**FOSTER & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc.**

Inc. No. A0005598

**Newsletter Series 3 No. 10 October 2022**

**President’s Report:**

The October member’s meeting was not as well attended as usual as there were a number of apologies for absence due to other commitments, holidays and sickness. Unfortunately I was one of those and I would have loved to be there to hear the four members give their personal stories of how they, or their families, came to settle in the Foster district from abroad. A report of the meeting follows later in this newsletter. The next gathering of members will be the Christmas Party on 6th December, a copy of the Invitation also appears in this newsletter.

We are delighted that the gold pocket watch generously donated by a collector in Wales has arrived and is on display in one of the glass cabinets in the front room of the museum. My thanks to Nola for corresponding with the gentleman and for setting up its display.

My thanks also to the members who assisted with cataloguing a number of newly donated objects. Can I remind members who may be on desk duty when someone comes in with a donation to see that the appropriate form is completed with details of the object(s) and of the donor which are important for our records. Copies of the form can be found in the filing cabinet adjacent to the front desk.

We anticipate that the 2023 Calendars will be arriving very soon. We are only having 150 printed so be sure to get yours before they all go.

The roster list is available at the front desk for January and February, please fill in the dates when you can help as soon as possible.

The current exhibition “Communications Past & Present” will be taken down from Weds. 2nd November in preparation for the next exhibition to be ready for the school holiday in December. The subject will be Migrants who settled in the district, from John Amey up to the present, and so far from 25 different countries!

My best wishes to you all. History matters!

Meg Rogers.

**Report of Member’s meeting Tues. 4th October.**

Mike Heal chaired the meeting in the absence of Meg Rogers and dealt with the routine business of the Society over the past month.

Kerry Corcoran gave a brief report on the plans for the next exhibition centred around the many different nationalities of people who had emigrated to Australia and settled in the Foster district. The Society has obtained a grant of up to $5000 from the Multi-Cultural Commission of Victoria to stage the exhibition.

Mike then called forward four members who were each to give a short presentation on how they came to settle in Foster as migrants from other parts of the world.

**Jill Plowright** outlined her and Howard’s early history as nurse and trainee doctor respectively in London and later with the RAF in the UK, Cyprus and Germany. In 1969 they decided to emigrate to Australia under the “Ten-pound Pom” scheme. With their young family they first settled in Lismore for a brief time, then to Bairnsdale where Howard worked as GP as well as doing specialist gynaecological work. In 1974 yet another move, this time to Melbourne where Howard joined another General Practice. Later Howard set up on his own in Box Hill and eventually Jill became his nurse. After retiring, and enjoying lots of adventures travelling to many foreign countries pursuing their passion for bird-watching, they decided to move to Foster in 2008.

**Wolfgang Fiedler’s** family emigrated from Germany in late 1954, landing in Australia in early January 1955. During the voyage they shared a cabin with another family, the Pruins, with whom they formed a life-long friendship. The families were housed in Nissan huts at a migrant’s camp at Bonegilla and the men sent off to work in Melbourne. Wolfie’s dad soon changed his work because he was being exploited by his boss, a not uncommon occurrence. With three other couples, including the Pruins, the families each built a 3-room bungalow at St Albans, then a rural area. Wolfie’s school had children of every European nationality and he recalls a very happy time there. In the early 1960’s Wolfie’s father decided he would take up farming and bought land in the hills behind Foster. Coincidentally the Pruin family also did the same thing and so began a long and enjoyable life in South Gippsland.

**Marjorie Greer** was born in Foster and traced her ancestry back to her Norwegian grandfather who had arrived in Adelaide in the latter part of the 19th century as a sailor. He later moved to Foster and worked in the Victory mine. Marjorie described how she had spent years trying to find out more about her grandfather and had been frustrated by changes in spelling of surnames and place-names. She travelled to Norway and made contact with cousins. Marjorie showed us a number of items of interest which she had collected and traditional clothes which she had made, contributing to a fascinating story.

**Rob Pritchard** and his wife Chris, migrated to Australia from the UK following their children who had already settled here. Unlike the previous speakers, Rob and Chris had to go through the long and difficult process of applying for visas. This involved much filling in of forms, undergoing medical checks and security clearances. They arrived in Melbourne on 31st December 2001 on Temporary Visas and settled in Berwick near to their daughter and three grandchildren in Emerald. The process of obtaining permanent visas proved to be more arduous and involved considerable more expense because they wanted to speed up the process by changing the Class of Visa. Even so it took eight years for them to obtain their permanent residency and they are still required to re-apply for renewal of their visas, at more cost, every ten years. In 2013 they decided to move to Foster to escape the increasing urbanisation of Berwick, built a new house and became involved in the relaxed life of Foster.

