



FOSTER & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC



# PROM COUNTRY HISTORY NEWS

JULY 2014



*Mrs Margaret Snell, an early member of the Society, cuts the cake at the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary afternoon tea*

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## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING NOTICE OF MEETING**

The 41<sup>st</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Foster & District Historical Society Inc. will be held as follows:

**Date:** Tuesday, 5 August 2014  
**Time:** 7.30 pm.  
**Place:** Crawford Hall (behind the Museum)

### **Business:**

1. To confirm the Minutes of the 40<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting.
2. To receive the Annual Report for the year ended 30 June 2014.
3. To receive and consider the Financial Statement for the year ended 30 June 2014.
4. To elect the Executive Committee: President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer.
5. To appoint Officers: Curator, Archives & Research Officer, Maintenance Officer and IT Officer.
6. To elect two ordinary members of the Committee.
7. To transact any special business of which notice has been given in accordance with the rules of the Society.

If you are unable to attend the meeting and would like to vote, please contact me for a proxy form.

Liz Rushen      Hon. Secretary  
Email: [secretary@promcountryhistory.org.au](mailto:secretary@promcountryhistory.org.au)

Ph: 0409 940 305

### **Call for nominations**

All positions on the Committee will be declared vacant with some members not re-nominating due to length of service. Nominations close 30 July 2014. We urge members to offer their support to the Society during 2014-15 by nominating for these important positions.

### **Annual membership subscriptions**

Subscriptions for 2014 – 2015 were due & payable 1 JULY 2014 and should be paid prior to the A.G.M. 5 August 2014. If you have not yet paid your dues, we respectfully request prompt payment of

- \$20 individual membership
- \$35 family membership (two or more people)

## Committee report – July 2014

- Work is continuing on a new “Prom Country” book, edited by Liz Rushen. It will contain:
  - Part 1 chapters by Garry Wallis- geology of the area, Mary Ellis – botany of the area and Cheryl Glowrey – indigenous history.
  - Part 2, divided into Hills, Plains, Coast Prom and Yanakie with the written and oral memories of local residents.It is hoped to have the book available for Christmas release.
- The Society will continue with its popular calendars for 2015.
- The Society has received a number of generous donations, in cash and kind:
  - Foster Community Association, Shire Councillors Mohya Davies and Jeanette Harding, Foster Rotary and an anonymous donor – towards the refurbishment of the Pearl Park interpretative boards.
  - Steve Paragreen – for thanks in organising the evening for local traders.
  - Trevor Lagstrom, the author of *Woorarra West*, donating the full cost of his remaining books to the Society.
  - Prom Country Aged Care – copy of the new book on aged care in the District, written by Shirley Westaway and Marjorie Arnup.
- The Society held an evening for local traders/community groups to give them an opportunity to see the Museum out of business hours. We plan to repeat the evening later this year.
- The South Gippsland Rail Trail Committee has asked the Society to assist in providing photographs and stories for interpretative signs being placed along the Trail.
- A Gippsland Heritage Walk around Kernot Hall Lake, Morwell is being developed. The Society is providing photographs relating to our gold and tin history, Commandos at Wilsons Promontory during WWII and will also possibly include well known local people such as Winsome Cripps (track & field Olympian) and John Allan (world champion shearer).
- The Museum’s “All Things Fifties” exhibition has been very positively received with many fond memories recounted.
- Speakers at Member Meetings:
  - Professor Wesley (Kit) Carson – “Does size historically matter?”, providing comment on the necessary links between local, personal and “small” history and the “big” historical narrative
  - Lyn Jamieson on the olive industry in South Gippsland
  - Mike Heal & Jennifer Jones on Patrick Silk and the development of an interpretive board to highlight significant sites in the Stockyard Creek area

## 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration

On Tuesday 3 June, over 65 past and present members of the Foster & District Historical Society Inc. and representatives of other museums met in the Crawford Hall at the Museum to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the drive launched by the Society to raise money in order to secure a permanent home for the artefacts, documents and local histories they were collecting.

Many cake stalls and raffles were organised, donations were sought from local organisations and together with a very generous anonymous donation, the Society was able to purchase the old Foster Post Office. The building was moved to its current position opposite Pearl Park with the generous support of many locals.

The President thanked the founding members and supporters for their vision in ensuring the histories and stories of the local communities were preserved, protected and displayed for all to share. She also thanked the present members and supporters for ensuring the vision lives on.

Guest speaker Graeme Wheeler, former Curator of the museum, spoke of the importance of the preservation and presentation of the community's history and stressed that equally important was the recording of the stories behind the history. *'There are many stories hidden within the archives that need to be shared'*.



