

MORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Vol 15 No 4

July 1998

Sec/Editor: Elsie McMaster - Ph. 51341149

Welcome to the July Newsletter

A Sign of the Times! A chapter in Morwell's history ended with the recent closure of the *Centre Club Hotel* in Commercial Road. There has been a hotel on this site since 1877 when John Quigley set up in business. A pizza restaurant will open in the former hotel building shortly.

Wanted! Any photographs or memorabilia relating to the **Morwell-Mirboo North railway**, for a display in our rooms in September. If you can help, please contact the Secretary.

News and Notes:

****** At our May meeting, members **Faye and Boyd Thompson** treated us to a superb presentation of slides of the **Ticino** district of Switzerland. Using two screens and two projectors, they took us on a magical journey through the Swiss countryside. We hope they will be willing to give us an encore very soon!

****** The **heritage walk through Hazelwood Cemetery** was held on May 24, under the guidance of member and Cemetery Trust committee man, **Lou Bond**. Although the weather was unkind, those who attended were given a fascinating look at the past through the expert commentary of our guide and the inscriptions on the headstones. We may repeat the excursion later in the year when, hopefully, the weather will be more clement.

****** On June 4, twenty or so members and friends gathered at St Luke's Uniting Church, Morwell for an **ecumenical service to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the first formal religious service held in the Morwell area**. It was conducted at Hazelwood homestead by the **Reverend Francis Hales**, an Anglican priest, on June 4, 1848.

The **Reverend David Pargeter** conducted the commemorative service at St Luke's, incorporating some of the forms of service from the Anglican prayer book which would probably have been used by Rev. Hales in 1848. Members of the congregation also contributed to the service - **Mavis Coleman** played the organ, **Kathy Dalton**, a licenced reader in the Anglican Church gave the aboriginal perspective on the coming of white settlers to Gippsland and **Elsie McMaster** read extracts from the diary kept by the Rev. Hales on his Gippsland travels.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Members are reminded that subscriptions for 1998-99 are now overdue

If a cross appears in this box [] we have no record receiving your subscription.

Membership: \$10.00 Single \$12.50 Couple or family

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday July 21 - 7.30pm - Morwell Town Hall

FAMILY LIFE IN YALLOURN - 1956

Local historian and author Prue McGoldrick, who is also a member of our society, sent the following article and accompanying letters:

Dear Elsie,

Look what I found among some old papers recently! I was 30 years old and rather naive to think *The Post* might be interested in what I wrote. That journal was one of a number from overseas available through the Yallourn library.

It has some relevance to the present time with the Olympic Games coming to Sydney in the year 2000. It gives a picture of family life in Yallourn in 1956. My 42 year update shows how things have changed since then.

Am I still naive in thinking you might get something from all of this for the newsletter?

Best wishes and kind regards,

Prue McGoldrick

Prue McGoldrick

Prue enclosed a copy of the following letter:

EDITORIAL ROOMS

BEN HIBBS
EDITOR

THE SATURDAY
EVENING
POST
FOUNDED BY
Benjamin Franklin

THE CURTIS
PUBLISHING COMPANY
PHILADELPHIA 5

October 24, 1956

Dear Mrs. McGoldrick:

Thank you very much for sending us your article on your family life, which we have been glad to consider. We are sorry that it did not turn out to be a successful candidate for our current editorial program but your thought of the Post is appreciated nonetheless.

Sincerely,

The Editors

THE EDITORS

FAMILY LIFE IN YALLOURN - 1956 (cont)

Prue McGoldrick

‘ With Australia as the venue for the 1956 Olympic Games, intending American visitors may be wondering about Australian people. What are they like, and how do they live? This article gives information concerning an Australian family.

Meet Val and Prue McGoldrick and their four children; James (6 years), Bernard (5 years), Anne (3 years), twelve months old Damien and nephew, Francis.

Val is a 34 year old professional engineer at a power station, situated ninety miles east of Melbourne.

Prue is 30 years old and describes herself as a home supervisor. Before marrying Val in 1949 she was engaged in Engineering Draughting and did a part time course in home management. She now cares for their four children and an eighteen months old motherless nephew, Francis.

