

# Melton Family History Group Inc

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Registered 6<sup>th</sup> Dec 1994

## October 2022-November 2022

Meeting Times: 6:30pm on the second Thursday of each month except for January

Venue: Melton Library – McKenzie Street, Melton

Membership Fee: \$25 per year payable July each year prior to August A.G.M.

Correspondence: 17 Sutherland Ave, Melton Sth, Vic, 3338.

President: Janeen O’Connell

Vice President Judith Bilszta

Secretary: Ian Bowey

Treasurer: Deborah Slattery

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Web site [www.meltonfamilyhistory.org](http://www.meltonfamilyhistory.org)

Committee Members: Sue Morton and Pauline Stotten

### 2022 Monthly Meetings at Melton Library in McKenzie Street.

13 <sup>th</sup> October	T.B.A
10 <sup>th</sup> November	T.B.A
8 <sup>th</sup> December	T.B.A
9 <sup>th</sup> February	T.B.A
13 <sup>th</sup> April	T.B.A

All dates and times are subject to change

## **Update: Regular work:**

Our Annual General Meeting was held at the Melton Library on Thursday the 8<sup>th</sup> of September. Judith Bilszta regrettably could no longer devote the time required in continuing with the role as president. A round of thanks to Judith for her services as our president.

Janeen O'Connell was nominated for and accepted the role of president. Judith Bilszta was nominated for and accepted the role as Vice-President.

Due to various reasons, our membership numbers are low. New members are always welcome, so if any member can help by recommending our group then please do so. For a similar reason, we will now be holding our meetings every other month. This will start on Thursday the 9<sup>th</sup> of February, 2023. The meeting times remain the same at 6:30pm, on the second Thursday of the month at the Melton Library.

Since our last newsletter, the number of requests for assistance has reduced dramatically. Hopefully this will change in the future.

## **Our new President's introduction.**



Hi there, I am pleased to let members know that at the AGM on 8<sup>th</sup> September, I was elected president of the Melton Family History Group. I've been a member of the group for around 6 years; lurking in the background 😊

Family history has become a major part of my retired life: I completed a Diploma of Family History at the University of Tasmania in 2017, and have four family history books (historical fiction) published with a small independent publisher, and a self-published book of short stories relating to a branch of the family on my maternal grandmother's side.

My work in progress is a biography of my great, great, uncle Sir William George McBeath.

I'm one of those people you avoid at a gathering after you've asked them what they "do". Hope to see you at our Wednesday mornings at the Melton Library.

Cheers Janeen O'Connell

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*The following article on the Beaty family is by courtesy of Robyn Hunter.*

## **The Beaty family, Toolern Vale**

*The following article, found in the "Melton Express", Saturday 9 March 1929, page 3, describes the history of the Beaty family of Toolern Vale, from their arrival in the Port Phillip district (before Victoria was proclaimed a state), until the sale of their land on March 13, 1929. It also gives an interesting account of the early history of settlement, and information about key periods in Victoria's history. It is well worth reading.*

## **History of the Beaty Property**

On Friday next, 13<sup>th</sup> inst., the sale is advertised to take place of some 700 acres in the estate of the late William Beaty.

The property is situated on the Kororoit Creek, between Toolern Vale, and Sunbury, and has been in possession of the Beaty family for more than 60 years. But it is far longer ago than that since the old pioneer family first came and settled in this district. It was in 1848 (81 years ago) that the late John Beaty, with his wife and four sons, William, Andrew, George and John, all young men at the time, arrived in the colony of Victoria, from the North of Ireland—a big undertaking in those days, of slow sailing ships, to cross half the world to unknown parts to win fortune in a new land, with nothing but health and strength, an iron will and dauntless courage.

Will you, in this modern 20<sup>th</sup> century, draw for a moment on your imagination and picture, if you can, what Melbourne and the surrounding country was like in 1848. When the Beaty's first-landed on these shores, Port Phillip Bay, down which you now go on pleasure trips, was then studded with mudbanks, which made navigation very difficult, and many a vessel, after a long and adventurous voyage, found itself stranded on one of these banks, and was forced to wait for high tide, or some other favor [sic] or fortune, before it finally reached its anchorage in Hobson's Bay. The lower reaches of the Yarra and Saltwater rivers were one wide stretch of lagoons, swamps, and morasses, which made it impossible to pass, without making a wide detour, from one side of the bay to the other. Ti-tree scrub grew thickly, all along the Yarra banks, and the gum trees of the forest came down mingling with the scrub. Elizabeth street was a creek which, in rainy seasons, carried a yellow flood, and effectively cut in two the youthful town, then comprised of only a few straggling houses, hotels, and places of business. The native blacks wandered around feasting on 'possum and kangaroo, and held corroborees on the outskirts of the town.

