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TORQUAY MUSEUM WITHOUT WALLS QUARTERLY MAGAZINE

HISTORY MATTERS

ALL ABOUT BELLS: THE COMP, THE SURFERS, THE HISTORY

EARLY JAN JUC

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VISION

A place that defines the essence of the Torquay region: its people, places and achievements during its rich past. A destination that serves to bridge the past to present by using digital history as a tool, offering relevant, educational and entertaining experiences that inspire discovery and connections.

MISSION

Torquay Museum Without Walls enriches and engages the local and wider community through preservation and dissemination of the unique historical stories of our area. We do this using an online digital platform which is open all hours, globally.

A GATHERING OF THE TRIBES

THE JOURNEY TO BELLS BEACH HAS BEEN PART OF A RITE OF PASSAGE FOR GENERATIONS OF SURFERS, WRITES MICHAEL GORDON.

Peter Troy and Vic Tantau knew they were making history, though it is safe to assert that neither man expected their creation to become the world's longest-running surfing contest, offering the most coveted trophy on the professional tour.

An advertisement placed in the second edition of Australian Surfer magazine in 1961 invited entries in "the first surfboard rally to be held in Victoria". For a two shilling fee, surfers were urged to compete for trophies in junior and open divisions. There was no mention of the one-pound prize for the wave of the day, or the stolen pig that would be barbecued at Bells after the contest.

Glynn Ritchie was an accidental competitor in the rally, which was advertised for New Year's Eve 1961 but held on Australia Day in 1962. The Manly teenager had come to Victoria with his aunt Ethel for a holiday, and been spotted by Troy when he was surfing in front of the Torquay surf club. "We've got a better place around the corner," Troy told him.

Ritchie is acknowledged as the stand-out surfer at the first rally but his contribution to the event extends well beyond his efforts in the junior and open divisions. Upon his return to Manly, Ritchie encouraged his mates to make the trip the following year, when the contest was held over Easter. "It was a groovy little scene," he said, half a century later.

EDITED FROM BELLS, THE BEACH, THE SURFERS, THE CONTEST, BY MICHAEL GORDON. PUBLISHED BY WOOLAMAI PUBLISHING.

Photo: Drew Ryan, Sydney Morning Herald 18/4/2011

Photo courtesy John Witzig

Joe Sweeney, builder Bell's bell
Geelong Advertiser 2/4/2016

Within a year or two, Bells became the setting for surfing's gathering of the tribes, the place where boardriders congregated to discuss the latest ideas on surfboard design, discover who was taking the sport to a higher level, debate the merits of competition — and to party. "The pilgrimage was part of your life as a surfer," is how three-time winner Nat Young describes it. "There is no question that every Easter I'd be at Bells and I felt really good about it, like celebrating Christmas." Ritchie was among the finalists in 1965, when the waves were huge and Bells was dubbed "the greatest contest ever" by Surfing World magazine's Bob Evans. There were several near-death experiences before a young mate of Ritchie's, Robert Conneeley, was judged the winner, with Nat Young second and a local surfer, Jeff Watt, third.

The place of Troy and Tantau in the history of Bells as the men behind the first contest is beyond question, but almost every other detail in the story of this iconic beach is contested. Was it Marcus Shaw, the man dubbed the first "king of Bells", or Joe Sweeney and others with connections to the Torquay surf club, who first surfed Bells on "modern" surfboards in the late 1950s? More than 50 years on, Shaw and Sweeney "agree to disagree".

Was it Brian Trist, who built the first staircase at Bells, who came up with the name Winki Pop for the break next to Bells? Or was it Troy? Or Glynn Ritchie? Trist is emphatic: "I was there, mate. I can only tell you what happened."

Was the distinctive bell trophy the brainchild of Tony Olsson, the administrator with an eye for the big picture? Or Midget Farrelly, who saw the attraction of having something as authentic as the carved wooden trophy at Makaha in Hawaii? Or was it John Witzig, the founding editor of Tracks magazine, who came upon the idea over a glass of champagne at the Torquay Hotel? In all likelihood, it was all three.

What is agreed is that Bells occupied a special place in the hearts of all of the pioneers, especially the 30 who each gave Joe Sweeney £1 to meet the cost of grading a track from Torquay to Bells in 1960. Their identities are not in dispute because Sweeney has the original hand-written list.

Rod Brooks competed in 11 finals at Bells and won five state titles at the beach on boards ranging from five feet eight inches to almost 10 feet. He vividly recalls seeing a short item in the newspaper about the track and made his first trip to Bells the following weekend.

From the beginning, the protocols at Bells were clear. Those who arrived early would prepare a bonfire on the beach that would be sustained during the day. Surfers, often clad in footy jumpers, would catch waves in short bursts before returning to the beach to warm up at the fire — usually singeing the hair off their legs.

The two men who created the Rip Curl surf gear brand, Brian Singer and Doug "Claw" Warbrick, first met at the Bells fire. Singer recalls Warbrick approaching the fire wearing a dressing gown and carrying a can of baked beans that he would heat up in the coals. Although some of hard-core surfers initially thought the idiosyncratic Claw was soft, they soon appreciated the benefit of the "baked beans energy hit".

Rod Brooks was studying cabinet making at Prahran Tech when he was assigned the task of producing the first Bells trophies in 1968. "I took the idea to a teacher in our class and we took it on as a class project," he recalls. "We had a lot to make because we had senior men's division, the masters, the women and the juniors. It was huge."

Gail Couper has a special place in the Bells story, and not just because she won a staggering 10 women's titles. Her father, Stan, was the most influential administrator in the early history of Australian surfing, and Gail's duties in the lead-up to the contest would include putting the plaques on the trophies. She also played host to many of the women who came out from Hawaii to compete, including Rell Sunn. In the years that followed, other women would have an enduring impact. Among them were Margo Oberg, Lisa Andersen, Pauline Menczer, Layne Beachley and Stephanie Gilmore.

Warbrick was a casual observer of the second event, a competitor in the third and a judge in 1965. With Singer, he was also the advocate for the event turning pro in 1973, when a new "objective" points-for-manoeuvres judging system was introduced. The system was perfectly suited to Michael Peterson, who arrived at Bells with a piece of paper on his car's dashboard explaining how many points he would receive for each turn. In the years that followed, however, a young man from Newcastle, Mark Richards, would go Peterson one better, winning the contest four times.

While Richards popularised the twin fin, Bells was also the setting for the launch of the three-fin thruster by Simon Anderson in 1981, and the even more radical winged keel, designed by Ben Lexcen and surfed to victory by Cheyne Horan in 1984.

Points for manoeuvres gave way to a simplified system that emphasised performing the most radical moves in the most critical part of the wave; a ban on leg ropes remained until 1976; the Quiksilver Trials were introduced to ensure rising surfers had a chance to make a mark; and a priority system was introduced to reduce hassling in the line-up.

Many of these changes were controversial because they compromised the notion that a surfing contest was a test of all aspects of a surfer's prowess, including the ability to secure the inside position and retain his or her board in the event of a wipeout. But, almost without exception, they made for a better spectacle, especially for the uninitiated.

By far the biggest innovation was the introduction of the man-on-man format in 1977, a system created by the theatrical Peter Drouyn, who, it should be noted, had never been done any favours under other systems. Along the way, Bells became more inclusive and more authentic too. The involvement of the Wathaurong people in the presentation ceremony, starting in 2006, gave the contest a tangible connection with those who had been custodians of this stretch of coastline for centuries.

Kelly Slater was the first to be honoured by the traditional owners of Bells and he felt compelled to reciprocate their generosity in 2010 by presenting the Wathaurong with his fourth bell, the one that matched the record set by Mark Richards.

Ten-times winner Gail Couper and Bells pioneer Joe Sweeney take in the famous break. Photo: Drew Ryan, Sydney Morning Herald 18/4/20011

BELL'S BELLE

GAIL COUPER

10 TIMES CHAMP

Bells Beach, is known worldwide through the iconic annual Bells Beach Easter contest.

Initially it was a single-division, men's only contest, won by Sydney surfer Glen Richie, with local George Smith awarded a special cash prize of one pound for riding the day's biggest wave. It wasn't until 1966 that the first girl was to surf in the Bell's contest. It was 18 year old, Gail Couper who won this initial event. Gail went on to win Bells a record ten times in eleven years, possibly due to being a Lorne girl – a local with access to some legendary surfing spots.

Gail started surfing at Lorne from the age of fourteen.

With Rip Curl as the primary Bells sponsor prize money of $2,500 was awarded in 1973. Michael Peterson from Queensland winning first place and receiving a cheque for $1,000. The women's division went pro two years later, with winner Gail Coupler awarded only $200.

