# MORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY REWSLETTER

published monthly, except December Meetings: 3rd Tuesday of the month at 7·30 pm in St. Andrews Presbyterian Church Hall Vol. 7 No.9

September 1991

#### WELCOME TO THE SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER

This month, we print a further extract from Emily Walker's diary, and a local history assignment researched by Morwell V.C.E. student Shari Aubrey. (In fairness to Shari, it should be noted that her extensive Bibliography has been omitted due to lack of space in the Newsletter and several sections of her report have been printed in a different order, for the same reason.)

News of the purchase of a microfilm/microfiche reader and printer for Morwell Library, together with the microfilming of the Morwell and Yinnar Gazette will be welcomed by members.

There is a request for information from anyone who has had dealings with Gippsland Base Hospital over the years. This month marks the 125th anniversary of the hospital.

Our next meeting will be held on TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17th(the date is correct this time!).

Guest speaker at that meeting will be Mr.John Pearson of Monash University Gippsland. John has for some time been carrying out research on local men and women who served in the various theatres of conflict in World War 1 and he will be presenting some of that material at our meeting.

We look forward to seeing you there.



### LATROBE VALLEY REGIONAL LIBRARY

P.O. Box 815, MORWELL, 3840 (051) 34 1047

Your ref

Our ref

Mrs Elsie McMaster The Secretary Morwell Historical Society Inc. 2 Harold Street Morwell 3840

15th August 1991

Dear Elsie,

I am writing to invite the Historical Society to contribute towards the cost of two exciting developments for Morwell's local history buffs.

The Regional Library plans to purchase a microfilm printer, costing \$6,800, for Morwell Branch Library - see enclosed brochure.

This will allow the Morwell Advertiser on microfilm, which is currently based in Traralgon Library, to be housed and readily available in Morwell.

The selected printer is also capable of handling microfiche copying and will be available to family historians using the library's extensive collection of microfiche records.

In addition, the Library has placed an order with the State Library for the microfilming of the Morwell and Yinnar Gazette which was published between 1886 and 1916. It is expected that filming of this paper will be completed early in 1992 at a cost of \$1,040.

If the Society is interested in contributing towards the cost of microfilming the Morwell and Yinnar Gazette or towards the cost of the microfilm printer, please contact myself or Carole Ingwersen at the Regional Library on 337588/341047.

Yours sincerely,

Lane Weed

Claire Wood

Morwell Branch Librarian

Morwell historical Society has decided to contribute \$500.00 towards the cost of the projects outlined in Claire's letter and it is hoped that other community groups will also contribute.

The reader/printer will be of great assistance not only to those interested in historical and genealogical research but also to students, particularly those studying at V.C.E. and tertiary level.

Gippsland Base Hospital Guthridge Parade SALE 3850

> Phone 051 496750 051 496642

> 20th August 1991

Morwell Historical Society C/O Mrs McMaster 2 Harold Street MORWELL 3840

Dear Mrs McMaster

September 1992 marks the 125th year of service of the Gippsland Base Hospital to the people of Sale and Gippsland. To help mark this occasion, Ann Andrew and I have been asked to write a history of the Gippsland Hospital.

We are, therefore, writing to your society to ask for assistance with this project.

The Gippsland Hospital, opened in 1867, was (almost) the first hospital in Gippsland - Woods Point hospital opened a few months earlier. For many years, the Gippsland Hospital served patients from the South, West and East Gippsland areas, including the goldfield towns. Patients were brought to the hospital for specialist medical care and surgery. They came by boat, by coach, by wagon, horseback and train.

The Gippsland Hospital was one of the first country centres, in the 1890's, to begin training nurses. This training continued until nurse training was taken over by colleges just a few years ago. A number of these nurses went on to nurse in the First and Second World Wars, and to hold respected nursing positions locally, and in other parts of Australia.

Sale and the surrounding areas were served by many highly regarded doctors and surgeons over the years.

As part of this project, we would like to recognise and to document the enormous energy and contribution made to the hospital by the people who worked in it, and by the communities and organisations who supported it.

We particularly would like to hear of personal stories, from nurses, staff, patients or families, which relate to the working conditions and to the care given by the hospital. We would welcome access to diaries, letters, photographs of the buildings or people connected with it. and to records of the benefactors and community groups who raised generous amounts of money to support the Hospital. We would like to hear individual reminiscences, for example, of the Influenza epidemic of 1919-20, the polio and diphtheria epidemics.

