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 Treasurer Liz Chambers: 03 52314572 Annual Membership fee: \$20.00 per person – due in May
 Historical Society Meetings are held monthly on the 4th Wednesday at 7.30pm, except in January,
 and during *winter* on the 4th Saturday at 1.30pm.

Open Hours for the public at COPACC History Centre: Thursday, Friday and Sunday 2.00pm to 4.00pm
Working Bees at the History Centre are on the 1st & 3rd Wednesdays 10.00-12.00am

Dates for your Diary

*Sept 24th 7.30pm Guest Speaker **Peter Mansfield**- "Colonial Cemeteries".

Also release of latest CDHS publication- "The Local Hall- Nalangil" by **Dawn Peel**.

Oct 22nd Warrion Flower Show- CDHS and CFHG joint Display Stand- volunteers needed.

*Oct 22nd 7.30pm Guest Speaker **Clive Millman**- "A lifetime spent as a pastry cook in Murray St."

*Nov 26th 7.30pm Members' Night- bring an item to show.

Nov 8th Geelong & District Historical Association at Cressy 10am-12.30 Topic-"How often should we photograph our Main St/ Town"?

Nov 10th 7.30 pm -Joint Meeting with Colac Family History Group.

Meetings Report June 28th **Norm Houghton**- "*The Economics of the Rail Networks in Colac Shire*"

Roads were bad, there were 185km of rail and 65 stations, stopping places and sidings. From 1877 to 1970 railways underpinned Colac's economics. Timber, split palings, spuds, onions, hay, salt, oats, lime, cattle, pigs, dairy products and passengers were carried and this peaked in the 1920s. Gellibrands Refreshment room was very popular. After WW2 road transport grew and trucks travelled interstate. Smaller stations closed in the 1960s then the goods shed. Today there is little indication left of the very busy times when the railways served Colac and district. Norm gave us many interesting facts and figures and touched on many aspects of local railway history including Ditchley Park Race Days, Otway saw mills, Football trains to Forrest, railway gates at Warncoort and Victoria's first female Station Master there, later a woman ran Forrest PO and station, there was a cart weigh-bridge and a pub at Ondit and much more.

July 26th **Joan Rowlands**, President of the Colac and District Family History Group spoke on the resources of that group telling us of the variety and scope of the functions they perform from writing books to researching the names of people buried in Colac Cemetery. Joan then capably answered lots of questions from the interested gathering.

August 23rd **Carolyn Haas**- "Memories of a Colac boarding House". Carolyn is a member of our society, now living in Bundoora, who grew up in our district. There were no motels in the 50s and so guest houses were essential not only for holiday makers but more so for short or long term residential needs. Thus they catered for teachers, herd testers and policemen etc. Carolyn recalled the life her grandmother led taking in boarders and how hard it must have been for her and other widows who had to use their domestic skills to make a living. Carolyn was also being raised by her grandmother who she called mum. "Orient House" was one guest house she mentioned, an impressive building which sadly burnt down. Carolyn recalled that there were 6 rooms to let, 2 bathrooms, a large dining room, kitchen, maid's room and a detached washhouse with a copper. She shared interesting anecdotes such as square dancing being practised in the large hallway with Jim Kelly as the caller and late night guests who left a trail of confetti on the floor.

A note from Historian Dawn Peel- I received an email from [Col Stewart's](#) daughter, Barbara, with a copy of a letter he wrote from Birregurra on **26 Jan 1931** to a friend in England. It was sent back to Barbara from a Speedway Museum in Glasgow! Here is an extract of the letter with a reference we believe to be to the Birregurra hall.

"Had a lot of fun the other evening. Went to the talkies in the local town hall. The program started off with God save the King but just as the audience had got to their feet things went wrong with the works and we had about 10 minutes of utter darkness and bad language.

Finally a pretty tattered and torn version of "The Gold Digger of Broadway" was thrown on the screen with the talky business limping along about a bar and a half behind the picture. However the whole business was stopped to allow an announcement to be made concerning someone or other in the audience whose horse had got to his oat stack.

I knew I was home again."

"Pioneer Churches of the Otways and their people", by local author Heather LeGriffon was launched at the Colac Lake Bowls Club on August 10th. This book was the brainchild of the late Reverend Alf Wilhelms who researched and collated significant information regarding the pioneer churches of the Otways for many years. He served there firstly as a Home Missioner and then as an ordained Minister. Here is an interesting snippet from the book-

"In 1924, two babies were carried into Forrest Methodist Church for their baptism. One was Alf from Roadknight's Creek, the other was Lorna from Yaugher. The pastor of the church took one baby on each arm and jokingly remarked, "Alfred Wilhelms marries Lorna Blundy". His joke became truth, for they were wed in March 1947. They were married for 66 years."

