

MORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

PUBLISHED MONTHLY, EXCEPT DECEMBER

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

OLD TOWN HALL , MORWELL

Vol. 10 No. 10 OCTOBER 1994

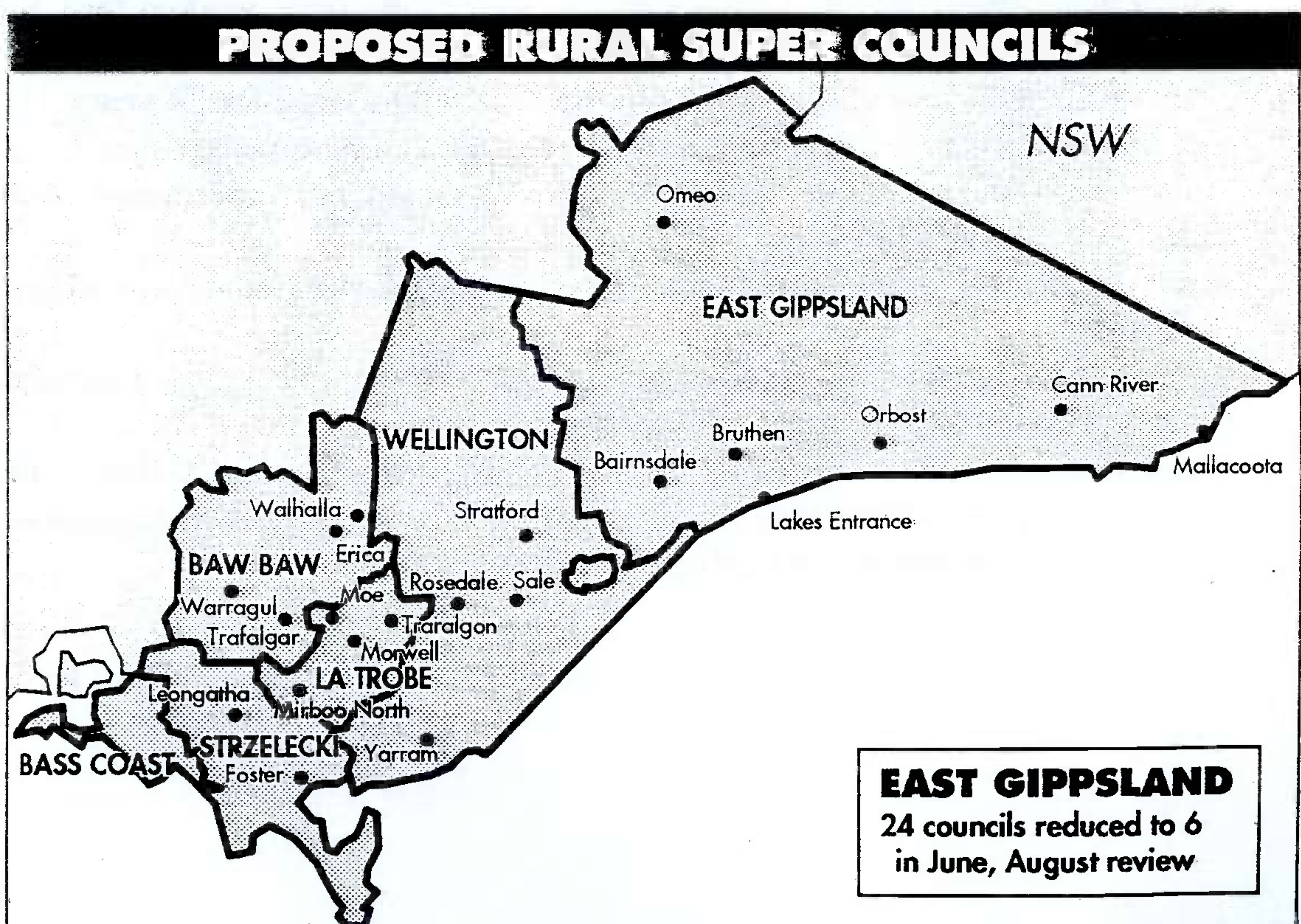
WELCOME TO THE OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

This month we note with regret the imminent demise of the Municipality of Morwell which, after 102 years, will lose its identity as a local government body when it is merged with other councils to form the new municipality of Latrobe. Another part of our history to be dismantled soon is the old Yallourn Power Station. However, it is pleasing to note that the history of the power station is to be preserved in the form of models and videos, and some of the plant will be relocated for public display.

