The Morwell Post

Morwell Historical Society

URL: www.morwellhistoricalsociety.org.au

Email: secretary@morwellhistoricalsociety.org.au

https://www.facebook.com/morwellhistoricalsociety/

Morwell Apex Club Members early 1950s

Back Row: Doug Matthews, Neil Hustwaite, Rod Corbel, Graham Gordon, Chas Davies, Arthur Holden, Len Heron, Ric Bouvier

Front Row: Ron Jones, Russell Billingsley, Don Kelly, Ken Welsh, Col Paul, Don McNeily

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Morwell Historical Society Directory 2024/2025

President:	Alan McFarlane Phone: 0448 430 394
Vice-President:	Shirley Prosser
Secretary:	Florence Butcher
Assistant Secretary:	Elaine Andrijczak
Treasurer:	Peter Butcher
Committee Members:	Rosalie Davey Rob de Souza-Daw Laurie Williams
Research Library:	12 Hazelwood Road, Morwell, Victoria 3840
Research Queries:	secretary@morwellhistoricalsociety.org.au
Public Access:	1st and 3rd Wednesday and last Sunday of each month, 11.00 a.m. – 2.00 p.m. Open - February to November
Members' Gathering:	Every two months on the 3rd Wednesday - commencing 21st February 2024, then April, June, August, October, at 2pm (informal get-together and afternoon tea)
Annual General Meeting:	3rd Wednesday of March each year
Membership Fees:	Due 1st July each year Single Member - $25.00 Family Membership -Family living at the same address $30.00 Application Forms available on our website for you to print and send. For a print copy of "The Morwell Post" - $10.00 per annum
Editor: Newsletter Team:	email: morwellpost@morwellhistoricalsociety.org.au Fay Thompson, Elaine Andrijczak, Florence Butcher
Research Fees:	$10.00 per hour or part thereof, and prices for photo prints on application and postage where applicable.
Facebook:	https://www.facebook.com/morwellhistoricalsociety
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 old Commonwealth Bank, corner of Commercial Road and Tarwin Street.

All photos, unless indicated, are from our archives

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Well another year has started, and nice to know we own our building. Hope everyone had a good summer break.

It was pleasing to see our member David McInnes nominated for Latrobe Senior Citizen of the Year. Congratulations to David on his nomination. He makes a wonderful contribution to Morwell through Rotary, Advance Morwell and our Historical Society.

We continue to receive Morwell and District memorabilia from all sorts of sources with a requirement to catalogue and store at our facility. The society is always looking for members who can assist in our processes. If you have some time please contact us.

A Bunnings BBQ in March will require some volunteers. If you can assist, please contact Shirley.

Our AGM will be held on Wednesday 19th March at 2pm with afternoon tea to follow. I hope to see many members attend this annual event and encourage any member who has an interest in joining the committee completing a nomination form.

Wishing you all a happy and healthy 2025

Alan McFarlane

Ah, the toys, writes Sue,

At Grandpa's house (Arthur Green) next to the shop in Tarwin St there was a home made cupboard (I still have it) that had some toys in it. Not much, basic and home made.

We went to see Grandma and Grandpa every day and whilst I don't remember the little top I do remember spinning a bigger one there . The cousins also played with the toys when they visited.

There was also a doll called Rosemary which is still around in good condition, I think a daughter has her.

There were blocks in a cart too. That is in the shed and will be in use again soon as there is another generation of Green descendants.

The peg dolls!! They are home made and when you pull the cotton strings really tightly you can make them stand up and dance on a flat surface like a table. Sort of like puppets I suppose.

Dad (Barras Green) or Grandpa would have made them and Dad used to work them for us circa 1950. An evening time entertainment. But not very often. They were fairly fragile. I could never make them work and we weren't really allowed "to Touch".

We also had a "magic lantern" (Julie still has It I think) that provided occasional night time entertainment too. But no grand or expensive toys- not much to be had in a post war time.

