

The Morwell Post

Morwell Historical Society

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"The Ascending Christ" by Arthur Boyd



See page 3

IN THIS ISSUE

Directory
St John's Anglican Church Mural
Dorothy Squires-Taylor
Sir John Patrick Dwyer

Page 2 Portable Iron Houses
Page 3 Driffield
Page 4-5 Our Bookshop
Page 6-7 Opening Times and Supporters

Page 8-9
Page 10
Page 11
Page 12

Morwell Historical Society Directory 2020

President: Bruce McMaster
Phone: 0428 528 464

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Secretary: Florence Butcher

Assistant Secretary: Peter Gitsham

Treasurer: Carolyn Schopp

Committee Members: Rosalie Davey
Shirley Prosser
Peter Gitsham

There is no President's Report this issue as some of us are taking a long earned rest from managing and monitoring the society and duty roster on Open Days but still continuing to work behind the scenes doing "odd jobs" here and there.

NOTE: Change in membership structure

Research Library: 12 Hazelwood Road, Morwell, Victoria 3840

Research Queries: research@morwellhistoricalsociety.org.au

Public Access: 1st and 3rd Wednesday and last Sunday of each month, 11.00 a.m. – 2.00 p.m.
Not open - December & January

General meetings: 3rd Wednesday February to November – 2.00 pm

Annual General Meeting: 3rd Wednesday of March each year

Membership Fees: Due 1st July each year
Single Member - \$25.00
Family Membership -Family living at the same address includes children under 18 years old - \$30.00

Application Forms available on our web site for you to print and send.

For a print copy of "**The Morwell Post**" - \$10.00 per annum

Editor: email: morwellpost@morwellhistoricalsociety.org.au

Research Fees: \$10.00 per hour or part thereof, and prices for photo prints on application and postage where applicable.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/morwellhistoricalsociety>

Postal Address: 12 Hazelwood Road, Morwell 3840
Victoria, Australia

Front page icon is of the old Post Office c1930 which was on the site of the now Commonwealth Bank, corner of Commercial Road and Tarwin Street.

All photos, unless indicated, are from our archives.

New 'home' for Boyd mural in Morwell



Above: Latrobe Valley Arts Centre Director Tony Hanning (extreme right) and the Civil Works team involved in the mural removal.



The mural was removed in 16 pieces.

A Yallourn Civil Works team has engineered one of the most unusual elements of the Yallourn Resettlement program.

The unique Arthur Boyd mural has been removed from St. John's Anglican Church, Yallourn, and reinstalled behind the altar in St. Mary's, Morwell.

The mural, which is of casein and tempera paints on masonite, measures about eight metres wide by five metres. It was divided into 16 panels for the complex five day removal exercise in the second week of February.

About 30 former Yallourn residents among St. Mary's parishioners petitioned the Anglican Diocese of Gippsland for the transfer of the mural to their new church, which was especially designed to feature the mural.

Among the first to visit the mural in its new home will be the curator of Arthur Boyd's works from the New Australian National Gallery in Canberra.

The mural, which depicts The

Ascension, was commissioned in 1960 by St. John's Vestry for 800 pounds.

Director of the Latrobe Valley Art Centre, Mr. Tony Hanning, said: "It is a very important work.

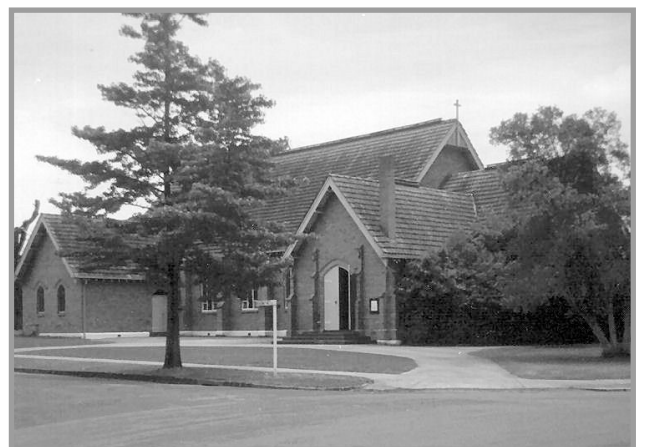
"It is unlike any of the paintings that Arthur Boyd did. His work is generally free flowing, almost in caricature. This one is made up of rigid hard edged squares and circles, like a mosaic or a stained glass window. The background colors of blue and black reinforce the impression of stained glass.

