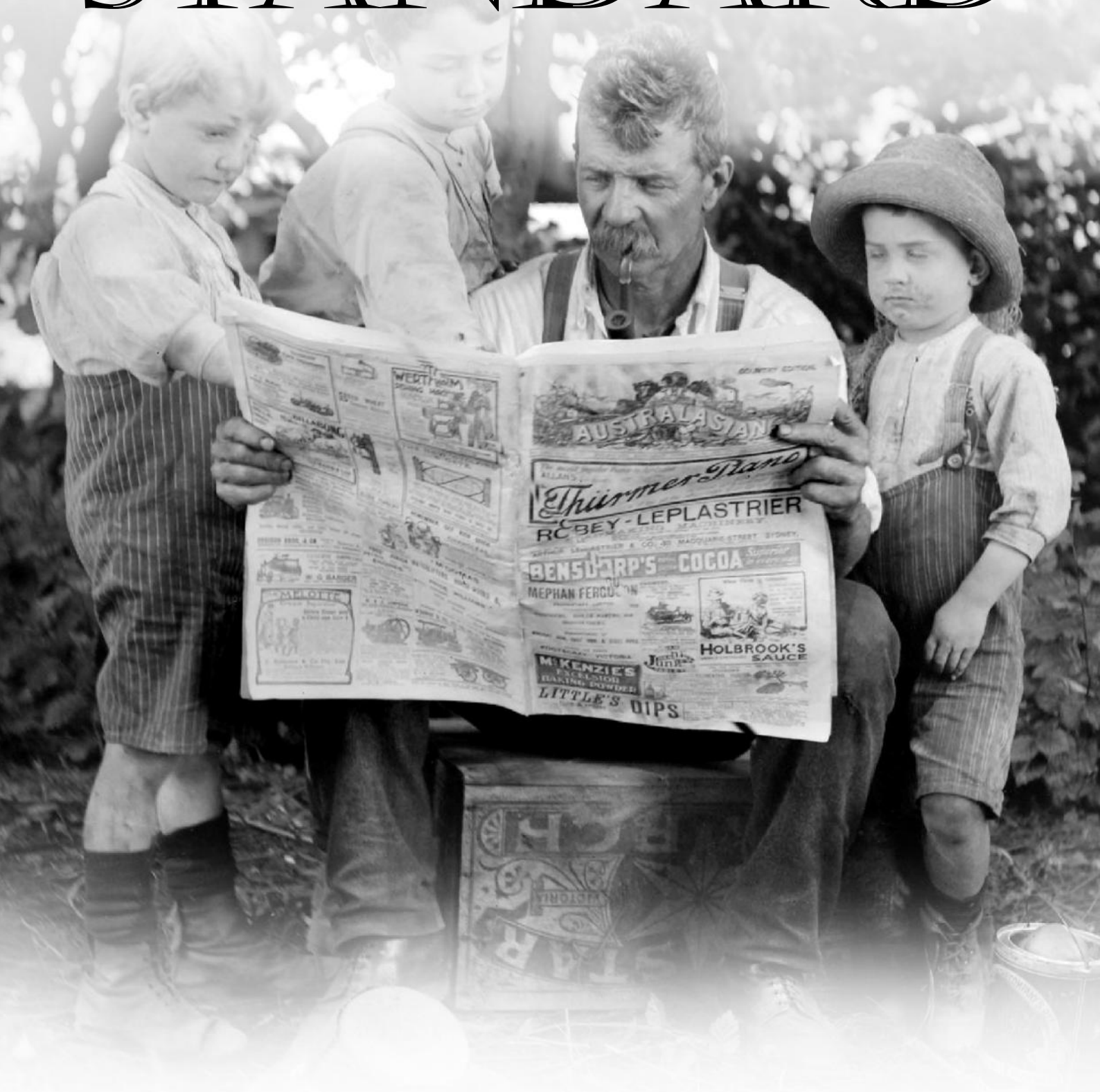


ALEXANDRA STANDARD



NEWSPAPER



**HERITAGE
PUBLICATION
SERIES**

ALEXANDRA STANDARD NEWSPAPER

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*Cover photograph of a man reading a newspaper
was taken by local photographer Lin Cumming*

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Name: *Alexandra Times*
Alexandra Standard
Location: Grant Street Alexandra
Established: 1868
Ceased: Still running

The first local paper was the *Alexandra Times*. The name was changed to the *Alexandra Standard*, which continues to this day. However an earlier version of the *Mansfield Courier* was also published in Alexandra for a brief period in the 1860s.



The *Alexandra Times* newspaper was one of three early newspapers in Alexandra and was first established in 1868. At that time Alexandra was a very young township and its direction was still being driven by the earlier gold rush and a high number of miners were still living in and around the Alexandra District. The first publication (*Alexandra Times*) was edited by John Whitelaw, who had brought his printing press from Woods Point, where from 1864 he had previously published the *Woods Point Times* and from 1865 the *Woods Point Times and Mountaineer*.



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Alexandra's First Printing Press:

The *Alexandra Times* newspaper was initially printed in a bark hut located at the rear of the Whitelaw's property *The Rookery*, near the corner of Downey and Myrtle Streets. John Whitelaw is always credited with ownership of the *Alexandra Times* although at various periods it was described as 'Whitelaw & Sons.' At significant functions though it was John that was lauded as the owner. However for the life of the *Alexandra Times* it was actually 'printed and published by Norman Whitelaw' (John's son) and for the first 18 months it also stated that Norman was the 'proprietor.'

**Printed and published by NORMAN WHITELAW, Proprietor,
at the "ALEXANDRA TIMES" Office, Alexandra, in the
colony of Victoria.**

John had previously been editor of the *Mountaineer* newspaper, which was owned by Alfred Golding from Jamieson at that time. The *Woods Point Times* was a competitor newspaper, however the town could not support two and they soon merged. As the mining boom declined, so did the profitability of the paper which led to its demise. According to an early Woods Point business directory, John had worked from an office in Scott Street, where he also served as Government Auctioneer and a mining agent. He lived in Ellery Street, Woods Point at that time.

John then moved to Alexandra and had the printing press transported from Wood Point. (*Alexandra Standard*, Friday 24 October 1930). But just prior to moving he had been elected as Mayor of Woods Point on 20 November 1867 and because of his ongoing fondness of the Woods Point District, he supplied his readers at Woods Point, Gaffneys Creek, Raspberry, Matlock, Jericho, Gooley's Creek and surrounding areas with the *Alexandra Times* in lieu of the *Woods Point Times* and *Mountaineer* to the end of the financial quarter.

Before entering the publishing business, John had been an auctioneer, mining agent and businessman and even worked as a teacher in Sydney. Before his arrival in Australia he had even contemplated entering the clergy in the Church of Scotland.

In Alexandra, the Whitelaw's initially released bi-weekly broadsheet issues of *The Alexandra Times*, and the first issue was given away for free. But that issue advised readers that from then on it would only be available by pre-paid subscription of 7s 6d (7

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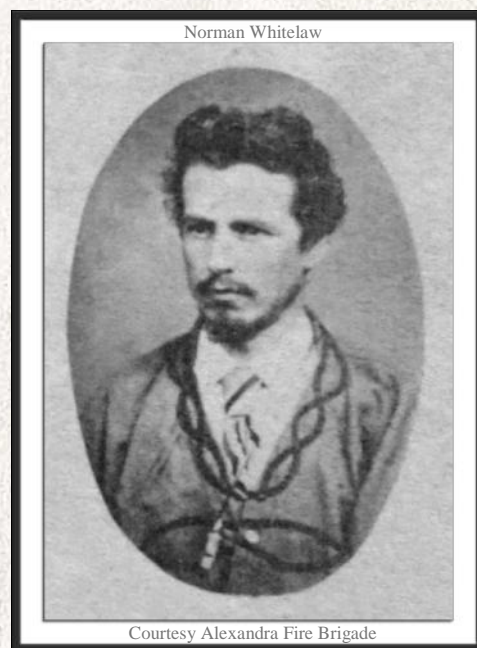
shillings and 6 pence) per quarter. As it was published twice weekly, a subscription would have worked out to be three and a half pence (threepence and a halfpenny) per issue.

The advertisement read:

NOTICE The first issue of this Paper will be delivered free of charge. All persons who wish to become subscribers will please forward their names and addresses to this office. The charge is 7s. 6d. per quarter—payable in advance.

In the Whitelaw's second edition they went into more detail about their need for subscriptions and how becoming financially viable was fundamentally important for a media publication. In this issue he also called on those who had received the first issue for free the previous week and had finished with it, to return it and he would buy it back for sixpence. This was necessary as the first free issue had been so popular with the general public that he had been unable to supply copies to all of his paid subscribers.

At this time mail was infrequent and radio, telephone and the internet were yet to be introduced, so the availability of a local newspaper would have been an exciting event for the entire township. During this period, Gobur almost exceeded Alexandra in its mining popularity, and for a short time Whitelaw managed to operate a newspaper in that vicinity called the *Gobur Standard*.



Mansfield Courier in Alexandra in 1868

Local oral and written history generally promotes the idea that Alexandra only had two newspapers; namely the *Alexandra Times* and its immediate successor the *Alexandra Standard*. However research in June 2018 uncovered evidence that this was not the case. Alexandra had actually had three official newspapers during its life-span. Around January 1868, the *Mansfield Courier* was invited (by local parties unknown) to publish



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a newspaper in Alexandria. This was not the *Courier* that we know today, but a much earlier *Mansfield Courier* which had commenced publication in late July 1867. This paper was promoted as a strictly liberal and independent publication, and the proprietor and journalist of this short-lived publication was Mr Adam Burgess.

Having received an invitation to publish a newspaper in Alexandria, the *Mansfield Courier* had first respectfully declined. However they later reconsidered, commencing at Alexandria at a similar time to Whitelaw. If either was aware of the other's intention in those earliest days is not known.

This is noted in a 'Letter to the Editor' in the second issue of the *Alexandra Times* objecting that the *Mansfield Courier* was about to setup a publication at Alexandria in direct opposition to the newly established *Alexandra Times*—just after the *Times* had commenced 2 June 1868.

The launch of the *Mansfield Courier* into the Alexandria newspaper market was criticized locally, as it was thought that having two newspapers in one small rural township would cause division and ruin the chances of either publication being profitable. (*Alexandra Times*, Friday 12 June 1868). The worry was short-lived however, as the *Mansfield Courier* ceased publication in Alexandria after a few issues and closed at Mansfield about the same time, making way for the *Mansfield Independent* mid 1869.

It is worth clarifying that the *Mansfield Courier* that came to Alexandria in 1868 was not the *Mansfield Courier* as we know it today. The current day *Courier* had not commenced publication in 1868 when the *Mansfield Courier* was operating in Alexandria. In fact the *Mansfield Independent*, which predated the current day *Mansfield Courier*, had not even commenced publication at that time. Their first issue was published on 5 June 1869, nearly a year after the first *Mansfield Courier* had closed.

Change of Address for the *Alexandra Times*

By September 1868, the *Alexandra Times* business was no longer being run from *The Rookery*. It was now operating from Milligan's Commercial Hotel (formerly the Power's Hotel) on Grant Street at Alexandria. It is not known if the printing press was also relocated to the hotel. An advert found in the *Alexandra Times* dated 1 September 1868, informs us that the 'Alexandra Times Printing Office' was operating from the premises,

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along with a number of other businesses which included the: Mining Warden's Office, Office of Solicitor Frederick Coster, Mining Agency, Electoral Office and Office of Auctioneer and Engineer Mr W Downing. However operating from the premises did not necessarily mean the printing press was also located there.

Early records inform us that the Alexandra Roads Board held their first meeting in a small room at this hotel and that by early July 1868, the Milligan's Commercial Hotel had been purchased by Cooper and Perkins, owners of the Eldorado Hotel located next door. They renamed the property 'Temple Court', and converted it into offices.

The 1869 Godfrey Creek Standard Newspaper

While the Whitelaw's were busy with the *Alexandra Times*, They managed to start a second broadsheet newspaper at Godfrey's Creek (later named Gobur). The first issue of the *Godfrey's Creek Standard* newspaper was published by John on 2 October 1869 and printed on his printing press at Alexandra (*Alexandra Times*, Friday 24 September 1869). In announcing this new publication, he stated:

'The growing importance of Godfrey's Creek has rendered it desirable that the place should be represented by a paper of its own. Until suitable premises can be erected, arrangements have been made with us for printing *The Godfrey's Creek Standard*, the first issue of which will appear on Saturday, 2nd October.'

Later, in the final issue of the *Alexandra Times* on 30 June 1877, Whitelaw confirmed that he had produced (not just printed) the *Godfrey's Creek Standard*.

We have received the first number of a respectable-looking broad-sheet, entitled the *Godfrey's Creek Standard*, published at Gobur. With respect to its political opinions, it makes the following declaration:—"Our motto shall be, 'Measures, not men,' and whilst we admire the able manner in which Mr. M'Culloch has for so long a period held the reins of Government, yet we have not come to the conclusion that the world of Victoria was made for one man. A village Hampden shall always receive our support, no matter whether he go by the name of 'Loyal Liberal' or 'Constitutionalist.'"

The Argus
Tuesday 5 October 1869
Courtesy National Library Australia

A lack of newspaper records indicate the *Godfrey's Creek Standard* only existed for a few months, and no issues are known to exist today. In fact, a few cross-references in other early publications are all that we have to confirm it ever existed at all.

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Change of Address

The *Alexandra Times* continued to operate from the former Milligan's Hotel (now Temple Court) until 1871. Around this time the *Alexandra Times* offices were relocated back to Downey Street, and possibly back to *The Rookery*. No reason is given for this move, though if the business did go back to *The Rookery*, then maybe John was cost cutting. He may have even built a more suitable structure on his property which housed his printing press.

Making their mark

The Whitelaw's were in part responsible for bringing issues related to the quickly growing township to the attention of the public. Numerous editorials over the years of his tenure show that the Whitelaw's agitated the need for: a hospital (when the closest hospital was at Woods Point), a library, the establishment of Local Government, and a reliable source of water. At that time water had to be carted from the Goulburn River or taken from the dirtier and less reliable UT Creek.

