



Diggings



THE JOURNAL OF THE MARYBOROUGH MIDLANDS HISTORICAL SOCIETY
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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.

FROM OUR ARCHIVES



Princes Park: Main Drain in flood circa early 20th Century.



The same location more than 120 years later following the heavy rain in mid- October this year.

In the introduction to his 1997 book on the Main Drain, the late Bruce Osborn wrote: "The Main Drain is a prominent feature in Maryborough, a legacy left to us by some of the town's pioneers... constructed of local materials supplied by each contractor ... Except for a few sections which have been covered over [and some repairs], the drain remains much the way it was when constructed".

Planning for the drain began in 1870 when complaints about the "noxious and offensive effluvia" emanating from the Four Mile Creek around which Maryborough was built led the Council to consider a solution. After extensive discussions about materials and surveying involving the Public Works Committee and the Central Board of Health, the first tender was called in March 1871. **One of the successful tenderers for a later section of drain was Arthur Worsley, builder of our Society's Worsley Cottage.**

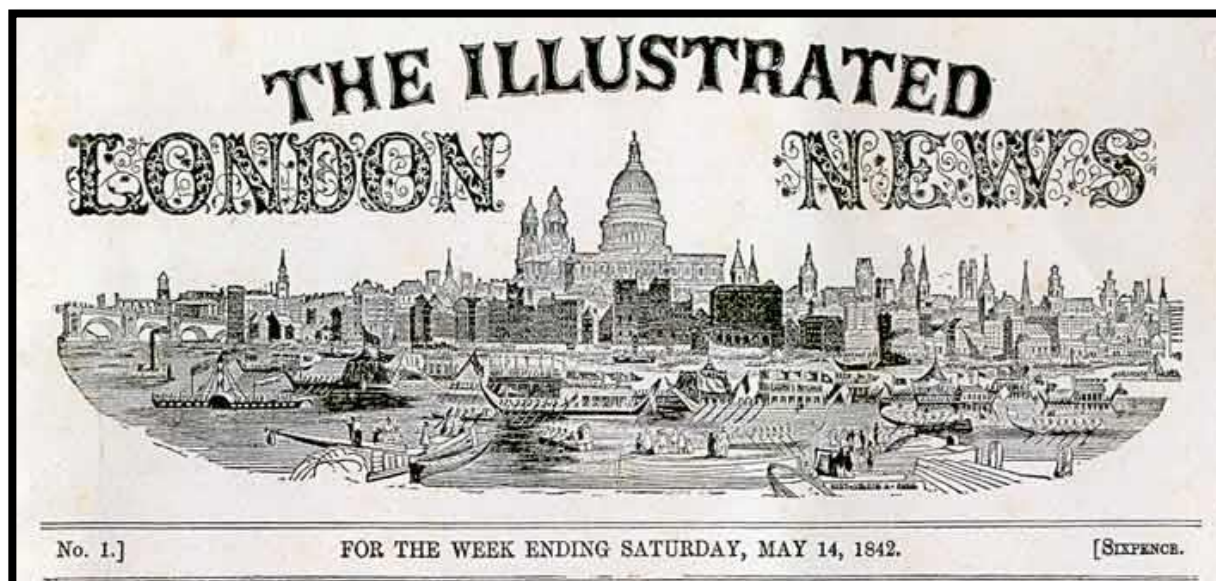
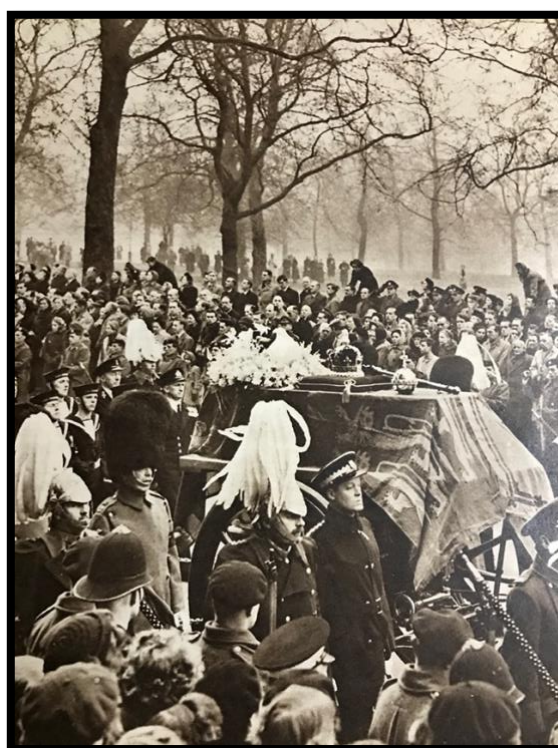
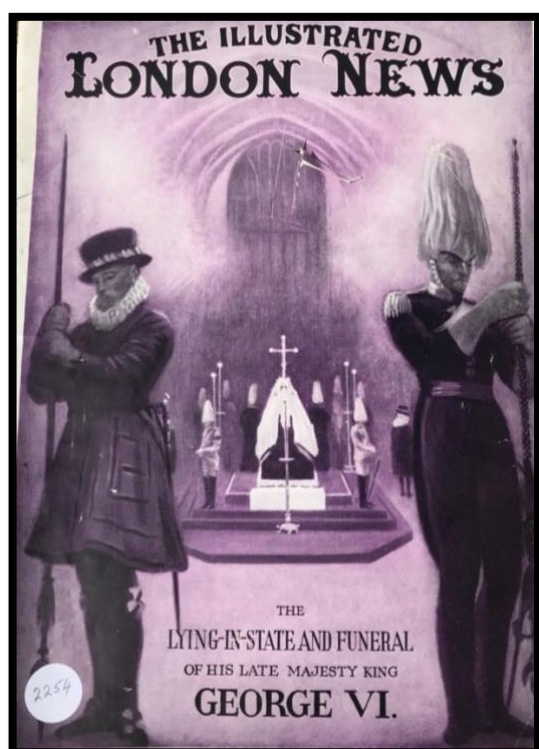