The major interactive role between the community and the hospital which served it, mark many of the social conditions and changes of the past, and with this work, we want to piece together a little more of the story of Gippsland.

We hope you will be able to help us in this venture.

Expect to arrive as Host Paid this shall coal". The beginning of The day passed In The muel Pronotory, ie. breakfast, sitting up on deck y traliting about, staying the salown in the heat of the clay. derver at 10'elocat & onder after the great heat was over, Till tre reached Fort Said as trockelle fin. Duelle the enjenes stopped, the fangeray Fras lowered, El Fras besieged -lu a number of boats o Anon from the landing-she close by. The men here very rough rive; each pushing r policy, with his long poole

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arrival on the Genomie Fre

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found quite a lange einele clacked round a jugler or conjuning, performing with a rabbit which he would penie of all remonstrance. D'éves dark about so'clock but me had some of the ship o Canten statuing over the sky-light, so die pelled. Mr Mac Theroon. The 3th officer, brought some Lettle trative boys for on to look at ; they mere rather ruce Cooking title boys too. One offered ic clamb to he inasthead & jump down i! someone troubd fevre min 2/0. however none cicaented

# Morwell war work, World War II

By Shari Aubrey. Maryvale Campus, Kurnai college.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS!

\* Mrs Spittall.

-Interview and questionnaire.

\* Mr Gooding.

-Interview and questionnaire.

\* Mrs Evans.

-Interview and questionnaire.

\* Mrs Butters.

-Questionnaire.

\* Mrs Davey.

-Interview.

\* Fiss McRoberts.

-Interview.

\* Mr Bond.

-Interview.

\* Mrs Lubcke.

-Interview.

- \* Ir John Smith. Manager of Morwell R.S.L.
- \* Mrs Elsie McMaster. Secretary of Morwell Historical Society.
- \* Mrs Lyn Ryan. Maryvale Campus Librarian.
- \* Mitchell House Hostel.
- \* Center for Gippsland Studies, Monash University, Gippsland.
- \* Morwell Public Library.

TOPIC- The contributions of Morwell and District residents in voluntary and formal work situations during World War II.

RATIONALE- I chose this topic of war work throughout the duration of World War II as it is not an aspect of the conflict that has been thoroughly documented and I, personally wished to examine whether the war effort from 1939-1945 united or divided the community of Morwell, while also reconising the contributions made by the self sacraficing people who resided in the general District of Morwell.

#### HYPOTHESES-

- 1. The small community of Morwell, and surrounding areas pulled together during the years of conflict ( 1939-1945 ) to assist the war effort in varying ways.
- Social events provided opportunities for fundraising efforts during the Second World War in the Morwell District.
- Due to media pressure, women of Morwell participated in formal work situations within the District as a contribution to the war effort.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION-

Prior to the outbreak of war on September 3rd, 1939 Morwell was a small town of approximately 2,000 residents and the town was just beginning to expand. Despite the few Industries and jobs available as a direct result of the Depression Morwell was beginning to grow. Morwell was sewered just before the war and the pilot plant at the Australian Paper Mill (A.P.M.) had been built creating many new jobs. The town had obtained a town hall and the State Electricity Commission (S.E.C.) was progressing to become an essential service, as was the A.P.M. which was steadily growing. (Finally there were jobs for many of the unemployed.

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(The typical resident of Morwell, and surrounding areas, Him did before 1939 were farmers and farmers' families, yet this group of people were conscious of the ever growing threat of war. "More or less" \*1 people knew the war was coming as "anyone who read the papers knew Hitler had been building up for a war....we just accepted it" \*2.

Mr. Gooding.

Mr. Bond.

When war broke out in 1939, Morwell was an "area where more or less everybody knew everybody" \*3. The small town was already a unified community, yet the conflict of 1939-1945 helped to strenghten the social bonds. The people had and continued to work closely for a long period of time, and according to Mr Bond this is the reason why Morwell did unite, because they had to "get down and work together" \*4. By working together Morwell, and District contributed an extraordinary amount of time and effort to assist the war effort which brought the community closer and closer.

