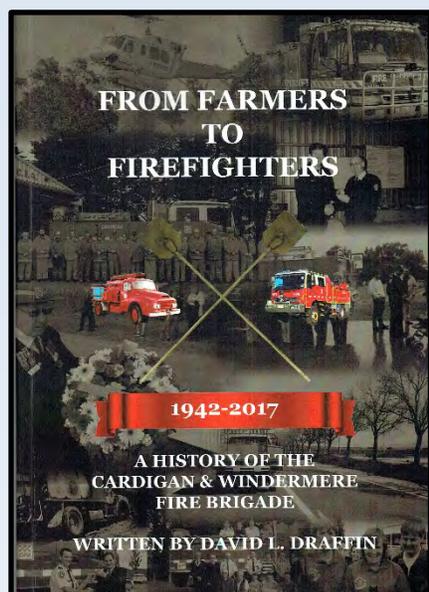


By David Draffin



We were very lucky that on the 21st of November, David Draffin talked to us about the brand new book that he has just tirelessly researched and written. The book has been compiled on the history of the Cardigan and Windermere Fire Brigade.

David spoke to our members about the technology that the fire brigade had, from the horse drawn wagons that were difficult to position and had a poor water capacity, to the new updated fire engines that currently serve the community. David wrote and researched the book, whilst his daughter served as the book's editor.

David very kindly donated a copy to the society, we thank David for his donation, it will be a wonderful addition to the history of the district.

David then took the opportunity to tell us about his time as a student at Haddon State School.

We all got a laugh when he told us of the time the school was having repairs done, and they heard a crackling noise whilst in class, it was only when they were all safely evacuated, that they realised the school was on fire!! David remembered fondly the bucket brigade the students made to put out the school fire.



On the 8th of December the society was given the opportunity to have Dr. John Harrison, an experienced horticulturalist who came out to Learmonth to instruct the society members and the local community about the proper way of summer pruning roses.

John led a very informative and hands on session that included summer pruning and the proper care for garden equipment. He gave many gardening tips. John and those who attended later enjoyed a cold drink.



This above article featured in the *Sunday Mail (Brisbane, QLD)* on Sunday the 7th of March 1937, p36.

On This Day

On this day, 100 years ago, the 15th of December 1917, the town of Learmonth and its surrounding towns were still in the throes of the Great War, the bravery of the young men and women who had voluntarily enlisted in the war effort, was a subject that was often applauded.

Our local parliamentarian and returned veteran, the Honourable, Major Matthew Baird, Minister for Education, spoke at a meeting at the Mechanics Hall, in regards to voluntary enlistment. A bit of background information to this article is that in 1917, a resolution was submitted by way of a referendum on the Government's proposals for 'reinforcing our comrades at the front, and as the voluntary is to be continued, and a compulsory draft taken only to make up the deficiency (if any).

The article we have selected was printed in *The Ballarat Star* newspaper on Tuesday the 18th of December 1917. The article as originally printed is written below:

MEETING AT LEARMONTH.

VIGOUROUS APPEAL BY MAJOR BAIRD.

A meeting in support of reinforcements proposals was held in the Mechanics' Institute on Saturday night. There was a large attendance. The President of the Ballarat Shire Cr. R. L. Medwell occupied the chair, and before calling on Major Baird to address the meeting, congratulated him on his appointment as Minister of Education. Major Baird, who was received with applause, said the government's proposals were a challenge to the young men of Australia, in which they had to consider whether they should hang back any longer. When Germany started this war the challenge went forth, not only to Great Britain, but to the colonies. She thought the manhood of the Empire would be found wanting. Hence on every eligible man rested the responsibility of meeting the challenge. What, then, was their answer to be? There was only one way to answer rightly that was by getting to the colors quickly.

They were being told that reinforcements are not wanted, but whose words were they going to believe? Surely they would believe the words of General Birdwood, and the man who had returned from the front, who told them reinforcements were badly needed to fill the battalions that were all below their full strength. If 600 men had to do the work of 1000 men, the work must be neglected, and the lives of these brave men who had made an imperishable name for Australia must be endangered. If the Hun gained his way it would mean a tremendous blow to Australia, and our boasted freedom would be swept away, and surely then, if only for selfish and monetary reasons, was it not worthy of them to make the sacrifice. The call of the time was for sacrifice, and they could not preserve their nation unless they made those sacrifices, which they were now called on to do. Australia has not yet sent compulsorily one soldier. Our soldiers left Australian shores voluntarily with the pledge of Mr Fisher ringing in their ears "to the last man and the last shilling".

