

MORWELL HISTORICAL SOCIETY NEWS

published monthly, except December

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

Secretary: Mrs. E. McMaster phone 34 1149

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NOVEMBER 1988

WELCOME TO THE NOVEMBER NEWSLETTER

This will be the last newsletter for 1988 as there will be no meeting in December. The final meeting for the year will be held on TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 15. At this meeting, Mr. Perc. Mooney will speak on the history of The Morwell Players.

At the November meeting, a decision will be made on whether to hold a meeting in January 1989. Members will receive a newsletter before the next meeting, whether it be in January or February next year.

As this Society is now incorporated, it is necessary to hold a re-election of office-bearers. This will take place at the February 1989 meeting.

Two enjoyable gatherings in October were concerned with bridges - one marked the centenary of Brunton's Bridge over the Thomson River, the other was to dedicate a memorial bridge over Waterhole Creek to commemorate the twin towns of Morwell Bridge and Morwell West. Reports on these events are included in the newsletter and readers will enjoy the reminiscences of Mr. Joe Metcalf, a former resident of Morwell Bridge.

Two obituaries are reprinted this month. Our Society mourns the passing of two fine Morwell citizens, Mr. Jock Lawson and Mr. Norman Sharpe.

We thank all those who have contributed to our newsletter this year. It has been a hectic year for many of us, including two of our newsletter committee, due to exceptionally heavy work loads and extra involvement in community activities, so all help has been greatly appreciated.

We wish you all a safe and happy Christmas and look forward to your continued interest and support in 1989.

hut. Then they set it alight and drove the horse and buggy around it, making out that they were Indians on the warpath. It was all done in fun and games, mind you.

One time this same sister and her best friend set out in the dead of night and painted with whitewash a bay horse belonging to the two Purvis sisters. What a shock these two English girls received the following morning when they found their pride and joy looking like a zebra.

There was also an incident involving a younger brother and myself. My brother paddled down the river in a tin canoe, and I, with my .410 gauge shotgun, poked the barrel almost against this tin craft and blew a great hole in it, causing it to sink and my brother to have to swim out of the river. I can assure you that, as one who had been brought up with guns, there was positively no danger involved; but imagine trying to tell this to an understandably enraged father when he had been told by one of his sons that his brother had tried to shoot him. Was I in disgrace! I was given one hell of a hiding and forbidden to touch my beloved gun for a month. What a long month it was!

Then there was the time my brother Jack and I were letting off crackers in our old bush toilet made of hessian with a tin roof. (How dear Mother used to paste the coloured pictures from magazines on the inside of this structure to brighten it up.) We never called them toilets in those days, always dunnies. Anyway, while letting off these crackers, Jack accidentally set fire to this flimsy building. Yours truly panicked and took off leaving my brother to cope with this disaster. Later on, when I returned home, I had to face the music. One good thing came out of this incident: my father being a bricklayer, one of the best in the trade, quickly built a real posh brick dunny.

I recall the Christmas time that this family, which had nine strapping sons, presented their beloved mother with her first Christmas present--a light-weight woman's axe! (They were even advertised as a woman's axe!) Dear Mother simply responded by telling her sons what a lovely present it was. What a most remarkable pioneer woman she was, and just how lucky a family we were to have such fine parents!

Then there were the "Bridge" football grounds, the original one being the front paddock of Kaye's farm. It was a large ground, the only trouble being that both wings were much higher than the centre, which in winter became a lake. Not only did we play football there, but at times we swam. Later on we moved to a ground situated above the local gravel pit.

It was not unusual that, in these football teams, there would be at least three of the Metcalf boys playing together.

It was at this same gravel pit that I had the misfortune to lose an elder brother, who with his young mate, was buried alive under a sudden fall of sand.

Further on up in this area, we local lads had made a saucer-shaped bike track aptly called the "Death Trap". Many a push bike met its fate here. Even the Kelly boys of Kelly Bros. fame decided not only to try their push bikes here, but also a motor bike, such was the reputation of this most torturous course.

Just down from the gravel pit at the bridge over the swamp prior to this time were the stables of Mr. Brennan, the many horses being stabled there being used to pull large wooden wagons loaded with gravel out to the S.E.C. at Yallourn. These wagons were pulled by a team of six horses and carried a load of about one ton. The method used to empty them was by means of a large lever which opened up the floor. Only two trips a day could be managed by this means.

My father, with his flat top A-Model Ford truck, with its canvas covering and three long wooden benches serving as seats, conveyed the locals to the picture shows at Yallourn. This truck was the very same one that had been used to carry the explosives (gelignite) used in the making of the Grand Ridge Road up through the Jeeralangs and Balook area.

The Princes Highway, which was close to our place, was part of the stock route between Warragul and Bairnsdale and many were the countless flocks of sheep that passed this way. Some were accompanied by one of the most remembered drovers of them all, a Mr. Jolly, who was such a large man that he had to travel in a jinker. Many a new-born lamb the Metcalf boys received from this most likeable gentleman.

Many were the Euchre and Whist parties that were held at the different homes. Usually the prize on such an occasion would be a block of chocolate or a home-made sponge.

Then there was the time we youngsters blackened our faces and knocked on the door of Norm Minor's house saying: "Your money or your life!" The only problem was that it was Mrs. Minor who answered the door and, after calling out to her Norman, promptly fainted away while we rascals fled. I do not know who received the biggest shock.

There being no junior football team at this time at the "Bridge" and Norm and his family being typically very English, they were good enough to teach us how to play soccer. Thus, for twelve months we played against other teams in the area. Incidentally, there was not one English lad in our team.