The Red Cross and the Australian Comforts Funds were established and both organisations were very active in the area, working in the department of relief mostly, not only for soldiers and civilians overseas but also for those in the local area. (Source)

The Red Cross, for the duration of World War II sent a steady flow of relief parcels overseas as did another popular organisation named 'Parcels to Britain'. As their name suggests, this organisation collected and dispatched, to the soldiers parcels containing foodstuffs such as tinned fruit, fruit cakes, biscuts plus clothing of all sorts.

The Red Cross, Country Womens Association and civilians made a large amount of bandages to be used in the War, which involved old linen being boiled/sterilised, cut and then rolled. The Red Cross, Mrs Spittall recalls also made a large number of nets for an unknown reason.

A very large effort was also placed, by the Red Cross to organise social events to not only entertain, but to also raise revenue for the war effort. As a result of various dances, picture nights and concerts a substantial amount of money was raised due to the penny or thripence entry fee charged at these charity events. Similarly, Churches held functions and stalls to raise money which was then independently distributed amongst charities of their choice.

Mrs Connelly and her pupils raised £4/6/4.  $\star 5$ . The Yallourn Womens National Emergency Fund, where in an evening £13/4/- was raised and a donation of £4 was given by the Yallourn Bowling Club as a result of an evening run by the latter.  $\star 6$ .

Typical social events included dances and balls and Mrs Evans recalls, "there were dances all the time". Card nights were also frequent events, often attracting large attendances. One night held in the 'Showroom' saw

<sup>\*3</sup> Miss McRoberts.

<sup>\*4</sup> Mr Bond.

<sup>\*5 &#</sup>x27;Live Wire'. Jan. 22nd. 1941.

<sup>\*6 &#</sup>x27;Live Wire'. Jan. 29th. 1941.

six-hundred people attend. As a result of the enterance fee and a cake being raffled and later auctioned, £7/10/-was raised. \*7 Knitting competitions were also a frequent event with the knitted goods being dispatched overseas to either soldiers or civilians. Other events which involved a degree of initiative include the 'Popular Girl' contest held by the ladies from the Traralgon Comforts Fund to try and raise money to provide a mobile canteen for the troops. \*8

The above begins to potray to what extent fundraising events were incorporated into social activities and the intense effort put into such functions by both organisations and individuals. Although many social activities were connected with the war effort, many Morwell District residents pulled together and formed groups which partoke in war work that was removed from the social scene.

By February 28, 1940, the 'Live Wire' told about the intense effort made by the Red Cross. Since August 1939, the Victorian Red Cross has assembled for dispatch overseas the following-

- Foodstuffs- 27,000 tins and bottles: 2,300 lb's. of bulk items: 4,000 packets for the sick, injured or wounded soldiers and over 13,000 packets for active soldiers.
- Articles of clothing- 4,000.
- Hospital supplies and comforts- 20,000.

For sick and injured in camps and hospitals-

- Red Cross Bed covers- 700.
- Sheets of notepaper and envelopes- 30,000.
- ~Games- 300.
- Articles of clothing- 3,000.
- Toilet items- 3,000.
- Cigarettes (packets) 15,000.
- Sweets (1kg.) 500.
- Preserved Fruit (tins) 500.
- Cordials and Beverages (bottles) 600.

Smaller, more local groups such as the 'Brown Coal Mine War Efforts Association' forwarded to the Red Cross by January 22nd., 1941-

- 45 pullovers.
- 84 pairs of socks.
- 31 scarves.
- 40 pairs mittens.
- 29 Balaclavas.
- 4 knee caps, and
- £2/19/0 of cigarettes. \*9

The Yallourn Women's National Emergency Fund (Reg'd) also made society aware of other ways in which they could assist the war effort. Useful items to be collected included—

- Clean rags.
- Flat tabacco and floor polish tins.
- Old motor tyres.
- Medicine bottles, all to be dispatched to Melbourne. Similarily the Australian Comforts Fund, in the same article called for knitted goods which have previously been acknowledged as of "exceptional merit". \*10

<sup>\* 7,8</sup> S.E.C. magazine. 16th. Dec. 1942.

