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Francis Moss

migrated to Victoria...

...aged 18 and settled at Buninyong, near Ballarat. In 1853 Moss established a 17 acre nursery/garden to supply the goldfields. He grew and sold red, white and yellow gooseberries, strawberries, red and black currants, plums, cherries and rhubarb. Moss grew many vegetables too, and learned some Cantonese so that he could converse with the Chinese he employed to work in his gardens. He imported seed from England, France and Italy, thousands of daffodil bulbs, and birds like thrushes and goldfinches.

[Click for more information on the Moss nursery in 1873 and 1877](#)

Bernard Farrell ...

...becomes the pioneer owner of a significant part of the Great Gippsland Forest, including the Mossvale farm area - described in 'Land of the Lyrebird' (1920).

[Click for a link to Land of the Lyrebird online.](#)

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1888

Francis Moss expands his nursery into Gippsland...

... and settled on 1,000 acres of virgin forest and began nursery development. Part of the property was originally selected by Mr Bernard Farrell, via the 1878 Land Board. Mr Bruce is the first nursery manager. At this stage the property was called Mossmont on the Tarwin.

The land was cleared by burning off which commenced in January. Then fencing, a hut and a bridge across the Tarwin River had to be built. By 1890 a house had been built for the nursery manager and Mr Moss when he visited.

[Click for more information on the Moss family](#)

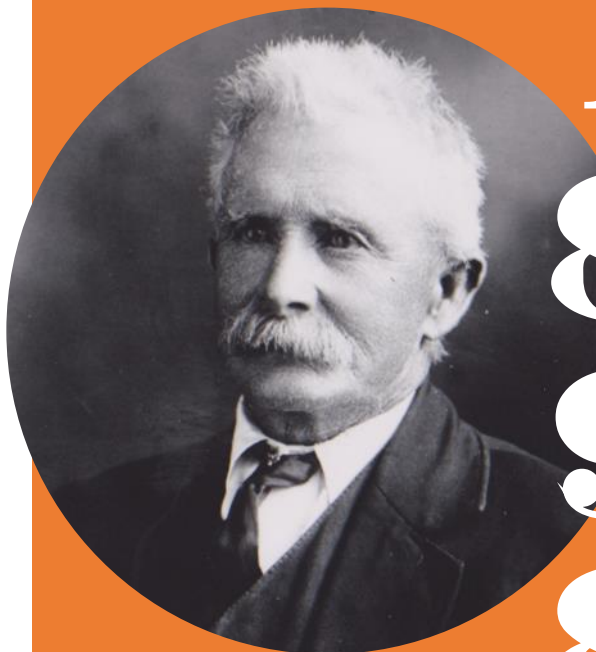
Mr J Bruce ...

...the first nursery manager came from Workington, Cumberland on the Scottish Borders, via Ballarat. Work to establish the Mossmont Nursery on the Tarwin continued with seed stock coming from the Buninyong nursery. Wire netting was wrapped around the old eucalypt stumps and ivy was grown up them to beautify them. This same ivy causes many problems in the Park to this day. A bridge was built over the Tarwin River, behind the two elm trees and the playground. You can still see the avenue in the paddock on the other side of the river.

A Mr G.E.Touzel, who still has family in the area, used to deliver the sold trees by packhorse to the Mirboo Nth railway station shortly after it opened in 1891.

1890





1898

Mr William Gould became...

...manager of Mossmont-on-Tarwin when Mr Bruce died. Mr William Gould managed both this nursery and Moss's Leongatha Nursery on the Ruby Creek. Gould had been trained at Brunning's Nursery in the 1860s, and supervised for Moss until 1917. He was a qualified nurseryman, apprenticed in the 1860s. It was William and his son George who planted the trees in the area that is now Mossvale Park. These may have been surplus nursery stock, which, for various reasons did not sell.

[Click for more information on the Gould Family](#)

Changes at the Nursery ...

...George Gould was appointed to assist his father William in both the nursery on the Ruby Creek and the property on the Tarwin River. It was decided to change the large grazing portion of the property to dairying.

The name of the property was changed at this time from Mossmont to Mossvale, the name we know it as today.

1910



1916

Francis Moss ...

Fern Cutting.
WANTED. — TENDERS for cutting about 700 acres of **FERNS** on Moss Vale Estate; in one, two, or three lots. Tenders returnable February 1st.
T. WEIR,
Leongatha.

