

# The Western Port Times

## Grantville & Districts



Volume 3 Number 1

FREE

May 2020

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This magazine is a continuation of the original Western Port Times, which was published in Grantville from 1898 until 1908 by T. C. Monger, and from 1908 to August 1910 by Harold B. and J. A. Sullivan, at which date the premise is said to have been destroyed in a fire and everything lost. Publication never resumed.

At its peak, the paper was distributed from Flinders and Hastings on the Mornington Peninsula, to San Remo and Phillip Island, Inverloch and the Powlett region, through to Jumbunna and Loch, and as far north as Lang Lang.

This version of The Western Port Times is produced for the U3A Local History Group, based in Grantville.

\* \* \*

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Even during a strike mines need to be kept in good repair.

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From a watery beginning on (and in) Sydney harbour, the Genista served the people of Western Port Bay well (despite the occasional breakdown).

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The Bass Valley U3A Local History Group is looking for photos and information on places of significance to our local history.

If you have anything you would like to share with us, we have the facilities to scan or photograph your items so they do not have to leave your possession.

**Links to other historical groups**

- Bass Valley Historical Society: <https://bassvalleyhistoricalsociety.com.au>
- Friends of Churchill Island Society: <https://focis.org.au/about-churchill-island/>
- Grantville History: [grantvillehistory.com.au](http://grantvillehistory.com.au)
- Hastings–Western Port Historical Society: <https://www.hwphs.org.au/>
- Inverloch Historical Society: [cv.vic.gov.au/organisations/inverloch-historical-society/](http://cv.vic.gov.au/organisations/inverloch-historical-society/) Also: <http://inverlochhistory.com/>
- Koo-Wee-Rup Swamp Historical Society: [kooweerupswamphistory.blogspot.com.au/](http://kooweerupswamphistory.blogspot.com.au/)
- Korumburra & District Historical Society: Janet Wilson 5657 2267 or PO Bo 293, Korumburra 3950
- Lang Lang & District Historical Society: [langlang.net/historical.html](http://langlang.net/historical.html)
- Leongatha and District Historical society: [leongathahistory.org.au](http://leongathahistory.org.au)
- Phillip Island & District Historical Society: <http://pidhs.org.au/>
- Phillip Island Nature Parks, Churchill Island Heritage Farm Collection <https://victoriancollections.net.au/organisations/churchill-island-heritage-farm#collection-records>
- South Eastern Historical Association: [seha.org.au](http://seha.org.au)
- Western Port Historical Society Inc.: [hwphs.org.au/](http://hwphs.org.au/)
- Wonthaggi Historical Society: [wonthaggihistoricalsociety.org.au/](http://wonthaggihistoricalsociety.org.au/)



## The Young Folk (of Grantville)

In the early 20th century the “children’s section” of the *Weekly Times* was hosted by “Aunt Connie” and “Uncle Ben” to whom the young folk could write. “Connie” and “Ben” were likely the same person, probably one of the (male) employees of the paper or the wife of same, not that their young correspondents would have known that.

From the *Weekly Times*, Saturday 20 August 1904, page 8

### A Kind Help

“Cherington,” Grantville, Aug. 8.

Dear Aunt Connie,—

I enclose two postal notes for 9s for the “Young Folks” Cot. I collected L1 14s for one of the other cots, but did not get my certificate. Will the two amounts entitle me to the Legion of Honor. We live close to the Westernport Bay. It is just in front of our place. French Island is opposite to us. The bays [*sic*] look pretty when the boats and sailing vessels are on it in full sail. The s.s. Ellen used to come in every week, but the Manawatu took her place for a time. The Deep Creek is at the bottom of our orchard. There are some nice ferns in it. The coral fern grows in the damp soil near the beach. We have a flower, fruit and vegetable garden, also some pot plants. We have a nice lot of violets and snowdrops at present, but the garden will look better when the bulbs, roses and canna and other flowers are out in blossom. We have three lambs, four calves, seven cows, seven horses, two dogs, and about 36 fowls. I do not go to school; mamma teaches me at home. I like music, and can play a few pieces on the piano. I have made a wool rug on hessian like the one in “The Weekly Times.” I am going to do the emu pattern next week. I can knit, sew, darn and crochet a little. Mamma tells me I must learn all kinds of work in time. My favorite hymns are “Count Your Blessings,” “I’ll be a Sunbeam,” “Glory Land,” and many others. I like E. P. Roe’s books, also the Pansy series. We had a lot of fruit last year, but it did not keep well. Mamma made a lot of jam, jellies, chutney, pickles and sauces, and preserved a lot whole. Grantville has one hall, one store, one blacksmith, one baker, one hotel, one draper, one saddler, one boot maker, one policeman, one fisherman. So it is all ones, and now with love to Cousins Connie and Florrie and yourself, I remain, your loving niece.—

E. M. Naomi George.

*(It was good of you to help the Cot Fund. A Legion of Honor will be sent when others are sent out.—Aunt Connie.)*

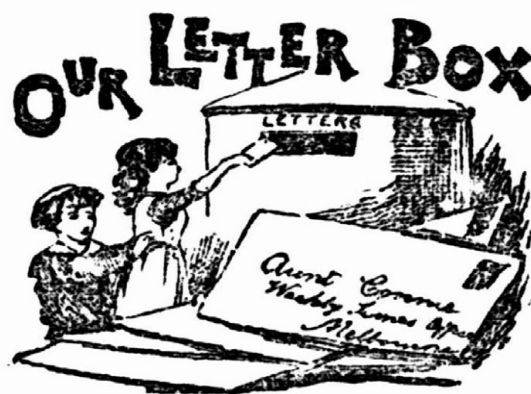
From the *Weekly Times*, 12 October 1907, page 37

### About Grantville

Grantville, 28th September.— Dear Uncle Ben,— This is the first time that I have written to you, so I wish to compete for the prizes given this month for the best letter on any subject. For my subject I have selected Grantville and its surroundings. Grantville, or course, is not a large town, owing, mainly, to its entrance by sea being difficult, as the water is very shallow, and only ships of a very small kind can come to the jetty, which is a fairly long one. Again, the nearest railway station being twelve miles distant, the people are put to great inconvenience. At and around Grantville the people mainly indulge in farming, grazing, sheep-breeding, and fishing. The fish are sent to Melbourne, for the population is not large enough for the fisherman to dispose of them here. The farmers have all put in their crops, and, not a few have used quantities of manure that they may bring their crops to perfection. The scenery round about here is, perhaps, what you would call beautiful. Abundance of wild flowers are to be found now. My age is fifteen years and three months. I remain your would-be nephew, Charles Hyatt.



BY AUNT CONNIE.



## No-No and Oh, No! Ads

The offense: ageism, ableism and sexism. Employers today are not allowed to specify male/female or a certain age group or physical state unless they are given government exemption. Of course, employers can choose who they want during the interview process providing they are discreet about it.

### VICTORIAN RAILWAYS VACANCIES FOR LAD PORTERS.

Age, 15 and under 17 years ; height not less than 5ft. 4in. ; weight not less than 8 stone. Applicants must hold Merit Certificate or pass educational examination at the 8th Grade standard. Any lad required to live away from home will be paid not less than 7/ per day. Apply now by letter (indicating educational qualifications, date of birth, height and weight) to the Secretary for Railways, Room 225, Railway Administrative Offices, Spencer street, Melbourne, C.I.

From KooWeeRup Sun & Lang Lang Guardian 12 August 1943

From *The Argus*, Friday 30 August 1895, page 5

### A Steamer In Distress

Name Unknown

San Remo, Thursday.

A steamer whose name is unknown is in a dangerous position between Pyramid Rock and Cape Wollomai. A boat has just left here for the steamer Lady Loch, which is at anchor about two miles from San Remo, and which [will] no doubt proceed at once to the steamer in distress.

The following message has been received at the Melbourne Telegraph-office:—"Cows reports that a small steamer is lying between Cape Wollomai and Pyramid Rock. She has been in the same position since about 4 o'clock to-day, and is supposed to be disabled. Think it is in view of Cape Schanck. The steamer Lady Loch is at San Remo at Present."

The offense: ageism and sexism. An employer might argue that 'junior' means junior in status not necessarily age; however the 'girls' 'lads' and 'boys' gives it away.

### Help Kooweerup Industry!

## -- WANTED --

### JUNIOR GIRLS

and

### JUNIOR LADS

### to learn Trade

SUITABLE BOYS WILL BE APPRENTICED  
TO THE TRADE.

Experienced

### MACHINISTS

also required.

GOOD WAGES and CONDITIONS.

Apply Manager, Grosby Manufacturing Co. Pty. Ltd., Koo-weerup. Phone: Kooweerup 127.

