



**Established 6<sup>th</sup> February 1950**

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President: Robert Missen: 03 52346351 Email: [flowerfield140@bigpond.com](mailto:flowerfield140@bigpond.com)  
 Secretary/Treasurer: John Angel: 03 52338280 Email: [elimalee@southernphone.com.au](mailto:elimalee@southernphone.com.au)  
 Postal Address: PO Box 154 Colac 3250 Email: [colachistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:colachistoricalsociety@gmail.com)  
 Newsletter Editor: Ellise Angel: 03 52338280 Email: [elimalee@southernphone.com.au](mailto:elimalee@southernphone.com.au)

**Annual Membership fee: \$20.00 per person – due in May.**

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

**Website address: [colachistoricalsociety.org.au](http://colachistoricalsociety.org.au)**

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

*Working Bees at the History Centre are held on 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesdays of month - 10.00 am-12.00 midday.*

**Please note that articles printed in this Society Newsletter are subject to Copyright**

### **Forthcoming Events.**

February 28<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm - General Meeting plus Films from our Collection

March 28<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm - *Lorraine Smith- "The Journey of a Lost Manuscript"*

April 21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> - Western Victorian Association of Historical Societies AGM – Port Fairy

May 12<sup>th</sup> Saturday 10.00am – Geelong & District Historical Association Meeting Cape Clear

April 25<sup>th</sup> 7.30pm – To be advised as date of meeting (Anzac Day) to be confirmed

May 23<sup>rd</sup> 7.30pm - AGM (Annual General Meeting)

### **A Note from the President-**

Our society finished 2017 with a joint Christmas Dinner shared with members of the Colac & District Family History Group at the Baronga Motel restaurant. In lieu of a Kris Kringle gift exchange, a monetary collection for the Colac Long Road Appeal raised \$100.

2018 began with a January bus trip to Camperdown. As we slowly drove around the town, 25 members received a fascinating insight into the history of Camperdown from Bob Lambell, President of the Camperdown Historical Society. Afternoon tea at the Lake Edge Café at Lake Purrumbete concluded a most enjoyable afternoon.

Once again our society provided a display of photos and artefacts at the Colac Heritage Festival. Thanks go to the members who helped set up, watch over and dismantle the display over 3 days. A great team effort.

I draw attention to the article in this issue of the newsletter extracts from the diaries of the McLennan Bros of Barwon Downs, written early last century. Unfortunately, in this case the donor is unknown. The recording of our local history relies on contributions concerning the everyday happenings of local people, so that those who follow can learn of the past. It is important that these are recorded and donor acknowledged.

Likewise the minute books and journals of district organisations, when given to the Historical Society are a great source of material for researchers. Only this month a PhD student from Deakin University is gaining valuable information from the minute books of the Colac Field Naturalists which was an active group for 40 years from 1956. We, as members of the Historical Society must encourage others to contribute material which might seem unimportant now, but in times to come will prove a great source of interest just like the McLennan Diaries.

Interesting inquiries continue to be received via our website. This month we received a request from Alvie, Inverness-shire, Scotland. The correspondent is the great-grand-daughter of William Robertson's brother of 'The Hill', who emigrated to Australia from Alvie in Scotland where he was born and educated. 'Glen Alvie' one of the stately homes built by the Robertson's sons took its name from their birthplace. The writer in compiling the story of her Robertson ancestors hopes to be able to tell their story to the children at the Alvie Primary School in Scotland.

I remember learning about the exploration and settlement of our district in Year 7 at High School. Are our children taught any local history as part of the curriculum today?

**Meetings Report- November 22<sup>nd</sup>.** Guest speaker-*John Knight* sharing his knowledge and love for clocks and watches. His oldest time-piece was a pear case watch, handmade in the 1700s by Taylor and Dent, the builders of Big Ben! There was a Seth Thomas clock, made from wood with tumbling numbers, a perpetual calendar clock, a very heavy yet transportable Dodd clock c 1820, and others including a Teas Maid clock that lit up and rang an alarm when a morning cup of tea was freshly brewed!

