

GUST AV'S NEWSLETTER

From

EUDUNDA FAMILY

HERITAGE GALLERY

BRUCE STREET, EUDUNDA



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CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Welcome Friends.

6 years! Hard to believe but it is true, what we started 6 years ago partly as a dream has become a reality and it gets better.

The Gallery has been paid off- a 10 year loan of \$40,000 paid off in five years.

Thanks must go to the hard work by a dedicated committee and in a big part by you 'the Friends of the Gallery'.

As you are aware the displays in the Gallery are the result of many many people contributing items for display.

Last Friday we had an interesting item or items brought in which when looked into proved most interesting.

A gentleman was doing some renovations to an old house in the town and when removing the old skirting boards in one of the rooms found five old betting slips from a Horse Race meeting in Eudunda of February 1925. They were intact so were losing tickets - four of them for 5/- and one for one pound making a two pound investment only to lose.

On going through the old assessment books of 1925 it was interesting to see that the council rates for that year were two pound 17/6. Almost the amount wagered and lost - no wonder they were behind the boards - HIDDEN - from the eyes of the wife.

We will have these on display in the near future.

A GERMAN WEDDING

IN THE 1860's/1870's.

When a Wedding took place, there was great joy for young and old alike.

Practically the whole settlement was invited to attend, also the Pastor and Teacher.

Celebrations would last for three days, and preparations would begin a week beforehand.

The german waggons would receive a new coat of paint, (blue & red)) the horses and the harness would be brushed and polished, and blue and red ribbons tied to the latter. A nice fat calf was killed by friends, also geese, ducks and hens, and great stacks of german cake was baked. Beer and brandy, red and white wine dare not be overlooked. The house received a fresh coating of white lime, and during the evening before the wedding, the tin-kettling took place. (Poiter abend) Guns were discharged, tin dishes were drummed etc German cake, beer and wine was distributed to all. Naturally most of the tin kettling was young people, and usually stayed till 10 or 11 p.m.

Then dawned the wedding day. Everyone dressed in their best clothes. Usually, in the Bridal group, besides the Bride and Bridegroom were six young couples. The man of the party carried "cylinder hutte" (Bell Toppers), and wore a wide long red ribbon, with a rose, on their left lapel.

Punctually at 10, all the waggons were lined up, ready to leave for the church. All were german waggons with two fat and shiny horses harnessed to each. The horses and harness were decorated with red, blue and white ribbons - even the driver's whip was entwined with ribbons. Then it was time to load the waggons - with people -sometimes 5 or 6 waggons full. The first waggon carried the Bridal Couple. The command was given - "Los, vorwärts, marsch." (Off, forward, march) - and the procession began, the horses going full trot.

The party cheered "Hip, Hip, Hurrah" and there was a loud 'rattling and clattering' from the waggons as they rolled along the street towards the Church. On the way to the Church, the party was "held up" a number of times, (mostly by school boys) by a decorated rope, held across the path of the procession, which drew to a halt, and german cake, wine and money was distributed. "That was a great joy for us, and we deemed it an honour to the couple, to be stopped like this, on their way to be married."

And then they arrived at the Church. The horses were quickly unharnessed, and tied to the fence, while the Bridal Party organised itself in line, two by two, headed by the Bride and Groom. At the Church door stood the Pastor, with his black, wide rimmed bell topper, and the Teacher, with his fine light bell topper. (Teacher Gerlach was a tall thin person, with a black chin beard. (Ziegen bart) The Pastor and Teacher led the procession into the Church, and all took their respective places - the Pastor at the Altar, the Teacher at the organ, and the young couple about to be married, in front of the Altar.

The Church soon filled, and the hymn, "Jesus lead Thou on" would usually be sung. The Pastor delivered a powerful sermon, (Gewaltige predigt) after which the marriage ceremony was performed. The waiters handed around german cake, and a glass of white wine to all present. All were happy, and delighted to be present, and the old men contentedly smoked their pipes. In the meantime, the horses were again harnessed to the waggons, and soon the party left, again at full trot, and much rattling and clattering over the stony track. Hats and handkerchiefs were waved, and again the party was "held up" a number of times.

