

Lakes Log

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The Newsletter of Lakes Entrance Historical Society Inc.

62

Summer 2024

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The Slipway Survives

The area around the slipway was used extensively by the Lakes Entrance community from the 1880s for various activities.

There was an enclosed garden for recreation (near the *Glenelg* memorial) around the turn of the 20th century. Ladies in long dresses entered through the gate, while the more agile could climb over the stile.



Slipway Park c1900

Image: LERHS Collection

erected a memorial overlooking the lake. This commemorates the officers, crew and passengers who perished when the ship foundered, after sailing from Lakes Entrance in 1900. Only three crew survived the disaster.

In the early 2000s local artists were invited to submit designs for a maritime memorial, to honour all those who had died at the Entrance including seafarers and fishermen. Although a winning entry was selected and a planning permit obtained for a site near the Coast Guard building, the sculpture was never built.

During the Seafarers Festivals of a decade ago, a display of intricate sand sculptures featured on the old slipway. These were organised by a member of the Wittingslow family, who used to bring the carnival to Lakes in years gone by.

In the latter half of the 1950s, Wittingslow's set up their Christmas Carnival on the site. This annual event was important in the Lakes Entrance calendar, not just for the entertainment value, but as the carnival operators allowed local charities and service organisations to make money from the sideshow stalls.

The slipway itself was established around 1960 by the Public Works Department, which later became the Port of Melbourne Authority and then Gippsland Ports in 1996.

In 2005 Gippsland Ports moved its operations to a new facility on Bullcock Island, but in the intervening years hundreds of vessels, large and small were slipped for maintenance, cleaning and repainting.

On 25 March 2000 descendants of those who died on the *SS Glenelg*



Trawlers on the slip c1970

Image: State Library Victoria

In later years the Baptist Church used one of the sheds as a venue for the youth group 'Theo's'.

In 2018 the Department of Environment Land Water and Planning asked for expressions of interest for redevelopment and the 'The Slipway Collective' was the successful tenderer.

Providing space for hospitality and arts enterprises this redevelopment was completed for Christmas 2023.

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The paddle steamer *Tommy Norton* is such an icon of Lakes Entrance history, that Gippsland Ports chose to revive the name for their new Trailing Suction Hopper Dredge in 2017.

The first *Tommy Norton*

Named for its owner, the *Thomas Norton* was built at Williamstown in 1859. The first 'Tommy Norton' had a carvel built hull with a rounded stern, a single deck and mast and was powered by a 20hp single cylinder steam engine.

The little paddle-wheeler (only 19.2m in length with a 3.8m beam) was brought to the Gippsland Lakes in 1864 by the Gippsland Lakes Navigation Company to work at the natural entrance as a tug, towing sailing vessels and steamers across the treacherous and shifting sands of the bar.

During 1865-66 the entrance shallowed, making it totally unnavigable. Two vessels, the *Charles Edward* and the *Trio* were trapped inside the lake for weeks when a sandbar formed in the Reeve's River. It was asserted that whenever a southerly or south easterly gale set in, the entrance blocked up with sand, and could remain so for months.

With the entrance closed to larger vessels, the versatile *Tommy Norton* was put into service making twice-weekly runs to Sale and Bairnsdale, maintaining trade and passenger services—and bringing back essential supplies. The *Tommy* was also used as a pilot boat, going ahead to show the *Charles Edward* the way through a narrow, crooked channel when the steamer ran the gauntlet on a voyage from Port Albert in 1866.

The 'Tommy' meets its fate

Returning through the entrance on the evening of 26 October 1877 after towing the steamer *Murray* out to sea, the *Tommy Norton* was caught side-on by a heavy sea and washed onto the western spit. On her side, battling the waves and a ferocious wind, the paddle steamer began to fill with water and gradually disintegrate.



The tug PS Tommy Norton' taking the bar' with a schooner in tow at the natural entrance to Bass Strait

The *Murray* which lay outside the entrance, sent a boat to assist, but in the wild weather this was deemed too dangerous, leaving on board Captain McAlpine, Engineer Brown, three other crew members and one passenger, a Mrs Rigney.

Fortunately the vessel held together until daylight when the captain and the engineer managed to get ashore and with the help of a boat from the schooner *Maffra*, which was moored nearby in Reeve's River, all remaining aboard the *Tommy Norton* were rescued – although they had lost everything and were left in just the clothes they were standing in.



On the Mitchell River, Bairnsdale

The 'Tommy Norton' was a familiar sight around the Gippsland lakes and rivers.

After years of navigating the lakes and rivers of the Gippsland Lakes system and assisting countless other vessels through the entrance, the much-loved *Tommy Norton* was claimed by that notoriously treacherous passage from Bass Strait, that it had 'owned' for over a decade.

'Old Tassie King' has become part of local folklore and photos are common, but who was he?

'Old Tassie King'

Contributed by Marie Fish

Thomas (William) King was born in England in the early 1800s. He had a string of convictions for various offences including attempted highway robbery and assault, and by 1834 he had been imprisoned six times.

On 8 April that year he was sentenced to transportation for seven years for theft.

He appears to have used both names: Thomas and William, possibly to dodge the police but also to avoid confusion with another convict with a similar name and number.

King arrived in Tasmania on 13 February 1835 and was assigned as a labourer on public works. On 9 September 1841 he was granted his Ticket of Leave and made his way to Victoria.



