

ANGLESEA & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc

NEWSLETTER No 29 - JANUARY 1995

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JANUARY JOTTINGS -

Although there is no January meeting, the affairs of "State" by no means halt. With the Museum open each Sunday afternoon during the holiday season, an opportunity is given for visitors to learn something of our town's history, as well as some locals who just don't manage to visit the premises at other times during the year. Members who offer their time for these "openings" are often rewarded for their efforts through the meeting up with interesting folk, e.g. On a recent Sunday an English visitor called in after seeing the Pearse graves at Airey's Inlet - her name was spelt with an "s" too - far less common than the "c" , and she was anxious to discover anything we might have on the afore-mentioned Thomas Pearse and where he'd come from. A very pleasant surprise to find he too came from Devon, the village mentioned in our publication "Airey's Inlet - A History" was quite near her husband's birthplace. She went away happily armed with a copy of the Bark Hut booklet and a firm resolve upon her return to the U.K. to establish some sort of link with the two Pearses. Another lass came looking for a photo of Kalimna guest house at Lorne where her parents spent their honeymoon. She wanted to present them with a framed photo as a Golden Wedding Anniversary gift - something unusual, unexpected and very acceptable. We were able to put her in touch with the Lorne Historical Society who do hold Kalimna photos in their collection. We are always happy to have members offer for this duty - if you have not attempted it before you'll have the company of an "experienced" member alongside.

The information caravan has also been staffed by members on Tuesdays during January - another interesting job. It is quite amazing how often visitors inquire about the 12 Apostles - some don't actually know the exact number, but they want to get there, often not realising that there is some distance between Anglesea on the early part of the Great Ocean Road and this famous outcrop of "rocks".

Airey's Art Show - Once again our photo collection was much admired at this venue on January 1st & 2nd. Keith, Lindsay and Jim had a hand in getting it there and setting up - Claire Roberts and her very willing band of helpers were on hand to answer questions and take orders. A tidy sum to Society coffers was the result - thank you Airey's members and friends.

General - Since our last newsletter the AGM has come and gone as well as the annual dinner (a report later on). We are fortunate to have such a dedicated President in Val Amery, and again she leads our Society for 1995. Jim too deserves our appreciation - he's often called on to move "this" to "there" and back again and always does so very willingly. The committee is right behind our energetic President Val and likewise, members can show their enthusiasm by accepting responsibilities when the opportunity presents itself.

Acquisitions - From Mr & Mrs Garry Armstrong the book "History of Lord Somers Camp and Power House" by Alan Gregory also the attractive N.A.B. Calendars, 1957 - 1994. Tennis racquet and bowls together with case from Mrs J O'Donnell. From Mrs Joan Murch, Receipts for Boat Shed fees in 1951 for £2-10 and postcard of early 4 Kings Roadhouse taken by Robert Pockley Studio. Father A Eames has again been most generous presenting the Society with further aboriginal artefacts and a small cabinet. The Society has purchased two more volumes, one depicting War Memorials throughout Victoria (yes, Anglesea is featured) and a book on computing to assist the President and Secretary on their quest for knowledge!

Various functions have been attended. We were represented by Mrs E Lawn and Mr A Stanley at Winchelsea when tourism planning was discussed with Shire representatives. Mr & Mrs J Blomeley and Arthur again attended an Environment Plan working group at Anglesea. This input by Society members to Shire policy formation is of value where our interests and views are recorded.

Members and friends were entertained and informed at our 13th annual dinner. Our guest speakers Mr Frank & Master Nicholas Flynn gave us a fascinating glimpse of "Shipwrecks in the Surf". We will be adding further insights into maritime tragedies when members in conjunction with Anglesea Probus Club visit the "Mary Rose" exhibition in Warrnambool on February 17th.

