



Diggings



THE JOURNAL OF THE MARYBOROUGH MIDLANDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
VOLUME 36 NUMBER 2

MAY 2024

JAMES DALY AND THE NAMING OF MARYBOROUGH: 170th ANNIVERSARY

On July 10, 1854, from “Camp Maryborough”, Assistant Commissioner James Daly wrote an historically significant letter to his friend (and future father in law) John Macnamara, a merchant and shipowner. Daly sent the letter care of Doctor Motherwell, of Collins Street. All three were Irish, and it’s not clear when or how they met, but Macnamara and Motherwell had jointly provided the bond required for James Daly to be appointed to the government service as a warden of the goldfields, so they must have had regard for his character and ability.

The framed letter is now in the care of the Maryborough Midlands Historical Society, which has recently arranged for the letter to be professionally photographed.

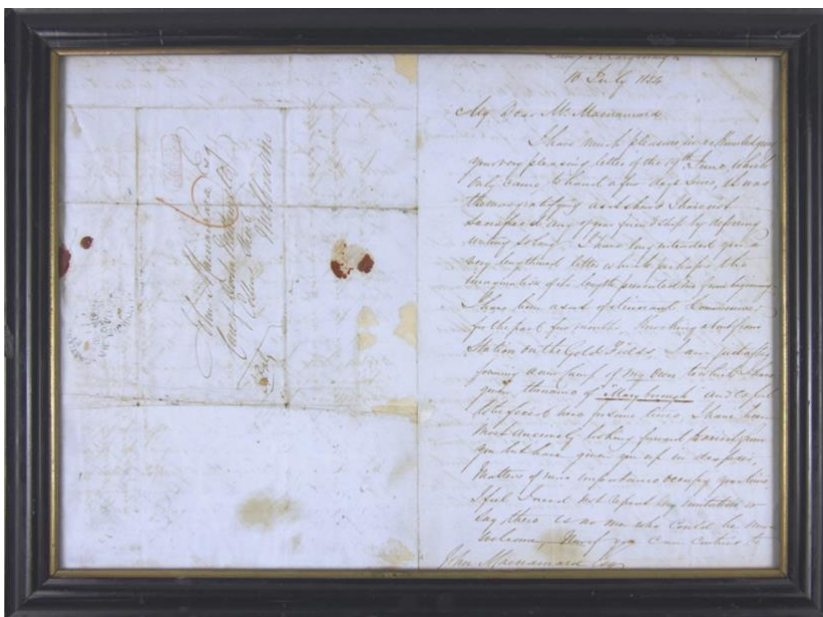
In the 170 years since the letter was written, it’s been claimed (and published in numerous books and websites) that Daly named the town **after his birthplace Maryborough/Port Laoise in Laoise County, central Ireland**. Many Maryborough 3465 residents have visited Port Laoise under this impression.

However, some Daly family descendants and researchers, who spoke with Maryborough historian Betty Osborn, and who have researched in Ireland, have cast doubt on the popular legend, suggesting that the name more likely refers to a smaller townland in County Cork, which is where Daly was born and baptised and where his parents were married.

This is what Daly actually wrote:

“ I have been a sort of Itinerant Commissioner for the past few months, knocking about from stations on the Goldfields. I am just after forming a new camp of my own to which I have given the name of “MARYBOROUGH” and expect to be fixed here for some time”.

Clearly, Daly is responsible for naming the town, BUT he doesn’t indicate any connection with his birthplace. Perhaps readers in later years invented the birthplace story and chose the town? Perhaps Daly assumed that Macnamara would know about his background in Cork? Perhaps the story has evolved in the same way that Mark Twain’s “station with a town attached” quote (which was another writer’s paraphrase of Twain’s actual comment) has become accepted and published history?



The “naming of Maryborough page” of James Daly’s letter

THE DALY STORY:

P. 2

Transcript of the letter
Notable people mentioned in
the letter.

Pp 3-4

Daly biography

Image (left)

The “naming” page of the letter. It’s in good condition apart from some foxing, but is difficult to decipher in some sections because of the cross hatching, a technique commonly used to save paper.

