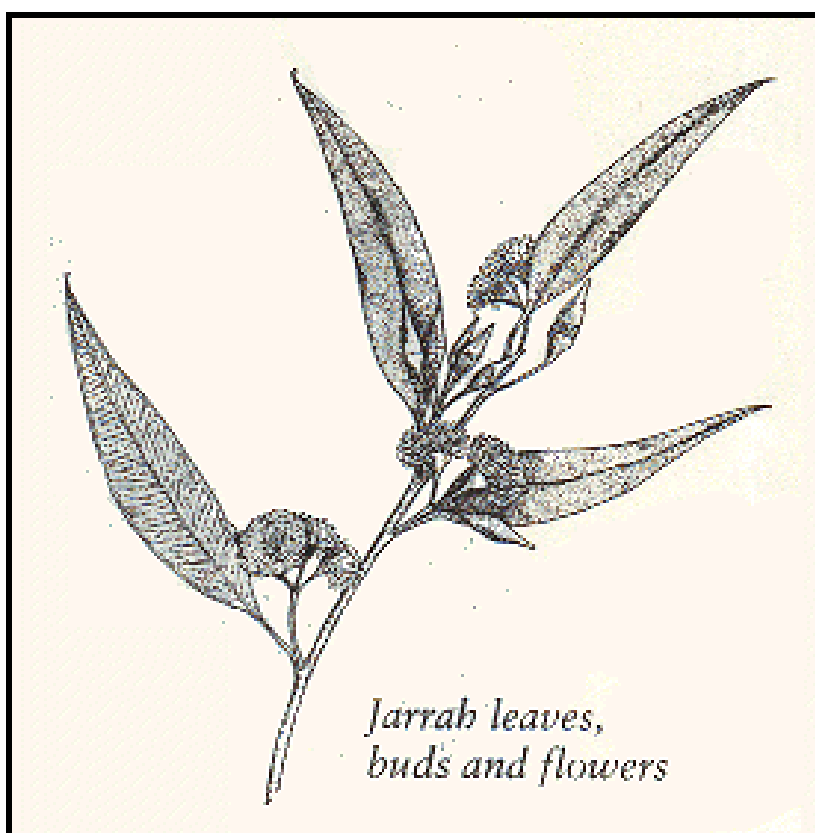


The Skeleton

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE
AUSTRALIND FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY
(INC.)

Affiliated with WA Genealogical Society (Inc.)



Eucalyptus Marginata

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WE'RE ON THE WEB

www.australindfhs.org

THE AUSTRALIND FAMILY HISTORY SOCIETY INC.

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Annual Subscriptions: 1 Jan - 31 Dec

Single Membership \$35
Joint Membership \$45

Single Membership (Senior over 60) \$25
Joint Membership (Senior over 60) \$35

LIBRARY HOURS

Tuesday 10 am - 5 pm
Wednesday 10 am - 5 pm
Thursday 10 am - 5 pm
Saturdays by appointment - no extra charge

Non-member charges
Use of library \$5 per session

A researcher is available to conduct
research on behalf of the Society

Contact Mr Alan Reynolds via the Library on
9796 1050 or email: alindfhs@iinet.net.au

Research

Initial Fee \$10 for 2 hrs
Additional \$ 5 per hr
Photocopying and Postage extra



Your Contributions . . .

Please email articles for the next newsletter to the Australind website with
'Newsletter' in the Subject line or leave in the tray at the Family History
Library: alindfhs@iinet.net.au

Deadline for the receipt of articles for next edition of the *Skeleton*.

15th May 2016



Disclaimer

The Society does not hold itself responsible for statements or opinions expressed by authors of papers published in this newsletter. The accuracy of offers, services or goods appearing here cannot be vouched for by the Society. The Editorial Team reserves the right to condense and edit articles to meet the approved size limits of our newsletter.

Message from the Editorial Team

Hello to all Members

Welcome back to another year of research. We're happy to see so many old faces coming into the Library and hope to gain some more new members throughout this year.

In this edition of *The Skeleton* we commemorate the history of Yarloop. During the January fires, like most of you, we were all deeply saddened at the devastation of Yarloop and its renowned Workshops. We wanted to acknowledge the important role Yarloop played in past years and would like to thank Geoff Cattach, Gay Johnson and Marg Smith for their articles also Roger Lane-Glover for his article of his forebears from Tasmania and how they suffered with bushfires.

We are now busily planning an event to celebrate the 175th Anniversary of the First Ships arriving in Australind as part of the Australind Land Settlement. This event is planned to be held in 2017 at Alverstoke in Brunswick. We will keep you posted on what is happening in subsequent editions of the newsletter.

In our Web Corner section there are details of new and interesting websites to assist you in your research.

Our next newsletter is due in June and we hope to focus on the first Bunbury Lighthouse - if anyone has information on the early years of the Lighthouse, please let us know. Personal accounts are always welcome.

Anne & Jayne
The E-Team

DATES for your DIARY

On request we can arrange appointments for researchers to come into the Library on Saturdays (between 10am and 2pm).

2017 - 175th Anniversary of the First Ships Arriving in Australind (more details in this newsletter)

Committee meetings: Last Friday of the month.
10am. AFHS Library.

WAGS Library open Mon 9:30 - 20:00
Wed-Fri 9:30 - 14:30 Sat 13:00 - 17:00
www.wags.org.au

TIP: *Don't forget to bring along your USB thumb drive to save files from your web research.*

AFHS SERVICES

Library Visit

Affiliated Societies - no charge (show membership card)
Non members - \$5 per visit

Membership

1 Jan 2015 – 31 Dec 2015.

Computer Use

Internet Access -includes Ancestry.com + Find My Past and many more.

All users	\$2 per hr
Printouts	30c each
Burn CDs	\$1 each

Micro Film/Fiche Readers/ Pro Scan

All users	\$2 per hr
Printouts	30c each

Photocopying

A4 B&W single	20c	Double-sided	30c
A4 Colour single	30c	Double-sided	50c
A3 B&W single	30c	Double-sided	60c

Ring Binding

Up to 50 sheets	\$2
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Laminating

Please ask at desk

President's Report

Hello to fellow Members and Researchers,

Welcome to the March *Skeleton*. Hope you're enjoying these pleasant sunny autumn days we're having.