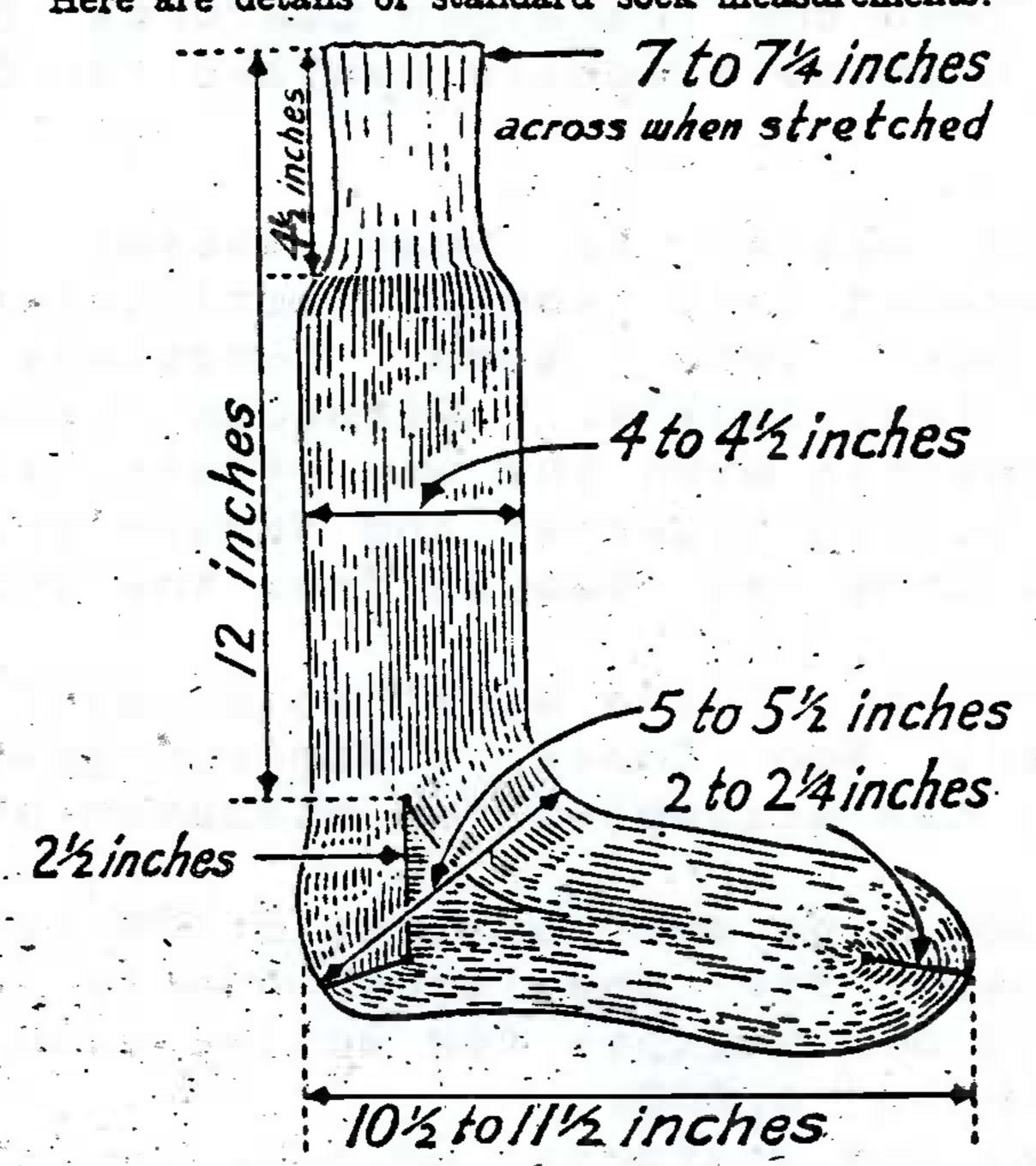
<sup>\* 9,10 &#</sup>x27;Live Wire'. Jan. 22nd 1943

#### 25,000 PAIRS SOCKS WANTED AT ONCE!

That was the order the A.C.F. received from the fighting forces on Wednesday, 8th September, "and." said Mrs. Ross (Knitting Commissioner of the Fund). "we hadn't got them."

Ladies of the S.E.C., here's a challenge to you! Will you help to provide these socks? We'll give you the wool and full directions. Just apply to Miss Murn, H.O., or Miss Moffatt, Flinders Street, or to your local knitting sub-committee of the S.E.C.P.F.

