

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. 7 No. 11

NOVEMBER 1991

WELCOME TO THE NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

This month, we conclude Emily Walker's Diary and we publish a brief history of Moss Vale Park, compiled by Dorothy Fogarty. There is a request for information about cars and their owners pre World War 1. Anyone with information can contact Mal Grant direct or give the information to Secretary Elsie McMaster who will pass it on.

Although this newsletter is arriving at the usual time, please note that our November meeting will be held on

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26th

at the CHURCHILL HOTEL MOTEL commencing with dinner at 6 pm. The change of date was necessary because of the hotel bookings.

On Tuesday November 19th at the Centre for Gippsland Studies Monash/Gippsland there will be a lecture, to be given by Meredith Fletcher on the C.G.S. Photograph Collection.

Members will have received separate notice of both the above events in the mail.

Finally, we present an assignment by Peter Schulz of Morwell, researched as part of his V.C.E. Local History studies.

N.B. Next newsletter - January 1992. No December meeting.

Death of Morwell last WW1 veteran

MORWELL'S last World War 1 veteran, 95-year-old Jack Medew, died on Tuesday at Latrobe Regional Hospital Traralgon.

Mr Medew lived in Morwell and district for most of his life. His father had a farm at Jeeralang and then later South Hazelwood (where the Churchill Hotel now stands). Mr Medew eventually bought his own farm across the road.

Mr Medew always took an interest in community affairs and had a long association with both the South Hazelwood Rifle Club and the South Hazelwood Hall.

After farming for 40 years, he retired and moved into Morwell.

During the first World War, Mr Medew served in the Middle East and

France. He saw action in France but became ill after spending days on end in deep, muddy trenches. He was in an English hospital for some time then spent another two years in hospital in Melbourne.

According to Morwell RSL president, Mal Bugg, Mr Medew was the last World War 1 veteran in Morwell and district.

Mr Medew and his wife Ellen, who died some years ago, have three children - Elva, Ron (deceased) and David. They have many grandchildren, great grandchildren and even great great grandchildren.

A funeral service will be held at the Morwell Presbyterian Church tomorrow at 11am.

MORWELL AND YINNAR GAZETTE ON MICROFILM

Readers will be pleased to learn that the microfilming of the 'Morwell and Yinnar Gazette' has been completed and the film is available for viewing at the Traralgon Library. It will be available at Morwell Library when the new microfilm/microfiche reader is commissioned, hopefully within the next few weeks.

The project proved rather costly as extensive repairs were necessary before the papers could be filmed and some parts were in such poor condition that filming was not thought to be worthwhile. However, most of the papers have been copied and should prove a most valuable resource for local historians.

MOSS VALE PARK

The founder of Moss Vale Park was Francis Moss. He came to the Gippsland area in 1878 from Buninyong, near Ballarat, where he had a nursery called Mossmont which he had been working since 1853.

Francis Moss came to Australia in the early 1850's as a courageous, adventurous lad of 18 years hoping to make his fortune on the gold fields. He came from Kent, in England, where there were acres of orchards and he soon realised that growing fruit and vegetables would be a surer, even if a slower method of making money than prospecting for gold, so in 1853 he decided to establish a nursery on a rich volcanic hillside in Buninyong. After much perseverance and industry this business flourished.

Moss married and had 5 children, 3 girls and 2 boys. One of the boys died young. The other son, William, was soon old enough to help his father run the nursery as Francis Moss and Son, names which became known to nurserymen in many parts of the world.

Ballarat had, in the meantime, become the richest gold field in the world and the population increased very rapidly. The demand for vegetables, fruit, seed and young trees was so great so business for Moss increased in leaps and bounds. He imported seed from England, France and Italy, and supplied it to many of the Chinese market gardeners around Ballarat.

In 1878 Francis Moss came into Gippsland and took over land on the Tarwin River. He also named this property Mossmont. In 1888 Moss and other pioneers decided to have a big burn-off as it would be beneficial for their land. After this burn-off Moss spent a lot of time tidying up and fencing the property. He then built a hut, and a bridge over the Tarwin River by falling two huge trees over the river.

At that time a Mr J Bruce was installed to manage the property and Moss himself came through from Buninyong from time to time to supervise. Moss now concentrated on buying and selling of stock for the main portion of the property, the establishment of a nursery and the beautifying of the property. From the Buninyong nursery there was a constant stream of young fruit and ornamental trees, shrubs, bulbs, seeds, acorns, nuts, cuttings etc.

