

# The Western Port Times

## Grantville & Districts



Volume 4 Number 6

FREE

October 2021

### Contents:

#### Local and General News

From the *San Remo Times*, February 1896.

on Page 3

#### News From the Powlett

Namely Archie's Creek, Ryanston and future Dalyston in April 1902.

on Page 4

#### Phillip Island And Woolamai Shire Council

An account of the 11 June 1881 Council meeting.

on Page 5

#### Sad Drowning Fatality

P. J. McNamara of Glen Alvie in 1905.

on Page 5

#### Jottings From Western Port

Commentary from a Phillip Islander on events in the shire in June 1881.

on Page 6

#### And Now A Word From Our (retro) Sponsor...

An advertorial for the (retro) sponsor of this edition of *The Western Port Times*.

on Page 7

#### Mann and Pozzi Killed

Two tragic but separate deaths in December 1896 – oh, and the weather is very dry; the district could do with some rain.

on Page 7

#### From A Grantville Girl

A letter to the *Weekly Times* from a local girl about the bush around Grantville.

on Page 7

#### Deaths From Gastric Fever

Child mortality was high 100 years ago and modern medicine in its infancy.

on Page 7

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.

\* \* \*

#### Sale of Coal to the Public

A big issue in the region in the second half of 1910. The Wonthaggi Progress Association is on the case.

on Page 8

#### Pier Pressure

A speculative piece looking at the piers of Grantville and nearby Queensferry, the when and why of their construction, who built them, and their role in the rise and decline of the two townships. Part two of two.

on Page 11

#### The Ant and Bee

The last, belated, and underwhelming, flourish of the local timber industry.

on Page 19

#### Argus Men Corner The "Monster" on Phillip Island

What monster lurks in the dense jungle near Wonthaggi in 1956? An intrepid team from the *Argus* seeks answers.

on Page 20

#### Deer On Phillip Island

The imported ruminants are proving a nuisance – or are they? It depends on who you ask.

on Page 20



### COLVIN'S PICTURES

Always a Good Show  
Kooweerup Memorial Hall  
SATURDAY, DECEMBER 17th  
**Ken's Here Again!**



You've seen him ride! You've seen him jump! Now see him "buckin'" a runaway steer—a stunt so hazardous that it has been banned from all rodeos. The wonder they call him King of Hosses!

### KENMAYNARD The Land Beyond the Law

and "THE SUBSTITUTE"

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21st



and

Circus  
Cycline

Featuring

ART ACCORD

### GRANTVILLE MONTHLY MARKET

THURSDAY, JANUARY 6.

Joseph Clarke & Co.  
Will hold their usual Monthly Market in the Grantville Yards on the above date, when they will yard Fat, Store, and Dairy Cattle.

### PUBLIC NOTICE.

Organisations desirous of using the tables and trestles from St. George's Church of England, Kooweerup, are requested to get permission from Messrs B. Darlington or J. Spencer.

Editor: Geoff Guilfoyle

U3A Bass Valley Local History Group

PO Box 3 Grantville 3984

Phone 5997 6240

Email: [geoffguilfoyle@dodo.com.au](mailto:geoffguilfoyle@dodo.com.au)

Website: [www.grantvillehistory.com.au](http://www.grantvillehistory.com.au)

Masthead design by Trish Hart

ISSN 2209-3508 (Online),

ISSN 2207-7163 (Print)

**Subscribe Free:**

Send your name and email address to:

[geoffguilfoyle@dodo.com.au](mailto:geoffguilfoyle@dodo.com.au)

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

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

**Links to other historical groups**

Bass Valley Historical Society: [www.facebook.com/groups/bassvalleyhistoricalsociety](http://www.facebook.com/groups/bassvalleyhistoricalsociety)

Friends of Churchill Island Society: <https://focis.org.au/about-churchill-island/>

Grantville History: [grantvillehistory.com.au](http://grantvillehistory.com.au)

Hastings–Western Port Historical Society: <https://www.hwphs.org.au/>

Inverloch Historical Society: <http://inverlochhistory.com/>

Also: [cv.vic.gov.au/organisations/inverloch-historical-society/](http://cv.vic.gov.au/organisations/inverloch-historical-society/)

Koo-Wee-Rup Swamp Historical Society:

[kooweerupswamphistory.blogspot.com.au/](http://kooweerupswamphistory.blogspot.com.au/)

Korumburra & District Historical Society: Janet Wilson 5657 2267

or PO Bo 293, Korumburra 3950

Lang Lang & District Historical Society: [langlang.net/historical.html](http://langlang.net/historical.html)

Leongatha and District Historical society: [leongathahistory.org.au](http://leongathahistory.org.au)

Phillip Island & District Historical Society: <http://pidhs.org.au/>

Phillip Island Nature Parks, Churchill Island Heritage Farm Collection

[https://victoriancollections.net.au/organisations/churchill-island-heritage-farm#](https://victoriancollections.net.au/organisations/churchill-island-heritage-farm#collection-records)

collection-records

South Eastern Historical Association: [seha.org.au](http://seha.org.au)

Western Port Historical Society Inc.: [hwphs.org.au/](http://hwphs.org.au/)

Wonthaggi Historical Society: [wonthaggihistoricalsociety.org.au/](http://wonthaggihistoricalsociety.org.au/)

Wonthaggi Genealogy Inc.: [secretary@wonthaggienealogy.org.au](mailto:secretary@wonthaggienealogy.org.au)



From the *San Remo Times*, 14 February 1896, page 2

## Local and General News

In our last issue we published a paragraph referring to a bazaar held in St Phillip's Church, Cowes, wherein it was inadvertently stated that the funds realised were to be devoted to *[sic]* the liquidation of the debt on the church. We are happy, in making the correction, to state that there is no debt on the church, and the profit from the bazaar was to be used to increase the minister's salary, and to improve and repair the church building. The inception of the bazaar was due to the energetic efforts of Mrs Henty Wilson and Miss Henty who materially contributed to the success of the affair. Mr A. S. M'Iraith, the hon secretary, wishes to thank the stallholders, Mrs Watson, the Misses Leeson and Richardson, and all the ladies and gentlemen who assisted, and also to the public for their generous support.

At the Council meeting on Saturday Cr Anderson moved that the Lands Department *[sic]* written to protesting against the cutting up of the Kilcunda Reserves for sale, they should be kept for selections.

Mr Davis of Kilcunda, has struck a rich seam of coal near Powlett and reports that it promises to prove one of the most valuable seams found in the district. A drill is at present engaged putting down another bore, at the foot of the range about five miles from Kilcunda. In several places in the vicinity coal is found cropping out of the ground.

Young Ted Dwyer, son of the mailman, was splitting logs in Dudan's paddock this week when he came upon a colony of snakes. Not wishing to encourage this undesirable class of colonists, Ted promptly relieved a prohibitive poll tax with a thick stick which ended the evil deeds and crooked business wriggledges *[sic]* of a score of them for ever.

The Grantville Show will take place on Thursday, 19th March. The prize list was arranged on Friday last. The day will observed as a public holiday in the district.

Mr Charles Williams, horse shoer and general blacksmith, Grantville, notifies in our advertising columns that he is prepared to undertake all kinds of blacksmith's work, and makes a speciality of horse-shoeing. All those requiring this class of work done cannot do better than send it to him.

Mr Patrick Quinlivan, a resident of Bass has reported to the police the loss of a favorite horse either by theft or otherwise, and offers a reward of £5 (if the animal was stolen), for

information that will clear up the mystery. The horse was found drowned in the Bass River.

Mr Thomas Grant of the "Genista" was the lucky winner of the pony given by Mrs Henty Wilson to the Cowes bazaar. The pony seems to be a great favourite and several offers have been made for his purchase.

Two valuable dogs belonging to Mr G. Smith and Mr H. Walton of Phillip Island were maliciously poisoned last week.

The St Phillip Church Bazaar Committee is now in funds, and have called for tenders for repairing and re-decorating the church.

Although the dry weather continues the supply of butter keeps up. Over a ton of it was shipped by the "Genista" for the city this week.

It is proposed by several influential residents of the district to hold a regatta on Easter Monday, and a meeting to consider the same will be held at Suss's Hotel next Monday night. A Melbourne *[sic]* firm has already presented a cup to be competed for which is now on view at the store of Messrs Bergin & Co.

The owners of the s.s. Maitland have communicated with Messrs Bergin & Co., of San Remo, relative to the running of that vessel between Melbourne and the former place once a week, and it is probable the steamer will be placed on that line.

The Westernport Bay Steamship Company has again been successful in obtaining the contract for the delivery of the mails from Melbourne to Cowes, Newhaven, and San Remo.

Mr Dwyer, the well-known mailman, is still in change of the mail delivery between San Remo and Kilcunda and Powlett.

Some of our local "sports" may soon have to consider the advisability of establishing a Hunt Club. Foxes are already quite numerous enough, and occasionally larger game might be put up. Quite recently a fallow deer was observed in the scrub near Queensferry. This is probably the forerunner of many others. Alas for the orchards then!

