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Annual Membership fee: \$20.00 per person - **Renewals Due In May.**

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

News/Updates/Information - Website: colachistoricalsociety.org.au

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

Working Bees at the History Centre are held on 1st & 3rd Wednesdays of month – 10.00 am - 12.00 midday.

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

Forthcoming Events -

August 25th - 1.30pm - Meeting - Speaker Dawn Peel – *Early District Settlers & their Homes.*

September 19th - Margaret Birtley - Initial assessment meeting work on J. G. Johnstone Collection.

September 26th - 7.30pm - Meeting- Speaker Alan Fleming- *WW1 Soldier Settlement.*

October 13th - 10.00am - Western Victorian Assoc. Historical Societies Southern Zone Meeting, also meeting at Colac History Centre for 1.45pm Bus Tour of Colac Historic Sites.

October 24th - 7.30pm - Meeting – Speaker Peter Hynes – *former Colac Pharmacist.*

November 28th - 7.30pm - Meeting - Speaker Heather Threadgold – *Aboriginal Stone Sites.*

A Note from the President –

The CDHS was delighted to receive a grant of \$9000 from the Public Records Office Local History Grants Program to professionally catalogue, assess and preserve a large body of material we hold known as the J. G. Johnstone collection. I hope some members will make themselves available over the next 18 months to assist with this work and gain new skills while working with cultural heritage consultant Margaret Birtley on this project.

A conversation with a visitor to the History Centre subsequent to this revealed a great story regarding an armchair owned by J. G. Johnstone. Dorothy Harris has put pen to paper, together with a photograph of the chair for our newsletter. (See article on page 3)

Guest Speaker: May 25th - Barbara Minchinton – “Money and Madams”

Barbara opened her talk by quoting an extract from C. J. Dennis “Songs of a Sentimental Bloke”, which tells the story of the Bloke and his girlfriend Doreen. He took her to see Romeo and Juliet and in the process C. J. Dennis invented the name- “Little Lon,” an area in Melbourne which contained the Red-Light District. In the 1870s the flash brothels were situated in Lonsdale Street whilst the less salubrious were situated in the side lanes which ran off Lonsdale Street including Romeo Lane and Juliet Terrace! This block of the city is now owned by the Commonwealth and has become known as “The Commonwealth Block”. The purpose behind the acquisition of this block was to clear away the slums which had been inhabited by this colourful class of people. This also gave the archaeologists a golden opportunity to excavate this area prior to rebuilding.

Barbara regaled us with many colourful stories of this area and its inhabitants. She related this to the history of the times. She traced the history of the various crimes acts which sought to control this industry to little effect and explained how it had a huge effect on the economy of the time. Not only did the industry service the degraded appetites of the men but it provided a means of income for women who were otherwise unable to support themselves and provided business men with opportunities for investment. “Gentlemen” were able to buy up properties which they then rented out to these women for their personal use as brothels. A few women were also able to buy property and rent it in a like manner. Some even purchasing large buildings, furnishing them with very expensive furnishings and letting them out to the high-class workers of the night.

A person of interest to Barbara was a woman called Madame Brussels aka Caroline Hodgeson. Through careful research Barbara has been able to piece together the life story of this once “Little Lon” Madam. She recounted how

this seemingly upright citizen became a brothel owner of renown and through a person in Sydney was able to piece together her life story, gain images of her and gather personal letters in her own handwriting. All of which created a picture of a lady who was far from criminal in nature and whose kind heartedness enabled her to nurse her sick husband and leave legacies to her servants who had served her well to her demise from Diabetes in 1908.

Guest Speaker: June 23rd Lindsay Hulm - "Hulm's Bakery 1950 onwards –

See main feature article on page 5 with Lindsay's historical talk and recollections about his life as a baker.

Guest Speaker: July 28th John Knight - "Collections"

Following a short meeting, Society members travelled to member *John Knight's* home for a talk, and some good old fashioned country hospitality. No doubt the highlight of the afternoon was John (+ others) pedalling the Pianola for the pleasure of its sounds. A cuppa and a chat was also delightful, with the afternoon very much appreciated by all those who attended. The wet coming and going of vehicles did not see anyone bogged - (as was predicted !!)

Colac & District Historical Society Inc. - President's Report 2017-18

It is with pleasure that I bring the 68th Annual Report of the CDHS.

At the 2017 Annual Meeting we were honoured with a visit from the President of the RHSV Professor Don Garden who presented a RHSV merit Award to life member Diana Cowan who was leaving Colac after many decades of service to the Historical Society.

We were delighted to welcome Noel Ryan as Vice President, Helen Paatsch as Librarian and several other new members all of whom are taking an active role in the activities of the Society. An interesting and diverse range of speakers have entertained and informed members at our monthly meetings.

This year we held a January bus excursion to Camperdown and in October organised a bus tour of local points of historical interest as part of the CFHG weekend of family history. On both occasions several members of the Tourist Information Centre attended and a closer relationship with this organisation has included the printing of a Colac History tea towel which is on sale at the Tourist Information Centre. No grants were sought in 2017 but we have sought funding this year from the Public Records Office Victoria Local History Grants Program for professional assistance and on the spot training for members to preserve, catalogue and record the vast amount of material in the J. G. Johnstone Collection.