Along the banks of the Tarwin Moss, assisted by employees, planted willows and golden poplars to prevent erosion. From the old bridge an avenue of trees was planted, going first along the river and then curving up to the redwoods. By 1898 a Mr W Gould had been appointed as manager of the nursery. He was a trained nurseryman who came from Warrenheip near Ballarat.

About 1899 Moss opened up another nursery at Ruby Creek which was quite close to the Leongatha Station as Moss was having difficulty in getting loads in and out of the Tarwin nursery, Mr Gould managed both nurseries. Francis Moss was growing older by this so his son William often was the person to come through from Buninyong to supervise. Very few trees now remain to show where Ruby Creek nursery once was as the new road went right through it.

Francis Moss was amazed at the quick growth of the trees in the nursery and park. This was due to the residual potash and other elements remaining after the burning off of centuries of forest growth. In fact, the trees grew so quickly that the first Tarwin nursery was abandoned, a second one commenced lower down on the flat, and a tool shed was built there.

By 1900 there was a constant stream of young trees coming out from the nurseries, many going to local settlers but, by far the greater number were sent to supply orders taken at the Buninyong nursery. Some went to South Africa, others to New Zealand. The oaks in Leongathas Memorial Drive came from Moss Vale.

Roundabout 1910 many changes occurred. Firstly the name of the property was changed from Mossmont to Moss Vale. At much the same time the first manager of Moss Vale Mr J Bruce died, and another close friend of Moss, A Mr Alex Campbell was attacked and gored very badly by a bull (which Moss had just purchased from the Melbourne Royal Show) as it was being led from Leongatha to the Tarwin property. Francis Moss, now an old man, grieved over the loss of these two trusted friends. He received a further shock as he was being driven to Mirboo North to catch the train when a wagon in front of them overturned and the occupant killed.

Francis Moss returned to Buninyong in 1912 he collapsed whilst working on his property. He died in 1916 and was buried in Buninyong.

A year after the death of Moss the Buninyong nursery was sold in 1917 but the price offered for Moss Vale was refused and the trustees did not sell the property till 1931.

From 1917 onwards Moss Vale began gradually to slip backwards - some of the trees dies, others were blown over. Yes! Slowly but surely the beauty of Moss Vale was disappearing. Trees, like flowers, know when they are really loved and cared for. The area became overrun with rabbits, ragwort, bracken and noxious weeds.

All tree lovers in the district were delighted when, in 1945, councillors of Mirboo North and Leongatha secured a portion of the spot for people for all time. they, with members of a Park Committee, are now caring for 9.15 acres of Moss Vale and 1.91 acres of Natural Bush on the other side of the river.

Moss Vale Park, as we know it today was officially opened in 1946 - A true memorial to one of natures gentlemen.

The above comments have been presented by Dorothy Fogarty. They have been summarised from a booklet called:-

FRANCIS MOSS and MOSS VALE PARK
written by A.M Blundell in 1956

Hon. Secretary,
-----Society

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P. O. Box 402

Gisborne 3437

27th Oct. 1991

Dear (as addressed)

Congratulations on your display at the Central Highlands Historical Society Local History Fair. Having now said those few words can I ask for HELP ? For many years I have been collecting information on early Victorian motorists - generally pre- 1918; and it is in this sphere that I am seeking your assistance.

Years ago the old records from Motor Registration Branch - were either lost or destroyed, (years of motoring history gone !) However since that time I have been able to obtain many thousands of names and addresses of early motor vehicle owners - (cars & motor cycles) - but very few details of makes owned by these pioneers. This has caused a great deal of frustration amongst people like myself, so with other historians I am trying to redress where possible; the imbalance.

A tremendous amount of HELP is required. Perhaps your society may have members with knowledge which could assist ?

What is asked for is as much detail as possible of any car or motor cycle from pre - 1918, which may have been owned or used in your district, (or any where else !)

For example - " Bill Jones of ' Lilly Pilly Station ' - Smeaton, had an old Talbot in 1912; he bought it new from Dalgety's in Ballarat. "

" Tom Smith, was a bank teller at the old C. B. A. in Linton - he had a motor cycle before he went off to war; the bike was made by Franklin - Davies in Sturt Street Ballarat - they had a push-bike shop. "

" Here is a photostat of an old photograph showing my father taking our family out in a car which has a number 3489 on it; I think it was in 1914 "

Quite often the local doctor was first in town to obtain a car, bank managers, clergymen etc., seemed to follow.

