



Pine Mountain & Districts  
Historical Society Inc.

# *History Happenings*

## *Pine Mountain*

Quarterly Newsletter  
Edition 1.2

6<sup>th</sup> June, 2022

The ANZAC Day Ceremony held at the Cricket Pitch Park on 25<sup>th</sup> April was well attended by about 200 people. Hardworking Historical Society volunteers were at the park before 7.30 a.m. to erect marquees and put out chairs.

The 2nd Light Horse Lockyer Troop enhanced the ceremony by their presence. Thankfully the rain held off for the duration of the ceremony. Afterwards, about 40 people attended the picnic in the park with tea, coffee and biscuits.



In other news, society members are busy working on research of early settlers in Pine Mountain, as well as writing an account of one of the pioneer families in the district. Older residents have been approached for information on the history of some of the place names in Pine Mountain, with the aim of producing a booklet in the future.

**Mary Mahon**

## **Memories**

**Reminiscences by local residents about life in Pine Mountain in previous times.**

### ***The changes from horse drawn technology to mechanical technology in farming in the late 1940's and early 1950's***

**By Bill Mahon**

My earliest memories are of around the end of WWII, and about three quarters of the farm was under cultivation. We used to grow cabbages, cauliflowers and lots of tomatoes and carrots that were sometimes funny shaped.

We also had a lot of chooks and a huge chook run. Underneath the verandah was an incubator. We had to feed it with small chips of wood in a little fire box to keep the eggs warm; and it held 100 eggs at a time. Eggs were a big sideline for the farm.

The whole paddock in front of the house would sometimes be completely covered in wheat. We also grew Milo, Sorghum and Lucerne for the cattle.

Dad bought a tractor in 1945, and it was the first tractor in Pine Mountain. We had a Farmall A. Then Artie Sherlock bought a Farmall H. We still used the horses for the inter-row cultivation of the vegetables. I remember Dad and Grandfather using the two horses at the time, Prince and Punch.

The tractor was used mostly for first till cultivation like ploughing. The Farmall A was eventually used to replace the horses; so implements like the scuffler were modified to be pulled behind the tractor.

Other implements were converted from horse drawn to tractor drawn, like the mower for cutting Lucerne.

Most of these horse drawn implements required an operator to sit on it to operate the lever controls while managing the horses pulling it. It now took two people to operate the tractor and the mower. Dad taught me to steer the tractor when I was 7 years old, because he had to sit on the mower. I got yelled at when I went wide on a corner. Dad would start the tractor, and jump off, because I couldn't reach any pedals or do anything else except steer it. Then the day arrived when I discovered I could actually reach some pedals. To do that, I used to slide right down under the steering wheel until

the back of my neck was on the edge of the seat. I could grab the steering column way down, and push the clutch in with two feet to change gears.

Dad used to put me on the tractor when we were ploughing a big paddock. He'd round the corners off, so that I would go continuously round and round. I used to spend all of my school holidays sitting on the tractor, going round and round, doing all of these paddocks. Dad would come along later and finish the corners.

Eventually I got to the stage where I could change gears. When I first started single-handedly driving the tractor, I had to spend the whole day in first gear because I couldn't change gears. Dad would just leave me to it. The tractor was quite capable of pulling the plough in second gear. Then I discovered I could change into second gear, so I did a lot of ploughing like that, and I graduated to using other things too, like the offset discs for doing a second pass cultivation, and harrows to finish it off.

One of the funniest implements we ever used on the farm was the potato digger. It was ex-horse drawn; and worked on a hammer mill principle. It was meant to be pulled by two horses, because it had a shaft that went across the front of it. You could hook the two horses to it, and they would walk along in two adjacent furrows.

The Digger had a pointed blade on the front that used to slide under the potato plant in the ground. The plant with the dirt and potatoes were lifted onto a multi-pronged platform coming out behind, with a wheel underneath that ran along on the ground. The wheel had all these paddles on it, and it worked on a cam, so that every time one of its paddles came up, it bounced the back platform up and down shaking the dirt through the prongs and leaving the potatoes to roll off the back onto the top of the ground. It made a hell of a clattering. You'd be ploughing along the row, leaving all the potatoes on the top of the ground, and you then had to go along the row and pick them all up and put them in a bag.