But the Whitelaw's were not always correct in their beliefs and public assertions. For instance, it once proposed that Gobur would become the new headquarters of the municipality, due to its flourishing gold mining industry. However it was Gobur that eventually declined and Alexandra that ultimately prospered when it transformed from a gold mining town into a significant agricultural and tourist centre.

Final Issue of the *Alexandra Times*

In the Whitelaw's last editorial in the final issue of his newspaper published on 30 June 1877, the end of the *Alexandra Times* was announced and the new owner James John Hamilton McColl was introduced. The Whitelaw's further informed their subscribers that the new publication would be called the *Alexandra and Yea Standard*. They reflected on how the newspaper had 600 subscribers in its early days, and reminded their readers about the early days when the *Mansfield Courier* published in opposition to his paper. The editorial was signed Whitelaw and Sons, but it is likely that Norman may have been the only son still in Alexandra.

During John's time at the *Alexandra Times*, he was actively involved in public affairs, including serving as a Shire Councillor from 1873–79 and Shire President for the

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1873/74 term. After the sale of the *Alexandra Times*, he moved to Melbourne with his wife but later returned to Alexandra. In appearance, John was described as a large jovial and jolly fellow. It was said that he was a great storyteller and that he always wore a grey top hat (stove-pipe bell topper) when in the street. He carried a walking stick in his later years, which was replaced with a large umbrella when raining.

Second owner: James John Hamilton McColl

The *Alexandra Times* was purchased by James John Hamilton McColl in mid 1877 and he changed its name to the *Alexandra and Yea Standard*. The first edition was published on 7 July 1877. It is interesting to note that McColl chose not to continue with the issue numbering system from the *Times* and instead chose to call his first edition 'Issue One'. Together with the change of the publication's name, it appears that McColl considered his new newspaper to be a different publication from its predecessor (Whitelaw's *Times*). The last issue of the *Alexandra Times* was issue 547, published on 30 June 1877.

Although McColl considered his paper to be a new newspaper, the masthead did include the words 'with which is incorporated the *Alexandra Times*'. So it was not a complete clean break from the past. He did however state how his new paper would have an extra column per page, so presumably the dimensions of the newspaper changed at point. He also advised that he would be able to include the latest *Telegraph News* right up until an hour before publication, which was an incredible feat.

Notably, James was the first to introduce single-issue sales of the newspaper, instead of the normal quarterly subscription which had applied to the *Alexandra Times* up until then. The single issue price was sixpence, and the subscription was 6 shillings and six pence (6s 6d) per quarter, or one pound per annum—payable in advance.

In late 1879 James changed the weekly publication date from Saturday to Friday, also reducing the quarterly subscription to five shillings. This represented the first reduction in the subscription in the newspaper's history.

During his tenure, the paper colloquially became known as the *Standard*, and in April 1878 he relocated the office to the property formerly known as Brook's Bakery in Grant Street (near where in 2018 Burnsies Pizza shop operates).



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During the later stages of his tenure he found that publishing a newspaper was diverting too much of his energy away from his Stock and Station Agency and his farming interests. As a result, he issued his last newspaper on 14 May 1880 (issue 149), selling the business to his brother-in-law Samuel Allardyce. A *Weekly Times* article in 1930 tells us that AM (Toby) Curtis contributed articles to the paper, and even suggests that he took up the editorship of the paper in conjunction with his auctioneering business.

James John Hamilton McColl was the Great Great Uncle of current day Alexandra identify Dorothy (Dot) Jackson (née) McColl.

Third owner: Samuel Allardyce (1880–83)

Samuel Allardyce served as Shire President from 1874–77 and operated the *Alexandra Standard* newspaper for around three and a half years. His first issue was published on 21 May 1880 (issue 150) and his final issue was published on 19 October 1883 (issue 234). During his tenure the issue numbering system fell into disarray, however it was still issued weekly and published on Fridays. On 5 May 1882 Allardyce reduced the single issue price to 4 pence per issue, a significant reduction.

On 4 July 1881, William Dixon was appointed General Manager of the *Standard* by Samuel Allardyce. A report in the *Weekly Times* in 1930 suggests that Dixon had in fact worked as a compositor during McColl's time as proprietor and was later the editor and manager of the paper, although this has not been confirmed.

On 18 August 1882 Samuel Allardyce appointed Joseph Allport Gordon as Manager of the *Standard* Newspaper office. Gordon may even have taken editorial control of the newspaper, however this is not known for sure. The paper continued to be published and printed under the name of Samuel Allardyce as proprietor until 19 October 1883.

Like his predecessor and relative (James McColl), Allardyce was not a full-time newspaper proprietor. In fact his farming interests often seemed to take precedence over publishing. During his proprietorship, he also operated the busy *Riversdale* property on the Goulburn River, as well as maintaining his farming property in Yanco, NSW, which he also named *Riversdale*.

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Fourth owner: Joseph Allport Gordon (1883–1901)

Joseph Gordon, an Englishman born in Nottingham, England, migrated to Australia via America. He published his first issue of the *Standard* on 26 October 1883, under the name 'Messrs Gordon & Co. for the proprietors'.

Gordon and Co was apparently a partnership between him and a silent partner Walter G. Moon. Upon later leaving the District, Moon was replaced by popular local pharmacist Frederick Wheeler. Then in 1887 Gordon became the sole owner of the company.

On 30 November 1883, Gordon attempted to resolve the numbering of issues which had fallen into disarray during Allardyce's time. He did this by titling the current issue 'New Series - Vol.2 No.78'. As this was only six weeks since Allardyce's last issue of the newspaper, it was hardly the 78th issue by Gordon & Co. However this numbering would make more sense if Gordon is counting back to his time of commencement as manager with Allardyce. If so, this suggests that Gordon may have had substantial editorial control of the *Alexandra Standard* from that time.

In that same issue, Gordon made a subtle change to the masthead of the newspaper when he included the words 'Established 1864'. However, this is plainly incorrect, as records show us that Whitelaw commenced the *Alexandra Times* in 1868. But Whitelaw had commenced the *Woods Point Mountaineer/Times* in 1864 and this may have been the source of the error.

On 1 January 1885 Joseph married local Alexandra girl, Mary Ann Elizabeth Bough, the only child of Edward Bough of Alexandra. They had three sons: Percy, Victor and Clive.

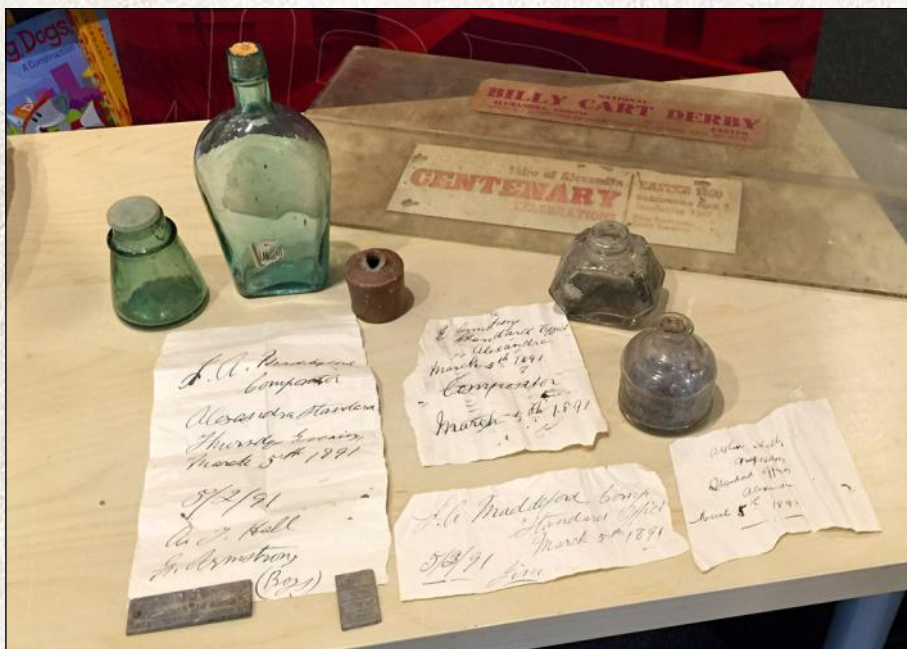
In mid 1887 the newspaper was expanded to eight pages. However by early 1890 it had reverted to four pages, and later in 1890 it was back to eight pages. It seems to have varied between four pages, four pages plus a four page supplement and eight pages over the next few years.

On 9 October 1889 the property directly between the UT Creek and the first section of the current day library building was purchased by Joseph Allport Gordon and R Irvine from saddler and harness maker William Henry Sault. William had originally received a mining lease for the previously unoccupied site, which caused some concern as the Library Committee had hoped this land would be the future site of a large library

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building. Sault had built a domestic property with four rooms on the site, from which he had lived and operated a saddlery business.

About 1891, Gordon made the move from the former Brook's Bakery building on the western side of Grant Street, moving across the road into Sualt's wooden building, which occupied the lot between the Library (its first stage) and the Ultima Thule Creek (UT Creek). The first stage of the library was built in 1883 and the second stage was built in 1891.



Interestingly, during the building of the second stage of the Library, some of Gordon's employees placed a time-bottle in the cavity in the northern double brick wall of the new stage two. The bottle contained slips of paper signed by JA Maddeford (Compositor), AT Hall, G Armstrong (both described as boys) and dated 'March 5 1891'. This time capsule was discovered during the building of the

more modern stage three of the library, which occupied the site of the earlier wooden Standard Office which relocated further north up Grant Street, on the other side of the UT Creek. More on the time capsule can be found in our Artworkz factsheet which was produced in partnership with the Murrindindi Library Services. Download it from our website www.esplash.me.

In late May 1892 the *Standard*, together with the *Mansfield Courier*, inserted a colour lithographic supplement. The supplement was a fold-out sheet showing streetscapes of both Mansfield and Alexandra and the major facilities and businesses in both towns. At the time it was not possible to directly print photos onto newsprint, but lithographic (engraved) reproductions, both Black and White (B&W) and sometimes colour, were becoming available. The supplement was produced by Messrs Rider & Mercer of



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Ballarat, and was prepared from photographs taken by Mr W Mercer on a visit to the District. The cost of the supplement was covered by payment of a fee to Rider & Mercer by the featured businesses, who treated it as a form of advertising. The poster was also available separately for purchase. In recent years the Mansfield Historical Society has reproduced a smaller version in B&W only. There is however a rare, original colour poster, framed and mounted in the Alexandra Library.

Ownership of the paper between 1883 and 1901 has always been credited to Joseph Gordon (albeit with a few early partners), however between Feb 1892 and its sale in 1901, the paper was actually being produced 'for M A Gordon, sole proprietress, at her registered office...' It is possible that this was a legal tactic by the Gordons to avoid any perception of conflict of interest, as in January 1892 Joseph had been appointed Shire Secretary. Certainly during this time Joseph had little apparent involvement, in fact a succession of names appear as being the printer and/or publisher. For the first 12 months of Mary Ann's proprietorship, the paper was printed by James Maddeford and published by Mary Ann. However from 1893 onwards even the publisher role was undertaken by others, but still had Mary Ann as sole proprietress. Names that appear as 'printer and publisher' are Francis Turnley, George Buckleton, James Maddeford and P Underwood.

It is noticed that in December 1898 that the paper was being printed and published by Maddeford 'for the lessee'. It is commonly thought that following owner TA Fox leased the paper from November 1900 until he was able to purchase the business. But is he in fact the lessee referred to in 1898?

Gordon then left the District for Melbourne circa 1901, where he died 18 years later.

Fifth owner: Thomas Albert Fox (1901–19)

Unlike the previous owners, Thomas was a professionally trained newspaper printer who served his apprenticeship in the Western District of Victoria. During his long career, Fox worked for newspapers in both Melbourne and rural areas of Victoria. This included the editorship of a new bi-weekly newspaper in Omeo in late 1893.

Thomas and his family left Melbourne and moved to Alexandra in March 1883 when he was 28 years old. He became the manager of the *Standard*, for Mr JA Gordon for a number of years, before returning to Melbourne around Christmas 1888.

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He then returned to Alexandra in 1901, taking over the editorship of the *Standard*. He initially leased the operation from Gordon & Co., and he later purchased both the business and the freehold circa 1906. However, like his predecessor he was printing and publishing the paper 'for the proprietress'. This implies that perhaps for legal reasons, the newspaper was in her name rather than in his.

In 1910 he published an advertisement *Advertise & Prosper – Here are sixteen good reasons why you should advertise*. Then in 1912 he published a full length, double column advertisement on:

- (1) General Printing (why businesses need printed letterheads, invoice books etc).
- (2) Advertising (why businesses need to).
- (3) How no resident of the district CAN AFFORD to be without his district local paper.

Thomas remained as editor and proprietor until his passing in January 1919, aged 63. His widow continued to operate the newspaper, although it was printed and published by Jeffrey Arnot on her behalf, until the end of April 1920 when Mr JT Guthridge of Seymour took over the business.

Sixth owner: Joseph Thompson Guthridge (1920–49)

Like the previous owner, Guthridge was also trained in the art of publishing, having served his apprenticeship with Sidney Gullett at the *Lancefield Mercury*. The Gullett family was prominent in the newspaper world. Henry served as editor of the Sydney Morning Herald and Philip was a well-known Melbourne based journalist, and afterwards editor of papers at both Hamilton and Ballarat. Prior to Lancefield, Sidney had been with papers at Tatura and Woodend. Young Joseph was certainly in the right place to learn his trade.

In 1909 Guthridge produced a small pamphlet '*The Stone Age: and the Aborigines of the Lancefield District*'. The Governor General visited the indigenous quarries at nearby Mt William and Joseph's pamphlet was 'much appreciated'.

Guthridge worked in SA, NSW and rural Victoria before coming to Alexandra from Seymour. His first issue of the *Standard* was published in May 1920. He joined the

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newspaper at a time of rural recovery following the end of World War I. It was also a time of accelerated construction on the Sugarloaf Dam, a dam being built near present day Eildon, for irrigation of the downstream flat lands of the Shepparton area. In late 1920 Guthridge published a number of articles about the 'safety' of the new dam and spillway. Whilst stating that he was not intending to scare, 'but it is our duty, on all occasions, to draw attention to matters which may beneficially or injuriously affect the interests of the public generally, and this district particularly'.

