

**Nibbles:** In this issue of Nibbles we record the sad passing of members John Parsons and Lyle McConachy, and acknowledge the considerable contribution of Jan Morris who recently retired as President of the Anglesea & District Historical Society. Our blast from the past is an article on the flagpole that stands outside History House and there's a short account of our most recent excursion.

## History Makers of the Anglesea & District Historical Society Lyle McConachy 1934–2025



Sadly, we record the death of the McConachy and Pearse patriarch Lyle Gordon McConachy, who passed away on 30 August 2025 at the age of 91. Lyle organized family reunions, researched family lines, and co-authored the family books *One Man's Family* and *South Beach Pioneers*. He was part of the team that rebuilt the Bark Hut at Aireys Inlet. He kept in touch with as many family lines as he possibly could. Lyle was the last remaining family member of the second generation born in Australia.

Lyle was born 1 March 1934. He lived his life around the Winchelsea area, being raised at Mirnee and farming sheep on his own property in Ingleby Road. He was educated at Winchelsea State School and Geelong College. He excelled at sport and was well known for his tennis skills, winning many trophies. He trained as a wool classer at the Gordon Institute and classed flocks around the Western District as

well as in New South Wales and Tasmania.

Lyle completed National Service at Puckapunyal and was a member of the Winchelsea branch of the RSL. With a keen interest in history, he visited war sites all over the world.

Lyle joined the Anglesea and District Historical Society in 2002. He served on the committee as Vice President. He organised speakers and displays for our meetings. He organized two Heritage days at Aireys Inlet, bringing a sheep shearer, a wood chopper and a fencer to demonstrate their skills. He maintained the Bark Hut with the help of other society members. Our sympathy is extended to his wife Heather, daughter Diane and sons Russell and Andrew.



*Lyle extreme right after reroofing Bark Hut*

## VALE – John Parsons



It is with sadness that we record the passing of an extremely valued member of Anglesea & District Historical Society and Surf Coast Family History Group, John Parsons. John was very much a hands-on man who took responsibility for the general upkeep of History House.

Although John never held an executive role, his wife Beryl was treasurer for some years. It is ironic that John Parsons passed away within days of Lyle McConachy, as they had worked together on many projects.

After the old single furrow horse drawn plough was stolen from the Bark Hut, it was John and Lyle who obtained a replacement and concreted it solidly in place. John wrote their names in the concrete, and that can still be seen today. It was John and Lyle who put up the display boards and often repaired the bark walls.

John and Beryl retired to Anglesea over 30 years ago, building their retirement home at 10 Jackson Street. After John suffered a stroke, Beryl cared for him at home for several years before they both moved into Calvary Cordelia Grove, Anglesea Aged Care, where Beryl currently resides. They had two daughters, one who predeceased them, and two grandchildren to all whom we give our sincere condolences. We are grateful to John for his contribution to preserving the history of Anglesea.

### **History Makers of the Anglesea & District Historical Society Jan Morris**



Jan Morris has stepped down as President of Anglesea & District Historical Society, a role she has held since 2013 with only a year's break in 2022/2023. Over that period she reinvigorated the society and took it a long way by developing its activities and raising its profile. Jan worked tirelessly in all aspects of the running of the society from steering the committee of management, editing the newsletter, researching the history of the area and revising the society's publications, to catering for events, gardening and volunteering for fundraising, to name but a few! It is timely to reflect on advances for ADHS under Jan's

leadership, noting that she would not want to claim any of these as personal achievements. She always acknowledged the skills, contribution and hard work of others:

- Disability access – driveway & ramp
- Storage facility for collection
- Annual programs of speakers and outings
- Mitchell bomber event & memorial garden
- Maintenance of Bark Hut
- Creation of database to hold resources
- Corners honouring early researchers Cecil & Braden
- Naming of Coogoorah bridges event
- Retention of HH when threatened by planning for Community Precinct
- Installation of Bathing Box with displays
- Improvements to History House e.g. insulation
- Instigated cataloguing project for collection
- Maintenance of activity during Covid 19
- Installation of museum lighting
- Involvement in War Memorial project – wall & major exhibition
- Fundraising initiatives
- Research & writing
- Social media presence

#### **Anglesea Community Plan**

Since May 2025, community members in Anglesea have gathered to develop a community plan. Over 250 people have contributed their ideas, shaping a Vision and a set of Principles. There is currently underway a process to gather broader engagement with the vision and principles. The plan is up in the shire's website for comments until 17 November. Go to:

<https://yoursay.surfcoast.vic.gov.au/AngleseaCommunityPlan>

The plan (the vision and principles) will also be available to view and discuss on **Saturday 15 November at the Anglesea Bowls Club from 9am – 10.30am.**

### **The History House Flagpole:**

History House has a well maintained flagpole in the front garden. This flagpole was at Chez Le RoI, at 105 Great Ocean Road, from 1947. This was the home of the King family. The Resort now occupies the site.

This flagpole was once used as a mustering point for the Anglesea Annual Anzac Day March.

Jim and Lucy King donated the flagpole to History House before they sold the property in 1988. Jim Tutt and Ryan McKnight restored it about 10 years ago. It is now in constant use



*The flagpole at 105 Great Ocean Road*



*The flagpole outside History House*

### **Bellarine Railway Excursion (2/11/2025)**

The group enjoyed a trip on the Bellarine Railway on Sunday 2 November. For some it was a trip down memory lane, for others it was a scenic journey, and there were even a couple of heritage railway enthusiasts!

Brief history: the original railway line was commissioned in September 1878, and opened on 21 May 1879. It connected Queenscliff with South Geelong Station, the terminus of the Geelong line, and the junction of the Warrnambool line. It was acknowledged at the time that although passenger traffic alone might not justify a railway line, military traffic from both the port and Fort Queenscliff—a key defence installation—would warrant its construction. It initially carried passenger, goods and military traffic, and continued to do so for several decades. [source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bellarine\\_Railway](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bellarine_Railway)]





Source: bellarinerailway.com.au

**Since we're talking about trains, here's some train humour:**

- Why can't train engineers be electrocuted? Because they aren't conductors.
- Even the toughest train engineers need a brake to let off some steam.
- How do you locate a stolen train? By following the tracks.
- What's the difference between a teacher and a railway security guard. One trains the mind and the other minds the trains.

**What coming up:**

**SURF COAST FAMILY HISTORY GROUP**  
**Meeting 10.00am Thursday 13 November**

- At History House
- Morning tea included
- Entrance 4, 5 McMillan St.
- Entry free
- Speaker: Ann Hodgkinson
- Topic: **Armstrong Creek: Who was Armstrong?**

• **Members and visitors welcome**

**ANGLESEA & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY & SURF COAST FAMILY HISTORY GROUP**  
**Combined Christmas Garden Party**  
**Sunday 7 December 2025**

come and celebrate

- At History House
- Entrance 4 McMillan St.
- Starts 2.00pm
- Afternoon tea
- Christmas Raffle
- End of year celebration

Members & visitors welcome