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Treasurer Liz Chambers: 03 52314572 Annual Membership fee: \$20.00 per person – due in May

Historical Society Meetings are held monthly on the 4th Wednesday at 7.30pm, except in January,
and during *winter* on the **4th Saturday at 1.30pm.**

Open Hours for the public at COPACC History Centre: Thursday, Friday and Sunday 2.00pm to 4.00pm

Working Bees at the History Centre are on the 1st & 3rd Wednesdays 10.00-12.00noon

Forthcoming Events.

Saturday June 27, 1.30pm- Speaker: **Frank Lawrence-** *Local Halls & Music*

Saturday July 25, 1.30pm- Speaker: *To be announced*

Saturday August 22nd - 1.30 pm- Speaker: **Doug Kirkman-** *Murray Street photos.*

Please note membership subs are now due- \$20 to the Treasurer. Bulletins are sent to Email addresses where possible. However it is appreciated if members put stamps on 4 self- addressed envelopes and give or send to the newsletter editor as above. Thank you to those who did this last year, it was a real time saver.

President's Notes from the AGM on May 27th.

In 2014-15 a loyal and dedicated membership has continued to actively carry out the 5 aims and objectives set out in the society constitution 65 years ago. I will attempt to list the events, and achievements which endeavour to meet these aims over the past year.

Seven guest speakers have all provided insights into aspects of Colac & District History. Several members have contributed on 2 occasions as well as our Christmas gathering, and BBQ meeting, graciously hosted by *Jen & Barry* to complete the year's programme.

Publication of, and reprinting of '*The Local Hall – Nalangil*' by Dawn Peel for which she and the Society received a prestigious award was a major highlight. We also republished Shirley Burn's 2006 publication '*Onion People*'. Members- *Dawn Missen*, who prepared '*The Wattle's Call*', for the Beeac Red Cross Centenary and *Helen Paatsch* '*For the Pleasure of the People*', for the 150 year celebration of the Colac Botanic Gardens and *Norman Houghton's* publications are all excellent means of bringing local history to the wider community. The sale of publications is our greatest source of revenue.

Five issues of the newsletter have been produced and I complement *Ellise and Craig*, and contributors of articles, for making the newsletter both interesting and enlightening.

We have hosted several school visits and also the Cub Scouts. Window displays continue to attract interest and reach out to those who never actually enter the Centre. Thanks go to *Jane, Gwen* and many others who have contributed to these displays. In conjunction with the Family History Group we have had a display at the Warrion Flower Show and the Colac Heritage Festival.

A grant from the Colac Otway Shire enabled us to restore the historic **Pillar box** from the SEC corner and have it erected at the entrance to the History Centre.

A new **logo** for the Society featuring Colac's unique war memorial was created and a joint brochure was prepared publicising the History Centre and the services provided by the two organisations.

Donations and acquisitions of manuscripts and objects of interest have included a small table passed down through the generations which had been part of the furnishing of the **Murray home 'Barongarook'**, also, the complete folio of maps belonging to the **Colac Water Trust**, from Barwon Water, and a previously unseen photo of the **1st Catholic Church** in Colac.

A project worthy of special mention is the collation, preparation and description of photos for the Colac Otway Shire for the **Colac Way-finding Signage Project**. Thanks go to *Craig* who put in many hours on this project.

We have just completed a grant application for the Shire Community Funding Program to assist us in the digitisation of our valuable map and sale poster collection.

As president, my greatest satisfaction has been gained from seeing the changes made, in co-operation with the **Family History Group** to make the **History Centre** an integrated workplace and a more attractive place to visit. I trust this will be an on-going process. Unfortunately our growing collection of records and manuscripts means that a considerable number of artefacts and relics are stored off-site which is a concern in the long term. The central desks now allow visitors to make enquiries which can be handled by both groups at the same time. Volunteers on duty also have a view of the whole area for improved security. New bookcases are much safer and look attractive in their new location. *Diana* has done a complete stocktake of duplicate books and eventually I would like to see the 2 libraries catalogued as one. *Barry* has also installed new cupboards in the kitchen and we are hopeful the Shire will make the sink less of an OH&S hazard in the near future. We are very grateful to the South West Community Foundation for funding to purchase two more modern display cabinets.