His first issue of the *Standard* was published on 7 May 1920. Two weeks later he noted that '...The "heading" used on the title page of the Mountaineer is still at the Standard Office, but with the high price now ruling for lead, we are inclined to think that it is about due for a trip to the melting pot'. Then on 26 March 1926 he mentioned that Whitelaw's old printing press that had been carted from Woods Point '...is now resting in the backyard at the Standard Office'. Obviously some modernization had occurred.

Guthridge guided the newspaper through the time of the Great Depression, a period of austerity and shortage. Later during WWII, the public and the newspaper encountered rationing. Amongst other things, rationing affected petrol, thus inhibiting vehicle movement and travel, and newsprint. In the latter, the *Standard* was somewhat lucky, as in 1941, when subjected to a limited quota, Guthridge announced that due to 'foresight, we have stocks...to carry us on for twelve months'. He advised that some of the stock dated back to the 1935–36 Abyssinian War.

Following the end of the war, Guthridge was beginning to ail. By 1948 he was working only part-time, having returned to his birthplace, Lancefield. It seems that the *Standard* was now being effectively managed by his long-time friend and employee Stanley (Bon) Hewitt.

Due to his literary interest, Joseph had been Secretary of the Library Committee for over 25 years and an active member of other organisations, especially St. John's Anglican Church. He was afforded two separate functions in July 1948 to celebrate his career at Alexandra.

The last issue of the *Standard* by Joseph Guthridge was published on 29 July 1949. He had announced the sale of the business to Bon Hewitt two weeks earlier.



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Seventh owner: Stanley (Bon) and Dorothea (Dolly) Hewitt (1949–58)

Bon Hewitt had already spent 28 years working at *The Standard* when he took over ownership in 1949. The previous proprietor, Joe Guthridge, was both friend and mentor to Bon and had even acted as MC at Bon and Dolly's 1929 wedding.

Bon had great organizational skills and was active in the community, often as secretary and highly skilled fundraiser for numerous bodies.

Whilst working for Guthridge in the 1930s, Bon occasionally represented the newspaper at events and functions. This became much more frequent by the mid 1940s and after 1945 or thereabouts, it seems that he was effectively in charge, as Guthridge was spending more time in his original hometown of Lancefield. Guthridge was even farewelled from Alexandra in 1948, although it was another year before he sold to Bon and the paper commenced being published under the Hewitt name.

Bon's first issue was published on 12 August 1949. He made no immediate changes to the paper, either in its physical characteristics (still four pages, seven columns, and published on Friday) or in its editorial policy. He took over the paper at a time of change in the District: post war redevelopment and immigration, farm mechanization, the gradual end of rationing, and the building of the Large Eildon Dam and expansion of the electricity network—which saw an influx of migrant labour to the District. However, this also coincided with a credit squeeze in the early 1950s, although this was not as severe as the 1930's Depression which Bon and Dolly had also lived through.

Bon unfortunately passed away in July 1955, aged 54 years. The paper was then run by his wife Dolly and daughter Mary (Mrs Mary Bradley) until 1958. During this time the Alexandra & District Hospital burnt down (May 1957), destroying the building that Bon had worked so hard to raise funds for over 18 years before.

Eighth owner: 'Thos. Page and Son' (1957–86)

When the widowed Emily Ann Page and her adult sons Albert Edward (Bert) Jnr and Thomas John (John) Page arrived in Alexandra, the boys represented the fourth generation of the family publishing business.

Thomas Page Snr founded the *Tarnagulla Courier* in 1864. An asthmatic, he passed

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away at his residence 22 December 1875. Son Joseph operated the business in the late 1870s until his passing in 1884 from consumption, at age 24. His brother Thomas Jnr, who was born circa 1861 in a house occupying the site of what is now the Royal Exhibition Building in Carlton, then continued with what was by then known as the *Tarnagulla and Llanelly Courier*.

In 1910, whilst still running the *Courier*, Thomas Jnr founded the *Quambatook Times*, and in 1912 entered a partnership with a Dr Rinder, and they operated newspapers around Kerang, Boort, Ultima and Quambatook. In 1912 Thomas sold the *Courier* to Mr A Taysom of Inglewood.

In 1914 the partnership was dissolved and Dr Rinder went on to operate his own newspapers, whilst the Page family continued with the *Quambatook Times* and the *Chillingollah Star*. In 1920 the Page family also opened the *Manangatang Courier*. Thomas Jnr was active in local affairs and was awarded Life Governorship of the Inglewood Hospital in 1918. He had earlier been Superintendent of the Tarnagulla Presbyterian Sunday School and a Councillor of the Borough of Tarnagulla.

Thomas Jnr passed away in 1939, having remained very close to the business. By now the business was being operated by his only son Albert Robert (Bert) Snr Page. Bert Snr had been born at Tarnagulla around 1890, and in 1923 married school teacher Emily Ann Cottrell (the Cottrell's had farming interests just north of Quambatook). They had three children: Albert Edward (Bert) Jnr (b22 May 1925), Thomas John (John) (b21 May 1927) and Ethel (Beth) Rosemary (b28 July 1935). Both Bert Jnr and John were to enter the printing industry.

Bert Jnr left Kerang High School after completing his Intermediate Certificate in 1941 and worked in the family business. In 1943 just after his 18th birthday, he joined the RAAF and served as a Leading Aircraftman in radar installations along the far North-West coastline of Western Australia. Following War Service he returned to the business in early 1946. Bert was mechanically minded and enjoyed tinkering with machinery, radios, clocks and cameras.

John was more academically inclined, frequently 'topping' his class at Kerang High School. Against the wishes of the Headmaster, he entered the family business in 1943 after gaining his Leaving Certificate. For three months his father sat him at the Linotype

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typesetting machine (which has a keyboard quite different to a typewriter), until the finished type-block was being turned out directly from his brain without him thinking of what the hands were doing!

Bert Snr passed away in 1949 aged 59, and his sons continued the business under the guidance of their mother. (Mrs Page penned a popular column under the heading *Mother Carey's Chickens*). Bert Snr had been Secretary of the Quambatook Agricultural Society for many years and was prominent in Freemasonry.

In June 1957, Mrs Page, under the family business name 'Thos. Page & Son,' purchased the *Alexandra Standard* and initially she and her eldest son Bert ran the paper. John remained at Quambatook until September when they sold their interests there to Mrs RM Richardson of the *Charlton Times*. He then made the move to Alexandra.

They subtly changed the title of their new acquisition to the *Alexandra and Eildon Standard* and set about modernizing the ageing equipment, which took a number of years. In 1969, in the Centenary issue for the Alexandra Shire, they announced 'more modern machinery' had been installed in the past few years and that 'plans are underway for building changes' (the timber building was then one of the older in the town, and it would have been generous to even describe it as ramshackle). The early 1970s saw the building totally replaced by a modern building constructed from concrete brick blocks.

Bert was most at home with the machinery; maintaining and operating the Linotype and printing presses, although he also reported on Council news, and his photographs of functions and sporting events were regularly published. John was more the business manager, reporter and editor, but he also took his turn on the Linotype as needed, to keep the type-blocks appearing in time to meet deadlines. A jocular comment (in a poem published under the nom-de-plume *Gringo*) was that Bert was often to be seen in blue overalls and to 'wave an oily rag to make the presses hum', whilst John in his 'smart grey suit' was 'a Journo to a tee'.

Generally Bert did the technical work such as setting up the type and blocks in a frame, which was page size for the *Standard*. This was then put on a flat bed printing press which printed the *Standard* two pages at a time. He later operated the Linotype machine which produced the type for news items, stories or advertisements, in preset column

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widths—using a hot lead and zinc mix. After printing the paper, the type was melted down and reused again and again.

By the early 1980s they had installed a ‘web offset’ printing press. This was a major improvement in technology for the *Standard*, which allowed a simpler style of printing plate to be prepared using a computerized typesetter (rudimentary by modern standards) and for printing to be conducted from a continuous drum of paper.

In 1966 Bert married Marianne Broadhurst and they had two children: Suzanne and Thomas. Bert was a Past Grand Master of the Quambatook Masonic Lodge, and continued his association with Freemasonry at the Alexandra Albert Edward Lodge. He joined Rotary (later awarded a Paul Harris Fellow for his outstanding contribution to the community) and was a member of the Gobur Rifle Club. In retirement he was a volunteer worker at the Alexandra Opportunity Shop.

John, the more outgoing of the two, remained single until 2003 when he married widow Wilma Hickson (née) Cameron. Wilma had known the family since her childhood days at Quambatook, where she was a school friend of Bert and John’s younger sister Beth. John played tennis and in later years golf. It has been suggested that John’s main hobby was his work!

It is recognized that Bert and John did much good work ‘behind the scenes’ and were ‘thorough gentlemen’. They had a policy of not reporting local Court news, nor of being critical of locals, no matter their status; all were entitled to some privacy. They invited local news items for publication, and many such reports (especially sporting results) would often be printed under nom-de-plumes such as IM Possible, Jack Hi, Nix, Nan, Bald Tyre, Cyclops, Omark, Fast Wheels, Bias, and Heckle & Jeckle. Football associated nick-names were a little more obvious: Shinboner, Green & Gold, Rebel, Villain and Purple & Gold.

In August 1986 the *Standard* was sold to Geoff and Carol Heyes and Geoff’s sister Jenny Smith. This ended 122 years (and four generations) of Page family ownership of newspapers.

They received many letters of congratulation upon their retirement, including a treasured one from Tom Dignam, the former publisher of the *Yea Chronicle* thanking

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them for their friendship, support and assistance over many years. At the annual Australia Day celebrations in 1987, Bert and John were jointly named as Citizen of the Year by the Alexandra Shire.

Mrs Emily Page passed away at Alexandra on 22 November 1991 aged 96, and was returned to Quambatook where she is buried with her husband, amongst other Page and Cottrell family members.

Bert passed away on 10 March 2010 aged 85 and is buried at the Alexandra Cemetery. Marianne passed away on 18 March 2017 and was interred with Bert at Alexandra. John aged 91 is living in care at Darlingford Upper Goulburn Nursing Home, where he is visited by his loving wife Wilma on a regular basis.

Ninth owner: Heyes Family/ Alexandra Newspapers Pty Ltd (1986–2011)

Geoff Heyes and his sister Jenny Smith, together with their respective partners Carol and Gary took over the *Standard* from the Page family on 29 September 1986. Geoff and Jenny came from a printing background as their father Ken, a former electrician, was largely responsible for the rapid growth of Progress Press in Melbourne where he was Managing Director. Progress Press operated a large national print and distribution network and later merged with the Leader Newspaper Group, publishing Melbourne suburban newspapers. The combined group was later purchased by the Murdoch publishing empire.

Daughter Jenny was a receptionist for a Melbourne accountant until the 1980s when her father Ken purchased a hobby farm at Merton. Jenny and husband Gary (a motor mechanic) moved to Merton and ran the property for Ken.

Geoff was a Primary School Teacher for two years, and then joined Progress Press in a combined Sales and Production role. After the takeover by the Murdoch group, Geoff and wife Carol spent a few months in Brisbane setting up a printing business for the new owners. They then found it hard to 'fit in' when they returned back to Melbourne. They then approached the *Mansfield Courier* and a partnership was purchased, which lasted for about three years.

In 1986 and out of work, Geoff fortuitously received a phone call from Bert Page,

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saying that he and brother John were looking to retire. To quote Geoff: ‘That’s where the real adventure began’.

At the Standard Office, Jenny was Office Manager, whilst Geoff was the Journalist, Editor and Publisher, and also managed the printing process. Although John Page had retired when they sold to the Heyes family, his brother Bert continued to work part-time with the Heyes for nearly ten years. He mainly looked after the ‘photographic department’, where he prepared photos for the printing process.

The Heyes continued with the same policy as the Pages—to be courteous, and avoided reporting on local Court matters. A submitted poem by ‘Gringo’ wondered ‘...would Geoff and Jenny print our news, or heed our scribbled demands?’ The answer was soon plain—contributions were welcomed, as in the past.

Many sports reports were published under nom-de-plumes: Chippy, Loose Man, Birdie, Faldo – Double Trigger, Up & Down, Green 2, Short End, Cheers, Hacker, Puttomatic and Rebel. At the end of the 1988 football season, the paper thanked ET ‘Tom’ Murray and Norm White for their reports throughout the year and included a head and shoulders mini portrait of both! Tom (also popularly called ‘Doc’) often had to have his reports severely pruned as they were almost a kick-for-kick description, especially if the Shinboners were in form!

In 1988 the ownership was formalized into a new company formed by the Heyes family and called Alexandra Newspapers Pty Ltd. The masthead also underwent a subtle change to the *Alexandra, Eildon & Marysville Standard*.

From 1988 until 2002, Alexandra Newspapers Pty Ltd partnered with Hartley Higgins in resurrecting the defunct *Warburton Mail* with a paper in Monbulk, *The Guardian*. They also published the *Upper Yarra Mail* in Yarra Junction and purchased *Mountain Views* in Healesville in 1996.

Due to space constraints, the Heyes family sold the original Standard building at 49 Grant Street to Tom and Maureen Pritchard, and purchased Redgate Nursery from Malcolm and Julie McKenzie at 43 Grant Street. After fitting out the building, the transfer of the printing machinery occurred in October 1989.

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In early 1993 the *Yea Chronicle* was purchased from Ash Long and included in the stable of Alexandra Newspapers Pty Ltd. The Yea office continued operating and submissions were received there, counter enquiries handled and articles prepared. However final layout and printing of the paper was now performed at Alexandra as Yea had no newspaper printing facilities. The *Chronicle* under Long had been printed at a number of locations under contract.

The Heyes introduced desktop PCs into the business mid 1990s. The journalists used Microsoft Word™, and the compositors used Aldus Pagemaker™ and Corel Draw™ software, printing to a 1,200 dpi B&W laser printer.

Digital cameras came later. The first was a Kodak with about 400 dpi, which was adequate for newsprint, but the average phone camera in 2018 has much greater resolution!

