

The Western Port Times

Grantville & Districts



Volume 6 Number 10

FREE

February 2024

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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.

The Western Port Times.

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<p>DAVIES-FRANKLIN BICYCLES & TYRES</p> <p>Hand made Best quality Warranted A PACEMAKER.</p> <p>"PRINCE" "Princess Victoria" and "Victoria" Hand Power & Steam Turbine</p> <p>J. EASON'S CASH PRICE LIST</p>	<p>BRITISH CREAM SEPARATORS</p> <p>"PRINCE" "Princess Victoria" and "Victoria" Hand Power & Steam Turbine</p> <p>J. EASON'S CASH PRICE LIST</p>	<p>J. EASON'S CASH PRICE LIST</p> <p>FOXES AND DINGOES. RANGFORD'S Dingo and Fox Decoy.</p>
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DONMIX PRE-MIXED CONCRETE

BASS HIGHWAY - THE GURDIES



The Farmer's Wife

A call for increased recognition of the hero – or more precisely – heroine, of rural life.

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A bold experiment in prison reform or an outdoor camp that encouraged escape? Many of the locals inclined towards the second view – not without reason. Part six of seven.

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EASTER SPORTS CARNIVAL.

WONTHAGIG

EASTER MONDAY, APRIL 9th.

Cycling, Woodchopping, Trotting, Foot running (Amateur), Highland Dancing.

Entries Close March 24th. No entry accepted without fee. Bookmakers £1/1. Sideshows 10/6.

Programs available at this office.
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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

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From the *San Remo Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser*, 4th February 1898, page 2.

Local and General News

The San Remo Court of Petty Sessions will be held to-day, and there is likely to be a large number of cases heard.

The usual monthly council meeting, which should have been held to-morrow, has been postponed till Saturday, 12th inst, on account of the bush fires, a number of councillors not caring to leave their paddocks and home-steads till there is a change in the weather or a shower of rain.

In our advertising columns a useful waggon is for sale. Those who require one will do well to see it, as the price is very cheap.

The Great Victoria Colliery Company's Directors complimented Mr Emery and Miss Hunt for their promptness in notifying to their manager, Mr Brown, that the bush fires were likely to damage their property, and also presented them both with a donation in the shape of a cheque.

The first two trolly [*sic*] loads of rails came down from Kilcunda to San Remo yesterday, and will be shipped to Queensferry at an early date.

All along the main roads every here and there are dead snakes that have been killed, and they appear much larger than the ones killed last season.

On account of the smoke haze that has been laying over the bay, the steamer has had to blow her whistle every few minutes going up the channel every morning this week, it being almost as thick as a winter fog.

Also

From the *San Remo Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser*, 11th February 1898, page 2.

The Sunday school children will hold their annual picnic on Saturday (to-morrow), at the usual place, and on Sunday Mr Jackson will address the children and present the prizes and on Monday evening a Magic Lantern Entertainment will be given. All are invited to attend, the parents of the children more especially.

The lifting of the rails on the Kilcunda tramway is being pushed on with. Several trolly [*sic*] loads have been conveyed down the line, but the quantities they are bringing are being small as yet, but it is expected when they get over the Kilcunda road that more substantial loads will be conveyed over the line.

The residents of San Remo are feeling the continued dryness, and not having rain for

so long a period, the tanks are all getting low, and if there is no rain within a fortnight there will be a water famine.

The Kilcunda reserve is now open for selection. All applications must be sent in not later than Friday, 18th inst, to the Crown Lands Officer, Melbourne.

The Phillip Island and Woolamai Shire Council will hold an adjourned meeting on Saturday (to-morrow).

Owing to the prolonged drought and bush fires, the supply of cream at all the creameries and butter factories has fallen off; so much that some of the factories have had to shorten hands much earlier than usual.

The whole of the children and teachers of the Cranbourne State school had to turn out on Tuesday last to beat out the fire that had approached within a couple of chains of the school, and they succeeded in saving the building.

There has been heavy rain at Adelaide, and a few light showers throughout Victoria, but not enough to put out bush fires. Most part of the week in this district it has been threatening rain, but it turned off to heat again. Some of the "know alls" have forecasts that there will be no rain this month.

The Dandenong and South Bourke agricultural show has been postponed till the spring, and also the Korumburra show, on account of the recent bush fires, and the dry state of the country.

Up to last night it was reported from the Blackwood and Powlett that the fires were all out, and there appears to be no danger of them initiating again.

At the time of our going to press the weather, which has turned quite cool, has the general appearance that there will be rain before the day is out.

Also

From the *San Remo Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser*, 18th February 1898, page 2.

The Sunday School Magic Lantern Entertainment which was to have taken place on Monday evening, was postponed till to-night (Friday), as Mr Jackson, who was to have operated on the Lantern, had to leave for Melbourne on Monday morning.

Mr P. Anderson has kindly allowed those of his neighbours who have had their grass burnt by fire, to pasture their cattle in his

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Local and General News (continued from Page 3)

paddocks, a few of which have accepted this.

The shire engineer has been instructed to report on the amount of damage done by the recent fires to bridges, culverts, fences, etc, throughout the shire.

The engineer of the Buln Buln Shire informed the council that the damage done by fire in the south riding of that shire was great. There were 49 bridges and culverts destroyed, and he estimates the cost of their renewal at £450. He also states that it will cost £50 to remove the fire timber from the shire roads.

The amount received by the Central Relief Fund up to last Tuesday for the relief of those who have suffered by bush fires, has amounted to £7,880, besides wearing apparel, furniture, and sundry useful articles.

There has been no rain to speak of in the Shire of Phillip Island and Woolamai, except at Wonthaggi, the other side of the Powlett River. On Tuesday night there was a good fall of rain there, several of the farmers catching from two to three hundred gallons of water in their tanks, but in other parts they have not caught a gallon.

In a contemporary it is stated there was no press representative to lunch at the Phillip Island and Woolamai Council on Saturday last. The "grub destroyer" referred to, living on the other side of the road, opposite the shire hall, was absent, but not the "whisky guzzler" living on the same side as the hall.

A well known "big boy" of Bass, has had another presentation made to him in the shape of the "Times" free, for four or five months. When will these presentations cease, and what are they for?

Also

From the San Remo Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser, 25th February 1898, page 2.

The San Remo Petty Court will be held on Friday next, March 4th.

The Phillip Island and Woolamai Shire Council will hold their usual monthly meeting on Saturday, 5th March.

Water for domestic purposes is a scarce commodity in San Remo, and if we do not have rain in a week from this the consequence will be serious to the inhabitants. Several of the underground tanks are quite dry, and the neighbours are trusting to one another for drinking water.

The heat of the last few days is up to the standard of any other time during this

summer, several days the thermometer registering over a hundred in the shade. There is no appearance of rain, and we are likely to go another fortnight without it.

A pleasant surprise was given the parents of children attending school by the arrival of a new teacher at San Remo on Monday, and school was held here on Tuesday and Wednesday, and at Newhaven yesterday and to-day but after this week the school will be at alternative days as usual. It is thought by the parents that this arrangement would be better.

In our advertising columns tenders are called for clearing and picking up about 30 acres of burnt timber.

It still remains a mystery how the fire took place at the Bass Butter Factory on Thursday night week. When the manager, Mr Brown, left the premises at about 8 o'clock, everything to all appearances was quite safe, and the fire broke out about 11 o'clock. It is pleasing to state the premises were insured.

The bush fire relief fund has reached nearly to £10,000. This is one of the largest amounts collected in so short a time for many years. The distribution takes place next month.

The general public are reminded that March 1st is the last day for sending in their schedules for the Income Tax to Mr Webb, Commissioner of Income Tax.

