

MORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NEWSLETTER

published monthly, except December

Meetings: 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7.30 pm
in St. Andrews Presbyterian Church Hall

Vol. 9 No. 3

MARCH 1993

A HOME OF OUR OWN AT LAST !

The news this month is all good! Morwell City Council has agreed to lease to Morwell Historical Society, for \$50 per year, the Foyer of the Old Town Hall. This will provide space for meetings, storage and displays and will enable us to remove from members' garages, sunrooms etc all the material for which we have not had suitable accommodation. We will be able to organise and catalogue materials, make research facilities available to the public, mount displays and accept more of the many articles of historical significance which have been offered to us by the public but for which we have not had appropriate storage space. We are now on the lookout for some reasonably priced filing cabinets, map cabinets, display cases, bookshelves etc.

In 1942, local resident Llew Vary wrote a series of articles for the 'Morwell Advertiser and Gazette' which he compiled mainly from primary sources (ie conversations, letters etc of people living at the time about which he was writing). We will reprint these articles over the coming months and our thanks go to member Claire Wood for locating and copying the articles.

Also in this issue, Queensland member Gwenda Booth (nee Jones) writes about her very memorable 15th birthday at Jeeralang.

** NB ANNUAL MEETING - TUESDAY MARCH 16 - See you there.

FROM



R.H.S.V. HISTORY NEWS

No. 135 MARCH 1993

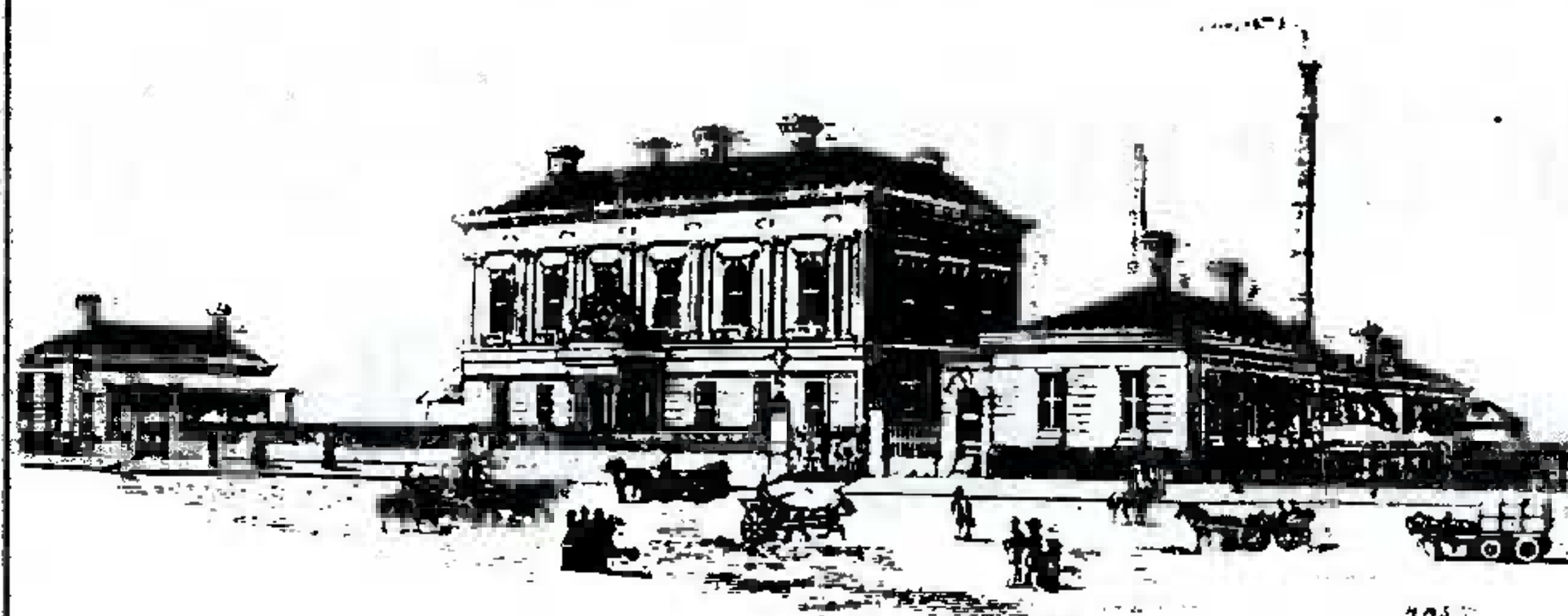
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THE ROYAL MINT MELBOURNE (BUILT 1872)

Come and discover the history of one of Melbourne's finest buildings from the goldrush years.