Is the only Tennis Club in the district, that at Queensferry, defunct? Possibly San Remo ladies will catch on, and establish one there. It would be quite interesting to watch a match between the ladies of the respective places. Cowes would follow suit, and what a lot of splendid outings we might have.

## News From The Powlett

### April 1902

From *The Western Port Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser*, 11 April 1902, page 2: Powlett.

The new Hotel at the Powlett is now complete and [unclear words] most substantial buildings in the district. It is built of bricks, made in an adjoining paddock of the proprietor Mr. P. J. Daly, and contains 15 rooms viz., 7 bedrooms size ranging from 10 by 14 to 14 by 14ft, 2 parlors 15 by 15ft, bar 15 by 15ft, dining-room 20 by 15ft, kitchen 18 by 15ft, bath-room 9 by 7ft, washhouse 12 by 13ft; and also a coach-house, feed-room and a four stalled stable. The dining-room and parlors are fitted with neat sideboard sin [sic] the chimney recesses, and the dining table is capable of seating about 30 at a time. The kitchen is fitted up with the latest improvements, dressers, safes, a large range in the fire-place with hot water boilers, the water being laid on inside. The hall is 6ft in width and runs through the whole building with a corniced ceiling, a 4ft hall running from the main hall to the billiard room, which is now in the course of erection. The bar is fitted up elaborately, counter and shelves are stained with black and lined with gold. The front and part of side is enclosed with a verandah 9ft wide, with ornamental hoardings overhead extending above the verandah roof with ornamental brackets capped underneath. The new Hotel will be opened to-day and will be called the Ozone Hotel.

A public meeting was called on Monday night and it was decided to hold a race meeting in Mr P. J. Daly's paddock, between the Bridge Creek Hall and the Ozone Hotel on Saturday 19th inst.

The Wesleyans held an anniversary Sunday school service on Sunday in the Bridge Creek Hall, there being a large congregation to hear Mr Hare preach. A tea meeting was held on Tuesday night, when a large number sat down to tea.

It is quite time that telegraph communication was between San Remo and Inverloch, as it will be seen by the last storm when a ship was in danger and wanted assistance, word could not be sent to Melbourne for several hours.

From *The Western Port Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser*, 25 April 1902, page 2: Powlett.

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.

A concert in aid of the building fund of the

R.C. Church, is being arranged to take place in the local hall on May 16th. Arrangements are being made to get Melbourne talent to assist, and a monster programme will be presented.

Mr. J. Price is about to erect a wooden villa on the rise to the north west of his present house. The situation is a pretty one facing Woolamai and the intermediate country.

Master Leslie Parer of the Ozone Hotel had a narrow escape from serious injury when returning from church on Sunday. The horse he was riding bolted, and after a mad career dislodged the lad, who fell with great force on the road. When picked up he was very much shaken and bruised about the head and body but fortunately no bones were broken. It will be some time before he is himself again.

The R. C. Church has purchased two acres of ground from Mr. W. Price, and intend erecting a new edifice. The building used hitherto will be allowed to remain where it is for the present.

A Wood Chopping Contest, the prizes totalling five pounds, viz.—£4 first prize and £1 second prize, is announced to take place at the Ozone Hotel on Saturday afternoon, May 3rd, to commence at 2.20 p.m. Messrs Parer and Daniel are the promoters and as the nominations and acceptances are not excessive there should be a large number of competitors. (An advertisement appears in this issue.)

A skiff in connection with the Ozone Hotel, was launched on Friday last and the occasion was celebrated. The owners will be pleased to give the use of the boat to patrons, for fishing and pic-nic purposes.

The Sale yards being erected here by Mr W. Ferguson, for Mr P. J. Daly, are nearing completion, and a sale is being arranged to take place on the 7th of May. Over 500 head of cattle have been catalogued, and the property of Mr Enoch Atkinson, goods and chattles [sic], will also be sold.

Apropos of this we are losing Mr Atkinson from our midst, as he is leaving for England in a fortnight's time. For 14 years he has been amongst us, and his manly form and cheery smile, will be missed by old and young.

The mutton birds at Cape Woolamai appear to be having a bad time of it, a considerable number of their bodies having been brought here by one local epicure.

From the *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, 15 June 1881

## Shire of Phillip Island And Woolamai

Saturday, June 11th, 1881.

Present: Mark Turnbull, President; Councillors Kidd, Delany, Misson, Aldridge, Norton, West and Duffus.

The minutes of last meeting were confirmed and outward correspondence approved.

From H. Byron Moore, with Map of Victoria—Received. On the motion of Councillors West and Kidd the thanks of the Council to be forwarded to Mr Moore.

From Wm. Harbison, asking for various works of formation and draining to be done near his place, on Phillip Island. Councillor West moved, and Councillor Norton seconded, that the letter be received and acknowledged, and no action taken.

From Borough of Castlemaine, asking cooperation of this Council in advocating Sunday trains.—On motion of Councillors West and Duffus, to lie over for further consideration.

From F. Bauer, asking that the footpath near his house might be formed.—Referred to members of riding.

From J. Hawkins, senr., asking the council to drain the road at back of Bass.—Left to the members of riding to report in the future.

From H. H. Taylor, reporting the existence of a bad hole in the Bass Bridge. Received, and thanks of the council tendered to Mr Taylor, and, on motion of Councillors Mission *[sic]* and Delany, clerk of works to report on bridge.

From F. A. Nowell, requesting renewal of slaughtering license.—Granted on motion of Councillors West and Delany.

From Secretary for Lands, asking answer to letter about deviation through Mrs Smith's land at Mount Fernhill.—Received, and information sent.

Three weeks leave of absence was granted to the secretary on account of his ill-health.

It was resolved that the Corinella Councillors and the secretary visit the proposed site of new bridge over Bass River, and report on it.

Permission was given to Mr Edward Mission *[sic]* to dig an outlet drain to the side drain near his ground in Corinella.

Councillor West was informed that no answer had been received from the Police Department in reference to the complaint lodged against Constable Ardill about his cow.

Councillor Turnbull moved and Councillor

Aldridge seconded, "That the sum of £3000 be borrowed by the council of the shire, &c."

Councillor Delany moved as an amendment, seconded by Councillor Misson, "That no money be borrowed." For amendment—Councillors Delany, Mission *[sic]*, Norton, West, and Duffus. For motion—Councillors Turnbull, Kidd, and Aldridge.

From the *Great Southern Advocate*, 5 January 1905, page 3

## Sad Drowning Fatality

The many friends of Mr. J. McNamara of Glen Alvie will learn with regret of the death of his son Mr. P. J. McNamara which occurred through a drowning accident in the Murray near Tocumwal on Boxing Day. Mr. P. J. McNamara who held the position of a surveyor in the Railway department was engaged on the Strathmerton Tocumwal railway which is being constructed. Deceased, in company with a young man named Clark, time-keeper for the men working on the construction of the line from Strathmerton went to bathe just below the Tocumwal Bridge, at a recognised bathing place on the Murray River, which they were in the habit of using. Both could swim, and they endeavoured to reach a log near the opposite bank, but were carried down stream by the current some 200 yards. Young Clark, never dreaming that there was any danger, went on to a snag that was sticking up out of the water. On looking back, he was horrified to find that Mr. McNamara had disappeared. The police had been dragging the river for some time but were not successful. On the following morning (Tuesday) the body rose to the surface and was recovered. The remains were entred *[sic]* in the Tocumwal cemetery on Wednesday. By the death of Mr. McNamara a most promising career has been brought to a close. The deceased gentleman, who was only 23 years of age, matriculated from the Christian Brothers' College, East Melbourne, some six years ago. After a course of study, he qualified himself for a post as surveyor, in connection with the Victorian railways. Mr. McNamara was always to the front in all matters connected with the Shamrock Club, (Melbourne) of which he was, until recently, assistant secretary, and by his sad demise the club loses one of its staunchest advocates and most willing workers. Through the district much heartfelt sympathy is expressed for the bereaved parents who are well known and greatly esteemed.

From the *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, Wednesday 15 June 1881

## Jottings From Western Port

By a Contributor

*Fortiter. Fideliter. Feliciter.*

(Re-paragraphed for the sake of clarity.)

The usual monthly court was held at Griffiths' Point on Saturday last. There was a good attendance of the public, which generally occurs if there is likely to be anything sensational. Constable Murphy, the newly appointed of Grantville, used his new broom, and obtained several verdicts, one party being fined in case of the lamp outside his licensed premises not having been lighted, and another for inciting the public to commit a breach of the peace.

Charles Dunbabin, a youth of 18, was charged by Malcolm Carmichael, with larceny.—Evidence was given that plaintiff's fishing net had been cut on the 8th May and a portion of it taken away. Defendant was seen at the net, and to throw something into the sea, which was afterward found under the spot where his boat had been, and upon being picked up, proved to be the missing portion of the net produced in court. He was sentenced to three months' hard labour. Much satisfaction was expressed at the verdict, as strong suspicions have of late been pointed at the prisoner for many small peculations.