SOME OBJECTS IN OUR COLLECTION
Some toys that children played with around the early 20th century

These two toys were generously donated by Sue Hateley (nee Green) from her family heirlooms

YouTube video:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p9zhP9Bnx-k

Dancing Peg Dolls
YouTube video: *George Evan Mills Dancing Peg Dolls*

This Gyroscope is inscribed: *DANDY Patented March 13 1918, Made in U.S.A.*

ARTHUR LESLIE (LES) HARE O.B.E. 1884-1981

The following is part 2 of his memories which were recorded by his grandson Les Campbell.

Belfanti travelled this area for many years. He won Tatts. one year. He never smoked, he never drank strong drink and he used to take the cigars home and give them to charity workers in Melbourne. He was a marvelous chap - very popular.

The shops along main street - there was a boarding house on the corner where the Town Hall is today. The Cricketers Hotel was on the other corner and next door was the Colonial Bank which was later taken over by the National. Next to that, Jack Rintoull had a shop - he used to do shoeing and make harrows and manufacture stuff for buggies. In the horse and buggy days there was quite a lot of work to be done on wagons and drays and buggies. There was tyre-cutting - wooden wheels used to shrink in the summer time and the metal tyres would get loose and you'd have to bring them in to the blacksmith and have an inch or so cut out of the tyre, and put it on red hot and cool it off with water on a stand. Jack Rintoull used to do quite a lot of that and there was a lot of work with plough shares. Jack Rintoull was a champion blacksmith.

We had George Dayble and Son on the other side (of the railway line) where the Post Office is now. He had a blacksmiths and wheelwrights shop there. He used to manufacture lorries and buggies and drays and all that sort of thing. He used to get parts of buggies up from Keep and Wood in Melbourne and assemble and paint and finish them off up here.

Jack Lowe used to do the wheelwrighting for Rintoull in Commercial Rd.

Following on from there we had a saddlers shop run by a chap named Rogers. Saddlers were kept pretty busy in those days because hand-sewn traces and saddles and collars and making up sets of harness was a big job.

Mostly the farmers used spring drays to cart their stuff into the town where Morwell East is today. Joe Buckley used to grow oats. the main crop grown around here were oats and barley. There was very little wheat grown. Ronald used to grow a lot of hay out on the Yinnar Road, and Porters down on the flats. Quite a lot of chaff was sent from here to Melbourne in the old days. We used to put six tons on a truck and cart it in - we'd get about five bob a ton for carting it in, loading it on a (railway), truck, covering it with tarpaulins and roping it down.

Ben ?? used to grow hundreds of tons of potatoes out on the McMillans Flats. He used to truck them away from Hazelwood siding. He must have had thousands of tons of potatoes off the Hazelwood Flats. He leased it for a time before World War 1. Later, it was taken over by the Closer Settlement Board and divided into Soldier Settlement blocks.

Primary produce was the main item of wealth in those days. There were quite a number of creameries around the Shire. There was one up at the corner of Latrobe Rd. and Melbourne Rd., there was one on a little creek near Tramway Rd., another on the Yinnar Rd. near McNabbs, another one up Boolarra way. These creameries were run by Wood and Co. who owned the butter factory. Farmers used to take their milk to these creameries to be separated by steam-powered separators. They'd get their skim milk back to take home for their pigs and cows. Later, farmers put in their own separators and brought in their own cream in ten-gallon cans to the butter factories and that finished the creameries. Some of the farmers had steam turbine separators but the hand turned ones seemed to be the most popular. You used to have to turn a handle until the bell stopped ringing. Then you knew you had enough speed up. You turned the milk on and the cream came out of the top spout and the milk out of the bottom spout. Now today most farmers supply whole milk.

In those days the cost of living was very cheap. You could buy a loaf of bread for 4 pence. Meat was 2½ pence a pound for corned beef, 3 pence for roast. You could go to Rowell, who had a tailors shop here, and get a very good suit for 4 guineas with a spare pair of trousers chucked in. If you paid cash he'd throw in a silk tie, worth about seven and six in those days. He used to make suits out of No.3 serge and you could wear it till it was like a looking glass - you couldn't ever wear them out.

