Roundabout
Monbulk Historical Society Newsletter
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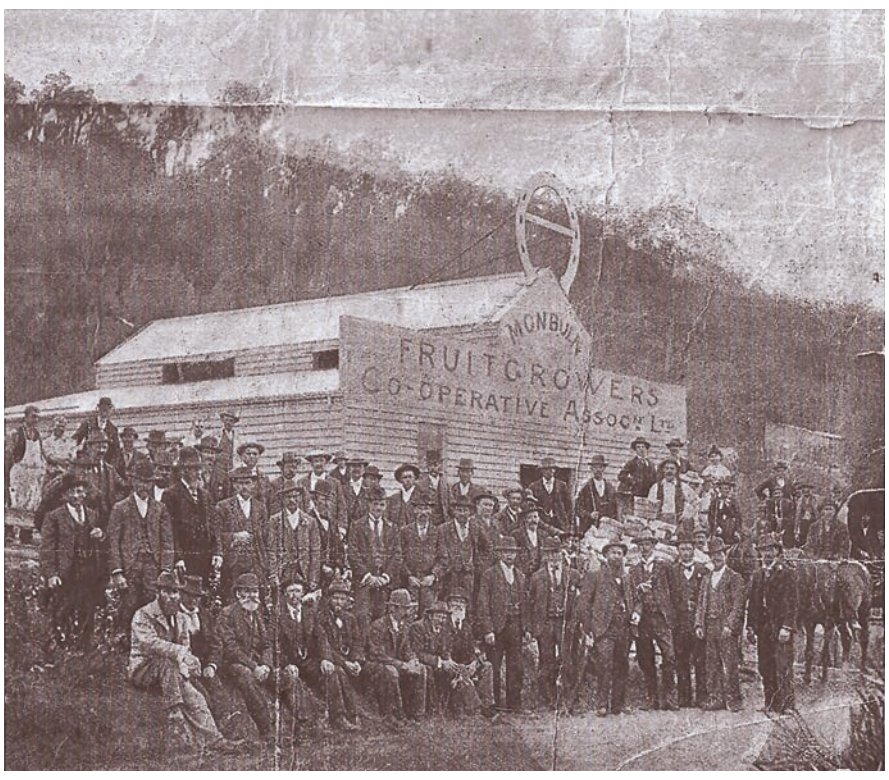
Summer 2025

BERRY GROWING IN THE HILLS

After facing some initial challenges, berry growing became a well-established industry by the late 1890s. Phil Simpson noted a record harvest of 328 tons of fruit in one year. However, as more berry farms popped up, there was an oversupply, causing prices to drop from 3 pence per pound to just 1¼ pence per pound.

Transportation to market was tough on the fruit as the rough tracks would shake the berries so much, often turning them to pulp. At that time, a factory was located where the Silvan Dam is now, but neither this factory nor city companies were willing to pay a fair price. This led to the formation of the Monbulk Co-operative Fruit Growers Association, where members contributed to setting up a jam factory near the Upper Gully Ferntree station.



Monbulk Fruit Growers Co-Operative Association jam factory at Ferntree Gully 1901

Walter A'Vard was one who collected the berries from the growers and transported them to Ferntree Gully. The following is a list copied from Walter's ledger book from 1907 of some of the growers and the quantities of raspberries sent to the factory. The price the growers received at that time was 2½ pence per pound (lb) giving an indication of typical crop sizes and incomes.

Frenchie Anderson	Sth Sass.	1279 lbs
Hibgame	The Patch	1057 lbs
Crerar	The Patch	2588 lbs
Mrs Bayne	Monbulk	3541 lbs
David Hill	Monbulk	2424 lbs
Hughes	Monbulk	1679 lbs
Mr Stanton	Monbulk	885 lbs
Mr Scott	Monbulk	536 lbs
Dan Camm	Monbulk	120 lbs
Martin Quirk	Sth Sass.	3007 lbs
Lew Lawson	The Patch	3492 lbs
McAlister	The Patch	600 lbs

