

Sep/Oct 1982

The Ulster Link
CORRIGAN ROAD

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Corrigan Road is perhaps the best-known side road in the Melbourne metropolitan area. Nearly everyone returning from Springvale Crematorium and Cemetery enters the Princes Highway opposite the well-signed Corrigan Road.

The road is not named after James Corrigan MA LL.D (1823-77) from County Donegal, the first headmaster of Wesley College, Melbourne, or after Thomas Corrigan (1853-94) from County Meath, the champion jockey who died two days after a fall in the Caulfield Grand National Steeplechase and whose funeral from Caulfield to the Melbourne General Cemetery was the largest ever seen in Melbourne.

Corrigan Road was named after Thomas Corrigan, sergeant in the Irish Constabulary in Dublin. He, with his wife Mary (Lemon) Corrigan and children Sarah, Mary Jane (Mrs Crockett), William, Letitia (Mrs Shields), Thomas, James born on the voyage, Bella who died on the voyage, left Ireland in 1848 and arrived in Melbourne after an 128 day voyage in the "Nelson".

Thomas spent a short time in the police in Melbourne and then went to Simson's Ranges, now Maryborough which was pioneered by Hector Norman Simson and his brother Donald Campbell Simson from the island of Islay off the west coast of Scotland. Here in No. 2 hut at Charlotte Plains - named after D.C. Simson's wife Charlotte (Coghill) Simson - their son Charles Corrigan was born.

The area abounded with aborigines in those days and the family were there on "Black Thursday", February 6 1851 when most of Victoria was aflame with bushfires and the temperature reached 117 degrees in Melbourne at 11 am.

When gold was discovered in Victoria in 1851 the family went to Ballarat and dug for gold. Their son, William, had been groom to Dr. Motherwell of Prahran who had been the surgeon on board the "Nelson". At the age of 14 William walked the 70 miles to Ballarat from Melbourne with a bullock team dray loaded with supplies.

After mining for a year the family returned to Melbourne with 'nearly a hundred-weight of gold'. At Woodend, near the Black Forest which was haunted by bushrangers who robbed those taking gold to Melbourne, Thomas tipped his drays up back and sat up all night betee them with a loaded double barrell gun at the ready. Theirs was the only party camped there who were not robbed that night.

The family then commenced carting stores by bullock dray from Melbourne to the Mt. Alexander and Buckland goldfields. Too busy to inspect it they bought at a sale in Melbourne at £1 an acre land at Brighton Road, Keysborough. There were no roads in the area and their property was marked by blazed trees at the corners. They lived in tents and then built a timber home. The only other people in the area were the family of George Keys born 1792 near Strabane, County Tyrone after whom the suburb of keysborough is named.

William, the eldest son, married Sarah, daughter of Robert Earber from Castleblaney, County Monaghan, and he inherited the home property.

They had five children - Sarah (Mrs Tom Kingston), William Leamon, Robert Latimer, Mary Elizabeth (Mrs Jack Macartney) and Letitia (Mrs Jack Fullerton).

William Leamon Corrigan married Mary Elizabeth Carson of Keysborough, daughter of John and Mary Ann (Colo) Carson and they settled in the old homestead. Their children were Clarence, Mary Vivian (Mrs Wilson), Sheila (Mrs John Brown) and Jack.

William Leamon Corrigan and his brother Robert Latimer Corrigan were named after their grandmother's sister Mary Lemon (or Leamon) Latimer. Robert Latimer Corrigan married Marjorie McMullen of Keysborough and their family consisted of William Robert, Sarah Jane (Mrs Jim Sharkie), Alan John Latimer, Marjorie Julie and David McMullen.

William Leamon Corrigan born about 1867, accompanied by Jack and George Keys and Bill Kingston, went to Fremantle, Western Australia in the vessel "Wooronga" around 1896. Here they bought horses and carts, stores and a condenser to distil water and set out for Kalgoorlie 400 miles inland where Patrick Hannan (1842-1925) from County Clare found the first gold. The journey took two months and they walked most of the way. They lived on tinned meat as no potatoes or vegetables were available, and they had to take turns in sitting up all night to keep the fire going underneath the condenser to provide sufficient water for themselves and the horses.

Each horse had a distinctively toned bell so that each man sought his own horse in the morning. Bill Corrigan's horse ate poison weed about 20 miles before Coolgardie and the loaded cart had to be pulled by the men for the remaining 45 miles to Kalgoorlie.

They remained on the Western Australia goldfields for about a year and found sufficient gold to pay their expenses and have something more for the future. Today a number of descendants of this pioneer family live within easy reach of the well-known Corrigan Road which is so-named in honour of the family.

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ERIN AND BRITANNIA

The only unbiased, comprehensive, well-indexed history of Ireland is "Erin and Britannia", by Professor Michael Landon, Professor of History at the University of Mississippi, USA. He gained his BA and MA at Oxford University and is a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society of Great Britain. It is published by Nelson-Hall Publishers, 111 N. Canal Street, Chicago, Illinois 60606 USA. The price is \$18.95 cloth, or \$9.95 paperback in American currency.

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Gold was discovered in California in 1847, and in Australia in 1851.

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The kangaroo and the emu are on Australia's coat-of-arms for neither has ever been known to take a backward step.

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time within two years he was on his way to Australia.

