

# BYGONE DAYS: Geelong - 100 years ago

Week 41: October 9th to October 16th, 1923

Escaped Geelong Gaol prisoner, Angus Murray, was captured in Melbourne. He was charged with committing another crime of robbery and shooting near the railway station in Glenferrie. Notorious criminal Squizzy Taylor and his woman friend, Ida Pender, were also arrested.

*"At 5 o'clock yesterday morning a dozen detectives quietly surrounded a house at Barkly Street, St Kilda and suddenly bursting in the door made three sensational arrests. When the back door was burst in, the detectives saw a figure moving in the dim light. 'Throw up your hands,' called Detective Carey, pointing his revolver."*

Angus Murray was still in his pyjamas when the raid occurred.

*"Murray was instantly handcuffed, and the search of the premises proceeded. He was subsequently charged with robbery and wounding Mr Berriman at Glenferrie on 8<sup>th</sup> October".*

When interviewed, Murray claimed that after he escaped he was able to obtain some civilian clothes and spent the night in leading Geelong Hotel. Later he dined at one of Geelong's largest cafes. Probably the ABC Café. He died his hair a lighter colour and wore a pale makeup on his face. Murray obtained a free ride in a car to get to Melbourne. It was there that he met Squizzy Taylor.

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Telecommunication developments were moving rapidly.

*"After agitation over several months, the farmers and others at Corio have been successful in obtaining an installation of a slot telephone... The postal authorities appealed to the Railway Department for permission to instal the instrument at the station... An effort is now on foot to have arrangements made, so that trunkline calls can be had at any time."*

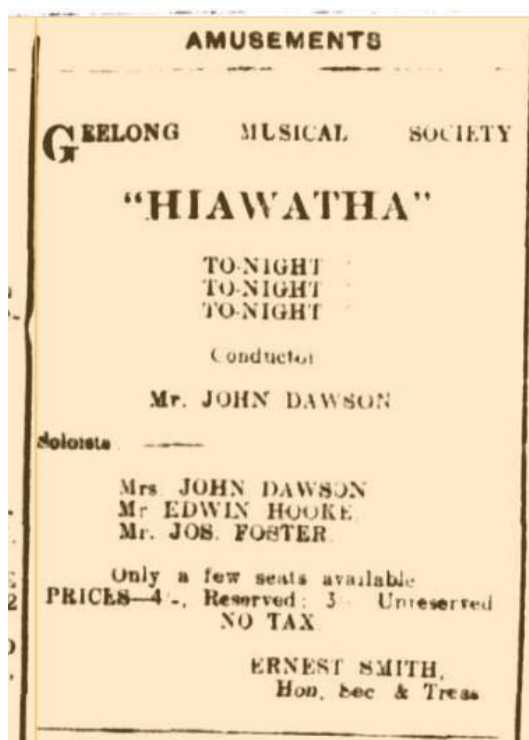
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Large Geelong businesses were starting to prevent employees from using business telephone for private use. The local Water and Sewerage Trust placed a notice in bold typeface over their switchboard: *"This telephone is to be used on official business only- By order of the Commissioners."*

On a larger scale, an article from Melbourne reported that £35,000 was spent by the Postal Department to complete a telephone link between Sydney and Brisbane. It was hoped that a line to Perth would be ultimately connected.

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Radio broadcasts continued to develop. Geelong's Music Society was attempting a *first* with its latest production of *Hiawatha*.



*"Advantage will be taken of the presentation of Hiawatha to transmit the performance by wireless, for experimental purposes, at 400 metre wave length throughout Victoria. The aerial will be suspended from the existing flag poles on the theatre roof, and the apparatus housed in the projection box at the rear of the Dress Circle."*

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Thieves were still practising their illegal activities in Geelong.

*"Between the hours of six and nine o'clock on Friday night, the shop of Mr Geo Woods, of Moorabool Street, was entered and a half a dozen watches were stolen."*

*"The matter was reported to Detective Sickerdick on Saturday morning. It was not long before he had the alleged culprit in his care, also four watches and*

*the remains of the other two which had been battered about and parts taken to pieces."*

A local youth was found wearing a wrist watch and was later arrested. After interrogation he admitted was stole by him.

