



Coladjins

Colac & District Family History Group Inc

e-newsletter Issue 1 2023

Welcome and Back to Normal

Welcome to 2023, already we have the opening hours back to normal including Thursday, Friday & Sunday afternoons for visitor inquiries.

If anyone feels they would like to join the duty roster, we are happy to 'buddy' you with someone to learn the routine.



Recently we have enjoyed some lovely family connections, through research, inquiries or donations. The outcomes often turn out to be as thrilling for the volunteers as for the families whose information we discover. Our Holden Photo project being a prime example of this.

Wishing you all an interesting year in whatever you are searching.

Diana McGarvie - President e: president@colacfamilyhistory.org.au

Due to a sudden closure of COPACC on Tuesday 14th, we were sent home and unable to hold the scheduled Annual General Meeting in the afternoon.

A quick phone around, a sign on the door, a bulletin sent to all members and a notice on facebook hopefully alerted most people in time. Although there were excess sandwiches, sponges, slices and scones at various households that had been prepared for afternoon tea. Thank you everyone for your understanding.

The Annual General Meeting will now be held on a date to be advised.

Congratulations to Diana and her husband Stewart who recently became grandparents for the first time - we all wish you both many joyful times with your little granddaughter.

Salmon Family Visit



Descendants of Harry Salmon from Geelong and Colac met at the History Centre recently to view Harry's family tree scroll. The family history group became custodians of the scroll following Harry's death in 2021 and Harry Dobber of Colac Woodworker's Guild crafted the new case to ensure its preservation. The scroll is on permanent display at the History Centre.

The family were thrilled to see the scroll in its new home and reminisced about the lengths that Harry went to so that it was kept up to date. When he was 82 years old, Harry converted all of the information from the scroll to a digital version after teaching himself how to use a computer. He would take his laptop to large family gatherings and throughout the day summons certain members from each family to fill him in with details of new births, deaths or marriages. At one stage he was overheard to "complain" that there were so many babies being born he wouldn't be able to keep up.

From left: Kevin Salmon (nephew), Evelyn Allan (daughter), Jeffery Salmon (son) and Christine Thompson (daughter).

Dedicated family historians like Harry spend countless hours and often a lot of expense researching and recording their family history and it is important that their work is not lost when they are gone. We developed a "Genealogical Will" that sets out which family members you would like to be entrusted with your work - or an option to name up to three organisations you would like to pass it on to. The Genealogical Will is not binding, but it is a strong indication of your wishes for your executors. If you would like a copy, contact: media@colacfamhistory.org.au

Isaac Hebb - Original Colac Historian



In late January 1888, the Colac Herald commenced the publication of "a highly interesting work entitled *The History of Colac*" from the pen of an "old and valued contributor".

Fans of TROVE will have seen the columns by "Izaak" which were published over many years and some people are fortunate to have a copy of his (now rare) book by the same name.

Isaac Hebb's work is a valuable insight into the history of Colac from the mid-19th century and has many references to early Colac settlers.

Diana and Stewart McGarvie have generously donated this original photograph of Isaac Hebb which will take pride of place at the History Centre.

Fast Expanding House and Property Database



Have you ever tried to find where your ancestor lived in Colac? Or do you already know where they lived and would like that information added to our house and property database?

Robyn has been scouring all of the resources she has been able to find to help identify where properties were located, if the houses or properties had names and who lived there over the years. Many house and property names are a link to the owner's past and sometimes help with family history research.

Robyn has developed a guide to several resources to use and where they can be found. Many are on-line, some only by paid subscription, and some, such as early Colac Rate Books are available at the family history group.

If you have information to share or would like to find out more about the database, contact Robyn on e: library@colacfamilyhistory.org.au

Are You interested in Volunteering from Home?

We need people to help transcribe names from our map collection. All you need to be able to do is type details into an Excel spreadsheet. Once the information is entered and checked, it will be uploaded to the CADinfo database.