There is no doubt the History Centre and the preservation of our written, photographic and tangible history by our Society, is an essential part of the culture of Colac and District, and is a vital component of COPACC as the Arts & Culture Centre of this community.

Looking ahead, there is a real need to recruit new members. We are very fortunate to have a membership, to quote current political terminology, of 'lifters not leaners', but there are so many things we could achieve with more people on the ground. However, filling the volunteer roster is becoming increasingly difficult, and those faithful members who attend the fortnightly Wednesday working bees are becoming fewer.

On a sad note both *Jen* and also *Jane* have had to relinquish their duties due to ill-health. We wish them both a full recovery.

We have maintained affiliation with and I have attended meetings of the Western Victorian Association of Historical Societies, Geelong & District Historical Association, Royal Historical Society of Victoria, and twice yearly get-together of the local network of Historical Societies.

My thanks go to vice president *Barry* who has been a great support to me, Secretary *Jen*, Treasurer *Liz*, *John* who has willingly stepped into the role as acting secretary these past few months, the executive committee and all who lend a hand in any way. Finally, to my wife *Dawn*, who handles all the email and phone enquiries and reminds me of what needs to be done; without her support I could not fulfil my role.

Robert Missen

What has been in the News?

Colac Herald.

March 25th 2015 - **First World War poetry finds a new audience.** Marie Gray lived from 1858 to 1938 and wrote about her experiences as a nurse during the First World War. As Beeac hospital's nurse in charge, she was also heavily involved in the formation of Beeac's Red Cross unit in 1915. *Mrs Dawn Missen* has compiled "*The Wattle's Call and Other Stories*" which contains 25 poems and historical information about Mary Gray and Beeac Red Cross.

Ailsa Sims, Marie Gray's granddaughter, attended the book launch and was impressed with the new book.

March 27th - **Reunion Popular.** 23 former Colac High School students and 8 staff members celebrated their 50 year reunion. The students were from the 1965 Matriculation class. The Colac Historical Society provided photos, records and school uniforms from the era.

27th - **New rail trail section officially opens today.** An idea for the 50 kilometre walking and cycling track along the Beechy railway line between Colac and Ferguson began in 2005. The railway had been an incredibly important link for saw millers and farmers in the Otways who relied on it to cart timber and later vegetables and livestock to Colac because of poor road conditions. The railway closed in 1962 and the Beechy Rail Trail has since become a popular walking track passing through private and commercial land up to Beech Forest and now to Ferguson, thanks to volunteers and grants from our State Government (\$500,000) and local council (\$330,000). There are 31 interpretive signs and 23 seats along the trail and many new trees have been planted.

27th - **Man's courage earned medal 100 years ago.** The former Pirron Yallock State School student, *William Vincent Turner*, left Melbourne aboard HMAT Ulysses on May 10th 1915 with his unit the 22nd Infantry Battalion. He served at Gallipoli after Australian forces had landed on April 25th and won the Military Medal for heroic actions 5 months later. He was a second lieutenant and was only 25 years old when he died from wounds received in France in 1917.

April 17th - Running Legend's cup will return to district. A piece of history returned to the Colac Otway Shire when the late *Cliff Young's* ultramarathon cup became a permanent tribute to the Otways' runner. Cliff became a legend in 1983 when he shuffled over the finishing line and won the *Sydney to Melbourne marathon* when he was 61. The Beech Forest potato farmer trained in gumboots on the Otway hills. Westfield, the race's sponsor, presented Cliff with a ceremonial Cup which he later gave to Queensland twins Paula and Bridgette Powers who have now returned it to the **Colac History Centre** to add to their display of his life.

17th Flag flies from Alvie monument. An Australian flag will fly on top of Alvie's Red Rock on Anzac Day thanks to Colac Legacy representatives, (*Gary Mewha, Terry Harris, Dick Lee and Ted Invermee*), and contractors (*T. Luppino and L. Presani*). The flag will fly on Anzac day, Remembrance Day and Australia Day.

May 25th -Author signs books. Colac author and historian *Helen Paatsch* has compiled a history of Colac Botanic Gardens.

May 29th - Colac gardens boast second -biggest bunya. The huge 135 year old pine, (*araucaria bidwillii*), has gained a second place listing on the National Register of Big Trees. It is 17 metres high with a 5.9 metre circumference. The Colac Botanic Gardens is celebrating its 150th birthday this year.

