

MORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS
published monthly, except December

**The Society meets every 3rd Tuesday of the month at
7.30 pm at Collins Street Primary School**

Secretary: Mrs. E. McMaster phone 34 1149

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WELCOME TO THE OCTOBER NEWSLETTER

NEWS AND NOTES

- Due to the absence or illness of a number of members, the meeting scheduled for September 19 was postponed until October 3. The October meeting will be held, as usual, on Tuesday, October 17 at 7.30 pm in the Collins st. State School staffroom.
- The projected date for the launch of "Glimpses of Our Past" is Sunday, December 3, subject to the availability of a suitable venue. Final details will be published in the November newsletter.
- From R.H.S.V. History News, October, 1989:

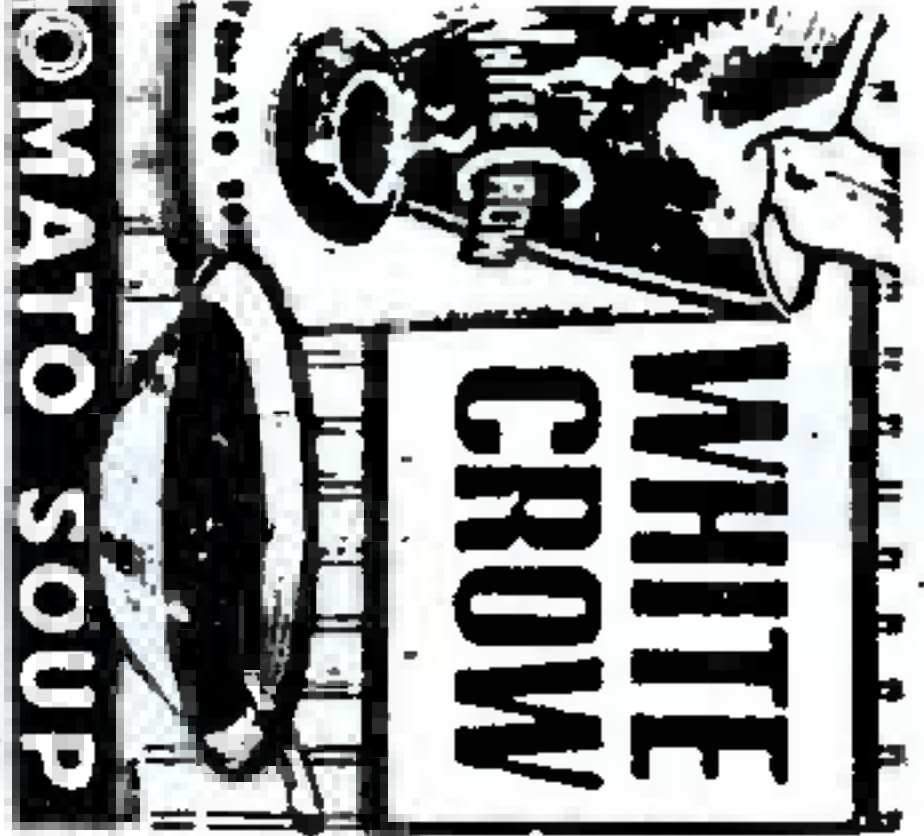
Having difficulty with your family history?

The RHSV intends to hold workshops on Genealogy and Family History beginning on Saturday 2nd December from 1.30 to 4.30 pm. If this is successful, further Saturday workshops will be held in 1990. The cost of these will be \$12.00 for members and \$15.00 for non-members for each day. Experienced researchers, with particular expertise on Victorian and Tasmanian records, will be available to conduct these sessions. Use of the Society's library will be made, together with an introduction to the Society's holdings, if appropriate. Individual help will be given to those with particular problems. The course will be geared to people who have started their research and who want guidance to further relevant material. Beginners are also welcome to attend. Afternoon tea will be served.

Please telephone the Society to make a reservation as numbers are limited and booking is essential.

- Phone (03)670 1219

(03)670 1241



OST U.K. FLIERS HELD FOR RANSOM

Plane Seized By Bandits

Australian Associated Press
LONDON, Monday. — Four Englishmen who left London by air in a privately-owned plane a month ago for New South Wales and disappeared are reported to have been captured by Yugoslav bandits, who are holding them for ransom.