The McGoldricks live in a town with 6000 inhabitants. Their house overlooks the township, whose appearance a stage backdrop is heightened by the distant wooded mountain ranges. These ranges are a constant delight with their ever changing colours, from inky blue to tenuous amethyst.

The house itself is of weatherboard construction, containing three bedrooms, a kitchen, a large living room, bathroom and laundry. It is all electric, with an electric range, washing machine, refrigerator, cleaner, sewing machine, cake mixer, shaver and radio. All of these things were purchased without time payment; perhaps the McGoldricks are not average in this respect. As T.V. is in its infancy it was decided to wait a few years before installing a set.

With a houseful of lively youngsters, Val and Prue are glad that they did not fill up their home with expensive furniture. Most of what they have already in the way of furniture was made by Val before their marriage. He used Australian timbers; Queensland Maple, a light mushroom pink, for the bedroom furniture, and Blackwood, a rich dark red, for the dining room and living room. Val looks forward to the days when he has more time to make furniture again in his workshop, well equipped with power saw, lathe and sander.

Prue has help in the house. A woman comes in daily to attend to the cleaning of the house and the laundering. Nevertheless, she is kept busy getting Jamie and Bernard off to the local primary school, caring for the two baby boys and Anne, who, despite her three years, is always anxious to help. Announcing that “We are the Mummies”, this curly-headed little lady will take Francis for a walk in the garden, gather eggs from the fowls or pick a nosegay of tiny wild flowers. Peak period of the day is the evening bathing of the five children. Val helps here, as even six year old Jamie must be checked behind ears and knees.

Val and the two school boys return home by car each day for mid-day dinner. Dinner consists of a main meal of roast lamb, beef, veal or pork; or grilled steak or lamb chops; or a casserole or pressure cooked stew. There are always at least three vegetables including potatoes, a yellow vegetable and greens. These are followed by a sweet. Tea at night consists of soup and a light, appetizing cheese or meat dish in winter. In the warmer weather there are sandwiches and salads from the home garden, the latter often being eaten out-of-doors in the garden at home or in the bush. Fresh fruit is eaten between meals. Tea, too, is drunk between meals or at any time - in fact, all the major and minor crises of Australian life are met with a “cuppa”. Marketing is done once weekly for meat, while groceries, vegetables and fruit are delivered to the door.

Activities outside the home include family picnics at the sea-side or in the bush. By "the bush" is meant the timbered country surrounding the township. As well as the trees, mainly eucalypts and wattles of many species, there is an undergrowth of ti-tree, flowering shrubs and ferns, while heath, small orchids and other wild flowers grow abundantly. Here, too, can be found the wallaby, koala bear, kangaroo, hedgehog, possum and other lesser known animals. The birds include those of the fly-catcher family, whip-birds, colourful parrots, and the famous magpie and kookaburra. The creeks and rivers not only contain fish but are the home of the unique platypus.

The vastness of Australia and the long distances between towns make car ownership a necessity. Both Val and Prue drive their Australian made 'Holden' car. Other activities outside the home include tennis for Val, while both he and Prue enjoy dancing when a baby-sitter is available. They attend the local picture theatre which provides not only a selection of good films but is the setting for locally produced plays and concerts by local and overseas musicians of note.

Val is treasurer of the local library, which has 3,200 adult and 1,200 child subscribers. Prue attends a book reading and discussion group and is a member of the local branch of the Country Women's Association. Val is secretary of the local division of the Institution of Engineers. He is also a keen amateur photographer. While neither is an enthusiastic gardener, there is a vegetable plot, and flowers, lawns and shrubs are kept trim. Each year the surplus fruit from the garden is preserved in jars for the winter time.

The McGoldricks are Catholics and their religion plays a big part in their family life. What of their aspirations for the future? Well, they still hope to travel - despite their growing family. Perhaps Val will win a travelling scholarship to further his engineering studies in England or America.

This is an average Australian family. These are semi-country dwellers, but there are city folk, suburbanites, inland station owners and families all over Australia who are proud of their country. Proud that she has been chosen as the site of the Olympic Games this year. We look forward to welcoming visitors to the Olympic Games and will gladly show them our country and share a "cuppa".