Our November excursion was full of interest and diversity. The Old Mint building (H.Q. of the R.H.S.V.), the magnificent Gothic Chamber of the A.N.Z. Collins Street premises, the breathtaking panorama from the Rialto Tower platform, the refurbished Old Treasury building at the top of Collins on Spring, now housing the Melbourne exhibition and finally an unscheduled stop to view Mr Myer's famous windows! A very taxing day but memorable.

Mid October President Val and Secretary Shirley were guests of the Surf Coast Shire at a luncheon at Barwon Park, an opportunity to meet the Governor of Victoria Mr Richard McGarvie and Mrs McGarvie. Val and treasurer Loris attended a very happy get together of local organisations as guests of the Surf Club in their very fine club house.

On November 11th - an appropriate choice of date being Armistice Day - the Tourism Authority launched an attractive brochure on the Great Ocean Road, acknowledging the part played by World War 1 ex-servicemen in its construction. The Society has fine records of this slice of history. A convoy of vintage and veteran cars, town criers, R.S.L. members, colour guard from the Queenscliffe fort, members of historical societies dressed in fashions of yesteryear, all combined for a lively, vivid scene.

COASTAL CHRISTIANITY - One of the early volumes in our continuing series "Along the Great Ocean Road" has been revised and now includes in its segment on the Anglesea Uniting Church details of the new building and opening ceremony. The establishment and history of the Lorne churches is now included. There has been a steady sale of books over the past few months, and this of course helps our financial position. A recent phone call from a bookshop in Swan Hill seeking copies of "The Great Ocean Road" shows how our reputation spreads.

FIRST MEETING Saturday Feb 4th at 8pm 1995 - A special to start the year! We are fortunate to have as speakers Messrs Graeme Wilson and David Hume. They sailed on one of the legs of the maiden voyage on the "Endeavour" replica and will give us their impressions first hand of this re-creation of history.

Interesting speakers are being approached for future get-togethers and details will be announced through The ECHO and at monthly meetings. It is hoped to have a special luncheon towards the end of March - possibly Friday the 31st - more on that later.

LOOKING AROUND WITH LINDS - ANGLESEA'S OLD HOUSES

Happened to be taking our dog for a walk along the river green the other day when this chap (obviously an American tourist) came up to me and asked- "hey, where's the oldest house in this seaside town?" "Well" said I, "see that single fronted red roofed house over the road - that was once owned by a Captain Webb and he built that in 1915. That one on the corner with the blue facia boards was once owned by the Bradleys, and they built that around about 1922. The one to the left and a little way up the hill named 'Debonair' was once the seaside holiday home of the Revd. Arthur Tonge - he would have built that about 1915." "You don't call them old!" said the tourist. "Unfortunately most of our pioneer homes have been claimed by either bushfires, white ants or developers" I replied.

