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Established 6th February 1950 - Incorporation No. - A0024514U

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

Payment for membership can be deposited to- Colac Historical Society Inc. Commonwealth Bank Account Colac - BSB 063 510 A/c No. 1007 1253

(Please also include your name with membership payment - thanks)

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 – dates & times advised

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

We Thank Contributors for This Issue: Ellise Angel, Alan Doyle and Graeme Robb.

Forthcoming Events -

Wednesday November 24 at 7.30pm

Speaker Mark Beasley – 'Connecting with the Geelong History Centre.'

Wednesday January 19, 2022 – 1pm

Bus Trip to Cressy History Centre and Cressy RAAF Airbase- 1pm departure from Tourist Information Centre Car Park

Members & Friends \$10 including Afternoon Tea

Please invite your family & friends – phone 0427 346350 to book or Place name on list at History Centre.

Wednesday February 24, 2022 – 6.30pm

BBQ Tea & Meeting 'Airdrie' McDonald Street, Colac

A Note from the President-

Our Society has numerous books for sale by members and local authors. These are a great idea for Christmas gifts.

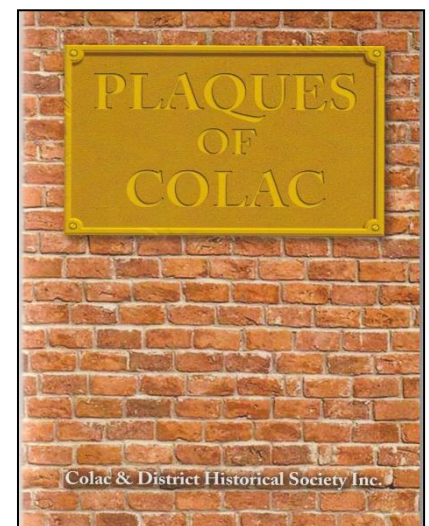
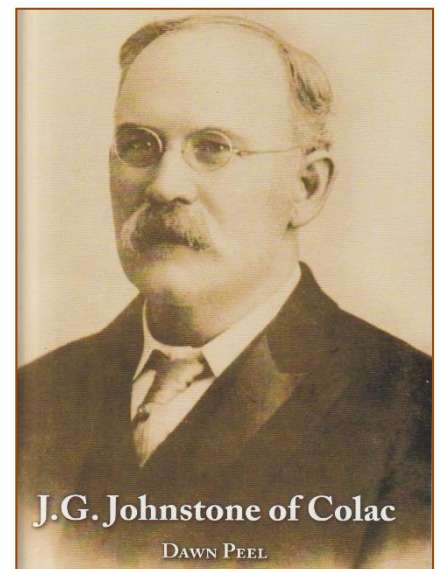
The latest publication 'J.G. Johnstone of Colac' written by Dawn Peel has been reprinted due to local demand. The book sells for \$15.

The original Johnstone home is our BBQ venue for February meeting. Another recent publication by Society members is 'Plaques of Colac'.

What has been in the Colac Herald news?

August 13, 2021- Lake Colac at two-decade high. Farmers, boaters, fishers and managers all agree that Lake Colac is in its healthiest condition in recent memory, (approx. 20 years), after a year of strong rainfall at the lake and its surrounding catchments. A rainbow trout release earlier this year was the largest fish restocking since the 1950s.

August 13- Still the "jewel in the crown". The Colac Otway Performing Arts and Cultural Centre opened in 2001 when Warren Riches was mayor, and has served



as theatre, gallery, meeting place, cinema, council chambers, emergency hub and COVID vaccination sight. An exhibition celebrating the past 2 decades was staged in the History Centre windows in COPACC with portrait photographs of local personalities from years gone by.

August 16- Technological upgrade for Colac's city clock. *Colac's Rotary clubs* have modernised the city's main street clock in celebration of the organization's 100 year anniversary in Australia. It will now update itself automatically for daylight saving and power outages which used to be done manually. The clock was erected in 1980 to celebrate Rotary's 75th worldwide anniversary.

August 18- Plane rises from salt lake. Workers shifted an *historic CAC Wirraway aircraft* from the bottom of Lake Corangamite with help from a purpose-built lifting apparatus which included gantry and winches, but the plane's engine stayed put. Salvage diver Rod Knights has been on this quest for more than 10 years. Permits for this operation become invalid at the end of August.

