



NEWSLETTER

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The Benalla Family History Research Group is a friendly, helpful and dedicated group of people who are striving to collate our local history and maintain it for future generations.

Visitors are always made very welcome and the Research team are available to assist with any enquiries on finding relatives and ancestors.

The group encourages and welcomes new members as the resources available are very valuable to a person seeking to learn more about their family tree.

Our normal open days are Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 10 am to 4 pm. Please note we are not open on Saturdays except by appointment.

We will open at other times if necessary, by appointment.
Please contact us via the contact form on our Website ...
or email our Secretary
Bill Willett - secretary@benallafamilyresearchgroup.org

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EDITOR'S NOTES

Hello Everyone,

Firstly, an apology for the delay in getting a Newsletter out to you all. But I hope that this very full and interesting Newsletter will make up for the wait.

We are back from the Christmas New Year break and our members are busy again in our rooms. The two Wendys, Pam and the Research Team at back into the swing of chasing and checking details of Family Trees.

Kelvin is at the computer busily entering the information for the Rates.

Bill is always busy at his desk, doing all the necessary things to keep the Group running smoothly.

We have a great group of people ready, willing and able to assist members with their Family History Research

- Family Tree Charts as part of the Special Project for the year.
- Lots of family trees researched by the team
- A large number of resources catalogued for the Library
- New members

Your newsletter is collated from information received from a variety of sources. It will only be good reading if I have lots of information to share with you. So, if you have a family history story you would like to share or some photos that would be of interest please let me know.

I would like to thank our members for their input this month. I do hope you enjoy reading everything that is included.

You can contact me via my personal email address or leave articles at the group's room for me to collect. Or you may write to me at 169 Webb Road, Goorambat 3725. If you prefer to call me my home number is 5763 3229.

Meredith

RESEARCH REPORT

Research has been steady but slow in recent months, some of the family names we have been involved with are: Cleary, McDonald and Harker, Martin Ford family of Fern Hills, and for a descendant of "Merriman" an aboriginal from the Wywurra tribe who was involved in the Faithful Massacre.

We have also had an email from a chap who is a Freelance Photographer who is starting up his own home-based business, restoring and repairing old and or damaged photographs. He has been working in this field for 20 years plus. His name is Greg Gardiner and his business name is "Restore My Image", he can be found on Facebook under that name. This may be of interest to some of our members.

Three family trees are to be done as soon as people have finished their research.

We have been donated a lot of family history, photos and information from a deceased estate on the family of Thomas Welsh (1823 – 1923) and his wife Catherine Phoenix (1838 – 1926). They were very early settlers in the Benalla and Warrenbayne district from 1864 onwards, many of their descendants are still in the district today. Amongst the collection are beautiful photos of the couple along with their children and grandchildren.

A short written history of the Thomas and Catherine Welsh family has been done by descendants of which we have a copy and it will all be placed in the Family History section of our library along with the rest of the articles.

Wendy Maxwell
Research Officer

RESEARCH & LIBRARY SUPPORT TEAM

Doreen Hillier, Wendy Maxwell, Chick Walker,
Wendy Webster, Joy Cole, Rosemary Archer,
Pam Herbert, Carole Gray

FAMILY HISTORY MONTH MAY 2018

The Benalla Library is promoting 'Family History' during the month of May. We have been asked for ideas and ways to display what is done and how at the Benalla Family Research Group.

Kay Anderson, one of the Library Officers, has been to visit us and has compiled a list of the resources we have with the view to referring their patrons on to us for further resources.

Once again, the BFRG will display the different Family History charts together with a variety of Family Histories that have been compiled over the years. A Question and Answer session and the demonstration of the use of 'Digger' will also take place. Library Officers will promote what's on offer regarding the Family History Month during April and May.

Research has picked up again over the last month after a very quiet time, hopefully it will keep coming in steadily.

NEW MEMBERS

We welcome

Jenny Bickerton from Swanpool

Kaye Patterson, Benalla

Helen Patterson, Benalla

(No relationship)

We wish them well with their research.

