

MORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

PUBLISHED MONTHLY, EXCEPT DECEMBER

Meetings : 3rd. TUESDAY of the month at 7.30 PM

OLD TOWN HALL , MORWELL

Vol. III No. I

JANUARY 1995

Welcome to the January Newsletter

Happy New Year to all our members, their families and friends!

We begin 1995 with a rather belated January Newsletter.

There will be no meeting in January. The first meeting for the year will be on **Tuesday, February 21st**, but you will receive another newsletter before that date, to remind you!

This year, in keeping with the theme 'Australia Remembers', we plan to have at our meetings speakers on the roles played by Australians in the Second World War, both in the armed forces and on the home front. At the final meeting for 1994, held at the 'Top Pub', the first of these guests, Mr Jack Evans of Morwell, gave a most interesting account of his experiences as a wireless air gunner in a Hudson bomber and his subsequent time as a prisoner of war in Germany. The first part of his story appears inside and will be continued in February.

This year, too, we present more of the exploits of our member Arthur Fish during his travels in Victoria in the thirties, and of Jesse William Huggett, whose story of gold digging and timber working last century we have been following in our newsletters.

If you have any reminiscences of the days of World War 2, please write them down (or tell them to an audio cassette). We need to record these stories!

**** Your Newsletter editor would be delighted to receive such stories (or any others of historical interest) for inclusion in forthcoming editions**

The 'Mainstreet' organisation is asking for suggestions for a theme for Morwell e.g. "Morwell - Garden City". They are also planning to identify places of historic interest within the Central Business District and it has been suggested that a historic walk could be designed, with an illustrated brochure to guide interest sight-seers. Our help has been sought. If anyone has any ideas, please let us know.

DISTINGUISHED MEMBERS

Several of our members have distinguished themselves in recent weeks.

Vice President Lou Bond and wife Leila celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary in December and on Australia Day Lou was awarded the O.A.M.

President Eric Lubcke was honoured for his contribution to our community by having the Yarra Gum Reserve in Maryvale Crescent named after him.

MORWELL couple Lou and Leila Bond (pictured right) know the meaning of marriage.

They recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary and in doing so, they clocked up 60 years of love, tolerance and communication.

The happily married couple claim those are the three secret ingredients which have helped them reach their diamond wedding anniversary.

On 15 December, Lou and Leila marked their 60th anniversary by celebrating with immediate family and close friends. They received many congratulatory telegrams including one from the Queen and one from Prime Minister Paul Keating.

They were married in 1934 in the old Presbyterian Church in Elgin Street, Morwell.

The bridal party included Leila's older sisters Gladys and Pearl, and Lou's eldest brother Vic and his future brother-in-law Herb Hart.

Reverend Vertigan conducted the ceremony.

The wedding breakfast was held at the local bakery tea rooms, 'Wilson's Tearooms'.

After the meal, the guests accompanied the newlyweds to the train station where they saw them off on their honeymoon. The couple spent several days in Ballarat.

According to Lou and Leila, they were lucky to have a honeymoon because it was the year of the floods.

In their 60 years of marriage, Lou and Leila have always lived in Morwell. They reared six children; Beverly, Neville, Janice, Merrilyn, Cheryl and Nolene. They can boast 18 grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

For Lou and Leila, the importance of being able to talk their problems through was unmeasurable.

Lou said he used to work long hours in the depression years, so the time they spent together was all important.

From 1950 onwards, they share-farmed land in the Maffra/Sale area.

Both Lou and Leila are well known faces in the Morwell community.

Lou served as a Morwell councillor for many years and has been heavily involved with various community organisations.

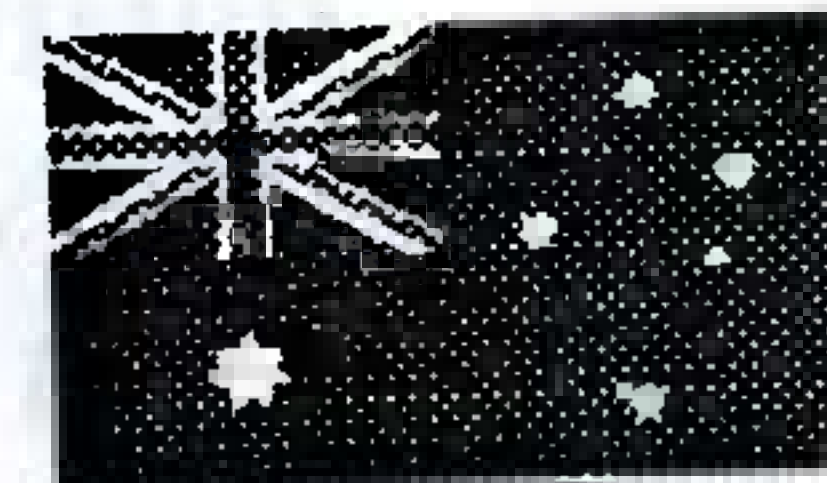
Leila is from three generations of councillors and "farming stock".