THE DALY LETTER: TRANSCRIPTION

John Macnamara Esq
10 July 1854
Care of Doctor Motherwell
Collins Street
MELBOURNE

My Dear Mr Macnamara

CAMP MARYBOROUGH

I have much pleasure in acknowledging your very pleasing letter of the (?) 19th June, which only came to hand a few days since. It was the more gratifying as it shows I have not sacrificed any of your friendship by deferring writing so long. I have long intended you a very (lengthened)/lengthy letter which perhaps the imagination of its length prevented me from beginning.

I have been a sort of Itinerant Commissioner for the past few months, knocking about from stations on the Goldfields. I am just after forming a new camp of my own to which I have given the name of "MARYBOROUGH" and expect to be fixed here for some time. I have been/most anxiously/ been looking forward to a visit from you but have given you up in despair. Matters of minor/(more) importance occupy your times. I feel I need not repeat my invitation, or say there is no one who could be more welcome ... if you can continue to disengage yourself from business even for a few days I think the trip would serve your health, and afford you an opportunity of inspecting the goldfields, if you feel curious.

I am most anxious to get away for a month, but I don't think leave would be granted me before the end of September or beginning of October as that time I will be entitled to leave. Then I need not tell you I will feel great pleasure in accompanying you to V.D. Land or anywhere else you may suggest. There are some persons there I would like to see very much tho' I am at a loss to know who the "Numerous" fair ones are who you alluded to in your note as desiring "very kind remembrances and love." I can only say I feel very proud, but I know how fond of a joke you are and will put this down with some others which I bear in memory. However, In October I hope to be with you-and then-we will give the Tasmanians a benefit but if you could come up in the interval it would be just the thing. Do try and manage it.

I hope all the family in Sydney are well. Remember me kindly to them please. If your son comes to the Gold Fields you know how glad I should be to see him.

It will be soon ten months since I joined the Government and every day's experience shews it is not the road to a fortune and squatters' daughters are not in the market, but all things aside you will be pleased to learn that using my connections with the Government I have discharged my duties with satisfaction to the Government and I trust with credit to myself.

Remember me to Dr Motherwell and his sister and to any other friends you please. I was sorry to learn that Gilbert sustained a loss lately. Remember me to him when you see him how sincerely I regret the loss but hope it is but temporary. I trust with yourself that business goes on prosperously.

As I know your time is fully occupied I will not extend my letter to greater length but let me hear from you and say you are coming – address Post office Carisbrook.

*Believe me Dear Mr Macnamara, I will be yours ever faithfully
James Daly*

PS The message alluded to in my letter and which you were so concerned to know is simply a cheque for £50 which I will hand to you when I go down or send you. I hope you will excuse the delay.

NOTABLE PEOPLE MENTIONED IN THE LETTER:

John MacNamara: (1811-1881) Daly's future father in law. (See Daly biography on next page). Merchant and ship owner, originally based in Sydney. Member of NSW Legislative Council 1856-1859. Listed as merchant in 1860 Sands, Kenny & Co Melbourne Directory. Father of Caroline Sophia Daly née Macnamara. Buried in Melbourne General Cemetery Carlton.

Dr James Bridgeham Motherwell (1815-1886) Born in Ireland, obtained medical qualifications in Glasgow, subsequently serving as a government medical officer at Port Arthur. Set up a practice in Melbourne and worked at Melbourne Hospital. Involved in establishment of Medical Society and Medical Journal. Member of Medical Board and University of Melbourne Council. In April 1886 The Age reported that:

His death causes the removal of another of the social landmarks by which we trace the connexion [sic] of the present epoch with the early historic time of this colony. His house in Collins Street has been for a very long period one of the most conspicuous features of the medical quarter of this city, and he will always be remembered kindly, both by those to whose sorrows he so successfully ministered, and by his associates in the brotherhood of which he was an honoured member.

JAMES DALY (c.1825-1872)

Little is known of Daly's early life, except that he was born and baptised in County Cork. His parents were listed as Jerry and Mary, and it's recorded that a brother (Jerom) also travelled to Australia. An obituary in the Advocate, Melbourne, in March 1872 suggests that Daly was "a nephew of the late James Daly, the well known distiller of John Street, Cork" In the *Maitland Mercury* of Wednesday December 29, 1852 James is listed as a passenger arriving on the S.S. Sarah Sands.

