

*LEARMONTH & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.*

**Meetings:** Every third Tuesday of the month. 8pm  
**Where:** The Old Shire Hall  
High Street, Learmonth.

**Time:** 8 pm  
**2012 Dates**

21th February  
20th March  
17th April  
15th May  
19th June  
July — AGM Learmonth Bowling Club  
21st August  
18th September  
16th October  
20th November. Ladies please bring a plate.  
No meeting in December or January

The society is now open on the 4th  
Sunday of every month except December  
or by appointment,  
phone the secretary below.

**Membership**

Single \$15.00 — Family \$20.00

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS FOR 2011\12**

**President:** Desley Beechey. Ph 5343 2318

**Vice President:** Ruth Nelson.

**Secretary:** Lois Keating. Ph 5338 4361

9 Langstaffe Drive. Wendouree. 3355  
or email [davidandlois@ncable.net.au](mailto:davidandlois@ncable.net.au)

**Treasurer:** David Spenceley. Ph 5338 4361 or 0417  
539247 email [david252@ncable.net.au](mailto:david252@ncable.net.au)

**Research:** Bill Loader Ph 5334 6330 or  
Claudette Crick. Ph 5343 2302

**LEARMONTH & DISTRICT  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY Inc**




FOUNDED 1983.  
INCORPORATED 13/10/1986.  
INCORPORATION No. A 11213.  
ABN No. 22 133 588 072.



326 High Street. Learmonth. Victoria

**NEWSLETTER  
December 2011**





**WE WOULD LIKE  
TO WISH  
EVERYONE A  
MERRY CHRISTMAS  
AND A  
HAPPY NEW YEAR  
FROM THE  
LEARMONTH AND  
DISTRICT  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY INC**

**CRICK FAMILY REUNION  
SUNDAY, 11TH MARCH 2012  
BEAUFORT COMMUNITY  
RECREATION CENTRE  
MORNING PROCEEDINGS**

10 am. Registration & morning tea.  
11 am. Formal welcome and overview of the day.  
Introducing "Living Memories", with Genevieve Stout.  
12 pm Lunch  
BYO and eat at the recreation Centre  
or select a place to eat from this brochure in the  
main street of Beaufort.  
For anyone who would like to take a trip to the  
cemetery before afternoon proceedings, maps will  
be available on the day.

**AFTERNOON PROCEEDINGS**

2pm. Crick family Book release.  
"Show and Tell" - time for those who have some  
thing to share.  
Unveiling of a plaque.  
Photos taken by Dennis Spievogel

**Followed by afternoon tea (Ladies please bring a plate)**

**Free tea and coffee will be available throughout the  
day.**

meant to link communities right around Australia. We chose to build ours on the top of Mount Hollowback, but Mother Nature stepped in with one of the worst storms, followed by a thick, pea-soup fog. It was the thought that counted on that particular occasion rather than the delivered product. David was an invaluable member of Council when planning for the Ring Road and the Western Freeway by-pass were negotiated with the property owners concerned, Civic service was an honour entrusted to him by his fellow ratepayers, not something for which he expected payment. There were expenses Councillors incurred, like petrol or phone calls, but he was unhappy about receiving and reimbursement. David was told the Shire was obliged to make out cheques for his Councillor's stipend. He reluctantly accepted them but didn't ever draw down on the funds. Instead he paid them into a dedicated account. He then made provision in his Will that the income from this account was to be held on trust and applied by his trustees for the advancement of organisations whose purpose was to provide sporting or recreational facilities established with the old Shire of Ballarat municipality. David received his first Australian Honour in 1995, being a Medal in the Order of Australia for Civic & Community Service.

**BALLARAT WEST TOWN COMMON** David was Chairman of the Ballarat West Town Common Managers. The common originally commenced at the corner of Gillies & Sturt Streets and covered 6,000 acres. Ballarat residents had the right to agist a cow with a calf at foot, but in later years, the Common Managers leased out larger areas. David regularly enjoyed inspecting the Common with the herdsman, Lloyd Paterson and myself.