From KooWeeRup Sun & Lang Lang Guardian 4 October 1943

From the *Powlett and Victorian State Coalfields Advertiser*, Friday 28 April 1916, page 3: Kilcunda.

### Message In A Bottle

From Mr M. O'Donnell, S.M., Kilcunda, we have received the copy of a letter which was found in a bottle picked up at Kilcunda by Mr T. J. Ward.

*From two of the boys bound for the front. Having a good trip, a lot of the boys had a bad time the first night out. So would the finder kindly drop Mrs Brown, Alace St. Newtown, Sydney, Australia, and wishing you good luck and good bye from your Soldier boys (signed) Pte. J. Feehran and Pte. J. McPherson. Wishing you all well.*

Written on the back of the note is the following:—"This note was written three days after sailing, we can just sight Melbourne, Victoria. Hoping this will be picked up. Good luck I will see you when I get back."

## Besieged!

Four slightly varying accounts of the 1953 siege at Almurta.

From *The Argus*, Friday 6 November 1953, page 1

### Armed Man Terrifies Two Women

Two terrified women locked themselves in a house at Almurta, near Wonthaggi, yesterday afternoon, while an armed man prowled outside.

When a shotgun was fired the women thought the house was under siege.

But when they looked through a window, they saw a man lying dead outside.

A discharged shotgun was beside him.

When one of the women, Mrs. George Garry, had walked out the back door of her home earlier, the man had threatened her with a double-barrelled shotgun.

She dashed to the safety of the house, and locked the door, and, with Mrs. "Kingle" Watson, crouched terrified in one of the rooms.

The dead man, a farmhand, about 36, was known in the district as Alf Wilson.

Wilson, who had been at Almurta for two years, had been employed on the Garry farm for 10 days.

#### Police were on way

Police say that a 10-year-old girl was criminally assaulted half a mile from the Garry home two hours before the women were threatened by Wilson.

Police from Wonthaggi were driving to Almurta to investigate the assault on the girl when the shooting occurred.

The girl was taken to Koo-wee-rup Hospital, and treated for bruises about the throat, and later was discharged.

From *The Canberra Times*, Friday 6 November 1953, page 4

### Assaulted Girl, Then Shot Himself

Melbourne, Thursday.

A 27-years-old farm labourer shot himself dead after allegedly assaulting an 11-year-old girl at Almurta East to-day.

Police allege the man, Alfred Wilson, assaulted the girl in a disused post office near the property where he was employed. He then got a shotgun and menaced two women, Mrs. George Watson and Mrs. K. Garry, who locked themselves in the farmhouse. Mrs. Garry immediately rang the police.

As the two terrified women huddled together in the house, they heard a shot ring out. They looked out and saw Wilson's body on the ground, with a gun beside it.

Wilson was dead when police arrived.

From *The Age*, Friday 6 November 1953, page 3

### Man Shot At Wonthaggi Farm House

Wonthaggi, Thursday.—A man armed with a double-barrelled shot gun threatened Mrs. George Garry outside the back door of her home at Almurta, near Wonthaggi, this afternoon.

She ran inside the house and locked the door. With Mrs. K. Watson, who was also in the house, she spent a terrifying few minutes.

A gun was fired and then there was silence.

After some minutes, the women looked outside, where they saw Alfred Wilson, 36, farm hand, lying dead 12 feet from the back door. A shot gun was beside him.

Wilson had lived at Almurta for two years and had been employed on the Garry's farm for the past 10 days.

Two hours before the shooting today a 10-year-old girl was assaulted half a mile from Mrs. Garry's home. Police are investigating the assault.

From *The Muswellbrook Chronicle*, 6 November 1953, page 1.

### Farm Hand Suicides

Held Up Two Women At Gunpoint.

Melbourne, Friday.

A berserk farmhand, armed with a shotgun, terrorised two women and criminally assaulted a 10-years-old girl and then shot himself at Almurta, 60 miles from Melbourne, late last night. The farmhand, illiterate and mentally deranged Alfie Wilson (27), died outside a small farmhouse where he had two women baled up for nearly half an hour. He shot himself when he could not break into the house. Police arrived only a few minutes later in response to a phone call for the women.

\* \* \*

The doctor shook his head doubtfully. "Tell me, what exactly is wrong with you?" he asked the patient.

"I can't explain it," said the patient wearily. "I only know I suffer."

"The doctor nodded. "What kind of life do you lead," he asked.

"I work like an ox; I eat like a wolf; I'm as tired as a dog at the end of the day, and I sleep like a horse," replied the other.

"H'm," said the doctor. "In that case I advise you to see a vet."

*Koo Wee Rup Sun and Lang Lang Guardian* 19 Oct. 1933

From the *Herald*, Friday 15 December 1933, page 1

## Wonthaggi Coal Dispute

Steep Places in Mine

Ponies Used To Haul Skips

Points At Issue

From Our Special Representative

Wonthaggi, Friday.—The full text of the resolution conveyed from the miners' stop-work meeting to the State coal mine management is:—

That this stop-work meeting is of the opinion that the management, in forcing miners to use horses under threat of dismissal and also under threat of refusing to pay the miners concerned the minimum wage, has committed a breach of the agreement of 1916, which provides for wheelers taking full skips from the working places. While we emphatically protest against the action of the management, we are in the circumstances reluctantly compelled to make a tentative arrangement for payment for miners using ponies in dip places, such arrangement to be made between the union and the managements. Matters to be discussed are (1) rate of pay to be fixed; (2) destination of wheeling 15 yards; (3) ponies to be left in working places and removed therefrom by the management; (4) no victimisation.

### Steep Inclines

The dispute centres around one or two highly technical working conditions of the mine. In the various shafts from the Kirrak Basin to the McBride Tunnel and on to the Dudley area and the newer sinkings toward Dalyston and Anderson there are 152 working places from which coal is won.

Each of these places is worked by four men who operate in two shifts. Where faults in the seam are met with in working places, there develop dips or inclines from the working coal face back to the point from which the coal is taken away in skips. Some of these dips

are fairly steep.

The management says that at only eight of these places have the men been asked to use ponies to take the skips up steep inclines.

Altogether 130 ponies are used in the State Mine, most of them being employed in drawing skips along the main galleries.

### Management's View

The points at issue are:—

(1) The management has instructed miners working on the coal face to use some of the oldest ponies to draw the skips up the incline where there are faults in the seams. Its view is that in some places to oblige a miner to push a skip up the slope is asking too laborious work.

(2) The union maintains that a miner should not be asked to hitch ponies to the skips to take them up the slopes because it is properly the work of wheelers who handle the ponies in the level tunnels of the mine.

(3) The management contends that in dipped places in mines in other parts of the world the miners have used ponies to draw the skips up the inclines. Not far from the coal face there are coups or places cut out of the side of the gallery where the empty skips are turned over when taken from the rails on which they run. To employ wheelers to bring the skips right down to the coal face the management considers would make for uneconomical working because only one skip could be brought down at a time and the operation of moving the coal would thereby be slowed.

### Special Payment Sought

(4) The union, while opposing the principle of miners being asked to use ponies with the skips instead of pushing them back by hand, considers that if they are called upon to use ponies that they are entitled to a special payment for this operation. There are payments at the State Mine for a number of operations which are distinct from the actual hewing of coal. No basis for a special rate for miners using ponies has yet been put forward. In a day a pair of miners



A group of striking miners.

(continues on Page 7)

*Wonthaggi Coal Dispute (continued from Page 6)*

would send back 10 or 12 skips of coal from the working place. The extra rate might be computed on the time occupied in moving the skips by ponies, or based on each skip moved. At present the average daily earnings of a miner working on coal at the State Mine is 21/4 for 11 days a fortnight.

(5) The management disputes the right of miners to special payment for moving skips by ponies, and reserves the right to give instructions how various operations in the mine are to be carried out.

### Question of Resumption

(6) The union desires that these different points in dispute shall be discussed between its representatives and the management before the miners resume work.

(7) The management desires that the miners shall return to work unconditionally before any such discussion takes place. Its view is that the claim for a special rate for miners using ponies should be a matter for determination by the State Coal Tribunal. In effect it has indicated its unwillingness to alter a working condition of the mine irrespective of the tribunal.

From *The Age*, Wednesday 16 September 1908, page 10

## Pre-Maternity Claim.

At Northcote court on Monday, before Dr. Cole, P.M., and Messrs. Plany and M'Intosh, J's.P., Agnes Ann Downie sought a prematernity order against a young man named Clifton Ward Emery, dairy farmer, of Bass, near Grantville. Plaintiff was employed last year as a domestic servant by Emery's father. Under cross-examination plaintiff admitted having previously given birth to an illegitimate child, and added that she could give no instance when the defendant and herself had been seen in each other's company.

