

# Morwell Historical Society Inc.

www.morwellhistoricalsociety.org.au



c. 1903

## The "Morwell Post" April 2010

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Items for publication in the "Post" are always welcome; please forward your contributions to either Elsie or myself. S. H.  
(P.O. Box 1163 Morwell 3840)

## Report on Annual General Meeting March 2010

The A.G.M. was held on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> March in our rooms at 44 Buckley Street.

The meeting was well attended thus enabling us to complete the formalities of electing office bearers and the receipt of various annual reports.

Our Office Bearers for 2010 are:

<i>President:</i> Leonie Pryde	<i>Vice President:</i> Mal Little	<i>Secretary:</i> Elsie McMaster
<i>Treasurer:</i> Carol Smith	<i>Archivist:</i> Bruce McMaster	<i>I.T. Manager:</i> Florence Butcher
<i>Newsletter Editor:</i> Stephen Hellings	<i>Asst. Treasurer:</i> Barry Osborne	<i>Asst. Secretary:</i> Stephen Hellings
<i>Executive Committee:</i> Alan Davey, Dot Bartlett and office bearers.		
<i>Acquisitions Committee:</i> Bruce McMaster, Joyce Cleary, Florence Butcher		

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On behalf of all members of our Society I would like to take this opportunity to thank Alan Davey for his contribution over the past few years in the offices of Treasurer and Vice President.

Thank you Alan for a job well done. (Please tell me where the "green tin" is hiding.)

Congratulations to all those who have attained office for the first time.

S.H.  
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# The Morwell and Ginnar Gazette

November 2<sup>nd</sup> 1900

## Death of Private G. W. Bolding



To say that a dark shadow was cast over the town and district of Morwell on Monday last when the electric current flashed the news that Private G. W. Bolding had died from enteric fever in Pretoria on Wednesday, 24<sup>th</sup> October, only conveys in a mild form the intense grief that was felt by one and all on hearing the sad news.

The blow was all the more forcible, inasmuch as the residents and his near relatives were buoyed up with the hope that they would have the pleasure of welcoming him home a little before Christmas; but, unfortunately, our hopes have been sadly disappointed, and we feel it more that words can tell.

It was not even surmised that he was ill, and it is this fact that makes the grief all the more poignant.

From the bare particulars to hand it is not known how long he had been an inmate of the hospital, but from what is known of the nature of the fever, it can readily be surmised that he must have been at least a month in the hospital, where he would have received every comfort and attention.

The sad effects of war are brought very near to us when those whom we know and respect fall a prey to its ravages. As soon as the news became known in Morwell flags were hoisted at half-mast, and there was not a shop which did not mark the sad event by erecting a "shutter" - the emblem of death- to mark the respect they entertained for him who had given his life for his country.

How to break the sad news to his parents was a delicate and painful duty; but it had to be done, and Mr and Mrs Cooper undertook the task.

All can well understand what followed, hence it would be unwise to further refer to it. To say that Mr and Mrs Bolding have the entire sympathy of the inhabitants in their sad bereavement does not by any means convey the heartfelt grief that is felt at their loss.

The hope is fervently entertained that they will derive consolation from a higher source than that of human sympathy, which is powerless to soothe the wounded heart.

Private Geo. Bolding was a member of the Bushmen's contingent, and was one of the first picked, his fine manly physique, robust constitution, and good horsemanship at once commending him to the officers who had to make the selection.

He will long be remembered in this district for his genial good temper, which was like a sunny day, reflecting its brightness upon everything. We can, indeed, say with truth of him that he always had a smiling face and spoke pleasant words.

This was evidenced on the Morwell station platform when the first contingent left. He was among the foremost in cheering those up who were depressed at bidding good-bye to relatives, when his kind acts and pleasant manner was marked by many. His character is nicely portrayed by the poet, who sings-

'Tis gentle good humor that makes life so sweet,  
And picks up the flowerets that garnish our feet.

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**Private George William Bolding**

20<sup>th</sup> April 1875 - 24<sup>th</sup> October 1900

# Morwell Fire Brigade - 1914

The Morwell fire brigade was formed at a public meeting on 20th November 1914.

It became operational in January 1915.

The first Captain was Mr. Richard Noy.

The brigade initially operated from Gill's Newspaper offices in Station Street.

The Brigade moved into its first purpose built facility in 1917.

The station was situated near the then Church Street level-crossing.

The Brigade moved to Church Street in July 1953.

The Brigade's current (McDonald Street)\* home was officially opened on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2005.