Another thing I remember from those days is the irrigation. In the time of my grandfather, Dad and his siblings built a weir across the creek. It was a pretty good weir in its day, and it held a lot of water, We would irrigate out of that and it would refill overnight. The interesting machine that drove the irrigation pump was an engine from an old 1938 Dodge ute that Dad bought. He took the cabin and back off the chassis; leaving the engine, gearbox and dashboard. He then put a sled type slide under the chassis and dragged it down to the creek bank. Dad drove huge big spikes into the ground so that it stayed in place. A big, flat drive belt was connected to a centrifugal pump which pumped the irrigation water. Originally, the Dodge engine ran on petrol, but Dad converted it to running on kerosene. It had a self-starter that never worked, so it had to be cranked to start it.

Dad used to put the clutch in, and put it in top gear; and he had to let the clutch out ever so slowly and try to get the engine to keep its revs up enough to get the pump up to speed. I decided there was a better way of doing this, so one day, when I was sent to

start it, I stood on the chassis and pushed the clutch in with my foot. I just went up through the gears and it worked perfectly.

The furthest back vehicle I can remember on the farm was the old Willys Whippet, 1937 model. Dad couldn't change down in those non-synchromesh gear boxes. You have to come to a stop and change down into the gear you want. That old Willys Whippet engine kept going for a long, long time. We had this vehicle the entire time I was in Primary School, and when I was in Junior Year, Dad got a Studebaker sedan. That was our big upgrade of the day.

The old Dodge engine driving the irrigation pump died eventually and the old Willys Whippet was stripped down and used to drive the irrigation pump.

The tractor ended up taking over irrigation duties, and also it was used for running the chaff cutter, the saw bench and the wheat cracker.

When the chaff cutter was a horse operated machine, we had a big circle outside the barn, where two horses walked around in a circle, turning a big metal dome in the middle that drove a long drive shaft. It was always referred to as the horse gear. The horse gear had two pinion gears at the side which drove a shaft through a series of universal joints to operate the chaff cutter. A hollow log covered the shaft so the horses could walk over the top of it.

Being modern, Dad converted the chaff cutter to be run by the tractor. He took the drive shafts out and threw them all away. The tractor could drive the chaff cutter at about 30 times the speed that a horse could. The chaff cutter could really go and the dust it used to make! You would come out of there nearly suffocated.

I remember when I was a really little kid, Dad would feed the Sorghum or the Lucerne into the chaff cutter and Grandfather was on the other side, raking the chaff back. Lucerne went to one side, and Sorghum went to the other side, so they didn't get mixed. There was always some chaff left in the hopper of the chaff cutter. The hens used to love it, because they would make a nest in there.

Dad couldn't change the gear in the chaff cutter, and he used to crunch the gears. He was supposed to put it in gear before he started the tractor. One day, Dad must have started it in gear. Grandfather was behind the chaff cutter, waiting to rake back. Next thing, this awful mess came through, with lumps of leather.

Grandfather came flying around wondering what had happened, and checking to see if Dad was about to come through head first. It was a chook and bits of Dad's hat! Grandfather nearly needed therapy from that. Us kids took turns at this job, after Grandfather got sick.

The corn and wheat cracker was meant to be driven by a crank handle, but Dad put a pulley on it and decided to run it with the tractor. It made the finest flour you have ever seen.

The milking machines were driven by a small 1 cylinder Sunshine engine that ran on kerosene. It had to be started using petrol, then changed over to running on kerosene. These engines had a little petrol tank that held about 1 litre of petrol and a larger tank for the Kerosene.

*Bill has provided some entertaining memories and recollections of the changes in technology in farming in the middle years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many farmers in those days had to embrace new and sometimes challenging farming methods, underpinned by ingenuity and a sense of humour.*

## **History Snippets**

### **Origin of Place Names in Pine Mountain**

The Cricket Pitch Park helped launch the sporting careers of three Pine Mountain men who represented Queensland and Australia in elite sports.



**The Cricket Pitch Park** on the corner of Pine Mountain Road and Russell's Road Pine Mountain has been used for local sporting events since the 1880's and has been one of the hubs of the Pine Mountain District for generations.

The park is named primarily because of the cricketing achievements of Bert Ironmonger, who was born at Pine Mountain in 1882. Ironmonger was one of seven children and during his growing up years he lost the top joint of his left index finger in an accident with a chaff cutter. His sister stuck his hand in a bag of flour to stop the bleeding.

He grew up playing in local cricket matches in the park that has been named in his honour.

Bert Ironmonger was a left handed bowler who showed much promise in competitive cricket. His unique bowling method came from his method of bowling without a finger joint on his bowling hand. This caused him to 'fire' the ball, somewhat like a schoolboy shooting marbles, rather than wrap his forefinger around it to impart spin. His stamina and accuracy were legendary.

