

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. 9 SEPTEMBER 1994

WELCOME TO THE SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

It is pleasing to be able to report that members Graham Gordon and Joyce Cleary are both well on the road to recovery, as is our President Eric, after a short spell in hospital. We wish them all a return to complete health very soon.

After our comments about the history of Scouting and Guiding in the Morwell district (August Newsletter), we received a call from Mrs Elaine Johnstone, of Morwell Trefoil Guild (an association for ex-Guide leaders) who tells us that individual Morwell Guide units have compiled their own histories. This is pleasing news and hopefully we will be able to obtain copies for our records.

It is interesting to note that 'Yallourn Was,' by our member Prue McGoldrick, is to be made into a 'Talking Book' by the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind. Prue also has a new book coming out soon - more details in our next newsletter.

**NEXT MEETING-OLD TOWN HALL
TUESDAY 20th. SEPTEMBER 1994**

*Guest for the evening will be Ann Dettrick
who will speak about
'Change in the Valley'*



YALLOURN HERITAGE TRAIL

The following letter has been received from Joanne Newey, Traralgon Skillshare:

“ I am writing to introduce myself as the project officer for the feasibility study to develop a Yallourn Heritage Trail. This project is a result of the Cultural Mapping of Moe project, where the people of Moe clearly identified strong links with Yallourn as part of their heritage and they wanted to promote this past in a way that was both informative and enjoyable to all levels of the community.

The Yallourn Heritage Trail will offer significant tourist benefits, drawing on the unique establishment and demise of Yallourn. Yallourn is an important component of the region's heritage and is closely connected with the region's development. A Yallourn Heritage Trail will assist to capture, cultivate and market the uniqueness of the region as a positive component of the region whilst contributing to the job opportunities in the tourism area.

We are inviting your assistance to help with this project and ask permission to come to a meeting and speak with your members about the Heritage Trail. This will enable us to identify potential homes for identification on the trail and allow us to develop a map depicting the relocation of Yallourn Houses.

The time span of the study (stage one) is for six months ending in late December. The trail has already created an interest in the community with many responses coming from our recent media release. We have also made brochures to give to the community inviting their assistance with mapping the history of Yallourn and already we have found many parts of Yallourn that still exist which can be

used in the trail from these. We will also inform interested individuals/committees with regular updates of our progress through newsletters.

As an ex-resident of Yallourn, and now living in a Yallourn house in Toongabbie, I believe that this trail will benefit the region in many ways, as the history of Yallourn is not known to many of the current inhabitants of the Valley. Future generations may also gain knowledge into their heritage, and for past residents it is an opportunity to recap on their involvement in the history of Yallourn.

Your organisation can assist the study with a letter of support. This will help the development of stage two of the Yallourn Heritage Trail.

Yours sincerely,
Joanne Newey, Project Officer,
Yallourn Heritage Trail.

THE KELLEHER FAMILY OF MORWELL

In response to a request for information on Edmund Kelleher, members Claire Wood and Eric Lubcke have located the following article from the Morwell 'Advertiser.'

Morwell 'Advertiser' - February 24, 1911 - OBITUARY -

'Another very old identity in the person of Mr E.(Ned) Kelleher passed away suddenly on Saturday morning. For some time past deceased was not well and about three months ago had a very bad turn whilst in Morwell, from which he, however, recovered. He arrived from Melbourne on Friday evening last, apparently quite well. He stayed at his old hotel and chatted away as usual with friends but about eight o'clock next morning was seized with another bad turn as he was about to get up. Dr

Bourke was soon in attendance but could do practically nothing as deceased was beyond all human aid. He sank quickly and passed away within a few minutes.