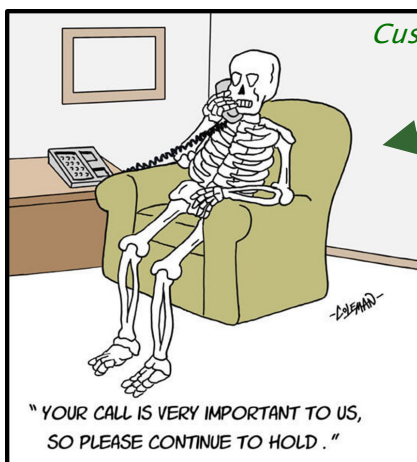
After possibly spending some time on the goldfields, he made his way to the Lakes Entrance area—at one time living in a tent on the site of the present day football ground.

He worked for the Rowe family at Kalimna West, among others.

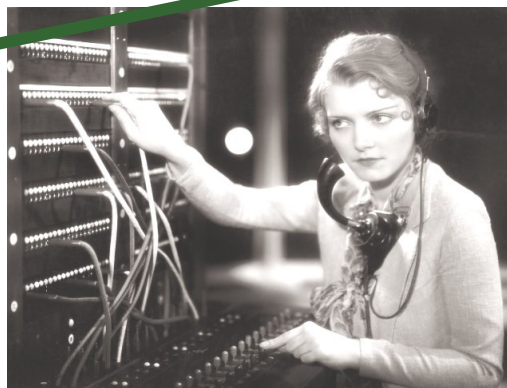
On 11 November 1910 he died at the Bairnsdale Hospital, aged 99. Old Tassie was buried in the Bairnsdale Cemetery the following day.

Below: Certificate showing details of Old Tassie's death at the age of 99.

DESCRIPTION.			(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	IF BURIAL REGISTERED.		(11)	IF UNDERTAKER WAS MARRIED	
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)
Where and when Died.	Temp and Cause, Death, or Poison.	Sex and Age	Signature of Medical Practitioner by whom certified, and of whom he has been Decided.	Signature of Registrar, and of Registrar of Burial.	Signature of Registrar, and of Registrar of Burial.	Signature of Registrar, and of Registrar of Burial.	Signature of Registrar, and of Registrar of Burial.	Signature of Registrar, and of Registrar of Burial.	Signature of Registrar, and of Registrar of Burial.	Signature of Registrar, and of Registrar of Burial.	Signature of Registrar, and of Registrar of Burial.	Signature of Registrar, and of Registrar of Burial.	Signature of Registrar, and of Registrar of Burial.
November 11 th 1910 Bairnsdale Hospital Bairnsdale County of Gippsland State of Victoria	Thomas King Male 99 years	English	Dr. J. H. King Bairnsdale 9 th 1910	11305 11305	11305 11305	11305 11305	11305 11305	11305 11305	11305 11305	11305 11305	11305 11305	11305 11305	11305 11305



Customer Service THEN and NOW



Joe Dugins’ School Bus

From an article by Molly Palmer ,
first published by the Tambo Shire
Historical Society.

In 1929 Joseph Francis Dugins commenced a school bus run between Lakes Entrance and Bairnsdale, starting out at the Lake Tyers turnoff.

This was the first opportunity children, whose parents could not contribute to private schooling, had to attend the High School or Technical School in Bairnsdale.

The first student to travel on the school bus was Merry! Wilson—the daughter of a Kalimna West farming family.

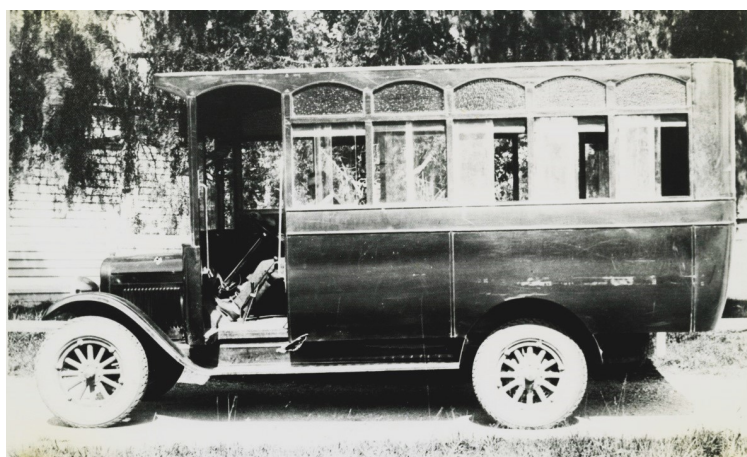
Despite a subsidy from the Education Department, parents were still required to pay 11 shillings per child per month. As the Depression of the 1930s continued, parents could not afford this sum and Joe was forced to sell the 4-cylinder Chevrolet bus and use a car to take the few remaining students to school.

This car was a dark coloured Buick with a ‘dicky’ seat and Joe drove it until times were better and he could purchase another bus—this time a Reo.

In those early days of school bus travel, adult passengers were permitted to use the bus, which was a great boon to people who needed to be in Bairnsdale early—although sometimes it was a very rowdy ride!

Molly recalled a time when she was travelling from Lakes Entrance to Kalimna West, where she taught, sitting through a fight conducted with handfuls of burrs—all thrown by boys who later became respectable citizens.