At the Brides home, the tables were loaded with all good things to eat and drink, and all took their places around the tables. The Pastor was the Master of Ceremonies, and table Grace was sung:-

"Lass endlich bei des Lammes Tisch,
Im Himmelreich uns essen.

Wo tausend Gaben, mild und frisch,
Du selbat uns wirst zumessen,
Da wird man achmecken Freud und Her,
Und wir, Herr, wollen nimmermehr
Zu preisen Dich aufhoren.

" All ate and drank their fill, and then again sang - usually - "Now let us come before Him, with heart and prayer adore Him."

The Pastor, Teacher and others then addressed the gathering, and the afternoon soon passed. "We children were gathered together in the kitchen, where we could eat and drink as much as we could from the 'leftovers'. We were given the name of "Topfauslecker". (Pot lickers).

After the evening meal, stories were told, the Teacher gave interesting elecution items, and riddles were asked. Songs were sung - and so - ended the first day.

The Second day, punctually at 10 a.m. breakfast was served. Dinner was at 1p.m. and after dinner; all went for a hike in the bush. There was "kuchen", and wine, music and games, and lollies for us children.

Walking home, towards evening, all were cheerful, and Folk songs were sung. The evening was spent as the first, and so, ended the second day.

The Third day — breakfast again at 10, after which all piled on the waggons, for a trip to Gawler. Through the streets at full trot, much rattling and clattering from the waggons, much cheering from the passengers, the waving of hats and handkerchiefs.

At a Guest house, the party drew to a halt, all alighted, and the Bride's Father gave all a meal. At 3pm the party headed for home, and on arrival, it was time for more eating and drinking. Music and singing passed away the remainder of the evening.

"This was a real Australian - German Lutheran Farmer's Wedding - in the year 1870. Oh! How all has changed since then.

THE 'MERLE' CONNECTION by Marcus Reseigh

They say that fact is stranger than fiction. The following series of coincidences led me to embark upon a research journey which tied local Eudunda heritage to my own family.

I am not a native of Eudunda, but more of a Johnny come lately who has got himself involved with the community over the last twenty years. I was born and brought up at Tailern Bend, a town at the bottom end of the mighty Murray River. I did the shopping for Mum at the local Eudunda Farmer's store and always dreamt that one day I would visit the mythical place where so many country stores had their origin. Fate decreed that in the early 1980's I would be posted to such a place as this!

A chance thumbing through of some local reminiscences in The Eudunda Family Heritage Gallery set in train the connections I am about to expose. I haven't the full facts as yet and the following is a work in progress with some speculative thoughts rearing their ugly heads at times. I came across a reference to Captain Ted Diener, late of Frankton fame, and a paddle steamer he had built at Morgan in 1904. The boat was named the 'Merle'. My great uncle Allan Haddy lived for many years on a boat called the 'Merle', tied up near the town wharf at Tailern Bend. When it burnt to the waterline in my childhood he had to become a landlubber! But perhaps I should start at the beginning. In the 1890's Ted Diener bought a small stern wheeler boat to ply his trade in haberdashery and clothing on the Darling river. The boat was of a type known as a "rag boat" perhaps due to the cargo they earned. What this boat was named and its ultimate fate are as yet, and may remain, unknown. Business must have been successful because in 1893 the 'Eva Millicent' was built. Ernest Edward Diener, or Captain Ted as he was better known, designed and built the 51.5 feet long craft at Morgan. It had breadth of 11.25 feet and a hull depth of 2.9 feet which was ideal for the Darling trade. Perhaps the boat was named after Ted's wife? Yet again I have no real confirmation of this so any assistance would be greatly appreciated. The boat's official River Murray registration number was 89435 and it was also registered as No. 6 in 1893 at the port of Adelaide. For those statistically minded amongst us it had a 3 horsepower engine, a gross tonnage of 20.67 and a 7.75 registered tonnage.