"It is quite magnificent to sit down in a place as quiet as a church and contemplate a work of this stature. If you really look, through it all you can see a figure, with blood on his hands, you can see a heart and blood on his side", he said.

The Civil Works team which carried out the operation was led by Murray Walker, with carpenters Brian McEwan, and Peter Robson and apprentice painter Ron Copeland.

Riggers Max Baszczuk and Harry Lane erected scaffolding for the job.

St John's Anglican Church Yallourn



Ivan Maddern was instrumental in starting up the Morwell Historical Society soon after he arrived in 1961 and the first Treasurer of our Society was Dot Taylor. A position she held for 30 years. Dot wrote the book *“Across the Old Bush Track”* about the History and Story of Haunted Hills later renamed Hernes Oak. Dot died in Wangaratta on the 4th March 2020 at the wonderful age of 97. The following two pages is Dot’s account of growing up in Hernes Oak.

Prior to my parents moving to Haunted Hills in 1935, we had lived at South Dudley. When my father lost his job at the Wonthaggi State Mines, he, like many other men during the great depression, worked on the roads for his sustenance money.

When the Yallourn Open Cut filled with water during the big flood of December 1934, my father got a job with the S.E.C. The reclamation of the Open Cut after the flood helped to break the depression in this district, giving many men the work they so desperately needed.

My father soon found the little cottage on an acre of land at Haunted Hills which was to be our home. The inside walls were hessian lined, with newspaper pasted over the hessian, then kalsomined. Housing, materials and money were in very short supply and houses were built of whatever materials were at hand - bush hewn timber, flattened out kerosene tins, even bark. We had plenty of land to grow fruit trees, berries etc and my father had a great vegetable garden. Fowls and ducks produced nice fresh eggs (free range!) so we enjoyed plenty of good fresh food. Rabbits were a great help in stretching the meat supply. They were plentiful, reasonably easy to catch using ferrets or traps, and could be cooked in a variety of ways. Electricity was unavailable in Haunted Hills at that time. We had lamps and candles, wood stoves and open fireplaces. Monday was always wash day. Clothes were boiled up in a copper in the yard or in a wash house. The housewife's patience was often sorely tried trying to bring a copper full of clothes to the boil, either because the wood was green or of poor quality, or because the wind was blowing in the wrong direction. Scrubbing boards or knuckles were used on the very soiled articles (and there were plenty of those which came home from shifts in the Open Cut!). Saturday night was bath night. Water was boiled in a kerosene tin on the fuel stove and family members would bathe one after the other, with a little more hot water added each time! Washing in an enamel or tin dish of water had to suffice during the week.



Our water was drawn from a well, using a bucket attached to a length of rope and, even as children, we became quite adept at filling that bucket. The well was also our 'refrigerator'. During the summer months, butter, milk etc would be lowered into the well to keep cool and jellies were set in the same way.

Haunted Hills was well settled when we arrived. The local hall had just been opened. Previously, Sunday school, church and social meetings had all been held in the garage belonging to the local storekeeper. Residents ran many activities, also from the garage, to raise money to build the hall which quickly became the focal point of the little settlement and the scene of many dances, card parties and social events. The hall and many homes were burnt to the ground in the disastrous 1944 bushfire but thankfully no lives were lost. The second hall was quickly built, with government assistance and remained to host many more happy activities until it was demolished in 1991. When I arrived at Haunted Hills I was twelve years old and I finished my last two years of schooling at the Yallourn Higher Elementary School, leaving with my Merit Certificate at age fourteen. Children had to walk approximately a mile and a half along a bush track to school, both primary and secondary.

Many years later, primary school classes were held in the Haunted Hills hall as an adjunct of the Yallourn State School. In 1939 the name Haunted Hills was changed to Hernes Oak (the name of a nearby railway siding) and in 1962 the Hernes Oak Primary School was built.

