

BYGONE DAYS: Geelong - 100 years ago

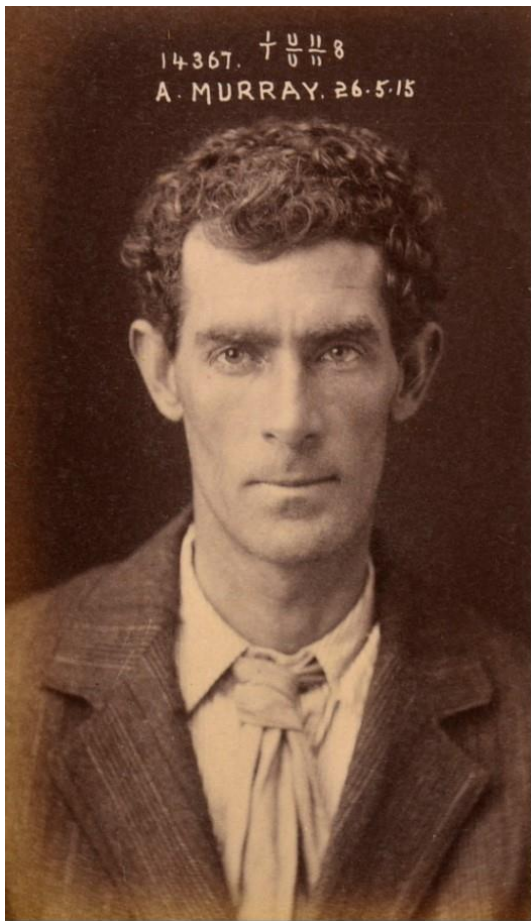
Week 37: September 11th to September 18th, 1923

It's the end of the world!

"There is at least one person in Geelong West who is confident that the end of the world is coming, and that we will soon be set free from all trouble. At the same time she is quite happy in the thought and will be pleased to be relieved of trouble 'and police court proceedings'. She has been fined on four charges for not sending her child to school as required by the Education Act."

They lady had evidence to support her prediction.

"Was not the Japanese disaster a warning that the end of the world was nigh? Did not the disaster to the American Fleet indicate it? And what about the Cessnock miners' fatalities? Were they not warnings in the distance?"



Angus Murray still eluded police, even though they continue to search local areas.

"Police were placed specially on duty to endeavour to bring about the recapture of Murray, but their efforts have been unsuccessful; they do not appear to have had the slightest clue to his movements after he left his cell."

Warder Kelly had been on suspension since August 28th, 1923 and would soon face trial on September 21st. Mr J. P. McCabe will be watching his interests on the day.

Geelong City Fire Brigade workers at their Geelong headquarters in McKillop Street discovered a novel, but effective means of finding the Geelong game results at Corio Oval. In the days before radio football broadcasts, four firemen rostered on during the game kept up to date by using - carrier pigeons!

"The quartet are ardent sportsmen and, naturally, when detained on duty are anxious to learn how Geelong's fortunes are processing."

Angus Murray: Source Wikipedia Photograph in Public domain

The system was established by Station-keeper Mr S. James who requisitioned the birds.

"On Saturday Mr James, who was off duty, took his four birds, three blue chequers and one red, to the oval. A bird was released from the east side of the arena at the end of each quarter, and the fourth one at the conclusion of the match."

Geelong Football Club's protest about umpire Riley in the game against Essendon was likely to fail. They accused Riley of not blowing for time off when the ball was not in play. Perhaps philosophical about the outcome, it was reported that:

"... it will have the effect of drawing the attention of umpires to the instructions at the foot of Rule 5 regarding provision being made to signal time off when delays occur after a goal has been kicked and the ball is temporarily out of play."

Japan's earthquake tragedy was prominent in the news. It reported 30,000 people who perished in Osaka and tens of thousands had gathered in a military clothing depot where there was a great open space. Fires had broken out in the city. A *Reuter's* reporter observed:

"It was late in the afternoon, and a terrific east wind brought with it burning flames. It was so hot, even in this wide rendezvous, that our hair and faces were actually burned."