It was a carvel type construction which means that the planks of timber making up the hull were aligned flush with each other and then caulked to fill in any gaps. Note the connection of the word carvel with that of caravel which were the light ocean going ships that the Spanish and Portuguese seafarers used to explore the New World. It also had an iron framework presumably to allow the decking superstructure to be added. Yet again business on the Darling was good, so good in fact that Captain Ted built a second boat at Morgan in 1904. This was the 'Merle' of our story. Named after his daughter, it was larger and more powerful than its predecessor. It was a peculiar looking craft with a double decking and a very tall smokestack near the bow. It also was a stern wheeler. It had a 10 horsepower engine which Ted himself designed and had built by May Brothers, a Gawler engineering firm. A carvel type construction like the 'Eva Millicent' it had a composite framework of wood and iron. It was 82.6 feet long, 15.5 feet in breadth and with a draught of 3.5 feet. The gross tonnage of 86.88 and the registered tonnage of 22.5 was far superior to that of the 'Eva Millicent'. It was registered as No.4 in 1904 at the port of Adelaide with its official registration number listed as 117415. It was fitted out as a floating store dealing once again in millinery wares but also trading in vegetables when in season. Diener's garden at Frankton, near Eudunda, supplied most of the fruit and vegetable produce sold to the lucky clients who were first in line to purchase the welcome change of diet along the riverbanks. The lower deck became the shop where assistants served behind the counter while the upper deck provided the crew's quarters and accommodation. As many as 19 passengers could avail themselves of its service on the boat's regular schedule along the River Darling. When the 'Eva Millicent' had its registration cancelled on the 20th February, 1904, corresponding to the launching of the 'Merle' it was converted into a barge appropriately called the 'Eva'. This was towed astern carrying extra stock for the deprived consumers of the then remote Darling hinterland. Business was booming!

A larger barge was required. In 1911 the barge 'Flo D' was built at Goolwa. It was a massive 100 feet long (30.5 metres) and took over the role as the floating store while the 'Merle' continued as the residential and power source of the enterprise. The barge had the longest counter on the river- 65 feet (19.8 metres) long - and possibly the longest counter on land as well! It must have been a truly awesome sight to see this combination of vessels plying the narrow and twisting course of the Darling River. But it was not to last.

A very low river in 1912 saw the Diener's move streams to operate between Morgan and Mildura at the top end of South Australia's Murray River. Later they were to move again operating in the Lower Murray portion of the river. In March 1917 the 'P.S. Merle' was swamped and sunk as it crossed Lake Alexandria on its way to Goolwa. To those of us who know how treacherous these shallow lake waters can be during a storm, coupled with the minimum amount of freeboard paddle steamers carried, it was not surprising that the 'Merle' and many other similar historical and modern day pleasure and fishing craft, came to grief. The anchors Captain Ted put out failed to hold on the sandy bottom of the lake. Merle, his sixteen year old daughter, took control of the wheel while he made arrangements to abandon ship. The 'Merle' settled on the bottom of the shallow lake with the crew taking refuge on the upper deck. The bad weather made it difficult for a small boat kept on the 'Flo D' barge to get to the steamer. Eventually a line was floated to the barge and the crew-crossed over by means of the small boat. They remained on the barge all that night and were rescued the next morning by a boat which came out from the nearest port Milang. The 'Merle' was raised but its hawking days were finished.

The engine and boiler were removed and it was sold for service as a barge. Its history from this point until it graced the presence of my Great Uncle Allan is largely unknown. It is known however that in the 1940's a boat call the 'Merle' carried passengers on short excursions.

It had been converted from steam to run as a motor engine on the Lower Murray. Presumably my great uncle had purchased the remnants of the original 'Merle' sometime after that.

The 'Merle' was deregistered on the 10th of December 1975. I am assuming that this was the date when she burnt. But, what of the engine and boiler portions of the boat at the crus of our story?

The 'Flo D' barge climbed the social hierarchy and became a paddle steamer in its own right. It was lengthened to 141 feet (43 metres) and the engine and boiler from the 'Merle' were installed. It was renamed the 'Kookaburra' and continued its hawking days on the upper reaches of the Murray. Again in the Captain Ted Diener mould it was an eccentric looking craft. It had separate twin wheels at the stern on either side of the engine. Because of this the boiler had to be placed well forward to balance the steamer. Again it had a tall "smokestack". The twin wheels at the stern were similar in design to boats called "droghers" which operated on many of the short coastal rivers on the eastern seaboard of Australia. When Captain Ted Diener retired his son Tom took over the running of the 'Kookaburra'. In 1928 it was sold and it survived until the 1960's. It sunk at Nyah, near Swan Hill, in Victoria's middle portion of the Murray. Unfortunately it went the way of too many of our early day paddle steamers - tied up to the river bank and left to the ravages of time to take their toll. These were the historical trains and semi-trailers of their day. They provided the lifeline for pioneers and townspeople alike with their produce, their conviviality and their mere presence provided a means of escaping from the everyday drudgery of constant toil.

