

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. 7 No. 1 & 2

1991

WELCOME TO THE FEBRUARY NEWSLETTER

Due to a hitch in photo-copying arrangements, we were unable to produce a newsletter in January, so, to preserve the numbering system, this edition is numbered 1 and 2. We hope this doesn't totally confuse you!

This newsletter contains another family history - that of the Bolding family of Hazelwood North. It was written some years ago (about 1975) by a niece of George Bolding's and is reprinted here by kind permission of our member, Mrs. Thelma Jones.

There is also an appeal for assistance with Morwell's effort with Red Cross Calling 1991. Collectors are urgently needed.

Our first meeting for 1991 will be held on

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19th

in

ST. ANDREWS CHURCH HALL

at 7.30 pm

The seats are comfortable, the company's congenial - hope to see you there!

RED CROSS CALLING!

You'll all be aware that it is once again approaching the time for the annual Red Cross Appeal. With that in mind we have reprinted part of an article containing some history of the Morwell Branch of the Red Cross dating back to World War 1.

We are launching the Appeal this year by holding a PLEASANT SUNDAY AFTERNOON on SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 24th at 1.30 pm at ST.ANDREWS CHURCH HALL, MORWELL. It is following a very similar format to the launch of our book, Glimpses of our Past, in 1989.

Val Wilson and the Morwell East Senior Citizens' Choir are among the artists on the program. Admission will be by a gold coin (ie \$1 or \$2) or as many of these as you might like to give! Afternoon tea will be served.

We hope that you will all be able to attend and that you will bring all your friends.

Also, we are still DESPERATELY IN NEED OF CALLERS, so if you know of anyone who can help in this way, please ring me on (051) 342638.

Jessie Cafiso.

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HISTORY OF MORWELL RED CROSS

J.Cafiso

The year 1989 was the 75th Anniversary of the Australian Red Cross Society. In connection with this, units were asked to write a brief history of their branches, to be read out at a regional luncheon to celebrate this Red Cross landmark. A copy of our contribution is in our Historical Society's newsletter of February 1990. With ^{it} is a copy of a newspaper article found in the Morwell Library. It is from the Morwell and Yinnar gazette of 11/6/1915 and I found it particularly interesting. However, rather than reprint all of it, I have abridged it somewhat and typed it to make it somewhat easier to read.

FROM A WELL-USED COPY OF THE MORWELL AND YINNAR GAZETTE, Friday June 11 1915 -

RED CROSS SOCIETY MORWELL BRANCH

The Secretary of the Morwell Branch, Mrs. A.E. Adeney, reports as follows:

At the beginning of May we appealed for more workers. The appeal was so responded to that our output for the month was nearly double. Against 24 shirts and 23 pairs of socks for April, in May we despatched 43 shirts and 43 pairs of socks and a much bigger supply of other articles. Now the position is that the demand for goods has overtaken the supply and we are in urgent need of funds for the purchase of material. The central depot is constantly sending out appeals for more articles and it is only by branches increasing their contributions that the demand can be met. NO CONTRIBUTION IS TOO SMALL TO BE ACCEPTABLE. There is also an urgent demand for old linen and we ask every housewife to look over her store of household linen and bring

RED CROSS (cont).

or send whatever she can to the Mechanics Hall on Tuesday next. Sheets, underwear, old tablecloths and garments in white calico (washed and boiled) can be made use of for our wounded soldiers.

Articles forwarded during May: 43 shirts, 43 pairs of socks, 15 towels, 28 bandages, 23 washers, - parcels of old linen, 3 parcels books, 4 pairs slippers, 1 scarf.

Subscriptions and donations from: (surnames only) -

Barry, Billingsley, Brown, Bryden. Conlan, Cutler, Daddo, Evans, Feely, Frances, Frost-Samuels, Graham, Green, Gay, Hone, Holmes, Hare, Harvey, Kerr, Kleene, Knuckey, Keegan, Lamont, Langdon, Lowe, McIntosh, McDonald, McKay, Northway, Oliver, o'Rourke, O'Gorman, Pryke, Powell, Robson, Rintoull, stamp, Sinclair, Shaw, Tulloch, Turner, Thompson, Vincent, Vary, Ward, Wolfe, Witt, Williams.

St.Hilary's also gave a subscription. As well as money, linen, socks etc, there were many donations of tinned milk, cocoa, corn flour, jelly crystals and soap.