When fights broke out, Joe would slam on the brakes and the boys would go flying—but unfortunately so would the other passengers. However, it certainly quietened things down.



*Joe's first bus—1924 Chevrolet
Image: East Gippsland Historical Society*

Later on, Joe divided the interior of the bus with plywood—one section for the boys and the other for the girls.

Joe's passion in life was fishing. He knew more about line-fishing lore than anyone else around: about bait, about the time of day to find Whiting in the lake below the Kalimna Hotel—and the best time of day to be there.

He also had a passion for selling articles from around the house that were no longer being used. Unfortunately he didn't always check with wife Pat before taking items and selling them. Pat frequently complained that she went to use an item, only to find out it had been sold!

He built an immense corrugated iron shed behind his house on Jemmy's Point to house the bus.

Joe drove his school bus well into the 1950s with an absolutely accident-free record.

All the students he carried loved and respected Joe and at the end of the school year they took up a collection and gave him a present.

The kids prepared party food and on the last day of school, Joe pulled off the road on the way home and they had their party and presentation—which was done by the bus prefect.

Continued page 5

Huge thanks to the Lakes Entrance branch of the Commonwealth Bank for nominating us for a 'grant' of \$500. To get the money we had to win a vote against other community groups—and we did!

Thanks to all our members and friends who voted for us.

And special thanks to the Bank's Lauren Barlow for her support—that's Lauren with the big smile, handing over the cheque.



Lauren Barlow from the Lakes Entrance Commonwealth Bank with a cheque made out to LERHS.

Image: Judy Davies

Who is this pioneer of men's fashion herding cattle across the lake?

What a shame the onesie swimsuit never caught on as workwear.

Thanks to Marie Fish for this fabulous image of one of her McMahon relatives transporting cattle by barge on Boole Poole.



Joe Dugins—loved and respected

Joe and his wife Patricia Johnstone, a school teacher, were married in 1930 and had five children. In the 1950s when the children were not yet adult, Joe died.

Joe Dugins was born on 3 January 1895 and died suddenly on 16 October 1955. He is buried in the Lakes Entrance Cemetery in Plot #D-45.

Molly Palmer remembered the last morning on the school bus. Her family lived across the road from Joe and her children went over to take the bus as usual.

But they were back almost immediately, to say that Joe was not well and had requested that their father drive the bus to Bairnsdale.

Molly said she went to the gate with her husband and watched him drive away, while Joe stood by the roadside and watched the bus until it was out of sight.

He then turned and walked slowly and heavily up his driveway.

Joe died soon after and was mourned by all of Lakes Entrance. Joe was jovial, highly-respected—and loved!

Molly remembered her daughter picking a huge bunch of lilac and red roses for him—and from then on Molly always thought of Joe when those roses were in bloom.



Cemetery Stories

Forgotten graves of Lakes Entrance

Thomas Wills Macleod

By Toni Munday

Toni Munday is fast becoming the go-to person for information on burials at the Lakes Entrance cemetery.

This story was inspired by a grave she encountered on her **Cemetery Walks**.

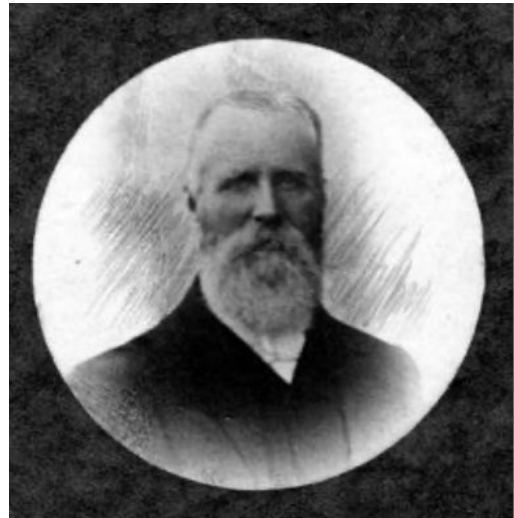
In the past graves had plot numbers to guide you, most long gone. Sometimes you are lucky to come across a cemetery that has embraced the new age of helping graves to be findable. Fortunately for us here in Lakes the Historical Society has a wealth of information in their archives. opening up a window to the stories of the past.

A trip to a cemetery, while a place for reflection, can be so much more. On my trips there are always those graves I stop at, pay my respects, yet wonder what story can I unearth. You just need to put your passion for history to work and do a little bit of research.

On one of my trips I was so lucky to have Brian Hancock along, sharing his knowledge. One particular grave we stopped at, A-294, was that of Thomas Macleod. Sadly it would appear that Thomas' grave was once running in line with the road, but with the new layout of graves in the middle of Section A, it is now relocated with an old stump in the middle of his plot.



*Headstone of Thomas Wills Macleod
Image: Toni Munday*



*Thomas Wills Macleod 18/6/1846—21/10/1914
Image: Ann Andrew*

Wow, what a journey of discovery was to follow. Not only his story but also to making contact with a descendant. A lovely lady, Ann Andrew, steering me to the Bairnsdale Library to read a family book written many years ago, as well as sharing some gorgeous pictures which she was happy for me to publish in this article.