Boots and shoes were very cheap. We used to buy Hugh Thompson (see next article) working boots from Arthur Green's shop around in Tarwin St. - a shop built of galvanized iron. It used to be called the Iron House. He sold also dress materials, towels, calicos, all that sort of thing. He was a very popular business man. He could sell Hugh Thompson boots for twelve and six. You couldn't wear then out. They had hobnails in them and a little horseshoe on the heel.

You could buy a pair of Blucher boots for half a crown a pair. Button-up boots were all the go with the ladies in those days. You had to carry button hooks around to undo them and hook them up. Living was very cheap.

Milk was cheap. You could go to a hotel in Melbourne and if you bought a pot of beer you could get curried sausages or steak and kidney pie dished up to you for nothing.

There was no water laid on to the town. Every household had a galvanized iron tank or, if not a galvanized tank, a square tank. These tanks held 200 gallons - they came out from overseas with crockery in them and then were used for water tanks here. Many of the shops and hotels had underground water tanks, about fifty feet deep.

In the dry summers we'd run out of water. George Billingsley had two 2000 gallon tanks on two drays. Fred Williams and I used to have to go down to the Morwell River and bale water out of the river in a 1½ gallon bucket - We'd stand on the second rail of the bridge with a foot on the wheel of the dray and we'd pull up bucketful after bucketful to tip into this 2000 gallon tank, then we'd bring it into the town and run it into the tank at the pub or store. We used to get four shillings a tank load and we'd have to do three trips a day - that's twelve shillings a day, six bob for the horse and dray and six bob wages - six bob a day for nine hours work! Eventually we got a six inch main laid from Billy's creek. That was a boon to the town.

In the old days the Brown Coal Mine was just a heap of rubble. The face of the coal was all slack coal - if you left the face in the sun it would crumble up into little granules like sugar. The old brown coal was lying there for years. In the early days it was used by the briquette factory, which was burnt out.

Before the First world war, a chap named Hoffman came here, He used to hire a horse and buggy every day and drive out to this brown coal mine and he dug out the face and put a tunnel in and timbered it up. He tunnelled out some of the solid coal and filled it into 200 gallon tanks. He'd get a (rail) truck load of them up from Melbourne and we'd cart them out on the lorries. He'd seal them up and push them out on a trolley to the corner, where I could get in with three horses and a lorry. I'd bring him out some empty tanks and pick up these full ones. I'd load up three on a lorry and away I'd come into Morwell with them. We'd lift them off with a crane and load them into railway trucks and send them off down to Port Melbourne. That coal was sent to Germany and tested over there and results came back that there were over 30 by-products in this Morwell brown coal.

The slack lumps of coal were put into 5 gallon drums and sealed up in the mine and we'd bring them in and send them to Germany, too. All that used to happen twice a week. I'll tell you, they took a bit of scuffling around, 15 hundredweight of coal in 200 gallon tanks! The First World War broke out and Mr. Hoffman disappeared overnight and that was the end of it.

We had a Brown Coal Committee that was very keen. Every politician who came to town, we'd run them out and show them this brown coal mine. We tried to get coal mining organised here but we were kicking against the wind for years. I remember once, when Drysdale Brown was minister for mines in State Government, we took him out there and he said "It's of no commercial value", and he wouldn't have anything to do with it. Later, we got the Premier, Sir Alexander Peacock, up with his Cabinet and we put on a turkey and plum pudding dinner for them out there. At the time they promised us they'd have a look at the position but, when it went to Cabinet, they all voted against brown coal for electricity - they voted for water power instead. They reckoned water wouldn't go on strike!

Later on fuel was very scarce in Melbourne and the Mines Department came and opened up the brown coal and used to send truckloads away. We'd pull It up by horses to Hernes Oak and send it away to Melbourne - raw brown coal. When the railway line from the mine was burnt out, it wasn't fit to put a locomotive on and we had to pull the coal out by horses. A 15 ton truck took a bit of struggling up to Hernes Oak around the curves with the wheels grinding! We sent hundreds of tons of coal away in the early days before the S.E.C. was constituted. I was working for myself at that time and I pulled the first truck of coal out of the old coal mine. I had a contract but my team of horses wasn't quite up to it - I'd struggle to get up the hills. A 10 ton truck was all I could pull out so I handed over the job to Mr. Billingsley. He had a team of draught horses and he pulled hundreds of trucks up to Hernes Oak.