Morwell Fire Brigade  
1917 premises

\*Ex Ambulance Headquarters corner Spry Street

### The "Ford"

In the early days, the only means of crossing Billy's Creek, where it cut the road to Jumbuk at the foot of the Jeeralang Hills, was by fording the stream. The bank was dug to a slope on either side and, with a vehicle, meant the use of the brake going down and a good pull for the horses up the other side. Mostly in the drier months the horses were pleased to rest in the stream and drink the cool water but when rain came it was quickly in flood and impassable. On quite a number of occasions, friends of ours, living on the other side, returned to stay at our house until the waters receded.

The "Ford" was a popular picnic spot, both for public and private meetings, and was known as the "Ford" for miles around. The trees and native scrub growth was also an attraction.

Some time in about 1909, it was decided by the local Council to place a bridge across the creek. A contract was let to a man named Dave Mortimer to supply the necessary timber. He was a good bushman and a wizard with the broadaxe. It was a big undertaking for one man to supply nine piles, 15 inches square and 15 feet long, three bearers or girders, 12 inches square, 30 feet long, enough decking planks to cover the span of thirty feet - these would be 14 feet long, varying widths and 4 inches thick. Then the gravel beams, 30 feet long and perhaps 10 inches square. The beams were placed on each end of the decking planks and carried the post and rails of the side rails.

Fortunately good timber country was close by with a good selection of trees, which was important as trees were chosen to suit the size of the beam required. The fallen tree was sawn off to the desired length, the bark removed, then to get a straight line down the trunk a string, having been dipped in a tin containing some charcoal and water, was stretched and fastened at either end. The string was then raised with the fingers and allowed to drop, thus forming a line right down the log as a guide to the axeman who, standing on the log, cut scarfs every few feet along its length. The sections between the cuts were then split off, leaving a rough square side. The broadaxe, with a 10 inch face, was then used to trim and neaten the cut up to the marked line. The log was then turned and the same procedure used on the other three sides, leaving a neat square of timber.

This was slow, hard work but, eventually, the pieces were bolted together, the decking spiked down and the bridge completed. One had to get close to the finished job to see that the timber used was hewn and not sawn.

The bridge was replaced a few years ago but it was there for about sixty years and stood as a tribute to the prowess of an artist in the use of the broadaxe.

The "Ford" was a popular place for camping fishermen, Billy's Creek being well known as a "blackfish" stream. This was before the introduction of trout which were reputed to have killed off the native fish. I have seen a weekend catch of blackfish by three men almost filling a seventy pound sugar bag. I was one of a Working Bee that cleared the bend in the creek, now used as the Billy's Creek Reserve. It is many years ago, and the gum trees growing there now were saplings a few inches through at that time.

As I have written previously, this area was used by fishermen and picnickers throughout the year but each year the annual general picnic was held there, with everyone attending, from grandparents to toddlers, from all around the district. It was usually held in January when harvesting was over and people felt like relaxing. However it was a busy period for the women folk who probably spent the previous day baking cakes and biscuits for the occasion and the morning of the picnic making scones and cutting sandwiches, packing up and trying not to forget some vital article.

Most folk arrived in time for a mid-day lunch, setting out the eatables on tablecloths spread on the ground. The teapots were taken to the fire where two kerosene tins were suspended above the fire attended to by some-one previously appointed, and as they boiled, the tea was made. It was not real billy tea but different in taste to what we had at home.

After lunch the children would be called together for a lolly scramble, when those boiled confections were thrown on the ground and eagerly gathered by the children.

Next would commence the races - first, the toddlers who, shy and bewildered, were called to and coaxed by parent or sister to run the short distance to the finishing tape. The rest of the children, in their various age groups, were also given the chance to compete in foot races, right through to the young ladies, young men, married women and menfolk. The Siamese, or three-legged race, was also a feature. This was a pairs race, partners having their two inside legs tied together with handkerchiefs, generally ending in a fall at the tape. The winners of each race received a coin- perhaps a shilling - while others were given sixpence or threepence, but it was contrived that every child attending would receive through the day some coin or other - winners or losers.

Other games and competitions were held, perhaps a nail driving competition for men and women, bowling at one stump of a wicket, stepping the chain to see who was nearest the twenty-two yards.

Woolwinding was also popular! This was for two persons, one holding on outstretched hands the skein of wool while the other wound the wool into a ball. This could be somewhat frustrating as some skeins were inclined to tangle, which caused the winder to pause and undo the error. The first to finish was, of course, the winner.

