

The Morwell Post

Morwell Historical Society

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St Mary's Anglican Church Morwell - Latrobe Road
Dedicated in 1958



See article page 4

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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

I hope all members are keeping warm through this cold weather.

We continue to have a number of people calling in on our open days.

Over the past month we have had 2 large groups visit our centre, namely the Gippsland Historical Automobile Club and the Morwell and District Red Cross Branch. Our exposure in the community is really high.



Recently the Celia Rosser OAM, prints donated by us to the Latrobe Regional Gallery were framed and hung in one of the meeting rooms at the Gallery. They look magnificent and I encourage members to call in to the Gallery and have a look.

After a number of years work, the *Origin of Naming of Morwell Parks and Reserves and Morwell Streets - Origin of Names* has been completed and submitted to Latrobe City Council. Duplicate documents are available in our rooms for members to view. Worth a look!

The Morwell community also lost a great sporting identity in Murray French, who featured in our recent tennis display. Vale Murray

I would like to acknowledge the effort of Mark Smith, who maintains the lawns around our building.

Just a reminder that subscriptions are now due.

Look forward to catching up with members at our August Members' Gathering.

Keep warm

Alan McFarlane

SOME OBJECTS IN OUR COLLECTION



Lady Sunbeam home hair dryer familiar to many women in the 1960s and 1970s (with bonnet)



Burroughs of Scotland Adding Machine
Used in offices and shops
Can only add and subtract

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND IN THE MORWELL PARISH 1847-1947

MORWELL.

St. Mary's, Morwell.

1879—1929, by Mr. A. Gilbert

During the years 1878 to 1887 the present Parish of Morwell formed part of the Traralgon district. The late Rev. Thomas Moorehouse was licensed as stipendiary reader at Traralgon on July 12th, 1878. The district comprised Traralgon, Eaglehawk (Glengarry), Morwell and Callignee.

On August 11th, 1879, the first Church of England service was held in the Maryvale School, 12 miles from Morwell. Service was also held at Hazelwood Ridge School. Until the appointment of a stipendiary reader in Morwell, these services were conducted monthly. The Maryvale School was built of slabs and bark, lined with calico. One Sunday, when the Church of England service was being held, someone cried out, "There's a snake," Without any hurry or excitement the people rose and went outside.

Some of the more valorous despatched the snake and some dozen or more young ones. The congregation quietly reassembled and the service was continued. The story was reported in the newspapers and made much of. This put the building in bad odour.

Attention was soon directed to the building of a more substantial school building in Morwell township.

On November 2nd, 1879, Mr. Moorhouse conducted the first service held in Morwell, in a room attached to the store and occupied by the late Mr. Charles Gilbert, who keenly advocated the advancement of church life. Services were continued in this building until removal of the State School from Maryvale to Morwell.

Until the opening of the Methodist Church on June 17th, 1883, the school building was used by the various denominations.

The use of the building was kindly offered to the Anglicans and Presbyterians until the erection of their own churches.

During the incumbency of the Rev. J. R. Walker in Traralgon it was decided that a church be built at Morwell.

The Mirboo railway line was under construction and created a mild boom in the district.

Amongst the newcomers was Mr. C. P. Nind, who commenced a newspaper "The Morwell and Mirboo Gazette." During the early days. Bishop Moorhouse paid two visits to Morwell. On the first occasion there were present: Revs. T. Moorehouse (Traralgon), S. Sandiford (Warragul), Canon Watson (Sale), and E. W. Hartmann (on his way to Bairnsdale).

A tea meeting was held in Kelleher's Hotel There was no public hall, and the Bishop and clergy held a meeting in the street. On the second occasion, a tea meeting was held in the railway goods shed. Another meeting was held in Murdock's Hall (now Hare's Garage).

While the Bishop was present on that occasion he heard of the death of the Rev. E W. Hartmann, who was drowned while attempting to cross the Mitchell River near Bairnsdale.

This happening greatly moved the Bishop The Rev. T. Moorhouse left Traralgon in 1883, and was followed by the Rev. J. R Walker.

