

# Moondai

182 Buxton-Marysville Road  
Buxton, Victoria



## Historical Notes

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The Marysville & District Historical Society acknowledges the Taungurung people of the Kulin Nation, in particular the Yawang-yilam-bulok clan as traditional owners of the land in this area.

We respect the resilience and strength of Ancestors and Elders past, present and emerging, and extend that respect to all First Nations People.

### DISCLAIMER

*This document contains information gathered by the Marysville & District Historical Society. It comes from a number of sources which are both factual and anecdotal. The MDHS takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the document but provides it as a source of interest.*

# Introduction

For tens of thousands of years people have lived on the land in Australia. In the Marysville-Buxton area they are Taungurung people of the Kulin Nation and in particular the Yawang-yilam-bulok clan. Their lives were greatly impacted with the arrival of Europeans from the 1830's in to this region.

In this area by 1859 the Taungurung had asked and been given the Acheron Station on the Nyaggeron<sup>1</sup> - Acheron River by Nunnunthum - the Cathedral Range where they 'wanted to sit on the land like the white people'<sup>2</sup>. Their efforts were thwarted and they were directed to a site on the Mohican Station further south and colder. It was not suitable.

Rev John Green, the recently appointed Inspector of Aborigines saw what was happening with the Taungurung. In 1863 he convinced the Taungurung people to join with Wurundjeri peoples on land being set aside for them in the Healesville area. This was Coranderk and so Taungurung people were taken over the mountains far from their country.

The first European settlers in the district came as squatters in the 1840's. Taggerty Station was first squatted on in 1846, all 50,000<sup>3</sup> acres situated on the east side of the Acheron River, south of today's town of Taggerty down passed Buxton. In 1864 James Batchelor purchased the rights to Taggerty Station, built a slab hut and in June 1864 "brought up Mary Ann and children for good"<sup>4</sup>, to live there. They came in a wagonette to Marysville, then James had to make a path to the property as they were the first to travel this way. Entry to this area had been from the north via Yea.

The Lands Act of 1869 changed the scene with settlers required to lease land on the condition they cleared, fenced and improved it for a fee based on size and when the work was complete the freehold became theirs. By the mid-1870s James Batchelor chose 1,000 acres in the north of the property around the homestead to lease. He concentrated on grazing and milking cows, for cheese making. His children lived and farmed this land until the 1950's.

It is hard to find details of who owned exactly what land when, however it looks like Barnescourt was part of the southern extremity of James Batchelor's land. William Scott applied for his lease for Barnescourt in August 1870.

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<sup>1</sup> Taungurung words from '*On Taungurung Land*', Uncle Roy Patterson & Jennifer Jones, 2020

<sup>2</sup> Rev George Edwards' Research Notes - quote found in documents he found on the Acheron Station.

<sup>3</sup> 1 acre is 0.4 hectares.

<sup>4</sup> James Batchelor's Diary extracts.

# William Scott

William Scott selected his first leased land of 550 acres in 1870 and members of the family were still farming in the Buxton area in the late 1960's.

William Scott (c1842 - 1929, Junee, NSW) was born to David Scott in the parish of Straybane, Co Tyrone, Northern Ireland and married Ann Irwin (c1844, Co Tyrone-1918, Yea) in 1861 in Ireland.

In April 1862 William Scott, farmer left Ireland with his young wife on board the 'Great Australia'. They arrived on 16<sup>th</sup> September 1862 and their daughter Elizabeth was born one month later in Lancefield, where they stayed for a couple of years near Ann's family.

He returned to Melbourne, bought several blocks of land, built on them and in this way was able to acquire funds. William is recorded in 1865 as a Foot Constable in Melbourne. His record<sup>5</sup>, which was not very good, shows altercations with his superiors including fisticuffs, and he resigned on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1870.

In the meantime, unhappy with Melbourne life, he sold his properties and organised to farm in Buxton like his Irish forebears. He selected and applied for a lease of land in Buxton on 31<sup>st</sup> August 1870 and was in Alexandra on 8<sup>th</sup> September, 1870 to swear to the truth of the document. A fragment of this document remains in the Public Records Office<sup>6</sup>. At the end of 1870 the family settled on the property they called Barnaseant/Barnescourt of approximately. 500 acres.

SCHEDULE A.

**APPLICATION FOR LICENSE UNDER PART II. OF "THE LAND ACT 1869."**

I, William Scott of Melbourne, Police Constable do hereby solemnly and sincerely declare on oath, that on the thirty first day of August 1870 at 12 noon o'clock, I placed posts with notices thereon, as prescribed by the Regulations of the 1st February 1870, of the corners of the allotment for which I hereby make application under Part II. of The Land Act 1869, as more particularly described hereunder; that at the time when I fixed these posts I saw no other such posts on the same allotment, and was not cognizant of any other person having marked it out with a view to applying for it; that I have not taken up a pre-emptive right; that I have not selected under any previous Land Act or Acts the maximum number of acres allowed by this Act; that no selection made by me under any previous Land Act or Acts has been forfeited or cancelled for the evasion of the provisions of any such Land Act or Acts; and that the area I now desire to obtain would not, if added to the area already selected by me under any previous Land Act or Acts, exceed 320 acres; that I am not under eighteen years of age.

And I further declare as aforesaid that I am not an agent, or a servant of or a trustee for any other person; that I have not entered into any agreement to permit any other person to acquire by purchase or otherwise the allotment in respect of which this application is made, or any part thereof, or my interest therein, or the usufruct thereof.

And I make this solemn declaration on oath, conscientiously believing the same to be true, by virtue of the provisions of The Land Act 1869, and of the provisions of an Act of the Parliament of Victoria rendering persons making a false declaration punishable for wilful and corrupt perjury.

Signature— William Scott  
 Occupation— Police Constable  
 Address— St. Mary's Station  
 in the Colony of Victoria, this thirty first day of August 1870 before me,  
Thomas Hall J.P.  
 one of Her Majesty's Justices

Situation and Area of Allotment applied for.	Description, containing the lengths and bearings of the boundary lines of the allotment and its connection with a fixed point in a Government Survey or a Signal Station, as provided in last clause of the Regulations of the 1st February 1870.	Report by Government Contract Surveyor.	Date and Hour of Receipt of Application by District Land Officer.
County— <u>Andersby</u> <u>Buxton</u> (District)	<u>Corundum: Commencing at N. 10. N. by E. of Allotment 15 then North 51. 20 E. 6000 then South East by 7. 20 E. then 1. 50 N. 5. 76. then 5. 5. 5. 25 then 12. 6. 57. then 4. 16. 10 N. 2. 24. then 5. 2. 65 E. 5. 74. then 5. 15. 10 then 2. 26. 43. 5. 11. 40. 12. 7. 10.</u>	Date and hour of order to undertake survey } <u>31 Aug 1870</u> Date of commencement of survey } <u>5<sup>th</sup> Sept</u> Date of completion of survey } <u>do</u> Particulars relative to any claim or claims to priority, or to any objections to the granting of the application } Survey fee charged ... .. } <u>6 10 0</u> Mileage ... .. } <u>10 0</u> <u>Wm. Downey</u> Cont. Surveyor.	<u>8<sup>th</sup> September 1870</u> <u>12. 10. 0. m.</u> <u>Henry W. Taylor</u> Land Officer.

1870 (12)

On the next pages are copies of the License return lodged in 1874 which gives more details.

<sup>5</sup> A copy of William's police record is in Rev George Edwards' Research Folders at MDHS.

<sup>6</sup> From Rev George Edwards' Research Folders.

(11)  
1874  
9 546

LAND REGULATIONS.—SCHEDULE IV.

APPLICATION FOR LEASE ~~OR CROWN GRANT~~ BY LICENSEE.

CHAPTER IV., SEC. 18.

Address— *Buxton*  
Post Town— *Buxton*  
Date— *29<sup>th</sup> June 1874*

Extent of Land—  
A.    n.    r.  
*155 : 0 : 10*  
Parish— *Buxton*  
Allotment— *150-18*  
Section—  
Date of License— *31/1/71*

SIR,

Being the holder of a License, No. *4721* under section 19 of *The Land Act 1869*, to occupy the land specified in the margin hereof, and having occupied the said land for a period of at least two years and a half, and having complied with the conditions of such License, I hereby apply for a <sup>Lease</sup> ~~Grant~~ of the said land, and for the Certificate of the Board of Land and Works for the improvements thereon; and I send herewith, in support of such application, my declaration upon oath that I now make the said application in conformity with and not in violation of any of the provisions of the said Act.

I have the honor to be, Sir,  
Your most obedient Servant,

*William Scott*

To the Honorable the President of the  
Board of Land and Works, Melbourne.

DECLARATION UPON OATH BY LICENSEE.

I, *William Scott* of *Buxton* being the holder of a License to occupy the above-mentioned allotment, make oath and declare—

1. That I have paid £ *16* s. *12* d., being all fees due on the said License.
2. That I have not at any time assigned or sublet the said allotment or any part thereof or any part of my interest therein.
3. That within two years from the issue of the said License I have made good and substantial fence, and that during the currency of the said License I have made every ten in the said allotment.
4. That within six months from the issue of the said License I have sinceforward during the continuance thereof I resided in my own proper person on the said allotment for not less than two years and a half.
5. That before the end of the said year from the commencement of the said License I have made upon the said allotment permanent and substantial improvements of the value of One pound for every fractional part of an acre contained therein.
6. That I have complied with all the other conditions of the said License.
7. That I make this application in conformity with the provisions of *The Land Act 1869* and not in violation of any of them.
8. That the statements made by me in reply to the questions hereto subjoined are true and correct in every particular.

