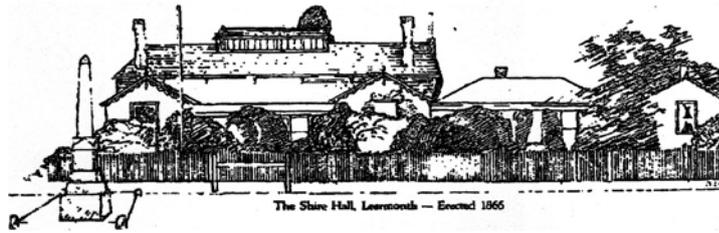


# LEARMONTH AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY



## NEWSLETTER

PUBLISHED QUARTERLY

**JUNE 2007**

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## FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

**JUNE:** Tuesday, June 19<sup>th</sup>.

**JULY:** \*See below.

**AUGUST:** Tuesday, August 21<sup>st</sup>.

The June and August meetings will be held in the old Shire Building, commencing time 8.00 p.m.

\*The **July** meeting is, of course, our annual dinner meeting and will be held this year on Friday, 20<sup>th</sup> July, at the Learmonth Bowling Club. An invitation is enclosed with this newsletter. We are fortunate to have Ted Lynes as our guest speaker this year.

Anyone involved with local history will know that Ted is very active in promotion of history in the Central Highlands region.

He is also a retired Lieutenant-Colonel with the Australian Army and you may have seen Harvey World Travel's advertisements for an upcoming tour to the War Memorial in Borneo, which is being hosted by Ted. He has an adventurous spirit and, amongst other achievements, rode the infamous Thai-Burma railway recently on a pushbike. This experience will be the topic of his talk at the dinner meeting. He has a deserved reputation as a public speaker

and the opportunity to hear him should not be missed.

## A NOTABLE MILESTONE

Congratulations to member Mary Stowe on becoming a nonagenarian or, to put it another way, celebrating her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday recently. Mary has been a loyal member for many years and has missed very few meetings over that period. We are confident that we will see her at functions for many years yet.

## CONDOLENCES

We extend our deepest sympathy to the Crick family on the passing of Alan and to Jim Kinnersley and family on the sad loss of his wife, Lil.

## CHHA EXPO 2007

Plans are well advanced for the CHHA Expo, to be held on the weekend of October 5 to October 7. The theme this year is "Three Cheers for Volunteers", recognising and celebrating the role of volunteers in the community. Volunteers have been one constant right throughout history

and are needed as much today as ever, especially by the Learmonth and District Historical Society!

On Friday, October 5<sup>th</sup>, at 8 p.m., there will be a lecture by Dr. Sharron Dickman in the Mulkearns Theatre at the ACU Aquinas Campus, 1200 Mair Street. On the Saturday and Sunday, there will be Workshops/Lectures on :

1. How To Trace Your Family Military History.
2. Dating Old Photographs and
3. Different Ways To Publish Your Family History.

Hope to see you there.

### **REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION**

One of the more important functions of an historical society is dealing with requests for information on people's ancestors. These requests come from all over Australia, and sometimes from overseas. In almost all cases, our researchers, Bill Loader or Claudette Crick, are able to come up with information beyond the expectation of the person requesting the information. In the latter half of 2006, a letter was received from a lady in New Zealand, whose ancestors had lived in Learmonth in the early days of settlement. Her great grandfather moved across the Tasman, but his siblings remained in the area, so it appeared a straightforward case of contacting people from the Australian lot and passing on the information. However, when the lady in New Zealand advised that she intended to visit, Bill Loader found that the Aussies weren't all that keen to meet her, due to a family

dispute long ago. Bill pressed on and told a relative in the Mallee, and one locally, of their relative's travel plans, and he even met the lady when she arrived and took her to meet her Learmonth cousin. Bill was very pleased to report their meeting was an occasion of great joy and the same thing happened when she met her Mallee relative and old family differences melted away very quickly. The lady from NZ was most grateful for Bill putting her in touch with her relatives and made a generous donation to the society.

Donations aside, it is most rewarding to be able to help people trace their ancestors and often a lot of time is expended by our researchers before they come up with something; then all the hours spent researching seem more than worthwhile. It is a two way street though, and we often find ourselves the recipients of the family history of people who settled this area back in the 1800s, such is their gratitude after learning details of the ancestors . With these histories come interesting tales of what became of the people after they moved away. The following item is a case in point.

### **AN EARLY MEDICAL PRACTITIONER**

Also in 2006, a Peter Gill of Ashburton, a Melbourne suburb, wrote to the society seeking information on Doctor Henry Paul Leman. Grateful for what he received from Bill Loader, Peter exchanged some details on the Leman family, which will be of interest to our members.

