

The Western Port Times

Grantville & Districts



Volume 6 Number 9

FREE

January 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.

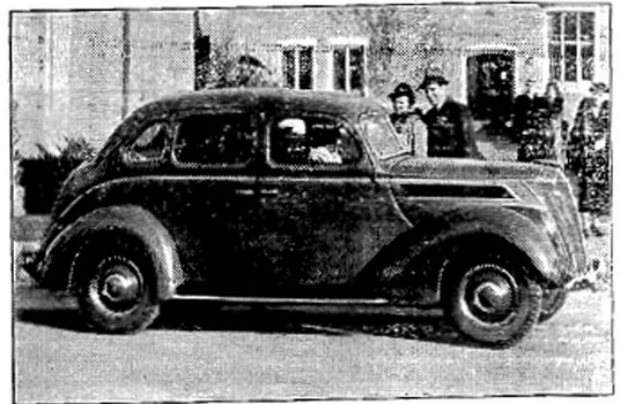
At its peak, the paper was distributed from Flinders and Hastings on the Mornington Peninsula, to San Remo and Phillip Island, Inverloch and the Powlett region, through to Jumbunna and Loch, and as far north as Lang Lang.



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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*, 7th January 1898, page 2.

Local and General News

Court of Petty Sessions will be held to-day. There are a large number of cases to be heard.

The Phillip Island and Woolamai Shire Council will be held on Saturday.

The visitors through the holidays were not so plentiful as they were the previous years at San Remo, but at Cowes they were up to the standard of other years.

On Wednesday Mr Cleeland crossed over to San Remo from the Island about 70 ponies and 70 head of cattle to be forwarded to his Bass paddocks. Capt. Lock shipped them over safely in his cattle punt.

Capt. Loch [*sic*] crossed over the passage from the Island about 40 head of horses and 50 of cattle on Thursday morning for Mr Harbison.

A plague of caterpillars, supposed to be similar to the caterpillars which attacked potato crops at Currum, has devastated the pea crops at Poowong.

With regret we have to chronicle the death of a much respected recent resident of Queensferry, Mr Denny, who died at his late residence in South Yarra on Wednesday morning. His friends will be sorry to hear that he was a great sufferer up to the last. Great sympathy will be expressed for his family in their sad bereavement.

Mr Robert Kennedy, the Scotch vocalist, gave a concert at Cowes on Boxing night. He sang several old Scotch songs, and gave amusing anecdotes which were much appreciated by the audience. Mr Kennedy still keeps up the same vigor in his singing, etc, as of yore. His accompanist was a local lady, Miss Robb.

Also

From the *San Remo Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser*, 14th January 1898, page 2.

Since receiving our market report potatoes have risen to £7 per ton.

In the advertising columns tenders are called for repairs to the Grantville Jetty. Tenders will close at the Public Works Department on January 20th.

The Government shire auditor, Mr J. S. Jenkins, is now auditing the books of the shire with his local assistant, Mr John S. Marsh.

Tuesday was the hottest day that has been recorded for sixteen years. In Melbourne the temperature was 109 in the shade. The register in our office was 106, and in other parts of the shire as high as 108.

Mr Elliott, the late Newhaven and San Remo State school master, has severed his connection with the Victorian department, and left here on Tuesday morning for Western Australia. A few of his friends met him on the eve of his departure to drink a friendly glass of wine, and at the close singing "Auld Lang Syne."

On Monday and Tuesday last the country was filled with smoke from the bush fires. From Bass and Queensferry the fires extended to the Blackwood, destroying several thousand acres of grass and crops just ready to harvest.

A concert was held last night at the Shire Hall, San Remo, by a company of Blind Musicians, and the attendance was very large. Several comic and sentimental songs were sung, and also instrumental music was given by different kinds of instruments. During the evening an exhibition of reading and writing was given by the performers.

On the morning of Tuesday last Mr Elliott left San Remo by the s.s. Genista. Before arriving at Stony Point, Capt. Clarke invited him down into the cabin with those on board to drink his health before leaving them. The captain made a neat little speech, wishing him bon voyage, coupling Mr S. Pickergill, who was leaving the same day.

Also

From the *San Remo Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser*, 21st January 1898, page 2.

Destructive fires broke out on Saturday evening on French Island.

The dance held in the Queen Victoria Hall, Bass, on Saturday night, was well attended, and everyone was well pleased with their evening's amusement.

It is understood there is a larger number of visitors expected here than have paid us a visit of late. There is plenty of room for them, as such necessary provision has been made to cater for the wants of visitors, that those who visit San Remo say they will be only to glad to pay us a visit again.

Steps are about to be taken to hold a Regatta at Easter. It is to [*be*] hoped the same will be carried out successfully, and not to leave all the work to do for one or two as was the case at Xmas. If it had not been for the exertions of J. Cleeland Esq. the Regatta would have fallen through altogether.

The largest number of visitors by the

(continues on Page 4)

Local and General News (continued from Page 3)

steamer this season between San Remo and Stony Point was on Saturday last, there being between sixty and seventy.

Friday, the fourth day of February, at 2 o'clock, is the date and time appointed for the holding of the Electoral Revision Court at San Remo for the Corinella and Phillip Island Divisions of the Electoral District of Mornington.

As will be noted by advertisement, R. Trew, Bass P.O., will be pleased to supply, at reasonable rates, posts, rails, and stakes, delivered anywhere round the district.

In our advertising columns it will be seen that a sale of Crown Lands will take place on Tuesday, January 25th, at 2 o'clock, at the auction rooms of Messrs W. L. Ballieu and Co., Collins-street, Melbourne. The lots consist of business and other sites, and command a splendid view of Bass Straits *[sic]*, high cliffs, and there are many beautiful coastal frontages, and are *[at]* Kilcunda, parish of Woolamai, county of Mornington. The lots to be sold are situated on the main road from San Remo to Inverloch.

Last Sunday evening our local Church of England had a good congregation the principal of which were visitors.

The charge of illegal detention, adjourned on last court day at San Remo, is likely to be settled out of court.

Messrs Jenkins and Marsh finished their audit of the shire books and accounts on Friday afternoon last, and report favourable as to their correctness, and give Mr Bonwick, the shire secretary, praise for the way in which has kept his books and accounts.

Constable Thornton, of Burwood, who was stationed at Cowes for about eight years, has made an exchange with Constable Parsons, of Grantville. The reason of his returning to this district is on account of his children's health, they being more or less on the sick list since leaving Cowes. His medical adviser advised him to return to their own native air with them, and he thinks that it will be the means of restoring them to health again.

In this issue is to be found advertisements referring to list of names of persons objected to upon list of rate-paying electors and the general list of electors.

By reference to our advertising columns, it will be seen that tenders will be received for grazing lands on West Creek, parish of Wonthaggi North. Tenders close at noon on Monday, 31st inst. Particulars may be obtained at the local land office.

Also

From the *San Remo Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser*, 28th January 1898, page 2.

The Court of Petty Sessions will be held at the Court House, San Remo, on Friday next February 4th. The Revision Court will also be held the same day.

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

In our last issue it was stated that the Genista had brought between 60 and 70 passengers from Stony Point, but we were misinformed, as it was not nearly that number.

Harry Hansen arrived with his newly-purchased boat from Melbourne on Monday. The boat is very fast, and yacht *[sic]* built and rigged, and has been in the Gippsland Lakes for a number of years, her name being the Aerial *[sic]*. The price paid for her, we are informed, was £46.

At the recent bush fire at French Island, there was about 200 tons of firewood burnt. Two or three men were engaged in cutting it for Capt. Loch *[sic]*, who took it from them, paying them a fair market price. They informed Capt. Loch *[sic]* that they could not go on cutting, as they were quite destitute and had no means of purchasing their provisions. The Captain, with his usual good nature, told them to go on cutting as much as they could and he would take it all, and supply them with provisions.

In our last issue an error crept in. It was stated that Messrs Baxter and Saddler had taken 5s 6d of the purchases of rolling stock in shares. It should have been five sixths of the money in shares.

Rumour says that another large and influential company is about to be formed, and intend taking up coal leases between Kilcunda and San Remo. The company is to be formed in one of the adjacent colonies, and they intend shipping the coal to their own territory.

The Great Victoria Company's men will commence lifting the rails on the old Kilcunda tram line on Monday next, and will trolley *[sic]* them down the line for shipment to Queensferry.

The friends of Capt. and Mrs Henderson will be pleased to learn that on Monday last Mrs Henderson presented the Capt. with a son and heir. Mrs Henderson is progressing as well as can be expected.

(continues on Page 5)

Local and General News (continued from Page 4)

The Education department are very slow in sending a teacher in Mr Elliott's place. If school does not soon commence there will be very few days for the children to attend, as there are only 20 days in this quarter on account of being half-time school.