FORTY TWO YEARS ON -

Australia is once again preparing to host the Olympic Games. While visitors will be welcomed as warmly as before, people, places and our way of life have changed.

The model town of Yallourn no longer exists. It was removed to gain access to the brown coal underneath it.

Household luxuries of the fifties such as television, refrigerators and washing machines are considered necessities today. Sewing machines, motor cars and even cookers are now computerised.

We eat a great variety of food and use it in many ways. It may be 'takeaway' style or home cooked in a pot or pan, conventional or microwave oven or an Asian wok. Meals are less formal; they are often eaten in front of a TV set. Supermarket shopping has replaced home deliveries of groceries, fruit and vegetables.

The McGoldrick family itself is unrecognisable; the children are well adjusted 'baby boomers'. They are all happily married with children of their own. They have given Val and Prue thirteen delightful grandchildren, the eldest being 21 years, the youngest 10.

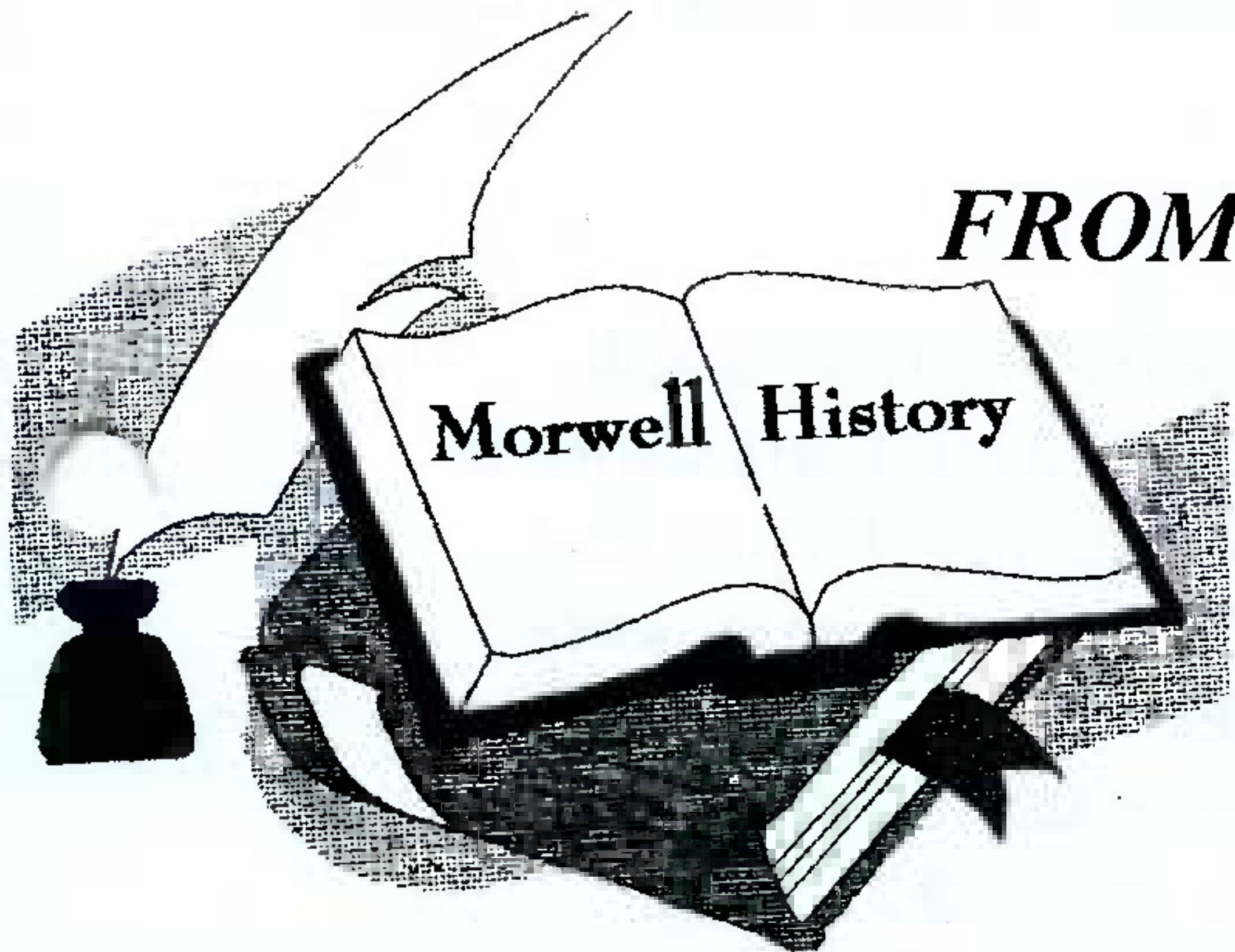
Val continued his interest in committees concerning education, sport and church matters. He became a local government councillor in his retirement from the workforce. He drives a Rover sedan.

