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Established 6th February 1950 - Incorporation No. - A00245414U

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

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

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

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

Working Bees at the History Centre - 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 Norman Houghton.

Forthcoming Events –

Saturday August 27th - Meeting 1.30pm.

Speaker - Mick Menzies - Railway Historian & President Western Victorian Historical Association.

Wednesday September 28th - Meeting 7.30pm.

Speaker - Dr. Heather Threadgold - PhD Thesis -

‘What the Stories Tell Us’ - Gulidjan Country Stones, Sites and Living Spaces’.

Wednesday October 26th - Meeting 7.30pm.

Topic - ‘Secrets of the Locked Cupboard’ Dawn Peel.

A Note from the President –

A link with early Colac district history was lost with the recent death of Mrs Shirley Burns. The Burns family were owners of ‘Corunnun’, where they were farmers on the south-eastern shore of Lake Corangamite from 1919 to early this century. ‘Corunnun’, was built by Dr Andrew Stoddart in 1844 and is one of the oldest surviving homes in the Colac district. Shirley and her late husband Andrew, were great supporters of our Society. Shirley wrote an important local history entitled ‘Onion People – the History of Onions in Victoria’, which she graciously allowed our society to re-print and to continue to make available for sale.

It is pleasing that member Ken Riches book ‘Let there be Flight’ has been revised and reprinted and is now available from the History Centre at a cost of \$45. It is a wonderful insight into the history of aviation in Western Victoria.

An interesting visitor to the History Centre this month Mal Campbell whose special interest is scales and weights. He was researching the solid brass measuring weights and vessels used by the Weights and Measures Inspectors. He has since forwarded to us the history of our collection which can be gained from the stamped imprints. Our set of avoirdupois weights in 3 boxes was used by the Corangamite Weights & Measures Union and allocated to the Shire of Colac in 1876. They were originally allocated to the Shire of Dunolly in 1867.



**AT LEFT –
Weights &
Measures used
by Colac Shire
from 1876.**

Colac & District Historical Society Inc.

President's Report 2021-2022

A dedicated band of members has continued to actively engage in pursuing the aims and objectives of the Colac & District Historical Society.

Membership numbers have been maintained and despite the handicaps of Covid-19, we have been able to hold regular meetings, keep the doors of the History Centre open to the public and attend to the many requests for information both in person and via the website.

At our AGM last year we were delighted to award a Life Membership to Norman Houghton who has done so much to foster an appreciation of our local history through his writings, and has freely given invaluable assistance to the Society for many years.

Activities have included visits to Birregurra and Cressy Historical Societies and the Cressy WW11 Airfield.

Guest Speakers were:

Jennifer O'Donnell – author of 'Coragulac'

Luke Phillips – History with a Metal Detector

Darren Allan – Colac & District Cycling

Brian Timms – Our Salt Lake Heritage

Alan Doyle – Lasseter – The Colac Connection

Mark Beasley from the Geelong Heritage Centre spoke of the resources now available since the Colac Library became part of the Geelong Library Service.

Our February meeting was held at 'Airdrie' the former home of J G Johnstone, lovingly restored by Fred and Mary Slade.

Dawn Peel has written a biography of J G Johnstone which was published by the Society to complement the completion of the PROV grant to preserve, catalogue, digitize and index the Johnstone collections of manuscripts and business records. Copies of material from this collection, more relevant to other parts of the state, have been forwarded to other History Societies. These have been much appreciated by the recipients.

Book sales continue to be a strong source of income, and Helen Paatsch is currently reviewing and revising 'Street Names of Colac' published in 2008, with the aim of an eventual reprint.

We have received a Shire Grant towards the purchase of a shipping container to store artefacts and large items which could be displayed if we had a suitable building. We have contributed to Shire Workshops looking at the future needs of the City as it develops a strategy for future needs of the growing city, particularly within the Civic Precinct. A purpose built Art Gallery and Museum to replace the History Centre demolished in 1990 is what's required.

A gift of negatives and photos taken by Wal Slow in his photographic studio has added to our storage issues and a fresh look at the utilization of the cupboard space in the kitchen area has been suggested.

We have been favoured with a gift of \$3000 from a benefactor and \$2000 from another local businessman for assistance provided by our research team. Consideration needs to be given to the best use of these wonderful gifts.

Deb Chant, Deb Jinks, Gwen Bray and Sandra Splatt have devoted many hours photographing, re-cataloguing and boxing the clothing collection worthy of limited space. This is a work in progress and plans have been drawn to refit the room with more functional shelves and drawers

Thanks go to our newsletter team of Craig Pink, Dawn Missen and Ellise Angel who continue to produce an excellent informative quarterly publication. We are also indebted to Richard Francis who ensures our website remains current.

The operation of a multi-faceted organisation requires a team effort, involving members who look after the library, the window displays, filing, repairing, school visits, research, newsletter articles and the duty roster.

