

*Situated on Wadawurrung land*

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**FACEBOOK:**

Torquay Historical Society

**WEBSITE:**

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**CONTACT:**

President: Frank Vagg

0400 877 035

Secretary: Carollyn Williams

0400 911 664

**OPEN:**

Thursdays 1pm to 4pm

OR by appointment

**MEETINGS:**

- Committee:  
First Thursday of month  
at 1pm
- Archive group: Thursday  
at 1pm
- AGM is in August

## TORQUAY & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY Inc

NEWSLETTER – FEBRUARY 2026

### NEWS

Welcome to 2026! The Society participated in the IGA Rewards program in Nov/Dec 2025 and thank you to those who supported us by shopping at IGA and adding tokens to our chute. Committee members attended a Victorian Collections seminar at the National Wool Museum and our collection at the Vic Collections website is being revised and expanded. Heritage concerns have been expressed regarding 1. the planned removal of moonah trees and extra lighting in the redevelopment of the bowls club in Taylor Park and 2. a request to remove a Norfolk Island pine on the old Doc Hughes shop site on The Esplanade.

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### TORQUAY PUBLIC RESERVES COMMITTEE

This committee was formed in the 1890s to protect the foreshore from development. In 1894, 12 acres of marram grass was planted on the sand dunes to counter erosion. Structures were introduced on the reserve such as seats, shelter sheds, rotundas and play equipment. Planting of 2000 trees 'of various sorts' was undertaken in 1919.



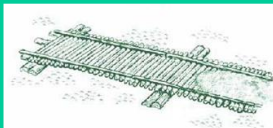
Source: Marshall Collection

## EARLY MODES OF TRANSPORT

Before the Great Ocean Road, travel between the coastal settlements along the rugged south coast was by coastal shipping. In the 1870s, an overland trip from Lorne to Geelong was long and arduous via a rough coach track through dense bush to the railway at Winchelsea. Plans for an ocean road emerged in the 1880s but only gained enthusiasm at the end of World War I. Construction of the Great Ocean Road commenced after survey work in 1918. Eastern View to Lorne opened in 1922 and the whole road did not open until 1932.

Travelling from Geelong to Torquay and beyond was by horse and coach. In 1881 **Mrs Murray** opened a guest house in Anglesea and **Henry Bubb** ran a coach service to Anglesea via Grovedale (Germantown), Mt Duneed and Bellbrae (old Jan Juc). In 1882 **James Follett** opened a guest house in Torquay. In 1888 he obtained a stagecoach licence to bring more visitors and operated a coach service from Geelong via Grovedale and Mt Duneed and made day trips between Torquay and Anglesea.

The route from Geelong to Torquay followed contours and avoided steep hills, selecting alternate routes after heavy rain. Stables at Grovedale allowed the horses to make the 16 km trip non-stop to Torquay. Approaching Torquay, the Deep Creek crossing was an obstacle, so the route followed Messmate Rd where the crossing was less steep, then crossing Grossmans Rd at St Therese School travelled to the corner of Anderson and Munday St where there were stables and a change of horses. The route from Mt Duneed to Torquay was also sandy and at times passengers were asked to get out, and even assist by pushing, so the horses could pull through the sands. One of the first priorities of the **Spring Creek Improvement Association** when it was formed in 1889 was to improve the road. **Felix Rosser** was employed to lay logs across the track in a corduroy effect to make travelling easier. The route to Anglesea crossed Spring Creek at the mouth, climbing up a cutting on the west bank and across the golf course to the Jan Juc beach car park. The next section coincides with the Surf Coast Walk along the cliff tops. At Ocean Bvde it turned inland passing south of **Addiscot** homestead and crossing Jarosite Rd into the coastal reserve on the north rim of the Iron Bark basin. After crossing Point Addis Rd, the track runs south of the Great Ocean Rd to a watering place near Forest Rd; then passes through Eumeralla Scout Camp and into Anglesea. Logs were placed in the riverbed to assist the coach to cross the Anglesea River, or the crossing was made at the mouth of the river.