Defendant stated that when he came back from New Zealand in September last his father warned him against the girl, and he had fully regarded this warning. The first intimation he had had as to her condition was a letter received a few weeks back asking for £6 for maternity expenses.

Isaac Emery, father of the defendant, and Geo. Hamilton stated they had seen plaintiff in the hut connected with the homestead, once with a man named O'Brien and the other time with a man named Anthony.

An order was made for £10, defendant to find a surety of £20.

## Getting the Cattle Across

From the *Great Southern Advocate*, Thursday 11 June 1896, page 3: San Remo.

On the occasion of one of the trips of the President and Councillors of the Shire of Poowong and Jeetho to San Remo, it was explained to them how cattle used to be crossed from Newhaven to San Remo. Much difficulty would have to be got over in swimming them across. Now, however, a punt is fixed up for the cattle. Last week there was quite a lively scene in San Remo caused by the crossing of 60 head of Mr. Harbison's cattle from Newhaven to San Remo, Captain Loch, of the Trucanini, having the contract to carry them across the straits. The s.s. Genista was engaged to tow the cattle punt, which holds about 40 head. The first load there [*sic*] was great difficulty in driving them into the punt, as the tide was not quite high enough, and the crush has just been going through sundry repairs and is found to be too wide for the punt, thereby making it a work of great difficulty to get the cattle on board. However, after a great deal of shouting, poking and whip persuasion they were landed safely on the mainland.

From *The Age*, Friday 30 May 1930, page 12: Wandering stock.

## Court's Interesting Decision

Lang Lang, Thursday.—At the court of petty sessions, before Messrs. W. C. Wilson, P.M., and Messrs. W. Cole, G. Bishop, E. W. Misson, J. Cornish, J's.P., as [*sic*] case was decided that will affect many of the shire councils throughout Victoria.

Samuel Uprichard, of Corinella (represented by Mr. L. Rostron) claimed a refund for excessive fees charged by G. Hamilton, ranger, and D. Parks, pound-keeper of the Grantville pound, both employes of the Bass shire council. Mr. W. S. Cook (Mornington) appeared for Bass council.

A sum of £3 6/, which included a trespass fee of 5/ per head, was made on three horses impounded during Easter week on the instructions of the shire secretary, Mr. Bray.

The bench decided that while the act provided for a pound fee and a sustenance fee, no authority was given for charging a trespass fee on any stock found wandering on the roads.

An order as provided under the act was made for the return of the whole of the fees collected, namely £3 6/, together with £7 4/ costs. No order was made for damage claimed by plaintiff for the unlawful detention of his stock.

From the South Bourke and Mornington Journal, Wednesday 17 April 1878

## Phillip Island And Woolamai Shire Council

Saturday, April 13th 1878

Ordinary meeting; present; the President (Councillor West) and Councillors Kennedy, Sunderland, Turnbull and Watson.

The minutes of adjourned and ordinary meetings were read and confirmed.

### Correspondence

From Lands and Survey Office, with tracing of Shire boundary of Cranbourne.—Consideration postponed till next meeting.

From Lands Department refusing to gazette some place in the shire for holding a Land Board.—It was moved by Councillor Watson, seconded by Councillor Turnbull, that the President and Secretary wait on the Minister of Lands on his arrival at Grantville next week, and urge the matter on his consideration.—Agreed to.

From the Treasury, requesting the payment of five per cent on fees &c. under the Licensing Act.—It was decided to pay the amount.

From the Lands and Survey Office, in reference to water reserve in allot. 83, Corinella.—The Surveyor was instructed to survey the reserve.

From same, granting reservation of two roods at Cowes for yards for shipping cattle.—Plans and specification to be prepared, and tenders called for the work.

From W. Harmer, asking permission to grub three or four chains of road opposite his land.—Granted under supervision of Clerk of Works.

The Secretary was instructed to summon any person removing timber &c. from the roads of the shire or cutting drains on the same without authority.

The resignation of Councillor Fowler was accepted, and the Secretary was instructed to write to him to that effect.—The President was appointed returning officer for the necessary election, and to take steps accordingly.

A letter from Mr Crump, the Secretary, asking for an increase of Salary, was held over for consideration until next meeting.

It was resolved that repairs should be done at Kidd's Creek bridge and Walsh's Creek bridge by day labor, cost not to exceed £7 10s.

Payments were passed to the amount of £221 3s 6d.

The following tenders were accepted:—Contract 140, W. Misson, £8 10s; do. 132, £238 15s, Hickey and Grant.

The Clerk of Works was instructed to employ day labor on Bridge at Douglas Flat, cost not to exceed £8.

It was determined to expend a sum not exceeding £5 on Powlett bridge for gravel &c.

It was resolved to strike a rate of 1s. in the £ for the year 1878.

Councillor Kennedy moved that tenders be called for printing for the year. The motion was not seconded, and consequently lapsed.

It was resolved to call for tenders for the erection of a five-stalled stable at Newhaven, according to plans prepared by the Clerk of Works.

The Secretary was instructed to write to the Minister of Lands, asking him to permanently reserve Swan and Green Lakes, Phillip Island as water reserve.

It was resolved to call for tenders for ten chains drains and one-and-a-half miles filling holes on road near Duffus' to complete old contract.

The Council then adjourned.

From the South Bourke and Mornington Journal, 22 May 1878

## Phillip Island And Woolamai Shire Council

Saturday, May 18th 1878

Adjourned meeting; present: The President (Councillor West), and Councillors Watson, Turnbull, Kidd, Sunderland, and Kennedy.

Mr. Duffus, the newly elected member in place of Mr Fowler, resigned, made the usual declaration, and took his seat at the table.

### Correspondence

From the Crown Law offices, agreeing to pay £25 a year rent for office in the Shire Hall. From Mr. Milne, applying for a slaughtering license.—Referred to Constable Ardill for report and subsequently granted.

From the Lands and Survey Office, in reference to grant of half an acre at Cowes for sale yard.

From A. Stewart, refusing to consent to excision of one chain in width from his tramway reserve.—Postponed till next meeting; the Secretary to notify the Councillors of Councillor Kennedy's motion in reference hereto.

From W. Harbison, asking for works to be done on Phillip Island.—Referred to Clerk of Works for report.

From Mr. Muntz, in reference to completion of Shire Hall.—Consideration deferred.

From the Lands and Survey Office stating

(continues on Page 9)



*Phillip Island and Woollamai... (continued from Page 8)*

that Swan and Green Lakes were temporarily reserved as water reserves on Phillip Island.—The Secretary was instructed to write to the Minister of Lands and ask him whether Mr. Harbison still held them under grazing Licenses.

From Mr. Hicks, asking for use of Shire Hall, fortnightly, for divine service. Granted till the end of the year.

Councillor Sutherland moved, seconded by the President, that Mr. Crump's salary be raised £30 a-year, commencing on 1st July next year.—Councillor Kennedy moved, as an amendment, seconded by Councillor Duffus, that no action be taken.—For the amendment, Councillors Kennedy and Duffus.—Motion carried.

It was resolved, on the motion of Councillor Kidd, seconded by Councillor Turnbull, that a bridge be constructed across the main drain at Natcott's Hill, on Bass road, at a cost not exceeding £4.

The Clerk of Works reported that the sum of £8 voted for repairs to Bothwell's Bridge, Douglas Flat, was not enough.—Councillor Kennedy moved, seconded by Councillor Watson, that tenders be invited for the work to be opened by the Secretary and Councillor Kennedy, on June 1st.—The President moved, as an amendment, seconded by Councillor Turnbull, that tenders be returnable at next meeting, June 8th.—Amendment agreed to.

Accounts to the amount of £199 4s. 9d. were passed for payment.

Councillor Kennedy moved that the Minister of Lands be requested to annex to the Phillip Island and Woollamai [*sic*] Shire the unoccupied country between it and the Cranbourne Shire.—The motion was not seconded, and consequently lapsed.

George Coates' tender, £41 2s. for contract No. 742, was accepted.—For contract No. 141, a tender for £40 1s. was received from F. Fraser, and it was decided to call for fresh tenders in August next.

It was resolved, on motion of Councillor Sunderland, seconded by Councillor Kidd, that fresh tenders be called for stockyard at Cowes, and alterations made.

It was resolved, on motion of Councillor Turnbull, seconded by Councillor Kidd, that tenders be called for 15 chains of levelling, forming, and gravelling, in front of Township at Griffiths' Point.

The Secretary was instructed to get the Shire Hall insured; also to write to the Minister of Mines for a return of the coal leases in the Shire.

