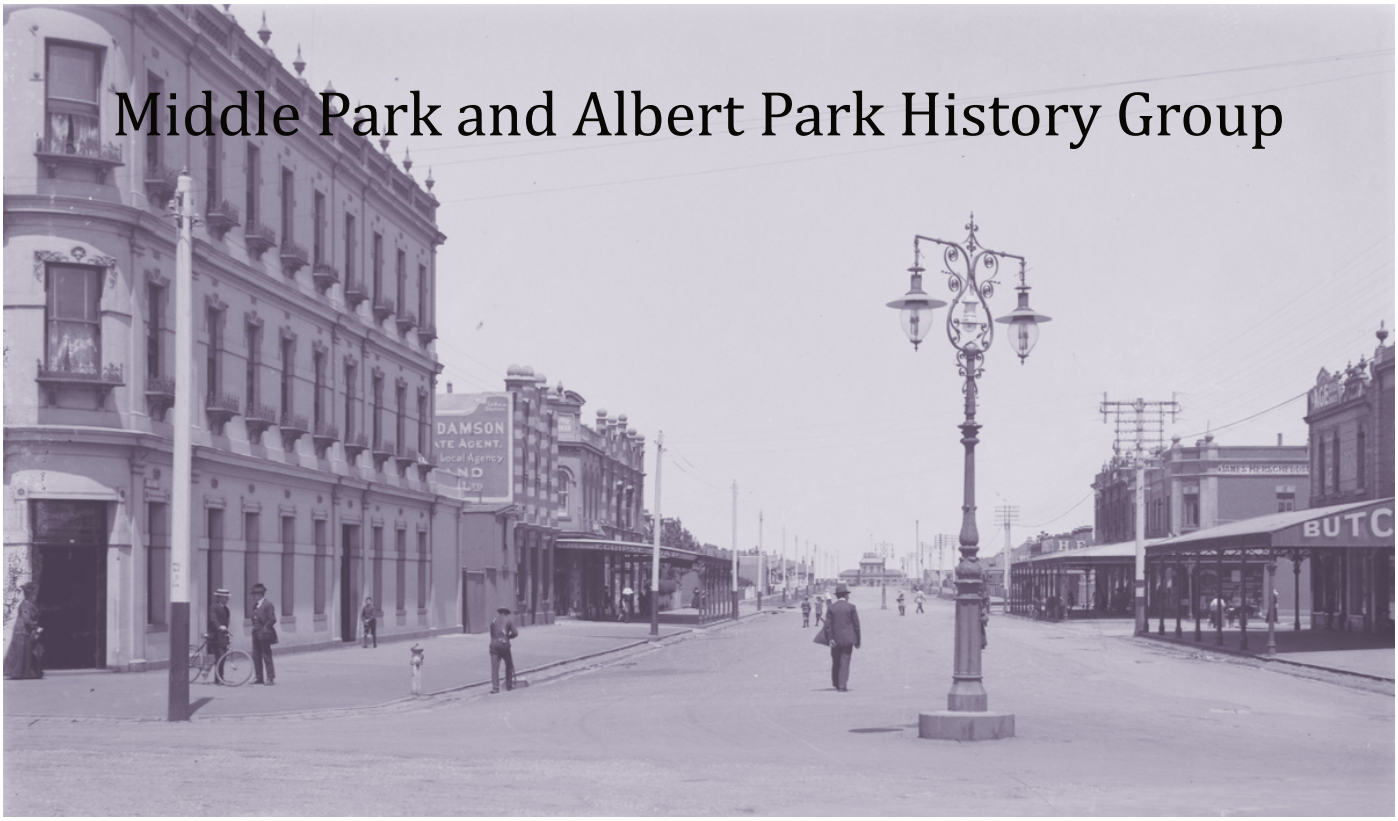
Middle Park and Albert Park History Group



Editorial

The AGM of our group takes place on Tuesday (note the day!) at Tobruk House (note the change of venue for just this meeting) 10 November. The Annual report by our president Meyer Eidelsen is included in this newsletter. I encourage readers to nominate for the committee. Our newsletter includes the usual article about what was happening 100 years ago by Sonya Cameron. And an essay on the Morris dairies by Nadia Wright provides details about milk supplies in the past that many of us can remember. MPAPHG has been contacted by Debbie Symons, Arts and Heritage Programming & Engagement Officer about Cultural Heritage Reference Group. The expression of interest webpage and application form to join the **Cultural Heritage Reference Group** are now open. If you have an interest in local history, heritage conservation, architecture, First Peoples heritage or community storytelling. Contact the City of Port Phillip. Applications close 21 November 2026.

As the newspaper article on the right notes, some retailers can not be trusted.

Gary Poore

MEAT SOLD AT EXCESSIVE PRICES

Albert Park Butcher Given Gaol Sentence

William John Bourke, wholesale butcher, of Withers st, Albert Park, was sentenced to three months' imprisonment on each of eight charges under the Blackmarketing Act in the Fourth District Court yesterday.

