

Korumburra & District Historical Society

Newsletter Issue 58 • Summer 2025

Established 1967

**Korumburra and District
Historical Society Incorporated**

A0034717Y

ABN 76 768 108 144

Korumburra Community Hub

Little Commercial Street

Korumburra

Website

www.korumburrahistory.com.au

Committee

President: Bob Newton

Secretary: Janet Wilson

Treasurer: Barbara Burton

Newsletter Sub-Committee

Janet Wilson

Linda Fisher

Gerald Brocklesby

Contact

secretary@korumburrahistory.com.au

Monthly Meetings

Public meetings of the Society are held on the first Thursday of the month.

New members are welcome.

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From the Secretary

At our Annual Meeting in November we elected new office bearers: President, Bob Newton; Vice President, Helen Comer; Treasurer, Barbara Burton; Secretary, Janet Wilson; Assistant Secretary, Linda Fisher. These five elected office bearers with the addition of two others elected, Marion Shuttleworth and Dennis Conn, form the committee. Bob Newton in making a brief president's report, thanked all who had contributed to the society through the year.

We spent time thinking about an early doctor in the area, Dr. Strahan, who when he left Korumburra spent 30 years as the doctor at Carlton Football Club. We spent some time discussing coffee palaces, and there was much interest in revisiting the runaway train of 1955. There's another story of one of our early doctors included in this edition.

We'll be setting up an exhibition of photos at the Korumburra Show, and books of the society will be on sale. As well as books of the society we will have Bob Newton's books, and "Lines, Mines, People and Places", Barry Sykes' wonderfully detailed book on the history of coal mining and the railways focussing on Outtrim and Jumbunna.

Our next meeting will be on Thursday 4 December at 1.00 p.m. at the Hub. Our room, usually open on a Tuesday afternoons, will not open on 30 December, or during January.

Heritage Week will run from 18 April through to 18 May, and during this time we plan to have an event which will fit in with next year's theme, "Change".

Our members Gerald and Jane Brocklesby have moved to away from the local area, but with an interest in history have visited their closest Historical Society which has as it's by-words: "Today is Tomorrow's History". How true this is. Just one example of this is the walkway we now have to the main street. The upgrade of the main street is another part of our history.

There were several life memberships conferred at the Annual Meeting. More on this in the next newsletter.

**Please note that membership payments are due. They may be paid online into
BSB 063 515**

Account 1014263

Please put your name and add that it a membership payment.

Newsletter Contributions

Do you have any contributions, stories to share, or feedback for this newsletter?

Contact Janet Wilson:

secretary@korumburrahistory.com.au

Society Meetings

The next meetings of the society will be held in the Korumburra Hub building on Thursday 5 February and 5 March, at 1:00pm.

These times may change, so please could you confirm the time with us if you wish to attend. Visitors are always welcome, and we would really welcome new members.

We are more than happy to help people researching their families or seeking help in finding information on the history of Korumburra and the area of the former Korumburra Shire. Contact secretary@korumburrahistory.com.au. It would be good to make this contact to make an initial enquiry or to check that there will be people available at the Historical Society room.

History of Korumburra & District Historical Society

Compiled by Janet Wilson, this is the first instalment of a comprehensive account of the history of the Korumburra and District Historical Society.

September 26, 1966 Suggestion from Mrs. Ludge that a portion of land between the old and new Leongatha Road should be preserved as a park, together with the Crown land at Coal Creek, also a portion of a coal tunnel for future interest. The membership in 1966 was £1, or £10 for a life membership.

In **October 1966** a letter was written to the shire asking for use of the reception room at the shire for use in the holding of meetings, also asking for financial assistance, and provision of accommodation for the storing of historical objects.

June 1967 Discussion as to restoration of the old shire hall, and the possibility of it becoming a museum. Jaycees invited to the next meeting to discuss their plans for the establishment of a park in Leongatha Road.