Great Southern Star, Friday 14th January 1914, pg3

...died, aged 84, and was buried at Buninyong. The Buninyong nursery sold, but the Leongatha property (Mossvale) failed to sell until 1931. From 1916 – 1923 Thomas Weir who had been Francis Moss's dairy business partner, was appointed by the estate administrators to continue dairy farming on the estate. However as the property deteriorated, it was leased for grazing.

Les Edey...

...Purchases 800 acres (320 Hectares) of the Mossvale property. The family - Les, Louie, Tom, Frank, Peter, Terry and Margaret milked 100 cows on the property. When the family arrived, the old 30 acre nursery site was untended roses, magnolias, rhododendrons, hawthorn, conifers, fruit trees, oaks elms, ashes, poplars and ivy.

The 'picnic grounds' which were what is now the Park hosted gatherings and sports days for the local school, Berrys Creek, a Scout Jamboree, the Army for a weekend camp and many fishers and campers.

[Click for more information about the Edey family and the picnic races.](#)

1931



Rodney Emmerson, far left and Terry Edey far right in the Park in Nov 2014



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Mr J Hayes...

...purchased the farm from the Edeys and continued the custom of picnics and sports days. He first suggested Woorayl Shire Council purchase the front paddock for public use. Local landholders, Messrs Aberdeen and Dowling support the proposal.

Delegates from the Leongatha Branch of the Australian Natives Association added support and presented a proposal for purchase, supported by Mirboo Shire Council.

Woorayl and Mirboo Shires ...

...jointly purchase 10 Acres, which is declared a public reserve in March 1946. A public meeting was convened in the Berrys Creek Hall on the 17th April, and the first Committee of Management was elected. Mr G M Hayes, was appointed caretaker. A sign for the entrance and a toilet block were planned. A sign was erected - 'These trees are the property of the public. Please respect them'. Fees were set for camping, picnics and firewood.

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"MOSS VALE" PARK, BERRY'S CREEK.

THE Woorayl Shire Councillors would like to meet the Mirboo Shire Councillors and the residents of Berry's Creek at a Get Together Meeting, to be held at "Moss Vale" on Saturday, March 28, at 1.30 p.m. to inspect the property and discuss arrangements for the future management of above Park and appoint a local Committee of Management.

Please bring your lady friend.

A.J. SLOAN,
President Shire of Woorayl,
Convener.



1955

The Australian Women's Weekly...

...in it's February 2, 1955 issue of the magazine featured this photo of the Park taken by the Rev. George Rees, of Merrylands, N.S.W. The caption reads 'The Tarwin River flowing through Moss Vale Park, Mirboo North, South Gippsland, Victoria. Moss Vale Park, Council property, is an excellent camping ground. The turn-off to it is near the village of Berry's Creek.'

You can find a digital copy of the magazine on Trove <https://nla.gov.au/nla.news-page4811958>

Mrs. A. M. Blundell writes the Story of Francis Moss and Moss Vale Park

SEPT 5 1957 - GIPPSLANDER

Interesting Booklet tells History of Moss Vale Park

Written by Mrs. A. M. Blundell, of McCartin Street, Leongatha, the history of Francis Moss and Moss Vale Park, makes very interesting reading.

The booklet is an authentic version of the early history of Moss Vale Park.

The book is to be sold in aid of various churches in the town, for the Home for the Aged, and the upkeep of Moss Vale Park, etc.

Moss Vale Park is situated between Mirboo North and Leongatha.

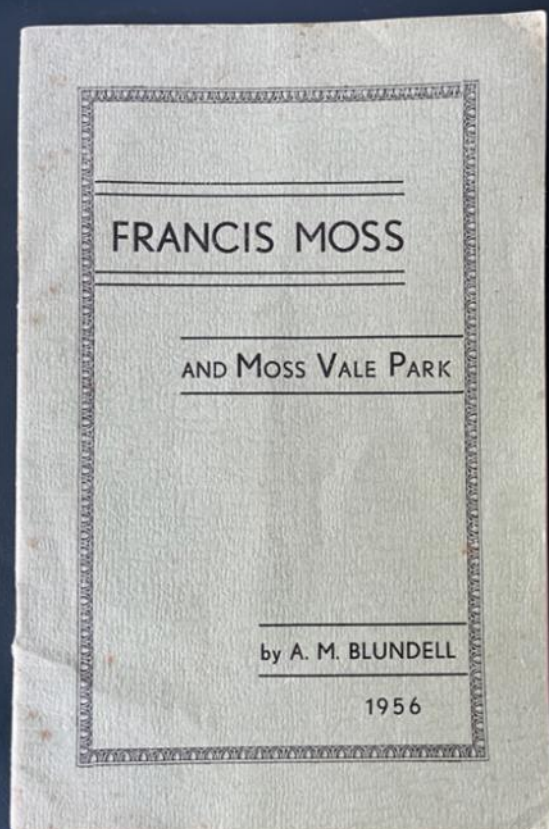
Comments on the work are as follows:

