



Diggings



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*The Maryborough Midlands Historical Society
acknowledges the ancestors and descendants of the
Dja Dja Wurrung, traditional owners and carers for
many thousands of years of the land on which we live and work.*

THANKS & GOOD NEWS

THE COTTAGE

In a recent press release, Central Goldfields Shire announced that funding had been allocated for repairs to Worsley Cottage. The cottage has been closed for over two years pending repairs, which has unfortunately led to misunderstanding over the work of the Society. We can assure potential researchers and visitors that our Research Centre and Museum Complex are well and truly open for business. It's hoped that repairs to the Cottage itself can begin soon, and that visitors will once more be able to access the Cottage itself as well as the collection inside.

OUR NEW WEB PAGE: mmhs.net.au

Society member and computer expert Craig Roberts, who has recently researched the history of mining on Bristol Hill, has begun to construct our new web page, which has been frustratingly out of date for years. We're grateful that Tom Woolman continues to maintain our Facebook page.

MAPS

Alex Stoneman and Sandy Creanor have spent many hours sorting through a large collection of donated maps, some of which will be directed to other local Historical Societies where appropriate.

COMMUNITY GRANTS

In the latest round of grants announced by the Central Goldfields Shire, our Society was awarded funding for a computer and scanner, which are to be used by the volunteers working on our historic photograph collection.

HISTORIC ARTEFACTS

With the co-operation of the Maryborough District Health Service, our Society has recently added to its collection photographs and a set of leadlight windows that formed part of the Clarendon Street house which was demolished to make way for medical student accommodation.



F.W. Niven lithograph circa 1860s

LIFE IN THE STATION HOUSE

Liane Sinclair

My father, Bill Sinclair, was the Station Keeper at the Maryborough Fire Station from 1948 to 1958, and our family lived with him on site in the Station House. It was quite an adventure when we were kids. My brother Neil and I were quite small when we moved in, and our younger brother Robert was born while we were living there. Robert recalls when he was about four that snuck onto the fire engine, hid in one of the compartments and only popped out when they were well on the way to the fire and it was too late to turn back. Our Dad was not impressed.

Dad worked for the P.M.G. [Post Master General's Department] next door [now Telstra], and during the day my mother Joan had to stay close to the switchboard room in case of phone calls or fire alarms. The whole place had to be kept pristine as there were regular inspections. Mum looked after the inside and Dad was in charge of the fire truck and the outside of the building. On the rare occasions that my parents took holidays, always in the winter, my grandparents would step in. They also helped when Mum and Dad went all around the countryside to balls.

The residence was freezing cold, with only one tiny open fire. There were very few windows. When Mum and Dad finally built their own house, Mum insisted on lots of windows. The bathroom, which had a woodchip heater, and the laundry were outside. The toilet was in the backyard, but the bonus was that it was relatively modern as it was connected to the Town Hall system. One of the rules was that the front door had to be left open. Dad would sometimes find an old man asleep in one of the chairs. Once one of them died.

When a fire was reported, the fire bell was rung. There was a sort of code – different strikes to indicate which section of town the fire was burning. If a fire was very serious the bell would be rung continuously. Mum would rush to open the fire engine doors, but the vehicle wasn't allowed to leave until the Fire Captain arrived.

Not many people had cars in those days and many firemen used bikes, so they would meet at pre arranged pick up points around the town where they could be collected on the way to the fire. There was always a follow up after a fire. The men would gather in the meeting room. The fire hoses would be stretched out to dry along the street then rolled up.

There was a system of fire alarms in streets around the town. It was my father's Sunday night job to check that all the alarms were working. He would drive around town and test that each alarm showed up on the board at the fire station. Some large businesses such as the Knitting Mill and the Flour Mill had their own alarms.

Our family enjoyed some great Christmases while we were there. We'd set up trestle tables in the Fire Station hall. The old fire reels were stored there too, and a piano. The timber floor was ideal for dancing. Myra Martin held classes there. When the weather was too wet for the High School Phys. Ed classes to go outside, Myra would teach them ballroom dancing.

In a way life for us kids was lonely because there weren't many other children our age around, but our neighbours the Hunts [house adjoining the Tren DuBourg Hall] were wonderful, and we spent a lot of time at their place. Frank Hunt was a mechanic at Patience and Nicholson and had a collection of old hobby cars. He often took us on trips in the old Rugby to places like Timor.

We would often climb the Fire Tower. If a fire was serious or on the edge of town the firemen would also climb up to have a look. At one stage access had to be closed off because some of the young lads from the dances in the hall across the road would climb up to ring the bell. No such fun once the siren was installed. A new fire engine was also handed over during this time.