To the north and west stretched the plains, dotted with long-extinct volcanic hills, clad with she-oak trees, and beyond the plain the mountain range, all in the state primeval, save for here and there, and far apart, a few squatters' homesteads and shepherds' huts. Such was the scene gazed upon by the Beaty family when they first knew the land which was to become their home for all time. The luck of the new land was with them, for, only two or three years after their arrival, gold was discovered in large quantities in various parts of the colony, and for several years fortunes were quickly made, and, in many cases, as quickly squandered!

In common with all those who came to the colony in the early days, the Beaty's experienced many hardships, and saw the land devastated by the great bush fires of Black Thursday. On that day, Andrew Beaty rode on horseback across the plains from Werribee to Keilor. Fires were burning on all sides, while smoke hung like a pall across the sky, obscuring almost everything. The heat was nearly unbearable. A load of wool, on the way from Mt. Aitken to Melbourne, was overtaken by the flames, near Keilor, and burned—dray and all!

History does not say that the Beaty's tried their luck in the quest for gold, but they did what was, perhaps, a wiser thing, and earned money in a way that, at the time, was almost as good as gold digging, was more valued, and more likely to stick to those who earned it. They started in the carrying business, between Melbourne and Bendigo, having acquired several bullock teams. Of these, the father and elder sons took charge, and commenced hauling goods to the diggings. The roads were unmade, the streams unbridged, and the journey slow in making, but the payment was exceptionally good, and, in this way, they laid the foundations of future prosperity. At the same time, the mother and younger sons lived at Digger's Rest, where they milked cows and sold dairy produce to carriers and travellers passing to and from the diggings.

John Beaty, the father, who undoubtedly had the money-saving "bump," was the kind of man who made every post a winning post, and all the money saved from the carrying trade was invested in land, then being sold by the Crown for the upset price of £1 per acre. His first purchase was about 700 acres, on the Kororoit creek, some four miles west of Digger's Rest, between the Mt. Aitken and Green Hills stations, and on this the

family went to reside, eventually leaving the-carrying trade when the building of the Bendigo road, and later, the railway, brought about newer and quicker methods of transportation.

On the land the Beauty's commenced general farming, growing grain, cattle and sheep breeding, dairying and pigs. The land is nearly all of a rich volcanic nature, along the creek valley, and, in the early days, the native grasses possessed splendid feeding and fattening qualities. Pigs were bred in large numbers, then turned adrift to forage for themselves, and so good were the pastures that, they grew and fattened without any hand-feeding at all. Every now and then a draft of 100 or so were driven, per hoof, to Melbourne and sold. As the cost of raising the pigs was practically nil, the profits were naturally large.

Throughout the fifties the population continued to increase by tens of thousands. New arrivals came from all parts of the world, lured here by the wonderful tales of the goldfields. This caused a great demand for all kinds of food-stuffs, and prices soared high. Primary production was to its infancy, and the supply could not meet the demand. Those who had produce of any kind to sell reaped a large reward. Thus the Beauty's prospered, and, as time went on, they were able to seize every opportunity which offered to purchase adjoining land, and ultimately built up an estate of over 3000 acres. When they thus became firmly established, the elder sons, William and Andrew, decided to marry, and they returned to Ireland to claim the sweethearts of their boyhood. On their return here they built temporary homes, on different parts of the property, which served until later, when they erected solid bluestone structures, in which their descendants still reside. One son, George, died young. John, the youngest, remained with the father, and, on his marriage, also built a bluestone house, near the site of the original family home.

Mrs. Beauty, the mother died about the middle of the eighties. She was a kind-hearted old lady, and known far and wide for her hospitality to all—travellers in particular. John Beauty, the father, lived on to the great age of 96 years, and died about the close of the century. He used to say he was a "lump of a cub," fit to fight at the Battle of Waterloo! The three sons, William, Andrew and John, all reached a ripe old age. William, the eldest, died only last year, at 96. His widow, Mrs. Beauty, is still strong and hearty, at 87 years. So all the hardships and vicissitudes of early pioneer life failed to affect their hardy constitutions, or shorten their days in the least. "Old John," as he was familiarly called by the neighbors [sic], was regarded as rather a hard case, and was long the subject of many amusing anecdotes. Apparently, in those days, domestic servants were as hard to get and keep as at the present time. John and his wife had many, but failed to induce them to stay long, so he rode on horseback to Melbourne and engaged a girl; telling her that his place was only a short distance out, he invited her to ride on the horse behind him. Being a "sport," as we say to-day, she did so, and John set out on a long steady canter across the plains to his home, 25 miles away! The girl stayed, for the simple reason that she was not able to walk far for many weeks, and, by that time, had become reconciled to her surroundings!

For many years the old man on his horse was a familiar figure on the landscape; all day he could be seen riding about amongst his cattle, inspecting each beast separately, and, in good seasons, enjoyed to watch them browsing on the long bush grasses. This he continued to do until a few years before his death. He acquired much property, but never troubled to build a comfortable home. He said he once bought a few palings, and they did for a long time. In this he was like "Big Clarke," who said "fools build houses; wise men live in them."

