

media

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Colac & District Family History Group Inc

e-newsletter Issue 1 2022

A Message from our President

As we begin a new year and we reflect, let us be proud of our achievements under different and sometimes difficult circumstances.

Many thanks to all involved for your support and contributions, either remotely or face to face (when we could), and we hope for more normal proceedings during the coming year.

Wishing you a safe and happy 2022.

Diana McGarvie



Opening Hours for 2022

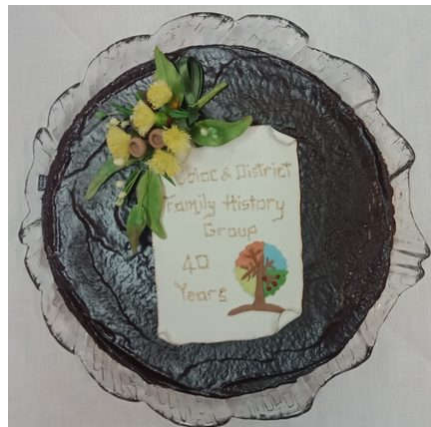
The group had planned to return to normal opening hours from the beginning of this year, but the Omicron variant has meant that we will continue to be open for visitors BY APPOINTMENT ONLY.

All visitors must provide evidence of being fully vaccinated before being admitted into the History Centre. Check our website prior to your visit for any changes in arrangements and please contact our secretary giving as much notice and as much information as possible about your visit. e. secretary@colacfamilyhistory.org.au

40th Birthday

Twenty twenty-one was meant to be a year of celebrations to mark our forty years of service but many of the plans were curtailed due to Covid. We managed to hold a small celebration at the end of the year with a slide show highlighting past and present volunteers and various group activities followed by afternoon tea.

Several early members attended the afternoon tea along with current members and volunteers and there was a traditional cutting of the cake, by past and current presidents. The cake was prepared and decorated by Lexie Picken, From Left: Molly Veale, Diana McGarvie and Liz Spence.



Technology & Equipment Update

Since the beginning of Covid, we have relied on our available technology to continue the work of the family history group and to keep our volunteers connected and occupied.

The experience proved that we could introduce flexible, safe and supported volunteering at short notice and it also provided the opportunity to explore options that would enhance future volunteering experiences and better outcomes for everyone.

When we were able to return to the history centre, we undertook a complete audit and review of our current equipment and, with advice from our information technology volunteers Bernie and Phil, future needs and future possibilities were established.

It was determined that we needed an immediate upgrade of our current server and a new internet server would make volunteering from home more accessible and far more reliable than the current set up. We applied for, and were successful in obtaining a grant from South West Community Foundation. The upgrade has been completed and the new internet server is currently under construction.

It was also identified that several very old computers needed replacing and we thank the Colac Library, who donated three second-hand computers following their recent changeover to Geelong Library. We also applied for and received a grant from the Bendigo Bank through their Community Enterprise, for a new computer for the Research Officer to use. The computer has been purchased and is currently being prepared for connection to the network. Following an appeal, several second-hand screens have been donated which will enable our volunteers to work with double screens while researching and transcribing or doing data entry.

Finally we were also successful in obtaining a grant through the Federal Government Volunteer Grants Program through Dan Tehan MP to complete the upgrade of our equipment and technology requirements. The last two years have limited the fundraising capabilities of the group and we are very grateful for all of these donations and to the organisations that provide grants for volunteer groups.

Covid Words and Phrases

New words to add to the Covid vocabulary. As this pandemic progresses, our language is keeping pace and new words or phrases punctuate our daily speech. Since our last newsletter, “lockdowns” seem to be phasing out and now it is all vaccinations and tests.

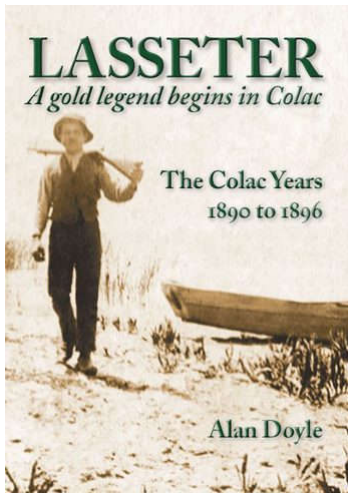
We can add jabs, jabbed, strollout, single-vaxxed, double-vaxxed, triple-vaxxed or boosted... and of course anti-vaxxers. We are also talking about PCR's - *polymerase chain reaction* - (*who knew what that stood for -yet we use it like medical professionals!*) and RATs - *rapid antigen tests*. Another new addition to the list has to be Wordle. Described as “the sour dough starter of Omicron”, it is currently the fastest growing fad.

If there are new words that have become part of your everyday conversation relating to the various strains of Covid or the pandemic experience, please share them with us.

Book Release

After several years of research, Alan Doyle is about to release his first book. It is the story of Lasseter (of Lasseter's Reef fame) and the time he spent in Colac. Alan is anxiously

awaiting the first copies to be returned from the printer and the book will soon be available for purchase.



Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting of the Colac & District Family History Group is held on the second Tuesday of February each year. Office Bearers and Committee Members are elected or re-appointed and any special business is taken care of. The quarterly General Meeting follows. The AGM is due to be held on Tuesday, 8th February at 1:30pm, followed by the General Meeting at 2pm. Due to Covid restrictions, there will not be afternoon tea on this occasion. All members are welcome. Please RSVP to: secretary@colacfamilyhistory.org.au

SECRETARY NEEDED

All positions will be declared vacant. After more than ten years as secretary of the group, Norma Bakker will be standing down and we need a replacement. The secretarial duties include minute taking, preparing agendas, checking mail and emails and distributing to appropriate parties or responding as required.



Norma is willing to support the incoming secretary for the first twelve months if needed. If you have administration skills and are interested in becoming more involved in the family history group, you would be made very welcome. The group now has limited tenure for office bearers. Nomination forms are available from: secretary@colacfamilyhistory.org.au

A Serendipitous Moment

Bill and Margaret never knew what happened to their little stillborn daughter, who they had named Maree. A moment of serendipity occurred when Bill came along to our May general

meeting last year. On what would have been their first born baby's 60th birthday, the couple were able to place a plaque on her resting place in the Colac Cemetery



[Click here to read Bill & Margaret's story](#)

Volunteer Award

In December The Colac & District Family History Group was presented with a National Volunteer Award for commitment and dedication to the community by finding innovative ways to continue our volunteer work and service to the community throughout the pandemic. The presentation was broadcast through Dan Tehan MP's facebook page.



Memberships

Thank you to all members who have renewed your memberships. Your support is greatly appreciated and provides essential funding to keep the group viable and financially secure. A discount was offered to all members for the 2021-2022 year and that offer will expire on the 28th February. After that date renewals will revert to \$20 per year.

Aircraftwoman Phyllis Adrian Dunne - WAAAF



The National Archives of Australia are in the process of scanning the files of all World War II service personnel. On checking which files had recently been scanned, the Service Record of Phyllis Adrian Dunne from Colac appeared.

A three-hour experiment followed. How much information could be found from readily available resources and enhanced by records from the family history group. Click on the link below to read what was found about Phyllis' life story, including the resources that helped bring it together.

Aircraftwoman Phyllis Adrian DUNNE

Family Reunions

The Holien/Holian and Armstrong family reunion that was cancelled last year has now been rescheduled for Saturday, 19th March at St Mary's Primary School. If you are a descendant of either of these families and would like more information, contact Betty Gusak on e: cactus@restdown.com or mob: 0447 553611 RSVP by 6th March. There will be a display of the family tree in the window of the History Centre at COPACC the week leading up to the reunion and the centre will open for a limited time in the afternoon for guests at the reunion.

Judy Newman from Queensland hopes to return to Colac later this year, meeting up with other descendants of the Brumm and Lyons families, early hoteliers in the district. Some of the family have been connected through articles that appeared on our Almost Forgotten and ColacFamilyHistory facebook pages. If you are related to either the Lyons or Brumm families and would like to connect with Judy before they come to Colac, please contact media@colacfamilyhistory.org.au

Special Occasion at Elliminyt Church

This photograph was recently donated to our group and it is believed to be the 75th anniversary of the Elliminyt Methodist Church. We posted it on our facebook page and several of the people have been identified. If you think that you know who any of these people are, please contact media@colacfamilyhistory.org.au



There have been more than 100 stories posted on our Almost Forgotten project facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/almostforgotten1900> It is worthwhile following to keep up to date with the project and learn about the people that have been researched, some of our earliest settlers. Also find out about more about our offer to share the cost of pre 1900 Colac and district death certificates.

Webinars

The family history group has access to a large number of webinars on various topics relating to genealogy. Some are very specific to researching in Australia. We are considering organising screening of these webinars to small groups at the History Centre

outside of usual opening ours. For a list of titles and topics being considered and for more information, contact Norma on secretary@colacfamilyhistory.org.au

Tips and Anecdotes from an Experienced Historian

Betty Horskins, one of our members, is an experienced genealogist who has travelled Australia giving talks to budding family historians. She is connected to the Dredge and Gamble families of the district. We recently discovered her name in a 1991 Rockhampton History Group newsletter as a connection to help with Victorian research.

Betty has had some interesting and funny experiences during her travels and has agreed to let us share the following anecdote and some tips and stories in future newsletters.

At a Victorian country town I was doing a talk on using newspapers for family history research, not just for Births, Deaths and Marriages, but much more.

What was the weather the day a person was born? What was the write up on their ship if any? Was the ship, as it came through the heads or off Cape Otway, transmitted to Melbourne by electric telegraph? What was the year? As it could have been the early ones when the telegraph was installed. Are there any reports on the family? e.g. Dennis Dredge and his life. News of the day? etc

At this talk a lady came up to me afterwards and asked did I think there would be anything in the local papers about her her GG grandfather as he was just an ordinary person. Ninety-nine percent of items in the paper are usually about ordinary people.

She said he was President of the local cricket club for years and a farmer from the first land settlements. I told her to look at the cricket reports - most will be scores etc. and look at the Annual General Meeting's to see if "Mr. ... was re-elected as President as he is an outstanding person and has run the club in an excellent way etc." Therefore you get some insight into his character. The Agricultural shows for Best Bull in Show etc. Read whatever you can think of.

"OK", she said and went off, came back about 5 minutes later and said "I have been thinking about what you said and there might be something in the paper about him as he did suicide by cutting his throat".



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