

# The Morwell Post



Morwell Historical Society

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“Turning the First Sod” see page11



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# Morwell Historical Society Directory 2018

President:	Bruce McMaster Phone: 5134 1149 – 0428 528 464
Vice-President:	John Willis
Secretary:	Florence Butcher
Assistant Secretary:	Elaine Andrijczak
Treasurer:	Carolyn Schopp
Committee Members:	Kellie Bertrand Rosalie Davey Shirley Prosser
Research Library:	12 Hazelwood Road, Morwell, Victoria 3840
Research Queries:	research@morwellhistoricalsociety.org.au
Public Access:	3rd Wednesday and last Sunday of each month, 11.00 a.m. – 2.00 p.m. Not open - December & January
General meetings:	3rd Wednesday February to November – 2.00 pm
Annual General Meeting:	3rd Wednesday of March each year
Membership Fees:	Due 1st July each year Ordinary Member \$25.00 Couple – at same address \$30.00 Dependants – at same address \$5 each Application Forms available on our web site for you to print and send. For a print copy of <b>“The Morwell Post”</b> - \$10.00 per annum
Editor:	email: morwellpost@morwellhistoricalsociety.org.au
Research Fees:	\$10.00 per hour or part thereof, and prices for photo prints on application and postage where applicable.
Facebook:	<a href="https://www.facebook.com/morwellhistoricalsociety">https://www.facebook.com/morwellhistoricalsociety</a>
Postal Address:	12 Hazelwood Road, Morwell 3840 Victoria, Australia

Front page icon is of the old Post Office c1930 which was on the site of the now Commonwealth Bank, corner of Commercial Road and Tarwin Street.

All photos, unless indicated, are from our archives.

## **PRESIDENT'S REPORT – NOVEMBER 2018**

Thank you to all members who have supported the Society throughout this year and I extend to you best wishes for the Festive Season.

### **History Week**

We were very pleased with the number of people who visited the Society during History Week. It was especially pleasing that we had 30 people who joined us for the Guided Street Walk of the Commercial Area on Saturday, 13<sup>th</sup> October 2018. Kellie Bertrand and I hosted this walk which was enjoyed immensely by those participating and who then returned for a delicious afternoon tea. It was suggested that another such walk should be held next year, possibly in March.

### **Support from the Local Business Community**

It has been pleasing to receive support from 18 local businesses as follows:

**Corporate Sponsors \$500** – AKZ Reinforcing Pty. Ltd., McRoberts, Optus MidValley Morwell.

**Business Supporters \$100** – Gippsland Dental Group, Goss Accountants, HelloWorld Travel Morwell, Steve McRae Dental Lab, Latrobe Eye Care, Morwell RSL, Morwell Club, Monacellars, Bensons Timber and Hardware, Marino Delicatessen, Latrobe Valley Bus Lines, Valley Court Laundrette, Aussie Broadband, Davies and Moller Advantage Pharmacy, Morwell Dry Cleaners.

It would be appreciated if our members could support these businesses wherever possible.

### **Grants Received**

Recently grants have been received from:

1. Energy Australia - \$550 for the purchase of Little Jumbo Safety Steps with a Safety Bracket
2. Latrobe City Council - \$5,000 Minor Capital Works Grant for repainting the painted areas on the front of the building
3. Latrobe City Council - \$5,000 Community Development Grant towards the publication "Morwell and District Boer War Soldiers and Civilians".

### **Latrobe City Seniors Expo**

Shirley Prosser, Fay Thompson and I attended the Latrobe City Seniors Expo on Tuesday, 16<sup>th</sup> October at Kernot Hall. This was a great opportunity to connect with the community and to share what the Society has to offer.

### **Fundraiser – Engraved Deluxe Metal Pens: "Morwell Historical Society"**

The Committee agreed to trial a Fundraiser selling Engraved Deluxe Metal Pens. Details: 5 colours – blue, red, purple, silver, black – for sale @ \$4 each including a black suede pouch or festive felt/material pouches. (Please contact a Committee member to purchase or attend the rooms on an Open Day).