Mr Stapleton, PM, who found Bourke guilty of having sold meat at prices exceeding those fixed by Prices Regulations, ordered that Bourke's sentences should be concurrent, and that after he had served seven days' gaol he should be released on a bond of £200 to be of good behaviour for two years.

Notice of appeal was given.

MIDDLE PARK AND ALBERT PARK HISTORY GROUP Inc. PO Box 5276, Middle Park 3206

Email: middleparkhistorygroup@gmail.com
Website: http://middleparkandalbertparkhistory.org.au/
Newsletter editor : Gary Poore

The Middle Park and Albert Park History Group
Supported by The City of Port Phillip

President's Report

Executive Committee 2025/2026 The Executive Committee has six committee members: Sonya Cameron, Abramo Ierardo, Meyer Eidelson, Gary Poore, Nadia Wright and Jennifer Cass. We thank the committee members for their hard work and enthusiasm commitments throughout 2025/2026. We thank Sue Joyner, who resigned from the Committee in March 2026, for her contributions.

Treasurers Report 2025/2026 The Middle Park History Group finished the 2025/2026 financial year with a surplus. The balance of both accounts totaled $25, 424.11 We thank our treasurer Sonya Cameron for overseeing our income and expenses amongst her many other contributions including the publications committee and regular articles to the newsletter. Sonya has also circulated a separate financial report.

Membership We have 89 current members as at the end of the 2026 financial year.

Website Middle Park and Albert Park History Group's website informs and resources our members, community groups and the general public. It includes information on our activities, publications, newsletters, images, events, membership, oral histories and the heritage of homes. We thank our webmaster Abramo Ierardo for his ongoing efforts on our website:
www.middleparkandalbertparkhistory.org.au

YourHome@3206Project In 2026 our society was proud to publicly launch our project YourHome@3206 on Tuesday 22 September at the Emerald Hill Library. We are continuing to add Albert Park information (including occupier data) and images to YourHome. Users can access historic images of their homes from two separate eras as well as information on approximately 3000 homes in Middle Park. The public can also submit their own information and images. This website project continues to add considerable data collection and input ably managed by Sonia Cameron, Nadia Wright and Abramo Ierardo. We have submitted our project for consideration to the annual Community History Awards sponsored by the RHSV and the Public Record Office of Victoria.

Monster Petition Project MPAPHG has initiated a joint project with Port Melbourne Historical and Preservation Society, the St Kilda Historical Society and the City of Port Phillip Heritage Centre to utilise the 1891 Monster petition database of petition signatories to create community projects such as walks, exhibitions and workshops.

MPAPHG History Award Competition Project MPAPHG is currently designing a history competition to involve members of the public and school communities to contribute essays that contribute to local heritage.

Publication Projects 2025/2026 Sales of our five publications continue with support from outlets including The Avenue Bookstore in Albert Park and Victor's Drycleaning in Armstrong Street. The research in our books has provided valuable material for heritage walks in the Albert Park area including for the CoPP Walks Program and Open House Melbourne. We are currently working towards publishing two walking guides, namely a walking guide to the Bridport Street shopping centre and a walking guide to Art Deco apartments of Middle Park.

MPAPHG Newsletters 2025/2026 Four issues of the MPAPHG newsletter were published in the 2025/2026 financial year, again under the editorial leadership of Gary Poore who actively encourages all members to contribute. Stories in these newsletters remain permanently on the historical record as they are uploaded by our webmaster for public access on our website and they are also uploaded to the National Library of Australia. It is a significant workload to produce our newsletters and we thank Gary for his continued and skilled contribution. We also thank all the contributors.

Primary School Partnership Project 2025/2026 Our partnership with Middle Park Primary School which enable us to meet there continues. Currently there are renovations at the school and MPAPHG is meeting at the Carmelite Centre.

Annual COPP Funding Deed 2025/2026 We are fortunate to have an ongoing service agreement with the City of Port Phillip which supports us by providing annual funds of approximately $4510 to deliver history services for the Middle Park and Albert Park community e.g. projects, newsletters, speakers, research enquiries, webpage, publications, partnerships etc. We have successfully negotiated a renewed funding deed for 2026-2027. Our thanks to the City of Port Phillip.

General Meetings 2025/2026 We continue to hold at least four general meeting with speakers every year which are held at the Carmelite Hall. We thank our speakers for their impressive knowledge and contributions. Our meetings in 2025/2026 were well attended. Speakers included:

- A Century of Lunacy: Memories of Luna Park by Meyer Eidelson
- St Vincent's Boys Home Brass Band by Abramo Ierardo and Jenny Glare
- Interwar Flats of Middle Park and Albert Park by David Helms
- Op Shop Ladies : South Melbourne Community Chest by Annette Robinson and Gary Hutchens

Community Participation and Liaison MPAPHG participates in Port Phillip Council's Heritage Reference Committee. These have continued to be held in 2026. We also provided information by email informing our members of items and events of historic event and responded to any search enquiries from the public. We collaborate where we have material to contribute to Facebook site 'Growing up in Albert and Middle Park', a popular format for contribution memories, stories and enquiries. We have also responded and provide referrals to enquiries or concerns from residents about issues which may impact on heritage. MPAPHG is an affiliated member of The Royal Historical Society of Victoria. MPAPHG is a member of the Rats of Tobruk Association.

