

MORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS
published monthly, except December

The Society meets every 3rd Tuesday of the month at
7.30 pm at Collins Street Primary School

Secretary: Mrs. E. McMaster phone 34 1149

Vol. 5

No. 3

MARCH 1989

EXCURSION PLANNED TO JUMBUK

TENTATIVE DATES SATURDAY APRIL 1 OR 8

DATE STILL TO BE CONFIRMED

MEMBERS WILL BE NOTIFIED BY

OUR SECRETARY

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became No. 1. Others on the list were Belvoir (now Wodonga), No. 37; Horsham, No. 298; Sale, No. 545; Wangaratta, No. 643. We can say, therefore, that in 1862 there were about 701 State schools (called common schools) that had been established as national or denominational schools sometime between 1852 and 1862.*

Since that period schools have been numbered consecutively as they opened. For the thirteen years, 1862 to 1874 inclusive, about 900 new schools were established, and from May 1875 to April 1879, a period of four years, there arose 600 new schools. The numbers of the following schools show this:—

Murtoa State School, No. 1549, May 1875.

Jung State School, No. 1728, April 1876.

Maryvale Ridge State School, No. 1939, November 1877.

Wallace State School, No. 2009, August 1878.

Morwell State School, No. 2136, April 1879.

The poor hut that served as the Maryvale Ridge State School was conceded as providing only temporary accommodation. When its replacement was being considered, the question of a more suitable, more central site was also raised. Those farmers who lived close to the Maryvale Ridge School would naturally enough have preferred the retention of the old site; but, as people began to cluster round the new railway station, a growing number began to insist on a school right in the township.

The first survey for a village at Morwell was made by James Robinson on the 25th of January 1878; and he marked out three blocks. Robinson carried out a further survey later that same year, adding three more blocks, and yet another in October 1882, so increasing the size of the village to nine blocks. Even at this stage there was some doubt as to whether this village was to be called Morwell or Maryvale. For example, a local storekeeper, Charles Oxtoby Gilbert, who had just arrived, wrote a letter to the Education Department on the 28th of January 1879 requesting that the "Board of Advice be instructed to come to this township of Maryvale to take evidence on the matter of a school site".

There was no such thing in 1878 as a school committee for each school. Instead, a central authority called the Board of Advice acted for all the schools in its wide area. Rosedale was the important town in this part of Gippsland; Morwell was within the boundaries of the Rosedale Shire; and the Rosedale Board of Advice, 25 miles away, was the authority to decide where the Morwell School was to be built—until the Morwell people bitterly protested. The Board of Advice had recommended, "after careful consideration, that the school should be built in the north-east angle of James Porter's selection, south of the railway line and within a mile of the township of Morwell".

It seems obvious to us, with the wisdom that subsequent events give us, that there could be no place to build a new school but in the township itself; yet it was only after some months of indecision that the site favoured by the board was abandoned and that an allotment within the boundaries of the village was set aside for a school. And there it is today.

* For an examination of the principles—and the practice—used in allotting school numbers, see "School No. 1—And Others", by the Editor, in *The Educational Magazine*, July 1958, pages 241-5.—EDITOR.

But, first of all, temporary accommodation on a temporary site had to be found. John Irving opened his school on the 3rd of April 1879 in premises off Tarwin Street (a modern chain store stands opposite) and owned by a Traralgon business man, Henry Breed. The building was a small butcher's shop that had been set up in 1877 to serve the construction gang working on the railway line. Tradesmen in those days followed the railway workers as they moved along, and catered for them with temporary, small businesses or branch businesses.

John Irving described the building thus :

It is situated next to and south of Donaldson's store in the eastern part of the township. It is built of hardwood, is unlined, and is fourteen feet long by twelve feet wide. I have had to exclude many children because the building cannot hold more than 25 or 30 pupils. It is too close to the business places, has no stove, no tank, no conveniences, and no playground. At the present time [May 1879] the cold is intense. The building is well-ventilated, [as] the upper part of the back wall consists of a kind of trellis-work, through which the rain pours in wet weather and the sun shines strongly in fine weather.

Inspector Holland commented that at times 46 to 50 children were packed into this schoolroom.

John Irving was 23 years old when he began teaching at Morwell. He was a son of Robert Irving, who opened a bakery business in Boolarra about 1884, and after whom Irving Street in Boolarra is named. John's sister, Barbara Irving, may have assisted him at the Morwell School during the first year, but she had her own school, Hazelwood Ridge School (1880-6). Then she married Mr. Norman Burnie of Melbourne. Their son, Dr. Alexander Burnie, has a practice in Melbourne and is also attached to the Alfred Hospital.