Two new books, one, by our member Prue McGoldrick, soon to be launched, and the other, a history of South Gippsland, already sailing, will be of interest to local historians.

Our next meeting will be on
TUESDAY OCTOBER 18

Guest for the evening will be Joanne Newey
who will speak about the Yallourn Heritage Trail.



MY PADDOCK
An early Twentieth Century Childhood
by
Prue McGoldrick

Gippsland writer, Prue McGoldrick, author of several local histories including 'Yallourn Was' and 'Steamhorse to Power, a history of Morwell Town' has written something quite different.

She has reflected on her childhood in Sunshine, an industrial suburb of Melbourne, over the decades 1920-1940, to produce 'My Paddock', a warm, human story with historical significance.

The author's picture of family highlights differences between modern living and that of seventy years ago. As such it will inform children who cannot imagine life without television.

The social mores of the period are shown through the attitudes and actions of the author's family and friends. For those who lived through the period, particularly in Melbourne, there is much to awaken nostalgia.

Although life was not all sunshine and family justice and patience wore thin at times, companionship, joy and humour were compensations.

'My Paddock' is to be launched by the Mayor of Sunshine, Cr John Hyett, the author's nephew, at the municipal offices' annexe, Sunshine between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m. on October 24.

The book, a soft-cover, will be available through book outlets in Gippsland and from the publisher, Gippsland Printers (Morwell), 16 Driffield Road, Morwell, 3840.

* * * * *

Prue McGoldrick was born in Sunshine, Melbourne, in 1925, attended primary school there, then Catholic Ladies College, East Melbourne, worked for CSIRO at Forest Products laboratory, married Val McGoldrick in 1949.

They raised their four children in Yallourn where they lived for 28 years. Over that period she was involved in many church and community activities, CWA, the Home Tutor Scheme, adult education, public speaking and Superintendent of a Red Cross Service Company.

Prue worked as a journalist with the *Latrobe Valley Express* and *Bairnsdale Advertiser*.

In 1979 she was commissioned by the Shire of Morwell to produce a history of the town. 'Steamhorse to Power' was the result.

The demise of Yallourn township prompted her to write 'Yallourn Was...' in 1984. Her social history of Sunshine titled 'When the Whistle Blew' was commissioned by the City of Sunshine and published in 1989.

MY PADDOCK (cont).

'*My Paddock*', Prue's autobiographical account of an early twentieth century childhood, will be launched this month in Sunshine.

Prue lives with her husband, Val, in active retirement at Paynesville. They have thirteen grandchildren. She attends the local primary school to befriend a student under the Learning Assistance Program.

Freelance writing has involved her in work for U3A (Universities of the Third Age), Neighbourhood Watch, *Gippsland Heritage Journal*, and *Catholic Life*.

In addition to her writing activities Prue has been a member of Monash University (Gippsland) Advisory Council, on the Board of the Centre for Gippsland Studies and a local history researcher.

'WEDNESDAYS CLOSEST TO THE FULL MOON'

Barry Collett

'*Wednesdays Closest to the Full Moon - a History of South Gippsland*' was launched in Foster on Friday, October 7, by Dr Davis McCaughey, former Governor of Victoria.

The book's title refers to the scheduling of early South Gippsland Shire Council meetings for Wednesdays closest to the full moon so that the councillors could sleep on their way home because the horse would be able to see its way in the moonlight. It is the story of South Gippsland from the days when the aboriginal tribe, the Bratauolong, (a branch of the Kurnai), roamed the district, to the present day, and the launch came just a few days before the announcement that there will be no more Shire of South Gippsland when it is merged with Woorayl and Korumburra to form the Municipality of Strzelecki.