Image of first edition masthead courtesy of Wikipedia

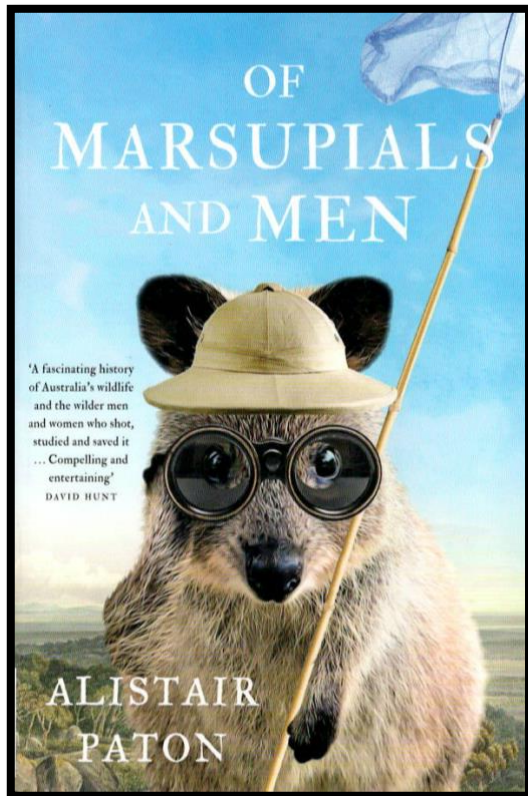


One of our researchers recently discovered a 70 year old special edition of the *Illustrated London News* in our archives. It was published on February 23, 1952, cost three shillings and sixpence, and was printed to commemorate the lying-in-state and funeral of King George VI, father of Queen Elizabeth II.

