

The Western Port Times

GRANTVILLE & DISTRICTS

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July 2018

WELCOME

Welcome to the third edition of The Western Port Times.

This magazine has been introduced as a rebirth of the original Western Port Times, which was published in Grantville from 1898 until 1910.

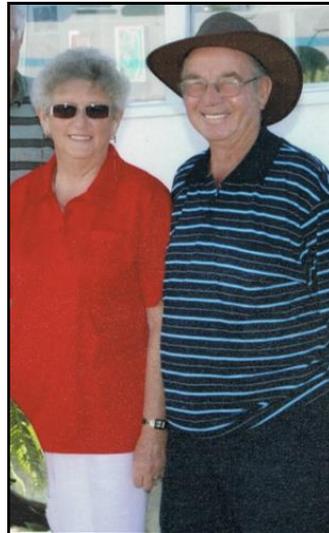
Produced by The Waterline News, for the U3A Local History Group, based in Grantville, The Western Port Times is a creative Exercise to showcase Grantville's history, via the group's website.

The monthly magazine is only available online, with all editions available on the website creating what the group believes will be a valuable historical resource.

Grantville was gazetted on 20 September 1872, almost 146 years ago and has a rich and proud history to be uncovered as more time passes.

We would like to invite all of you to contribute to the effort, with any stories, memorabilia, photos, maps etc. you may have in your collections.

FEATURES



Our Don Wheatley Starts Page 3

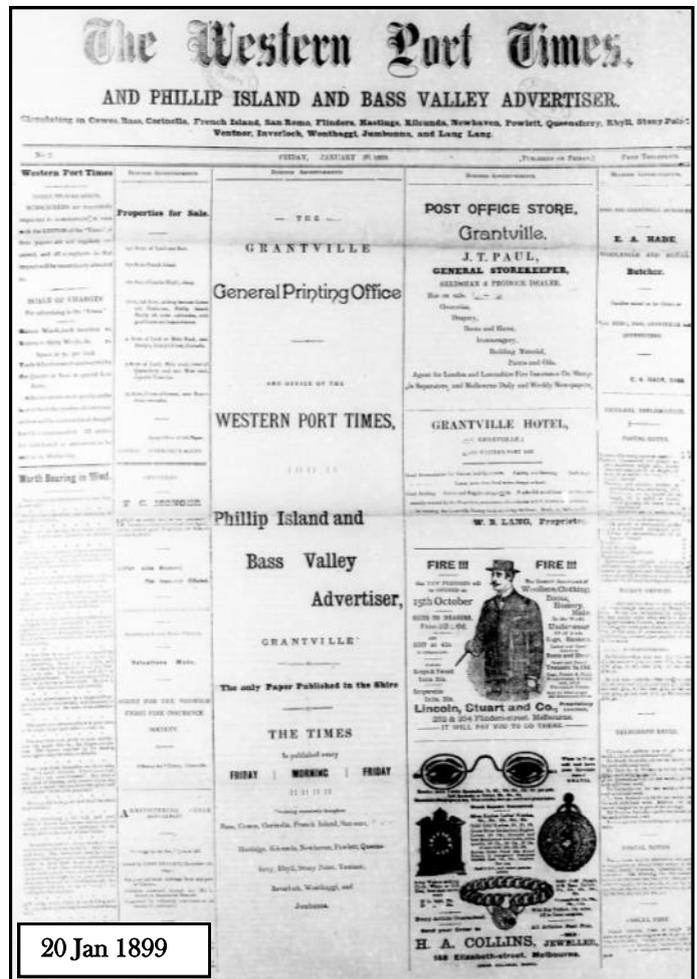


History of The Grantville Hall Starts Page 8

WEBSITE UPDATE

Following a recent meeting it was decided we should add a little about Grantville as it is today and some of the attractions.

We have just added to the website, an exciting collection prepared by one of our members, Geoff Guilfoyle, which includes.....



- * Grantville Today
- * Grantville Cemetery
- * Nature Reserve
- * The Shunt Off.

This is just the beginning of what will build into a great history of Grantville.

NEXT MONTH Next month we have a fascinating interview Tony Hughes did with Bruno & Teresa Brusamarello, Pat Jones, Ivy Yamn and Don & Irene Wheatley about the Cheese Factory at Glen Forbes.

Bruno, Pat and Don worked there at various times. Sadly, only the factory foundations remain today.

To the best of my knowledge, it is the only information in existence about the operation of the factory.

As with Don & Irene's interview, Tony has a number of photo's which he is happy to share with us.

Check out the website and subscribe FREE - www.grantvillehistory.com.au

Links to other sites

Group member, Grantville local, Clive Budd, Who is now also the webmaster for the new Bass Valley Historical Society website:

www.bassvalleyhistoricalsociety.com.au

Has started a list of links you might be interested in, to other historical Associations.

If you know of any we should add to the list, please do not hesitate to let us know:

Email: leader@grantvillehistory.com.au

Historical Group links

South Eastern Historical Association
seha.org.au

Koo-Wee-Rup Swamp Historical Society
kooweerupswamphistory.blogspot.com.au/

Lang Lang and District Historical Society
langlang.net/historical.html

Leongatha and district Historical society
leongathahistory.org.au

Wonthagi Historical Society
wonthagihistoricalsociety.org.au/

Western Port Historical Society Inc.
hwphs.org.au/

National Library of Australia Trove
trove.nla.gov.au/

State Library of Victoria
slv.vic.gov.au/

Grantville History
grantvillehistory.com.au

Inverloch Historical Society
cv.vic.gov.au/organisations/inverloch-historical-society/



Photograph of the Grantville General Store on Bass Highway, 1937.

The Inverloch Historical Society

Recently discovered some of the delights of The Inverloch Historical Society.

They have a fabulous newsletter and welcome enquiries from prospective members.

Email: secretary@inverlochhistory.com

Editor



Inverloch
Historical Society Inc
Newsletter No 234, June 2018

From the President

As we prepare for our August 2018 Exhibition, an examination of some of the photographs in the Society's collection has produced some exciting finds; the photos reproduced in my column in this month's newsletter are just three of the gems identified. They depict Inverloch many years ago, and are a reminder of the quote "If you want to see how far we've come, just look at the past".