On the 20th inst they would have a chance as free people to redeem that pledge. "Australians", continued to speaker, "the eyes of the world are now on you; you are put to trial, and surely you will not bring yourselves to the level of Russia, but by your vote on the 20th show to the world that you are not quitters, but worthy fathers, mothers, and brothers of those brave lads who are keeping that grand old Union Jack flying above our heads. In conclusion, I trust your decision on the 20th will be a tremendous "Yes". (Loud applause).

Mrs. Kinsman made an appeal to all women to support the Government's proposals, also Messrs Durham and Woodger. A vote of thanks was accorded the speakers on the motion of the Rev. J.H.R Halford and Mr W. Coutts. – M. Casey, Learmonth.

The Reverend Robert Hamilton

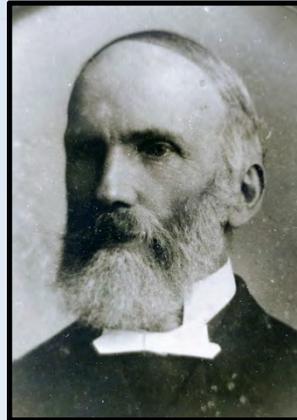
The success of bringing some out of town visitors to Learmonth during the 'Waste not, Want not' weekend, allowed our society to play host to a very special visitor. Lois and Carissah had the pleasure of meeting John L. Hamilton of Richmond, Victoria. He had wanted to visit Learmonth and the Historical Society for a while, but could not find the time. Instead he popped into Learmonth during the waste not, want not day.

John is a direct descendant of Reverend Robert Hamilton, the reverend of the Presbyterian Church. John gave us a stack of newspaper articles about Reverend Hamilton's time in Learmonth and district. The society would like to thank John very much for his numerous photos and articles.

Robert was born on the 3rd of March 1826, in East Kilbride, Lanarkshire, Scotland. He was sent out from Scotland to 'missionise' the people about the foundations and beliefs of the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland. Robert preached to the flocks of miners and pastoralists who attended the church at Learmonth, he became a member of the Presbyterian General Assembly of Victoria. Robert was a trusted member of the town and was quickly elected as President of the Learmonth Mutual Improvement Society.

Robert was a reverend at Learmonth and The Springs for 37 years, he raised his family of six children in Learmonth. His first wife Barbara McCracken passed away in 1878, at the Manse, Learmonth. Robert was heartbroken and travelled to New Zealand to clear his head. Upon his return he met and married Helen Ryrie, formerly Malcolm. They married in Carlton on the 20th of September 1883.

Robert resigned from his position as reverend at the Learmonth and Waubra Presbyterian Churches, he removed to Parkville, Geelong, where he lived with his wife Helen. Reverend Robert Hamilton passed away in 1907, aged 81. He was buried in the Learmonth Cemetery.



Robert and Barbara (pictured above) had 5 children who survived them, they were Mary Jane (Molly), who married Arthur Horton Riggall. Arthur was a Captain of the Tasmanian Bushmen, who fought in South Africa during the Boer War campaign. Molly and Arthur had one son, Thomas. Meanwhile, his second son, Robert passed away in Ashby, Geelong aged only 10 months.

His third daughter was Isobel, who was born in 1867, in Learmonth, she died aged 90 in Toorak, Melbourne in 1957.

Robert's son Charles Hamilton, his fourth born, was born in Learmonth in 1869, he went on to become a successful solicitor in Ballarat and married Ruth Constance Davies. Together they raised their family in Melbourne.

Robert's youngest children were his daughters Barbara and Robina (pictured below, left to right), who both were born in Learmonth and passed away in the year of 1950. They did not marry.



Grants and Applications

The Learmonth and district Historical Society applied for and were successful in getting a grant from the Public Records Office for the restoration of the framed collage of photographs that was dedicated to Claude Medwell, Esq of the Learmonth Branch (No. 75) of Australian Natives Association (ANA),

As stated on the Public Records Office website: The Victorian Government recognises that local and community history is an important part of Victoria's memory. The Local History Grants Program encourages and fosters community activities that preserve, record and share the local, social and community history of Victoria and Victorians.

