

HISTORY OF MORWELL NATIONAL PARK

Because Ellen Lyndon did not think she should write about her part in the reserving of Morwell National Park, I talked with her and am writing this to cover the early days of the effort to preserve the park.

In 1950 Ellen and her husband, Don, lived near the park on a share farm. Eulie and Os Brewster lived nearby. Ellen wandered in the area while living on that farm,

Eulie told Ellen about the orchids and Ellen found them and then started writing letters to influential people in the hope of forming a National Park. Ellen lead scientists and other people through the park in the hope of gaining their support. She was also responsible for recording most of the lists of birds, animals, fungi etc. of the park in those days and Don had many photos taken there. The main problem with creating the national park was that the land was not public land but private property and Mr. Quigley wanted \$20,000 for it. That was a lot of money in those days. (How this was ultimately overcome is told in Dr. L.H. Smith's article which is attached.)

About 10 years later, in 1960, the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalist Club was formed. Ellen asked for their help with preserving the bushland. It was decided to call a meeting of local people in the area that is now the national park. Ellen felt the people present were surprised that anyone thought of preserving bushland in that area. But they had no objections. Jim Peterson was present at that meeting and he took up the fight with the backing of the Latrobe Valley Field Naturalists Club. Whereas Ellen, who by now was living in the Leongatha area, had written many letters, Jim took the personal approach. He personally spoke about the hope of a national park with anybody he thought may have influence in the necessary departments and Council. Ellen assures me it was only after Jim became involved that things began to have a positive result.

As you will know Ken, Ellen has continued her interest in the park even up to the present. She suggests that for more information you should contact Eulie Brewster. The Brewster brothers lived near the park for a long time.

In 1980 the Land Conservation Council looked at all public land in our part of South Gippsland. In their report they suggested that the Morwell National Park was too small to be called a National Park and should be declared a Flora and Fauna Reserve. We fought very hard against this and used the other small National Parks in Victoria to help stop this suggestion. Although the final recommendations of the Land Conservation Council in 1982 suggested the Flora and Fauna Reserve the Government of the day, after much lobbying, did not agree with the land Conservation Council and left it a National Park. It was after that that the land exchange with the A.P.M. took place and enlarged the park. You will know of the further enlargements after that.

Bon Thompson