July 1967 Jaycees, represented by Ted Brown, told of their plans to establish a park in the area between the South Gippsland Highway and Silkstone Road. They would welcome something of historical interest, suggesting an old style bullock dray, of which there were a couple in the district. They were interested in converting an "eyesore into a civic attraction". Mr. Cedric Rolfe had suggested the purchase of a steam engine would be a significant tourist attraction. Mr. Rolfe was invited to the next meeting to discuss his proposition. It was felt that it was reasonable given that the State Government, had given financial assistance to Bendigo for the restoration of an old mine. The secretary to make inquiries. Cr. Miles was intending to bring to the notice of council an area of land in the Leongatha Road mine lease which was still in its natural state, with the thought that it be preserved.

August 1967 Cedric Rolfe attended and spoke about obtaining a steam engine to be kept as an historical relic. D3 quoted at \$600, \$640 for an A2. Neither would be engines that had hauled coal from Korumburra. It was decided to make further inquiries in relation to this. Mr. Rolfe's offer of the services of the Model

Railway Association to build a model of the first engine to have hauled coal from Korumburra was accepted. Mr. Burnet spoke to the group about the establishment of the Bourke Street park.

September 1967 Approach to shire to support restoration of old shire building to become a museum.

October 1967 Mrs. Rough (nee Bowden), Mrs. Donnelly (nee Mackinolty) former residents and Mrs. Engleman (nee Emma Rusk), her brother an early bootmaker were welcomed to the annual meeting. Filing of material was becoming a problem. Dr. Bowden's history of the town had been serialised in the local paper. Histories of Korumburra C.W.A. and Korumburra Choral Society were presented for the collection.

December 1967 Deputation to shire with view to restoration of old shire hall, and possibility of space to store the society's collection, and museum.

February 1968 Members inspected an area of temporary accommodation in the old shire hall.

March 1968 Membership increase of 13 as a result of the display at the Rotary Fair in the Parish Hall. Rotary Fair historical display was of a good standard and well received. A house classified 'C'; by the National Trust was in danger of demolition. National Trust to be asked to visit the property.

April 1968 Log house at Poowong, the only log house in the district to be discussed with the National Trust as to its preservation. It had been classified 'C'. The Korumburra Cemetery Trust to establish a lawn cemetery. Aiso to install a tablet recognising district pioneers. Change of name of society – to be known as "Shire of Korumburra Historical Society". 200 pioneers questionnaires to be distributed. Ken Wallace-Dunlop informed the group that the log house had been built by his great-grandmother, Flora Rachel Wallace-Dunlop. She came to the district with her son John, and this was the original selection in Poowong. The building of the house was supervised by John Anthony Wallace-Dunlop,

completed around 1880. The house was one a few to survive the 1898 fires. Mr. Burnet spoke on the Jumbunna brick house, built by Mr. John Glew in 1879, one of the first in the area, and certainly the first brick house. The family had a brick kiln. The roof was brought in through Grantville. The area was known as Cora Lynn, and later as Jumbunna.

June 1968 Log house at Poowong in sound condition, owners looking to rebuild on the site in approximately five years. Guest speaker spoke on family of William Salmon who selected land in 1877, not related to the Salmon family in the area as at 1968. William Salmon married Catherine May Holmes, daughter of L.E.C. Holmes. The speaker, Miss Dossitor, had diaries written by Mr. Salmon from 1878. John Salmon and Arthur McKenzie Salmon, also at Poowong were brothers of William. Dr. Cutts (of Melbourne) bought the block that William Salmon was to develop. John Salmon built the first store in Poowong in 1879. The wedding of William Salmon and "Kitty" Holmes was held in the log house. Christenings were also held in the log house. The first cattle sale was held there in 1882, and was followed by a dance. 300 copies of the pioneer questionnaire were to be printed.

1968 July Speaker Mr. Adams from R.M.I.T. speaking on library collections said that "a town without a history is like a man without a soul". He stressed the importance of history as a study by school children, and that often it helped to broaden one's outlook. He recommended several books he considered to be valuable resources. He recommended that the society set up a biographical file of early settlers, and the formation of an historical committee to organise and plan research.

1968 August Brian Blake had interviewed Mrs. Henry Petersen, a member of the Olsen family in relation to the Danish settlement at Poowong. Brian also gave a reading of a published interview with the late Mr. Albert Olsen, which revealed quite a deal about the Danish settlement.

