

Morwell Historical Society Inc.

www.morwellhistoricalsociety.org.au

c. 1903



The

AOO 16986 W

“Morwell Post”

December 2007

Wishing You
All a Very
Merry Xmas



Vol. 24 No.6

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Eric Lubcke Memorial

On December 9th a bench seat and plaque in memory of Past Historical Society President **Eric Lubcke** were unveiled in the park on Maryvale Crescent, overlooking the **Eric Lubcke** Yarra Gum Plantation. Eric was a dedicated and hard-working member of our Society for many years as well as an enthusiastic field naturalist.

Information Centre

There will be no monthly meetings in December or January, and the Information Centre will not open, as it does regularly throughout the year on Wednesdays, during those months. However, visitors who would like to view our collection are welcome to ring Secretary **Elsie McMaster** for an appointment.

“The Post”

Eric Lubcke Memorial	p. 2
“La Mode” potted history	p. 4
“La Mode” advert. (1946)	p. 7
Rev. Camp departs (1950)	p. 8
Do you remember when?	p. 11
Trivia Page	p. 12
Rowell advertisement (1919)	p. 13
Who’s Who (Arthur Witt)	p. 14

Heritage Overlay

Latrobe Council is currently in the process of implementing a Heritage Overlay to its planning scheme and is reviewing and updating the recommendations of several heritage surveys which have been previously undertaken but not acted upon. The Latrobe Combined History Group has approached Council with a proposal to mark a number of heritage sites with appropriate interpretive signage and we hope for some positive action within the next few months – more of this in our next Newsletter.

ERIC LUBCKE –
Unveiling of Memorial Plaque – Sunday 9th December 2007
Address delivered by Leonie Pryde
(President Morwell Historical Society Inc.)

Firstly, I would like to welcome you all here today, with a special welcome to Eric's family – his wife June, brother Len, sister Janet and the other family members who have come to help us dedicate this seat.

Eric was an active and enthusiastic member of Morwell Historical Society for many years – he and June were Life Members - and he was President for four-and-a-half years, but he was also a member of a number of other local community groups and he put a great deal of time and energy into all of them.

Eric was born in Morwell where his parents had a delivery service, using horses.

They moved to a farm in Driffield and Eric started school at Commercial Road, travelling in each day by jinker with the neighbouring Bond children. Later, they moved to Morwell North where Eric's father worked with horses at Brown Coal Mine (now Yallourn North), then back into Morwell.

On leaving school in 1931, Eric worked on local farms for a few years, then became a Herd Tester – he was Secretary of the Herd Testing Association for 18 years, and a Life Member.

When war came, Eric, blind in one eye from a childhood injury, was rejected from active service but joined the Army Reserve and served at the Yallourn North Anti-Aircraft Battery before taking a job at the Nestles Milk Factory in Yinnar.

After about two years he took up farming at Hazelwood and became involved in a number of farming groups – a Farmers' Discussion group (which he started), the Herd Testing Group, the Artificial Breeding Group, to name a few – then, after about ten years farming, he returned to

work for Nestles as Field Officer, finally moving to Moe Co-op as Field Officer, before retiring.

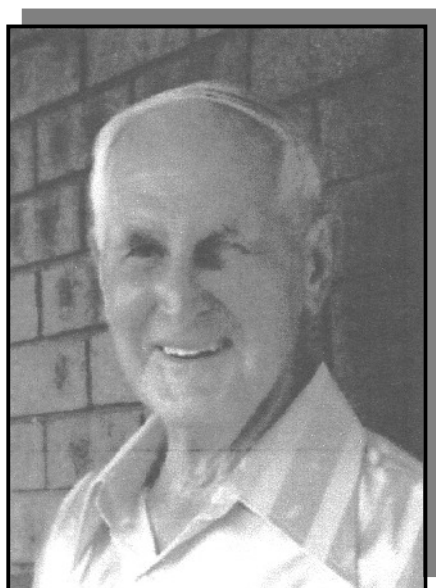
Eric had a great love of nature. He was responsible for the propagation and planting of the native trees at Morwell Golf Course, was a foundation member of the Friends of the Rose Garden and he represented the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalists Club on the Committee of Management of Crinigan Road Reserve for about twelve years.

