

THE MORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

Published every month except December.

The Society meets every 3rd Tuesday of the Month 7:30pm Collins St. State School Library

This month's Newsletter contains some history about the Morwell Presbyterian Church - St. Andrews. This information was generously supplied by the Rt. Rev. Doug Morey. This year is the centenary year for St. Andrews. The Society thanks Rev. Morey. Readers will also find a short history about the 1st Morwell Scout Group. This history was written almost ten years ago and needs an urgent update. The section about Angus McMillan is a copy from a booklet obtained Mrs. Maddern's donation to the Society. The history is brief, readable and one that is often difficult to obtain. Readers may appreciate having their own personal copy. Another benefit from being a member of the Society. The latter section is a major part of a 1948 Central Planning Authority Report ^{See} _{next issue} on Development of the Town of Morwell. Apparently this report was initiated on August 14, 1947 following a visit by "the Honorable the Premier" to Morwell on August 11, 1947. A committee of 3 completed the report.

The May newsletter comes to you a week earlier. The Society believes that if the Newsletter is received earlier than the actual meeting, attendance to meetings may improve. At our April meeting, concern was expressed about the low attendance at meetings. The financial membership totals approximately thirty-two. This is an excellent membership, all of whom enjoy receiving this Newsletter and the opportunity to participate in excursions. The 'body and soul' of the Society is seeing its membership, perhaps not all, but as many as possible, at meetings. Let us know who comprises the excellent financial membership. We do not want the Society to disband for a second time. The next meeting is Tuesday May 20 at 7.30. For this meeting the group is to visit the Gippsland Institute at Churchill. Here we will visit the Centre for Gippsland Studies. Please meet in the main carpark at 7.30p.m.

At the April meeting, Society members enjoyed looking at photographs of early Morwell. These photographs have been donated by Mrs. Maddern. Mr. Ivan Maddern assembled a large collection of photographs and those viewed by Society members are greatly valued. The photographs presented an interesting pictorial history and will be preserved by the Society. It is gifts such as these that makes our common interest in local history worthwhile and exciting.

Early in 1986, the Society presented a submission to Morwell Shire Council for funding from the Bi-centennial Committee. The submission was summarized in our March 1986 Newsletter. At this stage indications are such that the submission received a favourable reception.

Mr. Thrigg and a working bee began to look for another place that would cater for the needs of the boys. It was learned that the old butter factory in George Street was for sale. The factory was never used for its intended purpose, and the sale price was £178. Rates to the value of £78 were owing to the old factory.

Mr. Thrigg formed a Hall Committee. Those represented on this committee included Mr. Jenkins, a local grocer; Mr. Les Hare and a Mr. Ferguson. The aim of this Hall Committee was to obtain money.

Mr. Thrigg approached Mr. Norman Sharpe, with the Committee's proposal to buy the old factory. The Committee needed only £50 to settle the deal with the Shire and bank concerned.

Mr. Sharpe, at this time, was engaged in hawking about the Morwell area and when approached by Mr. Thrigg, he was delighted to repay the Morwell district. This was the area that had "made" Mr. Sharpe. Mr. Sharpe came to the aid of the Committee with the £50. This was paid to those concerned and the committee became the new owners of the title to the old factory in George Street.

The "new hall" was a concrete shell with a roof. There were no windows, no doors, no floor, and no ceiling. The building, locally known as "Menzies", had, in actual fact, become the habitat of tramps.

Bill James kept the books and a record of all scouting activities for Mr. Pedersen.

During this period, scout meetings were held on a Tuesday night. The uniform was as follows; black and yellow scarf, green shirt, blue shorts, blue socks, green tabs and the familiar scout hat.

Also during this period, Mr. Charlie Orr arrived from Melbourne and became an assistant to Mr. Pedersen. Mr. Orr was a carpenter with a construction firm. Mr. Orr then took over the position of Scout Master from Mr. Pedersen in 1949, hence becoming the 3rd Scout Master for the 1st Morwell Troop since 1936. However, Mr. Orr moved to New Guinea where he became a tradesman connected with the Church.

