

PLOD ESSAY:

Exclusive Preview to W&DHS Members

Many of you will remember that Jenny Churchill enlisted the help of Historical Society members to gather memories of Wonthaggi from the older people of the town during the Centenary in 2009-10.

Many people helped to collect stories, but it came down to Jenny, Barbara Moyle, Terri Allan, Irene Williams and I to organise the stories into a readable form that would entertain the people of Wonthaggi as well as serve as a social record of the first 100 years of our town. The resulting book has memories of every type in it from silly pranks to tragic events.

The book is a joint Bass Coast Shire and W&DHS publication. It is expected that publication date for, *Memories of Wonthaggi, the Town that Refused to Die!*, will be March 2012. Keep a sharp eye out for news of the launch.

Below, to whet your appetite, is one of the shortest yet funniest chapters in the book. We are sure that these stories will remind you of stories of your own. Let us know what they are for the second edition in a few years' time!

- c.r.landon

Pranks

The Whistle Stuck

My grandfather - William Fowler of Donald Street, North Wonthaggi, who at the time drove the Mine Ambulance so had a key to the mine gates, drove to the mine just before midnight on New Year's Eve. He thought he would have some fun and wake everyone with a blast on the mine whistle at midnight.

Alas - the whistle stuck and blew for five or more minutes. While Grandad struggled to stop the whistle before he was discovered, my grandmother, Pamela, and I stood on the back step of the house, wondering what had happened.

- Greta Bremner

Naked Woman in the Bath

I had got a shop dummy from a shop and put it in the bath at my father-in-law, Jack's, house. There was a big mirror over the bath. I filled the bath with water and put the dummy in the bath. Jack came home and asked where his wife was, and I told him she was in the bathroom. Jack goes into the bathroom and yells with fright and comes out and shouting, "Why didn't you tell me there was a naked woman in the bath?"

I used to collect the Adam's Cakes for our shop off the train of a night. One night I had a dummy of a man, dressed it up collar tie and hat, and sat it in front of my ute. Down at the station I ask the taxi drivers waiting for the train, did they know the man? One fellow, said, "Yeah, he lives up Stewart Street. I've driven him home a few times". I then came around and drove over to the shop and asked the fellows coming from the pub if they knew him. No one knew him. Bluey Riley came from his shop, and he said, "Yes, I just met him at the RSL".

- Norm Veal

Pie and Ice Cream Carts

Mallasey had a shop near the Union Theatre, and they had a little cart for ice cream and would go around in the horse and cart selling ice cream. Gus Cooper also had

an ice cream cart. Dickie Owens came around one day and told Norm he'd just got his penny ice cream from Gus, and that he wasn't going to get any more from him – Gus's glass eye had fallen into the ice cream. From that time on it had to be Mallasey's ice cream.

3d Refund on Return Bottles!

A. E. Dowson on White Road had a soft drink bottling factory. My dad was a friend of Mr Dowson's and when we went out there with Dad we would be given some of the bottle labels (to play with). About this time The Dairy opened in Hunter Street across from our house. A bottle of lemonade was 1/3d (about 12c). There was a 3d refund on returned bottles. We soon worked out that any clear bottle properly washed could have one of Mr Dowson's labels stuck on! So stuck on they were - with clag or even honey! We always took out bottle with us for refunds. It only took a few bottles to make up the 1/3d for a drink. Mr. Ross (Bill Parfrey's father-in-law) was never too tired to open The Dairy (even after hours) to sell us some lemonade!

There were younger children in my family and I think Mum worked so hard and long she didn't realise what me and my sister were up to!

- *Yvonne McRae (nee` Milkins).*

Getting Away with It ... Sometimes

I used to do a ventriloquist act with George Beaton – I would sit on George's knee and pretend to be the dummy.

I also used to do a card trick, and I got a lot of free shouts at the bar when the person picked a card and I would go through the pack and pick out the right one. No one knew that George Beaton would tap his foot until I got to the right card – no one had cottoned on to it.

A mate, Kenny Wright, and I heard there were jobs at Koo Wee Rup so we waited for the train at South Dudley and jumped into one of the sleeper trucks – after we jumped out at Koo Wee Rup, there were no jobs and no train to come back on.

My dad was the barman and the South Dudley pub, which operated illegally on a Sunday morning. The owner would give me 10 bob to take the cows grazing and he gave me an umbrella, as well. When the police appeared I would open the umbrella and a lookout with binoculars at the top of the pub would wave to me, and they would have time to close everything down. To this day the police still don't know how we found out they were coming.

- *Sos Lymer*