

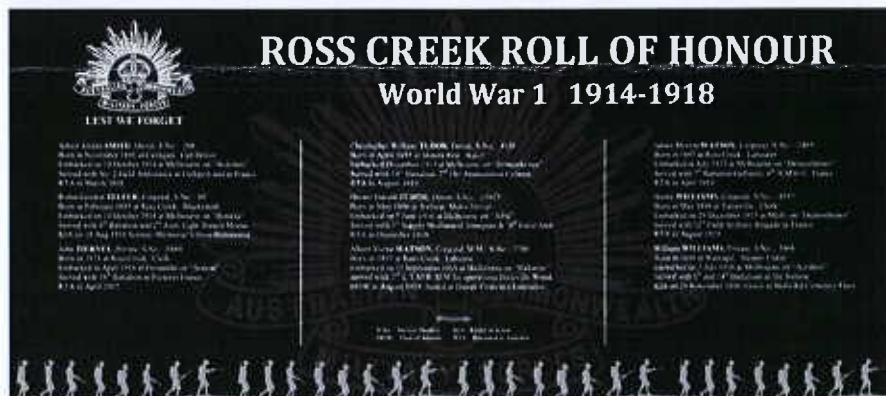


HISTORIC HAPPENINGS

Monthly Newsletter of
THE WOODY YALOK
HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

September 2018

No. 402



Detail of Memorial to commemorate the rededication of the Ross Creek Avenue of Honour which compliments the streetscape of the Ross Creek township.

President's Report

Welcome all,

The Ross Creek Avenue of Honour was officially recognised at a well-attended celebration last month, 100 years to the day from the original ceremony. The planting of 18 new trees enhanced the two original remaining oaks. A fine monument in the form of a three sided information sign was placed in a prominent position outside the community hall. The avenue recognises the 20 local volunteers who left for foreign shores to fight for country. It was a pleasure to see relatives of the soldiers and interested parties mixing with each other along with the official representatives from the military and from state and local government. Rosemary Barnett, with the assistance of Dr Joan Hunt researched the military history of the soldiers, the results of which were on display for perusal by the families and guests. The ceremony was complemented by the Phoenix School band and the assistance of students from the Ross Creek campus of the Woody Yaloak Primary School. The Monument /sign is easily accessible so if you are passing through Ross Creek please take the opportunity to check it out.

The installation of picture rail has begun at the Society offices in 'The Well' at Smythesdale. As the rail goes up so does our collection of framed images giving us back valuable storage space. The restoration of images and frames is coming along slowly. Again if there is anyone out there who has any large picture frames sitting around I would be interested in making an offer for them.

Last week a meeting was held by Golden Plains Shire Council at The Well in Smythesdale. Fortunately Treasurer Margaret Roberts was working in our rooms at the time and took the opportunity to show off our facilities to councillors from distant parts the shire, many of who were unaware of our operations. Her PR skills were in fine form as she explained our workings and our importance to the district.

The Woody's facebook site continues to be an important facet in our dealing with enquiries and the public in general. As if she didn't have enough to do, Margaret, and myself in a minor role, manage the site. It is becoming the major first contact between the Society and researchers.

Our August market was held under challenging conditions. The morning opened with brilliant blue skies and sunshine, all our lovely customers ignored the cold and took advantage coming along early. Unfortunately the weather changed into the day that had been forecast, the strong winds forced our stall holders into having to pack up early and our market finished about an hour and a half early.

A very big HAPPY BIRTHDAY to WYHS Life Member Laurel Sharp who turned 80 years young on the 31st of August. Congratulations Laurel.

Cheers,

Jim

The Next Meeting of the Woody Yaloak Historical Society Inc.

When: Wednesday, 19th September, 2018 — 7.30pm

Where: The Well, 19 Heales Street, Smythesdale.

What: General Meeting. Guest speaker is Steven Walker
Who is to speak about all things Scottish.

CORRECTION

The photograph on the front page of last months newsletter carried the wrong name and details.