I will never forget the time that my three younger brothers, along with the two Meredith boys, saw fit to place a dummy on the highway. They succeeded not only in frightening the motorists, but also in receiving a lecture from a member of the Morwell Police Force plus a hiding from their father.

There was Bill Rowan who, during the war years, rode a two-stroke motor cycle to work at Yallourn. This small bike only just managed to make it up the very steep hill prior to the hospital. Petrol rationing being in force in those days, Bill used to keep his supply of petrol in the old quart bottles under his rear porch. One day he told us how the bike had actually flown up this steep climb on the way to work only to be asked by Mrs. Rowan if he had taken a quart bottle of her home-made lemon cordial from under the porch. You guessed it! Bill claimed that it was the cordial that had made his bike perform so well!

To me, personally, the "Bridge" will always be something special, even though our family suffered the loss of a son and brother. We also enjoyed many years of growing up there and to top it off I met my wife there while she was down on a visit from her parents' farm at Glengarry.

Incidentally, even though the little township of Morwell Bridge has long since gone, the Metcalf's swimming pool at the river bridge can still be identified by the number of willow trees that my brothers and I planted there many years ago.

We of the "Bridge" can always claim that we have the M.B.E. No, not the order of the Member of the British Empire, but a Morwell Bridge Education.

This then is the "Bridge" as I fondly remember it.

Cecil W. (Joe) Metcalf,
8th July, 1988

Note: It could well be that my eldest brother, Ernest (Dick), who has just turned eighty years of age may well be the eldest Morwell Bridge school pupil still surviving.

OBIT: Norman Sharpe

A MAN who started in the clothing industry locally as a door to door 'hawker' before setting up his own business in Morwell, has died in Melbourne aged 81.

Norman Sharpe operated 'Sharpe's Emporium' in Morwell for 50 years before ill health forced him out of the business in 1983.

He died in Frances Xavier Cabrini Hospital in Malvern last week after a long illness. A funeral service was held at Chevra Kadisha, a Jewish synagogue in Springvale.

Mr Sharpe is survived by his wife Rosalind and two daughters, Pamela and Barbara. Prior to his death, Mr Sharpe lived with his wife in Toorak.

Born in Russia, Mr Sharpe migrated to Australia in 1922. He lived permanently in Morwell from 1925 to 1931 but in the following

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Death of M'well clothing king...

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years he travelled from Melbourne to tend to his business on work days before returning home on the weekend.

With his Emporium in Commercial Rd, Morwell (now the Spotlight building) Mr Sharpe was described by friends as a "popular and likeable man".

On his retirement in 1983, Mr Sharpe said it was important to be honest as "goodwill is an important part of business" and "a satisfied customer will always come back".

Mr Sharpe took a keen interest in Morwell Football Club as an office bearer and paid a lot of attention to local scouting organisations. His services to the community were recognised by Morwell Rotary Club which named a Reserve in his honor.

In 1941 he married Rosalind and settled in Caulfield where he was again involved with the youth of the area. He helped establish the 'City of Caulfield Youth Centre,' recognised at that time as one of the best in Victoria.

Friends tell an interesting story of the man who was said to get a lot of pleasure from charity and community work. Mr Sharpe was apparently unfit for service during World War 2 and at that time he had a racehorse called 'Attley' (named after a British Prime Minister). Every time 'Attley' won a race, Mr Sharpe would send a "substantial bundle" to the soldiers serving his adopted country.

'Attley' is recognised as one of the best weight-for-age performers in Australian turf history and he became known in the press as the 'war effort horse'.



Mr Sharpe was also a committee member of the Victorian Club.

Well known Morwell resident and former long serving Morwell Shire Councillor Lou Bond knew Mr Sharpe "from when he first came to Morwell carting his suitcases around" and he described him as "a great community man".

Mr Bond said: "He was very generous; any community project, he was there. He was well respected in the community; that sort of men are few and far between these days."

Away from the Emporium in Morwell, Mr Sharpe's business also included shops he operated in Sale and Traralgon for shorter periods. He also owned a three-storey property in Melbourne's Bourke Street from which he operated a similar store.

Lalrobe Valley Express

Tuesday October 25th

1988

2/6, 1/11 Men's All Wool Indiana Cashmere SOX 1/- Every Pair Pa

GIFT SUGGESTIONS FOR LADIES
2/6 Boxed Soap & Perfume Sets 1/-
3/11 Boxed Dainty Embroidered HANDKERCHIEFS 1/112
Free Gift for Ladies
A Pair of beautiful Silk Hose will be given FREE to any Lady spending £1 or over on first 3 days of Sale

3/11 Perfume, Soap and Bath Tablets CASKETS 1/11
5/11 Box of 1/2 Doz. 3/11 Embroidered Handkerchiefs

Transport Arrangements
As usual, arrangements have been made for Hardaker's and Mafeld's Buses to Run ALL DAY on Thursday, Friday and Saturday to and from Yallow. Special Trip will be made to Brown Coal Mine and Haunted Hills at 9.30 on Thursday morning.
NO Appos or Entries during the First Three Days of Sale—Thursday, Friday and Saturday. All Cash over Counter.



Who Said Gifts and Wonderful Bargains

MARVELLOUS SAVING OPPORTUNITIES AWAIT XMAS GIFT BUYERS

at SHARPE

GREAT XMAS SALE

December 18th 1934

GIFT SUGGESTIONS FOR MEN
10/6 Men's Boxed 7/11 PYJAMAS
3/6 Men's Boxed Braces 1/11 and Tie Sets 2/11
FREE GIFT FOR MEN
A Smart Silk Tie will be Given FREE to any Man spending £1 or over on first 3 days of Sale.