A mysterious "Mr X" had a telephone call through from Switzerland to the English company owning the plane, demanding 1250 ransom.

Mr Geoffrey Welch, an executive of the company flew to Milan, Italy, with the money which he was prepared to pay in ransom. It has not been paid over.

The British Ambassador in Belgrade (Sir Charles Baker) has asked the Yugoslav Foreign Office about the fate of the four men who had been given up as lost.

The Daily Mail's correspondent in Belgrade says 20000 British pounds were seized for the plane for use in Palestine.

The plane left London on October 29 with a crew of two and two passengers who intended to start a new surface-mining venture in New South Wales.

Five others were to have joined it in Rome. But it did not get there.

The Foreign Office has received reports that the plane crashed at Subujana, Jugoslavia, and that the two crew members had been detained and passengers allowed to escape. The four men are reported to be well.

Four days after the plane disappeared its wreckage was reported to have been seen in the hands of a Yugoslav bandit. The plane was reported to have been seen in the hands of a Yugoslav bandit.

King's Chances Of Recovery

ALARMIST REPORTS 'BASELESS'

From TREVOR SMITH
LONDON, Monday. — Reports from Australia quoting "official Canberra sources" on the King's illness have caused much concern in London.

Only a few London Sunday newspapers printed these reports, which quoted one Sydney newspaper as saying: "An official Government report from London indicates that although the doctors may affect a partial cure, the King will never recover fully."

It is stated categorically in London that no official report has been received from Canberra at the weekend. Similar alarming reports have been featured in the Communist-controlled section.

If the King's progress continues as it has done in the past few days, reconstituted might be given late next year for a visit to Australia and New Zealand—possibly some time in 1950.

It will be months before it will be possible to say whether he has been completely restored to health. But at the Palace and among Cabinet Ministers, today's bulletin on the King's health was regarded as distinctly encouraging.

The Daily Telegraph's medical correspondent, commenting on the doctors' bulletin today, says the fact that the word "feet" was used for the first time indicates that both sides are affected, and that the condition is either thrombo-arteritis obliterans (thickening of the arteries) or thrombo-angiitis obliterans (occlusion of the arteries).



CELEBRATING his 74th birthday today: Radio picture of Mr Winston Churchill, at the week-end meet of the Old Surrey and Bunting Hunt. He wore his distinctive hat, and jodhpurs. But he had no cigar. "He is full of beans and fit for any day."

HE IS 74 TODAY

Cabinet Repercussions Possible State CP Feeling Against Hollway Increasing

By The Herald State Political Reporter
Talks with members of the Parliamentary County Party today disclosed that feeling against the Premier (Mr Hollway) for playing a "lone hand" and agreeing to the settlement terms in the Essential Services Act dispute is growing, and may yet have serious repercussions on the Com-positio Government.

A leading CP member, who is not a Minister, told me that he thought that the CP meeting tomorrow would consider the withdrawal of the County Party Ministers from the Ministry.

This member said that Mr McDonald, as Acting Premier, had carried the brunt of the fight against the Red-controlled unions while Mr Hollway was abroad, and it was improper for Mr Hollway to have settled the dispute without first having placed the whole matter before a full Cabinet meeting.

The position of the County Party had been made untenable, and would justify the withdrawal of CP Ministers from the Government.

Whether this would be done would depend on the temper of members tomorrow and the discussions generally.

Commenting on the settlement of the dispute, a senior County Party Minister said: "It is not over yet by any means. Other County Party Ministers said the test of the Government's solidarity in any case would come when the next industrial disturbance occurred and it might be necessary to use the Essential Services Act."

Some CP members said that if Mr Hollway had agreed on Saturday to submit his "peace terms" to a full Cabinet meeting on Sunday, Cabinet would have refused to approve them. They were convinced, they said, that Mr Hollway knew he did not have the numbers in Cabinet, and that was why he took responsibility of accepting the terms himself.

LIBERALS CHEER PREMIER

Liberal Party members rose and gave the Premier (Mr Hollway) three cheers when he entered the Legislative Assembly this afternoon.

The Deputy Liberal Leader (Mr Kent Hughes) led the cheering from the front bench.

