South Gippsland Heritage Study

VOLUME 1

THEMATIC ENVIRONMENTAL HISTORY

December 2004

The front cover shows (from top):

- The silos at Knox’s Rockhill Farm, near Leongatha
- An unidentified church at Loch
- ‘Woodlands’, Old Dollar Road, Stony Creek

South Gippsland Heritage Study

Volume 1

Thematic Environmental History

Prepared for South Gippsland Shire in 1998 by Australian Heritage Group

Reviewed in 2004 by David Helms

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Preface

The *South Gippsland Heritage Study* (the Study) was prepared in two stages over four years between 1998 and 2002 and comprises:

- Volume 1 – *Thematic Environmental History*
- Volume 2 – *Key Findings* + *Recommendations*
- Volume 3 – *Heritage Place* + *Precinct Citations*
- Volume 4 – *Appendices*

The *Thematic Environmental History of South Gippsland Shire* was completed in November 1998 as part of Stage 1 of the Study by the Australian Heritage Group. This history was reviewed during Stage 2 of the Study, initially in 2002 with a final review in 2004. The purpose of this review was to determine whether any particular themes needed to be amended in the light of detailed research that was undertaken during Stage 2.

As a consequence of this review this revised and updated *South Gippsland Thematic Environmental History 2004* has been prepared. The key changes that have been made as a result of this review may be summarized as:

- Each chapter was split into three consistent sub-chapters; *Introduction* (which gives an explanation of the purpose of the chapter), *History* (which contains the historic information about the theme), and *Heritage* (which gives examples of the heritage places that illustrate the theme).
- Chapter 1 was split into two chapters; Chapter 1 becoming *Explorers & First Contact*, with a new Chapter 2 *Settling the land*. Sub chapters in relation to *Village settlements & soldier settlements* formerly in Chapter 5 *Governance* were added to the new Chapter 2.
- A new chapter *Working the land* is introduced to deal specifically with agricultural industries. A separate chapter entitled *Economic development* is created for all other forms of industry.
- Chapter 5 was renamed as *Governance,* while a new chapter entitled *Community & culture* was added. Additional contextual information was added for each of these chapters.
- Chapter 6 was renamed as *Building settlements and towns* and re-organised under headings that illustrated how towns developed according to key influences such as transportation and industry. Some information was moved to other chapters such as *Economic development*.
- Chapter 7 *Tourism and Conservation of Natural Resources* was moved to become part of the *Economic Development* chapter.

In undertaking this review the Australian Heritage Group (AHG) is acknowledged as the original author of the majority of the text in this report and their significant contribution to the completion of the Study is appreciated. In recognition of this, the original *Thematic Environmental History of South Gippsland Shire* remains as a separate document.

This version has been prepared as a reference document for the amendment to the South Gippsland Planning Scheme that proposes to include public buildings identified by the Study in the Heritage Overlay. It does not include illustrations and maps included in the original history prepared by the AHG, which were not available. It is intended that alternative illustrations and maps will be added in future.

Acknowledgments

Introduction

The preparation of the *Thematic History of South Gippsland Shire* during Stage 1 of the Study was made possible through the guidance and advice of a number of persons who co-operatively and unselfishly assisted the efforts of the *Australian Heritage Group* in its assigned tasks. These persons are listed below and their assistance and contributions are kindly acknowledged. Any person whose name may have been inadvertently omitted from this is extended a sincere apology and thanked for their assistance as well.

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Leongatha & District (Woorayl) Historical Society
- Margaret Stokes, Secretary
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Mirboo North Historical Society
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Poowong Historical Society
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South Gippsland Museum and Historical Society
- Rosemary Crawford
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Welshpool and District Museum
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Coal Creek Heritage Village
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Study team (Stage 1)

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- Mrs. Ursula Williamson – Director, Scenic Spectrums Pty Ltd - Computer systems and report design.

Introduction

The heritage setting of South Gippsland Shire

South Gippsland has a diverse post-contact heritage that has been shaped by the landscape in many ways. Europeans choosing to explore and settle in South Gippsland during the period from the very late 1700s through the 1880s encountered many difficulties and challenges that were unique from those experienced by settlers in other parts of Victoria. The dense forests, scrub, swamps, rivers and creeks in part explain this. Early settlers battled against the isolation of the region and yet came to identify themselves and their future with this very aspect of the landscape. It led South Gippslanders to identify closely with one another and their surroundings.

South Gippsland Shire was formed in December 1994 and covers an area of 3250 square kilometres in the southeast of Victoria. The Shire consists of three of Victoria's Landscape Character Types (LCT), progressing from the Coastline LCT inland to the Southern Lowlands and the Southern Uplands.

The coastline is varied, including relatively shallow inlets and mudflats of Anderson Inlet, Shallow Inlet and Corner Inlet; sand dune formations along Venus Bay; limestone escarpments near Walkerville at Waratah Bay; and rocky headlands at Cape Liptrap and Wilson's Promontory.

The lowlands occur along a number of rivers and streams that flow from the uplands to the sea, including the Powlett River, the Tarwin River, and other minor streams flowing to the coast in the Venus Bay, Shallow Inlet and Corner Inlet areas. These coastal fringes and lowlands provided the initial opportunities for exploration and settlement of the area from the late 1790s through the 1840s. However, dangerous offshore rocky reefs, tidal rivers and streams, extensive wetlands and dense tea-tree thickets presented formidable natural opposition to the early explorations and pioneering settlement.

The rolling upland terrain of the Gippsland Hills, including the Strzelecki Range and Hoddle Range, provide a northern enclosure to the lowlands on the south. These ranges give rise to the Bass River and Lang Lang River catchments on the northwestern edge of the Shire: the Tarwin River and its tributaries in the central portion of the Shire; and the Franklin and Agnes Rivers north of Corner Inlet. The terrain and the dense forests prevented serious settlement in these ranges until the period from the 1860s through the early 1890s.

The Vereker, LaTrobe, Wilson and Boulder Ranges of Wilson's Promontory provide somewhat more striking granitic formations on that isolated coastal peninsula. Wilson's Promontory was an important feature to the explorer George Bass in 1798 and the sealers and whalers who soon followed him. Wilson's Promontory remains a key attraction in its own right today.

1.1 Purpose

This report provides a 'thematic environmental history' of the *post-contact*[1] settlement and development of South Gippsland Shire[2] in Victoria. It is an historical explanation of the major environmental, social and cultural themes, which have been significant in the evolution and development of South Gippsland Shire during the post-contact period.

The objective of a thematic history is not to provide a comprehensive social or environmental history of the Shire. Rather, it is to provide:

- An historical explanation of the major environmental and social/cultural themes that have been significant in the evolution and development of the Shire during the *post-contact* period.
- A description of how these themes may be illustrated or physically manifested by way of structures and buildings, sites and places, landscape features and other elements.

Although the study's focus is on cultural heritage rather than natural heritage, natural heritage features that may have a notable social or cultural value were also considered. For example, a large remnant Mountain Ash tree in the Darlimurla area has come to symbolise the past history of the tremendous forest trees felled and cleared by the local communities ancestors and is now a local feature that visitors are shown in the telling of that story. Even though the tree is a natural feature, it's present value is cultural rather than just natural.

On this basis, this environmental history provides a summary of human use and impact upon the landscape in the years since first contact with indigenous inhabitants. It is not a chronological record and should not be read in this way.

Rather, the history is organised according to themes so as to provide a context to assist with the identification of heritage places that illustrate the rich cultural history of the Shire. These heritage places include buildings and structures, precincts, objects, ruins, trees and landscapes. The themes are also embodied in the historic or continuing use of places and people's social and spiritual associations with them.

The themes used in this environmental history have been adapted from the Australian Historic Themes (AHT) set down as guidelines by the Australian Heritage Council (AHC). The AHC notes that:

The consistent organising principle for the Thematic Framework is activity*. By emphasising the human activities that produced the places we value, and the human response to Australia's natural environment, places are related to the processes and stories associated with them, rather than to the type or function of place.*

Finally, it is important to understand that the history is not arranged as a hierarchy, which gives priority, weighting and privilege to some themes, nor is it simply a checklist. One place may have many themes reflecting the integrated, diverse and complex way that places evolve over time.

On this basis, each chapter includes:

- A brief introduction, which includes an explanation of which AHT is relevant.

[1] *Post contact* refers to the period following the initial contact between local Aboriginal communities and European explorers and early settlers.

[2] *South Gippsland Shire* is referred to as 'the Shire' throughout this history.

- An outline of the history of the Shire associated with the particular theme.
- A list of the heritage places associated with the theme. The lists of heritage places are not exhaustive; rather they are representative of the many places that the Study has identified.

1.2 Background

This environmental history forms part of the *South Gippsland Heritage Study 2004* (the Study), which was completed by 2002 and reviewed in 2004. The purpose of the Study was to complete the identification, assessment and documentation of places of post-contact cultural significance for the whole of the municipality.

A key task required by Stage 2 of the Study was a review of the first *Thematic Environmental History of South Gippsland Shire* prepared by the Australian Heritage Group in 1998.

The purpose of review was to determine if the emphasis given to particular themes needed to be reviewed in the light of the detailed work undertaken for this Study. It was also possible that new themes may have emerged.

1.3 Structure

The history is arranged thematically with key themes derived from the *Principal Australian Historic Themes* prepared by the Australian Heritage Commission (AHC).

The second chapter of the report, *Exploration and first contact* is given particular emphasis in order to clearly convey a sense of the Shire's beginnings. It relates the cultural and physical setting within which European settlement was established, and describes the relative sequence of that initial establishment within different geographic areas of the Shire.

This is followed by two closely related chapters *Settling the land* and *Working the land*, which demonstrate how the pattern of settlement and type of land tenure changed the landscape and influenced the type of industries that developed.

In order to ensure the study focus is on heritage themes and the remaining manifestations of those themes, the subsequent sections of the report are presented with less history telling, focusing instead on the central themes of the Shire's heritage and development.

Examples of remaining sites and places of known or potential cultural significance are provided throughout the report. These examples are not exhaustive and a full listing of these sites and places is provided in Volume 4 of the Study.

1.4 Historical Overview

As described above, this thematic environmental history is set out in thematic, but not chronological order. The following table is provided to assist in understand how the historic themes are associated with key dates in the historic development of the Shire. Please note that this table is indicative only of broad timeframes associated with each theme and reference should be made to the appropriate chapter in this environmental history for more specific information about the actual periods of influence for each theme.

Table 1 - Thematic history historical overview

Theme	Period of Influence										
	Pre-1860	1860s	1870s	1880s	1890s	1900s	1910s	1920s	1930s	1940s	1950s
Explorers & first contact											
Settling the land											
Working the land											
Transport & communications											
Economic development											
Governance											
Community & culture											
Building settlements, towns & cities											

	Primary period of influence
	Secondary or continuing period of influence

Explorers and first contact

INTRODUCTION

This era was very important in terms of establishing the potential of the Shire as a place for settlement within the nascent Port Phillip district. The observations made during this time by early explorers led to great interest amongst the early colonial settlers and enabled the first pastoral runs to be established in the district. While little physical evidence of these explorations remains today this era was instrumental in gathering information about South Gippsland, establishing the most viable overland routes and promoting it as a destination for subsequent settlers

Out of all the themes in the history of the Shire it had perhaps the least impact in terms of its initial effects upon the landscape, however, its impact upon the indigenous inhabitants and their traditional lifestyle was devastating.

This chapter incorporates the following Australian Historic Themes:

- Peopling Australia: Living as Australia's earliest inhabitants, Fighting for land.
- Developing local, regional and national economies; Exploring the coastline, Surveying the continent.

HISTORY

2.1 Aboriginal territories and European effects

Territories and language groups

The territories of the Kulin Aboriginal society included much of South Gippsland, including the eastern portion of what is now South Gippsland Shire. Within the Kulin society, five different language groups are recognised. (du Cros & Associates, 1998) The anthropologist, Alfred Howitt (1904, as referred to by Morgan, 1997:13-22) documented differences in their languages, their tribal history, stories and customs. West of the Hoddle Range and south of the Strzelecki Range, the *Bun wurrung* Aboriginal language group occupied the area, which now makes up the central and southeastern portions of South Gippsland Shire, including most of the Tarwin, Powlett and Bass River catchments, extending west to Western Port Bay. The *Bun wurrung* had hostile relations with the *Gunnai* clans and were not part of the larger Kulin grouping. (du Cros & Associates, 1998)

At the time of the first European explorations by sea and during the initial establishment of the sealing and whaling trades in the Wilson's Promontory area, the *Gunnai* Aboriginal language group (sometimes referred to as *Ganai* or *Kurnai* by Europeans) inhabited the Gippsland area from a line running roughly north-south from the Hoddle Range (west of Wilson's Promontory) to what is now the La Trobe Valley in the vicinity of present-day Moe and then eastward to just east of the Snowy River in the Cape Conran area. (Morgan, 1997:14-15) Five separate clans inhabited this area from the southern slopes of the Great Dividing Range to the coast.

The two *Gunnai* clans that inhabited the eastern portion of present-day South Gippsland Shire were the *Bratauolong* in the area roughly south of the Mt Fatigue area extending to Wilson's Promontory, and the *Braiakolung*, who occupied the area to the north, including the current far north eastern part of the Shire near Turton's Creek and areas further north and eastward. The *Bratauolong* moved between a series of permanent and semi-permanent camps extending from the La Trobe River to Cape Liptrap, including Wilson's Promontory.

The *Yowengarra* clan of the *Bun wurrung* group controlled the Tarwin Lower and Inverloch area and was noted by George Augustus Robinson in 1840 as being "a powerful section of the *Boonerong* nation at Western Port". (Charles & Loney, 1989:6)

North of the Strzelecki Range and west of what is now known as the La Trobe Valley in the Moe vicinity, the *Wurundjeri* clan of the Kulin language group occupied the northern part of the Shire, extending westward to the Yarra River area of modern-day Melbourne.

It is estimated that each of the *Gunnai* clans had up to 1,000 clan members prior to European exploration and settlement. (Morgan, 1997:15) They are thought to have moved in groups of 100 or more through their territory. (Charles & Loney 1989;6)

Effects of Europeans on Aboriginal life

The *Bun wurrung* are reportedly the first of the Victorian Aboriginal clans to be met by Europeans when Bass sailed into Western Port in 1798. (Charles & Loney, 1989:7) The first impact of Europeans on the Aboriginal clans was probably associated with the sealers and whalers who established temporary bases in the Wilson's Promontory area during 1798, soon after Bass's exploration of

the coast and reports of large numbers of seals in the area.

Reports of sealers and whalers abducting Aboriginal women from local clans and keeping them around their camps in the Wilson's Promontory area, as well as elsewhere along the southeast Australian coastline are common (Charles & Loney, 1989:6; Colwell, 1969:58). Apparently under the old 'sealers' law', a sealer was entitled to a maximum of five Aboriginal 'wives'. (Carroll, 1989:49, quoting a paper read by J.W. Beattie to the Royal Society of Tasmania in 1911.)

The abduction of women from Aboriginal clans and the annexation of tribal territory by Europeans resulted in inter-tribal raids on women from other Aboriginal clans and a general increase in the conflict between clans from different territories (Charles & Loney, 1989:8), although there is also thought to have been inter-tribal warfare from time to time prior to and separate from European causes. (Morgan, 1997:15)

One such raid on the Tarwin clan by Aborigines from the North Gippsland or Omeo area apparently occurred shortly before white men arrived, resulting in several deaths near the area later to become The Meadows Homestead near Tarwin Lower (Charles & Loney 1989:8). As settlers moved further inland, the Aborigines' land and traditional sources of food and shelter quickly diminished.

The spread of European diseases and viruses to Aboriginal people (including measles, small pox and syphilis), along with changes in lifestyle, diet and direct decimation were also major causes in the rapid reduction of Aboriginal populations in the South Gippsland area. The census of *Bunurong* clan members dropped from 87 in 1838 to 11 in 1863 (Charles & Loney, 1989:8). In the space of thirty years, from the beginnings of permanent European settlement at Port Albert in 1841, the *Bratauolung* were all but destroyed, their numbers dropping from 126 in 1853 to only 17 by 1863. (Charles & Loney, 1989:8) One conservative estimate suggests a population decrease of 95% in less than twenty years of European settlement in South Gippsland. (McNiven, 1995:19) They were forced to take refuge in the inhospitable swamplands or in the mountain ranges, but the effects of disease and cultural dislocation were still keenly felt.

The Aboriginal people were often described as peaceful, shy and inoffensive and there is evidence of cooperation between the two cultures. (Charles & Loney, 1989:7)

General evidence points to coastal Aboriginal clans benefiting in the shorter term from the greater availability of whale meat and offal associated with the European's technological prowess in hunting these creatures (Colwell, 1969:66-69) Aboriginal men sometimes worked as oarsmen for shore-based whaling station operators. They also often worked as guides for settlers intent on exploring South Gippsland. In a harsh land that most Europeans were still struggling to understand, these guides were often the only reason for their survival.

Aboriginal people occasionally worked for European settlers in exchange for food and other items or to camp near sealing or whaling stations and towns. It might be suggested that such employment was due to necessity rather than choice given the diminished opportunities for traditional food gathering by Aborigines.

The Europeans learned quickly to demonstrate and use their firearms. However, there is evidence of violence on both sides of this struggle for land, although European settlers in South Gippsland met with less resistance

from the Bratauolung than their counterparts in central Gippsland. Apparently some of the most terrible clashes took place around Port Albert, and one of the worst massacres of Aboriginal people occurred at Warrigal Creek in 1843 (now within Wellington Shire) where sixty Aboriginal people were killed, reputedly in retaliation for the murder of a white settler. Massacres also happened at Port Albert and Gammon Creek during 1843. (McNiven, 1995:18 & Collett, 1994:28)

There is at least one documented report of Aboriginal people successfully removing European settlers from Rabbit Island near Wilson's Promontory in 1846 and then burning the settler's huts and destroying their garden. (McNiven, 1995:19) This appears to have been associated with evidence of Aboriginal women living in the whaling camps in the 1830s and 1840s, whether by coercion or by choice is not clear. However, incidences of hostility by Ganai men seem to have increased in this period, which may indicate that some of the women had been abducted. (Collett 1994:31)

The Victorian government established a Central Board for the Protection of Aborigines in 1860. (McNiven, 1895:19) The Board worked in association with the Presbyterian Mission Board to establish Ramahyuck Mission Station, an Aboriginal Reserve, in 1863. The Station was located at the mouth of the Avon River, and therefore lies outside the boundaries of South Gippsland Shire. Most of the remaining Bratauolung in the vicinity of Port Albert were relocated to Ramahyuck Mission Station in the mid-1860s. An Aboriginal Mission Station was also established at Lake Tyers in 1861, outside the Shire.

The abduction of Aboriginal women by sealers and whalers created the first source of cultural conflict between European and Aborigines and contributed to conflicts between neighbouring Aboriginal Clans. Undoubtedly the Aboriginal clans were forced into contact with European settlers more often after their lands were usurped and the new settlers' domesticated sheep and cattle took over the areas where the Aboriginal people had previously hunted native animals. On the whole, pastoralists moving into South Gippsland, as with other parts of Victoria, probably did not fully understand or give full recognition to the Aboriginal people.

2.2 Explorers by sea

Pre-1800 explorations and misadventures

The first Europeans came by sea to the waters of Bass Strait and the shores of South Gippsland and Western Port to explore, chart the coastline, and to report on and classify the natural features and economic potential of the land. They also came to lay claim on the land for England by establishing shoreline outposts in the face of real competition from France.

During April of 1770, Lieutenant Zachary Hicks, second-in-command to Captain Cook on the *Endeavour*, sighted a point on the southeastern coast of present-day Victoria, which Cook later named Point Hicks in his honour. *Endeavour* then sailed northeastward, allowing Cook to discover the Victorian coastline from Point Hicks to the New South Wales border. (Calder, 1981:63)

During February of 1797, the *Sydney Cove*, a merchant ship with large quantities of rum and general merchandise, was beached on Preservation Island in the Furneaux Group of islands in Bass Strait. Only three of seventeen sailors survived their longboat and overland journey on to Sydney and two additional vessels were then sent to rescue the remainder of the crew, one of these vessels disappearing without trace on its return.

During October of 1797, a group of fourteen convicts stole a large boat in Sydney with the intention of sailing to Preservation Island to refloat the *Sydney Cove*, reached Wilson's Promontory and landed on Seal Island, being unsure in their navigation to Preservation Island. Half of the convicts decided the original plan was too difficult. They took the boat, left the other seven men stranded and sailed in search of Malaya, their eventual fate unknown. Dangerous seas between Seal Island and the Promontory made if difficult for the remaining convicts to get back to the mainland.

Early in December 1797, George Bass, a young ship's surgeon sought permission from Governor Hunter to make a voyage along the southeastern coast of Victoria. He intended to confirm the popular theory (based on the flow of currents) that a strait separated Van Diemen's Land from the mainland (Collett, 1994:24). Governor Hunter provided Bass with a whaleboat, crew and rations for the exploration. Bass set out from Port Jackson on December 3, 1797, in the company of the *Nautilus*, a vessel dispatched to explore sealing potential along the New South Wales coastline.

Bass arrived at the southern end of Wilson's Promontory on 2 January 1798 unaware of the stranded convicts nearby on Seal Island. He made a brief study of the bird life and vegetation, including the presence of large seal colonies. Departing from the Promontory, his boat sprang a leak and he turned back toward the mainland, passing close to Seal Island. Seeing smoke on the island, he and his party stopped to converse with people whom they thought would be Aborigines, however, found that the fire was that of the seven stranded convicts. (Collett, 1994:24) They shared their small amount of food and supplies with the convicts and promised to come back for them on their return journey.

Bass and his crew reached Western Port three days later and spent ten days documenting the area. Scott (1947:82) noted that this leg of the Bass expedition was the:

..most important discovery that had been made since the establishment of settlement in Australia....Bass' whaleboat voyage showed that the old belief that Van Diemen's Land was a southern extension of New Holland to be improbable. He had not, indeed, positively demonstrated the existence of a strait, though the southwesterly swell, which rolled in upon Westernport convinced him that there was one.

As supplies were running very low, it was necessary for Bass and his crew to turn back towards Port Jackson without establishing complete evidence of the existence of a strait between Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) and the mainland. Heavy seas forced them to beach the whaleboat for three days near Cape Liptrap and when they finally returned to Seal Island, they realised that they could not carry all seven convicts in the whaleboat given the weather and sea conditions. Having shared as much food and clothing as he could spare, Bass put five of the convicts ashore at Sealers Cove, being detained there for another week by strong gales.

When the weather cleared, they again met up with the five convicts who had made their way across the isthmus of the promontory to the northern portion of Corner Inlet. The five convicts were then transported to the eastern end of Ninety Mile Beach, where they were left with instructions to follow the coast back to Sydney, some 500 miles away. After sheltering in Corner Inlet for nearly another week, Bass departed with his crew and two sick convicts for Sydney on 9 February 1798. The other five convicts were never seen again. (Collett, 1994:26)

The *Sydney Cove* episode is significant in that it may have resulted in some of the earliest contact and possible co-habitation between white European convicts and Aborigines in the South Gippsland area. However, as Charles & Loney (1989:15) and Robert Hughes (1987:332) point out, many convicts sought their freedom from Van Diemen's Land by escaping across Bass Strait. As the area from Wilson's Promontory to Anderson Inlet was at the northern end of the shortest route from Tasmania and also along the route of the most easily negotiated currents during calmer weather, some convicts could well have landed in South Gippsland after 1804.

Although the dates do not entirely coincide with the reported weather patterns and Bass makes no mention of it in his journal, Collet indicates that Bass met up with his friend and fellow explorer Matthew Flinders near the entrance to Corner Inlet on 1 February 1798. Bass had mistakenly thought the promontory was "Furneaux Land", believing it had been sighted by Tobias Furneaux in 1773. Soon afterwards, however, Flinders suggested that it be renamed Wilson's Promontory in honour of his London shipping merchant friend, Thomas Wilson. It happens that Flinders was on a mission from Sydney to salvage the cargo of the *Sydney Cove.* (Collett, 1994:26)

During October 1798, Bass and Flinders circumnavigated Van Diemen's Land together, proving once and for all that a strait really existed and that what we now know as Tasmania was not connected to mainland Australia. Remarkably, this was the last exploratory mission by Bass, but it established Flinders as a navigator of high capacity worthy of more important tasks. (Scott, 1947:83)

Over the next four years, Flinders made several excursions into Bass Strait, naming the strait after his friend and naming many of the other islands and features of the strait.

Explorations from 1800 to 1826

During 1800, Lieutenant James Grant in command of the *Lady Nelson* was instructed by Governor King to assist Flinders with his explorations of Bass Strait and to pass through Bass Strait from the west, sailing relatively close inshore along the western coastline of Victoria. The *Lady Nelson* was a vessel of 60 tons, fitted out for making surveys and discoveries along the Australian coast. (Scott, 1947:83)

Although Grant named many of the prominent features of the coast, including Wilson's Promontory, he did not enter Port Phillip Bay or Western Port Bay during this trip. (Calder, 1981:64) However, Grant in the *Lady Nelson* was the next to visit to Western Port after Bass, passing Wilson's Promontory and Cape Patterson and entering Western Port on 21 March, 1801. He was the first person noted for cultivating Victorian soil (on Churchill Island) for wheat, vegetables and fruit trees during this 33-day stay at Western Port. (Committee of the South Gippsland Pioneers Association, 1920:2)

After returning to England for a visit during 1800, Captain Matthew Flinders was placed in command of the *Investigator* with instructions to resolve the remaining geographical configuration of Australia. He returned to Australia on this mission on 6 December 1801. (Scott, 1947:85) During the next year, Flinders discovered and mapped the entire southern coastline of the continent from the head of the Great Australian Bight to Encounter Bay. His surveys of the coastline proved remarkably accurate, given the technology of the day and years later were shown to largely match the coastline documented by modern aerial photography. As Scott (1947:85) describes:

By pursuing Spencer's Gulf and St. Vincent's Gulf to their extremities he demonstrated that there was no strait splitting the country into islands. In the following year, 1803, he produced a map of the whole continent showing it to be one vast island.