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A 'Reso' train visit to Geelong was the fourth visit in the series ,where Melbourne businessmen visit the Western District to explore investment possibilities.

*"A break was made in the journey, and in motor cars loaned by citizens, the travellers were conveyed on a tour of inspection of the leading industries."*

Mayor, Alderman J.C. King and prominent citizens greeted the visitors at the railway station. Fourteen cars transported the group to its first stop at the Australian Portland Cement Works in Fyansford. After an extensive tour of the quarries and manufacturing plant the visitors were entertained at a Mayoral Dinner addressed by Alderman King.

In the afternoon the group visited the Federal Woollen Mills, followed by a tour of Geelong City Hall. Later, the Cheetham Salt Works was inspected, with the last afternoon stage being a visit to the Panorama Heights to see the views of Geelong, Corio Bay and surrounding districts.

There was no rest for the visitors, as an evening was spent with Geelong Institute of Technology students.

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One local business, not visited by the Reso train group was the one that collected Old Newspapers for recycling. In fact, it would have been impossible.

*"After an experience extending over several months, it has been found by the Ocean Road authorities that the cost of the collection of old papers does not warrant its continuance. It has therefore been decided to cease the collection at once."*

The collection demise was disappointing, as it began collections during the Boer War.

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A Visit to the Western District Protestant Orphanage was made by the members of St. George's Mothers' Guild.

*"The object of the visit, which was also taken part in by several other ladies of St George's Church, was to increase interest in the orphanage, but it had an even more immediate practical purpose than that, for the mothers had clubbed together, brought two cases of cakes, of an assortment and toothsome-ness that furnished something special in the way of tea for the children."*

After touring the orphanage grounds and buildings the Ladies were entertained by the children with a musical programme.

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Local retail dairymen met in the Mechanics' Hall to decide on another cut in the price of milk which was priced a seven pence per quart.

*"This will be the second drop in prices since September 1 last."*

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At the October Geelong City Council meeting Councillors proceeded to the next stage of the Mayoral election to be conducted on November 9<sup>th</sup>.

*"It resulted in the return of Cr Robert Purnell. There were 14 councillors present, including the Mayor (Al. J. C. King) who was the presiding officer, with Crs. Williams and Holden and scrutineers. The voting revealed there were 10 votes for Cr. Purnell and three blanks excluding the card of Cr. Purnell, who did not vote."*

Two absentees were Crs. Hitchcock and Brownbill, who could not cast their vote. Councillor Purnell declared his intention to fulfill the office to the best of his ability and judgement.

*"The health of the Mayor-elect was pledged. With three cheers thrown in."*

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Control over Geelong's Harbour had been a festering issue for some time, but at last there appeared to be a resolution.

*"At last something in the nature of a definite pronouncement regarding the Government's intentions with regard to control of the Port of Geelong is available. In the course of his budget statement last night in the house, the treasurer, Sir William MacPherson, spoke as follows;*

**BROADLANDS MILK PRODUCTS**

**BONALAC**  
THE WONDERFUL BABY FOOD  
That has started Geelong by what it has done for Babies where other foods have failed. Call and see Mr. Geo. Smith, of 49 Wellington Street, Geelong West, and hear what he has to say. Unquestionably the most perfect Baby's Food on the market.

**MALTED MILK**  
Equal to the best imported, and much cheaper. Suitable for young and old. Taken hot makes a fine beverage.

**SPECIAL MALTED MILK**  
Specially prepared for those of weak digestion. A great strength builder, and when taken before retiring a natural sleep promoter.

**FULL CREAM WHOLE MILK**  
Suitable for all domestic purposes. When reconstituted with water the same as your milkman delivers each morning.

ALL SOLUBLE IN COLD WATER  
ASK YOUR DOCTOR  
ASK YOUR CHEMIST.