He was asked by Morwell Council to propagate some Yarraensis eucalyps and he spent a lot of his spare time for ten years in collecting the seed, planting and caring for the lovely Yarra gum plantation, named in his honour, which you see at the end of this park.

Eric was also a great supporter of the Presbyterian Church and took part in many of its activities, including 'Dad's Army,' and the Annual Church Fetes, for which he grew literally thousands of tomato plants over the years.

As I mentioned earlier, Eric was a Life Member of Morwell Historical Society and it was his interest in photography and his wide knowledge of local families and local history which is largely responsible for the excellent photographic collection now held by the Society.

Our Historical Society in particular, and Morwell in general, owe Eric a great deal and it is with much pleasure that I dedicate this seat to his memory, and I ask June to come and unveil the plaque.



Eric Lubcke

“La Mode” Industries- Morwell & Traralgon

Representatives from the “La Mode” factory in Fitzroy first met with the Morwell Shire Council in **May 1944**. The purpose of the visit was to seek the Council’s support in relation to the establishment of an underwear and corsetry manufactory in the Morwell district.

Mr. Reid, Chairman of Directors, accompanied by **Mr. Rosback**, Managing Director, outlined “La Mode’s” intentions and plans for the possible expansion of their company’s activities into this area.

Also present at this important meeting was the Chief Secretary and member for Gippsland South **Mr. H. J. Hyland** (later to be known as Sir Herbert). The Minister for development Mr. Lienhop, was unable to attend, he was represented by a Mr. Giles. The Morwell Shire President – **Mr. Alan Hall** welcomed them and after hearing their submissions and viewing their plans offered “La Mode” his fullest support.

The “La Mode” organisation was very keen to move into this district, for they regarded Morwell as being the centre of a large population area from which they could draw the necessary labour to operate their de-centralised establishment.

A steady and reliable workforce was vital to the company during the final stages of the Second World War. They were experiencing labour shortages and difficulties in the plant at Fitzroy and were very intent on establishing the Morwell concern as quickly as possible.

A suitable site was soon found on the northern edge of the township near the corner of Church and Winifred Streets on property owned by **Mr. Vincent Hourigan**. The land selected consisted of seven acres.

The first employment advertisement was placed in the **Morwell Advertiser** on **1st. June 1944**, it advised that the company would be initially seeking approximately 160 girls for their workforce.

The construction phase at the Church Street site began on **24th July 1944**.

The Morwell session of employee interviews was conducted at the Morwell Town Hall on Tuesday, 3rd. **October 1944**, the session was well attended and the factory manager – **Mr. J. C. Bush** was well pleased with the standard of applicant.

In **May 1945**, to introduce themselves to the community and to help support the new building fund for the Morwell Hospital, the management of “La Mode” decided to conduct a ball at the newly-completed factory premises. The ball took place on May 25th. It turned out to be a resounding success, nearly 2,500 people attended from all parts of the district, buses brought the revellers from far and wide. The ball raised the princely sum of £600, the company donated a further £400 to boost the total.

The Morwell plant was officially opened by the Premier of Victoria **Mr. A. A. Dunstan** on Friday, **July 13th 1945**.

Opening day was quite an event, there were speeches galore and the company provided a sumptuous meal for its many guests.

Employee numbers increased steadily, 53 people were employed when the factory opened, by **January 1947** the number of employees had risen to 139.

In **October 1949**, the “La Mode” directors decided that “La Mode” Industries Pty. Ltd., should become a public company. The name was changed to “La Mode” Holdings Ltd. The capital value of the new concern was £1,000,000.

A limited number of shares were made available to company employees.