Flinders' survey, which received significant backing following Bass's expedition to Western Port and Wilson's Promontory, and their joint circumnavigation of Van Diemen's Land eventually led to his publication of *A Voyage to Terra Australis* and his referral to the continent as "Australia", which gradually came into general use and was formally adopted as the name for the newly colonised continent by Governor Macquarie in 1817. (Scott 1947:86)

On a scientific expedition for the *Institution de France*, the French explored the Victorian coastline during 1802 with the vessels *La Geographe*, commanded by Captain Baudin and *La Naturaliste,* commanded by Captain Hamelin. After being separated by a storm, *La Naturaliste*, entered and chartered Western Port, while *La Geographe,* commanded by Captain Baudin, examined the coast of Wilson's Promontory and sailed westward along the Victorian and South Australian coastline to Kangaroo Island (Calder, 1981:64).

It was during this mission that a group from the *La Geographe* was the first Europeans to come ashore on the Tarwin Lower beach at what is now called Anderson's Inlet. The geographer Francois Peron was the first to use the name Venus Bay in reference to the embayment between Cape Patterson and Cape Liptrap (Charles & Loney, 1989:12)

In October of 1803, Lieutenant-Colonel David Collins established a settlement at what is now known as Sorrento on the Mornington Peninsula. Nearly 300 convicts and a guard of marines and civilian staff members accompanied him. Collins did not like Port Phillip and made little attempt to find the best site for a colony on the bay or to fully explore the lower reaches of the Yarra River. By June of 1804, Collins was permitted to withdraw his whole company from Port Phillip, transferring them to the Derwent River in Van Diemen's Land. (Scott, 1947:93-94)

Towards the end of 1804, Lieutenants Robbins and Oxley were dispatched in the cutter *Integrity* to report on the most suitable place for a post of occupancy, Port Phillip or Western Port. (Committee of the South Gippsland Pioneers Association, 1920:2) Port Phillip, at the mouth of the Yarra River was preferred. This second opinion on Port Phillip Bay may well have been due to Governor King's overriding concern for preventing French occupation of Australia and Collins' unconcealed scorn for Port Phillip, despite previous good reports from Murray and Flinders. (Scott, 1947:93) In any event, settlement and exploration of South Gippsland from the Western Port area did not occur with as much vigour or as early as explorations and settlements from the north and east.

Even the site on the Yarra River was not seriously pursued again until Batman claimed it as a *'place for a village'* in 1835.

In 1826, the fear of the French establishing settlements in unoccupied parts of Australia led to Captain Wetherall in HMS *Fly* and the brig *Dragon* sailing with 20 soldiers, 20 convicts and a few women to Western Port. Captain Wright and Lieutenant Burchell were in charge. William Hilton Hovell accompanied Captain Wetherall, correcting an error he had made in Corio Bay two years before, thinking it was Western Port at that time. Wetherall decided to form a settlement close to where Corinella now stands, six miles north of the Bass River. They were surprised to see a number of men clothed in sealskin garments on the beach. These were sealers from Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) who had lived on the island for some years and had built log huts and grown crops of wheat and maize.

Early 1840s explorations leading to permanent settlement

Fourteen years after Wetherall's establishment of the Corinella settlement (which was short lived), Anderson Inlet was further explored by Assistant Surveyor, TS Townsend, during 1840 following the overland exploration of the inlet and the lower estuary of the Tarwin River by Samuel Anderson of Anderson's Station near the Bass River and the shore of Western Port. (Murphy, 1988:3)

During early January of 1841, the wreck of the passenger steamer *Clonmel* on the outer sandbanks at the entrance to the Albert River led to the discovery of *"valuable tracts of land and a magnificent harbour (Corner Inlet)"* by the Melbourne Harbourmaster Captain Lewis during his rescue of the *Clonmel's* passengers (Collett, 1994:34 & Morgan, 1997:35). Corner Inlet and the general area may have already been known by previous maritime explorers, sealers and whalers, however, the 1841 discovery focused attention on the Port Albert area by a more settled population in Melbourne at that time, leading to a subsequent settlement boon for Gippsland.

During 1841, a party of settlers from Melbourne, including A. Brodribb, chartered the vessel *Singapore* to Port Albert and named the Albert and Tarra Rivers. They were astonished to find the tracks of Angus McMillan's, which they followed to the La Trobe River. (Committee of the South Gippsland Pioneers Association 1920:11; Murphy, 1988:4-7 & Morgan, 1997:35)

2.3 Sealing, whaling and Wattle bark stripping

Environmental context

The sea explorers were both followed and preceded by the sealing and whaling merchants, who also sought to make money by using their crews to strip bark from the coastal wattle trees and to shoot kangaroos and wallabies for their skins, which were then shipped to Europe for sale as hides and tanning agents. Along with seal meat and fish, mutton birds were also available in countless numbers seven months of the year, from October to April along the shores of Bass Strait, as Carroll (1989:44) describes:

When seals became scarce it was to the mutton bird that the sealers generally turned for income. The birds provided four saleable products - feathers, eggs, oil and the carcass, split and dried.

During the late 1700s and early 1800s, the only source of pure, clean oil for lamps was from elephant seals or whales. This oil was much better than smelly tallow or costly beeswax candles.

It is believed that the first Europeans to build semi-permanent settlements in South Gippsland were whalers and sealers. Physical evidence suggests they had bases at Wilson's Promontory as early as 1798. Sealing stations were built on Wilson's Promontory at Sealer's Cove, Lady Bay (now Refuge Cove), Bareback Cove and Waterloo Bay soon after George Bass reported seeing large colonies of seals in the area. Sealing was carried on in the area until the 1820s when sealers had to move further west along the shores of Bass Strait in search of their quarry.

Sealing

Sealing was a tough business. Following Surgeon George Bass' naming of Seal Cove at Wilson's Promontory in 1798, hundreds of colonial, British and American adventurers descended on the shores and islands of Bass Strait to slaughter seals for their skins and sea elephants for their superior oil. Sealing companies would set down and pick up gangs of sealers and trade sealskins, kangaroo skins and salt for clothing, tobacco, rum and ammunition. Some gangs remained in one place for years or were left behind by the mother ship. (Carroll, 1989:43) The elephant seals were skinned, their fat - sometimes a foot thick - removed, diced and boiled down for the oil. The rest of their bodies, except the tongues, which were salted, were discarded. The fur seals were an easy mark, but were mainly good for their hides.

By the end of the 1820s, there were over 1800 sealers hunting every bay, nook and corner of the Victorian coast. During the summer of 1820-21, the Bass Strait islands were seething with sealing activity. Fifteen to twenty British vessels and about thirty American ships were working the islands. Violent gales claimed seven of the crews. The Williams is recorded to have had a cargo of 60,000 sealskins on one trip. That was the hey-day of sealing, the likes of which would never be seen again. The seal populations had been decimated to an almost unviable level. (Carroll, 1989:43-44)

After this, many of the better-organised and financed sealing parties withdrew, making room for the emergence of independent operators and gangs of runaway seamen and escaped convicts. The mindless slaughter of seals eventually destroyed the trade. By the 1860s, the three species of seal common to this area, the Australian and New Zealand fur seals and the Australian sea lion were virtually extinct. (Collett 1994:30)

In addition to the havoc sealers brought to both the seal and Aboriginal populations, they were also credited with having brought rabbits to Rabbit Island off Wilson's Promontory. (Charles & Loney, 1989:15)

The significance of the sealing trade in South Gippsland is that it brought some of the earliest Europeans who had semi-permanent bases at Wilson's Promontory. These men had not only had a major impact on the Aboriginal culture. They were also responsible for one of Australia's greatest environmental disasters - the near extermination of the fur seal and sea lion populations from mainland coastal areas. They may also have been responsible for the introduction of rabbits to the mainland.

Whaling

Whalers had been in the waters off southeast Australia since the late 1790s. They often occupied former sealing stations as their own bases. During the whaling season, from May to October, whaling ships came to the region from the United States, Russia and France. (Collett, 1994:30) However, merchants from Launceston in Tasmania financed many of the ventures. Inter-colonial rivalry was very strong from the 1820s on and the Port Phillip Patriot complained on 12

August 1841 “the oil industry is in the hands of foreign interests”. (As quoted in Collett, 1994:30)

There is little evidence of contact between the whalers and local Aborigines and it is possible that the Aborigines actively discouraged contact because of previous attacks on their women by sealers and escaped convicts. Whaling stations were sometimes used as places of refuge for escaped convicts from Van Diemen’s Land, after making their way across Bass Strait. They used these bases to rest before traveling on to Port Phillip. The whaler’s reputations for dangerous and violent behaviour were well founded. Collett (1994:31) describes the end of season revelling:

(The whalers) links with society and with governments were few and reluctant, their ways secretive ... their behaviour crude and their work dangerous. ...The whaling ships were manned by particularly ‘rough men’ who landed in Hobart Town at the end of the season, where they spent money in pubs and brothels and in fighting and violent behaviour.

In contrast, some of the entrepreneurs who owned and managed sealing and whaling companies were upstanding men of high standards and good reputations, as we find in the accounts of the likes of John Griffiths and John and Charles Mills from the Tamar River area of Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania). These men were successful merchants, and their exploits ranged from New Zealand to Wilson’s Promontory to Kangaroo Island in South Australia. They were also successful colonisers of the township of Port Fairy on Victoria's west coast (refer to Carroll, 1989 and Powling, 1980).

The whaling industry went into a decline in South Gippsland and in Bass Strait generally during the early 1840s, when the inshore herds had been wiped out. By the late 1840s the remaining stations at Wilson’s Promontory were used mainly for processing before being abandoned altogether.

As late as 1844, G H Haydon observed Lady's Bay on the east side of Wilson’s Promontory while on an overland expedition:

Numbers of fish (whales) must have been killed on Lady's Bay, as the beach is literally strewn with their huge bones. On landing here in November 1844 a discovery was made of a large tripod, which had evidently been used for extracting the oil and was in good preservation. Near the shore lay the remains of a Captain Wishart. A piece of board with carved letters on it informing the visitor that he belonged to a whaler called The Wallaby and was killed by the blow of a whale's fluke in 1830 (Charles & Loney 1989:14)

The sealing and whaling industries were obviously not highly controlled, although certain industry regulations and later government acts were put in place in the 1830's and 1840's. (Carroll, 1989:86-87; Colwell, 1969:28 & 63-64) Competition and over-fishing contributed to the decline of the industry and the focus of the whaling industry shifted far offshore into the waters of the Antarctic.

Bass Strait sealing and whaling were highly significant economic activities, being Australia's first viable export industries, pre-dating the rise of the sheep industry by more than a decade. However, in South Gippsland the sealing and whaling industry was primarily significant due to the environmental destruction it brought on certain whale species. This served as an early example of unsustainable economies based on unsuitable environmental management practices.

Wattle Bark stripping connections with Tasmania and Port Fairy

Black wattle (*Acacia melonoyln)* grew along the coastal estuaries in many parts of Victoria and Tasmania and gained economic value when Kent discovered the suitability of this wattle tree bark for tanning purposes during 1819. (Historical Records of Australia, III, III, pp.255-256; and Bethell p.43, as referenced by Carroll, 1989:35) In Tasmania (then known as Van Diemen's Land), local farmers in the Tamar River area began stripping the bark for export to England via Hobart and Sydney.

During 1834, Captain Hart, master of the schooner Elizabeth of Launceston, owned by John Griffiths, brought a team of bullocks, a dray and 20 men for the collection of wattle bark. The men were members of Griffiths' whaling company and employing them in wattle bark stripping work was a method used by Griffiths and other whaling operators to keep their whaling crews together during the whaling off-season and to prevent them being employed by the opposition (Carroll, 1989:62-66; Committee of the South Gippsland Pioneers Association, 1920:5). Hart was able to collect a cargo of 15 tons of wattle bark, which he took to Sydney and sold for export to England.

While in Sydney, Hart chartered the *Andromede* to collect another 360 tons of bark from Western Port. The bark was transported in *Andromede* to London during December, 1835 and sold for about £13 per ton. (Carroll 1989:66; *Launceston Advertiser* 16 April 1835; and Bride (ed.), 1983)

The Western Port and Port Fairy areas were popular bases for wattle bark stripping, but this industry could well have extended to other estuaries within present-day South Gippsland Shire, probably at Anderson Inlet and along the Tarwin River, Shallow Inlet and Corner Inlet shorelines.

John and Charles Mills, along with Alex Campbell (three of the more prominent colonial sealers and whalers associated with John Griffiths and mutual interests in the Portland and Port Fairy areas) are noted as having been involved in wattle bark stripping and sperm whaling expeditions in the Western Port area during 1835-36 (John Mills Chronicle c.1901; Harbourmasters Record of Vessels Leaving Launceston, 10 September 1835 as quoted in Carroll 1989:66). It is highly likely that these men also engaged in whaling activities in the Wilson's Promontory area.

It seems probable that G.H. Haydon's reference to the remains of Captain Wishart near the shore at Lady Bay (Charles & Loney, 1989:14) could have been Captain James Wishart, whom it is claimed may have named the bay of Port Fairy after his cutter *Fairy* in about 1828. (Powling, 1980:8) If this is so, this is another example of the manner in which the men of the sealing and whaling industry ranged along the southeastern coastline of Australia during that time.

2.4 Explorers by Land

Hovell (1826)
During 1826, William Hovell was part of Captain Wetherall's expedition to establish a military settlement on the shores of Western Port, close to where Corinella now stands (Committee of the South Gippsland Pioneers Association, 1920:4). This would have been a bittersweet visit for Hovell, as he and Hume had mistakenly reported Port Phillip and Corio Bays as being Western Port during their expedition in 1824. (Morgan, 1997:26)

The Committee of the South Gippsland Pioneers Association (1920:4) described the three exploratory forays made by Hovell from the newly established settlement into the surrounding country:

Hovell made his first exploration eastward towards Cape Liptrap, where he found a considerable area of good land, but an insufficient supply of water, and he also found the coal deposits at Cape Patterson. On his return he made a twelve days' expedition and penetrated the open country between Cranbourne and Western Port. He made a third start, but got entangled in the thickets surrounding the Kooweerup Swamp, and then striking west made his way over the timbered rises behind Mount Eliza until he reached Port Phillip near Frankston.

McMillan (1839–1841)
Angus McMillan, a Scottish immigrant, is generally credited with discovering Gippsland, which he named 'Caledonia Australis' after his country of origin. (Billis & Kenyan, 1974) In 1839, an Aboriginal guide named Jimmy Gibber showed McMillan the way over the mountains (Great Dividing Range) to Omeo, where McMillan formed Nublamungee Station on the Tambo River.

McMillan continued to explore the north and central regions of Gippsland in four distinct expeditions undertaken a careful forays from base camps during 1840 and 1841. He was intent on locating a suitable port from which cattle could be transported. After penetrating the South Gippsland Hills, he reached the site of what was referred to as "Old Port" east of Wilson's Promontory on 14 February 1841 (Morgan, 1997:35; Calder, 1981:65)

McMillan's discoveries led to an immediate pastoral settlement of the lands around the central plains and lakes of Gippsland, spurred on by Lachlan Macalister's rush to get his people and cattle into this country before others. McMillan did not excessively promote his discoveries at the time, leaving this up to his employer Macalister in Sydney, who kept the discoveries quiet for his own purposes.

Macarthur-Strzelecki (1840)
It has most frequently been reported that Count Paul Edmund de Strzelecki organised and led the 1840 exploration of South Gippsland. However, TJ Coverdale (Committee of the South Gippsland Pioneers Association, 1920:100) reported that this expedition was actually organised and paid for by James Macarthur and that Strzelecki was the:

.. 'navigating lieutenant' of the party and was glad of the opportunity afforded him of making certain scientific observations he had long been desirous of undertaking..

The five-man party set off soon after McMillan from the Yass Plains along the Murrumbidgee during January 1840. Their intention was to explore the country for pastoral opportunities and:

.. to strike south from the crossing place on the Murrumbidgee, along the meridian of 148 degrees E., to bisect

the dividing range in latitude 37 degrees S., to resume the southern direction and follow windings of the range to Wilson's Promontory, then to re-bisect it in the direction of Westernport. (Committee of the South Gippsland Pioneers Association, 1920:9)

Macarthur and Strzelecki took the same route through the mountains struck by McMillan and made reasonable progress in the early part of the journey. Strzelecki was known for his exaggeration and tendency to compete. Due to this, the expedition was seen as a rivalry with McMillan, however, the two expeditions had complementary functions. (Morgan, 1997:32)

The journey became far more difficult when the party reached the La Trobe River, around the Rosedale area, where McMillan's exploratory tracks ceased. At this point the party began to encounter the most difficult terrain so far, with steep hills and gullies, thick and impenetrable scrub. Plans to reach Corner Inlet were abandoned and Strzelecki chose the most direct route possible to Western Port, which lead the party through some of the most difficult terrain in the South Gippsland Shire. Rations were diminishing, and each man had to tackle the arduous travelling on just one slice of bacon and one biscuit per day. (Committee of the South Gippsland Pioneers Association, 1920:10)

The party had with them an Aboriginal guide named Charley Tarra, to whom credit for the survival of the men is generally acknowledged. Tarra's knowledge of the bush kept them from starvation, though they arrived at the Corinella settlement in a state of extreme exhaustion. All five men had been through a trying physical ordeal. The region was named 'Gipps Land' in honour of Governor George Gipps of New South Wales.

On their arrival in Port Phillip, Strzelecki published glowing reports in the Port Phillip Patriot of what he had seen. He praised the potential grazing and pastoral lands and the valuable blue gum and blackbutt timber (as reported in *Port Philip Patriot* 14 October 1841 & 22 January 1842) Strzelecki also noted deposits of gold, silver, iron and coal, which would later play defining roles in the economic development of South Gippsland. Strzelecki reportedly desired fame and honour, promoting and boasting about his feat, seldom giving credit to Macarthur, McMillan or others.

The discoveries of McMillan and Macarthur-Strzelecki expeditions led to the settlement of Gippsland from two different directions - the settlement of north and central Gippsland by McMillan's followers from the north, via Omeo, and the settlement of South Gippsland via Port Albert by The Gipps Land Company and others to follow. (Morgan, 1997:33) However, it took nearly 35 years for the heavily timbered area the Macarthur-Strzelecki Party explored to be settled by selectors after 1875.

Anderson (1840)

Strzelecki and his party had visited Samuel Anderson, who had established a station on the Bass River near Western Port in 1837, after surviving their ordeal across the South Gippsland Hills in 1840. Anderson, inspired by Strzelecki, decided to explore more of Southwest Gippsland and he and his friend, John Thom, travelled northeasterly toward the present site of Korumburra. They were blocked by the same impenetrable forest that had inhibited Strzelecki and were diverted southward where they eventually came upon an inlet that they identified as 'Shallow Lagoon' on Flinders' chart. They explored further up the inlet, reaching the mouth of the Tarwin River, which they described as "...from 50 to 70 yards wide, and evidently very deep".

Anderson later sent a description of the area to Superintendent La Trobe, suggesting that the river be named after the Superintendent. As Strzelecki had already named a river in central Gippsland after La Trobe, the river was given the name 'Tarwin', derived from the Aboriginal word 'darwhin', meaning 'thirsty' or 'fruit of creeper'. Following Anderson's account of his discovery, La Trobe sent Assistant Surveyor TS Townsend to further explore the inlet, which was then named Anderson's Inlet. Townsend filed his report to the Melbourne Survey Office during December 1840. (Murphy, 1988:2-3)

Brodribb (1841)

On 13 February 1841, a party of settlers from The Gipps Land Company (later the Port Albert Company) arrived at Snake Island on the *Singapore*, which they had chartered in Melbourne in order to explore and settle the Port Albert area. Members of the Gippsland Company arrived at the Port Albert site within a few days following McMillan and were astonished to find McMillan's Tracks, which they followed to the La Trobe River. William Brodribb (or possibly Albert Brodribb and Odell Raymond - see Murphy, 1988:4-7) led an exploratory party from the company, finding and naming the Albert and Tarra Rivers in honour of Prince Albert and their Aboriginal guide, Charley Tarra, who was the same guide from New South Wales who had assisted Strzelecki during his earlier Gippsland exploration. (Morgan, 1997:35)

After also finding and naming Lake Wellington, Brodribb, Charlie Tarra and a group of men turned westward and marched toward Western Port, abandoning their packhorses after the first day. After 14 days (during ten of which it rained without ceasing) they forced their way through scrub on the 15th day to lower and less broken country (perhaps the Tarwin Lower area). Their provisions exhausted they lived on "monkey" (koalas), pheasants and parrots.

Finally, on the 18th day they reached Western Port and were transferred by boat by Surveyor Smith to Dr Jamieson's station near present-day Tooradin on 13 April 1841. They were thoroughly exhausted and suffering severely from scrub cuts with their clothes completely torn off them. As with the Strzelecki expedition, their survival was largely credited to the Aboriginal bush knowledge of Charlie Tarra. (Morgan, 1997:37 - Note: Murphy, 1988:4-5 associates this story with a trip made by Odell Raymond in August 1842)

Subsequently, the Brodribb party travelled east, following a route south of the current Princes Highway corridor and north of Strzelecki's previous route, through the forests between the Kooweerup Swamp and the headwaters of the La Trobe River. (Committee of the South Gippsland Pioneers Association, 1920:11)

Robinson (1844)

The search for a passable livestock route between Port Albert and Port Phillip was made by various parties in light of difficulties associated with the shipping of livestock via the ports at that time. During 1844, the Chief Protector of Aborigines, Mr GA Robinson and a party of twelve men were charged with the job of finding a suitable land route along the coast to Port Albert from Melbourne. This party included six native police under Sergeant Major Windridge, three convicts and an Englishman named GH Haydon. The party made good progress to the Tarwin River, but took several days to ford the river and after a further three-week struggle with depleted provisions, they were met by a relief party sent from the settlement of Victoria, the surveyed township adjacent to Port Albert. (Murphy, 1988:5-6)

HERITAGE

Heritage places identified by the Study that illustrate the theme of *Explorers and first contact* include:

Aboriginal culture
Unfortunately, little physical evidence of pre-European Aboriginal culture heritage remains. Morgan (1997:21) indicates that most of the *Gunnai's* language and customs were gone by the early 1900s, however, descendants still live today in the Lakes Tyers and other Aboriginal centres. Many middens and artefacts from former Aboriginal campsites still exist along the coast and other areas of South Gippsland Shire.

One of the greater difficulties of identifying post-contact Aboriginal heritage sites and places within South Gippsland Shire is the long period of time it took to completely settle the region. Certainly the Aborigines had contact with the early explorers and the sealers and whalers along the coast from the late 1700s through the 1840s. However, significant settlement in the southern part of the Shire took place after that period, from the 1840s through the early 1870s. In the northern part of the Shire, significant European settlement did not occur until the early 1860s.

Memory of the Aboriginal culture is most obviously present today in place names derived from Aboriginal language, such as *woorayl* (lyre bird), the *Bunurong* coastal area, *Gunyah Gunyah* (an area of forest in the upper Franklin River area. Recently an Aboriginal Toe-Hold Tree has been identified in the Gunyah Gunyah area. (Foster Mirror, August, 1998.) The Australian Heritage Commission and Aboriginal Affairs Victoria within the Victorian Department of Human Services protect most of these sites under the *Archaeological and Aboriginal Relics Act* 1972.

Explorers by sea
Aside from the place names given for certain geographic features, such as Bass Strait, Wilson's Promontory and Sealers Cove, there is no physical evidence left in South Gippsland Shire of the maritime explorers or their activities. However, diaries, sketches and other memorabilia from these expeditions remain with several major libraries and museums in Australia and overseas.

Sealing, whaling & Wattle bark stripping
Physical remnants of structures and artefacts dating back to the sealing and whaling days are still in evidence at Wilson's Promontory. A number of granite and brick structures, building sites, portions of jetties and other remains of the whaling or later sawmilling activities are registered on the State Heritage Inventory at Sealer's Cove, Refuge Cove and Waterloo Bay. Wilson's Promontory is among five sealing and whaling sites in Victoria to be reviewed by Karen Townrow on behalf of Heritage Victoria during 1997; however, the promontory was not one of the four sites for which an archaeological survey was conducted. (Townrow 1997) Wilson's Promontory and artefacts from the sealing and whaling days continue to serve as a reminder of this adventurous and environmentally regrettable period in Australia's history.

Explorers by land
There are few remaining physical examples of the land-based explorers, other than place names, some roads that bear explorer names and (in some cases) closely follow early tracks, and a number of monuments in honour of Strzelecki.

Settling the land

INTRODUCTION

The process of settling the land, which began in the 1830s, has led to some of the most profound changes to the landscape of the Shire. As we shall see, the Shire proved most suitable for both pastoral and agricultural development. The issue of pastoral licences and, later, land selection resulted in the subdivision of the land, clearing of the splendid forests for stock, crops and for building timbers. In addition, the nature of the tenure of the land (leasehold, freehold, small or large holdings) influenced the nature of the agricultural activities that were carried out, which will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

The key phases of development may be summarised as:

Pastoralism era

This era began with the arrival of the first squatters in the late 1830s, reached its zenith by the 1860s, and began to wane with the opening up of the land for selection from the 1860s onwards. As we shall see in the following chapter, the primary activity associated with this era was grazing, which is still carried on in parts of the Shire today.

Selection era

This era began with the passing of a series of Land Acts in the 1860s, which by the end of that decade opened up almost the whole of Victoria for selection. By the mid-twentieth century much of the land in the Shire had been taken up. As we shall see in the following chapter, this led to the decline of grazing and the development of a diverse farming community in which dairying, cheese-making, agriculture, the breeding of sheep and cattle were major occupations over many decades and into recent times.

The changes caused by these eras altered the district landscape forever and created the pastoral scene throughout much of the Shire that is widely valued today.

This chapter incorporates the following Australian Historic Themes:

- Peopling Australia: Promoting settlement

HISTORY

3.1 Pastoral era

Introduction

The Pastoral era began with the squatters who began flooding into the Port Phillip District after 1834. In 1836, the occupation of squatting was legalized and this encouraged a "further wave of fortune hunters", and by 1850 all but the most uninviting or inaccessible areas of Victoria such as the northern Wimmera, Mallee or Gippsland had been occupied. (Dingle, 1984:28, 68)

As we shall see early settlement through land selection in South Gippsland took place during and following the period of exploration, sealing and whaling, in the following general sequence:

- Coastal footholds from 1826 through the 1860s.
- Central inland areas of the Tarwin River catchment primarily from the 1860s through the 1890s.
- Strzelecki Ranges and northern portions of the Shire during the late 1870s through the 1890s.

