

The Morwell Post

Morwell Historical Society

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Bluestone Pitchers McDonald Street



See article page 4

IN THIS ISSUE

Directory	Page 2	Morwell Boab Trees	Page 5
President's Report	Page 3	Willaim James Scanlon 1856-1916	Page 6-7
Vale - Don Harle 1938-2025	Page 3	Sir Charles Kingsford-Smith visits Morwell	Page 8-9
Our Collection - Matchbooks	Page 3	Yinnar South School 2730	Page 10-11
Bluestone Pitchers McDonald Street	Page 4	Opening Times and Supporters	Page 12
Angus Finnon McDonald 1866-1935	Page 4		

Morwell Historical Society Directory 2025/2026

President:	Alan McFarlane Phone: 0448 430 394
Vice-President:	Shirley Prosser
Secretary:	Florence Butcher
Assistant Secretary:	Elaine Andrijczak
Treasurer:	Peter Butcher
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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 19th February 2025, 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:	email: secretary@morwellhistoricalsociety.org.au
Newsletter Team:	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

Winter continues to keep us indoors!

The new SEC is establishing a shop front in Commercial Road and are grateful to the Society for some relics that we have provided to them to showcase the original SEC in their new venture.

Bunnings continue to support community groups. Shirley and I recently attended a Bunnings thankyou to those groups that participate in their BBQs. We will again, with the support of our members, conduct a BBQ early in August.

Thanks to those members who support our Open Days and assist with our Step Back in Time Cafe and to those who assist with food.

Our next gathering of members will be held at 2pm on Wednesday 20th August.

I look forward to catching up on that day.

Best wishes

Alan

DON HARLE 1938-2025

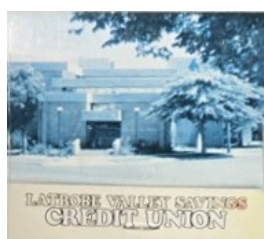
Last month we farewelled our esteemed member Don Harle. After completing his plumbing apprenticeship in Melbourne Don came to Morwell and in the late 1960s started up his own business. He was always community minded and a passionate Collingwood Supporter.

Don was instrumental in the purchase of the Masonic Lodge as well as a huge help in paying off our debt for which we will be forever grateful. Our office is named after Don and Dianne Harle in recognition of their contribution to our Society. RIP Don



SOME OBJECTS IN OUR COLLECTION

Manufacturing of matchbooks peaked during the 1940s and 1950s, then steadily declined because of the availability of disposable lighters and various anti-smoking health campaigns - to be replaced by Business Cards of today.



Are you a phillumenists? Matchbook collector

BLUESTONE PITCHERS ALONG MEDIAN STRIP IN McDONALD STREET, MORWELL

A pitcher is a stone used for paving

The 'bluestone pitchers' which form the edging along the median strip in McDonald Street, Morwell, have been a significant and distinctive heritage feature of Morwell for 70 years, and were painstakingly laid in the mid-1950s by Shire of Morwell employees, the late Mr. Ron Draper and Mr. Chris Presley.

Ron revealed when interviewed by Morwell Historical Society member, Elaine Andrijczak, in July 2023, that the Shire of Morwell Engineer, Mr. John W. F. Connan, purchased the 'bluestone pitchers' which weighed between 63-70lb., from the State Electricity Commission's Yallourn Salvage Store depot to use them as the edging of the median strip in McDonald Street. These particular 'bluestone pitchers' had been used in the road kerbside drainage of the town of Yallourn. Mr Draper recalled this was an early example of recycling and the cost to Council was 1 penny for each 'bluestone pitcher'. Mr. Connan saw these 'bluestone pitchers' as a low-cost opportunity to complete the edging of the median strip and road construction within the Council's limited financial resources.