Here are details of standard sock measurements:-



Despite the intense (social) efforts made to volunteer services to war work, there were also many personal sacrafices of commodities. Obviously the rationing of tea, beer, clothing, sugar, butter and meat were large contributors to the changes in lifestyles.

The below clearly depicts how people were encouraged to conserve electricity and the S.E.C. magazine, December 16th., 1942 read... "The helping hand that stretches out to turn off the switch is the symbol of the Commission's appeal to the public to save electricity for war industries."



It was not only electricity use that had to be reduced, but also everyday necessities. The proceeding page is a good example of articles found in all magazines from 1939-1945. Other material saving ideas are explained below.

It was common practice for woolen articles to be unpicked once worn out and the wool was then reknitted. "Everything had to be saved" \*11 and another useful practice was to make aprons and underwear out of the calico flour bags. Similarly Sugar bags, also made out of good quality material were used to make serviettes and pinnafores. Rags, especially linen and blankets were rarely thrown away but rewashed, hung out on hay bales and reused when dry. "We never wasted a button" \*12, was Mr Gooding's comment in regard to clothing. Adult's clothes were often cut down so as to be made into children's clothes and men's trousers were also cut to make ladies skirts. It was always important to "use the good parts out of a garment" \*13 and make the most of what materials were available at the time.

Although there were restrictions placed on what one could buy, due to rationing and pressures by the media and society, Morwell was no longer a struggling town. The Government increased it's spending on essential services due to the demands of war. The Australian Paper Manufacturers and the State Electricity Commission both fell under the above category and subsequently both Industries led to full time employment for many and the opeortunity for overtime.

Due to the lack of Male labour and the necessity for employment at the S.E.C. and the A.P.M., essential services, females were required to enter the workforce, taking on traditional male jobs. Prior to the outbreak of war the only employment offered for women was generally ? being behind a counter or working on the telephone. exchange. But people not only saw formal war jobs as their duty but many found that you either "work or go mad". As a consequence there were many women employed in male jobs. The S.E.C. had ten women working in the main store plus many driving cars or trucks. The A.P.M. also had females working for them, more so in the transport field. During the war, the Flax Mill \*14 took on a full staff of women which was welcomed by many women who were receiving wages that were similar to those of men and Mr Bond saw this as the beginning of equal rights.

The Land Army was also another active service which employed women in areas that had always been dominated by men. The women who worked on a voluntary basis were "as good as any man" and Mr Bond recalls that approximately six Land Army girls were present in the Morwell District area, as Italian Prisoners of War also did a large amount of work on the farms.

Same

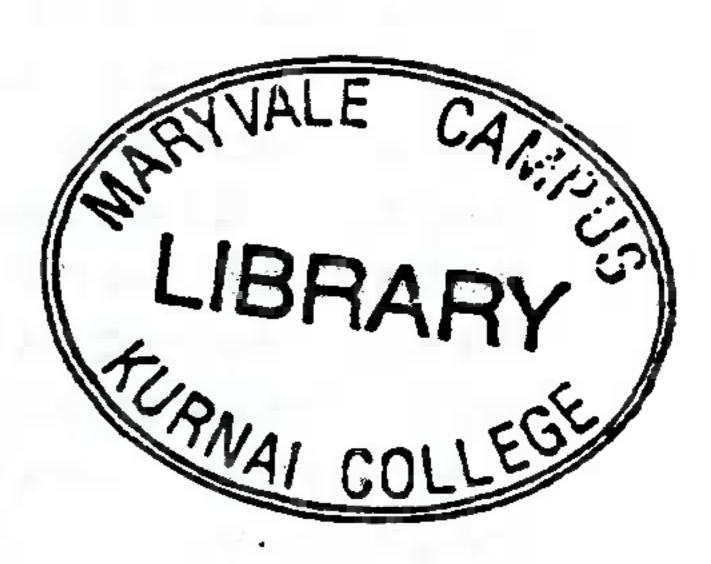
<sup>\* 11</sup> Mrs Spittall.

<sup>\* 12</sup> Mr Gooding.

<sup>\* 13</sup> Mrs Davey.

<sup>\* 14</sup> The Flax Mill, which was situated on Latrobe rd. in the same area as the 'Sunday Market', was destroyed in the 1944 Fires.