The society was awarded an amount of \$4,110.88. This amount was granted for the purpose of restoring the ANA collage. The members decided on taking the collage to Artifact Conservation at 74 Piper Street, Kyneton. The restoration cost \$3,531.00, and the society is still yet to purchase the equipment to allow us to restore some of the photographs in urgent need of repair in the Learmonth Shire Hall.

The decision was made at the November meeting to promptly purchase the supplies and acquit on the grant.



Our luck did not stop there as the Learmonth and District Historical society was also successful in receiving a grant from the ACCIONA energy, Ballarat.

ACCIONA is a Spanish company and a leader in the fields of infrastructure development and management, renewable energy, water and services. The ACCIONA Energy division of ACCIONA is a world leader in renewable energy. In Australia, ACCIONA owns and operates the 192MW Waubra Wind Farm near Ballarat in Victoria and the 46.5MW Gunning Wind Farm in New South Wales and jointly owns the 66MW Cathedral Rocks Wind Farm in South Australia with Energy Australia

ACCIONA generally offers sponsorship for the communities in which we have wind farm project interests.

The society was granted a sum of \$5,500, to be paid in two payments, the original application was for the purchase of a new computer, printer and scanner. These items are invaluable to the society and allow for digitisation and provide faster more reliable technology to take us into the future. The Snap Scan is a wonderful purchase and allows for the digital scanning of articles such as documents and photographs.

There is still left over monies from this grant and it is yet to be decided on what else to purchase to be able to acquit on this grant.



The Auction of the Learmonth Primary School took place on the 25th of November, it was great to see so many members of the community attend, including former students Des Donovan and Trevor Rasdell (pictured left). This school is one of the oldest buildings in Learmonth and has been an educational body since its establishment in February of 1859. The day of the auction gave the community the rare opportunity to see the interior of the school. Learmonth Primary school ceased operation back in 2012, due to the lack of students. The auction held by Ballarat Real Estate went seamlessly with one bid being offered, the first and last bid of the auction. The property ended up selling to Phillip Cormie of Learmonth. We look forward to seeing what Phillip will do with this Learmonth icon.

Due to the sale of the Learmonth Primary School, the Historical Society was given permission to extract the time capsules from the school grounds, for the protection of them at the society, until the intended opening dates. Fon Ryan removed the time capsule from the gate post, placed there in 1991, not to be opened until 2021. Fon is pictured left with Bill Loader and David McKay, all three are members of the society.

A second time capsule was installed in the ground of the Primary School, it was given to the school to mark the 150th anniversary of Victoria. The date of the installation was on the 24th of October 1985. It is not to be opened until the bi-centenary year of 2034.



The Learmonth and District Historical Society invites everyone including members of the general public to attend our meeting on the 20th of February, when Fon Ryan and his son Stephen Ryan will present both of the time capsules to the society for the protection and preservation of them until their intending opening dates. It will be a privilege to have them, and the society looks forward to receiving them formally.

Meeting Dates for 2018:

- 20th of February – Presentation of Learmonth Primary School Time Capsules
- 20th of March – Talk on the Ballarat to Waubra Railway line.
 - 17th of April
 - 15th of May
 - 19th of June
- AGM - 2nd Sunday in July (TBC)
 - 21st of August
 - 18th of September
 - 16th of October
 - 20th of November

Everyone is welcome to come to the meetings. Please remember to bring a plate of food for supper for after the meetings.

Open Days for 2018:

- 28th of January
- 25th of February
- 25th of March
- 22nd of April
- 27th of May
- 24th of June
- 22nd of July
- 26th of August
- 23rd of September
- 28th of October
- 25th of November

2017/2018 Office Bearers

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Ph: 0429 075 173 Ph: 0428 928 318 Ph: 0417 539 247

Research Officers: Bill Loader & Claudette Crick.

Newsletter Editor: Carissah Cain-Sultana.

If you are interested in adding to our 'Society Happenings' newsletter, please call Carissah on: 0458 677 742.



On behalf of the Learmonth and District Historical Society, I would like to wish you and your families a safe, happy and healthy Christmas, and a successful and prosperous new year. We look forward to seeing you in 2018.