Michael Gordon writes that Gail's early memories are of wearing a sleeveless woollen jumper before getting her first wetsuit, and being frustrated by the sticky red clay of Bells in winter which made for slippery feet when trying to stand up on a board. In the years before leg ropes were allowed, Paul Trigger and Rod Brooks caddied for Gail and she invariably felt guilty whenever she lost her board. Gail recalled to Michael that, "A lot of girls say they got a very hard time, but I never did. I lived in a really friendly town and I had a great time. We'd all travel up and down the coast looking for surf. Before Wayne got his licence our parents used to take us wherever the surf was, so you had a bit of experience with different waves." Wayne Lynch was also from Lorne. He was an inspiration for Gail and she would sometimes prefer to watch him on the waves than surf herself. Wayne surfed in a way that covered areas of a wave that other surfer's didn't approach. He was a teenage surfing phenomenon who went on to become one of the world's most influential surfers.

Gail is Victoria's most successful female surfer. In all, Gail won five Australian titles, thirteen Victorian titles and the amazing and unique record of winning ten Bells. Gail was inducted into the Australian Surfing Hall of Fame in 2000.

Image Gail Couper Collection

Photo Harrie Sutherland (Top left & Bottom)
www.watermarksphotogallery.com.au

PETER TROY

Peter Troy grew up in Torquay quickly learning and enjoying the spectacular surf of the area. He was a member of the Torquay Surf Life Saving Club and is reported to have been one of the first group of surfers to surf the waves at Bells Beach. Troy was a 23-year-old accountant when he left Torquay in May, 1963, with a suitcase and an almost three-metre wooden surfboard. On a three-year odyssey, Troy gave the first short-board demonstration in Brazil, showcased modern surfing in Europe and became European champion. He not only travelled the world competing in surfing contests, his adventurous spirit found him sailing to find remote surfing locations and living in such places as the Arctic Circle.

In 1956 he participated in a display of surfing at Torquay, run in parallel with the Melbourne Olympics. By the time he left in 1963, Troy was leading a band of young men who were shunning the stuffy world of surf-lifesaving clubs, to devote themselves to surfing. On their doorsteps were uncrowded waves generated by some of the most reliable swells in Australia. Troy was one of the first to surf Bells, and along with his friend Vic Tantau, Troy organised and ran the first surfing contest at Bells Beach in 1962.

Troy also had a passion about preserving Australian surfing's heritage. Again, with the help of fellow surfing pioneers Vic Tantau and Alan Reed, he collected information and materials to fulfil their vision of a surfing museum in Torquay. This dream became a reality when the Surf World Museum opened in the summer of 1993/94. Today it is known as the Australian National Surfing museum.

Troy was presented with a number of awards such as the Australian Sports Medal (2000) and in 2002, he was inducted into the Australian Surfing Hall Of Fame. He was also an inductee into Brazil's Surfing Hall Of Fame. In 2006 he was awarded an OAM, as well as being named as one of Victoria's most successful and influential surfers.

Peter Troy, Fairy Bower, Sydney mid 70s
Photo: courtesy Libby Troy/Australian National Surfing Museum

www.surfersvillage.com/content/peter-troy-1

Photo Barrie Sutherland
www.watermarksphotogallery.com.au

VIC TANTAU

Leonie Vrymoet collection

Vic Tantau was a key person in the development of Torquay as a surfing destination. He was very skillful with the board, and for seven years he was not beaten in surf board races at surf carnivals in Victoria.

Vic was surfing when 36 kg hunks of redwood about 2.7 m long was all surfers had. He began surfing during Easter 1946, and was quick to identify the advanced performance of shorter, lighter Malibu chip surfboards demonstrated at the Torquay International Surf Carnival, held in conjunction with the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games.

He was one of the first surfboard manufacturers in Victoria and quickly developed a reputation for producing the best boards. Along with his mate Peter Troy, Vic produced the 'T Boards' and to promote board sales, ran the first surfing contest at Bells Beach on Australia Day 1962. He had no idea that it would grow into an internationally famous event when he and Peter gathered a handful of local surfers together to compete for the sum of one pound ($2).

The competition was simpler then than it is today, with having fun as the main aim. It was easy to put the first one together. Peter and Vic just put the word out that they would be holding a competition at Bells, the waves were nice and big, then they set up a card table on the beach and judged the whole thing themselves.

In April 1992, The Geelong Advertiser ran an article about surfer George "Ming" Smith finally being paid the rest of his prize money from winning the biggest 'wave of the day' prize at the first Bells competition thirty years earlier. George had received only 10 shillings, half of his prize for the day. Vic and his mate Peter, had endured plenty of jibes for being stingy until Vic handed over the other ten shillings. He had found a mint condition note tucked away in a draw and quickly realized he could clear his and Peter's names. Vic sent the note to George Smith with a note saying the debt was cleared, even though it couldn't be used for tender as decimal currency had been introduced in 1966!

Geelong Advertiser 16/4/1992

Peter had the vision for a surfing museum. In support of this next innovation, Vic scoured the local region looking to secure significant items for display. So was the birth of Surf World Museum in Torquay, now known as the Australian National Surfing Museum. In 1985 Vic was awarded with a Victorian Surf Industry Pioneer award from the Australian Surfing Hall of Fame.

THE FIRST TO SURF BELLS

Reprinted chapter from Michael Joseph O'Donnell's (2006) book "A Little Bit O'Luck: The memoirs of an old bloke reminiscing while on his front porch" reprinted with permission from Gary O'Donnell.

Torquay and the adjacent Bell's Beach has now become the surfing Mecca of Australia and over the last fifty years, I have read numerous newspaper and surf magazine articles written by young surfers, who claim they were among the first to surf Bell's Beach! Many of them weren't born and most of the others were still being nursed by their mother' s, when our mob first went to Bell's Beach and much later started to ride some of its waves! Just for the record, I will give some of my memories of Bell's Beach.

When I first went to Torquay with Vic Tantau, nobody went to Bell's Beach to surf! In the whole of Victoria there were probably less than fifty or sixty board riders, who all rode long hollow ply-wood surf boards. As well there were a dozen or so surfers who paddled plywood surf skis. The skis were handy because we could use them when skin-diving for crayfish around the reefs. The beach at Bell's was completely isolated from Torquay, and the only access was by a very rough bush track which a few fishermen had made, so they could fish from the rocky point at Bell's. This track led off from the Anglesea to Geelong Road and was about ten miles from Torquay. Vic Tantau, George Packham and I often used to wander towards Bell's whilst we were out shooting rabbits in the grassy paddocks where Jan Juc is now, and we found the track made by the fisherman. One day in 1949 a couple of car loads of us headed out on the main road to Anglesea, looking for where the track started and found it. In low-gear, we drove carefully along it to where it finished just above the southern headland of Bell's. There was no track to the beach, but we followed a narrow track through the scrub, to where fisherman was fishing from the rocks, and then we had to clamber back across the rocks to the sandy beach. The beach was piled high with driftwood, which had been accumulating there untouched.

Through the months of winter, we made a couple more trips to Bell's and taking axes and tomahawks with us, parked our cars at the end of the fishermen's track, and then cut a short track through the tangled scrub straight to the beach. Once we had easier access to the beach, we would bring our skin-diving gear with us and swim out to a small reef just off the beach, which was crammed with crayfish, and get enough for a party that night back at Torquay. Our small group kept our "secret crayfish spot" to ourselves. Often Eric Knight and I would paddle surf-skis around there and catch a wave into the beach, and then don our skin-diving gear and get some crays, before paddling home to Torquay. But none of us ever went there at that time to catch any waves, because if there was good surf we stayed and surfed at Torquay. Every time our small group visited Bell's there was no sign of anyone else knew about the place, except the few fishermen!

Once we had made the small track, we started taking Noela and the other girl's around with us, for picnics. The men would heap up some of the driftwood and build a fire for a barbecue and the girls would sit around it, while we dived for some crays, then afterwards we would have a bit of a party around the fire. Our 16 foot long boards were starting to be replaced by the shorter and more manoeuvrable Malibu boards and one day we thought there could be a good wave around at Bell's and a small group of us paddled all the way from Torquay around to Bell's. We rode a few waves there and they were better than they were back at "The Quay" that day, so after that occasion,

Down at 'The Quay', Kevin Walker alias Mumbles with Russell Mole, Michael O'Donnell and Vic Tantau.