This book is available from Colac and District Historical Society.

A Query from Jody & Stuart Tyrer- *"We are celebrating 150 years at the Birregurra Primary School this year and I was wondering if anyone had any information, photos, newspaper articles etc. of the Birregurra Primary School. I am writing a small book on the history and am searching for items on the school. Can you help?"* Please reply to sjtyer@bigpond.net.au

WW1Centenary Poppy Tile Project- If anyone believes they have a relative who served in WW1, buried at the *Moonlight Head Cemetery* contact the Cemetery Trust regarding the Poppy Tiles- Telephone Graham on 52374223. Around Australia graves of WW1 servicemen can be marked with a small tile depicting the famous Flanders Poppy. They can be fixed to headstones and plaques as a permanent reminder of service. Enquiries to poppytile@gmct.com.au or call 93553180 by end December.

What has been in the News?

Colac Herald.

June 27th 2014-Colac District women honour proud history. Dozens of Colac district women honoured their convict ancestors at a bonnet-blessing multi-faith ceremony after making 25 calico bonnets for a growing collection called *"Roses from the Heart"*. Dr Christina Henri from Tasmania spoke about her art project, Colac Baptist minister *Angela Thomas* led the blessing, local musician *Emily Beale* played the violin, Salvation Army *Major Marilyn Jenner* helped read out dozens of names of convict women and *Margot Griffiths* spoke on her convict ancestry.

June 30th - Colac district community groups secure grants. *Colac and District Historical Society* received a grant of \$800 from the share of \$140,000 from the Colac Otway Shire Council's 2014-2015 grants program for Colac and district not-for-profit community groups.

July 7th - New health hub receives praise. *(History in the making).* The former Australian of the Year and Headspace director, Patrick McGorry said Colac's new Youth Health Hub was an example of Victoria being the heartland of innovation in mental health. Colac's Youth Hub had received a \$1.2 million Federal Government grant.

July 9th - Historic properties set for sale. More than a century of Colac history goes under the hammer this month with the sale of 2 neighbouring Gravesend Street properties. *"St Martin's"* has been in the same family for about 140 years and was last inherited by *Valerie and Bronwen Bassett*. Their mother was *Irene Bassett nee Sitlington* and their father was *Richard*. The Sitlingtons were early settlers in Colac. The second

house, an older one, “*St Albans*” was bought from the *Swayn family* 25 yrs ago to use as a sewing room and spare house. There was only one owner before the Swayns when it belonged to the *Wallace family*.
July 23rd - Otways Cemetery grant. *Wyelangta Cemetery campaigners* will fulfil a vision to restore the historic site after receiving a community grant of \$5,000 from Colac Otway Shire. The cemetery is 11 kilometres west of beech Forest on the Colac-Lavers Hill Rd. 63 people are buried on the site which opened in 1907. *Dorrie Lawson* 91, has been researching Wyelangta cemetery since 1975. A monument will be erected with the names of 53 people known to be buried there and a new gate and signage will be installed.

July 28th - Red Rock history group launches website plans. Red Rock and District Progress Association will use grant money to re-tell the story of the region. Part of the project is to produce a website and provide broad access to the content through on line publishing. Volunteers collect, record and share the stories of the past.

July 30th - Farmer’s link to first war. Mr *Fred Bentley* 91 from Dreeite was born after his father *Frederick Alexander* returned from WW1 serving with the Light Horse troopers. He was unable to bring his horse home but kept the horse’s bit as a memento.

-Community marks centenary speech. The memorable quote-“Last Man, Last Shilling” was part of Opposition Leader *Andrew Fisher’s* speech in *Colac’s Victoria Hall* on July 31st 1914, during a federal election campaign. The Colac and District Family History Group, with the support of the Returned and Services League, *Colac Historical Society* and Colac Otway Shire Council, will host a commemorative service at Colac’s RSL at 2pm. Event organiser *Merrill O’Donnell* said Mr Fisher’s speech marked a significant time in Australia’s and Colac’s history. The following day, *Joseph Cook* the Prime Minister repeated the commitment.

August 1st- Speech Centenary. *John Angel, Merrill O’Donnell, Joan Rowlands and Barry McDonald* participated in a ceremony to mark 100 years since then Opposition leader Andrew Fisher coined the expression-“*Last Man and Last Shilling*” which committed Australian troops to the First World War.