At right we see Inverloch Dairy. A notation on the back tells us it is "Jacobson's Dairy, with Aunt Annie and sister", from the 1920s.





The photo at left shows Two Views Guest House in 1926, with the guests apparently keen to have a group photo taken. This building once stood at the top of A Beckett Street in Sandy Mount Avenue; the location is presently a large vacant lot. Originally, it was Neil's Inverloch Hotel, which was de-licensed in 1922.

Your Society has an extensive and valued collection of photographs, prints, maps and documents, which reside at various members' homes, ready for a thorough analysis once we achieve our own home, which we aim to be the Inverloch Maritime and Historical Museum.

Founding Inverloch Historical Society (1996)

Recently my attention was drawn to my some articles and documents from the foundation days of the Society in 1996. They are a fascinating read, and I am absolutely certain that the good people featured in the photo and news clipping reproduced on page 3 would never believe that 22 years later the Society still has no 'home'. One face in the group is still with us, Joan Lehmann. Joan is a strong and active supporter of the Society, and in my role as current President, I personally know of her commitment and considerable interest in local history.

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Our Don Wheatley

By Tony Hughes

Interview, Don & Irene Wheatley



Irene and Don Wheatley

Date: 11th December, 2013

Present: Don & Irene Wheatley; Irene Williams and Tony Hughes from the Wonthaggi & District Historical Society.

Purpose: Record

Don's life in Grantville, particularly while he was growing up, for posterity. Interview will be put on file at the Wonthaggi & District Historical Society archives for reference and research.

Don was born at Childers in Queensland in 1928; this makes him 85, at interview.

His parents, Hubert and Mary, nee Hough, arrived in Victoria from England, Hubert as a young boy with his dad. Hubert was from Huddlesfield and Mary was from Yorkshire. Hubert met Mary at Yarra Falls, Melbourne, married and moved to the Isis Shire in Queensland where Hubert had a job driving a steam road roller for the Shire. After Don was born, the family moved back to Melbourne to live in Collingwood for a short time before buying and moving to Grantville on one third of 116 acres of bush at the Shunt-Off, Grantville. The remaining two thirds was held equally between Don's Uncle, Percy Wheatley and Alec Illsley.



Don's father built a rough, bush timber, three room home with a corrugated iron chimney, 8 inch timber blocks for a floor, no windows or door, only sacks. There was no mains electricity or refrigerator, water was from a 1000 gallon tank. A wind generator Don's father built at the back of the shed, worked well, but

would throw its chain when the wind got too strong. They always found the chain but it could be pretty well anywhere in the surrounding bush. Don was alone with his mum for lengthy periods, looking after themselves while his dad was away working in Melbourne, until his father's parents, Ralph & Emily came to live with them. His younger brother, Ted, 8 years his junior, was born at Wonthaggi. Don's dad built an additional two rooms on the end of the house for his grandparents, a bedroom and kitchen so they were self contained. He also added an entry alcove to the main house door to keep the prevailing westerly winds blowing straight into the kitchen.

As Don's mother couldn't drive, Don did the shopping at Len Tilley's Grantville General Store and Post Office. Bread was delivered by Bob Bird and Shah, a travelling hawker with a horse drawn wagon, sold clothes from his horse and cart in the 1930s. When food ran short, they survived on bread and dripping. As there was no house cow, they drank powdered milk but had fresh eggs from their own chooks. Don's mum had an arrangement with the Cumbridge's for fresh milk on school days. Don would drop off an empty billy can at the Cumbridge's on the way to school in the mornings and pick the full one up on the way home. It became a nuisance lugging it home each night and occasionally caused grief, getting caught up in the bike.

Goods also came from Melbourne by train and dropped off at Almurta Station. If something went wrong, meat would get flyblown and be inedible. Don trapped rabbits for fresh meat and still enjoys a good rabbit. A trap he was setting one day went off in a paddock and trapped his fingers. He did not have the strength to release it, so walked back to the house to find a lever to release them. The engine block from an old T-model Ford acted as an anchor when setting the stronger traps, he was always very careful removing the trap from the block just in case it was not set properly. "ACE" brand traps were a lot easier to set. His grandparents had some sort of pension which allowed his grandmother to bring him three pence of lollies each time she returned to the house from the shops.

The early sawmill workers camped in huts on the Grantville beach, presumably they travelled to and from work on the sawmill railway. Lorna Malone's father worked in the sawmills. Steamers came to both the Queensferry and Grantville jetties.

Don's mum would make/mend his clothes and enjoyed craftwork and knitting. She had a charcoal iron complete with bellows. School started at 6 yoa and was located near the entrance to the Grantville tip. Don would walk to and from school, meeting up with other kids from the Adams Estate along the way.

Our Don Wheatley

It was a long, tiring walk and a worry when fires were about. In 1941 the school was moved to where the Transaction Centre now stands, classes were held in the hall during the rebuild. The school was replaced with a modern "portable" building in 1968.

His dad cleared part of their property but was no farmer. While still quite young, Don remembers or was told about a casual worker who was helping cut down trees on the place. Don understands the bloke and his mate were told not to touch a particular tree; it had too many dead limbs on it. For reasons unknown, they started cutting it, a limb fell directly on the bloke, smashing his skull. He was taken into Wonthaggi but died shortly after.

Don wanted to grow potatoes; dad's response was for Don to dig about an acre of land by himself, which he decided to give a miss. Don made a number of suggestions to his dad over the years, mainly to buy good land that would have improved their quality of life. In every instance, these suggestions were rejected as his dad was not prepared to borrow money under any circumstance! While Don was still young, his dad replaced the rough timber shack with a new house using recycled timber from the old Westernport Hotel.

"Their land was really not good enough to survive on." When water was short they would take 44 gallon drums to the local stone quarry beside the Almurta Road, back the truck so the tray was over the edge and fill them with a bucket on a rope. The drums were then covered with hessian to stop losing too much on the return trip. The quarry can still be clearly seen beside the road. There was a spring on the beach at Grantville, on the LHS of the jetty, which provided the town with fresh water. The hotel had two wells on top of springs.