The *Illustrated London News* was first published in 1842, appearing weekly. By 2003, its final year, it was facing competition from more modern forms of media, and was published only twice a year.

Royal funeral watchers examining the photographs such as the one above would note that the traditions observed were repeated at the recent funeral of Queen Elizabeth, although the weather and modern security requirements have necessitated updates. The sailors (above) escorting the gun carriage appear to wear winter uniforms for the February fog, while security consists only of a line of assorted “bobbies” and soldiers. The Royal Standard, as in 2022, is draped over the coffin, and the Instruments of State (crown, orb, sceptre) are placed in identical positions.

MARSUPIALS AND MEN And ALEC CHISHOLM



Alistair Paton: Of Marsupials and Men
Blackinc Books
ISBN 9781760643645

"To the first European colonists, Australian wildlife was bewildering. Marsupials and gum trees seemed strange and hostile; rabbits, sheep and oak trees were familiar and safe. A bustling animal trade soon developed in both directions: foxes, starlings and other reminders of "home" were unleashed on the Australian landscape, while countless Australian animals found themselves in Europe as stuffed specimens or living curiosities in zoos and private collections.

Into this picture stepped a remarkable band of amateurs who were determined to get to know the fauna of the new colony. Equal parts inspiring and outlandish, over the next 150 years they would advance scientific understanding and transform public attitudes to Australian wildlife. From the "snake men" who fearlessly thrust their arms into hollow logs to see what might happen, to the top-secret plan to smuggle a platypus to Winston Churchill at the height of World War II, these are their stories."

Publisher's blurb on rear cover

Maryborough readers will be particularly interested in the book's account of later naturalists. The list includes Ellis Rowan, Donald McDonald, Crosbie Morrison, Eric Worrall, Harry Butler and Jack Absolom, but most significantly for Maryborough, Alexander Hugh (Alec) Chisholm (1890-1977), who was born, educated and first employed as a journalist in Maryborough.

2022 marks the 100th anniversary of the publication of Chisholm's book *Mateship With Birds*.

The introduction was written by his friend C.J. Dennis, author of *The Sentimental Bloke*.

Dennis wrote " ... it was mainly through the writings of Mr Chisholm that I began to take an interest in Australian birds, discovering a new pleasure, and one that will always endure".

"Many a learned savant shoots birds with a gun. Mr Chisholm shoots them with a camera and writes about them as a human being."



**Alec Chisholm, perched precariously at the top of a ladder, photographing a Shrike-tit's nest.
Illustration from *Mateship with Birds* 1922.**

Chisholm described finding the nest "at the top of a sapling 17 or 18 feet high, and not far from a busy country road".

PHILLIPS GARDENS formerly "THE RESERVE" Tom Woolman

Central Public Gardens were extremely important for earlier populations of Victorian towns.

Unlike recent times, more people lived very close to where they worked. The banks, many shops and workshops had residences above, or jammed in beside or behind them. Hotels, coffee palaces and boarding houses, mostly noisy places, with shared conveniences, could always be found between coach stops, later the train station, and the town centre.

Many occupants needed a place to "stretch their legs", to get "some peace and quiet", walk the baby, give the cooped-up kids a run, and/or "bump into friends", preferably in a setting with vegetation which reminded them of "home" (which usually had been in the other hemisphere).

Maryborough, in 1860, first tried creating large, British-style Gardens on the slopes from the Court House (now Masonic Hall site) down to site of the current Post Office, but the land was gradually needed for other government buildings and activities.

In 1861, the Council bought a dam on the Main Gold Lead, right behind High and Nolan, the two commercial streets, for watering horses and fire-fighting. The Council soon enlarged it, and had the surrounding land declared a "Municipal Reserve."

In 1862, piped water from the new high level Goldfields Reservoir began to arrive in the town centre. The Reserve Dam became increasingly redundant. It stood in a low-lying mess of abandoned mine shafts and their mullock heaps, (so already deeply dug land), situated on the Four Mile Creek, (now the Main Drain), so with more than a run-off water supply, at least some of the time.

