

On the corner of Waltham Street is the Australia Hotel, the refurbished successor to the old Star and Garter, where the Richmond Council held its first meeting in 1856. 'Churches and pubs,' a local observer remarked in the 1870s, 'are sprinkled about . . . in the most gratifying and impartial profusion,' and the Star and Garter, like Richmond's thirty-five other hotels, played an important part in social and political life. In the weeks before an election, their bars hummed with political gossip while in smoky backrooms local powerbrokers planned the candidates' campaigns. The publican himself was in a good position to influence voters, and on election day usually organised the 'cold meat and bottled beer business' on the candidate's behalf.

References:

on foot (Op. Cit.)