My interest may seem to be unusual but it often HELPS others as well. By dating photographs, tracing owners etc., people have been able to positively identify relatives and local scenes; it could be so again.

As Secretary of Gisborne Historical Society, plus being a member of many other Historical Groups I realize my requests often mean quite a lot of work, so I do appreciate any efforts at all, especially where early motoring is concerned.

Yours Faithfully

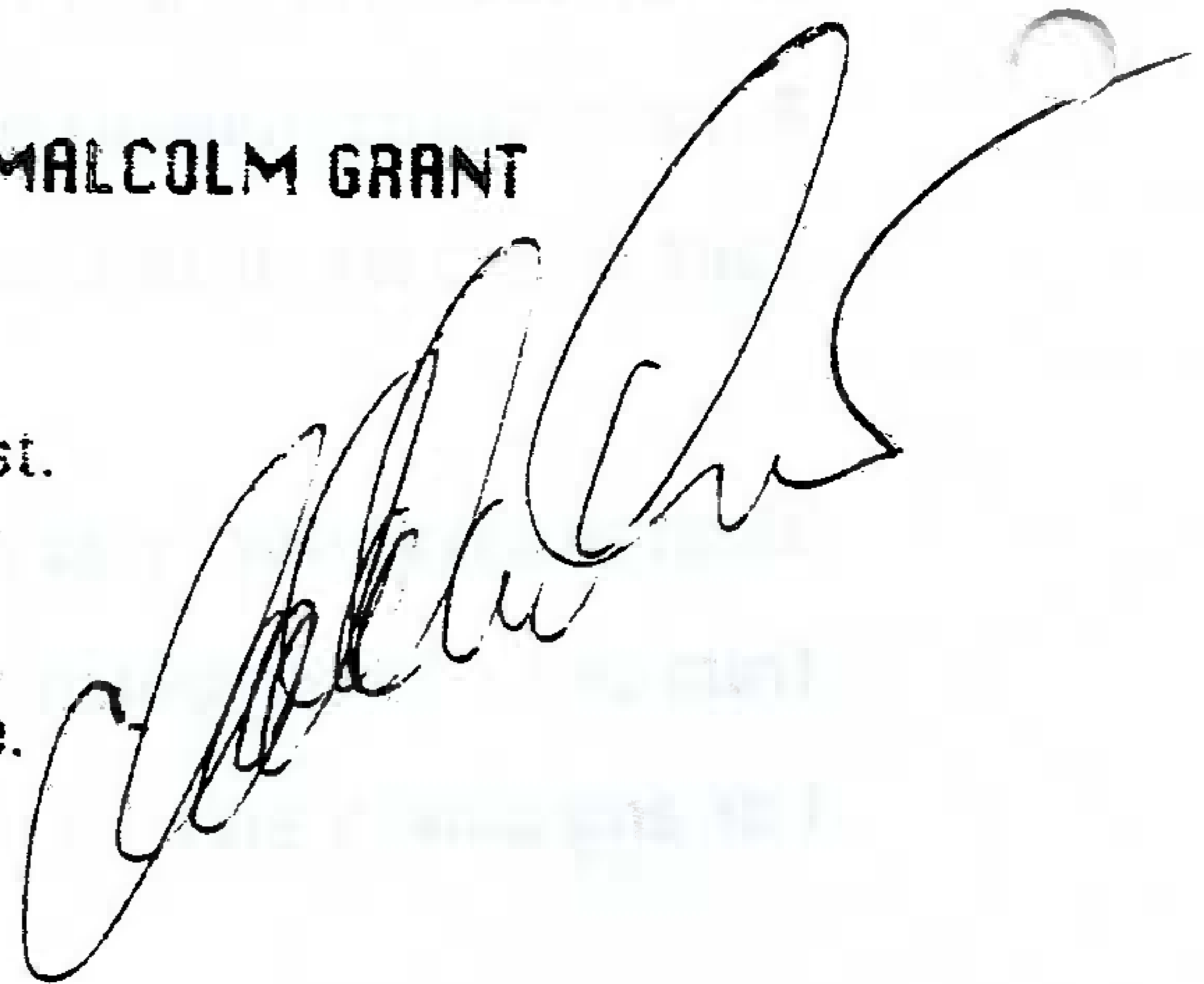
MALCOLM GRANT

Co-Editor. " Victoria Illustrated " -

Published by - James Flood- Harold Paynting Charity Trust.

" Wheels in Victoria " -

Published by - Victorian Automobile Chamber of Commerce.



