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Annual Membership fee: \$20.00 per person - **Renewals Due In May.**

Historical Society Meetings held monthly on 4th Wednesday at 7.30pm, except in January, also during *winter* on the 4th Saturday at 1.30pm.

News/Updates/Information - Website: colachistoricalsociety.org.au

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Open Hours for the public at COPACC History Centre - 2.00pm to 4.00pm Thursday, Friday and Sunday.

Working Bees at the History Centre - dates & times advised

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Forthcoming Events -

Saturday August 24	1.30pm General Meeting- Speaker Helen Paatsch – <i>‘For the Pleasure of the People’</i>
Wednesday September 25	7.30pm General Meeting-Speaker Don Nicolson – Former Colac Businessman
Wednesday October 23	7.30pm General Meeting – Speaker David Jellie – <i>‘History of Roads in Victoria’</i>
Saturday November 16	10.00am Geelong & District Historical Societies Meeting Hosted by Meredith History Group

A Note from the President –

The 69th Annual Report of the CDHS.

The Annual Meeting last May saw all positions filled with active involvement by a dedicated & stable membership which now numbers over 50. Member Barbara Minchinton provided an entertaining address entitled ‘Money & Madams’ centring on the recent archaeological dig in the Commonwealth Square off Lonsdale Street, Melbourne which was the centre of a flourishing brothel trade in the late 19th century.

We have had a varied meeting program with guest speakers including long serving Colac Shopowners, Lindsay Hulm and Peter Hynes, and visiting speakers Alan Fleming, Heather Threadgold and Alan McLean. We also benefitted from the vast local history knowledge of members Dawn Peel and Norman Houghton, while a visit to John Knight’s home in July with his vast collection of interesting historic items was greatly enjoyed.

Our winter afternoon meetings have enabled some members not able to attend evening meetings to remain more closely connected.

A special highlight was a bus excursion to historic property ‘Turkeith’ in January when 48 members & friends enjoyed the hospitality of Tim and MaryAnn Holt.

The 10 page quarterly newsletter continues to provide current information and quality articles. Special thanks go to the contributors of articles and to Craig Pink who is the driving force, and to Dawn Missen and Ellise Angel who are also very involved with the preparation, printing and distribution. Those receiving by email have the benefit of some colour photos. The success of the newsletter depends on its content and I urge members if they hear of an interesting story to contribute.

We have been fortunate to have been successful in two grant applications. \$1022 from the Colac Otway Shire for a new display case which features our aboriginal artefacts which have also been identified for registration with Aboriginal Victoria.

\$9000 from the State Government PRO towards cataloguing, preserving and making more accessible the large collection of material from the Stock and Station firm J G Johnstone & Co. Engagement of professional help is providing the opportunity for members to work with an experienced collection manager, which we hope will have much broader benefits. Stage 1 of the project has drawn our attention to the need to digitise some of the collection, due to its frail condition and we have received permission to vary the terms of the grant, to allow this to occur.

This year we have made application to the Colac Otway Shire Community Grants for funding towards much needed climate control in our archives and records room.

Requests for information, photos and books are constant both via the website and in person. Co-operation with our joint tenants the Colac & District Family History Group ensures enquiries are dealt with by the group best equipped to reply and quite often requiring a joint use of resources. Noteworthy was the request for suitable photos used as a basis for a large mural behind the reception desk at the new Colac Police Station.

We have hosted a meeting of the Geelong & District Historical Societies and the Southern Zone of the Western Victorian Association of Historical Societies. We maintain affiliation with these societies and I encourage members to take part in these gatherings as they provide insights and ideas of mutual benefit. We have hosted visits from Sacred Heart Primary School and Geelong Historical Society.

Our window displays continue to attract attention including celebratory displays from the Colac Players, Lions Club and Polwarth Group of CWA, while our Christmas nativity window won a \$100 prize.

This is my sixth annual report and one of the subjects I reflect on is the changes that have been made in the layout and functionality of the History Centre over that period to make it more user friendly in the interests of both user groups. Over that time there has been little change in the museum display area and some of the displays look tired. It is my belief that there may be more attractive ways to better utilize our limited display area. We need to be open to fresh ideas. I recognise that this would involve cost and our loyal volunteers have limited time, but, maybe some inspired suggestions will come forward.

Thanks go to all members who contribute through the opening hours duty roster, record donated items, file, catalogue, clean or deal with the numerous inquiries both via the web-site and in-house. Special thanks go to Richard Francis who conscientiously updates our website free of charge, John Angel Sec-Treasurer and the executive.

In conclusion, as we enter our 70th year we should remind ourselves of the 5 aims of the Society laid out in the original constitution, which I believe we are continuing to achieve.