LIST OF IMPROVEMENTS ABOVE REFERRED TO

	Value.		Value.
Dam ... ..	£	Clearing ... ..	£ <i>200</i>
Well ... ..	<i>131.57</i>	Draining ... ..	<i>273.5</i>
Cultivation ... ..	<i>525.00</i>	Buildings erected to soil, farm or other	<i>50.00</i>
Fencing ... ..	<i>75.00</i>		
	<i>226.5</i>		

Signature— *William Scott*  
Occupation— *Farmer*  
Address— *Buxton*

Declared upon oath at *Alexandra* in the Colony of Victoria, this *29* day of *June* 1874, before me, one of Her Majesty's Justices of the Peace in the said Colony, and a Commissioner of the Supreme Court for taking Affidavits

*Thomas Hall*

NOTE.—District Surveyors, Land Officers, and other persons connected with the Lands Department, are directed to assist selectors in filling up this Application and Declaration. No fee is to be offered or accepted for such assistance.

The form of Application, when filled up, to be handed to the nearest District Surveyor, Land Officer, or Crown Lands Bailiff, who will forward it to the Assistant Commissioner of Lands and Survey.

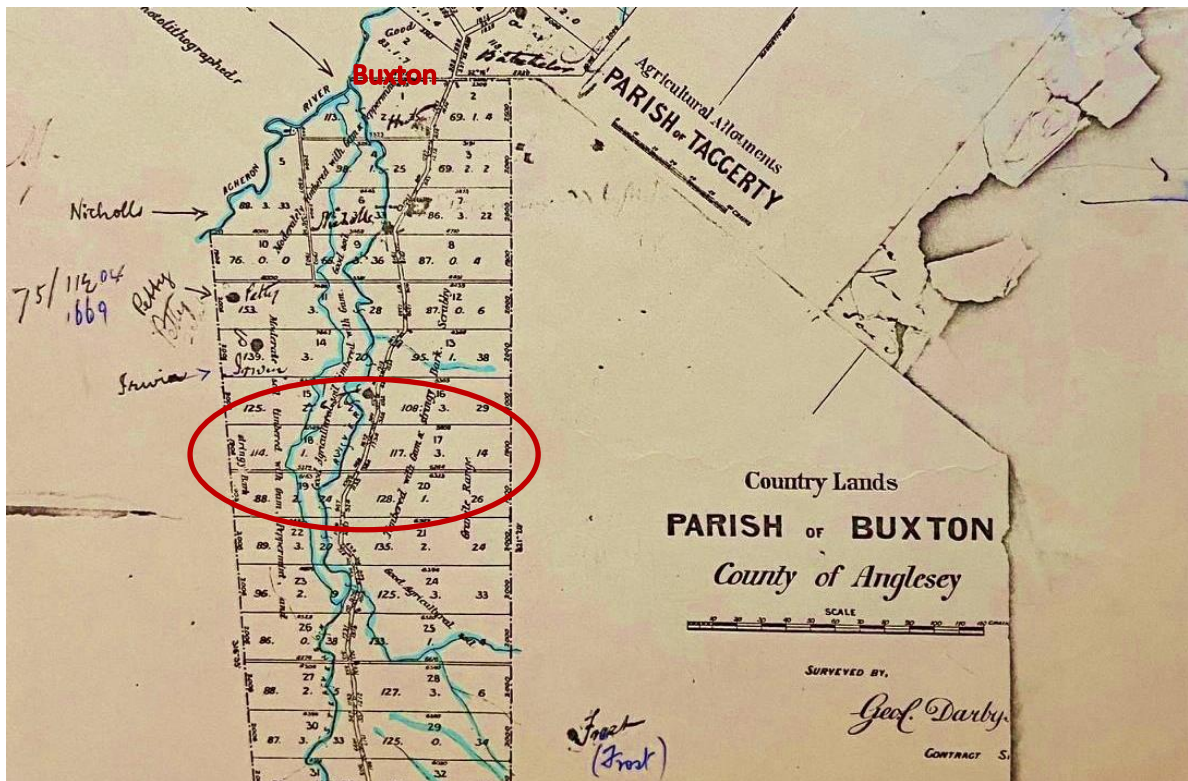
1874

Further Particulars to be furnished by Licensee when making application for Crown Grant or Lease under Section 20, Land Act 1869.

Fencing:—	Description thereof.	No. of Chains.	Cost per Chain.	Total Cost.			
				£	s.	d.	
	Post and 3-rail, split stuff ...						
	Post and 2-rail, ditto ...						
	Post, rail, and wire ...						
	Post and wire ...						
	Stone wall ...						
	Stub, or picket ...						
	Log ...	100	10/-	50	0	0	
	Chock and log ...	50	10/-	25	0	0	
	Log and brush ...						
	Brush ...						
	Have you arranged with occupiers of adjoining lands for payment of any portion of the above fences?	—		75	0	0	
	Who are the occupiers of the adjoining lands? ...	Arthur Irwin					
Cultivation:—	Number of Acres Ploughed and Cultivated.	Cost per Acre.	Nature of Crop.	Yield per Acre.			
					£	s.	d.
	First year ... 20 acres	25/-	Oats	20 bushels	25		
	Second year ... 35 "	"	"	15 "	175	0	0
	Third year ... 50 "	"	"	20 "	250	0	0
					62	10	
Buildings:—	Description.	Dimensions.	Materials.				
					£	s.	d.
	Dwelling house	25 x 16	Weatherboard				
	Barn	27 x 30	slating		250	0	
	Stables		slating		250	0	
Water Storage:—	Description.	Dimensions, &c.					
				£	s.	d.	
	Dam ...						
	Reservoir ...						
	Well ...						
All other Improvements:—	Particulars of Nature and Cost.						
					£	s.	d.
	Clearing			250			
	All the trees cut at 3/- per acre			23	5	0	
	Total Cost of Improvements			678	5	0	

579.10

William initially selected Lots 15, 16, 17 and 18 on each side of the road to Marysville. According to the 1875 map below William had selected almost 470 acres in his name. Of interest is the name Irwin on Lot 14. William Scott's wife was Ann Irwin and from William Scott's 1874 leasing documents Arthur Irwin was listed as on the adjoining land.



Section of map used for the application in 1875 for a school in Buxton

William called his property Barnescourt after Baron's Court Castle in Co Tyrone, Ireland where he was born and his family farmed. William, 28, arrived with his young family - Elizabeth, David, Mary/Margaret and William James. Two more sons - Robert and Charles were born at Buxton.

At Barnescourt William developed a thriving dairy farm with his four sons working with him from a young age.

Robert Scott, grandson of William Scott recorded, in 1968, his family's history for the Alexandra Historical Society and the following extract is about William Scott.

*"On this property he reared his family – Elizabeth, David, Mary, William James, Charles and my father Robert. It is commonly known that he, William, was a very good manager, cleared, worked and improved the property as men did in the early days. And only this year of 1968 did drainage contractors find underground storm drains still working, laid by the boys when they were only lads of the family. Speaking of his managership; he delighted in being up when the family returned from a dance, in the early hours of the morning; and would say – “Alright boys, just change your clothes and we’ll go to work”. He was a great drinker of whisky - 3 fingers of same in those days, and it has been said that he drank enough i.e. continuously in moderation, or what he called the latter - to float a small flag ship.*

*As time moved on, they had one of the most improved properties in the district, this came from hard work and the carriage of goods from the Healesville Railway Station, after that line had been installed, as well as the carriage of*

*goods and machinery to Woods Point Goldfields. In those days Woods Point's only outley (sic) was through Marysville. One of the sons Robert (my father) started on the road with a team of horses at the age of sixteen. Normally the trip to Healesville took two days, but after being on the road a while – i.e. with experience and a little age, he to, learned to go to the local, which in those days was open all night, and on this occasion was a day longer on the trip. On arrival home, the old chap said, "Healesville getting further away boy?"*

*As the boys grew up and prepared to wed, land was acquired in the area: Tyrone, the property next to Barnescourt was Robert's; "Cloverdale" for David now owned by Mr W Perry (1968). Another on the Maroondah Highway 2 miles from Buxton now owned by Mr Max Stephens<sup>7</sup>, and another on the Alexandra-Acheron Rd, now owned by Mr A Dunn. "*

In the early 1900's William's circumstances changed with his wife Ann's health deteriorating and so he sold Barnescourt in 1912 and the elderly Scotts went to live with their eldest daughter, Mrs Elizabeth Hodson in Molesworth.

Ann Scott died in October 1918 and William Scott died in July 1929 at Junee, NSW

The sale in 1912 was to Mr Orlando Burbank the 'Lace King' of Flinders Lane who called the property 'Moondai'. It was to be his country residence for the next 30 years.

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<sup>7</sup> Most likely Max Leslie not Stephens who is known to have bought Scott land on the Maroondah Highway.



