Hume and Howell's Crossing Place, Goulburn River.
"Camp Hill", Tallarook. Ambrose Griffin.
Painted to commemorate 100 years of Local Government in
Seymour,
1863-1963.

NEW CROSSING PLACE

The Story of Seymour and its Shire

by

H. G. MARTINDALE

EXTENDED TO 1982

by

NIALL BRENNAN

SHIRE OF SEYMOUR

1982

FOREWORD TO THE SECOND EDITION

This new edition of *New Crossing Place* has been commissioned by the Seymour Shire Council and the Seymour Historical Society. The original text, written by H. G. Martindale, has been extended by Niall Brennan.

The new text traces the history of the Shire from the late fifties to the early eighties. Mr. Brennan has written of the beauty of the Goulburn River and surrounding valley, of the railways, and of the new highways and changes which may take place as a result of the bypass of the three towns in the Shire. He has also recorded the great Army involvement at Puckapunyal and the inter-relation of Army personnel and Shire residents. The bond between the Army and the Shire was further strengthened in 1982 when the Council conferred 'freedom of entry to the Shire of Seymour' upon the First Armoured Regiment, Royal Australian Armoured Corps.

The story is told with modesty and with seriousness, and I believe it to be a just history. For the contribution Mr. Brennan has made I thank him.

I should also like to thank the Seymour Historical Society and others who assisted with the production of this new edition. Special thanks to Mr. Ray Carroll for the endless attention he has given to the project.

I will conclude by thanking those who gave me the great honour of writing this foreword. The Shire of Seymour has a history which deserves this new publication. Once a small shire, it has expanded and grown into a municipality of pride and beauty, with every amenity and full consideration for the well-being of its citizens. I believe the Shire is destined for great development, and will achieve even greater municipal status. Its social, industrial and economic life will flourish in the future.

Noel R. Smyth, J.P.
Shire President
September 1982

In Emily Street, Seymour, there stands a stone cottage still remembered as belonging to Frank May, a Cobb and Co. coach driver who was held up in 1859 when driving the Beechworth coach between Broadford and Seymour. This was about the time when a later type of highwayman was beginning to appear.

These later outlaws were the type from which the popular picture of the bushranger has been particularly drawn, and from their doings has sprung, in spite of the opposition of the serious-minded, a certain romantic legend engendering a form of sympathy in some of the most law-abiding modern breasts.

Some of these wild colonial boys were closely connected with the small selectors of the sixties in some districts, and the old ballads and oral traditions leave us in no doubt of the sympathy then felt for them among some sections of the rural population. Selectors and highwaymen had some common ground in the antagonism felt toward the squatters who, in the 1860's, seemed to have the law weighted in their favour, and who, in a number of cases, displayed an overbearing attitude to those of "lower" social status. An unduly harsh attitude of authority, which was a legacy of the old penal days, may have been a contributing factor in some cases to the later-day bushranging phenomena.

It has been implied that the attitude of some of the police of the 1850's and sixties helped to make some men bushrangers. Some of the police chiefs appear to have had serious deficiencies as leaders, and while there were many men of fine quality in the ranks, there were some of poor standard as well. However, the great majority of citizens, who suffered as much as any future bushranger from arrogance and bullying on the goldfields, had sufficient strength of character to maintain the honest form of pioneering life.

Many of the members of gangs appear to have been immature youths bemused by the haze of spurious glamour surrounding an older leader hardened in wrong-doing. And while highwaymen received assistance from some small settlers, at least some of that aid was inspired as much by a desire to play safe as by admiration.

Some outlaws did, on occasion, show a better side of their nature and there was always the sympathy enlisted for the defiant rebel, for the man who sticks to his mates, and for the sinner who dies game. Odd examples of chivalrous behaviour and the display of a rash courage have in later times been held redeeming features in the wasted lives of foolish, misguided young men who had not only an excessive love of excitement and of easy

money but also too often a dislike for patient hard work and insufficient regard for the sanctity of human life.

The best known bushranger to operate within the shire's borders was Power who in 1869-70 bailed up wayfarers between Seymour and Avenel along the old Sydney Road which in this part ran a little farther to the east and closer to the hills than the present road. Although never proved, it was believed, very probably correctly, that Power's youthful assistant was one Edward Kelly. On another occasion near Tallarook, Power relieved three wagoners of all the money they were carrying. Power himself cultivated the legend that he robbed the rich and left the poor unmolested, but his record, including as it does the holding-up of teamsters and other ordinary folk, shows that his mantle of an Australian Robin Hood was a rather shabby one.

In the late 1860's D. McCormack, who later selected land at Northwood, was employed as keeper of the toll gate for the Goulburn bridge. Two bushrangers bailed up McCormack's wife and ransacked the house, missing however a considerable sum which had been well hidden. At this same period Sergeant Deasey of Seymour, after an exciting chase, captured a bushranger on Sunday Creek station.

Dan Morgan who met his end in the north-east never seems to have had an apologist; he was thoroughly unsavoury to the end, and one day in April 1865, when his head passed through Seymour in a box under escort, the good people of the township were undoubtedly glad that they had not received an earlier visit from him when all in one piece. But that ghastly box still remained in the memory of some in Seymour well into the twentieth century.

