

Chapter Nine

Leisure and Entertainment: aspects of popular culture at Mount Morgan

Working-class leisure and entertainment assumed the status of ideology at a mining town as elsewhere. Popular leisure pursuits were universal, but the unique stamp of location, rules, method and patronage in a town prevailed. At Mount Morgan, the fine edge of high culture in the intellectual appeal of the lecture, theatre and music barely tempered the predominant interest in sport and outdoor pursuits. At the same time, the discipline of the workplace, economic conditions, geographic location and population mobility dictated leisure - and its cost. Thus, the essence of Mount Morgan leisure lay in individual or group choice and according to shift rosters and extra staff hours, whilst in terms of inter-town competition, the roots of social antagonism between the town and Rockhampton were manifested in deep-seated rivalry on stage and sports field.

In profiling Mount Morgan leisure in the late nineteenth century through the 1920s, this chapter reveals generic plebeian interests of the population. Many at Mount Morgan saw no permanent future for the town and so used their leisure time 'vigorously and frivolously' as occurred in other mining centres, from the coal pits of Throckley, Durham¹ to the gold mines of Charters Towers. Moreover, men who lived singly at Mount Morgan participated in pastimes that did not include community or domestic commitment. By comparison, permanent residents spent leisure in both public and private spheres, whether for rest and relaxation, sporting competition and entertainment,

¹ Bill Williamson, *Class culture and community: a biographical study of social change in mining*, London, 1982, p. 116.

hobbies or social interaction. Individual choice was also evident in time away from the workplace used for financial reward derived from a pastime or casual employment. This thesis also suggests a gendered leisure at Mount Morgan during the period studied. Typically perhaps, outdoor sport was an almost exclusively male domain, as music was for females, and some gender balance was evident in non-sporting cultural pursuits.

Most residents, apart from sporting teams and supporters, spent their leisure in the town. Visits to Rockhampton were relatively infrequent; this reinforced the insular attitude entrenched in the town *mentalité*. Local parochialism seemed a panacea to any suggestion of social isolation.

There were too many of us, and you had to catch the train there and back...no buses. There was nothing to take us to Rocky; we had everything at Mount Morgan.²

A single building, rather than the institution it served, was the place in town for a vast range of entertainment and activities. The School of Arts, built on government reserved land gazetted in 1895,³ provided space and facilities for the 'mental and moral improvement' of the middle classes.⁴ This was the philosophy of Schools of Arts, but at Mount Morgan as elsewhere, their institution developed according to the community it served. The significance of the School of Arts in the cultural mapping of Mount Morgan reflected the efforts of a committee of petite bourgeoisie to import the intellectual stimulus of the lecture and the cultural performance of drama and classical music. To this end, the first hall seldom had a larger audience than that which welcomed Scottish lecturer, Rev. Father Lane and a small group in 1897. Caledonians and others gathered in what the *Capricornian*, a weekly conservative tabloid of Central Queensland, declared was an audience of the 'most representative residents in the town'.⁵ Lane presented 'The Bard of Scotland'; an historical profile of Robert Burns, the programme interspersed with

² Margaret O'Brien, interview with the author, 9 July 1992, Mount Morgan Oral History Project, (MMOH).

³ *Queensland Government Gazette*, January 1895.

⁴ *Queensland Post Office Directory*, Brisbane, 1896.

⁵ *Capricornian*, 29 May 1897.

seventeen musical items and recitations illustrated with coloured slides of Scottish scenes. A decade later, a plethora of books, current newspapers and journals available in the library and reading room complemented the presentations of visiting lecturers. The Caledonian spirit prevailed as 'two hundred' gathered at a new School of Arts building to hear Rev. Allan McKillop present an illustrated lecture, 'Bonnie Scotland' an evening of entertainment as much as intellectual interest.⁶ These events suggest the spatial significance of buildings for public use, for example, within the Catholic precinct of church, convent and school, the large Cardinal's Hall was used after school hours as a gathering place for Catholic performance and entertainment, meetings and political discussion.

The spectrum of School of Arts usage varied from the rhythm of dances and balls, popular musicals and drama to the rallying force of political meetings. Mount Morgan was included in Maggie Moore's 1894 Queensland tour with the musical *Struck Oil*,⁷ the name chosen later for a mining settlement northeast of Mount Morgan. Political candidates organised meetings, held at first in open space and from 1903 at the Coronation Light, until such events joined the flow of intellectual and popular entertainment through the School of Arts. Fire destroyed the 1909 building that was replaced in 1923 with the third School of Arts that, with its capacity of 400, remained the major centre for indoor gatherings.

Barbara Webster contends that the brass band tradition of British working-class life was brought to Australia in the cultural baggage of immigrants and became integral to union meetings and celebrations.⁸ Moreover, Duncan Blythell interprets the brass band 'movement' as a 'novel spectator sport' –perhaps at a price - at any fund-raising

⁶ *Daily Record*, (DR) 8 September 1908.

⁷ Richard Waterhouse, *From minstrel show to vaudeville: the Australian popular stage 1788-1914*, Kensington, 1993, p. 30.

⁸ Barbara Webster, *Fighting in the grand cause: a history of the union movement in Rockhampton 1907-1957*, PhD thesis, Central Queensland University, 1999, p. 378.

event.⁹ At Mount Morgan, the town brass band was featured at most public celebrations. Moreover, the band marketed their services to the organisers of forthcoming activities. Numerous local associations formed their own bands, including the Foresters, Hibernians and the Caledonian Thistle Band, these complementing rather than taking precedence over the town band in terms of public performance.



Fig. 40. Children on parade, c.1912. Bandsmen wear slouch hats, left brim turned up, girls in the cart wear wreaths of flowers, another group marches behind.

Private music tuition became an early cultural tradition; this complemented from 1895 by the Catholic Sisters of Mercy who established music tuition at the Catholic school. They became synonymous with town music as they taught piano, violin and singing, despite much slow payment of the fees necessary to their domestic budget. Within years, a steady stream of music teachers and performers emerged through the convent music rooms.¹⁰ By comparison, Geoffrey Bolton suggests that Welsh miners

⁹ Duncan Blythell, 'Class, community, and culture – the case of the brass band in Newcastle', *Labour History*, no.67, 1997, p. 145.

¹⁰ Sisters of Mercy, Convent of the Sacred Heart, Mount Morgan, *Report*, 1913, Mercy Archives, Rockhampton.

were the source of musical heritage at Charters Towers.¹¹ However, when Mount Morgan was established in the 1880s, musical tuition and performance was already entrenched at nearby Rockhampton, and probably influenced an emergent musical culture at the mining town. Moreover, the talents and accomplishments of immigrants were reflected in the experience of Joseph Hickman, 'an ordinary man' and immigrant who worked at the mine. His passion for musical expression brought him to notice at Mount Morgan where the family became integral to the local music scene by 1895. Hickman's daughters studied music also, his elder daughter becoming a performer and teacher, the other studying with impresario Herr Ludwig L'Hage at Rockhampton. Hickman conducted an instrumental group at Mount Morgan and advertised locally:

Joseph Hickman, M.T.S.F. College, London. Professor of Music, Teacher of Singing, Violin, Violincello, and Organ. Miss Henrietta Hickman, Piano and Theory, Concerts and Balls attended.¹²

Hickman died in 1896, but Henrietta continued teaching and performing as accompanist at local functions. Entrenched interest in music and encouragement of local artists were witness to three sell-out sessions for the first Eisteddföd in Central Queensland held at Mount Morgan in April 1900.¹³ Subsequently, the Mount Morgan Glee Club and the Mount Morgan Musical Union were established. Perhaps more significant to the region was Rockhampton's encouragement of local musicians to compete in the Eisteddföd. To this end, public concerts featuring aspiring Rockhampton artists raised funds to pay competitors' travelling expenses to the 1903 Mount Morgan Eisteddfod. However, the mountain town dominated the results in that year.¹⁴

¹¹ Geoffrey Bolton, *A thousand miles away: a history of North Queensland to 1920*, Canberra, 1972, p. 268.

