

THE MORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Published every month except December.

The Society meets every 3rd Tuesday of the Month 7:30pm Collins St. State School Library

A REQUEST FOR HELP

One of our members, Mr Jim Bush, is the Secretary of the Hazelwood Cemetery Trust. At our last meeting we were interested in a letter he had from a Mrs Lila Ross who was seeking information about the burial place, date, etc of Mrs Mary Ross, (her husband's grandmother). Mr Bush found that records showed Mrs Mary Ross's burial to have been on October 15, 1929. She was the wife of John Ross and her maiden name was McLeod.

Mrs Lila Ross who lives at Colac, was also hoping to find an obituary notice to gain more information about her husband's grandmother. We wonder if anyone reading this could possibly help. Someone may have kept a newspaper of that period (October 1929). If anyone could help would they contact either Mr Bush or one of our members?



• THIS is the progress being made by workmen, despite the torrential rain of the past few days on building of the Coles-Dickins New World supermarket in George Street, Morwell.

REMEMBER THIS? LOOKING WEST. ALONG GEORGE ST. THE OLD SCOUT HALL CAN BE SEEN. THE EXPRESS. WEDNESDAY APRIL 29 1970.

EARLY MORWELL RACE MEETINGS

The item below will bring back memories to some of our members. It is from Yarragon, Trafalgar and Moe Settlement News dated December 10, 1914. The Moe Correspondent of the 'Herald' writes -

It is 35 years since the first race meeting was held in Morwell (Gippsland) and 31 years since the first meeting was held on the present course, which is owned by Mr Jensen, the owner of Royal Arms, Powerful, and other performers. Mr Joseph Keogh, one of the oldest and best known sportsmen in Gippsland chose the site, and the first meeting was a great success. Mr John English of Morwell was Secretary and the prize money amounted to £100. A feature of the meeting was the unique performers registered by Mr Keogh's three horses, Brownlock, Vanity and The Joker. They won every race on the program. The following week the same three horses repeated the performance at Drouin. Mr Keogh, who has recently recovered from a severe illness, still takes a prominent part in racing. He is president of the Yinnar Racing Club.

THE HAZELWOOD NORTH EXCURSION

This excursion held on Sunday 19th January, 1986 was a great success. We first visited the orchard on the property of the Jones family. About 30 people gathered around Mrs. Thelma Jones (nee Bolding) and her son, Harold (better known as Sonny) to hear the history of this orchard some of which is outlined here.

Mr Leon Wuttrich who was born at sea of Swiss parents in 1854, selected 280 acres in this district about 1872. It was he who planted this orchard (22 acres in area) over a hundred years ago. The great variety of trees included 10 acres of walnut trees and thus became known as "Walnut Park". Mr Wuttrich was apparently very innovative as he brought the first separator to the district in 1886. A Mr Graham who bought the property about 1900, wanted more grazing land for his cattle and sheep so he uprooted many of the fruit trees. However, when the Jones family bought the property a few years later, the remaining fruit trees still yielded quite prolific crops which were harvested for jam etc and were also enjoyed by marauding birds and small boys. The birds were still in evidence but no small boys - only big boys with long memories.

From this orchard we drove across to "Chishill", the Cranwell dairy farm. As we viewed this property from the site of the original home burnt in the 1944 fires, Max Cranwell told some of his family's history. The Cranwell family came from Chrishall, Essex in England. Thomas Cranwell married Emma Bolding from a neighbouring farm called Chishill. Thomas and his family emigrated to Australia in 1854. Tom established a farm at Braybrook and supplied milk to Melbourne dairies. His son Albert, used to leave home before daylight to deliver milk to Footscray and return in time for school. In the 1870's George Bolding, Emma Cranwell's brother, had married and settled in Gippsland. Albert used to spend holidays with them walking the 100 miles from Braybrook to Hazelwood. About 1880 the Cranwells moved to "Chishill", Hazelwood North. Albert, who selected a block of his own in 1886, sold this and bought Chilhill after his father died in 1908.

Early settlers faced many problems, one of them was the distance from medical assistance and the following graphically illustrates this.

One night Albert Cranwell swallowed his false teeth (about 5 teeth on a plate). They were stuck in his throat. He had to get up, catch a horse, while his wife dashed to get their neighbour, Mrs Maxwell, to mind the children. Then they drove to Morwell Railway Station and waited till 9 AM for the train to Melbourne to have Albert's neck cut open to remove the teeth from his throat, half choking all the time. Afterwards nurses sat in turn to hold an instrument on the wound for 3 days and nights to stop the bleeding.

Before he concluded his talk Max paid tribute to Mrs Ann Beaton, also a descendant of the Cranwells and Boldings, as much of the data they had was a result of her extensive research work. We were then invited to the "Chishill" home where a delicious afternoon tea awaited us. Our hosts and hostesses also had a most interesting display of photos and maps associated with their families history and the history of the district. These excited much interest and reminiscencing among past and present residents of the area who were there.