The “La Mode” company was a very generous concern, in association with its employee social club they helped raise funds for many local community organisations: eg. schools, kindergartens, hospital, ambulance appeal etc., in particular, the “Debutante Balls” were a popular social event.

In **October 1951** the new factory in Henry Street Traralgon was officially opened, the establishment employed approximately seventy girls, the “La Mode” operations in Traralgon had been initially housed in the old Drill Hall, from late in 1944.

The factory manager – **Mr. Bush**, resigned from the company in December 1954 to enter into a local accountancy business. He had been with the company for several years and had transferred from Fitzroy to oversee the establishment of the Morwell complex.

Early in 1958, the economic situation and weak markets for its corsetry production forced the Traralgon plant to endure a temporary closure, fortunately this state-of-affairs lasted only until May when production was resumed.

From this point on the state of the national economy produced something like a boom-and-bust cycle for the plant at Traralgon.

In **October 1960** plans were announced to increase the workforce by the staggering figure of 80 per cent., this had come about as a direct result of the dramatic increase in sales of “La Mode’s” underwear range throughout Australia. The Morwell factory was unable to cope with the extra production at that time, so the plant at Traralgon was to take up the extra work.

On the down-side of things, the problems associated with the “Credit Squeeze” made it impossible to continue production at Traralgon, therefore the plant was closed down in **July 1961**.

Girls who were displaced from Traralgon were offered positions at the Morwell plant.

In **February 1963**, the board of directors in Fitzroy decided to centralise the whole processing operation in the Latrobe Valley. Employee numbers were set to increase from approximately 250 to 450. The Traralgon plant was scheduled to re-open with 40 employees by the end of the year.

“La Mode’s” financial problems became apparent in **October 1963** when the directors announced that they were requesting a long-term loan from the Government to assist them with their centralisation plans in the Latrobe Valley. A creditors meeting was held late in October and at that meeting it was decided to give the company the opportunity to carry on.

Maryborough Knitting Mills took over “La Mode” in **June 1964**, with the intention of continuing production, unfortunately, the financial plight of “La Mode” Holdings Ltd. was much worse than first realised. Production carried on for a period until a Receiver was appointed by the ANZ Bank in **March 1965**.

The first employee retrenchments occurred in April, by the end of **August 1965** Morwell and Traralgon establishments had been shut down.



Morwell Advertiser

4th. April 1946

La Mode requires
GIRLS UNDER 18
and
EX-SERVICE WOMEN
CONDITIONS UNEXCELLED IN AUSTRALIA!
Ask any LA MODE Employee
... THAT'S OUR RECOMMENDATION!

LOOK AT THESE ADVANTAGES OF EMPLOYMENT WITH LA MODE—

- Seventeen consecutive holidays at Christmas as well as other public holidays during the year.
- High rates of pay from commencement (full adult rate after four years irrespective of age).
- Good piece work rates for efficient work.
- No Saturday morning work.
- Dining room and rest room.
- Trained nurse.
- Non-contributory Superannuation Scheme.
- Excellent training for post-war future.

SEE THE STAFF SUPERINTENDENT

LA MODE INDUSTRIES Pty. Ltd:

MORWELL (P.O. Box 100 - PHONE 182)

Bus transport to and from Yallourn, Brown Coal Mine, Herne's Oak and Morwell Bridge.

Morwell Advertiser

27th. April 1950

Presbyterian Clergyman Farewelled



PRESENTATION TO MR. AND MRS. F. H. CAMP

FOLLOWING the service on Sunday evening last at the Churchy Hall, the congregation of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church made a presentation to the Rev. F. H. and Mrs. Camp on the occasion of their departure from Morwell. The chair was occupied by Mr. E. E. Tilson.

Mr. A. Crilly, for the Session, said that it regretted the departure of Mr. Camp, who had been a guide and good friend to its members. When he first came to Morwell he had been retiring, but the development of his work here had made him more confident and his example had been inspirational.

