

Whittlesea Historical Society Inc.

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Covering news & history of the City of Whittlesea, outer northern suburbs of Melbourne

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President's Report

Welcome to a new year, one which promises some exciting activities for WHS members. Our major focus for the year will be to collaborate with the developer of the old Post Office site in Church St, Whittlesea. The 1926 post office building still exists in the corner of this site, and WHS is keen to see it preserved for the future, and maybe used for community purposes.

The year started early for us, with a fundraising event being held at the Rotary Tram Café at Diamond Creek on the 6th of January. Many thanks to those members who volunteered their time, and earned some great funds for WHS. Thanks also to those who visited us there and supported us.

You may have noticed some changes to the WHS website and Facebook page. Several members of the group have been working to update and reinvigorate these online platforms. If you are a Facebook enthusiast, please check out our active and informative page, which has already brought in several research enquiries, and several new members for WHS. The website now has much extra information available, including a members-only section. There are links to other history groups, research links, and information about the WHS collection. We appreciate those members who are spending much time in giving these sites a great new look.

WHS sub-committees are now being formed, and you are encouraged to share your knowledge and skills by joining one of these teams: IT/Media/Publicity, Fundraising and Events, Collections, Research, Education, Publications, and Grants. Team Leaders are listed on the website so that you can contact them personally.

While you are checking out the website, have a look for events coming up. There will be two great events in March, one organized by the Friends of Tourourong in which we'll be taking part, and a bus tour organized by WHS on the 17th March (already fully booked). Check for details under "Events", and put the dates in your calendar. Planning is already under way for some excellent speakers for the May general meeting and for an event in June. Keep an eye out for our latest activities, and we hope to see you on the 24th of March at the Yan Yean Reservoir.

Barbara Miller, WHS President.

New WHS Members

Whittlesea Historical Society would like to welcome Ian Berick, Bernie Coulthard, Wayne Coulthard, Lindsay Jolley, Elaine Miller, Glen Davis, Geoff Miller, Danielle Nebel and Tamara Slabon as our newest members. We look forward to your contribution towards the society.


Recent & Future Events

Tram Café, Diamond Creek



A huge thank you to Barbara Miller, Albert Miller and Virginia Greenwood for helping at the Tram Café in Diamond Creek back in early January.

The location of the Tram Café is within a beautiful natural linear park in Diamond Creek, with an amazing adventure playground and an off-leash dog park. Many thanks to Matt Christie for initiating this fundraiser. This is a fun and easy way to raise funds for WHS, and members are encouraged to volunteer. It's only four times a year!



Come and see our displays and activities at the 170th year celebration of the Yan Yean Reservoir.

We also specialise in family histories for the City of Whittlesea region.

Bring your memories and talk to our skilled helpers.

24th March 11:00 - 3:00pm
Yan Yean Reservoir
Recreation Road, Yan Yean

www.facebook.com/whittleseahistoricalsociety
www.instagram.com/whittleseahistoricalsociety
www.youtube.com/@WHS3757

Gilbert Marsahl – by Barbara Miller

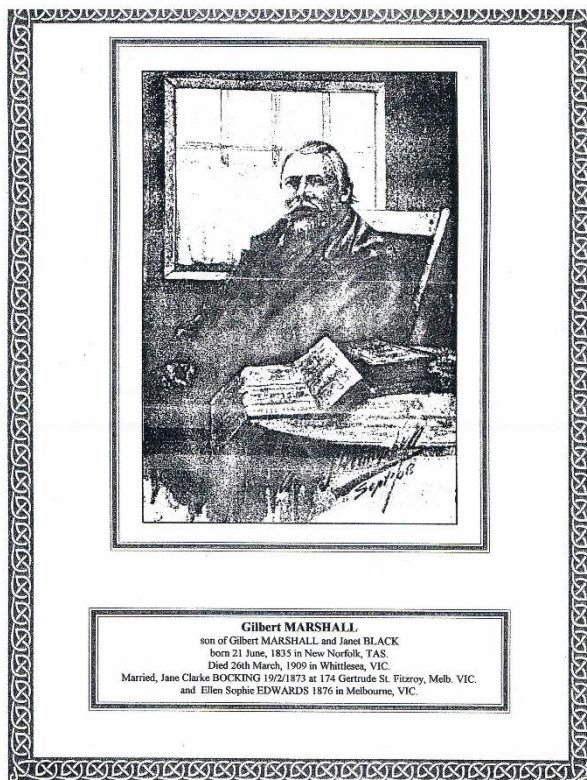
An interesting character of the Whittlesea district in the very early days of settlement was Gilbert Marshall. He was born in Van Diemen's Land in 1836, the child of two convicts. His family came to Victoria in 1837 on the schooner Enterprize with John Pascoe Fawkner, who was Gilbert's godfather.

