



Diggings



THE JOURNAL OF THE MARYBOROUGH MIDLANDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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VICTORIAN COMMUNITY HISTORY AWARDS

Maryborough author commended

The 2023 Victorian Community History Awards were presented at the Arts Centre Melbourne on the 2nd of February 2024.

Presented by Public Record Office Victoria in partnership with the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, the Victorian Community History 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. MMHS member

Craig Roberts' *Quartz Hill*, entered in the **Small History Publication Award**, was one of three books awarded a Commendation in that category.



Craig is presented with his award by Judy Maddigan

The book brings to life the colourful and dramatic history of the town's most prominent landmark. Bristol Hill (formerly Quartz Hill) is situated on Maryborough's western boundary and forms the area's highest elevation.

Quartz-reef gold mining was conducted at Bristol Hill between 1859 and 1905 under 205 separate registered claims and leases. The heavy, gold-studded quartz had to be extracted from underground reefs and brought to the surface before being crushed to the consistency of sand to allow the gold to be retrieved.

When mining ceased Bristol Hill was left riddled with deep shafts and denuded of vegetation.

In 1924, following collaboration between several government departments to replant many of the abandoned mining areas, Bristol Hill's native ironbark and grey box varieties were restored.

In the 1930s, the local council took advantage of the government's depression era sustenance labour program to fill Bristol Hill's mine shafts, which had become a danger to the local population and livestock.

As Bristol Hill gradually morphed into a bushland reserve, its history as a site of industrial scale gold mining began to slip from the minds of the population.

In 1994, a government survey concluded that Bristol Hill's sites had little historical integrity due to the mining relics having been removed or destroyed. No buildings, foundations, or equipment survived.

While the remaining ridge-line trenches still reveal the extent of past mining activity, many of the town's residents are largely unaware of Bristol Hill's original and significant mining history. *Quartz Hill* tells that story.

Craig Roberts' family connections with the Central Goldfields and gold mining stretch back for generations. Craig often spent school holidays in Maryborough, where he learnt to pan for gold.

For more information and ordering details see Page 6

DISCOVERY OF CHINESE HEADSTONE AT MARYBOROUGH CEMETERY

Robyn Ansell

During 2023, Maryborough Cemetery Sexton Tom Hoban noted the top of a stone under the lawn in the section containing old Chinese graves. He spoke with Debra Russell, the Trust Secretary, who was equally excited about the possible significance of the underground object. On Wednesday November 29th, 2023, working cautiously, the two unearthed what turned out to be a gravestone in immaculate condition. It is fortunate that Debra photographed the occasion.

Debra contacted a number of people to find out what was written on the stone. One volunteer was Anna Wolf, the President of CAFHOV (the Chinese Australian Family Historians of Victoria). Anna is experienced in translating the old style Chinese characters on nineteenth century gravestones. She is the co-author of a study of the Chinese graves in the Melbourne General Cemetery. The following information comes from her translation.



In Cantonese the family name is Fung. The given name is Marn On. Fung Marn On was from the Zeng clan which means his likely place of origin was Zengcheng, (Zeng City). In southern China, it has a mild climate and fertile land and is an area famous nowadays for its lychees. There is a person in the Melbourne General Cemetery also from Zengcheng. Mr Fung did not originate from the See Yup district, the home of many Chinese who came to Victoria. Dr Kok Hu Jin has published translations of the eighteen Chinese gravestones in the Maryborough cemetery and has concluded that two thirds belong to people from the Zeng City District of Guangdong*.

It is a pity there is no date on the gravestone, however the way that the characters were formed means it is likely they were inscribed in the 19th century. There are possibly more than two hundred men from China buried at Maryborough and the mystery of why only nineteen gravestones remain is a mystery that will hopefully be solved one day. Maybe the discovery of Mr Fung's memorial is a good omen.