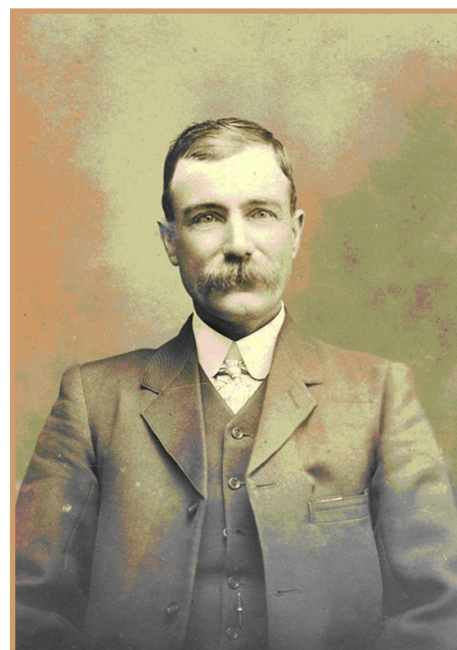
The construction of McDonald Street as a dual carriageway in the mid-1950s was a major project for the Shire of Morwell. The planner's concept was to develop McDonald Street as a major road serving the residential area with an expanding population and it also served as the primary heavy vehicle traffic route to APM Maryvale and the nearby sand quarry.

The bluestone pitchers edging along the median strip are fondly remembered by students of the adjacent former Morwell High School which opened in 1956 (Morwell Central Primary School is now on this site), patrons of the adjacent Morwell Swimming Pool which opened in 1956 (replaced by the Morwell Leisure Centre and opened in April 1994) and motorists driving along McDonald Street.

McDonald Street in Morwell and McDonald Way in Churchill are both named after Angus Finnon McDonald.

Angus was the youngest of six children of Archibald McDonald and Marion (Sally) Shaw. A widowed Marion McDonald and her children came to Hazelwood North in 1874 with her parents Archibald and Ann Shaw, and brothers Donald and Coll Shaw. Subsequently Marion selected an allotment on the eastern side of Bennetts Creek in 1877 where she and the family built a home which they called Glendonald. In 1904 the property was sold and Angus joined his mother who had previously relocated to Morwell and he became a Land and Estate Agent. Angus married Amy Ruth Little in 1910 and had one child, Donald McDonald. Angus was interested in the advancement of the town and public affairs and became a Councillor of the Shire of Morwell in 1911 for a total of 8 years, being Shire President in 1912-13.

Angus was held in high regard within the community and was involved with the Morwell Mechanics Institute, the Presbyterian Church, and a foundation member of the Morwell Bowling Club. In his younger days he was involved with the Hazelwood Cricket Club and Hazelwood Football Club.



MORWELL BOAB TREES - *Adansonia gregorii*

In 2019-2021 the Morwell CBD Revitalisation Project saw 15 boab trees planted in parklets along Commercial Road. There were also boab trees planted at the north end of Tarwin Street and in “The Hub”, Tarwin Street Gathering Place. It is unusual to see boab trees in Victoria because they thrive in northern WA and NT but all of our boab trees are flourishing. They were chosen because of their hardiness and resistance to drought. Let’s hope that our trees don’t grow as tall and wide as their counterparts in the north.



Photos of Morwell boab trees in Tarwin Street by Boyd Thompson 30.6.2025

Commercial Road looking west towards Tarwin Street and “The Hub” 2023



About 7 miles from Derby in Western Australia is the Prison Boab Tree which is believed to be 1,500 years old. This remarkable tree has a circumference of over 14 metres and has an oblong slit in the bark through which you can see the hollow centre. It is said to have been used as a prison for aborigine prisoners being transported over land to Derby. These trees can grow up to 15m high and 12m diameter.

WILLIAM JAMES SCANLON 1858-1916

Councillor William James Scanlon was a farmer and Licensed Victualler

In 1897 Bill Scanlon married Mary Anne Mullvenna and they owned the Budgeree Hotel. They had 4 sons William Ambrose (Noel), James Edward (Clarence), Bernard Patrick, Michael Thomas and one daughter Nancy Bridget Anne (Annie).

In 1916 William Scanlon was on a hillside sowing grass by hand from a bag of seed fixed around his body. When he came to a spot in the paddock where there was a sheer drop of about 20 feet he attempted to roll a log over the edge. In doing so a short limb on the log was caught in his bag as the log was rolling over and Bill was hurled to the bottom with the log. He was pinned under the log and badly injured.

