



Number 249  
December 2025

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# Western Historian

Newsletter of the Western Victorian Association of Historical Societies

Reg. No.: A0020504K ABN: 98 927 068 895

Website: <https://www.vvahs.com.au/>

Societies' cost: PDF emailed, included in annual fee - \$35.00

Individual subscribers: \$15.00 (PDF emailed)

Editor: Craig Proctor [vvahsinc@gmail.com](mailto:vvahsinc@gmail.com)

The Western Victorian Association of Historical Societies acknowledges the traditional owners of country on the land on which we are meeting throughout Australia and their continuing connection to land, culture and community.

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|                                                              |              |                                                                    |
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Please email your report or any other contributions for publication as Word documents with images as jpgs to  
Craig Proctor, [vvahsinc@gmail.com](mailto:vvahsinc@gmail.com)

## Member Groups

at December 2025

Arapiles (Natimuk) Ararat  
 Balmoral Birchip Boort  
 Camperdown Carisbrook  
 Charlton Golden Grains Museum  
 Cobden Cohuna Colac  
 Coleraine Dimboola Donald  
 Derrinallum/Lismore Dunkeld  
 East Loddon (Mitiamo)  
 Echuca Edenhope  
 Geelong & South Western  
 Rail Heritage Society  
 Glenthompson  
 Goldfields (Dunolly)  
 Halls Gap and Grampians  
 Harrow Heytesbury  
 Hopetoun Horsham  
 Inglewood Jeparit  
 Kerang Koroit  
 Landsborough Macarthur  
 Maryborough Midlands  
 Minyip Mortlake  
 Mount Rouse (Penshurst)  
 Nhill  
 Nhill Silo Heritage Project  
 Nullawil Ouyen Port Fairy  
 Pyramid Hill Rainbow  
 St Arnaud Stawell  
 Swan Hill Terang  
 Warracknabeal  
 Warrnambool Wedderburn  
 Wimmera Mallee Pioneer  
 Museum (Jeparit)

## President's Post

I had the privilege of attending all three Zone Meetings in September and October at Cobden, Jeparit and Pyramid Hill. We thank the Cobden and District Historical Society, the Wimmera Mallee Pioneer Museum, Jeparit and District Historical Society and the Pyramid Hill and District Historical Society for hosting these meetings. Doing so can be a daunting task but in each case these events were very successful.



While quite a few societies don't attend these meetings – distance and other commitments are always issues – the fact that around 100 people representing 34 groups attended the Zone Meetings is gratifying. The theme running through each meeting was 'networking' and 'sharing' and this is *always* a good thing.

Every second issue of *Western Historian* includes Members' reports, either presented verbally at the meetings or submitted *in absentia*. This issue contains more reports than usual which is also a reflection of our members' commitment to sharing their achievements. As always I have read every report several times and it is staggering just what groups continue to achieve. I only wish everyone would read each report as there are so many innovative, 'twenty-first century' and very diverse initiatives being implemented by our members. We all know local historians are passionate and born organisers but we must not undervalue the level of creativity among our members.

Separate from our Zone Meetings, I have also been invited to attend and also speak at AGMs at Colac, Macarthur, Nhill and Ouyen as well as visit St Arnaud which is something I thoroughly enjoy. Living in both Jeparit and Mortlake makes it relatively feasible for me to travel around to visit other groups so do consider inviting me; I always come away from these visits feeling optimistic, not to mention impressed.

Craig Proctor

## 2026 AGM and Zone Meetings

Our 2026 AGM along with Zone and Executive Meetings will be held in St Arnaud (North Central Zone), kindly hosted by the St Arnaud and District Historical Society, on the weekend of **11-12 April**.

Further details will be provided in the March issue of *Western Historian* and via email.

The 2027 AGM will be held in the Wimmera Mallee Zone, to be hosted by a member group or groups in that Zone. Hosts of the AGM in this Zone since 2017 have been Stawell (twice), Ararat and Nhill.

## Spring Zone Meetings

### Southern Zone

Around 31 people attended the Southern Zone meeting hosted by the Cobden and District Historical Society at the Cobden Miniature Railway Clubrooms on Sunday 14 September.

Representatives from Cobden, Warrnambool, Camperdown, Port Fairy, Mortlake, Terang, Heytesbury, Koroit, Derrinallum-Lismore and Geelong South West Rail Heritage attended. We also had seven of the ten members of the Executive travel considerable distances: from Nhill, Horsham, Landsborough, Stawell, Jeparit, Carisbrook and Geelong.

Inevitably each Report given stimulated comments with much sharing of advice; while all groups are 'doing their own thing' at the local level, they have common issues and it is always reassuring to hear how others are dealing with these.

After lunch attendees had the opportunity to ride on the miniature trains around the lovely course.

We are grateful to the members of the Cobden and District Historical Society for hosting this memorable and highly genial event.



At its meeting the Executive formalised providing each group which hosts a Zone meeting in September/October \$200 towards the cost of hiring facilities etc. A group hosting an AGM currently receives \$300 towards meeting costs but now Spring Zone Meeting hosts will also receive this funding.

### Wimmera Mallee Zone

For the first time a Wimmera Mallee Zone Meeting was held in Jeparit, co-hosted by the Wimmera Mallee Pioneer Museum which joined W.V.A.H.S. just three years ago and the re-established Jeparit and District Historical Society which had been a W.V.A.H.S. member from the 1970s but which has recently rejoined.

The meeting took place in the old Woorak West Methodist Church which has been on the Museum site since 1973, having been closed in 1971. We had around 30 attendees which was encouraging with Jeparit, Horsham, Nhill, Nhill Silo, Dimboola, Warracknabeal, Rainbow, Natimuk, Landsborough, Glenthompson and Stawell societies being represented. Apologies were received from Balmoral, Hopetoun, Minyip, Ouyen and Halls Gap.

Prior to and post-meeting attendees had the option to explore the 10-acre Museum site with fifteen heritage buildings and eight large sheds and pavilions dedicated to farming machinery and vehicles. Attendees also had the option to visit the Historical Society rooms at the magnificent Jeparit Memorial Hall following the afternoon tea provided by the Historical Society.

All agreed it was a great venue for a meeting with the setting providing additional talking points. Thanks to Daryl Meek of the Nhill Silo Heritage Project and Tracey Potatau-Wright from Glenthompson for running the meeting.

As always, the delegates delivered highly engaging and information-rich reports and, inevitably, there was lively discussion around perennial issues for all societies including the seeming lack of interest in government bodies striving to protect our built heritage and the difficulty of working with some bodies overseeing public cemeteries.







The tiny Woorak West Methodist Church, venue for the Wimmera Mallee Zone Meeting at the Wimmera Mallee Pioneer Museum in Jeparit.



### North Central Zone

The Pyramid Hill and District Historical Society hosted our North Central Zone Meeting on Saturday 4 October in the Pyramid Hill Memorial Hall with around 35 attendees representing twelve groups: Birchip; Boort; Charlton; Cohuna; Donald; East Loddon; Kerang; Inglewood; Maryborough Midlands; Nullawil; Pyramid Hill and Swan Hill. This was an excellent attendance!

Prior to the meeting attendees had the opportunity to visit the wonderful Museum. The Society has produced a huge number of books relating to the district's heritage...most impressive.

On behalf of the RHSV Council I presented Pyramid Hill's Helen Stevens with her Award of Merit. Not only did the official citation reflect Helen's many years of service to the Society but the applause from the gathering reflected the esteem in which Helen is held.

The General Business component of the meeting resulted in discussion of a number of issues, as is generally the case, including options for cataloguing software and the W.V.A.H.S. potentially returning to producing a Directory of all member groups with additional information which I will take to the Executive. This was a most useful discussion. Another benefit of this meeting was groups showing a prepared-ness to share information and insights with other groups. As with the Southern and Wimmera Mallee Zone Meetings robust networking was the order of the day.

Following proceedings we were treated to a Magic Lantern show of very old coloured glass slides with a narrative.

Thank you Pyramid Hill folk for hosting an excellent and thoroughly enjoyable Zone meeting.



Helen Stevens having received her RHSV Award of Merit.



The North Central Zone Meeting at Pyramid Hill

### Discounted Tech for your Society?

At the Wimmera Mallee Zone Meeting Evelyn King of the Dimboola and District Historical Society reported on the following which may be of interest to many other member groups.

The Connecting Up program supports Australian and New Zealand not-for-profit organisations. It has partnered with leading tech companies to support groups with donated and discounted IT products, such as heavily discounted computers and IT hardware as well as Software and services.

Connecting Up is operated in partnership with TechSoup. Together they facilitate access to the best technology available to NFPs, Civil Society, Organisations and Foundations in Australia, thus helping organisations fulfil their mission and increase their impact.

NFPs can join the program free of charge to access its services at discounted prices.

DDHS has been a member for about six years. We created an account and met the criteria in order to access the IT products, like Antivirus programs, refurbished laptops, and PCs, Adobe and so forth.

Join by supplying information about your group, wait for acceptance, create an account and away you go.

[Link to Connecting Up website](#)

We have just purchased Norton 360 for 1 year, for 5 devices at around \$35, as opposed to around \$179.

Regards, Evelyn  
[ddhs3414@gmail.com](mailto:ddhs3414@gmail.com)

Member groups are invited to submit promotions for events, books published and any other items of interest to the broader W.V.A.H.S. community. The 250th issue of *Western Historian* will go out in late February 2026 so please submit any items by mid-February.

### What do other groups think?

Discussion at the recent Buloke Tourism meeting and with other members while scouring for researchers has made us very aware that we need to have the names of local historians, cemetery contacts, schools, cemeteries, old halls and historical artefacts, so that we can better help people contact relevant helpful people who may know the localities better. Recently we had people looking for cemeteries that don't exist and societies which no longer function, schools no longer there etc.

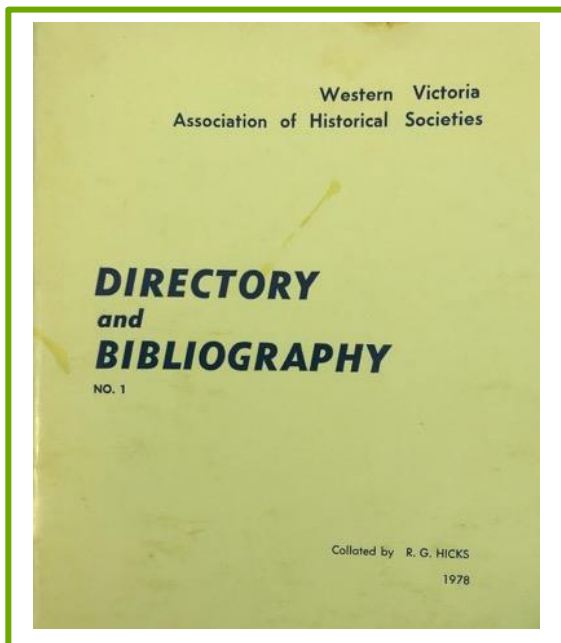
I have spoken to representatives from 10 Buloke Shire towns and also mentioned to Steve Pentreath at Swan Hill that it could be something we should look at asap. A map which could be put in all our societies, distributed online or some other way with names, emails, phone numbers would be invaluable. Two people I spoke to had contacted RHSV headquarters in Melbourne with no real help as the areas they were interested in had no member societies. This will continue to be the norm in our country areas with long distances between societies as churches and schools close. Once church clergy, presbyteries, schools were places to go for information but no longer exist or cannot help because of privacy laws or lack of personnel.

It was sheer fluke or good luck that a couple of us knew of a contact or two and were able to contact helpful people by phone, but there needs to be better contact methods. Many cemeteries are online, some better than others, some useless, depending on the server. Birchip has a great map of former schools and their history, Tourism booklets have a bit of information, but all could be better. Ideas ????

Maureen Donnellon  
Birchip Historical Society  
[maureen.donnellon@bigpond.com](mailto:maureen.donnellon@bigpond.com)



In 1978 the Executive of the W.V.A.H.S., under the leadership of Robert Hicks of Kaniva, produced a *Directory and Bibliography* listing all office bearers and contact details of the then-42 member groups. In addition, each listing – of 2-4 pages – included projects being undertaken, newspapers held, publications produced and other relevant items. It is not feasible to replicate a version of this resource in 2025; we could not guarantee that all contact details and office bearers would be accurate. Nevertheless, the Executive is considering options for collating and disseminating these details; the obvious option would be to have these on our website. Input from all members is welcome. Below is the entry in the 1978 Directory for Arapiles Historical Society. Separately, should any member group like a copy of their group's entry for 1978, please contact me. These make for interesting reading!