Our President, Mr Lou Bond, in thanking our hosts and hostesses for a most enjoyable afternoon expressed the feeling of all those present.

Yinnar's pioneering spirit

I REMEMBER Yinnar well, from the always-sunlit days of my childhood. I remember a dusty main street and a long drive from our Longwarry farm to get there. I remember my great-uncle Wal (Harris) carrying water to keep his precious tomatoes alive in the dust-covered garden, and the cicadas shrilling in the summer

but the memories of childhood are always deceptive and there is a great deal more to Yinnar than a dusty main street and the dried-out summer bush.

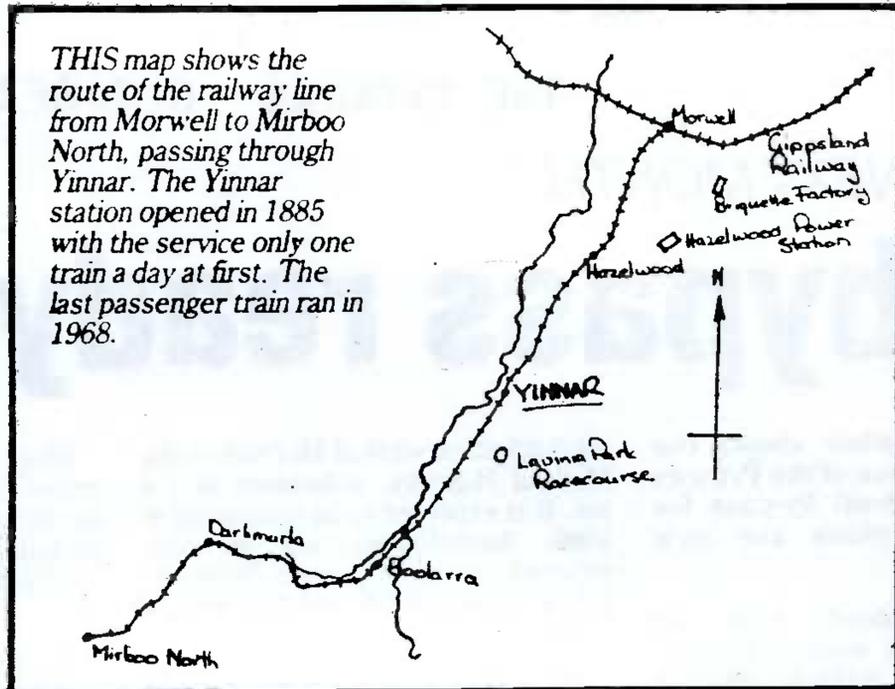
Yinnar celebrated its centenary in 1974, but the first settlers moved into the district more than 120 years before then. This really puts Yinnar town and district into the pioneer class.

William Hillier and Nicol Brown took up the Scrubby Forest Run in 1850. The Aborigines were troublesome and the land was so undeveloped that the run never really had a southern boundary. The first white men in that direction were at Port Albert, across the Strzelecki Ranges.

Brown also had coaching stables at Shady Creek, and a hotel. He had a contract with Cobb and Co to carry and provide feed for their horses along the route into Gippsland. Nicol Hillier argued almost constantly and they eventually resolved some of their differences by splitting their run in two.

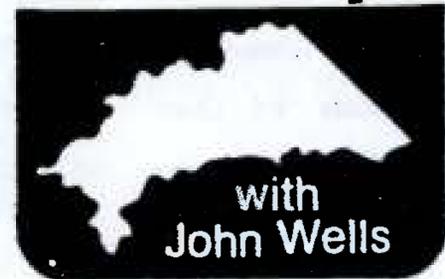
In 1869 it reverted to the Government and the next I know of it was that John Shiel, a squatter from Rosedale, held it for a time and then sold it to George Firmin in 1874. Records show that at this time the boundaries were better-defined and the run covered about 5000 acres. From about 1873 or 1874 there were selectors moving onto the big runs in the area. The first to go was the Hazelwood Run of John MacMillan, where the country was more easily cleared than it was on the Scrubby Forest land.

As the settlers arrived and the huts began to multiply in the lonely bush country, there was growing pressure for a school in the area. This was usually the case in Gippsland. Schools usually preceded



THIS map shows the route of the railway line from Morwell to Mirboo North, passing through Yinnar. The Yinnar station opened in 1885 with the service only one train a day at first. The last passenger train ran in 1968.

Gippsland History



churches or shops or almost anything else, except shanties and inns.

The first school in the district was at Hazelwood and every settler in the district seems to have contributed something. The finished building was 36 feet by 18, and the gaps between the timbers in the walls were filled with 'pug' from the local soil. There was even a residence built for the teacher. The first teacher arrived in October, 1876. She was a Mrs Mathison, who was unimpressed at the lack of a floor in the new school.

This first school was soon surrounded by others and found itself struggling to maintain the numbers it needed to maintain its funding. On several occasions it was reduced to half-time operation, but each time it

was saved by the burning-down of other local schools.