# Barnescourt, Buxton

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*Named for Baron's Court Castle, Co Tyrone, Ireland near the birthplace of William Scott, a country home and estate of the Duke of Abercorn. Also referred to by the family as Barneseant.*

*From Alexandra & Yea Standard, 20 May 1904*

## A MODEL FARM.

"Barnescourt" and the surroundings, and also that there were probabilities of great changes being brought about at this well-known homestead, our reporter essayed a trip to Buxton, on Saturday last, and made a surprise visit. The popular owner of this large, well-kept and excellently appointed farm (Mr. W. Scott) had an idea that our reporter intended to interview him and have a look round, at the same time, but had dismissed the matter from his mind for the nonce, being busily occupied in the hundred and one things necessary to keep an establishment of the dimensions of "Barnescourt" in working order. Therefore the visit was a surprise. On arriving at the house our reporter introduced himself to Mrs. Scott, who gave him a hearty welcome.

Mr. Scott soon arrived and the visitor was duly installed as one of the household until Monday.

It was not long before Mr. Scott informed our reporter that he intended retiring in the near future from the active life of a farmer<sup>8</sup>, under certain circumstances, of course. His property was for sale privately, but he did not intend to sacrifice the work of a lifetime for a mere song.

Having arrived about tea time with a keen appetite, our reporter lost no time in repairing to the festive board and partook of the hospitality of the genial host. A stay overnight meant an evening with Mr. Scott, and right well was it spent. All reporters are of a curious turn of mind, and after discussing the prospects of the several candidates likely to stand at the forth coming election, the newspaper man got to business. He gleaned from the evening's conversation that Mr. and Mrs. Scott arrived in Melbourne in 1862. The former is a native of Barnescourt, County of Tyrone, Ireland, where his father was a well-to-do tiller of the soil. Mr. Scott was not long in the country when he found lucrative employment at Lancefield. A few years, however, sufficed, when he was back to Melbourne, where

he joined the Victorian police force and remained in same until 1870, having put in five years in the city. The experiences of Mr Scott during these few years would fill a book. He was far from being a poor man at this time, and dabbled in land buying and house building in the city and suburbs, with the result he retired determined upon entering into pastoral pursuits. It was upon the advice of a friend of his that he journeyed to the Alexandra district to take up land. He originally selected 200<sup>9</sup> acres, which, in 20 years, has reached 607 acres of freehold and 338 acres of leasehold land, which is the total extent of the property known as "Barnescourt," independent of the Cloverdale estate, of 320 acres, purchased from, Mr. J. Clifford and now in the occupation of his son (Mr. D. Scott<sup>10</sup>.) The next farm is known as Maggie's Flat, purchased from Messrs. Elliott and Rielly, occupied by Mr. W. J. Scott<sup>11</sup>, and known as Tyrone. There is also 1,000 acres of leasehold known as Bald Hill, held by Mr David Scott, the present owner of Cloverdale. There are other lands, connected with the Scott family, who are all well-known and highly respected throughout the country. From these few facts there is no vocation subject to a greater variety of modifying influence, and no profession demanding a greater variety of knowledge than farming. The true farmer is he who can discover and recognise the truth of principles and practices of every day life and possesses the knowledge which enables him to apply them. In short, this man, is to be found in Mr. W. Scott. When this gentleman first selected those magnificent broad acres they were densely covered with timber and scrub. It can be understood that he was possessed of that bull dog courage and indomitable pluck that possessed the pioneers of the country. Mr. Scott has indeed been successful, and above all blessed with a fine family, all of whom

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<sup>8</sup> At this time William was 62. In fact he continued at the farm until 1912 when he sold it to Orlando Burbank.

<sup>9</sup> The original lease document of 1870 was for 470 acres. 1874 lease return is included in this document with more details.

<sup>10</sup> David Scott.

<sup>11</sup> William James Scott

are now married and doing well, thanks to honest parents, who wrought so long for them.

The residence, which bears the name of "Barnescourt," consists of six rooms, is constructed of weather-board, fitted with every convenience and very comfortable; there is also a cool store room partly underground, pantry, a large kitchen with brick fireplace and splendid oven, cupboards, recesses, etc., water for domestic purposes is laid on to the kitchen from never-failing springs conveyed from the high range on the opposite side of the road. There is a wash-house with conveniences, men's and servant's quarters, making one of the most complete homesteads in the district. The Steavenson River flows by a few feet below the house and like "The Brook," goes on for ever.

The next block of buildings that engage attention are the stables, buggy and chaff houses, all fitted with requirements necessary for housing horses, etc. A spacious fowl house and run adjoins. In this a large number of birds are kept, being enclosed in with wire netting for obvious reasons; no fowls, turkeys, pigs, ducks, geese, etc., are to be seen paddling around the house and kitchen, at "Barnescourt," everything being scrupulously clean.

The extent of the river flats is 300 acres, divided into 25 paddocks. Channels are cut so that each paddock is supplied with water from the Steavenson River and if needed these channels can be easily flooded. Further, the whole acreage can be inundated in a few hours if desired, but the position is such a favorable one that this would never be required. Each paddock is substantially fenced and forms one of the most valued properties in the State. A private<sup>12</sup> road runs through the property, which shortens the route to Healesville by about two miles. Mr. Scott cultivates just sufficient for his own use, any surplus goes to the local markets.

Dairying is the special feature at "Barnescourt" milking being carried on all the year round. At the present time about 50 cows are milked, a cow shed consisting of 21 bails<sup>13</sup> and flagged throughout being erected in a high and dry position. Some considerable distance away is the dairy and butter factory, which is replete with all the necessary appliances for butter-making. A De Laval separator, of the latest pattern is here found, also a churn

capable of turning out 30 lbs of butter, a butter worker, etc. At regular intervals the product is packed and forwarded to Melbourne, via Healesville, and is of such a quality that the highest market rates are always obtained. Water power is used for driving these machines, the whole forming a compact butter-making plant.

The barn, which is a very extensive and lofty building, is 100ft. x 60ft., and is furnished with quite a number of useful pieces of machinery, all of which are in thorough working order, and connected with belting. There are two chaff-cutters, hay cutter, ensilage cutter, corn crusher, winnower, peg drum, pulper, weighing machine, all propelled by water power, shafts and belting being fixed up in all directions. A bag of chaff can be cut in one minute, and it takes about the same time to set the huge water wheel to drive in motion. This wheel, which is 20ft. in diameter, is of great weight, and being built in granite and concrete will last for a lifetime. A concrete channel, about a chain in length, connects the Steavenson River with the wheel, the flow of water being regulated by flood gates which are raised at will and a simple contrivance allows the exact speed required. When shut but a few inches of water runs through the channel, a gate in front of the wheel turning the water in an opposite direction. When in full work, from 3ft. to 4ft. of water rushes onward towards the wheel and starts it immediately. This has proved a wonderful saving to Mr. Scott.

One of the most important adjuncts is the ensilage pit, which at present holds over 90 tons of green maize (cut into chaff) put down in the beginning of March and which is now ready for use. The pit, which is 25ft x 15ft. and 10 feet deep, is built of granite and cement and is perfectly airtight. Mr. Scott has recognised for years past that ensilage is the best form of artificial fodder for milk production, and the results have been highly gratifying. His herd in consequence is in full profit when milk is scarcest, and bringing higher prices. Mr. Scott, after cutting his maize into chaff, weighs it down with about 18in. of earth. There is no fear of this gentleman complaining about drought, on the contrary, a drought would be his opportunity of making more money. In a few weeks' time Mr. Scott will have a fresh herd in hand, when the ensilage pit will be opened and serve to feed the cattle through the winter in addition to grazing on the rich pastures now being prepared and greatly aided by a splendid system of irrigation. If this important branch was paid more attention to by our farmers, the dairying industry would not suffer. The pigs

<sup>12</sup> Is this a reference to the Marysville or Narbethong Road?

<sup>13</sup> The individual stalls for milking

reared on this property always command high market rates, alive or dead.

There are numerous other matters that could be mentioned in connection with this model farm, and

no doubt a great many persons in search of properties such as this will visit "Barnescourt" during the next few weeks, as Mr. Scott is known far and wide as a thorough practical man.



*Maize silage pit at Cloverdale, another of the Scott's properties nearby. Charles Scott is seated while his brothers, Bill and Bob Scott are seated on the platform. from the Burchall Collection, published in 'Alexandra & District', book by Brian Lloyd.*

# Moondai & Orlando Burbank

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Orlando Joseph Ednott Burbank (1861, Preston - 1943, South Yarra) became known as 'The Lace King' in Melbourne. He first married Bessie<sup>14</sup> Hill (1868, Emerald Hill<sup>15</sup> - 1924) in 1893 and they spent their honeymoon in Healesville. Bessie Hill's great personal beauty was commented on in the wedding report and it was noted that the altar was draped with Indian cobweb lace. They had four children - Brenda, Gavan (RIP WWI), Ruth and Noel. Sadly Elizabeth died in 1924. Orlando did not take another wife until 1936 when he married Aileen Flora<sup>16</sup> Jacoby (1896, Sth Melb - 1963, Sth Yarra).

When Orlando bought William Scott's property in April 1912 he named the property Moondai. He knew the district because James Robert aka JR Crooke, husband of Orlando's sister, Leura had bought Tarnpirr at Narbethong in 1909 for his weekend retreat. In the future, Mrs Leura Crooke would be president of Moondai Golf Links. Orlando and JR Crooke, who developed Aspendale Racecourse had known each other for a considerable time. They were executors to Orlando's father's Will in 1888.

