

THE BULLETIN

THE ROTARY CLUB OF INVERLOCH
12th September 2007.

TONIGHT'S MEETING

- Venue:** 6:15 Rotary Centenary Park, then
6:30 The Inlet Hotel Inverloch .
- Chair:** Ross Wise
- Sergeant @ Arms** Bruce Mitchell.
- Program: Tonight** Club night then Board meeting.
- Wednesday 19th Sept:** At Inlet Hotel , Program TBA.
- Wednesday 26th Sept:** Venue TBA, Program TBA.
- Wednesday 3rd Oct:** Visit of District Governor, Janet McCahon
Inlet Hotel, Partners Night.
- Wednesday 10th Oct:** Club / Board night.
Esplanade Hotel, Chairman, Ross Wise.

Important Reminder: *Club Membership fees of \$80 for July to December 2007 are now due to the Treasurer, Ian Blackwell.*

**NOTE THAT NEXT WEEK (19TH) WILL AGAIN BE AT THE
INLET HOTEL DUE TO RENOVATIONS AT THE ESPLANADE HOTEL.**

Venue for the 26th is still to be advised.

Last Wednesday Sam Gatto spoke to us at length and with great clarity on “The early beginnings of Wonthaggi”. We were delighted to hear such well researched history of the political lead up to the opening of “The State Coal Mine” and the rapid influx of population to the area after 1909.

Contrary to much published stories that the mine was established as an urgent response to a coal shortage to Victorian railways due to strikes in the NSW coal mines, Sam pointed out that the time frame to establish this new mine after the strike was too short. His research of Victorian parliamentary records shows that the political will and foresight was established much earlier to plan Wonthaggi and the State owned mine as a stable local source of coal for the railways, independent of NSW demands for coal and the commercial pricing of it. They even legislated that Wonthaggi coal could not be sold on the commercial market for many years.

Sam filled our evening with stories of the rapid expansion of Wonthaggi Borough to a population of 10,000 people way back in the 1920-30 era. Many of the miners having come from the goldfields as the gold became scarce. He told us tales of the good and bad traits of successive mine managers and chief engineers, now remembered on street names around Wonthaggi, such as McBride Avenue, Hunter Street and many others. We now have a better understanding of the tough working conditions and safety issues the miners faced, sometimes leading to the loss of many lives such as the explosion in number 20 shaft in 1937 which killed 13 men. By the late 1950’s the mines future was written by changes to Electric and Diesel trains, but it was propped up by Government subsidies until finally closing in 1968.

But the mine is not finished, as great work by Parks Victoria and a band of local volunteers have put it on the tourism map and hopefully as soon as some public safety issues are resolved, the public can again venture into the underground sections of the mine to experience the cramped, dark and dusty working conditions for themselves. And to see the “black gold” in the ground that created a still thriving town.

Thanks again Sam for the history lesson.

Another reminder from President Ian and the Fundraising Committee that we need names on the “Boat Raffle” roster for ticket selling and boat transport/towing.



Is it really safe to go in the water?

