

The Morwell Post



Morwell Historical Society

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

Cobb and Co Re-enactment journey September 1965



See page 4

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Morwell Historical Society Directory 2021

President:	Bruce McMaster Phone: 0428 528 464
Vice-President:	John Willis
Secretary:	Florence Butcher
Assistant Secretary:	Laurie Williams
Treasurer:	Peter Butcher
Committee Members:	Rosalie Davey Shirley Prosser Peter Gitsham
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.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Guest speakers: In October, Peter Lendon, a member of the Society, was our guest speaker. Peter did an apprenticeship in Book Binding and is still working in that profession 60 years later. Peter showed us books that he had made and the instruments that he used. The November guest speaker was Gary Patten who is a member of Morwell Numismatic Society and he brought along many Australian bank notes to enhance his slide show. Both speakers were extremely interesting.

Donations: The Society has been given many photos of Morwell Primary School (formerly Crinigan Road Primary School) and Tobruk Street Primary School being demolished and also a metal sign advertising the Driffield Cattery. We received a photo of the 1920s class at Commercial Road PS, also SEC Contact that the Society did not have in their collection, 2 x SEC News and other SEC publications plus some Gas and Fuel, Yallourn PS and Maryvale Mill photos. We also received a copy of a special 1969 Express which contained advertisements. These advertisements are very important as they tell us the addresses of shops. Also four Yallourn Production coasters and two Institution of Engineers Australia coasters. The Society was also given a Morwell Power Station Switch Board PABX from Latrobe Valley Control Centre and a very old doll with plaster head, legs and arms (see photo) and four celluloid dolls, an old Japanese toy and some very old children's books. I thank all the people for their wonderful donations.

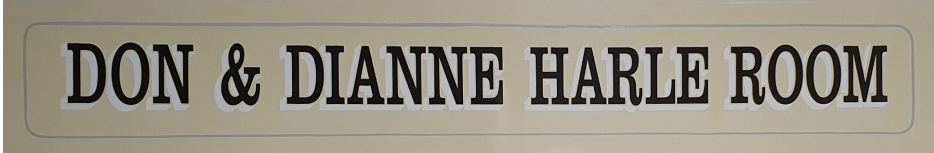


Fundraising: The sausage sizzle at Bunnings on Saturday 4th December raised \$482 towards paying off the building and \$38 Donation. I thank Shirley Prosser for organising it and the 12 members who volunteered their time. I also thank Brendan at Zio's Pizza in George Street for peeling and slicing 10kg of onions.

Christmas Dinner: On the 5th of December 19 members met for a Christmas Dinner at the Morwell Bowling Club. (see photo page 10)

60th Anniversary: The Society will be celebrating its 60th Anniversary next year on 15th March 2022 when special events will be planned.

Send Off: On the 8th December, the Committee said "thank you" to two valuable members, Don and Dianne Harle, who are leaving Morwell to



move into Dalkeith. In appreciation of all the work they have done for the Society it was agreed to name the office the "Don and Dianne Harle Room". I wish them all the best in the next chapter of their life together. Thank you to John Tomkins of John Signs for donating the sign.

Thanks to Peter Gitsham for mowing the grass and Chris Roads for taking the grass cuttings home. Thanks also to Teresa for looking after our Facebook page and to our valuable members who were on duty at the Society when we were open to the public.

A big 'thank you' to the Newsletter team, Fay Thompson, Elaine Andrijczak and Florence Butcher for publishing six excellent editions of the ~~Morwell Post~~ *Morwell Post* this year and sharing such varied historical records and memories – always a great read.

Stay well, stay safe, Merry Christmas
Bruce McMaster 8th December 2021

Cobb and Co

The original Cobb and Co was established in Melbourne in 1853 by four newly arrived North Americans – Freeman Cobb, aged 23, John Murray Peck, James Swanton and John B Lamber. This was the time of the Victorian gold rush and by early 1854 Cobb and Co operated a daily service to Forest Creek (now Castlemaine) and Bendigo and soon afterwards expanded the service to Geelong and Ballarat.

Their imported stage coaches used thorough brace technology whereby thick straps of leather suspended the body of the vehicle provided the passenger with considerable comfort on the rough roads to the gold fields compared to coaches with traditional steel springs. Cobb and Co horses were changed at stages of every 10-15 miles along the stage coach line, often at inns and hotels that could also cater for the needs of drivers and passengers. The driver would sound a bugle one mile out of the change station to alert the groom who would have a fresh team brushed and harnessed by the time the coach rolled in. Carrying cash and gold coaches were famously a regular target of bushrangers.