In the beginning, the changes to the natural landscape were, comparatively speaking, relatively small. Labour and capital were scarce and on most runs there were no fences apart from those around holding yards. There were no sown pastures, no fodder crops and only the most rudimentary buildings. Dingle (1984:28) notes that "Because they did not own the land and had no security of tenure, squatters kept housing and fixed equipment to a minimum".

However, in 1847 as part of the *Sale of Waste Lands Act*, new regulations were gazetted allowing squatters to purchase pre-emptive rights to their homestead blocks. Pastoral run holders who previously held grazing leases (sometimes called 'grass rights') were able to purchase up to 260 ha. (640 acres) of their runs before any land in the locality was made available for purchase by the general public (Peel, 49-53) This privilege was given in recognition of their pioneering efforts.

The import of this legislation is that it gave landholders more certainty and thus encouraged them to construct more permanent and substantial homes, outbuildings and other structures, which began to alter the landscape of the Shire, a process that was further accelerated by the selection era.

As the colonial squatters consolidated their holdings, improved their earlier dwellings, and came to live on their stations with their families, rather than appointing managers, they began to assume the role of landed gentry. These gentlemen squatters enjoyed a more affluent lifestyle, entertaining other squatting families, and engaging in hunting and other sporting pursuits.

Coastal Footholds

During 1803 Lieutenant-Colonel Collins established a settlement at Sorrento on Port Phillip Bay in order to thwart any claims the French may have planned to make on Australia. The site of present-day Melbourne was not chosen due to the perceived number and aggressiveness of Aborigines at that time. The Sorrento settlement was abandoned within a year and transferred to Tasmania, where it became the nucleus of Hobart.

During 1804, Lieutenants Robbins and Oxley in the cutter Integrity examined Western Port for a post to occupy, however, they jointly condemned Western Port, probably due to the swampy nature of the shoreline and the dense thickets of vegetation along the shores. For the next twenty years, Victoria was not seriously considered for settlement except by the sealers,

whalers and occasional escaped convicts. (Committee for the South Gippsland Pioneers Association 1920:2)

Hume and Hovell's mistakenly positive reports on Western Port at the time of their expedition to Corio Bay in 1824 renewed interest in the area. Captain Wetherall commanded a party of 20 soldiers and 20 convicts, along with a few women, other naval officers and William Hovell, which established a settlement at Settlement Point (Corinella) along the Western Port shore located about 6 miles north of the Bass River.

Wetherall also erected a flagstaff and an emplacement of two six-pound guns on a commanding hill site on Phillip Island, calling this Fort Dumaresq. (Committee for the South Gippsland Pioneers Association 1920:4) This settlement was abandoned within a year, along with a mob of cattle that multiplied and spread throughout the Bass and Powlett River catchments over the following years.

Interest in the Port Phillip and Western Port districts for livestock grazing by Van Diemen's Land pastoralists grew during 1826, however, applications for land grants were refused in that year. Although various wattle bark stripping crews may have set up temporary camps along the shores of Western Port in the meantime, it was not until 1835 that John Pascoe Fawkner and others attempted to sail the schooner *Enterprise* to Western Port in order to establish a settlement. Fawkner's ship was stymied by bad weather and sea sickness and was returned to Van Diemen's Land before the group had sailed past Tasman Heads. The others who reached Western Port were so discouraged by the appearance of the place in the cold winter rain that they abandoned the area as unfit for settlement. (Committee for the South Gippsland Pioneers Association, 1920:6)

Later during 1835, Fawkner and John Batman established a settlement on the Yarra River that was to become the site of Melbourne. Shortly following that, Samuel Anderson, with the assistance of two or three hired workers, established a wheat farm on the banks of the Bass River adjacent to Western Port Bay. The wild cattle from the former Settlement Point settlement provided an adequate source of beef. Robert Massie joined Anderson in partnership at Anderson's station in August 1937, after the first season's wheat crop had been sold for a good profit. (Murphy 1988:1-2) Anderson's brother Hugh also later joined the station, which was known as Old Settlement Station. Murphy (1988:2) includes the following quote by Samuel Rawson, a visitor to the farm, who wrote this description of the station in his journal on 9 February 1840:

Massie and Anderson have about 150 acres under the plow - they sold their wheat at 23s. a bushel, and cleared altogether by the farm upwards of £1400. The climate here being so superior to Sydney that there is a failure in the crop; they keep no sheep or cattle...

Grazing and cattle runs

During 1839, Robert Jamieson, who had a station along the eastern shores of Port Phillip, took possession of a run at the head of Western Port Bay that was afterwards known as Yallock or Jamieson's Station (Committee for the South Gippsland Pioneers Association, 1920:8). Once initial settlements had been established along the coast, a second wave of settlers came to South Gippsland in search of pastoral runs. Some came overland from New South Wales, others through the new sea ports.

Following his expedition to the Omeo area from the Monaro Plains of New

South Wales in 1839, Angus McMillan came to settle in Gippsland in January 1840. McMillan spent his first months bringing 500 head of cattle down from the mountains, cutting tracks through the rugged countryside and preparing a homestead. His pastoral run, Bushy Park, was located on the Avon River between the present day towns of Boisdale and Briagalong.

The effect of McMillan's established cattle run and Strzelecki's enthusiasm for the region led to a rush for land in South Gippsland in the latter half of 1840. Settlers from Port Phillip and New South Wales were attracted to the region for a number of reasons. The neighbouring pastoral areas across the ranges in New South Wales were becoming overcrowded. Those who wanted to increase their land holdings were forced to look further afield and this resulted in settlers from New South Wales beginning to drove stock to South Gippsland via Port Albert and the overland routes blazed by McMillan and the Macarthur-Strzelecki Party. (However, not following the section of route through the dense forests of the Strzelecki Ranges.)

Those from Port Phillip who were keen to take advantage of the much-praised grazing lands in South Gippsland were hindered by the isolation of the place. There were no established overland routes from Melbourne and there was no harbour through which to transport goods and livestock by sea. This would continue to be one of the enduring difficulties of creating profitable commercial ventures in South Gippsland.

The colony experienced commercial panic in the sheep industry during 1841. While stocking up the new country, the size of flocks had increased beyond the local demand. As the values for meat and wool decreased, the sheep were boiled down for tallow and the refuse used for manure or wasted. (Committee for the South Gippsland Pioneers Association, 1920:11-12)

The Gippsland Company was to established a settlement at Port Albert and by June 1841, the township of Victoria had been surveyed and settlers were beginning to arrive in large numbers from Melbourne. From Port Albert, the settlers opened up the interior of Gippsland. They brought with them herds of Shorthorn cattle and Merino sheep. Within two years, the plains around Port Albert were almost entirely taken up by settlers, and the coastal plains of South Gippsland were being taken up for cattle runs during the same period.

'Tarwin Meadows', located near the coast just east of the Tarwin River, was one of the more fertile areas to be found between Port Albert and Western Port and was taken up as a cattle run by George Raff in 1842. His nearest run holder was Alexander Chisholm, who held the grazing rights to 256,000 acres of land known as the 'Wild Cattle Run' or 'The Wild Cattle Country', located between the Powlett River and the Tarwin River.

At that time the Run had a carrying capacity of one beast per 400 acres and was rented for an annual sum of £10 plus threepence per head of cattle. Raff sold his lease of the 'Tarwin Meadows' run in 1843 to Edward Hobson who in turn transferred it during 1845 to Alexander Hunter in partnership with Raff and a Mr Bourne. All of these leaseholders used 'Tarwin Meadows' as a resting place or staging camp for stock en route from Western Port to Port Albert and none of them spent much time there. (Murphy, 1988:11)

A number of cattle runs covered the South Gippsland area, as evidenced by a map reproduced in *The Land of the Lyre Bird* (Committee of the South Gippsland Pioneers Association, 1920:14). It is estimated that the

boundaries on this map probably pre-date 1851 as they do not indicate the extended 'Tarwin Meadows' boundaries associated with the purchase of that tract by George Black at that time. (Charles & Loney, 1989:31) However, the cattle run boundaries do not indicate which areas were actually grazed at that time. The 'Wild Cattle Country' and 'Tarwin East' were taken up by the early 1840s. Other cattle and sheep runs were opened up in the country between Port Albert and Wilson's Promontory during the mid-1840s. However, the livestock was subject to Coastal Disease and many of these runs were not successful. The coast runs of 'Torbinurruck', 'Red Bluff', 'Upper Plains' and the 'Westaway' were taken up in late 1850. The 'Yanakie' run of 34,000 acres was established in 1850. The 'Kilcunda' Run was taken up in the early 1860s and the 'Ryanston' Run in 1869.

The northern runs of 'Strathmore', 'Mt Franklin', and 'Kangaroo' were taken up in 1861 in speculation only when it looked as though McDonald was going to find a roadway through to Sale. The permits on at least two of these runs were soon forfeited. (Committee of the South Gippsland Pioneers Association 1920:13) and it is unlikely that they were operated as commercial runs until after the dense scrub and timber were cleared during the late 1870s, by which time the runs would have been subdivided for selection.

3.2 Selection era

Introduction

The Selection era within the Shire was ushered in with the cutting up of the large pastoral runs following the passage of a series of Land Acts, which enabled the widespread creation of smaller freeholdings. This marked the waning of the pastoral era and profoundly altered the nature of land use within the Shire by encouraging the carving up of the surveyed Crown Allotments into smaller and smaller farm properties.

As we shall see, this led to closer settlement with an increased emphasis on more intensive forms of agriculture such as dairying and cropping in place of grazing as major rural occupations. This in turn accelerated the process of change that was begun during the Pastoral era and led to perhaps the most significant changes to the pre-contact landscape of the Shire. While the Pastoral era left few permanent marks upon the landscape, the advent of farming as well as legislative requirements resulted in more visible pattern of development.

For example, one of the requirements of the Land Acts was for owners to undertake improvements such as fencing. New and increasingly larger homesteads and outbuildings were erected and fencing, hedges and windrows of trees were established to mark property boundaries, to protect stocks and crops from wind, and also for aesthetic effect. As a result, the relatively open landscape of the Pastoral era was transformed to the more enclosed landscape that still exists in much of the rural parts of the Shire today.

In addition, the selection era also brought profound social and cultural changes to the Shire. Whereas squatters were usually 'male, young and unmarried' and conditions made it difficult to sustain family life, the family became "the foundation stone of the selection era". (Dingle, 1984:28, 68) The selection era thus stimulated the development of larger and more permanent settlements, which will be discussed in a later chapter.

As we shall see, George Black's success in developing the livestock industry at Tarwin Meadows, events surrounding the discovery of gold at Stockyard Creek in 1870 and attempts to mine coal at Kilcunda in 1873 led to the selection of many more leases in the 1870s, putting the Tarwin Lower area on the map. (Charles & Loney, 1989:29-35)

Still, this process was slow compared with other areas of the State with natural barriers such as the almost impenetrable forests proving an almost insurmountable barrier. However, the opening of the land was to receive a boost in the form of the discovery of gold and coal, which brought a rush of new settlers to the area and led to improvements to transport and access.

Grazing permit-holders and early selectors

During 1851 or 1852, a Scottish immigrant named George Black purchased the Tarwin Meadows run for £60. The run extended at that time from Cape Paterson to Cape Liptrap. Black cleared the land of tea-tree scrub, drained the swamps and sowed the cleared lands with clovers and English fodder grasses. He bred cattle and horses, for which he made a good profit at saleyards in Melbourne during that city's goldrush boomtime. By 1869, Black rented, owned or leased over 100 square miles (75,900 acres) of five original old runs, taking good advantage of the 1869 Land Act that authorised selection before survey of areas up to a maximum of 320 acres at a price of £1 per acre. He established a dynasty at Tarwin Meadows that would extend over three generations, lasting until 1979. More importantly, George Black had demonstrated the great potential of the

area to many others. At the expiration of Blacks original leases in the 1870s, the government opened the land up to general selection.

The Land Acts

The selection era in the Shire reached its zenith with the passing of a series of Land Acts in the mid to late nineteenth century, which allowed the selection and sale of Crown lands. Under the 1860 *Land Sales Act* three million acres of country lands were surveyed into allotments of 32 to 260 ha. (80 to 640 acres) and made available for selection. No person could normally select more than 640 acres annually. The land had to be paid for outright, or half paid for and half leased.

Further areas were opened up for selection under the *Land Act* of 1862 and the 1865 Amendment Act. Finally, the new Land Act in 1869 opened up the whole colony of Victoria for selection, including unsurveyed land. The selectors of unsurveyed land pegged out their claims and then applied for survey. Under this Act land was held under Licence for three years before it could be purchased. Furthermore, selectors were required to live on and make improvements to the land before the final purchase. These included the construction of a house and fences, and the cultivation of crops. ('The Lands Manual', p.34)

An amendment to the Land Act in 1878 increased the period of license and lease from 3 to 20 years and reduced the rent by half to one shilling per acre per year. Any person over 18 years of age, except a married woman living with her spouse, was eligible as long as they could meet the conditions of enclosing the land with a fence and cultivating at least one tenth of the total area. Purchase of the land outright could be made at the end of the lease period or the lease could be further extended.

In many cases families selected several blocks adjacent to each other. Some of these strategies have stood the test of time, such as the 1878 selection of adjacent blocks for the three Campbell brothers by their father, Donald Campbell, in the Mardan area. Those properties and the three adjacent homesteads remain intact today, surviving three generations of change. However, in some circumstances, these extensive family commitments led to forfeiting the land when the vast tracts of forest proved impossible to clear adequately to bring the land into the required level of production. (Murphy, 1988:15)

From 1850 to 1890, Victoria was entirely surveyed, with large tracts of land released for selection under the different Land Acts passed by the Victorian Parliament. Registered government surveying parties of eight to twelve men, including six or eight axemen, two chain men, a head surveyor and his assistant would mark and chart the allotments, ensuring that each block of land had adequate water rights, access to roads and that there was provision for townships where necessary. The work was often difficult and dangerous and the surveyors were in great demand by competing selectors who wanted to get their pegs into the ground first and have their allotment registered before someone else did so. (Murphy, 1988:23-24)

Selectors commonly employed bush guides to assist in their search for the right block of land. John Gallagher was one of the more skilled and well-regarded bushmen who acted virtually as a real estate agent of the day in the Mirboo area from his camp on Liddiard's Track where it descended into the East Tarwin River. He assisted many selectors in accessing various blocks with safety in the selection of their choice, ensuring that they met the requirements of viewing and marking their selection prior to a government survey.

After a prospective settler lodged their application for an unknown area of 320 acres, they would travel to South Gippsland, meeting their guide at a tavern in one of the townships or at a camp in the scrub. The bushmen usually charged each selector £1 per day or £10 if a block was selected. It usually took a minimum of three days to make a selection.

Between 1877-79, almost 200 selections were made in the Mirboo district, most of which were assisted by Gallagher or his employees (Eunson, 1978:15-21). Once the settlers had their blocks of land surveyed and approved, they began the task of clearing and fencing their land in order to meet the requirements of selection and to make it productive for their survival.

Clearing the land and bushfires

The clearing of scrub and forests by graziers and selectors, which included the use of fire by man and natural bushfires has had a profound influence on the way South Gippsland looks today along with

The foothill tracts in the southern parts of the Shire were covered in open Messmate/Peppermint or Stringybark forests. The higher altitude hills and mountains offered greater challenges with closed Mountain Ash and Blue Gum forests with dense understorey (Reichl 1870 as shown in Murphy, 1988:15).

A section of the forest would be cleared to allow the construction of a hut in an area safe from falling trees. Then the clearing of the rest of the block proceeded, either by the selector's themselves or, for those with enough money, by gangs of scrub cutters hired to speed up the development of the property. In other parts of Australia, the term 'scrub cutting' refers to the cutting of sapling forests, dense tea-tree woodlands or mallee scrub. However, in South Gippsland, the term was equally applied to some of the densest forests of enormous trees up to 300 feet high and fiercely foreboding understorey known in the world.

Once a section of understorey was cleared the successively larger trees were felled and the limbs lopped off. The scrub cutting usually took place between September and the end of November. From December through the end of February, the downed timber was generally left to dry out. When a good burning day occurred in March, the neighbours would be informed and a burn would be lit after 1.00 pm. Afterwards the timber would be "picked-up" by cutting it into suitable lengths for handling or by heaping the felled timber and burning it off (South Gippsland Pioneers Association, 1920:54-76)

In many cases, a forest of large dry trees (dead stags) 150 to 200 feet high were left standing after the understorey scrub had been cleared and burned. As the sapwood of these trees rotted and dried, they became an extreme fire hazard to the selectors.

To facilitate the process of clearing the pioneers used fires to burn off cleared scrub and forest areas during the period of selection. Unfortunately modern fuel-reduction methods were not established before some of the early natural bushfires occurred in South Gippsland. In addition, the use of fire as a management tool has sometimes not been effective or has literally backfired, resulting in extensive damage to the forests, private properties and the occasional loss of human life.

One of the worst bushfire disasters known as "Red Tuesday" occurred in February 1898, burning 1000 square miles of South Gippsland, in the area south of the Central Gippsland Railway running to the coast and from Western Port Bay to Mirboo. (Committee of the South Gippsland Pioneers Association, 1920:353)

During 1906 another major bushfire occurred in the hill country in the area north of Foster and Toora. This fire raced through the forests of the Boolarra area, over Mt. Square Top and on towards Toora before a change in wind direction turned the fire up Mt. Best. Collett (1994:199) conveys the harrowing account of Frank and Sarah Lonsdales' loss of five of their children at Mt. Best, while Frank helped neighbours save their house:

While he was away, the fire came up to the Lonsdales' house. His wife Sarah and the eldest daughter carried water to wet the house, but it caught alight. Mrs Lonsdale then sent her other seven down on to the road for safety. When it was clear that there was no hope of saving the house Sarah Lonsdale and her daughter ran down to the road to see if the children were safe. But the bush was in flames and she found four of the children running back towards the house. She told them to wait on the road while she looked for the three others. A little further she came across the body of Iris, aged 5 years, but could go no further to look for Gertrude and Claude. She covered the other children with a blanket and scrambled down to the creek for water. When she returned to the road Olive was dead, her body sheltering the baby. The mother took Francis and Ivy down to the creek, but a burning branch fell crushing Francis. The other girl, Daisy Harriet, died on the road. Sarah Lonsdale then carried the unconscious and dying Francis to the Pocklington's House. As she ran along the road with Francis in her arms, she met her husband who had come looking for his family and told him that five of their children were dead. It all happened in a few minutes

Other significant bushfires have occurred in South Gippsland during the years of 1921, 1934, and 1939. (Collett, 1994) Fire is an Australian legacy, but has been especially influential in shaping the lives and landscapes of South Gippsland.

Houses and outbuildings

The kind of house built by a selector varied according to the particular circumstances. In the words of a contemporary observer, 'many selectors gradually make for themselves very comfortable homes, but the house of the struggling man just settled up on the land and hard pressed for cash is often a mere bark shed, or for a time even a tent. However, “a man with a wife and family and some little capital... usually... begins erecting for them a more or less substantial house, probably laying out at the same time a small garden to grow vegetables etc.” (Cassell’s ‘Picturesque Australasia’ ed. E.E. Morris, 1889 facsimile copy, pp.473-474)

Often, the ‘more or less substantial house’ was the second or third house to be constructed, once a property had been established and made profitable. In some cases, the earlier house was incorporated into the new dwelling or, on other occasions, it was retained and continued to be lived in by a relative or farm help, or was converted for another use such as a hayshed.

Fences, hedges and windrows

Priestly (1984:92) notes that:

Land ownership made a permanent imprint on the Victorian countryside initially in the shape of boundary fences. The land surveys which were a necessary prelude to sale were patterned according to the grid of true meridians and parallels which had been defined in the systematic geodetic survey of Victoria begun in September 1858.

In the Shire, hedges were used from the late nineteenth century onward as an efficient form of fencing. Windrows of trees were also planted, chiefly Monterey Cypresses or Pines to protect stock and crops. These trees

and hedges also had an aesthetic value that added a picturesque quality to the landscape and consequently "bear witness to the immigrants desire to have familiar surroundings in this strange new land". (Berwick-Pakenham Historical Society, 1982:9) Usually planted in straight lines along the edges of paddocks and along boundaries, they closely followed the north-south and east-west lines marked out by the allotment surveyors and hence emphasised the grid layout imposed by the Government survey upon the landscape.

The most common hedging plant used in the Shire was English Hawthorn or Whitethorn (*C. monogyna)*, one of a number of different plant varieties used throughout Victoria in the nineteenth century. The early settlers brought with them the art of 'thorn-setting' or 'layering', as practised in England, which by interlacing the upper and lower branches, hedges were rendered cattle and sheep proof. (Beaumont et al, 1959:98)

Floods

The South Gippsland area is also known for its floods, which to a large extent have been exacerbated by the clearing of forests from large tracts of land. Some settlement also occurred on low lying river flats, particularly around the Tarwin.

During 1885, torrential rains let to the flooding of the Franklin River during April and the loss of a substantial log bridge, leaving Mary O'Dea and her family stranded until another bridge could be constructed (Collett, 1994:142-145). Additional floods during 1886 and 1887 made matters worse, destroying many culverts and roads.

One of the biggest floods recorded occurred on the Tarwin River in December of 1934, causing severe damage to bridges and road networks in the former Woorayl Shire. One of the wooden trestle railway bridges at Koonwarra was severely damaged during this flood. (Murphy, 1988:235) Downstream on the Tarwin at the property known as 'Tullaree', 4000 sheep and 180 bullocks were drowned. (Collett, 1994:235)

This led to a further reaction by landholders to snag (clear) the vegetation from the river banks in order to minimise future damage done by floodwaters. This was a continuation of such clearing along the floodplain of the river conducted forty-five years earlier from 1889 to 1894. During this earlier period, all trees likely to fall in the river were cut within a distance of 1.5 chains between Tarwin Lower and one mile south of Meeniyan.

In 1935, some of the land owners requested the Minister for Water Supply for assistance with snagging and with the straightening of the river by cutting thorough the bends. However, Murphy (1988:237) notes that not all people were of the same view on this matter:

There was a difference of opinion as to the wisdom of cutting bends in the river. It speeded up the flow of water but resulted in increased erosion. At Dunlop's cut the water was running at fifteen miles per hour but was sluggish further downstream. Mr. Wyeth of Inverloch stated that there was four to five foot more water coming down the river than twenty-five years ago, and the Inlet was becoming silted up with mud.

3.3 Village settlements, homestead associations and labour colonies

During 1893, the government passed the Settlement of Lands Act, which provided for the development of Village Communities, Homestead Associations and Labour Colonies. These community welfare/land settlement schemes were largely developed by various charity and Christian church organisations in response to the massive unemployment and hardship experienced by thousands of Victorian families during the economic recession that followed the 1880s land boom.

During the first year of the Act, 4,000 men applied to participate in these schemes, resulting in 78 village settlements being established in Victoria. In South Gippsland, ten village settlements were set up at Childers, Darlimurla, Kardella, Koonork (Hoddle Range), Mardan, Meeniyan, Mirboo North, Mirboo South, Tarwin and Strzelecki. (Murphy, 1983:2-12) Homestead Associations were also established at Ruby and in Meeniyan.

The Village Settlements and Homestead Associations primarily serviced families who were homeless and needed both a place to live and means of surviving. These communities had mixed results throughout Victoria and South Gippsland. However, they did not meet the needs of unmarried and unattached unemployed men or those of unemployed men who had families that had homes that they did not want to leave. In such cases, the concept of a Labour Colony, where they could go for a few months to earn a living, was more appealing. The Labour Colony, although subject to Government subsidies, was intended to become self-supporting soon after establishment.

The Leongatha Labour Colony was the only labour colony ever developed in Victoria. It was established during 1893 one mile northeast of Leongatha on 822 acres of forested land. The selection of the site was aided by the opening of the Great Southern Railway and a railway station in Leongatha during 1891. The colony was established through the efforts of a high level committee that included the Premier of Victoria, Archbishop Carr and the President of the Trades Hall.

Approximately 52 men came to the Labour Colony in the first year, first living in tents and gradually establishing buildings for their living quarters and farm activities as the land was cleared, a saw mill erected and a small brick kiln established. The men were paid 1/6d per week in the beginning and up to 4/- per week. They were expected to leave when they had accrued £2 credit or before that if they could find alternative work. They were also provided with rations equivalent to those given to the defence forces.

The Labour Colony was generally successful, despite some initial scepticism from a few Leongatha area residents. It lasted for 26 years, until it was finally closed and subdivided as a Soldier Settlement by the government.

3.4 Soldier and Closer Settlements

Following World War 1 and again after World War 2, a series of Soldier and Closer Settlement Acts were passed by the Federal and Victorian Goverments to provide agricultural land for returned servicemen, primarily from undeveloped Crown Lands or abandoned selections. Soldier settlements were established in several areas of South Gippsland, including the Mirboo North, Gunyah and Yanakie areas.

In the hill country near Foster and at Gunyah a number of Soldier Settlement allotments were established in 1922. Despite being provided with low interest loans and other assistance, many of the soldier settlers had abandoned their blocks by 1926 due to the difficulties experienced with fighting rabbits and bracken, their inexperience with farming, a poor butter market, record local dairy production and resulting low incomes. (Collett, 1994:225) This pattern was repeated in the Woorayl Shire and in Korumburra as well. (Murphy, 1988:204-205 and Hartnell, 1974:143-147)

During 1919, the Soldier Settlement Commission subdivided the Leongatha Labour Colony into four dairy farms of 100 acres each and one orchard block along Coalition Creek. The Mt Vernon Estate near Berry's Creek was also purchased for group settlement and subdivided into twelve blocks for returned soldiers. The local repatriation committee made some complaint that few of these blocks had been allocated to returned soldiers from the local community. In addition, confusion over whose responsibility it was to provide roads in the new subdivisions caused delays to the settlers in establishing their homes and farms. In the end, a Royal Commission held hearings to investigate the complaints of soldier settlers in the Victory Hall at Leongatha in 1925.

The Yanakie Land Settlement Scheme established after World War 2 provided a more successful result. Approximately 12,000 acres of the Yanakie Run was acquired and developed for soldier settlement farms with sixteen blocks made available in 1954, and another thirty blocks added under a special Land Act of 1959. By 1967, the Yanakie Settlement was regarded as one of Victoria's most successful settlement projects, having resulted in forty-six farms within a radius of two and a half miles. (Crawford, 1983)

HERITAGE

Heritage places identified by the Study that illustrate the theme of *Settling the Land* include:

Pastoral era
There are few buildings associated with the earliest period of pastoralism and settlement of the Shire in the era immediately following selection. The most significant reason for this is the impact of the great bushfires, particularly in 1898, which destroyed many early buildings throughout the Shire.

