

Traralgon & District Historical Society

Incorporated

BULLETIN

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Church Street

Looking towards the Baptist Church on the corner of Hotham Street

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Dawn Hustler receiving her Life Membership award at the Annual General Meeting; photographed with Jim Hood, Brian Hustler & Ron Hore.

From the Chair

Winter has arrived and some of our members have headed north for the warmer weather.

The Society is moving along well with Working Bees achieving tasks set aside for cataloguing, along with sorting photos that have been donated.

Members attended the combined Gippsland Historical Societies meeting at Rosedale – although a very wet and cold day, the meeting was attended by members of the various Societies of Gippsland.

The Annual General Meeting was well attended and a life membership was awarded to our Secretary, Dawn Hustler. This award was well deserved as Dawn's efforts have been outstanding over the years of her involvement with the Society.

Donations of photos and written articles keep arriving, adding to our collection. Everyone enjoyed hearing Richard Jeffery talk on the role the Jeffery family played in retailing in Traralgon. Our meeting for May will be Mrs Henry, talking about fire in the district and the damage it caused last summer.

We have trips arranged to Bindi Station later in the year along with a trip to the Military Museum at Nar Nar Goon. Our Oldsmobile won the Veteran Vehicle of the Year at Gippsland Historic Car Club at Morwell.

On closing, Robena and I had a very enjoyable trip to New Zealand – a very scenic place and both islands have their own beauty.

Till we meet again,

take care

Jim



Jim and Robena enjoy the sights of New Zealand

Coming Events

11th May – Tuesday, 7:30 pm

Our previous speaker, Lorraine Paulet, is not able to attend, and in her place we will have the Captain of **Glengarry West Rural Fire Brigade, Helen Henry**, who will address us and show us slides on the devastating fires of 2003. Thanks to Helen for filling-in.

6th June – Sunday, 10:30 am

Light Horse and Field Artillery Museum – we will be leaving from Seymour Street carpark at 10:30am by private cars. Cost for Museum is \$6.00 with guided tour and complimentary cuppa and biscuits plus \$5 per person towards travel costs. Total cost \$11.00.

Names required for transport and booking purposes.

8th June – Tuesday, 7:30 pm

Mr **Bill McMahon** of **Ray White Real Estate** will tell us something of the business of Real Estate. Mr McMahon has been involved with this business for many years and should prove to be a most interesting speaker.

13th July – Tuesday, 7:30 pm

Mr **Bruce Fulton**, the current school principal of **Traralgon South Primary School**, will tell us the history of this School and how it has grown over the years, culminating in the celebrations this year to mark 125 years of service to students of Traralgon South.

7th August – Tuesday, 7:30 pm

Mr **Barry Sykes** will be giving a talk on **horses and sundry items**. Knowing Barry, it will be a pleasure to hear him as he assures me he knows nothing about horses! A presentation of slides will follow his address.

14th September – Tuesday, 6:30 pm

Our **Annual Dinner** will be held at the Grand Junction Hotel function room on Tuesday, 14th September at 6:30pm. Guest speaker will be **Mr Les Wright**. Make a note if this in your diary.

Working Bees

Reminder – working bees will be held as usual on the 2nd and 4th Monday each month at our rooms. The next working bee will be Monday, 14th June and the following on Monday, 28th June.

Monthly Meeting Reports

January 2004

The History of Victoria Police

Speaker: Senior Sergeant Eric Duffy

Snr Sgt Duffy doesn't profess to be an historian, however he does have a personal interest and is concerned that history is being lost and destroyed.

Last year the Victoria Police turned 150 years old. In celebration the old *Police Gazettes* went on display at a number of sites around Victoria, including the TDHS during the month of October.

There isn't much information of the time that these gazettes don't hold. Miscellaneous information of 7th November, 1883 tells of Samuel Vary, Esq. JP of Merton Rush Station near Morwell, who had been elected the Licencing Magistrate for the licencing district of Morwell.