5/11 Braces & Suspender 3/11 Sets
29/6 Men's Boxed 19/11 "Luvica" Pyjamas
5/6 Men's Shaving Outfits 2/11
3/11, 2/11 Tableful of Men's TIES to go at 1/11
8/11, 7/11 Famous Beaucaire Fashion 4/11 SHIRTS
6/11 Men's Poplinette Pyjamas 3/11

9 A.M. SHARP
DECEMBER 13th
MANCHESTER & DRESS MATERIAL
AT SILLY PRICES

2/6 54 in. Snow-White Table Damask 1/- yd.
1/11 Linen Finish Serviettes 1/-
1/11 Single Bed Towel Sherry White & Unbleached 1/- yd
4/11, 3/11, 2/11 Tableful of Dress Materials 1/11 1/2 yd
2/6, 1/11 Tableful of Dress Silks 1/- yd.
These include Silk Vests, Bordered Silk, D.W. Weave Silk, Pique Vests, etc.

2/6 Genuine White Bemberg Spun Silk 1/- Yd.
Strict Limit of 6 Yards to each customer

REMNANTS HAND BAGS 8/11
ALMOST GIVEN AWAY
6/11 Stylish Silk GLOVES 3/11
1/6 "KANEBO" PRINTS 6 1/2 yd Yard

UNDERCLOTHING and CORSETS
GREATLY REDUCED

4/11 Dull Lockait Blouses 5/11 Ladies Indolene Summer Skirts 1/11 1/2
9/11 Dainty Lockait Pyjamas 5/11
5/11 Dull Bloom Vests 2/11 and Bloomers (Dull Finish) 5/11
5/11 Maybelle Lockait Pyjamas 5/11
5/11 Lady May Side Fastening Wrap-on Corsets 3/11
10/6 Up-Lift Brasieres Corsettes 6/11

COMMEMORATING
TWO DAYS OF UNIVERSAL
Huge Savings in Men's & Boys' Wear

Thursday, Friday, and Saturday will be the Biggest Bargain Days in the History of Gippisland.

12 Departments heavily stocked with Xmas Goods await Your Immediate Attention.

Are you going to help us to Establish a New Record? Come and See how Money can be Saved by Shopping with us.

Tune in to 3TR Tomorrow Next at 7.15 for Further News about the Sale.

FOOTWEAR of all description Positively Sacrificed.
Every Department Teeming with Bargains

4/11 Men's Sand Shoes to go at 2/11
7/11 Ladies Sandals 4/11
4/11 Men's Felt Slippers for 2/11
7/11 Men's Leather Slippers 4/11
25/-, 19/11 Men's Kid Boots All Sizes 12/11
15/11, 12/11 Men's Shoes to go at 9/11
25/-, 21/-, 19/11 Ladies Sample Shoes at all one price 8/11
9/11 Men's Strong Work Boots all sizes, to go at 5/11

2/11 Boys' South-westerns 6/11
12/6 Men's Briar Tweed Sports Trousers 7/11
12/11, 9/11 Cream Sport Trousers 5/11
3 Gns. British Worsted and Navy Suits for Men 39/6
4/11 Men's Denim Trousers (All Sizes)

2/11 Men's Genuine Fur Felt Hats 9/11
2/11 Boys' South-westerns 6/11
12/6 Men's Briar Tweed Sports Trousers 7/11
12/11, 9/11 Cream Sport Trousers 5/11
3 Gns. British Worsted and Navy Suits for Men 39/6
4/11 Men's Denim Trousers (All Sizes)

(The tribute given by the Minister of St Andrew's Church, Morwell, the Rev Doug Morey, at Jock Lawson's funeral service on September 6th, 1988.)

JOCK LAWSON

In this service here today we have many different thoughts and feelings going through our minds and hearts. On the one hand we are all devastated by the fact that Jock Lawson has been taken from us so suddenly and in such a tragic way. On the other hand Jock was such a wonderful person that we are kind of glad and honoured to be able to pay him this tribute today. I know we would all dearly wish that we did not have to be here holding this service for Jock. But we also all want to acknowledge that Jock was a most unusual and outstanding person.

Before we begin to tell Jock's story let us express our sincere and loving sympathy to Nan and Fae and the family who have suffered such a severe shock in what has happened. We are aware that Nan is here at the service having been let out of hospital for a little while. She is being attended by her doctor-granddaughter Johanne. Fae is contributing to the service in a special way by playing the organ. Unfortunately, Dr David Cousins, who is such a close friend to Nan and Jock, is unable to be here as he is at present somewhere in Europe.

Jock was a Scotsman, having been born in Queensferry, near Edinburgh. He was born in 1901, the oldest child of John and Agnes Lawson. Jock's older brother, Thomas, who also lived in the Latrobe Valley for many years, died 12 years ago. The only girl in the family, Mrs Effie Reid, lived all her life in Scotland. She died about 4 years ago. She visited Australia several years before her death. The other boy in the family, the youngest, Alex, died accidentally, in England while in the military during World War 2.

John Lawson senior was the game-keeper and a gardener at Dundas Castle near Queensferry at the time of Jock's birth and early life. They lived in a cottage in the castle grounds. Jock was obliged to walk into Queensferry to school each day, and then home again, sometimes through the snow and no doubt often through the rain, a distance of about 3 miles.

