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

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

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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 – dates & times advised*

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We Thank Contributors for This Issue: Ellise Angel, Alan Doyle, Robyn Perrin & Rosemary Richardson.

### **Forthcoming Events -**

**November 25<sup>th</sup>** -7.30pm – General Meeting – No Supper.

History Centre remains closed to general public but is open to members and by appointment for research purposes.

Re-opening to be discussed at November meeting.

**February 24<sup>th</sup>** - Details to be arranged.

### **A Note from the President –**

What an unprecedented year we have had!

The quarterly newsletter has provided a much needed link to our membership and it is pleasing to see membership renewals continue to be received following the Annual Meeting in June despite the lack of activity at the History Centre.

I trust that we can make decisions at our forthcoming November meeting that will enable us to resume a more normal program in 2021.

It is especially pleasing to have two members contributing an article in this issue for the first time. Both articles complement each other, providing interesting family insights into the early settlement of Larpent. How local landmarks were named is always fascinating and the origin of Vaughan's Island at the southern end of Lake Corangamite is brought to light in Rosemary Richardson's account.

Research enquiries and book sales have continued throughout the Covid-19 closure. We look forward to two new local history books which are close to publication, whose authors have utilized the resources of the Society.

### **What has been in the Colac Herald news?**

**August 19, 2020 - Salvage to go ahead in 2021.** A decade-long rescue attempt to salvage a Second World War-era plane ditched in Lake Corangamite will come to fruition next year. Salvage diver and aviation enthusiast Rod Knights finally has certainty about his plan to salvage the CAC Wirraway plane ditched in 1950 during a training flight from Point Cook. Work begins next March.

**August 21-** *Colac virus numbers heading towards zero.* 82 people have now recovered from the virus in our shire continuing a steady decline since the peak of August 8 when there were 92 active cases.

**August 24-** *Vice regal call for council.* Cr Jason Schram and council chief Peter Brown will video call with Governor General David Hurley and wife Linda. The Queen's representative hopes to visit our region when conditions permit and are aware of the compounding challenges COVID-19 is creating for Colac Otway and other communities.

**August 24-** *Bats leave gardens but concerns still remain.* Noise and light works have successfully scared off a colony of about 22 grey-headed flying foxes from the Colac Botanic Gardens. They are a protected native species and migrated to Colac four years ago reaching a peak of 6500 last summer.

**August 24-** *Family honours motoring titan.* John "Tubby" Parker has died aged 95. He was part of the second generation of family-owned car dealership and servicing business Parker Bros, which became a well-loved and

trusted organisation in Colac during its 88 years at its Murray Street showroom and garage. It was founded by his father Arthur and Uncle Percy. In the mid-1940s they struck a deal with General Motors Holden.

**August 28-** *Council backs buying school.* Colac Otway Shire Council will buy part of the former Colac High School site and keep trying to acquire more to create a community sports precinct for 2 soccer pitches and a baseball field.

**August 31-** *End of an era for Colac dealer.* Colac Motor Group has bid farewell to the iconic Holden as it marked its last day of trading the Australian car brand. Holden's parent company General Motors announced in February that it would axe the Holden brand by the end of the year in Australia and New Zealand.

**September 16-** *Lighthouse will close amid lease concerns.* The historic attraction at Cape Otway will probably shut for good next year. COVID-19 restrictions has wiped out business for the light station and closure will leave a huge hole in the visitor experience along the Great Ocean Road.

**September 18-** *Sports partnership revives Colac RSL's fortunes.* The Colac RSL went into voluntary administration in July. Now the RSL and Colac District Footy-Netball League have signed a new partnership deal to save the RSL Club from liquidation. This will give the League a home base and a new management committee will be created with members from the community, the league and the sub-branch.

**September 23-** *Colac Otway's library switch-up gets approval from new provider.* Geelong's regional library group has welcomed Colac Otway with open arms officially endorsing the request to join the bigger system. The move from Corangamite Regional Library Corporation to the Geelong Corporation will mean more books, technology and other resources for users.

**September 25-** *High interest in Colac business sites despite COVID.* Colac's Cheap as Chips building on Murray Street sold for \$3.72 million to private investors hitting the market for the first time in 30 years. The building previously housed Coles.

**October 5-** *Flag enthusiast thrilled with Mercy initiative.* Mercy Place resident, war veteran and vexillophile Les Trigg has overseen the addition of 3 new flags at the Colac aged-care home- Australian, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags at the front of the centre.

**October 7-** *Flying foxes back after a brief spell.* Bats have returned to roost at the Colac Botanic Gardens after a month-long hiatus. Council spent \$100,000 creating a management plan as dispersals are strictly regulated and not permitted when female bats are likely to be pregnant.

**October 9-** *Site selected. Planning starts to move Specialist School to High School site.* Colac Specialist School has received more than \$1.5 million for a plan to build a new state- of- the- art home at the abandoned, heritage, former Colac High School site.

