

## UNVEILING MOLLISON OBELISK

The most important ceremony of the Celebrations was on Monday, at about 11.30 a.m., when the unveiling of the Mollison Memorial took place before a large multitude. In the morning, not many miles from the site of the Memorial rain was falling fairly heavily, but this did not deter the enthusiasm of the people, and car loads of human freight set out for a spot on the Kilmore-Pyalong road about three miles from Pyalong, for it is here on a plot of land on the original homestead of the Mollison Bros., that the obelisk stands, abutting the road. On arrival, it was discovered perfect weather conditions prevailed for the important occasion.

Cr. Allan Shanahan, president of the Pyalong Shire, extended a hearty welcome to all and expressed pleasure at seeing so many present at the unveiling ceremony. He said the obelisk movement had been started by the receipt of a letter by the Shire, last year, from some of the Mollison descendants, suggesting that as other shires were placing on record in various ways recognition of the pioneers of their respective districts, Pyalong should do something, as 1937 would be the Centenary of the first settlement in the district. The matter was discussed by council, and as there seemed to be some doubt about the legality of the Shire Council spending council funds for such a purpose, the matter was held up pending enquiries being made. Meantime, however, Mr. S. Fullard came to the rescue, placed the land at their disposal, Mr. Norman Fullard jnr. drew up plans and did most of the work, of which all would agree was a credit to the designer and builder, and all his help-

signer and builder, and all his helpers. He had much pleasure in introducing Capt. Leggett of the Historical Society of Victoria, who had been kind enough to come along to perform the Unveiling Ceremony, and at the same time give them some interesting information concerning the pioneers.

Capt. Leggett, B.A., gave a very interesting address, details (verbatim) of which are as follows:—

"It gives me great pleasure to be present at this function as the representative of the Historical Society of Victoria, and I must begin by tendering an apology for Mr. A. S. Kenyon, who has asked me to say how sorry he was, not to be able to accept the kind invitation of the Shire President, but he has just returned from a visit to New Zealand to attend the Science Congress and finds himself unable to be present.

"Similarly, Mr. Chas. Daley, the secretary, is still absent in New Zealand, and probably has not yet received his invitation. Therefore, what is their misfortune is my good fortune, and I shall do my best to say a few words suitable for such an occasion as this, when you are all gathered together to do honour to the men and women who blazed the trail and opened up this great land of ours.

"It has been my pleasure to speak at Benalla and at Mount Greenock at the Centenary Celebrations of that great explorer Major Sir Thomas Mitchell, who, just a little over one hundred years ago, rode down and gazed on the infant settlement at Port Phillip from the crest of Mount

Macedon which we can see in the distance.

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He was on his way back to Sydney after crossing Australia Felix as he named it, but before he got back the first of the Overlanders were already on their way with herds of cattle and sheep from New South Wales.

"The first of these were Gardiner, Hawden and Hepburn, who drove their cattle down to what is now Hawthorn (Gardiner's Creek), and quite recently a memorial was unveiled at the entrance to Scotch College grounds to commemorate the arrival of these men, the first of the Overlanders. The second Overlander who drove his stock down to the new settlement was W. A. Broadribb (13th Feb, 1837), and the third was the man who was the pioneer of this district, namely Mr. Alexander F. Mollison.

"Perhaps I should have named Mr. Ebden, but he was not in reality an Overlander, for he settled in one place and then moved on to another and so on.

"A. F. Mollison was born in London on April 17, 1805, and after visiting Jamaica and New York came to New South Wales in 1834, where he took up land on the Murrumbidgee, and stocked it with sheep and cattle.

"When such glowing reports of the wonderful new settlement at Port Phillip began to filter through, he decided to visit it and see for himself. He left Sydney by boat for Hobart Town and then crossed to Port Phillip, which was the recognised way to reach it in those days. Evidently he was impressed, for he returned the same way, and in April, 1837, we find him setting out from the Murrumbidgee with 5000 sheep, 634 cattle, 28 working bullocks and 22 horses. In order to carry out the transport of this herd of animals he took with him 49 servants. One has to pause and