The research has not ended. There are gaps of fact to be filled and details and embellishments to be added to add clarity and understanding to the story. But one must make a start. To animate the past and make the connections to today is what this is all about.

HISTORY OF EUDUNDA FIRE!

A word that even today tends to strike fear into the hearts of the public. However, the effect it had on the early settlers of this district is hard to comprehend when it is realised that they had none of the machines and equipment used by today's fire fighters, and only a very meagre water supply.

The first disastrous fire in Eudunda is recorded to have occurred in February 1919, when Davey Bros. Mill was destroyed. As the only supply of water at that time was via a pipe from the Spring to Krummels or from water tanks, it was an almost futile effort to try to extinguish the flames. However, by the use of manpower, the bulk of the reserve grain and flour was man-handled out of the burning building onto the adjoining roads.

A short ten years later - 1929 - and fire again. Firstly Alf Neal's barber shop was the victim; and shortly after, Harry Peddie's tailor shop was reduced to ashes. The public had not long to settle down when, on 3rd October, they were again awakened by the ringing of the church bells - Wiesner's store was ablaze. Reticulated water had been in supply for some time, but the pressure was inadequate, so an urgent call was made to the Kapunda Fire Brigade who made the trip to Eudunda in a Rugby car in the excellent time of 35 minutes.

These fires prompted the Council into making representation to the SA Fire Brigade, the outcome being that on 30th October, 1930, the township was gazetted under the Fire Brigade Act and a two-wheeled hand, hose carriage was placed in town.

On 1st March 1931 the present SAFE Station in Bruce Street, was handed over to the Eudunda District, together with a Reo Speed Waggon carriage - the first crew were Messrs F. Gorrie, R. Severin, G. Duffield,

and L. Campbell. By 1939 it was obvious that the town unit, although highly effective, could not be used in the event of outside fires such as crops and stubble, and this led to the formation of the Eudunda District Fire Fighting Association.

In 1944, when the wartime Civil Defence organisation was wound up; a Beresford Trailer Pump was handed over to the Council for bush-fire fighting. This was followed in 1947 with the receiving of an ex-Civil Defence Siren which was erected at the rear of Leditschke's Garage which served as the point of departure for the fire-fighters.

In 1955, the present depot in Lloyd Street was erected to house the newly purchased Austin unit, the first crew being A. Wittwer, H. Jenke, and D. Feuerherdt.

By 1969 it became necessary to procure a second EFS unit, which now makes this section of Eudunda's Fire Service a fast, up to date service to the outside areas. The two services involved (SAFE and EFS) are manned by some 20 able-bodied men, mainly voluntary, and giving of their time for the cause of public safety.

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Friends of the Gallery Meet

Eudunda Heritage Committee members who entertained Friends of the Gallery last week Back L-R: Joan Latz, Marcus Reseigh, Blat Goulder, Yvonne Rokde, Terry Carter, Yvonne Schulz, Glen John. Front: Faye Grosser, Jim Reese, Dot Banner Delilah Balmer. Missing: Ora Jenke

Last Wednesday morning about 80 Friends of the Gallery gathered at the invitation of the Eudunda Heritage Gallery committee for morning tea.

The function held in the Eudunda Club was a very special occasion for not only were the committee celebrating the paying off of their loan on the building but it was also an opportunity to say thank you to all those Friends of the Gallery for their ongoing support.

Chairman Jim Reese was introduced by Delilah Balmer, who passed on an apology from Ora Jenke and Florence Knight before cutting the birthday cake and wished even-one a very enjoyable morning.

A raffle conducted during the Morning Tea was won by Dallas Mader.



Happy group at the friends of the