The former proprietor of the Stratford Supermarket a short time ago invited Snr Sgt Duffy to fossick through the roof the building, which had been a general store and drop-off point for everything since the 1880s. Around the time of 1880-1900 it had been used as a depot for the stores at Dargo, Crooked River and Grant, and was run by J D Kelly. Mrs Kelly had courteously folded and rolled-up every letter and order that she had received from the gold fields and put them in boxes. Amongst these papers was a "Forty-seven" which is an internal report used by the police. It regarded the insolvent estate of Mr T Bull who had died intestate.

Snr Sgt Duffy made reference to the recent publicity that the police department was 'short of a quid'. He related a story of how a member of the public had come into the Moe Police Station some three months ago with a book that originated from the Boolarra Police Station. It held all the district instructions and orders of Gippsland from 1892 to 1926. A district order that came out in 1915 from the Superintendent's Office in Sale said that:

The absolute necessity of the most rigid economy in the police expenditure for the next year or two in the Gippsland district is impressed upon members of the force. In this time of financial stress it is a duty of all to cheerfully assist the Government and put up with any inconvenience and perform any duty called upon and to treat the expenditure of all Government money with scrupulous care as if it were your own personal property.

It goes on to say that horses are to be used as little as possible and when not used, turned into a paddock or put onto a ration of hay only; shoeing is to be done as little as possible and only when the delay in shoeing will endanger the horse's usefulness; all unnecessary or seemingly unnecessary patrols are to be discontinued; extra care must be taken of brooms, cloaks, overcoats and brushes, and indeed of all articles issued so that they may last longer than the stipulated time; the number of letters sent must be curtailed, and so on. Current instructions are to cut down on the use of petrol, tyres etc.

An 1892 district order similarly stipulated that kerosene supplied by the Government must be burnt for as short a time as possible – an average of three hours per night was considered ample and experiments had proved that a five-eighths inch wick as supplied by the Department with half a pint of kerosene oil will burn for eleven and a third hours, therefore three gallons of oil should last for six months. Lockup lamps should not be lighted on moonlit nights and should never be alight after midnight.

Monthly Meeting Reports (cont)

While looking through the gazettes Snr Sgt Duffy came across a woodcut photo of a missing person whose surname was the same as his neighbour's. It turned out to be his neighbour's uncle who was murdered and whose body was found in the Yarra; the family had never had a photo of him.

A handwritten copy of a telegram from the Chief Commissioner of Police, 1923, is also included in the gazettes regarding a strike that occurred in our area.

In the past the police were meant to keep a daily diary. There was no CIB at Morwell until about 1960 and before that there was a detective at Warragul who covered an area from Phillip Island, Garfield to Traralgon, and another at Sale who did the rest of Gippsland. From 1952-1960 that detective was Don Cadby who now lives in Bairnsdale but had the area from Mallacoota, Omeo, Bendock, Glenn Wills etc to attend to. He was kind enough to lend his diaries to Snr Sgt Duffy who learnt that at 8:30am on Tuesday, 24th June, Detective Cadby picked up prisoners at the Sale Jail, attended Bairnsdale general sessions, awaited trial of prisoners then, after getting a prisoner from the cells, was advised that Fitzclarence had a piece of iron hidden in his clothes and was going to 'clock the escort and make a break'. A piece of three-quarter inch water pipe was found subsequently on Fitzclarence. All in a day's work!



Senior Sergeant Eric Duffy speaking to the TDHS on the history of policing in Victoria

Another entry worth mentioning involved the homicide and arson squad regarding the death of Stephen Biro and the burning of the Glenn Wills Hotel. This investigation included Detective Cadby transporting the contents of Biro's stomach to Sale. They were often long days, ending after midnight, and involved a great deal of travelling. These daily diaries were meant to be handed-in when completed, kept for seven years, and were then to be destroyed.

Fortunately our current Police Commissioner has keen interest in retaining history and has bent over backwards to ensure that things remain as they should.

Monthly Meeting Reports (cont)

February 2004

The History of the Baptist Church

Speaker: Ray Moore

Since Ray retired he's had two main interests in life: history and family history. China was his country of birth and from where he'd recently returned from a 2 week trip - he was still smiling.

About two years ago Ray was in a Church business meeting when the centenary was mentioned and he put his hand up to write a history of the Baptist Church. He soon discovered that there were no archives as such but lots of archival items, and that's where the interest lay.