In the early 1870's, the declining years of the bushranging era, the Seymour branch of the Bank of Victoria, managed by Merson, was robbed. The individuals concerned, one bearing the name of Sailor Jack, could hardly be classified as genuine bushrangers, and they were caught soon after at Wood's inn at Northwood. However it was a particularly impudent piece of work and quite possibly inspired by the doings of bushrangers. The robbers had decamped with £650, having perpetrated what still remains the most spectacular robbery in Seymour's story.

The Kelly country stretches away to the north-east and east from the shire, and part of the boyhood of the last and most famous of all the bushrangers, the man who caused the saying "as game as Ned Kelly" to become a common Australian expression, was spent at Avenel.

John ("Red") Kelly arrived in Avenel from Beveridge with his family between 1860 and 1864 and rented a dairy farm from Elizabeth Mutton, widow of an early Avenel resident. Ned was then five to nine years old and at least the youngest child of the family was born after the move. Ned and a sister attended school in the village. At one time, probably later when passing through Avenel, Ned rescued Richard Shelton from drowning in Hughes Creek. After the death of the father at the end of 1866, the family moved to Greta near Benalla in 1867. M. Kelly, an early Avenel selector, was no connection of this family.

The circumstances of the Kellys' initiation to bushranging and their careers afterwards, except for an odd incident or two, are not within the scope of a history of the district, for the gang did not make any important invasion of the shire. Controversy has always raged over the Kelly story and it is remarkable that even in the case of such a straightforward and comparatively unimportant incident as the hold-up of Gloster, there are handed down varying and divergent accounts of what happened.

The following points however are indisputable. James Gloster, who as well as having a draper's shop in Seymour hawked goods through the region in a covered wagon, was held up by the Kellys at Younghusband's Faithfull Creek station one evening in early December 1878. He arrived there to make camp, naturally ignorant of the fact that the homestead was in the Kellys' hands. The bailing-up was accompanied by some form of dialogue more or less dramatic. The outlaws helped themselves to new clothes from Gloster's stock next day and enlisted the services of Gloster's assistant, Beecroft, when Ned drove Gloster's van into Euroa. Dan drove a spring cart confiscated from passers-by and Steve Hart rode a station horse. They then carried out the daring hold-up of the National Bank in Euroa and on their return to the station presented Beecroft with £2.

Gloster appears to have been a connoisseur of bushrangers as, on another earlier occasion, he had two brushes with highway robbers in the course of one day not far from Seymour. In the second of these he received a charge of shot in the shoulder.

Returning to the Kellys, members of the Victoria Artillery Corps were stationed at both Avenel and Seymour in 1879, apparently as additional protection for these townships.

A photograph has appeared in more than one publication in recent years which shows the body of Joe Byrne, fourth member of the gang, publicly exposed after the dramatic dissolution of the gang at Glenrowan. In the background is a solid-looking building

with a high window apparently barred, and the letterpress states that Seymour is the place where this occurred. Although Seymour has a number of buildings that predate 1880, there is none still standing in the old part of the town which tallies with the one shown in the photograph, and there is no tradition handed down of such an event having occurred in Seymour. Furthermore, the Seymour lock-up has never been of brick construction. On the other hand, Byrne's body was so exposed outside the Benalla lock-up for the benefit of photographers and then was later buried at Benalla.

During the siege of the Glenrowan Hotel the somewhat fantastic idea of obtaining a field gun to shoot down the hotel was conceived, and it was arranged for a 12-pounder Armstrong gun, with members of the garrison artillery to man it, to be sent by special train from Melbourne. News of the result of the Glenrowan "battle" caused the special train to be stopped at Seymour and sent back. That train was itself a symbol of all the advanced communications which made it impossible in the future for bushrangers to remain "out".
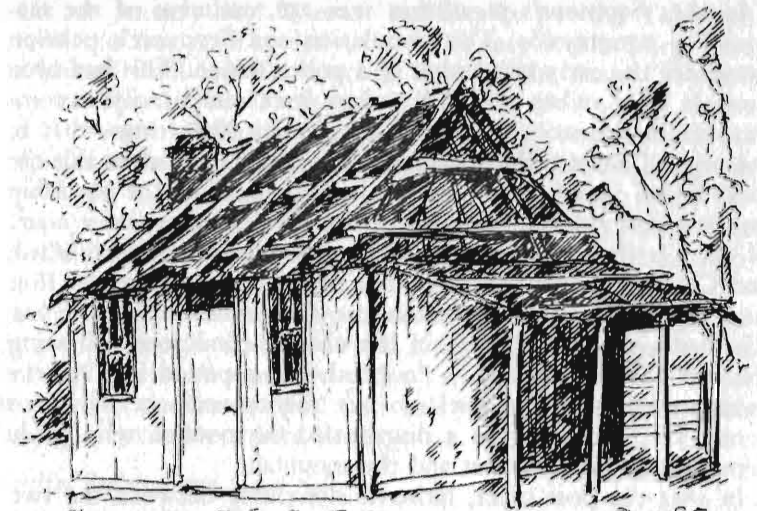
A REPLICA OF
THE FIRST KELLY HOMESTEAD

motor vehicle and in the 1950's there have been several instances in the district of the manure being spread by aeroplane.

