

MORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

Published bi-monthly

Meetings: 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7.30 pm

Old Morwell Town Hall

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May 1996

Welcome to the May Newsletter

Observant readers may have noticed that a gremlin seems to have got into the numbering system of our Newsletters. Vol 11, No 5 - July 1995 - was followed by Vol 12 No 6 in September 1995 and by Vol 12 No 6 (again!) in November 1995. When asked about this extraordinary state of affairs, the entire Editorial Staff - Writer, Editor, Typist, Proof Reader and Production Supervisor - denied responsibility. (She tried to blame the computer but no-one would believe her). Vol 13, which began in January 1996, seems to be on track - so far!

Our Society currently has two boards containing photographs of Commercial Rd and Tarwin St on display - one in the Mainstreet office, the other in Roylaine's shop. Roylaine's will make copies of any of the photos on display for \$15.00 each, \$5.00 of which they will donate to the Society.

At the meeting of the combined Gippsland Historical Societies in Traralgon on May 4, it was suggested that all the Historical and Family History Societies in the LaTrobe Shire should work together to present a united front in dealing with the Council. Hopefully this will be to the advantage of both sides, giving weight to the Societies' requests and enabling Council to deal with one large group rather than with a number of smaller groups. Traralgon Historical Society has offered to convene a meeting to discuss the proposal.

The Society has been given custody of two Chess trophies. One, which bears the inscription **Y.M.C.A. Yallourn & District Chess Championship** has two names on it - **G.Karukapp 1960** - and - **J Szabo 1961**. The other is inscribed **Central Gippsland Chess Congress** and it was won by:

Mirboo North 7/8/ 37; Traralgon 12/2/38; Mirboo North 20/8/38; Yallourn 2/1/39; Traralgon 22/7/39; Yallourn 12/2/40.

We would be most interested to know more about the history of these trophies.

NEXT MEETING: TUESDAY MAY 21 - 7.30 PM.

OFFICE BEARERS FOR 1996-97

At the Annual General Meeting of Morwell Historical Society Inc, held on March 19, the following office bearers were elected;

President: Eric Lubcke
Vice president : Lou Bond
Secretary: Elsie McMaster
Treasurer: Dot Bartlett

Committee:
Jess Cafiso,
Joyce Cleary
Stephen Hellings
Cath McRoberts

Members are reminded that annual subscriptions are now due:
\$10.00 Single member **\$12.50 Couple or Family**



FROM R.H.S.V. 'HISTORY NEWS' - May 1996

ROYAL BOTANIC GARDENS

As part of the 150th Year Celebrations at the Royal Botanic Gardens the Voluntary Guides have developed a new and fascinating walk.

Bushland to Botanic Garden features the changes in the area of the Botanic Gardens from pre-white settlement up to the first fifteen years of the Gardens by which time the first Director, Ferdinand Mueller was appointed. An opportunity to get an insight as to how the riverside site might have looked whilst Melbourne exploded and the pressures this put on the natural vegetation and the development of an exotic and relaxing garden. La Trobe's influence and the hard work of two little known Superintendants, John Arthur and John Dallachy.

Take this opportunity to join a Voluntary Guide in the Gardens on either **18, 22 or 25 May**. **Bookings are requested** for these free walks - ring 03 9252 2570 (7 days) or if a group of six more, other dates may be available.

JUNE EXCURSION

The Jewish Museum of Australia
Tuesday 11 June

A two hour guided tour of the superb new Jewish Museum of Australia and the adjacent St Kilda synagogue. On show will be the Museum's permanent exhibition, 'Belief and Ritual' and its current exhibition, 'The Moveable Feast : A Celebration of Jewish Food'. Afternoon tea will be served.

Meet at the Jewish Museum, 26 Alma Road, St Kilda, which is just off St Kilda Road. at 1:30 pm. Public transport from the city is available on tram 3 or 67 to stop 32. Cost \$8 for members, \$10 non-members. Book with Secretary, Wendy Baker, on 9670 1219 no later than 4 June.