THE OPENING OF ST. MARYS, MORWELL

St. Mary's, Morwell, was opened in 1886, and in February, 1887, Mr. Albert Edwards was appointed the first residential Stipendiary Reader in Morwell. The following is a copy of the account of the opening of St. Mary's Church, taken from the "Morwell and Mirboo Gazette" of February 9th, 1886: —

"The formal opening of the above church took place on Sunday last, the Ven. Archdeacon Stretch preaching both morning and afternoon, the Rev. J. R. Walker of Traralgon reading the service."

It may not be out of place to give a brief account of the events which led to its erection. It was considered advisable by those who belonged to the denomination that a church should be built, and an effort was made to collect subscriptions. A number of promises were made, and everything seemed to be progressing satisfactorily. However, the want of some responsible person to keep the movement alive had the effect of deadening the efforts previously made. For nearly two years very little progress was made.

The first permanent step was made by Mr. John Robb, contractor for the Mirboo line, who showed his liberality and earnestness for the cause by presenting the committee with the sum of £25, in addition to sufficient metal for the foundation.

The foundation stone was laid by that gentleman on the 21st July, 1885, and a silver trowel was presented to him on that occasion. Arrangements were made for the purchase of bricks, etc., and as soon as these were on the ground, a contract was let for the building.

The brickwork being finished, the floor and roof were quickly done, the church was ready for the opening. It appears that the subscription« amounted to about £120. This, added to £100 borrowed from the Diocesan Registry, made a total of £220. The account for bricks came to about £90, but Mr. Hitchcox, with his usual liberality, made a donation of £10 to the church.

The contract price for the brickwork was £47, and £19/10/- for the carpentering. Both these amounts were for labour only.

The account for wood, iron and all other necessities amounted to £180. The church had thus cost about £330. There was a deficiency of over £100, not including the loan from the Registry. Further work had still to be done, viz:—Internal plastering, seats, bell, etc. The committee had to work hard to satisfy all demands.

An organ was procured through the instrumentality of some of the lady members of the congregation, who deserved many thanks. This, in a measure, relieved the committee of one source of anxiety. A reading desk was also promised. At the morning service the Archdeacon took for his text, Luke, 7th Chapter, 5th verse: "For He loveth our nation and hath built us a synagogue." The collection in the morning amounted to £4/6/9, and in the afternoon £4/7/6. On the following Thursday a tea meeting and concert were held in the Mechanics' Institute. The report in the "Gazette" of February 16th, was: "There were four tables:—

1st given by Mesdames McIntosh and Powell.

2nd given by Misses Dean and Gilbert,

3rd given by Mesdames Ferguson and Tonkyn.

4th—a bachelor's table in charge of Misses Amiet

The concert in the evening was a great success.

1887 to 1918.

In the year 1887, Morwell became a separate district and work was considerably extended. Services were held in Morwell, Hazelwood, Latrobe and Morwell Bridge. On February 17th (1891) Mr. W. Reid was appointed Reader at Yinnar, Yinnar South, Jerralang, Delburn, Boolarra, Budgerie, and Mirboo East.

On the transfer of Mr. Reid to Korumburra, the Yinnar district was divided between adjoining districts. Splendid work was done by the first ministers at Morwell, the Revs. J. Francis (who was the first occupant of the new Vicarage), A. Gamble, J. H. Frewin. Under their successors the work was extended until, at the time of the resignation of the Rev. A. E. Adeney in 1918, there were 18 separate preaching centres. As many as 9 to 11 services had to be arranged on Sundays a task which required much organisation as well as zeal on the part of the clergy, who had the hearty co-operation of the laity.

The financial side of the work was carried out by the Central Council, which received all moneys for stipend, Diocesan claims. Missionary purposes, and expended moneys for all purposes.

It had long been recognised that the Parish, containing as it did an area of approximately 150 square miles, was too unwieldly. The Bishop consented to a division of the Parish. From the commencement of work until 1893, it was a Readers' District; and from 1894 to 1918 a Parochial District.

From 1918 to 1928, when the Parish was divided (at the time of the appointment of the Rev. A. J. Smith) Morwell was declared a Parish, with the Rev. A. J. Smith as its first Rector. During the above period Yallourn was established and soon became a separate Parish. The hill country was separated from Morwell and was worked by the Brotherhood of St. John the Divine.

Steady work was done and the esteem in which the Rev. A. J. Smith and family was held was proved by the farewell social tendered them. Many valuable presentations were made from representative sources.