Thomas was born to Norman Roderick Macleod and Ellen Howarth on 18 June 1846. It appears Norman and Ellen never married and didn't stay together. Ellen married Charlie Long (convict worker) on the Macleod property in 1848. Yet when Norman went to chase the gold rush in Ballarat, Ellen, Charlie and sons moved to Castlemaine.

Norman married Elizabeth Oswald and died in Ballarat in 1882.



*Norman Roderick Macleod
in Freemason regalia.
Image: Ann Andrew*

While Thomas never married, he moved in to help his stepmother Elizabeth with her small children.

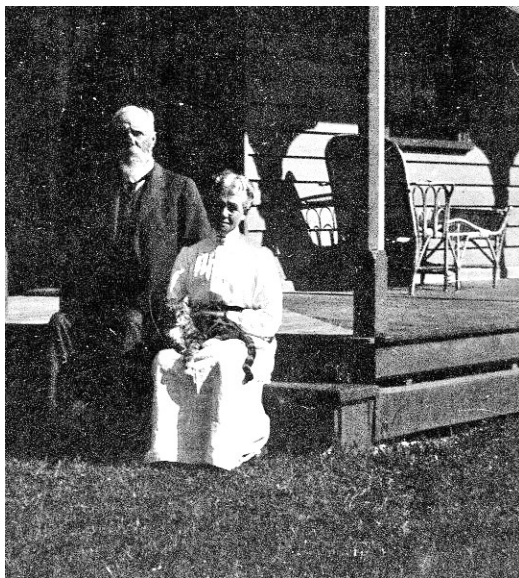
He was a keen sportsman and a successful property owner. Thomas and Elizabeth came to live in Metung after the Ballarat house burned down. Thomas became a member of the local Masonic Lodge.

Later Thomas and Elizabeth moved into the property 'Barwon Werra' owned by William Pearson, in Cunninghame. The property was described as a fine residence on four blocks fronting the Esplanade.

Thomas died on 21 October 1914, his stepmother Elizabeth died in 1920 and is buried in Plan 4 Section A Allotment 1 at the Sale Cemetery.

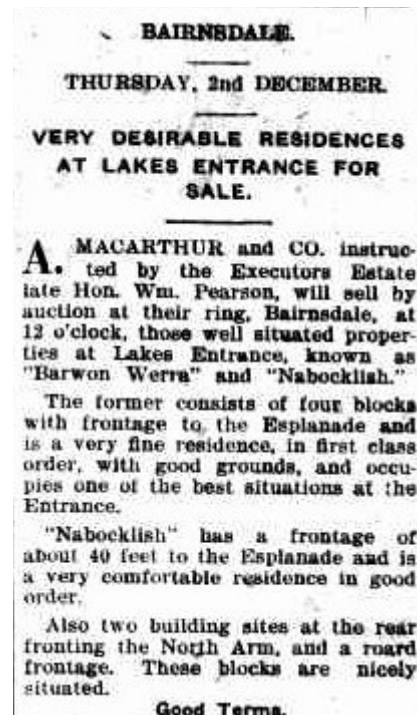
His half-sister Norma 'Nornie' wrote in a letter to her brother John 'Jack' in Queensland 'While Tom's death has been a great blow to us all it was merciful that it came in the way that it did, and the poor old chap did not have to suffer a long a painful illness. Mother will feel the loss very much.'

Thomas was obviously a much-loved fellow in the Macleod family.

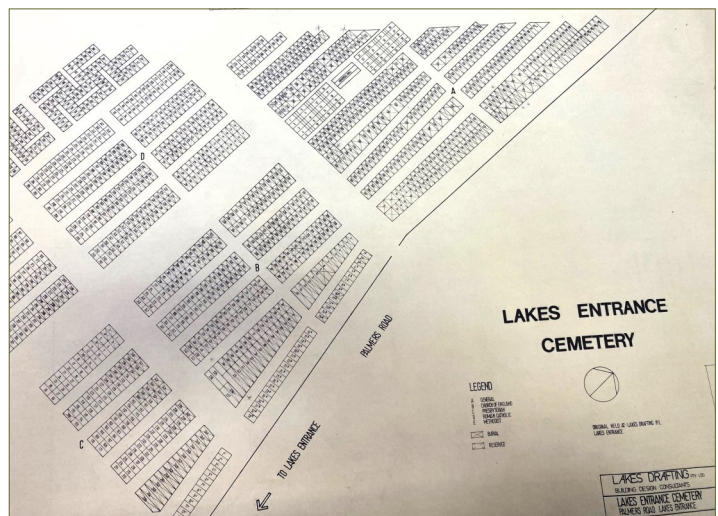


Tom & Lizzie Macleod in their later years
Image: Ann Andrew

My quest to find the grave of Tom's mother Ellen—and a picture—is another mission. Ellen died in Newcastle in April 1897. On a boat trip to visit her older son, she collapsed on the Newcastle wharf and died of an aneurysm.



'Barwon Werra' where Tom & Lizzie lived for many years, was advertised for sale on 27 November 1920.



Plans and information on the Lakes Entrance Cemetery can be viewed at the History Centre on Marine Parade.

Toni's Tip

The findagrave.com page is great.

Ancestors are findable, and if you know their story maybe you would like to share it with others.

The Kalimna Hotel

Thomas Laughton creates a Lakes Entrance icon

In 1886 the Kalimna Hotel opened on the clifftop overlooking the artificial entrance, which was still under construction.

