changes and alterations in governance since the original Linton Volunteer Fire Brigade was formed in about 1885. Its foundation members included: I and J Pietreich, W Crane, J Foster, A Keys, T Cornish, O and E Ball, C Rankin, R Grigg, G G Bennett, J McIntyre, P Wishart, W Quirk, H Davies, J Nicol, Jack and J Nelson, J Marks, Harry, Tom and Dan Cornish.

The first station was also built about 1885. It was replaced by a new building (with a tiled roof) that was erected by the Country Fire Brigades Board, and opened on 6 September 1939 by Mr Stewart, a member of the Country Fire Brigades board, which took over supervision of the country brigades at that time. This was known as the Bush Fire Brigade.

There was also the Linton Urban Fire Brigade, which was a member of the Victorian Urban Fire Brigades' Association. Teams from Linton used to compete in State Demonstrations in large centres such as Ballarat, Geelong, Warrnambool, Bendigo, Echuca and Mildura, where they were often very successful. The Urban Fire Brigade ceased to function in 1988 when the State Government amalgamated small urban brigades with their rural counterparts.

The 1939 fire station was extensively remodelled and extended at the end of 1990. The present station includes a modern meeting room, kitchen and radio room.



Pictured above is the Fire Brigade that competed in a demonstration at Warrnambool in 1905. From left to right: back row C. Nelson, F. Preston, G. Preston, W. Todd. Front: D. Nicol, J. Wishart, W. McMillan.

Vale: Mary Lillian Austin, nee Murrell

The Society has been advised that on Sunday 6 November 2011, Mary (Murrell) Austin passed away, aged 97, at Bateman's Bay, NSW. Mary was born on 22 June 1914, the youngest of seven children of Bill and Lily Murrell. For many years from 1912 onwards, the Murrells, and in particular their daughter Carrie, operated the newsagency in Sussex Street. Mary had two children, eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren. All Mary's siblings had pre-deceased her.

Jill Wheeler reports on research requests July-December 2011

In the second half of the year we handled the following requests for historical information:

HYNES, John Michael, and his wife Annie Agnes Hynes (nee Brophy)

A request from great-grandson, Darren Hynes, for any information on this couple and their family who lived in Linton in the early 1900s. The Society did not have any information, but we referred Darren to Mary Bradshaw of the Skipton Historical Society who is related to the Hynes family. We also consulted the Secretary of the Linton Cemetery Trust who subsequently reported that there were four Hynes family burials in Linton cemetery.

LEWIS, William & Ann and family. A request from Jenny Hillman regarding this family. We did have information on this family but have also had previous enquirers about them so we referred Jenny to them as well, and to the Cemetery Trust for information on any Linton burials.

PERKINS, George and Julia. Sandra Feil wrote requesting assistance with any information we might have about these Linton ancestors of hers. We had a copy of an inquest into the death of this couple's child Honora in 1868 that provided quite a lot of information about the family. We also had a copy of an inquest into the death of an Elizabeth Perkins in childbirth in 1862 who might have been George's first wife (unknown to this enquirer).

WEARNE, John and Ann (nee McGie). David Wearne wrote requesting any information or photographs we might have of this couple, his great-great-grandparents, or of the Wearne Family generally. We had a number of photographs but interestingly no other information. We referred David to a previous enquirer about this family and to the Linton Cemetery Trust to check for any Wearnes or McGies buried in the cemetery.

HOWELLS, John and family. A grandson of this John Howells, also called John Howells, supplied further information for us, including a family tree. The family lived in Linton approximately 1871-1882. We already have a file on the family, and one of our members David Howells, is also researching the family (this information was passed on to John).

LINTON BOWLING CLUB. Bev Haynes requested any historical information or photos of the Linton Bowling Club, in particular the foundation members. We do not have a great deal of information or photographs on the history of the Bowling Club, but were able to provide some information from newspaper clippings that we keep in scrapbooks at the Resource Centre.

PRESIDENT OF LINTON SCHOOL COUNCIL, Andrea Smith, requested any reports or photographs relating to **Principal Allan McKinnon** who is retiring from the school after 19 years. The School Council wanted this for a farewell function for Allan to take place in February 2012. We were able to provide copies of photographs from our collection and of newspaper clippings of this era from our scrapbooks.

Any further information that members have that could be passed on to the inquirers would be most welcome.

Standard Lead History

Mark Barry, who lives near the site of the Standard Lead mine in Morthcup Road, sought information on this old gold diggings area west of Linton. He wanted to give his property an historically relevant name. Below is a copy of the research I carried out into this question. Mark has now put in place a sign naming his property Standard Lead (see photo page 9).

Standard Lead was the name given to a populous, short-lived gold diggings community that grew up after gold was discovered in 1859 at what became known as the Standard Lead. It was located south-west of the initial gold discoveries in this district in 1855, which were in the area around the present Linton cemetery (at Bloomer's, Nuggetty, and Candlestick gullies). The area where Standard Lead was is now along the Morthcup Road going west out of Linton, beyond the Rail Trail bridge.