History News

1968 September President, Mr. Burnet in his annual report indicated that the greatest fillip of the year was the shire's provision of storage space for the society. The room in the old shire hall was ideal. He noted that "the future was not secure in this regard, but he felt that the needs of the society would not be overlooked". The staging of an historical display at the Rotary Club's event.

1968 December Mr. Lerk of Wangaratta is working on a project on cordial factories and like establishments. He mentions a cordial factory run by Messrs. Andrews and Son in Korumburra in 1896.

1969 February Arrangements made for display at Korumburra Show.

1969 December Display at Poowong Trade Fair had been well worth putting on. Boston's buggy available for use by the Historical Society to enter in the Korumburra street parade. Dinner to be held at Loch Haven on 6 December. "Early History of Korumburra" by Dr. Bowden to be launched.

1970 February Book launch had been most successful. Honary Life Membership conferred on Miss Daisy Hardwick, a pioneer in her own right, and daughter of the Coal Creek Company's first mine manager. Back-To Korumburra had been most successful.

1970 March In lieu of meeting in April, weather permitting a trek to be made to pinpoint the locations of the various mines which had operated in and around Korumburra.

1970 May Passing of inaugural president, Mr. J. Burnet noted. Mines Department to be contacted in an effort to obtain a map of former mine sites. Mr. Peter Neil notified the meeting that a "Weisser" wall clock had been donated to the Society by Mr. Alan Burgess of the Victoria Hotel.

1970 June Report on Jaycees project of planting tree ferns at Ritchie Park, along Coal Creek. Visitors book containing the names of former miners who had attended the Back-To Korumburra was presented to the Society. Records of the once famous Choral Society were being held by the Society.

1970 July The court house loaded and ready for delivery to Coal Creek. Miner's statue constructed by former Korumburra coal miner, Mr. Bob McMaster of Wonyip had been completed.

1970 August Annual meeting to be held on the evening of Saturday 3 October at Loch Haven. Ken Wallace-Dunlop spoke on the construction of the log house at Poowong built by his grandfather in 1880.

1970 October Speaker at annual meeting, Mr. Roy Ward said "History, was a fascinating exploration of the personality of an area". Mr. Hugh Hendry in responding to Mr. Ward's speech said that Korumburra was unique in being the first coal mining town in Victoria, and at one time supplied the whole of Victorian industry.

1970 December Historical Exhibition at Sanders Pavilion a great success. \$1,374 taken at display. Much discussion around the necessity for the Society to have a permanent "home" for storage etc.

1971 April. Repairs to value of \$250 to be carried out on court house (at Coal Creek). Syllabus adopted. Mr. & Mrs. Cedric Rolfe spoke on the history of Jeetho and highlighted the talk with photos.

May 1971. Cost of repairs to court house \$143.00. Thankyou to Rob Freene for his work. Meeting to May to be forgone in favour of an excursion to Phillip Island. Public appeal to be launched to raise funds for the purchase of a steam engine.

July 1971. Excursion planned for June had been cancelled. Wording for plaque to accompany miner's statue was arranged.

August 1971. Mr. H.G. Hendry, President of the Coal Creek Committee spoke to the group on progress of Coal Creek Park.

September 1971. Annual dinner meeting to be held at Loch Haven. "WigWag" to be purchased from Victorian Railways. Agreement to have a stall at the Poowong Trade Fair. Street stall to be held, using the shire caravan at the cost of \$2.00. Excursion to Grantville area to take place in October @ \$1.50 per head. There had been a successful deputation to the state government for funds to work on Coal Creek.

October 1971. Annual dinner meeting at Loch Haven.

March 1972. Stall at Poowong Trade Fair had been successful. The passing of Mr. John Ritchie was noted. There was a motion to the effect that the society would make available all assets and property for the park.

April 1972. Success of the "Yes" vote in the

referendum for the historical park. There was the feeling that the poll had done a lot of good in making the community aware of Coal Creek Park. Working bee organised to clean the interior of the court house. A letter to be drawn up for sending to all residents re financial support for the park. Account for \$850 for work done at the park to be forwarded to the shire. All cash and assets of the society to be offered to the shire for Coal Creek. FRloat to be prepared for Bacn-To Loch celebrations.