Thanks to the Colac Otway Shire who have made much needed improvements to the kitchen but we are still seeking better street signage and the extension of the air-conditioning system to our records room.

We have hosted school visits from Sacred Heart and St Mary's Primary Schools, also staged and staffed a display in February for the Colac Heritage Festival held at the Showgrounds.

We have made minor changes to the constitution to meet the requirements of the Incorporation Act and laid down a Working with Children Policy for the History Centre.

We have maintained affiliation and involvement with the RHSV, GDHA and WVAHS. I would encourage more members to take part in some of these events.

A new computer was provided for the Scanpro and microfilm reader and steps taken to enable more people to become au fait with its use. A TV screen was purchased to enable continuous photo screening in our window displays. Special thanks to those members who regularly change the displays which make a great contribution to the foyer displays in COPACC. Special events featured included Trinity College 50 years, Charles Stewart & Co 100 years and Kanyana/Kana Festival 60 years.

The quarterly newsletter continues to provide articles of substance and interests. Special thank you to our contributors and especially Craig Pink who is the driving force; Ellise Angel who scours the Colac Heralds and reviews guest speakers and Dawn Missen who does the final edit. Although the windows and newsletter are more visible, thanks go to all of those members who regularly take their turn on the opening hours roster, record donated items, file, catalogue, clean and deal with the numerous research inquiries both via the website and in-house. Mention must be made here of the passing of member Heather Knight who made a tremendous contribution to the working of the Society over many years.

Without the time you all put in and your willingness to do extra when asked my job would be impossible. My only regret is that if there was more room, and more of us, it would be possible to regularly change some of our displays, reduce the clutter and include more interpretive signage.

In conclusion I specially thank John Angel who manages the joint role of secretary and treasurer, Richard Francis who conscientiously updates our website.



J. G. Johnstone's Chair

We always called it "Grandad's Chair". My Grandfather was Andrew Swayn born 11/4/1858 at Mt Moriac. He was the youngest son of James Swayne Snr (the "e" was dropped somewhere between 1853 & 1870) and Mary Brown from Fifeshire, Scotland. The family arrived on board "The Bankers Daughter" sailing from Liverpool in 1853. James was an assisted immigrant as were most aboard this vessel and was assigned to work for James Riley of Barwon River for 6 months for 70 pounds and rations. Andrew was the only child in the family to be born in Australia.

Grandad Andrew married Margaret Box in 1883 at Modewarre. His trade was noted on his death certificate as farmer. My mother Daisy (the youngest of 10) was born in 1907 in Colac, her parents then share farming at Tirrengower Estate, Irrewillipe (at least 1903-1908) and later at Dreeite and Stoneyford. Andrew finally bought his own dairy farm in Pirron Yallock. In about 1915 he sold and moved into Colac and bought "Warrai", 8 Miller Street. It is presumed he no longer could work the farm as his 2 youngest sons had joined the war effort, Les 22 and Ern 19. Les was in the first landing on Gallipoli and one of the few that survived the carnage on that first day.

J. G. Johnstone had always been very kind and helpful to Grandad in times of hardship – allowing him time to settle his accounts when times were tough. After J. G. Johnstone's death in 1912 aged 77 years, Grandad went to an Auction. I believe they were selling off some of his personal possessions and Grandad wanted something to remember him by. He was successful and very happy to purchase the Chair. My Cousins Violet and Edie Stephens, currently 102 and 99 years of age, remember that at Miller Street the chair always sat in the kitchen by the wood stove where Grandad would sit and smoke his pipe. When he went to visit family the chair often went with him.

In 1936 we were coming home from Lorne one night when 5 miles up in the hills the crankshaft broke in the T model Ford, we had Grandfather's big chair in the back which I was sitting in. Dad and I walked back to Lorne... Uncle Harry towed us back to Colac... (from Roderick Swayn's Life recollections, 1929-2005)

After his wife Margaret died in 1937, Grandad went to stay with various daughters for several months at a time. It was agreed that when he died whichever daughter he was staying with would inherit the chair. He died in Bendigo in 1947 when he was staying with us. I had been a favourite, spending a lot of time with him. So my mother gave the chair to me when they moved from Colac to Lorne in 1967. We had it reupholstered and now it is a favourite with visitors and family alike in our living room in Nambucca Heads, NSW. No doubt my 3 daughters will have to draw straws for the ownership when I pass on.

Dorothy (Bell) Harris. June 2018.



What has been in the Colac Herald news?

May 14th – 2018 - New Accommodation for Colanda residents. Two of six purpose-built homes have been completed to accommodate Colanda residents in order that Colac's Colanda centre can close by mid-2019.

