

Balaclava Hotel, formerly **Carlisle Hotel 1869** -
123 Carlisle St, Balaclava 3183
MEL: 58 D11



A busy time at McCullin's Balaclava Hotel, 10 April 1922

First licensed by T Ryan in 1869, his insolvency in 1873 led to the transference of the lease to Thomas W Fiske. The Balaclava was a popular working class hotel for the poorer classes of St Kilda who lived on the swampy Balaclava 'flats', as opposed to the 'toffs' who lived on the St Kilda hill. So entrenched was their rivalry after the contest over the site of the 'new' Town Hall that they were known as the 'Hillites' and the 'Flattites'. The current building, designed by John Frederick Gibbins, was constructed in 1887 and incorporated publican Edward Allen's name into the façade – it still reads 'E. Allen's Balaclava Hotel'. While its façade has remained relatively the same, its interiors have been substantially renovated to incorporate more dining areas and a one-time beer garden and dance floor has been similarly included.

Ferguson McLelland, who would later manage the Royal Hotel in Essendon, was licensee during the 1960s, while Peter Doyle, who is at the Bridge Hotel in Mordialloc in 2003, was its licensee between 1971 and 1983. During this time, the Balaclava Hotel attracted many racing identities, bookmakers, jockeys, owners and trainers, and a TAB was built next door. Jack Ayling, the racing journalist from the Truth newspaper, drank there for many years, until he moved on to the Post Office Club Hotel to join his friend, the famous jockey Roy Higgins. Owned by Bruce Mathieson, the 'Pokies King' since 1994, the subsequent addition of gaming machines has rendered it a popular place for gambling.



Balaclava Hotel, 2004