

IDLE CHATTER Mark II

Newsletter No: 76

Thursday 9th January 2014

This newsletter is an initiative of the Quandialla Centenary Committee

Sponsored by Quandialla Bowling Club

DUST STORM – 19th JANUARY 1915

MICE PLAGUE – 1916 EARLY WINTER

“Rothesay”
Quandialla
19.8.68

Miss Hudson
Historical Society
West Wyalong

Dear Miss Hudson

Thank you for the return of my notes on the history of Quandialla District. I hope you and the Society found some useful material in them from a historical point of view.

My main object in writing this note is in response to a par in the West Wyalong Advocate of 16.8.68 re: the Black Dust Storm and its date. I have good reason (or rather unfortunate reason) to remember this.

It occurred on 19th Jan 1915. My late father and me were coming home from Sydney on that date by car. As we came along from Bathurst to Blayney an extraordinary cloud formation appeared across the western sky and the more it approached us the more unusual it seemed to get. It was more threatening at Cowra but as we were both anxious to get home we pushed on and met the storm at Bumbaldry. There was not much wind about and we pulled up behind what was an unoccupied building we awaited the full blast. It came in a frightening manner. Within seconds it became inky dark. We heard a voice from across the street asking us to come inside. We started to walk across but it was impossible to see. My father struck a match and he thought it went out as he could not see it alight but when he brought it closer it was still burning and it could not be seen at arms' length. The people that called us inside were the local school teacher and his family. After about 20 minutes the daylight came on again. While we were waiting we could feel the dust making breathing uncomfortable.

This was approximately 5 pm. We had a nightmare drive to Grenfell. Our lights in those days were not good and the dust was perhaps the thickest I have ever known. We stayed overnight at Grenfell as we both had had enough.

To conclude this description my father and me had to go to Grenfell to see sheep on agistment in the Grenfell area and that date was 21st Jan 1915 and when we got back home all that was left of our 6 roomed home was a smoke and a heap of burnt iron. The family lost everything. All clothing and many keepsakes and what would now be valuable relics. My mothers' people had been in Australia since the 1820's and being the only girl in her family she had kept all the heirlooms. It was all burnt. The date of this happening made a capital letter date in my memory for the dust storm.

Now the mice plague or rather the first plague. There was a repeat in the following winter. The real plague was in early winter of 1916. I never want to see the like again. As mice climb like ants and are not afraid to fall. Unless anything that could be chewed or more especially be eaten it could not be kept intact unless completely enclosed by metal boxes, they got through wood. Any stacked on a stage was not safe. If it were grain and food stuff the mob packed up underneath until it was high enough for them to jump off the top onto the stage. Those who made the heap had to wait for another heap. To give some idea of their desire to chew it was my job to pull down a small building during 1917 and when I unscrewed the screws and lead washers there did not seem to be any washers on the screws. As I had also put up the shed I was certain I had put washers on the screws. Close examination revealed the mice had eaten away all the lead but could not bite the iron in my screws. The 1917 plague was only mild, but still a considerable nuisance. In 1916 winter was one of the wettest the damage was very great. I remember the smell of rotten wheat at a distance of 4 miles.

Once more the dates sought:

The Great Dust Storm – 19th January 1915

The Mice Plague – 1916 and 1917

Yours Sincerely
N. Conn

The above letter was given to me by Mr Mick Mahon who has been gathering bits & pieces, information, photos etc. for our Centenary.

And I thank him very much - your efforts are greatly appreciated.

As soon as I read this letter I knew I had to include it in one of our newsletters. I thought it would be of great interest to I.C. readers. Hope you agree!!!

THE FUTURE – CENTENARY NEWS

CENTENARY MEETING

Wednesday 29th January 2014, 7.30pm at the Bland Hotel
ALL WELCOME

CENTENARY QUILT

The Centenary Group has been successful in obtaining a grant of \$785 from Arts Out West to assist with the Centenary Quilt Project. Co-ordinator Judy McAlister hopes to start work mid-January and will contact those helpers who offered their help last year. Further information will be advertised when available.

NOW

CONGRATULATIONS to DOCTOR SARAH TAYLOR: Sarah graduated from ANU School of Medicine with a Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery on the 19th December 2013 after 4 years of post-grad study. Sarah's very proud parents Trevor and Marlene Taylor attended the Graduation Ceremony and Ball which was held at Parliament House on the 20th along with approx. 450 medical students and guests. Sarah will start her intern year at the Canberra Hospital on the 20th January after which she will complete one or more years as a resident before applying to a college to specialize in a chosen field, followed by a number of years as a registrar where speciality skills are developed.

WELL DONE - DOCTOR TAYLOR

AUSTRALIA DAY CELEBRATIONS: There WILL be a BBQ tea held to celebrate Australia Day in Quandialla BUT the venue is still being sorted -more information definitely next week.

QUANDIALLA JACKPOTS: Bland Hotel Joker Jackpot has jumped to \$780 after my other half chose a card for a pint of beer. The Bowling Club Members Draw has jumped to \$3250 this Friday.

SEWING GROUP: Next sewing day will be held on Saturday 18th January at QCS.

A FAREWELL GATHERING for Ash & Katie Penfold and Tom & Kel Deery will be held this Saturday 11th January starting at 7pm at the Bland Hotel. Everyone is welcome to attend and wish them all the Best.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

 Extracts from IDLE CHATTER

Extract from IDLE CHATTER Vol 2 No: 33

THURS. JAN 9TH 1958

PROGRESS ASSOCIATION: The next meeting will be on Tuesday January 28th. A fire-alarm gong has been provided by the Bush Fire Brigade and has to be installed. The residence to the old police station is rapidly falling in to disrepair. The court house and the office are not much better. It is the duty of the Association to push for the building of a new one. Plans have been prepared for quite a while now, but without the necessary push from this end, the matter will be shelved. This could result in the removal of the police from this town...Don't let this happen.

CONGRATULATIONS to Miss Dorothy Dixon. Her many friends will be pleased to learn that she won the first year prize at the Sydney Hospital in the nurse's examinations...Well Done.....

MITCHO'S MAD MOMENT: I have just got a beaut plot for a one-act play. It goes something like this. The hero is one of those "Boss in his home" type and the heroine, just an ordinary timid? Housewife. There are a sundry other characters of course, but they are of little interest. The theme of the plot revolves around the decision of the hero to visit a neighbouring town for a day or so. Magnanimously the hero allows his wife to accompany him. Packed and ready for the trip, he berates wifey for not being ready. Such remarks as "You're not going away for a month" and "Why don't you be like me" did nothing to improve matters. After an hours delay with the hero fuming and fretting at the delay, they get away. The hero dresses himself for the occasion and enjoys the trip in shorts and open neck shirt. The hotel in which they book is rather high-class don't you know, and no-one is allowed in the dining room unsuitably dressed which does not worry our hero at all.....until he reaches the bedroom and discovers that in his haste to get away he had not packed a change of clothing. Peals of laughter from wifey dear nearly creates a civil war, and our hero, head bowed in mortification, begs permission of the management to be allowed in the dining room. Afterwards he can be seen dejectedly buying trousers etc, which he does not really need. The curtain falls on a jubilant wife and a disgusted hero....Of course all this is a figment of my imagination...or is it??? I'll let you into a secret- the hero and heroine are hiding in this district...Whodunit??????

Until next week - Cheers.....**Sue Priestley**