

MORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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

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JANUARY 1993

HAPPY NEW YEAR AND WELCOME TO THE JANUARY NEWSLETTER!

In this newsletter, we present a brief history of the Blucher family, pioneers in the Yinnar/Jumbuk district. A Blucher family reunion was held at Yinnar in November 1992.

The theme for Heritage Week 1993, which commences on March 21, is "La Belle Epoque - The Edwardian Era in Australia" which aims to highlight the first twenty years of this century. In this and the February newsletter we will take a broad look at those twenty years.

Also in this edition is an article from the Mining and Geological Journal of September 1940 on the Great Morwell Coal Mining Company. Our thanks go to Marion Holding of Tambo Shire Historical Society for sending it to us.

There is no meeting of our Society in January and you will receive another newsletter before the February meeting but this is an advance reminder (is there such a thing?) our next meeting will be held on TUESDAY FEBRUARY 16, 1993.

THE BLUCHER FAMILY

On November 29, 1992, at Yinnar Recreation Reserve, a reunion was held of the descendants of Joachim and Marie Blucher, whose children, Frederick, Johann, Wilhelmine and Herman, settled in Australia in the 1880s and 1890s.

Frederick was the first of the family to migrate, arriving in Melbourne in January 12 1885. He was followed by Herman, aged 19, in 1888, then by Johann and his family, accompanied by sister Wilhelmine, in 1891.

The Bluchers selected land around Middle Creek and Jumbuk in the 1890s. Family history tells the familiar story of mud 60cm deep in winter and ruts 60 cm deep in summer. The Blucher girls were keen dancers and would walk 6 or 7 km over uncleared country to Madalya to a dance. They wore their old clothes, changed at the hall, danced (often til daylight) then walked home in time for the morning milking. Dances were often held on nights of the full moon to help patrons find their way.

Frederick Blucher never married, but worked his farm in Jumbuk for many years. He died in 1913.

Wilhelmine, who never married either, died tragically in 1915. She was housekeeping for brother Johann and his wife at Jumbuk. While cooking over an open fire, her long dress caught fire. Johann rode as fast as possible to call the doctor but Wilhelmine died later that night from her burns.

The children of Johann Blucher were well known in the Jumbuk-Yinnar district. There were twelve in the family. The Blucher Family Reunion booklet gives brief stories of a few of them.

Minna came to Australia at the age of 8. She grew up in Jeeralang and went to work for the Walker family at Middle Creek, then to Melbourne where she married. She had a son but the marriage failed so she continued in service to support herself and her child.

Augusta was aged 3 when she arrived in Australia. The family were at first caretakers of a farm belonging to a Mr. McPhae in the Wonyip area. During one bushfire the family home was burnt and the family took refuge in an empty tank. The Bluchers later bought a farm in Jumbuk and Augusta worked on it and for several other farmers (Coleman, Firmin, Fred Blucher) during her teen years.

Augusta married James Sargeant in 1911 and moved onto a farm at Jeeralang Junction beside Billy's Creek. They lived there for 12 years before moving to a farm at Darnum which is still being worked by their son and grandson. After her husband's death in 1938, Augusta married Thomas Phillips. She died in Warragul in 1965.

Martha grew up on the farm at Jeeralang and married Roy Butters in 1916.

Charles owned a farm at Jumbuk which flourished before World War 1 but later deteriorated.

THE DECADE 1901 - 1910

The first ten years of the 20th century signalled the beginning of tremendous technological developments which were to change the way man lived on this planet quite dramatically. Powered flight, the motor car, radio and advances in medicine, physics and chemistry were precursors of the age of technology.

What was happening in those first ten years?

In 1901, Queen Victoria died, U.S. President McKinley was assassinated, (to be succeeded by Theodore Roosevelt), Rudyard Kipling wrote "Kim", Toulouse Lautrec died and Walt Disney was born.

The Kodak box Brownie brought photography within the reach of millions, Orville and Wilbur Wright flew their first glider and the first International car race was held from Paris to Lyon. There were 47,000 miles of railway in the world and German Dr. William Roentgen won the first Nobel prize for Physics for his discovery of X-rays.

In 1902, Edward VII was crowned, the first trans-Pacific cable was laid between Canada and Australia, halving the cost of cable communication between those two countries, and Louis Renault developed the drum brake for cars.