May 23rd - Parish celebrates centenary. More than 100 people gathered at *Coragulac* to celebrate St Brendan's parish's 100-year anniversary. Visitors included Sisters of the Good Samaritan who were in the convent and used to teach in the school. Keith Lenehan and Cooper Robb cut the cake.

May 28th - Investment, New site for Colac machinery business nears completion. *Rhys Evans Farm Machinery* to start operating on Princes Highway West Colac by July. The current business site was built on Murray Street in 1975 but they had outgrown the site.

May 30th - Historic help- *Colac Historical Society* has received \$9,000 to catalogue, assess and preserve its J. G. Johnstone collection of documents. The grant is by the State Government as part of the Public Record Office Victoria's support organisations and volunteers who work to preserve record or publish local history.

June 4th - Preserving Colac's hidden past. Colac and District Historical Society will preserve hundreds of documents salvaged when the former real estate and stock agent *J. G. Johnstone* changed ownership. They form a record of about

a hundred years of Colac and district property sales and subdivisions and map the regions development. John Glass Johnstone from Scotland founded the business in 1893 and went on to become the State member for Polwarth in 1911 and chair of the Closer Settlement Royal Commission in 1914.

June 16th- The fabric of history on show. An original *Otway's Federation coverlet or quilt* is a patchwork of 20 embroidered panels made by women in the Otways to commemorate the Federation of Australia in the early 1900s. It marks a time of growth in towns including Beech Forest, Gellibrand, Carlisle River and Lavers Hill.

June 8th- Posties returning to pedal power. Colac Post Office's delivery centre has begun swapping its motorcycles for *electric pushbikes*. This is to improve safety for posties as multiple Australian posties have been killed in motorcycle crashes while delivering mail in the past decade.

June 13th- Veteran Colac doctor closes book on career. Colac's longest serving Doctor *Michael Connor* will retire in June after almost half a century of continuous service to patients. He operated from a solo practice at Beeac in 1970. In 1971 he moved into the group practice in Colac now known as Otway Medical Clinic and has looked after five generations of some local families.

June 13th--Service is at the heart of Colac organisation. With the motto "To Serve", *Colac Lion's Club* has reached sixty years. *Doug Lyons* has been involved for four decades. *Tony Jones* is another long serving member. Colac Lion's projects have included housing for people with intellectual disability; funding for 29 units for elderly citizens; gardens at the railway station; catering for local events, donations to CFA; SES; Colac City Band, and Royal Children's Hospital.

June 20th - Tribute for fallen soldier. The family of WW1 Light Horseman *Edward Todd Harrison* gathered at Pomborneit to commemorate 100 years since his death while fighting in Palestine. He was buried near Jericho with some others but after the war he was reburied in Jerusalem along with 2500 soldiers in the British Military cemetery.

June 22nd - MP ready for new boundaries. Wannon MP *Dan Tehan* has committed to fight for Colac and all the communities he will represent after new electoral boundaries come into effect on July 13th. Wannon's Eastern boundary change will see the current 33,854-square-kilometre electorate expand to include Colac, Beeac, Cressy and Barongarook.

June 22nd - Wind turbines start power generation. Turbines, owned by *Acciona Energy Australia*, have begun pumping electricity into the grid as the renewable-energy project nears completion. Each of the 44 turbines can generate three megawatts if the wind is above 10 or 11 metres per second which is enough to power 60,000 homes. All will be on line in August.

June 25th- Mass honours Italian migrants. Italian families and their descendants will gather at St Marys Catholic church to pay tribute to the contribution of Italian migrants who began arriving in Colac in the 1920s. Sam Cirillo's grandfather *Giuseppe Cartieri* was one, working initially as potato growers at Beech Forest, before working to decommission the Colac- Beeac, Colac - Beech Forest and Birregurra - Forrest railways. Italian names include Cartieri, Cirillo, Demasi and Borgia.

July 6th- Bright Future. Winery taking over former Cororooke Dairy Factory. *Red Rock Winery* is developing the site as a bottling facility as expansion in export sales has led to a need for more space. Fonterra closed the Cororooke Dairy Factory in 2013.

July 13th - NAIDOC Week works will continue all year. *Vicki Couzens*, a former Pomborneit resident, is encouraging people to learn about Australia's history while she works to revitalise Aboriginal cultural practice. She is a member of the Gunditjmara and Kirrae Whurong Indigenous group from Western Vic. This year's NAIDOC theme is "Because of her, we can". It is everyone's responsibility to look after "Mother Earth"- the environment, the land and to honour your grandmothers, your inspirational aunties- the matriarchs.

July 13th - Lake Colac beach returns to shore. Colac Otway Shire has completed about 50 percent of a project to improve the lake's foreshore and create sandy areas for patrons.

July 25th- Cape Otway Lighthouse marks milestone. The Cape Otway Light station will mark 170 years in August by turning on its Fresnel lens, which has not operated in more than 20 years and was installed in 1891. It has the capacity of one million candles and could be seen for 40 kilometres out to sea.