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- as I overheard one of them say, to pitching him overboard. However "our Captain" says he must work his passage out to Adelaide, & then come back again in one of the N. O. boats. I believe, "Jack" he is called, is to be in the stoke-hole as a stoker; what hard work he will have, no mistake! Mrs Stokes' little baby is dangerously ill with dysentery. I am so sorry he is such a dear little mite. Our dear Mother is a little better, & takes her meals with more of a relish. The rest of us are in good life: 5 days of uneventful monotony passed away & on the 26th at

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not have to encounter it all. Many are sick & the ventilators & port-holes are all fastened up, so I'm afraid the Captain apprehends a storm. Little Frankie Stokes is almost well again though very thin. Mama's medicine she gave Mrs Stokes helped to save him. Some of the 2nd class passengers gave a "Christy Minstrel" entertainment to those of the other passengers & the officers, who could to come. It was great fun; some of the singing was very good. The saloon was crammed & all seemed to enjoy themselves. After the entertainment was over we had some solos, which

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7 o'clock am. another poor fellow - sent out ^{to Australia} as a last chance of life - humanly speaking, died of consumption. He left a wife & family in poor circumstances in England. The funeral is to take place about noon I understand. Captain J. expects to cross the Equator about 11 o'clock tonight. It is much hotter now than when we were in the Red Sea. Mama feels the heat rather oppressive. We saw a shoal of porpoises at day not far off. 4 more months now days. Nov 30th I commenced to get cooler, a very heavy "ground swell" there must be a tremendous storm raging somewhere, not very far away. I think we may

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were well rendered. Two days after - Sunday, June 7th, we had a collection after the service - in aid of the funds for the Sea-Town Orphanage Hospital. I was one of the collectors, we made 5£ which was pretty good considering many passengers were ill. On June 2nd the 2nd class passengers gave a dance to the 1st class, which was great fun. Many of the passengers were sick & laid down during the day, so that they might be able to dance in the evening. Poor Mother was very sick & poorly again today. We have had some delightful games of draughts & go-bang & Mr Vanian taught me to play

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chess which I am very fond of already. Our present speed is 15 or 16 knots an hour. Afternoon of June 3rd found us at a standstill. The Steamer sprung a leak & one of the engine fires is put out & one of the valves like the steam escape. But I am thankful to say all was put right by repair & we are once more safely on our way. Another few days varied only by occasional fits of seasickness on the part of the more delicate ones. Our Mother is very bad & little Nell is far from being well. The boys are jolly; their sailor-boy-friend took them into the fore-castle. One of the Carpenters promised

over the decks with a great force. The Steamer dips so far into the sea that the port holes are often in the sea & then we get a lot of water in on to my berth, which is just below the port hole. For the space of 4 days the storm raged, but on the 9th it was a little calmer weather as we passed Cape Sewin—the first little bit of Australia we sighted. On the 10th dear Papa hurt his back very badly. He was up on deck before breakfast & was looking landward when a great wave washed over the deck & knocked Papa down hurting his back against the

to make them a boat at Sydney, & bring it to Melbourne when they were homeward bound again. In the morning June 4th some of the younger passengers played Fig. He found it rather hard work with the ship rolling about & got a good snappy hard knock. He had quite a squall in the afternoon & the steamer continued rolling heavily all the evening & night. All the hatches were fastened down on June 5th & preparations made for a storm. It is fearfully close down below & more than half the passengers are sick. Dear Mother is very ill, indeed we all begin to feel very squeamish.

Storm increasing, the sea washed

side of the vessel. It was a great mercy he was caught, in the rigging I think it was, which saved him from being washed overboard. The hatches were opened on the 11th for a while & some of us ventured up on deck. He had to fasten on chairs, the ship still continued to dip rather more than was very comfortable or safe, so that it was a somewhat risky business as it was. Some of us got wet. We can see a dim outline of the Southern coast, I believe Captain Tillett exp. at to reach Adelaide tomorrow evening. Papa's back is very painful. ~~but~~ Mother is still very sick &

will be very glad to get to Melbourne
June 12th. A very cold morning &
 sharp breeze. All well again I
 think; Mamma too feels a little
 better though it is too cold for
 her to sit long on deck. We
 expect to reach Adelaide this
 evening, about 10 o'clock. Can
 see the coast very plainly. It
 looks very wild in some parts.
 The boats coming very near to
 the water's edge sometimes.
 Passed Kangaroo Island very
 early, through Investigator Strait.
 Now in St Vincent Gulf where
 it is much smoother & a little
 warmer. We are going to have
 another dance to night & then
 a "Sir Roger de Coverly" for the

up to times on the 13th but found
 everything very busy. The harbor
 is beautiful. There were a great
 many ships anchored inside
 the breakwater. A tender for
 the cargo & luggage is alongside
 already & the sailors are very
 busy. Mr Hampshire took
 Nellie & I right up to the bow -
 a place we were never in before.
 After breakfast - about 10 o'clock
 the Adelaide passengers went to
 the ashore in the tender with
 the luggage etc. Some fruit hawkers
 came aboard, & did a good
 trade I believe. It was so nice
 to have some fresh fruit again
 but it was fearfully dear.