The only known building associated with the Pastoral era is Hobson's wattle and daub hut, which was relocated in 1974 from the 'Tarwin Meadows' property to Coal Creek Heritage Village. A number of buildings still survive at the 'Tarwin Meadows' property itself, but these are thought to be associated with the development of the property in the freehold selection era during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Selection era
There are many houses and farm buildings associated with the Selection era. Some of the earliest surviving examples of homesteads, which are thought to pre-date the 1898 bushfires include:

- 'Oakwood', the former Charlton family home at Grassy Spur.
- 'Fern Tree Vale', the Hodgson family home at Hedley.
- 'Wolonga' at Kongwak.
- 'Cluanie' (Former 'Lyre Bird Mound') at Leongatha South.
- The three Campbell properties and homesteads at Mardan, which were originally selected in 1885.
- The 'Chock and Log' cottage at Poowong.

Many fine new homesteads were constructed in the wake of the 1898 fires as farms became more established and prosperous. Examples include 'Devonscot' at Arawata. 'Greenfields' near Fish Creek, and 'Argyle' near Foster.

However, perhaps the most visible impact of early pastoralism and settlement is the cultural landscape of cleared farmland with windrows of exotic trees such as Monterey Pines and Cypresses that has largely replaced the original dense forests, tea-tree thickets and woodlands.

Village settlements, homestead associations and labour colonies
Little trace exists of these early settlements apart from traces of the original subdivision pattern at Kardella. A house at Kardella may be one of the original village settler houses.

While most traces of the Leongatha Labour Colony have vanished, the Study has identified two Oak Trees that mark what was once the entrance.

Soldier and Closer Settlements
Many houses from the Yanakie Soldier Settlement Scheme are still extant along with the General Store.

Working the land

INTRODUCTION

Explorers and settlers harboured dreams of a great future for South Gippsland built on rich natural mineral deposits, however, the most important industry to the Shire since the earliest time of settlement has been agriculture, and in particular grazing and dairying, which has played the most influential role in establishing a settled and viable European presence in South Gippsland and formed the economic foundations of the Shire. This has required battling against a difficult environment to impose European farming methods.

As we have seen, agriculture had its beginnings in the Shire with the pastoral runs established Tarwin Meadows during the 1840s and 1850s. Initially limited to grazing it quickly diversified to include dairying and cropping as the land was opened up and settled.

Today, the economy of the Shire remains almost exclusively based on rural industries and it is one of the most important agricultural districts in the State. As we have seen, the rise of farming was closely aligned with the decline of the Pastoral era, and the changes in land tenure brought about by the Selection era, which stimulated the development of agricultural industries including dairying, and in later years cropping. Grazing and breeding of sheep and cattle declined somewhat, but still remained an important activity. These activities were not always carried on exclusively and many farms often combined grazing with dairying or cropping. Sometimes the activities carried out on a single property changed over time with new ownership.

These activities had been carried on before, however, the opening up of the land for freehold ownership provided an important impetus, which was further stimulated in the early twentieth century by improvements in farming technologies (that were promoted by local agricultural organisations), State and Federal government support, and expanding export markets. The exponential growth of the population of Victoria following the gold rush also vastly increased local demand for fresh produce.

Unlike some other more marginal farming districts, farmers within the Shire were, by and large, quite successful (the failures of some Soldier Settlements in the hill country notwithstanding), a fact that is owed to the rich soils of the area and good rainfall.

Not all of the early farming pursuits have survived, however, the changes they made to the landscape are still clearly evident in the distinctive cultural landscapes that exist today.

This chapter incorporates the following Australian Historic Themes:

- Developing Local, Regional and National Economies: Developing Primary Production

HISTORY

4.1 Grazing

Introduction

Grazing was the first major form of primary production within the Shire and continues until the present day. It was undertaken on leases from the 1830s during the Pastoral era and continued on the first freehold properties during the Selection era.

Early difficulties

Pastoralists coming into the South Gippsland area from Port Phillip and Port Albert had a similar set of obstacles to overcome to Angus McMillan and those who followed him overland from New South Wales. South Gippsland was largely covered by forests, woodlands, scrub or wetlands that did not lend themselves to productive grazing and carrying capacities were considered low.

In the beginning the area lacked a suitable coastal road for cattle. The cost of shipping an entire herd was prohibitive and attracted act high insurance premiums due to the dangerous Gippsland coastline. (Collett, 1994:39)

Better coastal tracks were opened up in 1843 and 1844, with government assistance, but they were still difficult for cattle and stock losses were often great during the journey. Settlers reported .stock lost in the scrub, injured and even taken by sharks at the mouth of the Tarwin River.

Cattle Runs

As we have seen 'Tarwin Meadows' was one of the best grazing areas available in South Gippsland during the 1840s and 1850s and the success of George Black in improving the pastures and grazing this area encouraged the taking up of land for selection during the late nineteenth century.

Black was fortunate to be a well-educated man whose success was due to his knowledge and skills in agriculture and husbandry. One of Black's major mistakes however, was introducing rabbits. They bred so rapidly he then had to loose domestic cats in an effort to keep numbers down. (Collett, 1994:51)

Other pastoralists in the southern part of the Shire did not other succeed as Black did. Yanakie run, though open and grassy could not carry large numbers of cattle. Cattle had to be shifted constantly from one side of the run to the other to avoid 'coastal disease' which was later found to be caused by a deficiency in the soil.

Yanakie Run was tried by a succession of pastoralists, who one after another could not make it pay. In 1859; partners James McKeitch and Henry Davis decided to try wool growing on Yanakie, but this too was a failure.

Richard Turnbull of Port Albert held runs on Wilson's Promontory at Mt Hunter, Mt Oberon, Sealers Cove and Darby River during the 1850s. But sheep and cattle on these runs were also subject to coastal disease and Turnbull forfeited the runs in 1859.

A succession of leaseholders continued to operate from runs in the northeast corner of Wilson's Promontory until 1872. Only a few head of cattle were grazed at any one time. (McNiven, 1995:12)

Livestock trading

Livestock trading has had a long history in South Gippsland since the first bullock herds were pushed through the coastal stock route in the 1840s. In fact, Stockyard Creek took its name from the livestock enclosure that was built on its banks as a resting place between Port Albert and the Tarwin River. Murphy (1988:82) describes the early development of livestock selling in the Leongatha area:

As the area of cleared land increased each year, so also did the stock numbers with a resultant need for stock agents, yards and auctioneers to bring buyer and seller together. The first set of cattle yards for sale purposes in the Leongatha-Koorooman area was set up adjacent to Horn's Roadside Inn on the Coalition Creek by G. McCord, with the first sale being conducted in October 1890. This site proved unsuitable as the following year they were shifted into Leongatha onto the lower side of Roughead Street, not far from the Long Street Corner.

Several stock agents became established in the Leongatha district during the 1890s and several of them built their own sale yards or trucking yards. One of these agents was John Murray Peck, an American who had been one of the founders of Cobb & Co. The stockyards built at Leongatha by Peck of split rails and posts featured a roofed sale ring rotunda through which the cattle could pass, protecting the buyers from inclement weather. (Murphy, 1988:83)

Prior to the existence of railways, livestock was either sold or traded locally or at sale yards in nearby townships or driven overland to the larger markets in places like Melbourne and Sale. As the railways were built, larger sale yards and trucking yards became established in the towns that had railway stations and the market stock was sent by rail to the larger markets. Mirboo North was a good example of this. Later, as petrol driven trucks and better highway transport became available, the railways became less important. Truck transport allowed the flexibility for city buyers to purchase livestock at the country sale yards and take it back to the city, buy it directly from individual farmers, or have it delivered to the Melbourne or provincial city markets for purchase.

Aside from cattle and sheep sale yards, the pig sales in Toora were a weekly event during the 1920s and 1930s. As the farmers usually brought their wives to town for shopping and socialising while they bought and sold pigs, these days became known as 'Pig and Lady Days'. (Collett, 1994:238)

Since the demise of Melbourne's historic New Market Saleyard in Kensington during the late 1980s, good examples of rural and provincial town saleyards have taken on new importance in Victoria.

The Koonwarra Saleyard is a more recent example established in 1982, but may carry the distinction of one of the few saleyards to have been designed to lessen its impact on the water quality of nearby streams, to recycle the nutrients from the manure into a tree plantation, and to blend into the landscape as viewed from the highway using a combination of grassy mounds and trees.

4.2 Dairying

Introduction

The dairying industry has been of continuing importance to South Gippsland since the late 1800s and became South Gippsland's most important industry after the demise of coal mining (See Chapter 5). Bowden (1970:95-96) concludes that:

The most important industry in Korumburra in 1895, after coal, was making butter. The real aristocrat of the Korumburra district was the dairy cow, destined to be represented on the hill by a splendid butter factory.

Once the arduous task of clearing land was completed, many people on larger selections took advantage of pasture to fatten sheep and cattle. Dairying soon became the major component of most farming, as it was recognised that this was the quickest and most efficient way to get a return from newly cleared land. Selections were generally covered in stumps, large and small, which ruled out cultivation.

The stumps and the mud also made herding the cows into the yards at milking time something of a challenge:

In the early part of the milking season the mud was more than knee-deep, and when a cow had to be bailed up the milker would walk out on a log that had been hauled into the yard for the purpose, and with a long pole would poke the cow toward the bail. Having got her nailed up and legroped (sic) a bucket of water was required to wash the udder after the mud had been scraped off with a piece of shingle. It usually appeared as if the cow required was always in the farthest corner of the yard and in the deepest mud, and to get her towards the bail meant disturbing all the other cows in the yard, who would splash round in the mud while the one wanted tried to dodge round them back to her favourite muddy corner

(Committee of the Gippsland Pioneers Association, 1920:240)

Dairying, often combined with mixed farming, was a favoured option for pioneer farmers, which was later promoted by swamp drainage, closer and soldier settlement schemes, the introduction of refrigeration on ships and better rail links to ports, and the temporary shortages of dairy produce in Europe and the United States during the First and Second World Wars. Changes in farm operation and transport led to the increasing use of internal combustion machines for milking machines, farm cultivation and milk can collection.

However, until the late nineteenth century dairymen close to Melbourne concentrated upon supplying the growing urban market with whole milk. Elsewhere, including the Shire milk had to be turned into butter (or cheese) if it was to reach its market in an edible condition. (Dingle, 1984:115) Thus, the dairying industry is represented by two key phases in the Shire; cheese and butter making predominantly in the late nineteenth century, and whole milk production from the early twentieth century onwards.

The suitability of the Shire for cheese making was described in an 1885 article in the *Gippsland Mercury* (as quoted in Eunson, 178:118) when talking about the process carried out on the selection of a Mr Joseph Couper:

What lends greatly to successful cheese making, is mainly the fact that the grass remains green throughout the whole year. In fact it never has but one colour. This characteristic feature furnishes cheese and butter makers with two seasons, so to speak, instead of only one, as in the rest of the colony. Mr Couper therefore engages in cheese-making with a peculiar advantage. There is little doubt, that cheese making will assuredly become

an industry of great importance, and together with butter making, will form an essential factor in hastening a not far distant prediction that Mirboo will be the centre of the wealthiest agricultural district in Victoria.

The cheese and butter produced for market was initially transported to Melbourne from the district by four routes. In the south it was packed to Anderson's Inlet and then went by boat; from the east it went to Morwell and then by rail, from the west it went by boat from Griffiths Point, and from the north it went to Drouin and then on by rail (Committee of the South Gippsland Pioneers Association 1920:243) Later, the opening of the Great Southern Railway in 1892 provided a significant boost as it became far easier to transport dairy produce directly to Melbourne.

Technical innovations during the late nineteenth century

In the 1880s, two technical developments (refrigeration and centrifugal butter churns) occurred that were of significance for the growth of the dairying industry in South: Gippsland. The first successful shipment of Victorian butter to the London market was made in 1880 and was possible because of new refrigeration methods. Earlier attempts at export had been disastrous with the butter arriving in a state only fit for sale as axle grease. Improved refrigeration methods allowed South Gippsland dairy farmers to sell their produce beyond local markets.

At about the same time as refrigeration methods became commercially viable, centrifugally operated separators were also perfected. (Murphy, 1994:71) Prior to this, milk had to be left to stand for between 36 and 48 hours before the cream could be skimmed off by hand. The separators could perform this process without it being necessary to stand the milk. It was faster, cleaner and more hygienic. They were powered either by a small steam engine or by horse works similar to those used in mining.

In 1889, the Deakin-Gillies government recognised the potential these two innovations could have for the dairy industry and decided to provide government incentives to encourage farmers to enter the export industry. The government. introduced a bonus payment on the export of butter, a similar bonus for the establishment of dairy factories and also purchased the Melbourne Refrigerated Works at Newport in which to store dairy products awaiting shipment overseas. (Murphy, 1994:72)

Creameries

Many of the farms in South Gippsland were milking only a small number of cows and could not the purchase of individual separators. Initially, creameries were established on a cooperative basis to provide a central point at which milk could be separated. Farmers delivered their milk by cart and would return home with the skim milk.

Creameries were established at Mirboo North, Darlimurla and Mardan but carting milk to them was both inconvenient and time consuming. It proved impractical to continue in this way and the practice was soon for milk to be separated on the farm and cream only sent to the factories. Within ten years of coming on to the market, separators were commonplace on dairy farms. (Murphy, 1994:73)

Once the cream had been separated the skimmed milk was not put to waste; Most farms included pigs, which were fed the surplus and sold when fattened. Consequently piggeries became one of the standard farm buildings.

The cream was usually stored temporarily in a cool-room near to the dairy before being made into butter or cheese.

Early dairy cooperatives and share farming

Depending on the size of the dairy farm, milking methods varied during this period. Smaller farms still milked by hand at the turn of the century, white the larger farms were experimenting with early forms of milking machines. While little of the money paid by the government as bonuses found its way to South Gippsland, dairy factories were set up in the district, either as cooperative or proprietary companies. By 1895 there were 38 cooperatives in Gippsland.

One example was the Mirboo North Dairy Company began as a cooperative in 1893, in a small wooden building adjoining the township. In spite of troubled beginnings due to the amount of capital required to install adequate refrigeration and modern butter making machinery, the Mirboo North Dairy Company was a success. In 1904 a new factory was built and equipped and the company joined a recently formed cooperative selling agency, the Gippsland Butter Factories Cooperative Produce Company.

One of the major problems experienced by this and other factories in South Gippsland was ensuring a regular supply of cream from the local farms. To overcome this the factories undertook to cart the cream from their suppliers and so bullock or horse drawn wagons made daily rounds through the districts. (Godbold, 1989:41) This led to the construction of cream stands at the entrance to many farms, which were once a common sight throughout the Shire.

One of the more innovative and largest developments in the Shire in the early 1900s was the 'share dairy system' set up by George Black's sons, Murray and Archibald, with eight farms of over 100 cows each the Tarwin River flats.

The farms were linked with a three mile long tramway track on which trollies were drawn by horses to collect the dairy products. A factory was built in the dunes near the Tarwin Meadows homestead, that first produced casein, then butter and later cheese. An extensive piggery was also established and linked to the tramway. The system worked on a production line model and resulted in high production.

The Black share farming system broke down during World War 1 but the property later known as ‘Tarwin Park’ was managed successfully by Archie Black's son Gregor until 1979 when it was sold to Owen McMicking. (Charles & Loney, 1989:67-77) This property is now owned by the Robert Robertson family, who are actively conserving remaining elements of the dairy system.

Proprietory companies

The operation of the dairy industry changed in the early 1900s when agents who had previously confined their role to selling farmers products moved into manufacturing. Agents began takeovers of the small locally operated cooperatives and, by 1902, ten proprietary butter factories were producing half of Victoria's butter. (Godbold, 1989:41)

One of the major companies to operate in this way was the Melbourne Chilled Butter Company. This company acquired many of the butter factories in Gippsland and shifted control of the industry away from local dairy farmers. (Godbold, 1989:53)

As a consequence a number of new and imposing butter factories were

built throughout the Shire in the early part of the twentieth century. Usually constructed in brick using the latest design and technology, they contrasted starkly with the simple and comparatively primitive early co-operative factory buildings. Most of these were located in towns with railway stations to facilitate access to the Melbourne markets (the factory at Mirboo North was actually built adjacent to the railway). The two exceptions to this rule were the factories established at Dumbalk and Kongwak.

Korumburra Butter Factory is one example, which was opened in August 1900. It was soon replaced in 1909 by a new brick factory, which was fitted with the most modern equipment and it was a day of celebration for the community. (Godbold, 1989:64-65) It went on to become one of the largest factories in the Southern Hemisphere by the 1950s. At Leongatha a new brick butter factory was erected in 1905.

The impact of the new butter factories cannot be underestimated. They contributed to the prosperity of the farmers and the broader community where they were situated. The benefits to the farmer are well expressed in this reply composed by a Boolarra State School student to the question: *What has the butter factory meant to the farmer?* (as quoted in Eunson, 178:184)

When the Boolarra Butter Factory was built in 1900 it meant that the farmer had a half day extra to do clearing on his farm. It also meant that the cream carts would bring the supplies and save the farmer many trips. They bought home separators which were quicker than taking the milk to the creamery. Having more time they could make more money. They had time to cut more palings and sell them and they had more time to improve their farms. They could sow more grass, then buy more cows to eat the grass. They were able to build on to their sheds and improve their fences.

As the larger factories were expanded some of the smaller and more marginal factories were closed. One casualty was the factory at Stony Creek, which was eventually destroyed by fire in the 1930s. As we shall see, this process of rationalization was to accelerate in the late twentieth century.

Supplying whole milk

Innovations that assisted the development of whole milk supply included the introduction of tankers to collect milk in bulk in lieu of cans. This system was first introduced by Archie's Creek and Mirboo North factories in the late 1950s and was followed by Korumburra and Leongatha in the 1960s. (Murphy 1988:391)

Rationalisation in the late twentieth century

In the 1960s a process of rationalization began that would see the number of operating factories in the study reduced from nine at the beginning of the post war era to only two in 2002, at Leongatha and Korumburra.

As transport improved and more modern corporations took over the older dairying cooperatives, two things happened. First, the milk supply area that could be serviced by a single factory increased greatly. Secondly, the smaller and less financially viable factories closed down. Hartnell (1974:157-159) demonstrates these changes graphically using the Poowong and surrounding district and the milk processing industry in West Gippsland during the periods from the 1890s-1905 to the early 1970s.

Fewer and fewer milk, butter and cheese factories remained in South Gippsland as time went by. However, many of the buildings remain, some having been abandoned and gradually

falling into disrepair and some, like the Mirboo North Butter Factory, finding a new life as a boutique beer brewery and restaurant.

The closure of factories had a significant impact from which many towns never recovered. Development ceased, shops and banks closed and houses were taken away. On the other hand, the increasingly centralised factories grew in size so did the towns where they were located to become the major centres within the Shire.

Knox's Rockhill Farm

A unique example of a scientifically-based dairy farm known as Knox's Rockhill Farm was established by James Knox in 1922 at Nerrena near Leongatha. Knox was a very industrious civil engineer who had interests in the quarrying and rock crushing industry at Leongatha as well as a farm on Nerrena Road at Chalmers' Hill. He also had later interests in coal mining and is noted for his role in the design of the outer concrete grandstands at the Melbourne Cricket Ground and the Kooyong Tennis Stadium.

The specialised design and construction of the buildings at Knox's Rockhill Farm came from the Loudon Machinery Company of Iowa in the United States. Knox acted as their agent and a working model of the concrete block barns and silos was built at Rockhill Farm to encourage demand for this type of block construction, which utilised Knox's high quality bluestone aggregate. However, it was not only the building design and construction that was being promoted, it was also an efficient system of milk and pork production that was placed on display.

The complex was operated for only a few years before the Great Depression sent price levels of dairy produce to very low levels in 1929. Following the depression, the complex continued to operate at a reduced level until farm labour became scarce at the outbreak of World War 2. (Leongatha Historical Society 1989)

4.3 Horticulture

Given the quality of the soils in much of the Shire as evidence by the great forests it was perhaps inevitable that it would attract people involved in horticulture.

In 1888, a nurserymen from near Ballarat Francis Moss bought a property on the Tarwin River near Berry's Creek to develop as an extension of the vegetable and fruit tree nursery business he had established at Mt Buninyong during 1853, which was known as 'Mossmount'. The new venture, originally known as 'Mossmount-on-Tarwin' was later renamed 'Mossvale' and raised fruit and ornamental trees, which were then sent all over Victoria via the railway station at Leongatha. Trees from the Nursery were donated for the Leongatha Avenue of Honour in 1918 and many fine ornamental trees in windbreaks, driveway avenues and gardens in the Shire reputedly came from the Nursery.

The property was sold in 1931 following Moss's death in 1916. The riverside picnic ground on the property was purchased by the Shires of Mirboo and Woorayl in 1946, creating a ten acre reserve, which contained many fine trees planted by one of the foremen at the Nursery during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Four trees in the Park (and one on the former Nursery site on the hill

behind) are listed by the National Trust on the Significant Trees Register. (Ellis 1995 & Lyndon 1994)

Another smaller nursery was established nearby at Wooreen.

HERITAGE

The previous chapter has described many of the houses associated with the early graziers and farmers. This section will therefore focus upon non-residential buildings associated with this theme.

Heritage places identified by the Study that illustrate the theme of *Working the Land* include:

Grazing

Farm buildings associated with grazing such as shearing sheds and dairies provide an important record of the historical development of a farm property and the types of rural activities that were carried out. Such buildings are now comparatively rare within the Shire and provide an important historical insight into early farming management and operation. Some demonstrate early construction techniques of great interest, and often reflect skills specifically associated with a region or particular migrant group (such as the Danish settlers of Poowong) and so contribute to the unique character of each district.

Perhaps the most notable farm complex to survive in the Shire is at 'Dorfstedt' near Poowong, which includes an early barn and dairy constructed using traditional Danish techniques. There are also early shearing sheds at 95 Forresters Lane, Berry's Creek, 'Wolonga' near Kongwak, and at the former Inglis farm at Dumbalk East.

Dairying

Butter factories are the most visible record of the expansion of the dairy industry in the Shire. Some, such as the complexes at Kongwak and Leongatha include a series of buildings that demonstrate the historic development of the factory over time. As we have seen, the coming of butter factories made farms more prosperous and allowed farmers to erect more substantial residences. Some of these have been described in the previous chapter.

Dairying is also indirectly demonstrated by the development of the commercial centres of townships, which was closely related to the establishment and expansion of Butter Factories. For example, the expansion of the Leongatha factory in the 1930s was probably an influence upon the major expansion of the commercial area that occurred during that same time.

- The former Butter & Cheese Co-operative Factories at Foster, Kongwak, Korumburra, Leongatha, Mirboo North, and Poowong.
- The former Butter Factory Co-operative stores at Kongwak, Dumbalk and Foster.
- Knox's Rockhill Farm near Leongatha.

Horticulture

- Mossvale Park on the Tarwin River near Berry Creek, between Leongatha and Mirboo North.

Transport & Communications

INTRODUCTION

Transport has been a major theme in the history of the Shire from an early date and illustrates how various forms of transport were used to overcome its isolation from Melbourne and Gippsland, as well as the internal isolation between the diverse and widely scattered village townships throughout the Shire. As we shall see, the continuing economic development and the pattern of early settlement of the Shire were strongly influenced by the early transport routes, which often determined whether settlements declined or prospered. In particular the coming of the railways in the latter part of the nineteenth century had a profound and lasting impact upon the pattern of settlement in the Shire.

The early transport routes over land followed tracks laid down by early explorers and stock routes, which in turn sometimes followed pathways used by the indigenous inhabitants. These were often in the form of desire lines that followed the most direct or practical path across the landscape. The hilly terrain of the Shire often foiled the attempts of the government survey to impose a grid layout upon the landscape, with many roads instead following the natural contours of landscape.

This chapter incorporates the following Australian Historic Themes:

- Developing local regional and national economies: Establishing communications, Moving goods and people

HISTORY

5.1 Early tracks

During the early years of European settlement, several key overland tracks were established through different parts of South Gippsland. Initially established primarily as cattle routes, pack tracks or Wattle bark sledge tracks (Committee of the South Gippsland Pioneers Association, 1920:77), these tracks became important travel routes for other types of travel and principal communication links and life lines between settlements and rural properties in the hinterlands. The tracks often served as access routes for the land surveyors, providing initial base lines for these surveys and the subsequent purchase of blocks by selectors. Portions of some of these tracks remain as part of modern day road alignments, still carrying their original names, even though it is now difficult to establish whether or not the roads remain exactly on the original track alignments.

Routes between Port Albert and Melbourne

The establishment of overland tracks for travel through South Gippsland was a major task in the early years of European settlement. As the Brodribb party found immediately after the settlement of Port Albert by the Gippsland Company during 1841, the establishment of passable routes to Melbourne would not be an easy task given the difficulty of getting through dense vegetation, swampy terrain and deep tidal rivers. They established two routes to Melbourne from Port Albert. One route proceeded northward from Port Albert to the La Trobe Valley and then eastward through the Warragul area and around the north edge of Kooweerup Swamp. The other route was along the coast through the Cape Liptrap area, across the Tarwin River and along the Kilcunda coast and on through a narrow section of higher land between the mangrove swamps of Western Port and the south edge of Kooweerup Swamp.

It was not until 1844 that the Robinson party were officially instructed to find a suitable land route along the coast to Port Albert from Melbourne (refer to Section 2.4). They took a bullock dray and eight bullocks, finding the journey from Melbourne to Western Port not difficult and the track "well formed". As they got closer to the Tarwin River, however, the thick tea tree scrub hampered their journey and they had to lay down logs in corduroy fashion on either side of the river in order to cross it with the dray. The road from Jamieson's Station at Western Port to the Tarwin River was judged to be impassable in winter. Although stock losses in the river crossing were minimal for this party, reports of subsequent parties who crossed closer to the mouth of the Tarwin River lost a great number of cattle and calves to sharks. By the end of 1844, the southern route to Port Albert from Melbourne "was in fairly regular use by those able to overcome its hazard," (Charles & Loney, 1989:23-24).