Moondai was the country home for Orlando, his family and friends. Orlando, a wealthy warehouseman known as the 'Lace King', was often mentioned in the Society pages of the newspapers. He was well-known and could afford to entertain well. In 1915 he packed up his house in Camberwell and moved the family into "Butleigh Wootton" the grand mansion in Glenferrie Road, Kew<sup>17</sup>. When the automobile in the 1920's reduced a long day's journey by train and coach to a few hours' drive, he made Moondai a weekend place. After all, his brother-in-law JR Crooke was the first man to drive an automobile - Schacht Motor Buggy - up and down the Black Spur.

Moondai lies cupped in blue hills at the apex of two great valleys, and right through it there runs two streams. With his purchase Orlando had one of the best sections of river for trout fishing<sup>18</sup> in Australia. Brown trout had been introduced in the district back in the early 1860's. One of the first things Orlando did was to make "an effort to improve the streams from an angler's point of view. He recently, under the supervision of an officer of the Fisheries' Department, erected nurseries in the Little Taggerty river<sup>19</sup>, on his private property, and stocked the same with rainbow trout, which up to the present have not been liberated in streams of this district. It is intended, if the experiment proves successful, to use the nurseries from which to stock all streams in the surrounding district. The hearty co-operation and best thanks of all lovers of angling are due to Mr Burbank for the trouble and expense he has gone to in this matter." <sup>20</sup>

Amongst Orlando's farm managers in the 1920s was Frederick Fiske snr from the dairy farm 'Carmyle' not far down the road.

By the late 1920's Orlando and his friends were taken with golf and so a nine hole golf course was established at Moondai.

Orlando died in 1943. It is not known when Orlando relinquished the ownership of the property. The notice for the auction of Moondai in 1944 was in the name of B V Mogg.

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<sup>14</sup> Philadelphia Elizabeth Ruth Hill.

<sup>15</sup> Emerald Hill early name for South Melbourne.

<sup>16</sup> Aileen Florence Marguerite Goldberg Jacoby.

<sup>17</sup> Butleigh Wootton in all its grandeur still stands today (2021).

<sup>18</sup> Maria McIntyre personnel conversations.

<sup>19</sup> The rivers on Moondai are known today as the Steavenson and Little Steavenson, but in Burbank's time they were known as the Taggerty & Little Taggerty.

<sup>20</sup> Healesville & Yarra Glen Guardian, 26 July 1912.

# The Golf Links

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*Young Australia had discovered golf and in the late 1920's, with the automobile making travel easier, a number of privately owned courses opened up in the country. Orlando Burbank was one who established a nine hole course on his country property, Moondai.*

On 21<sup>st</sup> December, 1929 Orlando opened his Moondai Private Country Club which included a nine hole golf course. For over twelve months a small army of men had been engaged in laying down this course.

*Alexandra & Yea Standard, 14 June 1929*

## **A Wonderful Project.**

During the past week I paid a visit to the new club, now in progress of formation, known as the Moondai Private Country Club at Buxton. To say that I was astounded at the beauty of the setting for this new club is to put it very mildly. I have visited all the beauty spots of this country, but I very much doubt if there is anything more gorgeous through the length and breadth of the continent than this bushland scenery around Marysville.

The promoter of this new country club is the owner of the fine estate on which the golf course is being laid down. A well-known Melbourne business man who has had his country home on this delectable spot for more than a decade, has decided to gather around congenial souls of clean, simple tastes - lovers of nature and of refined sport - to share the joys of this bushland paradise. For their hazards on this property golfers will find two delightful trout streams teeming with trout and other fish. Two hundred acres of virgin bush are reserved for a native sanctuary for flora and fauna, a large picnic ground, a spacious aerodrome; these, and many other features, will make the whole venture unique amongst gentlemen's clubs in this country. During my inspection I was much impressed with the setting of the course - the nature of the soil (friable loam), the never-ending beauty of the slow, winding river and the general atmosphere which pervaded the whole place. The membership list is filling up at a pleasing pace. Not everybody can be a member of this club. If it takes two or three years to fill up the membership list the founder is determined to keep the wrong element out. Money is not his chief object. A gentlemen's club for gentlemen is the watchword which is kept upper most in all transactions relating to the filling up of the membership roll. With such a wonderful scheme

and with so many good things to offer the founder can afford to be discriminating in his choice of members. The purchase of a block of land<sup>21</sup> at a nominal price with exceptional terms thrown in, is the open sesame to membership. With the opening of the links in spring, when the public will be given an open invitation to this veritable Eden, the membership roll should quickly fill. We predict great success for this novel venture.

Editor, "Golf in Australia."

*Alexandra & Yea Standard, 20 Dec 1929 extract*

.....Visitors to this country club will find something in the nature of a sportsman's paradise awaiting them. Trout fishing, swimming, shooting and riding may all be engaged in this 600<sup>22</sup> acre property. The two Taggerty rivers<sup>23</sup> wind in and out of the estate, thereby making this golf course the most unique lay-out of its kind in the southern hemisphere.

The Moondai course is open to the public on payment of a nominal green fee. Intending visitors to this centre must be sure to include their golfing kit in their holiday outfit. ....

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<sup>21</sup> No evidence of land sub-division at this time has been found.

<sup>22</sup> Moondai consisted of 500 acres freehold and 250 acre of Crown lease which was often quoted as 800 acres.

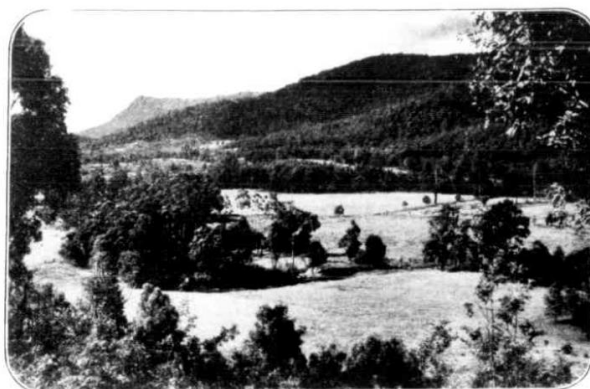
<sup>23</sup> The rivers on Moondai are known today as the Steavenson and Little Steavenson, but in Burbank's time they were known as the Taggerty and Little Taggerty.

Featured in the Weekly Times on 8 March 1930

*Picturesque Golf Course and Proposed Country Club near Buxton*



The Taggerty River, a fine trout stream, which runs through "Moondai."



View of the Fairways and the Island Green, made by the Little Taggerty, which also runs through "Moondai."



Looking up the Acheron Valley from Picnic Hill.

*Captions:*

*on the left - The Taggerty River, a fine trout stream which runs through "Moondai".*

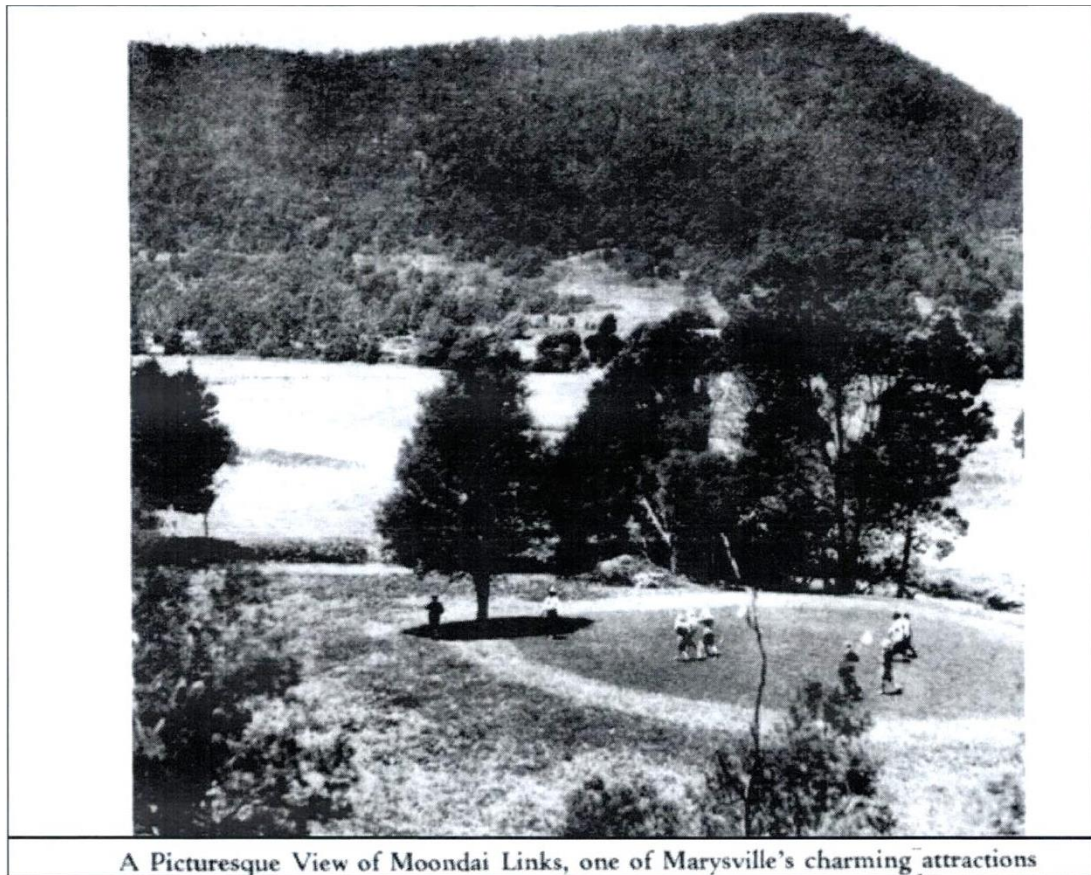
*top right - View of the fairways and the Island Green made by the Little Taggerty which also runs through "Moondai".*

