



# WAANYARRA REUNION NEWSLETTER

December 2016

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## Our next Reunion Sunday 26 March 2017

The next Waanyarra Reunion will take place at its usual venue at the Waanyarra Recreation Reserve on Sunday 26 March 2017

We had a perfect day at the last Reunion in March 2014, however despite an improved attendance from supporters in the local areas, a number of our regular attendees are now past attending and it is hoped you will introduce the younger members of your family to the history of their forebearers, many of who were original pioneers in the area. There have been new additions to the mailing list and many are expected to join us. In any event, it is a wonderful opportunity to picnic in the bush and meet old and new friends.

It is also hoped that individual families will organise a reunion of their particular family to coincide with the Waanyarra Reunion, and so increase the overall numbers attending. The gathering of the Morton clan has always been a feature of the Waanyarra Reunion and hopefully many of their family will again be able to attend.

If you receive this Newsletter and it has been redirected, please take the time to write to or email George Swinburne with new contact details. Also, it is important that you provide George with a postal address in addition to an email address, so that notices can still be sent if you omit to notify a new email address. Over half our mailing list now receive communications by email which considerably reduces the administrative task and cost of sending Newsletters. It would also be appreciated if you could notify the names of any family who have passed away and whether there is another family member who would like to receive the Newsletters

If you are not on the mailing list and would like to be, or if you know of descendants of Waanyarra Pioneers, or other people who lived at or have visited Waanyarra or who you think might be interested in being on the mailing list or receiving notices, please pass a copy of this Newsletter on to them and also take the time to email or write to George Swinburne with their contact details. The addition of an email address is extremely helpful.

The cost of holding reunions has in the past generally been met from the proceeds of the raffle held at the Reunion and several generous donations. As we borrow a PA and generator and provide several smaller shelters rather than hire a marquee, this has helped keep costs down. If you would like to make a donation it can be sent to George Swinburne or given on the day. Cheques should be made payable to Families and Friends of Waanyarra. Any surplus proceeds will be applied to future running costs and maintenance of the Historic Cemetery.

If you can donate a raffle prize please email or write to George Swinburne (as above) or let him know what you will be able to donate and bring your contribution on the day.

Traditionally, everyone brings their own picnic lunch and refreshments. A BBQ fire will be provided unless it is a day of total fire ban.

We are aiming to make the 2017 Reunion the biggest and the best ever. Any ideas for activities that may be an attraction to attendees will be gratefully received.

A small group from Maryborough City Brass Band under the direction of Kylie Monk will again attend and entertain us. They have provided a most enjoyable program for many of the past reunions and having many of them join us for lunch has added to the occasion. We are really grateful for their support

It is a tradition of this day and an integral feature that you bring and display your old photos of Waanyarra and any other memorabilia that you think will be of interest to others. Also, if you have any old Waanyarra photos or documents you might either email a copy these to George Swinburne or bring a copy to the Reunion so that we can include them on the Website. If you can identify the people in any photos it is obviously of more interest.

## Future of the Waanyarra Reunion

As I foreshadowed in my email of 16 August 2016 relating to the Strictly Vintage Fair held in Tarnagulla on Saturday 1 and Sunday 2 October (which only went to those on the mailing list who had supplied an email address), I unfortunately think it is time for me to hand over the reins to someone new and I ask that anyone prepared to take on this task to please contact me to discuss what is involved and hopefully to assist in 2017, so the transition is smooth. I have had great assistance from David Gordon, Phil Spencer and Richard Shiell and we would continue to assist in the future, but we need a younger person to take overall responsibility for the

Reunion, the Newsletters and mustering the volunteers. .Since I took over from Ken Morton as the Convenor of the Waanyarra Reunion in 2001, I have sent out many Newsletters and organized 4 reunions. The next one in 2017 will be the fifth.

It would be a great shame if our Reunions were to cease after so many years. The Families and Friends of Waanyarra have had unofficial responsibility for the Historic Cemetery maintenance and the fences have been renewed on the side boundaries, some clearing undertaken and the front fence and gates painted or stained (as appropriate) and David Gordon has been particularly active in securing the rails on the front fence.

We are a “great volunteer outfit” and we want you to help preserve the Historic Cemetery and the Reunion at all costs.