The Council then adjourned

From the *Canberra Times*, Wednesday 7 October 1964, page 7

## Mine Fire Traps 57

Melbourne, Tuesday. — Fifty-seven coal-miners were stranded in the Kirrak Mine, three miles from Wonthaggi for nearly five hours today before climbing a 1,000-ft. ladder to the surface.

The miners were trapped this morning when a fire demolished the winding room from which the mine's cage-lift was operated.

Younger miners were able to climb the ladder in about 20 minutes, but older men, some more than 50, took up to an hour and a half for the frightening ascent, resting at platforms every 22 ft.

### Three Had To Be Persuaded

Deputy foreman Allan Thompson, 46, had to climb down the ladder to persuade three miners to make the climb.

The first man reached the top at 1.35, and the last man was out shortly after 3 p.m.

The fire began in the compressor room at 10.45 a.m., and raced along oil soaked walls to the engine-room.

Clothes left in a change room by the working miners were lost when the building was razed.

### No Work For Two Weeks

Police estimated the damage at £100,000, but the mine's managing director, Mr. Jim Byrne, said it would not reach this figure.

Rebuilding would begin immediately, and it could be up to two weeks before the lift was operating again. No miners would be working until then.

Eight ponies, trapped underground will not be brought to the surface until the lift is back in action.

None of the men was affected by the incident. "There was never any danger," Mr. Byrne said.



Fire blazes and smoke gushes from pit head buildings at the Kirrak coal mine, near Wonthaggi, Victoria, below which 57 miners were stranded at the 1,150ft. level.

From the *Weekly Times*, Saturday 2 July 1881, page 10

## The Kilcunda Country

(By Our Travelling Reporter)

(Re-paragraphed for the sake of clarity.)

So much has been said and written about the Kilcunda coalfield, that the subject has been worn almost thread-bare. As, however, the agitation for the re-opening of the workings and reconstruction of the tramway—after the latter having remained in a state of decay for two or three years—is still going forward, a short description of the present aspect of the mine and its surroundings may serve towards letting the public know the advantages or disadvantages which surround the revival of coal mining in the locality of Kilcunda.

The mine is situated within a few yards of the edge of the cliffs overlooking Bass Strait, and the surface workings and machinery, although now in a dilapidated condition, indicate that almost everything necessary for coal-raising operations has been constructed, and it seems therefore a great pity that all the time, labour, and expense connected with the attempt to discover a payable gold-field [*coal-field meant*] should have resulted, after a lapse of three or four years' trial, in a complete failure.

It is asserted by the residents of Kilcunda and those interested in the coal-mining operations that the stoppage of work was due to the great expense connected with the conveyance of coal to Melbourne. Owing to the peculiarly rugged nature of the coast and the presence of breakers, it is impossible to construct a jetty anywhere in the neighbourhood of Kilcunda, and the nearest point on the seaboard, therefore, from which goods can be conveyed to or from Melbourne, is the jetty at Griffith's Point, some ten miles from Kilcunda. It will thus be seen that more than ordinary difficulties, in the way of conveyance, surrounded coal mining operations in the locality, and these were heightened by the fact of the company being obliged to purchase the right of constructing a tramway through the property of a Mr. Anderson, who owns a fine strip of country lying between Kilcunda and Griffith's Point.

In the terms of the agreement was a proviso that if the tramway remained idle for two years the land should revert back to the original possessor. As above stated, the company continued working for some three years, and were then obliged to suspend operations, the expense connected with the carriage of coal

—which, however, was principally due to the style in which the tramway was constructed, and its non-adaptability for the conveyance of large quantities of coal at a time—being too great to make the industry payable.

The company having discontinued working for two years, Mr. Anderson consequently claimed the land through which the tramway ran, in accordance with what he considered to be the terms of the agreement. Lately, however, the company endeavoured to get a bill passed through Parliament to restrain him from regaining possession of the land, and, so far, have been successful, their intention being, it is stated, to again commence operations, though on a far different and more extended scale, when the affair has been permanently settled.

The promoters appear to have every faith in the ultimate success of coal-mining at Kilcunda, and as the industry is an important one, it is to be hoped that their operations in the future will be signalled by more perseverance and enterprise than in the past. Several Government officers have reported at different periods on the existence of a payable coal-field in the neighbourhood of Kilcunda, and have also pointed out the difficulties which surround its proper development.

Mr. R. A. F. Murray, in his report of 11th September, 1877, gives a description of the workings, and then goes on to state that a line of tramway of light rails, say 35lb. to the yard, could be permanently laid down to Griffith's Point for about £8,000, and, including all necessary rolling-stock, for £12,000; and if a proper system of working were employed, the coal-mine could be made payable. Mr. Selwyn, however, another officer of the department, reported rather discouragingly regarding the existence of a payable coal-field, while in May last year a third official (Mr. Norman Taylor) paid a visit to Kilcunda, and appeared to be favourably impressed with its coal-producing capabilities, but for some inexplicable reason his report has not yet been published.

As the mine now stands, it simply reminds one of a deserted quartz claim. Everything is rapidly falling into a state of dilapidation and decay, and the only work that is being

(continues on Page 11)

*The Kilcunda Country (continued from Page 10)*

done is pumping water at regular intervals, in order to keep the shaft in as good a state of preservation as is possible under the circumstances. The main shaft is down about 100ft., and the adit level, which commences in the face of the cliff, extends about 400ft. before joining the shaft, into which also another tunnel, several hundred feet in length, runs from another direction. The seam of coal is distinctly traceable on the cliff—at the mouth of the tunnel, and out of workings extending to the shaft, something over 5,500 tons have been sent to Melbourne, and sold at a price ranging from 21s. 6d. to 32s. per ton.

Mr. Watson, who held a position of trust under the company when the mine was in full working order, and is still in charge, has furnished me with an estimate of the probable cost of conducting coal-raising operations in a 24in. seam, such as exists at Kilcunda, and at an average of 100 tons per day. It will be seen that this includes wages, rates of carriage, etc., and is as follows:—100 tons at 6s. per ton, £30; heading six yards at 16s., £4 16s.; props, 10s.; manager, 15s.; engineer, 9s.; blacksmith, 9s.; carpenter, 9s.; clerk, 6s.; striker, 6s.; braceman, 7s.; and platman, 7s.; total, £38 14s., or an average of 7s. 9d. per ton, which represents the amount of expenses to be incurred in raising the coal and putting it in the truck at the mouth of the mine.

To this must be added the cost of carriage by tramway to Griffith's Point, and from thence to Melbourne, 7s. per ton, which will bring the total expenditure up to 14s. 9d. per ton. This, according to Mr. Watson's estimate will represent as nearly as possible the average amount per ton which Kilcunda coal will cost delivered in the metropolis; that is, assuming that steam power be employed for its conveyance on the tramway, in which case he asserts there would be no doubt as to the payable nature of the undertaking.

Whether this supposition is based on a sound foundation or not remains yet for speculators to judge, but there certainly ought to be something done in order to discover once and for all the existence or non-existence of a payable coalfield in the locality of Kilcunda. Independent altogether of the advantage to the district in possessing a permanent coalfield, the gain to residents of Melbourne would be great, inasmuch as there would then be some competition with New South Wales, and the latter would not

consequently enjoy the monopoly which at present exists in the coal trade.

There is a vast stretch of country lying towards the Powlett and Cape Paterson which requires a thorough prospecting for coal; but this can never be done while the Government carry on boring operations with such a small drill as that now in use. It is simply labour lost, and money thrown away. The drill does not go deep enough, and the ground cannot, therefore, be properly prospected. Some six or eight men are required to work the drill, and there is besides a great deal of expense connected with the shifting of it from one place to another, yet all this has been done for many months without any return being obtained.

The land, too, has been reserved in all directions for many miles, so that selectors are unable to take up anything above 20 acres, and as this amount is too small to make a living off, little or no settlement exists in the back country and towards the Bass and Tarwin. The question of opening these reserves (of course with the proviso that coal mining could, if necessary, be carried on after selection) is one which should command the attention of the Government. Both the Lands and Mining Departments are interested in the matter, and no difficulty ought surely to exist with regard to its settlement.

Intending selectors are anxiously waiting to peg out on the first opportunity, and the soil being equally good as that of Gippsland, while the timber and scrub is not nearly so thick, almost every available acre would be taken up at once. A few adventurous individuals have already selected, but although they over and over again petitioned the Lands Department for a recognition of their claims for leases, and have received numerous promises to that effect, nothing has been done, and the unfortunate settlers are liable to lose all their labour and expense in clearing and cultivating the ground, erecting farm buildings, and in forming roads from the back country to the coast.

I travelled for several miles through the Bass, Powlett, and Tarwin ranges, and was astonished to find men with sufficient enterprise to attempt the opening up and reclamation of this almost unknown region. Certainly there were only a few, evidently the pioneers of the district, but I was assured on several occasions that a perfect rush for land would take place if the coal and blackwood reserves were abolished, and the country were thrown open for selection.