Don's chores, which included cutting wood for the stove and copper, had to be done before being allowed to play with his mates. He built billy carts with the White Brothers (neighbours and scrap metal merchants who lived further along the Shunt-Off on the left) and permanently "borrowed" wheels off one of their prams to put onto the cart. One day while mucking around, a broken beer bottle at their place caused a deep wound in Don's left foot. His mum pulled the broken glass out, bathed the wound and bandaged it, no doctor involved. Dr Sleeman at Wonthaggi was the only doctor in the district.

Don loved fishing, ferreting and trapping rabbits. Don's grandfather, Ralph, taught him how to fish from the Grantville Jetty using a stick with two pieces of string tied together and a nut as a sinker. Ralph became upset when he realised his grandson was using all the nuts off his bolts for fishing!

Don's dad had shown him how dangerous detonators were, so when he and his mates found some Silver

ones in the quarry, he warned not to muck about with them.

Unfortunately, they ignored his warning and put a match under one, Ken Petersen lost a finger and thumb, Don only suffered severe ringing in the ears for a while. Don still has a tin which detonators came in, its label says; Nobel, Glasgow, No 6 Detonators for high explosives, Thistle Brand, Manufactured in Australia with Alfred Nobel's signature.

Don's dad made up a fish smoker from the base of an old iron chimney, rods to hang the fish (which were held open), the front covered with hessian and a fire in the base. It was Don's job to collect the firewood and keep the fire smouldering, it wasn't allowed to break out into flame. Don really enjoyed the Smoked Cod they used to make.

He got his first bike at 12 yoa, it had an oval front wheel and perished valve rubber, both of which he repaired.

Don helped his father cutting wood; they cut wood into 2 foot lengths (packed into 40 cubic feet lots) which were tossed onto the back of the truck, taken to Almurta station and stacked into neat rows to dry. Men from the railways would come, measure the stacks and calculate the payment into cubic feet, cords or tons, a cord was 125 cubic feet or 2.5 tons. The details were sent to Melbourne and a little while later, a cheque would arrive in the post that could be cashed at the Post Office. To get extra money, Don would sometimes unstack the wood onto the truck, take it to 2 railway carriages in the siding and fill them. Each carriage took 16 ton or 800 cubic feet of 2 foot logs and he was expected to fill both by himself in a day. He always managed one but didn't always fill two, it was bloody hard work. Don and his dad also cut and sold firewood, posts for the coal mines at Kilcunda and Wonthaggi, piles for the Corinella Jetty and contract fencing, mainly over winter. Apart from cutting on their own land, they also harvested wood from other properties.

...../5



Mary Wheatley at home, 1948.
Note calendar from "Archies Creek Dairy Produce Coy. Ltd." on wall.

Our Don Wheatley

They also made charcoal and sold it to the Bayles Factory and to local truck operators who used charcoal instead of petrol in their gas producers due to war fuel restrictions. During WWII, petrol was rationed to 1 gallon (4.54 litres)/ week, kerosene was forbidden to be used and primary producers needed a permit to get 40 gallons of fuel for 6 months. The Army put an odorant in their fuel so it would be detected if "acquired" and many found ingenious methods to use kerosene away from towns, switching to petrol if they thought they might be detected as burnt kerosene could easily be smelled.



Don Wheatley's first truck with brother Ted on the step. It is a Dodge, was purchased around 1945/6 when Don was still working at the Glen Forbes Cheese Factory.

Making charcoal was a hard, dirty job and during the wet, very frustrating. However, it had to be done, you just accepted it. Using bricks from old chimneys in the area, Don and his father made charcoal kilns 10 feet long, 4 feet wide, 4 feet deep with angled sides to prevent collapse. The kilns were fired, stacked with wood, covered with an old sheet of iron and sealed to keep air out and turn the wood into charcoal. Dry gum gave hard, bright charcoal. Wet saplings with bark made soft charcoal which, when burnt, left too much clinker.

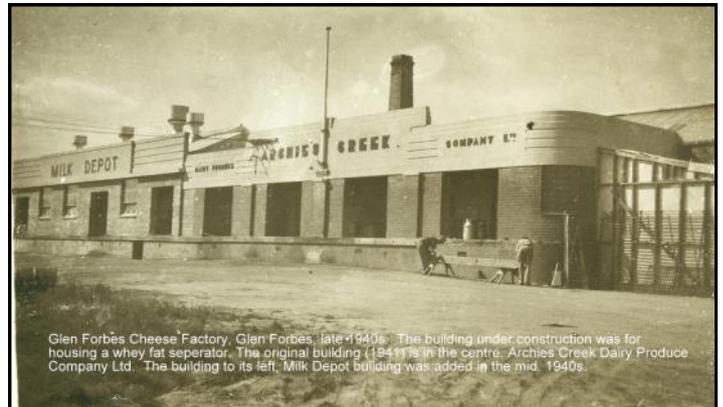
Don's dad used to buy old cars and motorbikes, fix them up and then sell them for income. Don remembers riding one of the bikes one day and nearly pranging it. He was trying to work out how much petrol was still in the tank by figuring out what the yellow on the gauge meant while rocketing along a local bush track. Luckily he looked up in time to see the scrub rapidly approaching and somehow managed to avoid it, his dad would not have been happy if he bent the bike.

Don left school at age 14 and helped his father make charcoal for 12 months, he wasn't paid much.

When age 15, Don got a job at the Glen Forbes Cheese Factory and worked there 6 days/week for six years learning two trades, Boiler Attending and Cheese making (refer Don's recollections of this time in the local history book, Glen Forbes, A Brief History).

During this time, Don filled in his spare time hunting

rabbits and foxes with a Lithgow 0.22 rifle, fishing and yabbying. The Queensferry Jetty was cross planked for the first half, then single planked for the rest. You had to be careful not to fall from the single planking but it was good, as you could see the fisheries inspector well before he could get to you.



Glen Forbes Cheese Factory, Glen Forbes, late 1940s. The building under construction was for housing a whey fat separator. The original building (1941) is in the centre, Archie's Creek Dairy Produce Company Ltd. The building to its left, Milk Depot building was added in the mid. 1940s.

