

Society Notes

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Stapleton family visits Historical Society as part of family reunion



Stapleton family members examine the embroidered tablecloth and find some ancestors' names. From left to right, Heather Weda, Ian Stapleton and his sister Lyn Willett from Corowa. Ian and Lyn are the children of Jim Stapleton. Heather is the daughter of Sam Stapleton's (S E Stapleton), who was the youngest of the family. See the story of the tablecloth on page 6. Photo: D Hopkins

On Sunday 20 March, Linton proved to be the perfect place for a reunion visit for one of Linton's oldest families, the Stapleton family, whose presence in the district goes back to the gold rush era. About twenty members of the family visited the Historical Society as part of their family reunion that was being held in Ballarat and Linton over that weekend. The family patriarch, Jim Stapleton, ex-resident of Linton who is aged 102 years, and who spoke at our History Night in February 2012, was part of the group. However, a sad postscript to the visit is the news that the old Stapleton family home on Cherry Tree Hill has recently burnt down (see page 5).

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Cemetery Walk highlights Linton families and characters

In place of a History Night in February, the Society and the Cemetery Trust combined to conduct an historical walk through the Linton cemetery on Sunday 21st February. 35 people attended this popular event on a hot and sunny afternoon, many travelling long distances to be there.

Chris Grigg, who is on the Cemetery Trust committee and is also a member of the Society, guided the group around, highlighting the history of the cemetery, pointing out graves of interest and telling something of the lives of some of the Lintonians buried there. Many of the walk participants had ancestors buried there and were able to contribute anecdotes to Chris's commentary.

*Afterwards, most of the participants returned to the Resource Centre for a much needed cup of tea (**it was a very hot day**) and there was a great deal of animated chatter as friends and acquaintances caught up with each other. Unfortunately, no one took any photos on the day, everyone being too absorbed in the occasion!*



Chris Grigg

Here is a summary of Chris's talk:

We begin the walk opposite the old shelter shed and toilet on the left of the main drive.

Here we find the grave of **Joseph Shepherd** who was born in England in 1833 and who moved from Geelong to Linton and established a store in Sussex St Linton in 1860. Joseph later opened a second store in Happy Valley. He served as a Councillor from 1870 until he retired in 1915. Buried with Mr Shepherd is his wife and a "nephew" who died in 1864, thought possibly to be one of the many homeless or needy children that the Shepherds were known to care for or raise as their own.

Beside the Shepherd grave we find, under the old Bunya Pine, three graves. One of these belongs to **Alexander Hartshorn** (1866) who was a schoolteacher at Linton's Diggings. **Mr Hartshorn** was paralysed in both legs and would come to Surface Hill (Linton) in a cart pulled by two billygoats. The other two other old graves are marked **Hill 1862** and **Endean 1862**.

From the old pine we move to the township end of the lawn section and here find a large monument to the **Harvey family** who buried 10 children over ten years! Behind the Harvey tombstone is a small grave of the infant **Frederick Barber**. Nearby we find the names of **Stratton and a Mr White** (listed on his memorial are his two wives and his adult children). We move east beside the Lawn Section (established circa 1980) and in this area find old monuments and graves with familiar names to many of you (**Hyatt, Nicol, Nicholls, Hitchins and Rankin**). **James Nicol** was born in Scotland in 1834 and he came to Old Linton's with the gold rush in 1856. He later moved to the Surface Hill township (that became present-day Linton) and established the Old Bakery in Sussex St.

Moving from the lawn section to the main drive (with the Bunya Pine on your right), we find familiar names in the Church of England section of **Bennett, Caldwell, Murrell, Mark and Cochrane** (to name a few). **Hugh T. Cochrane**, a miner, was a member of the newly formed State School Committee in 1868. His children, Annie and Robert, were both teachers at the school. Robert was head teacher from 1891 to 1895. Both Annie and Robert were also Sunday School teachers at St. Pauls, Church of England, Linton.

Bennett, William Garnsworthy, 1832–1903

William Bennett was born at Moulton, Devon, England. He was in Ballarat at the time of the Eureka Riots, and shortly after he came to Linton. There, he opened a butcher's shop, first at the 'Diggings', then at the corner of Clyde and Sussex streets (the building is still standing today opposite the former post office). Mr Bennett worked in Linton as a butcher for almost half a century. From the 1870s to 1880s he served several terms as the Councillor for the West Riding of the Grenville Shire. He was a founder of the Linton Rifle Club and generally active in community affairs.