By February-March of 1845, Superintendent La Trobe, Captain Dana and Crown Commissioner Powlett had inspected the southern road to Port Albert, using a punt to cross the Tarwin River. As cattle runs in the southern part of the Shire were expanded, the coastal route to Port Albert gradually improved.

The establishment of the coastal stock route was an extremely important achievement at the time. Since the northern route from Melbourne to Sale proved too difficult to establish in the beginning, all livestock supplies and sales associated with McMillans runs and others of Central and East Gippsland were made from New South Wales via Omeo. The coastal route

from Melbourne to Port Albert finally allowed the Melbourne livestock markets to deal with the Central and East Gippsland station owners, boosting the Melbourne area economy.

McDonald's Track

McDonald's Track was the first significant track cut initially as a stock route through the northern part of the Shire, along the Strzelecki Range by GT McDonald during 1861-62. However, due to it's ridgeline location, this track was not successful as a stock roeute aand was not readily used again until the time of land selection during the mid-1870s.

McDonald's Track ran easterly and northeasterly from Tobin Yallock (now known as Lang Lang) to Morwell over a distance of approximately seventy miles. Most of the route went through dense forest, following the ridgetops and spurs, McDonald clearing a seven foot swath along the line. Supplies were packed over sixty miles from Cranbourne during part of the establishment.

Although McDonald's Track ran through very wet country, there were no permanent watering holes along it. This resulted in it not being used as a cattle route and it not being used very much by anyone until the selectors and land surveyors descended on the area some twelve to thirteen years later. The track was entirely overgrown by that time and had to be re-cleared (Committee of the South Gippsland Pioneers Association, 1920:77-78).

Tracks leading to and from Stockyard Creek - Liddiard's, Whitelaw's and Turton's Tracks

The discovery of gold at Stockyard Creek led to the cutting of several tracks including Liddiards Track, Turtons Track, Amey's Track and Whitelaw's Track, by different surveyors during the 1870s.

Following the decline of surface gold mining near Ballarat and Bendigo in the 1860s, many of the miners and other settlers of those areas were attracted to the newly-opened Gippsland area. This was facilitated to some extent by the opening up of new tracks by surveyors such as G.T. McDonald in 1862, Turner in 1873 and Whitelaw in 1876. The Stockyard Creek gold rush also attracted more prospectors and settlers, leading to the cutting of Liddiard's Track (or Liddiard-Dodd's Track) in 1870. These developments led to the clearing and settlement of much of the area south of the Strzelecki Range in the Tarwin River catchment and on the coastal plain between Foster and Port Albert. However, the densely forested areas along the Strzelecki Range in the northern portion of the Shire were not intensively settled until the latter part of the 1870s. (Murphy 1988:14)

McDonald's Track was largely unused for a period of twelve years after first being cleared in 1862, due to the lack of permanent water for its use as a stock route to Sale. (Committee of the South Gippsland Pioneers Association 1920:77-78) This was due to a combination of factors, including difficulties in clearing the required portion of a selection in such densely vegetated and steep hill country, delays in the completion of the Central Gippsland Railway until 1877, a drought that lasted most of the decade, and land that was suitable to dairy farming rather than cropping while the local market was already over-supplied with butter. (Eunson 1978:4)

In 1872, William Liddiard surveyed the track named after him from Moe to Foster in 1871. This track connected the main Gippsland coach road near Moe to the settlements of Delburn, Darlimurla, Mirboo North and Foster. Liddiard's Track was also referred to as Liddiard-Dodd's Track (Reichl's Map of South Gippsland - 1870 as in Murphy, 1988:15).

During 1872, a geodetic surveyor named Turton discovered gold specks in the creek while camped with a survey party along Liddiard's Track eight miles north of Foster. For a short period of time Liddiard's Track became busy accessways used by prospectors and storekeepers who delivered packed flour, meat and other goods by pack-horse to the gold mining camps of Turton's Creek (Collett, 1994:89).

One outcome of Liddiard's Track was that it revealed the rich red soils of the Mirboo area to gold miners and travelers, many of whom returned to the area as selectors in order to farm the land.

The surveyor Whitelaw cut another track from the Stockyard Creek area to join up with McDonald's Track in the Nyora area during 1873 (Murphy, 1988:14 indicates that the date was 1876). The track crossed the plains from Stockyard Creek in a northwesterly direction until it reached Coal Creek. It then climbed through the valley to Mine Road and proceeded northwest of the present site of Korumburra township. Steep terrain and lack of supplies forced McDonald's survey party to cease their track clearing somewhere south of West Poowong (White, 1988:286-287).

Sometime after 1873 a track from Port Albert to Turtons Creek was surveyed. Part of this track is still known today as Turtons Track (McMaster, 1996:15).

Turner's Track

A mining surveyor named Turner opened a track between Anderson Inlet and Korumburra during 1873, after black coal was discovered in the Korumburra area (Murphy, 1988:14).

Other tracks

Various other tracks were also developed between main coach roads and rural settlements or between settlements and outlying mining or rural selection areas. Some of these included Amey's Track from Foster to Turton's Track, the Jeetho West track from Grantville at Western Port to Whitelaw's Track west of Korumburra and the Drouin to Poowong track, which later became a coach road.

5.2 The evolution to coach and wagon roads

Morgan (1997:85) identifies four stages of the evolution of early tracks into coach roads:

In forested country like Gippsland, roads developed in four stages. First a bridal path (suitable for a horse and rider finding their way through the bush), then a pack track (wider so a pack horse could get through), then a bullock track (much wider so a herd of bullocks could pass), and finally a coach road (narrower than a bullock track, but with a firm surface so that coaches would not get bogged).

This evolution in track development was often experienced in reverse as travelers ventured into South Gippsland from Melbourne during the years leading up to and during selection in the 1870s and 1880s.

A typical trip from Melbourne to the Poowong District up until the late 1870s involved a three hour Cobb & Co coach ride from Bourke Street in Melbourne to Dandenong, followed by a two hour waggonette ride to Cranbourne, where lunch was eaten, and then a twenty-one mile walk to Jimmy Bakers house one mile past Tobin Yallock (Lang Lang), where they would be accommodated for the night. From the Bakers house, travelers would proceed through the 'Sandy Rises' and the Cherry Tree Rises, then up 'Tinpot Hill', where they would often spend their second night camped out. Soon after this the travelers would enter the scrub through the narrow tunnel, which remained of McDonald's Track (Hartnell, 1974:26-27).

The principal tracks were gradually improved throughout Gippsland and more were added through the requirements for access to various selections and to new townships as they became established. Main coach roads to and from Melbourne were first established via Cranbourne to the fringes of Western Port (Tobin Yallock and Grantville) and via Drouin and Warragul to the La Trobe Valley.

The first coach road to Poowong from Tobin Yallock was opened in 1878. By 1879, the track from Drouin to Poowong was upgraded to allow a three-day per week mail coach service to be established (Hartnell, 1974:74). Other coach roads were established around the South Gippsland Shire.

The well known firm Cobb & Co. was established by American immigrants to Australia during the 1850s which played a major transportation role throughout the nation, including South Gippsland beginning in the 1870s. One of the original founders of Cobb & Co., J.M. Peck, left the firm in 1862 and started in the stock and station business. (Murphy, 1988:83). He subsequently established his own firm in the 1890s and opened a branch in Leongatha.

Road conditions throughout the area during the 1870s were atrocious, as is described in almost every history written on the area. Collett (1994:109-111) describes the road and travel conditions in the Welshpool to Foster areas:

In the West Riding of the Shire of Alberton roads were in poor condition, where they existed at all. The 'road' to Foster via Welshpool, Agnes and Muddy Creek was no more than the cleared track for the telegraph line, finished in February 1872, which kept close to the shore and crossed low and swampy ground. As with all narrow tracks in South Gippsland, for the greater part of the year it remained a quagmire, often with mud so deep that the wheels of drays had to be removed. There were bridges at Agnes River, Muddy Creek, the Franklin River, Deep Creek and Bennison Creek, but the roads at these places were ' a terror, even to Gippsland horsemen'. The bridge at Franklin River was only a tree trunk with 4 foot slabs nailed on it, without a handrail, under water in floods and very slippery. In the winter of 1873 the mailman fell from the Franklin bridge, 'both horse and rider rolling over in the creek'...."

In the streets of Foster wheeled traffic was frequently bogged down and pedestrians still crossed the worst parts on planks, and even in the better parts gumboots were necessary. The streets were a constant reminder to inhabitants that they were neglected by the Shire Council. In 1873 the Council received a report on Bridge Street, which had holes 'three feet deep', and the bridge itself in a 'disgracefully dangerous state'.

The Shire (of Alberton) covered an area of 2147 square miles and the Shire Council was obliged to maintain all streets, roads, bridges and culverts. Metal roads were extremely expensive to make properly since 'every cartload of metal thrown on the chocolate soil in that region would disappear almost as rapidly as if it were thrown in the sea' Labour was scarce and expensive, there was a shortage of stone and sand, and bridges and culverts were costly because they had to be built to withstand wet earth and winter flooding.....There was simply not enough money for so many roads.

Murphy (1988:37-38) also describes the difficult conditions experienced on the track leading past the Leongatha Cemetery to Inverloch, where seven miles of corduroy roadway was laid to enable bullock teams to get through with their loads. A large mud hole usually formed at each end of the corduroy roads, leading to more

maintenance problems (Committee of the South Gippsland Pioneers Association, 1920:82). Where conditions did not permit the passage of wheeled vehicles, sledges were used as a reliable and cheap alternative.

5.3 Twentieth century road improvements

Coverdale (Committee of the South Gippsland Pioneers Association, 1920:77-92) recalled the evolution of road construction up to the 1920s. Many of the original tracks were surveyed in along the straight lines of property boundaries and as a result frequently went straight up and down hillsides at grades of up to 1 in 7 or through creek beds. Such roads were considered to be Government folly and settlers had to form an entirely new system of roads for themselves.

Better roads that contoured around the hillsides at grades approaching 1 in 28 were eventually established, but it was a long, slow process. In some areas, split timber slabs fastened onto longitudinal bed logs replaced corduroy. These lasted for years when they were well made. In other areas attempts were made to harden the road surfaces by using burnt sedimentary rock, burnt clay or blue metal (crushed basalt rock).

However, little progress was made by the local councils until the Country Roads Board was established in 1913 for the purpose of improving the existing main roads and to construct new main roads where necessary.

Initial government funding of the Board's operations was in part allocated as a grant to the municipalities with the balance repayable over some 31 years. A great deal was accomplished by the CRB, but at least until after World War I, many of the backcountry settlers had to fend for themselves in the improvement of their own roads.

Priestly (1984:170) notes that:

Road construction accelerated after 1918 as road traffic was undergoing its spectacular motorization. By 1924, there were nearly ninety thousand motor cars, lorries and cycles registered in Victoria, although that was still less than half the estimated number of road vehicles pulled by horses. Just four years later, horse and motor vehicle numbers were balanced, and thereafter the fast-breeding petrol engine took precedence.

With the advent of the automobile, the need for smoother and safer surfaces led to vast improvements in the main roads and the evolution to the modern highways of today. Major improvements in engineering know how and construction materials have also led to the replacement of many of the earlier timber bridges and culverts with concrete and steel structures.

In the Shire of Korumburra, several small one-span bridges were built using the newly developed reinforced concrete method of construction development developed by the Monier Concrete Co. of which John Monash was one of the chief engineers. One his local employees, John Brydon later formed his own company and constructed four new bridges on the Bena-Poowong Road in 1914.

By the end of 1924, a new *State Highways and Vehicles Act* gave the CRB power to construct and maintain state highways and main roads, and to build ‘developmental’ roads, which would provide access to railway stations or the main roads leading to them.

The formation of the CRB and the 1924 Act consequently led to improvements to the road network in the Shire. In 1932, the CRB assumed

responsibility for the main road through the Shire from Melbourne and renamed it the South Gippsland Highway when it was proclaimed as a State Highway under the 1924 Act. (Anderson, 1994:59-60)

The increased road construction led to a demand for materials. During 1916, James Knox founded a quarrying firm near Leongatha, purchasing the South Gippsland Quarries and operating a quarry and crushing plant for the sale of bluestone screenings at the Ditchley Estate on Simon's Lane (Leongatha Historical Society, 1989:1). The bluestone was sold to the Victorian Railways and to road contractors in the Melbourne area. He opened another high quality bluestone deposit at Chalmer's Hill near Leongatha during the early 1920s. His firm was the largest quarrymaster in Victoria for a period of time, employing up to forty men.

5.4 Railways and Tramways

Introduction

Railways and tramways became the most important form of transport in South Gippsland during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and had a profound and lasting impact upon the pattern of settlement in the Shire.

As shown in Table 2, the railways operated from the late 1870s through the early 1990s when the South Gippsland railway line (formerly known as the Great Southern Railway) was closed by the Victorian Government. This line has since re-opened under lease by the South Gippsland Tourist Railway Association. Most of the major rail routes were constructed by the early 1890s, but a number of other short lines were established during the period from 1905 through the early 1920s. Various railway sidings and branch lines were also established in the Korumburra, Outtrim and Jumbunna areas during the period from the 1870s through the 1940s for coal mining purposes.

Meanwhile a few short narrow and broad gauge tramways, using horses or steam engines, were also established in the Welshpool and Toora areas and throughout the Hoddle Ranges and the Strzelecki Range for logging and milling purposes.

The development of railways and tramways was primarily in response to the transport needs of the coal mines and the timber mills of South Gippsland, but were also urgently requested by local selectors and town residents of the region as the most reliable form of transport available during times when the road systems were woefully inadequate and undependable. The railways also provided a productive and financially beneficial use for the great quantities of timber that was being felled through selectors land clearing operations in the late 1800's. Timber was used to burn in the steam engines, for the formation of sleepers, for bridge construction and for railway stations. Other aspects of railway construction and transport were a direct economic and employment stimulus to the South Gippsland community.

Morwell-Mirboo Railway

The first railway into the Shire was the branch line from Morwell to Baromi during 1883-84. The only suitable site for a railway station was found about a mile and a half west of the beginnings of the first settlement at Baromi. The new site was called the 'Terminus' and townships lots were surveyed and sold in 1884 when the railway station was named North (and later Mirboo North) (Murphy, 1994:41). Meanwhile Baromi declined and has all but disappeared.

Table 2 – South Gippsland railways & tramways construction details

Line	Constructed	Year closed	Details
Central Gippsland railway	1877-1879	Not applicable	205km; Richmond to South Yarra 1859, Sale to Dandenong 1877, Dandenong to South Yarra 1879
Morwell to Mirboo railway	1884-86	1974	32km
South Eastern or Great Southern railway	1888-92	1992	219km; Kooweerup to Korumburra 1888, Korumburra to Toora 1891, Toora to Port Albert 1892
Port Franklin to Bennison tramway	1889	Late 1930s	2km private broad gauge. Used by local fishermen for carriage of goods and passengers.
Korumburra to Jumbunna railway	1894	1953	6km. Lines also ran from Korumburra to coal mines at Coal Creek and Silkstone.
Jumbunna to Outtrim railway	1896	1951	4km
Port Welshpool to Hedley tramway	Pre-1900	1941	5km. Narrow gauge (2' 6") horse-drawn tramway.
Nyora to Wonthaggi railway	1910	1977	47km
Kooweerup to Strzelecki railway	1922	Progressively from 1930-1959	49km.

Source: Land Conservation Council, Report on the South Gippsland Area 2, Appendix 2A October 1980 (with additions and corrections)

Until the construction of the Great Southern railway seven years later the railway at Mirboo North was the easiest route for settlers coming to the Shire apart from coming by sea and led to the early settlement of the upper reaches of the Tarwin valley.

Great Southern Railway

The construction of the Great Southern Railway (also known as the South Eastern Railway) was authorized by an Act of Parliament in 1884 that became notorious as the 'Octopus Act'. Murphy (1988:36-37) describes in some detail the great number of men and the extensive amount of supplies and effort that went into the construction of the Great Southern Railway. Up to 700 bullocks and 200 horses were used. A fleet of steamers brought construction materials to Inverloch, where it was then hauled by bullock wagon to the Leongatha and Koonwarra section of the line.

The Leongatha to Port Albert section of the railway was built in two sections by different contractors, each commencing at Toora, largely because they could bring heavy materials, equipment and locomotives to that area by sea, using a pier that existed at Toora and building a new wharf at Port Franklin. (Collett, 1994:159).

The opening of the Great Southern Railway led to the start of *" a series of townships spread out at roughly five mile intervals along the route"* (Murphy, 1988:109). Six railway stations were surveyed between Korumburra and Stony Creek. As at Mirboo North some towns were moved to suit the location of the new line; Leongatha moved to its present site from the originally surveyed location near Koorooman where a store and post office had been established. Meanwhile some speculators surveyed their own towns, which were provided with a station. Plans for a station between Nyora and Loch to service the Poowong District were thwarted when the private development of Loch township included provision for a railway station (White, 1988:271).

As we shall see, Korumburra grew significantly due to the discovery of black coal and a grand brick station complex was constructed there in 1907. Leongatha also prospered due to the high quality red basalt soils in the area, its location at the junction of the railway and the track between Mirboo North and Anderson's Inlet and the establishment of a Labour Colony for unemployed persons during 1893 – After much lobbying by townsfolk a brick station complex (though somewhat less impressive than at Korumburra) was erected by 1910. Townships associated with other stations surveyed at Kardella, Ruby, Koonwarra, and Bongurra (Tarwin) were less successful, Bongurra never really materialising at all.

Branch lines

During 1891 the Victorian Parliament enacted legislation to construct branch lines from Korumburra to Coal Creek, Strzelecki and Jumbunna coal mines. The Strzelecki line was extended to the Black Diamond (Austral) mine during 1895 (White, 1988:271). The Outtrim-Jumbunna Railway was built in 1895-96 as a result of lobbying of the then Minister of Mines by the directors of the Outtrim Coal Mine and through their contribution of land for the track and their guarantee of the £20,000 required to build the line.

The last railway to be developed in the Shire was the Strzelecki Railway, which was completed during 1922. Lobbying for the railway's construction was successful after a number of local railway development leagues in the northern part of the Shire had competed unsuccessfully for lines to be built in their local areas. Banding together for the common purpose of

opening up an area of rich agricultural land that was not well accessed by roads, the various leagues combined their resources during 1911 and called for a railway to be built through Poowong East, Strzelecki and on to Mirboo North. An Act to build the line from Kooweerup to McDonalds Track was passed in 1914, but World War One delayed construction until 1919. By this time, automobiles were beginning to offer significant competition with the railways and roads were being improved. As a result, sections of this railway line were progressively closed from 1930 through 1959, (White, 1988:272).

Tramways

The completion of the Great Southern Railway provided a boost to the fishing industry of the Port Welshpool and Port Franklin areas, allowing fresh fish to be sent to Melbourne markets daily.

From Port Welshpool the fish was first transported by horse-drawn wagons to the Welshpool Railway Station located three miles to the north. A tramline was laid in 1904 and a horsedrawn tram was then used to carry fish to the railway station. This tram was also used to ferry people from the port to Welshpool township for work and social events (Peterson, 1978:11-12). During the same period, Masons Timber Tramway had been established to transport fish from the port to Mason's timber mill at the Nine Mile Creek and timber from the mill to the port. These trams apparently remained in operation until the end of 1940 and the tracks were later removed during 1953-54 (Loney, 1990:22-23).

At Port Franklin, the tramway constructed by Andrew O'Keefe during the construction of the Great Southern Railway was put to good use by fishermen of that port to transport their catch to the railway station at Bennison.

5.5 Travelling by sea

Introduction

As we have seen the early exploration of the area by early sailing vessels, commercial shipping and maritime commerce and transport played a significant role in its discovery and development and until the coming of the railways, the ports remained the easier point of access into the Shire. Piers and wharves at Port Welshpool, Toora, Port Franklin, Foster Landing, Millers Landing, Walkerville and Anderson's Inlet have been instrumental facilities at various times. This was particularly true during the period from the 1840s and 1850s through the 1910s and 1920s when overland transport was slow and difficult.

As a regional port, Port Albert (which is outside the Shire) also had a strong influence on the Shire's development, the Central Gippsland Region and transport movements in both areas during the early years prior to the advent of good roads and railways.

Port Welshpool

Loney (1990) chronicles many of the ships and maritime activities that have been associated with Port Welshpool. That port has served as a safe haven, tucked away from the weather of Bass Strait in Corner Inlet. It served as a major port for sail traders and small steam ships from the mid-1850s through the turn of the last century. The establishment of off-shore oil rigs in Bass Strait during recent years has re-invigorated the port as a transport centre for oil company activities as well as a temporary base for the fast ferry service to Tasmania.

Port Welshpool's first jetty, built in 1856, was destroyed by fire in the 1880s and was rebuilt in its existing location as the Fishermen's Jetty. The export of timber from Mason's Mill to Europe during the 1890s was highly dependent on the original jetty at Port Welshpool for commercial success. This jetty carried a horse tramway for many years. The need for deep water loading facilities led to the construction of the Long Jetty in 1937. The Long Jetty remains as one of the most unique jetties in Victoria, designed with a significant curve and has been used for both commercial and defence purposes over the years. During the early 1960s it was used by the first ships exploring for oil and gas in Bass Strait before the deep water port at Barry Point was constructed.

Loney (1990) documents a long list of ships, steamers and famous ship wrecks that were associated with Port Welshpool and the Corner Inlet area. Offshore islets, sand bars and reefs can make the waters near Port Welshpool hazardous. Some of the well known wrecks and disasters of the area include the *Earl of Windsor* (1863), the *Albert Victor* (1889) and the *Western Spruce* (1969).

Foster Landing

During the 1870s many miners and others wishing to go to Stockyard Creek would take a small paddle steamer (the Tarra was one) from either Port Albert or Port Welshpool to the estuary of Stockyard Creek, travelling upstream until they reached the Landing, a timber wharf built on the creek bank. This landing was not only a centre of transport for the Foster area at that time, but also was the location where the gold warden and magistrate William H. Foster held court for a number of claim jumping disputes and remarked that it was absurd to refer to the place as Stockyard Creek as the claims could not be in the creek (Collett, 1994:68-69). Once he had made some wise judgements, Stockyard Creek was renamed Foster by popular demand.

Miller's Landing

Miller's Landing was a jetty built to off-load supplies and passengers brought in by boat for Darby River. A horse and wagon was used to continue on to Darby River. It was named after Alf Miller, a ranger at Barrys Hill from 1925 to 1940. (Crawford, pers. comm., 1998). Remnants of this landing remain today.

Waratah Bay and the Walkerville Jetty

Waratah Bay is named after the iron paddle steamer *Waratah* that took shelter in the bay during 1854. The name was changed from the original Patterson Bay name given the embayment by the French navigator Baudin in 1803. The quarrying of limestone led to the establishment of a small village also called Waratah (later renamed Walkerville) and the building of a long jetty with a tramway on it to enable the lime to be loaded on ships for delivery to Melbourne during the 1870s. This jetty was very long and had a crook in it due to the difficulty experienced in driving piles into the hard reef rock located off-shore. Small steamers including *SS Blackboy* and *Gazelle* serviced this industrial port village, dropping off goods and fuel for the lime kilns, possibly going on to Lakes Entrance and Bairnsdale to pick up maize or sugar, and then returning to Walkerville on their way back to Melbourne, loading up to 500 bags of lime (Charles & Loney, 1990:47-48).

Port of Inverloch on Anderson Inlet and Wharves on the Tarwin River

Transport and communications in the Lower Tarwin area were largely influenced by sea access to the pier at Inverloch and the wharves at Maher's Landing and Tarwin Lower due to poor roads and dense vegetation. The area around Anderson Inlet was surveyed and settled during the 1840s and a number of schooners called regularly at the port. The ketch *Ripple* became

the regular contact with the outside world for the local community. Cargoes of goods and merchandise would be dropped off and farm produce, timber and other items would be loaded for sale in Melbourne. Regular seaport services continued on into the late 1920s and 1930s, with the steamships *SS Despatch, SS Wyrallah, SS Moonah, SS Ellen* and the *SS Manawatu* providing services (Murphy, 1988:127-128; Charles & Loney, 1989:59-63).

The Inverloch jetty proved to be instrumental when the Wonthaggi coalfield came into operation in 1909. A shortage of black coal in Victoria resulted in weekly visits by steamers from Melbourne to load coal that had been carted to the jetty by bullock wagon and steam traction engine. This activity continued until the railway between Wonthaggi and Nyora was completed in February of 1910 (Murphy, 1988:128).

Lighthouses

Due to the loss of many sea-going vessels (including the schooner *Industry*, the *Truganini* and the German passenger ship *Schornberg*) and increasing shipping traffic, a lighthouse was built on the southeast point of Wilsons Promontory during 1859. An innovative multiple kerosene light-reflective lamp that was visible from 25 nautical miles away was installed. (Collett, 1994:52)

In the early twentieth century, the newly formed Commonwealth assumed responsibility for lighthouses, and a new lighthouse at Cape Liptrap was built in 1913, becoming the second automatic light established by the Commonwealth Government in Australia. It is visible for twenty-seven miles out to sea and was replaced in the 1950s. (Charles & Loney, 1994:109)

5.6 Postal, telegraph and telephone networks

Postal Networks and Post Offices

Delivery of letters and other mail was in the beginning dependent on what could be sent via ship to the nearest seaport, transferred overland along bridal or pack tracks by a horseman. Post offices in rural districts were often nothing more than "*a large hole in a hollow tree where any mail for the nearby settlers was left high and dry until such time as it was collected,*". (Murphy 1988:34) Although the Lower Tarwin and Anderson Inlet areas were settled during the 1840s and 1850s, no official post office existed at Anderson Inlet until 1883.

The Koorooman Post Office was officially proclaimed in 1887 at Horn's Roadside Inn one mile north of the planned railway station. Mail from Anderson Inlet would be carried in relay fashion by different pack horse riders to the Post Office at Koorooman. On-going mail was then delivered to Mirboo North by a Mr Blackmore, who frequently had trouble fording the Tarwin River to get there. (Murphy, 1988:48) The Koorooman Post Office served the District for four years until the Leongatha Post Office was opened in 1891, when mail began to be received by rail.