Took some cases of oranges to

children. About 20 first & second
 class passengers leave the Garmen
 here & a few third class & steerage
 also. I don't expect they will be
 allowed to go ashore till the
 morning however. Reached
 Adelaide about midnight &
 signalled 3 or 4 times. The tender
 went up just over our cabins. We
 could see in the darkness that
 there were a good many vessels
 in port. A tender came alongside
 with letters, telegrams etc & took
 the mails with it to Adelaide.
 Some of the "Leven" men
 came alongside too, but I think
 all had to go back again.

There is a fine lighthouse just
 outside the harbour. It was all

Sydney - a large load. The Com-
 -pany's Agent came alongside
 too. What a funny little man
 he is! June 14th. Passed a very
 rough night again. We left Adel-
 aide yesterday evening; & experienced
 some tossing about, after we left
 Cape Lewis behind.

Arrived at Melbourne, I should
 say Williamstown about 7
 o'clock am. & at 10 o'clock were
 met on the steamer by
 Uncle Joseph Webster, &
 Aunt Mary Ann, who
 took us to their home at
 "Mayfield" to dinner.

Finis

Topic: "Morwell And World War II, 1939-1945"

Rationale: I chose this topic because, as I live in Morwell, I believed it would be quite interesting to discover what Morwell was like between the years of 1939 and 1945, and what happened in the associated districts, as well as the local industries.

Hypothesis:

1. Many happenings occurred in Morwell during the war years, not all related directly to the conflict elsewhere.
2. The people of Morwell contributed to the war effort.
3. Local industry prospered during the war years.

Methods: After choosing a topic, the first place I went to obtain information was the centre for Gippsland studies. I then sought information from Mr. E. Lubcke, as he is a member of the Morwell Historical Society.

I received information from Mr. S. Legge who is at present preparing a history of Morwell, and on the 18th June I interviewed Mr. Lubcke at his home in Morwell.

Findings: When war was declared by Prime Minister Robert Menzies on March 1939 the response by the people of Morwell was one of respect and acceptance but there was no real upsurge of anger, and people believed, as was the case with the First World War, that it would be, once again, a short conflict.

Most organisations kept going, but committees were formed, for example the Carillon Club who held socials, raised money, knit clothing, sent packages and, as the war went on, ensured good treatment for returned soldiers. These committees were formed, and showed a community minded approach, and on the 27th March, 1939, the Morwell Branch of the Australian Defence League was formed.

Men did not 'rush' to enlist, but Morwell men did provide a steady stream of recruits, many from the local militia unit, who, because of their training, were much more suitable, but later much more training was required.

On the 8th June 1939 there was a parade of militia men, showing the fact that 'Morwell and district to the fore' of Australian defence.

Morwell's shire President convened a public meeting at the town hall on August 17th to discuss the matter of Air Raid Precautions and appointing a district warden. As the war became more severe Air Raid Shelters were built in the back yards of houses, and anti-aircraft (ack-ack) guns were set up at Yallourn Power Station, manned by 42 'B-Class' soldiers who were injured but could do light duties. An A.R.P. blackout took place on the 23rd of September within a 12 mile radius of Yallourn. On the whole most people were

co-operative to regulations, with few exceptions.

The 28th of October saw a Gas Precautions lecture, which was very well attended, with the speaker being lucid on his subject. Also a pastoral letter from the Bishop of Gippsland was read in the Anglican Churches throughout Gippsland the previous Sunday: "After twenty years of a troubled peace, the terrible calamity of war has fallen upon us again..."

The 37th Battalion, local Militiamen, returned from a months training at Tallarook, on the 9th of November looking in good health, and on the 14th of January there was a farewell to Yinnar and Morwell members of the 2nd A.I.F. (Australian Infantry Force), with Morwell R.S.S.I.L. A representative Mr. E Maxwell stated "...they were going to complete the job which should have been completed in 1918. On the same day, A.P.M. chiefs were the guests of the Morwell Shire Council, and on the 15th February the new A.P.M. settlement in Morwell East was opened.

