The Clock Tower

When Collingwood Town Hall opened on 29 March 1887, its 150-foot high tower was without clock or bell. While it was intended to import both from England for installation by 1888, this did not happen until August 1889, when the clock (previously installed in the Melbourne GPO), formally commenced operations.

The purchase of the clock is shrouded in confusion, with different stories circulating in the press about how Joel Eade donated £300 towards it, while another story suggested that it was Cr Aitken (Mayor for the Collingwood Town Hall opening) who provided the same amount. Whatever may have been the case, at the time of its installation there was a clear statement made by a Councillor that the clock didn't cost Council a shilling, despite its £750 price tag!

It is likely that, along with some private monetary contributions from Councillors, the Victorian government provided the clock in lieu of some portion of its contribution to the building and ongoing lease costs for Collingwood Town Hall. The clock had been made by Mr Thomas Gaunt, of Bourke Street, Melbourne, and the installation was carried out by Mr Ellery, the Government Astronomer, presumably again as part of the contribution of the Victorian Government.

However, the inscribed bell weighing 1.5 ton was ordered, purchased and paid for by Collingwood Council. It was manufactured by the Whitechapel Bell Foundry Company in 1890 for the cost of £198 including shipping from England. In the end, including installation, the cost of the bell totalled £250. Anecdotal evidence indicates that the clock was still chiming until the mid-1980s when Collingwood Council decided to silence it.

FOR INFORMATION IN YOUR LANGUAGE ABOUT THIS DOCUMENT OR ABOUT COUNCIL, PLEASE CALL 9280 1940 AND QUOTE THE **REF** NUMBER BELOW.

ARABIC

للمعلومات باللغة العربية، حول هذا المستند أو عن المجلس البلدي، نرجو الإتصال هاتفيا على الرقم 1930 9280 وأذكر رقم المرجع **REF** المذكور أدناه.

SIMPLIFIED CHINESE

欲知有关本文档或议会的普通话版本信息，请致电9280 1937并报上下列**REF**号码。

TRADITIONAL CHINESE

欲知有關本文檔或議會的粵語版本資訊，請致電9280 1932並報上下列**REF**號碼。

GREEK

ΓΙΑ ΠΛΗΡΟΦΟΡΙΕΣ ΣΤΑ ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΑ ΣΧΕΤΙΚΕΣ ΜΕ ΑΥΤΟ ΤΟ ΈΓΓΡΑΦΟ Ή ΤΗ ΔΗΜΑΡΧΙΑ, ΠΑΡΑΚΑΛΟΎΜΕ ΚΑΛΈΣΤΕ ΤΟ 9280 1934 ΚΑΙ ΑΝΑΦΈΡΕΤΕ ΤΟΝ ΑΡΙΘΜΟ **REF** ΠΑΡΑΚΆΤΩ.

ITALIAN

PER AVERE INFORMAZIONI IN ITALIANO SU QUESTO DOCUMENTO O SUL COMUNE, SI PREGA CHIAMARE IL NUMERO 9280 1931 E CITARE IL NUMERO DI RIFERIMENTO (**REF** NUMBER) SOTTOINDICATO.