Opposite the Bunya Pine we find the grave of the **Blunts** (who owned the Victoria Hotel in the 1860s and 1870s). Also in this area, we find the family names **Cluff, Knight, Roberts, Trevorrow, Smith, Lewers** and **Stapleton**. Along from the Blunts, we find **Alf Smith**.

Smith, Alfred 1872–1961

Alfred was the son of George Smith. After his father's death, Alfred became the Shire Secretary, a post he held for a record 37 years. A keen sportsman, he played cricket, tennis and golf with district clubs. He was also Secretary of the ANA for 25 years and St. Pauls, Linton

Smith, George Henry 1839–1903

Five graves further along on the left (C of E section), is the grave of Alf Smith's father – George Henry who was born in England. He married Emma Keys in 1860. They sailed from Liverpool and arrived in Australia in June 1863. They settled in Happy Valley at Cress Green Gardens and had 14 children. Emma died in childbirth with the last child. After Emma's death, George married Anne Bolte and they had two children. George was a paymaster at the mines, rate collector, and in 1894 became Shire of Grenville Secretary until his death in 1903.

More familiar names in this area include **Gribble, Nelson, Todd, Stella Surman, Bolte** and a large monument to the Chasey family.

Nelson, Robert Simeon 1833–1893

Robert was born in Canada, the son of a farmer. He came to Australia in 1850 and arrived in Linton soon after where he had a successful carpentry shop and funeral parlour (1858). He was a foundation member of the local Freemasons Lodge (Duke of Athol 1861). He married Mary Ann Dawe in 1864 and they had six children. The funeral parlour business was carried on by his sons and is still operating successfully today in Williamstown, Melbourne. With many thanks to the Nelson family (in particular, Theo), the Linton Historical Society gained the old premises in Linton to restore as its Resource Centre.

Also in this area we find **Lionel Sparrow**, editor of the local paper (*The Grenville Standard*) for many years until his death in 1936. Other familiar names include **Commons, Sandow, Bennett, Ellis, Cornish, Elbourne, Lewis, Cox** and **Grigg**. Here we also start to find Lewers gravesites.

Lewers, Samuel 1827–1895

Samuel Lewers was born in Northern Ireland and came to Victoria in 1853. In 1855, he opened a store and gold buying business in Creswick. He was a member of the Creswick Road Board and manager of the Bank of New South Wales. He was transferred to Linton to open a new branch of the bank in April 1860. Mr Lewers was also first Shire President and later settled and farmed at Hoyles Creek, Mannibidar.



The Lewers' family graves

Photo: D Hopkins

Another interesting grave in this area is that **Alexander Kennedy, 1829–1892**

Alexander worked for the Bridge Head Company at Browns Diggings. He came to Linton in 1863 to manage the Victory Mine. He also worked as an engine driver at the Pioneer and Argyle mines – both on Linton Park.

Continuing past the C of E section, to the old Catholic section. Here we find names of **McInnery, Lewis, Cox, Gorman, Kelly, Ryan, Yeoman, Barr** and **Greenbank**. Of special interest in this section is a lone Chinese grave.

Continuing down the gully, we find the substantial double grave of **Thomas Kennedy**, his wife and young children.

Kennedy, Thomas 1837–1921

Thomas was born in Ireland and came to Victoria in 1859. He went first to the Ballarat diggings and was one of the pioneer settlers at Bullarook. He later joined the police force and was stationed in Linton in 1865, before transferring to Portland. He retired to Fingal Park in 1892 and in that year he became a Councillor in the Shire and served for 23 years.

To the left of this grave, though unmarked, lies Jennie, a 43 year old Aboriginal woman who died at Dreamers' Hill, south of Linton, in 1873.

Also in the old Catholic section we come across members of the **O'Beirne** and **O'Meara** families.

O'Meara, John 1834–1910: Mr O'Meara was the licensee at the Junction Hotel at Pittong (the current Kaolin clay mine site). In 1862, he inaugurated the Argyle Racing Club. His wife was Maria O'Brien.