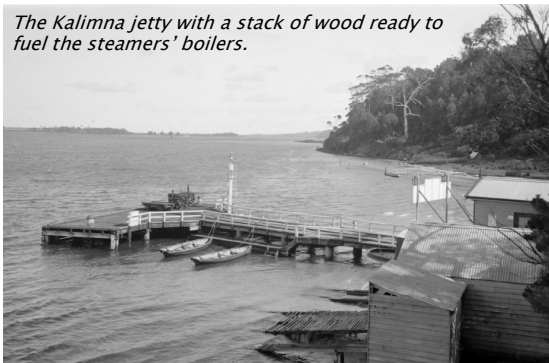
The Kalimna Hotel was built by Thomas Laughton, who felt this would be a better position when the entrance channel was completed than his Lakes Entrance Hotel at the east end of the settlement.

Local folklore has it that a condition placed on Laughton's sale of the Lakes Entrance Hotel was that he would not establish another hotel any closer than 32 kilometres. However, as the road in those days went up to the top of the North Arm before crossing over and coming back to Kalimna, Laughton managed to sidestep this condition.

A year or so later, Laughton had a jetty built (illegally) at the bottom of the escarpment for the benefit of his guests arriving on the steamers from Bairnsdale.

By the turn of the century packaged rail tours brought people to Bairnsdale by train, then they enjoyed a voyage across the lakes to Lakes Entrance. Many officials and dignitaries were included in that number, and Laughton could boast that the Kalimna Hotel had Vice-Regal patronage, as State Governors stayed there on numerous occasions.

The Kalimna jetty with a stack of wood ready to fuel the steamers' boilers.



In 1909, the Kalimna Hotel was described as a two-storey brick and timber building with a balcony, with access from all the bedrooms, running along the back. A verandah at the front overlooked the sea.



Henry Davies and the Golf Course

There was an asphalted tennis court and a motor launch to take guests on trips to scenic locations around the lakes system. Skiffs were also available for guests who chose to row themselves.

Henry Wroe took over as Licensee in 1910-1911.

Laughton's old establishment, the Lakes Entrance Hotel, burned down in 1905. Laughton sold the Kalimna Hotel to Henry Davies in 1912 and moved to Sydney, where he died not long afterwards.

Under a 1864 statute, Laughton held a Colonial Wine Licence, which authorised the sale of wine, cider and perry from fruit grown in the colony, on the proviso that it must be consumed on the premises.

The Kalimna Hotel continued to be popular with visitors and attracting Vice-Regal patronage. An item in society magazine 'Table Talk' of 15 January 1931 lists all the guests and their activities over the New Year period. The Kalimna Hotel featured in the social columns of newspapers right through until 1940.

In 1925 Davies established a nine-hole golf course on site—the first in Lakes Entrance—officially opened by Dr Alsop of the Bairnsdale Golf Club that November.

Following the sudden death of Henry Davies on 28 December 1933, his wife carried on running the business, until the hotel licence was transferred to Alfred West and his partner A. Denham in 1936, with Oliver Marshall as manager.



A golf club was formed in 1933 and this was officially opened by local MLA Albert Lind in August 1936. Prior to the opening, the 'Bairnsdale Advertiser' reported that 'the golf links were looking exceptional' and commended the hotel management on the innovative riding school established for younger guests.

The War Years

In April 1939 the Executors of the Estate of Alf West transferred the licence to William Sugden. The hotel was sold to Robert Sloane in November 1940.

In 1940 the hotel now had only 34 bedrooms, plus two lounges, a dining room, bar, ballroom, staff quarters and 12 lock-up garages.

Sloane was charged with licensing offences in May 1941. He moved on from the Kalimna in 1946 and was killed at his father's hotel in Warragul in January 1950, when a beer barrel he was moving fell on him.



Arriving at the Kalimna Hotel c1925

Ansett pioneers road tours

In December 1946 the licence was transferred to Dorothy Darnell, who was in partnership with A. Denham. The 'outdoor' or 'beer' garden was well established and getting a mention in the social pages at the beginning of 1948.

At that time, the hotel was sold to Ansett Hotels Pty Ltd and was managed by Donald Planner. Planner took an active part in local affairs, attending community meetings and was called upon to give evidence at a court hearing after a drunken attack on one of the guests. An area known as 'Planner's Garden' remained long after he left the hotel.

Francis Victor Wraith took on the licence in 1949, followed by Ken Doyle in 1956 and Russell Samuel Davies 1962.



Beer gardens became popular in Victoria in the late 1940s

The Kalimna Hotel appeared to have passed its prime as an accommodation establishment by the mid-1960s, but still remained popular with 'the locals'.

Continued page 10

Entertainment Venue

Graeme Lawrence bought the hotel from Ansett in 1965

and it was run by the Lawrence family for a number of years. Lance and Lorraine Westcott were managers right through until the early 1980s, bringing up their children Jack, Nola and Susie at the hotel.

Part of the old hotel was demolished and renovations carried out. The verandah area was glassed in, the black and white tiled foyer vanished and the bars and kitchen were modernised.



The hotel rooms were not rebuilt, instead Graeme Lawrence had his good friend George Morabito build four motel units at the western end of the hotel.

The Kalimna Hotel was 'the place to go' for locals in the 1970s and early 1980s with live bands performing on a regular basis.

