In This Issue:

- Rye Historical Society Reports and Activities,
- Notices: Subscriptions now due; AGM in August,
- Recollections of the White Cliffs Store, by David Trunfull,
- The Rye Mechanics’ Institute (Part 1 of 2),
- From Times Past - Early RYE Telephone Service,
- THE BACK PAGE: Meetings, Speakers, Events & Contacts
President’s Report

Rye Historical Society was represented at the Rye RSL ANZAC Day Luncheon, while the President earlier had the privilege of laying a wreath at the cenotaph.

The Society was also well represented at a recent Morn Pen Council Meeting (Nepean Ward); the venue on that occasion being the Blairgowrie Yacht Club.

Our second Street Stall for 2018 was held at the site adjacent to the Rye Post Office, which seems to be the ideal place. Although interest was intermittent, this activity is still considered vital to promoting the existence of the Society. As always, thanks to those members and supporters who made cakes and jams and arranged for the native plants to be available.

The next Street Stall is planned for 1st September.

Guest Speakers for the year to date have been:

February: Andrew Moon, who traced his detective work to prove the actual sites of graves for a number of ‘unknown’ WW1 soldiers from Korumburra.

March: The President, who spoke on his experiences on the Royal Thailand Land Titling Project in 1984/5.

April: David Johnson, with a nautical talk about “Shanties, Sisal and Skills”.

May: Alan Woollard, who described, in some detail, his recent solo motor cycle adventures in Alaska, Canada and the United States.

For the June meeting, members had been asked to bring items (cuttings, letters, photos, artifacts etc.) historically significant to Rye and district, with a view to them being photographed or scanned to add to our records archive.

A reminder that the second of our two daytime meetings in 2018 is scheduled for 23rd July. Guest Speaker will be member Wayne Bastow, ex RAN.

A basic function of our quarterly “White Cliffs” is to record local history for posterity, so recollections such as those contributed by member David Trunfull, re the White Cliffs Store, are always gratefully received for inclusion. (see p 6-7)

Steady progress is being made towards a reprint of Nell Arnold’s 1985 book: “Rye: A Book of Memories”. The original text is all formatted and proofed, but we are still seeking the last 23 of 86 photos. A promotional book launch has been mooted for later this year (venue, date, time, format to be announced).

A special tribute to those behind the scenes. In particular, Lynne and Lesley for their relentless, but largely unseen, work cataloguing our collection, and, of course, the ladies who provide the enjoyable suppers at our monthly meetings.

Thanks to Mr Jason Jones, our Street Names PC 3941 file has been updated with the Noel, Elvie and George Sts connections to the Stevens family clarified.

Finally, with the AGM coming up, thanks to all those members who regularly attend functions during the year, AND, don’t forget to promote the Society to friends and contacts with a view to possibly increasing our membership.

John Bertacco
GENERAL MEETING, Monday April 23rd, 8pm:

President John introduced the Guest Speaker, member David Johnson, whose topic for the evening was “Shanties, Sisal and Skills”. (pic below, NE)

Hemp gets a bad rap these days, but not so long ago, it was valued as much as other fibres including flax, jute, sisal, agave, coconut and cotton as a vital part of the success of navies and merchant marines back in the days of sail.

David’s remarkable photos reminded the audience of the harsh reality of shipboard life on sailing ships before good old manual labour was replaced by machinery. Crews had to work in harmony while setting or furling sails, or when raising the anchor. These laborious manual jobs were often made more efficient by the routine use of “sea-shanties” to maintain team rhythm.

The intricacies of the rope walk were explained; the standard length of which in the UK was 1000 ft in order to make anchor ropes 720 ft (120 fathoms) long.

That there are several thousand types of knots stunned a few of us. Granny and Reef knots got knowing nods from the audience, but not the Thief Knot!

He concluded by looking at scrimshaw and similar work, being typical images of life at sea carved on whale teeth or bones. The question session concluded with a light hearted “amateur-hour” group effort to sing some sea shanties. (NE)

OFFICIAL OPENING: ‘DOROTHY HOUGHTON WALK’, Friday, May 4th

An impressive walkway around the base of the Eastern Sister, near Sorrento, was recently completed. Named to recognise Dorothy Houghton (1920-2017), it was formally opened on 4th May.