A permanent exhibition of photographs and artefacts relating to the impact of gold and the establishment of the Royal Mint is on view in the main foyer of the historic Administration Building of the Mint. You will find that there are many outstanding features to delight the eye throughout the entire building, including the magnificent Bullion Room and Deputy Master's quarters. You will also be able to take in a stroll in the surrounding gardens and historic precinct.

Special events and tours have been organised for the Victorian Heritage Festival. For further details please contact: the secretary, Royal Historical Society of Victoria (Tel. 670-1219).

ROYAL MINT OPENINGS

In the November issue of *History News* the President invited requests from country societies for special Sunday openings of the Old Royal Mint. Would your Society like to pay us a visit?

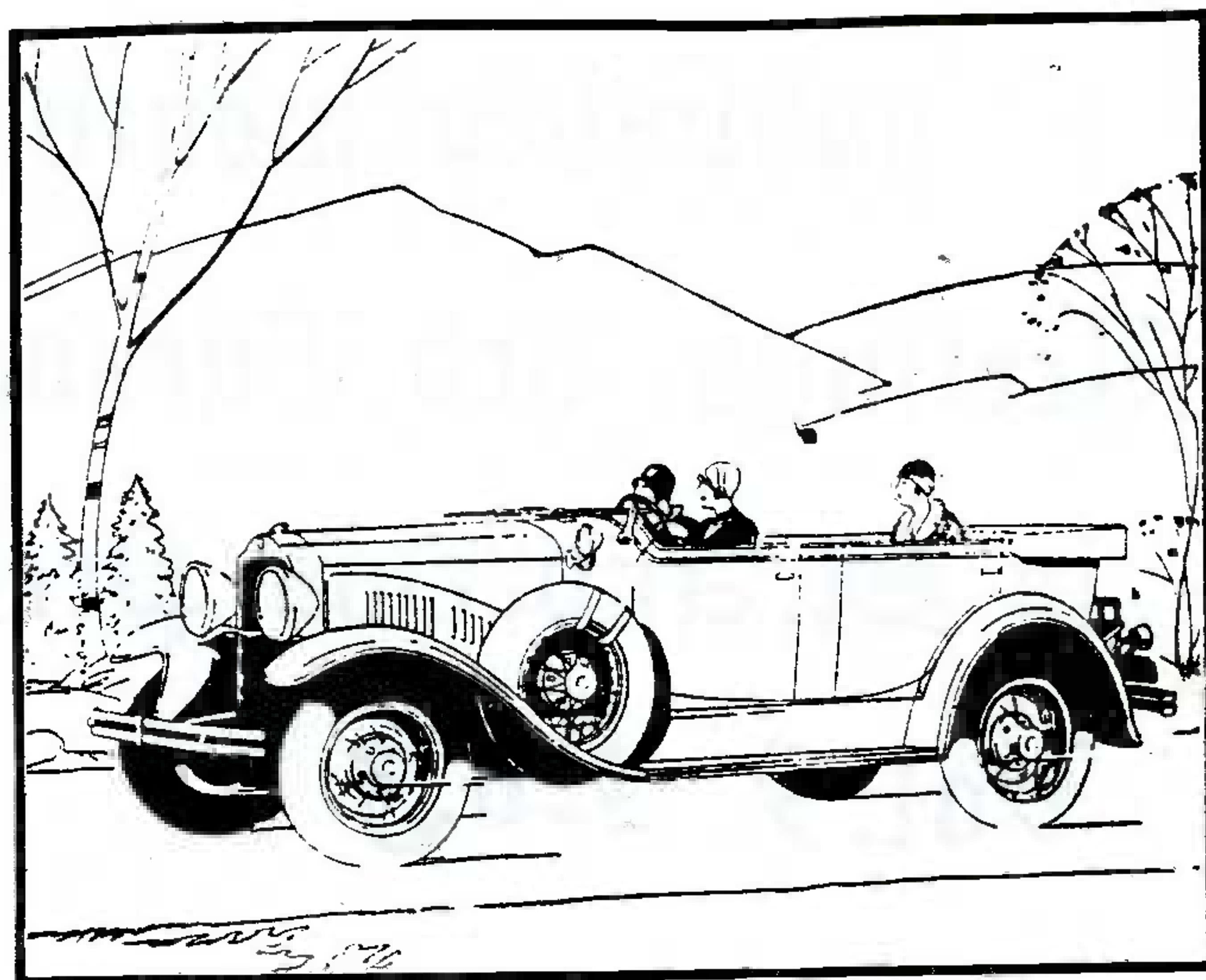
PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE OPEN DAY