Parliament met today for the first time since County Party Ministers challenged Mr Hollway's action in settling the Essential Services dispute with-out reference to Cabinet.

The County Party Leader (Mr McDonald) smiled faintly amid the laughter of Labor and Liberal members.

Upper members until the Hon Speaker (Mr Malloy) entered. Labor members were peering across the Chamber at CP Ministers.

MOCK CHEERS

The House was still noisy when the Speaker completed the Lord's Prayer.

When Mr Mutton (Ind. Lab.) directed a question to the Minister for Labor (Mr Hyland), and Mr Hyland asked that it be deferred until next Tuesday, Mr White (CP, Allen-dale) shouted: "You might not be giving the answer next Tues-

day."



Some of Morwell's oldest Scholars (1878). Left to right—front: Mrs Irving (nee Edith Donaldson), Mrs Demsey (nee Susan McGauran), Mrs Ford (nee Clara Martin), Miss Rose Crinigan, Edward Crinigan, John McGauran.

SOME OF MORWELL'S OLDEST
SCHOLARS at back to 1929.

CHRISTMAS IS COMING ! ! !

HERE IS THE IDEAL CHRISTMAS GIFT FOR ANYONE WHO LIVES OR
HAS LIVED IN THE MORWELL AREA

"GLIMPSES OF OUR PAST"

- a pictorial record of Morwell and surrounding districts.
- 120 pages of fascinating photographs.
- hard cover
- priced under \$20.00
- available December 3rd.

DON'T MISS OUT ON YOUR COPY - SEE NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER FOR FULL DETAILS.

MORWELL DAYS - 1919 to 1925.

Amy Tibballs.

My birth place was Kalgoorlie, but my earliest memories are of our home in the nearby town of Boulder, where my schooling began. Following the untimely death of my Mother in January 1917, my Father decided to sell our home and move back to Victoria, his state of birth.

So, a year later, we travelled east in the Transcontinental Train (now the Indian-Pacific) which to me was quite an adventure. I was then 8½ years and Eric two years older. My elder brother, Reg, stayed on to complete two more years at Kalgoorlie School of Mines and journeyed over late in 1920.

My Father's health was already declining, due to having worked in Kalgoorlie and Boulder gold mines, so he chose to do outdoor work on a farm near Nhill. We were there for six months but, perhaps because the school was some distance from the farm, Dad decided to move on and seek employment in the east of the state.

The remainder of the year I spent with my maternal Grandparents at Wandiligong near Bright, where life was rather tranquil and I was quite happy at school.

The goldfields in and around Bright area had been well turned over, but my uncles still sought gold in the Wandiligong Valley and had a little success at times. So I was able to enjoy observing the process of crushing the quartz and the extraction of the gold. I was always fascinated by the large water-wheel which remained there for very many years.

Perhaps my Father could not adapt very well to farming or the wages were not adequate, as he left Boisdale also and sometime during 1919 came to work at Brown Coal Mine. Naturally he wanted to have his only daughter near him again so he sought accommodation for me in Morwell, and so I came to live with Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Guy, who had two adult children, Harry and Bessie. At the time they lived in Buckley St., just around the corner from the present bakery where the early Methodist Parsonage was. The small wooden Methodist Church (which I attended), was on the corner of Church St. and the Prince's Highway, where Jephcott's Jewellery shop is now. In between Church and Parsonage was a small paddock with some shelter for horses as the folk from the farms in that era usually travelled to Church by means of horse-drawn vehicle, or on horse back. I have a clear mental picture of the late Mr. Alf Ronald driving a smart type of buggy drawn by two fine horses. A year or so later, the "horse paddock" became a cricket ground on Saturday mornings in fine weather, when Rev. A. Day would join the Sunday School children (boys and girls) for a game of cricket.

The Harvest Thanksgiving Sundays at Church were indeed memorable occasions, as the farmers who attended kindly brought in sheaves of hay and placed them at the aisle end of each seat (or pew), making even a plain little church look special. People brought in whatever home-grown vegetables they could spare, too, and usually there was a large quantity. On the following night these were sold for Church funds, so that meant another outing, and night outings were rare in any season.

Once again school was a happy place for me, and again I soon made new friends. It was but a short distance to cross the railway line at that once very wide crossing, then a little further along Commercial Road, to the school, and as I recall, it was not a very muddy route in winter. I remember the drinking trough for horses near the crossing, on the south side, near the shops.