We are "full steam ahead" organising the 175th Anniversary of the arrival of the First Ships to Australind. This event is planned to be held in 2017 at Alverstoke in Brunswick. We will keep you posted.

There is a new 1939 census on the Find My Past UK website which the Library subscribes to. You may find your more recent forebears' details on these records! Also there is a free government-run Irish Genealogy site covering Dublin area as far back as the 1700s.

The Library is now open once a month on a Tuesday night for those people who can't make it during the days that we're open. Please ring me on Tel 97254783 or AFHS on Tel. 97961050 for details.

Later in the year we're hoping to have an Open Day to introduce new people to genealogy and the Australind Family History Society. We want to get the word out there that our Library doesn't just research family history records locally but worldwide too.

If anyone is interested in working with the E-Team on *The Skeleton*, we would certainly like to hear from you. There is always a positive response from our readers—again, E-Team well done!

Come in and enjoy a cuppa and a toasted sandwich (for a small donation).

Happy researching!

Kind regards

Chris Shaw

OTHER SOCIETIES' NEWSLETTERS

We have recently received the following newsletters:-

NEWSLETTER
Australasian Federation of Family History Organisations (AFFHO) Newsflash
Avoca CHHA
Bega Valley Genealogist Society
Benalla Family Research Group
Berrima District Historical & Family History Soc
Casino - The Crossing
East Gippsland
Hawkesbury Crier
Hindsight Newsletter, Caboolture Family History Research Group
Ipswich Bremer Echoes
Mildurah Grapeline Vol 15
North Qld Relatively Speaking
Northern Territory Genealogy Society
Port Phillip "Belfast Genies"
Singleton The Patrick Plains Gazette
Vic Convicts Group
Wagga Murrumbidgee Ancestor
Wanambool The South West Genealogist

If you are interested in receiving a copy of any of the above please let us know and we can email them to you.

On 8 January 2016 one of the largest bushfires recorded in the South West of WA led to the devastation of the Yarloop townsite and its heritage-listed workshops. These workshops provided employment for a large workforce for many years and had substantial economic benefits to Western Australia up until the 1960s. We have put together some stories about the history of Yarloop to commemorate its importance.

YARLOOP PIONEERS

MEMORIES OF 50 YEARS

Mrs Eastcott Looks Back

(The Blackwood Times Bunbury, WA) 21 August 1953)

A rich store of memories of pioneering in the South West and life in Perth over 70 years ago are contained in a manuscript prepared by Mrs W J Eastcott, of Wagerup Park, Yarloop, with the help of Mr J A Hammond another old colonist, of Perth. The manuscript which, it is hoped, will later be submitted as a paper to the Western Australian Historical Society, describes the success of a small unassisted settler who by hard work and readiness to turn his hand to anything built up a substantial property. Today the Eastcott family are one of the best known and most widely respected in their district.

Mrs Eastcott was born in Perth in 1859. During her girlhood her father worked a garden below what was then known as Barnden's Hill and is now known as the Rivervale railway crossing. Later they moved to Muddy Reach on the Canning near the present site of Clontarf. With her brother the young colonial girl often went minding cattle in the bush which is now covered by the suburbs of Victoria Park, Como and South Perth, and so was trained early for the lonely and hard working life of a pioneer settler. Among her most striking memories of this period is the arrival of the explorer Giles and his train of camels after crossing the desert from South Australia. She remembers the explorers resting under some large gum trees at the Victoria Park end of the Causeway, the cavalcade of ladies and gentlemen on horseback riding out from Perth to meet them, the procession into the town with the Volunteer Band marching ahead playing "The Campbells (Camels) Are Coming," and finally the camels being led in under the Town Hall arches (then a market place and now closed in by the building of shops) where they were unloaded, while extravagant ladies gave them their nosegays to eat and the practical ones fed them with chunks of bread.

Into the South West

Early in the eighties the young girl married another "sandgroper" (a name of which they were proud) and in March 1886 the young couple with their six-month old baby set off to try their luck in the South West. They loaded all their earthly goods into a cart and with two ponies and one draught mare pulling them set off along the Bunbury road. Very little of the road was made and the travelling was heavy. At the end of the third day they pulled up at a running stream. Their camp that night became the place for their home. For 50 years up to the present day their hopes and their labours have been centered in the district.

In those days there was no form of assistance for settlers and no advances to be had. They made their first little home out of paper bark. "And very nice and snug it was " Mrs Eastcott says. But though they had this little home and 100 acres of land around it what were they to live on while they cleared the land? " But true West Australians are never stuck" Mrs Eastcott says.

Her husband gathered 25 or 30 bags of red gum from the bush, borrowed a strong horse from a farmer about seven miles away - their own draught mare had died - and took it up to Perth to sell to a tanner. One trip to Perth with gum gave them enough stores to last about three months, living sparsely and helped out with kangaroo or possum meat. By repeated trips they managed to live until they cleared and fenced their land.

Butter That Sparkled

Similar resource marked all their early days. The husband did all sorts of jobs - pit sawing, carting, timber splitting - and in the intervals applied himself to improving his holding. In one of his absences it was his wife who started their first garden. The struggle was hard and slow but gradually they got a herd of cows, and horses, poultry and pigs, and their garden flourished. They had eggs, vegetables and butter for sale. Their butter was famous. Mrs Eastcott has explained her methods. The milk was left to stand in the milk room for 24hrs before it was skimmed with a ladle like a perforated saucer. The cream was churned to butter, and salted down in wooden firkins. "I must say the butter was very much better than the factory butter of today," says Mrs Eastcott. "It had a full bodied flavour and a good colour and when broken would sparkle. I think the bush feed is much better for giving the butter the right flavour and then the setting of the milk for 24 hours seems to be an improvement. The butter did not have that sad putty appearance that factory butter has."