The Great Victoria Colliery Company are pushing on with the lifting of the rails on the Kilcunda line, having nearly two miles of line stacked at the pier. They expect to have five teams next week instead of three. Tenders will be called shortly for carrying by water from San Remo to Queensferry pier.

Some correspondence was received too late for publication in this issue. We beg to remind those who wish their letters, etc, inserted, they must be received not later than Thursday's post to ensure their insertion that week.

The Bass River is very low, and the quantity of cattle taken to water every day will soon run it dry if there is no rain shortly. Hundreds of cattle and horses are driven every day to water, and in some cases they come as far as three and four miles.

The Powlett River is lower than it has been for the last 20 years. The water at the bridge is salty, and for drinking purposes they have to go up the river four miles before it is fit for use.

The heat register in Melbourne on Wednesday was 153 in the sun and 103 in the shade. It was one of the hottest days we have had here this season.

From the *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, Wednesday 3 September 1884.

Shire of Phillip Island

Friday, 29th August 1884

Annual Meeting For Election of President

Present: A. Stewart (President), Councillors Clark, Kennedy, West, Duffus, Smith, Turnbull, Hogan and Aldridge.

Councillors West, Kennedy, and Hogan, the newly elected members, subscribed the usual declarations in the minute book before taking their seats.

Previous to the election of President, the matter of fixing his allowance for the year was considered. It was moved by Councillor Stewart and seconded by Councillor Smith, that the usual sum of £30 be voted to the President for the ensuing year. As an amendment, Councillor Kennedy moved, and Councillor Aldridge seconded, that no allowance be granted.—The amendment was lost by seven votes to two.

Moved by Councillor Stewart, seconded by Councillor Aldridge, that Councillor West be elected President for the ensuing year.—Carried unanimously.

Councillor West, in taking the chair, returned thanks for the honor done him in having elected him unanimously to the position. He also spoke in high terms of the manner in which Councillor Stewart had performed his duties as President during his term of office.—Councillor West proposed, and Councillor Duffus seconded, that a hearty vote of thanks be accorded the retiring President, which was carried with acclamation.—Councillor Stewart returned thanks and the meeting dissolved.

Ordinary Meeting

Present — The President (S. West), Councillors Stewart, Clarke, Smith, Turnbull, Duffus, Aldridge, Kennedy and Hogan.

The minutes of last meeting having been read and confirmed, Councillor Turnbull, as returning officer for the Woolamai Riding, reported the return of Mr. C. T. Hogan to fill the annual vacancy.

Correspondence

From Borough of Heathcote, asking co-operation in obtaining for local bodies an exemption from the license fee charged for removing gravel or other road-making material from Crown Lands.—To be informed that Council will co-operate in the desired direction on the motion of Councillors

Kennedy and Turnbull.

From School of Mines, Sandhurst, asking co-operation through the Legislature in obtaining assistance towards opening up neglected reefs in the Sandhurst district.—Moved by Councillor Stewart, seconded by Councillor Aldridge, that the letter be received.—Moved as an amendment by Councillors Kennedy and Duffus, that the member for the district be asked to assist the measure when before Parliament.—Amendment lost, motion carried.

The Secretary was instructed to advertise the notice relative to importance of re-vaccination in the local paper.

From Public Works Department, relative to the appointment of a polling place at State School, Kilcunda.—Received.

From Public Works Department, stating amount of £200 for Bass Bridge had been passed for payment.

From Public Works Department, relative to amount placed on the estimates for clearing track towards Shire boundary in Corinella Riding.—Referred to members for Corinella Riding to report on.

The Collector's report for the month was read.—Received on the motion of Councillors West and Aldridge.

The Clerk of Works asked permission to have some draining and other work done at Mr. Cleeland's gate on the Newhaven road.—To stand over for the present in order to have the work included in a new contract, tenders for which are to be called on an early date.

The Clerk of Works reported relative to Mr. A. Misson's request for clearing drains opposite his residence at Bass.—Consideration postponed for one month.

The Secretary submitted accounts in connection with the area lately severed from this and annexed to the Buln Buln Shire.—Secretary to forward the accounts.

The Clerk of Works was instructed to have the logs on the road along Paul's fence removed by day labor, at a cost of about £2, on the motion of Councillors Kennedy and Stewart.

Councillor West brought under the notice of the Council that the pegs of the telegraph survey line had been driven in at the edge of the narrow formation on Phillip Island

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Shire of Phillip Island (continued from Page 5)

between Cemetery road and Main road for a distance of about a mile, and that in the event of a formation being widened at any future date the holes would be in the road.—Councillor Kennedy pointed out that at Hurdy Gurdy one peg, and at Kennedy's corner two pegs of the telegraph survey were on the road.—It was decided that the Post and Telegraph Department be written to, requesting that the position of the poles on the roads referred to be altered to at least seven feet from the present road formation, or the same distance from the aide fences as the remainder of the line.

On the motion of Councillor Kennedy, seconded by Councillor Hogan, the Secretary was instructed to write to the contractor for the telegraph line requesting him to remove or burn off the road all the timber which had been fallen by him, and to have all the stumps cut level with the surface of the ground.

Payments to the amount of £39 15s. were passed.

Councillors West, Hogan and Kennedy were appointed returning officers for the ensuing year for the Phillip Island, Woolamai and Corinella Ridings respectively.

Councillor Duffus gave notice of motion for various works on Phillip Island.

Councillor Kennedy gave notice of motion that all printing for the Shire for the year 1884-5 be let by tender.

Councillor Hogan gave notice of motion for naming the unnamed roads in the Woolamai Riding of the Shire.

Councillor Clarke gave notice of motion for work on Clarke's road.

The Council then adjourned.

From The Western Port Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser, 8 November 1901, page 2.

French Island

There are great improvements on the Island lately, a large twelve roomed house has just been completed and several other smaller ones are about finished. Several of the small land holders are going in for Chicory growing this year, and are about to erect a kilen [*sic*], for drying. Last year a few acres of chicory were put in and the yields were very good, so this year they have put in much larger quantities, and it is hoped that chicory growing will be a prosperous undertaking for the small farmers.

From San Remo Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser, 18 February 1898.

Bass Butter Factory Destroyed By Fire

On going to press we learn that the above factory was totally destroyed by fire last night about 11 o'clock. A fire was seen from San Remo lighting the whole of that part of the bay at that time, it being thought by the appearance that it was a building. Mr Bates, who is the proprietor, built the factory a few months ago on Bass Park Estate, and had only just completed necessary improvements for making butter through the summer months. It is not known here how the fire originated.

And from 25 February 1898...

It still remains a mystery how the fire took place at the Bass Butter Factory on Thursday night week. When the manager, Mr Brown, left the premises at about 8 o'clock, everything to all appearances was quite safe, and the fire broke out about 11 o'clock. It is pleasing to state the premises were insured.

From The Western Port Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser, 15 April 1904, page 2.

Opening of the Municipal Market Yards

The Grantville Municipal Market Yards were officially opened to the public on Wednesday by the president of the shire, Cr C. A. Anderson. There was a large number in attendance, amongst which were several visiting buyers. Mr A. Clarke, who was the first auctioneer to sell, stated that as it was not far from the usual sale day there would be no sale again this month, and that the next sale would be held on Saturday, Maach [*sic*] 28th. The first pen of cattle sold were fats belonging to Cr C. Anderson, and they brought from £5 to £8 7s 6d. There were about 800 head of cattle yarded and it was sundown before the last pen was disposed of. The prices, which were somewhat lower than last market day, were as follows:—Fat cows from £4 15s to £8 10s; good store bullocks from £5 to £6; springing cows from £4 to £7; 2-year-old springing heifers from £3 15s to £5; 3-year-old steers to £5; 2-year-old steers from £2 15s to £3 15s; 1½-year-old heifers to £3 15s; £3 15s [*sic*]; 1½-year-old steers to £2 15s; yearlings [*sic*] heifers to £2 15s; 6 months poddies from 25s to 50s.

