

# MORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

published monthly, except December

Meetings: 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7.30 pm  
in St. Andrews Presbyterian Church Hall

Vol. 8 No. 4

APRIL 1992

## WELCOME TO THE APRIL NEWSLETTER

This month we are pleased to present a memoir written by Mr. Merv Medew recalling his childhood on the farm which became the site of Churchill township.

We offer our sympathy to members Gordon and Dorothy Taylor on the death of Gordon's mother on April 11, and we record with sadness the passing of a friend of our Society, Mr. Cyril Hare. Cyril and Mrs. Hare were guests at our dinner meeting at Churchill last year and Cyril shared with us his memories of the Churchill-Hazelwood area.

PLEASE NOTE: The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of Morwell Historical Society Inc. will be held on TUESDAY, APRIL 21 in St. Andrews Church Hall, Morwell at 7.30pm.

The usual monthly meeting will follow the annual meeting.

Hope to see you there.

## **PUBLIC ASSETS DEFENCE COALITION**

In 1989 community and local government organisations, including the RHSV, that were concerned at the scale and rapidity with which the Governments were disposing of surplus public property assets, came together to form the PADC.

Many of these properties for sale, such as post offices and court houses are, or could be, used by community groups. Also on sale are areas of land.

Because of the dispersed geographic impact of the program and its confusing operation, there is little public awareness of its existence and implications, although the RHSV through its links with the PADC endeavours to inform local historical societies of surplus properties proposed for sale in their area. With important heritage and other public values frequently being overlooked or ignored in the proposed assets sales, the PADC is launching a campaign for realistic reforms to the sales process. It is proposed to employ a part-time project officer for three months to increase public debate through contact with community groups and the media and by lobbying and negotiation at the political level.

The RHSV has made a donation to PADC campaign funds. Member societies are urged to make a donation, if possible, to assist in the reform of a process that affects us all.

### **OFFER TO NEW MEMBERS**

An incentive to joining the RHSV now, is 3 months free membership, included in the annual subscription, current to 30 June 1993

## **GRAND EPHEMERA FAIR**

The Ephemera Society of Australia, in conjunction with 3AW, is presenting a fair at the Malvern Town Hall on Sunday 17 May, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., admission \$4 (Conc. \$3), children free. Stalls selling old comics, books, timetables, posters, cards, dictionaries, menus, etc etc will be there, and free valuations can be given.

## **ORAL HISTORY WORKSHOP**

The Benga Oral History Centre presents an Oral History Workshop, jointly sponsored by the Dandenong Historic Precinct, the Oral History Association of Australia, Victorian Branch, and the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, to be held on Saturday 16 May 1992 from 9.30 a.m. to 4.30 p.m. at St. James' Anglican Church Parish Centre, Langhorne Street, Dandenong. The Guest Speaker will be Wendy Lowenstein, Author of *Weevils in the Flour*.

The workshop will be run by Benga staff members and will cover the practicalities of oral history projects, including research, interviewing techniques, transcribing and conservation of tapes. Participants will also be given the opportunity to practise interviewing. Recording equipment will be available for the workshop.

To register, please send personal details with a cheque for \$25 to the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, Royal Mint, 280 William Street, Melbourne. The cost includes morning and afternoon tea and lunch. Numbers limited to 24 participants, so hurry. (A similar workshop last year was over-booked.) For enquiries, ring RHSV (670 1219) or Benga (793 4152).

## **STATE LIBRARY OF VICTORIA LA TROBE LIBRARY**

In the second half of 1992 the La Trobe Library will be moving temporarily from its present location to a new building on the corner of La Trobe and Russell Streets.

The move will necessitate the temporary closure of La Trobe Sections at various times during the move until services are in place in the new building. Any inconvenience to researchers is regretted.

Definite dates for the successive closure of Sections will be advised by the end of June 1992.

## **TOURS OF THE ROYAL MINT AND RHSV**

Conducted tours of our Royal Mint premises are now being run to meet a growing demand from clubs and community groups. The tours include information on the fascinating history of the Royal Mint and on the library, archival and photographic resources of the RHSV. Tours will usually be conducted on Thursday mornings by prior arrangement. Cost \$2 per person for member societies of the RHSV, \$3 per person for other groups.

