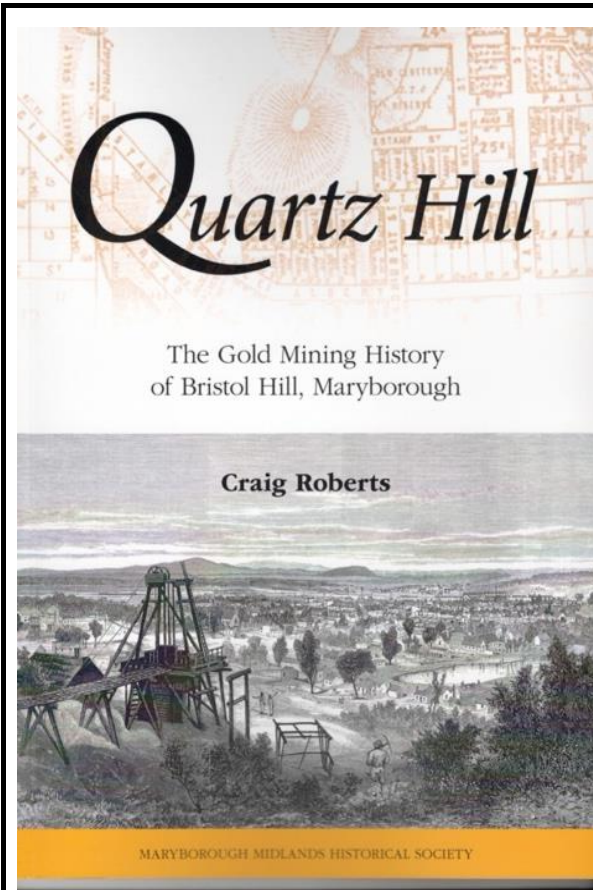




# Diggings



THE JOURNAL OF THE MARYBOROUGH MIDLANDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY  
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## QUARTZ HILL

We're delighted to announce that Craig Roberts' meticulously researched history of gold mining on Maryborough's Bristol Hill is now available for purchase.

Craig's interest was sparked when he moved to a home adjacent to Bristol Hill and took his dog for walks in the area. He was struck by the fact that "although thousands of tons of quartz were extracted from the many mine shafts that dotted the hill, no buildings, foundations, or rusted equipment remain"

The detailed bibliography and reference list reveal the enormous amount of time that Craig has spent researching material on line, in old newspapers and reports, and at the Public Record Office. Despite an intensive search, he was unable to locate images of mining on Bristol Hill. The exception is featured on the front cover.

The index includes the names of many well known Maryborough residents whose main claim to fame was in other areas of public life. It may surprise many local readers that Dr Robert Henry Dunn, surgeon at the Maryborough Hospital from 1857 to 1901, was also financially involved in mining companies.

## QUARTZ HILL ORDERS & SALES

**In person:** Copies are available at the Maryborough Tourist Information Centre for \$20 each. Please note that the Centre is temporarily located in Burns Street while renovations to the railway station interior proceed.

**Postal orders:** Because we're unable to access our Research Centre while the repairs to Worsley Cottage take place, we're subsidising the cost of postage. Please place your order via our website [mmhs.net.au](http://mmhs.net.au)

Book \$20, postage \$5

## AUTHOR TALK & BOOKSIGNING

March 7th 2.30 pm Maryborough Library

Free event. No booking required

Books will be available for sale and signing

**CRAIG ROBERTS**  
**AUTHOR TALK + Q&A**

Come along to hear from local historian Craig Roberts who recently completed comprehensive research on the Gold Mining History of Bristol Hill in Maryborough. Previously a relatively unknown segment of our district's history, the recently published 'Quartz Hill' includes a wealth of knowledge, put together in collaboration with the Maryborough Midlands Historical Society

**Tuesday 7th**  
**March 2023**  
**2.30pm-3.30pm**  
**Maryborough Library**

Copies will be available for purchase. Free Event - Bookings are not required.

## WORSLEY COTTAGE : Renovations

The good news is that three years after the bracing was first fitted to support the southern wall of the Cottage, repairs to the foundations and walls of our heritage stone cottage in Palmerston Street are about to commence, and are estimated to take three to five months.