May - Colac furniture store closes after 50 years. *Budget* managing director *David Harris* said retail had changed significantly during the past 5 decades and it was time for him to take new directions. The department store- *Henry Jacobs* opened there after WW2 until 1974. Then *Budget* commenced operating, owned by the *Marriner* family who extended the building to link Bromfield St and Murray St to become the biggest regional furniture store in Victoria. *Mr Walter Harris*, David's father owned Colac furnishings store-*Maples in Murray St* until 1981. The opening up of the Heytesbury Settlement brought in a lot of business.

June 1st - Alvie oak tree sapling has roots at Gallipoli. Alvie Consolidated School pupils have planted a Gallipoli oak to commemorate the Anzac centenary. The school was selected by the National Trust. Colac RSL president Ian Morgan attended the tree planting ceremony. Captain Winter Cooke sent a package of rare acorns to his uncle in Hamilton from Gallipoli almost 100 years ago. From these acorns many commemorative oaks have been planted.

Sacred Heart School Visit to the History Centre on June 3rd.

Mr John Knight wearing tails and a top hat with his distinguished trimmed beard looked the part as he leant on the old teacher's desk and explained life as it was in the old days to the attentive children sitting on the floor in front of him. He explained the butter churn, old telephone, camera, tin bath, an iron tricycle, ink well and school strap also mentioning the lack of electricity and use of lamps and wood-burning stoves. When the children were given free time to walk around the centre they tried writing their names on a type writer, sat in the tin bath, tried out the commode and pedalled the old Birregurra church organ to make the keys work. There were two groups of children that day who seemed to enjoy their outing to hear and see objects their grandparents or more likely their great grandparents once used.



WORLD WAR 1 – A letter from the Front –

from Richard Bassett to Irene Sitlington

On 5th of June 1915 Richard Bassett (who later became a foundation member of the Colac and District Historical Society) wrote from his dug-out on the Gallipoli peninsula to his fiancé Irene Sitlington of Colac. These are some extracts from that letter.

Surrounded by dangers and death lurking in every valley, screaming shrapnel, I can only dream of you and hope our future may be bright. I have seen so much of sudden death and ghastly wounds that I am almost afraid to hope too much. How awful it is I can never express in words. ... You will know that we had our first experience under very trying conditions and I may say, that in common with practically everybody I was fairly nervous. I still am and don't expect that I shall ever be otherwise. ...

I told you of a shell burying me in earth as I sat writing the letter. That simply illustrates how precarious life is here. I am writing this in a dugout on the side of a hill where we are more or less protected from rifle fire. Shells occasionally burst on top of the hill though and they are dangerous. I mentioned that I got a "knock". I was sitting in the dugout when a piece of shell hit me in a glancing manner in the shoulder. It passed on and damaged a man's wrist so badly that he had to go to hospital and has already been away three weeks. He was standing beside me. I got a hard knock which numbed my arm and rendered it useless for a few days.

My shoulder and arm were black and blue for a week or so. Although we are not now in the firing line I have seen men shot dead going for water twenty yards away. We get accustomed to the danger to a certain degree, but one must be a born soldier to disregard it altogether ... As we came to the shore in our boats a shrapnel burst over us and I ducked in the same way as everyone did ... every time a shrapnel burst over me I shiver from my heels to the top of my head and I have been under a few since ... It is just three weeks since we landed and we have had some experiences since then. I never realised what war was like and I don't think anyone could who has never seen it. It is awful! Terrifying! ... One night I thought I would never see daylight again so horrific was the fighting and so exposed was our position. I got through however and hope I will continue to be so fortunate.



AT LEFT – R.A. Bassett. Later in the war, while serving in France, Richard suffered a gunshot wound to the arm. This photo was taken while he was recuperating in hospital in England in 1916. He was 28 years of age. (Image scanned by Andrew McIntosh from photo formerly held by Bassett family)

Later, on 18th June Bassett echoes the same sentiments, I was not made for war. These deeds of violence horrify me and while I recognise the necessity which has made it imperative, I hope and pray for the sake of everyone that it may soon cease. I am not a hero. I must admit that along with almost everyone I am afraid. I conquer that fear as best I can and have not failed when necessity arose ... but I abhor the carnage and dreadful destruction of the battlefield ... I could tell you things which would make your blood run cold and send a chill of horror to your brain.