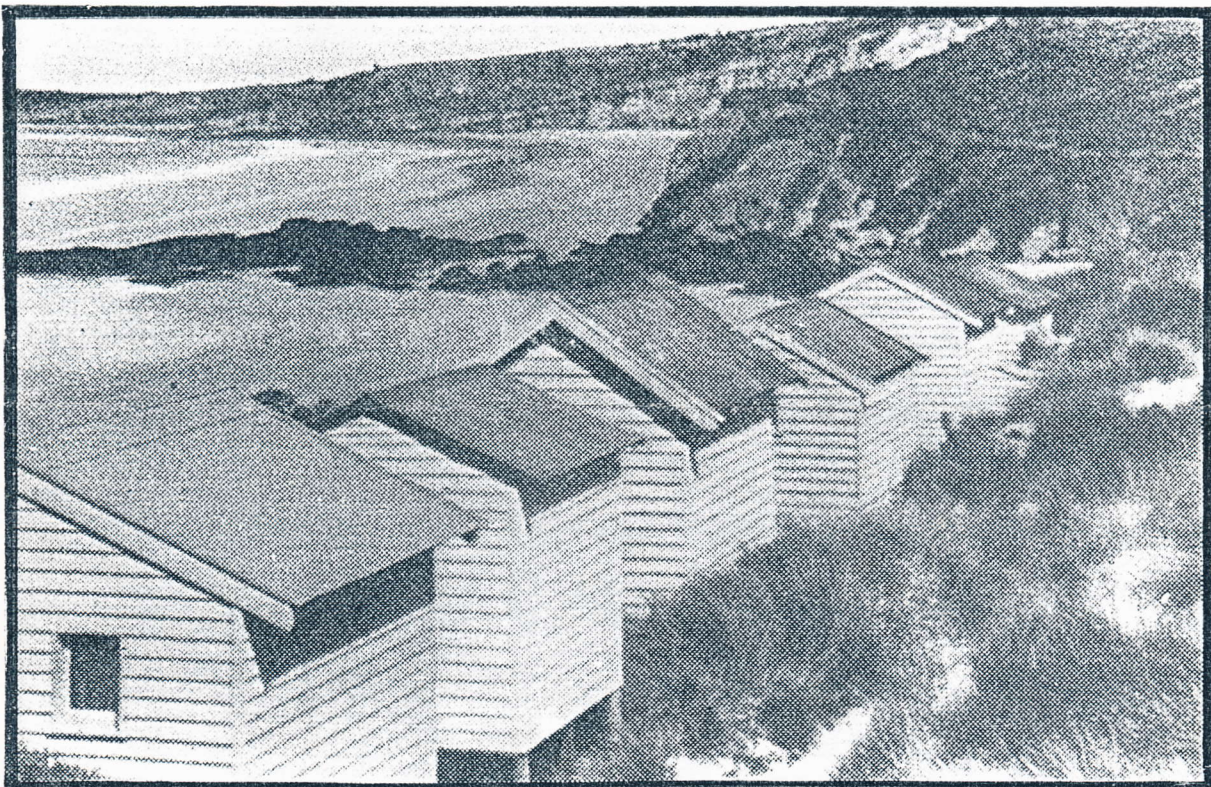
"Really" said the bemused tourist. "If you want to see the oldest dwelling still standing, go up Parker Street (that's the one just over the road), to the corner of Jackson Street, and on your right you will see a place with a white tower, it's called 'Blink Bonnie' - the first part of that was built for Alex. McMillan back in 1886" said I. "Now your talking!" said the tourist as he left to explore. Our dog by this time had disappeared into the distance chasing seagulls !

Ascertaining when an Anglesea house was constructed is not as easy as it might appear - there are plenty of traps for the unwary ! Before the turn of the century, the early Shire rate books (especially those for the west side of the river) were notorious for their inaccuracies regarding the year a cottage was actually erected.

These errors came about through the lack of communication, as rough tracks made our coastal area somewhat difficult to access. The rate collectors from either Shire were said to have called only once a year to inspect for new constructions. There were no building regulations as we know them today - people just went ahead and built or subdivided and notified afterwards.

Sometimes a long duration passed before the Shire Office was informed of change. This of course now makes accurate research almost impossible. For instance, I have seen an early Shire rate book with solely vacant land recorded against a certain lot, only to read in the Geelong papers of the same time that Mr & Mrs So and So had spent a delightful holiday in their new cottage at Anglesea River - obviously on the same site.

The first pioneers such as Henry Bubb, the Murrays, Anna Mackay, Emil Sichlau and the Brearleys all settled on the east side of the river - none of their houses survived. Holiday cottages appeared on the west side of the river after George Noble subdivided a portion of his land as the "Gladstone Estate" in 1884. Some Geelong historians state that McMillan's "Blink Bonnie" (1886/7) was the first structure to be built on the far side of the river - I do not agree with them, as both Bannister's hut and Whyte's cottage were both recorded before this.