The Cranbourne Shire is getting desperate on the fox bonus. Several adjoining shires have discontinued paying it, and of late the number of scalps brought into Cranbourne is alarming. The shire is going to ask the Government to make it compulsory for all shires to pay the bonus.

Among the few successful crops this season was one sown by Mr John Denham in a salty paddock close to Westernport Bay, near Koo-wee-rup. Mr Denham, who used a Buckeye manure drill, harvested 90 bushels of oats per acre from this crop, which was abnormally high and sturdy.

We have received a sample of brick made at Goodhurst by Mr Good. They are of a real good quality, being hard and sound and fit for any work. Mr Good informs us that he can supply any quantity at the nominal price of £3 per thousand at the kiln.

The Minister of Lands was interviewed in reference to the distressed farmers by the late fires in and around Leongatha.

The late station master of Stony Point has been transferred to another more important station, and Mr Stewart has taken his place.

Want of water is keenly felt by a large number of residents in the district for domestic and other purposes. The Woolamai sawmill has been closed for over a month on account of not having sufficient water for making steam.

The places of business, more or less, were closed on Foundation Day in this district, and several of the business people embraced the opportunity of having a day out. The post and telegraph offices were all closed through the day, except an hour in the morning and evening.

Throat affection is very prevalent in the district. It was thought that it was symptoms of diphtheria [*sic*], but fears on the matter are now subdued, as our shire medical officer is quite satisfied there is no infection in the district.

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

From the Age, Monday 9 May 1938, page 12.

Truck Overturns

Five Persons Injured

Early on Saturday night a motor truck driven by William Wheatley, 52 years, of Grantville, near Cranbourne, with six passengers was returning from Dandenong after meeting a train there. Travelling along the South Gippsland Highway, the truck had reached a point six miles from Cranbourne, and between that town and Tooradin, when it got into loose earth at the side of the road, skidded and overturned.

Two of the passengers, Miss Adeline Tootell, Addersley-street, West Melbourne, and William Wheatley, junior, 17 years, of Grantville, were uninjured. William Wheatley junior [*senior is likely meant*]; his wife, Florence, 55 years, and his brother, James, 54 years, Church-street, Richmond; John Street, 28 years, Grantville; Stephen Tootell, 47 years, Addersley-street, West Melbourne, and Ernest Cox, 43 years, Ann-street, Williamstown, were taken by ambulance waggons to Alfred Hospital. All had sustained extensive lacerations, and Cox had a compound fracture of the leg.

Also

From the *Argus*, Monday 10 May 1938, page 3.

Suffering from injuries to the back, Mrs Florence Wheatley, aged 52 years, of Grantville, near Cranbourne, was admitted to the Alfred Hospital yesterday. She was one of the five persons injured when a motor-truck overturned on the South Gippsland Highway, near Cranbourne, on Saturday night.

From *The Western Port Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser*, 3 April 1903, page 2.

Fatal Accident

A young man named Charlie McGathy, who was in the employ of Mr P. Kennedy, proprietor of the Archies' Creek Saw Mill, met with his death on Saturday last being thrown from his pony.

An inquiry was held on the body at the Royal Mail Hotel, Archies' Creek, on Monday, by Mr P. J. Daly J.P. The evidence was that the deceased was sent a message and on his return he was carrying a parcel which the pony objected to. The pony threw him against a post which resulted in his death.

The verdict was recorded accidental death through being thrown from a pony.

He was interred in the San Remo Cemetery on Tuesday.

From the *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, Friday 2 July 1884.

Shire of Phillip Island

Friday, 27th June 1884

Present: Councillors West, Turnbull, Kidd, Duffus and Aldridge. In the absence of the President Councillor West was voted to the chair.

The minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed, and outward correspondence approved.

Correspondence

From Councillor Stewart, stating that he was, owing to private business, unavoidably prevented from being present.—Received.

From the Oriental Bank Corporation, asking payment of overdraft, £301 11s 9d, with interest added.—Consideration postponed, on motion of Councillor West seconded by Councillor Turnbull.

From Government Statist, forwarding agricultural statistics for 1884.—Received.

From Public Works Department, stating that the amounts on the estimates for 1883-4, for Clarke's and Delany's roads, and also for Cape Patterson road, would be placed for re-vote with the estimates of 1884-5.—Received.

From Public Works Department re the Bass bridge plans &c.—Referred to Shire Engineer.

From P. Quinlivan, asking that his contracts be allowed to stand over till October next, as, owing to the weather, he was unable to proceed with the work.—Request granted.

From Central Board of Health, forwarding model bye-law for the suppression of the steam whistle nuisance.—Received.

From Secretary for Agriculture, forwarding form of application for trees to plant *[in]* the Cowes Public Reserve.—Referred to the members for the Phillip Island Rising.

The ratecollector's report of defaulting ratepayers was laid on the table, and it was resolved that they be summoned for the amounts due.

The Clerk of Works was instructed to get about ten chains of extra work done on Pickersgill's contract on Cape Paterson road.

The Clerk of Works reported recommending that culvert at Dunn's, Phillip Island, be redecked.—The report was adopted, and work ordered to be done.

The Clerk of Works reported having had various small works done by day labor since last meeting.—Report was adopted.

The Clerk of Works was instructed to sell the old timber of Bass bridge to the best advantage.—He reported that some unscrupulous persons had taken part of the best timber away.

The matter of considering action to be taken relative to Clarke's road deviations was further postponed.

Payments were passed amounting to £228 16s 9d.

The following dates were fixed for Council meetings till the end of the year, viz.:—August 1st, August 29th, September 16th, October 31st, November 28th, and December 27th.

Councillor West brought under the notice of the Council a paragraph which appeared in the S. B. & M. Journal relative to the oysters in Western Port Bay, and thought it desirable that the Council should express an opinion as to the reserving of same. On the motion of Councillor Turnbull, seconded by Councillor Kidd, the Secretary was instructed to write to the Commissioner of Customs, stating that this Council approve of any action which may be taken to preserve and protect the oysters in Western Port, and suggesting an appointment of some responsible officer for that purpose. Further, to suggest that half mile instead of quarter mile be made the boundary from the mouth of the Bass River, as the radius within which netting should be disallowed.

The Secretary was instructed to write to Mr. Muntz, requesting him to ascertain whether or not the Upper Powlett bridge is on the proper line of road, and to fix the best site for a bridge there.

The Council then adjourned.

Wonthaggi Hotel,

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OPPOSITE RAILWAY STATION,

— WONTHAGGI. —

Excellent Accommodation for Everyone.

C. D. TABERNER,
PROPRIETOR.

The Prices in Dalyston

by

Geoff Guilfoyle

Most locals know – or should know – that the town of Dalyston acquired its name from the prominent Daly family. But what – and who – was in the area before the various Dalys arrived? And what was the place actually named before it became Dalyston?

Due to the blocking effect of the Koo Wee Rup swamp, the area later comprising the Shire of Phillip Island and Woolamai was lightly settled in the 1860s. The cattle runs still comprised the major economic activity, with some uncoordinated prodding of the ground for coal a distant second. Bass and Cowes were beginning to form real townships, with Deep Creek (future Grantville) just on the brink of doing so in the last years of the decade. East of the Powlett River, however...

The river had not abated in its overflow of waters, and after spending the day in the trial to pass, they were obliged to return here again, merely to inform their chums in waiting that they were not half so badly off as those on the other side of the Pawlett [sic] River, who were waiting to come on here as they had no house nor shed for shelter, whilst here, at the Royal Hotel, they had every comfort the bush would allow. (Illustrated Australian

News for Home Readers, 26 October 1867, page 10: The Floods.)

This lack of a bridge didn't stop other braver souls from attempting the crossing (see below) with dire results. The Victorian government took notice of this and on 12 November 1867 accepted the bid from Carter and Turnbull of £482 9s. 8d. for the building of a bridge over the river.¹

The location of this bridge is unknown, but was possibly in the same spot as where a later bridge on the lower river was constructed, that is, close to where the Bass Highway crosses the Powlett today.

While this made overland travel from Bass to the Tarwin and beyond marginally easier and considerably safer, it wasn't until 1878 and 1879 that land in the Powlett River area was made available for selection and there was an influx of settlers (though this was still mostly to the west side of the river).

