

The Western Port Times

Grantville & Districts

Volume 5 Number 12

FREE

April 2023

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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.

* * *

Colvin's PICTURES

Kooweerup, Saturday, February 5



Lang Lang Talkies

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7. SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 7.

RAY MILLAND and BARBARA STANWYCK in—
CALIFORNIA
Fearless Romance! Spectacular Drama!!
Not Suitable for General Exhibition.

EDDIE BRACKEN and VERONICA LAKE in—
HOLD THAT BLONDE
An Atomic Bombshell of Laughter.
Suitable for General Exhibition.

USUAL SHORT SUBJECTS. USUAL SHORT SUBJECTS.



Editor: Geoff Guilfoyle
 U3A Bass Valley
 Local History Group
 PO Box 3 Grantville 3984
 Phone 5997 6240
 Email:
 geoffguilfoyle@dodo.com.au

Website:
 www.grantvillehistory.com.au

Masthead design by Trish Hart

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Send your name and email
 address to:
 geoffguilfoyle@dodo.com.au
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Links to other historical groups

- Bass Valley Historical Society: www.facebook.com/groups/bassvalleyhistoricalsociety
- Friends of Churchill Island Society: <https://focis.org.au/about-churchill-island/>
- Hastings–Western Port Historical Society Inc.: <https://www.hwphs.org.au/>
- Inverloch Historical Society: <http://inverlochhistory.com/>
- Also: cv.vic.gov.au/organisations/inverloch-historical-society/
- Koo-Wee-Rup Swamp Historical Society: kooweerupswamphistory.blogspot.com.au/
- Korumburra & District Historical Society: www.korumburrahistory.com.au or PO Bo 329, Korumburra 3950
- Lang Lang & District Historical Society: langlang.net/historical.html
- Leongatha and District Historical society: 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
- Wonthagi Historical Society: wonthaggihistoricalsociety.org.au/
- Wonthaggi Genealogy Inc.: secretary@wonthaggi-genealogy.org.au



From the *San Remo Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser*, 2 April 1897, page 2.

Local and General News

In our last issue it was stated that the court would be held to-day, but it appears that no one but those who are connected with holding the courts know. The last few court days have been held the first Friday in the month, and suddenly it is altered to the second Friday. If the court is to be held on the second Friday in the month let us have it on that day, and not changing it about from the first to the second every now and then. Not even the constables in or about the district know on what day the San Remo Court is held.

It is rumored Mr. Gunn, late councillor, was given a send-off in the way of a social gathering. There being no representative of the Press invited, and no invitation, it is natural to think that no notice was wanted of the affair.

A great number of trout have been caught during the week. They have been about in shoals in the Channel between San Remo and Newhaven.

To facilitate the identification of graves in the Corinella cemetery, relatives of persons buried there are required by the regulations to affix numbers thereto. Iron numbers may be obtained on application to the secretary, Mr. Jas. Gray, Bass.

As will be seen by advertisement in another column, tenders are invited for digging Corinella cemetery, about one acre, at per square chain. Tenders must be lodged with the secretary, Mr. Gray, Bass, on or before 17th April.

A meeting of the School Pic-nic Committee was held at Mr. M'Ilwraith's residence, Rhyll, on Monday evening. After the payment of prizes, etc., the committee found that they had a substantial surplus in hand, and it was decided that the sum of 25s. should be devoted to each school for prizes, to be disposed at the discretion of the teacher, and to be awarded as they think fit, whilst a balance of £3 was held over for the next pic-nic. A balance-sheet will shortly be issued, and may be inspected at the various schools.

The Sports Committee of Cowes are trying to arrange sports for Easter Monday, and if they are supported by the public in the way of subscriptions, etc., will arrange a liberal programme.

Mr. John B. O'Meara announces, through our advertising columns, that he is a candidate for the vacant seat in the council, caused by the resignation of Cr. Gunn, of the Woolamai riding.

For the extraordinary [*sic*] vacancy in the council

for the Shire of Phillip Island (Woolamai riding), the following candidates have been duly nominated:—Edgar C. N. Halford, George Hollins, and John Bernard O'Meara. A poll will be taken on Tuesday, the 13th April, 1897, commencing at 8 a.m. and closing at 4 p.m., at the following places:—Shire Hall, San Remo, and the State schools at Bass, Kilcunda, and Goodhurst.

From the *San Remo Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser*, 9 April 1897, page 2.

The Court of Petty Sessions will be held at the court-house to day.

Mr. Steele, who has been looking after the Cape Patterson coal mines for a great number of years, has relinquished that position, and left on Tuesday morning by the s.s. Genista for Melbourne.

Messrs. Joseph Clarke and Co. will hold a sale at the Powlett Hotel on Thursday next, when 150 head of cattle, horses and sheep will be offered.

Holiday excursion tickets will be issued to and from all stations (suburban excepted) from the 12th to the 21st April (both dates inclusive), available for return for one calendar month. The department cannot engage to forward horses or vehicles by passenger trains unless accommodation can be provided by special arrangement.

A grand ball will take place in the Bridge Creek Hall this evening in aid of the fund for lining the Archie's Creek school. Good music and an efficient M.C. will be provided, as will also refreshments.

It is with regret we have to announce the death of Mr. George Elms Smith, who was well known in this district as managing director of the Great Victoria Colliery Company. The deceased gentleman was taken suddenly ill, and died on Wednesday, his illness being the result of a severe cold.

At present there are no fewer than 308 cases of scarlet fever in Victoria. Out of that number 164 were reported to the central authorities, and the epidemic is rapidly increasing.

Also

From the *San Remo Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser*, 16 April 1897, page 2.

Those interested in the local court will please notify in another column the day and date for holding the Court of Petty Sessions

(continues on Page 4)

Local and General News (continued from Page 3)

at San Remo. This list can be safely taken as correct, as it was supplied by Mr. Smallman, visiting Police Magistrate.

The Cowes Sports Committee have decided to hold sports on Easter Monday at Cowes, consisting of horse racing and athletic sports. The programme is varied and long, there being 5 horse races and 3 foot races, and if the weather keep/s/ fine there should be a large attendance from other parts, including the Island.

On Saturday, the 24th, the usual monthly meeting of the Council will be held. There are a large number of contracts advertised for to be let by tender on that day.

Tenders will be received, subject to the conditions of tendering, for repairs to shed and jetty, San Remo, until twelve o'clock on April 22nd, 1897. Particulars may be learnt at the police station, San Remo, and the Public Works office.

W Robertson, for the Great Victoria Colliery Company, No-Liability, has secured a lease of 458 acres at Bass, parish of Woolamai, for the purpose of mining coal.

The Rev. Herbert E. Potter will conduct Church of England service at the Shire Hall on Easter Sunday evening at 7.30. p.m.

A grand ball was held at the Bridge Creek Hall on Friday night last in aid of the funds for lining Archie's Creek school, there being between 30 and 40 couples present. Dancing was kept up till daylight to first-class music, and refreshments were handed round during the evening.

Sports will be held at Bass township on Easter Monday, consisting of horse and foot racing. The programme appears in our advertising columns.

An extraordinary election of a councillor for the Woolamai riding was held on Tuesday, and resulted in the return of Mr. O'Meara by a majority of 35 votes. Things were very quiet at all the polling booths, with the exception of Goodhurst, where there was a bit of a stir.

Also

From the *San Remo Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser*, 23 April 1897, page 2.

The Council meeting has been postponed to 1st May, and the times for tenders for contracts has been extended to 1st May, as will be seen by our advertising columns.

A tea meeting and concert was held at the Woodleigh Presbyterian Church on Good Friday evening, the attendance being so large that three relays had to be made. After

the tables were removed a concert was held, those contributing to the programme being local and a few visitors.

Mr. Charles Martin, of Kilcunda, left by the s.s. Genista during the week, en route for the West, where he intends trying his fortune.

Great gallantry was displayed by Captain Loch, of the Trucanini, the first mate, Frank Long, and a lad named Alfred Thompson, in putting off from the Mornington Jetty in a dingy only about 14 feet in length, in the face of a high sea, and rescuing Wm. Allen, one of the crew of the yacht Progress, which foundered through shipping a heavy sea while competing in the Fisherman's Race at the Mornington Regatta on Easter Monday. It is to be hoped the Royal Humane Society will acknowledge their gallantry for such it was!