The road to Traralgon in the early days was only a bush track. It carried on up Commercial Rd. to the top of the Ridge where the main road to Yinnar turned off. It was only scrub and ti-tree. There were about four tracks through the scrub and you had to pick the best one out to get to Traralgon.

The road to Brown Coal Mine and Moe was down Station St. (Princes Highway today), down to Toners Lane, along Old Melbourne Rd., down the old sandhill at Godridge's, over the old bridge and turn to the right along the Morwell River; the road to Moe was straight on down the old Coach Road. When you got to the Haunted Hills it was pretty well straight up. From Pettigrew's Garage up it was about a 1 in 5 grade and it was just as steep going down the other side. All the carters and teamsters coming up that road used to fall a tree to hang on behind their wagon to help the brakes coming down the steep hill. At the bottom of the hill they'd just unhook it and roll it off on the side of the road. There'd be a heap of logs on each side of the road at the foot of the hills on both the Moe Morwell sides, about four or five feet high.

There were quite a number of bullock wagons doing the heavy carting in those days. Jack Dyer had a champion bullock team - fifteen bullocks. Bill Cook was another one who had a bullock team and Fred Firmin was another. They used to cart sleepers and timber and all that sort of thing from the bush. You could go with a bullock team where you couldn't go with horses.

Drovers used to say that the Haunted Hills were hollow. They could never get animals to settle down and camp there. Sheep drovers had to travel four miles a day - they weren't allowed to loiter on the roads.

The only fast-moving traffic was the railways. Wherever the railway crossed the road there were railway gates with a gatehouse. The ganger's wife used to open and shut the gates when the train was coming through. Down on the Tramway Road below the Ridge there was a gatehouse.

There was an open crossing connecting Church St. and Commercial Rd. – a big wide crossing. It used to be a bit of a nuisance, especially when motor cars came in. Trains used to be shunting and they'd always have that crossing blocked - you'd have to go down to Jane St. to get across the line. There was another crossing down near Toners Lane. Later on the railways replaced the gated with cattle pits at the crossings and shifted the gate houses.

Morwell railway station and waiting room in the old days was just an office and a residence behind it for the Station Master and his family. They later turned the residence into an office. There was a goods shed and a cool shed because a lot of perishable goods were sent to Melbourne such as meat and butter.

They shifted two of the gatehouses into Morwell and built a Station Master's residence right opposite where the National Bank is today.

Morwell had four race meetings a year. There was a New Year's Day meeting at Yinnar, Boolarra had one and Morwell had two – The A.N.A. Day race meeting and the St. Patrick's Day meeting. People came for miles to these races. There were pony races and trots (ridden – no sulkies). These trots created a lot of interest. They were handicapped up to 70 yards start for a mile or two-mile trot. Pony races were handicapped too. Little ones would have a couple of hundred yards start but it was good sport to see them racing.

There were Indian hawkers here who used to walk around the countryside with a big basket on their backs and a bundle on their heads. In the basket they'd have beads and things - safety pins and hairpins etc. In the bundle they'd have aprons and handkerchiefs, stockings and materials - all sorts of things for the farmers. They'd walk through the hills and there were certain places where they'd camp, where the farmers used to let them stay. They always carried their own food -they'd never eat any food that was handled by the local people. In the old days, Joe Buckley built them a shed up on his farm, where the reservoir is today, and there used to be a dozen Indians make this their headquarters. They'd stay there for a week and get their supplies to take out during the weeks ahead.

On the weekends, a number of Indians would come to town and buy chooks and take them up there and kill then themselves, according to their religion. It was funny to go up there and see them sitting around smoking a pipe. They'd have a big pipe in the middle of the room and they'd all sit round it. It was on a swivel and they'd all have a suck at it and puff out the smoke, and this smoke was drawn through water.

The Indians were very clean and tidy and they pioneered a lot of the back blocks here, helping out settlers with little knick-knacks delivered onto the farms up in the hills. A lot of the farmers looked forward to the Indians coming around."


