

MORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

published monthly, except December

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

Secretary: Mrs. E. McMaster phone 34 1149

Vol. 4 No. 10

OCTOBER 1988

THE 1988 BI-CENTENARY YEAR.

MORWELL AND DISTRICT

DECADE 1968 - 1978.

In this decade the growth of Morwell's population had slowed down somewhat and the changes taking place were most noticeable in industry, commerce, social service and sport amenities. At this time, too, the Shire Council progressed with its scheme to segregate residential areas from industrial and commerce centres. Below are a few interesting dates followed by some reminiscences written by another member.

- 1968 - The Gas and Fuel Corporation at Morwell closed down when the natural gas flowed from Bass Strait.
- 1969 - Maryvale High School moved from its temporary accommodation at Morwell High School, to its present site on Bridle Estate.
- 1969 - A squash court was built off Church Street and the Morwell Club Bowling Green opened in Helen Street.
- 1970 - The Hazelwood Power Station was completed.
- 1971 - Late Friday night shopping re-commenced.
- 1972 - The local newspaper 'The Advertiser' ceased to exist. It was replaced by The Express.
- 1976 - A new golf course beyond Crinigan Road opened.
- 1977 - Morwell High School hall was built.

Campbell Hughston, a retired S.E.C. engineer.

The Gallery workshop was commenced in February 1972 in the Town Hall "dungeon" - originally the children's library - now the Red Cross Rooms.

FROM OUR SEPTEMBER MEETING:

- Most discussion centred on the proposed Pictorial History of Morwell which Morwell Historical Society is compiling. We are in the process of obtaining quotes for the publication and work will begin shortly on actual selection of the photographs.

- The Shire of Morwell has retained the firm of Loder and Bayly, Design Consultants, to do a feasibility study on the redevelopment of the old Town Hall in Commercial Rd. for the use of community groups. Members will recall that we have been asking, since 1985, for use of part of the old records room as an archival storage area and, in fact, we were promised space there when the records room was finally cleared.

Our Society somehow missed out on being consulted (via a questionnaire from Loder and Bayly) on our requirements but, after several 'phone calls to the powers that be, we received an invitation to take part in a workshop of interested groups on Wednesday, October 5th. President Lou Bond attended on our behalf and we now await, with interest, the outcome of the feasibility study.



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INVITATIONS AND EXCURSIONS.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20: Members are invited to Boolarra Historical Society's meeting. Guest speaker will be Mr. Patrick Morgan, whose book: "Shadow and Shine - an Anthology of Gippsland Literature", has recently been published. Visitors are welcome to look through the Boolarra museum also.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23: We are invited to join with members of the Moe and Traralgon Historical Societies on an excursion to Brunton's Bridge, near Walhalla. The purpose of the trip is to celebrate the centenary of the opening of the Bridge in October, 1888. Speakers at the celebration will be Mr. Hans Faubel and Major Chris Raymond.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 30: Dedication of the memorial bridge over Waterhole Creek to commemorate the twin towns of Morwell Bridge and Morwell West. This will take the form of a reunion for ex-residents of the two areas but all interested folk are cordially invited. The reunion commences at 9am and the dedication ceremony will take place at 1.30 pm.

NOVEMBER: Boolarra Historical Society is planning an excursion for November, tentatively on the 26th, in the form of a historical Walk Round Boolarra and a visit to some of the former industrial sites - e.g. the early coal mine and the bauxite quarry.

Tentatively also, on Thursday evening, November 10, Boolarra H.S. will host a group of long-term Boolarra residents with some fascinating tales to tell about the district.

Confirmation of both the above dates will be made shortly. For any further information on any of the excursions and meetings mentioned, please contact Elsie McMaster on (051)341149.

The Butters and Brittingham Families

Last month our members were very interested in the article about Mrs Iris Brittingham (nee Butters). This information was supplied by Mrs Brittingham's son, Bill, who offered us more information for future editions. However, circumstances prevented us contacting Bill before this edition was ready to print. So instead we have printed a little information about the Butters family found in 'Steam horse to Power'.

As stated before, 'Nana Brit' was one of the thirteen children of Mr and Mrs H. A. Butters. Sadly, death claimed three of this Butters family in fourteen months. The second child, Ivy, was drowned in an old clay hole in Corbett's brickyards on 16/10/1897. She was nine years old. The sixth child, then aged five, was choked by croup on 26/5/1898 and the seventh child died of convulsions on 25/1/1899.