James Hawkins, junior, was once more summoned by E. Leeson, for maintenance of his illegitimate child, but this time did not succeed in establishing her claim as she acknowledged that she was not married, and had introduced another olive branch into the world from the wrong side of the blanket; but she obtained an order for the confiding youth to pay £4 16s., which he had foolishly promised to do in writing. As an instance of barefacedness of the complainant upon being asked by defendant if she had not had another child, she replied, "What is that to do with you? I only want you to support your own child."

M. Carmichael was charged by Charles Dunbabin with assaulting him on the 9th May. This case arose through the fishing-net business, and although the defendant acknowledged to have "shook the plaintiff to shake the pieces of net out of him," the Bench taking into consideration the provocation received, dismissed the case.

After the usual business of the Court was over. Constable Ardill appeared (late as usual) and obtained instructions for a warrant to be issued compelling Sergeant Ah Pow to appear

and answer the charge of illegally occupying Crown lands without license.

The business of the Court did not commence till more than half-an-hour after the proper time, owing to many of the original summonses not having been handed to the Clerk of the Court until the morning of the day on which the Court sat. I respectfully suggest that in future this may be altered so as not to occur again.

The meeting of the Shire Council of Phillip Island and Woolamai took place in presence of a very small attendance of the ratepayers, considering that a proposition was to be heard to borrow £3000, to be spent upon works required in the district, and which proposition, much to my astonishment, was lost, owing to the representatives of the Corinella Riding having carried an amendment "That no money should be borrowed."

How is this?

Corinella is the only Riding that wants plenty of money to spend upon roads, &c., and hitherto they have stuck hard and fast for borrowing. I can understand why Phillip Island Councillors voted against the motion, as their roads are in fair order, and they have as much money as they require. In fact, I see no reason why Phillip Island should be joined to any other district. By virtue of the locality and its position it ought to work solus.

A letter was received from Mr W. Harbison, asking for sundry works to be performed and threatening the Council that he would not pay his rates, unless the Council agreed to do so. It was resolved not to entertain the request, owing to the threat.

The Secretary was granted a well merited leave of absence, owing to ill health.

In reply to an enquiry, the Health Inspector stated, that no reply had been received from Constable Ardill, as to the reason why he had allowed his cow to die close to his house, and to become a nuisance. Failing a reply, I should recommend the Council to report the matter to the Chief Commissioner of Police.

I would like to know how it is that the Constable at Cowes can remove stones from Government reserved land, and place them

(continues on Page 7)

*Jottings From Western Port (continued from Page 6)*

in his garden; also why he should be allowed to remove the remains of the old tide gauge, and put up a fence with it?

Mr John Watson, of Kilcunda, is now forwarding by bullock drays to Griffith's Point, for the use of the steamer running in Western Port Bay, coal which in quality is nearly equal to Welsh Coal. When shall we see coal going to the Point on the iron road, and when will the Coal Company carry out their promises to start operations. How is it that the people of Griffiths Point are not making arrangements to receive the Ministers of Railways and Public Works when they visit the locality?

## And Now A Word From Our (retro) Sponsor...

Want fish and chip but can't find them ANYWHERE? Pizza, hamburgers, fried chicken and Chinese takeaway, but no fish and chips? And don't you just hate it when you do find the elusive fish and chips, only to have then served luke-warm?

Well, does The Leeroy have good news for you!

As from this coming Friday and every Friday thereafter, you'll be able to purchase HOT fish and chips right here at The Leeroy at Kooweerup. Potatoes and fish as you want them: deep fried in animal fat and served hot. Remember: hot fish and chips now served at The Leeroy every Friday.

Thanks to The Leeroy for (retro) sponsoring this edition of *The Western Port Times*.

**We wish to announce that you will be able to obtain HOT FISH and CHIPS every FRIDAY at the**  
**The Leeroy**  
**Kooweerup**

From *KooWeeRup Sun and Lang Lang Guardian*, 21 May 1958

From the *San Remo Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser*, 11 December 1896, page 2: Bass Valley.

## Mann and Pozzi Killed

On Tuesday a young man named Wilfred Mann, who is well-known in the district, was cutting scrub near his home, and not coming in when expected a search was made and he was found dead, a tree having fell on him and pinned him to the ground. He was working by himself, but it is not known how long he had laid there. The body was not quite cold when found.

Another accident of a similar nature happened on Saturday within a mile of the last, to an Italian named Michael Pozzi, who was cutting scrub on Mr. Wilson's selection with two mates. As a tree was falling he lost his presence of mind and ran under it, being killed instantly. His mates left him laying there, with the tree across his body, for about twelve hours, thinking that as he was dead they had no right to touch him till the proper authorities came to remove him.

This district is much in need of rain, it not being so dry for years in this month.

From the *Weekly Times*, Saturday 16 November 1935, page 30: Letter From Readers

## From a Grantville Girl

The bush is looking beautiful. The nest of swallows, magpies and laughing jackass which I found all contain fledglings now. During Show holidays I went to Eltham where may [*sic*] beautiful wild flowers grow. Down in the gully young foliage is ornamental with creepers. At sunrise one hears the chorus of song-birds singing among the bluegums in the gully. I think the blackbird's song is more melodious and continuous than the thrush's; there is not a melancholy note in it.—June Thorne (Grantville Vic).

*The Argus*, 25 January 1905, Page 4

## Deaths From Gastric Fever

Lang Lang, Tuesday.—The deaths of four children from gastric fever have occurred at Queensferry. Two children of Mr. Oakley and two of the children of Mr. Cambridge died suddenly. Other children of both families are now suffering, and while burial arrangements were being made the mothers had to travel 15 miles by coach to Lang Lang for medical assistance. It is stated that insanitary conditions, accentuated by the recent hot weather, prevail in the locality.

## Sale of Coal to the Public

From the *Argus*, Tuesday 5 July 1910, page 7

### **Powlett Coal** Sale To The Public The Ministry's Decision

Though no official announcement has been made on the subject, it is understood that the State Cabinet's recent decision on the question of the sale of coal to the public from the State mine at Powlett is really a determination to come to no decision for the present. The Ministry, it is believed, has agreed to postpone the adoption of any definite policy on the question until the possibilities of the Powlett field have been more fully determined. For the present, therefore, the Mines department will continue to hold up all applications for private leases in the Powlett basin.

It is understood that a Ministerial statement to this effect will be made in the Legislative Assembly by the Premier (Mr. Murray) early in the session.

From the *Wonthaggi Sentinel*, 21 October 1910, page 2

### **Sale of Coal to Public**

(Re-paragraphed for the sake of clarity)

Recent developments at the State mine have in a large measure been responsible for the revival of the question concerning the sale of coal to the public. The question is of vital importance to every person in the State of Victoria, and the welfare of the town of Wonthaggi and district depends almost entirely upon it, and in a more marked degree at present than at any other time. In our issue of August 12th attention was drawn to the indifference of the residents on this most important question. About that time we read of agitation in favor of such a proposal from almost every part of the State. Numerous public bodies passed resolutions in favor of the proposal and asked the Government to give favourable consideration to the question. One of the places where the question was a dead one was Wonthaggi.

To quote from our issue of August 12th:—"Why or how the question has been overlooked we cannot understand, and in drawing attention to the oversight we do so in the hope that the representatives of the public will bestir themselves in the matter... Any combination of parties or any movement having for its object the sale of coal to the public would

*(continues on Page 9)*

From the *Wonthaggi Sentinel*, 21 October 1910, page 3

### **Action by the Progress Association**

At the Progress Association Committee meeting on Monday evening last, the existing state of affairs at the State mine was discussed, and the action of the railway commissioners in connection with the use and carriage of coal from the mine was freely criticised.

Mr. Crombie introduced the subject. After referring to what had recently appeared in the press concerning the quantity of coal used by the railways, and the "laying off" of men at the mine, he said it was time a public meeting was called for the purpose of advocating the sale of coal to the public. The public required shaking up in the matter. The men were again working short time and everyone was effected thereby. It was most important that steps were taken to at least discuss the situation, and no time should be lost in fixing a date for a meeting. The railway commissioners were receiving 1,000 tons of coal daily from Newcastle, and the quantity that was being sent from here was being stored. The output from the mine was being restricted by this action, and now that wool season was in full swing and the harvest season coming on the chances were that the present output would be further restricted owing to the inability of the department to provide sufficient trucks to take the coal away. That means shorter time for the men and consequently a worse time for the public and the business people. The State coal mine was the best asset in Victoria, yet it was being slowly strangled, and it was necessary that a strong stand should be taken to try and prevent it.

Mr. Mesley said the Progress Association should make the question of the sale of coal to the public the foremost plank to work on. An effort should be made to arrange for meetings throughout the whole of the State to advocate that the public be supplied with cheap coal from the State mine. Such a schedule would be possible to arrange and if the question was taken up right throughout Victoria, some weight would be added and probably some good would result from such a course. He favoured circularising the whole of the public bodies in the State and asking their assistance in a matter of this kind.

Mr. Carling agreed that meetings should be arranged for throughout the State and the people should say that they intend insisting on

*(continues on Page 9)*



*Sale of Coal to Public... (continued from Page 8)*

meet with the approval of every resident of Wonthaggi... We trust the matter will receive early attention and would suggest that representatives from the Progress Association, the Traders' Association and the Miners' Association should meet in conference to devise some scheme for the furtherance of this all-important question."