Because of our childhood my late brother Neil (Tank) joined the Maryborough Fire Brigade and remained a member until he passed away. His sons Jason and Matthew are still active members of the Maryborough Brigade.

ROYAL CELEBRATIONS

The Queen's Platinum Jubilee celebrations in 2022 were an interesting contrast to the calendar of events planned in May 1863 in the Maryborough area to celebrate the marriage of the Prince of Wales (eldest son of Queen Victoria) to Princess Alexandra of Denmark. May 19th was declared a public holiday in Victoria. The wedding had taken place two months earlier, on March 10th.



A grand procession was planned for Tuesday May 19th, commencing at 11am and assembling in the Market Reserve, Maryborough. The order of procession, largely reflecting the social strata of the time, was to be as follows:

Marshall

M. Mcleod Esq. J.P.

Aides-de-Camp

James Evans Esq.

Charles Pollock Esq.

BAND

Maryborough Volunteer Rifle Corps

Volunteer Fire Brigade

Clergy, Learned Professionals, Magistrates and

Government Officers

Chairman and Town Council

Chairman and Members of the Tullaroop and District Road

Board

Freemasons

M.U.I. order of Oddfellows

German Association

Highland Society of the North West Province

Ancient Order of Rechabites

Mining Board

Miners

Trades

Schools

Band of Hope

Chinese

Equestrians

The procession was to proceed to Princes Park after a circuit of town streets, and at 4p.m. was to reform in Nolan Street to give three cheers for the Queen.

Other local festivities included a grand celebration ball, cricket and other games, and a whole ox roasted on the Market Reserve, Carisbrook. An immense bonfire on the top of Bald Hill was to be kept burning all night.

WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

When Australia adopted the Imperial system of weights and measures, it became the responsibility of local councils to purchase suitable testing equipment and to employ Weights and Measures inspectors. The inspectors conducted tests annually on scales, weights and measuring equipment in all places of trade such as shops, feed stores and markets.

The measures, scales and weights were eventually replaced during the early 1950s, and in 1966 the imperial system of weighing was superseded throughout Australia following the introduction of the metric system.



Earlier this year Weights and Measures expert Malcolm Campbell, who is researching weights and measures within Victoria, with a focus on local standards, visited Maryborough to inspect the display of weights and measures housed in the special cabinet presently in the foyer of the former Tourist Information Centre. Malcolm's delighted response was as follows: "You have a fantastic collection of weights and measures from Maryborough and surrounds to the south"

Both the cabinet and the weights and measures are owned by our Society, but unfortunately we don't have sufficient room to display the cabinet to best advantage. We're hoping that the renovated Tourist Information Centre at the Railway Station will become the cabinet's new home, thus allowing a wider audience to have access to this historically significant display.

BABY HEALTH CENTRE



To make way for the redevelopment of the Maryborough Hospital, the former Baby Health Centre (later VicRoads office) on the corner of Clarendon and Neill Streets was demolished in July this year.

Our Society has been in contact with the Maryborough District Health Service since news of the demolition was announced,. They have been most supportive, and we're pleased to say that the foundation stone is now part of the Society's collection. Our volunteers have also photographed the building's exterior and stages of demolition.

The Society also alerted the *Maryborough Advertiser* to the demolition and the building's history, and reporter Riley Upton's excellent article brought the story to a wider audience.

The brand new Baby Health Centre was opened on October 10th, 1930 by Dr Vera Scantlebury-Brown, a distinguished doctor, administrator and child welfare expert, who had served in the Royal Army Medical Corps during World War One. In 1926 the Victorian Government appointed her Director of Infant Welfare.

Dr Scantlebury-Brown was born in Linton near Ballarat, and was a medical colleague of Dame Mary Herring, wife of Maryborough-born Sir Edmund Francis Herring. Both women campaigned energetically on child welfare issues.

Maryborough's very first Baby Health Centre operated in much smaller premises in High Street from 1925. From 1922 early campaigners for its establishment lobbied local councils, suggesting that the Maryborough Borough Council and Tullaroop Shire Council might share costs.

Betty Osborn, writing in *Against The Odds*, records that the negative response of several Tullaroop Councillors led to an outraged editorial in the *Maryborough Advertiser*. The Councillors had claimed that there was no need for such a Centre in Town and that they had more important things like roads and bridges to look after.

The new Centre, which cost £1,150, was designed by S.L. Hunn and built by Wandel Brothers. It featured a vestibule for prams, a waiting room, sisters' room, testing room and consulting room. H.N. Phillips, the long serving Town Clerk, designed the fence and supervised the project.