From the *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, Wednesday 16 July 1884**Jottings From Western Port**

By a Contributor

Fortiter. Fideliter, Feliciter.

(Re-paragraphed for the sake of clarity.)

The railway line between Melbourne and Frankston seems to vary like a barometer. On the 1st November, 1882, a time table was fixed, which was not interfered with until the 1st December, 1883, when, I believe, some of the Frankston people obtained an alteration. Now I see by the *Argus* of the 10th inst. that a meeting of residents and property owners along the Mordialloc and Frankston railway has been held with a view to obtain another alteration, and get a change of carriages at Caulfield, one of the objections altered when Mr. Bent was Commissioner. Nothing but the railway to Hastings will settle all differences. Then I hope to see the traffic sufficiently large to warrant an express train each way once a day. The increase of traffic depends upon the hotel accommodation at Hastings, Cowes, and Grifliths' Point. I hear that Mr. Bauer of the Isle of Wight hotel, Cowes, intends to make large additions if the steamer continues to run. If time is lost by waiting until the railway commences there are others alive to the fact that more accommodation will be necessary. I believe the the above alteration is attempted by a land syndicate, headed by Mr. Byron Moore of Melbourne, and Mr. C. M. Watson of Cheltenham.

To show the want of a crane at the Cowes jetty, on a late acesion [*sic*] the steamer "Queenscliffe" had to wait three hours until the tide had risen sufficiently high to enable the steamer to use her steam derrick and hoist a box containing a valuable horse belonging to Mr. W. Harbison, which was being shipped to Melbourne. I am very anxious to see the next estimates passed, in which it has been promised that £800 should be included for a crane and additions to the jetty. Probably the Councillors of the Phillip Island Riding can see their way to obtain the fulfilment of this promise. If they don't back up the action already taken there is a chance of the work once more being delayed. A deputation of residents and owners of vessels interested should have the desired effect. Although I do not like deputations, I have found from experience that those who expect much without them do not get it.

I notice that the Public Works Department have been asked to assist the district of Belfast

in repairing the mischief done by drifting sand along the coast. There is a place near Green Lake, on Phillip Island, where the public road has almost disappeared through sand drifting from the beach, and the lake is gradually being filled from the same cause. As the sand is drifting from the Government reserve I think, that with proper representation, some assistance might be obtained. If it is not done soon the Shire Council will eventually be compelled to purchase a piece of land to enable the public to visit that beautiful spot called the Nobby. "A stitch in time saves nine." "Many a little makes a muckle." The sand at Green Lake is getting very "muckle."

The Councillors of the Shire of Cranbourne (by the reports) do not appear to by [*sic*] a happy family, which is to be deplored, as municipal affairs are apt to get behind hand [*sic*] if routine is not carried out. Suppose that all the Councillors retire, and then the Council could commence *de novo*. The Secretary of that Shire lately advertised for all owners of property to keep adjoining roads or streets clear from seedlings, suckers, and other offsets from all hedges or live fences, that is, for those having hedges. The Council of the Shire of Phillip Island might follow this example, as there are several roads on Phillip Island almost impassable through seedlings of the gorse, furze, or whin. Unless united action is very soon taken no real good can be derived. So, with sparrows and thistles. What is the use of one person poisoning sparrows if all the neighbors do not do so at the same time. I may cut down thistles on my land according to the Act, and afterwards get another crop from seed from the land of my neighbor, or of the Government reserve, or of the road under the control of the Municipal Council.

I suppose from henceforth until early in August next to nothing will be discussed but candidates for municipal honors. For the Shire of Phillip Island I have been informed that for the Corinella Riding Messrs. James Lawrence, D. B. Kennedy, and C. Warsley intend to contest the seat vacated by Mr. J. Hayes, who retires. Messrs. John Kidd and

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Jottings From Western Port (continued from Page 7)

C. F. Hogan will fight it out for Woolamai Riding, and Mr. S. West will not meet with any opposition for the Phillip Island Riding, if he allows himself to be renominated. Of the relative qualities of the candidates I will say more anon.

I congratulate the Shire of Phillip Island on their action in dredging for oysters; they, however, overlooked two important recommendations to the Minister of Customs. One, that the privilege of dredging should not be confined to one person or firm; the other, that the same beds should not be dredged continuously, but allowed to rest for a period of from five to seven years.

The exertions of the promoters of the Cowes Free Library do not appear to have met with the support they deserve, if we can judge by the amount of encouragement given it by the Government, in the way of subsidy. Anticipating a good round sum, the committee, in the early part of last year, collected from the public sufficient, with a free grant of land by two residents, and a grant from the local Council, to justify it getting into debt, expecting, of course, to be supplemented by the subsidy. I have just learned that the munificent sum of £2 9s. 2d. is all they will get this time, and if more is required it will have to be obtained by private subscriptions, as the Government only give in proportion to such. I imagine the committee will have to find other means of raising funds. The residents, as a rule, have not subscribed liberally, and that is to be wondered at, as the room is open three evenings a week for free access, and for the time the library has been open there is a fine collection of books. I am also sorry to admit that in several instances those who promised to help, when the library was instituted, have not kept their word, and some have declined to subscribe, on the plea that eventually the institution will be turned into a dancing saloon. There are ways and means of obtaining funds. Amongst them that of concerts and entertainments. The encouragement to those ladies and gentlemen who gave their services gratuitously last easter is certainly not complimentary, judging by the reception they were accorded by several rowdies who gained admission, and did all they could to stop the concert—thus spoiling the pleasure of others and making themselves ridiculous. As I hear that the Queensferry folk are starting a kindred institution I hope they will profit by the experience of others.

Also

From the *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, 30 July 1884.

By the advertisements in the *South Bourke and Mornington Journal* the nomination day for the elections for the Shire of Phillip Island has been fixed for the 29th inst. Ere this reaches the reader of this paper the nomination papers will have been sent in with the customary deposit of £10 in cash. I have only seen one public announcement, that of Mr. D. B. Kennedy for the Corinella Riding.

I venture to guess that the only nominations will be:—Mr. S. West for Phillip Island, Mr. Hogan for Woolamai, and Mr. Kennedy for Corinella. If such turns out to be the fact, the ratepayers of Phillip Island are bound to appreciate the self-denial of their representatives in once more placing his services at their disposal.

Mr. West has been so long connected with Shire matters that his knowledge therein is invaluable, and his absence at the Council table would be severely felt.

Of Mr. Hogan's capabilities as a Shire Councillor I cannot speak from experience, but I have no doubt that from individual knowledge he will render good service to his constituents so long as he does not fall into the usual error of beginners, that is, attempt to do too much in reforming his fellow councillors.

Usually those outside a council chamber fancy that they can manage council matters better than those who are already there. But when they sit at the council table they find things much different, and that they have to act according to statute, and that their voice may be one against eight. Lookers on, as a rule, imagine that they see more of the game than those who are playing it.

I do not know of any reason why Mr. Kidd should be rejected by Woolamai, further than that the majority will prefer Mr. Hogan. Mr. Kidd whilst a Councillor performed his duty conscientiously, and gave fair attention, as proved by the fact that he has held the position for at the least seven years continuously. If he should be nominated, and fail to be elected, or should he have decided not to stand, I think some recognition from the ratepayers is due to him.

Of Mr. Kennedy I can speak from experience, and I fail to see where the district will benefit by his election, unless he has determined

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Jottings From Western Port (continued from Page 8)

to profit by previous experience. When in the Council previously his actions were more of an obstruction than advantage to the Council, and it is to be hoped that he and Mr. Kidd will not be compelled to sit together at the Council table. Having lately been a contractor and auditor for the Shire, he ought to bring outside experience. But why should he give up those positions of profit to undertake one where he will get nothing but honor?