Don's dad, who also worked at the cheese factory and had been instrumental in getting him a job there, left about 6 weeks after Don. His dad bought an old Dodge truck and the two of them cleared timber for 2 to 3 years. During this time, Don turned his talents to professional fishing as well by purchasing an old 21 foot boat with a blunt stern, called Valda. He and his dad put a single cylinder "Deriko" engine in it that proved to be reliable but was a brute of a thing to start. The fish were put into fish boxes without ice or refrigeration and sent to the Melbourne Fish Market where they sold for around 2 pence (cents)/pound. When the Bay's fish stocks dropped off, probably due to overfishing, he gave it away.

Up to age 17, Don had no way of getting around. He couldn't dance and girls didn't want to dance with a boy who couldn't. He was no sportsman, they laughed at his attempts to bowl at cricket so he contented himself with his own company, listening to the radio, doing stuff outdoors or mucking around with his mates when he wasn't working.

While still working at the Cheese Factory, Don purchased his first Dodge truck, around the age of 17, from Lifeguard Milk at Bacchus Marsh, who the Cheese Factory supplied with pasteurised milk. It is a long story, the short of it is, he was pulled up in the centre of Melbourne by two burley policemen for driving a vehicle without registration plates displayed. When he explained why, he was let go without a fine as long as he displayed the plates in the proper manner. Being a resourceful country boy, he soon "acquired" some wire and set off proudly showing his new plates, the policemen never asked for his licence or checked to see if he complied.

In 1951 at age 23, he met this very nice girl named Irene on a bus going to the pictures in Wonthaggi; she was really easy to talk to.

Our Don Wheatley

They talked a lot more, got on really well, fell in love and were married in 1953. Irene worked in the Grantville General Store and Post Office before they married.

Don's parents bought Uncle Percy's one third share of the 116 acres when Percy decided to live in Wonthaggi. His parents sold up their 77 acres to Mrs Stewart, a buyer for Myers, and moved to Nar Nar Goon to live. During this time, Don and his father worked on an hourly rate for Mrs Stewart, clearing the land, including stump removal, mainly using Gelnite. Unfortunately, the deal his dad made was for actual hours worked which meant long periods they weren't getting paid due to the weather, this resulted in an unsatisfactorily low hourly rate. Don recalled getting the worst headache of his life one morning when they were removing stumps with gelnite; he thought he was going to die. Don believes he got it from either gelnite fumes or wiping his forehead after handling the stuff; a definite no-no! It only happened once, yet they were handling gelnite every day.

Don recalls his dad telling or doing many things to earn money for the family. Some of them included: Driving a solid rubber tyred steam truck for road making in Melbourne. The law at the time required a man with a flag to walk in front of the truck as a warning to others.

Boiler Attending in Melbourne after they moved to Grantville.

Local timber cutting, fencing, truck driving, buying old cars & motorbikes for repair and resale.

Driving a steam road roller for the Isis Shire, QLD, and the Korumburra Shire, VIC.

Charcoal manufacture on the property.

Boiler Attending at the Glen Forbes Cheese Factory.

Boiler Attending and maintenance engineering at the Raleigh Preserving Co. at Pakenham after moving to Nar Nar Goon from where he retired. Raleigh had some sort of commercial tie up with Rosella.

Don's mum and dad moved to Lang Lang after his father's retirement, to live out the rest of their lives together. Dad passed away in February 1969 and mum in December 1969, both sadly missed!

Freddie Webb was looking for a bus driver when Don was helping clear Mrs Stewarts property with his dad and asked Don to do a run. Everything went well and Freddie offered him a permanent job as a driver, which he enjoyed for the next 6 years. When his parents moved, Don rented a house, with his brother, at Corinella until Don and Irene married. In case Don's dad, who hated borrowing money, talked Don and Irene out of securing a loan to buy land to build on, they didn't tell him about buying six

acres of land opposite the Grantville store. To help fund retirement, Don and Irene sub-divided the six acres but kept their original home which they are still happily living in and enjoying good health.



Don and the other bus drivers were not paid for the 6 week school holidays over summer. To keep money coming in, Don worked a couple of summers at the Raleigh Preserving Company at Pakenham with his dad and the other summers carting hay in the Grantville district. The other 4 weeks of school holidays during each year were fortunately paid annual leave.

When Freddie decided to sell the business, he offered each driver the opportunity to buy their run, including the bus. Don did his sums and decided he and Irene couldn't afford it and build a new house at the same time. They chose to build the house and Don started work as a test driver at the GMH Proving Grounds at Lang Lang where he stayed for the next 16 years. He loved the work but the night shift finally got to him. During his time at GMH they purchased a 24 foot Cousta Boat for fishing charters on the bay. An old caravan was cut down to make a portable platform which was towed around by a tractor to get customers on and off the boat during high tides. It carried an aluminium dingy which was run up on the platform using a roller from an old wringer washing machine; nothing was wasted!

While Don was on leave and recovering from the effects of working night shifts at GMH, he was given the opportunity to buy Johnny Motton's Concrete truck and work for Donmix, which he did. He went back to GMH, gave his notice and spent the next 16 to 17 years in the concrete carting business. He sold the truck to Gary Blackney when he retired.

During his time on the bus, GMH and Donmix, Irene was busy giving birth to, and raising four strapping boys. Brian was born in 1954, Donald (Bud) in 1956, Ian in 1959 and a lot later, Mike in 1966. The boys used to help load and cart hay during summer.

Our Don Wheatley

The township of Grantville struggled to survive for many years but through the efforts of the Wheatleys and others, it is now a thriving seaside town with a bright future. Jimmy Smith, the Bootmaker (where the BP servo now stands), the Cumbridge's, Bob Bird from the bakery and a lot of others would be proud to see it.

There was very little traffic on the main road which was gravel, no public transport, just a service bus run. Grantville seemed to be too far away from Wonthaggi to get things done.