In 1842, the Marshall family moved to Whittlesea. As a young man, Gilbert worked as a bullock driver and a stock rider between Euroa and Sydney for three years. Finally he settled in the Whittlesea district, and worked for himself, buying three bullock teams. He was a competent bushman and a renowned horseman. He was also a farmer, the licensee of the Carrier's Arms hotel, and a Whittlesea Shire councillor for twelve years.

In 1873, Gilbert married Jane Clark Bocking, with whom he had already had five children. Jane died a year later, and Gilbert married Ellen Sophia Edwards in 1876. They had seven children, although only two lived to adulthood. Ellen died in 1926, and is buried with Gilbert and their family in the Yan Yean cemetery, where their gravestones still exist.

When the Melbourne Water Supply Board was seeking an extra source of fresh water for the Yan Yean Reservoir in the early 1880s, consideration was given to bringing water from the King Parrot Creek. This source, however, would have involved great cost due to fifteen kilometres of hard rock that would have required tunnelling through. Gilbert Marshall led a group of surveyors to the Wallaby Creek, which was found to be able to supply sufficient clean water at a cheaper cost, and provided a more effective solution. For his efforts, Gilbert Marshall was awarded the sum of two hundred pounds. The implementation of the new water scheme involved the construction of the Tourourong Reservoir, as well as many kilometres of aqueducts. The construction camp for the huge workforce was named Marshall Town, presumably in honour of Gilbert Marshall.

The water system established by the MMBW was essential for the health and development of Melbourne as a city, and Gilbert Marshall was an important cog in the wheel of the Wallaby Creek and Tourourong section of the project. The aqueduct and water pipes from this system still cut through the City of Whittlesea, with the bluestone channels and water towers showing the path along which the lifeblood of Melbourne flowed. On the 24th of March at Yan Yean Reservoir, the Friends of Tourourong are celebrating the 170th anniversary of the turning of the sod at Yan Yean by Governor LaTrobe. Whittlesea Historical Society will be in attendance, and we would welcome you to share your stories of local history with us at this event.



From B & W Photocopy; from newspaper article in Leader Newspaper article November 14, 1908 - Design Kaye BREWER

IT'S A BAD WORLD

Sunday Games for Wallan

WALLAN, Tuesday.—Some Whittlesea councillors are shocked because young fellows play cricket in Whittlesea Park on Sundays.

At last council meeting a motion seeking to stop the playing of games on Sundays was defeated.

The majority said that if such a motion were passed they would be the laughing stock of the country. If the games were stopped in the park, they would be played on the roads, and that would be worse.

100 Years Ago!

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1922

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CONTINENTAL FRANKFURTS 500g 50	PHILADELPHIA EASDAI CHEESE 250g 89¢	ESKAL HORSE RADISH 340g 177
360 375g	410 .680kg	ESKAL FROZEN CHICKEN . . . 6 th CHEESE 1kg 2 nd APPLE JUICE 1 st

COLES
NEW WORLD

1982

REMINISCENCES by Cr. Walter Thomas (1844 – 1932)

My thoughts carry me back to my boyhood days, when I was initiated into that delightful bullock driving. I fancy some of your readers will smile at the idea. Well, let them smile. My father owned a farm which he let to two young men starting in life, and there was a considerable, quantity of cultivation land which was ploughed by bullocks. I was lent to my parent's tenants to help them on the first year, and my job was to drive the bullocks in the plough. It took me to drive the bullocks and a farm hard, now dead many years, to do the ploughing. The process was slow, but the hard ground was effectively moved by the bullocks, and a fine crop was the result, then outcome being, as far as I was concerned, a qualified bullock driver, but I did not get a certificate for it.