*Corduroy pattern*

**Edwin Molyneux** of Geelong West in the early 1900s established a refreshment and hot water depot in Torquay over the summer months. He was granted in 1915 a stage carriage licence for a waggonette to carry passengers between Torquay, Barwon Heads and Queenscliff. **Basil Drayton** operated a horse drawn wagonette for the Geelong Torquay Anglesea mail run until 1924 when the wagonette was converted to a baker's cart.

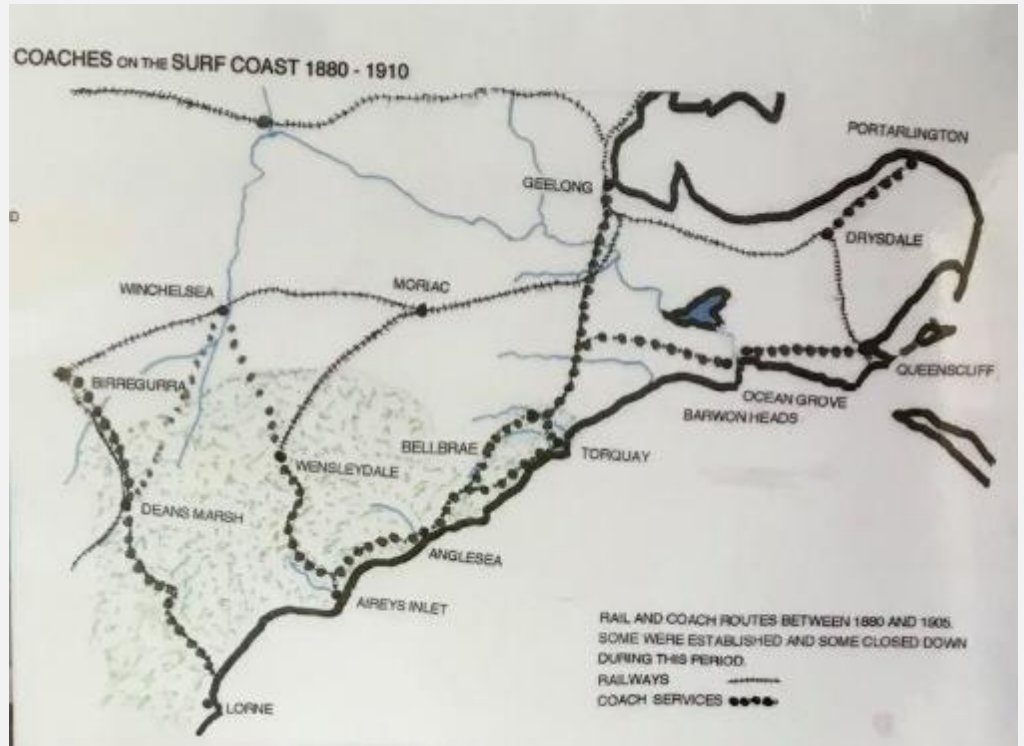
The Melbourne Motor Omnibus Co Ltd was established in 1912 as the first motor bus operator in Melbourne. Local motor bus services were established by individuals.

In 1918 **Edwin Molyneux** upgraded his passenger service and was granted a stage carriage licence for a motor car to carry passengers between Torquay, Barwon Heads and Queenscliff. In 1921 a stage carriage licence to travel between Geelong and Torquay was granted to **Basil Drayton** using a motorised vehicle.

**Coach Services**

**1880-1910**

Source: TDHS Collection  
(author unknown)