Rumour says that certain residents of this locality will guarantee all his expenses whilst a councillor. If I was a councillor I should join with all those who did not contribute towards the said expenses in believing that no councillor could act strictly impartially under such circumstances, and that it would only be natural for him to favor his friends as much as he could.

There is another matter concerning Mr. Kennedy in the position of councillor, of which the ratepayers should be informed, and that is:—On the 30th November, 1878, a petition was presented to the Council praying that the license fees charged to publicans should be reduced from £25 to £10. Mr. Kennedy is credited with presenting that petition, and of using all means to obtain sanction thereto, and which was obtained, but only by a fluke. If he did not present it, it was done by one of the then councillors for Corinella, and the three councillors were then Messrs. Kennedy, Monk, and Misson.

Reckoning the average annual licenses to be 11, the loss of revenue to the Shire since the alteration has amounted to nearly £700, which would be increased considerably by the subsidy from the Government. As there are only two licensed houses on Phillip Island, the greatest loss has occurred in the Corinella and Woolamai Ridings. How many roads and bridges could have been repaired and built with that money I leave for the ratepayers to form an estimate!

To compensate for that reduction, solely to benefit the publican, has there been any corresponding advantage? Have the customers received more liquor for their money, and have they received more of it? If Mr. Kennedy is elected, and will obtain a reinstatement of the old license fee, I will forgive him; if not, "Hawk Eye" will look out for the first vacancy.

Since September 6th, 18879 [*sic*], the date of Mr. Kennedy's retirement, the business of the Council has been conducted without

acrimony. I venture to predict that, if Mr. Kennedy obtains a seat at the Council table the President of the Shire of Phillip Island for the year 1884-5 will have his work cut out for him. *Nons verrons!*

The following amounts are included in the special votes in the estimates for 1884-5:—Jetty and approaches, Anderson's Inlet, £500; jetty and shed at Grantville, £600; crane and extension to Cowes' jetty, £400; to assist in clearing track from the termination of the track cleared by the Shire of Buln Buln, the Council of Phillip Island to expend £100 additional, £200. The latter vote I do not understand, unless the Shire Council of Phillip Island intend to expend money for the benefit of Buln Buln, who are in a much better position to do so.

Touching the question of "Drifting Sands," would the Councillors of Phillip Island favor me with reading the leading article in the *Argus* of the 30th May, 1884, bearing on the question, and act upon it promptly. I am sure that much of the damage caused at Green Lake, Phillip Island, has been through a breach of the bye-law of the Council, which prohibits ti-tree and scrub being cut down indiscriminately. Having been done, it is necessary to repair the damage before it is too late. I see that £200 has been voted by the Government for fencing land from Queenscliff to Point Lonsdale to prevent irruption of sand.

As the time is drawing nigh when Swan Lake will be open for fishing, it will be necessary for rules and regulations to be framed.

LANG LANG CHEAP STORE.

Opening Sale

MONDAY, APRIL 22.

**Best of goods at lowest
Prices.**

Come and see for Yourselves.

J. EASON, Lang Lang.

The January-February 1898 Fires

From the *San Remo Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser*, Friday 14 January 1898, page 3.

Bush Fires

Bush fires were raging in al [*sic*] directions on Tuesday. The fires at Bass were rather extensive, and is reported to have started from Bass Park paddock, destroying about 300 acres of grass and fencing. It then crossed over to Kennedy's paddock, burning 150 acres of grass and nearly all his fencing, then making its way to Emery's, completely roasting a field of potatoes of about 10 tons and 1½ acres of hay. At the time the fire came they were mowing the crop. It swept through the field, burning the whole of the crop in a few minutes. It then passed over to a crop of peas just ready for pulling, which were completely consumed. It got almost up to the homestead, and it was in imminent danger of being consumed, but the occupants worked hard and kept the fire back, the smallest children being kept going throwing water on the outhouses when a spark was intinging [*sic*]. To make matters worse Mr Emery was not at home, he that morning having started for Lang Lang, and when on his way home the fires were raging through Queensferry down towards the township. When he got to the Old Victoria Hotel, the fire had just caught the end of the house. He at once tried all he could to put it out, but it had too great a hold and in a very few minutes was laid to the ground. There were several thousands of the Great Victoria Collery [*sic*] Company's sleepers stacked close by and the fire made its way through them, destroying 1,100. On the Bass River the fire had reached near where the company's bridge is being constructed, and the whole of the hands employed were put to work to beat off the fire from the bridge, and it took them all their time to keep it from being consumed. Mr Headon's farm and house was also nearly burnt, and had it not been for the assistance of his neighbours and friends his place would have been in ashes. It is also reported that there was a fire raging through Blackwood. The Woolamai saw mill was completely surrounded by fire. The loss of property in this district must be very considerable, and to the amount of several hundreds of pounds.

STOP that Cough with Tromax White Pine and Tar. Get it at McDougall's.

From the *San Remo Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser*, 4 February 1898, page 3.

Destructive Bush Fires At Wonthaggi And Kilcunda

Extensive and destructive fires are still raging in and around Kilcunda, extending to the Powlett River and Wonthaggi, and if the present weather exists much longer, it is hard to say where the mischief will end. The following have been the principal sufferers:—Littlejohn, all his grass and fences; Peters, 30 sheep, all his grass and fences; Pillan, all his grass and fences; O'Meara, nearly all his grass burnt and log fences; C. Stenholdt, grass, fencing, and a stack of hay. Several homesteads are bound to be burnt, as the fire is so fierce that it would be impossible to save them. An immense amount of damage has been done at the Blackwood, particulars of which are not yet to hand, as the exertions of one and all are engaged in the watching of properties, and the putting out of fires, wherever a possible chance exists. At Wonthaggi the grass is all drying up, and there is very little sustenance for dairy cattle, except in low lying lands where a certain moisture exists on the banks of the River Powlett and its tributaries and other adjacent creeks. At some of the dairy farms there is still a fair average of cream, but a very considerable falling off for this time of year, when a very large quantity of cream is naturally expected. The water at Wonthaggi is very scarce, and if it was not for the Powlett River the cattle would perish. A great many are depending on the brackish water that is to be found in creeks, they having no water for domestic purposes. J. Lyne is a considerable sufferer through the bush fires, as he has lost everything. He is surrounded by the principal dairying interest of Wonthaggi. It would be a sad loss to all considered if the fire spreads as the Kongwak butter factory is supplied principally by the dairy farmers in that locality, and the factory has already sustained a severe loss through the unfortunate position of affairs. The quantity of butter made has fallen off from three tons to thirty cwt per week.

SAN REMO HOUSE—Unsurpassed rest and health resort, lofty rooms and outdoor sleeping accommodation.
MRS. J. T. DENHAM.

From the *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, Wednesday 13 January 1897.

A Koo-wee-rup Settler

(Re-paragraphed for the sake of clarity)

In the opinion of a correspondent Koo-wee-rup contains more concentrated essence of hopelessness than any other alleged village settlement in Australasia — not even excluding the experiment in misery at Southport, Tasmania.

It appears he once endeavored to settle at Koo-wee-rup, and kept on endeavoring for three months. During that period all his clothes and most of his cuticle were distributed impartially on the jagged points of the all-pervading ti-tree stumps; his horse, weakened by excessive chewing of ti-tree bark, got into a crab-hole and wouldn't Koo-wee-rup any more; his wife fell into the "big drain" twice while trying to catch eels; his children were chased by big black snakes, and got lost and sunstruck on the way to the half-time school four miles up the swamp; a deer or other wild animal from the surrounding scrub forest came in the early morning and demolished the few decrepit cabbages and frost-bitten potatoes in the "garden"; the native cats or possums or some thing killed the fowls; a neighbor, or a neighbor's pig, came in the night and carried off the only remaining "fifty" of flour and half a sack of dried onions; and a vagrant kangaroo dog stole the baby out of the gin case cradle and only dropped it after a two-mile chase through the ti-tree.

