THE EVOLUTION of RINGWOOD

Coupled with that of the

COACH AND HORSES HOTEL

1850-1940

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Marie Burnside

RINGWOOD

THE GATEWAY TO THE HILLS

One hundred years ago—it was bush—today, in 1953, Ringwood is a city with a population of over 10,000.

Woven around this remarkable development is the Coach and Horses Hotel and the Madden family.

In the early days—the Coach and Horses Hotel—the old Log Cabin—was the rendezvous of the miners of 1850, of the bullock teams, and later of Cobb and Co.'s coaches. hence the hotel's historical name.

In this environment grew the Madden family.

Mr. Nicholas Madden, Snr., played an important part in the early development of Ringwood—and for some time was Secretary of the first Progress Association.

This publication places on record some of the early history of the district.

FROM LOG CABIN TO PALATIAL HOTEL

NINETY years ago a man named Thomas built an unpretentious shack of rough bush timber on a winding bush track 15 miles from Melbourne. The shanty became known as the Coach and Horses Hotel, and around the spot began to grow the township now known as Ringwood. The hotel became the second stage of Cobb & Co.'s coaches, the calling place for the bullock teams, and the miners of those early days.

Ninety years have gone, and with the passing of the years has passed the old bullock teams, the miners, the Cobb & Co.'s coaches and the Old Log Cabin Hotel, and there has arisen in its place right at the gateway to beautiful Ringwood a palatial two-storeyed brick hotel, uncommon in design, arresting in its architectural features, unique, in that inscribed in glass on the four windows of the bar room, is the history of the past 90 years. Time marches on!

THE EARLY DAYS

If only the real history of those early days could be told, what a story it would unfold of early pioneering difficulties. The slow-moving bullock waggons, blazing the trail for others to follow, winding and curving in and out on the rough bush track, forming what is now known as the White Horse Road. Then the advent of Cobb & Co.'s Coach Service with the rush and bustle of changing at the Bush Hotel, the coming of the miners, the starting of the antimony mine at Ringwood East, always the urge to go out further, seeking, opening up, developing. What gatherings took place in that rough bush pub in those early days with rough, hard drinking men passing through and congregating there!

FIRST POST OFFICE

Thomas held the hotel for some time and then sold out to a Mr. Stirling, and as trade increased a store and post office was built on the block adjoining, and was managed by the licensee's daughter, Miss Stirling. This was Ringwood's first Post Office. It was later transferred to the building further down the road known as Willsmore's House, and later on Miss Thompson's mother took it over.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT

The coach horses were stabled at the hotel, and a blacksmith's shop was erected by a Mr. Hamill.

A butcher's shop was erected where Mr. Bisset's store now stands, and a grocery store adjoined the hotel.

A big open tank was constructed on the east side of the hotel, which served to water the stock passing through.

The settlement grew, and after a number of years Thomas Wiggin purchased the hotel, and held the licence for a long period. His son, George, drove the first Cobb & Co.'s coach through to Woods Point. George Wiggin died at Ringwood in 1928 at the age of 79.

Robert Masheter married a daughter of T. Wiggin, and later became the proprietor.

RAILWAY AND STATE SCHOOL

In 1883 the railway was extended to Ringwood, and about the same time the first State School was erected on the western side of the Heatherdale Road railway gates. The school was constructed of palings with a paling roof, and served the districts of Mitcham and Ringwood. Mr. Sam Brown attended the school, commencing as a boy of four. Other school children attending were the Dicksons, Kennedys, Murphys, Frost and McDonnell's, of Mitcham. Mr. Brown still possesses a photo of the old school. Later on the chimney was blown down, and the school was held temporarily in two rooms in Tom Mackie's house till another school was built near Deep Creek road. That building was later shifted to Ringwood, and is now a schoolmaster's residence, situated near the tennis courts, Ringwood Street.