Les Hare and friend standing on side of road, beside parked car. Inscribed on the spare wheel cover:
Four Wheel Brakes, L. Hare, Morwell, Balloon Wheels

HUGH THOMPSON - LEATHER MERCHANT

In the early 1850s William Overton established Victoria's first glass works in Collingwood on the corner of Rokeby Street and Glasshouse Road. The glass house was unsuccessful and by 1855 the building had been taken over by Rae Dickson and Co for use as a Stearine candle factory. By the late 1850s the candle works had also closed down.

After lying vacant for a number of years, the site was taken over by a prominent Melbourne leather merchant, Hugh Thompson in 1864 for a tannery and boot factory. Beginning with a staff of 20 the firm grew rapidly to over 200 employees by the late 1860s, after the introduction of protective import tariffs on boots and shoes. The works was one of Collingwood's first steam powered factories with a six horse power diagonal steam engine driving a variety of machines including leather rolls, a pricking machine, eccentric sole cutting press and a number of sewing machines. By 1868 the tannery section employed 20 staff with 36 tan pits and a large curing room. The firm had introduced new technology including machine rolls to flatten the leather (previously beaten out by hand) and a pricking machine to punch holes in the soles for sewing. In 1868, however, most of the boot making work was still done by hand with the factory floor having 8 large work benches for 20 sewers each, 2 additional benches with lasts for the 36 hand riveters and 12 finisher's stools.

By 1920 the business was called H Thompson and Son Pty Ltd. In 1930, the company was still in business, specialising in men and women's belts and heavy machine sewn men's boots. The business closed in c1950.
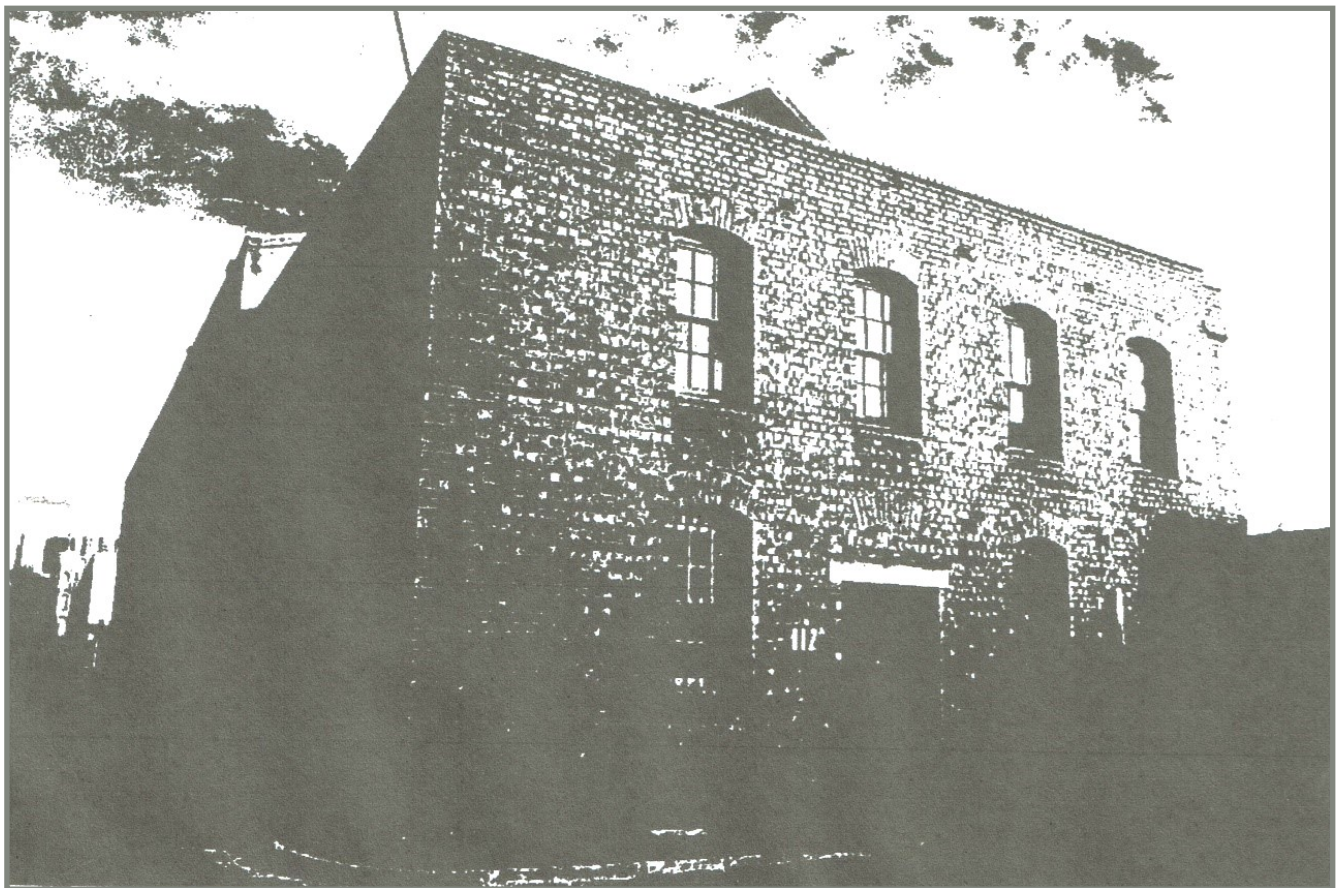
Former United Tannery and Boot Factory, 112 Rokeby Street, built c.1876