As Dr McCaughey says in his foreword, 'Dr Collett's history of South Gippsland is perceived in a dual perspective. Personal histories - what happens to people, how they live, suffer, work and die - is interwoven with awareness that the lives of men and women are frequently conditioned by forces beyond their control.'

The book is a great read for anyone interested in Gippsland and readers will notice similarities with the development of our own district - the effects of wars, bushfires, the depression were felt everywhere.

'*Wednesdays Closest to the Full Moon*' is available in hard or soft cover. The soft cover edition, priced at \$29.95, is available from Collins, Mid Valley and both are available from the South Gippsland Shire Office, Foster.

The following article tells of the tragic death ninety-seven years ago of little Ivy Butters, aunt of our member Joyce Cleary. The clay hole was on the site of the present bowling green in Helen Street.

From the 'Morwell Advertiser', Friday, October 22, 1897:

SAD DROWNING CASE

Saturday last was a beautiful day, the brightest and sunniest of the week and everything in our town seemed gay, many of the country people were in purchasing a supply of goods; the Rangers were parading, others enjoying their half-holiday were playing cricket, whilst some went fishing and all appeared happy; but amidst life we are in death, and when, about 4 o'clock, the news flew about town that "Ivy" Butters was drowned, the gladness was turned into sadness and quite a gloom was cast over Morwell.

It appears that on Saturday afternoon about 3 o'clock Florrie Johnstone Butters, better known as "Ivy" Butters, bright little (girl) of nine summers, in company with a number of other children, went fishing at a deep waterhole, or rather an old 'clay hole' in Corbett's brick yards, which is about 200 yards from the main road and fenced round with post and rails. The hole is a very large one and in places is fully 20 ft deep. The water, which is of a dirty yellow colour, is about 3 ft from the surface, and in places the bank is undermined a considerable distance, making it very dangerous for anyone to walk close to the edge. The children however had no fear and were very happy playing and fishing together. They had been there before and had been warned by Mr Corbett on Saturday afternoon, shortly before "Ivy" slipped into the hole. Mr Geo. Irving, who was passing by the hole, told the children to go away or, he added, "some of you will be falling in." The children, however, took no heed. It would appear that, about 3.40, "Ivy" fancied there was something on her line and when in the act of hauling up, the earth slipped from under her feet and she fell in the water. Frank Wilson, a boy nine years of age, took off his boots immediately and tried to render assistance but the water was too far from the top of the bank that he could not reach the unfortunate child although she rose to the top of the water several times. Finding they could render no help, the children ran for assistance. Mr R. Noy was the first they met and he ran down to the hole but "Ivy" was then out of sight. Her hat was on the edge of the water, and being told where she had fallen in, "Dick", who had taken part of his clothes off, jumped in but could not feel the girl, he then got out of the water and took off the whole of his clothes, and with a rope in his hand again dived in, and was successful in recovering the body, but unfortunately life was extinct. The child was, however, taken to the doctor, and all the necessary treatment in drowning cases carried out, but without success. The fishing line she had been using was tangled round one of her legs. Only a few days before, "Ivy" had a narrow escape from drowning by falling into a hole close to Mr Lobley's residence, and she promised not to go near such holes again.

Great credit is due to Mr R. Noy for the heroic manner in which, without reckoning the danger, he jumped into the water and recovered the body, the hole is well known to be a treacherous one containing from 10 ft to 20 ft of water and at the bottom there are parts of tramways, logs &c. and we feel sure very few would have acted as Mr Noy did, and we should feel proud of having in our town men heroic enough to risk their lives to save others. The only thing to be regretted is that the girl was dead when recovered.

On Monday morning a Magisterial Inquiry was held before Mr D. Macmillan J.P. when the following depositions were taken:

Frank Wilson, having been duly sworn, deposed: I am nine years of age and reside in Morwell. That day I was in company with Florrie Johnstone Butters; we were fishing in company with other children when the earth suddenly slipped from under deceased's feet and she slipped into the water. I took off my boots and tried to help her but I found it was too deep and I could not reach her, although she rose several times to the surface. I then told Mr Noy who went down to the hole where she was. I was within a couple of yards of deceased when she slipped in.