Its suitability as a site to replace the depleted gardens fronting Havelock and Neill Streets, was recognised, and so, in 1872, the Municipal Reserve became the Botanical Reserve. Strong fences and gates were added to protect extensive new plantings from wandering cows and goats, so that shady trees from everywhere could put down deep roots. Eventually they surrounded the former dam, now the lake, which was given an island to shelter water birds from introduced pests.

In 1874, the sport of Iron Quoits was introduced to the district, with pitches created in The Reserve, as well as at Dunolly, Eddington, Havelock and Timor, where the First Prize was a Gold Medal, from local Jeweller, C.J. Wilks.

In 1879, prisoners from the Maryborough Gaol built a green for the Bowling Club, but some members ring-barked trees around it, and the Club forgot to pay its water bills. Not a good first year. Soil was brought the long distance from Lal Lal (which also had a railway station), a four-rink green was established, and a Club House was built in 1901-2. In 1923, the Club merged with the Highland Society and the greens became those for ladies' croquet.



The Reserve had become a garden for everyone, fortunately, because during the Council's 1915 Budget Debate, Councillor Giddings asserted the curation should be severely reduced. Councillor Casey quickly retorted "(You want) A place for goats??"

Fast forward decades. From the late 1940s, I remember playing with acorns and sticks in the dust and gravel under the trees behind the stone seat, trying to inch closer to the water to look down for fish and water rats, while whoever was looking after me was chatting, chatting, chatting. On Saturday afternoons and Sundays, we were better dressed. People strolled around the lake, looking at the ducks, swans, waterfowl and latest blooms, "quick hello-ing" or stopping to chat with friends and neighbours, especially if someone was pushing a pram, and admirations were expected.

On hot summer evenings, the overheating of flimsy, upstairs and/or unshaded residences sandwiched in amongst commercial spaces, and the odours from their horse yards, the slimy grey-water drainage gutters and the ubiquitous, unmentionable pan lavatories, drove more people to The Reserve.

They came "for a breath" (of fresh air), a stroll, usually a chat with someone they hadn't spoken to since last week, perhaps with a thirst quench via some safe-ish water from the drinking fountain, or for more well-planned visits, with a piece of calico for the grass, a flask of cordial made with boiled water, or with even a formal evening picnic.

Continued on page 5

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Of course, one ate quietly, with best manners, sitting up straight, because everyone "is watching you," if necessary, hissed rather than spoken.

Who might we meet? Cerinis from Cross Street?, someone from the Coffee Palace, or from the Mandeville at the other end of the block, who might work for MKM [Maryborough Knitting Mills] or P&N [Patience & Nicholson], - my nosy cousin always spent too much time talking to them - or, from across the road?

Maybe Mrs King from next to Marty's, or Mum's cousins or the other people from Wilson's Buildings on the corner? People could come out from the back gates of Nolan Street, perhaps even from the billiard rooms. From the other side of Nolan Street, there may be people from the baby shop, Auntie Marie Moon from above Cloke's boot shop, who was lots of fun, but whose husband might just read a newspaper, or the bakers on the Alma Street corner, with the stinky horse yard and bread dump? And of course, people came out their back gates from High Street. There was always someone.

All too soon, the caretaker cycled up, rang his bell, and everyone left. He chained the gates and cycled off into the dusk.

I'm told that sometimes people then walked up to the Station, past the Art Deco lamps, which marked the start of the cooling Station Street avenue, to see who alighted from the evening train from Melbourne.

Simple, inexpensive entertainments.

Our modern lives give us so many options our forebears never had. The great majority couldn't afford aids for cooling, telephones for chatting, or private vehicles for a "breezy spin" "to blow away the cobwebs."

For decades, The Reserve, now Phillips Gardens, was both the lungs and balm of Central Maryborough.