August 20- Calls to honour rescuers. High on a cliff above wild, rolling ocean stands a monument, no-one can access, to a tale that all should remember. Shipwreck historian *Alan McLean* says the heroes behind the *wreck of the Fiji* near Moonlight Head, west of Cape Otway, need more recognition. At present the old monument is inaccessible. It marks the spot where 7 recovered bodies were buried 4 days after the *Fiji*, with a load of cargo and 26 souls on board hit a reef after a 105-day voyage from Hamburg in 1891. Locals raised money to put up the monument but since then the undergrowth has hidden the pathway.

August 25- A journey into railway history. Author and historian *Norman Houghton* has published his 44th book focusing on Warrnambool line railway stations and called "To Warrnambool, Stopping All Stations", which covers the history of all 58 stations and sidings from 1876.

August 27- ALC staff get jab at work. An on-site vaccination clinic at *Australian Lamb Company*, has helped deliver nearly 200 Pfizer jabs to workers who were at the forefront of Colac's COVID crisis last year.

August 30- Lockdown extends, exposure sites grow. *Colac and district people* will remain in COVID-19 lockdown beyond Thursday, after Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews extended the lockdown and recorded the highest daily tally cases this year- 19 sites in Geelong, and 900 in Victoria.

September 1- Success for plane salvagers. *Rod Knights* and a dedicated team of volunteer aviation buffs have lifted the fuselage of a CAC Wirraway aircraft to shore after it had laid in salty, Lake Corangamite since crashing there in 1950. They hope to restore the Second World War-era plane to fly again.

September 6- Ancient creature leaves its mark at Cororooke. A Cororooke history project featuring a life-size *megafauna exhibit* is a step closer after the project secured State Government funding. The Red Rock District Progress Association have plans for a history trail to include a Diprotodon which were common at Cororooke thousands of years ago.

September 13- Green stride. Colac's water treatment facility is now running on green energy, in a significant milestone for the Australia- first Colac Renewable Organics Network. Barwon Water now has a generator at Colac's water reclamation plant, which converts organic waste from nearby A L C into renewable electricity.

September 15- Governor won over through Colac visit. Colac's story of trial and triumph through successive COVID outbreaks reached the ears of the *Hon Linda Dessau*, who visited with her husband Michael Howard and met mayor Kate Hanson, and Colac Otway Shire Council chief Anne Howard and Bulla boss Kylie Armstrong among others. The visit made it possible for the Governor to say thank you to people who are working so well in our community.

September 29- Dedicated staff reach vaccine milestone. *Colac Area Health* has hit an exciting milestone in its COVID-19 vaccine rollout- delivering its 10,000th vaccine dose. "Pharmacists, nurses, and administration workers have gone above and beyond, to do their best for our community," said Ms Eden, vaccination clinic administration co-ordinator.

October 1- Disability advocate earns praise. *Noel Bates*, a retired engineer, has spent 5 decades as an advocate for people with disabilities and their families, in particular residents of Colac's former Colanda Centre which closed 2 years ago. Residents moved into purpose-built homes across the state. Noel has earned a place on the Lifetime Achievement Honour Roll as part of the Victorian Disability Awards. He advocates with the NDIS, NDIA and government for people who find it difficult to communicate.

October 1- COVID ACTION- One new case and exposure sites in Colac. A Colac Area Health team worked at a Pop - up COVID-19 testing site which was opened up at Central Reserve due to the exposure of one new case and multiple public exposure sites. It was a drive-through set up.

October 4- Cluster grows. ALC closes amid Colac COVID-19 outbreak. Colac's outbreak has grown to at least 15 cases which led to a precautionary shut-down of Colac's Australian Lamb Company.

October 6- Bats return to gardens. Residents reported that grey-headed flying foxes have returned to roost in trees at the Botanic Gardens. In the warmer months their numbers can increase to 7,000. The Colac Otway Shire Council has a licence to disperse the bats, but only between April and August.

October 6- High hopes for new hedging. Colac's *Hearn St* has a fresh set of greenery. The Colac Cemetery overgrown cypress hedge on Hearn Street has been removed and replanted.

October 8- Colac cases contained to home. Colac Area Health chief executive *Fiona Brew* said Colac's active COVID-19 cases are contained to households across the city, with the health services and Barwon Health constantly monitoring the 26 positive cases and their household contacts.

October 11- UPGRADE. New fire tower to watch over district. Our *Mount Gellibrand fire tower* will be replaced almost a year after the structure closed due to health and safety concerns. The new tower is built to withstand inclement weather and will give operators far-reaching fire observation across the area.