In 1939, a modern picture theatre opened in Yallourn. Before this, pictures had been shown at St John's Church of England in Yallourn. A curtain was drawn across the altar, the seats reversed and the pictures shown on the back wall. Saturday afternoon matinees were the highlight of the week for the children. Amateur boxing and wrestling matches were also held in the church on occasions. Pleasures were simple - picnics in the bush, fishing in the creeks, camping out. Birthdays were always celebrated with a party with lots of cakes and jellies. There were always presents but these were simple, not to be compared with the more costly ones children receive today. Money was always very scarce for us.

Few people had cars so we walked everywhere, even when sick. One time, after suffering toothache for a few days, I eventually got up the courage to go over to the dentist in Yallourn, only to be told when I got there that an abscess was forming. The tooth would have to come out and it would be a difficult extraction. This meant walking back home to collect my mother so that I would have someone with me after the tooth was extracted - in all, two return trips and a total of six miles!

My husband Gordon and I, before we were married used to like to go to the pictures in Yallourn. Gordon didn't have a car so he would come by bus to Yallourn. The bus timetable didn't allow him time to pick me up or take me home so I would walk into Yallourn to meet him. Not wanting to walk the mile and a half through the bush at night by myself, I would enlist the company of one of my brothers - his reward, a seat at the pictures paid for by Gordon!

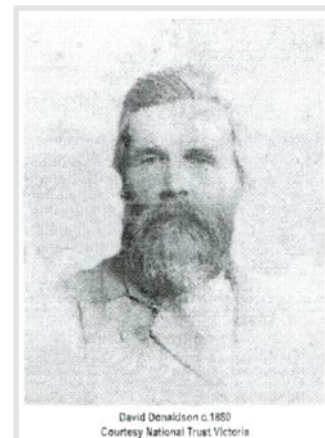
When I was fifteen years old I obtained a position at the Yallourn General Store earning the princely sum of seven shillings and sixpence (seventy-five cents) per week. I served in a number of departments and also at the Western Camp post office. During the early war years I became cashier in the grocery department where the grocers in crisp, starched white coats weighed and packaged many of the grocery items in the store. I sold tobacco and cigarettes from the cashier's kiosk. Although not rationed as with coupons, smokers' needs were in short supply. Sales were restricted to a certain number of cartons and long queues would form at the times when they were on sale. Cigarettes were sold at 10 am and 2 pm, and tobacco at knock-off time, three days a week. Yallourn was heavily guarded for fear of invasion or sabotage and there were anti-aircraft batteries located in several areas around the town and the works area. There were frequent air raid drills and when the sirens screeched their warning we had to evacuate in an orderly manner to the air raid shelters. By now I was head cashier of the store, having acquired the position when the previous cashier joined the R.A.A.F. The department managers would usher customers out, lock the doors, empty the tills and bring the cash to me, then follow their staff out to the shelters. After I had locked the cash away, the store manager, accountant and I would also move out - the last three to go! Thankfully there was never a real air raid, though residents did have a scare one Sunday. The sirens went, then the guns started firing. Everyone rushed to the shelters only to find, when the all-clear went, that an American plane had flown into the prohibited air space over Yallourn and been mistaken for the enemy.



In 1945 I married my husband Gordon and six months later we moved into Yallourn to live. So closed that chapter of my life which had begun ten years earlier when I arrived as a schoolgirl at the little settlement of Hernes Oak.