1972 May. Lack of direction from shire was noted in respect to Coal Creek. It was felt that the society could no longer collect for this cause. Decision to write to the shire and ask for a declaration of policy on the park and some direction with regard to the society's role is any in assisting with the park's development.

1972 June. Train account to be closed and balance sent to Shire.

1972 July. Train account holding \$3,000 to be closed and passed over to the Coal Creek committee. Back-To Loch had been successful. Poowong Back-To committee urged to consider restoration work on the cemetery prior to the Back-To, pointing out that the graves of many pioneers were located there.

1972 July 23 Special meeting to discuss possibility of holding an historical display later in the year. Representatives of service clubs attended.

1972 October Possessions of the society removed from the old shire building, and placed in a room at the rear of the Korumburra theatre. Building of the new library had commenced. Membership to remain @ \$1.00. Annual dinner to be held at Loch Haven in November. Vintage train trip in November to be catered for, also a bus to be arranged for members of the Railway Historical Society. The train is available for the trip to Nyora and return. The cost for adults \$1.50, 75c. for children.

1972 November Meeting held at 'Korumburra Times' office due to a power strike. Final arrangements for vintage train visit made. No further meetings until February 1973.

1973 February Further \$1,600 donated to Coal Creek.

1973 March. Members working on miner's cottage at Coal Creek. Also work had taken place in the court house.

To be continued in next edition.

Laid Down His Life

From the
Zeehan & Dundas Herald,
Tuesday, 31 March 1908.

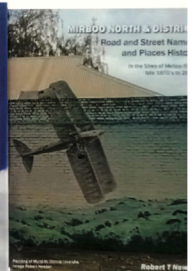
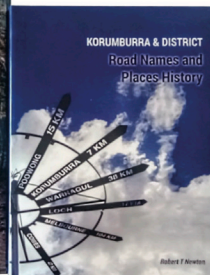
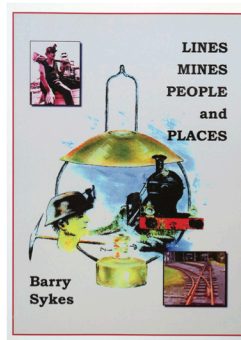
They say there is no romance in Australia, but is not the great bush full of that tragedy which embodies the very essence of romance. Of this we are, at times, afforded convincing proof. Not very long ago, one of the best surgeons practising outside the metropolitan centres of Australia lay very ill at Powlett River, South Gippsland. This man was Dr. William McGee, a college chum and close personal friend of Dr. Kennedy of Zeehan. In the night when it was cold and wet and rough, Dr. McGee received a call. "Is it an urgent case?" he simply asked. "Perhaps one of life and death," said a big strong man, who stood over the prostrate surgeon with quivering lips, and a mute, inexpressible sympathy in his eyes. "Help me up," pursued the doctor, as he scrambled to his feet. Then he dressed laboriously, painfully, and the saddled horse was brought round to the front door. Dr. McGee was practically lifted into the saddle, and, as he faced the hard and bitter elements of that winter's night, he remarked calmly and evenly, "This, probably, is my life or death too!" Then he rode into the dark, and made the best of his way to the call of duty. He was in time to save a life, but he himself, returned home and went to bed, from which he never rose again. He now lies buried out on the lonely plains behind Powlett River where even at sundown the melancholy croon of the plover of that moorland may be heard, and where at night wild dogs range in packs, with intent eyes set on settlers' property. There he lies far from his kin and those who understood, but close to many acquaintances who prized and loved him. The world is yet good and grand.

Summer is Hay Season



Photograph titled "Grab Stacker, M. LeMaitre c. 1945"

Christmas Gift Ideas



Looking for a Christmas gift or maybe just a good holiday read? We suggest some excellent books by local historians Robert 'Bob' Newton and Barry Sykes.

Bob's books, 'Korumburra and District Road Names and Places History', 'From Train Tracks to Rail Trail' and 'Mirboo North and District Road Names and Places History', may be purchased at the Historical Society rooms in the Hub, or at

The Hare and Tortoise Books,
69 Commercial Street, Korumburra.

Copies of 'Lines, Mines, People and Places' by Barry Sykes may be purchased at the Historical Society.