1. To collate information in order that the history of Colac & District is recorded.
2. To promote the interchange of information amongst members of the Society by lectures, reading, discussions, excursions and exhibits of objects of historical significance.
3. To keep members informed in the field of history.
4. To acquire by purchase, donation or otherwise, such objects and material as are relative to history and in particular the history of Colac & District.
5. To interest the community in the Society's aims.

Robert Missen – May 2019

Guest Speakers –

May – Guest Speaker: Alison Harcourt: 2019 Senior Victorian of the Year

Alison, as a child, lived at 14 Manifold St Colac. Her father, Dr. Doig, believed in plenty of open fresh air when sleeping. In those days Manifold St. had no trees; Pollack St. had trees which provided shade in the hot weather.

Dr Doig was born at Nathalia. He received a scholarship to Geelong College and after completing his medical degree at Melbourne University, served in World War 1 as a medical officer in the trenches. After returning to Australia he joined the practice of Dr. Arthur Brown in Colac.

Alison was the youngest of a family of four and her eldest sister cared for her while she was young. She attended the Manifold St. Kindergarten where her love for mathematics became evident as she enjoyed doing simple sums.

Her real love for Mathematics started at Colac West PS where she had an outstanding teacher in Grade 5. She recalled that Girls and boys had separated play areas in those days.

After primary school she attended Colac High School until Year 9 when, in 1943, she went to boarding school in Melbourne. She recalled riding her bicycle to the High School along a bike track across Armstrong St. and up Moore St. to the back of the High School thus dodging the busy highway. She was allocated to form 1A, 1B catering for the more manual subjects. She enjoyed all subjects except drawing. She commented that she was hopeless at drawing. In stark contrast to the Colac schools the Melbourne school had no play space.

Doig and Brown encouraged all doctors to have consulting rooms in the hospital. Colac Hospital became the first hospital in Australia to provide such a consolidate service to the community.

Alison's Mother was very active in the town. She helped to set up the first baby health centre in 1920. In 1930 she was appointed to the governing council of the hospital. She was also very active in the CWA and used her own car to visit CWA country groups.

If Dr. Doig was called out at night, he took his little dog with him to keep him awake.

The Colac Butter factory was very handy to let people know the time of day. Each day whistles blew at 8 am, 12 noon, 1 pm and 5 pm. She remembered the sound of the steam train going down to Melbourne and commented that the fire alarm was scary.

Alison finished her talk with the Colac High School War Cry which she remembered very well indeed after the many years which have intervened since her time in Colac.

June – Guest Speaker: Reg Murray – “Murray Family Connections to Colac and Australia”

Hugh, was a common name in the Murray family and it was traditionally given to the eldest son.

Hugh of Hobart was the first Murray to come to Australia with 23 members of his family. He chartered a ship and they sailed from Leith in 1823, landing in Tasmania. He was given a land grant even though he knew nothing of farming. Naturally this venture failed. He then set up wine merchant's business which prospered.

1837 Hugh of Colac came to the mainland on the “Gem”. With GT Lloyd, Austin and his brother Andrew he arrived at Point Henry. They lost many sheep as they swam them ashore due to the cold water. They first settled at St Leonards. After a while they went looking for better land. On the way they dropped Austin off at Winchelsea and the Murrays finally settled by Lake Colac.

Father Hugh expected Colac Hugh to turn a quick profit. By 1840 he had 3000 sheep and managed to prosper even through the depression years. Meanwhile, by 1842 Hugh of Hobart was in dire straits financially. The Colonial Bank went broke and Hugh of Hobart suffered from this. He died in Hobart on 21st Dec 1845. Hugh Murray of Colac died in 1867. Hugh of Colac married his cousin Elizabeth who was nine years younger. When she arrived back in Colac, she was one of only 4 white women in the Port Phillip District. They had a total of 14 children, 5 of whom died in infancy and she outlived Hugh by 20 years.

Russell Mervyn Murray – Reg's grandfather – was born in Elliminyt on 12th July 1877. He was educated in Colac and, later, at Melbourne University. He graduated as a civil engineer. Soon after graduating he was employed by the Mt Lyell copper mine in Tasmania. He soon became acting mine manager. During the Mt Lyell mine disaster – a fire in the mine 700 feet below ground in which 42 men lost their lives – Murray showed exceptional courage and was awarded The Royal Humane Society Medal for extreme bravery. During the fire the escape route was cut off when a cage blocked the main shaft. A secondary shaft which had been blocked by a rock fall was cleared and 50 men were saved. This was mainly due to the leadership of Murray. Nine days after the fire started the mine was sealed and flooded to put out fire. At this stage Murray was 39 years old. He was a Manager of exceptional talent and a manager who realised that the welfare of his employees was very important to them giving good service to the company. He, among other things, set up the first medical scheme for miners, provided a butcher's shop for the

men's family and developed a housing scheme for the workers. Russell Murray held The General Managers position for 24 years. He died on 22nd January 1945. He was well respected by all and was voted into the Miners' Hall of fame.