Letters often showed Richard Bassett escaping from the horrors of the sights, sounds and smell of war with memories of home, and particularly of the bush. In one letter he wrote: I enjoy the memories that come to me as I imagine great gums flanking cavernous gullies filled with masses of ferns and beautiful shrubs the whole permeated with the wondrous perfume of the bush. I often think of that and long for it.

Contributed by Dawn Peel

AT THE DRIVE-IN

By - Craig Pink

A BRIEF HISTORY -

Originating in the state of New Jersey, USA, the "Automobile Drive-in Theater" was the creation of Auto parts salesman Richard Hollingshead Jnr.. Experiments by Richard started with a 1920s Kodak film projector, with the movie projected onto a large sheet tied between two trees. Speakers were set up behind the screen, with cars placed in different arrangements to ultimately come up with the best way for multiple car loads of people to all see the movie. Further trials were even staged with water sprinklers, which imitated the effects of visibility from light to heavy rain. In August 1932, Richard filed a Patent application for his "Automobile Drive-in Theater", a Patent was granted for his so named invention in May 1933.

The first Drive-in Theater which was started by Richard Hollingshead Jnr., opened on the outskirts of Camden, New Jersey in early June 1933. Not having the capital himself, Richard set up a company called "Park-in inc.". Instead of payment, many of the trades people involved in the first initial Drive-in Theater construction obtained shares in "Park-in inc.". The Drive-in Theater concept did not catch on initially as we would think, and is why it is better known as a 1950s phenomenon. This first Drive-in Theater actually closed in 1936, and was moved to another town in New Jersey by its then new owner. The premature closure was mainly due to the non- synchronised, and poor quality sound which also created undue noise for up to several miles distant.

Richard retained a 30% share in his Company - "Park-in inc.", many Drive-in Theaters then set up in states all over USA. A vast majority not abiding by the Patent, simply just set up on the quieter outskirts of towns and reeled in the profits. Of those who did abide by the Patent, a one off initial fee of \$1,000 (US) was paid to "Park-in inc.", 5% of gross profits was also paid to "Park-in inc." on an ongoing basis. This was similar to many of the franchise agreements still used today in an ever increasing range of businesses. This supposedly also gave them a distinct territory with no opposition, but many were swindled by others opening up Drive-in Theaters in nearby towns, or close by. So many set up supposedly "illegally" Drive-in Theaters, that lawsuits could not keep up.

Several years later a court ruling overturned the whole "Automobile Drive-in Theater Patent", due to it being the same concept of an indoor theater, but using cars instead of people on seats. 1941 saw the introduction of "in-car speakers" which was a big step forward in regard to local noise issues, and saw the Drive-in Theater finally become very popular. Patrons were encouraged to eat at the Café style venue before the film started, playground equipment was also popular to entice families to arrive early, which turned the Drive-in Theatre into a good family atmosphere, especially for those who did not live near the beach for example.

Some of the advantages of the Drive-in Theater concept were considered quite substantial at the time, such as; being able to talk without interrupting other patrons, smoking without disturbing others or violating fire laws, children could simply sleep in the back seats of cars, while the late film more suited adults anyway. Not having to pay for babysitters was also something new, teenage girls even set up protests outside early Drive-in Theaters with banners such as – "DOWN DRIVE-INS, MORE WORK FOR BABYSITTERS".

Early 1942 saw a total of around 95 Drive-in Theaters operating in the USA, development was obviously somewhat static during the USA involvement in World War 2. Post-War expansion saw around 820 Drive-in Theaters operating in the USA by 1948.

1958 saw USA Drive-in Theaters peak at around 4,000, followed by a slow decline into the 1960s and beyond.

AUSTRALIAN DRIVE-IN THEATRES -

As well as the USA and Canada, Australia was the only other country to adopt the Drive-in Theatre concept to any great extent. Australia's first Drive-in Theatre opened in the Melbourne suburb of Burwood, on 18th February 1954. Called the Skyline, it started a chain of around 308 Drive-in Theatres known to have operated in Australia. A total of 18 Drive-in Theatres are known to be still operational today in Australia. Victoria has 5, being – Coburg, Dromana, Moe, Shepparton and Yarrawonga. Surprisingly, they operate quite profitably, with very little advertising required.

