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The Morwell Historical Society News

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Collins St. Primary
School.

Secretary Mrs. E. Mc Master.

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WELCOME TO THE APRIL NEWSLETTER

Readers will notice a change in format. The "banner" above was designed by a Year 11 student at Kurnai College - Maryvale Campus. As a class exercise, a Year 11 Graphics class designed several alternative headings. I will trial these alternatives over the coming months. Comments from readers are most welcome. (Thanks go to the teacher, Mr. Rene Melis.)

A reminder that the next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday April 19. This will be our Annual Meeting also.

President, Mr. Lou Bond has been on the sick list in recent months. Lou in fact spent some time in hospital and is now resting at home. We all wish Lou a speedy recovery. Also, Lou's wife, Leila has not been well. Our thoughts are with the Bond family, hoping that all goes well.

Included in this newsletter is an article from The Express re the two Morwell palm trees. It is encouraging to note the efficiency of our Secretary as well as the interest shown by our local newspaper.



The 1867 Royal Tour set the fashion

by GERALD STEWART



Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, a son of Queen Victoria, landed in Australia on October 29, 1867. He was the first Royal visitor.

QUEEN VICTORIA'S loyal Australian subjects were preparing for their first Royal visit in 1867 when a curious pamphlet hit the bookstalls. It was entitled "A Proposal for the Confederation of the Australian Colonies with Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, as King of Australia." Its author preferred to hide his identity under the pen-name of "A Colonist."

The very idea of suggesting an independent kingdom of Australia was, of course, an outrage, and at afternoon-tea parties where the pamphlet was discussed many a cup was abruptly placed on its saucer in a noisy protest.

"A Colonist" argued that the formation of such a kingdom was the only way to prevent the Australian colonies from following the example of the United States and becoming independent under a President.

The kingdom, he said, would also help to maintain British traditions at the antipodes, for its constitution would be patterned on that of Great Britain. In addition, it would have the advantage

and was known to be bored by many of them.

As he drove through the streets of Glenelg in his carriage his mounted escort had to fight off horsemen who tried to break through to get a better look at the Duke.

About 400 aborigines cheered the Duke at Macbeth's station, near Lake Alexandrina, on November 2. One of them stood on top of an arch which was decorated with a red, white and blue flag and inscribed, "Coolwa blackfellow one glad see im Queen piccaininy."

The aborigines entertained the Duke by throwing spears and boomerangs, and dancing a corroboree. The Duke was so fascinated that he stayed with them until 11 p.m., and had his piper play the bagpipes to entertain them in return.

The Duke, who toured country districts in a carriage, was keen on sampling Australian bush life. One night he slept on the ground on the shore of Lake Albert, with his head resting on the roots of a tree and a mosquito net spread over him.

He drank tea made in a billy, and whenever he could spare the time went possum and kangaroo shooting. Near Caramut (Vic.) he and his party stood in an enclosure—five acres surrounded by a 10ft. fence—while horsemen and boys on foot drove 35 kangaroos backwards and forwards past the Royal party so that they could be shot down.

ONLY OCCASIONALLY was the Royal tour programme altered—such as at a banquet at Melbourne's zoo when more than 100,000 people arrived, and the Governor of Victoria was informed by the chief of police that things might get out of control once the Duke entered the grounds.

When the Duke arrived at the zoo he was persuaded to return to Toorak. But somehow the organisers of the banquet forgot to tell the crowd, which, in its frustration, rushed the tables.

Groups of toughs got hold of all the food, and opened a 500-gallon wine cask, wasting most of its contents. In the end, police were called in to rescue some of the wine and beer.

Transparencies which decorated the streets of Melbourne included portraits of the Duke and pictures of the *Galatea*. Some of these portraits looked so much like caricatures that the Duke told members of his party he doubted whether his mother would recognise him if she saw him disguised like that.

Public decorations varied in lavishness and artistry according to the size of the town or city and the local talent available. The smaller towns contented themselves with a display of flags and evergreens and a welcome sign or two suspended across the main street.

Chinese residents decorated their streets with lanterns, dragons and Chinese flags, and lined the route dressed in their national costumes.

At Glenelg, public buildings, banks, shops and warehouses were lit up in relays—the gas company couldn't cope with the heavy demand for gas light to honor the Duke.