1949 | 1950 | 1953 | 1956

Michael Joseph O'Donnell (Mick) was a successful Torquay Surf Life Saver, experienced sailor and prominent Queensland businessman. He first visited Torquay in January 1949 after an invitation from Russ Mole and Vic Tantau.

we started to check out the surf there more often. When Torquay wasn't "working", there would often be a nice shaped wave at Bell's, and slowly more of the surfers from Torquay started to surf there and we thought it was crowded if more than a half a dozen were there riding the waves! Some of those I remember as being among the first to surf at Bell's were, Kevin Walker, Vic Tantau, George Packham, Owen Yateman, Brian Beck, "China" Gilbert, Geoff Emerson, Bill Clymer, Keith Wadling and "Ming" Smith. Many of the older club members like Phil Bennett, Ron Hussey, Sam Henson and Don Nichols would row our old surf boat around to Bell's. Then catch a wave into the beach and join the rest of us for a few drinks at the beach barbecue, before rowing home again.

What ruined Bell's for us, was when some of the newer and younger surfers, employed a bloke with a machine to make a track along the cliff top from Jan Juc to Bell's. This happened in the fifties and then Bell's became known to all and sundry and to the "old-timers" it had lost its exclusivity and charm. To those who claim, "I was one of the first to surf Bell's"! If you were only a child back in the very early fifties, or still just a twinkle in your father's eyes, I'm sorry, but you are far too young to make such a claim.

FOOTNOTE:
It was Joe Sweeney who went to the Barrabool Shire and met with Ron Spence the engineer giving Joe permission to grade and widen the old track through the Bells scrub. With no bookwork involved, Joe asked Lance Altman, who had a grader, to put through the track. It cost Joe £30. To recoup his money, Joe waited, and as each surfer arrived Joe asked them for 'a quid'.

Michael O'Donnell holding Victorian flag with Brian Davidson, the North Bondi Beach Inspector and holding up his son. Newport Beach 1953.
- Michael O'Donnell collection

Joe Sweeney's collection of one pound per surfer for widening of track to Bells Beach. Courtesy Jeff Sweeney

Listen to Joe Sweeney tell the story of employing the "bloke with a machine" AT

https://torquayhistory.com/the-first-to-surf-bells-beach/

OR CLICK THE ICON.

JERICHO POPPLER

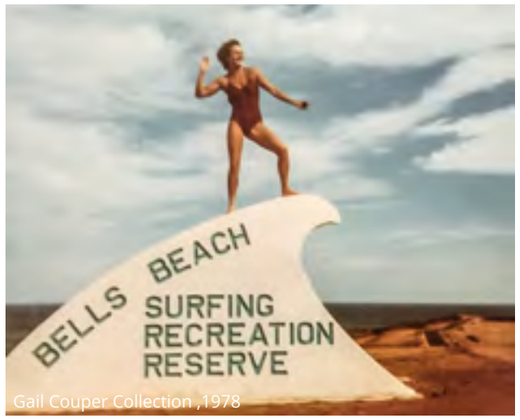
THE WAVEDANCER

When it was announced that the fifth World Surfing Titles would return to Australia and be held at Bells Beach in May 1970, Torquay was a buzz with excitement. The permanent population of the town was then about 800. And with the summer campers and holiday makers well gone, as the wintery weather approached, the influx of some 150 or so international surfers was sure to get the town talking. It was only a matter of months before a couple of boys had set up in the old Bakery opposite Nairn's dairy and started making surfboards and wetsuits. Not the old Malibu's that adorned the walls of the surf club, these were new, fast, short fibre glass boards. It seemed this "surfing thing" was real, and now the best in the world were coming to town to strut their stuff.

Amongst the competitors from the USA, South Africa, Puerto Rico, Hawaii, New Zealand and the United Kingdom who rolled in to town that wet cold May, was 19 year old Jericho Poppler from Long Beach California. This visit would be the first of many visits here for her and the start of a lifelong love of Torquay and especially the waves of Bells Beach.

Jericho was born and raised in Long Beach California and started surfing when she was nine, out in front of the family home. She learnt early she needed to be feisty and tough to get her share of the waves. Jericho was a dancer and a ballerina and brought these talents to her surfing. She was known for her graceful style. She arrived in Victoria with the other women surfers from the U.S.A. and four other countries, and headed to Torquay and out to Bells. The

Jericho Poppler Collection



Gail Couper Collection ,1978

week prior to the contest starting, the surf was excellent and the competitors practising had a chance to experience good waves in the famous Bells Bowl. The girls were able to test the waters.

Accommodation in Torquay for all the competitors was scare to say the least, so local surfers opened their homes all along the surf coast. Jericho and fellow Californian surfer, Joyce Hoffman, accepted the offer of a bed from Victorian champion and at the time, 4-times Bells Beach winner, Gail Couper in Lorne. The majority of the Americans tucked in at the Lorne Hotel, so the girls weren't far away from the nightime action.

Sadly, the good surf that came up early was short lived. After the countless civic ceremonies to mark the special occasion, a tree planting at Bells, and an opening parade through the streets of Lorne, (which the local papers and magazine mistakenly reported as Torquay) when the real surf action was to begin, the waves had dropped. Gail took the opportunity of the lay days to load the girls into her new Ford Cortina and show them around her beautiful coastline. They were able to find waves along the Great Ocean Road, testing the waters as far down as Apollo Bay.

Geelong Advertiser 2/5/1970
USA East Coast team marching through Lorne
Flag bearer Mike Tabeling. L-R Jericho Poppler, Paul Strauch, Sharron Webber

The world titles at Bells had some controversial moments. The road from Southside to the Anglesea Road, cutting through the Ironbark Basin was approved and caused some protests from environmentalists. Funding to get the contest under way was slow and it took a last minute injection of $25,00 from Henry Bolte, the State Premier, to guarantee the event would actually go ahead. The organisation came under strong criticism, and worse, an Antarctic blast sent the air temperature plummeting and the water was icy. Many competitors struggled to adjust to the cold, especially the Hawaiians. Ben Aipa and Paul Strauch were feeling the cold as they arrived without wetsuits and had to make a hasty search to find some. Surfers and officials from Hawaii, Puerta Rico, South Africa and Australia were ordered to bed after coming down with a virus.

Narcotics agents conducted raids and the fact that a small amount of marijuana was found made headlines. There were mumblings in the surfing community at the time about the direction surfing was going- it was on the cusp of turning into a powerful profession sport with an emerging industry behind it- and some felt that it was at risk of losing its soul. Young Victorian Junior Champ Wayne Lynch was a no show, Australian champion Ted Spencer, a new convert to the Hare Krishna movement pulled out just as the competition was to get under way, and Hawaiian David Nuuhiwa surfed only one round before heading back to the warmer waters at home in Hawaii.

Jericho almost didn't get a chance to surf. Her motto always was. "You can't have too much fun". She talked Gail into lending her the Cortina and headed to a party at the Torquay Pub with members of the USA team from California. Things got a bit wild, as they could do back in the day and food was flying!! American Corky Carroll was accused of starting a food fight and the California team were almost banned from competition. It took some sweet-talking to allow them back in the game.

Jericho made an exit back to Lorne and in her haste managed to lock the keys in the car. This was a problem in the morning when Gail needed the car to get to her teaching job at the Lorne School. It was only solved when the girls opened the unlocked boot, pushed the rear seats out and Jeri managed to wriggle her way through the metal cross bars into the car and open the door. It wasn't all bad though, as Gail discovered a new way of transporting her boards by poking them through the boot without having to tie them on top.

Despite the controversy some of the men were causing,

the ladies were holding their heads high. Peg McMahon, Age columnist and one of Australia's first female sports writers sought interviews with some of the girls, including Jericho, atop the cliffs at Bells and wrote in her column that they were, a "dedicated an articulate band" and added they were "happy, healthy and clean living".

Peg McMahon may have tried to equalise the coverage about the women surfing in 1970 with that of the men, but got little support from other Surf Media, who virtually ignored their efforts. The poor surf meant the main event was moved to remote and mostly unknown Johanna beach. Contest director Stan Couper moved the women's event to Skenes Creek, where their final was held in sloppy left breaking waves. The first and only time a major surfing event has been held there. The winner was goofy footer Sharon Weber from Hawaii. Jericho who perhaps spent most of her time keeping to her motto regarding fun, finished in 6th place.

The trip to Australia in 1970 was Jericho's first but not her last. When surfing went pro just after the world titles, Jericho was instrumental in forming the Women International Surfing Association (WISA). With sponsorship from Body Glove in 1977 she formed the "Golden Girls", creating a global presence and awareness for women in surfing. Jericho returned to surf at Bells as a pro surfer in 1976, 77,78 79 and 1981. She retired from Professional surfing in 1982 but has never stopped attempting to tame the waves. She is an ambassador for women's surfing, travelling and surfing all over the world. She loves reunions with her "Golden Girls", some of whom are in their seventies and still surfing regularly. She has been a regular visitor to Torquay and Bells over the past 45 years and whenever she is in town catching up with old friends, she never misses an opportunity for a quick paddle at Bells.