THE RULES OF WAR

'Herald-Sun'

31 - 1 - 1991

By JOHN MURCHE
in London

It is an awesome sight.

Hundreds of thousands of men armed with the latest military technology are ranged across a front which stretches for miles.

They are dedicated and highly trained, counting among the number some of the best soldiers world.

At 11 hours time, 40,000 of them will be dead.

For the wounded who outnumber the fatalities many times over, death will often be preferable to life.

For wounded prisoners conditions are unspeakable ... their suffering is almost unbearable.

THE battle just described has nothing to do with the Gulf. But its ramifications are having an important part to play in this conflict.

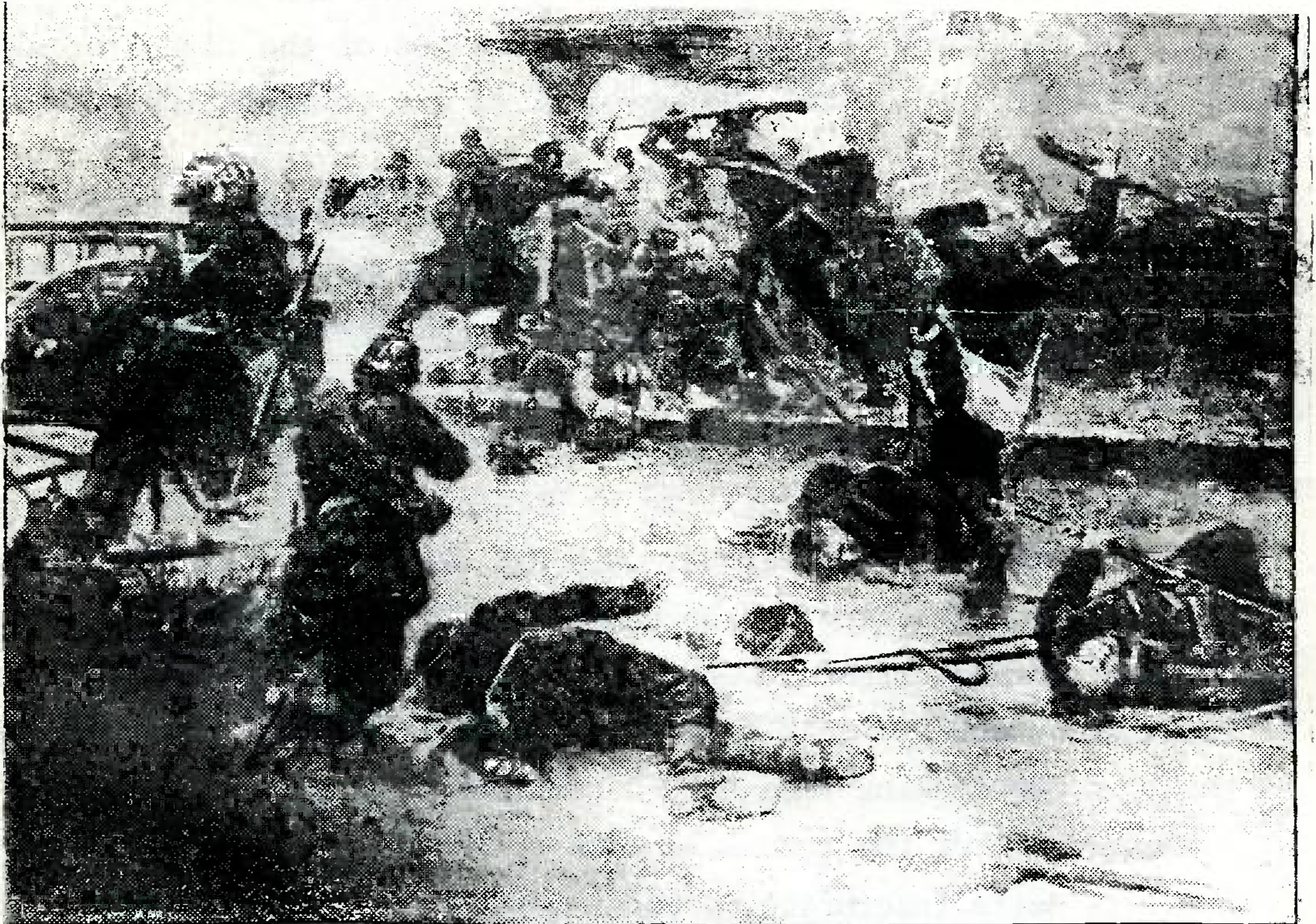
Swiss philanthropist Henri Dunant who witnessed the Battle of Solferino in Italy on June 4, 1859 — when the forces of Napoleon III met the Austrians — was horrified at the appalling suffering of the combatants.