*Cr. Mohya Davies with noted local historian and former Principal South Gippsland Secondary College, Dr Cheryl Glowrey*

Cr. Mohya Davies congratulated the Society for its work and the high standards it follows, particularly the fact that 20 years ago Foster and District Museum became one of the earliest country museums to be accredited by Museums Australia (VIC) and that it had maintained that accreditation every five – eight years since. The accreditation 20 years ago was judged by the exacting standards applied to city museums, with no leeway for lack of money etc. As a result Foster became the blueprint for the way all future country museums should be considered and accredited.

Members recalled their memories of the early days of the museum. We heard about the moving of the building to the present site, the arrival and preparation of Lewis Hubert (Harold Bell) Lasseter's boat used for constructing and repairing shipping beacons in Corner Inlet, the gathering and cataloguing of materials, the work required to make the Post Office suitable for a museum and also the invaluable contribution of Professor Weston Bates, eminent historian and former President of the R.H.S.V. in preparing the Museum and putting together the first application for accreditation.



*Members listening to Graeme Wheeler*



*Hard working members in the kitchen*

*Pru Fleming and Merran Wilde, daughters of Dr Robert & Patricia Fleming, original members of the Society, examining photos*



FoBS 48.2 – Moving the Post Office building on site.



FoP 104 - Moving Lasseter's boat on site at the museum.

*Moving the Museum and Lasseter's boat*

## **Norm "Cobber" Sparkes retires**

Norm Sparkes, the current Treasurer of the Society, has announced that after 20 years of service, he will be retiring from the position at the A.G.M. Cobber's father also held the Treasurer's position for a similar length of time! Norm is a direct descendant of Alfred Camp Sparkes, one of the original discoverers of gold at Stockyard Creek. Congratulations, Cobber and thank you for a job well done.



## Patrick Silk



Patrick Silk was born c1832 in Ireland and died in Foster in 1892. Apart from being a Warden's Clerk and Librarian/Secretary of the Mechanics institute, he was also the Temporary Mining Registrar for the Tarwin Sub-District.

A man of many talents, Patrick Silk could speak several languages and play the fiddle.

Society member, Mike Heal, has found descriptions of him in various documents. He was described as "tall, lanky and fair" and also "dirty and stinky" with the publican, Lomax, who finally persuaded him to have a bath claiming it was the 'the first since his mother washed him.'

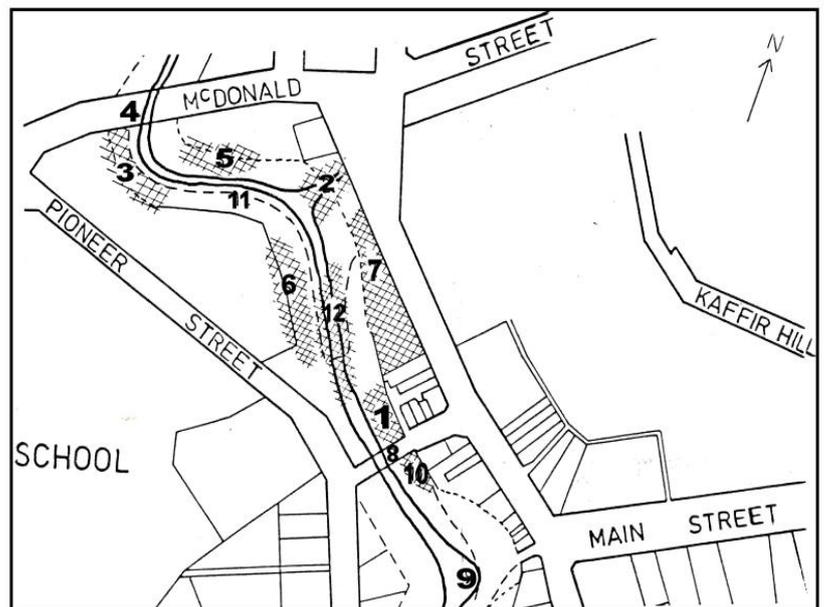
When Silk died, he was laid out in the Wine & Spirits, blacksmith and undertaker's shop next to the old Post Office in Bridge Street – where the Rhythm Cafe block of shops now stands.

Patrick Silk lived in a hut where the newsagency now stands and walked by Stockyard Creek nightly, ending at the Hotel, drinking and playing his fiddle.