Although they don't remember exactly when they first met, they suspect it was at a football dance a Yinnar. "Good clean fun with little alcohol," Lou recalls. Leila would arrive in a horse and jinker and Lou in a T-model Ford.

Although they have no plans for the future, Lou and Leila say they keep living from day to day as they always have.



BOND, Mr Louis William.
Morwell, Vic. Service to local
government and the com-
munity.



Naming ceremony for M'well reserve

MORWELL'S Eric Lubcke was honored in a naming ceremony to mark the opening of the Yarra Gum Conservation Reserve in Maryvale Crescent yesterday.

Former mayor of the City of Morwell, Jack Vinall, presented Mr Lubcke with a letter of recognition for his contribution to the community over the past 40 years.

Mr Lubcke was instrumental in establishing the Morwell Golf Club, the Centenary Rose Garden and Crinigan Road Bushland Reserve. He has also been an active participant in the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalists Club and the Historical Society where he contributed to the publication of two books.

The Yarra Gum Conservation Reserve will be named after Mr Lubcke.



JACK EVANS' STORY

Jack Evans's parents came to Morwell in 1912 and for many years ran the Morwell Newsagency. Jack is the proprietor of a wholesale stationery business in Morwell. He has written an account of his experiences during World War 2 and has also contributed to a book compiled by survivors of the Lamsdorf P.O.W. camp.

Jack Evans was only 22 when he joined the RAAF in September 1940 and was sent to Canada to train under the Empire Air Training Scheme.

After attending wireless schools in Calgary and Montreal, Jack's group moved to England in July 1941, where they completed an advanced wireless course at Cranwell Air Base. After passing out, sixty-eight of the group were posted to bomber Command and four, including Jack, to Silloth coastal Command Operational Training Unit on the west coast of England near the Scottish border. The four were unhappy at being separated from their mates, and, as it turned out, they would never see most of them again. All but five of the sixty-eight others were killed.

In the O.T.U. Jack and another wireless operator from his course, Fred Sturt, teamed up with Pilot Syd Wickham, and Navigator Ron Godfrey to form the crew of a Hudson bomber and after completing their training, they were sent to the Middle East in March 1942.

They went first to Gibraltar where they spent three days, then on to Malta, a seven hour night trip. At this time the Germans were blitzing Malta twenty-four hours a day, from Crete. The aerodrome at Luga was seven miles long and all the hundreds of planes flying to Egypt had to land between air raids to refuel for the leg to Egypt.

They made it to Cairo where the planes were fitted with sand filters on all air intakes, then about mid May they flew to the Burg El Arab Aerodrome where they

met their Flight Commanders and ground staff to form 459 Squadron. Jack writes: 'At this period of time I had about 150 hours flying time and enjoyed life. Our crew visited Alexandria a couple of times. We were kept busy making the Squadron battle-worthy - checking our five Browning machine guns, practising bombing and gunnery and making our tents comfortable.

Our crew slept in a four man tent. The Squadron mess tent was really large with no shortage of grog and food... the Squadron had 24 Hudsons on the strip. Only thirteen were fully trained - the eleven crews from England and two Flight Commanders. We had to fly the operations. The other crews were direct from Australia and had to do their conversions on the Hudsons and then operational training.'

'June 19th. The German Army under Rommel had captured Tobruk from the South Africans and advanced rapidly towards Egypt...the British retreat was on in earnest. Thousands of trucks, cars and artillery streaming along the narrow coastal road towards Alexandria.

Our Hudson was having an engine change when word came through for 459 Squadron to fly back to Landing Ground Z next to Ismailia on the Suez Canal. The engines were placed back without time to test.