Family in 1993

Jericho back at Bells November 2016

THE FIRST BELLS COMP

CRAIG BAIRD

Photos Vic Tantau/ Australian National Surfing Museum

Australian National Surfing Museum

History is a slippery beast, or perhaps it could be likened to swiss cheese. You rarely have a complete picture and often what is "known" is riddled with holes. The very first contest at Bells has created disputes for years, because it was organised to run in December 1961 but was postponed until Australia Day 1962, and also for things like George "Ming" Smith being awarded "wave of the day" despite Ming not actually having entered the event! It was a carefree time, a very different era that was not well documented.

That first iteration of what has become the worlds longest running surfing competition was brought into sharper focus not long after the Australian National Surfing Museum (SurfWorld) opened in 1993. We discovered two boxes of slides from the event, given to Surfing Victoria by Vic Tantau. Vic was a Victorian surfing pioneer and organised the first Bells comp with his mate Peter Troy. That first Bells event was, in part, an opportunity for the two to promote sales of "T Boards", Troy and Tantau's fledgling surfboard company. The images filled in a lot of information about the first running of that low key but now iconic event. The waves, the crowd, the boards and local surfing stars like Terry Wall, Marcus Shaw and Ray Wilson were all represented in full colour. You can make out the contest infrastructure, two card tables, a couple of chairs and a loud hailer, and see spectators and surfers gathered on the sand.

In answering many questions about the event these images also create some intrigue. Clearly there were a number of girls surfing at the event, something that has never been really commented on or mentioned in Bells contest histories. So while we have filled some gaps in our knowledge of the event, and have a great visual record from that day in 1962, at the same time we have found a new hole in the cheese.

circa 1970: Greg Hill (Fledge), Greg Alla (Pup), John Robinson (Boong), Chris Young, Charlie Bartlett (flashing the peace signs) and 'Little Charlie' Irving. The dog's name was Rodney.
Picture © John Witzig www.johnwitzig.com.au/

'SPRINGSIDE'

Originally built in 1888 by Edward Fischer, a Geelong jeweller. Edward was a foundation member of the Spring Creek (later became Torquay) Improvement Association. Fischer Street, Torquay, is named after him.

"Springside", sadly no longer exists but surely no house in Torquay has more stories to tell or is more a part of our folklore than "Springside".

From its earliest beginnings Torquay was a town of two stories - a winter one and a summer one. In winter, there was the sleepy little coastal village with a few hundred people, some shops, a little school and several churches. In the summer the population trebled, or quadrupled as holiday makers from all over Victoria flocked to the town for 6 weeks. In the early days, most of these visitors were campers in tents and later in caravans. The camping grounds and parks would be full to overflowing over the Christmas period and even up until Easter and then almost overnight, they emptied out and Torquay became a sleepy hollow again for the next nine months. Some of the founding fathers of the town, wealthy business men from Geelong, built holiday homes so they too could enjoy a seaside summer holiday in Torquay. Fisherman Owen Yateman, when once asked how the locals reacted to the influx of the first "surfers" said "They didn't like it. They were old and set in their ways, and they didn't like it a bit."

With the birth of Rip Curl in 1969 and Quiksilver in 1970, Torquay became the centre of surfing in the State, if not the nation. People began to make a lifestyle for themselves that involved making a living in town and finding time to surf as much as possible. The townsfolk saw this new breed as interlopers. Not many of the young men of the town surfed. There was no local high school, a narrow one lane road into Geelong and a rickety bus service that ruled out any hope of an after school surf. The publican's son Johnny Pawson, Fatty Long, Ray Wilson, Colin McDonald were among the local boys that were at the beach as often as they could be. The Brighton boys who had been coming on weekends,

Springside visitors c 1970 - seated L-R: Jack Skelton, Kaye Orbuck, Lorraine Skelton standing: Barb Graham, Greg Strickland

Rhonda Page Collection

Doug (Claw) Warbrick, Rod Brooks, Peter (Boots) Dowling and Fledge, found a house and a way to find work that allowed them to stay. They were shaping and selling surfboards, starting the first surf shops and gluing wetsuits. There was always work on the garbo truck or at the foreshore trust, and the dole made it easy to have a simple life with time to surf.

Springside was a superb hundred year old house sheltering in the trees at 7 Rudd Avenue, just a hundred metres from the pub. It became a mecca for wandering surfer's when Simon Buttonshaw and Charles Bartlett took on a lease in 1969 for a very meagre rent. Artist's, musicians and assorted creative souls joined them. Springside in the late 60's had a floating population of people attracted by the environment, the surf and an alternate lifestyle and philosophy.

The two-year period from 1969 until 1971 including the period of the World Titles in May 1970, is considered by many to have been a high point in Torquay history. Simon Buttonshaw in "Sea Waves" 1978 says, "A lot of people used to come and stay from Melbourne. Usually fairly creative people who were attracted by the atmosphere of the place. There was always a collective people situation made up of individuals who were different, and for them surfing was almost a total expression of what we were going through. Torquay had a quality that attracted a certain type of person, the lifestyle here touched people, they seemed free and uninhibited."

Sadly for Springside this "nirvana" was not to last. In 1972 Springside was burnt to the ground and the residents were forced to move on. It remains etched very clearly in the memories of those who had the pleasure to live there, or sit under the trees, or on the roof listening to music, or be a part of the party that life was there.

Photo courtesy George Stawicki
http://www.photographergeelong.com.au/

Properties owned and leased by Bell [blue], Carr [orange], Harding [red] if they owned the land today.

EARLY JAN JUC & BELLS BEACH (PART 1)

1836

The European settlement of Victoria began in 1835 when large numbers of sheep were shipped from Tasmania to Port Phillip and Western Port by members of the Port Phillip Association. By 1850, Geelong was the fifth largest town in Australia, drawing its wealth from wool.

1841

The early explorers identified potential farming in the Geelong area, consequently the settlement of large pastoral estates followed. Surveyors divided the land up into Parish's, often giving Aboriginal names to the area, such as Jan Juc 'the place of iron barks'. Increased population expansion, resulting in the subdivision of pastoral estates, together with the introduction of the Selection Acts in the 1860s and the Closer Settlement Scheme during the early 20th century, changed the use of the land from the vast sheep runs to smaller, mixed-use, small scale freehold farming enterprises.

1857

The township of Jan Juc, named after the Parish, was first settled toward the western boundary of the Parish. During the 1920's it was renamed Bellbrae and the township name of Jan Juc was moved eastward along the Spring Creek near Torquay.

The Parish district still encompasses the area covered by the current Jan Juc, Bells Beach, Bellbrae and a part of the Anglesea area.

The first squatter of the Torquay area was John Stokes, who in 1836 established a Pastoral Run, which he called Stokes Station, it was also known as Sport Hall Station at Connewarre. Silas Harding followed in 1841 establishing the Mount Pleasant Run, 1280 acres of property south-west of Spring Creek at present day Torquay/Jan Juc, covering the area of the Ocean Views Estate, the Torquay Golf Club and beyond to Bells Boulevarde and Bones Road. Silas quickly developed other pastoral interests so he transferred the Mount Pleasant Run license to his cousin Elias Harding. Elias himself had established a pastoral run in 1841, which was his home at Connewarre, called Saltwater Creek Run, near Bream Creek, just north of John Stokes Sport Hall Run. It wasn't until 1844 that Joseph Gundry held

the Iron Bark pastoral run in the north-west part of the Parish near today's Bellbrae.

Elias, a farmer from South Petherton, Somerset, England, arrived with his wife and three young children on 2nd October 1838.

New squatting regulations were introduced in 1844 entitling squatters who had occupied their land for 5 years to Pre-emptive rights. This granted them the right to purchase the property. On 27th September 1853 Elias wrote to the Lieutenant Governor asking to purchase 640 acres of the original 1280 acres pastoral run as part of the Pre-emptive selection process.

Approval was given for the purchase of only 160 acres from his request. The rest of Elias Harding's run was subdivided for more intensive farming to be later put up for sale. Elias was left with the squatter's homestead block under the Pre-emptive section that he and his son had developed as a requirement of the Squatters lease. It was Elias' son who lived there. However, it was not until three years later in December 1856, that the purchase was completed.

Surveyor's plans for Harding's Pre-emptive Right (PR) applications show a hut and woolshed with a garden area beside the Jan Juc Creek and a large dam across the creek nearer the entrance. The accompanying application report describes the hut as three-roomed cottage. Other improvements included two paddocks of 10 acres with post and rail fences, and a third paddock enclosed by a brushwood fence.

Melbourne newspapers ran advertisements from the Public Lands Office with the schedule of public land that had recently been proclaimed for sale in the colony of Victoria. The first public sales of the area occurred during September 1857.