1940 saw Morwell receive two large grants the first, for river snagging, of £46,000 pounds on February 22nd and the second, for Ragwort destruction, of £5000 pounds. Due to a government offer to County towns for sewerage and concrete footpaths, Morwell was one of the first towns to receive these improvements.

There was interesting debate throughout late February, March, April and May correspondence columns on pacifism, the churches position on the war etc.

On the 4th March, A.P.C. medical examinations and Enrolment for home defence took place in Morwell. June/July 1940 were times of great patriotism, with

Great Patriotic meeting being held on the 26th June, within which important resolutions were carried, unanimously, for example:

i) The introduction of a Bill similar to the Emergency Powers Bill, like that in place in Britain

ii) The internment of all enemy aliens,

and on the 18th of the following month, a "Win The War" rally, with the minister for Air visiting Morwell. One week later it was suggested that a Military Corps be stationed, though this never did eventuate.

The 'Morwell Patriotic Players' had their first public programme, at the Morwell town hall, on Wednesday the 3rd July, to a large crowd (mainly selections of song and dance), and on the 7th August 1941, boxing on Friday nights at the Morwell Town Hall started, conducted by "Snowy" Faulkner. Morwell's entertainment/social events were growing.

The A.P.M. was successful in 1940, with craft paper being produced in Gippsland for the first time on August 15, and it showed a big profit by the 26th September.

A big change occurred on the 31st October with the illumination of Morwell, the beautiful "White Way".

In April/May 1941 there were urgent appeals for increases in flax, and in October it was proposed to have a flax-mill for Morwell, with a site along Latrobe Road in view. It was situated just north of the present Sunday Market site, and provided material for webbing belts and equipment for servicemen. Flax grown on local farms was brought to the mill by road, as well as supplementary loads, brought by train, from further afield.

The mill was burnt down in the 1944 bushfires, and

was never rebuilt. In an attempt to save it, water was diverted from the town, leaving houses unprotected. Subsequently, further fires occurred wherever burning flax, spread by strong wind, landed.

From about June 1941, the war was obviously serious, the whole community became involved to a fuller extent, and a number of P.C.'s were "locals" and were communicating home regularly.

There was an acute shortage of houses in November 1941, despite the fact that over 300 houses had been built in the past 30-40 years, and on January 15, 1942, a campaign to destroy ragwort, a noxious weed, despite the fact that wartime restrictions had reduced the supply of poisons needed to destroy the pest.

The 26th March 1942, saw the start of anti-Japanese propaganda in local papers, for example, 'Japan's Aggressive Career (No. 1)', and on the 2nd April civilian identity cards were issued.

On the 24th September council plans were unveiled for a Public Hospital, and on the 8th of October a public meeting took action to obtain such facilities.

By the 11th March, 1943, women were guarding against enemy planes, and the A.W.A.S. made a special appeal to help the war effort. By April women were becoming more actively involved in the work force, as the war accelerated. Employers were having trouble getting labor. Under the Essential Services Act, the government helped and men came up from Melbourne, as well as the Womens Land Army worked on farms.

On the 23rd of October the council decided to move at once to investigate preliminaries for a town planning scheme, to plan for the post-war drift.

Bush and grass fires swept the district on the 14th February, 1944, resulting in a heavy loss of life, houses and stock. 13 people were killed and 72 buildings were destroyed. On the 16th burnt out settlers got together and formed an association.

Building operations were to commence at the end of July for the clothing factory at Morwell.

Advertising for La Mode Foundations for and Grace offering interesting employment for Girls. On the 31st of May, 1945, La Mode Industries held an Inaugural Ball, which was a triumph.

"With one magnificent gesture La Mode Industries have established the right to take their appointed position in the community life of Morwell by placing their new factory building at the disposal of the Hospital Committee for the Inaugural Ball.

The Hospital Building Fund will benefit by considerably more than £600. A sum that would have taken much labor and time to acquire through the ordinary processes of entertainment and collection."

The La Mode establishment was officially opened in Morwell on the 19th July 1945, and was welcomed by a huge crowd. That same day, in a generous gesture, La Mode contributed another sum of money to Morwell Hospital, bringing the total gift up to £1000.

Throughout the war the people of Morwell, for entertainment, participated in sporting activities, Dancing on Saturday nights, Card games and Basketball between the churches were popular. There was a close commitment to the churches and people were very socially minded.