*Covid cases back to zero.* Colac Otway has no active COVID-19 cases for the first time since July 17. There were 2 outbreaks earlier, one at the Australian Lamb Company and another from an essential trip to Melbourne but the pandemic is far from over said Mrs Fiona Brew, chief of Colac Area Health.

*Back to familiar surrounds.* Colac's Chris Quinn has returned to the company he founded- Quinn Funerals, as general manager having sold it five years ago. It was the former Wesley Church that he had converted into a funeral chapel 10 years ago.

**October 16-** *Special celebrations for Colac 101-year-old.* Mrs Daphne Jeanette (Jean) Tanis was born at the former Derrinook private hospital on the corner of Gellibrand and Manifold streets, Colac, and has rarely ventured further away. She grew up on the family farm at Barongarook then married James, a soldier; they later farmed at Warncoort. She is now in Corangamarah.

*Students bloom back at school.* Colac Secondary College students from Year10 to Year 12 enjoyed a special activities week to celebrate their return to face-to-face learning. Students in Year 7 and 8 had a picnic and planted sunflowers. Remote learning at home has been their, and all schools', classroom experience during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**October 19-** Easing of Covid restrictions in Regional Victoria.

**October 26-** Alvie War Memorial at Red Rock restored thanks to a \$7500 Federal Government Grant.

**October 28-** State Government announce that Melbourne residents will be released from lockdown and allowed back into regional Victoria on November 9<sup>th</sup>. Indoor Pools, Libraries and Gymnasiums to reopen.

**October 30-** South-West TAFE named Victoria's large Training Provider of the Year.

**November 2-** Colac-Otway Shire exceeds childhood immunisation targets with over 95% fully immunised and 100% of children 60-63 months.

Colac Regional Saleyards to trial online cattle auctioning at its monthly Store Cattle Sale.

**November 9-** *3 New Faces elected to Colac-Otway Shire.* Graham Costin, Jamie Bell and Marg White to join returning councillors Joe McCracken, Chris Potter, Kate Hanson and Stephen Hart.

Colac City Band President Andrew Currie says that being unable to practise since July has flattened band morale.

Netball Courts at Colac Central Reserve to be completed by Christmas as part of \$1 million Colac Central Reserve Master Plan.

# MY FAMILY CONNECTION TO THE LARPENT

By Robyn Perrin - based on Research by Peg Perrin

I was raised in Melbourne and moved to Colac for my first teaching position in January 1979. Around 1989 my mother rang and asked if I had heard of a place called LarPENT with the emphasis on the pent. I wonder if you mean Larpent I answered and there began the extraordinary coincidence of my family connection with Larpent and Colac.

As most of you will know, John Dunmore Lang organised several chartered ships of Protestants to sail from England to Australia including The Larpent in 1849. Lang had purchased 640 acres of Andrew Murray's land 6 miles west of Lake Colac and the growing township of Colac. Passage on The Larpent was at no cost and the land could be purchased at one pound an acre. Aboard ship all 210 passengers came down with typhoid with 10 dying and buried at sea and another 13 after arrival in Geelong. Dr Alexander Thomson, as Lang's representative, arranged to accompany the settlers to Larpent but found that many families had sold their shares while still at sea or on arrival in Geelong.

William Needham was one of the Protestant immigrants who sailed on The Larpent and took up his 16 acres at the new settlement. He built a simple hut and continued to farm alone until he travelled for the arrival of the barque "Bride" which had commenced its journey from London and arrived at Port Phillip on 31<sup>st</sup> January 1852. On board were fifty seven healthy young unmarried women of good character who were encouraged to emigrate to the Colony. Their passage was paid for by the government from the sale of Crown Lands.

19 year old Margaret Carey was one of the young women aboard "Bride". On 26<sup>th</sup> May 1852, less than 4 months after her arrival, Margaret, 20 was married to William Needham, 39, in Melbourne's first church; St James Anglican Cathedral. William was nearly as old as Margaret's father. Margaret's sister, Sarah, travelled to Larpent and at 23 on 12<sup>th</sup> February 1857, married John King at the home of the Needham's neighbour Angus McDonald.

Although Margaret now had the company of Sarah and her young family, life was far from easy. William was a sickly man not only working his own farm but was a shepherd on other Larpent properties too. In June 1864 William and his neighbour, Angus McDonald, were working on Mr Jeffray's property when William collapsed and died. William was buried at the Colac Cemetery although the location of the grave is not known.

Margaret was not without support in her plight as Andrew Rutherford, a relative of William's, had a property just west of Larpent. Margaret and her 5 children under 10 were soon on their way to William's relatives James Rutherford and Thomas Brown who held the Uluphna pastoral run in northern Victoria. In August 1865 Margaret married John Josiah Walters, a carpenter from Cornwell. Margaret, her new husband, and her youngest child Frank lived in the remote Bajanna shepherds hut on the present site of Numurkah. Margaret was the first white woman in that district. The other 4 children were raised by the Brown's at Bajanna Homestead. John and Margaret had three daughters.