¹² Joseph Hickman to George Haswell, 9 March 1896, cited in George H. Haswell, A Tyneside worthy, paper read at the Tyneside Club, Birmingham, England, 27 November, 1897, Haswell papers, F642, Fryer Memorial Library, (FL).

¹³ *MMA*, 13 April 1900.

¹⁴ *Critic*, 24 July, 28 October and 6 November 1903.

The nurturing of musical talent that led to success in the wider society became a paramount force for local pride. Public commitment and contribution to the overseas study of music for promising students saw the town support the talents of little Alma Moodie, by 1904 a child prodigy at the age of six.¹⁵ After years of study in Europe, Moodie was a renowned violinist and thereafter, the town claimed a little of her reflected glory and that of other local performers who benefited from town support in their early years of professional training.

Coincidentally with imported musicals and drama, the Mount Morgan Musical Union Vaudeville Company and the Mount Morgan Dramatic Society promoted local talent and provided fund-raising entertainments for 'deserving causes'.¹⁶ The choral concert was a charity mainstay, ensuring at the same time performance experience for the musicians that the Sisters of Mercy and seven other music teachers fostered. However, theatrical productions had limited life by 1907. Theatre drama captured town interest for a time, but offerings by local amateur thespians soon tended to be ignored, whilst audiences became apathetic also towards the frequency of local variety concerts. Moreover, the challenge of entertainments of wider appeal for general audiences in a limited population caused the annual Mount Morgan Eisteddfod to fade, although enthusiasm for occasional instrumental and choral presentations remained. Depending on content and participation rather than professional entertainment, these local musical productions played to full houses, where audiences applauded the public performances of family members. By 1913, a choir of 200 Catholic children practised in Cardinal's Hall to present the popular musical *Princess Ju-Ju*.¹⁷

¹⁵ Alma Moodie studied violin at Mount Morgan. Taught by her mother, a music teacher who was a past student of the Sisters of Mercy, Alma Moodie studied later with Herr Ludwig D'Hage, violinist, orchestra maestro and teacher at Rockhampton. Alma appeared as a violinist at public recitals in Rockhampton from the age of six and by 1907, gained a scholarship to Brussels Conservatoire. Moodie was acclaimed the finest interpreter of the Brahms compositions for violin. She never returned to Mount Morgan and died at Cologne in 1943.

¹⁶ *Mount Morgan Chronicle (MMC)*, 20 August 1907.

¹⁷ *Critic*, April 1900, 6 November 1903; Sisters of Mercy Mount Morgan, *Report*, 1913, Mercy Archives, Rockhampton.

Almost 40 Mount Morgan students of piano passed the prestigious London Trinity College of Music examinations in 1919, and echoes of earlier Mount Morgan Eisteddfödaau were the forerunners of the first Rockhampton Eisteddföd held in 1923, a competition that became an annual, week long cultural festival of music, drama and song.



Fig. 41. Lyric Orchestra, 1912. The orchestra of 39 musicians includes 15 children.

Through the late nineteenth century, the advance of stage and dance hall music that extended throughout Britain to the provinces and overseas brought the decline of the music hall tradition.¹⁸ By 1911, companies touring with a single presentation prioritised show locations. Imported theatre played Rockhampton prior to visiting Mount Morgan; The Merry Widow Opera Company opened a season in Rockhampton with *The Waltz Dream*, following this later in the week with *The Merry Widow* and concluding with *The Cuban Girl*. Four days later, the company presented the same programme at Mount Morgan.¹⁹ Patronage was reasonably constant at the mining town, but variety and some melodrama predominated, confirming that if imported theatre

¹⁸ Williamson, *Class, culture and community*, p. 168; Waterhouse, *From minstrel show to vaudeville*, p. 30.

¹⁹ *Critic*, 18 August 1911.

reflected social change in the wider sphere,²⁰ local preference dictated the popularity of entertainment. In addition to music hall delights, enthusiastic Mount Morgan audiences flocked to amusements in the style of early nineteenth century English mining villages - waxworks, and a perennial favourite, fireworks displays. The outspoken *Critic* complained:

If ever Sarah Bernhardt visits the Mount and a waxworks show is on, the divine one will freeze while the other show will play to packed houses.²¹

Mount Morgan was on the circuit for occasional imported presentations of performing small animals including monkeys and dogs. The town might have provided an ideal audience for the all-American Wirth's Circus that featured large, exotic animals; but such a show was not for the mountain town, probably for logistical reasons. Local circus patrons travelled to Rockhampton which, with Wagga Wagga in New South Wales, was one of the two Australian regional centres visited most frequently by large circus companies.²²

Some imported shows failed. For example, after a short season at Rockhampton, the film *Living Paris* in combination with the 'genial humorist' Leslie Harris played to 'bumper' houses at Mount Morgan, but Reginald Wickham and his 'talented Company' opened in Mount Morgan to a poor audience. A disgusted *Critic* raged:

The average Mountainite's idea of good stuff may be gathered from a perfectly true story. One patron visited Sydney and was asked later what he preferred in the theatrical line. He said, "'Our Miss Gibbs" was rotten, but this 'ere "Jack and the Beanstalk" was a bosker thing'.²³

²⁰ Waterhouse, *Private pleasures, public leisure: a history of Australian popular culture since 1788*, South Melbourne, 1995, pp.67-69.

²¹ *Critic*, 11 January 1907.

²² Mark St. Leon, 'The circus in the context of Australia's regional, social and cultural history', *Royal Australian Historical Society Journal*, vol. 72, part 3, December 1986, p. 205.

²³ *Critic*, 5 July 1907.

Entertainment at the Mount Morgan School of Arts followed a popular culture, but the Rockhampton press delivered a withering attack on an audience whose poor patronage of an imported classical concert was perceived as lack of intellectual appreciation:

Mount Morgan has emerged from a state of coma to a 'dam the expense style', with balls, concerts and entertainments of such frequency and variety...the boom has the appearance of becoming chronic.²⁴

Benefit shows and events were the stuff of fund raising for friendly societies, mine accident victims and widowed families. With music by a string band and a local identity as Master of Ceremonies, charity dances mirrored a town *mentalité* that demanded entertainment as value for money in return for donations to causes. Non-fund raising functions included those arranged by mine groups and shifts; the well patronised Smelters' Ball seemingly as clannish as the colourful and prestigious Military Social. The latter filled the original School of Arts, where even the stage was crowded with onlookers.²⁵ The press report of the function exaggerated the attendance - '400' - a number far exceeding the capacity of the hall. Functions also varied in style, music, catering and decorum. A dance held at the Baree School of Arts where a sole pianist provided the music for 'a good crowd' that included parents was a strictly controlled affair and prohibited liquor. Patrons observed traditional dance etiquette; if a dancer left the line and moved to a position opposite another dancer, the move was an insult to the first partner. The offender was reprimanded on the floor and warned against repeating the move.²⁶

Social freedoms for women increased at Mount Morgan as local mores changed. In 1891, a man charged with breach of promise declared in his defence at the local court that he had abandoned and refused to marry a woman who attended a public dance

²⁴ *MB*, 3 May 1912.

²⁵ *MMA*, 18 August 1907.

²⁶ *Critic*, 1 December 1911.

unescorted.²⁷ By World War I, the social atmosphere of local dances sealed the future of many couples. In the 1920s, with the introduction of optional card playing at public dances, some women attended, unescorted, to dance and play cards. Margaret and her best friend married brothers, had families and lived a street from each other. For the friends, card playing at the School of Arts – not at home – was a regular outing without their husbands. The young women walked arm in arm to the hall where the Saturday night programme included:

Euchre and Dance...you had to have two or three dances and then it would be 'all Euchre players, under the School of Arts'.²⁸

The image of public entertainment at Mount Morgan changed with introduction of the cinema. The Olympia Theatre in East Street was the major cinema that provided different programmes every Wednesday and Saturday at 8.pm. Originally the Foresters Hall, the place changed hands several times to become the Olympia in the era of silent films, where entrance prices started at 6d.²⁹ In 1911, the Irish theatre manager A.M. Welch promoted 'the show with the largest public audience' and indeed, the Olympia not only had the largest floor space in town, but also, the theatre was frequently filled to 'standing room only'. The Welch management was a family affair, and to ensure a vocal segment during sessions, Mrs. Welch engaged singers, including a young ten-year old girl whose voice thrilled patrons. Welch did not limit his entrepreneurial skills to advertising, the provision of comfortable seats and entertaining films shown to the 'superb' playing of the cinema pianist. He had a commanding voice and rendered appropriate vocal items to complement the current film; for example, he sang 'An Irishman's toast' before showing *The lad from old Ireland*. At the 'Olympia Hall', so named when shows other than films were presented, variety entertainment including the Valdares trick cyclist troupe played to a full house. The following night, a complete

²⁷ Mount Morgan Clerk of Petty Sessions (MMCPs), 28 February 1892, Deposition book 14 November 1887-7 June 1893, CPS 7B/P4, Queensland State Archives (QSA).