Naturally, there was a rush westward. In the enclosed space this causes a tremendous stampede, in which thousands died – trampled underfoot by the rush of frenzied men. The rush actually carried me to a point where there was a pool in which the water was breast deep. I plunged in, and covered my head with a wadded cushion to escape the tremendous volume of flame converging on the pool, and the showers of great pieces of wood and red hot iron."

Information from New Yorks estimated the dead, injured and missing at 1,356,000. Another *Reuter* reporter wrote from Yokohama;

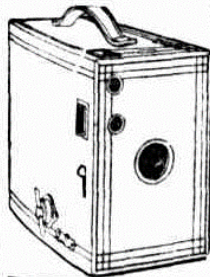
"After the first shock the place was flat. It was hell broke loose when the fire started. Then came a half cyclone with a gale blowing seaward. We rushed to the sea to escape the burning cinders and remained there for hours up to our necks in water."

Reports came in that Tokyo was to be rebuilt and;

"Japanese Industrialists have ordered modern, technical manufacturing equipment from America, thus assuring the rise of an entirely modern Tokio from the ashes of disaster."

Donations from around the world flooded into Japan. A Queensland philanthropist (Mr F. P. Feen) donated half a million dollars. Red Cross funds were over 5 million US for food, shelter and medical supplies. Geelong businesses, churches and school had donated over £912 up to mid September.

Mobile phones today challenge the former dominance of land line connections. In 1923, land lines were growing in number and superseding the telegraph as the major means of interpersonal communication. Popularity comes at a price, and the rental price for telephone in Geelong was to rise, because the number of subscribers had increased.



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"An official notice has been received by telephone users in Geelong that, in view of the provisions of telephone regulation 5, under which rental increases in cases where the number of subscribers in the network is between 1500 and 4000, attention is drawn to the fact that commencing on 1st February, 1924... the rental on all exclusive services will

be increased by 5/- and party lines by 7/6 per annum." (5 shillings and 7 shillings and 6 pence.)

Subscribers believed that the increases would be valid if the service was improved, by callers had to dial 2 or 3 times to get the correct number.

People throwing bottles onto the road to break them to puncture tyres of cars was causing concern. The Geelong branch of the Automobile Association believed strong action was required to bring these miscreants to justice.

"It was decided to offer a reward to constables who secure a conviction against offenders."

Two run-away boys were spotted by police on the beach.

"On Wednesday last at about midday the North Geelong police noticed two strange young boys idling about on the beach. The police were attracted by the unkempt appearance of the boys, and becoming suspicious, apprehended them."

The boys were asked for their address and the one they provided was known to the police, so their story was rejected, and they were taken to the police station.

"There, after a meal, wash and threats of incarceration the boys admitted having run away from their homes in Footscray on the previous day."

A furniture van gave them a ride to Werribee and they slept in the van for the night. The next day, the driver didn't wait for them and the boys were picked up by a passenger car to get to Geelong.

Police contacted the boys' parents and it was organised for them to catch a train to collect them. They had not arrived by 6pm, so the boys were sent to the city watch-house where beds were available.

"They were fast asleep when parents arrived by the 8.30 am train from Melbourne and they were packed off by the last train to their homes."

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Spring offered motorists great delight on their journey to Lorne.

“Motorists who have this week been to Anglesea and Airey’s Inlet describe the display of wild flowers between those places as the best for very many years. The land was covered in heath of various colours and supported by the yellow of wattle blooms.

“The roads are in patches somewhat rough, but any slight inconvenience in this direction is compensated for by the wealth of bloom, which makes a glorious picture.”

Tetanus is disease that can cause concern today. There is no cure, but we are able to manage it by inoculation and timely treatment. A new anti-tetanus serum, in 1923, provided some relief when applied to sufferers. A young man from Queenscliff was treated in Geelong hospital and given the serum.

“The injections have now been discontinued, and the boy is past the dangerous stage.”

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.