When the children were babies no longer, Prue pursued an interest in drama and committees dealing with general community work. She updated her educational qualifications, took up journalism and in retirement embarked on writing books, mainly on local history. She drives a Peugeot sedan.

Val's dream of travel was realised in 1959, when he was sent overseas by his employer, the SEC. That was a rare privilege. Both Prue and Val have travelled privately a number of times to Asia, U.K., Europe and the USA, also extensively throughout the vastness of Australia.

The promise of a welcome for visitors to the Australian Olympics remains unchanged but the 'cuppa' will probably be coffee instead of tea.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S FACT FILE



FIRE BRIGADE

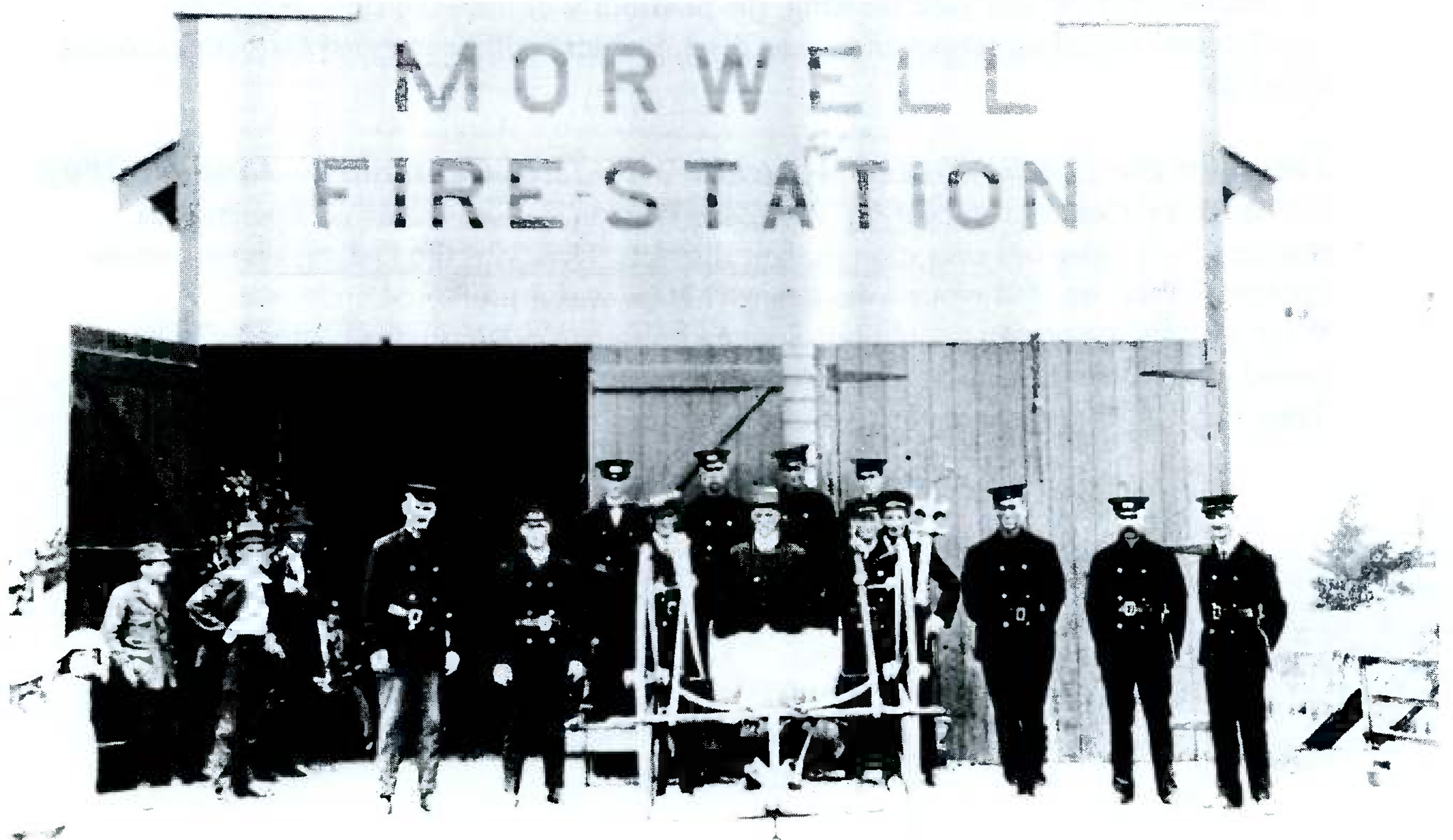
The Morwell Volunteer Fire Brigade was formed on 20th November, 1914. It became operational in January 1915. Mr Richard Noy was the first Captain. Other officers were Lieutenant J. Bryden, Foreman W. Wilson and Secretary W Milligan.

