

Morwell Historical Society Inc.

www.morwellhistoricalsociety.org.au



c. 1903

The

AOO 16986 W

“Morwell Post”

February 2008

Vol. 25 No.1

Secretary: Elsie McMaster

2 Harold Street Morwell

Tel: 5134 1149

Compiled by: Stephen Hellings



Proudly supported by Latrobe City Council

Published every two months: February to December

2008... our 25th Birthday!!!

Welcome to the first Morwell Post for 2008! We were saddened by the death in January of our friend and member **Will McRoberts**. A tribute to Will is included in this newsletter.

There is movement on the local heritage scene. The Latrobe Council has initiated a review of the various heritage studies undertaken over recent years with a view to implementing a heritage overlay to the Council's planning scheme. Local Historical Societies are currently helping with the review and one of our members is assisting with the photographing of buildings, objects and sites.

We are grateful for the recent donation of two books:

A Memorable Life by William Charles McRoberts, donated by
the McRoberts Family of Morwell

and

Images of Gippsland Revisited by Alexandra and Barry Stevens, donated by
Mrs Dorothy Bartlett

Finally - a plea for help! The number of members willing and able to supervise our display on **Wednesdays** between 11am and 2pm has dwindled over the past year and there are now only six of us left. Could you - or do you know anyone who could - help out? There are always two people on duty when the rooms are open, and you don't have to be an expert on the computer or the filing system or anything, really!! Elsie would be delighted to hear from you if you can help.

VALE WILL McROBERTS

It was with great sadness that we farewelled a valued member and friend, Will McRoberts, in January.

Will came to Morwell in 1924, at the age of two, with his parents and sister, Cath. The coal and electricity industries were in their infancy in the Valley, with much of the equipment used being horse-drawn. Will's father, Will McRoberts Senior, set up a produce store in Morwell, which sold chaff, oats, bran and general produce and later hardware, petroleum products and briquettes.

The family lived first in Hopetoun Avenue, then moved to Maryvale Crescent and Will had fond memories of growing up in Morwell in the 'twenties. A lifelong love of steam trains began with watching those on the Mirboo rail line which crossed the main road about 50 metres from the house. He also recalled 'business enterprises' developed by him and his two brothers, Andy and Burkett, to earn pocket money.

It was customary for Morwell shopkeepers to decorate their veranda posts with gum saplings at Christmas.

One Christmas, the boys approached shopkeepers and offered, for sixpence, to provide and affix a sapling to a veranda post. At 3am on Christmas Eve they took their billy-cart and an axe to the eastern end of Commercial Road and, by 7.30am, after three trips, they had all the posts decorated. Their earnings amounted to four and sixpence (45 cents) each.

Next Christmas there was an even bigger demand for their services so Dad took them out in the truck the previous night and by 6am every shop in town had its Christmas tree in place and the McRoberts boys had collected 52 shillings and sixpence.

Another highlight of his childhood was in 1932. Sir Charles Kingsford Smith was barnstorming around the country and McRoberts, as Vacuum Oil Company agents, had the job of keeping the "Southern Cross" fuelled on its visit to Morwell.

There were no such things as wind socks, so 10-year-old Will was detailed to maintain a small, smoky fire, fuelled by straw, at the end of the runway.

At the end of the day, Smithy invited Will and his father to go for a flight.

Will said he had loved planes ever since that day.

Will attended Commercial Road School, then Yallourn High School, riding his bike the round trip of 18km in all weathers. Leaving school in 1938 he joined the State Savings Bank as a teller on the princely salary of fifty pounds (\$100) per year.

He had been driving the family's truck for quite some time, taking care to keep to the back roads and on his 18th birthday he went to the Police Station to ask for a licence test. "When did you turn 18, Bill?" asked the Sergeant. "Today, sir," replied Will. "Well, come back in three weeks when you've had time to learn to drive," was the reply.

Will joined the army in 1941 and after serving in various parts of Australia, was posted to Morotai where he acted as a courier, taking certified information, prisoners, blood and plasma supplies etc in and out of Tarakan by Catalina flying boat.

In 1945, leaving the army with the rank of Lieutenant, Will married his fiancée Melva Wright, a Sydney girl whom he had met during the War and they returned to Morwell where Will joined his father, Cath and Andy, in the family business.

After settling in Morwell, Will and Melva became much involved in the community life of the town. With children Richard, Beth and Phillip, they were closely involved with the Methodist Church, Will being Youth Leader for seventeen years.