*bottom right - Looking up the Acheron Valley from Picnic Hill.*

*The Age, 3 June 1930*

**MOONDAI CLUB COMPETITIONS. KING'S BIRTHDAY HOLIDAY GOLF AT BUXTON.**

Details are to hand of an interesting programme which is being staged for golfers who are visiting the Buxton-Marysville district during the King's birthday holiday. Events have been arranged by the members of the Buxton Progress Association for competition on the 7th, 8th and 9th inst. on the picturesquely situated nine-hole course of the Moondai Country Club. Stroke handicaps have been arranged for each of the three days, and entries may be sent to the Moondai Country Club, Buxton. Post entries will be received on Saturday. A number of prizes have been donated by the Buxton Progress Association. Motorists may reach the course via the Healesville-Narbethong road over the Blacks' Spur, and then along the Marysville-Buxton road or direct to Buxton through Narbethong.



A Picturesque View of Moondai Links, one of Marysville's charming attractions

*Table Talk, 3 Dec 1931*

By this time the Moondai Country Club also offered accommodation, however no details of this has been found.

*Sporting Globe, 9 Jan 1932*

#### **Golfers' Find - Moondai Country Club**

'Tracker' Forbes of Commonwealth and Arch Owen of Yarra Yarra, two well-known golfers wrote of their adventures. .... " We struck the Moondai golf course in our travels," writes Forbes, "and found it so interesting for golf, fishing, shooting, swimming, riding, and practically everything that makes a perfect holiday, that we thought it would be well to tell you....."

"We drove in, and were informed that the links were available for anyone who desired to play. We found a very fine old farm house, surrounded by beautiful trees, and through the 800acres of playground the trout in the two Taggerties meander.

"The manager, Ted George, and Mrs George, who attends to the catering, are both out to make everyone feel at home. The course is in good order, and much improved, according to those who had seen it before. There was good shooting, and touring the district on horseback was a popular way of spending the days. During the hot weather the big bathing pool was perhaps the most popular spot."

Golf's popularity grew and Burbank and his friends sought to take advantage of this with the formation of a company. Amongst the prominent people who became involved with Orlando Burbank's golf links was Cr Herbert Mogg, the Mayor of Kew who back in 1927 became Secretary of the Aspendale Racing and Coursing Club - Aspendale was JR Crooke's race track. Herbert's son **Basil Valentine Mogg** was a school boy champion golfer in the early 1930s.

Basil was registered at Moondai, farming, for the 1943 Electoral Roll. He was in trouble with the Alexandra Police Court, along with six others for failing to destroy rabbits. The case was adjourned for eight weeks. Time enough to get rid of the rabbits.

*Alexandra & Yea Standard, 18 Sep 1936*

### **Moondai Golf Course.**

A company is being promoted to erect a non-licensed hotel on the Moondai estate and golf-course between Marysville and Buxton. To finance land purchase, building, equipment and working capital, £60,000 is to be sought. Building and equipment to cost £32,600 is proposed; also expenditure of £750 on construction of an aeroplane landing ground, and improvement of the existing 9-hole golf course. Nine additional holes are laid out, and these would be completed. Other expenditure set down in the prospectus being drawn up is purchase price of the property, £17,000 cash ; working capital and preliminary advertising, £2,250; and preliminary expenses £3000, making a total capital expenditure of £55,600. Land comprises 500 acres freehold and 250 acres Crown leasehold. Distance from Melbourne is sixty miles, by road. The Company will be known as Moondai Ltd. Capital of £60,000 in £1 shares will be sought from the public.

*Alexandra & Yea Standard, 11 December 1936*

On Saturday last the Moondai Golf Links at Buxton were re-opened and are now in first class playing order. An opening ceremony was performed at the first tee by Mrs. Crooke, the President of the Moondai Golf Club. Mrs. Crooke stressed the great credit due to the Moondai Syndicate, which includes Mr. T. D. Robb (club captain), Mr. Grainger (curator-manager), Mr. Preece (committeeman) and others for their enterprising efforts. The links have been reconditioned under the supervision of Mr. L. B. Oliver (golf architect) who has turned Moondai into one of the best kept country courses in Victoria.

It is not known if the company was formed or how long the Moondai Golf Links existed. Orlando died in 1943. When the land was auctioned in 1944, B V Mogg was listed as the owner and there is no mention in the description of the property of a golf course.

The Argus, 29 Jan 1944

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2. At Three O'clock. To Be Offered at SCOTT'S HOTEL. MELBOURNE. SALE BY AUCTION. FAVOURABLY SITUATED COUNTRY PROPERTY. MOONDAI, BUXTON. YOUNGHUSBAND LIMITED and D. G. OFFICER PTY. LTD. (agents in conjunction), under instructions from the owner, Mr. B. V. Mogg, will OFFER as above: Property, of 548 acres, situated 1<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> miles from Buxton Post-office, School, &c, 4 miles from Marysville and 65 miles from Melbourne, by bitumen road. Daily bus service to Melbourne. Comfortable homestead, 4 rooms and 3 bungalow rooms, and well-appointed, bathroom, sewerage, hot and cold water, telephone, extensive outbuildings. Splendidly fenced, boundaries netted, subdivided into 17 paddocks, permanently watered by Steavenson River and creeks; alluvial flats, undulating grazing land, and valuable timbered hills. A unique opportunity to secure a country property within easy reach of the city. Title, certificate. Immediate possession. Further particulars obtainable from the agents, YOUNGHUSBAND LIMITED. 94-96 King street. Melbourne; D. G. OFFICER PTY. LTD., 90 William street. Melbourne.



# Sir Roy Grounds

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Sir Roy Murman Grounds (1905, St Kilda-1981, Parkville) was one of Melbourne's leading architects possibly best known for his controversial National Art Gallery and Cultural Centre on St Kilda Road, Melbourne. He was knighted in 1969.

After WWII Roy tried his hands at orcharding in Mt Eliza before taking on Moondai with its dairy herd. Finances were not always good so the ever resourceful Alice Bettina (Betty), Roy's wife, trained as a herd tester and served a wide area of dairy farms in the Yarra Ranges. This earned her an extra petrol coupon. Igloos or rather Nissan Huts, ex WWII, were dotted on the property for guests to use. Two of these were removed to form the Igloo Roadhouse Cafe in Buxton.



Sadly Roy's young daughter drowned at Moondai in October 1945 and he and his wife could no longer enjoy Moondai, so in 1949 Roy auctioned all machinery, goods and animals and moved away.

**Inspecting Roy Grounds' old dairy,** *Maria McIntyre's collection (persons unknown)*



# Sydney Ronald MacPherson

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Sydney Ronald MacPherson, who came from the Riverina where he managed Roto Station, was managing Moondai and in 1950 his name was on the auction notice. Sydney had his left arm amputated to the elbow in 1940 when he was in his 60s after he defended the station cook. He had a timber mill in Gipsy Lane beside the property. He died in 1951.

# Important Property Auction "MOONDAI," BUXTON

## 509 Acres 509

### TUESDAY, 7th MARCH, 1950

At 3 p.m.

### At SCOTT'S HOTEL, Melbourne

Younghusband Limited and E. P. Cameron have been favored with instructions from S. R. MacPherson, Esq., to offer by Public Auction as above his well-known property:—

## "MOONDAI"

Situated 1 mile Buxton Post Office. Store, School, etc., 19 miles Alexandra, 61 miles Melbourne. Excellent arterial roads, daily return trip can be made either way by bus between Melbourne and Buxton. Another mail bus passes property each day.

The property comprises more than 200 acres of rich flats with long frontages to the Taggerty and Little Taggerty Rivers, which flow through the property, carrying an exceptional soil of pasture or rye, clover and other grasses. Balance undulating to low hills, position of which has been top-dressed. About 100 acres un-cleared with natural timber.

Subdivided into 18 paddocks, all well fenced, and the boundary is mostly netted.

Watered by rivers, pump and mill.

Comfortable W.B. house, 4 main rooms, with 2 rooms and dairy and laundry detached, H.W.S., 2 bathrooms, sewerage, water laid on from pump and mill, telephone. Exceptionally good cowshed and milking plant and 2 large utility sheds.

**RAINFALL.** — Authentic records in this vicinity not available, but estimated at over 40 inches per annum average.

Situated in this certain rainfall area, with its rich river flats, long river frontages and undulating rises, the property is suitable for fattening cattle and sheep or for dairying, and could be worked to advantage with any property in lighter rainfall areas, and the carrying capacity could be greatly increased by further top dressing and clearing. The climate, surroundings and trout-laden streams have made the district popular with city businessmen and northern property owners, many of whom own properties in this vicinity.