From the *Weekly Times*, Saturday 20 February 1926, page 27

## **Pastures and Various Crops**

### **Bass Valley Converted Into Highly Fertile Area**

by "Utility"

Fifty years ago the area of land adjacent to the present railway station at Almurta, on the Strezlecki line [*it is actually the Nyora-Wonthaggi line – editor*], was in a very rough state. It was practically all held by the Messrs Pender Bros., well known in racing circles at that time. Both of them were noted amateur riders over fences and on the flat.

The property was known as Bass Park. It included a large portion of the Bass River, the adjoining flats having been the best feeding ground on the station.

In 1883 the place was made available for selection. Its condition did not offer much inducement for small blocks to be taken up. But several men who had previously been identified with farming considered that the quality of the soil on the river flats was well worth the expense of clearing and sowing down with grass.

Messrs W. Craig, T. L. Caldwell, J. Walker, J. Stewart, W. S. Walker, R. Ward, M. Hawkins, I. Emery and J. Pretty were among the pioneers who took up blocks varying from 90 to 300 acres.

It is estimated that at the present time the cost of bringing this land from its virgin state to what it is now would be from £20 to £30 an acre. Years ago the value of the timber was not considered, and thousands of tons of blackwood and hazelwood were piled up and burnt. In addition to the heavy timber on the flats there were big tussocks and scrub to contend with.

But by dint of hard work and perseverance the pioneer's task was practically completed, and the Bass River flats will now compare with any part of Gippsland for grazing or agriculture.

#### Many Advantages

Situated about 60 miles from Melbourne with a suitable train service, no difficulty is experienced in transporting both stock and produce to the best market. The rainfall averages about 35 inches a year, and the water supply for either stock or home uses is never-failing if proper methods are adopted to conserve it.

The river flats, composed of rich and deep soil, are rather hard when first broken up. Afterwards, under proper conditions of working, they will produce either grain or root crops. The

majority of the landholders in the valley hold the opinion that there is more to be made out of the flats by grazing than by cultivation.

The splendid growth of grasses of all kinds, clovers and other herbage that is induced almost right through the year provides fodder that is specially suitable for either milk production or fattening purposes.

The hilly country is nearly all cleared and sown down. While not as rich as the flats, the grey soil on the hills produces a good sole of grass, and is generally considered to be quite equal to the lower lands for cultivation.

#### Successful Landholder

Mr J. Walker, one of the earliest settlers, gained experience with his father on a selection at Glenalvie, in close proximity to the Bass Valley. This property was taken up in 1883, and when an opportunity offered Mr Walker purchased a block of 350 acres within a mile of the Almurta railway station.

[A] portion of this is [*unclear words*] quality, and the balance undulating country. It is well watered by Tennant's Creek, and has a frontage to this never-failing water supply.

The whole of the land is well cleared, subdivided and sown down with rye grass, cocksfoot, and clovers.

Mr Walker is engaged in mixed farming. Sheep and cattle are reared and fattened, and a limited amount of land is cultivated. Only sufficient cows are milked to provide for home requirements.

#### Border Leicester Sheep

Among the 350 sheep at present on the farm is a flock of stud Border Leicesters. They are bred from first-class strains, and do remarkably well in the district. At present a ram from the well-known Wycheproof breeders, Messrs T. Pryse and Sons, is being used. The previous sire was a ram from the Research Farm at Werribee.

These sheep are large-framed and good shape. Last year the ewes cut 11 lbs. of clean wool, which realised 17¼d. a lb.

In 1924 the clip was about the same weight, but the price went up to 35d a lb. Most of the ewes kept for breeding lambs for export are a good class of comeback and crossbred.

They are mated to Border Leicester rams,

*(continues on Page 13)*

*Pastures and Various Crops (continued from Page 12)*  
and about 90 per cent. of lambs were marked this season.

In 1925 the lambs from this cross realised up to 39/10 a head, proving that their breeding, as well as their prime condition, was present to a marked extent.

Mr Walker recently acquired a nice little stud of Shropshires from approved strains. He proposes to give them a trial and is of the opinion that on the rich pastures they will prove equal to, if not better than, the Border Leicesters as a dual purpose breed.

### Carrying Capacity

Although the greater portion of the property is hilly, its carrying capacity is excellent. At present Mr Walker has about 120 cattle and 500 sheep and lambs on the 350 acres.

The cattle are generally large-framed bullocks, in prime condition. Both sheep and lambs have an abundance of grass, and the lambs will be ready for market this month.

Several bullocks are purchased as stores. Fat cattle from this holding can always be relied on to do well, and top prices are obtained in the Melbourne market.

Mr Walker gave top-dressing a trial last year. On 20 acres he distributed a ton of bone and super mixed.

The result was so satisfactory that he intends to fertilise well up to 100 acres during the coming season.

### Another Enterprising Settler

Mr T. L. Caldwell, of Moyaver, has 90 acres of river flats close to the Almurta railway station. He has been in the Bass district since 1884. His land is all thoroughly cleaned and drained.

The latter is very essential, as in wet seasons water comes down from the hilly country, and would submerge the flats if a proper system of drainage was not provided.

The farm appointments are complete and up to date, and the holding is an object-lesson as to what can be done on a small area of rich soil. Proof of the carrying capacity of the land is furnished by the fact that even in this fairly dry year 65 head of cattle are being carried on the 90 acres, and there is an abundance of grass.

A frontage to the Bass River provides an abundant water supply for all purposes.

### Jersey Herd

Mr Caldwell has a herd of first-class Jerseys. They are bred from best Victorian and South Australian blood. Previously he gave other

breeds a trial, but has found the Jerseys the best. The remainder of the cattle on Moyaver are bullocks.

The land has all been sown down with a mixture of papsalum [*sic, presumably paspalum meant*], rye grass, cocksfoot and clovers, and this combination has given complete satisfaction. The stronger grasses have provided shade and shelter for the clovers, and the stock are able to secure a variety of feed which stands well to them right throughout the year.

A small area is put under cultivation each year. A few tons of oaten hay as well as several tons of grass hay, are cut and saved for stock during the winter months. Maize produces heavy crops up to 12ft. high in some seasons.

The land is also particularly suitable for root crops. Up to 15 tons of potatoes have been taken from an acre. Mangolds and carrots also do very well.

The present value of the river flats is considered to be from £40 to £42 an acre. When the carrying capacity is taken into consideration, that estimate does not seem high.

\* \* \*

From the *Daily Advertiser*, Thursday 21 July 1949, page 1

## They Keep Mines Safe

No coal is being mined at Wonthaggi (Vic.) now, but safety men are still on the job testing for gas, and doing general repair work and maintenance work. Two of them are shown replacing timber which collapsed when earth fell in one of the drives.



## The S.S. Genista

The S.S. *Genista* was built in Sydney in 1886 and operated as a ferry on (and in) Sydney Harbour until sailed to Western Port in 1889 and used on the San Remo – Cowes – Stony Point run until the early 1930s when it was replaced by the *Alvina*.

From *The Argus*, Saturday 21 May 1887, page 10

### Collision In Sydney Harbour.

Two Steamers Sunk.

(From Our Correspondent.)

Sydney, Friday.

A collision between two harbour steamers occurred this evening in Watson's Bay. The ferry steamer *Genista* left Circular Quay at about 6 o'clock with 18 or 20 passengers, and when abreast of the Orient Company's wharf was run into by the harbour steamer *Leveret*, which struck her abaft the after gangway, on the port side, and cut into her about 6ft., both above and below the water-line. As the *Genista* was considered to be sinking the passengers were transhipped to the *Leveret*. The *Genista* was towed over to Blue's Point where she sank directly the sand-bank was reached. The *Leveret* landed the passengers, and as she was found to be settling rapidly, she was taken over to Blue's Point and immediately sank alongside the *Genista*.

From *The Argus*, Monday 14 December 1891, page 6

### The Gale In Westernport Bay

A Narrow Escape.

Note: *Genista* and dinghy are misspelt throughout the article.

Saturday afternoon in Westernport Bay was marked by a succession of violent squalls which robbed boating of its amazement and imparted a spice of real danger to a least one pleasure party. As the steamer *Genesta* was steaming across from San Remo to Stony Point, with a party of members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Railways on board, the man at the wheel sang out that there was a small boat showing signals of distress on the weather bow, and Captain Clarke at once altered his course and bore down in the direction indicated. A heavy squall had just swept over the bay, and there was another ruffling the water ahead, and rapidly approaching.