Richard Noy, on oath, deposed; I am a labourer residing in Morwell. I remember the 16th inst and in consequence of something I heard that day I went to a waterhole and was shown where the deceased, Florrie Johnstone Butters, had slipped into the hole. I saw a hat on the edge of the water and then jumped in but could not feel her. I then got on the bank and took off all my clothes and, with a rope in my hand, I again dived into the water and brought the body to the surface. Deceased was in about 10 ft of water. About ten minutes had elapsed after I was informed of the occurrence before I recovered the body. Deceased then appeared quite dead. The hole is about 200 yards from the main road, in a paddock.

Henry Alfred Butters, on oath, deposed: I am a butcher residing in Morwell. The deceased, Florrie Johnstone Butters, was my daughter. She went away playing with other children on Saturday, 16th inst. She was nine years of age on 26th May last. In consequence of something I heard, I went to the waterhole. Mr Noy was there and dived in and recovered the body. Deceased was then quite dead. I knew deceased used to sometimes go fishing in waterholes but did not know which ones. It was between 3.30 and 4 pm when the body was recovered and it must have been in the water at least 15 minutes.

A verdict that deceased was accidentally drowned by slipping into a waterhole was returned.

On Monday afternoon, the body in the coffin was taken to the Wesleyan Church where a short service was conducted by Mr West. The funeral which afterwards left the church was headed by the scholars of the local state school who marched on foot to the top of the Ridge. Mr West officiated at the grave.

Very many beautiful floral tributes were received and much sympathy is expressed to Mr and Mrs Butters in their sad bereavement.

THE WAY IT WAS (cont) - A.R. Fish

It was at Stawell that I was able to keep the camp almost in meat, by hiking out to the nearby Black Ranges and knocking over a rabbit or two. Yes, I found the little .22 very handy and sure would have often gone hungry without it. Foxes were very numerous around that area. I remember seeing seven in one day - four of the large reds and, (foxes come mainly in two kinds), three of the smaller black variety. I was not able to shoot any of these and probably could not have skinned one if I had.

Flour was cheap at the little flour mill. One could get a large sack full for a shilling; not first grade - it was cheaper by reason of the fact that the mice had been playing around in it. And from the Chinese market gardener one could get enough vitamins to keep sickness at bay, but not at any time did one suffer from over-eating.