In the first period and down to early in this century, much of the fencing was of the chock-and-log, post-and-rail, or brushwood variety. The bushfire of January 1905, probably the worst example for this district of the land-holders' chief summer hazard, could be said to have ended the chock-and-log era, although the rabbits' use of this type of fence as a shelter had already caused it to be abandoned in various parts.

Free selection in these districts started only a little before the coming of the railway in 1872 and this considerably helped the settlers in the struggling years when they were first gaining a foothold. Bullocks were used for transport both on a property itself and to the town. Horses were introduced for transportation purposes to some extent in the closing years of the nineteenth century, but in the hilly areas of Kobyboyn bullocks were indispensable for a long time.

With the many changes that have occurred from the period of the First World War onward, especially in the matter of communication, and with the many modern conveniences of life within reasonable reach for the majority, most of the features that belonged to the pioneering days and that lingered on long after the initial years of selection, may be fairly said to have passed by the end of that war.

The telephone was introduced in the years just prior to the First World War as far as Fernside and Habbies Howe, but it was not till after the war that it was connected to most holdings. Motor transport of any real significance in the life of the area was to develop in the 1920's. The automobile and improved roads have meant that many of the small centres which, within a comparatively small radius, would comprise a hall, a church or two, a school and possibly a small inn, shanty or store including the post office, have decayed and disappeared. Worrough and Kobyboyn have had such an experience. The Whitehead's Creek school served sections of Worrough and the first schoolteacher was W. Crawford, a North of Ireland character. At this time there were as many as seventy children in attendance. Lightfoot followed Crawford in 1890 and was an example of the old type of teacher whose teaching ability and whose strength of muscle were both remembered with respect by his boys sixty and more years later. Among those who came after him were Bainbridge and W. E. Cass. Cass fought in the Boer War and rose to the rank of brigadier in the First World War. After the beginning of this

century, school numbers had fallen to forty, a decline that illustrates the tendency towards a smaller rural population with the amalgamation of farms, as well as the changing social fashion in size of families. The school finally closed during the Second World War and children are now brought by school bus to Seymour. Another school existing until about the same time was situated near Bungleboori Estate on Hughes Creek.

The Presbyterian Church about six miles from Seymour on the Highlands Road dated from the beginning of the century, while the Roman Catholic Church at Kobyboyn occupied a site still known as Chapel Hill on the Fernside Estate. Both these churches were served from Seymour.

In the early part of this present century the hall on the Highlands Road was the venue for dances at the period of the full moon, and for boxing, skating and general meetings. Football, cricket and tennis teams were also maintained by the district. About a mile from the hall were a store, wine shop (Pout's) and post office. Martin's wine shop was located at Kobyboyn and Maher's hotel was between Habbies Howe and Fernside.

But the motor age has meant all have disappeared.

Some features of the story of the country scene are common to all sections of the shire, and will not be repeated in the following descriptions of the other districts.

Avenel, Tarcomb, Mangalore

The first Avenel farmlands were several blocks sold by the Crown in the early 1850's. These were on both sides of Hughes Creek downstream from the town for about two miles, and buyers included L. Jones of Avenel station, John Burrows, W. H. Mutton, Frederick Ruffy, J. G. C. Wilmot (the Government Surveyor), Richard Shelton, James Cross, J. and E. Bignell, J. Hilet and W. Norris. One of Mutton's blocks, stretching southward of the western end of the present "new" town and almost reaching the creek, was the small holding of 40 acres leased by John Kelly, father of Ned Kelly. The Jones blocks farther to the west and mainly on the other side of the creek were later sold to Phillip and John Morgan, who were involved in incidents and quarrels with the Kelly family which form part of the Kelly story. Later the Morgans also selected land to the north of the town. Wilmot acquired his property on behalf of a member of his survey party, J. Vearing, to whom the land was actually transferred in 1859. This block and other nearby land selected later by J. Vearing are still held by his son, F. A. Vearing. Other descen-

dants have had land and business interests in Avenel down to the present.

Richard Shelton, with part of his family, arrived in Avenel about 1854, two sons coming a little later. He had arrived in Australia in 1849 and came from Adelaide via the goldfields to Avenel. The farmland which he obtained on Hughes Creek and on which one of the first brick farmhouses of the district was built is still in the hands of a descendant (Mrs. Z. Gee). Some of the Mutton and Ruffy property was bought by Richard's son Esau and is still held by a fourth-generation member of the Shelton family. Esau and his brother John obtained selections westward of Avenel and R. J. Shelton, son of Esau, selected to the south of the town. Sons of R. J. Shelton, Stanley, Esau and Richard, are present landowners of the district.

Selectors of the 1860's in the Avenel area included J. Gorman, P. Moroney, W. Donaldson, Solomon Rawson, Michael Kelly and W. Dudman. Michael Kelly's grandson, Patrick, formerly a manager in the Union Bank, bought back in 1945 part of the property that his grandfather and father had worked in the past. J. Ryan and H. Lorenz, a Danish dairy farmer, settled in the 1870's on the creek upstream from Avenel, while also dating from the 1870's the Ewing family have farmed in the area down to the present. Other early farmers included E. Plumer, M. Murphy, Lookers and Butterfield.