Thanks to you all.

Where does the future lead us?

This is my 9th Presidential Report. I have been buoyed by the enthusiasm and ready involvement of members who have newly joined and actively participated during my term as president. We may be travelling okay but I believe that any organisation that has the same president for more than 10 years is stagnating.

I come back to 2 paragraphs from my first President's Report in 2014. 'I believe this Society and the Family History Group would both be more effective if the Colac History Centre was operated as a single entity. Research enquiries regularly involve material from both organisations; we have 2 libraries, 2 desks, 2 sets of book sales and a crossover of membership. I have spoken individually to a number of members of both organisations and the wider Colac community and I believe there is widespread support.'

In fact, the community at large does not understand the difference.

I have not changed my view and believe it is time to engage with the Family History Group and take a fresh look at what is in the best interests of both organisations and the wider community.

Both groups have members with specific skills, interests, and areas of expertise. Added together we would create a Historical and Genealogical Society able to fulfil every community request, utilizing the full resources of the History Centre. With the passage of time I am heartened to see greater co-operation, less possessive ownership of resources and freer access to each other's collections.

All activities need not be integrated, with members able to concentrate on their particular areas of interest, but duplication of physical assets, insurance and competition for funding grants to name a few is a waste.

In conclusion, thank you to our secretary/treasurer John Angel, and a very supportive executive.

Robert Missen – May 2022

What has been news in the Colac Herald ?

May 11, 2022- Political rivals gather for special playtime. Civic leaders have turned out to officially open *Colac's newest play space in Memorial Square* with its poppy themed equipment. The previous play equipment has been sent to a struggling new community in the Philippines.

May 11- Colac shop sells for \$2.41M. Investors have paid this for a shop in Colac's Aldi complex, reflecting continued high interest in commercial real estate in Colac.

May 11- High COVID figures persisting for Colac. The shire has recorded 27 new cases a day and over 4000 cases since the pandemic began.

May 18- Public homes boost for at-risk residents. The state government unveiled *4 new modular houses* in Taylor Court for people experiencing homelessness or are at risk.

May 20- Volunteers vying to open visitor centre. The men and women who helped build Colac's once-celebrated *visitor information centre* want to see it up and running again. It has not been opened after COVID. Apex members spent hundreds of hours building the \$170,000-centre. Visitors could call in for first-hand information on everything in the district and maps were given out.

May 25- Marking 40 years of riding history. *The Colac and District Adult Riding Club* is hosting a 40th anniversary on June 5th. Barb Griffiths was the founder and inaugural member of the club in 1982. The club's ground is on the Colac-Lavers Hill Road, Elliminyt.

May 27- Razor evokes powerful story. Able Steward Percy Shute gave his razor to Sub Lieutenant James, "Jim" Paizis aboard *HMAS Colac* during The Second World War. It was the day before Percy was killed in action. Jim kept it until his death in 2022 and the Colac RSL will now proudly display it.

May 30- Flying fox protest. Passionate animal welfare activists gathered outside Colac Botanic Gardens at the weekend to oppose activities to "nudge" grey-headed flying foxes to vacate vulnerable trees.

May 30- Dinosaur trackway found. An Apollo Bay couple has discovered more than 50 fossilised footprints near Skenes Creek and are awaiting identification from the Melbourne Museum.

June 1- Lake welcomes trout release. Victorian Fisheries Authority workers released 1,000 rainbow trout into Lake Colac. There will be another 1,000 at a later date.

June 1- Digital dilemma. *Colac Visitor Centre* advocates want community talks with the council ASAP and want the centre to have a trial re-opening to help the council collect more up-to-date data.

June 1- Museum plans to expand. Application has been made by the *Apollo Bay and District Historical Society* for a change of use of an existing residence to a place of assembly. There are plans to offer improved display areas in the

museum and for access to their library and archives for research. The buildings were originally a telegraph station in 1935 containing a cable station and officer- in- charge residence, until 1980.

June 3- Dinosaur footprints are legit. Discovered near Skenes Creek, believed to belong to agile, three-toed carnivores known as theropod according to Dr Tom Rich fossil expert.

June 8- Riding group cheers 40 years. *Colac and District Adult Riding Club* gathered at its grounds on the Lavers Hill Road, Elliminyt, to recognise 4 decades since its first official meeting in May 1982. Barb Griffiths was a founding member. She teamed up with Jenny and John Daffy and Judy Slater to hold family bush rides.

June 6- Cemetery takes on Colanda. *Geelong Cemeteries Trust* will take over the land, having first expressed an interest in the 35 hectare site in 2018 because Colac's present cemetery in Gravesend Street only had enough space for another 30 years of burials. The Colanda residential centre closed in 2019 and was demolished in 2020.