During the voyage Daly entertained passengers with demonstrations of the pseudo science of electro-biology, "a theory of animal magnetism according to which the actions, feelings, etc. of a person are controlled by the will of the operator." (Wiktionary). The "science" had received publicity in England in the years before Daly's departure. Newspaper reports indicate that he gave demonstrations in Sydney, Melbourne and in Tasmania. *The Courier* in Hobart printed Daley's comments in February 1853.

"I have much pleasure in coming before you this evening, in compliance with the wishes of several of my fellow-passengers by the Sarah Sands, steamship, as also in accordance with those of many influential citizens of Sydney. I take this opportunity of stating that I have not come to this country with the view of making a profession of the science of electro-biology. When I studied it I did so for my own private amusement, and nothing was more remote from my intention than to give any public entertainment; but as a knowledge of it has, I am glad to say, enabled me to add my quota to the many amusements which tended to lighten the monotony of a long but pleasant and prosperous voyage – a voyage so happy that many of us were by no means too anxious for its termination, - I shall be disappointed if it does not contribute in some degree to your amusement also; and I trust that, as I am the first to come forward to illustrate the science of electro-biology, I may not alone succeed in amusing you this evening, but that my experiments may have the effect of awakening in the minds of many an interest that may lead them to an investigation of this important subject."

In Melbourne Daly embarked on a new career, entering the government service with the assistance of John Macnamara and James Motherwell (see p.2). *The Victoria Government Gazette* of November 9th 1853 lists the appointment of **James Daly Esquire to be a Commissioner of Crown Lands for the Gold Fields in the Colony of Victoria**. During his first posting he wrote of his decision to name the camp and subsequent town Maryborough.

It's possible to trace Daly's later career via *The Victoria Government Gazette*

August 1855: Chairman of the Local Court of Ballarat
January 1858: Warden of the Gold Fields of Victoria
February 1858: Chinese Protector
August 1858: Police Magistrate of Victoria, to act at Ballarat East (Daly now listed as a Justice of the Peace)
August 1860: Warden of the Goldfields, Daylesford
July 1861: Captain of the Daylesford Volunteer Rifle Corps
August 1861: Commissioner of Crown Lands
July 1865 Acting Receiver and Paymaster, Landsborough
May 1867: Police Magistrate, Warden and Coroner. Ararat
January 1869: Magistrate, Ararat
June 1871: Visiting Justice, of the Gaol, Woods Point

According to research undertaken by Maryborough historians Betty Osborn and Tren DuBourg, (*Maryborough: a Social History*), Daly was very popular with the miners. They quote *The Argus* correspondent, who declared Daly to be "a universal favourite among the digging population".

When Daly was transferred from Ballarat, he was given a dinner and presented with an address signed by 1600 residents. Speakers declared that

... "During a residence of five years they all knew that Mr Daly had affably and industriously worked in his duties, and had shown a shrewdness and a large experience useful both to himself and the public. These qualities deserved our respect and our esteem. In many of his positions he had not been backward in coming forward for the public good ; and in speaking in his praise he (the Chairman) would not be suspected of not feeling what he expressed. Mr Daly may have committed errors, as all have, but all would agree that he had done much to further the interests of the district. but at all times he [Duncan Gillies] regarded Mr Daly as a gentleman who acted with zeal, ability, and discretion. He wished, and so did all there, and many who were not there, that Mr Daly and those dear to him may have a long career of prosperity, and that in his new sphere he would be as successful as he had been here..."

The address signed by residents included these words:

"As Gold Commissioner, Chairman of the late Local Court, Warden, and Police Magistrate, you have been frank, generous and courteous; and as a citizen, you have always manifested an earnest desire to promote the social and moral well-being of the inhabitants of Ballarat, and we are deeply sensible that in your removal this district will experience a loss which it will not be easy to supply. We therefore request, respectfully, that you will accept this our token respect and esteem to you... "

JAMES DALY (continued)

Daly appears to have been held in similarly high regard in Daylesford, whose residents were most reluctant to accept his transfer to Landsborough. He was presented with a collection of mementos, notably a silver cup of sovereigns. A number of these artefacts are held by the Gold Museum in Ballarat.