October 11- Working wonders for rotunda. An *historical rotunda* at Colac Cemetery is open to the public after a major restoration. It was built in 1902 and was capable of seating 50 persons. It became the cemetery's office 60 years ago but when management installed an office on Pound Road the rotunda was restored before reopening to the public.

October 15- Colac pioneer's story revealed. Historian *Dawn Peel* has researched the influence that *JG Johnstone* had on Colac. *John Glass Johnstone* was a real estate agent who opened a stock and station agency in Colac in 1883 when aged 27. He was a committed Presbyterian and was successful in standing for election in the local shire council. John built Airdrie, his home, still standing on McDonald Street. Johnstone's Lane in Colac is named after him. Dawn has written a book on JG Johnstone- the story of his life.

October 18- Caravan park cabins popular at auction. A total clearance of lessee-owned cabins at Lake Colac's caravan park shows phenomenal demand for the lodgings. The park is to return to an old- style caravan park. The sale was successfully conducted online.

October 27- Central celebrating centenary. *Central* was formerly part of the Colac Bowling Club, which formed in 1896 and was based at Colac's Market Square. A disagreement in the club led to a split where Colac club moved to Manifold Street and the group who stayed and allowed women to play renamed themselves Central, 100 years ago. The Market Square became The Memorial Square and later the Council wanted the club to move off and they relocated in 1993-94 to new facilities on Wilson Street. Their old clubhouse was relocated to Forrest as part of the Forrest Guest House. Centenary celebrations for Central on October 8 were postponed due to COVID-19.

October 29- Awards set to ditch Australia Day event. *Colac Otway Shire Council* will pick a new date for its community awards, having voted five-two in favour of the move and hoping to stop Australia Day awards from 2022 onwards. Cr Hart said moving the awards could boost participation and help avoid community division over Jan 26.

October 29- Polwarth shrinks for next election. The Polwarth electorate will shrink along its north and west edges after the Victorian Electoral Commission handed down the final review for the next State Parliament vote. Some farming regions have been shedded while Torquay has been accommodated and could trigger a shift towards left-leaning Labor and Greens candidates.

November 3- Colac Otway hits high vax rate. More than 86 per cent of Colac Otway's eligible residents, 18 and over, are vaccinated against COVID-19. More than 95 per cent had received 1 vaccine dose. Colac district's medical clinics have been administering Pfizer and Astra Zeneca. The State Government lifted travel restrictions with Melburnians able to travel freely in regional Victoria and vice versa.

November 5- Iconic Falls & New Year Music Festival. This event is to relocate to a Murroon property dubbed 'Pennyroyal Plains' in 2022-23. The event has been cancelled this year. Birregurra's 'Brae' restaurant is ranked 57th in the World's Best Restaurants.

November 10- Colac Otway Shire unveils plans for Apollo Bay Harbour redevelopment.

Record Prices at Colac Store Cattle Sale as excellent seasonal conditions promote prolific grass growth.

November 12- Major residential development at Colac West. This development could force 143-year-old Colac Rifle Club to relocate.

Warrion Hall upgrade nearing completion.

November 15- Most Health Workers meet Vax Mandate. It was mandatory for all health care workers in Victoria to be vaccinated by today. Colac Area health stated COVID had impacted the health sector, and had also been further impacted by a skills shortage within the health industry. Staff had expressed frustrations about "ongoing pressures due to the pandemic and industry skill shortages".

Shire Kerbside pick-up of glass recycling bins commences in a new small purple bin - 1x monthly pick-up.

November 17- New Playground in Colac Memorial Square well under way.

Colac district cricket export Aaron Finch captains winning Australian Twenty-20 World Cup triumph.

November 19- Building Boom - Colac Otway records \$124-million construction boost. Colac Otway has ridden a wave of surging building approvals to post huge growth in new construction projects during the past financial year - a 54 per-cent jump from the \$80.6 million of the previous year. A total of 592 building permits received VBA green lights in 2020-21, up from 455 in 2019-20.

Polwarth MP Richard Riordan states the Colac east roundabout at the Colac Ballarat Road turnoff is a disgrace and an ugly grey bog hole, and had spoken directly to the Roads Minister this week to honour the original plans for "a grand entrance to Colac". Safety issues, including the long debated lower 80kmph speed limits were now finally in use.