The Public Record Office will be holding an Open Day at its Laverton Repository (57 Cherry Lane, Laverton North) on Sunday 4 April as part of the Victorian Heritage Festival. The Repository will be open from 10 am until 4 pm.

Open Day provides a rare opportunity for the public to look behind the scenes at the Public Record Office, to see the Repository at work, to visit the conservation laboratory, to talk to staff about doing genealogical or other historical research using the resources of the PRO and to meet representatives from genealogical and historical societies. There will be talks during the day, and displays of records. The main display will feature Frederick Deeming who was hanged in 1892. NORMAL REFERENCE SERVICES WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE.

For further information ring either 651-4131 or 369-3244.

"WILL YOU COME FOR A DRIVE IN THE TALBOT?"



The Edwardian Era In Melbourne

An exhibition of historical photographs and archival material dating back to the turn of the century from the Royal Historical Society of Victoria collection

Venue: Royal Mint, 280 William Street, Melbourne

19 March until 7 May 1993 Mon.-Fri 10.00am.-4.00pm.,
also Sun. 28 March 10.00am.-4.00pm

VETERAN CAR RALLY, GUIDED TOURS, MONSTER BOOK SALE SUNDAY 28 MARCH 10 AM - 4 PM

Linked to our 'Talbot' Exhibition, the Veteran Car Club conducting a rally of veteran, vintage and classic cars, commercial vehicles and motor cycles, making the Royal Mint the centre of activities. Special permission has been given for these vehicles to park in the Flagstaff Gardens and in the vicinity of the Mint. The many vehicles expected will tour the city, with occupants dressed in period costume.

PHOTOGRAPH RESTORATION AND PRESERVATION

- WITH A DIFFERENCE!

Cheaper and better than traditional methods, our process allows you to restore and preserve your family photographs digitally. Repairs are easier, much cheaper, and much more effective. Archives are on CD, the photographic archive of the future. Prices for restoration start at \$30, archiving from \$5 (plus the cost of the CD).

For more information contact Guy Morton at Heritage Printers on (03) 470-4454.

HARKING BACK

Llew Vary

From 'Morwell Advertiser and Gazette' July 30 1942

At the request of some of my friends who, like myself, are always interested in the early settlers and their doings, I am going to endeavor to describe the early settlement of Morwell and the surrounding districts, and for the present I will confine myself to the happenings before the railway was built in 1878.

These reminiscences are compiled from gleanings while listening to my father and other early settlers and for some of it the writer is indebted to Mr Cabin Cox of Mirboo North, whose eldest sister Clara Kate Cox was born on Maryvale on the 11th January 1864, but I will refer to this later.

First of all I have no records of how Morwell came by its name, actually the Morwell River was named long before the township was ever thought of but as there is a small village or district in Cornwall (England) by that name it is most likely that is how the Morwell river got its name and, of course, the township which is situated on that river would naturally be called by the same name. The district was originally three cattle stations namely Maryvale, Hazelwood and Merton Rush.

There was also Scrubby Forest where Yinnar now stands, and The Wilderness situated on the south of Wilderness Creek but I will leave these two runs till a later date.

Maryvale - "The Homestead of which was built on the spot where Mr John Ronald's house now stands, and the Prem. Right on the Latrobe River, and is now owned by the Derham family" was taken up in the very early days, probably in the late fifties, by Patrick Coady-Buckley, who came over from Sydney and took up Prospect (now known as Seaspray), Woodside, and later Maryvale, which he used mainly as a big weaning paddock. Travelling his weaners (calves) which he bred on the other stations, by road to Maryvale. This was done for two reasons - Firstly to wean them and secondly to make them tractable so as they would be easier to handle when, at a later date, they would have to be sent to market. Stockmen know what a contract it is to drive cattle that have never been off the run on which they were bred.