Hobart residents were proud their "emblematic arch" whose were made of tun butts used for whaling, and whose arch local products such as bales of wool, packets of hops, timber, leather, glue and starch, casks of beer, and wheat. Right on top were the jawbones of two sperm whales.

Sydney celebrated the Duke's arrival with, among other attractions, a dragon—transparencies attached to both sides of a steamer near Fort Denison.

This dragon was 102ft. long and 26ft. high and had a mouth seven feet wide which spat out rockets. Twenty-five boats decorated with lanterns formed the dragon's tail.

Some decorations preceded the Duke right around Australia; this way local organisers split costs, although the Duke recognised some of the pieces. Even the inmates of asylums celebrated by erecting signs the entrance to their ground arches inscribed, "Welcome, Alfred."

Crowds cheered and tossed bouquets into the Duke's carriage. Now and again horses were changed, during which time the Duke listened to an address. He often took the reins himself, but experienced considerable trouble with the horses which, frightened by the applause of the crowds and the barking of kangaroo dogs in country towns, threatened to jump fences, or broke into a gallop.

German residents took a special interest in the Duke, for he was a general of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, a German principality. (Later in life—after his Australian visit—he became its ruler and renounced allegiance to the British Crown.)

The Germans organised torchlight processions in his honor at which, in addition to torches, they carried transparent lanterns inscribed "Willkommen" (welcome) and lyres of transparent gauze which were lit up by candles inside.

They burst into the Duke's favorite German songs and had their brass bands play for him.

With the exception of the shooting at Clontarf (see page 50) and an indignation meeting at Toowoomba, during which the crowd burned the effigies of two prominent Queensland Cabinet members, the first Royal tour of Australia proceeded as planned.

At Toowoomba, the local people were angry that Government members had refused to contact their mayor about Royal tour arrangements, and they cheered the Duke, but hissed Government representatives who accompanied him.

Like other Royal visitors after him, the Duke had no time to spare, so that, at a levee at Melbourne's Exchange Building, 3000 men were

(Continued on page 36)



Prince Albert (the tall one) and Prince George (later King George V) pose with Ballarat miners on their visit in 1881.

Puzzle of the two palm trees solved

RESPONSE to the mystery of the "precariously perched palm trees" has been overwhelming.

Longtime locals kept Express phones running hot yesterday, several people came into the office and we received a couple of letters on the trees.

One letter advised that one of the cooks at the then nearby single man's Ridge Hostel, planted the palms so he could hang his hammock between them.

Jumbuck resident Arch Chitty, now 72, explained that the trees were planted in a the local butter factory manager's residence. "They were a fair size then (60 years ago) when I was a kid," he recalled adding that his father once supplied cream to the butter factory.

Local Kevin Berg said his great grandfather, John Flewin, used to farm the area behind the "ridge". Mr Flewin, according to his great grandson, planted the gateway entrance to the butter factory.

Honorary secretary of the Morwell Historical Society, Elsie McMaster, provided the Express with the most complete story: "They stood originally at the gateway to the Morwell Butter Factory manager's residence. The factory functioned from the 1890's until it was burnt in 1929. The manager's house was burnt in the 1944 bushfires but the palms survived. They are probably about 80 years old."

Will the Morwell Bypass works get them? Morwell Historical Society has sought, and received according to Elsie McMaster, assurance from the RCA that the trees will be unharmed by the new roadworks. The excavations at present going on around the trees are for filling, to be used in another area of the road construction.

Moving the palms was considered but, because of the cost involved, they will probably be left on an island overlooking the new road.

Morwell Historical Society would be pleased to hear from anyone who has any further information on the palms. So any more queries should be directed to them... no more calls to the Express please!