In the Poowong District, regular postal services did not exist until 1878. Irregular collection of mail forwarded to Cranbourne or Tobin Yallock by a passing selector who would then leave letters for others at James Scott's house. After a Post Office had been established in Poowong in 1878 a weekly horseback mail service from Tobin Yallock commenced. This was later followed by a three-day per week coach mail and passenger service that was highly dependent on the weather and road conditions. An alternative coach mail service from Drouin was started when the Drouin-Poowong coach road was opened. By 1890 a

contract for a six-day per week mail delivery from Nyora to the Poowong Post Office was awarded, marking the importance of a westerly route for Poowong instead of the old northern route from Drouin. (Hartnell, 1974:75)

Mail nights were events, which were looked forward to with eager anticipation in the isolated and news starved district, particularly since The Gippsland Independent also arrived then. This is conveyed by Hartnell (1974:74) in a quote from a correspondent to the Independent on 20 May 1880:

Your excellent journal, being our only means of knowing what is going on in our country is, on mail nights, greedily seized upon and the contents thereof devoured with avidity.

When the railways were established, some postal services were incorporated with the railway stations. After Federation in 1901 responsibility was assumed by the Commonwealth, which implemented a building program. During the early twentieth century, several new post offices were erected in South Gippsland as part of this program such as the brick Korumburra Post Office built at the corner of Bridge Road and Mine Road in 1904 and its timber counterpart constructed at Leongatha in 1907. The Chief Architect of the Eastern District of the Public Works Department, JB Cohen, designed these buildings in a distinctive Queen Anne style.

Telegraph and telephone networks

Telegraph services were set up during the 1870s and 1880s, with terminals often housed at the Post Office or local General Store and then later at some of the railway stations.

Telephone services were extended from Korumburra to Leongatha in 1913. (Murphy, 1988:171) Like the railways, telephone leagues were often established in local areas to lobby the government and raise the public outcry and funds to establish what was then the most modern communication link. Installation first took place in the township areas, but was later extended to farms. (Sparkes, 1997).

5.7 Newspapers

Newspapers have been extremely important forms of communication in South Gippsland over the years, particularly the local newspapers that were established in almost every medium to large township.

In the former Shire of Korumburra alone, there were at least seven noteworthy newspapers, including The *Great Southern Advocate* (1889 to 1959) and *The Korumburra Independent*, *The Southern Mail* (1890 to 1909), *The Korumburra Times* (1892 to 1973), *The Korumburra Free Press* (1895 to 1896), *The Outtrim News* (1897 to 1909), *The Loch, Poowong and Bass Valley Express* and the *Loch and Bass Valley Advertiser* (1931 to 1932), *The South Gippsland Sentinel-Times* (1973 to Present).

In Mirboo North, the *Mirboo Herald* was published from 1887 to 1894 and *The Gippslander and Mirboo Times* in 1897. A new office in Ridgway was erected in 1910 for the Times, which was renamed simply as the *Mirboo Times* in 1957. In 1997 it became a community owned and operated newspaper called *The Mirboo North Times*.

One newspaper that has operated continuously for over 100 years is the *Great Southern Star,* now simply *The Star*. Its offices in McCartin Street, Leongatha were constructed using concrete blocks manufactured at Knox's Quarry and are still in use today.

HERITAGE

Examples of heritage places that illustrate the theme of *Transport and Communications* include:

Twentieth century road improvements

- Early reinforced concrete bridges at Ruby, Bena, and Outtrim.
- Knox's quarry at Chalmer's hill near Leongatha, and the former Manager's residence on Simon's Lane near the site of the railway siding used to load gravel.

Railways and tramways

- Buildings and infrastructure associated with the railways and tramways in the area. This includes the extant station complexes, bridges, and landscape features such as cuttings and embankments (in cases of closed lines these features sometimes provide the only evidence of the former railway)

Travelling by sea

- The piers at Port Welshpool and Port Franklin.

Postal, telegraph and telephone networks

- The Post Office at Foster is the oldest post office in the Shire. It is now part of the South Gippsland Heritage Society Museum.
- Post offices constructed by the Commonwealth in the first decades of the twentieth century are still exant at Korumburra, Leongatha, Loch, Mirboo North, and Toora and all with the exception of Korumburra are still in use.
- The route of the former telegraph line can still be interpreted by the name of roads such as Telegraph Road, and the width of part of the Main Street in Foster.

Newspapers

- The early offices of the 'Star' in McCartin Street, Leongatha, and the 'Gippslander & Mirboo Times in Ridgway, Mirboo North.

Economic Development

INTRODUCTION

As we have seen, the rural industries of the Shire have been of primary importance in its economic development, particularly up until the middle of the twentieth century. This chapter describes the other industries that were important in the formation of the Shire, and have contributed to its development at key times in its history.

As we shall see, while the other early industries in South Gippsland including sealing, whaling and bark stripping industries were important to the Australian and world economies for a limited time, they had little lasting impact on the development of a local economy in South Gippsland.

Timber milling, gold and coal mining and fishing have each, at various times, been suggested as the future of South Gippsland. Coal and gold mining in particular had brief, yet spectacular impacts upon settlement and were largely responsible for the establishment of the two key towns of Foster and Korumburra. While their

In addition, tourism too has played an increasingly important role the economic development of the Shire, particularly since the Second World War although it commenced as early as the 1900s.

This chapter incorporates the following Australian Historic Themes:

- Developing regional, and national economies; Utilising natural resources, Altering the environment; Catering for tourists.

HISTORY

6.1 Utilising natural resources

Sealing, whaling and Wattle bark stripping

The sealing, whaling and wattle bark stripping industries provided the first exports for the Australian economy and the areas around Sydney, Launceston and Hobart no doubt prospered because of these industries in the early 1900s. It is difficult to determine the full value of the whaling industry to the Australian economy, however, during 1791 Governor Phillip decided that he would open whaling as Australia's first export industry, putting many of the ships that had delivered convicts to productive use in fierce competition with whaling companies from Britain, France, Holland, the United States, Germany and elsewhere.

Literally hundreds of colonial and foreign men would have been employed in these trades at the time, spending their hard earned wages for good and bad around Australia and the world. The whaling companies also made reasonable profits on the whale oil and whale bone. A typical small catch with 100 tons of oil and 5 tons of whalebone would have had a total value of 2000, out of which 694 would have been deducted for the wages of 27 labourers and 1020 would have been paid for provisions, stores and other charges, leaving a profit of about 285. (Colwell, 1995:60)

Timber cutting, sawmilling and tree plantations

Timber milling was not always considered as a commercial venture in South Gippsland in spite of the huge forests. This was in part due to the very poor transport through the area and the difficulty of shifting milled timber to the Melbourne or Sydney markets.

As we have seen, clearing the forests was merely a necessary and extremely difficult aspect of preparing land for agriculture, and the cleared timber was often simply burned. However, some commercial logging and sawmilling ventures developed during the 1840s and 1850s.

As market demand increased and the technology for milled timber improved in the 1870s, commercial timber operations became an integral part of the development of the Shire. The great forests, big trees and their processing remain an important part of the region's folklore and heritage.

One of the earliest profitable ventures occurred in the early 1840s, as the whaling industry was drawing to a close around Wilson's Promontory. Timber millers saw the potential of the tall trees around Sealer's Cove and cut posts and rails for use in fencing and construction work in both Sydney and Melbourne (Collett, 1994:44). Another timber mill was established at Sealer's Cove in 1903, resulting in a little township of about 40 people, complete with houses and a community hall. Trees felled inland from the coast were transported on timber rails to the mill, sawn and stacked and picked up by steamships from an 800 foot pier for export to Melbourne. Most of the township was destroyed by bushfire in 1906 and the milling ceased at that time. (Collett, 1994:190)

A more organised venture began the following decade when Robert Turnbull, one of the original owners of the port at Port Albert, established a

timber mill at Sealer's Cove in 1853. He intended to supply timber for the building boom being experienced in Melbourne. Turnbull soon moved his venture to Muddy Creek, which is near the present township of Toora, so as to access the blue gum forest. He built a network of tramways to transport the timber to the waters edge, where it was then taken by punt to ships anchored off shore. This was another successful commercial venture for Turnbull who had a monopoly on all shipping, provisions and trade at Port Albert.

Timber tramways were built in the Foster, Toora and Franklin River areas during the 1880 to service the sawmills. An early pioneer, Mary O'Dea, recalled her childhood memory of the tramways:

There was a wooden tramline right through our paddock and Cleary's. There was a jinker and two big wheels of six feet diameter and the logs were hooked on to the axle by a chain and dragged along the tramline by bullocks. Everywhere out this way there were hundreds of stumps cut in the characteristic way of axefelled trees. (Collett, 1994:140)

Another description indicates that wagons with as many as 32 bullocks could be seen pulling logs and timber for the Mason's sawmill at Nine Mile Creek, near the present village of Hedley. (Collett, 1994:145)

During the 1870s and 1880s, the building of weatherboard houses for selectors created a new demand for milled timber. In the Foster area, a sawmill at the foot of the Hoddle Ranges supplied finished timber to selectors, while the sawmill at Toora, which had been closed down, resumed production. (Collett, 1994:138)

After the 1890s Depression, the demand for timber in Victoria increased again, leading to a number of new timber cutting and milling operations in South Gippsland. One of these operations was conducted under license by Charles Hall in the Hoddle Range, beginning in 1899 and lasting for about 15 years, when most of the workers were called to World War 1.

Hall built a tramway into the ranges and the Battery Creek area from Koondrook (later known as Hoddle) Railway Station. Twenty wood-cutters were hired and horse drawn trams were used, moving along rails primarily made of wood. Blackwood trees went to furniture manufacturers in Melbourne and Mountain Ash trees were split into lathes for use in goldmines in Victoria. (Collett, 1994:190)

Many of the trees felled were incredibly large. One such tree at Gunyah was sufficient in size to build an eight-roomed hotel there. (Murphy, 1994:66). In the case of the larger Mountain Ash trees, a temporary scaffold would be built at the broad base or stump of the tree to allow it to be cut at a point with more tender wood up to ten feet above this point. Springboard planks 1.5 to 2 inches thick, 8 inches wide and about 5 feet long would be inserted by expert axemen into a notch cut about 5 inches deep into the tree (Murphy, 1994:23).

Some of the springboard tree stumps were used as temporary houses, stables or churches (Collett, 1994:138). Examples of these tree stumps remain today at Darlimurla and Gunyah Gunyah.

The Mirboo North district was another important timber area in the Shire particularly during the period of land selection from 1878 to the turn of the century. Establishment of the Morwell - Mirboo North Railway in 1886 led to the establishment of many small sawmills where sufficient stands of millable timber existed. The railway allowed selectors a relatively fast way

to earn cash while clearing their blocks. The areas surrounding railway stations at Darlimurla and Mirboo North were stacked with sleepers, palings and battens to be shipped off for sale (Murphy, 1994:65).

Timber tramways were commonly used throughout the Strzelecki Range forests during the time when the dense forests were cleared by the settlers. The tramways were used by bullock teams to haul timber from the harvest area to the mill and then to take milled timber from the mill to the railway line.

Blackbutt and Mountain Ash trees were used as “splitting timber" for making the selectors homes with slab floors, split paling walls and shingle roofs. Bluegum and Messmale trees were used for making stumps and fence posts.

A better quality house required pit-sawn timber, created by positioning a suitable log over a pit that was four feet deep and six feet long. One sawyer stood on top of the log and another sawyer, in the pit below the log, each drawing a seven or eight foot 'buck' or 'cross-cut' saw up and down a marked line. (Gabbedy, 1981:73, referred to in Murphy, 1994:21-22)

Timber felling and milling was also an important part of the economy in the Leongatha, Korumburra and Loch areas. In particular, the building of the Great Southern Railway created a great demand for timber and many small mills were established close to the railway to supply its needs.

The mills were self-sufficient, utilising a large boiler fired with wood from the forest and mill off-cuts to create steam to drive the engines that powered the saws.

A small sized mill during the late 1890s and early 1900's would employ ten to twenty men as engine drivers, log yard men, saw men, dockers and sawyers. Little villages would occur near the mill to provide housing for married men, huts for single men and a blacksmiths shop. If the community was big enough, a community hall or a school house that served a multi-purpose role for other community activities (church, dance hall, etc.) would be built. Even though many of the mills were temporary, they contributed greatly to the growth and economic development of the Shire.

Conversion of many areas of native forest that were less productive or of lesser commercial value to pine plantations was carried out by the Forests Commission Victoria on Crown Lands in the Strzelecki Ranges during the 1960s. Survival rates for the pines were lowered by predators such as rabbits, wallabies and bush rats, which fed on the tender young seedlings. After introducing 1080 poison carrots to these areas, the Forests Commission increased its pine and eucalypt plantations ire areas near Childers, Allambee, Darlimurla and the eastern Strzelecki Range.

At Mirboo North during the 1970s, the Commission planted over 1000 acres of pines and a slightly lesser area of eucalypts within a seven mile radius of the town. APM Forests Pty Ltd also increased its plantations on purchased farm land and on leased Crown Land. (Murphy, 1994:316)

Although the number of small sawmills decreased greatly during the 1900s, in particular during the past fifty years, commercial timber operations and milling continue as part of the South Gippsland economy today. The effect of the timber industry on the appearance of the South Gippsland landscape is visible in two ways today:

- Firstly, many of the areas cleared as part of timber operations have become part of the trademark ‘green rolling hills’ of South Gippsland.

- Second, the planting of pine plantations has also created another distinctive feature of South Gippsland Shire's northern and eastern areas.

Fishing

Families living in the coastal areas of South Gippsland used fishing to supplement an income drawn mostly from agriculture. During the late 1880s, between twenty and thirty families at Toora, the Landing (on Stockyard Creek downstream from Foster), Port Franklin and Welshpool combined fishing with a little farming to make a living and sold their catches to their neighbours at Foster. Many of these families were Scandinavian and there were Chinese as well as Anglo-Saxon Europeans. (Peterson, 1978:5-10)

As transport and refrigeration technology improved, the fishermen were able to extend their markets further afield. The opening of the Great Southern Railway by 1894 provided a great boost to the industry; for the first time, fishermen in the Shire could compete directly with others closer to Melbourne (such as at Tooradin) by loading their catch onto the train.

As we have seen, timber tramways using horse-drawn vehicles were used to transport fish in cane baskets from the piers at Port Welshpool and Port Franklin to the nearby stations. The horse drawn tramway between Port Welshpool Jetty and Welshpool station opening in June 1905. The journey took thirty minutes, and gave the fishermen better access to the much larger Melbourne markets.

A small Chinese fishing industry was in operation along the shores of Wilson's Promontory in the 1860s. The fishermen were based at Corner Inlet and made their living from squid, salmon, whiting, mullet, pike and shellfish available in the area. Coastal steamers called at Sealers Cove to collect the live catch between 1865 and 1868. Chinamen's Creek, Chinamen's Beach and Johnny Souey Cove derive their names from this period. (Lennon, 1992:8 & McNiven, 1995:12)

From the 1890s, crayfishing became a major industry based at Port Welshpool and the Corner Inlet area. Many crayfishing boats frequented the area, ranging from 60 feet to 73 feet in length. (Peterson, 1978:30-31)

Other fish caught in large quantities over the years have included barracouta. whiting, garfish, mullet, trout, rock flathead., silver bream and flounder.

One of the more notable of the local fishing craft was the *Janet Isles,* built in 1913 by WB Smith and his sons, who were prominent local members of Port Welshpool community. Peterson (1978:31) recalls how this medium sized boat was not only renowned for the large hauls of salmon, trout and other fish it brought in, but was also popular for parties, picnics and other social events. The boat is now on display at the Port Welshpool Museum.

The fishing industry resulted in the construction of a number of significant jetties and piers over the years. Collett (1994:250) describes how one large timber jetty built at Toora in 1889 was unfortunately destroyed by an Army commando unit wing in 1943. Remains of this jetty can still be seen.

The Welshpool fishing fleet was relatively large during the 1900s up until the 1960s. A unique long pier with a curved design was built in 1937 to provide a deep water jetty at Port Welshpool (Collett, 1994:271)

The Corner Inlet fisheries associated with Port Welshpool are the third most important within Victoria today with approximately 200 tonnes of fish caught commercially each year, and

approximately 175 tonnes of fish caught for recreational purposes annually. Whiting, flathead, flounder, mullet and salmon are the principal species taken. (Land Conservation Council, 1993:151)

6.2 Gold mining

Introduction

The gold rush began much later in South Gippsland than in other parts of Victoria, but it was nonetheless caught up in the gold fever experienced throughout the State as each new field was discovered and heralded as better than all before. Miners and speculators hoped that gold finds in South Gippsland in the 1870s would bring great wealth, however, as was so often the case, the reality of gold mining in South Gippsland did not match the high expectations.

While gold yields were far below those at the lucrative Bendigo and Ballarat goldfields, the discovery of gold was instrumental in bringing people into South Gippsland and many miners later chose to settle and moved into agriculture. Gold was also a catalyst for the extension and improvement of track and road networks to the mining areas.

Stockyard Creek

Gold was discovered at Stockyard Creek in March 1870. Timber workers who prospected casually in the area had long held the belief that the land was auriferous and the initial find was proof. Hints of gold had been found from the early 1850s, but the isolation of the region and a lack of government support for prospecting in this difficult country meant the leads were not fully explored for another twenty years.

Within a week of the find at Stockyard Creek, thirty men had made the difficult trip to the field to try their luck. However, heavy rains in April stalled the diggers progress and made the already difficult country even more trying to work and, compared with the hundreds of people who rushed to the goldfields in other parts of Victoria, the Stockyard Creek field was deserted.

Reaching the diggings was no easy matter. Prospectors had first to make their way to Port Albert, either by boat or by tramping along the coast. From there it was a 4.5 hour trip by steamer to the Landing at the mouth of Stockyard Creek and then a five mile walk to the diggings.

Many found good surface gold at Stockyard Creek. Others sank substantial shafts, up to 80 feet deep, through wet clay. The shafts bottomed on good deposits, but there was still no sign of the substantial lead that was suspected in the area. (Collett, 1994:62)

Despite these difficulties, between September 1870 to June 1871 Stockyard Creek grew from a group of 20 miners to a population of over 700. However, by the end of 1871 the boom times were over and although Stockyard Creek did not become the rich gold town that was hoped, it did outlast gold, to become the settled and permanent township of Foster. (Collett, 1994:77)

The town was named after WH Foster, a popular magistrate who observed that a “court hearing could not be held in a creek”. He had a reputation for his sensible rulings on claim jumping disputes. (Wilson et al, 1995:43-44)

Turton’s Creek

Gold was discovered at Turton's Creek, six miles north of Foster, in December 1872. Early finds were good and had Gippslanders hoping this would prove a richer field than any other in South Gippsland.

Men deserted their claims at Foster and made then way to the new field, so that within two weeks there was a small township at Turton's Creek with no less than thirteen hotels. Competition was rife between the two neighbouring goldfields and those remaining at Foster did not take kindly to having their work and supplies disrupted by the new field.

The future looked bright for Turton's Creek, so much so that storekeepers from Port Albert arranged, with government assistance, to have a track cleared directly to Turton's Creek; bypassing Foster, the existing tramway and the Landing. This improved access as the goldfield was situated in an area dense with ferns, scrub and dogwood. Again prospectors had to battle the environment to win gold.

In spite of grand hopes, the rush at Turton's Creek died away as quickly as it had sprung up. By the end of 1873 the alluvial field was largely exhausted and miners were leaving in droves. The township did not survive. (Collett, 1994:92-93)

Wilson’s Promontory and Waratah Bay

A small gold mining venture, covering 25 acres, was based around Mt. Singapore On Wilson’s Promontory between 1866 and 1870. The Chancellor Gold Mining and Quartz Crushing Company employed around ten men who established a small base between Mt. Singapore and Mt. Hunter. The venture was not successful. Similarly, small yields were occasionally found around Waratah Bay. (McNiven, 1995:12)

6.3 Coal mining

Introduction

As Sykes (1997:5) points out, during the mid to late 1800s Victoria followed the advanced areas of the world in being heavily reliant on coal as a power source prior to the advent of electricity, oil and natural gas. The Victorian Government had offered incentives during 1852 and again in 1870 for the discovery of good black coal mining sites.

The initial coal discoveries in South Gippsland were at Cape Patterson and Kilcunda and lie outside South Gippsland Shire. During the 1880s small scale coal mines were opened up at Berry's Creek near Mardan, at Coalville near Thorpdale and north of present-day Mirboo North.

At the same time that the busy goldfield at Stockyard Creek was evolving into the town of Foster, black coal was discovered in the vicinity of Korumburra. James Brown, a prospector, discovered the Coal Creek seam while travelling from Stockyard Creek to Melbourne via the Strzelecki Ranges in 1872. However, his discovery was not turned into a paying commercial enterprise for another twenty years.

The isolation of South Gippsland and the lack of a suitable means to reach and transport the coal hindered progress. Although historical sources are somewhat contradictory (White 1988) it appears that it was not until selectors began to move into the district and begin clearing the country that confirmation of important seams was made and they became

accessible. (Committee of the South Gippsland Pioneers Association, 1920:230)

The organised search for coal was conducted in the Coal Creek area six years after James Brown's find. The party of Henry Hine, WS Paterson and JR Paterson found indications of coal deposits in the samples they took from the creeks.

Believing that this could indicate major deposits in the area, JR Paterson successfully persuaded the Minister for Lands to reserve the land as a coal reserve. It was at the time being surveyed for selection. Bowden (1970:119) notes that this was achieved in 1879 although the Coal Creek Mining Company was not officially formed until 1888.

The interim years were a struggle to raise the capital required for such a labour intensive venture. Financial difficulties plagued the Coal Creek Mining Company even though bores had been sunk, a rail siding built and paying coal found and sold. In 1894 the Company went into voluntary liquidation and a new company was formed and registered as the Coal Creek Proprietary Company (Bowden, 1970:120).

Government assistance was provided to win coal at Korumburra when in 1889, the Minister of Mines ordered that a drill be brought from Kilcunda. The government hoped that the field would prove rich enough to relieve the uncertainty of coal supplies from New South Wales, where the fields were subject to frequent industrial unrest. Bullock teams brought the drill slowly and laboriously along tracks deteriorating in the winter conditions. The first bore put down did not show results and its location was a bone of contention between Mr Field, the drill manager, the engineer for the Coal Creek Proprietary Company and the Mines Department. The second was more successful and a third confirmed that larger quantities of coal were present.

The development of the fledgling coal industry was hampered by inadequate transport to and from the area. In 1891, the government passed legislation to construct a railway line from Korumburra to Coal Creek, with the company to bear a portion of the cost. The government was criticised for not financing the entire railway and supporting the industry.

After commencing in May 1892, construction of the railway was completed the following October and the first train load of coal left the Coal Creek siding on 25 October, 1892. (Bowden, 1970:121) The day was declared a public holiday day in Korumburra and the local community joined in the celebrations.

The demonstrated existence of coal at Coal Creek saw some 46 other groups form syndicates and apply for mining leases in Korumburra and surrounding districts including Jumbunna and Outtrim.

Some of the mines became long term ventures while others failed when it was discovered that payable coal seams were not present on their leases. Among the most successful of these were the Austral mine and the Jumbunna mine. The founder of the Jumbunna seam, Mr TW Horsley, recounted his discovery:

The first discovery of coal in the above district was made by myself in the months of May, 1890 in sowing grass seed on some newly cleared land. This proved to be the forerunner of other discoveries in the Outtrim and Korumburra districts. The discovery did not seem to me to be of much importance at the time and it was two months later before I did anything to prove the thickness of the seam, which, to my surprise, turned out to be 4ft. 6in. ...I and a man named Aikman had the honour of hewing the first coal

in the district, the tools we used being an axe and a spade, no pick being available...

(Committee of the South Gippsland Pioneers Association, 1920:234)

The coal mining resulted in economic activity in the Shire over a period of nearly fifty years, employing hundreds of men as miners as well as for the building of railways and skip lines for the transport of the coal to Melbourne and elsewhere.

The mines were a tremendous consumer of timber, stimulating the market for timber milling in the Shire. The lure of profits also attracted the entrepreneurs, some of whom were more interested in buying land near the mines to sell to the miners and other settlers who came with the formation of coal mining townships (Sykes, 1997:9-12)

Workers dissatisfaction with working conditions (e.g. working the mines with their feet in water, dangerous conditions or being forced to purchase land as a condition of employment) and the pay were the source of some of the longest running and most famous industrial strike actions just before and after the turn of the century. (White, 1988:119-135 & Sykes, 9-12)

The recurring difficulties experienced by those attempting to win coal were the laborious nature of the land and industrial disputes. In addition, the Victorian Government withdrew its support of the South Gippsland mines in the end, favouring the purchase of coal from New South Wales. (White, 1988:119)

Coal mining brought to great economic stimulus to South Gippsland through the sale of coal, the influx of people and the building of communities, the construction of road and railways. However, there is little doubt that the mining and its associated developments also brought many environmental impacts and changes to the landscape, many which remain today in the form of abandoned railway cuttings and sidings, tailing heaps etc.

6.4 Tin mining

Tin mining played only a very small part in the economic development of South Gippsland, when compared with more lucrative returns from gold and coal. However, tin mining was locally important on the Franklin River near Toora from 1884 to 1914, and at Wilson's Promontory during the 1920s.

Upper Franklin River

In 1884, a lease to mine for tin was granted on the upper Franklin River. Two years later, the mine was producing modest returns of about a ton of tin ore per week. This had to be taken by packhorse and dray to the wharf at Toora to be shipped to Melbourne.

The results were good enough to encourage others to try their luck and in 1888, a group of Melbourne investors set up the *Gippsland Tin Mining Company*. They approached their new endeavour with great enthusiasm, describing their lease as having *"sufficient tin to supply the world for the next hundred years."* (Collett, 1994:153)

This was yet another example of colonial exaggeration aimed at attracting investors. In reality, tin production in the area was erratic and failed to reach the high expectations of prospectors.

Tin mining continued at Toora through 1914, when much of the big money behind the Toora Proprietary Tinfields was withdrawn. The mine continued on under sole proprietorship for a few more years, but the mine workers were largely itinerant and considered

to be a 'rough lot' by local people. (Collett, 1994:216)

Mount Hunter, Wilson's Promontory
Wilson's Promontory was gazetted as a National Park in 1905 and three years later regulations controlling its care, protection and management were published in the *Victorian Government Gazette*.