Colac's Early Explorer of Central Australia

Charles Frederick Wells (1850 – 1896)

Alan Doyle – August 2021

Colac's connection to early Central Australian Exploration from the 1860's through to 1897 is little known. Charles Frederick Wells is not well known in Colac history but his story dates back to 1850. His parents Frederic Charles Wells and Catherine Wells (nee Lyons) married in Colac, in early 1849, and Charles was born in March 1850. His father is described as a grazier, as well as a servant to Michael Lyons of the 'True Briton' Hotel, much to the chagrin of authorities and the Colac court. Michael Lyons had been warned many times not to have Frederic as a servant, and on the 11th August 1849 the Colac Petty Sessions court fined him £5.

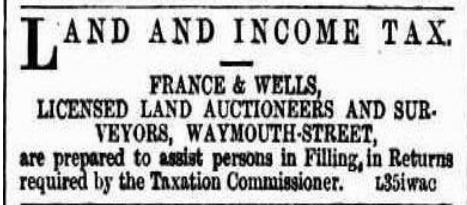
Charles Frederick Wells was raised by his parents in the Colac district for about three years before his father died, which resulted in him being taken into the care of his uncle Mr. Henry E. Wells of Katnook, Penola, and subsequently of Mingbool station, near Mount Gambier, S.A. The Wells family provided Charles with education opportunities, enrolling him into Scotch College, Melbourne. At the age of 16 he became a cadet of the Survey Department South Australia in 1866, under Mr. O'Reilly, who was in charge of a field party. Charles was a member of the party that surveyed the road from Naracoorte to the Coorong through the Ninety-Mile Desert, and later went onto survey the vast lands of Lake Albert and Alexandrina.

In 1868 he was appointed as a member of the Survey Expedition, sent to the Northern Territory under the command of Surveyor General Mr. George Woodroffe Goyder G.M.C. Charles also became a team member of an expedition party led by George McLachlan that rode out of Port Darwin in July 1870, which left in a southward direction in search of a route for the telegraph line. Their course brought them to the Mary, McKinlay, and upper Katherine rivers, partly following in the route traversed by explorer John McDouall Stuart, years before. They found two horses Stuart had left behind eight years before hand. They later discovered blazed trees by Stuart at Kekwick Springs and on the Mary River, which proved that Stuart had gone through to the coast and had actually crossed the continent from south to north.



Charles Fredrick Wells
Cadet on the Northern Territory
Survey Expedition – c1870
SLSA image B 11348/6

After almost three years in the Northern Territory, Charles returned to Adelaide in 1871, and Charles was reappointed to the survey staff of the Surveyor General's Department. Eight years later, he married Port Lincoln girl Mary Helen Lawson on the 4th June 1879 and raised a family of three sons, Frederick George (b 1880), William Allan (b 1882) and Lindsay Gordon (b 1884). In 1882 Charles left the employ of the government service, and entered into the private partnership of 'France & Wells', trading as licenced land brokers, auctioneers and surveyors. From their premises in Waymouth Street, Adelaide, they traded for a little over three years. Little success was achieved in the private sector, and the business was dissolved on the 10th June 1885. He returned back to government service in the Water Conservation Department, where he was placed in charge of the water supply on the Teetulpa goldfields when they were first discovered.



Express and Telegraph,
14 February 1885, page 2

Charles returned to the Northern Territory, as surveyor and draftsman in 1889, with the tenure lasting one year, before returning to Adelaide, appointed to the Lands Title Office. Charles obtained 18 months leave from the department to become second-in-charge of the Calvert Expedition.

The Calvert Expedition was led by his cousin Lawrence (*Larry*) Allen Wells, and was funded by Mr. Albert Frederick Calvert, F.R.G.S. of London and supported by the Royal Geographical Society, South Australia. It must be noted that the Calvert Expedition has no known connection to the Calvert families of the Colac district. The Expedition was set up as a scientific expedition to explore the unexplored regions of Western Australia and Northern Territory that were left untouched by the previous Elder Expedition, 1891-1892. These task areas were broken into five sections.



Calvert Expedition 1896-1897

To explore Sections: B, C, D, E & F
The Project Gutenberg Australia

In May 1896, the expedition party departed Adelaide aboard *S.S. Waroonga*, sailed to Geraldton, W.A. and then to Mullewa by rail. Twenty camels were selected, bought, loaded and moved out on the 13th June 1896 north into their uncharted territory, towards the Fitzroy River. Larry Wells led and set up camps along the way, then ventured further afield looking for water that would support his men and camels. Once a suitable source of water was located, he brought his party up to the new camp base. Finding water would prove to be problematic and fatal, as they moved into the summer heat of the desert.