While the labour on the farm went on the family was also growing. Five children were born without a doctor's aid but in some cases with the help of a neighbour's wife. Incidentally the pioneer couple now have 22 grandchildren and one great grandchild. Their nearest neighbour in those days was six miles away on one side and four miles on the other. The chief means of keeping in touch with the outside world was by the mail cart which ran from Bunbury to Pinjarra every Monday and Thursday and back on Thursdays and Fridays. The drivers would bring orders for the settlers, carrying out commissions for them and tell them the news. When, in 1893 the railway line was put through, the settlers felt at first that it was a much less personal service than the old one, not so friendly and not so convenient.

From the point of view of Mr and Mrs Eastcott the turning point in the district's progress was the establishment of the timber mill at Yarloop in 1895. Then things began to move. "Now all at once there was a call for everything one could grow on the farm, milk, butter, eggs, poultry, hay and all kinds of vegetables and work for all at seven shillings per day of nine hours." The hardest of the struggle was over and since then there has been a tale of steady progress. In their seventies the couple can look back on the long way they have come, regretting nothing and remembering gratefully the pleasure there was even in the hardness.



Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Eastcott, of Oakley-street, Bunbury, who celebrated their 69th wedding anniversary last Tuesday. Mr. Eastcott is 93 years old; his wife 91.

(The West Australian 8 May 1937)

YARLOOP - a Town Built on Wood

The Early Years

The Darling Range bordering Perth and continuing through to the South West of Western Australia has extensive areas of jarrah forest where below the escarpment several timber towns emerged one of which was Yarloop - a town built of wood. Timber milling in the South West began back in the 1840s around Busselton, Quindalup and other places along the Geographe coast. It was a time when timber getting was done by pit-sawing and bullock teams. The 'boom' of the timber industry didn't occur until the late 1890s.

Jarrah is one of the finest timbers in the world as it is stout, durable and easily worked with a multitude of uses. In the early years it was used for railway sleepers, harbour and dock works, pier and bridge construction and paving for the streets of London (see story on page 13).

"--- the timber of the South West is such that it is unequalled throughout the Southern Hemisphere and greatly sought after in Africa, India, China, the British Isles and the continent"
(*South Western Times Bunbury 19 Nov 1918*)

"---- these hardwood blocks with a paving life of fifteen years were preferred to cobblestones because ironed rimmed wheels had less tendency to slip and horses hooves made less noise as they clip-clopped through the streets pulling carts and carriages. In Glasgow the careful Scots got double the wear by turning the block over."
(*The Jarrah Forest: A complex Mediterranean ecosystem*).

The late 1840s saw settlers arriving in the Yarloop district to farm the land but it wasn't until two entrepreneurial brothers saw the wealth of timber surrounding the district that the town emerged with the establishment of a sawmill and private rail lines connecting to the government line known as South Western Rail Line (opened 1893).

Charles Gibson Millar and his brother Edwin Franks Millar were railway construction contractors from Victoria, who had carried out work in Victoria, New South Wales and South Australia. Their first operations in this state were in connection with the building of the Albany-Beverley rail line which opened in July 1889. It was then the brothers first commenced timber cutting, when they procured the timber used for sleepers at sawmills they had built at Torbay near Denmark. Later they extended their operations into jarrah cutting, starting a sawmill at Yarloop which was 2km from a siding known as Waigerup (later known as Wagerup when a signwriter omitted the 'i'). The first mill was called Waigerup. Within a few years several other mills were constructed, Waterous (1897), Hoffmans, Mornington and Nanga Brook. By 1901 Yarloop was the main centre of their operation and the following year Millar Brothers had amalgamated with several other sawmills to become Millars Karri and Jarrah Company holding 26 sawmills, 600kms of railway and 46 locomotives. The company was often referred to as 'The Combine'.

Charles and Edwin appointed a fellow Victorian Henry Teesdale (Teasdale) Smith who was also a railway contractor, as manager of the company. Smith held the position until 1908. Incidentally when surveying a sight for a pending mill Smith sought advice from Mr William J Eastcott who was able to show him the most suitable rail route from the new mill to the forest. William's experience in developing his land held him in good stead.

One can only imagine the strenuous work of the hewers in negotiating a path through the dense forest to reach these giant trees, followed by the sound of the ringing axe and the booming of the tree.

Once on the forest floor the log would be transported by horse drawn jinkers, that was up until 1899 when a man named Harry Stevens (Stephens) who was working on the mills in the district invented a steam whim (the first mechanical hauler). It was a giant machine of four wheels and framed to carry its vertical boiler and engine. A plentiful supply of scrap wood ran the steam whim. The logs were huge but the machine straddled over them, raised them off the ground and took them through the bush. This method was much quicker than the horse jinker which took at least half an hour. The steam was a success up until the war when it was superceded by other methods.



Steam whim hauling at Yarloop
Photo by permission of the WA State Library

Yarloop town-site developed quickly with one side (eastern) housing employees and company buildings such as machine shops, offices and stores of the timber company. These large buildings indicated the extent of the operations conducted up in the forest and the busy mills they served. It was the main centre for the well equipped repairing workshops of all the mills in the district.