Around 4 o'clock, the afternoon tea would be served, then horses would be harnessed to the various buggies, gigs, spring drays, etc., and the folk were homeward bound. It was a simple afternoon's fun, but I am sure every-one would consider it well worth while, - at least they would all be there for the next Annual Picnic!

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# Morwell Advertiser and Gazette

21<sup>st</sup>. May 1942

Passed Away



**Mr. ALEC. McINNES**



An old and popular resident of North Hazelwood, in the person of Mr. Alec McInnes (brother of Councillor J. McInnes) passed away at his residence on Tuesday last, after a long illness.

Deceased, who was 60 years of age, came with his parents from Newry to North Hazelwood, when a child over half-a-century ago, and resided on the same farm during the whole of that period. He attended the North Hazelwood State School, and although of a retiring disposition, took a keen interest in local affairs, and was held in the highest respect by a large circle of friends. He was a good judge of all classes of stock, and a most successful farmer.

Unfortunately he became a victim of that dire disease-cancer, from which he suffered most patiently for some considerable time. He bore his affliction with great fortitude, and although he suffered much and was aware that "his days were numbered," he was never heard to complain about his lot.

Deceased leaves a widow, son, daughter, and other relatives to mourn their loss, and much sympathy is felt for them in their sad bereavement.

The remains of deceased were interred in the Hazelwood Cemetery on Wednesday. The Rev. Hovenden officiated at the grave, and the mortuary arrangements were carried out by Mr. J. Bolger.





## JOHN LACHLAN MACMILLAN

by Rob de Souza-Daw, Churchill

John Lachlan Macmillan known as Jack Macmillan was the son of John and Isabella Macmillan of Hazelwood. He was born 11 October 1869 at Hazelwood Station where he lived until 1910. As a child, John Lachlan Macmillan attended the Morwell State School and upon leaving school, was a grazier at Hazelwood Station. However, he did join the gold rush to the Eastern Goldfields of Western Australia where he searched for alluvial gold in the Kalgoorlie district.

In 1899, John Macmillan snr died at Hazelwood Station. He was a very successful and wealthy grazier and at the time of his passing, held freehold title to 3,679 acres. John Macmillan's jnr's entitlement to his father's estate was approximately 1/6 share of the real estate. Initially after John Macmillan's death in 1899, the Macmillan family continued grazing but in 1905 the Macmillans sub-divided the property into dairying and mixed farming farms which were leased by auction for a six year period.

After the sub-division of Macmillan Estate in 1905, John Lachlan Macmillan described himself as a person of independent means rather than as a grazier. Gradually the widow and children of John Macmillan snr left Hazelwood but retained freehold title to Macmillan Estate.

On 16 February 1910 John Lachlan Macmillan married Margaret *Maude* Anderson, a widow at Toorak. She was the daughter of Dr Alfred and Maria Howitt of Metung. There were no children from this marriage. Immediately after their marriage and for the remainder of his life, John Macmillan lived at Metung.

John Lachlan Macmillan's youngest brother, Alexander (Lal) Campbell Macmillan had served in the Boer War as a Private in the Third Bushmen's Regiment. He also left Hazelwood to live at Metung.

On 10 November 1914, John Lachlan Macmillan from Metung enlisted in the Third Light Horse. On enlistment he was described as 6 foot 4 inches, 14 stone, hazel eyes, dark hair and aged 41 years- but he was older. Jack Macmillan, like his father and brothers were tall men.

Initially John Lachlan Macmillan was appointed as a driver but soon progressed through the ranks and on 3 February 1915, he was appointed Sergeant. He embarked on 2 February 1915 on the *SS Chika* for Egypt but on 6 July 1915 when at Heliopolis, Sergeant Macmillan transferred to the Western Australian regiment, the 10<sup>th</sup> Light Horse.

On 1 August 1915 Sergeant Macmillan embarked from Alexandra to the Gallipoli Peninsula. As the 10<sup>th</sup> Light Horse had volunteered to fight as infantry, they left their cavalry in Egypt. John Macmillan's horse was a *golden chestnut with a long tail and mane*<sup>3</sup> named Gold Bar. The horse was a *winner of first prize in the class for weight carrying hacks at the Melbourne Show*<sup>3</sup>.