August 4th - New regional focus for Colac saleyards. (*History in the making*). Officials hope Colac Livestock Selling Centre’s new roof and new name-Colac Regional Saleyards, will draw attention and business to the yards. The \$1.5 million roof will improve water saving initiatives with tanks catching rain from the roof. The saleyards also feature a new soft floor.

-Vivid memories of markets. Irrewarra dairy farmer *John Martin* was 10 when the saleyards were opened in 1979 by former *Premier Rupert Hamer*, on Ballarat Road, Irrewarra. The saleyards before that were in the centre of Colac.

August 8th -Otways history preserved. Two years of research have come to fruition for Colac historian *Heather Le Griffon*. Her new book is *“Pioneer Churches of the Otways and their People.”* The idea for this book came from *Rev Alf Wilhelms*, (now deceased), a Methodist minister from Forrest, who asked her to write the book.

August 15th - Concert celebrates reopening. Colac’s bluestone *Uniting Church* was reopening after extensive renovations had been carried out. *Colac Chorale* brought back, “*The Beatles 50 years on with choral arrangements of the Fab Four*” on Sunday Aug 17th, at the Colac Uniting Church.

-Red Cross marks centenary. Red Cross memorabilia is on display in Colac to mark the organisation’s 100th year in Australia. A window at *Colac and District Historical Society, COPACC*, features memorabilia such as WW2 uniforms, posters, banners and hand knitted trauma teddies. Beac Red Cross member *Pat Robb* said the organisation was proud of its history in Colac and contribution to people in need across the world. The Red Cross shop in Murray St also has a window display related to WW1

-Lighthouse enchants. The lightstation south of Colac, will join forces with 404 lighthouses in 43 countries to raise awareness of their need for preservation. *Cape Otway Lighthouse* was built in 1848. The Gadabanud people were the original settlers at Cape Otway living on local seafood, herbs and spices steamed in baskets made from the strappy leaves of the lomandra plant over an open fire. Lomandra was also used by the women to create fish and eel traps as well as baskets and water carrying vessels. (Captain Cook encouraged his men to eat native spinach to ward off scurvy).

BUILDING UP TO BRYAN BROTHERS

THE UNTOLD STORY OF ARCHIE BRYAN'S ORIGINAL WINDMILL DESIGN - AND ITS SUCCESSORS - C. 1888 TO 2014.

By Craig Pink **(part 2) "THE BRYAN BROS. AND BORCH ERA"**

"Windmills bearing the name Bryan Bros. have probably been one of the best methods of advertising Colac during the past 60 years.---Each year this firm manufactures hundreds of complete windmill plants, which have been supplied to every State in Australia.--- No matter to which part of Australia one travels, the name "Bryan Bros." will be seen floating in the air painted on the tail of windmills.--- Because of the dry season in the northern parts of Victoria, Bryan Bros. & Borch are experiencing the busiest period during 60 years in business. The firm's reputation of 'building up to a quality, not down to a price' is its keystone to success."--- (Colac Herald 28th January 1949).

Three generations of the Borch family were involved in the Bryan Bros. & Borch business over its years of trading. R.A. (Dick) Borch's son Jack joined the business soon after completing an apprenticeship in mechanical engineering (*Jack's apprenticeship was nearing completion when Dick Borch took over the Bryan Bros. business*), Jack Borch's two sons John and Geoff also went on to be involved in the business.

Dick Borch continued on with the Bryan Bros. business which he took over from Archie Bryan around 1942. Being of German origin, wartime restrictions stipulated that Dick was unable to take the actual ownership of the premises, which in turn he leased until after the end of World War 2. As with many business purchases, the original name often stays as part, or sometimes the whole new trading name. Considerable reputation/good will is also dependant on what the business is worth as a trading/viable income figure. The late 1940's saw the Bryan Bros. & Borch business updating machinery, especially in the foundry department to meet ongoing challenging engineering problems. The installation of "*Plate Moulding*" enabled the firm to compete against even the bigger Melbourne foundries with the manufacture of castings. Early 1949 saw 24 people working at Bryan Bros. & Borch, which at this time manufactured an output of over 400 cast brake shoes each month for use on the Melbourne Tramways. The Tramways contract worked alongside everyday windmill + related manufacture, small and simple everyday engineering jobs, thru to delicate, highly precision work even involved with local Doctors/Surgeons instruments.