Colour was introduced to the *Standard* on 18 November 2009. The front page included a colour photograph submitted by Karen Morrison of a Porsche Club outing to Buxton (Karen was later to be employed by the Heyes and worked in the office). When previous owner John Page saw the issue (which included photos from the annual Alexandra Show which had been held the weekend before) he is said to have commented 'nice colours'. The introduction of colour necessitated the paper being printed off-site, initially in Wangaratta. The *Standard* and the *Chronicle* have not been printed locally since that time.

In July 2010 the freehold of the premises at 43 Grant Street was sold to local businessman Ian Newman, with a long-term lease back to Alexandra Newspapers Pty Ltd. Ian also purchased some of the older disused machinery along with the newspaper and photo files. (Ian is a local businessman owning several properties, a collector and dealer in old artefacts, and a member of the Alexandra Historical Society).

In February 2011, Alexandra Newspapers Pty Ltd and its two newspapers were sold to the Mott and Yeates families who were another established newspaper business. They operated a number of publications under the 'Newspaper House' banner.

Geoff and Carol raised three sons: Michael, Jeremy and Declan, who were all educated at Alexandra and loved sport. Geoff and Carol were then necessarily involved with

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sporting clubs and school committees. Carol nursed at both Kellock Lodge and Darlingford Upper Goulburn Nursing Home and was a Board member of the Dame Pattie Menzies Centre.

Jenny and Gary had two children: Janette and Matthew, and both attended the Alexandra Secondary College until heading to Melbourne for work. Gary was an active member of the CFA Bonnie Doon Fire Brigade, later transferring to Yarck Brigade.

Following the untimely passing of Geoff's wife Carol, he moved to the family holiday house at Phillip Island. Jenny and her husband Gary (who toiled in the print room of the Standard Office for many years and kept the old machinery working), now live at Kanumbra. They retain a close association with Merton and Bonnie Doon where they have many friends.

Tenth owner: Mott Family/ Alexandra Newspapers Pty Ltd (2011–present)

Alexandra Newspapers Pty Ltd and their two papers (the *Standard* and the *Chronicle*) were purchased by the Newspaper House Group in February 2011. Newspaper House was itself owned by the Yeates and Mott families, the two families also being linked by earlier partnerships. Newspaper House was headquartered in Kilmore and published papers in lower Central Victoria. The Yeates & Mott partnership also has substantial publishing interests in East Gippsland.

In 2016 the families reorganized their internal business structures and Alexandra Newspapers Pty Ltd is now largely owned by sisters Celina and Fiona Mott. The sisters are fifth generation newspaper owners.

George Mott, a British newspaper proprietor, emigrated to Victoria with his wife and family and after some Melbourne and goldfields' experience founded the *Border Post* at Wodonga in 1856. He then had the *Hamilton Spectator* and was later a director of successful printers Gordon & Gotch. Three of his sons headed west and founded the first papers at both Kalgoorlie and Coolgardie.

Those sons later returned and formed the *Border Morning Mail* in 1903, replacing the defunct *Post*. One of the sons later went to Melbourne, purchased the *Northcote Leader* creating a sophisticated suburban newspaper chain.

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Successive generations of the family were involved with the Mail Group and the Leader Group. The Mail ownership remained within the Mott family for over 100 years, but was diluted with successive family heirs all holding shares, until it was purchased by the Fairfax publishing empire in 2006 for \$150 million. The Leader group was later purchased by the Murdoch group.

Interestingly, Clifton Athol (Clif) Mott resigned as editor of the Border Mail in the early 1950s and in the late 1950s for a short period, farmed locally. The family is remembered by the current generation of the Webster, Dick and Collier families.

In 1934 Clifton was recognised for his quick thinking when the Dutch DC-2 Uiver (Stork) became lost in a wild electrical storm. It lost communication and was drifting off course. Clifton proposed to Albury's electrical engineer to use the entire city's lights, to flash the Morse Code signal '**ALBURY**', in the hope that the DC-2 would see the lights. This was done and the plane was able to land at the Albury Race Course, thanks to his quick thinking. He appears in the *Trompe L'oeil* mural at the Albury Airport, commemorating the Uiver story.

The fifth generation sisters Celina and Fiona Mott are not involved in day to day operations of the *Alexandra Standard*, however Celina is the publisher (in legal terms) and a Board Director of the holding company, Alexandra Newspapers Pty Ltd.

Since taking over the *Standard*, there have been a few editors employed, however as at 2018 Anne Richey has settled into the role over the past few years (Anne has a media background in television).

Karen Morrison is the Office Manager who commenced with the previous owners, the Heyes family and is also a Board Director of the holding company.

After purchasing the paper in 2011 the community was somewhat dismissive of the new owners ('big town' newspaper owners). It was rumoured that the *Standard* would be run from an office in Kilmore and would no longer be local (untrue), and that the printing was being carried out at Bairnsdale (true).

Seven years later (in 2018) and 150 years after Whitelaw created the *Times/Standard*, the paper is still being run locally and news articles, advertisements and photographs are

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still being prepared at the Alexandra office.

The printing of the newspaper is performed offsite, however that commenced in 2009 during the Heyes' ownership, not as a consequence of the Mott involvement. The company have since updated some of the printing machinery and offer on-site printing of both B&W and colour posters and plans up to A1 size, as well as offering a general printing capacity for stationary, cards, magnets, brochures etc.

EARLY PROPRIETORS

SEVEN EARLY NEWSPAPER OWNERS

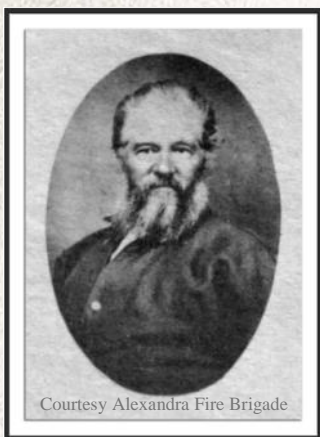
HISTORIC FACTSHEET

JOHN WHITELAW

John was born in 1819, son of George Whitelaw of Kelvin Grove, Glasgow, United Kingdom. He migrated to Australia around 1840, possibly disembarking in Sydney as records show he was a teacher of over 60 pupils at Dunmore, NSW in 1838 and married Elizabeth (Eliza) Simpson on 16 July 1842 at Hopewell, NSW.

By the early 1850s he was operating as a auctioneer in Bourke Street, Melbourne (opposite the General Post Office). He was President of Gisborne Roads Board and Schoolmaster there before moving to the Woods Point District during the Gold Rush there and was editor of the *Mountaineer* and later the merged *Woods Point Times and Mountaineer* newspaper as well as being elected the Mayor of Woods Point in 1867. Around 1868 as the Woods Point Gold Rush subsided, he moved to Alexandra where in June of the same year he established Alexandra's first newspaper, the *Alexandra Times* which operated from *The Rookery*, his property on the south east corner of Downey and Myrtle Streets.

John served as an Alexandra Shire Councillor from 1873–79 and was Shire President in 1873 and 1874. In 1874 he appeared as one of 21 men displayed on an Alexandra Fire Brigade poster and in June 1877 he sold the *Alexandra Times* to James John Hamilton McColl who renamed it the *Alexandra Standard*. John then returned to Melbourne where he purchased and ran the *Carlton Gazette*; until financial ruin. He then conducted agency work in Melbourne before returning to Alexandra with his wife. He went on to serve in the Shire for many years, was President of the Agricultural and Pastoral Association, President of the Upper Goulburn Valley Railways League, President of the Alexandra Cottage Hospital and Chairman and Correspondent of the School Board of Advice.



In 1897 with declining health, he moved to Tasmania to live with his daughter Mrs McRae. At this time it is believed that he was the oldest serving Justice of the Peace in the Colony. His health subsequently improved in Tasmania and he lived until his death on 19 September 1899. He was buried at the Sorell Cemetery in Tasmania. He was described as a large jovial and jolly fellow who was a great storyteller and always wore a grey top hat (stove-pipe bell topper) when in the street. He carried a walking stick in his later years, which was replaced with a large umbrella when raining. In 1922 local identity Mr AP Downey described John Whitelaw as a Scholar and a Gentleman in an article in the *Alexandra Standard* titled *The Early Days*. On 7 July 1876, John's daughter Gertrude Macrae christened a new bridge over the Goulburn River at Riversdale which was then called 'Whanregarwen Bridge, but was later renamed Riversdale Bridge.

J.J. HAMILTON MCCOLL

James John Hamilton McColl (often known as JJ Hamilton McColl) was born in 1838 at Laggan, Invernesshire, Scotland, to parents John McColl (d1858 Sutherlands Creek, Victoria) and Margaret (née) Gordon (d1879 Alexandra, Victoria). The family migrated to Australia in 1852, and James married Harriet Emily (née) Kidgell (b1847, d1887) in 1866. His father John died in 1858, and his mother Margaret, along with a few of his brothers, selected land at Acheron around 1870.

James had at least eight siblings, including Gordon who died in an 1870's flood on the Goulburn River. Samuel Allardyce, who he later sold his newspaper to, married his sister Elspeth. James purchased the *Alexandra Times* newspaper, (Alexandra's first newspaper) in 1877 and renamed it *The Alexandra & Yea Standard*. The first issue of *The Standard* was published on 7 July 1877. On 13 December 1879, John announced that in order to help his readers from Thornton and Darlingford to obtain their papers Saturday morning, he was changing the publication date of the newspaper from Saturday to Friday commencing in the new year.

On 6 March 1879, Mr JJ Hamilton McColl was almost killed when his buggy overturned on the old cutting into Alexandra while proceeding to the Alexandra Cemetery for the funeral of his brother Mr Duncan McColl. Duncan had died on 4 March 1879 when a miner's bucket was dropped down a shaft at the Acheron 'Fiery' Gold Mine, hitting him on the head. He had been working with his brother Peter McColl when the accident occurred. On 30 January 1880, we learn from an advertisement that Mr Walter G. Moon was acting as Manager and Collector for James's business.

JJH McColl was a Councillor of the Alexandra Shire from 1879–81 and a Stock and Station Agent as well as having local farming interests. After James disposed of the *Standard* to his brother-in-law Samuel Allardyce, he returned to farming, which at one time included managing *Ulupna Station* for Allardyce. *Ulupna* was earlier part of James Rutherford's Cobb and Co coach empire, and was where Rutherford had his homestead.

James was managing *Burra Burra Station*, Burra, NSW, where he was found dead in a paddock. An inquiry before CJ Medcalf JP on 11 December 1901 found he had died of heat apoplexy. He was supposed to have died on 9 December.

Note: We have used the name James John Hamilton McColl as this is how he described himself as publisher of the *Standard*. But his name was John James Hamilton McColl. Perhaps he adopted James to avoid confusion with his father, also named John?

SAMUEL ALLARDYCE JP

Samuel was born in 1833 near Balmoral, Scotland and migrated to Australia circa 1853. The Allardyce family moved to the district in 1868 and Samuel became known as a respected citizen and progressive farmer who loved equine stock. He married Elspeth, sister of John McColl, the previous owner of the *Alexandra & Yea Standard*. Unfortunately three of his prize stallions died over the years, one a Clydesdale whilst being shipped from England in 1880. He was the owner of the Riversdale Station for around nine years and was recognised as a highly capable farmer. The property at that time was 1500 acres and included 1000 acres of river flats, with the rest being hill country. The river frontage was two miles long. He also had a sawmill at Crystal Creek, Whanregarwen.

Not long after moving into the District he was elected a Councillor, serving from 1874–77. He also served as Shire President for a term in 1876, as well as being a Justice of the Peace. He was a strong advocate for the township and many of the successful beautification projects of his time were a result of his lobbying. In 1878 the family briefly left the district to concentrate on his farming interests in NSW. At a farewell dinner he was presented with an illuminated address to ‘record our appreciation of your services in all matters involving the prosperity and progress of this district...you have secured the approval and respect of all those with whom you have had to deal’. Manager of the Union Bank, JP Bainbridge, said of Samuel ‘we can ill afford to lose such men’. Although in later years he suffered Samuel’s wrath after a business dispute with the bank, unwisely saying ‘what has Mr Bainbridge done to advance the prosperity of this district’? Samuel and his wife suffered severe burns in 1878 when a house caught fire whilst visiting friends in Melbourne.

He spent the latter half of 1879 touring Europe. For a brief period he was the owner of the *Alexandra Standard* and later took to the *Letters to the Editor* to conduct a running battle with a number of prominent townsfolk. He was a Show Steward and President of the Upper Goulburn Valley Pastoral and Agricultural Association.

During the months leading up to his death, Samuel was managing the Cathkin Estate, but struggled with depression brought on by failed business arrangements. On the night before his death he was despondent and overly concerned with his monetary issues. Samuel committed suicide on 19 October 1895 and it is reported in the *Alexandra Standard* that his suicide startled town residents. He was buried with his wife at Alexandra.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

JOSEPH GORDON

Joseph Allport Gordon was born circa 1849 at Nottingham, England. He migrated to NSW in Australia in 1873 and arrived in Alexandra in 1877. Initially intending to mine, he ended up conveying the daily mail between Merton, Gobur and Alexandra for a time, before accepting a position as Manager for Mr TF Thompson at the Central Stores. He showed keen business abilities which characterised him through his life.

He and Mr Moon, acquired the *Alexandra Times*, though Moon later sold his interests to businessman Frederick Wheeler, who continued with Mr Gordon for many years until they dissolved their partnership on 8 July 1887. Gordon continuing as sole proprietor until 1901.

Joseph was actively involved in the Victorian Mounted Rifle Association after its formation, and was given a commission and appointed Lieutenant. In this capacity he suggested GA Cookson and D Murray (Manager of the National Bank) be sent to England to complete their training and act as Alexandra representatives. Both accepted and travelled to England.

Joseph married Miss Mary Ann Elizabeth Bough in 1885, only daughter of Edward Bough of Alexandra. They had three sons: Percy F Graham (Manager of the Commercial Bank), Victor Edward (Registered Wool Buyer) and Clive Audley (Clerk in the Atlas Insurance Company). Clive had been on active service for the four years to 1919. Joseph was actively involved in the district and in 1885 was elected Local Auditor for the Shire. He then became returning officer until 1890.