Mr. Guy, along with many other men from Morwell and nearby areas, rode a horse to work at the old Brown Coal Mine, a distance of several miles over rough roads then. Others covered the route by bicycle or two-wheel horse-drawn vehicles.

Across the road from where I lived was the Bolger family and Mr. Bolger was the Funeral Director, generally referred to then as the "Undertaker", and he had quite a collection of horse-drawn vehicles, old and new, housed in what seemed to me to be an enormous barn. The newer vehicles were quite grand and were in a special section at one end.

In Church St., not very far back from the present Post Office, was a blacksmith's shop; well worth crossing the road to observe the activities there.

MORWELL DAYS (Cont.)

The Dempsey family, further along Church St., had a cow (or cows) and one of the boys used to bring milk in a large billy can and serve Mrs. Guy with the usual pint or quart, also to others in the neighbourhood.

Sometime in 1920 Mr. and Mrs. Guy moved to a cottage on the south side of the railway line, 39 Elgin St., and later on bought the place from Mrs. Dusting who then lived up past the Commercial Rd. school.

Well, apart from being a little further from the Church and also from the school, life was much the same, but there were many more houses in that area so more people. Strangely however, No. 39 was alone, practically in the middle of the block but later on, Bessie and her husband, Will Collins, built a home on the Hazelwood Rd. side and son Harry and his wife built on the other side.

Across the road then was the earlier Presbyterian Church and next to it the Manse. I am not sure if there was an actual "horse paddock" in the Church grounds but the great pine trees certainly offered some welcome shelter for horses, summer or winter.

Elgin St. did have one problem in the winter as the ground sloped down that way so the road was a muddy mess after heavy rain and the footpaths were not much better.

Across the road and down on the corner of Hazelwood Rd. and Elgin St. lived the Ross family and I soon became friendly with Olive, Vera (in the same grade as myself), and Alma, whom I still meet up with in Morwell. It was great to have some mates nearby as there were seldom any children at "39".

These were very frugal days and the children were often reminded of the "Waste not, Want not" slogan. Patching and mending was a fine art in most homes and Mrs. Guy taught me to do both very neatly, also to knit and crochet. So I knitted warm woollen socks for my elder brother, Reg, who chose to wear boots rather than shoes and he liked hand knitted socks.

Many women made attractive floor mats using coloured strips of material which were hooked onto a hessian base. Sugar bags could be used, too. Sometimes, depending on colours and quantity of material, mats could be made with quite clever designs. Some folk used flannel or other woollen material scraps to make bed rugs in the same fashion, so no usable material was wasted - not in the average household.

Mrs. Guy was an expert with the "rag" mats and would make them to sell, or for Church stalls. Also Mrs. Guy would be busy knitting socks or doing some of her beautiful crochet work at which she was very talented.

Mr. and Mrs. Guy owned a fine buggy as well as Bonny, the horse, and there were some most enjoyable outings at times, occasionally to Brown Coal Mine township, and in due course to Yallourn in its very early days.

Being regular Church members, they would sometimes have the visiting preacher for dinner on a Sunday and then Mr. Guy would take him to Morwell North or to Hazelwood for the afternoon service. I didn't mind going to Church three times on a Sunday if there was to be a ride in the buggy as a bonus.

Like most people, Mr. and Mrs. Guy grew their own vegetables, but I remember an elderly man named Charlie, who made a meagre living pushing a barrow load of home grown vegetables around to sell, with his small dog for company.

Mr. Blake from Yinnar used to bring milk to the house, also a Mr. Payne, earlier perhaps. Mr. G. Rae, from the Maryvale area where the A.P.M. Mill is now would bring butter, eggs and vegetables from his farm. I was always interested in the butter-pat imprints on the nicely shaped pound of butter. These goods were always carried in a large basket with a fresh looking cover and I always waited eagerly to see the "goodies". An Indian hawker came around too but as I was always dubious about being too close to the covered wagon, I didn't learn much about the goods for sale.