Some time later a public meeting was convened under the auspices of the Progress Association to discuss the matter, but not more than half-a-dozen put in an appearance and the meeting lapsed. Nothing further was heard on the question till a couple of weeks ago, and at the Progress Association committee meeting on Monday night, the question was again introduced. The seriousness of the present situation is apparent to all.

When the present town site was marked out, glowing descriptions of its future greatness were depicted by the Government. The supply of coal was unlimited, and the output would be unrestricted. 2000 tons per day was to be reached in a short space of time, and Wonthaggi in the course of a few months would have a population of 10,000. Manufacturers and householders looked forward to the prospect of obtaining cheap coal. Men came from all parts of the State in the hope of obtaining permanent employment and incurred considerable expense in the erection of homes. Their wives and families followed later on. They staked their all on the representations made by the Government. Business men from all parts vied with each other in securing sites whereon to carry out business, and in most cases incurred large outlays in the erection of suitable premises. No thought of political influence was entertained, and all looked forward to the nationalisation of the greatest and most valuable asset of commerce.

But the scene has changed.

Private enterprise in the shape of the Legislative Council has taken a hand and the sale of coal to the public has been prohibited. The output of the mine has been restricted to 1300 tons per day, with a possibility of being further restricted, owing to the inability of the Railway Department to take more until such time as the existing contracts with the Newcastle collieries terminates *[sic]*. The mine is capable of producing 2000 tons per day, and the manager is in a position to increase the output to that amount when required. The transportation facilities are also to be

*(continues on Page 10)*

*Action by the Progress... (continued from Page 8)*

having their rights. If a scheme was formulated to arouse public feeling in the matter, then the effort of the Progress Association would not have been in vain.

Mr. Brunt said he had read the late reports in the Press, and at the present time there was a possibility of the output being decreased instead of increased. In that case less men would be employed, less money would be spent in the town, and the effect would be felt all round. The progress of the town would be retarded also. It was necessary that coal should be sold to the public if the town was to grow. A circular dealing with the question should be sent to every public and political body in Victoria. He was prepared to contribute his share towards defraying the cost that such a proceeding would entail. The question would be discussed, reports would appear in the Press in all parts of the State, and the question would be so stirred up that what was most desired might eventually be brought about. He moved—"That this Association causes a circular to be drawn up setting forth the serious way in which the development of the State coal mine is being retarded by the fact that there is at present no power to sell large coal to the public, and that copies be sent to every municipal body and to the secretaries of the various friendly and political societies throughout the State."

Mr. Bird seconded. He said he had recently been informed by a traveller that all the country coal depots were full of Newcastle coal. He thought the Government wanted very little coal to go from here eventually, for they had shelved the question of the sale of coal to the public. It was necessary to carry Mr. Brunt's motion. The State coal mine was the best asset Victoria possesses to-day, and many people in Australia would start manufactories if they were assured of being able to get cheap coal. He knew cases were *[sic]* manufacturers had gone to South Australia on account of being able to get cheap coal. Prohibitive duties had been imposed in many cases in order to foster local industries, but it was impossible to start manufactories unless cheap coal was to be had, and consequently the State was a heavy loser thereby. Manufacturers were now driven elsewhere, whereas if cheap coal could be obtained, many lines which were now imported would be made here and the mine would be placed on a good footing. Many miners had erected homes on the

*(continues on Page 10)*

*Sale of Coal to Public... (continued from Page 9)*

restricted owing to the wool and wheat traffic being so heavy. Men are to remain in enforced idleness and business is to remain almost at a standstill. The commercial side of the question is not to be considered and the whole progress of the district is to be retarded in order to appease the avariciousness of Mr. Private Enterprise.

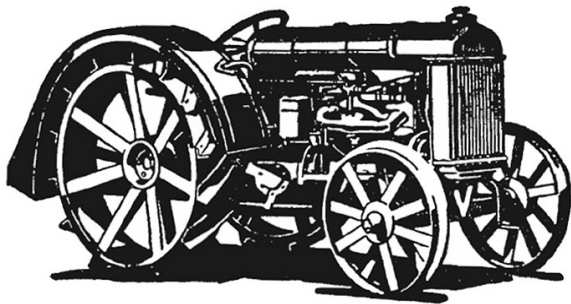
Through his mouthpiece—the Legislative Council—the decree has gone forth that coal must not be sold to anybody but the Railway Department, whose requirements do not exceed 1000 tons per day, and the time has arrived when the public of the whole State should insist upon steps being taken to remove that embargo. A move in the right direction has been made by the Progress Association. Every municipal body, and the secretaries of the various friendly and political societies throughout the State are to be circularised and their co-operation asked in an agitation for the sale of coal to the public.

The serious way in which the development of the State coal mine is being retarded will thus be brought directly under notice, and by the aid of the press and the public the unfairness and injustice of the existing state of affairs should receive such publicity that what is most desired will eventually be brought about. The State coal mine is one of the most valuable assets of the State, and in all fairness to the public, the miners, and the business people of Wonthaggi, the present policy of political strangulation should not be tolerated any longer.

\* \* \*

## Fordson Tractor

BUILT TO SERVE MANKIND



The prosperity of farmers depends upon two factors—increased production and decreased costs. Both are effectively controlled by the use of a FORDSON TRACTOR.

Price, £195.

Local Dealer—

### J. DAVEY, Jun.,

KOOWEERUP.

From *KooWeeRup Sun and Lang Lang Guardian*, 26 April 1928

*Action by the Progress... (continued from Page 9)*

understanding that the Government were going to extend and develop the mine, and the Progress Association should protest at the way it was being hampered by the Government.

Mr. Laidlaw said he was opposed to the motion because it was proposed to ask the public bodies to do what they had already done. His idea was to hold a meeting first, a meeting of the miners and the public, and the circular could be adopted afterwards if necessary. An organising delegate should be appointed to visit Ballarat and Bendigo and other centres of population. Furnish him with all reliable data re the cost of the coal, hewing, haulage, etc., and we would get more genuine support in 10 minutes than 10,000 circulars could promote. Glowing accounts had appeared in the metropolitan press concerning Wonthaggi. The Minister of Mines had promised all sorts of beautiful conditions. There was to be a population of 10,000 people here by Christmas. We were fooled by such misleading statements. As a national asset the State coal mine was unequalled and had unlimited possibilities, but the Government were doing their best to strangle it. Many people had pledged their credit to establish themselves here and now there was a possibility of the mine being hung up during the wool season. The position would be accentuated later on when the harvest season commenced and possibly three shifts per week would be worked. Ruin stared many business people in the face who have staked their all in Wonthaggi, and he hoped the metropolitan press would take the matter up on their behalf.

Mr. Mesley said no good purpose would be served by holding a meeting to sympathise with one another. We could not expect the public of Victoria to sympathise with us because we had spent all our money here. The people had been blinded by the sale of slack to the public and had no idea how the mine was being shelved by the Government piece by piece. A public meeting in Wonthaggi alone would not be of much use.

Mr. Brunt said that if the various public bodies took the matter up, the Government would have no option but to take the necessary steps to have coal sold to the public.

The motion was carried.

Messrs. Laidlaw, Brunt, Bird, Carling, Crombie, and Mesley were appointed to draw up the circular and make the necessary arrangements for the printing and distribution of same.

## Pier Pressure

### The Piers at Grantville and Queensferry

Ports, Provisions, Timber, Trade: the Rise and Fall of Grantville and Queensferry  
Part Two

by Geoff Guilfoyle

With additional research by Robert Glover

Note: This is very much a work in progress and heavy on speculation.

#### The Decline of Queensferry

Queensferry's fortunes started to slip even before the depletion of the timber. Around the time of the building of its Government pier in 1882, in a burst of common sense, the Victorian parliament dropped the proposed Jeetho to Queensferry railway from the Railway Construction Bill in order to further finance the proposed line to Alberton (the future Great Southern Railway).<sup>1</sup> Bad news for Queensferry but ultimately good news for the rest of the colony.

The only hotel, the Victoria, ceased being listed as such in the 1885 Phillip Island rate book, becoming just a house on 3 acres of land [page 92, entry 703]. The owner and licensee goes from being a 'publican' or 'hotelkeeper' to 'selector' and in later rate books a 'carpenter,' the former hotel now put to other uses.

The next blow came in mid-1886...