He vowed to do what he could to ease the plight of the wounded and prisoners of war.

His campaign led to the founding by Swiss citizens of a commission to study the problem.

What emerged is the International Committee of the Red Cross, which today polices the way prisoners and battle-wounded are treated. The result of the first conference in 1863 was the first Geneva Convention laying down rules for the treatment of the wounded and for protection of medical personnel on the battlefield.

In its 150 years the Conven-



● Battle ... scenes the like of which shocked Henri Dunant.

tion has often been ineffective, as Saddam Hussein, Adolf Hitler Josef Stalin and others have demonstrated. Those who breach the rules stand condemned as enemies of humanity.

The history of the Conventions is tangled.

In 1909, they were revised to take account of shipwrecked sailors; in 1925 to outlaw poison gas; in 1929 to increase protection of PoWs. World War 2 brought about a brutal return to reality when an estimated six to 10 million PoWs perished.

In the post-war era a new ICRC conference, including experts from 16 countries, produced four new conventions, to which 125 countries — including Iraq — gave their backing.

● The Convention for the Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded and Sick in Armed Forces in the Field;

● The Convention for the

Amelioration of the Condition of the Wounded, Sick and Shipwrecked Members of Armed Forces at Sea;

● The Convention Relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War;

● The Convention Relative to the Protection of Civilians in Time of War.

It did not stop there.

In 1977, attacks on dams and dykes (to deprive people of water supplies) or food crops (to starve an enemy into submission) were banned. Hitting historical monuments is also a crime as are attacks harmful to the environment.

Much of the third convention is taken up with the minutiae of PoWs' health, nutrition, finances, labor, and so forth but some might have been written with Saddam in mind. Article 13 states for example: "Prisoners of

war must at all times be humanely treated.

"Any unlawful act or omission by the Detaining Power causing death or seriously endangering the health of the prisoners of war in its custody is prohibited ... Likewise prisoners of war must at all times be protected, particularly against acts of violence or intimidation and against insults and public curiosity."

As regards "human shields", the convention expressly forbids the use of PoWs to deter attacks on an area.

Hussein's eagerness to breach the Geneva Conventions by turning American, British, Italian, Saudi and other allied PoWs into human shields, loosing oil into the Gulf (not to mention his threats to use chemical and biological weapons) will likely form part of a future war-crimes charge sheet.

THE NIGHT THE PLANES CAME DOWN.

On Saturday, November 24th 1990, members of Traralgon, Moe and Morwell Historical Societies joined in an excursion to the site on Latrobe Rd. Morwell where, on the night of Saturday/Sunday February 24/25, 1945, four R.A.A.F. planes made an emergency landing, helped by Morwell residents.

It appears that Mrs. Billingsley, who was in charge of the volunteer "plane spotters" in Morwell, noticed a plane circling the town at about 11.30pm on the Saturday night. Over Morwell, and in fact much of the Latrobe Valley, on that night, lay the heaviest fog locals could remember. Mrs. Billingsley realised that the plane was in trouble and set about implementing emergency procedures. The fire brigade and the Volunteer Defence Corps (Home Guard) were alerted and it was decided to try to guide the plane to an emergency landing strip in a paddock on Latrobe Rd. owned by Mr. Neil Walsh. Meanwhile, another plane could be heard circling the town.

Two participants in the excursion, Lou Bond and Keith Williams, were there on the night of the event. Keith Williams drove one of the fire trucks. Lou Bond was one of the motor vehicle owners who were called out to help light up the emergency landing strip.

Owners of motor vehicles were contacted and asked to bring their cars and trucks to the Latrobe Rd. site, where they lined up herringbone fashion with their lights pointing at an angle to illuminate a strip running from south to north, parallel with Latrobe Rd. The strip ended at the fence along Old Melbourne Rd.