On the death of Mr AJ Moore, he was appointed Shire Secretary, which he held until he left Alexandra in 1901. He took a strong interest in the Alexandra Cottage Hospital and was Secretary for 11 years. He also served on the Agricultural Society Committee where he was Secretary for six years, as well as serving as Secretary of the Alexandra Free Library for 10 years. He was a member of the Dramatic Club of Alexandra, and along with his wife, was a musician. He was a member of the Alexandra Shire Band and the Alexandra Orchestra and a prominent member of St John's Choir.

He left Alexandra for Melbourne 18 years before his death, worked for the Australian Paper Mills, and was identified with the choirs of St Silas Albert Park, St Andrews Middle Park and Christ Church St Kilda. Joseph died at his home at 30 Chancer Street, St Kilda on 24 December 1918 after a prolonged illness and was buried at the Alexandra Cemetery. Joseph was remembered as a genial, amiable and shrewd man who possessed qualities which made him a popular and successful commercial businessman.

THOMAS FOX

Thomas Albert Fox was born in 1855 at Norwood, Surrey, England. He and his younger brother Alfred immigrated from Liverpool aboard *SS Great Britain*, arriving in Melbourne on 5 September 1868. The brothers joined their parents, who had immigrated years earlier, at Belfast in Victoria where Thomas first worked in the drapery trade.

Within months Thomas found work in the shire office, then with a solicitor, before becoming involved in printing. He was apprenticed to the proprietor of the *Belfast Gazette* on 1 July 1870. While there, he developed his musical skills professionally, which benefited him throughout his life. He left the *Belfast Gazette* on 13 February 1877, joining the *Warrnambool Examiner* and married Emily Jane Richter on 13 February 1877, and had eight children. In 1878 he travelled to Tasmania to work for the *Hobart Tribune*, and then the *Hobart Mercury* before returning to Melbourne. He worked at the *Daily Telegraph*, then the *Argus* before commencing work at the Government Printing Office in August 1882. Whilst working there, he also performed to audiences in theatres and halls to help make ends meet.

He then worked for McCarron Bird & Co., but left on 1 March 1883 and moved to Alexandra where he stayed for six years, managing the local newspaper for JA Gordon. He took a very keen interest in public affairs and performed widely, even writing and performing in the drama *Off to the Soudan* in aid of the Alexandra Cricket Club. He was a founding member of the Alexandra Football Club and served as secretary, treasurer including four seasons as captain. He was a dedicated member of the Alexandra Presbyterian Church and played lead cornet in the Scorch's Brass Band. In late December 1888 he left for Melbourne, again working for the *Argus* and later the *Evening Standard*. He continued to perform widely, becoming well respected. His Richmond home was then flooded, causing severe loss.

After his wife died in 1893, he left Melbourne with his son Alfred, taking up an offer to start a paper in Omeo. At Omeo he was active in the community and married widower Mrs Arnot, and had two children. They then moved to Melbourne, Rutherglen (where he worked for the *Rutherglen and Wahgunyah News*) and then back to Alexandra. He leased the *Standard*, before purchasing the paper and premises from JA Gordon.

Thomas died on 28 January 1919 aged 63 and was buried at the Alexandra Cemetery. His widow continued with the paper until April 1920 when JT Guthridge purchased the business.

JOSEPH GUTHRIDGE

Joseph Guthridge was born in 1879 at Lancefield, third of eight children to parents William Guthridge and Sarah Ann (née) Wright. Joseph undertook an apprenticeship at the *Lancefield Mercury* before working in SA, NSW and rural Victoria. He studied the local aboriginal history and produced an explanatory pamphlet for a visit to the Mt William indigenous quarries by Governor General Lord Dudley. Joseph was a local expert on the quarries and had a collection of indigenous stone axes from the quarries. In May 1920 he took over the *Alexandra Standard* from TA Fox, operating it for the next 29 years.

He was a devoted parishioner of St. John's Church of England, a member of the Vestry Committee, Church Warden and representative of St John's at Central Council. At the consecration of the St. John's church building in 1943 by the Right Rev. TM Armour, Bishop of Wangaratta diocese, Joseph presented the Bishop with a ceremonial walking stick in honour of the occasion on behalf of vestry and church.

He was an active member of the Alexandra Sub-branch of the Returned Services League, the Tennis Club (being one of the original members), and the Alexandra Pastoral & Agricultural Society. In 1946 he was awarded life membership of the P&A Society. He was a committeeman (and treasurer) of the Football Club. From the early 1920s he was active with fund-raising committees, including as chairman, for the Alexandra Hospital. By 1931 he had joined the Hospital Committee of Management, serving until 1947. He was Vice-President for several terms and then President for two years, before again 'stepping down to the ranks' of Committeeman in 1938.

He was a highly regarded Secretary of the Library Committee for 25 years (1921–46). In July 1948 the committee afforded him a valedictory function at which he was presented a reading lamp. A writing desk was also to be placed in the library in his honour, as a reminder of his service. At a second function he was also lauded, and received gifts including an armchair, a smoking stand and set of pipes, an electric clock, radiator and a travelling rug.

By this time his health was failing and he was living in semi-retirement in Lancefield. By 1948 his participation in the *Standard* was only part-time. In August 1949 the ownership transferred to his friend and employee Stanley (Bon) Hewitt.

Joseph was looked after by his sister and brothers at Lancefield where he passed away on 9 February 1954. He was buried at the Lancefield Cemetery.

STANLEY HEWITT

Stanley Francis (Bon) Hewitt, the youngest of ten, was born in 1901 at Alexandra to parents Joel Hewitt and Mary Ann nee Kearney. The Hewitts had arrived in Alexandra c1880 and Bon's grandfather John is also buried in the Alexandra Cemetery.

Bon's mother also had local links, having been born at Reedy Creek. In his younger days he was called 'Bonnie' by the family, an appellation which when shortened to 'Bon' accompanied him for the rest of his days.

In 1929 Bon married Dorothea (Dolly) Isabel nee Higgins (b1904). He was a devout Roman Catholic and from the early 1920s he served on a local committee to assist the parish priest with matters concerning St. Mary's Church. Bon was especially active in fundraising, usually as Secretary of the committee, for many local organisations. He was Noble Grand of the Mt Pleasant Oddfellows lodge in 1927, and thereafter was Secretary for many years. He was appointed a Trustee of the Cemetery Trust in 1931. In 1936 he raised subscriptions and organized a new set of suitably inscribed figurines for the Stations of the Cross at St Mary's, for installation before a visit by Archbishop Mannix.

In 1938 he led the fundraising to build tennis courts at the primary school, including the supervision of tenders and works. Following the tragic 1939 fires he was appointed Vice-President of the local Relief Committee, raising and disbursing funds to affected families. In 1939, after many years of running annual balls, carnivals and sports days for the hospital, he was appointed to the Hospital's Committee of Management.

In 1940 he was Secretary of the Central Fundraising Committee, coordinating local township committees, to raise 1,500 pound towards the building of a new hospital. He was President of the Committee of Management in 1943 and 1944. He was a volunteer fireman with the Urban Fire Brigade, a member of the Alexandra Progress Association and Secretary/Treasurer of a committee that raised funds for the erection of the Sloyd Centre at the primary school in 1942. He was a member of the School Committee and as 'Correspondent' was responsible for official communications to and from the Education Department. In 1945, upon the formation of a 'Welcome Home Committee' for soldiers returning from WWII, he was elected as the Publicity Officer. In 1947 he was Secretary of the Alexandra Citizens Band and in 1948 he was actively promoting the establishment of a volunteer Alexandra Ambulance Service and purchase of an ambulance and was a member of the inaugural committee of the service.

Bon passed away on 5 July 1955 following a period of illness and suffering and was buried at the Alexandra Cemetery.

CHANGING FACE OF THE MEDIA

HOW NEWSPAPERS HAVE CHANGED

CHANGING FACE OF THE MEDIA

The period from the mid 1800s to the 1930s in Australia saw little change in newspaper print technology. While this period did witness the introduction of illustrations, lithographs, photographs and an expansion of formatting options, change was slow and profits were moderate. It was not until the 1930s as the world's communications improved, that newspapers began to be comfortably profitable. Their success resulted in larger budgets and the hiring of specialised staff.

But this period of prosperity lost some of its sheen in the late 1990s when the 'Digital Age' arrived. Newsprint was now competing against websites that were prepared to offer basic news services for free, or for a small fee. Digitally astute readers loved the introduction of high quality colour imagery, audio and video content, not having to deal with large dirty newspapers, the ability to save stories for later reading, the ability to share stories with friends and family, and instant access to breaking stories. Then the digital age morphed into the digital 'Mobile Age' with the introduction of the first iPhone on 29 June 2007 and the iPad on 3 April 2010. Now readers could freely gain access to the quickly growing range of news sources from anywhere and at any time.

By 2015 some larger proprietors were experimenting with (and using) computer algorithms to write content. Websites and mobile apps were now starting to rely on algorithms to rate what was newsworthy, while some even plagiarized material from competing news sources to avoid the costs of writing their own stories. It was not unusual during this period to hear how readers felt news quality was in decline. Around this time some large news corporations started collecting users' personal information and browsing habits, which they then shared with third parties for profit. No longer were publishers just supplying readers with information, many were now actively gathering user information and providing it to unknown third parties.

While many smaller rural newspapers found ways to stay afloat, community feedback often noted an increase in advertising for these publications. Some increased their advertising ration up to and beyond 55 percent while making their papers free. Others chose to continue to charge subscriptions or a per-copy fee, while elevating their advertising even higher. By 2016 it was common to see paid newspapers exceeding 65 percent advertising content. In 2017 Apple released their 'News' App and facebook experimented with pushing news based on algorithms. But facebook's early attempts led to the coining of the phrase 'fake news' and 'fact-checker'. In 2017 in a move against the trend, WikiTribune opened its doors offering free digital content that was first checked by professional reporters. May 2018 saw Google introduce a beefed up mobile news app, with Microsoft following suit in June. News has changed forever!

JOURNALISTS

The term 'Reporter' in reference to a person who wrote news stories for a print publication is hard to find in our early newspapers, including the *Alexandra Standard*. This is because reporting is a more modern term that was coined to describe a person who reported the news on television, which was introduced much later in the 1950s and in Australia on 16 September 1956. In the days before television, the term journalist was widely used to describe someone reporting on the news.

Today a reporter has a narrower skill set and is primarily involved in the gathering and reporting of facts, while the journalist also provides commentary on those facts and/or places them into greater context. Reporting is often the first step towards being a journalist.

In early times the journalists relied heavily on the community for information and direction, which meant that they needed to have personable characters to keep the public onside. This has not changed and today the most highly regarded journalists are measured by their character and personality as well as their knowledge and skill.

Our earliest reporter

Alexandra's first newspaper proprietor John Whitelaw, was also Alexandra's first journalist. But even though he was a learned man and had previously worked as a teacher in New South Wales, he had no official training or qualifications in journalism. Yet it does appear that he was a personable chap who got on with people, was active in the community, and was a popular public identity—all traits of a successful journalist. In John's time, not only did proprietors of smaller newspapers often act as journalists, but they may have also filled other roles such as editor, compositor, printer, salesman and debt collector.

Globally, the paid role of 'journalist' became most common as newspapers became sufficiently profitable that they could hire qualified staff to fulfill specific roles. The larger city based publications with their large readerships achieved this in the mid to late 1800s, while smaller rural publications such as the *Alexandra Standard* were only achieving this level of profitability in the mid 1900s.



HISTORIC FACTSHEET

JOURNALISTS

Local Journalism

There were numerous reporters who worked for the *Standard* over the years, each bringing their own personality and skill to the position. Some operated just as reporters, while others acted in numerous roles. One of the more recent reporters was Julia Foletta, who was employed during the time that Ann Friedel was on staff. Ann was a layout, graphics and production artist who remained until shortly after Geoff sold the business. Whilst Julia was not trained as a journalist, she was a qualified teacher who was familiar with putting together materials for presentation, just like the newspaper's first owner John Whitelaw, who had also been a teacher.

Julia first studied teaching, obtaining her Bachelor of Education before teaching at numerous primary schools in Victoria, and specialising in teaching art for much of her teaching career. Julia later moved permanently to the family's farm at Buxton. With two children to support she needed more than occasional emergency teaching. In March 1988 she dropped into the Alexandra Standard Office in Grant Street in the hope that some of her writing and photographic skills and local knowledge might be of use to the local paper. What follows is Julia's informative account of her time at the *Standard*:

'I joined the *Standard* in April 1988. The office and printing office was located next to UT Creek, where the new Alexandra library now sits. Geoff Heyes and his sister Jenny Smith had recently purchased the paper from Bert and John Page. Geoff was the editor, Jenny the office manager.

No need to sign anything, I wasn't given a job title. I took photographs and wrote stories, edited the handwritten sports reports and anything else which needed checking. One of my first tasks was to write a report from council meeting notes on the feasibility of a heated pool for Alexandra – has anything changed?

My two small children attended Taggerty Primary School, I worked two and a half days a week: hours were flexible and I could work around my farming and school commitments.

The office had no computers or email. There was a fax which printed on a continuous roll. We handwrote story copy on every second line. Geoff read mine, I read his and we edited where necessary in the spare lines. Stories then went to one of two typesetters working the Compugraphic and papertype Singer.

JOURNALISTS

The type was then fed through a processor and printed out, trimmed and manually laid then photographed onto an aluminium plate ready for the Rotaprint Gazette.

Vince Dignam, Neil Garlick then Gavan Skerritt were the printers. Papers were printed four pages at a time on Wednesday mornings by Jenny's husband Gary in the print house at the back. It was hard work.

Bert Page was the 'photographic department'. All photos were taken on black and white film, purchased in bulk and loaded in cassettes for film cameras. Each roll of film had to be processed and dried. The strips of negative were then placed over a light box and selected via the use of a magnifying glass. The (chosen photos) photos were marked with a felt tip pen then Bert would 'screen' them in the darkroom.

On a Sunday night at home I would process any black and white film I had exposed at weekend events, Geoff would select and then Bert would screen. Any colour film taken was raced up to the Pharmacy for urgent processing.

Weekly wages were paid in cash in a small brown envelope with a handwritten pay slip. Later the office and printing equipment was moved to 43 Grant Street where it is today.