²⁸ O'Brien, 9 July 1992, MMOH.

²⁹ *Critic*, 25 August 1911.

change of programme was a charity concert organised by the Australian Workers Union to aid striking sugar workers.³⁰

Vacating the Olympia Theatre to a St. Patrick's celebration, Welch and his wife presented 'King's Pictures' in an open-air setting at the Rugby Union ground where a large audience sat near the screen and filled the grandstand. At this showing, Welch presented the programme described above including his own vocal item, whilst his wife and assistants dispensed 'cool and refreshing wet stuff' as a fillip to the entertainment. Meanwhile, at the Olympia Hall, the St. Patrick's concert and dance was a highlight of the Hibernian year and an occasion when women and men attended in equal numbers. The hall was crowded for the 'lavish entertainment' at the end of the day's parade and sport.³¹

In opposition to the Olympia, the Red Hill Moving Picture Show catered for patrons south of the town and mine, including Tipperary Point, Red Hill and Horse Creek. The minuscule report of the cinema by the local press - three lines of news, compared to two by one-third column reports on other theatres and shows under Welch's management - suggests that Red Hill had scant credence in the town. Moreover, when *A domestic upheaval* showed, the press sneered that the scenes of 'flying furniture and bad language', were apt entertainment for a suburb with the social character of Red Hill.³²

Picnics in the bush were popular mixed gatherings which, apart from family gatherings, were arranged by any section of the labour force, association or religious group. However, the Mount Morgan 'mine picnic' to Emu Park was the major annual event for most, and for mothers, the day began before dawn and ended perhaps at

³⁰ *Critic*, 12 May 1911.

³¹ *Critic*, 24 March 1911.

³² *Critic*, 24 March 1911.

midnight, when some families returning on the last train from the coast. The event organised by the mine had particular support from the 'Linda men' of the Linda shaft and Works. Few mine families missed the trip to Emu Park in 1904, when three 'packed' trains took some 2 500 picnickers on the third annual picnic.³³ The rail journey to Rockhampton and change to the Emu Park train was more than two hours, but travel was not a deterrent for most. The annual picnic moved into the town ethos as the most memorable event. Most walked to the Mount Morgan station in the early morning, carrying bags of food, drinking mugs, and billies in which to make tea with hot water purchased on the beach for threepence. Few would have stopped for morning tea at establishments such as Mrs. Presley's new two-storeyed Grand View House, opposite the Railway Lower Gates at Yeppoon where meals were available for visitors on arrival by Sunday trains and afternoon tea before departure.³⁴ With one accord, it seems, Mount Morganites went to the beach:

There's sister Sue with her beau attached,
Looking her very best,
There's Mum and Dad, with all their batch
Rushing along with the rest.
We're off once more in the picnic train
That is loaded with humans and beer;
Off to the seaside - hip hooray!
Cheers for our well-earned holiday-
That comes but once a year.³⁵

The press agitated for a Saturday to Monday holiday for the Linda picnic, the rationale for this the long, hot train ride to the seaside. Moreover, the station at Yeppoon was more than one kilometre from the beach, having been sited for the convenience of local agricultural producers rather than holidaymakers. Once at the shore, and with only a brief interval 'to sniff the briny and get a full cargo of lunch on board' many picnickers who wanted to secure a seat on the first return train trudged back to the station in the heat of the afternoon. The Company also ignored a press

³³ R.S. Archer to Kelso King, 26 November 1904, Archer Letter Book 1904-1912, K1014, ML.

³⁴ *Critic*, 24 March 1911.

³⁵ *Critic*, 18 October 1911.

suggestion for the loan of tarpaulins and tents sufficient to shelter the women and children at the seaside overnight.³⁶ Some Mount Morgan residents managed unpaid holidays at the 'seaside' over the Christmas - New Year period when the Company closed the mine for two weeks.³⁷ Campers, who took 'everything' on the train, from tents and stretchers to cutlery and crockery, were confronted with a long trek to camping spaces in the sand dunes fronting the shore.

This thesis has discussed in chapter four the ubiquitous existence of hotels at Mount Morgan. With drinking to excess a normal activity for many, the sale of liquor influenced the town culture of work and domestic life, law, politics and leisure. The endemic practice of gambling was also allied with hotels, with some establishments advertising 'the latest sporting info' with their offerings of meals, accommodation and best liquors. For example, when John Tucker took over the Calliungal Hotel in Morgan Street from the highly respected Morrisons, he offered the 'first' sporting news. Yet most patrons would be aware that the sporting results, as with other 'intelligence' was available to those who went direct to the nearby telegraph office.

For a majority of Mount Morgan males, the town became and remained a centre for sport, providing relief from the confinement of workplaces and specifically, the underground mine. A working-class culture at Mount Morgan as elsewhere saw fighting, boxing and footrunning linked intrinsically with pubs, hotels and drinking. However, it will be seen that the practice of 'work together and relax together' was not the preserve of miners only; workers and others of any class who tended to spend leisure in groups or teams included many who worked together. The emergent working class culture at Mount Morgan in the late nineteenth century included British traditions of a century earlier entrenched in early villages and districts until transported to the

³⁶ *Critic*, 25 August 1911.

³⁷ O'Brien, 9 July 1992, MMOH. A railway branch line to Yeppoon from the Rockhampton to Emu Park railway opened in 1909.

urban sphere. Sports imposed by immigrant adherents of boxing and footrunning³⁸ were not only connected intrinsically with gambling and drinking, but also reflected class lines. This might have included the blood sport of cockfighting, for male only patronage.

It's into the pub to take a sup,
The cock-fight it was soon made up.
For twenty pound these cocks will play,
The charcoal black and the bonny grey.³⁹

Whether cockfighting occurred at Mount Morgan is uncertain, but by the 1900s, strident argument relating to the cruel sport was heard between late night drinkers in laneways and unsavoury places.⁴⁰

Licensed billiard saloons - usually attached or adjacent to hotel premises - operated freely. Despite the population difference between Mount Morgan and Rockhampton as discussed in chapter three, six saloons operated in each town by 1900.⁴¹ Working class men patronised billiard halls where regular intra-town competitions flourished. Class lines in patronage⁴² were apparent; at Rockhampton, some more affluent petite bourgeoisie played billiards at private residences, at the School of Arts or The Rockhampton Club. At Mount Morgan, Carlton House featured a billiard room, as described in chapter two, while G.A. Richard, an obsessive player, had a billiard room included in a large semi-detached addition to his Company

³⁸ Waterhouse, *Private pleasures, public leisure*, p. 37.

³⁹ A. L. Lloyd (comp.), *Come all ye bold miners: ballads and songs of the coalfields*, London, 1978, p. 228. Cockfighting, outlawed in Britain by 1849, was not illegal in New South Wales in the later nineteenth century, but was confined to areas remote from public or residential locations. It was a clandestine event, perhaps 'out behind a hotel yard' where the licensee was doubtless aware of the proceedings. Cockfighting was scarcely sport, given that a long steel spur fitted to a claw enabled a bird to kill another, perhaps in seconds. See also Clifford Geertz, *The interpretation of cultures*, USA, Harper Collins, 1973, pp.422, 426.

⁴⁰ MMCPs, Deposition Book, 17 August 1897-7 March 1899, CPS 7B/P4, QSA.