THE EXPRESS

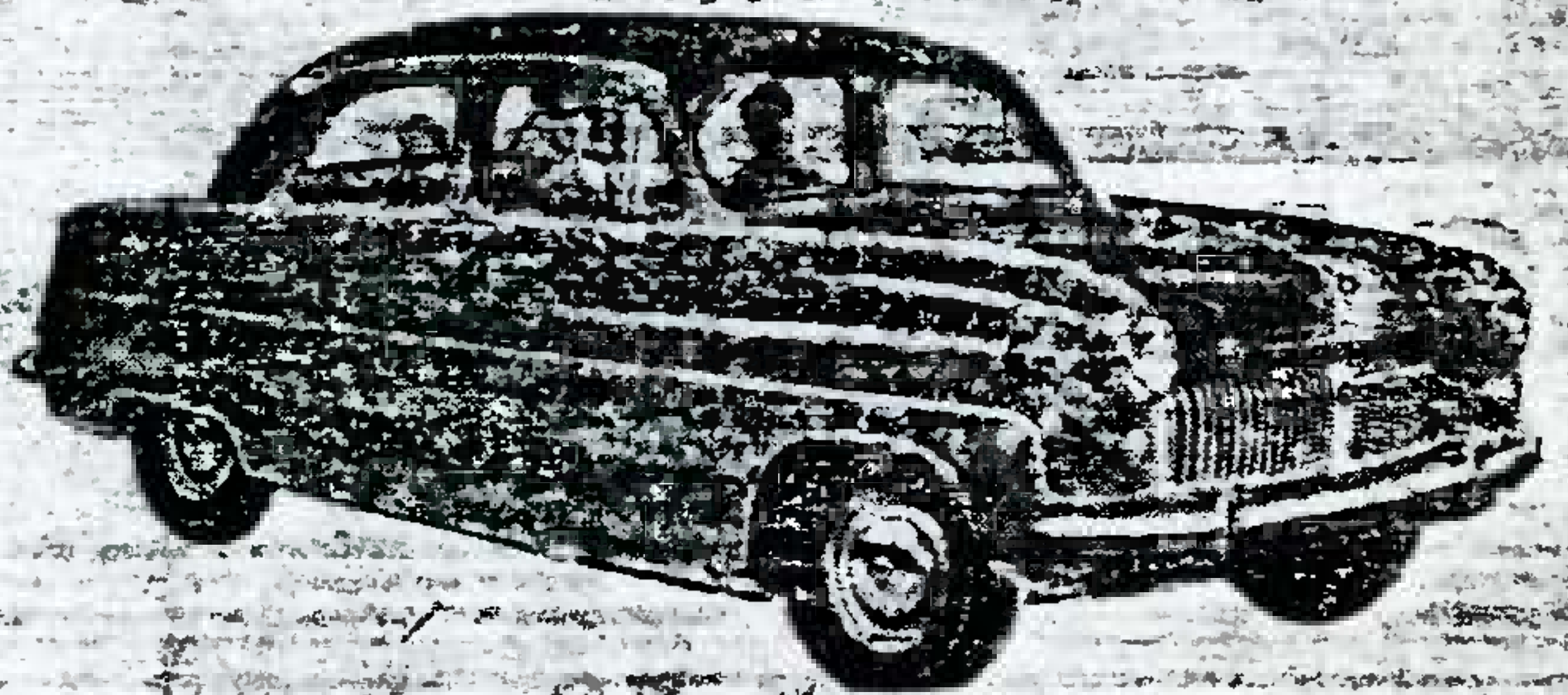
MARCH 22, 1988

Some Notices.

- Sunday April 24 - 2 p.m. R.S.L. unveiling of a plaque to commemorate the Soldier Settlers at Hazelwood Estate. Ceremony to take place on the hill above the Hazelwood cemetery overlooking the pondage. All are welcome to attend.
- Next meeting of our Society - April 19. Guest speaker from the Private Lives - Public Heritage organization - (the interest is with family snapshots as history.)

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Morwell Bridge and Morwell WestExcursion March 6th

On March 6th 1988 our members were invited to join an excursion organised by the Traralgon Historical Society, to the sites of Morwell Bridge and Morwell West. This proved to^{be} a nostalgic but very enjoyable afternoon. Our leaders were Mrs Dot Bartlett and Mrs Lois Starkey. Apart from the resumés given by these two, other members of the party related anecdotes both interesting and amusing. Readers may remember an article by Mrs Starkey (nee Lois Shepherd) we printed in serial form in Newsletters March, April and May of 1987. In these she told of her memories of Morwell West. Her father, Keith Shepherd, has also contributed excellent articles to our newsletters.

Here Mrs Bartlett (nee Dot Dodemaide) adds her memories, especially of her school days at Mowell Bridge.

These two ladies are the instigators of the movement pledged to gather material to compile a book and memorabilia to preserve the memory of these two settlements. Local historical societies will be giving them all the help they can.

Newsletter Nov. 1986 also has Reminiscences and photos of Morwell West.