Mixed farming was carried out by most of the above-mentioned pioneers and cropping of wheat and oats on some farms continued down to the time of the Second World War. Dairying fell away during the present century when, in this area also, sheep for both wool and fat lambs grew in importance. The hilly country of Tarcomb to the east did not attract selectors at such an early date and some of the freehold of that district was not secured until a number of years of the present century had passed. Among the earlier land-holders were M. Tankard, E. L. Gleeson, D. Hourigan, P. J. Gleeson, A. C. Smith and M. Jeffrey.

Just to the north of Seymour towards Mangalore were four of the earliest farms in the shire which were sold by auction in 1855. The first of these lie on the west of the Goulburn Valley Highway about a mile from the junction with the Hume Highway. These were bought by T. Maguire, P. Tiernan, P. McNally and C. Maher. In the sixties F. Batten and C. Perron acquired land in this area along the river. A little to the north on the Mangalore run selectors began taking up land in 1862, among the first being George Coombes (employed by Jones on Avenel

station in the fifties), William and Richard Whitechurch (from Seymour), J. D. and G. Morison (from the old Tallarook sheep station) and John S. and Thomas F. Griffiths. Others who selected were David Spence (from Tallarook), W. Harris, Seymour blacksmith, Geo. Robinson (also an early holder of a Mangalore hotel), C. Guinness (manager of Forlonge's Mangalore run), William and Joseph Ferguson, Job Gerrard, J. Westerdale, Phillip Kelly and A. Doherty. In the seventies G. Helms, W. E. Lewis and F. J. Leete took up land while W. G. Milroy and G. Holloway came near the end of the century. R. W. Whitechurch's selection grew into the Poplar Vale property on which he built up an important stud of milking Shorthorns, well known in the earlier part of this century. The families of Coombes, Griffiths, Morison, Gerrard, Whitechurch and Helms still hold property in the district to the present day. Although only in the district since 1930, W. Sloper represents a very old Seymour family in this area.

Mangalore became and remained a very minor centre on the coming of the railway. The creation of the rail junction with the opening of the Goulburn Valley line in 1880 did not make any appreciable difference. The inevitable hotel, earlier Robinson's and later O'Connor's, appeared on the opposite side of the line from the present hotel. A small store and a school began to function. As early as 1863 a weatherboard Presbyterian Church was built, but services were later transferred to Avenel. A small township had been surveyed, but its form is not very apparent even today. Certainly, as with other districts in the horse and buggy days, it had more life then than at present. Athletic meetings and horse races were held there and the area supported a cricket team.

In 1929 a German of an inventive turn of mind and with a talent for high-powered salesmanship commenced an elaborate undertaking, on the site of the present defence storage area, to produce petrol from straw. The district as a whole remained sceptical and the traditional caution of a farming community was its defence, for the enterprise was a failure. At demonstrations in 1930 petrol was said to have been obtained—the formula remained a secret, although the fluid may have been some form of power alcohol such as was made in the Wimmera in the Second World War. Ferdinand Adolphus Nuske soon departed for distant fields, leaving machinery and memories behind.

During the Second World War stores of material were established close to this railway junction. Near by an enormous wheat store was also erected—never to be used and within a few years to be dismantled. Apparently the idea was that it should be fed

the Shire Hall was built in 1872 and occupied in January 1873. The contractors, Connell and Stewart, may have employed Lyster as builder or the building may have been erected under his supervision as shire engineer of the time.

On various occasions for a number of years, meetings lapsed for want of a quorum. The early work of the board was concerned with road and street formation and the construction of small bridges. As the years went by, the authority enlarged its activities under Local Government Acts, functioning as a typical shire. The change to the status of shire occurred in 1871, the first meeting as a Shire Council being held on 11th March with Esau Shelton as first president.

In October 1863 the crest which rests above the coat of arms of the Seymour family was adopted for the seal of the Road Board and this with the alteration of wording around the circumference was continued for the shire. In heraldic language it is described as "out of a ducal coronet or a phoenix of the last, issuing from flames".

Candidates for municipal honours gave speeches on shire affairs to a meeting of ratepayers and were subjected to a barrage of questioning. Accounts of these meetings show that they could have been almost as lively as the political meetings of those days, giving ratepayers a chance to vent their feelings and those, not so seriously inclined, to extract a considerable amount of entertainment. The council meetings could also at times be charged with tension although at other times outside critics levelled the charge of somnolence at the council. In fact the councillors down the years seem to have received a mead of mingled praise and blame which appears to be the usual reward of legislators, local or national.

No doubt it has played its normal and useful part in the development of the district and has been served by a number of citizens who held office for long terms, giving unselfish honorary service to community matters. A record or near record for membership of the Shire Council must be that of James Chittick Junior who was a councillor for over forty years, his connection, with a break of five years, extending from 1893 to 1939. Others serving for over thirty years have included A. Stewart, J. Morison, J. McCormack and W. D. Chisholm.

In 1928 with Chittick a moving spirit in the transaction, the Federal Hall was bought by the shire so that a site could be obtained in the centre of the area to which the bulk of the business of the town had long since shifted. After renovation the new

Shire Hall (or as after called, Town Hall) was opened by Sir William McPherson, the Premier of Victoria, in May 1929. Part of *The Merchant of Venice* presented by local performers was one of the main items of entertainment at this function.