Regarded as the most productive lead at Linton's Diggings, the Standard Lead was discovered in August 1859 and within a fortnight of its discovery, forty-nine claims had been registered. Apparently, 'before the end of the year the locality had a population of 4000, with several stores (Zucherman's, White's, Luth's and Haywood's butcher shop), [and] a number of hotels and shanties ... erected.' A school was established in late 1859 or early 1860 under Church of England control, called Standard Lead School, No. 577, and the Ballarat *Star* of February

1860 enthused that, 'Since the days of Eureka and Red Streak, nothing like the Standard has been struck in this district.'



There was evidently little expense involved in the sinkings, as there was 'neither rock nor much water to be overcome,' because this lead was remarkable for its great depth of black soil. Some of the richest claims were Flying Buck, Prince of Wales, Time Will Tell, and The Atlas. From one claim a 16 oz nugget was taken. Though very rich, these claims proved small, and parties of 10 to 15 men worked them out in a few months.

By 1864, however, it was almost over. Probably diggers left about that time for other fields. The pub, 'The Standard,' a two-storey wooden building, was moved into Linton's main street in 1861. People still continued to live in the area for some years at least and referred to their address as 'Standard Lead, Linton.'

In 1865, the Linton's Diggings school (located at the diggings near the present cemetery) and the Standard Lead school combined, and in 1867, they combined again with a third school, called simply Linton's (which was in the new town of Linton), to form Linton State School, No. 880.

Information compiled from:

Bennett, H.P. comp. *Looking Back Over 100 Years, 1839-1939: A Brief Historical Review on the Settlement and Development of Linton and District. Historic Souvenir of the Linton centenary, 1839-1939.* Linton, Vic.: Linton Centenary Celebrations Committee, 1939.

Mining Surveyors' Reports: furnished by the Mining Surveyors of Victoria to the Board of Science, vols. 2-20, May-December 1859. Melbourne: W. Fairfax and Co., Printers and Publishers. Vols 9-20, January-December 1860. Melbourne: John Ferres, Government Printer.

Mining Surveyors' Reports: furnished by the Mining Surveyors of Victoria to the Mining Department, Vols 21-32. January-December 1861. Melbourne: John Ferres, Government Printer.

Blake, L.J., general ed. *Vision and Realisation: A Centenary History of State Education in Victoria*, Vol 2. Melbourne: Education Department of Victoria, 1973.

Petterson, A. 'Linton.' *Forest, Lake and Plain: a magazine for school and home in the Colac Inspectorial District* 3, no. 2 (October 1923): 15-16. Colac: Brown & Holmes, 1921-1923.

Applause: A Big Thank You to all our Donors



Now that donations to the Society are **tax deductible** (receipts issued on request), many of our members have responded generously to assist us with new projects for preserving and displaying our precious collection of artefacts, photographs and documents. If you would like to make a donation, please contact our Treasurer, Jan Cooke (5342 8554), or post your donation to the Society's address: PO Box 41, 69 Sussex St., Linton 3360.

A Word from the President

Welcome back to you all after the Christmas break, and we wish all our members health and happiness throughout 2012.

Our new format end-of-year celebration – a Christmas dinner at the Linton Railway Hotel on December 16 - was a great success, with 21 of our local members enjoying the festivities, including hot roast turkey and plum pudding, bonbons, paper hats and a Kris Kringle.

Our November History Night at the Resource Centre was one of our popular ‘Secret Life of Things’ evenings (where we ask members to bring along old objects, artefacts, documents, keepsakes or photos, and tell us the stories behind them). Members brought a huge variety of objects and photos and their stories were fascinating, as always (full reports on both these events are elsewhere in this edition).

State of our buildings: repairs required

Apart from these get-togethers, work proceeded behind the scenes on a number of fronts in the final three months of 2011. One of our pre-occupations has been liaising with the Golden Plains Shire regarding **the need for major repairs at the Letty Armstrong Resource Centre (the Nelson Undertakers Building) and the 1874 Mechanics Institute Library** (both of which are owned by the Shire).

In my report to the Society’s Annual General Meeting, which was published in the last issue of *Society Notes*, I mentioned the poor state of those buildings. The Resource Centre urgently needs replacement of rotting window frames and waterproofing of the rooms housing the archival collection, as there is a growing problem with damp. Storms in the latter half of last year increased the urgency of the situation, resulting in the collapse of guttering and further deterioration to the weatherboards, which are already in an extremely poor condition, several having almost completely rotted away. In addition, an electrician’s inspection of the Centre advised that we need a new fuse box, the existing one being extremely old and not in keeping with present day regulations that have the latest safety switches.

The Library needs repairs to the entrance, windows, rear veranda and rear wall. We also feel it would be desirable to have extra power points, a water connection to the building and a sink fitted to facilitate greater use of the building for meetings, exhibitions and other gatherings.