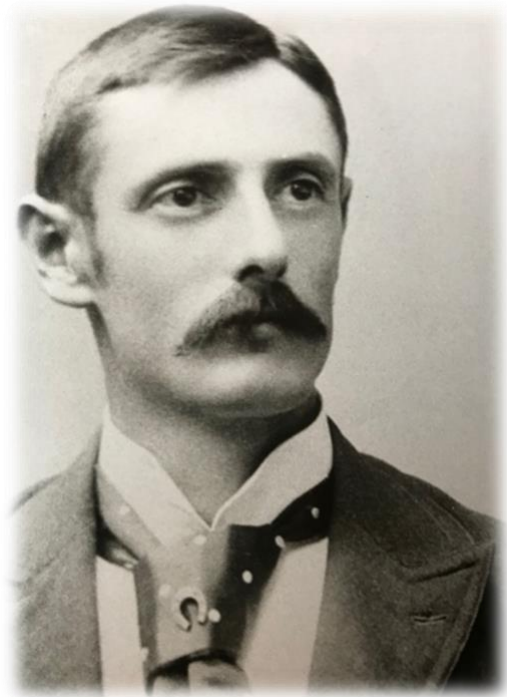
Tom Woolman

*In preparing this article Tom referred to Betty Osborn's book **Against The Odds, The Maryborough and Dunolly Advertiser** online, maps held by the Public Record office and State Library of Victoria, and of course his own Maryborough childhood memories.*

One of Tom's other claims to fame is that he edits our Society's Facebook page.

We thank him for his interest and continuing work.

PHILLIPS GARDENS: Henry Neville Phillips 1863-1938



H.N. Phillips as a young man

H.N. Phillips was born in Hamilton, the third son of Charles and Elizabeth. He arrived in Maryborough in 1878 aged 14 when his teacher father was transferred to the White Hills school.

He was appointed to the Shire of Tullaroop offices by F.T. Outtrim, secretary of the Shire of Tullaroop (and brother of A.R. Outtrim member of Parliament and Maryborough Mayor). He later served as secretary of the Gas Company and secretary and legal manager of the Building Society. In December 1888 he was appointed Town Clerk of Maryborough, a position he held for 47 years. He also carried out the role of secretary of the Waterworks Trust.

Other community roles he undertook included secretary of the Highland Society and of the football, rifle and cricket clubs. He was also an office bearer in the Australian Natives Association, In 1890 Phillips was appointed a licensed government auditor and in 1900 a civil engineer. He was also a Justice of the Peace and a Valuer.

Phillips designed the band rotunda in Princes Park to commemorate Maryborough's golden jubilee.

He was buried in the Maryborough Cemetery. A plaque was installed in the gardens in 1975

MARYBOROUGH CONNECTIONS

Over a number of years our Society has compiled a list of notable people who were born in Maryborough or close by, lived in the town, or visited, albeit briefly, at some stage.

Our categories are:

- # Writers, Journalists, Broadcasters and Reformers
- # Politicians, Generals and Governors
- # Entrepreneurs
- # Sportsmen and Women
- # And ... Just Passing Through ...

Included in the last category for example, are Amy Castles, Caroline Chisholm, Queen Elizabeth II, Joseph Jenkins (*Diary of a Welsh Swagman*), Annette Kellerman, Nellie Melba, Samuel Clemens aka Mark Twain and Eugene von Guérard.

We've recently discovered another candidate for the Politicians category and one for the Journalist list.

ALEXANDER HUGH PANTON March 20 1877 – December 25 1951



*Hon Alexander Hugh Panton
Image courtesy of Parliament of W.A.*

On his World War One enlistment documents Panton recorded his birthplace as Alma. He was educated in Carisbrook, where his parents Alexander Henry and Jessie née Miller had married.

