

BYGONE DAYS: Geelong - 100 years ago

Week 5: January 30th to February 5th, 1923

News of Prime Minister Hughes resignation as Prime Minister was spread to the Geelong Community via the pages of the Geelong Advertiser on February 3rd.

"Mr W. M. Hughes yesterday resigned the Prime Minister ship of the Commonwealth. In doing so, he recommended His Excellency the Governor General to place the Commission for the formation of a ministry in the hands of Mr S. M. Bruce, Treasurer in the late cabinet."

Prime Minister William Morris Hughes led an unlikely coalition government of the Nationalist and Country Parties, following an indecisive election result from the previous December. Animosity between leaders of the two parties resulted in Hughes being forced to resign. In 1923, the seat of Federal Parliament was still in Spring Street, Melbourne, because Canberra was still being constructed. May 27th, 1927 was when Federal parliament moved to Canberra.

Dancing in Johnstone Park was a major issue for the City Council when damage was done by those attending the band concert on the Thursday evening. Representations were made to the Town Clerk (Mr L.A.Walter) about the

'...extensive damage having been done to the lawns....owing to a number of people indulging in dancing.'

Complaints were also made about damage to flower beds and the extra work to be completed by gardeners.

"The attention of the prosecuting officer, Plainclothes Constable Dunn, has been officially drawn to the matter..."

Two days later it was reported that:

"A good deal of the charm that is associated with the weekly band concerts at Johnstone Park will be lost now that the City Council authorities have prohibited dancing on the greens to the jazz music supplied by the band, because the lawns and the flower beds are being damaged."

Suggestions to remedy the destruction included a tarpaulin with dance chalk and people paying to dance on the 'floor'.

Untidy streets caused annoyance to the Geelong West police inspectors because of the

"...action of a number of young men who nightly congregate in Pakington Street and scatter papers about. The practice is a dangerous one, as the papers are swept along with the street by the wind and frightened horses. On Sunday, Pakington Street was most untidy. A horse, in charge of a lady from the Bannockburn district, took fright, and the occupants of the vehicle had a thrilling time. The animal galloped along the thoroughfare and was only got under control as it was about to turn into Aberdeen Street, the steep hill having its effect."

Technical nerds would be salivating at the invitation of Geelong's Presbyterian Guild. Titled, **'Wireless Class for Young Men'** the Guild appealed to:

"... men interested in wireless school for the Guild hall on Monday night at 8:00 o'clock. It is the intention of the Guild committee to instal a modern and complete set for the use of students, provided a reasonably large number agree to seriously study the subject."

Wireless (or radio) was not available in the Australian community in February 1923. The airwaves were relatively silent. Wireless technology was largely the domain of the military and the amateur. In August 1919, Earnest Fisk of Amalgamated Wireless (AWA) demonstrated how music from a gramophone could be broadcast into another building. So began a series of public broadcasts commencing in 1921. Amateurs also began broadcasting music with

3ME and 3DP operating in Melbourne. The first commercial Wireless broadcast stations were not recognised until November in 1923, in Sydney, when 2SB first hit the airwaves. Melbourne's 3AR was granted on January 24th 1924 followed by 3LO in October. Even then, it was limited to just one station, because listener's receivers were physically limited as a *Sealed Set System* that could only tune into to one station and there was a licence fee to be paid too.

Fun in Geelong wasn't limited to the gardens, theatres, sport and dancing. The Geelong Advertiser ran through the activities on a pleasant Sunday on February 5th, 1923.

"As usual the beaches appeared to be the favoured walk, and though there was no attraction in Transvaal Square in the nature of a band, the spot was well patronised. With the arrival of the Courier that gathering began to assemble at the Moorabool Street pier, and swelled by a large number of weekenders on their way back to the metropolis, it was difficult to find even standing accommodation. Upon the departure of the boat many took the opportunity to view the Japanese steamer, Kyosei Maru berthed at the Railway Wharf, but the greater percentage wended their way in the direction of Transvaal Square and the Eastern Beach. No matter what be the weather on a Sunday afternoon, it is seldom one can pass the Electric Supply drain and find the spot deserted; indeed the recent publicity given the spot seemed to have made it more popular, for yesterday instead of a large gathering watching the frolics of small boys in the hot water, the onlookers were treated to an exhibition of water planning by several young members of the fairer sex, who had requisitioned an old piece of iron into use for a plane to slide the whole length of the drain into the Bay."

Royal Geelong Yacht Clubs activities over the Foundation weekend holiday were well rewarded with huge patronage. The Yacht club chartered the steamer Rosny to make trips around Corio Bay. The endeavour was a gamble by the Yacht Club Committee that patrons would support the trips.

"... Subsequent results justified the action. It is now learned that on Monday no less than 2010 people made the trip around the Bay in the Rosny, and during the two days of the regatta the total number of passengers carried was 3000. This number is exclusive of the hundreds that must have travelled in the motor launches."



Double ended Steamer, Rosny

State Library Victoria ID: 9920978013607636 Accession No : H86.98/465

Problems with the visit of the steamer, Carl Vinnen arose when the ship was about to depart. Two German sailors, Rasmussen and Willie Schmidt, found the Australian shores too appealing and they deserted the ship. Some thought

they may have stowed away on an outgoing steamer bound for Sydney and others thought they may have hidden in a German colony to hide their identity.

“In any case, the visit to Geelong is likely to prove somewhat expensive for the captain of the Carl Vinnen, as he is liable to forfeit a bond of 100 pound for each of the two sailors should he leave the port without them.”

This ~~was~~ the world of your Grand Parents and Great Grandparents.

References:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/History_of_broadcasting_in_Australia#1920s