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Adventures At Cape Paterson Coal-Fields

To the Editor of the Age

Sir, — Four days since some men who have been working under the Government contractor (Mr Sedders), boring for coals, beyond Cape Paterson, left the place to go to Melbourne to arrange matters in connection with a discovery of a seam of coal which they had found themselves, on their own account, but not near any of the Government borings. Having relinquished their employment in consequence, they intended coming by sea, but, the wind being contrary, two of them left the ship in the River Tarwin, anxious to get to town to have matters arranged by Messrs Baillie and Butters, whom they expected to get up a company to work the coal. On the journey, however, they disagreed as to the proper track to take. Very imprudently, they separated, and consequently both got lost in the scrub. One of them, William Hodgkinson, found his way to Cape Paterson on Friday, and this morning, with one of the colliers in my employ, came on to the Bass River. In crossing the River Powlett they had a narrow escape from drowning. William Hodgkinson, of Barley-street, Carlton, was carried off a little distance by the current, when the other caught him by the arm, and, providentially, both got on shore in safety. Hodgkinson's mate, John Hardman (who is an unmarried man, but has a mother and sister, if not more relatives, living some place in Lancashire), was found wandering about near the wild cattle run, by Johnson Byrne, a stockrider at Black's Station, who was coming to the Bass for letters, riding one horse and leading another. He offered to show Hardman the way, and take him across the Powlett on his horse, but, in crossing the river, they were swept down the current, the horse turning backwards, and his rider, being unable to regain a footing, was tumbled along among the rocks down to the sea, where, after showing himself beyond the breakers for a little time, he sank and perished. Johnson Byrne escaped with difficulty, as he had Hardman's swag as well as his own tied on to his horse.

These fatalities prove the necessity for a bridge and finger posts, which would cost a mere trifle, from the "Bass River to Cape Paterson and the Tarwin into Gipps Land." It was only yesterday week that two of the couriers, on attempting to cross the Powlett, narrowly escaped drowning; for, although they had a pack-horse with them, and three experienced horsemen were present, one of the men lost his footing by getting into quicksands and deep water, from whence his partner extricated him in a pitiable plight. The horse went underwater with all the swag, when the girth breaking set him free from his burthen, and so he got out safely. I wish a little of the money spent in getting water up country for the miners was spent in giving the passengers and miners a passage over waters here about. It would be well, if not better, spent; for these coal-fields are of more value to the colony than the gold-fields, and will tend more to the prosperity of it, all reports notwithstanding. But the plague is how to get to or from them.

From the *Age*, Thursday 24 October 1867, page 7.

The Prices in Dalyston (continued from Page 7)

Along with the gloriously named Kingdom Kent (looking exactly like an unkempt and white-bearded Old Testament prophet), the more mundanely named William Price also arrived. The 1873 booklet *Memoirs of Dalyston & District* has this to say about the Price family...

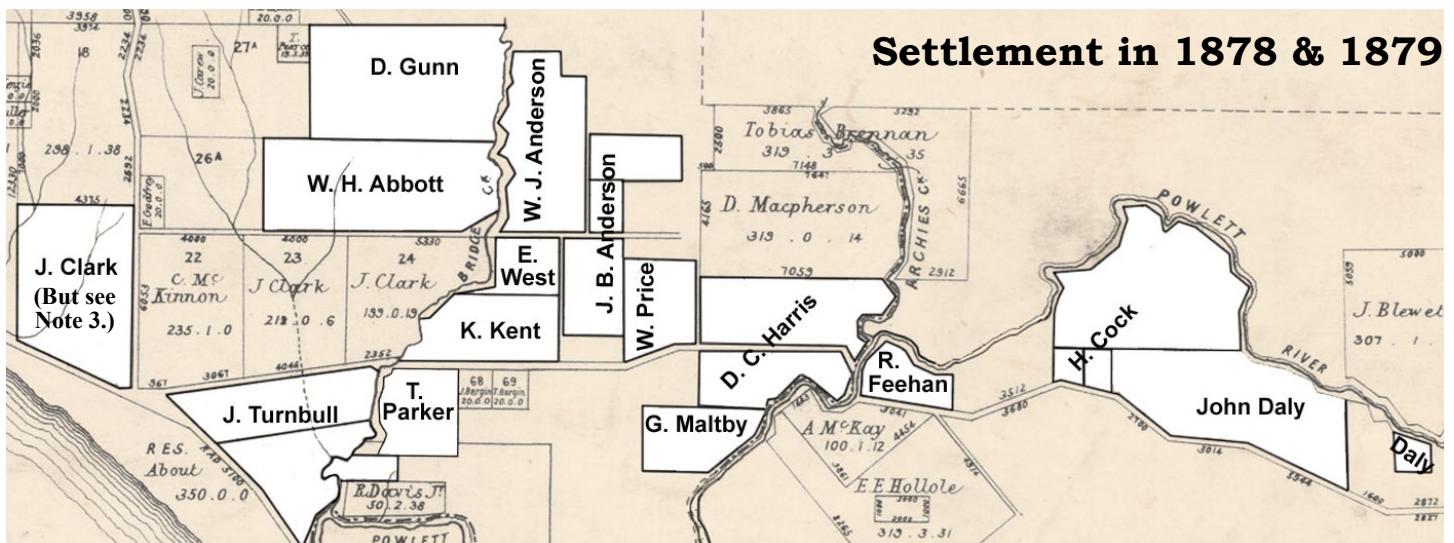
For over half a century, Dalyston was known as 'Price's Corner', so named after Mr and Mrs Price who, with a family of seven girls and two boys, moved up to a spot behind where the Ozone Hotel now stands. They came from Melbourne in about 1856, and their home was a well-known calling place, being for some time the only house between Kilcunda and Inverloch. Mr Price died in 1881. He was the first funeral in the San Remo cemetery. Mr Malpie, an uncle of Mr Price, took up a selection nearby in 1875.

William Price and his wife Lettice seem to have had seven children in total, two of whom (William Jnr. and Esther) both died

before their 5th birthdays. These two, and their five surviving siblings (Lettice Jnr., James, Mary, Esther and another William Jnr.), were all born in Brighton between 1854 to 1870 which makes the presence of the Price family in future Dalyston in 1856 improbable, especially as an 1882 notice of probate in the *Argus* lists their former address as Tucker Road, Brighton, implying a relatively recent migration to the Powlett. Amusingly, Births, Death and Marriages, Victoria credits Lettice Jnr. and James each with two birth certificates which, given the times, isn't unusual. William junior would spend his life in the area and died in Wonthaggi in 1952, aged 89. There was possibly another child named John, who may have been born around 1847, but who died in his early teenage years.²

William Price's application for 100 acres of land in the Parish of Woolamai was approved on 24 January 1879 and that's when they moved to the Powlett area (Lot

(continues on Page 9)



Settlement in 1878 & 1879 (bold text on white background) and 1880-1882 (black text on beige background).

Sources:

Selections at the Bass & Powlett Rivers, County of Mornington [cartographic material], Department of Crown Lands and Survey 1882; *Woolamai*, County of Mornington [cartographic material], Department of Lands and Survey, Melbourne, 1960; Wonthaggi Parish Plan, W3866, Regional Land Office Parish and Township Plans Digitised Reference Set (2002). Public Records Office Vic.: VPRS 16171, P0001.

Victoria Government Gazette No. 76, 2 August 1878, page 1848 (George Maltby, 100 acres); *No. 41*, 10 April 1879, page 826 (Henry Cock 18 acres / John Daly 320 acres / David Gunn, 320 acres); *No. 63*, 20 June 1879, page 1551 (Henry Cock 20 acres / John Daly 20 acres); *No. 97*, 10 October 1879, page 2440 (Henry Cock 320 acres).

Phillip Island and Woolamai rate books 1878 and 1879: Thomas Parker, 100 acres, 1878 selection, entry 335 / Kingdom Kent, 140 acres, 1878 selection, entry 382 / Edwin West, 60 acres, 1878 selection, entry 383 / William J. Anderson, 205 acres, 1878 selection, entry 384 / George Maltby, 100 acres, 1878 selection, entry 385 / John Turnbull, 286 acres, 1878, entry 352 / J. B. Anderson, 179 acres, 1879, entry 341 / David Gunn, 320 acres, 1879, entry 342 / W. H. Abbott, 320 acres, 1879, entry 343 / William Price, 100 acres, 1879, entry 387 / D. C. Harris, 289 acres, 1879, entry 345 (and possibly 1878 as George Harris, entry 386).

Note 1: Richard Feehan is a "1879er", more specifically, April 1879. He, however, was Melbourne-based and didn't occupy the block which was likely left vacant.

Note 2: There is some minor conflict (e.g., the amount of land D. C. Harris, John Daly and John Turnbull held) between the rate books and government maps. Where the rate books differ from the charts, the cartographic material is followed.

Note 3: James Clark eventually went on to own Lots 19, 23 and 24 (Powlett area) and Lot 13 (Kilcunda). None of these is the 320 acre block listed in the 1879 rate book which, additionally, is placed in the Corinella Riding. It isn't until 1889 that the rate books start listing Clark land near the Powlett River (as John Clarke), but only Lots 21 and 22 for a total of 84 acres. And Clark is spelt as Clarke throughout. What exactly is going on is hard to pick out. Thus Clark's inclusion with Lot 19 is a best-guess, based on 1879 being his first appearance in the rate book (entry 620) and no suitable 320 acre block being available in the Corinella Riding (and nothing smaller owned or leased by Clark).