It is now just about 36 years ago since deceased first came to Morwell, having only a short time previous arrived in the colony from the Old Country. The railway line from Melbourne to Sale was then being built and deceased was a sub-contractor on the line between Morwell and Sale and at times a lot of men worked under him. Before the completion of the line, deceased and his two brothers - John and Maurice - opened the first store in the district on the banks of the Morwell River, which they carried on successfully until the site of the Morwell railway station was fixed and the township site reserved. At the first Crown land sale held here, deceased bought one of the first blocks submitted on which the late Mr John Quigley had a store and sold liquor, and on which the Club Hotel now stands, the value of improvements being paid to Mr Quigley. Mr John Kelleher at the same time bought the blocks on which the Post Office and Manning and Read's butcher shop are now located. The brothers dissolved partnership and Mr Ned Kelleher, having made additions to the premises occupied by Mr Quigley, opened a public house. As time went on and business increased, deceased, about twenty-five years ago built the present brick structure, on the site of the old hotel, and the house at the time was considered one of the best in Gippsland, and it only passed out of Mr Kelleher's hands a few months ago when it was sold for £4,000 to Mr Conlon. Some ten years ago Mr Kelleher retired from the business and let the house to the late Mr Reidy, and after enjoying a rest for a while he took lease of the Royal Hotel, Warragul, where he remained for a few years, but

for some time past has lived privately.

Deceased in the early days took a lively interest in Municipal and local matters and some of the elections he contested, especially when opposed to Mr J. English and Mr Bert Turnley, were, to say the least, fought in a most strenuous manner and keen interest was taken in the issue throughout the Shire. Never since those days has the same vim been put into local municipal contests. When the Traralgon Shire severed from Rosedale and Morwell and district became the west riding of Traralgon Shire, with three representatives, Mr Kelleher was one of the three first elected to represent the west riding, and we believe was re-elected on every occasion that his term expired. (Mr George Firmin, one of his colleagues, having the same honour). Upon the severance of the west riding and the Morwell Shire being formed about eighteen years ago, Mr Kelleher was one of the many candidates and was among the six successful, retaining his seat for some years. He was one of a few men that got together and started a movement for the erection of a Mechanics Institute and chose the site of the present building. He took a deep interest in other local matters and by his kindly manner, generous and charitable disposition, was esteemed by all with whom he came in contact, and made a host of warm friends throughout the district.

He leaves a wife and family of one son and two daughters, for whom much sympathy is expressed in their sad bereavement.

The remains of deceased were interred in Hazelwood Cemetery on Sunday last. The Very Reverend Dean Coleman officiated at the grave and the mortuary arrangements were carried out by Mr G. Billingsley.

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

Chapter Three - Johnnie Apples:

The summer was moving along and it was now the middle of February, and the Export was due to start. Of course, I hadn't a clue what this was all about but then I found out that it meant the beginning of the export season for apples, and the first crop on the list for export was the Johnathon apples. So there would be a bit of work about in the apple orchards. So I went over and got myself hired as a picker on the Milne Bros. apple farm. It was a big place owned by a sandy little man named Milne, a Scotsman, and a man of grit. Some are born to toil. I was told that over fifty acres of this orchard had been cleared by Sandy working on his own, after his day's work was done, working at night by the aid of a lantern light, slung over the branch of a tree.

But, older now, he took life a bit easier, and looked after a fruit shop down in Ballarat, while his nephew Harry and cousin Don looked after the fruit growing end of things. They also kept one paid hand during the year, a fellow named Hec Lennox. And with the picking season came a team of workers, packers and pickers and case-makers. There were the Randall twins who lived over somewhere in Victoria Valley, and between seasons used to keep the wolf from the door with a load of rabbit traps, and sometimes, when the bunnies were not co-operating, they would go up into the hills and prospect for gold. There was a fellow named Bowtell, from Halls Gap. I remember reading a story about this young chap once, some years later, how he survived the terrible fires of Black Friday by lying in a too-shallow creek and being kept from burning by pouring water over himself, dipping it up with a can.

The wages were good. I was getting a pound a week, and keep myself. Tents were supplied, water for nothing, meat if we could shoot it, and firewood free. I enjoyed those weeks, six in all, spent among the apples, and they helped out with the food bills. But on those days when Sandy was up from Ballarat to see how the picking was going, we had to keep an eye open for him. If he heard an apple rattle into a box he would be up the orchard like a shot and the offender could easily find himself going down the road, out of a job. Those apples had to be treated like they were eggs. Maybe one reason why fruit will not keep nowadays is that in those times we had to be careful in our handling.