Schoolgirls' clothes are more often outgrown than out-worn. If you must buy something new, buy a size larger than actually needed.



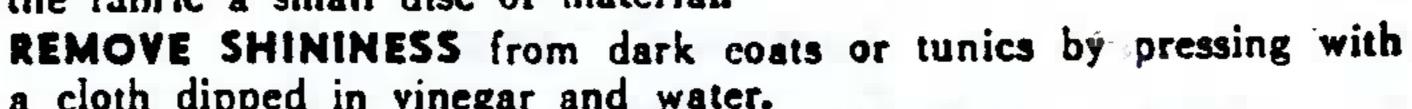
SHOES ARE IMPORTANT. They are quickly outgrown and as ill-fitting shoes are harmful, it would be an excellent idea if mothers could begin a community shoe exchange.

DUST AND DANDRUFF DESTROY materials. Daily use of clothes brush is advisable. Perspiration rots materials; guard against its effects by regular laundering.

BLOUSES AND JACKETS should have patches sewn under armholes before their first wear.

SCHOOL BLAZERS before being worn for the first time will be made to last longer if patches of material are sewn inside of garment at the elbows. Strengthen pocket seams and buttonholes.

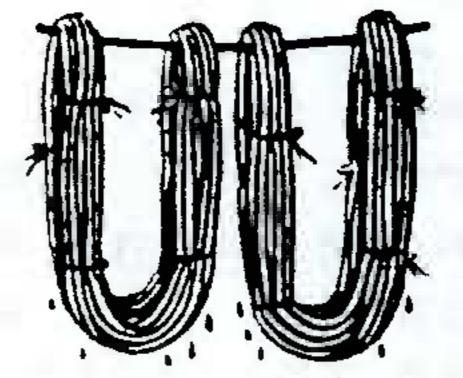
"anchored" by stitching on the inside of the fabric a small disc of material.



a cloth dipped in vinegar and water.

FROCKS already lengthened to full extent of hem can be still further

lengthened by inserting bands of contrasting material. If too tight, they may be let out by inserting bands lengthways.



WEAR PINAFORES made from useless frocks.
These will protect school and house frocks.
TOPS OF WOOLLEN SINGLETS or sweaters

that have pulled into holes should be undone from just above the waise and re-knitted with lacy top.

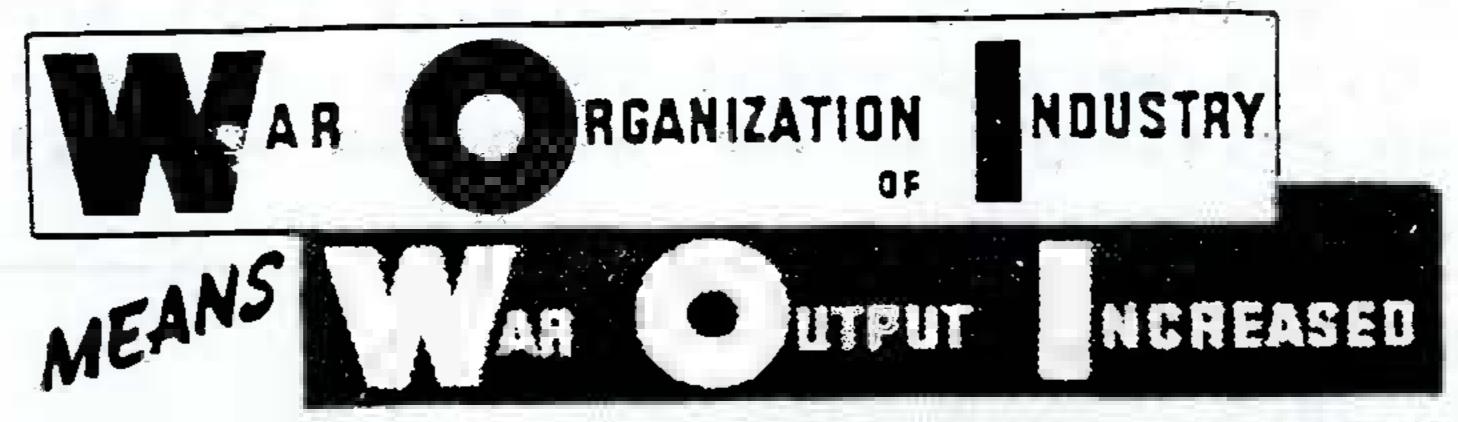
CHANGE SLEEVES of sweaters to opposite arms to give longer wear.

