

Diggings

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FRANK ROSSITER CROZIER (1883-1948) Maryborough's ANZAC artist

When Frank Crozier was born in July 1883 his father John was Headmaster of Maryborough Grammar School, a private educational institution. Francis may have been the boy's baptismal name, but by the time he signed A.I.F. enlistment papers in 1915 he was definitely Frank.

John Crozier married Emily Caroline Jessie Medland in Ballarat in September 1882. She was the daughter of H.A. Medland of Maryborough. The marriage notice in *The Australasian* announced that John was "Principal of the Maryborough Grammar School" and that Emily was "the eldest daughter of H.A. Medland Esq., Maryborough". Emily's mother's maiden name was Rossiter - hence Frank's middle name. Henry Allington Medland was an auctioneer and owned shares in a gold mine.

An advertisement in the Educational Columns of the *Maryborough and Dunolly Advertiser* of February 2, 1883 announces that J. Crozier B.A, Head Master and Assistant Master J. Porteous would be teaching Greek, Latin, French, Algebra, Trigonometry, Higher English, and the "customary English subjects", while "Mrs Crozier takes the music, painting and drawing classes". There was provision for boarders and day boarders.

Little is known of Crozier's childhood, but by the turn of the century he was clearly established in Melbourne. The 1906 Electoral Roll lists him as "clerk", resident in St Kilda. By 1912, he recorded his occupation as "artist".

A number of sources note that Crozier worked initially for a decorator specialising in church interiors. He subsequently studied art while working as a bank clerk, later attending the National Gallery of Victoria School of Art from 1905-1907, where he was awarded prizes. The 1913 Sands Directory entry indicates that he was sharing a premises - possibly a studio - with a "P. Leason", undoubtedly Percy Leason, a fellow student at the National Gallery School and later a prominent artist and *Bulletin* cartoonist. They and fellow students such as Penleigh Boyd and Louis McCubbin exhibited their work in Melbourne and joined various artists' colonies in Heidelberg and Warrandyte.



The Beach at ANZAC Frank Crozier [Australian War Memorial]

In March 1915, at the age of thirty-one years and ten months, Frank Rossiter enlisted in the Australian Imperial Force, his next of kin noted as his sister, Mrs L.J. Bottomley. Private Rossiter was posted to the 22nd Infantry Battalion, sailing to Egypt and Gallipoli, where he served as a stretcher bearer.

In November 1915 Crozier became involved in the production of the Anzac Book, the brainchild of the legendary Australian War Correspondent Charles Bean, who sought contributions both written and drawn from soldiers. Crozier provided a number of illustrations and is thanked and recognised in the Editor's Note as a member of staff.

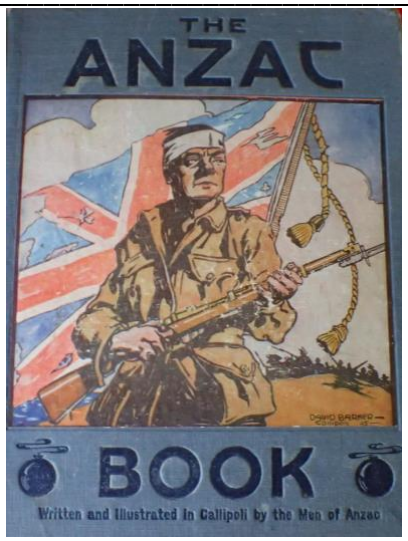
The Editor, Charles Bean, wrote:

This book of Anzac was produced in the lines at Anzac on Gallipoli in the closing weeks of 1915. Practically every word of it was written and every line drawn beneath the shelter of a waterproof sheet or of a roof of sandbags - either in the trenches or, at most, within the range of the oldest Turkish rifle, and under daily visitations from the smallest Turkish field-piece...
... As drawings and paintings began to come in, disclosing the whereabouts of some of the talent which existed in Anzac, a ***small staff of artists was collected*** *... and a dugout overlooking Anzac Cove became the office of the only book ever likely to be produced in Gallipoli"*