The camp site was pitched in picturesque surroundings in the middle of the orchard, facing eastwards down the sloping sides of the mountains, looking out over the valley, with the great ridge of the ranges rising as a great wall in the rear. Over these mountains at weekends I wandered, with my rifle in my hand, exploring far and near. We were not far from the Monarch of the Grampians - Mount William - and I would like to have had the courage to have tackled this mountain, but according to the Randall twins it was a three day climb, one day to the higher ridges, then the dash to the top the second day. Third day to scramble down again. Nowadays there is a good road to the top and, I think, a couple of TV towers there. But TV was not even a dream in those days.

I worked hard and lived well. Food was cheap - for a shilling one could buy a whole quarter of potatoes (28 lbs) - and bread was 11d a four pound weight - large, we used to call it. Tins of beef for 6d, and the most delicious Camp Pie for only a shilling a tin. Rabbits were plentiful and easy to knock and bronzewing pigeons were to be had by

anyone handy with a gun. And I was handy. Two rabbits with three bullets - that was the average. And bullets were cheap - only fifteen pence a box of fifty. The pigeons were plump, with plenty of meat on the breast - good eating. But the work was hard and fast and hot. Sixty cases a day was considered good picking and in my second week I was making the sixty cases but I would not have known I was doing so well had I not heard Don skiting about the good picker they had.

However, all things come to an end and the six weeks of the export season were soon past, and with my swag rolled and my 'roll' safely tucked away in my purse, it was time for me to be pushing on again. I left behind some good friends in Pomonal and always hoped to some day get back to look them up, but not until forty years had passed, and by that time even the very memory of them had been forgotten. So ended my first experience with Johnnie Apples.

Chapter Four - Road (K)nights:

I got a lift into Stawell on the fruit truck, and then I was on my own again. Well, the Mud Hut was the first port of call and as I approached there was a delicious smell of fried onions floating out through the doorway and, as I entered I was invited to "come up and git a bit of dinner", and to this my response was just as ready. In those days, in the hard times, there was a camaraderie on the open road - it was very much a case of "hail fellow, well met". We shared what we had. The great Australian ideal of mateship was still very much a feature of life on the open road. We made friendships and forgot them as quickly as they were made. Life was in a somewhat fluid state. And 'fluid' was the term to describe the friendship that existed between Paddy McIvor and his two 'mates'. Paddy was camping in the mud hut and he had two friends with him. Also he had a pension,

being a returned man from World War 1, and these two hangers-on were helping him drink it. Paddy had come over from South Australia, having, while under the influence, climbed aboard The Overlander and gone to sleep, and waking, he was put off at Nhil. He tramped it down to Stawell and became one of the estimated five hundred or so camped around the town. The town must have been well done at that time as were most towns on the main lines of travel, and no doubt the tradesmen and townspeople must have grown heartily sick of the continuing strain of providing food gratis to this travelling population. It was the time of the annual Stawell Gift and, of course, accommodation was at a premium. So men were sleeping under hedges, in drain pipes, under bridges and in old sheds and anywhere at all and the town must have got a doing over. I heard Paddy's two mates bitterly complaining that the baker had asked them to cut a bit of wood in return for their loaf of the 'daily'.

However, most of the men were genuine out-of-workers, chasing from day to day the elusive crust of survival. Six or seven of us were at that time camped in the mud hut. I think that shortly after this it was demolished in order to discourage any too-permanent settlers. In that time all authorities combined to keep the floating population on the move all the time. In those days there was what they called the Travellers' Dole - a pittance of six shillings a week, less a tax of 3d - which the rulers of our fair land had decreed was sufficient to sustain any able-bodied man for seven days. Well, it might have been, but only just - or perhaps I should say, unjust - the snag being, and there is always a catch in any of these government handouts, that this dole could not be drawn at any place twice in succession. This kept the men

moving, all those at any rate who liked to eat, and most of them seemed to be addicted to this form of pastime. It meant that they had the choice between actually looking for jobs or pressing on to the next dole station, and as these were placed, where possible, nowhere less than sixty miles apart, it kept the men on the move. This prevented them from getting together and causing trouble, or fomenting revolution - and of course it also kept you from any sustained search for work - that is, if you wanted to be at the next dole station on the next dole day.