Between 1992 and 2003 I worked and lived in Melbourne where my children attended schools and university, returning to Buxton on weekends. For some time I returned to Alexandra to attend and report on shire council meetings. I also made occasional submissions to the Standard. After leaving in 1992, Margaret Aujard, also a trained teacher, took on my role. Margaret and her farmer husband Mark were long time Alexandra (Whanregarwen) residents.

In February 2004 I came back to the *Standard*. Everyone was using computers, the office had email, albeit very slow, and an updated fax. Weekly wages were still paid in cash and my cup was still in the tearoom cupboard. By now the Yea Chronicle had been purchased by Geoff and Jenny.

Digital photography had arrived, revolutionising the whole industry.

A lot has happened between 2004 and today. Of major significance is the drought, the north south pipeline issue and the terrible 2009 fires from which some are still

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recovering and others never will.

In November 2009 Wednesday printing of the paper on site ceased, the printing was outsourced and colour was introduced.

In 2011 the *Alexandra Standard* and *Yea Chronicle* were purchased by Newspaper House. My last paper is January 30, 2013.'

By © Julia Foletta 2018

This piece was written just prior
to Julia leaving the *Standard*

ILLUSTRATIONS & PHOTOGRAPHERS

While photography was introduced into Australia in the 1840s, the technical difficulty in reproducing a photograph (which was the result of a chemical process) into a newsprint publication took much longer to resolve. Lithography is an early attempt at resolving the problem.

Lithography

Lithography was a process where a printing technique that relied on the principle that oil and water repel each other. Lithographs were used to produce printed material, including the reproduction of photographs. The lithographic plate was manually produced by creating reversed etchings on hard surfaces such as limestone, wood or metal, oil and ink was then applied to the surface in a multi-step process, before paper was pressed onto the prepared surface to produce a print.

While lithographs had been used to reproduce sketches and paintings from the late 1700s, it was much later that lithographs were prepared by professional artists who copied them directly from an actual photograph. And for this to happen, photographs had to first exist.

While the lithographic copying of photographs does not seem to have occurred at Alexandra, our earliest proprietors were able to print basic illustrations using metal lithograph plates prepared off-site. These were usually for advertisements and the metal plates were prepared in larger areas such as Melbourne.

Photography in Newsprint

Photography was first introduced to Australia with the introduction of the Daguerreotype camera from 1836 and the Calatype camera in 1841. The more widely accepted Albumen prints, produced by a growing range of cameras, were being produced by 1847 and with these prints came the mass produced photograph. This resulted in a new worldwide photographic fad as photographs were now being sold as early post cards and sent to addresses worldwide.

The production of lithographic plates from photographs was a time consuming and labourious task only carried out by extremely skilled artists. This led to the search for a simpler process whereby photos could be easily transferred to the printing plate.

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

ILLUSTRATIONS & PHOTOGRAPHERS

The introduction of photographs directly into newsprint media was technically complex due to the fact that photographs were created using chemicals, and this was not easily transferred to a manually produced metal plate. An early version of an automated process, produced what is known as a half-tone process, where the variation between black and white was extremely limited. In early times the resulting newsprint photo lacked the detail evident in chemical based photographic prints. The first half-tone photograph reproduced in a newspaper was in 1873. A later process using a photomechanical reproduction was printed in the US periodical *Daily Graphic* on the 4 March 1880.

Early illustrations

One of the first lithographic illustrations in the *Alexandra Times* was in 1868 when basic imagery was sketched into a printing plate for use in our early printing press. More intricate illustrations were available at that time for the more wealthy publications which had large readerships, but the *Alexandra Standard* with its small readership, did not see intricate local illustrations until the late 1910s.



In the *Standard* dated 22 August 1919, we find that the 'Cameron's Miners Exchange Hotel' was now reproducing an intricate lithographic advertisement that included a picture of its building in Alexandra (a local photographic subject). This advertisement continued as 'Cameron's Alexandra Hotel' from 23 July 1920.

In the *Standard* dated 10 September 1920, we find the 'Red House' shoe store was using an intricate illustration in its Alexandra store in its advertisement.



Some of the most elaborate early illustrations included a picturesque series of illustrated advertisements by James Abomady for his clothing business in 1921, and Lin Cumming for his business selling Rugby Automobiles in early 1925.

ILLUSTRATIONS & PHOTOGRAPHERS

Illustrations in the form of intricate lithographs of local subjects were now being used, and it was only a matter of time before photographs were able to be used locally.

The first photograph

To date, the first photograph we have found reproduced in the *Standard* was in the issue dated 21 August 1925. The photo was part of an advertisement for Morris Automobiles and was published in the *Standard* for sole Alexandra agent A. Forbes of Grant Street. His automobiles commenced at the bargain price of 275 pound. In fact the first three photographs we found reproduced in the *Standard*, were by this same Morris agent.

It is worth mentioning here that the printing plate used to reproduce the photograph in this advertisement (and others like it), were likely prepared in Melbourne by the importer. The importer would have had multiple plates made, and then sent them out to their agents in rural areas for use in their local publications. The photographs used in such advertisements were generally of the product and the photo itself had no direct link to our District.

The Penny Post may be a long time coming ...

but it is worth three half-pence to send for an excellently illustrated catalogue and price lists dealing with the wonderful British Morris Car Models.



Morris Cars are the Finest
Motoring Value in the World.

From £275.

Deferred payment arranged.

A. FORBES, Grant St., Alexandra,

Sole Agent for Alexandra District.

Shire Hall, Alexandra, Sat., March 27. Weir on 30th.



Interestingly, the fourth photograph we found in early issues of the *Standard* was a picture of a politician (25 September 1925), suggesting that politicians saw the importance of using photographs in rural publications to promote themselves from an early time.

The fifth was a photograph which made up part of a generic silent movie advertisement (19 March 1926) for the movie *Don Q. Son of Zorro*, sequel to the 1920 silent film *The Mark of Zorro*.

ILLUSTRATIONS & PHOTOGRAPHERS

Lin Cumming

One of our most prolific and important early photographers at Alexandra was Lin Cumming. While his photographs from the 1910s and 1920s were not able to be reproduced in our local publication at the time, due to print technology restraints, he was having success with larger city based publications reproducing his work. This included publications such as the *Australasian* in 1913 and the *Weekly Times*. For instance, in 1913 Lin published photos in *The Australasian* (Saturday 16 August 1913) alongside Mansfield photographer Herbert Valance of Val's Studio.

Lin is remembered locally for producing some of the most important images of the District around the turn of the twentieth century. Importantly to Artworkz, Lin Cumming's daughter, Sandra Cumming graciously opened up her father's collection to us in 2010. Many of Lin's early photographs are also available on the State Library of Victoria website thanks to Sandra.

Later as technology improved, Lin's historic photographs were more widely used in the local print media. Notably the use of his photographic works in our present day print and digital media far exceeds anyone else's photographic works from this area.

Bert Page

Bert, who with his younger brother John ran the *Alexandra Standard* from 1957 to 1986, was also an enthusiastic amateur photographer. While not professionally trained, he often took photographs for publication in the newspaper. His photographs became more common-place in the *Standard* once technology was introduced to the print office allowing for black and white photographs to be processed locally for the production of the printing block. John also owned and used a camera, though he lacked the photographic enthusiasm of his brother Bert.

Allan Weeks

In more modern times, our first professional photographer to regularly supply imagery to the *Alexandra Standard*, was photographer Allan Weeks. Allan ran a small local photographic business at Alexandra from the mid 1950s (Allan Weeks Studio) and even held a pilot's licence which was beneficial for his work.

ILLUSTRATIONS & PHOTOGRAPHERS

Allan first took photographs commercially for the media when he commenced work for the *Herald Sun* Newspaper. Soon after, the Government owned Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) approached him to do commercial work for them. He accepted their offer and after that time it was not uncommon for Allan to take photographs for the *Herald Sun* using a Mamiya 120 Press Camera, while using a 16 mm Paillard Bolex Movie Camera to take news clip movie footage for the ABC.

The first camera used by Allan for newspaper and general commercial work was a Linhof 5x4 Inch Press camera. While cumbersome in size, it was still faster to use than the 120 m cameras, and faster than many of the 35 mm cameras of that time. Linhof had a rapid change six film sheet Graphmatic Magazine.

Newspapers eventually changed to 120 mm and later 35 mm cameras as the improvement in film emulsions led to higher negative quality. This made it less expensive to produce photographs and cameras were less bulky to carry around.

Allan was later approached by regional television company GMV6, and he commenced working for them as well. By this time his camera stable consisted of two 16 mm Paillard Bolex Movie Cameras, two Mamiya 120 mm Press Cameras and two Mamiya RZ67 (6x7 cm) cameras for his commercial work.

By this time, the *Standard* was already reproducing photographs in advertisements using pre-prepared zinc plates. However they wished to broaden the use of photographs to include news stories. This was helped along when photographer Allan Weeks commenced supplying photographs to the *Standard*.

Allan commenced photographing local news events for Bert and John Page of the *Alexandra Standard* in April 1958. While Allan did not charge the *Standard* for the use of his photographs, his name always appeared as the copyright holder, and if people requested copies of photos, it was agreed that Allan would receive all profits. One of the other benefits of supplying his photographs to the *Standard* for free was that it led to him gaining local recognition, which in turn led to ongoing commercial work.

The first major event that Allan covered for the *Standard* was the visit by Dame Pattie Menzies, wife of Prime Minister Menzies, on Saturday and Sunday of the weeklong 1958 Back-To-Alexandra celebrations.

ILLUSTRATIONS & PHOTOGRAPHERS

The new zinc block process used to reproduce photographs in the newspaper involved the re-photographing of the original photograph using a special camera. This camera used a size marked ground glass screen for focusing, with a screen with round holes (72 dots per inch–dpi) placed in front of the negative during exposure. The resulting negative was the same size as the desired print size. The negative was then placed on the Zinc block which was covered with an emulsion, exposed to an arc lamp, and then developed in a bath solution containing an acid. The block was then washed under a water tap to remove the exposed areas. The Zinc block was then glued to a wooden block to make up type height, before being printed. It was a labour intensive process, which accounted for its high cost. This process is still in use today by some publications.

Early photographs taken by Allan which had been selected for publication by Bert and John, were reproduced in the *Standard* with a visible white dot on each corner. This was due to the fact that printing photographs this way was a new thing for Bert and he didn't have the correct glue on hand required to glue the Zinc plate to the wooden block. So instead he came up with the idea to drill holes in the corners of the Zink block and screw it to the wooden blocks. This worked fine, except for the noticeable white dots in the corners of Allan's photographs.

Some of the images selected for publication required air-brushing to remove imperfections, or alter/improve images before publication. Air-brushing was an artistic technique that used a mechanical airbrush and requiring a high level of skill. In the early days of Allan's photographic studio business at Alexandra, Allan's wife Patricia, an artist in her own right, would often hand colour his studio photographs which he had taken of special events and occasions.

Later a new printing process was developed which made the use of photographs in newspapers cheaper, easier to replicate and much quicker to reproduce. Best of all, the new process could achieve a very satisfactory 65 dpi (dots per inch) when printed on newsprint paper. Considering many of today's newspapers still print at just 75 dpi, this was an excellent outcome.

In over 60 years Allan has been involved with and seen the photographic development from Black and White film, to colour transparencies, to economical colour prints and finally to digital photography. During this period, Allan has contributed a huge number

ILLUSTRATIONS & PHOTOGRAPHERS

of photographs for local publication, and this has continued to this day, with him sharing his new works and his earlier works with local publishers free of charge. His graciousness in sharing his photographs and stories has significantly helped lift the quality of many Artworkz publications, for which we are deeply indebted.

CONTRIBUTORS

Since the time newsprint first appeared, proprietors have relied on contributions from readers to supplement their own offerings. These included 'long-form' pieces such as articles, or 'short-form' pieces such as a *Letter to the Editor*, poetry, community updates and community group reports. Further contributions in the form of artworks and photographs were standard once printing presses were able to cheaply and easily reproduce them.

Contributors were often motivated by the belief that they had something to offer the community or by a desire to educate the community on some matter. Others were motivated to participate because they wanted to promote something that they felt was important to the community. On the negative side of contributions, it was not uncommon for contributors to use the media platform for their benefit by attempting to attract attention to themselves, object to another's point of view, or simply even scores. Whether in the positive or the negative, communities have always loved contributors and relied upon their knowledge, skill, fun, wit and sometimes even their gossip.

In the early days of Alexandra, it was not unusual for advertisers themselves to hide behind a 'fun contribution' to promote something. We saw this in the *Alexandra Times* in June 1871 when Bellman and Chimney Sweep William Lawrence submitted a piece for publication where he wittingly wrote as a third party who was informing a make-believe lady how she should rely on the services of William Lawrence (himself).

Another early contributor, Fawcett man W Long, was recognised as a learned man and was a significant and regular contributor to the *Alexandra Standard*. He also contributed to Melbourne and Sydney based publications such as the *Sydney Bulletin*. However, William sadly took his own life after a long bout of depression. Up until then, he was one of the most published local contributors.

In the case of Artworkz who commenced publishing a free magazine (eSplash) locally in 2009, everything published in the magazine relies upon contributors. The magazine, which has captured the imagination of many locals has resulted in tens of thousands of contributions since it started.

With the advent of digital media, digital contributions in the form of postings to social media sites is now common place. Numerous local social media sites now make up a wide information web that ensures those using the platforms locally are better informed.

TIMELINE

BASIC TIMELINE

TIMELINE

- 1864** John Whitelaw established the *Woods Point Times* newspaper at Woods Point.
- 1865** John Whitelaw took over the opposition *Woods Point Mountaineer* newspaper and incorporated it into the *Woods Point Times*.
- Early 1868** Around January 1868, the *Mansfield Courier* was invited (by parties unknown) to publish a newspaper in Alexandra. They initially declined.
- 2 June 1868** **FIRST OWNER:** John Whitelaw established his printing press in a bark hut on his Alexandra property *The Rookery* with his sons. He christened the newspaper the *Alexandra Times* and published issue one on 2 June 1868 with the help of his sons.
- 5 June 1868** Issue Two of the *Alexandra Times* included a call for those who received Issue One for free and had finished with it, to return it and be paid sixpence. This was necessary as some of the early subscribers had missed out on Issue One.
- Early June 1868** Between 5–12 June, the *Mansfield Courier* commenced publication at Alexandra in direct opposition to the newly established *Alexandra Times*. This newspaper was short-lived and the *Mansfield Courier* closed shortly thereafter. The current *Courier* is a re-creation of the earlier title and was born out of the later *Mansfield Independent*.
- September 1868** The *Standard* Office was now located in Milligan's Commercial Hotel, which housed a number of businesses. It was later delicensed and called Temple Court.
- 2 October 1869** The first issue of the *Godfrey's Creek Standard* newspaper was published by John Whitelaw. (*Alexandra Times*, Friday 24 September 1869). This newspaper was only published for a few months.