During the whole period since the inception of church life in Morwell district, no less than five churches have been erected:

St. Mary's, Morwell, 1886.

St. Matthews', Yinnar, 1889.

Holy Innocents, Yinnar South, 1895.

St. John's, Budgerie, 1901. Licensed August 10th, 1904.

Christ Church, Boolarra, 1911. Licensed March 10th, 1911.

A small church was also built and subsequently removed to Morwell Bridge.

In addition to the erection of these buildings, church sites were acquired at Morwell Bridge and at Gunyah. The laymen who helped in this work include Messrs. Boake, McIntosh (deceased), Aherin, at Morwell; Alfred Firmin, A. Firmin and Furnell, at North Hazelwood; the late Mr. and Mrs. G. Firmin and their family, Yinnar; A. Morrow, Boolarra; the late J. Grant and Morrell, at Budgerie; and Mr. Arthur Gilbert.

An interesting item in the history of the Morwell Parish was the formation of an organisation known as "The King's Daughters." It was brought into being in the year 1893, the Rev. Gamble being the first chairman, the first meeting being held in the home of Mrs. Stephenson. The badge of membership was a small Maltese cross bearing the letters I.H.N. ("In His Name"). Mrs. Edney was elected President, and Mrs. Tonner [sic] (?Toner) Secretary. Later the name was altered to "Ladies Guild." Money was raised in the Rev. A. E. Adeney's time towards the building of a Parish Hall, but this money was eventually used to repair the church. The old Rectory was in dire need of repairs.

In fact, so badly had it fallen into disrepair, that Rev. L. W. A. Benn, who succeeded the Rev. A. J. Smith, absolutely refused to use it as a dwelling place, and a new Rectory was built for him on the north side of the railway line. Sufficient land was purchased for a new church, too. The new site fronted the Prince's Highway.

BUDGEREE

The Diocesan Church News of October 4th 1904, gives the following report of the opening of St. John's Church, Budgerree. "The Bishop visited Budgerree on August 10th and dedicated St. John's Church, which has just been completed. The church, a nice looking building, including a Chancel and Porch, is 38 feet by 14 feet, and cost £104, which amount has been raised. The Rev. W. D. V. Reid was the first minister to conduct a religious service of any kind in Budgerree. This was held in the State School on March 8th, 1891. From this time the residents cherished hopes of having a church of their own. The ground for this was eventually secured. The Rev. J. H. Frewin later opened a subscription list which was the nucleus of the building fund.

This fund remained open for subscription during the ministries of Revs. H. T. Langley, W. D. Kennedy to W. F. B. Hoysted. So freely was the movement supported that there was soon enough money in hand to erect the church. There was a large attendance at the opening service. The petition was read by Mr. Charles Morrell and the license by Mr. John Grant. After this his Lordship delivered an impressive address from St. Matt. 18.20. During his address the Bishop acknowledged the help rendered to the church by the hon. Lay Reader, Mr. A. Gilbert. St. Mary's Choir journeyed from Morwell to help in the service. This little church was destroyed by bush fires in 1944.

ST. MATTHEWS, YINNAR.

Although this has already been mentioned in Mr. Gilbert's article, some reader may be interested in knowing just how the church began in this area. On April 6th, 1888, a public meeting was held with the Rev. J. R. Walker in the chair. There were 11 persons present, and, those 11 decided to build their little church on the block of land which was given by Mr. Firmin.

No doubt services had been held elsewhere prior to this, because they already had an organ fund, and they decided to divert this money to the building fund. They were quite prepared to return donations to any who objected. They formed a building committee consisting of Messrs. Firmin, McDonald, Wicks, O'Hara and Edwards. Mr. Wicks was the Secretary and Mr. Edwards the Treasurer.

The original subscription list is still in existence in the records of Yinnar. It shows £18/10/6. This, together with a loan of £150 from Diocesan Funds, gave them more than they needed, for on June 5th, 1889 the tender for the erection of the church was let to Mr. John Jollup for £120/14/6. He was given 12 weeks in which to complete the building. The church was to have been opened on December 12th of that year, but the contractor found it impossible to finish it in time. It was dedicated by Archdeacon Langley on February 2nd, 1890.

HOLY INNOCENTS, MIDDLE CREEK (YINNAR SOUTH).