⁴¹ *Queensland Government Gazette*, 1900.

⁴² *Critic*, 23 August 1907.

residence on the mine Range.⁴³ It is probable that Richard, as 'Captain' of the Gordon Club, was instrumental in the installation of the club billiard room.

Miners brought boxing to Mount Morgan, in an era of physical settlement of social disputes, but the code became a spectator sport for male patrons drawn to witness the prowess of imported pugilists and local challengers. The promoters required a permit from police to stage a boxing match in a hotel yard or a hall, depending on the status of the protagonists.⁴⁴ Professional bouts at Mount Morgan were intermittent, but boxing retained its following. The Australian Natives Association, prompted perhaps by the large complement of local Irish youth, conducted sparring classes by 1907, reporting a strong membership of learners at a gymnasium the association constructed for the purpose.⁴⁵ Such an adjunct to public leisure and performance prompted the comment that Mount Morgan had 'at last awoken from its lethargy and started to amuse itself in various ways instead of drinking beer'.⁴⁶ Ironically, the new facility highlighted the long-standing need in the town for 'a workers' club', a desire that remained an unrealised hope. Conversely, the Carlton Club functioned from the early 1900s, with a seemingly elite membership of younger men on mine staff, in management, and local business.⁴⁷ The social events of the club, included picnics and dances that the press reported in detail, citing the names of female participants, and on occasion, describing their attire. This reportage was the antithesis of generally brief reports of local wedding celebrations, as cited in chapter eight, including of a local miner's wedding for which reportage barely mentioned the bride. Such press was usual, so cannot be attributed only to individual journalism.

⁴³ H.P. Seale to N.F. White, 17 September 1901, Mount Morgan Gold Mining Company Limited (MMGMC), MS82.12, CQU/CC.

⁴⁴ MMCPs, Deposition Book, 20 December 1897, CPS 7B/ P4, QSA.

⁴⁵ *Critic*, 5 July 1907.

⁴⁶ *Critic*, 18 August 1907.

⁴⁷ *Critic*, 24 March 1911.

Sports that provided major competition in the late nineteenth century continued in the 1900s when events were held at the Rugby Union ground where footrunning (pedestrianism) was a standard feature for benefit association picnics. The Australian Natives Association also promoted leisure pursuits through sporting picnics, large scale annual events that included footrunning, cycling, football placing, throwing cricket bat, the traditional egg and spoon race, high jump and 'old buffers race'. The goat race was an event identified already with Central Queensland. The inclusion of a hurling match demonstrated the bond between Irish-Australians and the Australian Natives Association.⁴⁸ Substantial prizes were the rewards for all events, with footrunning and cycling the most important and titled the Commonwealth Handicap and Australian Natives Association Handicap.⁴⁹

By 1906, the Mount Morgan Athletic League held its first meeting at the Calliungal Hotel, where publican J. Lowry was secretary for the executive that adopted the rules of the Queensland Athletic League.⁵⁰ Two years later, the New Year's Day Sports of the Rugby Union Club held footrunning races including the traditional Ladies' Bracelet, seventy five yards sprint and quarter mile handicap.⁵¹ However, this sport of 'peds' - was derided loudly by 1911, in a reaction to results posted for the local Grand Handicap in which, after a disputed result, the runner placed second received the purse. Backers were left to take up the matter with the Rugby Union Club who arranged the sporting event on their ground. However, personal rivalry that fragmented the success of club interaction did not detract from the social significance of footrunning events on any sports day programme.

Individuals generated town interest in horseracing, a sport that the first general manager of the Company, J. Wesley Hall supported, both competitively and financially.

⁴⁸ *Mount Morgan Argus (MMA)* 25 May 1900.

⁴⁹ *Morning Bulletin (MB)*, 19 May 1906.

⁵⁰ *MB*, 25 May 1906.

⁵¹ *Capricornian*, 3 January 1908.

He raced his own bloodstock on the rough racecourse south of the town and donated £20 per year to turf club funds. Within a decade of settlement, such paternalism by the Company hierarchy was not only accepted but also expected by townspeople. Hastened perhaps by the onset of the Great Drought, horseracing faded in the town after the death of Wesley Hall in 1901. R.G. Casey replaced him as elected director of the Company and, indeed, horseracing enthusiast who, during his visit to Mount Morgan in 1903, ignored the press suggestion that he was 'just the sort' to support the almost defunct local Jockey Club.⁵² Walter Russell Hall, director and major shareholder of the Company was also keenly interested in horseracing and the press speculated that:

If the Turf Club could be roused from its dormant state during the cold weather and applied for assistance, Casey and Hall would give substantial prizes and more than once a year.⁵³

However, such a request would involve a personal contribution from Hall and Casey rather than in the name of or at the expense of the Company, so the turf club declined to act. The Australian Natives' Association also formed a Jockey Club, but organisation of meetings was amateurish and dismissed publicly as 'cronk', although perhaps typifying bush race meetings. Local demand for regular monthly meetings for small stakes was unsuccessful; owners refused to travel horses for minor purses that drew small fields and indifferent horses to race on a course that was very rough at best.⁵⁴ Ultimately, meetings declined to an occasional event held by a town association, and the annual, official meeting on New Year's Day - at the height of the Wet season. The day of traditionally diverse social events was challenging in terms of the gate and takings for a club that held its only meet when races were 'attractions at every little town and bush public house'.⁵⁵ Mount Morgan was aware that whilst their track and the horses that raced were poor, Rockhampton raced bloodstock at professionally organised meetings on a track that was

⁵² *MMA*, September 1903; R.G. Casey was reported as owning the favourite for the 1903 Grand National Steeplechase in Victoria.

⁵³ *Critic*, 24 July 1903.

⁵⁴ *Critic*, 5 June 1903.

⁵⁵ *Critic*, 11 November 1903.

'one of the most raced on courses in Australia'.⁵⁶ Although the Mount Morgan Turf Club confined their next meeting to the winter period, the local press scoffed at the event:

Same old racecourse,
Same old ground,
Same old horses
Running 'round.
Same old grandstand,
Same old crowd.
Same old home stretch
Same old luck,
Same old favourite
In the ruck.
Same old thirst
O dear Ochone!
Same old way of
Walking home.⁵⁷

In the early 1900s, the Jockey Club anticipated a boost to meetings with progress on the extension of the railway from Mount Morgan to the Dawson Valley. Funds swelled by 50 per cent when the club lobbied locally for donations to increase prize monies. With an improved track, enthusiasm for local meetings of the 'prads' revived from 1909-1912, together with a significant increase in the number of women who attended as spectators and punters. However, the brief racing resurgence faded, suggesting that meetings continued only until the flow of contributions ceased.

An equestrian sport of a different style and implanted from an immigrant culture emerged at Mount Morgan in the late 1890s. Despite the urban character of the town, polo tested the horsemanship of local and district riders. Not a sport for the faint-hearted, and shortlived at the mountain town, polo was vigorous and demanding as players competed in a section of the Company 'paddock' near the mine. Mounts were not polo ponies *per se*, but local horses that were ridden hard on a ground that ensured chukkas were exciting if dangerous. Where the original scrub had been cut for the mine, many remaining stumps were sharpened almost to points, probably 'by small boys

⁵⁶ McDonald, *Rockhampton*, p. 364; *Critic*, 5 July 1907.

⁵⁷ *Critic*, 24 July 1903.

with the family axe collecting firewood in their billy-goat carts'.⁵⁸ The polo club disappeared under the increasing difficulties of an unsuitable climate, the need for a safe ground, regular team practice, and care of mounts.⁵⁹

Although pedestrianism dominated at Mount Morgan, many who lived in outlying suburbs or districts rode horses to and from the town for work and leisure. Robert Cole recalled that his father rode from Moongan at the top of the Razorback to the mine and grazed his horse in the Company paddock during shift.⁶⁰ Horse-trading was a sound enterprise at Mount Morgan as at Rockhampton and, given the rugged terrain and tracks at the mountain town, transport, racing, driving and riding had strong elements of danger. Infrequent track racing at Mount Morgan was no deterrent to outside racing. This explains a 'course' on a section of the rough main road near Moongan on the way out of town. The location provided popular, if surreptitious sport for riders and gamblers. Races were dangerous for horses, riders and horse vehicles driven under illegal conditions: a cart with three horses, the third outside the shafts and hitched to a swingle bar, might be raced at a fast pace after dark and without lights.⁶¹ Police were not stationed at Moongan, or Moonmera over the Razorback, so they were limited to acting upon reports from complainants who travelled to Mount Morgan, sometimes on foot. It seems that many local riders, particularly the native-born, overcame the racing challenge with an innate sense of horsemanship and riding style that suggests a devil-may-care attitude consistent with an entrenched larrikin image.