For many years the **O'Beirne family** were wool and skin merchants in Linton. They collected skins throughout the whole district. The first Mrs O'Beirne was thought to be held in high regard by Aboriginal women for her care of Aboriginal people. People will be familiar with the O'Beirne properties which stand beside and opposite the new Linton Fire Station (the two substantial houses on both sides of the highway).

Up to the new Catholic section:

In this area, familiar names include **McDonald, Hogan, Kennedy, Reidy, Sandow, Grigg, Holding and Verdoorn**. A walk up the hill to see the grave of **Father Daly, Harry Kennedy (Councillor)** and his wife **Dorothy**, and the **O'Mearas** of Pittong – who were murdered in their hotel in 1953.

We turn right here with the Chinese section on our left, with numerous marked and unmarked graves and two memorials to Linton's Chinese residents. Past the Chinese section we come to the Methodist section. Here we have names that include **Preston, Jennings, Walker, Nicholls, Cornish, Bryants, and Commons**. We also have the **Chings**, who ran a general store in Linton from 1861 to 1960.

Bryant, Frank Thomas 1860–1919: Frank came with his wife from England to landscape the gardens and orchard of Langi-Willi Station. They later ran a produce store and café in Linton.

Nicholls, W.H. 1820–1888: Henry arrived in Port Henry, Geelong from England in 1852. He settled first at Inverleigh and moved to Linton in 1855 with the first gold rush. He later opened a store which he operated until he died in 1888.

Baird, Matthew Hamilton: Mr Baird was one of the first settlers on the old Pitfield diggings. There he built a large hotel and store. After selling the hotel, he purchased Mount Bute Station and was on the first Grenville Shire Council and was also a trustee of the local Presbyterian Church. The grave of Matthew Hamilton Baird is found near the fence under the old Cyprus trees. Also in this area is a large grave of the **Wise** family.

Leaving the Methodist section, we walk up and around to the main drive, where we find the **Presbyterian section** on the left hand side (looking towards the Bunya Pine). Here we find names that include **Gascoigne, Rankin, Fraser, Morgan, Cameron, McBeath, Stoddart and Cook**.

Kerr, Armstrong 1836–1903

Mr Kerr emigrated from Scotland with his four brothers in the 1850s. They settled on land in the Lucky Womans area, much of which is still held by their descendants today.

Dodds, James 1828–1891

Mr Dodds was the first Secretary of the Shire of Grenville. He held the post until his death in 1891. He was also on the first Linton State School committee.

Clarke, John 1836–1919 Mr Clarke was the son of David Clarke who purchased Piggoreet West in 1854. At his death, John Clarke was one of the state's oldest Colonists, being resident in Victoria from 1839. He married Miss Newcomen in 1866 at Emu Hill. He became a JP in 1870 and was a Grenville Shire Councillor for 47 years.

It is thought that burials took place here from the time of the gold rush at Linton in the mid-1850s, however this cemetery was only officially surveyed in 1860, and burials recorded from that date. As the plots were not numbered until 1872, and not all graves had headstones, many of the dead lie in unmarked graves. Amongst them, are two Aborigines – an Aboriginal woman known as Jennie (mentioned above) and King Billy, regarded as 'the King of the Booriyalloak Tribe,' who died on 8 January 1882 at Mt Bute station.

The cemetery is administered by the Linton Cemetery Trust who conduct regular working bees to maintain it. To contact: Mrs Kath Blackwell, Secretary c/- Post Office Box, Linton 3360, ph. 5344 7453.

The new slim-line Society Notes

As with our last issue of *Society Notes*, you will notice that this issue is slimmer than we have come to expect, and the type size has been reduced from 11 point to 10 point. We have had to adopt this new "slim-line" approach because the Golden Plains Shire has substantially increased the fee it charges us for the use of its photocopier when we print *Society Notes*.

Another expense for us is the increase in postage. [If you would prefer to receive only an electronic copy of Society Notes, please let us know by emailing Drew Hopkins at this address: drewhopkins47@gmail.com](mailto:drewhopkins47@gmail.com)

History Night talk on assisted immigration to Victoria from Lancashire



Speaker Richard Turner, Society President Jill Wheeler, and Society archivist Del Atkinson

About 20 members and visitors attended our **History Night on Monday 18 April** to hear guest speaker Richard Turner give his talk entitled 'To the Manor Risen'. Richard is a PhD student at La Trobe University who is researching the stories of Government Assisted Migrants from southern Lancashire who arrived in Victoria in 1852 and 1853, at the height of the Victorian gold rushes.