Source - *City of Yarra Heritage Review: Building Citations* page 323-324

SCHOOL CROSSING SUPERVISOR RETIRES

When Mary Thomson began working as a School Crossing Supervisor there were many school crossings with supervisors in Morwell but now there are only five.

Mary started as a relief School Crossing Supervisor but on May 28th 1986 she was given full time work. In November 2024 Mary retired after 38 years working in the heat, rain, wind and sometimes good weather for two hours each school day -8 to 9 in the mornings and 2.45 to 3.45 in the afternoons.

The photo below shows the ladies in their summer uniforms in 1992.

Left to Right: Irene …?, Maria Armatas, Mary Thomson, Pam Gunn, Antonia Kalogiannis, Denise Williams, and the lady on the end is a Churchill school crossing supervisor.

Mary with her "Lollypop" in The Boulevard

Source - City of Morwell –*Streets Ahead* Autumn 1992
        - Interview with Mary Thomson

JILL AND JUNE WATSON TWINS - 1936-2024

When you drive down June Street or up Jill Street and you pass Watmor Avenue do you ever wonder where these names came from?

George Watson was born in Bacchus Marsh in 1874. He is the son of Robert Watson who came to NSW in the 1840s. The family moved to Gippsland and was engaged in farming operations. The *Morwell Advertiser* was owned by RH Turnley and a few years later by Stephens and Guest and George Watson purchased a third interest in the business. In 1896 he, at the age of 20, became the sole proprietor. He was the editor of the newspaper, a correspondent for the Melbourne Argus and also did a large business in job printing and in book binding. In 1898 George married Mary Morris. In later years "*The Morwell and Yinnar Gazette*" amalgamated with "*The Morwell Advertiser*".

When George Watson died in 1942, his son Rob inherited the Morwell Advertiser.

Rob had married Nellie Walsh in 1930 and they had twin daughters, Jill and June, who were born in 1936.

Jill married Fred Amman. Watmor Avenue was named after two people - George Watson and Mary Morris who married in 1898 - the name came from the first syllables of the two surnames, Watson and Morris.

Jill and June Streets were named after their twin granddaughters (Rob and Nell's daughters).

George died in 1942 and Mary died in 1957 and they are both buried in Hazelwood Cemetery. Pres Row N.

On November 21st 2024 Jill died and about 3 weeks later on 13th December June died.