TIMELINE

- Circa 1874** The *Standard* Office was now located in Downey Street.
- 1 July 1877** **SECOND OWNER: James John Hamilton McColl** purchased *The Alexandra Times* and renamed the publication *The Alexandra & Yea Standard* (*Alexandra Standard*, Friday 23 July 1897). The first issue of the *Alexandra & Yea Standard* was published on 7 July 1877.
- April 1878** The *Standard* Office and printer returned to Grant Street, taking over the premises formerly known as Brook's Bakery (possibly near what is now 50 Grant Street).
- 21 May 1880** **THIRD OWNER: Samuel Allardyce** purchased the *Alexandra Standard* business from his brother-in-law James McColl. His final issue was 19 October 1883.
- October 1883** **FOURTH OWNER: Joseph Allport Gordon** (initially in partnership with others) took over the publication, although he may have been editing the paper for Allardyce from 1882.
- Circa 1891** Gordon took the *Standard* Office and printing works over the road to what is now known as 49 Grant Street (and the site of the third stage of the library).
- February 1892** Although JA Gordon has always been credited as owner, he became the paid Shire Secretary in January 1892—and possibly to avoid any legal conflict of interest—the paper was placed in the name of the ‘proprietress’ (his wife Mary Ann Gordon).
- May 1892** The *Standard*, along with the *Mansfield Courier*, carried a colour lithographic supplement of scenes and businesses within their towns. The supplement was prepared by Rider and Mercer of Ballarat.
- 1901** **FIFTH OWNER: Thomas Albert Fox** returned to Alexandra

TIMELINE

and took over the editorship of the *Standard* initially leasing the business. He later purchased the business and freehold.

11 May 1906

A 28 page supplement was issued along with the normal newspaper of four pages. Supplements were not uncommon and were probably mass produced in Melbourne for numerous papers as the advertisements were higher level and generic, and not specifically local.

28 January 1919

Thomas Albert Fox died aged 63 while still operating the *Standard*. This marked the first instance of a proprietor of a newspaper at Alexandra dying while in business. His widow continued to operate the paper until the end of April 1920.

1920

SIXTH OWNER: Joseph Thompson Guthridge of Seymour purchased the *Standard*.

1949

SEVENTH OWNER: **Francis Stanley (Bon) Hewitt** purchased the newspaper from his long term employer. He ran the publication until his death on 5 July 1955.

1955–57

Bon's wife **Dolly** and daughter **Mary** carried on the publication after Bon's death.

June 1957

EIGHTH OWNER: The firm **Thomas Page & Son** purchased the Alexandra *Standard* in June 1957. It was initially operated by Mrs Emily Page and her sons, although over time, sons Bert and John were the active partners.

Early 1970s

The Pages erected a new building of concrete bricks around the ramshackle timber building and then removed the old structure. Earlier they had also modernized a lot of the printing machinery.

Early 1980s

A web offset press was installed, printing from a roll of paper, which allowed for speedier and easier production.

TIMELINE

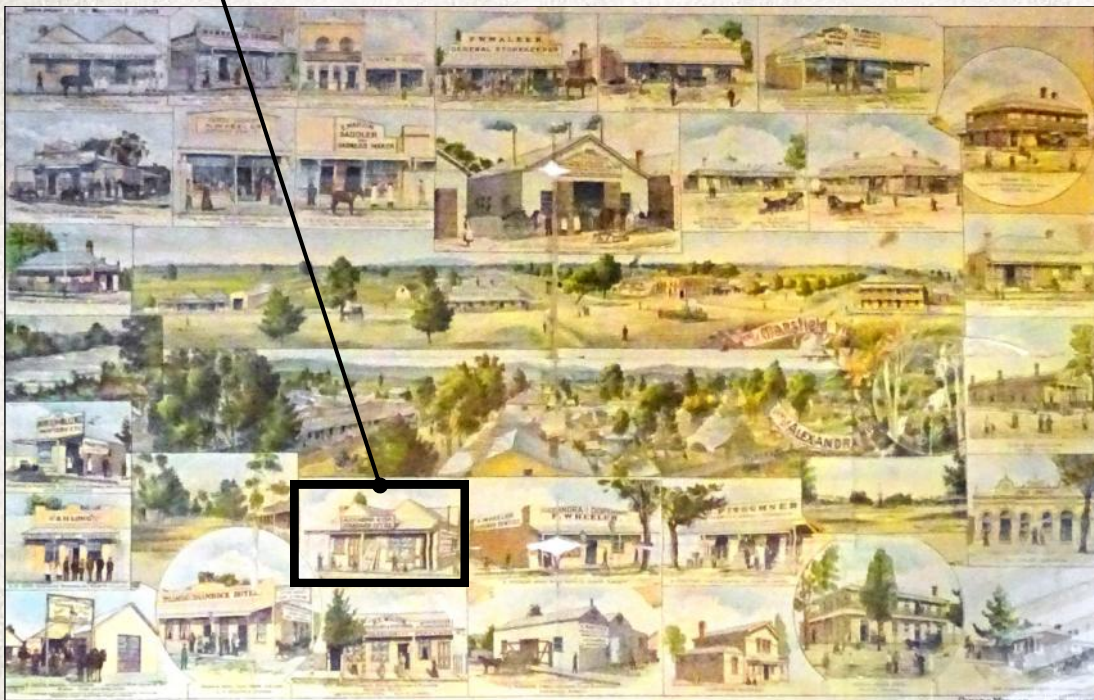
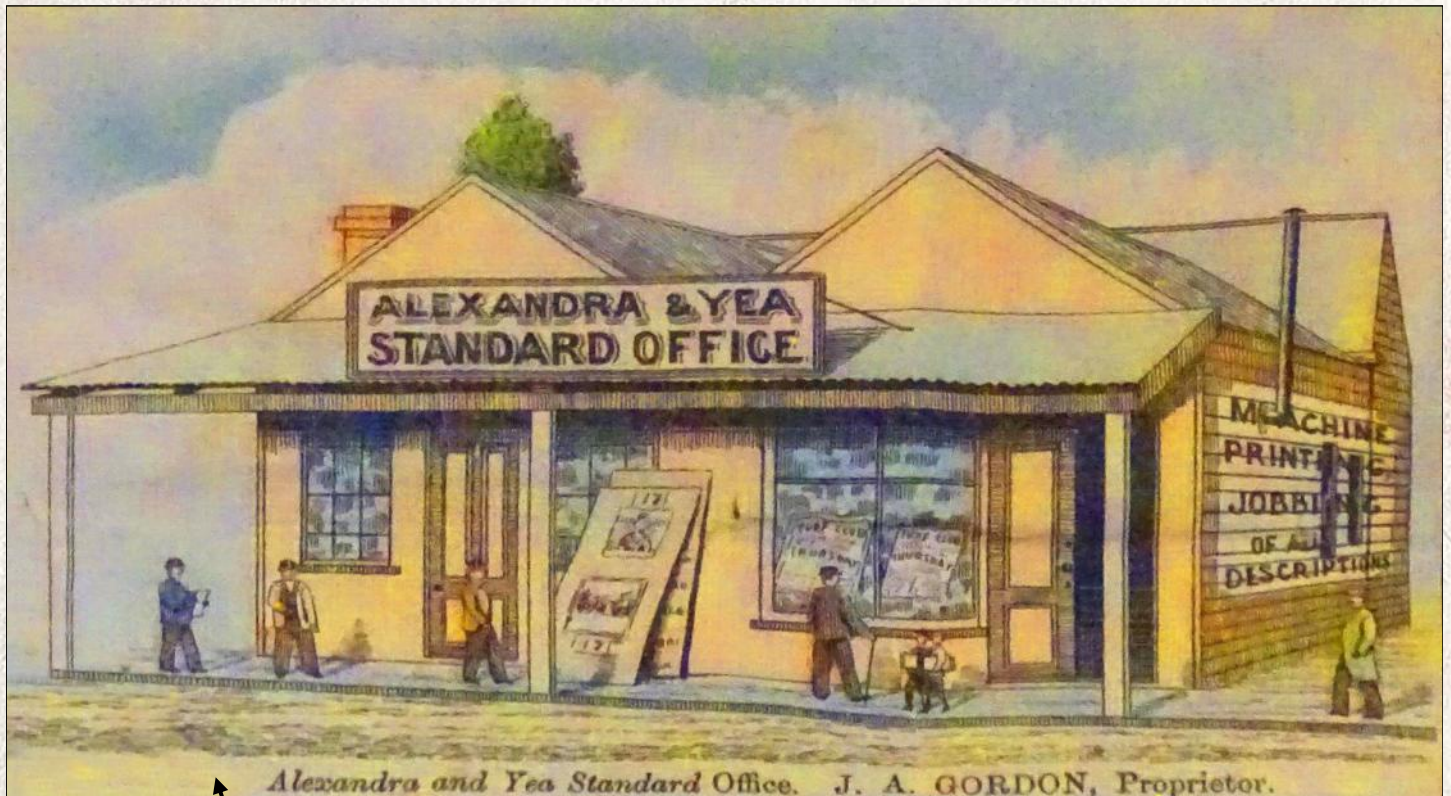
- 1986** **NINTH OWNER: Siblings Geoff Heyes and Jenny Smith, with their respective partners Carol and Gary,** purchased the *Alexandra Standard* business.
- 1988** The Heyes and Smith families formed Alexandra Newspapers Pty Ltd to legally conduct the business, although all shares were held within the families.
- 1990** Needing more space, the business moved to 43 Grant Street before the former building was demolished as part of a later expansion to the Alexandra Library in 2004.
- 18 November 2009** Colour photographs were included in the *Standard* for the first time.
- July 2010** The freehold of the building at 43 Grant Street was sold to Mr I Newman, and the building 'leased back' to the *Standard*.
- February 2011** Alexandra Newspapers Pty Ltd (and its newspapers) were sold to the **TENTH OWNER** Newspaper House Group (Yeates and Mott families). Following internal restructuring of Newspaper House, the majority shares in Alexandra Newspapers Pty Ltd are now held by sisters Celina and Fiona Mott.
- 27 May 2016** Artworkz commenced work on this factsheet.
- 6 June 2018** The *Alexandra Standard* celebrated its 150th Anniversary with a special historical feature and a small public function at the *Standard* Office. The birthday cake was cut by Dot Jackson (née) McColl, the great great niece of second owner James McColl.
- 31 July 2018** This factsheet was publicly released by Artworkz during its HistoryCafe evening event.

GALLERY

RELATED IMAGES

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

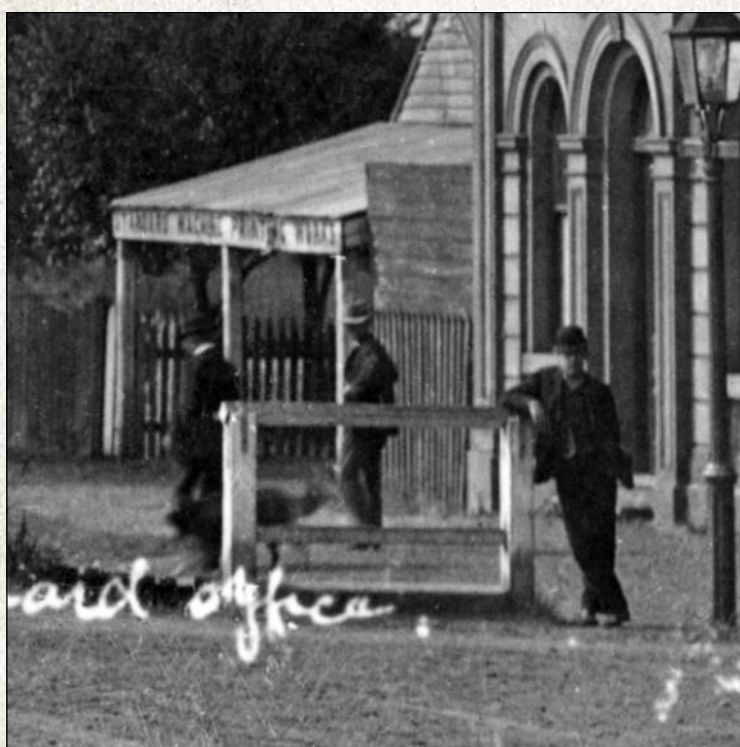
GALLERY



Lithographic supplement to the *Alexandra & Yea Standard*
produced by Rider & Mercer in 1892

Courtesy Allan Layton and Murrindindi Library Services 2018

GALLERY



The image is taken looking north along Grant Street, and shows the early wooden trestle bridge, the Alexandra Library and the 'Alexandra Machine Printing Works' on the right. The Printing Works later became known as the 'Standard Office'. It eventually made way for a third library expansion project.

Photographer Lin Cumming
Courtesy Sandra Cumming and
State Library Victoria

GALLERY



The Alexandra Free Library and the Standard Machine Printing Works, located in Grant Street Alexandra and photographed above circa 1900.

This picture is after the extension to the Library was added (left section) in 1891.

Photographer Lin Cumming
Courtesy Sandra Cumming and
State Library Victoria



GALLERY



Library building, Shire Hall and Standard Office in Grant Street circa 1910

Photographer Lin Cumming
Courtesy Sandra Cumming & Courtesy State Library Victoria

GALLERY



Alexandra Standard Office pictured between 1921 when the fire bell was installed nearby and before 1945 when a filling hydrant was added to the tower.

Courtesy John & Wilma Page

GALLERY



John Page (centre) and Bert Page (right) with friend Maurie Smith in the early 1960s. In this picture Bert has a moustache which he only had for a short period of time before he married. Bert was a photographer, worked in the darkroom and processed black and white film.