Meyer Eidelson
President, 2026

100 years ago

Sonya Cameron

PAVILION DESTROYED.

CRICKET RECORDS LOST.

Fire at South Melbourne.

A fused electric wire was responsible for the total destruction by fire of the members' pavilion at the South Melbourne Cricket-ground yesterday morning. The alarm was given at a quarter-past 10 o'clock by Mr. J. A. Boyd, who, when passing the ground in his motor-car, saw volumes of smoke suddenly rise from the stand. Although Mr. F. L. Morton, secretary of the South Melbourne Cricket Club, was working in his office beneath the pavilion at the time of the outbreak he was unaware of the occurrence until Mr. Boyd rushed into the office and gave the alarm. The pavilion was a wooden structure, and so quickly did the fire gain hold that Mr. Morton, assisted by Mr. Boyd, was able to save only a desk, part of a card index, and a chair before the fire had gained a complete hold. Detachments of firemen from South Melbourne and Eastern Hill arrived shortly after the alarm was given, and, under the direction of Mr. Harrie B. Lee (chief officer of the Fire Brigade), gained control over the flames in about a quarter of an hour. By this time the only portion of the building which remained standing was the northern end, where the secretary's office was situated. Most of the hoses were directed towards this portion of the building in order that valuable records of the early history of the club might be saved, but the pressure of the water was insufficient to carry the jets as far as the roof of the structure, and a pumping engine had to be used to obtain an auxiliary supply from the Albert Park Lake.

"I had no idea that anything had happened until several people raced towards the office crying 'Fire,'" said Mr. Morton, "and we attempted to save as much of the office property as we could. The greatest loss to the club has been that of a series of old photographs, most of them irreplaceable, of members of the South Melbourne Cricket Club who have become famous in the cricket world. Members have always looked with pride at pictures of such men as Frank Allan, J. Blackham, J. Farmer, W. Midwinter, H. Graham, H. and A. E. Trott, and Warwick Armstrong, and the most valuable photograph of all, which has gone, that of Jack Conway, who resigned his position as captain of the club to accept the position of manager of the first Australian Eleven to visit England in 1878."

Underneath the stand which was destroyed were, in addition to the secretary's office and committee-rooms, a bar, social clubroom, kitchen, cricket dressing-room, and locker-room of the Police Football Club, all of which were destroyed. The building was insured with the London and Lancashire Insurance Company for about £2,000, but the committee consider that the loss will amount to about £3,000. The furniture contained in the various rooms included a large table valued at £40, and a number of valuable chairs, and was not covered by insurance.

The members' pavilion was the oldest stand in the grounds, having been built about 38 years ago, and accommodated 750 people. Two early members of the club, Mr. Esquire Thackeray (vice-president) and Mr. R. Darlington, who have been members of the committee for more than 50 years, stood on the oval and watched the efforts of the firemen. "It is a pity to see the old place go," said Mr. Thackeray, "for it is the centre of the Cricket Club. I attended meetings in it in the 'seventies,' and it contained more history on its walls than any other building on the ground."