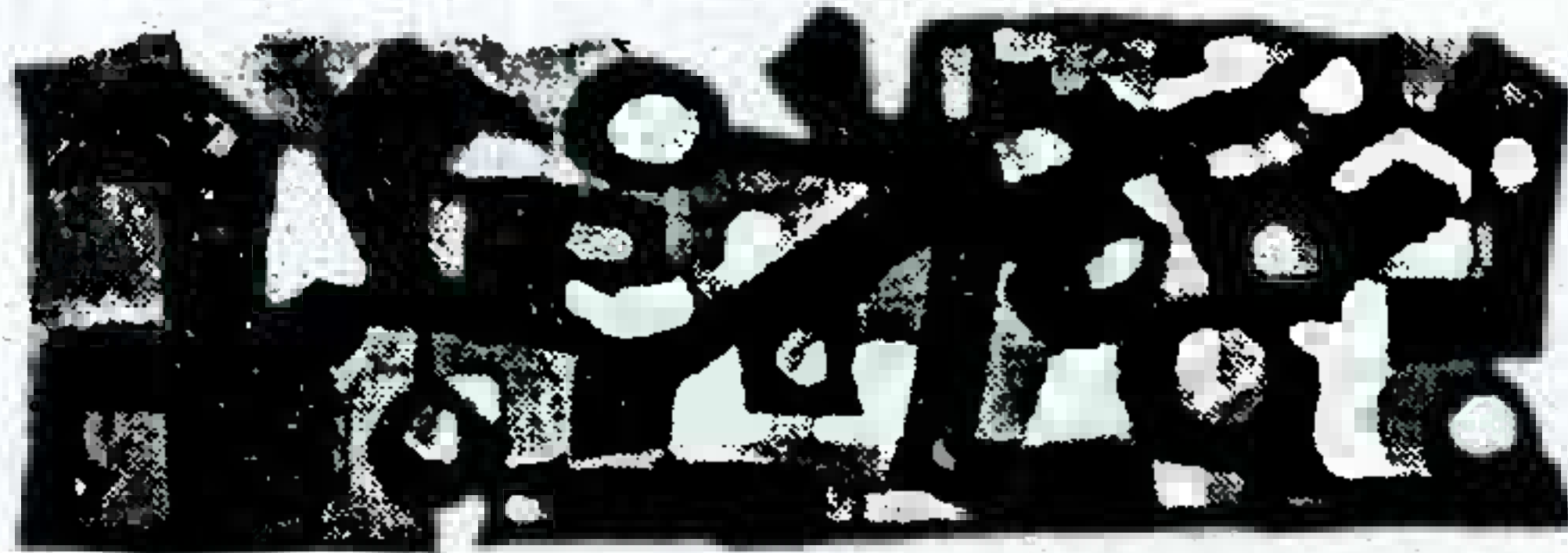
Another sister of John Irving was Miss Christina Irving, a pianist, who taught music at Morwell for many years. In fact, the Irving family was a very gifted one, particularly in music. John Irving himself played the violin and, when brother and sister practised at night together, some of the local people would gather outside to listen to the entertaining performances of the duettists. John Irving's son, Mr. Reginald Irving, lives in Fairview Street, Traralgon, and still has his father's violin, now well over a century old.

In 1880 John Irving married Miss Ina Grant of Yinnar. When the Roman Catholic School opened in Morwell in 1884, causing a big drop in the enrolment at the State school, John Irving transferred to Boolarra School, which in the circumstances could have been a bigger, more important school. Accommodation troubles at Morwell (for the school residence was tiny and unsatisfactory), apart from family reasons, also may have played their part in his transfer to Boolarra.

As well as being able to play the violin, John Irving could entertain an audience with his recitations. He was also in charge of a militia unit that he started at Morwell. At Boolarra he won a Bronze Medallion of the Royal Humane Society for an attempt to save the life of a housekeeper whose clothes had caught alight from a fire. The housekeeper died; John Irving spent several weeks in hospital, recovering from severe burns. He died of Bright's Disease in 1894 at the early age of 38, and is buried in Hazelwood Cemetery, four miles out of Morwell. His wife and children returned to Yinnar for a short time, and then Mrs. Irving opened a boarding-house in Morwell in

order to make a living. Her place was on the hill in the vicinity of the present Roman Catholic Church. Her neighbours were the Donaldson family on one side, and the Dustings and the Rowells on the other. Mr. Reg. Irving remembers hearing that one of the Donaldson girls, Grace Donaldson, aged eighteen years, was killed on New Year's Day 1881 when her horse bolted on the way to the annual picnic. The Donaldsons, the Dustings, and the Irvings have all gone from Morwell now, but the Rowell family still occupy their old home.

Mr. Reg. Irving has an excellent, enlarged photograph of his father, John Irving, a handsome, intelligent-looking man, a pioneer teacher, and a highly esteemed early citizen of Morwell.



A U T O M A T I O N

HOW WILL IT AFFECT THE SUPPLY AND THE LEISURE OF DOCTORS AND TEACHERS ?