Also during Mr. Pedersen's association with 1st Morwell between 1936 and 1949, there was a 1st Morwell Rover Crew led by Mr. Ernie Jeffery. Towards late 1949, the 1st Morwell Cub Pack was quite active under the leadership of Mr. Mitchelmore.

Up until 1949, 1st Morwell Troop had also produced three King's Scouts. Lindsay Murray (otherwise known as "Cod") and Stewart Berwick were from Mr. Brown's troop. The third, Hedley Davis was from Mr. Pedersen's troop. Meanwhile, it is believed that Mr. Brown left the area to go to New Zealand and then returned to his homeland, Scotland.

At this stage in the history of the 1st Morwell Group, the information is missing. Records were kept between 1936 and 1950 and, it is believed, after 1950 as well. However, the valuable information is believed to have been burnt during a mass clean-up at the old hall. Other records are believed to have been burnt also.

Therefore, what follows is a brief summary of the period between 1950 and 1972.

- The hall in George Street became known as the "Whurlie".
- Former leaders at 1st Morwell include:
P. Sandford (S.Master), M.Perkins (A.S.M), J. Woof (C.M.),
Dick Johnson (S.M. & S.S.M.), Mr Saunders (C.M. & G.S.M.),
Miss. Angers, "Akela" (C.M.), Stewart Ferguson (C.M.),
John Oliver (C.M.), Fred Touzel (G.S.M.), John Rebbecchi
(S.M.), Bill Doble (on loan from swimming pool),

Roy Paton (S.M.), Hedley Davis, Jack Martin (G.S.M.),
Brian Walters (S.S.M.), Shirley Dart (C.M.), Ray Beebe
(acting S.M.), Col Leviston.

- Between 1950 and 1960, there existed a 1st Morwell Cub
Pack and a 2nd Morwell Cub Pack. The former met on
Thursday afternoons after school and the latter met on
Thursday nights.

- 1967 - 4 Queen's Scouts - L. Billington, Ian Derham,
Ross Hocking and Dale Edwards. This was the first group
to receive the award after the three King's Scouts
mentioned previously.

• Written years ago by Leo Billington.

SOME INFORMATION ABOUT PRESBYTERIANISM IN MORWELL

Presbyterianism came to this district in 1854 when the Rev James Login was appointed to Sale to serve Gippsland. He held a service at "Loy Yang" Station (not the Power Station) in that same year, 1854.

In 1877 Mr Login held a service at the McMillan homestead, Hazelwood. This year is taken to be the year of commencement of Morwell's Presbyterian history and a centenary service was held on 18th September, 1977, to mark the occasion when the Guest Preacher was the then State Moderator, the late Rev W.A. Loftus.

In 1886, exactly 100 years ago, the first Presbyterian Church was built in Morwell. It was situated in Elgin St on the site now occupied by the Greek Orthodox Church. The first manse was on "Buckley's Hill" (near the S.E.C. Visitor's Centre). A second manse was built beside the Elgin St. Church in 1913.

The present St Andrew's Church, in Church Street, Morwell, was opened and dedicated on 18th March, 1961. That is exactly 25 years ago last Tuesday!