July 27th- Tragic shipwreck to feature in book. 25 sailors were aboard the *Fiji*, which was carrying cargo from Hamburg to Melbourne, when the 3-mast ship ran ashore on Sept 6th 1891 at Moonlight Head, west of Cape Otway. Rescuers from nearby districts helped to save more than half of the sailors but one rescuer died. Historian Alan McLean is writing a book about the event.

August 10th- Detective reflects on 40 years. Colac Police Detective *Chris Potter* returned to Colac, his home town, in 1991 after years with the Homicide Squad in Melbourne. He continued to fight crime here but has now retired to concentrate on his other role as a Colac Otway Shire Councillor.

August 10th- Family firm sews final stitch. An auction will mark the end of an era for family-owned Colac business- *McMahon's Upholstery and Blinds*. Although founded in Geelong in 1948 by Jack McMahon, he moved it to Colac in 1952. After 3 changes of premises he set up shop at 266 Murray Street. Jack's sons – Wayne, John and Gary have worked together in the business for the past 50 years.

LINDSAY HULM – A LIFETIME AS A BAKER

- a transcript from his informative historic talk as Guest Speaker at CDHS Meeting on 23rd June 2018

On September 1st, 1950 *R.E & A. HULM*. opened for business at 210 Murray St, Colac. Ron, from Warnnambool had bought the business from Millman's, and had a twenty-year lease of the premises. This included the residence at 7 Connor St. for his family, as well as a residence behind and a second storey above the shop; Lindsay was 16 at the time. Bread doughs were mixed and proven on the upper floor then sent via a chute to the bakery below to be placed in tins. Bread was baked through the night between 6pm and 2am by two bakers. The ovens were both wood fired Scotch ovens (brick) fired by wood brought to the yard at 150 tons a time. Each day, the bakers chopped enough to fire the ovens for the next day's baking. They also produced Yeast Buns, Boston Buns, Bread Rolls, etc. The flour was transported from railway trucks by *Mr McGrath* driving a horse and cart. Flour was stored in an upper storey and had to be lifted up to there by rope and pulley and stored on a platform. The horse was taken out of the dray and each bag of flour was attached to a rope which went over the pulley and was attached to the horse and the horse had to walk about twenty feet forward and in so doing hoisted the bag of flour up to the second storey! Once the bag was taken off the rope by the bakers who stacked the bags, the horse was backed up to get the next bag. The bread was delivered by two town rounds also using horse and cart.

Thomas Flour Mills financed Ron to buy the business. Ron was a baker and Lindsay a pastry cook. Pastry cooking started at 5 am and finished at 1 pm. The Pastry Cooks produced pies, pasties, etc. and a large range of cakes. These were delivered to shops, schools and sporting clubs on a wholesale basis. Staff consisted of bakers, bread carters, pastry cooks and shop girls. There were stables in the backyard of the shop where the two horses required to pull the baker's cart were housed. They were taken to a paddock in Murray St. behind *Permewan's Shop* on Friday and returned to the stables on Sunday evening. These horses got to know their rounds so well that they would stop at the appropriate places and then walk on to meet the baker after he had delivered his basket of bread. Water troughs were provided around the town for the horses. The bread carters wore khaki jackets and had leather money pouches.

Business was good and soon Ron expanded by buying the bread trade from *J. S. Yates* when it went on the market. Each morning Ron took the bread in a small covered trailer hooked up to the (1937) Vauxhall Car, down Murray St to Yate's cake shop and cafe. Ron also purchased *Bartlett's bread trade* while Bartlett's retained their cake shop and cafe. In 1952 Ron had an accident while borrowing flour from *Thwaite's Bakery*. Fourteen bags of flour fell on him and pinned him underneath shattering his spine and dislocating his collarbone! The accident happened in the morning and the doctor recognised the seriousness of the injuries and was wary of doing anymore other than trying to keep him as comfortable as possible. He did not even risk putting the collarbone back into place. They lay him face down on the bed to protect the spine.

Dr. Davies contacted top surgeon (Mr. Jens) who planned to be in Colac by late afternoon to operate on Ron. Father Pat O'Keefe and Lindsay stayed with Ron in the hospital and held his cigarettes for him to smoke (to help him cope with the pain)! Ann had just come out of hospital prior to the accident after surgery for gallstones and was still convalescent. (Ron had been looking after her). *Mr. Jens* who was chauffeured to Colac (after operating that day in Melbourne) didn't arrive until nearly 8 pm. By this time Ron had spent a lot of pain-filled hours. Five Colac doctors observed the operation which involved inserting a steel plate and piecing together the shattered spine. The operation was a success, and, after a long convalescence, Ron was able to walk with his back in a brace (strapped on) and helped along with the aid of two walking sticks. A lot of effort went into getting to this stage with a lot of pain along the way!

