

# BYGONE DAYS: Geelong - 100 years ago

Week 18: May 1<sup>st</sup> to May 7<sup>th</sup>, 1923

Live like 1923!

What can you do on a cold wintry night when only a wood fire is there to warm you? If you had money, could purchase an electric radiator, but how would you be entertained?.

Just remember; no radio, no television, no computers, no mobile phones and no electronic games.

Here are some possible answers to your entertainment problem.

If you decided to go out on the town a number of options were available. Theatre entertainment, roller skating, dancing and cards were still available too and that included sessions during the week and Saturdays. Here are the options advertised for Monday, May 7<sup>th</sup>.

**WHERE TO GO TO-NIGHT.**  
Regent Theatre.—“Pink Gods” and “The Great Night.”  
Geelong Theatre.—“Minnie” and “Tansy,” also the Cycling Brunettes.  
St. Mary’s Hall.—Euchre Party and Dance.  
Ashby Hall.—Dancing.  
The Imperial Skating Rink.—Grand Sports Night.

If you decided to stay snugly at home, Griffiths’ Star Store in Ryrie Street provided many options, especially for the family.

**GAMES FOR WINTER EVENINGS**

**PING PONG,**  
THE MOST POPULAR OF GAMES,  
8/6, 8/6, 10/6, 12/6, 17/6, 30/-.

**BOBS,**  
17/6, 13/6, 10/6, and 2/-.

**MECCANO,**  
THE GAME THAT INSTRUCTS, 7/6, 12/6.

**TABLE CROQUET,**  
ALWAYS POPULAR, 1/6 and 3/-, 4/6 and 15/-.

— **CARD GAMES.** —

|                                     |                          |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| LINETTE CARDS, 2/- and 4/-.         | 500 GAMES, 1/6, and 2/-. |
| PLAYING CARDS, 9d., 1/6, 2/-, 2/6.  | SNAP-CORNER.             |
| CRIB BOXES AND BOARDS.              | HAPPY FAMILIES.          |
| BRIDGE SCORERS AND CARDS, 1/6, 3/6. | LOTTO, 2/- and 3/-.      |
| PATIENCE GAMES, 7/6.                | DOMINOES, 1/-, 2/-.      |

**GRIFFITHS' STAR STORE,**  
— **RYRIE STREET.** —

— **POPULAR GAMES.** —

|                                    |                                       |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| TIDDLEWINKS, 1/3, 2/6, 4/6.        | MAGNETIC FISHING, 2/-, 3/6, 5/-.      |
| MOTORS GAME, 2/- and 4/6.          | A.B.C. BLOCKS, 6d. to 5/-.            |
| DOWN MAIL, 1/3, 2/-, 3/6.          | PICTURE CUBES, 1/- to 20/-.           |
| LUDO, 6d., 1/-, 1/6, 5/-.          | DRAWING SLATES, 1/-, 1/6, 2/-.        |
| SNAKES AND LADDERS, 1/-, 1/6, 2/-. | PAINTING BOOKS, 6d., 1/-, 1/6, 2/6.   |
| MOTORING, 1/3, 2/-, 3/6.           | RAG BOOKS, 6d., 1/-, 2/-, 3/6.        |
| BUSHRANGERS, 1/3, 2/-, 3/6.        | CHESS, DRAUGHTS, AND MEN, all Prices. |
|                                    | WIRE PUZZLERS.                        |

You could indulge yourself in a hobby.

Magazines were popular too:

*“To many people who appreciate good reading in the form of serials, short stories, special articles, etc. the May issue of the popular magazine, ‘Life’ should make a great appeal.”*

Bury yourself into a good book.

*“Several years have elapsed since the name Steel Rudd (Arthur H Davis) last appeared on a new book.... But he now again appears as an author with “On Emu Creek”, another Selection story which gives him full play for his humor.”*

Another option was the Phonograph that could be purchased at Suttons’ Music Store.

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Perhaps the phonograph could have been purchased for mother with Mothers' Day being celebrated on May 13<sup>th</sup>.

A popular present for Mums at the time wasn't quite as expensive as phonographs. 'Buttons' of various shapes and colours were available from the Band of Hope Temperance Union.

*"In addition to the ordinary buttons which will be on sale, and the feature of which is a star with Mothers' Day, Band of Hope Union has had prepared for that occasion souvenir badges in silver and gold respectively."*

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Entertainment was also the focus of an article reprinted from the Scientific America periodical.

*"Technically, talking pictures must soon become a success. Workers in this field have such a splendid array of devices at their command..... But admitting that talking pictures are possible and probable will they supplant the present silent pictures? The bald truth is that the present screenplay is based on the silent drama technique: it tells the story by action and suggestion rather than by dialogue now given in the form of titles."*

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Motor Car and motor bike Licences were relatively new, and it was felt that a change in examining applicants was needed.