My family link is in fact with Margaret Eliza the eldest daughter of Margaret and John Walters. Margaret Walters is my great great grandmother, Margaret Eliza my great grandmother. William Needham is not a relative although he and Margaret did have 5 children while they were living at Larpent.

As an interesting footnote, my mother acquired a subdivision of the Larpent settlement. The land farmed by the Needham's is part of the Sutherland's dairy farm on the Princes Hwy. In 1990, Graham took my parents and I to the Needham's land saying there was no evidence of a house. To his surprise there was a rise in the paddock indicating the presence of a long gone building. Peter McDonald's land which was in the next paddock has a well, mulberry and other fruit trees and the ubiquitous Belladonnas.



50 Year Medallion celebrating the arrival of 'The Larpent'

## ***Mabel Margaret Vaughan Whitehead – A Grandmother I never knew by Rosemary Richardson***

Thomas & Susannah Vaughan sailed from London in May 1850 on the barque 'Bernicia' arriving in Melbourne October 1850. Around 1851 the land sales opened up big runs and news came that some of the land across the highway from the Larpent settlement had been sold to an Englishman called Vaughan and it was rumoured that he and his wife and nine children planned to live there.

This was the beginning of the Vaughan family history at Larpent – Thomas purchased this land from Andrew Murray – part of his Irrewillipe Estate.

Thomas & Susannah (my great- great- grandparents) arrived with their nine children and began to build a house – this was known as "The Homestead". In time, further land was purchased. One of these properties was at Pomborneit East, and included an island in Lake Corangamite, which became known as Vaughan Island.

Samuel, the seventh child (fourth son) would become my great- grandfather. Samuel first married Diana Purdue in 1865. They had four sons. Diana died in January 1876. Samuel then married Annie Jackson Fairbairn (my great-grandmother) in Hamilton in March 1878.



Mabel Margaret Vaughan

They had one daughter -Mabel Margaret Vaughan – born 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1879 at Larpent – the grandmother I never knew. Luckily for me I grew up with several of her things. Three of these are listed below:

- A china urn beautifully painted by Mabel – depicting a stem of roses.
- A silver rose bowl engraved WVE and MMW. This commemorates a tennis match. The initials refer respectively to Mabel who was by then married- Mabel Margaret Whitehead.
- A wooden medicine cabinet. Mabel burned a design into the wood, using a magnifying glass.

Mabel spent her early years at Larpent, attending the Pirron Yallock Primary School. When Samuel retired he left the Larpent property in the care of son Thomas and moved to Geelong. Mabel completed her education at "The Hermitage".

An anecdote of the time is that Mabel and John Doyle – a Geelong Solicitor – had a "crush on each other", but as the Doyles were Roman Catholic, these relationships were taboo. Mabel never mentioned the fact at home, and when one Christmas John gave her a hairbrush, Mabel identified Herbert (half-brother) as the gift giver, with Herbert's agreement.

Mabel married Robert Whitehead and on 19<sup>th</sup> July 1905 (my grandparents). Robert had joined the firm of Strachan, Murray and Shannon, wool brokers of Geelong. They settled in Geelong and on the 15<sup>th</sup> July 1907 Jack was born (my father).

When Robert began working in partnership with his brothers on their family property north of Warrnambool, the family moved there. In 1912 this was divided into three portions and Robert and Mabel named their portion "Koorinal."

Robert and Mabel had five children – 3 sons and twin daughters, and they enjoyed a happy life style living on "Koorinal" until suddenly on the 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1925 aged 46 years Mabel died, discovered by son Jack, aged 17 years. Five years later on 2<sup>nd</sup> of November 1930 aged 51 years Robert died from a motor accident, and son Jack arrived at the scene. The five siblings were left to fend for themselves.

The history of the Vaughans of Larpent continued, as until recently I lived at Alvie, looking out over Lake Corangamite to Vaughan Island, remembering my grandmother and the family who settled in the early days of Larpent.