What will happen to the gravestone now? It appeared to Tom and Debra that the stone was in situ, actually marking the site of the grave. If so, it is the only known marked grave in the Chinese part of the Maryborough cemetery. The other eighteen gravestones have been separated from their graves and arranged around the perimeter of the section. Tom and Debra intend to return Mr Fung's stone to his grave site.

**"Chinese graves in cemeteries in each of Maryborough, Maldon, Inglewood, St. Arnaud, Warracknabeal, Dimboola, Stawell, Beaufort, Smythesdale, Smythe's Creek, Linton, Buninyong, Blackwood, Heathcote, Bairnsdale, Omeo, Harrietville, Bright, Buckland, Chiltern and Daylesford and notes of other cemeteries where Chinese were interred, all in Victoria / studies by Dr. Kok Hu Jin". Dee Why, N.S.W.: JKOK Media 2018.*

CHINESE BURIALS: a postscript

Robyn Ansell of CAFHOV, (see p.2 article), who has been researching and recording Chinese deaths and inquests during the gold rush era around Maryborough, found this item in an 1867 **Advertiser**.

"We dare say our readers have heard of the proceedings taken by the Chinese to remove the bones of their dead fellow-countrymen home to the land of their fathers. Such steps are now being taken at Maryborough cemetery, where a dead man's skeleton has been exhumed with much ceremony. It seems that Kong Meng & Co., have an agent in their employ who used to keep a chemist's shop at Alma and subsequently at Dunolly, and who now travels as a Celestial bone-collector, at a good salary. As soon as the skeleton is unearthed, it is his duty to divide the skeleton in halves, keeping each bone on its proper side. These are carefully kept in separate parcels, and conveyed to Melbourne in carpet bags. One of the bodies to go home with the present batch is not in the dry bone state, as it is the mortal and somewhat unsavory remains of a Chinaman named Yong Yeng, who was killed by falling from a cart on the Dunolly Road some months ago; consequently special provisions have to be made in his case, and Mr Casey, the undertaker, has received orders to make a zinc-lined coffin, in which such part of the defunct Celestial as can be gathered together will be placed, and conveyed with the more portable remains of his brethren to the Flowery Land. Of course, the necessary legal authority has been obtained to make the graves give up their dead. One skeleton has been raised from the Dunolly Cemetery, and another is to come from Amherst, if the state of the resurrection funds will permit, for the pecuniary part of the ceremony seems to be a joint-stock affair. On Saturday afternoon the exhumation of the body of Yong Yeng threw one of the Chinese agents conducting the collection into a frantic state because one of the bones was missing. His ravings in High-street collected quite a crowd around him, and in a very insane manner he offered any one £2,000 who would bring the dead man to life."

Maryborough and Dunolly Advertiser, Monday April 22, 1867

MARYBOROUGH CEMETERY: The Missing Gravestones

DAMAGE TO CHINESE SECTION OF MARYBOROUGH CEMETERY

At the meeting held on 16th April 1969, it was reported that headstones [sic] in the Chinese section of the Maryborough Cemetery had been knocked over and smashed, apparently by a bulldozer or grader. This once unique section of the cemetery could have been a major tourist attraction – other centres in the gold mining areas regard them as one of their prized possessions. However, enquiries at Trust and Municipal levels have revealed a complete lack of interest.

[Maryborough] Midlands Historical Society Annual Report, 1970

It's believed that the damage noted above was observed by two members of the Maryborough Field Naturalists' Club, who were horrified to find many of the stones – some broken – piled into a heap. On a return visit, they saw that many of the stones had disappeared. Some of the intact stones were later used to make a border that now marks the Chinese burial area. That section of the cemetery, including the burning tower, is now well maintained, but not of course, as originally set out.

CENTRAL GOLDFIELDS ART GALLERY EVENT : March 14, 11.30am



The March *Art Talk* at the Gallery will be given by the Golden Dragon Museum Collections Manager Megan Hall, who will discuss Chinese history in the goldfields area, with a focus on the tea ceremony tradition. There will be an opportunity for questions, followed by tea and coffee.