Less physically challenging than riding in the remote areas of the town was rifle shooting, an activity entrenched in the Volunteer ethos. Before the Boer War dragged

⁵⁸ MMA, 28 September 1900; B. G. Patterson, Notes on sport at Mount Morgan, p. 2, c. 1950, Mount Morgan Historical Museum (MMHM).

⁵⁹ Polo was popular briefly in Central Queensland, with rural clubs including the Yaamba and Kunwarara districts north of Rockhampton, but the sport there was also shortlived. Kevin Geddes, interview with the author, 3 January 1999, Oral History, (OH); Leo Carpenter, *Livingstone, a history of the Shire of Livingstone*, Brisbane, 1991, p. 236.

⁶⁰ Barbara Webster provided information from her father, Robert Cole, 1999.

⁶¹ MMC, 7 September 1917.

to its ignominious close, the demands of Queenslanders interested in rifle shooting prompted applications to government from 70 districts for the formation of state rifle clubs.⁶² The Mount Morgan Rifle Club formed in March 1900 preceded the 'Gordon' Club, mentioned earlier in this chapter, and named perhaps for the Gordon family, landholders in the 1870s of the later Mount Morgan mine area.⁶³ Riflemen practised for the Federal Flag competition, for which teams of eleven men fired traditional distances of



Fig. 42. Mount Morgan Rifle Club 'A' team, 1912.

200, 600 and 800 yards. Practice was rewarded in the superiority of Mount Morgan riflemen who tended to defeat both Rockhampton and Gladstone by large percentages when the towns met in regular, representative competition.⁶⁴ In addition to rifle clubs, young state school cadets underwent regular training and firing practice and participated in junior competition. At Mount Morgan by 1903, 'Captain' Richard was the

⁶² *MMA*, 1 June 1900.

⁶³ McDonald, *Rockhampton*, pp. 290, 291.

⁶⁴ *MB*, 17 November 1905.

commanding officer of the senior corps members who instructed cadets. Such training of youth begs a question of the place for rifle shooting in the schema of 'sport' or 'leisure'.

McEwen contends that organisations in the Newcastle coal district were devoted to organised leisure but discriminated against women.⁶⁵ As stated earlier, sport was gender specific at Mount Morgan, and press coverage of a sporting event in the 1890s might include a seemingly token comment:

The most noticeable features during the match were the large number of ladies, the vociferous barracking, the rough play and the good nature of the players.⁶⁶

Brief press references to women's sport by 1906 confirms that women were not excluded from sport, but their efforts did not receive detailed comment. In comparison, coverage of local Rugby Union games - a sport discussed later in this chapter - commanded columns in a single issue. By 1911, reference to female spectators at commercial sporting events was a regular item in the social column of the conservative *Morning Bulletin* or a single sentence in non-conservative press.⁶⁷ Public sporting events included women in the 1900s; for example, the committee for the Friendly Societies Picnic Sports Day in 1908 encouraged male competition and commented patronisingly on prizes to be offered for the ladies' cricket match, boys' and girls' races, and the 'married women's race'.⁶⁸ This opportunity for public sporting participation by women, however banal, confirms social change in less than decade. Moreover, social events connected with sport were no longer exclusively male affairs. After a Rugby Union match against the Charters Towers team, the local club entertained the visitors at a dance held in the School of Arts. Women played their role as caterers for the function

⁶⁵ Eileen McEwen, *The Newcastle coalmining district of New South Wales 1860-1900*, PhD thesis, University of Sydney, 1979, pp. 209, 210. Team sport, the pub and gambling sports were male preserves at Newcastle, where women who visited public houses were ostracised. Members of brass bands, Volunteers and most friendly societies were male.

⁶⁶ *MB*, 21 July 1897.

⁶⁷ *MMA*, 13 May 1911.

⁶⁸ *DR*, 11 September 1908.

while onlookers filled the stage and the floor was 'uncomfortably crowded with dancers until music and refreshments ceased at 2.a.m.'⁶⁹

Climate or dress did not affect the popularity of energetic entertainments. Roller-skating at the Royal Rink was popular by 1903 and became a sport for anyone. The rink opened from May through the winter season until November and the return of brass band recitals, variety shows and ultimately, films. At no other Mount Morgan venue was the



Fig. 43. Skating and fancy dress in the open-air, Royal Rink, c.1918. Spectators crowd the skaters on the floor; others line the high side fence to Morgan Street.

diversity of amusements so marked as at the Royal Rink. By 1917, 'Rinking' was so popular that large crowds attended day and night sessions, where sports events included a mile handicap, beginner's race, barrel and wheelbarrow races for men, relay and potato races for women. A 'masquerade ball' featured masks available at the door and prizes for the best costume,⁷⁰ whilst a charity skating carnival held in June 1917 raised

⁶⁹ *MMA*, 30 July 1900.

⁷⁰ *MMC*, 12 May 1911.

funds towards the repatriation of returned soldiers. Competition was critical to the sport and male team players competed for selection in a 'roller-skating hockey team' for the first inter-town match against Rockhampton. The event was more successful than the first Central Queensland football match on skates played in the 1890s between two Rockhampton clubs at their Columbia Rink.⁷¹

From the outset, mine management influenced the popularity of some sports.⁷² Ronald Lawson has pointed out the class based appeal of recreation in Brisbane in the 1890s, and McEwen confirms a similar situation at Newcastle.⁷³ A self-styled elitism at Mount Morgan in the late 1880s - in essence still a canvas and bark town - saw the formation of the Mount Morgan Lawn Tennis Club. The court was near the river and within the section of the Company paddock that in later years, became the town sports ground.⁷⁴ However, animosity in a membership of *ten* caused 'the club's senile decay, if it was not become moribund' and for this reason, some merchants and a medical practitioner built courts at their residences.

By 1905, a self-appointed committee that moved for revival of the lawn tennis club included a police magistrate, the mine manager and a senior staff member, who formulated stringent rules for the harmony and progress of the association. Alice Richard, wife of the Company general manager donated a bench for spectators when women were among the twenty-three club members;⁷⁵ but research did not reveal whether women were members of the club, or, indeed, whether they were players. If so, press reports of tennis fixtures and competition did not refer to females.⁷⁶ In comparison, lawn tennis was the most popular sport at The Rockhampton Girls'

⁷¹ *MMC*, 6 July, 13 July, 3 August 1917.

⁷² Fred Cole, interview with the author 8 October 1992, MMOH; *MB*, 23 May 1935.

⁷³ Ronald L. Lawson, *Brisbane in the 1890s: a study of Australian urban society*, St. Lucia, 1973, pp. 194-206, cited in McEwen, *The Newcastle coalmining district*, p. 214.

⁷⁴ See Map no. 1, chapter 1. The area (centre left) of 'Newman Park' was the earliest recreation and sports location, initially named 'Playground', later 'Sportsground'.

⁷⁵ *MMA*, 20 July 1900.

⁷⁶ *MB*, 11 July 1909.

Grammar School by 1897.⁷⁷ At Mount Morgan, it was the forte of tennis club associates to organise fund raising social functions, for which their highly successful efforts were praised in the press.