In 1907 the young people of Morwell formed a dancing club and Les Hare became its first secretary. The best dance pianist in the town was young Nellie Butters (the eldest of the above thirteen children). She provided most of the music for these early dances. Les Hare and Nellie Butters were married on 26/3/1908. Nellie died in 1973 aged 86 years.

Centre for Gippsland Studies Seminar

Publishing Your Family/School/Church History

A Publishing Information Day

Saturday 19 November

Gippsland Institute of Advanced Education

Switchback Road, Churchill

In response to the many enquiries we receive on how to publish small histories—be they family, school, church or club histories—the Centre for Gippsland Studies is holding a day of workshops and seminars on self-publishing.

Topics covered will include lay-out, type faces, choice of paper, preparation of photographs for publication, cover design, editing, inter-acting with printers, general advice on costs, preparation of bibliographies and indexes, ISBN numbers and legal requirements, use of computers, merchandising and distribution.

Some of the sessions will be informal and are intended to answer queries and solve problems.

Speakers include publishers of local histories, authors, editors and librarians.

If you have a completed manuscript that you intend to publish, but have little experience in the field, have been elected to a centenary committee that is preparing a publication, are researching your family history and want to publish it for members of the family, or have a book still sitting in the back of your mind, the Publishing Information Day at Gippsland Institute will greatly assist your project.

Publishing Information Day

Saturday 19 November

10 am—4 pm

Cost \$20

(Morning and afternoon tea included but lunch not provided).

For more details and a copy of the complete programme, contact Meredith Fletcher at the Centre for Gippsland Studies

Gippsland Institute

Switchback Road

Churchill 3842

(051)220356

Trivia

What's in a name?

Famous People of England and Scotland

For centuries makers of anagrams have sought hidden meanings in the letters of people's names. Seventeenth-century Jacobites made great play of the fact that James Stuart could be represented as A JUST MONARCH.

Below are given the anagrammatic versions of the names of five famous people. In each case the anagram is not merely a combination of convenient letters, but also a clue to the identity of the person. The number of letters in the forenames and surnames is also given in brackets after each item. To help you further birth and death dates are also given. You'll note that one is still living. (An English Politician).

1. I'll make a wise phrase (7, 11)
b. 1564 d. 1616
2. On then, O sailor (7, 6)
b. 1758 d. 1805
3. Our best novels in store (6, 5, 9)
b. 1850 d. 1894
4. Flit on cheering angel (8, 11)
5. That great charmer (8, 8)
b. 1925