About noon we took off. One rev counter showed around 6000 revs per minute, the other showed around 1000 revs per minute. We climbed to about 200 feet and began to lose height. Syd informed us that he would have to land in rough country. This is sand dunes five metres in height. The crew went to the rear of the Hudson, the safest place, and poor Syd had to land the Hudson, which he did - we should have crashed. We had a three hour tramp back to the aerodrome.

All the transport had departed. The aerodrome was occupied by at least twelve 40mm Bofors anti-aircraft guns.... The next afternoon the four of us hitch-hiked back to Alexandria with the retreating 8th Army. Fred and I boarded a four ton truck and the driver kept falling asleep - he had not slept for days. I had a drivers licence and took over.'

The crew finally made it to landing Ground 2 (LGZ), were given another Hudson, and flew to Gianaglitz, fifteen miles east of El Alamein.

On July 7, they had been out looking for Italian warships which were approaching Tobruk.

Jack writes:

'After one hour we received a recall and returned to Gianaglitz. For night landing in the desert a chanch light is used (ie a searchlight with a reflector to keep the beam about one metre parallel to the ground.) The reflectors were not adjusted correctly and Syd was blinded landing into the light and we flew into the ground with a lot of petrol and a full bomb load. I was standing beside Syd when we hit - belly landed and caught fire. We all managed to scramble out. The crash wagon quickly extinguished the fire. Next morning we inspected the Hudson. It was a wreck. I sprained my ankle. Later in the morning Col Stinson flew our crew back to LGZ at Ismailia.'

With a new Hudson, Jack and his crew were in the air almost every day, mainly searching for large tank landing craft (F.boats) which were transporting petrol and ammunition from Tobruk to El Alamein. He writes:

'After 27th July our group of Hudsons were to be relieved and fly back to the Suez Canal. However, around 8.30 a.m. on the 28th July we were informed of F.boats approaching Tobruk. The Flight Commander was missing on the very large aerodrome containing 300 to 400

aircraft.

Syd was the Senior Pilot and with the emergency we flew off with the Hudson. We had a rendezvous with the Beaufighter (escort). During these operations I had nothing to do. I was stationed under the astrodome listening out with earphones. I would search for the enemy with field glasses. We had been out about half an hour expecting the escort when we sighted the two F.boats. On low level attacks, Ron the navigator sat beside the pilot using a hand held bomb sight. Fred was in the turret and I manned a belly gun. Down we went with the fixed front guns firing and bomb doors open. There was some flak from the 20 mm guns and then there was a hell of a bang. We had taken a direct hit from the 75 mm gun. Ron took a hit. (He was killed). I could see the F.boat coming up - Syd jettisoned the bombs. Fred and I saw them straddle the F.boat. I can still remember saying to myself "How am I going to get out of this?" - in a damaged aircraft doing 250 miles per hour and on fire!

Syd was a good pilot - he didn't panic. He was wounded, the cockpit was on fire but he made a good landing on the rather rough sea - the Hudson hit on a swell and skidded across the water....

I rode the landing down well. I had my back against a bulkhead and then began the ditching drill. I had to jettison the main door which contained the large dinghy and then throw out the small personal dinghies. By this time Fred was out of the turret and we floated out of the Hudson. Syd escaped from the hatch above his seat and Ron, when hit, fell down the front of the Hudson. The aircraft sank. It all happened in a few seconds. Fred Sturt commented that it was the best landing that Syd had ever made - he landed the plane gently on the crest of a wave. The large dinghy was

perished but fortunately one of the small dinghies inflated.

By this time the attack was over and the other three aircraft dropped their load.

We all felt the effects of the bombs exploding in the water.

Syd was knocked about. Fred and I placed him in the dinghy and hung onto the side. Our Mae West life jackets kept us afloat. Here we were 100 miles behind enemy lines attached to a small dinghy. Thank goodness the water wasn't cold but all of us were shivering - suffering from shock.

We continued this way for a couple of hours when one of the F.boats we had attacked approached. The German sailors had two machine guns trained on us. Syd shook our hands saying "The bastards are going to shoot us", and I could feel the bullets going through me.

We were then beckoned to climb a ladder. The captain spoke perfect English and told us to take off our wet clothing - shirts and shorts - to dry in the hot sun.

We lost our footwear in the water. The Captain knew Melbourne better than I did - he was a member of the German Merchant Navy pre-war.