The mutton-birding has been in full swing during the last week or two at the Cape, and the birds, from all accounts, being plentiful, some large hauls have been made, one party "bagging" as much as 1500, which they plucked and cured, ready for market, on the spot.

The hotels and boarding houses at San Remo have had a large number of visitors during the Easter holidays.

The Kilcunda coal mine is looking well at the present. Mr. Davis is putting out about 30 or 40 tons a month, this being just enough to supply the steamer and local consumption.

The steamer Genista ran double trips on Thursday and Monday, last, and was well patronised.

The death of Mr. David Morris, of the firm of Thompson and Morris, butchers, Outtrim, took place at his residence there on Saturday morning. The deceased gentleman, who was 35 years of age, had been a resident of the district for over 15 years, being first employed at Bena. The funeral took place in the Korumburra cemetery on Sunday, there being over 60 horsemen and a number of traps.

From the *San Remo Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser*, 30 April 1897, page 2.

The Phillip Island Shire Council will hold an adjourned meeting to-morrow. A good number of tenders are to be let, there being 15 open for competition.

The San Remo Court of Petty Sessions will be held at the court-house on Friday next, May 7th.

Church of England service will be conducted

(continues on Page 5)

Local and General News (continued from Page 4)

by the Rev. Herbert E. Potter at the Shire Hall on Sunday morning next at 11 a.m.

Mr. Clarkson, of the Cowes school, will shortly be leaving the district, he having been appointed to take charge of the Harcourt school. During his stay on the island Mr. Clarkson, through his straightforward and upright manliness, has made, for himself many friends, and his loss in the cricket field will be keenly felt by the local club.

Things were a bit busy at the San Remo jetty on Wednesday night, putting one in mind of the Queen's Wharf from the number of lights burning, consequent on the discharging of a cargo of red gum posts for Mr. J. Hoddinott, brought from Cunninghame by the s.s. Queenscliffe. The only pity was that there was not more local men on the jetty on arrival as three were required for unloading, but only one was obtainable, consequently they had to fall back on the passengers.

The potato crops on Phillip Island this year are especially good, and of a first-class quality, one farmer having as high an average as 14 tons to the acre, which speaks well for the richness of the soil there.

Me [*sic*]. Charles Grayden, junr., had the misfortune to lose a splendid colt this week. While a young man was leading him along the road from Cowes to Newhaven he suddenly dropped down dead.

Miss M. Kent, of "Goshen," Bridge Creek, has consented to act as local secretary to the Queen's Shilling Fund for Kilcunda and Bridge Creek. It is a special appeal to the women of Victoria to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Her Majesty's reign. As this, the longest reign in English history, is that of a woman, it is considered peculiarly fitting that the event should be commemorated by Victorian women, and it is intended to found as a memorial hospital for women and children, to be called the Queen Victoria Hospital, on the lines of the famous "New Hospital" in London, which is officered entirely by medical women. The Queen's Shilling Fund has been started for this object, and every woman in Victoria is asked to contribute One Shilling. This will be the only hospital in Australia where women will receive medical and surgical treatment entirely from their own sex. It is to be hoped the ladies of this district will respond nobly to the appeal.

Window Blinds for the summer, all sorts, at the Melbourne Furnishing Coy., Wonthaggi.

Boring in Kilcunda

Early in 1845 Mrs. Anderson, one of the first settlers at Griffiths Point, formed a coal prospecting association. A number of bores were sunk near Coal Creek — two miles west of Cape Paterson. Unfortunately, no records of the operations remain, and although the sites are marked on Mr. Selwyn's plan the precise position cannot be located.

In 1858 Mr. A. R. C. Selwyn, Government Geologist, had a bore put down about three-quarters of a mile north-west from the site of present State coal mine.

In 1860 Mr. J. Hotson, mining engineer for the Victorian Coal Company, put down six bores.

The late Mr. Nathaneal Levi had the sites of most of these bores filled in. The positions of some of the holes, however, can still be located.

In 1867 the Government let a contract for a bore which was sunk a few chains north of Selwyn's shaft and bore. This was carried to a depth of 500ft. without striking coal. It is locally stated that a three-foot seam of coal was passed through, which, owing to the loose methods adopted, was unrecorded. Almost coincidentally the Griffiths Point Coal Company bored on the coast at the S. E. corner, allotment 27, Woolamai; after reaching 850ft. the bore was pronounced "a duffer."

Boring rested till 1879, when the Government sent a diamond drill to Kilcunda. Report says at 490ft. a seam 2ft. 8in. "was cut in No. 4 bore." At 683ft. the bore hole caused trouble, and a larger machine was used. A few yards northwards a new bore (No. 6) was run down to 864ft., the 2ft. 8in. seam being again tapped at 490ft. 820ft. was reached in the midst of dispute as to whether the seam formerly passed through was 3ft. or 2ft. 8in. in thickness, and no satisfactory agreement being arrived at, the machine, after reaching 864ft., was removed eastward to the south bank of the Powlett River, a few chains northward of the Kilcunda-Inverloch road junction. Two clear seams were cut in this bore—2 ft. 1in. at 352 ft., and 2ft. 6in. at 689ft. This reading corresponds to the two large seams reported from the Bridge Creek bore.

Source: *Powlett Coal Fields and Coal History of Victoria 1825-1910*, page 17-18. Published by Rae Bros., The Strand Publishing House, 1910.

Pianos, organs, bicycles, cash or terms at the Melbourne Furnishing Coy., Wonthaggi.

From *The San Remo Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser*, 11 September 1896, page 2.

Wonthaggi North

(From our own Correspondent)

The Goodhurst residents are at a loss to know the exact spot in Mr. Daly's paddock on which the new school is to be erected. All attempts to ascertain the proposed site have met with an evasive answer from that gentleman. But your humble servant is now in possession of the secret, which is unreservedly given the public. It is to be built on the south-east corner of Mr. Daly's farm, near Neill's land. Now, for the life of me, I do not see how this site will suit the children of Messrs. Talbot, M'Kay, Love, Ware, Shillin, and Webb. I shall not be surprised to hear of some opposition. This site is not at all suitable in my opinion.

Whooping cough is very bad at the school, and it should be closed.

We are to have a broad gauge *[sic]* rail way. I hear the Nyora-Kilcunda railway league are to have a meeting at an early date to take steps to have a trial survey through the hills.

A running star of very great brilliancy was seen on Tuesday evening, and for upwards of an hour, after the disappearance of the star, a long bright streak was plainly visible. It was in the west.

Since writing the above the health officer, Dr. Wilson, has closed the Goodhurst school for a fortnight. If the children are not then convalescent, the school will be kept closed for a longer period.

The late rains has made the roads very bad. They are next to impassable in parts. Near Bowman's, at Glen Alvie, it is frightful, so is that between Messrs. Treevoris and Diaper's.

The latter has been surveyed over the crest of a hill, and one would imagine that the surveyor looked for the worst place he could find. If it had been carried west a good road could have been made. I would advise the council not to spend any money on the present road, but they had made terms with Mr. Tozer for them. Mr. Edwards will not hear of the road going through his property without a fight. It appears the council bought a road from Mr. Clarke, who was at that time a councillor, but through some bungling never had the road properly transferred, although the money was paid. That gentleman's land was subsequently sold and a deed obtained on which the road was shown. I believe he was about to close the road, but the council

seeing the fix, they readily consented to give the road purchased from Clarke. This it appears was all but arranged when the residents of Glen Alvie got wind of it, and they are up in arms. A fund is to be raised for the purpose of bringing an action against the council to compell *[sic]* them to make good the amount paid to Mr. Clarke, for things look very cloudy up Glen Alvie way.

The council are about to open a road to Outtrim along the flats. I am afraid they do not know what they are doing. This will be an expensive job, and should not be undertaken lightly.

From the *San Remo Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser*, 21 February 1896.