June 8- Fireworks spark staff celebration. *Cape Otway Lighthouse* has lit up the coast for the last time under its current management, the Bowker family, to celebrate their involvement over the past 25 years. The Great Ocean Road Coast and Parks Authority took over at the end of June. At its peak in the 1980s, 100 plus riders were members.

June 10- Footbridge set in place over creek. A new pedestrian bridge over *Barongarook Creek* has been installed. The original bridge near the Scout Hall was washed away after a flood 6 years previously.

June 10- Planting program kicking off. 14 iconic claret ash trees in *Colac's Manifold Street* in poor health were removed to be replaced by 22 urbanite ash trees as Colac Otway Shire Council rolls out the first phase of a planting program across the region.

June 13- A lifetime legacy. *Swayne and McCabe's* team at Colac's iconic machinery business are celebrating 75 years of history. Original founder was Leslie Swayn aged 22. He later offered a partnership in his business to old friend Laurie McCabe and their farm machinery business was a roaring success.

June 13- Authorities sign Treaty on Gadubanud Country. The State Government and First People's Assembly of Victoria have gathered on *Gadubanud Country at Lorne* to sign, establish, and celebrate a new Treaty Authority. The Treaty aims to deliver truth and justice, and embrace Aboriginal lore, law, and cultural authority.

June 13- Colac doc receives top honour. Colac general surgeon and practitioner *Chris Sutherland* has received an Order of Australia medal for his phenomenal commitment to families of the Colac district.

June 13- Balnagowan's boost for city. The owners of Colac's historic Balnagowan home are proposing to restore the heritage residence and finish building a community around the iconic property. The plan would protect the popular mansion's grounds and grandeur while boosting Colac's housing shortage by completing a four-stage development of 27 retirement units.

June 17- Housing Deal. Council nets \$2.86 million by selling 4.2 hectares of land in *Bruce Street* to developers.

June 20- New refugee advocacy group. Scores of Colac and district residents have signed up to a new group to help the plight of local refugees. It is called *Colac's Rural Australians for Refugees* and seeks to help the plight of local people who have sought asylum. They also want to boost the rights of workers. On Palm Sunday in April, a rally with more than 100 people was held in Colac's memorial Square which demonstrated there was local interest.

June 29- More residents, religion shrinks. *The Australian Bureau of statistics 2021* data showed Colac people with no religious affiliation jumped from 32.2 per cent to 44.4. However, Christianity was the largest broad religious group in Colac. There were 506 extra Colac residences since 2016 and 206 new families. Colac's new population total is 12,756.

July 4- Bulla site celebrates birthday milestone. Bulla's multi-million-dollar chilled operations plant in Colac's Forest Street has marked its 20th anniversary. It is an expansion of Bulla in Murray Street. *Justin Downey*, founding family member said his company was the largest producer of fresh cream in Australia, with 60 million litres each year.

July 8- A tragic story for shipwreck. It was the greatest number of lives lost for the small coastal town- and 90 years on, *Apollo Bay is remembering the tragedy of the iron SS Casino, on July 10th, 1932, which claimed 10 lives* on a stormy morning when the ship was attempting to moor at Apollo Bay's harbour. Waves heaved the ship, and it struck the bottom, breaching its hull allowing water to fill the ship's hold. The Casino's horn alerted townsfolk to the unfolding tragedy and people raced to help. Some swam out with lines and some rode horses into the raging surf. Nine people were saved but 10 crew died. The Great Ocean Road opened later that year making Apollo Bay just a few hours drive from Melbourne.

July 11- Ray Croft's 90th Birthday Sale. The founder of *Ray Crofts men's and women's wear* initially opened up in Colac's Murray Street opposite the Memorial Square in 1932, before moving to its current site at 152 Murray St. When Mr Croft died in 1944, Bill Hewitt became managing director until 1972 when George Dean took over. When he retired in 1996 Rod Bray managed, then Gordon Scott and currently John Carew who keeps a clear focus on delivering high-quality fashion to the community.

July 27- Asbestos removed from old police station site. Authorities have removed contaminated soil from Colac's former police station site in Queen Street. The old police station was demolished in November 2018 when a new state of the art facility was built. A heritage listed bluestone cell remains on the site.

From “*Central Stores*” to “*Central Auction Mart*”, and more.

108 Murray Street, Colac - GPS reference: 38°20'23.3"S 143°35'15.0"E

Bromfield Street, Colac - GPS reference: 38°20'26.5"S 143°35'15.3"E

Alan Doyle – June 2022

108 Murray Street (Section 20, allotment 8, Parish of Colac) is currently the resident of the ANZ bank - but the site has hosted many businesses since 1877. The land was originally purchased by Richard Morrison, a young man of 27 years of age with an entrepreneurial vision of the Murray Street property. Richard Morrison was born 10th May 1849, Summerhill, County Meath, Ireland, and arrived in Geelong 26th June 1850, aboard the ship “*Bussorah Merchant*” as an infant. He was educated at Geelong College.