What seemed to me to be a grand idea in my childhood days was that a lady could write to Payne's Bon Marché, or similar large stores in Melbourne and request samples of summer or winter material, and patterns, which would be eagerly awaited in the mail. In due course, after much discussion and comparison of samples, the order would be posted for required material. It was always quite an exciting process, perhaps because of the package that would arrive by rail or mail, but thinking back now, it surprises me, as Morwell was fortunate in having two well-stocked stores - Jenkins' on the corner of Tarwin and George Sts. and, across the road on the Post Office side (then) was Mr. Green's spacious store. The former had a long narrow grocery section, with a long counter, across from which was a plentiful supply of hardware; but I was mainly

MORWELL DAYS (cont.)

interested in the biscuit tins, those long-lasting, solid, square tins with the hinged lids. If I was lucky enough to be there when a new tin was needed for the pound of biscuits just requested, the grocer would very deftly open the tin and lean it forward for me to have first dip. Yes, I liked shopping there!

Along the front of the shop from the grocery area, etc. was the Men's Wear Section and, at the end, the Ladies' Wear Department which included what seemed to be a wonderful Haberdashery Section. The very name fascinated me and so did the seemingly endless supply of sewing aids.

Mr. Green's Store was equally interesting. I was always glad to do any messages there too, for Mrs. Guy. My Father, and brother Reg, used to buy boots there sometimes and necessary hard-wearing clothes.

Another favourite shop was in Commercial Road down near where the Newsagency is now. Mrs. Hadley stocked school requisites and even buying a new exercise book was special as the pattern on the covers varied. A bakery was down that way too, and on one Christmas Eve at least, I remember Mr. Francis throwing pennies into the street for the children. Another bakery was along nearer the school, and across the lane was a butchery, owned then by Mr. Cam Read.

When I first attended S.S.2136, the Head Teacher was a Mr. Hart. I think Mr. R.H. Morrison came about 1921. His family included twins, Jean and Hayden, about my age, and a younger boy.

A regular function with many schools in those days was an annual concert, and ours was held in the Mechanics' Hall, simply referred to as The Hall. At the time I was not aware of the significance of a Mechanics' Institute, and how fortunate a town was to have one, even if it didn't look grand.

Commercial Road School had a reasonable supply of talent, one of the best being Ted Brock, a born comedian and a good singer. Miss Rintoull trained us for various items and it was all good fun. These concerts were always well attended, usually by entire families but I was always disappointed that my father and brothers could not come to the concerts.

Sometimes a local church would organise a concert and these were well patronised too.

When I was about 13 or 14, a Circus came to Morwell and set up a big tent on the Town Common, below Commercial Road School. As I had not expected to be able to attend the evening entertainment, I was delighted when my brother Eric arrived, having cycled all the way from Brown Coal Mine township to take me to the Circus - so, I was allowed to go and what a treat it was! That was the most exciting event I had attended since leaving Kalgoorlie. Fortunately it was not raining that night or Eric would have had a very unpleasant return journey.

Other special occasions were when my father and brother Reg would walk to Morwell to visit me, before Dad bought a horse. It was a rough walk at the best of times as they would cut across the paddocks where possible, but in winter time it must have been hard going. It never occurred to me then how far and how tiring their journey would be.

My music teacher for piano was Miss Gay (or Gaye), a very lovely lady who lived in Anne Street.

In 1922, Edward, Prince of Wales, came to Australia and toured many areas. Sale was chosen as the venue where Gippsland school children were to gather to greet H.R.H. and to entertain with various displays. At Morwell, the senior girls were busy practising a Maypole Dance under a teacher's guidance. It was all very exciting and, when the special day came, we travelled with other children from along the line on a special train to Sale, and it was an occasion to remember. Following this Royal Tour, the route the Prince travelled was named the Prince's Highway. In my memory most of the road through to Sydney was rough and dusty and none too wide, so I have often wondered about Prince Edward's journey through southern Victoria and along the east coast to Sydney.

Each child attending school in 1922 was presented with a copy of a letter written by Prince Edward. Mine was a prized possession, but somehow, with much "moving on", it seems I have lost it. So, I do hope there are some copies still around, maybe in Morwell.(?)

MORWELL DAYS (cont).

School became much more important to me as time went by, and I was fortunate in having Miss K. Rintoull in charge of grades 5 and 6 and Miss E. McDonald, the Infant Room Mistress, who also had to find time for the senior girls for sewing and knitting sessions on a Friday afternoon. These were two very special ladies who were dedicated teachers.