Maryvale was bounded on the north by the Latrobe River, on the west by the Morwell River and on the east and south by the Traralgon and Hazelwood Stations respectively. It is my intention to take each station separately, and describe the early settlers down the more recent years, which can be remembered by many present day residents, and should I overlook any of these I will be grateful to anyone who will give me any information.

Patrick-Coady-Buckley, who took up Maryvale was described to me by my father, who knew him, as a tall thin wiry man, and a very good bushman, as proved by the fact that he came over from Sydney with his stock accompanied only by his two black boys. There is a little story about this that I think worth mentioning at this stage. Angus McMillan, as is generally known, was the discoverer of Gippsland, and after doing so went back to Sydney and reported his find to Governor King of N.S.W. At that time Victoria was part of N.S.W. Governor King ordered McMillan to form a party and make a further survey of this wonderful pasture land, and sent his nephew John King, who took up Nambrok and built that beautiful homestead, with the party to act as Land Commissioner. The reason for this was so the squatters could register their holdings here and there save them the long trip over the Alps to Sydney to do so. Buckley tried hard to get into this party which was made up of those early North Gippsland squatters, but as he was not (shall I say) an aristocrat, he was left out. Not to be outdone, he started off with his black boys through Gelantipy and settled on Prospect, where he built a homestead and resided until his death in the early seventies. He was a bachelor and employed a Mr and Mrs Ricketts and daughter as stockman and housekeeper. After some years both Mr and Mrs Ricketts died and were buried on the station a few hundred yards from the homestead. The writer saw this grave at the time when the property was being cut up for soldier settlement.

Miss Ricketts continued as housekeeper after her parents' death and became engaged to be married to Buckley, but before the wedding took place he

HARKING BACK (cont)

took ill and died without making a will, and although many claimed relationship, none could prove their claim and the whole of his estate reverted to the Crown and was afterwards thrown open for selection. Thus ended the career of one of those hardy pioneers who blazed the track so that we could find the way to prosperity.

In those days the only mode of transport to and from Melbourne was by coach, which rattled along the Old Melbourne Road a couple of times a week, and one of the changing places was on the hill above the Morwell Bridge, now known as Kaye's subdivision. Some old poplar trees still mark the spot where the stables and post office stood. The stables were once destroyed by fire and seven horses were burnt to death. The keeper of the post office was a congenial, kind-hearted person named Mary Ann Smith. It will be interesting here to note that township allotments were surveyed at this spot, but when the Railway was constructed it was thought advisable to build the town nearer the railway.

(To be continued.)

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From 'MORWELL ADVERTISER AND GAZETTE'
January 1935

Was There An Earthquake.

There is a widespread opinion that the recent disastrous floods were accompanied by an earthquake. Residents in Mirboo, Gunyah, Thorpdale and many other centres assert that there was a distinct shock accompanied by a deep rumble on the morning of December 1st of such intensity as to shake homes and rattle crockery.

Apart from land slides, in many localities wide rents have appeared in the ground which penetrate deeply through solid rock. An instance of this, among many others, occurs on the property of Mr W. Moncur, of Thorpdale, where a deep fissure of this nature has occurred. All are agreed that the time of the shock was about 3 a.m.

January 10 1935

Temporary Public Library

Although almost the whole of the books in the Mechanics' Library were destroyed by fire, the committee evidently intend to see that the needs of subscribers are catered for until such time as a library is opened in a new building.

£20 has already been spent in the purchase of new books, and these together with about 250 that were in the hands of subscribers at the time of the fire will form a nucleus of a new library. Many of the 250 were books purchased shortly before the fire, and will therefore be comparatively new to many readers.

The library will be temporarily located in the old billiard room, and the Secretary, Mr Smithers, will be in attendance on Tuesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons, also each evening except Monday.

We understand that should any local person wish to donate to this temporary library suitable books for which they have no further use, the acting librarian will be pleased to receive them, and the donor will be helping to tide over an awkward period.

