

BYGONE DAYS: Geelong - 100 years ago

Week 29: July 17th to July 3rd, 1923

Vermin, in the form of rats, became a major problem in July. An official from Melbourne's Health Department visited Geelong and toured the foreshore with the city's inspector.

"Geelong citizens yesterday advocated the revival of the old bonus system of 3 pennies per head of the captured rodents."

Killing 1000 rats would mean a cost of 12 and one half pounds. Rats were particularly active at night and at the garbage tips.

The year 1923 was a particularly wet one with rural and city dwellers both being affected.

"Around Paraparap and Moriac the lower lying lands are showing signs of too much rain, and some of the farmers are being despondent as regards the future of their crops....In many places the crops are under water....The season opened very dry, but since the breaking of the drought there has been a super abundance of rain... The same thing now applies in and around Geelong, where the land is sloppy and sodden. For the first time in 30 years the Geelong football team were yesterday afternoon prevented from practising upon the ground on the oval on account of its churned and sloppy condition."

Of course, a deluge of rain also affects the rivers.

"As a result of the recent heavy rains the Barwon was running in flood yesterday. By evening it had risen a good deal compared with the morning, although, as an old resident said, 'it could not be called a big flood in that some I hate were seen'. The Barwon, however, rose high enough to submerge parts of the road west of the temporary bridge, and also part of the Belmont Common."

Foster Street residents in South Geelong still struggled with the 'quagmire' that affected their area. Local councillors and the city engineer were being pressured by residents for action to overcome the issue.

"Messrs Dennys Lascelles and Co. propose erecting, through Laird and Buchan, of Moorabool Street, a two-storied building in Corio Terrace to be used in connection with their produce departments. The new stores will replace the iron-framed buildings which have been used for the last four years for the storage of wool."

"The Comunn Na Feine Hotel, one of the oldest in South Geelong, is to be remodelled. The Volum Brewing Company intend to carry out extensive additions to the property."

Beautification of the Eastern Beach attracted a small number of funds from the council, but there was more to do.

"Far from making progress, the Eastern Beach and its surrounds seem in some respects to be scarcely holding their own. What is being done with the Pergola? Apparently at a standstill. The suggestion made by this paper at the time it first began to topple, viz., to dig out the embankment just under the wall and put seats down there, in a position sheltered from the cold south winds, is still worth considering. .. Then there is the Joy Ark, which no one has ever pretended to regard as an addition to the beauty of the scene. There is no room for it in any plan for beach improvement....."

Commuters know the frustrations of public transport arriving later than the scheduled timetable. Frustrations arise because appointments, on going links and planned events are missed. That frustration also occurred with Tram timetable in 1923. Under the heading : Time-Table Must Be Followed, the Geelong Advertiser emphasised;

"In the interests of the general public, the tramways must adhere to the published timetable – it was a matter of good faith. At the railway station at 6 o'clock each evening were stationed a car and trailer for Newtown; a car for Geelong West; and a car for East – 4 vehicles in all. If a train arrived on time, it was possible to suit both the people coming off the train, and the people who were waiting around, say, Moorabool Street, who looked for the timetable to be kept. The cars could not wait more than two or three minutes after six o'clock at the railway station as it would not be fair to the business people, shop assistants etc., who left off work at six."

Buses were different, it appears because they were not on a fixed service.

"But the car service had to be maintained day in and day out – and to a timetable."

Trams continued to be an issue when one was derailed at the corner of Moorabool and Ryrle Street. The tram pushed some loose metal from the track and it went beneath the two front wheels, forcing it off the rails.

"Difficulty was experienced in replacing the car, which weighs approximately 13 tons on the rails. It was taken about 100 feet down Moorabool Street and distinctly left the marks of its trail."

"Complaints have been made about the conduct of a newsboy in Newtown. Each morning he cycles down Latrobe Terrace footpath with his bundle of papers under his arm. Apparently he thinks at that early hour there is no danger, as he does not even trouble to retain possession of the handles. There have been some narrow escapes through people coming out of the side streets. A watch is to be kept for the culprit. His early appearance in the police court is likely unless he desists from using the footpath for his morning ride."

Cyclists riding through Johnstone Park raised the ire of the Mayor, Town Clerk and pedestrians.