### Historical Societies, Museums and Victoria's Child Safe Standards: we all need to comply

In Victoria revised Child Safe Standards became mandated on 1 July 2022. These 11 Standards apply not only to all organisations and bodies engaging with young people but also to all charities and not-for-profits, including historical societies. All historical societies (and Museums) must develop policies demonstrating how they are complying with these 11 Child Safe Standards (CSSs).

Some historical societies will already have policies in place complying with the Standards but most probably don't.

The RHSV's Historical Societies Support Committee has been fielding queries from societies about how to comply with these mandated Standards.

The RHSV is currently developing resources and advice for its affiliates to develop the policies.

The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) already has detailed guidelines and templates available online to support all of us to develop our own policies. The link for the CCYP follows.

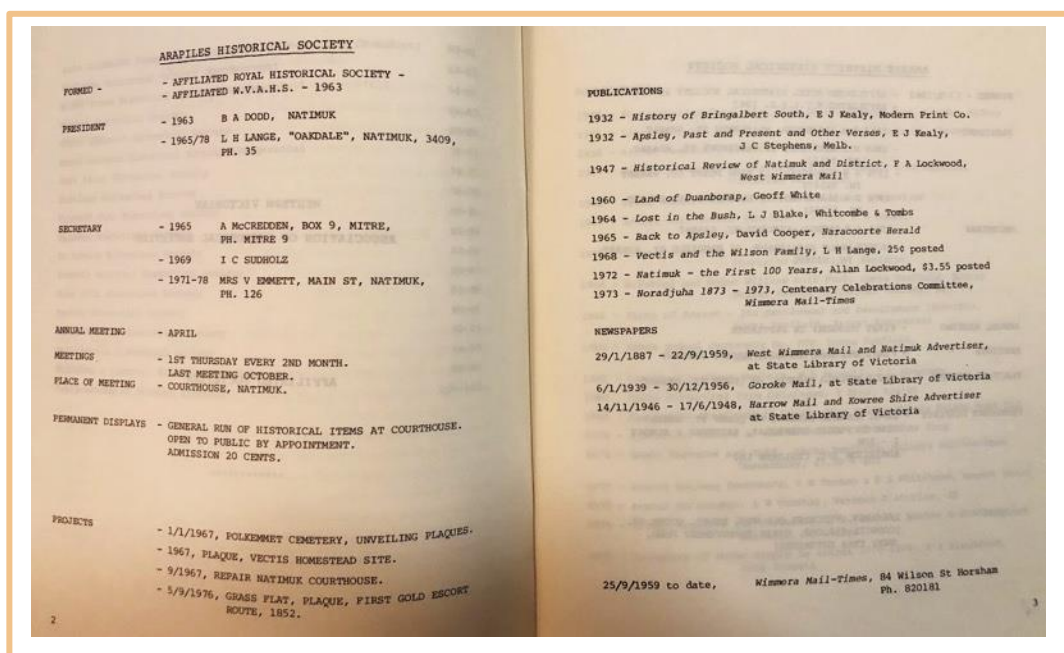
We all need to be aware that it is incumbent on us to comply with these requirements; not doing so is not an option.

By the time we hold our AGM in April we will have greater clarity about what we all need to do and be able to offer advice to our members

#### Key links:

[Victorian Government's Child Safe Standards](#)

[Commission for Children and Young People](#)



## Spring Zone Meeting Reports

### Nhill and District Historical Society (WM)



I would like to welcome you to my first President's report, to fill you in on what has been happening and what we hope to do in the future.

Our AGM was held on 27 July. All positions were declared unopposed due to the absence of other candidates. The new board consists of the following people being appointed as office bearers, I was named president (Don Keam), with Colleen Forbes secretary, the vice president Wendy Rethus, treasurer Trish Alexander, and our committee of Lorraine Pilgrim, Marilyn Lowe and Vienne Rocher. I would like to

thank our past President Helen Woodhouse Herrick and the committee members who did not seek re-election: David Brown, Daryl Meek and Irene Colbert and thank them for their service to the group and their ongoing contributions.

We are in the process of updating our kitchen due to a grant of \$2,000 from the Horsham Sports Community Club.

Our priority is to keep preserving the town's history, including families, cemeteries, buildings and related artifacts. Our valuable documents and photographs that have been donated by the community, and our own books and research records are currently being updated and indexed to make them easier to find and make more accessible to the public. To do this work we have had to update some of our facilities, so we have purchased a new computer, an economical printer and network hub so our volunteers can easily access the work that is needed. To achieve this goal, we have members going through boxes of photos and documents, photographing our collection and library of books but this will take a long time, consuming many hours of volunteers' time and many people to even attempt this ongoing job. So, if there are any new members and volunteers out there, with free time, we would appreciate their help.

We have other things on the go for the year. We are involved in the publication of Daryl Deckert's book relating to the soldiers of our district whose names are displayed on our war memorial in the main street of Nhill. We have Kevin O'Reilly in the process of finishing off the manuscript and are hoping to get it printed soon. We are also looking at our involvement in the Nhill Heritage Weekend, 25 and 26 October, with Craige Proctor speaking on "Telling the stories of pioneer women" as part of our Prominent Women of Nhill series. On 16 November guest speaker Ron Dodds will be talking about his new book on his life in the district.

Going forward we hope to provide more information on the history of the district to the public and are looking at new ways to raise funds for our society.

Next year we are looking at hosting more guest speakers. In March John Deckert has asked to speak on his contribution to Australian mapping and we are hoping to have Bill Allen from the Bendigo Goldfields Museum speak on the gold route.

Between 20 April and 5 May 2026 we hope to have the numbers to have Imelda Cribbin, documentation specialist (editor/writer/ trainer), run a course on writing family histories, covering copyright, components of a book, etc.

I hope that as the new team we keep our communication and keep working as a team, in a happy environment so that we can attract new members.

Don Keam, President

### Halls Gap and Grampians Historical Society (WM)



Like many History groups throughout the district ours continues to be small, with just four members, all of us of the grey-haired brigade.

This year we have concentrated on managing the back room, clearing out years of accumulated papers which have been stored in unopened files, sorting through photographs and assessing donations which might or might not have something to do with our Grampians area. It is a slow process but we will keep working on it!

Cataloguing our collection is a constant aim but not a reality at the moment.

It is important to focus on what we achieve. Thanks to Chas Mangle and local residents Kerrie and Gary, our rooms are open to the public six afternoons a week. Our rooms display a wide variety of artefacts, photographs and historical information of interest to both local and international tourists and, most importantly, we continue to welcome a high numbers of visitors.

Jen ODonoghue



## Glenthompson Historical Group (S)



Entertainment in small towns was often limited to towns close by, playing sporting competitions or the regular Saturday night dances.

In our local area a group was formed to increase inter-town events and came up with the idea of local towns competing in a form of talent contest which they called "Star Town". Competing towns were Glenthompson, Dunkeld, Peshurst and the competition was started around the 1950s. Many other towns also ran similar "Star Town" competitions, such as Lismore, Cobden and Skipton.

As can be seen by the newspaper cutting, there was a variety of musical instruments, singing, dancing and comedy acts, all vying to be voted the best. Sadly, after some years of successful events, like so many other groups, it slowly faded away and then stopped completely.

In 2009 Glenthompson resurrected the idea, but only within the town and only as a one-off fund raiser. There was a raffle, voting on the acts, followed by supper and a great night of fun and entertainment was had.

On the home front, our little history group is busy planning an event for the upcoming Seniors Week. On Sunday 12 October we will be opening the Centre from 10am-4pm and combining with St Peter's Anglican Church to present "Memories". We will provide entry to the History Centre, morning and afternoon tea and a guide for the story behind the murals in the church, all free. We hope to get a good turnout.

Tracey Potatau-Wright, Secretary

### MANY COULD NOT GET SEATS FOR "STAR TOWN"

The biggest crowd ever to witness a concert at Glenthompson packed into the War Memorial Hall on Saturday night for the 1960 "Star Town" audition, and many more who sought admission had to be turned away from the doors.

Glenthompson last won the competition in 1955 and are hopeful they can do so again in this their centenary year.

Many talented artists entertained the capacity house, which paid £250 for admission.

A penny vote competition was held for the selection of the best item, the result of which did not tally with the decision of the judge, Mr J. Lavery, of Willaura.

Popular choice was the Glen. marching girls, pupils of the State School, led by Gwen Field.

The judge's first placing, Ararat Rock-a-bye Boys (instrumental group) were placed fourth on the popular vote list.

Mr Lavery's other selections were:—Marching Girls, novelty 2; "Reminiscences," company, 3; Michael Cocks, vocal solo, 4.

He said ten year old Michael, at present singing as a boy soprano, if given the correct tuition would go a long way as a tenor in the musical world.

He is a son of Mr and Mrs Cocks, formerly of Glenthompson, now of Ballarat, and has sung in the South Street competitions.

Other items with popular vote numbers were:—

Instrumental, Old Timers' Group, 975; vocal, Dorothy Williams, 1036; novelty, Marching Girls, 4862; mello piano, Ian Mc

Alpine, 737; novelty, George and Geoff, 823; song and dance, Geraldine Hockley, 464; instrumental, Rock-a-Bye Boys, 1388; novelty, Vic Gellert, 1496; Reminiscent Company, 2548; vocal solo, Michael Cocks, 751; comedy, Snow and Rex, 799; instrumental, the Harmonicas, 676; vocal solo, Kerry Cooper, 548.

The following items were rendered by guest artists, "A Spot More Comedy," Snow, Rex, Jim and Dot; vocal solo, Doris Hurley; instrumental, Ted Nulty; novelty, Alec. Wheeler; vocal, Jim Lavery.

THE HARMONICATS.  
L.R.R.. GARY MCFARLANE, JIM SCHACK,  
KEN MCFARLANE, GEORGE MCCALLUM.  
IN FRONT.. JOANNE TURNER, SHARON HURLEY  
IAN MASON.



### FAHS Newsletter

The Federation of Historical Societies is the national peak body representing the interests of about 1,000 historical societies and about 100,000 members throughout Australia. Dr Rosalie Triolo OAM FHRV is President of FAHS and your *Western Historian* Newsletter Editor also produces the FAHS newsletter – four issues annually – which anyone can sign up to receive free of cost.

[FAHS website](http://www.fahs.org.au)



## Warracknabeal and District Historical Society (WM)



We have recently been very fortunate to receive three small grants. One was from the Horsham Sports and Community Centre to allow us to purchase seating and tables for our new BBQ area. Another was from the Yarriambiack Shire to install floor-to-roof Perspex on the south and west of the BBQ to provide

wind protection. These grants mean that our redevelopment of the whole area is just about complete. The third grant was from the Federal Government Volunteer Grants to purchase a new laptop for the Secretary (thank-fully to replace the old, old one which works sometimes!)

As many of you know, our Warehouse continues to provide a great second-hand opportunity for the whole community. We have a couple of new volunteers who are enjoying the experience. Items, big and small, continue to be sold regularly and "new" items are being brought in often. The Warehouse offers a huge variety of items for sale.

At the Historical Centre we have had a large envelope of old photos brought in. A local person purchased a chest of drawers at the Warehouse and later found the photos hidden away in a drawer. She brought them to the Centre and we were able to identify the family they belonged to. They will be returned to their rightful owners, but the family has allowed us to copy photos of community interest. Computers have also had a "birthday" with much needed updates, cleaning and sorting.

The Museum Foyer display has now been changed to Massey Harris machinery which will be featured at next year's Easter Rally. Included in the display is some locally manufactured machinery.

The Museum volunteers have been very busy. Some restoration has taken place on a backhoe and rotovator. But they have been working to install three tank stands at our storage shed with a view to running the water to a dam. They have also been enclosing part of a skillion to provide storage room for machinery parts.

We were recently visited by a tourism expert who made several really good suggestions to assist us with the promotion of our own attractions as well as town promotion. We will work with the Tourist Centre and hopefully the Shire to begin these projects.

One of our members is hoping to put on a promotional Historical Society display at our Show in October. This will feature items from the Centre and Museum. Our Museum members will also have machinery in the Parade and on display on the day.

Several members visited Nullawil's 100th birthday celebrations in August. How great it is to see what other societies are doing, to learn from them and also have an enjoyable day out!