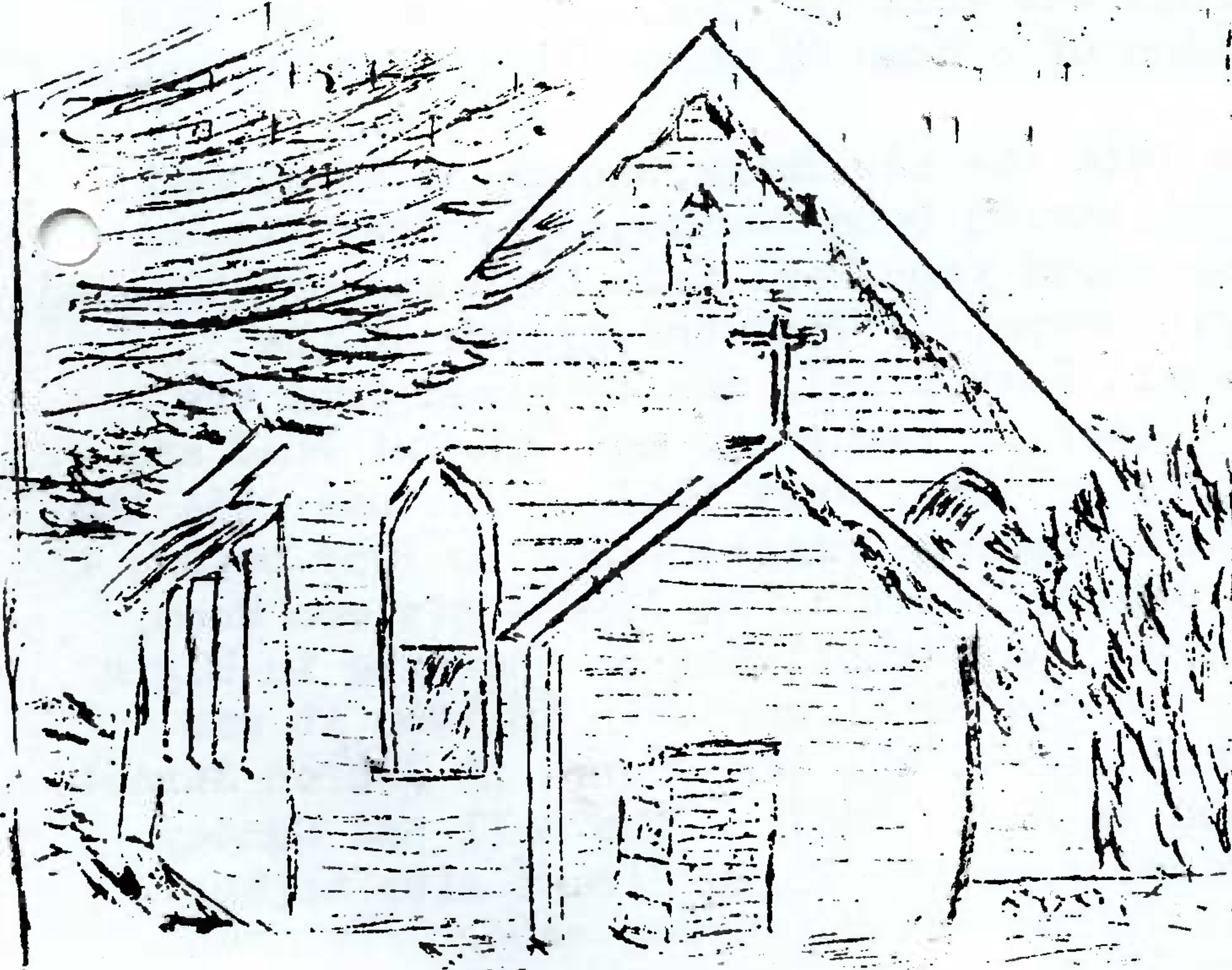
The present manse was built in 1963.

As part of the Presbyterian story in Morwell, we must include Hazelwood North where the first Church was built in 1908. This was later lost in a bushfire. The present Church was opened on 16/2/46. Over the years Presbyterian services were also held at Boolarra, Yinnar, Hazelwood South, Jeeralang North and Morwell East. The Morwell Presbyterians were also involved in establishing the Co-operative Church at Churchill. At the present time the Morwell Presbyterian Parish embraces Morwell, Traralgon, Hazelwood, Churchill and Yarram and their outlying districts. Services are held each Sunday at Morwell, Hazelwood North and Yarram.