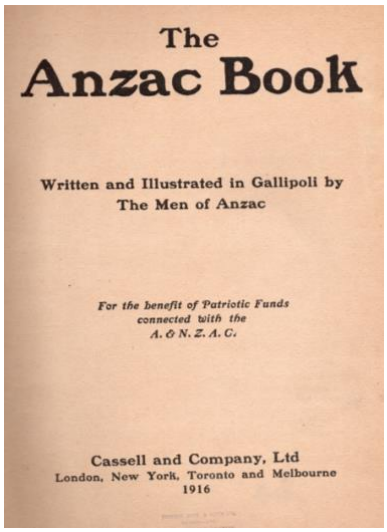
FRANK ROSSITER CROZIER (continued)



Crozier's illustration for a poem (Australian War Memorial)



Front cover of first edition



Title page in first edition

In early 1916 Private Crozier was posted to France. His service record describes him as "escort to General Birdwood", who had written the Introduction to the Anzac Book. It appears that Crozier's artistic talent also came to the attention of Brigadier General Gellibrand, who requested that he sketch various aspects of the Battle of Pozières in 1916.

In the same year in Melbourne some of Crozier's work was exhibited at the Victorian Artists' Society. *The Argus* reported that "In the central gallery there are a number of interesting sketches from Anzac by Mr Crozier". The same exhibition included sculpture by Margaret Baskerville, creator of Maryborough's War Memorial statue.

In 1917 he was posted to the 1st Anzac Corps Topographical Section, a unit that carried out surveying and creating maps of the battlefields. In October 1917 Crozier applied to join the Australian War Records Section in London, where he was trained in camouflage techniques. The following year he was appointed as an Official War Artist. Given the rank of Honorary Lieutenant, he served in this capacity until 1920.



The Unburied (Frank Crozier)

Illustration for a poem in The Anzac Book.

Snowflakes ...

"have softly covered with a glittering shroud/The unburied dead"

In 1919 Crozier returned to Australia, giving his contact address as the Victorian Artists' Society.
His name appears in the promotion columns of the Commonwealth of *Australia Gazette* of October 1920. On the same list the name Charles Webb Gilbert [aka C. Web Gilbert] appears. Gilbert was born in Cockatoo (a small mining area near Talbot), specialised in sculpture, and created many WW1 and public memorials. It's almost inevitable that these two artists born within a few kilometres of each other would have met and worked together in London.

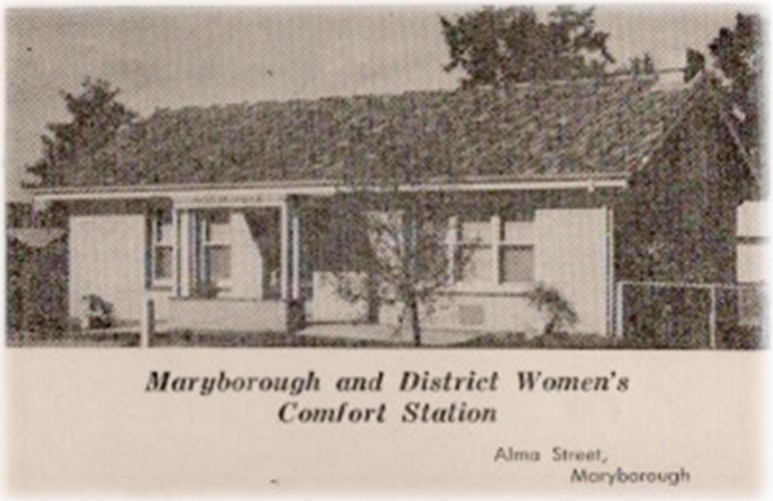
Crozier entered his work in a number of exhibitions in subsequent years, some of which were fund raisers for the Australian Comforts Fund. He specialised in landscapes. In 1936 he was employed for six months at the Australian War Memorial in an advisory role, possibly at the instigation of Charles Bean.

Australian War Memorial research indicates that Crozier worked in the Maribyrnong Munitions Factory in Melbourne during World War Two.

His work is represented in the Australian War Memorial as well as the National Gallery of Victoria, Ballarat Art Gallery and the Castlemaine Art Museum. Many landscapes were sold privately.

Crozier died in October 1948 and is buried in Warrandyte.