Below is a list of the successive chairmen of the Road Board, followed after 1871 by the presidents of the shire:

T. C. Brooke	1863-64	E. H. Boddy	1910-11
J. D. Morison	1864-65	J. Morison	1911-12
C. Perron	1865-67	C. A. McKenzie	1912-13
J. D. Morison	1867-70	Geo. Howe	1913-14
E. Shelton	1870-72	J. Chittick	1914-16
C. Perron	1872-73	J. Morison	1916-17
E. Shelton	1873-74	H. Wallis	1917-18
Michael Hickey	1874-75	J. McCormack	1918-19
Henry Bolton	1875-76	Thos. Tehan	1919-20
Michael Hickey	1876-77	A. C. Smith	1920-21
E. Shelton	1877-78	H. A. McKenzie	1921-22
C. Perron	1878-79	J. Howe	1922-23
Michael D. Ryan	1879-80	J. Chittick	1923-24
John Guild	1880-81	J. Morison	1924-25
Michael D. Ryan	1881-82	W. D. Chisholm	1925-26
George Woods	1882-83	T. Tehan	1926-28
J. D. Morison	1883-84	J. Morison	1928-29
Michael Ryan	1884-85	G. W. McAlister	1929-30
G. C. Coombs	1885-86	A. J. Coyne	1930-31
P. Dockery	1886-87	J. Chittick	1931-32
John Guild	1887-88	H. Sidebottom	1932-33
C. E. Wallder	1888-89	F. B. Halpin	1933-34
P. Dockery	1889-90	A. J. Coyne	1934-35
W. H. Tristan	1890-91	T. Tehan	1935-36
C. E. Wallder	1891-92	A. C. Smith	1936-37
S. Ferris	1892-93	H. McP. Austin	1937-38
E. Kennedy	1893-94	T. Tehan	1938-39
John Carnie	1894-95	W. G. O'Shea	1939-41
William Donaldson	1895-96	W. D. Chisholm	1941-42
Colin A. McKenzie	1896-97	H. E. Bailey	1942-43
James McCormack	1897-98	H. E. Whiteman	1943-45
J. Chittick	1898-99	J. H. Roberts	1945-46
J. Morison	1899-1900	J. Seymour	1946-47
Alexander Stewart	1900-01	W. G. O'Shea	1947-48
Geo. Howe	1901-02	F. A. Vearing	1948-49
J. Chittick	1902-03	W. D. Chisholm	1949-50
P. J. Gleeson	1903-04	W. R. McIntosh	1950-52
H. Wallis	1904-05	C. H. Helms	1952-53
E. Kennedy	1905-06	F. H. Wallis	1953-54
T. Howard	1906-07	E. C. L. Head	1954-55
T. H. Bayley	1907-08	A. Smith	1955-56
J. Wall	1908-09	S. C. Shelton	1956-57
J. McCormack	1909-10	M. E. Coughlin	1957-*

*1957-1958

In 1850 the township was surveyed by Thomas Wedge and town lots were marked out on both sides of the creek. The first survey extended east-west from Jones Street to Crighton Street and north-south from Watson Street to a Barton Street. However, as many blocks on the south were bought by Lloyd Jones and absorbed in the Avenel run, the township only developed to Ash Street, the one street south of the Sydney Road, which on the west of the creek was called Henry Street and on the east, Mitchell Street.

First sales of town allotments were held in Melbourne in May 1851. These were lots on the Sydney side of the creek just north and south of the Sydney Road and the following were the buyers: J. Bignell 10 roods, S. Benjamin 4 roods, J. Smith 4 roods, H. Smythe, C. Williamson, J. Anderson, W. H. Mutton, J. Burrows, L. Jenkins, J. McDermott, D. Benjamin and H. Lewis 2 roods each. This total of 9 acres sold for £491 10s. Later on in the year some of the allotments on the other side of the creek were also adver-tised for sale.

Lands Department records show that most of the original buyers were residing in Melbourne in 1851, but H. Lewis was living at Avenel and J. McDermott at Hughes Creek. A family tradition asserts that W. Mutton moved from Seymour to Avenel in 1849. But Mutton's place of residence when he bought his land in 1851 is given as Goulburn (presumably Goulburn River). He established a smithy on the Sydney side of the creek a little south of the Sydney Road and he was followed by a carrier, John Burrows, who also had resided at Seymour.

Bignell lost no time in erecting a hotel, the Avenel Arms, on his block on the Sydney Road, just to the east of the creek. This hotel was later occupied by Andrew Linton in 1860 and then by Edward Sherman and by 1866 was in the hands of George Stewart, by whom it was re-named the Commercial. When the railway arrived in 1872 and an exodus to the north occurred, the building ceased to be a hotel, but long after, with the revival of traffic on the Sydney Road in this century, it returned to its original status. Remodelled, it is now the Imperial Hotel, owned for many years by T. Bolton. The Avenel Arms had been the coaching house of the early years.

A second hotel, the Royal Mail, on the Melbourne side of the creek, was built by J. Hilet. Belonging for a time to F. Ruffy, it was later acquired by Esau Shelton and owned by the Shelton family until it closed in 1903. The old building still exists as a private home, easily recognizable on the right-hand side as the Avenel bridge is approached from Seymour. Esau Shelton, son of

Richard Shelton, referred to in Chapter 9, was yet another example of the successful carrier who turned his attention to a mixture of commerce and agriculture—in this case the combined occupa-tions of hotel and store keeping plus an interest in the land. A very early weatherboard store and butcher's shop which stood almost opposite the Royal Mail was owned by Ruffy and run by the Shelton family.