A Visit To The Grantville Library

Very few townships in Victoria of the same size as Grantville can boast of as good a library as is to be found there. Quite recently I paid it a visit, and was delighted to find so large and varied a collection of books which fill up three very large cupboards. There are upwards of 600 books from which to choose, and the committee endeavor to add to them every year. The subscription is 10s per annum, and any member may propose books for addition to the library on entering the titles, prices and other particulars in the library. The collection includes the standard works of such authors as Sir E. Arnold, Walter Besant, Carlyle, Dickens, Charles Kingsley, Ruskin, Scott, Thackeray, etc. It speaks well for the intelligence of the district to see such books as "Lang's Problems of the Future," "Drummond's Ascent of Man," and "Darwin's Decent" on the shelves, and to note that they and numerous other examples of the higher class literature are well read. The lighter literature is also well represented, and so far as I could see, there does not seem to be a book in the library to which even the most prudish could take exception. The library is open from 7 to 10 p.m. on Mondays and Thursdays, and on the last Saturday in each month from 3 to 5 p.m. Dominoes, draughts, comic and illustrated papers are always on hand for the amusement of visitors, who are supposed to record their name in the visitor's book. Mrs Monk acts as librarian, and is most obliging and willing in assisting visitors, to get what they require. General regret is felt in the district for the loss of the genial Mr J. S. Marsh, who has been a most persevering hon secretary.

From the *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, Wednesday 31 October 1883

Phillip Island Shire Council

26th October 1883

Present: Councillors Stewart (President) Hayes, Turnbull, Duffus, Aldridge, Kidd, West, and Smith.

The minutes of last meeting were read and confirmed.

Correspondence

From R. Gall, complaining of roads being closed at lot 47, Phillip Island, and requesting that same be re-opened as their [*sic*] being closed was a great inconvenience to him.—On the motion of Councillors West and Duffus the request to be complied with, and parties notified to remove fences at once.

From Government Statist, forwarding copy of regulations re collection of agricultural statistics for 1883-84.—Received.

From Rippon Shire Council, urging that a clause should be inserted in Local Government Act Amendment Bill to regulate the width of tires on wheels carrying over certain loads.—On the motion of Councillor West, seconded by the President, the letter was received, and the Secretary instructed to write stating that this Council do not agree with proposal to limit loads according to the width of tires on wheels.

From Central Board of Health, stating that whooping cough had broken out amongst the children at Fern Hill State school, and forwarding copy of regulations and steps to be taken in such cases.—Referred to the President, and Central Board of Health to be informed of action taken in the matter.

From Water Supply Department, approving of action taken in accepting the tender for construction of reservoir at Kilcunda.—Received.

From Cranbourne Shire Council, stating that their President had been deputed to act in conjunction with this Council in any action taken with a view of having the electric telegraph to Phillip Island via Cranbourne, Yalloch, and Bass.—Received.

From S. J. Findlay, schoolmistress of Fern Hill school, drawing attention to dangerous trees on the road near the school.—Referred to the Clerk of Works to have the work done if the trees could be removed without risk.

From J. T. Paul, asking that about ten trees be removed from the road fronting his store at Grantville.—On the motion of Councillors West and Turnbull no further action to be taken than to allow J. T. Paul to

remove the trees at his own risk and cost, as the removal of the trees would be a personal benefit to Mr. Paul.

A further extension of time was granted to J. Emery on his contract at Corinella.

The Clerk of Works reported that drains at foot of Turnbull's hill required repairs to the extent of about 30s., and the culvert on Pyramid road, Phillip Island, also required repairs.—The report was adopted and the Clerk of Works instructed to get both works attended to.

Payments to the amount of £97 16s. 5d. were passed, on the motion of Councillor Stewart, seconded by Councillor Aldridge.

The tender of W. Denne for forming and rolling, &c., near Murray's for £35 13d. was accepted.

It was resolved that the claim of D. B. Kennedy for placing gravel beams on Deep Creek bridge be paid.

The Secretary was instructed to procure a new map of the Shire showing clearly the boundaries of the Shire, and especially the northern boundary as some doubts seemed to exist as to its exact position.

The Secretary was instructed to write again to Mr. Muntz, requesting him to come down to prepare the necessary plans &c. in connection with the Government grants to assist in forming &c., on Cape Patterson road, and for Bass bridge renewal.

The Secretary was instructed to write to Shire of Buln Buln, asking them to contribute one-half towards clearing about 70 chains of the boundary road between the two Shires, viz., south of W. Hayes' block.

On the motion of Councillor West seconded by Councillor Duffus, tenders were ordered to be called for forming 40 chains on Centre road, commencing at Smith's road, Phillip Island.

Tenders were ordered to be called for about ten chains of post and two rail fencing on the Sidely road at Nobbies, the two-rail fence at Cowes to be removed to the Nobbies, and a three-rail fence to be erected at Cowes in its place, on the motion of Councillor West seconded by Councillor Smith.

It was moved by Councillor West, seconded by Councillor Duffus and carried, that tenders be called for about 6 chains gravel on Ventnor road, near Harbison's and Richardson's corner.

(continues on Page 8)

Phillip Island Shire Council (continued from Page 7)

Councillor Stewart, authorized by Councillor Clarke, moved that tenders be called for work at Freeman and Harvey's blocks, Corinella, as per plans and specifications prepared by the Shire Engineer. Seconded by Councillor Hayes and carried. It was moved by Councillor Stewart, seconded by Councillor Hayes and carried that tenders be called for work at deviation on Ward's block as per plan and specifications prepared by the Shire Engineer.

Councillor West gave notice of motion for 100 chains of clearing on Eastern Passage road and claim for placing gravel beams on Deep Creek Bridge be paid.

Councillor Stewart gave notice of motion for ten chains of clearing, forming and draining, on the Corinella road at Poole's corner. Also that tenders be recalled for contract No. 291, work near Kennedy's; for culvert and three chains drains at Queensferry, and for 40 chains clearing and draining between Kennedy's and Sloss's.

Tenders were ordered to be called under suspension of the standing orders for five chains forming and table drains on east side of Turnbull's hill, on motion of Councillor Kidd, seconded by Councillor Aldridge.

On motion of Councillor West, seconded by Councillor Aldridge, the Clerk of Works was instructed to have the gravel at Griffith's Point rolled, from the approach to jetty to Post Office.

The Council then adjourned.

From The Western Port Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser, 2 March 1900, page 2

Bush Fires

On Monday there were extensive fires through [sic] the district. At Kilcunda hundreds of acres of grass were burnt and great difficulty was experienced in keeping the flames from the dwelling houses. The fire appeared to have started at Anderson's Corner, and went right through one portion of Kilcunda. At Glen Forbes and Glen Alvie the fires were not so extensive, being easily kept under, but at Archies Creek and Ryanston several outhouses were burnt, and others damaged; all the people in the neighbourhood turned out to assist, and the damage done was not very great. Another fire started in one of White's paddocks near Grantville, and was travelling towards the paddock in which the house stood, when a number of Grantville residents arrived, and beat the fire out before it had done any damage.

From Smith's Weekly, Saturday 18 January 1947, page 10

Reds vs A.L.P.

Fight For Miners' Leadership

A bitter struggle between Communist and Labor Party supporters on the coalfields has followed the resignation of Harold Wells as general president of the Miners' Federation.

It is now almost certain that the Communist Party will back Idris Williams, of Wonthaggi, secretary of Victorian branch of the Federation.

Most prominent ALP nominee is E. Wallwork, secretary of Richmond Main Miners' Lodge.

Other contestants for the ballot are likely to be Jim Comerford, a member of the Central Council, and Fred Lowden, president of the NSW southern district.

Comerford was a former member of the Communist Party, but withdrew and is no longer attached to any party.

Lowden, a known anti-Communist, is tremendously popular on the South Coast.

Alan Opie, formerly of Wonthaggi, may also enter the lists. Opie, now vice-president of the Kearsley Shire Council, came to the South Maitland coalfield to become better known to northern miners with the object of challenging George Grant for the position of general secretary.

However, Grant is now so firmly entrenched that Opie may have a fling for the presidency.

Executive officers of the Communist Party on the northern coalfields have already announced that they will support Idris Williams for president.

As this position has been held by Communists for the past ten years, they are hopeful of success.

But ALP officers believe that Wells' resignation has struck a terrific blow to Communist morale.