## **INDEX TO VICTORIAN HISTORICAL JOURNAL 1980-1989**

This index is now available. Cost \$15.50 per copy plus postage. Copies may be collected from the RHSV office. Local historical societies and libraries are advised to obtain a copy of this useful publication.

FROM R.H.S.V. 'HISTORY NEWS'

APRIL 1992

## **HISTORY INSTITUTE WINTER SCHOOL**

The History Institute is holding a three-day Winter School on Historical Research from 8th to 10th July, 1992. It will include visits to the Parliamentary Library, the State Library of Victoria, the Public Records Office, the Australian Archives at Brighton, and the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, among other places, lectures and hands-on experience in dealing with historical and genealogical source materials.

For further details contact: The Secretary, The History Institute, Victoria, Inc. 258 Faraday Street, Carlton, Vic 3053. Telephone 344-6209.

## THE HOUSE BEHIND THE TREES

Merv Medew

Almost hidden by trees on a rise behind the Churchill shopping centre is an old timber house. I'd guess that few Churchill residents have even noticed it.

Well, one cold day in September 1930, my father brought my mother and I home to this old house and this is the place where I was to spend my childhood, having been born a few days earlier in the Morwell hospital.

My mother told me that on that day as we drove home to what was then known as Hazelwood South, the Jeeralang hills were covered with snow and she always said that it was typical of me to choose the coldest time of the year to be born.

I can only imagine what it must have been like chugging along in the old "T" model Ford with side curtains flapping in the wind; Mum and I huddled up against Dad as he steered the car down the grassy road through the rain and sleet. Of course if I'd been born a year or so earlier I wouldn't have had the luxury of motor travel.

In 1930, apart from a couple of farm sheds, our homestead stood alone in the centre of a 160 acre farm. A school was situated on our front boundary which ran along the now Alexandra Boulevard or Midland Highway where the Churchill shopping centre now stands, while the Churchill hotel sits across the site of our front gate. My grandfather, a strict teetotaler, would be most upset if he knew that a pub was built across our front gate.

The farm's southern boundary ran through the edge of the now Glendonald Estate, part of the Monash University College is sprawled across what was our northern paddocks, while our eastern boundary was on top of the hill, just where Northways road joins Roberts Drive.

Northways Road was named after my mother's family who bought the adjoining property to ours and started clearing it before the turn of the century.

The Northway family also owned our 160 acres before they sold it uncleared to my grandfather Medew in 1908.

Grandad and Grandma Medew, at the time lived on a farm in Jeeralang with their 5 sons and 4 daughters and could not move onto their new property straight away, so for the first three years, two of the older sons camped there in a small hut while they began to clear the land and establish it as a dairy farm.

In 1911 the house was built from sawn timber, carted by bullock waggon from Traralgon, and Grandma and the younger children were able to move down from Jeeralang. At the time, my father, the youngest son, was 11 years old.

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## THE HOUSE BEHIND THE TREES

Over the next few years, the older members of the family married and moved away from Jeeralang and the farm there was sold.

In 1922 Grandma passed away, leaving only Granddad, Dad and my Aunt Ruth on the Hazelwood South farm.

In 1925, Dad married my mother, Helen Northway. My mother was the youngest of 13 children and Grandpa Northway died before I was born, while Grandma Northway lived until I was about 5. I can just remember her.

Mum moved into the Medew home and took over the running of the household. Aunt Ruth, who was very frail, later moved away to live with one of her married sister.

In 1926 my brother Ken was born, and by the time I was born, Granddad Medew had retired from work at the age of 70 and Dad had taken over the running of the farm.

By this time it had become more than a dairy farm. Apart from the cattle the animals included sheep, pigs, chooks and of course draught horses and cattle dogs. Potatoes and other vegetables were grown, and periodically, crops of maize and oats, while the house was almost surrounded by a fine orchard of apple, pear and plum trees.

By the time I became conscious of my surroundings, the world was in the middle of the great depression and our family was largely dependent on the farm for a food supply. But we were indeed fortunate in that we never had to go without good food as the people in the towns and cities must have done.

Life was not easy of course, especially seeing as there was no electricity, refrigeration or water supply, apart from rain water, caught from the roof of the house. In fact, water was in such short supply during dry weather periods that all dish, clothes washing and bathing water was saved and poured on the vegetable garden. Baths were taken once a week in a big tin tub, whether they were needed or not, with everyone using the same water in turn.

My mother worked very hard in those days. Apart from doing her difficult household chores, she would be up before 6 o'clock every morning to help Dad with the milking.