He discovered a document outlining the first 80 years, which was called 'History of the Baptist Church 1904-1908', but early minute books state November, 1903 as the date of the first services. Nonetheless, the document had a lot of good material in it.

Minute books were a great primary source for information and included Deacon and Church meeting minutes. There were some minute books missing – the Baptist Church was not as hierarchical as the Church of England or Catholic Church, and so their democratic approach meant that with the turnover of office bearers, there was no central storage. Ray has made archival cupboards in order to preserve future history.

Ray entitled his book *An Ordinary Church in the Country*. He felt this was appropriate as it encapsulated the sense of modesty and pride that was the Baptist Church in Traralgon. The cover was watermarked with a picture of the congregation and a picture on an easel that stated "God wields his brush to change the ordinary into the extraordinary".

The history of Traralgon was the setting for the book and from there it detailed the people of the Church, such as Mr Doran who had a horse and buggy and would collect children for Sunday



The Baptist Church, 1906-1966, Corner of Church & Hotham Sts

School (during the 1930s the Church had missions and all the children in the area would go along and sing); Rev. Cooper who, during WWI, visited North Carlton Baptist Church – the Secretary reported that he brought back "a message of sympathy with us in our endeavour to extend the kingdom in this district"; Pastor Miner, during the 1920s, came to Traralgon with a wife, who passed away at Cumnock Hospital; the Christian Endeavour Organisation, who would allocate roles like leading

Monthly Meeting Reports (cont)

meetings or writing - the group maintained a fine balance of structure and form while maintaining their individual freedom of spiritual expression; Mr Treharne, who became Secretary during the ministry of Mr Webb, was given a vote of no confidence for speaking out of turn but who appeared at the next meeting in a different role; and Ian Gook whose vote of no confidence wasn't passed as it didn't reach a two-thirds majority, but about whom there is barely any history.

The Church bought property on the corner of Church and Hotham street that went all the way down to the CWA and Morley's. In the 1950s they talked about rebuilding and hence bought the Kay Street block where the Church is now.

Ray pointed out that the book had not been written but compiled by him, and that the project has since inspired him to write poetry and all kinds of 'stuff'.

April 2004

Jeffery's Store – 1926 to 1989, 60 years in business in Traralgon

Speaker: Richard Jeffery
Precis by Nola Matthews

In the early 1900s, J H Waite had the first drapery store on the corner of Franklin and Seymour streets. Then in 1926, Mack Christensen divided the large store into two stores – one becoming Moran & Cato grocery, and the other Jeffery's drapery store. Jack Keating and Norman Frederick Jeffery set up business on 18th October 1926 in a booming railway town. Victor MacLeod was employed. Business was excellent in the years of the building of the Glenmaggie Weir but the depression years affected business.

In the first nine months of business the profit was £10 with sales at £6,500. A couple of years later, in 1928, profit was £139 with sales at £9,503; and in 1929, a profit of £131 was made. However 1930 saw a loss of £580 and in 1931 a loss of £943 with sales at only £4,412, this being the record lowest year. There were two employees, Anne Gibbs and Roy Chester.

When the State Electricity Commission (SEC) township of Yallourn was established, Jeffery's employed a boy to ride his cycle from Traralgon to Yallourn to deliver hand bills to every house to advertise their special sales. Traralgon traders paid part of the cost to have buses bring people from Yallourn to shop. Customers presented their ticket at a store and half the fare was returned. The buses were usually crowded as Yallourn did not have a large shopping centre until years later.

In 1932 Gordon Jeffery came into the business and that year things boomed once more, and a profit of £100 was made. Staff increased – Florence Hart, Mary Stoddart, Val Bertrand, Ethel Hine (nee Christensen), Les Davidson, Harold Graham, Mel Turnbull and Trixi Carr all assisted in making a larger profit year by year.

In 1935, F C Jeffery (cousin to Norman) purchased the freehold from Mack Christensen, and his son Gordon commenced buying shares from Norman. He made the last purchase in 1954 and named the store G Jeffery Pty Ltd. Mr F C Jeffery died in 1959 leaving the store to his son, Gordon, who renovated the weatherboard building. When the store needed re-stumping about fifteen years ago, an old well was found under the floorboards.