Bruce Pascoe in his book "*Dark Emu: Black Seeds: Agriculture Or Accident?*" refers to Hugh Murray stealing fish from the Aboriginal people and instigating the massacre of the local tribesmen. So far, according to Reg Murray, he has not come up with a legitimate source for this information. Hugh Murray would not accept this slur on his character and stated this in a letter to Governor Latrobe.

July – Visit to Mayor Jason Schram's home

Members enjoyed their visit to Jason Schram's home where Jason gave an informative talk and illustrated display about the history of Colac. Members joined in with additional information and reminisces which everyone appreciated and filled in the afternoon.

What has been in the Colac Herald news? –

April 15- Foreshore's destruction continuing. High tides are again impacting the Apollo Bay foreshore and further investigations and design options are needed for erosion protection works.

April 17-Apollo Bay beach repair starts. The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning and Otway Coast Committee started the \$100,000 project which will include beach re-profiling and sand renourishment in an effort to minimise further erosion by providing a buffer on sections of the foreshore.

April 17-Lights transform memorial. Colac's memorial Square will light up with unique images and memories commemorating the Anzacs onto the walls of the cenotaph every night over Easter to Anzac Day. The council funded the project through a \$40,000 Victoria Remembers grant.

April 17- Traffic switches to new bridge. Traffic to cross the *Barongarook Creek* on a temporary bridge as works ramp up to demolish the old bridge and build a new one.

May 24-Ward system returns to Colac Otway Shire. Victoria's electoral authority has recommended that the shire return to a ward system consisting of 7 councillors elected from 3 wards- Colac ward, Northern ward and Otway ward. The final decision to be made prior to the next local council general election in 2020.

May 29- Old Colac bridge demolished. Colac's old *Barongarook Creek Bridge* is no more to make way for a modern structure, safer and wider, that meets the needs of the region. More than 13,000 vehicles use the Princes Highway between Geelong and Colac each day, 14 per cent being trucks.

May 31- Progress on new arts centre. *Colac's Maker' Space* group could move into this new home in July as work continues to refurbish Colac's former library annexe.

June 3- Health chief proud of efforts. Outgoing Colac Area Health chief *Geoff Iles* will look back with satisfaction at his past 13 year's work. He has seen many significant achievements including the fluoridation of Colac water, redevelopment of the theatre complex with increased anaesthetic rooms, recovery and day stay beds- as well as stopping the demolition of Polwarth House.

June 3- Book preserves yard's history. Colac Regional Saleyards will put 40 years' worth of history on paper. Saleyard's superintendent *Graeme Riches* worked with the council to make the book for the public to read with the help of Irrewarra farmer *John Martin*.

June 10- Mathematician's honours add up. 89-year-old Colac-born *Alison Harcourt*, nee Doig, earns the title of Officer of the Order of Australia in the Queen's Birthday honours for her service to mathematics and computer science through pioneering research and development of integer linear programming.

June 17- More bones unearthed. Crews halted work on the site of Colac's Barongarook Creek Bridge after discovering what they believed to be the bones of Indigenous humans. *The Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation* is currently consulting with the major works unit to further examine the site. Bones were found on the site in March and the legal custody of those remains was transferred to the Victorian Aboriginal Heritage Council.

June 26- Long-standing travel agency ready to rebrand. *Colac Travel Service* which has been locally owned and owned and operated since 1926, will close as it prepares for an exciting development, rebranding as Helloworld Travel Agency on July 1st.

June 26- Merger plan approved for seniors' services. After 35 years, *South West Do Care* and *Colac Area Health* have merged to provide social support programs for older members of the community across Colac and district. Their office will be in Miller St.

June 26- Historic gift. Regional Roads Victoria has donated tools used in the original construction of the *Great Ocean Road* between 1919 and 1932 to the Lorne Historical Society.

July 1- Honour for Rotary stalwart. Colac's *Lindsay Hulm* has earned a distinguished title- President Emeritus, from Colac Rotary Club after almost 5 decades of service to the group.

July 8- Council joins talks for fast rail service. Fast rail is earmarked to replace old trains with V-Locity trains by 2025 with access to Melbourne in 65- 85 minutes.