Also he gave us a bottle of British rum to drink (captured in Tobruk). Suddenly our Beaufighter appeared on another sweep and opened fire, killing a few German sailors not far from us. Probably an hour later we were put ashore at Solumn and handed over to the German Army. We travelled by truck to Bardia. Next day we travelled to Tobruk. Fred and I were placed in a cave. Syd was sent to hospital. I met him next at Luckenwalde near Berlin in March 1945. He looked good. The German doctor did an excellent job on his burns.'

(To Be Continued)

Next month we will present the story of Jack's experiences as a prisoner of war in Germany. Following is an account of the crash of the Hudson, sent to Jack recently, and written by Syd Wickham, the pilot.

"On the 28th July, 1942, I was alerted for an immediate strike against "F" boats (300 tons; supply barges) which were carrying supplies to the Afrika Corps at El Alamein (poised for a decisive strike on the Nile Delta). Our (Hudson - "R") aircraft was already armed with depth charges. We took off at 1110 hours with three other 459 Squadron planes in V formation; we were to fly behind enemy lines and close to the coast. Although we were promised fighter escort they did not appear until we were attacking.

Near Sidi Barrani in the Bay of Sollum and about one mile from shore I saw two "F" boats and circled to attack with the flight falling in almost line astern. With bomb doors open I made a diving approach slightly on their port bow which would give us a run to seaward after attacking and allow "stick bombing" on both craft.

I saw cannon shells hitting the water off my port side as I levelled out at about thirty feet. Then "all hell broke loose". I circled a forward gun platform in my gun sight and held the firing button down. The tracer, clearly visible, sprayed across the gun platform and bounced off the deck. Ron (Godfrey) (navigator) who was sitting beside me, hit my arm as an indication to go no lower or level out because at this stage in an attack I was always firing the front guns. We received more hits and Ron was blown through the seat. He must have died instantly. I released the depth charges. I could smell petrol, and flames were sweeping up the open front. Oil, soot, flames and blood covered everything, and I couldn't see through the windscreen. The motors were dying. More throttle had no effect. I had released the depth charges as the ships disappeared under our nose and didn't know whether they had cleared the bomb bay. Then, knowing it had to be a wet tail, I selected bomb doors closed and I released my escape hatch. The aircraft was losing height but there was no way of knowing where the water was. I tried to slip one side of my shoulder harness with the thought of looking above the windscreen but I don't know if any of this happened for I was experiencing a violent spinning sensation and then everything was black. The thought went through my mind "so this is what it is like to die".

I opened my eyes and vomited salt water, then slowly my brain started to function, and I could see water, only water. I realised the flotation material in my Mae West was keeping my mouth just above water level and with each wavelet I was sucking some in. I turned around to see the aircraft about 50ft away with Fred Sturt (WAG) and Jack Evans (WAG) at the open rear door.

The immersion switch to inflate the dinghy in the door had failed to operate so Fred, who had his boots ripped off when his feet were jammed getting out of the mid upper gun turret climbed back inside and released the dinghy manually. It was perished and sank. Jack then went inside, collected two "one man" dinghies and swam them over to me. All this time, not knowing that the depth charges had released, I was yelling: "Get away from the aircraft!" in case the charges exploded. The aircraft ("R" for Robyn) slowly stood up on her nose, as if in final salute, then settled back and sank tail first beneath the sea. I waited for the dreadful percussion which I knew would crush us. Nothing happened. And slowly my head cleared and sanity returned. It was quiet, very quiet, except for the lapping sound of the water against my Mae West and a faint sound of the last of the rest of strike force in the distance. Suddenly I felt abandoned.

Fred and Jack handed me a "one man" dinghy which I couldn't inflate so let it sink. Three of us in the "one man" dinghy!! I clearly remember being in the water and thought that is where I stayed during this incident but I have been assured by Fred and Jack that they put me in the dinghy. I have no recollection. Yet I do recall people in the dinghy little realising all these years later that I was the only one. Fred stayed with Jack in the water. We floated for about 1 1/2 hours then I could feel the vibrations of vessel becoming more pronounced and there above us was "the

one that got away". We had split the plates of one vessel which had been beached. The other had survived the four aircraft attack, taking the crew from the beached vessel and came to collect us. A 20mm cannon was aimed at us and I wanted to say "Good luck, this could be it" but I doubt the words were ever uttered. However our captors behaved in a very humane manner, assisting us up the ladder with boat hooks.