He witnessed the excision of many parts of the Common for development for industry and other purposes. The then School of Mines & Industries was given approval to develop its Rural Studies Annexe on part of the Common. David was always proud that this led to the development of an extensive agricultural education component of that great institution which continues to this day. As secretary of the Common Managers, I don't ever recall getting a letter withdrawing our appointments. It may well be that, to this day, the former Ballarat Shire Councillors and myself as individuals still are the Common Managers! David found the prospect of that possible administrative omission at the time of the 1994 amalgamation a very amusing one.

#### **ARCH OF VICTORY & AVENUE OF HONOUR COMMITTEE**

David had a particular affinity with the Arch of Victory & Avenue of Honour Committee. There are six Baird family members honoured in the Avenue with trees and I know he felt it a very special duty on his part to ensure their memory and service were never forgotten. He recalled that on the day the Arch was officially opened in 1920, he was too young to attend. However, he enjoyed afternoon tea at the Hamilton Ave home of his "Uncle Matt" - Major Matthew Baird MM, MLA. David was Shire President in May, 1993 when the Memorial Wall at the Arch of Victory was officially opened by his fellow Prisoner of War, Sir Edward "Weary" Dunlop. Committee President, Bruce Price, noted that David was always committed, caring, reliable and valuable as a contributor to the Committee's work. Because of his own war time experiences, he had a strong affinity with all who served their nations conflicts. Just two weeks ago, Matthew & Sari Baird arranged a leave pass from hospital for David so that he could attend the official relaunch of the Arch restoration project by the Governor General, Quentin Bryce. David's stoicism shone through—he had no complaints despite the inconvenience and obvious pain that he went through. I spent a wonderful hour with him last Friday week recalling the highlight of meeting the Governor General, the Memorial Wall project and the Avenue of Honour upgrading programme. Just eight weeks after he opened the Memorial wall in 1993, "Weary" Dunlop passed away.

**For the continuation of this eulogy, see February's edition of this newsletter.**

## **BALLARAT SHIRE PRESIDENT'S Keeping it in the family**



James Baird  
1st Shire President  
1863-65

**James BAIRD**, son of **John BAIRD** and **Penelope BLACK**, was born on 17 Apr 1824 in New Cumnock, Ayrshire, Scotland, was baptised on 27 Apr 1824 in New Cumnock, Ayrshire, Scotland, died on 9 Jun 1887 in Learmonth, Victoria at age 63, and was buried on 11 Jun 1887 in Learmonth Cemetery. The cause of his death was Cancer.

#### **THE ARGUS (MELBOURNE NEWSPAPER) - 10th JUN 1887 - DEATH NOTICE**

**BAIRD.-** On the 9th inst, at half-past 5, Mr, James Baird, of Rosebank, Learmonth, aged 63 years. Mr. James Baird, J.P., of Learmonth, died at his residence last evening, after an illness of comparatively short duration. Mr. Baird was President of the Learmonth Shire Council, and took an active part in the administration of local affairs. A prosperous farmer, he always evinced a warm interest in all projects for the development of the agricultural industry, and until his health gave way he was an enthusiastic member of the Council of Agricultural Education, and rarely absent from its meetings. His resignation of membership on account of ill health was read to the council at the fortnightly meeting on Tuesday last, but it was unanimously resolved to request Mr. Baird to reconsider his decision, as he was an old and valued member of the council, whose services his colleagues would regret to lose. Mr. Baird filled several public positions during his residence in the Ballarat district, having been a member of the first road board, for many years a councillor of the Ballarat shire, and for several terms its president. Mr. Baird was chairman of the Ballarat group of municipalities, and has been more than once a vice-president of the Ballarat Agricultural and Pastoral Society. He leaves a grown-up family in good circumstances.