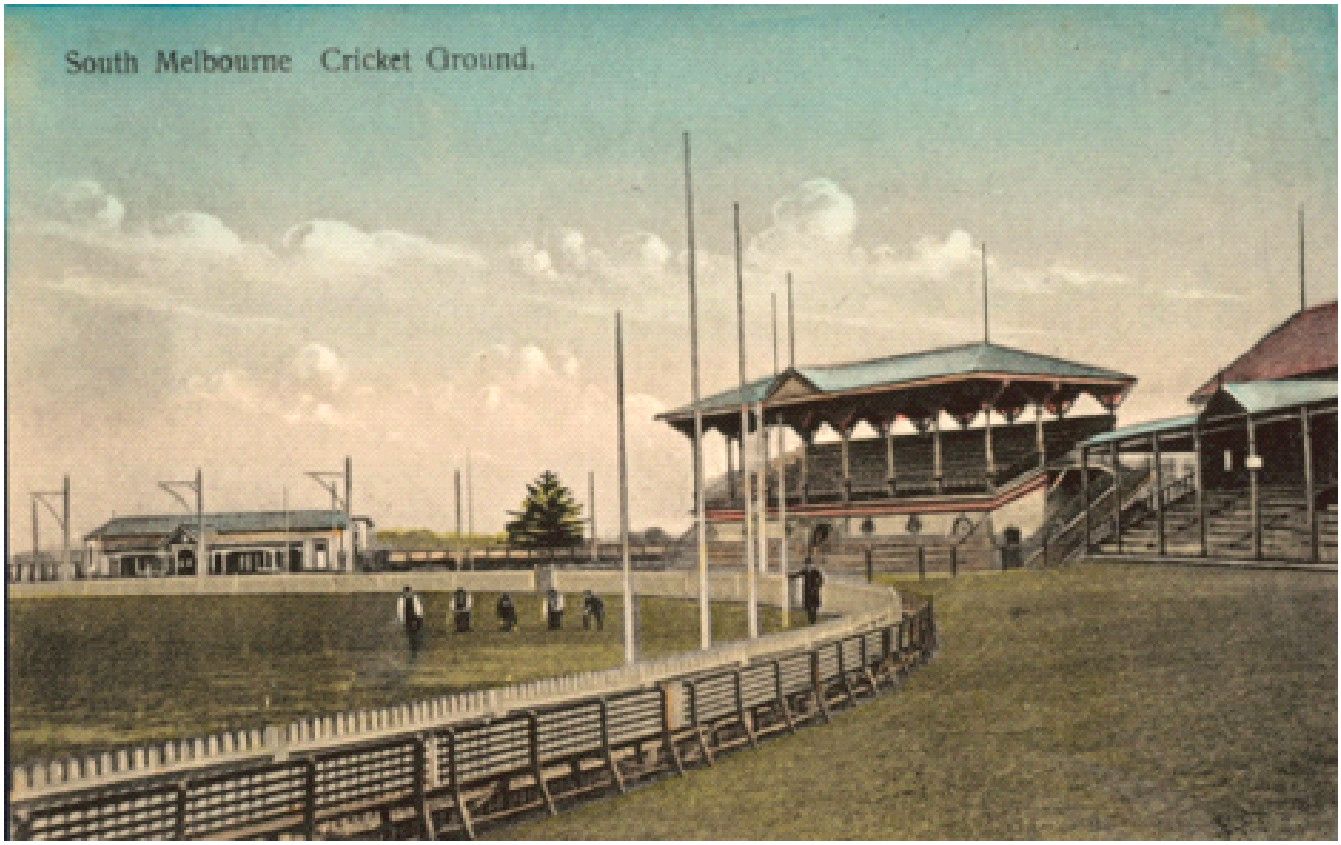
A police report of the fire is being prepared by Plain-clothes Constable F. W. Lockyer.

No dislocation of the League football matches will be caused by the fire, as the fixture against St. Kilda to-day will be played on the St. Kilda ground, and all the debris will be cleared before next Saturday, when the South Melbourne team will play against Carlton at South Melbourne.

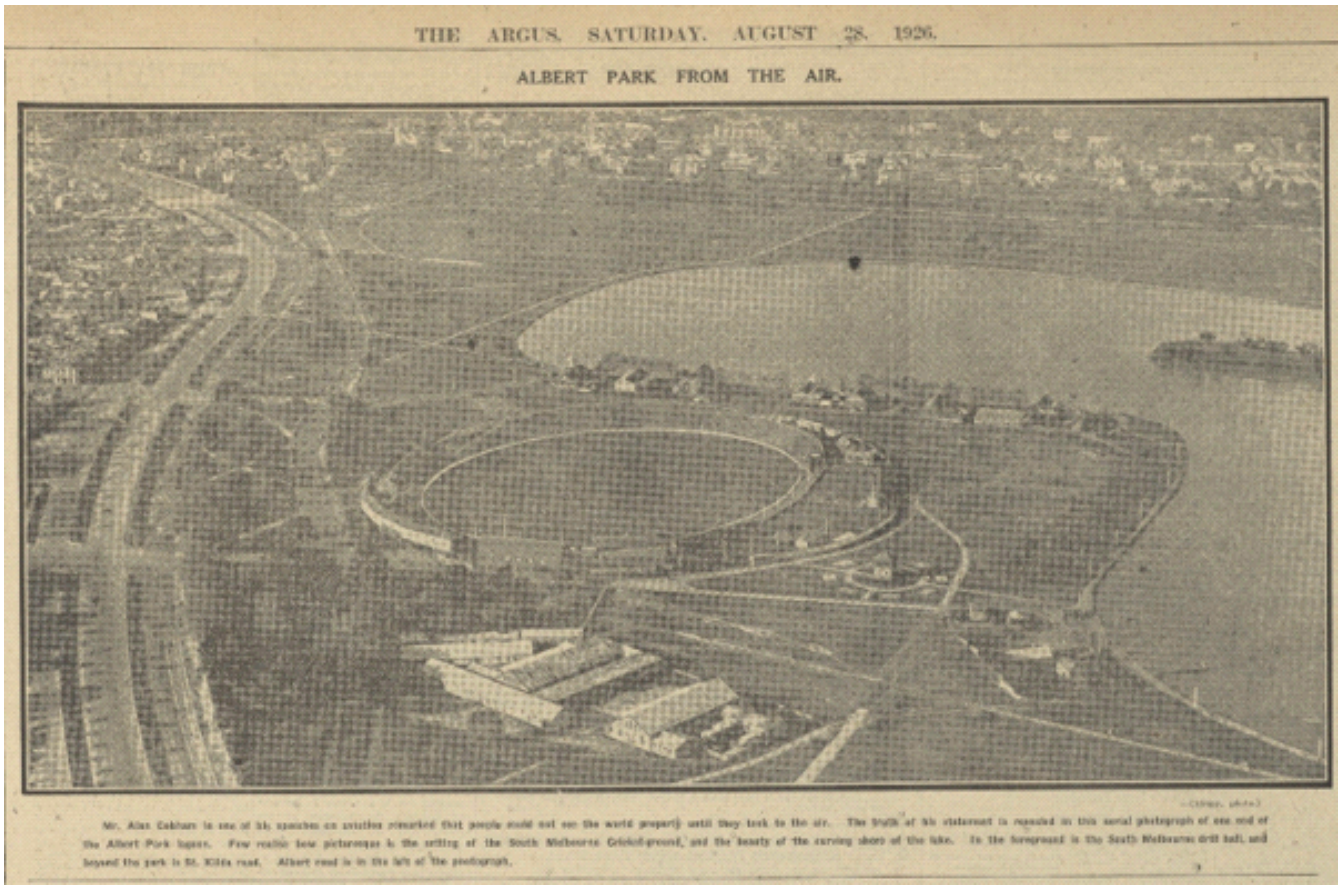
Trams Delayed.

