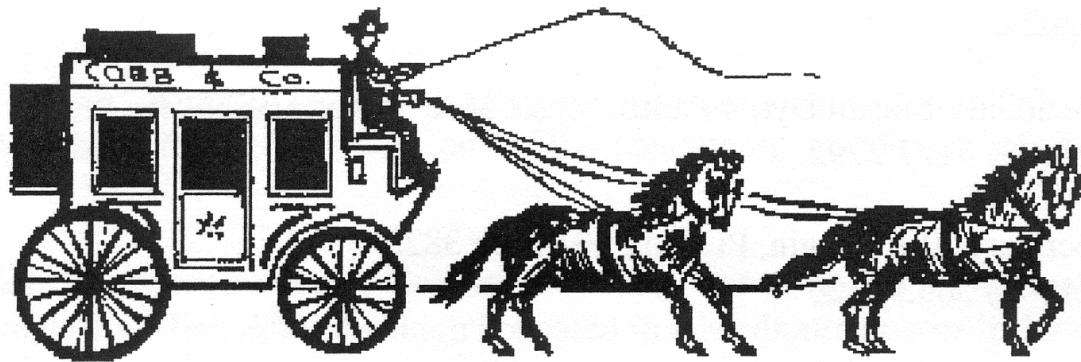


COACH NEWS



MOE & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC

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MOE AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC. QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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There is now a link in our web site to the Royal Historical Society where members can access our catalogue of resources. So far 456 items are on the catalogue with many more to come.

Meetings and Activities

At Society Rooms 2 High Street Moe, on the fourth Tuesday of the month, from February to November. Club Rooms are open 7.30pm, MEETING at 8.00pm. During December and January the Historical Society is in recess.

Index

Article	Page
Editorial	3
Discovering Moe & Gippsland in the 1960's	4
The Great Flood – 1934 – extracts from the Advocate	7
Flooding of Latrobe River – 1934 – SEC Log	15
Middleton & Manings Gippsland Directory – Westbury	19
Mail Bag	19

Editorial

Following on from the story by Martin Mohr in our last edition we bring you another article about arriving in Moe as a migrant. Hans and Annelise came to Moe in the 60's and quickly made it their home. These stories tell us of the journey migrants made as they left their home country and established themselves in Australia. They make for wonderful reading and we hope to bring you further articles in coming editions. If you know of anyone who would talk or write about his or her experiences please let us know.

This is followed by extracts from the Narracan Shire Advocate of December 1934 on the Great Flood. It is 70 years since this amazing event took place - an event hard to comprehend today after so many years of dry weather. Perhaps, with all the flood mitigation works that have taken place since, it might even be an event that will not happen again. Many local identities are mentioned which adds to the colour of the article.

We also have from our archives a log of communications through the Yallourn SEC communication centre which illustrates the rapid development of events and the urgency of action to deal with the many problems that emerged. We have Bill Adams, our Treasurer, to thank for this material.

The last of the Gippsland Directory articles is on Westbury. The small number of entries shows how, despite being an early settlement, the development of the Moe district had already surged ahead elsewhere. We would appreciate anyone being able to tell us what a 'pressman' would be in 1885/86. We doubt that in the local population there would be two people working on the local newspaper.

In Mail Bag we have a letter of thanks from Kath Ringin. Despite her 'auspicious entry' to the rooms for the September meeting a wonderful celebration was held for Kath, Florence and May who have reached the grand age of 90.

Due to lack of space we have left out 'From Our Collection'.

As we look forward to the festive season, the Coach News extends best wishes to all our members and friends for a very happy Christmas and a healthy, prosperous and safe New Year.

Bundilla Picnic

All members are invited to the annual family picnic day at Andy and Kath's Coalville property on the **16th January**. From 10.30am all day barbeque; tea, coffee, milk, boiling urn provided and shelter available. BYO picnic table and chairs.

Discovering Moe and Gippsland in the 1960's

By Hans Faubel

When my wife Annelies and I decided to migrate from Stuttgart in Germany to Australia in 1959, we never anticipated to finally settle in Moe. We left Germany at the port of Bremerhaven with the 12,000 ton Italian liner the Castel Felice on Christmas Eve 1959 and landed at Princes Pier in Melbourne on the 26th January 1960 on Australia Day.

The 26th of January 1960 was a very hot summer day. Having left Germany during the middle of winter, Anneliese's fur coat and my heavy leather coat were

not necessarily the most suitable dress. But this was compensated for by two navy ships anchored at the other side of the pier and a navy band playing lovely tunes. But it took us not long to find out that this had not been arranged to welcome us but to farewell the Governor General who was sailing back to the Mother Country the same day.

Before migrating to Australia I had, as a civil engineer, been in charge of maintenance, reconstruction and extension of a 150 km track section of the Stuttgart Tramway Board. During the preparation of our migration to Australia I had become aware of the, in my opinion, discriminating restriction of recognition of overseas professional qualifications. This did not influence our decision to migrate to Australia. I realized that I had to approach my professional engagement in a different way, namely based on experience and a bit of luck as well.

The Tramway Board of Melbourne had become aware of my existence. They tried for quite some time to encourage me to join their service whilst I was sweating it out as a process worker during the first three months with £16 wages in a small factory at Footscray.

I was interested to work at the Snowy Mountains Scheme and managed through a letter to the Commonwealth Government to get a job with their road design section.

Working in Cooma – Geehi and Khancoban I was allocated a commission house at Cooma and my family of four, who had been surviving at St Albans, did join me.

I enjoyed working with the SMA very much. But this chapter of my life would fill many pages on its own.

Annelies and I felt so confident with our life in Australia that we decided to have another child – a baby girl was born in August 1963. Unfortunately this little baby needed a lot of medical attention. Caring for the advanced education for our other three children was also a big task in front of us whilst living in Cooma.