Mr. Morrison was a very special teacher too, and encouraged me to think about what came next after Primary School, in my final year there.

Mr. Morrison was keen to improve the school grounds in general and to make the Commercial Road strip more attractive. We had been busy with minor tasks but on Arbour Day we planted small Cypress trees along the front fence, and other plants to add colour. Along the Chapel Street side there were already large, sheltering pine trees, which served well both in winter and summer, and the children who came to school on horseback could tie their horses outside the fence where they too would have shelter. Many years later, after major school alterations, these worthy pine trees had to be removed and, later again, the cypress trees became too big and untidy, so they too had to be replaced by smaller trees and native shrubs. Over the years I had looked at the cypress trees with much pride and fond memories, so of course I was sad that they had to go.

The "Bird Day" excursion was always awaited with great expectations, and one year we walked out to the sand pits (or gravel pits), taking all possible short cuts over those convenient post and rail fences to Latrobe Road, and then left along the old Sale - Melbourne Road. Of course there were many more trees there then, and many more birds in that attractive area up above the Morwell River, and we greatly enjoyed the time spent watching and listening to birds. In recent times, at my request, friends took me to the sand pits and I was glad to see that the area was still much as I remembered it.

Inter-school sports, though not on a grand scale, and with no glamorous trophies, were none the less joyful and special occasions. On at least one such day we went out to Blossom Flat, just over Thom's Bridge, (over the Latrobe River), towards Brown Coal Mine, travelling happily on an open lorry, drawn by two strong horses. Blossom Flat, as the name suggests, was a rather level area by a bend in the river, and along the bank grew many large wattle trees as well as tall shady gum trees. It was indeed a pleasant place for school sports, or any kind of picnic. The scene there today (1989) is still attractive but, sadly, many large trees have been removed.

Well, the other competitors came from Brown Coal Mine (S.S.3967) and Morwell North schools, and the competition was keen. Of course we had a great day, but I do not remember any results in regard to the races.

In the mushroom season I would often get up early and go searching in the paddocks beyond Wallace Street or on the far side of Hazelwood Road, where the Morwell Open Cut is now.

Sunday afternoons in good weather usually meant walking, up to The Ridge, where the Butter Factory was, along the Mirboo North line, out along Latrobe Road, or over to the Morwell East area as far as the "poppet heads" indicating the early search for coal.

When the S.E.C. began operations, a new bridge was built over the Morwell River past Davey's farm and, one Sunday afternoon, Bessie and her friend took me with them to see what progress had been made. The bridge was not completed but there were two wide planks over the river and we walked over them, (for my part, rather nervously).

The school ground seemed so large in the 1920s, as the boys had ample room for football on one side, where fine gum trees grew along the fence, and the girls had a basket-ball court, a maypole area, and shady spots down in one corner for sunny days. Favourite games were "Jacks", hop-scotch, and skipping contests. We were fortunate to have a large shelter shed near the pine trees and across the shed, a large parallel ladder for swinging along. Alas, one day I miscalculated and my nose suffered from the fall.

MORWELL DAYS (cont).

With the development in the Yallourn area, Morwell was growing too, and school intake increasing. The wooden structure (eventually moved further down in the school ground) housed grades 3 to 8, and a brick room had been added at one stage for the Infant section, but now an additional room was needed. So, for part of the winter of 1922 we firstly had classes in the cold, draughty old Fire Brigade Hall which was all on its own close to the railway fence and across from the present Post Office. Some smelly kerosene heaters were in use during school hours but, because of the draughty building there was very little warmth and the kerosene smell was nauseating. Overall, it was a very trying time for both children and teachers, the latter coping very well in the difficult circumstances.

However, we had somewhat better conditions when we moved to the Mechanics' Hall, just one block up from Elgin St. In the 1920s there were stables at the rear of the Hall, very necessary in those days. Vera Ross and I would usually discuss which way to go to school, only a matter of minutes either way, but, even in Spring, usually more muddy round the road, so we mostly took the short cut via some post and rail fences, often landing in a puddle which was not visible amongst the grass.