## The Memoirs of William Ower – Original Settler at Beeac

### *Continued from August 2020 Newsletter -*

#### ARRIVAL AT BEEAC:

About the end of 1860 Robert and James set out with 4 horses and 2 drays for Ondit loaded with all necessities, including a new plough and harrows, neither of which implements we had ever used. They arrived on the last day of December. I was detained in Melbourne on business and left Geelong on the morning of the 1<sup>st</sup> January 1861. I travelled to Colac via the mail coach, and this coach was to continue its journey to Camperdown. It was carrying the mail for the first time through the 'Stony Rises', the road in course of construction, being now practicable. One of my brothers came to Willis's Hotel to meet me. They had camped the previous night close to the track and in the middle of our land frontage. We were all pleased with the block, seeing it for the first time, and now having reached it on our first inspection. Water was lying on all the low places where we camped, and during the night the mosquitoes attacked us in swarms. On the back portion of the block the land is low and this applies to all the blocks on a line of nearly  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile of each side of ours. All this land was then covered with 6 inches to 1 foot of water, none being there on our first visit. By the way, I may here mention I got subscriptions from all the parties interested during our second year, and the Colac Roads Board applied our money in aiding the cutting and construction of a drain carrying the water into Lough Calvert. This reclaimed the land from further flooding, making a long stretch of road leading to the 'Sunny Hills' practicable in the winter time. All stock travelling from the Warrions district to Melbourne and Geelong had to be driven along this line of road.

#### BUILDING A HOUSE:

We fixed upon a very nice site on sloping ground facing east, about 8 chains from the main road sheltered from the strong west winds. There was a deep hollow over a bank to the north, a depression caused by volcanic action. There were several hollows nearby. We decided to build of stone, there being plenty of surface honey comb about 1  $\frac{1}{2}$  miles to the south west on crown land. We got a mason who did this kind of work on road contracts. His name was Dickie, a Scotsman, but the finding of fresh water was the first essential before proceeding further.

#### SEARCH FOR WATER:

The scarcity of water was regarded by the Colac residents as a most serious problem. The Squatters or Crown Tenants had no interest to serve in developing this essential element on their runs. The Survey Plans covering thousands of acres were carefully marked where wells had been sunk. All except one was 'Well Salt'. The only one marked 'fresh' was at an old shepherds hut called 'Goody Hut' on the southern bank of the salt Lake Beeac. This hut was on Mr Kerr's selection occupied by a couple of Chinamen, employees of Mr John Calvert, the Crown tenant. When we went up on the land they were the only humans in the Parish of Ondit. The first thing to be done was to get some firewood, there being no trees on the land. This we got from the Stony Rises west of Lake Beeac. Then Robert and James started to Colac to get post and rails- a trip was a full day's work. There was Kangaroo grass on the land like a crop of oats. The horses were turned loose, hobbled, but one morning they had disappeared. We scoured the country for many miles, and for several days, unsuccessfully, but on a Sunday morning they were brought to us by young Willis, up from the Barwon, twenty miles away, and bound for home. Dickie, the mason and I sunk a hole out in the flat land and bottomed on salt water at about twelve feet, and another in the depression near the proposed house site, but with the same result. Salt as the sea. On a Saturday morning we started on another in the largest hollow. The first 2 or 3 feet was in volcanic soil, then we encountered 'Wombat' stone, a band about 2 feet thick. This was hard graft. We put up a galvanized iron shade for the man in the hole. After passing through the 'Wombat' stone we got stiff clay, had to use the pick. About 3 or 4 feet of this and the clay changed colour and became moister. The sun was sinking and our iron shelter was discarded. It was my spell below and the prospects were nearing water. It was growing dark and Dickie suggested it was time to knock off. I had sunk a small spade hole in the centre of the hole and a spoonful of water had collected, sufficient for a test. I put down my fingers which carried a few drops to my tongue, a moment of suspense, and then another trial. Yes, it was fresh! I called up to Dickie, 'send down the billy! I think I have struck it alright this time'. He answered, 'knock off it's about dark.' A billy was sent down with a pannikin. The water had about filled the hole by this time. The billy was filled and sent to the top and I followed. It was only after persuasion 'He thought I was having a practical joke.'

He at last, after my example, took a sip and then another, and then we were ready to embrace one another. My brothers, with their teams reached the tent soon afterwards and with the week's provisions was a bottle of Hollands. Very little of this was required to render us all joyous. It was a momentous event, not only to us but to the other Selectors who had not yet put in an appearance. The good news soon spread, and we had many callers to see and taste of it. Dickie and I continued the sinking as deep as the water would permit with bucket baling. Robert and James brought small and flat pieces of honeycomb stones from the Rises to build up the wall. For some considerable time the water was blue in colour, but this disappeared after a time. The flow of water was strong and continuous. We always had enough and to spare. The hollow or basin was an acre or so in size, and the dividing line between our land and Thomas Judd's ran nearly through the centre of the basin. He had only to sink a similar well and have the same success. Numerous other fresh water wells were opened up, after many failures like our first two failures, but I have never heard of any others having the quality of those in the basin.

#### BECOMING ESTABLISHED:

On the south bank of Lake Beeac, not far from Kerr's selection, was an old pit formerly used for burning lime. Limestone as rock, and in pieces, scattered over a flat surface of rich black soil. We decided to try and burn a kiln. We got wood from the land 'between the walls' dividing the estates of Mr Robertson and John Calvert. (No Crown land bailiffs in those days). We had no tools for quarrying the stone, so we gathered and picked up stones on or near the surface. The product was not as successful as we desired as some of the stone was not sufficiently burnt. At last the walls, roof and floors were completed, also the doors. The windows were temporarily filled with calico, until we got a competent man to make them. I managed to do all the other woodwork and put the iron on the roof.