We were prisoners of war."

by Syd Wickham



402268 F/Lt Syd Wickham
459 RAAF Sqdn. March 1941

Syd was badly injured and required considerable medical attention not only by the Axis medical staff during (his 3 years of) imprisonment, but in RAAF medical establishments on his return to Australia.

The Way It Was (continued) **A.R.Fish**

Sunday night I crept back to the showgrounds and next day, in company with a few friends, jumped a rattler to Dimboola. That was my first and only experience of riding free at the expense of the Victorian Railways. It was a good run up to Dimboola in an empty open truck. Empty, that is, save for the six or seven free travellers. It was a slow run as we got shunted about a bit while trains were being made up, but we kept our heads down and were quiet, not wishing to draw attention to ourselves, until one shunt put us straight down the line and we ended up slap in the middle of the platform. The S.M., being a good sort of bloke, poked his nose over the side and told us to keep steady and keep out of sight.

Well, it was a lot easier than walking and probably a bit quicker and finally we rolled into the Dimboola yards, where an obliging shunter driver backed his engine up to our truck so we could clamber down the steps of the cab.

But all train jumpers did not get off as easy as that. I have been told of the dangers of train-jumping on the interstate lines especially near the border stations and also on the main line to Mildura. Here, sadistic railway officials, aided sometimes by policemen, and armed with billy-clubs, would assault the jumpers and, by raining blows upon them, force them to jump off while the train was in motion. Not a few were injured in this way and one man told of seeing his mate mangled under the wheels of a fast goods.

But a lot depended on the attitude of the local police. Myself, I met with only kindness from them although one or two did enquire, somewhat to my embarrassment, about my age. Carrying

the swag was not permitted to anyone under the age of sixteen but what could anyone do? - some places whole families were on the road together.

However, one place I was at was ruled over by the local gendarme, a tall, bald-headed man with a great pot belly. It was his custom, when sighting a knight of the road, to draw his club and, with an awesome roar, rush upon the unfortunate fellow. No beg pardon. This was effective in keeping that small town rather free of swagmen. As news of this kind travels rather faster than radio waves, this was one town avoided by the tramps.

However, this was one place where I got on well. Perhaps he thought me beneath his notice. I remember it was here that I got the largest handout of meat that I had ever seen. I timidly approached the butcher in his shop and in a half whisper asked if he could spare me a bit of meat. For a moment I thought he had not heard me, as he proceeded to put together what I thought must surely be a large order of meat - steak, sausages, chops, puddings, mince, all in a large parcel which he rolled up and thrust into my hands. Well, I lived well for a few days, although there was no way of keeping meat fresh when on the track.

Reminds me of the time I went to work on a farm down Colac way. In the days before fridges, when the meat was brought to the table the lady would have a good sniff at it then pass it along to the boss cocky. "What do you think of it, Dad?" Dad would take a long, lingering sniff, then remark - "smells all right to me" - then pass it along to son. "What do you think, Frank?" Frank usually agreed with Dad. Then, further along to the hired man. "Smell all right to you, Jim?" Jim said it did. Then, all agreed, carving would commence. I was there only two weeks and no beasts were killed in that

time, so it was a case of 'only the strong survive' - and in that case, 'strong' was the operative word.

However, to return to my remarks about the police. Some were really good. One police sergeant was called by the bagmen 'Welcome Stranger'. He got moved about a lot so he was quite famous among the road fraternity. He would come to the camps, check to see all was in order, then he would appear again with armloads of bread and other kinds of provender, anything eatable that he could persuade the local tradespeople to part with, which is one of the reasons, no doubt, that he was shifted so frequently. Shortsighted policy on the part of the shifters, as this would be one town where the boys would be on their best behaviour.

Dimboola was a good town and I was the only one of my kind there. Excellent camping facilities at the local showgrounds - which was also the race course - good clean camping and high and dry, beside the Wimmera River.

There were fish in the river and within walking distance was the Little Desert where rabbits were plentiful, and so also were the bronzewing pigeons. Rabbits, or as they were called, 'underground mutton', sold in those days for fourpence a pair. I am told that now they are worth a dollar each.

I never, at any time, drew any kind of official dole or ration and was completely on my own. I was a few weeks short of my sixteenth birthday.

I enjoyed my stay at Dimboola, but one morning I rolled the knot again and got on the way to Jeparit. This was about a day's march - about thirty miles or so - but the days were getting short so I did not make it until after dark. I did have a bit of a rest on the way - stopped to boil some spuds for lunch; cooked them up in the little jam-tin billy and, with a crust of

bread to chew on, gained some strength for the way.