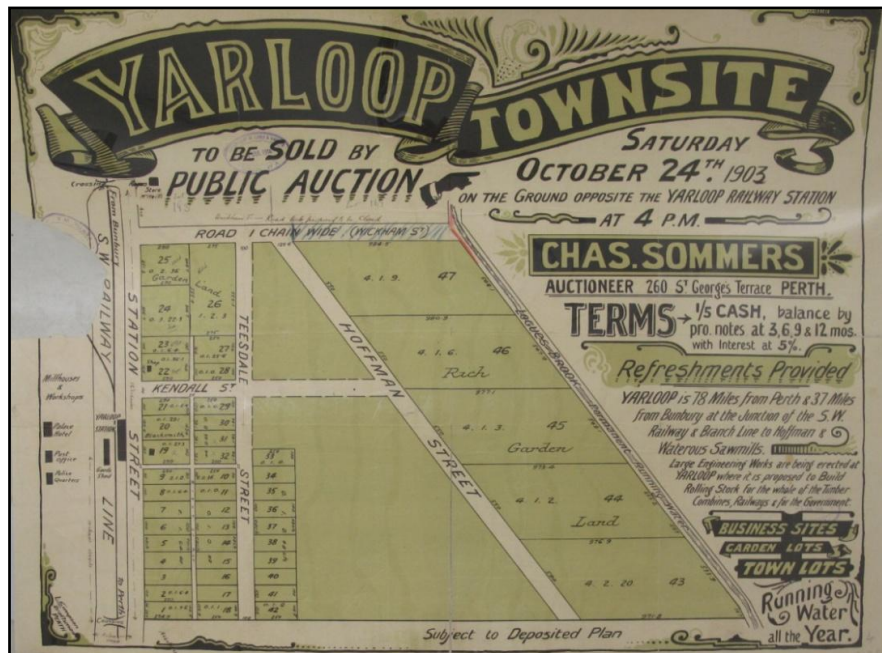


Yarloop 1910-1920
Photo by permission of the WA State Library

Some folk preferred their own home and these were on the western side of the line. Other services were built, hospital (1896), boarding house (1896), post office (1898), hotels (1903 and 1907), town hall and general store (1904), school (1907) all necessary for a growing town. The townsfolk lived with the constant hum and growl from the rolling trains and the ever-present scent of the wood wafting over their town.

It's been said the escarpment above Yarloop were some of the company's best leases and a large load of timber in 1909 was recorded as an Australian record. This country town was so important that in 1930 it was accepted as the biggest timber centre in the world and again, important when in 1984 the National Trust classified Yarloop as a conservation area.

The historical significance of this town can never be over-estimated in the history of this state and the recent devastation of the town makes it even more worthy.



Real Estate Plan Yarloop Townsite 1903

Tom Lofthouse Memoirs

Story from member Marg Smith

My father Bernard came out from Leeds in England in 1910. There was not much work in WA for cabinetmakers or coffin makers as he used to be, so he became a general carpenter. He bought a small block of land (80 acres) at Wokalup from the WA Company for a few shillings an acre. He was working at Mornington Mills when WW1 broke out. He, like a lot of the workers in the area, saw a chance of a free trip to England, so they all joined up.

After returning from the war Bernard bought another 80 acres of land alongside the first 80 and started farming properly. A lot of men worked in the timber yards and on other farms, and on the weekends they worked their own little blocks of land.

He was working at *Bundidup* (Hayward's Farm) where he met Dorothy Hayward, his future wife. One of his jobs was to deliver produce from *Bundidup* to the timber mill at Mornington. They used to sit up on the rail trucks going out to the bush camps.

(Tom) As a kid, I recall helping Dad on the weekends. We used to go around all the mill houses delivering fruit and vegetables. A lot of it of course was grown on our own farms. Milk, honey, all those sorts of things.





From "**Cobbers of Mine and other Poems**"
the Axeman

There's a silence in the forest
Where once the jarrah fell
There's a sound that somehow's missing
That bushmen knew so well
And the lazy old iguana
Rules his homestead now supreme
For the sound is missing now
That used to wake him from his dream
When the axemen wake the echoes
With the axe and maul and saw
Now the forest stands in silence
As it did in days of yore

Where's the old whip-cracking drivers
When that old bush was new
They could use the whip could those chaps
Where the giant jarrah grew
Where's Jack and Jim and Arthur
Ned and Joe and Tom and Bill
For the old address can't find them
"No 20 Hoffmans Mill"
How it used to rain in torrents
And we spelled from week to week
Playing quoits with four old horse shoes
With the lads across the creek

Where the old white tents were shining
Just the poles can now be seen
Where the choppers boiled their billies
The grass is growing green
Where we held impromptu concerts
And drove away dull care
All is silent now and around it
Save the birds that twitter there
Where once was mirth and laughter
Now the nights are still and grey
And the men that woke the echoes
In that forest - "where are they?"

Ah! we'd dearly love to meet them
And grip their hands again
In that same old jarrah forest
Where these giant trees were slain
That you can't describe in words
In stately jarrah forests
'Mongst the twitter of the birds

(Daily Telegraph and North Murchison Gazette, 29 August 1919)

THE YARLOOP WORKSHOPS

by Geoff Cattach



(Geoff grew up in Yarloop as did his wife and his mother. His uncle Percy was a train driver for 4 years. His grandfather rode the rake, that is, he was a guard. "I think my relatives, if I added them all up, have something like a thousand year's service with Millars' Timber and Trading throughout the state.")

In 1895, Millars Timber and Trading set up a major workshop at Yarloop. This workshop was designed to do repairs for all the items that could not be repaired in the small workshops in other mills throughout the South West. At that time Millars had 26 mills throughout the South West and something like 30 spot mills. It was far too long to bring any major item out from England by sailing-ship so Yarloop workshops were set up where housed steam-age engineering trades were available for major repairs. This meant that any item that needed major repairing was sent to Yarloop.

The pattern maker at the workshops designed the wood pattern which was used to mould the item from the ingot of steel melted in the furnaces. Therefore, the workshops had fitters and turners, coppersmiths, blacksmiths, pattern makers, moulders, plumbers and carpenters. Virtually every trade was covered to enable repairs for any item in those days, way back in 1900s.



All the machines were driven by steam. Also, Millars had something like 1200 horses throughout the South West. The horses were used to shift logs from the bush to the train lines. The feed for the horses was held in a chaff shed in the workshop. The chaff which was bagged up and put on the trains, was sent to the various mills.

Another major item for the workshops, of course, was the sawshop. The sawshop was where every major repair to the band-saw and circular saw took place. As you can imagine with 26 mills spread from Denmark in the south to Jarrahdale in the north and to Wilga in the east, it was a major business operation. From our understanding, at that particular time, Millars had the biggest private railway line in the world. This also required the repairs of engines and locos.

