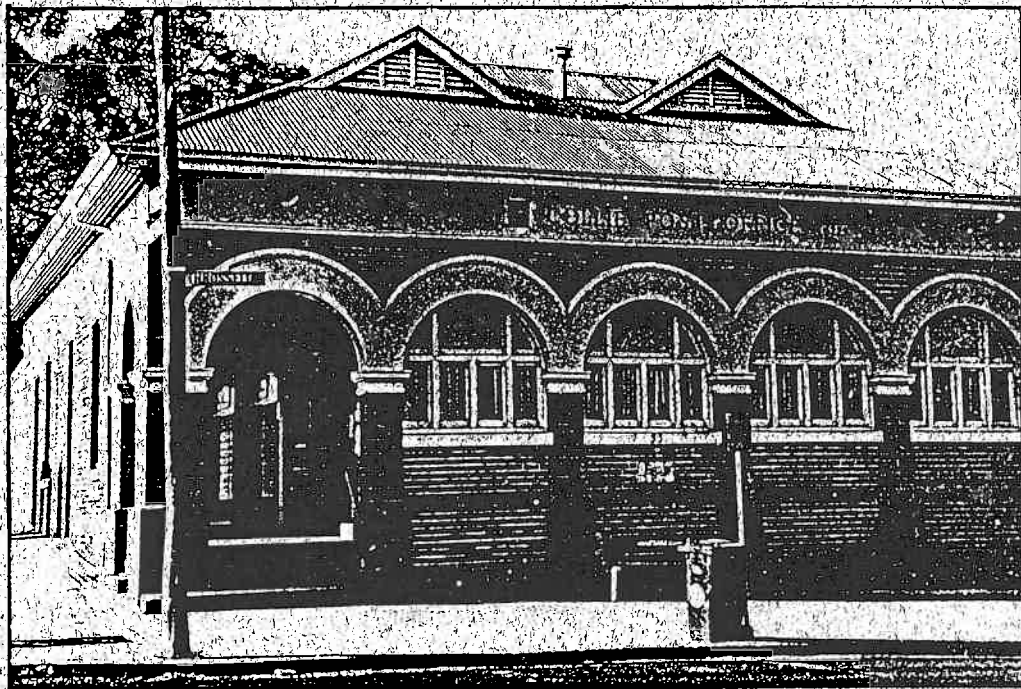


SHIRE OF COLLIE

MUNICIPAL HERITAGE INVENTORY



Prepared by **HOCKING PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE**

undertaken for

THE SHIRE OF COLLIE

October 1995

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
THEMATIC FRAMEWORK	4
INTRODUCTION	4
PART 1 - TIME PERIODS AND TIME THEMES	6
PART 2 - THEMES AND STORY LINES	14
MATRIX FRAMEWORK	
MUNICIPAL INVENTORY LIST	36
PLACE DATA SHEETS	40

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INTRODUCTION

This Municipal Heritage Inventory has been prepared on behalf of the Shire of Collie by Hocking Planning and Architecture Pty Ltd. The purpose of this report has been to satisfy the requirements of the *Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990* as well as provide the Collie Shire Council and community with a comprehensive list of places within the shire boundaries which are of cultural heritage significance.

Cultural heritage significance is the aesthetic, historic, scientific and social value a place may have for present and future generations. This may be a place which has played an important role in the history of the area, a building which has a particular architectural style or association with a person or a natural feature which should be conserved as a place for people to use.

Thus, the Inventory can be seen as a heritage asset register which can be used in conjunction with the Collie Shire Planning Scheme to provide for individual places as well as precincts.

Legislative Basis

The Municipal Inventory is a local heritage list which has been brought about by a provision in the *Heritage of Western Australia Act 1990*. The Act requires public consultation in the identification of heritage places although the decision to enter places in the Municipal Inventory rests ultimately with the Shire Council. Municipal Inventories must be updated annually and reviewed every four years. Places in the Inventory of high heritage significance may also be included in the State Register of Heritage places.

Role in Conservation

Although the Act requires a local council to provide the Heritage Council with a copy of its inventory, the places listed can not be considered for entry into the State Register without further assessment. The Municipal Inventory has an important role in the conservation of local areas especially when related to design guidelines, tourism studies and the community's sense of place.

Compilation Process

The philosophical basis for the process of developing the Inventory is the ICOMOS charter for the conservation of Places of Cultural Significance (the Burra Charter) which provides guidance on matters of definitions, assessment of significance, and the preparation of conservation policy.

The process of compiling the Inventory list was carried out over several months and required the involvement of, state and local public bodies as well as members of the community. A steering committee of local residents, which represented a broad diversity of community interests, knowledge and expertise, assisted in the process and overview all nominations.

Community consultation meetings were organised to educate and inform the public as to the expectations and outcomes of the Municipal Inventory as well as accept nominations.

Historical Context

A history of the area was prepared in order to establish criteria to assess nominations and to locate the heritage places within a historical and architectural context. The thematic framework that has been produced is a comprehensive social history of the area which defines historic themes within which the heritage places can be categorised. Themes and subthemes identified in the history were refined as a matrix to clearly illustrate this relationship over time. Essentially, the development of the history of the area was to ensure that the inventory list represented all aspects of the community.

Existing Documentation

All previous heritage places have been reviewed and, where appropriate, incorporated into the inventory. This included listings from the Heritage Council of Western Australia Geographic List, classifications by the National Trust of Australia (Western Australia) and places in the Shire Planning Scheme.

Geographic List - Heritage Council of Western Australia

The geographic list of heritage places maintained by the Heritage Council was inherited from the former Western Australia Heritage Committee. However, only a minority of these places have had assessment and in many cases the reason for the entry and their location is not known. The majority of the places on this list have been included in the inventory and some further information has been recorded.

National Trust Classifications

All National Trust of Australia (Western Australia) classifications and listings of existing places have been included in the inventory and treated in a similar manner to those recognised by the Heritage Council of Western Australia.

Place Record Sheets

Nominations for additional places on the inventory list were received from the steering committee and community. All individual community nominations were reviewed by the consultants and the Steering Committee and further information for each place was assembled in order to demonstrate reasons for inclusion. Management recommendations have been assigned to each place to assist the Council in policy decisions relating to the town planning scheme.

Heritage Provisions in the Town Planning Scheme

The purpose of the inventory is to contribute to the management of the community's heritage assets and resources. This can be achieved through appropriate integration with community planning and development control.

Heritage precincts are appropriate for those areas where it is desirable to conserve the general environment and setting of heritage places. Precincts which have been identified in the Inventory can be included as conservation areas. This will ensure conservation of the

building stock and control of building redevelopment and renovation. It will also allow for landowners be advised of the implications /recommendations affecting their properties.

Further Research

This document represents the beginning of a register of heritage places that will be continually expanded. In accordance with the Act, it will be required to be reviewed annually and updated every four years. Any additional properties and amendments will need to be adopted by Council.

It has not been the purpose of this report to carry out detailed research of individual properties, where any works which may affect a heritage place are proposed, adequate assessment should be prepared in accordance with Heritage Council of Western Australia requirements.

THEMATIC FRAMEWORK

INTRODUCTION

The framework for this study has been constructed on the basis of a matrix of historical time periods and major themes. In constructing the framework the first task was to break up the 'seamless web' of Collie's history into shorter time periods that could be subjected to more detailed scrutiny. These time periods are generally characterised by dominant events or trends that provide contrasts to other periods. In effect, this exercise sought to identify major turning points in Collie's history and the result, with its justification, is set out in **Part 1**.

The next task was to settle on a set of major themes or story lines that would best capture the whole of Collie's past and be relevant to its future. The steering committee decided at this stage to adopt the major themes already used in the South West Regional Framework, which had been completed in 1992. In this study major themes had been treated as questions with a broad enough base to capture the whole gamut of the past.