Being a member of the 10<sup>th</sup> Light Horse, Sergeant Macmillan on 7 August 1915, participated in the fatal charge of the Light Horse at The Nek. On that day 300 men from the Victorian 8<sup>th</sup> Light Horse and 300 men from the West Australian 10<sup>th</sup> Light Horse *charged in four lines against an impregnable line of Turkish trenches. Two thirds of the*

*Victorians were killed or wounded and the Western Australians who followed<sup>4</sup>, lost nearly half.*

Shortly after the charge of the Light Horse Brigade at The Nek, Sergeant Macmillan was again called into action. On 29 August 1915, the 10<sup>th</sup> Light Horse was occupying trenches that had been dug by other soldiers at the foot of Hill 60. The 10<sup>th</sup> Light Horse was ordered to take a long trench which was held by the Turks on the summit of Hill 60. There was a heavy exchange of bombs, gun-fire and hand fighting but eventually, the 10<sup>th</sup> Light Horse (and other units) took possession of Hill 60. During the course of the trench battle, Sergeant Macmillan received a gun shot wound to the right thigh.

*It was reported that Sergeant John Macmillan because of his extreme height and the difficulty the stretcher-bearers had in getting him out of the trench and exposing themselves to Turkish fire, he pleaded with them to leave him there, and that naturally they refused<sup>1</sup>.*

In the trench battle for Hill 60, Sergeant Macmillan fought alongside of Second-Lieutenant Hugo Throssell who at one stage was in sole command. Throssell was severely wounded and for his *conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty* in the fight for Hill 60, he was awarded the Victoria Cross. This was the only VC to be awarded to the Australian Light Horse.

On 29 August 1915 Sergeant Macmillan was evacuated from Mudros for England in the hospital ship *HA Devonka*. While at sea, doctors removed a bullet from his thigh. On arriving in London, Sergeant Macmillan spent several weeks at the King George Hospital, London and was then transferred to the Australian Auxiliary Hospital at Harefield Park, Middlesex.

Two months after the battle for Hill 60, Sergeant Macmillan described *the fight that will always be the most vivid memory of my life, the most thrilling event in a career that has not been without its moments of adventure<sup>3</sup>.*

As a result of his war injury, Sergeant Macmillan was declared permanently unfit for service and the Medical Board recommended his discharge. On 22 January 1916 he embarked from London for Melbourne on the *SS Malwa* which he did at his own expense. He was accompanied on this voyage by his brother, Alexander Campbell Macmillan. On 26 February 1916, the *SS Malwa* arrived at Fremantle and then continued to other ports. On arrival in Melbourne, Sergeant Macmillan was admitted to No.5 Australian General Hospital and on 11 June 1916 was discharged from the Australian Infantry Force as permanently unfit for active service.

John Lachlan Macmillan was awarded the 1914/15 British Star, British War and Victory campaign medals. His name is listed on the *Great European War Roll of Honour* at the Morwell State School, now known as the Morwell Primary School- Commercial Road.

Around 1922, the Macmillan family sold Macmillan Estate at Hazelwood for World War I soldier settlement. The land then became known as Hazelwood Estate and was divided into 45 farming allotments by the Closer Settlement Board. Some of these allotments were allocated to returned soldiers who had fought at Gallipoli.

For the remainder of his life, Jack Macmillan suffered *foot drop* caused by nerve damage from the gun shot wound. *On return to Metung from the army, he always required a stick, but was so incensed when Melbourne had a police strike during the war, that he offered*

*his services as a special constable and was seen ably directing traffic in Swanston Street, supported by his stick<sup>1</sup>.*

For several years John Macmillan worked as a Stock and Station Agent for McLean and Little and around 1941 he retired. John Macmillan owned and drove a 1929/30 Hudson sedan.

On 24 October 1950, John Lachlan Macmillan died at Traralgon and was buried in the Hazelwood Cemetery in the Macmillan family plot. His wife Margaret *Maude* Macmillan was the sole beneficiary of his estate which mainly consisted of fixed deposits, debentures and money in the bank. John Macmillan had stated in his will that his funeral arrangements were to be as quiet and unpretentious as possible and his remains were to be buried in the nearest cemetery. When his wife died in 1953, she was buried with her husband at the Hazelwood Cemetery.

On 7 November 1948, John Macmillan's youngest sister Grace Bruce died at Traralgon. In 1902 she had married Traralgon solicitor William Maxwell Bruce. On 13 January 1951, Maxwell Bruce bequeathed to the people of Traralgon for geriatric care, the Bruce property at Traralgon known as *Dalkeith*. Maxwell Bruce was fond of his wife Grace Bruce and his brother-in-law John Lachlan Macmillan and in bequeathing the real estate, he stated *their memory is very dear to me and I feel sure a gift of this nature would be a fitting memorial to their lives<sup>2</sup>.*

In 1961 *Dalkeith* was transferred to an organization known as the Grace Bruce & JL Macmillan Memorial Home Inc. This organization now manages the aged care facility at *Dalkeith* in Traralgon and *Hazelwood House* in Churchill.