IT TAKES A MINIMUM of fifteen years to turn a first-year medical student into a consultant. Allowing ten years to build and equip a new medical school, we ought soon to begin to build the medical schools necessary to produce the consultants we shall need in the year 2000. Similar needs will arise in connexion with education, housing, roads, and other necessities ; and our existing road problems show how little we have prepared for what could have been foreseen. This is not a matter of obtaining more knowledge, but of persuading the government to use the knowledge we have. *Automation will make little difference to doctors, midwives, nurses, or school teachers.* At present we have too few of all of these, and as the population increases, so will the shortage. *Are we then to envisage a state of affairs in which the industrial part of our population enjoys compulsory leisure, while the professional part continues to be overworked ?* All that automation means is that fewer people are needed to do certain jobs. *Should we not now be preparing for this by expanding the opportunities and incentives in medicine, nursing, and teaching to encourage more people to work in these fields ?* The benefits of automation would then be more evenly spread among those who work, and the community as a whole would benefit.

Wishful thinking?

—From the presidential address given to the British Association for the Advancement of Science by LORD BRAIN, formerly a president of the Royal College of Physicians and a specialist in neurology.

1946

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MORWELL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

WITH the president, Mr. W. D. Jenkins in the chair, the monthly meeting of the Morwell Chamber of Commerce took place on 14th May last. In view of the non-existence of a progressive association in the town, the Chamber is endeavouring to handle, within its capacity and under the limitations of its constitution, many matters of urgent public interest, which do not ordinarily come within the province of a Chamber of Commerce. Nevertheless the members are strongly of opinion that the time is ripe for the formation of a citizens' organisation with a wider scope of membership, with which the Chamber would be pleased to co-operate in all matters concerning the welfare of the town and the progress and prosperity of the district.

Yallourn Kindergarten

An application by the secretary of the Yallourn Community Kindergarten Association for support in the establishment of a kindergarten in Yallourn was discussed, and it was agreed that the matter of contributions thereto could more appropriately be left to individual business houses than to the Chamber.

Multi-Purpose School at Moe

The meeting had before it a copy of a letter addressed to Mr. H. J. Hyland, M.L.A., by the Minister of Public Instruction (Mr. Field), notifying the Minister's approval of a recommendation for the erection of the Multi-Purpose school at Moe, also certain extracts from the official file, supplied through Mr. Hyland, in connection with this matter. Members took particular exception to the unwarranted inference contained in a report, which appears on the file, from the District Inspector of Schools (Mr. O. C. Phillips), dated 7th August, 1945, and reading as follows:—

"As this is to be a school serving a district there appears to be no reason why it should be established in close proximity to an open cut. IT WOULD APPEAR CERTAIN THAT A MOVEMENT OF POPULATION WILL BE AWAY FROM MORWELL AND THAT THE WORKERS WILL WISH TO LIVE AT MOE AND TRARALGON. Present indications are that a site at Moe or the Yallourn site referred to in (1) (near Herne's Oak) would be more suitable if coal mining operations are to commence at Morwell."

Speakers pointed out that nobody in this town had ever represented to the Education Department that the school "should be established in close proximity to an open cut". There were numerous sites available outside the probable dust area. On the matter of the "apparent certainty of the movement of population away from Morwell and the desire of the workers to live in Moe or Traralgon", the meeting agreed that if this view was

inspired by Government policy, a deputation should be arranged to wait on the Premier to clarify the position on this point. Three members of the Chamber (Messrs W. Jenkins, D. G. Scammell and J. G. Lawless) were appointed to approach the council at its meeting next day for its co-operation in this move.

Commercial Road Bus Shelter

Satisfaction was expressed at the receipt of information from the shire secretary that tenders for the shelter would be re-advertised and the construction proceeded with if a suitable tender was received.

Comforts Station

Advice was received from the council that a grant had been applied for to erect in Morwell a station of a type similar to that at Moe. The availability of the land considered most suitable as a location for the structure is also being investigated.

Town Plan

The shire secretary informed the Chamber the matter of preparing a plan is being held over until a clearer idea of the regional scheme is obtained. A motion was unanimously adopted that the council be requested to take the earliest action to zone the town for location of industries. It was pointed out that at the present time there was nothing to prevent the establishment of industries in residential areas with the possibility of thereby scaling down house values in such areas.

Train Services

The secretary was in receipt of a reply from the secretary, Victorian Railways, to his request that the 6.20 a.m. Warragul-Melbourne train originate at Traralgon. The department is making enquiries and further advice is awaited.

In regard to the evening express train from Traralgon to Warragul, which the Chamber is pressing to pick up at Morwell and Moe, the department advised that observations are being made as to numbers travelling to and from certain points, and it is expected that enough facts will be available at an early date on which to base a decision.

Yallourn Bus Service

The secretary, Transport Regulation Board, advised the Chamber that the request for delaying the departure of at least one of the Saturday morning shopping buses had been taken up with the operator and the result would be communicated in due course.

A.P.M. Representation

Mr. R. S. Lee, Assistant Resident District Manager, Pulp Production, will take over A.P.M. representation in the Chamber, vice Mr. J. Andrews.