For that reason I was looking for an alternative job and found one with the SEC in Yallourn as a draughtsman with Coal Production in October 1963.

After two weeks we were allocated my present residence, 40 Lincoln Street in Moe.



Hans & Annelise 1990's

The whole family settled in well. Unfortunately our little baby's health deteriorated and she passed away in February 1964.

I still remember the funeral at the Moe Cemetery and the support given by early contacts we had made. Special credit has to go here to John Leckey. He did not only arrange a grave site and service for us but cared in many other ways. It was interesting to find out that his sister and her husband, Alec Bacon, were living in Cooma and we had been in contact with the Bacons through shared friends.

The period of settling in was helped by local trips to pretty places recommended by Lionel and Joan Chewe, a treasured couple I am still sharing company with after more than 40 years.

Matthias, our eldest son, was 12 years old when we came to Moe. He had, on my suggestion, joined the Boy Scouts at Cooma and naturally wanted to continue with scouting at Moe. He joined Second Moe. It took only a couple of weeks until I became engaged in a working bee painting the scout hall.

I was elected secretary of 2nd Moe Group Committee after some time and am still remembered by former scouts and others for organizing a model train show as a fund raiser.

Remembering my involvement in scouting brings back memories of one outstanding Moe citizen, the late Russ Savage who had been the District commissioner. He was, in my opinion, a true representative and member of an early Moe pioneer family with all their qualities and contributions to the development of the Latrobe Valley. This would also apply to Jim Balfour, the local Member of Parliament at that time.

Having moved into 40 Lincoln Street, we soon began to cultivate our block by hand digging the shallow top soil, building many cubic metres of rock walls to balance the slope and laying out our front and back yard.

Turning over the top soil was a mammoth task and luckily a Mr Teicher was working in our area with his back hoe. He offered to take on the job but I am certain that he did not get rich with the £20 Australian he had quoted. All of our improvement jobs benefited from the Purvis Hardware Department, the Saxton Mills, Walker and Bennie and others. By the end of 1963 more houses were constructed in our section of Lincoln Street. This tempted Stephan, by then five years old, to go on exploring trips on those construction sites. It didn't take long before he finished in one of the holes excavated for new power poles, rescuing him became a big task.

The Hunter Reserve, only a couple of hundred yards from our corner, became the ideal adventure area for the children. Annelies and I took also advantage of this pleasant nature reserve for many long walks to stay fit.

We were always fortunate to have good neighbours where ever we lived. This does even include the crocodile and the pet snakes of Syd Cook.

Settling in Cooma we had become members of the Snowy Film Society. Naturally coming to Moe we joined the Moe Film Society well run by the Drummond Family and James Bishop, the son of the High School Head Master.

Whilst Matthias started schooling at Moe High, Andrea and Stephan had the privilege of Mr Mannes as Headmaster of Moe South Street State School. He was another one of those dedicated individuals developing Australia into what it is today.

Andrea and Stephan continued schooling at Moe High when they finished primary school. Andrea matriculated as Dux, winning the Purvis Bursary.

All our three surviving children continued their education, with a state school background, at Melbourne University and a couple even added post graduate studies overseas. All three advanced mainly under their own steam or the benefit of student and cadetships.

On the 7th May 1965 we became Citizens of Australia at the new City Offices. We tried very hard to become active members of our new community and looked around for worthwhile involvements.

A notice in the local paper by the Moe and District Historical Society invited people to attend a meeting with a local historical topic. Annelies and I went along and felt encouraged to join the local historians. We gained a lot, learning many details about the city and district we had accepted as our new home. And we can also take some credit for contributions we made. Annelies was the editor of the Historical Magazine Coach News for 25 years until she passed away in May 1999.

I dug up a lot of details about the Moe Swamp and found more about Brunton's bridge near Walhalla and finally became heavily engaged with the history of Sir John Monash in regard to the development of the Yallourn Open Cut.

My Monash research led even to a very active involvement with the seminar group at the Australian Jewish Museum in Melbourne, lasting now for many years.

Always interested in railways; I also found out that the line from Moe to Thorpdale was one of the most expensive lines per mile during the period of extensions, more than one hundred years ago.

I would also never hesitate traveling by train to Melbourne and to the amusement of Annelies, showing off to fellow travelers with my knowledge that there existed still a coach connection between Bunyip and Morwell when the line from Melbourne to Sale was constructed. The rail section through the Moe Swamp area was a mighty engineering task.

Researching local history was assisted by a midget Grundig tape recorder we had brought with us to Australia. Recording oral history brought us in contact with many very interesting friendly people and local identities.

The most rewarding fringe benefit naturally was the contact and friendship with such outstanding characters as Andy and Kath Ringin, Bill Furnell, Fred Strong, Reg Stephens, Zac Williams and many others.

Shopping in Moe was at the time we arrived here still dominated by quite a considerable number of local family shops. The Purvis empire, a small Coles outlet in George Street, half a dozen butchers like the Moores and Wagners, Paull's range of merchandise, two newsagents, a couple of chemists and many others come to mind. There was no K Mart or mighty supermarkets and sugar was not necessarily sold pre packed.

Medical service was taken care of by a small health centre in the compound opposite the Town Hall. For hospital treatment one had to go to the still existing Yallourn Hospital.

This service was very much appreciated when Annelies finished window cleaning with a complicated compound fracture of her leg two days before Christmas. I still feel grateful about the most skilful service provided by the late Mr Birks. He fixed her so well that she had no trouble traveling on a shoe string budget three and a half times around the world. Trips to Melbourne became more important to us after the children started their university courses.

