

# MORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

## NEWSLETTER

PUBLISHED MONTHLY, EXCEPT DECEMBER

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

OLD TOWN HALL , MORWELL

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JUNE 1994

### Welcome to the June Newsletter

Our good wishes this month go to members Dorothy Fogarty, now on the mend after a spell in hospital - may your health continue to improve, Dot - and to Amy Tibballs, who celebrated her 85th birthday last month - may you have many more, Amy!

President Eric, with representatives from several other groups, visited the old Yallourn Power Station last week to see if any of the remaining materials were of historical significance. Most of the contents of the station have been removed but our Society will be given custody of several gauges and some original plans (drawings) which we feel are worth preserving.

Guest speaker at our May meeting was Mrs Linda Powter who gave a most interesting and entertaining account of her family's connection with our early history, from her mother's perspective. Lin's family, the Raes, owned the property now occupied by A.P.M Mill and Lin, her brothers and sister, grew up there. Lin later married Ern Powter and, with 25 hens, which she had bought as day-old chicks, started Lyndale Poultry Farm, which now has around 50,000 hens and produces tons of eggs weekly. A cassette of Lin's talk is available for loan.

It's interesting to note that Morwell's municipal offices have been re-located for the fourth time in just over a century. The first Shire Offices were on the site of the present Water Trust building. Then they were located within the Town Hall, then in the Civic Centre to the east of the town, and now in the old Co-op Building. With municipal mergers in the wind, will there still be a Morwell Council this time next year?

***An Important Question for All Members!*** Have you paid your annual subscription? \$7.00 Single, \$10.00 couple or family.

Dot Bartlett, 5 Neville St. or Elsie McMaster, 2 Harold St. will be pleased to receive your payment.

### "Georgina" Reunion

A reunion of the descendants of passengers who came to Australia on the ship "Georgina" in 1852 is planned for October 15, 1994, in Geelong. The parents of well-known local identity Christina Tucker-Greenwood arrived on the "Georgina". Her great-granddaughter, Gwenda Booth has put together a family history, of which we have a copy, which is available for anyone interested to borrow. Further information on the reunion can be obtained from Margaret Vines, 29 Huskisson Ave, Lalor 3075.

### *The Way It Was* (cont). A.R.Fish

The second day away from home and after a little while I came to a small creek and here on the bare stones of a small ford I again boiled the billy. The tea, though refreshing, was spoilt by an oily scum that rose to the surface of the water, and this I had to remove before I could drink it. This was, and I suppose still is, typical of water in that part of the country and I have wondered whether there is oil thereabouts.

On again, in the morning sunlight, and I got onto the railway which runs from Koroit up through Penshurst to Hamilton, and as it seemed to be going the same way as I was, I followed it along. It was easier going than the open paddocks as I was now in the region of the Penshurst stoney rises - outcrops of volcanic rock and piles of loose boulders which made the going rather rough so I stuck as long as I could to the easier going of the line. However as I got further along towards the town of Penshurst the way diverged from the more direct route I wished to travel so I once again took to the harder going.

It was not only hard but lonely going. For this was at that time, and may still be, a region of large estates, and all that

day travelling from sun-up to sun-down, I did not see any other human, or sight a house or any station property. But if men were scarce, then at times hares were plentiful. I have never seen, before or since, so many hares as I saw that day.

Mid-afternoon I crossed the road that goes from Penshurst across to the town of Caramut and continued until evening when I arrived at a large sheet of water - partly man-made - that I could see by the earthen bank which held it back - but in the maps of that region, dignified by the title of "lake".

Under the pines by the lake bank I laid down my burden and after a short rest, impelled by hunger, I unrolled a hand line and angled for fish, with no success. There was an abundance of wildlife on the water but even had I shot one, it would still have been out of reach. So it was rabbit again - roasted rare on the coals - and some toasted bread, washed down by black, unsweetened tea. Truly, hunger is the best sauce. This would have been a good camp. But a cold wind began to blow and I heaped up a breakwind of pine branches and pine needles. However, my second night away from home did not pass so sweetly, due partly to the cold wind, the half-raw rabbit and the small mob of cattle which came investigating the stranger by the lakeside. Cattle by nature are very curious animals. Queer Cattle. (That was the title of my first accepted and paid-for story). I tried again in the early morning to catch a fish but with no success. If there are any fish in that water then they must be there still. I never took any out.