Message for Empire Day.

BY THE EARL OF GOWRIE

(President of the Empire Day Movement)
THIS first Empire Day after the end of a great world war, which threatened the structure of human society and blighted human relationships, finds a mood in which we may easily be discouraged, losing faith and hope in those ideals which inspired our war effort.

Now the dangers of war are removed it is imperative to appreciate that dangers, though less apparent, threaten the peace of the world. Suspicion, revenge and suspicion among the peoples of the earth, the future confronts us with the challenge as to whether material power and economic necessity are to mould our destiny or whether, by conscious endeavour, the spirit of man can govern events. Let us direct our forward march toward the highest attainments of human wisdom and universal goodwill.

Unless our great victory inspires us to make a fresh start to meet the desperate human need for peace and stability, based upon friendship between races and creeds of mankind, our success and suffering will have been in vain. An even greater effort, therefore, is demanded from each one of us to exercise patience and stern resolution during the coming years of reconstruction. By these achievements will the character of the British peoples be judged.

What interpretation of human relationships does the British Empire offer this bewildered and distracted world? The loyalty and unity so strikingly manifested by our Empire peoples, of all races and creeds, is proof of our understanding and co-operation between nations are within the reach of all mankind. We have shown that by tolerance, patience, and self-restraint, it is possible for nations to strive together for common ideals of freedom and mutual being. In the universal acceptance of these principles lies our hope for the future.

The celebration of this Empire Day is therefore the dedication to faithful service of our Empire in its great task of promoting world peace and goodwill in overcoming the passions and divisions which to-day threaten the destruction of our civilisation. May God bless us with wisdom and sincerity in all our endeavours.

School Notes.

THE State School's War Relief Committee was closed down at the end of the year, but the pupils of the Morwell School carried on their fine work through their Social Service League, which encourages its members in an admirable spirit of service to others.

Two special appeals have been issued to support this year, the Children's Hospital and Food for Britain, the very first of 1946 being subscribed by

Phones—Traralgon 258 — — Morwell 1.

UNDERTAKERS

Morwell Mechanics' Institute.

The annual meeting of subscribers to local Mechanics' Institute was to have been held on Thursday evening last, but in consequence of the small attendance it was resolved to postpone the meeting until this evening.

The Institute is a public concern and it is to be hoped that town-people will take at least sufficient interest in it to attend the annual meeting, at which the financial position and other matters will be discussed and committee of management for ensuing year elected.

Instruction in Swimming.

On Friday, the 4th inst, the boys of the Morwell North (Latrobe) State School had their first lesson in swimming, under the instruction of Mr Keamy, the H. T. of the above school. There were 8 pupils to be taught. As the result of two hours' lesson 4 boys were taught to swim. The new swimmers, and the distances they could swim were—Robert Baillie 20 yds; Ronald Rae 12 yds; Stanley Costello 9 yds; George Marshall 4 yds. The above shows that it is not hard to learn the useful and exercising art of swimming.

District News

YINNAR SOUTH.

At last the results of the Yinnar South School exams are to hand. Two of the three scholars in Grade 8, Thomas Walker and Helen Gilbert, obtained merit certificates, the third scholar having got hers the previous year. The only scholar in grade 6, John Gilbert passed the qualifying Exam. The Yinnar South School has been fortunate in having a succession of painstaking and conscientious teachers and for several years every candidate for a certificate has been successful and in the majority of cases the candidates have been below the average age.

Boolarra

During the past few weeks bush fires have been raging in various parts of the district and whilst a lot of good has no doubt been effected by burning up a lot of timber and rubbish, a great deal of damage has likewise been done.

Mr D. Latter had the misfortune to lose about 130 sheep through a fire that swept from an adjoining holding and raced through his paddock at Sassarfass Creek, at a terrific pace. In rescuing some other stock Mr Latter himself, who was surrounded by fire, had a narrow escape. He, however, succeeded

Morwell Open-cut.

UNIONS "STRANGLE-HOLD." WHY STRIKERS AGREE TO TERMS.

In explaining the decision of the State Ministry that applications for work at Morwell would not be accepted unless the men signed the stipulated conditions of employment before 10 o'clock on Saturday 5th inst, the State Attorney General (Mr Robinson) said on Friday last that information had been received that the men had afterwards been advised to sign, as the Australian Coal and Shale Employees' Federation desired "to retain its grip at Morwell." "It is fairly obvious," Mr Robinson added, "that the black coal interests desire to retain a 'strangle-hold' on the brown coal undertaking." About 90 unionists are affected by the Ministry's decision.