The facts are a little obscure at this point, but it seems that the castle was turned into some sort of medical post during W. War 1, and the family was obliged to leave. They went to Kirkcaldy in Fyfe where Jock completed his schooling. There is also a legend that Jock started his work life as an apprentice in a fitting and turning workshop but only lasted in it for a very brief time. He had been born and bred to the open air and to things associated with gardens, and soon found his way into a career as a botanist and horticulturalist. His first experience and training came from the Glasgow Botanical Gardens and then a little later, helped by good references from his employers at Glasgow, he was granted a place in the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in London.

This has always been considered to be the highest possible honour to be bestowed on any budding professional gardener, and Jock never ever forgot his tremendous good fortune in having that experience. He knew that his qualifications would take him anywhere in the world.

The course gave him more than just head knowledge; it trained him in a philosophy of life which made him into a man who greatly understood the real nature of the world. When he taught gardening to others he also imparted to them a wonderful sense of respect for nature and a deep appreciation of the whole natural world.

It is of interest to learn that there are only 16 people per year who are accepted for the 3 year Diploma Course at Kew and that as far as we know only 8 graduates from Kew have ever come to live and work in Australia. So Jock was really a member of a very select group and had the highest qualifications possible in the world of horticulture. It was always dangerous to ask him a simple question about some plant or some aspect of gardening. His knowledge was so profound that, to him, nothing was simple and his answers were always very complete, and very long.

One of Jock's closest friends is Percy Trevaskis, who was a fellow student at Kew, and who eventually became the gardener for the Nicholas Gardens at Sassafra, now known as "Burnham Beeches". Percy is in hospital at the moment and is unable to be present here today.

Jock came to Australia in 1927 at the age of 26. He landed a job in the Ballarat Gardens for a short time and then came to Yallourn and almost immediately became the head gardener for the S.E.C. at the time that Yallourn was just beginning to come into being. He held that post for 38 years, retiring in 1966. In 1970 his outstanding contribution to Yallourn was recognized by the Queen who awarded him a British Empire Medal. The citation which was read at his investiture by Sir Dallas Brooks, states : "In recognition of his outstanding service as Head Gardener for the State Electricity Commission at Yallourn and his valuable contribution to the beautification of public parks and reserves in and around the district".

It was a bitter blow to Jock when his life's work was condemned to death with the removal of the township of Yallourn. But Jock took it all in a rather remarkable spirit of philosophical resignation. His training as a gardener had accustomed him to seeing the death as well as the life of living things, especially in the plant kingdom. He saw not only the birth and death of his gardens, but also of Yallourn township as well.

On the other hand he had many memories of how his work had brought beauty and joy to very many people over the years, making their life just a little more bearable in their otherwise unpleasant proximity to the brown coal open cut.

Jock was particularly proud of his work on the Yallourn ovals and playing fields. When an English Cricket team visited Yallourn in the early 1950s, their captain, Len Hutton, complimented Jock on the turf pitch on Number 1 Oval and said it was the second best one he had encountered in Australia. The best one was in Adelaide.

More enduring monuments to Jock's gardening influence and assistance can be found in the gardens of the Latrobe Valley Hospital and the Gippsland Institute at Churchill. However, his real influence in the gardening world will live on in thousands of hearts whom he inspired with a love of nature through his visits to schools and his sharing of his own enthusiasm for gardening with the children of this community. He was always available to anyone who sought his advice and we would be here all day if we tried to give a full list of all whom he helped in this way. Jock was a Fellow the Institute of Parks and Gardens.

Jock came to Australia on his own, but he had already become engaged to Nan in Scotland. Nan came from Musselborough, also in the Edinburgh district. Once Jock had settled into Yallourn he arranged for Nan to come out which she did in 1929. She stayed in the manse with the Rev and Mrs William Simpson until the wedding which took place soon after her arrival. That wedding may have been the first in the newly constructed Presbyterian Church in Yallourn.

Thus Nan joined Jock in Yallourn where they were to live for the next 44 years, citizens of that community for nearly the whole of its life. They were very much part of the Scottish Community in Yallourn and in this district, as well as being staunch members of the Presbyterian Church for all of that time. When we speak about their family, it is a bit difficult to distinguish between relatives and friends, since their friends were like members of their family, and today we feel Jock's passing just as keenly whether we are family or only friends.

Jock and Nan had two children, Fae and Ian. Ian was tragically killed in a road accident while he was stationed in Butterworth, in Malaysia, with the RAAF in 1959. He is buried at Penang.

Fae is Mrs Keith Horman. They now live at Geelong and have three children, Peter, Johanne and Bruce. Bruce is married to Karen and they have two sons, Matthew and Stephen. Sadly, Jock never saw his newest great grandchild, Stephen, who is only four weeks old.

Jock and Nan celebrated their Golden wedding Anniversary as far back as 1979 and were looking forward to their Diamond Anniversary next year. We are all very sorry that that won't be possible, but we do congratulate Nan on having had almost 59 wonderful years of married life with Jock.

In 1973 Jock and Nan moved to Morwell and have since shared in this community, which includes much of the former Yallourn community.

Jock was also a champion bowler and many of his bowling associates are here today and I understand will form a guard of honour outside the Church after the service.

Perhaps there are many other areas of interest that Jock shared in which could be mentioned in this brief tribute. You will be able to fill in any blanks which I leave with your own memories and recollections.