His eldest son Noel, aged 18, happened to be near him at the time and quickly went to his father's aid but he was unable to remove the log that was crushing him. The son ran as fast as he could for help to Walter English's place which was about half a mile away. Luckily

Walter English was home at the time and armed with an axe, lever and stretcher they hurried back to Bill Scanlon. Young May English ran down to where the men were working on the road and Jim Cranny got on his horse and road to Boolarra to telephone Dr Sutcliffe. However the doctor was in Willow Grove and it took a long time to contact him.

With bushman's skills Walter English, assisted by Noel Scanlon, set to work to remove the log that was pressing on Bill Scanlon. It was about 40 feet in length and as it could not be lifted it had to be chopped up in lengths. The men had to cut steps up the steep hill to carry William on the stretcher. It was some hours before the log was removed and the "relief party" carried William on a stretcher to English's house. William was then put on a mattress and on a sledge drawn by a horse was taken to his Hotel.

Doctor Sutcliffe had a small car and because of the distance it took him over 5 hours to arrive at Scanlon's Hotel. In the meantime the Catholic Priest from Morwell had arrived. Bill was placed in the car with Doctor Sutcliffe and Mary Scanlon and it was about midnight when they set off for St Hilary's Private Hospital in Morwell. Close to Mr Roy's residence the patient asked for a drink of water and a few minutes later he passed away as they went down Whitelaw's Track. After a service at the Sacred Heart Church Morwell, 49 year old William Scanlon was buried in Hazelwood Cemetery.

After Williams's death, his wife Mary carried on running the Budgeree Hotel and farm with her son Michael but on the night of Saturday, May 18, 1930, tragic circumstances again struck the family. In the Hotel was Mary, a servant girl, and an Italian boarder. Michael had gone to a dance. It was the eve of Mary's 56th birthday. Some poultry had been dressed and other things prepared to celebrate the event. At 10 pm Mary went off to bed with a candle which she placed on a table at the head of her bed. The servant girl and the boarder also went to bed and they heard nothing until Michael returned home sometime after midnight and saw smoke coming from his mother's bedroom and the 14 roomed hotel on fire.

He immediately raised an alarm and rang Mr Townsend who lived nearby and he came with his son. They made their way in the smoke towards Mary by throwing buckets of water at the flames which they got from a nearby tank. Eventually they found the lifeless body of Mary and she was seriously burnt but the smoke was as much responsible for her death. It appears that the fire started in her bed clothes and because her door and window were shut the fire was confined to her room.





Scanlon's Hotel Budgereef East

After the fire, the family sold the Budgereef Hotel and bought the Yinnar Hotel.

William and Mary Scanlon are buried in the Hazelwood Cemetery.
(Old Catholic Section K31)

William Scanlon was a Morwell Shire Councillor in the Yinnar Riding
from 1912-1916

Source

Morwell Advertiser Friday 12 May 1916 p3 Sad Fatality

Morwell Advertiser Friday 23 May 1930 p3 Tragic Death

Morwell Advertiser Friday 20 Feb 1931 p2 Advertisement

Brownie – The Diary of Anne Lawless 1915 p.39

LAND SALE

AT MORWELL

On Tuesday, 3rd March

At the Sale Yards of **MATHIESON, DAVIS, VARY & CO.**, at 1.30 p.m., the following Allotments will be offered:

Allotments 22, 22A, Section B, and Allotment 37, Section A, Parish of Budgereef, containing 307 acres 30 perches with W.B. Hotel (wayside licence) and farm outbuildings erected thereon.

Allotments 36 & 36A, Section A, Parish of Budgereef, containing 154 acres 15 perches.

Allotments 52A & 52B & 52C, Parish of Binginwarri, containing 196 acres 2 roods 11 perches.

The properties, which are known as Scanlon's farm, are situated 20 miles S.E. from Morwell and 10 miles from Boolarra Railway Station.