Lesley Stephan

## Camperdown and District Historical Society (S)



In April over fifty members and guests visited Yellangip Homestead, Darlington. See Allan Willingham's extensive report and much more in our latest (July) *Past Matters*.

In June it was again all hands (and more) on deck to support many aspects of the Robbie Burns Celtic Festival and our own History Talks were very well attended and of high quality. At the conclusion of the morning session of the History Talks the immediate past president of Royal Historical Society of Victoria, Professor Richard Broome, presented our long serving committee member and secretary Maree Belyea with the Society's Award of Merit.

Again see latest *Past Matters* for Bob Lambell's reports.

Displays at the Centre are continually changing with the work of local Commercial Artist, Nurse and Landscape Painter Enid Cummins 1917-2014 and the achievements of local jockey Neville Wilson being just two examples of those featured in the past year.

We continue to upgrade equipment on an as-needed basis to ensure the time spent by volunteers is on what they do best and not fighting with outdated equipment.

The Society now has to hand a transcribed copy of the "Minutes, Trustees of the Camperdown Public Park 1869 to 1955". The typed document of 314 pages is a transcription from the four original minute books and has an added easy to find index of just over 300 surnames of suppliers, contractors, laborers or anyone listed in the minutes, being generally payments for services. Names such as Carey, Carmen or Casey only appear once, the exception being the surname Walls which appears on 160 of the 314 pages.

The Committee has also recently (3 August) submitted to Corangamite Shire an objection to a Town Planning Application for a large advertising sign at 245 Manifold Street, Camperdown, corner Brooke and Manifold Streets, and two properties west of the Heritage Centre. It is hoped Council's heritage overlays and planning controls would not allow such a structure in that location. However, it was felt failure to object may be seen as our support for such a development and also that we may be one of the better placed organisations to speak up and object to a sign which would dominate the streetscape and be detrimental to the historic character of the precinct.

We are currently working with Andrew Miller to reproduce "IF THESE WALLS COULD TALK", a report of the Corangamite Dry Stone Wall Conservation Project initially printed in 1995.

On a very sad note, our Treasurer and Camperdown RSL President Kevin Murray died suddenly in September.

Lyle Tune, President

### Port Fairy Historical Society (S)



In late March we held a Photograph Day to photograph clothes which needed to be on mannequins to be displayed properly. Ten of our volunteers came to help with setting up lights, moving furniture, dressing, labelling and folding away, while Anthony Phillips photographed all the items.

In May we held our third Walk Through Time focusing on Bank Street this time. These walks attract quite a crowd of people and there are always many questions regarding the shops and traders involved. The sit down in the hotel afterwards allows people to ask all the little things they have thought about while wandering the street concerned.

In July we again held our lunch at Charlies on East. We have no meeting during the colder weather.

The *Casino* commemoration took place again on July 10 with quite a few turning up to remember her.

Two new exhibitions were created in April and June, one relating the lives of two brothers and their war service in New Guinea and Japan during the Second World War and the other concentrating on The Streets where We Played, using photos from a collection taken of those same streets in the 1950s alongside those taken of the children who grew up in them.

August brought us a nice surprise of a large anonymous donation. So the plans are for updating computers, remodelling the kitchen area, desks and shelving. Quotes have been sought and we are well on the way to achieving that goal.

We have had many new donations this year. Some lovely clothing from the late 1800s, an amazing mixture of wedding cake decorations and bouquet flowers in a bell dome and five photo albums of, at the moment an unknown family, which had been handed to someone in Tasmania and passed through two more sets of hands until someone rang us to ask if we wanted them. There are some great photos among them. We have also acquired two collections of papers and photos from two well-known Port Fairy historians.

In October we will be hosting a Royal Historical Society of Victoria event presenting speakers on Archives in the Digital Age, Presenting our history in Exhibitions and preserving our stories both botanical and family.

We hope that many of you will join us as I think it will help broaden our knowledge of the ways in which we deal with our collections and the digitising of our history in the future.

Lynda Tieman

### Derrinallum & Lismore Community Association Inc. History Group (S)

It has been business as usual collecting, supporting and promoting our local history, responding to research inquiries and taking appointments in addition to our usual "OPEN DAYS" on the first Sunday of the month.

We have supported a number of Community events recently, notably the Pura Pura School Gathering at the CFA Shed/Rooms at Pura, Western Plains Machinery Preservation Group 2-day event, Cuppa for Cancer at Wooltrack Store celebrating 25 years of support of this fundraiser, 25 year anniversary of the amalgamation of the Derrinallum and Lismore Football Clubs, Lismore Progress Association "Mid-Winter Festival" featuring Postcard Art and an impressive sound and fireworks display.

We have had a number bookings for Social Groups wishing to visit the History Rooms. Members provide a short presentation about our beginning in 2002, our collection and a brief outline of our local history. Groups usually stop for coffee before visiting and pre-arrange lunch locally.

The work of Acquisitions, sorting, documenting, archiving and scanning is constant and time consuming. This has been a priority for 2025.

We have been involved with digitising the Lismore Cemetery Trust Records which has been a long term project. Members are presently writing up a brief history of the cemetery and stories about some of the historic graves in the cemetery to be presented on "Story Boards" around the cemetery. Lismore Cemetery Trust is fortunate to have historical registers and maps.

The future of the historic bluestone Lismore Presbyterian church built in 1864 is in jeopardy. Lismore once had four churches, presently two exist. Derrinallum also had four churches, all sold and repurposed. It is concerning to see these cherished buildings disappearing from the social fabric of our small towns.

We were saddened to hear of Florence Charles' passing recently. Florence has left a lasting legacy in the wonderful local history recorded in her books and stories written over the years. Vale Florence.

We have two recent publications available, launched in 2024.

Our own 'Snapshots – Memories around the Mount and across the Plains', \$20. Recorded stories of the Lismore and Derrinallum districts.

'Mt Elephant-Tjerrinallum, A History of the Derrinallum and Darlington District' by Pamela McGregor and Lynton Oaten, originally published in 1985. This second edition has a deeper understanding of the region including our First Nations people. \$50.

Avon Buchholz



### Mortlake and District Historical Society (S)



MDHS conducted its second tour for 2025, in May at Hexham, with around forty people in attendance. The present owner of the old Criterion Hotel of Hexham, Mr Peter Stapleton, opened up his property to MDHS participants for

the afternoon. We all gathered at the back of the house on a paved area which were the original flagstones of the property when it was built in 1862, to listen to a talk given by Peter on the history of the property.

With the talk completed, the attendees were graciously allowed to walk through the rooms of the old Criterion Hotel. The renovation and decoration of the property has been done excellently with many original features, such as the underground cellar, being retained. All who went through the property were impressed by the attention to detail by the owners.

The second part of the day was a walk around the small township of Hexham, with Robert McLaren leading attendees around the streets and talking about the various buildings, or in some cases about a building no longer there. Some attendees were able to add additional information as buildings, people and locations were discussed. The day was finished with afternoon tea in the old bluestone school building at Hexham which is now used as the local community hub.

In July a presentation was given by two of our members, Craig Proctor and Robert McLaren on Research, Record and Publishing. As both have published several books, their insights into the process of book writing and publishing were invaluable and they took lots of questions from the audience. The presentation was open to both MDHS members and the public. It was a successful afternoon although the attendance was low. It is always hard to get people to attend events on a cold winter's day.

Also in July, following a request by the Mortlake Senior Citizens, MDHS Secretary Jillian Clingan, attended their

annual Demo Day. The day is a way for local groups to represent themselves to members of the public and chat to them about what each group does. It was also another opportunity for MDHS to be seen and be part of the broader Mortlake community.

Our Donation Policy document which was updated in 2024 has been well used in recent months. Photos of Ellerslie, CWA material and a small collection of items from the village of Chatsworth are among items offered to MDHS in recent months. The Donation Policy has ensured that we have a paper trail which details the initial offer of the material to our Society and the transfer of ownership to MDHS. The time spent revisiting our MDHS Policies is justified by how easy it is to deal with donations such as these and knowing we have a proper provenance for items held in our archive.

Another initiative this year has been the investigation about an old public stock water trough in Mortlake. Following a request from a local resident about the deteriorating state of the trough (not a Bills Trough), MDHS contacted the local council, Moyne Shire, to determine who had responsibility for repairs. Moyne Shire confirmed that this trough was viewed as an 'inherited asset' of Moyne Shire, as it is on public land. The issue is ongoing as the trough has been inspected and concrete cancer diagnosed. A contractor used by Moyne Shire was reluctant to do repairs as it may further damage the trough. A solution to fix this problem is still to be discussed.

Coming up in the next few months, MDHS is planning at least one more outing for the 2025 year. This is currently being arranged, hopefully for October, to Kilnoorat and surrounds. There are two local community events in November 2025, the Mortlake Rose Show and the Great Victorian Bike Ride pre-event, which we have committed to support by opening up The Ark - our MDHS archive – providing additional activities to those in attendance. In December we are also hoping to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this iteration of the Mortlake and District Historical Society.

Robert McLaren, President

### Heytesbury District Historical Society (S)

Our AGM is next week and we can report that our membership level is at its highest for many years.

The Timboon 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year helped us with exposure and we will need to work at maintaining this interest.

Plans for the coming year include guest speakers at meetings and expanding the group of members who are interested and capable of working on maintaining our cataloguing.

We have started planning for the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the loss of the "*Loch Ard*" at Muttonbird Island on June 1<sup>st</sup> 1878. Along with Flagstaff Hill and a private display on loan to the Port Campbell Visitor Information Centre, we have a significant archive of the wreck and events before and after.

If any societies have material associated with the "*Loch Ard*" we would be happy to discuss its significance.

Peter Younis, Treasurer

## Warrnambool and District Historical Society (S)



Heartened by the feedback we have been receiving from many quarters, we are continuing our commitment to adding the *Warrnambool Standard* to Trove. As our second batch - the 1880s decade - went online in May we were obtaining quotes from the State Library for the digitisation of the 1890s papers. We received a WCC Community Development Grant in August to assist with this and have added some of our own funds and private donations. While the scanning of this third decade of papers is occurring we are working on raising the rest of the money to pay for it. We are nearly there!

Although we still face uncertainty regarding our accommodation, we continue to work with Council to consider possibilities for new premises. Our current day to day operation in our present location continues, although with imposed restrictions on our activities. We soldier on, remaining warm, dry and comfortable in our less than fully compliant building.

Meanwhile the usual round of school visits, street walks and providing guest speakers to community groups continues and our public programs this year have included the National Trust Heritage Festival *Digging Up the Past*; the Storytelling Festival in July *Warrnambool Something to Sing About* and the upcoming Seniors Festival *FJ Plus 8*.

We have a new booklet in the pipeline on tanneries and quarries in the area, authored by Professor Rob Wallis. Rob's booklet *Natural History in the C19th Warrnambool District* was published in 2024 and has enjoyed steady sales figures at Collins Books. James Affleck's latest book, *Faithful Unto Death*, documents the 178 men and women who are listed on the Christ Church World War 1 Honour Roll.

Our collections and cataloguing team has been focussing on keeping pace with the new donations coming in, while also reviewing their procedures and information on 3000+ items which have been uploaded to the online Victorian Collections database over the last decade. In many ways Victorian Collections is our shop window and the source of many enquiries for research assistance. The committee is very grateful for the work of the volunteers who devote hours to the onerous task of maintaining and updating our catalogues and databases and we are always on the lookout for more willing workers.

Janet Macdonald, President

## Cobden and District Historical Society (S)



We have replaced the old kitchen in our archives room with a new kitchenette. It has certainly brightened up the area and now allows us to serve morning/afternoon tea to visitors.

We have received grants for more newspaper reels to be digitised and to produce a new brochure to promote our society.

Since the last report we have set up English Embroidery and Cookbook "Pop-Up Exhibitions" which have been well received by our monthly visitors as well as other groups who book to see our museum.

The shop window was set up with Anzac Day memorabilia during April and now it is an old-fashioned sewing room. Soon it will become an old-fashioned kitchen.

Our society has had lots of Family History enquiries from locals, people from around the state and even interstate. We have discovered lots about people we didn't even know had resided at Cobden.

Our Facebook page is going well, with over 1,200 followers. Jennifer does an incredible amount of research before writing a piece to publish. Donna has begun working her way through saving our Facebook posts as some people are finding their page is unrecoverable if it is lost.

Jennifer has been posting old rural school photos on our Facebook page which has attracted much interest, with responders giving us much-needed research information and photos.