The little dingey was sunk almost to the gunwale, and a lady in the bows was frantically waving a handkerchief tied to her umbrella as a signal for assistance. There were two other ladies and a gentleman in the dingey besides the boatman, and the little craft, which was utterly unfit to carry so many passengers in a heavy sea, was half full of water.

The *Genesta* lost no time in getting to the spot, and the passengers were quickly taken on board. The ladies were very pale, very wet,

and very thankful for the timely assistance, and they were hardly seated in the cabin before the second squall broke with extraordinary violence over the *Genesta*, getting the sea up in an incredibly short space of time, and sending the waves clean over the deck. The members of the committee were very attentive to the party, and did everything in their power to make them comfortable.

There is no doubt that if the steamer had been five minutes later the dingey, heavily loaded as it was, could not have survived the squall.

The rescued party consisted of Mr Goodchap, ex Commissioner of Railways of New South Wales, Mrs. (Dr.) Walsh, of Kew; Miss King, and another lady. They had been out all day sailing in a yacht belonging to Mr Baner, of Cowes, and the weather grew so bad that the boatmen became apprehensive as the afternoon went on, and finally insisted upon the occupants of the yacht taking to the boat. Some of the party remained on board the yacht, which weathered out the squall eventually.

From *Great Southern Advocate*, 11 June 1896, page 3: San Remo

### Genista Accident

A very severe and painful accident happened to Mr. E. Edwards, engineer on the s.s. *Genista*, on Wednesday last. He was engaged working on a crane unloading some samples of coal which were being transmitted to Melbourne, at Stony Point, when his attention was directed elsewhere, the result being that the unfortunate man got his right hand entangled in the cogs of the wheels, three fingers being terribly crushed, the second member being completely severed off at the first joint. When the steamer arrived at San Remo Mr. Edwards was driven with all haste to Bass, where Dr. Wilson attended to the injured hand. Great sympathy is expressed for Mr. Edwards, and it is to be hoped that the injury will soon be all right.

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S.S. *Genista* calling at Rhyll. B&W postcard. View of Rhyll Pier and SS *Genista*, approx 1900. From the collection of the Phillip Island and District Historical Society Inc.

*The S.S. Genista (continued from Page 14)*

From *The Age*, Monday 29 April 1901, page 6

### The Recent Gales

San Remo, Sunday.

The ship George T. Hay, which had been anchored off Cape Woolamai since Tuesday morning last, was towed out at 8 o'clock this morning by the steamer Genista. She is bound for Sydney.

From the *Great Southern Advocate*, Thursday 18 June 1903

### A Rushed Meal

The heavy fog which enveloped the port prevented the mail steamer "Genista" from going out to Stony Point till nearly 1 o'clock in the afternoon. The dense fog lifted quite suddenly about the hour named, and the whistle of the boat was the signal for a general rush by passengers who had not anticipated the fog disappearing so quickly. One traveller who had just sat down to his dinner when the whistle blew, paid his bill and cramming a couple of slices of bread in his pocket, grabbed up his hat and coat, picked up his plate of meat and vegetables and made a bee-line for the pier, content to wait till he had boarded the lugger to eat his mid-day meal.

From *The Age*, Monday 13 November 1905, page 6

### Accident To Steamer Queenscliff.

San Remo, Sunday.

The steamer Queenscliff broke down nine miles, west-south-west of Cape Wollamai at 3.30 this morning, owing to an accident to her engines. She managed to make Cape Woolamai under sail, and anchored. Two fishing boats put off to her through a heavy sea and wind, and the captain stated that he wanted a tow in. The captain of the steamer Genista immediately got up steam and towed the disabled steamer into safety. The captain of the Queenscliff has wired for a tug, as the vessel cannot steam and must go to Melbourne for repairs.



"Genista" approaching Rhyll jetty c.1915. Phillip Island and District Historical Society Inc. collection.

From *The Argus*, Monday 28 November 1910, page 8

### A Plucky Deck-Hand

San Remo, Saturday.—Mr. Winton, who offered to handle the ropes from the s.s. Genista upon her arrival to-day, was caught in one of the lines and knocked off the jetty. The tide was at strong flood, and Mr. Winton could not swim. Quickly realising his helplessness, Gutanna Marabella, a deck-hand on the steamer, dived in and caught the struggling man. The Genista [*sic*] was swinging towards the jetty, and Marabella's task of rescue was made more difficult. However, he succeeded in swimming with Mr. Winton to the steps.

From the *Powlett Express and Victorian State Coalfields Advertiser*, 10 March 1916, page 4

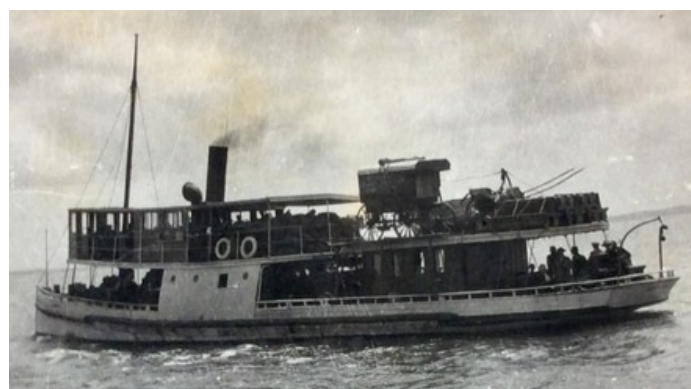
### San Remo

Capt. Andrew McLeod, who was in his 61st year, died at his residence, San Remo, on Monday, February 21, after a long illness. He arrived in Westernport with his parents about 50 years ago.

Following in the steps of his father, who was a master mariner, he adopted the sea as a profession, and for a number of years traded between Westernport and Melbourne and Tasmania in a vessel of his own, which was eventually wrecked on the Tasmanian coast. During the past 12 years he had been captain of the s.s. Genista, running between San Remo and Stony Point, he was therefore well known to some thousands of tourists who will regret to learn of his demise. He leaves a widow and two grown up children.

The burial of the Late Capt. Andrew McLeod took place on the 23rd inst. The funeral cortege moved from the deceased's residence in San Remo to the jetty where it embarked on board the s.s. Genista for Cowes. On reaching the cemetery the numbers had increased to one hundred. Presbyterian and Masonic funeral services were conducted at the grave by the Rev Mr Cox and Mr L. R. Davies-Griffith.

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Genista with jinker and wagon aboard, 1917. Phillip Island and District Historical Society Inc. collection.

*The S.S. Genista (continued from Page 15)*

From the *Powlett Express and Victorian State Coalfields Advertiser*, Friday 27 April 1917, page 3: San Remo

## Heavy Fog Delays Steamer.

Trying Experience of Genista's Crew  
San Remo, Monday.

Last Saturday the s.s. Genista was unable to leave San Remo for Stony Point until 1.30 p.m. on account of the thick fog, which afterwards delayed her journey. She did not get back to San Remo with the mails till 9.30 a.m. on Sunday. The boat only got as far as Rhyll overnight. There the crew had to sleep on board very uncomfortably. But for the kindness of the residents of Rhyll they would have had no food, being in the position of ship-wrecked mariners possessing nothing but what they stood up in.

On several days last week heavy fogs were noticeable in the vicinity of Wonthaggi, and there were some unique fog and cloud scenes on the Bass ranges. While in the town of Wonthaggi bright sun shone, a few miles away in the hills a dense fog was observed, slowly and magestically [*sic*] rolling up from the Southern ocean, throwing a mantle of grey over the landscape. About 5 p.m. on Saturday the fog overspread Wonthaggi, but soon lifted when a light breeze sprang up.

From *The Powlett Express and Victorian State Coalfields advertiser*, Friday 13 July 1917

## San Remo

Some weeks ago Mr. A. K. T. Sambell, contradicted a rumour published in the "Powlett Express" that he and two other persons had purchased the s.s. Genista. Technically his contradiction was correct, but he did not state the fact that he himself was the buyer of the boat. It is now known that he entered into possession on July 1.

Nothing is available as to the reason for keeping the information from the public until the last possible moment. Public opinion in San Remo inclines to the view that it was feared that an earlier disclosure of the fact might lead to international complications.

The s.s. Genista, carrying mails, runs under new management from July 1. She is timed to reach here at 2.15 p.m., instead of 1.45 p.m., as formerly (more often than not she was 30 minutes late). It was hoped that things would have been better under the new contract, but they are worse. One o'clock would be the more convenient time for her to arrive.

The amended time-table is — Arrive at Cowes, 12 noon; Rhyll, 1.15 p.m.; and San Remo, 2.15. Depart San Remo 8 a.m., instead of 8.20 a.m.

From the *Powlett Express and Victorian State Coalfields Advertiser*, Friday 21 September 1917, page 3.