The A.P.M. continued to grow bigger, creating work

and causing them to collect timber from other forests. The S.E.C. also kept pace and went ahead. The A.P.M. used more power thereby improving productivity and revenue. As a result the S.E.C. opened a mine at tyres, which created jobs. When war ended in August 1945, the people of Morwell were very pleased, and celebrations took place, but after the first few days life returned to normal, although a burden had been lifted. All men were welcomed home, and were initially made as comfortable as possible.

Analysis; the people of Morwell and district showed themselves to be very supportive of the Second World War through their willingness to sign up and also through their various activities at home to support the war effort eg. raising money, knit clothing, send packages.

They also suffered with natural disasters during this time such as the 1944 bushfires with the loss of lives, property and industries, one of which was the Flax Mill, an industry very important for the war effort.

However, the people of Morwell and district showed that life must go on regardless and much town planning and improvements went on during this time eg. the establishment of Morwell Hospital, new housing, footpaths etc. and the ka made which provided jobs for women.

The S.E.C. grew and provided many jobs for post-war European immigrants wanting to start a new life.

Critical evaluation

The successes of this study were, firstly, I was able to prove my hypothesis and obtain sufficient information to complete this project adequately. I was also able to interview a person very much involved in local history.

The limitations of this study were the lack of resources in Morwell itself, as well as my narrow selection of resource materials that were used.

Conclusions

The findings of my project supported my hypothesis, as they showed that many happenings did occur in Morwell some related to the war, eg. Air Raid Precautions, others not, eg. 1944 Bushfires.

Also the people of Morwell contributed to the war effort, not only by the men enlisting but also by the organisations such as the Carry On Club who did numerous things to assist the war effort.