Remembering Whitelaw

A little more Whitelaw history as told to us in the last edition by Dennis Conn (thank you Dennis)

Since then we have been thinking about one of the families at the gatehouse at Whitelaw. Shortly after World War One a family with the surname Kennedy came to Whitelaw.

Mr. Kennedy, in the employ of the railways was the appointed gate keeper at the Whitelaw rail crossing and lived with his wife and children in the gate keeper's house. One of those children was a boy named Bill, who attended the Bena State School along with Stan Ricardo also a Whitelaw resident attending the same school. Stan would ride his horse down Sullivans Road to the gated rail crossing and upon crossing the rail line, pick up Bill Kennedy and double kink him on his horse to and back home from school.

Bill left school at 14 and after a short period of local employment left Whitelaw to live and work in Melbourne. He then changed his name to Hal. Hal Kennedy became a musician and band leader; his popularity among the crowds of ballroom dancers through the metropolitan area and beyond during the first half of the 1900's when ballroom dancing was at its height, brought him celebrity status as did his generosity to charities. Memories of Hal Kennedy as a child and young man had been passed down by the late Stan Ricardo, and Betty Wilson of Bena who recall being at school with the Kennedys.

Christmas Shopping Anyone?

An article headed "Round the Shops – Through the Korumburra Streets" appeared in the Great Southern Advocate dated 19th. December 1912. What follows is a shortened version of the original.

A.B. CRABTREE Drapers and clothiers, with a vast emporium stocked with everything suitable for Christmas wear. The windows are prettily decorated with the latest steles of millinery and ladies wear. Miss Trappes has her dressmaking business on the premises.

L.H. WALKER A grocery business with a large plate glass window. Condiments, flavourings and seasonings for Xmas confections. Crockery, glass-ware and general groceries. Stockings, toys and dolls in great variety "which will appeal to the little ones as they go forth with their elders to do the Xmas shopping".

JAMES S. BURNET "Come right along" is the cordial invitation issued by Mr. Burnet. The glass and chinaware department is crowded with dainty novelties. Sporting goods, cricket, tennis, quoits, guns and fishing tackle are there in profusion, requirements for picnicking, cameras and photo goods.

DAVIES' "The White House", one of the best business stands in the street. No pains spared for decorating the window, which at night is lit by two powerful lights. In one window is the dainty creation of the milliner and a costumer, decorated with suitable furnishings, in the other everything in men's wear is shown to great advantage. It has every appearance of a city shop with city goods and prices.

A.P. LLOYD "The headquarters for sporting goods". Windows dressed and furnished with taste and precision show goods to perfection. Everything for the Christmas shopper, and any member of the public who requires anything from a nail to a tone of wire, or from a corkscrew to a screw jack can be courteously and expeditiously attended to.

MC COWAN'S Christmas cheer of varied assortment: grocery, all kinds of drapery, tweeds direct from Scotland, the finest of ales, wines and spirits, with real "Mountain Dew" from Bonnie Scotland, excellent whiskey, 10 year old port, finest sherries.

J.H. SHORT The "Red House", Commercial Street. Tuesday night will see the spacious windows illuminated by a blaze of light, showing to advantage everything suitable for holiday makers, thrifty householders and others. There is an invitation to walk through the shop and look around. Mr. Short will be pleased to fulfil all commissions in their line. The men are especially invited to have a look at his mercery.

J. CRABTREE The Commercial Street tonsorial artist Mr. J. Crabtree is ready to meet those who want to have the latest hair cut, shave or beard trim, and so be spruced for the festive season. Wide range of toys, fancy goods, agent for the new speaking machines. Mr. Crabtree's is also the shrine of "My Lady Nicotine", tobacco, cigars and cigarettes of all the best brands, available at lowest prices, as well as pipes by all the genuine makers.

MURRAY & CO'S They have announced that Santa Claus, the most important personage at the present time, over-shadowing kings, princes and prime ministers, has made Messrs. Murray and Co. of Korumburra, Wonthaggi and branches, his headquarters. Well stocked windows display seasonal commodities in fancy goods, toys and grocery departments. Their extensively stocked emporium contains a special purchase of Christmas groceries, and they are working at high pressure getting out their Christmas orders.