George Morabito and George Arceri purchased the Kalimna Hotel in the 1980s, and actively managed it in the early years: George Arceri cooked breakfast for the guests and stayed on until afternoon then George Morabito took over until closing time.

When the *County Antrim* was wrecked in 1897, the captain and crew showed their appreciation of the kindness shown to them by the Kalimna Hotel by giving them the figurehead from the derelict vessel.

This imposing lady was erected on a tree stump in the garden where she stayed for many years, until brought down by the ravages of termites.

The headless figure is now in the Port Albert Maritime Museum.



Managers, came and went during the 'Georgian' period, including Tom and Carolyn Gorry, Bob and Gail Sexton in 1991 and Bernie and Laine Walkley in 1992.

George Morabito died in November 2003, when Wayne, Patti and Wendy Reggardo were running the Kalimna Hotel-Motel, promoting it as 'the one with the view'.

A Series of Shutdowns

The following years have been difficult for the Kalimna, with a series of shutdowns and subsequent changes of ownership and management.

Nikki Ellis had problems with the police regarding allegations of drugs being available in the bar, so she made the decision to close the hotel and walk away.

The Kalimna Hotel opened as a Greek taverna in the 2010s. The restaurant's quality Greek food, including fresh local fish and calamari charred on the grill, succulent lamb cutlets and tangy saganaki was favourably reviewed by 'The Age' newspaper in September 2012.

When this venture failed, the hotel remained closed for some time. It was passed in at auction in 2017.



*The Kalimna Hotel was passed in at auction in 2017
Image: Judy Davies*

The Enemy – Fire

During the Laughtons time, a bushfire devastated the fledgling Kalimna settlement and neighbouring children were brought to the hotel for safety—it was noted that Miss Laughton gave each child an apple.

The Kalimna Hotel had a narrow escape when a bushfire blazed through in the summer of 1927. The golf links were burned out, along with fencing and outbuildings, but the fire changed direction before it reached the hotel.

In March 1962 a fire ripped through the Kalimna Hotel, burning out about twenty of the rooms, causing damage estimated at £20,000. At this time the hotel was owned by Ansett Hotels Pty Ltd, which ran coach tours down the east coast. Hotel staff under manager Mr Thomson were commended for their efforts in ensuring that all the guests safely escaped. Local gossip said it was arson, as Ansett had built a new motel at Merimbula and the Kalimna Hotel was a less important part of their business.

The Holiday Inn, another Kalimna accommodation establishment, burnt down a few years later.

Katrina Gleeson, a new face, came with ideas and more renovations in mid-2018, but the Gleesons didn't last long.

Michael Gardiner also re-opened the hotel after a period of closure, unfortunately encountering the Covid-19 epidemic in 2020, which was devastating for the hospitality industry.

Under his management the Kalimna offered excellent meals and varied musical entertainment. He moved on in November 2023.

The latest incumbents are also aiming to make their mark on the iconic hotel, making the most of the large site with its exceptional lake views.



Right: A peaceful retreat—the Kalimna Hotel c1900

The hotel today has a modern bar and bistro area, beer garden, four accommodation rooms and plenty of parking.

Here's to a prosperous future for the Kalimna Hotel.

Calling the Kalimna ...

The first telephone was installed at the Kalimna by Henry Davies in 1919 with the number 2, making it only the second phone connected to the Lakes Entrance exchange. In those pioneering days, the service was only available between 9am and 8pm on weekdays.

Around 1970, during Graeme Lawrence's time, a new telephone number system was introduced and the Kalimna was allocated 55 1202.

Another great innovation around this time was the installation of a pay phone for the benefit of patrons—it had the number 55 1309.



Any additional information to add to our Kalimna Hotel file is welcome.

Ed.

From our Library ... Reviewed by Joy Wilmshurst

A journey to Orbost—Getting there was half the fun ... from 'More Colourful Tales of Old Gippsland' by John Wells

We tend to forget how hard it was just getting around in the early days.

The coach journey from Melbourne in the 1860s was a nightmare experience of steep hills, dark swamps and twisting narrow tracks through forests. Bushfires and winter floods presented a real danger at times.

Even in the 1860s travellers had to resort to packhorses. Small wonder that most people took a boat to Port Albert and then a coach to Sale. It was more comfortable, cost only a little more and was not much slower.

On the other side of Sale, the traveller was in just as much trouble. The many streams in the deep gullies and the arms of the Gippsland Lakes provided real barriers.

There was a cart track to Bairnsdale from Sale, until In 1861 a coach service began between the two towns—although the horses had to swim the Perry River near Lake Wellington. The road ran through private properties and time was lost opening and closing gates and raising and lowering sliprails. Up to thirty-six halts were necessary between Stratford and Sale alone.

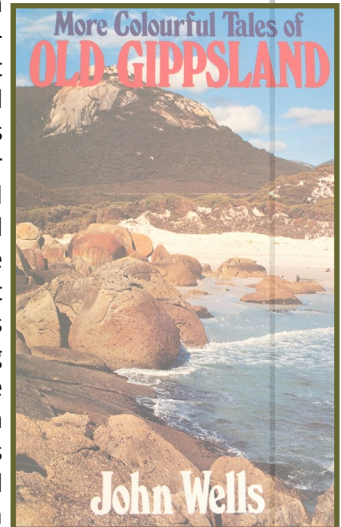
Travellers wanting to go farther east than Bairnsdale usually went by boat. There was a rough track to Cunninghame by way of Bruthen and Colquhoun, but it was a daunting prospect.