Up to 35 cows were milked by hand, twice a day, taking up to three hours each time. Cream was separated from the milk, using a hand operated machine, and the skim milk was fed to the pigs to fatten them for market.

Some of the cream was used to make our own butter, a job which Mum took charge of. She also made jam from the plums in the orchard, and any of the other fruit that couldn't be sold or eaten at the time was preserved for later use. She let nothing go to waste. She also killed, plucked and cooked chooks for the table, while Dad butchered our own mutton and pork. And then there was always plenty of underground mutton.

## THE HOUSE BEHIND THE TREES

By the time I'd started school, my sister Gwen was born and later on another two brothers, Graeme and Ivan.

We all had our allotted jobs to do, even before and after school. Ken began to help with the milking at an early age, which relieved Mum a little. I was given a try at milking but I proved too slow at it, so I was given other tasks, such as feeding chooks and splitting firewood etc. all of which I wasn't very fast at either. The trouble was that I spent most of my time day-dreaming about what life would be like in the towns and cities, because I thought that kids got it a lot easier there.

Mum would yell at me and Dad would give me a fierce glare that seemed to terrify the rest of the family but I don't remember this ever speeding me up. They were loving and understanding parents in spite of the hardships they had to endure, but I must have been a constant source of frustration to them.

Life was not all work and gloom though. After our evening meals which were not usually over until 8 o'clock or later, it was time for relaxation. Sometimes Grandad would tell us stories about the pioneering days in the hill country as we sat around an open fire. Then Dad would get out his violin and play some of the beautiful old songs of the period, while Mum accompanied him on an old treadle organ. We'd all join in and sing until it was time for bed.

One day when Gwen was about two years old, Dad took her with him to load some pigs for market, in a trailer hooked onto the "T" model. Dad was directing the pigs from the sty into the back of the trailer when the old Ford started to roll away down a slope, dragging the trailer with it. Dad made a desperate lunge to try to stop the car but he slipped and fell between the car and the trailer. The trailer ran over him but he struggled to his feet again. By this time the car had gained a lot of speed and it was impossible for him to catch up to it. It crashed its way through two wire fences and finally came to rest in a clump of blackberries at the bottom of a gully.

When Dad reached the scene, Gwen was standing up behind the steering wheel, giggling. Dad was badly bruised and had a broken arm, but he hugged her and started to laugh with her he was so glad that she was unharmed.

The community spirit of the farming families during that period was wonderful. School picnics were just one of the social occasions in which everyone participated and the events included nail driving competitions for the mums and sheaf tossing competitions for the dads.

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## THE HOUSE BEHIND THE TREES

During the war years, as young men of the district joined the services and went off to various parts of the world, farewell functions were held in a community hall, but even though everyone knew that they might never see these brave young men again, I can only remember these farewells as happy occasions of dancing and laughter.

As a boy I had little appreciation of the horror of war as we listened on the wireless each day to the overseas service of the B.B.C. and as the Battle of Britain raged on the other side of the world, I dreamed of becoming a fighter pilot as soon as I was old enough.

Dairy farmers and other primary producers were not permitted to join the services, as of course the maintenance of food supplies was vital, but when the threat of a Japanese invasion became very real, the Hazelwood Volunteer Defence Corps Unit was formed and Dad immediately joined along with most of the other local farmers.

The Unit met and trained at regular intervals. Dad took his role in the part-time army with all the seriousness it demanded and in a short time rose to the rank of sergeant.

In February 1944, bushfires raged right through Hazelwood, Driffield and Jeeralang. Fueled by the long dry grass and fanned by an extremely strong wind, the fire burned so fast and on such a wide front that it was impossible to even try to control it. As it approached our farm there was just time to draft the cattle in to a ploughed paddock near the house.

I was attending Yallourn tech. school at the time and didn't get home until next day, but the rest of the family huddled together in the paddock with the cattle until the fire passed. It wasn't until the smoke finally cleared that they could see that the house was still standing, saved only by being surrounded by the orchard and garden, but the milking and hay sheds were destroyed.

Throughout the districts, 13 people were burnt to death on that day and dozens of families lost their homes. Dead cattle lay in the paddocks everywhere and badly burned animals roamed freely through collapsed fences and had to be destroyed.