One incident, among others, that I recall there at the mud hut was the evening one of the knights of the road came in from the road and dumped his swag in the corner and sat down to take a well-earned rest. It was quite dark in the hut, as we had no light but the flickering flames of the small fire. Paddy McIvor was 'oiled up' and holding the flute. The stranger sat quiet for a while, just listening, then suddenly rose and, crossing the floor, struck a match and held it up to Paddy's face. Then he let out a yell - "Paddy McIvor, you old b....!" It turned out to be an old mate. "I thought I knew the voice!" They had been together as mates on Gallipoli and had not seen each other since the withdrawal from that field. Well, the mate, after almost seventeen years, had not forgotten the voice of his friend. They had some kind of a celebration, as much as they could have on black tea. One bright Thursday morning I got the urge to be on my way. So it was roll up the swag and out onto the road again. There are two ways for the traveller, we are told, only two ways. There were two ways to Horsham. One, the main highway, the shorter way - a bit over forty miles or so. The other way led up around the towns of Glenorchy and Murtoa, and was somewhat longer - about sixty-three miles. I make a point of recording these mileages because of what comes later. I had almost made up my mind to take the more direct route but when almost up to the turn-off I fell into conversation with a man on a bike who, when told of my intentions, gave me some good advice. "Don't take the main road" he said, "It's a hungry track, being nothing along the way, only scrub, no houses hardly at all." He went on to talk about the longer way. "Round through Glenorchy there are farms and houses and you will be able to get something to eat." So I allowed myself to be persuaded, and the tucker track it was. However, it did not live up to its expectations, or to his predictions. Indeed, I was refused cold water at the only place I tried, so I had to make do on what I could scoop up from a wayside pool, and as that week there had been a downfall of about three inches, there was plenty of water about, though somewhat discoloured. For food I still had a bit of bread but little else. At sunset I had covered a bit over thirty-two miles and coming abreast of what appeared to be a derelict farm house, I decided that I had done enough for one day. The sun was giving the day away as I chewed away at the dry bread and washed it down with the somewhat murky tea - the water had been scooped up from a rain puddle - then settled down before the fire. Being a bit weary, I should have slept soundly but for one thing that disturbed me somewhat. Someone had scrawled in large chalk writing on the walls 'Beware of the ghost,' and 'the ghost house', and maybe this preyed on my mind as I had not been asleep very long when I was wide awake. No idea of the time, but seeing the moon was glowing brightly overhead, I reckoned the night must have well advanced, so I decided that, as it was a mild night, I would roll the knot and be on my way. I had no watch, for the one that my friend of the tobacco patch had given me did not go at all, unless I took it somewhere. So I set off along the road by the light of the moon and in the cool of the night was making good time, or at least, had it not been for that black Wimmera mud. I would have been. As I have said, a few days before there had been a good fall of rain; as I strode along, the thick mud caked on the soles of my boots until I would have to go over to the fence and scrape the mud off on the wires. This had to happen every two or three hundred yards or so. But even so, the miles went by, the moon crawled down the sky, and finally set. The night blackened and I was still on the road. The mud had cleared a bit, the fences on each side went by slowly, the miles were long, but there was nothing for me to do but keep on

keeping on. Though weary by now, I could not stop to rest, as the ground was that flat Wimmera plains country, and wet, water and mud everywhere, so nowhere could I stop and I did not fancy stretching out on the damp ground. None too soon, relief came in sight, in the shape of a heap of broken stones by the wayside. Here I could be high and reasonably dry, so I scratched out a bit of a bench and lay down to sleep. It was a bit hard, but I had been on the rocks so long a time that it was even possible to sleep on the stones. And besides, had not another fugitive in the days of long ago lain down with nought but a stone for a pillow? So I curled up and soon was in dreamland.

Dawn came, and the sun rising in the morning mist, and I was wakened by the singing of a young farm worker going by on a pushbike, no doubt on the way to work. Well, I had no work to go on to, but I rose, rolled the swag, and pushed on to the town of Horsham, reaching it about eleven in the morning. Later I was to discover that I had covered about sixty-two miles since I had left Stawell.

Chapter Five - Cafe Capers.

So I came to Horsham, rather weary, hungry, and with a large blister the size of a 20 cent coin on one heel. First thing then, to find a resting place - somewhere to camp. The first place we always headed for was the local showgrounds. Mostly these were good camping places, well equipped with sheds, used mostly only once a year, and of course with the travellers concentrated in large camps, the work of the local police was made easier. If anything went astray, naturally it was some of the poor travellers who had pinched it. Anyhow, there were about thirty-five or forty men camped here in the local showgrounds so I found a dry spot and dumped the swag, and after a bit of a rest, went out to 'do the town.' 'Doing the town' consisted of calling at all the shops that sold food, butchers shops, cafes, bakers and restaurants and biting enough, or, if really hard up for tucker, buying enough to make up a meal. However, in my case on this occasion, my success was nil. The town had been well done, being a main line town, and the local traders were all hard of hearing and even harder of heart, having learned to keep their spare change - if they had any - deep down in their pockets. So up one side of the street and down the other, and not a bite. Things did not look too good. I had tried every place except one. This one I was reluctant to try, having heard about it. And here, were it not for the fact that this narrative is entitled 'The Way It Was', I might be tempted to skip over the next few days, but this is an authentic, unvarnished report of the way things were, so I must go on with this chapter.