Many older people are now considering what to do with their family history and their heirlooms, as their children and grandchildren are just not interested. This has caused the donations we receive from the public to rise.

Delia Kerr

### Coleraine Historical Society (S)



Here at the Coleraine Historical Society we operate out of the Old Court House in Whyte Street. Over many years the building has started to show signs of wear and tear. The building is much in need of repairs inside and outside. Knowing that the Southern

Grampians Shire was offering grants, we applied for one, along with asking the local Community Bendigo Bank for funding to help towards the Capital Works of fixing the outside.

We have managed to secure both grants for the grand sum of \$15,000.00 each. After speaking to the builder, we have an approximate start date of late November, with works taking 5-6 weeks.

During Law Week 19-25th May we hosted three guest speakers to visit and present to both primary schools and on the Wednesday evening our guests spoke to the greater community at the local Mechanics' Institute.

Our first speaker was Kari Kristiansen who completed a degree in history at the University of Melbourne before training as a lawyer. In 2007 she was recognised by the Australian Human Rights Commission for her work throughout Australia as an advocate and policy adviser of distinction in the field of human rights.

Our second speaker was Wayne Marsh who moved to Melbourne with his family and joined Victoria Police at age 16. Proud to have served at the "coal face" of operational policing for the duration of his 40-year career, he is now living happily in retirement in Portland with Julie, his wife of 49 years.

Our final speaker was John Lesser who grew up in the Melbourne suburb of Elwood in the 1950s and 60s. He knew from an early age that Coleraine was an important part of his family's history in Victoria. However, he has only visited on a handful of occasions. John's great-grandfather Abraham Lesser came to Coleraine in 1859. Members of the Lesser family made Coleraine their home for the next ninety years or so. With his brother Louis, Abraham Lesser built and operated a store where the IGA stands today in Whyte Street. Both Abraham and Louis Lesser and Abraham's son Leon May Lesser (John's grandfather) were local magistrates, Shire Councillors and active community volunteers in Coleraine. John Lesser has worked as a TAFE teacher, solicitor, member of a number of Victorian and Commonwealth tribunals and a Magistrate. He still works as a relief magistrate and is also a presiding member of the Adult Parole Board.

The evening allowed the Historical Society to promote itself, with a positive membership drive stemming from a fantastic event for the greater community.

Donna Hutchins

### Koroit and District Historical Society (S)



Although over Winter open days are a little quieter visitor-wise, there is still a flow of requests to be answered and much scanning, filing, researching, recording and sorting of historical information that was sourced in earlier times which a very small number of people help with.

We find requests are now on land, roads, houses and employment as well as family, many of whom are laid to rest at Tower Hill Cemetery.

It was interesting in April to have a request for a phone number from 1922. We found it on a docket.

In June we visited Mt Rouse Historical Society and then the Volcano Centre. Both enlightening.

We also visited the Warrnambool Library and are now aware of its many resources.

We were pleased to receive a Local History Grant from the Public Records Office to digitise our 1878 -1886 newspapers to Trove and now our next goal is to finance digitising newspapers which have not been microfilmed, to Trove.

A member is also working with The Rail Trail Committee in preparing information boards on the history of the trainline to Port Fairy and also working on a booklet on restoration of the Station building, now used by local groups.

We always try to be available for community activities and coming up is a visit from a Probus Group, a stall at the local Picnic in the Park, we will open our rooms during the Great Victorian Bike ride which has a 2-night visit to Koroit and the Koroit Horse Show.

We also have our AGM at the Railway Station on October 13<sup>th</sup> at which our guest speaker will be Sandra Fitzgerald on Koroit around 2000.

All before Christmas and we know now January and February are always busy.

Margaret Trotter, President



### Jeparit and District Historical Society (WM)

For many years the Society had suffered from dwindling members with only the President, Wendy Zanker, remaining at the helm. The collection had been housed across six rooms on the upper floor of Jeparit's Memorial Hall but it had never been catalogued nor organised systematically. Also very importantly, the *Jeparit Leader* newspapers had never been microfilmed and therefore not digitised and desperately needed protection. The Society needed to re-establish its momentum as well as its community profile and the results have been very gratifying.

In 2023 the Robert Menzies Institute (RMI) at the University of Melbourne secured funding through the Public Record Office of Victoria Local History Grants Program to engage a heritage consultant to carry out a collection-level Survey of the Society's holdings. Throughout 2024 Dr Tim Sullivan visited the Society's rooms in Jeparit and by year's end was able to submit his report to the RMI and to JDHS. The recommendations of Tim's Report form the basis of the work JDHS members are now focussing on implementing. One of the early phases of Tim's work with JDHS was for the Society to purchase essential archival support materials to preserve all items in the collection: the original *Jeparit Leader* newspapers, a huge collection of photos, Minute Books and other items.

In 2024 two members of the Jeparit Township Advisory Committee approached JTAC to see if it might be willing to contribute a proportion of the \$3,181 required to purchase the archival support materials recommended by Dr Sullivan. JTAC not only came to the party but resolved to fund the entire amount, believing that preserving the town and district's heritage is important.

Additionally, in March 2024 a \$1,000 grant was secured through the Hindmarsh Shire Council's Community Assistance Grants Program. So, thanks to the generosity of both JTAC and Hindmarsh Shire Council the Society could proceed with organising and archiving its extensive collection. A vast amount of archival support material soon arrived and so our work could begin.

In September 2024 we set up the JDHS Facebook page which has been a great way of raising the Society's profile not only locally but much further afield. Currently the page has 470+ Followers. The *Wimmera Mail Times* has approached us to provide regular articles on aspects of Jeparit's history and these appear in the *Rainbow-Jeparit Argus*.

In May 2025 we applied for a Murra Warra Wind Farm Grant, administered through Wimmera Southern Mallee Development in Horsham. Our application was for a computer and printer so that we can start creating

a catalogue of the collection as well as store digital images of photos. We were successful in our application and received \$2,328 for the purchase of the equipment.

Thus, over eighteen months JDHS has received much-welcome funding totaling \$10,059. This does not include a number of generous donations from individuals.

And then we needed to encourage all-important membership! Our membership numbers – currently 35 – continue to increase which is most gratifying. We are now producing a brief newsletter for members and the local community.

The Society had been a member of W.V.A.H.S. for more than thirty years from the 1970s and has now rejoined the Association.

The past year has been a very exciting time for the Society and we hope to continue this momentum.

Wendy Zanker, President

### Minyip and District Historical Society (WM)



After considering alternatives, the M&DHS now holds its meetings in the Memorial Hall directly opposite our home at the old *Guardian* Office. The *Guardian* Office has limited

space and our intention is to have this become a work area with upgraded storage facilities.

We are working closely with the management committee of the Memorial Hall to create a historical display in the hall foyer and, later, the hall proper. This will follow the completion of building works on the hall.

Our monthly meetings are well attended, justifying our move to the more spacious meeting room in the hall. As well as guest speakers at each meeting we have visited the Dimboola Historical Society and conducted a cemetery walk at the Banyena Cemetery.

Our group abuts the town square and has just received funding for a shade sail to be erected which will cover the area used for various ceremonies.

In association with the Minyip Lions Club we are working on a memorial to the initial selectors and settlers to the Minyip district. The memorial will make use of the excellent material compiled by the late Ron Falla of Donald Historical Society and cover the parishes of Nullan, Dunmunkle, Rich Avon West and parts of Laen, Lallat, Rupanyup, Ashens, Kewell East parishes. This will be situated in the town square and housed in a yet to be designed covered area.

The society continues to receive requests for assistance with research projects and recently has had an influx of material (photos etc.) donated. We continue to work on digitising our records which will be an ongoing task.

Wayne Jackson, President

## Ouyen District History & Genealogy Centre (WM)



Our AGM is to be held on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> October with a 'Meet and Greet' for members and supporters at 10am followed by the AGM at 10.30am. We are looking forward to welcoming Craige Proctor who will speak on the topic 'Resilience and Renewal for Historical Societies'. This will be followed by a luncheon.

In June we assisted the Ouyen United Football and Netball Club with their Heritage Round. The team chosen for 2025 was Gorya Football Club – one of the many foundation teams that make up Ouyen United today. The collection of football records and memorabilia at the Centre assisted research together with contacting past players. An exhibition was set up and open to the public at the History Centre then relocated to the Clubrooms on game day. An amazing range of items came forth for the display which created a lot of interest and included a special old footy boot, trophies, special match footballs, a Premiership Flag, articles etc. etc. – some found in back sheds. On game day the 2026 Heritage Team Kiamal was drawn by past Gorya Captain and coach Kevin Reither. Leading up to the day involved writing articles for the NW Express and other promotions on Facebook, ABC, player interviews etc. A successful MRCC Community Grant enabled the purchase of a digital projector and screen which was utilised at the Exhibition to show 1953 Gorya football footage from the History Centre Archives. The grant also enabled the purchase of plastic display stands which assisted with setting up the exhibition and are now utilised for other displays.

Current research is the previously unwritten History of the once channel filled Walpeup Lake. Following the coming of the pipeline in 2000 the lake was no longer filled, ultimately leading to the creation of the present day Ouyen Lake. We are planning a presentation of Walpeup Lake History in conjunction with the MRCC Library Service. Old photos and footage has been sourced for the presentation.

A large TV screen has been set up and is used for power point presentations for visitors.

This year we have had several international visitors seeking family history- for details see our updated Facebook page following a social Media Workshop with Kimberley Furness.

We are currently applying for a MRCC Community Grant for a desk top computer to enable more volunteers to use the facilities.

Alongside these activities volunteers are kept busy with the constant ongoing research to answer email requests, mainly concerning family history. Vital for this research are the records held at the Centre including Rate books, School Records, Parish Maps, Cemetery Records, Newspapers, Biographies plus filed information and correspondence collected since the History Centre's beginnings in 1984. It is important that we remain open each Friday to assist visitors with enquires and also keep up with the office work, cataloguing, filing and answering emails. The Centre has also opened to visitors on other days.

Merle Pole, President

## Ararat and District Historical Society (WM)



A brief report from Kerrin for the last six months of Langi Morgala Museum at Ararat.

We haven't been extremely busy but can always find something to do.

Two local state schools have visited the museum to look at the displays and interact with schooling in days gone by.

During this period we have been cleaning out any unnecessary items that are no longer required to make space for new projects.

We have had upgrades with our lights to LED. This has made a great improvement in our display area.

Numbers during the winter have been low but hopefully they will improve now the weather is warming up.

Sadly one of our members passed away in June and is sorely missed.

We are still circulating our quarterly newsletter.

Our main display at the moment focuses on local sporting identities.

Our main event for this half year is to be a fashion parade which will be held during Seniors Week. Our models will be wearing vintage clothing, and afternoon tea is also to be provided.

Kerrin Gellie, President

### Balmoral and District Historical Society (WM)



The Society's little band of dedicated workers have been kept busy as of late with several large photographic donations. One was centred around the Balmoral School and contained photographs of both the teachers and pupils. These were sorted in their years and mostly named; what a relief that was. When posted on Facebook it created a lot of conversations and memories about 'old school days'.

Another donation was from a former community-minded resident. This is proving to be a little more complicated. Many photographs are from around the area and seem to be when applying for grants or collecting a list of areas in the district that have problems and need attention. So trying to work these out has been taxing.

Furthermore, a former resident who had reached over 100 years had previously donated items centred around the Balmoral Drama Group which included programs, tickets, newspaper clippings and, very importantly, set and costume designs was further added to with other memorabilia. What a fabulous gift for Balmoral.

The Balmoral Bush Nursing Centre recently celebrated 100 YEARS!!

The Society was involved by being able to supply information and memorabilia for the day of celebration which was a resounding success.

This is when we find our local community invaluable!

Through the *Bulletin* and Facebook Page questions are being answered.

It also lets the community know that we are active and a place for items to be donated to.



On the restoration of the Balmoral Lock-Up...well that has slowed a little. The Society again applied for the Southern Grampians Partnership Grant but . Those large cracks in the stonework will just have to wait. But it is believed that previous works carried out on the Lock-Up have stabilised the area and buildings.

We will be trying again next Grant round.

Denize Raggatt

### Landsborough and District Historical Group (WM)



It has been a busy six months at the Landsborough Historical Group.