John Lachlan Macmillan was a World War I soldier from Hazelwood. Lest we forget.

#### References-

<sup>1</sup> Page 301 *The Story of Metung and its First Inhabitants* Gay Halstead, Self-published 1977

<sup>2</sup> *Grace Bruce & J.L. MacMillan Memorial Home Inc.* in the Annual Report 2003/2004 of the Grace Bruce & JL Macmillan Memorial Home

<sup>3</sup> Interview by John Macmillan as reported in the London Daily Mail, 27 October 1915

<sup>4</sup> Personal correspondence from John Hamilton, Herald-Sun, February 2010  
*For Valour* Ric Throssell Currency Press, Sydney 1976

VPRO Series 7591 (Wills) and Series 28 (Probate)

NAA Series K269 Passenger List

NAA War Service record for John Lachlan Macmillan.



**Sergeant John Macmillan on sentry duty at Gallipoli  
Photo 1915 and courtesy of the Australian War Memorial. Item number A05402**

# Next Meeting:

Wednesday

The same exceptional value for money as in previous years

21<sup>st</sup>. April at 2.00 p.m.

Morwell Historical Society Inc.

Annual Subscription Rates:

Single: \$17.00

Family/Double: \$20.00

Payable March each year

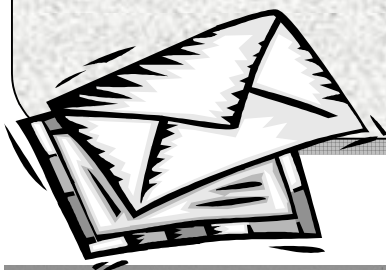
44 Buckley St. (next to T.A.B.)

Visitors are most welcome

We are open to the public on  
Wednesdays from 11am to 2 pm  
February to December

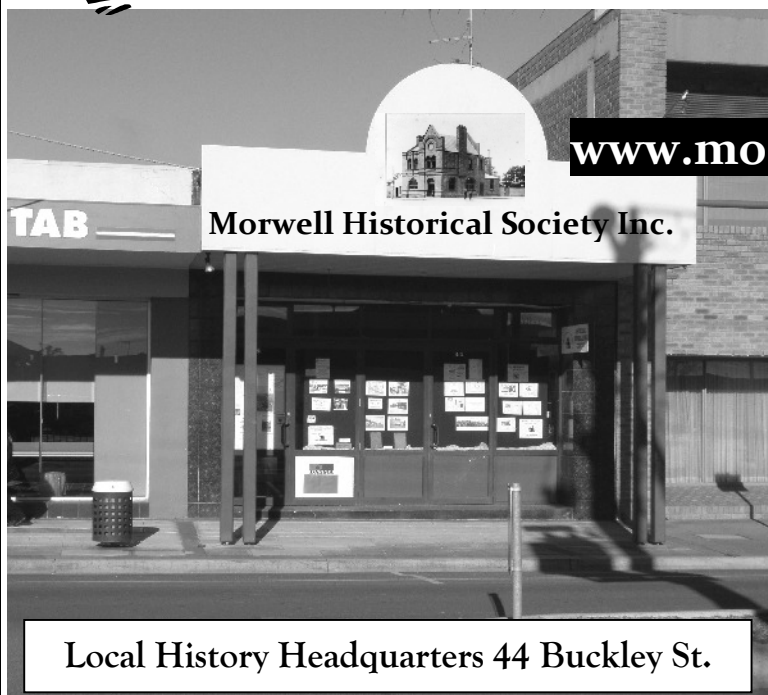


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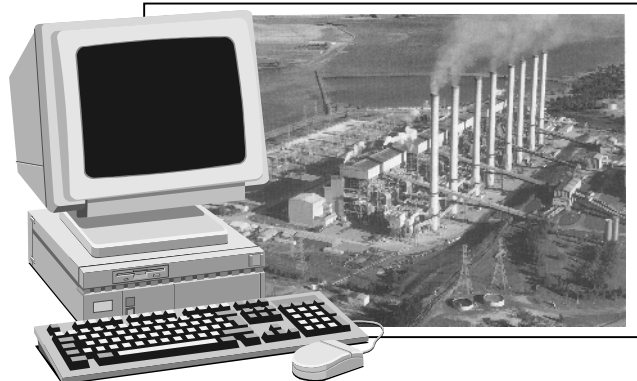


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One of the many photographs you may view on our website!