Reviewing the dispute at the open-cut, Mr Robinson said that the rates of wages at Morwell had been fixed by a wages board constituted at the request of the employees, supported by members of the labor party. The Ministry could not permit interference by the Hibble tribunal, nor would it agree to any section of its employees jumping from one tribunal to another to gain some advantage over the rest of the men employed in other State departments and undertakings. Immediately after the advertisement appeared offering employment at Morwell on the department's terms, a large number of applications were received, nearly 600 arriving in five days. All these applicants had signed the published statement of the conditions as stipulated. The men already on the field had been warned to sign before Saturday, and they were also informed that future operations would not necessitate the employment of as large a number of men as previously. Those who failed to obtain employment at Morwell were offered work at Wonthaggi. At the meeting of the men on Tuesday, when it was decided to sign the statement a speaker advised the men to apply for employment, as the federation desired to retain its "grip" on the industry. The Ministry, however, decided that the remaining men to be engaged were to be selected from those who had applied for work within the time fixed. The time for granting free railway passes to either Morwell or Wonthaggi was extended until Monday.

"It will be observed," Mr Robinson continued, "that every facility was given to those on strike to apply for re-engagement; that they were offered preference in employment; that they were notified of the closing of the applications, but that they refused to apply within the time limited. Those who have lost employment at Morwell, if genuine coal-miners will be able to find work at Wonthaggi, and the reopening of the Jumbun mine affords

Progress Association

A meeting, convened by Mr E Vary, J P., for the purpose of forming a local Progress Association, was held in the Mechanics' Lodge Room on Tuesday evening last. Over thirty were present and all seemed of the one mind regarding the advisability of forming a progress association.

Apologies for absence were received from Rev. A. J. Smith, Mr Stirling and Mr C. Davey, the latter making a number of suggestions regarding matters that he recommended Association to take up.

Mr Vary, who presided, in explaining the object of the meeting, said a progress association was urgently needed in Morwell. A number of important matters were sadly neglected and many things that should be pushed forward were overlooked.

Mr Bert Thompson moved: That an association be formed to be called the Morwell and District Progress Association.

In seconding the proposition, Mr Ben Ronald said he thought Morwell was very much in need of a Progress Association. He added that on looking round the room he was surprised to see a number of townspeople absent that he thought should be present.

On being put the motion was carried unanimously.

The following office bearers were subsequently elected:—

- President, Mr L. Vary
- Vice-Presidents, Messrs B. Ronald and Southorn
- Secretary and Treasurer, Mr C. Crawley.

Some discussion took place with regard to committee. Mr Poynter said the Berwick Progress Association had a committee of 16. Mr A. McDonald said a former local Progress Association had a committee of five. Mr Evans said the Murtoa Progress Association had a committee of seven and had done a great deal to advance that town. Mr Southorn favored a committee of seven. The Chairman said they wanted a committee of good, live energetic men who would push things along.

It was afterwards resolved that a committee of seven be appointed. Eight persons were nominated and on a ballot being taken the following were duly elected:—Messrs Poynter, Morrison, Galloway, Kelly, Langdon, Read and L. Davey.

The membership fee was fixed at 5/6. An amendment that fee be 2/6 was lost.

It was resolved that copies of rules be obtained from Progress Associations at Murtoa and Traralgon.

A number of matters were then suggested that the Association

BOW

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The Salei very friendl They nestled even "hugge ites, however and frequentl Kitty's side, t to "cut thei was, neverth

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of Morwell Historical Society Incorporated will be held on TUESDAY, MARCH 21, in the staff room of Collins St. State School, Morwell at 7.30 p.m.

Business.

1. To confirm the minutes of the A.G.M. of Morwell Historical Society held on April 19, 1988.
2. To receive reports from the President and Secretary.
3. To receive and consider the financial statement and report to be forwarded to the Registrar of Incorporated Associations.

4. To elect: President.

Vice-President

Secretary

Treasurer

A committee consisting of not less than two ordinary members in addition to the above-mentioned office-bearers.

Nominations for the above positions should be lodged in writing, and with the endorsement of the candidate, with the secretary, by Tuesday March 14, 1989. If insufficient nominations are received by that date, those members nominated will be declared elected and further nominations will be received at the Annual Meeting.

Nomination forms are available from the Secretary, 2 Harold St. Morwell
Phone (051) 341149.

A SELECTOR'S LOT.....

The latest issue of GIPPSLAND HERITAGE JOURNAL contains an excellent article by Stephen Legg on the information available from Dept. of Crown Lands and Survey Selection Files. As an example of the material available, he offers extracts from the correspondence of Lee Hing Jacgung who selected land at Jeeralang in 1885. Selectors were expected to pay rent on their blocks with a view to ultimately obtaining the freehold title. Many failed, defeated by the weather, bad roads, steep hills, poor communications etc. Mr. Jacgung persevered and finally obtained his title but the following extracts from his letters to the Lands Department, explaining his rent arrears, give some idea of the tremendous difficulties faced by the pioneer farmers in our hill country. (His words are here paraphrased - actual wording is printed in G.H.J.)

July 1885 - great expense in taking possession of land, building a house - also loss of a valuable horse.

March 1887 - maize crop failed to ripen - also stock losses.