The Brigade consisted of 25 men and operated from Gill's "Gazette" newspaper office in Station Street (Princes Highway) until February 1917 when a Fire Station was built beside the railway line near the Church Street level crossing. The site was chosen because it provided easy access to either side of town. The current Fire Station in Church Street was opened in 1953 and was built at a cost of 17,000 pounds. The Brigade then became a unit under the control of the Country Fire Authority.

Source: *Steamhorse to Power* pp 59 and 87

Photographic references: *Heart of the Valley* page 140 / *Glimpses of Our Past* page 90

Below: Fire Brigade members in front of the fire station, Station Street, Morwell. Date unknown.
Front row (men in uniform) l-r: Percy Lubcke, Watson, Thomas White, others unknown.
Back row: Second from left, Dick Noy, others unknown.



PRESERVING OUR HERITAGE

Memories and Memorabilia, a program funded by the Federal Government, urges Australians, both as individuals and as members of community organisations, to locate and preserve any items of significance relating to their community's wartime experiences over the past century. Items of wartime heritage value may be as diverse as school and community honour boards, medals and decorations, ration coupons, blackout instructions, family photographs, postcards and letters from servicemen and women, and many more. Local historical societies are well placed to take care of such items and our Society would be pleased to accept any items which fit the above category.

Preservation of Local Government Records

Our Society, together with the other historical societies in the LaTrobe Shire, is still working on the preservation of the municipal records of the former Shires and Cities of Moe/Narracan, Morwell and Traralgon. Our concern over these records falls into two parts. First, the need to retain the records in their local areas so that they can be easily accessed by residents, rather than have them housed in the Public Records Office, where access is difficult. Secondly, the need to copy and/or restore fragile and fading records such as rate books and minute books. The societies are currently investigating the possibility of copying and storing these records electronically, either by digital photography, or by scanning them into a computer.

Preservation of Built and Cultural Heritage

A point of discussion at the meeting of the Royal Historical Society State Committee in June was concern about the preservation of buildings and items of cultural heritage. RHSV has requested the Minister for Natural Resources and Environment, Marie Tehan, to reinstate the circularisation of lists of public assets being considered for disposal, but has had no reply as yet.

A proposal to identify former school sites, as has been done in South Gippsland, was recommended for State wide adoption.

*Co-incidentally, at our June meeting, the possibility of marking sites of historic significance, including school sites, was discussed and will be pursued further at coming meetings.

Plans for the Celebration of Australia's Federal Centenary - January 2001

At the RHSV Committee meeting, Professor Weston Bate called on all Societies to research the history of Federation in their districts. How was the Federation movement accepted? Who was in favour, who against? How was it promoted?

What worthwhile projects could our Society initiate to celebrate the centenary? There is bound to be some funding available for such projects. Now is the time to start planning. The celebrations are less than two and a half years away.