For the Board of Management, Mr. E. Rowell, said that in Mr. Camp they were losing a minister second to none in Morwell. He believed that some of the criticism of the past of ministers not getting results, could be more rightly directed to the congregation for its lack of support to the ministers. His youth had in no way been a drawback as it specially qualified him for his work for the young people.

While his loss would be felt in Morwell generally, it would be a severe blow to the Board, which had always his full co-operation. Mrs. Camp had been very interested in the youth work of the Church, and in her class and, as with her husband, would be difficult to replace. He wished them long life and the best of health for their work in the ministry.

In presenting a bouquet to Mrs. Camp, Mrs. C. D. Koenig said that P.W.M.U. were exceedingly sorry to have lost the understanding qualities of Mrs. Camp, and at the same time happy to express to Mr. Camp their appreciation of what he had done for them.

Mrs. J. Dunlop expressed her belief that the loss to Morwell of Mr. and Mrs. Camp was regretted by very many people outside their church. Both had helped them in no small degree to further the needs of the church.

Cannon R. W. G. Phillips expressed the regrets of the Anglican community for the loss of one, with whom he had been so closely associated in the ministry over the past four years. He sincerely trusted that his successor would quickly be appointed to help in the great task the churches must undertake in the Latrobe Valley, which was mainly the capture of the new population to come into the area. He asked Mr. and Mrs. Camp to accept his best wishes for their future in the work of the Church.

Rev. E. A. Hinson, for the Methodist community, said that all ministers in their comings and goings left behind in each parish something of themselves in inspiration given or works accomplished. The matter of moving on was always a hard decision to take even though the experience gained could be applied to a higher class of work in the ministry. He was going to miss Mr. Camp's co-operation in their joint work at Hazelwood. He trusted that both would take away happy and lasting recollections of Morwell.

Rev. R. T. White (Yallourn) said it was a pleasure to pay a tribute to Mr. and Mrs. Camp, but not when they were leaving. Mr. Camp had been a very good neighbour, and he was going to miss their associations in the many Presbyterian organisations, in which they both worked. There had been a great deal of progress in the Morwell charge while Mr. Camp had been there as he carried a message to his people each Sunday. All would have much to regret at their departure and he extended best wishes to them both.

The speakers were supported by Dr. A. A. Crook and Messrs D. Ough and G. Gordon.

In making the presentation of a chiming clock to Mr. and Mrs. Camp, Mr. W. N. Shaw said it was the tangible expression of the appreciation of the congregation for the work they had done in Morwell, and of the high regard in which they were held by their people. He wished them every happiness and success in whatever work they would be called on to undertake in the future.

Rev. Camp thanked the people for their gift and assured them that they had both enjoyed the fine friends they had made in Morwell. He was particularly grateful for the wholehearted hospitality extended to him in the homes.

His relations with the Board and the Session had been of the happiest, and he had enjoyed his work in the Fellowship and the Sunday School.

His relations with the other ministers had been extremely cordial. He specially appreciated the friendship and association with Mr. White.

He thanked all very sincerely and extended them his best wishes.

Mrs. Camp thanked the P.W.M.U. for their bouquet and everyone for the sentiments expressed about their work in Morwell. She would miss very much the friendships made.

The serving of supper brought the evening to a close.

Other Functions

The people of South and North Hazelwood tendered a social evening to Rev. and Mrs. F. H. Camp last Friday at North Hazelwood Hall preparatory to their departure from the district. Items were rendered by Messrs F. Robertson, R. Rae and A. Moody. The chairman was the Rev. E. A. Hinson, and there was a hundred per cent. attendance of the Hazelwood United Fellowship. Speeches were made by Messrs Findlay Robertson, on behalf of North Hazelwood, Mr. Tom Lade, for South Hazelwood, Miss Bernace Robertson, for the Fellowship, and Mr. Ron Rae.

