



Society Notes

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Before Social Distancing: our historical bus tour



Happy hungry historians enjoying afternoon tea in Happy Valley

Photo: Drew Hopkins

What a great day!. Our historical bus tour of Linton and the district ended on a rowdy note at the Happy Valley School where a delicious afternoon tea, catered for by the Happy Valley Community Hall Committee, was consumed with relish by our history enthusiasts. We were fortunate that the tour, on Sunday 15 March, took place just before Victoria's lockdown guidelines to restrict the spread of COVID 19 came into force. See a report of the tour inside.

Such was the enthusiasm for the tour, that we will consider future tours that can cover places we did not have time to visit this year. In this issue of *Society Notes* we have included several photos of the interior of Linton's two churches that are still operating, as they contain some impressive works of art.

Also inside:

- **Linton and the 'Spanish Flu' pandemic of 1919**
- **Linton's art treasures in the churches**
- **Marne's Mosquito drops (not to be drunk!)**
- **ANZAC Day during the lockdown**

Historical bus tour a very popular afternoon enjoyed by all, and provided a discovery of Linton's art treasures for many

Our bus tour of Linton and the district on Sunday 15 March went off without a hitch and was generally regarded as a great success. 52 passengers boarded the bus, driven by Ian Getsom of Happy Valley, that took them around the town and as far as Happy Valley. The journey took approximately three hours and took in old mining sites, churches, war memorials, former town facilities such as shops and businesses, the former railway station, and views of the town and surrounding landscape.

The commentary was provided by members Chris Grigg, Jill Wheeler and Leon Dark, with additional information supplied by some of the other passengers who were knowledgeable about the local history.

The tour included stops for passengers to get out and go inside St Paul's Church of England and St Peter's Catholic Church, and to walk around the gardens of the former Presbyterian Church. The last stop was the old Happy Valley school for a memorable afternoon tea provided by the Happy Valley Hall committee.

It was a great afternoon of sharing and reconnecting with Linton's rich history and with members of our local community.



Interior of St Paul's Church of England, Linton, looking east.

Photo: Leon Dark

Two of the many highlights of the tour were Linton's remaining consecrated churches, which contain some real art treasures: St Paul's Anglican church, and St Peter's Catholic Church. The photo above shows the interior of St Peter's Anglican church, and features the elegance of its beautiful vaulted, timber ceiling. In the background is the charming wooden altar with the Christian Waller windows that are referred to in a following story.

Two of the significant features of the Catholic church are the altar, and the Stations of the Cross on the walls of the nave. This set of the Stations of the Cross, all of which are in very charming wooden frames, is a recent addition to the church. It was brought here from the Catholic Church at Springdallah which was recently de-consecrated and sold into private hands. For those unfamiliar with decoration within Catholic churches, the Stations of the Cross consist of 14 pictures, or devotions, that depict Jesus Christ's last day on earth, and they can become the site of a mini pilgrimage as a devotee moves from station to station.

The altar is an elaborately carved Italian work, and the front of it features a coloured bas-relief copy of Leonardo da Vinci's *The Last Supper*. The altar was donated by John and Mrs O'Beirne.



Some of our tour members in the nave at St Peter's Catholic Church

Photo: Drew Hopkins



The bas-relief at the front of the altar, depicting the Last Supper.

Photo: Drew Hopkins

The stained-glass windows of St Paul's Church

A particular treat for those on our Historical Bus Tour who had not been inside St Paul's Anglican Church were the stained-glass windows. Christian Waller's windows above the altar are discussed in detail over the page, but three other significant windows were made by former Linton resident and stained-glass artist, Bob Albert.

Samuel Lewers' window

One window on the north side of the nave memorialises a former Linton notable character, Samuel Lewers, on the Linton goldfields in the 1860s. Samuel Lewers, who opened a branch of the Bank of New South Wales in 1860 and was its first manager, and also the Shire of Grenville's first President, moved around the goldfields collecting money to pay for the construction of a Church of England. He was known to have worn a "bell topper hat," and Bob Albert has depicted him holding out the hat for donations. Legend has it that, whilst coins were collected, some diggers donated small gold nuggets, and gold dust.



The Samuel Lewers window, by Bob Albert

Photo: Drew Hopkins

Alice Knight memorial window

At the west end of the church are two windows that were donated by well-known Linton residents, Alice and Kevin Knight, who commissioned Bob Albert to make the windows in memory of their mother and Old Lintonian, Alice Evelyn Knight. The windows depict the New Testament story of the two sisters, Mary and Martha. Jesus is shown visiting their home. In the left-hand window, Mary sits at his feet listening to his teachings. In the right-hand window, Martha prepares food. The story provides an opportunity for the discussion of the relative importance of spiritual values over material values.



