



# Diggings



**THE JOURNAL OF THE MARYBOROUGH MIDLANDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY**  
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## HISTORIC FIND

Tradesmen working on the renovations to Worsley Cottage recently unearthed two items under the floorboards, most probably dating from the Worsley family occupation of the cottage. The first, a broken chisel, had obviously been discarded, but the second, a women's well-used leather lace-up boot, was identified as a good luck charm, deliberately placed in the foundations, chimneys or walls to ward off bad luck or evil spirits.

*Further details about the superstition can be found on the National Museum of Scotland website.*

## QUARTZ HILL: AUTHOR INSIGHTS

On Tuesday March 7th at the Maryborough Library Craig Roberts, author of the newly published **Quartz Hill**, presented his audience with a very entertaining and informative insight into his research experiences, and signed copies of his book. He highlighted the importance of continuing funding for the National Library's TROVE, which he found Invaluable.

Craig is pictured at the talk with member Alex Stoneman, who has researched and published information on deep lead mines around Carisbrook and on the Moolort Plains.

**Quartz Hill** is available at the Maryborough Visitor Centre or via our Society's website. (see page 6)



## MEMBERSHIPS 2023-4

Memberships fall due each April. Unfortunately those members who usually drop into our Research Centre to pay will be unable to do so at present. Any of our Committee Members (see list) would be pleased to collect your membership fee and pass it on to the Treasurer.

And yes, we still accept cheques!

Postal address: P.O. Box 265, Maryborough 3465

You can also pay directly into our Commonwealth Bank account:

**BSB 06 3519 A/C 00901319**

Please provide your surname as a reference if paying this way.

***Memberships remain at \$25 individual, \$35 family.***

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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2022-2023

It's been a year of highs and lows and waiting ... and more waiting. Three years after the damaged Worsley Cottage south wall was braced and we were instructed by Council not to allow volunteers or visitors to enter the building, the renovations to walls and foundations are finally about to begin. Packing and relocating the displays and furniture from the Cottage in January was an enormous task. Committee members packed boxes and washed curtains and bedspreads, two Rotary members spent a morning helping to move furniture, and our dedicated garden volunteers cleared the build-up of weeds and pruned back bushes and trees close to the work area. Special thanks 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. Unfortunately permits and power company issues have delayed the starting date by another six weeks. We're hoping that the Cottage, which has always been the focal point of our publicity, may be open to visitors later this year and that normal operations in our Research Centre can also resume.

Now for some high points:

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.

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 1930s house which was demolished to make way for medical student accommodation. We also have in our collection the foundation stone for the 1930 Baby Health Centre (later VicRoads office), demolished in July 2022 to allow space for the new hospital building. Our volunteers have photographed the building's exterior and stages of demolition.

Generous donors continue to offer contributions to our collection, providing a wide range of Maryborough-related items, ranging from books to complete 1960s school uniforms to an impressive set of scales and weights formerly used in a Maryborough bank.

Society member and computer expert Craig Roberts, who has recently researched the history of mining on Bristol Hill, has constructed 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, imparting his vast knowledge of Maryborough history.

Although our Research Centre will be closed to visitors and volunteers until the Cottage renovations are completed, we've relocated our email service, and continue to respond to a constant stream of email enquiries. Some also arrive via our website and Facebook page. The queries range from family history issues to street name searches to media enquiries (for example the story of Tilly Aston, after whom the Aston electorate – soon to hold a by election- is named). We've carried out research for the local council, and art gallery, run history walks around town, and one of our committee members is taking part in meetings of the Maryborough Heritage Review Reference Group.

The highlight for the Society this year has been the publication of Craig Roberts' meticulously researched **Quartz Hill**. When Craig moved to a home adjacent to Bristol Hill and took his dog for walks, 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 locating material on line, in old newspapers and reports, and at the Public Record Office. The index includes the names of many well-known Maryborough residents whose main claim to fame was in other areas of public life, for example Dr Robert Henry Dunn, surgeon at the Maryborough Hospital from 1857 to 1901, who was also financially involved in mining companies.

A very successful author talk and book signing took place at the Maryborough Library on March 7. The Society owes a huge debt of gratitude to Craig, firstly because of his contribution to Maryborough's written history, but secondly because he has donated the proceeds of book sales to MMHS.