PUBLIC HOLIDAYS IN 2018

Queen's Birthday Monday June 11th

AFL Grand Final –

Friday September 28th

Melbourne Cup Day-

Tuesday November 6th

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

We will hold our Annual Meeting on May 30th at 3PM. This will give our members an opportunity to put forward ideas and requests. Followed by afternoon tea and a catch up.

All our members and interested visitors are warmly invited and encouraged to attend.

It is a great opportunity to meet up with each other and to hear how much the Group has accomplished over the past 12 months. Each year we look forward to growing our member numbers as well as adding to our extensive library and digital resources.

We would be very happy to receive your nomination form for a position on the committee.

All positions are vacant.

Nomination forms on Page 12

MEETING DATES FOR 2018

The group decided to change their meeting days from Tuesday to Wednesday to accommodate the availability of majority of members.

For your information the committee usually meets on 3rd Wednesday of each month at 11.00am.

If you wish to attend please advise the Secretary. We are pleased to advise that Cr Danny Claridge attends our meeting representing Benalla Rural City Council.

Wednesday May 16th

AGM Wednesday 3.00pm May 30th

Wednesday June 20th

Wednesday July 18th

Wednesday August 15th

Wednesday September 19th

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THE ROOMS

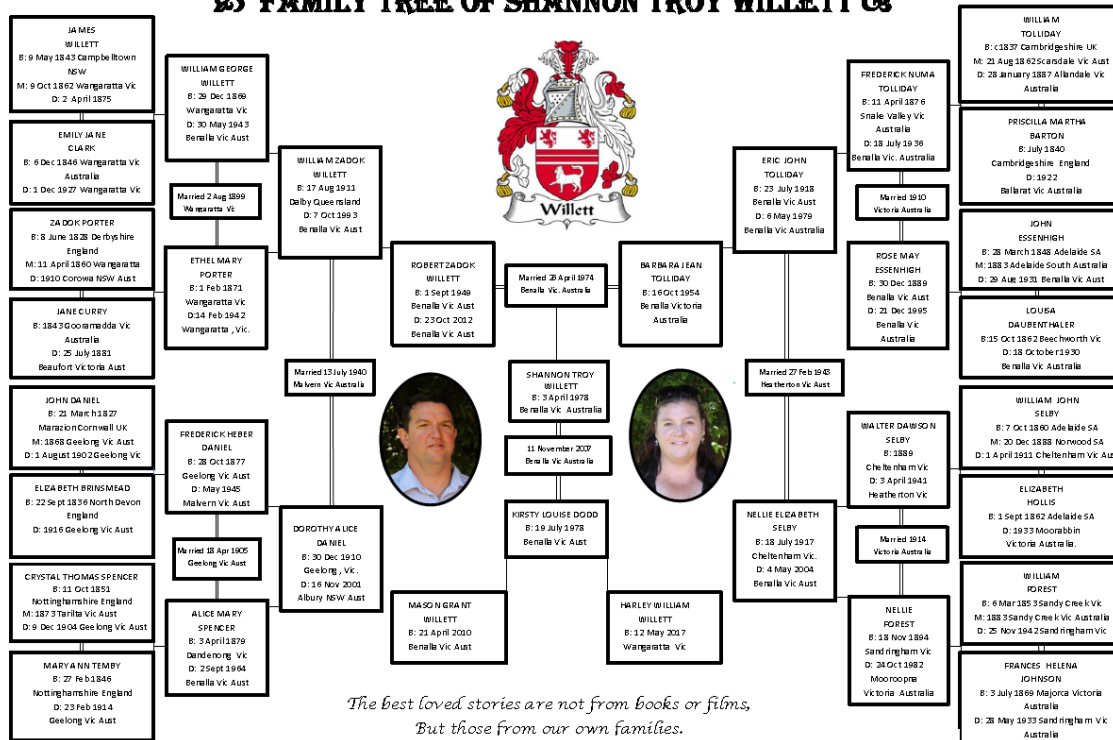
Some of our members have been diligently indexing the Rates Books.

Thank you to Kelvin Freemantle, Bill Willett, Ros Hunt and Jo Wise. The Rates have been completed up to 1914. Lyn has been indexing the Births, Deaths, Marriages and Baptism certificates, they are stored in coloured coded folders in the compactus and on a Master Index, this will make it much easier for people to access. Thankyou Lyn for your assistance.