The Alice Knight memorial window, by Bob Albert

Photo: Drew Hopkins

The Society's response to the COVID-19 pandemic

The lockdown and social distancing requirements that have been advised by the Victorian and the Commonwealth Governments have meant we have had to close our Resource Centre to the public until advised that it is safe to reopen. This has resulted in the cancellation of our June History Night, and our Open Days in April, May and June. We will follow our usual practice of closing for the winter months of July and August. However, our volunteers' work, such as cataloguing and storing our collection, and dealing with research requests, continues behind the scenes.

The Christian Waller windows in St Paul's Anglican church

We received a surprising phone call on 14 March from Caroline Miley, a Melbourne fine-arts academic, who asked whether we could provide her with colour photographs of the stained-glass windows in the east wall of St Paul's Anglican Church in Linton.

We were aware that the windows were the work of Christian Waller, a stained-glass artist of the first part of the twentieth century based in Melbourne. The windows depict 'The Nativity' and 'The Ascension'. Christian (1894-1954) was the wife of Napier Waller who was also a stained-glass artist and who was much more well known then and now. They had met while they both were attending art classes at the National Gallery in Melbourne. Napier Waller is also well-known for his murals and mosaics that can be found in many Melbourne buildings, and in The Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

Caroline pointed out that Christian Waller is something of an overlooked artist, and Caroline is trying to redress this by publishing a book about her and her work. She said that Christian was much in demand as a stained-glass artist for churches all over Victoria and indeed Australia. For example, she designed windows for St James Old Cathedral in Melbourne and St Mark's Church in Camberwell. She was a professional artist who was able to support herself independently, being a favoured artist for architects to use at that time. The designs for the windows at St Paul's are held in the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria.

Caroline requested up to date photos of the two windows that are in St Paul's as she only had black & white reproductions. The windows were commissioned for the church in 1938 by the Lewers family in memory of the Samuel and Annie Lewers who were pioneers of the church.

Linton is very fortunate, and St Paul's particularly so, to have such significant and valuable artworks as part of its collection.



The Christian Waller windows in situ behind the altar in St Paul's

Photo: Drew Hopkins

The 1918 influenza pandemic

As we endure the current COVID-19 global pandemic, it is interesting to reflect upon the global pandemic of nearly 100 years ago, the influenza epidemic of 1918-1919. Jill Wheeler takes a look at that epidemic and how it was experienced in Linton and district at that time.

Beginnings at the end of World War 1

Regarded as the most devastating epidemic in recorded world history, the influenza epidemic of 1918-1919, known as the 'Spanish flu', killed approximately 50 million people worldwide, which was more people than the First World War that immediately preceded it.

Beginning in the overcrowded hospitals and army camps of Europe in 1918, the outbreak hit Australia in December 1918 and Melbourne in early January 1919.

Local authorities were aware of the devastating effects of the disease in Europe and took precautions to limit its impact. Strict procedures were in place before the virus attacked. The border between Victoria and New South Wales was closed; public meetings of twenty or more people were prohibited; travel in long distance trains was restricted; loitering 'under the clocks' at Flinders Street station was strictly forbidden; and people were encouraged to wear masks in public. In a desperate effort to stave off the virus, the disinfectant phenyl was sprinkled in Melbourne's city streets.

To what degree the precautions in Australia controlled the spread is open to conjecture. Still, Australia escaped relatively lightly compared to India, China and Europe. About 12,500 died nationally; around 30 percent of these were Victorians.

This virus was most deadly for those in the 20 to 40 years age bracket, thus many young men and women who had survived the horrors of the war were struck down by the influenza epidemic.

So great were the numbers of people taken ill in Melbourne that the Exhibition Building was converted into an emergency hospital between February and August 1919. The number of infected people reached its greatest height in the second week of February. By mid-August 1919 the hospital had treated 4046 cases, 392 of whom had died.



Hospital beds in the Great Hall during the Influenza Pandemic, Exhibition Building, Melbourne, February 1919
Unknown photographer. Source: Museums Victoria

How did the epidemic play out in the Linton district?

I searched the local newspaper, *The Grenville Standard*, and the Ballarat paper, the *Ballarat Star*, for any references to influenza, or what was called 'pneumonic influenza' during 1919.

The first mention of it in Linton was when *The Grenville Standard* reported on **February 8, 1919**, that 'owing to the influenza epidemic, the annual picnic to the Ballarat gardens has been postponed.'