Hoses lying across the tram-rails in the vicinity of the cricket-ground caused a stoppage of the electric trams running between the city and St. Kilda by way of South Melbourne. During the fire passengers were forced to alight at the corner of Moray street and Albert road and transfer to trams waiting at the opposite side of the intersection. Normal tram-running was restored shortly after 11 o'clock.

This wooden member's cricket pavilion was built in 1886 but burnt down on 13th August 1926. According to The Record (Emerald Hill), the pavilion was due to be demolished as it had become obsolete and inadequate and was soon to be replaced by a "modern, ornate and commodious structure". Following the fire, the South Melbourne Cricket and Football Clubs jointly commissioned a new grandstand built on the site of the old pavilion and to be completed by the end of 1926. It included seating for 1500 people, a bar, luncheon room, dressing rooms, committee room, training room, office and baths and showers. (People's Playground: a history of the Albert Park" by Jill Barnard and Jenny Keating)



South Melbourne Cricket Ground, c. 1908 (Image courtesy SLV)


THE ARGUS, SATURDAY, AUGUST 28, 1926.

ALBERT PARK FROM THE AIR.

Mr. Alan Cobham is one of his speeches on aviation remarked that people could not see the world properly until they took to the air. The truth of his statement is revealed in this aerial photograph of one end of the Albert Park lagoon. How realistic how picturesque is the setting of the South Melbourne Cricket-ground, and the beauty of the curving shore of the lake. In the foreground is the South Melbourne drill hall, and beyond the park is St. Kilda road. Albert road is on the left of the photograph.

The aerial image shows the remaining old grandstand following the fire, and an empty space to its right where the pavilion once stood.

Port Phillip Heritage Centre Update

Thea Guiry-Stewart and Nicole Hilder

Hello Middle Park and Albert Park history enthusiasts,

I trust you're all enjoying this lovely warm spring weather. Read on to see what we have been up to these past few months at the Port Phillip Heritage Centre.

On August 27th, we had the pleasure of hosting Let's Talk Treaty, an evening with First Peoples' Assembly of Victoria member Zoe Upton, and MC Uncle Charles Pakana who spoke on the decades-long journey to Treaty for Victoria. This was an impactful and eye-opening evening for our patrons, who can now access copies of the Yoorrook Justice Commission's final report Truth Be Told, at all our library branches.



First people's Assembly of Victoria members, Leroy Miller

I (Thea) was fortunate enough in early September to speak at the Public Libraries Victoria Conference on the Local History Panel. It was a fantastic opportunity to share our work at the Heritage Centre with librarians across the state. My focus was on active collecting through programming; highlighting the excellent submissions we received in our 2025 Photography Competition. The many thoughtful questions from the audience was a sure sign that local studies in libraries are alive and well.



2025 Family History Club Show and Tell

For Senior's Festival in early October, we hosted our annual Family History Club Show and Tell. This is the third show and tell event for the club and as expected, was an enriching and fascinating exercise. From hotel keys to family portraits, hair clips and more, each story was as interesting as the next. Our Family History Club is held on the first Thursday of every month at 1pm at the Heritage Centre for any family and local history fans.

And of course, on September 22nd we were fortunate enough to host the Middle Park and Albert Park History Group's launch event for the excellent online resource Your Home @ 3206. Attendees were eagerly following the demonstration and were sharing stories of their own houses and other wonderful buildings in Middle Park. A fantastic evening presented by Sonya Cameron and Abramo Ierado.



Thea (staff), Abramo and Sonya

The end of the year is fast approaching! Keep an eye on our website and the library newsletter to see what we are up to next.