Let me conclude with a reference to the Church. Jock and Nan have been faithful Church attenders first in Scotland, and then in the Church which the Scots have brought to Australia, the Presbyterian church. First at Yallourn for all those many years of life in that town, then for a number of years at Moe, and now for the last few years here at St Andrew's, Morwell. We have grown to love Nan and Jock who are always so regular and faithful in their attendance on the House of God each Sunday. Jock took a great interest in the Church and often spoke with warmth and sincerity of his appreciation of the services and the message of the preacher. Always with that twinkle in his eye. He was a happy man and his happiness was due in part to his strong Christian faith. His appreciation of Christianity was no doubt due to his deep knowledge of the world of nature. He understood so much about the creation that he also understood much about the Creator. There is a saying that we are closer to God in a garden than anywhere else on earth, and I believe that that saying is very appropriate for Jock who spent so much of his life in gardens and was also so close to God as a result.

But gardens, like Yallourn itself, belong to this world that will pass away and Jock also knew of that eternal city of which the Bible speaks, the city that has real foundations whose maker and builder is God and which will never pass away. He cherished in his heart a true assurance that he was a citizen of that eternal city and now we can be confident that he has entered its gates and is already gazing with great interest and wonder at the beauty of the streets and parks and gardens in that city, for the Bible tells us that there are such things there. Maybe they will have a job for Jock to do there, too. Who knows?

Ago no barrier for lively twins

TWIN sisters Isla Vale and Jean Waddell must have a fountain of youth ... because they sure don't look 90.

"I don't feel it, to tell you the truth," Isla said yesterday.

But the sisters, born in Morwell on November 5 1898, did celebrate their 90th birthday on Saturday.

"It was a wonderful day. I'll never forget it," Isla said.

Relatives arrived from around Australia and England for the luncheon at St Peter's Church Hall in Murrumbidgee — in-

● 90-year-old twins Mrs Isla Vale (left) and Mrs Jean Waddell celebrate their birthday on Saturday. Picture: JOHN CASAMENTO

By JOEL DEANE

cluding most of Isla's nine children, 32 grandchildren and 26 great grand-children.

Jean, who never had children, is like a second mother — a "twin" mother.

Isla said there is a special link between twins: "we've always done a lot together".

The twins lived in Morwell until they were 16 when Jean moved to Melbourne.

When Isla and Jean married they had no trou-

ble keeping in touch with each other over the years. Jean lived in Melbourne and Isla lived and worked on a sheep station for 37 years — both sisters are widows.

Nowadays, Isla has retired to Terang while Jean lives in Melbourne.

After Saturday's big day Isla's eight-year old great-grandson said he was all ready for the 91st birthday — she laughed.

"Some call me Gran, some call me Nan, some call me Mum. I don't know what they call me other times," she laughed.

Isla said the secret to long life was simple — "work".

"I don't think life begins before you're 65."

Melbourne "Sun" - Mon. Nov. 7, '88

We hope to get in touch with these ladies. Can any reader help with an address?



THE 1988 BICENTENARY YEAR

MORWELL AND DISTRICT

DECADE 1978 -1988.

In 1978 the population of Morwell was approximately 15,500. It was recognised by most people that the town had reached its saturation point. The years of growth were while the project was growing. Development from then on was more in the direction of Traralgon and Churchill.

In the 1980's too, this area has felt the effect of Australia-wide and indeed world-wide economic troubles. In 1979 it was noted that property values had risen dramatically and unemployment was rising.

Some physical changes most visible in this decade have taken place in the Central Business Area. The scheme to segregate residential areas from industrial and commerce centres has certainly progressed rapidly. Many new commercial buildings, that is shops, offices and supermarkets, have replaced houses in the C.B.A. which has extended in practically all directions but especially in the south and west. The main development in the east was the Mid-Valley complex, of course. Recently the frequency of offices and shops changing venues and management makes one quite dizzy, not to mention the amalgamation of big-name supermarkets, e.g. Coles=Fosseys, Woolworths=Safeway.

The town centenary year of Morwell was 1979, so though this is Australia's Bicentenary year, Morwell is officially 110 years old in 1989. Thus it is fitting that we continue to review the history next year. So, here you will find just a few events of the year 1980. These were found by browsing through copies of the "Express" for that year. The date of the paper appears on the left:

Jan.2, 1980. Loy Yang - the slab foundations of the station's first crusher house were laid. This was the start of Dravo's coal plant contract

Jan 24, 1980. Ericssons likely to close by the end of this year. (In fact it didn't close until October 1988.)

Jan.24,1980. Horseshoe Vale, Yinnar, homestead restored. This was built for Mr. G. Bond in 1907.

May 8, 1980. Units for aged at Mitchell House set to go.

May 22,1980. Opposition to building of Mid-valley complex.

June 24,1980. Shire gives green light to the Mid-Valley complex. 25 hectares of land involved.

June 26,1980. Binishell at Gippsland Institute given a try out.

August 14, 1980. Report of plans for Malls in the C.B.A. (Tarwin & Church Sts.)

BRUNTON'S BRIDGE EXCURSION.

On Sunday, October 23, members of Trafalgar, Moe, Morwell, Traralgon and Rosedale Historical Societies joined together in an excursion to Brunton's Bridge, near Walhalla, to celebrate the centenary of its opening.

This imposing structure was designed by Mephan Ferguson and is said to be a replica of the Victoria Bridge over the Yarra.

Brunton's Crossing, on the Thomson River, was an important part of the most direct route between Sale and Walhalla during the gold rushes. The metal bridge, which was opened in October 1888, replaced a wooden one at the Crossing. It was a four-span, iron girder bridge, about 60m. long and 12m. above the river bed.

With the construction of the Walhalla - Moe railway line, the bridge's importance declined and in the '50s the timber decking was destroyed by fire.