These questions, which shall be examined in depth in **Part 2** are:

Why did people settle here?

How did they travel and communicate?

What did they do for a living?

What did they do as a community and how did they live and relax?

What was provided from outside the area?

and a miscellaneous catchall:

Famous people and extraordinary events

By examining each of these questions over time, a real history of the people can emerge and so provide a solid foundation for the nomination of Heritage sites in the area. It was agreed at an early stage that 'Heritage' would encompass anything that would help future generations understand how life was lived in Collie in the past by all its residents.

Although the study has concentrated on Collie township it has included heritage sites throughout the Shire embracing the small satellite settlements at Buckingham and Allanson, the early timber mill sites and of course the coal mines.

PART 1

TIME PERIODS AND TIME THEMES

One has always to begin at the beginning although the beginning, as in this case, is often shrouded by time. The aboriginal history of the region has yet to be told so this framework is only concerned with the period following European settlement of Swan River Colony in 1829. Settlement in Collie, in the sense of occupation by first residents, occurred in 1896, though the Town was not officially Gazetted until 1897. The first turning point is therefore 1896-7.

1. 1829-1896: BEGINNINGS : Exploration and first occupation

Collie takes its name from the river which winds through the region. This river was discovered near its mouth and named in November 1829 by Alexander Collie - 'Physician, Explorer and Administrator' (as he is named on a memorial plaque erected in Collie in 1935). Collie had been appointed surgeon to the 63rd Regiment which arrived on the *HMS Sulphur*, in tandem with the *Parmelia*, to guard the Colony to be established at Swan River.

Settlement in the new colony proceeded along the Swan river and the Canning river, its tributary, until land there became scarce, then moved into the rich Avon valley along the Avon river which was so named before it was realised it was a continuation of the Swan. Under the auspices of the New South Wales government, a settlement, or outpost had already been founded at King George Sound, in 1826, primarily for defence reasons, and in 1831 this settlement, named Albany, was handed over officially to the Governor of Swan River Colony. Immediately, Governor Stirling appointed Dr Collie as its first Government Resident and Justice of the Peace. Collie continued to explore and sent back reports of good grazing land. By 1835 a road had been cleared overland between Perth, the Avon Valley and Albany. This was of importance for Collie as it meant that for many years the area lay untouched between the tides of settlement down the coast (to Bunbury in 1840) and down the Albany Road (Mt Barker 1835). To a large extent the Collie region was isolated because of its extensive Jarrah forest coverage, heavy timber that made overland transport by horse or bullock cart extremely difficult.

Even the convict era, from 1850 to 1868, passed Collie by - although it is certain that some of the men transported during that period eventually worked and lived in the region.

By the 1870s the little colony was progressing but badly needed to increase its exports to meet the continually high import bill. The two commodities with most export potential were wool and timber, while domestic demand for meat and leather to replace imports made cattle raising also vital. It was under the imperative of these goals that the Collie region was first occupied and developed - although the net had drawn a little tighter with the clearing of a track from Bunbury to Williams (midway on the Albany Road) to bring sandalwood to the port.

In 1879 Maurice Coleman Davies was granted a concession to cut timber in the Worsley area and in 1882 built a small steam operated mill along Pile Road named the Worsley mill. [Southcombe p68]. Some months earlier the Canning Jarrah and Timber Co had built a mill at Wellington but both suffered enormous difficulties in getting the timber out through the forest and over the hills to Bunbury. The Wellington mill struggled on but Davies decided to move further South (to Karridale) and sold the Worsley workings to JC Port and Co who in turn sold their enlarged mill to the Jarrah Timber and Wood Paving Co in 1887.

By the early 1880's at least four pastoralists were running stock in the Collie region. Gibbs had stock on the Muja flats; Pollard had a paddock on the Bingham river; Rose had a homestead at Roelands but grazed cattle well upstream and Perrin of Brunswick ran cattle in the West Collie area. [Williams p9] - all had shepherds who, in the days before fencing, ranged with their stock day and night.

It is said that it was George Marsh, a shepherd for Arthur Perrin, who first found coal on the banks of the Collie River in 1883. Exact details are uncertain, for Perrin later claimed to have found it himself, but legends are important and the legend concerning Marsh has it that he built himself a fire to keep warm, ringing it with stones, and later found that the stones were burning and by morning had turned to ash. Some say he was Welsh and familiar with the nature and uses of coal but whether this is true or not he reported the unusual occurrence to his employer who "dismissed the story". [Williams 10]

Marsh left the district soon afterwards (some say was sent away) and died before his find was confirmed. [ibid] Perrin, however, checked it out and anticipating some

reward was determined to keep the find a secret . With the coming of the first steamships to the colony and the building of first railways there was a clear need for commercially viable coal deposits. Perrin kept the secret for 7 years until severe illness prompted him to relate the find to his brother - who in turn passed the news on to business associates. One Bunbury businessman, David Hay, persuaded the now recovered Perrin in September 1889 to take out a joint lease of the area and form a company to exploit the coal. Hay and a friend took leases around the 300 acre lease that Hay had with Perrin, and subsequently found a coal seam on their lease, not on the lease held with Perrin. Triumphantly Hay took a ton of the coal to Bunbury in November 1889 where it was burned in an exhibition fire before the Governor, Sir Frederick Broome. Hay was awarded the £1000 prize for discovering coal within 60 miles of a port - until challenged by Perrin. A Select Committee later divided the award equally between the two.[*Williams p11*]

Hay and his associates did a considerable amount of prospecting over the following year and lobbied hard for government help in exploring the region's potential. Interest was evidenced by the formation of the Collie Commercial Coal Mining Company in May 1890 and the floating of 20,000 shares at 5/- par. The company hoped to find coal and sell out, their hopes raised by a South Australian syndicate which had just obtained a concession from the government to search for coal. In 1891 the government requested a noted specialist in coalmining, Dr James Robertson, who was visiting the colony, to investigate the area. 'Significantly, says historian Williams, Robertson was accompanied on his exploratory trip not by Woodward, the Government Geologist, but by Hay, the interested lease holder. Not surprisingly Robertson advocated intensive prospecting and held hopes of commercial finds which he felt should be exploited by an extension of the railway from Brunswick to the fields. The government was impressed with this report and immediately commissioned Robertson to set up a drilling team to prove or disprove the existence of viable coal deposits.

The fourth hole drilled by the team selected by Robertson, and headed by an experienced coalminer, WB Pendleton, struck an 18ft thick seam of coal at 41ft depth late in 1892. Ironically this fourth hole had been started by the Collie Coalfields Co and abandoned at 30ft when money ran out. Another fourteen holes were drilled before the Government called halt, - the existence of viable deposits had been proven but its quality remained to be tested.

The first 16 tons of coal were mined for testing from bore No. 11 using a vertical shaft. The coal was delivered in May 1893 and tested by the Railways Department on

the new Perth to Bunbury railway - with favourable results. Orders were then given to mine a greater quantity of coal for more intensive tests and an inclined drift was built into the No.11 seam to facilitate the operation. By August 1893, 200 tons of coal had been removed. But after this promising beginning little or no mining occurred for nearly 2 years.

Despite numerous favourable reports on the performance of Collie coal, arguments were continually raised against further exploitation. Some pointed to the poor keeping quality of samples examined, others felt it inferior to Newcastle coal in that less of the latter was required for a given head of steam. Most vocal of course were the Eastern Coalfields interests who maintained that there would be no significant cost advantage in mining local coal as Newcastle already had the scale of operations and distribution network that allowed them to lower prices, as they had just done in their latest contract with the WA Railways Department. C.Y. O'Connor, then acting General Manager of Railways, was not persuaded. In July 1894 he stated the belief that Newcastle coal prices were artificially low and would rise; that local coal mining would preserve the colony from the effects of coal strikes in the East, and that "other things being equal it would be better to spend money in paying wages in Western Australia". The government was sufficiently swayed to order another geological survey of the area, this time to bedrock.