We had been lucky. We still had our home and the cattle were safe, though there was nothing for them to eat. They would have starved if it were not for the donations of baled hay from farmers in unaffected areas.

It took time to rebuild but there was no mention of not going on or not being able to cope. The community spirit gave them strength.

Grandad died in 1946 at the age of 86 and my brother Graeme lost his life in a road accident when he was just 18.

THE HOUSE BEHIND THE TREES

One by one the rest of us went our separate ways, but Mum and Dad remained on the farm until just before the land was acquired to build the town of Churchill in the early 60s, when they moved to Morwell. Dad claimed that he had retired but he worked as a handyman in a local garage until two days before he died at the age of 70. Mum moved to Maffra where she lived until she was 83, although she never fully recovered from the blow of losing Dad.

I hope and pray that they are together now in a better place, as a reward for their unselfish devotion to their family and each other.

But life goes on, and new generations build their homes and raise their children around the old farm. And I wonder if a child ever asks, "Who lived in that old house behind the trees?"

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PUBLIC ASSETS DEFENCE COALITION (see notes from R.H.S.V.HISTORY NEWS p. 2.)

We have been notified by R.H.S.V., on advice from the Public Assets Defence Coalition, that public property in Roy's Rd. Budgerie is to be disposed of. From the enclosed information and map we take this property to be the Budgerie School, now no longer in use. Further information will be sought from Boolarra Historical Society as to what exactly is being offered for sale.

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DONATIONS TO THE SOCIETY:

"ACROSS THE OLD BUSH TRACK" donated by the author Dorothy Squires-Taylor, (who is also the Treasurer of our Society).

"A TALE OF TWO PIONEERS-PHILIP AND MARY ANN KEEGAN - Limerick to Ayr, Chewton to Morwell" - donated by the author John Keegan O.M.

A review of "Across the Old Bush Track" and a brief history of the Keegan family's stay in Morwell appeared in last month's Newsletter. Our thanks go to Mrs. Taylor and Mr. Keegan for these most welcome additions to our library.

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ADVANCE NOTICE: The Annual Meeting of Gippsland Historical Societies will be held in Moe on Saturday May 2nd.

## RULES FOR TEACHERS

The following sets of rules are displayed in the Foster Local History Museum and are reproduced here with acknowledgements to the South Gippsland Historical Society. Unfortunately there is no source listed but we offer them for your amusement. Presumably the 1915 Rules apply to female teachers only. The reference to icecream bars suggests America rather than Australia.

### RULES FOR TEACHERS 1879

1. Teachers each day will fill lamps, clean chimneys before beginning work.
2. Each teacher will bring a bucket of water and a scuttle of coal for the day's session.
3. Make your pens carefully. You may whittle nibs to the individual taste of the children.
4. Men teachers may take one evening a week for courting purposes or two evenings a week to attend church regularly.
5. After ten hours in school you may spend the remaining time reading the Bible or other good books.
6. Women teachers who marry or engage in unseemly conduct will be dismissed.
7. Every teacher should lay aside, from each day, a goodly sum for his benefit during his declining years so that he will not become a burden on society.
8. Any teacher who smokes, uses liquor in any form, frequents pool and public halls or gets shaved in a barber shop will give good reason to suspect his worth, intention, integrity and honesty.

### RULES FOR TEACHERS 1915

1. You will not marry during the term of your contract.
2. You are not to keep company with men.
3. You must be home between the hours of 8pm and 6am unless attending school functions.
4. You may not loiter downtown in any of the icecream bars.
5. You may not travel beyond the city limits unless you have the permission of the chairman of the board.
6. You may not ride in a carriage or automobile with any man unless he is your father or brother.
7. You may not smoke cigarettes.
8. You may not dress in bright colours.
9. You must wear at least two petticoats.
10. Your dress must not be any shorter than two inches above the ankle.
11. To keep the school neat and clean you must sweep the floor at least once daily, scrub the floor at least once a week with hot soapy water, clean the boards daily and start the fire at 7am so the room will be warm by



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BACK TO HERNES OAK - Held at the Hernes Oak Recreation Reserve,  
Old Princes Highway, Hernes Oak - March 7th, 1992.

Report by Dorothy Taylor.

Weatherwise it turned out a lovely day, a little too hot if anything. The marquees, bunting and Morwell Civic Band gave a carnival atmosphere to the Back-to.