The Pyrenees Rail Heritage Signage Project is finally completed with the launch being held on Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> May at Crowlands Hall. It was a wonderful day thanks

to the efforts of so many people. From our own Historical Group can I thank Kaye, Wilma, Jim, Diane and our late vice-president Michael Coughlan who with Diane came up with the idea of some sort of historic signage in the first place. It took a number of years, negotiations with three councils, issuing of permits and grants from both Pacific Blue and the Pyrenees Shire. Both Martha Haylett, MP for Ripon, and Megan Phelan, Pyrenees Shire Councillor, graced us with their presence which was really appreciated. Helen Curkpatrick also came with a small group from the Stawell Historical Society – thanks Kate, Ron, Bev and Wendy who took the time out to attend. We received good coverage including the front page of both the *Pyrenees Advocate* (thanks Craig Wilson) and *Landsborough District News* (thanks TD) and were also featured in the *Western Historian* (thanks Craige). The free booklets have been stocked at both the signs themselves and various outlets around the district including all the information centres and local post offices. If you are next visiting the region, please take in the signs. It is so wonderful to see the project reach its conclusion and we hope the benefits flow through to the Pyrenees Shire in the form of increased visitors to the area.

Our books continue to sell steadily with the Railway book enjoying a revival of sales thanks to the Signage project. Forthcoming publications will include the final Hotel book from Phil Waring on the Hotels of Redbank, Moonambel and Barkly and our long-awaited 160<sup>th</sup> anniversary on the History of Landsborough and district. We are keen to assist the Cemetery Trust with signage and a guide and map of the Cemetery and I recently met up with the Trust to progress this further. Given the loss of the early records, a list of the 950 burials which have been extensively researched by both Landsborough and Stawell Historical Groups would be certainly helpful for future generations and researchers.

Like most of the smaller Historical Societies we struggle for volunteers due to the increasing number of people who have either sadly passed away or moved away from the district. We do maintain a strong membership base including many former district residents and their descendants with a connection to Landsborough so we are confident we can retain our presence in the community for some time to come.

Brett Leslie, President



### Wimmera Mallee Pioneer Museum, Jeparit (WM)



We continue to make progress with implementing some of the recommendations of the Hindmarsh Shire Council's Masterplan, specifically through the development and erection of more storyboards, storytelling about farming techniques, harvesting, land management, grain cleaning, buildings and people, the storyboards being integral to enhanced visitor engagement.

We continue to forge partnerships with other individuals and organisations. We established links with Matthew Polack, a film maker in Horsham, who produced a documentary for his YouTube channel on John Coppock who established Albacutya Station in the 1840s and who is keen to produce more videos on aspects of the district's history for his YouTube channel.

The Committee was successful in receiving in the HSC budget allocation funding for curatorial support, storyboard production, website production – a future goal – and the digitisation and ultimately exhibition of our Ryko the Byko banner.

There has been considerable support among the Committee members for rearranging some of the sheds to allow for a safer and richer visitor experience. This includes the tractor shed and the headers in the eastern shed.

Committee members Wendy Werner and Colin Moore finished photographing the Albacutya homestead collection. This highlighted the items displayed in these rooms. This is our flagship for the Selector era of our story and some of the items either obscure this story with too many objects or are clearly from a later era.

We had a photoshoot through Grampians Wimmera Mallee Tourism as part of our membership package which provides us with inclusion in their brochure and this will be used in social media posts and advertising.

In May Hindmarsh Shire Youth Council met at the Detpa School here at the Museum and they appeared engaged and interested in partnering with us. An introductory talk was given by Craige Proctor, Wendy Zanker (as President of the Jeparit Historical Society) and Wendy Werner as President of the Museum. Our talks highlighted the opportunities for young volunteers in Historical Societies and Community Museums and how they can bring their expertise in all things digital to our organisation, and how they might benefit personally from volunteering. We hope it is the beginning of a fruitful partnership.

The President and Secretary worked with Hindmarsh Shire Council to produce the Expression of Interest/scoping document for our curatorial support and just this past week the first visit to the museum by the successful applicant took place.

We have also been developing the all-important Collections Policy which provides a framework for what the Museum can accept in the way of donations as well as what we may be able to deaccession from the collection in time. This is a vast undertaking but considerable progress has been made.

We also finalised the registration of the Detpa School building as a National Schools Museum through the Australian National Museum of Education operating out of Canberra University.

We have been fortunate to have four new local people join the Museum volunteering on an *ad hoc* basis. Each brings fresh insights, different skill sets and welcome enthusiasm to supporting the Museum in various ways.

Wendy Werner, President

### Hopetoun and District Historical Society (WM)

It is quite enlightening to reflect upon major milestones and achievements during the past twelve months.

- The Launch of the original Shire Map after a long and arduous preservation
- The Schools of Karkarooc Exhibition Launch
- The acquisition of Lands Department Maps
- The perpetual Curatorship of The Shire of Karkarooc Ledgers
- We have extended our Textile and Clothing Collection and shared in a fundraising fashion parade at the Corrong Village
- We have been successful in being granted \$990 from Horsham Sports and Community Club for The Lake Corrong Homestead
- We recently signed a 7-year lease for the Museum further giving us continuity into the future.

Much of this has been achieved by a close collaboration with Members and untold voluntary hours. I wish to offer personal thanks to those who have contributed so selflessly. The pressing need for an increased membership is an important matter to address in the year ahead.

Thank you to the Shire of Yarriambiack for their complete faith in our work, offering continuity of our important heritage and the preservation of a substantial collection.

It gives me great pleasure to present my report and look forward to making inroads towards a continuity which maintains regard in the closer and wider community.

Jenny Stephens, President

### Stawell Historical Society (WM)



We held our AGM on 11 September. Dorothy Brumby stood down as President but will remain as Vice President; Brett Leslie was elected President; our Chief Research Officer, Jim Melbourne, retired. His knowledge and dedication will be missed. Greg Robson retains the role of Secretary/Treasurer; Kate van Dyck retains the roles of Museum Curator and Publicity Officer with Bev Bachelor as Assistant Museum Curator and Research Assistant; Gary Withers retains the role of Cataloguer with Meredith Tangey assisting; Facebook: Cass Langley.

The Executive Committee remains the same with the only change being Brett Leslie replacing Jim Melbourne.

We determined at this meeting that prior to the next school holidays we will open an extra day per week to meet the demand.

Cemetery issues:

Further to a brief discussion at the Southern Zone Meeting we have confirmed that the Department of Health is now the governing body with Councils and Cemetery Trusts being answerable to them. It is of concern re historic headstones as the Department has stated that if a gravesite is deemed a safety concern (broken headstones etc.) they are directing Trusts to remove them but not repair or replace them. This includes groups such as ours not being permitted to prop them up or stop them from falling. The lady who is the Cemetery Trust representative at Council advised me they have no control over this decision.

Our Society now has 125 financial members and 12 active Volunteers.

Digitising of the known Cemetery records is almost complete.

Digitising of 14,000 original photos is complete and uploaded to Victorian Collections although they are very slow to upload at their end.

AMaGA is visiting on 6 October to look at our Research Centre and Museum.

We recently hosted a coach tour from the A.C.T. National Trust. Thanks to Helen Curkpatrick for recommending us. They seemed to enjoy visiting the historic sites around Stawell.

Kate van Dyck

### Horsham Historical Society (WM)



In 2025, the changes continued at Horsham Historical Society. I have just completed my first year as president and recently Cherie Hutchinson accepted the role of secretary.

Horsham Historical Society's main focus this year has been IT upgrades. The old database, containing some 100,000 images, is now an internet-based program, which can be accessed from any computer in any location and does not require backups to be completed by volunteers. Cataloguing of new items has been simplified.

We also have a new website, which includes an online shop, through which customers can purchase publications for postage, after browsing our inventory from their computer or phone.

In 2025 the Society inducted former president and retired businessman Ian Ballinger to life membership, recognising his contribution spanning many decades, which continues to the present time.

We have recently commenced work on a new project which is actually an update of a publication made more than 25 years ago: *Naming Horsham Streets*. Dozens of new streets have appeared within the town since 1998 and we look forward to having a new edition of the book printed some time in 2026.

Readers of the *Wimmera Mail Times* will have enjoyed weekly instalments of the soon to be published book *Waters of the Wimmera* by Bob McIlvena, another former president of Horsham Historical Society. This is a sequel to his popular first book, *Pipe Dreams*, which detailed the history of the Wimmera and its connection to water.

Last year I might have suggested we were close to securing more space within Horsham's Mechanics' Institute Building. Despite some fruitful discussions with Council, we are still waiting for paperwork and therefore we have not expanded our footprint as yet.

Despite the delay, we have been delighted to continue our monthly public meetings, which have included a range of engaging and insightful guest speakers over the last twelve months, covering various topics related to the history of Horsham, the Wimmera and Victoria. We also intend to celebrate history month again, by opening the Society rooms to the public on Sunday afternoon October 12th, at which time old film reels will be shown and visitors will be introduced to our various offerings.

Stuart Hall, President

### Birchip Historical Society (NC)



We have had a quieter year in some respects but lots of family research, particularly for families whose ancestors were here before the town of Birchip was settled and so research is much harder with several places mentioned on old documents which no longer exist and some for districts with no cemeteries, historical societies or museums or even collections known about.

Our Bills' Trough has been restored and back in its usual place in our Median strip. That coincided with our Mali Heart Festival and our newly painted Wall Art which featured Ray Naughton who bounced signals from the Moon in 1969, the day Man first walked on the Moon and at the same time a platoon of young soldiers in Vietnam stepped on a mine. One of these was Frank Hunt from Birchip who is featured in the famous song by Redgum "I Was Only 19", played most ANZAC Days at many places throughout the country. We have had a display showing what Birchip would have looked like in 1969.

We were able to buy a new printer/scanner and get it all set up with some of the proceeds of a truck sale by our President Warren King and also received a grant from the Buloke Shire to repair the front windows of the museum which were showing their age after 111 years.

We are working with some senior school students who are researching some local people and events to write articles for their annual school magazine.

We have continued to receive some old photos and artefacts from surrounding districts to add to our collection and have helped with research for a writer researching the Hibernian Associations in Donald, Birchip and Watchem for some talks she is giving.

A couple of tours of the Curryo and Kinnabulla district have been arranged for visitors too while other visitors were researching family members from the Kinnabulla area when the "wild dog fence" was being constructed. Three different research requests involved people from families with large numbers of children who once lived and farmed around Morton Plains.

Three school Reunions were helped to find missing names for photos and copies of photos, while sporting clubs checked out facts from previous centuries and players. Members were able to visit Nullawil Museum, see the artefacts stored at Watchem and check out some of the storage methods of nearby towns which are not officially PODs or members of our Zone.

Maureen Donnellon, Secretary

### Swan Hill Genealogical and Historical Society (NC)

The last twelve months have been busy for our group. We have been privileged to have heard from many interesting speakers at our meetings, ranging from reports on the Annuello reunion and forty years of Swan Hill as a city, to work in the community and the progress of dairying in our region, and to information on tracing family history in China, using the Find a Grave site and sacrifices made by families in World War 2. There is certainly an amazing range of expertise to be found in our wider community. During the year the group purchased a microphone system which has been used by some of our speakers and also used to great effect on walks conducted through both Nyah and Swan Hill cemeteries and on an evening walk through Campbell St. These walks were conducted as our contribution to Heritage Month and were well attended as well as raising some welcome funds for the group. In recent months Julie and I have visited Hope Aged Care to share some of our photos and other resources with the residents, and we have been very pleased with the response.

It has been gratifying to see some new faces volunteering their time to help with a variety of jobs, with special thanks to Sue Winbanks who has agreed to take on the job of Newsletter Editor. We are extremely grateful to Sue and very appreciative of the work done over the years from 2006 by Jan and Wes Guse in producing newsletters of such high quality each quarter of each year. Well done Jan and Wes!

Work has been ongoing with the task of collating records for our cemetery, with records now including inscriptions, photos and family details which are being regularly updated. Our scrapbooks of notices from *The Guardian* are now online and searchable, which we are sure will be a very useful extra research tool. We have been fortunate to receive a grant from Bendigo Bank's Charitable Arm to be used for further digitisation of *The Guardian* newspapers. The cost of doing this is increasing significantly and we are looking at the best way of using this money effectively.

We continue to have a variety of requests from people seeking information for family and historical research, some of which prove challenging and many of which lead us to find information about which we ourselves were unaware. Our librarians have spent time reorganising parts of our room and files in order to create more space and make items easier to find. They are also well-occupied with finding room for donated items and any new purchases that we obtain. Our ongoing project of collecting information from Community groups to preserve their information for future generations is proceeding slowly and we welcome reports from those involved in such groups.