Thornboro' Atkinson, another mining expert was chosen to accompany Woodward for the survey and to report on his findings. Atkinson was more than optimistic and predicted a glowing future for the Collie fields. Their remained one major problem and it occupied many hours of parliamentary debate in 1895. To take advantage of the Collie coal a railway would have to be built to link the field with existing lines, and this would be a very expensive exercise according to survey reports.

Successive surveys had provided a living for the first man to actually settle in Collie - D.W. Jones, who had arrived with the Pendleton party to work on the government tunnel in 1892 and stayed on, bringing his wife to live with him in a hessian and thatch home in 1893. Jones had been made caretaker of the government mine when the experimental mining phase was over until such time as the government found a private concern to take it over. The government surveyor, J Ewing, was the second to decide to take up residence with his family in Collie, although Ewing knew that the Government had decided to open up the district - which it did with the announcement on 20th February 1896 that 102,000 acres of land on the coalfields was available for

lease. Soon afterwards the government announced its decision to go ahead with a rail extension into the Collie fields....The real history of Collie was about to begin.

1896 - 1914 EARLY DEVELOPMENT

Although the initial response to the governments announcement of available leases on the Collie fields was not enthusiastic (only 2 applying) interest increased over the following months as more people visited or worked in the region. The decision to build the railway brought numbers of men into the area looking for employment , including Atkins and Law who had contracted to supply the timber needed for the new line. The latter erected a saw mill on the Harris River, the first timber mill in the district.

On 3rd December 1897 Collie township was Gazetted - as Collie. The following year its name was changed to Colliefields but returned to simply Collie in October 1899. In the meantime the railway had reached the town from Brunswick (1.7.1898) and a station built and station master, J Telford, appointed. The railway line had four sidings along its route which were later to develop into small centres - Olive Hill; Lunenberg (later Fernbrook); Worsley and West Collie (now Allanson).

As will be spelt out under appropriate theme headings, the following years were exciting and full for Collie residents, as mines and mills were opened, small businesses established in the town and private and public buildings erected. By 1903 the town was described in the WA Government yearbook as possessing a bank (Commercial); a post and telegraph office; a state school, a government hospital; ..also a mechanics institute where the municipal council met; a police station and a courthouse. Five religious denominations were represented and the town was lit by electricity. It had a population of about 1,500 and was producing about 140,000 tons of coal a year (1903 Yearbook).

The population of the town continued to grow as it received an influx of ex-miners from the Goldfields. When war was declared in 1914 Collie mustered nearly 500 men - an incredible effort for a town only 18 years old! The loss of this number of men was bound to influence the township and thus marks the end of the first phase of Collie's history.

1914 - 1930 EXPANSION AND CONSOLIDATION

The period from the first World War to the onset of the worldwide depression of the 1930's was one of expansion generally in Western Australia, as successive governments followed the populate or perish line and worked hard to promote industry in order to widen the economic base. Vigorous immigration under the group and soldier settlement schemes increased the size of the domestic market and led to considerable infrastructure investment - all of which stimulated the coal and timber industries upon which Collie's prosperity rested. The various competitive coal mines decided to amalgamate to increase profit and did so in 1920, constituting a monopoly that went unchallenged until 1926 when the Griffin Syndicate began operations. The railway was the lifeline of the township and this period witnessed the building of the turntable round house and the refurbishment of the rail spur and bridge over the Collie river. Business diversified with Chinese market gardens being established at Collie Burn and the Co-op mine starting a power station. Coal production climbed steadily from 3 hundred thousand tons in 1914 to 5 hundred thousand tons in 1930 employing 896 men. Events overseas, however, were to interrupt this steady progress.

1930 - 1945 DEPRESSION & WAR

Collie was effected like every country town by the fall in world prices for primary produce and the drying up of investment funds. Unemployment rose sharply as both the timber and the coal industry were forced to cut production and lay off men. The Coal Mining Industrial Board retaliated by reducing wages which hurt the miners and sparked industrial unrest - especially as Amalgamated Collieries was shown by a Royal Commission to have been extracting unfair profits from its clients. Wages in the industry did not return to 1930 levels till 1940. The timber industry fared little better and tradespeople in the town were badly hit. Government projects such as the construction of Wellington Dam, begun in 1931, provided sustenance for the unemployed.

The worst was over by 1934, but full employment did not return until the outbreak of the second world war in 1939 which led to considerable enlistment in the services. Fewer Collie men served in this war than had in the first, however, as coal was now deemed an essential industry and prohibitions placed on the recruitment of its workers. A major step forward in the war period was the commencement of open cut mining at the Stockton mine in 1943, while the passing of the South West Power Scheme Act the following year resulted in the State Electricity Commission compulsorily acquiring

the Collie Power Station. 1945 saw the end of the war and so marked the commencement of the long post war boom.

1945 - 1960 GROWTH AND PROSPERITY

Strong post war demand for power for both domestic and industrial use led to a 100% employment increase in the mines in the 1950's and a corresponding building boom occurred to house the new employees and their families. This in turn created more jobs and many new immigrants from Southern Europe found their way into the town. By 1954 the total population of the town had reached 8667. Transport was revolutionised as the motor car took over from the horse and mechanisation proceeded apace in the mines and the timber mills in the surrounding district. In 1960 two decisions were made that were to have a dramatic impact on Collie's immediate and long term future respectively. First, Amalgamated Collieries decided to close its doors after losing a major government contract and second, the Western Australian Government decided to proceed with the construction of the Muja Coal Fired Power Station which would substantially boost the state's electricity supplies

1960 - 1973 THE LEAN YEARS

The closure of Amalgamated threw over 700 men out of work and a shocked gloom pervaded the town. Industrial unrest followed and led to the formation of the Coal Tribunal which successfully brought peace to the industry. But its prospects did not look promising as transport and industry increasingly switched from steam power to diesel and petroleum, so lowering the demand for coal. As miners sought employment elsewhere, other businesses faltered and the property market suffered.

A glimmer of light showed when the large cement Co, Ready Mix, began their blue metal quarry just outside the town in 1964, and in 1965 the disastrous flooding and closure of the Hebe mine was offset by the opening of Stage 1 of the Muja Power Station, 60 megawatts. To add to the power station's demand for coal came new contracts to supply Japan in 1966, a year that also saw a record "divvy" day declared by the Collie Co-op Store - which erected a new bridge over the Collie the following year.

In 1968 a huge apple packing shed was opened to cater for the many farmers who had diversified into orchards in preceding years and had now cornered profitable export markets overseas. Fruit boxes, then made of wood, thus provided another small

stimulus to local timber mills. But coal was the principal employer and throughout this period of improved technology production had remained constant at around a million tons per annum.. There seemed little hope for any major increase in demand, until the world's confidence in the panacea of petroleum was shattered by the oil crisis of 1973.

1973 TO DATE - NEW HOPE.

By 1973 Collie's population had fallen to around six and a half thousand, 78% of the figure it had reached in 1954. But the hike in petroleum prices following the oil crisis of that year made government and industry think again about their increasing reliance on petroleum. Plans were laid to extend the capacity of the Muja Power station and an agreement was reached between government and industry regarding the construction of an aluminium refinery - to be built at Worsley to take advantage of Collie coal. In a further turnaround it was announced in 1975 that the Kwinana refinery was to be converted to coal. Confidence was restored and finance followed confidence as the large Co. CSR offered to take over 56% of Western Collieries in 1979.