In 1894, James Morton contracted to build the church for £17/10/-. He would be rushed with work today; but, poor man, he was not able to finish it for that amount. It cost another £5, but, even then, it was not a bad effort, I should think it was a record. You certainly cannot build a good church under £22/10/-. It is approximately 16 feet by 12 feet and was built on a block of land a chain square. The land was given by Mr. Walker.

The date of opening was January 1st, 1895.

CHRIST CHURCH, BOOLARRA.

I have little information about this church other than its opening, which took place on March 10th, 1911.

It has a tiny Vicarage in the church grounds and would be ideal for a bachelor Curate attached to Morwell. Away, at the back of Boolarra, is the Gunyah country, heavily timbered, but sparsely populated. Experience has taught me that it is here, among these hill people, that the church needs to work. They are such homely folk and so hospitable that they fall an easy prey to all the wandering sects.

... NEW ANGLICAN CHURCH - *Traralgon Record* ... Fri 17 July 1885 p. 3

Mr John Robb, was the contractor of the Mirboo Railway Line and he donated sufficient metal for the foundation so the building of St Mary's in Chapel Street could commence. On July 14th 1885 a large number of residents turned out to witness the ceremony of laying the foundation stone. John Robb laid the stone which came from the Darlimurla quarry and a parchment scroll on which the following was written -

"Diocese of Melbourne, in the Colony of Victoria, the foundation stone of the church of St Mary, Morwell was laid by John Robb, Esq; the Right Reverend James Moorehouse, DD, being Bishop of the Diocese; Sir Henry Loch, KCB, Governor of the colony; in the reign of Queen Victoria, The Reverent John B Walker being the incumbent. Dated 14 July 1885"

Also copies of the local papers "Traralgon Record", "Gippsland Times" and the Church of England Messenger" were sealed in the stone. (The Morwell Advertiser started in 1886).

Mr Robb having well and truly laid the stone presented a cheque for £25 to the Committee. Several other donations were received, making a total of £32. Mr Robb was presented with a silver trowel.

St Mary's Church of England Church Chapel Street
Morwell early 1900s



As it is today

Source

The Church of Our Fathers : being the history of the Church of England in Gippsland, 1847-1947 by Albert E. Clark

Printed with the kind permission of The Anglican Diocese of Gippsland

Gippsland Mercury July 16 1995, p. 3

Various internet sources

The Society's own records

The Christ Church Anglican Church, Boolarra is one of the Co-operating churches (Anglican, Church of Christ & Uniting sharing joint worship and/or facilities) in the district. The church building was erected/opened about 1911



The Holy Innocents Church Yinnar South was opened in 1895 on land given by Mr Walker. It was built by James Morton for £22. Measuring 4x5 meters, it is said to be one of the smallest churches in Australia

St John's Budgeree Church opened in 1901. It measured 38x14 feet and cost £104 to build. The church is next to the school. It was burnt down in the 1944 bush fires.



St Matthews Church in Yinnar was opened in 1888 on land donated by George Firmin. It was built by John Jollup for £120. In 2002 it was moved to a Catholic School in Warragul to be used as the church chapel.

THE HOBSON BAY ENGINE - MORWELL TO SALE RAILWAY LINE

In 1851 Melbourne's Mayor held a public meeting to plan Australia's first rail line. The line would be built and operated by the Melbourne and Hobson's Bay Railway Company and people could pay £50 to be an investor at the start of the project. The building of the line began the same year and work moved ahead quickly on both the stations and the track.

It was a gala occasion for Melbourne when on 12 September 1854 the Melbourne to Hobson's Bay Railway Company opened Australia's first railway line. Thousands gathered at Flinders Street Station and along the 2.5 mile (about 4 k) track to Sandridge which became known as Port Melbourne in 1884. The track went across the Yarra River over the Sandridge Bridge and it solved the problem of moving people and goods. The track used a broad gauge of 1600 mm (5 feet 3 inches).

An English Factory was engaged to produce the engines required for the line but they were not going to be ready in time so a local firm, Robertson, Martin and Smith Engineering works was asked to produce the engine and it was built in 10 weeks. The train consisted of the engine, one second class and two first class carriages. In an open wagon next to the engine the band of Her Majesty's 40th Regiment played appropriate music. The journey took 10 minutes.

The English engines arrived in 1855 and they were named Melbourne, Sandridge, Yarra and Victoria.