Monthly Meeting Reports (cont)

In 1937 the Australian Paper Mill (APM) built a large factory in the area and two years later sales for the year were £16,940 with a profit of £1,026. By 1958 the sales were £185,714 and the profit £13,345, and by 1989 the sales were \$2.75 million.

Also in 1937, a huge 'Opening Sale' was advertised and un-bleached sheets were 1/11 each, men's athletic singlets 1/-, bordered supper cloth 6d, towels 1/6, striped silk frock 5/-, silk slip 3/11, men's socks 1/-, and fast colour print material 9d per yard.

Supplies were becoming hard to get because of World War Two. The shop only opened two hours per day and only £20 was allowed to be spent. Rationing was introduced in 1942. Staff would drive to Melbourne with a trailer attached to the car and purchase stock from the warehouse, but it was cash only sales. Towels and sheeting were in very short supply.

Gordon Jeffery joined the RAAF and most of the male employees joined one of the services. Percy Pyke managed the store during the war years to 1945. Traralgon was expanding rapidly. In 1945 a large block of land with two old houses (which had been transported from Walhalla after the gold rush finished) on it was purchased for £12,000 in Seymour Street. The Franklin Street shop was very cramped. Gordon decided to leave the ladies' wear and manchester at this shop, but house the men's wear at a shop on the corner of Hotham and Franklin Street which he rented from Jim Rogers.

The Government Housing Commission and the APM built estates of houses in Traralgon. Gordon rented a shop at the lane-way in Seymour Street to manufacture blinds, as they had gained a contract to supply blinds to fit all the houses. The business people of the town wondered why Gordon was building his new department store out of the main commercial area. They predicted the store would not be a success as there were a few shops but mainly houses in Seymour Street. In 1955 the new large department store was completed, with ladies' wear, materials and manchester comfortably displayed and the men's wear was once again in the Franklin Street store.

Richard Jeffery had been working at the National Bank for six years, and Rockman's Warehouse for a short time, prior to his father asking him to join the business in 1957. Gordon retired in 1959, the year his mother died. Richard managed the business from 1959 to 1989 and in those years extended the store back to the rear lane-way. An area was built upstairs for office and curtain making facilities. Carpets, heating and air-conditioning were installed, and the overhead pull-string money exchange system to the upstairs office was replaced with mechanised registers in each department. Modern fixtures were in place and excellent window displays attracted the public.

Toys were kept at the Christmas period but that was not a success. Fashion parades were popular, and professional and local women modelled the fashions of the day. These were held in



Richard Jeffery

Monthly Meeting Reports (cont)

local halls but later were confined only to the store. Four huge 'Sales' were held each year, and the farmers' wives who came to town on a Wednesday for the cattle sales complained that the sales were held on a Thursday. Thursday was 'money day' - the average worker was paid Wednesday. In the peak years, thirty-eight staff were employed and the record year for sales of balls of wool was \$50,000 in one month. \$50,000 a year was spent on advertising. In 1988 the Franklin Street store was leased to Panthers Men's Wear (Jeffery's still held the freehold) and in 1989 the Seymour Street drapery store had a monster sale to sell all stock and the store was closed. Jeffery's leased the building to Findlay and Weymouth, retaining the freehold until its sale in 2003.

Richard said he enjoyed meeting people – suppliers, the public and his staff, making his thirty years a very enjoyable time in his life.

The Ikin Garage

By Ray Ikin

I seem to remember my father, Bruce, telling me his father (Pop) purchased the property (Lot 4, Kay Street) at 1-3 Argyle Street, now 1-3 Post Office Place, in 1928. Uncle Gordon thinks it was later, in the early thirties – either way, it was a long time ago. It was then a feed and grain store. Pop developed it into a garage and petrol station.

In 1940 while the war was on he wanted to build a new building, but was refused a permit by the Council, citing the material required may be wanted for the war effort. He then modified the request to renovate the existing building, which was approved. The building next door on the corner of Franklin Street was not very old and had lovely big solid brick wall which Pop made use of for the west wall of his renovation. (He would have made arrangements to do this with the owner of said brick wall of course!).