At their peak, Millars had a total of 35 locomotives. This resulted in a huge collection of G-class patterns. On top of that there were approximately 30 spot mills. Spot mills are small mills located throughout the forest and the timber from these were put onto the rail line and taken to the main mill for circular sawing and made into sleepers or pieces of timber that were required. Of course all this sounds fairly simple but if you go back 100 years, motorcars were non-existent making the rail line the main course.

Mills included areas like Hoffman Mill, Nanga Brook, Klondike, Waterous and many other areas throughout the South West. This meant that there was a very large workforce in Yarloop, which in the early years exceeded 500 men and in fact only one lady was employed. Millars also owned the hospital and it was only by pressure from the men who worked for them that the ladies were finally allowed to use the hospital for themselves and their children. Ultimately this resulted in many children being born in the Yarloop Hospital. We did have the records but I believe they have now been destroyed.

If you think about a work force of 500 in 1900 and multiply that through to today's date of 2016, you get a good understanding of how big such a workforce was and how vibrant the town was. There were two hotels, three hostels, a post office and three shops of a general nature. The school of course was a government school and very well attended. It was a major part of the Yarloop Society.

Yarloop was involved in log chops and there were two men from Yarloop that became world champion axemen. We did have axes that belonged to one of the gentlemen in the workshops so hopefully we can still perhaps restore them.

Millars was a huge employer and they operated from 1895 through to about 1978 when Cyclone Alby put a stop to the main body of the workshop. Prior to the cyclone I believe that the workshops had started to wane in the early 50s. Trains were replaced by log trucks, the horses disappeared and the workforce changed quite dramatically. On top of this timber was much scarcer and it was realised that the trees should not be destroyed, making the product unavailable to Millars.

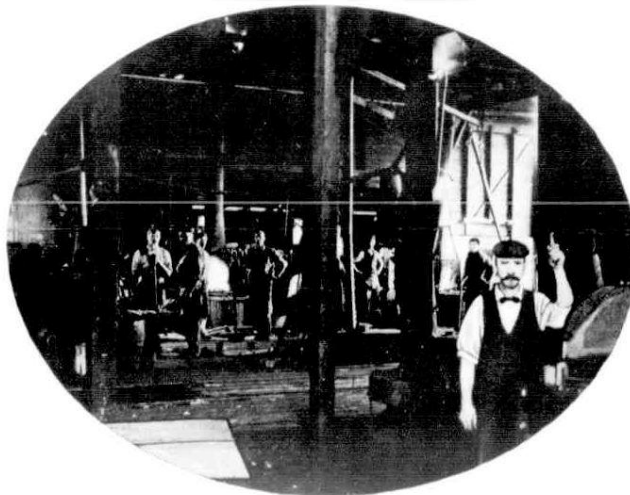
To give you some idea of the size of Millars Timber and Trading in 1901, they employed 13½ thousand people worldwide with something like eight wharves throughout the world. This included places like South Africa, South America and Singapore. The timber was even used to pave the streets of London as well as Flinders Street in Melbourne. There are photographs of how this timber had worn years later. It was quite astounding to see pictures of the beautiful sleepers that were used way back in that time.

In 1914, 258 soldiers from Yarloop enlisted in the First World War. During this period the workshops were converted to a munitions factory, for a period of eighteen months, to supply much needed munitions for war.

There was no doubt that timber played a major role in the State of Western Australia from 1900 through to 1950 and when you consider that it involved – 26 towns throughout the South West – it was of huge importance to the economy of the South West and Western Australia.

This is just a brief summary of where Millars Timber and Trading were and what part they played in the economy of Western Australia.

(There is nothing like Yarloop and the Heritage Council described it as "the most intact example of an early privately-owned 20th century railway workshop in Australia" and says "the place, including the workshop buildings, tracks and yards constructed circa 1900-1910, comprised the most important group of early to mid-20th century timber industrial buildings in Western Australia.")



*Yarloop Workshops, where locomotives and all other machinery are repaired
(The Australasian 27 March 1909)*

JARRAH BLOCKS PAVE THE STREETS OF LONDON

The timber industry was Western Australia's biggest export industry until World War 1. One of the main products exported from WA during this period was jarrah block pavers. Charles and Edwin Millar (mentioned in previous stories) saw the potential in sending a trial shipment of jarrah blocks to London for testing as street pavement to replace the old cobble stone. The noise created by heavy traffic on major London cobble stone roads was caused primarily by the sound of the horses' iron-shod hooves along the uneven surface. The installation of jarrah wood roads would greatly diminish this noise congestion; they were less slippery when wet and provided a smoother travelling surface. In 1889, Westminster Bridge road was laid with jarrah block paving. This particular road was well-known for its persistent and very heavy traffic, with the weight of horse-drawn trams and cargo wagons etc. The jarrah hardwood was ideally suited for use outside London hospitals because it was far quieter than cobbles.

In 1895 the Millars brothers received favourable reports and the first mill began operations at Yarloop. The town developed and became the centre of Millars milling operations in the south west, servicing 26 mills. Millars Timber and Trading Company (Yarloop timber mill) won a contract to provide one million jarrah blocks to pave the streets of London. Australian hardwood was in such demand for roads and was also used for paving in other major cities around the world. In fact jarrah wooden blocks can be found today in the streets of London.

The jarrah block paver was predominantly a hexagonal shape with an interlocking design. Each block was estimated to weigh less than 2kg. The stringy and fibrous jarrah wood proved durable, hard wearing and resistant to absorbing water and organic foulness e.g. horse urine, which was one of fundamental problems with the imported Swedish soft wood pavers initially laid.



From ianvisits.co.uk

Many of London's most famous thoroughfares were still covered with wooden blocks through until the 1920s but by 1925, wood paving was finished as a road material and was replaced with tarmacadam. Horse-drawn transport was slowly being replaced by automobiles and these tarmac roads proved an efficient road base for this type of traffic. In the 1950s when the roads were surfaced with tarmac the majority of London's wooden blocks were ripped out for fire-wood. The creosoted blocks burnt well and were much in demand for home heating.

'Paving the streets of London' helped WA's economy grow during the early 20th century and the Yarloop timber mill played an important role in the manufacturing of these jarrah block pavers.