1903 saw the foundation of the Ford Motor Company and the first powered flight by the Wright Bros. at Kittyhawk, North Carolina. The Serbian Royal Family was assassinated, the first Teddy Bears were made in U.S.A. and German physicist Christian Helmar discovered the use of radio echoes to help prevent collisions at sea - a forerunner of radar. In that year also, the first telephone answering machine came into use.

1905 was the year of the Russo-Japanese War which ended with the sinking of the Russian fleet. Picture postcards were the craze of the year - most were printed in one colour, sepia, but some of the more expensive ones were hand tinted.

The Wright Bros. 'Flyer 11' became the world's first practical aircraft, able to stay aloft for 30 minutes as well as turning and circling, which earlier aircraft had been unable to do without stalling.

1906 - San Francisco was hit by a devastating earthquake and fire, the playwright Ibsen died, France held the first International Grand Prix race. Colour printing for books and cards came into use and on Christmas Eve the first successful radio broadcast was made from National Electric Signalling Company's studio in Bryant Rock, U.S.A. It opened with a violin rendition of "O Holy Night", followed by readings from St. Luke's gospel and ended with Christmas greetings.

THE DECADE 1901 - 1910 cont.

In 1907, bubonic plague killed $1\frac{1}{2}$ million people in India, regular radio broadcast were being made in New York and William Harley and Arthur Davidson formed their famous motorcycle company which was producing 18,000 machines a year by 1917.

In 1908 an earthquake in Sicily killed 75,000 people, the Geiger counter was developed and Charles Furness became the first aviation passenger when he flew with Wilbur Wright on a 28.6 second flight.

U.S. chemists extracted titanium oxide (the whitest known pigment) from its mineral sources rutile and ilmenite, leading to a purer white for textiles, paper, rubber and ceramics.

The barium meal process was developed for showing intestinal ulcers under X-ray and Wood and Taylor developed a gear-cutting machine which would lead to cheaper, good-quality gears for cars.

In 1909, Japan occupied Korea, Admiral Peary reached the North Pole and the topic of the first radio "talk" broadcast was 'Women's Suffrage'.

The first military aircraft, a Wright Model 'A', was adopted by the U.S. Army. It was a bi-plane which could remain aloft for 1 hour 12 minutes, with an average speed of 68.4 km/hour. It crashed shortly after being commissioned thus destroying the embryo U.S. Air Force!

Also in 1909, chemist Leo Baekland patented his process for making Bakelite - the dawn of the plastics age.

1910 saw the creation of the Republic of South Africa and the reappearance of Halley's Comet. King Edward VII and Tolstoy died, Enrico Caruso's voice was heard from the New York Metropolitan Opera House in the world's first outside radio broadcast and the first criminal capture assisted by radio took place when Canadian police were alerted that the notorious killer Crippen was aboard a trans-Atlantic passenger liner.

ON THE AUSTRALIAN SCENE, 1st January 1901 saw the proclamation of the Commonwealth of Australia at Centennial Park, Sydney. The population of Australia was approximately $3\frac{1}{2}$ million, 90% of whom were of British descent. A middle class white collar worker earned about £300 a year. Taxes were levied in N.S.W. at the rate of 6d in the £ (flat rate) and in Victoria at 4d in the £ up to £1000.

Queen Anne style houses with elaborate decorations, turrets and domes were in vogue and tiles were becoming the accepted roofing material in the cities. (The Wunderlich Co. imported over 75 million terracotta tiles between 1892 and 1914.)

Sport was popular. In 1901, Australian bowler M.A. Noble took 7 wickets for 17 runs against the English Cricket Team in Melbourne.

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THE DECADE 1901 - 1910 cont.

In 1905 a combined Australia/New Zealand tennis team contested the Davis Cup. In 1907 Norman Brookes became the first non-British player to win Wimbledon and he and his N.Z. team mate went on to win the Davis Cup that year.

The Arnott's Biscuit Co. was formed in 1904 and the Kiwi Boot Polish Co. in 1906.

A Royal Commission was held in 1908 into medical and dental quackery and a number of bogus practitioners were put out of business.

In 1909, George Taylor made the first flight in Australia in a heavier-than-air machine (glider) and in 1910 Harry Houdini, famous escapologist and magician brought a 'Voisin' aircraft to Australia to publicise his stage show and made the first powered flight in Australia.