Meanwhile, the local Postmaster, Mr. Burley, attempted to relay a message to the distressed planes by signalling in Morse code with the Morwell street lights. It was later learned that the pilots could see the lights flickering and realised that someone was signalling but because of the fog, and the fact that the lights were hooded (to direct light towards the ground, in compliance with blackout regulations), they were unable to read the message. They realised, however, that the residents of the town were making some sort of emergency arrangements to help them.

The account of the actual landing recorded in the "Advertiser" of Thurs. March 1st 1945, is quite inaccurate, according to our two eye-witnesses. In fact four planes, not two, landed that night.

One came down well on the emergency runway at a little after 12,30 am. Most people thought that only one plane was in trouble and began to run towards it. Keith Williams drove his fire engine towards the plane and suddenly became aware of the wing of another plane which seemed about to slice through the cabin of his truck - a sensation he won't easily forget! A second plane had come in immediately behind the first. It also landed without much bother, slightly damaging its landing gear.

A third plane, meanwhile, had run out of petrol. Its engine cut out and the listeners on the ground could hear only the eerie whistling as it came in towards the landing strip. It landed crosswise to the strip, hit a fence and some trees, but amazingly the crew were unhurt.

THE NIGHT THE PLANES CAME DOWN (cont).

It seems that a group of planes - Avro Ansons - had been on submarine patrol over Bass Strait and were heading for home when they became lost in the fog. Seeing the lights of the Latrobe Valley towns they headed towards them in the hope of finding their way. Apart from the four planes which landed at Morwell, another landed at Rosedale, another at Bairnsdale and yet another made it back to Sale.

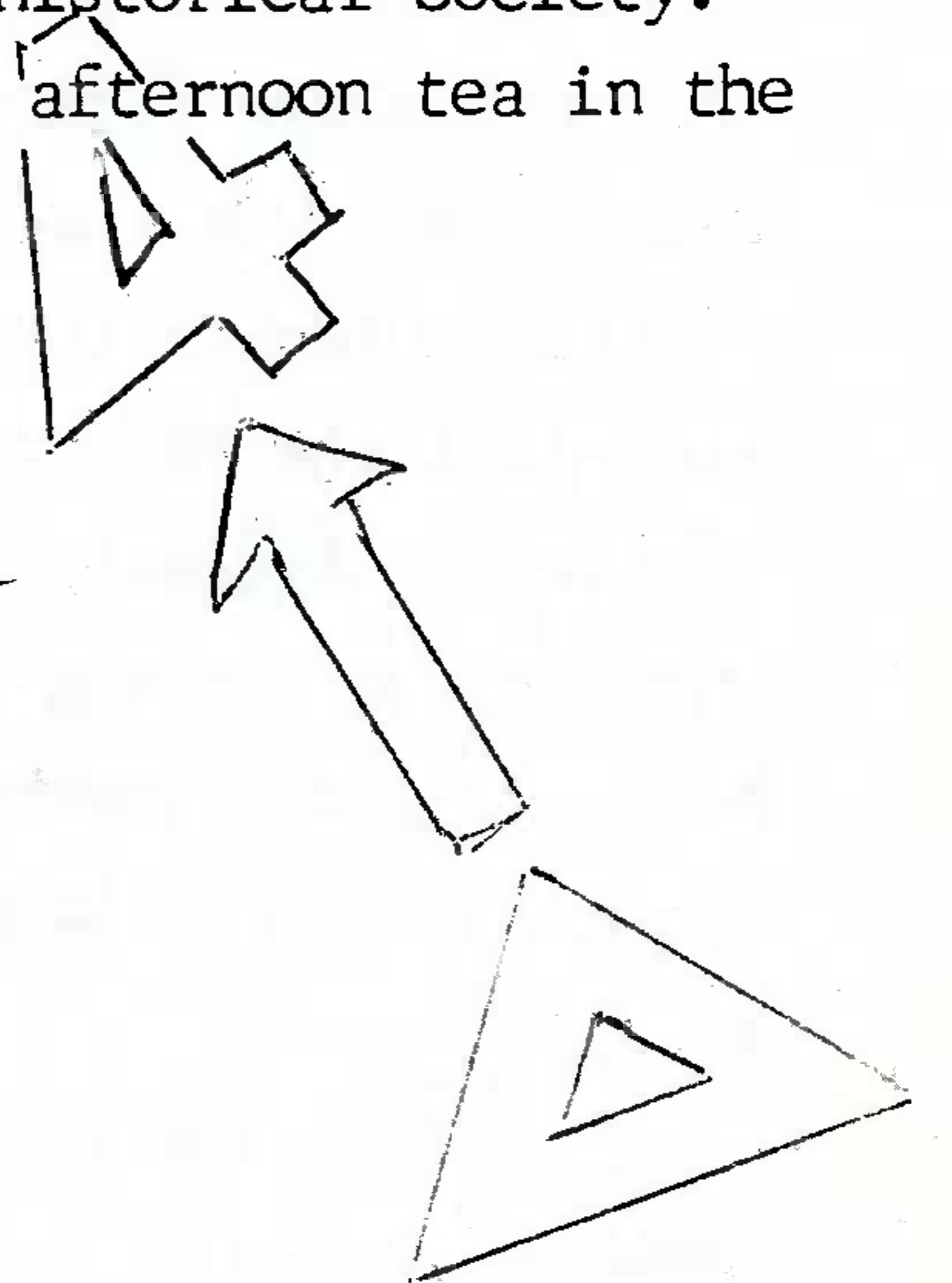
From the Latrobe Rd. location, the members of the Historical Societies' excursion party made their way to a spot alongside the surge basin of the Yallourn water treatment plant, to look at a navigational marker recently uncovered by Mr. Tom Adams.