DAVID AND ANNIE DONALDSON AND THEIR GRANDSON SIR JOHN PATRICK DWYER

David Donaldson, the son of Henry and Grizell (nee Johnston), Donaldson was born in Airdrie, Scotland in 1820. He worked as a stone mason before going to America and on to Australia where he settled in Melbourne. It was here that he met his wife Annie (nee Thompson) who came from Lanarkshire about five miles from Airdrie, Scotland. The couple married in 1854 and their first home for some years was a prefabricated Iron House in Coventry Street, South Melbourne. It was here that their first five children were born and David had a stone mason company. This was this time of the gold rush and we next find the Donaldsons living in the remote gold mining area of Matlock where David became the town's general storekeeper supplying goods to local miners, farmers and itinerant gold prospectors. Annie gave birth to two more children at Matlock and one in Woods Point. In the summer of 1873 a fire destroyed the whole village of Matlock, except the Donaldson's store. The village was rebuilt but the area declined because surface gold was petering out. Within a few years, the Donaldson's, with their children relocated again, moving 120 km south to the new town of Morwell where they selected the most central site to operate a general store. Their store was on the corner of what is now known as Commercial Road and Tarwin Street (now 2020 KW Property and Sales).



Stephen Legg in *"Heart of the Valley"* claims that Donaldson bought the store from John Quigley in 1879.

The obituary notice for John Quigley in the Advertiser in 1908 says that Quigley erected the first building on the site of the Club Hotel and he opened a store and public house. When Quigley opened a store and wine shop at Yinnar in 1885 Kelleher took over the business in Morwell.

We definitely know that Donaldson's store was leased to John Hall in 1894 but where Quigley's store was situated is not clear –was it on the corner or was it was on the former site of the Club Hotel. The true answer we may never know.

David and Annie had eight children: Elizabeth was born in 1855 died 1894. Married Thomas Dwyer in 1879 Thomas died 1895 (more about Elizabeth and Thomas Dwyer on the following page) Henry was born in 1856 and married Elsie Scott in 1884. Henry was Post Master at Aberfeldy from 1880-1885 and by 1893 he was Post Master at Heyfield and Secretary of Heyfield Butter Company until his death in 1906.

Andrew was born in 1858 Grace was born in 1860. 18 year old Grace died when her horse bolted while she was on her way to George Firmin's Annual New Year's Day Picnic in 1881. Agnes was born in 1863 and married Charles Sommers in 1886. They moved to his farm at Moora, near Geraldton, WA. In 1915 Agnes was driving a horse in a sulky when the wheel struck an obstacle. The frightened horse bolted and the sulky got jammed between two trees and Agnes was thrown out and died. John was born in 1866 David was born in 1868. In 1904 he accidentally fell into 14 feet of water while fixing pipes for conveying water from Silverthorne's Dam, Coolgardie in WA to an engine in the timber yard.



Edith was born in 1871 and married George Irving, a grazier, in 1906. George is the younger brother of John Irving, Morwell's first school teacher.

In 1886 David died and his wife and family carried on until 1894 when they leased the store to John Hall. David and Anne's home was in Commercial Road and the house site is now the car park next to Sacred Heart Catholic Church. Anne died in 1905 and is buried with David and Grace in the Hazelwood Cemetery.

Elizabeth and Thomas Dwyer lived at Aberfeldy where Thomas was a butcher. Thomas was born in Tipperary, Ireland in 1854. They had three children John Patrick born in 1879, Anne Gertrude (called Gertrude) born in 1880 and David Percival born in 1883. Elizabeth died in 1884 at the young age of 29 and her husband Thomas died the following year. They are both buried in the Aberfeldy Cemetery. Elizabeth's parents, David and Anne Donaldson, took the three orphan children to live with them and their four children in Morwell. The three young grandchildren attended Morwell State School and the eldest child John Patrick was considered to be the most brilliant pupil the school has ever produced.

1890 Completed his primary school education at the age of 10 years and 6 months

1890 Gained a School Scholarship

1891 Went to Geelong College

1893 Dux of Geelong College

1897 Began his articled clerks' course through Melbourne University

1902 Called to the Victorian Bar

1904 Called to the WA Bar. Practised with ML Moss at Fremantle

1908 Married Emily Munro

1911 Formed a partnership with Moss

1916 Enlisted with the Australian Imperial Force

1917 Commissioned

1918 Arrived in France. Served with 44th Battalion and rose to Lieutenant

1918-22 Senior partner with Moss, Dwyer, Unmack and Thomas

1928 Became a foundation lecturer of the newly created law faculty

1929 Became Judge of the Supreme Court

1942 Chief Scout of Western Australia

1946-59 Chief Justice

1946 Knighted

1947 Knight commander of the Commander of the Order of St John

1947-54 Chairman of the Trustees of the Public Library, Museum and Art Gallery

1948 Chairman of the State Electoral Commission

1949 Elevated to KCMC (Knight Commander of the Order of St Michael and St George)

1951 Administer of the State

1952 Appointed honorary lieutenant governor for life

John Dwyer was a member of the Royal Perth Golf Club and played till he was 78 and played lawn bowls until he was 82. He died in 1966 aged 87. His descendants would be very proud of him and his achievements -the orphan from Aberfeldy.