By 1910, he was representing Queensland against Victoria, and he made his Test debut in the same match as Don Bradman at the Melbourne Cricket Ground in 1928. By this stage, Ironmonger was 46 years of age!

Bert Ironmonger played in 14 Test matches for Australia in the 1930s.

There is a sign at the entrance of the Cricket Pitch acknowledging his achievements as a 'son of Pine Mountain'.

Apart from Bert Ironmonger, there were two brothers who were born and bred in Pine Mountain, whose sporting prowess was significant in the cricket world.

James Carew (1872 – 1950) and Patrick Carew (1875 – 1942) grew up playing cricket at the local park at Pine Mountain. Both of these men were right hand batsmen James played in 13 first class matches for Queensland between 1898 and 1906.

Patrick played in five first-class matches with Queensland, between the 1899/00 and 1902/03 seasons.

In addition, Patrick was an Australian Rugby Union national and state representative where he played 17 matches, 16 against New South Wales as a forward and one against Great Britain. He captained Queensland in two games against NSW in 1901.

The Cricket Pitch Park was the ideal place for these two brothers to practice their cricket and rugby skills.

In modern times, the Park is used by the Pine Mountain Progress Association for their Annual 'Christmas Carols in the Park'. This event always attracts many of the young families in the district, with a visit from Santa on a Fire Truck.

Several family groups have had family reunions at the Park, the largest one being the Pioneer Day hosted by the Pine Mountain & Districts Historical Society in 2012, where 600 people took part in activities commemorating the settlement of some of the Irish families whose descendants still live in the district.

In 2015 for the centenary of the landing of Australian and New Zealand soldiers at ANZAC Cove at Gallipoli, the Historical Society built a Monument to commemorate those young Pine Mountain men who served in the First World War. Each year, the

Historical Society organizes ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day Ceremonies at the monument beside the Cricket Pitch Park.

In 2022, the Cricket Pitch Park is used by local families having picnics, while their children play in the playground. The cricket pitch is visible in the middle of the park, and serves as a reminder of past glories of talented sportsmen who learnt the skills that launched their sporting careers.

## **Past Times in Pine Mountain**

**Queensland Times (Ipswich, Qld.: 1909 - 1954) Sat 10 Mar 1928 Page 7**

### **PINE MOUNTAIN.**

*Presentation-The residents of the district, friends, and well-wishers, assembled in the State School last evening for the purpose of bidding farewell to Mr. and Mrs. W. N. Gordon. Mr. Gordon has accepted a position at the Biarra State School. Mr. J. W. Hill presided. He said it was a great pleasure in one way to be present and in another way it was not.*

*He was sorry Mr. and Mrs. Gordon were leaving. Mr. Gordon had been teaching at Pine Mountain for 19 months. Mr. W. J. Goodin asked Mr. Gordon to accept an illuminated gold wristlet watch from the residents of the district. To Mrs. and Mr. Gordon, he handed a silver tea-set on a silver mounted tea tray, suitably engraved, to show the esteem in which they were held by the Pine Mountain people.*

*Mr. Gordon, responding, thanked them for the valuable presents, which would always remind them of the days spent at Pine Mountain. Other presents included a xylonite clock, a silver-mounted honey-jar, from friends, and an afternoon tea set from the Tennis Club.*

*The evening terminated shortly after midnight with the singing of "For They are Jolly Good Fellows." Dance music was supplied by Mr. George Hay, extras being played by Messrs. E. Whiting, F. Doyle, and V. Russell. Mr. E. Berry played a banjo solo. Recitations were given by Mr. W. Goodin.*

*Those responsible for the success of the evening were: Messrs. J. Bell (Chairman). W. Sheppard (Secretary). Messrs H. Carlile (Treasurer). E. Whiting, H. Carlile, T.*

*Stokes, J. Sheppard, Mesdames E. Russell, E. Whiting, T. Stokes, M. Fels, J. Sheppard.*

*The school was tastefully decorated by the ladies for the occasion. Mr. H. Carlile carried out the duties of M.C.*

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## **Membership of the Historical Society**

New members are welcomed to join the Society. We host ANZAC Day and Remembrance Day Ceremonies at the Cricket Pitch Park at Pine Mountain each year. The rest of the time is taken up with exchange of ideas and historical research.

Meetings are held once a month in the Rural Fire Brigade Shed at Pine Mountain. Afternoon tea is supplied.