Richard came to Colac with his older brothers, William and Peter in 1866. Peter took up property at Carpendeit and William settled out at Elliminyt. Richard took up work as a clerical assistant at *Western Stores* with Adam Rea at the age of 17, when Adam was trading at East Colac. He then moved with him to No. 1 Murray Street in 1871. After 5 years working with Adam, he later partnered with Alex Stewart on the 8th April 1874 - opening up a general store on the east side of the bridge, close to the Prince of Wales Hotel. Richard also became a long-time selling agent for the Victoria Fire and Marine Insurance Company.

Richard’s vision was to settle at Colac, as he felt Colac had better potential for business prosperity - the mid-way point for access to Ballarat and the Otway ranges. Ballarat had grown with the discovery of gold in the 1850s and offered possibilities to its south, while the Otway ranges were untapped, and its discovery was sure to happen in the immediate future. The possibilities of moving to Camperdown did not seem to offer the same business opportunities.



Richard Morrison
Author's family image collection

On the 16th February 1877, Richard married Jane Smith from Geelong and brought her to Colac. They initially resided in East Colac, before they began building a large two-story building in Murray Street, neighbouring the *Union Club Hotel*. Their shop front was at street level, while their family lived upstairs. The store was called *Central Stores*, and became a one stop shop for the residents of Colac and the outer districts, selling drapery, clothing, millinery, Dress Goods, Crockery, Boots & Shoes, Groceries, toys, ironmongery, etc. Rifles, blunderbusses, revolvers, and explosives were even sold up until 1885.



L-R - *Central Stores* and *Union Club Hotel* - c1895

Image - CDHS – photocard collection

One window was dedicated as his main show piece display, the ‘Shilling Window’. The window displayed many beautiful items that all could be bought for a shilling. During the ‘grand centenary’ in January 1888, he ran a promotion, where he enclosed a special coupon in various goods. Some lucky customers received a coupon, and could choose one item from the shilling window, free of charge.

The store did good trade for many years and gave Richard further opportunities to buy other properties in and around Colac. He and Jane raised ten of their eleven children from this address, Florence (b. 1877), Jane (b. 1879), John (b. 1880), Elizabeth (b. 1882), Henry (b. 1884), Ethel (b. 1885), May (b. 1887), Nellie (b. 1888), Marjorie (b. 1891), Wilhelmina (b. 1898) and Dorothy (b. 1900). By 1900 the Morrisons had bought and moved to a large property in Queen Street, which became known as ‘Dumfries’.

The store suffered a fire in November 1895, in which the building could have been lost, if not for the valiant efforts of the Fire brigade and town's people to save the store. He was insured and was also the acting insurance agent. Loss of goods and damage totalled £2,500, and the building was repaired. When repairs were completed, Richard had decided on a new career - becoming an auctioneer in June 1896. He set up an auction house and leased a premises in Gravesend Street, near Ball Brothers. His business became known as *Central Auction Mart* and he was described as the new "Knight of the hammer", trading in general merchandise, dairy, poultry, carcase of mutton, beef and pork. Although, he was not involved in the livestock trade. His first auction began at 11 o'clock on the 3rd July 1896. Over time, Richard built a



**Richard Morrison's Central Auction Mart rooms -
Bromfield Street, Colac, c1902**
Author's family image collection

purpose auction room at the rear of *Central Stores* and by 1898 he was auctioning from these premises. His building would become colloquially known around town as "*The Old Tin Shed*."

With the shop repaired, he leased it to drapers Walter Selwood and Charles Northcott, trading as *Selwood and Northcott* in March 1896. This arrangement ran for approximately two years, before they dissolved the business and had to sell their stock at reduced prices. However, Charles Northcott solely took over the business and continued, under *Chas. Northcott*. Northcott finished the lease, and by March 1899, he vacated further up Murray Street to a shop that became the *Beehive Store*. Interestingly, he leased this shop from his former partner Walter Selwood.

For a short time, the shop was then leased to James and Kirk, as a fishmongers shop in early 1903, followed by more short-term leases. *Colac & District Ham and Bacon Curing & Refrigeration Co.*, 1904, Mrs. A Cameron – Fishmonger, 1905, followed by the short-lived F. Vigona & Co. – Fruiters and Groceries in 1906.

In 1902, a lease agreement was signed by publican Robert John Laverty, of the *Union Club Hotel* to lease the upper level of the shop for the purpose of accommodation via an adjoining doorway between the two premises. The hotel had right-of-way access to Bromfield Street, via a pathway on the right-hand side of the auction rooms. At the termination of the lease, the *Union Club Hotel* removed the doorway and made any necessary repairs. This agreement continued for approximately 30 years, until the *Union Club Hotel* went through an upgrade in 1932. The upper level was converted to take in smaller business that only required a room for their services, including an accountancy, dressmaker and others. These rooms all added to the rent roll the property was now generating.