*I am sorry to have to report that Stewart's Bass river saw mills have stopped. After working for so many years it will be a great loss to the place; in fact, a few years ago the mills were the mainstay of the district, very few people living here who were not depending on them for a living...*

*The mill employed from twenty to twenty-five men, who, of course, have been thrown out of employment; but no doubt most of them will find work amongst the selectors, which they will be well suited for, being mostly good bushmen. I believe the mill has not been paying for some time...*

*Poor Queensferry looks very dull at present, but I have heard it is not to go to decay, as there is a company about to be formed in Melbourne for the purpose of salt making. I*

*have not heard particulars yet, but I hope it will be a success.*<sup>2</sup>

It wasn't. It was also just the first of a number of failed attempts to keep Queensferry going now that its primary reason for existing had ended. Matters grew bleaker on 13 April 1888 with the death of its founder and mainstay, Alexander Stewart, who had been ill for much of the previous 12 months.<sup>3</sup>

By 1890, the Queensferry pier was becoming less useful due to a sand bar obstructing access, requiring Government assistance, with the Commissioner of Customs promising... *an officer would be sent down at once to report as to whether the work suggested would be possible*, with the local council leaving any action to the discretion of the members of the Corinella riding. If it was dredged, which doesn't appear to have been the case, it only temporarily fixed the problem, as a decade on their was another call for clearing the approaches to the pier.<sup>4</sup>

One path to prosperity for Queensferry was as a port for the coal from the soon-to-be-opened mines on the Woolamai coal field. The Glen Alvie Coal Mining Company was registered on 19 May 1896, with Edward Cracknell of Queensferry as manager and the company office located on the Esplanade, Queensferry.<sup>5</sup>

Either the coal seam proved faulty [the Joseph White *100 Years Of History* version] or the cost of carting to coal to the railway proved prohibitive [the *Argus*, 23 September 1908, page 5 account]. Regardless, little was heard of the company after 1896.

A more serious attempt to develop the

*(continues on Page 12)*



The remnant of the Government pier at Queensferry in 2004.

*Pier Pressure (continued from Page 11)*

Woolamai coal field started earlier and lasted longer. The first public notice of the new mining venture came in the *Age*, 6 May 1895: the formation of the Great Victoria Colliery Co. NL with 300 shares valued at £25 each. The last public notice came in mid-1901 with the second and final auction of all remaining plant and equipment (the first sale being in mid-1999).<sup>6</sup>

With the spectacular failure of the Great Victoria Colliery Company, the residents of Queensferry looked to both their farms and the sea to keep the dying town afloat.

*The farmers of Queensferry are moving in the matter of establishing a creamery at that place. A representative of the Melbourne Fresh Food and Storage Company has been canvassing the district, and many farmers have been approached and asked to take up shares. The company is to be a co-operative one, and no doubt the local milk-suppliers will see it is to their advantages to do so, and keep it going when started. (28 August 1901).*<sup>7</sup>

And:

*An Oil Boat Company is being formed to trade between Melbourne, Flinders, Cowes, San Remo, Queensferry and Grantville. The designs of the boat have been prepared by Mr. Cracknell, of Queensferry, who has had great experience in the building of steamers. The proposed boat will be 80 feet over all, and 14 feet beam, capable of carrying 80 tons of cargo, on a draught of 7ft. 6in., and 40 tons on 4ft. 6in., which will be a light enough draught to allow her to come in to Grantville or Queensferry on any ordinary high tide. (8 November 1899).*<sup>8</sup>

On 27 January 1899 *The Western Port Times* announced that: *The Queensferry jetty is to have fifty new planks. Mr. Richardson of Rhyll is the contractor.*

This was the last repair ever officially made on it.

On 22 June 1900 the following notice appeared in the advertising section on page 1 of the *Age*:

*Western Port.—Queensferry Jetty Light.*

*Referring to Notice to Mariners dated 3rd August, 1883, and to General Notice to Mariners, Victoria, dated 1st June, 1898, page 93, it is hereby noticed that the Queensferry Jetty Light will be DISCONTINUED on and after the 1st July, 1900.*

*C. W. Maclean,  
Port Officer.*

*Melbourne, 31st June 1900.*

Finally, in the advertising section on page 1 of the *Argus*, 16 February 1904, came the following notice:

*Queensferry Pier. — Westernport.*

*Mariners and others are hereby notified that the JETTY at QUEENSFERRY, described in General Notice to Mariners, Victoria, dated 24th September, 1901, page 96, is UNSAFE, through deterioration, and has, therefore, been CLOSED against traffic. Persons are hereby cautioned against using the pier.*

*C. W. Maclean, Port Officer.*

Queensferry had already lost its general store and post office; slowly but surely, the population was dribbling away. The formation of the Queensferry Progress Association failed to halt this, as did a late attempt to develop Queensferry as – of all things – a resort town with the sale of 51 mostly quarter-acre residential blocks in 1929.<sup>9</sup>

The failure of this sale sealed the township's fate. Today Queensferry is merely a locality, one of some local historical note and no current importance.

## Grantville: Towards the Zenith

Grantville could have gone the same way as Queensferry after Brazier's mill fell silent at the end of 1880. It didn't.

Why?

Because right from the start, back into the 1860s and the Corinella Coal Mining Company, Grantville served a function that Queensferry never quite did.

*The only place we could get stores from was Grantville, and if the boat got wind-jammed (which was often the case) you had to wait until she did get in before you could get all the stores you wanted, for the store-keeper was bound to be out of some of them. (Edward Sheepway)<sup>10</sup>*

And...

*My father and I landed at Grantville in March, 1875, coming from Melbourne to Hastings by coach, and from there to Grantville in Jones' fishing boat. After staying at Grantville for about a week, we went to the Bass river and pitched our tents and commenced stripping wattlebark and splitting staves for sale in Melbourne. We carted the bark and staves to Grantville with a bullock team until the road was unfit to cart on, and then started to pack them, using six horses which I had to drive, making two trips a day from the Bass to Grantville, a distance of about six miles. (Henry Dowel)<sup>11</sup>*

*(continues on Page 13)*

*Pier Pressure (continued from Page 12)*

Less glamorous than timber, and in the short term less lucrative, Grantville acted not only as one of the main entry points for people arriving in the district, whether by road or by ship, but as a supply, transshipment and service centre after they settled. This goes a long way in explaining the existence of the Deep Creek general store in 1870 and the Grantville Junction Hotel from, probably, 1872, at which Henry Dowel and his father would have stayed unless they had friends locally who put them up.

*To The Editor Of The Leader*

*...The first work should be the making of a road to Deep Creek, as this is very badly wanted by the back selectors in the parish of Jeetho to enable them to obtain their provisions, &c., from that township.*

*Yours &c., One Interested, Jeetho. (11 May 1878).<sup>12</sup>*

The Shire of Phillip Island and Woolamai was not unresponsive. Reading through the first twenty years of Council meeting reports in the *South Bourke and Mornington Journal* shows that discussion of roads and road-related matters took up a sizeable portion of each meeting. Usually it was in the form of answering “we need a road here!” or “this road needs URGENT repair!” requests from ratepayers, and often nothing could be done due to lack of funds.

*From James Cuthbert, pointing out the best method of draining the road to Corinella.—On motion of Councillor’s Stewart and Misson, the letter to be acknowledged with thanks, and Mr. Cuthbert to be informed that no funds are available at present. (23 March 1881).<sup>13</sup>*

*The Shire Secretary brought up a statement of estimated revenue available... As a matter of fact, the Council at the present moment have not one shilling to spend for any works, but to carry out some very necessary works a loan will be obtained from the Bank. (2 Nov. 1887).<sup>14</sup>*

Over time the roads improved and new ones were added, though, of course, never entirely to the satisfaction of those living in the interior, or along the coast, or in the townships, or...anywhere in the shire. Then and now.

The lack of any storage facility near the new Government pier continued to hurt the town.

*A much felt want in our township is a goods shed in connection with the jetty. At present there is no place in which to securely store the many hundreds of tons of goods received and despatched from here. I believe a petition has*

*been sent to the Customs Department in regard to this matter... (10 November 1886).<sup>15</sup>*

*At the Shire Council meeting on Friday Councillor Tulloch moved that the Minister of Customs be urged to erect a building for storage purposes at Grantville jetty. It is a gross injustice to hundreds of people that this want has not been supplied before. There are no less than seven schooners trading here regularly, delivering and taking away, on an average, 150 tons of goods per week, and on account of the limited private storage accommodation provided, valuable goods are exposed to the weather for days at a time. (2 November 1887).<sup>16</sup>*

For once the Victorian Government acted with commendable speed (by Government standards). After a wait of only three years, on 5 September 1889 the job of building the required customs shed was awarded to Cameron & Co. at the cost of £115.<sup>17</sup>

## Holding the Line

The late 1880s saw Grantville at its height. Milling continued, albeit on a reduced and stuttering scale [see page 19], and the town contained the Grantville Hotel, a coffee palace, Frederick Dowel’s boarding house\*, bank, general store, combined post and telegraph office, a cricket, football and rifle club, Mechanics’ Institute, police station, carpenter (Henry Rowlands), blacksmith (Charles Williams), a shoe and boot maker (M. Bartlett), Payne’s butchery and Henry Mission’s saddlery. Grantville now had its government pier and was about to receive a customs shed, greatly aiding trade; the roads to the interior were slowly, very slowly, being improved, and the Cobb & Co. coach to and from Dandenong terminated at Grantville.

One of the seven schooners mentioned by Tulloch in the quote above, was the *Clara*, which belonged to local storekeeper John Thomas Paul.

The same account which reports Paul’s purchase of the *Clara* also opines:

*In the face of the fact that the Great Southern Railway will likely be opened as far as Sunnyside on the Bass River in the course of another year it may not seem a judicious “spec,” but it does not seem to be generally known that as far as the carriage of goods and produce is concerned the Southern line will be of little*

*(continues on Page 14)*

\* Given George Dowel’s 1887 involvement with the site, this was probably the Prince Alfred hotel, which was delicensed in 1884.