SETTLEMENT FOLLOWED THE STATION

When the railway was put through there was no land suitable for a siding in the vicinity of the township of Ringwood, and the station was taken further on and erected on its present site. From then on settlement radiated from the station, and that was the genesis of the present Ringwood.

THE RISE AND FALL OF RINGWOOD EAST

At this time Ringwood East was quite an important centre, with the antimony mine in full swing and three or four brickworks operating. Approximately 50 years ago George Wiggin built the Club Hotel at Ringwood East with bricks from the local kilns. A big boarding house of 40 rooms was erected where Mr. Percy Howship's residence now stands. Years rolled by, the antimony mine and the brick works closed, and the development of East Ringwood was greatly retarded.

RACE MEETINGS

In the early days, from 1895, a racecourse was constructed at the back of the Coach and Horses Hotel, and there meetings were held up to 1906. This brought an undesirable element about, and the place gained a doubtful reputation.

DISAPPEARANCE OF THE OLD LOG CABIN

In 1907 the old Log Hotel was burnt down, the licensee at the time being "Nobby" O'Meara. The present building was then erected, and in 1909 the present licensee, Mrs. C. L. Madden, with her husband, Mr. N. Madden, took possession.

In 1924 the licence was transferred to Tom Murrihy, of Warrnambool. Jack Penman was the next licensee, and then Mrs. W. Cornwell. In 1931 Mrs. Madden again became the licensee.

TRADE INCREASE

From 1931 onward trade at the hotel had shown a continuous increase, and in order to cope with the increasing business the licensee successfully applied to the Licensing Board for a transfer of the licence to the opposite side of the road, and as a result in a few weeks' time the new hotel will be opened. (The new hotel was opened in January, 1940.)

RINGWOOD'S GATEWAY

The old Log Cabin, the old associations, the old days have gone. There has arisen a new Coach and Horses Hotel, rich in the history of the past 90 years, yet pointing to a new era. It is the gateway to a new Ringwood, proclaiming its growth and progress.

The old Coach and Horses Hotel will probably be converted into flats. (The flats were completed in 1948.)

The story of 90 years' evolution from Log Cabin to Tapestry Brick is the story of the rise and fall of Ringwood in the early days; of the establishment of the present Ringwood; of the progress made since the depression years; and of the enterprise of the present proprietors and their faith in the future development of Ringwood.



COACH AND HORSES 1940

The new hotel is a double storey brick building of modern streamlined design. The external walls of tapestry brick give it a striking and imposing appearance. It con-

tains 19 rooms, three sleep-outs and a large commodious bar with 80-ft. bar space. The bar rooms and fittings alone are costing £1,200. There is a separate bottle department, two private bar parlours and a private lounge. The bar room itself is magnificent, with four large leadlights depicting in picture the history of the hotel.

HISTORY IN GLASS

The first shows a picture in glass of the old hotel with the bullock drays in front. The next is taken from an actual photograph, and shows Cobb & Co.'s coach and horses with Mr. T. Wiggin and family in front of the hotel. A later stage in history is revealed with the advent of horses and vehicles. The fourth leadlight shows the present modern hotel with motor cars parked outside.

The rooms on the ground floor are panelled 4 ft. with polished blackwood. A fancy brick rail around the bar replaces the old-fashioned brass rail. The bar is of pleasing appearance, and electrice compartments keep all drinks electrically cooled. The cellar is constructed to maintain any desired temperature. A spacious dining room, kitchen and pantry complete the ground floor. Upstairs are the bedrooms, and leading off is a spacious balcony. The whole of the building is served by a hot water system and sewered. The floors are covered with ½ in. plastic Lygnoleo.

A three-compartment brick garage has been erected at the side of the hotel, and the vacant block on the opposite corner has been acquired for a parking area.

The imposing structure reflects great credit on the builder, Mr. W. Madden, son of the licensee. Mr. Yarker, Bayswater, is foreman carpenter. All the labour and practically the whole of the materials used are local. The architect is Mr. A. Pretty, Croydon.