PROMINENT FACES FROM YARLOOP

Neil McNeil (1921-2009) born Yarloop

1961 Liberal Member for Canning
1965-1983 WA Legislative Council for Lower West

Jack Davis (1917-2000) spent his childhood in Yarloop

Notable Australian 20th Century playwright and poet
Indigenous rights campaigner
Awarded MBE in 1976, AM in 1985

HAPPY MEMORIES OF YARLOOP

by member Gay Johnson (nee Stewart)

My childhood days in Yarloop started in 1947 when I was eight and my brother Jim was two. Our elder sisters were by that time making their own life in Kojonup and Fremantle. Dad (Jim), went to Yarloop for work.

We firstly lived in the old Hotel, a large rambling place owned by the Driscoll family. It was next to the old Post Office where town residents would line-up on Sunday nights for a cheaper phone call to their families. No home phones for us. Mum ran it as a boarding-house for a short while. It was across the railway line from the main town, which was accessible via a bridge over the line. I was petrified of using the bridge. To me it was old and shaky.



*Gay & brother Jim
outside the old boarding-house*

We walked to school along a gravel road, then a track at the back of the mill workshop, up a little hill and on to the school. Mr Alec 'Daddy' Schooler was the headmaster. He had been there for a couple of generations of local families. It had three class rooms and about 100 children. In Mr Schooler's room, just inside the door, stood the large jar with the dreaded cane in it, always a reminder to be good, although I don't think any of the girls ever felt the sting of that cane. Mum insisted we wear shoes to school but they soon came off and into our bags. We were nearly always barefoot.

We soon shifted to the Mill boarding-house which Mum ran for about seven years. It was down next to the Workshop and still stood and was used as a guest-house until the fire destroyed it in 2016. It catered mainly for single mill and workshop workers and a couple of teachers. No such thing as ensuite – the lavatories (with a pan system of course, with newspaper for the necessary!) were behind the bedrooms, as was the bathroom - a primitive affair with hot water from a chip heater. The laundry (wash house) had a copper for boiling the sheets etc. and two cement troughs for rinsing. Mum didn't have a washing machine until years later. My job at the boarding-house was to clean the mirrors in the men's bedrooms on a Saturday morning with Bon Ami, a white substance that had to be vigorously wiped off to a sparkling shine to Mum's approval. Mum employed a few local girls to help her. She had a very big Metters stove which never went out. Always a large container of milk straight from Bob Nicoli's dairy across the road sat at the back of the stove, slowly simmering away, giving us lots of scalded cream off the top. Nothing like it. I will mention two of the men who stayed with us - Jim 'Dasher' Dearle and Maxie White, both well known characters of the time. Dasher lived in a room on our back verandah and was a great favourite of both Jim and I as he always bought lots of comics which we could read. Maxie came from a distinguished family in South Australia - the black sheep of the family. He was a great favourite with the townspeople. There was never a locked door in those days and no thought of any of the men harming us children. It was the opposite, with the men always looking out for us.



1940s Yarloop Train

The town was made up of mainly Millars' houses, a shop and the Top Yard Mill, the office, mill store, tractor shed and the Workshops. Of course there were some other homes and shops and dairy farms privately owned around the town. Yarloop was also the service town of Nanga Brook and Hoffmans Mill. Steam trains ran out to these settlements every weekday to take supplies and people out and bring the logs in from the forest. Millars owned most of the buildings in these towns. The workers rented the houses for a nominal rent. A lot of the people spent most of their lives in the town born in the hospital, went to school, and married and died there. At the general store you could 'book up' from fortnight to fortnight for groceries, haberdashery, petrol and the like, therefore being indebted to Millars for life.

Yarloop had three churches, Methodist up next to the school, Church of England at the southern end of town and Catholic up on the hill on Johnston Road. We went to the C of E Sunday school every Sunday, always looking forward to the Sunday school picnic which was held at the Waterfalls off Waterous Road.

Jim and I had a mostly carefree childhood in Yarloop running free to wherever. Traffic was sparse on the roads; the bush was our playground with cubbies and forts, wild flowers which we picked with no restrictions in the spring; the irrigation channels to float down when the water was running, a giant lilac tree in our yard for me to climb and read my latest book; music lessons from Mrs Cooper, playing with my friends and my beloved dolls. We certainly didn't have many toys. I had two dolls and a small doll's pram and a doll's tea-set, plus books which I read over and over again. I received my first push bike when I was 12, a second-hand Malvern Star, which had been restored by Mr Bill Wellington. I was so proud of it. A pile of firewood on the back verandah gave Jim all the toys he needed; trucks, cars, fire engines and steam engines. Imagination is a marvellous thing. There were also a lot of real old steam engines around that made great things to climb over and make into anything you liked to imagine. We also looked forward to trips on the Nanga or Hoffman train. It carried a passenger carriage and many a lovely day was had out in the bush.

The town hall was the centre of entertainment in town as well as acting as a bank agency for a few hours once a week. Wedding receptions, birthday parties, the pictures on a Thursday night, local meetings, dances and the big event every year was the Yarloop Hospital Ball. The young ladies wearing their new ball gowns and vying for "The Belle of the Ball", all sitting around the perimeter of the hall with the young men standing around the door (or out the back having a forbidden drink of beer). The older ladies and men came in their Sunday-best while the judges of the Belle sat up on the stage. We always had a very good dance band lead by 'Pop' O'Conner on the drums and Joan Higgins on the piano. Supper was always a highlight with the Country Women's Association doing us proud with a wonderful supper. The "pictures" once a week at the town hall - a Mr Jones ran the movies all through the South-West. They were always well patronised whatever was on show, often breaking down, with hand-clapping and boos from the patrons. Ken and Joan Higgins ran the local deli-cum-newsagents which was open on movie nights, with everyone going off for a cool drink or one of Jean's famous pies at half-time. The children, mostly boys, would crawl around the floor under the seats etc. and collect the cool drink bottles, stack them in a secret spot and carry them home to be taken to the shop next day for a few pennies pocket money. Of course the big sister (me) was expected to help carry Jim's cache home much to my embarrassment.