Wells secured only a small majority in favor of him contesting a fresh ballot, when it was found that he was ineligible to participate in the first ballot because he was unfinancial.

From the 6000 votes recorded, Wells got a majority of a little more than 500.

It is considered that all members of the Communist Party had recorded their vote for Wells.

This would leave them in a hopeless minority in the Federation with more than 23,000 members in the Commonwealth.

SMALL Cushions, nice colours, only 7/6. McLeod's, Kooweerup.

The First Phillip Island Bridge

by

Geoff Guilfoyle

Although discussion about bridging the gap between Newhaven and San Remo had rumbled on for years, the genesis of the construction of the 1940 bridge is found in a letter to the editor in the *Frankston and Somerville Standard* in mid-May 1927:

...Phillip Island wants joining on to Australia "permanently," and the remedy is in the hands of the residents, and that is to organise and go solidly to work, and get a bridge across the eastern passage.

...Within a radius of two or three hours' run by car or truck, are ten or twelve big market centres, which would be accessible to us, and we would have a market for everything we can produce.

...There are thousands of people in Gippsland owning motors [sic] cars who would come here as soon as they could get (not one of whom we see now) who would go back, and send thousands more.

...At a very low estimate it would enhance the value of our property one third, and probably double our incomes from increased production consequent on better market facilities. Our population would increase in no time, and the big vacant places would be carrying crops instead of scrub and furze.

...Our present connection with Stony Point would not be interfered with in any way, as we would be a complete circle instead of a dead-end as at present. Our tourists would still come from Melbourne through Stony Point, but we would get thousands of others which at present are denied us, and at last Phillip Island would come into its own.

Join Phillip Island to Australia and bring its people wealth and prosperity.

Richard Grayden.¹

This seems to have galvanised local public opinion, for seven weeks later, on July 14, a

well-attended meeting was held in the Cowes Hall to initiate a movement to see a bridge between Newhaven and San Remo built. Cr. McIlwraith was elected to the chair, and in introducing the matter to the meeting spoke of the advantages that would be derived from a bridge to the mainland. Richard Grayden also spoke, probably recapitulating the points in his letter. A Bridge League was formed, consisting of Cr. Edgar (President), R. Grayden, (Secretary) with a Committee comprised of Mrs. E. Cleeland, Messrs. A. Robb, G. Steele, G. Clark-Kennedy, J. Spavin, G. Edwards, L. Roberts, J. Cleeland jnr., and Crs. McFee and McIlwraith.²

As with most things, it is easier to propose than achieve. It was almost a decade before much headway was made.

In November 1936, an unnamed "leading bridge-building authority" (as reported in the *Herald*) considered there were no great engineering obstacles in the way of building a bridge. "The cheapest possible wooden bridge would cost £15 a foot, and the distance from San Remo to Newhaven was about 2000ft." The two caveats to this model were that longer planks would increase the cost and that the life of the bridge would be from 15 to 20 years.³

The *Age* and *Argus* provide different but not mutually exclusive accounts of what happened a month later in their 4 December editions.

According to the *Argus*, on Tuesday, 1 December, engineers viewed the crossing at San Remo and Newhaven at low tide. They calculated the cost of a bridge at around £18,000 to £20,000, and added that if a toll per car were charged at least £1,500 could be collected *per annum*.⁴

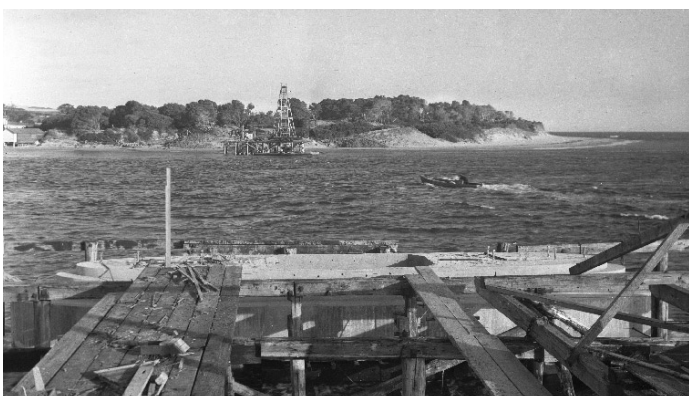
The *Age*, on the other hand, reports that

(continues on Page 10)

Meet the Designer...

M. G. Dempster

...The designer and superintendent engineer, M. G. Dempster, M.C.E., was educated at the Guildford Grammar School and obtained his engineering degrees at the University of Western Australia and, later, Melbourne University. He was the winner of the £500 prize for the best design for the Port Melbourne traffic bridge, built at a cost of £60,000 in 1934, and he superintended its construction. He designed also the Punt-road bridge over the Yarra, which was opened by the Victorian Premier last December, and which is the most ornate of the many bridges over that river. Its cost was nearly £80,000. (West Australian, Thursday 24 August 1939, page 17: A Victorian Bridge).



The First Phillip Island Bridge... (continued from Page 9)

at a 3 December meeting at Cowes called by Cr. W. Dawson Davie, the President of the Shire of Phillip Island, the bridge was once again discussed. Various estimates of the cost were given, but it was claimed that a pile bridge with a counterbalanced lift section would probably cost no more than £30,000.⁵

In February 1937, a deputation representing the Shire of Phillip Island and the agricultural and business community of the island met with Mr. Goudie, the Minister for Public Works. Also present were Mr. Kirton, M.L.A., Mr. Tyner, M.L.C. and Richard Grayden (now President of the local branch of the Country Party). Cr. Dawson Davie pointed out that Phillip Island contained 33,000 acres, with 100 farmers and their families, providing a permanent population of more than 1000 people. Further, it was explained that present traffic between the island and the mainland was dependent upon the ferry service between Stony Point and Cowes and the San Remo-Newhaven punt. These services only operated during daylight hours. The possibility of a bridge toll was also once again raised.⁶

The cost of the ferry was a separate if related issue, many considering the fee for passage too high, Cr. R. Harris being an example, sending a detailed letter to the *Herald* (23 February 1937, page 16). There was also this shorter plea in the same edition of the *Herald* from a 'Resident' at Cowes:

Sir,—The correspondence on excessive transport charges on the Cowes ferry service is timely. There are thousands of motor owners who would visit Phillip Island to see its many beauties but for the high cost of transport. If the general public would co-operate with the residents of the island in stressing the urgent need for a bridge at the Newhaven-San Remo end of the island this obstacle would be overcome.

Twenty-one months after the February 1937 delegation and eleven years after Grayden's raising of the issue, Premier Dunstan in mid-November 1938 announced his approval for the link, but added that the government opposed the imposition of tolls as a relic of the Dark Ages. Preliminary preparations had already been made and a suitable site chosen, one issue yet to be decided being whether to use concrete piles or ones of turpentine hardwood. The bridge would take two years to build. Mr. Fricke, the Chairman of the Country Roads Board, added that the new £30,000

(continues on Page 11)



The First Phillip Island Bridge... (continued from Page 10)

bridge would be 2000 feet long, with the central suspension span 500 feet, with a 40 foot headway under the structure. It would also have a double track, with safety bays for pedestrians.⁷

There was some pushback against the decision...

From the *Age*, Monday 20 March 1939, page 10: Bridge at San Remo...

When I was at San Remo recently I was told that it was proposed to build a bridge across the Narrows, to connect Phillip Island with the mainland, and that the clearance of the bridge above the water was to be only 40 feet. If the project is carried out, it will close the eastern entrance to Westernport to much sea-borne traffic that has used it in the past. I have myself been using this channel every summer for the past 25 years or more, and it has been used a good deal by the crayfishing ketches on their way to Stony Point. My vessel requires a clearance of about 60 feet, and I should say some of the crayfishing craft need at least ten feet more. If a bridge is built, it should, in my opinion, have a minimum clearance of 70 feet — though even that might not be enough for some of the traffic. Surely no one has the right to close a natural sea waterway.—Elliot Giles (South Yarra).