Brown's Hardware – c1907
SLV image H96.200/1503 (part view)

By late 1906, *Brown's Hardware* began trading in ironmongery, wallpaper, paints, and hardware items. Mrs. C. Woods began running her dress making shop from the rear of the building. This one site now had three tenants and the owner auctioneering from his tin shed at the rear, all generating healthy profits for Richard Morrison.

After approx. four years, *Brown's Hardware* ceased trading and was taken over by Max and Leslie Stanley Castles. It began trading under the name of *Castles Brothers - The Ironmongers* in 1910, and became a well-known go to shop in Murray Street. They traded in Ironmongery, general hardware, farm implements, various products required for farm animals, sporting goods, ammunition, and firearms.

September 1914 saw Richard Morrison retire, and *Central Auction Mart* ceased trading. The *Old Tin Shed* was then leased to *Swayn & Mulder* for a Motor and general engineering workshop and later became the Motor Garage of Mr. James E. Sell. By July 1921, the premises was re-leased to Plumber, Alfred Peters for £2 per week.

Castle Brothers continued growing and required more room to house their ever-growing inventory. A new lease was signed on the 12th August 1922, with the additional clause that the *Castles Brothers* could build an extension to the rear of the shop - with the tenant to pay the costs of the extension. At the end of the lease the extension was then to come under the ownership of Richard Morrison. *Castle Brothers* continued for some time, but by the late 1930s they vacated to another premises in Colac. *D. & W. Chandler & Co* then took over the shop and continued in ironmongery and hardware supplies.

Richard Morrison died in Colac on the 17th July 1935, that saw the transfer of ownership of his estate and businesses intrusted to his surviving children, who then ran the estate as trustees - an agreement that benefited them for years to come. By 1935, *The Old Tin Shed* was leased to Mr. Merrit as a Motor repairs workshop. The upper floors were hired to the Colac 5th Scout Group and Colac Dairy Band for one day a week.

Throughout the years of WW2, *The Old Tin Shed* was leased at a nominal rent to the *Waste Product Auxiliary*. After the war, the shed was leased to various businesses for the next 19 years. The last business to operate from the shed was *Laurie Kelly & Co* - Shopfitters, Cabinet-makers and Joiners.

The Morrison family owned this central Colac property for the best part of 87 years. The trustees of Nellie and Marjorie Morrison finally sold the property in November 1964 to *Woolworths* (Victoria). By January 1965, *Woolworths* began with the removal of the Murray Street two storey building and the *Old Tin Shed*. A new shop front was built on the Murray Street frontage, while the rear was turned into a car park. The new Murray Street shop became an extension of *Woolworths* Supermarket, to be followed by *Paradise Discount* store, *Ball and Croft*, *Betta Electrical* and refurbished later to the present *ANZ Bank* building.



Castles Brothers store

Image - CDHS - Doug Kirkman Collection



Position of various businesses – 18th Nov. 1927

108 Murray Street Colac (Section 20 allotment 8)

Rear view looking north from Bromfield Street

- 1 - Castles Brothers shop in Murray Street (obscured)**
- 2 - Upper story of shop, leased to the Union Club Hotel, as accommodation (Union Club Hotel to the left).**
- 3 - Rear of Castles Brothers shop extension.**
- 4 - Alfred Peters, plumber.**

SLV image H91.160/1246 (part view)

Timeline Summary of *Central Stores* – 108 Murray Street, Colac:

- 1866** - Richard Morrison arrives in Colac. Takes up position of clerical assistant for Adam Rea at *Western Stores*.
- 1874** - Richard Morrison partners with Alex Stewart and opens a general store in Colac East.
- 1878** - Beginnings of *Central Stores*, Murray Street.
- 1895** - Fire at *Central Stores* with substantial damage to shop.
- 1896** - Richard Morrison leases shop to *Selwood & Northcott* and becomes an auctioneer.
Starts Morrison's *Central Auction Mart* in Gravesend Street.
- 1897** - *Selwood & Northcott* become bankrupt and then trades as *Chas. Northcott*.
- 1898** - Chas. Northcott ceases and moves further up Murray Street.
Shop is leased to others.
- 1902** - Lease agreement with *Union Club Hotel* to lease upper section of shop for accommodation.
- 1903** - Shop is leased to *James & Kirk Fishmongers*.
- 1904** - Shop is leased to *Colac & District Ham and Bacon Curing & Refrigeration Co.* in 1906.
- 1905** - Shop is leased to Mrs. A Cameron – Fishmonger
- 1906** - Shop is leased to F. Vigona & Co. – Fruiters and Groceries, followed by *Brown's Hardware*.
- 1910** - *Castles Brothers* lease shop in Murray Street.
- 1922** - *Castles Brothers* renew lease and build extension to rear of shop.
- 1932** - *Union Club Hotel* cease lease agreement for accommodation.
- Late 1930s** - *Castle Brothers* vacate to new premises in Colac.
Premises is then leased by *D. & W. Chandler & Co.*
- 1964** – *D. & W. Chandler & Co.* cease trading.
Property sold and purchased by *Woolworths* (Victoria) in November.
- 1965** – Demolition of the two-storey building begins shortly after purchased by *Woolworths* (Victoria).
New extension to *Woolworths* store built.
- 1970s through to present** – *Woolworths* close and are replaced by new businesses - *Paradise Discount Store*, *Ball & Croft*, *Betta Electrical*.
Then remodelled to the present-day *ANZ bank*.