PRESBYTERIAN WITNESS IN MORWELL AREA.

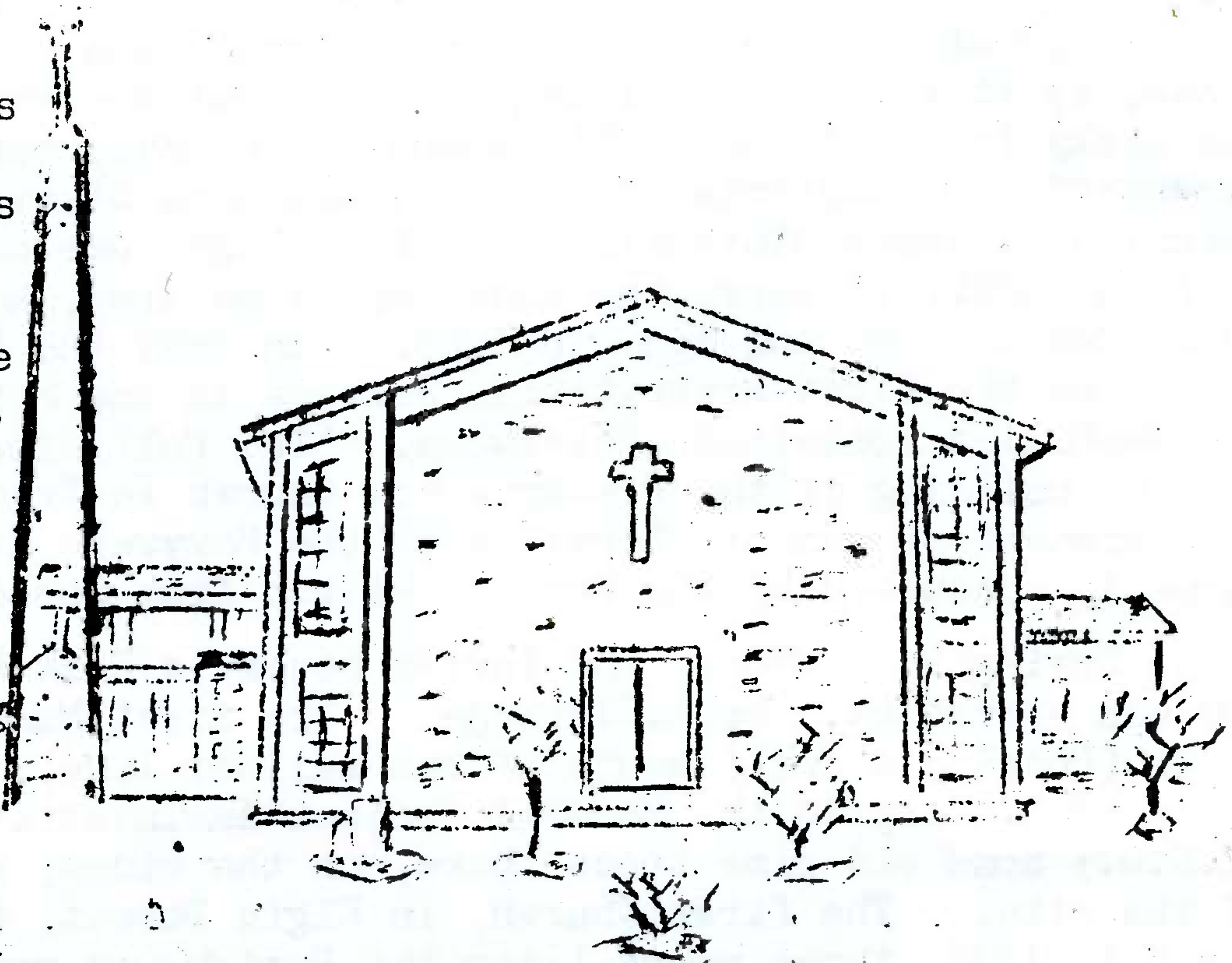
A great number of the early squatters and selectors were Scots, so it is not surprising to find that the Presbyterian Church was early in the field in Gippsland. In 1854, the Rev. W.S. Login conducted a Presbyterian Service at Loy Yang Station, then occupied by James Rintoull. The Rev. Login was stationed at Sale, 1854 to 1886, to serve the wide Gippsland area, he retired to Melbourne in 1886 and died in 1903. In 1877 the Rev. Login conducted the first Presbyterian Service in the Morwell area at the MacMillan Homestead, Hazelwood. The following year, 1878, saw the building of the Presbyterian Church in Traralgon, and the commencement of monthly Services in the Maryvale Ridge School, Morwell, conducted by the Rev. J.G. Wilson from Rosedale.