Til next time,

Thea Guiry-Stewart and Nicole Hilder

Morris Bros: a dairying dynasty

Nadia Wright

From humble beginnings to a leading milk supplier in Albert Park, the firm of Morris Bros served the district and beyond for some 70 years.

The founders—James, Robert and William were born in Moliagul, central Victoria —three of the ten children of Benjamin and Elizabeth Morris.

By 1893 James, the eldest son, was living in South Melbourne and in 1896 was listed as a dairyman running the local branch of Mr Darbyshire's Gippsland Dairy Company at 86 Ferrars Street. However, the dairy was sold that year and James moved to Faussett Street running his own small dairy business. Pushing his little dandy (milk truck) along the streets, he vied for customers pouring milk from a large can into their jugs or billies. James soon expanded his business by buying out Charles Rigby's dairy at 166 Montague Street in 1898 and needed two two horses for his milk round. They were stabled in a narrow lane between Merton Street and Fausset Street.

Meanwhile, Robert had moved to South Melbourne and in 1898 was listed as a dairyman living at 9 Merton Street.

William, a qualified boilermaker, who had spent some years in mines at Kalgoorlie, settled nearby in about 1902. His expertise would lie in designing quality modern infrastructure for the firm.

The first indication that the brothers had joined forces was a small advertisement in *The Age* in February 1902 saying that Morris Bros wanted to regularly purchase about 114 litres of milk for daily deliveries. The following year Morris Bros made its debut in the Sands & McDougall directory being listed at 370 Montague Street with James as the senior partner.

James and Robert were staunch Labour supporters. In 1903 James was elected President of the Albert Park Labour Party while Robert was a committee member. Thus, it is no surprise that from the outset they paid their workers union wages and followed union requirements.

James later explained that theirs was a life's work. When they first started, each brother took 23 shillings a week for personal expenses and the rest went back into the firm for expansion and improvement. The firm was determined to 'give the best product regardless of price,' he emphasised.

They upgraded and extended their facilities making use of recent innovations in cooling and processing milk. Indeed, they were one of the first dairies to introduce pasteurisation, and use sealed bottles. In April 1910 the State Governor and his wife along with representatives of the Lady Talbot Milk Institute, which sourced its milk from Morris Bros, toured the premises. They admired the newly installed refrigeration plant run by an 8 hp gas engine and the non-absorbent granolithic flooring. The brothers detailed to their visitors how the milk was processed to the cleanest and highest of standards from its reception into the dairy to its despatch.

Later that year James and William hosted a highly successful social evening for their employees and their wives to celebrate the opening of the new stables at 380 Montague Street.

The dairy was now called Morris Bros Union Dairy or just the Union Dairy, reflecting their strong Labour principles.

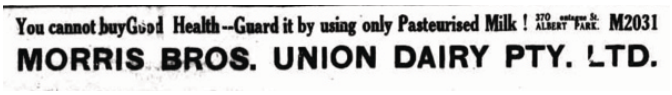
In 1911, Morris Bros opened a branch at 261 Bay Street in Port Melbourne, but this was short-lived, and closed in 1912.



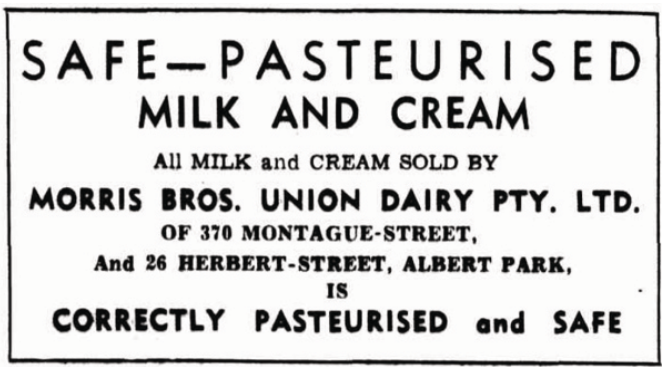
The extended family of Benjamin and Elzabeth Morris in 1913 with the partners in the back row. *Leader* 23 August 1913



Former stables at 380 Montague St [apartments.com]



Advertisement *Record* 3 November 1934



Advertisement *Age* 27 March 1943

By now the numbers of individual dairymen supplying households was decreasing as large companies replaced them, and Morris Bros was one of these. The days of obtaining milk from cows grazing in Albert Park or even backyards was over, while the practice of delivering milk direct from a can to the household jug was declining.

To ensure a steady supply of quality milk for their dairy, the brothers established a state of the art milk collection depot at Darnum in West Gippsland. Overseen by William, this opened in 1922. Local farmers took their milk there where it was cooled, sent to Melbourne each morning by rail, unloaded at the Milk Dock at Flinders Station, then transported to Morris Bros dairy for bottling. In 1926 the visiting Health Inspector praised Darnum's 'beautifully appointed premises.'