July 1959, local Colac Shire Councillors were faced with the difficult task of deciding which, (or if any) of several Drive-in Theatre construction proposals were suited to Colac's outer boundary areas. At the outer western extremities of Colac, a Motel and Drive-in Theatre Complex was proposed for the Hurlingham corner, or perhaps the proposed site of a Drive-in Theatre at Elliminyt was better suited. The Colac enterprise which planned a theatre at Elliminyt was to have a very picturesque position looking out over the township. The lower slopes of the Elliminyt Hill were to be terraced to take cars, lawns and gardens would be laid down, alongwith a children's playground area. A large sum of money had been raised by a group of Colac business people for the venture. The proposed Drive-in Theatre at Elliminyt would initially cater for up to 450 cars, but ample provision was to be made for expansion on the (continued on next page ↘)

AT THE DRIVE-IN (2, continued from previous page)

By - Craig Pink

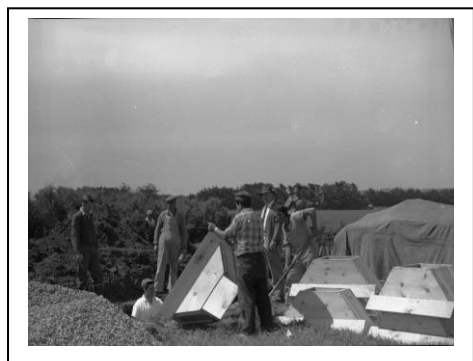
28 acre site. High quality films were to be screened, along with films especially catered for children's entertainment. One of many up-to-date features was to be an indoor "theatrette" to cater for those without cars, and for winter viewings.



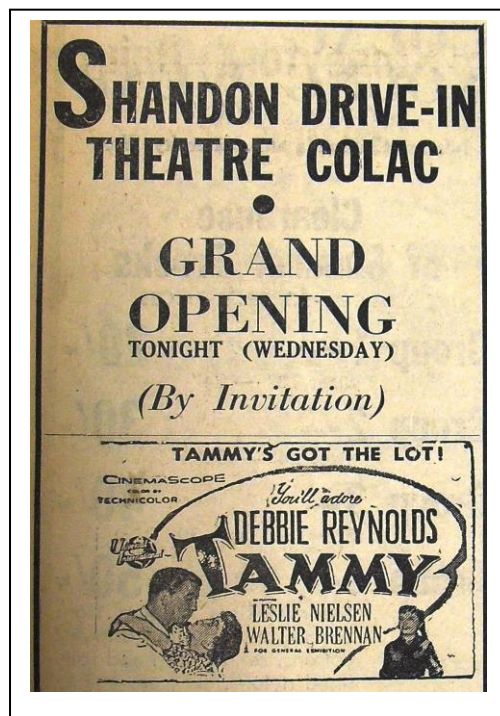
AT LEFT – The proposal of a Drive-in Theatre at Elliminyt obviously had some financial support at this point, as reported in the Colac Herald Newspaper, 20th July 1959.

NOTE – This proposal is close to 2½ years before the opening of Colac's first Drive-in Theatre in November 1961, situated on Rossmoyne Road, Colac West.

With initial financial support for Colac's Drive-in Theatre to be situated in the Elliminyt area in 1959, the public started to get used to the idea of Colac having a Drive-in Theatre sooner than most anticipated. Even dating back to the mid 1959 proposals for the Colac Drive-in Theatre, the land in question was always on the outer perimeter of Colac's built up township area, which meant Colac Shire Councillors were left with the end decision as to where a Drive-in Theatre would be situated, to cater for Colac and surrounding residents. The eventual location was situated at Colac's outer western end, with frontage to Rossmoyne Road. This site was up to final construction stages in early November 1961.



ABOVE – Three images from October 1961 show work well under way for concrete foundations at the Colac Drive-in Theatre site, situated on the Rossmoyne Road, west of Colac. The strange looking wooden boxes in left image are being set up by workers as wooden boxing moulds, in preparation for concrete footings. The two images at right are the foundations for the Colac Drive-in Theatre's massive 12 ton screen. At the time, the new Drive-in Theatre was promoted as the region's newest tourist attraction.



AT LEFT – Advertising for the first opening night of the "SHANDON" Drive-in Theatre, located on the western outskirts of Colac, Wednesday 22nd November 1961. Note the "By Invitation", screening commenced at 7.45pm.