Then the inspector decided that insufficient work had been done on the holding to entitle the settler to half-time employment on the Government drain. More ti-tree stumps should be grubbed, he said.

The poor devil of a villager had built fences with ti-tree stumps, walled and floored his dwelling with ti-tree stumps, poured them down crab-holes in tons, had grubbed them out and piled them up in huge bonfires that scorched his hair and whiskers, and burnt down his fowl house; heaps of ashes; 6ft deep, surrounded the premises, and lay like sand dunes up against the impenetrable wall of standing tree at the back; and all the time the house and garden kept sinking slowly down until they got below the level of the canal, and the water soaked through the floor and put the fire out.

Yet, despite all this, the inspector wasn't satisfied, for the ti-tree stumps increased and multiplied. At every fresh subsidence of the homestead they sprang up like mushrooms.

It was no use, so the settler shook the swampy "sugee" from his bare feet and gave the ti-tree stumps best. Charles Dudley Warner and other amateur gardeners anathematise the American weed called "pusley." They should try to eradicate ti-tree stumps, especially at Koo-wee-rup.—Bulletin.

From the *Canberra Times*, 24 January 1966, page 4.

Middle-aged Couple Found Shot Dead

Melbourne, Sunday. — A middle-aged couple were shot dead in the kitchen of their home near Poowong, 63 miles south-east of Melbourne, last night.

They were Harry William Parslow and Alice Jean Parslow, both about 40, of Poowong.

In incidents which police said were related to the murders, two sticks of gelignite were thrown into a car near the dead couple's home and shots were fired over the heads of four youths as they fled across paddocks.

Police said Mr and Mrs Parslow were shot dead after an argument at their home.

Car Ran Off Highway

They said the couple's car was stolen and driven away at high speed. It ran off the Bass Highway, near Grantville, about 30 miles away.

Police found the car later last night. A man was asleep on the back seat.

Inspector Frank Holland, chief of the Melbourne Homicide Squad, travelled to Cowes and questioned a man, aged 21.

He was later brought to Melbourne, where he was charged with two counts of murder. He will appear in the City Court tomorrow.

From the *Age*, Friday 22 Sep. 1933, page 18: Wonthaggi.

The Ragwort Menace

At the meeting of the Bass council a letter was received from Mr. A. E. Priestley, Glen Alvie, in which he stated that the ragwort menace had been recognised, but unfortunately nobody seemed prepared to tackle it. He urged that action should be taken to impress the Government with the necessity for action. Cr. Bolding stated that in the Korumburra shire the weed was very bad in places more especially in abandoned mining areas about Outtrim. Cr. McRae said there were many instances where land had fallen in value 50 per cent. owing to the spread of the weed.

From the *Australasian*, Saturday 30 March 1872, page 12.

Shooting The Gun At Phillip Island

by Cartridge

Part two of two

(Re-paragraphed for the sake of clarity.)

“Not distant from the isle of Toobonai,
A black rock rears its bosom o’er the spray,
The haunt of birds, a desert to mankind,
Where the rough seal reposes from the wind,
And sleeps unwieldily in his cavern dim,
Or gambole with a huge frolic in the sun;
There shrilly to the passing oar is heard,
The startled echo of the ocean bird,
Who rears on its bare breath her callow brood,
The feathered fishers of this solitude.”

“The Island.”—Byron.

Fifty yards beneath the foot of the hotel garden was capital bathing ground—a hard, stoneless, sandy beach, rapidly shelving into deep water. One couldn’t quite divest one’s mind of the notion of sharks, and I think that Mr. Bauer would do very wisely, and make his pleasant inn still more attractive, if, either in his own account, or in conjunction with neighbours, he were to set about securely fencing in a portion. I enjoyed my sunrise swim, as it was, hugely, and am not on the whole, I think, a bigger coward than most men, but that story of the fishermen about a certain finny specimen of some 18 feet long or so, whose presence in the vicinity of the jetty had been [a] matter of notoriety for several weeks past, would somehow crop up, and intrude into one’s thoughts as one swam a little way out;—and—yes—I should certainly have bathed more happily even than I did had I known that trustworthy palings separated me and this worthy gentleman!

Sunday morning at Phillip Island. What was to be done? A friend had kindly furnished me with a line of introduction to the gentleman who originally held the island for squatting purposes, but whose run was now reduced by the inroads of the free selectors to the mere pre-emptive section.

Mr. M’H’s residence was distant about five miles from Cowes, horses were to be had in plenty, and so shortly after breakfast done justice to with an appetite that I felt almost ashamed of, and accompanied by a gentleman, like myself a visitor to the island, I started for it, the dogs gaily following.

My chronicles of that pleasant day must be limited to a few words. If I said all that I might possibly like to say, I could run on for about a month, and absorb perhaps far

more columns of *The Australasian* than are devoted to the sporting department; racing, cricket & c., and shooting altogether; in fact, without doubt a deal more than even my friend little Specs, or the most ardent lover of the gun could ever put up with. It will be inferred that I enjoyed myself.

I did.

A glorious ride along the bold coast of the island—now on the hard sandy beach beneath, and anon by the winding track above the cliffs—a most kind and hospitable reception from Mr. M’H. and another ride, after lunch, to the picturesque “Nobby” Rocks, down by Point Grant, it were hard indeed to fail to enjoy. Finally, on the evening inland route home, we several times to our joy beheld Messrs. Rap and Scamp steadily standing sundry bevvies of plump quail.

Before going to bed that night the following resolutions were duly put and carried:—

1st. That my newly-found friend and I, being duly furnished by Mr. Bauer with a strong sort of double-seated spring-waggon and a pair of stout steeds, should proceed herein at an early hour on the morning following, in quest of game.

2ndly. That, as we neither of us knew much about the several tracks, fences, and “slip-panels” of the free-selector, we should gratefully accept the offers of two residents to join us in the day’s sport.

Another sunrise swim, then, another Brobdignagian breakfast and we were off. Of course there was to be a hot day again (when did we last have any cool ones?) but there would at all events be several hours in the morning and towards evening when the scent we might hope would be fair, and the heat not too great for the dogs. A little word concerning one of the latter.

Rap, a white setter, had been, as it were, lately under a ban—and in this wise: being rather averse to new friends, timid, withal, and moreover living for a considerable period in close retirement in South Yarra—close retirement at all events as regarded the gun—he had, back in January, been tried

(continues on Page 13)

Shooting (continued from Page 12)

by a sportsman of note—tried, and reported wanting.

“Wouldn’t give you half-a-crown for him,” this gentleman had kindly declared to his deeply-chagrined owner, “he does nothing but race meaningly and uselessly about, and has no nose!” Poor Rap!

But now to business. After a few minutes’ delay at a waterhole near the confines of the township, and a shot at some black ducks, we drove off towards the centre of the island, passing lots of pretty country and covert, and presently pulling up at the farm of Mr. M’D., a worthy Scotchman, who bade us welcome.

“Quail? yes; there were,” he said, “plenty” (couldn’t I have hugged him as he spoke!).

And in a very few minutes Prince and Doctor, the two horses, were taken out and put in the shed.

“Just try that stubble,” was M’D.’s advice to us as we moved off. I say “we” for all of us carried guns. Neither Tallboys, however (my pleasant hotel acquaintance), nor R. nor D., our guides for the day, were properly equipped for the slaughter of quail. The two latter indeed rather, I fancy, despised such quarry, while the first had only succeeded at the very last moment in procuring from the little Cowes store shot almost better adapted for slaying elephants. So, beyond a very

occasional discharge or two from them, the fun fell to my share.