The power will be disconnected and the whole site (including our Research Centre) will be closed to our volunteers and the public, so our Society will suspend most operations from February until the work is completed. Our committee will continue to meet monthly at an alternative venue.

**You will be able to contact us via email or our web pages, but we won't be able to carry out research because we'll be unable to access our records. Personal visits will obviously not be possible. The telephone message service won't operate.**

Our dedicated garden volunteers Gary and Marie (with friend Archie) cleared the build-up of weeds, and pruned back bushes and trees close to the work area.

Packing and moving the displays and furniture from the Cottage was an enormous task. Committee members packed boxes and washed curtains and bedspreads.

Rotary volunteers Terry and Martin spent a morning helping to move furniture.

Special thanks are due to MMHS Treasurer Rod Nielsen, who co-ordinated the whole process and packed and shifted many of the boxes, items of furniture, photographs and artefacts.

## WORSLEY COTTAGE : History

The Cottage has been the home of the Maryborough Midlands Historical Society since 1976, when a grant of \$10,000 was awarded by the Victorian State Government. The [then] Maryborough City Council supported the project. A further local contribution was provided by the [then] Shire of Tullaroop and members of the Historical Society. The cottage was purchased for \$15,000 and declared open as a museum by Tom Austin M.L.A. on October 30th, 1976.

Arthur Worsley, born in Maryborough in 1861, worked as a contractor in stonework, in later years constructing sections of the town's impressive Main Drain. In 1893 he married Agnes Morris, and the following year completed the first two rooms of their home, built of local stone that he had quarried himself near the Avoca Road. A separate timber kitchen stood at the rear of the house.

A further two rooms were added in 1894. In 1908 Worsley estimated his property to be worth £150. In addition to the house he included the kitchen, a stable, a tool house, a dray shed, a W.C. and a fowl house. The cottage remained in the possession of the Worsley family until the late 1930s. After the sale in 1949 a number of local families lived in the cottage. Many have vivid memories of their life there.

Worsley Cottage's museum displays reflect the life and times of Maryborough during the Worsley family occupancy.

*Original watercolour by Stan Thomas*



## PIONEERS' MEMORIAL TOWER BRISTOL HILL : 90th Anniversary



Unbranded postcard circa late 1930s

Maryborough Historian Betty Osborn outlined the tower's origins in her book *Against The Odds*.

*"The idea of a tower for Bristol Hill emanated from a Traders' Association meeting as early as January 1930, the brainchild of J.J. Lythgo ... in May Mr Liston of the association thought it would be a good idea to ask the government if the towers from the old gaol could be re-erected on the hill. Two years later the Traders named it the Pioneer Tower project which was approved by the Council. "*

- E.J. (Eddie) Peck (Local teacher and architect) submitted two designs
- June 30th, 1932: Joint public meeting. Unemployed Relief Committee guaranteed labour and funds.
- Messrs E.E. Allen and Tom Elliot donated bluestone steps from within old gaol towers.
- Dr Miller donated the cost of three stones to be incorporated into the tower, inscribed with Henry Lawson verses.
- Foundation stone (donated by stonemason W.T. Jones snr) laid by H.E. Williams on October 15th, 1932.
- Community raised £469 of the total cost of approximately £800.

In Betty Osborn's words *"The project not only provided work for the unemployed but it was a morale booster for the town – a beacon of hope, as it were. For Maryborough it was not only a landmark that commemorated the pioneers – it also became a memorial to the unemployed of the Depression. In physical terms, it became a focal point for local sightseers and tourists who could now ascend a beautiful vantage point that had been valued only as a pock-marked quartz hill for miners"*

Thousands attended the official opening on Easter Sunday, April 16th, 1933. George Frost, M.L.A. and former Maryborough Mayor, performed the official opening, and an 85 year old resident, Mrs Rebecca Wilson placed a time capsule in the tower vault. The pioneers buried in Maryborough's first cemetery at the foot of the hill were also remembered. A cross of white stones marked their graves.