Postage for 2 pens with or without pouches - \$3.25 Postage up to 6 pens with or without pouches - \$4.25

### **End of Year Christmas Dinner, 6<sup>th</sup> December 2018, 6.30pm at Morwell Bowling Club**

We are looking forward to an enjoyable end of year function to celebrate the past year and the Festive Season. If you have not yet replied but would like to attend please text or phone Shirley Prosser on 0409 436 019.

### **Past Guest Speakers:**

October Meeting – Peter Butcher – "1914 – a World at War" as portrayed in postage stamps.

November Meeting – Mrs. June Turner (nee Sellens), age 91 – Memories of Morwell Bridge, together with Mrs. Gwen Graham (nee Cain) and Gail Bianconi (nee Starkey).

Bruce McMaster  
President

# A Haunting Story

Recently, on a cold, wet, windy, miserable afternoon one of our intrepid volunteers saw a visitor knocking on the front door of the Lodge. Crossing Hazelwood Road our volunteer saw the visitor had moved to the side entrance and was knocking furiously on that door.

On asking the visitor if they could be of assistance as there was no one in the building the visitor introduced himself to our volunteer as Matthew, a student from Federation University, Churchill.

Matthew informed our volunteer that he had made an appointment to visit the Historical Society at 1.00 pm but there did not seem to be a welcoming committee.

“Who did you make the appointment with?”, he was asked.

“I put it on Facebook”, he replied.

However, the volunteer said “If you tell me what you want to research I may be able to help”.

By this stage they were inside the building and Matthew explained that he was undertaking an assignment on “Haunting” and had been referred to the Society by staff at the Morwell Library. When asked about what ghost stories existed in the area our volunteer explained that the nearby Haunted Hills which was later renamed Hernes Oak had a reputation of being haunted. This was because cattle were afraid to stay in the area. The subterranean hollows in the hills magnified the hoofbeats of the cattle and frightened them and they would never settle at night. Matthew was given the book “*Across the Old Bush Track*” which is the history and story of the Haunted Hills to read. After browsing through it he explained that he was looking for people ghosts not animal ghosts.

Our volunteer explained there was a reputedly “haunted house” at 4 Jane Street but it was demolished years ago and now the site is a block of flats. This brick house was built by J.B. Hoyle and later was lived in by the local newspaper editor who hung himself in the house. After school, seeking adventure, a group of High School boys sneaked into the house to check it out and claimed to have seen a ghost.

Matthew was also told that if he wished to spend \$25 for each tour you can go on a ghost tour in Yallourn North or Traralgon or Rosedale most weekends. At Coal Creek in Korumburra and also at Walhalla ghost tours are run and they even provide a lantern to carry.

Matthew thanked the volunteer and after he left our volunteer wondered if the spirits of the past members of the Masonic Lodge whose images grace the walls above the entrance door still took an interest in the renovations and modifications of their former home.

**BLUEY & CURLEY : Gave Them The Bird**



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“*Across the Old Bush Track*”

By Dorothy Squires-Taylor



# Council Gives Up The Ghost

## 'Oldest' house to go

Morwell is to lose its 'haunted house'. Morwell Shire Council this week agreed, a little reluctantly, to issue demolition permission for the Jane Street house at number 4, said to be the towns' oldest brick house.

The house, known by generations of school children as "haunted", has an eerie past. The local newspaper editor of early times hung himself from a beam just inside the back door.

An Express reporter looked inside the same, open door this week but the foreboding, pitch dark interior and the spooky creaking of the door persuaded her to stay outside.

You don't casually stroll through the house, she found you sneak up on it and hope it isn't watching?

Eighteen months ago, Morwell Council tried to classify the house with the National Trust. Failing this it went to the Historic Buildings Preservation Council which gives the decision within the next two weeks. Not only is it said to be Morwell's oldest house, but the remaining house built with bricks fired from clay very similar to that in the open cut.

The demolition permit for the house, owned by Geoff Bell, came before Morwell Council this week as an item of late business. Council granted the permit, but only after much debate. Cr Tony Hanning argued strongly against demolishing the house, but his efforts were in vain.

