

# MORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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Sec/Editor Elsie McMaster - Tel: 03 51341149  
2 Harold St, Morwell 3840

## *Welcome to the January Newsletter*

and may the year 2000 be a happy and satisfying one for all our readers!

As we start another year, changes are afoot in our Society.

\* Last year we wrote to the C.E.O. of LaTrobe Shire asking for clarification of our position when work begins on the extension to the Morwell Art Gallery. We had hoped to be given space in the new Gallery precinct. This is not to be. However, the C.E.O has replied, stating that "*it is Council's intention to provide a dedicated space for the Morwell Historical Society, including both information and display functions, somewhere in the Morwell municipal precinct. Obviously any such centre would need to be at ground level with connection to all necessary services and with sufficient space for the Society's collection and other resources.*"

This sounds hopeful. However, since work on the new gallery is to begin in May, it seems that our tenure of the Town Hall foyer after that date is rather doubtful. We await developments!

\* The LaTrobe Shire Combined History Group, which includes the Historical Societies of Morwell, Moe, Traralgon, Yinnar, Yallourn North, Boolarra and the Mid Gippsland Family History Society, last year wrote to the C.E.O. of the LaTrobe Shire asking if the Shire had a Heritage Policy. The Group has received a reply stating that, although "*Council does not have an articulated heritage policy...it has identified that a heritage study needs to be undertaken for the whole Shire. Any suggestions that the LaTrobe Shire Combined History Group would like to put forward to assist Council in this endeavour would be gratefully accepted.*" Input into this project will be discussed at the February meeting of the Group.

\* We have had the benefit, over the past two years, of the services of Michael Farrell, who has been recording and indexing our photographic collection on the computer. Mick's services in this regard, and his cheerful participation in the various activities of the Society, have been greatly appreciated by members. Unfortunately, he is unable to continue this work but as he is a member of the Society we look forward to continuing our happy association. During the latter part of last year, Kym Tunbridge was assisting Mick and Kym will continue the task of collating the photographic collection. He will be in the Society's rooms on Wednesdays between 10am and 3pm and we will open our rooms to the public between those times.

\* Our photographic project - *Morwell 2000* - is underway, with several members already on the job. Bruce McMaster has taken a number of photos of the town from the same vantage points as earlier photos in our collection and these make for very interesting comparisons. During the rest of the year, shutterbugs amongst our members will be photographing public buildings, houses, industries, activities and



events, people, recreational pursuits etc in an attempt to record on film as many aspects as possible of life in Morwell in the year 2000.

\* We have received permission from Council to erect signs marking the sites of the Hazelwood Ridge State School and the Hazelwood Homestead. The signs, featuring yellow lettering on a brown background, will be erected where they are easily visible to passing traffic and it is hoped to have them in place shortly.

\* We have received, from Alan and Rosalie Davey, of Morwell, the donation of a souvenir program for the 1929 Back-to-Morwell Celebrations, which we are delighted to add to our memorabilia collection.

\* Members are invited to join in the **Traralgon Historical Society Excursion to Tarraville - Sunday, February 27**. Travel is by private car and further details can be obtained from Valma Plant on 51742096.

Tarraville is the birthplace of Ada Crossley, famous Australian contralto. Her father was a farmer who grew onions, for which the soil of the area was particularly suitable, and her mother was a talented pianist.

Even before her 20th birthday, Ada was one of Australia's most popular singers. In 1894 she travelled to Europe and later the United States where she was much admired. She is reported to have told a journalist that 'all the Tarraville children are given onions nearly every day, and they have the loudest and clearest voices in Australia.'

### **TRIVIA ANSWERS**

Here are the answers to the Trivia Quiz in the November 1999 Newsletter:

- 1 a) Cleaning the lamp glass, trimming the wick and filling the lamp  
b)shaping a block of ice to fit in the ice chest c) toilet paper  
d) cleaning the open fireplace e) cleaning the wood stove  
e) washing the separator f) damping clothes for ironing
- 2 a) I love God and my country, I honour the flag, I will serve the King and cheerfully obey my  
parents, teachers and the law.  
b) lowered c) Hazelwood Ridge School
- 3 a)Bonnington's Irish Moss b) Malvern Star c) Ford Pills d) Bryant & May Matches  
e) Brylcreem f) Three Threes cigarettes g) petrol and/or kerosene
4. Mr Norman Sharpe won the men's motor car reversing championship
- 5 a) 1958 b) Billy's Creek c) General Sir Stanley Savige

**OUR FIRST MEETING FOR THE YEAR 2000 WILL BE HELD  
ON  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15  
AT  
7.30PM IN THE TOWN HALL FOYER**



# LOOKING BACK

*With Lou Bond*

## TRANSPORT

In the first years, horse drawn sleds were used on the farm itself to transport milk, cream and produce of all kinds as they did not damage the surface of roads or farm lands in the winter months as much as wheeled vehicles.

The dray and the bullock wagon had no springs. The body was attached to the axle and was used for the cartage of very heavy loads over longer journeys

Wagonettes and spring carts were for lighter loads, were drawn by lighter horses and were a faster method of travel. Wagonettes were generally drawn by two horses abreast, but for heavier loads a second pair could be used in tandem. When driving two pair in tandem, quite a lot of skill was needed to handle the reins.