July 1887 - roads impassable due to heavy rain in last couple of months so unable to get produce to market.

April 1890 - 1888-1889 caterpillars ate all the grass in the district - cattle died as a result and had to be replaced.

March 1892 - severe stock losses including milkers and a valuable mare.

March 1893 - season unfavourable - unable to sell stock unless at a loss.

September 1893 - potatoes harvested but unable to get them to market due to state of the roads - hopes to do so in a couple of months.

February 1896 - last two seasons very bad causing very low returns on produce - lost seven milkers and his only draught horse last winter. (The cows through being so poor, the horse through an accident.) Last November sent two trucks of potatoes to Melbourne - they realised 15/- per ton - on that he had to pay 9/- cartage, 7/8 railway freight, 3/- for bays (bags?) and 1/5 commission and weighing per ton.

March 1899 - Mr. Jacgung's own words: "I am really unable to pay my rents. I was completely burnt out on Feb. 4th, 1898, losing house, dairy, hay and cowsheds, all out-buildings besides crops and all my fencing.

And now I have had the caterpillars since the beginning of December until lately, and after they disappeared the grasshoppers have come in their place, completely eating up all the grass. I have had to shepherd my cows on the road or wherever I could get a little grass, all my other stock being turned out as I could not afford to pay for paddocks. it has taken all that I have made to pay for horse feed and all other expenses incurred (after the bushfires) during the winter, and rebuildings, the house not being complete yet for lack of means."

February 1901 - caterpillar plagues in the two seasons since the bushfire - wet weather set in in April last year and continued up to beginning of last month - ground so chilled there was little growth of grass.

January 1902 - wet and cold right to end of November, then a jump straight into summer - no spring so little grass growth - had to cart chaff from Morwell to keep cows alive.

**In April 1903, L.H. Jacgung applied for his freehold title - it was granted in May.

ITEMS OF INTEREST.

1. FROM OUR FEBRUARY MEETING:

The \$5,000 remaining of the Shire of Morwell Bicentennial Grant has been received by the Society and invested until needed for the Pictorial History project

The Shire of Morwell has undertaken to replace the seat stolen from the area outside the Senior Citizens Club in Maryvale Cres. The Society has ordered a brass plaque to be erected on or near the new seat when it is installed. The seat and plaque are a memorial to Mr. I.T.Maddern, former President of Morwell Historical Society, and commemorate his contribution to the research and recording of the history of this area.

2. FROM R.H.S.V. NEWSLETTERS FEB./ MARCH.

During 1989 the R.H.S.V.'s rooms and library at the old Royal Mint will be open on the first Saturday of each month from 2.30pm to 5.00 pm.

P.R.O. Free Bus Service: The Public Records Office is running a free bus service Monday to Friday from the City Search Room at 318 Little Bourke St. to Laverton. Buses leave the City for Laverton at 9.30 am and 1 pm and return from Laverton at 12.15pm and 4 pm. To be sure of a seat you should book at least a day in advance. Enquiries to the City Search Room (03)663 3434.

The R.H.S.V. is publishing an invaluable guide for researchers into Victorian land records entitled "LANDS MANUAL: A FINDING GUIDE FOR VICTORIAN LAND RECORDS". It will sell at \$20 for members or \$25 for non-members but you can order a copy at the pre-publication price of \$15 from

The Director

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Red Cross call for help

NEWS
LINE

NEWS
LINE

THROUGHOUT the recent 'Ash Wednesday' fires and closer to home the Morwell fires, the bravery of the volunteers was admired.

But there was one group of volunteers who went about their work after the damage was done and helped to make day to day living that bit easier — The Red Cross.

It is just one of the many volunteer groups now so vital to Australians, whether in times of natural disaster, war, or family crisis.

During the Morwell fires, in which two houses were destroyed, one

family lost everything. The next day was to have been spent celebrating the little girl's fifth birthday; however, all the gifts they had bought her were destroyed in the blaze.

However, the young child did receive a birthday gift from the Red Cross. Along with her birthday present the family received new clothing, blankets, bed linen, towels, toiletries and shoes.

These helpful goods were received the day after the blaze and the speed with which they were given to the family typifies Red Cross action.

Red Cross volunteers give of themselves right through the year and ask for little in return. However, March is Red Cross Calling month. It is the only time of the year they ask the public to dig into their pockets and wallets to help them help others.

This year the target is \$2,300. Last year's target of \$2000 was reached easily, and they hope that people will be just as generous this year.

Red Cross are also asking for volunteer doorknockers to spare an hour or two of their time on March 19 and 20.

This year much of the money Red Cross hope to raise will be spent on disaster relief. Local Red Cross teams have spent most of their reserves helping with food and clothing for bush fire victims and fire fighters, all over the State.

If you can't help by knocking on doors and collecting, please remember to give generously when your door is opened to a Red Cross caller, and help Red Cross help.

