

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.

8

AUGUST 1994

WELCOME TO THE AUGUST NEWSLETTER

It is with regret that we record the death in July of one of our long-time members, Miss Kathleen Ida Green. Kath, who was a well-known Morwell identity, had been looking forward to celebrating her 90th birthday on August 2. Some notes on Kath and the Green family appear inside.

On a happier note, two other members are on the road to recovery after illness. Graham Gordon is on the mend after suffering a stroke and Joyce Cleary is getting back on her feet again after a broken hip. We wish them both continued progress and a full return to health.

Our display in the Old Town Hall is now open to the public, free of charge, on Fridays between 11 am and 3 pm. The Yallourn Fire Brigade trophies have been polished up and look most impressive in the new display cases (ex-Jephcotts), and there is a growing collection of tools and artifacts as well as the photographic display.

A few extra notes for volunteers who will have received their rosters for supervising the display. The makings for tea and coffee are in the louvred cupboard in the back room - we now have a 36 cup urn which boils quite quickly - and just inside the front door there is an "OPEN" sign which can be put out on the step. And, if business is slack, you can always polish the trophies!

Members Dot and Gordon Taylor have bought a unit in a retirement village in Toowoomba, Qld. They found it next to a shopping centre where they had gone to buy pastries and decided it was for them. Gordon says they are the most expensive pastries he's ever eaten! We wish them a very happy and satisfying life in their new home and look forward to seeing them back here for a visit in November.

***Next Meeting: TUESDAY, AUGUST 16 IN MORWELL LIBRARY at 7.30 pm.
PLEASE NOTE CHANGE OF VENUE!!***

THE GREEN FAMILY OF MORWELL

The following information comes from articles in the **Morwell Advertiser**, 13.1.1964 and 12.4.1907; from an interview between Kath Green and Jessie Cafiso, printed in **Morwell Historical Society News Vol4 No.1, Jan.1988**; and from the eulogy delivered at Kath Green's funeral in July 1994.

Kathleen Ida Green was born on 2nd August, 1904, in Morwell. Her parents were Arthur and Catherine Green (nee Stamp) and her father had a shop in Tarwin St, on the site of the present Fosseys store. The family lived next door to the shop and their garden extended to George St. Kath attended Commercial Road school until the end of Grade 6. Then, as there was no high school closer than Sale and transport was a problem, she went to Maryborough to stay with her grandmother and attended Maryborough High School before becoming a boarder at Cromarty, a boarding school for girls, in Elsternwick.

At age 17 she returned to Morwell for a couple of years, then for two-and-a-half years she was apprenticed to Traralgon chemist Mr Robinson. She then attended the Pharmacy College in Melbourne for two-and-a-half years. During her studies she failed a chemistry subject and was upset and anxious, but cheered up when she found that another student senior to her had also failed - the student was Weary Dunlop.

After qualifying as a pharmacist, Kath did relieving work for twenty years in many parts of Victoria, as well as New South Wales and Tasmania. In 1948 she returned to Morwell to care for her parents, while still relieving part time in local pharmacies. She held various executive positions with the Pharmacy Association and was on a committee to review equal pay for women pharmacists.

Kath had a keen interest in local events. She was a member of P.W.M.U. and C.W.A. and a life member of Morwell Croquet Club. A niece said of her: "As an aunt, she was constant and thoughtful. She became the centre of all the

family news and events. Auntie Kath was honest and made her point of view known but was never intrusive or commented on anything that she considered not her business, and had great respect for each family member's individuality and privacy. She will be remembered with respect and affection."