*Pier Pressure (continued from Page 13)*

use to the residents of South-western Jeetho, the whole of Jumbunna West, Wonthaggi, Kongwak and other places, Grantville and Queensferry being the natural outlets for the goods traffic of these districts.<sup>18</sup>

The writer wasn't entirely wrong.

The Tooradin to Loch (opened 11 November 1890), Loch to Korumburra (opened 2 June 1891) and Korumburra to Leongatha (opened 17 December 1891) sections of the Great Southern Railway, followed by the opening of the Korumburra to Jumbunna (7 May 1894) and Jumbunna to Outtrim line (5 February 1896)<sup>19</sup> didn't materially help the thick band of settlers either side of the Bass River. It did, however, offer benefit to those in and around Jeetho (which gained an actual railway station) and areas to the south of it such as Kilcunda Road and Glen Alvie, reorientating some trade away from the bay. The slow improvement of the roads worked both ways: getting material to Grantville was easier, but so was carting it to the railways stations at Loch, Jeetho, Jumbunna or Outtrim.

Also not helpful, though it is hard to determine how damaging it was to the region, was

the early 1890s colony-wide depression in which land prices plummeted in 1889, building societies went broke in 1890, and the banks collapsed a couple of years later. The impact was probably felt more in the cities, particularly Melbourne, than in the country. The depression will be examined a little more closely further in the article.

More impactful would have been the collapse of the Great Victorian Colliery Company at Queensferry, and the continuing decline of that township. It is hard to envisage it not having a knock-on effect on local businesses affected by supply-and-demand, such as drapers, butchers, saddlers, blacksmiths and even general stores. Property prices fell, but the lack of employment prospects with the collapse of the GVCC would have deterred those outside the area from taking the opportunity to settle.

Additionally, although the summer 1897-1898 bush fire season was serious (bush fire relief totalling £16,000 was provided by the Victorian Government to 640 settlers) it was accompanied by a severe drought which badly affected the dairy industry with little or no milking being carried on.<sup>20</sup>

Grantville wasn't outwardly affected by

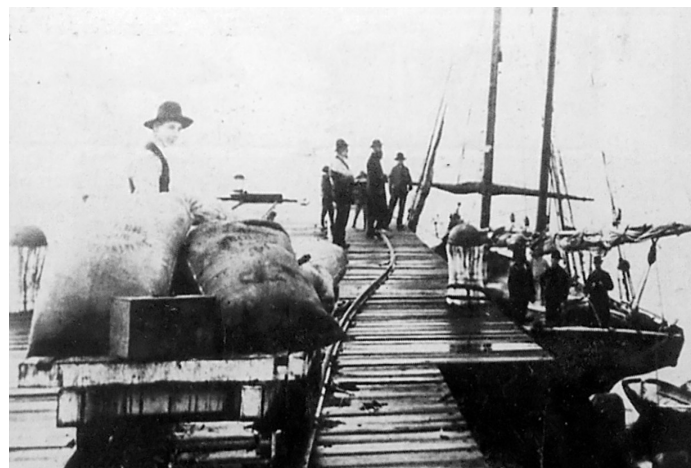
*(continues on Page 15)*



The pier at Grantville, undated but appears to be before the erection of the customs shed (which, however, might be to the left and out of view).



The Government pier at Grantville. Date unknown but after 1889 due to the presence of the customs shed.



J. T. Paul's schooner at Grantville jetty pre-1903 and the installation, at J. T. Paul's request, of a crane.

*Pier Pressure (continued from Page 14)*

all these changes, adding a Free Library to its now four year old Mechanics' Institute in June 1891 (it had 600 books in 1896, a large collection for a rural town at the time) and the Grantville Racing Club and a race-course in 1895.<sup>21</sup>

Cobb & Co. ceased to run its thrice-weekly service from Dandenong (later Cranbourne) to Grantville after the completion of the Great Southern Railway as far as Lang Lang, but a mail and passenger service from Lang Lang to Grantville operated by A. W. Hardingham filled the gap. (His predecessor as mail contractor, Samuel Shearer, may also have offered a passenger service). Additionally, from September 1889, a twice-weekly coach service to and from San Remo was started.<sup>22</sup>

The yearly agricultural show was still going strong and around this time William Lang added an extra residential building to the Grantville Hotel. He also, according to *The San Remo Times* of 18 November 1897, extended his dining room, making it the largest dining room in the district, its size being about 15 feet wide by 35 feet long. The whole of the premises is being thoroughly renovated inside and outside.

A year later, Thomas Monger observed in the *San Remo Times*:

*San Remo seems to be going down lower every month in the shipping trade. The schooner trade is about one a month. Grantville and Queensferry can boast of a dozen in and out this month already.* (9 Sept. 1898, page 2).

That Monger moved his printing and publishing business from San Remo to Grantville two months later, *The San Remo Times* becoming *The Western Port Times*, with William Sinclair beginning a drapery business in the same building, does not show a town in steep decline. Monger was still in operation nearly a decade later and George Lumsden replaced Sinclair as draper.<sup>23</sup>

From *The Western Port Times*:

*Yesterday, Grantville was quite lively in the shipping trade, there being three schooners at the peir [sic] in the day, the Little Angelina, Trucanini and Swan, all had a good amont of cargo. The Trucanini sailed for Yanakie, near Corner Inlet, last night.*<sup>24</sup>

As usual, Monger, that most incurious of reporters and master of the run-on-sentence, doesn't bother telling the reader what cargo was dropped off or picked up even though this all happened almost within shouting distance of his residence/office.

## A Dissenting View

In May 1892 the "agricultural reporter" for the *Australasian* paid a visit to the area, and his account was printed in the 7 May 1892 edition on page 7, under the title *Through South Gippsland: Grantville and Queensferry*.

*These two places are prettily situated on the south side of Westernport Bay, and well sheltered from the ocean gales by French Island. Both are small shipping ports, only about two miles apart, and were formerly favourite landing places with the early settlers in this part of the country. Before the advent of the Great Southern Railway, Grantville was a very busy place. Nearly all the traffic to and from Lang Lang, Poowong, and far into the interior along Macdonald's Track was centred at this port. But things have altered considerably within the last few years, and to many people who were at one time in a thriving way of business here the change has been for the worse. The deserted houses about—shanties or huts would, perhaps be a more correct term—are evidences of depopulation, while on some of the buildings one can faintly read the obliterated signs of "store," "hotel," or "skittles." The sawmills in the neighbourhood, which formerly employed at good many hands, have also all been closed, and excepting the general farming trade, continued to within a radius of about a dozen miles, there is now no other business to support the townships.*

There is an obvious problem with this piece. Stick the writer in the middle of the main crossroads in central Grantville and have him look about him. What does he see? Much more than he mentions, such as a pier and custom's shed, hotel, coffee palace, police station, mechanics' institute, general store, post and telegraph office, blacksmith, and so on.

His statement that "Nearly all the traffic to and from Lang Lang, Poowong, and far into the interior along Macdonald's Track was centred at this port" is wrong, nor does he place any particular emphasis on the thick band of settlers from Woodleigh to Glen Forbes who did draw their supplies through Grantville, much of which arrived by ship.

The years 1892-1893 were arguably the worst of the 1890s depression; commercial concerns throughout Victoria were doing it hard, especially in Melbourne. No Grantville business, however, is known to have gone

*(continues on Page 16)*

*Pier Pressure (continued from Page 15)*

belly up during this time.

Now plonk the writer down where the future Bass Highway meets the Queensferry Jetty Road and have him peer about. What does he see? The closed down Victorian Hotel on Lot X and the old general store of L. Howell Williams on Allotment 92c. If the skittles in the late 19th century had less to do with the bowling game and was slang for butchering and/or meat, then it might well apply to 92D and 92B and the Sloss brothers over the road from the old store. The few houses in the location were probably primarily 2-4 room dwellings; it was not as prestigious an area as the beach-front Esplanade, the main residential section which the writer doesn't seem to have visited.

Queensferry was hit harder (and more recently) than Grantville by the closing of the mills, and was certainly in decline in 1892, although soon to get a temporary boost with its foray into the coal mining industry. Also, William Stewart, storekeeper and timber merchant, trading as W. Stewart & Co., now one of the mainstays of the township after the death of his father, had gone bankrupt in 1890 at the start of the depression.<sup>25</sup>

The *Australasian's* reporter has produced a sensationalist story of decay and abandonment which, in Grantville's case at least, doesn't seem warranted given the other evidence available. Indeed, the writer undermines his own argument in the paragraph immediately after the doom-and-gloom opening:

*It must not be supposed, however, because there has been a deviation of the traffic of the country, which necessitated many people leaving this locality, that it is "all up" with Grantville and Queensferry. It was only those who existed on the passing traffic and travellers who were compelled to clear out. The legitimate land-owners still remain, and relatively speaking all these people are doing as well or better than ever before. A corner block in either township cannot to-day be purchased for a trifle.*

And he continues in this upbeat manner for the remainder of the article, interviewing farmers and prophesying future prosperity for the region.