A lot of laughter and reminiscing was enjoyed as friendships were renewed by the 450-500 people who attended. Unfortunately, some of the ex-residents had to share their time between the Hernes Oak reunion and the Newborough Primary School Back-to.

Mr. Perc. Mooney, a member of the Morwell Historical Society, carried out his duties in a very capable and happy manner. Perc accepted this office after only short notice when Mr. Lou Bond, President of Morwell Historical Society had to decline the position of Chairman due to illness. (It is pleasing to report that Lou is now very well.)

The official opening was held at 11 am. The Mayor of Morwell, Cr. John Guy, accompanied by the Lady Mayoress, Mrs. Guy, welcomed everyone and launched the book "Across the Old Bush Track" - the history and story of Haunted Hills - Hernes Oak. Mr. Gerald Morrissey, the person who lived the longest at Hernes Oak (50 years) presented a copy of the book to Cr. Guy who gave an inspiring address.

Mr. Peter Scott, representing the S.E.C. also addressed the gathering. He grew up in Yallourn and so had a close association with the Hernes Oak residents of his youth. Mr. Scott gave an interesting talk on the workings of the S.E.C. and the future of the coal winning operations.

The very senior citizens of those early Hernes Oak days were honoured by special seating in the marquee and were served morning tea after the opening ceremony. They were also presented with a souvenir calendar.

The S.E.C. showed a video of "The First 50 Years" of the S.E.C. undertakings. They also provided sample bags for everyone, and provided a large map of Hernes Oak, superimposed on a photograph of the Yallourn Works area and Open Cut. S.E.C. buses also ferried people on sightseeing tours of the Works area and Open Cut. All this was arranged by Mr. Peter Leslie, Public Relations Officer for the S.E.C. who also worked tirelessly on the day.

Mr. Bruce McMaster, Mrs. Elsie McMaster and Ms Claire Wood, also members of the Morwell Historical Society were kept busy in their marquee (courtesy of A.P.M.) selling the book, and Morwell Lions Club catered for hungry appetites.

It was a happy and satisfying day for myself and those ex-residents who returned. The book has been favourably received and my grateful thanks go to all those who helped make the day such a huge success, particularly the S.E.C. for their wonderful assistance practically and financially.

MORWELL BRIDGE - MORWELL WEST REUNION \_ Held on  
Sunday March 22, 1992 at Kernot Hall, Morwell.

Report by Dorothy Bartlett.

About 150 people attended the reunion which was held in the foyer of Kernot Hall at Morwell Civic Centre. Mr. Bob Meredith welcomed the ex-residents and Morwell Mayor, Cr. John Guy, who attended with his wife, Pam, gave a short address. Many of the returnees had travelled long distances (some from Queensland and Western Australia) to renew old acquaintances.

A minute's silence was observed in memory of friends who are no longer with us. About thirty have passed away since our last reunion in 1988.

A big welcome was given to Mrs. Nancy Ormsby from Thomastown. Nancy was a Land Army girl (Nancy Gibbs) on Bill Albrecht's farm during the war years.

At lunchtime, the gathering ventured outside intending to have a picnic lunch on the lawns of the Civic Centre but was quickly driven back indoors by some unwelcome guests in the form of a swarm of European wasps which demanded a share of the lunch.

Wasps notwithstanding, a very happy day was spent reminiscing and renewing old friendships and there are plans to make these reunions a regular event.

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HELP WANTED URGENTLY !!!

The Latrobe Valley Express is planning a souvenir edition to be printed in the broadsheet form of the Morwell Advertiser as it was in 1892 when Morwell Shire came into being. The person responsible for compiling this edition, Mr. Gerry Bein, is anxious to borrow a copy of the Advertiser pre-1927 in order to photograph the paper's distinctive masthead for reproduction. The masthead changed sometime between 1927 and 1934.

If any reader has a pre-1927 copy of the Advertiser, Gerry would be most grateful to be allowed to photograph it. He can be contacted at the Express office.

A TRIP TO JEERALING.

[BY WANDERROO.]