#### **THE ARGUS - SOCIAL AND GENERAL NEWS - 14th JUNE 1887**

The death is announced of Mr. James Baird, J.P., of Learmonth, a well-known ag, and agriculturalist, and a member of the Council of Agricultural Education.

Noted events in his life were:

- He was the First President of the Ballarat Shire President in 1864. Learmonth. Victoria. James was involved with the Ballarat Roads Board before it incorporated the Ballarat Shire in 1864. He was also a renowned farmer.
- He immigrated. James & Jean arrived in Victoria, on board the ship "Europa", on the 15th Sep 1852.
- Judicial and Law Notice: **THE ARGUS (MELBOURNE NEWSPAPER), 20th JUN 1887.** In the SUPREME COURT of the COLONY of VICTORIA: In the Probate Jurisdiction. - In the Will and Codicil of JAMES BAIRD, late of Learmonth, in the Parish of Burrumbeet, County of Ripon, in the Colony of Victoria, Farmer, Deceased, - Notice is hereby given, that after the expiration of fourteen days from the publication hereof application will be made to this honourable Court, in its Probate jurisdiction, that PROBATE of the LAST WILL and TESTAMENT, with a codicil thereto, of the above named James Baird, deceased, maybe granted to Jane Campbell Baird, of Learmonth, in the colony aforesaid, widow, Colin Campbell Baird, Robert Craig Baird, and John Baird, all of Learmonth, in the colony aforesaid, farmers, the executors named in and appointed by the said will and codicil. Dated the eighteenth day of June, 1887. MITCHELL, NEVETT, and ROBINSON, Lydiard-street, Ballarat, proctors for the said executors.



## David Baird

**David BAIRD**, son of **Robert BAIRD** and **Agnes McKERROW**, was

born in 1881 in Learmonth. Victoria, died on 3 Feb 1960 in Ballarat. Victoria at age 79, and was buried in Feb 1960 in the Learmonth Cemetery.

Noted events in his life were:

He worked as a Ballarat Shire President & Councillor/Farmer from 1928 to 1960 in Learmonth. Victoria.

He was a Shire President on four occasions from, 1931-32, 1940-41, 1946-47 & 1956-57, he was a councillor from 1928-1960.

David married **Mary (Eliza) Elizabeth VALLANCE**, daughter of **Alexander VALLANCE** and **Elizabeth BLAIR**, in 1912 in Victoria. Mary was born in 1882 in Moyston. Victoria, died on 18 Mar 1971 in Ballarat. Victoria at age 89, and was buried in Mar 1971 in the Learmonth Cemetery.

Children from this marriage were:

1. **Jean McLennan BAIRD** was born in 1915 in Ballarat. Victoria.

2. **David Alexander BAIRD** was born on 28 Nov 1917 in Ballarat. Victoria, died on 16 Nov 2011 in Ballarat. Victoria at age 93, and was buried on 21 Nov 2011 in the Learmonth Cemetery.

David married **Dorothy May Grills**, daughter of **Joseph Grills** and **Ellen Christina Turnbull**, after 1945 in Victoria. Dorothy was born 28 Feb 1923 in Geelong, Victoria, died on 18 Jun 2011 in Ballarat. Victoria at age 88, and was buried 23 Jun 2011 in the Learmonth Cemetery.

3. **Donald Neil BAIRD** was born on 21 Feb 1919 in Ballarat. Victoria, died on 29 Mar 1992 in Ballarat. Victoria at age 73, and was buried in Apr 1992 in Learmonth Cemetery.



**David Baird**  
1931-32, 1940-41,  
1946-47,

## David Alexander Baird

### EULOGY FOR THE CIVIC & COMMUNITY SERVICE OF DAVID ALEXANDER BAIRD

As read by Jeremy Johnson.