Bernie, our IT volunteer, has developed a program that will show the historic maps over current maps, enabling the user to determine where a property was located.

You could nominate your preferences for the map you would like to transcribe. The maps will be enlarged and divided into sections to make transcription easier.



Contact Norma on e: secretary@colacfamilyhistory.org.au for more information

Photographs, Certificates and Family Histories

Since returning from the Christmas break, we have had several visitors seeking information on their ancestors who lived in the Colac district. We have also been given copies of family trees, photographs and some certificates, which all add to the collection and help others researching the same families.

If you have photographs, certificates, family trees or family histories you would like to share, please contact Merrill on e: media@colacfamilyhistory.org.au

Final Chapter - Holden Family Photo



After having a very old photograph brought into the History Centre, researching the people in it and tracking down descendants, we were finally able to hand it back to the family early this year.

Warwick and Sue Hoban travelled to Colac to collect the photograph in January. Warwick's grandmother, May Louise Elizabeth Holden is on the left of the picture and his great grandparents in the centre.

Warwick was introduced to the three Colac people who were associated with the photograph during the thirty-two years it was in Colac. From left: Khalid Eldib, Warwick Hoban, Andrew McIntosh and Louise Loubey.

A video of how this story unfolded and how we tracked down a descendant to give the photograph to has been produced and will soon be made available to members.

TROVE



The Farewell Banquet tendered to Rev. W. Ryan, Colac.

This wonderful image (albeit a little grainy) is one of the many treasures readily available to family historians on TROVE.

The photograph gives a rare view of the interior of the Victoria Hall and shows a willingness to cram as many people as possible into that space.

The occasion was a farewell dinner for Father Rev W A Ryan who was leaving Colac to take up work in the Camperdown parish. Rev Ryan had come to Colac from Ireland and during his seven years here had "earned the love of the people of his church by his kindly disposition and zeal in everything he appertained to the welfare of the church".

According to the article - which you can read in full in *The Advocate*, 30 August 1913 - it was a "large and representative gathering of all classes of the community". The hall was tastefully decorated and the stage covered in masses of palms, ferns and flowers with the wattle peeping forth "here and there".



Charles Harris - Brewer from Birmingham

Charles Harris and Amelia Gumbly emigrated with their five children on the *Crusader* from Birmingham in May 1870. After the birth and untimely death of a baby girl in Melbourne, and the birth of another son, Charles decided to move the family to Colac where he worked as a brewer. He later established his own brewing business, the first advertisements appearing in the Colac Herald in late 1875.

By March 1876 their tenth child was born in Colac, nine were still living. In an unimaginable series of events over the 20 weeks between the 6th of December 1876 and 20th April 1877, five of the children died from various illnesses.

Amelia was pregnant with their eleventh child when 10 year old Charles and 14 year old Harry died a day apart in December, followed two weeks later on Christmas Day, by four year old William. Just three months later, tragedy struck again when their twin daughters, Clara Violet and Anne Lily died, soon after their first birthday.

In February 1879 Charles was declared insolvent with huge debts citing his inability to work due to a severe accident, deaths and sickness in the family. Charles died in Melbourne of tuberculosis in 1888 and his remains were brought to Colac for burial.

When Amelia died in Melbourne in 1921, her remains were also brought to Colac to be buried. Local residents, Mrs Morrow and Mrs Belsar were publicly thanked for their kindness. Even though the family had left the district many years beforehand, the bond with Colac remained strong.

Unusual Request with Good Outcome

We recently had an unusual request from overseas. In the early 1990s three exchange students became friends while living in California. One was from Colac and the others were from Sweden and the Netherlands.

Over time they had lost contact and one of the ladies was coming to Australia later this year and hoping to reconnect with the Colac exchange student. The only problem was that the family had left the district thirty years ago.

A call was put out to our local members and within a few days we were able to organise contact between the parties. A good outcome and a very happy reunion is anticipated later this year.