Courtesy John & Wilma Page

GALLERY



Alexandra Standard Office in snow during 1966

Courtesy Murrindindi Library Services and State Library Victoria

GALLERY



Alexandra Standard circa 1966

Courtesy Murrindindi Library Services and State Library Victoria

GALLERY



The Alexandra Standard Printing Office erected in the early 1970s. This building replaced the ramshackle timber building that had stood on this site since the 1890s.

Courtesy John & Wilma Page

GALLERY



The Alexandra *Standard* Printing Office in the 1970s

Courtesy John & Wilma Page

GALLERY



**Gary Smith (front) at the Rotogazette machine at 49 Grant Street
with Geoff Heyes (back left) at the folding machine circa 1987**

Courtesy Geoff Heyes and Jenny Smith 2018

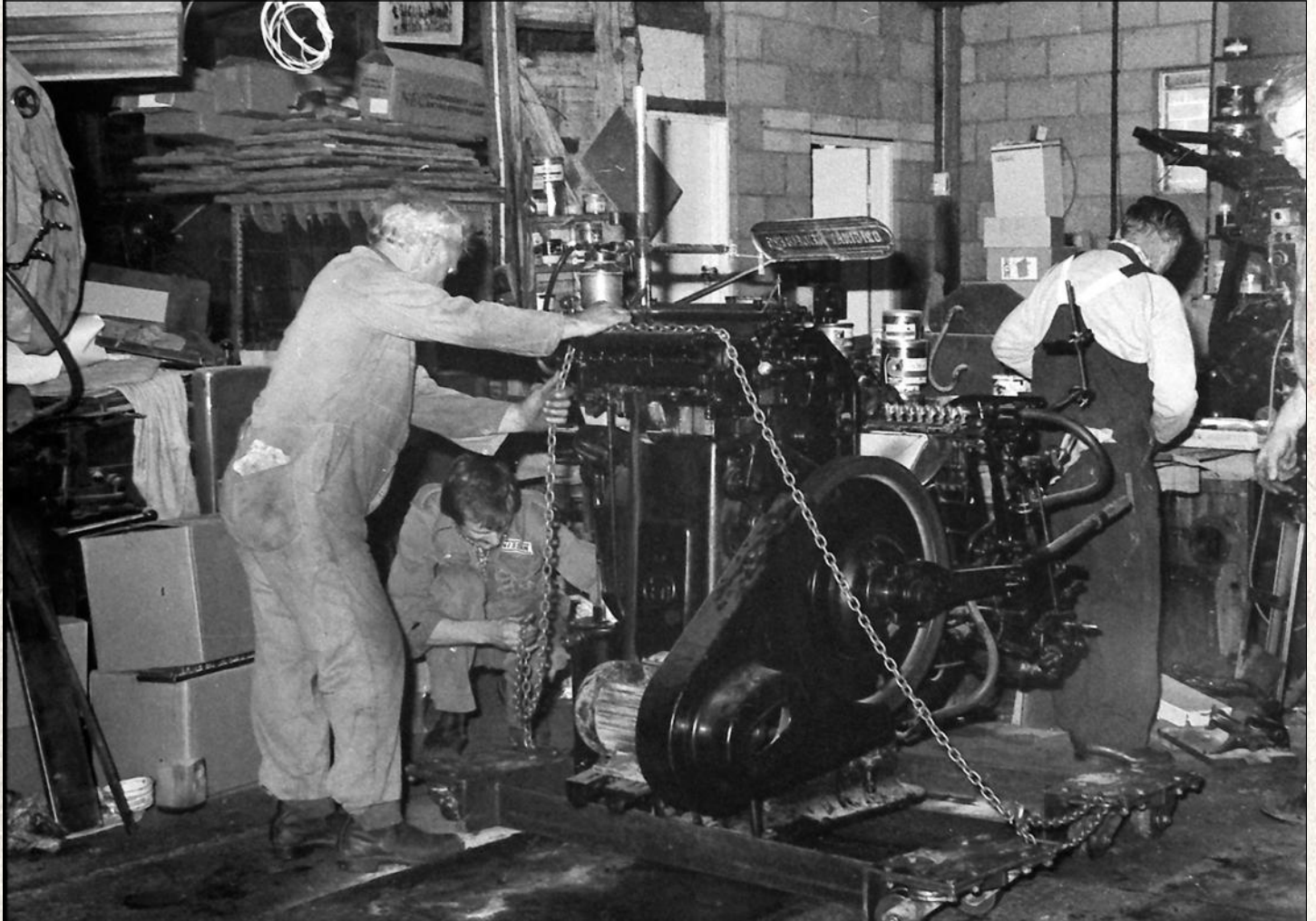
GALLERY



Gavan Skeritt (right) prior to the move to 43 Grant Street in October 1989

Courtesy Geoff Heyes and Jenny Smith 2018

GALLERY



Typesetter Neil Garlick (right) preparing for the move to 43 Grant Street in October 1989 while two engineers from Melbourne (left) move machinery.

Courtesy Geoff Heyes and Jenny Smith 2018

GALLERY



Neil Garlick prior to the move to 43 Grant Street in October 1989

Courtesy Geoff Heyes and Jenny Smith 2018

GALLERY



**Norma Dick (right) preparing for the move to 43 Grant Street in October 1989.
Norma's husband Jim taught at the Alexandra High School for a while.**

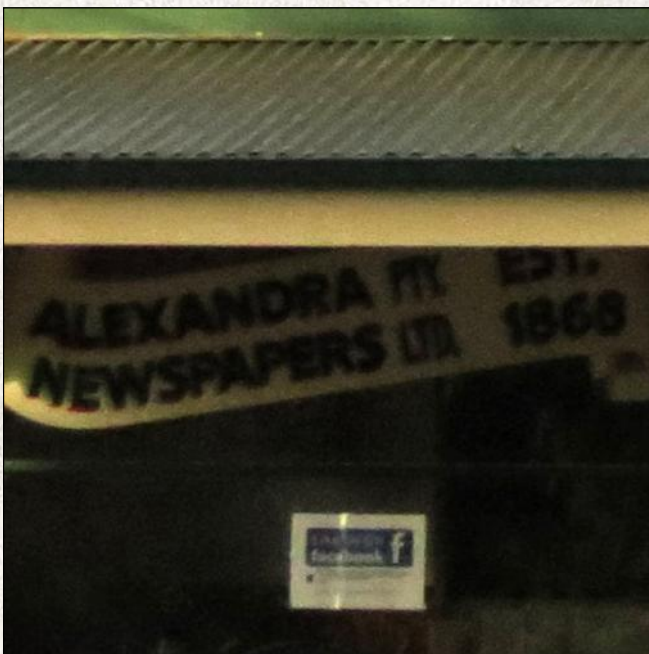
Courtesy Geoff Heyes and Jenny Smith 2018

GALLERY



Alexandra Standard Office at 43 Grant Street in 2014

Photograph © Ron Cooper 2018



GALLERY



The original printing press was situated in a bark hut on this corner of Downey and Myrtle Streets, at the property then owned by John Whitelaw. At the time John owned both the corner block and the adjoining block.

OTHER

OTHER RELATED ITEMS

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

MASTHEADS



The Alexandra Times.
For Circulation in Wood's Point, Ghin Ghin, Yea, Maindample, Mansfield, Doon, Merton, Jamieson, Lauraville, &c.
No. 2, [PUBLISHED EVERY WEEK] AND FRIDAY. ALEXANDRA, JUNE 5, 1868. 7s. 6d. PER QUARTER.

Est: 1864
John Whitelaw
2 June 1868
to
30 June 1877



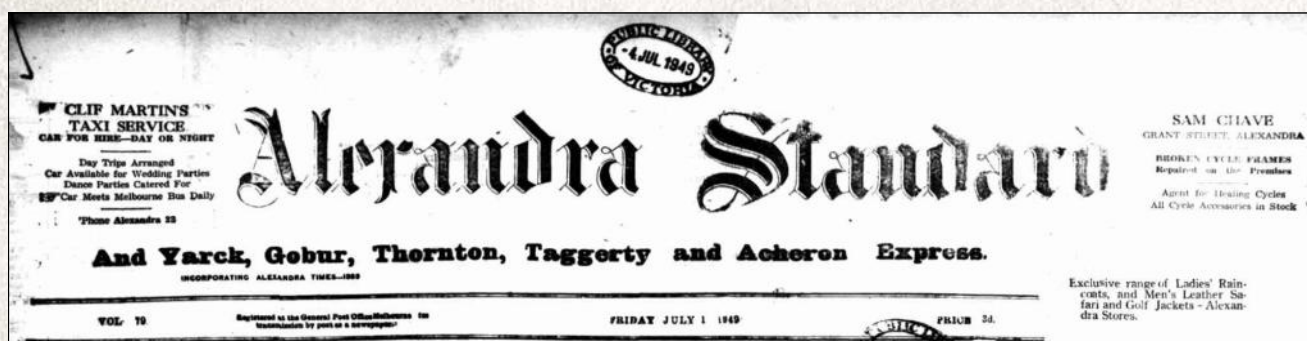
ALEXANDRA AND YEA STANDARD,
THORNTON, GOBUR, AND ACHERON EXPRESS.
With which is incorporated THE ALEXANDRA TIMES.
NO. 1. ALEXANDRA, SATURDAY, JULY 7, 1877.

7 July 1877
to
7 July 1877
One issue
only



Alexandra & Yea Standard
AND GOBUR, THORNTON, AND ACHERON EXPRESS.
WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED THE ALEXANDRA TIMES
NEW SERIES—VOL. 20.—No. 1058 [Registered at the General Post Office, Melbourne, for transmission by post as a newspaper.] The Alexandra and Yea Standard, Friday, December 12, 1902. PRICE THREEPENCE

14 July 1877
to
23 June 1949



Alexandra Standard
And Yack, Gobur, Thornton, Taggerty and Acheron Express.
INCORPORATING ALEXANDRA TIMES—1868
VOL. 19. Registered at the General Post Office Melbourne for transmission by post as a newspaper. FRIDAY JULY 1 1949. PRICE 2d.
CLIF MARTIN'S TAXI SERVICE
CARS FOR HIRE—DAY OR NIGHT
Day Trips Arranged
Car Available for Wedding Parties
Dance Parties Catered For
55 Car Meets Melbourne Bus Daily
Phone Alexandra 22
SAM CHAVE
GRANT STREET, ALEXANDRA
BROKEN CYCLE FRAMES
Repaired on the Premises
Agent for Hoising Cycles
All Cycle Accessories in Stock
Exclusive range of Ladies' Rain-coats, and Men's Leather Safari and Golf Jackets—Alexandra Stores.

01 July 1949
to
at least
1 Mar 1957
(hard copy)



ALEXANDRA & EILDON STANDARD
Volume 89.
Friday, April 11, 1958.
INCORPORATING ALEXANDRA TIMES—1868
Price 4d.
P. DEVINE & Son
CASH BUYERS
Wool, Hides, Skins, Tallow, Fur.
Dept: Vinery Street, ALEXANDRA.
In attendance Friday afternoons and Saturdays.
WOOL CLASSING DONE
Phone 22
KEEP YOUR CHILDREN WARM THIS WINTER WITH
Knitwear & Woolies
THE BLUE BOW
THE CHILDREN'S WEAR SPECIALISTS
Grant Street, Alexandra
And YACK, GOBUR, THORNTON, TAGGERTY & ACHERON EXPRESS.

Known
issues
include
1958–c1967
4d

HISTORIC FACTSHEET

MASTHEADS



- Masthead appeared on both the top left and right of the cover
- Lighter background in box

Known
issues
include
18 Sep 1964–
9 May 1979
4d, 4c, 5c, 10c, 14c



- Masthead appeared on both the top left and right of the cover
- Lighter background in box
- Change of font below the box from a serif to a sans serif

Known
issues
include
18 Feb 1981–
26 Oct 1983
15c



- Masthead appeared on both the top left of the cover
- Font change at top
- Rounded inner corners of box

Known
issues
include
26 Oct 1983–
8 Oct 1986
20c



Known
issues
include
8 Oct 1986
30c



- The contact details moved to bottom of page in a long black box and date inserted in new black box in masthead

Known
issues
include
12 July 1989–
24 Jun 1992
40, 50c



Known
issues
include
12 Jul 1989–
present
70c, 90c,
\$1.00, \$1.20

STANDARD MEMORIES

By © Lloyd Foster 2018

I didn't have much to do with the *Standard*. But what I did, certainly had a lasting impression. My brother had a friendship with Bert Page from the cycling club as I recall and he used to drop into the office and say hello. This was a habit I continued after he left in 1969.

Even as a little boy I recall the bouncy floor and smell of mould in the old timber building. The verandah at the front of the place was disappearing into the dirt and the rest of the place wasn't far behind it. My fascination that it was still standing was fantastic. Of course at that age you take the world as you find it, and it was like a trip to Luna Park. I sort of remember a bit of a lean to out the back (although really the whole place was a lean to, except it had nothing to lean against) which I think had a dirt floor.



Alexandra Standard Office in snow during 1966

Courtesy Murrindindi Library Services and State Library Victoria

Later on I did a few bob a job type things like cleaning the windows. I have no doubt they were much worse when I finished than when I started. A few times I was called in to fold the papers. They were all hand assembled and folded. Even in those days this seemed a bit antiquated. Looking back at it, what made it fun was there was always a disaster with the last page and you would be

sitting around for hours until the thing finally got printed. There was usually a fair bit of shouting and unpleasantness with this. But great memories.

STANDARD MEMORIES

One paper folding night I remember hearing music coming in from the street and we all assumed it was a loud car stereo. But there weren't any cars to be seen. To my complete amazement it was the noise from the High School social in the High School Assembly Hall. My memory might not be completely accurate on this, but that would have been the now very famous Rose Tattoo. Except at that time they were not very famous, but they must have been very loud!

From the wonky verandah and the smell of the hot ink. To the madness of individually folding every page and having black hands that wouldn't wash out for days, to the sound of the lead falling down the chutes like rain after the machine had made them into typeset (I think that is what it was called). Or the Heidelberg copier that must have run on compressed air somehow. It hissed like puffing billy while all its mechanical bits performed a symphony of clank.

Wonderful memories.

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