It should have read: -

Mrs Dorothea (Dora) MOONEY
(nee GETHERINGS)
Born 1792 in Wexford, Ireland
Died 1866, aged 74 Melbourne

Dora's parents were Thomas Gethings born circa 1786 and Mary Roberts (sister of Joshua Roberts the elder). Dora married James Mooney and they had eleven children: Martha, John, Thomas, Michael, James, Mary, Ellen, Joshua, William, Eliza and Francis.

James and Dorothea Mooney, their eldest son John (35 years) and youngest daughter Frances emigrated to Australia on the Albatross which sailed from Liverpool November 15th 1852, the family boarding in Cork, Ireland.



Fellow passengers were the Roberts family consisting of John (aged 23 years, his widowed mother Ruth (55), his older sister Martha (25, brother William (19) and younger sister Sophia (16).

Frances Gethings was to marry John Pounder Roberts in Melbourne in 1859. They were to have two sons; John Garibaldi (Garry) and William Joshua. Frances died in 1872.

Left: Mrs Roberts whose name was incorrectly used on Mrs Mooney's photo last month.

Ruth Roberts (nee Pounder)
Born 1796 (Wexford, Ireland
Died 30 August 1871, aged 75;
Buried in St Kilda cemetery, Melbourne

MINING NUGGETS

Central western Victoria is renowned for its abundant gold nuggets. Prior to the use of metal detectors only 1327 alluvial gold nuggets of greater than 20 oz (0.6 kg) were recorded, but many more were presumably found. Some were very large, e g 625 over 50 oz (1.6 kg), 335 over 100 oz (3.1 kg), 45 over 500 oz (15.6 kg) and 12 over 1000 oz (31.1 kg) The four largest nuggets were the 2280 oz (70.9 kg) Welcome Stranger nugget from Moliagul, supposedly the largest single nugget found in the world, the 2195 oz (683 kg) Welcome nugget from Ballarat East, the 1744 oz (54.2 kg) Blanche Barkly nugget from Kingower and the 1716 oz (53.4 kg) Precious nugget from Rheola Berlin.

Many nuggets would not have been reported as miners were traditionally tight-lipped not wanting other men to jump their claim.

The first recorded large nugget on the Woody Yaloak goldfields was discovered at Browns Diggings was in July 1856 and weighed 356 oz or 10.09 kg. It was placed on display at the Nugget Hotel in Smythesdale and encouraged a rush to the goldfield.

KELLYS RUSH by John Boyd

The discovery of Kelly' rush by William Willis and Walter Welsh about the turn of the century, about 4 miles north-east of Smythesdale, would have to be the local mining highlight of the century.

Some twenty years earlier to this Mr. Knight from Canico was carting firewood to the Racecourse mine at Haddon with a three-horse wagon team when he picked up a 20 oz nugget in the wheel track in the bush.

Several miners searched the area and a considerable amount of surface area was turned over but nothing further was found, suspicion spread that he had picked up the nugget on the machine stone dump at the Racecourse mine.

In the intervening years an eccentric man named Miller found a very rich but small patch of nuggets a few hundred yards north of where Knight had found his 20 oz nugget. As there was no water with which to wash the dirt and a negligible amount of fine gold, Miller treated the dirt by sieving and dry blowing. The amount of gold he recovered is unknown.

Later on, Willis and Welsh fossicked Miller's old workings and then prospected the area in the vicinity of Knight's find and it was then they discovered the run of nuggets that became known as Kelly's Rush, so named after the nearest property owner.

I had not long left school and was working with my father when the rush broke out. My father went out and pegged a claim which it turned out was just off the track of the nuggets and our only find was a 2 oz piece. Three other claims that he could have pegged had several nuggets in them up to 15 ozs in weight.

I saw quite a number of the nuggets up to 35 ozs in weight, and while most of the successful miners made no secret of their finds, there were a few who remained tight lipped.

In the meantime Knight had died, and the theory of his finding the 20 oz nugget on the Racecourse stone heaps had been exploded. He was a most unlucky man, as time has shown that the nugget he had found and the work that had been done at that particular time was just outside the run of nuggets and only a few yards away from the centre of the run where several of the larger pieces as well as some of the smaller ones were found.

What is a water race?