Richard Morrison's lease agreements
Author's family collection



Castles Brothers store - interior
Image - CDHS - Doug Kirkman Collection



Removal of *Central Stores* & new build – October 1965.
Note: 1. Bluestone curbing still in Murray Street.
2. Eastern wall of the *Union Club Hotel* to the right.
Image - CDHS - Bela Bard Brucker collection



**Old site of *Central Stores* (*Central Stores*).
*Paradise Discount store.***
Image - CDHS - Doug Kirkman collection



**Old site of Central Stores.
ANZ bank – 108 Murray Street.
Author image – January 2021**

Timeline Summary of Central Auction Mart - rear of 108 Murray Street, Colac:

- 1896** - Starts Morrison's *Central Auction Mart* in Gravesend Street.
- 1898** - *Central Auction Mart* moves location from Gravesend Street to Bromfield Street.
- 1914** - *Central Auction Mart* ceases business and leased to Swayn & Mulder as a motor garage.
- 1921** - *Central Auction Mart* is leased to Alfred Peters - Plumber.
- 1935** - *Central Auction Mart* is leased to Mr. Merrit for motor repairs, Colac 5th Scout Group and Colac Dairy Band.
Richard Morrison dies, and his estate is then administered by his surviving children, as trustees.
Old auction rooms become colloquially known as *The Old Tin Shed*.
- 1939/45** - *The Old Tin Shed* is leased to the *Waste Product Auxiliary*.
- c1946** - *The Old Tin Shed* rooms are leased to various businesses.
- 1964** - Last tenanted to *Laurie Kelly & Co.* – Shopfitters, Cabinetmakers and Joiners.
Property sold and purchased by *Woolworths* (Victoria) in November.
- 1965** - Dismantling *The Old Tin Shed* begins in January.
The Murray Street building would be demolished shortly after.



**Central Auction Mart - November 1963
The Old Tin Shed, Bromfield Street.
Note: Down the street is the brick building that
is currently used by petstock.
Image - CDHS - Bela Bard Brucker collection**



**Old site of Central Auction Mart
(The Old Tin Shed).
Bromfield Street - rear of 108 Murray Street.
Author image - January 2021**



**November 1965 view of Central Auction Mart -
demolition in progress.
Image - CDHS - Bela Bard Brucker collection**

Acknowledgement and thanks to Craig Pink for his time in researching the CDHS records. Family history notes by author, Clare Doyle and Janet Galley OAM. (Full bibliography can be supplied upon request)

Wireless and Television

By Norman Houghton

We take radio and television for granted these days, but there was a time when Colac possessed no such amenities.

The introduction of wireless broadcasting to Colac in 1924 was a revolution in home entertainment and public events. The first regular demonstrations of the new technology were held at Nelson's Band Hall when organisers (presumably future marketeers) put on children's bed time stories, cable news - as in submarine, not CNN - markets and a concert program. Sets were commercially available from around this time and Colac retailers in this line opened Wireless Departments for retail sales, Peters Hardware being the first in March 1925. The Colac Herald began running articles on how to build wireless and crystal sets.

Dances and events no longer needed a band or pianist and anyone could put on a social function. Dance parties to wireless became the new craze as the entire world of sound and music was opened to Colac. For example, in June 1925 a dance party was held at St Johns Parish Hall. Organisers had bought a big seven valve wireless, tuned it to 3LO and out boomed the strains of Bert Ralton's Havana Band playing live at Carlyon's Hotel in St Kilda. Fantastic. Melbourne night club sophistication comes to Colac! Sporting events too now became live. The Geelong Football Club met Collingwood in the 1925 grand final and so the Colac RSL put on a wireless grand final afternoon for the occasion as a fund raiser on sixpenny (five cents) admission. A loud speaker ensured patrons could hear every detail.



AT LEFT - The coming of wireless was a great business opportunity for several retailers in Colac and district. Some Colac businesses such as Peters Hardware came and went in wireless, but others such as Ball & Croft and Revills went on to offer after sales service and extended further into electrical appliances - Wireless was good for them.