Twelve lots varying from 81 to 349 acres were made available in the area known today as Jan Juc and Bells Beach. All of the allotments had frontages to creeks, mainly either to Spring Creek or Jan Juc Creek and were advertised as "generally of fair agricultural land, timbered with gum, wattle, and she-oak, are well supplied with building and fencing material." The 'upset price' was one shilling (ten cents) per acre. This is the lowest price at which the property could be auctioned or sold at public sale.

Purchasers of the land were –

	acres	rods	perches
James Gattie Carr	672	4	
James Stevenson	294		
Elias Harding	186	2	
H. H. Farquharson	129		
W. Eirnspern	89		
Andrew Stewart	81		
William Bell	349	2	

Some of these purchases, such as those by Stevenson, Farquharson and Eirnspern were for investment purposes as the buyers played no part in the history of the area. It is likely that Andrew Stewart's purchase may have been for investment also because he was the head teacher at Mt. Duneed School at its opening in 1862 and living at Connewarre.

Three men purchased most of the land covering Jan Juc and Bells Beach at this initial sale and future sales. They also held substantial pastoral leases near their freehold properties.

JAN JUC: **James G Carr** purchased most of the land however, he never moved into the area. James was an auctioneer and estate agent, who remained living in Geelong, later acquiring more property in the area. James was a member of the Legislative Assembly, representing South Grant from 1859 to 1861. Later he represented Geelong West (1868 – 1870).

Elias Harding purchased a further 186 acres from his original Mt. Pleasant Run. The Harding's stayed at their Connewarre Saltwater Creek Run for many years, while the eldest son, Samuel managed the Mt. Pleasant Run at Jan Juc. They prospered despite drought, depression and floods. However, five months of continual rain in 1858, and the death of three children over an eight-week period, instigated Elias looking to the newly opened up colony of Queensland to farm. By 1862 he had put all his property on the market and after the death of another child, Elias, the family moved to Ipswich, Queensland where he was known to be a very successful pastoralist.

BELLS BEACH: After the initial 1857 purchase, the beginning of his pastoral pursuits, **William Bell** went on to purchase more land as the Crown made it available over the next twelve years. Ultimately, he owned and leased property extending across 2783 acres, including the coastline from the beach at Bones Road to past Point Addis. This is the same William Bell who owned property in Torquay and who Bell Street is named after. William, a Scot, landed in Sydney in 1843 and arrived in Geelong the following year. He settled down as grocer and the success of his business enabled William to acquire a good deal of Geelong town property as well as property along the surf coast to dabble in pastoral pursuits. He also owned the Geelong Times and Evening Star newspapers and was Mayor of Geelong during 1886.

When his sons Thomas and George were managing different parts of the (Bell's Beach) property during the 1870s, each had a dwelling on their portion, George called his 1439 acres 'Glenvale'. William owned Glenthompson in the Western District and Morago Station in New South Wales, when George and Thomas died in the early 1880s. After their deaths, William started selling the Jan Juc allotments with Dalgetty's purchasing much of the land and William W. Dobben managing it. Barrabool rate books identify the property as 'Bells Homestead'. It would be reasonable to conclude that Bells Beach is named after William Bell. During the late 1880s there were two events reported in the Geelong Advertiser referring to 'Bell's Beach'. First was the proposed railway line from Geelong to Lorne with one option suggesting the line go to Anglesea via "Spring Creek (Torquay) and round by Bell's Beach and Point Addis". The other was "the white seal which was killed on Bell's Beach". William Bell did own that part of the coastline at the time.

William died in 1894 bequeathing his NSW Morago Station property to his son William, and his Bells Homestead property to his other son James.

Sources:

Lands Department correspondence
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‘GIRLIE’

Photos from Bell Family Collection
courtesy Chris Barr

MARY KATHLEEN ALEXANDER BELL

Mary Kathleen Alexander Bell was born at Mt Duneed in May 1894 when her parents, John Calvert Bell and his wife Frances Ellen Wilson were living at the Calder Park Homestead. She was the fourth Bell daughter and joined her sisters Clara 7, Naomi 6, Honor 4 and her brother Harold, who was 2. A second son was born in 1896 but sadly died only days later.

The family seemed keen on nicknames, Naomi was known as Middy, Honour was Queenie, Harold was Sonny and Mary Kathleen was known all her life as Girlie.

J C Bell, the son of a wealthy Scottish immigrant, was a pastoralist and a Councillor for the coast riding of the Shire of Barrabool. He had managed family properties in Victoria and interstate before settling at Calder Park.

In February 1901, his 3 older girls were sent to a boarding school in Ballarat, Loreto Abbey. In September that year Frances Bell died, leaving a heartbroken family behind.

Soon after the death of his wife, J.C Bell purchased 1616 acres and leased a further 1280 acres at Addiscot near Torquay. He moved his family to Bells Beach and he would remain there until his death over 30 years later. The childrens Aunt Irene moved in to care for them.

The Bell property stretched through the Ironbark Basin and included the land sweeping down to the cliff tops to the east. The Bell children had an idyllic childhood, picnicking on the beach, playing and exploring in the bush. The bush was a part of their life and they loved to roam around through the stands of moonah trees. They developed a deep love of the ironbark basin which stayed with them all their lives.

In a letter, Clara recalled the 5 children riding their horses down the paddocks and along the beach to Point Addis, keeping an eye out for little Girlie, making sure she could keep up with her older siblings. Their father would drive his sulky down and they would enjoy a beach picnic, and then the children would ride home through the bush.

Apart from the years she was away at school in Ballarat with her sisters, Girlie lived all her life in the hinterland of Bells Beach. Clara and Queenie stayed in Ballarat and

‘Girlie’ Bell

became nuns in the Loreto order and taught in schools around Australia. Naomi travelled abroad, and married an Irish Sea Captain before going to live with him in Ireland. She sadly passed away in 1919 never returning to her childhood home. When her brother joined the AIF in 1915, Girlie stepped up to help her father in the running of his estate, and when Sonny was killed in Belgium during 1917, she became her father’s “right hand man” and eventually took over the management of the property when J.C Bell died in 1937.

Girlie and Irene stayed on at Addiscot until Irene passed away in 1952. They were a memorable pair dressed always

THE YOUNG FOLK COLUMN

AUSTRALASIAN 27/5/1911 - FROM “KATHLEEN BELL” ADDISCOT, GEELONG

“Dear Patience, ‘Addiscot’ is a very pretty place, situated on the coast, between Torquay and Anglesea. We have lived here for the past five or six years, and appreciate it more than town life. I am very fond of riding, and go out nearly every day. Yesterday my cousin and I went for a long ride with the “boundary rider” to see some sheep that Daddy bought. We left home at 6 o’clock in the morning, and did not get back until 5 o’clock that afternoon, so that will give you an idea how far we went. Do you like horses and riding, ‘Patience?’ The heath is coming out now. I picked a large bunch this afternoon of pink and white for the table; my sister decorated the dining room, and it looked just sweet with the little vases of wild heath and coral-fern dotted here and there. Instead of the usual roses and maiden hair, or dahlias and asparagus-fern. Daddy and my brother Harold are both fond of gardening, and do most of it themselves, but I get tired of it. Did you ever skate, ‘Patience?’ I am learning, but find it very hard; do you think I had better give it up altogether? One of my pet lambs died a few days ago, but there are still two left - Goss and Barbe. Goss is very small yet, and is the youngest, therefore the most spoiled; he loves tobacco, rice, and sugar, but Barbe will not eat anything like that. I hear someone calling, ‘Come on Girlie (I am called ‘Girlie,’ ‘Patience,’ but my proper name is ‘Kathleen’). We are off for a bathe, so I must not keep them waiting. Good-bye now, dear ‘Patience.’ I remain, yours sincerely, ‘Kathleen.’

in black, long silk coats and broad brimmed hats. They had a small Opel car and were seen driving to Geelong and Torquay to visit their solicitors, or to do business.

Entrance to the family home 'Addiscot'

After Irene died, Girlie, then the last surviving member of the family, moved to a small shack near Bellbrae township. She kept sheep, a few cows and her dogs. She lived a very reclusive life, only receiving few if any visitors, and then only if she chose to allow them in her gate. She had no running water or electricity, but her small home was filled with beautiful antiques and memories of her early days. She liked to listen to her large collection of Nellie Melba records.