TO TAKE WRINKLES OUT of unravelled wool wind it into skeins, wash thoroughly and, without wringing it, hang it across clothesline in the open to dry. Then wind into balls.

ALWAYS CLOSE ZIP FASTENERS before washing, in case one side should shrink and make it difficult to close.

#### "Mend and Make-Do" to Save Buying New

Nowadays when materials and manpower are needed for equipping the Services, every re-made garment is a uniform of honour, and every patch a "decoration". Don't discard any garment, no matter how old, if some use can be made of it. Mend and make-do to save buying new and so make still another contribution to our common war effort.



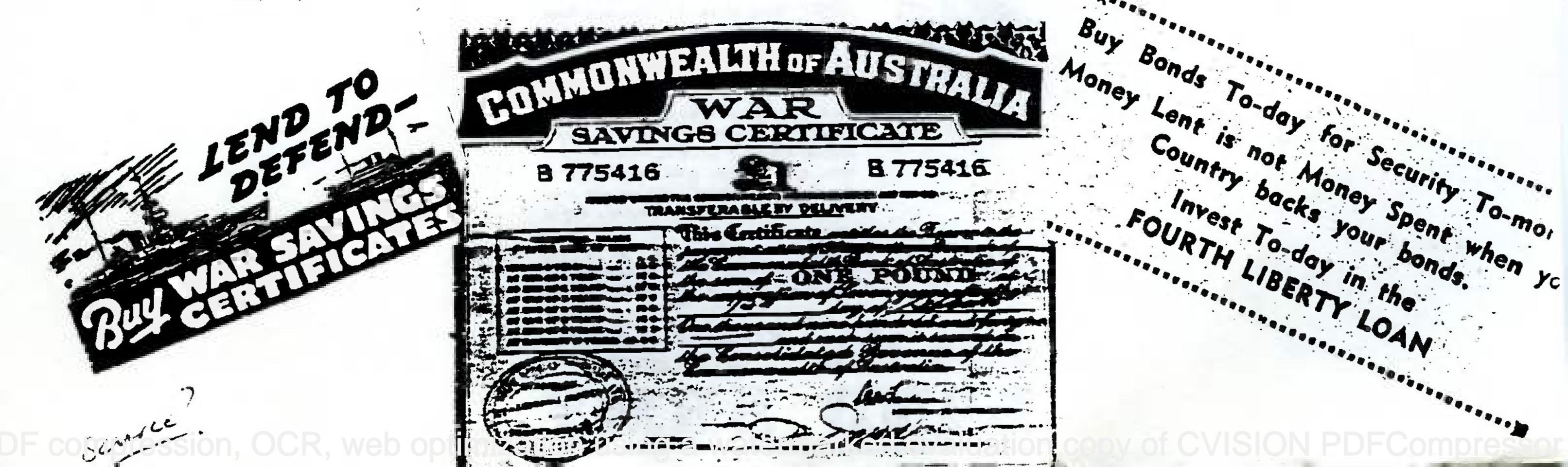
Start a "Mend and Make-Do" Book and Paste this in it.



Semier :

Similarly, many women from the Morwell District joined armed forces such as the Australian Women's Airforce or the Medical troops and therefore many 'city girls' had to be employed within the Land Army. Despite the need for women to enter all services none of the people interviewed recalled any media pressure except for Mrs Evans who recalls pressure from the abundance of war films shown throughout the years of the Second World War. This could be contributed to the fact that Mrs Evans was a teenager during the war whereas most of the other interviewee's were Wof an older age group and married. Despite the lack of media and pressure there was a degree of social pressure applied to women so as they would take 'Victory jobs'. The control Land Army posters (next page) were typical advertisements of the time to entice women to take a formal job as part of their contribution to the war.

As previously mentioned, with the extent of work available and the inability for people to buy luxury items with their spare money, the Government began to place pressure on everybody to invest in War funds or Victory bonds. This sentiment was stimulated by the frequent advertisements in newspapers, magazines and Billboards.