In 1898 the disastrous bushfires that swept Gippsland destroyed the Yinnar South School and the pupils attended the Hazelwood school (called Hazelwood Ridge) which thus went back to full-time operation until 1902. For three years it ran half-time again until the Driffield school burned down in 1905.

Hazelwood took in the Driffield students and became full-time again. It lingered on until 1944 when, no other schools having burned down in the area, it was forced to close.

The other thing settlers always seemed to want in those far off days of high hopes and hard work, before road transport was economic or efficient, was a railway. The settlers of the Hazelwood-Yinnar-Boolarra area were no exception.

On April 10, 1885, the Yinnar railway station was opened. The station was built on land 'resumed' from two settlers. One of these was George Firmin, whose father, Walter, had been one of the first settlers in the district.

Walter Firmin was held in high regard. He was elected to the Traralgon Shire in 1880 and was president of the shire in 1884-85. When the Morwell Shire was formed on May 27, 1892 from parts of the Traralgon and Narracan Shires, Firmin became a councillor on the new shire. He stayed in Local

Government until 1903. The Firmans have played a continuing role in the development of Yinnar and its way of life.

The other settler to lose land for the station was Henry Wicks, who came to Yinnar shortly after the Firmans and took up most of the land where the Yinnar township now stands.

The month after the coming of the railway, while optimism still ran high and the future seemed assured, one James Johnson surveyed the township site, a necessary pre-requisite for a permanent settlement. An auction of the surveyed blocks was then held. Gemmell, Tuckett and Co. held the auction in their rooms at 9 Collins Street, Melbourne on July 15, 1885 and 100 allotments were sold.

The rail service was only one train a day at first, going up to Mirboo North one day and returning the next, providing a link with the main line at Morwell. By 1900 this service had increased to seven or eight trains a week. Special trains were run on New Year's Day and some other days, bringing people to Yinnar for race meetings at the old Lavinia Park racecourse.

The last passenger train ran on Saturday, September 7, 1968, 83 years after the line was opened. One amusing problem for the railwaymen (though they would not have thought it funny and to the farmers, it represented a disaster) was the lack of traction on the slopes caused by caterpillar plagues. Sometimes the train would be held up while sand was sprinkled on the rails to give the wheels a grip.

The Lavinia Park racecourse was the home of the Yinnar Racing Club, formed in 1886. The club held its first meeting on New Year's Day in 1887 and the club's meetings attracted bookmakers and punters in droves from Melbourne.

Yinnar has never been a district to make headlines in any major newspapers (though gold was found in the creeks to the south) but it was, and is, a closely-knit community that has always managed to provide the facilities and the help its members needed, with a minimum of outside help. In short, it was a typical pioneering community, and the best of the pioneering spirit still remains.

Morwell will witness many changes over the next four years as a result of the new highway bypass. The map below is reproduced as a reminder of our changing landscape and the effect on Morwell's history. Old landmarks will disappear and new landmarks will emerge. The former must be remembered somehow.

THE EXPRESS OCTOBER 8 1985

EARTHWORKS START NEXT MONTH

Morwell bypass ready to go

THE diagram below shows the route for stage one of the Princes Freeway - Morwell by-pass for which design plans are now complete.

Stage one extends from the Thorpdale Rd area, west of Morwell, to the Midland Highway east of Morwell. Initial earthworks near Thorpdale Rd are expected to begin in November.

The 10 km bypass will extend from the Morwell River in the west, to pass between the township of Morwell and the SEC works area, to link with the Princes Highway near the boundary of the Shire of Morwell and the Shire of Traralgon to the east of Alexander Rd. The by-pass will be built in two stages:

Stage one extends from the exist-

ing duplication west of Morwell to the Midland Highway, a distance of 6.4 km. It is expected to be completed in 1989. Interchanges will be constructed at the Morwell-Thorpdale Rd, Commercial Rd, and the Midland Highway.

Eight bridges and five major culverts will be constructed. The large number of bridges is partly due to the crossing of three railway lines servicing the Commission works area. These are the railway lines serving the briquette plant and the Yallourn and Morwell open cuts. Other bridges will be located at:

- Morwell River (eastbound carriageway);
- Morwell-Thorpdale Rd Overpass;
- Commercial Rd (twin structure);
- Midland Highway Overpass.

Stage two, a 3.8 km stage, will extend from the Midland Highway to the Princes Highway near the municipal boundary of the Shires of Morwell and Traralgon. Bridges will be located at:

- Tramway Rd;
- Eastern Railway Line.

Work on stage one began early in 1985 and is expected to be completed in 1989. Stage Two is expected to begin in 1987 and be completed in 1990. The bypass, a National Roads project, is estimated to cost \$35 million.

The bypass has been designed to form an attractive feature within the local environment and the landscaping design will be co-ordinated with the SEC and Morwell Shire to ensure a balanced approach.