In 1981 construction of the Worsley aluminium refinery began and the Muja power Station increased its capacity to 640 megawatts, allowing the old Collie Power Station, which had been closed in 1971, to be totally demolished. Prosperity returned to the town as the number and diversity of available jobs increased. A feeling of civic pride was engendered by the State's sesqui-centenary in 1979 and active moves were taken to record and preserve the town's history and face to the world, as they were again for the nation's Bi-centenary in 1988. As will be seen in the themes or story lines that follow, the town has much to celebrate and much to offer the visitor.

PART 2

THEMES AND STORY LINES

Having now established the broad contours of Collie's development over time, the questions that will reveal more detail about the town's history can be posed. As the very early exploratory period was dealt with in some detail in the previous section, the themes or answers to questions will begin in 1897 when the town was officially Gazetted.

1. WHY DID PEOPLE SETTLE IN AND NEAR COLLIE?

There are three principal reasons why people choose to settle in a particular area - its natural beauty, employment prospects, or to join family and friends, (what is known as chain migration), in Collie's history the last two have been most important. In the early days, employment prospects or the hope of making money brought the first pastoralists and shepherds into the area and after the discovery of coal it was the hope of reward, speculative gain or employment that drew men and their families to the Collie fields. Settlement also tends to progress (or regress) in waves, as initial immigrants are followed by their friends and relatives till all that wish to move are relocated, followed by a pause until some event triggers the next influx of new settlers which will have its own after or chain wave effect and so on. Collie is no exception.

The first leap was in the period immediately following the town's foundation. Within four years the population had grown from nil to almost 1,500, of whom 60% were male. The coal mines were the major employer but public services such as post office, courthouse, school, police station and burgeoning shops, hotels and small businesses provided alternative employment and created a suitable environment for families. The early population was also lifted by the establishment of a Salvation Army Children's home on a grant of 28000 acres just outside Collie in 1899. The home was to be under the general care of Herbert Booth, brother of William Booth the founder of the Salvation Army in Britain. Three homes were built on various parts of the site - separating girls and boys and big boys from the smaller ones - and by 1903 the girls home had over 40, the small boys (No. 2) about 50 and the No. 1 home had about 60 older boys. As there were about 20 or more general staff to look after the children and help run the farm that sustained them, the whole estate contributed quite significantly to Collie's population, and community life, till wound up and sold in 1920.

The years 1903 to the outbreak of WW1 saw much slower growth in population as might be expected after the first burst, but there were new faces such as George Robinson an immigrant from Oregon in the United States who chose to settle with his family on a property just outside Collie where he ran sheep and grew fruit, tobacco, grain and vegetables, selling his surpluses, like those from the Salvation Army home, in the town. When war was announced, Collie - a centre not yet 20 years old - sent an unbelievable 500 men to fight overseas.

Post war there was another population surge bringing the total to 3,313 in 1921 of whom 51% were male (a low proportion for a principally mining town and indicating perhaps the number of men who did not return). The following decade saw little real growth for in 1933 the total population had only reached 3784 - despite the fact that the twenties saw a sharp increase the population of the south west as a whole under the impetus of the government's Group Settlement schemes.

Growth in population throughout the depression period and the second World War was also slow, departures (many to Kalgoorlie) being just offset by new arrivals. It is worth mentioning that population counts in these days did not include aboriginals before 1967, and there was quite a marked increase in the number of Aboriginals living in and on the outskirts of Collie during the depression years. Although many Collie men were recruited for the armed forces in the second World War there was not the same impact on the town as there had been in the first, for coal was declared an essential service industry and recruitment of miners forbidden. Post war Collie's population stood at 4,500 - with still just 53% males. But Collie was on the brink of another major leap.

By 1954 the population had almost doubled to 8,667. Numbers of European immigrants and their families came to the town seeking work and war time Nissan huts were hastily converted to house them until proper accommodation could be built. This was Collie's hey day for since that time the population of the shire has fallen - to 7,547 in 1961 and 7,535 a decade later in 1971. In the 1960's the closure of Amalgamated Collieries threw hundreds of men out of work and led to an exodus of men to seek work elsewhere. The 1961 census in fact showed that Collie was one of only two shires in the state where women outnumbered men. The 60's and 70's saw the huge development of mining in the north of the State and this acted as a magnet for many of Collie's young men, especially as wages paid in the north were many times higher than

those offered by the Collie mining companies. By 1976 the population had fallen to 6771.

The 80's and early 90's have seen a revival. In the 1981 census total population was back to 7667 and it has continued to rise, linked to increasing employment opportunities with the expansion of the Muja Power Station and the establishment of the Worsley Aluminium plant - to nearly 9000 at the time of writing.

2. HOW DID THEY TRAVEL AND COMMUNICATE?

For most of its history the railway, which reached Collie from Brunswick in January 1898, has been the lifeline of the town bringing in supplies, taking out produce, carrying the mail and, until the 1960's, passengers - townsfolk and visitors alike. Servicing the train through to the 20's were bullocky wagons and horses. Bullocks were essential in the forest surrounding Collie for they could live off the surrounding vegetation, were capable of working in wet and muddy conditions and in terms of hauling heavy loads outclassed the more highly strung horse, as portrayed so vividly in Katherine Susannah Pritchards famous novel *Working Bullocks* set in the South West of this state. But in the town and in the mines horses were invaluable. Stables and blacksmiths shops were an accepted part of living as were chaff shops dealing in the dried feed they needed for fitness.

One impediment to easy travel in the early years was the Collie river which meandered through the town and had to be crossed to get to many of the mine workings. At first travellers used the "corduroy crossing" of logs at the end of Throssell Street but in 1900 work was begun on two bridges, one near the corduroy crossing for normal traffic and one further up as a bridge for the railway extension of 1903 to Narrogin.

At the same time roads in the town were improved under the auspices of the local Roads Board, but for a long time there was no direct road to Bunbury and the road leading to Brunswick was little better than a cleared track until the 1920's when it was finally bituminised.

Postal communication was established early in Collie which boasted its own Post and Telegraph Office in 1898. By 1914 the first telephone link had been established so cutting Collie's isolation from the rest of the State.

Throughout this period roads (or tracks) were cleared in criss cross fashion through the forest to enable the timber workers to reach their goals. Timber tram tracks were also laid between mills and the nearest rail siding, one such private line being that between Buckingham's mill and the main line - of which remnants exist today.

In 1920 the railway round house was constructed - a considerable piece of engineering, allowing trains to be turned without blocking the lines that were used for loading coal supplies. In 1929 a new rail bridge was constructed over the Collie river and a spur line built to link the Collie marshalling yards with the Griffin mine.

During the 20's and 30's significant improvements were made in terms of new bridges and bituminised roads, curbs and footpaths - some of it providing work for the unemployed. Much of this was necessitated by the revolution in transport occasioned by the introduction of the combustion engine, in the form of cars, trucks, lorries, motor bikes and buses, which occurred in this interwar period. Della ran a bus service in the late 1930's taking men from the town to the mines in what were called 'Charabangs'.

The post war continued romance with the motor vehicle gradually undermined the place of the railway in the life of Collie and completely replaced the horse and bullock wagon. Petrol stations replaced stables and garages the blacksmith's shop. The revolution in air travel, which meant so much to inland Australia, did not impinge much on Collie although it has its own airstrip for light planes. Far more important in terms of communication has been the advent of computers and fax machines which provide instant communication with anywhere in the world and can therefore help build new export markets for the produce of the Collie region.

3. HOW DID THEY EARN A LIVING?

This question needs to be sectionalised as there are clearly major categories of occupations in which Collie residents are and have been involved. Collie is unique in having a predominant industry employing a considerable proportion of the town's male workforce and so much of this section will be taken up with the story of coal mining. It will also involve the timber industry, the growth of the commercial sector and the public service. It should properly also include the work done by women in keeping house and raising children throughout the period but as this is still commonly not seen as 'work' it will only briefly be touched upon.

