

# MORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

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## *Welcome to the July Newsletter*

**President Eric Resigns** - It is with reluctance that the Committee has accepted the resignation of our President since 1993, Eric Lubcke. Eric's health has been causing him some concern lately and, as he says, he has had 58 years continuously in various executive positions and now feels it is time for a rest! We thank him most sincerely for all his work as President over the past four years and we are pleased that he will remain an active member of our Society, but without the added burden of the Presidency. **Thank You Eric!**

In our May Newsletter we printed an article from the *Morwell Advertiser*, January 6, 1928, concerning the improvements to a number of Commercial Road shops. The proprietor who 'set the ball rolling' was named in the Newsletter as Mr Poynting - in fact his name was **Mr Poynter**, and we apologise for the mistake - your Editor now has a new pair of specs and hopefully will not make a similar mistake again. Joan Endacott, one of our members, is Mr Poynter's daughter. She wrote telling us of the error and, as punishment for daring to criticise the Editor's powers of observation, she has been set the task of writing what she knows of Morwell's Commercial Road shopping area in the 20s and 30s! (Actually, Joan offered to do this and we look forward to presenting her recollections in a future Newsletter).

Have you seen our display in the showcase at the Morwell Shire Office? It is based on the trophies and pennants won by the *Morwell Players* over the years and looks quite impressive.

Members are reminded that annual subscriptions are now due. If a cross appears in this box it means that we have no record of having received your 1997-98 sub. **Membership is \$10 single, \$12.50 couple or family.**

## ☞ **NEXT MEETING: Tuesday July 15 - 'Show and Tell'**

Members are asked to bring along something of historical significance to them or their family and to give a short account of the item and why it is important to them.



## ***STRZELECKI FESTIVAL - October 17, 18, 19***

An International Festival to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Sir Paul Edmund de Strzelecki is to be held in Morwell in October this year. *Mainstreet Morwell*, together with representatives of the Polish community and other local groups will be responsible for the organisation.

Among the activities planned are: \* '*Strzelecki*' - a play written and directed by Hanna Bilec

\* A parade through the streets of Morwell on the Saturday morning, finishing at Church St

\* Fiesta in Church St starting at 12.00 noon on Saturday

\* A Polish Art Exhibition in Kernot Hall

\* A chopin Concert by Slavomir Zumis

\* An ecumenical Mass

\* A soccer match between Polonia (Sunshine) and a Latrobe Valley team

\* A Sound and Light performance at the Kernot hall Lake on Sunday evening.

## ***POLISH ART EXHIBITION - JULY 19 - 31***

The Strzelecki Festival will be preceded by an exhibition of Polish art in the public section of the LaTrobe Art Gallery opening on July 19 and continuing for the next two weeks.

\* \* \* \* \*

## ***MORWELL FIGHTS THE 'FLU - 1919***

From *Morwell Advertiser*, 14 February, 1919

'There is an old saying that *preventon is better than cure* and our local health officer ( Dr Sutcliffe) is to be commended for the prompt measures he has taken to fight the influenza scourge should an outbreak occur in our midst.

The Health Department urge that efforts be made to congregate patients in one centre as far as possible, in order that they may receive the best attention that can be given, and with that object in view the Morwell State School has been converted into a temporary hospital for influenza patients and the services of Nurse Mayall and Nurse Kjellgrer have been secured and they have taken up their residence in Morwell.

At a public meeting convened by the President of the Shire, held at



## *MORWELL FIGHTS THE 'FLU (cont)*

Mechanics Hall on Tuesday afternoon, the necessary equipment and furniture for hospital was promised with the exception of bedding which will be supplied by Red Cross Society of Melbourne.

The Railway Department has sent an emergency van to Morwell for the purpose of bringing patients from Mirboo and stations along the line to "hospital". A landing has also been made on railway line opposite the "hospital" and gates erected so that patients will be conveyed in same to within two chain of hospital. Messrs A. McDonald, R. Noy, F. Lee, R. Hentschel, Bert Fisher, J. Miller, J. Lowe and J. Ward have volunteered to act as stretcher bearers.