The ladies have been working steadily in the Research Department.

Lots of things happening quietly in the background for this busy, friendly and helpful group of people.

FAMILY TREE OF SHANNON TROY WILLETT



Our researchers produce beautiful Family Tree Charts. The above chart is just one style that would be available. It shows a young man with his wife and details of all his family, both maternal and paternal on either side of the chart along with their Coat of Arms/Family Shield.



Joan and Les Hooper pictured with their four children celebrating Joan's 90th birthday

BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Mrs Joan Hooper formally of Devenish and now residing in Benalla, enjoyed two large gatherings with family and friends and one small Devenish Card Players Group, to celebrate her 90th birthday. Joan's husband Les of 69 years reminisced of their first meeting and their "lived happily ever after" life together. Joan and friend Beryl Ilsley recently received a "Recognition and Appreciation Award" for 30 years of continuous volunteering service from the Benalla Family Research Group.

Thomas and Catherine Welsh

Thomas Welsh was born in Earls Ferry, Kilconquhar, Fife, Scotland on the August 15th 1832. Thomas left Scotland at the age of 21 and sailed for Australia in search of gold. The ship he sailed on was the "James" from Glasgow, 150 tons, after six months he arrived in Port Phillip Bay in 1854 and landed in a small town which grew to become Melbourne.

Melbourne at that time was but 20 years old and was already growing rapidly with the big influx of gold from the goldfields of Ballarat and Bendigo. Thomas soon caught the gold fever but with little success and his finances being limited he changed his occupation from a miner to a carrier of merchandise to the goldfields. His team consisted of 8 bullocks and with a four-wheeled wagon he travelled to Bendigo and the "Ovens" as Beechworth was then known. The Goulburn River was accessible by punt but the other numerous creeks were not bridged and during floods he had to camp on the banks waiting for the lowering of water levels. Often the merchandise was unloaded, the empty wagon driven into the creek and acted as a bridge over which he would manhandle the goods across, draw out the wagon and reload the goods. Often when the water was too deep the load was wrapped in tarpaulins, tied and harnessed to a bullock to take across the stream then loaded onto the empty wagon.

During this time before Railways, with Bullock teams as the only means of transport freight, charges ranged from 50 pounds a ton to Euroa, 100 pounds to Bendigo and 140 pounds to Beechworth, and one can well realise the difficulties and hardships of the slow and laborious work involved by the carrier, with no formed roads and lack of fodder for the animals except for the native grasses and herbage along the track. With the construction of railways this transport system ceased to exist except for the lesser centres of industry when horse teams and better roads supplemented the old wagon and its team of bullocks.



During these carrying days Thomas Welsh met Miss Catherine Phoenix who came from Castlefin-County of Donegal Ireland. She had recently arrived on the sailing ship "Parsee" and was employed in service at Donnybrook, Victoria and they were married in 1857 at St. Johns Church in Melbourne, he being 24 years and she 19 years.

Thomas and Catherine lived at Mickleham and Thomas was then still a carrier. Thomas was a staunch Methodist and there is no doubt he and Catherine attended the [Mickleham Methodist Church](#) along Mt. Ridley Rd at Mickleham, the Church being built in

1855 while the couple were living at Mickleham. There is no documentary evidence of this but there is a chance Thomas may have played a part in establishing the church at Mickleham along with other residents, as later in life Thomas was the founder of the Methodist Church in 1897 at Boho and was a prominent member all his life. It is believed there were a number of Methodist Wesleyan families who knew each other before they came to Mickleham.

With their connections through the Church quite a few moved from the Pentridge (Coburg) area to Mickleham at around this same time but if this was actually the case with the Welsh family is not known at present but is not beyond the bounds of possibility.

The Welsh family in the early Mickleham days would have only consisted of Thomas and Catherine. Their first son Thomas was born in the May of 1858 at Mickleham died of dysentery aged only 20 months. Eventually they went on to have another 11 surviving children the first (Thomas) and second (William) being deceased.