[Grantville's first State School, on Mr Brandwick's Crown Allotment 176b, was opened in February 1873, and was known as Deep Creek Non Vested Rural School No 120. The site was on the east side of the Bass Highway roughly halfway between Deep Creek and Swan Street. Seven days after opening, the teacher, Mr Brandwick, resigned, sold part of his selection to Mr Monk (the piece that included the school building), and left the district. Mr Monk was willing to have the school continue but the school's inspector found the building was unsuitable. New Rural School No 120 was built in the township on Crown Allotment No 9 (furthest from the pier?) and re-opened in January 1874 with the original 27 children. The Education Department took over the school shortly after, renamed it Grantville State School No 1414. Criticism of the state of the school was such that the school was closed and later re-opened in April 1876. A new building was constructed on the site and was occupied in August 1876. Declining attendances at State School No 1414 and the Queensferry School No 1707 in 1881 saw both schools replaced by a new combined school at the Stock Yard Reserve (near the entrance to the present tip) which opened as Grantville State School No 1414 in March 1883. Pressure to re-site the school resulted in the old building being moved to a new site, where the Transaction Centre now stands, and reopened in 1941. In 1966 the building was condemned and replaced with a modern portable building which opened on Friday, 29th March, 1968. This school was closed in 1980 and between 30 to 40 pupils transferred together with the "portable", to the new Bass Valley School on the Corinella Road. Source; "One Hundred Years of History" by Joseph White] Anderson Hill, which was still gravel in 1951, had trees meeting over the top of the highway.

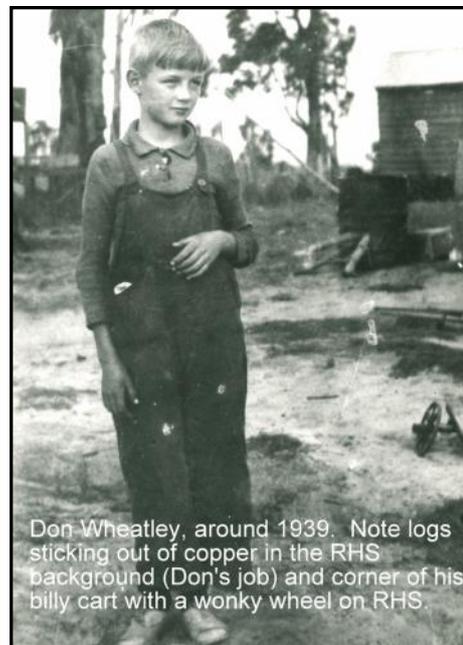
The drive-in theatre opened in Grantville around 1960 when Don and Irene's four boys were still young. It has been recently subdivided for housing. The Grantville Jetty fell into disrepair and needed to be either repaired or pulled down. Unbeknown to the residents, the publican of the Bass Hotel

organised a petition to have it pulled down and presented it to the Shire. As a result, the Public Works Department arrived one day, hooked up their powerful jacks and proceeded to pull it down. When the good townsfolk realised what was going on, it was too late! Don & Irene believe the publican wanted the people who used the Jetty for fishing to use Bass Landing instead, hopefully buying some refreshments from him along the way??

Subdivisions in the area included Pioneer Bay (£2000/block), Smiths Estate (Tommy Suckling's land), Grantville Heights, Coronet Bay and Tenby Point. Don recalls his dad being offered one of Tommy Suckling's piglets, free, to raise and use or sell. They picked out the one they wanted in the sty, Don hopped over and grabbed it, no worries. When mother pig heard one of her treasured piglets squealing, she raced out of the enclosure and took aim at Don. To this day he does not know how he cleared the fence in a single bound while still hanging on to his prize. He is not sure what became of it, but suspects it grew up and was sold.

Throughout most of his childhood and all his adult life, Don has lived in Grantville and worked in the local area, which is very unusual by any standard. Don's brother, Ted, tried egg farming, buying a new Fordson tractor for contract ploughing but finished up hiring it to the Country Roads Board (CRB) instead, share farming, building a house over the road from them, working at GMH (Lang Lang Proving Ground), SP Bookmaker, painting, building, then leaving Grantville for WA and purchasing an hotel. He sold it, wandered around for a bit, bought another pub in the WA wheat belt where he died, probably from overwork.

Compiled by Tony Hughes
24th January, 2014



Don Wheatley, around 1939. Note logs sticking out of copper in the RHS background (Don's job) and corner of his billy cart with a wonky wheel on RHS.

History of The Grantville Hall

Revised by Clive Budd



The Grantville Hall – The Mechanics Institute Hall

The first Hall Committee, led by the President, Mr John Thomas Paul acquired a piece of Crown land on the Bass Highway in the Grantville township for the purposes of building a Community hall. The location of this land is shown on the map on page 9 . An application was made to the Minister of Lands in the mid 1880's for a grant of a section of Crown land on which to build the Mechanics Institute.

The Minister, the Hon John Lamont Dow, President of the Board of Land and Works and Commissioner of Crown Lands and Survey in the Gillies Ministry of the Victorian Government, was approached. He was sympathetic and approved a Crown grant of half an acre of land on which the Institute (the old hall) used to stand. The site was exempted from occupation for business purposes and mining operations. Having secured the land from the Crown the Committee then decided to solicit subscriptions from the public and by this means the sum of £50 was raised. The Colonial Bank granted a loan of £150. Mr F A Nowell, a member of the Committee then offered to draw up the plans and specifications for the new hall. The Committee accepted this offer and then authorised the construction and erection of a wooden building as the Mechanics Institute in Grantville. This was in 1888. "The Mornington Country Herald" records that the Grantville Mechanics hall cost £230.

In 1891 the building was lined inside with pine board which was brought to Grantville

on Mr John Paul's ketch, the 'Clara' . In 1890 a pianoforte 'Becket' was bought for the hall.

'Mechanics Institute' is the organisation which built the Grantville Mechanics Hall in 1888. The organisation was formed in Victoria originally to improve the education of working men and to instruct them in their various trades, but later the aim was broadened and the institute became a popular agency of adult education. It started in London in 1824, NSW in 1826, and Melbourne in 1839. In the course of time, in spite of the provision in many cases of some government subsidy, the institutes found difficulty in paying their way, and many of them built billiard rooms to augment their income. They also began to cater for popular reading tastes by purchasing more works of fiction and eventually abandoned the idea of providing educational facilities for their members becoming merely a recreation hall, in which capacity they had a lot of use. They also built libraries in country areas. that still exist in many places, although libraries in modern times are organised by local government councils.