The "hospital" has also been connected with telephone and members of local Red Cross have offered to do sewing and render assistance in other directions.

The whole scheme as arranged by Dr Sutcliffe has been submitted to the Public Health Department and they have heartily approved of same.

We understand that the Morwell and Mirboo Shires are co-operating in the matter and are sharing the expense. Patients who are able will, however, have to pay a certain fee.

There was a good deal of adverse comment by a few local residents against the proposal to treat patients (if any) from Mirboo in local "hospital", but from enquiries made, together with information supplied to us by Health Officer, we are satisfied the scheme is a wise one. The idea is to stamp out the disease in all parts of the state and there is little use one district taking every precaution if patients and contacts in an adjoining Shire cannot be properly dealt with. The Mirboo Shire is without a doctor and should there be an outbreak there the disease would be likely to spread rapidly for lack of attention and proper supervision. The act of patients being brought into Morwell is not at all likely to spread the disease in the town for patients will be brought here in emergency van and kept isolated. The nurses and others connected with hospital will also be isolated, whilst stretcher bearers will wear masks and gowns when moving patients. The influenza germs are unlike most germs owing to the fact that they live on nothing but human beings and can only be transmitted from one person to another by close contact. The germs quickly die in an unoccupied building and will not live on clothing or any such material. Consequently there is no danger of school children or others contracting the disease at a later date on account of school having been used as hospital.



## **EMERGENCY HOSPITAL-CELEBRATING ITS CLOSING**

*From Morwell Advertiser - August 29, 1919*

' At the invitation of Dr Sutcliffe and Staff of local Emergency Hospital, a very large and representative gathering assembled at the Mechanics' Institute on Friday evening to celebrate the final closing of the hospital. The hall was very tastefully decorated and the floor was specially prepared for the occasion.

During the evening Cr Dunbar, in addressing those present referred to the object of the gathering and said they were pleased that the influenza epidemic had moderated to such an extent that they were able to close the hospital. He said that when the epidemic reached such a stage that it was found necessary to procure an emergency hospital, a difficulty was found in securing a suitable place. The Mechanics' Hall was first thought of but it was not what was desired.

Subsequently the State School was inspected by Dr Sutcliffe and proved such an excellent place to meet requirements that it was speedily converted into emergency hospital. The Head Teacher (Mr Hart) did not like giving up the school but at the same time put no obstacle in the way, although it meant much inconvenience to him and his staff, the school requisites having to be removed to the Mechanics' Institute where school was conducted under somewhat trying conditions owing to the cold and unfavourable weather that prevailed.

After first influenza wave it was thought that the hospital could be closed, but a second followed so close on the first that it could not be closed. Then the second wave passed and there was a clamour by some to have the hospital closed permanently owing to the cost incurred in its upkeep. That course, however, was fortunately not adopted, for a third and more serious wave of the epidemic came along and in a very short time the hospital was full of patients and he ventured to say that had it not been for the hospital a number of deaths would have taken place. Two deaths did occur but they were cases that were of a most serious nature when they were admitted to hospital. Dr Sutcliffe worked night and day and the thanks of the community were due to them for their efforts in connections with the epidemic which had now been practically stamped out of the district. About 190 patients had been treated at the hospital.

*(Concerning the third wave of the epidemic)* - Only three days elapsed before influenza broke out with greater severity and on July 15th the hospital was again opened with Sister Ward in charge, assisted by Miss Daldo. Before many days had passed the hospital accommodation was taxed to its utmost, thirty patients being there at one time. Sister Morrow came to the assistance of Sister Ward, taking full night duty. They were aided by Sisters Mathias and Pederson and V.A.Ds Mrs Maher, Mrs Phillips, Misses Daldo, Hoyle, Firmin, Bond, B.Hart, L.Ridgeway, Lowe, McDonald, Hipwell and Hogben. Mrs Smith, whose duties were often very strenuous, was laundress. During this outbreak 75 patients were admitted and 72 discharged; 3 died.

Many times during these epidemics the strength of the Sisters and V.A.Ds was taxed to the utmost but they always willingly gave their strength forgetting self in their anxiety for the patients' welfare.