## San Remo.

The s.s. Genista has been berthed in Melbourne for repairs, which will occupy a week. Meanwhile mails and passengers are conveyed from Stony Point to Cowes by motor boat, across the island by buggy, and to Newhaven to San Remo by row boat.

From the *Powlett Express and Victorian State Coalfields Advertiser*, Friday 16 November 1917, page 3: Family Notices.

## Wedding.

San Remo, Tuesday.

Capt. C. P. Kerr, of the s.s Genista, was married on Nov. 10 to Mrs. Leighton, relict of the late Mr. Wm. Leighton. The celebrant was the Rev. Mr. Tacon, of Cowes, and the ceremony was performed at the San Remo residence of Mr Rumpf. The bridegroom's present to the bride was a diamond brooch, and the bride's present to the bridegroom a pair of gold sleeve links with monogram. Among a number of useful and ornamental presents were a silver teapot and set from Mr. and Mrs. A. K. T. Sambell, owners of the Genista. In the evening Capt. and Mrs. Kerr were congratulated by numerous friends with musical honors.

From *The Argus*, Thursday 27 August 1920, page 12

## Phillip Island Transport

### Complaints of Channel Situation

The Minister for Public Works (Mr. Goudie) was asked by a deputation of members of the Phillip Island and Woolamai Shire Council and of the residents on the island yesterday to make arrangements to dredge the channel between Stony Point and the Island. The deputation was introduced by the Minister for Lands (Mr. Downward).

It was stated that the steamer Genista, which plied between the mainland and the island, frequently had to "force a passage" through the silt in the bed of the channel.

The owner of the vessel, Mr. A. K. T. Sambell, said that under existing conditions it was impossible to maintain a regular service to San Remo. The continual "scraping" to which the bottom of the ship was subjected involved heavy expenditure in repairs. He contemplated the purchase of a larger vessel, but could not hope to run it unless the channel were dredged.

Councillor T. McPhee said that residents on the island had been trying for 37 years to have the channel deepened.

Mr. Goudie said that he did not know if it

(continues on Page 17)



*The S.S. Genista (continued from Page 16)*

would be possible to dredge the channel effectively, or if a dredge could be made available for the work. He promised to ask the chief engineer of the department to report to the subject.

From the *Frankston and Somerville Standard*, Wednesday 21 March 1923, page 5

### The Genista Repaired

Last Wednesday the s.s. "Genesta" [*sic*] voyaged to the metropolis for the purpose of having some necessary repairs effected to her machinery, returning on Saturday morning in time to resume her usual running. During her absence passenger communication between Cowes and the mainland was maintained by motor boats. As the weather was favorable the innovation was in no wise [*sic*] an unpleasant one, and many visitors who, had they known beforehand of the withdrawal of the "Genesta" [*sic*] from the regular running would have deferred their visit to Cowes, were agreeably surprised to find how enjoyable the across was, and how excellent the sea-going qualities.

From *The Herald*, Monday 14 May 1923, page 1

### Stranded At Cowes

#### Mishap To Genista

#### Tail Shaft Broken

Cowes, Monday.

The steamer Genista, which connects Phillip Island with the mainland, broke her tail shaft this morning.

As a result a large crowd of week-end tourists have been stranded at Cowes.

Sambell and Co., agents for the vessel, state that the inconvenience to passengers and shippers caused by the accident would shortly be overcome.

The regular service will be maintained by a motor boat and a small cargo steamer, while repairs are being effected to the Genista.

They are hopeful that the regular vessel will be in commission again in a few days.

From the *Frankston and Somerville Standard*, Wednesday 13 June 1923, page 6: Phillip Island Boat Service

### A Quick Trip by the Genista

The fact that the lack of proper railway facilities is entirely responsible for the slowness of the ordinary morning trip to Cowes was very prominently demonstrated on Saturday afternoon, June 2. Arrangements had been made for a special train which left Flinders street at 1.50 p.m., and as there was no delay at Stony Point waiting for railway clearances, etc., the "Genesta" [*sic*] making the trip in 29 minutes, landed her passengers at Cowes at 4.50, exactly three hours from Melbourne.

This clearly places the responsibility for the delay with the railways, but it is understood that a fast train service will be provided to Stony Point next summer and that special arrangements will be made so that the "Genesta" [*sic*] will get her clearance with in half-an-hour of the train arrival.

In connection with recent comments in this paper on transport arrangements to Phillip Island, Mr. Sambell informs us that he has given the matter very full consideration, and that he will shortly take advantage of the columns of the "Standard" to satisfy all concerned that this vitally important question will be satisfactorily dealt with.

It may be fairly claimed for Mr. Sambell, that by his past enterprise, and also by the very substantial interests which he holds on Phillip Island, he has earned the confidence of the islanders in his courage and capacity to do whatever is necessary to maintain a safe and substantial means of transport to the island. We certainly think that, if the steamer service were conducted by an outside company, there would not be the same satisfactory winter service as is conducted at present, at what must be a substantial loss.

*(continues on Page 18)*

## S.S. GENISTA.

### Regular Service.

LEAVING	RETURNING
San Remo (daily) 7.45 a.m.	Stony Point, 11.40 a.m.
Newhaven, 7.50	Tankerton, (Tues, Thurs, Sat) 12 noon
Rhyll, 9	Cowes, 12.40 p.m.
Cowes 10 a.m.	Rhyll, 1.25 p.m.
Tankerton (Mon, Wed, Fri,) 10.30	Newhaven, 2.30
Connecting with 8.0 a.m. train from Melbourne and 11.30 a.m. from Stony Point	San Remo, 2.45
All further information—Offices. s.s. GENISTA, 421 Collins Street Melbourne, or Cowes. Phones—Central 8608, Cowes 1.	

Genista's schedule, January 1922.



Genista leaving San Remo for Cowes, circa 1920s. From the Rural Water Corporation collection, Photo RWG/U371.

*The S.S. Genista (continued from Page 17)*

From *The Argus*, Saturday 20 October 1923, page 37

## Traffic To Phillip Island

To The Editor of The Argus

Sir,—In Country News today it is stated that there have been frequent mishaps to the s.s. Genista of late years, and that much inconvenience has been caused thereby. As this statement may mislead and react against the best interests of the island, I wish to give the facts relating to the above. The Genista has been withdrawn from service a total of five occasions during the last two years, and for a total of 10 days, and this includes several days in connection with the vessel's annual survey. There are no docking or engineering facilities at Westernport, and any repair work is done under difficulties.

The weather experienced during the last winter has been exceptionally bad, and only two days was occupied this week in placing the machinery in good order for the ensuing season. The best marine engines require overhaul and adjustment occasionally, and those of the Genista are not exceptions, but any inconvenience has been reduced to a minimum by carrying out overhaul work during the slack periods.

The record of the Genista bears favourable comparison with other public transport facilities, all of which are subject to some interruption.

The Genista has never failed during the holiday season to provide safe transport for the visitors to Phillip Island and San Remo, and I have no record of any injury having been caused to any passenger in the whole 26 years during which the vessel has linked the island to the mainland, and the motor-launch auxiliary services have always provided safe and adequate transport with the least possible inconvenience.

The Genista's captain and ship's company have never been on strike, but have always given loyal service, and have safely navigated the vessel day after day even though the violent storms, many of which have occurred during recent months. A full service has been maintained during the various coal strikes.

As already announced, owing to the increased population of the island, a fast and modern vessel will be provided to cope with the additional traffic next year, and during the coming season another steamer will assist the Genista to provide ample and safe accommodation for the heavy holiday traffic which has been booked.—Yours, &c.,

A. K. T. Sambell

421 Collins street, Oct. 19.

From *The Herald*, Saturday 29 December 1923, page 4:  
Phillip Island Popular

## Tourists Take Cars

Since last Wednesday, 19th inst., the two Port Phillip steamers, s.s. Genista and s.s. Dover, have been daily running three trips from Stony Point to Cowes, Rhyll, Newhaven and San Remo, and have been filled to their utmost capacity on every trip. Every boarding house on Phillip Island is filled, and hundreds have had to be refused for the lack of accommodation. During the past year several new boarding houses have been erected, and more will be put up next year. Fifty motor-cars for touring purposes have been conveyed by the steamers to the island during the holidays. Trips to the "Nobbies," "Seat [sic] Rock," Newhaven and Cape Wottomai [sic], "Shelly Beach," "Mutton Bird Rookeries" employ these cars. Weather conditions so far have been very good.

From *The Argus*, Tuesday 14 April 1925, page 10

## Genista Aground.

Excursionists Kept Waiting.