MORWELL IN THOSE TEN YEARS was a small but thriving country town. The population of Morwell Shire in 1901 was 2,808. The township of Morwell had 587 people, Boolarra 107 and Yinnar 83. The population of the Shire was mainly rural. In 1891, 48% of the population had lived in the three main towns - in 1901 the percentage was only 27.5.

The town of Morwell boasted a variety of shops and businesses - two blacksmiths, two local papers, general stores, greengrocer baker, butcher, tobacconist, fancy goods store, jeweller, chemist, saddler, stock and station agent, coachbuilder, butter factory, soft drink factory, brick and tile works, post office, police station, Shire Office, railway station, several churches and (by 1907) two primary schools. In 1902 a handsome Catholic church was built in Commercial Rd. In 1903 the Bank of Australasia (also a handsome building) was rebuilt and Arthur Green's Drapery Shop in Tarwin St. was said to be a real showpiece and the most modern shop in Morwell at that time.

The Morwell Methodist Circuit was set up in 1904, in 1906 a modern brick school replaced the old wooden building in Commercial Rd. and in 1907 a Catholic school was built, also in Commercial Road.

Motor cars were slowly coming to the district - the local doctors were amongst the first to use them, but roads were more suited to horse drawn transport and the new vehicles were unpopular with many because of their noise, smell and unsettling effect on nearby horses.

Morwell had a band and an orchestra. Dances, socials and concerts were held in the Mechanics Institute which was renovated in 1907.

A Golf Club, formed in 1908, functioned in Kleine's paddock to the south-east of the town. Interest in football had lapsed in the 1890s but reappeared in the first decade of the 20th century.

Women's Suffrage was a subject under discussion. The Morwell 'Advertiser' championed the cause in an article in 1905. Victorian women received the vote in 1908 though they had been able to vote in local government elections much earlier.

In 1905 Dr. Julian Smith brought the first X-ray machine to Morwell and it was soon in use locating a bullet lodged in a man's head as a result of an accidental rifle shot.

There were bushfires in most summers but particularly bad were those around Driffield and Budgereee in 1905, Gunyah and Wonyip in 1908.

The opening up of the Strzeleckis for selection brought many people to the area. Many of these struggled valiantly against poor land, shocking roads, bushfires, lack of transport, weeds and pests, only to have to leave their farms in the 'heartbreak hills'. Others managed to hold on and make a reasonable, even a good living.

Throughout the first decade of the 20th century, Morwell was consolidating its position as one of several towns servicing the rural industries of dairying and timber which were the mainstays of the district. Spasmodic attempts to develop the coal which was known to be in the area met with little success and it was to be another ten years or so before that resource began to be exploited.

NEXT MONTH The Decade 1911 - 1920

Sources: This Fabulous Century - Peter Luck
The Timetable of Technology - Edward S. Ayensu
Heart of the Valley - Stephen Legg