Acting on the cordial invitation of some friends of mine amongst the hills, I last week paid a visit to Jeeraling. Way up in the higher regions, where the sun shines brighter, and the air is purer and fresher than in the lowlands, where ruddy health and beauty cheers the eye of the sojourner amongst the homely and industrious toilers on the hillsides. Leaving Morwell at 9 o'clock, in company with a friend, we travelled along the North Hazelwood road past Mr. Porter's residence, which said residence has lately been greatly improved by the addition of a handsome verandah; past Flewin's, where a small brick kiln shows that the owner of the property, who started the first brick yards in Morwell, cannot leave the trade alone altogether, although he has taken up farming. Pressing on, we come to the North Hazelwood church, which is used by all denominations for devotional and other purposes, and which sadly needs a coat of paint to cover its dinginess. The state school stands over way, where Mr. Smith has his work cut teaching the young idea how to shoot. Messrs. McInnes' and Wuttrick's places also grace the scene, and give us the idea of passing through a land flowing with milk and honey. Milking time is just over, and "the lowing herd wind slowly o'er the lea" to browse in bovine contentedness on the rich pastures beyond. Still on we go, past Gooding's, Thompson's, and Cranwell's, till our attention is arrested by the sight of the Bennett's Creek creamery, the property of Mr. W. Wright, of Morwell Butter Factory fame. Here all is hurry and bustle—farmers driving up with cans of milk, separators going, and other farmers pumping the skim milk back into their cans, then driving off to make room for their neighbors. The next point of interest we strike on our onward journey is a little hut, and I at once launch out into an account of its history—for thereby hangs a tale. This hut was once the property of a certain Mr. Howell, who had but just bought the property connected with it, when he had the great misfortune to lose his life through an accident, and no one has since occupied it, whether from fear of "wraiths" or otherwise I cannot say. But we toil onward and at last come to Mr. R. Cotterell's place of abode, the mountain butcher's shop, where all the Jeeraling folk who do not like to kill a whole beast for their own use at once, and cannot conveniently manage to kill less, get their supply of steaks and joints for the family pot. The owner of this place is a character, and many a laugh has he raised amongst the selectors' sons with his witticisms at their "kick-ups," which take place on an average about once a fortnight. But I am digressing instead of progressing. After leaving Cotterell's, one may fairly reckon oneself amongst the hills, and the course is marked with ups and downs right on to the end of the chapter. On the left side the road is bounded by Mr. W. Little's selection, and a glimpse is caught of a cosy farmhouse in the distance, giving a suggestion of the golden butter, luscious honey, and delicious white bread we read about in novels. Next in order comes Fraser's, the half-way house for the Jeeraling people. On the roadside opposite sheds of all kinds have been erected by the fortunate possessors of buggies, and within them is seen a variety of all kinds and shapes of vehicles—two-wheelers and four—for know, oh ye fortunate lowlanders, that only a few, a very few of the most daring can take their vehicles any further than this. We have

now reached the foot of the "Blowfly," a big hill with a very euphonious name, at a distance of about 12 miles from Morwell. This is the site of the now historical "Jeeraling contract dispute," wherein Mr. S. Thompson was credited with being the most dishonest of individuals because he took the cheque that was offered him by the shire council for work they now swear he didn't do. Be that as it may I know the Blowfly is a jolly hard hill to climb, and our horses began to have an idea that it was a bit of a "mug's" game trying to reach the clouds to suit other peoples tastes. But of course such high falutin' notions met their due reward, and our fourfooted friends had to carry us to the top of the Blowfly whether they liked it or not. On the way we passed the Jacjung Bros., busy on a contract filling up the numerous ruts which adorn the Blowfly's face, and a good job they seem to be making of it. At last we arrived at the top; but only to plunge down again into the bowels of the earth and then up again *ad libitum*. Two uninhabited houses surmount the hill, one time the residence of the Lawless's, but these have sought fresh fields and pastures new out Narracan way, and the luxuriant Scotchman and dogwood cover the place at their own sweet will. The country round here is sublimely picturesque, so much so that it has awakened the slumbering genius in the bosom of one of the selectors, and called into existence the Jeeraling poet. Tree ferns grow in wild confusion, mingling their greenery with the greenery-yallery hue of the musk and blue leaves of the eucalyptus or blue-gum. Giant trees (mostly blackbutt) rear their heads aloft to the height of three and four hundred feet, causing cricked necks to curious sight seers. But the big heart of the selector is not daunted by these "trifles," and he sets himself to "carve out a home for himself and family," as little Johnny Draslin recently put it in his election address. Farmhouses at long intervals mark his march, and big "burns" on every side tell where he makes his onslaught on the giants of the forest and the accompanying undergrowth. Jacjung's, Larkins, Nuttall's and Summerfield's are passed in succession, each and all furnishing abundant proof of the prolific nature of the Jeeraling soil under suitable conditions; and the end of our journey is reached. I must mention another steep hill (the "Joey") which has for years been a stumbling block in the way of those during selectors who brought their vehicles so far; but the ingenuity of man has overcome it and a first class cutting makes it accessible to horse and vehicle.