*Presented at A.G.M.*

*Barbara Nielsen March 2023*

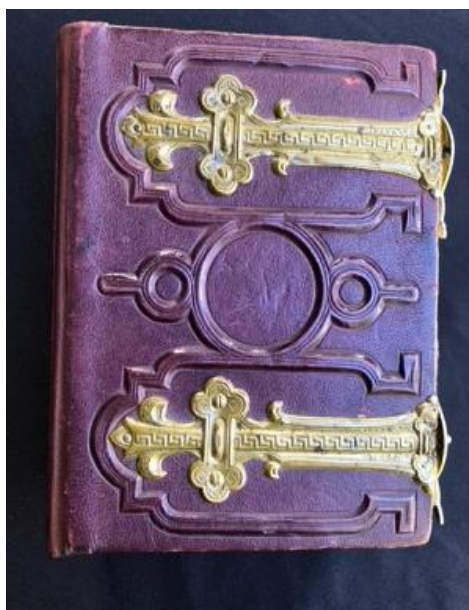
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## THE ROSCHOLLER TROWEL



Thanks to the generosity of Roscholler family members in Melbourne, we'll soon be able to display the engraved trowel presented to Maryborough Mayor Councillor Cr John Thomas Roscholler when he laid the foundation stone for the Simson Brothers memorial in Kennedy Street at Easter 1939. The Scottish brothers, John, Hector and Donald were regarded as the first three European settlers in the district. The memorial unveiling also marked 100 years of European settlement (1840-1940).

*Clockwise from above right: the engraved trowel in its original case; the memorial on Primrose Hill in Kennedy Street 2023; and the assembled dignitaries at the laying of the foundation stone in 1939. Councillor Roscholler stands to the right of Miss Kathleen Simson, grand-daughter of Donald Simson.*



## ROSA OUTTRIM RETURNS

Our Society was awarded a PRO Community History Grant to restore an old photograph album owned by Rosa Outtrim, mother of local Mayor and Member of Parliament A.R. Outtrim. The images were taken by Maryborough professional photographer James Weller, and featured scenes and buildings from the town and surrounding areas in the 1860s.

Unfortunately the album was in poor condition, for example torn pages where attempts had been made to remove the photographs, and broken rear clasps. Restoration was delayed due to Covid and a serious illness, but thanks to the skills of Megan Cardamone (*Circa Museum Services*) and Simon Dart and colleagues at *SB Libris* in Bendigo, the album has been digitised and beautifully restored.

The album will be on display later in the year, when we return to normal operations.

## EYEWITNESS TO HISTORY

### **"DEATH, DESTRUCTION AS STORM HITS MARYBOROUGH"**

*The Age, Monday January 2, 1961*



**December, 31, 1960** – The day was like any other Saturday, for that time of the year. My brother, Lachlan (9) and friend, Ian Bucknall (8) and I (11) headed for “The Park” as was our custom during school holidays. If we weren’t going to “The Pool” we would ride around to see what else was happening. Of course plenty was happening as the Highland Gathering was to be held on January 2. New Year’s Day fell on a Sunday and, in those days sporting events were not permitted to be held on the Sabbath, so a team of volunteers and side-show workers were preparing the Princes Park Oval and surrounds for Monday’s events.

I headed to the speed-boat launching place near the “Loco Wicket”, where the skate-board facility is now situated, to watch the people water-skiing. At around 3:00pm it started to rain and, within a short time, the wind began to “spring up” and lightning started to flash. Older boys than I were swimming in the lake having fun, but I knew enough about electricity and water to stay

away from the lake. I tried to get into a car near the water’s edge but it was already full of people so I jumped into the boot and was soon joined by the boys who had been in the lake, but not before they had been lying out on the cricket pitch with rain “bucketing down”. They had no sooner jumped in with me when lightning struck a large gum tree between the Loco Pitch and Jubilee Oval and sent branches into the middle of the Loco Pitch! Although the time before the storm stopped seemed to be interminable, it was over in about fifteen minutes. Following the rain a few of us walked through the area now occupied by the Caravan Park and saw a number of pine trees that had toppled over during the storm, including one which fell across the boot of a car and squashed it!

I then decided to head home in Nightingale Street but, as I passed the area between the Pool and the Lake, I noticed an ambulance and a group of people where the side-show people camped standing around a sheet covered body on the ground. Sadly the body happened to be Sonia Stevens, the daughter of a side-show family who had billed her as the “Fattest Woman in the World”. She was only sixteen and died pushing her younger brother away from the falling tree which killed her. Her brother survived thanks to her heroism.

The Main Drain and the Oval were flooded so to get home I rode to Tuaggra Street and pedalled through about 300 mm of water until I reached High Street which is on higher ground. Dad had been at the shop, now “Vinnies”, and said there was little damage as we had a cellar at the front of the shop and the shop entrance had slats where the water ran straight into the cellar and filled it rather than flood the shop. The slats also served to catch the stiletto heels of women’s shoes as they entered the shop!