The Country Roads Board disagreed. According to the Secretary, Mr. Jansen, "Any craft that had been using the channel between the island and the mainland would not be inconvenienced by the new bridge..."⁸

Collection of material for building began in January 1939, with onsite work started on 20 January when a campsite for the men to be employed was selected, and forming the approaches to the bridge and the casting of the piles began. Early February saw the approval of the initial tenders by the Country Roads Board. The only two selected that can be classified as local were from Korumburra and Bena.* Work on the bridge itself couldn't be started for another two months when the plans would be finalised. Another problem was a lack of fresh water due to a long drought. However, heavy rain in February overcame that difficulty.⁹

On Friday 14 April 1939, members of the Country Party and the Bridge League were present at Newhaven when the first concrete

(continues on Page 12)

*4,708 foot of re-forming and surfacing with fine crushed rock – T. Anthony, Korumburra, £412 12/4, and supply and delivery of 155 cubic yards of fine crushed rock – F. Mackin, Bena, £77 10/.



The First Phillip Island Bridge... (continued from Page 11)

pile for the bridge was driven. By 7 June, eight of the 25 main piles had been driven, and working from the Island side, the staging was carried out to a distance of about 600 feet.¹⁰

From the *Age* we have a good description of the structure...

A long span is provided over the deep, swift-running channel. This will take the form of a suspension bridge with a span of 550 feet. The span will be carried on latticed steel towers; twelve cables holding the structure to the approach works will each have a circumference of seven inches. Huge concrete pillars at each end of the span will carry the steel framework. The bridge width will carry two lines of traffic, and it is considered that this roadway will be adequate for peak traffic at holiday periods. (1 August 1939, page 8: A Bridge At San Remo).

The Country Roads Board approved the next round of tenders — mostly mild steel towers and cast steel plates — in late January 1940. The only local tenderer was “2220ft of forming and gravelling; G. H. Rosevear, Woolamai, £247.”¹¹

Two of the steel towers were in place by mid-July and work began on fitting the cables. By mid-November 1940 work neared completion, more or less on schedule (unusual then and now) despite working conditions made difficult by the rise and fall of the tide, a swift current, and the often high winds. This may have been a factor, though a small one, in the blowout in costs (typical both then and now) with the bridge ending up costing £50,000. In compensation, the life of the structure was now put at 50 years. The completed bridge was scheduled to be officially opened on 29 November, suitable functions being arranged by the Bass Shire and Phillip Island Shire Councils. A month before the official opening, the first mass crossing of the (almost but not quite completed) bridge, was made by 200 Manchester Unity I.O.O.F delegates who did so on foot.¹²

With Friday 29th November made a half-holiday, most of Phillip Island's residents travelled to Newhaven in the afternoon for the opening ceremony, the crowd being swelled by around 2,000 from the mainland. The bridge was decorated with flags and streamers, and many school children carried miniature Union Jacks and Australian flags. The official party included the Premier

(continues on Page 13)



The First Phillip Island Bridge... (continued from Page 12) and Mrs. Dunstan; the Chief Secretary and Mrs. Bailey; the Minister of Public Works, Sir George Goudie, and Lady Goudie; the Minister of Transport, Mr. Hyland, and several other members of Parliament (including Mr. Kirton, M.L.A. Mornington and Mr. McKenzie, M.L.A. Wonthaggi), representatives of the Country Roads Board, and other public officials. Mrs Dunstan cut the ribbon, and followed by hundreds of people the official party crossed the bridge to San Remo.¹³

Of course, it wasn't all sweetness and light, at least at the local level. Until the end of 1927 the regional authority was the Shire of Phillip Island and Woolamai. It broke into two and became the Shire of Bass and the Shire of Phillip Island in 1928. The construction of a bridge connecting both shires was bound to cause problems. These bubbled to the surface within weeks of the bridge opening.



The opening of the San Remo-Newhaven bridge on the afternoon of 29 November 1940.

From the *Great Southern Advocate*, Thursday 19 December 1940: Bridge Brawl:

Mr. Grayden waited on the Bass Council to obtain signatures of councillors upon a souvenir plan of the bridge.

In his remarks the speaker apologised on behalf of the people of Phillip Island for the manner in which Bass Council had been treated over the opening of the Newhaven-San Remo Bridge, and declared that there was a growing demand on the Island for re-joining Bass Shire and Phillip Island as one municipal body.

Mr. Grayden said he had been informed by the chairman of the Country Roads Board that the usual procedure when two shires were joined by a bridge was for the shires to co-operate in the opening arrangements and share them equally. The chairman had suggested that perhaps Phillip Island, being a young council, had not known the usual procedure, but apparently someone on Phillip Island had wanted all the limelight.

The Phillip Island Council had not done near as much as Bass to get the Bridge. An apology was offered also for the poor arrangements whereby the people could not hear the Premier speaking, and to the 1000 people who were not allowed to come over the bridge from the mainland to hear the opening. Mr. Grayden said the Premier had complained to him about it.

In conclusion, the speaker said the people were discontented with the Phillip Island

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The First Phillip Island Bridge... (continued from Page 13)

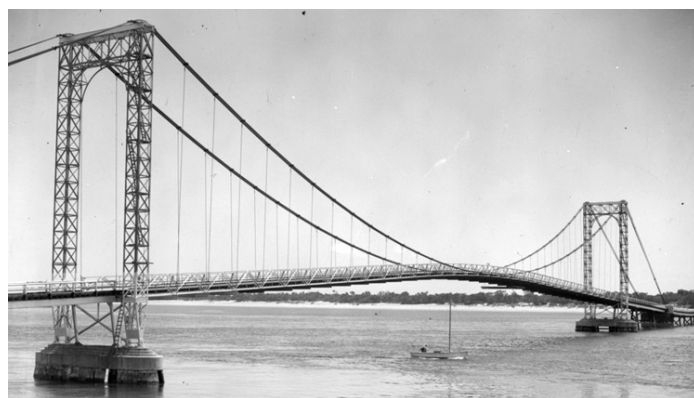
Council, which only represented a section...

This supposed discontent on Phillip Island reached its final form in December 1994 when the shires merged again to form what is today the Bass Coast Shire.

The next issue to arise was in regard to the Stony Point-Cowes vehicular ferry service, the previous main route to Phillip Island, the chief ship in 1941 being the *Killara*. The President of the Phillip Island Shire, W. Dawson Davie, wished it to continue, which led to this 'begging letter' in the *Argus*...

Sir.—The public may well wonder about the possibility of continuance of the ferry service between Stony Point and Phillip Island. Islanders have no doubt that a generous Government that provided the magnificent Phillip Island bridge last year would not desert a shipping service asking for similar privileges as given everywhere else in Australia, or maroon Phillip Island, one of the State's finest holiday resorts with its wonderful fauna and unique historical features, for a matter of £5,000, or thereabouts, the estimated requirements for the service. (31 July 1941, page 6: Phillip Island Ferry).

Dawson Davie was supported by the Chairman of the Transport Board, A. J. Fraser, at an inquiry into whether the necessary repairs to Stony Point docks should be carried out. Fraser pointed out that people were accustomed to going to the island by ferry



and that the short run across the water (45 miles from the C.B.D to Stony Point to Cowes) was preferable to many than the long drive via Tooradin and Grantville to the bridge (70 miles from the C.B.D to San Remo). Mr. C. C. Gale, Secretary, Public Works Department, also backed the repairs.¹⁴

The vehicular ferry continued until 1948 when economic reality saw the end of the service.

The main problem with the bridge was the weight limitation imposed, thanks to the materials used in construction and the design. It was set at six tons, so not an immediate concern, except in one case...

...A six-ton limit had been fixed for the bridge, but the worst load so far had been four elephants of up to five tons. When taken across in a trailer no ill effects on the structure were observed, but when being brought back on foot the animals produced such a sway that the passage of elephants on foot was now forbidden over the bridge. (Age, Wednesday 22 October 1941, page 9: The Phillip Island Bridge).

This story should be taken with a grain of salt (or more accurately, a salt shaker full). Such a unique sight and no one thought to grab a camera! No other paper reported it either, and the *Age* only did so second hand. Additionally, if four elephants caused such a sway, what would the high winds which whip in from Bass Strait do! The story was told by M. G. Dempster at an after-dinner presentation – at which alcohol was doubtless served – at the Institution of Engineers in October 1941.