One such migrant was Alexander Trickett, a weaver in a Lancashire woollen mill, who arrived in Victoria in 1853 and went to live in Happy Valley. His daughter, Mary Ann's subsequent marriage to Edward Morey, a miner at Happy Valley who later became a successful mine owner and investor, and subsequent owner of Linton Park, enabled Alexander to rise up in the world – when he died in 1877, his residence was given as Linton Park and he was listed on his death certificate as a 'Gentleman'.

Richard's power-point presentation looked at a range of similar success stories of families who were part of this Assisted Migration program, and who came to the Ballarat goldfields soon after their arrival. His talk was followed by a number of questions from the audience and the usual delicious supper.

Visitors to the Society

On **Saturday 5 March** the Society played host to about 25 members of the **Geelong and South Western Rail Heritage Society** who were following the old railway line between Linton and Skipton to commemorate the centenary of its opening in January 1916. Jill Wheeler gave the visitors a short talk about the history of Linton and they toured the library and looked at the display of railway memorabilia from our collection.

The planned visit the following day of the **Ballarat Vintage Car Club** was cancelled by them due to the extreme heat.

On **Sunday 24 April**, about 18 folk from the **Derrinallum and Lismore History Group** visited us. They are a relatively new historical society who are anxious to find out how other historical societies operate. Jill Wheeler gave a short talk on the history of Linton and the Linton Historical Society and took the group on a tour of the Library. This was followed by questions and discussion. One of the group had family heritage here being a descendant of the **Nicol** family who were the Linton bakers for many years, and our member Del Atkinson showed her photographs and documents that we had on this family.

FIRE DESTROYS ANOTHER PIECE OF LINTON HISTORY

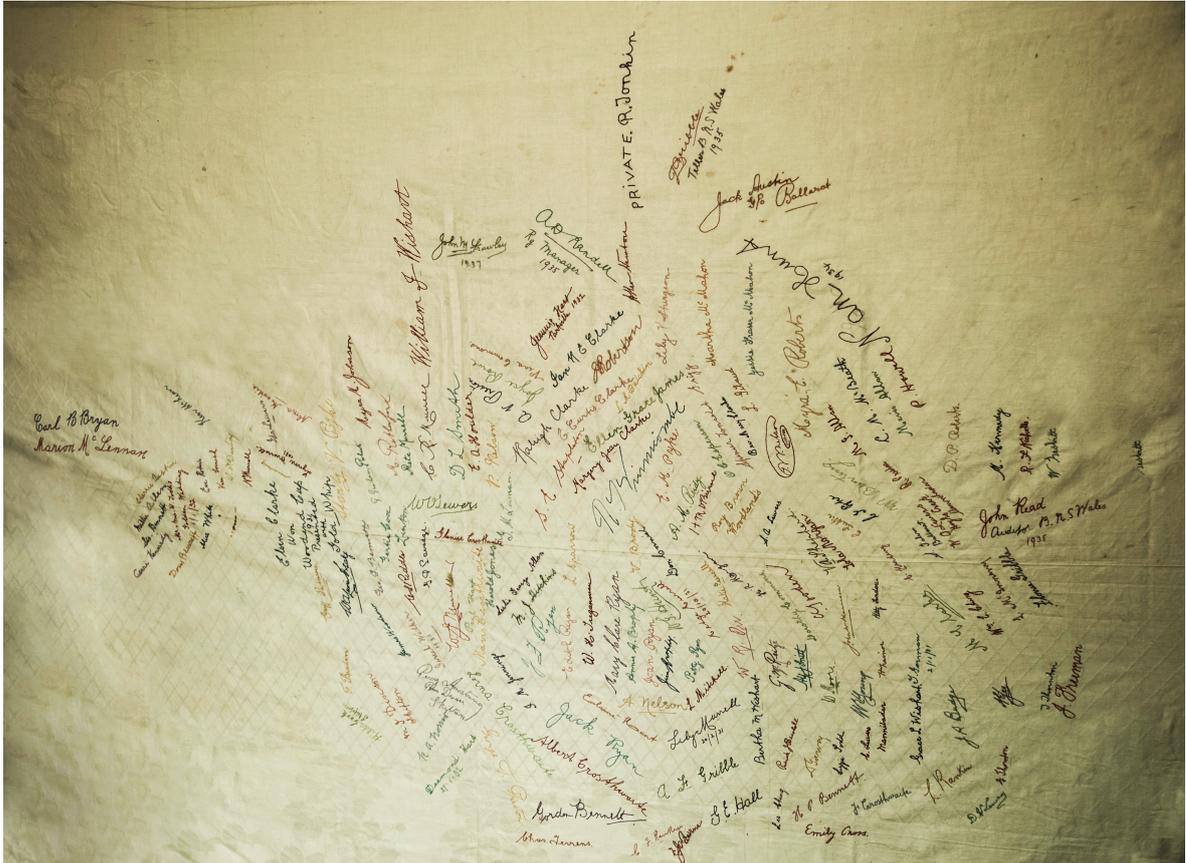
On Friday night 22 April, a fire destroyed the old house on Cherry Tree Hill that was the home of the **Stapleton family** over many years. It had evidently been built by the early Lintonian, Digory Pendray Roberts, in the 1850s. In those days, there were 5 bedrooms and a music room, and 16 children were brought up there. It originally had a melthoid roof that had also once caught fire. Fortunately the family living there got out safely, but they sadly lost everything. Members of the Stapleton family, who visited the house a couple of years ago, will be saddened to also lose a piece of their family history, and the town another piece of its heritage.