At night a big Neon sign will light the hotel, which will become a landmark for the district.

HISTORICAL LANDMARK

As the historic White Horse, recently erected in the Main Street of Box Hill, commemorates its early history, so will the new

Coach and Horses Hotel commemorate the early history of Ringwood, associated with the coaching days.

THE EARLY PIONEERS

Whilst dealing with the early history of Ringwood it will be interesting to note that Mrs. Madden is the oldest living descendant of the first rural pioneer of the district, being a grand-daughter of Major Charles Newman, the first station owner of territory extending along the left bank of the Yarra from Heidelberg to Warrandyte, embracing the whole of Templestowe and extending south probably as far as Ringwood.

THE FIRST STATION OWNER

An officer for many years of the British East India Company, founded by Royal Charter in Queen Elizabeth's reign on the 31st December, 1600, and continued till 1858, Major Newman, retiring with ample pension, migrated to Tasmania early last century. He transferred to Port Phillip shortly after Batman and Fawkner's arrival, acquired, and in 1837 took possession of his station. He imported stock, including buffaloes, from India, which once roamed in these parts, but proved unsuitable.

THE FIRST HOMESTEADS

The major built two homesteads of stone, still extant, at the confluence of our Deep Creek with the Yarra, the first named "Pontville," on the Warrandyte side, at present occupied by a branch of his descendants, and the other "Monckton," on the Templestowe side, where his youngest child, Mary Ann Newman—Mrs. Madden's mother—was born in 1842, the latter homestead having been Mr. and Mrs. Madden's residence when they acquired the Coach and Horses Hotel.

DISCOVERY OF GOLD AT WARRANDYTE

Surely all Australians realize the transcendant importance of the discovery of gold in Australia, not only to our own country, but to the British Empire, but how few of us know and fewer appreciate the fact that important British history had its genesis in the first published discovery of gold in June, 1851, on Major Newman's property at Anderson's Creek, Warrandyte!

EARLY HISTORY

Mrs. Madden's father, Edward Richard Crosswell, well known for many years in the Whittlesea district (born in Carnarvon, Wales, in 1827, died at Bundoora, 1922), left his native land in the early fifties to join his uncle—his mother's brother—Richard Lewis, also one of the very earliest settlers of Tasmania, who set up business in Hobart as a merchant, and acquired great wealth. Richard Lewis was the founder of the well-known family of Lewis, still in Tasmania. A grandson, Elliot Lewis, was Premier of Tasmania a few years back, and one of his daughters returned to England to become the Countess of Donnaghmore in Northern Ireland. Mr. Crosswell had his colonial experience on "Norton Mandeville" Station, owned by the then well-known W. J. T. Clarke, in association with the latter's sons, one of whom later became Sir W. J. Clarke, Baronet of famous "Rupertswood," Sunbury, and (inter alia) the father of Sir Frank Clarke, now President of our Legislative Council. Having acquired the necessary experience Mr. Crosswell crossed to Victoria, assumed the management of Poon Boon Station in the Riverina, but left there to take charge of the station extending along the Yarra on the opposite—Eltham—side of the Yarra, the homestead of which was on an eminence right opposite Major Newman's "Monckton," so also he was closely associated with these parts.

PIONEERS IN BUILDING CONSTRUCTION

In view of the pioneering proclivities on both sides of Mrs. Madden's ancestors, it would seem but fitting that descendants of the Newmans and Lewises should be pioneers in breaking new ground in building construction as demonstrated in the new Coach and Horses Hotel, Ringwood.

MELBOURNE'S HISTORIC HOMES

By C. E. S.

Reprint from "The Age," 26th August, 1933.