There existed at that time in Horsham a shop that was famed wherever Romans foregathered or knights of the road supped. Ill-famed would be a better description. So I had deliberately avoided this cafe. However, hunger is a very compelling motive so under the goad of an empty stomach flapping against a not over-padded backbone, I approached this place. Plucking up courage, I crossed the threshold and asked if they had any food to spare, or could I do anything to earn something to eat. In the circumstances this last request could have opened the way to a lot of misunderstanding. "Would I mind cutting a bit of wood?" The girl was quite nice about it and well, I did not mind. She directed me round to the rear of the building which backed onto a bit of a lane and I went in and found the woodheap and an axe. I made a couple of tentative swings at the wood and split a stick or two. However, my efforts were stayed by a gentleman who emerged from the cookhouse. "Forget about the wood. Come and have something to eat." It was just about

noon so I did not hang back. He led me into the kitchen, sat me down at a table and gave the cook instructions to "look after the lad: see that he gets something to eat." One of the girls set before me a plate loaded with good food, and all the trimmings, and I tucked into the first well-cooked and ample meal that I had had for months.

(To Be Continued)

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GLIMPSES OF PIONEER DAYS (cont) - Jesse William Huggett

The Cumberland Diggings: We found the Cumberland country very poor as regards the gold, but rich in friendships. We got into a hut with four prospectors - their names were: Dick the Devil, who belonged to a wealthy Dublin family, who gave him £2000 a year to keep away from home and to stay in Australia; also William Doubly, who claimed to be the world's champion wrestler, a Cumberland man, champion in all styles; Mountain Tom and Jim the Splitter. Four as good mates as you could find. There was more than a dray load of empty bottles at the back of their hut, on which account we christened it the Bottle Hut. William doubly was no small man, as he was 19½ round the calf and 32 round the thigh, all bone and muscle.

There was no store at that time on the Cumberland and prospectors got their tucker from a place called Paradise Plains, just a few miles from the township of Warburton on the Yarra River. This was a trip of about 20 miles each way. Their order was never less than £25 or £30 and always included a good supply of grog, usually a keg of rum. Sometimes the storekeeper would stay and help them drink it, then send his man for another keg, and then perhaps swamp the price of it before he went home again.

Icicles: Well, up here all the timber was blackwood and beech and blackbutt, good timber, wonderfully sound but the limbs were dangerous and when snow fell quietly without much wind the snow would load up on the dry limbs and with the frost at night the limbs would crack off and come crashing down. The hut was built all of logs, walls and roof and ridgepole, all about six inches in diameter, covered with palings on the outside, and then in the winter nights icicles would form and hang like pendants from the eaves of the hut, sometimes being all of three feet long and would be there for weeks.

On one occasion there was no communication with the Watts for three weeks. Thirty miles on the Melbourne side and thirty-two miles on the Woods Point side, the only two places where we could get supplies of food. The mail carrier got his horses over to the Point but could not get much as a Mr Hutchinson, the boss in charge of a gang of Government road workers, had got to hear of the outlook and had gone to Mr Hargreaves the store-keeper and bought up all the supplies of ham, fish, bacon, cheese, butter and jam that he had, (excepting a little that he kept back for his own use). All we were able to get for a week was fat and flour and tea and sugar. The store-keeper remarked that we were using a lot of fat for our boots and I told him we did not use it for that, but made fat cakes out of it. He said: "I thought you were using it for your boots, greasing them to keep out the snow." It certainly was old and very strong-smelling stuff.

Snowed Up: We were six weeks on flour and the last two weeks no fat or sugar, and as we were working pretty hard we were getting weak during this starvation time. We did get a native bear but he was so thin that if we had hung him up and put a candle in him he would have done us very well for a lantern. The store-keeper kept promising meat "next Saturday" or "next Monday" and so on, so at last we decided to eat the bear if no meat

came by the end of the week, but it came - a fore-quarter of mutton at 1/3 a pound. We were very lucky to have flour and good appetities all through.