I have been given the honour and privilege by the Baird family of presenting this tribute to David, recognizing his civic and community service to our district and beyond during his most interesting life. I would like to thank David J, Jeanette and Matthew & Sari and the extended Baird family for giving me the honour as David and Dorothy, his beloved wife, were my dear and special friends. I would also like to acknowledge the help of many identities of the former Shire of Ballarat for helping with compilation of this tribute: Rex Hollioake, former Councillors Reg Kinnersley, Graeme Spittle, Bill Flynn, Tony McDonald and David Vendt and also Tom Ford, Peter & Bill Loader, Bruce Price and Dsvd Draffin.



**David Alexander Baird**  
1968-69, 1972-73, 1980-81,

**CIVIC & COMMUNITY SERVICE** It was difficult to know where to start in this monumental task of paying tribute to someone whose contribution to our community spans as period of time and such diversity of organisations and activities. I have no doubt that David would feel very unimpressed with being publicly feted for his community and civic contribution. He was a man of simple tastes and genuine humility. Never once would he have sought the limelight for himself and his own deeds, but he was magnanimous in heaping praise on others for their work. The most obvious starting point however is his municipal service. David was elected as a Councillor for the East Riding of the Shire of Ballarat in 1960. He sat alongside two very formidable East Riding contemporaries in Mac Troup AND t. W. Ford. The Ballarat Shire had an envied reputation for its civic leadership and the excellence of its municipal works and services. David was elected at a by-election to replace his father, also David, who had served from 1928. To my knowledge, there had been a Baird on the Shire of Ballarat and its predecessor body, the Ballarat District Road Board for the entire 1856 —1994 period of existence of these two bodies. David served four terms as Shire President. It was fitting that in his last year as Shire President in 1993, he farewelled long standing Shire Engineer and Building Surveyor, Rex Hollioake, who retired that year. The Baird family has farmed the La Rose property at Learmonth since days of being tenant farmers for “Big” Clarke from the 1850’s. As a Councillor, David witnessed the most amazing period of growth in the Shire’s history. He was also part of some momentous decisions. These included the shift of the Shire Offices Headquarters from their original Learmonth base to Wendouree in 1964. One can only imagine the kitchen table discussions that would have taken place around the district and in the Baird household in particular, regarding this move. Acquisition of Ballarat Aerodrome in 1961 and, shortly afterwards, the former RAAF Wireless Station site, which is now the Wendouree Industrial Estate, were two very important economic development decisions that the Shire made. David was an integral part of the Shire team that delivered the outstanding sporting facilities for which this part of Ballarat is renowned. I know at first hand how valuable he was during his last term as Shire President with the North Ballarat Football Club and Ballarat A&P Society redevelopment project. His wise counsel and clear thinking contributed much to resolving the complex nature of those negotiations. David was a great supporter of the Shire’s rural areas as well and felt strongly about each community having the right to its own school, a hall and appropriate sporting facilities. The Learmonth Oval and Entry Gates are named in his honour. As a Councillor and Shire President, David treated everyone the same and always with the greatest respect. He was an excellent listener and a problem-solver. In many ways he had a photographic memory for detail, particularly geographical and natural features around the Shire. He was generous to a fault at times. I well recall having to deal with some difficult Town Planning issues in the north eastern part of the Shire and often expressed my frustrations at warring factions involved. In his wisdom, David would always be a bridge builder and he taught me much about resolving problems by face to face discussions rather than through officialdom and bureaucracy. While David always respected rules and regulations, he was a pragmatist. I recall another incident when a ratepayer had grown a marvellous crop of oats on a roadside without first obtaining Shire permission. David’s advice to me was that it was a bigger sin to waste such a good crop that Mother Nature had provided than to insist on compliance with the rules and have it prematurely removed. I reckon he showed the wisdom of Solomon on that particular occasion! David enjoyed a celebration and we had many in the Shire. The State’s Sesquicentenary in 1984, the Shire’s 125th Anniversary in 1988, and the Australian Bi-Centennial in 1988, were all celebrated with gusto. The Bi-Centennial celebration was particularly memorable in that one nation event was a night of bonfires that were