In 1977 the Moe and Traralgon Historical Societies became interested in the bridge. The assistance of the 91st Forestry Unit and the 39th Electrical and Mechanical Squadron, Australian Army Reserve, was enlisted and it was decided that these two units would repair the decking of the bridge, to footpath width, while on their annual camp in 1979. Local timber, milled on the spot, was used and the bridge was classified by the National Trust.

At the gathering to mark the centenary of the opening, Major Oliver Raymond who was C.O. of the 91st Forestry Unit at the time, spoke on the redecking project and Mr. Hans Faubel of Moe Historical Society gave an outline of the history and building of the original bridge.

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HELP WANTED - JUMBUK.

Mrs. Alma Glover, 26 Fairview St, Traralgon, is researching the history of Jumbuk. She would be grateful for any information on the area, whether it be photographs, documents, letters or just personal reminiscences. Mrs. Glover can be contacted on (051)743462.

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ANSWERS TO LAST MONTH'S TRIVIA - What's in a Name?

1. I'll make a wise phrase - William Shakespeare.
2. On then O sailor - Horatio Nelson
3. Our best novels in store - Robert Louis Stevenson
4. Flit on cheering angel - Florence Nightingale
5. That great charmer - Margaret Thatcher

MORWELL BRIDGE AND MORWELL WEST

REUNION AND OFFICIAL MEMORIAL BRIDGE OPENING OCTOBER 30, 1988

After months of meeting and sending out of invitations to ex Morwell Bridge and Morwell West residents, the big day finally came. This was our third very successful reunion, the first of which was held at the Morwell West school back in 1976. The response to that reunion was beyond all expectations. It lasted well into the night, dancing by generator-powered lights. People came from as far as Tasmania, New South Wales and Queensland.

At this time there was no Morwell Bridge and very little Morwell West and the school was one of a few buildings left but was no longer being used. Consequently it was a target for vandals but with a bit of a clean up it was made presentable for the occasion. This school replaced the Morwell Bridge school which was burnt down in 1944 and retained the same number, 2439.

The next reunion was held ten years later at the Morwell Football Ground.

Once again we were pleasantly surprised by the large attendance. This was also a very successful day, finishing in the Football Club rooms, reminiscing and dancing until the late hours.

After this reunion the committee decided that they wanted something built, erected or whatever, to remember Morwell Bridge and Morwell West by. Ideas came forth and after many suggestions it was decided that, because there were three bridges at Morwell Bridge, a bridge would be an ideal memorial. We would have liked a bridge erected over the narrowest span of water in front of Kernot hall but cost prevented this.

We finally settled on a smaller bridge across Waterhole creek. This was paid for by the State Electricity Commission and put in position by the Morwell Shire, and we thank these two bodies very much. We also had the old Morwell Bridge School sign, which was donated by Joe Metcalf, erected above the bridge, and a plaque set up in front of the bridge made it very acceptable to us.

Our official opening commenced at 9 a.m. with a reunion. The day, weather wise, was not very kind to us but it did not stop people attending - a big crowd started to build up at 10 a.m. and stayed until closing time at 5 p.m.

The official opening took place at 1.30 p.m. with the Shire President, Mr. Keith Hamilton, speaking on behalf of the residents of Morwell Bridge and Morwell West. This was followed by a speech from the S.E.C. representative, Mr. Kevin Gould, who is an old Morwell West boy. The Shire President then introduced Alliss Kaye and Harry Godridge who officially cut the ribbon and unveiled the plaque.

The area around the bridge is a very good park area and we have ideas of setting up electric barbecues so people can picnic there, look at our bridge, use it, and reminisce.

Once again a very successful day was had, making it worthwhile for the effort put into organising it. There are many people to thank for the three reunions being successful and in naming just a few it would be remiss of me to neglect mentioning Dot Bartlett, Lois Starkey, Joe Metcalf, Jack McDonald, Gwen Graham, Tom Graham, Shirley field, Cyril Metcalf, Ben and Ella Padfield and all the past residents and friends who have attended each reunion.

R.J. (Bob) Meredith.



The Memorial Bridge



Lois Starkey, Bob Meredith and Dot Bartlett on THE BRIDGE.



Alliss Kay & Harry Godridge unveil the commemorative plaque



"L.V. Express"

Tues. Nov. 1, 1988.

★Note:

The area was acquired by the S.E.C. but it is nowhere near the Morwell Open Cut!

A QUAIN bridge was opened over Waterhole Creek in Morwell on Sunday as a tribute to the pioneers of the former settlements of Morwell Bridge and Morwell West.

The wooden structure was officially opened at a cheerful reunion of remaining residents and relatives of the early pioneering districts.

It will be a reminder of the two towns, eventually swallowed up by the Morwell Open Cut, which were connected with a very small bridge over the Morwell River.

Nothing now remains of the bridge nor the towns to prove that they ever existed.