- The Rev. H. Cairns, B.A., ThL.—"The writer not only succeeds in communicating something of lasting benefit to all who will pause to read, but also challenges us to appreciate more fully those treasures still remaining in our rapidly changing hills and pastures green."
- Mr. Ormandy, B.Sc., Dip.Ed., headmaster of Leongatha High School—"The story of Moss Vale makes a worthy contribution to the history of Leongatha and district. Children are interested in local study, and this work should provide additional material to build up a picture of the development of the district."

In an interview with Mrs. Blundell, she told us that collecting the information for this small booklet, at this

stage, was not easy. She is deeply indebted to the grandson of Francis Moss, of Mossmont Nursery, Monbulk, and many others, whose contributions are acknowledged in the booklet, and without whose help it would have been impossible to compile the work.

Mirboo North High School is obtaining copies of the book.

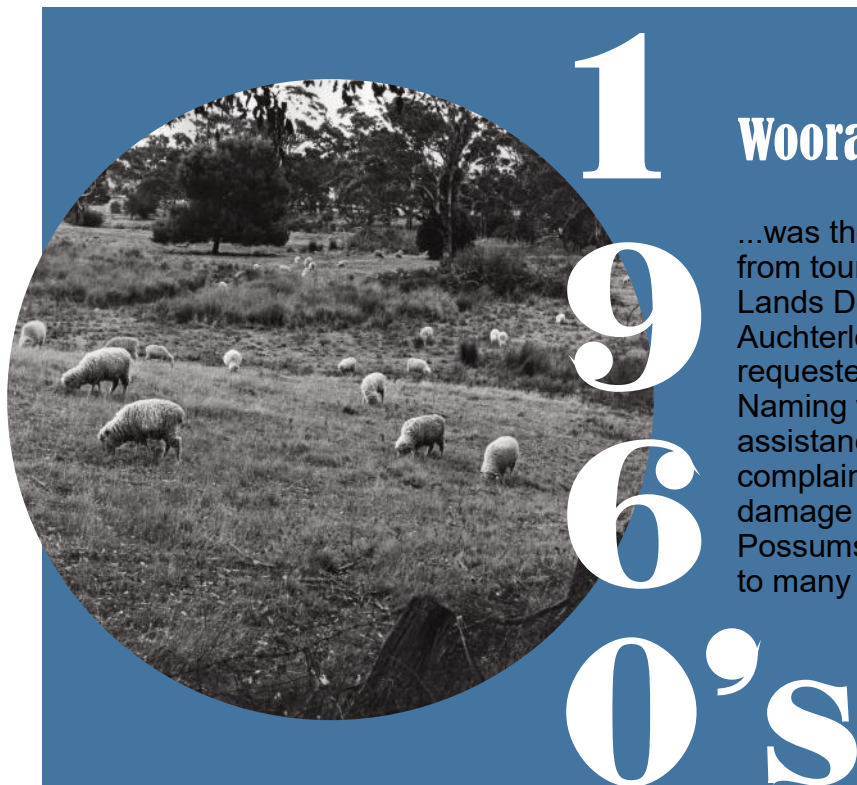


The Moss Family nursery donated ...

...8 trees, for a CWA commemorative planting. The trees were two birches, a Golden Elm, Silver Elm, Golden Ash, Claret Ash, a Rowan and a Washington Thorn.

Berrys Creek Pony Club, was granted use of a restricted area of the park, on Saturdays not otherwise reserved. They were charged £1 per season. The pumping shed was made available to the Pony Club for storage purposes.

Mr Keith Forrester was granted grazing rights for sheep at a rate of £5 per year.



Woorayl Shire Council ...

...was the management authority. Grants from tourism authorities were sought. Mirboo Lands Dept controlled the weeds. Mr Bob Auchterlonie, a naturalist from Narracan, was requested to name the trees at Mossvale. Naming was completed in 1966, with assistance from the National Herbarium. The complaints from park users about the damage from sheep grazing increased. Possums were also causing serious damage to many of the specimen trees.