July 12- Nursery celebrates milestone. Colac's *Kui Community Nursery* celebrates 3 decades of cultivating plants and providing employment opportunities to supported workers at its Queen St nursery, first opened on June 30, 1989. Kui's longest serving employee Glenn Saunders has worked there for 20 years.

July 19-New owners snap up prominent Colac shop. Lyal and Joy Eales will open a branch of their camping, fishing, outdoors gear and hardware store in Colac before Christmas using the former *George Taylor's Stores* building in Murray St which closed in May.

July 24-Aboriginal elder feels ignored. *Mr Arnold is a Gulidjan-Gadubanud elder* and the chair of Guli- Gad, a traditional owner group that works to protect Aboriginal cultural heritage around Colac and the Otways. He believes the group is being increasingly excluded speaking for their own Country because the State Government is working with the Eastern Maar Aboriginal Corporation instead.

July 26- Lake Colac pipe plan gets council backing. *Colac Otway Shire* councillors have given the nod to further investigate a water reclamation project, which would pump recycled water from the Surf Coast for industry and agriculture and replenishing lakes like Lake Colac. First a study is to be made into the economic feasibility and cost-versus- benefit of the project at a cost of \$250,000. An 80-kilometre pipeline from Breamlea to Colac could cost \$150-to- \$300 million and \$14 million annually.

July 26-Bird book is taking flight. Colac's *Adam Fry* and Barongarook's *Ian Davies* have compiled more than 40 years of serious birding into a new book-*Colac Otways Birds* with photographs of each specie seen.

July 29-Hairdresser hits major milestone. Colac's *Denise Duryea* will celebrate 50 years of hairdressing, styling and cutting the people of Colac's hair in her Bromfield Street salon on July 31st 2019.

100 YEARS SINCE WORLD WAR ONE SOLDIER SETTLEMENT AT DREEITE

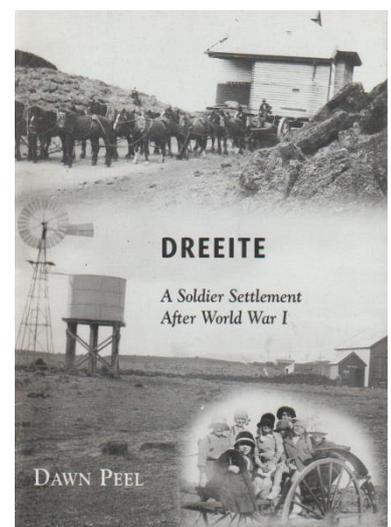
By Craig Pink

2019 marks 100 years since the first settlement of World War One returned soldiers on allocated farmland north west of Colac, in the Dreeite area under part of the newly developed soldier settlement scheme.

The Monday 6th October 1919 edition of the Colac Herald reported that the first 12 soldiers were now settled into their land at Dreeite. These initial settlers had to overcome many, many extreme difficulties. During the wet winter months it was almost impossible to have building materials carted to the land. Cartage cost sixteen shillings per ton to cart from the nearest railway station (Beeac). At this point the Colac Shire Council was also under considerable pressure about giving consideration to the necessity of providing a road to the Dreeite soldier settlement area. Plans for a railway line from Colac to Alvie, close to the soldier settlement area, were also being strongly supported.

The other main Colac district soldier settlement areas after World War One were in the Dreeite, Irrewarra and Wool Wool areas. Smaller expanses were also allocated such as those at Beeac, Birregurra, Cundare, Cressy, Deans Marsh, Eurack, Larpent, Pirron Yallock and Warrion areas. Small sections were also allocated to the south of Colac, a lot just being single allotments. These were allocated from land going as far south as the Apollo Bay and the Hordern Vale areas.

Anyone with a family connection to this subject is encouraged to seek further information from the Public Record Office Victoria (PROV) website – “Battle to Farm”, which has a huge amount of searchable content, including down-loadable original scanned documents relating to basically all of the Victorian Soldier Settlement after World War One. These extend into the early 1920s period. Assistance by several of our society members can be given to anyone wanting help to search the PROV content.



ABOVE RIGHT – DREEITE – A Soldier Settlement After World War 1 – this book was originally researched and published by Historical Society member Dawn Peel in 2001 and is an original look into the subject of the returned soldier settlement at Dreeite.