Terms—10 per cent. on signing of contract, balance in cash on possession in thirty (30) days.

One quarter of total commission paid will be allowed to Agent introducing actual buyer, in writing, prior to the sale.

*Inspection arrangements and further particulars on application to:*

**YOUNGHUSBAND LIMITED,**  
MELBOURNE and BRANCHES. Phone MU8245.

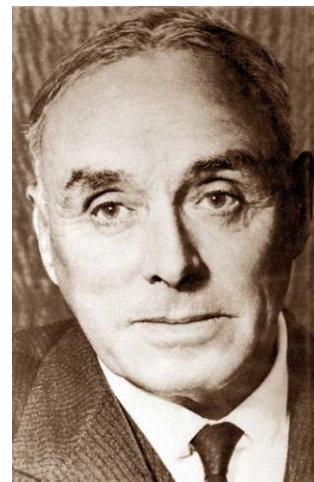
**E. P. CAMERON,**  
ST. JAMES BUILDINGS, 125 William Street,  
MELBOURNE. Phones MU1417, MU4504

## Captain Sir John Williams, CMG, OBE

Captain John Williams bought Moondai at the 1950 auction. The property was a working dairy farm with manager John Robin, a friend of the Captains.

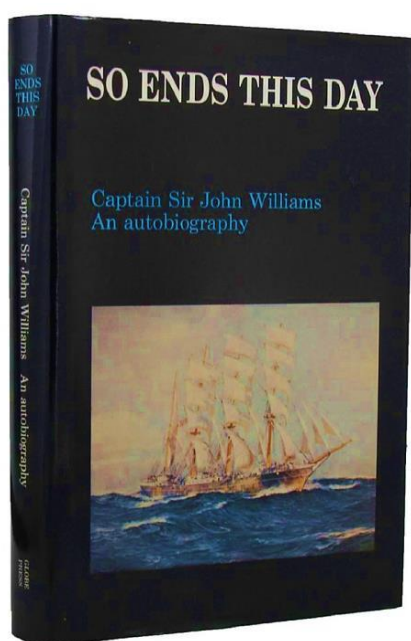
John wrote of his adventurous life including owning Moondai in his autobiography, 'So ends this Day' published in 1981. The Moondai section appears on the next page.

John Protheroe Williams<sup>24</sup>, although born in Hull in 1896, his family were Welsh thru and thru, small landholders in Pembrokeshire, and this is where he was educated. He had an idyllic boyhood with relatives keen fly fishers and he spent many hours with his Uncle Sam, the best of them. Although not mentioned in his words on Moondai, he was a very accomplished fly fisher and so trout fishing in the Steavenson River on the property would have been a regular activity.



Not interested in scholastic work he became a seaman at aged 14 on square riggers sailing around the Horn and Cape of Good Hope. During WWI he served as a merchant seaman which took him, late in the war, to Australia where he met Gladys Grieves who he returned to marry in 1922. They had a son and three daughters.

Now with a family, he left the sea to work on the Australian wharves and was soon in Melbourne leading the United Stevedoring Co. Marine salvage appealed and with John's knowledge gained on square riggers and deep sea sailing, and engineering aptitude he became a world expert.



In 1939 he joined the Australian Navy Reserve and was involved in much salvage work. It started in 1941 when he led the team that retrieved most of the Bank of England's £2,500,000 of gold bullion (8 tons) lost when the 'Niagara' was wrecked off the New Zealand coast by German mines. He organised the clearing of Darwin Harbour after the Japanese bombing and retrieved many vessels damaged by enemy action in the Pacific. He retired from the RANVR in 1954 with the rank of Lieutenant Commander.

He was heavily involved in Australian shipping, being on the board of the Australian Coastal Shipping Commission (precursor of the Australian National Line), including being its Chairman in 1954. He received a number of awards culminating in being knighted in 1967.

Quite an entrepreneur, John was always extending his business interests, looking "to turn an honest penny" for himself and his fellows. After the war there were paint shortages and it was nothing to John to set up a paint plant. He mined gold from the old gold dumps in Blackwood, Victoria and Laverton, north of Kalgoorlie in Western Australia.

John sold the property to Des O'Keefe, from NE Victoria in 1962 and moved to a property near Romsey.

Captain Sir John Williams died in Melbourne in 1989.

<sup>24</sup> From The Australian Dictionary of Biography.

## So ends this Day, autobiography of Captain Sir John Williams, 1981

Section relating to Moondai.

Like so many seafarers of my day and upbringing in that profession the idea of buying a farm appealed, from the angle that if things went sour elsewhere the family could still live beholden to nobody.

In 1950, things had hardly 'turned sour', nevertheless we bought 'Moondai', 560 acres at Buxton, about sixty miles from Melbourne, a lovely stretch of country under the shade of Cathedral Mountain. The farm house was on the roadside and the valley, with the Steavenson River, a fast running stream like the Gwili in Wales, spread out below.

All I knew about farming, written small, wouldn't have filled a cigarette paper, and our manager, John Robin, son of my lifelong friend Bishop Robin knew about as much. But aid was at hand in the form of Wykeham and Mavis Perry of 'Dalewyke' along the Marysville Road who took pity on us, showed us the ropes and helped us at every turn. A splendid family; they and their handsome children. Nothing was too much trouble ever and we soon began to get the hang of it, or John Robin did anyway. Milking about 50 cows and raising beef cattle as well, we ran 'Moondai' on the smell of an oil rag and put such margins as we made back into the property.

When we took over the place about 100 acres was still not cleared, the timber on it was messmate and a good stand. Therefore with the aid of the Perry's - God bless them - we set up a small sawmill, felled the trees, cut them up into 6" x 1" for ships dunnage<sup>25</sup>, working most weekends and holidays and did well, though there were snags.

One paddock we cleared contained thirty acres of good soil so we worked it up and fenced it including rabbit wire all round as well as into the ground to keep the bunnies out. This was before myxomatosis and what curse bunnies were to farmers then.

The thirty acres was sown with oats. The rain fell at the right time and up came a splendid crop, about three or more inches high one Sunday when I was up there. The next week, after being warned by John Robin, I found bare earth, not a blade of oats left. Apparently a wombat had blundered through the wire netting to get in and went out in another place doing the same thing. The bunnies heard of it and that was that.

Then myxo came and killed then off in good style but it was a mixed blessing to us as we were treating some thousands of pairs a week at the cold storage company in Melbourne. So, no rabbits on the farm after myxo but none in the cold store either, what one might call a balanced result tipped against us, damn it!

To help with the milking and general work we employed an Italian, Mike Odorisio, just arrived in Australia. After he had been with us for a bit I lent him 500 pounds to bring his wife and kids out from Italy. This raised the question of a home for them. We sketched a plan on the breakfast table one Sunday morning: a long building with a verandah in the front shading the kitchen, dining room, three bedrooms and a shower room, and all hands went out to cut the timber for it.

Alas, the house didn't last long, Mrs Mike, unaccustomed to the old-fashioned wood stove, let a log roll out on the kitchen floor. Her youngest, Seraphina, ran across to Jim then in the dairy, seized his arms yelling the Italian word for 'fire' and the place was gone in a matter of minutes. Later we put up a prefabricated house and did the 'fitting' (doors, windows, etc.) ourselves to save money. My recollection is it cost only two hundred pounds but councils, do-gooders, econuts, etc., didn't interest themselves then in what you did on your own place provided you didn't hurt your neighbours. A bit different to the present when one cannot build a dunnikin without getting approval of a score of 'authorities'.

I forget how many years we were at Moondai. The place smiled on us and gave us relief from the city. As I have said, a lovely spot under the shadow of Cathedral Mountain. But that same mountain shut out the morning sun on the valley paddocks,

Furthermore, although the annual rainfall was high, dry weather reigned from December to March or April and scanning the weather forecast, too often I read: 'Rain on and south of the ranges'.

Therefore we sold Moondai and decided to come 'on or south of the ranges', to see for ourselves what it was like to have a place within an hour's run of our home. ....to buy 'Hollyburton Park', 350 acres served by Emu Creek and 28 miles only from the General Post Office .....on the Melbourne side of Romsey.

<sup>25</sup> Dunnage is loose materials used to protect equipment, parts, and accessories during shipping.

## Des O'Keefe & Arthur Williams

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In 1964 Des sold the west part of the property (275 acres) facing the Maroondah Highway to Max Leslie who learnt to farm with his parents, Eric and Elsie Leslie, when they came to Buxton in 1953 to 47 acres just south of this land.

The rest of Moondai was sold to Arthur and Kath Williams (no relation to Captain Sir John Williams). It may have been Arthur's parents who owned the property. They had dairy cows.

The Williams family sold Moondai to Eugene Goodvach in the early 1970s.

## Eugene Goodvach

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By the 1970's the owner of Moondai was Eugene Igor Goodvach (1918, Copenhagen, Denmark-2013, Melbourne). An estate agent, Eugene married Etta Ida Kelman (1924, Lebanon - 2014, Melbourne) in 1954 and they had three children - Vida Ruth, Louisa Claire and Mark Maurice. Their Melbourne address was 4 Linden Court, Armadale from the 1960's.