During the 1880's, the Parish became a Home Mission Station, and was served by a Mr. E. Eldridge. The first Manse was on the Ridge (Buckley's Hill) south of the railway line, and close to the road leading to the Morwell Project Administrative Building, (B.E.C.) some old pine trees there, on the ridge, may be markers of the site. The first Church, in Elgin Street, Morwell, was built in 1886, three years later the Parish was raised to the status of a full Charge and in October 1889 the first Kirk Session was formed. Elected as the first Elders of the new Charge were, Mr. R. Porter for Morwell, Mr. John Thompson and Mr. W. Little, North Hazelwood. The minister serving the Charge during this period, 1885 to 1891 was the Rev. Robert Murray, on the 28th. April, 1892 the Rev. Angus McDonald was inducted to the Charge.



In 1899, the Session having decided to increase the membership of the Kirk Session, the following were Ordained and Inducted to the Eldership, James Brewster, Middle Creek, Andrew Gay, Morwell, Malcolm McDonald, Jeeralang, and Samuel John Thompson, North Hazelwood. It was also in this year that the Rev. Angus McDonald

transferred from the Charge. In 1900 the Rev. Edgar Law was Inducted. In 1901 a Mission Station was formed at Boolarra, and in 1904 monthly evening Services were being held at Yinnar, and there were also Preaching places at Hazelwood, South Hazelwood and Jeeralang North. 1906 saw the building of the Church at Hazelwood North.



In 1908 the Session assisted in the formation of the Kirk Session at Mirboo. At it's meeting on June 11th. 1909, the Moderator, the Rev. J. Millar-Smith reported to Session that he had dispensed the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper at Trafalgar, Moe and Trafalgar South. It was also in this year that the Session assisted in the formation of the Kirk Session at Trafalgar. In December of 1909 Mr. Watson was appointed to the position of Sunday School Superintendent, a post he was to hold for many years. In 1913 the new Manse in Elgin Street was built, the old Manse on the Ridge was sold in 1914. In 1921 the Kirk Session recommended the formation of a Home Mission Station at Yallourn.

On the 16th. February 1946 the new Brick Church at Hazelwood North was opened, the old Church having been destroyed by Bush fires. In 1947 a Disposals Hall was acquired from West Sale Camp and established as a Sunday School Hall in Elgin Street. With the growth of the Housing Commission area in Morwell East a hall was acquired from the A.P.M. and established on the corner of Vasey St. and Vincent Road and the first Service conducted there on 18th. July 1953. In June 1954 the new area was assisted by the Home Mission Committee and in 1955 became the new Charge of St. Columbus, Morwell East. In 1958 a sixteen Room, single men's Building was acquired and established on the site in Elgin Street as Class rooms. After the second Stewardship in 1960 it was decided to go ahead with the building of the New Church in Church Street, this was completed and dedicated in March 1961. The Hall and Sunday School classrooms were transferred from the Elgin Street site to the rear of the Church, and the old Church and Manse was sold. The new Manse was built and occupied in 1963.

The honour of discovering Gippsland is usually accorded to Angus McMillan in his journeys 1839-1841 but, in fact, a few squatters had entered the region as early as 1835, and several had established stations at least on the outskirts of the area before McMillan appeared on the scene.