The Prices in Dalyston (continued from Page 8)

73). William Price's name now makes its first appearance in the Phillip Island and Woolamai rate books (entry 387). The area was probably chosen because Lettice Price's brother, George Maltby (not Malpie) had selected 100 acres there in 1878 (Lot 77), probably originally arriving as a squatter given his first appearance in the rate books predates his selection.³

Given that the Price family weren't the only ones living near the Powlett River in 1879, and had indeed only just moved to their land, they wouldn't have been in much of a position to be a "well-known calling place" for some time, and even in 1879 were far from the "only house between Kilcunda and Inverloch."

William Price, however, did die in 1881, aged 84, and is buried at San Remo. The inquiry into his death revealed he'd been ill for the previous five years and died from, according to Dr. Goldston of Cheltenham, an unspecified internal complaint as well as age.⁴

Despite the influx of settlers in the late 1870s and early 1880s, there was as yet no townships, just localities such as Bridge Creek, Archie's Creek and the Powlett. There was also no Price's Corner.

Dalyston was also undreamt of, though the first inadvertent step in making it an eventual reality was taken in 1879 with the arrival on the Powlett of John Daly.

After William Price's death in 1881, James Price took over Allotment 73 (1883 rate book entry 400), holding onto it until sometime in 1891 when it was subdivided into roughly two equal parts with William Junior taking 73B, the non-main road adjacent half (1892 rate book entry 767 & 768).

Curiously, this conflicts with both a 1943 and 1960 Department of Lands and Survey map* in which Lot 73 was subdivided in 1896 with James taking 73B (shown on these maps as the highway adjacent half) and then selling or gifting 73A (non-main road half) to William 2½ years later.

If the rate book entries are in error, then it is one continued without protest from either Price brother for the next decade and a half. Thus, whatever the reason for the discrepancy, for once the rate books must take priority over government maps.

It didn't matter in the long run, for sometime in late 1905 or 1906 William sold his half of Lot 73 and moved to his 200 acre property at Archie's Creek. James held out

* Woolamai, County of Mornington [cartographic material], Department of Lands and Survey, Melbourne, 1943 & 1960.

a little longer, selling to a fellow named P. J. Daly in 1909.* In 1901 he had already sold part of 73A to the same P. J. Daly who had erected a hotel upon the purchased section, opening it on the 11th April 1902. It was, and still is, named the Ozone Hotel.⁵

And yes, more than anyone else, this man is the "Daly" in Dalyston.

By the late 1880s much of the land in the area had been taken up and the Main Coast Road (future Bass Highway) now looked more like a dirt road than a bush track (except after sustained periods of rain when it consisted mostly of mud). Whether or not the Price family was as hospitable as the legend has it is a moot point. There is no evidence either way beyond them being an established family in the area.

Far more important than their presence was the location of their property. The 'corner' in Price's corner. In 1890 the northern reaches of Archie's Creek had been opened up for selection and it is likely that one of the roads to that area developed along the eastern edge of Lot 73 from the main road, thus giving form to the 'corner.'

The first mention of Price's Corner is on 8 December 1892 in the *Great Southern Advocate* (page 3): *Commencing at mouth of Powlett River, along river to Young's Hotel, thence west along Kilcunda road to Price's corner, north along Price's road and Eastern Boundary to the corner of Stewart's bridge, across Bass River along new road (recently surveyed) to a point near Grantville State School.*

In the same month, the *Mornington Standard* of the 22nd reporting on government mail contracts (page 3), says this: *To and from a point on the San Remo and Powlett River mail route (Price's Corner) and Goodhurst, three days a week.*

This was not a one-off. The 10 July 1896 edition of *The San Remo Times* has this in the mail contracts section: *To and from a point on the San Remo and Powlett River mail route (Price's corner) and Archie's Creek (Monger's) via Goodhurst...*

You'll notice that Price's Corner, in much the same way as Goodhurst or Young's Hotel, is used as a convenient location or reference point, and not as the name for the area. There was never a gazetted township, nor in

(continues on Page 10)

* The situation is a little more complicated than these two lines suggest. Actually, it is a lot more convoluted. Regardless, the outcome was that by 1910 Daly owned pretty much all of Lot 73.

The Prices in Dalyston (continued from Page 9)

the 1880s and most of the 1890s was there anything there that could be considered one. In a series of articles on the area in 1902 the original *Western Port Times* calls the area the Powlett.

In the 18 editions of the paper that carry the heading *Powlett*, Price's Corner is mentioned once: *Mr. P. J. Daly's fine hotel is now open for business and judging by appearances his calculations on the need for a hotel at Price's corner are correct.* (25 April 1902, page 2).

The Phillip Island and Woolamai rate books don't mention Price's Corner at all. You would think that at least Lot 73, the actual eponymous corner, would be listed in the rate books as, well, Price's Corner. This is, after all, the Price's Corner that will become Dalyston.

Well, no, it isn't. Not according to *The Western Port Times*, 5 February 1904, page 2: *A well attended meeting was held here last Wednesday week to frame a petition to apply for a local post office, after which it was decided to rename the township of Powlett, Dalyston.*

And there it is. The locals called the growing settlement there Powlett, not Price's Corner, and changed the name to Dalyston on 27 January 1904.

But wait a moment! It is never that simple.

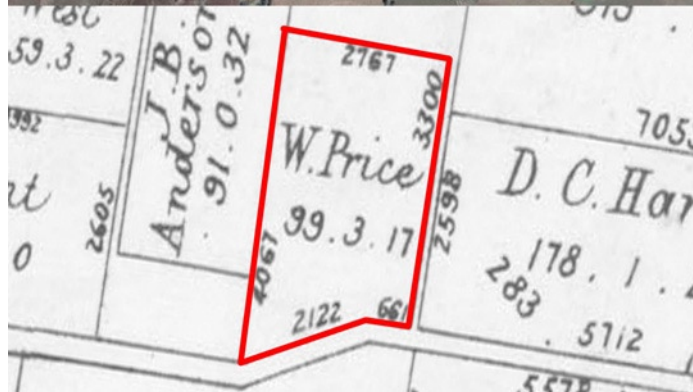
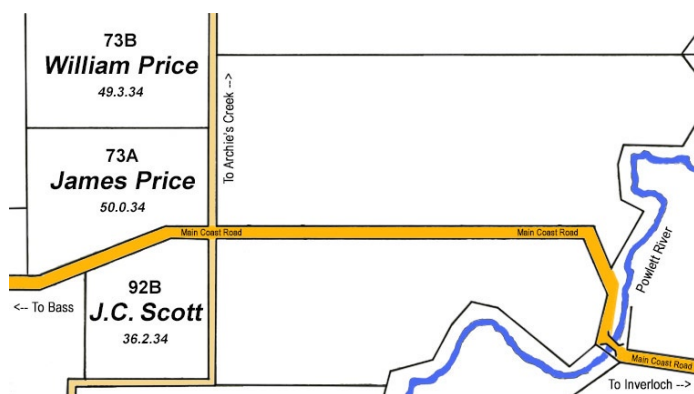
Wise's Victoria Post Office Directory For 1904 complicates matters by listing both Powlett River and Price's Corner. So what is the difference? Powlett River is the area around, but excluding, Lot 73A and Lot 92 (ex-Scott's, directly over the road) and lists over 30 farmers. Price's Corner (Lots 73A and 92) has a very different and much smaller list, such as Patterson & Buckley, blacksmiths & wheelwrights; Henry Schade, saddler & bootmaker; William Walkerden, brickmaker; James Parer, Ozone Hotel and Jos. David, draper & fancy goods. All located in much the same area as businesses today: either side of and fronting the main road in central Dalyston.

In summary, in the 1890s Price's Corner was never an official designation; it was more a convenient shorthand for the area either side of the Main Coast Road on the west side of the Powlett River. The only difference between it and, say, Fern Hill or Bridge Creek, is that a genuine township developed there in the early 1900s, and that became Price's Corner while the wider area was Powlett River or simply the Powlett.

So was Dalyston previously named Price's Corner? Given that modern Dalyston is based on Lots 73A and 92, yes.