MARRIAGE, FAMILY AND DEATH:

In November 1855 James Daly married Caroline Sophia Macnamara in Sydney. The first of their children was born in Ballarat in 1857. Typically for that era, only four of their six children survived to adulthood.

When Daly was posted to Woods Point, his wife and children didn't accompany him, presumably because of the difficult conditions and because Caroline gave birth to a son in July 1871. Daly descendants record that Caroline was staying with her sister Charlotte Emily and brother in law Archibald Fiskin, in Yendon, on their Lal Lal, estate, south east of Ballarat.

The circumstances around Daly's death created controversy. Daly descendants suggest that complaints had been received about his conduct, citing "neglect of duty", but that his health was deteriorating, possibly because of the travel he was obliged to undertake under hazardous conditions. On March 22nd 1872 he was found dead in his bed in Jericho (the main settlement on the goldfields of the Jordan River – a tributary of the Thomson River. Until tracks were cleared, supplies had to be carried by pack horse). Today's road trip from Jericho to Woods Point stretches for 29km.

Wood's Point, Friday.

.James Daly, Esq., the police magistrate of the Wood's Point district, was found dead in his bed at the Golden Age Hotel, Jericho, this morning, at four o'clock. The deceased had been residing at Jericho on duty since the 15th instant. The deceased was suffering from dysentery. Mr Daly leaves a widow and several children. He was of very old standing in the service, and was greatly liked by those with whom he came in contact. During the last four or five years his health has not been good.

Ovens and Murray Advertiser, Beechworth, Saturday March 23rd, 1872.

Woods Point, March 25

Mr Daly, warden at Woods Point, was buried today. The funeral was largely attended. At the inquest held yesterday a verdict was returned that the cause of death was exhaustion from dysentery and want of substantial nourishment.

Mount Alexander Mail, Tuesday March 26th, 1872.

Fingers had been pointed at hotel staff and a local doctor, but they assured the inquest that they had looked after Daly. The Advocate (a Roman Catholic publication in Melbourne) was one of the finger pointers.

Our Wood's Point correspondent writes:— The death of Mr. Warden Daly caused universal grief here, and when the particulars became known, occasioned very painful feeling, for it was seen that if he had not been neglected he might have been saved. In the discharge of his official duties the deceased gentleman left this place for Jericho on Friday morning, the 15th inst. He generally put up at Cadigan's Hotel, and did so on this occasion. But though very ill on Monday, the 18th, and Poole, the proprietor, was in Wood's Point that day, and aware of the fact, he gave no information on the subject to Mr. Daly's friends. Had he done so in all probability Mr. Daly's life would have been saved, for it appears from the evidence at the inquest that he was not attended to as a person in his debilitated state required. The verdict was that death was caused by diarrhoea, produced by a want of nourishment.: Manslaughter would be nearer the truth. The remains of Mr. Daly were brought to Wood's Point on Sunday evening, and placed in the Court House for the night They were interred in the Wood's Point cemetery this (Monday) morning, having been followed by a large number of people. Mr. Archibald Fiskin, J P, Lai Lal, Mr. Daly's brother-in-law, and Mr. Superintendent Reid were the chief mourners. The Rev. Father Mcnamara performed the funeral service. The account of Mr. Daly's death will be received throughout all these colonies and New Zealand by the practical miners with regret, for from the beginning of his long career as warden extending over nineteen years, he was ever and always the true and staunch friend of the digger. Here, in especial manner he ingratiated himself with the mining population. The greatest sympathy is felt for Mrs. Daly and family.

The Advocate. Saturday March 30th, 1872

Following Daly's death, Caroline was left to bring up four children aged from one to thirteen. She died in 1883 and is buried in the Melbourne General Cemetery with her father, John Macnamara, who died only two years earlier.

NB Maryborough Midlands Historical Society welcomes any new documentary information on the naming issue or on James Daly's life.

Thanks to a Daly descendant, Laraine Ramsey, for her assistance in the preparation of this article.

Laraine and her family have installed a commemorative plaque to Daly at the Woods Point Cemetery.