In 1854 a court of petty sessions was established in the village and at the same time a lock-up for the accommodation of erring individuals was in existence.

Residents of the 1850's included J. Hilet, William Norris, R. Ward, Joseph Reeder, James Smith, William Austin (shoemaker) and Solomon Rawson, the last-named being an early Avenel policeman, who turned later to business in the town and then to farming near by. Hilet was something of a contractor, as he com-pleted the building of the first court house and police barracks in 1856. The Avenel agent for the *Kilmore Examiner* in 1856 was William Norris, M.D., and it would thus appear that Norris may have been Avenel's first doctor. As some of the doctors of the 1850's also maintained an "apothecary's hall", Dr. Norris in the role of a newsagent and in fact a storekeeper as well is not as strange as at first appears.

The greatly increased traffic of the 1850's required something better than the old wooden bridge, and a fine stone bridge was built in the late 1850's. A tradition gives the date 1856-57 as the time of building, but work was apparently still being done on it in 1859 and a description at the end of 1860 tells of "the new bridge" which had only one fault—it was too narrow. He who today admires the venerable structure would still agree with the description of long ago. A toll house was erected between the Royal Mail Inn and the bridge at the end of 1860 and this was leased for some time by Patrick Hanna.

Almost all who left recorded impressions of the locality in the 1840's, 1850's and 1860's speak of the picturesque nature of the little village centred on the highway crossing of the creek. In 1860 it is described as "rather pleasantly situated" and also as consisting of a "few scattered houses on either side of the road". In that period the road from Seymour approached the bridge more directly from the south than it does today, keeping to the east of Lookout and Fair View Hills instead of to the west as at present.

Also from 1860 comes the account of a Boxing Day race meet-ing. Officials included John Smith judge, J. Hilet starter, T. Vear-ing clerk of the course and Linton, Norris, Bignell and Bruce,

stewards. The main race of the day was easily won by J. Hilet's Zango, very possibly the renowned animal described elsewhere as owned at one time by the Darcys of Marengo.

The Avenel of 1864 can be reconstructed with reasonable certitude. There were just over thirty separate residences and shops within the township area. Some of these had additional sheds and stables near by and it must be remembered that, at that time, the kitchen was frequently detached from the dwelling. Just half of the Avenel dwellings were described as slab huts or slab houses. Seven were brick and the rest are described as either bark or paling. There was also Shelton's weatherboard store.

Some of the following residents of 1864 hitherto not recorded in this chapter may well have dated from the 1850's. Benjamin Organ was a saddler, John Davis a shoemaker, John Norton (sometimes spelt Naughton) and James Elder were both blacksmiths and Samuel Fenton and George Sugden were apparently partners in a grocery, butchery and bakery business conducted in a brick shop owned by William Norris. William Campion had a store in a slab shop on the highway on the eastern side of the town. He was also an early postmaster, newsagent and registrar of births and deaths. Later he erected a stone building and in 1873 was also conducting an inn which was advertised simply as "Campion's Hotel".

When the railway came through, opening in 1872, it cut across the extreme north-west corner of the old township reserve and the station was located just beyond the northern boundary. It would appear that part of the original racecourse reserve was cut up for new township blocks adjoining the station and Bank Street. It was here a new township developed after the railway opened for traffic. From this year till 1880 Avenel experienced a boom, as much of the wheat of the Goulburn Valley was carted to the Avenel railway station for rail transportation to the city. In 1880 came the opening of the Goulburn Valley line which joined the north-eastern line at Mangalore and Avenel then became a much quieter town.

During the seventies three brickyards were working in the town. T. P. Batey, who also did threshing work in the district, built a two-storied flour mill, later run by J. Pratt. This mill was close to the creek between the old and new towns. Its fate was that which seems to have overtaken a number of country flour mills—it was burnt down.

In either the late 1860's or the beginning of the 1870's William B. Gadd arrived in the town to engage in wheat buying and to

found the general store carried on by his son and now by his grandson, both of these being C. T. Gadd. Another businessman coming at the opening of the railway was S. Tonkin, who opened as a saddler in Bank Street and then conducted a store beside Gadd's, remaining till 1914. He was succeeded by R. Neveau and then by E. Holloway who stayed till the building was burnt down, and who then transferred to a delicensed hotel (the Harvest Home) across the railway line. C. and F. Vearing followed Holloway in this business.

On the advent of the railway Geo. Stewart of the Commercial Hotel hastened to shift to the station where he erected the Harvest Home. H. J. Mutton later held this for a time and its more recent history has just been outlined above. Farther along the street the Plough Inn was also established and this also was once in the hands of H. Mutton. E. Shelton also built a two-storied hotel, the Imperial, to which a store was attached, opposite to the Harvest Home, but did not give up the old Royal Mail. The Imperial building occupied by T. Bolton in the 1920's was later burnt down, but the name was transferred by Bolton in 1932 to the old building on the highway which had been Bignell's original hotel, and which was remodelled, although sections of the present building may go back to the original.

In 1873 a store and hotel were run by Plummer opposite to the former Bignell's hotel in which the Misses Davies were then running a ladies' seminary. William Hook was a later newsagent and his daughter in her turn carried on a newsagency until very recent years.