The escalation of the influenza epidemic was being reported in the *Ballarat Star* on **3 February**, with 13 cases in what was known as the camp hospital set up in the showgrounds. Widespread inoculation was being carried out, although its effectiveness was dubious: the *Star* reported that all nurses at the Melbourne Hospital who had been inoculated contracted the disease, which 'showed that inoculation did not prevent infection, but it lessened the severity of the complaint'.

The Grenville Standard reported on **8 February** that the Shire council was considering urgent measures to counteract the spread of the epidemic 'should it appear in the Shire.' Free inoculation, measures to reduce overcrowding in public buildings and the establishment of temporary hospitals at Linton and Smythesdale were recommended.

On 14 February *The Grenville Standard* reported that Grenville Shire Council held a special meeting to consider the establishment of isolation hospitals for pneumonic influenza patients in Ballarat for the shires adjoining. It was agreed that Grenville would cooperate with this move. It was also agreed to have police enforce quarantine regulations in the Shire; that free libraries within the Shire be closed; that it be recommended that Churches also close; that the health officer, Dr Donaldson, should set up a free inoculation depot at Cape Clear; that 'a supply of disinfectant and fly paper' be distributed at cost price to ratepayers; and that the Linton State school be procured for an observation hospital, with a nurse to be retained, equipment obtained and voluntary aid solicited.

On 21 February *The Grenville Standard* reported that Dr Donaldson administered free inoculation in the Shire Hall, which seemed to be a two-stage process with 'A' vaccine being followed by 'B' vaccine a week later.

On 27 February the annual meeting of the Free Library considered a recommendation from the Shire Council to close due to the epidemic but decided to 'leave the matter in the hands of the secretary ... it being pointed out that the people did not congregate at the reading room in large numbers'.

On 8 March 1919, the *Ballarat Star* reported that in Melbourne that 139 new cases had been reported the day before and the total number of cases in hospitals was 1112. Fourteen people had died.

The Ballarat Hospital and the Showgrounds camp were both housing patients, some of whom were convalescing, but one or two who were still in the grip of the disease. A nurse at the hospital had died 'while attending to her patients' and 'three members of staff had contracted the disease in a mild form.'

The Ballarat Shire's Health Committee considered the advisability of isolating those people who brought patients to hospital. Cr Dickinson quoted the example of Grenville Shire where a patient had been conveyed to Ballarat Hospital and 'their health officer had isolated the person who brought the patient to the ward.' (Perhaps Dr Donaldson was ahead of the Ballarat medical fraternity in disease control since this appears to have been a new idea to them at that time).

During March 1919 the state-wide restrictions continued, despite some pressure to remove them. However, a meeting of State Cabinet reported on **1 March** in *The Grenville Standard* concluded that 'while it has not been unmindful of the serious loss and inconvenience which the regulations have caused, it feels that the health of the people must be the predominant consideration'.

Next History Night: Monday 21 September

Our next History Night will be the Annual General Meeting of the Society, which will be held on its traditional date, the third Monday in September, which will be 21 September, 2020.

Our speaker for that meeting will be advised in the August issue of Society Notes, and via email.

Meanwhile, not much appears to have changed in Linton. *The Grenville Standard* reported on **8 February 1919**, that 'Cricket has been revived at Linton after a silence of many years'. Cricket, and then football matches continued with other local teams, and on **March 15**, the newspaper reported that 'the annual gathering of the Linton St Patrick's Sports Club will be held on the recreation reserve this afternoon.'

By the end of March, *The Grenville Standard* reported that 'the influenza epidemic is dying out in Victoria, but not very rapidly, and there are fears that there may be a recrudescence of the disease in winter.'

Indeed, **by April 19**, *The Grenville Standard* was reporting that the epidemic 'shows no signs of abating. In Melbourne it has outsped the hospital accommodation and the supply of nurses. In Sydney the mortality is steadily increasing. Ballarat is still an infected centre.'

However, the annual reunion of the Old Lintonians was held on the recreation Reserve at Linton, as reported in the *Ballarat Star* on **23 April**. The attendance was well up to average, 'despite the influenza epidemic keeping a number of visiting members away.'

Although the epidemic continued in Melbourne during the winter of 1919, there are few reports of it in the Linton district and there are no reports of local people being infected, except for one subsequent report is of it being imported from the city. *The Grenville Standard* reported on **14 June 1919** that, ‘Constable Kirk of Linton, who was called to Melbourne for special duty in connection with the shipping strike, and contracted pneumonic influenza, is reported to be steadily improving.’