Well, this is what the men lived on, thousands of them, combined with what they could cadge, thief, pinch, beg or borrow. Or find. One down-and-outer carrying his swag out of Mt Gambier one day picked up a wallet containing one hundred and sixty lovely quids. Lucky? Well, maybe. As luck would have it, the wallet also had within it the name and address of the man who had dropped it. So the bagman, being an honest man, took it back to the town and delivered it intact to its owner, and was wonderfully rewarded with 10/- - half a quid - for his goodness. Bet it would have been hard to convince that fellow that honesty is the best policy.

Myself, I did not qualify for the dole, so I lived by my wits, and later by doing wire-work, and my little old twenty-two was a good standby whenever the butchers were not co-operating.

About that time the then Senator McLaughlin rolled his swag and set off up the Western Highway, then branched off up into the Mallee, just to see for himself how the other half lived and what conditions really were like on the roads. Not that he needed to go to such extremes. Any one of us could have told him. He went up by the great stacks of wheat at the wheat sidings, countless

thousands of sacks of grain piled sky-high beside the rail everywhere, and at the mercy of the wind and weather, open to the onslaughts of vermin, mice and rats waxing fat on grain that could have been food for men, women and children going hungry day after day. No silos in those days - wheat was stacked high in bags, sometimes covered with canvas or sacking - rarely iron, because of the expense - while in our own fair land people went hungry. I tell you what, men would not endure to see it today and take it all so stoically. There would be trouble, I am sure. Some years later I met the Senator when I attended a political rally up at Warburton. When the meeting was over, I went up and chatted to the gentleman, asking him about that episode. He told me the sights and experiences of that jaunt into swagland was something he would never forget. He also told me, incidentally, that years previously he had visited the town of Warburton and had worked on the installation of the first hydro-electric plant there, which plant supplied power for the Granose factory.

(To be Continued).



**GLIMPSES OF PIONEER DAYS -
Jesse William Huggett - (cont)**

Another Start:

Well, my splitter boss had previously been splitting on the Berwick side and was acquainted with Mr Selwyn, one of the early government surveyors, who told him that when out one day with a sailor man they had stopped for a drink at a creek and found a specimen of gold and quartz, so he said father and his mate, if they liked, could make up a party and he would give them directions so they could find the place, from the Lilydale side. Well, they all agreed to do this and as it was on a splitters place, he was to have a fifth share of anything they found. Just at this time, the splitter's brother-in-law, a bootmaker at Lilydale named Barber, decided to build the old Crown Hotel. It was a wooden place and father, being an expert carpenter, was asked to do some work on it, the understanding being that he would take equal share also in any gold found by the miners.

So, as Mr Selwyn had stated that he also had found a good bed of blackbutt and blackwood timber on the Woori Yallock Creek, my boss Mr Callander and I thought that we would try and find it. We started out one Saturday morning - 12th December 1863 - without coats as the weather was hot - myself and a Tasmanian named George Handcock who was also working for him. (His brother William Handcock built the old Lamb Inn in the city - Elizabeth Street - and also the Bridge Hotel at Richmond, before the old wooden bridge I remember so well was there and there was only a punt for the crossing of the Yarra). The first two miles of the trip was fairly clear and then we got into dense scrub, mixed up with supple-jack, wire grass etc up to six and seven feet high. Also tops of fallen trees we had to climb over so it

was rough going, but we got through the scrub after a great deal of hard going then found some of the most beautiful blackwood and blackbutt timber that I have ever set eyes on.

Father's mates he found wanted to back out of their agreement for the fifth share and instead offered him 30/- a week and tucker. He did not like this but could not do much against the four of them, although he was the only legal miner amongst them, none of the others having a miner's right. But, in this case, 'Might was Right.' So, father decided to go on his own, so set in at another creek where he averaged about an ounce of gold a week. His mates in the other creek were doing about the same and one afternoon hit a patch of about 16 ounces.

