

INVERLOCH HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.

Newsletter No. 251 June 2020



FROM THE PRESIDENT

The year 2020 will enter our minds and memories for the Coronavirus 19 worldwide problem which brought us almost virtually to a halt. So many things have changed, and it has focused our minds on the values and importance of what we did before the virus struck. At the moment Victoria is loosening the 'chains' and restrictions of how we conducted ourselves during the virus, but as we are all well aware, we are still required to be vigilant and careful.

The Inverloch Historical Society Inc. like all organizations within the community, had to alter its way of doing things - no meetings, no activities, changes in how we communicate and do things - and so the list goes on. The feature of the past twelve weeks for us has been the transfer of our storage from Bear St. to A'Beckett St. The Society is most grateful to the Bass Coast Council for the use of our new storage. It is spacious, central and very clean. A lot of work has been done under current difficulties. Our hard working Secretary - Lynn Kirk, has done so much work regarding transferring our original Accession Register from the original hand written one to a digital one on the computer. Further, Lynn has been busy organizing and commencing to sort out what has already arrived at our new storage. In the meantime our Treasurer Harry Dunn and myself have bought, delivered and erected equipment and materials for use in the storage - four new 4 drawer filing cabinets, four heavy duty metal shelves from Bunnings and numerous plastic boxes for the storage of 3D objects. We are very grateful to our Treasurer's two sons Peter and Eddie, who initially gave the shed a thorough clean, from top to bottom. They have also assisted us greatly with their youthful strengths in the moving of various objects and pieces of furniture - a huge mapping cabinet from the Rocket Shed to A'Beckett St, and the removal of rubbish to the transfer station. We have also had the cooperation of Tony Speed with his practical assistance in moving our materials from one place to another. Over the many years, the Society has been adding to special funds to eventually buy equipment and materials for the day when we have our own storage. The current Committee along with our members and understanding citizens within the Inverloch township and district, are most appreciative of our past office bearers and efforts from members now sadly passed away, who for many years struggled to achieve

a central storage, such as we have now. I am sure they would be well pleased with what has been achieved in the past few months. The Society's funds have been well spent, and we still have sufficient in storage in our further planning for improving the efficiency and organization within the Society. Secretary Lynn has purchased special preservation materials to protect our valuable assets, and these are not cheap, but they are necessary. As our new storage is developing, we are already becoming increasingly aware of the wide ranging things we own and wish to preserve - everything from a photograph, a large map, a slightly tattered and stained newspaper and a wooden boat which is being kindly stored away for us by local car preservation enthusiast Jack Miller. We were greatly amused in recent days when our Patron and Order of Australia recipient - Eulalie Brewster, after viewing the new storage, declared she was thrilled by what has been achieved and what she had seen, but felt we might be running out of space already! After the September 2019 Exhibition in the Hub, the Information Centre Management enquired of us could we please display the Rocket Man and the life saving equipment we had specially created, and place it in the Information Centre for further display for a few weeks. This was achieved by Ray Burtt and Rod Petitt in time for the Christmas holiday period and into January. So successful was the display that we were asked would we mind if we left the display up for a few more weeks? We were delighted to cooperate, but then the Coronavirus 19 did not permit us to take it down, so the Rocket Man and his equipment have only been removed in recent days. It's been quite a saga, but it's been convenient and handy to have to leave the Rocket Man where he was! He is now in his correct place in the Rocket Shed, and during the next few weeks Ray Burtt and the team will set up the permanent display, ready for an official launch.

In our last Newsletter (April-May), we featured an article about Brown's Kiosk, when Lesley Brown and her family ran the place. At that time we did not have a photograph - and I must report we now have two pictures of the place - one a splendid photograph and the other a painting reproduced on a postcard. Further, we have had numerous responses on the internet from people who keenly remembered Brown's kiosk. In its latter days, I well remember myself how popular it was, and despite not being in the Carlton Lygon St. style, it was still a great place, in fact better, with a view of the sea!

"RAMBLER REMEMBERS"

- a trip on the Inlet and the Tarwin.

In the March 2019 edition of the Newsletter, I included some writings by 'Rambler' and the visit to Inverloch. The March Newsletter highlighted the train journey from Korumburra to Outtrim. In this section of the writings, 'Rambler' reaches Inverloch. Please note that I have included the words as written, punctuation - spelling mistakes and others. It was written in 1909.

By the way - after reading both the railway trip and this boat trip, was "RAMBLER" an Edwardian gentleman or lady? I'd like to hear your thoughts on that one!

"Lunch over we were soon on the beach which was only a few minutes walk from the house. Inverloch is a nice place, very quiet and clean. There are 50 or 60 houses, 2 Hotels, 1 small Coffee Palace, but most of the houses take in a few boarders in the busy season. This was over when we got there. This place is situated between Cape Patterson to the west and Cape Liptrap to the east of us. We were staying on high ground and could see the above points with a distant sight of the steam boats going to Sydney or Melb. Way. Could see a good part of the Inlet and the Enterence or rip which is a dangerous place. There is only one small vessel trading between here and Melbourne named the Ripple and is a sailing vessel but has a small motor & propeller to assist in case of losing the wind at the enterence and in the Inlet. This ship could only pass the bar at high tide.