The stubble proved to be fairly stocked with what we were in search of. Five, ten, fifteen, brace were pretty rapidly totted up, plump, true stubble quail, and the dogs shaped decently.

Master Rap, just at first a trifle eager and prone to wide-ranging, toned down instantly after receipt of mild correction, and thenceforward and throughout the trip, behaved as it is but seldom my good fortune to witness. Scamp, as usual, would, until he caught it “hot” once with the whip, have a preliminary snap at fallen birds, “just to see what they were like again,” his apologetic look, I thought, seemed to say, as he took his thrashing without the faintest whimper, and as though he fully expected it—shook himself afterwards, and then, without a semblance of sulking or malice-bearing, gaily recommenced ranging. That’s the sort of dog for your money. I fear my friend B. dare not touch his (Scamp’s) brother, do what he will, eh, B.? for dogs, like men, vary so much in temper.

What a jolly lunch we had when the stubble had been duly shot, and the noon day hour come; some corn-sacks spread upon the straw in M’D.’s barn, and upon

(continues on Page 14)



Homestead on Phillip Island. Painting by John Black Henderson, c. 1855-1874. Source: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales. Album ID: 1037076.

Shooting (continued from Page 13)

them in their turn sundry tempting and plentiful viands brought in the waggon, were paid the deepest attention to. Need I add that there were bottles too, and something in them, and methought (could it have been fancy?) that never had the Messrs. Tennent brewed such beer before.

I got another hour's capital shooting in and about some lucerne, and then we harnessed up again. Tired? No, but it chanced that about five miles away, down by Point Grant, dwelt S., a fine, stalwart, jolly fellow whom I had once met upon the mainland, and in the neighbourhood of whose residence I had the day before put up a good many birds. S. himself had been away when I called, but his return was hourly expected, and so we resolved to drive down and visit him and his well-grassed paddocks.

One little episode *en route* there nearly marred our merriment. Prince and Doctor, Bauer's two horses, had shown themselves throughout so uncommonly quiet, and regardless of gunshots, that we very senselessly, at a place denominated Swan Lake, left them standing, untied and unharnessed, in the shade of some trees, while we stalked

a mob of ducks. Upon our firing presently, at not many yards distance from them, our steeds became alarmed and promptly bolted, dragging the waggon after them.

Surely our luck must have been "dead in," when it chanced that after tearing through a dense patch of scrub, capsising [*sic*] the vehicle and scattering its contents, the scared animals suffered us to recover them, in a swamp adjacent, with, lo and behold! scarcely an article fractured.

S. was still from home. "You can blaze away, however, sir, as much as you like," said his civil man in charge, and we furthermore resolved not to return to Bauer's, but to accept his offer to accommodate both ourselves and horses, for the night.

Opposite the bold cliffs called the "Nobbys," at Point Grant, and separated only from them by a hundred yards or two of ocean, are the "Seal Rocks," whereon hundreds of curious and harmless animals, from which they are named, are annually slaughtered. It would have been something novel a little seal-shooting, but we had neither time for it, nor what was as important, a boat. So when it became cooler the quail suffered again.

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Nobby Rock, extreme south west point of Phillip Island. Painting by John Black Henderson, c.1860. Source: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

Shooting (continued from Page 14)

Several hours later something like 40 brace hung suspended in the night air in S.'s verandah; both dogs and men had had enough of it for that day, and lazily we lay in the moonlight, listening for an occasional cry from the distant seals, and from the multitude of swans out upon the placid bay.

One of the main features of the next morning's shooting was the marvellously good working of poor condemned Rap. From 6 o'clock to 9, in the long dew-covered grass he made regularly, as a fair computation, three points to Scamp's one, nor did the latter shape by any means badly. And such pleasant shooting! A high open breezy promontory, with glorious views seaward on either side; capital walking, good covert, and plenty of birds, what could the mortal quail-shooter wish for more? I think there will be good shooting on the island for some months to come, for there were any quantity of "cheepers," and the 20th of December had evidently been far too early an opening day.

Breakfast over and the heat of the day come again. "What do you say to a little fishing, gentlemen?" said S.'s obliging representative.

Fishing! the very thing; and Tallboys, who doesn't go in heavy for walking, jumped at the notion. Twenty minutes later the members

of our little party were seated cosily on the ledges of sundry rocks abutting into the strait to the right of the Nobbys, "angling" (save the mark) with tea-tree rods and stout hempen lines in the swirling eddies of the retreating tide. At first the finny denizens of that region fought rather shy of our hooks as baited with limpets, but presently having secured by (don't laugh) a charge of quail shot! a huge and seemingly otherwise unattainable cray-fish, we tempted them with pieces of it, to their instant and most profuse destruction.

Tallboys! how many did you slaughter, I ask you on your word as a gentleman? Blue-noses, rock-cod, leather-jackets and what not? Heigho! we had lots of fun, at all events, over it.

More bathing, more gormandising, and a start towards Cowes again. It was utterly impossible, speaking personally, although we had already a good bag, to pass the Scotchman's farm on the route, without another slap at the poor quail. And the birds, as if anxious to please me at parting, did rise thickly and no mistake. From 4 o'clock or thereabouts, until the central-fire was almost unbearably hot and foul—until I couldn't see to shoot any longer—Rap, Scamp, and

(continues on Page 16)



Swan Lake, Phillip Island. Painting by John Black Henderson, c.1860. Source: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

Shooting (continued from Page 15)

I stuck to them, R. goodnaturedly carrying the bag. I'm sure D. and Tallboys must have been tired of waiting.

And when at last, between 7 and 8 p.m., we turned up again at Bauer's inn, the worthy proprietor of that welcome hostelry gazed at us manifestly as if we were risen from the dead, having, it appeared, confidently settled it in his own mind that we had been all dashed—Prince, Doctor, guns, and waggon, into unrecognisable fragments at the bottom of the cliffs down by Cape Woolamai!

The merriest and pleasantest trip must come to an ending. I was told that, if I "would only stay another day or two," I could have lots of additional "excitement," rabbit-shooting at Churchill Island, seal-shooting, wallaby-shooting, &c. I was assured that I hadn't seen the prettiest side of the island, and that it was downright folly to return without exploring, among other things, the "Eastern Passage," whatever that might be.

But there was no help for it. Time was up next morning, and duty, in the shape of a desk and a ledger, beckoned remorselessly from the mainland. One more bathe upon the shelving beach, a last ferocious breakfast with Tallboys; and, then, at 8 a.m., with most commendable punctuality, Jim, the boatman in Cobb and Co.'s employ, took Rap and Scamp, and the hamper of quail (carefully packed by Host Bauer) once more into custody. With many a hand-shaking, and promise to "come again soon" (if he could), the scrawler of these lines sprang in after them, feeling, as the little jetty and the kind faces of those on it gradually faded in the distance, that seldom before, if ever, had he spent such a holiday.

Millinery and Blouse Specials

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Miss GREEN'S,
GRAHAM-ST., ... WONTHAGGI.

AT 6s 11d.—All-Wool Delaine Blouses in Assorted Styles.

AT 7s 11d.—Navy, Black and White Blouses, in heavyweight silks. Other smart styles from 9s 11d to 14s 6d.

AT 9s 11d.—Black Silk Velvet Hats, in newest shapes, trimmed Posies or Feather Rushes. Others to clear in Velvet and Felts at 5s 11d.

ALSO GENUINE REDUCTIONS IN LADIES' and CHILDREN'S COATS, DRESSES, Etc.

COME AND INSPECT.

From the *Great Southern Advocate*, Friday 20 January 1899

The Farmer's Wife

(Re-paragraphed for the sake of clarity.)