Elephants aside, the weight limit caused few problems initially, though enforcing the policy was carried out diligently by Phillip Island councillors. In one instance a likely offender stopped at Newhaven was discovered to exceed the limit by 9 tons. It was stated that misuse by truck owners was damaging the foundations as well as deck planking and part of the superstructure. The cost of repair was around £50 per week. Another trouble, one potentially serious, was erosion damaging the pylons. By 1953 it had become so troublesome that the Public Works Department spent £10,000 in an attempt to fix the problem. The same year the Shire of Phillip Island asked the Country Roads Board to strengthen the bridge. Trucks were by then capable of carrying much heavier loads than 6 tons and the local producers felt that the weight limit was having a negative effect on

(continues on Page 15)



The First Phillip Island Bridge... (continued from Page 14) trade.¹⁵

One negative and entirely foreseeable product of the bridge was...

About 5000 cars and buses moved over the Newhaven-San Remo bridge today. It was the busiest Sunday on Phillip Island since New Year's day 1953. Traffic was so heavy in Cowes township that cars going to the beach reserves had to be diverted to side roads. (Age, Monday 19 April 1954, page 4: Traffic Jam At Cowes).

Road upgrades and diversions and various other schemes since then has today resulted in fewer traffic jams in Cowes at peak times during the year and more and longer (length and duration) traffic jams on the approach to the bridge. That's progress!

If erosion and overloading wasn't bad enough, in January 1957 the bridge caught fire. As reported in the *Argus*...

The postmaster at San Remo, 75 miles from Melbourne, received a telephone call at 3 p.m. today that the Phillip Island bridge was on fire.

Later Mr. J. Vorwerg, the postmaster, said: "If the fire brigade had arrived 10 minutes later, the blaze could not have been held." He said a holidaymaker phoned from Newhaven to say that he had just crossed the bridge and had seen a fire smouldering.

When firemen arrived they found a 12in. by 4in. wooden bearer and two 8in. x 2in. planks ablaze.

A cigarette butt, flipped towards the sea, which landed on the edge of the bridge is blamed for the "million to one" chance fire... (7 January 1957, page 1: Call saves bridge.)

In the mid-1950s, the idea of imposing a toll on those crossing the bridge was raised by Cr. R. Harris of the Shire of Phillip Island to help offset the repair bills. There were 21,000 crossings by vehicles from 13 to 24 January in 1954, and the proposed toll was 1/ per vehicle.

(continues on Page 16)



The bridge and beach at San Remo, circa late 1940s – early 1950s. Rose Stereograph Co. Rose postcard series: P.14004. ID: H32492/8805.



Aerial view of eastern end of Phillip Island, Victoria, c.1950-1960 by Charles Daniel Pratt (John Etkins collection). Airspy collection of aerial photographs. State Library of Victoria. Accession no: H2016.33/73.



Aerial view of San Remo, Newhaven and bridge. Rose Stereograph Co. Airspy Photo. Circa 1940s-1954. Rose postcard series: P.14000. ID: H32492/8801.



All that remains of the original bridge is the plaque commemorating the 1940 opening. It is located at Newhaven where the bridge connected with the island.

The First Phillip Island Bridge... (continued from Page 15)

Those opposed to the toll argued that it would not lead to an improvement of the island's roads, a disingenuous argument given that the money was to support the maintenance of the bridge. The motion was defeated and the issue doesn't seem to have been seriously raised for the rest of the life of the bridge – which wasn't long, and certainly nowhere near the 50 years prophesied in 1940.¹⁶

By the 1960s the need for a hardier bridge was evident, and one was announced in 1963 with building to commence after the plans were drawn up. The bridge would take three years to construct and cost £850,000. That amount changed with the move to decimal currency and ended up costing \$3¼ million. Also, it wasn't completed until November 1969, a reinforced concrete and prestressed bridge 2,100 feet long, 28 feet wide for vehicles, and with 5 feet for pedestrian traffic.¹⁷

For a short time the two bridges stood side by side before the old obsolete structure was dismantled.

Footnotes:

1. *Frankston and Somerville Standard*, Friday 20 May 1927, page 8: Phillip Island.

2. *Age*, Monday 18 July 1927, page 16: Phillip Island Project; *Frankston and Somerville Standard*, Friday 22 July 1927, page 8: Phillip Island; *Great Southern Advocate*, Thursday 21 July 1927, page 3: Phillip Island Project. The *Age* and the *Standard* disagree slightly on the date. It being a local paper I've used the one provided by the *Standard*.

3. *Herald*, Wednesday 4 November 1936, page 3: Phillip Island Bridge Move.

4. *Argus*, Friday 4 December 1936, page 3: Linking San Remo With Newhaven.

5. *Age*, Friday 4 December 1936, page 9: Phillip Island Bridge.

6. *Age*, Thursday 18 February 1937, page 15: Phillip Island Bridge; *Argus*, Thursday 18 February 1937, page 15: Bridge To Phillip Island; *Herald*, Wednesday 17 February 1937, page 3: Phillip Is. Bridge.

7. *Age*, Monday 14 November 1938, page 8: Phillip Island Bridge; Tuesday 15 November 1938, page 16: Bridge To Phillip Island; *Herald*, Tuesday 15 November 1938, page 17: No Bridge Toll For Phillip Is.

8. *Argus*, Friday 17 March 1939, page 12: Phillip Island Bridge.

9. *Age*, Friday 10 February 1939, page 6: San Remo Bridge; Tuesday 1 August 1939, page 8: A Bridge At San Remo; *Argus*, Thursday 26 January 1939, page 6: Island Bridge.

10. *Age*, Saturday 15 April 1939, page 28: Phillip Island Bridge; Wednesday 7 June 1939, page 2: Phillip Island Bridge.

11. *Age*, Saturday 27 January 1940, page 29: San Remo Bridge.

12. *Age*, Friday 29 November 1940, page 6: Suspension Bridge; *Argus*, Monday 28 October 1940, page 5: 200 Delegates Cross By New Bridge; Monday 11 December 1939: page 4: Phillip Island Bridge; *Great Southern Advocate*, 14 November 1940, page 3: San Remo-Cowes Bridge; *Herald*, Friday 19 July 1940: page 10: Phillip Island Bridge.

13. *Age*, Saturday 30 November 1940, page 22: Phillip Island Bridge; *Koo Wee Rup Sun and Lang Lang Guardian*, 5 December 1940: Phillip Island bridge [sic].

14. *Argus*, Wednesday 13 August 1941, page 3: Phillip Island Ferry; Thursday 14 August 1941, page 3: Phillip Is. Ferry Favoured.

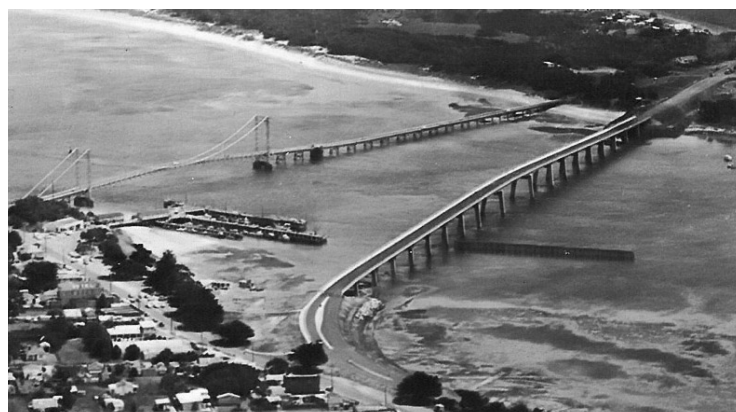
15. *Age*, Tuesday 13 June 1950, page 5: Bridge Damaged by Heavy Loads; Tuesday 27 June 1950, page 7: Heavy Loads Are Damaging Bridge; Thursday 2 July 1953, page 4: Strengthening of Bridge Urged; Saturday 29 July 1950, page 4: Heavy Traffic on Vital Bridge; *Argus*, Saturday 14 February 1953, page 3: £10,000 to stop erosion; *Herald*, Tuesday 18 March 1952, page 2: Phillip Island bridge damaged.

16. *Argus*, Saturday 30 January 1954, page 7: Move for Phillip Is. bridge toll defeated.

17. *Canberra Times*, Tuesday 15 January 1963, page 2: In Victoria This Week; McFee, S. L. *The First Phillip Island Bridge*, 1975.