Footnotes:

1. *Ballarat Star*, 12 November 1869, page 2: Melbourne.
2. Births, Deaths & Marriages, Victoria: William b.1858 (4512)–d.1861 (6108) & Esther b.1864 (7130)–d.1867 (709); Lettice Jnr. (3041/1854 and 18616/1854); James (3060/1856 and 19484/1856); Mary (11012/1861); Esther (7130/1864); William Jnr. b.1870 (7261)–d.1952 (19900); John? (7135/1860); *Argus*, 10 April 1882, page 8: Advertising.
3. Births, Deaths & Marriages, Victoria: marriage 5182/1847; *Victoria Government Gazette No.76*, 2 August 1878, page 1848; *No.8*, 24 January 1879, page 211; Phillip Island and Woolamai rate book 1878, entry 385.
4. Births, Deaths and Marriages, Victoria, certificate 10637/1881; Proceedings of Inquiry, 19 December 1891, Crown Law Office, 1881.
5. Phillip Island and Woolamai rate book 1905/6, entry 706 and 1906/7, entry 683 [before and after]; 1908/9, entry 711 shows *P. J. Daly* pencilled in over Price name); 1901/2, entry 733 (73A now 2 acres less); *The Western Port Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser*, 11 April 1902, page 2: Powlett.



From the *Argus*, Monday 26 December 1949, page 3.

£3,000 In Safe Stolen At Cowes

Shots End 80 MPH Chase Across Island

An 80-mile-an-hour car chase across Phillip Island, ending with a volley of shots at San Remo bridge, followed the theft of a safe containing £3,000 from a Cowes guesthouse early yesterday.

As the car skidded to a halt, a lone policeman held up and arrested three men at gun point.

Just after 5am a guest at the Continental guest house, near Cowes pier, saw three men loading the house safe on a trailer attached to a large sedan car. The car was driven off at high speed.

The guest woke the proprietor, Mr A. J. Jones, who notified First-Constable J. Hodgson at Cowes police station.

The policeman and Jones drove to the bridge linking the island with the mainland at San Remo.

Hid In Ambush

First-Constable Hodgson waited in hiding at the island approach to the bridge, while Jones



The Continental Hotel in 1949.



First Constable John Hodgson, pictured with Mrs Hodgson, is wearing a medal which is the highest award issued in the Victorian Police for outstanding courage and devotion to duty in the arrest of three desperate criminals.

returned to Cowes to organise a search for the thieves.

In a number of cars, Mr Jones, his friends, and guesthouse employees, began to scour the island.

On a back road Mr Jones saw a car approaching him at high speed. He noticed that it was pulling his trailer.

He turned his car, and chased the getaway car at 80 miles an hour for several miles until his car broke down.

Race To Bridge

The chase was continued by Mr F. Davis, proprietor of Erehwon guest house, who was following Mr Jones. However, the fugitives had time to detach the trailer from their car.

As the getaway car raced towards the bridge at more than 80 miles an hour, First Constable Hodgson jumped from his hiding place and called on the driver to stop.

When the car hurtled on, the policeman fired five shots at it. At least two of them struck the vehicle near the driver's door. The car skidded to a halt and First Constable Hodgson arrested its three occupants at gun point.

Patrol's Dash

Melbourne wireless patrol police under Sgt. E. C. Cody, who travelled the 86 miles to the San Remo bridge in 80 minutes, arrived at the scene.

Wonthaggi detectives also arrived soon after the arrest, and they took over investigations.

A search was made of the back road over which the thieves had travelled, and Constable K. Williams, driver of the wireless patrol, found the 5cwt safe hidden under some bushes.

An attempt had been made to blow it, but the safe was jammed. Its contents, money and jewellery worth £3,000, were intact.

THE

CONTINENTAL

On the Esplanade, COWES

THE HOUSE OF DISTINCTION

Mr. and Mrs. S. W. DAVIE — Cowes 16

CITY—X2171

From the *Age*, 29 November 1940, page 6

From the *Australasian*, Saturday 23 March 1872, page 11.

Shooting The Gun At Phillip Island

by Cartridge

Part one of two

(Re-paragraphed for the sake of clarity.)

“Let us go seaward, as the great winds go.” Swinbourne.

Aye, seaward, to the very bottom of the sea, could one but breathe and live there this weather!

“Melbourne to Cowes, Phillip Island, for five shillings!” Thus advertise those inimitable aids to the travelling public, Messrs. Cobb and Co. Fifty mile and better per coach, and several more by sailing boat. All for five “bob.” Well done, Cobb and Co! (N.B., and three cheers for opposition!)

Was it much of a marvel, then, that in view of a few days’ holiday, and of the cheap travelling chance proffered [*sic*] as above, I should resolve, about Friday last, to quit for those said few days, the dusty, parboiled city of Melbourne and its belongings, and with a brace of dogs and well-beloved old shooting stick, to start for what to me was the *terra incognita* of Phillip Island.

“Any charge for dogs?”

“Yes, sir, half-a-crown each, and cheap enough too.”

I should think so indeed. So Rap and Scamp and I recklessly took tickets to the aggregate enormous value of ten shillings, and putting on proper looks of dignity and importance, after such profuse patronising of Cobb & Co., duly took our seats at 8 a.m. on Saturday, in one of the useful vehicles of that illustrious firm.

“Ahem! No fleas, I hope, sir?” (This from a rosy, well-conditioned old gentleman – not a free selector, I’m sure! – between whose solid-looking nether limbs Scamp’s nose was soon thrust confidingly.)

Answered I, with prompt severity, “Certainly not, Sir!” as if the insinuation were the direst of dire insults.

The rosy gentleman looked, I thought, as if not quite satisfied.

An order to Scamp, however, to “down charge” beneath the seat, and a subsequent “liquoring up” together at the first change, served to mollify my travelling *vis-à-vis* and make us good friends for the day.

Many a stirring year had come and gone, many a changeful season, since I and my gun had been companions on the coast road

beyond Mordialloc. As we rattled through the scrub-lined track by the “Long Beach,” I bethought me of boyish days, when the “old bushman,” true sportsman as ever lived, had merrily whistled to his dogs, and balanced his trusty gun in the forest life in those wilds that he loved so well.* I thought of him sadly bidding adieu to his old mates, the sharers in his “Bush Wanderings,” and of his subsequent far travels in the icy North: finally of his singular destiny to die, Speke-like, after a wild and adventurous life in many lands, from an accident received in the very heart of “home.”

Was there not a memory, too, of a certain jolly trip undertaken in those very youthful days in the interests of kangaroo shooting, when O’Grady and Raven, and the scrawler of these lines, sallied down gallantly on horseback, with our rifles slung at our backs, to the “drive” at King’s Creek? These boon companions, where are they now? O’Grady has, I hear, subsided into the (colonial) country gentleman, grown a beard and corporation, and, like the Pharisee, “maketh long prayers,” while Raven, alas! (the hero of that jovial trip as regard marsupial slaughter), waxeth old and feeble, dreading to damp his poor feet! *Tempora mutanter*, with a vengeance.**

Frankston towards mid-day, and an early lunch, Hastings on Western Port Bay two

(continues on Page 13)

* Author footnote: For the information of those who happen not—and may yet care—to know, I may as well add that I am here alluding to poor Mr. Wheelright, originally a professional gentleman in England, but whose indomitable love of nature as well as sport led him to abandon all the attractions of society and home for the wildlife referred to. Under the *non de plume* of the “Old Bushman,” he was a frequent and valued contributor both to the sporting press of this colony and also to the columns of the “Field,” in London, on the office steps of which he, singularly enough, I believe fell in the accident which occasioned his death. Sportsmen, and even many others who have not read his “Ten Years in Sweden” “Winter and Summer in Lapland” “Bush Wanderings in Australia Felix,” &c., will not regret a perusal of them. The “Old Bushman’s” favourite shooting haunts in Victoria were the wilds between Mordialloc and Western Port Bay.

** Editor footnote: *Tempora mutanter, nos et mutamur in illis* (The times are changed and we with them).

Shooting (continued from Page 12)

hours later, and shortly after 3 p.m. Messrs. Cobb and Co.'s vehicle and fourth change of stout steeds emerged, dusty, travel-stained, and steaming from another scrub-guarded, heavy track, and we found ourselves facing Phillip Island from a place called Sandy Point, as indicated by a boatman's residence, and a small but sufficient jetty.

Two trim-looking sailing boats floated beside the latter. The one was a kind of tender to the mail or opposition coach (which coach, by the way, had arrived there only just before us; having left town first by an hour); the other boat carried the banner of our friend Cobb. Beyond – across the blue, calm strait – the few, but pretty, vastly pretty as regarded site – cottages of Cowes glistened in the sunlight, while east and west, above the rocky island shore, peeped forth from sheltered nooks the homes of the selectors.

"Precious little wind, boatman!"

"Yes, sir. I reckon all we can do with our canvas to day won't be much good to us."

And then I thought I detected a keen and somewhat anxious sort of scanning glance on the part of our civil and, alas! mateless mariner over the personal physique of myself, another passenger, and the rosy old gentleman. It seemed to say, "Wonder whether there's any pulling to be got out of you chaps?" and which, under the circumstances, was

perhaps not much to be wondered at.