Panton worked as a gold miner in Victoria before enlisting for service in the Boer War (1899-1902). After World War One (he enlisted at the age of 38 and was wounded) he had a long and influential role in trade unions and the Australian Labor Party, and was elected to both the Upper and Lower Houses of the Western Australian Parliament, serving as a Minister and as Speaker. He was involved in many community organisations and was awarded the C.M.G.

JABEZ WALTER BANFIELD 1820-1899

Born in Chatham, Kent, Banfield trained as a printer in Liverpool. He was a childhood friend of James Gearing (later Mayor of Maryborough). They both completed their apprenticeships with the same firm and both married in Liverpool.

Banfield recalled later in life that "The discovery of gold in Australia caused great excitement in England and was the chief topic of conversation... one Sunday afternoon at our tea table Australia was freely dwelt upon ... ". As a result of the discussions he and Gearing sailed for Australia on the *Serampore* in July 1852. They tried their luck in north eastern Victoria then the the Campbell's Creek area, before returning to Melbourne and working on *The Argus*.

Following the gold rushes to Maryborough, Gearing, Banfield and Edward Nuthall, who previously operated a printing firm in Melbourne, created the *Maryborough Advertiser*, which in 1856 became the Maryborough and Dunolly Advertiser. The three men were involved in publishing newspapers in a number of gold towns.

On the death of Edward Nuthall, Banfield purchased the presses and machinery and printed the *Ararat and Pleasant Creek Advertiser*, which later became *The Ararat Advertiser*, published continuously for fifty years. Banfield served in a number of Ararat community organisations such as the Benevolent Society, Masonic Lodge, Hospital Board and the Church of England.

Banfield's son Edmund (E.J.Banfield) trained on his father's newspaper, moved to Queensland and became celebrated as a journalist and author. He published a number of books, most notably *The Confessions of a Beachcomber*, based on his experiences on Dunk Island., where he lived for many years.

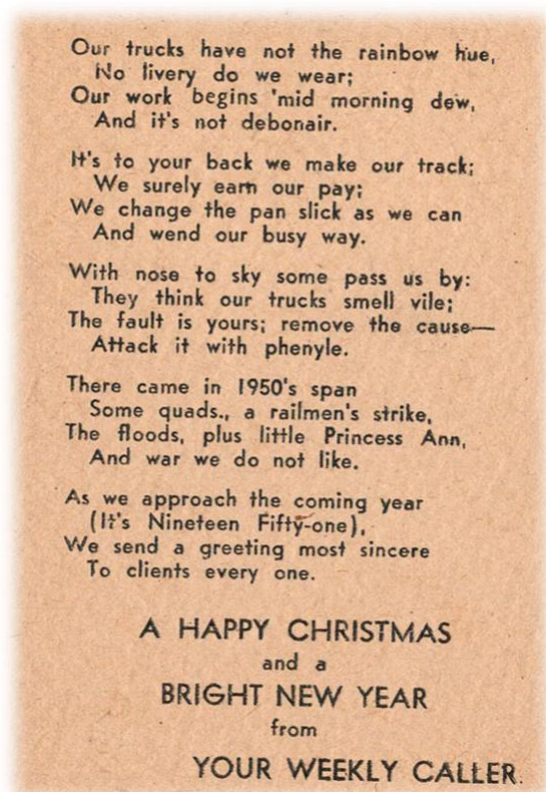
"Ted" Banfield's friend Alec Chisholm (they met in Queensland and shared an interest in nature) wrote the introduction to the book.

YOUR WEEKLY CALLER

In her book *Against The Odds*, Maryborough historian Betty Osborn noted that the issue of a town sewerage system had been discussed from around 1932. However when a referendum was held on the issue in 1937, the town voted NO. Consequently Maryborough lagged seriously behind neighbouring towns. Construction finally began in 1955.

Before this, a “pan service” was the principal method of sewerage or nightsoil disposal. The workers were variously called “weekly callers”, “pan men”, “sanitary men”, “night men”, or the frowned-on “dunny men”. Access to the outhouses and pans was usually at the rear of properties via the network of lanes.