January 24 1935

Essay On a Banana

BY A JAPANESE BOY

A Japanese boy who was learning English was asked to write a small theses on a banana. This was the result:—

The banana are great remarkable fruit. He are constructed in the same architectural style as sausage. difference being skin of sausage are habitually consumed while it is not advisable to eat wrapping of banana. The banana are held aloft while consuming; sausage are usually left in reclining position. Sausage depend on human being for creation by stuffing machine, while banana are Pristine product of honorable mother nature. In case of sausage both conclusions are attached to other sausage: banana on other hand are attached to stem and opposite terminal entirely loose. Finally, banana are strictly vegetable kingdom, while affiliation of sausage often undecided.

January 10 1935

MY 15th BIRTHDAY - BLACK FRIDAY - 13th JANUARY 1939

By Gwenda Y.Booth 1993

I am Gwenda Yvonne Booth (nee Jones), the eldest daughter of David Henry and Louisa Maud Jones (nee Jacgung). Though my fifteenth birthday was well over 50 years ago, I still haven't forgotten the events of that day.

I was at home on the farm at 'Marwann Vale' Jeeralang North just 19 miles (around 30 km) from Morwell. (My great grandparents, Lee Heng and Katherine Jacgung moved onto 'Marwann Vale' in 1884.) My mother, Louisa Maud Watts, my stepfather Percival Watts and his nephew Leslie Wise, aged 13, were there also. Leslie was up from Melbourne on school holidays.

The morning of the 13th started off quite warm with no clouds in the sky and I thought I would be having a quiet birthday, with harvesting finished. My two sisters, Moira and Selma, had left for Melbourne a few days earlier for a holiday so my mother invited John Robinson aged 12 and his sister Rita, aged 9, (children of our neighbours on the next farm) for afternoon tea.

The Robinson's farm was up on a hill adjoining our property which we all called 'the Joy'. My mother said it had been called that as long as she could remember. The road up to the Robinson's home started at our front gate and wound its way around the side of 'the Joy' though there was another road up to their house on the other side of the hill.

Just before lunch, clouds started to appear on the horizon in the direction of the Jeeralang West School and we thought "Great!" It looked as though we were going to get some rain. We had not had any for some months and our water tank was nearly empty. We had not been able to have a bath or wash our dirty clothes because we were so short of water. When we saw those clouds in the distance my stepfather decided he would empty what water was left in the tank and give it a good clean out as it had not been cleaned for some years, so, while we were having lunch the tank was emptied. We only got two kerosene tins of drinkable water, the rest was too dirty for drinking.

Leslie and I did the lunch dishes then left home to walk up 'the Joy' to the Robinson's home. Mrs. Robinson had invited me up to their place to collect a birthday present which she had had sent out from England for me, and her two children were to come back with Leslie and me for afternoon tea. While we were away, my mother was to ice the fruit cake for my birthday, but that cake never got iced. After Leslie and I left to go up to the Robinson's, my mother started to get very concerned at the way the clouds were forming - they just didn't look like rain clouds, they were too black and frightening and were still moving across from the direction of the Jeeralang West School.

We didn't stay too long up at the Robinson's as we wanted to get back home before it started to rain. By the time the four of us reached our front gate there was no thunder or lightning but it was windy and the sky was so black and eerie. When we got to the gate, my mother was there to meet us. She was very concerned and worried and very agitated and she ordered us down to the springs in the gully just below our cow sheds. Just as she was telling us to go to the springs, all the bracken ferns that were growing around the springs exploded into flames and then all hell seemed to let loose, the whole sky appeared to be on fire and everything was exploding into flames around us and the fire was coming out of the sky.

We all rushed up the laneway to our house. The things one does in a panic - I grabbed a blanket and threw all our shoes onto it, wrapped up my birthday cake (un-iced) in a tea towel and threw it in with the shoes. The two boys grabbed the basket of dirty washing out of the wash house and we all headed for a dry spring just above the house on the side of the hill which rose up from the house. My stepfather took the two kerosene tins of water he had just taken out of the tank up to the spring for us.

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MY 15th BIRTHDAY (cont)

Then my mother came up to the spring and told me I was not to panic and I was to look after Leslie, John and Rita and we were not to move from the springs at all. My mother also told me to keep a brave face and at all times stay calm so the three younger children wouldn't get frightened and panic. I will say they were very good the whole time.

When the smoke became so thick that we couldn't see or breathe, we took a few dirty towels out of the baskets and soaked them in one of the tins of water, then wrapped them around our heads and faces so we could breathe.