Councillor Jack Vinall said he had always supported preserving the house but, following the last inspection, had decided that it was not worth preserving because of the cost and its state. "It would be very costly for Council to restore it. If Council agrees that it stays, who pays for it?" he asked.

The Chief Executive, Mr Waters, pointed out that the legislation covering such situations were presently under review and was even caught up in the Morris land compensation report review. "If the Historic Buildings Preservation Council decreed the house should be preserved, the Council could be bound to have some responsibility for it", he said.

Mr Waters said that if the owner could not demolish it, it was also doubtful whether he was responsible to renovate or re-establish it. "That was being looked at by the committee before the government changed. It is not clear who pays".

Mr Waters earlier pointed out that, if the council refused the owners request to demolish the house, it could be subject to an appeal to the Planning Appeals Board or have damages levelled against it.

When the motion to demolish the house was put to the vote those who voted against it were the Shire President, Cr Keith Hamilton, Cr Hanning and Cr Brian Ingram. The other Councillors, with the exception of Cr Bill Roberts, who was absent from the meeting at that stage, voted in favour.

"The Latrobe Valley Express" Thursday October 6th 1983

# Morwell Hospital

In 1910 the only hospital in Morwell was Miss Townsends 'Private Hospital', 24 Hazelwood Road. It was a private house with three bedrooms for patients. This hospital was purchased by nursing sisters Smith and Mathers in 1914 and they called it St Hilary's. In 1922 a newly built 12 patients hospital at 16 Elgin Street was opened by Sister Mathers and it was called St Hilary's. This hospital was sold to Sister Danaher who in 1941 decided to sell it.



Morwell's first Hospital

l to r. Sister Cox, ? , Sister Mathers and Sister Kath Maloney.



At that time, Morwell had a population of 2000 and in 1942 a public meeting was held to consider the establishment of a Community Bush Nursing Hospital. In January 1943 the furniture, equipment and chattels of St Hilary's were bought from Sister Danaher for the sum of 886 pounds, 9 shillings and 6 pence. A further agreement to transfer the lease of the hospital was also completed. To raise money to cover the cost of the new hospital, committees were formed throughout the Shire and canvassers appointed, yielding a sum of 4042 pounds and 7 shillings in donations and memberships. Sister Phelan was appointed as Temporary Sister in Charge of the Shire of Morwell Hospital but many people still called it St Hilary's. The hospital was affiliated with the Victorian Bush Nursing Association. Sister Mitchell was the first Matron. In 1946 the first major alterations and additions were made to the hospital to accommodate 18 patients. In the period 1948 to 1951 Morwell's population rose from 2,000 to 10,000 so the need for more hospital facilities became obvious. In 1952 the Committee severed its affiliation with the Bush Nursing Association and the hospital was re-registered as the Shire of Morwell Hospital. In 1958 the name changed to Morwell and District Community Hospital.



1964 advertisement on ply wood found in Campbell "George" Polwarth's cow shed and donated to the Society by Beverley White, his niece.



Morwell and District Community Hospital

In 1973 more alterations were made to the hospital and in 1988 the hospital became St Hilary's Nursing Home and in 1989 opened with 20 beds.

Baptist Community Care 'Baptcare' purchased the nursing home in 1997. It was closed in 2003 and a new facility opened on the Elgin Street site of the old hospital in 2008 and is called 'Baptcare St Hilary's Residential Aged Care'.

"Morwell Advertiser" 5 Nov 1942  
Morwell Historical Society Files

Photo taken 4th August 2018





# *Then and ...*

## **SPRY STREET**



We do not know where the word Spry came from but the houses at the top of Spry Street were known as APM houses. Booth Street was named after the Manager Director of APM. Botany St was named after a suburb in Sydney where there was a mill, as was Fairfield St after a Melbourne suburb that had a mill. Papyrus is a kind of paper made from the stem pith of the papyrus plant. APM also had administrative buildings and temporary houses for their employees on land beside McDonald St on what became known as the Sir Norman Brookes Park. In 1956 the swimming pool was built on land donated by the APM.

# *... Now*

Photo taken 10th May 2018 from the top of Spry Street looking west.





## *Remember When*

The railway line from Morwell to Mirboo North was opened on 7th January 1886.