Well, when father was prospecting he found some gemstones and, thinking they might be of some value he sent them to Professor McCoy, the Government Lapidist, who said they were garnets and not of much value as they could not be cut locally and it would be needful to send them to England for treatment and they would be used only for cheap jewellery. They were of all colours, very pretty, all shades of red, green, blue, milk-white and crystal clear. Gembrook got its name through this finding of gems there in the brook. This was in 1864. There is also a monster rock, a granite boulder, on a hillside near a falls in McCraes Creek, much the shape of a ship without masts, which my father christened 'Ship Rock' and it still retains its name.

Well, to return to myself, I got dissatisfied with splitting and joined my father in the creek. Also my brother Francis from town had come out but the gold soon ran out. We tried McCraes Creek and got a patch of gold there so we took a holiday at Christmas and went to town. Afterwards we came back to the

McCraes Creek diggings where father's old mates were located, having left the other works on Anson's.

In January 1865 John Searle and his son Watty went to Blackspur, paling splitting, and soon came over to us to get us to join them, which we did. Then a man from Cumberland Falls, 30 miles up the track - Mt Arnold, 4,000 feet above sea level - who told us that there was a good show of gold there, but it was too wet for him as he had a bad case of rheumatics. So father and my brother went up to see it and if any prospect we were to join them - if not they were to return to Blackspur to the splitting.

Well, we heard the good word in two weeks time so we went up. They wrote that things were very dear on the Cumberland field - flour 8d a pound, potatoes 5d, sugar 9d, meat 1/-, tea 3/-, butter 3/-, tea, bed and breakfast 7/6d. We had just bought a bag of potatoes worth £3-6-8d on the diggings and on the 16 March, 1865, Watty Searle and myself - J.W.Huggett - started from the Watts with our packhorse and bag of spuds, getting as far as Bell Hell Creek on the east side of Mount Grant that day. We thought we would camp and eat some of the potatoes as we had nothing else to eat for our supper, but the rain had started and put out our fire. Mr Petter, from Kennedy's Creek, near Doncaster, was starting a store there and had the sides slabbed and canvas on the roof, with two ends open and logs laid down on the floor, so he invited us in and soon had a fire going. We cooked our spuds for supper and lay down for the night. In the morning a series of little creeks were running under our bed between the logs on which we reposed. At about 11 the rain cleared and we set out for the remainder of our journey up to the Cumberland, about four and a half miles, arriving there about 2 pm. We had a

good feed of fat-cakes for ourselves and our horse. My father and brother had only fat and flour to eat. Hargreave brothers from Queensland had just opened their store. They had been on the Caledonian diggings. We started next day our return trip to the Watts with a good supply of fat-cakes for ourselves and our horse, and snow started that same day. This was the first snow of 1856, on 17th March, and for months it was never off the ground. We had the last snow of the year on December 16th.