Our house was the only house in the area that escaped being burnt but we lost everything else, the cow shed, stable and hay shed. The hay shed was packed to the roof with fresh hay we had just harvested. The pig pens, fowl house, even the hen sitting on a setting of eggs, were burnt to a cinder. In a shed that was supposed to be fire proof, we had bullets stored and when the shed went up in flames we could hear the bullets exploding in the fire. It sounded just like Guy Fawkes night. We also lost at least ten acres of very good quality gum trees, about 40 years old. The gum trees that were there before them were burnt down in the 1898 fires, the year my mother was born. Over the years she had watched the new gum trees grow so it was heart-breaking to see them burnt again.

Usually a bush fire comes roaring along the ground but this fire didn't, it just came out of the sky and engulfed anything which was standing in its path - buildings, trees, bracken ferns - but very little grass was burnt. The day before, there had been fires burning out of control all around the state and the only explanation one can give is that the gases and the heat from all those fires had built up in the atmosphere and formed this large fire ball. Before the fire ball hit us there was no fire anywhere near us, yet when what we thought were thunder clouds came over us, everything just exploded into flames.

Mr Jack Robinson was in the Navy for many years before he retired and he and his wife Elsie and their young son John migrated from England in the early 1930s and bought the farm next to us. In the short time they had been on the farm he had made many improvements. He had built a first class cow shed with a very large hay shed attached, with all the walls covered in galvanized iron, and a nice big dairy to separate the milk and store the cream. They had a new kitchen built onto the house, with a sink (at the time very few farm kitchens had sinks, one had to wash up in a dish), and water pumped into the sink. Just a few months before the fire, Mr Robinson had built a large stable and machine shed and, at one end, two large water tanks. I think on the day of the fire they were about half filled.

In the mean time up on 'the Joy', when Mr and Mrs Robinson realized the danger they were in, they grabbed all their clothes and bedding and scattered them out in the paddock just in front of their home, as the grass had only been cut for hay a week earlier. Then, being worried about their son and daughter, they fled down to our place. Mr Robinson came down the road but Mrs Robinson fled across their paddock to our fence and down 'the Joy' through our paddocks. Thinking back to that day, I would say that if Mr and Mrs Robinson had stayed up on their farm they would have lost their lives as there was nowhere they could have sheltered from the fire ball up on 'the Joy'. Over the years my mother often remarked on how the Robinsons escaped the fire. I know that when Mrs Robinson arrived at our place she was very stressed.

That night we all slept at the spring on the side of the hill. We had brought a few blankets outside and we slept on them. I remember one fault of sleeping on the side of the hill was that we kept slipping off our blankets during the night. About midnight, my mother, stepfather and Mr Robinson went down to the house to listen to the news on the wireless, to see what damage the fire had done in the area. The news report mentioned every other place that had been burnt out but there was no mention of Jeeralang, which had them worried that no-one knew what had happened to us.

MY 15th BIRTHDAY (cont)

Next morning all were tired and hungry as none of us had eaten for twenty hours or more. The men were green in the face from taking in so much smoke, and had bloodshot eyes, and I would say they were all in a state of shock after going through such a traumatic time. We didn't have time to think about what had happened the day before as we had to round up the cows and try to milk them tied to a fence post, as they had not been milked for 24 hours. Luckily our dairy was up near the house under the pine trees so we still had buckets to milk the cows. We were also out of water and had to go and look for some drinkable water. The spring water down in the gully just below the cow sheds was undrinkable as it had a very brackish taste - more about the water later on.

During the night, word started to spread down into Morwell that Jeeralang had been wiped out and somebody went and told my mother's brother, Lindsay Jacgung, who was then living in Boolarra, that Jeeralang had been burnt out and his sister Louisa and her family might need help, so at daybreak he headed for the Jeeralang hills in his truck. The further he went up into the hills, the more distraught he became at the destruction the fire had caused to the hill country and he could not see how we could have survived such a destructive fire. Luckily he met a friend about three miles from our place who was able to tell him that we were all safe. This friend later told us that, had he not met my uncle when he did, he thought my uncle would have collapsed with shock before he got to our place, because he just couldn't see how we could have survived.