Snowballing: It often started snowing in the morning and by dinner time there would be twenty to twenty-four inches of it on the open ground and where it had drifted it might be ten to fifteen feet deep. We young fellows started on the bank where it was steep and began to roll a snowball and we kept at it until we could not move it any more. It was about twelve feet high and would have filled a fair sized room. We were at Cumberland Creek from 1st day of march 1865 to April 1886 and all through '65 we had snow, the last falling on 16th December. The summer was short but very hot and when we left in April the big snowball had not melted away but had turned into a large block of ice. We did well at the Cumberland, considering the time lost by reason of the snow, but at that time in September, father returned to the city to work at his trade, leaving Watty and me to put in a few weeks prospecting about the place where Watty had been lost.

One evening after supper we were sitting in front of the hut smoking and we heard a noise of rustling in the scrub just on the other side of the gully. Watty cocked his gun and put it up to his shoulder, thinking it was just a lyrebird or a wallaby, watching for an opening to let drive at it. Just at this moment a man's head appeared over a small bush. Watty dropped his gun and turned as white as a sheet for he was a dead shot and seldom missed anything he let go at. If ever a man had a narrow escape from being shot dead, it was that fellow. When we told him he was very pleased at his escape. He told us he was lost and no doubt if he had not found us at that time he would have been dead in the bush, for there was not a living soul or track of any sort in the direction he was going. He got instructions from us on how to get back to the track to the Cumberland where he duly arrived, as we learned later. He was from Ballarat.

(To be Continued).

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NEWSLETTER

NO. 152 OCTOBER 1994

FROM OUR ARCHIVES

A reading of historical archives often shows that modern day happenings had their forerunners in colonial times. Take for example, recent protests over the use of Albert Park. On 16 November, 1893, the 7th Earl of Hopetoun, Governor of Victoria 1889-95, wrote to the Hon. J. McIntyre, Minister of Lands in the Victorian Government, concerning the use of land in Albert Park for recreational purposes:

My dear Mr McIntyre,

You will recollect that I wrote to you some months ago, to tell you that the Trustees of the Albert Park were fencing the whole of the grass from the roads thereby preventing people from riding on the turf. You were good enough at the time to enquire into the matter & you informed me that you had given orders that the portion of the of the Park on the South side of the Lake should not be fenced off but that it should be at the disposal of the riding public.

When driving round the Park today I was astonished to find that a fence is being put up to cut off horsemen from the only piece of turf that is now open to them. I am sure that this is not being done with some(?) sanction and it does seem monstrous that the Trustees should be allowed to turn the reserve, granted that it was for the public recreation, into a grazing farm. For I am sure that such was never intended when the State handed over the land to them.

This strip of grass which lies between the south shore of the Lake & the wall is the only piece of soft ground in Melbourne. It is a great boon to the riding public - to ladies & to business men - who have only a limited time for recreation & I do hope you will use your great influence to stop it being taken away from them.

Very truly yrs

Hopetoun

Yallourn PS history to be retained

Dismantling of the old Yallourn Power Station will soon get under way, but before site clearance begins, the history of the Station will be comprehensively recorded

Generation Victoria undertook at a hearing before the Historic Buildings Council to properly and permanently record the historic and engineering significance of the power station.

Chief Executive Officer Frank Martin said considerable work had been done on thoroughly recording the station's history through several books, films and other written accounts produced over the years.

"We are now enlisting the help of historians and other experts to ensure the information and items we are retaining are both relevant to the story of the station and accessible to the public," said Frank.

A member of the Historic Buildings Council will participate in the process.