### **Organisation of the Reunion in 2017**

I would be grateful to hear from anyone who will be attending who can assist on Sunday morning with the organisation and set up of the shelters and presentation of the memorabilia.

David Gordon will again attend with his computer on which he maintains indexes to the names of pioneers and local identities whose names appeared in newspapers circulating in the district. This was a great success at the last three reunions and many availed themselves of the opportunity to obtain details relevant to their family. David's indexes enable you to avoid all the hard research work. Where you identify the names in which you are interested, he will, if they are too long to copy, be able to email the details to you later.

Edna and Ken Arnold of Crown Castleton Publishers have indicated they will again attend and sell books and photographs which are relevant to the district. Edna and Ken Arnold some years ago produced the excellent reference book “Tarnagulla and District – The Way it Was” (which incorporates Waanyarra families), and this will again be available for sale.

Ian and Pat Belmont have again agreed to join us and make available for sale their excellent CD which includes an Index of Burials at Tarnagulla and Waanyarra, photographs of graves and headstones, cemetery maps and some Tarnagulla township photos. This is a quality production which has been updated and which works on PC and Mac. If you are unable to attend the reunion, the CD is still available for purchase direct from Ian (who produced the disk with his wife Pat), by sending a cheque or money order to him at 237 St Aidans Rd, Bendigo 3550. The cost is \$25 per CD posted.

Ian has also informed me that if you have any corrections to information on the earlier CD, he is happy to add/update the information on the CD so it is available on future CD sales. For those who have already purchased a copy and have found any errors, Pat would like to hear from you so he can make corrections. Further, he's happy to add any good Waanyarra stories. If you have any queries for Ian his email is [ianpat@internode.on.net](mailto:ianpat@internode.on.net).

If our Reunion is to survive and flourish we will need to provide an interesting day, especially for our younger descendants who must be encouraged to join us so they can relate to their forbearers and the history of the area and the pioneers who developed the rural areas.

### **Maintenance of Waanyarra Historic Cemetery**

Maintenance and replacement to the fences surrounding the Historic Cemetery has been carried out over the years and as reported in our earlier Newsletters, a Prison Release Party had 5 visits to assist in maintenance and repair of the front post & rail fence and replacement of the boundary fences and many of you also contributed funds for materials and Allan Brownbill contributed a roll of wire mesh. Phil Spencer and George Swinburne also assisted with the repair of the post & rail fence at the front and painting of the picket fence adjoining the front gates and together with David Gordon undertook some clearing works. More recently, David Gordon has secured a number of the rails in the front fence that were falling down. In the next 18 months we will need to again apply a protective timber treatment to the post and rail fence followed by a coat of sump oil to provide a measure of water proofing which while not as good as creosote, has again lasted very well.

### **Waanyarra Revisited Website**

The website is an integral part in maintaining information on the Families and Friends of Waanyarra and disseminating information on the Reunions and on the history of Waanyarra and the families who passed through the area in the gold rushes and since that time. Updates have taken place to the website and more are planned. Many people searching for information on Waanyarra have availed themselves of the Contact facility and a number of families have been put in touch with each other. The further upgrade of the site, including a facility for anyone with photographs to upload them to the site, as is the case with The History of Tarnagulla web site maintained by Cameron Clark (<http://www.tarnagulla.com>), is planned. Have a look at the existing histories of various families and consider whether you could put together a similar historical record of your family.

Waanyarra is believed to be an aboriginal word meaning running water, but there are other claims to its meaning. The area became a bustling town (although never declared a township), which was known to have produced the purest gold in the world, being 99.9% pure. It was also noted for the numerous alluvial nuggets that were found.

### **Tarnagulla Strictly Vintage Fair**

The Tarnagulla Strictly Vintage Fair (formerly called Tarnagulla Out 'n About) was again held on the weekend of 1 – 2 October 2016 and David Gordon oversaw the very successful Tarnagulla & District History Group display in the Victoria Theatre . New material was produced including Waanyarra material. You can view photos of the event at <http://www.tarnagulla.com/photogallery/gallery3/index.php/Events/Tarnagulla-Vintage-Fair-2016> There was another magnificent response with over 300 visitors to the history display and as a result many new photos were added to the Website. Since then there

have also been a number of records retrieved and scanned by the Mechanics' Institute of Victoria relating to Mechanics' Institutes in the District and beyond. If you have any records, books or photos relating to any Mechanics Institute (or know someone who does) please let George Swinburne have details as there is a program to scan all records..