Around 1879, Kath Green's grandfather, Mr J.Green, then a draper in Rosedale, bought a block of land in Tarwin Street Morwell and engaged Mr. W. Allen, one of the first builders to enter Gippsland, to build a shop. A galvanised iron building, later known as the "iron store" was erected and was considered a first class building of its time. Mr Andrew Gay was appointed manager, sleeping on the premises. As business grew the shop was expanded and a manager's residence was built beside it. After Mr Gay's death, his son succeeded him as manager then, in the early part of the 20th century, Mr Arthur Green took over the management of this father's store. In 1907, a new store, again designed and built by Mr Allen, was opened on the same site, the building work having been organised so that business could be carried on without inconvenience to customers. The new shop was built of bricks made by Morwell Pottery Co. Fifty-two feet long, forty-five feet wide, with fourteen-foot ceilings, it was divided into two compartments, one thirty feet wide, the other fifteen feet, linked by means of an archway through the dividing wall. The ceilings were pine, painted grey with blue borders, the floors jarrah, and the doors glass to within eighteen inches of the floor and fitted with Norton's attachments to prevent slamming. The verandah was striking, with an impressive frieze and fringe and panelling and there were display windows along the front of the shop. The counters had French-polished kauri pine tops and there were many other up-to-date fittings, making the new shop certainly the finest in Morwell at that time. Merchandise sold included haberdashery, fancy goods, manchester, men's and women's clothing, hats and footwear. You could buy a pair of dungarees for 2/6d or a pair

of boots for 2/11d and men's good working socks were 6d a pair. According to Kath Green, the shop had strong metal shutters fitted to the windows, not to protect the premises from thieves or vandals, but from roaming cattle. These animals, frequenting the street at night, would see themselves reflected in the windows and charge into the glass, injuring both themselves and the windows.

Arthur Green, apart from being a well-known and liked local businessman, was a keen amateur photographer and one of the first in the district with proper photographic equipment. During World War 1, he operated a 'Snapshots for the Front' service, taking photographs of local families to send to servicemen overseas. He was also very interested in the weather and kept a record of Morwell's rainfall for many years. His records were used by bank managers, auctioneers and estate agents to convince people that Morwell was an area worth settling in.

KING'S AND QUEEN'S SCOUTS

Glen Billington, son of member Leo Billington, has given us, for our records, a copy of his research on King's and Queen's Scouts from Strzelecki Scouting District. Glen is working towards his own Queen's Scout award and this study is part of his work.

In his introduction, Glen writes:

'My assignment was to list the names, dates, and groups of Strzelecki District King's and Queen's Scouts. I have made every effort to list everyone who received the award and research the correct pieces of information about each individual.

Before I began this assignment I never realised how many people had worked to receive the award that is known as one of the highest youth awards in scouting. It is a credit to those who received the award for all their hard work and perseverance that they put in during their time in the scouting movement. While it is the scouts who receive the credit for the work involved in the Queen's Scout award, there are always the leaders who have assisted them. Encouragement

and support given by leaders is a key factor in the completion of the award. I'm sure that receiving this prestigious award is a great memory for those who have received it. During my work researching the names for this list, I have learnt a lot about an interesting history of the Strzelecki District. It is a pity that no-one in the past has put together a list of past King's and Queen's Scouts. Some groups have their own individual honour boards. These honour boards have supplied some of the names required for the list, but many names have come from district hall files and District Association minutes. There have also been names that have come from neither of these two sources, but the memories of people who were involved with our district. I have found names on pieces of paper and in books; while this is helpful it is extremely annoying to find that these names lack a date or have an initial in place of a first name.

I have enjoyed this piece of work and have also found it very rewarding. It has also occurred to me that the Strzelecki District lacks a comprehensive all round history. The information is available and all that is needed is someone with the willpower to tackle such a piece of work. I am hopeful that one day the history will be documented, and once it has been done it should not be forgotten because Strzelecki District, like everything else, continues to change. It is my hope that this list of scouts will continue to be updated so those who receive the King's or Queen's scout award can be recognised for their achievement.'

Well, how about it, some of you ex-scouts? Will anyone take up Glen's challenge and write the history of scouting in Strzelecki District? Glen's Dad, Leo, has documented the history of 1st Morwell Scouts (**Morwell Historical Society News Vol.2 No.5 May 1986**).