On the 23rd July a lagoon was discovered and named Lake Gordon, an area teeming with bird life. From this point the country ahead became more trying. Larry Wells named the Princess Range, despite offering poor vegetation and becoming rougher to travel through. On the 29th of July some of the camels had eaten poisonous plants and needed urgent treatment to save them. They made camp, while Larry Wells forged ahead over sandridges and located the dry lake that explorer John Forrest found in 1874. Another water source was located, and the party brought up while still looking after their sick camels, they set up a depot and rested for a week. Their party began to travel again and were now entering into the Great Sandy Desert. Crossing the sandridges was extremely difficult for the camels with their heavy loads, and no noticeable water in sight. The party eventually found a good water supply on the 25th August and named the well, Midway Well. This was marked as a halfway point from their established depot and to their next destination of Joanna Well, located in 1873 by explorer Peter Egerton Warburton. They mapped the country and named the Calvert Ranges after the expeditions sponsor. The party later returned to their depot with continual stops to rest the camels from climbing over the countless sandridges. Returning to their depot on the 8th September the condition of the camels and men had improved. Larry Wells and

Part of Western Australia was to be Section (B) between the tracks of explorers Forrest's track of 1874 and Giles' track of 1876, and Section (C) was between the tracks of Giles' and Warburton's of 1873, Section (D) was between Warburton's and Forrest's tracks of 1879. The unknown Section (F) was to be between the Northern Territory, Western Australia and Tennant Creek with possibility of Section (E) placed north of the Kimberley district, a very tough and ambitious task. There was also hope that the party could possibly locate the long-lost remains of explorer Ludwig Leichardt, as well as Albert Gibson, who lost his way in the Gibson Desert, named after him.

The expedition leader was the well qualified surveyor and explorer, Larry Allen Wells, who was second-in-command of the previous Elder expedition. He was also the younger cousin of Charles Frederick Wells, who he chose as his second-in-command. The party included George Lindsay Jones, a young 18-year-old, who was a mineralogist and acted as the expedition's photographer and collector. George Keartland a specialist in ornithology, taxidermy, and photography also joined them, James Trainer was the party's cook, and Afghan Derish Bejah and Said Ameer were responsible for looking after the camels bought for the trek.



Calvert Expedition members 1896-1897

**Standing L-R: George L. Jones, Dervish Bejah,
 Alec. J. Margery (agent).**

**Sitting L-R: Charles F. Wells, Lawrence A. Wells,
 and George A. Keartland.**

SLSA image B 9758

Bejah traversed up 200 miles on a north-north-east course and on the 3rd October discovered a “splendid well”, later renamed “Separation Well”. The whole party was brought up, and the weather became more increasingly hotter.

It was here at Separation Well on the 11th October, that the fatal decision by Larry Wells to split the party into two groups was made. The main party would continue their northerly course heading to Joanna Spring. The second group of Charles Wells and George Jones made a flying trip to the north-west on a compass bearing of 290 degrees west-north-west for approx. 80 to 100 miles, travelling through the flats of the sandridges. They then changed course to travel on a north-east course and re-join the expedition at or near Joanna Springs. They planned that Larry Wells’ party was estimated to reach Joanna Wells in twelve days, while Charles Wells estimated to reach the same spring in fourteen days. Both parties agreed that if they could not locate Joanna Springs that they would continue onto the Fitzroy River and wait. Wells and Jones were equipped with three camels, 60 gallons of water and provisions for one month. A small amount of stores were buried at Separation Well.

Both parties left Separation Well on the 11th October. Larry Wells’ party struggled with the incessant heat and the crossing of sandridges, lack of camel feed and finding water sources. They eventually would rest by day and travel through the night and along the way would offload equipment and their scientific collections. They lost two camels and three more were later abandoned. They never located Joanna Spring but searched the local area for any evidence of Charles Wells and George Jones. Larry Wells’ predicament was now becoming dire, they decided that they would race towards the Fitzroy River, through the most inhospitable and arid regions of the desert to save their own lives, a distance of 170 miles. They arrived at the Fitzroy River in early November with only a bucket of water left and only two camels.

After two weeks of rest, Larry Wells had seen no sign of both Charles Wells and George Jones and was becoming very anxious, he began to organise a rescue party, but his camels still needed time to recover. Larry made numerous attempts to retrace his tracks, but made little distance and had to return, due to the extreme summer heat. The Western Australian Government despatched a Mr. Rudall who was surveying the north-west of the state and based at Oakover River. David Carnegie’s expedition which had just arrived at Halls Creek from their trek through the desert, also offered his help in the search, but they were not required. Mr. Rudall was unsuccessful in finding the lost explorers, but successfully mapped 23,000 square miles of previously unexplored country.