Crossing the Tambo River 1914–15 illustrates a story on page 28

Photo attributed to Country Roads Boar, Victoria



Those who settled in the Marlo, Newmerella and Orbost areas used the 'Old Coast Road'. This meant travelling for miles through sand dunes and scrub and crossing the Lake Tyers bar when it was dry. If this was impossible a long detour had to be made to the Bunga Creek ford. Settlers in this area ran a mail roster, each taking a three-month spell to act as mailman.



Drays and wagons had narrow wheels and were often heavily loaded so that even a shallow ford could be a problem. Punts were the salvation and made many settlements more viable.

There was a punt at Sale long before the swing bridge was built. A punt service was established across the Tambo in about 1870.

At Johnsonville, a punt crossed the Tambo until 1952. Christian Boss ran a punt near his hotel on the Nicholson until 1886 and the Tambo Shire Council provided one across the Snowy River at Orbost in 1884. There was a punt operating on the North Arm at Lakes Entrance.

There was another punt at Orbost before construction of a swing bridge in the 1890s. In 1922 a new bridge was begun designed to take both the road and railway.

Bridge building was a problem with soft soil on the riverbanks—and sudden floods played havoc with construction. The main bridging material was wood which the tere-do worm found enjoyable.

The bridge the Townsends built over the North Arm near Lakes Entrance in 1893 was destroyed by these worms during the next thirteen years. The bridge built to replace it collapsed in 1914.

When the motor cruiser *Idler* sank back in the 1980s, some people wrote it off.

Idler survives—40 years on

Once owned by Colin Scott of Hinnomunjie Station, the *Idler* was lucky to be rescued by the scallop boat *Ballina Star*, skippered by Tommy Northrope, when it sank in Bass Strait in the 1980s.

The cruiser was a sorry sight when brought to the wharf in Lakes Entrance and after being pumped out, was left tied up at Eastern Wharf for many years.

While we know it was sold by Scott's former son-in-law Rob Strang, we have been unable to work out who owned it and when.

Today the *Idler* is just known as EE32 and is moored at the Western Harbour. She could use some maintenance, but appears seaworthy.

Above left: '*Idler*' being lifted out of the water after sinking in Bass Strait.
Left: Today at Western Harbour



In the 1980s, before the East Gippsland Shire absorbed the old municipalities of Tambo, Bairnsdale, Omeo and Orbost, each was responsible for organising their own Australia Day event.

Australia Day— out of fashion?

This was done on a voluntary basis and no funding was available.

The Tambo Historical Society took on this role with gusto, holding full-scale historical re-enactments at Nyerimilang, complete with period costumes and damper.

Then the new East Gippsland Shire became patriotic, and offered a pittance by way of funding, before eventually taking over and organising ceremonies in the bigger towns of the municipalities.

As well as taking the opportunity to confer citizenship on new arrivals, worthy members of the community were nominated to

Australia Day at Nyerimilang



become Citizen of the Year and receive a certificate—with a handshake and blessing from the Mayor or one of the Shire Councillors.

Over recent years, as the Council has distanced itself from Australia Day

recognition, the Citizenship ceremony and Citizen of the Year awards have taken place on a day other than 26 January.

Possibly as a cost-cutting measure, the custom of each area holding its own event has morphed into one, taking in the whole of Shire. The 2024 event was held at Eagle Point, with the Lakes Entrance celebration of the public holiday being left to LEADA to organise.

The Boole Poole School (No.2797) was unique—a great initiative for the time, even if it was only for a few years.

The School at the New Works

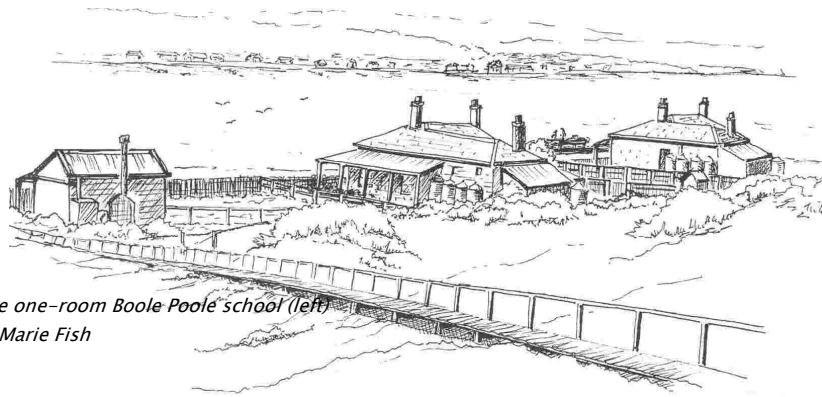
The school at the New Works opened on 2 November 1886 and closed in January 1889.

In 1885, a number of families were living at the New Works. Some were involved in fishing and others worked on the construction of the artificial entrance.

O'Connor was told by the Education Department to buy his own rowing boat, while teachers at bush schools operating on a similar half-time basis were provided with a horse.

He wrote numerous letters to the Education Department explaining his unique position and his concern for the children—these were met with a total ignorance and lack of understanding by the Department.

Fortunately for O'Connor, this situation only lasted two years, when the school was closed at the commencement of the 1889 year.