It was traditional for workers such as rubbish collectors and sanitary men to receive a Christmas gift – often a bottle of beer. To encourage residents, the sanitary workers in Maryborough often delivered a small card incorporating a topical humorous poem and season’s greetings. The Society’s archives contain a selection of these cards from the forties and fifties. The 1950 version, reproduced below, mentions strikes, the birth of quads, floods and Princess Anne.



The Australian writer Clive James published possibly the most colourful and definitely the funniest description of the workings of the pan system in 1940s and 1950s Australia.

“Ever since I could remember the dunny man had come running down the driveway once a week. From inside the house, we could hear his running footsteps. Then we could hear the rattle and thump as he lifted the lavatory, took out the full pan, clipped on a special lid, and set down an empty pan in its place. After more rattling and banging, there was an audible intake of breath as he hefted the full pan on to his shoulder. Then the footsteps went back along the driveway, slower this time but still running. From outside in the street there was rattling, banging and shouting as the full pan was loaded on to the dunny cart along with the other full pans. I often watched the dunny cart from the front window. As it slowly made its noisome way down the street, the dunny men ran to and from it with awesome expertise. They wore shorts, sandshoes, and nothing else except a sun-tan suspiciously deep on the forearms. Such occasional glimpses were all one was allowed by one’s parents and all that was encouraged by the dunny men themselves. They preferred to work in nobody’s company except their own. They were a band apart ...

Only when he was about to leave our lives forever did his concentration slip. Perhaps he foresaw that one day the sewer would come to everywhere in the world. Perhaps in order to ward off these grim thoughts he partook of his Christmas beer while still engaged in the task. Because it was on that day – the day before Christmas that the dunny man made his solitary mistake.

My mother and I were having breakfast. I heard the dunny man’s footsteps thumping along the driveway, with a silent pause as he hurdled my bicycle, which in my habitual carelessness I had left lying there. I heard the usual thumps, bangs and heaves. I could picture the brimming pan, secured with the special clipped lid, hoisted high on his shoulder while he held my mother’s gift bottle of beer in the other, appreciative hand. Then the footsteps started running back the other way. Whether he forgot about my bicycle, or simply mistimed his jump, there was no way of telling. Suddenly there was the noise of ... well, it was mainly the noise of a dunny man running full tilt into a bicycle. The uproar was made especially ominous by the additional noise ... tiny but significant in context ... of a clipped lid springing off.

While my mother sat there with her hands over her eyes I raced out through the screen door and took a look down the driveway. The dunny man, overwhelmed by the magnitude of his tragedy, had not yet risen to his feet. Needless to say, the contents of the pan had been fully divulged. All the stuff had come out. But what was really remarkable was that none of it had missed him. Already you could hear a gravid hum in the air. Millions of flies were on the way towards us. They were coming from all over Australia. For them, it was a Durbar, a moot, a gathering of the clans. For us, it was the end of an era.”

Clive James
Unreliable Memoirs (1980)

PRINCES PARK WW1 MEMORIAL GATES

Margaret Baskerville’s digger sculpture in McLandress Square is often the focus of WWI and WWII commemorations, leaving the Princes Park Memorial Gates largely forgotten.

The gates, incorporating Harcourt granite pillars, were unveiled by Brigadier General Thomas Blamey on Armistice Day, November 11, 1928.

The £535 required for the project was raised by the women of the Maryborough Red Cross. The pillars display the names of 493 serviceman and five nursing sisters who enlisted for service in WW1.

Carleton and Carleton from Hosken and Co. in Hawthorn submitted the winning design.

The park’s original cast iron gates and fence, manufactured by the McKay foundry in Ballarat, were constructed in 1885 but later modified to incorporate the memorial pillars. The original pillars were relocated further north to another park entrance.



The original gates to Princes Park looking towards the oval



Post 1928 view with memorial pillars. View up Nightingale Street



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