Well, the great day came when the new room was ready and, as there were more pupils in grades 5 and 6, we were the fortunate ones to move back into comparatively luxurious surroundings it seemed, with our dear Miss Rintoull, who, at least, much deserved a nice room after months of inconvenience.

The next year, however, I was back in the old room again, and grades 3 and 4 were still allotted to the far end of the room, beyond the folding dividing screen. It could not have been easy for two teachers to have to cope in one room and students had to learn to respect the fact that the large room was being shared. The situation never appeared to bother Mr. Morrison, who had fine qualities as a teacher, and a pleasant personality, and I much enjoyed my last year at Primary School.

Sometime during my years at Elgin St., the small cottage, and probably the whole town was serviced with electricity. Was it 1921 or '22? So the small lamp which had served me so well was put away in a cupboard. I have often wondered if it was ever used again, or is it now someone's treasured antique?

One more recollection of 1923 was that Mr. Morrison arranged for those who were interested to have a "penfriend" in England. The idea appealed to me so I promptly wrote a letter and in due course had a reply from a girl. I still have the letter she wrote, describing the Coronation Procession of King George VI. and Elizabeth.

St. Hilary's Private Hospital was over in Hazelwood Road, and Mr. and Mrs. Guy's first grandson was born there. He was William Collins Jnr. Kath Moloney (in my grade), and her mother lived at the hospital. Sister Mathers was Mrs. Moloney's sister.

The earlier Post Office was my favourite building in Morwell. To me it seemed quite unique with its unusual architecture, and the interior was so attractive, with its solid, rather high counter.

I also liked the old bank, still there but no longer used for its original purpose.

A smaller building which appealed to me was the Advertiser Office, which had an attractive frontage and remained the same for many years.

Across the road from the school, between railway fence and road, was an unusual small building which had a chimney, but no-one seemed to live there. A tree of some kind grew near the entrance door. After quite some time I learned that Morwell Brass Band members practised there. The small band hall remained there for many years.

I began to think I had imagined the old swimming pool of the 1920s until someone else mentioned it. The small pool was also adjacent to the school and near the old Band Hall. It rather puzzled me as I never saw anyone swimming in it. However I have just been speaking to a friend who had swimming lessons there about the time I left Morwell.

MORWELL DAYS (cont.)

The Morwell shopping centre became a much busier scene one day each week when the farming folk brought in their goods for sale and made their general purchases; one came to know most of the families.

For many years it was to Morwell that the Brown Coal Mine folk had to go to catch a train, whether by taxi or horse drawn vehicles etc. So Morwell shops gained accordingly. It was several years later before buses took B.C.M. and Yallourn folk to Moe Railway Station. Morwell Railway Station always seemed to be a busy place, what with the Mirboo North branch line and the regular daily train service from Melbourne to as far as Bairnsdale.

Eventually my happy Primary School days were over and I was pleased that I was to attend Warragul High School the next year. I became a "boarder" with other girls, travelling on the Monday morning train and returning to Morwell for weekends on the Friday evening train.

I do not remember many motor cars in Morwell before I left there but Dr. G. Mitchell Snr. had one and I think his wife owned a smaller car. Their home and large garden were most attractive. They lived in Commercial Rd. past the shops and close to Chapel St. if not on the corner.

Names I remember from Elgin St. were: Keegan; Daniel or Daniels (Audrey); Gapes (Gertie and Jim); there were not so many houses there at the time.

In Hazelwood Rd.: Evans (Lily, George and Jack); Robinson (Percy and Jack); Marion Fraser next to the Ross family, and Mr. and Mrs. Sherry opposite. I am told that a Davey (or Davies) family lived first in the fine brick house on the corner of Hazelwood Rd. and Elgin St. but in my time a Mr. and Mrs. Ickeringill bought or rented the house. It had an overall renovation in the 1960s and appears to have had another in recent times so it must have been a well built house.

Across the road from me in this Village (Latrobe Village, Moe), is an ex-school friend who was Val Hutton and related to the Brinsmeads of Morwell. Val was married to Charlie Olver, brother of Roy.