Morning mists were breaking up before the sun as I was once more on my way. Day Third. And now quite close to the hills. This was the last week of the year 1932 and I was midway between my fifteenth and sixteenth birthdays. But the mountain range was now high in the sky

and calling my vagrant heart. So on it was. It was during the last part of the morning that I made it into the town of Dunkeld - sixty miles from home by road, a little less by the way the crow had to fly - and here I found a couple of small shops open. I was able here to stock up in readiness for my assault on the ranges. The ladies in the shop were curious and very sympathetic when I told them I was hiking up to help with the harvest on my uncles' farm just out from Horsham. My uncles were named Ross. "My word", said the dear old lady, "your feet will be tired before you get to the Wimmera". As proof of their interest they gave me a little more than I paid for - which helped me out a bit - and I tell you now that I was to discover that you can tell a story that touches hearts, but when you touch pockets then it really means something. I have sometimes wished that the hearts of editors were more easily touched.

Fortified by lunch and the good wishes of my friends, I set out again. Filling the new water bag at the little stream flowing out of the heart of the range, I left the beaten track and set my face and my feet to climb the rocky wall. At that time I was young and with no experience of mountaineering, and I had no reason to suppose that I would not be able to reach the peak of Mt. Sturgeon in an hour or so of steady walking. But I found that even though the plains fell away behind and beneath me at a steady rate, the mountain top itself seemed no nearer. However, mid-afternoon found me still toiling up the lower slopes, so I had to content myself with a revision of my mountaineering plans, lest night find me still on the scrubby hillsides. I then decided on an up-and-over the ridge at what appeared to be its lowest point. Two other aspects of nature which came to my notice for the first time that day

were, first - the biggest bull-ants I had ever seen, well over an inch long. The other, my first sight of the so-called sleepy lizard - stump-tailed - which appeared at first glance to have a tail at either end. I kept out of the way of the ants but the lizards were quite harmless, though fearsome-looking in defiance with their wide-open jaws.

Late afternoon and I topped the range and began the descent. Down the valley side through dense bracken fern well over head high, which made it almost impossible for me to see where I was going, or to keep any kind of direction except a downward one. I was surprised then to step out onto a well-travelled gravel road, which I welcomed as a relief to the scrub-bashing, and this was easier going. I had decided that I was not cut out for any kind of mountaineering so followed the road upwards along the valley. It was the Dubkeld-Victoria Valley road and I followed along until about sunset I came to a small school-house - the Valley School House, I think. Here was shelter and water and it appeared as a good place to spend the night. Large flocks of brilliantly-coloured parrots fed in the grasses or rose on splendid-hued wings and startled the great kangaroos who, in dignified manner, loped lazily away towards the higher slopes and the thicker scrub. Unmolested and unpursued, several emu ran in among the trees. Here I made my camp - now eighty miles from home - and stretched out for a dreamless sleep. I had come a long way, some of it over rather rough going. I was only fifteen.

Next day was D-day. The day of decision. Three days out; it would take me three days to get back. Or I could go on, into the unknown. It was very much a matter of the devil I knew versus the unknown one. So, on it was. And the swagman's breakfast.

Then roll the swag and out on the road, up along the valley and over the mountain pass about midday with the high noon sun glaring down on the sandy road and the bare rocks. Down to the foot of the hills again where the Wannon River flows gentle over the stones. Here at that time was a kind of wayside cafe or tea rooms. And here also was the place to remove the boots and socks and refresh tired feet in the cool waters. There was little traffic on the road, somewhat different to what it is now in these times. There would not have been a dozen cars in a whole day and this, remember, was in Christmas week. What a contrast these times. Those days a winding sandy bush track. Now a wide bitumen road, with an endless stream of holiday-makers. But in those days only the most venturesome of motorists took their cars on those mountain tracks. Those were the days when inter-state travellers spoke of "crossing to Adelaide" and in bated breath of "the dreaded Coorong". It was not a good road for walking, that road that went up along the valley to Hall's Gap. It was a hot day and the sun poured down upon the sandy track and the scrub and was fierce among the bare rocks, and the air was still and lifeless. And the track was hot and sandy and scrubby, winding through, and sometimes over, the scrub, and for the first time on my journey I began to feel some fatigue. But I did not have to walk far as a kindly Providence was watching out for me and there came along the track a small car, driven by a gentleman accompanied by his wife. The car was what used to be known as a 'two-seater', just one bench seat, and outside in what we would have now called the 'boot', another seat, known then as a 'dickey-seat'. This was quite open-air and was the seat normally occupied by semi-strangers, children or