The Embroidered Tablecloth

During the 1930s and 1940s in Linton, Carrie Murrell, who ran the newsagency in Sussex St, asked her customers to sign and date a white damask tablecloth, and she later embroidered the names and dates in a variety of coloured thread. The earliest date is 1931, and the latest 1945.

The result, now in the possession of the Historical Society, is a visual and very personal record of the people who lived in or visited Linton over a fifteen-year period. An assessment of the Historical Society's collection of artefacts by Arts Victoria and Heritage Victoria in 2008 described this tablecloth as 'a delightful example of the genre and a wonderful visual record of people who lived in or visited Linton over a period of 15 years,' and of 'historic, aesthetic and social significance.'

The Stapleton family enjoyed looking at the tablecloth on their recent visit to the Resource Centre and finding the signatures of their relatives and other Linton folk whom they had known from the past (see story page 1).



The embroidered tablecloth, 1930s-1940s

Photo: Gary Hunt

Long-standing Society member Betty Grigg is turning 90 and members are invited to help her celebrate!



When: Sunday 22 May

**Where: The Blue Room,
Recreation Reserve, Linton.**

**Time: for afternoon tea, 2-
5pm.**

All welcome! RSVP NOT required

Next History Night is on 20 June 2016

**Monday 20 June at 7.30pm
in the Shire Offices.**



Mannibadar State School pupils, 1930s

LDHS collection

Guest speaker: Graeme Ellis

'Memories of Mannibadar'

Long-standing resident of Mannibadar, Graeme Ellis, will talk about the history of this soldier settlement community south of Linton, and share his memories of his family's experiences, and the experiences of the other families who settled in this often-unforgiving environment.

All welcome. Supper afterwards (please bring a plate).

ANZAC commemoration Friday 22 April



Our member, **Deirdre Nicol**, represented the Society at the ANZAC Day commemoration run by the school at the war memorial on Friday 22 April, and laid the Society's wreath.

the Bulletin board

• **Next Open Days at the Resource Centre** – The second Sunday of the month: 12 June 2016, 11 September. Opening times: **2:00 – 5:00 pm**. *The Society has its mid-winter break in July and August.*

• **Our next History Night will be Monday 20 June: Graeme Ellis talking on 'Memories of Mannibadar'**

• 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 follow us on **facebook**

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, Hans and Gerry Ver Doorn): **\$10 each + \$5 postage and handling**. 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, and at Plants Wares n Things 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, PO Box 41, Linton 3360.

• **A Walk-Drive Tour of Linton:** \$5 plus \$2 postage and handling. Cheque payable to the Linton and District Historical Society, PO Box 41, Linton 3360.

• **Welcome to New Members:** Avon Buchholz, Ivan Kerr.

• **Society Notes is a quarterly publication. The next issue will be August 2016.**

Society contacts:

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