

MORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

published monthly, except December

Meetings: 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7.30 pm
in St. Andrews Presbyterian Church Hall

Vol. 9 No. 8

AUGUST 1993

WELCOME TO THE AUGUST NEWSLETTER

This month we are happy to report that two of our members are on the mend after surgery. Jean Cook is recovering after an eye operation and Lorna Williams (never one to do things by halves) after a seven-way heart bypass! We wish them both a speedy return to full health.

There has been a new development in the matter of the relocation of Mr. Maddern's Memorial Seat. Morwell City Council is to set up a small plantation, to be named the Ivan Maddern Memorial Plantation, between two blocks of the new senior citizens' accommodation units currently being built in Maryvale Crescent. The plantation, which is opposite Elgin St., will incorporate a large gum tree already growing there and will provide pedestrian access to Langford St. The seat is to be installed, together with a large brass plaque, under the gum tree.

At our July meeting, Mr. Will McRoberts gave a very interesting and entertaining account of Morwell as he remembers it when he was a boy. He will be continuing this account at our August meeting. For those who missed the first part of the story, a cassette recording of his talk is available for loan so you can catch up before the next meeting which will be on

TUESDAY AUGUST 17 at 7.30 pm.

Morwell Advertiser and Gazette
September 3, 1942

The famous town of Yallourn is built on this leasehold, and perhaps it would not be out of place here to mention how this huge deposit of Brown Coal was found. The late Henry Godridge, while fishing in the Latrobe River, discovered an outcrop of this substance, which he thought was peat, and used it to make his night fire for his fishing operations. He mentioned his discovery to others and eventually a company was formed and a small Briquette factory was built on the spot where the old open cut is, but this did not prove a success and after it remained idle for a few years, a bush fire burned the building down. It then remained in abeyance for a number of years, until a small band of Morwell men (the writer included), formed themselves into what they called "The Morwell Brown Coal Development Association", with members tickets issued at 2/6 per year, one of which I have in my possession. The main personnel of this group were H Conlon, President; J.B. Hoyle, Secretary; G. Watson, P.P. Kelly, D. McKay, and several others, including myself.

After two years functioning this association managed to induce the Government through their member the late Tom Livingston, and the member for Walhalla, the late Mr Sam Barnes, who was minister for Mines at the time, to make an investigation and consequently an inspection was made by a number of members of Parliament. Local ladies supplied afternoon tea and general speeches were made. Thus was started the immense works which supplies nearly all the state with electricity and briquettes.

Before I start on the selection of Merton Rush, I will mention a little episode which occurred at the homestead, as it may add a little humour to this epistle, even if those concerned could not see anything funny about it at the time. The writer's mother arranged for a doctor to come from Sale for the purpose of vaccinating the family. This happened before I was born. When he arrived he was told there were quite a number of children in the district for him to do. But as he wanted to get back quickly, he decided to show mother how to do the job, and after doing so he said "I'll leave you the needle and the necessary vaccine, and you can do all the children of the district to save me coming back." Later all the youngsters for miles around, including the MacMillans, O'Haras and others were mustered at The Homestead and the operation commenced and the fun started. The bush christening had nothing on it. Believe me, it was well and truly done. If Mr. Charlie O'Hara and his sister, Mrs. Wm Bond, would show the blotch on their arms, it would be sufficient evidence that the operation was a complete success.

Now for the selectors, and I will start on the northern boundary of the run where the Morwell River joins the Latrobe. G Pettit, Casey and Godridge whom I have already spoken of and then Jack Alliss.

HARKING BACK (cont)

Travelling south over the railway we find Patrick McGrath, a British army pensioner who could display two medals, one for the Crimea and one the Indian Mutiny. Pat came regularly to get my father to witness his pension papers and I remember on one occasion Father asking him what made him join the army. Pat replied "Sure, it was either that or live on spuds and butter milk all me life." Further up the river was Jeremiah Ryan and his brother Jack. They came from Ireland as young men and after following the diggings they tried their lick in New Zealand. Not being satisfied with the dominion they returned still having the wanderlust they made for the diggings in Queensland. On the way up they were shipwrecked. Not striking any luck in that colony, they decided to return and settled on the Morwell River. Jerry stuck to his selection and it is still retained by the family but Jack sold out and moved off again. Not far away, Richard Maher and Jim Jensen secured their holdings. These with several other men who I will mention later came from Mount Edgerton near Ballarat where they had worked on the mines. On the Wilderness Creek the late Geo. Auchterlonie chose a splendid piece of country, it being still worked by his son George, and everyone passing makes the remark "what a beautiful place", which it undoubtedly is, and shows great credit to its present management. Next further up the creek was Dick Fitzgerald, who also came from Mount Edgerton. This property is now owned by Walsh Brs.

Samuel Vary being the holder of the station, entitled him to first pick of 320 acres of his run, as well as his P.R. He chose that portion lying between Ryan's and Wilderness Creek. He called this property Driffield, after the place of that name in Yorkshire, England, where he was born. Soon the surrounding district got to be known by that name for which I think he was pleased.