The farmer's wife gets very little sympathy, but a great deal is heard from time to time of the hardworking farmer, who, according to his own showing, works all the hours that are made and a few over. He is always up before daylight, and he keeps on working till long after dark. He says so himself, and he ought to know.

I have studied the farmer for more years than I now care to count, and I now feel impelled to say that I do not quite agree with him when he talks of all work and no recreation.

On well-managed farms in the coast districts, where a regular rotation of crops is grown, the farmer and his assistants are kept pretty fully occupied during the greater portion of the year; but in the wheat-growing localities there is always a very easy time between the sowing and harvesting periods. If the farmer works then, the result of his labor is not often apparent.

The farmer's wife, on the contrary, has to work hard all the year round, and harder than usual when the harvest is being gathered. She it is who really keeps the house going by her industry and economy, and the money she makes out of poultry, eggs, butter, &c., which the wheat-grower looks upon as rather beneath his notice, though he well knows their value in reducing the household bills.

If dairying, as well as agriculture, is carried on, the female members of the household do most of the milking, while the farmer takes the milk to the butter factory or creamery, and discusses the Eastern question with other farmers whom he meets there, believing all the time that he is working hard. I never knew a prosperous farmer who did not owe a large measure of his success to his wife, but neither in the Press nor on the platform has she ever received the recognition she deserves.

The farmer's wife is entitled to far more consideration than she now gets. She would not be compelled to wait for her reward till "we meet to greet each other in the sweet-by-and-bye."

SAN REMO HOUSE—Unsurpassed
rest and health resort, lofty rooms
and outdoor sleeping accommodation.
MRS. J. T. DENHAM.

The McLeod Prison

Part Six: 1952-1954

From the *Koo Wee Rup Sun*, 9 January 1952.

Police Run Down Fugitives

As police searched for two prisoners believed to have escaped from French Island on Saturday, four other men were detained after 12 shots had been fired at a utility at a road block near Lang Lang. The four men are being questioned about the alleged disappearance of a utility truck from East Melbourne on Saturday. Two men dived into the Lang Lang River, but were held at gun-point. The missing prisoners were discovered at Tankerton, on the island, at noon on Sunday. As they had not left the island they will be dealt with by the Penal Department and will not be charged by the police with escaping. The prisoner were found by First Constable R. F. Hewitt, of Lang Lang, and three police recruits, Constables J. Milner, G. Brace and G. Herbert, who were spending their week-end leave at Lang Lang.

The road block near Lang Lang was being operated by Constable H. C. Perrin and F. H. Powney, of Wonthaggi, who were searching all vehicles for the missing prisoners. When a utility failed to stop, the police thought it might contain the prisoners. They fired 12 shots, eight of which hit the utility, which was later found abandoned and out of petrol half a mile from Bass, on the Wonthaggi road.

Before going to French Island, First Constable Hewitt, with the three recruits, had questioned two men at Bass Post-office, but had not detained them. When he learned about the utility, he and the recruits took the road that the men had taken from the post-office and joined forces with a patrol car sent from Melbourne to search for the missing prisoners. The police saw two men and chased them through thick scrub and open paddocks. The men jumped into the Lang Lang River, but were caught.

Two other men were detained later, one at Wonthaggi and the other at Bass.

From the *Herald*, Thursday 10 April 1952, page 3.

Island Escape By Raft

Two young convicts escaped from French Island during the night by making a raft from two inflated tyre tubes they had stolen from a truck in the grounds of the penal settlement.

They paddled their raft five miles across the water to the mainland near Lang Lang, and are believed to have then headed for Melbourne. Lang Lang is 52 miles south-

east, of Melbourne.

The raft was found this morning 60 yards from the shore of French Island. Police at first believed that the escapees had drowned but later were convinced the raft had drifted back with the tide.

Stole Till

It is believed that, soon after they landed, the escapees broke into and robbed a garage at Lang Lang and then stole a till from the Tooradin Hotel.

They are James Patterson, 18, and Rex Smith, 21. Both were sentenced to imprisonment on French Island last August for factory breaking and stealing.

A search has been organised by First Const. R. F. Hewitt of Lang Lang.

Descriptions of the men are:

Rex Smith, 5ft. 7½in. medium build, brown hair, hazel eyes, fresh complexion, scar on left side of chest. He has tattoos on both forearms — a woman on the left forearm and the figures 1951 on the right forearm.

James Patterson, 5ft. 8in. 9st. 10lb. brown hair, blue eyes, fresh complexion, a sore on the upper lip.

From the *Koo Wee Rup Sun*, 3 December 1952.

French Island Escapees

Captured After A Long And Strenuous Chase

Two escapees from French Island Penal Settlement on Saturday night were smartly captured on Sunday near Tooradin. They were David Albert Pearson, 20, and Neil Ernest Sturrock, 21, and both were serving indeterminate sentences. They made the journey of six miles to the mainland on a raft constructed of petrol drums and planks and landed in the mangrove at Tooradin at about 3 a.m. Sunday. A patrol car crew, led by Senior Constable R. McLachlan and assisted by First Constable R. F. Hewitt, of Lang Lang, comprised one of the searching parties, the other party being First Constables E. Duncan (Cranbourne) and H. G. Watson (Kooweerup). While standing on the Tooradin bridge at 4 a.m. the latter party came in conversation with Mr F. Keighery, of Tooradin, who was on a hitch-hike to Dandenong, and he was informed the purpose of the officers' visit. Walking along the highway about one mile west of Tooradin, Mr Keighery seen [*sic*] the

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two escapees ahead of him and immediately returned to inform Constables Duncan and Watson and the patrol which had then arrived from Melbourne without seeing the escapees on the highway. In scrub and swamp the wanted men were pursued north of the highway, and although several shots were fired at them, they managed to escape and made towards Tooradin North. The escapees were again seen near Manks road, where Sturrock, exhausted, gave himself up to Constable Watson and Duncan at 6.50 a.m. Sturrock was handed over to Mr Fruehbauer, who had accompanied the patrol from Melbourne, while Constables Duncan and Watson went in search of Pearson. After being chased in knee deep swamp for about two miles, Pearson, thoroughly exhausted, at 7.30 a.m. gave himself up to Constable Watson 1½ miles north-west of the Tooradin Railway Station. In the meantime the patrol party car got bogged on an unmade road near Tooradin Estate and had to receive towing assistance. The escapees were remanded at the City Court on Monday to appear at Lang Lang Court on the 10th inst. The police appreciate the assistance given them by Messrs Keighery, Smith (Tooradin) and Paxton (Five Ways).

From the *Koo Wee Rup Sun*, Friday 11 February 1953, page 1.

French Island Escapees Causing Terror

Cranbourne Shire Council at its meeting last Friday was advised by the French Island Progress Association that it is endeavouring to arrange a deputation to the Minister concerned protesting against the increasing number of prisoners on the island escaping from custody and requesting council's support. Cr. W. J. Ratford said the matter was far more serious than many realized. Some of the prisoners were dangerous men. Residents on the island are mostly young men with young families and when escapees were reported to be at large they could not leave their homes. In fact, "the people were terrified and have had it," and the council should do its best to see that the now prevalent number of escapes does not continue. Cr. G. Ridgway said the regulations should be tightened up in order to keep the prisoners under more surveillance. The number of escapes was also causing anxiety to people on the mainland. Council decided to give the association all possible support, and Cr. Ratford was appointed to attend the proposed deputation.

From the *Argus*, Monday 16 February 1953, page 2.

They Leave A Rifle Loaded Islanders Alarmed By Prison Escapes by Barney Porter

Last year 23 prisoners escaped from McLeod, penal settlement on French Island, and with only six weeks of the present year gone, the escape total for 1953 is five.