Visitors will also be able to view the current "Love" Exhibition, which includes photographs by Wal Richards, the legendary amateur wedding photographer, whose images are in the collection of the Maryborough Midlands Historical Society.

Image: Unknown, Teapot and stand, brass. Likely 19th century. From the collection of Golden Dragon Museum, Bendigo

1964: THE GREAT VERANDAH REMOVAL

"1964 will go down in history as far as Maryborough is concerned as the year when almost all post-supported verandahs in the shopping centre were removed. Very few old-type remain and they must go very soon under the City Council's appropriate by-law"

Maryborough Advertiser January 1, 1965



High Street Maryborough circa 1964 before the verandah removals

High Street Changing

The face of Maryborough's High Street is changing rapidly with many of the business houses pulling down the old post-supported verandahs and replacing them with cantilever type. In recent weeks over 10 old type verandahs have been pulled down and some of them have already been replaced. Work on others is proceeding at present.

Under a City Council by-law all post supported verandahs must be pulled down by December 17 this year. Council made its first move in this direction about 12 years ago. Under terms of the by-law property owners had 10 years in which to comply but council later extended the by-law provisions for two years.

Several other municipalities have adopted similar by-laws and some have already been put into effect. This is the case in Stawell where the appearance of the main street is now one of modernity.

There is no doubt that when all Maryborough's business houses have made similar alterations to those which have already taken place here then our shopping centre will look neat and be a distinct credit to the city.

One of the big questions asked in Maryborough in recent months has been that concerning hotel verandahs.

The Council by-law also applies to them. If the precedent set for other towns such as Stawell is followed then it can be expected that the local hotels will have short cantilever verandahs over the entrances. These look very neat and fill the purpose.

Maryborough's High and Nolan Streets early in 1965 should be vastly different to the streets as we know them today.

Maryborough Advertiser May 25, 1964

Maryborough Historian Betty Osborn chronicled the changes in her book **Against the Odds**.

"Maryborough was unfortunate in its Council's unbending resolve to get rid of its heritage and chose not to listen to protests ... Iron lacework, although relatively short lived overseas, had been an architectural feature in Australia for a considerable period and certain groups, such as the Arts Society, cried out for its retention, even asking that a few of the better specimens, such as the Albion Hotel verandah be retained. One strong reason for its retention was that cast iron lace had been made at Robinson's foundry in High Street ... "

At least one Councillor, Bruce Thornhill, later regretted the decision, remarking on the "horrible and very plain and dreary effect of cantilever verandahs that add nothing to the character of the town:" (**Against The Odds**)

PIONEERS' MEMORIAL TOWER: Devastating Damage to Town's Heritage



Site of the gate removal

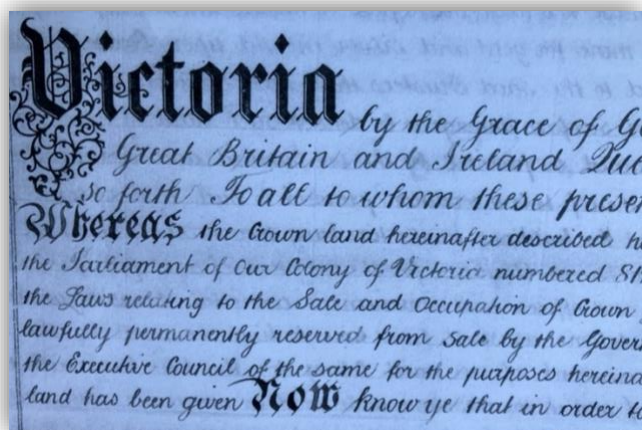


The newly-restored tower

Community volunteers who have spent hours, and in some cases their own money, to restore the sadly neglected Pioneers' Memorial Tower on Bristol Hill were devastated to see that within weeks of the project's completion last year someone had stolen the specially designed and manufactured gate leading to the tower's top section. This was not the usual mindless graffiti and smashed bottles vandalism that's been inflicted on the tower over the 90 years of its existence. Someone, using appropriately sturdy tools, removed the entire gate. The theft was particularly disappointing for retired builder Daryl Maffescioni, who funded and installed the substantial gate as well as carrying out other repairs and maintenance.