"In several instances when riders have been checked they have been imprudent. Cases have also occurred where pedestrians have been bowled over and the offending cyclist has ridden on as fast as he could so as to avoid his name being secured."

The Town Clerk spoke with the prosecuting officer to stop the practice.

"Plainclothes Constable Dunn wishes it to be known that no further warning will be given, and that the first person detected offending will be prosecuted and a severe penalty provided for as a warning to others."

ASHBY HALL
GRAND ANNUAL PARISH BALL.
TO-NIGHT. TO-NIGHT.
WEDNESDAY, 18th JULY.
The Greatest Dancing Event of the Year.
A DELIGHTFUL MIXTURE OF NEW
AND OLD DANCES.
Excellent Orchestra. Perfect Floor.
Dainty Supper.
Grand Streamer Waltz.
Cards for Non-Dancers.
Dancing to commence 8.30 p.m. Conclude
2 a.m.
VISITORS TO THE WATERLOO CUP
WILL BE WELCOMED
And assured a night's perfect enjoyment.
Double Tickets, 6-; Single, 5-.

ST. MARY'S HALL
THURSDAY NEXT, JULY 19th.
MONSTER EUCHRE PARTY & DANCE.
(Sub. Queen Miss Molly Dickenson.)
Ladies' Prize, £1-; Gentlemen's Prize, £1-
Prizes donated by Mrs. Dickenson, Messrs
W. Brownell, M.L.A., and W. L. Carr.
Admission, 2-; First-class Orchestra.

DANCING.—St. Mary's Hall, To-night:
Miss Lyssaght's Class. Instructions
in the latest dances, including "The Savoy
Tango," 1925 Fox Trot, etc. Gent's, 7
p.m. to 7.30; Ladies, 7.30 to 8 p.m. Danc-
ing, 8 to 11 p.m. Full Jazz Band.
Refresh for non-dancers, valuable prizes.
Watch Advertisement for All Nations and
Thousand Verles Ball.

DANCING ATTRACTION.—The rea-
son why everybody is going to Mr and
Mrs Goodall's Dance on Thursday in the
Commun Na Feinne Hall is because every-
thing is up-to-date, select and enjoyable.
Come where the crowd go. Mr. Dudley
Johnson's Well-known Band.

An article was printed from the United Service Special Cable from London on July 17th that raised questions about the safety of modern dancing and girls in particular.

"The question of whether modern dancing is harmful, at present causing an acute controversy, has been investigated by a correspondent on behalf of the 'Daily Mail'.

The correspondent declares after a tour of some of the principal dancing resorts, that dancing has become an insatiable hunger, creating a type of 'never-rest' girl who has lost all sense of proportion. Whereas formerly dancing was a pleasant social function now it is merely something that happens hausted and hungry expression.

The modern craze for dancing has bred a new type of selfishness. Girls care only to satisfy their craving for dancing. The more they get the more the craving grows. It is written on their faces and girl after girl seems to wear a sort of drugged to exhausted and hungry expressions.

Many doctors in letters in the 'Daily Mail' warmly praised dancing in moderation."

A dance craze was certainly present in Geelong. The Ziff and Novelty Dance at St Mary's Hall attracted 400 people who danced to Mr F. J. Hennessy's orchestra. Mr and Mrs Goodall held a dance at the Commun Na Feinne Hall every Thursday attracting 200 or more. Mr Dudley Johnson's Jazz Band provided the music and Miss Lyssaght held weekly classes at St Mary's Hall with instructions in the 'latest dances'. Euchre was provided for non-dancers.

New Hours began for the Public Service employee. Monday to Friday hours changed from 9am - 4.30pm to new times of 9am - 4.45pm with one hour lunch. Saturday's hours were 9am to noon.

A record crowd attended the final meeting of the Waterloo Cup conducted by the Victoria Coursing Club. There were many visitors from interstate attending as well as dignitaries including members of parliament. The weather at the Geelong Racecourse was better than expected. The event was won by Unie

References:

All quotations and advertisements in the weekly accounts are sourced from articles published in the Geelong Advertiser during the designated week, unless acknowledged otherwise. Photographs are acknowledged below or in the text.

Photograph