TWO STATIONS ON THE YARRA: BUSHRANGERS AND GOLD

THROUGH the village of Heidelberg the road crosses the Yarra—narrow at this point—and then goes past rich river flats to the small settlement of Templestowe. It sweeps wide here, a little away from the winding Yarra, and makes a long climb up a pleasant slope. At its top the road forks. That to the right, macadamized, leads down on its winding way to Warrandyte. That to the left is Newman's Road. It is earth formed, and trickles through orchard and dairy country—orchards mostly—until suddenly it loses itself in a rutted, grassy track, and eventually gives itself up at the wired entrance to an old orchard. Facing this remnant of a track is an old white-washed house, all under a slate pyramid roof. The fruit trees go up almost to the front door, an old, bland-looking door, with two dim-eyed windows, one each side, and a verandah covering it rakishly, for all the world like an old, devil-may-care cap that is a little down in the peak from age and much wear. In an old buggy, in an old barn, the household fowls roost; the gasping remains of an aged vine trails over a trellis at the back. There are apples ripening on the window sills; the handle of a pump sticks out from a well which is under the house. It is on a knoll, this old house. East from it, separated by a pleasant valley, through which a creek trickles, and on another knoll—they are twins, these two grassy knolls—is another old house. Longer fronted, this one, with a spacious front porch, windows each side of it.

The slates have long since gone from the roof, and galvanized iron taken their place. Two grey cement chimneys rear tall, stout heads from the roof top. Comfortable-looking chimneys, homely like the white-washed house. We stroll down through the fruit trees, and slipping through a wire fence, come through a belt of light timber on to pleasant, well-grassed flats, grazing twenty

or so fine cattle. A sharp turn to the left, and we cross the creek by a low, log bridge, and, toiling up a sharp pinch, are at the front door of the house on the second knoll. The brick work shows where the white cement has peeled off. Age is written on every inch of the substantial house. A family of dairy farmers is here now. They point out pridefully the rich flats that go down to the river, a bend of which we glimpse through the thick timber. East, at the boundary of the property, is another belt of thicker timber. There is a great, beautiful quiet over everything; yet less than half a mile away traffic whirls over the busy Warrandyte Road.

We have been left no record of the inner thoughts of the creator of these homes, so we know not whether he was a lover of beauty. What we do know, though, is that for most of his life in Australia he was almost blind, so that if the beauty of the spot were not readily visible to him, it must have been communicated through other senses. Of sound, perhaps—sound of rippling creek and singing river; of birds, of tree song. Of scent—scent of sweet, damp earth; of eucalypt, of horse and cattle, for we do know he was a lover of horses and cattle.

Indeed, little authentic record has been left of Major Charles Newman. His name, and that of his sons, appears occasionally in the records of our history. His most substantial memorials are the two homes sketched above—Monckton, on the first knoll, and Pontville, on the second knoll. He played no great part in our development and history, yet indirectly no mean part. It were something, surely that he pioneered this rather wild part of the State; it were something, too, that so far from the settlement of Melbourne, he could hold his ground against loneliness, against the blacks, against bushrangers, against fire and flood in that remote period of our young history that goes back nearly a hundred years. It were something, too, that it should be on land leased by him that the first gold rush in Victoria occurred.

Charles Newman was a major in the 51st Regiment (Bengal Native Infantry). In the early thirties retired on a pension of a guinea a day, he came to Australia with his wife and son, Charles, bringing with him several native servants. He visited Melbourne in 1835, and then settled in Tasmania. Three years later he returned to Port Phillip, and took up the properties in the Templestowe district, now known as Monckton and Pontville. He was then about 52. The district in those days must have been wild, practically isolated from the settlement on the Yarra, then only three years old. Something of its state can be gauged from a description penned of it by Westgarth concerning a trip to the district in 1855. With the members of the select committee inquiring into the gold fields, Westgarth in that year visited the Anderson's Creek field. After leaving Melbourne, the party passed "smoothly along for about four miles," crossing first the Merri Creek by "its pretty new bridge," and then the Darebin Creek by "an older and much less pretentious structure." At Warringall (the early name of Heidelberg) the road was not made, but it was "cut at the sides, and with occasionally a slight attempt at levelling." They passed then through "the pretty village of Heidelberg, showing the gap between the high-timbered ranges that permits the winding Yarra to flow westward to Melbourne. The scene appeared one dense forest, excepting in our vicinity, where we saw some natural glades, less thinly wooded, or farms, or green paddocks cleared of timber. The Yarra was crossed by a punt. Templestowe comprised "a public house, a blacksmith, a few houses and gardens, with fields in the neighbourhood." As they approached "the gold regions" the soil became less favourable, "as indicated by the stringy bark forests it had sent up. Many trees were severely charred by recent fires." Beyond Templestowe they descended a "well turned up valley," and saw the Yarra "pleasantly sparkling in the sunbeams as the waters wound their devious course through high, wooded banks."