Traveling by car took between three to four hours before the freeway was constructed. I felt always amused by the similarity of the winding sections through Trafalgar and Yarragon. They looked very much identical.

Traveling by train included a stop at Warragul with a cup of tea and a sandwich if so desired. In winter months they threw warm water containers into the carriage because the local trains had no heating arrangements 40 years ago.

Compiling the memories of our early stages of settlement in Australia as presented is naturally only a very selective and condensed story.

Hopefully it is still conveying that we went through a colourful and rewarding experience. This has been enriched further after the coal dust and the smell of the paper mill became history too.

To supplement the story Matthias, Andrea, and Stephan will add a brief chapter in a later edition on how they remember their early years in Moe.

THE GREAT FLOOD

Seventy years ago this December an event took place in Moe that was to be vividly remembered by all who experienced it. In a very short time and after extraordinary rainfalls, the local rivers flooded. Remarkably, no one in the local area was drowned. However, the Melbourne Herald reported on December 3rd that the floodwaters in and around Melbourne and East Gippsland had caused the death of 34 people. There were 6000 homeless in Melbourne. Food supplies at Dandenong were running out. Locally this is the story as told by The Advocate.

The Advocate

Friday December 7 1934

THE GREAT FLOOD

On Saturday afternoon when removing by hand the grass and debris from behind the spare wheel on Mr H Robinson's car, which had been four feet under water during the morning, Mr H Martin was surprised to see that he had deposited, with the grass on the road, a snake about a foot long. It was promptly dispatched.

A young snake, a lizard and a frog, as well as a large amount of silt were removed from the home of Mr and Mrs B Howard Beck, after the floodwaters had receded.

Included in the most treasured possessions of Mrs D H Beck was a valuable secretaire which, had been a presentation to her grandfather, the late Mr Albert Harris MLA. The flood has been responsible for its destruction.

In the Narracan Valley the biggest flood that has ever been known occurred.

Considerable damage to railway bridges on the Moe Thorpdale line resulted and it may take some time to effect the necessary repairs.

At Narracan the road bridge (spanning the Narracan Creek) was washed away. The bridge near Mr T Baker's at Coalville was also destroyed as well as the billiard room of the Coalville Hotel. Parts of the wreckage are strewn about in all directions.

A great amount of damage has been done on the route of the Moe Waterworks Trust's pipeline, in places where landslips have occurred (in the properties of Mrs McKee and Mr C P Bubb, the pipes and a concrete column having been carried away). At the

headworks, the earth was washed away from the pipes, trees torn down and the course of the creek changed. In two or three places the road has become the new creek bed. About 25 chains of new pipeline near David Station and about five chains at the headworks, at Coalville, will have to be laid.

Before the flood covered the Moe Walhalla railway bridge (Latrobe River) Ganger McDonough and his men were busily engaged 'clearing' the logs and dead stock. The river rose 5 feet in 20 minutes. This accounts for the loss of much stock – distributed about the paddocks to the north of Moe, particularly those of Messrs H Robinson and Bohnholtzer.

Some stock, thought to have been drowned, is being recovered far below the farms on which they were kept. A horse owned by Mr Morphett and being grazed on Mr F Brock's property (Tanjil River) was found on Mr Bohnoltzer's farm – some miles downstream. Between the bridges (near the Latrobe River) about six chains of the bank on either side of the Moe Walhalla line has subsided. At Brock's overhead bridge a large bank has given way. There is a crack in the bank on the northern side of the bridge that is causing anxiety. If it subsides it will take a lot of filling. The Erica and Gould gangs are assisting with repairs to the permanent way.

*North end of Moore St during the flood.
At its full height only the roof of the
house was visible.*



The current of the Tyers River was so strong that it leveled to the ground the pumping station at Gould. A patch of gum trees (3ft and 4 ft in diameter) was also uprooted. When assisting to muster stock at Tanjil South a horse which was being ridden by Mr J Allen entered deep water and had to swim for it. Thrown into the water, Allen grasped the horse's tail and was towed to safety. The horse thereupon collapsed and died. When the police boat arrived at Tanjil South on Friday, Angus Thomson, who was driving a bus owned by Mr T Brown (Gould) and could not get through to Moe, rendered a great deal of assistance in conveying the boat to Mrs A Hasthorpe's and people to Gould.

At Hill End during the storm period, 11.10 inches in 48 hours were registered. The official readings were as follows: Thursday (Nov 29) 12 points; Friday 415; Saturday 695; Sunday 12; Total (4 days) 11.34 inches.

On the damaged length of the Moe Walhalla line, 26 men were engaged on Thursday and an additional eight more are to commence today. Ballast trains were run from Moe to the scene. It is reported that a train may be able to traverse the whole of the line on Monday. First Constable Williamson (Moe) has on hand a limited supply of relief application forms for use by those in distress.

With repairs now being made, the trains on the main line are gradually resuming normal running.

IMMENSE DAMAGE AT YALLOURN

Yallourn – the nerve centre of the State's electric supply – caught the full force of the floodwaters with disastrous results. The damage is something in the nature of a catastrophe.

Less than three miles above Yallourn the junction of the Latrobe, Tanjil and Narracan Rivers drain immense watersheds, while in an easterly direction from the works the Morwell River effects a junction. This river carries the water from a vast watershed from Delburn and North Mirboo to a point south of Traralgon.

These old man rivers rolled their floodwaters towards Yallourn like angry ocean breakers, sweeping menacingly to the seashore, submerging all the flat land to a depth of 40 feet. Levee banks crumpled and were washed away. Trees, fences and stock were caught in the giant swirl and were swept away. The banks of the famous open cut yielded to the weight of raging waters and great volumes poured into it in one resistless stream. Years of work were swept ruthlessly away in a few short hours and men looked impotently on.

