

NEWSLETTER

Ringwood & Croydon Chronicle

Circulating Extensively in Districts of Ringwood, Croydon, Warberton, and throughout the Shires of Lilydale, Eitham, and Upper Yarra.

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LILYDALE, FRIDAY, MAY 20, 1919.

PRICE—ONE PENNY.

Before Ringwood had their own newspaper, local residents had to rely on the Box Hill Reporter (1889-) and the Lilydale Express (1886-). The Ringwood Mail began with the first edition being published on 9th January 1924, in preparation of the Borough of Ringwood breaking away from Lilydale Shire later in that year. The Ringwood & Croydon Chronicle was Ringwood's first newspaper and grew out of the Lilydale Express in 1919, despite having volume 33 and no. 104 the front page. These numbers were actually those of the Lilydale Express which probably highlighted the similar content of a large range of local newspapers that TA Pettit printed under his large consortium. The newspaper continued to about 1928, probably finding it hard to compete with the local produced Ringwood Mail. So this is the story of Thomas Allard Pettit, taken from the book "A Press Missionary-The life of Thomas Allard Pettit" by Margaret Jenkins great grand-daughter of Thomas.



Thomas Allard Pettit was born in Leamington Spa, Warwickshire, England in 1846, and was the eldest of five children. His father was an inn-keeper in Leamington Spa. Thomas

NEXT MEETING

TUESDAY 8PM, 28 MAY 2013

Peter Fry, our Treasurer, will take us through his fascinating trips to Europe, with partner Val, where he took literally thousands of high quality photographs. Amazing journeys of culture, history and stories of the rich and famous.

Preceding this, **Terry Kane**, our Secretary has some interesting slides of Ringwood, from hidden collections in the archives, as well as showing techniques of restoring valued photographs.

TA Pettit – Ringwood Chronicle

was educated at the Manor House Academy in Leamington Spa. When he was 16 he was apprenticed to Mr Glover at the “Leamington Spa Courier” where he learnt the trade of a printer and a journalist. At the “Leamington Courier” he taught himself Pitman’s shorthand. Although there is no evidence of formal lessons in shorthand he later won the junior championship of England in Bath.

In 1882 Thomas Allard Pettit with his wife Mary and five children moved to Weymouth in southern England where he purchased the “Weymouth and Portland Guardian” which he retained for 12 months. In 1884 T.A. Pettit and his family migrated to New Zealand on the second voyage of the steamship “Victory”. T.A. Pettit had waited until the second voyage of the “Victory” so that his wife gave birth to their fifth child in England and not during the voyage. On the voyage to New Zealand he kept a diary for the 60 days of the voyage, and that historical diary has been found and is reproduced in the biography.

Arriving in Wellington in 1884, T.A. Pettit did not find business prospects encouraging, so came to Melbourne on the “Manapouri”. The first papers he purchased in Victoria were “The Shepparton Chronicle” and the “Numurkah Guardian”. However, the climate of northern Victoria did not suit the family. In 1886 the family moved to Portland in Western Victoria, where T.A. Pettit purchased the “Portland Guardian”. Portland, however, did not suit his progressive ideas, so in 1886, at the invitation of George Hickox and H.C. Jones the family came to Traralgon. On 27 January 1887 he printed the first issue of the “Gippsland Farmers’ Journal” in Franklin Street, Traralgon in opposition to “Traralgon Record” which had been operating for some time.

Whilst Traralgon became T.A. Pettit’s home and love, he was also involved in purchasing and improving at least 25 Gippsland and outer suburban newspapers in the period 1889 to 1920. These included the “Boort Standard” in 1889, the “Gippsland Express” at Drouin in 1890, the “Yarram Chronicle” in 1891, the “Warragul Guardian” in 1892, the “Warragul News”, “Morwell and Yinnar Gazette”, the “Narracan Shire Advocate at Moe”, “The Gippsland and Mirboo Times”. The “Mirboo Herald and the “Gippsland Miner’s Standard” at Woods Point in 1894. In 1896 he purchased the “Rosedale Courier”, in 1897 the “Walhalla Miner and Goldfields Advocate”, the “Glengarry, Toongabbie and Cowwarr Journal” and the “Central Gippsland Reporter”. In 1902 he was involved with “The Gippsland Auctioneer”. T.A. Pettit was the best known country pressman in Victoria in his time, and as a journalist had few equals. His able pen did much for Gippsland and Victoria.

They now had a family of seven children, four sons and three daughters. Obviously Mary was involved substantially with the seven children, all of which appeared in photos as chubby and well dressed. The family owned three homes in Traralgon during this period. The first home was at “Hilltop”, which was purchased in 1886 from the original Messrs F. Row and Co’s Traralgon Station.

The family owned three homes in Traralgon during this period. The first home was at “Hilltop”, which was purchased in 1886 from the original Messrs F. Row and Co’s Traralgon Station. In the early part of the 20th century the family moved from “Hilltop” to “Leamington”, a comfortable wooden house with bay window and return veranda. T.A. Pettit died on 17 September 1920 at “Leamington” which was in Church Street Traralgon.