Coal

The history of the Collie coal mines has been detailed by H Williams in *One Day in Collie* and in the book edited by Catherine Stedman *One Hundred years of Collie Coal*, so detail here will be kept to a minimum. The early exploratory phase was outlined in Part 1 of this report where it was seen that the government opened an exploratory mine in 1893. This mine became the Wallsend mine in 1898 and operated until 1910 almost in the centre of town. This mine was important as it truly put Collie on the map as a major coal producer, the mine yielding a total 1,043,677 tons of coal during its lifetime. In 1897 the only vertical deep shaft mine was opened in West Collie (later Allanson) but it only lasted a year closing in 1898 after yielding 2,947 tons. Another shortlived mine was the Moira opened in 1900 but closed 1901 after a yield of 19, 727 tons. In 1902 a Co-operative mine was opened on the incline shaft method and operated successfully until 1917 yielding 836,439 tons. A year later in 1903 one of the most successful of the early mines, the Cardiff mine, was opened and operated independently until 1920 when it was absorbed into the Amalgamated Collieries, (it then continued to be mined until 1960 making it one of the most significant mines on the Collie fields).

The Amalgamation of 1920 saw the demise of Collie Burn or the Scottish colliery which had begun in 1903. Amalgamated also took over the Westralian, founded 1909, the Proprietary, founded 1911, and the new Co-op mine founded in 1918, and the Premier, founded in 1911 - tho' the latter closed its doors soon after take-over, having been purchased primarily for its quota.

1926 was an important year as it saw the birth of a company that would take on the Amalgamated force and win. This was the Griffin syndicate which operated deep mines until 1955 and then switched to open cut. In response to competition Amalgamated opened the Stockton mine in 1927 - which can lay claim to being the first mine on the Collie coal fields to use the open cut method of mining, begun in 1943. Collie coal mining was dominated by Amalgamated through the twenties and thirties. During the depression years men were laid off, the workforce falling by 41% and wages being cut for the 614 men lucky enough to still be employed.

The exigencies of the second world war from 1939 put pressure on available coal supplies and by 1945 there were some 1500 men employed on the Collie Coalfields. Griffin had opened two new deep mines, Wyvern mine in 1943 and the Phoenix in 1948, while Amalgamated opened the new Wallsend in 1946. In 1949 a number of

gold miners formed the "Goldfields Syndicate" determined to switch interest from gold to coal which was in high demand. By the end of that year, however, the syndicate had been taken over and renamed Western collieries.

Under the impetus of a sharp post war boom the 1950's witnessed a very rapid increase in activity to 1955 then a disappointing reversal as supply outstripped the less than expected growth in demand. From 1950 to '55, however there was furious activity on the fields, Western Collieries began operations in 1950 with an open cut at the new Collie Burn which when it closed in 1953 became 'Blue Pool' a popular swimming hole. 1951 saw the birth of Western Collieries Western Number 1, while Amalgamated opened Black Diamond and Ewington and Griffin Co. the Centaur. The following year, 1953, Western Number 2 came on stream as an incline shaft deep mine and in 1954 Western Collieries opened its 3rd mine, an open cut, Western Number 3. Also in 1953, Amalgamated opened the New Westralia mine and Griffin Co. a new open cut mine at Muja, followed by the Hebe deep mine in 1954. But in 1955 the effects of all this furious activity began to tell.

Falling prices from 1955 forced many mines to close and others to rationalise their operations, shedding unprofitable works. Griffin closed its deep mine in 1955 and in 1957 Amalgamated succumbed, closing its New Westralia and Black Diamond mines. The following year, 1958, Griffin closed the Centaur and Western Collieries closed Western Number 3. In 1959 Griffin was forced to close its two deep mines the Wyvern and the Phoenix, Western Collieries closed its original Western Number 1 deep mine and Amalgamated closed the Ewington Number 1 open cut. Despite this, Amalgamated seemed to have emerged victorious from the hot winds of competition, but in 1960 Amalgamated itself closed when the Government refused to renew its coal contracts, choosing instead the cheaper coal tendered by Griffin mines. As a result Amalgamated's New Co-op and Stockton mines were closed together with their Cardiff mine - which had operated continuously since 1903, so ending a chapter in Collie's history.

The closure of Amalgamated resulted in the laying off of almost 700 men and had a diabolical impact on the town. There were some 587 still employed in the Griffin Muja open cut and in Western Collieries deep mines Western 2 and Western 4 and in Hebe but those who had lost jobs exerted industrial pressure and resulted in considerable unrest until a Coal Tribunal was set up (1961) to address their problems.

In 1965 Hebe was forced to close as the deep mine workings had been flooded and in 1969 Western No. 4 was also closed. With the Kwinana refinery being converted from coal to petroleum in 1965 the future of the coal industry looked bleak - although the Muja power station was opened that same year at a small 60mg watt capacity. Western Collieries and Griffin remained the only producers on the Collie fields, though output had not fallen significantly due to the new technologies being used in the industry.

Following the oil crisis of 1973 the future of Collie coal began to brighten as Kwinana was converted back to coal and the dangers of being too dependant on imported petroleum were brought home to the government. The capacity of the Muja power station was gradually raised throughout the 70's and 80's creating an expanding demand for coal while exports through Bunbury improved with the advent of bulk handling. The siting of the Aluminium refinery at Worsley in the early 1980's was important because when it came on stream in 1984 it too provided a consistent demand for coal from the two companies operating on the fields - Griffin and Western Collieries.

The early 1990's saw a continuing battle between the proponents of gas and coal as the basis for the State's future energy needs - a battle which remains unresolved at the time of writing but one which will have a large bearing on the future growth of the town.

Timber

In 1879 Maurice Coleman Davies was granted a concession to cut timber in the Worsley area and in 1882 built a small steam operated mill along Pile Road, named the Worsley mill. Some months earlier the Canning Jarrah and Timber Co had built a mill at Wellington but both suffered enormous difficulties in getting the timber out through the forest and over the hills to Bunbury. The Wellington mill struggled on but Davies decided to move further South (to Karridale) and sold the Worsley workings to JC Port and Co who in turn sold their enlarged mill to the Jarrah Timber and Wood Paving Co in 1887.

When Atkins and Law won the contract to build the Brunswick-Collie railway they leased another mill near Collie, but which one is difficult to determine as there were a number of privately owned spot mills in the area by that time. Completion of the line made expansion possible, and by 1901 competition between the various mills was intense and few were really profitable for the local demand for hardwoods, which had

burgeoned with the gold rushes of the 1890's, had quietened and interstate and overseas markets were aflood with jarrah and karri. At this stage a company with British financial backing and experience in felling and milling in the Great Southern, Millars Karri and Jarrah Co, proposed a merger of the principal producers in the State. The amalgamation was agreed to in 1902 and as a result the Worsley and Wellington mills became part of what was to be known as "the Combine". With huge capital backing the company modernised and streamlined its production, some mills were abandoned in the process but the two Collie mills became part of the group of 12 owned by the Combine that together produced 665,000 cubic meters of sawn timber each year in the first decade of the new century and enjoyed the lions share of the export market.

The Combine was not a complete monopoly. In 1904 JW Lyall, a gold fields timber merchant established a mill some 7 miles outside Collie which became known as Lyalls Mill, even though Lyall sold out to the Bunnings brothers in 1907. This was the start of the Bunnings push which was to take on the mighty Millars Combine. Lyalls mill became a major part of the growing Bunnings brothers timber business, operating until closure in 1968.

In 1908 many of the independent timber hewers who had worked in the region and were now redundant, decided to form their own co-operative and become players in their own right. They formed the South West Timber Hewers Co-op and floated 300 £10 shares to erect a mill at Lucknow near Collie. They supplied hewn sleepers and beams and did well, opening branches at Holyoak, Marrinup and Kirrup before being bought out by the State Saw Mills in 1913 for £80,000!