Today the Open Cut is one vast lake of water. All its modern coal winning machinery is submerged and even those operating from its banks have slipped into this now vast lake. The extent of this damage may be gauged when the dimensions of the Open Cut are considered. Ninety acres in extent, with an average depth of 210 feet, a drainage problem is facing engineers of gigantic proportions.

The briquetting works have been closed down for an indefinite period.

Sufficient coal supplies are available at the powerhouse to keep the plant operating for another three days. Future supplies will have to be drawn from the Brown Coal Mine section over the river, and it is hoped that floodwaters will have abated sufficiently to enable this to be done. Difficulties may be encountered at the outset, as damage to the railway line and road must be extensive although not yet ascertainable.

Thousands of yards of dumps and levee banks have been washed away and although the waters are now receding, only the tops of the dumps can still be seen.

An employee was marooned all Friday night on a dump and spent a most anxious time. An ocean of angry waters surged around him carrying away large sections of it. He was fortunately rescued by boat on Saturday.

(Note : on the same page is an article about the Water Board setting a new rate for the supply of domestic water!!)

DEVASTATING FLOOD

Appalling Losses

Never in the history of this district has a flood such as that which was caused by nearly eight inches of rain in little more than two days been experienced here. As the waters recede, the story of immense destruction and waste unfolds itself, adding to the abject misery of those who forced to leave their homes, have suffered all manner of privations and now realise that they stand on the verge of ruination. That the Government should

come to the immediate help of many is patent to the meanest intellect. To this district, in common with other parts of the State, the visitation is a calamity. The previous record was in 1901, but last week's flood level exceeded that by 15ft.

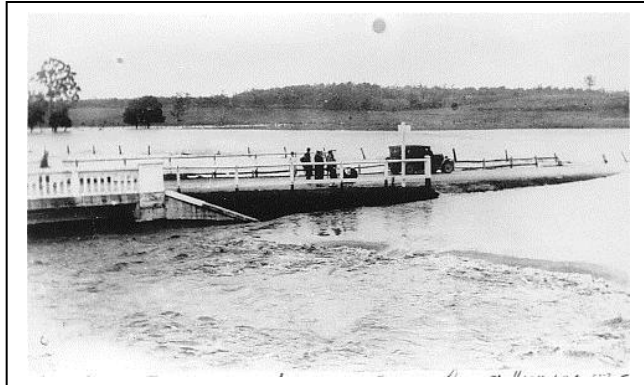
Rain commenced on Thursday afternoon and continued with unbroken steadiness until Saturday at about 11.30am. At 9 am on Friday morning, 254 points had been registered. By 6pm on Friday a further 225 points had fallen and at 9am on Saturday another 251 were recorded. Altogether, almost eight inches in less than two days was the total fall. After continuous rain on Thursday night, it was realised that a big flood only could result. The first intimation that farmers were endangered came from Mrs A J Hasthorpe, whose property adjoins the Tanjil River. It was not until Friday afternoon that a boat from Yallourn was found to be obtainable and it was brought per motor truck to Moe. By this time however, news of a small (16ft) bridge beyond the Latrobe River at Westbury being wrecked had been received, and the truck had to return with the boat to the Moe railway yards, where it was lashed to a trolley and conveyed along the Walhalla line to the scene of the flood. Senior constable Collier (Yallourn), First constable Williamson (Moe) and Bunn (Morwell) were in charge of the boat. Mrs Hasthorpe and her children were rescued and the boat returned to her house for Peter Hunter (eldest son of Cr and Mrs E Hunter) who had gone across to use the telephone and was unable to return home, and Messrs Williams, Needham and F Lamont. By this time the flood was at a dangerous height, and First Constable Gunn and Constable Creed were forced to remain. In the meantime, Mrs Hasthorpe and family, Mrs Williams and daughter, an elderly gentleman and Senior Constable Collier and First Constable Williamson traveled by car and motor truck to Gould.

By 6pm on Friday, more urgent messages for help were received. Walking from his home through the thickly timbered hill country across to Miss M Wilson's at Tanjil South, Mr D Beck phoned to Moe to advise relatives of his brother Howard's plight. The floodwaters could be seen rapidly approaching and as his home is situated in a vee between the Tanjil and Latrobe Rivers, disaster appeared inevitable. With his small dingy on another railway trolley, Mr G C Purvis, accompanied by Messrs I Edwards, W J Beck and L Riches immediately left with the intention of rescuing Mr and Mrs Howard Beck and her daughter (12 years). Their efforts proved fruitless, as the dingy was much too light to withstand the raging torrent, with huge trees and logs rushing along at a terrific rate, and they had to abandon the dinghy and return to Moe.

At about 7pm the bridge known as Beck's spanning the Latrobe River in the vicinity of the farms of Messrs Walter and D Beck, was struck by a large tree and wrecked. This incident was witnessed by Henry Robinson, a son of Mr and Mrs W Robinson, whose home was soon to be attacked by the flood waters. They endeavoured to place articles of furniture on the table in the house and to try and save a motor truck, a tall ramp was hurriedly erected but to no avail, as the lot was completely washed away and the house totally submerged. Among other valuable property lost was a pianola, wireless set and stock. Mr Robinson had leased part of his property to Mr Frank Venables of Drouin, who had grazing on it 400 two tooth ewes and wethers (fat), stated to have been purchased at £1 each. Although earlier driven to higher ground, all perished in the path of the flood. A trotting mare (Bess) and foal and stock owned by Mr H Bechaz, was also lost. Farther on,

Mr Gordon Walker's home was entered and the homes of Messrs J Pruden, E and N Bohnoltzer and A Turra were submerged as also was that of Mr Nardino on the Narracan Creek.