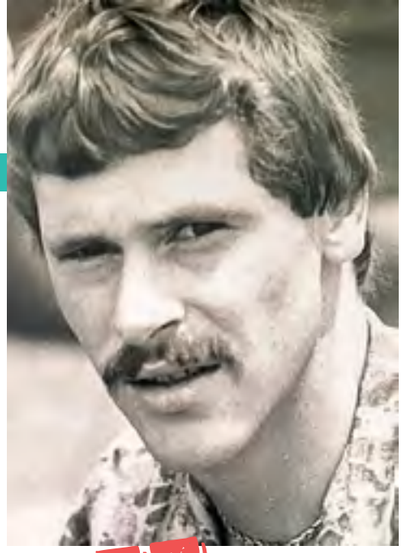
Throughout her life Girlie loved to visit the beach at Bells. The early surfers might remember seeing her there in the 50's and 60's, often brandishing her stick at them and warning them of the dangers of the rock shelf and ocean currents. She thought it far too dangerous to swim there, as her family had a bathing box around the corner at Southside.

Lengthy negations continued during the 1960's and 1970's for the land owned by Mary Kathleen Alexander Bell at Bells Beach. The council wanted to buy a parcel of it to create the National Park at Point Addis. When negotiations stalled, the council made a compulsory acquisition of 423 acres to finish this transaction.

Girlie Bell died in Geelong in April, 1978. She was buried at her request, in the tiny Mt Duneed cemetery with her infant brother John Wilson Bell who had died almost a century earlier, and the final chapter of a gracious family saga ended.

c 1897 Harold and Kathleen "Girlie" Bell

c 1914 Bell Family at Rocky Point, Kathleen laying down



FLASHBACK

CONTRIBUTED BY MAX STEVENS

MAX STEVENS

now working in the Special Projects area of the High-Performance Unit at Cycling Australia, remembers his time at Torquay and how the town shaped his career.

My greatest times in life centred on Torquay. Fifty-five years later I still have nothing but fond memories. It certainly paved my way in life.

I was first introduced to Torquay at about 4 or five years of age. My parents bought a large block of land at 2 Munday Street in about 1960 or even earlier. We built a holiday house there and for some decades it was my paradise, my haven and my focus. Every given spare moment I had from school and work, was spent at Torquay. From a holiday resident to a permanent resident, Torquay was 'the duck's guts'. It was like going to a different frontier, a new land, but just one hundred kilometres from Melbourne. It was like nothing I experienced in suburban Melbourne.

Sixty years of age now and living in Adelaide, I have had to dig deep to remember, and of course impossible to remember every little detail. So, what do I clearly remember?

- The Torquay Surf Club (My headquarters)
- Chris Harris, Peter Milburn, Chris Wade & Bryan Hayden (Friends)
- The Torquay Front beach (My introduction to sea water and small waves)
- Fishos (The boat ramp)
- The Back Beach (Scary as a young boy, but my home in the years ahead)
- The Picture Theatre in Price Street (My first ever movie without mum & dad -To Sir with Love)
- The Presbyterian Church in Anderson Street (parents made me go)

- CSSM (Yes, parents made me go there too)
- Bounce-A-Ball (The Esplanade, on the Front beach)
- The Go-Karts (Near Fishos)
- Fred Pyke (Zeally Bay Road)
- Rip Curl (Boston Street)
- The RSL Club (Beales and Munday Streets)
- Nairn's Dairy (Pearl and Boston Streets)
- The Torquay Caravan Park (Off Bell Street with a big footy ground)
- Pat Morgan Surfboards (Corner of Anderson & Munday streets)
- The Torquay Hotel (Misspent youth)
- The Total Service Station (Bell Street, next door to the pub)
- 77 Sunset Strip (Very, very early days, on the corner of Park Lane & Bell streets). It was a bar, nightclub type thing, can just remember it vaguely
- The trampolines on Bell Street (at around ten years of age this was the place to hand out)
- Quick Silver (Rod Brooks)

My aunt and uncle had a holiday home in Park Lane, that's how it all started, with dad buying the block in Munday Street. He built a massive double story home, and for the next three decades, Torquay was me! My mother played such a BIG part in all this and still today I can't thank her enough for making dad buy and build in Torquay.

There was a 'milk bar' on the corner of Bell and Munday, the Botralls owned it and they produced the best ever thick shakes. To this day nothing compares.

I first learnt to stand up on a surfboard at Barwon Heads

Louise Leighton Collection

while visiting family friends. When we returned home to Torquay I was wanting my own surfboard. Dad granted me this wish and if my memory serves me correctly Fred Pyke sold us, my first surfboard. I was hooked big time.

Due to Torquay peer pressure and the fact that there were three boys in our group with the first name Mark, I became Max Stevens; Max became my nickname. As time went by the name Mark totally disappeared and I became Max fulltime! Wouldn't and couldn't happen today. But yes, Mark Stevens became Max Stevens.

The greatest influence in my life was my time at the

TORQUAY

SURF LIFE SAVING CLUB JUVENILE SECTION

This is to Certify that

.....Steven.....

IS A MEMBER OF THE ABOVE CLUB AND PROMISES TO ABIDE BY THE RULES OF THE CLUB AND TO . .

Torquay Surf Life Saving Club, the culture and the many people at the club. While I was a Nipper for some years, my real involvement came after a fire burnt down the old clubhouse. A huge grey Bessa block building, we called the Taj Mahal, was erected. I took an active role in everything 'surf' from then on. I was on the club's committee, ran the club dances, promoted them, picked the bands and also organised a few surf competitions (stand-up riding) at the Back Beach (Torquay Surf Beach). My life was consumed by the Torquay Surf Club.

As luck would have it, I was on patrol duty one day at the surf beach (maybe 16 or 17 years old), the club's public phone rang and I answered it. "Torquay Surf Life Saving club", the women on the other end of the phone said, "It's Maria here from Radio 3GL in Geelong. We are looking for someone to help us with our daily Surf Reports". I replied, "We have just the bloke to help you, I will get him to call you back." Little did she know I was referring to myself. For the next two years, I supplied the station with daily surf reports.

At 18 the station put me 'on air' with the reports. Max Stevens "covering the coast for 3GL" was the tag-line. I

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went on to work for the station full time, wrote a regular surf column for the Geelong Advertiser Newspaper, did the same at 3DB and Channel Ten before my big break came with Channel Seven Melbourne (HSV7). This is when I joined the station as a General News Reporter and from

my end the rest is history. During this period, I continued to live in Torquay, driving up and back each day from the surf coast to South Melbourne.

Now, I don't want to paint a picture that I was a church going goodie two shoes! I did plenty of damage along the way, always pulling stunts at the Torquay Picture Theatre, the Surf Club or anywhere else I went. Mischievous Max would best describe me and suppose that hasn't left me.

For the record, I had nothing to do with the fire at the old Torquay Surf Club (I was too young). I think is was one of the Nairn brothers that let the piglet loose in the Torquay Picture Theatre, not me, though I loved to take credit for it! Don't worry, I did get up to plenty of no good in and around Torquay, I'm the first to admit that. Blocking the public pay phones on the corner of Bell Street and Munday Street, was a great way to pass time. During the very busy Christmas periods, people would line up to ring home, it was the place to meet people and make a 'bob' or two. We blocked the money return with cardboard. Users would push the big 'B' button and their money would get stuck. Very naughty, but fun at the time.

We also mounted an expedition to re-float the Joseph H Scammell. Well, very bold statement, maybe just bring something up from the wreck. The Joseph H Scammell was a Canadian sailing ship that was built at Eatonville, Nova Scotia in 1884 and shipwrecked at Point Danger, Torquay in 1891 (Wikipedia). Spear fishing off Point Danger was a pastime for us when there wasn't any surf. We came across an anchor or something resembling a ship in shallow waters (about a metre deep) off Point Danger. We combed Torquay to find people (local residents) who may know more. A couple of gentlemen at the Torquay RSL Club convinced us we would find something and told us of the Joseph H Scammell. Not much more eventuated from our sightings, we could see something on the ocean bed but didn't have the necessary equipment to mount any form of selvage operation. This little adventure lasted the whole Christmas holidays.

Since then I have travelled the world and where ever I go nationally or internationally people know Torquay, it's still a talking point for me. In fact, one of my bosses at Cycling Australia, where I'm employed, lives in Torquay. Just can't seem to get it out of my system. Whether it's Bells Beach, Winkie Pop, Haystacks or Rincon it all comes back to Torquay in discussions with so many people around the world. I still stay in contact with a few from my Torquay days, and get invited to the odd function too.

My mother passed away, then dad sold the Torquay house around 1989 and sadly I have only been back to Torquay once, sometime in the 80s.

What I had, what I experienced at Torquay are just fantastic memories. Afraid if I were to return, I may be disappointed.

Torquay gave me the opportunity to do so much and experience a great deal. My days in the surf and on the beach at Torquay were the best years of my life.