If the selectors only had a good and easy means of transit, such as a tramway for instance, they would be able to produce vegetables of all kinds and cereals of such quantity and quality as would put even the North Hazelwood producers in the shade; "but lor, what's the use," as old Aunt Chlou says, when they haven't got any convenient way of getting them to market.

Another source of trouble to these selectors is the close proximity of the coal reserve. This reserve is the roughest breeding place for vermin that ever was seen, and deluges the surrounding selections with its products. Its uselessness as a coal reserve is apparent to anyone who knows anything at all about the matter; but, all the same the Lands department won't hear of making it accessible to the selector in any shape or form, although they have been approached several times on the matter. The timber reserve on the other side also closes up a lot of good land and breeds a lot of vermin, but it contains some very valuable timber, and therefore the Lands Department cannot be blamed for reserving it.

After the adjournment of the annual meeting the President said that a special meeting would now take place to consider what was to be done with regard to the gazetted notice praying for the severance of the West Riding from the Shire of Traralgon. He would not say anything, but would leave it in their hands.

Cr. Firmin then moved and Cr. Turnley seconded "that this council offer no objection to the severance of the West Riding from Traralgon Shire, to be constituted a new shire, as gazetted."

The motion was lost, only Crs. Firmin, Kelleher, and Turnley voting in its favor, all the rest against.

Cr. Bodycomb then said that he thought it only a fair thing that the Council should be heard by the Minister. This had come upon them quite unexpectedly. If he remembered right the president when elected said that peace and goodwill reigned supreme. He for one was surprised at seeing the petition in the GAZETTE. He thought they should do something in protest.

Cr. Kelleher: Appoint the three west riding councillors to go down and oppose it. (Laughter.)

The President (laughing): You don't get at us that way Cr. Kelleher.

Cr. Bodycomb: Well it's a pity that this should crop up again, as we are now we are a compact little shire, and if severance were granted both shires would be crippled. We don't want to part with the West Riding. We have too much love for it.

Cr. Turnley: I think Mr. President Cr. Bodycomb must forget that since last time the "Powers that be" have been good enough to pass an Act specially for us, and we have taken in a piece of Narracan. Besides the last time the argument was that we couldn't support ourselves, and now it's all the other way.

After some further discussion the following motion was put and carried:—

Lawtonson, Bodycomb: That the secretary write to the Minister of Public Works and notify that a motion for the severance of the West Riding from the shire has been negatived, and ask for an early opportunity of interviewing him on the subject.—Carried.

Advertiser March 1892

The Moe Swamp strike.

A difficulty arose a few days ago in connection with the Moe Swamp reclamation works which at first appeared likely to be fraught with serious consequences, though, fortunately these have been prevented by the turn affairs have since taken. The complications in the first instance arose through the navvies engaged in the works going on strike and then threatening violence to the men who were sent to fill their places. The result was that the matter was brought under the notice of Mr. Graham (Minister of Public Works) who on Tuesday last proceeded to Moe and enquired into the whole matter. From what the Minister was enabled to elicit it appears that the contractor had cut out a trench the full depth of the main drain in order to carry away the water and thus enable the men to proceed with their work of excavation. At first he paid the men removing the soil from this trench at the same rate for as the excavation, but subsequently, had the soil removed by day labor. The piece men insisted on being paid as though they had cut out the grip themselves. This the contractor refused to do, and the men, to the number of about 180, struck work. After hearing both sides Mr. Graham reasoned with the men, and a short time afterwards he was informed that a settlement had been arrived at, the men agreeing to accept the contractor's terms, and the chairman of the strike committee also informed him that he had accepted £10 to leave the works. Work was therefore resumed on Wednesday. It was also agreed that the 25 men sent up by the Salvation Army a few days ago to take the place of those on strike are to be employed at the same rate of pay as those who were originally employed. Mr. Graham states that the contractor offered to pay the men at the rate of 8s. a day, but they preferred to take piece work at 7d. a yard, at which some of them earn as much as 10s. or 12s. per day.

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