maybe by mother-in-laws. In this case, however, the dickey-seat was full of piled-up luggage. However, there was one place for a weary boy, and that was the running-board. Even if modern cars had such things, such a place would have been extremely risky in modern-day traffic, but in those circumstances and at the slow winding speed as the car churned its way along the sandy road, the ride was quite safe and, though not much faster than walking, it was a deal more comfortable. To make it quite safe, the driver passed a stout leather strap around the steering column and this, passed again around my middle, made a good safety belt. And thus we travelled through the high noon and the hot afternoon.

They asked a few questions and I made suitable replies. When I told from whence I came - and how long I had been in coming - the lady almost told me to my face that I was a liar. Well, so I might have been but this time I was telling the truth. Which poses the question - why is it when I tell the most outrageous lies I get unquestioning belief, but here, where I am sticking to the truth I am met with incredulous unbelief. Tell people a whole string of lies and they swallow it hook, line and sinker, but try telling them the truth. These days I deal in truth, but nobody seems to want it.

Late afternoon we pulled up at the entrance into the Bellfield Hotel and it was back on the track again for me. The motorist offered to buy me a beer, which I declined. Also he offered me a part-used packet of cigarettess, which I accepted. These I could have better been without. Well, I had a few miles to go so, once again, with my swag on my shoulder and my rifle at the trail position, I made my way into the town of Hall's Gap.

(To be continued)

***Glimpses of Pioneer Days (cont).***  
**Jesse William Huggett (written in 1919).**

There were two or three episodes while at Brunswick. One was the opening of the Yan Yean Water Supply. On this occasion all the children were invited to a spree at the back of the Retreat hotel, Sydney Road, in a large paddock, where we were treated to all sorts of good things and the water carts were filled up with milk and ginger ale and hop beer.

The next event to note was the laying of the foundation stone of All Saints Church of England, northcote. The then Governor, Sir Henry Barkly, was officiating and anyone who desired it was treated to a supply of roast beef and plum pudding and other good things. This was in 1858.

Situated in Prince's Park was a stockade for prisoners. I remember on one occasion a big balloon, that was sent up from Cremorne Gardens by Mr George Coppin, was over Brunswick followed by a large crowd of men, women and children. It came down inside the wall of the stockade - a dry rubble wall with sentry boxes at short intervals. The crowd got over the wall and prisoners and crowd and free people and warders all got mixed up together. They received the balloon while the warders were threatening to shoot the people if they did not get out - but they took no notice and it was not until the balloon rose again that the stockade was cleared.

Kangaroo Farm. Well, my father always had a fancy to go on the land (his father had a farm in England) so in 1858 we bought fifty acres at Vermont - Nunawading in those days - on Delaney's Road, now Canterbury Road, just where the Vermont Post Office now stands. My father and I went from Brunswick to build a two-roomed hut there and the

very first morning when I opened the door there was a kangaroo sitting there, the first I had seen. I found later that there was a great number of them about the place, also native cats (two kinds) and many possums, native bears, flying squirrels, dingoes, bandicoots, snakes and lizards and iguanas and also kangaroo rats and kangaroo mice.

We did not take much food or cash with us, not thinking to be long there, but father became very ill with dysentery through drinking the only water we had which was not too good, being clay-coloured. We were delayed and were for three days with no other food than potatoes which the only neighbours gave us. On a Sunday in April we started for home. My father was very weak. We got as far as John o'Shannasse's big house. Booroondara, then crossed a potato paddock towards Kew. I remember eating a few raw potatoes. Then we got amongst some lanes and hedges and came to an hotel, where father went in and told the landlord how we were situated and asked if he would trust us for a dinner. He invited us in and gave us as much roast beef and plum pudding as we could eat and (as if that was not enough) made my father have a glass of beer as well, and when father talked of paying him when he came again the landlord was quite offended and would not hear of it.