At the same time we had begun to plough. The land was still rather dry and the roots of the kangaroo grass were very wiry. With a single furrow plough it required four horses. The grass roots gathered on the coulter, making it notched like a saw and making it most difficult to guide. The nearest blacksmith was Colac, so we had to make do with the grindstone until compelled to take it to the Smith.

The house now being habitable, the female family members then in South Yarra were invited to join us, which they cheerfully consented to do. They were grandmother, Mrs Johnston, mother, sisters Margaret and Mary. They came to Geelong where my brother Robert and I met them with two drays to convey them and such of their belongings as would suit the new conditions. We returned by way of Inverleigh and across the plains by way of Mt Hesse Station, Timms owner.

The erection of fencing to protect the growing crop, a paddock for the horses and a couple of cows which we had purchased, took all our energies before harvest.

#### BEING INITIATED:

Grandmother was able from the experience of her youth when there were no 'bails' nor 'leg-ropes' to teach our sister Margaret how to milk the cows. For our first harvest the only instrument to use was the reaping hook, and this she was able to teach us males by example and precept. Personally I found the 'Heuk' (Scotch) and the scythe the most back aching work I had ever tackled. The wages paid that first year were 20 shillings per acre, three glasses of rum per day and four meals. After harvest was our first experience of a threshing machine, and its gang of men. Our first crop of wheat and oats was considered good. As to wheat, what we required for flour was sent to a mill in Colac to grist, the quantity required for seed was retained and the balance had to be carted to a mill at Inverleigh.

#### THE BELCHER-PEPPER BLOCK:

As we gained experience we found we would be able to work more land. We entered into an agreement with G F Belcher, Government Treasurer, Geelong, to rent, with the right of purchase the 175 acre block next but one to the south of our home block. As we had to fence it we decided that after the 1862 crop was planted, father, Robert and I would go into the forest a few miles south of Colac and split the post and rails. We took our old tent, tools and a week's provisions. James came to us weekly with a fresh supply, clean linen and the home news. There were two brothers named Hester working near us also. They had land north of Beeac at Weering. We completed our task about the end of the wet season and when the roads became fit we carted the fencing out as opportunity offered.

## RUST IN WHEAT:

I think it was in 1863 or 1864 when rust first made its appearance in Australia. Growth had been excellent, and the wheat was in ear, when the straw grew quite red, due to a fungus like rust on iron.

Growth of the seed was completely stopped and the grain was like caraway seeds. Walking through the crop the clothes became covered with the red dust. Its appearance caused consternation amongst the farming community, as few if any in the country had ever seen it before, not even in Britain. We got a loan of an 'Adelaide Stripper' a novelty in Victoria, from a neighbor Barton Butcher, trying it in the worst bit of wheat, but the result was not worth the labour of men and horses. The only clean wheat we had was about 10 acres in the home paddock grown from seed supplied by the Troy family. However, it was 'sprawly' and difficult to harvest with a sickle. The first year of the rust in wheat, we had 3 or 4 acres of English barley sown with hand-picked seed, done by the family in the long evenings at the kitchen table. I took a load of it to Geelong when the show was on, and exhibited 2 bags of barley which were awarded first prize, a silver medal to Ower brothers.

## BECOMING A COUNCILLOR:

1863- In this year I was elected a member of the Colac Road Board. The Chairman was Mr Hugh Murray, who was then and always had been, I was informed, the chairman of the local branch of Magistrates, and was generally known as the 'King of Colac'. He was reputed to be the first settler on the Lake, and his wife the first white woman in the district. He told me personally, in illustration of the changes which had occurred since the country had been stocked with cattle and sheep and the surface thereby consolidated, the rainfall was rapidly carried to the Lake, as formerly it was often very low and one year he had ridden his horse across the bed of the Lake. He was intelligent and of gentlemanly manners.