### What Has Been in The News?

#### The Colac Herald 2017

**November 6<sup>th</sup>- Aboriginal space now open.** Colac's Aboriginal people now have a space to go to feel connected to the community and engaged with crucial services, it is "The Gathering Place" at 4 Miller St Colac and was officially opened on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> November. Gulidjan woman Ebony Hickey is the project manager.

**November 20<sup>th</sup>- Rock-walling project progressing at creek.** Heavy rain and flooding on September 14<sup>th</sup> last year eroded Barongarook Creek's banks damaging paths, a walking bridge, the Lion's Park and inundated the Colac Scout Hall. Contractors are strategically positioning large basalt rocks along the creek wall.

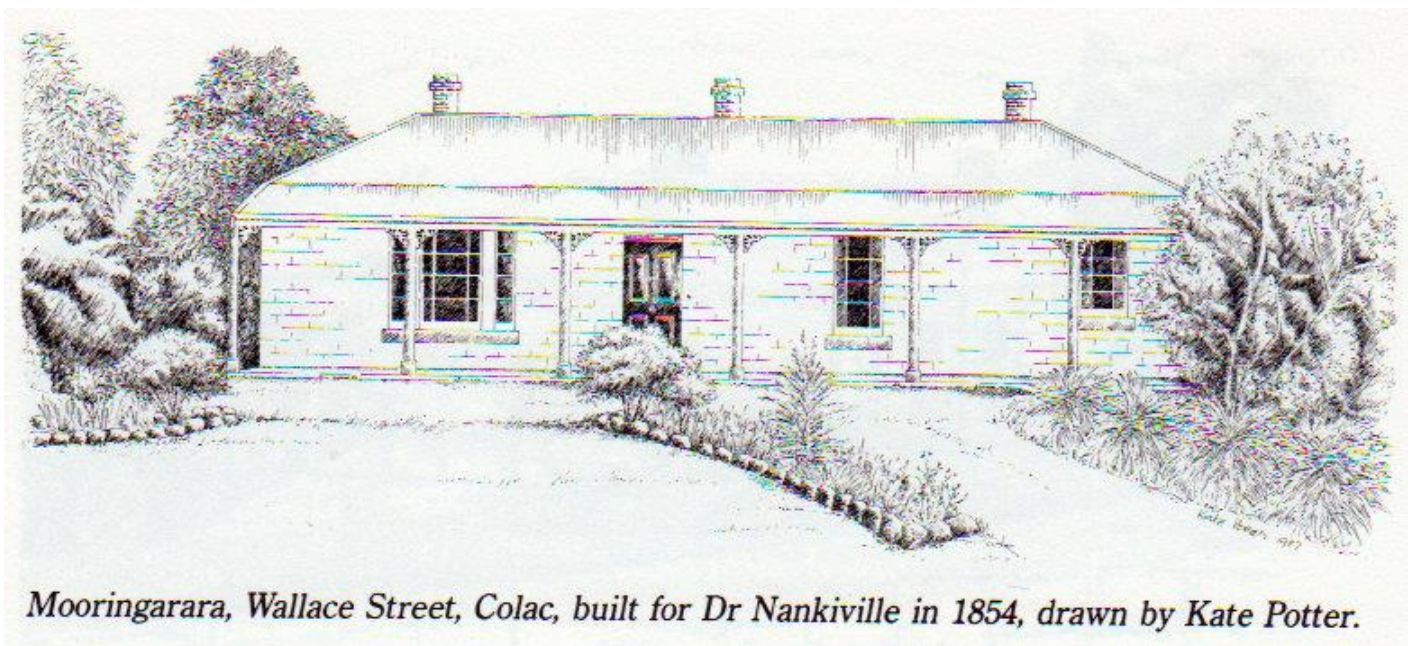
**December 4<sup>th</sup>- Kinder celebrates four decades.** Colac's Apex Kindergarten has celebrated its 40<sup>th</sup> birthday of educating Colac children.