1. Thomas WELSH born - 1858 Mickleham, VIC, AUS - died -1860 Mickleham.
2. William WELSH born - Benalla, VIC - died at Broken River, Benalla, VIC.
3. Mary Jane WELSH born - 26th Nov 1863 at Benalla, VIC and died - 17 Oct 1943
4. John WELSH born - 26 Nov 1863 Benalla, VIC and died - Feb 1944
5. Robert WELSH born - 9 Aug 1865 Benalla, VIC and died - Aug 1958
6. Christina Elizabeth WELSH born - 9 Oct 1867 Benalla, VIC died - 7 Oct 1952
7. Clara Catherine WELSH born - 1870 Boho, VIC, AUS Died - 1952
8. James Charles WELSH born - 26 Nov 1871 Boho, VIC and died - 28 Sep 1940
9. George Thomas WELSH born - 26 Jul 1873 Boho, VIC and died - Feb 1957
10. William Andrew WELSH born - 9 May 1876 Boho, VIC and died - 1 Jun 1972
11. Selina Constance WELSH born - 26 Oct 1877 Warrenbayne, VIC died - Oct 1949
12. Alexander WELSH born - 17 Mar 1881 Boho, VIC died - 27 Jul 1966 Wangaratta
13. Henry Fern WELSH born - 28 Dec 1882 Boho, VIC died - 17 Feb 1943 Euroa, VIC.



Left: Thomas and Catherine with their children

Thomas and Catherine moved on from Mickleham and went to the Bolinda Goldfields for a short while then to the Broken River as Benalla was then named. There were but three or four houses at the time, land was 20 shillings per acre and the old brick building opposite the RE College, the "Black Swan" Hotel. There were more aboriginals than whites and the favourite camping site was where the Fire Brigade Station was situated.

The Welsh's shifted to Boho some five miles from Violet Town in 1868 where he purchased 400 acres by Miners Right from the Crown and in its virgin state was thickly covered with gum and wattles of giant size and was thickly covered with undergrowth. In the days of clearing their land they lived amongst the trees and wattles and their "eight hour" day mostly became 18 hours.

Their tools of trade consisted of the cross cut saw, crowbar, axes, adzes and the single furrow plough. With these tools he built his slab hut with roof of bark and lived off the land with plentiful supplies of possum, kangaroo, wild game and damper. The land became more settled with the passing of time as the disillusioned alluvial miners drifted back into land settlement and with the construction of the Railway from Melbourne to Albury the growth of intermediate stopping places became established.

This Violet Town area grew and notwithstanding the difficulties of land settlement with its droughts, bushfires, floods and deep economic depressions, the valiant pioneers went forward with profess, families multiplied and social amenities with schools, Churches, society clubs grew with the increase.

Thomas Welsh was the founder of the Methodist Church in 1897 at Boho and was a prominent member all his life. He also took part in the establishment of the school and all public affairs.

In April 1907 they celebrated their Golden Wedding and it was a notable affair and occasion for the district. The Welsh family now consisted of the parents and 13 children of this union, the first and second children being deceased, and the eleven surviving children all settled on the land in this district, except one who became a civil Engineer at Kerang.

They were joined by 37 grandchildren and 100 guests. For those people who can remember the gatherings that took place in these earlier days can well imagine the scene of the old house at Boho which, had been a happy home for so many years. For days beforehand the "boys" had used the horses to drag up big logs and had them set in big heaps around the house, marquees were erected, tarpaulins placed around the tables, swings in the trees, large boilers of hot water, food and refreshments aplenty, music from gramophones, violins and piano.

The celebrations commenced midmorning and continued through the night when the log fires were lit illuminating the whole surrounds with flickering lights and shadows. The Chairman conducted the occasion and musical items, toasts and goodwill were expressed by all and the correspondent of the time commented on the fact that a more important or enthusiastic gathering in the social life of this community had never been held before, and it will live long in the memories of all those present.

This couple saw with pleasure and satisfaction their family marry and some move away from the district. They lived on to celebrate their diamond Wedding in 1917 at their home "Happy Valley" in Warrenbayne West when all the children again attended along with many of their old friends. By this time the Welsh family with descendants had now grow to 100, being 74 grandchildren and 10 great-grandchildren.

This wonderful couple lived on in peaceful contentment at this "Happy Valley" and on the 8th of February 1923 at the grand age of 90 years Thomas Welsh passed away peacefully. His wife Catherine survived him another three years when she passed away in their old home at the age of 88 years.