Dorothy, a long time Rye business owner and a Life Member of Rye Hist Soc, made an enduring contribution to a wide range of issues on the Mornington Peninsula. A number of Rye Hist Soc members attended and all valued the opportunity to be part of this notable event. (Photo, PP)

Proudly posing for the cameras after the ceremony are family members (L-R):

Will Houghton, Jon Houghton, Dr Debra Houghton, Graeme Houghton, Peter Houghton, Sue Houghton, Tom Houghton and Abe Ata.
STREET STALL, Saturday, May 5th:

After a blustery night with some showers, the day dawned fine and the reliable regular crew had this stall ready for action by about 9am. Pictured at right are Pauline P, Lynne W, Sue L and Ann E chatting in the chilly breeze during a brief lull in activity at about 10:15am.

It was hard to judge whether or not foot traffic was increased by the Rye Foreshore Market in full swing across the road. Regardless, sales across our entire range led to a useful final figure of $265, so, thanks to all the contributors and helpers on the day. There will be one more street stall later this year - now formally scheduled for Saturday, 1st September.

GENERAL MEETING, Monday, May 28th, @ 8pm.

Mr Alan Woollard, pictured here with President John, was the Guest Speaker. (NE)

Alan prefaced his talk with a photo, taken 40 years ago in Canada, of himself standing in front of a motorcycle with snow all around. He had never forgotten that great adventure and in recent years he set about detailed planning for an ambitious repeat.

Alan outlined his experiences during about 3 months as a solo motorcycle rider travelling in Canada, Alaska and mainland USA on his trusty BMW, most often on secondary roads and gravel bush tracks, all the while camping out in a tent.

This journey puts meaning back into the word ‘epic’. All his necessary items; tent, sleeping bag, clothes, tools, food, drink, and a bladder of spare fuel were held in storage frames mounted above and at each side of the back wheel.

The average tourist who hires a car to go from A to B simply puts fuel in it until finally handing it back at the destination. Covering 38,800km meant that Alan had to schedule BMW service stops to maintain the machine in top condition, including replacing worn tyres. Off road tyres had been fitted but the relentless travel on rough roads wore out 5 back tyres and 3 front tyres. And to put that 38,800km distance in perspective, Australia’s mainly coastal Highway 1 covers about 14,500km, so Alan’s total travel equates to 2.7 times around Australia.

Timing his ride to coincide with whatever “warm weather” occurs in northern Canada and Alaska, Alan avoided frostbite while venturing far enough north to experience 21hr days, when the sun briefly dipped below the horizon at “night”.

The smorgasbord of photos included; snow capped mountains, lakes, rushing rivers, bridges, historic gold mines, Inuit and First Nation settlements in Canada and the USA, redwood forests, US desert landscapes, campsites, etc, etc, etc.

The number and extent of National Parks traversed was a real eye-opener, and it was a relief to learn that Alan never went toe-to-toe with a brown bear.

Overall, a fascinating look at many aspects of North America which seldom feature in popular media. Report ends! You had to be there! (NE)

GENERAL MEETING, Monday June 25th, daytime, St Andrew’s Hall, @ 2pm.

After overnight rain and a dull morning, the sun had come out by midday to give us a pleasant afternoon for holding this relatively informal meeting.

After President John opened proceedings with notices of future events, he opted to be first speaker, basing his presentation on both old, and relatively new, survey drafting instruments he has collected. He also reminisced about his early years as a survey draftsman. Below is a sample of the following program:

The prize item set before the crowd was a hand operated, 2-row vegetable seed drill, used by the Jennings’s in the early 1900s and delivered by Danny. Its function and operation were discussed, but few seemed to be overjoyed by the prospect of having to set up and use such a machine to make a living.

John H commented on two old books, handed down by the Cain family, which he had on display, and stressed the stoicism of the early settlers with their often large families, living in pretty basic cottages and rarely having much money.

Pauline P spoke about, and passed around, a number of colour prints from the 1950s and used an example Prescription Record Book she had brought along to explain the changes over the last 60 years in the way Pharmacists operate.