Finally a big thank you to all our hard working committee members for all their work and energy that they bring to the group and our best wishes for a speedy recovery to those who have been on the sick list.

Leone Walbran, President



### St Arnaud and District Historical Society (NC)



First, our apologies for not being able to attend this W.V.A.H.S. North Central Zone Meeting as it falls on the same weekend as our local Agricultural Show and most of our members participate in some way.

Our members have been extremely busy over many months following an unfortunate accident to the front of the Museum wall and veranda. Hopefully, this will be finished very soon as we are now working hard to get back to normal operations.

We are pleased to report that a generous bequest of \$100,000 from the late **Mr Frank Medlyn** has allowed us to build our display centre at the rear of the Museum. This building has been lined and recently painted inside and will be a valuable addition which continues to allow us to share the history of the town and district with pride. We are presently shifting items from the historic Fire Station to enable us to set up these two areas more appropriately. Several larger items have been stored for many years at the Flour Mill in St Arnaud and have never been on display. These items have all been manufactured in St Arnaud at the McGlashan Foundry, a wagon, chaff cutter and reaper. Research has also found that the restored historic fire cart may also have been made by the McGlashan Foundry.

One of the highlights of the year was the launch of **ST ARNAUD THEN & NOW**, a book compiled by one of our members, **Scott Smith**. This has proved to be highly successful with regular sales.

During the year we usually have two large wood raffles to raise extra funds for the running of the Museum. These are always well supported by the locals.

Like all Museums and Clubs, we find it hard to recruit new members/volunteers. As time rolls on, we are getting that little bit older and slower which means completing some tasks takes that little bit longer, however, hopefully, eventually, we get there.

**Mrs Mervynne Dunstan** has been our President since we reopened the Museum in 2008 and with her guidance we have achieved much. I along with our members would like to thank her for her commitment to the Museum and to St Arnaud.

In April 2026 St Arnaud Historical Society will be hosting the AGM for the W.V.A.H.S. at Stewart Hall and McDonald Hall. We are looking forward to catching up with everyone and showcasing the many historic sites in St Arnaud.

Wishing you all a great weekend with like-minded people in Pyramid Hill.

**Leonard (Len) Reid, President**

### Rainbow Archive & Historical Society (WM)



Rainbow Archive and Historical Society's executive committee has had a change of guard over the past year. Due to health and personal commitments, we thank Dianne Walls and Peter Ralph for their years of dedication. They are still our much needed "Brains Trust" and we retain our Treasurer in Ruth Gosling.

Allira Roberts, our new Secretary, is stepping into the role with enthusiastic efficiency. As president I am trying to steer the Archive ship to an eventual opening to the public. We are ably assisted by a new member Bronwyn Nuske who has committed many hours of her volunteer time in keeping us on the sorting path. When time permits, we try and work at the Archive most Saturdays.

Recently we have been fortunate to have access to surplus-to-needs filing cabinets from the Rainbow P-12 School. As a result, this has thrown us into a rearrangement frenzy of our storage and research area. The metal shelves that held the many archive boxes were very tired. We have now organised the filing cabinets to hold the collection, eliminating OH&S issues, i.e. heavy boxes. Another addition to our storage capacity is a vertical map cabinet kindly donated by the Dimboola Historical Society.

Recently we have established our "Friends of the Archive" and have achieved a great response, enabling us to purchase two new tables for our meeting room, again thanking the Rainbow P-12 School for the donation of 10 matching chairs.

Our ongoing projects for the future... to vigorously chase grants, especially for building improvements and storage, continuing to file, catalogue and scan the collection, sort and digitise the *Rainbow Argus* from 1962, a huge job, continuing to file and catalogue the huge school collection that has come to us when the P12 was established.

Our displays are also in the wings waiting to be done.

So, our small group has achieved quite a lot over the past year.

We hope to associate with our surrounding societies in the future and look forward to networking.

**Jan Edelsten, President**



(WM)

This past year has been one of growth, renewal, and forward planning for AHS. In August, we held a planning workshop with the goal of setting a clear direction by developing a 5-year plan to help us focus on future goals and make strategic, sustainable progress. From that session, five key priorities emerged:

1. Ensure financial sustainability to allow AHS to grow and ensure we remain viable for years to come.
2. Grow our membership to strengthen community involvement and sustainability.
3. Improve museum presentation and visitor experience, particularly through better lighting and interactive displays.
4. Enhance digital access and interpretation, including IT infrastructure and development of the heritage trail.
5. Progress the precinct expansion, ensuring we have space to display and store our growing collection.

As a direct result of this workshop, we launched a membership drive, and I'm proud to report that our membership increased from 44 to 82—an impressive 86.4% increase. This growth reflects the renewed energy and broader community engagement in our work. We look forward to members helping AHS to grow to 100 members this year.

A major focus this year has been on improving the presentation and accessibility of the Garage Museum. The team has done an outstanding job enhancing the space.

With Big Bertha Coffee Van on-site, we opened the museum on most weekends over the past six months, drawing between 10 to 20 visitors per weekend and creating a regular, friendly presence.

We also had several successful open days, both at the Garage Museum and the Showgrounds machinery shed, giving locals and visitors a chance to experience the breadth of our collection and history firsthand. A huge thank you to everyone involved in the clean-up of the Showgrounds shed—your efforts have transformed the space into one that the public can enjoy and appreciate. It's a big job and we're very grateful for your dedication.

We've also had a strong year in grant success:

- FRRR grant funded the full museum lighting upgrade, thanks to Mark Radford Electrical for the installation
- Horsham Rural City Council grant supported expansion of our Heritage Trail video project—with 16 new sites added this year, and another 8 planned for the coming year.

Horsham Sports and Community Club grant enables us to start our digital journey with the purchase of Interactive screens.

- Squadron Energy grant provided us with the opportunity to purchase IT equipment and a security surveillance system for the precinct.
- Natimuk Lions Club also paid for two Mini PCs one for each of the interactive screens.

Our events team has delivered some fantastic moments this year. Thanks to all the people who assisted with the regular Bunnings sausage sizzles, they play an import role in funding our bills during the year.

A major highlight was the FRRR-supported "Lighting Up the Past" event, held to celebrate the completion of our upgraded museum lighting. More than 100 people attended, and the event showcased local history through engaging performances and storytelling.

Looking ahead, we're excited about our involvement in the upcoming Fringe Festival in November, including a pop-up Dinky Di's Café in the Courthouse, Gillian Turner's Telegraphy display, and the much-anticipated Night at the Museum fundraiser.

On a larger scale, we've made significant progress on the precinct expansion project outlined in our 5-year plan. Multiple meetings with potential stakeholders have shown strong support in principle for joining the new precinct from community groups.

Successful presentations were presented to the Natimuk Social and Economic Committee, Horsham Rural City Council, and with Horsham's Home of History. All were received very positively. A draft business plan has been drafted, we have now received costings and will need to consider how we move forward.

Honouring the legacy of past president Peter French, we've embraced his vision for a more interactive museum. Our first interactive display has been installed thanks to HSCC grant funding, and the Arapiles Climbing Museum has secured one as well.

These tools will bring our stories to life for all ages.

Our collection remains central to our mission. It continues to grow in richness and relevance, and efforts are ongoing to document and preserve it for future generations. Thanks to the collection and research team for the tireless work that has been put into cataloguing and displaying of our collection. Our planned expansion will allow us to one day finally exhibit many items currently in storage.

To every committee member, volunteer, supporter, and sponsor—thank you. Your passion and effort have helped AHS grow in strength, visibility, and impact. The future is bright, and together we are building a vibrant, lasting legacy.

Pat Ford, President

### Donald History Society (NC)



Since our last Zone meeting our Archives have undergone painting and renovations, the mammoth task of shifting and reinstating contents made harder by the discovery of termites in one of our storage rooms.

In May, along with the Swanwater West Cemetery Trust, we hosted a barbeque, tour of the cemetery and afternoon tea at the Donald Courthouse Museum. The event titled "Digging up the Past" celebrated the cemetery's history and showcased work recently completed by the Trust.

We have had two trips to surrounding districts. In May we travelled to Corack to visit the site of the Sheridan memorial plaque where Paul Sheridan spoke on the Sheridan family since selection. This was followed by a visit to the Granite Flat Community Church where Alison and Ian McEwen talked about the history of the Church and its present-day involvement in the community.

Following on from stonemason Jim Petrie's talk last year, in September we visited his workshop at Watchem where he demonstrated on a block of stone he is shaping into a sphere. After a meeting and afternoon tea at the Watchem Hall, we visited the old Watchem Bowling Club where the Watchem Progress committee plan to organise a museum. They have already gathered many items relating to the history of the town and surrounding district. We have invited them to visit our Archives, Courthouse Museum, Agricultural Museum and Old Police Camp.

Guest speakers since April have included Rhonda Russell who gave an interesting account of the life of her father George Wood. Beryl Milne told the history of the Fairmark shirt factory in which she played a major role throughout its 25-year duration. John Kumm spoke of the importances of the Men's Shed in the community, and Jenny Campbell talked about the history of community gardens and the establishment of Donald's community garden. This was followed by a tour of the garden.

The Archives has a collection of family histories. Recently we received the story of the H. J. Green family of "Woodgreen", Litchfield from 1857- 1928. Included is the visit of a Scottish Agricultural Commission delegation to the Donald/Litchfield area in 1910.

The Donald newspaper, presently known as *The Buloke Times* celebrated its 150<sup>th</sup> year. ABC's Landline filmed an interview with the editor, Robin Letts, in the Archives reading room surrounded by bound copies of the newspaper.

Our Op-shop continues to be popular. There are always newly donated items to tempt someone looking for a bargain.

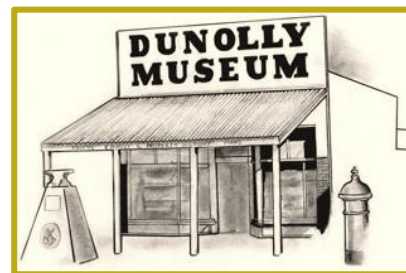
The Minyip Historical Society is planning a memorial to commemorate the early selectors of their district. Because some of the parishes they are interested in have already been researched by the late Ron Falla, they requested permission to use his selection books and records held at our Archives. We agreed as they will acknowledge Ron's work on the memorial along with a photograph and brief biography.

Three members attended the Royal Historical Society of Victoria's "Making Ourselves Useful" seminar in Bendigo.

As part of History Month, the Courthouse Museum will be open every Friday during October from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., the Georgie Ah Ling, Donald's market gardener, collection being a feature.

Ann Dunstan

### Goldfields Historical and Arts Society (NC)



At Dunolly Museum our six monthly tours to different places continue to attract the attention of the wider community. This is where we get most of our new members from. We have gained 15 new members in three years.

We had solar panels put on the roof of the Museum. Unfortunately, neither the grant applicants nor the grant providers did a financial assessment. Initial figures suggest it will take 20 years to pay for itself.

We have the first Avenue of Honour planted in Australia at nearby Havelock. Our application saw the National Trust give this avenue State Significance. We intend to place markers on each tree.

John Tully, President



## Dimboola and District Historical Society (WM)



Over the Winter all we wanted to do was huddle in the rooms with split systems, thankfully that included the archive and meeting room, while visitors braved the Arctic temperatures in the Museum area, we tackled relentless incoming research and sorted through the many files and folders needing attention and will always be ongoing.

We did, however, fit in a field trip during Winter, picking a pearler of a day for our reconnaissance up to Rainbow, the wildest Mallee dust storm so far this year with zero visibility, stinging sand and dust whipping around our faces and legs with such force that we thought it was quite exciting to be caught in the eye of the storm. It certainly raised our trip to a new level. Peter Solly at *Yurunga* looked after us very well and gave us a talk on Rainbow's early years and the history of the homestead. It was really very interesting. At Pella church Mal Drendle, local historian, parishioner and organist, gave us a stirring rendition of Amazing Grace and an upbeat version of another hymn on their majestic pipe organ. Everybody has amazing history, and we want to make field trips an ongoing activity.