In response Mrs. Camp sang and Mr. Camp spoke of the very happy times he had had at both South and North Hazelwood and also with the United Fellowship, and said he appreciated very much the close co-operation of Rev. E. A. Hinson. On behalf of all, Mr. Findlay Robertson made a presentation of notes, asking that some suitable gift be purchased.

On Sunday morning the Kindergarten children gathered with the Senior School and under the chairmanship of the Sunday School secretary, Mr. Graham Gordon, presented Mr. Camp with a very beautiful solid leather lodge case. Mr. Camp was associated with the Sunday School as soon as he arrived in Morwell and since July last year has been superintendent. On behalf of the school, Roderick Morrison spoke words of appreciation and Elaine McKenzie made the presentation.

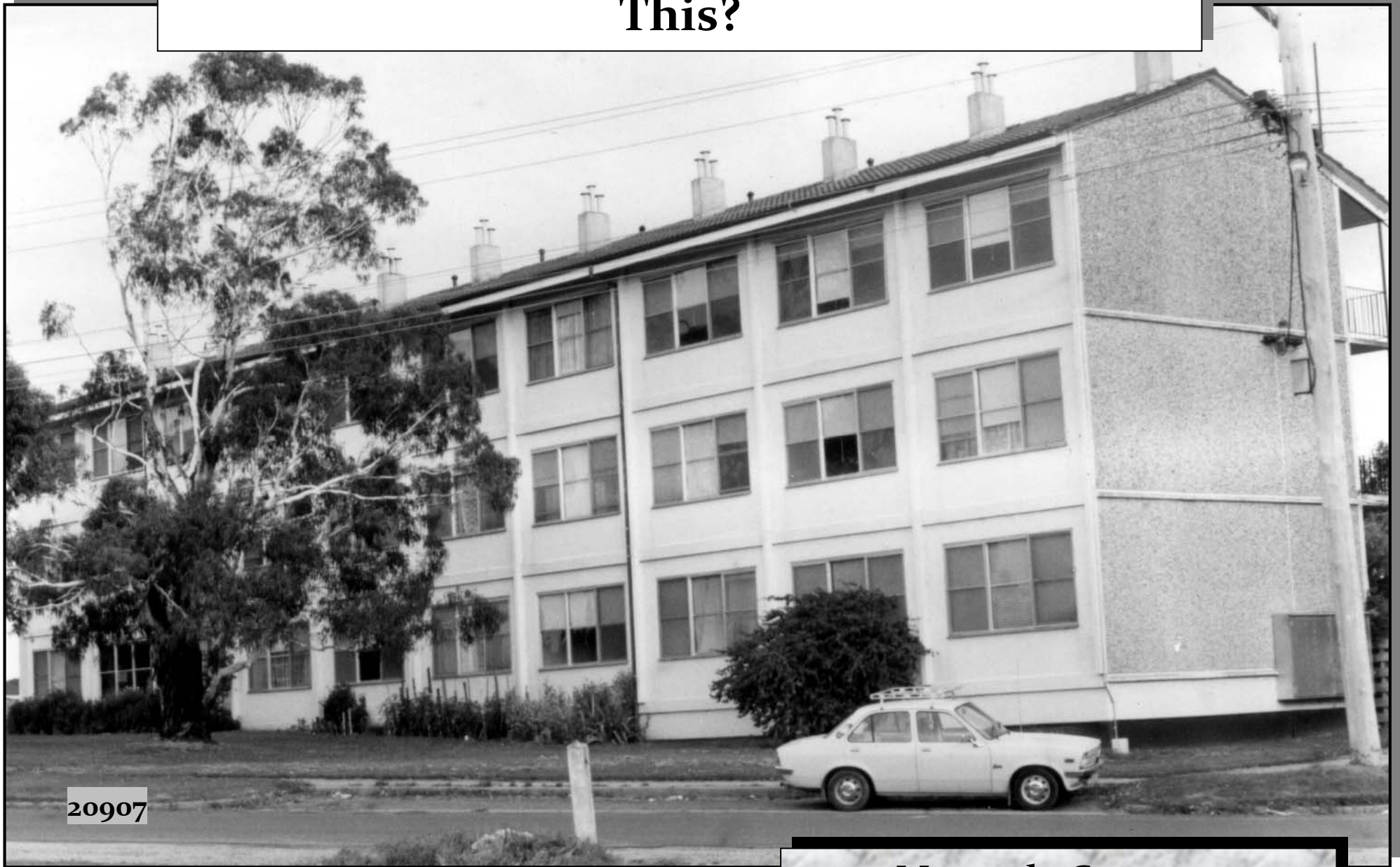
In response, Mr. Camp said how much he had enjoyed being with the children and thanked them for the gift which would remind him all his life of the Morwell Presbyterian Sunday School and of all their bright and smiling faces.