The Great Morwell Coal Mining Company

Pioneer of Briquetting in Victoria

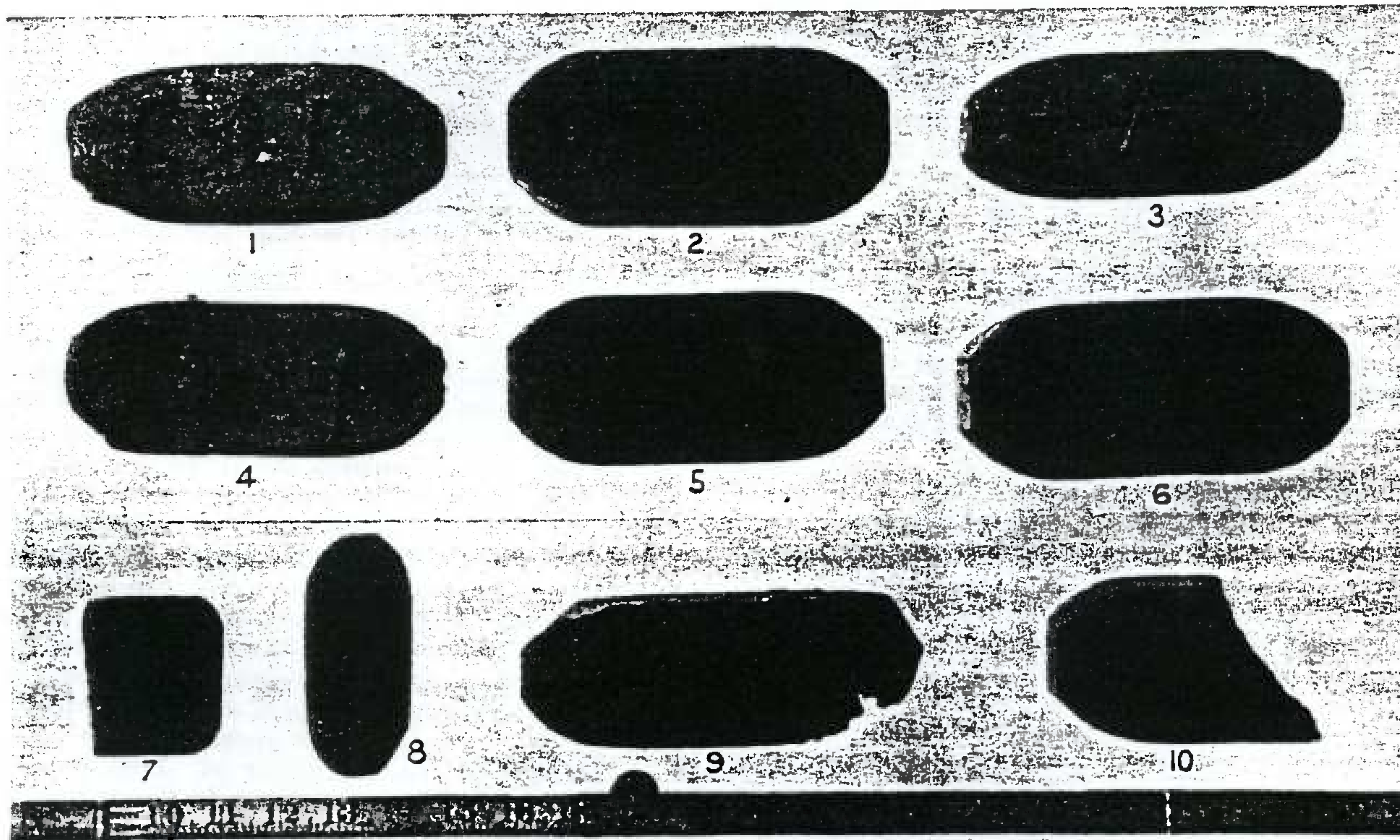
By I. C. H. Croll, B.Sc.

The founders of any entirely new industry meet with many more problems than those incidental to the satisfactory working of their factory or machinery. In addition to the raising of capital, which is a hard enough task in itself, they frequently have to create a demand for their products, often in the face of severe competition from established industries. When a pioneer company fails against such odds it may be a cause for passing regret, but when its vision and enthusiasm are subsequently vindicated some tribute should be paid. Fifty years ago the directors of the Great Morwell Coal Mining Company N. L. visualized a rapid exploitation of the brown coal resources of the State, using the coal for almost every domestic and industrial purpose, both in the raw state and as briquettes. In about ten years of active operation the company had an uphill fight against many and varied handicaps, and when it finally had to admit defeat there appeared to be justification for the view that nothing had been achieved except to prove that Victorian brown coal was not of economic value. Yet, in the same area from which the company had obtained a maximum annual output of nearly 9,000 tons, the State Electricity Commission obtained in 1939 a total of more than three and a half million tons of coal of

which every scrap was utilized in industry or in Victorian homes. The full story of this development cannot be recorded in the limited space available, but the brief history of the pioneer company makes interesting reading.

The discovery of brown coal or lignite in Victoria dates from about 1866, and for the next twenty years the details regarding their distribution were being steadily accumulated and placed on record in the Mines Department publications. The deposit at Lal Lal, near Ballarat, had been unsuccessfully worked before 1873, and attention was thereafter directed to the numerous locations in Gippsland where seams had been discovered, more particularly in the region to the east and south-east of Moe. Whilst not necessarily the first of its kind, but apparently the first on the site of the present operations, mineral lease number 773 was issued on 8th August, 1887, for an area of 539 acres 27 perches, including land on both banks of the Latrobe River, about 5 miles north-westerly of Morwell, and a little more than 80 miles in a direct line east-south-easterly of Melbourne.