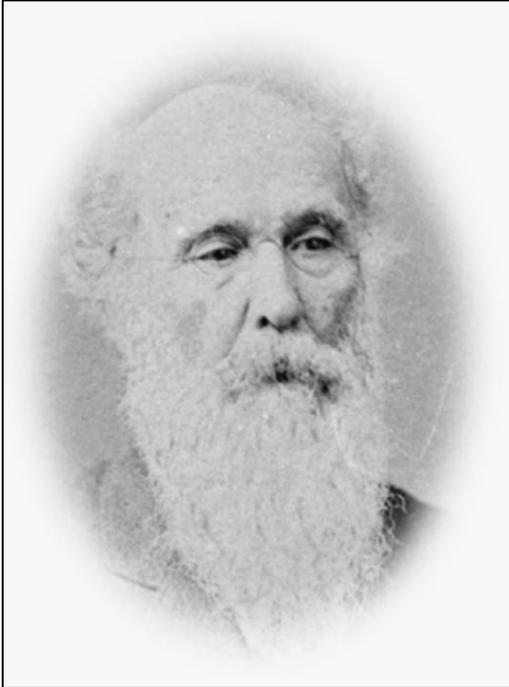
After several re-prints, Dawn's Dreeite Soldier Settlement book is still available today as part of the Society's book sales, and is only \$8.

The Robertsons of Alvie in Van Diemen's Land.

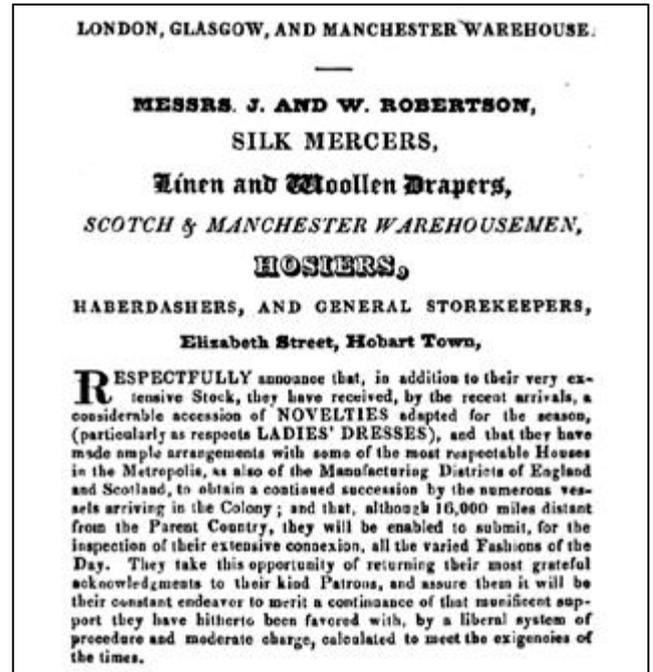
Earlier this year the Scottish journal "History Scotland" published a detailed study by Dr David Taylor tracing the life of the Robertson siblings who escaped their humble roots in early 19th century Badenoch to become fabulously wealthy farmers and businessmen in the fledgling colony of Van Diemen's Land.

William Robertson ventured to Victoria and was a key figure in the early development of Colac and District. Alvie township derived its name from his ancestral home and the homes built by his sons are district landmarks.

Excerpts from this article which was illustrated by photos from our collection are reprinted in this edition of our newsletter.



William Robertson in later life



The Robertson brothers' store advertisement published in Van Diemen's Land; advertising a 'Variety of Statistical and Other Information likely to be Interesting to the Emigrant as well as to the General Reader' (Hobart, 1833)

John and William Robertson sailed to Van Diemen's Land on the 'Regalia' in 1822. By 1829, four of the Robertson brothers from Dunachton, John, William, James and Daniel, along with their youngest sister Christiana, had all settled in Van Diemen's Land. While John and William's initial success had come through land and farming, the sale of their original farms in 1827 suggests some new venture was in the offing.

When Daniel and Christiana had sailed for Van Diemen's Land in 1829 they were joined on board by their older brother John, who had been in London on business.

Later that year, John and William launched their new venture, a 'new and commodious Warehouse [in Hobart] with an extensive and elegant assortment of Merchandise'.

Hence the trip to London: 'J. Robertson... himself selected the above... in the British market, in order to recommend their qualities', and, 'having paid ready money', they were able to sell 'upon the most reasonable and liberal terms'. It was another bold but shrewd move, for the lack of colonial industry meant British manufactures were in constant demand. The goods included huge quantities of cloth, clothing, haberdashery, ironmongery and domestic items. Much of it was clearly targeted at the expanding middle class: government officials, army officers and the increasingly wealthy settlers, particularly wives – no doubt followers of media features like 'London Fashions for May' – with items such as a 'superior assortment of silks and ribbons of all colours and the most fashionable patterns for ladies' dresses'. Regular cargoes from London followed, with satins, silks and velvet again indicating the luxury market, but John and William were also expanding into consumables, offering 'tea by the chest, sugar by the bag or ton, tobacco by the basket'.