The activity of manned glider flying highlighted status divisions while it emphasised the diversity of interests outside the workplace at the urban mining town. An aviation enthusiast who visited the Company in 1909 'infected' a group of engineering graduates with the desire to fly. They formed a gliding club and obtained a glider – a fabric covered wooden framework in which the 'underbody' comprised the lower limbs of the 'pilot'. He ran within the structure while the other club members ran ahead as fast as possible and towed the glider up-wind. Once the craft was off the ground - short flights achieved about 100 metres – the man within controlled elevation by moving his body backwards and forwards. Steering was impossible as the glider flew only against the wind. When staff changes at the mine dispersed members, the club collapsed and the glider hung, 'cobwebbed and rotting', beneath the mine staff quarters until demolition of the building in 1930. Meanwhile, a legacy of the gliding club encouraged interested Mount Morgan boys to make model aeroplanes. Prizes were awarded, and amongst the winners was the keenest model maker, Roderick Stanley Dallas, the son of an underground shift boss at the mine. Young Dallas made models and studied all the literature he could acquire through Jens Lundager, local bookseller and newspaperman.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Betty Cosgrove, *The wider view: a social history of the Rockhampton Girls' Grammar school*, Brisbane, 1992, p. 219.

⁷⁸ B.G. Patterson, Mount Morgan gliding club, typescript, c. 1950, p. 2, MMHM.

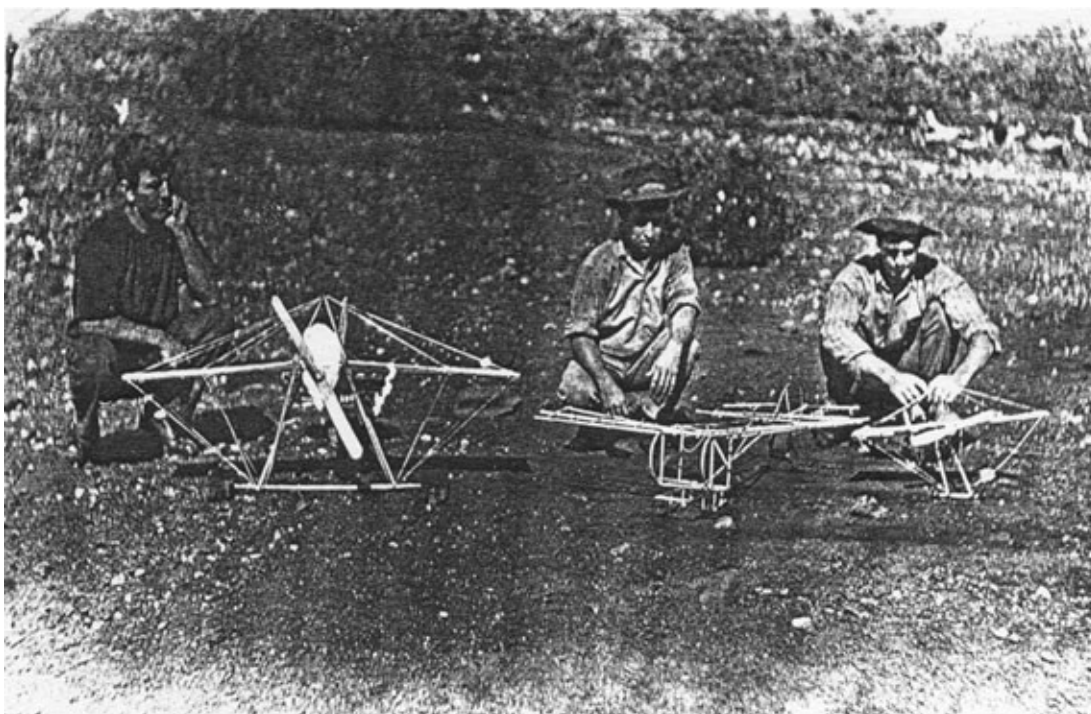


Fig. 44. Stephen Dallas and others with model aircraft at Mount Morgan quarry, Iron Island, Shoalwater Bay, Central Queensland, c.1915.

Dallas studied chemistry and mechanical drawing at the technical college and followed his father to work at the mine. However, Stanley Dallas joined the staff at the assay office, and subsequently went to the Company's ironstone quarry operation on Iron

Island in Shoalwater Bay, north of Rockhampton, where he continued to make flying models and to study aeronautics. His opportunity to fly came when recruits were sought for the Royal Air Force formed in Britain during World War I. Dallas paid his own travel cost to England, applied to join the new force and was accepted. The career of Flight Commander Stanley Dallas, DSO and Bar, DSC and Croix de Guerre ended with his death in an air battle over a foreign field in June 1918.⁷⁹ However, rather than dedication to King and country, his chosen life path suggests an obsession with flying, for which he was prepared to go to war. Whilst his name and exploits moved into Australian service history, they became part of the Mount Morgan collage of deeds that became local legend. At the Mount Morgan state primary school, generations of pupils

⁷⁹ Rob Ogilvie, *The best days of your life: a centenary magazine for the state schools of Mt. Morgan Shire*, Rockhampton, 1987, pp. 47, 48.

learned of Stanley Dallas, pilot and national hero, his name etched in gold leaf on the school's WWI honour board.

The threat to Mount Morgan life included catastrophe in leisure pursuits. The number of adults and children who drowned at Mount Morgan as elsewhere emphasised the hazards of local watercourses and dams. Dressing sheds constructed at a mine dam on the Dee River in the 1890s were destroyed by flood within a few years, but Council constructed concrete swimming baths in 1905 near the site of the destroyed sheds.⁸⁰ The baths were filled only after prolonged negotiation with mine management for the provision of water from the Big Dam. Dependence on the mine for assistance with leisure facilities confirmed Company paternalism but, as pointed out in chapter two, such paternalism was as selective as it was infrequent. Women swam at the Mount Morgan Amateur Swim Club Baths, a complex enclosed within a high iron fence and where small dressing cubicles surrounded the pool.⁸¹ Comparative privacy at the pool encouraged women to use the facility and join the Ladies' Swimming Club. At a carnival in the first year of operation, women's swimming races provided prizes of 10s. 6d. per event, a substantial amount that exceeded the weekly wage of a shop assistant. On that occasion, the all-male committee, led by Mayor Jens Lundager, insisted that in the interests of unbiased results, the judge should be a Rockhampton male, but it is not known if official integrity was perpetual.

The local baths remained popular but the Big Dam was the place for picnics and gatherings and was the local resort in the long, hot summers. A vast water storage for the mine, but presenting the fresh, cool beauty of a lake, the Dam was suited to supervised boating, but some races were arranged privately and in a spirit of derring-do, for example, one was advertised as an:

Aquatic Event Extraordinary

⁸⁰ *MB*, 14 November 1905.

⁸¹ *MB*, 26 October 1905.

At the Big Dam on Saturday night next, at eight sharp, moon permitting, pair-oared with cox race, catch boats: the 'Barnacle' Crew, versus the 'Deadbeat' crew, straight course if possible, 250 yards, for a case of wet stuff, one to win. Betting: 6 to 4 on 'Deadbeat'.⁸²

If the public image of the Big Dam environment was one of tranquil beauty and space for leisure pursuits, a dark side to the place was ever present. Accidental drowning was a constant hazard and at least one phthisis sufferer suicided from the bank. Moreover,



Fig. 45. No. 7 Dam, 1905, J.H. Lundager photo, series 4. Posed figures, children above the Dam. Others near the boat sit on the wall, some stand at the base.

swirling currents at the wall of the Dam were so strong that small boats might be swamped. If the water level of the Dam was below the wall, the occupants might drown, or if the Dam was full, they might be swept over the wall to the rocks below. Mishaps also occurred on waterways anywhere, whether at favoured places for picnics

⁸² *Critic*, 15 September 1911.

and swimming, like Black Snake Falls, or waterholes in the creeks of the town hinterland.

Some cycled to the Big Dam, other places of interest and to work. A mode of transport that proliferated in outer London in the later nineteenth century, cycling was popularised at Mount Morgan by 1903 when the Rockhampton Red Bird Riders visited the mountain town. Their ride was a feat characteristic of its time, but a test of endurance rather than cycling expertise, considering the track and the Razorback.⁸³ The



Fig. 46. Black Snake Falls, Mount Morgan, 1919.

event prompted formation of a cycling club in the mining town, but the Mount Morgan terrain was not conducive to a large scale cycling, sales enterprise or, indeed, the extended life of a bicycle. Whilst Rockhampton, in its location on the wide flats of the Fitzroy River, became and remained a bicycle town, cycling enthusiasts at Mount Morgan competed at sporting carnivals held at the Union grounds on the riverbank.