Reminiscences- Mrs Dorothy Bartlett (nee Dodemaide)

It is hard to believe that it is 60 years since I left Stratford where I was born and came to the Latrobe Valley with my parents Charles and Dorothy Dodemaide. We first lived in a small four roomed cottage at the South camp which was near the old Yallourn briquette factory. Mum, dad, my brother and myself and an Uncle and Aunt lived there for a short time, then we moved to Moe. It wasn't long and Dad heard of Mr Joe Kaye at Morwell Bridge. Mr Kaye had land there and rented quite a good sized block to enable people to build their own home. The rent was 2/-(20 cents) a week. We moved into the place that Dad built at the end of 1928. The kitchen

and one bedroom had a floor, but the other two rooms only had part of a floor. There was no lining at all but we had a good wood stove, and a small tub for our weekly bath. I started school at Stratford, then spent a few months at Yallourn, then Moe and Trafalgar when I lived with my grandmother for a short time. I started at the Morwell-Bridge school in January 1929, so I was probably in grade 2 at that time. The school was about a mile away from home and during the winter months we quite often arrived with either wet feet or a wet bottom.

We were often warned about walking on the ice on top of the puddle holes. If the ice was thick enough our boots would skid across and down we would go. Monday morning the flag would be flying and we all had to recite "I honour the flag". Every morning rain, hail or shine we had to stand in the line for inspection. Shoes had to be clean, hair done, teeth clean, finger-nails clean and a handkerchief was a must. No tissues those days. The school was one big room, a small store room and porch. There were two teachers and each teacher took four grades. School excursions did not exist then, although we did have a great day once when we came into Morwell to the "Advertiser" office owned by Mr George Watson.

During the winter month the Mothers used to take their turn to come to school at lunch time to make cocoa. It would be heated on the open fire place. It was often smokey, but at least it was hot. Christmas time was something we all looked forward to. The Mothers club always had a break up party for us and the Christmas tree have a present for every pupil and also for the younger ones not yet at school. The men would cut a huge pine tree down and sit it up on the platform in the class room. I remember one year the tree was so big that it took then ages to pull it through the door. We were all getting quite worried in case we would miss out.

As soon as the tree was set up we were all sent out to play and each parcel was tied to the branches.

1988 AUSTRALIA'S BI-CENTENARY YEARMorwell and District (Continued)

We are very grateful to Mrs A. Ringin, now a very well known member of the Moe Historical Society, who has answered our appeal for contributions to our newsletters with the article "Some Memories of Morwell in the 1920's" found on Page 8/9. This is exactly the kind of personal reminiscences we are asking for and we hope it will encourage others to follow suit.

Below are a few notes about the decade 1928-1938.

Again mainly drawn from Steamhorse to Power - Prue McGoldrick.

1928-1938 - During this decade and the previous one Morwell showed definite signs of weathering the economic crisis very well. In 1928 the Advertiser had noted the improvement in the appearance of the main street stating that "practically the whole street has now been dressed with coloured tiles and plate glass."

Because Morwell's economy was derived from primary produce, commerce and industry the area had more economic stability than most areas of Australia at that time. However finances were still difficult for many.

Many of our members will remember the swaggies (tea-tucker tramps). One of our members recalls - "Our house was on a road frequented by swaggies and my mother had a reputation for her generosity. However, we had a big household and she could not afford to waste food. She often found herself with quite a large quantity of 'left over' jam when the family switched from one kind to another. One day she decided to boil these up together and was pleased to find the mixture quite tasty. She asked my brother to label it, remarking it was mainly for the swaggies. She was really upset when she viewed his work later. He had labelled it 'Tramp Jam'. He had to re-label it 'Tasty Jam', Mother had great respect for the men's feelings."

1988 AUSTRALIA'S BI-CENTENARY YEAR

Who remembers how rabbits provided meat and income for many through the lean years? I seem to remember being told that from the time they settled in Driffield, the Bond family made a livelihood by selling rabbit skins and meat.

The Advertiser noted the building of the house in Buckley St, 1933, later occupied by Mr and Mrs G Rust (nee Dolly Ashman), as a sign of improving economy. Several more houses were built later that year and the Advertiser noted that there were few unemployed in the town.

By the end of 1937, 170 men were employed at the A.P.M. pilot paper mill.