RED CROSS CALL FOR HELP

This heading on Page 3, Newsline of the Express of 3/3/1983 was of special interest to me. We are in the midst of the 1989 Red Cross Calling at the present time. I hope members of our Historical Society will forgive me for using space in this newsletter to give Red Cross a 'plug'

As the President of the Morwell Red Cross unit and assistant organiser of the Calling in the Shire I know something of its history. Since that article was printed in 1983 we have found it increasingly difficult to get enough callers to cover the Shire. A number of local helpers of past years are no longer fit or able to do it. Although most of the collecting throughout the state is done over one week-end in March we have permission to continue collecting until the end of the month.

So any of our readers who have not had a caller yet, keep your cheque books handy! There is still time or you could post it to: Appeal Chairman, Red Cross Calling, 171 City Road, Sth Melbourne, 3205.

N.B I dont know what our target here is this year but I know it's many times higher than that quoted in this 1983 article. Readers can you guess why?

Morwell and District

The 1980's

Again a few notes from copies of the Express in the 1980's. This time from some 1983 editions. In regard to the entry of the headline 'Red Cross call for help' you will find the whole article reproduced on another page of this newsletter. These, too, you will find our reason for doing this.

As before, the date of the paper in which each headline was found is on the left.

- Tuesday 11/1/1983 - Sharpe - Market - New Owners plan. Mr. Rom Ambrose who bought the property has plans to turn it into a miniature Victoria market shopping area.
- Thursday 20/1/1983 - Mid-Valley Units still uncertain.
- Tuesday 25/1/83 - Declare drought call for Morwell Shire. Council has applied to the State Government to have the shire declared a drought stricken area.
- Tuesday 8/2/1983 - Anger against too many flats being built forces Morwell Shire Council to develop a strategy to regulate this.
- Thursday 10/2/83 - Was it a fire bug? Valley Black Day last Tuesday (8th). The hunt was on for a possible firebug following fires raging in L.V.
- Thursday 17/2/83 - Industry stumps - Survey shows Gippsland increasingly hit by recession.
- Thursday 3/3/83 - Red Cross call for your help.
- Tuesday 15/3/1983 - \$3.8million. Riddle. Government asks why Mid-Valley Units still empty.
- Thursday 24/3/83 - Rain by the foot - Rainfull up to 300mm - or 1 foot by the old scale were reported in the Strzelecks this week - 8 inches (200mm) at Willung, Traralgon 101mm, Morwell 100mm, Moe 55mm.

THE EARLY SCHOOLS OF MORWELL DISTRICT

Part 3 : Morwell School No. 2136

THE MAIN GIPPSLAND LINE was built in five sections or stages, beginning from Sale at one end and from Oakleigh at the other. The sections in the order of, and with the date of, their completion were :

- SALE to MORWELL, the 1st of June 1877
- OAKLEIGH to BUNYIP, the 8th of October 1877
- MORWELL to MOE, the 1st of December 1877
- BUNYIP to MOE, the 1st of March 1878
- SOUTH YARRA to OAKLEIGH, the 2nd of April 1879.