The Secretary, Mr J V Bartlett also combined the office of Engineer. His residence was a double storeyed brick house on the east side of the creek, which was the populated part of the township in 1863. The Road Board held its meetings in the largest room of the house. In the meantime, John Chapman had begun the erection of a new building opposite the Victoria Hotel. I think it was in the year 1864 that an Act was passed creating 'Shires', under its provisions Colac became a Shire, and its territory was divided into 'Ridings', the representatives then being called Councillors, and the Chairman, President. The Rev Hugh Blair was the Presbyterian Minister of Colac and several of the outlying districts, Ondit being one of them. Through his exertions a stone church was erected. What is now in 1918 the prosperous township of Beeac with its branch banks and railway station, was then peopled by not over a score – Gilbert's Store, McLean's Smithy and a bootmaker. On Sunday afternoons Mr Blair came and held service in our house and one room (not a large one) held the congregation. One Sunday in 1865, he took me aside after service, and told me that Mr Hugh Murray had asked him to broach the matter to me, which was that he desired to retire from his position as President of the Shire Council, if, and on this condition only, I would consent to occupy it. He was already assured that a majority of Councillors would vote for me. This was quite unexpected by me. I asked Mr Blair to thank Mr Murray, tell him the matter would require serious consideration, and that it would be necessary to obtain the full and free consent of my Father and brothers, as the duties pertaining to the office would take up a considerable lot of my time, which rightly belonged to the partnership. I duly consulted them and their consent was given unhesitatingly. At the annual meeting I was proposed by Mr Murray and Mr J H Connor was also proposed. From the date in the letter attached hereto I was elected November 15<sup>th</sup>, 1865, and I must have resigned as Councillor about the end of October, 1866, as I sailed from Melbourne in the ship 'Sussex', November 10<sup>th</sup>, 1866, bound for London.

On 26<sup>th</sup> June, 1867 I was married to my cousin Mary Ower and in July 1867 we sailed in the 'Swiftsure' for Melbourne.

*On his return to Australia, William found the farm not large enough to support all of the family. His brother Robert had married and built a home on the Belcher-Pepper block. He received his share of the family estate and rented a small cottage next to William Darby's cottage at the east end of the 'Old Colac' with a small paddock. In conversation with Andrew Wilson who had the brick flour mill near the lake, it was suggested that he enter partnership with him. After due consideration he decided against the offer. However, the idea of establishing a flour mill attracted him and he moved to Camperdown where he established a flour mill which he operated until 1884 before returning to Melbourne.*

## The butchers of 139 Murray Street, Colac.

139 Murray Street, Colac - GPS reference: 38°20'22.2"S 143°35'10.3"E

By Alan Doyle – August 2020

The small and unassuming shop of 139 Murray Street (section 11, allotment 3, Parish of Colac) has had a long running history, as a butcher shop. It continually serviced Colac and district for 110 years, before finally closing its butchering chapter in 1997. It was located on the North side of Murray Street, between Corangamite and Gellibrand Streets. The site was purchased by John Wilson in 1887, who began building the butcher shop, with a cellar. The cellar was originally used as a cool room for purpose of storing meat. John Wilson was trained in the butchering industry in one of the Trotter butchers' Colac shops.

A few years after setting up the Murray Street butcher shop, he sold the shop and business to Henry Wilson on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 1889. It was a short venture that only lasted one year, before it was sold back to John Wilson and Arthur Stephen Lucas from Stoneyford. They had become partners on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 1890, and traded under the name of Wilson & Lucas Butchers, and also employed Peter McLeod, as an assistant.

They always sourced and supplied the best meat for Colac and district, and they never missed an opportunity to advertise.

*Messrs Wilson and Lucas, butchers, of Colac, killed two fat bullocks for Christmas which turned the scales at 1216 lbs and 1308 lbs, respectively. They were pure shorthorns, were bred in the Warrnambool district, fattened by Mr Lang, of Grasseley Vale, and sold through Messrs J. G. Johnstone and Co. (Colac Herald, 28 December 1904, page 3).*

Wilson & Lucas Butchers traded successfully for sixteen years. On the 30<sup>th</sup> June 1906, John Wilson retired and continued as a grazier and cattle dealer. The business was then taken over and solely run by Arthur S. Lucas. Arthur was an extremely competent butcher, well known for his honesty and his ability to run a very clean shop and slaughter yard.

**WILSON & LUCAS**  
BUTCHERS,  
MURRAY STREET,  
Beg to thank the inhabitants of Colac and the surrounding Districts for the very liberal support given to them for the past Four Years, and to inform them that on and after

SATURDAY, the 1st SEPTEMBER,  
The Price of Beef at their Establishment will be as follows for CASH:—

Roast Beef, ...	2d to 4d per lb
Boiling Beef ...	2d to 2½d " "
Leg of Mutton ...	3d " "
Mince Meat ...	3½d " "
Steak and Chops ...	3½d " "
Corn Round ...	3½d " "
Pork ...	4d " "
Tripe ...	4d " "
Corn Beef ...	12s 6d per 100

Colac, 31st August, 1894.