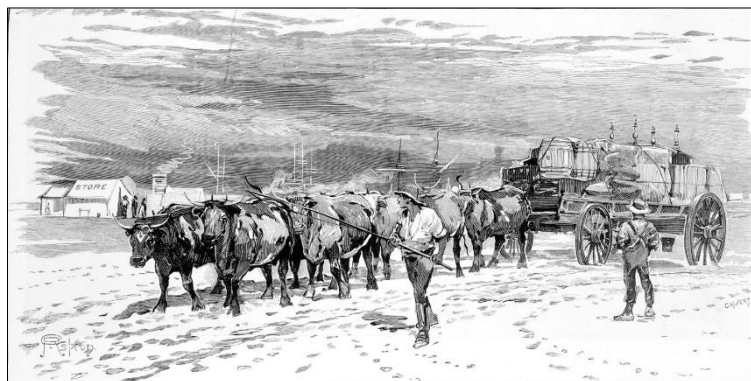
Well, later in life I had more to do with the now despised bullocks as a means of transport. In the early sixties it was no uncommon sight to see a string of bullock teams, each team consisting of from eight to twelve bullocks, coming over the Plenty Mountains loaded with wool, and occasionally wattle bark. The roads in those days were something dreadful to travel on, but the bullocks always brought their loads home.

If one team did not do it, two would, and there was a free masonry among the carriers that they always helped one another when in difficulties. Another factor in those days was a small expense of bullocks in carrying. The country being open, when the day's work ended the bullocks were simply turned out and got in in the morning and another day's stage travelled. True, it was slow travelling, but many a man laid the foundation of a fortune with his bullock teams.

I grant it was a primitive method of transport, but it was, if slow, an effectual one, and I venture to say now that I have seen carriers with loads of wool pulling their loads out of glue pots that the motor lorries could not face. We all know we much go with the times, as our friend, Mr. Clapp, finds to his cost in his competition with motors, and as surely as the railways superseded the bullock and horse teams, so will the motors, from their flexibility, affect the railways.

Hysterical legislation bolstering up the railways notwithstanding, we must advance, and by every possible means keep pace with the times. Otherwise we will go back in the freight for our products. I have some friends in the Western District who for many years have been fighting for railway construction, but who, to my surprise, don't now seem to be troubled about. They tell me that they prefer their motor lorries to the train to take their wool and products to the port where they dispose of them, as when they lost time to deliver their produce to the railways, and had again to pay at the other end, they were money in pocket by marketing with their lorries.

No doubt railways are in many cases very valuable means of transport, but as time rolls on it will be more and more found out that motors are equally as, if not more, valuable.



Plenty Gorge Walk, South Morang

The landscape of this wonderful walk allows the walker to imagine what life was like for the Wurundjeri people prior to European settlement. The gorge and surrounding landscape provided food, medicines, shelter and fresh water.

The walk starts and ends at the Red Gum Picnic Area off Gordons Road (near the public toilets).

From the car park take the paved road east through the barriers. You will pass two small ponds on your left before reaching a junction. Turn left here. A wide pathway now passes through open grassland. At the next junction turn left, off this wide path, into more diverse bushland.

Turn left at the next junction, heading north into the heart of the parklands. At the next junction there is a signpost, follow the orange arrow to the right (Morang Wetlands Walk). The bushland along the route is a feast for the senses. There is a real sense of leaving the city behind.