**December 6<sup>th</sup>- Blooming tribute to volunteers.** Colac and District Pastoral and Agricultural Society has honoured its life members with a touching tribute at the showgrounds by planting a standard rose for each life member.

**December 11<sup>th</sup>- Fire refuge ready for summer.** The newly opened Lavers Hill Community Fire Refuge will be an emergency services hub for the Otway Ranges, housing the Otway Fire Station and the State Emergency Service's Otway Unit. Otway Fire Brigade captain Erica Nash said the need for a refuge had become increasingly important as tourism numbers in the Otways and along the Great Ocean Road continued to grow.

#### The Colac Herald 2018

**January 31<sup>st</sup>- Colac's GATSBY house.** This house correctly named "Mooringarara" has been a part of Colac's history since 1849. Originally the police barracks were on this site along with a lock-up. It was bought by Doctor Nankivell who started a surgery there. After his death at 37, his widow married his partner-Doctor Rae and continued to live there until her death in 1914. The magnificent garden contained some beautiful, rare trees and at a later stage a huge market garden flourished there. Ida and Ian McIntosh bought the mansion forty years ago because they loved it, even though it was run-down. They then set about restoring it to its former glory. Their daughter Alison and husband Martin van der Linden moved in in 1989 and re-renovated the house to deal with the huge problem of rising damp. The whole house had to be redecorated keeping to the integrity of historic "Mooringarara".



## From the Cataloguers' Drawer - McLennan Diaries

By Dawn Peel

In the cataloguers' drawer were three small red-backed diaries, with no Gifts and Loans number. Their origin and significance had not been noted. Careful reading revealed that the earliest, dated 1905 had belonged to Frederick Stuart McLennan of Barwon Downs. The second and third were those of his brother Albert Norman McLennan for 1911 and 1921. They were the third generation of the McLennan family who came to Australia in 1852 and were early settlers in the Barwon Downs/Murroon area.

In 1905 Frederick Stuart, known as Stuart, was the fifth and youngest son of Roderick McLennan, who had died the previous year at the age of 53 years, leaving a widow and five sons. Stuart was 15 years old. The front of his notebook records monthly sales of farm produce – eggs, cabbages, potatoes and butter. In the other part are records of going fishing – 'caught 26 blackfish and one eel' - one entry notes. There are also accounts of rabbits caught, and sales of fox skins, a kangaroo skin and some calf skins. A beehive was bought and beeswax sold. The returns for these items show, for example, that 24 dozen rabbit skins weighing 40 pounds, brought 16 shillings and 8 pence, selling at 5 pence a pound. Good fox skins sold at 2 shillings and 9 pence each. Horse hair featured regularly in sales bringing in 4 shillings for 4 pounds of hair. This diary would be of value to people interested in Barwon Downs history, with the names of the customers for farm produce, and also for its insight into the farm economy.

By 1911 the oldest son, John Duncan McLennan, (referred to as JD) was living at Apollo Bay, while Alexander William (AW) had purchased part of the Holmchase property near Colac, where he lived. As the 1911 diary begins the three youngest sons, Charles Roderick (CR), Albert Norman (AN) and Frederick Stuart (FS) were living in a hut in the Cororooke area, and working hard cultivating onions and potatoes on family-owned land as well as occasionally working for neighbouring farmers. His daily records give a great insight into the hard work involved and the yearly rhythm of farming. January through to June up to 10 days a month are spent digging potatoes. Then they are cutting potato seed, harrowing the potato lands, loading and carting bags of potatoes. The onions are similarly demanding and for anyone interested in the pattern of life in early onion farming the diary would be of interest.