To the disappointment of the "Friends of Bristol Hill" community volunteers, the relevant authorities such as Central Goldfields Shire Council and the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action seem reluctant at present to accept responsibility for the ownership and continued maintenance of the tower, despite lengthy discussions. Talks are proceeding.

MARYBOROUGH LADIES' BENEVOLENT SOCIETY



MMHS Vice-President Margaret Harrison recently presented our Society with a copy of an original land grant made in 1885 for an "asylum" (in the sense of refuge) in connection with the Maryborough Ladies' Benevolent Society, which was founded in 1869 in response to a number of severe hardship cases in the community. The Society's first tenement was built in 1873 after a public appeal raised almost £300.

In honour of Mrs Isabella Warton's twenty-eight years of service to the Committee, the property was named after her.

Image: A section of the elaborate calligraphy on the title

Margaret Harrison herself has a long involvement with the Benevolent Society, serving as Committee Member For 30 years, including two terms as President.

RAIL TRAIL ON TRACK: “Walking the Past ... Glimpsing The Future”

MARYBOROUGH-CARISBROOK WALK: March 24, 10am to 1.30pm

The Castlemaine-Maryborough Rail Trail Association (CMRT) invites you to walk the path of our future rail trail. Experience the rich history and natural beauty of Maryborough to Carisbrook.

This March, join us to walk approximately 7 kilometres along the historic rail line from Maryborough to Carisbrook on Dja Dja Wurrung country. Be welcomed into aspects of First Peoples culture, visit places of gold rush history and become immersed in stories of the region's past.

Stroll with us and hear experts from local historical societies and informed naturalists share their deep knowledge about the region's recent and ancient past.

We want to share with you our aspiration for a world class recreational trail from Maryborough to Castlemaine, anchored at its western end in a special landscape. Walk with us to uncover its hidden gems of rich cultural heritage and significant volcanic landscapes.

Don't miss this rare opportunity to walk the line, explore the region's stories and have a hearty lunch - provided by Carisbrook Lions - with friends and trail supporters.

- **Included: expert talks, guided walk, hearty lunch** Cost: \$15 + online booking fee
- **Meeting Point: Dellavedova Fertilisers 110 Burns Street, Maryborough (across the railway line, plenty of parking, shuttle buses will return you at the conclusion of lunch)**
- **Enquiries or Questions: Call 0401 107 857**

- **Bookings:**

<https://events.humanitix.com/walking-the-past-glimpsing-the-future-y7svr3m4>

NB Maryborough Midlands and Carisbrook Historical Societies and Maryborough Field Naturalists' Club will be providing information for participants.

WORSLEY COTTAGE: POST-RENOVATION PROGRESS



The time consuming task of shifting furniture and artefacts back into the Cottage is almost completed, as the image of the kitchen indicates. Craig Roberts' drone view of the Cottage and garden reveals how much of the garden was removed during the renovation process. Pictured in the foreground, Arthur Worsley's 100 year old grapevine is still producing fruit. Members of the garden sub committee are hard at work clearing the year's worth of weeds and planning for new layouts for paths and Autumn plantings.

Since our reopening we've welcomed a steady stream of visitors and researchers during our opening hours (Tuesday & Thursday 10am – 12 noon, Sundays 2pm – 4 pm).

MARYBOROUGH HIGHLAND GATHERING



Image: Maryborough Midlands Historical Society

The 161st Highland Gathering was held in Maryborough on New Year's Day this year.