SPANISH

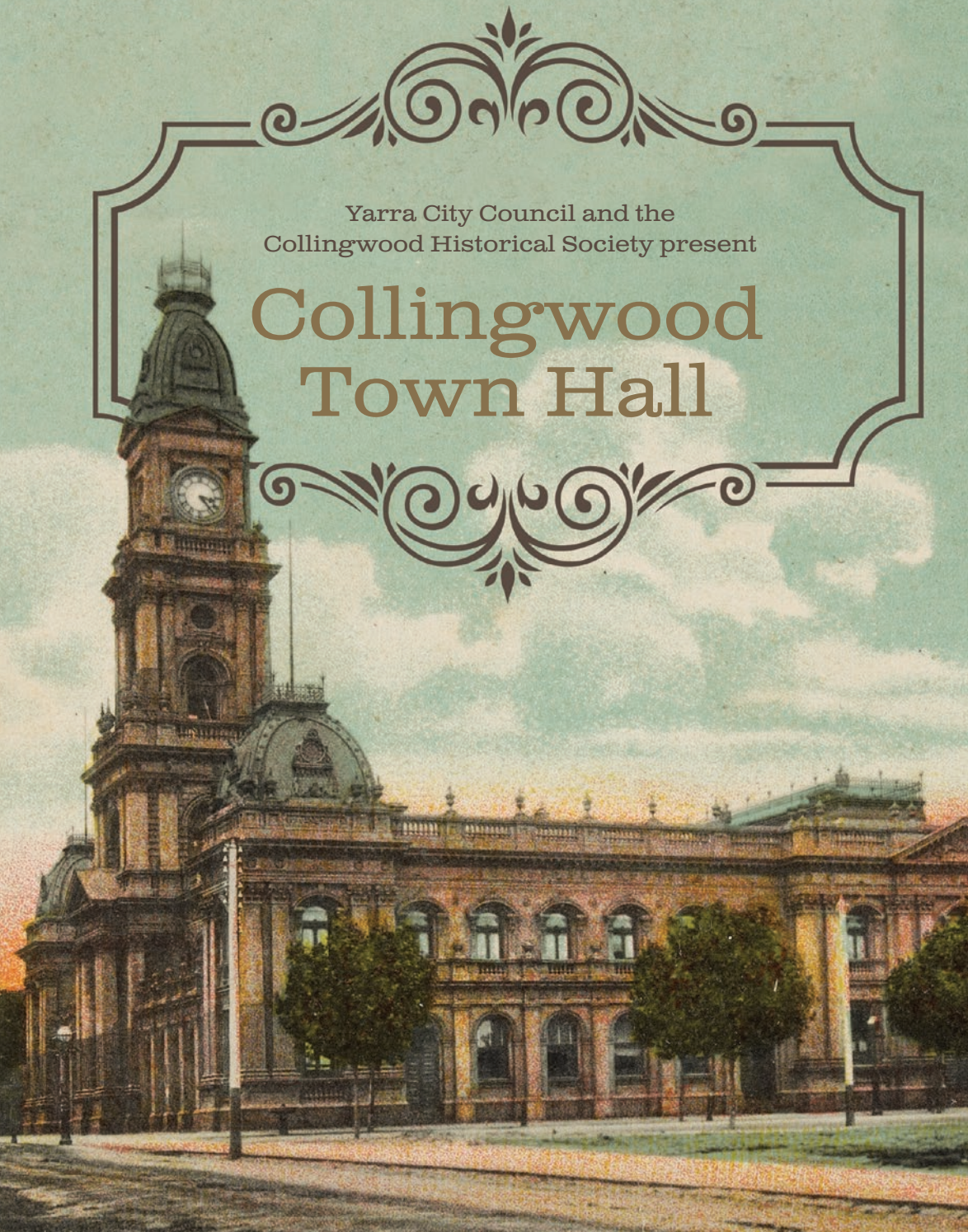PARA INFORMACIÓN EN CASTELLANO SOBRE ESTE DOCUMENTO O SOBRE EL AYUNTAMIENTO, LLAME AL 9280 1935 Y CITE EL NÚMERO DE **REF** DE MÁS ADELANTE.

VIETNAMESE

ĐỂ BIẾT THÔNG TIN BẰNG TIẾNG VIỆT VỀ TÀI LIỆU NÀY HAY VỀ HỘI ĐỒNG, XIN HÃY GỌI SỐ 9280 1939 VÀ NÊU SỐ **REF** DƯỚI ĐÂY.

REF 15158

Yarra City Council and the Collingwood Historical Society present

Collingwood Town Hall

CITY OF YARRA

Larry Harrigan

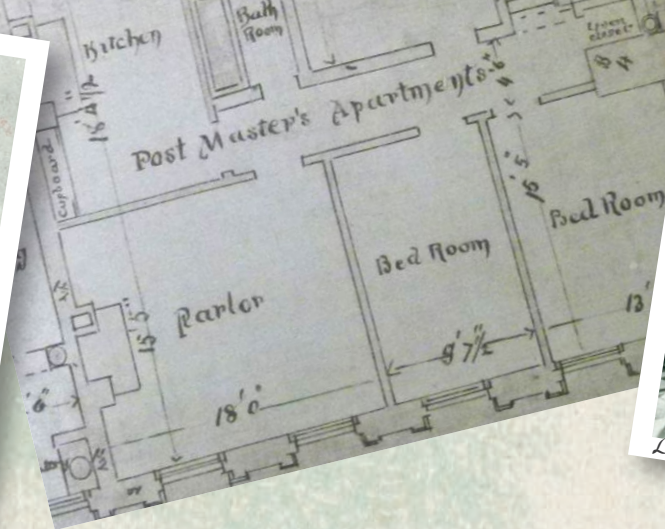*Rita Jamieson*

Theo Sidiropoulos

Collingwood Town Hall

For more than a century, the stunning architecture of Collingwood Town Hall has been a prominent landmark in Hoddle Street and beyond. The foundation stone was laid during Melbourne's boom period, in July 1885. A comparatively rare example of nineteenth century boom-style classicism, the town hall's significance is rightly acknowledged on local, state and national registers, and it has been an important hub for a wide range of municipal, government and community activities since its completion.

