

MORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Meetings: 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7.30pm

Old Morwell Town Hall

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Welcome to the March Newsletter

Several members attended the public meeting held by LaTrobe Council in Morwell and aired some of the concerns of the Society about the lack of consultation between the Council and community bodies. A meeting is being arranged between our committee and the Executive Officer Corporate Services, where these concerns can be addressed in more detail.

Work is proceeding on the development of the Historical Precinct in the grounds of Commercial Road State School. The precinct will include the old St Mary's Anglican Church, the old Commercial Road School building and an amphitheatre in landscaped gardens. It is hoped the area will be widely used by community groups when it is finished.

The **Australian Institute of Genealogical Studies** and the **Genealogical Society of Victoria** are working together to compile and keep up-to-date a listing of all cemeteries and burial grounds in Victoria, including the location of any or all records. They also plan to have a central 'register' point for any project (e.g transcribing of memorials) so that duplication is avoided. The co-operation of members of Local History societies is being sought. Anyone with an interest or information can obtain further details from Elsie McMaster.

If anyone is going to Melbourne by car within the next couple of weeks and could pick up two sheets of foamcore mounting board from R.H.S.V in Queen St, it would be appreciated. The sheets are approx 3' x 4', very light, and rather fragile, so they are unsuitable for rail freight.

The Annual Meeting of Morwell Historical Society Inc will be held on

TUESDAY MARCH 19 at 7.30 pm in the Old Town Hall
Guest Speaker will be local author and academic John Pearson

ST. MATTHEW'S, YINNAR

St. Matthew's Anglican Church, Yinnar was officially de-licensed by Bishop Arthur Jones at a final service on March 3 this year, due to concerns about the building.

Albert E. Clark, in *The Church of Our Fathers*, writes:

'On April 6th, 1888, a public meeting was held with the Rev. J. R. Walker in the chair. There were 11 persons present, and those 11 decided to build their little church on the block of land which was given by Mr Firmin.

No doubt services had been held elsewhere prior to this, because they already had an organ fund, and they decided to divert this money to the building fund. They were quite prepared to return donations to any who objected. They formed a building committee consisting of Messrs Firmin, McDonald, Wicks, O'Hara and Edwards. Mr Wicks was the Secretary and Mr Edwards the Treasurer.

The original subscription list is still in existence in the records of Yinnar. It shows £18/10/6. This, together with a loan of £150 from Diocesan Funds, gave them more than they needed, for on June 5th, 1889 the tender for the erection of the church was let to Mr John Jollup for £120/14/6. He was given 12 weeks in which to complete the building. The church was to have been opened on December 12th of that year, but the contractor found it impossible to finish it in time. It was dedicated by Archdeacon Langley on February 2nd, 1890.

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From *Herald Sun* 5 March, 1996:

History is losing its past glories

By LYNNE HOLROYD

THE greatest threat to history teaching is not its declining popularity at VCE.

Instead, say history teachers, it comes in the compulsory years of secondary schooling where separate and systematic history teaching now looks set to disappear.

Under the Curriculum and Standards Framework, soon to be compulsory in all Victorian government schools, history is no longer a subject in its own right.

Instead, in line with national guidelines, it is just a small part of one of the eight key learning areas in Years 7-10.

This area, called Studies of Society and Environment (SOSE), covers content and skills typically taught in history, geography, commerce, environmental studies and even religious studies.

"When anything new is introduced into the cur-

riculum, time is taken away from the humanities," says Helena Dunn, who heads both the Victorian and Australian associations of history teachers.

She has seen humanities shrink from occupying about one-fifth of the secondary curriculum to much less to make way for subjects such as technology, health, computer studies, leadership courses, sex education, sport and environmental studies.

She says history could shrink even further to become just a small part of the three periods a week likely to be given to SOSE in many schools.

In the past, many schools may have taught two or three separate history subjects such as ancient, Australian, European or Asian. Now they may teach none.

History departments are being replaced in many government schools by SOSE departments.

The danger, says John Cantwell, education officer for the History Teachers Association of Victoria, is that integrated studies built around particular themes will take over.

As a result, history in state schools will be taught

History is facing a bleak future as a school subject

in only a very disjointed and haphazard fashion.

"For example, you might study endangered species in the Antarctica, followed by women in the gold rush, then Australian Government," Mr Cantwell says.

He welcomes course ma-

terials and sample courses being produced at national and state government level to help students learn about Australia's government, the constitution, citizenship and Australian culture.

But he points out that teaching this material is not compulsory and anyway, it must be crammed into a crowded SOSE curriculum.

"Covering this area is obviously a first priority. But it is also necessary to have an understanding of the rest of the world or else we risk becoming isolationist or self-absorbed," he says.

For these reasons, Mr Cantwell also finds it contradictory that universities reward VCE students for languages but not history.

THE WAY IT WAS

Arthur Fish

Well, to pick up our story - I say 'our' because Jim, Lofty and I had teamed up again so we went on towards Hamilton and the end of my story almost in sight.