**Colac Herald,**  
22<sup>nd</sup> February 1895, page 4



Arthur S. Lucas Butcher – 139 Murray Street, Colac - c1910.  
*Prosperous and Progressive Colac – CDHS collection*

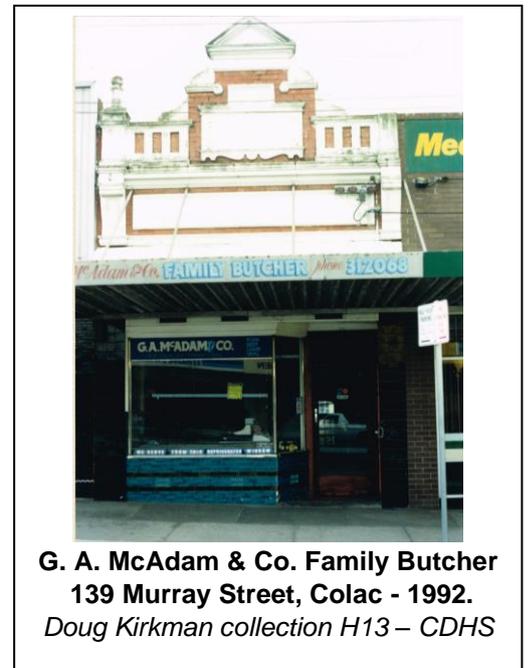
### A. S. Lucas, butcher.

MR. A. S. LUCAS has carried on an up-to-date butchering business in Murray Street, Colac, during the past twenty years, and is still flourishing. His premises are always scrupulously clean in every detail and much of the success he has achieved is due to this fact and also that the primest meat only is offered to the public. Another thing worth mention is that Mr Lucas does not believe in throwing too much bone when weighing up. That's a good point and one a careful housewife readily notices. If you haven't dealt with "Lucas," give him a turn. If he can't satisfy you-well, you'll be extraordinarily hard to satisfy. (Prosperous and Progressive Colac – J. Edward Robertson, 10 March 1911).

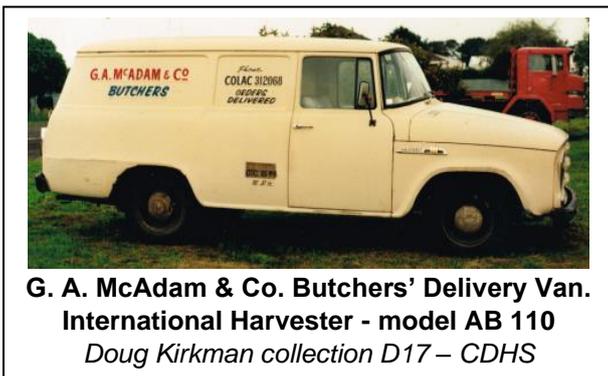
After serving the Colac public for over 28 years, Arthur retired and sold the business to his assistant Peter John McLeod on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 1918. Peter McLeod set up a partnership with John Matthews, and traded as McLeod & Matthews butchers. The partnership lasted for approximately seven years, before it was bought out by G. A. McAdam butchers of Gellibrand Street in 1925. McAdam closed the Gellibrand Street shop and continued trading from the new Murray Street address. The Colac abattoirs also began operations in October 1925.

Around the 1930's, G. A. McAdam butchers changed their name to G. A. McAdam & Co. with the formation of partnerships, such as Tom Embrey and Geoff Flannigan. Geoff Flannigan was a butcher in Colac and partnered with Selwyn McAdam for 37 years.

G. A. McAdam & Co. sourced most of its meat from the J. G. Johnstone livestock markets across the road on Thursdays. After the auctions, drovers mustered and led the stock down Bromfield Street, turning down Hesse Street and crossing Murray Street and heading to the holding yards and the abattoirs. They also collected further stock purchases from the Dalgety auction yards. After stock had been slaughtered at the abattoirs, Ken McAdam (son of Clyde McAdam) would go to the abattoirs at 7am to collect their meat. In later years, regulations would have the butcher's meat delivered, by registered meat vehicles. Carcass's delivered over 600lbs would have to be carried into the shop by the butcher, which was extremely heavy work.



**G. A. McAdam & Co. Family Butcher  
139 Murray Street, Colac - 1992.**  
*Doug Kirkman collection H13 – CDHS*



**G. A. McAdam & Co. Butchers' Delivery Van.**  
**International Harvester - model AB 110**  
*Doug Kirkman collection D17 – CDHS*

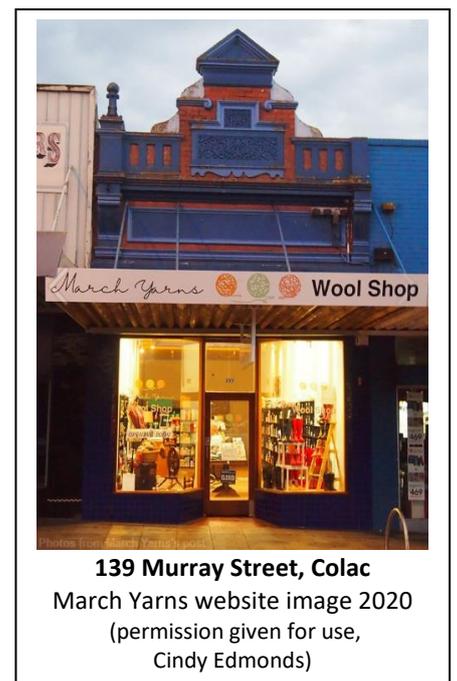
G. A. McAdam & Co. conducted a home delivery service by a pair of two-wheeled horse drawn carts. As the company grew, the delivery area stretched to outer areas and around the lake, servicing over 100 customers. This was achieved with the introduction of a modern delivery van and the disbanding of the horse drawn vehicles.