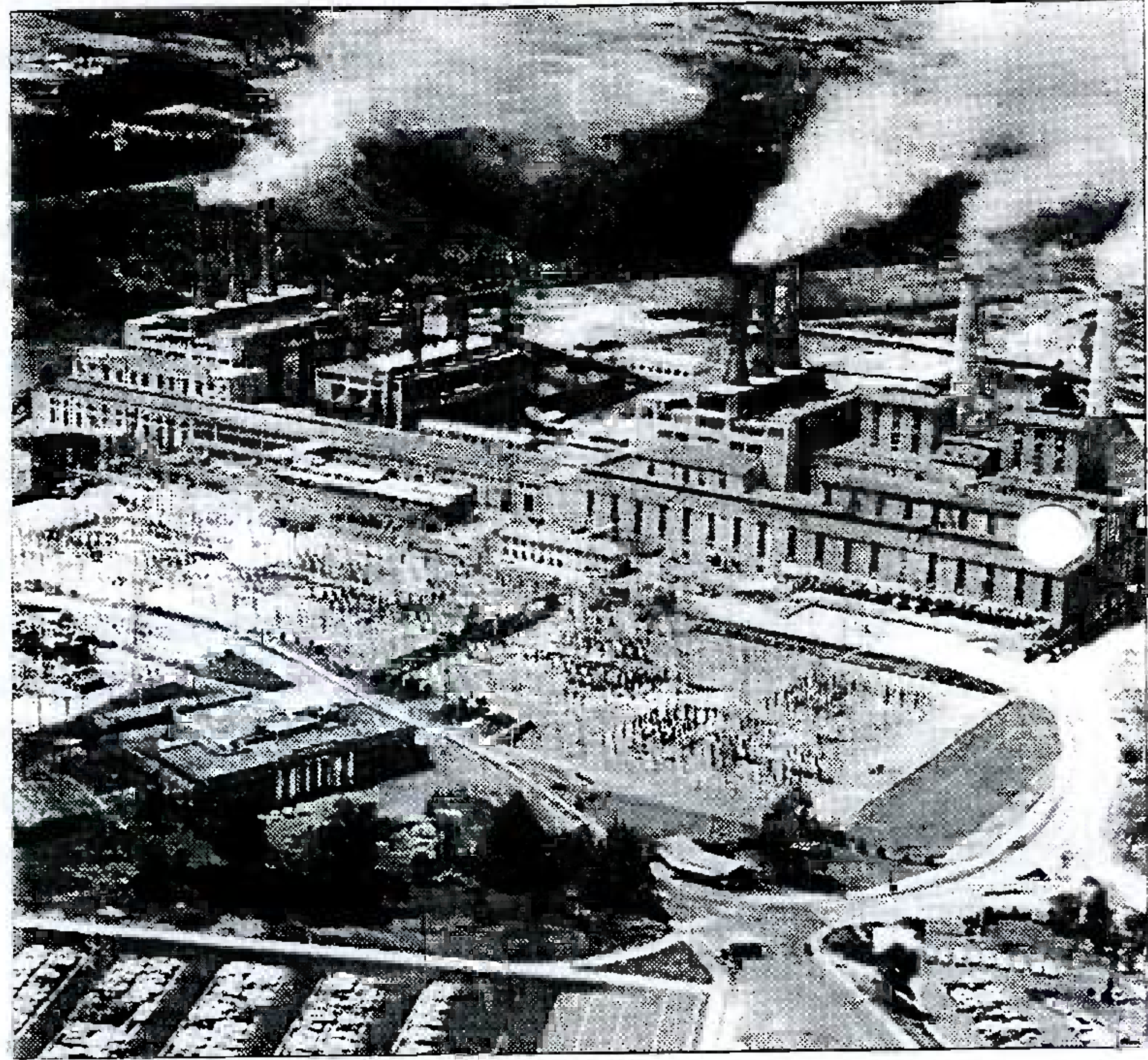
"As well as collating and retaining archived material we are also producing a detailed model of the station, a new video featuring current and historic scenes of the station, and relocating some power station plant items for public display," Frank said.

He said Generation Victoria agreed that the proposed means of "remembering" the station's contribution to Victoria was the most practical available.

"There's no doubt the physical preservation of the unused power station in a safe manner would have imposed a very substantial and ongoing burden on Victorian electricity consumers," he said.

Generation Victoria will now move quickly to complete contract negotiations for clearance of the site, which is expected to create more than 100 jobs and may provide 30 months of work.

"However, clearance will begin only after the Historic Buildings Council has approved all measures for preserving the history of the station," said Frank.



A detailed model and a video will help preserve the history of the Yallourn Power Station.

CONTACT **SEPTEMBER 14, 1994**