Carts were drawn by a single horse and there were different types of bodies, such as baker's, butcher's, milk etc and then the farm cart with the open body.

The vehicles used for the conveyance of people were the light and heavy jinkers. We owned a jinker that was built for the breaking in of young horses to harness, with extra long shafts so the horse could not kick the body of the jinker, and we used to drive to school in this vehicle for many years.

The buggy was a four wheeled type and was generally used by the family for transport to social gatherings or visiting neighbours etc. Some of these types of vehicles could be quite a showpiece with a collapsible hood, fancy paintwork and ornate metal work. These types of vehicles were the only means of transport until the turn of the century and then the advent of the motor car saw some remarkable changes in transport and the general state of the road system.

For the first few years after we came to Driffield, we travelled by jinker to school in Morwell. We drove an old grey horse named Tom, a very quiet horse who served us for many years. Darkie was used as a saddle horse, cart horse and was also used to pull a buggy that was purchased after a few years. He was also raced at picnic gatherings and at local race meetings on the local hack races and won a few races.

In the early 1900s a school was opened at Driffield and old Tom became redundant. A mare named Friday was purchased and used as a saddle horse and also to pull all types of light vehicles.

The saddle horse could be used for many varied tasks, for mustering and droving cattle, visiting nearby towns for light shopping, travelling for social visits, carrying mail and many other tasks. It was often used at night by a single person to attend dances and other forms of entertainment and was the means of travel most favoured by suitors when courting somebody several miles away.

**The horse drawn jinker** was a popular form of transport. It was well sprung, light to handle and could seat three people with room to carry light loads at the rear of the vehicle. Passengers were at the mercy of the elements with no permanent fixture for overhead protection. A rug of some kind was used as cover from the waist down and gloves on the hands.

**The buggy**, with its two sets of wheels (rubber tyred), better springing and optional hood, was a more sophisticated vehicle, much favoured by the more affluent people of the day. There was a heavier type of this buggy with double seats and a shade heavier construction, with steel tyres, and it was this vehicle that was more popular with the farming community.



**The wagonette** was a vehicle which was four-wheeled and used mostly for moving furniture, light, bulky farm produce and fast delivery of milk and cream to factories. It could be adapted to carry passengers to sports meetings, horse racing and school children on annual picnics. It was sometimes seen with a hooped covering built to protect the load from the inclement weather or the hot summer sun.

**The spring cart** was the jack of all trades, a great utility vehicle used for carrying people and loads of up to half a ton in weight. Usually drawn by a light draught horse when heavy loads were carried, saddle horses or hacks could be used when passengers needed faster transport. An open bodied vehicle about six feet by four feet in size, with twelve inch to fifteen inch sides, moveable planks were used as seating. When used to carry loads of produce, this seating was removed.

Our spring cart was used for many years to carry loads of trapped rabbits to Morwell railway station for sale to agents for Melbourne forms. Another use was on Sundays, when we would go hunting foxes and other game in different parts of the shire. We would harness Darkie in the cart and, with three or four adult shooters, three or four of us boys for 'beaters' and all the farm dogs, we would head off for the day to return in time for the afternoon milking.

It was these types of transport that were used by us as young people to attend dances and other social events up to the late 1920s and the advent of the motor car for our family transport. Light for night travelling was a candle enclosed in a glass container and, later on, a kerosene lamp was a great improvement. These were positioned on both side of the vehicle and were warning lights only, the horses being relied upon to dodge obstacles and follow the course of the road or track. The earth roads of the day were usually two long wheel ruts a foot or more deep, formed by the constant traversing by the steel tyres of the wheeled vehicles.

**The dray** was one of the vehicles that was used by the first settlers of the area. One of the first vehicles purchased when we started to clear our farm was a tip dray which was drawn by a heavy draught horse (Kate). It was used for various jobs on and off the farm, carrying fencing posts and other needed timbers from the Haunted Hills forests for farm use, carting lime from the railway for pasture improvement and, at harvest time, carting hay.

As the name implies, the body of this vehicle could be tipped on the axle by the release of a sliding catch or anchor that was attached to the shafts. It would tip backwards and, if you were carting materials that did not need careful handling, it made work much more simple. It was a job for an adult to yoke up a draught horse for dray work because of the size of the horse, the weight and size of the harness and the large wooden shafts and iron attachments. Usually it took two men to back the horse into the shafts, then lift the shafts and attach the harness to the dray.

**The bullock wagon.** The type of transport that could be compared to the covered wagons, told of in the history of the pioneering of America. Built to stand any of the hazards of forest tracks, river crossings, floods and fires, it was perhaps the vehicle that helped to open up the wetlands of Gippsland. With its wide tyred, heavy wheels and strong undercarriage, it could carry loads of several tons in weight. With wheel hubs of twelve inches diameter, wheel spokes as thick as your forearm and wheel tyres four to six inches thick on a three inch steel axle, it could withstand most challenges from any obstacle it encountered. It could be hauled by six or eight pairs of bullocks but more could be added for very heavy loads. Before the railways were built in this area, the heavy materials used for developing the lands of Gippsland were hauled from the sea ports by this mode of transport and there were many hauliers operating all over Gippsland.