To show the extent of the Inlet we had a days trip on it. We to the number of 14 engaged the motor yatch and left the jetty at 10 o'clock. After sailing some miles up the captain cast his Anchor. He then produced fishing lines to supply us all of us, and baited the hooks with clams and that kept him fully employed as there were more nibbles than catches. However there was plenty of fun as many especially the ladies had not tried fishing before. Flathead whiting and eels were the principle catch. After about an hour The Anchor was lifted and we continued up the Inlet and by and by entered the Tarwin a beautiful wide and tidal river. Proceeded until we came to the Tarwin West Jetty. Here the boat was tied up & all went ashore carrying our provision & Billy to have a picnic lunch on shore. I got a snapshot of the river & followed to where the smoke was seen in the titree near by. After lunch a stroll up the river bank to see a Grave stone in this solitary place. A drover from Western Port was crossing a mob of horses here and something going wrong he was drowned just opposite. His body was recovered and buried just where it was landed, and the mans widow had this stone placed here 15 years after.

We then returned to the boat & were all photoed and were taken some miles further up the river to a Bridge & Jetty called Tarwin East. This is as far as the ship Ripple can go & the goods for the settlers higher up are landed here. Our boats head was turned homeward & we had a pleasant afternoon sail back, arriving at the starting point at 6.30. The whole days run costing us only 2/- each besides having got a large amount of information from the Captain W. Anderson who tried his best to please us passingers. Besides running the Dora he and his wife keep a very good boarding house for visitors to the Inlet & can put up about 20."

REAL ESTATE IN INVERLOCH.

Property and real estate (and of course their value's) are always topics of seriousness and deep thought whether it's 1898, 1928, 1969 or even today. The Society has a collection of real estate posters and information sheets ranging from Victorian times, through to the mid 1970's.

Two of our important fully framed prints are in fact real estate posters. They are excellent examples of particular kinds of art work. They are also very good examples of the language of the industry, where exaggeration, claims and suggestions for buying are quite remarkable.

In recent times we have been given an ad from the "POWLETT EXPRESS" of 1928, showing the north west corner of Inverloch. One should immediately note the invitation -

"If you want to make money and enjoy life, buy a lot now". Well I never! One should note the 1930's Depression was nigh! Note also, possibly to your astonishment that a railway line to Inverloch is assured. One should also note that what they call Beach St., is now Bear St. McIntosh St., is still there, but notice Duckett St. does not exist in 2020. Currently the area in question, advertised in this advertisement is in fact the industrial area of Inverloch, so was any block sold for housing?

The Society welcomes any information.

**PIGGOTT'S
PIGGOTT'S**

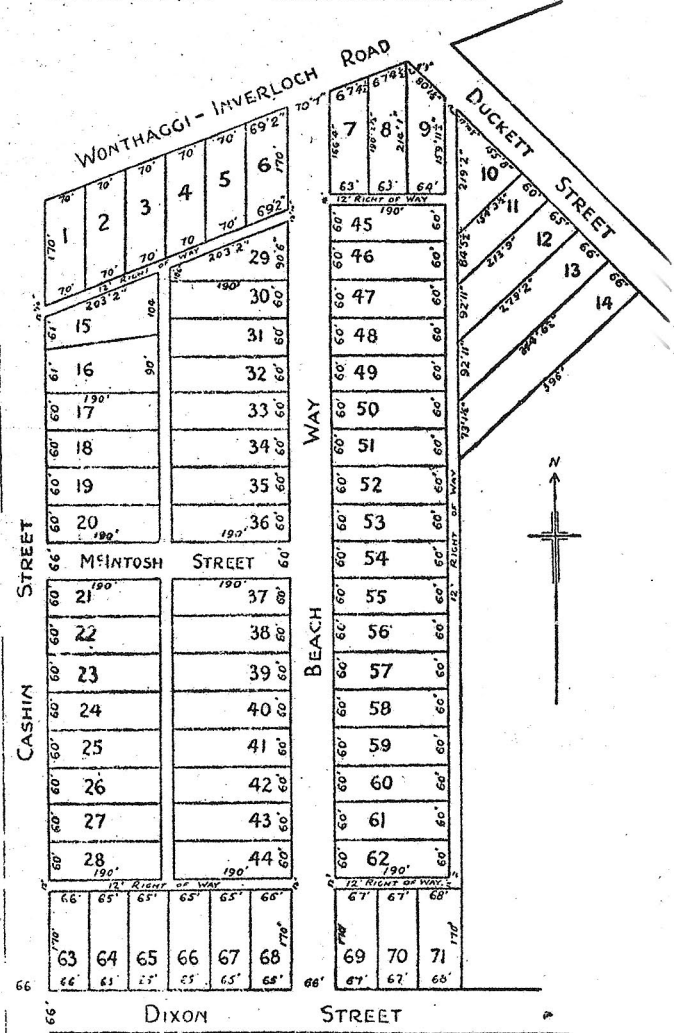
Wonthaggi Land and Estate Agency,
Redg.