In 1959 the family business in Commercial Road was closed and the site sold to Moran and Cato.

Will and Melva bought out the shares of the other family members and rented premises in Gudes Arcade, deciding to concentrate on briquettes and produce - they later included stoves and solid fuel heating appliances. In 1964 they built new premises in George St. maintaining both shops until 1966 when they moved the whole operation to their enlarged George St shop.

Will's interest in community affairs led him to stand for election to the Morwell Shire Council in 1972 and he represented North Riding until 1983 when he retired.

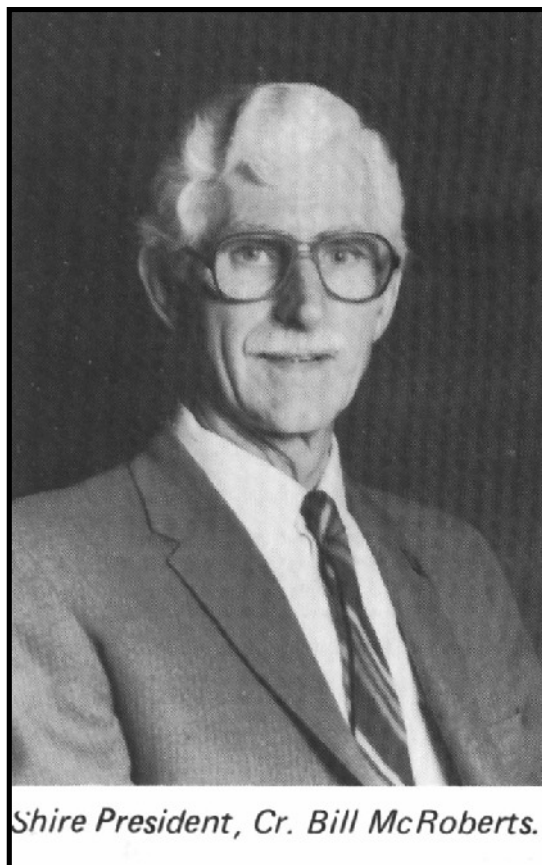
He was Shire President in 1978-79, and served as a Justice of the Peace from 1979 until 1994.

He represented Morwell Council on the Latrobe Consultative Committee in the early 'eighties and was its chairman for three years. He became the interim president, overseeing the setting up of the Latrobe Regional Commission in 1983 and in the same year was elected to a second term as Morwell Shire President.

He was chairman of the Morwell Chamber of Commerce for eight years and both Will and Melva were active members of the Liberal Party. In the mid eighties, they became actively involved in St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Morwell, and Will travelled throughout Gippsland as a lay preacher.

Will, Melva and Cath McRoberts have been long term members of Morwell Historical Society, Their active support and willingness to share their knowledge of our community is greatly appreciated - many readers will have enjoyed one or more of our Heritage Walks through Morwell streets, with Will as guide.

He will be sadly missed.



Shire President, Cr. Bill McRoberts.

Elsie

Morwell Advertiser

17th. April 1952

Orange Blossom

WEBB - DRAPER

At St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Morwell, the marriage of Barbara, only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jesse Draper, Morwell, with Maxwell Charles, son of Mr. T. Webb, Mirboo South, and the late Mrs. Webb was celebrated on April 5th. The church was beautifully decorated for the ceremony at which the Rev. Alan Thomson officiated.

A trailer bouquet of frangipanni, cream roses and gladioli was carried by the bride against her lovely classical gown of magnolia satin, fashioned with sweet heart neckline and long sleeves on the slim fitting bodice, and full trained skirt, misted by the tulle veil which fell from a coronet of pearl orange blossom (lent by Mrs. J. Broderic).

Given away by her father, she was attended by bridesmaids Misses Peggy Longley and Pat James in full skirted frocks of lemon and mauve lace over satin, respectively. The circlets of flowers in their hair matched their posies of lemon and mauve flowers.

Mr. Russell Webb was best man and Mr. Raymond Draper groomsman.

During the ceremony, the solo "Where You Walk", was sung by Mrs. C. McCracken.

The reception was held in the Morwell Town Hall Supper Room, where over fifty guests were entertained at the wedding breakfast.

Mrs. Draper wore a frock of parma violet moss crepe, with a smoke grey sealette jacket and grey accessories to tone.

On leaving for the honeymoon the bride chose a dove grey suit, with green hat and grey accessories.

Morwell and Mirboo Gazette

31st. August 1886

OPENING
OF THE
BRIFFIELD CHURCH.
SUNDAY, 5TH SEPTEMBER, 1886.