MARYBOROUGH MIDLANDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2023-2024

For most of 2023 the **SORRY WE'RE CLOSED** sign hung on the front gate of 3 Palmerston Street while the contractors (Provincial Construction Bendigo) worked on the project to renovate historic Worsley Cottage. The construction site (which included our Research and Resource Centre) was fenced off to the public, to our volunteers, and of course to researchers. We stayed online remotely and our committee continued to meet monthly at alternative venues, including the Art Gallery. Emptying the Cottage of furniture and exhibits proved to be an enormous task, given the small number of active volunteers. Rotary helpers lent a hand or two. Most of the contents were stored on site in other buildings. By year's end, after a particularly wet winter, the Cottage garden was in a sad state. Large sections had been removed to allow space for the bracing used to support the walls during repairs, and weeds proliferated.

The project was funded via a grant obtained by the Central Goldfields Shire Council (which owns the property) plus an allocation from the Council budget. We're encouraged by the evidence that the Council views the preservation of local heritage sites and the recording of local history as a priority.

The renovation team straightened and restored all external walls after stabilising the foundations, then repaired the extensive cracking and damp on internal walls. When the contractors removed the old flooring they discovered not only a discarded chisel, but a very worn women's leather shoe, which had been placed as a good luck symbol. The new timber floor and the interior painting (the latter carried out by CGSC tradesmen) have transformed the building.

2024 has so far been the year of reassessing and returning the Cottage collection and setting up new displays. Our volunteer gardeners have worked tirelessly to eliminate weeds, remove overgrown and damaged shrubs and to plan the new garden, which will be a combination of cottage garden and low maintenance plantings to suit our climate. Our Society appreciates the support of the Bendigo Bank via a grant for the reconstruction of the garden.

Since our re opening in February a steady stream of researchers and tourists (some from interstate and overseas) have visited Worsley Cottage and our Resource Centre, and many family history researchers have sent email requests. Some visitors bring information about the Maryborough pioneers in their families or generously record reminiscences. The Gold Rush era figures in many searches. It's disappointing that such a small percentage of the Maryborough Advertiser is on TROVE.

We carry out research for the local council, liaise with the Art Gallery (amateur wedding photographer Wal Richards' images feature in the current "LOVE" exhibition), and one of our committee members is taking part in the Maryborough Heritage Review Reference Group. Committee members have also been active in other areas, for example raising funds for the garden via the Rotary Club "Sausage Sizzle" stall. MMHS members are participating in the Bristol Hill restoration project, supplying information about the tower's construction, the pioneer cemetery and the WW2 Volunteer Air Observers Corps. Our researchers have recently prepared information on the Locomotive Sheds and turntable for the Castlemaine-Maryborough Rail Trail walk. Member Robyn Ansell has carried out extensive research into Chinese miners. During our regular working sessions our volunteers continue the task of cataloguing and preserving local history.

We've received a diverse range of Maryborough-related donations, from photographs of Maryborough Knitting Mills office staff and the brand new unfilled (in 1941) outdoor swimming pool, to Victorian Railways certificates of service presented to local workers, to a traditional iron quoit that was used in local competitions including the Highland Gathering.

One particular highlight was the success of MMHS member Craig Roberts at the Community History Awards, which were presented at the Arts Centre Melbourne on February 2nd this year. Sponsored by the Public Record Office Victoria in partnership with the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, the awards are held annually "to celebrate the people involved in community history projects who are dedicated to telling local stories which help all Victorians to better understand their past". Craig Roberts' *Quartz Hill*, entered in the **Small History Publication Award**, was one of three books awarded a Commendation in that category. Several of our members attended the ceremony.

We hope that Arthur Worsley and his family would approve of the efforts to repair and preserve their historic family cottage. In the words of writer, designer, artist, poet and craftsman William Morris (1834-1896):

... these old buildings do not belong to us only. They are not in any sense our property, to do as we like with. We are only trustees for those that come after us... [Extract from William Morris's address at the 12th Annual Meeting of the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings. 3rd July 1889].

MARYBOROUGH LOCOMOTIVE SHED



Image: Weston Langford 1960

“The locomotive shed ... is a large, red brick building with end sections framed with corrugated iron cladding and slate roof formed into gables with continuous monitors, carried on cast iron columns about a turntable pit” *Heritage Victoria 2002*

* Note the “Coal Stage” to the left. The track on the right leads to Castlemaine.

BEGINNINGS

The rail link with Castlemaine opened on July 7, 1874, largely without ceremony, as the partly built Maryborough station was surrounded by mud. Goods traffic was delayed until the opening of the goods shed was completed several months later. The journey to Melbourne took approximately five and a half hours.