James and Daniel followed suit in 1831 with their own 'splendid Store' in the colony's second town, Launceston, thereby stimulating 'a spirit of competition among the shopkeepers'. The new branch soon diversified into agricultural supplies and 'good old port, pale sherry, and pale ale'. Though the colony's retail trade in general was thriving, the Robertson mantra of personal selection with cash up front had clearly established a winning – and highly lucrative – formula.

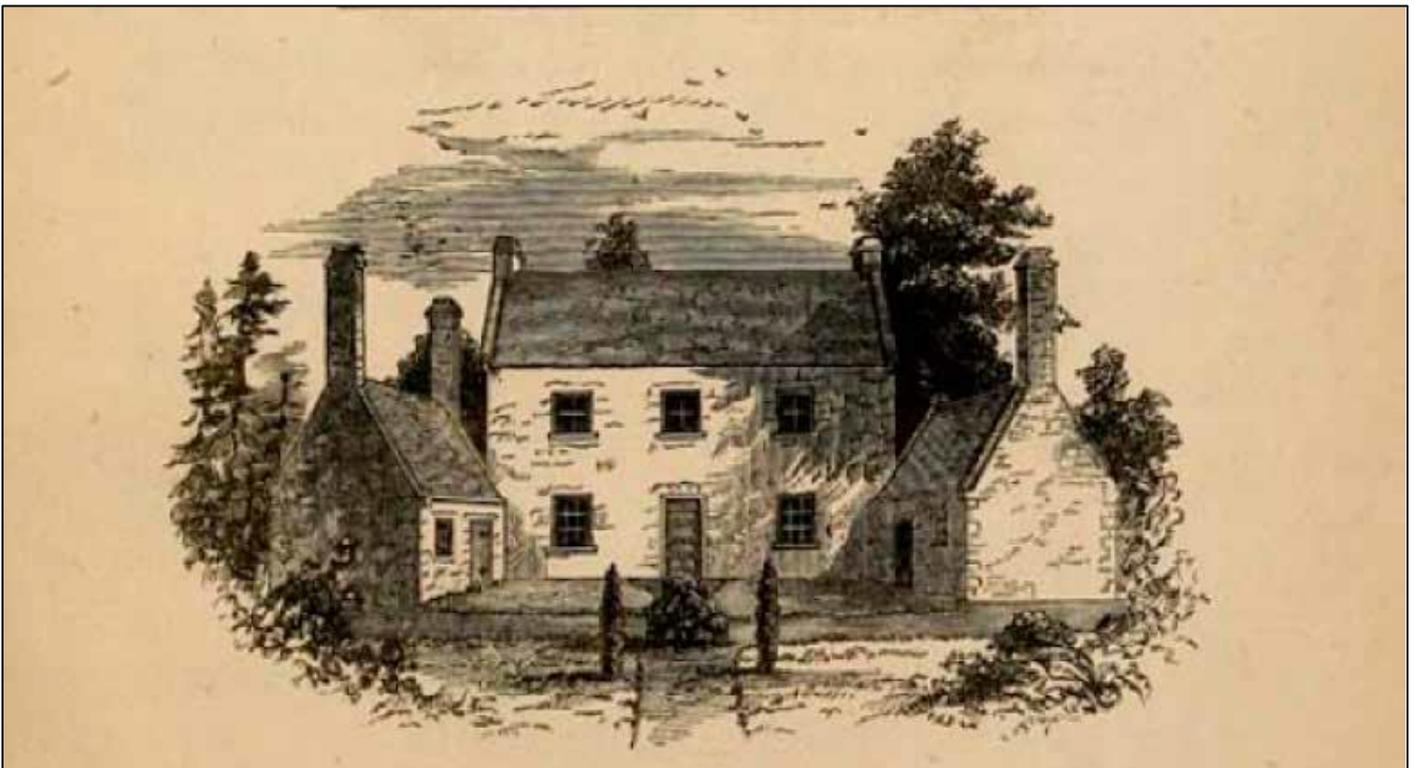
Daniel's homecoming

Daniel returned to Britain with his family in 1837 to act as London buyer, perhaps with some judicious fashion advice from his wife Sarah. That Tasmanian ladies could be wearing the latest London fashions within six months of their release was no small part of that shrewd eye for business, making the settler class feel 'at home' by echoing the society they had left. The air of affluence was noticed by a British visitor in Hobart in 1838: 'elegant houses, many of them of stone, that would do honour to the most splendid cities of Europe...everything wears an aspect of comfort and opulence'.

In March 1838, Daniel, now an extremely wealthy businessman, returned to his old home in Dunachton – the homecoming even featuring in the *Inverness Courier*.