I say "the circumstances," and advisedly.

True was it that the fair little hamlet of Cowes lay but three miles away, and that the water of the strait intervening seemed, at a little distance, almost ice-like in its calmness; but was not that stilly tide running with a five-knot current dead across our track. This, with a thermometer at considerably over 100° in the afternoon sun, made the way far enough.

"All aboard, gents!" and we soon made a start. The rosy old gentleman instantly avowed a peculiar fitness and capacity for steering, directly he saw that something else than steering was clearly required; the third passenger, who had throughout carefully preserved the visage and general comportment of a city undertaker on duty, "made no sign;" Rap and Scamp it was certain were not able seamen, and so, with a deep sigh, I, Cartridge had to pull off my coat. I like an occasional pull well enough in its way.

I believe I am still down on the list of original members of the See-saw Rowing Club, and that I sometimes figure as "Number Three" in a foar-oar [*sic*]; but on the whole I don't think that I care much about sweating in that sort of way in a heavy boat, a hot sun, and against a strong tide. It would have been infinitely pleasanter reclining under the shade of the

(continues on Page 14)



View from the north side of Phillip Island, Tortoise Head & French Island in the distance. Painting by John Black Henderson, c.1860. Source: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

Shooting (continued from Page 13)

flapping, useless, little mainsail, watching the grey gulls, and the dancing waves (only there weren't any), &c.

Not to linger, however, too much over this part of my trip, an hour's determined sticking to it (the oar) brought us to the Cowes pier. And the mail boat, a somewhat smarter and better equipped craft than ours, beat us but by a length after all. That was some consolation.

Climbing the jetty steps, too, it was further by no means disagreeable to find oneself promptly recognised and taken charge of dogs, baggage, and all, by the civil and obliging landlord of Baner's *[sic]* Family Hotel, a most pleasantly situated and comfortable abode immediately above the landing place.

N.B.—I may add here that there are two inns on the island, each of them well reported of. I did not try the second (Mr. Wood's), but I can strongly recommend, at least, the one I did stay at, which deserves a liberal support, that is, if very good and reasonable accommodation in pleasant quarters combined with most untiring attention from the proprietor, are worthy of it.

"Fine dogs them, measter!"

It was sundown. A capital dinner, none the

worse appreciated from the appetite gained by the pull, had just been disposed of, the wants of my canine companions in a similar way looked to, and on the greensward by the inn door, there was gathered a knot of islanders, among whom I hoped for some tidings respecting game; and tidings, at all events plenty of replies to my questions on this all important subject, I very soon procured, and, as usual, of a most conflicting sort.

The man that admired my dogs, pitied me, also, for bringing them there, seeing there was, as he said, "nout to shoot;" a second stated that he had been three months on the island, during which time he had ridden or walked every inch of it, and only seen three quail; a third said there had been plenty, but that they were all gone, while a fourth strongly advised me to abandon at once and forever all hopes of getting any, and to go in for slaying mutton birds and young cormorants!

So far, so bad.

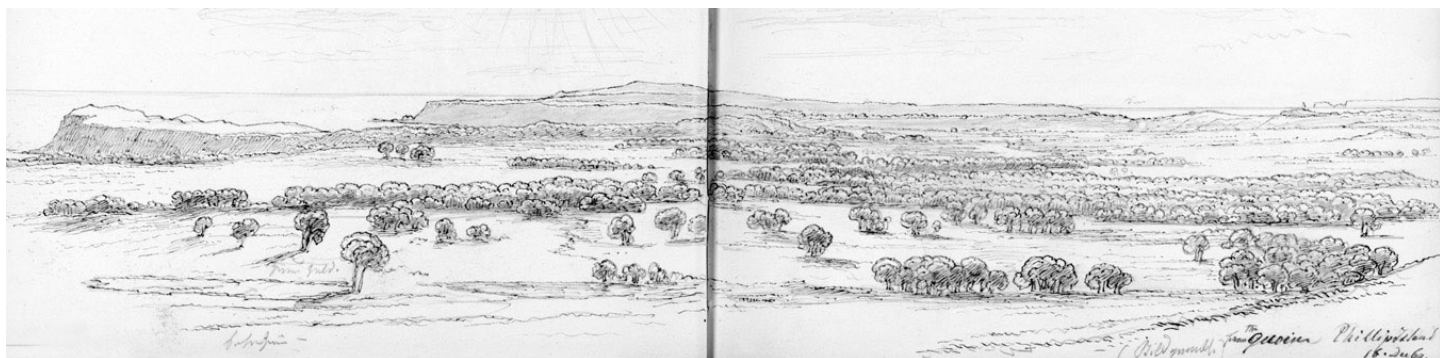
I strove to keep my spirits up as well as I could, stood drinks for my kind informants, and tried others. Presently there came encouragement. A man who had done a good deal of reaping on the island this season told me, with considerable cold-blooded exultation,

(continues on Page 15)



Cape Schanck from Phillip Island. Survey Cutter "Loelia" beating out. Painting by John Black Henderson, c.1860. Source: Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

Shooting (continued from Page 14)



From the Quoin, Phillip Island, 16 December 1869. Sketch by Eugene von Guerard, c. 1865-1870, 1872. Source: Volume 14a: Sketchbook XXXVI, No. 18 Australian. Album ID: 931203. Mitchell Library, State Library of New South Wales.

that he “had cut thousands of the young devils in bits” in the course of his occupation.

“Come,” thought I, “the innocent must have left some relations behind them at all events!”

Then Mr. R—, a tall young farmer, said that if I didn’t mind a “lot of hard walking, I might pick up a good few;” finally a carrot-polled, jovial individual, vowed that if I only paid a visit to “his place, to’ther side o’ the island,” I should find my friends, the quail, there, “thicker than grasshoppers!”

It was true that this too welcome latter informant had been evidently freely patronising Bauer’s taproom, but I bethought me of the sapient axiom “in vino veritas,” and comforted somewhat, retired.

Rap and Scamp withdrew themselves to the wide verandah fronting my bedroom window,

*

*

From the *Lang Lang Guardian*, 8 July 1914, page 3.

Lost Child Found

Jean Misson, a little dot under 3, daughter of Mrs Hugh Misson, of King Island, who was on a visit to her father at Grantville, was lost for nearly four hours on Saturday. She went out to play with her little brother, who returned home without her, and a search party was soon out scouring the neighborhood. Sid Bonney and F. Close found traces of the child on the Lang Lang road, and following these the little wanderer, who said she was “going home to mumma” was found over two miles from home, close to D. Cochrane’s fence. The condition of the country over which the child travelled was very rough, and had not traces been picked up it is doubtful if search would have been made so far away from home. A humorous incident of the afternoon was that a swagman who joined in the search got lost in the scrub, and made the welkin ring with his distressed cooeying.

there to dream doubtless pleasant canine dreams, and keep faithful watch and ward. Softly over the placid, moonlit water, came, through that lifted window, mingled with sweet incense of many flowers from the garden, the breeze of evening, and, as one gazed, ere seeking one’s pillow, the beautiful concluding lines of Swinburne’s “Dedication” rose up to memory, and harmonised with the scene and the hour.

“Though the many lights dwindle to one light,
There is help if the heaven has one;
Though the skies be discrowned of the sunlight,
And the earth dispossessed of the sun,
They have moonlight and sleep for repayment,
When, refreshed as a bride and set free,
With stars and sea-winds in her raiment,
Night sinks on the sea.”

(To be concluded next issue).

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From the *Koo Wee Rup Sun and Lang Lang Guardian*, 27 February 1963.

The Gurdies Post Office Closes

Next Friday morning the small Post Office at The Gurdies will go out of existence [*sic*] when the phone subscribers will be linked to the Lang Lang exchange on the automatic system.

The change over will give subscribers a continuous service, but the residents in that area will miss the personal link with the little office, where for many years they were able to purchase their stamps and make use of the many other post office facilities.

The closing of the post office at the Gurdies will increase counter work at the Lang Lang post office.

Mrs. Kennedy, popular postmistress at The Gurdies will no doubt receive more than the usual number of calls next Thursday, her last day on the job.

The McLeod Prison

Part Five: 1938-1951

From the *Telegraph* (Brisbane), 20 February 1938, page 9.

Two Prisoners Escape

Left Penal Settlement in Rowing Boat
Melbourne, February 20.

Having secured a small rowing boat by breaking the padlock of its shed, two prisoners escaped from the McLeod penal settlement on French Island early to-day. An extensive search by police and warders is being made in the back country between Glen Forbes and Grantville, but it is believed that the men have boarded a Melbourne train.

The men are Eric W. Howell, aged 24, labourer, and Robert Cunningham, aged 23, labourer. Both men have long criminal records.