On the way, walking, we turned aside into the station property called '*Grung Grungle*'. This being Melbourne Cup Day as I write this, it is not inappropriate to recall that some years ago, but subsequent to our stay, a Cup winner was bred on this place. About this time I became aware that I had picked up some other travelling companions, not so pleasant as my mates, but none-the-less, almost bosom friends, as it were. I became aware that I was lousy and, thinking back, realised that I had most likely picked up the lice from that abandoned blanket. This was the first and only time that I was ever in that condition. So, I announced to my two mates that night that I intended to take a bath. On the open fire in the hut I boiled up a couple of gallons of water in a kero tin, dropping in my singlet and shirt and, when the water had cooled enough, having a good sponge down. I burned the old blanket in the fire. Being somewhat shocked and a little ashamed of this condition in which I found myself, I made no explanation to my comrades and they, for their part, maintained a discreet silence. I had no more worry with lice so my precautions must have been effective.

Being in country made famous by the Galloping Poet - and country that later produced a Cup winner - it was natural our talk turn to horses. Lofty would have a horse. Lofty began to indulge in delusions of grandeur. "With a horse" he said, "I could ride along - much better than tramping. Or get some kind of wagon, be high and dry, somewhere to camp out of the rain and wet." Horses, of course, were Jim's forte, having been a bushie all his life and a Light Horse man and all - just the bloke to put a mate right. "When we get to Hamilton" he promised, "I will look you out the right kind of nag." So it was agreed. We went on towards the town of Hamilton and, unknown to me, my travels were coming to an end, at least for a time.

Well, we made it to town, walking along in cold, drizzling rain. I remember Jim remarking as we went, upon the rosy glow on my youthful cheeks and the effect it would have on the matronly hearts of the town of Hamilton. But, a week or so after reaching the town, I was to find out the reason I was 'ruddy of countenance'. I went down with scarlet fever which in those days was a rather serious disease for which the main treatment was six weeks in bed in isolation. That winter an epidemic of this disease had swept through the south east and no doubt I had picked up the germ on my travels.

We made our way down to the banks of the creek - a damp, desolate and cold camp. Jim had a small tent which he rigged up to keep some of the weather off us and there we spent some miserable and cramped days. About this time occurred another of those strange events which made me aware that a kindly Providence was watching over me. Some of the men camped there under the inadequate shelter of the trees made it up to move over under the old railway bridge. This was up a short spur line, a rarely used bit of rail, and under the bridge would be dry if somewhat draughty camping. So they shifted and I was minded to

THE WAY IT WAS (cont)

go with them, but I was warned in a dream not to do any such thing. A few days later a heavy loco was put out along the line and broke through the bridge. One man was killed and several others injured. Because, by some strange coincidence the man killed was a wire-worker, reports of a wire-worker being killed in the Hamilton district raised some anxiety among my family, as they knew I was working in the area.

Hamilton and Hospital:

I got very short of money in Hamilton and for the first time since I left home I was almost destitute. I began to be short of food as there was no sale at all for wire gadgets in Hamilton and no doubt this under-nourishment contributed to the ease with which I succumbed to the scarlet fever germ. Until this time, in spite of leaving home comforts to knock about the bush, I had enjoyed excellent health, not even suffering from a common cold.

Wood was a problem in this large town - being in the centre of a well-settled area, there was not much about in the natural state, but the answer was in a large pile of second-hand railway sleepers down in the rail yards. These had been bought by one of the local citizens and prior to taking delivery he had had them sawed up into foot blocks. Under the dark of night we made several trips to the yards, going up past the local police station and lugging home to the camp several bags of them. Later when I was in hospital I read of a certain councillor complaining bitterly of someone thieving his wood. Well, they made excellent burning, and as the visiting policeman said when he looked our camp over - "I suppose you have to have a fire." (Evidently a close relative of Welcome Stranger.)

Come one morning, Jim announced he had got us all jobs down at Koroit, bagging onions. I should have known it was the wrong time of year for that sort of job, but as I was coming under the influence of the fever I might have been a bit off my guard. Had things been different with me, things might have turned out a bit better for Lofty. Jim was impatient to be gone and so was Lofty. They could not desert a sick mate so Jim went up to the police and arranged for one to come down and get me into hospital. And so I rode away in a cab, mates waving goodbye, and my wanderings came to an end - but not yet my story.

For the facts that follow I am indebted to other mates and to Jim and Lofty. I was not about when Jim finally bought the horse. He brought the horse down to the camp. It was a good horse, said Jim. He had got it for only twelve pounds (almost all the money that Lofty had) and was sure it was a good buy. In fact, in his own opinion, it was such a likely nag that when the polo season opened it would be worth much more, perhaps twenty pounds or even thirty. The saddle was only a pound extra. So said Honest Jim, and it was his Honest Opinion. Or, I should say, it was Honest Jim's opinion. We discovered later that there was a slight difference.

To be continued