In 1963, Ron got into financial difficulties. *Sunicrust* bought the bread business leaving the pastry cooking side still intact, then Lindsay bought into the business and set about getting it viable again. With finances gradually improving, Ron bought a house at 13 Hart St. and Lindsay sold his home at 45a Hart St. and moved into the bakery residence where the family lived until the lease expired (Aug. 1970). Millman's didn't renew the lease so Lindsay bought the freehold of 66 Murray St and set about getting it ready to become a bakery. (Prior to this, the premises were two shops - a babies' wear and a Photographic Studio). The first step was a meeting on the premises with the then health inspector (*Mr. Roy Gall*) who advised on the necessary steps to have the premises registered as a food shop. Next, the planning re: oven, shop fittings etc. As the premises had a flat above the bakery and shop and money being scarce after buying the property, the family moved in. (Bought 28 Hesse St in 1972).

The oil-fired oven was bought second-hand from Kerang, transported to Colac and installed in the new bakery, re-bricked and made ready for baking. All was in readiness to open the new shop (designed by Lindsay with fittings made by *Lloyd Russell* of Colac). There was much worry about the opening, but we were not expecting the disaster which followed. The oven had to be tried out prior to opening day and was fired with oil in readiness. There was a great explosion which blew out the back of the oven! The oil was rapidly turned off by a quick-thinking neighbour (a resident at a nearby shop). He jumped the fence and saved the day. What a sight met our eyes!!! Fine dust everywhere and the back of the oven sagging out of shape. *Barry Healey* (engineer at *Wilson & Noble*) came to the rescue and repaired the oven for another tryout. Fortunately, all went smoothly, and we were able to open the shop on the advertised day of opening 23rd August 1970. The shop was amazingly busy, way beyond what we had been used to. We had only one kitchen fridge for cold drinks making things pretty hectic. The girls wore new, neat and trim uniforms - blue with monograms of Hulm's Bakery on them.

Further Information from Lindsay's notes: Bakeries in the area in 1950: Colac: Hulms, Thwaites, Bartlett's, Yates, Apex, Foley's. Colac District: *Cororooke, Beeac, Warrion, Elliminyt, Forrest*. Bakeries at this time were all wood fired ovens. Hulm's used 150 to 200 tons of two-foot wood per year. Bread bakeries gradually decreased with the advent of Supermarkets, *Hulms and Thwaites being the two originals which have survived*. Hulms continued delivering bread in the town area and Thwaites in the country until it became unviable. Also affected were the home deliveries of milk, ice, groceries and meat. The bread making side of the business was sold to *Sunicrust Bakeries* from Geelong in 1967 but the pastry cooking side continued successfully, making pies, pasties, cakes, etc. Their shop employed ten people.

The Historic Hulm's Oven: This oven is still intact and useable and is situated behind No.210 Murray St. It cannot be moved because of the manner in which it was built. No mortar was used in the construction except for the outside walls. Packed sand was used to make a base for the oven and to form up the domed oven. The upper bricks were stood on their edge longwise and packed in to form the dome – no mortar was used. When the sand inside the domed oven was removed the wedged in bricks stayed in place and the sand was packed on top of the bricks to a depth of one metre to form the insulation for the oven.

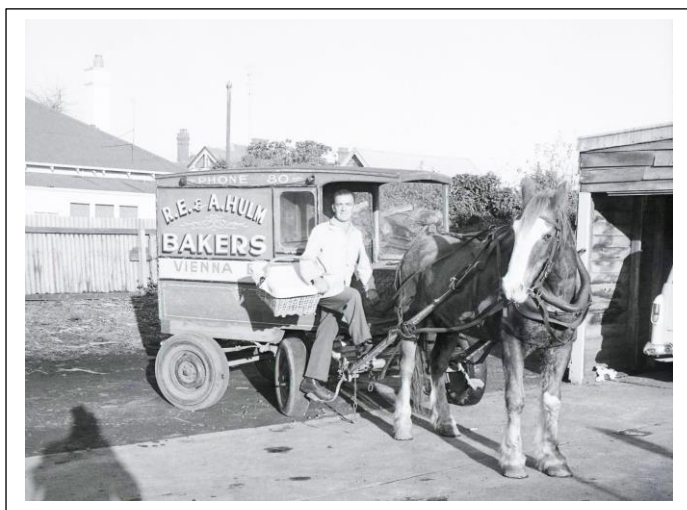
Lindsay's Personal History: Born in Koroit 1934 – his grandfather Percy drove a horse drawn bread cart in Koroit. Lindsay's father after serving his apprenticeship as a bread baker moved to Inglewood then later moved to work at his brother's bakery in Terang. Lindsay attended school in Terang and then moved to Warrnambool where his father managed a large bakery. He attended St. Joseph's College but left school at 14 to work at a motor garage in the spare parts department. Moved to Colac in 1950 and worked with his father as a pastry cook. He was a pastry cook for 60 years and then sold the cake shop business to his daughter Kerry, and the pastry cooking to two of his employees. 48 years a Rotarian- President from 1976-77 and was awarded the *Paul Harris Medal* in recognition of his community service. Was a Past President and Life Member of Colac Lake Bowling Club; Councillor of Colac Otway Shire and Deputy Mayor; Member of the Loch Calvert Trust; Married to Margaret for 64 years- father of six children, 12 Grandchildren and 6 Great Grandchildren.