think, before one realises what drays and other gear had to be taken, in order to be sure that provisions, etc., would last out this journey. The rate of progress was slow, for many of the servants were unreliable, and from entries in the diary kept, some were often drunk. For instance, they were held up because the blacksmith was drunk and could not effect repairs to the drays—a second entry says "the blacksmith still drunk". Then the fording of rivers was another hindrance. They carried boats, but it was necessary to build pontoon bridges. The structure of these was interesting. The drays were upended, so that the shafts were upright. These were joined up with saplings, hurdles were laid, and on the hurdles tarpaulins were placed, and these were covered with dirt or sand. The whole was anchored to submerged logs, and in this manner the crossings were made. By November 30, they had reached the Campaspe River, where a halt was made. I should have said that they wintered at a place called Bontherambo, and at Indigo Creek for the lambing season. It was in December, 1837, before they reached Coliban where he formed that station.

"Ebdén has reached Carlruhe six weeks before with stock, and shortly afterwards, Yaldwyn took up what is now W. H. F. Mitchell's country.

Mr. W. T. Mollison says in a letter that he joined Mr. A. F. Mollison in 1838 and that they lived in reed mias and tents. Pyalong was occupied as a cattle station in 1838—W. Hamilton, Mundy & Smythe, and F. A. Powlett followed in this quarter. In 1839-40, the head of the Lodon first taken up by A. F. Mollison, and he was followed by Lyon Campbell and L. Mackinnon.

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"In the early part of 1841, Parker made a reserve for aborigines on the Loddon and tried to civilise them. They belonged to the "Jim Crow" tribe and were peaceable enough.

"In 1839, sheep were being brought at Coliban for Adelaide at 27/6 for breeding ewes; and in 1840, cattle

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## PYALONG CENTENARY

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were sold for export to New Zealand, cows at £10 and steers £12. Welsh bought cattle and McFarlane sheep.

"1841—First mill for grinding corn (water power).

"1842—Fat wethers, 8/- to 12/-.

"We get the information from the Coliban Farm Journal, which tells us that work was in full swing in 1839. The entries were made by A. T. Mollison, in the absence of Mr. D. McLean the superintendent.

"I find that Mr. McLean, with the consent of his employer, took the post position of superintendent for Messrs Watson & Hunter at Devil's River, and Alexander Macpherson the store-keeper was appointed in his place.

"It will interest you perhaps to hear the amounts paid out for the years 1839-43 for the following commodities—Flour, £1066 odd; Sugar, £339; Tea, £499; Tobacco, £406; Slops (clothes etc.) £542. Sugar was 4d lb; Tea, £13 to £16 a chest (50 lbs); Tobacco, 4/- to 5/- for Negrohead, 2/3 for Colonial, which was only fit for

making sheep dip, Rum, 18/6 a gallon; Flour, 22/- per 100 lbs.

"If sickness occurred, the patient was sent down to Melbourne.

"And so the work of the station went on; but the years 1842-45 were bad seasons and prices declined so that boiling down works were instituted, as the tallow extracted was worth more than the carcass of the sheep.

"Mr. Mollison was appointed a Justice of the Peace by Sir George Gipps, the signature of his appointment bore the name, E. Deas. Thomson, Colonial Secretary of N. S. Wales.

"I also find that 142 bales of wool were shipped to England in the ship Brakenmoor in 1842.

"Mr. Mollison took an interest in education, and in 1844 replied to the circular sent out by Mr. Macpherson, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly of N. S. Wales, giving his ideas of what should be done in the matter of education for the children of the settlers.

"In 1851 he went home to England and while there was an active member of the Committee of the Australian Colonies; but he did not enjoy

ian Colonies; but he did not enjoy good health, so after remaining there till 1859 he paid a short visit to Australia and went back again. In 1873 he returned to Victoria, where he remained till his death, which took place at Kew on April 10, 1885, within a week of his 80th birthday.

"His life showed him to have been an honourable Christian gentleman, energetic and resourceful, with a sound judgement, coupled with keen business ability—fair and just in all dealings. He was a close friend of Governor La Trobe and Sir Charles Nicholson.

His brother, W. T. Mollison was a Member of the Legislative Assembly. He died in England in 1886, but his memory is perpetuated by the Mollison Scholarship at the Melbourne University.

"Another brother was Dr. Mollison, and the third, Crawford Mollison, was the Gold Commissioner of Sandhurst.