We need someone to carry on the good work - and what about the Guides? No history of guiding in our area exists either.

Glen's list contains awards dating from 1931 to 1994 and it is available for reference in our library.

The Way it Was (cont) A.R.Fish

Well, I stayed a few weeks with Jack, until came a day when our friendship almost disintegrated. Jack had gone down this day to the town of Moyston, to see a man who owed him some money for a clearing job. It was a rainy day and I stayed about the camp, cleaned the place up a bit, and when evening came I prepared tea and cooked myself a slab of steak. Then, as it got later I prepared some tucker for Jack. But it was much later when Jack finally got back to camp and by that time the tea was overdone. He was a bit under the weather, having collected from the fellow who owed him, and then, because it was too wet to work, spent the day and the money in the Moyston pub. Well, it was his own money, he had worked hard to earn it. But I had not been loafing all the time either, on those 12-chain long rows of tobacco.

We had a few words and I thought it wiser to leave Jack alone for the night, so I went over to visit friends, over in the nearby apple orchard, and got their permission to bed down there for the night. So I bunked down on the back of the fruit truck, high and dry, and plenty of bags for extra warmth and to make a bit softer the hard boards on the tray body truck.

Next morning I went back and tackled Jack, an extremely rash or terribly brave thing to do, inasmuch as he would then have been in the throes of a hangover. But don't get me wrong, Jack normally was the kindest and most gentle of men, but it was just that the drink used to get him. Proof of this is found in the fact that we remained friends after these happenings. He accused me of going over there - to the orchard - and making fun of him. He swore at me. I swore back at him, casting reflections on his parentage. This was the worst thing to do and was too much for Jack. He let out a wild yell and came out of his bunk with a leap that took him half way across the floor. I let out what must have been a louder yell of terror and went out the door in a panic, snatching up my rifle as I went and doing a Landy down the track for

about fifty yards. Then I stopped and swung round with the rifle at the ready. Well, he had the sense to stop, standing there with the morning breeze flapping his shirt tails, facing the raised rifle. I am glad that he had the sense to stop. I probably had no more sense at that time than to try to stop him, for, let's face it, he could have torn me to pieces. But I was a crack shot with a rifle and he knew this. So he stopped. And I stopped - or at least, I went. And thus ended my first attempt at tobacco farming. However, I must add this. No sooner did I get established in the tobacco business than I wrote to my folks, told them where I was and what I was doing, and soon the word got about and my mother was approached by certain neighbours who asked could they get some tobacco seed, no doubt with a view to growing their own weed, but although I did send home a small amount of seed I do not think any of it grew. But someone visited the garden in the dead of night and several plants, not tobacco plants, disappeared mysteriously.

Chapter 2 The Long Chapter.

Well as I said before, Jack and I remained friends. but I looked for another job and found one with a young fellow named Long Dick. And he was as long as his name as he stood over six feet in his socks. He had about six acres of leaf on good ground and was comparatively well-off, inasmuch as he had a motor car, and a well built shack with tar paper walls and an iron roof. He was busy with a horse and cultivator, breaking up the heavy clods between the rows of tobacco. It was my job to come behind with the hoe and work the soil loose around the green stalks, opening up the ground to the air and to any moisture that might fall.

The wages were very good - six shillings a week and my keep. Well I got the keep but not the shillings, and I think it was a long time since Dick had seen so much money all in one piece. Later, in lieu of pay, he gave me a watch which didn't go. So I was not well paid, but he was a good mate, not addicted either to the smoking of the weed nor to alcohol, and we got