A. PAM Pam's boot shop in Bridge Street has long been looked upon as the place to buy good, up to date and serviceable boots, and this year the stock is larger than ever. Anything from the daintiest shoe to the hob-nailed blucher can be supplied, and when they begin to show signs of wear, which takes a long time, Pam is the man to repair them well and cheap for you.

J. PATON Succulent, melt-in-your-mouth joints, pork, beef and mutton, small goods of every description are available at Mr. Paton's establishment in Commercial Street. Primeest bullocks and sheep from the sweetest pastures have been purchased and dressed to grace the Xmas dinner tables in many homes.

History News

PIONEERING BUTCHERING CO.

Mr. Coomber, manager of this company, has his shop decked out with Xmas joints, and as there is sure to be a rush at the last, orders should be placed early.

D.M. SCOTT The beams in the shop groan under the weight of tender juicy meats. Customers can be sure of satisfaction in placing their orders with Mr. Scott.

M.K.S. FINE Mr. Fine's furniture warehouse is the only one of the kind between Melbourne and Port Albert. One of Korumburra's pioneer businesses. His warehouse covers a large area, and there is in stock everything required for the comfortable furnishing of a house at Melbourne prices.

R. JENKIESON Old customers always return to "Jenkie" for their suits because they know they can get satisfaction. He always has a good range of samples and just now there is something special for promised patrons.

W.A. MACKAY This busy fancy goods shop has one of the finest shows to be seen outside of Melbourne. All kinds of presents can be procured here: novelties for the little ones, papers, magazines, books, jewellery, glassware.

A. LAMBERT Lambert's suits are always well made. All kinds of mercery can be obtained at this up-to-date men's shop.

S. WEISSER Mr. Weisser has a large and varied assortment of jewellery, watches, brooches. Or his customers might be seeking an albert guard, a piece of silver or gold plate. He has also installed the most up-to-date instruments for testing eyesight, and can supply glasses suitable for correcting abnormal vision.

COPE BROTHERS Are as firm as ever in public favour for all sorts of suits, and the articles turned out there are equal to anything from the city or anywhere else. It is too late now to get a Christmas suit from them, because they are too busy, but mercery of all descriptions can be obtained there.

D. HERD Herd's, the recognised shop for jewellery repairs has a compact stock of seasonable presents, and anything not in stock can be obtained on the shortest notice.

S. RUSSO His assortment of fruit and lollies is equal to anything to be seen in the city. He occupies the shop recently occupied by J.T. Jones, and has made all arrangements for Christmas.

Bookshop

The following books are currently available for purchase from the Historical Society or by contacting the Secretary by email: secretary@korumburrahistory.com.au

The Land of the Lyre Bird	\$40
The History of the Shire of Korumburra by Joseph White	\$20
A Gippsland Union, the Victorian Coal Miners Association 1893-1915 by P.D. Gardner	\$50
Coal Creek Miners Memorial, Compiled by Doug Boston & Janet Wilson	\$10
Korumburra & District Road Names and Places History by Robert Newton	\$50
From Train Tracks to Rail Trail by Robert Newton	\$60
Mirboo North & District Road Names and Places History	\$45
Lines, Mines, People and Places by Barry Sykes	\$80

Membership Application

2025-2026

From 1st October 2025 to 30th September 2026

I/we
Of (address)
Phone Nos
Email
Agree to comply with the Rules of Korumburra & District Historical Society Inc. and support the purposes of the Association.
Signed
Date

Fee for 2025-26 Financial Year is \$15.00.

For direct deposit of Fees our account is:

Commonwealth Bank, Leongatha
BSB: 063 515 Account Number: 10014263
Please use your name and membership in the reference.

Either post this completed form to us at the postal address above or submit it online.

To submit online: scan and email this form to secretary@korumburrahistory.com.au along with a copy of your bank deposit receipt.

New memberships received between 30 June and 30 September will expire on 30 September the following year, i.e., up to 15 month initial term.

The committee would like to know if you have any particular interest, experience or qualifications.

Find us on the web: www.korumburrahistory.com.au

For queries: Facebook: www.facebook.com/korumburrahistory

Email: treasurer@korumburrahistory.com.au