Peter Synan →

Index to the Gippsland Times 1861-1900, compiled by Peter Sienna, edited by Linda Kennett : Churchill : Centre for Gippsland Studies, Monash university Gippsland Campus, 1995. 124 pp \$20 (includes postage), available from the Centre, Churchill, 3842.

Newspaper indexes are a rare commodity, and even rarer in print, so it is something of a pleasure to welcome this index to the Gippsland Times of Sale for the years 1861 to 1900, a volume which will be a valuable resource for anyone working on the 19th century history not just of Sale but for much of Gippsland. It was an important newspaper for my own researches on Bairnsdale, Walhalla and Port Albert areas among others and I have scanned the pages over and over searching for references to the areas I was dealing with. I needed an index like this. Family historians will welcome the wealth of personal names in these pages. Peter Synan has used the Times himself in publishing **Highways of Water** and a more recent history of Sale. The index is drawn mostly from his references to the Times used in his books and it does not attempt to be comprehensive, but it is certainly a good start and can help the researcher save hours of hunting through page after page of microfilm. Special attention has been given to personal and family names. References are to newspaper issues by date. Cross-references are used liberally to help the user gain maximum benefit from the index. An introduction provides a history of the newspaper. Anyone working on Gippsland history will need this index - may there be more like them ! JDA.

THE WAY IT WAS

Arthur Fish

We left Arthur in Hamilton Hospital with scarlet fever while his mates, Jim and Lofty, headed for Koroit for a job bagging onions (or so he thought):

On this Monday night I am in hospital - in isolation - in a large, somewhat primitive, unlined, unceiled structure set out in the centre of the back corner of the hospital grounds. Well, as things were, Jim and Lofty were impatient to be gone but as it was already late in the evening and it was a bit rainy they decided they would get away first thing in the morning. Lofty, being on horseback, would go swiftly and Jim would follow more slowly on foot. Would Lofty get there on time - it was fully forty miles - and be able to hold down the job until his mate arrived? Lofty thought he could so he set off early. Jim, before he left had a little something to do and that was to pick up a small sum of money owing to Lofty and bring it along with him.

Tuesday afternoon Jim comes down to see me in hospital, all done up for going away. He was going to Horsham, he said. Dressed up in a nice pair of blue strides which he asked me to admire. "Got them for twelve-and-six down the street." Well, they did look nice on him, I had to admit. So we shook hands and Jim went out of my life, but not yet out of my story.

A little later that day Taffy came up and related to me some of the events of the previous day and in conclusion remarked that Jim was going to Ballarat. Well, it was never my policy to argue with people who know they are right so I said nothing to this, even though I knew better. Evening came and another visitor from the camp - "Jim's gone to Portland." As I said, no use arguing.

A day or so passed peacefully. I was on my own in this isolation ward but, accustomed to being a loner, this did not worry me. Throughout Thursday it rained. Evening came and with it an unexpected visitor. Lofty appeared in the doorway, streaming water from head to foot and very, very upset. He had a sad tale to tell. The Koroit job had turned out to be a myth. On the way back he had to walk the horse as the nag knocked up. He found some sort of shelter in a pine plantation a little way out of town. While standing in the rain disconsolately holding his horse, he was approached by a stranger who looked rather closely at him and even more closely at the horse. Then he asked: "Where did you get the horse?"

"Bought him on Monday. Paid twelve quid for him."

"Funny thing" said the stranger, "sold that horse on Monday, got thirty bob for him. All he's worth, too!" Well!!

It must have come as a great shock to Lofty, as he idolised Jim. To add to his misery, when he sought the camp by the creek another mate came up and told him the cops had been sniffing around the camps looking for an almost new leather coat that someone had pinched off a chair on a front veranda. And there was also the matter of the small amount of thirty shillings he had arranged for Jim to collect for him. There was no doubt that this was also gone. Then, while standing there all forlorn, he asked me if I had seen around camp the spare pair of trousers that went with his good suit. (In those times it was the custom to supply a spare pair of pants with a suit.) I just had to say that I had not seen them about, but that Jim was wearing a nice new pair when he had made his farewell visit. Well !! - again.