In 1939 The hall was used as a school for 3 months, until the school building was shifted to the town area. There was a library in the hall in the early days. The books were found stored under the stage when the renovations started in the 1950's. All the library books were taken to the tip.

"Mechanics' Institutes" provided the means for staging concerts, visiting shows and other entertainments where a stage was required or a dance floor was needed. Many are the stories told of the young people riding through the rough bush tracks for long distances to go to the dances. Some even walked from as far as Krowera and Woodleigh to attend a function at Grantville and after the dance was over they would walk home to start milking early in the morning. Sometimes when the track got too bad the brazier at the sawmill would lend a horse drawn timber trolley to take the dancers to the hall.



Grantville Hall History

In those early years the hall was used for fancy dress evenings, dances, card nights, flower shows, birthday parties, New Years eve gatherings, youth club, church services and many other purposes.

Lighting for the hall was acetylene.

Acetylene is an industrial gas used for welding and for preparing other chemical compounds. It was also used as a lighting fuel and it was very bright. Acetylene is synthesised from carbon and hydrogen using an electric arc.

In the years before World War II there was still no electricity available and other means had to be used for lighting and for heating.

The Grantville Hall has changed very much since 1950. The first photograph shows what the old hall was like in 1950.

In the early 1950's all of the windows were broken, the door was in a very bad condition, and all the paint had peeled off. The hall was in such a bad condition that it was necessary to place support poles on either side of the building to protect it from falling over !

In 1955 a lot of repair work was carried out. It was re-stumped, the floor was sanded and the stage was re-built. The newly renovated hall was opened on 1st April 1955 when George Wheatley's orchestra provided the music. A new floor was put in later in 1957.

The septic toilet system wasn't put in until about 1965. Before that people who wanted to use the toilet had to fight their way through the blackberries and scrub to a small building some distance down the block behind the hall. This small building had a wooden seat and a tin can - it was a real "fair dinkum Aussie dunny". The new toilet facilities were finally attached to the main hall building.

Other additions in the 1960's included the construction of the supper room / meeting room on the northern side of the hall. Another piano for the hall was bought from Miss Kennedy.

In its long history of more than 85 years the hall survived fire and flood, but in 1940 it was ordered to be demolished by the Department of Health. Funds were not

available to permit the Committee to carry out the necessary repairs at that time. By the strenuous efforts of the Secretary of the Committee, Mrs De Merlo, Committee and the local residents, a stay of execution of the demolition was obtained and eventually, as we've already seen, the necessary repairs were carried out.

The second photograph shows what the hall looked like in 1993; it shows some of the changes that were made. The position of the front entrance doorway has been changed to the side of the porch, and the windows at the front of the hall have been closed up. The painting has been done but it is very much in need of more attention. (see page 24)

The additions to the hall can be seen in the second photograph and the toilets and the other meeting room.

In the 1960's there was a growing need for extra facilities. The property on which the hall was built was 66 feet wide and 330 feet deep; the hall is close to the Bass Highway leaving a large area behind the hall which has remained empty over the years.

In the early 1970's the Committee suggested that the old hall be moved to the recreation reserve. The Shire Bass supported the application but the grant application was unsuccessful, because the cost of transporting and the subsequent renovation would have been nearly \$150,000, and it was felt that this amount of money would be better to be spent on a new hall on the recreation reserve Site.



The Grantville Mechanics Institute Hall in 1974, photograph from 10 Years of History, by Joseph White.

Grantville Hall History

The new hall was built in 1991 and opened in 1992 on the opposite side of the Bass Highway from the old hall. The new hall has adequate parking space around it and this is an advantage over the old hall which is close to the Bass Highway. The environment of the new hall is quite attractive. It is a modern brick building. Since then the new hall has been in use by all of the Grantville organisations. One of the last groups to move from the old to the new hall site was the monthly Sunday market.



Two days to remember

I'd like to pick out two functions in the old Grantville hall - a function from early years and a recent function.

The recent function I describe is Carols by Candlelight by Grantville Brownies and Guides in 1982. The leaders were Miss Marie Trewin and Mrs Pam Haigh. They decided to run a community evening and Brownies and Guides invited all the local groups to join in on their local night. The girls made a lot of posters advertising the night and at each meeting they practised their singing. Everyone was very enthusiastic and got very involved in the activity. Finally the day came and ten of the girls arrived to help decorate the old hall. They had been up to an old pine plantation at Bert Paul's and got a few Christmas trees, made paper chains and lanterns and brought along decorations and lights from home. After several hours of hard work, the hall was transformed into a magical Christmas scene with tinsel, balloons, fairy lights, trees, candles and pictures of Christmas scenes around the world. The seats were all put out in rows, the organ put in place and everything ready to go.

The Brownies' and Guides were to arrive at 7 pm but when the leaders arrived there were already people lined up at the door waiting to get in. Some of the Brownies went to the caravan park knocking on caravans inviting the holiday makers to join them. By 8 pm the hall was overflowing and the doors opened wide so that people outside could sit on their rugs

and join in. What a wonderful community spirit was in action and in full force - from babes in arms to a 90 year old grandmother who did a recital of "A Christmas Gift" for the audience. Everyone sang the carols on the program, then another hour was spent singing requests from young and old.

The old Grantville hall had come alive. Community spirit was not all dead or gone. The enthusiasm of a handful of young girls had been able to gather together about 180 people to help them celebrate the joy of Christmas and share in their fun and laughter without any cost but with a wonderful result.

The early function I would like to describe was "Grantville Flower Show". It was Wednesday, 26th November 1958. There was judgement of such competitions as cut flowers, pot plants, newer arrangements, needlework, childrens work, novelty section and hand crafts. The judges had to choose first and second prize. Some of them had to pay 6d for entry. The fair was very successful. There were many people even if it was on a Wednesday. Many, many people came to the flower show.

There is a local organisation named "Progress Association". It was started in 1953. They raise money for every project for Grantville. At that time, most of the money went to the Grantville hall. First members were Mr & Mrs D Lennie, Mr & Mrs H Bird, Mr & Mrs T Walker, Mr & Mrs A De Merlo, Mr & Mrs Perrin, Mrs I Smith and Mr H Geyer.