Image from the publication "Home To Colac 1838 – 1928".

The rural areas around Colac were a little slower to take up the craze, although Beeac was into it from the start, thanks to the enthusiasm of Gainger Bros who promoted wireless by demonstrating the very first set there in 1924 in their shop. They also organised the first wireless dances in town. A year or two later correspondents could note that there were many wireless aerials evident in the farm houses along the Beech Forest railway and at Murroon it was noted that the Christmas programs put on by 3LO were particularly appreciated. At Forrest wireless dances were popular for club special occasions such as Christmas break-ups.

The wireless now became a standard of civilized living as shown when the new all weather road was opened from Gellibrand to Carlisle River in 1927. One of the official speakers at the ceremony mentioned the wireless, along with the telephone and the new road as stemming the tide of rural population loss.

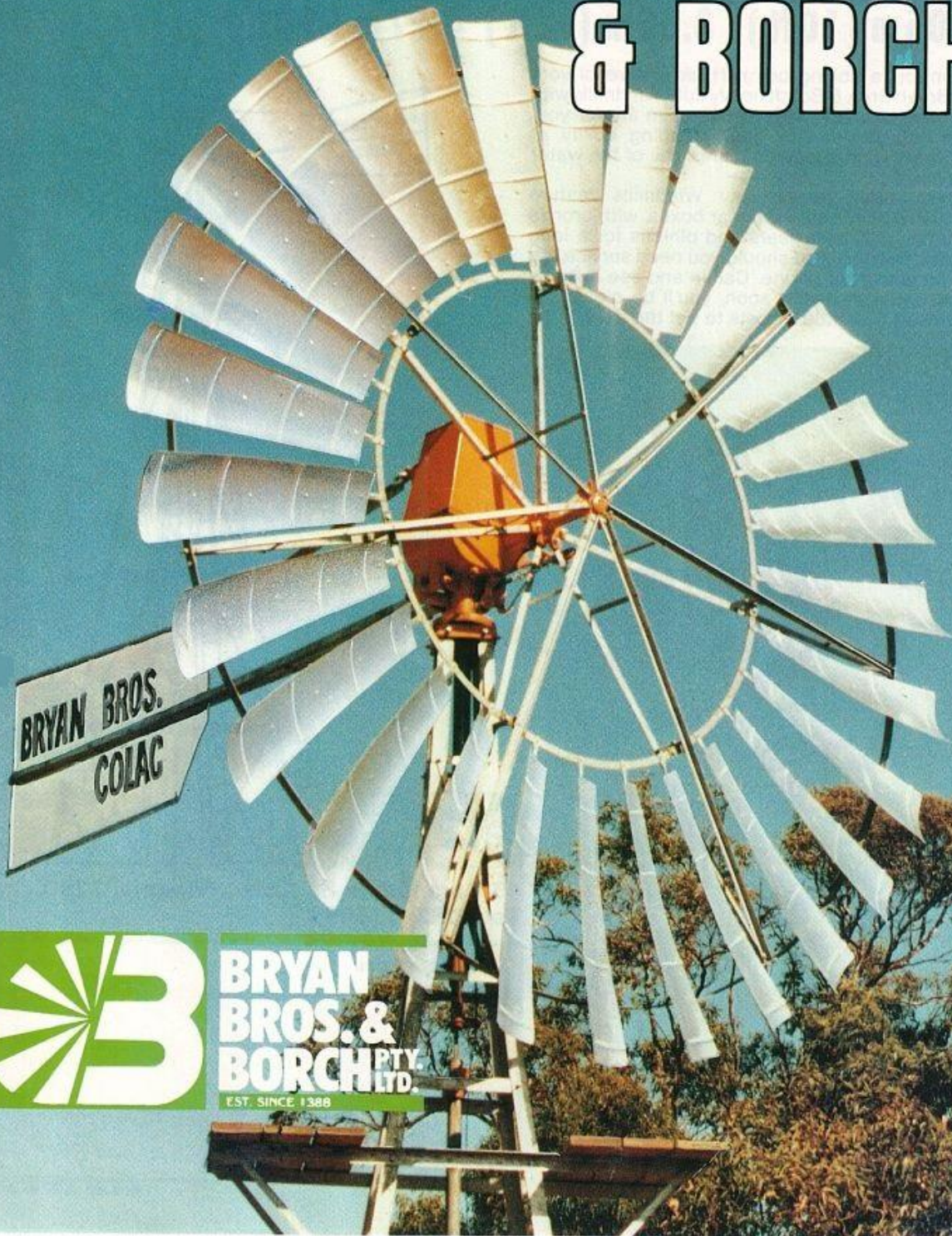
There were social drawbacks. A body such as the Colac Caledonian Society ruefully noted at its 1928 Annual General Meeting that enthusiasm for the cause was on the wane because the older members stayed at home to listen to the wireless and the younger members were out at dances doing Jazz rather than attending the Society's Scotch concerts.