Julia E took the audience for a trip down memory lane with her well chosen descriptions of various local events back in the 1950’s, including Christmas and New Years Eve celebrations, routine milk and bread deliveries around the camp sites, and also once being the beneficiary of concern shown by the driver of the last bus back to Melbourne on a Sunday evening when children, which he knew should be catching that bus, were not already waiting at the stop.

John H rounded off the session with costs of a range of everyday items and foodstuffs in the mid-1800s. He reminded us of the difficulties of trying to keep track of livestock on unfenced runs and contrasted the low commercial value put on meat, compared to hides and bone, simply because it soon went rotten.

In summary, a very enjoyable (and amply catered!) and worthwhile afternoon, during which a significant number of photos were scanned for our records. (NE)
“The article in White Cliffs [Apr-Jun 2018] about the White Cliffs store has exercises my "little grey cells" a bit. Below is a bit of history about the store, plus some history about the streets mentioned in the aerial photograph.

I believe the dating of the cover photo as 1954 is probably correct. I haven’t checked with my cousins, but I believe that the Bowring family bought the White Cliffs store in the late 1950’s. We were quite friendly with them and I remember going on picnics to the back beach and Baldry’s Crossing with them and their boys. (this would be about 1958-9). I do not remember the shop looking like the photo at this time, I think the next owners were the McPherson’s. Their son, Alan ("Joe") McPherson would probably be able to fill in more details about the store. Tony Howard might also be able to fill in some gaps, because I recall that he said he lived in the timber house next door for a while. The McDonald’s were the next owners and had the store for the next few years. For the Christmas holidays in 1968 I got a job at the store. My job was to keep the fridges stocked with soft drinks and milk, and to help out at the counter during the busy times. The others that I remember working there were Mrs. Dennis, Dianne Rowley and Vicki Streeter, as well as the owners. I remember that I was paid $40 a week, whereas the girls, who were on Award wages were paid more. In 1969 Cliff Hallett bought the leasehold and I also worked for him until mid-January until I got a permanent job in the city. (My first fortnightly take home pay at the Australian National Line was $54.32, so I was annoyed that I could have made more money if I had stayed working at the store until the end of the holidays, plus the added benefit of free malted milk shakes!)

My grandfather, Arthur William Dark (no relation to the Arthur Dark who lived in Lyons St.), bought 3 blocks of land in Maori Street, in the mid-40s, and built two houses on them over the next few years. No 26-28 was for my grandparent’s holiday home, and No.30 was for my aunt and uncle, Norma and Edwin (Ham) Collins and their two girls, Judith and Lorraine, and from 1955, Douglas. Lorraine was born in 1950, and they moved in to the house in 1951. He also bought two adjoining blocks of land on Pt. Nepean Road, and one on Elgan Avenue (called Capel Street until the 1960s.) From about 1954, when I was eighteen months old, I spent virtually every weekend at my grandparents holiday home, and I went to St. David’s Presbyterian church. My grandparents, mother and I moved to Rye permanently in February 1960, to help raise my cousins, as my aunt had died.

Regarding the aerial photograph, I do not think it is accurate to call Elgan Avenue, Maori Street, and Recreation roads “made” in 1951. They were sandy tracks with outcrops of limestone peeking through, until the road was sealed in the mid-1960s. After rain this was a boy’s dream come true, as the rain created “lakes” that we could float our toy boats on, and generally get in to mischief.

Where Pauline Powell’s and John and Di Kennedy’s houses are today was a forest of ti-trees, with long vines of bower spinach and other native flowers, including green hooded orchids. This was also a favoured playground for my cousins and I.
The aerial shot is not very clear, but my memory of the area was that there were more trees. My grandparents cleared much of their land, but there were still parts that were heavily ti-treed. It appears that the blocks next door (22-24) to ours, owned by Bill Townsend, who was a builder from Hampton, had been cleared. This may be the case, but by 1960 it was heavily treed again. He started to build a new house, but it was never completed. Blocks (16-18) were owned by Bob Friend, a fisherman, and it would appear that in 1951 work had started on the building of Robina Court Holiday Flats and Caravan Park. The property’s main frontage was on Point Nepean Road, and there were two Mobil petrol bowsers there. Robina Court was later bought by Reg and Blanche Kolbe, whose previous business had been hire boats on Mordialloc Creek. They sold Robina Court in the early 1960s, and after a short while in Queensland came back to Rye and bought the hire boat and boat launching business virtually opposite from Vern Townsend (no relation to the Townsend mentioned earlier). They also had hire paddle boards and had an Allis-Chalmers tractor that they used to launch boats with. They became our neighbours and good friends when they bought the small Victorian timber house in Elgan Avenue.