In pioneering the Warrandyte district Major Newman had to journey through conditions more primitive even than those experienced by Westgarth or by the diggers on

the Anderson's Creek field. Yet he survived these conditions, and firmly established himself on his holdings.

As the years passed he accumulated upwards of 4,000 acres in the district, but all but a square mile was only on licence. The 640 acres of freehold was divided equally between Monckton and Pontville. Here he grew cattle, and bred horses, principally hardy Welsh ponies, but also a few thoroughbreds which he raced in matches on the flats along the river below his properties, and at meetings that were held in the district. It is said that Major Newman would go any number of miles to match his thoroughbreds against other racehorses, and many matches in which his horses figured were held in the Heidelberg and Plenty districts.

Two events stand out in the Victorian career of Major Charles Newman. The first was an attack by bushrangers—the first of these gentry in the colony—and the second the discovery of gold on part of the property he leased. The first event concerns, in part, the short, hectic bushranging career of four young men, John Williams, Charles Ellis Daniel Jepps and Martin Fogarty. "Inspired by an older rogue, William Cam, this quartet took to the bush in the Dandenong district late in April, 1842, and in the course of a few days "stuck up" and robbed a number of stations. Then, working their way across country, they began operations in the Plenty country, visiting Major Newman's lonely station near the Mullum Mullum (now Deep) Creek. Their booty consisted of £30, a powder horn, two watches, a silver tureen and a number of medals and military ornaments. News of the outbreak in the Plenty country soon reached Melbourne, and, recruited by Mr. Latrobe, a party of five young bloods set out from the Melbourne Club in pursuit. The bushrangers were located in a hut on the station of Mr. Campbell Hunter near Diamond Creek, and after a pitched battle one was shot dead and the remaining three captured and brought to Melbourne, where the gentlemen volunteers were feted by the populace, and, after a trial, the bushrangers executed, also with much public applause. Major Newman had a slice of luck with most of the property stolen from

him. He offered a reward for its recovery, particularly the silver tureen, the watches and the medals, but without success. Some years later, however, a man named Adams, who had taken possession of the hut occupied by William Cam, who had been transported for his part in the bushranging exploits, found the property (except the money) hidden in an old tin in the yard. He advertised his find, and the property was claimed by Newman. The silver tureen is now in the possession of a descendant in West Australia.

It is still a matter for argument where the first gold was found in Victoria, but there is no dispute that the first officially recognized field was at Anderson's Creek. California, and later New South Wales, may rightly be blamed for the fever of gold in Victoria. Hargraves's discovery near Bathurst in May, 1851, fired the people. Alarmed at the consequences to Victoria, the Mayor of Melbourne called a public meeting, which was held in the Mechanics' Institute on 9th June, and resulted in the formation of a gold-discovery committee. Meanwhile several parties were scouring the hills near Melbourne. One, headed by Louis John Michel, a publican at the corner of Swanston and Little Collins Streets (where now are the Town Hall Chambers), was searching in the Plenty country. In June they found gold near the Deep Creek on portion of Major Newman's property. The fact was made public on 5th July, and on 16th July, according to McCombie in his history of Victoria, the party brought "a considerable sample of the dust to Melbourne, which they exhibited to the gold-discovery committee." On the next morning the following newspaper announcement was made:—

"The committee appointed to promote the discovery of a gold field in the colony of Victoria have the satisfaction of announcing that unquestionable evidence has been adduced showing the existence of gold in considerable quantity, both at the Deep Creek, on the Yarra (near Major Newman's run), and also at the Deep Creek, on the Pyrenees, near Mr. Donald Cameron's house.—William Nicholson, Mayor (Chairman of Committee)."