Larry Wells and cameleer Bejah, accompanied by Sub-inspector Ord, Trooper Nicholson and two aboriginal trackers left Derby on the 10th May. Resting for a day at Joanna Spring, they set out and asked aboriginals for their help in locating the men, with little help. The search party then found discarded stolen goods, approx. six miles from the well in a southerly direction. The mummified bodies of Charles Wells and George Jones were finally found on the 27th May 1897 and identified by Larry Wells. George Jones body and some possessions

were located on a sandridge, partly covered by sand. Charles’ body was found under a desert gum tree and makeshift fly for shade. Jones’ journal showed that they had also travelled under extreme hardship with no water and camel feed and after traversing their set route the heat became too much and they returned to Separation Well and rested for five days. Then set out to follow the route of Larry Wells’ party to Joanna Springs and died en-route around early-November 1896.

Their bodies were sewn up into sheets and returned to Adelaide for a state funeral. The funeral was held on the 18th July 1897 and their remains interred into the North Road Cemetery, Nailsworth (Plot 2284, Path 8 North). The grave was adorned by a 12 foot obelisk, erected by the Royal National Geographical Society of Victoria. Then on the 27th June 1937 two stained glass windows were unveiled at the Brougham Place Congregational (Anglican), Church, North Adelaide to commemorate both Charles Frederick Wells and George Lindsay Jones of the Calvert Expedition of 1896-1897.

(Full bibliography can be supplied upon request)



Grave of Charles Fredrick Wells and George Lindsay Jones. North Road Cemetery, Nailsworth, S.A.
SLSA image B 10485



Mummified body of explorer Charles Fredrick Wells
SLSA image B 61234

WHERE WE GOT PETROL Part one of a Series -

By Graeme Robb and Craig Pink

With the first soil turned for the new Colac east BP service station site recently, it's a great opportunity to look back on where we remember buying petrol from years gone by. We start off this issue from late 1950s, travelling to Colac from the east, starting at the turn-off to Birregurra on the Princes Highway at Warncoort, along the old Princes Highway past the Colac east hotel, east side around the showgrounds, then through the east end of today's Murray St at Bruce St, finishing this issue at the Hesse St intersection on Murray St.

MOBILGAS – WARNCOORT - South west side of Birregurra turn-off. This was a long-established business which over the years incorporated the local post office and also the local general store. Aub and Lila Ross managed the premises from late 1950s to early 1960s. It traded very successfully with the rise in vehicle numbers on the road of the 1950s and 1960s. It was demolished after closing around the early 1970s.

BELOW AT LFET – The Mobilgas Warncoort service station/post office in December 1965, which was in its prime busy period. The origins of the main house structure are clearly evident. Image - Bela Bard Brucker collection.



ABOVE AT RIGHT– The Shamrock service station looking very busy in this April 1976 view as an Esso outlet. Image - Bela Bard Brucker collection.

SHAMROCK SERVICE STATION – South side of Princes Highway, Irrewarra. Started by J & M Wilson from Geelong, this premises initially traded as “The Friendly Inn”, opening in late December 1959. It was advertised as “one of Australia’s most advanced Roadhouses three miles east of Colac”. “Similar to thousands lining American Highways, includes modern dance floor for 200 couples under a mass of fairy lights”. It also initially specialised in steak meals on a special grill made in Colac. Petrol pumps were later also added, which it traded for many years as a roadside service station, situated just past the Victree sawmill. Some years after its closure around the late 1970s, it opened as a second-hand mart where they also went on to make furniture, as well as selling the second-hand goods. The premises survives today with large shedding from extensions from the second-hand mart days and also the furniture manufacture on the site.

GOLDEN FLEECE – Geelong side of Cameron’s Hill at Colac east. Colac’s Golden Fleece Roadhouse was under construction in September 1959, at this point the framework of the main building was almost complete, the 30ft x 21ft snack bar was to be constructed alongside. It opened around December 1959 - the total construction cost was some £19,000. A former auctioneers’ accommodation paddock, the block measured 150ft x 300ft. There was also a residence built behind the service station on the block. The Golden Fleece restaurant chain became the largest of its type in Australia for the era, with its bold logo and air-conditioning being a very

AT RIGHT – Colac Herald 2nd October 1959 advert for leasehold of the new Colac east Golden Fleece service station/restaurant. Note - the Belmont premises being built at same time also.