This followed some twenty years of lobbying by members of the Melbourne Field Naturalists Club, led by JB Gregory, to have the Promontory declared a National Park. (Lennon, 1993)

This did not, however, mean the end of prospecting and mining at Wilson's Promontory. In the early 1900s deposits of tin were found in the area adjacent to Mount Hunter. Towards the end of the First World War, the scarcity of tin forced its value to double its pre-war value.

Pressure to mine the deposits at Wilson's Promontory increased and the government decided it was in the 'national interest' to do so. The *Argus* newspaper and field naturalist groups opposed the decision. An initial prospecting lease was granted in 1918, and when samples taken proved payable, further mineral leases were granted in 1920 and 1921. (McKellar, 1993:12)

At the end of 1924, mining began under the auspices of the Mt. Hunter Tin Mining Company. Accommodation was established along Tin Mine Creek to the north of the mine. Rough weatherboard huts were erected for the mine manager and other staff, while the labourers were housed in canvas tents. A blacksmith forge, a store and explosives magazine were also part of the small settlement. (McKellar, 1993:16)

Payable ore was finally reached on 18 December, 1924 but just two days later a flaw in the casting of one of the cylinders at No. 2 pumphouse caused it to break. The workforce had to be stood down and repairs were not completed until March 1925. The company never really recovered and returns were not sufficient to continue mining.

The mine closed in June 1925 and in the next few years the huts were sold and removed and the equipment dismantled and also sold. The National Park Committee of Management eventually filled in the tunnels and shafts, though this had formed the terms of the original lease and should have been done by the mining company. (McKellar, 1993:25)

Later attempts to revive tin mining at Mt Hunter were not successful.

6.5 Lime extraction and processing

Walkerville and Bell Point
The limestone cliffs at Walkerville, previously known as Waratah, and nearby at Bell Point were quarried between 1878 and 1924 (Land Conservation Council, 1980:20)

Leases were first issued for the limestone cliffs that are situated near the present day village of Walkerville South in 1874. A company known as the Waratah Bay Lime, Marble and Cement Company Limited was formed and set about producing, burning and transporting lime to Melbourne for use in building and agriculture.

In 1875, six brick and stone lime kilns were built adjacent to the site set aside for a jetty. Each kiln had its own packing shed and storage and was connected by rails to the jetty, which was competed in 1899.

Patricia Fleming (n.d.:2) describes the operation of the kilns:

Each kiln was about 40 feet deep, brick lined and tapering to a narrow neck at the base where a grate opened into the back of a large shed. The limestone was put into the kiln from above between layers of firewood or, latterly, a type of coke called breeze, set alight and allowed to burn slowly to a powder when it was scraped from the base of the kiln as quick lime, bagged and stored ready for dispatch..

The lime was either hewn or blasted from the cliff face and then taken along the tramway by horse drawn dray to the kilns (Fleming, n.d.:2). After being fired and bagged, the lime was again taken by horse drawn wagon out along the jetty to be loaded onto waiting boats.

The jetty was constructed in stages but was not complete until 1899. In the intervening years, rowboats ferried people, building materials, stores and even horses between the shore and boats anchored in the bay. (Sharrock, n.d.:4)

In spite of the transport difficulties in receiving stores and transporting the bagged lime to Melbourne, a small community grew at Walkerville. Tram lines and roads were constructed to the kilns and by 1885 there was a school and a post office. Houses were built along the cliffs and connected by footpaths rather than roads.

It was estimated that the lime industry supported around fifty families at the turn of the century, including those working in associated ventures, such as cutting and hauling timber to fire the kilns.

Waratah lime was reputedly of very good quality and found a ready market even though a steamer called only once a week to convey the packaged product to Melbourne. This was a distinct disadvantage given that Lilydale lime could reach Melbourne within an hour (Sharrock, n.d.:4)

Around 1908, another lime lease was taken out at Bell Point, some three kilometers south west of Waratah. This lease contained good quality deposits of lime and produced good yields before the owners opted to go into farming in the area.

The lime industry finally came to a halt in 1924. In April of that year the *Wyrallah*, a steamship belonging to the Gippsland Steam Navigation Company Limited, collided with the *SS Dilkern* in the entrance to Port Phillip Bay and unfortunately sank with the loss of six lives. The *Wyrallah* had made regular calls at Waratah to ship lime to Melbourne and without this regular service, the industry had to be abandoned. (Sharrock, n.d.:25)

James Hughes made an attempt to revive the industry when he took over the Waratah quarry site in 1925. He was successful for a short period, but was forced to cease in the 1930s. The quarry license was formally cancelled in September 1931 although the quarry had not worked since 1928.

With the end of the lime industry, local residents and their families were forced to move away the area to find work, as the local economy was almost completely dependent on the lime industry.

Today, Waratah Bay is enjoying something of a revival as a popular holiday destination.

Limonite

Near the Grand Ridge Road approximately 5 km southeast of Mirboo North, a relatively high quality deposit of the mineral limonite was mined during the late 1880s. This brought about what is now known as the Limonite district. The quarrying of Limonite did not, really viable, however, and any beginnings of a settlement were soon abandoned.

6.6 Tourism

Early days of nature appreciation and tourism

Nature appreciation and tourism have been important and intertwined activities since the very early days in South Gippsland.

Early explorers from Bass and Flinders onward and a number of well regarded artists, photographers and poets have presented Gippsland as a picturesque and scenic landscape with dramatic forests, rivers and coasts. Morgan (1997:95) describes how from the time of its early exploration, Gippsland has attracted outsiders "as a 'glorious world unstain'd by sin'". Strzelecki wrote "Everywhere Nature seems to have most liberally enriched this part for the benefit of man". During 1853-54, the Government Botanist Baron Von Mueller included a trip to Wilson's Promontory among three expeditions made at that time.

The natural significance of South Gippsland was not only noted by professional explorers, scientists and artisans of the early years, but also by the early settlers, who even though faced with the dangers and difficulties of taming the land, had a great appreciation for its inherent natural and aesthetic values, representative of 'God's Domain'.

By the 1880's tourist guides were in publication, including one entitled *Our Guide to the Gippsland Lakes and Rivers* that first appeared in 1880, and a later example entitled *Tourist Handbook of Australia* by Donald Macdonald. These books led to the 'rambling movement' of Sunday tramps and more extended excursions into the bush by city people wishing to have health, recreation and outdoor pursuits such as hunting and fishing. As we shall see in Chapter 8, Sunday buggy rides, picnics and trips to the beach had become a popular pastime fairly early in South Gippsland.

The rising conservation movement

Morgan (1997:103) notes that the public's rising awareness of nature and the popularity of bush tourism led to:

..a strong sentiment in favour of protecting the bush and its denizens....; the new deal was to observe and note the different species, not to collect trophies and pelts.

During the 1880s, the Field Naturalists Club of Victoria was founded, with Baron Frederick Von Mueller an active member. The conservation mood led to the protection of areas regarded as special.

During 1886, pressure was placed on the government by selectors for the 40,000 acre timber reserve in the hill country around Mt Fatigue to be released. The conservation movement thought the trees should be protected, finding support from some State Parliamentarians. During April of 1887, the Minister for Lands, Mr Dow, visited the Mt Fatigue timber reserve. Collett (1994:129) describes how, while riding from Toora through the selectors properties on the way to the reserve, he was "appalled to see, for mile after mile, the magnificent forest ravaged by the axe, the trees piled up for burning, and the ashes of those just burnt". Consequently, Dow returned to Melbourne determined to protect Mt Fatigue Reserve from the selectors.

Melbourne-based environmentalist JB Gregory proposed the protection of Wilson's Promontory as a national park to the Field Naturalists Club in 1887 (Lennon, 1993). His proposal was met with a counter scheme to settle about 1000 financially disadvantaged immigrants from the Isle of Skye on the promontory, which eventually came to nothing. During 1892 the club went by rail to Foster and Toora and Wilson's Promontory became a favourite area for the club's tours. After a campaign lasting ten

years, the Field Naturalists Club and a number of South Gippsland 'patriots' met some success in 1898 after the State government reserved 91,000 acres of Wilson's Promontory.

Wilson's Promontory National Park

Wilson's Promontory National Park was finally proclaimed during 1905 with regulations guiding its management gazetted in 1908. Reserves and National Parks were also formed at Mt Buffalo, Mallacoota and Wingan Inlet at East Gippsland during that period. The Prom has been extended on a number of occasions since its initial proclamation including:

- The final 144 acres of the former township of Seaforth, surveyed between Mt. Singapore and Mt. Hunter in 1892, was absorbed into the National Park in 1928. Despite this, the town plan remained valid until 1952. (McKeller, 1993:3-6)
- Yanakie Run was added to Wilson's Promontory National Park in 1975, and remnant stockyards and dams such as Varney's waterhole remain as evidence of the former pastoral use of this area. (Lennon, 1993)

By 1913, a house had been built at Darby River to accommodate park rangers and to serve as a meeting place for the Committee of Management. The Rangers cottage and another building were transferred to Tidal River during 1949, the cottage still provides accommodation for rangers in the park today.

During 1919 a silent movie was made of a group on horseback at Lilly Pilly Gully, of the light house and Mt Oberon. By the early 1920s, the availability of motor cars stimulated thoughts of exploiting the tourist potential of Waratah Bay by building a metalled road from Foster. Wilson's Promontory could now be accessed by road in a car, however, no vehicle tracks existed within the park. (Collett, 1994:221)

The construction of a road from Yanakie to Darby River Inlet improved tourist access to the park in 1928 and the subsequent construction of the South Gippsland Highway from Melbourne resulted in increased visitation to the area. A chalet was built at Darby River, providing guest rooms. The Victorian Railways advertised Wilson's Promontory to visitors as a romantic setting " commanding a glorious view... superb coastal scenery... horses on hire... comfortable accommodation". (Collett, 1994:226)

Wilson's Promontory not only serves as a significant reserve of natural heritage significance, but due to the historic involvement of Europeans with Wilson's Promontory since the early 1800s, it is also an area of rich post-contact cultural heritage, both as a whole and as represented by a number of individual places within the park.

Coal Creek Heritage Village

Coal Creek Historical Park was opened at Korumburra in 1972. Members of the Shire of Korumburra Historical Society initiated the development of a historical village setting to display important elements of the region's past coal mining, dairy and timber industries.

The former Korumburra Court House was the first building to be relocated to the village in 1970, and it was progressively developed with the relocation of additional buildings intermittently over the next twenty years. Today there are fifty buildings on the 16 hectare site of which nineteen are original, although some were altered in the early years to fit specific site areas. Among the recreated and refurbished buildings and businesses, volunteers work and demonstrate much of the historical equipment and machinery.

The park was renamed the Coal Creek Heritage Village during 1998 and continues to serve as an important outdoor museum for the South Gippsland Region.

Tourism today

Tourism is an increasingly important part of the economy of the Shire today. South Gippsland is now part of Tourism Victoria's *Phillip Island & Gippsland Discovery* Region. A 1995 survey by Tourism Victoria of visitor activities in the region revealed a high interest in sightseeing drives, shopping, dining out, bush walking, and visiting national parks and art galleries/craft centres.

The region attracted over 1.3 million visitors in 1995 that spent an estimated $102 million in the region, while an additional 1.4 million day trips to the region during the same period generated approximately $40 million. (Tourism Victoria, 1997) Although a large proportion of this tourism is focused on Phillip Island, other destinations within South Gippsland Shire, in particular Wilson's Promontory National Park and the beaches of Waratah and Venus Bays are important tourist destinations.

Attractions such as the South Gippsland Tourist Railway and the Coal Creek Heritage Village are key facilities that not only attract visitors, but also allow the heritage of the Shire to be displayed and interpreted.

The adaption of heritage buildings such as the Mirboo North Butter Factory into a brewery and restaurant demonstrates how redundant historic buildings are being adapted for a new use. Historic homesteads and pastoral properties that reflect the Shire's heritage from the days of selection are becoming increasingly sought after as escapes for city dwellers when offered as bed & breakfast or holiday accommodation.

Historic overland tracks such as the *Grand Ridge Road* (Liddiard's Track) and *McDonald's Track* remain as scenic heritage drives while abandoned railways, such as the *Great Southern Railway* east of Leongatha and the former Mirboo North Railway have become popular rail trails that allow a more intimate relationship with the Shire's heritage landscapes and features for local residents and visitors alike.

HERITAGE

Heritage places identified by the Study that illustrate the theme of *Economic development* include:

Timber cutting, sawmilling and plantations

- Remnant and re-growth native forests within the State Forest and National Park systems, particularly those in the area between Mirboo North and Gunyah Gunyah and at Wilson's Promontory National Park.
- Sawpit and main mill site at Sealers Cove.
- Remnant Mountain Grey Gum at Darlimurla near Mirboo North (the 'Big Tree') listed on the National Trust Significant Tree Register.
- Springboard trees at Gunyah Gunyah and near Toora.
- Tramway route from Mason's Mill to Port Welshpool.
- Mason's Mill site on Nine Mile Creek and the Dickie's Hill Sawmill at Mirboo North.

Fishing

- The remnants of a Chinese fishing camp at Chinaman Long Beach on Wilson's Promontory.
- The Fisherman's Pier and the Long Jetty at Port Welshpool.
- The *Janet Isles* fishing boat at the Port Welshpool Museum.
- Fisherman's cottages at Port Welshpool and Port Franklin.
- The route of the Port Welshpool Tramway, which can still be interpreted.

Gold mining

- Examples of gold mining equipment at the South Gippsland Shire Historical Society's Museum, monuments to the gold miners at Stockyard Creek, and earthworks related to the mines and diggings.
- Early public buildings such as the former Court House and the former Post Office, as well as early miners cottages, and the Exchange Hotel.

Coal mining

- Sites of coal mines at Berry's Creek, Jumbunna, Korumburra and Outtrim.
- Various buildings and objects associated with the coal era now displayed at Coal Creek Heritage Village.
- Jumbunna town site and remnant timber tramways.
- Sunbeam mine sheds southeast of Korumburra (featured in the movie *Strikebound*)
- Various mine railway and skip car trackways and sidings in the Korumburra, Outtrim and Jumbunna areas.
- The civic, commercial and residential buildings in Korumburra, which demonstrate the prosperity of the town during the height of the coal mining industry from 1890-1910.

Tin mining

- Remnants of the Mt Hunter Tin Mine at Wilson's Promontory.
- Remnants of the tin mine water race and tunnels from the Agnes River and on the Franklin river, north of Toora.

Lime

- Walkerville lime kilns and worker cottage remnants and the Bell Point lime kiln remnants.

Governance

INTRODUCTION

In the early days of settlement the Shire was included in a number of very large municipal districts that extended from Warragul in the North to Port Albert in the East. The creation of separate local government authorities based in local townships therefore marked an important step in the historic development of the Shire.

Although the first municipal boundaries were essentially artificial constructs, they were drawn at a time prior to the area being fully settled and so were well established by the time that the majority of people settled in the Shire. Over time, the Shires of Korumburra, Mirboo, South Gippsland and Woorayl developed quite distinct identities, which were strongly associated with their local communities, and have largely survived the forced amalgamation to create the present South Gippsland Shire in 1994.

Colonial, and later Federal and State governments have also played an important role in the administration of the Shire. The construction of permanent buildings such as court houses and post offices indicated the growing importance of a settlement.

This chapter incorporates the following Australian Historic Themes:

- Governing; Developing institutions of self-government and democracy; Administering Australia; Defending Australia; Establishing regional and local identity.

HISTORY

7.1 Colonial, Federal & State administration

Government controls over the new colonial settlements in South Gippsland have always been present, if not always direct, since the late 18th Century.

All of the early explorations and much of the early sealing and whaling activities came under the control or guidance of the Queen's Colonial Governors in Sydney. Once Melbourne had been established in the 1830s, Superintendent La Trobe exerted his influence and authority through the presence of the Surveyor General's office by sending out Assistant Surveyor Townsend and others to map and survey the land. During 1844, the Chief Protector of Aborigines, GA Robinson made his way to Port Albert in the company of six native police, again showing the face of the government to European settlers and Aborigines alike.

As the land was settled and townships developed there was a need for colonial (and later State and Federal) governments to provide a permanent presence to enable matters within their jurisdiction to be properly overseen and administered. Along with educating (which will be discussed in a later chapter), law and order was one priority.

The first permanent court house in the Shire was built at Foster in 1889. This was deemed necessary because of the many disputes associated with mining claims. It is no mere co-incidence therefore that the second permanent court house was established at Korumburra, another mining centre, in 1899.

The construction of the Foster Court House was followed soon after by the erection of the Post Office in 1891. Following Federation in 1901, the newly formed Commonwealth Government assumed responsibility for postal services and embarked on a building program, which saw new post offices established at Korumburra (1904), Leongatha (1907) as well as Loch, Mirboo North and Toora over the following decades. These buildings were among the first tangible symbols of the newly federated Australia within rural Australia.

7.2 Forming local government

Prior to the formation of shires as local government institutions, South Gippsland was made up of several roughly demarcated districts, counties and parishes. Since the mid-1860s a series of Shire Councils with evolving administrative boundaries have had local government jurisdiction over the Shire.

Up until the mid 1880s, the Shire was contained in three shires, each of which had the headquarters in a town far outside the boundary of the Shire. The first to be created was Alberton Shire, inaugurated in 1864, which had its seat of government at Yarram. The western boundaries of Alberton Shire reached as far as the Tarwin River catchment. During 1878, Narracan Shire was formed with its headquarters in Morwell, taking over parts of Alberton Shire and its South Riding taking in the areas of Boolarra, Mirboo North, Mardan, Koorooman (Leongatha) and part of Korumburra. Meanwhile, the western portion of the Shire including Poowong, Jeetho, Loch and Bena was included in the former Shire of Buln Buln, which extended from well north of Warragul, the Shire seat.

As the Shire developed in population many of the settlers believed their local areas were too remote and under-represented in the larger Shires and lobbied for Shires of their own. Consequently, the first new Shire to be created was the Shire of Woorayl, which was formed from the former South Riding of Narracan Shire during May of 1888.

Three years later part of the Buln Buln Shire was excised in 1891, when the former Shire of Poowong and Jeetho was declared. The name of this shire was changed to the Shire of Korumburra in 1922. Then in 1894, the first Shire of South Gippsland was severed from Alberton Shire, while in the same year Mirboo Shire was created from the East riding of the Woorayl Shire, coupled with a portion of the Narracan Shire.

With the exception of some minor boundary adjustments the make up of the shires remained intact until the mid 1990s. The most recent South Gippsland Shire Council was formed in 1994 from all or portions of the former Shires of Mirboo, South Gippsland, Woorayl and Korumburra as a result of major local government rationalisation and amalgamations put in place by the Kennett Government of Victoria. (Refer to Hartnell, 1974; Murphy, 1994; Collett, 1994; Morgan, 1997)

7.3 Defending Australia

South Gippsland, like many other areas of Australia, was significantly affected by World War one, World War Two and other global conflicts in which Australia and the Commonwealth became engaged. Many of the local men (some little more than boys) volunteered for military service, some returning as heroes, others not returning at all. The community that was left behind had to put up with rationing of food and goods and in many cases the women took charge of the men's roles or organised themselves as members of the Red Cross or the Country Women's Association (CWA). Many memorial buildings, statues and avenues of honour remain around the Shire today as a testament to the people who served their country in these wars.

At the outbreak of World War One, the Federal Government, concerned at the potential invasion, embarked on a building program to enable military training to be provided in rural areas. As a result, drill halls were established in many country towns. The halls were designed by the Public Works Department and followed a standard layout, which only varied in size. After lobbying by the Shire of Poowong & Jeetho, Korumburra was chosen ahead of Leongatha and Wonthaggi as the site for a Drill Hall, which became the local headquarters of the Army during World Wars 1 and 2.

During World War Two emergency landing strips were constructed near the coast and operations at the Walkerville lime kilns and the Gelliondale coalfield were expanded. During 1940, the British steamer *Cambridge* was sunk off Wilson's Promontory when it struck one of the fifty mines that had been laid by the German ship *Passat*. Wilson's Promontory was closed to farmers and the general public for military purposes. The lighthouse became a coastal observation station. A commando air base with hangars carved as large caves into Red Hill was established and the No. 7 Infantry Training Centre was set up at Darby River, Lilly Pilly Gully and Tidal River. Apparently many of the abandoned timber bridges and the Toora jetty (built in 1899) were bombed during target practice exercises conducted by the military aircraft crews. (Collett, 1994:246-253)

HERITAGE

Heritage places identified by the Study that illustrate the theme of *Governance* include:

Colonial, Federal & State administration

- Foster Court House
- Korumburra Court House
- Post offices at Foster, Korumburra, Leongatha, Loch, Mirboo North and Toora.

Forming local government

- The municipal offices at Jeetho (former Shire of Poowong & Jeetho), Leongatha (former Shire of Woorayl) and Mirboo North (former Shire of Mirboo).

Defending Australia

- The Korumburra Drill Hall
- Remnants of the aerodrome and igloo hangers at Commando Bay near Darby River within Wilson's Promontory.

Community and culture

INTRODUCTION

As we have seen, as the opening up of land for selection from the 1870s onwards drew increasing numbers of families to the Shire there soon became a need for places for meet, socialise, learn and worship. During the Pastoral era, the large private houses of wealthy squatters often served as meeting places, as schools and even churches, however, the Selection era led to the need for permanent public buildings, which in turn led to the development of the first community centres.

These buildings are important markers on the landscape, which express the hopes, dreams and optimism of the first settlers for the future development of their communities. In some places, these buildings were among the first structures that marked the 'coming of age' of important towns such as Foster and Mirboo North and Korumburra. In other districts such as Mardan, the optimism expressed by the community was never fully realised in the development of a permanent town and these buildings where they remain are often the only physical reminder of some of the very early settlements in the Shire. One building often served many purposes - many early churches often acted as schools and public halls before these buildings could be obtained (and sometimes vice versa).

The places also represent important stages of life within communities from early childhood until old age. Consequently, these buildings have great social value and associations with local residents.

This chapter incorporates the following Australian Historic Themes:

- Educating; Forming associations, libraries and institutes for self-education, Establishing schools
- Developing Australia's cultural life: Organising recreation, Forming associations, Worshipping, Remembering the fallen, Pursuing excellence in the arts
- Marking the phases of life: Dying

HISTORY

8.1 Places for learning, meeting and worshipping

Introduction

In many cases, as rural grazing communities grew and the principal squatter or selectors hired workers, provision was made for a building to be used for a variety of purposes including religious gatherings, the schooling of children, and for social events. Charles and Loney (1994:71) describe one such building, which was erected as a school at Black's agricultural complex at 'Tarwin Meadows':

The school provided a centre around which much social and community activity took place. Dances, billiards and scouts.....were regular and well patronised. Gymkhana days were also remembered, with horse riding races, games for the children and a dance at night, with people coming from miles around.

The pioneers in some cases made do with what they had at hand; a large Mountain Ash tree stump at Mount Square Top was used as a church for up to fifty people on Sundays, as a place to teach children and as a place to shelter horses while the surrounding area was being cleared. The tree accommodated up to 50 people before it was destroyed during the great bushfires of 1898.

Schools

The National Board of Education functioned from 1851 to 1862 managing government-funded, non-denominational schools, of which 193 were built throughout Victoria. This was superseded by the Common Schools Act, which was passed in 1862. Finally, in 1872, the *Free, Compulsory and Secular Education Act* was guided through the Victorian parliament by George Higginbotham, which heralded a new era of State education in Victoria. Many new schools were established after this date. The passing of the 1872 Act co-incided with the opening up of much of the land for selection and so most of the early schools established within the Shire were state schools.

Meanwhile, the various churches also were involved in the provision of education. Church or denominational schools sometimes became National or Common schools (and later State Schools) if they obtained Government Funding.

Prior to 1872, many pioneer children were given lessons at home, while the more affluent rural families may have sent their children to boarding school in Melbourne. With the passing of the 1872 Act schools were established where sufficient children resided. With the coming of the railways by the end of the century and with the discovery of coal and gold, the population of some centres such as Korumburra increased substantially putting pressure on facilities. However, the financial crash of the 1890s led to the tightening of purse strings within Government departments and very little building of new schools was carried out for almost ten years.

Meanwhile schools such as Korumburra were bursting at the seams and the Department responded by moving an old school from Clunes. When building did finally re-commence in the early twentieth century it was in accordance with a model of standard designs for one-room schools, the most common type. Some of the earliest examples were erected at Mardan and Meeniyan by 1906. Still communities found difficulty in obtaining suitable accommodation and in some cases the only answer was to construct the building themselves. The Moyarra community finally obtained a school in 1907 by this method.

With the introduction of the new standard designs, the schools were increasingly used only for their intended purpose and not as multi-purpose buildings. However, as late as 1939 a combined school and hall was constructed at Milford.

By the mid-twentieth century there were dozens of one or two room schools throughout the Shire, however, a great deal of consolidation has occurred and at many places only a sign or some trees remain to remind us of their existence. For example, the former Shire of Mirboo had approximately 23 schools in different locations over the years, most of which are longer open, and of which only a few have extant buildings. (Murphy 1994)

Churches

Religion, particularly through some of the mainstream European Christian denominations, was an important part of South Gippsland's settlement and development. Murphy (1988:41) describes the importance of religion in the formation of early communities:

The majority of men and women who took up residence in the Tarwin Valley in the early decades of settlement were God-fearing people whose intense faith helped them survive the hardships and vicissitudes of those early years. Firmly believing in the words of the Scripture that 'where two or three are gathered in My name, there am I in the midst of them' they quickly formed themselves into small congregations of their respective denominations.

Collett (1994:196) suggests that the country itself may have provided divine inspiration:

A sense of carving out for themselves a kind of Promised Land within the immense and beautiful bush seems to have fostered a strong religious sensibility in some people.

Religious services were sometimes conducted by some of the Christian members of the community in private homes until small halls became available in the community or a church could be built. Visiting ministers may have come around on an itinerant basis or on regular monthly calls. Lay readers were eventually replaced with permanent ministers or with clergymen who were responsible for a circuit of church communities from a central parish base.

Mechanics' Institutes and Public Halls

Public halls also dot the South Gippsland landscape, erected by various community groups or local governments largely on Crown Land that has been loaned to the local councils for little or no rent. Many of the communities that once utilised these halls for meetings, dances, receptions and the like have now all but disappeared.