In 1911 two brothers who had timber interest in the Kalamunda-Roleystone region just outside Perth, turned their attention South. Ernest and James Buckingham arrived in Collie in 1910 and opened a steam mill a few miles outside the town at a place that now bears their name (Buckingham) in 1911. This mill proved to be a small but steady performer which successfully weathered the storms of war and depression into the second half of the 20th century.

In 1910 Lewis and Reid, another timber company purported to have South Australian backing, had purchased mills in the Collie region. The one at West Collie, Allanson, became the centre of their operations (the other was probably taken over from Atkins and Law). By 1912 Lewis and Reid found that good timber in the area was becoming scarce and looked further afield, opening a mill at the Harris river in 1913. Timber

felled and milled here was taken on timber tram lines to Allanson for dressing and distribution. They became a large concern operating a general store and butcher shop for those living at the at the Harris river site and a business in Collie as a local outlet for their timber. The profitability of this company did not go unnoticed by the fledgling Bunnings Co which made a successful takeover bid in 1923. Increasingly stringent Forest Department regulations however, forced Bunnings to close the two Collie mills if it wished to build up the Harris River mill so both were wound down and closed in 1925, most machinery being transferred to Harris River. Some of the remaining stockpiles of sawn timber at Allanson disappeared in the severe bushfires of 1929.

The potential of the Harris River site had been noticed by another timber man, McClusky of the Collie Land and Timber Co who had purchased part of the Salvation Army property when it came up for sale in 1920. McClusky built 3 mills in succession on his new land, the largest in 1928 near the Lewis and Reid mill at Harris River. This mill also prospered and was taken over by Douglas Jones in 1933 who ran it successfully till it was absorbed into the Millar empire in 1972.

By the 1940's timber production in the region employed 310 men. The major mills were Lyalls(Bunnings), McCluskeys(Jones), Worsley(Millars.-Wellington mill having closed in 1928 just before construction of the Wellington Dam), Harris River (Bunnings) and Buckingham.

When Bunnings closed the Lyall mill in 1968 most of its plant was moved to a new site nearer Collie where Bunnings had erected one of the most modern timber mills in the state. In 1972, as already mentioned, Douglas Jones of the McClusky mill had been taken over by the mighty Millars but in a final twist of fate Millars was taken over in 1983 by its long time rival, Bunnings, in a deal worth \$25 million.

Timber in the Collie region has not only been a constant employer and a cultural offset to the coal industry, it has also been a microcosm of the history of the timber industry in the state.

Farming

Land along the Collie river was taken up at an early stage, as we have already seen, by pastoralists running cattle. The area was really too wet and the tree coverage too dense for successful sheep and grain growing before extensive drainage and irrigation occurred in the thirties. The land proved ideal, however, for cattle and so the principal

occupation of most farmers in the district has been raising beef cattle and dairy herds. At first dairy's were developed to supply the town as wider markets were impossible given the slow transport available and the lack of refrigeration. In the 1920s, however, when refrigeration was more widely available, the government pushed the dairy industry to replace reliance on imported butter and cheese. In response Peter's Pty Ltd established a large milk and cream processing plant at Brunswick which provided a growing number of dairy farmers with an outlet for their extremely perishable product.

Many farmers raised fruit and vegetables for their own needs and, again in the interwar years, government encouragement was given to apple and pear growing for export. As noted elsewhere this led to an increasing demand for wooden fruit boxes which the local timber industry was pleased to supply. When timber boxes gave way in the 60's to cardboard, a large new apple packing shed was erected in Collie so that from 1968 farmers could deliver their produce in bulk.

Commerce

Almost before the first government coalmine got into regular production a hotel, the Miners Arms, had been erected in Throssell Street near the mine entrance. Built in 1898 this hotel was burnt down in 1902, rebuilt and then later dismantled and re-erected to make a shop, more towards the centre of the town. Commerce closely followed swings in the mining industry and total population, for the needs of the workers for butchered meat, milk, bread, clothes, haircuts, education, legal aid, boots, sharpened tools, undertakers, building materials etc created many opportunities for small businesses. The most profitable business however would seem to have been hotel ownership. From as early as 1901 there were five hotels in the town, each with their own clientele, (viz the Commonwealth [later called the Club], Federal, Colliefields, Victoria and the Miners Arms.[at one time also known as the Commercial]).

The retail sector dominated commerce in the town , and within the retail sector the Collie Co-operative store was paramount from its foundation in 1902 to its final demise in the mid 1970's. It literally sold everything people wanted and did extraordinarily well in the days before the large scale economies of the supermarket. "Divvy day ' was a great day in Collie when dividends were allocated to shareholders - who encompassed practically one in every household in the town. Dividends were met with long shopping lists and consequently were almost always spent back in the store. The Co-op also contributed to the town running bread, meat and vegetable carts throughout

the town and to surrounding area's, and financing a new bridge across the Collie in 1967 - one year after the record Divvy day when, on the 29th of September 1966, the co-op paid a huge 4/6. on each £1 share. The opening of 'Tom the Cheap' in Collie in 1965, however, spelt the beginning of the end for the co-op which had coped with the advent of the telephone, the change from horses to motor vehicles [which had seen the demise of their extensive stables] and the explosion in the number and variety of consumer goods after the war. It simply could not compete with the likes of Coles, and other discount stores with the cost advantage of their huge buying power. Closure of the co-op also marked the end of an era in Collie.

All the professions were also represented in Collie's commercial sector. The Business Almanac of 1914 shows that Collie had in that year a vet, insurance officers, hairdressers and barbers, an auctioneer, dentist, doctors, nurses, carriers, jewellers, solicitor, photographer, stationer, bakers, bootmakers, butchers, builders as well as two maternity homes, two livery stables and three tea-rooms. An undertaker commenced business before the end of that year. There were also the clerics, for all religions were by this stage represented in Collie. Under the professional heading would also have to come the entertainers, those who ran local dances and picture shows and later the movies.

Under the commercial banner [as they were too small to really be called manufacturing concerns] would also have to come the production of aerated waters from a building in Prinsep Street from 1926 and the Radiant Clothing Co. in Throssell Street which about the same time produced basic ready-to-wear clothing. Small processing industries did well in the town until the advent of the large retail chains which, through their economies of scale, drove the small local suppliers out of business - a trend that was seen throughout the South West in the 60's and 70's.

From 1918 there had been Chinese market gardeners on the outskirts of Collie and, as noted above, with the big export push of the 1920's more and more farmers in the district turned to fruit, particularly apple, growing.

Throughout Collie's history the building industry had always been represented and made good use of local timber. But very early on brickworks had been established on the edge of town and the better houses were constructed of this material. Examples of building styles over time for the poor and the wealthy are an important part of Collie's history and the town is fortunate in having a number of well preserved houses representative of all the major stages in Collie's development.

The diversity and extent of employment in the private commercial sector was matched if not surpassed over time by that in the public sector - encompassing all those working for the Government.

Public Service

The largest State government employer in Collie was undoubtedly the State government railway [WAGR] which ran the yards, locos and the station at Collie from 1898 to the mid 60's when the scale of their operations was severely cut. In its hey day the railways at Collie employed over 200 men, making it one of the more significant occupations in the town. But with the transition from steam to diesel locomotion in the early 1960's there was no need for the coal loading depot and rail traffic to Collie came almost to a halt. Railway employees and their families were moved away, reinforcing the depression caused by the closure of Amalgamated collieries.