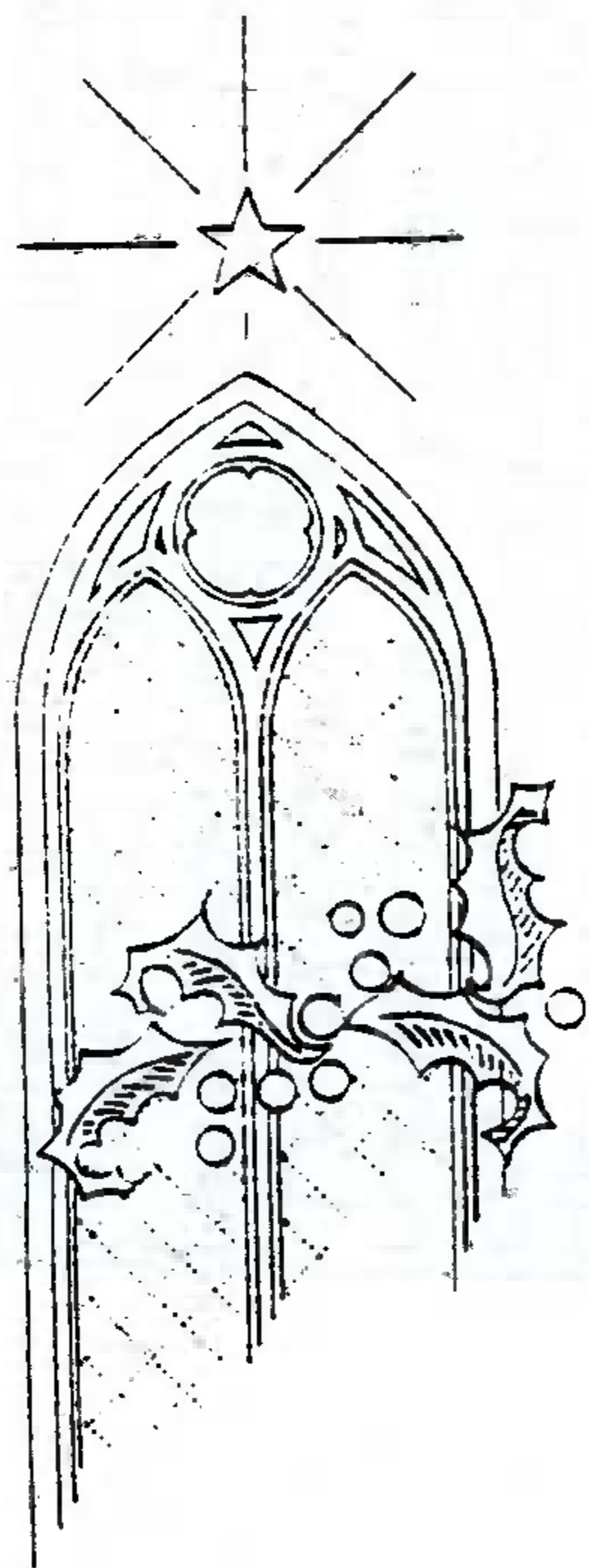
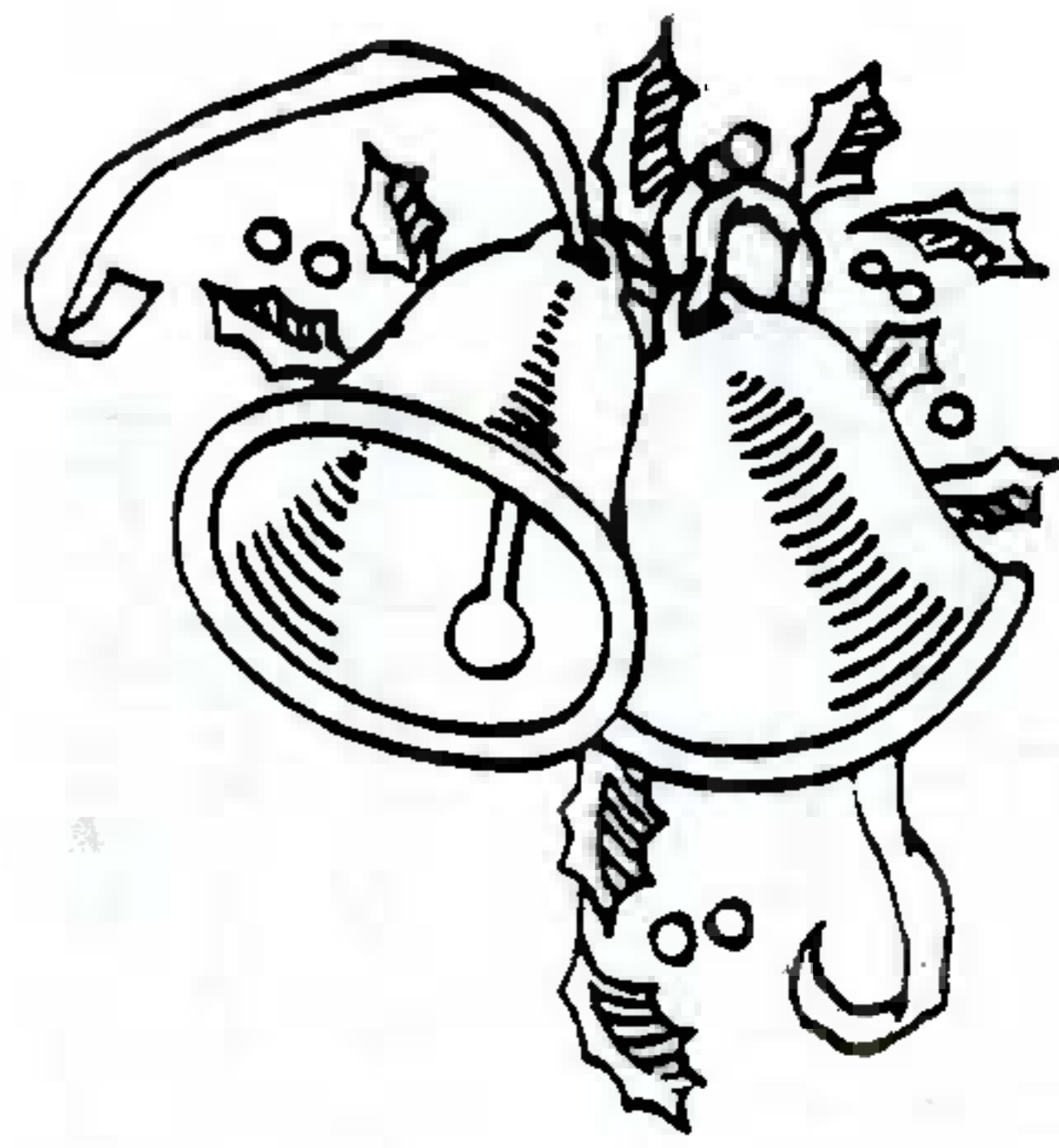
Local industry prospered with the A.P.M. being a prime example of this, as it showed a profit and continued to grow. Not only this but a new industry started, that being ka made in church street.

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Merry Christmas



HAPPY
NEW
YEAR!