THE CONTRACT

No.	Purpose, No. of Tenders, and Particulars of Contract.	Amount.	Name for Approval.	Charged against Vote or Fund.	Authorized according to Regulations on the date stated.
82	RAILWAYS— (17)—Construction of engine-shed and repairing shop at Maryborough	£ s. d. 16,221 17 11	Isaac Summerland ...	Loan 845, Item 1, Acts 821 and 860	

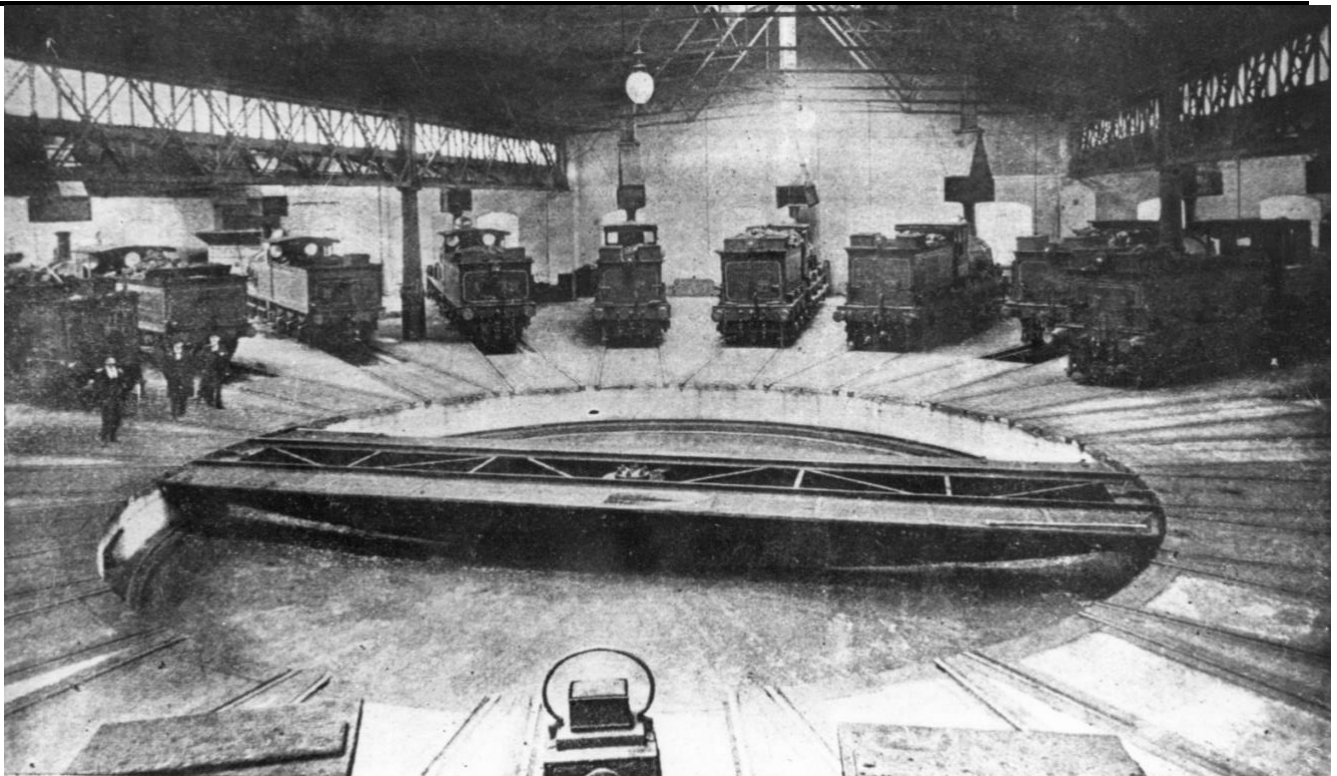
Government Gazette Victoria April 15, 1887, p.1044

MATERIALS

- 400,000 bricks, over half of which came from the Timor kiln (8 km north west of Maryborough)
- 66,000 imported slate tiles for roof.
- 18,000 sq ft of plate glass.
(A previous shed, built in 1874, was demolished.)