If you have not visited the Tarnagulla Website recently (<http://www.tarnagulla.com>), you should do so, as it has been and will continue to be greatly expanded. You will also find the David Gordon Indexes which note a great number of references to families and institutions relating to Waanyarra and the Tarnagulla district which appeared in newspapers (particularly the Tarnagulla & Llanelly Courier) circulating in the District.

#### **Avoca & District Historical Society Inc.**

A number of descendants of Waanyarra now reside in the Avoca District and might like to access the website of The Avoca & District Historical Society Inc. at <http://home.vicnet.net.au/~adhs/ADHSMain.htm>. President Tony O'Shea states that the website is being updated. The Society is in recess until 1 February 2017

#### **Articles on Jones's Creek and Waanyarra**

##### **Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer (Vic) Friday 8 April 1853**

I am assured, that everyone on Sandy Creek is doing well, and the new diggings just opened, about 4 miles this side of Sandy Creek, called Jones's Creek, are turning out remarkably well, that a 13 ounce nugget had been found the very morning my informant left; at this time about 200 people were working at Jones's Creek, and many were leaving Sandy Hill for it. A Commissioner had just arrived; he intended fixing his head-quarters near a large pond on Jones's Creek, and to keep the water of this said pond expressly for drinking and culinary purposes. Want of water is the great evil. Sandy Hill and Creek are supplied from the pond at Jones's Creek, at the rate of 5s. for eight gallons. The gold found is pure, though not quite equal to the Mount Alexander gold; it is very scaly and peculiar in appearance, and I am informed that the 13 ounce nugget before mentioned, is one of the most extraordinary yet found in this Colony; it is as flat as the bottom of a pannikin.

##### **The Courier (Hobart, Tas.) Thursday 4 August 1853**

VICTORIA. EXTRAORDINARY GOLD FIELDS. On Thursday morning, Mr. Steele, Superintendent on the station of C. Bradshaw, Esq, startled the Melbournites from their propriety by informing them of the discovery of an extraordinary gold-field, the yield of which threatens to throw all our other goldfields together completely into the shade, and has caused a rush from the Daisy Hill diggings now nearly deserted. It appears that, a few days since, a heavily-laden dray got bogged in the new locality, and on wrenching the cart out, several nuggets of gold were observed in the clay sticking to the wheels of the vehicle, which caused the spot to be opened, from whence £800 worth of the precious metal was speedily extracted. In three days afterwards the Commissioner had upwards of ten, mostly large, nuggets lodged with him in security. Mr. Willan, of Melbourne, says, all this is confirmed in a letter to him from a friend. Indeed, having made particular personal enquiries, we are assured of the correctness of our statement. The new locality is on the run of Mr. D. C. Simson, at Jones's Creek, and is leased by Mr. R. Kuy, the son-in-law of Mr. Montgomerie, late solicitor of this city. It has been known for some time past that, from certain indications of the country, there must be gold there in abundance, and now at last it has been actually discovered. The distance of Jones's Creek, where the discovery was made, is about 100 miles from Melbourne, as the crow flies. *Melbourne Morning Herald*.

##### **Freeman's Journal (Sydney) Saturday 6 May 1854 (From the *Melbourne Argus*, April 27)**

On the Bendigo road, near Tarrengower, a new spot has turned up, and a rush has taken place in consequence. Sanguine hopes are entertained, from what has been already taken out, that it will yield remarkably well. At Jones's Creek some large gold has been taken out. A famous nugget has fallen into the hands of a party who are working on the Kingower diggings, weighing twenty-three pounds. Favourable accounts have come to hand of Hepburn and the neighbourhood. The number of licenses issued is thought to be increasing, and the population is in a very thriving condition.

##### **The Argus Wednesday 15 August 1860**

NARROW ESCAPE. - As Mr. Bevan, of Burnt Creek, was proceeding from Dunolly to Sandy Creek on Tuesday morning, he met with a singularly narrow escape, owing to the bad state of the road at Jones's Creek, which is almost impassable on account of the holes. The horse he was riding passing too near one of them, slipped and fell in, carrying Mr. Bevan along with him, and had it not been for the timely assistance of some miners who were working near the spot, and witnessed the accident, he must have inevitably been smothered. It is surprising that there are not more accidents occurring on this road than there really are. It is certainly disgraceful that the Government should have allowed so much time to elapse since the money was voted for its repair without doing something to it. - *Maryborough Advertiser*, August 10.