Inconvenience was caused to holiday-makers yesterday when the steamer Genista, trading between San Remo and Stony Point, ran on a mudbank as she was leaving the pier at San Remo. The steamer was aground for about an hour, and many people were waiting when she reached Stony Point. In the evening, so great was the crowd waiting to leave Cowes (Phillip Island) for the mainland, that all were unable to travel by the Genista, and several motor-boats were pressed into the service.

From *the Argus*, Thursday 7 May 1925, page 15

## Genista Disabled.

Engine Trouble the Cause.

San Remo, Wednesday.—In consequence of a dense fog which enveloped Westernport Bay this morning, the departure of the steamer Genista with mails from here, via Newhaven, Rhyll, and Cowes, to Stony Point, was delayed from half past 7 o'clock until about 9 o'clock, when the fog began to disperse. About a quarter past 10 o'clock the Genista was seen to be stationary south of French Island, about two miles east of Rhyll. Apparently engine trouble is the cause. All the fishing boats here are out. Assistance to the disabled steamer will have to be sent from Cowes.

(continues on Page 19)

*The S.S. Genista (continued from Page 18)*

From *The Argus*, Tuesday 11 August 1925, page 15

### Boat Service To Cowes.

Referring to a complaint which appeared in "The Argus" of August 5 that a small motor-boat was used to convey passengers from Stony Point to Cowes instead of the usual steamer service, the Railways Commissioners stated yesterday that the steamer *Genista*, which provided the regular service between Stony Point and Cowes was recently brought to Melbourne for repairs and while undergoing tests under steam was used to carry passengers around the bay during the visit of the American Fleet. The commissioners added that inquiries from the owner of the *Genista* showed that the steamer is brought to Melbourne annually for repairs in the slack tourist season.

No information is in the hands of the department to show why the steamship *Alvina* which was recently purchased to replace the *Genista*, and which is in perfect order, was not substituted for the *Genista*. It is stated that the *Alvina* was also brought to Melbourne to be used during the fleet visit. The Railways Commissioners explain that these vessels are not under their control, there being a contract with their proprietors to convey persons holding combined rail and boat tickets [*sic*] from Stony Point to Cowes.

From *The Age*, 19 January 1926, page 10: Stony Point Tourists.

### Accident to S. Genista.

Cowes, Monday.—The steamer *Genista* struck a reef of rock in the channel between San Remo and Rhyll about 5.45 p.m. on Friday night, and heaved over on her side. This made it necessary to have the pumps in action to keep the water out. The tide was very low at the time, and with the rising tide the vessel received a couple of knocks, but eventually floated off, and reached San Remo safely. She was able to resume her usual trip to Stony Point next morning. The *Alvina* took her place on the evening trip to Stony Point, making the trip from Rhyll and back in the record time of 2¾ hours.



The S.S. *Genista* Leaving the pier, Cowes, Victoria Circa 1920s. Part of the Rose Series, P.655.

From the *Frankston and Somerville Standard*, Saturday 22 June 1929, page 8

### S.S. Genista To Be Overhauled.

The s.s. *Genista* has been run on Cr. G. Dorward's slip at Rhyll for overhaul. This is the third vessel to be docked. The schooner *Ripps* has just been launched after considerable overhauling and has sailed for Melbourne. This slip is a fine acquisition to the island and speaks volumes for the progressiveness and enterprise of Cr. Dorward.

From the *Frankston and Somerville Standard*, Saturday 13 July 1929, page 8: Phillip Island

### Rhyll

Work on the s.s. "Genista" is nearing completion, and it is expected that she will be re-floated next week. Although the age of this vessel is about 40 years the condition of the hull planking was found to be particularly good, every plank being perfectly sound, and on the renewal of the copper plates this good old vessel, which has served the island so faithfully in the past, will again receive official approval, and it is understood that she will be placed on moorings at Rhyll ready for service.

From *The Herald*, Saturday 17 July 1926, page 6

### Gales On Coast

#### Shipping Delayed; Genista Hove To

Heavy seas are reported on the Victorian coast between Gabo and Cape Schanck.

For several days strong winds have been blowing on the south coast. Moderate to full gales have hindered shipping.

The steamer *Morton Hall*, which reached Melbourne from Sydney to-day, reported having averaged only 7.5 knots. She was late in reaching the Heads, and lost about 20 hours on the trip.

The C. and D. steamer *Port Albany*, which arrived today after a voyage from New York, encountered high seas. The *Port Albany* also met with heavy weather when nearing Brisbane.

The small coaster *Genista*, which sailed for Westernport several days ago, is hove-to off Queenscliff waiting for calmer weather.

(continues on Page 20)

**COWES, PHILLIP ISLAND and SAN REMO** (Sundays excepted).—Trains Flinders-street daily, 8 a.m., connecting S.S. *Genista*, arrive at Cowes 11.30 a.m.; San Remo, 1 p.m. Returning: S.S. *Genista* leaves San Remo 8 a.m., calling Cowes. Arrive Melbourne 1 p.m. Fares: Return Melbourne, San Remo—1st class, 14s. 6d.; 2nd, 12s. Cowes—1st class, 10s.; 2nd, 8s.

From the *Age*, 6 November 1901

*The S.S. Genista (continued from Page 19)*

From *Frankston and Somerville Standard*, 27 July 1929, page 8

## Genista Overhauled.

Work on the s.s. *Genista* is nearly completed and the vessel is expected to leave the slipway in a few days. The seams along the bottom of the vessel have all been recaulked and recovered with copper. The massive gun metal rudder shoe, which was damaged at Newhaven, is being replaced. Mr. Sambell informs us that he is well satisfied with the work carried out on the vessel under Mr. Dorward's supervision.

Mr. Sambell states that the provision of the slipway is a great boon, as not only is the expense much less but he has no anxiety about sending vessels to sea in bad weather as he has sometimes had to do after completion of overhaul in Melbourne. In addition, it means the establishment of another industry on the island and the expenditure of more money on the island.

From the *Herald*, 15 November 1938, page 6: In Town And Out

## Pressure of Cars

The motor-car – beetling tyrant of this age – may be indirectly responsible for thrusting that graceful steam yacht, the *Alvina*, out of Westernport Bay service.

The *Alvina* is not to be scrapped, but will ply in Port Phillip waters *an [sic]* in Bass Strait. In Westernport Bay she was the successor to another ship which will be affectionately remembered by thousands who travelled between San Remo and Stony Point. This was the *Genista*.

The *Alvina* supplanted the *Genista* because she could carry more cars. Then the *Alvina* gave way to the present ferry boat, the *Killara*, which offered still more convenience to automobilists. And now even the *Killara* is threatened with disfavor through the project of a bridge from the mainland to Phillip Island.

When does an island cease to be an island? When you can drive a car on to it, surely? It is to be hoped that this steady pressure of improvement does not destroy the charm of that holiday spot.

## Genista Epilogue

The *Genista* ended its career as it started – by sinking. Decommissioned and awaiting dismantling at Rhyll in 1933, it sunk overnight at its moorings. It sat there for the next 33 years when the Ports and Harbours Department in 1966 cleared the remnants.

From the *Great Southern Advocate*, 27 July 1916, page 3

## Trouble At Wonthaggi Town In Semi-Darkness

Kerosene lamps and candles were much in requisition in Wonthaggi on Monday night. The majority of the business people had decided not to use the electric light or power supplied by the State coal mine because it was produced by other than the ordinary union labor. Street lights were burning as usual, but beyond these the town was in semi-darkness. Both picture theatres declined to use the power on Sunday night, consequently for the first time for years there was no entertainment at either place.

At night a largely attended public meeting was held in the upper hall of the Wonthaggi theatre in almost total darkness, the only light provided being a hurricane lamp and couple of small acetylene gas lamps, but the latter failed before the business was over. The meeting was held in connection with the movement initiated in Wonthaggi for the better development of the coal resources of Victoria.

Afterwards consideration was given to the engine drivers and firemen's strike. Rev. Rodgers said the demands of the strikers were fair and reasonable, and they had the sympathy of the public. The position is serious, for if the mine were flooded it would mean a tremendous loss to the people of Victoria. He suggested that an effort at mediation be made. Several councillors and Revs. Blair and Hamilton also generally condemned the action of the management of the State coal mine in not coming to terms with the men. A deputation was appointed to wait on the Premier and place the facts dealing with the present stoppage before him.

Rather than use the electric light a number of business people closed their shops early on Tuesday afternoon, and allowed their employes to go home. Others had resource to candles, and anything that would give a glow. The power for lighting is still being maintained at the mine, the work being done by the official staff. Several of the mine deputies who were not affected by the strike have been dismissed, as they state, for refusing to work the pumps when told to do so by the management. About twenty-two of the railway firemen at the State mine depot have been put off. They have been instructed to report at the end of the week. It is rumored that if the electric light is used in some shops there is likely to be a strike of assistants.