Football was one of Morwell's popular sports. In 1932 Morwell became a member of the Central Gippsland League. At one time there were six Bond brothers playing- Vic, Harry, Lou, Tom, Ted and Jock. Lou (our president) played for 12 seasons only missing one game (that through a leg injury).

Carefree Sports, better economic conditions, progressive trade were all part of the peace and stability enjoyed here during the latter thirties before World War 2.

N.B. In regard to the memories of Morwell in the 1920's and 30's it is fitting that we draw our readers' attention to our Newsletter of July 1986. There you will find Reminiscences of Mrs Nell Smith (nee Rogers) as told to Mrs Jean Rodgers (nee Hunter) who also contributed her memories of Morwell from 1937 in the same issue.

Mrs. Kath Rintoull

We lived on a farm on the Morwell River, and with my cousins attended the Commercial Road State School, the only one at that time excepting the Roman Catholic school further up the hill. I was aged six.

We drove 'Old Dick' in a jinker from Maxwell and Morrison's Road, crossed the Old Sale - Melbourne Road and along Toner's Lane.

We put our horse in a stall in the stable of the Methodist church yard. The Methodist church faced the Princes Highway, where Jephcott the Jeweller is today. There was a small shed attached to the stable where the carbide was kept for the church lamps. To get to school we crossed the highway and the level crossing over the railway line, past the horse trough on the left, the Doctor's residence on the right and then the school. My first teacher I think, was Miss McDonald, later Mrs J. Rintoull.

Some of 'the big kids' were Ella Corbett, Enid Cook, Una and Edna Hare, Harry Hughenin, Lou Bond, Allen Brinsmead, but as I left when I was nine to attend Morwell North school, my memory is not clear on names.

We were not allowed up the street further than the Post Office, which was a lovely double storied building on the corner of Tarwin Street and Commercial Road. An exception to this rule was when our monthly school paper was to be collected at Evan's Newsagency. This expedition took us across Tarwin Street, past Mill's Corner, McKay's Hotel and, or was it Conlan's Hotel, on past Furlong's confectionary, (where I still remember having my first ice-cream, bought for me by Mr Joe Bolding to keep me happy while he and my dad yarned!). Past the Newsagent were other shops - I think Mr Pointer's chemist shop was one, then a bank, another shop which became Rintoull's Hardware and the lane beside it led to the Rintoull's family home. On the western side of the land was Rintoull's Blacksmith shop and here we came when Old Dick needed new shoes. Old Mr Rintoull with his neatly trimmed beard was a jovial smith, and the sparks from his forge, the clanking of his hammer on the anvil and the smell of burning hooves as the shoe was fitted, all created a special atmosphere which I still remember.

On these days we would collect Dick after school from where he would be tied up in the yard and drive home going home down Jones's Hill past the Driffield turnoff, and here I can now confess my cousins would swap notes with the Bond boys or the Brinsmead boys, putting them under a stone on the strainer post at the corner of the road. We considered this very daring and were sworn to secrecy.

Going to church also has memories - people tying up their horses under the pines both outside and in the church yard, the pitter patter of Ronald's buggy and pair and the rumble as they went over the wooden culvert, very often coming in late. I remember admiring Miss Martha Ronald's big hat and lovely frock with a huge bow at the back, and also the Reverend Alex Day telling us children that the best way to remember our lessons was to say them over five minutes after we went to sleep, and five minutes before we woke up! He often went shooting with my father and uncle, and I remember him telling dad that he had several wallaby or kangaroo skins being tanned in his laundry (wash-house in those days!), when a policeman came to his back door and saw them, but ignored them. I have gathered since that the animals must have been protected at that time. After church, folk gathered to talk while their children played about. Little Mrs Brinsmead Snr from The Ridge drove a horse and buggy which her grandsons would be sitting up in, calling "Dinner time Grandma". No one seemed to be in a hurry those days and I can't remember anyone driving a car to church. My first ride in one was in Mr Bert Morrison's who lived on the farm next to us, I think it would have been 1921. What a lot of changes in those sixty odd years. The house we lived in then is now the site of the Morwell River Diversion Offices and the river flats may soon become the eastern coal field. "The Encyclopedia of Victoria", speaking of Morwell in 1905, quotes, after describing the town, the history of The Great Morwell Coal Mine, and its rise and fall, "The interest originally excited by the brown coal discoveries rapidly faded out of the public mind, and thus Morwell narrowly missed becoming one of the most thriving commercial centres in Gippsland."