Henry Paul Leman was born in 1821 in London. His father, also Henry Leman, was also a surgeon. Henry Paul qualified as a doctor in London and came to Australia in 1852 on the "Brilliant", on which he was ship surgeon. He appears to have gone straight to Ballarat after arrival here as his address on his wedding day was given as Ballarat. At age 32, he married Emma Angus, 26, on 16/9/1854 at St. Paul's Church of England in Geelong, Emma being resident in Geelong. It is believed that Henry and Emma met on the ship en route to Australia and their only child, Helen Emma, was born on 5/1/1853. They started their married life in Ballarat and were involved in the Eureka Stockade. On 4/12/1854, Henry was operating as a doctor in a tent in Rodier Street, off Victoria Street, during the storming of the Stockade and Emma was with him. She was fired upon by a soldier when she put her head outside the tent to see what was happening. Dr. Leman assisted Alfred Carr in amputating the leg of William Hardie, who had been wounded during the uprising. It is also recorded that he sheltered the miner, George Pobjoy, during the uprising.

Henry began practising in Learmonth in 1858 and remained there until his death in 1867. He was Medical Officer for the Shire of Ballarat, along with Dr. Creelman, and attended patients throughout the Learmonth district. It is thought he lived, and had his surgery, in the house now occupied by John and Helen Reid. He was only 46 years old when he died on 10/7/1867 from dropsy. The informant of his death was his friend, Thomas Betts, of Learmonth, the Deputy Registrar of Deaths in Learmonth was Alexander McKay, the undertaker was Thomas Barnes, burial conducted by Reverend Edward Radcliff and witnesses to the

burial were Thomas Bath and William Vaughan - some well known names in Learmonth's history are mentioned there. In 1871, Henry's widow, Emma, married Thomas Webb, whose first wife had died in 1869, aged 54. Thomas had 186 acres of land in the parish of Burrumbeet, in the area more recently known as Whitehands. In 1873, Thomas and Emma were given a send off at the Stag Hotel as they were about to sail to England on the "Loch Tay", no doubt to visit friends and family. They were given a three gun salute amidst the cheers of those assembled. The shipping records state they travelled on the ship with their 19 years old daughter, which must have been Emma's daughter, Helen. They returned later in 1873, but Helen apparently stayed in England.

Thomas Webb died in 1881, aged 62 and was buried with his first wife, Ann, in Learmonth cemetery. His estate was sold later that year and, after expenses were paid, Emma received £4745.1.1, a large sum in those days.

At this point, no further trace of Emma can be found and Peter Gill is left wondering if she remarried, or returned to England, having no family in Australia. Some time in the future, more may be known.

## THE SCOTTISH CONNECTION

The district's Scottish connections in the early days are well known, the Learmonth's and the McKays being two of the better known families who were Scottish in origin. The McKays built the Stag Hotel in 1854, and then the present day Learmonth General Store, in 1861. The store was originally called the Dunrobin Store and was named after Dunrobin Castle in

Sutherland in the Highlands of Scotland. It is the seat of the Earl of Sutherland and the Clan Sutherland. The Earldom of Sutherland was created in 1235 and a castle has stood at this site at least since then, probably earlier. The early castle was a fortified, square structure (called a keep), looking out from a cliff top position. Remarkably, this keep still survives, albeit much altered, within the complex of later extensions, so Dunrobin is therefore one of the oldest inhabited houses in Scotland.



Learmonth General Store As It Looked In The Early 1900s.

In 1845, the Clan Sutherland hired famous architect, Sir Charles Barry, to completely re-model the castle, changing it from a fort to a house in the Scottish Baronial style that had become fashionable among the aristocracy. Barry was also the architect who designed the House of Commons in London and his expertise was in great demand. After the re-building, the castle had, and still has, 189 rooms, and is thought to be the largest house in the Highlands.

In 1915, much of the interior designed by Barry was destroyed by fire. The interior was restored, to the design of Scottish architect, Sir Robert Lorimer.

After the death of the 5<sup>th</sup> Duke of Sutherland in 1963, the convoluted system of British nobility succession saw the Earldom and castle go to the current Countess of Sutherland, but the Dukedom

to somebody else outside the castle. Later in the 1960s, it became a boarding school for boys for seven years, but reverted to a family house after that.



Dunrobin Castle And Gardens Today

Visitors to the castle can see an exhibition which includes the colours of the 93<sup>rd</sup> Sutherland Highlanders, the famous thin red line at Balaclava. Falconry displays are put on in the castle's grand gardens. There is also a museum where the heads of numerous animals, shot by family members on safari, are displayed as well as ethnographic items from all over the world, especially Africa, and an important collection of archaeological relics collected from the Sutherland Estates. These relics are notable for Pictish symbols, stones and cross-slabs.

If you fancy visiting the castle one weekend soon, when there's not much on TV here, you need to go to Inverness, take a Citylink bus to the small town of Golspie and proceed north on foot for about a mile.

**THE LAST WORD:** If you have any ideas on a display for Expo, based on the volunteer theme, please let us know. Also, let us know if you'd like to become a volunteer! Don't forget the annual dinner meeting on July 20<sup>th</sup>.