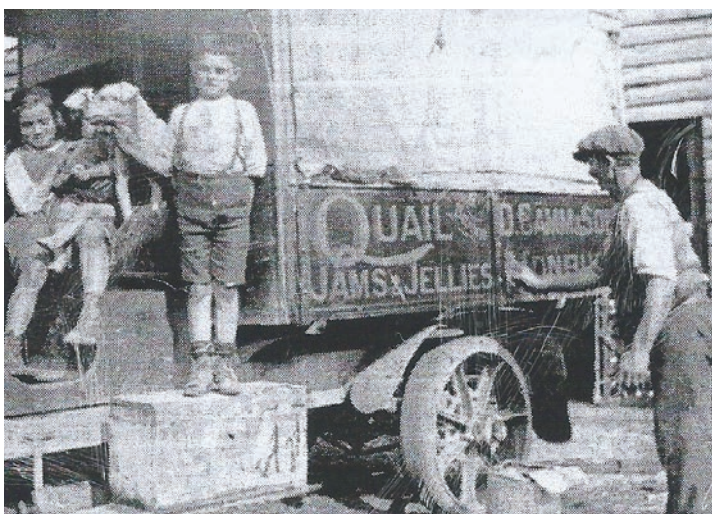
The O'Donohue family picking raspberries c.1919

Sadly, in 1909, the Co-Operative came to an abrupt halt after a fire destroyed the building, resulting in the investors losing all their money.

Monbulk Historical Society wishes everyone a merry Christmas and a happy and safe New Year!

Back in 1896, Daniel Camm made his way to Monbulk and became a successful berry grower. To tackle the marketing challenge, he set up a pulping plant that allowed him to pulp the day's harvest for later sale. It wasn't long before other growers began to take their fruit to him. By 1909, he had started making jam on a commercial scale. As time went by the business changed ownership twice, first to Brooke Bond Tea and then to SPC, creating many job opportunities for the local community over many years.

Camm's Quail brand jam advert



Camm Truck advertising their Quail jams and jellies. Daniel Camm kept the truck clean.

CONGRATULATIONS Armin
2025 Community and Volunteers Award

Armin Richter grew up in Kallista and attended Kallista Primary and Monbulk Secondary College.

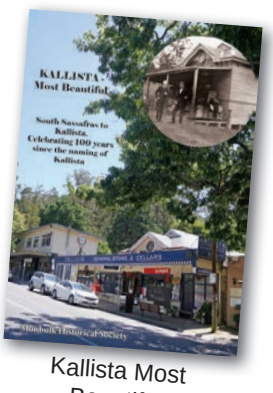
Armin has been involved in several local community groups for many years.

He became a player at Monbulk Football Netball Club (MFNC) in 1989. He played a total of 317 games for the Club over his playing years. He has been a long term committee member and happily sets up and packs up the ground on match days, and cleans the rooms each week. Armin began to digitally record items of signifi cance about the MFNC so that the history could be preserved for the future. In 2000 he wrote a book to celebrate the history of the 125 years of the MFNC. Armin is a Club Life Member.

Armin Richter

Being interested in local history Armin joined Monbulk Historical Society (MHS) in 2016 and became President in 2021. He contributed research and photography to co-author our book of the history of all the roads in Monbulk, Kallista, The Patch and Sherbrooke. The book won the State Award for a Local History Project in 2019. This year he wrote a book on the naming of Kallista 1925-2025 called *Kallista - Most Beautiful*.

Armin has been a major contributor in the digitising of MHS photos and documents, Girl Guides and Kallista Primary collections of photos. He has been a major influence on actioning the digitisation of the Dandenong Express (1891-1894) and the Dandenong & FTG Express (1894-1896). Once done, this project will benefit the greater community in their own research.



Kallista Most Beautiful

Armin travels into the Public Records Victoria Office most weeks to research and digitise the records of the early settlers of this area, and has helped many people with their family research.

In 2023 Armin joined the Mt Dandenong & District Historical Society and is also a member of Sherbrooke Foothills Historical Society and Knox Historical Society.

Armin most certainly deserves recognition for his dedication to volunteer work. We commend him for receiving this community award.