**MARYBOROUGH PIONEERS. IMPRESSIVE MEMORIAL. TRIBUTES TO THE DIGGERS.  
Large Assemblage at Ceremony.  
BY OUR SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE.**

**MARYBOROUGH, Sunday.** - On an autumn day 79 years ago three wandering fossickers found gold at the White Hills, then portion of a vast run controlled by the Simson family of squatters in Central Victoria. Within a few months the rich goldfields of Maryborough, Dunolly and Alma were opened. Today, in brilliant sunshine, descendants of the diggers of the 50's and 60's gathered in thousands at Maryborough for the unveiling of a striking memorial to the men and women who laid the foundations of a thriving town.

Bristol Hill, an eminence overlooking the town has certainly not carried such a throng of people since the days, long ago, when diggers assembled and scarred its quiet slopes. Townspeople were reinforced by residents of the agricultural areas, and by those from dreaming villages which once were throbbing goldfields. There were also many visitors from Melbourne and other parts of Victoria.

The memorial tower is an adequate monument. Erected at a cost of about £800, it may be regarded as a half-brother to the Eureka memorial at Ballarat which commemorates an historic event which occurred about six months after Maryborough had been proclaimed a town and had been named by Mr Daly, a goldfield commissioner after his native town in Ireland.

Surmounting a massive base are six large square pillars above which rises an imposing tower, which, 50ft. above the crest of the hill, commands a view of the whole of Maryborough and of the rich Charlotte Plains. A remarkable feature of the tower is a spiral stairway of stone. This was once portion of the large Maryborough gaol, which has now been dismantled and turned into a high school, and into comfortable homes.

Decorative features of the memorial include representations of a pick, a shovel, and a mining dish, and several verses from a poem by Henry Lawson. The first verse is as follows –

"Oh, who would paint a goldfield,  
And limn the picture right,  
As we have often seen it  
In early morning's light!"  
Resting place of Pioneers.

Altogether the memorial is noble and distinctive. It rests on a pick-scarred hill which "diggers" of a later day - the former soldiers of Maryborough - declare reminds them strongly of certain hills on Gallipoli. The memorial looks down directly upon the first Maryborough cemetery, a small enclosure which was closed more than 60 years ago. Almost all the graves lack head stones, but a cross 20ft in length by 10ft in width has been built in the centre of the burial-ground.

This cross is composed of white quartz set in concrete. It lies flat on the ground, but stands out strikingly in the old burying-place. Today a wreath was placed on the cross in memory of the unknown pioneers resting there. Preceded by the Maryborough Brass Band a procession composed principally of visitors from Melbourne marched to Bristol Hill where the assemblage was welcomed on behalf of the Pioneers Memorial Committee by the chairman (Mr P. S. Fisher).

After an address had been given by a representative of the committee (Mr. H. V. Nunn) who said that the memorial was intended to do homage to pioneers of all nationalities the president of the Maryborough Old Boys and Girls Association (Mr. W. Morris of Melbourne) said that old residents everywhere took pride in the memorial. No history of Australia would be complete without adequate reference to the diggers of the early days and no history of the diggings could neglect the rich Maryborough district which had produced vast quantities of gold, including the famous "Welcome Stranger" nugget.

Descendants of fossickers of the district had made their marks in science, art, music and literature throughout Australia. "This memorial really pays tribute to the whole of the pioneers of Australia," said Mr. Gibson, M. H. R. "It was conceived firstly to commemorate the pioneers; secondly to beautify the town; and thirdly to relieve unemployment. All of these objectives have been achieved." He recalled that it had been claimed that gold was first found in Victoria in 1850 at Amherst, seven miles from Maryborough. The pioneering fossickers had faced difficulties which would probably have appalled many people of to-day.

The official opening ceremony was performed by Mr. Frost, M.L.A. who paid a warm tribute to the pioneers who he said had been courageous and splendidly independent. He mentioned the work of clergymen and doctors who had gone to the diggings and established churches and hospitals. "The golden age of Maryborough has not yet passed," he added. When the deep leads and the quartz reefs are exploited much gold will be found and unemployment will be banished.

**Continued on Page 5**

From Page 4

### Records Placed in Vault.

A cylinder containing records of the occasion, including a copy of "The Argus" of Saturday, containing an article on Maryborough pioneers, was placed in the vault of the tower by Mrs. R. Wilson aged 85 years, who has lived in the town for almost the whole of her life.