Our 2025 Steampunk town event went very well. We welcomed over 400 visitors to the Courthouse over the course of four days. We decorated the Courthouse exterior with carnival attire and coloured lights. Our antique tin bath in the garden was transformed with a quirky display complete with a mannequin languishing in the bath, up to her chin with coloured balloons, bright red plaits, pink lippy, glass of champers, and a cake of soap. It was much photographed. We had a gazebo in the garden for our five-day book fair, made up of community discarded books of all types. We raised around \$800 and donated \$300 to the Royal Children's Hospital appeal. In the meeting room we had a miniature Steampunk tractor display made from old sewing machines. In all it was a lot of fun but hard work just the same.

We have recently purchased three refurbished Apple Mac laptops from Connecting Up. We required portability so that our researchers and data imputers could use them anywhere.

We have had some very interesting topics as part of our after-meeting activities. Pam Cupper OAM and our Society minute taker gave a talk with Powerpoint presentation on her very recent trip to France to follow the path of the French revolution and visit the areas, and still surviving buildings which all played a part in the lead up to the revolution and the events which followed. Her

teaching expertise guarantees a good night. Pam's next meeting presentation is on Gallipoli and Anzac Cove and the changes which have occurred. We have also had Show and Tell, always one of our best nights, the treasures that show up being incredible. First item was an 1861 child's framed sampler, shown by Kneller Lehmann's whose great-grandparents arrived from England in 1849. They had four children, one of whom was Charlotte who completed her sampler aged seven years, sadly, just shortly before she and two sisters died of diphtheria. This precious heirloom is being passed down through the generations. We were shown a beautiful white cameo brooch, again handed down to the next generation of females. Our President Bruce showed a 1905 plate camera which contains up to six plates simultaneously. Another member described seeing the intricate work involved with carpet making by small children in Egypt, because their poor little fingers were small and nimble. One other interesting Show and Tell was autograph books belonging to a member's mother who would visit the railway station aged fifteen during World War Two and collect the autographs from the soldiers as they passed through, also her grandmother's autograph book with lovely inscriptions and drawings from 1918.

Lastly, two items that have come our way recently, and without their story would appear to be rather unremarkable but which elevate themselves into something very special, something which reminds us of the early hardships endured through circumstances not of one's own doing, and which forms part of Australia's social and economic history: "Swaggies' Art". One piece is a tin candle holder with adjustable handle and little wick and turning knob on either side, still in working order and made from old tin food lids, bits and pieces found along the Swaggies' way. The other item made with the lady of the farm in mind is a small pot planter and holder on little tin legs. This item is painted with swans and flowers. The holder's metal lid has been crimped and curled for embellishment. Amazing pieces of design, artwork and ingenuity, at a most desperate time in both men's and women's lives. We love them. The story that accompanied the pieces came from one of our members, Shirley King, granddaughter of Bill and Emily Reid who lived at Antwerp near Dimboola in the 1930s. They told her about the men on the tramp.

"There were occasional Swaggies who would come through Antwerp and offer to do odd jobs for a few shillings, or pennies. Pop Reid would get them to chop wood or dig a garden bed. He always felt sorry for them and would give them a bit of tea, sugar and flour. Nan would give them some roast meat or some cake and eggs. Her cakes were horrible so I'm not sure they really wanted them! A couple of times Pop paid some pennies for what he called Swaggies' art, made from tin cans bits and pieces."

We have asked our members if they had heard any family stories about the Swaggies or itinerants who came our way during the Depression years. So far we have had a couple of stories about Swaggies which have now gone beyond to gypsies, hawkers and rogues.

Evelyn King, Secretary

### Charlton Golden Grains Museum (NC)



Our museum has had another productive six months.

Our Glenloth bus tour in May was a great success with a full coach of sightseers enjoying the history and landmarks of times past. Afternoon tea at the historic Cobham Hall was also a highlight.

Our Childhood Treasures & Collectibles Day was also a resounding success and lots of fun. The Uniting Church Hall was full to the brim with toys and collectibles from yesteryear. Many items were loaned from the community for the day and in some cases were donated to the museum afterwards. This was an unexpected benefit of the event.

Our renovation of the back room of the Wesley Chapel is complete. It has been repaired, painted and the floors sanded and sealed. We now have the fun task of setting up our extensive collection of medical items and creating the accompanying interpretive panels. The added bonus of this new display is the space it will create in our storage facility. With the museum receiving new donations weekly, storage for items not on display is always at a premium.

We now have new door handles and locks on our museum. They are much easier to use and were worth the investment. The next step in our efforts to accommodate people with different disabilities is more audio content for the sight impaired. We are also working on adding more interactive content as well for children.

AMaGA ran a workshop at our request on how to use the Victorian Collections website. We now have six volunteers who are entering our catalogue sheets onto the website. They do this at home in their own time. The workshop helped to solidify their knowledge on the website and allowed them to ask questions. All participants thought it was well worthwhile. We hope to recruit more volunteer home typists. With over 10,000 images and items to add to the site it is going to take a lot of volunteers!

We recently had a taxidermy bird display conserved. This item is over 150 years old and possibly contained arsenics as well as various insect activity. This cost the museum over \$3,000, funded by the Charlton Community Bank, but as one of our only natural history displays well worth the cost.

We have regular museum updates appear in the monthly community newsletter and we submit information from 100 years ago to the local newspapers. Content for the quarterly *Cultural Magazine* is always well received and recently covered author Ethel Stonehouse (known as Lindsay Russell) who lived in Charlton as a young child and woman, and the Drama and Music Club which produced many large theatrical productions over the late '70s and early '80s. Incorporating reminiscences into these articles makes for a more personal story and gives the museum an archive of material as well.

Carolyn Olive, Secretary

### Pyramid Hill and District Historical Society (NC)



The Museum has continued to be a hive of activity over the last six months.

We are in the process of updating and relocating some of our signage in Kelly Park which has deteriorated due to weathering.

Our members and the broader community were all very pleased to hear that Helen Stevens was to receive a much deserved RHSV Award of Merit.

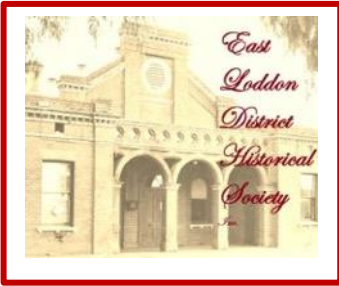
We finally got the exterior of the RSL Hall in Kelly Park painted after lengthy delays due to streetscape works and weather. Recently a number of RSL chairs have been returned to us. These were purchased by returned soldiers and had their names printed on the back. When the Hall closed, many were taken home but one by one they are finding their way back and this adds a personal touch to our military collection.

Our workroom is busy as usual as we wade through the quagmire of cataloguing, updating, cleaning, sorting etc. Space is our biggest hurdle as our collection continues to grow. We are continuing to engage with Council to find a solution, particularly regarding our large machinery collection which is still in storage.

We continue to have a small but steady flow of visitors, many of whom have a past connection to the district and are chasing up family history. Later this month we will enjoy visitors from the Railway Adventures tour on the vintage Diesel Electric Rail Motor which is having a short stop on the siding while the regular Melbourne to Swan Hill train goes through. We hope there will be time for patrons to visit our Museum and cafes before resuming their trip. They have another trip scheduled to stop here next March.

Andre Brewicke, Archivist

## East Loddon Historical Society (NC)



**October 2024 – RocknRoll at Dingee.** We organised an afternoon of music and history to try to discover the story of these events for the younger generation in the 1960s at Dingee. The oldies enjoyed the reminiscing with old friends but it was hard to find out information: who

organised, who went, which bands and singers performed etc. Contact with some of the bands and singers was more forthcoming with their stories. Hutch Lawrie from Balranald with Liv'n End returned for the event and played just as enthusiastically as he would have done sixty years ago.

ELHS supported **art drawing** classes of Mitiamo at Mitiamo. RHSV Public liability Insurance was approved. Within a few months regular attendance became too challenging for the group to continue. Maybe another time.

### Remembrance day commemoration continues each year.

In November 2024 it was at Jarklin. No monument, no memorial board. Just enthusiasm. We located 35 names through many sources: neighbouring community memorials, school enrolments, Shire rates, newspapers, family history search etc. The memorial is now a booklet publication of names of the district who enlisted for active service. A temporary shrine was created beside the hall and under the lamp post that graced the original Jarklin Hall. The guest presentation was the story of one serviceman's experience with enlisting. The bank manager attempted to abscond with the contents of his bank account. The bank manager was apprehended in Perth trying to enlist. In 2025 it will be at Mitiamo Memorial Corner and this time revealing all the names of those on the memorials and also those who had a connection with Mitiamo at some stage prior to enlisting but not recorded will be preserved in a commemorative booklet also. David McDonald, President and research officer of the 2/3 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment Association, has accepted our invitation to address the gathering on 11 November and share the history of the Bofors AAC gun displayed at Mitiamo Memorial Corner.

**Dingee Bush Nursing Centenary History 1923-2023.** The discovery and even confirmation of the history of the Centre and nurses has had us also trawling through a third of the 99 boxes of Victorian Bush Nursing Association's early history archived at the State Library identified as these may contain answers to our Dingee questions. It's been a long arduous task. We are trying to wrap up the editing now to print a book. We recently received a Holdsworth grant which will cover the unfunded cost of printing.

Visitation of **family researchers** continues to offer diversion of conversation and opportunities to update the existing family files. Visitors from interstate and New Zealand have called in trying to find the original settlement block or cemetery or what's in our archives, many with photos and stories to share.

**Celebrating 150 years of Mitiamo** township settlement was diarised for October 2025 but the organising committee voted to cancel any further planning because they felt there was not the enthusiasm or interest within the district to continue. However, there are to be some interpretive panels placed around the town recognising Mitiamo's history, for example, the railway water tower, the last water tower on the Swan Hill line, we believe. Remnant business premises. Refurbishment of the Memorial corner signage. Watch this space for more.

**Cataloguing** of existing and incoming information continues relentlessly. Each week one contemporary family historian does the background connections of the latest newspaper notices. Rae Hocking was presented with 'Recognition of Service' for fourteen years of preserving our local family history. Probably grew up with them, taught them, maybe even related to them or, if in doubt, knows who to ring. The contacts list of her mobile phone is extensive. Recently pressed the contact number to speak with Neil. Didn't look further than first initial of the surname. Ended up with an hour conversation with another Neil who happened to have the same first two letters of the surname. Two more volunteers keep plodding away at entering data to the cataloguing system and finding storage niches. Three more do background historic research of records, online, etc. for the family researchers and projects. Two more work away at the publications and verifying the stories created. Vikki Hamley/Henderson comes one day a month and goes home with projects, typing, research and collating stories. And there are only six of us. Over many months we have tolerated the blue stripe occasionally appearing on printed documents. It was getting worse so we enquired with Viatek office equipment re some suggestions. Verdict: end of life. So the decision was made to replace it. We were so grateful for a generous benefactor's contribution which covered most of the cost.

Two members attended the **RHSV seminar** 'Being useful' in Bendigo a few weeks ago. Great slogan, great feed for guest speakers and great presentations, too.

Mary Davidson



## Maryborough Midlands Historical Society (NC)



This year marks the 60th anniversary of our Society.

In the 1960s, with Maryborough's spectacular and diverse indigenous, gold mining, pastoral and industrial heritage in mind, local residents recognised the need for an official historical society in order to record and preserve that heritage. Discussions began in the 1960s, and in 1965 a meeting, hosted by a descendant of one of the district's pioneers, was convened. A constitution was adopted, and the name Midlands Historical Society chosen. [In later years the word *Maryborough* was added to more closely identify the location].

The newly formed Society aimed to foster an interest in history, collect and preserve documents and items of historical interest and to conduct displays and lectures that furthered the society's aims.

One of the first challenges facing the Society was to establish a permanent home suitable for a headquarters and museum. Meetings were held initially at local schools.

From its inception the Society involved itself in local historical issues and activities such as the Golden Wattle Festival, public exhibitions and guided walks, the Tilly Aston memorial in Carisbrook and the preservation of the Chinese cemetery. It became a member of the Western Victorian Association of Historical Societies and the Royal Historical Society of Victoria.

In 1975 a permanent home was found: the old stone cottage at 3 Palmerston Street (built originally by stonemason Arthur Worsley) purchased with a combination of Society fundraising, council and shire grants, bequests and donations. A naming competition produced the logical result: Worsley Cottage. Society members worked hard to develop the garden and set up the cottage as a museum, and local residents donated artefacts and furniture.

In the intervening years more buildings have been added to the site: a reconstructed squatters' hut, a machinery shed, and a resource centre/museum complex which houses our records. The cottage itself underwent extensive renovation in 2023, thanks largely to Central Goldfields Shire Council.