*Narracan Creek at the Calder Bridge,
Narracan Drive*



More than 30 persons including the families of Messrs P Vincent, W Robinson, G Walker and J Pruden took shelter at the home of Mr and Mrs W J Blair of Moore Park.

Friday evening also brought ill news of the fate of Messrs Con Savige, A H Donnelly, E Greenwood and Mrs M Austin and families. The last named made a hurried removal to Mr T Robinson's home and early in the night the Donnelly family at great risk came into Moe. At about 10pm the swelling waters of the main drain through the Moe Swamp had risen to such a height that the road between H Robinson's and E Greenwood's was four feet under water. Cars from Moe went out and Messrs N Beck and H Kendall waded to Mr Greenwood's residence and assisted in carrying out his three children and the younger son of Mr and Mrs Con Savige while the parents were able to wade to safety at Mr T Robinson's. In the dark, this was a treacherous task, as the culvert near Mr H Robinson's residence was in a bad state.

The rain continued and at 3am the water reached the homes of Messrs H L Beck and T Robinson with the result that the rescued families and the latest afflicted had to leave and go into Moe. Returning to warn others, Messrs Robinson, Beck, Fry and Somners brought to Moe the families of Messrs J Bowman, FW Adams and G Guymer, Residing with his son, Mr Bowman, who is aged 84 years and is blind, appeared loath to leave until he was assured that his kilts which are more than 100 years old were safe. While these people were being assisted the flood rose a further two feet and on Saturday morning, it had reached the level crossing at the end of Moore Street.

It was here that a 20ft rowing boat from Lakes Entrance was launched at 9.30. Four motor trucks – one of which broke its differential at Traralgon – were used in carrying the boat over the land, and it was rowed by the five fisherman accompanying it across flooded streams on the way. Sailing down the road, it passed Mr H Robinson's car standing in 4ft of water, near the cross roads and under the direction of Mr G C Purvis was rowed across the paddocks and railway bridge (20ft high and covered by flood waters at least 12 ft deep) to Mr Howard Beck's farm. Here they found Mrs Beck and her 12 year old daughter on the ridging of her home, where, with a little white duck that swam up to them, they had braved the elements from 9pm on Friday night until 10am on Saturday. It was a pitch black night with rain falling in torrents and flood waters lapping against the spouting at their feet. The boat was taken over the roof of the kitchen and the two occupants were conveyed to Moe.

Fears for the safety of Mr Beck were at this time felt, as his wife had not seen him since dark the previous night, when the rapid rising of the flood prevented him returning to his home after taking his cattle to the farm of a brother (Mr D Beck)

From Friday afternoon, all means of communication were disorganised. Phones were out of order, road bridges washed away, parts of the railway lines also washed away and bridges damaged. Taking a train in the direction of Walhalla, Driver Rumpff, accompanied by J Phefley (fireman) and C Mathers (guard), found the line under water in several places. At Gould, he received instructions to return with the train. This proved impossible because at the Eight Mile, the line was covered by water more than 4 ft deep. He put back into Gould, where the train still stands. On the main line the milk train could not pass Trafalgar and had to return to Moe and all passenger and goods trains were cancelled.

The Princes Highway between Trafalgar and Yarragon was impassable, with the result that no mails could be taken by rail or road. The first transport to come through after making deviations at Bunyip and Darnum was 'The Herald' delivery truck at midday on Sunday and the first mail arrived by car on Monday morning. Yeast was dropped by aeroplane on the Moe Recreation Reserve on Sunday afternoon, but the three parcels were not discovered until the following day when Mr C Kilpatrick (head teacher of the local school) got a number of the senior boys on the job.

Moe township was flooded on every side. To the north lay the huge expanse of water more than 30 ft deep on the flats; to the south, in Fowler street, residents had to wade through water over their knees; to the east the Highway at Calder Bridge (spanning the Narracan Creek) was impassable. And to the west the Prince's Highway and road near the croquet lawn were under water.

At Tanjil South, the Brock family had to leave their home by means of the police boat and take shelter in their wool sheds. Mrs Gooding senior, and family moved to their loft, and at Mr G Hasthorpe's, refuge could only be had by occupying elevated positions in the house. Mr C Staff and family and Mrs Staff senior were marooned and the water rushed under their homes, as it also did at the newly erected residence of Cr E Hunter.

Following the wreckage of the small bridge over the Latrobe River at Westbury, Mrs Childs and her sons were forced to vacate their home at Westbury Park, which was invaded by water 18in deep and seek shelter at Miss Wilson's. Later, the abutments at the Latrobe Bridge between Wilson's and Brock's, on the Moe Walhalla Road, was completely swung round and now lies on its side on the western bank.

After rescuing Mrs Beck and her daughter, Mr Purvis and his party of fishermen took the boat to Trafalgar, where, for the remainder of the day, rescue work was carried out. The return trip to Moe was made along the route of the main drain through the Moe Swamp. It was found that Messrs K Mitchell and S Sefton had escaped serious loss, although the water – which reached Mr Sefton's home – had carried away the latter's pig sheds.

Proceeding, the boat was taken down the Latrobe River to Beck Bros properties and it was found that both Messrs Walter and D Beck's homes had been submerged and, with water up to their necks and their children on their backs, they –with Mr Howard Beck – had struggled to shelter in the pig sties at 1 o'clock the previous night. Here they had to remain for two nights and a day. Farther up the river, Mr Turra and his family had also to flee to the pig sty for shelter.

The sudden fall in the height of the flood waters is attributed to the break in the levy banks at the Yallourn weir and the flooding of the open cut (one mile long, half a mile wide and approximately 180 feet deep). The damage at Yallourn is set own at £250,000. To know that in fact all who were in the flood area will have to have a fresh start.