In May 1856 the four partners sold out and Cobb returned to the US. Passing through the hands of a number of owners Cobb and Co rose to greater prominence after 1861 when it was bought by a consortium of partners led by another North American, James Rutherford. Rutherford and his partners reorganised and extended the Victorian services and won a monopoly of major mail contracts. By 1870 most of Victoria was serviced by a network of coach routes.

In June 1862 Rutherford extended the business into NSW and in 1865 expanded into Queensland. At its peak in the 1870s Cobb and Co coaches were travelling over 45,000 km a week over 11,200 km of routes from the Gulf of Carpentaria and Cooktown in Queensland to southern Victoria. Australia's last horse drawn stage coach service run by Cobb and Co was in Queensland on the 14 August 1924.

In early 1862, the first English cricket team to tour Australia, was carried around Victoria in this Cobb and Co coach with driver Ned Devine and his twelve horse team.



Source – *Wild Ride - The Rise and Fall of Cobb and Co* by Sam Everingham



Cobb & Co. Coach with Ivan Maddern, (Pres. Morwell Historical Society) as passenger outside the Rosedale Hotel

Re-enactment of Cobb and Co coach trip through Gippsland September 1965

In front of the Morwell Co-Op store, corner of Ann Street and Hazelwood Road



Front Cover: Jack Rintoull and his wife Effie (nee McDonald) meet the coach outside their house at 23 Hazelwood Road Morwell

Thomas Mills Diary

In 1893 Thomas Mills took a trip from Melbourne to Rosedale in a Cobb and Co coach. An Englishman, Mills was appointed manager of Heyfield Station that James Tyson had purchased in 1866. Mills boarded a coach at the Albion Hotel in Bourke Street at 1 pm in September.

The following is from his diary:

“Going at good galloping speed through St Kilda the country soon opened up and after an hour’s run brought us to a pretty little village called Oakleigh. Here we delivered mails and exchanged horses. At 5 o’clock we reached the small village of Dandenong. We reached the next stage, Berwick at 8 o’clock. The horses were changed but no time was allowed for refreshments. We did get a meal at the Inn at Bunyip Creek –a fine joint of beef and potatoes. I drew up to the fire, prepared to have a warm, when the driver called “All aboard!” so we had to go or be left behind. We had not left long when we met the Melbourne bound coach and were warned by the driver that the roads were very bad indeed.

We were not long in finding out for the coach came to a sudden stop. The coachman jumped down and when I heard him exclaim, “Here’s a bonny fix!” I jumped down too. I landed up to my ankles in thick mud to find a sapling had become tangled in the wheels of the coach. Axes were brought out and after an hour’s work the wheels were free. Every mile of the road got worse and it was great exertion on the part of the horses that we arrived at Brandy Creek. We changed horses and a passenger left here. I took his seat on the box, thinking that the time and journey would not be so fatiguing, but in this I was disappointed.

It was now 1 o’clock at night and very cold. I was delighted when morning dawned and felt better able to bear my troubles. The forest seemed full of life. Wild birds sang, cockatoos shrieked, there were an unearthly row of the laughing jackass and a scrambling of monkey bears. By 9 o’clock we reached the small village of Lady Creek where there was just time for a warm. When we started I took the inside seat as I could not keep my eyes open. I thought I might get a nap by sleeping on the mail bags but it was quite impossible, owing to the loose boxes and parcels falling everywhere. I became very sick and was pleased when we pulled up at the village of Moe and it was a source of great gratification to me when I became aware that the worst perils of our travels had been attained.

At Traralgon village we had a few minutes refreshment and then another start for the last stage for me. An hour’s run brought us to Rosedale where horses were waiting to take us to our destination at Heyfield. The 33 hours in a stage coach across the Australian forest was quite enough to satisfy me ambitions in that direction”

Word was sent through Rosedale Post Office for horses to meet incoming travellers. Thomas Mills had a further 12 miles before he could arrive at his destination. But food and warmth waited for him behind the sturdy stone walls of the old station on the banks of the Thompson River. It maintained the reputation of lavish hospitality of those days.