With control of this lease and about 1,518 acres of freehold and other property between the river and the main Gippsland railway line (3 miles south of the river), the Great Morwell Company was inaugurated



1. Typical German Briquette, 1891. 2. Briquette made at Zeitz, Germany, October 1891. 3. Briquette made at Bitterfeld, Germany, October, 1891. 4. Briquette made at Möncheberg, Germany, 24th November, 1891. 5 and 6 Briquettes made at the Great Morwell Company's Works, Morwell, 1896. 7. Briquette made from brown coal refuse at Burnley. 8. Briquette made at Nienburg, Germany, October, 1891. 9. Briquette made under Mr. J. C. Newbery's supervision at Zeitz, October, 1891 (about a fortnight before No. 2 was made at the same works.) 10. Portion of Briquette made at Buchau, Germany, October, 1891. With the exception of No. 1, all samples were made from Morwell coal.

and commenced mining operations on the north side of the river. It was soon clear, however, that successful development of the enterprise required that the mine should have direct rail connexion with its principal market, Melbourne, and in 1889 the company opened negotiations for the construction of a branch line to link the mine with the main railway. Agreement was reached that the branch should be constructed at the company's expense, except for the rails and sleepers which were lent by the Railways Department, and that the cost was to be reimbursed to the company when the traffic amounted to 200 tons per week for six months. The opening of the line on 10th September, 1890, was an important occasion for the company, and marked the commencement of the first large scale attempt to utilize Victoria's resources of brown coal.

In the first six months of accelerated operations a total of 5,453 tons of coal were sent to Melbourne (210 tons per week), and the company claimed that the conditions governing the reimbursement of the cost of the railway had been fulfilled. The Railways Commissioners probably suspected, however, that this output could not be maintained, and declined to pay the account of £6,526 (plus interest) that had been rendered by the company. The fears regarding the volume of traffic were well founded, as the half-yearly tonnage over the line never again exceeded 3,700 tons, and was usually much less, but the agreement was binding and years later the Railways Department paid the bill.

Marketing problems were not easy of solution. Raw brown coal may contain as much as 50 per cent. of moisture, and consequently is not a good or economical fuel. Elaborate trials had been made in locomotives, stationary boilers, and in domestic grates, but no outstanding successes were achieved, and it appeared that the company's product could not hope to compete against the justifiable popularity and established market of black coal. The solution seemed to lie in the production of briquettes, which were in considerable demand in Europe, at least for domestic use, and inquiries were instituted into the possibilities of producing briquettes in Victoria. To ascertain in the first case whether the local coal was suitable for briquetting, a sample of 25 tons was sent to Germany for experimental work in June, 1891. Of this amount, 5 tons were for the use of Mr. J. Cosmo Newbery, Victorian Government Analyst, who had been sent to Europe to investigate briquetting and other matters on behalf of the Government. The remaining 20 tons were sent in approximately equal proportions to four established briquetting works in Germany, where tests were supervised by Mr. J. Armer, an engineer acting for J. Birch and Company, London agents for the Austral Otis Engineering Company, South Melbourne. The first stage in the tests was to make a few briquettes in small presses at each of the works, and the samples thus produced, two from each works, were received in Melbourne in December, 1891. The group of briquettes in the accompanying photograph includes four of these trial products, which were among the first manufactured from Victorian coal (Nos. 2, 3, 8, and 10). Mr. Newbery's experimental work with Great Morwell coal was carried out at a foundry at Zeitz, where No. 2 briquette was made, about a fortnight before Mr. Armer conducted his tests. A sample made under Mr. Newbery's supervision is No. 9 in the photograph, and this is therefore the oldest of those shown. The label on this briquette may throw some light on its poor preservation, and reads thus:—

"Brown coal briquette made in Germany under Mr. J. C. Newbery's supervision and said by him to be composed of coal from the Great Morwell mine. The identity of the coal is disputed by the company. This is a sample of the briquette reported upon by the Coal Test Board, and said to be useless for steam generation."

There are two possibilities with regard to the obviously inferior quality of this briquette. Mr. Newbery had other samples of coal with him for testing, and there may have been some accidental mixing of the samples so that the source of material was wrongly ascribed to the Morwell mine. The second and more likely possibility is that the material was not properly prepared for testing, either at the mine or at the works, and too much foreign matter was included with the coal. Whatever the cause, it is not surprising that these briquettes received a very unfavorable report from the Board appointed to examine their qualities for locomotive work.