"Thus we see that each member of the family has left an impression on the fortunes of this new land. And that is why we have gathered together today to dedicate this memorial to the pioneers, and to hand down to the succeeding generations something that will remind them of the sterling men who went out into the wilderness to conquer new lands and to found for us a glorious country."

Capt. Leggett then proceeded to unveil the memorial, saying, "I have much pleasure in unveiling this memorial which will commemorate the work of these great men." He then read the inscription—Erected by the local residents to the memory of the Pioneers, W. T. and A. F. Mollison who settled here in 1837 from N.S.W., giving the name of Pyalong to the district.—Feb, 1st, 1937.

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Mr. A. S. Mollison, a nephew of the late A. S. and W. T. Mollison, was in attendance, and was next called upon by Cr. Shanahan to address the people. His speech (verbatim) was as follows:—

"I have been requested by my elder brother, Dr. Mollison, to convey his apologies for his absence, on account of his inability to make the journey this morning, and attend at this Cere-

mony. On my own behalf, I desire to thank your Shire President for his invitation to me, which I was very pleased to receive. I do not know who originated the idea of commemorating the Centenary of the first white settlement in this district, and in this manner. Those responsible for the erection of this Memorial Cairn are to be congratulated for the way in which the work has been carried out. It is, certainly, substantial and well built. Mr. Fullard has been generous in providing the site on a part of the original Pre-emptive right. It so happens, in this case, that I am one of three nephews of the two pioneers whose names are engraved on this obelisk. They were bachelors, and consequently left no direct descendants. A. F. Mollison arrived in Sydney in 1834. Soon after he purchased a run on the Murrumbidgee and stocked it. In 1836 he proceeded by Sea from Sydney to Port Phillip, where he inspected the country suitable for pastoral occupation, including this and the district north of Mount Macedon. Returning to the Murrumbidgee by the way he came, he with the assistance of ticket of leave men and shepherds, removed his stock comprising 5000 sheep, 600 odd head of cattle 28 working bullocks and 22 horses. Travelling south, and cross-

horses. Travelling south, and crossing the Murray with some difficulty, he eventually reached this district in 1837, and was joined by his brother William in 1838.

"A run on the Coliban near Kynton and Malmsbury was also taken up and stocked.

My father arriving a year or two later from the Old Country, resided there for a time, prior to his appointment as a Commissioner on the gold fields at Bendigo and Heathcote.

"On behalf of the next of kin, several of whom are present, including the fair sex, I express their appreciation in having the opportunity to be associated with local residents and others in this Commemoration."

Mr. Coyle, M.L.A., said he could hardly tell them how grateful he felt for the opportunity of coming along and joining with the people in the unveiling ceremony. It brought home to him the reason why a street he lived in in Bendigo in his boyhood days bore the name "Mollison Street." The district should feel proud of such public spirited citizens as Mr. Fullard and others who had associated with him in this wonderful work; the monument was something to be proud of.

Mr. Russell Clarke, M.L.C., was the next speaker, and in his opening remarks said he recently heard of a distinguished man from overseas being called upon to address those assembled at a function, and as he arose he asked the audience what he would speak about. Instantly there was a reply from one in the audience: "about a minute." (Laughter). So, proceeding, Mr. Clarke said on this occasion he would be brief in his remarks as there was a big programme mapped out for the day. He was pleased for the invitation received to

come along and join in Pyalong's lasting recognition to the great hearted pioneers.

Mr. McEwan, M.H.R., said it was very proper that this present generation should recognise the work and foresight of the pioneers that made possible to have Australia as it is today. When one looked back and considered the magnitude the task these pioneers had undertaken, in bringing stock through hundreds of miles of unchartered country, over unbridged rivers, one realised and appreciated the fortitude of these brave men and it enabled us to carry on, for there was much to be done. The people of to-day would be the pioneers of the future.

Mr. James Maher then called upon the crowd to give three cheers for the architect and builder (Mr. Norman Fullard) and all who had been associated with him in the erection of the obelisk. The large crowd replied in wholehearted fashion.

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A panoramic photo of the people assembled around the memorial was taken by Mr. N. R. McGeegan, photographer, of 154 Hotham Street, St. Kilda.