The second largest state employer in the area has been the State Electricity Commission [SEC], which took over the privately owned Collie Power House in 1944 under war time controls. Increasing power demands after the war had seen the construction of a second power station at Bunbury in 1957, but it was soon apparent that this would be totally insufficient for future needs. In 1960 the decision was taken to build a new and larger power station near the source of energy - coal. It was to be named Muja, the aboriginal word for the flowering Christmas trees which flourished in the area. Site clearing began in November that year and construction began at Easter 1962 after considerable research had been undertaken to ensure the most up to date design. The Station came on stream in 1965 with a workforce of 38, by 1969 when Stages A & B were complete it employed 167. In 1972 staff from the old Collie Power Station, which had been working in tandem, were moved to Muja and the old Station was closed. Construction at Muja continued as Stage C was put into effect to bring the power generation capacity to 200 MW. Stage C was opened in 1981 and increased direct employment in the Station to 325, and the coal throughput to 6000 tonnes per day. Stage D was then begun and completed in 1985 bringing the total value of the station to some \$1500 million. Following decentralisation in the early 1990's, when much of the direct administrative function was moved from Perth to the site, employment at Muja reached 745 while the coal usage of the now fully operating station exceeds 10,000 tonnes a day. Power generation has therefore become a major part of Collie's life. Government plans to even further extend the States electricity

capacity with the construction of the station were at first favourably received until forceful arguments were put forward in favour of using gas from the North West Shelf as a cheaper form of energy to coal. At the time of writing the decision has not been made and Collie waits in some trepidation.

Provision of water supplies has also been a major, if sporadic, source of government employment. In 1910 a large water tank reservoir was constructed at the top of the hill overlooking the town, fed by a spring and pump on the other side. Water from the tank was then piped to the railway yard where it was fed into engines using feeders similar to the one still visible at Roelands today. As Collie grew its water needs exceeded that provided by the tank reservoir and plans for a dam were mounted. The Wellington Dam was constructed fairly cheaply using unemployed labour during the depression. Legend has it that the whole construction was completed without machinery - men, shovels, pickaxes and horses did the job in just under two and a half years. In 1947 the Dam walls were raised to increase the Dams capacity and it served Collie well for some twenty years. By the 1970's, however, concerns were being expressed about the increasing salinity of water from the dam. Vigorous planting programs, designed to offset the damage done by excessive clearing, did not reverse the trend and plans were laid for the construction of a new Dam. In 1986 the Government announced that the new dam would be built at Harris river to the North of Collie. This huge undertaking was planned to supply Collie and other South West inland towns into the 21st century and its construction would provide further employment for Collie townfolk.

From the beginning the courthouse, police station, schools, hospitals and postal facilities employed government servants who were well known and respected in the town over time. Public works, such as the construction of the Wellington Dam in the early 1930's and its extension some years later, brought numbers of civil servants and outside contractors into the vicinity of the town. Instrumentalities such as the Coal Board and earlier the Coal tribunal have brought public servants to the town, some of whom have stayed. In later years the government has staffed a social security centre, CES job centre, medibank office, infant health centre, CALM office and partly funded the municipal library.

Local government has been and is also an important employer, looking after roads, water supplies and sewerage, town planning, land sales and other registration matters as well as the local museum and tourist centre. Collie has had a very active local government and its new municipal building well reflects its forward thinking attitudes.

4. WHAT DID THEY DO AS A COMMUNITY AND TO RELAX

To 1914

Social activities in Collie from the early days revolved around the Church, the pub, Masons, horse races and other community sports, and the local schools. Before the first church was opened in 1898 Di Jones, one of the earliest inhabitants, used to take services at the railway ticket office. The first church was a rough made building used for Wesleyan and Congregational meetings until their church proper was opened in 1899 presided over by the first full time minister, Welsh born Mr Davies. Church of England and Catholic services were held in various locations before they too constructed their own permanent churches - the All Saints Church of England in 1915 and St Brigids Roman Catholic Church and convent in 1913.

Masonic lodges came to Collie at the same time as its churches. As early as 1899 there were three lodges, one in each mine, and their building was opened in 1900, the same year that the Salvation Army hall was opened.

Racing was always a popular sport. Even before Collie was founded a four horse race had been held for local residents at the 'Paddocks' Roelands in 1892. In 1898 and 1899 horse races were held up and down Throssell Street (the main street in town) until put a stop to by the town's first policeman, Newbold, in 1900. Thereafter an active tote was run from the Hotels in Throssell Street or under the "Betting tree" by the Station.

Local dances were popular. In 1898 Mrs Bradley's shed became a meeting place on Saturday nights for those inclined to kick their heels up, and by 1900 Collie had its own brass band, though according to advertisements at the time they were badly in need of new instruments. Dances then occurred in the hotels along Throssell Street - where five splendid two story buildings vied for custom.

In 1902 fire destroyed the Miners Arms hotel and the Colliefields hotel. A separate fire destroyed shops near the Miners Arms hotel. The rest of the town was gratified by the introduction of electricity generated from Wallsend mine. When Mrs Krakour threw the switch which lit the town for first time Collie became the first town in Western Australia to have access to electricity. One of the other comforts Australians take for granted in our long hot summers also became available in Collie in 1902 when the train delivered ice every afternoon at 4pm.

Clubs were also popular in the days before movies and television. Some with a serious purpose such as the Progress Association although not a club as such, but rather a group of rate payers who made decisions to enable development of the town, was formed as early as 1897. The Mechanics Association was formed in 1900 and the Collie River District Miners Association also in 1900. Others were founded simply for recreation such as the six cricket clubs operating in 1900, the Italian club formed the same year, The Dog and Poultry Association 1902, the Race Club 1903, the Angling Society and the Collie Rifle Club both formed in 1906, the Collie Mens Club 1907 and importantly in terms of its future prominence in Collie's affairs, a Cycle Club was established in 1910.

The establishment of a local paper was essential as a means of conveying local information as the town grew. The first local paper was the Collie Miner begun in 1906, but this was replaced by the still operative Collie Mail in 1910.

Entertainment was very family oriented in these years, picnics at Minninup pool were popular, skating was possible from 1904 at the Colliseum and by 1906 the silent movies held many spellbound on a Saturday night in the open air - the first picture theatre proper being established in 1914. The Collie recreation ground had been established in 1900 and apart from regular summer cricket matches there were hockey and football matches and annual fairs. The recreational ground at West Collie (or Allanson) was opened in 1922 and called Lowry Park after one of the leading personalities of this mill town.

Swimming has always been a popular sport for residents fortunate enough to have a river wind through their town, and there were a number of favourite spots along the Collie River for swimming - Clancey's pool, Telfer's pool, Town pool, and Brick kiln pool were all in the vicinity of the town while Minninup pool was the outside favourite because of its rocky bottom.

Schools were important too in the Collie community. The State school was opened in 1899 with Jock Blain as the headmaster and, for some time, sole teacher. Some of the larger timber mill settlements had their own schools such as that at Lyall's Mill which was opened 1904, and the school at Allanson, serving the Lewis and Reed mill families, which was opened in 1913. Particular mines also had schools for the children of their employees, Cardiff school opened in 1916. These State schools were

well attended, though parents also had the choice of a Catholic education at St Brigids school which had opened in 1913.

Inter-war

During the twenties life in the town consolidated, reflecting the coming of age of the second generation of Collie residents. The local hospital which had been founded in 1901 was given a new two story extension, schools were enlarged and a state secondary school opened in 1926. That year also saw the inauguration of the Collie to Donnybrook cycle race which has now become an annual classic event. Whippet racing challenged horse racing for the towns gamblers - but were also family picnic occasions. Out in the timber towns two-up schools were popular drawing 50 to 100 people. Various mens clubs such as the Druids and the Buffaloes were formed. The State's Centenary celebrations in 1929 were warmly entered into by the people of Collie at a very successful Carnival.