ANGLESEA — TORQUAY RUN

Congratulations Max once again. Max lead all the way with Cliff Goulding close on his heels. However, half way through the race Max took off his windcheater and completely demoralised Cliff with his silk black numbered running singlet. Max strode away and was never headed. Dark horse in the race was John Fay. John who took it easy early in the race literally ran over all the bottles and came in a a trong second. It was good to see the large number of competitors on the line, including Barbara Fay who ran into 11th place. Perhaps next year we can improve on the 36 starters.

Results were as follows :-

1st	M. Stevens.	1 hour 6 mins.		17th	J. Watling.	1 "	16½
2nd	J. Fay.	1 "	8½ mins.	18th	P. Plant.	1 "	17½
3rd	C. Goulding.	1 "	9 "	19th	B. Haynes.	1 "	18
4th	L. Robertson.	1 "	9½ "	20th	C. Wall.	1 "	20
5th	B. Langton.	1 "	10 "	21st	T. Colley.	1 "	21
6th	G. Newstead.	1 "	11½ "	22nd	J. Mulibach.	1 "	21½
7th	K. Axiss.	1 "	12 "	22nd	B. Conquest.	1 hour	21½
8th	W. Saxon.	1 "	12½ "	23rd	K. Smith.	1 "	22
9th	M. Kilburn.	1 "	13½ "	24th	A. Doyle.	1 "	23½
10th	J. Duffin.	1 "	13½ "	25th	J. Russell.	1 "	24
11th	B. Fay.	1 "	13½ "	26th	B. Kane.	1 "	24½
12th	A. Dell.	1 "	13½ "	27th	V. Perillo.	1 "	27½
13th	Rabbit.	1 "	14½ "	28th	M. McConnell.	1 "	27½
14th	J. Casey.	1 "	15 "	29th	P. Julien.	1 "	30½
15th	G. Coulson.	1 "	15½ "	30th	D. Steed.	1 "	31½
16th	M. Doyle.	1 "	16½ "	31st	P. Perillo.	1 "	41

FROM JAN JUC TO BELLS BEACH

The Jan Juc Surf Club which nestles in the dunes by the little Jan Juc creek, opened in 1963 with one bronzed squad of 6 lifesavers, with local legend Joe Sweeney as Club Captain. It has grown to a vibrant and strong surf club, and is the only building you can see when walking on the beautiful stretch of sand. The stretch of beach from Rocky Point to Bird Rock, with its sandy dunes and soaring orange cliffs is perhaps one of the most beautiful in our area. The sunrise from Juc is the best of all.

Jan Juc peak is popular with the local groms, who these days sharpen their skills from sun up till sundown with a break for school in between. The boardwalk and lookouts above the beach provide a perfect viewing spot to watch the surf and a great gathering place for locals in the early mornings and evenings.

At the southern end of the beach is the faster but temperamental Little Rock wave. At the dramatic Bird Rock, also known as "The Rock", is a break with a demanding shallow right-hander, mostly for the experienced surfer, and is so named because of the number of birds that would sit there. "The Rock" also provides a challenging jump off into a rock pool at high tide by those daring enough to try.

As soon as you round the point from Bird Rock the beachscape changes. The crowds disappear and for the most part, so does the sand. This is the domain of the hard-core surfers - it's difficult to get to, and you need to know where you are going and what you are doing. Being caught on the tide is dangerous and the Southern Ocean can be unforgiving.

The first break past "The Rock" and close in is known as "Sparrows", named after wet suit visionary at Ripcurl, John "Sparrow" Pyeburne. John deserves a lot of credit for

Bob Smith, a life spent walking on water.
Picture Alison Wynd, Geelong Advertiser 11/3/2017

Bob Smith, a life spent walking on water.
Picture Alison Wynd, Geelong Advertiser 11/3/2017

establishing cutting edge design in the fledgling wetsuit business and contributing to the worldwide reputation Ripcurl has as a maker of wetsuits for surfers.

Calder's Reef is out the back. In the late1950's steps were put in on the narrow fisherman's track that wound down from the cliff top above Calder's Reef and the spot came to be known as 'Steps', the more common name these days. Evos named because of 'evil' reef cuts, is a little wave with a nasty section of rock between Calder's and Steps.

Along from Steps is Boobs, named after long time Bells Beach resident and even longer time surfer Bob Johnston. He tells the story that one day when he was a lad, with a big swell running, he and his mates Tony King and Eddie Beacham, set off on a surfing expedition. Instead of going to Bells they decided to try a new break. They stopped on the cliffs above Boobs and scrambled down the fisherman's track to the beach. Ed and Tony surfed out in front, while Bob, a goofy foot, headed a little further along the beach with his board, a 9.5' mal made by Vic Tantau to surf a right hander. As the boys finished and made their way back up the cliff to the car (an old chevvy they kept for the purpose of going to Bells) Bob commented what a great day they had and noted "that right hander is pretty good what will we call this place?" Ed replied, "Well you were the first to surf that wave, lets call it Boobs". The name has stuck.

Once you pass the fishermen's steps at Boobs there is no access to the beach until you get to Bells Beach, so this stretch of beach is almost always quite deserted. The high golden cliffs are beautiful but with little sand and an unforgiving, rough shore-scape underfoot. It's not an easy stroll and not one taken very often.

Thanks to the hard working and dedicated members of SANE (Surfers Appreciating Natural Environment) the vegetation along the cliff tops, once quite denuded, is now lush and very beautiful. SANE was formed by Charles Bartlett (Charles of the Sea) in 1988, to draw attention to the huge gulf that had opened up between the community and the Barrabool Shire about appropriate land management practice.

Ecological stewardship was largely unheard of back then and Charles was concerned about damage happening in the Bells Beach Surfing Recreational Reserve. The heavy-handed approach to provide access for people and car traffic caused a great deal of unnecessary damage to the natural environment. Crowds at the Easter contest were trampling the fragile cliffs, native trees and plants, and car parks were being expanded, more asphalt was introduced, rubbish disposal, problems with overnight campers and lack of toilets were further concerns.

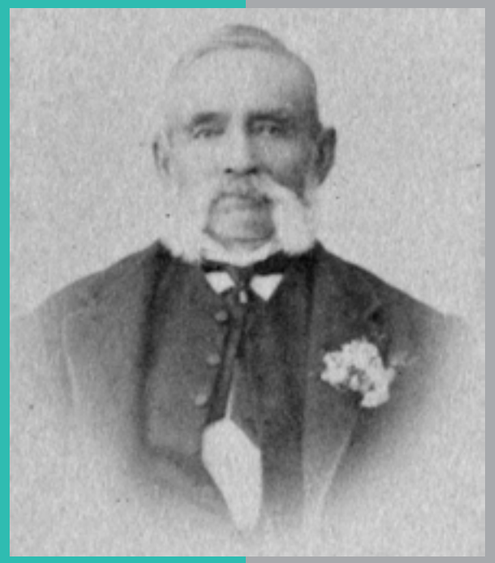
SANE has been working to restore the balance now for some 27 years. The once bare and eroding cliff tops are now abundant with indigenous Coastal Moonah, Beard Heath, Tussock Grass, Seaberry, Saltbush and Cushion Bush among others and habitat has been restored for the threatened Rufous Bristlebird and swamp Antechinus. The sweeping heathlands make a spectacular entrance to Bells Beach especially in summer when the Moonahs are in bloom. The education programs run by SANE have helped raise awareness of protecting this special place. Surfers, walkers, bike riders and local residents, indeed all, owe a debt of gratitude to the members of SANE, Surfrider Foundation and Rip Curl who keep a careful eye on all that happens in the area and work to maintain its beauty. It is worth taking a walk out along the coast on the Surf Coast walk to admire the spectacular ocean views and see the conservation work that SANE have overseen.

The entrance to the world-famous Bells Beach Surfing Recreation reserve is marked by the much photographed "concrete wave", now hidden in the bushes. This reserve is unlike anywhere else in the world - the first surfing reserve ever created and the spiritual home of all our local surfers and a mecca for surfers worldwide.

Picture courtesy John Witzig : Charlie Bartlet, Cheyne Horan
www.johnwitzig.com.au/

MOUNT DUNEED

WILLIAM BATTEN



In the country, we often see a road that is named after a person or family who lived in that road. Curiosity leads me to find out more about these people. Batten Road runs north-south from Lake Road to Barwon Heads Road. As it runs through farms that were once owned by William Batten I assume it was named after him.

1850

1852

1866

1896

Contributed by Gwen Threlfall

Mt. Duneed History Group

A subgroup of the Mount Duneed Progress Association

History meetings are at 7:30 pm on the first Thursday of February, April, June, August, October and December.

http://mdpa.weebly.com/blog

William Batten who was born on 13 December 1815 Cornwall, England, was the son of John and Mary (née Bone) Batten. His wife Ann, born on 7 December 1816 in Cornwall, was the daughter of Henry and Annie (née Roberts) Batten.