Mechanics' Institutes played an important role during the early decades of settlement in South Gippsland, as they had throughout Victoria, following Scottish and English traditions. The first was built in Melbourne during 1839 and over 100 were established throughout Victoria by 1870, with another 300 constructed by 1892. A subsidy was provided by the Victorian Government as an added incentive for the establishment and maintenance of libraries at these institutes. (Murphy, 1991:3)

Aside from the Mechanics' Institutes, which were built in towns such as Foster, Meeniyan, Leongatha, Korumburra and Stony Creek, many other halls were built by Shire Councils, scout groups, churches or other community groups. In the former Shire of Korumburra, for example, there were over 16 public halls built at different times. (White, 1988) The halls were the backbone of social infrastructure and were used for public meetings, social, religious and civic

functions, offering 'moral and mental improvement' to the community. (Murphy 1991:3)

8.2 Organising recreation

Leisure and recreation were important parts of pioneer and later life in South Gippsland, even though the early settlers often worked from morning til dark and had little time or energy for non-work activities.

At their homes, reading books, playing draughts or chess by lantern light was a common activity. Later in time, some of the more well to do families had established grass tennis courts and croquet lawns near the main homestead. The Tarwin Meadows homestead was an example of this, which also sported an art pavilion, a fernery and gardens used for parties and social get-togethers. (Charles & Loney, 1994:68)

Recreation reserves

When townships were surveyed recreation reserves were usually set aside for community use and had to be cleared, ploughed, formed and drained through a combination of community volunteers and contractors tendered by the Shire Councils. Murphy (1988:133) describes the creation of one such reserve at Leongatha:

At Leongatha, Surveyor Lardner reserved two areas, one of thirty-two acres for a park and recreation reserve and another fifteen acres for showgrounds. At a public meeting held on 24 June 1892 dissatisfaction was expressed about the suitability of these areas, and it was decided to ask the exchange for them. This the Lands Department agreed to do, and an area of 107 acres was set aside for public recreation and show yards.

Going to the beach

Going to the beach for fishing, sailing, beach picnics and swimming were also popular pastimes. Fishing was something that could be done in the local rivers and creeks, as well as in the inlets and coastal areas of South Gippsland. During the early 1900s a horse-drawn wagon service was provided by Cole's Livery Stables from Leongatha to Inverloch beach every Sunday morning and fishing or picnic parties could be arranged for any day and Woorayl Shire Council were requested to allow the erection of private bathing boxes along the beach. (Murphy, 1988:137)

By the 1920s a track leading to an point in the Dunes at Waratah Bay known as the ‘Gap’ gave horse-drawn buggies access to the beach and to Walkerville following a route that ran partly along the beach and partly in the dunes. A timber bridge was built over Cook’s Creek.

The Tarwin River near the ‘Riverview’ Hotel was a popular spot for swimming sports meetings, while in the north, the Tarwin Lea property on Allambee Road was used for picnics and sports meetings. The Mossvale Nursery at the Berry's Creek was used by residents for picnics and, later, for school carnivals. (Murphy, 1994:102)

Swimming pools

For inland communities where the beach or estuaries were not so easily accessible, the establishment of a reasonably safe swimming hole or more formal swimming pools became a high priority. At Mirboo North, the first swimming pool was established in the heat of the summer of 1904-05. A small stream on the north side of town was dammed in order to form a pool about 25 yards long. A dressing shed was made of split palings and a six-foot paling fence enclosed the shed. The pool was lengthened and improved several times up until 1955, when the layout was made permanent with cement retaining walls and

children's pools. (Eunson, 1978:222) A similar arrangement was used in the establishment of a pool at Mardan South in the interwar years.

Dancing
Bands and music were popular leisure time activities. The Mirboo North Band, for example, was established in 1890 and was often called upon to play at social and outdoor functions. Dances held at the many small public halls dotted throughout the Shire were the social highlight of many local communities; held during a full moon they often continued until dawn. Stony Creek was renowned for the "excellence" of its dances during the 1920s.

In the interwar years, the advent of cinemas with silent and later, talking movies drew audiences to many of the local Mechanics' Institutes or other theatres of South Gippsland. The Mechanics' Institutes at Leongatha and Mirboo North were two of these popular venues. Some new Halls such as the one at Mirboo-on-Tarwin incorporated projection booths specifically for this purpose.

Rifle shooting
Rifle shooting was a popular pastime among many men over the years and various gun clubs were formed and rifle ranges designated throughout South Gippsland. One such range was located at the north edge of the Labour Colony near Leongatha. Rifle clubs were also formed at Meeniyan, Dumbalk, Mardan, Korumburra and other localities around the Shire.

Racecourses
Racecourses were established at many towns by the late nineteenth century including Foster, Stony Creek and Leongatha. At Stony Creek a track was set out on a straight section of road to the east of the town. An application was made by 1895 to reserve land for a racecourse, but this was not enacted until 1910. Regular meetings were then held until the 1920s when the course was abandoned. During this time the highlight was the Stony Creek Cup, when a special train was run from Melbourne. The Stony Creek & District Racing Club was re-formed in 1947 and the first meeting was held in 1950. Leongatha and Foster Clubs commenced racing at Stony Creek in 1951 and continued until amalgamation in 1964 when the South Gippsland Racing Club was formed. Today, the club still holds regular meetings with the Stony Creek Cup still a highlight.

8.3 Commemorating

Introduction
As in other districts, the World Wars had a devastating impact, however, they also served to unite communities in a common expression of grief. The loss felt by communities was expressed in a variety of memorials ranging from memorial gates, to Avenues of Honour, and even community buildings. These memorials remain as a tangible reminder of the impact of these conflicts upon the community.

Memorials
Memorials to World War 1 were mostly granite obelisks erected in prominent locations in parks or median strips of townships. At Loch, Memorial Gates were erected at the Recreation Reserve.

Avenues of Honour
The Avenue of Honour is a uniquely Australian memorial, and one that was most popular in Victoria. The first (and eventually one of the largest) avenue was established at Ballarat in 1917 and by 1918 contained 4000 trees. (Inglis, 1988:156) At least nine avenues were established in the Shire after World War One. Reputedly, two Oak Trees at Kardella were planted in commemoration of the Boer War.

Murphy (1988:197-198) describes the establishment of the first Avenue of Honour in the Shire at Leongatha:

With the periodic return of injured and sick soldiers from the war, the question of a war memorial to the members of the Armed Forces was soon under discussion. Several schemes were suggested, but the one finally adopted was that put forward by Mr W. Watson of planting an avenue of trees along Roughead Street and then between the butter factory and the Labour Colony. When a working-bee was arranged for 22 June 1918, over 200 people attended with spaces, shovels, hammers, etc to plant trees and erect guards. All callings were represented, with farmers, contractors, business and professional men participating. The Hon. J.E. Mackey, MLA, was present and displayed a keen interest in the proceedings.....Mr. Mackey was then asked to plant the first of 170 trees that had been obtained from Moss Vale Nursery. Mr. Mackey said he hoped that within a year they would be able to meet and celebrate peace, and that each soldier would be able to return and say this is 'My' tree. Similar plantings honour of enlisted soldiers were undertaken at Wooreen and at Meeniyan in August.

The Avenues planted in Victoria after the First World War usually comprised English trees in deference to the 'Mother Country', however, one avenues in the Shire at Meeniyan is a rare example using native species (in this case, Flowering Gums)

Memorial halls

The largest building in the Shire erected as a memorial to the soldiers was the new Shire Offices and Hall for the Shire of Woorayl erected by 1927. At around the same time, the Tarwin Lower Mechanics' Institute was extended with money donated by the Black family and renamed as the Tarwin Memorial Hall.

8.4 Cemeteries

It has been said that there are just two certainties in life – death and taxes. Just as surely as communities needed their hotels to socialise, churches to worship and schools to learn, they needed a place to bury and remember their dead. Sagazio (1992 (ed):25) notes that:

Cemeteries constitute a significant spatial and visual element in the urban or rural landscape and contain important historical and cultural information about the communities that created them. They reflect vital aspects of our social, religious, folk, architectural and literary history which are not found in such a combination in any other place.

As in other areas, the cemeteries in the Shire are memorials to the rigours and difficulties of country living - virtually every burial ground has reminders of men, women and children who perished under harsh conditions. In some cases such as at Allambee East, the cemetery is the only place that remains to mark this early community.

Cemeteries were also a necessity and have ranged from a few isolated graves such as those on Wilson's Promontory and at Walkerville to larger cemeteries at every township that have been maintained and administered largely by dedicated Cemetery Trusts over the years. A combination of government grants and public subscriptions provided sources of funding to enable "nearby residents to clear 'God's acre' of timber and erect a stock proof fence around the boundary." (Murphy, 1994:31)

8.5 Hospitals

Health care was a difficult service to provide in the early years of South Gippsland. Hospitals could only be built in the major towns such as Warragul and Sale. Although doctors serviced the larger towns in South Gippsland, either as residents or on a visiting basis, getting injured people of the bush to a hospital and caring for the sick in outlying areas posed a major problem. Accidents from timberfelling were common among the men, but childbirth was a time of hazard for the women. Outbreaks of infectious diseases such as typhoid fever, pneumonia and diphtheria were also common. Patients with serious problems had to be transported to Sale, Warragul, or Melbourne.

During 1907, James Barrett proposed the setting up of intermediate hospitals to handle the problem of inaccessible, over-crowded and high priced hospitals. His ideas gained support, but did not materialise as Bush Nursing Hospitals until nearly 20 years later. During the intervening period, the Australian Order of District Nursing was incorporated in 1910, with the associated Bush Nursing Association being inaugurated in South Gippsland at Meeniyan during March of 1912.

The success of the Meeniyan Bush Nursing scheme led to its expansion into the Tarwin Lower (where a residence was constructed for the Nurse in the late 1920s) and Waratah Bay areas, with Nursing Centres at Dumbalk, Dumbalk North and Buffalo. Other Bush Nursing Centres were established at Poowong in 1922 and at Korumburra in 1930.

Meanwhile, private hospitals were being established to meet local needs early in the twentieth century at Leongatha and Korumburra, (some were for ladies only) as well as at Meeniyan and Toora.

The nurses and mid-wives associated with these nursing centres performed a very important and often difficult role under difficult circumstances. They frequently worked out of small quarters and had to go alone on horse back to remote areas in order to attend to sick settlers or assist in the birth of children by pioneer women who could not get to a hospital.

Due to the existence of competent doctors, nurses who provided private hospital facilities in their homes and two private hospitals located in Leongatha, and delays in finances caused by the unemployment situation of the 1920s, a Bush Nursing Hospital was not established at Mirboo North until 1931. The first hospital building was used until it was replaced on a new site with another building in 1939, which operated until 1991, when it was replaced by new hospital and nursing home facilities in Mirboo North. (Murphy, 1996)

The Mirboo North hospital was followed by the establishment of Bush Nursing Hospitals at Korumburra in 1932, at Toora in 1933 and at Loch in 1936. The advent of World War II and the closure of some of the earlier private hospitals increased the demand for hospital facilities during the 1940s. As a result, the Bush Nursing Hospital in Leongatha was opened in 1942 (Murphy, 1988:265) Following the war, the Leongatha Bush Nursing Hospital was merged with the Woorayl District Memorial Hospital, established in 1958.

HERITAGE

Heritage places identified by the Study that illustrate the theme of *Community and culture* include:

Places for learning, worshipping and meeting

- Early Public Halls and Mechanics' Institutes including Tarwin Lower, Stony Creek, Mirboo-on-Tarwin and Mount Eccles.
- Early churches such as Scots Church at Mardan South, the former Wesleyan Church, Poowong, Dumbalk North and Fish Creek.
- Early schools at Dollar, Mardan, and Moyarra.

Organising recreation

- The 'Gap' camping ground at Waratah Bay, and the bridge over Cooks Creek.
- The grandstand at the Leongatha Recreation Reserve
- The Leongatha Croquet Club.

Commemorating

- The numerous war memorials that exist in almost every township, for example those at Poowong, Korumburra, Leongatha, Meeniyan, and Mirboo North.
- Avenues of Honour in various towns and districts including Leongatha, Kongwak, Meeniyan, Wooreen and Welshpool.

Cemeteries

- The cemeteries at Allambee East and Tarwin Lower.

Hospitals

- The Bush Nursing Hospitals at Mirboo North, Toora and Loch.
- The former private hospitals at Toora and Meeniyan
- The Bush Nursing residence in Tarwin Lower.

Building settlements, towns & cities

INTRODUCTION

As we have seen the pattern of settlement of the Shire in the late nineteenth century was essentially influenced by three things: the location of railway stations and butter factories, and coal mines.

Thus by the early twentieth century the hierarchy of towns and their relationship to their surrounding communities was clear and well established. Foster, Leongatha, Mirboo North and Korumburra were the municipal centres and main shopping areas and served a regional function. Other towns essentially served a local role and were closely tied to their surrounding communities.

With the exception of the mining settlements of Jumbunna and Outtrim which all but vanished after the closure of the coal mines, this distinct pattern of settlement has remained essentially intact until the present day.

This chapter specifically considers the residential and commercial buildings associated with the development of settlements. Civic and community buildings are dealt with in another chapter.

This chapter incorporates the following Australian Historic Themes:

- Building settlements, towns and cities; Planning urban settlements, Supplying urban services; Making settlements to serve rural Australia.

Korumburra Butter Factory complex
Source: Korumburra Historical Society

State Savings Bank at Korumburra c.1905
Source: Korumburra Historical Society

Dawson's Cash Store (former) at Toora
Source: Australian Heritage Group

HISTORY

9.1 Township development

Introduction

As part of the Government survey, which preceded the land selection process township or village reserves were set aside in each Parish, which usually included land set aside for recreation, public purposes (such as Mechanics' Institutes, schools or halls) and a cemetery. These villages reserves were the earliest to be established in the Shire. As we have seen, with the coming of the Mirboo railway in 1884 and South Eastern Railway by 1892 more towns were laid out around the stations along the lines and these towns soon achieved pre-eminence.

On the other hand some towns such as Jumbunna and Outtrim also sprang up spontaneously around coal mines and were only connected by rail at a later date.

However, simply being on a railway line was no guarantee that a town would develop. If there is a common denominator amongst all the main towns of any size in the Shire it is that they all possessed a large and successful butter factory.

Early Government survey towns

The earliest townships in the Shire were established after the first surveys of the 1870s carried out as part of the land selection process. One example is the township of Mirboo in the Parish of Mirboo South, which was surveyed south of the Tarwin East River in October 1878 about a year earlier than the ridge township known at the time also as Mirboo, but referred to then as Brennan's Corner (now Mirboo North). Twenty-two allotments were surveyed. In addition substantial areas were reserved for recreation. A Mechanics' Institute was also established by 1887. However, development of Mirboo was cruelled by the coming of the railway to Mirboo North by 1884, and a newspaper article once referred to Mirboo as 'a town that never was' (Eunson, 1978:22)

Port towns

While Port Albert was the pre-eminent port in the South Gippsland region, Port Welshpool and Port Franklin (along with Port Albert) also played important roles, the latter providing a landing place for machinery and materials used in the construction of the South Eastern Railway.

Railway towns

As we have seen the opening of the Great Southern Railway's opening led to the start of *" a series of townships spread out at roughly five mile intervals along the route"* (Murphy, 1988:109). Not all these towns developed. Those that did usually had a butter factory or, as in the case of Meeniyan, a large cattle market. There were some exceptions such as Buffalo and Welshpool.

Mining towns

As we have seen the town of Foster sprang up around the gold mines before settling into its role as Shire seat. Similarly, Korumburra owed its beginnings to the coal mining, and later became the centre of the Shire of Poowong & Jeetho after the shire offices were relocated there by 1922.

But perhaps the best examples of the rise and fall of mining towns were Jumbunna and Outtrim. Both developed after coal was discovered and private subdivision created township areas. The coming of the railway stimulated development and by 1900 Jumbunna had achieved a population of 500 and Outtrim over 1000 (the latter boasting several hotels, churches, shops and a large school). However, a series of disastrous strikes together with the opening of new State coal fields at Wonthaggi led to the closure of the mines and the inevitable decline of the

towns. Many of the buildings were sold and carted away to other towns while others were destroyed by fires. Within a generation, both towns had all but vanished.

Butter towns

The importance of a butter factory to the development of a town is perhaps best expressed by Kongwak and Dumbalk. Despite not being located on a railway line, both had established successful butter factories, which included co-ooperative stores that sustained the communities until the rationalization of the industry in the 1960s onward led to their closure.

In the main towns of Foster, Korumburra, Leongatha, Mirboo North, Poowong the fortunes of the towns rose and fell with the butter factories over the years. It was only in the late twentieth century that a more diverse industrial base began to be developed.

9.2 Developing commercial centres

Introduction

As townships became established in South Gippsland, so commercial centres were developed to provide the necessary goods and services. .

Hospitality

The hospitality industry did not have glamorous beginnings in South Gippsland. Essentially it began in a small way at homesteads located along some of the main overland tracks as a result of both human necessity and human decency. As mining villages and other townships became established, boarding houses, hotels, pubs, coffee palaces, cafes and restaurants were established to cater to residents, transients and short-term visitors.

Hartnell (1974:26) describes one good early example, which was located on the selection of Jimmy Baker selection east of Tobin Yallock (Lang Lang) along McDonalds in the 1870s:

...Jimmy and his wife Dorcas (or 'Darcas' as he called her) had begun providing accommodation after many selectors began 'dropping in' on their way 'up the Track'. Mrs Baker has 'a wonderful faculty of providing sleeping accommodation for all comers however numerous'....Mrs Baker provided 'meals plain and good at reasonable prices'...."

During the period of selection, prospective selectors needed places to stay when they arrived at places such as Mirboo North or Poowong. The accommodation was sometimes no more than a tent at a camp with an outdoor fire and billy tea, but it didn't take long for enterprising businessmen to establish reasonably good hotels, even in some remote areas such as Gunyah. As travel was made easier with the provision of railways and improved road systems, demand for food and accommodation at some of the intermediate stopping places dwindled, however, this was made up for at the more popular destinations in the larger towns.

The more major hotels and pubs have had a tremendous effect on commerce as well as the appearance of streetscapes in many of the towns. This was particularly so for many of the boom time hotels of the 1880s which displayed grand Victorian and Queen Anne styles of architecture. The loss of some of the great old hotels in South Gippsland has markedly diminished the character of the towns over the years, one example being the demise of the large Victoria Hotel that used to command attention where it sat at the bottom of the hill on Commercial Street at the west end of Korumburra.

Banking

By the 1890s as the townships developed and began to prosper the first banks were established in South Gippsland. The banks were not only important in providing finance to selectors in providing loans for clearing of land, paddock improvements and the setting up dairy businesses. They were also crucial in the establishment of the newly formed Shire governments. For example, when the former South Gippsland Shire Council broke away from Alberton Shire in 1894, the Bank of Australasia was instrumental in providing a £500 overdraft so that the Council could appoint and pay for staff and begin the task of improving roads and services in the Shire. (Collett, 1994:178)

The influence of butter factories can also be seen in the location of many early banks. The small township of Stony Creek reputedly gained a permanent branch of the Bank of Australasia because of its butter factory and after strong lobbying from local residents.

At Stockyard Creek, the Bank of Victoria began with a rented room in Charles Petersen's store, buying gold from the miners. (Collett, 1994:81) The first bank to operate in Leongatha was the Bank of Australasia in 1890, which had also opened an agency in Mirboo North that year. The number of banks increased and the quality of bank buildings improved as local commerce and economies grew. During the 1930s, Toora had two banks, the Bank of Victoria and the Union Bank. Murphy (1988:119) comments on the importance of the banks to developing townships, not only for the financial assistance they provided, but for the qualities and skills the people in the banking profession brought to the community - often filling organising and money management roles for sporting and social clubs.

As with the hotels, banks flourished and waned with the boom times and depressions experienced in ten to twenty year cycles. However, given their outside resources, the banks often built substantial buildings in the main towns. The architecture of these buildings not only demonstrated the bona fides of the bank, but added prestige and character to each town.

Horse and buggy livery stables

In the early days livery stables and blacksmiths workshops were important parts of every new village and township. Saddleries and granaries came along at the same time or shortly after. As tracks improved enough to handle wheeled buggies, horse buggy makers and dealers came on the scene, along with wheelwrights. Later when Cobb & Co and other passenger and mail services became established, coach stations and coach houses were built.

Murphy (1988:115-117) provides a vivid description of the establishment and growth of the horse-related businesses and trades in Leongatha during the 1890s. Commerce was heavily reliant upon horse-drawn transportation, which persisted through the 1920s and into the 1930s until the automobile became the dominant mode of travel. The buildings and trappings of the horse and buggy trade and use of them by the general public meant that the entire appearance of the South Gippsland landscape, in both towns and rural areas, was heavily influenced by these elements, from the livery stables and granaries down to the hitching posts and watering troughs.

Motor vehicle garages

The advent of motor cars presented a gradual but major change to South Gippsland, both in terms of the ability and speed with which people could get around and in terms of how the roads were constructed, what towns looked like and what jobs people performed.

A description of Foster during the early 1920s gives some insight into this transition and its impact:

...newspaper advertisements reflected this transition. In 1921, the Great Southern Co-Operative was advertising buggies and sulkies (including one model that would take two cream cans), but the days of buggies, sulkies and jinkers, gigs, blacksmiths, wheelwrights and saddlers were numbered, for the same issues carried advertisements of the Yarram garage (Phone 17), agent for the Dodge motor cars. Dr. Wilson at Foster had a Dodge, which meant that on Thursdays, for example, he could be consulted at Fish Creek until noon, and then motor to Welshpool to be consulted from 1.45 until 2.30, then be at the Coffee Palace at Toora from 3.15 until 4.00, and home to Foster for the evening surgery. Yet his brother Percy James Wilson the lawyer, still rode a horse.....The scholarly lawyer rode to his consulting rooms in Meeniyan, and since the horse knew the road Wilson read Greek text as he went.

By 1922 Foster had its own Dodge agency at the garage at the garage of Arthur Tobias, and local newspapers carried accounts of a round journey from Melbourne to Sale, Foster, and Fish Creek by motor car." (Collett, 1994:221)

In Leongatha, the increasing importance of the motor car was demonstrated by the imposing new garage in the Spanish Mission style erected by Mr UV Knight in Bair Street in the early 1930s.

Retailing

The speed of development of commerce in South Gippsland townships varies widely from place to place, depending on how rapidly the settlers arrived. The gold and coal mining towns of Foster, Turton's Creek and Korumburra tended to develop in a fever overnight, whereas the bush and pastoral towns of Poowong and Mirboo North developed more slowly or spasmodically, Mirboo North eventually outstripping Poowong as a result of its railway connection. However, regardless of the strength and size of their growth, all towns, big and small, required the basic necessities of life - food, clothes and materials. As such grocery stores, clothing stores and hardware stores were established.

For many years all of the essential elements could be found under a single roof of the General Store. Collett (1994:106) describes an early example of such a store in Foster:

Stennet's Bridge Store could supply 'oats, bran, maize, chaff, timber, iron, doors, sashes, wines and spirits, bottled ale and porter, and Carlton XXXX Ale in bulk. Grocery, drapery, ironmongery, boots, shoes, etc.'

As some of the towns grew and time moved on, competition for the general stores developed in the form of specialty shops, including butcher shops, clothing shops and haberdasheries, bakeries, chemist shops and so forth. Although the public seem to enjoy the choice offered by different shops, the concept of a general store has never entirely died out. In some smaller towns, such as Poowong, the old General Store is still the centre of business, while in the larger towns, such as Leongatha and Korumburra, the supermarket chain stores now fill the role of supplying all and sundry under one roof.

9.3 Residential development

Early housing within the Shire was primitive in its construction and designed to provide the most efficient and utilitarian form of shelter given the lack of building materials. As towns were established and became more prosperous more substantial villas began to be constructed. In Korumburra, the prosperity of the town during the late nineteenth century began to be reflected in Victorian villas erected along Radovick Street and Bridge Street. In 1899, a large residence known as 'Braeside', designed by a Ballarat architect, was erected in a prominent position in Radovick Street for Peter Hudson.

At Leongatha in 1897, local councilor and hotelier Hugh McCartin erected what was termed the 'finest dwelling house' in that town at that point. An article in 'The Star' enthused about the quality of its decoration and finishes inside and out. However, the boom in residential development was to occur later in Leongatha and many of its finest houses were erected during the interwar period. In the 1920s a builder, FW Morris, came to the town and designed and constructed many fine houses including his own residence, constructed in brick in the attic bungalow style in Jeffrey Street.

HERITAGE

Heritage places identified by the Study that illustrate the theme of *Building settlements, towns and cities* include:

Township development

- Loch and Stony Creek are examples of towns that initially developed around the railway station, and later because of a butter factory.
- Kongwak is an example of a town that developed around the butter factory.

Developing commercial centres

- The commercial precincts in Bair and McCartin Streets, Leongatha and Commercial, Bridge and Radovick Streets in Korumburra.

Early bank buildings including:

- The Colonial Bank of Australasia (1907) in Mirboo North
- The former Banks of Australasia at Fish Creek (1910) and Stony Creek (1911)
- The former Union Banks at Loch (1902) and Toora (1907).

Early hotel buildings including the Austral Hotel in Korumburra, the Exchange Hotel in Foster, the Seaforth Cafe/Restaurant at Port Welshpool, the Royal Standard in Toora, and Bair's Otago Hotel in Leongatha.

Early retail buildings including:

- The former Hayes' Store (1892) at the corner of Roughead and Hughes Streets, Leongatha.
- The former Koonwarra Coffee Palace (1892).
- Bigelow's Store in Loch (1892)
- The former Dawson's Cash Store (1914) in Toora.
- The early (c.1895) shops at 42, 62 and 86 Ridgway in Mirboo North.

Most of the heritage places associated with the early horse and buggy era have long since been destroyed or significantly modified, however, one example is a Bills' Horse trough at Fish Creek. Some early transport-related premises include the former Goller Saddlery Store (1920s) in Leongatha, Boston's Carriage Works & Blacksmiths (1893) in Korumburra, and the former Knights Garage in Leongatha.

Residential development

- The residential precincts in Radovick Street (and surrounds) in Korumburra, and Ogilvy Street in Leongatha.
- *Mortlake*, the former residence of FW Morris at 41 Jeffrey Street, Leongatha.
- *Rostrevor*, the former residence of Hugh McCartin, now situated at 27 Turner Street, Leongatha
- *Braeside* at 52-54 Radovick Street, Korumburra.
- *Wilga*, the former residence of Mr Ernie Dickson, at 59 Station Road, Foster.

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