With the increasing practice of delivering milk in glass bottles, the theft of bottles became a problem. In 1925 a worker was charged with stealing an empty Morris Bros milk bottle – valued at threepence. Four more bottles were found at his home and he was fined £2 for each bottle or 21 days' jail and ordered to pay court costs of 4 guineas. Punishment which today seems severe.

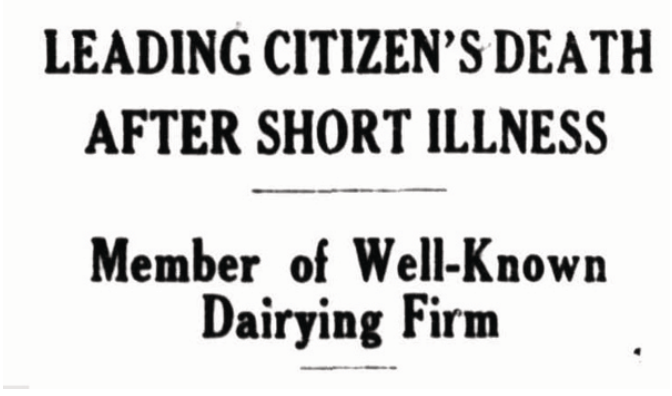
The firm suffered a blow with William's unexpected death in September 1922. Aged only 53, he died at his residence Moliagul, 31 Merton Street. A keen sportsman, William was a member of the South Melbourne Cricket Club and the South Melbourne Football Club both of which lowered their flags to half-mast on hearing of his death. In his memory the firm donated £100 to establish the William Morris scholarship at South Melbourne Technical School.



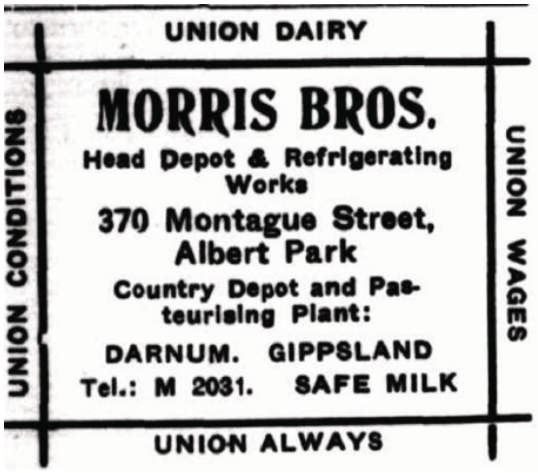
Robert James Morris Port Phillip City Collection. Melbourne sm0080

This left James and Robert as directors. In 1927 the firm had £30,000 in capital, and the next generation of Morrises was assuming senior positions. In April 1927, James' son Leonard and Robert's son Bob embarked on a fact-finding visit to the USA to investigate the latest developments in milk processing and distribution. One result of this was the introduction of new equipment costing £18,000 at Darnum.

Despite the implementation of more stringent regulations on milk production, and more inspections, contaminated milk still posed dangers for children's health. In 1930 in order to dispel public fears about the spread of Malta Fever (brucellosis) Morris Bros arranged for five carloads of South Melbourne dignitaries to visit their Darnum depot. Here, they were shown the complex and carefully supervised stages of processing the milk. They were suitably impressed, and left with their fears alleviated.



James Morris *Record* 23 June 1934



Advertisement *Labour Call* 9 January 1941

Further tragedy struck the firm in the 1930s. James died aged 69 at his home 5 O'Grady Street in June 1934. He had been elected a South Melbourne Councillor from 1905-1918 and mayor 1914-1915. In 1910 Nimmo Street in South Melbourne had been renamed Morris Street after him.

Robert died in July 1936 aged 66. Complications had developed after he broke his leg when he fell at the dairy. He had been an active member of the Australian Natives Association, serving a stint as president. Robert was also president of several sporting clubs including the Victorian Athletics League and the Albert Park Bowling Club, as well as the South Melbourne City Band.

By now the next generation of Morrises, in particular Bob and Leonard was running the company. Bob took over as managing director, but he too, died young. Aged only 46 he succumbed to illness in 1943, his death coming as a shock. A charismatic man, Bob had led a busy business, sporting, and civic life. He was a member of the South Melbourne Council for six years, having defeated the long-serving Sir Charles Merrett for the seat of Canterbury in 1937. He served as mayor in 1941 and 1942.

Bob was senior vice-president of the South Melbourne Football Club, and had also captained an interstate cricket team. Not surprisingly while in America, he had looked at new training methods for sportsmen. A short obituary even appeared in the Guinea Gold newspaper in Papua New Guinea.



1 pint milk bottle 1920s

Like Bob, Leonard had worked his way up from driver to partner. He managed the depot in Darnum from 1922 until returning to Melbourne in the late 1930s, and settling in Elwood.

Morris Bros continued to do well under its new management. In the 1940s they won a number of government tenders to supply milk for army depots and camps, as well as schools in the metropolitan area, and the Royal Navy. A decade later when the government introduced its free milk to schools programme, Morris Bros supplied milk to 21 schools from St Kilda to Port Melbourne. They also won the tender to supply milk to the Post Master General's department from 1955-1960. As well, they delivered milk to about 8,000 customers in 1946 and sold dairy products from their shop.