The notion of Television first came to Colac in 1926 when The National Musical Federation began touting for a national network of agents for wireless and television. One of its representatives arrived in town in November 1926 to interview prospective agents. The results of this marketing initiative are not recorded but Colac had to wait another 24 years before the real thing actually arrived. On 29th May, 1950 a van drove into town with television gear and a demonstration was set up in the Victoria Hall. Screens and cameras enabled those in the hall to see themselves on TV. It was foretaste of things to come and that day arrived in 1956 when commercially available sets went on sale.

The first television sets were bulky affairs and, for Colac, required an aerial of monstrous height to receive the signals from Melbourne. At first few could afford to buy the sets but consolation was at hand in Murray Street when retailers such as Maples and Rileys placed sets in their show windows for passers-by to view. It was a favourite after school activity for the young ones to spend a bit of time glued to the plate glass watching a show.

Over time the price of the sets came down and more households acquired television. Side effects were a change in recreational and social habits that led to the demise of the Regent Theatre and the Drive-In and less eating out at cafés in the evenings.

THE BIG PERFORMERS FROM BRYAN BROS. & BORCH



**BRYAN
BROS. &
BORCH PTY. LTD.**
EST. SINCE 1988

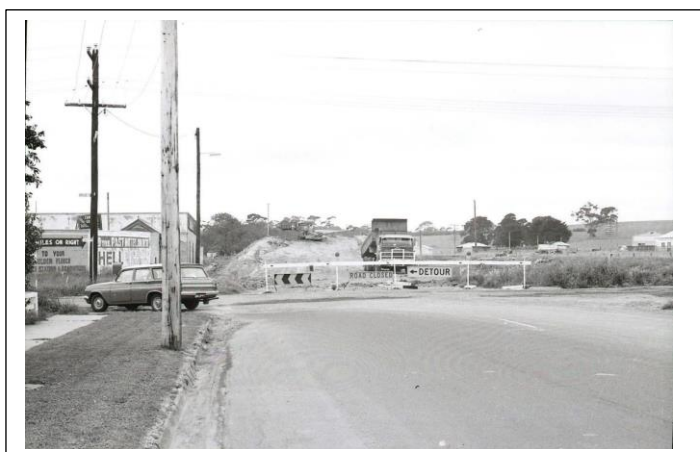
ABOVE - A page from a later 1970s Bryan Bros & Borch sales brochure, advertising their popular enclosed geared model of windmill. With its large sails, the 8^{ft} wheel model sold very well in all localities due to its ability to pump water even in the slightest breeze, and was quite capable of pumping upwards of 150 gallons of water per hour.



LAST ISSUE ANSWER

AT LEFT - August 1963 image of the merry-go-round at the Koala Motel, situated on the Princes Highway, west of Pirron Yallock. The Fordson tractor is a CRB (Country Roads Board) outfit, with attached road roller doing repair work on the Princes Highway past the Koala Motel frontage. The Koala Motel had become very popular by this time - it really thrived thru the 1960s and far beyond.

Image from Bela Bard Brucker collection.



AT LEFT – Can you pick where this end of the road scene is in Colac - why would the EH Holden station wagon be turning left at this dead end ?

- If you need a clue - the date is October 1975, looking east, and that's the showgrounds on the left, the north side of Bruce St is to the left where the EH Holden station wagon is turning into.

ANSWER NEXT ISSUE

COLAC AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL DUTY SOCIETY ROSTER 2022. 2.00 PM – 4.00 PM

Please Note: This roster is subject to the possibility of any relevant COVID-19 restrictions or isolations

Month	Thursday	Friday	Sunday
SEPTEMBER 2022	1 st D. Missen 8 th L. Spence 15 th G. Splatt 22 nd J. Knight 29 th R. Missen	2 nd C. Pink 9 th G. Bray 16 th E. Angel 23 rd M. Saddlier 30 th G. Robb	4 th R. Osborne/N. Ryan 11 th G. Knox/R. Perrin 18 th R. Osborne/N. Ryan 25 th H. Paatsch
OCTOBER 2022	6 th D. Missen 13 th L. Spence 20 th G. Splatt 27 th J. Knight	7 th C. Pink 14 th G. Bray 21 st E. Angel 28 th M. Saddlier	2 nd R. Osborne/N. Ryan 9 th G. Knox/R. Perrin 16 th R. Osborne/N. Ryan 23 rd H. Paatsch 30 th R. Missen
NOVEMBER 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/N. Ryan 13 th G. Knox/R. Perrin 20 th R. Osborne/N. Ryan 27 th H. Paatsch