Another report on **26 July** was of the postmaster at Skipton contracting influenza and being taken to Ballarat by motor ambulance, although his case ‘is not a serious one’.

The *Ballarat Star* reported that at a Ballarat Shire Council meeting on **7 July**, the Health Officer reported that ‘the epidemic of influenza has quite cleared away. There has been no case reported for a month’.

One of the lingering effects of the epidemic, as with the current pandemic, is the economic impact. At the annual meeting of St Paul’s church, Linton, on **26 July**, the funds were lower than usual as the ‘usual special appeal had not been made’ and the ‘Parish Hall fund showed a small deficiency, owing to the hall having been closed for three months during the influenza epidemic.’

Apart from that reference to the impact of the epidemic locally, there are no reports of other detrimental effects on the local community. It seems that Linton and the surrounding district escaped the very worst of this influenza epidemic, which was felt most devastatingly in the cities.

Sources: Museum Victoria; *The Grenville Standard*; the *Ballarat Star*; Frank Bongiorno, How Australia’s Response To the Spanish flu of 1919 sounds warnings on dealing with coronavirus’ *The Conversation*; Mary Sheehan, Spanish Flu in Melbourne, *Living Histories*, May 25, 2017.

ANZAC Day Wreath

As we are all aware, ANZAC Day commemorations had to be cancelled this year because of the pandemic-related restrictions on people gathering together.

However, the Society still placed a beautiful wreath (photo below) at Linton’s War Memorial in front of the Shire Offices in Sussex St. Our thanks to committee member Sue Collins for arranging this and laying the wreath.



The LDHS wreath at the war memorial on ANZAC Day 2020.

Photo: Sue Collins

Marne's Mosquito Drops

The Society has in its archival collection a box of about a dozen little bottles called 'Marne's Mosquito Drops'. They were donated many years ago by Bob Albert who found them when he was renovating his residence, the building at 64 Sussex St that we affectionately call 'Barr's corner'. Barr's was a drapery shop and a boot and shoe shop at various times during its ownership by three generations of Barr brothers from 1873 until the 1930s.

The bottles have small corks in them and there was some anxiety when volunteers were storing them that the smell from them was seeping into the surrounding atmosphere and that they might contain a toxic substance that could be harmful to humans.

The writing on the bottles gives no indication as to what the contents are, describing them as 'an invaluable delicately perfumed preparation for the prevention of mosquito and sand fly bites'.

There was a suggestion that we should pour out the contents. However, the policy of our Society is not to interfere with or alter in any way the objects in our collection, so we decided it was best to get the contents of the bottles analysed to see if they are dangerous in any way.



What the laboratory report said:

'The liquid was found to predominantly Eucalyptus Oil, which is a popular household product, commonly found as an essential oil, medicinal product, cleaning product, inhalation/vapouriser fluid or as a topical preparation. It is generally considered not toxic when used externally as directed, when inhaled, and in low concentrations.

If consumed internally at low dosage as a flavouring component, or in certain pharmaceutical products at the recommended rate, it is also considered safe for adults.

However, it is *extremely toxic if ingested*, and even small ingestions of the pure oil (≥ 5 ml) can lead to severe symptoms and even to death. The pure oil is also known to cause skin irritation in some individuals when applied topically.

The liquid in the bottle supplied should be considered as a relatively pure concentrated oil. As such, some caution is required, especially with regards storage, and access for children. If it is ingested, even in small amounts it could be fatal. Exposure of the liquid to skin may cause irritation in some people.

It should be safe for your volunteers to be occasionally handling the bottles, however if they are going to open the bottles and be exposed to the liquid or vapours, caution is recommended.'

While the instruction on the bottle says, ‘Pour a little of the drops into the hands and rub over the face, hands and arms before retiring,’ the laboratory thought this would not cause irritation for most people, and that the product would work at warding off mosquitoes.

Conclusion?

We have concluded from all this that it is safe to store the bottles of Marne’s Mosquito Drops at the Resource Centre, but that they should be handled minimally and with caution, and that we should put this analysis report with the box of bottles, and make a note of it in our catalogue. We will also put the box inside a clear plastic box for further protection from any odour.

How the bottles came to be at the old Barr’s store we don’t know. Were they sold in the shop? Did the family have a store of them for their own use?

An online search of historic newspapers indicates that these drops were being advertised widely in NSW, Queensland and South Australia between about 1915 and 1927, to prevent the bites of mosquitoes and sand flies. However, we did not find any advertising in Victorian newspapers.