But the visit had to end. Lofty had the rifle with him. Being desperate for money, I had sold it to him only a few days previously. He handed it back to me and refused to take the money back in return - would not take money from a sick mate, he said. He had some good principles, my mate Lofty. I felt quite badly about this as it had cost me only 7/6 in the first place. There was just one thing more. The leather coat.

Lofty wanted me to take it as a parting gift and although I had always wanted a good leather coat, I felt it better to decline. Lofty solved the coat problem by rolling it up and pushing it into the rubbish bin. He put the lid on it slowly and, no doubt, a little reflectively, thus putting the lid on an experience that I am sure he was long to remember. Then he left, after a final handshake, swearing strong vengeance on Jim. As I have said, later in his life he was to do well for himself in amateur wrestling, and then later, when he turned 'pro', no doubt he made a bit of money for himself out of the mat game. But I never saw him again.

I was invalided home to Warrnambool and one day on the street I chanced to meet my old mate Taffy and we had a good yarn about the places we'd been and the things we'd seen. He told me that Lofty had met up with Jim in Ballarat and that Jim was taken to hospital afterwards - which seems to settle the point on which we had often argued, which was- whether a good wrestler can beat a good boxer.

As for the encounter - there follows a few lines about "Honest Jim", concluding with a somewhat fanciful account of that last meeting:

Honest Jim

*Hairy chest and iron jaw, broad of shoulder, long of limb
Strongest man you ever saw, that was Jim.
Always looked you in the eye, everybody trusted him
Swore he'd never told a lie - Honest Jim.*

*Took all trouble as it came, nothing ever bested him
To the last was always game - Fighting Jim
Could use his hands a little bit, and his head,
Had the science and the grit, so he said,*

*One day from the city Lofty came
Honest Jim thought he was pretty easy game.
Camped one night with Honest Jim, slept like a log.
In the night Jim ratted him, thieving dog!*

*Lofty woke at dawn to see he'd been robbed so well,
Not a sixpence left and he swore like hell.
Honest Jim got nearly drowned, forgot he had to hide,
Came out of a pub and found Lofty there outside.*

*We stood about to see the show - nothing much.
Jim had courage but, you know, mostly Dutch.
Tried to make a willing go - not a chance.
Lofty opened up the show - kicked his pants.*

*Lofty was a wrestling man so we found
And he soon had honest Jim on the ground.
Get his money, do you think? Not a dime.
Honest Jim is now in clink, doing time.*

By A. R. Fish

(But just this last part might not have been exactly *THE WAY IT WAS*)

LAND MEASUREMENTS

The *Bairnsdale Advertiser*, 22 June 1895, is the source of the following information:

An **acre** is the amount of land which a team of oxen were supposed to plough in a day. It was fixed by Edward 1 as a furlong in length and four poles in breadth.