*The little one-room Boole Poole school (left)
Sketch: Marie Fish*

These families encountered difficulty in getting their children to the Cunningham school across the lake, so they petitioned the Education Department to establish a school on their side of the lake.

When approval was given, the arrangements to establish the school were left to Patrick O'Connor, the teacher at the Cunningham School.

This caused a huge problem for O'Connor, who would be required to teach at both schools on a half-time basis. To ensure the children got a full-time education, he had to row the Boole Poole students across the lake to Cunningham and vice versa.

This was due to a decrease in the population at the New Works as the Entrance neared completion, together with the opening of a new school in Bulmer Street.

*Bulmer Street school c1913
Image: Lakes Entrance Regional Historical Society*



The current School No. 2672 in Myer Street opened in 1926.

A shout out to members— please remind your friends and families that the Society is always keen to receive donations of photographs, documents and objects relating to the history of our 'catchment area'. Phone 0466 980 166 for a chat.

Tambo teredo tragedy ends river trade

Having been attacked by the dreaded teredo worm, the Swan Reach bridge was no sooner declared unsafe than it collapsed: on 17 November 1925. Traffic was diverted to the Johnsonville punt to avoid causing disruption to road users until a temporary pontoon bridge could be put in place.

This bridge was quite successful, with over 1000 cars reportedly travelling across the river on Boxing Day 1925. The pontoon bridge was in place for over four years until it was swept away in a flood in June 1930.

The new permanent bridge spelt the end of river transport, as it was not a bascule bridge and could not be raised to provide clearance for shipping.

At this time the Tambo River was badly silted. The level of the river bed had risen 6.7m over the previous thirty years as a result of constant flooding and erosion upstream.

The river was choked with willows and other hazards and snagging was constantly required, causing increasing difficulty for the *Burrabogie*, then the only steamer regularly making the trip to Mossiface. A decision to make Bridle Creek the last stop for navigation was on the cards when the bridge collapsed.

The last of the lakes steamers to cruise up the Tambo River was the *Dargo* in 1934, which had the advantage over the *Burrabogie* in that it had adjustable masts and funnel. Even this trip ended badly, only managing to get as far as Tambo Upper.



*Swan Reach bridge 1926
Image: State Library Victoria*

On the return journey the *Dargo* grounded at the mouth of the river and the passengers had to be rescued. A sad end to a colourful part of East Gippsland history.

Cliff Crest aka Scone Cottage

A simple weatherboard house with an iron roof, 'Cliff Crest' was built for Sarah Westersen around 1890.

Built on five acres above Harper's Bight in Reeves Channel, the house was ideally situated to welcome guests.

Mrs Westersen had been on the staff of the Kalimna Hotel and often helped out by taking the 'overflow' of guests when the hotel was fully booked in the heyday decade of 1890-1900.

Before the motor car era, tourists arrived at Nyerimilang or Lakes Entrance by steamer and were looking for excursions and other entertainments to make their holidays memorable.

Sarah developed a roaring trade, offering



Above: Sarah Westersen's 'Scone Cottage'

freshly cooked scones and tea to the day-trippers, out enjoying the lakes on the launches of the various guest houses and hotels in Lakes Entrance.

As late as the 1950s, her granddaughter Mrs Lancaster, continued this tradition of serving afternoon tea to the tourists.

Multicultural Metung

Metung has a history of many different nationalities living and working around the village.

A large number of Chinese had settled in the 1870s around the creek named for them and were engaged in fishing and growing vegetables for the goldfields of Omeo.

Captain Limschou, who was part-owner and master of the *Mary Anne*, which traded on the lakes from 1870 and the skipper of the schooner *Gippslander* in 1875, built a house at Metung—although this was sold to John King in 1880 and later demolished.

In the 1870s the brothers Kreymborg, of German origin, had made a permanent camp at Gardiner's Creek.

A Portuguese marine pilot named Ferreira had established a decent orchard in the village in the mid-1880s. George Ferreira ran the post office some decades later.

By 1900 brothers by the name of Jensen had built houses in Metung. The name Jensen is most usually associated with Denmark.

The first store at Metung opened in 1905 and was run by a J. Fleischer, a well-known name in Germany and Northern Europe.



*Box's Creek, Metung
Image: Judy Davies*

In 1897, following the death of pioneer John King, St John's Church was moved to a new site by contractors Gawen & Johansen. In 1912 Johansen's property on the old Metung Road was sold to Councillor Olsen. There were many people of Norwegian origin in East Gippsland at that time.

Originally from Germany, builder Herbert Zeigler had a garage where the Yacht Club now stands around 1915. He also built a number of houses around Metung and one for himself out on Boole Poole.

The Hansen brothers from Norway were fishermen, who bought land in the Metung area.

A niece of Judge John Box married a man named Schollick, which is a name associated with Wales or North-West England. The Schollicks lived at Judge Box's house 'Cawarra' during the 1930s.

Thanks to Heritage Victoria, John Adams, Peter Synan, Helen Martin and Gay Halstead for snippets of info.



Man at work! Gary Burnett fitting castors to a newly-acquired display unit, making it easier for our volunteers to move



This is one of two units donated by the Bairnsdale Museum and will soon be utilised to display some of the cameras in the Society's collection—including this well-used Kodak Box Brownie.