A meeting of townspeople was held on Saturday night and arrangements to get provisions to the stricken families were made.

Ganger, J McDonough and repairers Brownbill and Flewin did splendid work at considerable risk. By means of motor tri-cycle a quantity of food was conveyed across the damaged railway line to isolated farmers on the northern side of the Tanjil and Latrobe Rivers. During the week goods for towns along the Walhalla line have been carried in this way to Gooding Siding and picked up by motor trucks, while cream is conveyed to the Moe Factory on the return trips.

To deliver bread to Yallourn drivers had to make detours in order to regain the highway, because of the flooded condition of the Narracan Creek.

Voluntary gangs worked all day on Sunday, making temporary repairs to the main drain bridges and their approaches and in cutting bush tracks to isolated farmers.

Separate untitled newspaper item

When a local businessman sent to the Moe State School, on Monday following the flood, a 10 shilling note to be shared among the boys (Bill Templeton, Ted Bourke and Neville Macrae) for the services they had rendered in assisting to see that goods were safely conveyed to isolated farmers on the north side of the Latrobe and Tanjil Rivers and buses from places along the Walhalla line, a very fine spirit was displayed. The boys accepted 1/6 each and the remaining 5/6 was handed to Mesdames Brice and Hall to purchase, on behalf of the Flood Relief Committee, something urgently needed by any of the flood victims. Well done!

Friday December 21st

Burying the Bodies

The report of the herdsman (Mr H Beck) stated that a gang of men was busy burying the dead cattle left by the floods. 101 had been buried while 33 had to be taken from the Main Drain where they had evidently been thrown.

The President, Cr W T Smallacombe, said action had been taken in emergency. It was difficult for private men on small blocks to destroy the drowned cattle, particularly when they did not belong to them in many circumstances. He thought it only fair to help.

The police, it was understood, were moving in the matter of those who had tipped carcasses in the drain. In some instances where carcasses had been left by the floods high up in the trees, the gang found it almost impossible to get them.

NOTE Many of the carcasses coming down the drain were skinned. (*Thus indicating farmers removing dead stock by throwing them in the drain after skinning them* - Editor)

The Advocate Friday 28th 1934

FLOOD HIGHLIGHTS

Strange But True Stories

First driven from the lower portions of his farm, Mr R Handley and an assistant Mr L Wuttrich succeeded in saving several hundred sheep. In order to complete the rescue of the majority of these – separated from a ‘batch’ saved by Mr Wuttrich and a friend – Mrs Wuttrich was obliged to enter the flood waters, at the time above her knees. By opening and closing her umbrella and ‘shoo’ing the animals she drove them out of reach of the surging waters – and later, with the help of Mr H L Beck, transferred the flock to a paddock on top of Hennessey’s Hill.

At the farm of Mr Howard Beck the river has changed course. It was assisted in the operation by a section (about two acres) of ploughed ground in which were planted potatoes – all washed away. Here fences running east and west were destroyed, whilst those running north and south remained practically untouched.

Mr Howard Beck – one of his cows climbed onto the motor truck of Mr D Beck where the cows had been taken and with both feet through the steering wheel, died there.

Mr Bohnoltzer’s farm on the Latrobe river – the flats covered by 40 ft of water tells the story –

‘A garage and workshop owned by Mr Neil Bohnoltzer was lifted intact and with three ft blocks clinging to the foot plates, carried at least 300 yards across a valley and deposited alongside a tree. A circular saw and other articles were still hanging on the walls of the workshop, the bench was whole and on it the tools none of which was lost.

Before she left home Mrs D Beck (Latrobe River) placed on a table a jug of milk. It was evident that the table had taken a trip to and from the ceiling but not a drop of the milk was spilt when the water dropped and the table resumed its position on the floor.

At the home of Mr C Savige there was a somewhat similar happening. The inrush of water was so unexpected that Mr Savige, his wife and family rose hastily from a late tea and abandoned the house. On their return they were astounded to find that, under similar conditions of travel the dishes had not been disturbed and were just as they had been left on the table. The dregs of tea were still in the cups.

The scene presented in Mr E Bohnoltzer’s home was a heartbreaking one. Everything was covered with a mantle of silt. Chairs that had risen with the flood waters hung at the end of curtain poles, pictures had been brought down and in addition to the furniture many articles to which attached much sentimental value was absolutely destroyed.

Since the flood a large gum tree came down and now spans the Latrobe River between the site of what was known as Beck’s Bridge (on the old Moe Walhalla Road). The tree is D W and H Beck and A Turra’s only means of communication with Moe. Mr Beck is using the tree as a means of conveying goods from one side to the other. By means of

pipng linked up with tanks on either bank, buttermilk obtained from the Moe factory is transported to the northern side of the river.

Cream is carted to a site alongside the Moe Walhalla railway line and picked up and conveyed the rest of the journey to Moe by motor bi-cycle.

FLOODING OF LATROBE RIVER

The following record of communications during the 1934 flood is believed to originally have come from the SEC. The Society has a photocopy without further details.

November 30th 1934 to December 2nd 1934

The following give the tenor of the messages obtained and sent

From: General Superintendent to Chairman –(telephoned message at 3.55pm, 30.11.34)

Flood Danger – Yallourn – 30.11.34

Rainfall for 24 hours at 9.00am 293 points

Rainfall from 9.00am to 3.00pm 149 points

Height of river below the Weir at 3.00pm – R.L. 135. It will probably be some hours before full effect is reached.

3.00pm Reports from Noojee indicate that the flood waters are very high and rising rapidly. A bridge in the vicinity of the town has been washed away.