William arrived in Geelong in 1850 farming in the Bellarine district soon after. Although successful, he moved to Batesford becoming the licensee of a hotel. He started the first punt service on the Barwon River in partnership with a Mr. Connor. On 30 August, 1952 he was called before the Police Bench to account for the exorbitant charges he and his partner levied upon the public. It was claimed that he refused to let the police cross free of charge, a claim which he denied. He owned the first team of bullocks in the area and carried goods to Ballarat at a time when the trip took about six weeks. After returning from an eighteen month Europe holiday with his wife, William returned to Geelong speculating in land, a venture which was very successful. He was elected to the South Barwon Council in 1862-1871, 1874-1877 and 1881, appointed mayor in 1867-68. In 1867 when the Duke of Edinburgh, second son of Queen Victoria, travelled from Geelong to Winchelsea he was met by Mayor William Batten and the councillors of South Barwon at the Waurn Ponds toll gate where a speech was given amid great excitement.

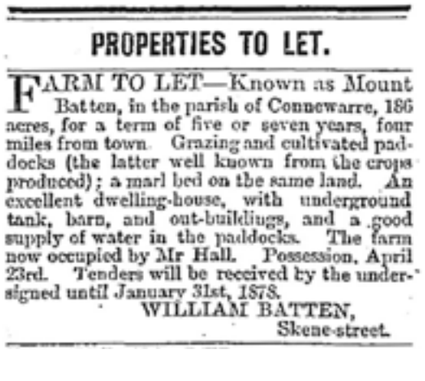
In 1866 William was elected a councillor of the Newtown and Chilwell borough council, a position he held for many years. During this time, he was a trustee of the Queen's Park and was the oldest trustee when he died.

On 21 September 1886, a banquet was held in his honour in recognition of his services during a period of upwards of 30 years' representation in the municipal council.

He died on 13 May 1896 aged 80 years at his residence "Skene House" Newtown, Geelong, then buried in the Church of England section of the Geelong Eastern Cemetery. He had suffered from an acute attack of bronchitis.

Ann Batten was born on 7 December 1813 at St Stephens, Cornwall. She died on 19 August, 1905 aged 93 years and was buried beside her husband.

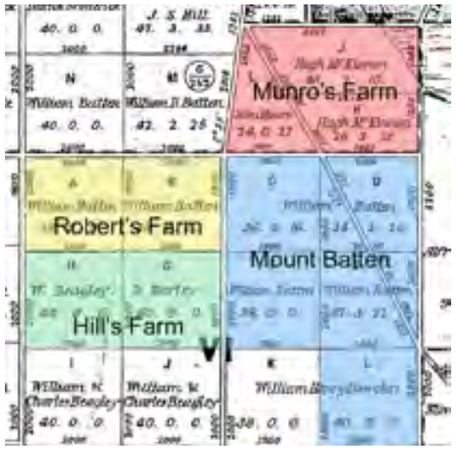
In a complicated will Batten left a lifetime interest in his property to his wife Ann. After she died, certain properties were bequeathed to various nieces and nephews on condition that they gave a cash amount to other nieces and nephews. Both his brother Thomas and Ann's brother William Roberts Batten had brothers named William Henry Batten. The son of William Roberts Batten who moved to Sydney had an unfortunate accident and died in 1900. He was not found by the executors before his death and it took until 1905 before his widow could claim his share.



PROPERTIES TO LET.

FARM TO LET—Known as Mount Batten, in the parish of Connewarre, 186 acres, for a term of five or seven years, four miles from town. Grazing and cultivated paddocks (the latter well known from the crops produced); a marl bed on the same land. An excellent dwelling-house, with underground tank, barn, and out-buildings, and a good supply of water in the paddocks. The farm now occupied by Mr Hall. Possession, April 23rd. Tenders will be received by the undersigned until January 31st, 1878.

WILLIAM BATTEN,
Skene-street.



TOWN TALK

SHOUTS & MURMURS DURING 1800s
IN THE GEELONG ADVERTISER

TORQUAY

Yesterday afternoon the drawing of tickets in connection with the coupon art union of the Geelong and Western District Agricultural and Horticultural Society took place in the Geelong Town Hall in Little Malop street. There were three prizes to be disposed of, the tickets having been issued at one shilling each, and entitling the purchaser to admission to the fair recently held in the Recreation Club's premises. The prizes were as follow:- First, a dog cart, valued at £20 but which cost £32 a few weeks before the society secured possession of the vehicle, second, a piece of land at Torquay, valued at £10, the gift of the Hon. J. H. Grey, M.L.C.; and third, a cow and calf, valued at £8, the gift of Mr Josiah Magor. 6/4/1895

MT. DUNEED

The people of Mt. Duneed have erected a good substantial stone building for the twofold purpose of church and school, in connection with the Church of England. The building was opened for Divine service on Sunday afternoon last by the Rev. Astley Cooper of St. Paul's, Geelong, when a numerous body of people collected from the surrounding neighbourhood. On Tuesday a festive meeting was held in the same place. After tea addresses were delivered by the Revs. A. Cooper, F. Smith and J. Gardener and also by Messrs. Hall, Eden and Stewart. It is pleasing to record that the proceeds, which amounted to 17, enable the building committee to free the structure entirely from debt. 1/10/1863

JAN JUC

On Saturday afternoon, a horseman was observed to ride down to the steamboat wharf, dismount and fasten his steed to a post near the jetty, and then hurry on board the s.s. Courier which was just leaving for Melbourne. The owner not returning, a young man, who had witnessed the circumstance, quietly took possession of the horse and rode round the town for some hours before giving up the animal to the police. On learning the particulars of the peculiar affair Sergeant Rogers directed that the horse should be allowed to remain as the police stables until the owner should take it into his head to call. Yesterday a resident of Jan Juc named Albert Grossman called on the sergeant, and stated that he was the owner of the horse. He explained that he had been obliged to proceed to Melbourne by steamer, but had arranged for his brother to call for the horse at the spot agreed upon. However, when his brother arrived on the scene, the quadruped was missing. The account of Mr Grossman was deemed satisfactory, and his property restored to him. 27/1/1890

CONNEWARRE

The progress made in the acclimatisation of rabbits is something wonderful. From Queenscliffe, all along the coast line to Cape Otway, they are on a moon light night; to be seen in hundreds on the open spaces of sand dotted between the scrub on which they feed. So long as they confined themselves to the sand hills it mattered but little, but we find that in Connewarre they are very partial to the produce to be found in farmers' gardens. They have also spread to distant parts for instance, at Rokewood and Teesdale they abound. A. ferret turned into a burrow on Mr Bell's station, at the last mentioned place, in a few minutes caused a score of rabbits to scamper in every direction. 4/2/1867

BREAM CREEK

This resort of picnickers was patronized as much as it usually is on holidays. Several large picnic parties visited it, including the Mount Zion Sunday school. The cool bracing sea could but invigorate those who had escaped from the "busy haunts of men" for a short time. Games of all sorts were resorted to, and many of the older folks so thoroughly gave themselves up to pleasure and fun that it will take some days for them to wear off the result of their exertions in that direction. 10/11/1877

EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY 1982

2017 Debbie at La Jolla with her prized 'Bell'

Accepting the award from Brian Rochford

RINGING "THE BELL"

contributed by Debbie Beacham

When I first visited Australia in the late 70's the cliffs and rock formations around Bells and Winkipop reminded me of my home town of La Jolla, California.

In 1982 I stayed with the Barr's in the big Bell House with Rell Sunn and other vagabond Americans that were lucky enough to get a room.

I had fallen in love with Torquay on previous trips and loved the Hot Cross Buns from the local bakery during Easter. It was such an honour to win the women's event that year and bring home a beautiful Bell from the 21st Anniversary of the event!

L- R: Rell Sunn, Chris Barr, Debbie Beacham

Do you have a favourite image you would like to share with our readers? We would love to hear from you. Email a high quality scan and the history behind the picture to tmuseumwithoutwalls@gmail.com and we will publish it here. If you don't have a scanner, let us know and we will visit with a scanner to help you.

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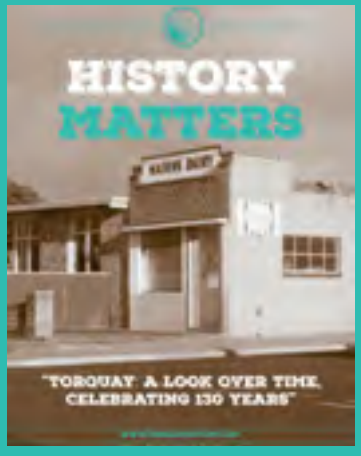
Where The Past Meets The Present

PREVIOUS ISSUES



$10 RRP