They are both interred along with many other pioneers in the Violet Town cemetery. The Welsh descendants have shown their appreciation of their progenitors and the ties that bind them together by holding a family commemoration service at the homeland of Violet Town on October 1st 1970, when some 300 members gathered and a further 900 were unable to come. Many were not aware of their relationship when meeting each other. This family group would probably be the largest of any in Australia and it is important to remember the forbearers from whom it originated:

Thomas and Catherine Welsh



Thank you to David Ravie, Martin Welsh and the many other contributing descendants of Thomas and Catherine Welsh for the information and pictures.



INDIAN HISTORY STORY

TRADERS OF GOODWILL

Sikh Pioneers of Australia

Most of us think that Sikh or South Asian migration to Australia is a recent phenomenon, spanning just the past few decades. But not many of us know that our Sikh forefathers first came to Australia more than 150 years ago.

Displaying their true enterprising spirit, they came to Australia, in search of a better lifestyle and wages, and quickly endeared themselves to the local population here. Country towns all over Australia are dotted with memories of these brave Punjabi migrants, who seem to have been welcomed by the locals despite the official "White Australia" policy.

Initially, the migrants from India were contracted labourers, who worked on sheep stations and farms around Australia. Some adventurers followed during the gold rush of the 1850's. Thereafter, many more came and worked as hawkers - going from house to house, town to town, traversing many kilometres, making a living by selling a variety of products.

A record of shipping arrivals of the day shows that *S.S. Clitus* and *S.S. Jullundur* arrived in Melbourne in 1898 carrying many Punjabis, some of whom like **Young Nuttoo Singh** (buried at Winton cemetery), and other Indians went on to become hawkers. There is enough anecdotal evidence from local Australians that the Sikh hawkers were much loved members of the community. The womenfolk loved them because they provided a welcome break from their mundane existence - the hawkers brought beautiful clothes, goods, all things exotic, and a fleeting glimpse of the big wide world beyond their farmlands. The Australian men liked the hawkers because they were tough - they knew how to survive in difficult bush land and, more importantly, they played cricket!

Hawking in those days was a lucrative business but required a lot of grit and hard work. The sheer distances between towns in Australia could prove prohibitive for some people, but Sikh hawkers seemed to thrive on it. According to the records, 213 country licenses were issued for hawkers in Hamilton alone, which is just one of the country towns of Victoria. It is mind-boggling to think of what the actual population of Sikh hawkers might have been Australia-wide, especially since there were many more Indians in New South Wales compared to Victoria.

Typically, a hawker would have to pay a bond of nearly \$100 upon entering the country. Then, before they began hawking, they had to go to court to obtain a permit, had to prove that they were of good character and needed to be debt-free. Then, they would either begin hawking on foot or on horse-drawn carts and pay an annual hawking fee. If a buyer couldn't get what they wanted, they could place an order and receive what they needed within a day or two. Some hawkers made so much money that they bought sheep stations; land and property, while others were content with sending the money back to Punjab.

But the hawkers led very lonely lives - tramping repetitively on country roads where the nearest town would be at least 100 kms away.

Hardly any of them had their family here and they rarely inter-married locals. Letters were their only source of contact with family back home and they could go for a long time without speaking or hearing their native language, since each hawker had a specifically marked territory to work in. They tended to form friendships with local country people and twice a year many hawkers converged at a pre-arranged spot where they spent a few weeks of holidays together, typically during Christmas and Easter.

Young Nuttoo was formerly of Arin Caste Village, Tondaura P.O. Kote Badal Khan Tapsil Nakodar District Jullundur, Punjab, India. He was a well-known Indian hawker who had been in the Benalla district for 30 years prior to his death in 1932. He had been ailing for a short period before he died and had returned from Melbourne the evening before his body was found in his caravan at Winton where he had made his base at Frank Hernan's place. He was buried at the Winton Cemetery where a special Mohammedan service was conducted by a priest brought up especially from Melbourne. Mentioned in his Will are his two sons, Shah Mohammed and Iman Deen of the same address as Nuttoo's in India. When Nuttoo died his personal estate included one old horse together with harness and one covered wagon, close on £500 of bank deposits and £1350 in real estate in the form of terrace houses in Carlton. Nuttoo's horse, cart, goods and wagon were auctioned off. The money raised was sent back to India to his two sons.