FORTY-THREE YEARS OF COMFORT



AMENITIES:

Spacious, attractively furnished lounge

Well equipped kitchen

Comfortably furnished sick bay

Baby feeding cubicles

Babies' bottles heated

Ladies' toilets

Requisites for small children

Hot water available

Hostess on duty

Text on back of card (left)

In the years after World War Two, many families were able to buy cars and sometimes take family holidays. In the 1950s many Comfort Stations were built to cater for the growing number of travellers. In country areas those travellers were often in town for the day for shopping or farm business. Public toilets, if they existed, might be primitive.

Maryborough Mayor Harry Gibbs organised a meeting in December 1952, inviting any district women interested in the notion of building a comfort station. He suggested that Phillips Gardens in the centre of town would be the ideal site and that it might be possible to obtain government funding. The 26 women who attended agreed to compile information about other comfort stations that they might visit during the coming summer holidays. They also passed a motion that later proved to be contentious: that the Comfort Station would provide for women and children only. Mayor Gibbs later expressed his uneasiness with this proposal.

Relevant council officers and the Mayor met in early 1953, and later that year local teacher/architect Ted Peck produced blueprints and an estimated cost of £2,500.

Discussions over a potential site continued were prolonged. The committee favoured sites closer to the then Infant Welfare Centre (later VicRoads, then demolished to make way for the new hospital). It was finally pointed out that in order to gain government funding the potential site had to be vested in the Crown or the Council.

The committee also approached other local organisations such as the Country Women's Association and State School Mothers' Clubs for financial support, and fund raising efforts such as Children's Balls were held.

The builder, W.H. Hart, began work on the Alma Street site within Phillips Gardens in July 1956, and the official opening, by founding President Mrs Kath Gibbs, was held on August 25, 1957.

The last committee meeting was held on July 27, 1999 and the building was later demolished.

Early office bearers and supporters of the Comfort Station pose in front of the building.

Kath Gibbs, Beatrice Bales, Aileen Bucknall, Eileen Waters, Florence Price, Emmie Rich, Harriet Witnish, Bertha Black, Mary Burkinshaw, Jessie Pascoe, Elsie Douglass, Bessie Lock.

Photograph (right):

Appeared originally in Betty Osborn's book:

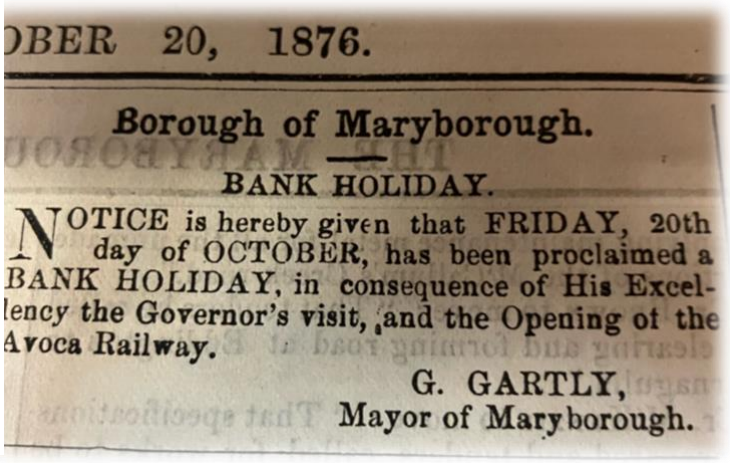
Against The Odds Maryborough 1905-1961



RAIL CELEBRATIONS

Maryborough residents were encouraged to celebrate the opening of the line to Avoca in October 1876. The contract for the fifteen miles and four chains of track had been awarded to a Maryborough firm, Milne Gartley and Tout, at a cost of just over £37,000. The main challenge was the construction of the timber trestle bridge over the creek at Bung Bong. The cost per mile was calculated to be £2,480.

Maryborough and Dunolly Advertiser
Friday October 20, 1876



OBER 20, 1876.

Borough of Maryborough.

BANK HOLIDAY.

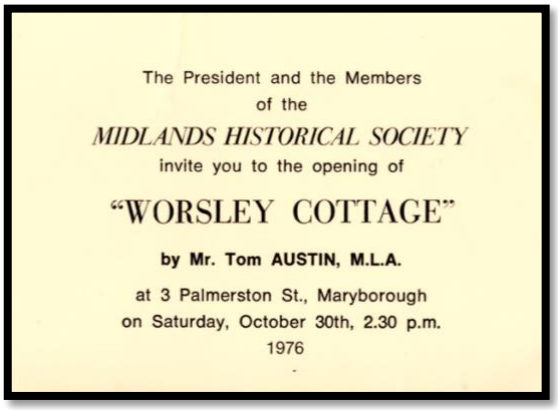
NOTICE is hereby given that FRIDAY, 20th day of OCTOBER, has been proclaimed a BANK HOLIDAY, in consequence of His Excellency the Governor's visit, and the Opening of the Avoca Railway.