And now last, but not least, Jimmy Woods, who had a small block adjoining Auchterlonie's. I wonder if anyone can tell me where the expression a "Jimmy Woodser" originated. One hears this term all over the State and, as this man drank by himself, the local boys, my elder brothers included, always used this expression if they saw any of their mates "drinking with the flies" so to speak. While I have no definite proof it is my opinion it originated from this source, and this ends Merton Rush, where I was born. The place where I grumbled most and was treated best.

(To Be Continued)

NOSTALGIA

I remember the cheese of my childhood
 And the bread that we cut with a knife,
 When children helped with the housework
 And the man went to work, not the wife.
 The cheese never needed an ice chest
 And the bread was so crusty and hot.
 The children were seldom unhappy
 And the wife was content with her lot.
 Remember the milk from the billy
 With yummy rich cream on the top?
 Our dinner came hot from the oven
 And not from the fridge in a shop.
 The kids were a lot more contented,
 They didn't need money for kicks,
 Just a game with their mates in the paddock
 And sometimes the Saturday flicks.
 I remember the shop on the corner
 Where a penn'orth of lollies was sold
 Do you think I'm a bit too nostalgic?
 Or is it I'm just getting old?
 I remember when the 'loo' was the 'dunny'
 And the pan man came in the night.
 It wasn't the least bit funny
 Going out the back with no light.
 On daytime trips to the outhouse
 Many items of interest we saw
 On the squares of cut-up newspaper
 That hung from a string on the door.
 The clothes were boiled in a copper
 With plenty of rich creamy suds
 And the ironing seemed never ending
 As Mum pressed everyone's duds.
 I remember the slap on the backside
 And the taste of soap if I swore.
 Anorexia and diets weren't heard of
 And we hadn't much choice what we wore.
 Do you think that all that bruised our ego?
 Was our initiative quite destroyed?
 We ate what was put on the table
 And I think life was better enjoyed.

Author Unknown

Acknowledgements to St Mary's
 Church, Morwell - Pew Sheet.

DAWN*to dusk*

Graeme
 Johnstone

**IN SOUTH
 MELBOURNE**

WHAT were you taught of Melbourne's origins?

From the British-based history DTD remembers being fed, John Batman materialised out of thin air!

He signed a "contract" with the Kooris, declared "this is the place for a pie stall", and that was it.

Where he came from was never really mentioned, and why was never fully explored.

Where he parked the Batmobile remained shrouded in mystery ...

□ □ □

WE accept now we are a colony of Tasmania!

And hopefully are coming to grips with what the "contract" actually meant ...

Why did he come? Prof. Alan Shaw told DTD that for 10 years Batman and others such as the Portland-bound Hentys had sought farm land because Tassie Crown land was used up.

While he made an exploratory voyage, did you know Batman was not among the first white settlers to establish Melbourne?

On August 30, 1835, a crew from the *Enterprise* came onshore after having hove-to on the Yarra, "diagonally across it".

Even then, we had an odd view on parking.

□ □ □

A REPLICA *Enterprise* is being built next to the *Polly Woodside* to ultimately re-enact the 1835 events.

Tied in is a move to proclaim August 30 Melbourne's Foundation Day. This year a ceremony will be held at the *Enterprise*.

Prof. Shaw and Foundation Day chairman Sir Rupert Hamer hope the day will become a significant Melbourne event.

Eventually Gelli-brand got killed by the Kooris, Swanston the banker suicided after going broke and Batman died penniless.

Couldn't afford the parking costs on the Batmobile ...

□ □ □

Whatever happened to jacks, tip-cat and saddle-me-nags?

When children went out to play

WHEN did you last see assorted children playing on footpaths and back streets those magical games of skipping, hop-scotch, jacks, marbles, hoppo-bumpo, tip-cat, and spinning tops?

Sadly, our modern lifestyle has stopped boys and girls from playing those frisky games that children in a near-forgotten era took for granted.

A recent newspaper article bemoaned the lack of sports in Melbourne schools these days.

There was a time when children spent most of their spare moments playing some sort of schoolyard sport — in the lunch hour, before classes and even after school.

At the schools in Collingwood and Richmond in the '20s and '30s, no pupil had to be forced to participate in school sports of any kind.

After we had played the sports and games laid down by our teachers — football, cricket, swimming, tunnel-ball, rounders, basketball and swimming — we only had to wait for the school bell to end our day so we could start games of our own.

The girls needed nothing but a fair-sized rope. A girl at each end would turn the rope and keep time, while one, two or more would skip inside the turning rope.

Another whiz-bang game for little girls was hop-scotch, a game played on a footpath where they hopped in and out of numbered squares.

Like many more children's games of that long-gone era, they were simple, they were exercise and they were fun.

But of all the myriad of games that little girls evolved, none required more dexterity than jacks.

Jacks was a complicated game (only understood by girls) and was played with the knuckle bones from legs of mutton.

After mother had cooked the leg of mutton and the family had polished it off, the knuckles were removed, washed, dried in the sun, painted, then whizzed off to school.