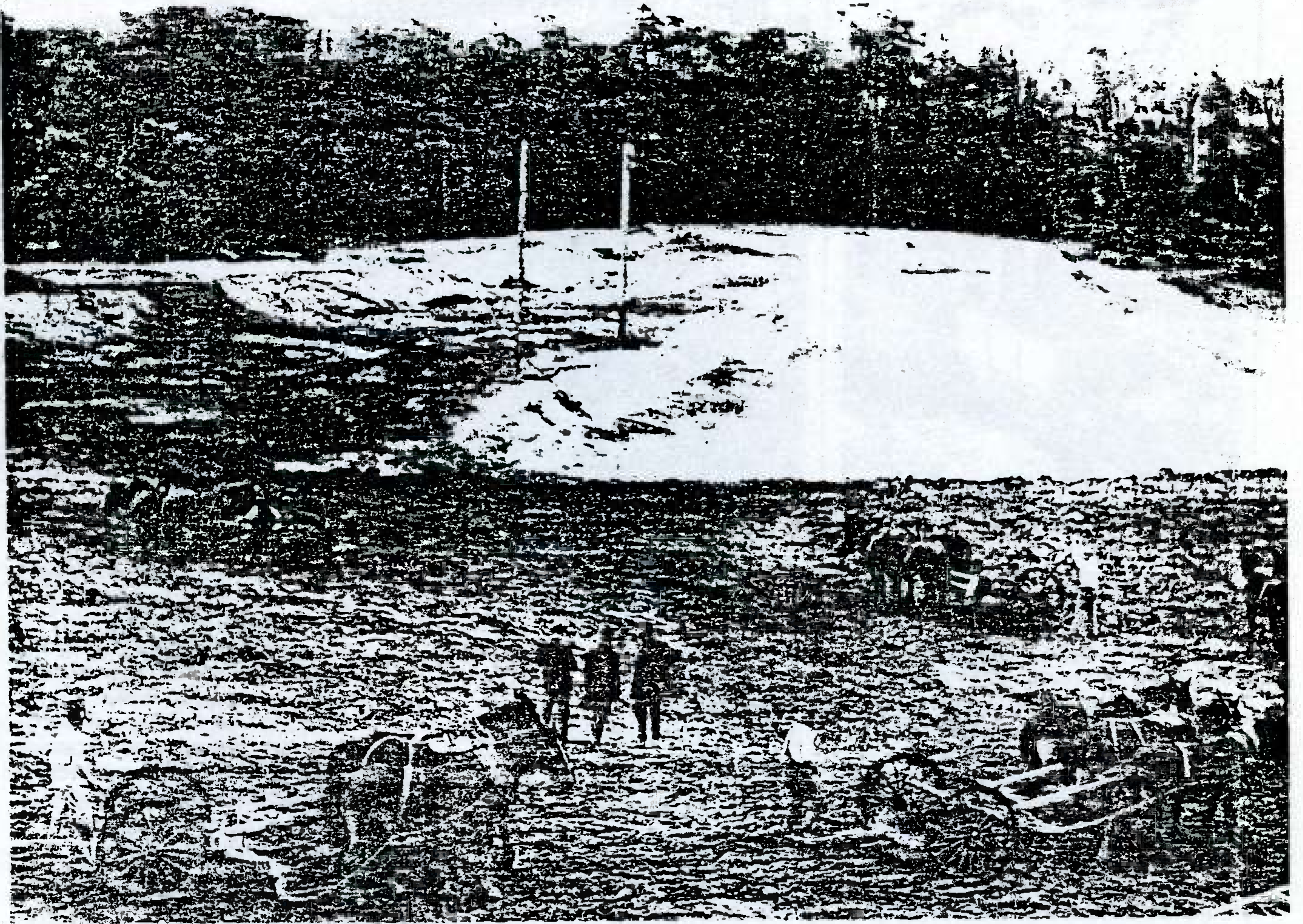
ELECTRICITY-THE STORY

Early days of brown coal



Number 5 in the series

Issued by the Public Relations Department of the State Electricity Commission 15 William Street, Melbourne 3000.



Horses were used to remove overburden during the development of the Yallourn open cut.

Victoria has almost no black coal. In the early days that did not matter much. There were few steamships and wood sufficed for domestic heating and as fuel for the minor industries that were established.

As the new colony grew, railways were planned and the demand for coal expanded. In 1862 the Victorian Government offered a reward for the discovery of workable fields.

Brown coal was found at Lal Lal near Ballarat in 1857. From the 1860s onwards many new fields were reported, and by 1876 brown coal had been found in 32 places. The Latrobe Valley has by far the easiest access to the coal.

Henry Godridge, a Morwell Bridge innkeeper, and William Tulloch, a builder and contractor of Morwell, prospected these outcrops independently. From this activity came the application for a mineral lease on which the Great Morwell Coal Mining Company began operating in 1889. Some of Godridge's descendants have recently worked for the SEC.

The Victorian Government Geologist, James Stirling, told a Royal Commission on Coal in 1891 that he believed the deposits were the largest in the world. This was not a bad guess when so little boring had been done, for the Latrobe Valley deposits are indeed among the world's greatest reserves of brown coal.

The 'father of brown coal', Dr Hyman Herman, estimated that Victoria's deposits were 57 000 million tonnes, of which 42 000 million tonnes were recoverable.

Latest estimates are that in the Latrobe Valley alone 112 000 million tonnes of brown coal have been proved. Of this, about 35 000 million tonnes can be mined economically under present methods and costs.