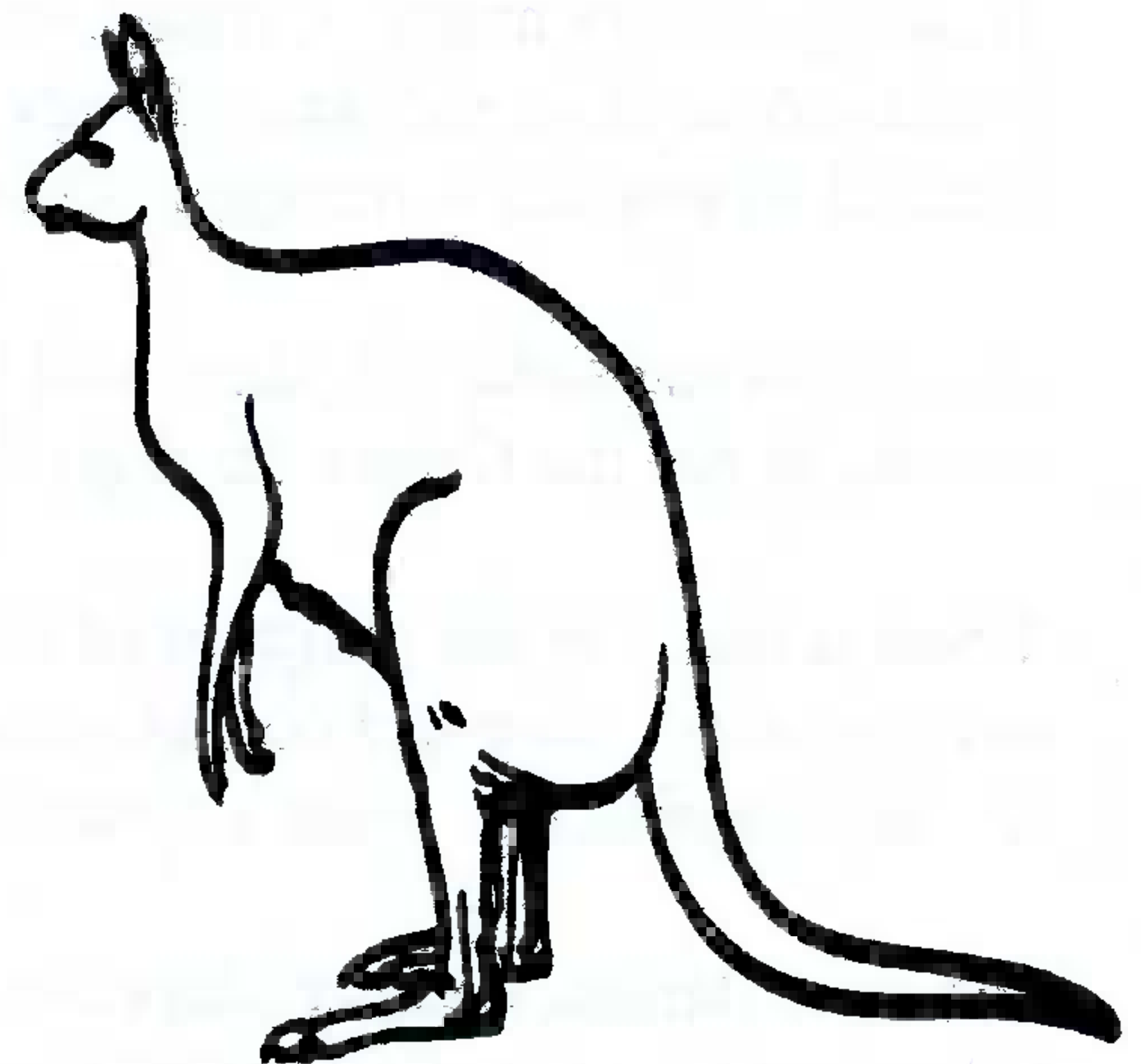
It continued snowing until we got to Marysville - 16 miles - then we had a patch of low country to the foot of the spur, to Fishers Creek - now called Narbethong. From there to the top of the spur was about four miles of mud and slush fully three feet deep. We had a terrible job to get the horse along the way - no way of escaping it - scrub thick and twenty feet high on either side, so we just had to wade through it. We got to the top of the ridge at last but we could go no further as the horse had knocked up, like ourselves, so we lay on the ground with our heads on a log for a pillow and slept like tops, being so tired. The next Wednesday we packed up all our gear and took it all back to the Cumberland field, arriving about evening, and were told the Watty was lost. It appeared that my brother and he were on the way to the store which was half a mile down the track, at six o'clock in the morning, for something for breakfast, taking a gun with them. They thought they heard a lyrebird over the creek and Watty said he would go along the creek and try and get a shot at it and would take the short cut home, and before my brother had got far away, Watty had gone off into the scrub. He heard a shot fired but heard nothing more and when he got back to the creek Watty was not there. Watty's father was nearly frantic, so I got