There is one other piece of evidence against his opening analysis: If Grantville was in steep decline, why did the net annual value on the Grantville hotel not drop significantly. The value on the hotel was assessed at £75 in both March 1889 (before the depression) and

March 1893 (arguably the worst year).<sup>26</sup>

On the other hand there is this from the *South Bourke and Morning Journal* under the heading Woolamai:

*The busting of the land boom has had its effect here. Land for which the owner asked £200 per acre, and for which he refused £50, would now be difficult to sell at £25. There is very little doubt, however, that the place will certainly become the resort for persons seeking health and recreation. (8 May 1889).*

It isn't clear if this collapse in the value of the land is the same everywhere or if San Remo, being a resort town with a summer tourist season very much catering to the middle-class, is somehow worse affected because of this. It is hard to envisage Grantville ever having had a land boom, whether it be 1889 or 1999.

### The Early 20th Century

Grantville entered the 20th century diminished from its glory days in the late 1880s, but still the "biggest kid on the block" in the Shire of Phillip Island and Woolamai. Given the rise of both Lang Lang and Korumburra just over the borders of the shire, this is something of a tarnished boast.

Something happened around 1904-1905 which saw Grantville dip even further. Nothing obvious in the record and the town quickly reached a new, if lower, equilibrium.

A hint of this decline is seen in the fortune of the general store. In the 1905 Phillip island rate book it has an NAV of £60 (entry 1125). This drops to £40 in 1906 (entry 1084) for no discernible reason. The change of ownership from John Thomas Paul to Francis McOwan in itself can't be the cause; however, it is possible the new owner sought a reduction due to a decline in trade. [See *TWPT* June 2021: A John Thomas Paul Mystery].

Perhaps this was caused by the slow rise of Bass on one side and the clear growth of Lang Lang on the other. The former town would draw those living in the Glen Forbes and Woolamai area into its orbit while Lang Lang did the same with the farmers north of The Gurdies. Additionally, around this time Dalyston was undergoing rapid development, though it is hard to see how this would have a direct impact on Grantville.<sup>27</sup>

There is, perhaps, a better explanation or, at least, an complementary one. As the coming of the train killed the Cobb & Co. coach, so the eventual slayer of the country railway was putting in an appearance – the automobile.

*(continues on Page 17)*



*Pier Pressure (continued from Page 16)*

It isn't recorded when the first automobile showed up at Grantville. At the beginning of the 20th century Melbourne effectively ended at Oakleigh, with Dandenong and Cranbourne merely prominent country towns. Any attempt to motor to Grantville from Cranbourne in winter, in an era without petrol stations or car mechanics, was beyond foolish, but in summer it was no different to the perils faced by a Cobb & Co. coach (provided you carried extra petrol and a tool box). The adventurous motorist could reach Grantville and Bass and, if particularly daring, might even try for San Remo.

Thomas Monger, printer, and owner and editor of *The Western Port Times*, became the district agent for Davies-Franklin in 1903.

It isn't clear what impact the arrival of the automobile in the district had on its fortunes. It also remained a product for the well-off and out of the reach of the average person.

Of course, this waning in the fortunes of the town around 1904-1905 may be more inferred than actual – the new Grantville Municipal Market yards were opened in a big ceremony by the Shire President in April 1904<sup>28</sup> – and if true, not a harbinger of calamity. Grantville had slipped and recovered before. It could do it again.

This time it never had the chance.

## RIDE DAVIES-FRANKLIN BICYCLES & TYRES

And You  
will Never  
feel the  
Want of



### A PACEMAKER.

THE Davies-Franklin Cycle Co's. Machines are undoubtedly the BEST on the MARKET, and they can be purchased by Cash or on Time-Payment.

**Bicycles:** from 10 10s to 25.

**Motor cycles:** from 55 guineas.

**Motor Cars:** from £150.

**All Machines Guaranteed 12months.**

For further particulars and prices, APPLY:—

**T. C. Monger,**  
"TIMES" Office Grantville,  
Agent for this District.

From *The Western Port Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser*, 17 April 1903, page 1: Advertising.

## The Long Decline

The fatal blow wasn't so much the rise of Wonthaggi in 1909 and the development of the Powlett Coal Field. It wasn't even the accompanying Nyora to Wonthaggi branch line.

It was the route of the railway: down the middle of the Bass Valley, roughly following the river – Woodleigh, Kernot, Almurta, Glen Forbes, Woolamai – then up to Anderson. This was Grantville's heartland, and its loss was irreplaceable.

Officially opened on 10 May 1910, the railway quickly destroyed the seaborne trade in Western Port Bay and effectively rendered Grantville obsolete. Businesses shut down or moved away; *The Western Port Times* newspaper ceased publication in August 1910; the Grantville and Jeetho Agricultural Society disbanded in June 1911; the police station was moved to Bass in mid-1915, and auctioneers, Alex Scott & Co., ended their sales at Grantville from 22 April 1923, though the monthly market stuttered along until at least 1927.<sup>29</sup>

At the Licensing Court in December 1916, the owner (William Lang) and current licensee (Edith Lang) of the Grantville Hotel asked for and received a reduction in their council rates from £80 to £50 due to the falling off in business.<sup>30</sup>

Grantville struggled on but by the mid-1930s, with the loss of the Grantville Hotel to fire and the racecourse closing, it was reduced to the role of a small quiet country town with a general store and (for a time) a bakery and nothing else to stop for.

So people didn't.

Grantville's long slumber had begun.

Footnotes:

1. *Gippsland Times*, Friday 21 July 1882, Page 3: Parliament; *The Kyneton Observer*, 5 August 1882, Page 3: Parliament. See Also *The Western Port Times Vol.2 No.7, November 2019*, page 5.

2. *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, 12 May 1886: Queensferry.

3. *Age*, 18 April 1888, page 1: Family Notices; *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, 18 April 1888, page 2.

4. *Herald*, Tuesday 9 December 1890, page 2: Topics of the Day; *Great Southern Advocate*, Friday 28 November 1890, page 2: Phillip Island Shire Council; *The Western Port Times*, 20 July 1900, page 2: Correspondence; 22 June 1900, page 2: Local and General News.

5. *Great Southern Advocate*, 12 March 1896, page 3; *Victorian Government Gazette No.61*, 29 May 1896, page 2282.

6. *Age*, Monday 6 May 1895, page 7: Stocks and Shares; 8  
(continues on Page 18)

*Pier Pressure (continued from Page 17)*

May 1895, page 8; *Argus*, Saturday 27 May 1899, page 5; 3 June 1899, page 5; 28 May 1901, page 2: Advertising.

7. *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, Wednesday 6 June 1900, page 2: Poowong; 28 August 1901, page 2: Grantville.

8. *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, Wednesday 8 November 1899, page 2: An Oil Boat Company.

9. *The Western Port Times*, 26 June 1903: Local and General News; *Victorian Government Gazette No.112*, 31 August 1910, page 4040; *Herald*, Wednesday 15 May 1929, page 13: Western Port Bay.

10. Recollections and Experiences—Edward Sheepway. *The Land of the Lyre Bird*, published for the Committee of the South Gippsland Pioneers' Association, 1920.

11. Recollections and Experiences—Henry Dowel. *The Land of the Lyre Bird*, published for the Committee of the South Gippsland Pioneers' Association, 1920.

12 *Leader*, 11 May 1878, page 24: The Gippsland Roads.

13. *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, 23 March 1881: Phillip Island and Woolamai Shire Council

14. *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, Wednesday 2 November 1887, page 2: Grantville District.

15. *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, Wednesday 10 November 1886, page 2: Grantville.

16. *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, Wednesday 2 November 1887, page 2: Grantville District.

17. *Age*, 6 September 1889, page 7: Public Tenders; *Advocate*, Saturday 7 September 1889, page 11.

18. *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, Wednesday 10 November 1886, page 2: Grantville.

19. V.R. Timeline, Victorian railways.net. <http://www.victorianrailways.net/vr/history/history.html> (viewed 20 June 2021).

20. *Great Southern Advocate*, 21 April 1898: Local Topics.

21. *Argus*, Friday 26 June 1891, page 5: Country News; *San Remo Times*, 21 February 1896: A Visit To The Grantville Library; *Great Southern Advocate*, Thursday 10 October 1895, page 3: Sporting; *Mornington Standard*, Thursday 3 October 1895, page 2: From our Own Correspondent.

22. *San Remo Times, Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser*, 15 March 1896, page 2: Local and General News (Monger misnames him as Hordingham); Phillip Island 1894 rate book, page 76, entry 1237; *The Western Port Times*, 30 December 1898: Local and General News; 26 May 1899; 23 May 1902: Public Notice; *Great Southern*

*Advocate*, Friday 20 September 1889, page 2.

23. Phillip Island rate book 1899, page 66, entry 1165 & 1166; 1908, page 56, entry 1003 & 1004; page 50, entry 905.

24. *The Western Port Times*, 28 November 1902, page 2: Local and General.