Victoria had to rely on the extensive black coal deposits in New South Wales to provide power for its growing industries and enthusiasts saw in these Latrobe Valley deposits a great opportunity for the State to free itself from this dependence. Germany had

Early days of brown coal

(8)

During the 1920's, horses were used to transport coal from the Yallourn open cut to the power station



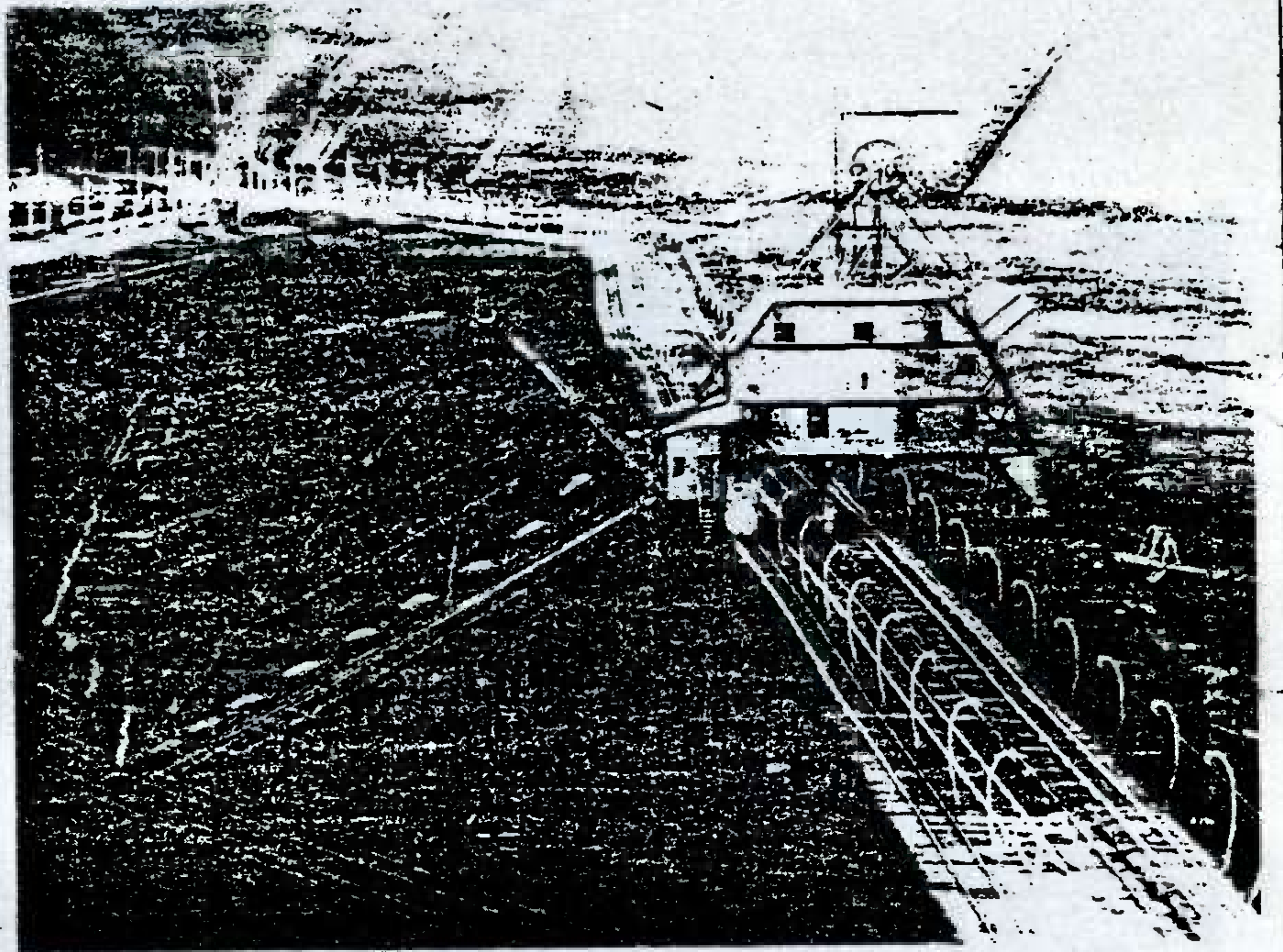
been using both raw and briquetted brown coal for 30 years. People argued: Why not Victoria? Some even predicted that brown coal would eventually be used to make gas in Victoria. (It was, but not until the mid 1950s.) No-one suggested at that early stage that it be used to produce electricity, although the Germans had, in 1884, lit a brown coal colliery by a portable engine fired with brown coal. In 1890, the great maritime strike in New South Wales disrupted coal supplies and aroused fresh interest in Victoria's brown coal.