After 92 years of service to Colac (72 years in Murray Street), G. A. McAdam & Co. finally ceased trading on the 23<sup>rd</sup> October

1997. At the time of writing, the Murray Street shop is leased by specialist knitting wool supplier, March Yarns.

**Timeline Summary of Butchers – 139 Murray Street, Colac:**

- 1887** - John Wilson buys building site and erects a shop. Begins trading as a butcher.
- 1889** - John Wilson sells the butcher business to incoming butcher Henry Wilson.
- 1890** - Butcher Henry Wilson sells the business back to John Wilson and Arthur S. Lucas, who begin trading, as Wilson & Lucas Butchers.
- 1906** - Partnership of Wilson & Lucas is dissolved and Arthur S. Lucas begins trading as the sole trader, as Arthur S. Lucas Butcher.
- 1918** - Arthur S. Lucas sells the butcher business to incoming butchers Peter McLeod and John Matthews and begins trading as McLeod & Matthews Butchers.
- 1925** - McLeod & Matthews Butchers sell the butcher business to incoming butcher George A. McAdam and begins trading as G. A. McAdam Butcher.
- 1930's** - G. A. McAdam becomes G. A. McAdam & Co. with the formation of partnerships.
- 1997** - G. A. McAdam and Co. cease trading, as butchers.



**139 Murray Street, Colac**  
March Yarns website image 2020  
(permission given for use,  
Cindy Edmonds)

Acknowledgement and thanks to Craig Pink for his time in researching the CDHS records and accessing contacts for this article. Also, thank you to Selwyn McAdam for his time in sharing his family's butchering knowledge. (Full bibliography can be supplied upon request).

## EX MELBOURNE CABLE TRAMS AT APOLLO BAY -

Part extracts from Colac Herald - 12<sup>th</sup> September 1951.

Yet it has travelled far and seen much in a long life.... What tales it could tell if it could speak.... tales of more spacious, more gracious, less hectic days back towards the turn of the century and even before that. It is a far cry from the life it once knew among the noisy, crowded, busy haunts of men to a quiet resting place on the western coast of Victoria, but this relic of a bygone Melbourne which we will never know again has spanned it.

It is the dummy of an old cable tram – objects of wonderment and mirth to visitors for many years..... You do not have to have passed middle age to remember to hold the cable crossing an intersection, and all male passengers would have to get off and push. Then there was the gripman’s warning as the tram swung around a corner. “Hold on while rounding the curve,” and you had to, too, otherwise you were liable to part company with the dummy and find yourself in a heap on the road. Tram travelling in those days was almost an adventure.

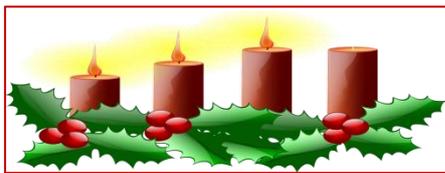
### POPULAR SPOT

Much of the glory of Apollo Bay’s dummy has departed.... Its metal fittings are rusting, Its woodwork decaying and badly in need of paint, but it is still a very popular vantage point where one can sit and idle away an hour on a fine day, enjoying the panorama of sea and mountain....

The Apollo Bay dummy and a companion were bought in Melbourne about 15 years ago for £3 each and transported to their new home for £1 each. The other one was installed on the foreshore just to the north of the pier and served a useful purpose for a time. Then someone raised some objection to its presence and one dark night it was mysteriously spirited away into the bush, there to end its days rather (sadly) when a big tree fell on it.

Its more fortunate companion still bears the notices so familiar to tram travellers of the past – “Passengers must not stand on the front or sides of the dummy”; “Passengers must not talk to the gripman.” It also bears, accidentally, hundreds of names and addresses of those strange people who must scribble in public places.

Yes, this old-timer could tell some tales of days when people found their pleasures in simpler things, when a run along St. Kilda road on the dummy of a cable tram on a warm evening was regarded as a real treat...



**AT LEFT** - Can you pick the location of this scene taken c. early 1980's on a popular central Colac main street corner.

**ANSWER NEXT ISSUE**

**A CLUE** - It is not there now. The building became well known in 1985 when short scenes were shot indoors, and also outside this building for series one of *The Henderson Kids* television series. Series one of *The Henderson Kids* was mainly filmed at Birregurra, to which Birregurra was depicted on TV as a small coastal town called Haven Bay.

**Colac & District Historical Society Re-opening Roster will be emailed or posted to Members at a later date.**