Personal Memories of the Times: Cooking hams and turkeys wrapped in dough for Christmas. These were too big for home ovens. This cooking was done for individuals and Bilson's Store; cows were driven from farm to market. Some of the herds were large; shopping was Thursday - market day; some farmers came to town in horse and jinker. These were left behind the "Austral Hotel"- the women went shopping and the men went to the sale yards; some homes with a large town block kept a house cow; casual workers would split wood for the bakery for ten shillings an hour; Hulm's employed 180 employees over 60 years, many were apprentices and many of these went on to open their own bakeries.

Murray Street Shops from Corangamite to Hart Streets in 1950 -

North side: 1. Halloran Motors: 2. Gainger's Bus lines Depot: 3. Miss Stephen's Cake Shop (later Bertie Farrells): 4. Swayne and Neilson's Sport Shop: 5. Bowley's Saddlery with residence beside: 6. Ben Whitty Motor Bike Shop: 7. Brunt's Wheelwright and forge for making horse shoes: 8. Laneway to a back paddock where *Hulm's horse* went for weekends: 9. Permewan Wright Groceries and Farm Supplies: 10. Private Residence: 11.3CS Broadcasting Station: 12.Shop for car parts: 13. Flanagan's Butchers: 14.Motor Car Spray Painting Shop: 15.Fruit and Vegie Shop: 16.McKenzie Car Sales.

South Side: 1.CBA Bank: 2. Gray's Department Store: 3. Spare Parts for Cars: 4. King's Music Shop: 5. Bob Loricco Fruit and Vegie Shop: 6. Laneway through to Connor St. and for access to *Hulm's residence and Bakery and to 7 Connor St.*, which is still there: 7. Small shop for electrical supplies and repairs: 8. *Hulm's Bakery and shop*: 9. Murray Selwood Grocery: 10. Ladies' Hairdresser: 11. Claude Robb's Butcher Shop: 12. Parr and Spencer Garage: 13. Parker's Hardware: 14. Parker's Garage and showroom and repairs: 15. Private residence (Thompsons): 16. Boyes' Butcher Shop: 17. Smith's Grocery on Hart St., Corner. (pictured below – June 1963 – horse and cart - FB Holden panel van)



Recollections of Old Colac - PART 2

Part two of a series - By a Veteran Colackian (Patrick Danaher)

No. 3 Article from Colac Reformer, 30th July, 1884

As soon as people became possessed of a little gold, stock and everything else went up to enormous prices, and when disposed of realised comparatively fabulous sums. Horses, especially the useful sort, became invaluable. I have seen £150 offered and refused for a nag known to go quietly in harness, that six months before could have been bought for £5 or £6. Previous to the discovery of gold fat sheep and cattle were mostly melted down for fat, a bullock eight or nine hundred weight could then be purchased for about £3, and a fat sheep from 1/6 to 2/6. But the influx of people from every quarter of the civilised world enhanced the value of property of every kind, and the canvas town of Emerald Hill will never be forgotten.

As every man had to have a horse in those days, racing became the order of the day. Matches for £10, £20, £30 and £50 a side were a daily occurrence, and every digger who owned a stead did imagine himself a veritable Alexander, and his horse a Bucephalus. As fine animals of their kind as ever stood on four legs were often stripped for an event on the old Colac racecourse – that known as the racecourse paddock, the property of W Robertson, between Deans creek and “The Hill”. A long distance and heavy weight are enough to try the metal and staying power of the very best racers. Three and sometimes four miles and two mile heats were nothing uncommon to traverse, and some of the most notable local flyers who figured in them were the old Lad of the Lake, Faugh-a-Ballagh, Ranger, Creeping Jane, Jem-a-Long-Jossie, Old Skipper, Donald, Scroggins, Kelly Darling and some others.

The Lad and Faugh were tough old veterans, and many a ten pound note they netted for their lucky nominators. Excitement! Talk about excitement, eh! One of those events caused more sensation than the Melbourne Cup now-a-days. Refreshment booths, too, drove a roaring trade, and a lucky fellow he was considered who could secure a license for a stand on one of these occasions. Well, a race over, it was a general scrimmage to see who would reach Colac first. I once got mixed up in one of those stampedes, and nearly came to grief with several more. Two gallant young fellows came a cropper beside me, just where the Rev J B Horton now resides. (Roseneath, Colac West). A big log lay close to the track, and three or four horsemen went right at it together; two of the steads cannoned in the air, both coming to grass with a crash, dismounting their riders. We carried the injured and insensible men to Colac. For 48 hours they remained unconscious in a room at the “Crook and Plaid”, and at the end of that time one succumbed, but the other slowly recovered, and shortly afterwards went to Queensland to take up a station there. Not long ago I heard he got drowned when crossing a river in that colony.