Meanwhile, Lachlan and Ian were caught in the side-show area near the Band Rotunda and were sheltering in a three-sided shooting gallery tent when suddenly the tent blew away! They then headed to the Grandstand for shelter to see out the storm. They had only been there a short while when the rear-half of the Grandstand roof lifted off and landed in the Main Drain behind it. They stayed around for some time afterwards and were interviewed by a television station. I think that approximately three inches (or seventy-five millimetres) of rain was recorded in the quarter hour of “The Big Storm”!

From the moment the storm stopped, the work began to have everything in readiness for Monday’s Highland Gathering. One of the first things to do was to try and catch the reptiles that had escaped from a side-show. People spoke of crocodiles and snakes swimming on the oval and trapped by the fence, but that may have been apocryphal. Anyway, we knew that crocodiles wouldn’t have survived a winter in Victoria even if they gained access to the Loddon River. Cr Alf Leech brought a front-end loader to the oval and breached the bank on the western side nearest “Tweeddales” Gate so that the water had the shortest route to the Main Drain. Men, some of whom I had never seen before, armed with shovels, mattocks and other implements “pitched in” wherever they could, working through the night and, by January 2, and having that day’s grace to repair the damage, there was little evidence to indicate the ferocity of the Saturday storm albeit that some people who sat in the Grandstand were sunburnt on their backs and necks!

**Michael Ritchie 2023**



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## STATION LUNCH

A number of Society members, including some out of town visitors, enjoyed a mid-autumn lunch at the Maryborough Railway Station café on April 19th. Thanks to Margaret Flowers, the organiser.

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## BACCHUS STORY REPRINTED:



Two Melbourne members who attended the Society lunch were Robyn and David Tan. Robyn, who is the daughter of the late Betty and Bruce Osborn, presented us with a copy of *The Bacchus Story: A History of Captain W.H. Bacchus and his Son*. Betty and Bruce lived in Bacchus Marsh before relocating to Maryborough, and Betty carried out extensive research into the area and its residents. She was made a Life Member of the Bacchus Marsh Historical Society.

Betty's children were pleased to give that Society permission to reprint, and almost 50 years after its release, Betty's book, which has been out of print, will be available in A4 paperback format.

Betty and Bruce of course continued their research and writing in Maryborough. Bruce's publications on the Maryborough Gaol and the Main Drain are still on sale, while Betty's books on Maryborough, the first written in association with Tren DuBourg, remain the standard "go to" for local researchers.

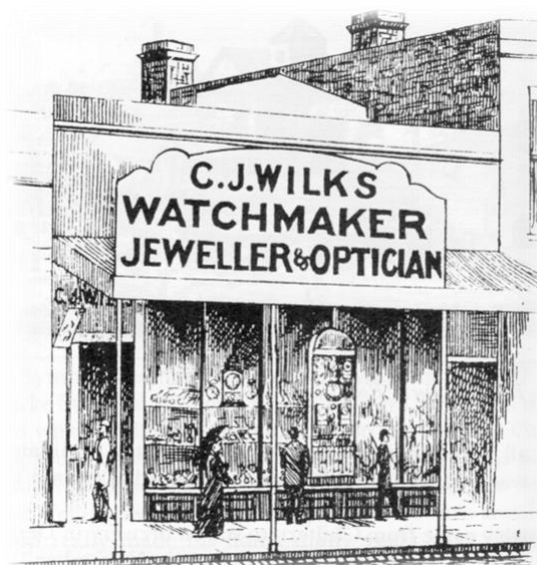
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## VALE MARJORIE WILKS (1929-2023)

Long time member and generous supporter of our Society, Marjorie Elizabeth Josephs-Wilks, daughter of Leonard John and Edith, died in January this year. She will be remembered for her support of our society and her interest in history. Trained as a nurse and midwife, Marjorie went on to occupy senior administrative roles in health.

Marjorie was especially proud of her family's contribution to the history of Maryborough.

Joseph Josephs-Wilks migrated to Victoria with his family on the 'Constance' during the 1850s. He is believed to have worked in Central Victorian goldfield locations, perhaps buying gold as well as making jewellery. His son, Charles Josephs-Wilks, established a jewellery shop in Maryborough during the 1860s. The business in High Street operated over five generations of the family until 1973.




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## COMMITTEE BUSINESS

Our Committee has been meeting each month as usual – in the Community Hub rather than our Research Centre, due to the renovations to Worsley Cottage. We're hoping that later in winter we'll return to our usual venue. Committee members have also been active in other areas, for example fund raising via the Rotary Club "Sausage Sizzle" stall, representing the Society at meetings of the Western Victorian Association Of Historical Societies and on local history-related committees, and acting as guides on various history-related walks and tours. At the AGM in March Irene Oxley stepped down from the committee. We thank her for her sterling contributions over the years as office bearer and committee member.

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**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

**General Committee Members:**

Janice Digby-Beste  
Margaret Flowers  
Marion Melen



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