Universal Pictures presented the film starring Debbie Reynolds as "TAMMY" free of charge on the first opening night, with proceeds (over £100) going to aid the Community Chest Fund.

Colac Shire President (Cr. H.L. Martin), opened Colac's "SHANDON" Drive-in Theatre in perfect weather, on the night of Wednesday, 22nd November 1961. Universal Pictures presented the film starring Debbie Reynolds as "TAMMY" free of charge on the first opening (continued on next page ↘)

AT THE DRIVE-IN (3, continued from previous page)

By - Craig Pink

night, with proceeds (over £100) going to aid the Community Chest Fund. The name "SHANDON" was the name of the Company which operated a chain of Drive-in Theatres over the years, stretching to South Australia. In the days following the first opening night of the Colac Drive-in Theatre, shellgrit was spread, also playground equipment installed, along with trees planted which completed the beautification process of the Colac Drive-in Theatre site.

The Colac engineering firm of Gordon Chapman had won the contract for the supply and erection of the large outdoor theatre screen, which measured 66^{feet} from ground to top, with an actual screen size of 45^{feet} by 88^{feet}. Bolted to a tubular steel framework were oregon beams. The actual screen was 22 gauge Zincaneal sheets affixed to the oregon beams. Several firsts were said to have been achieved at the time; the massive 12 ton screen for the outdoor theatre was assembled on the ground, then lifted into position in one piece. This was stated to have not been done in Victoria before, and probably Australia. Also claimed to be a record was the time of just 5 weeks from order of the screen to completion (also claimed by Gordon Chapman). New Years eve 1961, just weeks after the first opening night saw especially good patronage. All night shows were popular over the years which lasted well into the later 1970s era.



AT LEFT + BELOW— Three images from January 1962, showing the Tiger Moth Aeroplane which was operated by one of the Shandon Drive-in Directors. This Tiger moth was stored on property beside the Drive-in premises.

NOTE -"SHANDON" sign writing, brilliant advertising, even underneath if you were close enough to see it, as the left image shows after it crashed heavily in January 1962, as a result of children playing on the runway beside the Drive-in Theatre. This Tiger moth was supposed to do trial flights as a shark spotter at Apollo bay in the days immediately following this mishap, but instead had a costly repair bill in excess of £500.



ABOVE – K.E. Black & Sons Heavy Haulage "Blitz" Crane lifts a tall, large, heavy second-hand entrance sign into position at the Colac Drive-in Theatre, October 1967.

AT RIGHT – The newly refurbished entrance sign, with lights, June 1968.



February 1970 saw Walt Disney's new feature film "THE LOVE BUG", screen to large Drive-in Theatre audiences around Victoria. The Walt Disney production about the famous "HERBIE" Volkswagen car created so much fanfare, that Drive-in Theatres around Victoria such as the outer Melbourne suburb of Clayton, had more than 500 Volkswagens converge at their outdoor Drive-in Theatre for a special "VW's only" preview, of the then new highly successful Disney film "THE LOVE BUG", which starred a Volkswagen called "HERBIE".

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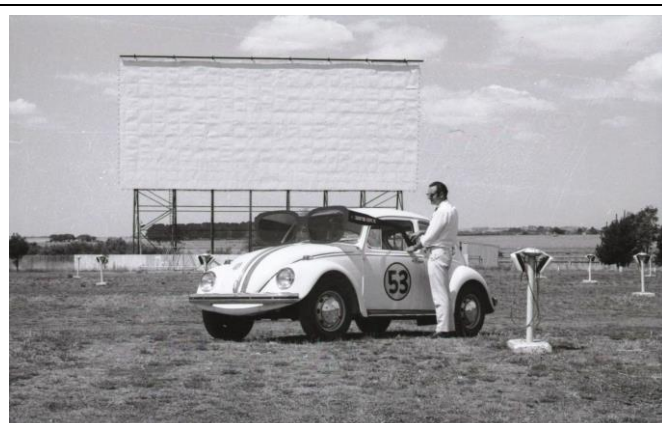
AT THE DRIVE-IN (4, continued from previous page)

By - Craig Pink



ABOVE – Children from St Cuthbert's Home at Elliminyt being treated to a barbecue tea and free outing to watch the smash hit movie "THE LOVE BUG", February 1970.

The outing and transport was all arranged by theatre management. Catering for a crowd was never a problem at the Colac Drive-in.