Sources: Our Donaldson files

Lanarkshire Family History Society Journal February 2019

"A Souvenir History of Morwell" I.T. Maddern

"Morwell Advertiser" 15 June 1906; 29 May 1908; 3 December 1915

Kalgoolie Western Argus: 23 February 1904

"Australian Dictionary of Biography"

PORTABLE IRON HOUSES AND THE DONALDSONS

The National Trust has three prefabricated Iron Houses located in Coventry Street South Melbourne and they are the last of 100 that existed in South Melbourne, North Melbourne and Fitzroy. With gold discovered in Victoria in 1851 accommodation was needed for the many migrants flocking to the colony. Iron Houses helped meet this need.

When David Donaldson married Annie Thomson in 1854 their first home was an Iron House in Arden Street, North Melbourne that was owned by Annie's sister Mary and her husband Andrew Abercrombie who also came from Airdrie in Scotland.

These buildings were constructed in England, then dismantled and every component labelled and packed into crates, shipped abroad where they were reassembled in their new location. Specialist labour was not required and anyone could assemble them by following the instructions. As people had been living in Canvas Town – a small village of tents and paying 5 shillings per tent each week being able to move into a house was a luxury. By 1855 South Melbourne comprised of 100 portable houses of which Paterson House is on its original site. Abercrombie House was relocated from North Melbourne and Bell House from Fitzroy at a later date to South Melbourne.

The Abercrombie Cottage dates from around 1853 with a brick kitchen added in 1860. It was the home of Andrew and Mary Abercrombie and David and Annie Donaldson and their 5 children. The cottage was threatened with demolition so the brick kitchen, timber bathroom and water closet were removed and the house cut in two and was moved by truck to its present site.

The National Trust have recently found documents in the roof of the Iron House notifying David Donaldson that his stone mason company had accidentally caused a serious railway incident and he would be made to pay compensation. This misfortune must have terminated his Melbourne business as a stonemason because the family moved to the Matlock area.



Abercrombie Cottage



"Loren" Gippsland Heritage Park



Bell House

Source: Lanarkshire Family History Society Journal Feb 2019

National Trust web site "*Iron Houses*"

Internet sites

There is a portable Iron House in Gippsland Heritage Park in Moe. "Loren", a two-storey gabled prefabricated house was dismantled at Curzon St in North Melbourne and moved to the Park in 1968.

DRIFFIELD

The last lease holder of the Merton Rush Run was Samuel Wesley Vary who came to Australia with his parents



Luke and Elizabeth (nee Jackson) in 1852. The family was in Ballarat for a time then went to New Zealand, before returning to Australia. Samuel married Mary Jane Stewart in 1861 and they lived at Mount Moriac near Geelong for some years. They had 4 children –Mary Helen 1862, John Arthur 1866, Alfred Henry 1867 and Charles Egbert 1869 who died a few weeks later. In 1869 Samuel and Mary Vary with their 3 children travelled by horse drawn wagonette and in four days reached the Morwell River on the Merton Rush Run. After the lease for the Merton Rush Run expired he became a large landholder, 640 acres and named his estate Driffield after the Yorkshire town in which he was born. The

first child to be born was Alice Elizabeth Morwell in 1871 followed by Florence Jane 1873, Charles Albert 1876, Frank 1878, Edward Llewellyn 1880 and Ernest Hughie 1886. Four of the Vary children initially went to school at Hazelwood Ridge which opened in 1876 by walking through the Morwell River.