*"At present the sergeant of police or one of the two watch-keepers is authorised to carry out the work. When an applicant attends at the station one of the officers goes on a joy ride and compels the applicant to drive round some of the streets and perhaps through a narrow lane here or there. If the work is accomplished without mishap the licence is made available."*

The article said that examiners had no "knowledge of the mechanism of the car" and it was claimed applicants should be tested, not just on their driving ability, but also "as to his or her capability of manipulating the mechanism and putting it right should any defect develop." This would prevent motorists being stranded in the country areas.

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Today, we take for granted the testing of drivers for their blood alcohol readings and drug readings too. It was more difficult in 1923.

*"When in Moorabool Street yesterday afternoon, Constable Mackey noticed a man in charge of a motor car drive in an erratic manner across the intersection of Moorabool and Ryrie Streets. The car swayed from side to side and several narrow escapes were experienced by persons in the vicinity. There were four men in the car and unfortunately, for the driver, his petrol became exhausted and the car pulled up outside the Geelong Theatre. Constable Mackay suspected there was something wrong and he and Constable Walsh went along and examined the driver whom they claim was intoxicated."*



The driver was charged with driving a motor car whilst under the influence of liquor and driving at a rate dangerous to the public. The driver and another man were placed under arrest, while the two passengers escaped with the car and stored it at a local garage.

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Work was wanted for three 14 years old orphan boys at the Western District Orphanage. It was claimed they would like to be ;

*"...up and doing for themselves. It is considered that in view of the circumstances, farm work would fill the bill."*

An apprenticeship was considered too difficult, because of board and lodging issues and the scarcity of apprenticeships.

*"The lads should do well 'down on the farm' for they have had some experience of that sort of work at the orphanage, including the handling of cows."*

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*"An expert (Mr B Pringle) from the Amalgamated Wireless Limited, Melbourne, was in Geelong Yesterday and gave a demonstration of a 3 valve amplifying wireless receiving set at work in Messrs Johnson and Ebbott's. The apparatus can be employed in either wireless telegraphy or telephony, and can be fixed in one's own home within an hour."*

Geelong Presbyterian Guild's Wireless Club continued to provide advice to the community about wireless related issues.

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Direct communication from one telephone to another is expected on our land line telephones and mobile phones, but that wasn't the case in 1923, because an operator was required to establish those contacts. A new development with an Automatic system was being developed. A reprinted article from a British newspaper indicated:

*"Rapid progress is being made in the installation of automatic public telephone exchanges in British towns. Already there are sixteen of these exchanges at work in Great Britain with an ultimate capacity of 50,000 lines."*

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Placing electric lights in trains was just an experiment in 1923. If the experiment was successful, Western District lines would be fitted with the lights.

*"Up to the present, they are highly pleased with their experiments...."*

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Many recent visitors may have been to the Anglesea Golf Course to watch kangaroos up close. In 1923, residents were interested in constructing **that** golf course for 'the benefit of visitors.'

*"The proposed course for the 'Royal and Ancient' game will be situated within half-a-mile of the hotel and it will be a nine hole one."*

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Football fans attending Corio Oval were certain to focus on the game, because the police objected to the temporary licence to sell alcohol at the game.

*"The police were appealed to in the hope that the matter might be waived for today, but that is impossible."*

There was criticism that the decision was made very late in the week.

*"It is understood that the grounds of objection are:- that a booth is not necessary; that last year the booth was conducted in a disgraceful manner; that the booth was a nuisance to the people; that it resulted in displays of ruffianism; and that as a football match is only in progress for two hours the public ought to be able to go without a drink for that time"*

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An annual hospital appeal was commenced during the first week of May, with a goal of 1200 pounds being set as the goal. Buttons were sold, street stalls operated, nurse boarded trains and band recitals were organised for Transvaal Square and Johnstone Park. Collections will be taken by representative from Trades Hall and church collections will be donated too. It was believed that only a few people would be in the street without wearing a Red Cross button.

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Commun Na Feinne organised a contest in shorthand and typing skills. *"Such competitions, although rare in Australia, are very popular in America."*

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***Conserve Your Water Supplies***, was the pleading heading of the Geelong Advertiser. It was felt that the coming winter would be short and dry. It was estimate that two year's supply was available but precautions were needed. In another article Geelong Water Trust caretakers in the catchment areas announced: *"Everything is becoming very parched and rain is badly needed."*



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*A photograph of one of Pratt's aircraft circ 1923  
State Library Victoria ID  
3485215*

The Minister for Education, (Sir Alex Peacock, M.L.A.) visited Geelong schools as well as Gordon Institute of Technology. During that week a second aeroplane, constructed

Charles Pratt and students from the Gordon, was completed. *"The former machine has been doing some good flying and shows that aeroplanes can be made successfully in Australia."*

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