The marker consists of the word YALLOURN, a directional arrow, and a figure 4, all constructed in concrete - the letters are 10 feet high, about 6 feet wide and are raised about 15 inches above the ground. The overall length of the word YALLOURN is 58 feet. (See April 1990 Newsletter).

Investigations by Moe Historical Society indicate that this marker was constructed in about 1947, almost certainly as a result of the incident over Morwell in 1945. The arrow on the marker points to the emergency landing field on Latrobe Rd. and the figure 4 indicates 4 miles direct distance. Each letter had its own light fixed to a pole above it so that the marker could be illuminated at night if an emergency arose. The letters were originally painted yellow but most of the paint has now worn off. When discovered by Mr. Adams, the sign was completely overgrown, but it has been cleared by him, with the assistance of members of Moe Historical Society.

To conclude a most enjoyable afternoon, members had a picnic afternoon tea in the grounds of the water treatment plant.

Rough sketch of Yallourn marker
(not to scale)



YALLOURN

THE LANDING

The Morwell "Advertiser" of Thursday, March 1st, 1945, reported the incident of the emergency landing fairly much as follows: (We couldn't read the microfilm too well!)

About 11 pm on Saturday last (24th February) Mrs. G.I. Billingsley, who puts in 24 hours a day on V.A.O.C. in Morwell noticed a plane cruising around over Morwell and realised that it was in trouble. Her first job was to get information to the Air Force in Melbourne, which she did at frequent intervals until 11.45 pm.

Instructions came through to contact the police and the Post Master. The Post Master was asked to try to get instructions in Morse code to the crew of the aircraft as to the location of a possible landing place, by using the town lights.

Mr. Burley, the Post Master, promptly answered the call and continued to send information in Morse until 12.30 when the town lights were turned off. Later conversation with the crew revealed that they were aware that a message was being sent but were unable to read it.

With all this going on, the winking of the town lights and the drone of aircraft engines awoke the townspeople to the fact that something unusual was happening.

Telephone exchange attendant Greg Ross called all owners of motor vehicles and asked them to take their vehicles to the site that was being prepared as an emergency landing strip in Mr. Neil Walsh's paddock north of the town. Many car owners came to the police and fire stations and were redirected. Mr. Rob Watson had the fire bell rung with an unusual signal to alert people to the emergency.

Bill Newton in the council truck made history as he passed the vanguard of traffic along Latrobe Rd. to open up the paddock for the motor vehicles.

Pilot - Officer Dick Robinson D.F.C., lately returned from England, marshalled the cars in the correct formation to signal the plane down. While all the activity had been going on, another plane was heard circling the town. It was assumed that this plane was simply keeping watch over the one which was in trouble until it had landed safely.

By 12.30, the landing field was sufficiently lit. Just after 12.30 the first plane came in to land. It made three attempts and finally came to rest after narrowly missing a dam, ploughing through a fence and collecting a tree. Its wing was torn off and its tail smashed. One of the crew needed stitches to a cut on his face. As it had been assumed that only one plane was in trouble, the people on the ground were most surprised when the second also came down, making a perfect landing. Probably the fact that it landed so soon after the first averted a tragedy as people were beginning to move onto the runway.