The Depression was as severe in Australia as in England, so he joined the Victorian Railways Regimental Band which gave concerts in the park and gardens of Melbourne. Five years later the break came for him. The Victorian Railways offered Bill and five others in the band an opportunity of playing as a dance band in the railway's Mount Buffalo Chalet. Bill found himself domiciled on top of the 5,645 foot high Mount Buffalo. To keep fit he took up skiing and soon he was assisting the ski instructors on the snow slopes. His Irish wit, his Irish charm and his Irish accent endeared him to everyone and soon he found himself doing a dozen jobs at Mount Buffalo. He met the trains at Benalla and Wangaratta and drove the guests to Mount Buffalo. He organised concerts, entertainments and sports and kept everyone happy.

Bill Marriott's father was killed in World War I. Being big for his age, young Bill joined the 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars in 1916. When it was discovered that he was only 14 he was transferred to the regimental band. His two brothers joined the band too and on recruiting drives they visited many places in Ireland. After the war the regiment was posted to India and here he developed his ability as a sportsman, playing soccer, hockey and cricket. He has represented Victoria at water polo and he has rescued hundreds of lost hikers during his 34 years at Mount Buffalo.

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NEWS FROM THE ULSTER SOCIETIES

MELBOURNE

The programme at the September meeting was in the hands of member Bill Mascn, who had recently returned with his wife from a 17 week holiday mainly at his old home on Sandy Row, Belfast. This was his first visit home since arriving in Melbourne 21 years ago. He was a cost accountant with Dunlop-Olympic which closed down its Port Melbourne industrial complex where he was employed.

Bill took us for a delightful and unique musical tour of Ireland. He visited his country cousins at Cullybackey, County Antrim and we almost felt we were there when he sang in excellent voice "The Lark in the Clear Air". Roberta Rogers from Ballymacarrett, Belfast was the accompanist.

He told us of his visit to the wonderful Ulster Museum at Cultra, County Down where relics of the past from mills, thatched cottages, gypsy waggons to every type of farm implement and farmhouse furnishings are on display. His two charming daughters, Ruth and Patricia, sang in harmony "The Spinning Wheel", followed by the regimental March of the Irish Guards "The Young May Moon". Bill and his wife went to Dublin and from there Mrs Skinner, our travel consultant, had also arranged an excellent tour of the south of Ireland. We were told of the beauty of County Wicklow and that the great Irish poet Thomas Moore was so taken with the scenery at the Vale of Avoca that he wrote "The Meeting of the Waters" and this song was also sung by the sisters. Powerscourt House, the magnificent home of the De La Poer family, and its 34,000 acre demesne is now owned by one of the Slazenger of tennis

family and after describing it the song "Avenge and Bright" was sung. The west coast of Ireland reminded Bill of his tour in Scotland, so, joined by his wife Dorcen, the three ladies sang two Scottish numbers "The Rowan Tree" and "Tuddle Doon". Back again in Belfast he told us more of his holiday and he concluded by singing "Little Town in the Old County Down". It was a much appreciated evening and he was admirably thanked by one of our newer members, Mrs P. Martin, of North Dandenong whose ancestors came from County Donegal. Mrs Milte of Essendon and formerly of County Tyrone made a presentation to Bill and Joe Thompson of Belfast recorded the programme so that an elderly Ulsterwoman could hear it on a cassette.

There will NOT be a meeting on Thursday 7th October as our meeting place, the Chapter House, St. Paul's Cathedral Buildings is the setting for the Annual Anglican Diocesan Synod of Melbourne.

On November 4th 7.30 - 10 pm a musical quintet will sing, and Thursday 2nd December is our usual great Christmas Party to which all members and readers are invited, and the programme will again be presented by the Ulster Christian Fellowship Choir.

SYDNEY. The annual and ever-popular sausage sizzle was the business at the August meeting and it was thoroughly enjoyable and well attended. It was a great opportunity of meeting and chatting with others whilst partaking of a delightful meal followed by dessert. The orange-picking day at Mr Robert Power's property "Waterford" with a barbeque lunch was enjoyed and the members gathered 5½ tonnes of the ripe fruit which they saw graded and packed into cartons ready for market. All the members went home with a generous supply of sweet juicy oranges.

The meeting on Friday 17th September took the form of a crazy whist night organized by the Hon. Treasurer, Mrs May Lewis.

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A ROTARY STORY FROM IRELAND

One line in the defence of freedom - freedom of discussion - is found in the weekly meeting of a Rotary Club. Here, in an atmosphere of good fellowship, is a fitting place for an exchange of views. True, the controversial nature of many problems - especially international and sectarian problems - presents difficulties. But one of the goals of Rotary membership is to provide a forum where differing views can be expressed. We cannot escape controversial issues. How Rotarians in troubled areas face them is one measure of their club's mettle.

The mettle of one such club has been tested. The Rotary Club of Strabane-Lifford has members from two communities - Strabane, Tyrone, Northern Ireland and Lifford, Donegal, Republic of Ireland. A few years ago the hotel in Strabane, in which the club met, was blown up and the Border closed; nevertheless, the club continued to meet and the Rotarians from Strabane went through as many as five checkpoints to get to a new meeting place across the Border in Lifford. The fact that these Rotarians continued to cross the Border encouraged others that it was safe to do so. Their example helped re-establish more normal relationships in the locality.