Councillor Poole [the Mayor], who chaired the opening proceedings, praised the women of Maryborough for their fundraising efforts:

"In the space of three years they had collected £370, the amount mainly being raised by afternoon teas and small collections ... there was not the slightest doubt that the building was one of the best in Victoria ... and that it would stand as a monument to their efforts" [*Maryborough Advertiser*]



ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

Repatriation Committee's Affairs. AN AMUSING STATEMENT.

MARYBOROUGH.—

The affairs of Maryborough repatriation committee were wound up about twelve months ago.

Recently Mr. G. Frost, M.L.A., the former president, received a letter from the Department of Repatriation bringing under notice the necessity for forwarding a statement of receipts and expenditure of the local committee for the period ending 30th June, 1922, as required by the Australian Soldiers' Repatriation regulations of 1920.

It was pointed out that the section distinctly stated that all statements must be certified to by a competent auditor, otherwise they would not be accepted.

Mr. Frost's reply was as follows: —
Maryborough Repatriation Committee. —

President, Mr. G. Frost, M.L.A.;
Secretary, Mr. G. Frost, M.L.A. ;
Committee, Mr. G. Frost.

Statement of receipts :

nil expenditure for six months, 1st January to 30th June. 1922:

Receipts, nil.

Expenditure, nil.

(Signed) ; G. Frost, president; G. Frost, secretary.

Audited and found correct.

(Signed) H.N. Phillips, auditor.

The Age,

Tuesday July 11, 1922

It should be noted that the G. Frost in question was well respected businessman, Councillor, Mayor and Member of Parliament **George Frost**. He also obviously possessed a well-developed sense of humour and was not intimidated by threatening letters from the Department of Repatriation.

Henry Neville Phillips served for 47 years as Borough Surveyor and Town Clerk .
Phillips Gardens were named in his honour.

Local **Repatriation Committees**, which were set up after World War One, were empowered to raise funds to assist returned servicemen.

FIFTY YEARS AGO

TECH COLLEGE GETS STATION ST. [sic] COUNCIL DECIDES BY 6-3 VOTE

City Council by a 6-3 vote at the February meeting decided that Station Street be closed to vehicular traffic so that it can be used by the Education Department for Technical College expansion. The Department has assured that a pedestrian way will be created and that it will take steps to facilitate easier movement of traffic in other access streets ...

The "gallery" in the council chamber was packed for the well publicised debate on the issue and there was loud applause when the decision to close the street was carried. Two councillors contended that the issue should be decided by the public but against this it was stated there was no provision in the Local Government Act on such a subject...

Maryborough Advertiser

Tuesday February 8th 1972



MORE PADDLE BOATS FOR LAKE VICTORIA

Two more paddle boats are likely to be added to the three already in use on the lake in Princes Park.

The owners, Messrs Kirchner and Chiller, have advised the City Council of this.

Council has decided to reserve an area at the north end of the lake for the paddle boats. The owners have marked this out with buoys. The Council has reserved the right to use all of the lake for other purposes – for example kite flying for the Wattle festival Carnival Day.

Maryborough Advertiser

Tuesday February 8th, 1972

NB In 2022 boating, kayaking and swimming are not permitted because the water in the lake is recycled.

HERITAGE POOL



Central Goldfields Shire Council has announced that Maryborough’s heritage listed 50 metre outdoor swimming pool requires such extensive repairs that the best option will be a complete rebuild.

“Council will work with Heritage Victoria to use the \$2 million in funding to upgrade the octagonal pool, the plant room and the main entrance building – which will contribute to preserving this significant heritage complex.”

CGSC press release

The entrance pavilion features on a number of Art Deco websites and tours, and was part of a 2008 Art Deco excursion conducted by the Maryborough Midlands Historical Society .

The plaque outside the pool building reads as follows:

*Olympic Swimming Pool Complex
Heritage Listings:
Victorian Heritage Register, National Trust of Australia
(Victoria)
The complex was designed by local architect E.J. Peck
and city engineers E.J. Muntz and J. Hocking
Construction utilising unemployed and voluntary labour
commenced in 1939. On its completion in 1940 the
complex was opened by swimming legend Sir Frank
Beaurepaire.
The site remains remarkably intact, with its Art Deco
entrance pavilion with its original pools (an intermediate
pool was added in 1973 and planting scheme retained
close to original condition.*

Amazingly the pool project took only eleven months to complete. Two thousand people attended the official opening on December 7, 1940.

Local humourists dubbed the complex “Poole’s Pool” due to Councillor Sam Poole’s enthusiasm for the project.



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