G. GARTLY,
Mayor of Maryborough.

It was reported that there were mutterings of discontent at Avoca, where a grand banquet had been planned for the Governor's arrival. During the half hour stop in Maryborough after the journey from Melbourne via Castlemaine, the Vice-Regal and Ministerial parties were entertained with a "slight collation" provided by the Bull and Mouth Hotel and laid out in the guard's room at the station. This was viewed by some as sabotage!

A special free train was scheduled at 8pm to convey Maryborough residents who held ball and banquet tickets to and from the Avoca Railway Ball, held under the patronage of the Governor, Sir George Bowen. The train was to return at 5am on Saturday. Local women were no doubt relieved to learn that ... "with regard to the banquet we learn that ladies will be admitted"

WORSLEY COTTAGE ANNIVERSARY



The President and the Members
of the
MIDLANDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
invite you to the opening of
"WORSLEY COTTAGE"
by Mr. Tom AUSTIN, M.L.A.
at 3 Palmerston St., Maryborough
on Saturday, October 30th, 2.30 p.m.
1976

The Cottage became the headquarters and museum of the Midlands Historical Society in 1976 after a grant of $10,000 was awarded by the State Government.

The Maryborough City Council supported the project, as did the Shire of Tullaroop.

Historical Society members contributed generously.



DONATIONS TO OUR COLLECTION

We were pleased to receive recently three landscapes, including a view of Phillips Gardens, painted by the late Harry Linton, a well known Maryborough art teacher, who worked at the High School between 1946 and 1980. One wing (now demolished) of the school was named after him.

A legal document dated November 4th, 1856 was recently posted to us. It records a "Grant by Purchase to Charles Tattam" of Maryborough. Tattam was a dealer in china, glass and earthenware on the corner of Nolan and Main (later High Street) Streets. His obituary in the *Prahran Telegraph* describes him as "*one of the first on the Maryborough goldfield, where he was an active member of the vigilance committee formed for the purpose of maintaining law and order...".* Clause 5 of the regulations drawn up read: ..."*that it be distinctly understood that this society does not advocate lynching" ....*

MIXED MESSAGES

The August edition of ***Diggings*** included an article on past sponsors of the Maryborough Show. As the article indicated, *Muriel Salon* does still exist in Nolan Street, but it is operated by the Rinaldi Family and not Margaret Lovett. Apologies!

TOWN HALL MEMORIES

Since the official opening in 1888, marked with a grand ball, Maryborough's Town Hall has been the civic, cultural and political heart of town life, hosting entertainers, politicians, public meetings, school reunions, lectures, Masonic Lodge events, pantomimes and variety shows, concerts and even a dog and poultry show.



Celebrating 50 years of local government 1907

In the years before "Talkies", when the Maryborough Brass Band screened silent films at the Town Hall, the audience had to be wary of the danger from the balcony. Local Legend Harry Hart recalled that a barrage of orange peel or peanut shells often descended on the main floor, and that occasionally a yabbie would be released to create havoc. Sometimes the old gas engine that powered the projector stalled halfway through the film, and patrons would have to return several nights later to view the second half.

Many musical celebrities have performed at the Town Hall. In 1909 Singers Nellie Melba and Amy Castles gave concerts. Melba's concert party included the legendary Adelaide bass baritone Peter Dawson and Ballarat born flautist John Lemmoné. The Lynch Family Bellringers showed off their skills in 1902, and the newly formed Highland Pipe Band held its first concert in 1914 to a packed hall. Irish concerts celebrated St Patrick's Day.

Politicians, once even a Prime Minister, often took the stage. In 1906 Prime Minister Alfred Deakin addressed a meeting, and In July 1914 the *Ballarat Star* reported that "The Town Hall Maryborough was densely packed tonight with a most attentive audience to hear Mr W.M. Hughes MHR [the legendary 'Billy' Hughes] on the "Federal political situation". One former resident recently recalled an animated exchange with then Victorian Premier Henry Bolte at a meeting in the Lower Hall.