The business's reputation carried on from the talent of its extremely capable workforce, many staff being previously employed with Archie Bryan's- Bryan Bros. business, who in turn stayed in employment with the Bryan Bros. & Borch take over. Jack Room started at Bryan Bros. in 1938, and later married Olga Borch. Jack Room was just one of many long standing and highly valued employees over the years of association with the business. Laurie Spokes started at Bryan Bros. & Borch in 1948, and along with Jack Room, spent a long career there. Archie Bryan's daughter Lorna started work at Bryan Bros. & Borch in 1950, Lorna worked not only in the office, but at times also competently completed many other tasks, such as painting the Bryan Bros. name on the tail of new windmills.



Above- March 1950 postage envelope with the "BRYAN BROS. & BORCH PTY. LTD." logo, showing local postage cost of 3½ pence, the month after war rationing of petrol finished. While envelope fronts can be good advertising as this example shows, many struggling farmers, especially Post WW2 merely saw it as another bill to pay. (Envelope copy- courtesy- Ian Whytcross collection)

Bryan Bros. & Borch further expanded thru the 1950's/60's era, also into the supply/installation of irrigation equipment, which became popular with expanding dairy farms in the Western District areas where city milk contracts stipulated a year round, daily fresh milk supply. Automated Travelling Irrigators also became popular, along with the cheaper, but more labour intensive spray lines, but the windmill still held its place for domestic stock/farm water supply.

In July 1973, Bryan Bros & Borch purchased Allan Turner's long established general engineering business at main street Beeac. Allan traded mainly in water reticulation; along with hay/machinery shed manufacture/erection as well as everyday general engineering. With the purchase of the complete trading business, most of Allan Turner's staff relocated to Bryan Bros. & Borch in Colac. The main street Beeac business had been started on the same site pre-1900 by Thomas Hall. Jack Hall (*no relation*) took over around 1922 and traded as Hall & Burton for some years before running the business himself. Jack Hall built his own "HALL" Beeac windmills which were always well known for their reliability/excellent workmanship in materials/manufacture. Allan Turner purchased the business from Jack Hall after Allan returned from World War 2, which Allan ran until the end of July 1973. Several local Beeac district people showed interest in Allan Turner's vacant business premises after the takeover of Bryan Bros. & Borch, but the strict clause of not trading in any form of competition to Bryan Bros & Borch for 5 years was too limited to what they could trade in, which in turn saw nobody take up the offer. The Beeac business premises did sell, and next traded as a second hand shop for a range of items such as from Auctions around the countryside. -- (continued next page ↘)



Above- This model, first released in 1948 shows the already well proven 1920's design of Bryan Bros. enclosed geared oil bath style windmill head, which was also utilised and sold as the Bryan Bros. & Borch ground based engine driven pump head. Driven by an electric motor as in this advert, petrol engine power could also be used if electricity was not available close by the pumping site. This pump head proved popular and ultimately so reliable, many are also still in use today with many years reliable service left. (Advert from- Colac Herald Files)

BUILDING UP TO BRYAN BROTHERS - By Craig Pink (part 2) "THE BRYAN BROS. AND BORCH ERA"

(from previous page) Bryan Bros & Borch were also further expanding at this time, September 1973 saw the firms Colac premises supply a building which was erected on a one acre site in Cashmore road, at Portland (Vic.). The establishment of Bryan Bros. & Borch business premises at Portland was intended to supply the 50 mile radius around Portland with water reticulation/supplies/windmills along with hay/machinery sheds etc.. Further modernisation/expansion by mid-1974 had seen most of the "old" original Bryan Bros. wooden frontage/building now gone at Corangamite street Colac, the last remaining wooden frontage facing Corangamite street was by now all but replaced by modern brick street frontage, the remaining Southern end section facing Corangamite street being readied for a modern brick/glass frontage + an expanded showroom. The firm had also expanded into steel house framing by this stage also; the first was erected in Aireys Road Elliminyt in August 1974.



Above- Late July 1973, the last days of Allan Turner's Main St. Beeac business premises, the building dates from the 1920's, and still stands today.

Photo from Historical Society Files - (Bela Bard Brucker collection).



Above- Late December 1973, Jack Borch shows the long standing reliable enclosed geared oil bath pump head to visitors from India, a then possible potential export customer.

Photo from Historical Society Files - (Bela Bard Brucker collection).

The Bryan Bros & Borch foundry closed in the 1970's due to Environment Protection Agency concerns about pollution so close to the main business centre of Colac, castings were then supplied by out-sourcing from foundries from outside Colac. In an attempt to remain competitive, 1981 saw the design of the enclosed geared oil bath Bryan Bros & Borch windmills redesigned to replace the cast housing with a fabricated steel (*welded*) housing, as well as the introduction of machine cut gears and pinions. The poured White metal bearings were also replaced at this time by roller/ball race bearings, which made the windmill turn in a lesser breeze, supposedly making the windmill even more efficient.