Sport was very big in town. Yarloop played football in the league. We always seemed to have a pretty good A-grade team, plus a B-grade with most of the town turning up on a Sunday home ground. My Dad (Jim Stewart), was a 'football tragic'. He was the goal umpire for Yarloop in our childhood. We also went to East Fremantle to see "Old Easts" play on a Saturday.

Hockey was the main women's sport in town with Yarloop having two teams in the league, the Robins and the Wrens. Also basketball which is now called netball. I loved all sports and played both hockey and basketball, never being mentioned amongst the best!! Badminton, tennis, cricket and darts were also played.

I cannot have a Yarloop story without mentioning the hospital and Dr Barrington Knight. The hospital was built by Millars in about 1896 for use of the men of the mill towns. Women and children had to go to Perth or Bunbury for many years. It was a "Fund" hospital with Millars Timber & Trading Co contributing as well as the workers. The people of the town were treated free by the Dr and the hospital. Dr Knight was about the third doctor. He arrived in 1936 and delivered medical services to Yarloop and the surrounding mill towns. The hospital was in a poor condition when he arrived and over many years it was upgraded by funding from events held in the town and Busy Bees were arranged to generally improve the grounds. Dr Knight, Matron Gooding and Sister Selfe ran the hospital for many years; you always felt safe there. Dr Knight had a consulting room in which he would dispense his black medicine to all and sundry. It seemed to suffice for almost any complaint.

He ran the hospital until he retired in 1981. My husband, Bill Johnson, was born two months prematurely in 1935 at the hospital. No such thing as humi-cribs. He was taken home in a shoebox lined with cotton wool. He was delivered by Dr J McCall.

The local "Pub" was a two storey structure during my childhood. A very important place for the men of the town to relax after work and football games. Women weren't allowed in the public bar, that was a real no-no, although some women socialised in the lounge bar. How game were they!! I watched that hotel burn down in 1955. At the time I was employed by Millars in their office which was up the hill from the hotel and in direct sight of it from my desk.



MR. HUGH McNEILL'S HOTEL, YARLOOP.
"The local Pub"
(Kennewell Hardware shop on left)

Our high school days were spent at the Harvey Junior High School. Much excitement as I got my new uniform. Off we went to Harvey every school day. It was a new life for me. New friends were added; school dances etc. As my Junior exams were approaching in my third year, Mr Wilf White, the General Manager, approached my parents asking if I could leave school and work in the Mill office. I couldn't wait to leave school and work. I spent the next 3½ years there as the office girl-cum-telephonist, typist, adding up pay-sheets, mail girl and sometimes shop assistant at the store. Never any formal training, I stumbled my way through, learning on the job. I was the only girl working at Millars in Yarloop at the time.



*Gay, Jim &
Jennifer Robertson*

I can't mention all our friends of our Yarloop days as we knew most people in town, but from primary school, Jennifer Robertson, Geoff Cattach, Jeanette Rutherford, Dorothy O'Callaghan and Jillian Osborne were close friends.

During this time, I started noticing my 'to be husband', Bill. I had known him for years of course but this was different. He was older than me, had lived in Yarloop all his life and had done his apprenticeship in the Workshops. He told me later that he first noticed me getting off the school bus and the romance blossomed from there. We were married in 1957 and left Yarloop in 1958.

Bill had his 80th birthday at the Yarloop Hotel last September.

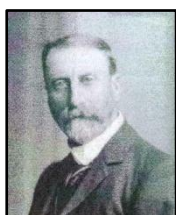


Look out for Bill Johnson's story in our next edition

GOURLAY FIRES, TASMANIA

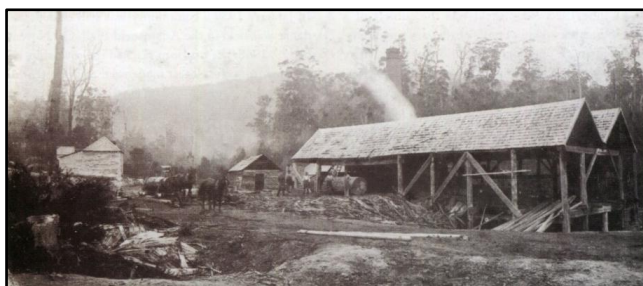
Extract from "What's In A Name? My Family History"
by member Roger Lane-Glover

The recent destruction of much of Yarloop, a Western Australian town born on the back of the timber industry in the late 1800's, reminded me of the ever-present threat of fire to property and people who draw their livelihood from timber. My own forebears, who were timber merchants in the late 1800's and early 1900's in Tasmania, experienced the same distress caused by the power and unpredictability of fire. Of course, Tasmania is no stranger to raging bushfires, the deadliest being the "Black Tuesday bushfires" in 1967, which left 62 people dead, 900 injured and over 7,000 homeless. Over 70 fires are ablaze in the densely wooded west coast as I write.



My maternal great grandfather, Joseph Gourlay (1856-1942), owned timber mills in Surges Bay on the Huon River (1888) and Fitzgerald in the Derwent Valley (1917), both of which were endangered by bushfires.

On 21 January, 1889 the *Mercury* reported, "Between one and two o'clock this morning the engine house attached to the Surge's Bay mill was burnt down. A workman saw the fire from his bed and roused all hands who, under Mr Reed, the mill manager, saved the mill which was also on fire, by bucketing water from the creek. The mill manager's wife left her bed and stood knee-deep in the creek filling the buckets."



Surge's Bay Mill

In later years Joseph Gourlay's son Jasper, my grandfather, and his two brothers joined Joseph making the firm, "J Gourlay and Sons Timber Merchants." They owned a Joinery Plant in Elizabeth Street, Hobart and in 1913 the *Mercury Newspaper* reported that "Mr Gourlay has installed an electrically-driven joinery planning and milling plant and up-to-date machines for tonguing and grooving and planing floorboards. One bystander remarked that it did the work so well, it seemed a pity to use the boards, so beautifully finished, to make floors."