He was Jewish and announced the birth of his first daughter and advertised his real estate business in the Australian Jewish News. His escape from the 2009 fires was reported in this newspaper.

Eugene had worked Moondai for some time with share farmers and/or managers but it was too big a property for his needs so he sold the land on the west of the road to Graeme Dawson, his current manager and kept the northern block on the east of the road where he built himself a house. The southern block on the east was registered in the name of an associate although Eugene farmed both blocks.

In his retirement Eugene spent a lot of time in Buxton and was a good friend to his neighbours. Maria McIntyre took him on her journey to Alexandra at the height of the 2009 fires.

After the 2009 fires Eugene visited at weekends but never stayed for extended periods. He allowed Maria to stay in his house, which had survived the fires, until she replaced the house on Moondai. Eugene Goodvach died in 2013 and his land was sold.



**Eugene Goodvach at Moondai before the 2009 Fires, Maria McIntyre Collection**

# Graeme Dawson

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Graeme Dawson in 1987 split the land on the west into three blocks. See map on the next page. The blocks were not as deep as the original Scott lots, land facing the Maroondah Highway having been sold to Max Leslie in 1964.

Graeme lived briefly in the original house while he converted Eugene's new dairy which was now on Lot 3, the northern most block into a house. This northern most block was then sold to John Hovat. Graeme did not stay on in the district.

John Coyne and his wife Rilla Sinclair bought Lot 2, the next block in 1987. John still lives on this block, sadly Rilla has died.

The southernmost block, Lot 1, had the original house and was in the hands in 1987 of a 'man of the cloth' possibly Mr Wallace<sup>26</sup> who soon sold it to Maria and Ern McIntyre in 1988.



**The old house and outbuildings c1988, Maria McIntyre Collection**

The house on this property started as the original house of William Scott, described in the Alexandra & Yea Standard article of 1904 -

"The residence, which bears the name of 'Barnescourt' consists of six rooms, is constructed of weather-board, fitted with every convenience and very comfortable; there is also a cool store room partly underground, pantry, a large kitchen with brick fireplace and splendid oven, cupboards, recesses, etc., water for domestic purposes is laid on to the kitchen from never-failing springs conveyed from the high range on the opposite side of the road. "

There is also a reference in 1932 to "a very fine old farmhouse" in an article on the Moondai Golf Course.

In the auction notice of 1944 the house is described as a "comfortable homestead, 4 rooms and 3 bungalow rooms, and well-appointed, bathroom, sewerage, hot and cold water, telephone, extensive outbuildings."

The house had windowed double doors to each room from the outside so each person could go to their room from the veranda. Down the hill next to the Steavenson River was the old undershot waterwheel and old brick dairy.<sup>27</sup>

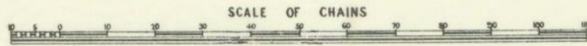
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<sup>26</sup> Personal History of Buxton, Ian Jones, unpublished, copy in MDHS Archives.

<sup>27</sup> Nancy Leslie email June 2021.

# BUXTON

## COUNTY OF ANGLESEY



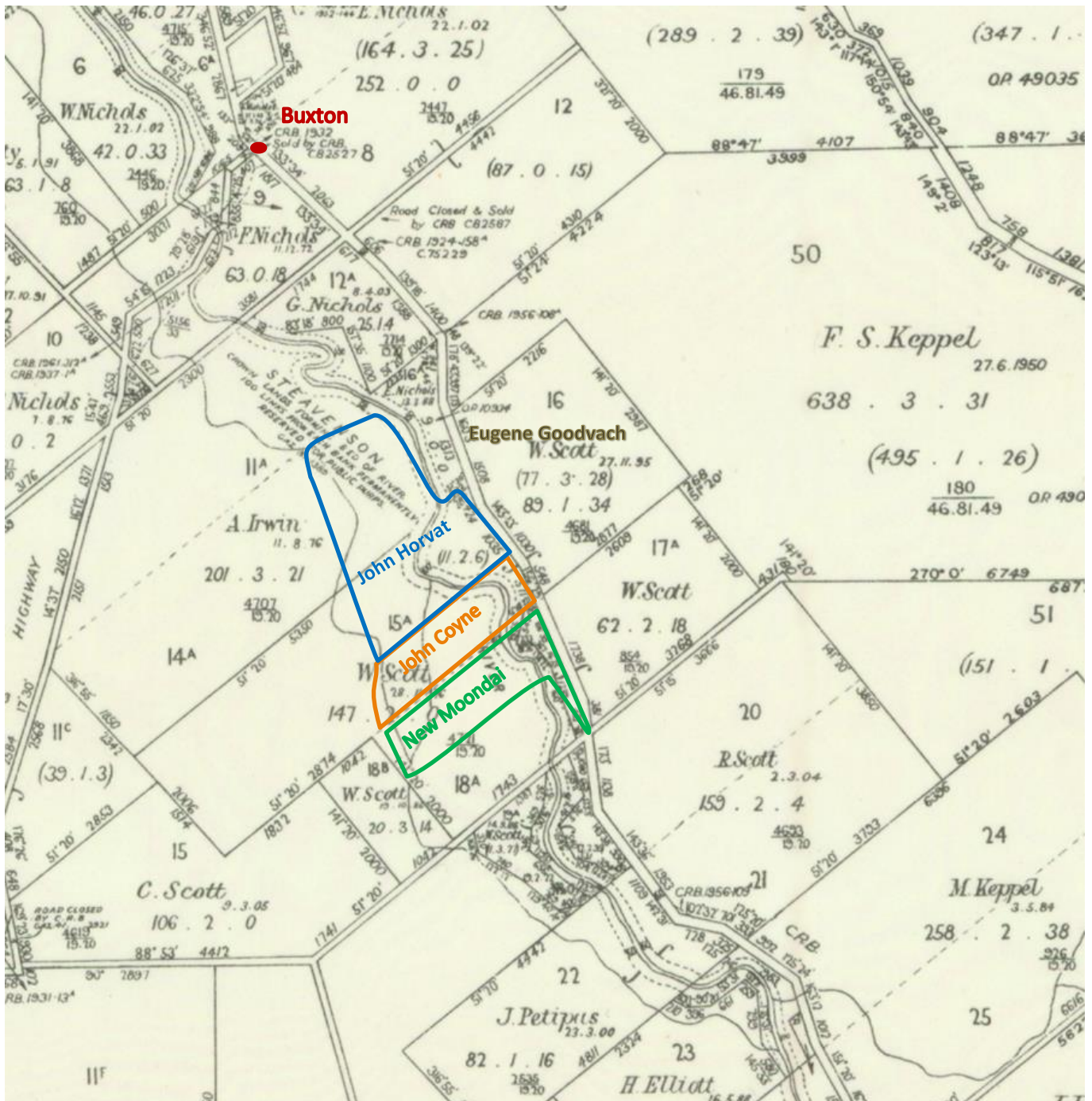
DISTANCES SHOWN ON THIS PLAN ARE DERIVED FROM ORIGINAL SURVEYS OF VARYING DATES AND, WHILST APPROXIMATELY CORRECT, DO NOT NECESSARILY CONFORM TO MODERN STANDARDS OF ACCURACY.

FOR SURVEY INFORMATION, APPLICATION SHOULD BE MADE TO THE CENTRAL PLAN OFFICE, OR TO THE OFFICE OF TITLES.

Title on the map released in 1961 from which the section below has been taken.

Note

1. Map derived from various survey maps.
2. Due to the enlargement of the section the scale is not applicable.
3. The position of Lots 1, 2, & 3 was provided by John Coyne.



# Maria & Ern McIntyre

182 Buxton-Marysville Road, Buxton

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Ernest<sup>28</sup> (Ern) and Maria McIntyre had spent their lives running grazing properties, some in the Marysville district until Ern came down with septicaemia and lost a leg. A large property was not feasible, however they still wanted to be on the land, so in 1988 they bought the property known today as Moondai and moved from 'Bendemeer', their Taggerty property. Maria could still have her horses and later alpacas.

The property contained the original Scott farmhouse and its outhouses. Maria set about slowly restoring and renovating it, adding a billiard room at the southern end.



**House from the front**, after renovation, *Maria McIntyre Collection*



**House from the rear**, before the new verandah was added, *Maria McIntyre Collection*.  
The McIntyres added the dam in the foreground.

As she had the original house, Maria acquired the original bronze 'Moondai' plaque which was on the converted dairy on the neighbouring property and called this property Moondai.

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<sup>28</sup> Ern was a ruckman for St Kilda then Collingwood in the 1940s and did a brief stint in the Navy during WWII. After the War he trained as a dentist.