The depression of the 1930's hit Collie badly. A 'tent city' sprang up on what is now the Hockey ground near Cardiff bridge, housed single men who had come to the town in search of work. Regular produce markets were held under the auspices of Bill Nunn to help families by providing grower direct fruit and vegetables. Ada Thomas was one of a number of dedicated women who ran soup kitchens to feed the needy throughout this period. Free entertainments such as swimming under lights at the Swing Bridge, Cycling races, Pitt horse races in the mines, racing pigeons, etc were very popular while the more expensive recreations were shunned.

When war was announced it was no real surprise. Army recruitment had picked up from 1937 and absorbed many who had been laid off during the depression. One of the many army training camps was situated near Wellington Dam which meant Collie became familiar with men in Khaki.- in 1941 there were 126 enlistments from the town, though as noted above the coal miners were working in an essential industry and their recruitment was discouraged. Petrol was rationed throughout the war which limited movement while many products simply became unavailable.

Post war to 1973

After the war Collie saw a large influx of migrants, many of them from Southern Europe. This stimulated a building boom in the town and introduced a more cosmopolitan flavour to local eateries. The character of the town was totally changed too by the increasing use of the motor car. A 'Holden', Australia's own car, cost some £400 in 1952 when average yearly wages were about £250 -£300 - but every family aspired to a car of their own. Society became more mobile and holidays by the coast became a normal part of life in the 1950's as did Sunday drives and picnics in the bush.

A polio scare in the 50's deterred swimmers in the river for some time and led to the old Collie hospital being declared an infectious diseases hospital. School immunisation programs, however, contained and finally eradicated both polio and the scourge of mining towns - tuberculosis, although there is no record of WA coal miners with TB, as the coal is soft and doesn't cause this type of complaint.

With improved transport available it was deemed inefficient to continue to run many small country schools and from the late 50's more and more children were bussed to larger State schools in Collie rather than walking to their own small local schools. Schools in the 50's also introduced concepts of health and nutrition, resulting in policies that saw every child given a half a pint of milk a day, and compulsory swimming lessons.

The early 1960's, as related above, were years of gloom for Collie as the largest coal mining company closed its doors and the Railways contracted employment. Things were so severe that the Collie Co-op - heart of the town - was unable to pay a dividend in 1962, the first and only time this occurred. The following year the Co-op was forced to close its bus (or lorry) service which had operated 3 times a week to outlying areas. Many men left the town in search of other work but for those that remained there were a few brighteners. In 1961 the Shire of Collie was inaugurated giving well deserved independence to a local government which had always acted for the good of the community and in the same year the Collie Drive-In picture theatre was opened with a 249 car capacity. 1961 also saw the cycling event of the Commonwealth games, held that year in Perth, scheduled for the Collie Velodrome although the actual event had to be cancelled due to rain.

Depressed economic circumstances inflamed opinions on the issue of native assimilation, raised when a number of aboriginals camped on the outskirts of town. Several public meetings were held but little was done. The new Shire Council decided

in 1963 that the town needed a proper swimming pool which was opened in 1964, the year that flooding from the Collie river did its worst damage. At a cost of some \$120,000 the river was there-after dredged and its course altered such that some of the old swimming spots were destroyed. The pool was the centre of some controversy in following years as the Churches objected to Sunday opening and as a result hours of opening were slightly restricted and charges raised.

The Shire council was concerned at this time for the welfare of the very old and the very young in the community and set itself the task of raising funds to establish a Youth Club and provide homes for the Aged - community response to both projects was generous (in one year \$30,000 was raised for the youth club and \$100,000 for a home for the aged - the latter finally being opened in 1970). Meals on Wheels was inaugurated in 1965 and in the same spirit of community service the newly established Lions Club raised \$5000 for coal research!

A combination of depressed conditions and the advent of the first supermarket in 'Tom the Cheap' led to the closure of at least two long standing retail stores in Collie - Harry King's hardware store and Cox's Store both closed their doors in 1967. The Theatre Royal, a centre piece of Collie's entertainment history was also forced to close and was demolished in 1967. The last performance of 'The King and I' was held at the Bow Theatre and it was finally sold to the R&I bank for \$29,100 in 1973.

New Hope 1973 to date

The 70's brought a slow return of prosperity to the town, indicated by the opening of the new municipal chambers in 1977, a new wing of the hospital in 1974 (followed by further extensions in 1981), the Collie Museum in 1971 in the old Roads Board building, and the Tourist Bureau with its railway park containing the steam locomotives sold by WAGR to the council in 1971.

Progress had its costs however and the townsfolk lost the familiar sight of the railway station in 1977 and the Co-op store in the mid 1970's. The post office at Schotts was closed in 1971 and in 1973 the council discontinued its sanitary service spelling the demise of the dunny at the bottom of the garden. Most of the verandah's outside the hotels and shops had gone by the mid 1970's as well in the drive for modernity.

The State's Sesqui-Centenary in 1979 was celebrated in a more hopeful frame of mind for the agreement over the Aluminium refinery at Worsley promised increasing

employment as did anticipated extensions to the Muja Power Station. To mark the Sesqui-centenary the council launched a commissioned book by H Williams on the history of Collie, while the Collie Apex club erected a memorial plaque at the coal discovery sight on the Collie river, both events acknowledging a growing interest and pride in the history of the town.

1983 was the towns own centenary and was marked by the inaugural foot race in the Griffin open cut - now renowned as the "Griffin gate to gate". The Bi-centenary in 1988 was also time for celebration and CALM re-dedicated the Bibbulman track - a walking track through forest and parks from Perth to Walpole on the South coast following as nearly as possible the route taken by the indigenous natives in the days before white settlement. This track winds around Collie and provides another challenge for visitors to the town.

5. WHAT WAS CONTRIBUTED FROM OUTSIDE THE REGION

[See 'Public Service' in section 3]

6. FAMOUS PEOPLE AND EXTRAORDINARY EVENTS

Extra-ordinary events in Collie's history have mostly consisted of natural catastrophes - fires and floods. Fire wiped out part of the town in 1914, and they were not uncommon in the mines. In 1901 a fire broke out in Wallsend mine that could not be extinguished - it is said that this fire smouldered for six months. Floods also took their toll on the physical landscape, the worst being in the years 1915, 1926 and 1964 - the latter hopefully being the last as it was followed by extensive dredging and recasting of the river bed. It was followed however by further flooding in 1982 although the damage done was far less than in earlier years.

The two world wars also impacted hard on Collie as did the depression of the 1930's - all three qualifying as extra-ordinary events. Others have been more celebratory such as the erection of a huge arch of coal in Perth in 1901 to welcome Federation and the visit of the Duke and Duchess of York. The town Lord Kitchener was one of many famous visitors to the town, he visited in 1910 and was followed by Premiers and Prime Ministers.

Over time there have been many town characters, Di Davies the preacher and mayor Coombes being two early ones. Nurse Jones won a place in the peoples hearts in the

interwar and post war years for her unstinting efforts to help others, and Miss Wilson is remembered by many for her long service in educating the young of Collie. The mines had their heroes too. Fred Robinson is a good example for he risked death when he rescued trapped workers from the Centaur mine as it caved in in 1951. A character whom the town would rather forget in the Armanaso murderer whose grisly crime in 1950 riveted national attention on the town.

Other events of note would include the day in 1971 when all the steam trains in the State came to Collie to mark the final passing of the days of steam. Again in the mid 70's the town was surprised by a visit from what appeared to be every motor bike in the State.

Openings of major projects have also been red letter days for Collie - examples being the opening of the various stages of the Muja Power Station and the opening of the Worsley Aluminium Refinery.

Every resident in Collie would probably have a different nomination to add to a list of famous people and extra-ordinary events, so the above may be taken as representative only. One event that should be included however is the Councils decision to undertake a municipal inventory of the town and its surrounds for such an inventory will provide the basis for future town planning, for tourist visits and most importantly provide future Collie residents, including its children, with a feeling for the struggle - the tears and the joy - that have gone into making the town what it is today.

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