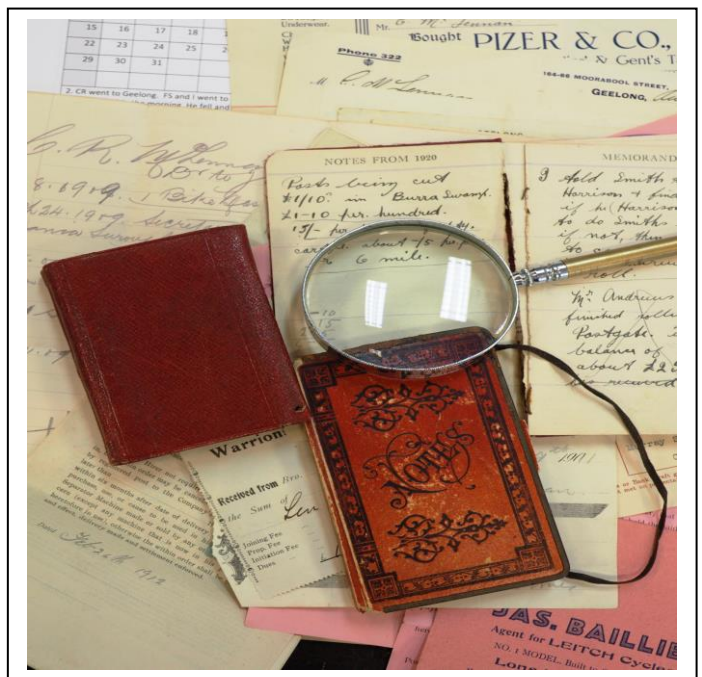
But as they are young single men, there are many entries relating to attending picture shows in Colac, dances 'upstairs at the Vic Hall', plays, the Colac Competitions, IOOF meetings and other social events in Colac life. They attend sports meetings and the results of the bike races there are recorded in the diary. Their bikes are important and the purchase of a new machine was very noteworthy. Rifle shooting is another interest. A new suit is ordered from tailor Clarke. AN has his photo taken by Bugg. Albert Norman was 23 years old in 1911 and the diary provides a window into one young man's life.

In May 1917 Roderick McLennan was killed in the Great War. Within weeks both Albert Norman and Frederick Stuart had enlisted and both served in France. After the war they each became a soldier settler, FS at The Sisters near Terang, and AN in the Mallee.

By 1922 AN did not keep such a detailed diary and there are only scrappy notes relating to farming.

The diaries will be stored in our manuscript collection, together with a transcript of the 1911 diary.

(A transcript is also stored in the 'McLennan' folder in the Family Files)





# THE COLAC HERITAGE FESTIVAL –

Held at the Showgrounds by the Colac P & A Society on February 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 2018

By Craig Pink



**ABOVE** – Replica scale model steam traction engines, along with a scale model steam truck delighted crowds as they steamed around the show grounds. The owners were kept very busy throughout the weekend with demonstrations and explanations of their finer workings.



**ABOVE** – The International Harvester brand was the main feature brand name of the weekend, with a large feature of associated manufacture of the IH Company name from its many factories around the world. This 1959 AW7 Diesel powered tractor was just one of over 50,000 tractors built at the Geelong International Harvester Works from 1948 to 1982. Many local people travelled for work at Geelong IH over its years of operation from 1939 to 1982.