Well, we made another start and when we got to the Kew railway station, where the Roman Catholic College is now - a big paddock it was in those days - we saw assembled there about two hundred blackfellows and their lubras holding a corroboree, throwing their spears and boomerangs and dancing to music provided by the lubras beating possum skin drums stretched across their knees. This was the first and only scene of this kind I have seen. We stayed about two

hours and then made for Brunswick. On the following Wednesday we moved our belongings to our new home at Nunawading.

In May 1860, things not being too good with us at Nunawading, the roads being so fearfully bad, father and a neighbour, Charlie Stewart, decided to try their luck at the diggings at Hoddle's Creek near Yankee Jim's (Old Warburton). They started, arriving at Lilydale the first day. Next day they reached John Brierty's station on the Woori Yallock creek (later owned by David Mitchell and afterwards by Syme's of the Age newspaper.) Mr Brierty was noted for his kindness and any bona-fide traveller was sure of a supper and a breakfast and a shakedown on the floor.

The same John Brierty was one of the Major Mitchell party, who came over from Sydney in 1838 with bullock teams, horses, cattle, sheep, fowls and pigs and stores to form new settlements. Where a suitable spot was found one of the party would be left, with twelve months provisions and some stock and a few farm implements. Mr Castella (the well-known wine grower) was another of the party who planted the first vine cuttings in Victoria. Another of the party, a certain Captain..... (his name has slipped my memory for the time being) settled at what is called Yarra Glen.

Major Mitchell's route was along the top of the dividing range and over the top of Baw Baw, and down through the Watt's, now called Fernshaw. The party camped there and, after supper one of the party said he would try and catch some fish in the river. He failed to return so they searched for him and found his body where he had slipped and fallen into the water. So they buried him on a hill there and it was called Dead Man's Hill when I was there on the Watts at January 1865. Off to the Jordan Diggings. Well, to

return to the story The night my father and his mates got to the diggings, four other men from the Hoddles Creek diggings came there also. They got talking and said Hoddles Creek was not too good and invited them to go off to Jordan doggongs which field had just broken out. Father and his mate agreed and one of the party gave the opinion that they need not go all the way to Melbourne (30 miles) then some distance up the road to Yea - sixty miles for nothing. He declared he could pilot them across the country to the Big River, where they could get some food, and then follow it down to the Yea road. He said: "We can get through in about a day and a half so we need not overload ourselves with food." So on Saturday morning they started out and arrived at the foot of Mount Juliet sixteen miles away where they decided to camp for the evening. They stayed the next day - Sunday - then on Monday decided not to travel straight on but to hunt up a track they were told led to the Blacks' Protective Station on the Acheron River. They could find no track - only short ones made by surveyors which came to nothing only a short way into the bush. Lost in the Ranges. Well, they finished their flour at dinner time on Monday and decided to tackle the scrub, placing every confidence in their guide's ability to take them safely through but they soon found out that they were mistaken and that he had misled them and indeed confessed that he knew no more about the country than they did (and that was nothing). It was very rough country - it still is - with dense scrub and steep ranges. They had no food until the following day they shot a lyrebird with the only charge of shot they had.

At Starvation Point. They threw the gun away and they had previously thrown away their tent and blankets and tools,

everything but a billy, a small driving pick and a piece of clothes line. They also had to make an agreement that no matter what came they would not kill and eat each other. Well, they stewed the bird. (Bushmen still declare that lyrebird is cooked with a small stone in the pot - when the stone is soft then the lyrebird is ready for eating)! They decided to have soup for supper and save the solid meat for breakfast, dividing it into about six parts - a bird about the size of a small fowl. My father's mate said he would let the soup go and have all his share of the meat then. Next day father said the poor fellow looked so bad when they were all having breakfast that he felt inclined to share with him - but then they were all just as bad off as he. The next day - Friday - they were going along but missed one of their number. Going back they found him lying on the ground by the track. They asked him what was wrong and he said he was not going any further; that they would never get through anyway and as they would all die anyhow he decided that he may as well die in comfort where he was. However they made him get up and come along. he was nineteen, the youngest of the party, and a fine powerfully built fellow - a blacksmith, as was his father - who was also one of the party. This incident proves to me that the older and more set men are better able to stand up to hardship than youngsters, when it comes to privations and hunger.