The local V.D.C. unit mounted guard over the planes until Sunday morning when the Air Force arrived to take charge. The guard consisted of Sgt. Catterick, Cpl. Hobbs, - W. Shaw, Pte W. Firmin, - Treloar.

Hospitality to the four crew members was shared by Mr. and Mrs. Trigg and Mrs. G.I. Billingsley. The crew said that, although unable to read the Morse messages being sent, the concentration of lights in one spot and the stream of lights moving towards that spot indicated to them that an emergency landing place was being prepared.

The "Advertiser" in later editions commented on the fact that Air Force officers had inspected the paddock and agreed that, with a few modifications, the strip selected would serve as an emergency runway if necessary in future. The Post Master was to be provided with a Lucas signalling lamp to ensure transmission of information to aircraft in difficulties should the need arise again.

The Air Force noted its appreciation of the splendid spontaneous effort of Morwell residents who helped light down the machines.

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SOME ITEMS OF INTEREST FROM "HISTORY NEWS" - FEBRUARY 1991 ISSUE.

NEW DIRECTOR APPOINTED

On the retirement of Ian Woodroffe the Council appointed Dr Leonie Foster to be the Director of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria with effect from 7 January, 1991. Dr Foster is a distinguished historian whose book **High Hopes: the Men and Motives of the Australian Round Table**, published by the Melbourne University Press in 1986, was well received. She is currently preparing a short maritime history of Australia. Prior to her academic career she had extensive experience in public accounting. Since May 1985 she has been engaged by the Victoria Archaeological Survey as a professional maritime historian in researching shipwrecks. She is a member of the Historic Shipwrecks Advisory Committee and Australian Representative on the International Commission of Maritime History. Leonie Foster's appointment was announced at the Annual Meeting of the Society at which she was herself present and able, therefore, to meet a number of members. She looks forward to meeting many more in the years to come.

NEW BOOK LAUNCHED

The new history of the Shire of Alberton, South Gippsland, entitled **From these beginnings**, written by RHSV Council member, John Adams, was formally launched at a ceremony at the Port Albert Maritime Museum on Wednesday 2 January 1991 by the Alberton Shire President, Cr. Fran Lawson. The occasion was the opening of the Port Albert 150th anniversary celebrations, which will continue to May. A special exhibition relating to Port Albert history, with several items on loan from the RHSV Library, was opened by Judge James Howden, great grandson of William Bellamy Howden, first publican of the Port Albert Hotel. A dinner was held in the evening of 2 January to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the ship "Clonmel" on the Clonmel Reef, which accident led to the discovery and exploration of the Port Albert region and the opening up of Gippsland. The main event of the Port Albert celebrations will be on 14 February when, with the Governor in attendance, there will be a commemoration of the arrival of Angus McMillan at Old Port on 14 February 1841, with the unveiling of a cairn and opening of a new walk from Port Albert to Old Port. Copies of **From these beginnings** are available from the Alberton Shire Council offices, P.O. Box 1, Yarram 3971. Hard cover \$30, soft cover \$25, with postage extra.

HISTORIC SHIPWRECKS TRAIL

At Peterborough on 11 December 1990, the Minister of the Department of Conservation and Environment, the Hon. Steve Crabb, officially opened the Western District Historic Shipwreck Trail. The land-based trail extends from Moonlight Head to Port Fairy and is the result of a co-operative effort of the Victoria Archaeological Survey, Vic Roads, local government and local historical bodies.

A WARTIME MEMORY

Gordon Marlin

Gordon Marlin was stationed at Yallourn for a short time during World War 2. In response to a query, he wrote the following:

" I am sorry I cannot give you any specific dates of my army days in Yallourn. It was approximately middle of 1942, as I was married early April and joined the army at end of April.

After Caulfield, Williamstown, Royal Park, the 30th H.A.A. Battery arrived at the Yallourn football ground where we were for a few weeks, doing routine army instruction etc. We used to do our marches to Moe and back, plus usual marches around the township. Yallourn itself, I found, was a very clean town apart from the coal dust.

I enjoyed it there as I had my wife staying with friends, Eva and Jim Watson, of 12 Railway Ave, and I used to stay over night at times.

From the Oval, I was stationed at the swimming pool gun site for a while. It was at that site that the ack-ack opened up at a marauder which had strayed off course.