From the *Argus*, Monday 11 April 1938, page 3.

Escape In Moonlight

French Island Prisoner

Escaping late on Saturday night from the McLeod penal settlement at French Island, John Leonards, aged 43 years, crossed the eastern channel of Westernport Bay in a dinghy he had taken from the settlement and disappeared into the scrub near Corinella. The dinghy was found yesterday on the beach where Leonards had landed. Leonards cut telephone wires on the island to hamper the search on the mainland. He disappeared from the settlement between 10 p.m. and 11.30 p.m. and apparently crossed the channel in the open boat in the moonlight.

A description issued by the police is as follows:— About 5ft. 7in. in height, 9st. 7lb. in weight, slight build; wearing grey dungaree trousers, slate blue pullover, and, it is thought, tennis shoes.

From the *Age*, Friday 29 April 1938, page 7.

Escaped Prisoner

Belongings Found on Beach

Further support to the supposition that John Melville, the indeterminate prisoner who disappeared from French Island penal settlement on Monday, has been drowned was given yesterday by the finding of a sugar bag containing food, matches and a pair of boots belonging to the missing man on the Corinella beach.

The discovery was made about 100 yards from where the crude boat in which it is believed he attempted to reach the mainland

was found on Wednesday night. A piece of broken paddle was also found yesterday.

Fishermen and men who have known the coast, expressed the opinion that Melville must have been drowned almost at once after leaving the island between Monday night and Tuesday morning.

It is thought that Melville took his boots off to swim to the shore when he felt his raft sinking, and the tide must have swept him away.

From the *Age*, Thursday 19 May 1938, page 13.

Washed Up By Sea

Body of Escaped Prisoner

Lang Lang, Wednesday.—A report from Grantville this evening stated that a body had been found at the deserted beach between Grantville and Corinella. It was not identified, but may be the body of John Melville, 26 years, carpenter, who was an indeterminate prisoner at the Macleod penal settlement.

Melville attempted to escape by making a raft with bed sheeting from his bunk, glued together on to a frame. Taking his tucker bag, he disappeared about midnight on April 18. Heavy seas were running that night, but it was not until three days later, when part of the raft and his boots were found, that the search for him was abandoned.

From the *News* (Adelaide), Friday 20 May 1938, page 12.

Didn't Take Him Long To Pick The Trouble

Melbourne, Friday.

When members of the Indeterminate Sentences Board returned to Corinella after an inspection of the penal settlement at French Island, the driver of the police car in which they were travelling could not unlock the door of the car because of a defect in the lock.

After working on the lock for half an hour and vainly attempting to get into the car by removing the floor boards, members decided to remove the hinges of the door.

They were observed by an indeterminate sentence prisoner who was in charge of the prison boat in which the board members had been brought across from French Island.

Approaching diffidently, the prisoner whispered to a member, "I can fix that lock."
"Have a try then," said the member.

(continues on Page 17)

The McLeod Prison (continued from Page 16)

To the astonishment of the crowd the prisoner, whose convictions were for house-breaking unlocked the door in a few seconds by inserting a slender stick in the lock and springing it.

"You have been at this before," observed a member of the board, who was delighted at the prisoner's feat.

The prisoner modestly walked back to the boat. Would he [sic] obtain a good or a bad mark from the board on his exhibition of skill as a lock expert?

From *Koo Wee Rup & Lang Lang Guardian*, 9 Nov. 1939.

Drowned While Escaping

French Island Prisoner

An improvised "lifebuoy" of rope and corks is believed to have led to the drowning of a prisoner who attempted to escape from the French Island penal settlement on Friday by swimming to the mainland. With the rope tangled round his legs and shoulders his body was found near Bass on Saturday afternoon.

The prisoner, William Vesey, aged 22 years, who was serving an indeterminate sentence on a charge of having illegally used a motor-car, left the penal settlement on Thursday night. He had apparently obtained 30 feet of half-inch rope and a number of corks from a fishing net, and from these he devised his "lifebuoy." The body was found at The Bluff, three miles from Bass, by First-constable Hewett on Saturday afternoon. Apparently the rope had slipped and hampered his movements. Powerfully built, Vesey was a good athlete and an exceptionally strong swimmer. Constable Hewett believes that Vesey had crossed the two channels and was close to The Bluff when he was drowned.

The body of another prisoner who attempted to swim from the island last year was never found. Since the settlement was established 25 years ago 35 have attempted to escape. Two have been drowned, and all have been recaptured except one, who was living an honest life when traced by the police. He was allowed to retain his liberty.

From the *Argus*, Friday 13 September 1946, page 24.

Two Escapees Recaptured

Watch For Two Others

Two of four prisoners who escaped from reformatories on Wednesday night were recaptured last night. They were William Mason, spinner [sic], 21, and Francis Herbert Henry Waldron, 21, who escaped from French Island by rowing to the mainland. They were recaptured at Grantville by Constables Hewitt and Walsh, of Lang Lang.

Allan Frederick Woolley, 16, and Phillip Ernest Lucas, 20, who escaped from a prison farm near Castlemaine, are still at large. A close watch for them is being kept.

Police believe that Woolley and Lucas may have used a truck in an attempt to reach Melbourne. A truck, No EY262, is reported to have been stolen from Harcourt. Written on the side of the truck are the words, "H.F.P.A.—Phone 52 Harcourt."

Anyone knowing the whereabouts of the escapees is asked to advise the nearest police station immediately.

From the *Herald*, Friday 13 September 1946, page 1.

Gunpoint Arrest of Escapees

Three armed police arrested at gunpoint on a bush road last night two indeterminate sentence prisoners, William Spinner and Francis Waldron, who had escaped from French Island penal settlement in a stolen boat on Wednesday night.

To cross the swift-running sea channel that separates the island from the South Gippsland mainland, the fugitives took a boat belonging to a settler and landed near Corinella about 4 a.m. yesterday.

A Lang Lang boy, Geoffrey Wheatley, who was unaware that escaped prisoners were at large, came upon Spinner and Waldron in the bush later in the day. They told him they were lost and asked the way to the Melbourne road.

Plans to catch the fugitives after night-fall were made by First Constable Hewett, of Lang Lang, after he had heard Geoffrey Wheatley's story.

Using a small car, Constable Hewett, Constable W. J. Walsh, and Detective G. M. Howard set out from Lang Lang at dusk along the South Gippsland highway towards Bass. About 8 p.m. they noticed the hunted men standing on the roadside screened by scrub.

(continues on Page 18)


D. A. Simpson
 Chemist.
 LOCH and LANG LANG.
 Phone 4, Loch.

The McLeod Prison (continued from Page 17)

They leapt from the car with pistols drawn, surrounded the men, and handcuffed them.

No trace has been found of two young reformatory prisoners, Allan Wooley and Phillip Lucas, who disappeared from Muckleford Prison Farm, near Castlemaine, the same night.

They are believed to be headed north in a motor truck stolen from Harcourt, but Castlemaine police today had no further reports about them.

From the *Herald*, Friday 4 March 1949, page 1.

Escaped Convicts Retaken

One In Hospital, Other At Mine

Two convicts who escaped from the French Island penal settlement on Wednesday night after secretly making a boat and planning every move for several months were recaptured on the mainland today.

Robert William Lynnvar Kerr, 32, was arrested at Wonthaggi Hospital after he had broken an ankle, and James Raine, 22, was found by miners in the boiler house at the Kilcunda mine this afternoon.

Raine told police he was glad to surrender because he was exhausted, and had spent several hours on Wednesday night frantically bailing water from their cockle-shell craft.

Police said today that the escape had been carefully planned for several months.

Built Boat

Last year the two convicts began building a 9ft. boat from timber stolen from the old gaol building. Whenever it rained heavily on the island, and work was suspended, the convicts spent every spare moment secretly building the craft in scrub about a mile from the settlement.

They also had rowlocks made from pieces of metal found on the island. New clothes, protected by mothballs, were [unclear word] on the island before they escaped. It is not known yet how the clothes were smuggled to them.

After the men escaped at [unclear time] p.m. they rowed all night and landed near Anderson, on the mainland about 4½ miles east of San Remo, about 8 a.m. yesterday.

They pushed the boat back into the sea, hoping that it would drift to another part of the coast and put searchers on a false trail.

Broken Ankle

Last night Kerr fractured an ankle when he jumped from a high bank. Early today he limped to the house of a resident, who

immediately took him to Wonthaggi Hospital, where he was placed under police guard.

Raine stayed with Kerr until 8 a.m. today, and then made off towards Kilcunda.

He was first seen on the cliffs by miners, and later hid in the boilerhouse at the mine until he was arrested by Senior-constable Barnes and First Constable McDonald, of Wonthaggi police.