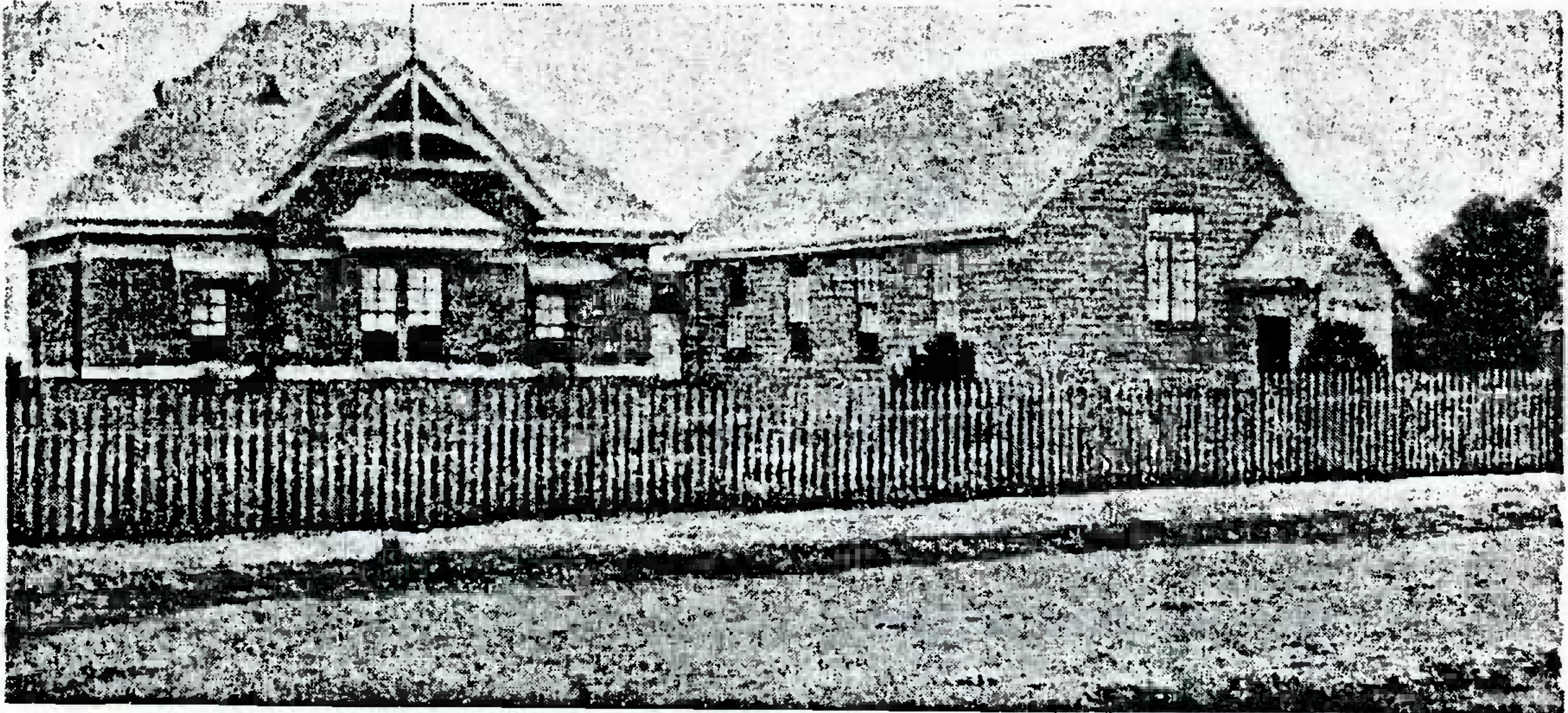
John Irving, the first teacher to be appointed to School No. 2136, was stationed at Sebastopol School, Ballarat, when he received notice of his transfer to Morwell. He travelled to Melbourne from Ballarat on the 1st of April 1879, and to Morwell on the following day. He must, therefore, have boarded the first through train from Melbourne to Sale by a coincidence that seems to stress the undoubted connexion between closer settlement, more railways, and the opening of new schools.

Few of the inhabitants knew that he had arrived. Only twelve pupils appeared on the first morning, Thursday the 3rd of April 1879, and only sixteen pupils were enrolled on the first day. From then on, however, the average daily attendance rose to 37 pupils.

Morwell township had begun in 1877 with a railway station and nothing more, if we exclude a camp of railway workers. In scores of settlements such as Morwell the original focus changed with the coming of the railway. In this area Morwell Bridge, where the coach road crossed the Morwell River three miles from the present town, gave place to the railway township of Morwell.

The requirements of railway engineering had most to do with these changes. Whereas original settlements were established on low ground, close to watercourses or a water-supply, the railway engineers could build their stations or stopping-places only on level ground or higher ground, since engines could not pull heavy loads up a slope from a standing start. This mechanical need of railway engines is the reason why modern Morwell stands on a slight rise, some distance from the river, and on a higher level than the Morwell Bridge.

The number of a school gives us a clue as to the year of its establishment. When the single Board of Education took over in 1862 from the earlier dual control, its common schools were numbered in alphabetical order. Alberton School, although not the oldest school,



SCHOOL No. 2136 (COMMERCIAL ROAD SCHOOL, MORWELL) AS
IT WAS IN 1910

The weatherboard building in front at the right is the old school, built in 1880. It is no longer in existence, having been replaced by today's much larger structure. The brick building, erected in 1906 and shown here, has been incorporated in, and surrounded on three sides by, the larger building of more recent years. The roofing of this old brick section can still be recognized, and the wall on the extreme left of the photograph is still part of the outside wall. The old bricks used here can be distinguished from the newer bricks in the remaining sections of the eastern wall of today's school.

HEAD TEACHERS OF THE SCHOOL

The following is the complete list of the head teachers of Commercial Road School, Morwell, from its beginning in 1879 :

1879-84 JOHN IRVING
 1884-95 THOMAS FERGUSON
 1895-1903 THOMAS SLATTERY
 1903-5 JOHN ROBERTSON
 1905 JOHN BETHEL
 1905-7 JAMES TIPPING
 1907 ALEXANDER HAMPTON
 1908 DUGALD W. MCPHEE
 1909-17 ROBERT DICKSON
 1917-20 HENRY C. HART
 1920-5 ROBERT H. MORRISON
 1925-9 ARTHUR R. FORSYTH
 1929-37 EDGAR S. HALL
 1937 THOMAS E. HUTTINANCE
 1937-42 REGINALD E. GARLICK
 1942-9 JOHN A. GOYEN
 1949-52 STEPHEN HARTUP
 1952-7 JAMES R. ELLIOT
 1957-62 JOHN H. STURTZ
 1963 AUGUSTINE L. BRENNAN