We have had discussion and correspondence with the Golden Plains Shire Council officers regarding these problems, and where responsibility lies for undertaking the repairs. Council officers have inspected the buildings and were reporting to Council, so we await the outcome. Meanwhile, we have felt it necessary to move our archival collection away from the damp areas of the Centre, and accordingly, we have had a new purpose built set of shelves made to house it in the driest room at the Centre.

Application for Local History Grant

In November, we applied for a Local History Grant (through the Public Record Office of Victoria), which, if successful, would enable us to produce an up-to-date book about Linton’s history using some more of our extensive photograph collection. We will not know the outcome of this until June 2012.

Officially, the Society has been in recess during the month of January. However, we have continued to attend to requests for research and information from members and non-members and from other organisations in Linton (see separate Research report).

Website

I have commenced writing the content for our website which we hope to have up and running in the first half of 2012.

We hope to see as many of you as possible at **our first History Night of the year on 20 February** when one of our oldest members, Jim Stapleton, age 98, will come from Echuca to regale us with his stories of Linton in the 1920s and 30s!

Jill Wheeler

History Night Monday 16 April:

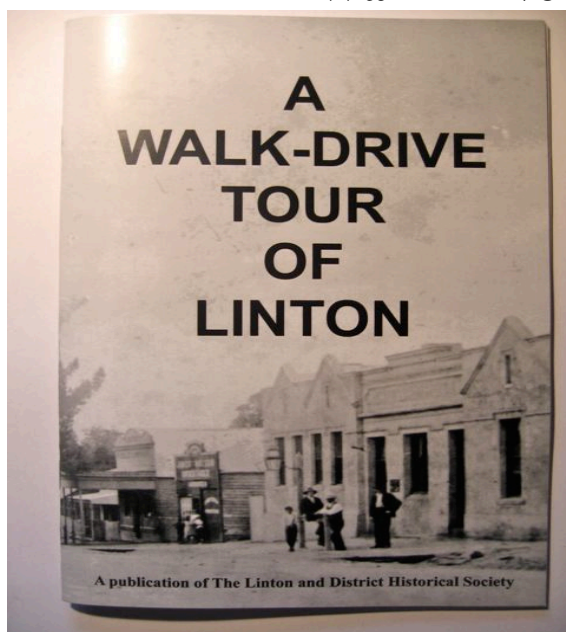
From Lancashire to Linton: explorations in Family History.

Our second History Night for the year will be held Monday 16 April, 2012 at the Letty Armstrong Resource Centre Sussex St, Linton, 7.30 pm.



At this History Night, Jill Wheeler will report on her recent visit to Lancashire where she researched her ancestors, the Walker family, cotton workers who emigrated to Linton in the nineteenth century. (Above is a photo from a Lancashire Mill Museum.)

Walk-Drive Tour Booklet Available



The *Walk-Drive Tour of Linton* booklet was launched last year at the Society's Annual General Meeting. The booklet sets out three tours of Linton and district (two walks, and one drive tour), with explanations of places of historic interest and many photographs.

The booklet is selling well and is available from the Post Office, the Take Away, Susie's on Sussex and the Historical Society. If you cannot get to one of these outlets, **you can order by writing to the Secretary (Town Walk Book), Linton & District Historical Society, PO Box 41 Linton 3360, enclosing \$7 for purchase and postage.**

the Bulletin board

- **Next Four Open Days** – Sundays 12 February, 11 March, 8 April, 13 May. *Please Note the new opening times – formerly from 1:00 – 4:00 pm, but now 2:00 – 5:00 pm.*
- **Monday 20 February** is our next **History Night – Jim Stapleton – Memories of Linton in the 1920s and 1930s** (see details on page 5).
- **Monday 16 April. History Night – From Lancashire to Linton: explorations in Family History.** Jill Wheeler will report on her recent visit to Lancashire where she researched her ancestors, the Walker family, cotton workers who emigrated to Linton in the nineteenth century.
History Nights commence at 7:30 in the Letty Armstrong Resource Centre Join us to hear the speakers, join in the discussion and share the supper.

Welcome to new members: We would like to welcome three new members who have recently joined the Society: Bill Callaghan, Betty Innes and Cheryl Morris.

Society contacts:

President, Research Officer, Grants Officer: **Jill Wheeler** (5344 7386; 0439 895 939); email: jillianleawheeler@gmail.com

Vice President: **Alan Giles**

Treasurer: **Jan Cooke** (5342 8554)

Secretary (Correspondence): **Deirdre Nicol** (5340 3507)

Membership/Subscriptions: **Joan Giles (5344 7424)**

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Photographic collection: **Warwick Madden** (0457 025 353)

Society Address: PO Box 41, 69 Sussex St., Linton 3360.

(Nelson Bros. Undertakers building, but now the Letty Armstrong Resource Centre)

Society Notes contributors and helpers: Jan Cooke, Susie Cooke, Alan Giles, Joan Giles, Deirdre Nicol, Jenny Stuart, Jill Wheeler.

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