Desolation. So, early in the morning they came to a swamp - this was Friday - and a creek flowed through it and on the other side a steep hill, which they were too weak to tackle so camped by the swamp, but one more plucky then went ahead up the hill to see what it looked like. When he reported that the country up in front was stringybark and more open this was cheering news to the rest

of the party.

Catching a Bear. Then early on the Saturday morning they started their way up the big hill and found the country becoming more open and less scrubby, and also finding a native bear up a small tree. Close by was a much larger tree. Then arose a controversy. Should they try to get him down? Would he spring into the larger tree and be out of their reach? This would have been disastrous for the starving men but they decided to risk it - they had no real choice - so they picked around the roots of the sapling with the pick and then pulled it over with the bit of clothes line. Then some rushed in and killed the bear while some got a fire going. They first burned all the fur off and then cut it into six parts and ate it all except the inside and half the head - which the young fellow put into the billy and carried along - saying it might be useful later and anyhow he was not going to go hungry any more.

They Find a Calf. Well, they travelled on and presently came to a fence and some tame calves inside of it, and some wanted then and there to kill one and eat it. Others contended that where there was a fence there must have been some settler so it would be better to follow up the fence and see if they could find someone and if not they could return along the fence and kill one of the calves. This was agreed upon. The next thing they did was all to go down on their knees and give thanks to God for having brought them safely through their troubles. Some of these men had perhaps never prayed in their lives before, but men are like that, they turn to God when things are going wrong, expecting Him to help them - but at other times they turn away from Him.

(To be continued)

# Let's trumpet Melbourne Day

**Y**OU have noticed, of course, that our new city commissioners have declared August 30 Melbourne's Foundation Day.

That was the day in 1835 that the schooner *Enterprise* sailed up the Yarra.

Do you realise what this means? The tough, fearless characters who are now running our city have come down on the side of John Pascoe Fawkner.

Melbourne, you must realise, has always been divided between the Batman mob and the Fawkner mob.

If you were in the column-writing business it was difficult indeed. If one even made a suggestion that one or the other was the true founder, several hundred letters would arrive in the mail.

There were only two more dangerous subjects — religion and dogs.

There were immense complications. Batman came up the river and declared Melbourne a nice place for a village three months earlier on June 8.

But then, you see, he didn't pitch his tent for very long. He went back to Launceston and didn't return until April 1836.

The *Enterprise* came up the river on August 30, but Mr Fawkner wasn't even aboard.

The *Enterprise* set out on July 27, but then returned allegedly because J.P. couldn't stand the storms and a churning seasick stomach. But the truth was he had to go back because of all his unpaid debts and the sheriff was after him.

So the *Enterprise* set to sea again without J.P. and he didn't actually get to the settlement until October 16.

Meanwhile, the *Enterprise* arrived with Captain Lancey and George Evans, and it was George who actually settled down, put up the first shack and made a settlement before he moved out to Sunbury and created Emu Bottom.

Some Foundation Day enthusiasts believe we should honor George. He came from a family of Plymouth builders, joined the navy and fought with Nelson in the



KEITH DUNSTAN

Battle of Copenhagen, losing part of one hand.

But we have done nothing for George. Batman has a monument and an avenue named after him. Fawkner has a park, a cemetery and innumerable streets, crescents and avenues. George doesn't even crack an entry in the *Dictionary of Biography*.

Then there are those who go for Charles Grimes: surveyor-general of New South Wales, who came up the Yarra on February 2, 1803, 32 years before any of them.

I tell you, it's fiercely tricky.

Fawkner himself always claimed he was the true founder.

He detested Batman, whom he thought was a bit upper class, a squatter. What's more, he disapproved of his morals. Batman was a womaniser and died of syphilis.