After my school days I did not return to Morwell but have always been interested in its progress. Since about 1972 I have kept checking on 39 Elgin St. as, at that time it had been nicely renovated, possibly by new owners, and it looked so attractive once again with its fresh paint and wrought iron trim on verandah. That pleased me greatly, but times have changed and now, in the late '80s, "39" looks unloved in once again. Recently, nostalgia drew me there once more, always hoping to see some improvement, but I was not very surprised to find a "For Sale" notice out front. I stood there remembering when it was a neat little well-cared-for home with an old-fashioned garden out front; but that was more than sixty years ago.

Amy Tibballs

14th September, 1989.

Nothing beats a day at the store

THE rich smell of lucerne, the feel of wheat running through your fingers or the black dust from briquettes infiltrating the pores of your skin.

Most people would probably prefer to avoid these experiences but for Mr William McRoberts (known to his family as Will and his friends as Bill), these things will never lose their appeal.

Mr McRoberts, although retired for several years, still loves nothing better than to do a day's work in the family grain and produce store in George St, Morwell.

McRoberts and Sons is the oldest store in Morwell and is now being run by the third generation of the family, Phillip McRoberts.

The store was opened by Mr William McRoberts Snr back in 1924. At 45, he purchased land facing Commercial Rd for his first venture into retailing.

Mr McRoberts built up a thriving business. Horsepower was the main source of transport in those days with the Morwell area essentially rural.

However Mr McRoberts Snr soon realised that he would have to move with the times if business was going to succeed and changed to engine power. His old truck was a familiar site making deliveries to areas such as Yallourn, Morwell Bridge, Morwell West and Hernes Oak.

One of his popular ventures was a Saturday afternoon produce mar-

ket in the store's rear yard. People would come from everywhere to sell their vegetables, homemade jam, farm fresh butter and more, by auction. "I remember the markets clearly," recalled Mr McRoberts Jnr. "I was a tall lad but even I couldn't see over the big pile of cabbages."

In 1946, after the War, Mr Roberts' two sons, Andrew (deceased) and Will joined the business together with sister Catherine, a competent bookkeeper/secretary.

Briquettes made up a large part of the sales. McRoberts Store was the first to sell briquettes in Morwell and is the last.

The store became the largest country retailer of briquettes in their heyday. The change to natural gas and the move from large briquettes to the smaller industrial size, saw their popularity drop although Mr McRoberts Jnr admits to having kept several of those large sized briquettes.

In 1959, Mr McRoberts Snr sold his property to Moran and Cato, his son Will and his wife Melva bought the family shares in the company and started from scratch. The family store moved to small premises at Gudes Arcade until the couple eventually purchased the site of the present store in George St. Ironically it is only separated from the original store by a laneway, appropriately called McRoberts Lane.

The need for the grain and produce store is still obvious. The only one left in Morwell, it does a brisk

trade. "The emphasis has changed from a rural community to urban industrial," McRoberts said. "Not many of the larger farms remain but in their place are smaller farmlets which carry many recreational animals."

"The expectations from those farms left has also changed, with people expecting bigger and better production. Once, if hens laid 200 eggs a day it was terrific, today it's 300 or you get rid of them. Potato farmers used to think a yield of four tonne a day was good, now it's a 20 tonne a day average."

But one thing that hasn't changed is good old fashioned service which Mr Roberts sees as a

tradition at the store. People often just pop in for advice.

People come in for a special mix of lawn seed, or the McRoberts famous fertiliser recipe that seems to make camellias and azaleas thrive.

For those unfamiliar with grains and seeds, a browse through the store is a fascinating experience. In huge bags, open at the top, you discover a range of goods including rich red Milo (actually East African millet), familiar black poppy seeds (sterilised Indian Hemp), crushed maize, Livamol (a vitamin supplement), safflower and sunflower seeds, wheat, shellgrit, lucerne, straw, colorful varieties of beans and more.

Customers drive to the back of the store via the laneway to collect larger goods such as briquettes, straw, hay and large quantities of grain and fertiliser. Only hardware goods associated with these products are sold.

While Mr McRoberts' career training has been on the job, son Phillip brings a new dimension to the business. An industrial chemist, Phillip has also studied agriculture.

Despite the fact that Mr McRoberts and his wife retired several years ago, they still like nothing better than to help in the store. But then when you've worked practically all your life in a business, most of the time up to 14 hours a day, it's hard to get it out of your blood!



AN industrial chemist, also trained in agriculture, Phillip McRoberts has brought a new dimension to the store.

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