I think it was my mother's level head that saved us. She never panicked - she was calm the whole time. As you can see, it was a birthday I will never forget!

When we woke next morning and when they thought it was safe to move away from our place, Jack Robinson and his wife went up to see what damage had been done to their place up on 'the Joy'. What a terrible shock they got. There was not one building left standing. Even all their clothes and bedding which had been scattered around the paddock had exploded into flames from the fire ball and burnt to ashes, yet no grass had burnt in that paddock. There was a hedge of lucerne trees around the house and every one of those trees was burnt to ashes. The two new water tanks at the end of the new stables and machine shed were blown away - one was found nearly a mile down the gully on our farm, but the second tank was never found. The Robinsons lost everything. They only had the clothes they wore. They came and lived with us till they rebuilt their house, but they did not rebuild up on top of 'the Joy'. The Harris family who lived on the other side of the Robinsons lost only their house.

Frank Russell and his wife lived the other side of us, nearly a mile up the road and their house and farm buildings were on top of a ridge. From their house there was a wonderful view of the Baw Baw Mountains, Yallourn and the whole Latrobe Valley. Even in 1939 it was a lovely sight at night to see all the lights of those small towns down in the Valley. The Russells also lost everything when the fire ball hit their farm. They rushed down Blowfly Road, which was about half a mile from their home, then they ran another quarter of a mile down Blowfly Road and sheltered in a cow shed on Mr Walker's farm. Mr Walker had built a two roomed hut and a small cow shed just off Blowfly Road, I think to put a couple in to work the farm for him. The fire burnt all around the cow shed. The Russells were lucky because there were tall gum trees all round them. We wondered how they found the strength to run all that way because they were an elderly couple.

Although the Bushfire Relief sent us plenty of food, especially bread, we couldn't eat it all because, for days, we all felt quite sick and about the only food we could eat was bread soaked in hot milk and sugar. My birthday cake wasn't eaten till weeks later!

Now back to our water shortage. The day after the fire we took a walk around the old Jeeralang Road that went through our farm, to see what damage the fire had done. It was sad to see all the beautiful fern trees burnt

MY 15th BIRTHDAY (cont)

We found a running spring just over half a mile from our house along this road and the water was drinkable, but to be on the safe side we boiled it. A few days later, my stepfather and Mr Robinson loaded the copper and two large galvanized bath tubs onto the sled and took them around to this spring. They also took some roof guttering and a large drum and piped water into the drum, and we used this water till it rained and our tank had some water in it. We used to wheel our washing around to the spring in a wheelbarrow and do our washing at the spring and we also had our baths there. One day, Mr Walker must have seen the smoke coming from the copper; as the road ran through 'his farm. He set out to investigate and what a shock he got when he rounded the bend in the road - there was Jack Robinson in the bath tub, having his weekly bath. As Jack was a tall man, he had his legs hanging over the side of the bath tub and I believe he was singing at the top of his voice. I don't know who got the bigger fright!

It was nearly a month before we got any decent rain. In early March, my mother decided to send me down to Boolarra for a few days. They thought it would do me good to get away. My stepfather and I decided to bike it to Boolarra, but we only got as far as Jeeralang Junction, a distance of about 12 miles, when I got a flat tyre - gravel roads don't agree with bike tyres - so I left my bike at the Jeeralang Junction Post Office and stepfather dinked me the rest of the way to Yinnar (about 6 miles). When we got to Yinnar, my Uncle Dick Jones was just about to leave to go back to Mirboo North with his cream truck so he took me on to Boolarra to my Uncle Lindsay Jacgung's place. While there, I was told that my great grandmother, Christine Tucker-Greenwood, had died. I didn't know until then that I had a great grandmother, but I was told that it was she who delivered me when I was born.

We lost all our winter feed for our stock in the fire so, when Autumn came, my mother decided to go to Melbourne and get a job, as we had no money to buy fodder for our cattle. I was left in charge to do the cooking and housework for my stepfather, my grandfather and my two sisters. My mother was able to get a housekeeper's job in a doctor's home for the winter months and just before she came home she got a job for me in Melbourne doing dressmaking.