The Grantville hall committee enjoyed the official opening of the new kitchen and store room with a breakfast held on Australia Day morning. From left: Don Wheatley, Irene Wheatley, Janice Hughes, Pat Van, Les Peters, Bill Blackmore, and Dorothy Roach.

Grantville community celebrates its hall

Close to 100 people attended breakfast and the official opening of the Grantville Community Hall extensions on Australia Day.

The hall committee received a \$33,000 federation grant to extend the kitchen area, and the end result is impressive... a spacious and modern kitchen and store room with ample room. The committee applied for \$36,000, with the Grantville Market Committee making up the \$3,000 shortfall. The market committee also financed the hall's new verandahs. Friday marked the culmination of a local community effort, and in particular the efforts of the committee's secretary, Pat Van, who put in countless hours preparing the submission. The hall is used every day by a variety of groups including the senior citizens, guides, the tennis club and the CWA. It is also now an appropriate disaster centre, with adequate kitchen facilities. And the Grantville community won't be lying idle... there are already plans to extend the hall, to allow functions to cater for more than 100 people. Federal Member for Flinders, Peter Reith, officiated at Friday's ceremony, which was attended by Member for South Eastern Province, Ken Smith, and Bass Coast Shire councillor, John Hulley.

A collection of photos of the old hall, taken by Jan Walker, on 24 April 1995 just days before it was demolished.



End of an era.
The old hall was demolished on 29 April 1995.



19-4-88

Guests arrive at the Grantville hall, welcomed by Peter Taylor and Luke Anthony -- of Phillip Island -- in military costume. Bass shire president, Cr. Bruce Campbell and his wife Sheila are pictured being greeted.

Grantville hall: centenary night

The old Grantville hall came to life on Saturday night, its centenary.

More than 200 guests packed into the facility and huge marquee to celebrate the event.

They included Bass councillors Bruce Campbell, Bert Paul and Barry Webster, and shire manager Gordon Harland.

Most were in period costume.

An organising committee had planned the grand night for several months.

The response was described as 'superb'.

A local band, led by Alan Chatfield, provided the music, while San Remo's Alan Knox was the MC.

Mark Bryce greeted guests, formally announcing them after blowing a loud trumpet.

Top jugglers, Mark and Angela Ramon, displayed their skills during the night.

The duo was formerly with an international circus.

The hall's basic structure is the same as when built, although there have been several facelifts.

Cr. Paul's grandfather was chairman of the first hall committee.

Festivities raged until the early morning hours, with guests reluctant to leave.

Peter Giles, one of the main organisers, was overwhelmed by the response.

He said: "It was absolutely marvellous."

"We couldn't have hoped for anything better and thanks to the community for its effort."

"Wouldn't it be nice to be here at the bi-centenary bash."

Peter and a hardy crew cleaned the hall on Sunday afternoon, after again toasting its special birthday.

Grantville Hall History

Some of the material for this story was sourced from an outstanding publication, *A History of the Grantville Hall*, written in 1993 by Newhaven College exchange student, Minori Tani.

Minori came from the suburb of Senba, Mito, Japan and returned to Japan in December 1993.

During her year in Victoria, her hosts were Doug and Pam Haigh in Grantville.

We would love to hear of any follow up on Minori.



Minori Tani

The Waterline News

Great reaction to the history segment in the June edition of The Waterline News. Weston Langford's front cover photo of the rail motor crossing the Trestle Bridge at Kilcunda, and the information in the Page 28 story on the available videos was well received.

Don't forget all previous editions of The Waterline News are available on their website www.waterlinenews.com.au

The website also has a search facility which allows you to look for particular stories published over the past four years. If you have any queries? Email: editor@waterlinenews.com.au or send a query on the website.

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End of an era

Kilcunda 1977

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Historical Snippets - An interesting collection from Geoff Guilfoyle.

South Bourke and Mornington Journal (Richmond, Vic. : 1877 - 1920, 1926 - 1927) / Wed 2 Jan 1901 / Page 2 / GRANTVILLE

GRANTVILLE.

The Grantville Social Cinderella Club held its final dance for 1900 on Friday night last, the function taking the form of a grand ball and supper, in the Mechanics' Institute. The attendance was not so good as was anticipated, which made it more enjoyable for dancing, but which is to be deplored from a financial aspect. The floor was in excellent order, and the music, supplied by various performers was good, and to say the same of an excellent supper laid out by Mr. Hade is only giving that gentleman his due. Dancing was kept up until a late, or, rather, early hour, and all present seemed to enjoy themselves thoroughly.

The Argus (Melbourne, Vic. : 1848 - 1957) / Fri 10 Feb 1905 / Page 3 / PRINTED BY A FALLEN TREE

PINNED BY A FALLEN TREE.

LANG LANG, Thursday.—A painful accident happened at Glen Forbes on Saturday to a labourer named William Hunt, who was in the employ of Mr. George Eden. Hunt had just felled a large tree, which rebounded, striking him on the right instep, and pinning the lower portion of his leg against a log. Being unable to free himself, the injured man remained in agony for six hours. At sunset he appears to have made up his mind to adopt the desperate expedient of amputating the foot, and he had made the first incision with his axe when help arrived. He was carried home to Queensberry, and afterwards removed to the Alfred Hospital.

South Bourke and Mornington Journal (Richmond, Vic. : 1877 - 1920, 1926 - 1927) / Wed 11 Mar 1885 / Page 3 / QUEENSFERRY

QUEENSFERRY.

From our own Correspondent.

A rifle match was fired at the Grantville butta, seven men aside, between the Fernhill and Grantville clubs on Wednesday, 4th March. The day was very bad for marksmen, heavy rain falling in the forenoon, and it blew hard, all day.—The ranges were 200, 300, 400, and 500 yards, five shots at each, the losing team to pay for a dinner to their opponents. The match was a very close one, resulting in a win for Grantville by nine points. The following are the total scores:—Grantville, 176; Fernhill, 167. The dinner was held at the Grantville hotel, where all the riflemen made bulls-eyes with the good things provided by host Moore. Now the matches are started no doubt there will be plenty of them, which will give the members good practice, which may be useful, as they may be wanted to guard our shores before long.