ABOVE – Ron Hillman, from Hillman & Tonkin with one of the firm's new revolutionary Volkswagen cars at the Drive-in Theatre, as part of promotional work for the extremely popular feature film "THE LOVE BUG", February 1970.

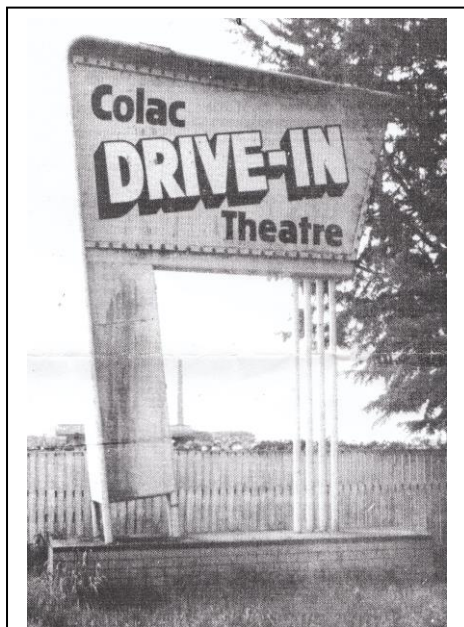
This decorated VW car also did a lot of promotional work in Colac for this feature film, including being inside some shops such as Woolworths, with these big marketing sunglasses on.

Arthur Davie took over Colac's Drive-in Theatre around 1974, with six shows screened each week, crowds of up to 1,000 people were not uncommon on a sell-out night. Through the colder months, fog was also quite common over the years, with fog passes given out when the picture could simply not make it to the screen. Once the fog came down, it would rarely, if ever disappear. The fog passes could be used at any Village Drive-in Theatre. One cook could cater for up to 250 people on a mostly self-serve café style set-up. Maximum vehicle capacity was around 408-415 cars.

At an extra cost to their already placed adverts which screened before the films and at intermission etc, local business places also advertised in the "Shandon Newsletter". This Newsletter mainly promoted up-coming film features, and was given out free. The later 1970s saw a downturn to general Drive-in Theatre attendance, especially with the introduction of the VCR (Video Cassette Recorder). Other reasons given at the time included farmers going through hard times of the later 1970s era, also the effect the late night out had on the early start for milking cows, and also children having to get up early after a late, say Thursday, night out. With modern cars more affordable, others would simply travel to Geelong to see a new release film that would have been at Colac in a few weeks' time anyway.

To entice back lost patronage, the early 1980s era saw admission at the Colac Drive-in Theatre drop to \$10 a car load, but the boom days were now long gone, and would not return to its former popularity. The Colac Drive-in Theatre struggled through 1984, Easter Saturday 1985 saw the last film screen. The Colac Drive-in Theatre then closed for, as it stated - "early winter", and failed to re-open after that early winter closure. Some time after the closure, a clearing sale was held, speakers and poles sold for as little as \$1 each. A variety of kitchen utensils/cafeteria equipment was also sold at the clearing sale, which saw the end of the Colac Drive-in Theatre. Colac's Drive-in Theatre lasted much longer than many others; the income from Drive-in Theatres was extremely low compared to land values in outer areas of growing towns that got so valuable, houses soon stood on old Drive-in Theatre sites.

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AT LEFT – October 1988 image shows the entrance sign still intact on the Rossmoyne road entrance to the old Colac Drive-in Theatre. By this time the sign was in a dilapidated condition, the paint also peeling badly. In it's hey day, this sign was well lit at night, the flashing lights also promoted the excitement of a visit to the Drive-in, especially for children. The live-in attendant's house was still there at this time, and was leased out. In later years the attendant's house had disappeared. The large outdoor theatre screen also still stood at this time, in later years the condition of the large screen deteriorated to the point that it eventually fell over.

AT THE DRIVE-IN (5, continued from previous page)

By - Craig Pink

Of the Drive-in Theatres that closed and laid dormant, many set up and became the sites of the early era of the first Sunday Market/Swap Meet sites etc., which are still becoming ever increasingly popular in today's times.