Jeparit turned out to be a nice little town, not at all spoiled by being the birthplace of that great Australian R.G.Menzies.

The camping arrangements were ideal. In the neat little showgrounds, a row of strongly built loose-boxes well lined with clean straw, provided a home for a score or so of travellers. Some strange fellows here - one old boy used to dash out in the early dawn while the dew was still on the grass and sprint across the flat, quite bare, and take a header into the river.

I have been told since those days that this river rarely flows now and the lake is often dry. In the days of which I write, there used to be a low dam built across the river mouth to stop the back-flow of water from the lake, which would take place in years when the river flow was low. The lake, of course, was salty. It was, in those days, teeming with fish and some professional fishermen used to reap the scaly harvest. At cleaning stations on the lake bank, huge piles of shining scales testified to the success of these men. I enjoyed a very pleasant week or so at Jeparit. Out along the lakeside was a happy hunting ground, plenty of rabbits and hares, bronzewing pigeons, all in good trim for eating. Then there were the deserted gardens where the ruins of old farm houses stood, or rather tumbled, in the sand banks along the lakeside. And almond trees, and melons, and grapes, and plums.

However, as usual, I had no luck with the fish. But all the same, I spent some happy days there when the sun was warm on the sandhills, shooting, lazing and swimming in the clear waters of the lake. And at night, the clearness of the frosty skies, and the warm, leaping fires at the camp-site on the flat.

It was at this camp that I met the young drover man, down from the Mallee,

having brought down a mob of sheep, and now camping a while before heading back to the sand and the scrub. He entertained us at night, by the camp fire, with his tales of droving and stories of his shooting. It seems he was quite a good man with the rifle, so, being always willing to learn, I concluded that a day out with the expert might prove of great benefit to me, so I proposed a day at the lake side. I supplied the bullets so he was quite willing and very happy to show me a thing or two, so off we set.

We were off the main road and heading for the low scrub of the sandhills when a rabbit popped up and headed for the horizon. Without thinking, I up with the rifle and let fly. The bunny rolled over several times then stopped dead. "Good shooting!" he said. "Not bad," was my reply. No reason for telling him it was the first and only time up to then that I had dropped a rabbit on the run. Now, this is not an easy thing to do with a .22 single shot. With a shot gun, a blind man could hardly miss, with the spread of shot covering half an acre or so, but a .22 pellet is only pea-sized and to make it connect with a target running as fast as a scared rabbit, calls for a deal of skill or a great amount of luck. Well, I have done it once or twice since.

So we went on, my mate willing to demonstrate his skill, blasting away at everything that came into sight, but with a continuing lack of success. Well, I bagged several pigeons and another rabbit but my rifle-man mate had still not scored when came time to turn homewards. As a face-saving gesture I allowed him to carry one of the bunnies back to camp. After that, I never decried my own ability with a .22 or sought lessons in the art of marksmanship. I make an exception of my mate Honest Jim, of whom I will write more later in this narrative.

A few more days and the itch to be on the road again. But that is The Way It Was. As one veteran said to me: "Young fool, to come on the road at your age. Once you take up the swag, you never lay it down." Well, it did get some of them that way.

(To Be Continued)

GLIMPSES OF PIONEER DAYS - Jesse William Huggett (continued)

Our swags arrived and we went to Settlement Point for them and when we got them we made a start for the city. When we reached Kelly's station near McDonald's Track, a man asked us if we wanted to work there. If so, there was a big contract out for the digging of a big drain to be opened up about two miles away at Tobin Yallock. Two brothers, Matthew and Harry Monk, of Cranbourne, contractors, got the contract for the deepening of the drain, which was 20 feet wide. It was piece work - about sixpence-halfpenny a cubic yard - it was to be at beach level and go about two miles. It was easy digging and plenty of fish came up the drain to the camp at high tide, but the water was brackish and so dysentery prevailed among the men. One man was taken to Melbourne Hospital but died on the way. I got it bad myself, but the boss said he would cure me. He gave me a drink of rum, mixed with laudanum, at midday, and I lay down and slept for thirty hours without waking. The boss was scared, thinking that he had killed me, but I woke the next evening at 6 pm and was quite cured.