In about 1948 they took over John Dobeli's well-established dairy, which, despite its address at 24-26 Herbert Street, was known as the Hambleton Dairy. A much smaller business, it still had coolers and processing equipment, and a shop selling dairy products. Morris Bros ran that until about 1960 when the premises were bought by Marvan Carpets.

As business expanded and modernised, so did their work force. Rather than the dozens of milk carters, and stable hands hired up to the 1950s, the firm employed truck and van drivers, mechanics, office girls, book keepers, and clerks. Wages for truck drivers were £9 15s for a 6 day week in 1950 while dairy hands earned £11 5s in 1951. The good wages and conditions offered were keeping with company's principles.

In 1973 Morris Bros Union Dairy was one of two dairies licensed for milk delivery in South Melbourne: a far cry from the 20 dairies that existed in the 1920s. It was still running in November 1975, but seems to have closed soon after that. Their premises at 370 Montague Street were sold to developers and by the late 1970s were occupied by town houses. The stables at 380 Montague Street, along with the house had been sold to racing car enthusiast Paul Vellacott in 1974.

That year Leonard died in a Brighton hospital aged 81. He had been living in Hampton and was still described as a dairyman in 1972. The company was voluntarily wound up in November 1981.

The Morris brothers were more than successful dairymen: they became much respected and prominent local citizens. Over the years Morris Bros had supported the community, donating generously to local charities and benefits such as the Lord Mayor's fund, the Community Chest and old Buffers Carnivals as well as school picnics and to baby shows. On Australia Day 1940 they organised a milk drinking contest for young people, donating silver cups for the winners and of course all the milk required. Reflecting the brother's interest in sport, the firm sponsored junior football teams and fielded teams in the dairymen's football matches over the years.

Today, nothing remains of the former dairies, except perhaps in the memories of old residents. Only Morris Street is a tangible reminder of Robert.



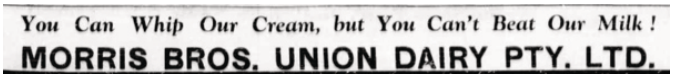
Morris Bros dairy and carts. The dairy is the building with the sign on the wall. *Courtesy Te Hikoi Museum, Riverton, NZ*


MAKE IT A DATE

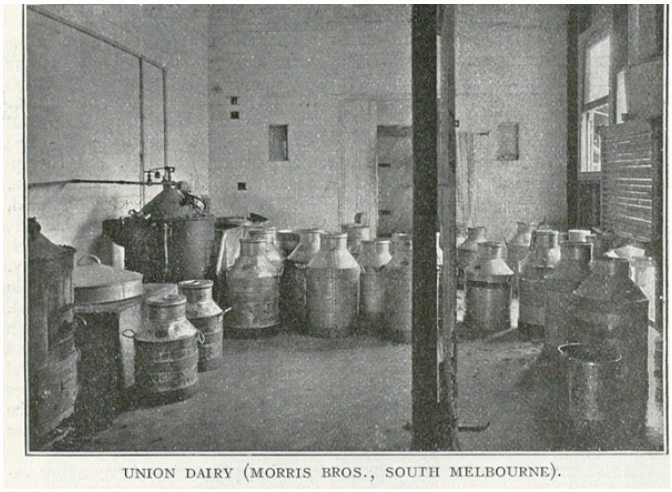
See you at the
MIDDLE PARK
OLD BUFFERS'
GRAND CHARITY
CARNIVAL
Queen's Birthday

DRINK MORRIS BROS MILK
and live to be an Old Buffer.
Space kindly donated by
Morris Bros., Dairymen

Old Buffers' advertisement *Record* 6 June 1952


You Can Whip Our Cream, but You Can't Beat Our Milk!
MORRIS BROS. UNION DAIRY PTY. LTD.

Advertisement *Record* 21 October 1933


UNION DAIRY (MORRIS BROS., SOUTH MELBOURNE).

Union dairy 1911 *Journal of Agriculture*, 1911



Morris Bros cart c. 1910 Port Phillip City Collection. Melbourne sm0568



The dairy at 370 Montague Street 1974. SLV CUASM238/2-4 Image 8

MPAPHG Meetings Calendar 2026

Tuesday 10 November 2026 : 7:30 pm
Tobruk House, 44 Victoria Avenue, Albert Park
Annual General Meeting

plus presentation by

Lesleyanne Hawthorne
"The transformative impact of World War II on one local village family"

introduced by Lachlan Gayland, Secretary of The Rats of Tobruk Association



Your MPAPHG committee

President:	Meyer Eidelson
Vice-President:	Vacant
Secretary:	Abramo Ierardo
Treasurer:	Sonya Cameron
Liaison Officer	Vacant TBA
Committee members	Jenny Cass, Gary Poore, Nadia Wright