The station at Yinnar was located at the 7-mile peg, the 12-mile peg was Boolarra, the 16-mile peg was Darlimurla and the terminus was Mirboo North. Soon after opening the line a station was provided at Hazelwood and it was opened on 1st February 1888. This station closed on 22nd September 1953.



Steam train crossing Commercial Road on the Morwell to Mirboo North Railway Line 1960's

The contractor for this line was John Robb, who on completion went on to build the Moe-Narracan line. Incidentally John Robb has a place in the history of the Morwell Church of England. He donated the foundation material and a sum of 25 pounds for the building of the first St Mary's in Chapel Street and laid the foundation stone of the church on 27th July 1885.

Partly because of the lessening of rail traffic because of the expansion of road traffic, and partly, the SEC wanted the land for the extension of the Morwell Open Cut Mine, the Morwell to Mirboo North line was closed in 1968. Passenger services were withdrawn on 7th September 1968 and the goods traffic discontinued on Tuesday 18th June 1968.

For over 70 years it gave regular service to the people of Morwell and its environs, carrying rural produce to market and returning with goods to stock store keepers shelves. It carried picnickers and punters to race meetings in Morwell, passengers to Melbourne and troops to world wars. We have a very small section of the line which was donated by the late Graeme Cornell, a member of our Society, is on display in our rooms.

## REMEMBER, REMEMBER THE FIFTH OF NOVEMBER

(Traditional English Rhyme - 17th Century)

Remember, remember the fifth of November  
Gunpowder, treason and plot  
I see no reason why gunpowder treason  
Should ever be forgot



**Back Row:** Billy Godridge, John Hallam, Richard McRoberts  
**Front Row:** Phillip McRoberts, Beth McRoberts, Mary Godridge,  
Joan Pigdon, Kevin Pigdon, Max Lithgow, Mary Hallam  
c. 1957

What a delightful memory of Guy Fawkes Night!

### Thank You Gentlemen

The children of Helen St. convey sincere thanks to Messrs Jas. Turnbull, Jack Hallam, Ivan Hocking, Wm. Graham, Thos. Robinson and S. Crookes for supplying material and building them a bonfire on Saturday, as vandals had burnt theirs Friday night.

*"Morwell Advertiser"* unknown date



From the Front Page...

**Turning the first sod on the site of the Yallourn Power Station, February 1921.**

Left to right: - Mr. C.H. Kernot (later Chief Engineer, S.E.C.), Mr. A.H. Merrin (later Secretary for Mines), Sir Thomas Lyle (Chairman of the Electricity Commissioners until 1920 and later S.E.C. Commissioner), Mr R. Liddelow (Secretary and later Manager, S.E.C.), the Hon. G Swinburne (S.E.C. Commissioner), Sir John Monash (S.E.C. Chaiman, 1921-31), Sir Robert Gibson (S.E.C Commissioner)

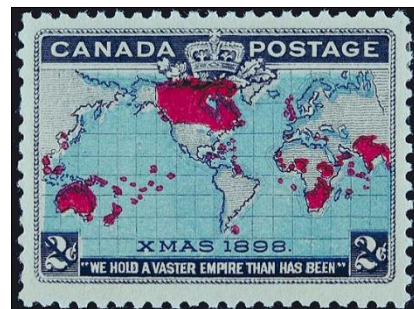
“YALLOURN” published by the SEC of V c. 1960s

Festive pouches for our pens mentioned in the President’s Report



**Canada Releases World's First Christmas Stamp in 1898 - 120 years ago**

On December 25, 1898, Canada became the first country to issue a Christmas stamp, which also became known as the "map stamp."







## OPEN DAYS 2018

7th November / 21st November / 25th November

## OPEN DAYS 2019

6th February / 20th February / 24th February

6th March / 20th March / 31st March

3rd April / 17th April / 28th April

1st May / 15th May / 26th May

5th June / 19th June / 29th June

3rd July / 17th July / 28th July

7th August / 21st August / 25th August

4th September / 18th September / 29th September

2nd October / 16th October / 27th October

Please deliver me to:

If not delivered please return to 12 Hazelwood Road, Morwell 3840

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