McMillan's exploring work was more important, better organised, more systematic and indeed covered a wider area, and it is just, therefore, that we should accept him as the greatest of the Gippsland explorers.

HIS BIRTH

Fourth son of a Scottish farmer, Ewen McMillan, and nephew of a great soldier, General McLeod, Angus McMillan was born at Glenbrittle, on the stormbeaten island of Skye, west of Scotland, in 1810.

EMIGRATION

In his middle twenties he left Scotland for Australia where his courage, hardihood, determination and self reliance made him a capable leader of men.

He paid £55 for a passage in the emigrant ship, Minerva, which left Greenoch on September 13, 1837, under the command of Captain T. Furlong. After a wearisome voyage, the Minerva docked at Sydney on January 23, 1838, and McMillan carried letters of introduction to Lachlan Macalister, one of the squatters of New South Wales and also a native of Skye, who resided at Clifton Station near Camden.

Macalister employed McMillan and, afterwards, made him a manager. Within the first four years of his arrival McMillan was to do valuable work which has given to him, deservedly, the reputation of being the greatest of the Gippsland explorers.

Macalister made McMillan overseer of his cattle station at Monaro, New South Wales, and it was because of the severe drought in 1838-39 and, at the instigation of Lachlan Macalister, that McMillan began looking for cattle pastures in the southern tablelands.

• FROM...

ANGUS McMILLAN

GIPPSLAND EXPLORER

1810 - 1865

A brief history compiled by
Dr. T. A. McLean - Vice President
of the Traralgon + District
Historical Society (1970)

Besides his other attributes, McMillan was a popular citizen deeply religious, kindly and befriended and protected the aborigines. It was from the blacks of Monaro that he learned of the well-watered pasture lands of Gippsland.

HIS JOURNEYS 1839-1841

He began the first of his series of journeys in May, 1839 with one aborigine, Jimmie Gibber, Chief of the Monaro Tribe, as his sole companion. Near Buchan he gained an extensive view of the East Gippsland area from the top of a mountain he named Mt. McLeod (now called The Haystack). But Jimmie Gibber was afraid of the Warrigal Blacks of this area and McMillan was forced to return to Cmeo, where stations had been established much to McMillan's surprise. The whole journey took less than a fortnight.

Later, in September, 1839, McMillan established an out-station for Mr. Macalister at Numbla Mungee (or Ensay) on the Tambo River. It was from Ensay, which he could now use as an advance base, that McMillan organised his more important journeys of 1840-1841 into the heart of Gippsland and to Port Albert.

THE EXPLORATION OF GIPPSLAND

McMillan's Journeys 1840-1841

His explorations can be conveniently divided into 3 sections -

Stage 1 - The setting up of the base station at Ensay - already noted.

Stage 2 - This began in late December, 1839, when McMillan set out with Messrs. Matthew Macalister and Cameron and a stockman named Edward Bath, to explore the plain country seen earlier from Mt. McLeod, but the loss of a pack horse in an accident forced his return. He began again in January, 1840, having added two black boys to the party, Cobban or Big Johnny and Boy Friday.

Stage 2 (contd.)

After passing rugged country in the Upper Tambo region, they came to flatter land near Bruthen and followed the Tambo River down to the Gippsland Lakes, reaching there January 16, 1840. Turning west they crossed, in turn, the Nicholson River, Mitchell River, Avon River, and reached the Macalister River which they were unable to cross. They followed the Macalister downstream, past its junction with the Thompson, to the Latrobe River close to the present site of Sale. It must have been a wet season for at this point the explorers were blocked by an immense mores and by floods. They were forced to return to the base at Ensay which they reached, all food supplies having been exhausted two days before, on January 31, 1840. McMillan then returned to Monaro to report to Lachlan Macalister, who instructed him to look for a port on the Gippsland coast.