At Right: Another (undated) photo of the front of the White Cliffs Store from the Rye H S archive.

Subscription Renewals 2018/19

**Membership Renewals** for the 2018/19 year are due as from 1st July 2018. Subscriptions: Family $30, Single $20. Please remit your renewal either:
- personally to the Treasurer, Danny Jennings, or,
- by cheque in the mail to The Secretary, PO Box 65 Rye 3941, or,
- by Direct Debit to BSB 633-000 A/N 1151 83857, Ref: your name.

**Nominations for Office Bearer Positions 2018/19**

Reminder: All positions become vacant at the AGM, 27th August.

Nomination forms available from Secretary, at meetings, and at the Museum. Please return completed forms to Secretary Pauline Powell by 20th August.

**Annual General Meeting** and **Bring a Treasure**

The AGM will be held on Monday 27th August. After that meeting, instead of having a guest speaker we will have our annual Bring a Treasure evening.

Bring along one of your special treasures and tell us the story of how it came into your possession and what it means to you.
Introduction

In the UK in the early 1800s, the education of children was only available to the wealthy, either at boarding schools or at home with a tutor. Calls from some clergymen who advocated educating the masses in order for them to read scripture for themselves were dismissed by those in power. And any citizens who advocated an individual’s rights to an education and to unite to improve working conditions were regarded as subversives to be ruthlessly suppressed.

While the Industrial Revolution had created a demand for literate, technically trained manpower for factories, this was not being met by the traditional UK apprenticeship system. Since books were both scarce and too expensive for the working class, the concept of centres of learning based on a technical library evolved. Progressive Industrialists realised that technical education was vital for their own prosperity and soon started supporting that movement. The generic term “mechanic” was applied to this new breed of educated factory worker.

The first Mechanics’ Institute was opened in Edinburgh in 1821, followed in 1823 by one each in Liverpool and Glasgow, and Institutes in both Manchester and Ipswich in 1824. By the mid-1800s, there were hundreds of Institutes in the UK and the idea had been exported to Canada, America and New Zealand.

In Australia, the concept had been included in guidelines for the Governor from the Colonial Office in the 1820s. Mechanics’ Institutes were established in Hobart (1827), Sydney (1833), Newcastle (1835) and Melbourne (1839).

Victoria’s administration supported the initiative and, upon application, it was not unusual for Crown Land lots to be reserved in town surveys. Community groups, through their appointed Trustees, could then fund raise, build and maintain suburban and rural Mechanics’ Institutes at no cost to Government, which, in return, from time to time offered grant monies for book purchases.

Popular demand for universal primary education finally became Government policy in 1872. The resulting surge in literacy led to the remarkable total of just over 1000 Mechanics’ Institutes built across Victoria alone by the early 1900s.

The Rye Mechanics’ Institute

In response to a petition lodged in 1868, a half-acre Crown Land allotment at Rye was reserved for a future Mechanics’ Institute.

The notice in the Government Gazette is at right and portion of the town plan is on the next page.

Rye—Site for Mechanics’ Institute purposes, temporarily reserved by Order of 29th December, 1868. —Two roads, county of Mornington, town of Rye, being allotment 10 of section 4. Commencing at the north-east angle of the allotment, being the point of intersection of the west side of Napier street by the south side of Nelson street; bounded thence by Napier street bearing S. 8° 15’ W. two chains fifty links; thence by allotment 9 bearing N. 81° 45’ W. two chains; thence by allotment 8 bearing N. 8° 15’ E. two chains fifty links; and thence by Nelson street bearing S. 81° 45’ E. two chains to the point of commencement. The bearings are from the true meridian. — (68. 18846.)
It is worth noting that during the 15 years after Primary Education became law, Mechanics’ Institutes were established at three nearby centres, as below.