There were 10 x 500 gallon petrol tanks put in the ground and the building was built over them. There were five brands of petrol pumps put out the front: Plume, C.O.R., Shell, Atlantic and Caltex. The new building was virtually built over the top of the old one and remains as you see it today.

My first recollection of the Garage was in the early 1940s when I was there with Dad, and Pop said to me (in his gruff way) "Don't you touch anything!" I found my way upstairs; it seemed to be full of junk to me – car parts and panels. But what I remember most was a mountain of wooden boxes all marked *Plume, Atlantic*, etc. I later asked Dad what they were there for and he told me that they had held 4 gallon



Ikin Garage, 1940

The Ikin Garage (cont)

tins of kerosene and petrol, 2 per box, and they were to be sent back to Melbourne to be used again. Whether that ever happened I do not know, but the next time I went up there years later, they were gone.

In 1948 or early '49, my parents purchased the building from my grandfather after my grandparents had moved to East Malvern. My Mum and Dad had to sell our house in Kay Street to pay for it. We went to live in the Baptist Manse in Hotham Street behind the Baptist Church, which was then on the corner of Church and Hotham Streets. There was no Baptist minister at the time and when one came, a Mr Shaw, he was alone and he lived with us. Dad gave up smoking at that time.

All of my spare time was taken up serving petrol for the next 3-4 years. I would open up at 8am and Dad would get there just before 9, then I would go to school in Grey Street. Sometimes he was late and I would ride my bike as fast as I could to get there before class started. After school I would go straight to the garage, put on my white dust coat and serve petrol till 5:30.

Mum and Dad were the (Rootes Group) Humber-Hillman and Commer truck agents as well as managers of the petrol station. It had grown into quite a profitable business – it was called Traralgon Service Station.

In 1953 the business (not the building) was sold to a Mr Head who had his own sons to serve petrol and I lost my job. By the end of 1956 Mr Head had gone and McBride & Phillips, who had the BP Service Station just down Argyle Street a little, took over the Rootes Group agency – I think Mr Head had sold it to them. I remember Dad was not too happy.

Early in 1957, Vanguard Motors, owned by Sid Lawrence and Lyle Milner, started business there as the Standard Motor Co agents. They sold Standard, Vanguard and Triumph motor cars and Ferguson tractors.

I started to work for them as a 3rd year apprentice in January 1957 and finished in November 1958. I went to truck driving then and sort of lost track of time, but they went until at least the late 1960s. The petrol pumps went when they did. The brands had dropped to one – Golden Fleece. Ted Neal's Motors, the Toyota agent, were there for a short time.



Traralgon Service Station, Ikin Bros

The Ikin Garage (cont)

Alex Gathercole then rented the building and used it as office and store for his building business. At one time Gina Polus had a school of deportment there, also a carpet sewing and laying business. In the 1970s Mrs Furlonger started to sell flowers, with 2 or 3 changes of hands – No 1 was a split florist and coffee shop and No 3 was Smith Upholstery.

My wife, Nan-Maree, purchased the florist/coffee shop on 13th August 1994. She did not enjoy the coffee shop side of it and dropped it a couple of years later to concentrate on the florist trade which she does enjoy.

Smith's Upholstery moved out of No 3 in 1995 when they could no longer get insurance, as the insurance companies considered the building a fire risk. This reason also prevented us from renting it again. Nan carried on with the florist shop till the death of our mother, Etta, in June 2001 caused it to be sold at auction in February 2002. The building was handed over to the Manny's Market Group in April after we moved Tiffany's Florist to 30 Church Street.

In Pop's time the building can also be credited for the first taxi service, later to be called Ikin Bros Taxis (Theo, Gordon and Bruce). Their slogan was *Don't go hikin', ring Ikin*. I can remember the name on the top of the building being changed to Ikin Bros from W E Ikin in approximately 1946 or 1947.

Also the first bus service for Traralgon began here, called Traralgon Bus Lines, later sold to Latrobe Valley Bus Lines. They still retain the name, as I saw recently, in small writing on the side of a bus – *Traralgon Bus Lines*. The first bus was hand built by Pop on a Ford V8 truck chassis. (Pop - W E (Bill) Ikin – is also to be credited for beginning the first milk round in Traralgon from the family farm at Traralgon South.)