Father, mother and sons are all gone now. It's a far call back to 48, when the Beauty family, in their youth and prime, commenced their share in the building of this new nation in the south. Much has been done in the intervening space of time. Hundreds now own the land where the squatter reigned supreme of old, and the plow [sic] has turned the soil back and forth many times. New men and new methods hold sway. Melbourne has grown from the little bush village to a city of a million inhabitants. The roaring days are but a memory, and the mines silent and worthless. The bullock teams are gone, the drays have rotted and the very chains rusted

away. A new race travels in swift motor cars, on a new smooth road, where, long ago, the dray wheels lurched deep in forgotten ruts, or rolled slowly over the boulders. Science strives to make all things easier for men to accomplish but, who shall say if men now are superior to the men of old, or our times better than theirs?

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## The Throne of Sir John Harrington

by Ellen Castelow

Sir John Harrington (aka Harington) was a poet – an amateur and not very successful one! But his poetry was not why he would be remembered. Something much more ‘down to earth’ was to be his legacy.

*He invented the lavatory!*

He was a godson of Queen Elizabeth I, but he had been banished from court for telling risqué stories, and exiled to Kelston near Bath.

During his ‘exile’, 1584-91, he built himself a house, and devised and installed the first flushing lavatory, which he named Ajax.

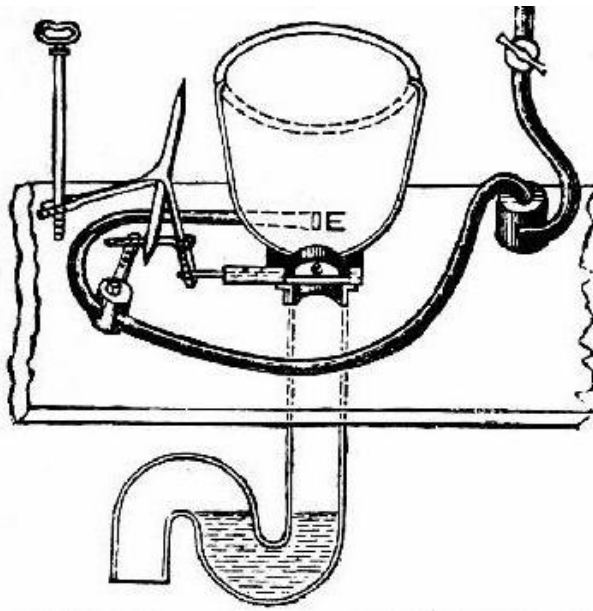
Eventually Queen Elizabeth forgave him, and visited his house at Kelston in 1592.

Harrington proudly showed-off his new invention, and the Queen herself tried it out! She was so impressed it seems, that she ordered one for herself.

His water-closet had a pan with an opening at the bottom, sealed with a leather -faced valve. A system of handles, levers and weights poured in water from a cistern, and opened the valve.

In spite of the Queen’s enthusiasm for this new invention, the public remained faithful to the chamber-pot.

These were usually emptied from an upstairs window into the street below, and in France, the cry ‘gardez-l’eau’ gave warning to the people below to take evasive action. This phrase ‘gardez-l’eau’ may have been the origin of the English nickname for the lavatory, the ‘loo’.



Cumming's water closet patented in 1775  
(source: <https://www.theplumber.com/closet.html>)

It was almost two hundred years later in 1775 that a flushing water-closet was first patented by an Alexander Cummings of London, a device similar to Harrington's Ajax.

In 1848 a Public Health Act ruled that every new house should have a 'w.c., privy, or ash-pit'. It had taken nearly 250 years for Sir John Harrington's water closet to become universal ...it cannot be said that the British embrace all new inventions with enthusiasm, despite Royal Approval!

The above article is taken from <https://www.historic-uk.com/CultureUK>

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## **Sat 4<sup>th</sup> Aug 1923 – Weekly Times (Melbourne, Vic:1869 – 1954)**

### **Page 46 – About Many Things.**

Marjory Walker, who lives at Melton Park, Melton writes – Dear Aunt Connie – This is the second time I have written to you, and I will write "About many Things". Melton is rather a small township, 23 miles from Melbourne. We live a little distance from the township, in a farm. The "Band of Hope" had pictures last fortnight, and few musical items were given. Two of our four nieces, Elaine and Levie Lewthbridge, from Fryerstown, have come to live in Melton. We have had a good deal of rain here lately, so the crops are growing, and there is plenty of green grass for stock.

On Empire Day, the school children had a penny concert at the Mechanics' Hall after which there were to be sports in the school ground, but rain set in, and the sports were postponed until Arbour Day. We went into the school, and lollies, biscuits and apples were handed round. Concerts are going to be held in aid of getting a piano for the school. The school is divided into two rooms; four grades in each. The boys have a ground for cricket and football and the girls have one for tennis and basketball. I am 13 years 11 months old. Best wishes.

[Thank you Marjory, for your good wishes. Write again – Aunt Connie.]

Many thanks to Judith Bilszta the above newspaper article.

**On a final note, Daylight Saving starts this weekend. Please remember to set your clocks one hour forward.**