3.00pm Postmaster at Moe reports – Biggest flood on record in the Tanjil

3.00pm Yallourn Police advise that reports from Trafalgar state that the Moe Drain is in very heavy flood and that a family is marooned near Moe. Police ask for Commission's boat. This is being arranged for with the least possible delay. ECCS kept advised of any information received. Considerable amount of rainwater is in the Open Cut. Mr McKay is at present in Cut investigating.

Messages received from Shift Engineer 30.11.34

Time received	Gauge Read	R.L above Weir
6.20pm	6.00pm	139
6.50pm	6.30pm	140.4
7.35pm	7.00pm	142.7

Note – rang Mr McKay at his home and gave him the above figures.

8.00pm	7.30pm	144.0
8.45pm	8.00pm	145.0

NOTE – at 8.00pm failing to get Mr McKay on phone I advised Mr Morrison that at 7.30 pm the water was at 144.0. Mr Morrison said they would have to block drain at Screen House. No further measurements could be taken as after 8.00pm the water level was over the top of the gauge.

7.35pm (30.11.34) Mr W H Burrage advised me by phone from Moe that the floods around Moe were very severe and that Beck's Bridge had been washed away.

8.00pm (30.11.34) – Message sent to Mr Price through operator at Yarraville.

“Level above Weir at 7.30pm was 144 feet – No special cause for anxiety at the moment. Beck's Bridge – Moe – washed away.”

Meadows – Brown Coal Mine – rang me and I advised him that there was no possibility of using the track over the Weir or bridge.

8.50pm – Message to Mr Price – through Yarraville –
“Height of river now exceeds 145 feet which is the limit of the gauge. The position at the Power Station is somewhat serious. The position in the Open Cut is causing anxiety.”

9.05pm – Mr McKay advised me that they were getting the trains out of the Open Cut as a precautionary measure. Mr Price advised.

9.10pm – Joe Young rang me to say that the Police at Trafalgar wished to know whether the SEC had another boat as there were people marooned at Trafalgar. Advised him no boat available.

9.15pm – Mr J R Wilson advised me that water was running over road at junction of BCM Road and the road to the eastern side of the Open Cut.

9.15pm - Mr R A Hunt advised me that all water supply pumps were under water at 7.15pm

10.07pm – Power station whistle went for men to go to the Open Cut.

10.10pm – Mr Hunt arranged for men with truck to report to Coal Supply (It was later found that they would not be required).

10.20pm – Went with Mr Hunt to Open Cut – found water pouring into Cut.



Open Cut during flood, showing pipes in the foreground for pumping.

11.45pm – Advised Mr Price –
“Water is pouring to a depth of 2 feet through 3 gaps in levees to the east of the Eastern Camp. Everyone has been ordered out of the Cut. Very doubtful if any coal will be obtained tomorrow. There is 6 inches of water inside of Rectifier Shed. Water level now nearly stationary but the situation more clear. Mr Nelson has arranged for reduction of load to approx: maximum of 10,000KW from Yallourn during the night. Advice has been sent for Newport B to be started up as soon as possible. Richmond and Newport A assisting. Yallourn will probably be able to supply 25,000KW for a few hours only Saturday morning 1.12.34. Terminal Bunker Crusher pit is flooded.”

Saturday Morning – 1.12.34

Mr Price advised to the position but no record of message kept.

These following messages were taken by Mr Dowd during G.S's absence from his office between 11.00am and 12.00noon.

‘Phoned through from Control Room –
Police and Commission’s boat are somewhere in the Gould district and are unable to return to Moe”

“Please phone to Mr Price – HO – he will wait for your ring”

“Please phone Mr Nelson –

Phoned by Mr Johnson – “he has been successful in communicating by signals with BCM people concerning men on the pump and has arranged for further signals at 1.00pm today if you wish to send any messages. The shift engineer will communicate with Mr Johnson.

Mr Lynch (O/S/M/O) suggests that a patrolman be stationed near his shed to prevent people going into dangerous places. Mr Lynch will indicate dangerous places to the man sent down. (No action taken)

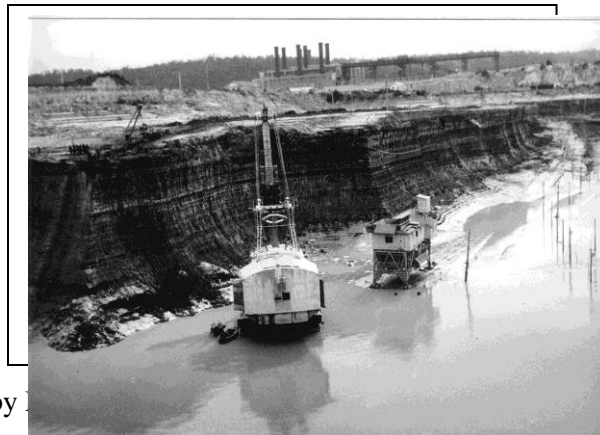
Don Shaw and mate are OK but are at Gould and cannot get away.

12.05 – Telephoned to Mr Armstrong – Head Office – generally as follows –

“Flood water has receded from 4 to 6 inches. Reported that two men were marooned on the Plough Dump and one on the Overburden Dump. Smoke seen by us coming from a shed on the Plough Dump but no men seen. I examined the area with powerful field glasses. These men can get shelter but no food. Boat was sent to Moe in charge of Police and two of our men – these men are marooned at Gould. Also rumoured that Dave Smith’s family were marooned at his house: could not see anyone with the field glasses. Russell said he saw a man walking through the water. Smith is said to have been warned last night and that a dray had been sent to him but they refused to move. The road around the eastern end of the Open Cut has been completely washed away for some distance just west of the Open Cut Office. The ground is being gradually eaten away and the Rectifier Substation is in danger as is also the Open Cut Office. The large Drag Line is also in danger near the Eastern Camp owing to erosion of water as it falls into the Open Cut.