A rush set in, the first of Victoria's many exciting gold rushes. Major Newman found himself deserted by his shepherds, cow herds and servants, and also by a gang of labourers who were even then erecting a malt house

and brewery on his station, a project that, afterwards, he did not proceed with. On 20th August there were about 200 men on the field. On 1st September Anderson's Creek field was first occupied under the sanction of the Government. The more famous fields of Clunes, Buninyong and Ballarat followed on 20th September.

In a few years the brief glory of the Anderson's Creek field faded. In 1857 a select committee of the Legislative Council awarded Michel and his party £1,000 for their discovery. Newman appears to have taken no part in the gold hunting. He was more intent on farming his land. In the work, actually, his son, Charles, took most part, and after a few years this son became the virtual owner of the Pontville property. A second son later succeeded to the Monckton property. Major Newman himself moved to the city, and in 1855 we find him in a two-storeyed house in Lonsdale Street, on the south side, between Swanston and Elizabeth Streets. After his death this house became famous as a cafe, The Maison Dore, over which, in the eighties and nineties, presided a martial-looking lady, Madam Lacaton, a Swiss. Because of her great height and military bearing this lady was known to the bohemians of the day as the "Giraffe" and the "Grenadier." Another city property of Major Newman was in Lennox Street, Hawthorn, where he died on 12th September, 1866, aged 80. So deep was his affection for the Templestowe properties that he was buried on a knoll midway between Pontville and Monckton. Here, also, his wife and his sons were buried. When Monckton was sold about thirty years ago the remains were removed to the Doncaster Cemetery. Monckton was cut into small orchard properties. Pontville is still in the possesssion of descendants of Charles Newman, who entailed it.

Major Newman's great love for horses has come down through three generations to a great-grandson, Mr. Benjamin Weir, who today conducts a riding school on Ulupna, a property at Bundoora. A proud moment for Mr. Weir is when he reins in a party of riders on a hill overlooking the Yarra beyond Eltham, and points out across the forests, and the valleys and the orchards, the white walls

of the two houses his great-grandfather built —Monckton and Pontville—standing like sentinels on their outposts, walled in by hills and timber, and with the Yarra gleaming below their rich flats.

THE MADDEN FAMILY

Mr. and Mrs. William and Mary (nee Molan) Madden, early pioneers of Victoria, emigrated from Ireland and landed at Williamstown (Vic.) in 1849 and 1852 respectively. They were married at St. Francis Church, Melbourne, in 1853, after which event they proceeded to the diggings at Castlemaine, where they acquired cattle, after which, following the diggings, at several places dairying, ultimately settled in Smythesdale, where Nicholas Madden, one of a family of 15, was born, on the 30th of August, 1870.

After leaving school Nicholas became a woodcutter for the mines, up to the age of 18, then, arriving in Melbourne he became and remained a law clerk for 11 years. After that he was occupied as a legal Manager of Mining Companies principally on the west coast of Tasmania, up to the year 1914. Meanwhile he, with Mrs. Madden, his wife (nee Crosswell), acquired the Coach and Horses Hotel, attached to which was 35 acres of land on which for several years, in addition to the hotel business, they carried on general farming. The surviving members of their family are now carrying on the hotel business.

To the descendants of Edward Richard and Mary Ann Crosswell and — William and Mary Madden—these facts are affectionately dedicated with the compliments of

N Madden

Coach and Horses Hotel,
Ringwood.

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