

MORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Welcome to the May Newsletter

At the Annual General Meeting of the Society on March 16, the following office bearers were elected:

President: Stephen Hellings **Vice President:** Audrey Conrow

Secretary: Elsie McMaster **Treasurer:** Dot Bartlett

Executive Committee: The above four officers plus Leonie Pryde, Joyce Cleary, Jess Cafiso, Cath McRoberts

Acquisitions Committee: Curator: Bruce McMaster, plus members Stephen Hellings, Claire Wood and Joyce Cleary (Chair).

**** Members are reminded that Annual Subscriptions are now overdue. If a cross appears in the box at left, we have no record of having received your subscription for the coming year. Subs are: \$10 single, \$12.50 couple or family.**



FOUND! John Rintoull's Anvil ! Donated to Morwell Shire by the Rintoull family in 1958, it was to be erected as a monument to the pioneers of the district but somehow that never happened and the whereabouts of the anvil became a mystery. Some detective work by member Eric Lubcke recently uncovered the anvil at the LaTrobe Shire's Morwell depot where it had apparently been languishing for the past forty or so years! The Shire is planning to carry out the previous plans and install the anvil in Morwell as a pioneer memorial. Eric and another of our members, Boyd Thompson, (himself a blacksmith), are assisting the Shire in this project.

***** DONATIONS *****

Member Jean Mooney has given the Society several large scrap books containing a wealth of information on the *Morwell Players*. Jean and her late husband Perce were active members of the Players and Jean kept cuttings, programmes, photos etc of the activities of the group. The Society has on display in the Information Centre a collection of trophies won by the Players during their very successful career in amateur dramatics. Jean has also donated a large number of copies of the S.E.C. magazine *Contact* from 1964 to 1988, collected by Perce when he worked for the S.E.C. in the Latrobe Valley.

We have also received, from Mrs Marj Lenscak, a copy of *The Leader Spare Corner Book* - a book of cooking and household hints from the early 1930s and from our member Marion Holding, a copy of a photograph showing locals Don and Geoff Mitchelmore, Keith and Gladys Scarce, Nancy Deering, Hazel Stonehouse, Mrs Marka and Mrs Corbett, taken at Traralgon during the Queen's visit in 1954.

Many thanks to the above folk for their donations.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, May 18 - 7.30pm
Morwell Town Hall Foyer

WORKING IN MORWELL:

Two of our members, **Jean Mooney** and **Lou Bond**, have been persuaded to write down their recollections of their working lives in Morwell. Their memoirs start on the next page and will be continued over the next few newsletters. Have you given any thought to writing about your life? What seems to us a very ordinary event may be of absorbing interest to the next generation. A trip to the dentist for a filling may well be a thing of the past when teeth can be repaired by regenerative cell therapy (we wish!). Refrigerators and motor mowers could become obsolete when food is irradiated to last indefinitely and grass is genetically altered to ensure that it grows only to the height desired then stops.

Far-fetched? Maybe - but things do change and, as we approach 2000, it is worth recording life as it was for you in your part of the 20th century.

LIGHT HORSE & FIELD ARTILLERY MUSEUM

Well Worth a Visit!

On Saturday, May 8th, five of our members joined members of Moe and Traralgon Historical Societies on a trip to **Bernie Dingle's Light Horse & Field Artillery Museum** at **Bessie Creek Rd, Nar Nar Goon**. Bernie is a working blacksmith, coachbuilder and wheelwright who has built up a most impressive collection of military transport, guns and harness, all painstakingly restored by him in his spare time. (What spare time? we asked when we saw the exhibits!)

We were greeted by Bernie, wife Frances, and a team of very friendly horses which can be harnessed up for a working display of the vehicles. A pot of chicken soup was bubbling, the barbecue was hot, and tea and coffee were ready when we arrived and after a picnic lunch Bernie and the irrepressible Gordon Cook, who organised the trip and who has helped collect much of the harness and horse memorabilia at the Museum, showed us around and explained the workings and background of the exhibits.

In addition to the transport vehicles, artillery pieces, field kitchens and ambulance (all horsedrawn), there is a fascinating display of medical kits, packsaddles, cavalry equipment, uniforms and harness together with letters from soldiers at the front, honour boards and tributes, and many photographs. Unfortunately we ran out of time for a mobile demonstration - we really needed another day in which to properly examine and take in all the items on display.

The Museum is open on Saturdays and Sundays 10.00am - 5.00pm and Mondays to Fridays by appointment. Phone: 03 59425512

COMPUTER GRANT:

The Society has received a grant of \$750 from the LaTrobe Shire to upgrade our computer. A committee has been formed to consider the best course of action. The present computer was given us by LaTrobe Shire when it became surplus to requirements under the Shire amalgamations. We need to consider the possibility of purchasing a scanner, connecting to the Internet etc. etc. so that the money is wisely spent. This, of course, may entail spending more than the Shire grant and there is a possibility of working in with Boolarra and Yinnar Historical Societies to share our resources.

WORKING IN MORWELL DISTRICT

Lou Bond

I was born in 1909 and educated in 1915 at Longwood, 1916-1921 Morwell State School, 1922 Driffield State School, 1923 Brunswick Technical School. When attending Brunswick Technical School I lived at Auntie Florrie Houston's in Essendon and travelled the six miles by push bike to school, did the two year course in one year and received my Merit Certificate. I gained an apprenticeship with a master builder in Brighton for nine months, then the man became insolvent and I returned home to Driffield.