on well together. At that time he was keeping company with a sweet little girl from the next door farm. I cannot remember her name but she was a dumpy piece, had not much in the way of looks but she came up to his heart and was big enough to fill it. Through Dick and his girl I got to know the Dickenson family, who had a small place further up the track, which place was a great meeting place for the youth around. Old Josh and his son Young Josh were both great performers on the old button accordion and many a night we whiled away the hours listening to father and son performing. And sometimes in the bright moonlight we would put on a bit of a dance out in the open on the smooth bare patch of ground before the house. There was a large family of boys and girls living over the way so we were never short of company, as they were full of life and, even after a hard day in the fields, they could still join in a bit of innocent fun. It was a pleasure to know such people. Their old man was a shrewd, hard-working farmer, and he had the rows of leaf planted going the same way as the road, the idea being that if any of the young people were going down to the store or the post office they could take a hoe with them and hoe up a row on the way down and on the way back. And, if it was a girl going, there would often be a boy with her - that place had the best cultivated fields in the district. Well, it is all gone now. Forty years later, exactly to the day I first set eyes on the fields of Pomonal, I got back there again, but it was all gone. Gone were the tobacco farms and the shacks and the scrub and the orchards. Gone the apples and the pears and the plums, and the tracks that used to wind between the trees. Dried up were the little creeks and the music and the laughter were likewise gone "for joy had withered from the hearts of men."

We spent some happy times at the Dickenson home - when the music and dancing were done we could sit about and listen to the old man bragging about the days on the wheat fields and the bumper crops he had grown, and how bulk handling was the only answer to the crisis

afflicting the wheat industry.

I enjoyed working with Dick, he was a mate, and in no sense a boss, but the knowledge that he would not be able to pay me for what I was doing may have had some bearing on the matter. He did not even go moderately crook when I got fooling about with his old Ford and left the choke out and all the petrol ran out on the ground, though why it should have done this is beyond my understanding. It was a model T and perhaps this was a peculiarity of this model. About this time I came across one of the original "Pommie" jokes when a young migrant from next door came wandering down along the track to the field of tobacco. I first noticed him standing there gazing in somewhat vacant fashion at the bush in general, and a few straggly trees in particular. I asked him if he wanted anything, to which he made the reply: "The boss sent me down to get a couple of swingle trees and I don't know one tree from another, they all look the same to me. But he said I would find a couple along the track down here." Well...! I was able to increase his knowledge of things colonial by explaining that 'swingle trees' were not things that grew but were bars fitted across the trace chains on a farm implement, and helped in distributing the load and pull when more than one horse was yoked in a team. And there actually were several there on the ground at his feet.

About this time I almost fell out with my boss. I remember the day when his young lady came a-visiting and there was much soft talking and quiet whispering one to another. Long Dick told me that later that night there was to be a broadcast from overseas of a boxing match, some world famous pros were involved - I have forgotten who they were - and he persuaded me strongly that I should go over to the orchard, where there was a radio, and listen to it. Well, I was not greatly interested but agreed that it might be a kind of a night out. Radios were somewhat rare in those days. Try to imagine a house without one nowadays.

So about evening time I picked up the rifle and wandered away along the track that led through

the trees and down by the creek bank, where I bagged a couple of bunnies. However, on arrival at the fruit sheds I was disappointed to discover that something had caused the fight to be postponed, so we were left at a bit of a loose end. We spent some time yarning and mucking about with a single barrel shot gun one of the boys had newly got, trying our hand at 'mooning' possums but without luck. The moon was bright enough but the possums were not playing so I decided to head back along the track to Long Dick's tobacco farm. It was a fine, cool night and the fruit trees were in full crop, hanging low with weighted boughs, and the moon was now high in the sky and I enjoyed the walk past the rows of tobacco, shadowy in their greenness. Coming closer to the hut I suddenly burst into a loud piercing whistle and as suddenly into the hut. Well! It was dark in the hut, only a small window let in a glimmer of light and I sensed rather than saw my friend Dick make a sudden bound for the middle of the floor, tugging frantically at his trousers. Of course it was too dark to see anything in the hut and coming in from the moonlight I could see nothing. We had no lighting in those days, not even candles, just a slush lamp which, when it was alight was more smoke than flame, being just a bit of leather bootlace floating in a dish of fat. And, if you were asleep when the lamp went out it would wake you up with the stink. However, they had not lighted the lamp, preferring the darkness and, if the girl had kept her mouth shut I could have kidded that I did not know she was there but, being a woman, she just had to say something. But as I said, it was dark anyway and I could see nothing so I had to emulate that famous Chinese man of my home town - "me see nothing, me say nothing, me know nothing." So we stayed the best of friends, Dick, the girl and I.