The young man who had left the small farm of Cluanach less than a decade earlier was now addressed as gentry, 'Daniel Robertson, Esq., of Van Diemen's Land'. In the kind of ostentatious show of wealth usually displayed by clan chiefs and estate owners, he invited the entire community 'to witness their favourite winter amusement, a shinty or cammack match' – a sport that he and his brothers would often have played in earlier times. Hundreds turned up for the occasion, enjoying their host's liberality as 'the mountain dew circulated plentifully amongst the multitude present, while the stirring strains of the bagpipe added life and animation to the scene'.

Later, Daniel entertained his friends to an 'excellent dinner' at Dunachton House, with an all-night party nearby where 'several hundreds joined in keeping up the merry dance till next daylight'. Charitable donations were made to the poor and to his old school in Alvie. But his most significant gesture was the dinner he provided at the local inn of Pitmain for a 'large party of gentlemen' with 'champagne and claret, which were of the finest of their kind, and of which more than an ordinary quantity was drunk'. Young Daniel was surely making a very big statement within his former community. Daniel's lavish generosity – encapsulating the image of the successful highland emigrant – cannot have escaped notice.



Dunachton House as it might have looked when Daniel held his party there in 1838

Shortly after, Dr David Boyter, the principal Australian emigration agent in the highlands, visited Kingussie, the main village in Badenoch, to recruit workers for New South Wales. The packed meeting needed no convincing: they had already seen evidence of the Australian 'Utopia'.

Furthermore, Daniel's brother William had just purchased 13,000 acres of prime grazing land in Victoria on mainland Australia at public auction – little short of astonishing to a society where ownership of land was the prerogative of an exclusive elite of aristocrats and clan chiefs.

In the infectious optimism of the moment, Boyter got 240 names, 135 of whom, including yet more Robertsons, would sail for Sydney that summer on the *St George*. The famous Kingussie song celebrating this emigration, *Gu 'm a slàn do na fearaibh* ('Here's a health to the fellows who'll sail o'er the sea'), with its unbounded optimism, perhaps reflects the excitement of Daniel's visit. Just a few months after William's extensive purchases and Daniel's visit, their older brother Duncan returned from Skye to become tenant of Drumstank, a small eight-acre farm in Dunachton with a rent of just £8 15s. The contrast could hardly have been greater.

Scottish Van Demonians

As their mercantile business thrived, the Robertsons continued their agricultural interests, developing their pedigree stock while indulging in frequent land transactions – not least in Victoria, where William quickly added another 40,000 acres, with John also getting in on the act.

The 1830s were halcyon years. Graduating from rural farmers to urban merchants brought a new impetus, thrusting the brothers into the colony's social and economic heart. Success meant not just wealth, but an increasingly high profile; social status in turn engendered a growing sense of civic responsibility. The level of commitment was further heightened by marriage – Daniel, James and Christiana in 1833, William the following year, with only John remaining single: this was now their families' home, their children not highlanders but Van Demonians, their future inextricably intertwined with that of their new homeland.

"Harnessing their prodigious energy to their rising wealth and status, the brothers threw themselves into community and charity projects, at the heart of which lay their deep-rooted Presbyterian values. All were vigorous supporters – both in pocket and principle – of the church of Scotland, maintaining the cultural and moral framework that had underpinned their highland upbringing.

Indeed, the 'Scots Church' in the colony was under threat from the church of England's aggressive demand for episcopal supremacy – the very antithesis of the Presbyterian egalitarianism that defined Scottish identity. The Scots community united 'to maintain the integrity and independence' of their 'National Church'.

John was on the committee demanding church equality in 1835, even quoting the 1707 treaty of union in evidence; William took the cause into more political realms in a letter referring to those Scots 'immediately interested in the prosperity and independence of the Scottish Nation.

The brothers' resurgent Scottishness was reflected in the formation of the Launceston St Andrew's society in 1842. James, whose 'zeal for the furtherance of anything national, festive, and patriotic' was acknowledged in the *Launceston Examiner*, was both founder and lifelong treasurer. The initial aim, 'to promote the national games of Scotland' – particularly shinty – might appear frivolous, but the society soon moved into the realm of 'enlightened philanthropy, to ameliorate the condition of the destitute'. Its biggest humanitarian effort was actually directed homewards during the 1840s potato famine. When reports of the suffering were communicated at a meeting in 1847, members pledged their support, with James co-ordinating the relief. A gratifying acknowledgement, appropriately from the Macpherson clan chief in Badenoch, expressed 'heartfelt gratitude' for 'the substantial aid which has accompanied the expression of their feelings'.