The first Driffield School No 2433 opened on 1st November 1881 in a portable building with living quarters for William Francis, the teacher. The initial attendance was 21 but this dropped to 10 in 1902 and the school became half time with Hazelwood Ridge. The school along with the Methodist Church and Creamery were burnt down on 11 February 1905 in the bush fires that raged through the district that summer. On 30 January 1930 the school was established again in the local hall with Hilda Fox the teacher but on 26 August 1931 it closed again due to low enrolment. The Driffield School reopened again in 30 January 1940 with 15 children and William Annear the teacher, first in the hall but on 29 March 1946 in its own school building. This building was opened by Mr Johns MLA. Mr Les Hare who attended the opening informed the district residents that 2 miles of their road was to be sealed. A teacher's residence was provided for Alan McKinder in 1951.




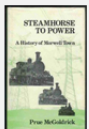
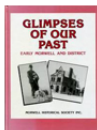
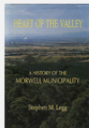



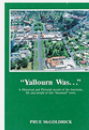


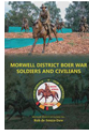



In the school yard bull ants and jumping jacks were sometimes a hazard, but snakes were a constant problem. A large piece of 8 gauge wire was kept at the school and teacher after teacher used it to kill snakes. In a single year in the 1960s nine snakes were killed. The last teacher was Prudence Rowe 1980-1982. Much of the schools equipment went to Yinnar School but some was sent to Traralgon Special School. The children then

transferred to Yinnar or Morwell. The school residence was eventually sold by the Education Department.



Source –"Changing Landscapes A history of Settlement and Land Use at Driffield" Linda Kennett and Meredith Fletcher

Information Panel at Driffield Memorial, Strzelecki Highway

TITLE	AUTHOR	COST
 Morwell Past to Present	Morwell Historical Society 2016	\$25 DVD 1 hour
 Steamhorse To Power - A History of Morwell Town	Prue McGoldrick 1979	\$10
 Glimpses of Our Past - Early Morwell and District	Morwell Historical Society 1989	\$20
 Heart of the Valley- A History of the Morwell Municipality	Stephen Legg 1992	\$20
 Across The Old Bush Track - The History and Story of Haunted Hills, later renamed Hernes Oak, Victoria	Dorothy Squires-Taylor 1992	\$30
 The Morwell and Mirboo Railway - A Descriptive History and Lineside Guide	R K Whitehead 2006	\$15
 Changing Landscapes - A History of Settlement and Land Use at Driffield	Linda Kennett, Meridith Fletcher 2003	\$10
 Yalloum Was... - A Historical and Pictorial record of the functions, life and people of the "deceased" town	Prue McGoldrick 1984	\$20
 A Souvenir History of Morwell - Morwell Centenary Celebrations 31st March to 6th April 1979	I. T. Madden 1979	\$5
 Street and Place Names of Churchill	Rob de Souza-Daw 2010	\$10 Soft Cover \$60 Hard Cover
 Morwell District Boer War Soldiers and Civilians Significant events, people, places, memorials and items relating to the 51 Morwell District Soldiers and 3 Civilians who enlisted Saluting Their Service 368 pages	Rob de Souza-Daw 2019	\$65
 Morwell District Boer War Soldiers and Civilians - Audio Visual Presentation with photos	Morwell Historical Society 11 October 2017	\$10 DVD 12 minutes
 Morwell District Boer War Soldiers and Civilians – Commemorative Service and unveiling of the Roll of Honour, and Graphic Exhibition	Morwell Historical Society 11 October 2017	\$25 DVD 1 hour 25 minutes
 Jaberanda & Co - Living in the Twentieth Century 1950-2000	Prue McGoldrick 2001	\$20

OUR BOOKSHOP

All these publications are available from our society. Please make enquires regarding postage and packaging for each item.

Phone Bruce: 0428 528 464

Email:

secretary@morwellhistoricalsociety.org.au



OPEN DAYS 2020

We are closed until further notice.

We will monitor the health professional and government advice and open as soon as we can.

Please deliver me to:

If not delivered please return to 12 Hazelwood Road, Morwell 3840

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