About this time I was sent for from Thompson's Tannery, shortly after April 1868, and in '69 Mr Thompson sent me to Ballarat where he joined with a Mr Anderson in purchasing a tannery near the lake there. I was there about eighteen months. Things were very brisk in that town at that time, the mines turning out a

lot of gold - Band and Albion, Hand and Band, Working Miners, North Park, Kohinor, Galatea, All Saints and many others.

Sometimes I was slack and then would go up to the Tanjil and do a bit of gold digging. I left Ballarat in '88, going back to Thompson's, then at Broadhursts, Mahoney's, Lennon's, Swithe's, Steele's, McGaun's, and Russell's, 42 years in all. Some of this time my brother Frank was prospecting and mining in the Tanjil region - being there about fifteen years from 1895. During his time there, early in the piece, he made a visit to the top of the mountain, and being a hot day he carried a billy of water all the way up with him. To his surprise, on getting to the top of Baw Baw they found a beautiful lake of clear spring water. It was in a cavity that must, at one time, have been a crater and it formed a creek a bit lower down. They found snow in the shade of the big boulders on top of Baw Baw. This was in the third week of January and was evidence that snow is there almost all the year round in the mountains.

From the part of the Tanjil where my brother and I worked, we had to go along a high ridge, almost as high as Baw Baw itself, to carry our tucker and other supplies from Lady Manus Sutton Creek, two miles away, where the carrier would leave it. We used to get it from Mr Williams' store at Willow Grove, ten miles away. In going along this high ridge in February, I saw fresh snow on Baw Baw. This mount is almost a mile above sea level - not quite two hundred feet short.

My brother, W.F. Huggett, was living in 1874, with my father and mother in Reilly St in Collongwood, when he became acquainted with a man named Gray, who had recently arrived in Melbourne from England and he said one

day he would like to do a bit of digging if he could get a good mate. Mr brother said "How would I do?" "Oh," he replied, "splendid, if you would come." Well, the upshot was that they made it up to go to the Queensland fields, going by boat to Sydney, then changed boats to another one to Cooktown.

The fare was £25 and the trip lasted three weeks. When they got to Cooktown, they found they still had 200 miles to go to the diggings at Palmer Creek and they had to carry everything they wanted - tents and blankets, tools, food and all equipment as not an ounce of anything could be got along the way for the whole distance. It was a terrible journey, and a dangerous one. Many poor fellows after about fifty or sixty miles of travelling became disheartened and returned to Cooktown and found themselves stranded there as many new arrivals were coming in every day and there was no money or supplies to travel further. One result was that the town was nearly eaten out of all foodstuffs. All the food my brother and his mate could get was 11 pounds of meat and some sea biscuits, a small amount to see them through a 200 mile trip - a poor prospect.

Well, they got started and the very first day they had to make their way through a swamp of slimy mud and slush with snakes and centipedes and all sorts of vermin floating in it. It took them the whole of the day to travel what they thought to be three or four miles. They stripped to the waist and made a collar of their swags and put it on their necks and shoulders and then, with long rods probing in the foul water, they made their slow way, as they did not know the depth in some places, and in others, only their heads were clear.

(To Be Continued)

SPECIAL EXHIBITION
Louie B Riggall (1868-1918)

PRELIMINARY NOTICE

The Latrobe Regional Gallery is currently assembling its most important historical exhibition that will re-claim a long forgotten turn of the century Gippsland artist.

Louie B. Riggall (1868 - 1918) lived at Tinamba near Maffra and studied art in Australia and Paris. In her life time she was a well respected and noted artist but now, some eighty years later, she has been omitted from our art history books and her works dispersed widely amongst relatives.

Louie was a VAD during WWI in Rouen and it was there in France she died in 1918.

In order to reinstate Louie's place in national art and local history the Latrobe Regional Gallery is drawing together her works from all over Australia for a once only exposé.

Her work is traditional and ranges widely in subject and media. The exhibition presents portraiture, still life and plein air landscape subjects. Whilst her oils speak of her disciplined training her watercolours are fresh and masterly.

Exhibition dates: 24th February - 2nd April

Latrobe Regional Gallery would be pleased to hear from groups wishing to view the exhibition and organisations wishing to be represented at the opening of this important event.

Latrobe Regional Gallery
138 Commercial Road, Morwell
Telephone (051) 34 1364

Gallery Hours: Tuesday - Friday 10.00 - 5.00 Sunday 1.30 - 4.30

Note: Latrobe Regional Gallery has no disabled access

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