Open Cut during flood.

A row boat is moored to the Dredger on the left.



Flood levels taken on 1.12.34 by J

9.40am at Terminal Bunker

10.40am

11.00am at Junction & BCM roads

2.00pm at Terminal Bunker

6.45pm at Terminal Bunker

148.5

148.5

147.3

148.3

147.4

?20pm – Message sent to Mr Price – through Yarraville –

“No change – level dropped about 3 inches – not raining – weather appears brighter” (Dixon)

?45pm Message to Mr Price – through Yarraville.

"I am very anxious to get a boat with two pairs of oars. Could you arrange Police Department to send one to Yallourn by lorry or train as soon as road is clear. Unless we have a boat I see no means of relieving men marooned in flood waters" (Dixon)

Bill Smith, wife, 7 children and one other woman clear at 5.00pm

Dodemaide off Plough Dump at 7.30pm

Two men from Smith's stables gone when boat arrived.

9.25pm – Message sent to Mr Price – through Yarraville –

"Levels show that flood was about 8 feet 6 inches higher than any previously known flood. Water is now receding – down to 5 feet at Water Supply Pump House and about 18 inches near site of Kernot's house.

Mr McKay says water level in Open Cut has reached practically same level as water outside the cut. Although Lifting Tower at Rectifier Station has fallen in it is thought that the main building will not collapse. Drag Line near the Rectifier Substation appears safe. Two locomotives at Overburden Dump are not flooded. Weather now fine. Four men, 2 women and 3 children marooned by floods have been rescued. None in danger now." (Dixon)

Sunday – 2.12.34 – Message sent to Mr Price – at 9.00am

"The river has fallen about 7 feet at rear of Power Station. River not yet low enough to ascertain effect on the BCSM Bridge. Will advise you when position is clearer. Water is now running out of the Open Cut."

2.15pm – Message from Mr Price –

"Can you ascertain the condition of other centres in Gippsland, the Premier enquiring."

3.00pm Mr Price advised that I had seen the Postmaster at Yallourn who rang up the following centres –

Leongatha – "condition not too good – bridges washed away – have telephone communication with Melbourne."

Sale – "telephone connection obtained through Bairnsdale. Condition not very serious – flooded but not dangerous – cannot raise Yarram."

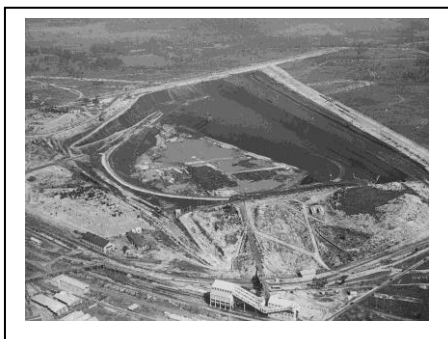
Orbost – "River high but conditions not serious."

Rosedale – "River 5 feet over highway – water 6 inches in P.O. and water about 2 feet deep outside. River now dropping – bridge intact."

Traralgon – "Flood water down 5 feet – no-one drowned – conditions are bad at Glengarry – railway washed away – some small bridges damaged."

Morwell Shire – "Many bridges washed away – Herald car got through from Warragul – detour at Yarragon."

Maffra – "Conditions serious – Macalister flood just coming down telephone communication OK."



*Aerial View of
Open Cut
before & after
1934 flood.
4000 million
gallons of
water were
pumped out
over 4 1/2
months.*

*Middleton & Maning's
Gippsland Directory
1884- 85*

De Tracey, W., Westbury	Westbury
Heathfield, J., Westbury	Gadd, Charles, publican, Westbury and Tanjil
Luke, Henry A., pressman, Westbury	Luke, Henry, pressman, Westbury
Rawlingson, J., Westbury	Rawlings, T. E., Westbury
	Rawlingson, T., Westbury

MAIL BAG

THANKYOU

In September 1994 three members of our Society turned 80 and were feted by fellow members at our monthly meeting with Mrs Phyllis Lester as President and Andy Ringin as Secretary.

They were Mrs Florence Lee, Mrs May Mudge and Mrs Kath Ringin and we shared a decorated birthday cake provided by May's daughter, Mrs Joan Falkingham. We all appreciated the honour and the fellowship.

Ten years have rolled by and we are still here, so another celebration was planned but time has taken its toll – May, who is resident at Mitchell House in Morwell was not well enough to attend. Florence's previous partying followed by the flu caused her to apologize on the day. However, I (being the last of the Mohicans!) was able to be there – on my wheely walker. It was a dark wet night, raining steadily, a 90 year old getting out of the car unsteadily fell lengthwise into the flowing gutter – having to be lifted out by a husband, son and fellow Society member. Needless to say, my entry, dripping water and blood from a cut forehead, one shoe off, was less than auspicious. First aid and a wheel chair in front of the gas heater soon restored me.

The meeting once again was conducted by Mrs Phyllis Lester, standing in for our President, Mr Martin Dyt, who rang from Berri South Australia and Bill Ringin as Secretary.

Andy showed slides of some of our many Historical Society excursions over the 40 plus years of our existence.

Mrs Sheila Mangan had made orchid shoulder sprays – there was a huge pink decorated and creamed sponge birthday cake and a beautiful supper – autographed birthday cards including one from Traralgon Society brought by guests Jim and Robina Hood and photos (which I fear to see) taken – also I know immersion in a gutter puts a hearing aid out of action – in spite of all this it was a great evening, shared with special friends. Florence received her share of the party next day and asked me to add her thanks to mine. It is great to see the Society making such progress and in such good hands.

Love from Kath Ringin

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