From the *Dandenong Journal*, 14 September, 1949, page 14

Futile Attempt To Escape

Shots Make Escapees Surrender

Advised by the penal authorities on Wednesday, September 7th, that five prisoners on the Settlement at French Island had not reported at the 6 a.m. muster, and that investigations pointed to their having stolen a dinghy in which to escape to the mainland, First-Constable Bob Hewitt, of Lang Lang, soon made his way to Corinella, and from there began a search for signs of the escapees.

About 10.20 a.m. he saw a party of men landing from a dinghy between Corinella and the Bluff, Bass. He followed them at a distance and keeping them under surveillance, saw them disappear into the scrub country about 3 miles east of Bass township. At this stage he was joined by First-Const. Walsh, of Bass, who had been searching elsewhere for signs of a landing; also Sgt. McQuestion and Snr. Const. McDonald, of Wonthaggi.

A wide net was then thrown around the country in which the escapees were seen, with a view to encircling them. The men were poorly dressed and at least one was bare-footed. Just on dusk First Const. Hewitt saw the escapees attempting to make a break through to the hills. At the same time Const. Walsh and Sgt. McQuestion who had approached from a different direction, called upon the men to halt. They refused and broke away.

Shots were then fired over their heads and Bix immediately stood still and was arrested.

The police net rapidly closed and Snr. Const. McDonald and Const. Perrin arrested three more of the escapees — Sheehan, Burgess and Tulk — in a paddock in the property of Mr. White, of Bass, where they were attempting to avoid capture by hiding among the cattle.

They reported that they believed that Allen had been wounded, as they had seen him fall as they ran away.

A search by First-Const. Hewitt and Const. Perrin, who were aided by Mr. Geo. Brown, of Bass, with his very excellent spotlight, led

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to the finding of Allen on the ground in a paddock, suffering from an attack of asthma but otherwise unhurt.

After being charged at the Bass Police Station the 5 men were conveyed to Melbourne that night by prison van.

They will be brought before the Lang Lang Court on Monday, Sept. 19th.

From the *Argus*, Monday 11 June 1951, page 7.

Five Youths Escape From French Island

Roads Cordoned

Police cordoned off roads leading to Melbourne yesterday in an effort to recapture five young escapees who rowed away from French Island Penal Settlement on Saturday.

They stole the boat and rowed about two miles from the eastern coast of the island to the mainland town of Corinella.

They had been sent to French Island only last Wednesday.

One of the five, Reginald F. Lloyd, was recaptured last night.

Warragul police found him walking along a back road near Almurta, only four miles inland from where the party landed.

He was tired and hungry, and submitted quietly.

On Saturday night, four suits, several pairs of shoes, and a quantity of tinned fruit were stolen from a house at Corinella, while the householder was out at a card party.

Later in the night police were informed of an attempted car theft at Grantville, near Corinella.

A rowing boat was found adrift in Western Port Bay in the same area.

Further reports led police to concentrate on scrub country around Lang Lang, further north around the bay.

Fifteen police and several civilians took part in the search, and an appeal was made for more civilian helpers.

Wide Net

Police were alerted as far afield as Warragul, Cranbourne, and Korumburra.

The escapees are:

William Blake, 23, of West Coburg (serving 3 months for illegal use of car).

Ronald Blamey, 22, of Parkdale (two years for housebreaking, and 12 months for demanding property by menaces).

Thomas Royal, 19, of Fitzroy (3 months for escaping from legal custody, and one month for garage-breaking).

Reginald Lloyd, 23, of Albert Park (two years for housebreaking and 12 months for demanding property by menaces).

William Boyd, 20, of Edithvale (3 months for illegal use of a car).

From the *Herald*, Monday 11 June 1951, page 1.

One Convict Still At Large

Armed police are still looking for the fifth prisoner who escaped from the French Island penal settlement on Saturday.

They are concentrating on the metropolitan area where the escapee, Thomas Royal, 19, was last seen.

Late last night, a man recognised Royal, who was with a companion, on the corner of Princess and High Streets, Kew. Two police who arrived at the corner soon afterwards saw Royal and his companion, an other escapee, William Boyd, 20.

Senior Constable W. Job leapt out of the car and chased Boyd into Highfield Street, where he arrested him at gunpoint.

Meanwhile, Constable L. Harrington, who was hampered by an injured leg, pursued Royal along Denmark Street, but lost sight of him.

Royal was serving three months' imprisonment for having escaped from the Castlemaine Reformatory on December 29. He was also serving a month for garage-breaking. His description is: 5ft. 7in., brown hair, blue eyes, fresh complexion.

Did Not Resist

Earlier last night, armed police captured one of the escapees, Reginald Lloyd, 23, as he was walking along a road at Almurta. He was tired and hungry; and offered no resistance.

Early today, Ronald Francis Blamey, 22, and William Basil Blake, 23, were arrested by Sgt. M. C. Quistin* and Senior Constable Stock, on the Loch-Wonthaggi road.

All escapees were wearing civilian clothing, believed to have been stolen from a house at Grantville after they had reached the mainland in a boat.

Three wireless patrol police returned to Melbourne this morning after being without sleep since 10 p.m. on Saturday.

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HAZEL SCRUB LAND, at Jumbunna, near Grantville, very little heavy timber, SHOWN by Edward Maccaasalen, care of J. Dickins, Grantville Post Office.

* Sgt. McQueston probably meant – Editor.

The McLeod Prison (continued from Page 19)

From the *Koo Wee Rup Sun*, 13 June 1951.

Five Escapees From French Island

Citizens' Assistance Appreciated by Police

On Saturday five young youths escaped from French Island Penal Settlement. They stole a boat and rowed about two miles from the eastern coast of the island to the mainland of Corinella. They had only been on the island from Wednesday last.

A rowing boat was found adrift in the bay near Grantville.

The escapees are: William Blake, 23, of Coburg (serving three months for illegal use of car). Ronald Blamey, 22, of Parkdale (two years for housebreaking and 12 months for demanding property by menaces). Thomas Royal, 19, of Fitzroy (three months for escaping from legal custody, and one month for garage-breaking). Reginald Lloyd, 23, of Albert Park (two years for housebreaking and 12 months for demanding property by menaces). William Boyd, 20, of Edithvale (three months for illegal use of a car).

On Saturday night four suits, £20 in notes, several pairs of shoes, and a quantity of tinned fruit were stolen from a house at Corinella during the absence of the householder at a card party.

The same night Mr Bird, baker, of Grantville, was attacked while endeavoring to retain his motor truck from being stolen.

At 3 p.m. Sunday Mr Alex Sheckleford [*sic*], of Glen Forbes, while riding a horse round his sheep, saw three men in tussocks on his property. After receiving the time from him, they hastily departed. At 5 p.m. Lloyd was recaptured on the Glen Alvie road, and at 1 a.m. Monday Blake and Blamey were caught on the Loch-Wonthaggi road.



The pier (and pet dog) at the French Island prison, probably 1946. Source: Public Records Office, VPRS 10516/P0001. French Island Penal Settlement – Corinella.

Boyd was recaptured on Sunday night at Kew.

Royal, believed to have accompanied Boyd to Melbourne, is still missing.

Sixteen police, under Inspector Dendle, were assisted by about 30 civilians in the hunt. The latter carried all kinds of firearms and bludgeons, and their assistance is greatly appreciated by the police.

From the *Age*, Monday 12 November 1951, page 1.

Shots Fired Over Yacht To Halt Escape

In a dramatic pursuit in Westernport Bay on Saturday night, warders in a motor launch captured four escaped prisoners after firing five shots across the bows of a yacht in which the men were heading for the mainland.

The prisoners were missed at the 7 p.m. muster at French Island penal settlement.

They were Robert James Bartlett, 20; William Peter Anderson, 19; Donald Thomas Potts, 19, and George Maxwell Edwards, 18.

Police believe the men broke from the compound at 6 o'clock and met by arrangement at a beached 20-foot yacht a mile and a half away.

As there were no sails and only one oar in the yacht, which is owned by Mr. Colin Cox, a French Island farmer, the prisoners improvised a sail from an 8-foot sheet of hessian.

Sighted At Dusk

As soon as the men were missed Warders B. Gascoyne, W. Devine and N. Short set out by launch to head off the missing yacht which they believed would sail for Corinella pier, five miles distant.

The yacht was sighted at dusk, and two miles out the warders drew level and called on the men, crouching on the deck, to haul down the sail. The yacht, however, drew away.

The warders then fired three shots across the yacht's bows, and as this had no apparent effect, two more shots were fired.

The escapees immediately leapt to their feet with their hands up, and then lowered the sail.

The capture took place about 10 p.m.

The yacht was towed to Corinella pier, where the youths were handed over to police who had been patrolling the shore.

The prisoners were later taken to Russell-street and charged with escaping from legal custody.