The Morwell branch of the Presbyterian Fellowship of Australia held a Fellowship Tea on Sunday night last to say farewell to Rev. F. H. and Mrs. Camp.

Mrs. W. D. Jenkins made a presentation to Mrs. Camp and spoke of her interest in the Fellowship and Mr. Graham Gordon thanked Mr. Camp for his work and interest in the young people and made a presentation on behalf of the Fellowship.

Mr. and Mrs. Camp suitably responded.

Do You Remember When It Looked Like This?



20907

Maryvale Crescent

TRIVIA

Put your knowledge of local history to the test.....

- Where was Alexandra Park?
- For what sport was the Yinnar Cup awarded in 1900?
- Where was the Morwell Flax Mill situated?
- Which football team won the Mid Gippsland League Premiership in 1934?
- Which famous aviator took Morwell residents for joy flights in 1932?
- Where was the Morwell Mechanic's institute situated?
- Which town was originally named 12-Mile-peg?
- Where was the bauxite mine which operated locally in the early 1900s?
- What sporting venue is now beneath the waters of the Hazelwood Pondage?
- Which members of the royal family visited Morwell in 1934?



Morwell Mechanic's Institute

E. G. ROWELL

(Late A.L.F.)

**Grocer and General Provision
Merchant,**

Commercial-Rd., MORWELL,

DESIRES to notify the residents of
Morwell and District that he has
taken over the business lately conducted
by Mr Angus McDonald, and by
giving same his best attention trusts to
ment a fair share of public patronage.

Phone, 18.

5th. September 1919

Meeting Dates 2008:

Tuesday 7.30 pm at 44 Buckley Street

February 19th

March (A.G.M.) 18th

April 15th

May 20th

June 17th

July 15th

August 19th

September 16th

October 21st

November 18th

Morwell Historical Society
Inc.

Annual Subscription Rates:

Single: \$17.00

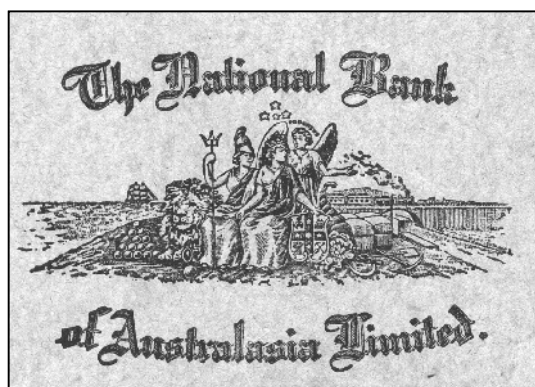
Family/Double: \$20.00



Local History On-Line

Our Internet Address is:

www.morwellhistoricalsociety.org.au



Who's Who:

Witt, Arthur Wellesley

Arthur Wellesley Witt:

Manager Colonial / National Bank:

Morwell branch

1894-1918

Staunch supporter of St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church

Committee Member: Morwell Mechanics' Institute.

Left Morwell for Daylesford then later transferred to Melbourne

Passed away at his residence in Essendon in October 1929 aged 67 years