We owe much to the enterprise and free spirit of these Sikh forefathers, and hope that they are accorded their rightful place in history.

Sources: *India Today*, by Manpreet Kaur Singh, *The Argus*, Melbourne, 29th Dec 1932, P.R.O.V. The Will of 'Young Nuttoo', 1933

Spelling...from Bill

Isn't it amazing how spelling mistakes can make an article stand out and attract your attention. Personally, I hate reading articles with numerous spelling mistakes. In our days, everything is typed on a computer, and all mistakes are underlined with a red wavy line, and therefore I can't see any excuses for bad spelling. All that is needed is to press the spell check button and correct the mistakes. However, in 1914 there was no spellcheck for the printed word and the likes of the following article, sometimes very humorous, were the result. What a gem. This article was transcribed from the Benalla Standard, November 13th, 1914, exactly as printed in the paper.

Husband Wanted. – "widow woman" writes to us as follows:

"Dear Sir, _ I am riting you a few lines to tell you i am a widow woman with one child 14 years old i am a teacher of fancy work i travel all over the world staying a few weeks in each toun Befor the war and the bad season I made £1 2 6 per day i am in ----- til January and I wood like to meet a good man tradesman of som sort a man that do not trink or suare and a man over 50 as I am 50 myself i wood like to meet a good senseabel man with Regards marriage Both to travel to make money i am not pertickler what his traid may be watch maker tin smith pino tuner Barber any kind as long as he is Respecabel sober do you think you can do anything for me thru your paper Sir I am your obedient-----."

The papers reply: As we are anxious to do what we can to assist our correspondent to meet a "good senseabel man with Regards marriage," we will be only too willing to forward the address, photos, and correspondence of any of our bachelor friends who are anxious to join the ranks of the Benedicts to the lady in question.

It is with sadness that we advise our friends and members of the passing of Les Hooper. Much loved husband of Joan. In this newsletter we were celebrating Joan’s 90th birthday and then only a short time later Les passed away.

Leslie Ernest Hooper was born on July 21st 1921 and passed away March 20th 2018. The funeral service was conducted by Reverend Kel Hodge in the Devenish Uniting Church on March 26th. Les has been interred in the Devenish Cemetery.

From the Order of Service -

After being welcomed the opening Prayer was given.

- First Hymn- How Great Thou Art
- Reading of Psalm 23 by Sarah and Tom Cahill.
- The Eulogy was delivered by Sam Newman.
- Reflections- Val Newman, Kate Muscat and Anna Little.
- Reading- Shut the Gate-Mark Boehm
- Reading- I’m Free- Holly Trenerry, Thea Newman and Jessie Shannon.
- Homily- Rev Jan Taylor
- Prayer- The Lord’s Prayer
- Second Hymn- Abide With Me

Pall Bearers- Colin, Russell and Ashley Hooper, Alan and Tom Cahill and Sam Newman.



OUR WEBSITE

Our website is full of great information and is easy to navigate. When you have some time please check it out. Click on the links below to learn more about the Rate Index, Family Histories, or publications. Or when online click on the relevant tabs to see the information as shown on the next pages.

The screenshot shows the website's navigation menu with tabs for Home, Library Records, Publications, Feature Stories, Research Tips, and Make Contact. Below the menu is the 'Family Histories' section, which includes a list of surnames that have been researched. The surnames are arranged in a grid format, with a decorative graphic of a family silhouette in the background.

<http://www.benallafamilyresearchgroup.org/>
<http://www.benallafamilyresearchgroup.org/publications/librarybooks>

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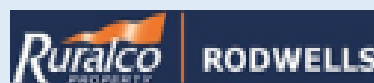
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The Benalla Family History Research Group is a friendly, helpful and dedicated group of people who are striving to collate our local history and maintain it for future generations.

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Bill Willett - secretary@benallafamilyresearchgroup.org

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The accuracy of offers, services or goods appearing here cannot be vouched for by the Group. The Editor reserves the right to condense and edit articles to meet the approved size limit of our newsletter.