TERMS CASH or two-thirds deposit
Balance spread over 2 years in equal half-yearly instalments at 6 per cent per annum.

For further particulars apply to the Auctioneers—
MATHIESON, DAVIS, VARY & CO.
Morwell

AIR-COMMODORE SIR CHARLES KINGSFORD-SMITH 1897-1935

Sir Charles Kingsford-Smith was born in Brisbane in 1897 but was educated in Sydney. He joined the Australian Army in 1915 but later transferred to the Royal Flying Corps and was awarded the Military Cross in 1917 after being shot down. In 1921 he returned to Australia and joined the Western Australian Airways as one of the country's first commercial pilots.

In 1928 Kingsford-Smith completed the first transpacific flight, a three legged journey from California to Brisbane via Hawaii and Fiji. He and his co-pilot Charles Ulm became celebrities and later that year he and Ulm completed the first non-stop flight from Melbourne to Perth and the first non-stop flight from Australia to New Zealand.

In 1935 Kingsford-Smith and his co-pilot John Thompson Pethybridge were flying the lady Southern Cross over night from India to Singapore as part of their attempt to break the England to Australia speed record when they disappeared over the Andaman Sea. Their bodies were never discovered. Eighteen months later a Burmese fisherman found the undercarriage leg and wheel, with its tyre inflated, which had been washed ashore at Aye Island in the Gulf of Martaban, 3 k off the south east coast of Burma.

Sydney International Airport is named after him and the Brisbane Airport is home to the Kingsford-Smith Memorial. He was knighted for services to aviation in 1932.

Sir Charles Kingsford-Smith visits Morwell Saturday 29th October 1932

The landing ground was located in Kleine's paddock, which was between White and Wallace Streets at rear of the Presbytery. The Southern Cross was due to arrive at 11 a.m. but long before then quite a number gathered on the site. Shortly after 10 a.m. an "advance 'plane" arrived at the landing site (the surroundings of which were very soft owing to recent heavy rains), to "try it out," and in doing this the 'plane got nearly bogged on the outskirts, in a crabhole, and had to be assisted out.

About 11.15 the "Southern Cross" was seen in the distance. Before it arrived the other "advance 'plane" rose and led the way to the landing ground. Both machines made a perfect landing.

Sir Charles was introduced by the Shire Secretary (Mr Horsfall) and Mr W. Smith to members of Morwell Shire Council, Returned Soldiers and others.

Cr. D. J. White, on behalf of Shire Council, and Mr A. Shaw, on behalf of Returned Soldiers, extended a very hearty welcome to the famous airman.

He cordially invited everyone to inspect the "Southern Cross" and flights were given at reasonable prices. The passenger cabin held 16 persons and the sliding plate glass windows afforded excellent views. Owing to the large crowd present it was difficult in keeping thoughtless people from getting too close to the revolving propellers.

No mishaps of any kind occurred and those who enjoyed a 'fly' and viewed the town and district from the air for the first time greatly enjoyed their unusual experience.

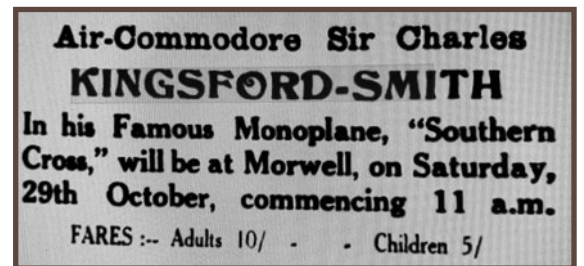
On Saturday evening, quite a number of returned soldiers from Morwell and Yallourn as well as Morwell Councillors and citizens had the pleasure of a private meeting with Kingsford-Smith in McKay's Hotel sitting room.

On Sunday morning, the "Southern Cross" left for Leongatha with some passengers aboard.