It was tested for use in raising steam and making gas. Government analyst, J Cosmo Newbery, was sent to Germany in 1892 with a quantity of Morwell brown coal that was made into briquettes there. He reported that experts considered the quality well above that of German briquettes.

The Great Morwell Coal Mining Company had dug an open cut north of the Latrobe River. Attracted by a Government offer of \$10 000 for the first 100 000 briquettes produced in the colony, the company made some briquettes which were described as of good quality.

In view of the technical difficulties with brown coal, it was remarkable that the company had done so much, but the day of brown coal had not yet come.

A bucket chain dredger in the Yallourn open cut.



Black coal was much more easily used and comparatively less costly. The company closed down in 1899, after years of struggle against black coal competition, the nature of brown coal itself, and a disastrous bushfire.

In 1901, Stirling, the State Geologist, visited Germany and reported that the use of brown coal was expanding enormously there, even in competition with black coal. He brought back technical details of briquetting. He saw a vision of the Latrobe Valley dotted with collieries and factories, and he urged that Victoria's 'magnificent beds' be exploited.

Nothing was done, however, and brown coal remained, like a huge fortune in chancery, waiting for the rightful heirs to its riches and benefits.

In the fifty years to 1917, by sporadic efforts in various places, 120 000 tonnes of brown coal were won. In the next 60 years, Victoria produced more than 300 million tonnes of coal.

By 1918, Victoria's population had grown to 1.5 million. The State's policy of tariff protection for local industry had been adopted as the settled policy of the federation of States that became the Commonwealth of Australia. Manufacturing was increasing; it needed power, and for that an adequate and uninterrupted supply of fuel was essential.

In 1918, the Victorian Government passed legislation to appoint Commissioners to regulate and investigate supply of electricity. This was prompted by the urgency of the situation, particularly in the metropolitan area where a shortage of power was imminent; the inadequacy of Victoria's black coal reserves; and the threat to continuity of supply of NSW black coal due to recurring industrial disputes.

In 1921, legislation was passed creating 'The State Electricity Commission of Victoria'. As a statutory corporation, it has the responsibility to generate and distribute electricity; to own and operate brown coal open cuts and briquette works; and to undertake ancillary functions. In June 1924, power was first transmitted on a commercial basis from Yallourn A power station to Melbourne. By 1928 this plant supplied 75 megawatts. Today, the SEC is the largest electricity supply authority in Australia, and Australia's largest individual coal producer. The SEC's transmission network comprising 115 000 km of power lines services over 1 1/2 million electricity customers throughout the State. The brown coal power stations of the Latrobe Valley now have a total capacity of over 3700 megawatts with further generating plant under construction at Loy Yang.

MEMORY MILESTONES - thanks to Audrey Conrow

- 1-7-70 Purvis for Survis - shops were located in Moe, Morwell and Yallourn North - celebrated their 60th Anniversary. Morwell's Purvis store was in Buckley Street where K.W. Steel is now located.
- 1-7-70 Woolworths apparel store at 22 Commercial Road conducted a closing down sale. Today, Faulkners Bottle Gourmet is located in this building.
- 1-7-70 Michael Guss store operated at 232 Commercial Road. (Kelly Bros today). In 1973 he was still advertising school uniforms for the Morwell area.
- 1-7-70 Whites shoes shop was located at 15 Church Street. Whites later moved to Commercial Road - near Robinsons pharmacy.
Maples furniture store was located on the corner of George and Tarwin Street for all of the 1970's.
- 22-7-70 Mr. Reg Lord, Shire Secretary, and Mr. Graeme Ritchie, Shire Engineer noticed that street seats and garbage bins could be presented in an attractive form. Consequently, similar were made for Morwell - Morwell library area was an area to be beautified. The hot house now located near the cenotaph memorial (Princes Highway) was shifted from its former (and original) site adjacent to the Morwell library. This site was therefore available for the Gallery workshop. It is now where CYSS meet.
- 22-7-70 Alterations commenced at the rear of the Town Hall (Hazelwood Road corner). The Regional Art Gallery was to be located here, besides the Social Welfare and Home Help offices. The parking officers were also located here. The Art Gallery was at a level extended from the Council Chambers and Shire President's Reception Room. It was offically opened by the Premier, Mr. Henry Bolte in May 1971. A director was appointed - Mr.