Architect George Johnson designed Collingwood Town Hall, as well as town halls in North Melbourne, Northcote, Daylesford and Maryborough, and the second stage of Fitzroy Town Hall. He visualised the complex as a number of separated two-storey units: a post office and accommodation in the front middle; a library, reading rooms and lecture hall on the north side; municipal offices and meeting rooms in the southwest, the magistrate's court, police station, cells and accommodation to the southeast, and the hall itself in the centre.

A major renovation in the late 1930s, under architectural firm A.C. Leith and Bartlett, involved both structural and decorative alterations. The Moderne or Art Deco style of this period is still evident in the main foyer and the hall. The building was significantly renovated in the 1980s, with notable work done externally by master-plasterer Larry Harrigan, and again in 2013–2014 to fit it out for the demands of the twenty-first century as both a workplace and a forum for a multitude of events.

People of the Town Hall

Collingwood Town Hall was originally designed with four residential apartments. Accordingly, in addition to the councillors, police, librarians, post office staff and others who have used Collingwood Town Hall over the years, a number of people have called it home. Reported tenant numbers fluctuate, but as an example, the 1931 ratebooks list 10 people living in the building, and for 1932 they list 16 residents.

Hall Keepers

The Hall Keeper lived on the premises so as to be on call 24 hours a day. It was a busy job, locking up, preparing rooms for events, supervising dances, and assisting Councillors with meetings and refreshments, as well as undertaking a myriad of minor maintenance tasks. William Scott became Hall Keeper in January 1892, and by 1931 there were seven adults living in his second-storey flat, including his sister, his three children, his daughter-in-law, and at least one grandchild. Mr Scott retired in 1932 after 40 years of service, but stayed close by, living in Gipps Street. His son Harry then became the Hall Keeper, staying in the job until the 1960s.

Post Office Staff

Post Masters and Post Mistresses were provided with accommodation as part of their position. The role is a good example of a career that was available to women in that era and gave them opportunities for responsibilities and promotion. One such person was Miss Gertrude Bailey, who was Post Mistress at Abbotsford Post Office, from its opening until 1905, when she transferred up to the Clifton Hill Post Office.

Mr John Gorman, a career Post Master who held the role during World War I, lived in the Post Office apartment during his appointment at the Abbotsford Post Office, along with his wife, six children and a servant. Mr Gorman was Post Master in 1916, when a daring daylight robbery there resulted in the theft of £200 in coin and notes. The robbery, subsequent trial and appeals were much reported in the press of the time, with emphasis on the fact that the money stolen was for soldiers' dependents.

Councillors

Rebecca 'Rita' Jamieson

In 1963, Rebecca 'Rita' Jamieson was elected as the first woman on Collingwood Council. She was an active member of the Union of Australian Women and one of a number of women from its Victorian branch who successfully breached the male bastion of Victorian local government. Rita Jamieson fought to improve conditions for working class women and children, and was involved in the establishment of an after-school program in Collingwood. She was a Councillor until her death in 1970.

Theo Sidiropoulos

Born in Greece in 1924, Theo Sidiropoulos immigrated to Australia in 1954 and became the first Greek-born Collingwood Councillor (1968–78), Mayor (1977–78) and Member of the Victorian Parliament (Member of the Legislative Assembly for Richmond 1977–1988). A leader both locally and in the Greek community, with a strong belief in social justice, he stood up for and spoke out on behalf of migrants and minorities. Theo Sidiropoulos died in 1998, and hundreds of people farewelled him at Collingwood Town Hall.

Librarians

In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Librarian was usually a mature-aged male with connections to Collingwood Council. John Bowring who died in the job in 1878 at the age of 64 was the brother of Cr Joseph Bowring. He was replaced by Irish-born Mr Randal Lambert, who had Masonic connections. As the Librarian from 1878 until 1905, he presided over the library move from Smith Street to Collingwood Town Hall. In 1905, at the age of 78, he died suddenly at his home in Paterson Street, Abbotsford, just before he was to head back to open the library for the evening. The next Librarian was Mr John Lang, JP. A Collingwood Councillor for a term from 1881, Lang was 83 when he retired in 1919! There were jokes in the newspaper at that time about how fit he was and how he might stand for the next elections.