Marne and Co

Further research by our intrepid volunteer, Del Atkinson, into discovered this about the company that made them:

An advertisement in the *Adelaide Advertiser* in **1916** describes Marne & Company as “Manufacturers and Agents”, of Daking House, Rawson Place, Sydney.

The **1917 Sand’s Directory for Sydney** shows Marne & Co occupying rooms 20-22 on the fourth floor of Daking House, Cnr Rawson & Pitt Streets, Sydney. Marne & Co are listed as “manufacturing agents”.

By 1918 the company appears to have relocated. Marne and Company, Manufacturing Chemists, was advertising in the *Sydney Morning Herald* in November 1918 for workers for its factory at Dulwich Hill, Sydney.

In a report on industries in Marrickville published in the *Daily Telegraph*, **10 February 1922**, it is listed as a chemical company, located on the corner of Herbert Street and New Canterbury Road, Dulwich Hill.

Marne & Co appears on lists of “Imports passed at His Majesty’s Customs” published in the *Daily Commercial News & Shipping List* (Sydney) **5 March 1920**, p. 2. Shown as importing “drugs” and “essential oils”.

It is listed as a recently registered company in NSW in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, **3 September 1925**, p. 11: “Capital, £25,000. Chemists, druggists, drysalts, etc”.

The bottles of Marne’s Mosquito Drops in the LDHS collection have the Dulwich Hill address on the packaging, so can presumably be dated to **1918** or later.

The Shire printer not available, so most will receive this issue of *Society Notes* via email

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic control arrangements, we do not have access to the Golden Plains Shire’s coloured printer. Accordingly, we thought it best to send everyone a pdf of *Society Notes* via email.

For those members for whom we do not have an email address, we have had to send a black and white copy which I have printed on my machine at home. Hence, if you have received a paper copy of *Society Notes*, and you **DO HAVE AN EMAIL ADDRESS**, it means we do **not know** your email address. Please send it to me if you would like an electronic version of this, which will be IN COLOUR, and will enhance the photos of the churches and stained-glass windows.

My email address is: drewhopkins47@gmail.com

Drew Hopkins, Editor, *Society Notes*

the Bulletin board

- **Next Open Days at the Resource Centre** – The Society has, for some years, closed for a Winter break in July and August. Our next Open Day was due to be in June, but dates cannot be set until the extent of the current COVID-19 pandemic response lockdown period is known. When we have further information, we will advise dates by email, and in the next Society Notes. (**Usual Opening times: 2:00 – 5:00 pm**).
- **Next History Event: The Annual General Meeting, Monday 21 September, 2020. Speaker to be advised**
- Donations to the Society are **tax deductible**. Please contact the Treasurer for details.
- Lots of information is on our website www.lintonhistory.org.au and you can like us on www.facebook.com/lintonhistory



Publications:

- **DVDs of History Night talks are available:** Jim Stapleton; the O'Beirne family; Bruce Adams; Aaron Kerr; Rod Lewers; Chris and Bill Grigg; Joan Hunt (two talks); Hans and Gerry Ver Doorn; Graeme Ellis; Chris Uren on the Kvapil/Hayward family and the Snake Valley Displaced persons camp; Memories of the Harney Family at the Railway Hotel; Leon Dark – memories of the Dark family and Linton in the 1960s. **\$10 each + \$5 postage and handling. Details see our website. Contact Joan Giles: joangiles@hemsleypark.com.au Tel: 5309 1770.**
- **Linton Makes History: an Australian Goldfields Town and its Past** On sale at the Shire Office, the Emporium, and the Linton Take Away, all in Sussex St. Or buy direct from the author Jill Wheeler – jillianleawheeler@gmail.com - email Jill for electronic banking transfer details or send a cheque for \$30.00, plus \$8.00 postage & handling, to Linton & District Historical Society, 69 Sussex St, Linton 3360.
- **Linton: A Photographic History** A history of the small gold rush town of Linton as told through selected photographs from the collection of the Linton and District Historical Society. \$30.00, plus \$12.00 postage & handling. On sale at the above outlets. Or email: enquiries@lintonhistory.org.au to order.
- **An Historic Walk-Drive Tour of Linton and District** – see p for details of just released new edition.
- **Society Notes is a quarterly publication. The next issue after this one will be August 2020.**

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Applause: A Big Thank You to all our Donors

Donations to the Society are **tax deductible** (receipts issued on request). We have been thrilled that 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, Karen Ronan, enquiries@lintonhistory.org.au