Golden Fleece Service Station and Roadhouses

APPLICATIONS are invited for the
Leasehold of —
**Service Station
and
Roadhouses**
undergoing construction at
**1 Princes Highway,
Belmont, Geelong.
2 Princes Highway,
Colac.**

EACH STATION IS OF MODERN DESIGN AND
INCORPORATES A ROADHOUSE EQUIPPED WITH
THE MOST MODERN FACILITIES. FULL TRAINING
IN SERVICE STATION AND CAFE MANAGEMENT IS
PROVIDED FOR THE SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS.

**THIS IS A RARE OPPORTUNITY
FOR A FAMILY BUSINESS**

THE ONLY FINANCE REQUIRED IS FOR STOCK,
MOVABLE EQUIPMENT AND OPERATING CAPITAL

**For further information, telephone —
Geelong— Day, U 2470; Night, 93570**

lucrative advertising drawcard. Many locals worked at this busy Colac east premises over the years, which operated very successfully into the 1980s, and was not only very popular with those travelling through, but also with local patronage. Many people visited repeatedly, such as seasonal pea harvesting workers when in the local area. The home cooked style meals - the mixed grill being a specialty favourite, were way ahead, and well before anything like KFC and McDonald's so called "dine-in" and "take away". Local businessman David Hose purchased this Golden Fleece Roadhouse in the mid-1970s - it traded on into the mid-1980s before closing. In July 2000 the premises opened again as a Colac Stockfeed business office space - today the building remains, but in a poor dilapidated state right next to the boundary of the new BP service station being constructed at Colac east.

ALOI's SERVICE STATION – East side of Princes Highway – just west, over the road from Marriners Nursery entrance. It traded for a time as an Amoco fuel outlet, and also as a produce merchant. Patronage obviously dropped off after the opening of the new highway overpass in 1976 which diverted the Princes Highway over Cameron's Hill, and was among the reasons for its closure. Pat Aloï also operated a transport service from this site.

SHELL SERVICE STATION + DEPOT – Operated by Jack Cassin, who came to Colac from Essendon in 1949 as part of a football deal. Jack initially started at the Shell Depot site which was on the north end of the Austral hotel block, and then shifted to the Princes Highway site. The Business at 22 Princes Highway was purchased by Peter and Robert Riordan c. early 1960s. This site also used a railway siding for many years for the delivery of fuel to the storage tanks on the site. The site traded in the early 1970s as the Lake-View Service Station - open 7 days. Riordan's shifted to a new purpose-built premises on the new re-aligned Princes Highway, which they traded at from early 1976, just east of the new overpass. The Riordan's also expanded their hire business on the new site. This site still remains a Shell fuel outlet today. The former Shell site at 22 Princes highway (now Dalton St) would be known better by most as the site of Hutch's Auto Wreckers who traded there for many years. The site remains today as the "Pre-Mix" brand name of bulk concrete supply, with the small office building at front still intact. Does anyone remember the sign that said "8 punt kicks to Jack Cassin's service station" ? – the sign stood in the vicinity of the Marriner's Nursery gate area.

HARTNETT & THOMPSON - Len Hartnett and Harry Thompson had a hire service on this site after moving the business from main Street Elliminyt around 1969. The new premises with Princes Highway frontage also went on to include a Golden Fleece fuel outlet. The hire service was taken over to become Riordan's Hire Service, which also ended up shifting with the new highway in 1976. This site would be better known to most as Brunt's transport former depot.



AMPOL SERVICE STATION – Corner of Bruce St and old highway as it straightened up from east of showgrounds, in front of Alex Kelly & Sons depot premises. It closed with the new highway overpass opening in 1976.

AT LEFT - Most would recognise this as Colac Exhaust and Tune - a 1984 view. Note the Holden 4 door ute visiting for the camera - a very unique concept by talented local Colin Box. A mid-1960 reference for advertising states this premises as the Atlantic Service Station.

Image - Wal Slow collection.

ESSO - NEUL WALLACE – Neul started around 1930 with a small petrol outlet in the front of a wooden garage on his brothers block on Polwarth St corner, on the north west side of Murray St. In 1954 he purchased the block diagonally opposite, which was built a larger outlet. This site would be better known by most as Noel Weedon's Colac Exhaust and Tune. Peter and Ken Davis also leased the mechanical repair/exhaust side of the business for a number of years after Quintons closed in Bromfield St in 1994. The fuel outlet closed around 2005 and operates today as exhaust/mechanical repairs and a self-serve car wash. Today, the car wash covers part of the original demolished service station building.