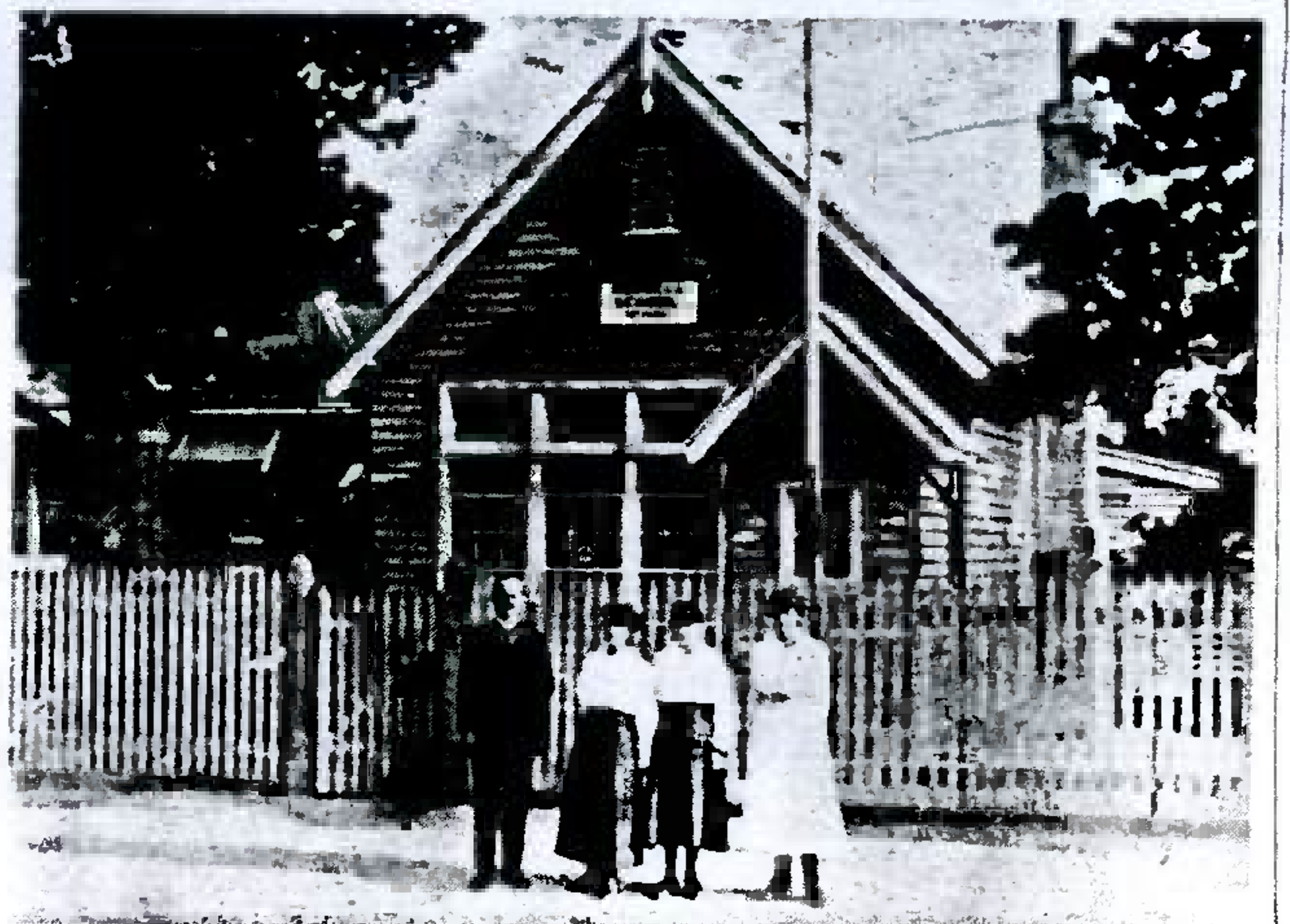
The **furlong** or **furrow long** is the distance which a team of oxen could plough without stopping to rest.

Oxen, as we know, were driven not with a whip but with a goad or pole, the most convenient length for which was 16½ feet. The ancient ploughman also used his **pole** or **perch** as a measure by placing it at right angles to his first furrow, thus marking off the amount he had to plough. Hence our **pole** or **perch** of 16½ feet. This width was also convenient for turning the plough and for sowing. Hence the most convenient unit of land for arable purposes was a furlong in length and a perch or pole in width.

40 poles make one furlong and 8 furlongs make one mile.

Many of us can remember, in pre-decimal days, (only thirty years ago), learning such tables from the backs of our exercise books at school. Nowadays there are not too many exercise books around - they have been largely replaced by loose-leaf folders - and it seems that even these are likely to be outdated soon with the advent of laptop notebook computers in schools. One Gippsland school plans to introduce these computers for all students in Years 7 to 10 in 1997.