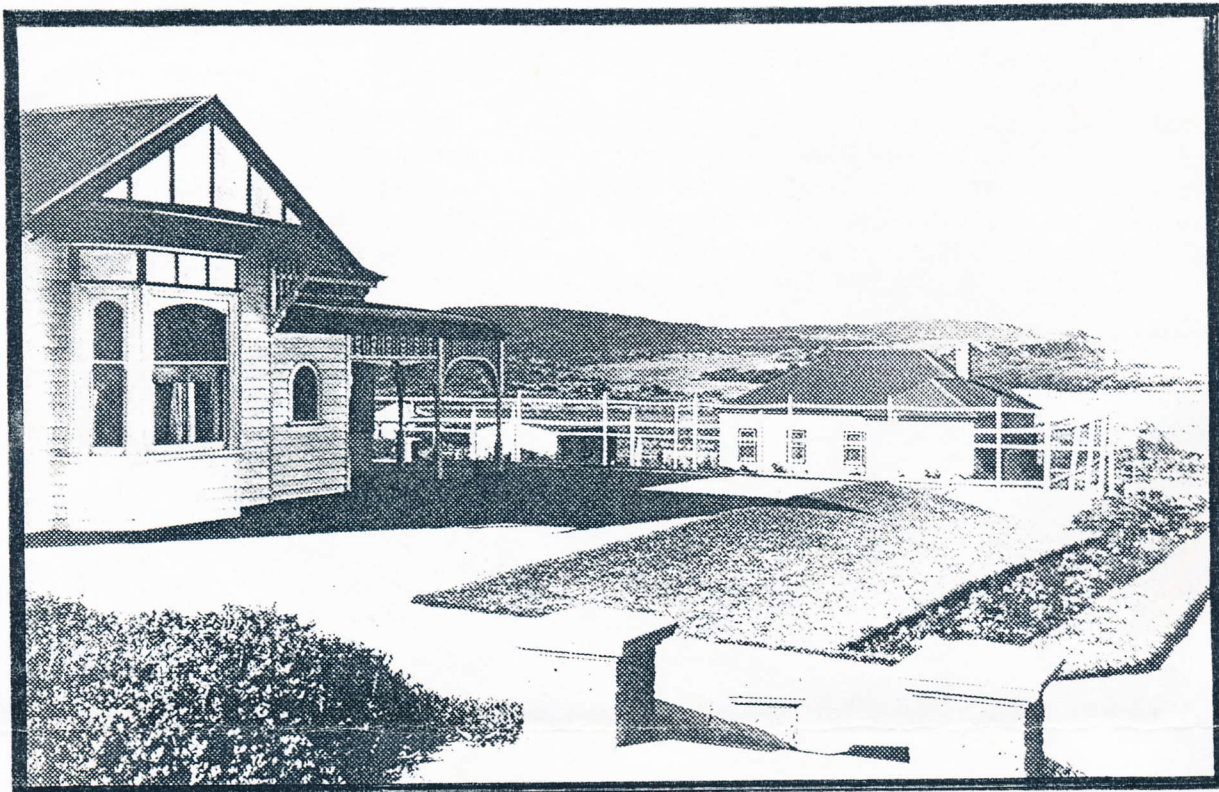


BATHING BOXES ON THE ANGLESEA BEACH - EARLY 1940'S

Fred Whyte and Henry Bannister purchased their land in 1884. Whyte had his completed cottage with substantial fencing, good waterhole, furniture and boat listed for Auction by September 1886. It is obvious that Fred Whyte would have taken some time to achieve all these improvements, before deciding to sell and move to Ballarat. Surely this would have put him first on the scene. Both these properties were later acquired by Frederick Harvey, a grain Merchant in Geelong. Bannister's was burnt by the 1919 fire, and Whyte's cottage was demolished in 1963 to make way for a new house in Gardiner Avenue.

So there you are - as I see it, in the whole of Anglesea, McMillan's "Blink Bonnie" (built 1886/7) is the oldest one remaining, with William Colledge's cottage (rebuilt after the 1908 fire) in what is today known as Holmwood Avenue, taking second place for those still standing. By the way - has anyone seen a white dog around ? She likes to chase seagulls, and answers to the name of "Woofa!"

Lindsay Braden..



BON AIR - THE SICHLAU HOME -