In this image *circa* 1890s, three members of the Hubble family (John, Isobel and Robert) pose for a formal portrait taken in the studio of the legendary Maryborough photographer Charlie Farr, who in later years photographed over 300 of the town's pioneers.

It's possible that the Hubble children had taken part in the "Best dressed in Highland Costume" category.

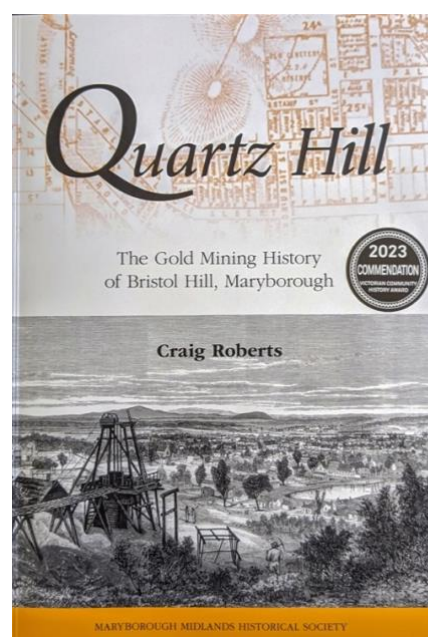
A *Maryborough Advertiser* report in January 1892 listed all the results for that year's event. As well as traditional Scottish music and dancing categories, events included "Putting heavy stone", "Throwing heavy hammer", "Tossing the caber", "Running high jump", "Vaulting with pole", running, hurdling and cycling races, plus an obstacle race and a handicap [metal] quoit match. The cycling track was reputed to be the best banked asphalt track in the colonies. Around 10,000 spectators attended the event, many travelling on special excursion trains.

Before animal welfare concerns ruled them out, goat races were sometimes held. A 1915 account described how the provisional winner (and driver) were disqualified because spirits of salts (hydrochloric acid) were found on the goat's tail. A Talbot goat named "Lord Kitchener" was declared the winner.

QUARTZ HILL: ORDERS

Copies of *Quartz Hill* are available for \$25 from:

- The Central Goldfields Shire Visitor Information Centre, which is based in the Maryborough Railway Station. Hours: 9am – 5pm.
visitorinfo@cgoldshire.vic.gov.au
- Maryborough Midlands Historical Society
3 Palmerston Street Maryborough
Tuesdays/Thursdays 10am – 12 noon
- Maryborough Midlands Historical Society
mmhs@outlook.com.au
See online ordering details under "Bookshop"
Postage within Australia
\$25.00 + \$10.90 postage = \$35.90 total
- RHSV Bookshop: office@historyvictoria.org.au



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING: INVITATION

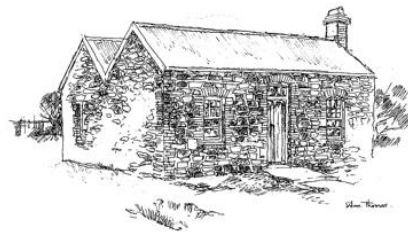
The Annual General Meeting of the Maryborough Midlands Historical Society will be held on:



Wednesday March 20 at 2pm
Research & Resource Centre
3 Palmerston Street
Maryborough

All welcome

Following the meeting, there will be an opportunity to inspect the recently refurbished Worsley Cottage.



MARYBOROUGH MIDLANDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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Email: mmhs@outlook.com.au
We're also on Facebook/Meta

The Maryborough Midlands Historical Society acknowledges the ancestors and descendants of the Dja Dja Wurrung, traditional owners of the land on which we live and work.

President: Barbara Nielsen

Vice President: Margaret Harrison

Minutes Secretary : Margaret Deason

Treasurer: Rod Nielsen

Memberships: Lorraine Fitzpatrick

Curator: Barbara Nielsen

Assistant Curator : Irene Oxley

Committee Members: Janice Digby-Beste, Margaret Flowers, Marion Melen

The Committee meets on the second Thursday of each month