Margaret Roberts

Mining for gold requires a supply of water to separate the gold from the gravel and soil. Australia being Australia, water is not always available thus for the earlier miners the need of a secure and reliable water supply was a priority. Dams and channels (water races) were thus dug to divert water sideways around the hills and into valleys with a slight slope to mining claims.

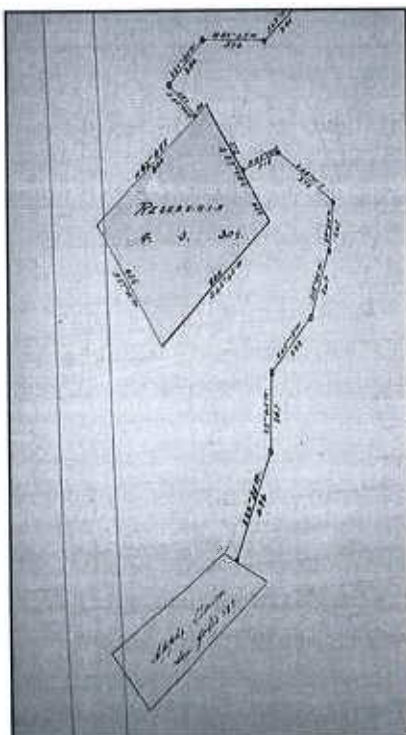
The dams and reservoirs were built (dug) in gully's or creeks to store water. The races were hand dug by the miners themselves using picks and shovels, usually by employees of the company they worked for. They were often dug during the summer when water was scarce and mining activities had ceased due to the lack of water. Each race had to be registered and surveyed by the Government surveyor before it could be constructed.

Today, as you walk around the bush and paddocks what seem to be dried gutters crisscrossing the landscape, these are actually water races. They were constructed as a simple V-U shaped earth cut, normally about 300 mm to 1 metre deep falling with a slight gradient; the fall between any two points generally being 1:500. The earth removed from the race was always placed on the down side of the race so as not to inhibit the flow of water run off into the race from the top side. Some of the water races extend for five to 10 kilometres from dam to catchment area.

Dams were built manually using simple mounds of clay piled across a creek bed or gully, with an outlet pipe and outlet valve inserted in the base to control the outflow. Miners built this entire infrastructure, often at considerable cost, before they could even begin mining. Tunnels, siphons and flumes, raised wooden channels were also used where necessary. Miners could, however, recoup the cost of building dams and races by selling water to other parties.

Due to their value, the pipes and valves were removed from a dam after a dam was no longer needed. This left a breach in the dam wall. There are hundreds of kilometres of water races and breached dams that can still be seen today in the bush around old mining sites in the Woody Yaloak district.

By 1868, there was a 4,000 km network of water races criss-crossing the Victorian colony.



Left: Plan of a water race drawn by John Lynch, surveyor 16th March 1874

Right: In January 1991 our district had a considerable amount of rain which caused wide spread flooding and damage. That day I saw the water races on my property working as they would have 150 years ago.

It was an amazing sight especially when one race which had been ploughed out many years ago revealed itself.



Horrible and mysterious murder, which appears to have been perpetrated through motives of paltry revenge.

The Argus newspaper of 1st June 1855 reported on the murder of Edward Murphy at Smythes Creek on the 28th May.

Edward his wife and family resided at Happy Valley. The previous week the store ran by the family had been robbed during the night. Luckily the neighbours knew where a party of thieves were camping and a group of miners descended on their camp and found most of the stolen goods in their tent. The miners tied the thieves (three men and one woman) to a tree and sent a messenger the 13 miles (21 kms) to Smythesdale for the police. While tied to the tree the woman using the foulest language threatened all manner of abuse to the neighbour including that she would be on the lookout and would steal his gold or his life.

Charges were brought against three persons of having 'Illegal possession of sundry goods on the Linton diggings' by Edward Murphy against two men; David Smith and Henry Alben* and Elizabeth the wife of Alben.

The case was heard at the Court in Ballarat on the morning of the 28th May. Charges against Smith and Elizabeth Alben were dismissed but Henry Alben was committed to trial at the next sessions.