# Spend your holiday in the Country—

and get paid for it!



If your annual holiday is due, why not arrange for an extension and spend three weeks with the Women's Land Army Auxiliary? We've found that most employers are willing to co-operate. A working uniform is pro-

vided, you get award wages (a minimum of two pounds a week) and your keep—good food, good housing.

Think how much you'll benefit by those glorious weeks working in the open, with happy companions and of the grand job you'll be doing — producing food for Australia, the Fighting Forces and for Britain. Come in and talk it over.

A.W.L.A. Headquarters, 34 Martin Place, Sydney, or your nearest National Service Office.

Join the Auxiliary of the

AUSTRALIAN

## WOMEN'S LAND ARMY



GET out from behind that office deak NOW! Help farm the land our men are fighting for. Produce food for them, and for every Allied Service in the South-West Pacific area... food for Australia's civilian population... food for Britain and the liberated European countries. You will work among friendly people, receive good care, good wages, and your keep. A smart uniform and clothing are provided, too. For further details apply now to:—

A.W.L.A. HEADQUARTERS, 3rd FLOOR MICHOLAS BUILDING, 37 SWANSTON ST. ['Phone MU 1651] or your nearest National Service Office

Join the AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S
LAND ARMY









One Billboard that Mr Gooding can distinctly recall is a large one situated at the Morwell Railway station. Such Billboards often had the words 'Your country needs you' and the picture of Australian soldiers in the midst of a fight. Mrs Spittall said that "there were posters everywhere" although Mrs Davey recalled that where she lived, in the Farming district, there was not much money available to purchase war bonds, reinforced by Mr Gooding who also came from a Farming family who declared that people by ought the bonds when they could afford them.

Evidently the war effort was assisted in varying ways, through voluntary work, the attending and organisation of social events. Through formal work, the purchasing of war bonds and the joining of charity organisations such as the Red Cross. Such contributions made "daylight to dawn hectic" \*15 although the "topsy-turvy three or four years" \*16. of war managed to bring the Morwell District residents closer than they were prior to the war.

#### CONCLUSION!

Hypothesis 1-

Not one of the interviewees were able to deny that the warhad unified the community of Morwell and similarly, no-one was able to recollect any divisions occuring. The general reason for this statement was that Morwell was already a unified community and that when people are working as hard and as close as Morwell residents did, then there is no option but to pull together.

Hypothesis 2-

The majority of Social events were incomporated into fundraising activities during the Second World War to ensure that people were not deterred from helping the war effort and by adding entertainment to the activities it attracted more people, hence enabling groups to raise substantial revenue through such events.

Hypothesis 3- There was not a substantial amount of pressure from the media for women to take on formal 'Victory jobs' although there were always posters and the use of war films and encouraging women who women felt that taking on formal jobs was part of their war role while the men were at War.

Medin = Communición e fin a do estación.

<sup>\* 15.</sup> Mrs Davey.

<sup>\* 16.</sup> Mr Bond.

#### MUSINGS ON MOBILITY

We view with some alarm the recent tendency of erstwhile fixed features of our landscape to wander around the town, apparently at will.

First it was our Mobile War Memorial. The digger has tried out three different sites since his arrival in town - first at the junction of Commercial Rd. and Church St.(before the subway was constructed), then in the Princes Highway gardens opposite Hoyle St. and, more recently, at the intersection of Tarwin St. and Elgin St. Will he be satisfied with this neighbourhood, we wonder, or will he pack his kit and move again in search of a more appealing position? What if he decides he prefers to live in Traralgon or Moe?

Now, eight of the majestic Travers St. palm trees, evidently deciding that power lines are a health hazard, have uprooted themselves from their home of many years and moved to other areas of town.

This movement of our landmarks is a real worry. Will we wake up one morning to discover that the Mid Valley clock has repositioned itself in the middle of the Civic Centre lake? And what if No. 10 Dredge decides that it prefers to reside in Commercial Road rather than in the bottom of the Open Cut?

Perhaps it was the migration of Yallourn houses to far flung areas of the state that started this business of moving around. Perhaps the whole City of Morwell might move to the Gold Coast - but then all our power stations, mills etc would probably follow us so we'd be no better off - except, perhaps, for the weather!

HAVE YOU PAID YOUR 1991-92 SUB. YET?