After the preliminary trials Mr. Armer had more extensive tests made at factories at Birterfeld and Möncheberg, using the ordinary works machinery instead of the small hydraulic presses. The work was done at the latter factory on 24th November, 1891, and No. 4 briquette in the photograph is one of the batch produced at that time. It was despatched from London on 27th November together with a sample of an "average German brown coal briquette" (No. 1 in the photograph), the covering letter containing the following remarks:—

"By to-day's mail we have sent a parcel containing two briquettes, one marked 'Morwell' this is an average briquette taken freshly from the press, and is made from your Australian coal. The other briquette represents the average kind which may be seen travelling about the country. If these arrive safely and undamaged it will be evident to you how superior the appearance of the Australian briquette is to that of Germany. . . . The strength of the Australian briquette is also much greater (when they are of the same thickness)."

From the present appearance of these two briquettes there is little to choose between them, although the one made of Australian coal is somewhat less well preserved. Investigations in Europe included inquiry into the cost of a briquetting plant to be erected at the company's mine, and it was eventually recommended that the Nienburger Company supply for about £9,000 a plant to produce 100 tons per day.

The Great Morwell Company faced a dilemma. It did not have £9,000 to spend, it was losing money selling raw brown coal, the Railways Department owed it more than £6,000, and it had to face the necessity of producing briquettes or lose the market where some profit could be made. At this stage the Austral Otis Engineering Company submitted a tender for the supply of a locally built briquette press at a cost of £5,000, specifying that it would conform in general design to the Nienburger plant, but would have a capacity of only 30 tons per day, which, however, could readily be increased when the demand warranted expansion of output. Then the Railways Department promised to settle the outstanding account when the briquette plant was erected, and the company saw that the way was clear to go ahead with the production of briquettes. In the winter of 1893, therefore, Victoria's first briquette factory began to take shape and steam was raised for the first time in March, 1894. This did not mark the beginning of the anticipated era of prosperity, however, as it soon became apparent that the all-important drying apparatus was not satisfactory either in design or operation. Months of unsuccessful attempts to rectify the trouble only strengthened the conviction that the part would have to be replaced, and a new dryer was ordered from America. This arrived in Melbourne in February, 1895, and was immediately sent to the factory, in time to be included in the complete destruction of the plant and machinery by a bush fire on 2nd March.

The untimely end of the first factory was closely followed by the establishment of the second, for which the foundations were laid in July, 1895. Trial runs of the new machinery were commenced in January, 1896, but it was not until September of that year that difficulties had been so far overcome as to enable newspapers to report that "contractors made over 100 tons of briquettes in trial runs of machinery lately, but samples are not yet up to marketable standard." Two illustrated in the accompanying photograph (Nos. 5 and 6) are products of this period, and indicate that there was little uniformity in results. No. 6 is 1.5 inches thick and tends to crumble, whilst No. 5 is 1.3 inches thick and is perfectly preserved. The latter is labelled "From J.W.C., 22.9.96"; the initials are those of J. W. Corbett, who was successively manager of the mine, contractor for mining the coal, and manager of the briquette factory. In spite of setbacks some progress was being made, and by May, 1897, the company was using a briquette depot at Prince's-bridge Station, and had sold a few tons at 17s. 6d. per ton. In the next six months the output was 726 tons, bringing the total to date to about 1,250

tons, but the continual delays in the factory were adversely affecting the company's plans for supplying the domestic coal market, and the outlook was serious. A ray of hope shone through the clouds when, in May, 1898, the Railways Department received authority from Parliament, and paid the outstanding account for the construction of the branch line. This proved to be only a temporary stimulant for the weak finances of the company, and on 22nd February, 1899, a bank successfully applied for a winding-up order.

The first stage of the utilization of Victoria's brown coal deposits was closed, and it was left to others to master the technical and financial difficulties that defeated the pioneer company. A start had been made, however, and years later the threads were picked up again, and a large industrial undertaking for the production of electrical power and briquettes was established on the same site and using, for a time, the same open cut mine which was opened by the Great Morwell Company half a century ago.


The Genealogist June 1992

Gippsland's First Railway

Reprinted from the *Trafalgar and Yarragon Times*
Monday, May 3rd. 1937.