The ceremony concluded with the formal presentation of the memorial to the mayor (Councillor J.R. Bryant) by Councillor S. Poole, on behalf of the Pioneers' memorial Committee, and of the Unemployment Relief Committee, the two organisations which raised the funds necessary for the erection of the memorial. Tonight the memorial is floodlit."

**The Argus, Monday April 17th, 1933**

## THE TOWER TODAY

In the ninety years since the opening ceremony trees have grown to block the view, and the tower itself has unfortunately suffered periodic attacks by vandals. Several of the plaques are almost unreadable (including the dedications on the bluestone seats - now overpainted - commemorating the work of J.J. Lythgo and Tom Speed.)

Despite the best efforts of the Council and various Service Clubs, *The Maryborough Advertiser* reported as far back as November 2003 that the landmark was no longer "a city jewel".

*"Vandalised by graffiti, the spiral tower is home to foul language streaked across the walls in a variety of colours ... it smelt of urine, the paths littered with broken glass and empty alcohol bottles ... the bluestone edging of the carpark is slashed by bold blue spray paint and the bitumen coated in a series of tyre tracks."*

It's encouraging then, to read in a recent edition of *The Maryborough Advertiser* (February 17th, 2023) that restoration of the Tower may begin soon. Recent letters to the editor had lamented the fact that due to structural and safety issues the tower had been closed to the public for 18 months.

The Advertiser reports that the body responsible for the Tower is now the Department of Energy, Environment and Climate Action.

## Quotes being sought to restore Bristol Hill, DEECA says

Continued from Front Page

*The Advertiser* understands the department is currently waiting on quotes for painting and rendering works at the tower before works can commence, however a restoration of the site could be underway in the next eight to 12 weeks.

"DEECA is working with Parks Victoria and the Central Goldfields Shire Council to ensure the safe reopening of Bristol Hill Tower to the public," a DEECA spokesperson said.

"The works required at Bristol Hill Tower require specialised contractors, and DEECA representatives have been working to find the right people with the right skills for the job, to achieve the best outcome for the site and the community."

DEECA are currently the interim manager of the tower and surrounding land, with the

department previously telling *The Advertiser* that moving forward, the Central Goldfields Shire Council would ideally manage the tower, carpark and road to the tower, while Parks Victoria would manage the surrounding environment.

The Maryborough Rotary Club has expressed interest in maintaining the tower and club president Garry Higgins said the indecision was frustrating.

"I think everybody's frustrated with this but we can understand why, we just need someone to make a decision on the management of the place," he said.

"Whether it's at a State Government level or local government level, just make a commitment to getting the job done — it's the indecision more than anything we're frustrated with.

"There doesn't seem to be any urgency at all about this and if we as a club hadn't flagged this as an

important community project, nothing may have happened."

Rotary have plans to create a peace park at the tower, utilising it as a welcoming space for all members of the community to come together.

A memorial to the pioneers and founders of Maryborough, the tower was built during the Great Depression in 1933 and Mr Higgins said with the icon now in its 90th year, its significance needed to be recognised.

"We've had visitors to town who haven't been impressed with the condition of the tower," he said.

"It's a valuable and historic community asset, it's 90 years this year since the tower was built and the 100th anniversary isn't far away.

"We should be able to show the same enthusiasm and commitment now to the tower as the people who built it in 1933 did."

## MARYBOROUGH MIDLANDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.

3 Palmerston St Maryborough 3465  
P.O. Box 265, Maryborough 3465  
Telephone: (03) 5461 2518

ABN: 33610 529 643  
Inc. Registration No: AOO24478S

email: [mmhs@outlook.com.au](mailto:mmhs@outlook.com.au)

[mmhs.net.au](http://mmhs.net.au)  
We're also on Facebook



*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.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Please note that due to the renovation project at Worsley Cottage the venue for this year's AGM will be the Council Hub building at the corner of Nolan and Burns Streets, Maryborough.

**WEDNESDAY MARCH 15th 2.30 pm**

All welcome

*If undeliverable*



*Please return to:  
P.O. Box 265  
Maryborough 3465*