In 1895 the American humourist Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens) drew huge crowds.



WWI Recruiting Centre July 1915



Ball in the 1960s

A photograph taken in 1915, a year after the outbreak of World War One, shows the Town Hall, decorated with flags, set up as a recruiting centre. A banner stretched across the stage read "Men! Gallipoli Calls You". To reinforce the message other small banners asked "Why aren't you in khaki?" and lectured "If the cap fits YOU join the army today".

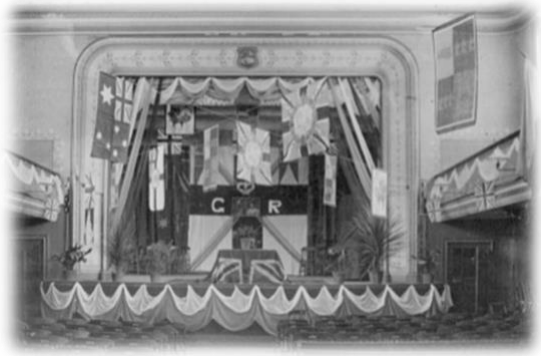
TOWN HALL MEMORIES (continued)

Soldiers returning from World War One would be met at the station, and driven to the Town Hall, accompanied by a band and a flaming torchlight procession. The civic reception was often followed by a dance. News of the Armistice ending WW1 in November 1918 was announced from the Town Hall stage. After World War Two the Town Hall was also the venue for Welcome Home receptions held to honour the service of local men and women.

A huge crowd attending a ball in the 1960s was captured in a black and white photograph that reflects changing fashions and habits. Many of the watchers in the balcony are wearing hats, and the female dancers in the main hall all wear gloves while many of the men are smoking. One dancer remembers that it was traditional to serve a full buffet supper. Over many decades the Town Hall has hosted wedding receptions, balls of all kinds - for firemen, the hospital, various churches and football clubs - and concerts featuring rock singers and symphony orchestras.

In 1906 the Leviathan Mine, which had employed hundreds of local men, was in financial trouble. The Borough Council, alarmed at the situation, called a public meeting at the Town Hall, where a deputation was nominated to take the issue to the government. Unfortunately the mine still closed. The underground excavation was reputedly so large that the Town Hall could have been dropped into it. In 1930, during Depression years when unemployment was rife, community singing raised money to assist welfare efforts. The construction of the Lower Town Hall and Neill Street entrance provided employment in 1939.

In the days before television and widespread social media, world events were announced at the Town Hall. In January 1901 the Mayor Councillor Casey (of Fire Brigade fame) proclaimed the new King (Edward VII) in front of a crowd of school cadets and children. They sang God Save the King and gave three cheers for the King and for Queen Alexandra. The stage was decorated with bunting and flags to mark the coronation of King George V in June 1911.



Town Hall stage decorated to celebrate the coronation of King George V on June 22nd in 1911



"Back To Maryborough" gathering in 1921 Hundreds attended, many travelling on special trains

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In the 2020s Council meetings have returned to the Town Hall. In the first years of the 20th Century Council staff also worked in the building. The photograph taken in 1907 (*see* Page 5) of the celebration for 50 years of local government clearly shows the signs painted on the lower windows "Town Clerk" and Rate Collection Office".

Many locals residents will have voted in the Town Hall when it was used as a Polling Booth, and many Wattle Festival activities were scheduled there. Until recently Dancing Schools held classes and staged concerts in both the Lower and Main building. School presentation nights were scheduled in December.

Wal Richards' astonishing collection of wedding photographs went on public display for the first time in the Town Hall. Hundreds of visitors searched the prints to find their own wedding, and many brides, grooms and families were identified for the first time. The collection is held by the Maryborough Midlands Historical Society, and a more recent curated exhibition held at the Art Gallery attracted large crowds.

The Town Hall was closed for some time while extensive electrical work was carried out. It's currently available for community use, but only on a limited basis and in certain areas of the complex. Central Goldfields Shire Council has sought a commitment from political parties and candidates in the November 2026 Victorian election to help secure $10 million, the estimated cost of repairs and restoration.