Stage 3 - The search for a suitable port began in July, 1840, McMillan's party consisted of Lieutenant Ross, Royal Navy, Matthew Macalister, Edward Bath, John McLaren and a black boy. They were forced to return when their way was blocked once again by the Latrobe River swollen with winter floodwaters.

In October, 1840, they reached the hill called Tom's Cap in the Carrajung district about 15 or so miles due south of Rosedale and only about that same distance from the coast but the denseness of the scrub stopped further progress.

Finally, on February 9, 1841, a new start was made. With Tom Macalister, four stockmen and a black boy, McMillan crossed the Latrobe, reached Tom's Cap, forced a way through the scrub and reached the sea at Port Albert on February 14, 1841. By a strange coincidence, another party, which had come from Melbourne by sea, were in the same area at the same time, with the same object.

Stage 3 (contd.)

Thus Port Albert was discovered twice in the second week of February, 1841. In May of that year, McMillan's bullock driver, James Lawrence, drove a dray all the way from Sydney to Port Albert.

Macalister and McMillan had realised that the new land would be virtually useless without an outlet for stock and now the way was open for squatters to surge into Gippsland. There was ample fertile land and a port from which to export cattle.

Paul Edmund De Strzelecki 1797-1873, the second greatest of Gippsland explorers, was severely criticised on July 9, 1840, in the "Sydney Colonist" for his failure to give any recognition whatsoever to McMillan's strenuous pioneering work. In his exploit, Strzelecki followed McMillan's tracks of early 1840 to the Latrobe River but about two months later. Then he went on passing to the east of Traralgon across the present Princes Highway on April 13, 1840, to reach Westernport. On the way, he renamed some features already named by McMillan. A cairn today marks the spot where he crossed the Highway. To give details, Strzelecki came from New South Wales to Ensay arriving on March 27, 1840. McMillan was away at Monaro at the time and, in fact, he and McMillan never met but Matthew Macalister directed the party along McMillan's path to the Latrobe then he carried on to arrive exhausted at Westernport on May 12, 1840.

Whereas McMillan was looking for pastures and, therefore, reticent about his discoveries lest rival squatters jumped his claims, Strzelecki was looking for honour and glory as well as scientific discoveries and made his exploits known immediately.

Stage 3 (contd.)

McMillan had named the region, Caledonia Australis (or New Scotland) and the river the Glengarry but Strzelecki renamed them to the present names of Gippsland and La Trobe River. Gippsland is the happier name and it is of interest that the man after whom it was named, Sir George Gipps, Governor of New South Wales, 1838-1846, lies buried in the churchyard at Canterbury Cathedral, England.

The Latrobe River was named after Charles Joseph La Trobe, Superintendent of the Port Phillip District, 1839-1851, and Lieutenant-Governor of Victoria, 1851-1854.

It is quite possible, of course, that Strzelecki was not aware that McMillan had already bestowed the names stated.

THE LATER STORY OF McMILLAN

He became a station owner in his own right, settling at Bushy Park on the Avon River near Stratford. He pioneered the cattle trade between Port Albert and Hobart Town, was a prominent member of the Manchester Unity Lodge and the Gippsland Caledonian Society, raced thoroughbred horses and served in the Legislative Assembly as the first member for South Gippsland being elected in September, 1859. However, he had no love for political life and withdrew from the Victorian Parliament in 1860.

In 1856, a public dinner was given in his honour at Port Albert, and his portrait in oils, financed by public subscription, may still be seen in the Shire Council Chamber at Yarram.

He married his wife, Christina, in the mid fifties and they had two sons - Ewan born in 1858, and Angus three years later. They all lie with him in the family plot at Sale Cemetery.

THE LAST YEARS

Bush fires swept through Bushy Park in the summer of 1861 and destroyed most of McMillan's stock. From this time onwards he suffered financial difficulty but continued to reside at Bushy Park with his family. The cottage today can be seen at the Gippsland Folk Museum at Moe, having been moved from its home site and reconstructed in its original form. It has been classified "C" by the National Trust.