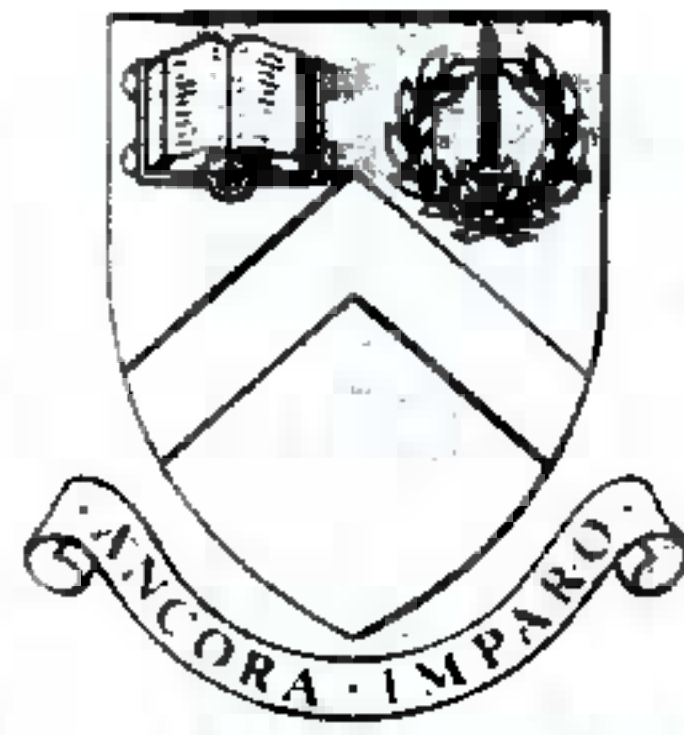
another gun and went up the same bridle track. Taking my bearings from a pocket compass I turned into the scrub for about a mile, coo-ee'd and fired the gun thinking he might hear the shot and reply, but there was no response. I put my compass on the ground to track my point for steering back to the track, but not coming to it I had another look at it and found I was going away from the track instead of to it. Where I put my compass down was on top of an ironstone ridge and it made the needle vary. I had to tear along the track for all I was worth and when I got back to the main track it was pitch dark but I managed to find my way to the hut where I found they had given me up also as lost.

Well, we arranged to make up two parties to start very early in the morning to continue the search. With us were two prospectors who knew the country. So myself and Dick the Devil arranged to go round one side of the mountain while my father and Mountain Tom would go round the other and we would meet and report progress. Dick and I came to a deep gorge where we heard a noise on the other side like a native bear grunting so I fired off my gun but the noise did not stop. Now I knew that a native bear always goes quiet when a gun is fired so I said we would go round the head of the gorge to see what it was. I was out in front when I heard a human voice and I sang out "That's Watty!" Off I rushed through the snow in the direction of the sound, falling into an old tree stump up to my neck in snow, but scrambled out and went on and found Watty sitting on a log, quite exhausted. He said he could not go on any longer and had intended to die in the snow if we had not found him. The snow here was nowhere less than two feet deep and in some places three or more. Some places in drifts it was over

ten feet deep. Watty had not had any food for over forty hours and had no tobacco or matches and was perished with cold. He had some brandy and water in a bottle. He drank some of this but could not eat. With much effort we got him into our hut and into bed, giving him food and drinks, and he was alright next day. He had gone off the track and shot a dove, then went to pick it up in the falling snow and then his tracks were covered so he could not find his way back. Later, when we got to know the country, we found he had wandered down a tributary of the Big River for about twelve miles.

(To be Continued).





AUSTRALIA

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Centre for Gippsland Studies Annual History Conference, Saturday 15 October, 1994

Putting Gippsland on the Map

The CGS invites you to an informative day on maps and mapping.