**LOCAL AGENT—ROBERT F. CRANSTOUN**  
RYRIE STREET, GEELONG  
FROM WHOM ALL INFORMATION CAN BE HAD.

*"The best method of providing shipping facilities at Geelong has long been a difficult problem. There is now however, a general recognition of the fact that the best solution lies in the establishment of a single authority, which will have control over the whole of Port Phillip Bay, and upon which Geelong will have adequate representation."*



Daniel Pratt Collection State Library of Victoria ID: 9916531323607636

The Treasurer proposed a Bill would be raised for this new authority to take over from the Geelong Trust. The Bill would only include the port management and not the 'extraneous undertakings' of the Corio Freezing Works and Sparrowvale Farm. It was envisioned that:

*"These and the endowment lands will revert to the Government."*

Local Geelong City Councilor, Mr Thear, indicated he would NOT have a 'wait and see' policy regarding the proposed legislation for the Port of Geelong.

*"General business at the City Council yesterday brought him to his feet with a strong desire that things should not be allowed to drift. Would it not be advisable to meet again?"*

A previous conference was held to discuss the Geelong Port issue.

*"Nearly two months had elapsed since the conference last met. It seems a pity to let things drift backwards. He suggested that in the near future the Mayor should call a conference together again so as to settle any differences of opinion before the matter got in the hands of the minister himself."*

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*"By kicking a football as the eastern end of Myers St. late on Sunday afternoon, a number of boys not only desecrated the Sabbath, but also caused two electric light cables to make a contact and throw out an automatic switch at the power station, thereby interrupting the electric light supply to one of the sections in East Geelong."*

*"Services at Saint Matthews and the congregational churches were held in semi darkness and the return to the old means of illumination was made in churches and dwellings until the companies breakdown gang remedied the trouble, which was a 40 minutes duration question."*

Police took action against the boys.

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Geelong's Town Clerk forwarded the sum of £1674 to the Lord Mayor of Melbourne fund for the relief of the sufferers in Japan's earthquake. The money was raised by the Mayor of Geelong's Japanese Aid Fund.

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A heroic effort by Senior-constable O'Mullane stopped a runaway horse from creating havoc in Geelong Streets.

*"Shortly before two o'clock yesterday afternoon a horse attached to a cart belonging to Mr. Podbury, Baker of Myers St. bolted from Mercer St. into Gheringhap St. The runaway crashed into one of the rockeries in Mercer St., but escaped doing damage to either rockery or cart. It galloped into Malop St. and negotiated the Fountain as though it was driven round it. In Gheringhap Street, when above the City Court, Senior-constable O'Mullane set out in pursuit of the horse, which he captured and eventually pulled up after it had passed Ryrie Street."*

Many observers thought the Senior-constable might have failed, as he was entangled in his coat that was stuck in the shaft of the cart.

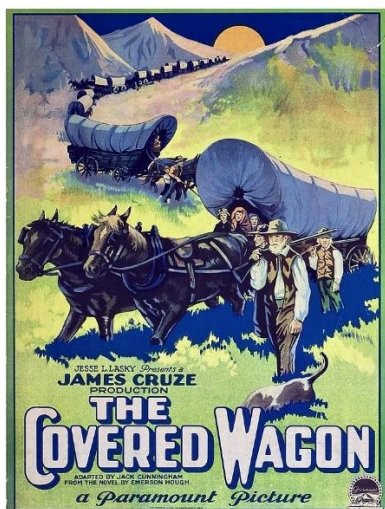
*"He was later congratulated for his plucky effort."*

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A major attraction at the Regent Theatre was the film *A Covered Wagon*. It was a blockbuster of its day. The film glorifies the endeavours of American pioneers to cross from the east to west coast of the United State of America and establish settlement.

*"Next week, Geelong is to have an opportunity of seeing one of the greatest triumphs of the picture world. Through the enterprise of the Regent Theatres management of the great film, "The Covered Wagon," is to be shown for the first time, commencing next Monday night. It is coming direct from the Auditorium, Melbourne where 150,000 people have witnessed it during its six weeks run."*

The film was to be accompanied by support from Fred Morton, a negro comedian and Paul Verdayne an Indian Chief. Early booking were essential.



You can see the movie and find details on this site. Copyright expired in 2019.

See link below.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Covered\\_Wagon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Covered_Wagon)

#### 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.

*The Covered Wagons Film Poster was sourced from Wikicommons*