The Traralgon & District Historical Society records show the building changing hands two or three times, but this is not so. The leasing arrangements were that the people renting it were to pay the rates to the Council; this then appeared on Council records as the lessees being the owners. The building was demolished in October, 2002.

Many thanks to Sandra Beckett (Ikin) for making my scribble readable.



Traralgon Bus Lines

One Hundred Years Ago

By Dawn Hustler

Extracts from the Gippsland Farmers Journal

April 1904

As per our usual custom at Easter, there will be no issue of the Journal on Tuesday, 5th April.

Toongabbie races will be held on Wednesday, April 6th.

Mr W Handley has purchased Mrs Gallager's house and land near the State School, Traralgon. The highest bid at Monday's sale was £67/10/- (sixty seven pounds, ten shillings).

Mr R H Widdis has purchased the late Mr Hutton's house and 12 acres at Hilltop. £255

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Alterations to the Traralgon Railway Station, consequent to Traralgon being made the railway centre of Gippsland. Operations started on Tuesday, when a gang of men were put on to bring the earth from the hill to raise the ground opposite Mrs Kelly's hotel to the level of the line. N^o 2 road will be carried across the level crossing about as far as the subway and another pair of rails will diverge from this at the crossing. This will give two additional shunting roads, and provide much more accommodation.

If Bombala is chosen as the future Federal Capital, Traralgon will become a very important railway centre and the whole line will be transformed.

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Whilst burning off at "Ellisdale", Upper Flynn's Creek, the property of Mr J English, at the latter end of last week, nearly 30 chains of fencing were destroyed by fire.

Not only does the best cattle leave this district, but, also some of the best horses. On Saturday evening, the 6.35 goods train from Traralgon had six trucks of splendid animals attached, and they are sure to command big prices when placed in the ring.

May 1904

The Rev. Robert Elliot, of St James' Church, Traralgon, is at present visiting Sydney on a health recruiting tour. His pulpit appointments on Sunday last were ably filled by the Rev. Mr Freeman of Sale.

The petition of a number of ratepayers in the Jeeralang district of the Traralgon Shire for annexation to the Morwell Shire, which is being engineered by the Morwell Shire Council, has been forwarded to the Traralgon Shire Council. The Minister for Public Works desires to be

One Hundred Years Ago (cont)

informed how the Council views the proposal to reduce its area. It is needless to add that the Council will oppose it.

The old afternoon train service between Traralgon and Warragul was both handy and convenient, but was discontinued on the ground that it did not pay, and of course the public have to bow and look pleasant. The Warragul Shire Council has lately made a move to have the train put on again. The Narracan Shire was approached, but declined to assist.

At the Traralgon Licensing Court yesterday, Mr Sandford, on behalf of Mrs Meredith, wife of Mr Price Meredith formally of Bairnsdale, applied for the transfer of the license of the Toongabbie Hotel from Mrs Elizabeth Douglas. The application was granted.

June 1904

Some little time ago, Cr Whittakers president of the Traralgon Shire, offered a trophy of £3/3^s, to be competed for by the members of the Traralgon Rifle Club, under musketry conditions. The winner proves to be Mr C Piera, one of the most consistent shots of the club.

The new shop, built by Messrs S Wright and Co, the Federal Supply Stores, Franklin St, Traralgon, has a very handsome and attractive appearance, and is very generally admired. The building is situated at the end of the Grand Junction block. It is built of bricks from Mr Flewin's kilns, Traralgon, and all the upper rooms are plastered.

News and Notes

Donations

Tom Barry – book.

Ray Waack – WW2 petrol coupons.

Fred Wayne – paper for photocopier.

Bill Bailey – scrapbook, Traralgon Cycle Club.

Pearl Reeves – books.

Richard Moulton – books.

John Waldron – 20 copies, History of Gormandale.

Family, Clem Jones – Memorabilia.

Family, Stuckey – Memorabilia.

Donations were also received from **Joy Lancaster, Anne Heerewarden, Pat Shalleau, Don Tylee,** and **Marjorie Nicholas.**

We sincerely thank all our donors.

Traralgon & District Historical Society Inc.

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