In 1864, to his delight, McMillan was offered the leadership of the Victorian Alpine Expedition to open tracks in the mountain mining areas of Dargo, Omeo and Matlock. In May, 1865, whilst working along a rocky spur in the Moroka Valley, a pack horse fell on McMillan while he was descending a steep slope. He was badly injured and died at the Inn at Iguana Creek on May 18, 1865.

Angus McMillan was buried in Sale Cemetery on May 20, 1865, near his great friends, Dr. Arbuckle and John McLeod.

In May, 1965, the 100th year of the death of Angus McMillan was the subject of a Commemoration Ceremony by the combined efforts of the Bairnsdale, Sale and Maffra Historical Societies.

PLACES, MOUNTAINS, RIVERS AND LAKES NAMED BY McMILLAN

Gippsland (1840) Originally named Caledonia Australis (or New Scotland) by McMillan, but renamed Gippsland by Strzelecki after the Governor of N.S.W. Gippsland is the happier name and that is probably why it has been retained.

Bruthen & Bruthen River (1840) An aboriginal name suggested by Big Johnny, one of McMillan's guides. Bruthen means bracken fern.

Mt. McLeod (1840) After his Uncle, General McLeod. Now called The Haystack.

PLACES, MOUNTAINS, RIVERS AND LAKES NAMED BY McMILLAN (contd.)

Lake Victoria (1840) After the young queen, Victoria.

Nicholson River (1840) After Sir Charles Nicholson, Speaker of the N.S.W. Legislative Assembly.

Mitchell River (1840) After Sir Thomas Mitchell, explorer and Surveyor General of New South Wales.

Clifton Morass (1840) After Clifton Station, N.S.W., occupied by McMillan's employer, Lachlan Macalister.

Avon River (1840) After a river in McMillan's native Scotland. There are several Avon Rivers in the United Kingdom and in Europe.

Mt. Wellington (1840) After the Duke of Wellington.

Lake Wellington (1840) After the Duke of Wellington.

Macalister River (1840) After his friend and employer, Lachlan Macalister.

Mt. Angus & Mt. Ewen After McMillan's sons.

La Trobe River (1840 Strzelecki) Originally named Glengarry River by McMillan, but Strzelecki named it after Charles Joseph La Trobe, Superintendent of the Port Phillip District.

The following is offered only as a brief history of the 1st Morwell Scout Group. It is brief because the primary sources are scarce. Mr. O.A. Pedersen figured quite prominently in supplying the information. Unfortunately, Mr. Mitchelmore passed away during 1971 leaving a void in the groups history, particularly as regards the 1st Morwell Cub Pack.

There will be some aspects of the development of the 1st Morwell Scout Group that have not found their way to paper. Any informative contributions will be appreciated in an endeavour to construct a more detailed history of the 1st Morwell Scout Group.

There is some doubt as to when the 1st Morwell Troop was formed. Mr. Charles Brown was the first official Scout Master at the 1st Morwell Troop. Mr. Brown joined the Troop in 1936. However, it is believed that an unknown person (a "behind the scenes" person), began the Troop before Mr. Brown was Scout Master.

In 1936, Mr. Brown was joined by Mr. O.A. Pedersen who acted as assistant Scout Master. Mr. Pedersen was, previous to 1936, connected with meetings at Yallourn boiler house where they were workmates. Mr. Pedersen moved to Morwell whereupon he joined Mr. Brown at 1st Morwell.

An active Group Committee was formed in 1936. The Secretary was Mr. Thrigg, who was the first accountant in Morwell before a Mr. Baker. Mr. Thrigg had two sons in the Scout Movement.

At this stage, scout meetings were held in the Fire Hall (opposite the Post Office) in Morwell, when it was available. Meetings were held once a week. When the Fire Hall was unavailable for use, meetings were held under street-lights.