⁸³ *Critic*, 5 June 1903.

McEwen suggests that for the Newcastle working class, cricket and Rugby were the mainstay sports.⁸⁴ Their universal appeal also ensured they became and remained the major sports at Mount Morgan. Doubtless, the hundreds of players involved included many miners, underground and surface workers, town employees and players from the emergent mining settlement of Mount Usher that was to the east across the Dee Range. The suburb of Baree, its character reminiscent of the clannish community of a British village,⁸⁵ fielded teams independent of the town.

At least eleven cricket teams played at Mount Morgan, while representative teams of seniors and juniors provided constant challenges to Rockhampton and other centres. One oval did not suffice for the multiplicity of teams, and many played where space was available. The earliest and best cricket pitch was on Burke's Flat, a location described in chapter one, and which was absorbed by the 1900s into the mine tailings area. Land on

<u>Senior</u>
Roman Catholic Young Men
Lower Works and Town
Linda
Mundic and West Works
Baree
Mount Usher
<u>Junior</u>
Mundic Works
Lower Works and Town
Mountain Top
Mundic West and Copper
Lower Works and Town
Mount Morgan
Rechabites
Roman Catholic Young Men ⁸⁶

Table 8. Cricket Teams, Mount Morgan and district, 1905.

⁸⁴ McEwen, *The Newcastle coalmining district*, pp. 216-218. The amateur game 'Rugby', played in New South Wales by 1829, was known as 'Union' from 1874. The game of Rugby 'League' for paid players emerged in 1908, but was not played in Mount Morgan before 1911.

⁸⁵ E.P. Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, London, 1991, p. 448.

⁸⁶ *MB*, 14 November 1905.

the river flat at the north end of the Company paddock became the main pitch, but a further difficulty arose with the survey for the proposed Dawson Valley railway from the town. The Mount Morgan Cricket Association wrote the Railways Department, urging that the railway should use the Company siding into the Lower Yard and join the line at Mundic Creek.⁸⁷ The Railways response was polite if pithy, pointing out to the cricketers that the deviation they suggested would completely spoil the new rail line.

From the outset, Rugby dominated Mount Morgan contact sport. Numerous teams of mineworkers played in matches arranged between different departments and Works. Typically also, teams including Wests, Easts, Mine, Town, Central and Baree fielded senior, junior and minor grades. The number of teams and the range of age categories typified family involvement,

Dad was not very big, but very quick. He was a great footballer, he was of a great football family, all the nine boys in the family played football, and all played in different teams.⁸⁸

The demanding and irregular lifestyle of mine shiftwork was a major hindrance to sporting participation for many in various sections of the mine, especially for underground workers. Some tradesmen were required to work night shift also, and might do so throughout their working life.⁸⁹ Shift workers' hours decreed that they were unavailable for regular training sessions or selection for club or representative teams. To overcome a sense of exclusion, workers on particular shifts formed teams. When members were available, they played against shift teams from other sections of the Works. They were not involved in local Union fixtures, but matches between shift teams were closely fought and included 'Flamanck's Shift versus Dibdin's Mundic Works shift', and W. Franklin's Shift versus P. Dallas' shift. Teams, also selected from groups of 'Possibles' and 'Probables', were played for a trophy of fifteen gallons of beer

⁸⁷ Patterson, 'Notes on sport at Mount Morgan', p. 4.

⁸⁸ Elaine Millers, interview with the author, 10 December 1992, MMOH.

⁸⁹ James Leigh, interview with the author, 15 September 1992, MMOH.

and three dozen soft drinks.⁹⁰ The camaraderie of underground workers who had slight opportunity to play sport with other than workmates confirmed a compulsory insularity. Their games benefited players at the physical level rather than social interaction with and against players from outside the immediate workplace, or indeed, other towns.

Dissension between Mount Morgan and Rockhampton was traditional in their sporting competition. The Rockhampton press criticised the Mount Morgan Rugby Union for seeking permission from Brisbane Rugby authorities to send a team to Brisbane 'on their little own' for the Country Week Competition instead of a Central District representative team. The indignant response of the Mount Morgan Rugby Union and criticism in a flow of letters through the press were reflected in a typical statement: 'infernally cheek...adds insult to injury and only goes to show the extent of hatred and bias' that reflected the simmering animosity between the clubs:

Why two towns, distant only twenty six miles from each other, are not on friendly sporting relations is a mystery to us...This is a matter that requires probing to the very core. Friendly rivalry between sister towns is always conducive to the progress of any sport, but when one town has the other 'set', as has been represented to us, then the sooner those responsible for such a state of affairs are brought to their senses the better.⁹¹

The open antagonism evident in 1903 remained unsettled and the towns' entrenched rivalry marred representative games.⁹² Fights and abuse between spectators and also between players occurred at almost every inter-town match until by 1907, although Mount Morgan won almost every game that year, few supporters travelled to Rockhampton with the team.⁹³

In addition to the proliferation of competition in town and against Rockhampton, challenges between Central Queensland teams and other centres as far distant as

⁹⁰ *Critic*, 5 June 1903.

⁹¹ *Critic*, 2 May 1903.

⁹² *MMC*, 8 June 1906.

⁹³ *Critic*, 26 July 1907.

Brisbane, Toowoomba and Charters Towers were seasonal events. The Rockhampton Rugby Union arranged a match in 1906 against Toowoomba - a team flushed with a recent victory over New South Wales. Mount Morgan players were selected also and the local press claimed that the Central Queensland combined team was expected to 'cause the good old paying public to look up and take more notice'. However, the Rockhampton press declared tartly that a purely Rockhampton side could 'put the acid' on Toowoomba. The south Queensland visitors came to Mount Morgan subsequently, arriving to an official reception at the Calliungal Hotel, where Mayor Jens Lundager chaired the function. The press named local bourgeoisie who were present, but the players received no press coverage.⁹⁴

A Mount Morgan by-law prohibited Rugby matches on the 'dreadful "Victorian" Sabbath' but at Baree, 'only a bracing walk from the Mount' the Union game that was played in 1911 on the Sunday after Christmas drew a spectator crowd of about 800.⁹⁵ Significantly, since the 1909 changes to town boundaries, Baree was just within the boundary of the Calliungal Shire, where football was played on Sundays. The shire itself was predominantly rural with scattered populations and small settlements to which municipal by-laws were not applied. However, whilst the authority of a Mount Morgan by-law was skirted on occasion, it seems fielding of rugby teams at the height of the sub-tropical summer drew no comment or criticism.

Social interaction occurred in leisure gatherings and general sport. Programmes varied to accommodate patrons expected to attend a particular celebration. For example, at the Friendly Societies Sports Day at the Big Dam, six lodges fielded rugby teams to play matches of ten minutes each way, while twenty-five other field and water

⁹⁴ *MMC*, 8 June 1906.

⁹⁵ *Critic*, 12 July 1907, 28 December 1911.

Sports Carnival!

UNION GROUNDS, MT. MORGAN,
Monday, May 4th, 1925.

DAY AND NIGHT.