Source

-Morwell Advertiser Thursday 27 October 1932 p3

-Morwell Advertiser Thursday 3 November 1932 p3



Stamp issued 19 March
1931 Commemoration
flight: Australia to California
via Great Britain in 1929

1997 \$1 coin Centenary of his birth



YINNAR SOUTH SCHOOL No. 2730

The school dates back to 1885 when John Deppeler, Christopher Bates, Joseph Fisher, George Heeps, William Ham and Hugh Morris petitioned for the establishment of a school. The school was opened in 1886 and the first head teacher was William Francis. There were 26 pupils and class was held in a room in the home of Hugh Morris until June 1887 when they moved to a portable building at a site on Walsh's Road a little north of where it joins Quigley's Road.



From 1894 onwards the school worked half time with Hazelwood Ridge School 4-5 miles away. The head teacher occupied the residence at Hazelwood Ridge and travelled to Yinnar South on school days. In 1898 the children were –Alexander Bryson, Margaret Healey, William Healey, Archibald Deppeler, Albert Deppeler, Patrick Keogh, Ellen Keogh, Edwin Bond, Albert Bond and Ellis Gilbert.

In February 1898, head teacher Noland Greaves and 2 helpers fought off a bush fire that threatened the school, only to return next day to find the school had burnt down during the night. The following is a summary of Noland Greaves' letter to the Education Department:

"I have the honour to report that on Tuesday a fearful bush fire swept over from the ranges at the back of Yinnar South School, which it completely destroyed. I had school in Yinnar South that day, but being warned that the fire was rapidly approaching in the direction of the school I sent the children home shortly after 12 o'clock. The school paddock contains an acre of ground and it is enclosed by a post and rail fence, being surrounded on three sides by scrub, logs and tall, dry trees. The fourth side is bounded by the road, which is cleared in the middle with scrub and timber on both sides. The scrub in the paddocks around the school had been cut last year and was lying thickly on the ground in dry and very inflammable heaps. The people in the district worked very hard keeping the fire back from the vicinity of the school, but about 1.30 pm the school was surrounded by a roaring fire, which crossed the road into the grass flats on the other side. As soon as the fire covered the road, the majority of those assisting me to protect the school had galloped away to save their own homes and I was left with 3 men to do our best.

By 2 pm trees were blazing on all sides, some falling across the fence in several places and setting it a fire. The roadway in front of the school was blazing on both sides. The heat was intense and the dense smoke was suffocating and blinding. By 3pm the school seemed safe as far as any danger from burning was concerned. The only danger was the burning trees and the intense heat, against we could do nothing. It was not advisable to carry any furniture out of the school as there was no place available. We decided to try and get away ourselves. There was only one possible route - along the road, and on the third attempt we got through safely. The school was then untouched by fire and it seemed that we had saved it. Then I went home to Hazelwood. This morning I returned to Yinnar South and found that the school had been reduced to ashes. Logs and trees are still burning in all directions and great damage and destruction has been done".

A temporary school was built by Joseph Walker on his property next to the tiny Holy Innocents Church on Middle Creek Road.

Source -*Vision and Realisation* p1240

-*The Education Magazine* June 1965 p 239

-*School No. 2730 Yinnar South, The First Century, 1886-1986*

The class photo below was taken at the school in 1906



Back: Eric Walker, John Brewster, Tom Vagg, Bill Brewster, Therese Keogh, Mary Heesom

Centre: George Burnie, Bill Vagg, Charlie Walker, Hubert Guthrie, Archie Vagg, Martin Walker, Annie Keogh

Front: Edith Heesom, Sadie Bryson, Annie Bryson, Percy Vagg, Tom Heesom, Edith Walker, Isobel Burnie, Daphne Brewster

Teacher: Miss Edith Brocklebank



This photo of the school in Middle Creek Road was taken in 1914
The flag pole is part of the building.
This building was used until 1924
when the present school was built in
Brewsters Road.



Martin Walker was Morwell Shire Councillor 1929-30, 1933-34, 1946-47 and 1959-60 and Yinnar's first scout leader in 1923. Near the intersection of Upper Middle Creek Road and Gilbert's Road there is Martin Walker Reserve.
Photo of when he was a Councillor



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

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CWA Morwell Evening Branch

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