Old suspension bridge on left. The 1969 bridge with all pillars in and decking only partly completed (on right). Source: Jack Jenner collection. Victorian Collections. <https://victoriancollections.net.au/items/5600cc82400d0c22a881b58a>



For a brief period in 1970 both bridges stood side by side: the modern utilitarian model versus the visually attractive but obsolete.

Note: Normally I would not publish anything Joseph White wrote without some analysis of its accuracy or potential problems. However, White was contemporary with the building of the bridge and wrote *100 Years of History* soon after its construction. Additionally, White is at his best (albeit dated) when writing about Phillip Island, able to tap the increasing knowledge of the then relatively new Phillip Island Historical Society. The final factor is the abundance of primary sources to which White had access (though his lack of the inclusion of even a single photograph is puzzling). White even names an actual primary source he used, a rare event. Thus I think his account of the second bridge is reliable, if truncated, and include it here.

From *100 Years of History* (Shire of Bass, 1974), page 155-157...

The Concrete Bridge

by Joseph White

The suspension bridge gave good service but its load limit of 6 tons caused considerable difficulty as for example the Archie's Creek Dairy Company could not send large milk transports on to the Island; only small vehicles could be used and increased transport costs. Some of the largest tourist buses had to off load passengers who were then required to walk over the bridge. Efforts were made by Phillip Island residents to have the C.R.B. strengthen the suspension bridge to carry a greater load but the C.R.B. were adamant in their refusal. Eventually the Islanders were able to satisfy the Government that a new and larger bridge was an economic requirement for the advancement and development of Phillip Island.

Instructions were then issued to the Country Roads Board to prepare plans for a new bridge. The main problems at the site were deep water and a very strong 8 & 10 knot tidal current. The location chosen for the new bridge is further into Westernport Bay where turbulence and depth are reduced and the sea bed more stable.

After plans had been finally completed tenders were invited and the contract was awarded to John Holland & Co. in April 1966. The specifications called for a concrete constructed bridge using prestressed concrete beams in the bridge width to carry the decking and roadway, each beam was approximately 92 feet in length except the anchor beams which carry over the navigation span as cantilevers; these are 204 feet in length.

To facilitate the building of the bridge the contractor elected to build and work from a temporary steel bridge which was constructed on the ocean side of the new bridge site. All materials for the foundations *[sic]* piles, and concrete were carted on this bridge and off loaded where required.

The main prestressed beams were made in Melbourne and carted to the site on special motor transport. One beam fell off to the side of the road near Monomeith where it was an object of interest for some time. Other beams required were built at the site.

The total cost of the bridge including approaches was \$3¼ million. The following authorities co-operated in the project—Public Works Department, Bass Shire Council, Phillip Island Shire Council, State Electricity Commission, Postmaster General, Westernport Waterworks Trust.

The opening addresses were made by the presidents of the Shire of Bass, Cr. C. Blackney, the Shire of Phillip Island Cr. W. Papworth and the chairman of the Country Roads Board Mr. I. O'Donnell. Mr. Porter Minister for Public Works when opening the bridge said the occasion must be one of the most important in the district's history.

Bridge Statistics: —

General Description. A reinforced concrete and prestressed concrete bridge 2100 feet long consisting of a central 200 ft. navigation span flanked by 150 anchor spans and 100 ft approach spans on each side. The bridge is 28 ft. wide between kerbs and a 5ft *[sic]* wide footing. Navigational clearance height at high tide is 40ft.

Beam structure. 80 pre-tensioned I beams each 100 ft. long in 16 approach spans. 5 pre-tensioned T beams each 92 ft. long in a suspended span. 10 pre-tensioned segmental beams each 204 ft. long which span the anchor spans and cantilever approximately 50ft. into the main navigation span.

Quantities.

Concrete cast in place 7,700 cub. yards.

Precast concrete units — 5,200 tons.

Filling — 113,000 cub. yards.

Filter layer 1 ft. thick for beaching — 5,000 sq. yards. Filter layer 2'6" thick for beaching — 6,600 sq. yards. Primary beaching — 5,000 sq. yards, Secondary beaching — 5,000 sq. yards. Prestressing stand — 68 miles.

Roadworks. Pavement is 8" coarse base, 6 ins. fine crushed rock top course and 1 inch asphalt surface.

(Copied from C.R.B. brochure belonging to Mrs. J. McKenzie, Thomas Street, San Remo).

The Newhaven-San Remo Punt

by

Geoff Guilfoyle

Although the gap was only around 700 yards (depending on where and when you measured), tides, a fast running current, rocky outcrops, mud banks and shallow water, made contact between Phillip Island and the mainland difficult. The larger the ship, the greater the chance of grounding on a mud bank; the smaller the craft, the greater the chance of it being battered about by the current and winds.

In the 1890s, Captain Loch of Rhyll offered a punt service between Newhaven and San Remo. Not being motorised, it required towing, a task usually done by the steamer *Genista*. Its main use was in moving horses and cattle.¹

The rise of the automobile after WWI created a new problem in getting to the island from either direction. This was outlined in detail in a 1928 article in the *Argus*:

The arrangement of a light car 100-mile road race on Phillip Island has directed attention to this portion of Victoria as a resort for motorists. Many car owners however do not like having their cars lifted by a winch on to the deck of the steamer and unloaded in the same manner at Cowes. The normal traffic requirements require only a small steamer with limited deck space for cars. The steamer journey from Stony Point takes less than a hour, but the loading and unloading of tourists' cars takes almost as long. The motor tourist traffic could be built up by the restoration of the punt at San Remo. This punt, which carried cattle, and on one occasion a traction engine now lies rotting in the sand at San Remo...

And further on...

Residents of San Remo have been discussing the restoration of a punt for some time, but the financial resources of the township are not great enough to enable it to bear the entire expenditure... (27 March 1928, page 3: Motoring).

The writer of the above piece in the *Argus*, though familiar with Loch's punt, was clearly unaware of the 1926 attempt at covering the gap between San Remo and Newhaven.

In the second half of that year, a company, the details of which have been lost to history and which may have consisted of no more than a handful of individuals with an idea, one of whom was named Jackson, proposed an ambitious scheme.

An officer from the Lands department was here lately to see where land could be leased to the company which is going to run a punt from San Remo to Newhaven... (Argus, 8 October 1926, page 18: Country News).

This was followed up a week later with:

A public meeting was held in the shire hall by the Lands department to consider the granting of leases for two landing sites in connection with a punt ferrying company to convey cars from Phillip Island to the mainland at San Remo. The meeting was well attended by representatives of the island and the mainland. The Land Board consisted of Mr. Northy (chairman) and Mr. Wood. The board will recommend the Minister to grant the lease to Mr. Jackson. It was shown that the company intends to erect a jetty on each side and run a motor punt on cables to carry motor-cars, passengers, cattle, and produce... (Argus, 13 October 1926, page 26: Country News).

Two new jetties and cross channel cabling. I did mention that it was an ambitious scheme.

Ten days later the *Age* reported:

The motor punt which is being installed between San Remo and Newhaven, Phillip Island, will provide something that has been badly wanted for some time... (23 October 1926, page 22: Wonthaggi).

And that appears to be the last mention of the scheme. Mr. Jackson and his unnamed "company" vanish from the record.

Two years later, a lone individual, Charles Newman, a Newhaven fisherman, initiated a more practical scheme...

The lease of the foreshore at San Remo and Newhaven has been granted to Mr C. Newman, of Newhaven, who is building a punt with a motor engine capable of carrying two motor-cars and passengers between Newhaven and the mainland. It is expected the service will be in operation by October. (Mirror, 23 June 1928, page 10: New Punt Service).