Boys, too, devised a variety of games — stoopers kick, saddle-me-nags, hoppo-bumpo, toodlembuck, marbles and kick the tin.

And there was the game that was played outside schools every lunch hour called tip-cat.



Child's play: Computers have taken the place of outdoor games such as marbles.

In those days, we had no cars to contend with. At worst, you could encounter a council dray, a bottle-O pushing his hand-cart or perhaps a butcher boy delivering meat to a customer. So we could play tip-cat in the side streets without a worry.

All that was needed to play was a 75cm-long piece of broomstick for a bat, and a smaller piece which was sharpened slightly at both ends and called a puck.

A boy would throw the puck a fair distance and another boy would be set a number of paces to retrieve it. If he failed he had to pay three cherry bobs (or cherry

stones) as a forfeit.

Then there was footy. As our parents could not afford a real football, we had to make do with a paper footy. We would roll up a newspaper and tie it with string.

IT MAY have been a makeshift football, but we could still pretend we were Gordon Coventry, "Chicken" Smallhorn, Jack Baggott and even the great Jack Titus.

But do not think boys and girls only put their minds to "fun" sports.

One of the most important dates in the school calendar was the yearly sports day held at the Motor Drome,

which was on the site of Olympic Park. For weeks the children practised sprinting, relay races and swimming.

These inter-school competitions were taken very seriously.

In today's computerised world — with its kung-fu devotees, kick-boxers and uniforms of jeans with sneakers — one does not see many games like hop-scotch or jacks or even tip-cat.

I'll be more sure of seeing Richmond win a flag in the next few years than seeing a group of girls skipping along a side street.

BERTIE BERTRAM grew up in the inner suburbs of Melbourne during the 1920s and '30s.



FROM:
R.H.S.V.
HISTORY NEWS

No. 140 AUGUST 1993

AUGUST EVENTS

IMAGES OF SOLITUDE



PHOTOGRAPHS BY NICHOLAS JOHN CAIRE (1837-1918)

PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION

Nicholas Caire is regarded as one of Melbourne's finest landscape photographers. Caire made travelling throughout Victoria his life's work in order to capture the beauty of the mountains, forests and rivers. More importantly, his images carry a deep empathy for the early settlers of the land.

The Royal Historical Society of Victoria holds a unique collection of his work, comprising over 300 photographs from which this exhibition is drawn. In addition, we are fortunate to have display material made available by other contributors, most notably that of Miss Edna Bennett, grand-daughter of Nicholas Caire.

This Exhibition will be held in the Ramsay Gallery, Royal Mint, until 20 August.

GIBSON INDEX

The Victoria Police Historical Society has released an index of interest to family and local historians.

The Gibson Index, prepared by members of the Society, is an alphabetical listing of offenders and victims, together with the date of the offence and the particular volume in which it is recorded. The index is compiled from 140 Watch House Charge Books held by the Police History Unit and covers the period to the year 1900.

Full details for each entry are available from the Charge Books, for a payment of a fee.

Comprising 3 fiche, the Gibson Index costs \$25.00 (including p & p) and is available from:

Victoria Police History Society,
GPO Box 2763Y,
MELBOURNE, 3001.

THE RHSV PHOTOGRAPHIC COLLECTION AND YOU

Authors planning works on Victorian history should be aware of our extensive photographic collection which may well be useful when making selections of illustrations. Lorenzo Iozzi, our Curator, will be happy to assist you in making a search of the RHSV collection.

THE FOUNDATION OF MELBOURNE

On Sunday 29 August, at the 11.00 am service at St Francis Church, Lonsdale Street, there will be a celebration of the arrival of the ship *Enterprise* in the Yarra at the foot of present-day Market Street with the first party to settle on the site of Melbourne.

As a matter of interest one of the backers of the *Enterprise* was Samuel Jackson, the future architect of St Francis church. He was not aboard the vessel then, but was 'represented' by his brother and partner, William.

On Monday 30 August at 3.00 pm the Lord Mayor will re-dedicated the obelisk commemorating John Batman. It is now in shed J in the Victoria Market, Elizabeth Street, in the position of Batman's original grave in Melbourne's first cemetery which used to be on that site.

Unfortunately the inscription stating that he 'founded a settlement on the site of Melbourne then unoccupied' is not quite accurate. Though Batman certainly helped to stimulate settlement around Port Phillip, he did not form the settlement on the site of Melbourne. He bought a huge area of land to its west, north and north-east. Nor was the land unoccupied - as Batman well knew, since he claimed to have bought his land from the Dutigalla Aboriginal tribe who he said were the occupiers and owner.

A.G.L. Shaw

SLV - INTERRUPTIONS TO SPECIAL COLLECTION SERVICES

Because of the moving of several of the State Library's Special Collections to improved accommodation in the newly constructed North East Wing only limited services will be available from several of the Special Collections for some months. Information about progress on the restoration of services can be obtained by phoning (03) 669 9077, and users are advised to check before making a visit to use special collection material or services.