Source –*The Argus* 10 March 1945 p 12

Gippsland Journey 1873

Morwell, Narracan and Mirboo Agricultural Society

Once a year, in March, from 1888, the farming community around Morwell came into town in force to exhibit their farm products and skills. This event was known as the Morwell, Narracan and Mirboo Agricultural and Pastoral Society Show and it took place in the Show Grounds situated well down Hazelwood Road on a site since swallowed up by the open cut coal mine. This show continued until 1893.

In 1892, the President of the Morwell, Narracan and Mirboo Agricultural and Pastoral Society was Frederick Howlett, the members were McCoull - Secretary, Shaw, Mulcare, Rintoull, McNabb, Murdoch, Turnley, McRae, McIntosh, Watson, Wuttrick and Deppler.

The certificate below, which is on display at the Society, is one of the oldest documents that are in the Society's collection. It is not known who donated it but we know that W A McFarlane won first prize with his best collection of honey.

It is interesting to read that the certificate was printed by Bert Turnley who took over the Morwell Advertiser from W Kemp in July 1888. Seacombe and Kemp had started the Morwell Advertiser on 30 October 1885.

Source -*Morwell Advertiser* Friday 16 December 1892

Steamhorse to Power, Prue McGoldrick p 40-41



George Watson

Between Jill Street and June Street in Morwell there is Watmor Street. Who was Watmor? Watmor was actually two people. George Watson married Mary Morris in 1898 (see photo) so the name came from the first syllables of the two surnames, Watson and Morris and Jill and June were their twin granddaughters, (Rob and Nell's daughters).

George Watson was born in Bacchus Marsh in 1874. He is the son of Robert Watson who came to NSW in the 1840s. The family moved to Gippsland and was engaged in farming operations. *The Morwell Advertiser* was owned by RH Turnley and a few years later by Stephens and Guest and George Watson purchased a third interest in the business. In 1896 he, at the age of 20, became the sole proprietor. He was the editor of the newspaper, a correspondent for the *Melbourne Argus* and also did a large business in job printing and in book binding. In later years "The Morwell and Yinnar Gazette" amalgamated with "*The Morwell Advertiser*". Upon his death, in 1942, his second son Rob inherited *The Morwell Advertiser*.

George Watson was a prominent figure in Morwell, being involved in practically every public activity including starting the initial tennis club and proved to be a very good player. At football he was a fine player and in addition to taking his place on the field carried out secretarial duties of the Morwell-Mirboo Association for many years. At cricket he also excelled and he was the President of the Morwell Cricket Club for the 1903-04, 04 -05 and 05-06 seasons. Bike riding also claimed much of his time when he was young and he won many trophies. Years later saw him take up the less strenuous game of bowls. For some years he was champion of the Morwell Bowling Club and runner up in the Gippsland champion on one occasion. George loved the game and he accepted the presidency of the Gippsland Bowling Association –a position he occupied for 15 years until failing health compelled him to resign.

George was keenly interested in Lodge affairs and was a past Master of the Morwell Masonic and Marc Lodges, a district GM of the Manchester Unity and a past president of the local ANA. In public life he interested himself keenly in the Morwell Town Hall, Racing Club, Horticulture Society and the Brass Band. He was on the first committee that formed the Water Trust in the town and he was a Justice of Peace. He occupied a seat on the Board of Management of the Presbyterian Church for a lengthy period and for 20 years was superintendent of the Sunday school. He was also the choir master for many years.

George Watson died in 1942 and following a short and impressive service at the Presbyterian Church the lengthy funeral cortege, one of the biggest ever seen in Morwell, left for the Hazelwood Cemetery. His wife Mary died in 1957



George and Mary had 9 children

-Walter 1899-1975 who married Reta Haigh in 1926

-Robert (Rob) 1901-1980 who married Ellen (Nell) Walsh in 1938

-Ruby 1903-1991 who married Stan Gude in 1926

-Grace 1905-1978 who married Jim Crozier in 1924

-Amy 1907-1995 who married Jack Pruden in 1932

-Jean 1909-1996 who married Wally Wicks in 1938

-Elva 1911-1992 who married Roy Faulkner in 1939

-Ida 1914-1991 who married Herbert (Bert) Christie in 1938 (Morwell Post Master)

-Joyce 1918- 1999 who married Walter Henrikson in 1938



The Watson family at "Junee" 237 Princes Highway in the 1920s

Back row -Elva, Grace, Rob, Ruby, Amy

Front row-Walter, Mother (Mary), Joyce, Father (George), Jean and Ida

Source

- *Morwell Advertiser* Thursday 3rd December p 7 and Thursday 10 December 1942 p 5
- *Gippsland Times* Thursday 3 December 1942 p 1
- *The Age* Monday 30 November 1942 p 3