**B**UT then George was no saint himself. He was sentenced to three years' prison and 500 lashes for aiding and abetting prisoners.

J.P. claimed he was the only one who stayed to build Melbourne. Batman died. Lancey stayed a few weeks, Evans went out of town.

So maybe we should give it to J.P., who stayed with us until 1869, when he died, aged 77.

This column for the past 10 years has been pleading for a special day for Melbourne, mainly because Melburnians are such a miserable, self-deprecating lot. The city seethes with knockers.

It wasn't always so. In 1873, Anthony Trollope accused us of too much boasting. He wrote: "When a gentleman sounds his own trumpet he 'blows'... They blow a good deal in Queensland; a good deal in South Australia. They blow even in Tasmania. They blow loudly in New South Wales, and very loudly in New Zealand.

"But the blast of the trumpet as heard in Victoria is louder than all the blasts — and the Melbourne blast beats all the other blowing of that loud colony."

There's a lot of competition around and I believe we should blow just as hard now as we did then.

Very wisely, there is no suggestion that this Foundation Day should be a public holiday. If you do that it would be as inevitable as your next parking fine — the public holiday would become a long weekend and an excuse for more football matches.

No, our Melbourne Day should be a day for "blowing", a day for celebrating precisely why we are so wonderful.

We could have a series of trophies, prizes for the

best art work that depicts Melbourne; a prize for the best Melbourne song, the best poem, the most enchanting piece of prose.

But Melbourne Day should cover everything. We could have the baker who baked the best bread, the pastrycook who made the best cake, the restaurant that turned on the best meal.

We could have a Mr or Ms Melbourne of the Year on whom we would confer the O.M., the Order of Melbourne. I don't think it would distract too much from Britain's Order of Merit.

You might have more suggestions on how we can handle Melbourne Day, but we could make it the brightest day of the year and, with a bit of luck, we could blow our heads off.

## City bosses set date for Foundation Day

By ALAN RADOS

THE City of Melbourne's commissioners yesterday agreed to declare August 30 Melbourne's Foundation Day.

The move is a bid to close the book on the long-running debate about who first settled Melbourne.

The council will pass a special proclamation on August 30 acknowledging the day as the occasion of the first white settlement on the Yarra River in 1835.

It will also "rectify historical discrepancies" in plaques and monuments across the city relating to Melbourne's settlement.

The Melbourne Foundation Day Committee, which requested the move, applauded the decision to celebrate officially the day the schooner *Enterprise*, owned by John Pascoe Fawkner,



Sir Rupert Hamer

sailed up the Yarra with a landing party.

But the chairman of the Batman Family Association, Mrs Edna Richards, said: "It would be a confidence trick on the people of Melbourne and at least a half truth."

Mrs Richards said June 8 should be Foundation Day — the day in the same year John Batman pronounced those famous words "this will be the place for a village".

Mrs Richards, a descendant of Henry Batman,

John's brother, said John sailed into Port Phillip Bay three months before the *Enterprise*, on May 10.

"The nucleus of the permanent population of Melbourne was John Batman's holding party from Indented Head (on the Bellarine Peninsula), several of whom had sailed up the Yarra and were there (in the area of today's Melbourne) on June 8," she said.

The chairman of the Melbourne Foundation Day Committee, Sir Rupert Hamer, said he was delighted the council recognised August 30 as Foundation Day.

He said it was the day the first white settlers stepped off the *Enterprise* with animals and building materials.

The move has the support of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria and the History Teachers Association of Victoria.



# Hist. Society to the rescue



*Trophies won by the former Yallourn fire brigade have been given to the Morwell Historical Society for safe keeping.*

*Generation Victoria presented the Historical Society with the trophies, won by the Yallourn brigade at fire fighting competitions between the 1920s and 1960s.*

*The trophies may eventually be displayed at the Society's Commercial Rd premises in the old Morwell town hall.*

*Pictured above, Generation Victoria Community Relations Manager Mark Vitlin hands the trophies to Morwell Historical Society President Eric Lubcke.*

From "CONTACT" (The magazine of Generation Victoria)  
June 8, 1994