Shortly after this episode I concluded my contract with Dick but not, I must add, on this account. But this ended the Long Story, except that I never did have any payment, except he gave me a present of a watch that would not go. But anyhow, I went instead.

(To be continued).

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

How the Miners Fared:

My fatherr's partybof miners found some gold at the head of a small creek called Anson's (further down). They had a packhorse and decided to fatch their tucker from Lilydale so as to keep it secret from the Hoddles Creek diggers, five miles distant. To do this they turned off the track at the Wooriyallock and went across country to McRae's Creek following that up for about twelve miles to their destination and to make doubly sure they reversed the shoes on the horses' feet. But soon a Hoddles Creek man saw them going into the bush with a bag of flour on the horse and said - well, people don't go packing food away into the bush like that, so there must be something doing. So, he reported it at the diggings and two of the men there, brothers named Walsh - 'Bluenose' and 'Old Shepherd' as he was called - started out to search for them and after three weeks succeeded and thought that they would benefit themselves but it did them no good for, under the mining laws of that time, and they were then under the Castlemaine mining laws, each man was permitted to take up a hundred yards of creek including both banks and prospectors got double, so a thousand yards for the five of them took up all the good ground from the dam site above to the falls below.

Although the creek ran for some miles below the falls yet no gold was found from the falls down. There was no need for secrecy now so our party made a trek back to Hoddles Creek and got their food along the track by packhorse.

Joining the Mining Party:

Well, by this time father had finished his building job and he came out to join his mates on the field. He came out via Hoddles Creek and when about half way along it he missed the track and wandered through the scrub until he came to a creek. He knew that if he went straight along to the right he should be able to see his mates' huts but, not finding them, he went up a big hill and camped on a big rock until morning. Then he took his bearings by the sun and soon found his mates. He had had his

breakfast and he went straight to work.

Blackfellow Tracks:

In a couple of hours, Jimmy, the tracker from Corranderk, made his appearance and, pointing at father said: "I have got you." I must explain how the tracker followed my father. Just previously four men had come to Hoddles Creek to try their luck at the diggings and the first night, after supper, one of them said he would go up and look at the horses - they had them penned in a small yard in the scrub at the top of the hill. When he did not return after a while his mate said he would go and see what had become of him. He also did not come back, wherein the other two went looking for the missing ones. They set a fire going by cutting down some saplings and standing them against a tree to make a good blaze, thinking their mates might find their way home by walking toward the blaze, but it did not work that way. When the fire died down and they tried to find their way back to camp they also got lost. The disappearance caused the other miners to send for the black tracker. Next day one of the men got home and reported the matter and the next day another of them came home safe. Later the third man arrived but the fourth went right through to Dandenong, taking in all about five days, and arrived there starving and almost naked, his clothes being torn by the rough nature of the scrub. Well Jimmy got onto father's tracks, thinking he was one of the missing men, which proved to me the ability of the tracker to follow a track as no man had ever been where my father had been at that time. He told father where he had left the track, crossed the creek and camped up on top of the granite hill - and all this through thick scrub everywhere.

A Trial of mining:

After doing some splitting of stakes for mining claims, they took two mates, John Searles and Joe Brown, who came to prospect while the others kept working. The party started to sink a shaft in the Dry Hill and had got about sixty feet, near to bottom they thought, when the big 1863 rain started. After some days of

continuous rain it cleared, but when the party came to look at their claim they found it had fallen in and all their gear was down buried at the bottom of the shaft. There was nothing to do but grin and bear it.