That is why the islanders are forming a deputation to the Chief Secretary to protest against the "danger, damage, and nuisance caused by the repeated escapes of prisoners."

Decision of the Bass Shire Council to support them, announced last week, has given them hope that at last their claims for justice may receive some consideration—and action.

While there is no terror among the free residents of French Island, the farmers and fishermen and their families live in a state of constant tension. Whenever convicts are at large the man of the house before he leaves home either to join in the man hunt or to go about his lawful occupation, hands his wife a rifle with the instruction: "Shoot first and ask questions afterwards if any strangers come poking around."

Although no escapees have caused violent harm to the islanders there always has to be a first time.

And escapees have armed themselves with knives, iron bars, and wooden billets, which have been taken from them after their recapture at gun point.

Already convicts have made threats of reprisals against island settlers for helping track down escapees.

After 14 local residents armed themselves and assisted warders in recapturing three escapees last year, one islander, Mr B Mogford, who works at McLeod was told by convicts "When a prisoner escapes, it is nothing to do with the islanders...NEXT TIME THERE IS AN ESCAPE SOMEONE WILL BE BURNT OUT!"

Other equally violent threats have been made to various individuals.

McLeod prison settlement is not like Pentridge or Castlemaine or other prisons. It is not walled. There are four warders to look after about 50 prisoners, and escape is easy.

But there is no direct telephone between the prison and Tankerton (the island civilian settlement) telephone exchange, nor is there an all weather road connecting McLeod with the island road system.

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One resident. Mr. J. W. King, has been trying for more than a year, on behalf of his neighbors, to get conditions remedied, but all the satisfaction he received was a Ministerial statement from Mr Dodgshun, when he was Chief Secretary, that: "Experience over a period of more than 30 years does not justify fears that the reformatory constitutes a danger to residents."

However, warders on the job have told islanders that some of the prisoners include the worst types of criminals who should be behind walls, and a former superintendent of McLeod said: "Anything can happen here at any time."

Residents disagree with the Ministerial view. Apart from the risk of physical danger, and the thefts and vandalism by escapees seeking clothes and provisions, there are 20 boats, worth up to more than £500 each, moored around the island. They could be taken by escapees.

The boat owners have been advised that no charge could be laid against an escaping convict for the unauthorised use of a boat.

Points which the deputation will impress on the Chief Secretary will include:

- That at least one warder be kept at McLeod permanently after he has explored the island thoroughly and familiarised himself with landmarks and bush tracks, so that he can lead searches for escapees.
- That McLeod be equipped with a jeep, fitted with two-way radio telephone in touch with McLeod for directing searches.
- That an all-weather road be made to link McLeod with the island road system.
- That McLeod be connected by telephone direct with Tankerton, or an equivalent radio link be installed.
- That recaptured escapees be sent to some other prison instead of being returned to French Island. (Some prisoners have escaped twice from McLeod, and one or two have a higher tally.)

The islanders are hoping hard.

From the *Herald*, Saturday 28 November 1953, page 3.

Island Farmers "Ready To Shoot" Convicts

Thirty-five farming families on French Island, in Westernport Bay, are living "in constant fear."

Prisoners at the penal settlement there have sent out this threat:—

"Unless the farmers stop interfering when we escape we will do more than just break into their homes — we will burn them out."

And the nervous farmers knowing this is no idle threat, say—

"We are fed-up; from now on we shoot!"

For years, French Island farmers have been menaced by escaped convicts from the penal settlement that sprawls over 600 acres.

The farmers armed themselves to help hunt fugitive convicts — and protect their own life and property.

Isolated

French Island, 20 miles by 18 miles, is almost virgin bush country. The farms are isolated miles apart, and connected only by rough tracks and a single-strand telephone wire.

When a prisoner escapes it is sometimes days before the farmers know, because the phone is so often out of order.

Until he is recaptured, the island families live in constant fear.

Women and children stay close to the house; the men get down the rifles, which are always loaded.

Axes, Knives

Some prisoners, when recaptured, have had clubs, axes, bludgeons, an iron oar or a knife.

So far none has managed to get a gun.

Mr Bill Perks, who has been an island farmer for eight years, leaves his 14-year-old son John in charge with a loaded rifle if he has to leave home when a prisoner is "out."

He has told John to shoot anyone who refuses to answer a challenge.

"And I'd shoot, too, if they tried to attack me," John said yesterday.

"When there's some one 'out' Mum is too frightened to leave the house."

Bill Perks recently led a deputation of farmers to the Chief Secretary, Mr Galvin, to ask for more protections.

"We don't mind one getting out," he said yesterday, "but when they get out in bunches of three or four what hope has one man got?"

"One could come and knock at the back door while the others came in through the front."

"Blow-up"

When a prisoner escapes, the farmers have to watch their boats—and sometimes have to stop work to do it.

Prisoners have stolen launches worth hundreds of pounds to get to the mainland. Some boats have never been found, but

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farmers have received no compensation for these losses.

“We have been told by the Government that the convicts are harmless,” Bill Perks said.

“But a few months ago warders warned me not to go after one man alone, even though I was armed and on horseback.”

“It’s only a matter of time before this thing blows up,” Perks added.

“One man wounded, farmer or convict, and it’s going to be on.”

Farmers have fired shots at prisoners, mainly warning shots while they were trying to steal boats.

Defiant

Another island farmer, George King, who was in at the last arrest of escapees, told this story:

The three fugitives had run down one of his sheep and cut its throat with a razor blade.

They were disturbed while cooking the sheep, and were later found under a haystack and ordered out by a ring of angry farmers.

The convicts were defiant, and one said that if he had had a gun he would have made a fight of it.

Soon after this, the prisoners sent their “burning-out” threat to the farmers.

Fire Hazard

“It would be easy for them to burn us out,” George King said.

“A match in this grass in the middle of summer would soon wreck us.

“If it happened at night while we were in bed, well, we wouldn’t have much chance.”

Three years ago, the farmers say, the prisoners did burn out one property.

It belonged to a man who refused to send prisoners’ letters to the mainland.

He nearly lost his life in the blaze.

From the *Herald*, Friday 14 May 1954, page 15.

Convicts Make Break At French Island

Two young convicts escaped from French Island penal settlement early today.

Police believe they are hiding on the island, but they have blocked off all roads leading from Westernport Bay.

The convicts are:

George Maxwell Edwards, 21, who is described as 5 ft. 10 in. tall, 11 st. 6 lb., sallow complexion, dark hair, brown eyes.

Richard Norman Slattery, 21, 5 ft. 9 in., 10 st., 6 lb., fresh complexion, sandy hair, hazel eyes.

Both were wearing denim trousers and pullovers. Edwards was wearing gumboots and Slattery sandshoes.

Armed warders are patrolling the beaches on the island.

Night Break

The men were missed at 6.30 a.m. at roll call. Their beds had been slept in, but warders told police they thought the men escaped from the settlement before midnight.

The alarm was given and warders searched the Island, but found that no boats had been stolen.

Constable W. Hewitt walked along 15 miles of beach in Westernport Bay, but did not find any signs of an abandoned boat.

The men are at the settlement “during the Governor’s pleasure.”

Edwards has been convicted on nine counts of housebreaking and two of larceny. In 1951, with two other prisoners, he escaped from the settlement.

They were picked up in a boat before they reached the mainland. Edwards was sentenced to 12 months’ imprisonment.

Slattery has been convicted on seven counts of larceny, two of illegally using cars, one of attempting to illegally use a car, larceny in a dwelling, and shopbreaking and stealing.

In October, 1952, he was sentenced to 12 months’ imprisonment for shop-breaking and stealing and six months for larceny in a dwelling.



William Peters on the Corinella foreshore in the 1930s fixing the decking on the boat used as a supply vessel for the French Island prison farm.

* * *

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