Sorrento Mechanics’ Institute was opened with a gala ball in February 1877. It is understood to have been built on a parcel of land generously made available by The Ocean Ampitheatre Company and to be managed by the foundation Trustees, namely: Messrs. George Coppin, Joseph Hiskens and John Cain.

In 1874, a parcel of land for the Dromana Mechanics’ Institute was Gazetted, and, although no record of its official opening has been found so far, that building appears to have been completed and already in regular use prior to 1882.

We know the original Rosebud Mechanics’ Institute had been completed by 1882, because in that year it was offered as a venue to expedite creation of a new primary school at Rosebud. It was subsequently utilised in that capacity when the Rosebud school commenced with 37 students in September 1884.

In 1891, three local Rye men, Messrs Cain, Myers and Sullivan, were sufficiently confident of community support to make an application. It was approved, with those men taking responsibility as foundation trustees.

(refer Government Gazette of 9th September, 1891, at right).
A “Credit Foncier” public purposes loan from, eg, The State Bank, could be secured, but the Trustees personally “went guarantor” since such a building situated on a Crown Land site could not be sold off to clear any future debt.

Materials were soon acquired and the building was erected, presumably by voluntary labour. It was completed in early 1892 at a recorded cost of £180.

In its first year, the associated Rye Free Library commenced operation with 49 books. Two years later, it could boast of a stock of 118 books. This library was staffed by volunteers, being opened to users as and when required.

At Left: This tattered poster advertised the “First Spring Ball”, which was timed to coincide with a full moon in 1898 to assist patrons in the walk, or ride, home after the event. (from the RHS archive).

Admission:
Gents 2 shillings,
Ladies Free
Refreshments, 9d ea
Doors Open, 7:30pm
Dancing Commences, 8:00pm
Moonlight Moonlight!!

At Right:
The first Rye Mechanics’ Institute building, pictured in the mid-1920s.

It is possible that the photographer waited to capture local identity Miss Kate Poulson walking along Napier Street, dragging some firewood.

From the condition of the front wall, it also appears that graffiti on public buildings is nothing new!
At Left: A sample Credit Foncier advertisement, this one from *The Advocate*, 22nd September 1906.

The following pages offer us glimpses of typical events held there (and shows the value of appointing a publicity officer to send reports to a newspaper!). Commencing in 1895, the *Mornington Standard* occasionally carried reports on the Mechanics’ Institute at Rye, as below. Unfortunately, no similar reports dated more recently than 1907 have been found so far.

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Concert at Rye. [30th May 1895]
On Friday, May 10th, a concert in aid of the Mechanics Institute, Rye, was held in the above building, and as it was for the purpose of liquidating the debt on the building the folks came in good number. The proceeds amounted to about £5. ......

RYE [25th February 1897]
On Wednesday, the 17th February, a concert took place in the Rye institute, to raise funds for the Church of England at that place. As the audience did not all turn up to time, the chairman, the Rev. F W Wilcox, entertained the audience with a humorous account of a wedding he had attended in the bush. The evening was very hot, and the audience not numerous, and as some of those expected did not arrive, a short programme was carried out. ......

RYE JUBILEE BALL [29th July 1897]
A jubilee ball was held here the week before last, at the mechanics’ institute in aid of the building fund. It was very extensively patronised, the spacious hall being completely filled. Everybody enjoyed themselves to the utmost. The music was of a first class character, and the MC (Mr James Spunner Jr) performed his arduous duties in a highly satisfactory manner. ......

RYE [28th September 1899]
The scholars attending the Rye State School, assisted by ladies and gentlemen from Sorrento, gave a varied and pleasing entertainment in the Rye Mechanics Institute on the 15th inst, the object being to raise funds for the prizes for the children, and to assist the local Mechanics trustees....