At the next junction there is a 'Ridge Track' sign pointing to the right - follow this track now. The landscape opens up to a wide variety of grasses and sedges. The path now circles around the lake which supports a thriving population of local bird life. At the next junction continue on straight. However, if you would rather avoid the small footbridge on this next section of the walk, you can turn left here. You will soon meet the path you were on earlier. Retrace your steps back to the car park.

If you are continuing straight on, the path now winds around some more beautiful wetlands. Take care when crossing the small foot bridge. It's only two steps long, but it is narrow. The path now returns to the 'Morang Wetlands Walk' sign. From here, turn right and return to the car park the way you came.



Photography by Karen Wilson

<https://walkingmaps.com.au/walk/445>



Facilities: At the start of the walk there is a car park, toilet block and picnic tables with a large open area for fun and games.

Access by train/bus: Take the train to South Morang Station. From the station take bus route 562 towards Humevale and get off at the Gordons Road/Plenty Road stop (10 mins from station). It is 100m from here to the start of the walk.

By Car: The Red Gum Picnic Area is only 20km north of Melbourne CBD. From the Western Ring Road, take the Plenty Road north to Gordons Road. Turn right here. The park entrance is 100m on the left.

Thomastown's 19th Century Irish Families – by Rob Wuchatsch

The Germans and Wends who settled at Westgarthtown in 1850 were one of four different groups to settle at Thomastown during the 19th Century. The other nationalities represented at Thomastown were the English, Scottish and Irish.

Thomastown's most prominent Irish settlers were the Devine, Larmer, Lewis, Mahoney, McCoy and Perry families. The focal point for Irish Catholics at Thomastown was McCoy's Belmont Hotel. Edward Perry, the Wesleyan school teacher and postmaster, was the only Protestant Irishman.

Thomastown's Catholics worshipped at St Francis Church in Melbourne until the early 1850s. From 1853, they could attend the new timber Catholic school and chapel at Epping, then from 1855 St Paul's Church at Pentridge (Coburg), before St Peters Church at Epping opened in 1867. Both Peter McCoy and his daughter Frances were married at St Pauls in 1858. Most of Thomastown's 19th Century Catholics are buried in the Melbourne General Cemetery at Carlton.

Peter Devine, Peter McCoy Sr and Peter McCoy Jr served as members of the Epping District Roads Board and Peter McCoy Jr., Michael Larmer and James Lewis Jr. served on its successor, the Shire of Darebin.

Devine

On 17 April 1855 Peter McCoy, who owned 144 acres in Section 22, Parish of Keelbundora, was granted a licence for the 'Belmont Hotel, Dry Creek.' By April 1856, however, John Devine had taken over as licensee and continued to operate the hotel with his wife Catherine until 1866. Devine had arrived in Australia aged 19 from County Antrim with the McCoy family aboard the *Manlius* in 1842 and was related by marriage. Peter had married Catherine Suffern in Melbourne in 1850.

Devine and McCoy were members of the Epping District Roads Board which held its meetings at the Belmont Hotel for many years. In 1866 Devine, who owned property at Thomastown and Woodstock, relinquished the hotel's licence and moved to Merriang. He died at Bendigo in 1874 aged 52. Catherine died at their son Peter's home at Williamstown in 1891 aged 72 and was buried with John in the Melbourne General Cemetery.

Larmer

Michael Larmer succeeded John Devine as licensee of the Belmont Hotel in 1866 and remained there until his death in 1881, aged 35. Larmer, also from County Antrim, married Frances Suffern in Melbourne in 1865 so was related by marriage to the McCoy and Devine families. It is not known when Michael arrived in Australia but Frances arrived in 1853 on the *Marco Polo* with her parents James and Sarah Suffern and brother Thomas.

Like Devine and McCoy, Michael Larmer was interested in municipal affairs and served as a councillor for the Shire of Darebin during the 1870s. Both Michael and Frances, who died in 1882 aged 37, are buried in the Melbourne General Cemetery. Their six surviving children were raised at Thomastown by Peter McCoy Jr.

The continuation of this article can be found on the WHS Website.