Until a little before the First World War various doctors lived in Avenel. Besides Norris, who was there in the fifties and early sixties, there were at various times Worthington (whose son taught in the Avenel school for a time), Gray, Butchart, Moss, Dobie and Lethbridge. However, with improved communications in this century, it became possible for the township to receive medical service from Nagambie and Seymour and doctors no longer continued to reside in Avenel.

Early services were held by visiting clergymen in homes and also in the court house. The Reverend J. Sabine of the Church of England resided at least part of his time in Avenel in the early 1860's and it appears certain that his services were held in the school, where possibly Methodist services were also originally held. The first church to be erected was the Methodist Church and this stood close to the creek a little south of the Sydney Road. A little later, in 1872 or 1873, the Anglican Church

NOTES ON VARIOUS RECORDS

A small manuscript history of Seymour exists in the Melbourne Public Library. It was compiled in 1922 by M. P. Kearney, head teacher of Seymour State School, and appears to have been mainly based on reminiscences of old residents then living. While of value for some aspects of the story of the town, it also illustrates the tricks which can be played by memory—at some points the memories appear to be those of elderly persons relating what they themselves had been told when young.

The souvenir history of Seymour published at the time of the town's centenary celebrations contains a number of statements which do not tally with contemporary records.

Victoria and Its Metropolis: Some of the biographical notes in this work need to be treated with considerable reserve. Careless publication and careless relating and recording of the facts in the first case may both be responsible. Rough calculations of time were probably all too common when some of the details were furnished to the publishers. To take just one example, the details concerning W. B. Gadd just do not tally with incontrovertible contemporary evidence. This evidence shows that W. B. Gadd was at Avenel earlier than is stated in *Victoria and Its Metropolis*.

Dealing with another Avenel resident, the name Vearing is given as Nearing. The statement under the name of J. Lyster that in approximately 1866 Seymour consisted of six houses and a police station is obvious rubbish.

A note on F. Clune's account of the Kelly family in Avenel as given in "The Kelly Hunters"

That section of *The Kelly Hunters* which deals with the Kelly family in Avenel is the concern of anyone studying the history of the shire. Mr. Clune states that J. Kelly moved to Avenel in 1860. However, John Kelly is not recorded as the lessee of Mutton property till 1864. If the assumption that Kelly arrived in Avenel in 1860 is based only on H. Mutton's statement in *Victoria and Its Metropolis* that he went to school with the Kellys for seven years, the case has a shaky foundation, as *Victoria and Its Metropolis* is not completely reliable (see above). In this case the "seven" might well have been "several".

Two of Ellen Kelly's children were born at Wallan in 1861 and 1862. Mr. Clune explains this by saying the mother went down to Wallan for their birth. It hardly seems likely that folk as poor as the Kellys would have undertaken what would have been arduous trips in the circumstances —especially as the services of a midwife were available in Avenel. It is a far more simple explanation that the two children were born before the transfer to Avenel took place. The exodus of the Quinns from Wallan on Mr. Clune's showing was in 1863-64. It would seem reasonable that the Kelly relatives may have migrated at about that same time.

The Mutton farm leased by Kelly is said to be two miles from Avenel. This was not so—it was close to the old township boundary and about a mile from the stone bridge and centre of the old town. It is now practically right against the "new" town.

The Morgans are called wealthy farmers, who held 700 acres. In 1863 they together held 483 acres and in 1865 150 acres each. In any case one is inclined to wonder how many of the farmers around Avenel in the selecting days could be described as wealthy, just as one may wonder how the Morgans in drought time came by the abundant grass mentioned in *The Kelly Hunters*.

R. J. Shelton, born 1858, was rescued when a boy by Ned Kelly, not when he was a man as stated in *The Kelly Hunters*.

James Smith and William Austin, two residents of Avenel, are said to be farmers. Perhaps they were, but in 1867 Austin had a shoemaker's shop on an allotment of one acre, a brick house and good garden, while Smith had a dwelling house, huts, shed and a very good garden on a township block. They were not recorded as holding land in the vicinity of the town.

Paddy Hanna is said to be the Avenel toll gate keeper. It is not impossible, but it is hardly likely to have been the Patrick Hanna who leased the Avenel toll gate, who built the Seymour bridge, and who was elected to Parliament in 1866. There is a difference between "leasing" and "keeping" a toll gate. This is of no importance to the broad sweep of Mr. Clune's story, but it is of importance to the historian of a locality, intent on making his picture as accurate as possible.

Finally, it might also be noted that, whether the Kellys passed through Seymour on their way to Avenel or not in 1860, the two hotels were then not the Royal and the Prince of Wales, but the Royal and Seymour hotels.

POPULATION OF THE SHIRE

1871	2,551	1921	3,806
1881	2,804	1933	4,012
1891	4,293	1947	4,470
1901	4,165	1954	11,596
1911	3,831	1956	12,080 (est.)

It will be noted that in 1947 the population was less than 200 more than it had been fifty-six years before in 1891, and for a considerable part of that period had been decreasing. Yet during that period there had been a steady increase in the town population of Seymour. This vividly illustrates the decline in rural population described in Chapter 9.

The spectacular increase from 1947 to 1954 is due to the development of military centres, particularly Puckapunyal, since the Second World War. More than 6,000 of the 1956 total can be considered of military origin and a considerable part of this number would comprise trainees. Thus this total would be liable to somewhat violent fluctuation.