Former residents and relatives do however make it a habit to get together when they can to remember their heritage. The bridge has now given them something they can call

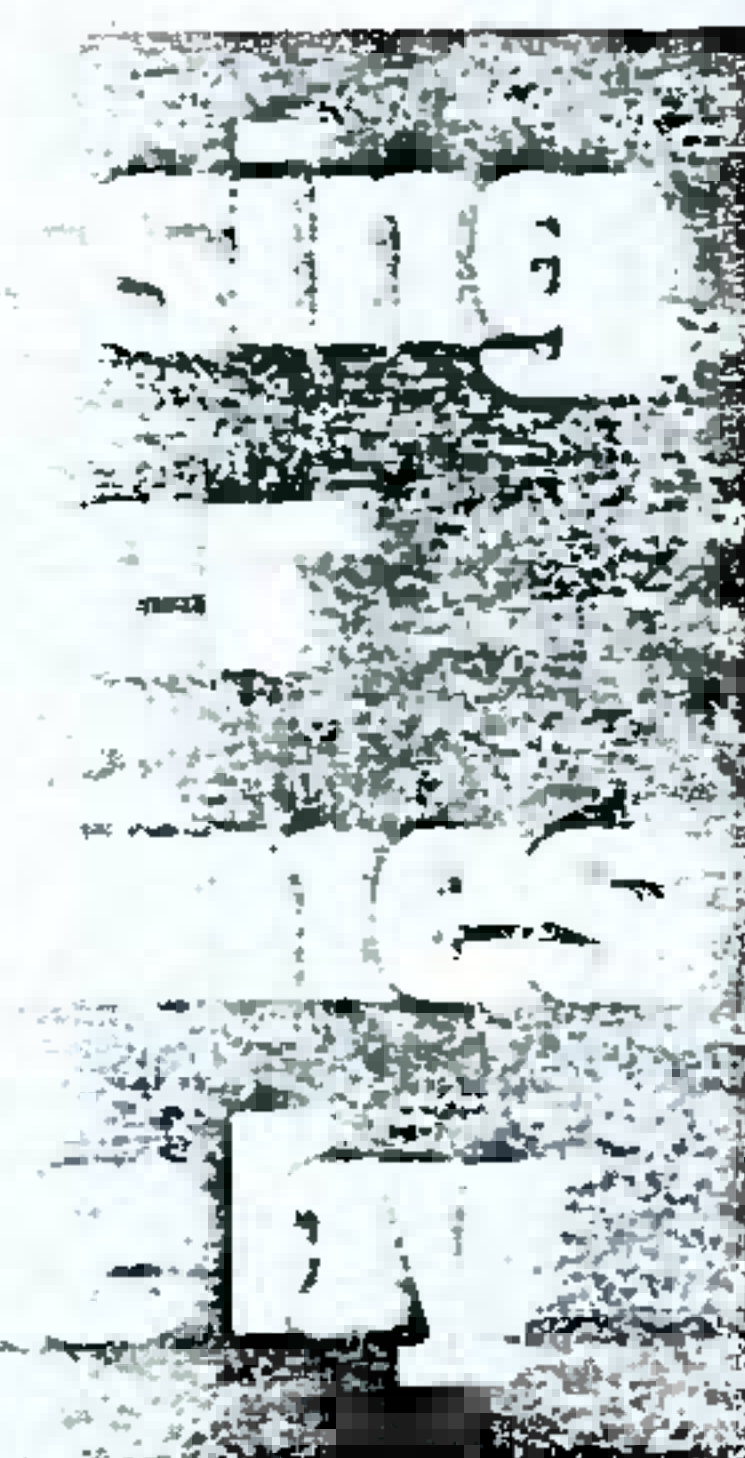
their very own.

The SEC provided the funds to purchase the bridge and it was built over Waterhole Creek, between the Mid Valley units and Kernot Hall. Morwell Shire Council provided the manpower to build the bridge. The SEC also donated a plaque to the Morwell Bridge/Morwell West Reunion Committee.

• Pictured here is Lois Starkey, a former resident of Morwell West, with Harry Godridge and Alliss Kaye testing out the new bridge.

The opening was a special occasion for everyone involved, especially those who travelled from as far as Queensland, Tasmania and New South Wales for the ceremony. The plaque was unveiled by Alliss Kaye, granddaughter of the first man who settled in the district in 1842, and Harry Godridge, grandson of the late Henry Godridge who owned the old Morwell Bridge Hotel which serviced Cobb and Co coaches.

After the bridge opening, more than 250 people renewed old friendships and made new ones well into the afternoon at Kernot Hall.



REMINISCENCES OF MY YEARS AT MORWELL BRIDGE

I was only three months old when, in September, 1921 my parents decided to settle at this small place. It was from one of the early landowners, the Kaye family, that my father obtained his quarter-acre building block which was one of the first such blocks.

My aunt, Mrs. Mary Matthews, I believe was the first official Post Mistress, the postal section being a part of her small store, which was built by the S.E.C. and workmates of her husband, William, after his untimely death as a result of an accident while employed by the S.E.C.

Later on this store was taken over by Bill Warnett, or as we kids called him "Bronco Bill". After this store ceased to operate another one built a few hundred years further down on the Yallourn side and this was run by the Evan's family who, during the war years, had the misfortune to lose their eldest son, who was a mate of mine, in a bombing raid over Germany.

Then later on this store was run by the Dodemaide family. Some time later another was built a short distance away on Morwell side and was run by the Marshall family.

Our first garage was operated by Bill Clover. This garage was next door to the Evan's shop. Then, some time later, another one was built next door to Marshall's store and was run by Alex Johnstone, one of the best motor mechanics in the business.

The "Bridge" school was situated approximately five hundred yards past the Godridge family farm, this family being one of the earliest settlers of the area. It was here in the early 1850s that the same family built and operated the Morwell Bridge Club Hotel, which was also a stopping place for the Cobb & Co. coaches on their run from Melbourne to Sale.

As kids going to school past this farm, we soon found out that close to the roadside were two of the best fruit trees one could ever wish for--one was a quince and the other an apple. Many were the quinces and apples taken from these trees, although not without a price, as I know personally. On one occasion Mr. Godridge was waiting for me as I climbed down from one of these trees with my spoils. I believe he must have worn a size ten boot as I had a sore rump for a few days.