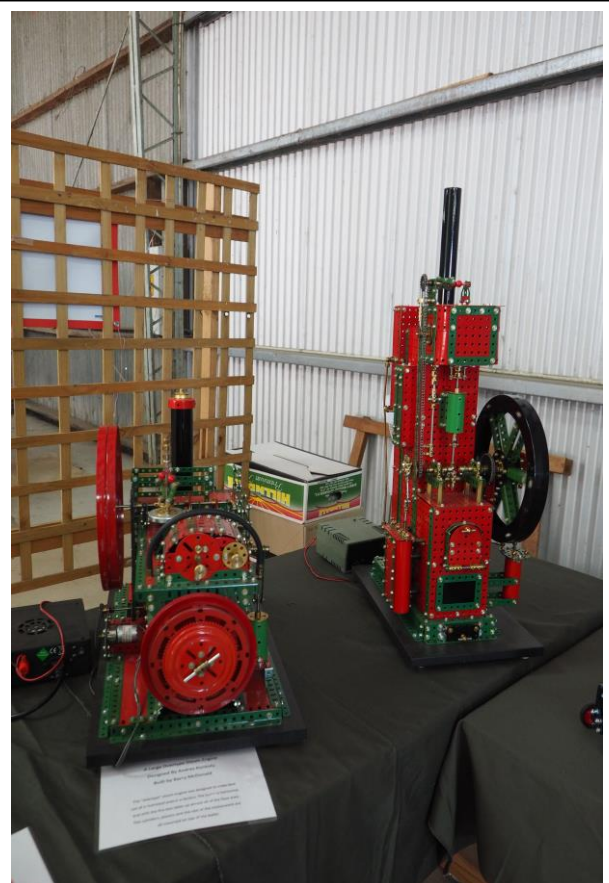


**ABOVE** – Ferguson tractor, this model was better known as the Grey and Gold Fergy, this one dating from 1957. Purchase price new was £ 732, 9 schillings and 5 pence. This tractor was used at “Erskine House” Lorne, it also mowed the footy oval and has very little rust considering its many years spent by the sea at Lorne.

**AT RIGHT** – Some of the working Meccano models displayed by Society member Barry McDonald.

At left – a large overtype steam engine which had the engine workings on top of the horizontal boiler to overcome small floor space areas in the pre-1900 era.

At Right – A model of a vertical Steam Engine, also built by Barry. (All photos by C. Pink)



# Animal Stories –from the Colac Herald

By Norman Houghton

1876. An old horse came home to die at Colac recently. It was formerly owned by John Kemp and put out to pasture at Birregurra for past two years. The horse was about 30 years old. The animal left the Birregurra paddock and walked to Irrewarra where it rested the night at Wray's place and then next day continued to Kemp's place, arriving after nightfall. The gate was shut so the horse lay down in the driveway and expired there overnight.

1878. George Southey of the Railway Telegraph Department here at Colac has a clever dog. The dog did tricks in front of others at a hotel. The dog was asked to shut a door and did so and made sure the door was closely locked. Then the dog was asked to take a drink so the dog bowed his head to a whiskey bottle and received a nobbler. With the agility of a fireman the dog extinguished lighted matches in all directions, then ran to spot where some five shilling pieces were buried, dug them up and brought them to the hotel owner to pay for the drinks.

1879. It is rare for mares to have multiple births but at Warrion last week a mare belonging to Warner Bros gave birth to three foals. The foals were premature and all died.

1905. A nine month old baby on Joe Harrison's farm at Carlisle River was carried off by a pig, held in the pig's mouth. The pig ran a long way through bush and scrub dragging baby through mud and dirt. When the baby was extracted from the pig's mouth by pursuers it was found to have both hands lacerated, tops of two fingers missing and a bite on one foot.

1911. On Sunday two horse riders near Cobden went riding a fair distance accompanied by their dog, trotting behind. They rode back briskly and dog was not with them. They thought the dog would eventually catch up but did not. There was no sign of the dog by Monday morning. On Monday afternoon a neighbour arrived with the dog, recounting how he had found dog on the road standing guard over one of rider's spurs that had fallen off his boot.

1914. The big plate glass window at the store of Neilson, Graham & Bastards in Lismore was broken by a bull who took his reflection as an opponent.

1914. At Foxhow a mob of starved out NSW bullocks, numbering 600, were put on part of Strathvean Estate. The fences proved inadequate and the mob soon got out of control of the man in charge. In some paddocks the crops were eaten down and 592 of the cattle were impounded. There is to be an adjustment of the damage done.

1920. A farmer at Elliminyt moved to Tongala, taking his eight cows and farm dog. The dog went missing at Tongala. Two weeks later the farmer's wife had to return to the Elliminyt farm and found the dog there. It had travelled 250 miles.

1948. The Balintore School has a pet cat named Tabby. It was a wild one that went there during the holidays to have kittens. The children gave it food and milk and eventually it emerged with its kittens. The school was plagued by rabbits until now but Tabby keeps them down. She has been caught in rabbit traps a few times. The school garden is flourishing now that the rabbits are kept under control.