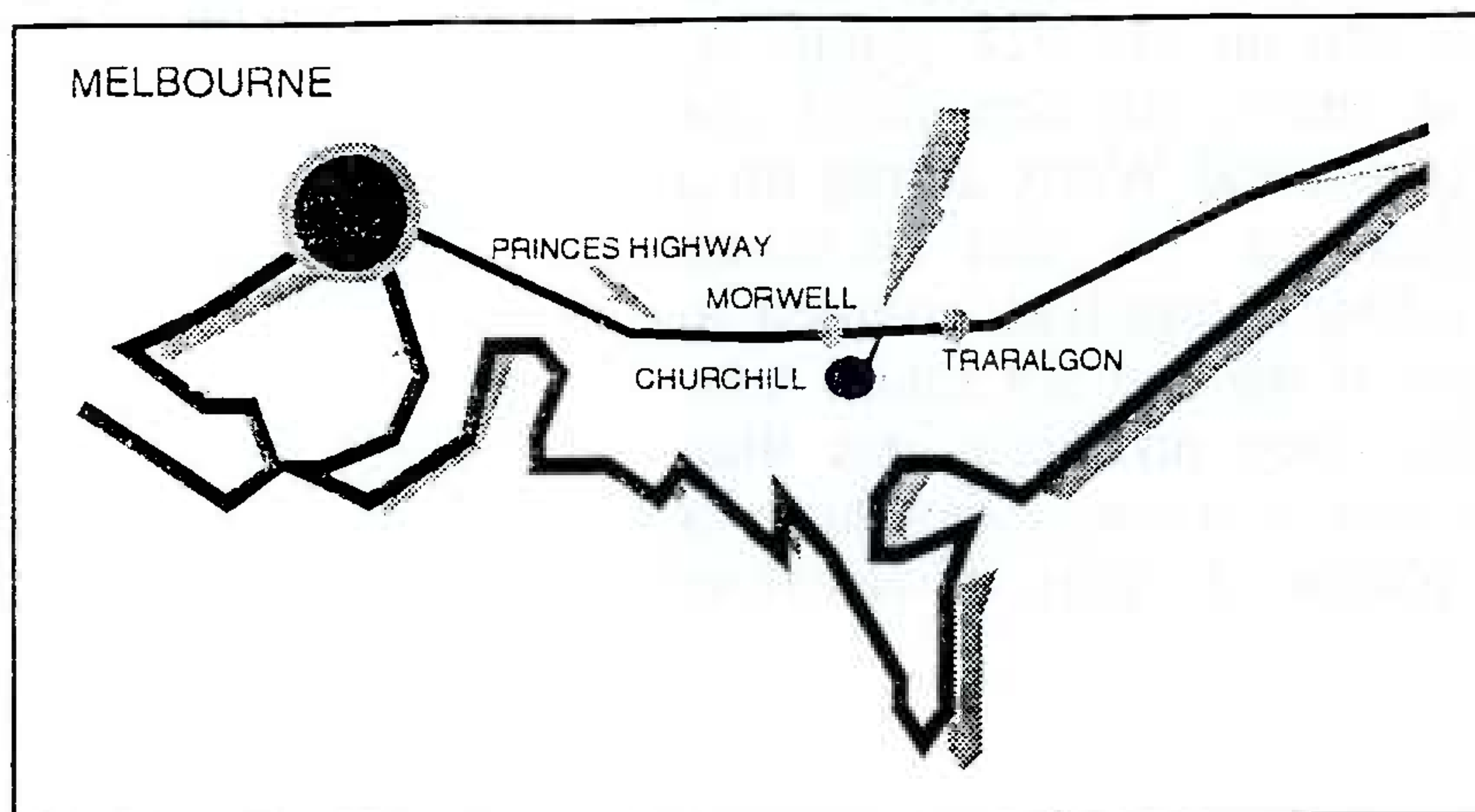
Judith Scurfield, map librarian from the State Library of Victoria, will speak about special Gippsland maps in the State Library collection and also give advice on caring for historic maps. This will be invaluable for historical societies who have the custodianship of fragile maps. Robin Bailey will discuss the maps and routes of early surveyor Thomas Townsend, and Charles Fahey will speak about parish plans and mapping the selection era. This will clarify land acts in Gippsland and help researchers to interpret maps in their quest to trace elusive selectors.

In the afternoon, Debra Squires from Kapana Press will give practical advice on how to prepare maps for publication such as reducing unwieldy maps to a manageable size and drawing locality maps. Cathie Lewis will discuss cultural mapping and the pilot project underway at Moe and Anita Brady will show how the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is mapping and interpreting Gippsland's historic sites.

As well as the speakers, there will be a photographic exhibition of Dumbalk to view, and a chance to see the Centre for Gippsland Studies Yallourn Exhibition, before it goes travelling.

There is much in the program of interest to historical societies and family history groups: map interpretation, care and conservation of maps, map collections, researching families and advice for anyone about to write a school, family, church or local history.

For more details, contact Meredith Fletcher, Centre for Gippsland Studies, Monash University Gippsland Campus, CHURCHILL 3842. Telephone: (051) 226 356



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