In that rush home another accident occurred. A lady, who drove a large and powerful black horse in a chaise, was on her way to Colac, when the “blood” took fright, ran the wheel of the chaise against a stump, and over went the whole concern, but fortunately the lady was not hurt. Although many were bent on racing and sporting, yet there were a few who were desirous of doing business of a more substantial nature, in the shape of making a home for themselves. With this view, they kept a sharp look out for the sales of the land, which was advertised to take place in Geelong about this time. There were very few purchased lots in the township then; those alienated having been sold in Sydney or Melbourne. Upon this occasion the competition was announced for Geelong. Accordingly, the day previous to the sale the men well mounted and their pockets filled with money, might have been observed wending their way along the road, up Cameron’s Hill, on the way to the Pivot. The thoroughfare in those days continued from Marriner’s corner to the quarry, but the road was subsequently altered to its present position by the Colac Road Board, since merged into the Shire Council.

No. 4 Article Colac Reformer, August 6, 1884

Every man who could procure a horse went to Geelong to attend the sale and purchase an allotment at least, or as many more blocks as the length of his purse would admit of. Land in Colac, even at that time, was held in very high estimation, and the half-acre lots ranged in price from £10 to £60. The people who went to the sales at Melbourne and Geelong were met by capitalists, monopolists and speculators of every hue, who out-bid the men of limited means. The working men and miners brought all their influence to bear on the Government to stop the auction sales, and to pass an act enabling alienation to be brought about by the selection. Accordingly, Mr Nicholson, being the Minister of Lands, and the working man’s representative – for he was a horny-handed son of the soil himself – brought his land Bill before the Lower House. The measure quickly passed its third reading, and was sent to the Council. A rumour went abroad that the Council would throw the Bill out, which report exasperated every man throughout Victoria who wished to make a home for himself and family. It was agreed in all centres that on the day on which the Bill was to be presented to the Legislative Council, every working man who could possibly do so should be present in Melbourne, and make a grand demonstration. Ballarat, Bendigo, Castlemaine, Ararat, and every place sent its contingent, even this thinly populated district contributed to swell the monster meeting of working men. The bone

and sinew of the colony were there. The meeting was headed by a publican named Brody, from Mount Gellibrand, near Birregurra. (For you must know that the Birregurra of today was then termed Bowden's Point.) Brody was a great politician, a good stump orator, and a very bold man. The story goes that the mob was very well provided with picks, crowbars, and sledge hammers, with other weapons of offence and defence known to our advanced state of civilisation, ready to tear down the house on the heads of the Legislative Council, if they did not quickly pass the Nicholson Land Bill into Law. The Council at first made a show of resistance, refusing to be coerced, but the concourse of working men becoming uproarious, pressed up to the very doors of Parliament and vigorously thundered at them, as only a mob can thunder. At the first application of the sledge-hammer a messenger brought out news that the Bill had been passed.

As soon as the crowd were satisfied of this assertion, they retired to a little distance, and then sent into the firmament three hearty cheers for their worthy representative, and three times three for their trusty and well-beloved leader, Brody. Brody subsequently received a handsome douceur from the working men of Melbourne, in recognition of his services, a Government appointment as Crown Lands Bailiff at Ararat, and shortly afterwards disappeared from the world.

No. 5 Article Colac Reformer, August 16, 1884

In 1860 the Nicholson Land Act was enforced as the law of the land, and many persons became property owners for the first time in their lives. But the provisions of the Statute were very soon discovered to be inadequate to the requirements of the country. In 1862 Mr Duffy became Minister of Lands, but Duffy's Act, as it was called was likewise a failure. That gentleman appointed a day on which people could select farms in the district of Camperdown and other places, but as soon as the offices opened, lawyers, agents, and monopolists rushed them, taking sole possession by actually filling the rooms, and would not allow anyone to enter until they, at all events, were satisfied. In this way some of the best lands in the district passed from the farmers forever. Mr Duffy, however, as soon as he discovered the lawyers, to use a popular phrase, could "drive a carriage and four" through his Act, withdrew the remaining lands from selection and stopped the mischief.

But the monster selections of 1865, under the superintendence of the then Minister of Lands (Grant), far outshone all previous affairs of the kind. It was in the month of July, and the weather was clear, cold and frosty. The desire to possess land drew multitudes together, who camped for days before the time fixed, in and around Camperdown, the scene of the fray. People from all the colonies were there, from Sydney, Adelaide, West Australia, Queensland, Tasmania and New Zealand; all on this occasion cast in their lot with Victoria for a 640 acre farm.

As the hour of ten approached on that fateful July morning, it was a grand sight to witness the large concourse of well-dressed people assembled around the Land office, anxiety and eagerness being depicted on every countenance. When the door opened the crush was tremendous, but the police maintained order, and allowed about a dozen to pass in at a time. Over 20 clerks and officials were in attendance, and when an applicant presented himself at the bar, a blank ticket was handed to him, on which he wrote his or her name, and then dropped it into a large churn prepared for the purpose. The applicant was then conducted to a large and high enclosure, at the rear of the office, there to await the chance of his ticket coming out. It took nearly two hours to get all the tickets deposited and the people drafted into the yard prepared for them. The Minister was present to see for himself how his arrangements worked, and let it be ever remembered for him, he allowed the ladies to remain in the rooms of the Land's office, but loud and deep were the complaints of the men in the yard, who were awaiting developments ankle deep in mud. At length four clerks, with the great churn of tickets, made their appearance on the platform, about 6ft or 7ft above the heads of the people, and one official stood ready with his coat off, and his shirt sleeves folded up, ready to draw lots. At this moment Mr Grant stepped on the platform, when three cheers were given for him. As each ticket was abstracted, and the name read out, way was made by the police into the office for the lucky individual, who selected his section, paid his deposit, and was conducted into the street.