GRAHAM STREET

**BEAUTIFUL
INVERLOCH**

If you want to make money and enjoy life, buy a Lot NOW. An extension of the Railway Line is assured. Prices are Low and the TERMS ARE EASY. No interest is charged on balance owing.

We will build a House to order for you on your selected block on Small Deposit and EASY TERMS. Boating, Bathing, Fishing, Golf, Tennis, Bowls, Cricket, &c.



WHAT IS A MECHANICS INSTITUTE?

As we travel the length and breadth of our very beautiful state, you will probably have noticed many country public halls described at the front of the building as a MECHANICS INSTITUTE. For many this is a puzzle as to its name and what it exactly means. To many it is simply a local country hall. Many of these halls, be they big or small, are not used as much as we may care to remember fifty years or so ago, for its role as a dance hall or picture theatre, has passed. Many members will remember with fondness such gatherings, and despite smaller church halls, the local halls, whether it was called a Mechanics Institute or Returned Serviceman's Hall, it was the centre piece of the town, especially when local travel was difficult to other parts of the state or your nearest large town. The local country Annual Ball, where everybody dressed up for the yearly pageant, was a true centre piece of how country folk could dress up and conduct themselves with great dignity, just like the 'toffs' and 'hobnobs' in Melbourne.

But back to the name - MECHANICS INSTITUTE. Now in terms of Inverloch itself on 28th. April 1908, the records of the Inverloch Mechanics Institute set out by the Committee stated the following -

"For the diffusion of Literary, Artistic and other knowledge, and the mutual improvement and recreation of members by means of a Library of Reference and Circulation, the delivery of Lectures and other entertainments and the formation of classes - but no political or religious controversy will be allowed".

Now this may seem a little stiff and formal as to its usage, especially to our minds in 2020, yet there are still many activities within our current 'Inverloch Community Hub' that fit comfortably into that old description.

Then where did all this business of a "Mechanics Institute" start and what actually happened? It will be a complete surprise to many to learn that the whole thing originated in Glasgow, Scotland way back in 1799, when a Professor George Birkbeck conducted a series of lectures. free of charge, for the working man of Glasgow, so that he might - "agreeably occupy his mental vacancy in the evenings".

It proved so hugely popular and successful that the idea spread throughout the whole of Britain and the Colonies, such as Australia and New Zealand.

Consequently halls or institutes of varying descriptions were set up in Victoria, aided and encouraged greatly by financial grants from various sources, for books and building, principally from governments at numerous levels.

A typical Institute was set up with a Reference and Lending Library, complete with a reading room. Some of the larger Institutes in Victoria's major towns also had a museum, a workshop and a laboratory - places such as Ballarat and Bendigo.

Here in Inverloch fund raising for an Institute began in

Here in Inverloch fund raising for an Institute began in 1888. A design by William Youll in 1897 .was accepted and it was built by James Nation at 14 A'Beckett St. - both were local people. The building was destroyed by fire in the early morning of 30th. July 1978 following a dance the previous night, entitled "An In Bad Taste Dance".

The Inverloch Institute served the town well with activities set out in their original description, but also in

wider activities where charges were made to hire the place. Clive Newton, a local man, ran movies for many years on the traditional Saturday night, alternating with a dance, which was particularly popular with the younger folk. The hall was also used for State and Federal Elections, as well as church services.

Today, it is surprising to learn that some Mechanics Institutes still exist and operate in almost the original form. The City of Melbourne still has its original Institute and building, occupying a prominent spot in Collins St. Today we know it as the Athenaeum where its theatre is still used. The most fascinating Mechanics Institute is in Ballarat, still on its original site and still offering many of the original features. Visitors are welcome to drop in and tour the building. It is a classic Gold Rush building, filled with treasures from Ballarat's fascinating past.

As a community centre in Inverloch, and having participated in various activities within many parts of the building myself - the library, reading area, the stadium and the Hub for exhibitions, the community house for meetings - all testify to the tremendous usage of the place, and a reminder that the old building memories which lasted for 80 years, still has life and energy in the present centre.

MEETINGS (! - ?)

At the moment regulations forbid us to hold our monthly General Meetings normally held in the RSL Hall. So far our only meeting for the year was held in February at the Anglican Church, and I wish to thank the church for letting us use their excellent facilities, with its large parking area.

A big thank you to Ian & Wendy McBurnie for organizing our late replacement venue. The Committee will meet on June 15th. at 2pm. I'll be in touch regarding the venue



A'BECKETT STREET, INVERLOCH

Image No.37 of the Inverloch Historical Society's collection of restored photographs shows A'Beckett Street in the 1950's with the Inverloch Mechanics Institute building on the left. Below is looking up A'Beckett Street in the late 1980's, how times have changed.



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