

MORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to the May Newsletter

At the Annual Meeting held in March the following **Office Bearers** were elected for 1996-7:

President: Eric Lubcke

Vice President: Audrey Conrow

Secretary: Elsie McMaster

Treasurer: Dot Bartlett

Executive Committee: In addition to the above,

Cath McRoberts, Joyce Cleary, Jess Cafiso, Stephen Hellings

Acquisitions Committee:

Chairman: Ted Allan

Curator: Eric Lubcke

Members: Stephen Hellings, Joyce Cleary



Members are reminded that Annual Subscriptions for 1996-7 are ¹⁹⁹⁷⁻⁸

NOW DUE: \$10.00 single - \$12.50 couple or family.

Have you seen our display of photographs of the Morwell commercial district in the window of the empty shop at the top of the subway, on Commercial Road - and have you noticed that the display is changed periodically? It was originally designed to coincide with the Morwell Chamber of Commerce 50th Anniversary celebrations but so many favourable comments were received that we decided to keep it in place for a while longer and to change the photos every so often.

The Historical Societies of Morwell, Moe and Traralgon have been invited by LaTrobe Shire to place displays in the glass cases available at the municipal offices in those towns. The Morwell office currently has mayoral robes and regalia on show. If we accept the offer to maintain the showcases, displays will be changed every month or two and LaTrobe Shire has offered assistance with this activity.

Our cataloguing group continues to put in hours of work, not only sorting and filing but cleaning, restoring and housing items in the appropriate manner.

Thanks go to Michael Binz who installed the *Inmagic* program on the computer and made sure that it was operating correctly.

The next **BIG** job for the cataloguing committee will be to record their work on the computer. Any offers of help would be appreciated!

COMBINED HISTORICAL SOCIETIES MEETING

Three members of our Society attended the annual meeting of the Association of Affiliated Gippsland Historical Societies on May 3. This year's meeting, which was well attended by delegates from all over Gippsland, was hosted by Warragul Historical Society in their rooms at the Old Shire Hall in Queen St.

The Shire Hall has been extensively renovated and redecorated and is now a most impressive Museum, open to the public on Sundays and well worth a visit.

At the meeting, concern was expressed by a number of delegates over the likelihood of the removal of Shire records (rate books etc) from local areas to the Public Records Office at Laverton.

At the time of the municipal amalgamations, councils were directed by the State government to forward all municipal records to the P.R.O. Some records have already been sent, others are in storage in various depots around Melbourne and some are still in their places of origin.

Shire records are an invaluable source of information for historians and genealogists. Not only will their removal to Laverton make them much more difficult and costly for the public to access, but it appears that the P.R.O. is unable to deal with the mass of documents being deposited by the new Shires and that these documents will be held in storage at the P.R.O. (and will therefore not be available to the public at all) for at least two years.

It was proposed at the meeting that Gippsland Historical Societies and Genealogical Societies should immediately approach their Shire Councils and request that the records be retained in their local areas at least until they can be copied onto microfilm. Although this is an expensive business, it appears to be the only way to ensure that the records are freely available to researchers, and it is a way of protecting the originals from damage and deterioration due to too much handling.

Fortunately, nearly all of the records of the municipalities which make up the Shire of LaTrobe are still held in the local area and our Society, with others in the Shire, will be approaching LaTrobe Council in an effort to ensure that they, or copies, remain here, freely available to the public.

Another proposal at the meeting concerned the development of a format for historic signage. The suggested format is yellow writing on a brown background, the same as that used by South Gippsland Shire Historical Society for its markers on former school sites. Gippsland Historical Societies are encouraged to request that their local Councils adopt this signage format for all historic sites.

STRZELECKI BIOGRAPHY

A new biography of famous Gippsland explorer Sir Paul Edmund de Strzelecki is soon to be published to mark the 200th anniversary of his birth. An information sheet accompanying the advance notice of the book, titled *Sir Paul Edmund de Strzelecki - Reflections on His Life*, by **Lech Paszkowski**, has this to say:

'Nineteen ninety-seven marks the 200th anniversary of the birth of Sir Paul Edmund de Strzelecki, Polish emigre, British knight and explorer, scientist and humanitarian of extraordinary distinction.

William Gladstone, the British Liberal statesman and Prime Minister, knew Strzelecki well. An astute judge of character, he described Strzelecki as 'a very remarkable man, of great information, singularly wide experience, very high character'. Many others, in society, in the sciences or in humble circumstances were also generous in their opinion of him. Certainly he produced scientific studies of enduring value, and, travelling the world, he crammed enough adventure into ten years to fill several ordinary lives.

In Australia, however, he was openly criticised by some of his contemporaries and, more recently, by some scholars, who have portrayed him in a harsh light, suggesting that he falsely claimed noble ancestry and priority in the discovery of gold in Australia; that he took credit due to other explorers; that he was untrue in love.

Lech Paszkowski is concerned to correct the too-often-repeated misconceptions about Strzelecki. He does so by reviewing the evidence and presenting it so that readers may decide the issue for themselves.'

The book, a 360 page, well illustrated paperback, B5 format, is due for release in August. RRP \$39.95. It can be ordered from *Australian Scholarly Publishing - P.O. Box 299, Kew, Vic 3101*, post free.



WE'RE CHANGING OUR SIGN

The sign on the door to our rooms reads *Morwell Historical Society Museum*. This title was bestowed upon us by the former Morwell City Council, without consultation. Recently, members working in the rooms have been somewhat embarrassed by visitors looking around and asking "Where's the Museum?" or "Is THIS it?!"