SERMONS will be preached in the Morning by Mr. Eldridge, and in the Evening by Mr. Alday.

A Tea and Public Meeting
WILL BE HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 8TH SEPTEMBER,
When addresses will be given by the Revs.
Walker, Wilson, Alday, Eldridge,
Taylor, and others.
J. ROWLEY,
Hon. Sec.



Morwell Advertiser and Gazette

6th. April 1933

DRIVING UNREGISTERED CAR



At the Morwell Court of Petty Sessions, on Tuesday last, before Mr. A. Noonan, P.M., William Albert Clover, of Morwell Bridge, was charged on the information of Constable J. A. Gunn, with having on March 14th 1933, used an unregistered motor car upon a public highway. He was also charged with fraudulently using a general identification mark on a motor car, driven on a public highway.

Senior-Constable Gillies conducted the prosecution, and Mr. L. Serjeant appeared for the defendant, who pleaded not guilty.

Constable Gunn gave evidence to the effect that he had seen accused repeatedly driving the car at Morwell Bridge and had spoken to him about same. Accused appeared to be using the car to go to and from work at Yallourn.

Defendant stated he had bought the car which was badly in need of repair. He certainly had driven it, but in each case he was either testing the repairs that had been done to it, or he had a prospective buyer.

John Abell, of Yallourn, gave evidence that on one occasion, he was a prospective buyer of the car. He had gone for a drive in the car, but as it was not running too good he would not consider buying it. Later he bought a wireless set instead.

The P.M. said he did not believe the evidence for the defence. On the first charge defendant would be fined £6 and on the second charge £3.

Mr. Serjeant asked for a stay of 14 days, which was granted.





When repairs are necessary
let Experts who understand
the work carry them out!

OUR EXPERT KNOWLEDGE, backed by years
of practical experience, assures you of absolute
satisfaction in REPAIRS OF EVERY DESCRIPTION.

Our complete up-to-date plant enables us to make
the finest adjustments to all essential parts.

CALL AND SEE US FIRST!

W. McROBERTS

For the Biggest Allowance on the old Car.

MORWELL.

PHONE 23.

TRY HERE 1st.

January 23rd. 1931

Morwell Advertiser

1st. May 1952

Level Crossing Fatality

MORWELL BUSINESS MAN KILLED

STRUCK by a shunting goods train at the level crossing at Morwell at about 6.15 p.m. on Thursday last, Mr. Thomas Robins, manager of the hardware section of Purvis Stores, was killed instantly.

In company with Mr. L. Cripps, the deceased was proceeding to his home at 40 Buckley St., after work, when they encountered a stationary section of a goods train blocking the level crossing with the rear truck half-way across the western cattle pit.

After waiting some minutes the deceased suggested to his companion that it would be possible to cross behind the truck and immediately made the attempt. At the same time the train backed, and he was struck by the truck which passed over his body. He was dead on the arrival of medical aid.

The deceased was a well known figure in the business life of the town in which he had made many friends. Of a retiring disposition, his interests were mainly centred in his home and his garden although, as a member of the Angling Club, he frequently took advantage of the opportunities presented to spend a day in fishing some quiet stream.

He was born at Portland in 1894, but at an early age accompanied his parents to Western Australia, where his father was interested in gold mining.

Returning to Victoria, he enlisted in 1916, and served in France with a Trench Mortar Battery, attaining the rank of sergeant. As the result of a shell burst he sustained injuries to both eyes, sight of which were for some time despaired of. Eventually he lost one eye as a final bid to preserve the sight of the other.

At the Anzac Service on Friday, the president of the R.S.L., Mr. Geoff. Colebrook, referred to the sad loss of Tom Robins and, at his request, the whole of the assembly paid a tribute of silence to his memory.

The deceased leaves a widow and two sons, Richard and John.

The remains were interred on Saturday at the Hazelwood Cemetery following Requiem Mass at the Sacred Heart Church, and a service at the graveside conducted by Rev. Father Ward.

The R.S.L. Burial Service was read by the president and members filed past the grave and dropped in poppies as a last tribute to one "who had served".



Morwell's Sacred Heart Church and Presbytery

Do You Remember When It Looked Like This?



January 1987

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



Clifton, C. H. B.

Who's Who:

C.H.B. Clifton:

Manager -National Bank: Morwell branch

1946-1950

Treasurer: Shire of Morwell

President: "Dads' Association

**Treasurer & Committee member: Shire of Morwell and Maryvale
Band**