THE BUILDER

Isaac Summerland, contractor, of Castlemaine, constructed a number of passenger stations, engine sheds and platforms, (including the Avoca station), on Central Victorian lines. He died in Melbourne in 1905. His house, built in 1879, still stands in Doveton Street Castlemaine



The layout consisted of a central turntable with one entry line from the south and 24 radiating engine positions. The funnel section of each locomotive was parked under a fibro cement "chimney" (they appear as black boxes on the photograph) so that heat and sparks didn't set fire to the pine boards underneath the roofing slates. If this was done incorrectly, sections of the roof could be burnt out. Underneath each locomotive was a metre-deep inspection pit reinforced with Oregon beams. As well as supporting the structure, the cast iron columns drained water from the roof. In later years some became blocked with pieces of roofing slate, causing flooding.

LATER YEARS

- 1955** An electrically operated turntable replaced the manually operated version. Built in Britain, It was one of six in the state, and was approximately 70 feet long. Handling the locomotives was easier and faster, but fewer workers were required. A "cage " at either end housed the operators.
- 1968** Steam locomotives were withdrawn from the area.
- 1969** The Railways called tenders for the removal and relocation of the turntable. Unfortunately the contractor ignored the requirement to cut only bolts, and made the "relocation" (to a museum) impossible by cutting the rails into pieces. Tenders were called for the demolition and removal of the locomotive sheds. Local residents Colin Dellavedova and Alf Leech lobbied the Railway Commissioners to save the building.
- 1969** The Dellavedova family were granted a lease to conduct their fertiliser business in the sheds. In return for a peppercorn rent they agreed to maintain the sheds. One major task was to replace many of the slates with iron roofing. In frosty weather the top of the copper nails that fastened the slates often popped off, sending the slates hurtling down from the roof.
Most of the pits plus the turntable area have been filled in with fine quartz gravel topped with cement.



Several of our members were involved in the very successful event organised by the Maryborough Castlemaine Rail Trail Association on Sunday March 24. Participants walked approximately 7 kilometres along the historic (now closed) rail line from Maryborough to Carisbrook on Dja Dja Wurrung country. Our Society provided historical information about the Maryborough Loco Sheds, where the walk began, and where it's proposed that the Trail will start.

Image at left: Participants register outside the Loco Sheds.

RETURN TO WORSLEY COTTAGE



Two special guests visited Worsley Cottage in April. Sisters Margaret Stonehouse and Eileen Courtney, whose family, (the O'Gradys) lived in the cottage in the 1950s, were very interested to see the result of the year-long renovation project. They were also able to provide details of how the cottage and yard looked during their family's occupancy. They recalled, for example, that there was no running water inside the house, only a tank and an exterior town water tap in the yard outside. Their father kept a horse in an enclosure in the back yard so that he could ride to work. The bathroom and washhouse were also behind the house, and the water for them was heated in a copper. Two big kettles kept on the kitchen stove provided hot water throughout the day. "It was a comfortable house for those days", they said.

MEMBERSHIP FEES: 2024-2025

Membership fees fall due in April each year.

Please support the Society's work of recording and preserving Maryborough's history by renewing your membership promptly.

If you're unsure of your membership status please contact us by email or phone (see below).

2024-2025 MEMBERSHIP:

Individual \$25

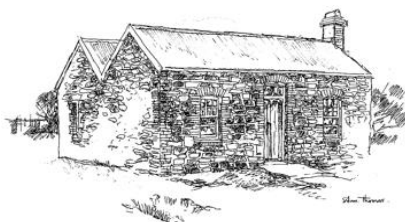
Family \$35

Payment can be made via:

**Cheque: Yes, we still accept cheques! Made out to MMHS and sent to our postal address:
Post Office Box 301, Maryborough 3465, or delivered personally.**

Cash: In person during our opening hours: Tuesday/Thursday 10-12, Sunday 2-4.

**Direct Deposit: Commonwealth Bank
BSB 06 3519
A/C 0090 1319**



MARYBOROUGH MIDLANDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY

3 Palmerston Street, Maryborough

P.O. Box 265, Maryborough 3465

Telephone: (03) 5461 2518

ABN: 33610 529 643

Email: mmhs@outlook.com.au

We're also on Facebook/Meta