1954. Recently happened in a town near Colac. One of the local businessmen has a dog that usually accompanies him. One day he was called away from the business so he telephoned his wife and said he would leave the dog in the office until he got back. Wife was later concerned about the dog locked up so rang a friend living near the office to let out the dog so that he could come home. One hour later dog was not home so the wife rang the friend again who said that she had let out the dog an hour ago but the dog

ran straight across the road to the hotel and took up a position outside the main door and refused to leave. So the dog is still at the hotel.

1955. A violent wind storm at Chapple Vale on A. Bone's place snaps pine trees two feet foot in diameter, wrecks a shed and sends the roofing iron half a mile. There were two inches of rain in 20 minutes. The storm also picked up two horses in the paddock and carried them half a mile. Bone found them out of the paddock [with undamaged fences] in a very dazed state.

1955. Frank Christensen of Carlisle River recalls that in the early days of settlement his father had a number of pigs he wished to take to Colac to sell. Father and son drove the pigs as far as Tomahawk Creek and found it in flood so they had to catch the pigs and ferry them across. Frank was then a boy and remembers catching the pigs in the scrub. But some pigs escaped and ran away so they continued to Colac with the rest. When they returned home that night they found the missing pigs had found their way home and were asleep in the hut, the door of which they had forced open.

1956. Quadruplet kids born to a nanny goat owned by Adrian Goldsworthy of Forest St. The quads are all females.

1956. Seen in Bromfield Street last market day a man with a pram with a calf in it and the cow following and frequently peering into the pram. Cow and calf bought at the sale but the calf too young to make its own way so farmer put it in a pram.

1956. Last breeding season some sparrows made a nest inside the ram on top of the Golden Fleece petrol pump at Dillon's service station in Murray Street. This year a starling family moved in to share. At first there were a few squabbles but matters eventually settled. The two families now live in amity, as the adults emerge daily to replenish the larder. When the hatching period ends Mr Dillon expects there to be some congestion inside the ram.

1956. The State Electricity Commission manager comments about birds' nests on electricity poles around Colac. He mentioned one at Eurack, probably for a hawk, that was made with a base of several types of wire including baling wire, No 8 fencing wire and wire netting. The wire was carefully threaded and bent and shaped. The base of the nest was lined for the eggs with wool, cow hair, bark, a few sticks and a lamb's rib-bone.

1956. A white hen belonging to G. Osborne of Elliminyt laid a perfectly round egg 1.75 inches in diameter and resembles a golf ball.

1957. Some passers-by saw a wallaby come down to Shelley Beach near Apollo Bay through the scrub and go for a swim in the water. The wallaby was there for some time and when it came out it was caught by the spectators. The animal appeared to be tame and unfazed by humans and eventually hopped away.

1958. Thousands of black swans from drought areas in north Victoria are descending in the district and wrecking pastures and crops. A farmer said from 5.30 am each day they come in wave after wave and the paddocks are black with them and they are shooting them as fast as they can.

1959. A farmer was taking a truck load of stock from Birregurra towards Geelong and with him in the cabin were his son and the farm dog. At Winchelsea at 7.45 pm the truck hit a cow wandering on the road and crashed onto its side. No one was hurt but when the farmer and son scrambled out of the cabin and when the dust settled the dog was nowhere to be seen. The dog turned up at the Birregurra farm at 10.30pm, so the animal had covered 19 miles in 2 hours and 45 minutes.

*Part two of Norman Houghton's Animal Stories continues next issue.*

# MILK FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

By Craig Pink

Those of us who remember having milk supplied at school still have varied thoughts in today's times as to whether it was warm, hot or otherwise - well here's how it all came about.

A nation-wide children's nutritional survey in 1944 confirmed that a large majority of Australian households were consuming much less calcium than the recommended daily intake. Although some Australian States had previously ran their own independent free milk schemes, February 1950 saw the Commonwealth Government decide to centralise the scheme so that (at least in theory), no child under the age of 13 would miss out on the goodness of calcium rich milk. Good seasons in the early 1950s also gave an excess of milk from dairy farm supply, which also helped the cause of milk for school children, and had the advantage of using up the surplus of the over-supply of milk.