### *A Walk with Patrick Silk*

Some important features are the sites of:

- 1 - The Crooked Billet'
- 2 - 'Maggie's Gully'
- 3 - 'Sparkes' Bank'
- 4 - 'Griffiths' Bridge'
- 5 - 'Winchesters' Bank'
- 6 - 'The Great Uncertainty Claim'
- 8 - The Bridge, Bridge Street
- 9 - Start of Patrick Silk's walk
- 10 - 'Post Office Corner'
- 11 - 'Ingram's Path'
- 12 - 'Turner's Pool'

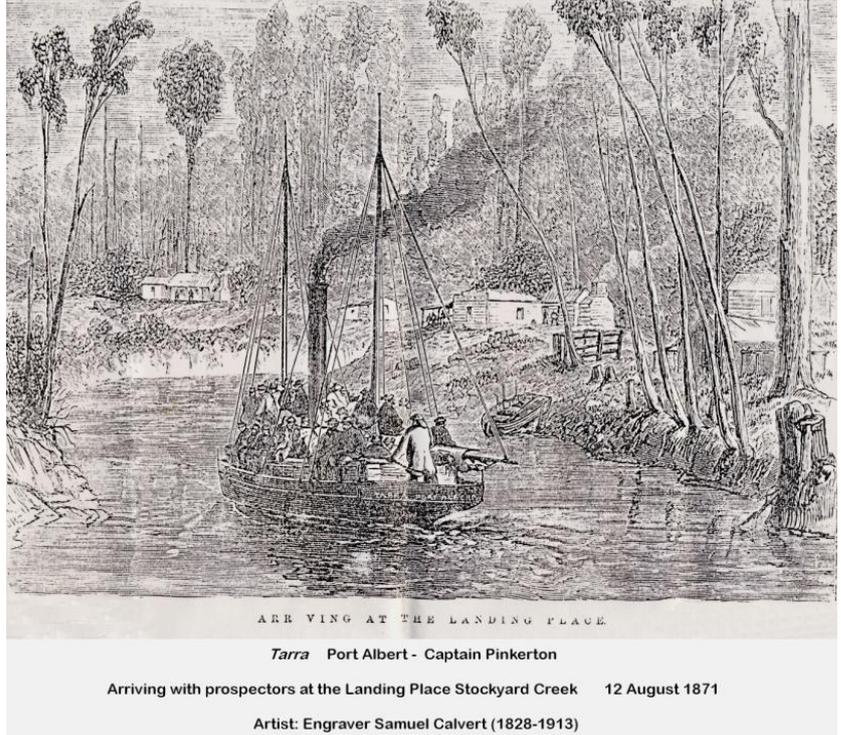


Whilst much of the walk is now overgrown and the Creek subject to flooding, the Society is planning to place an interpretive board for 'Silk's Walk' alongside the Creek. We even have a suggestion that a guided walk along the Walk during the summer be conducted by Mr Silk himself!

## Plans for the future

- *Stockyard Creek Landing Interpretive Board*

For many of the miners attracted by the gold in Stockyard Creek, a boat trip from Port Albert was the only way to the diggings, landing near the mouth of Stockyard Creek. The Society is planning to place an interpretative board near The Landing, accessible from Fullers Road.



A presentation by Mike McCarthy on 2 September will discuss the Landing and the tramway into Foster.

- *ANZAC Centenary 2015*

In conjunction with the Foster RSL, the Society is preparing a major exhibition to celebrate the Centenary of the ANZAC landings at Gallipoli, focussing on locals who fought there and in France.

## Changes to the Marine and Council Rooms

The Marine Room is now accessed through the Council Room, not the verandah and houses material on Wilsons Promontory during WWII, South East lighthouse, shipwrecks and strange occurrences, and the Beaufort Bomber propeller.

The Council Room's folding doors between the Council Room and passage have been removed for space and the photos of Yanakie, Black Swamp and Sandy Point have been relocated to the Council Room, whilst the Wilsons Promontory map and timeline are now on the left wall leading into the Marine Room. Thanks to Reg Williams and his band of workers – Bill Davies, Wolfgang Fiedler, Richard Jones and Chris Pritchard - who all worked hard at interpreting the Curator's requests!

*Photos overleaf*



*The Marine Room and entrance from the Council Room*

**Future meetings – First Tuesday in the month, 7.30pm in the Crawford Hall**

- |             |   |
|-------------|---|
| 5 August    | A.G.M. followed by the ‘Museum over 40 years’                                   |
| 2 September | Mike McCarthy Sawmills and Tramways, particularly Pinkerton’s tramway to Foster |
| 1 October   | Reg Williams Country Fire Authority   |
| 4 November  | No meeting Cup Day  |
| 2 December  | Christmas breakup   |

**Newsletter**

This newsletter will be produced quarterly, in September, December, March and June. The next edition will report on the Annual General Meeting and the new office bearers. We will also take a look at the Stockyard Creek landing and tramway into Foster.

*The Foster & District Historical Society Inc. is a member of the South Gippsland Historical Network, an affiliated member of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. Foster & District Museum has been appointed by the Public Record Office of Victoria as a Place of Deposit for non-permanent public records and is an accredited museum through Museums Australia (Vic).*