##### **Bendigo Advertiser Wednesday 21 October 1863**

Dunolly, Monday - A monster nugget, weighing nearly thirty pounds in the gross, and twenty-five pounds net, was found this morning by three puddlers within a foot of the surface, in Jones's Creek. It was sold to the Bank of Australasia for about £1,100.

**Bendigo Advertiser****Tuesday 28 July 1868**

SHOCKING DEATH - The Tarnagulla paper states that an accident of a melancholy and fatal character occurred to a young man named John Frayne, for many years a resident at Jones's Creek. It appears that on Saturday last he had returned to his hut, after having imbibed rather freely at some of the neighbouring shanties, and sitting down beside the fire, must have fallen into it as he awoke with his foot frightfully burned, the flesh being literally roasted as deep as the knee.

**The Age****Saturday 24 April 1875**

Many places in the colony have objectionable names, which it is desirable should be altered. In yesterday's Gazette it is notified that the Postmaster General has made the following changes in the names of post offices: - Cabbage Tree to Yaagardook, Devil's Creek to Bolwarra, Duck Holes to Monegatta, Gap to Buttlejork, Jones' Creek to Waanyarra, Muddy Creek Bridge to Moorilim, Sailor's Gully to Nerring, Scotchman's Lead to Yarrowee, and Ten-mile House to Loyola

**The Age****Saturday 11 June 1887**

The plans and specifications in connection with the cross-country line, from Dunolly to Inglewood have been completed by the engineers' branch of the Railway department, and the commissioners will early next week call for tenders for its construction. Passing through the old settled agricultural districts north and south of Bullock Creek, which has been shut out from railway communication for many years. The line will touch at the townships of Tarnagulla and Llanelly, and will also afford direct railway facilities with the settlements at Irishtown and Waanyarra. Generally speaking, the contour of the country through which the line passes is not of such a character as to necessitate heavy cuttings or gradients, and does not present any engineering difficulties.

**The Daily News (Perth)****Tuesday 13 January 1903**

Last week a little boy, aged nine years, son of Mr. E. Williamson, of Waanyarra, near Tarnagulla, made a hole in the ground, filled it with powder, and then put match to it. The powder exploded, severely burning the boy, and injuring the sight of both his eyes.

**The Advertiser (Adelaide, SA)****Tuesday 3 February 1903**

SLY GROG-SELLING. This morning Edward Ray was arrested at Tarnagulla for sly grog selling at Waanyarra rush. The constables had a warrant to search the tent, and discovered two beer barrels, both nearly empty, and a number of tumblers, which were seized. Last night a man named Lancaster was coming from Maryborough with two barrels of beer on a waggonette, when the trace broke, and while he was repairing the damage the constables arrived, searched the vehicle, and found the liquor. The vehicle and beer were confiscated, and Lancaster, who is a resident of Maryborough, will be prosecuted.

**The Sydney Morning Herald (NSW)****Saturday 28 February 1903**

A GIRL'S BRAVERY. Two men attempted a robbery at the house of Mr. E. Williamson, who for some time past has been getting good gold at Waanyarra rush. The house is in the bush three miles from Tarnagulla, and the only person at home was a girl aged 12, who seized what gold there was in the house, about £50 worth, and then confronted the men with a gun. She threatened to shoot them, and they made a hasty retreat, but returned in about half an hour with a gun. The girl locked herself in a bedroom with the gold. The robbers ransacked the house and only found 6s in cash.

**The Argus****Wednesday 3 October 1928**

Miss Vera Bool was entertained at Waanyarra and presented with a suitcase on the eve of her departure for Tarnagulla, where she will take over her sister's place at the State school, Miss Elsie Bool having been transferred to Dunolly.

**The Argus****Friday 24 September 1937**

DUNOLLY-The Bet Bet Shire was 73 years old on Monday last, the shire having been proclaimed on September 20. The first meeting of the council was held at Laidlaw's Hotel, Jones's Creek (now Waanyarra) on September 27 1864.