The 1st 'Music for the People' Concert is held...

...with the Victorian State Orchestra. In 1971 the local paper was noting that Councillors were thinking about a sound shell for the Park. By 1973 Leongatha Lions Club member, Bruno Croatto had initiated Lions support to promote the annual 'Music for the People' concert. That support has continued to present. Neil McInnes MLA, applied for a Municipal Grant, to supply electricity to the orchestra area in 1975. The sound shell was eventually completed in 1980.



Remember the 'Beautiful' ivy pillars from the 1900's?...

...Miss Rosie Lincoln, local business owner, raised concern about the increasing infestation of English ivy as the man she had been paying to weed was no longer available. The Mossvale committee of management showed no concern or support. The Leongatha Horticultural Society was also rebuffed when it raised concerns about the weed.

(The English Ivy is still causing concern today. We have herbicides and lawnmowers to keep the open areas clear, however amongst the trees hand weeding is done by volunteers regularly.)

The mid seventies...

...Beveridge Williams - surveyors prepared a plan of the Park in April 1975. This year bought the 7th visit of the State Orchestra. Mr W. G. Brett the owner of the Mossvale Farm was granted the grazing rights to the Park over the river as long as he fenced it.

In 1976 The electricity connection to the Park was to cost \$4000. Apex installs a gas BBQ.

In 1977 the Pony Club is granted a large area on each of twelve Sundays. The area is to be roped off, and a charge of \$4 per meeting is levied. In 1979 they apply to fertilise the grass as it is getting worn.

1970's



The Sheep (and their droppings) are retired...

...as complaints about sheep nibbling the trees, escaping the Park and leaving manure and the odd dead carcass littering the park increased. No sheep were grazed after 1988.

Without woolly mowers the Woorayl Shire Council begins a regular mowing program. The toilets are upgraded.

Council planted a number of advanced specimen trees and graded and drained the area in front of the soundshell and removed willows from the wetland, near the carpark.

1980



A plaque was unveiled...

...to celebrate the contribution of the Moss family to Mossvale Park. Four generations of the Moss family attended the day along with Shire Councillors and family friends. After the unveiling ceremony, 28 deciduous and ornamental trees were planted in the Park.

Council successfully relocates Miss Gina Roughead's established *Cedrus atlantica* from Leongatha, to avoid severe damage to it during power line clearance of vegetation.

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Moss Family in the Park 22/8/1987
The Great Southern Star 1/9/1987

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The Moss family nursery donates trees ...

...for the council tree planting. 25 trees were planted.

Cec Sainty – Korumburra naturalist / photographer, contributed photographs of Mossvale Park for South Gippsland Conservation Society publication, 'Significant Trees of Woorayl Shire'.

Victorian Municipal Restructure and amalgamations – Woorayl Shire and Mirboo Shire, now included in the new South Gippsland Shire.



A tree was planted...

...to commemorate contribution of Mrs Kenny, late of Berrys Creek to the Berrys Creek Pony club. The *Zelkova serrata* near the sound shell was donated by the Pony Club. The planting took place on the 22nd of August.

This was the fourth planting day the Moss Family had attended and donated trees to the Park.

26 plants in total were planted that day, including a Mme Casimir Perier lilac planted by Ellen Lyndon the author of 'The Story of Mossvale Park' (the source of this information)

1992



Ellen Lyndon writes the Story of Mossvale Park

THE STORY OF MOSSVALE PARK

BY

ELLEN LYNDON (O.A.M.)

Published by Woorayl Shire Historical Society
© Ellen Lyndon 1994
ISBN 0 646 17547 5