The milk for school children carried on as intended through the 1960s, but by this time the costs involved had risen substantially. Providing the milk for school children in 1951 cost some £72,000, having grown to a figure of some \$10 million in the recently introduced (1966) new dollar currency in 1969. In 1969 the milk for school children scheme used some 12.4 million gallons of milk, about 3.4% of liquid milk sales at that time.



**ABOVE** – August 1964 - Alvie Consolidated junior school children doing part of their daily chores such as stacking up and counting empty milk crates.

(Image from Bela Bard Brucker collection)



**ABOVE** – January 1969 – Production line for bottling milk at Park View Dairy - Dennis St. Colac.

(Image from Bela Bard Brucker collection)

In 1974 the milk for school children scheme changed considerably, with a projected cost at that time of over \$12 million. The scheme was then downgraded to supply fewer schools at a cost of around \$5 million, with preference given to children with disadvantaged backgrounds.

With the introduction of the well-known (still in today's times) "BIG M" milk brand of flavoured milk in 1978, most schools supplied flavoured milk from the canteen fridge which the children could purchase as part of their morning recess or lunch. This was certainly much more consumer friendly, and is still popular today.

Memories of the free milk at school from c1951 to c1973 are not always complimentary, some remember more about why did the milk sit in the sun and get so warm by morning recess. Others remember having to shake the bottle or you likely got a big lump of cream to go with your drink.





## CRAIG'S CONUNDRUM

### LAST ISSUE ANSWER –

**AT LEFT** – Alvie Consolidated School junior students stack and count milk crates as part of their daily activities/chores in August 1964.

*Pictured left to right-*

Maree Riches, Neil Hayes, Beverley Whitehead, Robert Williams, Michael Langdon, Phillip Neale, Chris Meade, Andrew MacRae (dec'd), Brian Egan & Keith Russell.



**AT LEFT** - Can you identify the location of Jack Dillon's Golden Fleece service station in Colac?

The date is September 1963.

If you need a clue, the building joining it has a large clock in its street frontage which is still there today.

**ANSWER—  
NEXT  
ISSUE**

### COLAC AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY ROSTER 2018 2.00 PM – 4.00 PM

Month	Thursday	Friday	Sunday
<b>March</b>	1 <sup>st</sup> D. Missen 8 <sup>th</sup> I. Barlow 15 <sup>th</sup> G. Splatt 22 <sup>nd</sup> J. Knight 29 <sup>th</sup> R. Missen	2 <sup>nd</sup> C. Pink 9 <sup>th</sup> G. Bray 16 <sup>th</sup> E. Chambers 23 <sup>rd</sup> M. Saddlier 30 <sup>th</sup> Closed (Easter)	4 <sup>th</sup> A. McIntosh 11 <sup>th</sup> G. Knox 18 <sup>th</sup> B. McDonald 25 <sup>th</sup> L. Spence
<b>April</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> D. Missen 12 <sup>th</sup> I. Barlow 19 <sup>th</sup> G. Splatt 26 <sup>th</sup> J. Knight	6 <sup>th</sup> C. Pink 13 <sup>th</sup> G. Bray 20 <sup>th</sup> E. Chambers 27 <sup>th</sup> M. Saddlier	1 <sup>st</sup> Closed (Easter) 8 <sup>th</sup> G. Knox 15 <sup>th</sup> B. McDonald. 22 <sup>nd</sup> L. Spence 29 <sup>th</sup> R. Osborne
<b>May</b>	3 <sup>rd</sup> R. Osborne 10 <sup>th</sup> I. Barlow 17 <sup>th</sup> G. Splatt 24 <sup>th</sup> J. Knight 31 <sup>st</sup> R. Missen	4 <sup>th</sup> C. Pink 11 <sup>th</sup> G. Bray 18 <sup>th</sup> E. Chambers 25 <sup>th</sup> M. Saddlier	6 <sup>th</sup> A. McIntosh 13 <sup>th</sup> G. Knox 20 <sup>th</sup> B. McDonald 27 <sup>th</sup> L. Spence