£120 Pedestrian and Cycling Events £120

PEDESTRIAN EVENTS:

1. **LABOUR DAY HANDICAP, £40, 130 yards.**
First prize, £30; second prize, £7; third prize, £3. Nomination, 8/-; Acceptance, 4/-
 2. **MOUNT MORGAN HANDICAP, £15, 100 yards.**
First prize, £10; second prize, £3; third prize, £2. Nomination, 3/6; Acceptance, 2/-
 3. **UNION HANDICAP, £10, 220 yards.**
First prize, £7; second prize, £2; third prize, £1. Nomination, 2/6; Acceptance, 1/6
 4. **SPRINT HANDICAP, £10, 75 yards.**
First prize, £7; second prize, £2; third prize, £1. Nomination, 2/6; Acceptance, 1/6
 5. **NOVICE HANDICAP, £5, 75 yards.**
First prize, £3; second prize, £1/10/-; third prize, 10/-. Nomination, 1/6; Acceptance, 1/6
- Peds. may nominate for all Events for 15/- and accept for 7/6**

CYCLING EVENTS (Amateur):

6. **MILE BICYCLE HANDICAP, £20.**
First prize, trophy value £15; second, trophy value £4; third, trophy value £1. Nomination, 10/-
 7. **ONE AND A-HALF MILE BICYCLE HANDICAP, £12.**
First prize, trophy value £8; second, trophy value £3; third, trophy £1. Nomination, 6/-
 8. **HALF-MILE BICYCLE HANDICAP, £8.**
First prize, trophy value £5; second, trophy value £2; third, trophy £1. Nomination, 4/-
- Cyclists may nominate for all Events for 17/6.**

NOTE.—The Cycling Track has been banked and put in first-class racing order.

Affiliated with Central Queensland Athletic League.

NOMINATIONS for Pedestrian Events close on SATURDAY, 18th APRIL, with E. J. Chick, G. A. Thomas, S. Phillips, W. Currin, C. Bull, and the Secretaries. Handicaps declared 22nd April; Acceptances close MONDAY, 27th April.

Nominations for Cycling Events close on SATURDAY, 25th April, with R. Semple, Rockhampton, T. Sunner, Mount Morgan, and the Secretaries.

The Committee reserve the right to postpone the Carnival in the event of wet weather or other unforeseen circumstances.

ALL THE FUN OF THE FAIR!

Minor Events Quoit Handicap Field Games Dancing Events

DANCING ON THE GREEN SIDE SHOWS CONFETTI BATTLE

PUBLICAN'S BOOTH REFRESHMENT STALLS LUNCHEON ON GROUND

Grounds Lighted by Electricity at Night. Special Trains to and from Baralaba and Rockhampton

BRASS BAND IN ATTENDANCE C. HEISER'S ORCHESTRA

Procession leaves Girls' School at 9 a.m. Sports start at 10.30 a.m.

ADMISSION—Day Session, 1/1; Night Session, 1/1 (inc. tax); Grandstand, 1/- extra. Children, Half-price

[SEE OTHER SIDE FOR
ENTRY FORM.]

A. ROWLEY, } Joint Hon. Secretaries,
ROY SELLARS, } Mount Morgan.

Mount Morgan Chronicle Print

Fig. 47. Advertising leaflet for Labour Day Sports at Mount Morgan, 1925.

events on the programme included running, swimming, sailing, boating and diving. In high moral tone, the societies' organising committee asserted that the sports were not

devised for the 'boldest and the strongest' but for participants to exercise 'judgment and sagacity'.⁹⁶ Hints of earlier influence of benefit societies and lodges in Labor ideology was evident in the disciplined organisation of the Eight-Hour Day Union sports, stipulating all nominations must be lodged on the due date, on forms provided and with appropriate fees. Pedestrian events were to Mount Morgan Athletic League Rules, 'naval and military' events to 'decided' rules, and the local sports committee directed school, horse, and wood chopping events.⁹⁷

The politicising of sport saw the Labor Day carnival in May 1925 conducted at a time when local industrial relations were abysmal. The town upheld the traditions of the wider society where celebrations continued irrespective of circumstances. On the Mount Morgan stage where 'life must go on', many *would* afford the carnival, not only for fun, but to also participate in events in the hope of prize monies more than in the name of sport. Thus, the celebrations preserved a local image that defied the reality of escalating poverty.

By 1927, the Company in liquidation left a town almost devoid of employment and in mental anguish for which a panacea of sorts was enforced leisure. The press declared that the closed doors of failed enterprises confirmed the suggestion that traders had gone 'possum shooting.' Perhaps this activity was for financial gain rather than leisure. Theatres closed until only the Olympia remained, and the dwindling population organised social gatherings and functions at the School of Arts, albeit with much reduced patronage or financial support.⁹⁸

⁹⁶ *DR*, 11 September 1908.

⁹⁷ *Critic*, 24 March 1911.

⁹⁸ *DR*, 22 October 1927.

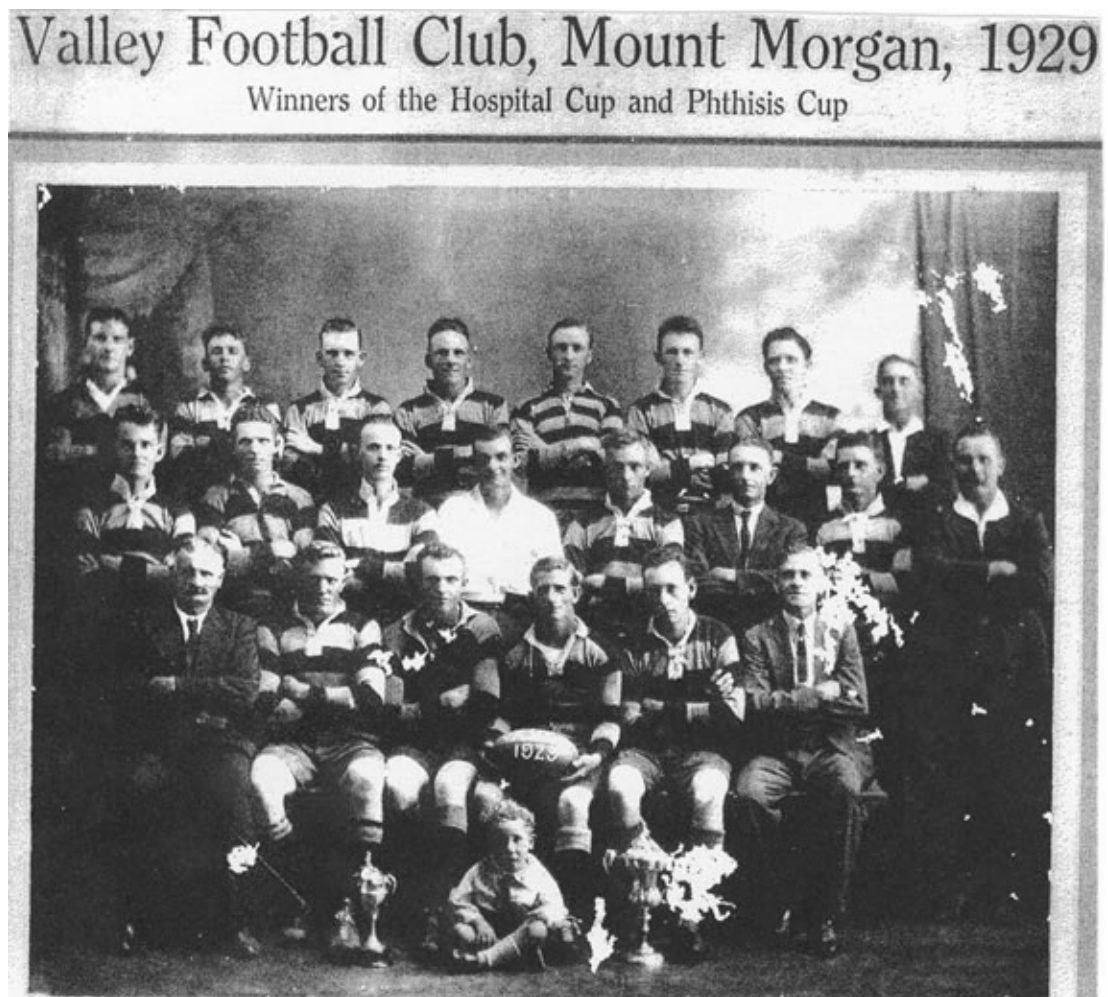


Fig. 48. Mount Morgan, 1929. The Hospital Cup and The Phthisis Cup, 1929.

Whilst organised sporting events were fewer now, local Rugby teams vied for the Hospital Cup and The Phthisis Cup, the trophies ironic memorials to workers sacrificed in an occupation devised by capitalism. Similarly, in this once vigorous 'man's town', the social support systems of those who remained perpetuated the slowed heartbeat of a place that hoped for material resurrection of a once omnipresent mine.