Mornington Standard (Vic. : 1889 - 1908) / Thu 15 Aug 1901 / Page 3 / Grantville

Grantville.

(From Our Own Correspondent.)

Captain Ham received a great reception here on Friday evening. He had been asked by a committee of management to be present at a "Welcome Home" given by the residents of the Bass and Grantville districts by Troopers Milne and Moore, returned soldiers. During the evening he presented a gold chain and locket to each soldier, on behalf of the residents, the lockets were suitably inscribed, and the chains were very massive and valuable. All the returned men gave some of their experiences, which were received and listened to by the large audience with great interest and Captain Ham was made to promise that he would return and give the residents a lecture on experiences in South Africa. It is doubtful if there was ever such a large attendance before at the local hall, as a very large number could not gain admittance at all. The Rev. Potter of San Remo occupied the chair and made some stirring remarks. The proceeds of the entertainment are to be given to Mrs. Hyatt, whose husband recently died. The proceedings wound up with a very enjoyable dance which lasted until daylight.

The Argus (Melbourne, Vic. : 1848 - 1957) / Wed 30 Jun 1915 / Page 12 / KITCHEN AND PANTRY

KITCHEN AND PANTRY.

FAGGOTS.

"M.J.P." (Grantville) sends the recipe for "Faggots" which was asked for. "Boil a young pig's liver still tender. Let it cool, then mince it fine. Add salt, pepper, thyme, and any flavouring liked. Then add enough oatmeal to bind it. If too dry, add a little stock. Mix well together and shape into balls. Pack closely in a baking tin, cover with lambs' or pigs' suet, and bake until nicely browned."

The Argus (Melbourne, Vic. : 1848 - 1957) / Wed 20 Apr 1938 / Page 9 / "BACK TO GRANTVILLE"

Base Hospital.

"BACK TO GRANTVILLE"

ALMURTA, Tuesday. — The "Back to Grantville" celebrations and 50th anniversary of the Mechanics' Institute were celebrated in the institute hall last night. About 200 people took part in dancing and games.

Councillor John Price Jones opened the proceedings, and Mr. Lang presided. The secretary was Mr. Parks.

The forgotten whalers

The female convict story

A tale of two soldiers

Irish famine orphans

Deciphering disease

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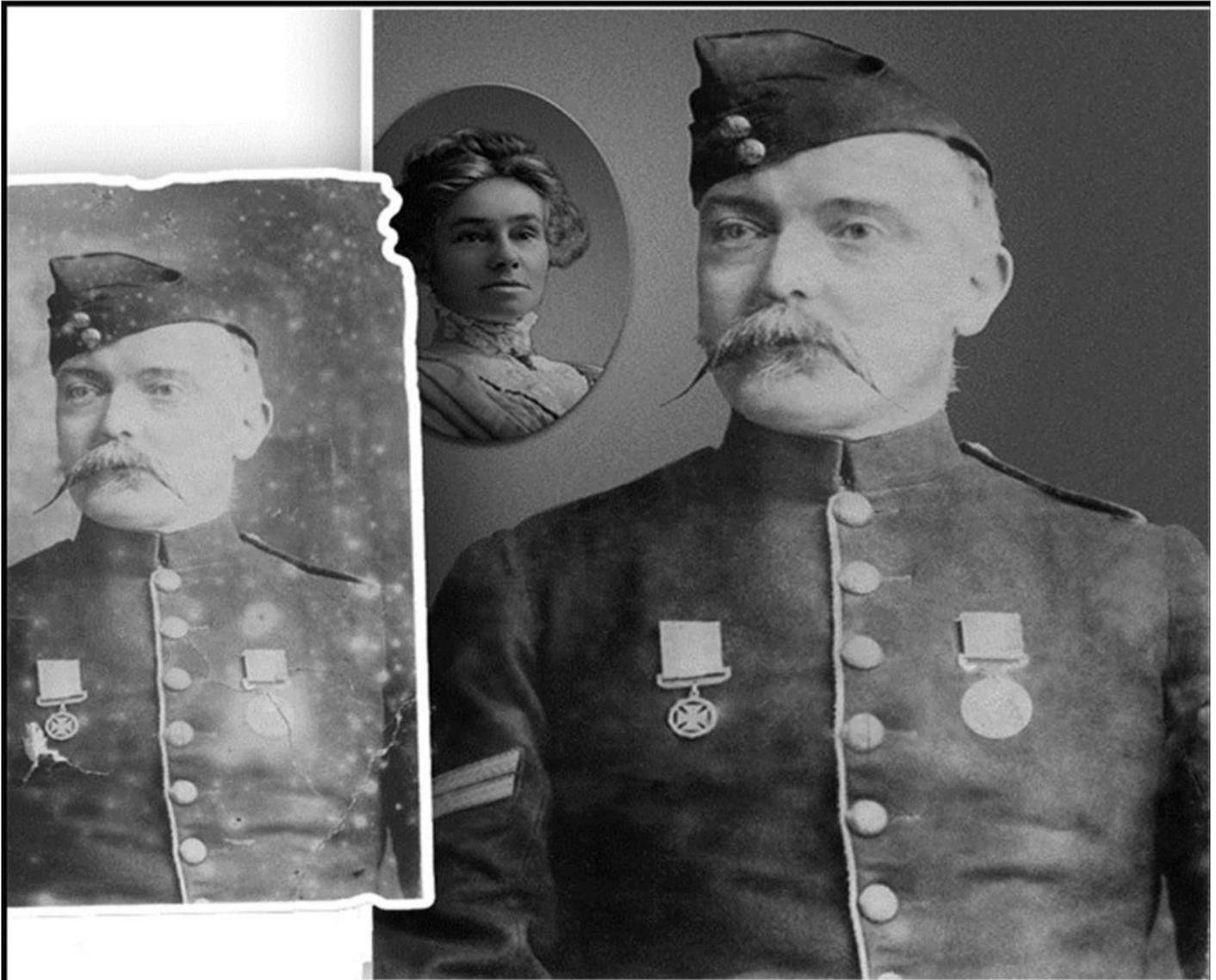


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