Lost in a Crab Hole

Mr and Mrs Erland who live near the Latrobe River, some 7 miles from Morwell, were alarmed on the afternoon of 17 July 1904, when their youngest boy, Jack, who is under 2 years old, suddenly disappeared. Mr Erland had seen his wife rushing about in their paddock in an excited manner and he wondered what was the matter with her. She told him that little Jack had disappeared. They had gone for a walk and while resting the little boy was playing on top of a log. Her attention was drawn from the child for about 2 minutes and when she turned around she was horrified to find that he had disappeared and was nowhere to be seen. Together they searched high and low but they could not see the child. Some of the neighbours were informed of what had happened and they too joined the search. Subsequently the local police were informed and the occurrence was announced in the churches which led to a large search party being organised.

Shortly after 9 o'clock the first contingent, comprising of 20, among them were Constable Gorman and Rev F Barclay left Morwell having with them a number of torches and lamps. Mr J Hall and others set out on horse-back whilst many more went on buggies. The last to leave Morwell was a party of 9 who crowded into Mr JD Morris' spring dray with "Old Creamy" in the shafts. No one knew where the Erland's lived except it was somewhere the other side of Tom's Bridge. They got as far as Mr Vetch's place where they expected to receive directions. Mr Vetch and family had, however, joined the search party and so they were not home. They decided to look for tracks and follow them. Messes Brown, Watson and Sheen took the lead, and with the aid of lamps, proved good trackers. The ground being soft in places they were able to follow the tracks which eventually led them to Mr Erland's paddock. They could see lights flitting hither and dither in the darkness in all directions. On getting closer human beings could be seen carefully peering here and there in the darkness in all directions looking beside logs, between tussocks, in scrub and bracken and in all likely as well as unlikely places.

After about 2 hours of searching a faint groan was heard by one of the searchers and it was only by putting the lamp into the large crab hole that the legs of the child could be seen. He had slipped off the log and had fallen head first into the 4 foot deep hole. When he was taken out he was none the worse although he had been confined to his clay prison for 8 to 9 hours. Fortunately for Jack the crab hole was dry.

When Jack was placed in his mother's arms she was frantic with joy. She carried him to the house and placed him in a warm bath. Mr Brown the Chemist checked out the child and found him to only have some swellings on his eyes and face.

Source - *Morwell Advertiser* 22 July 1904 p 3

Heart of the Valley by Stephen Legg p 134



Christmas Dinner at the Morwell Bowling Club

Uncovering the Secret Coded Language of Postage Stamps

Apparently the 'secret stamp code' actually emerged back in the 'receiver pays' mail era as a way to dodge exorbitant postal fees. The sender could encode a simple answer into the placement of their stamp on the envelope – perhaps

'yes', 'no', or 'come at once'. The receiver could then examine the envelope, extract the message and then refuse to pay the delivery fee for the unopened letter. Obviously, this became redundant in the 'penny post' era but later couples adopted the system for their own needs. Here's an example.



This stamp messaging system was used across the postal systems of the world although there was significant variation between countries. Some system relied on where the stamp was placed on the postcard while others were concerned only with its orientation to the page.

As a consequence, some guides prescribe that a 90° right-turned stamp means a hopeful "Reply at once!", while other guides would interpret the same stamp as "I wish for your friendship, but no more".

I suspect there must have been thousands of star-crossed lovers whose dreams were dashed by a misread coded message from a potential partner. Who would have thought that the mundane act of attaching a stamp to a letter could be loaded with such social danger?

So ... Take careful notice of your Christmas Card this year!

There's a larger story behind this which can't be told here because of the constraints of space.





OPEN DAYS 2022

Please check the current Covid-19 restrictions before attending.

2nd February || 16th February
 2nd March || 16th March; AGM || 27th March
 6th April || 20th April || 24th April
 4th May || 18th May || 29th May
 1st June || 15th June || 26th June
 6th July || 20th July || 31st July
 3rd August || 17th August || 28th August
 7th September || 21st September || 25th September
 5th October || 19 October || 30th October
 2nd November || 16th November || 27 November

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Morwell Neighbourhood House



We sincerely thank Russell Northe, MLA for Morwell and staff for printing our Newsletter