Murphy, who lived at Happy Valley, was also a carrier owning a horse and dray. On the 28th May he had been to Ballarat to appear at the court and was bring a load of hay to the Smythes Creek Police Camp as Government forage. Sergeant Frederick Warming of the Smythes Creek Police had passed Murphy on the road in the afternoon and had expected him to arrive at the camp at 7.30 pm.

Edward Murphy's body was found at Smythes Creek the next morning (29th) by John Monteith, a shepherd employed by Thomas Black lying about 12 yards from the road, about 200 to 300 yards from the Smythes Creek Police Station. The sergeant immediately suspected Smith and Alben as he had overheard them threatening Mr Murphy the previous day. He apprehended them and another man, Benjamin Grix at Smythesdale at 3 am the next morning. A search revealed items believed to have belonged to Mr Murphy.

An inquest as held on

Dr William Griffiths of Smythes Creek examined the body and found he had been shot twice in the head by a small calibre weapon.

The inquest concluded that Murphy was killed by two gunshots in the head and David Smith was guilty of is wilful murder with Benjamin Grix and Elizabeth Helben* as accessories.

On the 5th February 1856 the accused appeared before the Geelong Court but were discharged due to lack of evidence. No one else was charged with the murder.

Mrs Catherine Murphy, 37 year old widowed storekeeper of Linton who had 7 living children below the age of 14 years married William Macginnis, a 29 year old gold digger of Linton at St Alipius Church, Ballarat on April 6th 1856.

Smythesdale, 16th September 1879

At two o'clock this morning Gargan's Club Hotel, Scarsdale, took fire. A strong wind was blowing, and the building was soon consumed. It was insured for £200 in the City and National offices. Inquiry will probably be held.

The Age Wed 17 Sep 1879

OPENING TIMES

Wednesdays

at **The Well**
19 Heales Street, Smythesdale

The Society is open to researchers between 9.30am and 4.00pm each Wednesday, except the 1st Wednesday of each month, when due to the commitments of members, it is only open in the afternoon.

The stables, lockup and gallows are open every 3rd Saturday morning during the market

At all other times by appointment

Contact the Society in advance of visiting the area to arrange a time.

Smythesdale Country Market

Saturday
 15th September 2018
 (9 am—1pm)



Volunteers Needed

The market is on the 3rd Saturday monthly at the Historic Police Precinct from 9am to 1pm.

Join us for morning tea, a sausage sizzle, pre-loved books and bric-a-brac at bargain prices.

All sales go to WYHS Inc.

If you have a few hours available to help out you please contact:

Veronica on 0432 565 279

DONATIONS

Thanks to all who have made generous donations towards the preservation of the Court-house and its environs this month:

Anon.

All donations to the Woody Yaloak Historical Society Inc., Smythesdale Court House Museum Fund of \$2.00 and over are allowable income tax deductions under the provisions of 12.1.3. of the table in Section 30-100 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1977.

NEW MEMBERS

Welcome to our new members:

Elaine Maberley and Therese Moloney

We hope you find pleasure in, and benefit from, your membership.



HISTORY SAYINGS

“Those who don't know history are destined to repeat it.” Edmund.

“History is the version of past events that people have decided to agree upon.” Napoleon.

“History never looks like history when you are living through it.” John W. Gardner on Bonaparte Burke.

“History is a gallery of pictures in which there are few originals and many copies.” Alexis de Tocquevilles de Tocqueville.

THE WOODY YALOK HISTORICAL SOCIETY COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2018-2019

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Membership: Annual fee of thirty dollars (\$30) per person or family unit.
12 newsletters and free research facilities.

The Membership Secretary, Woody Yaloak Historical Society Inc., Post Office, Smythesdale, 3351
The Society's year runs from March to February.

Contributions welcome: If you have items of historic interest, reminiscences or queries you would like circulated among the membership, please send copy (.doc, .docx or .pub) via
Email to: nesabudka.koschka@gmail.com

ALL MAIL SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:—

WYHS Inc., POST OFFICE, SMYTHESDALE 3351

Hours of Opening: Most Wednesdays, 10am to 4pm. Phone to check.
All other times by appointment.

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EMAIL ADDRESS: wyhs@vic.chariot.net.au

Historic Happenings
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