Four years later, the Robinsons had another traumatic experience. They lost their son John in the 1944 at the Hazelwood Flats. Nine weeks earlier, John had spent a few weeks in hospital with a fever and it had left his heart a bit weak. He was working on a farm in Hazelwood when the fire broke out and he went to help put it out. I don't remember the full details but John was burnt around the waist and his heart couldn't take the shock. He passed away at the young age of 15 years. His parents were so heart broken that they sold their farm and moved to Melbourne. Jack Robinson joined the R.A.A.F. but he never left Australia as the war ended in 1945. Mrs Robinson had a baby boy after they left Jeeralang.

We sold our farm in 1945, after the fire. Trying to rebuild all the sheds and repair fences with very little money took its toll and in the end we thought it would be much better to sell up, move to Melbourne and start a new life there.

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SHE'S APPLES

The apples we know today are believed to have originated in south west Asia and the Romans are credited with introducing them to England and France. In Australia, by 1900, there were about 50 varieties of apple available in nurseries.

In the 1840s, the story goes, Maria Smith found a self-sown apple tree growing on her property at Ryde, near Sydney. The fruit was smoother, rounder and a different colour from any she had seen and the locals were impressed by its flavour. Maria planted seeds from the apple and grafted branches onto older apple trees. So were born 'Granny Smith's' apples.

SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS MAN

SMALL BEGINNING LEADS TO BIG THINGS.

From 'Morwell Advertiser &
Gazette'

November 28, 1935

Mr Norman Sharpe arrived in Australia in 1923 at the age of 18 years. He shortly after obtained a position in Sydney Road, Brunswick, at a salary of £1 per week. He gave up that job and went to work for his brothers at Northcote. In 1934 he was transferred to Sale branch where he received £3 per week. Out of that he paid 30 shillings per week for board, ten shillings a week to be taught the English language. He allowed himself 5 shillings a week pocket money and made a point of saving 15 shillings every week.

In 1925 he started to tramp the countryside from door to door, with only one suitcase in his hands. The first town he visited was Moe where he spent about three hours but did not do much business so he left by the midday train for Morwell, which proved to him a kind town as he finished up the day selling about £6 worth of goods. He afterwards went on to Bairnsdale. Business flourished so he bought another suitcase and increased his stock. He still walked from door to door with his suitcases in his hands. Business, however, continued to flourish and he bought a Chevrolet car on which he paid a small deposit and arranged time payment for balance. In 1926 he chose Morwell out of all the towns he had visited to settle in business. He purchased McClenchy's mercery stock in tiny shop in Commercial Road, employing one girl and one boy, and for the first time he became an employer. Business still continued to flourish and he secured larger premises where Mr G.P. Evans' old newsagency shop was located, but being cramped for room he induced his landlords to build him the shop where Sharpe's Emporium is today.

In 1928 Norman purchased a business at Traralgon and in 1930, still looking to expand, he purchased the business from his brothers in Sale. All the businesses were carried on most successfully and as a result Norman's credit was good with his suppliers for many thousands of pounds.

In 1932 Norman Sharpe made up his mind to commence business in Melbourne and purchased premises on the corner of Bourke and Russell Streets for £38,000. As soon as his suppliers got to know that he had bought the said property to open a drapery store several stopped his credit and many demanded immediate settlement of their accounts. His bankers also disapproved of his move and refused to allow the overdraft desired, being afraid that he would fail as others had done on that particular corner. However, alterations had to be made before opening the shop and £5,000 had to be spent when credit was frozen. He was not dismayed and announced the opening of a new shop in the heart of the city under the name of 'Normans Corner Stores'. With a half page advertisement in the 'Herald' he brought thousands of people to his store before 9 am. The footpath was so crowded with anxious shoppers waiting to gain admittance that four policemen had to be engaged to marshall the crowds.

The many houses in Flinders Lane and others that had stopped Norman's credit and the many that demanded immediate settlement of their accounts have since altered their mind and were quite satisfied that the country boy knows a lot about merchandising and how to draw crowds in to his store, and were eager to do business with him again. In less than three years, Norman Sharpe has spent a further £15,000 and added another five floors with two up-to-date elevators.

One of Norman's characteristics is generosity and it is a pleasure to him to assist deserving objects. Whilst in Morwell last week he donated fifty guineas to committee of Morwell Scout Movement to enable them to purchase a hall for the Scouts. He also gave a donation to the Bowling Club and....is also making a gift of £500 to the public of the district as a mark of appreciation of the support given him and success achieved.