## Moondai Farm B & B

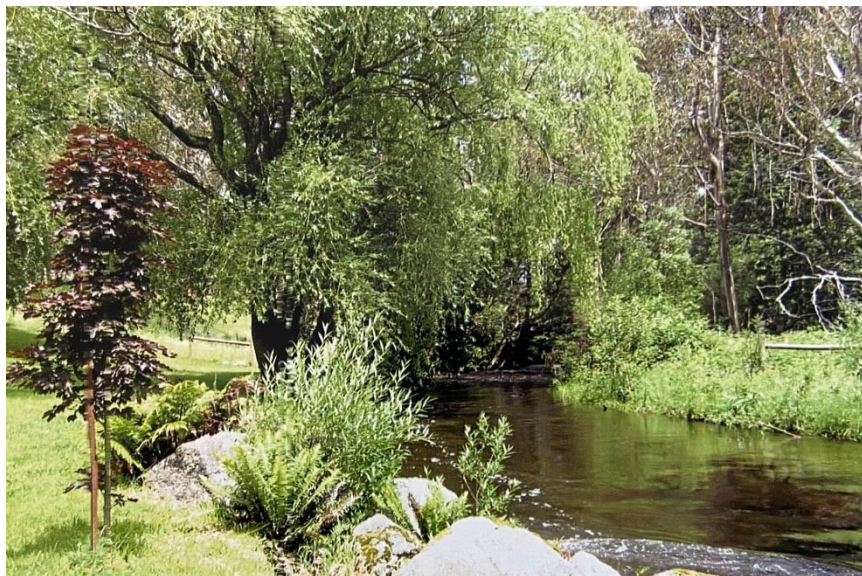
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**Rear view with the billiard room converted to B&B at the right end**

*Maria McIntyre Collection*

With the popularity of Bed & Breakfasts Maria converted their Billiard Room into self-contained accommodation in the 1990s. One of the biggest attractions on the property was the stretch of the Steavenson River and the Little Steavenson, the latter belonging to the property. It is considered one of the best trout fishing places in Australia and possibly the world. During Maria's time some of the top fly-fishers in the world came to try their luck. Orlando Burbank had been right to put rainbow trout in the river each year back in the 1910's.



**The bend in the Steavenson River, Maria McIntyre Collection**

Sadly Ern McIntyre died in 2003.

When the 2009 fires came, Maria managed to grab a few personal papers and to collect neighbours - Eugene Goodvach, Karen Scott and her daughter - just as the fires approached and drive them all to safety in Alexandra. The original house was destroyed.



[www.moondai.com.au](http://www.moondai.com.au)  
AAA ★★★★★

**Situated one and a half hours from Melbourne and 5 minutes from Marysville**

*Moondai Farm Bed and Breakfast*  
**"Stopping Station" for the early Cobb & Co. Coaches**

With majestic mountain views this historic property is located on the banks of the Steavenson River. A perfect spot for an afternoon of trout fishing or just a lazy day on your balcony listening to the babbling stream and native birdlife. Get up close and personal with the farm's resident alpacas, horses and pet cow 'Buttercup'.

Spacious self-contained accommodation with luxury facilities including wood fire, A/C, central heating, double spa, TV/VCR, BBQ, generous breakfast provisions and late checkout.

The district is famous for its four seasons attractions including skiing at Lake Mountain, bushwalking, golf, horse riding, rain forests, waterfalls and scenic drives.

**182 Marysville Buxton Road. Phone/Fax: 03 5774 7319**  
**Web site: [www.mmtourism.com.au/moondai](http://www.mmtourism.com.au/moondai)**

Note: the claim is made that the property was an early "Stopping Station" for Cobb & Co coaches. I have no proof of this. Coaches would have stopped specially at Moondai for Orlando Burbank, his family and friends until the mid-1920s and the age of automobiles. Stopping Stations usually had stables for Cobb & Co's horses to change over and nearby accommodation for overnight stops.

# Talk to the animals

Sydney Morning Herald, April 22, 2006 by Katherine Kizilos

## The Basics

This is a working farm with alpacas that will stare at you sweetly, horses, bouncing dogs, and two rivers meandering through the green pasture. The accommodation is a former billiard room transformed into a large, wood-lined bed-sitting room. The front veranda has a barbecue and a pleasant view of the willows and the river. Maria McIntyre, whose farm it is, will light the wood-fire heater for you if the weather is coolish and she knows your arrival time. The farm is a soothing, unpretentious place. Guests are welcome to walk around the paddocks, or you can lie under the willow in the hammock and listen to the river. At night, the wonders of a big country sky vies with the television and the holiday reading in the bookcase for entertainment. (It was a warm, cloudless, moonless night when we were there, so the Milky Way scored an easy victory.)

## The Location

The farm is on the Marysville Road between Buxton and Marysville, and was once a stopping station for Cobb & Co coaches; it is a 90-minute drive from Melbourne and a five-minute drive from Marysville. There are hills and forests all around but the farm is on the flat. You can hear the Steavenson River from your room at night, and then walk across the paddocks to the Little Steavenson River in the morning. It is a peaceful, comfortable retreat and we were glad that check-out was as late as noon.

## The Surrounding Hills

For this writer, the drive through Healesville and over the Black Spur forms a magical approach to Marysville, one that amply rewards the driver with its mountain views, its rivers and its rainforest. On the way up, we stopped for a satisfying lunch at Healesville Hotel's Harvest Produce Store. We drove home via Warburton after taking, in innocence, a road called the Acheron Way. For those who don't know it, this narrow, gravel, winding road bordered by giant mountain ash follows the Acheron River and then threads precipitously around Mount Donna Buang, offering spectacular views of valley and forest for the passenger and a challenging experience at the wheel for the driver.

## The Room

The accommodation is attached to the main house but has a separate entrance. We enjoyed long, warm autumn days but it is easy to imagine hunkering down at the farm in the cooler months. The decor is restrained and mercifully free of the floral tweeness that can beset country cottages. There are comfortable armchairs, a queen-sized bed, a kitchen equipped with an electric frying pan, small refrigerator and microwave, and a small dining table. Breakfast ingredients - bacon, farm eggs, cereal, toast, juice, real coffee and tea - are provided for guests to prepare themselves. If you tend to avoid B&Bs because you can't face the thought of chatting to strangers in the morning, this is a civilised arrangement.

## The Bathroom

Like the bed-sitting room, it is a generous size, well-appointed, with a double spa and clean, modern fittings. The tiles are cream, and the look is reproduction vintage-style.

## The Crowd

Only one set of guests can ever stay at one time at Moondai Farm. A glance through the visitors' book shows that the farm attracts a fair share of fishermen and couples in search of a haven where they can leave their worries behind. Unless guests lie in visitors' books, the farm is serving a useful purpose for stressed city folk. A walk around the property means encountering several gates, alpacas and a friendly dog or two; we found the animals to be non-judgemental types that didn't care how we dressed or what model of car we drove around in.

## Details

Moondai Farm, 182 Marysville Road, Marysville. Phone: 5774 7319 or moondai.com.au. The cost for our midweek stay was \$140 a night.

## The Verdict

This is a good choice for couples looking for a comfortable, quiet getaway in beautiful mountain scenery. Maria McIntyre is friendly and welcoming and will introduce you to the alpacas if you wish to meet them, but the set-up also allows for privacy if you are the type who prefers it. Self-catering is possible in the room, but decent meals can be found in nearby Marysville for those not inclined to cook

## After the 2009 fires

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With the house destroyed in the 2009 fires Maria considered her options. She liked the high ceilings and open fireplaces of the old traditional Australian farm houses and found her solution in an old house, or rather half-house, which came from John Scott<sup>29</sup> who had a property near Alexandra.

The half-house was moved to the site in 2011, and sat there for 8 months with a leaky roof before being renovated and extended. Maria stayed in Eugene Goodvach's house until her new house was habitable.

Maria sold Moondai in 2019 to Alan Grollo for over a \$ 1.25 million. In the advertising the property was described thus -

Charming classical home with frontage to 2 rivers set on 21 acres

- Superb classical residence, beautifully finished and well proportioned, offers 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, European kitchen, air con, extensive open plan living area with views to the river. Impeccably presented in neutral tones with large entertaining deck overlooking the river and countryside.
- Renowned trout filled Steavenson and Little Steavenson river frontages with 9ML water rights and 2 dams in addition to town water make this a unique lifestyle property suited to horses or livestock.
- This beautiful property of 21 acres offers unrivalled country surroundings, close to Marysville and within 90 mins Melbourne.

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<sup>29</sup> John Scott is not related to William Scott, the original owner of the land.

## Acknowledgements

The 2009 Fires destroyed the documents and artefacts of the Marysville & District Historical Society, however since then many, for whom Marysville was home or a holiday destination, have helped the Society restore its collection. It is my pleasure to help restore various aspects of the Marysville & Districts' history.

These Historical Notes started with a little information in the MDHS Collection and I have been encouraged by my fellow MDHS members to expand our information by further research and conversations with locals who have lived on or near Moondai.

I particularly wish to thank Maria McIntyre who spent a number of hours with me discussing Moondai and its occupants. Her generous sharing of some of the precious photos she took with her on Black Saturday 2009 have added greatly to this document. A special thank you to John Coyne who sorted out the 1987 subdivision map for me and to Max and Nancy Leslie who searched their memories of the people they knew on the neighbouring property.

Judith Vimpani

June 2021

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*Research Notes*, Rev George Edwards, 1850's-1960's, MDHS Collection.

*Alexandra and District*, Brian Lloyd, 2010.

*Scott Family Memories*, Robert Scott jnr, provided to Alexandra Historical Society in 1968.

*Personnel History of Buxton*, Ian Jones, 2010, unpublished notes in MDHS Collection.

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*Ancestry.com.au* for genealogical information and Australian Electoral Rolls.

## Private conversations

Maria McIntyre, past owner of Moondai.

Max and Nancy Leslie, farmer nearby from 1953-2016.

John Coyne, neighbour to Moondai since 1987.