RIP Jill and June

Source
- *Morwell Advertiser* Thursday 3 Dec 1942 p7 Exemplary Citizen Passes
- Watson family 2016 reunion book
- Lynette French

Incidentally, Jill and June are cousins of Lynette French, as her mother Elva is Rob's sister.

http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article65858530

http://nla.gov.au/nla.news-article65908019

MORWELL APEX CLUB CHARTER NIGHT

The induction of Morwell Apex Club as the 69th Club in the Association of Apex was carried out in the Town Hall Supper Room on 23rd June 1950. Mr J Langdon Persons, National President of Apex, performed the Induction and presented the Charter in the presence of members of Apex Clubs throughout Victoria.

Following the introduction of guests and visiting Apexians by the President of Morwell Apex Mr Jack Anderson, the Shire President, Cr AW Ronald, extended a cordial welcome on behalf of the Council and the citizens of the Shire, to the National President and other executives of the governing body of Apex and expressed pleasure at the opportunity to pay tribute to an organisation, which was serving the community so well. He congratulated the young men of Morwell on forming their Club.

Presenting the Charter, the National President, who had travelled from Adelaide for the occasion said it was indeed an honour for him to have the privilege of Inducting Morwell Club into the fellowship of Apex. The name 'Apex' adopted by the founders of the association, Messrs Ewan Baird, Langham Proud and John Buchan at Geelong in 1930, meant the height of ambition.

It was the responsibility of Clubs to carry on the high ideals of the founders, namely to fit themselves for citizenship in the community, and by precept and example influence others with the true ideals of Apex in order that it may become a real power in the National life of Australia.

Accepting the Charter for the Morwell Club, the President said that he felt sure that Morwell would carry out the ideals of Apex.

On behalf of the Traralgon Club who had sponsored Morwell, District Governor Tom Hackett presented Morwell with a gong. Don Kelly on behalf of Morwell accepted the presentation. Following the dinner a very successful Cabaret Ball was held in the main hall.

1950 office bearers -Jack Anderson President, Russ Billingsley and Chas Davies Vice Presidents, Graham Gordon Treasurer, Arthur Holden Secretary.

Members -Jack Ackhurst, Jim Allison, Fred Ammann, John Anderson, Robert Azlin, Albert Budge, Rodney Corbell, Don Day, Bruce Derham, Jim Dunlop, Ken Dwyer, Peter Eves, Patrick Fleming, Arthur Holden, Jack Hourigan, Fred Jenkins, Ron Jones, Don Kelly, Don McNeilly, Rhys Milner, Col Paull, Ian Poynter, Jim Rutherford, Ken Welch.
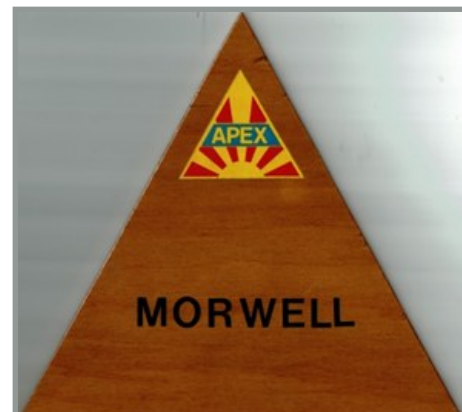
Front page image

Apex Club Members early c1950s

Back Row: Doug Matthews, Neil Hustwaite, Rod Corbel, Graham Gordon, Chas Davies, Arthur Holden, Len Heron, Ric Bouvier
Front Row: Ron Jones, Russell Billingsley, Don Kelly, Ken Welsh, Col Paul, Don McNeily

Source: Morwell Historical Society Website
Morwell Advertiser 29th June 1950 page 1

OPEN DAYS 2025

5 February || 19th February || 23rd February

5th March || 19th March; AGM || 23rd March

2nd April || 16th April || 27th April

7th May || 21st May || 25th May

4th June || 18th June || 29th June

2nd July || 16th July || 27th July

6th August || 20th August || 24th August

3rd September || 17th September || 28th September

1st October || 16th October || 26th October

5th November || 19th November || 23rd November

Members' Gathering: Every two months on the 3rd Wednesday - commencing 19th February 2025, then April, June, August, October, at 2pm (informal get-together and afternoon tea)

Please deliver me to:

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

We sincerely thank Harriet Shing, Member for Eastern Victoria and staff for printing our Newsletter