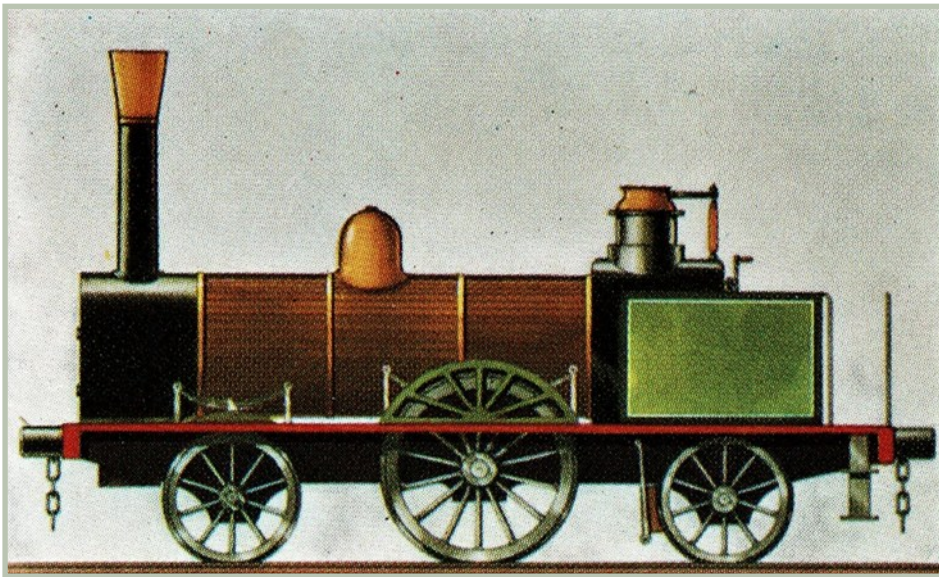
After the first rail line was built many other rail networks quickly spread across Australia.

Victoria laid down a network of railways all over the state. The lines reached out from Melbourne to Bendigo and Ballarat before the Sale connected was completed on 2nd April 1879. But Morwell to Sale residents had enjoyed rail communications between their towns for 2 years prior to this.

In late November 1873 the Gippsland Rail Construction Act was passed and surveys were carried out in 1874. Millar and James won the tender for the Morwell River to Sale stretch, 41 miles, with a contract price of £140,498. Machinery, materials and plant were carried by ship from Melbourne by sea, lakes and river to the Port of Sale which was where the swing bridge is today.

The flat bottomed *Warhawk* successfully carried the first locomotive, the old Hobson Bay engine used on the Sale line over the sand bar at the entrance to the Gippsland Lakes. It was unloaded at Latrobe wharf. Later a swing bridge was constructed near the wharf -1880-1883. From here it was hauled by bullock team to the site of the railway terminus. When the Morwell to Sale line was completed on 28th May 1877 the trains began to run on that section. When the first train left Morwell for Sale it had one second class car with 4 compartments, two dummy buffer wagons and no van. John Crabtree was the engine driver and his sons, James and Jethro, were fireman and cleaner. Harry Walker was the guard. At that time the journey from Bunyip to Morwell was done by horse coach. The problem was the "Glue Pots" (Koo Wee Rup Swamp) between Bunyip and Moe. The train could not leave Morwell for Sale until the coach had arrived and often it was 2 hours late with the passengers and mail.

There was great jubilation when the Oakleigh to Sale line was completed and officially opened in March 1878.



Issued for the 150th
Anniversary of
Railways in Australia
September 2004



VICTORIAN RAILWAYS.
OPENING OF THE LINE FROM SALE
TO MORWELL.
ON and after 28th inst. a Train will Leave
Sale for Morwell daily at 7 a.m., re-
turning from Morwell at 10 a.m.
Fare each way ... 7s.
Intermediate Times and Fares will be found
posted at Rosedale and Traralgon.
By order,
JOHN ANDERSON,
Assistant Traffic Manager.
Sale 25th May, 1877.

Morwell Railway Station c1910

Source: -*Steamhorse to Power* by Prue
McGoldrick p26

- Gippsland Times* Mon 21 May 1877 p3
- The Herald* Wednesday 23 May 1877 p3
- Victorian Railways to '62* Leo J. Harrigan p 38





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)

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CWA Morwell Evening Branch



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