Since the rooms were never intended to be a museum, we have requested LaTrobe Council to repaint the sign to read **Morwell Historical Society Resource Centre**. Council has agreed to change the sign but suggests that, as the word 'resource' is used these days to describe a range of Health and Community services, we should consider using another term - say, 'Reference Centre'. What do you think? Suggestions will be welcomed.

MEET THE COMPUTER

Now that our computer is up and running, members are invited to come and 'have a play' with it, to learn how it works. Even if you are electronically challenged - even if you have to get your neighbour's six-year-old to re-set your digital clock - you CAN learn to use a computer! (And you're never too old to learn)! If you are interested, give Bruce McMaster a call - ☎51341149 - and arrange for a 'hands on' lesson. If you are 'computer literate', how about coming in anyway, and learning about *Inmagic*?



RHSV JUNE EXCURSION

Documents for a Nation" - the Australian Archives. Tuesday 17 June.

The Australian Archives comprise the archival holdings of the Federal Government, with branches in Canberra and in each state.

This excursion will feature a visit to the state of the art premises of the Australian Archives in East Burwood. Participants will learn of the systems employed, the type of material held, how to access material, the environmental controls employed and see the latest techniques of archival management in operation.

Meet at Australian Archives at top of Vision Drive, Burwood at 11:00 a.m. Tour will conclude at 12:30 p.m. Morning tea included. Visitor car parking is available in grounds. Melway 62 D8 Vision Drive is shown in newer Melway only. It is off Springvale Rd., western side, about half way between Highbury Rd., and Burwood Highway.

Springvale Rd., buses numbers 888 and 889 (Nunawading, Glen Waverley and Chelsea) pass near. Travelling south, request stop is just past Vision Drive, outside World Vision building. Travelling north, request stop is Weeden Drive (opposite Vision Drive).

Limit of 16, charge \$5 members, \$7 non members. Please book with Wendy Baker by 11 June. Telephone : 9670 1219.

HERITAGE TRAIL PROPOSED

Guest speaker at our April meeting was Mr Peter Leslie of Gippsland Country Tourism, who spoke on that body's aims in promoting tourism in the Gippsland area and asked for the Society's help in compiling historical notes on the various tourist trails being developed.

One such trail is the *Gippsland Heritage Trail*, at present in the planning stage, which takes in areas from Wonthaggi to Port Albert, Sale, Maffra, Glenaladale, the Strzeleckis, Morwell, Moe, Traralgon, Walhalla and, of course, many districts in between. Businesses such as museums, historic properties or gardens, heritage bed-and-breakfast properties, galleries etc will be listed and historic notes and maps made available to the public.



From *The Morwell Advertiser* - January 6, 1928 :

ADVANCE MORWELL

Notwithstanding the bad times, tightness of money, drought and other drawbacks at the present time, it is pleasing to note the confidence that local property owners, business people and others are displaying in the town and district.

The appearance of the main street has been greatly improved by handsome new shop fronts with plate glass windows. Mr Poynting set the ball rolling some time ago and one by one other owners followed suit, until practically the whole street has been dressed with coloured tiles and plate glass. There are still, however, a few "eye sores" left but it is to be hoped that it will not be long before the owners of these places will have them replaced with fronts in keeping with the rest of the street.

Mr Les Hare has erected a fine, attractive show room at his garage in which Oaklands, Pontiacs and other new cars have been seen to advantage, surrounded by tree ferns, palms, gum leaves etc. There has been a keen demand for cars of late and Les is determined to keep abreast of the times.

Another local business place that has recently undergone a transformation is D.C Mills & Co's Universal Emporium, which is conducted on up-to-date lines. For the convenience of staff and customers and to facilitate the despatch of business, Lamson's Rapid Railway Cash Carrying System has been installed at considerable cost. Three "stations" have been erected within the Emporium, and cash is speedily conveyed by the electric railway from various points of the compass to the accountant's desk and change returned in a twinkling. The whole place presents a city like appearance and the proprietors have to be congratulated upon their forward move and the advance methods adopted.

Then Tarwin Street is about to undergo a much desired change. Mr Irving has let a contract for the erection of three shops, with up-to-date verandah, etc., between Jenkins' store and Mappins furniture arcade. The work has been commenced and will be completed early in the year.

There are various other advance movements on foot and there is every reason to believe that it will not be long before Morwell comes into its own. So mote it be.



• **CENTRE FOR GIPPSLAND STUDIES ANNUAL HISTORY CONFERENCE**

There's No Place Like Home:

Gippsland History and Houses

**Saturday 11 October 1997,
10.00am -4.00pm**

Monash University Gippsland Campus

This will be a day full of interest for local historians, renovators or people who love history and houses: how Gippsland houses have evolved, the ideas that have shaped them and what houses mean to people.

There will be talks on building materials (from reed thatched roofs to the mysteries of corrugated iron).

We will introduce you to the delights of researching and writing house biographies.

There will be histories of individual houses from South, West and Central Gippsland - farm houses, a federation-style house and a now heavily disguised Victorian house.

Yallourn houses, transported throughout Gippsland, will also feature, with a discussion of their history and design.

Interiors and renovating experiences will be discussed.

Speakers will include Tony Dingle, Coral Dow, Linda Barraclough, Ann Edwards, Robyn Stevens and Meredith Fletcher.

For more details, contact Meredith Fletcher

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