At Left- May 1974, Showing the Bryan Bros. & Borch Corangamite St. frontage. The old wooden original section at far Left is next to join the brick modern frontage at Right, which remains today as the lower Corangamite St. frontage of "BETA ELECTRICAL".

Both photos from Historical Society Files - (Bela Bard Brucker collection)



At Left- Late August 1983, Bruce Roberts (left) and Geoff Borch stand beside Bryan Bros. & Borch's own Scania delivery truck with 24 windmills, the largest single order consignment to ever leave the premises, on route to new S.A. State Distributors Dean & McCabe of Mt. Gambier. Travelling empty on each return home trip got the company thinking about road freight, which saw the company expand further into the road transport of general freight.

Photo from Historical Society Files - (Bela Bard Brucker collection)

In 1986/7 Bryan Bros & Borch faced financial difficulties which by later 1987 had led to placing the company into voluntary liquidation, resulting in the sale of related assets. Bruce Roberts, having previously worked for the firm before starting as a partner in "WATER SUPPLY SPECIALISTS" in the former Quinton's International Harvester dealership premises

was keen to buy the windmill manufacturing side of the business, but had stiff competition from Deans of Mount Gambier. However, Bruce was able to purchase the windmill manufacturing side of the business, and was also able to purchase enough of the already sold machinery (*which was by now in Melbourne*) to start up manufacture at premises in Douglas street Colac, trading as "BRYAN WINDMILLS", meaning the long established name stayed in the town it had started in nearing 100 years earlier. Most of the former Bryan Bros. & Borch staff soon gained employment in other local businesses; such as Swayne & McCabe who also further expanded into the area of fitting/machining etc... The former Corangamite street premises sold at auction in late 1987 to a group of local businessmen, and did not trade again in water reticulation of any kind. Today, the former Bryan Bros. premises is the site of BETA Electrical; parts of the building are easily recognisable such as the photo with the Falcon ute (*above*) in May 1974. After working for around 2 years at the Douglas street site, Bruce Roberts moved to new premises at the corner of Wilson and Forest streets Colac, some years later he retired and sold the business, which still trades today as "BRYAN WINDMILLS" under the ownership of Peter Morrissy. Australia has only a mere handful of windmill manufacturers still operating today, the Colac manufactured range of Bryan windmills still consists of both the open crank direct drive/enclosed geared oil bath windmill styles, and with the exception of modern sealed bearings, they are little changed to Archie Bryan's original designs. A street named "Bryan Avenue" at the western end of Colac is also a modern day reminder of the area where Archie Bryan's brick residence was formerly located. (THE END).



Last issue answer- **Elliminyt's old General Store**, now a residence on the East side of Main Street.

Not many readers worked out the right answer. Back in April 1968 there was great excitement in Elliminyt at the opening of "**Webb's Mini Markette**". It was an initiative to be applauded", said the president of Colac Shire, Cr T. Barnard, "Elliminyt has become an urban area within a rural shire." The site of the new, modern store opposite the Elliminyt Primary School was thought to be once occupied by a blacksmith's shop. Buggy wheels, hubs, a special spanner for removing the wheels of a gig, a set of steps from a buggy, bolts etc. and a barrel of an old military muzzle-loader were unearthed during excavations. Next to the new store was Mr **W. Standfield's Butcher shop**.

CRAIG'S CONUNDRUM - WHERE IS IT? CLUE- Colac District Mid 70s,
Answer next issue.



COLAC and DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY ROSTER 2.00 to 4.00 pm

Month	Thursday	Friday	Sunday
October	2nd D. Missen 9th I. Barlow 16 th G. Splatt 23rd J. Knight 30th Committee?	3rd C. Pink 10 th G. Bray 17th E. Chambers 24 th B & J McDonald 30th Committee?	5th A. McIntosh 12 th D. Cowan & M. Facey 19th N. Houghton 26 th D. Cowan & M. Facey
November	6 th D. Missen 13 th I. Barlow 20th G. Splatt 27 th J. Knight	7th C. Pink 14th G. Bray 21st E. Chambers 28th B. & J. McDonald	2nd A. McIntosh 9 th D. Cowan & M. Facey 16 th N. Houghton 23rd M. Facey & D. Cowan 30th Committee ?
December	4 th D. Missen 11 th I. Barlow 18 th G. Splatt Christmas Day	5 th C. Pink 12 th G. Bray 19 th E. Chambers Boxing Day	7 th A. McIntosh 14 th D. Cowan & M. Facey 21 st N. Houghton Christmas Break