One of the greatest historical events of importance in Gippsland since it was first explored by Angus McMillan in 1839 was the building of the main Gippsland Railway line from Melbourne to Sale, from which period the real development of Gippsland began.

Contracts for the building of the line were let in sections, work being commenced simultaneously at each end. The Sale - Morwell section was ready for traffic on June 1st 1877, the Morwell - Moe section on the 1st December, 1877 and the Oakleigh - Bunyip section on the 8th October, 1877. The final length between Bunyip and Moe was opened on March, 1st 1878. The first tiny, funnelled engine, with its one second class car and two dummy buffered ballast trucks was driven by three brothers, John, James and Jephtha Crabtree, and as it steamed and puffed, an interested group on the station platform at Sale included the S.M. (Hr J. J. O'Connor), Ass. (Mr J. Anderson) and Cr. Guthridge, the then Mayor of Sale. It was a 'red letter day' in Gippsland history.

James Crabtree afterwards settled in the Sunny Creek district, and followed mixed farming pursuits until his death some years ago, thus breaking a link with a very memorable event. Members of his family best known here are James and Edgar who followed mixed farming pursuits in this district but who later disposed of their respective interests. Of more than passing interest was the opening of the first railway line in Victoria from Melbourne to Sandridge on 13th September 1854. The opening ceremony of this historic event was performed by the Governor, (Sir John Hotham), and thus began an era of railway progress as evidenced today - some 83 years later. 

CURRENCY A word applied in early colonial Australia to the wide variety of coins then in circulation, as distinct from English gold coins, which were called Sterling. The word assumed the connotation of "Australian" and "un-currency" meant "un-Australian".

CURRENCY LAD, OR LASS In the early nineteenth century this meant one of European descent born in Australia, as opposed to *sterling*, i.e., English-born settlers.

The Currency Lads may fill their glasses,
and drink to the health of the Currency Lasses,
but the lass I adore, the lass for me,
Is the lass in the female factory.

Sydney Gazette July, 1832.

SEARCHING FOR "HIDDEN MELBOURNE"

BY IAIN STUART,
MANAGER OF
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A trip into the centre of Melbourne, the Central Activities District (CAD), shows the strong outline of a modern city. All those cranes have been replaced by towers and glass boxes of 1980's architecture.

But what is left of the 1880's "Marvellous Melbourne"? Or the swamps and hills of John Batman's village; the place they were going to name Barebrass or Batmania? Travelling down the wide main streets of the city, there is little that is not modern. But a trip down the "Little" Streets and the lanes shows another, hidden Melbourne, a relic of the past.

It is that hidden Melbourne, the remains of the 150 or more years of settlement that the Victoria Archaeological Survey is searching for in its project "An Archaeological Survey of Melbourne's CAD".

In the last few years there have been several discoveries of archaeological deposits within the CAD. The first was at 300 Queens St where refuse from the house of Melbourne's Lord Mayor was



discovered. The major excavations in "Little Lon", centre of the Red Light District but also the home of Chinese and the poor working class followed. And recently VAS has been working with the City of Melbourne to protect the burials in the Queen Victoria Market. Who knows what else of Melbourne's history lies buried or written in the fabric of some hidden building waiting for the archaeologist?

The Victoria Archaeological Survey as the State Government body that protects archaeological sites in Victoria, is undertaking an archaeological survey of the CAD to try and find where archaeological sites in the CAD are and what their significance is.

Two archaeologists Siobahn Lavelle and Dana Mider and a historian Dr Marie Fels are working on the project. The initial stages of the project have involved the preparation of an historical overview of the changing patterns of land use in the city and the collation of an extensive series of historic maps charting the development of the city of Melbourne. This initial work has shed light on a vast and largely ignored surviving subterranean heritage of important city infrastructure including massive 8 foot diameter stormwater drains, hydraulic power supply (the first in Australia) and 1850's water mains.

A comprehensive field survey, by Siobahn and Dana, involving the visual inspection and assessment of all blocks in the CAD has been completed. The archaeological survey team had the unusual experience of constantly being mistaken for either Council health and building officers or fire inspectors! The survey has revealed that approximately 75% of the CAD area had been so intensively developed that no archaeological resources would be expected to survive. The survey has also indicated that a considerable number of remnant structure - earlier buildings incorporated into later ones or vestiges of previous structures - survive as a largely hidden resource in the back lanes of the CAD.