Later years

In the late 1840s the remaining brothers committed to a cause fundamental to Tasmanian society: convict transportation. Presbyterian principles guaranteed their support for the Anti-Transportation League.

William 'threw himself with all his energy into the movement... both with purse and person to do anything and everything within his power to advance the cause'. James was not only involved in petitioning the British government, but in 1853 sailed for London on colonial business, the *Examiner* hoping that 'as a staunch anti-transportationist, he will doubtless exert his influence at home, in favour of the land of his adoption'. Later that year convict transportation was indeed ended.

Though William and James both gave up their retail businesses in 1852, they remained committed to colonial interests. Van Diemen's Land was in crisis due to a labour shortage arising from the vast exodus of workers to the newly discovered Australian goldfields. James's London mission was in part to attract highland emigrants, a cause supported by the *Scotsman* during these times of hardship: Australia 'calls aloud for more labourers – honest, industrious men, happy to prosper through the fruits of lawful exertion, and not bitten with the gambling mania of the goldseeker'.

James explained the colony's needs to the London board of the Highlands and Islands Emigration Society, whose assistance was secured when the *Sir Allan McNab* arrived in 1854 with 304 emigrants, half of whom were highlanders.

Both William and James were active in their respective Hobart and Launceston immigration societies, raising money to help provide free passages, and sending agents to Scotland to attract suitable emigrants. James himself was over recruiting in the Glasgow area in 1855, and over the next few years regular shiploads of workers arrived in Tasmania (renamed so to distance itself from the shadow of convictism) to help boost the island economy.

Similarly William, who returned in 1857 'to purchase some fine cattle', apologised to Duncan, again with a hint of regret: 'I fully intended visiting Kingussie again... but... I found myself much hurried... so that I was compelled to give up the chance of seeing Scotland once more'. Business clearly outweighed nostalgia. Perhaps, unlike Daniel, they recognised the potential sensitivity of such a visit – self-conscious of parading their wealth in such a poor community, possibly to the embarrassment of their much poorer brother. Or it may just be that Dunachton was better preserved as a sentimental childhood memory, unsullied by recent hardships.

When William sold the store in 1852, he was described as 'the very personification of integrity', and when finally leaving Tasmania to settle on his estate at Colac in Victoria, the accolades were unstinting. He had that rare quality of being 'universally popular', primarily because of his 'steadfast course of undeviating honour; of rectitude combined with an unremitting desire to pursue that course, that it may benefit his fellow colonists and his country, more than himself' – hence his name had become 'a "household word" amongst rich and poor'. William survived just eight years in Victoria, earning a formidable reputation as one of Australia's finest breeders, at his peak running 10,000 cattle. He died in 1874, leaving a fortune of £294,000 (£15-30 million today)."



Stained glass window at St Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Colac, Victoria, created by renowned craftsmen Ferguson & Urie of North Melbourne. The window was erected in 1877 in memory of William Robertson, who had died three years earlier.



William Robertson, c.1852 by Thomas Bock Collection of the National Portrait Gallery, Australia



CRAIG'S CONUNDRUM

LAST ISSUE ANSWER –

AT LEFT – November 1970 view of Dickins Food Market, situated at 74 Murray St Colac. With Dickins then owned by Coles, the new Coles Supermarket at 175 Murray St replaced it when opened on Wednesday 16th June 1971. The former Dickins 74 Murray St premises was later sold. Later, the building became well known as the “THE DISPOSALS”, which most would remember. Today the building remains, and is occupied by Captain Georges Fish & Chip shop.

AT LEFT - Can you explain what this person is doing in this May 1963 image.

**ANSWER
NEXT
ISSUE**

COLAC AND DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY ROSTER 2019 2.00 PM – 4.00 PM

Month	Thursday	Friday	Sunday
September	5 th D. Missen 12 th R. Osborne 19 th G. Splatt 26 th J. Knight	6 th C. Pink 13 th G. Bray 20 th E. Chambers 27 th C. Pink	1 st A. McIntosh 8 th G. Knox 15 th B. McDonald 22 nd I. Barlow 29 th G. Knox
October	3 rd D. Missen 10 th R. Osborne 17 th G. Splatt 24 th J. Knight 31 st R. Missen	4 th C. Pink 11 th G. Bray 18 th E. Chambers 25 th M. Saddler	6 th A. McIntosh 13 th G. Knox 20 th B. McDonald 27 th I. Barlow
November	7 th D. Missen 14 th R. Osborne 21 st G. Splatt 28 th J. Knight	1 st C. Pink 8 th G. Bray 15 th E. Chambers 22 nd M. Saddler 29 th E. Angel	3 rd A. McIntosh 10 th G. Knox 17 th B. McDonald 24 th I. Barlow