Amongst some of the school teachers that I can remember was a Miss Walsh, a Mr. Grant who boarded with my Aunt, a Mr. Earl G. Pearson who rode his Indian motor cycle and sidecar each day from Morwell. Earl G. later retired from high up with the Education Department. There was a Norm Stone, not long out of Teachers' College who played football for Morwell, a Miss Francis Sagar, who also ended up in a high position with the Department and, towards my last years at school, a Mr. Willy Watson.

I will always remember the piebald horse, "Lady", ridden to school by the Toner family, who lived some distance past the school on the banks of the Morwell River.

I also recall the various natural river swimming pools, one of the first being a short distance behind the Godridge farm, very deep with the usual rope tied to a branch of a large gum tree from which we dropped off into the cool depths. It was at this pool that, around the tender age of ten or eleven, I received my "Herald Learn to Swim" certificate per courtesy of our school.

The second pool was some distance further upstream the other side of the old wooden bridge. (This was the same bridge over which the coaches used to travel over, was located close to the Godridge's farm.) This pool was appropriately named the "Sand Bank" because of the natural sandy bottom. It was not all that deep, and used not only by the locals, but was also the favourite place for the Yallourn Baptist Church to baptize its members. To we youngsters the ritual was quite a mystery!

Again, further upstream, another pool was named after the Shepherd family as they were the first to use it. To me this pool was best of all.

Then there was the Metcalf's pool, located at the bridge on the Princes Highway and only a couple of hundred yards from our place. There was no sandy bottom here, only lots of mud. Did we have some beaut mud fights here!

It was at this same pool that my eldest sister taught me to swim. She did this by tying a long rope around my middle and lowering me from the heights of the bridge into the water below and telling me to start swimming. The good old dog paddle got me somehow into the shallower water so that I could bottom.

It was also here that one of my older brothers used to amaze one and all by standing on the top rail of the bridge and diving into the water many feet below. Then, of course, he was one of the best swimmers and divers in the area--many a swimming contest he won at the old Morwell Baths. Who can remember them? From memory I think that they were located just opposite the Commercial Road School.

It was in the great flood of December, 1934, when the floodwaters were many feet over this section of the Princes Highway with just the tip of the top rail of the bridge visible, that the residents of Morwell Bridge witnessed the unusual sight of a large rowing boat coming up this flooded highway. The purpose of this boat was to rescue any people marooned on roof-tops and trees. Luckily no one at the "Bridge" needed its service. This boat was then loaded on to one of Foster Meredith's trucks and transported to the next flooded section, which was just beyond where the Latrobe Valley Hospital is now located. This same procedure was repeated along the highway, and many were the rescues carried out by such boats. One of the Morwell Bridge residents, Charlie Dodemaide was rescued after spending many hours marooned on one of the dredgers in the flooded Yallourn Open Cut.

What a fisherman's delight was this same Morwell River! Many were the large conger eels we caught by means of a springer with bullfrogs as bait, we used set just prior to dusk. Those congors at times were around the twenty pound mark. Because of the size of these eels it was our practice

the following morning to take our rifles and shoot them before removing them from the river. The largest conger that I know of personally taken from the river in our time was a monster of twenty-eight pounds, which was caught by an uncle.

Besides these huge eels there were some of the largest lobsters possibly in Gippsland. The late Crosbie Morisson, one of Australia's greatest naturalists, correctly naming them the Southern Spiny Lobster, not caryfish as they came to be commonly called in later years.

Also in abundance was one of Australia's oldest freshwater fish, the Sand Trout. To me these fish were the tastiest of all.

The swamp behind the Kaye farm, which in winter became a very large lake was found by my brothers and I to be ideal for floating our tin canoes and catching the many rabbits stranded on little islands, etc.

In summer time there was always a small clear-water drain, only about knee-deep, which was always well stocked with silver eels. Our method of catching the silvers was to first block off the drain where it ran into the river with a piece of flywire. Then, clad only in our swimming togs, walk along the bank for a few hundred yards, get into the water and start off downstream feeling with our bare feet as we went for the many eels hiding under the abundance of water weed. Then, keeping our feet on the eels, we would bend down and quickly scoop them out on to the grassy bank where they were quickly despatched. I can assure you not too many eels escaped and those that did could not get past our wire block. Now, in later life, I shudder at the thought of feeling one under my bare feet.

The river bridge where this drain ran in to was also a favourite spot for the many swaggies to camp under.

How fortunate we were, living close to the river and bush with its abundance of wildlife including our native bear.

I recall Brownie, our rather large dog of mixed breed that my brothers and I used to harness up to pull us around in a small cart. The only problem was that when he sighted another dog or cat Brownie would take off at full speed, usually with disastrous results to the cart.

How we enjoyed Guy Fawkes nights at the communal bon fires just over the river bridge, one and all joining in the fun. Just prior to one of these nights my father, who used a lot of gelignite, put a stick in a four gallon petrol tin and set it off. What a commotion it caused! Windows in the nearby houses rattled and I do believe a few houses lifted off their stumps. We even had a visit from a member of the Morwell Police Force, who incidently was a good mate of my Dad's. They had heard the blast in Morwell and had come to check it out. No one was talking that night. It was suggested that perhaps someone had been blasting out stumps, which was a common practice at the time.

When I was only six or seven years old there was an incident concerning my three eldest brothers and my eldest sister which occurred in the bush where the Hernes Oak railway siding existed and where was also located an old bushman's hut made of hessian with a bark roof. Two of my brothers grabbed my sister and the remaining brother and threw them into this