I worked with brothers Vic and Harry on contract fencing, timber getting, clearing land, shearing sheep, rabbit trapping and any other work that was available through the Depression years. This was the period when sustenance for the unemployed was 6/- a day (50 cents) and they had to work for the pay.

In 1932 I purchased the carrying business from E.H. Vary for the sum of two hundred pounds (\$400) with money guaranteed at the bank by Father and Mr Frank Amiet, a neighbour. I then purchased a second-hand truck with money of my own and started out as a business man.

The work was cartage of cream from different areas of the Shire to butter factories; delivery of rail goods to commercial shops and hotels; delivery of truck loads of produce to farmers and town merchants, and general cartage work. I was still a single man and boarded with a Mrs W Smithers who had a boarding house where the Parkside Motel now stands.

In 1934 I rented the carrying business of Mr John Gordon at 201 Station St (now Princes Drive) with the option of purchase. This property had a very large shed with horse stables, store rooms and workmen's huts and an old five-roomed house. These business premises were where Kelly Bros conducted their garage and car sales for many years, opposite the railway station.

In the same year (1934) I married Leila Irene White, the youngest daughter of D.J and Georgina White, and set up house at 201 Station St. I took up the option of purchase for four hundred and fifty pounds (\$900) and became the owner of my first property in Morwell.

The business gradually expanded. I purchased two more new trucks and brothers Tom, then later Ted, left the home farm and came to drive the extra trucks. Tom and Ted lived in the workmen's huts in the yard and had their meals with us. The business was growing rapidly and we were selling firewood and briquettes, carting cattle and furniture to various parts of Victoria.

All our trucks at this time were tray bodies and when transport was needed for passengers to dances etc in the neighbouring towns, we would hose the tray of the truck clean, fix a canvas hood to the tray body, place three wooden seats lengthwise and off we would go to the dances. Harry Huguenin drove these free buses for several years. The dance promoters reimbursed our costs and often young people would be standing on the running boards because of overcrowding. When the Transport Board was formed, this practice ceased because the safety rules laid down were very strict.

In 1939 the old house was demolished and a fine brick home was built. By this time Beverley and Neville had been born and Leila had not only to look after the children - she was supplying meals for Tom and Ted and was taking orders for wood, booking up carrying work and answering the phone; she was an important part of the business.

To Be Continued

MY WORKING YEARS IN MORWELL

Jean Mooney

I was born in Morwell in a small hospital situated in Hazelwood Road. I was brought up on my parents' property at Middle Creek (now known as Yinnar South).

When I was aged six or seven, my parents moved onto a share farm for Mr Wattie Firmin at Yinnar. I started school at Yinnar and finished my schooling at Yinnar South. I left school in 1933, three weeks before I reached fourteen years of age, to work for a Mrs Brewster, to help with the housework. I had to walk three-and-a-half to four miles to get there so had to stay a couple of days each time she needed me.

Other times I helped my family on the farm, milking cows, turning the hand separator. I loved cutting ferns, cut maize for the cattle and helped sow the potatoes down on a small creek at the back of the property.

We had to carry our water uphill from the creek - had a tin dish to wash our face and hands and bathed only twice a week.

My first full-time job was at Yinnar Bakery - general housework, cooking, cleaning, serving in the shop, milking a cow night and morning - (I couldn't get away from the farm, could I?). I worked for Mr and Mrs Geo Preston and when they moved to Melbourne due to illness, I applied for a job as waitress, with general shop work, in Central Cafe, Morwell, originally owned by Neals and known then as Neal's Cafe. Mrs Flo Huguenin and Mrs Marge Davey ran this cafe, with the help of their husbands after they had worked at their jobs during the day. Mr Davey was a stock agent and worked on his own farm looking after the cattle. Mr Harry Huguenin was Manager at D.C. Mills Store on the corner of Commercial Road and Tarwin St.

I lived with Mr and Mrs Davey, upstairs above the Cafe. I was paid 15/- a week and keep. They had two children, Margaret and Jack, about nine and seven years old. I shared a room with Margaret. They were a nice family and had another daughter, Rosalind, many years later. They had bought the Central Cafe from Mrs Neal, whose daughter, Ruby, married a Mr Brinsmead, living here in Morwell for many years.

I remember the first day I worked, being a Monday of a holiday weekend. I had never seen so many dirty dishes to be washed - (no dishwashers in those days!) - and no sooner had I washed up and put them away that they kept bringing more. This went on all day. Believe me, I was washing dishes in my sleep that night!

My job consisted of serving behind the counter where they sold cakes, sweets, ice cream, soft drinks etc. I waited on the tables in the dining room, taking customers' orders, cooking the meal, setting the tray and serving the meal. Mrs Huguenin and Mrs Davey always made their own pastry, cooked their own home made pies and pasties nearly every morning, with sponges and scones Tuesdays and Fridays.

Friday was cattle sale and pig sale day - we called it Farmers' Day Out in Town. They came into town to do their main shopping for the week. We would have mixed morning and afternoon teas (a special) consisting of one sandwich, half a buttered scone and a piece of sponge, pot of tea or coffee and hot water - this was only 3/-

This Cafe opened from 8am until midnight, having two shifts each woman, with two or three girls working with her. All the staff were very happy working here - hard work but quite a lot of fun.

To Be Continued