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RYE [15th Feb 1902]
A ball is to be held at the Rye Mechanics’ Institute on Wednesday 19th inst. The arrangements are in the hands of Mr H Horneman. [Retd Rye Headmaster Ed]

RYE [11th July 1903]
A concert in aid of the building fund of the Rye Mechanics Institute was held on Friday, the 3rd inst, and, considering the unsettled nature of the weather, which prevented a good many from attending, was very well patronised by visitors from Sorrento, Portsea, Dromana and other places. The chair was taken by Mr John Cain, JP, who gave a short address in his usual felicitous manner. We are informed that the net result of the concert and ball will be about £4, after paying all expenses. ......

RYE [10th October 1903]
A deaf, dumb, and blind entertainment will be held at the Mechanics Institute here tonight, when it is hoped that they will have a good house, and that their efforts will be duly appreciated. ......

RYE [10th October 1903]
The annual school picnic and ball, given by the residents, will take place on the 30th inst. The Rev Edwin Rodda will lecture on the: “Early Settlement of Victoria, Buckley and the Aborigines” at the Mechanics hall, on some day to be fixed during this month. ......
RYE [9th January 1904]
The following is the statement of receipts and expenditure for the concert and ball held at the Mechanics Institute on the 14th December last:

Receipts: By ball and concert tickets per Mr Myers, £3 11s; by sale of concert tickets, £1 17s; Total, £5 8s.

Expenditure: To postage, stationery and postal notes, 3s 8½d; milk, pails and groceries, 13s 6½d; printing and books, 10s 3d; Townsend, pastry, etc, £1 10s; the Sorrento Brass Band, £1 15s; butter and meat 7s 8d; to balance 7s 10d [profit, Ed]. Total £5 8s.

It is to be regretted that the affair did not turn out the success it was anticipated, but the expenses on the occasion were extremely heavy.

RYE [20th February 1904]
It is proposed to hold a ball at the Mechanics’ Institute on Wednesday, March 2nd, in aid of the building fund. The committee have received numerous promises of support, and we [have] every reason to expect it to be a financial success.

RYE [10th December 1904]
The tea meeting held at the Rye Mechanics’ Institute on Thursday, 1st December, to commemorate the opening of the new Presbyterian Church, was exceedingly well attended by visitors from all quarters of the locality. The addresses made by the various clergymen were very appropriate.

The singing was also much enjoyed, particularly the numbers rendered by: the Sorrento glee club; Mrs Anderson, of Sorrento; Mr J Smith of Rye; Miss Seraphina Albress and Miss Hill, both of Rye.

It is expected that a good balance will remain over after paying expenses, which will be devoted to painting the church, besides other improvements much required.

RYE [15th July 1905]
Through the instrumentality of the Hon D E McBryde, MLC, one of our respected representatives, the Chief Secretary has allotted £10 to the local Mechanics Institute, which sum will be entirely devoted to reducing the debt on the building, as it has fallen lately into arrears and the guarantors of the debt were at their wits ends as to how they would be able to continue the quarterly payments on the Credit Foncier principle. The Rev. E Rodda will deliver a lecture at the Mechanics Institute on Wednesday the 19th inst, on “Social Life in America, and its wonderful progress and growth”. No doubt he will have a good and appreciative audience.

[£10 in 1905 = $ 1473 in 2017. RBA, Ed]

RYE [16th February 1907]
A public meeting of ratepayers called by the Shire Council, was held at the Mechanics’ Hall, Rye, on Saturday, the 9th February, Councillor Marsden in the chair. It was proposed by Mr Wm Trueman, and seconded by Mr B Stenniken that four residents of Rye should be appointed Trustees for the management and improvement of the foreshore from the White Bridge to Canterbury, and whose names will be submitted to the Shire Council and the Lands Department in due course.

RYE [13th July 1907]
Arbour Day, held on Friday 6th inst., was unfortunately very wet and in consequence, the picnic could not be held in the open but the Mechanics’ Hall was made available for the occasion, and everything passed off very satisfactorily, considering the state of the elements.

