

Noisy charabanc awakens the town

GAZETTE columnist Ariel was inspired to the melodramatic heights in which he excelled by an early, and very nasty-sounding, example of the disturbance caused by noisy traffic 100 years ago.

"Malvern being a highly respectable community, it may be assumed that the best part of it is abed, sleeping peacefully or sonourously, or perhaps dreaming, at midnight on Thursday.

"If this assumption is correct, it may be added with confidence that at 17 minutes past 12 precisely the recumbent population of Church Street and of portions of the adjacent thoroughfares, woke

with a start, rubbed its eyes and listened, and presently asked itself what all the deafening racket outside was about.

"It certainly was a fearful clatter; the noise was enough to wake the dead.

"The violent explosions suggested that someone carrying a light had found a great escape of gas, and that as a consequence of this discovery the symmetry of some huge pile of architecture was being marred. The disturbance seemed to proceed from Church Street, but here nothing extraordinary was seen.

"But presently two powerful lights glanced round the top of the street and looked searchingly

down the hill. They slowly advanced, and the explosions crept nearer and became louder than before.

"And then the cause of the confusion was soon made apparant. The lights belonged to a regular monster of a charabanc, which passed leisurely by and went on its way rejoicing in the liberty which allowed it to arouse peacable inhabitants from their slumbers with its nerve-shattering row, and create grave apprehensions as to the safety of the town."

The offending vehicle was in fact carrying rail passengers who, because of the tunnel collapse, had to be ferried by road over the hills.