J Gourlay Timber Merchant

Bushfires were not the only hazard. Gourlay's timber business also experienced fire from the failure of their own machinery. On 16 June, 1923 the *Mercury* reported, "On inquiry yesterday it was ascertained that the debris, caused by the recent early morning fire at the timber establishment of J Gourlay, Elizabeth Street, Hobart, had been cleared away. The reconstruction will include a separate motor for each machine in place of one larger motor and a blower to collect refuse into one room, preparatory to being taken away."

On 17 January, 1934 the *Mercury* reported that Gourlay's mill at Fitzgerald had been saved: "Mr Jasper Gourlay, the mill manager, presented a tragic figure as he stood by the mill directing the men and fighting the flames. The fire had started on Gourlay's tramlines about a mile from the mill. They raced hundreds of gallons of water on trollies along the tramlines, but eventually retreated to the mill to prevent its destruction. The mill stables were lost, but by a stroke of good fortune, combined with the herculean efforts of a large party of bushmen, who apparently know no fear, Gourlay's mill and about 1,000,000 feet of timber were saved."



Fitzgerald Mill

Yet again, on 29 November, 1937 a bushfire destroyed about 20 chains of tramlines leading from the Fitzgerald mill. The *Mercury* reported that the fire had started in bush on an adjoining property: "It did not cause any serious trouble until Friday when the flames began to travel during the heat of the morning. Many bushmen working in the area worked throughout the day in the terrific heat in an effort to check the flames, but it was impossible for the men to prevent the fires from reaching the tramlines."

In February 1936 the *Mercury* reported that, "after working for 54 years in the timber business, Mr Gourlay said, "I suppose I am about the oldest man in the trade, but next January I am retiring and my sons will carry on."

So imminent has the threat of fire to the Tasmanian timber industry over the decades, many timber towns which were destroyed and rebuilt, only to be destroyed again, became ghost towns.

LIBRARY – LATEST ACQUISITIONS

Many thanks to the generous people who have donated books to the Library.

To Be a Man of Independent Means	Helene Smith
Rest Point Remember - Swarbrick Family	

**** WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS ****

668	Diana Collyer	Dalyellup
669	Margaret Cowan	Australind
670	Roy Scott	Australind
671	Kaye Scott	Australind

MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Please check the list below to see if you have a common interest (i.e. researching the same name & place) that is relevant to your family history research:-

Surname	Place	State/County	Country	Period	Member No.
COWAN		Lanarkshire	Scotland	Pre 1810	669
McKENZIE		Lanarkshire	Scotland	Pre 1810	669
COOPER		Suffolk & Norfolk	England	Pre 1850	669
CARVER		Suffolk & Norfolk	England	Pre 1850	669
WARMAN		Suffolk & Norfolk	England	Pre 1850	669
BENSLEY		Suffolk & Norfolk	England	Pre 1755	669
CURTIS		Suffolk & Norfolk	England	Pre 1850	669
SCOTT	Newcastle	Northumberland	England		670 & 671
WALLACE	Newcastle	Northumberland	England		670 & 671
COOPER	Newcastle	Northumberland	England		670 & 671

If so, please ring the AFHS Library on 9796 1050 to arrange contact with these new members

WEB CORNER

Remember to visit our own AFHS website administered by Chris Riley

www.australindfhs.org

FreeREG database of UK parish registers - this database contains more than thirty million records of baptisms, marriages and burials from Thomas Cromwell's order that such records be kept in 1538 up to the establishment of the civil registry of births, marriages and deaths in 1837 - <http://freereg2.freereg.org.uk>

Now on **FindMyPastUK** are:

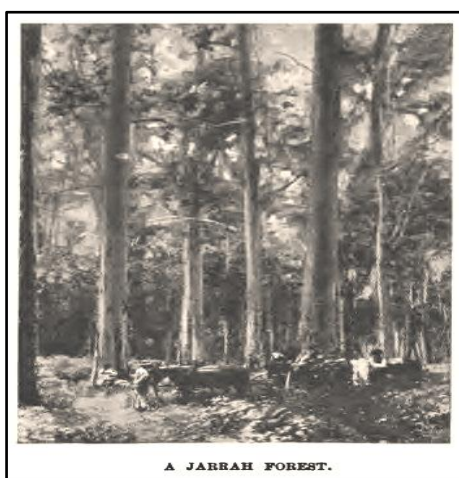
- **1939 Census** which was taken on the eve of WW2, to see how many able-bodied men available with what trades, etc.
- **British in India** records where you can search the names of British people who either lived, worked or travelled to India from early as 1664 up to 1961 with an Index of births, marriages, divorces and deaths compiled by the Society of Genealogists.
- **British India Office Births & Baptisms** - explore over 23,000 new additions to find the births and baptisms of ancestors who lived or worked in India and other territories administered by the India Office.
- **Irish Newspaper Update** - a collection of Irish newspapers now contains an additional 819,000 articles and 5 brand new titles. Read historic articles from all over Ireland to find out what life was like for your Irish ancestors

Now on **Ancestry**:

- Ireland, Civil Registration Births Index 1864-1958
- Ireland Catholic Parish Registers 1655-1915
- Ireland, National Army Census 1922
- Ireland, Military Service Pension Index 1916-1923

See historic town of Yarloop on video "Yarloop Saw Mill End of An Era" - www.youtube.com

Photographs of Yarloop - mingor.net/localities/varloop





Helping Hand

Bob goes to see his supervisor at the mill work-shop.

"Boss," he says "we're doing some heavy house-cleaning at home tomorrow, and my wife needs me to help with the attic and the garage, moving and hauling stuff."

"We're short-handed, Bob," the boss replies. "I can't give you the day off."

"Thanks boss," says Bob, "**I knew I could count on you!**"



175th ANNIVERSARY OF THE FIRST SHIPS ARRIVING IN AUSTRALIND

Are you one of the descendants of families who came on ships
Parkfield (1841), *Trusty* (1842) or *Diadem* (1842)?

We are planning a special event in 2017 to celebrate the arrival of the first settlers to Australind.

More information to come - watch this space!