And, indeed, the service started in the first week of October with the transfer of the first automobiles, the punt itself propelled by two paddlewheels powered by a 40-60 h.p. motor. It was capable of carrying two cars and their passengers (the passenger and baggage at no cost) at any time of day, a telephone connection with San Remo being placed in the punt-house at Newhaven.²

(continues on Page 19)

The Newhaven-San Remo Punt (continued from Page 18)

As is usually the way, the small fry is quickly consumed by the larger fish. In December, A. K. T. Sambell of the Westernport Steamer Service, purchased the operation.³

Such was the success of the punt that others sought to start their own operations. The Lands Department held a meeting at San Remo on Friday, 10 May 1929, to discuss the matter, the result of which was the issuing of a permit to George Dorward of Rhyll whose plans and specifications were approved. Dorward intended to spent £2,000 on the punt and approaches, with the service to start on 1 December that year.⁴

For some reason, it didn't go ahead and no one else seems to have applied for permission to start a service, or followed through on the idea if they did. There is no hint in the record that Sambell put pressure to desist on anyone, mainly because there is almost no primary source dealing with the affair. Given the complexity of tides and currents, perhaps it was simply a matter of not being able to find a suitable landing place on the opposite shore and suitable home base. Newman, with his local knowledge, had likely already selected the best location (which was near the Newhaven pier).⁵

Not directly related to the punt service, but too exciting a story to ignore, comes this piece from 1936: *When the engine of their speedboat failed off San Remo pier yesterday, Jack Kams, 27, of Essendon, and Jack Bacon, 28, of Moonee Ponds, narrowly escaped being carried out to sea by the swiftly running tide. They were saved by the master of the San Remo punt (Mr Reg. Justice), who, seeing their plight, put out after their tiny craft and overtook it just as it was passing Cape Woolamai. Mr Justice threw a line to the men and towed their boat back to San Remo.* (*Herald*, 3 January 1936, page 3).

The *Telegraph* in Brisbane had its own, more dramatic, account in its 3 January edition which I include as a reminder that

when two primary sources conflict, go with the local one. It may not be correct but is more likely to be so.

Prompt action by Mr. Reg. Justice, master of [the] San Remo punt, saved the lives of the crew of a disabled outboard motor launch which was swept out into Bass Straight [sic] by a treacherous current. Noticing that the engine of the tiny craft had failed, Mr. Justice set out in his powerful launch and overtook it as it was passing Cape Woolamai. Battling against a 20-mile-an-hour current he then succeeded in towing the helpless boat safely back to the San Remo jetty. Mr. John Keam, jun., of Essendon, and his companions, who had left San Remo on a fishing trip, were the occupants of the disabled boat. (3 January 1936, page 7: Prompt Rescue).

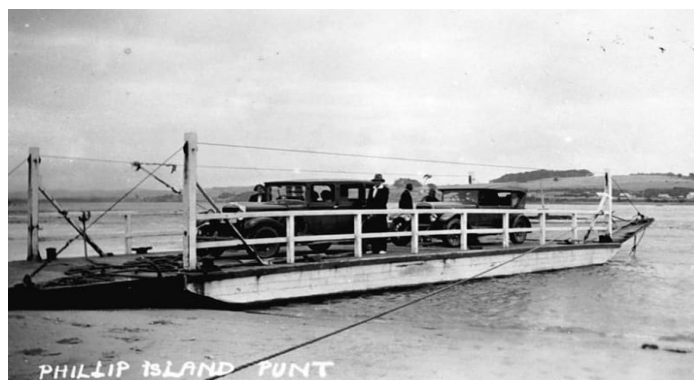
You'll notice how the *Herald* account gives the impression – without explicitly saying so – that it was the punt that went to the aid of the stricken craft. However, by 1933 Newman's original punt had been replaced by an unmotorised but larger vessel pulled by a speed boat, the powerful launch mentioned in the *Telegraph* account.

This lack of a motor led to an amusing (in retrospect) incident three years earlier:

A severe storm occurred here at 8a.m. to-day, and much damage has been reported throughout the district. The punt operating between San Remo and Newhaven was driven considerably out of its course, and is now anchored in the middle of the channel. The punt has the Melbourne mails aboard, and efforts were made during the day to get it back to San Remo, so that the mails could be sent by another route. (*Age*, 13 June 1933, page 8: Storm at San Remo).

In 1937 and the following year, there is a hint of dissatisfaction with the cost of using the punt which mirrors that regarding the ferry. From Robert C. Beech of Elsternwick in a letter to the *Herald*:

Sir.—As a frequent visitor to Phillip Island
(continues on Page 20)



The Newhaven-San Remo Punt (continued from Page 19)

at various times of the year (my last trip was in December) it has never been my luck to be charged the rate mentioned by Mr Sambell for the carriage of motor cars. I have always had to pay by the San Remo-Newhaven punt 15/ return for the car and 1/6 for myself as driver. It is not any wonder that Phillip Island is not going ahead as quickly as it deserves? (23 February 1937, page 16).

In November 1938 the fares, according to the *Herald*, were: cars of 10 horse-power and under, 6/ day return, driver free, 1/6 each passenger; single fares, car 4/, driver and passengers 1/ each. Cars greater than 10 horse-power, 10/ day return with driver free, 1/6 each passenger; single fares, car 7/ 6, driver and passengers 1/ each. Caravans carried free. (14 November 1938, page 4: San Remo Punt Fares).

On 15 February 1940 on page 37, nine months before the opening of the bridge, the *Herald* carried an ominous message regarding the San Remo punt service: *The punt that runs from San Remo to Newhaven is to be repaired, and the service will be discontinued on February 19 until further notice.*

The punt was soon again operating, the halt indeed being only due to the repairs.

The next mention of the punt is in the *Age* (page 24) on 12 October:

The ferry Killara will go to Melbourne on Sunday night for her annual overhaul. The service between Cowes and Stony Point will be maintained by the motor yacht Hollydene, but no cars or heavy cargo will be carried. Motorists will be able to use the punt service between San Remo and Newhaven.

Six weeks later, on Friday 29th November, the bridge linking Phillip Island with the mainland opened.

If the ultimate fate of the punt is unknown, that of the service isn't. There was simply no need for it anymore. It was obsolete.

Footnotes:

1. *The San Remo Times*, 1 January 1897, page 2: Local and General News.

2. *Argus*, Friday 5 October 1928, page 14: Country News; Wednesday 5 December 1928, page 16: Where To Spend A Holiday; *Frankston and Somerville Standard*, 12 October 1928, page 4: Pars From Mars.

3. *Frankston and Somerville Standard*, 14 December 1928, page 8: Mr. Sambell's Enterprise.

4. *Argus*, Saturday 11 May 1929, page 29: Phillip Island; *Herald*, Thursday 9 May 1929, page 27: San Remo Punts.

5. *Herald*, Tuesday 20 December 1938, page 16: School Tennis Fare For Christmas.

From the *Age*, Wednesday 29 December 1937, page 3

South Gippsland Wedding

Links Two Old Families

Two old South Gippsland families have been linked by the marriage of Miss Jessie McKenzie, second daughter of Mr. and Mrs. J. McKenzie, of the post office, Krowera, and Mr. George Wilson, eldest son of Mr. A. Wilson and the late Mrs. Wilson, of Jeetha [*sic*] West.

The wedding was celebrated by Rev. K. Miller and Rev. G. McGregor in the Krowera Presbyterian Church, which was delightfully decorated in a color scheme of white and pink flowers—hydrangeas, carnations, sweet peas and gladioli.

The bride entered the church on the arm of her father, and made an attractive picture in her gown of patterned cloque, made with raglan sleeves, the skirt cut on the bias to extend at the back into a long train. Her tulle veil (lent by her aunt, Mrs. A. McKenzie) was fastened to the hair with a halo of orange blossom, while a bouquet of cactus dahlias, carnations and hydrangeas completed the ensemble.

The two attendants, Misses Allison and Isla McKenzie (sisters of the bride) were gowned in pink taffeta frocks worn under redingotes of silk net, and wore head dresses of pink tulle and flowers. They carried bouquets of pink carnations and dahlias. Mr. Jack Wilson (brother of the bridegroom) was best man, and Mr. Leslie Wilson (another brother) was groomsman.

Following the ceremony, a reception was held in the State school building, where the guests were received by Mrs. J. McKenzie, who wore a gown of black patterned cloque relieved with red, and she carried a posy of red carnations. Mrs. McKenzie was assisted by Mrs. Treloar (sister of the bridegroom), whose dress was of nigger brown patterned cloque. She carried a posy of pansies in autumn tonings.

Mr. and Mrs. Wilson are making their home in Korumburra.

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