**St Mary's Church of England
and Commercial Rd State School
- soon to be part of a Historic
Precinct in Morwell.**



MORWELL ROTARY CLUB - 50 YEARS OF SERVICE

1946-1996



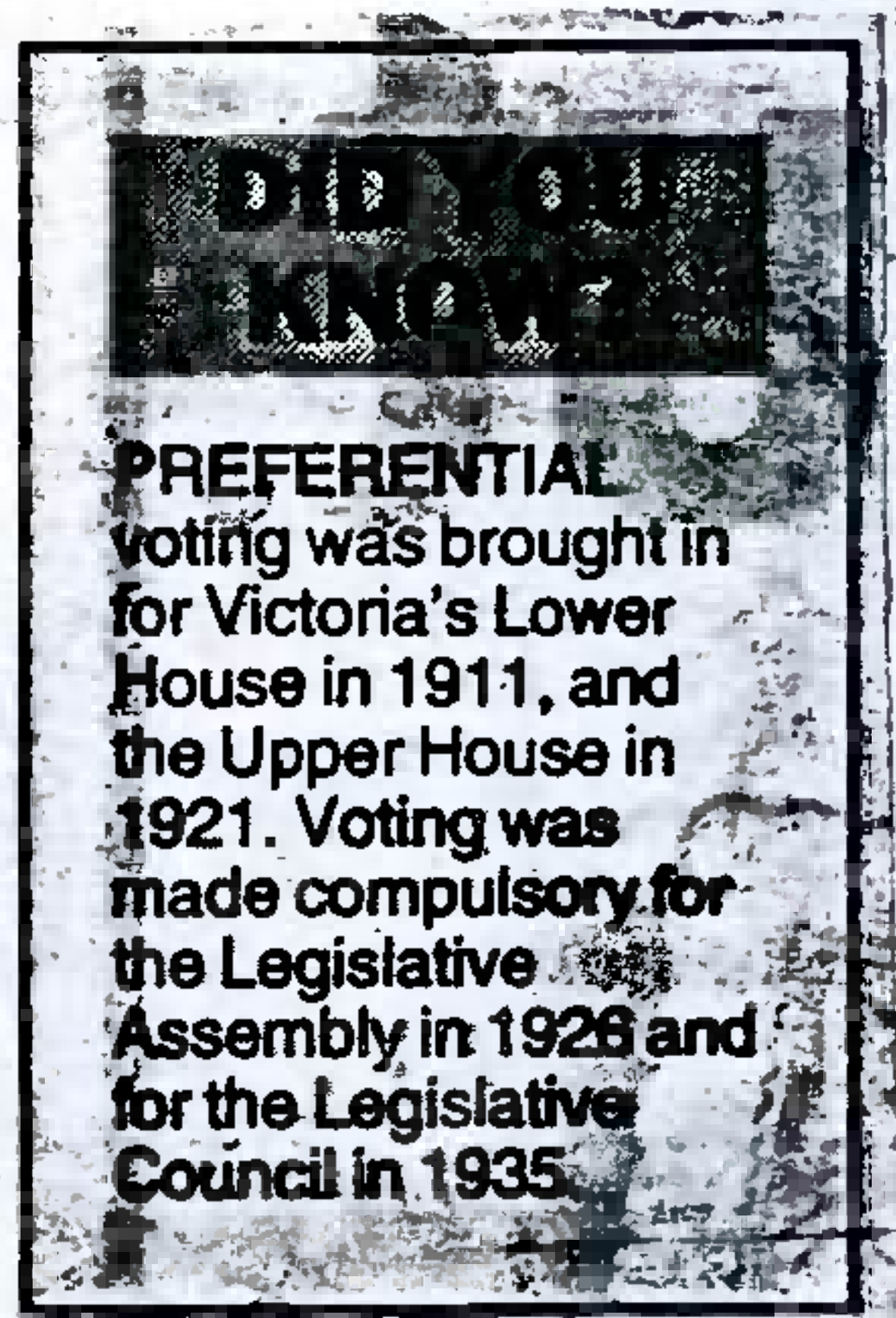
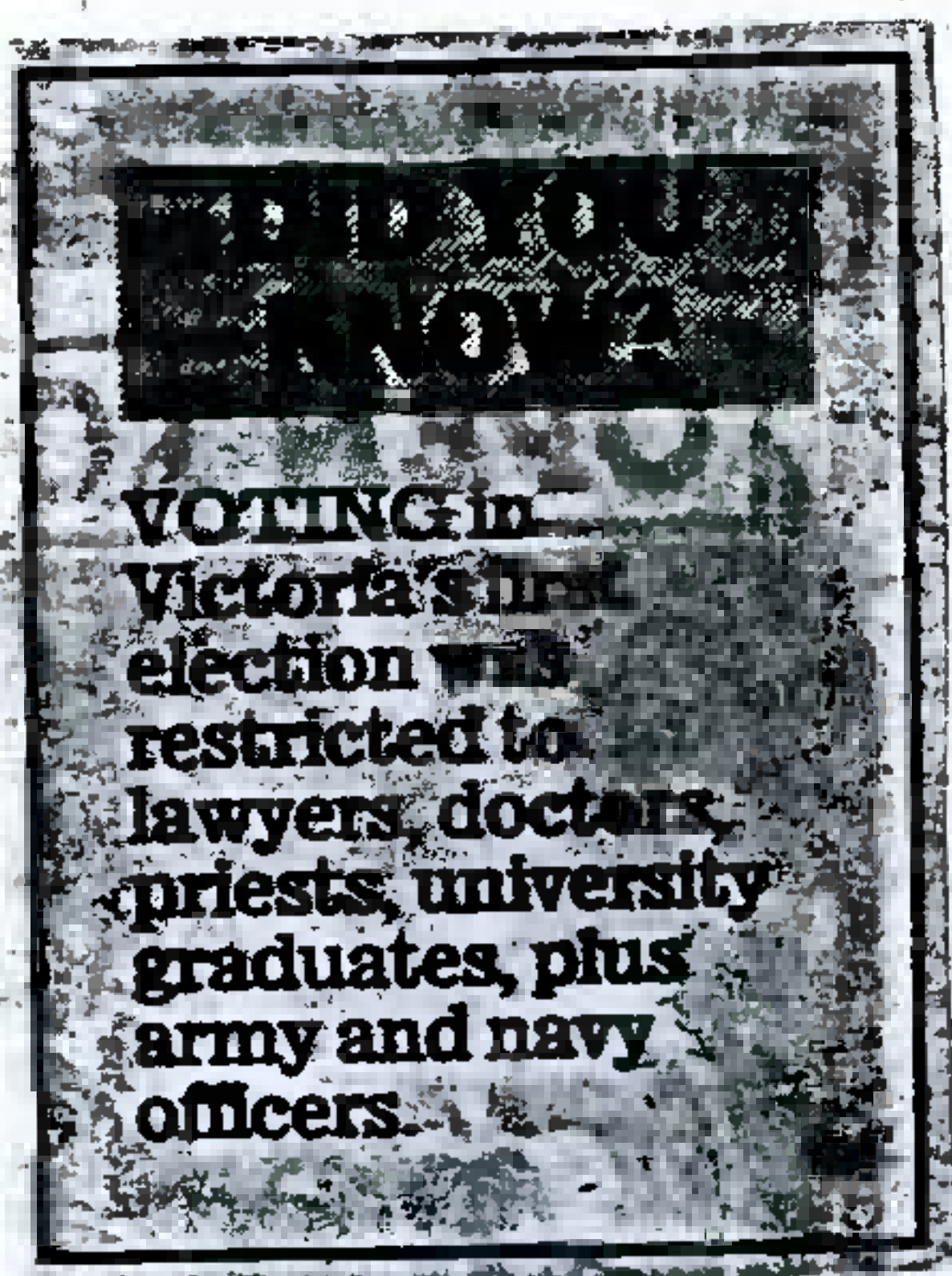
Morwell Rotary Club Charter Members.

Back row l-r: B. Vary, D. Kelly

Centre: W. Shaw, R. Payne, D. Scammell, K. Macdermid, S. Winchester, W. Firmin, F. Jenkins J. Haugh, R. Davey, A. Ronald, W. Ferguson.

Front: J. Bush, J. Goyen (Secretary), Dr. H. Mitchell, L. Trigg (President), J. Lawless, Rev. R. Phillips.

Morwell Rotary Club was formed in March, 1946. The four avenues of Rotary service are to the member's own vocation, to the Club, to the local community and to the community of nations. With these ideals constantly in view, the Club has, over the years, given untold assistance to a great many people and projects, both at home and abroad.



Henry Ford, father of the Ford motor car, predicted that his Model T would see the beginning of the 'automobile age.' He also said: '*History is bunk!*' Well... he was right about the car.