*Left: Follett's track  
now Surf Coast  
Walking Trail*

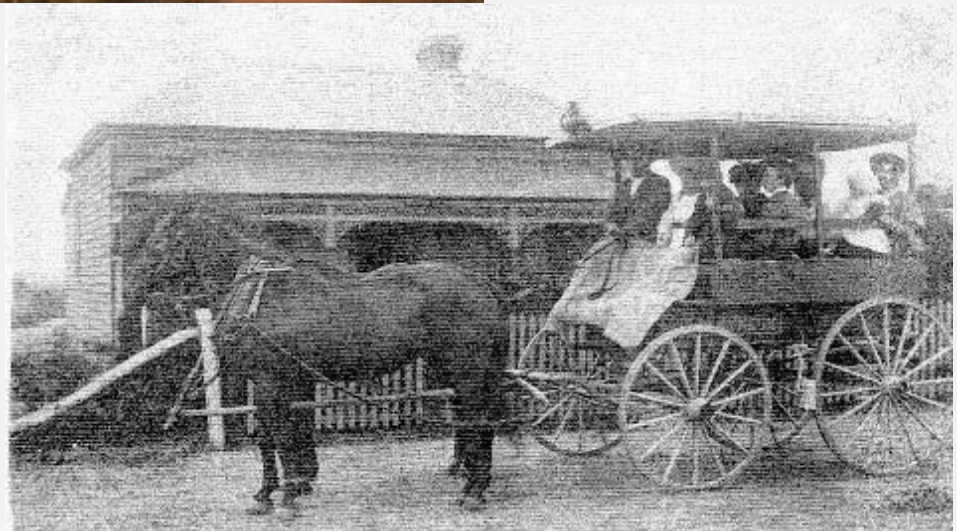
*Right: Track used  
by Bubb & Follet  
beside GOR  
between Hurst  
and Forest Rd*

Source: TDHS Collection



*Edwin Molyneux's  
drag in Parker St  
c. 1906*

Source: Molyneux collection



*Basil Drayton's  
motorised coach  
c. 1922*

Source: TDHS Collection



## RESOURCES AT WEBSITE

- Library catalogue
- Membership forms
- Research request forms
- Walking trail brochure
- Back issues of the newsletter
- History of Torquay HS

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### Beales St tennis courts 1922

Source: W. Richardson Collection

### Torquay Tennis Club Junior Tournament c 1959

Ross Quick coach

Source: B. Robbins Collection

Next newsletter  
May 2026

## TENNIS in TORQUAY

Tennis was a very popular pastime with both early residents and holiday makers to Torquay and courts and clubs evolved from the Palace Hotel having a court and guest houses having courts. At the Palace Hotel at Christmas, New Year and Easter tournaments were regularly held. In the early 1900s tennis enthusiasts were eager to have courts on which to play and so the Torquay Improvement Association (TIA) in Price Street constructed two courts at the rear of their hall and fronting Beales Street. Members of the TIA tennis club subcommittee were **E Taylor, F Gilbert, G Batten, R Hocking, and T McFarlane**. Soon after, due to demands, adjoining land was purchased for a further two courts.



In 1933 Torquay Tennis Club together with Freshwater Creek, Mt Duneed and Paraparap formed the Coast Tennis Association. The Torquay representatives were **B McGregor, K Duffield, A Rice, and Jean Berryman**. Many Torquay members served on the Coast Tennis Association committee: **George Harriott, Bob Pettitt, and Lesley McQuinn** who was made a Life Member. Fund raising began for a new location and by 1982 the courts were moved to the Spring Creek Reserve with four asphalt courts and clubrooms all fully funded by the club, through fundraising by dedicated members.

The TIA courts were still hired by holiday makers and annual tournaments were held regularly on Boxing Day and New Years Day. Volunteers who managed the events at the TIA included **Ross Quick, Carl Charman, Spencer Nall, Jean Parker and Bill Wishart**. Children who entered the tournaments received a complimentary ice cream and drink.



Bellbrae Tennis Club had its first meeting in 1929 with 16 in attendance and applied for a grant to build tennis courts. In 1953 plans were made to build a pavilion next to the courts. This was constructed by members at working bees, in particular **Ray Cunningham and Ken Baensch**.

Following discussions in 2016, Torquay, Jan Juc and Bellbrae Tennis Clubs formed a single entity known as **Surfcoast Tennis Club** in January 2018.

**Note:** No history is available for the Jan Juc Tennis Club.

**IF ANYONE CAN ASSIST WITH THIS INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT THE SOCIETY**