The Committee of the Foreshore Trust have, at present, about 100 tons of ti-tree cut and ready for carting. The leading residents have kindly volunteered to lend their horses gratis for a day or two, so that funds will be raised for defraying the expenses of the fence, which it is expected will shortly be erected to enclose about two acres of ground opposite the township, besides other improvements contemplated by the committee.
Rye Mechanics’ Institute, Part 1 of 2 (cont.)

Replacement trustees were confirmed in the *Government Gazette*, dated 31st January, 1912, as at right.

In 1923, the committee may have enjoyed a modest cash boost, as per the item at right from *The Argus* of 6th February.

Although back in 1884, the Education Department had offered only £8 for an entire school year for the use of the Dromana Mechanics’ Institute as a school!

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**MORNINGTON**

The contractor is making rapid progress with the new State school at Rye. The Education department has hired the Mechanics Institute until the school is finished.

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46 of the students attending Rye Primary School during 1923 are pictured outside the front of the Rye Mechanics Institute, which was then being used as a temporary schoolhouse while the builders completed the present brick building.

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In 1924, *The Frankston and Somerville Standard* reported the results of what appears to have been a raffle draw on account of “Rye Goose Club”, whatever that was!

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**RYE**

[9th May 1924]

The following numbers were successful in Rye Goose Club, in the following order: 1, 3005, H C Cairns, Flinders; 2, 384, J Williams, Boneo; 3, 1359, E Cooper, Sorrento; 4, 1355, F Skelton, Sorrento; 5, 308, R Rowley, Rye; 6, 631, M Monk, Somerville; 7, 493, W Blisset, Red Hill; 8, 163, D Wilson, Boneo; 9, 628, J Williat, Moorooduc; 10, Dwyer, Dromana. It was drawn at a large gathering in Rye Mechanics’ Institute, on April 26, 1924.
During the late 1920s, The Age carried the following items:

**RYE** [10th January 1927]

Sunday - During the holidays dances have been held in the Mechanics’ Hall, which has lately been painted and renovated, and now presents a much improved appearance. Some of the dances have been arranged by the hall committee, others by local friends and visitors, and have generally been well attended.

**RYE** [30th August 1927]

At a meeting of Rye mechanics’ hall committee Mr Dowd was elected president and Mr George secretary. Mr George also takes the position of secretary of the progress association, formerly held by Mr Van Nouten.

**RYE** [7th September 1929]

The following have been elected as a committee for mechanics’ hall:- President, Mr Webster; hon secretary, Mr Culliver; hon treasurer, Mr Bodycomb.

Before WW2, The Argus, of 15th May, 1939, carried the notice at right.

The few newspaper mentions of the building during the 1940s found so far include: a council election pitch by Mr L F Baker at a 1946 public meeting; its being a nominated venue for payment of rates; and being the Rye polling place. It continued to house the Rye free library, and it was also used for a number of wartime and post-war support activities in Rye, perhaps including the “Welcome Home” reported at right.

The building was totally destroyed by fire in 1949, so Part 1 will conclude here by quoting from the recollections of that fire as recorded by Mr Arthur Dark.

“The night the Rye Hall burnt down, I was in bed as I had an early start the next morning. I awoke and arrived on the scene in my pyjamas to help Dad and Jack Campbell get the piano out the side door. I got very little out, taking items passed by Joe Culliver and getting the legs of my pyjamas singed for my troubles. War time Honour Rolls and photos were saved but it was all over very quickly as Rye did not rate a Fire Brigade and it was an old weatherboard which sparrows had nested in over the years. Dad and Jack were of the opinion that if it was still standing, you got less insurance.”

**Sources:**

NLA “Trove”,

*If These Walls Could Talk*, Mechanics’ Institute Conference, Kilmore, 2000,

Tyler, Vic; *Chronicles of my Life*, Rye Hist Soc,


*Researched and written by Noel Erbs*
In this era of ‘universal connectedness’, it is hard to visualise the isolation in regional areas before telephone services were extended beyond the city after 1900. The newspaper items below offer some snapshots of the development of a telephone service to supersede the previous telegraph system. [Ack: NLA ‘trove’]

For some years after 1905, calls from the Rye PO public phone or any private or business RYE subscribers went through the Sorrento manual exchange. (NE)

**Mornington Standard, 25th Feb 1905.**

**RYE**

A movement is on foot here to have the telephone extended to Rye, and a petition will shortly be circulated for signature and presentation to the proper quarter. The telephone will be of great convenience to many of the residents.