Christmas in Melbourne:

Well, as it was near Christmas time, father and Stephenson started for home. Mother had left Nunawading now and was living in Victoria St Richmond. To get their track, they had to cross the Yarra at a stoney ford with about four feet of water over it from the big flood. While trying to cross, Stephenson, who was a powerful swimmer, was washed of his feet but managed to grasp a bit of scrub about a quarter of a mile downstream and was able to get to the bank. My father, who could not swim a yard, got over without any real difficulty and waited about for nearly an hour, thinking his mate was lost, but he finally turned up. It was now dark and they had about three miles to travel through nearly three feet of water before they got to higher ground. Well, they finally did it, arriving, they judged, about midnight. They had some dry wood and matches and made a fire, then stripped off and tried to dry their clothes, then lay down until morning, making town the next day. This was the great flood of 1863 - 17th December - the highest for the city.

More Troubles:

Well, my father not getting his money from England as he had hoped he would, and losing his mill wages, and one of the officers of the Provident Fund having decamped with about £10,000 of the fund money, the Institute was forced to come down hard on all borrowers for repayment, and as father was not in a position to redeem the house, it was sold for what it would fetch, so father lost all.

(To be continued)



From History News
August 1994

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE New Priority Services

Public access to the Public Record Office will be enhanced by a number of new services to be introduced over the next 6 months.

From 4 July - Toll free number to Laverton Search Room

A toll free number direct to the Public Record Office main Search Room at Laverton will be available for Victorian users living outside the Melbourne Metropolitan (03) area.

Ring 1 800 657 452 for inquiries about services, hours of opening and holdings.

From 1 August - Priority record delivery service to the City Search Room

Same day or overnight delivery of records will be available for

users of the Public Record Office City Search Room in Little Bourke Street. A small fee will apply for this Priority Service. The new service will operate Monday to Friday.

The existing free delivery service will remain and be extended to five days a week.

As the new Priority Service provides researchers with ready access to records in the City Search Room, the photocopying of "unseen" records will be discontinued.

From October 29 - Saturday Opening of the Laverton Search Room

The Public Record Office Laverton Search Room will open on the last Saturday of each month, except during the Christmas holiday period (December and January), from 9.30am to 4.00pm.

Future imperfect

By DEBORAH CONNORS

PREDICTING the future has always been difficult, if not perilous. But that has not deterred generations of would-be forecasters from Nostradamus to Alvin Toffler.

In recent years writers such as Toffler, John Naisbitt and Faith Popcorn, chronicling social trends and future talk, have all made best-seller lists.

Yet from biblical times human beings generally have predicted the future very badly.

Two years before they took off from Kitty Hawk, Wilbur Wright told his brother Orville that man would not fly for 50 years.

In 1893, a US news agency commissioned 74 prominent men and women to write an essay predicting what the world would be like in 1993. And these essays were subsequently published last year in a book entitled *Today Then*.

Many of *Today Then's* essayists succumbed to excessive optimism with declarations such as "Laws will be so simplified that there will be no work for lawyers", "Longevity will be so improved that 150 years will be no unusual age to reach" and "Religion will have solved the alcohol problem".

**JUST A
moment**

Herald Sun

Like Wilbur Wright, some essayists could not make their imagination do quantum leaps. For example, "Women will never want the right of suffrage" or "The railroad would still be the fastest means of travel".

One of the major concerns of all futurists is crime and criminals. In the 1893 essays, an intellectual wrote that in 1993 there would be little crime because "criminals would be prevented from breeding", while a fellow essayist tipped that "poverty would fade and justice dealt to everyone."

Five years earlier, American author Edward Bellamy, in his popular novel *Looking Backward*, imagined cities in the year 2000 as genteel Utopias where crime has all but disappeared because everyone enjoys equal pay.

With the new millennium close, the human impulse to squint into the distance will continue apace.

Only one prediction can be made with confidence: in the future, there will be people making a lot of predictions.