Ellen Lyndon
Feb 1994

This booklet is available from the Leongatha and District Historical Society

Postal Address

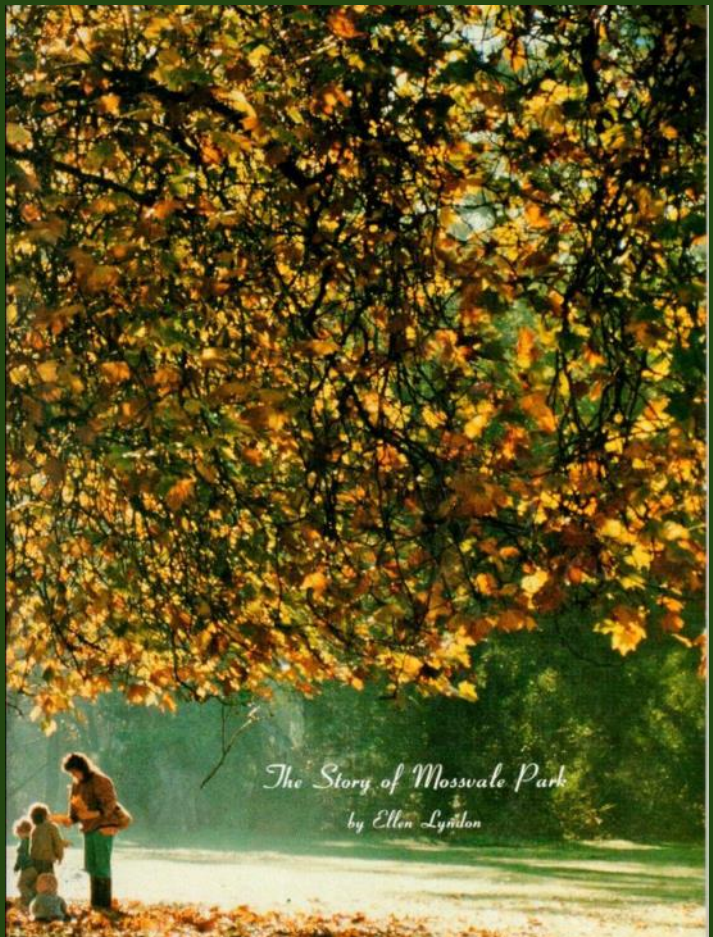
PO Box 431

Leongatha 3953.

Telephone: 03 5662 2492 (Thursday & Fridays Only)

Opening times Thursday and Friday 12 to 4 pm or at request

E-mail: leongathahistory@gmail.com





2002

In 2002...

...The Forrester Family is honoured when the refurbished picnic shelter in the Park is named 'Forrester Lodge' in recognition of the work Keith and Linda Forrester put into the Park.

Mr Forrester was the volunteer caretaker of Mossvale Park for many years, and he served on the Committee of Management from 1954. In 1958 he was appointed Secretary. Mrs Forrester took bookings, and she estimates she collected over \$100,000 worth of bookings for the Shire.

[Click to see some newspaper clippings honouring the Foresters' contribution to the Park](#)

A weed management plan...

...South Gippsland Shire Council, in conjunction with the West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority and Mossvale Advisory Committee, drafted a Mossvale Weed Management Plan. This highlighted various issues, particularly the urgent need to remove poplar and elm trees and suckers, together with the many agricultural and horticultural weeds in Mossvale Park. The redevelopment will be staged over several years to minimise the effects on the park's amenity.

[The weed management plan is able to be downloaded from this page](#)

2007





2009

Weeds out in a mighty effort...

...West Gippsland Catchment Management Authority (WGCMA) and Council complete first stage of the Tarwin River rehabilitation. Weed species were removed and indigenous endemic species were planted on Tarwin River easement. See 2013. A selection of exotic specimen trees were also planted in the park.

A Landcare tree planting to launch 'The Million Trees for South Gippsland' project on the hill, north boundary was attended by 200 people who planted 65 melaleuca, callistemon and correa plants (pictured).

Council fences the flat and concert area, to restrict vehicle access and there is a regular tree mulching program.

The Park is looking great...

...New picnic tables are installed.

The soundshell is refurbished.

The National Trust listed Algerian Oak, next to Soundshell, unexpectedly falls and is removed. A replacement tree has been planted.

2010



The Great Southern Star 12/1/2010

Page 5

2013

The WGCMA ...

...and Council complete second stage located north of Tarwin River bridge.

This area was identified in 1998 by Andrew Paget as an important remnant stand of indigenous *Eucalyptus strzeleckii*. Weed species have been removed and replaced by indigenous endemic plants on Tarwin River easement and floodplain, but with the introduction of a selection of Australian native specimen shrubs and trees, north east of the road bridge.

Check out the weed controversy by clicking [here](#)



Mossvale Park legend honoured...

...Rodney Emmerson, Mossvale Park Advisory Committee member since 1965, has served as secretary of the South Gippsland region of the Horticultural and Garden Societies for 40 years and the Australian Horticultural Judges association. A liquidambar 'Oakville Highlight' was planted to honour his exemplary service to Horticulture.

[Click to see the planting celebrated in the local papers.](#)

2018



2021

A friends group is formed...

...Hopefully. Watch this space!