**Mornington Standard, 20th May 1905.**

**RYE**

The telephone has been erected and connected with the post office, and will no doubt be much appreciated by the residents of this locality.

**Yackandandah Times, 9th July 1908.**

**New Telephone Lines**

New trunk telephone lines are available for public use as follows: - Aspendale to Mordialloc, Carrum, Frankston, Mornington, Bittern, Dromana, Rye and Sorrento; Wandin (Hunter’s Store) to Wandin receiving office, Wandin South, Lilydale and Melbourne; Minimay to Goroke, Mitre Lake, Natimuk, Noradjuha and Horsham; Ballangeich North to Ellerslie, Framlingham, Purnim, Woodford and Warrnambool.

**The Age, 19th Aug 1931**

**BAYSIDE TELEPHONE ARRANGEMENTS**

Following a recent paragraph in “The Age” pointing out the inconvenience to the public and the loss of revenue to the Postal department by the closing of telephone exchanges at the Bayside resorts of Rosebud and Rye on Saturday afternoons, instead of on the Wednesday half holiday observed in those centres, it was announced yesterday that from today the Wednesday half holiday will be observed. At Rosebud the telephone hours will be from 9am till 12:15pm, and from 1:15pm until 8pm, except on Wednesdays, when the exchange will close at 1:45pm. At Rye the hours will be the same except on Wednesday, when the exchange will close at 1:30pm. Continuous service is provided at Sorrento and Dromana.

**The Age, 20th February 1932**

**DROMANA:** An extra telephone line, direct to Melbourne, has been erected, and this has proved a great advantage to telephone users.

**The Argus, 30th October 1936**

**OTHER DISTRICTS**

ROSEBUD - After November 1st, Rosebud is to have a continuous telephone service.

**Standard (Frankston) 22nd November 1945**

**FLINDERS SHIRE**

Lt-Col Ryan MHR sent a reply from the Postmaster-General, which stated that additional telephone service is now available at Rye Post Office. The hours observed will be: Monday to Friday, 8am to 12noon, 1pm to 10pm: Saturdays, 8am to 1pm: Sundays and holidays, 9am to 10am.

**The Argus, 28th April 1952**

**Smash Silences Many Phones**

Trunk telephone lines to Dromana, Rosebud, Rye and Sorrento were put out of order last night when a car crashed into a telegraph pole seven miles from Mornington. The lines are expected to be restored by early this morning.
Coming Meetings, Guest Speakers and Events.

16th July: Committee Meeting only, @ later time of 7:00pm;

23rd July: General Meeting: 2pm (winter, daytime; St Andrews Church Hall)
Guest speaker: Wayne Bastow will be looking back 50 years to recall RAN actions aboard HMAS Hobart during the Vietnam War.

27th July: Rye RSL Happy Hour, 5 - 6pm, Meal afterwards optional.

27th August: Committee @ 6:30; Annual General Meeting (AGM) @ 8pm, Followed by an informal “Bring a Treasure” night and supper.

31st August: Rye RSL Happy Hour, 5 - 6pm, Meal afterwards optional.

1st September: Street stall, 9am - 12:30pm, at the usual Post Office site.

24th September: Committee @ 6:30; General Meeting @ 8pm, Guest speaker: Mr Greg Eccleston, who will speak about the early surveyors who did the field work on the southern Peninsula and generated the maps essential for administering the Colony of Victoria.

28th September: Rye RSL Happy Hour, 5 - 6pm, Meal afterwards optional.


Easiest to Google ‘Rye Historical Society’. Some recent issues of our “White Cliffs” newsletter can be viewed in colour on the Society’s website. Members may like to read past editions or send our newsletter on to friends. Once on our website, simply click on NEWSLETTERS then scroll and click on the chosen icon.

FACEBOOK: Rye Historical Society Mornington Peninsula (now on Facebook) continues to be a valuable entry point for supporters to offer recollections and photos to add to the historical record as well as a path to publicise our Society.