I was also up at the North Coal Mine gun site for a period of a couple of weeks. I used to walk down to 12 Railway Ave of a night and back to camp early in the morning.

I was a height-finder operator with the ack-ack and we used to line up on the chimney stacks to make coincidence with the height finder.

At approximately end of July we went to Laverton for further training, then to Royal Park, then we went North.

I know there was also a light ack-ack (Bofors) on the golf links but I had nothing to do with them.

I know this is not much but I hope it is of some use to you,

Yours faithfully,

Gordon Marlin

THE BOLDING FAMILY - HAZELWOOD NORTH

George Bolding, son of Joseph and Elizabeth of Chishill, Essex, England, was born in Cambridgeshire, England, in 1837 and came to Australia in the ship "James Fernie". He was 18 years of age when he arrived in Moreton Bay on 24th January, 1856. He passed away at The Grange on 4th June 1910, aged 72 years.

When he arrived in Australia he went straight to Queensland where he was engaged in opening up country for squatting purposes. He was brought up to farming in his native country Essex.

He came to Victoria at the time of the great gold rushes to Castlemaine, Ovens and Bendigo and on his return to Queensland, participated in the rush to Port Curtis, now the site of Rockhampton.

His next move was to Brisbane where he was engaged in stock droving and other pursuits for several years. About 1870 he settled on a farm at Braybrook where he carried on farming until 18th May, 1874, when he selected 395 acres at Bennett's Creek, Hazelwood Flats. This was part of Bennett's Morass, which was later drained.

In 1873, he had married Elizabeth Cluston (nee Draffen) in Melbourne. He built a four roomed house of wattle and shingle and a very large shed with several bedrooms upstairs, where the employees or anyone in need of a bed was welcome to stay. People passing through were always sure of a bed and a meal. He first called this selection "The Grasspan" but later changed it to "The Grange". George and Elizabeth had a family of one daughter and five sons: William George, Mary Lavinia, John, Herbert Joseph, Fredrick Leslie, Harold Frank.

"The Grasspan" had 320 acres of rich alluvial land. Some 80 cows were milked. The milking shed was about 157 yards from the dairy and George Sen. used to carry the milk from the shed to the dairy in two kerosene tins hanging from a yoke on his shoulders. The milk was placed in pans and next morning the cream was skimmed off and made into butter. The churn was operated by horse works. Some of the butter was heavily salted and shipped to England. The "Grasspan" butter was well known for its superior quality and flavour, the Bolding brand having won numerous prizes at various shows throughout Gippsland. Frequently Mrs. Bolding could be seen riding sidesaddle into Morwell with a basket of butter on one arm and a baby on the other.

A number of the Bolding descendents farmed in the Hazelwood area. George enlisted in the Mounted Rifles in 1898. He was a member of the Third Victorian Bushmen's Contingent in the Boer War. After the siege of Elands River, he contracted enteric fever, from which he passed away in the Praetoria hospital on 24th October, 1900.

A second son, John, was a member of the first Victorian contingent and the first to volunteer from Hazelwood for the front. He saw active service throughout the South African War. When he returned he married Marion Bruce and they had a family of thirteen - six daughters and seven sons.

Mary Lavinia married John Falla and they had a family of three sons and one daughter.

They carried on farming for several years at Hazelwood, buying a farm on Tramway Rd. After several years they moved to Donald. Mary passed away there in 1977, aged 94 years.

Fredrick Leslie married Louise Todd and had a family of four daughters and one son. Leslie bought a farm on Tramway Rd. near the highway and carried on farming there for many years. The land is now owned by the S.E.C. Leslie passed away there on 13th July 1943 aged 59 years.

Harold Frank married Marge and had a family of two daughters and two sons. He bought a farm near Bennetts Creek and carried on farming for several years and later moved to Johnsonville.

Joseph married Ann Shaw and had a family of five daughters and three sons. Their son George enlisted in the second world war and was a prisoner of war in Germany. He was with the Duke of Gloucester's nephew, Viscount Lascelles. When the Duke was on his tour of Gippsland he asked to see Lieutenant Bolding.

When Joe and Annie married they built a six roomed house on land on the corner of Blowfly Rd. (now called Thomsons Rd.) This house was later moved down beside the old homestead. Both were burnt down in the 1944 bushfires and were replaced by a brick home on the same site.