25. *South Bourke & Mornington Journal*, 30 April 1890, page 1; 3 September 1890, page 2: Advertising; 27 August 1890, page 2: Advertising; the *Argus*, 4 July 1890, page 3: Judicial and Law Notices; 4 July 1890, page 2: Advertising.

26. Phillip Island 1889 rate book, page 21, entry 611; 1893 rate book, page 24, entry 849.

27. *The Western Port Times*, 16 May 1902, page 2: Powlett; 23 May 1902, page 2: Powlett; 30 May 1902, page 2: Powlett; 6 June 1902, page 2: Powlett; 8 August 1902, page 2: Powlett.

28. *The Western Port Times*, 15 April 1904, page 2: Opening Of The Municipal Market Yards.

29. *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, 29 June 1911, page 2; 15 April 1920, page 2: Advertising; *Lang Lang Guardian*, 16 June 1916, page 2: Hotels and Stores; *Dandenong Journal*, 8 September 1927, page 4.

30. *Powlett Express and Victorian State Coalfields Advertiser*, 15 December 1916: licensing Court; Phillip Island rate book 1916-1917, page 53, entry 1057.



Grantville pier in decline, 1927. Rails and crane removed.



Grantville pier, circa 1922-1926. Photo by Albert Arnell.



The Grantville piers, old and (relatively) new in 2020.

# The Ant and Bee

by

Geoff Guilfoyle

With additional research by Robert Glover

As covered in the main article, when Brazier’s mill, an important local employer, ceased business at the end of 1880, that was the end of the timber industry at Grantville. What wasn’t mentioned, and will be done so now, is that after a silence of nearly seven years...

*Two enterprising brothers, E. and J. Wallace, have commenced saw-milling operations at Grantville, steam being got up for the first time last Friday. This will prove a convenience to the district, and I hope a profitable return to the owners. (2 November 1887).<sup>1</sup>*

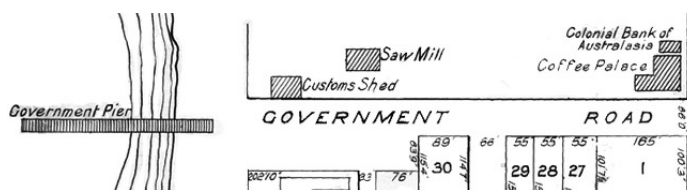
And...

*The sawmill is again at work in the township. The new proprietor, Mr Peaset, is a man of good experience, and from appearances is doing very well. He intends erecting a very large plant here in a few months’ time. (11 October 1889).<sup>2</sup>*

These two quotes make it appear as if Grantville was saved from Queensferry’s fate by a robust and continuing timber industry. The story is not as straightforward as the above quotes make it appear.

The Ant and Bee Mill, set up by John and Edward Wallace Junior may have been called such after Edward’s 40 acre A & B allotment at either Corinella or Jumbunna (depending on the Phillip Island rate book consulted). Or, if you prefer a more noble explanation, was named exactly as it sounds: after the industrious ant and bee. There is a third and more likely reason which will be considered in a moment.

According to the 1889 Phillip Island rate book (page 30, entries 914-917), John owned the mill in Grantville while Edward leased or owned the 1,000 acre Allotment 216 on the west side of the Bass River near Almurta which provided the trees. It is unclear why this area hadn’t previously been thoroughly cleared. A reserved area for timber purpose,



The late 1880s Grantville sawmill. The customs shed shown on the map is probably J. T. Paul’s storage shed. The actual customs shed wasn’t built until late 1889 and was placed at the foot of the pier. Munro & Baillieu Advertisement for 17 April 1888 land sale at “Grantville on the Sea.”

probably, with that status now removed. The 1889 rate book, however, is confusing for it lists *two* mills, John’s in Grantville and Edward has one on Allotment 216.

And here is the possible third reason for the name. The plant at Grantville was the A mill and the one at Almurta, the B mill, hence Ant and Bee mill (or it was the other way round).

In the 1890 Phillip Island rate book (page 63, entries 1002 and 1003) John is gone, the mill silent, leaving Edward with his mill on Allotment 216. Nothing changes in 1891 (page 101, entries 1302-1305) and 1892 (page 138, entries 1316-1318), except another Edward Wallace, probably Edward Junior’s father, takes up the A & B Allotment, though he doesn’t seem to be involved with the mill. Additionally, that 1000 acres vanishes.

Edward Wallace Junior disappears from the 1893 rate book, leaving Edward Senior at Queensferry. Or, more likely, this is a mis-labelled Edward Junior, who is now listed as a *grazier*.<sup>3</sup> Brother John went on to become involved with the Ant and Bee Gold Mine – but that is a story for another time.

Oh, but what about Mr. Peaset and his grand plans? Well, he took over John Wallace’s mill in late 1889. So, once again, it appears, you have two mills operating at that time: Grantville and Almurta.

Except you don’t. Grantville very quickly  
*(continues on Page 20)*

**N**OW WE ARE IN **I**T!

**Hardwood Timber**

**SUPPLIED AT LOWEST RATES.**

Postal Address—

**WALLACE BROS.,**

**Ant and Bee Saw Mill,**

**GRANTVILLE WESTERNPORT.**

From the *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, Wednesday 19 July 1893, page 1: Advertising. Wallace Bros. advertised in the *South Bourke and Mornington Journal* from December 1887 until 19 July 1893.

*Pier Pressure (continued from Page 19)*

drops out for a second time and once again there is only one.

The Ant and Bee Mill (or, perhaps, more accurately after the Grantville operation closed, the Bee mill or the Ant mill), run by the Wallace brothers, with or without John (making it, technically, a Wallace brother), continued to operate at least until mid-1893, which is odd, because the mill at Almurta had ceased operation earlier that year!

So what is going on?

Here is my best guess and the simplest answer that makes the least assumptions and best fits the known facts.

The Wallace brothers established two mills, the main one on Allotment 216. It did the heavy work and the timber it produced was carted to Grantville where the minor mill (John's) could trim or cut it to customer requirements, such as for floorboards or making furniture. This second part of the operation (John's) proved unneeded or unprofitable and was closed. The main plant at Almurta continued and also assumed the role of its Grantville counterpart. The effort was small-scale and the product advertised and sold locally, with very little of it exported to Melbourne.

Mr. Peaset took over the silent mill in Grantville, and initially did well or seemed to. However, he appears to have lasted so little time that he doesn't trouble the rate books. He and his big dreams vanished before the 1890 rate book was compiled (February 1890), and the mill fell silent again, this time forever. It had lasted just over two years, nearly all of that time under John Wallace's ownership. The mill at Almurta continued until, at the latest, March 1893 when, timber exhausted, it ceased operation.

So how to explain the Wallace brothers advertisement which appeared in the *South Bourke and Mornington Journal* on 19 July 1893 selling timber, this being months after the same mill closed. Probably selling off surplus stock at Almurta using Grantville as the mailing address. After July the Ant and Bee Saw Mill vanishes forever.

Milling continued elsewhere within the Shire after that time, particularly around Bass and Woolamai, but Grantville was no longer the main point of export.

1. *South Bourke and Mornington Journal*, Wednesday 2 November 1887: Grantville District.

2. *Great Southern Advocate*, 11 October 1889, page 2: Grantville.

3. Edward Senior didn't die until 1915 (Reg. No. 7685/1915) and is buried in the Grantville cemetery.

From the *Argus*, Friday 22 June 1956, page 1

## Argus Men Corner The "Monster"

by Lindsay Mudge

Two Argus men cornered they mysterious Wonthaggi "monster" in dense tea-tree jungle only a mile from the town, late yesterday.

But it is still at large. It escaped after a fierce encounter with a veteran hunting dog.

The dog tracked down the "monster" in the tea-tree after an all-day search through 10 miles of scrub country.

Yesterday Argus photographer Percy Spiden and I made a special trip to Wonthaggi to hunt the mystery animal which has been sighted by a number of people since early this year.

Fierce barking by our dog warned us that he had "flushed" the quarry, but only the dog got a good look at the "monster."

Percy and I caught no more than a fleeting glance of a ginger body flashing through the teatree. I fired six quick shots from a high power rifle, but the animal escaped.

The dog crashed through the teatree in pursuit, but returned to us in 10 minutes, exhausted and discouraged.

We were assisted in the search by Mr. Peter Atkinson, a farmer at Lance Creek, and Mr. Ern. Featherston, a motor-car salesman at Wonthaggi.

Mr. Featherston saw the monster crossing the Inverloch road several months ago.

From *San Remo Times and Phillip Island and Bass Valley Advertiser*, 1 July 1898: Cowes.

## Deer on Phillip Island

With reference to the shooting of deer on the Island, there seems to be a difference of opinion whether to destroy or not. One of the largest landowners on the Island has assured the Secretary of Customs that there are not more than half a dozen on the whole of the Island, and that they do no harm. It was supposed that they were making ravages amongst the cultivation, particularly in the orchards and gardens, and he states if the present protection were removed they would very soon be extinct, as there is very little cover on the Island in which they could take refuge. On the other hand, the Department is informed by another settler that deer, against which fences are not of the least avail, recently got into his small field of chicory, and that the animals ate or trampled down the greater portion of his crop.