TA Pettit – Ringwood Chronicle

During this period we wonder how T.A. Pettit moved around the countryside to supervise the running of these newspapers. We have found out that the Boort newspaper was run for his Pettit and Company by Mr William Mather, who came out to Australia with his wife in 1889 to visit the Pettit family. In England we have record of T.A. Pettit travelling around collecting news and advertisements using his “white pony and trap”. We presume that he had a horse and jinker for travelling between various towns in Gippsland to look after his business interests.

Outside his life of owning and running newspapers, he was very active in the Traralgon community which he did much to promote. He was made a Justice of the Peace in 1895. He was one of the earliest and largest shareholders in the Traralgon Butter Factory Company. For many years he was actively connected with the Mechanic’s Institute, and was president in 1901. In 1902 he was president of the Horticultural Society and the Agricultural Society. TA Pettit was a keen educationist, and for about 28 years was associated with school work, being on the early Board of Advice, which under the provision of the Education Act, supervised the State Schools in the Shire of Traralgon. He was both Chairman and correspondent on the Board of Advice for many years.

T.A. Pettit sold his interest in the “Gippsland Farmers’ Journal” in 1903, and in 1907 was elected as Councillor for the central riding of the Traralgon Shire Council. He was never again opposed in subsequent Council elections. He was made Shire President in 1910 and also in 1918.

TA Pettit was active within the Wesleyan Church, being Superintendent of the Sunday school for 11 years. After that period he conducted small non-denominational Sunday Schools at Traralgon South and Traralgon West. It was said that no matter how rough the weather, or how exacting a week T.A. Pettit had had in business, he never missed keeping his Sunday appointments with the children.

In 1915 it has been reported that he donated a new organ to the newly built Presbyterian Church. When he died in 1920 T.A. Pettit was on the Board of Management of the Traralgon Presbyterian Church. In his Will he left money for a stained glass window to be erected in the honour in the Presbyterian Church. That window is actually two windows and has been preserved and transferred from the Traralgon Presbyterian Church and is found in the Traralgon Uniting Church in Park Street Traralgon.

After he sold the “Gippsland Farmers Journal” at the end of 1903, he tried retirement, but found it too slow for his liking. He subsequently bought several outer Suburban papers, and having trained his four sons in the Newspaper trade, installed them as managers in those papers for him.

In 1906 TA Pettit purchased the “Moorabbin News”, in 1907 the “Oakleigh Guardian” and “Oakleigh Times”, in 1908 the “Mornington Standard” which subsequently became the “Mornington and Dromana Standard” and the “Frankston and Somerville Standard”. In 1909 he purchased the “Heidelberg News”, in 1911 the “Healesville Guardian”, in 1913 the “Lilydale Express” out of which grew the “Ringwood and Croydon Chronicle”. His last newspaper acquisition was the “Portland Guardian” which he purchased in 1920 for his son Ormond Pettit after Ormie returned home from serving in World War 1.

News

Unfortunately there was some sad news that Bruce (Vaught) McDonald, long-term member of the society and past committee member passed away on 10th May at his home. Bruce was born 28th November 1927 just over 85 years ago. Bruce lived in Ringwood and Ian Austin remembers him being his RI teacher at Southwood Primary School, and their son John who was a classmate at Ringwood State and High schools. We will miss his jolly nature at our meetings. Our thoughts are with Colma and his family.

Ringwood will host the **2013 AOEHS conference on 29th June at Karralyka Centre** in Mines Road, Ringwood, an all-day event with one of best list of speakers assembled locally. We need at least 2-3 people to help out with registration, tables and society's displays (please contact Russ). Cr Ann Fraser will be giving the welcoming address on behalf of the host society and also welcoming guests to the Maroondah City Council.

Recent calls from Nancye Gower, grand-daughter of Charles Sherburn, visiting us from Perth and shocked that the Miner's Hut, modeled on her grand-father's hut, had been burnt down.

2013 Speaker Program

We have invited some interesting speakers for our meetings on the **4th Tuesday, at 8pm at room 4, Federation Estate, Greenwood Ave, Ringwood**. Visitors welcome, supper afterwards.

28 May	Trip to Europe (Peter Fry)
25 June	Gold in Those Hills (Graeme Tamme)
23 July	Climate History and El Nino (Don Garden)
27 August	The History of the Ringwood Mechanics Institute (Russ Haines)

Archives & Volunteer Hours

Volunteer hours for the month of March 68 hours

Catalogued in Database

Photos - 2,678 Newspapers - 255 Artefacts - 429 Documents - 601

Thanks to all the volunteers for the time that they give freely. New volunteers are welcome.

Contact Us

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COMMITTEE Ian Austin, Lois Aders, Pam O'Connor, Steve McGoldrick, Terry Ahern

Supper Roster

May	Graeme Tamme
June	Pam & Daniel McDowell
July	Russ Haines
August	Pam Baragwanath & Beryl
September	Bev & Lyndon McKeon
October	Peter Fry
November	Pat Guest & Sandra Smart

Those on roster need to bring some milk and a couple of plates. Thanks to the various members who bring additional cakes or biscuits, or add to the raffle prizes.