DILLONS – Murray/Queen St corner – Started around 1927 - as with many premises, it was also used a coal depot in WW2. The premises traded until it was demolished in mid-1967 - a Council by-law regarding kerb side fuel bowsers being a certain distance from footpaths etc. was amongst the reasons for its closure. The site at corner of Bromfield



and Queen St was then taken up, and remains today as a Shell outlet, which was purchased from Dillon's in 2016 by Robert Riordan.

AT LEFT – Jack Dillons Golden Fleece service station situated at No. 2 Murray St - early 1960s. The FC Holden in the service bay really fills the small space - this was typical of the era. The Colac Post Office can be seen behind this premises. The fuel bowsers became a real issue so close to footpath and was the demise of a number of service stations in the 1960s. This site on the south west corner of Queen/Murray St is utilised today mainly as a garden space. Note also the tie which was worn in these days.

Image - Bela Bard Brucker collection.

VICTORIA MOTOR GARAGE/BP MURRAY ST. -

The Victoria Motor Garage dated from the 1920s, which was beside the Victoria hotel which was built in 1853. The garage was run by the Quinton family from the 1930s. Quintons had new modern up to date premises built at 82 Bromfield St, which they transferred to in May 1965. This was west of their Quintons farm machinery premises, which was well established by that time on the corner of Hesse and Bromfield St.



ABOVE- The Victoria Motor Garage in mid-1960s, prior to its demolition in 1966. Note the above 2nd storey which formed part of the Victoria hotel at left – the hotel had 36 bedrooms. Before TV became the normal, people would often go to the Regent Theatre and watch the latest movie while their car was serviced. With the fate of the fuel bowsers on the footpath with the busy traffic of the 1960s, Quintons built new modern premises in Bromfield St. In late 1965 the site of these 2 buildings was sold – the idea was to build a modern new BP service station (see image at right) and then develop the remainder of the site.

Image – Doug Kirkman collection



ABOVE - The new Murray St BP service station looking very busy and established in November 1968 - certainly positioned back off the street somewhat compared to the former premises at above left. This BP was very popular, and lasted until replaced by the current BP service station which opened in October 1998 – some may recall Colac nearly being shut down when the newly installed fuel tanks floated on the water after heavy rains – luckily the new steel tanks were just sitting there, and not hooked up – once the water was pumped out the hole they settled back into position where they still remain today.

Image - Bela Bard Brucker collection.

In the mid-1960s Colac had more than 20 different petrol outlets – today there are just 6.

Any further information to record on this subject in the Society files would be very much appreciated, especially on the Alois service station and also the Ampol one on the old former highway corner at Bruce St.

Next issue continues on the Princes Highway, following though Colac and out to the west. A later series will also look at other Colac petrol outlets, along with surrounding areas such as Alvie, Beeac, Coragulac, Cororooke, Cressy, Deans Marsh and Swan Marsh.



CRAIG'S CONUNDRUM -

LAST ISSUE ANSWER – AT LEFT - The former Ambulance station and residence which opened within the Connor St block of the Colac Hospital in December 1960. An early view - as shown in image before the Ford F Series ambulances became common place. The current Colac Ambulance station premises opened at Rae St in November 2003 adjacent the already existing fire station. Note also - the hospital building at rear left still remains intact today.



AT LEFT - Can you pick what this odd-looking contraption might be? and what it would have been used for! The date is November 1968, and if you need a clue - it has CITY OF COLAC on its side, and is sitting outside the City Council Offices in Rae St especially for the photo.

**ANSWER NEXT
ISSUE**

COLAC AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY ROSTER 2021 2.00 PM – 4.00 PM

Please Note: This roster is subject to the possibility of any Coronavirus restrictions that may be in force

Month	Thursday	Friday	Sunday
DECEMBER 2021	2 nd D. Missen 9 th L. Spence 16 th G. Splatt	3 rd C. Pink 10 th G. Bray 17 th E. Angel	5 th R. Osborne 12 th G. Knox
JANUARY 2022	20 th G. Splatt 27 th J. Knight	21 st E. Angel 28 th M. Saddlier	23 rd I. Barlow 30 th H. Paatsch
FEBRUARY 2022	3 rd D. Missen 10 th L. Spence 17 th G. Splatt 24 th J. Knight	4 th C. Pink 11 th G. Bray 18 th E. Angel 25 th M. Saddlier	6 th R. Osborne 13 th G. Knox 20 th N. Ryan 27 th I. Barlow