OTHER SEYMOURS

Seymour has been popular as a place name in U.S.A., as towns with such a name exist in four states—Connecticut, Indiana, Texas and Wisconsin. Another Seymour is situated in South Africa and still another on the east coast of Tasmania.

Of these, the Seymour of Connecticut is probably the oldest, first white settlement of the area occurring in 1678. This town went by two other names before acquiring that of Seymour in 1850.

PRESENT BUSINESS HOUSES WITHIN THE SHIRE

Below is a list of business houses of the shire in existence in 1957:

Seymour

Bakers
    H. J. Constable, Station Street
    W. L. Williams, Station Street
Blacksmith
    C. W. Beel, Tallarook Street

master of the school which was attended by forty-one children.*
This church school lasted until the late 1920's.

The Church of England dates from the end of 1884, W. F.
Johnstone, a lay reader, being a moving force in securing its
erection.

Before galvanized tanks were installed, Tallarook folk dug
out springs in the gravel of Dabyminga Creek and carted the water
up in buckets. These springs gave out and a well was put down
close to the Church of England. A hand pump was installed and
this became naturally a meeting place after the manner of an old
English village. An old Englishman, Pye, had a well, the water of
which he used to manufacture the Tallarook supply of soft
drinks.

The Mechanics' Institute and Library dates from 1890-91, even
though it bears the date of 1887. At one stage of the repainting of
the hall the painters had gone over the old date and had then for-
gotten what it was. In the easy-going Australian fashion 1887 was
painted up as being about as close to the date as anyone involved
in the incident could remember.

As far as cricket and racing are concerned, early sport in Talla-
rook has been noticed elsewhere. Racing continued till about
1901, the course being at first to the south beside the Melbourne
Road and then westward from the township. Sports meetings
were held regularly for many years until shortly after the Second
World War. Tallarook's strength was in football in the early
1890's when it was premier team of its association for six years
running. At this time, a group of Kennedys made up a consider-
able proportion of the team. Construction of a swimming pool
for the township was carried out in 1957.

Small as the village of Tallarook is, its fame has spread, for its
name lent itself to the catch phrase that became very popular prior
to World War II, and in that war young Australians in all sorts
of out-of-the-way parts of the world told each other, when things
were not just plain sailing, that "things were crook at Tallarook".
Since then the phrase has been used as the theme for one of J.
O'Hagan's songs.

* Details of the school mentioned are from Catholic Church records. It
must be recorded also that Education Department records show that Talla-
rook School No. 745 (and thus apparently a Common School) was opened
on 6th April 1864 under the control of Michael Grennan; that this school
closed on 31st December 1874 and that on 1st January 1875 Tallarook School
No. 1488 opened with Michael Cussen as head teacher. The change at the
end of 1874 appears to be a renumbering of the school—perhaps some other
change was also made then.

CONCLUSION

THE first industry of the area, the pastoral, still remains the
prime undertaking, changed though it is in technique, and
over the years the nature of the life of the district has been
modified by the needs of war, as well as by the shire's position
athwart national lines of communication—communication that has
changed tremendously in form since the early days.

Having now surveyed the life of the shire over a period of
more than a century, the end is approached with a sense that the
picture is still incomplete. The story of the past unfolds to merge
with the story of the future. There is also the realization that the
whole story is composed of the unrecorded lives and work of all
those who have sojourned within its boundaries and of the inci-
dents, past beyond recall, which nevertheless have left their
influence and which have helped to shape some small part of the
present. Knowledge of these would have explained what it has
been necessary to leave unexplained and would have led to a
fuller interpretation of the area.

With these shortcomings acknowledged, here in these pages is
offered a story of the New Crossing Place and environs from the
time when the white man first brought in his flocks and herds,
slowly and painfully shaping his environment to suit his purpose.
He sprinkled his names and those of the dispossessed black man
over the sleeping land—Stoney Creek, Daniel's Swamp, Wagg's
Range, Mount Stewart, Bald Cone, Meadows Hill, Cherry Tree
Range, Tallarook, Wild Dog Gully, Bungleboorie, Maher's
Lagoon, Puckapunyal, Callans Range, Kong Meng Hill, Crotty's
Knob, Lambing Gully, Charlie's Hill, Dolly's Brae, Kobyboyn,
Bunding Creek, Sheep-Wash Creek and Wicket Hill.

Here, on the hills and by the creeks, on the flats and in the
gullies, in the open paddocks and in the scrub and timber, the
seasons with their blossoms have pursued their eternal round.
They have brought their winds, their frosts and snow, their heat
and dust and their rains and their droughts, all to play a part in
forming the problems which the Australians of the area have faced
and fought to overcome. From the rude life and heroic efforts of
the pioneers, and from the long years of toil of the generation
immediately following, has come the productive region of today
with the amenities now available, and with the many gracious
homes of both town and countryside.

Behind the present lies the past which has been recorded in these pages—a past which has set no mean standard; ahead is the future, and in spite of the fact that it will be a future in a most uncertain world, the people of the country, of which Seymour Shire is a fragment, have long formed the habit of looking to an even better future ahead and of taking steps to ensure that the dream will become a reality.

OLD TOWN HALL

APPENDIX

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