Colac men, as a rule, were very fortunate, many of them obtaining good selections. A well-known Birregurra man secured the second call, and picked at the Green Hills, near Camperdown, where his sons are still settled, happy and prosperous, to this day. An allotment in the neighbourhood of Terang, which fell into the possession of a Colac man, changed hands not long since for £12,800. Smiling and happy homes may now be seen, made on farms they obtained, but there are not so many homesteads existing as there ought to be, for the fertile blocks fell to the lot of many who never intended to settle on them, and who transferred them to capitalists for a mere trifle.

COLAC'S MEMORIAL SQUARE LAWN BOWLS - Colac's Oldest Bowling Club

By Craig Pink

Following negotiations through, and with advocacy of the Town Riding members of the Colac Shire Council, the first Colac Bowls Club was formed by a convened meeting in mid-1898. The new club was granted permissive occupancy of an area on the then "Market Square". From the very beginning, the new club consisted of both men and also women. After make-shifting with expedient buildings for its first years, the group built its first club house. The bowling green at this point was closer to the south west corner of today's Memorial Square (see both photos below).



ABOVE – Showing the early lawn bowls fence with frontage to Murray Street – Note the Murray Street shops in the background. (c. pre -1900- turn of the century image).
Image from Society files – Photocard - 15



ABOVE – South west corner of the original Market Square, the Lawn Bowls rotunda style clubhouse can be clearly seen as second building from left. This building ended up at the Manifold Street Bowling Club, then the Croquet Club.
Image from Society files – Photocard - 100

The Shire's tribute to the fallen in World War One, the memorial, was under way in 1921, and the "Market Reserve" then took on the name - "Memorial Square". The Shire then wrote to the council requesting the bowling club move its club house to the northern side of the square. With members divided about the shift, the club, by a definite majority decision purchased a site in Manifold Street (part of the Hearn estate), moved the club house there and constructed a seven rink green. Players not favouring the move then formed the Colac Central Bowling Club, which the Shire Council readily gave approval for occupancy of the Memorial Square green on similar terms to those previous, but located to the north of the original bowling green, where a standard seven rink green was laid down and a clubhouse built.

The Manifold Street bowling green was extended some 30 years later to an eleven rink green. The site closed and new premises opened in late 1964/early 1965 on the corner of Armstrong and Moore Streets, which it remains at today.

By the late 1980s, the Colac Central Bowls Club on the Memorial Square had had its time. The Bowls Club could not expand as ratepayers had stated they did not want this to happen in both the Marriott and Townscape reports. The Colac City Council had no option but to assist in a suitable relocation, which ended up on a site at Wilson Street, adjoining the eastern fence boundary of the old former Colac Dairying Company. These premises were officially opened by then Mayor of Colac Jim Ryan on 20th February 1994. The Central Bowls Club remains at this Wilson Street premises today.

The Memorial Square building as pictured on back page was shifted to Forrest and still operates as the Forrest Guest House.

AT RIGHT – The former club house form the Colac Central Bowls Club on the Memorial Square, which lives on today at Forrest in a new life as the Forrest Guest House.

(Image supplied by Dawn Missen)





CRAIG'S CONUNDRUM

LAST ISSUE ANSWER –

AT LEFT – Later 1960s view of the former Lawn Bowls, which was located on the north west side of the Memorial Square. See previous page for a brief history of the Colac Central Bowling Club, and the survival of this iconic club house today.



AT LEFT - Can you pinpoint the location of this former NATIONAL TYRE SERVICE premises in Central Colac. This image, taken by Bela Bard Brucker in the mid-1960s shows its location on the corners of which two well-known streets of Central Colac?

**ANSWER
NEXT
ISSUE**

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

Month	Thursday	Friday	Sunday
SEPTEMBER	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. Saddlier	2 nd A. McIntosh 9 th G. Knox 16 th B. McDonald 23 rd L. Spence 30 th R. Osborne
OCTOBER	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. Saddlier	7 th A. McIntosh 14 th G. Knox 21 st B. McDonald 28 th L. Spence
NOVEMBER	1 st D. Missen 8 th I. Barlow 15 th G. Splatt 22 nd J. Knight 29 th R. Missen	2 nd C. Pink 9 th G. Bray 16 th E. Chambers 23 rd M. Saddlier 30 th R. Osborne	4 th A. McIntosh 11 th G. Knox 18 th B. McDonald 25 th L. Spence