In recent years several large outdoor evening films have been screened at the Colac Saleyards, and also the Colac Showgrounds by local car enthusiast groups, these have all been a huge success and more will most certainly be screened again by related enthusiast groups as years go by. Today, Drive-in archaeologists have very little remnants to find at the site of the old Colac Drive-in Theatre, which was formerly situated on the western outskirts of Colac, with frontage to Rossmoyne Road. Easter 2015 marked 30 years since the closure of the Colac Drive-in Theatre.

(All material in this article from Historical Society files – Images from Bela Bard Brucker collection, Adverts from Colac Herald files)
THE END.

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

By Norman Houghton

The granite drinking fountain in Colac's Memorial Square was installed in 1924 as a gift from St John's Gymnastic Club. The fountain delivered the water via a rose spray, which was touted as being more hygienic than that from the Council supplied fountain, which was a water pipe to which was attached an enamel mug on a chain.

The Gymnastic Club was formed in 1903 as a sports and athletic group for young men of the town (not just church goers), but after an initial burst of enthusiasm quickly faded and closed in 1909. The Club had started a fund to build a hall and possessed a reasonable sum when the Club folded. The funds then sat in a bank account for fifteen years doing nothing until Mayor Daffy appealed to the citizens of Colac to donate statuary to the newly revamped Memorial Square.

The remnant trustees of the Club then decided to liquidate the hall funds by using the money for a drinking fountain.

The fountain itself was crafted to a design by Charles Wilcox.



AT LEFT and ABOVE – The Granite Drinking Fountain as it still stands today in the Memorial Square, permanently engraved on the side is – **“PRESENTED TO**

THE TOWN OF COLAC

St JOHNS GYMNASTIC CLUB 1923”

(Both photos by Craig Pink)

2015-16 COMMITTEE:

At the Annual General Meeting held on Wednesday May 27th 2015 the following members where elected:

President: Robert Missen

Cyber Committee: Jane Davis, Dawn Peel, Dawn

Vice-presidents: Barry McDonald, John Knight

Missen

Secretary: John Angel

Librarian: Diana Cowan

Treasurer: Elizabeth Chambers

Vertical File: Gwenyth Knox, Gwen Bray

Newsletter: Ellise Angel, Assistant: Craig Pink

Photo Officer: Craig Pink

Manuscript Officer: Dawn Peel,

Acquisitions: John Knight, Andrew McIntosh, Craig Pink

Assistant: Margaret Saddler

Wardrobe: Gwen Bray, Ann McKenzie, Sandra Splatt,

Recorder of B. D. M.: Margaret Facey

Ellise Angel

Research Officer: Anne McKenzie

Window Displays: Gwen Bray, Jane Davis, Sandra Splatt

**CRAIG'S CONUNDRUM****LAST ISSUE ANSWER –**

“THE COLAC

DRIVE-IN THEATRE”

Easter 2015 marked 30 years since its closure - see feature article this issue.

AT LEFT - WHERE IS THIS PICTURESQUE SCENE DATING FROM APRIL 1978 ?

CLUES – It's on the outskirts of Colac, and is not actually in the City Of Colac. The *“Structure”* still stands today, and is still used on a regular basis, but what uses it ?.

ANSWER –

NEXT ISSUE

COLAC & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY ROSTER 2015 - 2.00 to 4.00 pm. Thankyou.

| Month | Thursday | Friday | Sunday |
|---------------|--|--|---|
| June | 4 th D. Missen 11 th I. Barlow 18 th G. Splatt 25 th J. Knight | 5 th C. Pink 12 th G. Bray 19 th E. Chambers 26 th M. Saddler | 7 th A. McIntosh 14 th D. Cowan & M. Facey 21 st B McDonald 28 th M. Facey & D. Cowan |
| July | 2 nd D. Missen 9 th I. Barlow 16 th G. Splatt 23 rd J. Knight 30 th D. Peel | 3 rd C. Pink 10 th G. Bray 17 th E. Chambers 24 th M. Saddler 31 st G. Bray | 5 th A. McIntosh 12 th D. Cowan & M. Facey 19 th B. McDonald 26 th M. Facey & D. Cowan |
| August | 6 th D. Missen 13 th I. Barlow 20 th G. Splatt 27 th J. Knight | 7 th C. Pink 14 th G. Bray 21 st E. Chambers 28 th M. Saddler | 2 nd A. McIntosh 9 th D. Cowan & M. Facey 16 th B. McDonald 23 rd M. Facey & D. Cowan 30 th M. Saddler |