These days we receive a constant stream of researchers, many of whose ancestors arrived during the gold rushes, and we liaise with the Council, the Tourist Information Centre and the Art Gallery, providing

historical information and advice. It's encouraging to note that many of our enquirers are purchasing older homes to renovate rather than demolish.

We're also fortunate to receive a variety of donations of items relating to Maryborough's history. Photographs, community organisation records, show awards, school magazines, paintings and WW1 certificates are making their way to us rather than the tip, and the stories behind them help us to document and illuminate the town's history. A painting of church memorial windows revealed the story of a WW1 veteran, a talented art teacher turned soldier, who died tragically early, and a doctor's wife who had collected plant samples for Ferdinand von Mueller. A local 19th Century Maryborough professional photographer's *carte de visite* image of an aboriginal couple was left under our front door. A descendant of a committee member of the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind (Maryborough Branch) donated the Society's paperwork dating from the 1930s, which records the names of many well-known residents who had conscientiously collected penny donations for years, even throughout WW2. The first prize certificate for a fancy tea cosy at the 1915 Maryborough District Agricultural and Horticultural Society Show arrived out of the blue in the post, and an immaculately preserved WW2 Women's Army uniform (including hat!) worn at her wedding in the 1940s by a prominent town businesswoman was donated by her family.

Our Society looks forward to the next 60 years.

Barb Nielsen, President

## Carisbrook Historical Society (NC)



On Remembrance Day new signage at the Majorca war memorial will be unveiled by Martha Haylett MP on behalf of the Minister for

Veterans' Affairs. The signage was funded through a grant from the Victorian government. In July 2024 a small group of local volunteers bought and planted a new Avenue of Honour at the site. Carisbrook Historical Society has designed and researched information for the signage and we are organising the observance. A good-sized crowd is expected.

Members of our Society have begun relocating the vast research carried out by life-member Judith Healey from her home to our Research Centre for sorting and filing. It will take a long time!

In the October issue of *The Logs* there is a long research article on the municipal forebears of what is now Central Goldfields Shire. Between 1853 and 1990 there were twenty different municipal configurations in this district and this article explicates these changes in detail.

Alex Stoneman OAM

## Kerang Historical Society and Museum (NC)



There continues to be an air of excitement around the Museum after the recent two Heritage Days on 6 and 7 September. These days involved a lot of work by our 44 volunteer members.

This year we had three special features which proved to be very successful. One was a book launch by Peter Newman of *James Wallace, a Ned Kelly Sympathiser*. James Wallace lived in Kerang for ten years during the 1860s and 1870s, working on the local paper. The book makes for some interesting reading.

A very special appearance was Moby D, a huge Kenworth C510 truck which was used by Leigh Dehne approximately twenty years ago when working on the rail line between Alice Springs and Darwin. This truck - one of a kind - is a whopping 11 metres long, complete with state-of-the-art shower and toilet and is powered by a Caterpillar V12 engine.

Like many museums, over the years we have been given some beautiful ball gowns. This year we decided to have a fashion parade of one of our collections which belonged to the late Mrs Barbara Turner. This parade proved to be very successful, thanks to the Baulch family.

While the Heritage Days have been in the forefront of our minds, there are many other things going on around the Museum as well. We have just finalised a grant after twelve months of hard work for our tram and carriage shed. This tram ran between Kerang and Koondrook from the mid-1940s until 1958, bringing many students into school as well as taking stock and redgum sleepers to the Kerang rail head. The chassis of the tram has been cleaned and painted while the 'Ford' truck compartment has been sanded down ready to paint. The motor is going after sitting out on a farm for over fifty years without any use. The local Men's Shed has offered to help with all the woodwork which needs repairing. This tram has created a lot of talk about town as many people can remember coming into High School on the tram each day. If only those walls could talk!

Our new ammunition and armoury has been completed and signed off by Victoria Police.

Throughout the last six months we have also united with other town organisations to help with their activities. These included the Kerang Rotary Art Show, Kerang Show and Shine, Rotary film night and dinner, Kerang Agricultural Show and the opening of the Military Room on ANZAC Day.

Our visitor numbers are up. These have included groups of school children, car club members, Seniors groups from Kerang and nearby towns and those who come during our opening hours on Sunday. Our Museum continues to grow thanks to our band of enthusiastic volunteers who come each Monday morning to work but also have a cuppa and chat with other volunteers. Like many museums, our members are getting older so we are on the lookout for some young members.

Gerard Hastie, President

## Inglewood District Historical Society (NC)



We have been quite busy with a range of things which keeps us relevant.

Events held include:

- Life in 3 Pictures as part of the Inglewood Alive Festival (20 people attended)
- Christmas gathering (12 people attended)
- Unearthed In Inglewood (6 people attended)
- Friends of Kooyoora Brooke St Walk (6 attended)
- During October we have the From This Day Forward display of local wedding dresses and related attire and items. Open Sundays from 10am -2pm and Wednesday and Friday 5pm-7pm at the Inglewood Court House.

Family History. We have undertaken many family history enquiries. There seems to be a lot of interest in people seeking information about their ancestors' time in and around the Inglewood goldfields and even more recent times. We had visitors come all the way from New Zealand a few weeks back to understand the area where one of their descendants lived in the very early days of Inglewood.

Howard and I attended Inglewood Primary School to talk about the history of Inglewood and of local identities to assist them put ideas together for a play 'Untold History of Inglewood', performed to the Inglewood community. It was a very loose interpretation of early Inglewood.

We did a reprint of our very popular book *A Brief History of Inglewood*. Our book sales are still going strong and we thank the businesses in town who sell them in their shops.

We had an old Bridgewater Railway Station baggage trolley that was in our collection restored by the Inglewood -Bridgewater Men's Shed. It is currently on loan to Eucy Museum as part of their display.

We were contacted to provide some information to Scott Pollard who runs a Big Things Australia Facebook Page about the 'Big Eucy Leaf' that was outside the caravan park for a short time. It took a bit of sleuthing and looking at Google street images and speaking to some locals to determine the short timeframe it was in place.

We received a Loddon Shire Community Grant to assist a resident from Rheola put markers at the site of the former Wehla Tennis Courts and Presbyterian Church. He owns these sites and wants to preserve their history.

We've had donations of various items and documents from several families and individuals.

We thank everyone who has attended meetings, cleaned up, helped at events, shared information and generally supported the Society.

Wendy Murphy

## Nullawil Historical Society (NC)



Nullawil Historical Society has had a very busy six months. We have changed our name to Nullawil Heritage Centre because we feel it describes our area better.

In early April we welcomed Dr Anne Webster, Federal Member for Mallee. She was kind enough to call in and allow some time on her way to Wycheproof. She seemed taken with what we have to offer and it was a great visit.

We welcomed Paul Haw to our heritage centre to discuss and look over the aboriginal collection we have. Paul has a collection open to the public in Boort. He was very informative and very helpful to us. Paul and his wife Kathy loved the place so much they bought their family back on Easter Saturday to spend time at the Centre.

We had a PAG group of around 34 from East Wimmera visit. We gave them Devonshire morning tea and they bought their own picnic lunch.

The Open Day we held at the Heritage Centre on Sunday 27 April was not quite as successful as we had hoped.

We had about 30 people come who thoroughly enjoyed their day. We hosted the main meal for the football club progressive tea on the Saturday night. An exceptionally busy weekend.

In May we had two groups come, one a health group and the other a car club. These were great days and the interaction between visitors and members adds an extra dimension to the day.

Auchmore House, the crowning glory of our collection, is 100 years old this year. We made a date, 17 August, for the celebrations. We worked extremely hard and many hours of preparation were put in to having Auchmore spick and span. There was painting, repairs, redecorating a room, adding mannequins and a whole house clean from top to bottom. We planned to keep this celebration front and centre so put an article in our local papers each month, paid for ads in the local papers and our President Wendy Spry was interviewed for 3WM. The day came and we felt we had done all we could to get a crowd. Our hearts sank when the day began with rain but it soon cleared up and the people began arriving. We had the most wonderful day and our estimates give us over 120 people plus children. We were thrilled with the crowd and had lots of positive comments. There is nearly always a new connection made or old ones revisited on day like this. It was a very interactive day with singing, activities such as using the separator and engines going

making hay and gristing wheat into flour. There was even an old bulldog tractor running at one stage. When it came time to report on this fantastic day in the paper the suggestion was made to write the story though the eyes of the house. We had been calling her a "Grand old lady" and that she was and is. This has caused plenty of comment since.

There has been a lot of activity throughout the museum. The men have spent many hours restoring the Mallee roller.

We have been very fortunate to have been donated a unique scarifier. This was designed north of Culgoa by the O'Keefe brothers. In brief, it folds in the middle, so it can fallow crab holes. Early farmers found the deep crab holes difficult to work.

In September we had two trade travel groups and they all came from a mixture of states. One group loved hearing all the farming stories and were especially interested in the canola crop. The bus was escorted to a paddock where they were able to get off and have their photo taken. These groups are always so interested in everything farming and ask lots of questions. They have such a limited time with us that they don't get to see everything. One of our members has written up a preamble and given it to the bus drivers who will give an overview of the Heritage Centre before the buses arrive.

Our members are attempting to tend to the cataloguing and digitisation of our collection in between the busy time we have had. We were lucky enough to receive a grant from the Bendigo Bank in Charlton to start us on the social media bandwagon. We have enlisted the help of Jordan Howell from Wycheproof who is setting up our website, connecting us to Facebook and from there we are creating QR codes for exhibits.

The number of inquiries online are continuing so encouraging us to work more towards getting our information available on the computer. This is a slow process.

The other exciting news is that we were successful in obtaining a Stronger Communities grant for a solar system. We have no power at our site and have been running with a generator. The solar system will be an extension of this and hopefully give us continuous power.

The mural on the Room of Remembrance is basically completed. The three flags have been framed and we are going to acknowledge the grant received. We are holding a Remembrance Day service on 11 November at the Heritage Centre. Lunch will be available and the Centre will be open after lunch. There will be community singing in the Winston Church in the afternoon.

Kaylene James



## Cohuna and District Historical Society (NC)



I have been involved with the C&DHS since May 2023. At that time the Society was in the midst of a large extension to its Archives Building which was finally handed over in early 2024. The room was funded by a dollar-for-dollar grant from the Gannawarra Shire, the rest by our Society via

funds raised from Trash and Treasure income. It was decided to hold off on an Official Opening until March 2025 to allow time to put up displays and also coincide with the Society's 55th year. The official opening and Open Day was well attended.

The extensions also doubled the compactus storage for archives records with a custom-built room and extensive new compactus. Members have worked tirelessly sorting through tubs and tubs of records which had been stored away in various parts of the Society's storerooms. Now all are proudly stored in the new room, with still more work to do, but that will always be the case.

Cohuna looks forward to celebrating over Melbourne Cup weekend its 150th year of being gazetted. The Cohuna Progress Association has lots of celebrations and activities planned. Our Society will have Open Days on the Saturday and Sunday. Also, our Trash and Treasure located in the old Church Hall will be open. T&T is the Society's main source of income.

Like most small historical societies, we struggle to attract new members with the current few members trying to do multiple roles and tasks despite ill health, ageing etc.

Over the winter the T&T was closed to allow some urgent repairs to the hall, re-stumping, repairs to white ant damage and, as usual, renovations tend to blow out, finally requiring new carpets, plaster repairs and painting etc. Now back in action, it looks bright and cheerful.

The Covid years also hit the Society, with T&T having to close, groups not permitted to come for a visit etc. Sadly, we lost quite a few members during this time. Once out of lockdowns the extensions began which meant the current Archives rooms were hard to access as the site was surrounded by safety fencing. Plus, recently many people thought that with the T&T closed the Archives and Museum was also closed. Finally, now back in action, numbers are improving with T&T, Archives and Museum all open again.

I have taken on the role of Curator over the last year. Sadly, due to Covid and loss of the previous Curator there is much to do. My two co-volunteers and I are still cataloguing items donated pre-Covid and since which we had previously nowhere to store them.

New shelving in our Collection storage area is now filling fast and our pencils are busy filling out worksheets. WHY pencil? With an average age of 80 years most of members struggle with the use of a mobile phone, a couple don't own one, plus few know how to use a computer. So, a manual system we are for now, with the adage that if the wheel is not broken, leave it alone.

**Kris Campbell, Curator**

## Terang and District Historical Society (S)



Our meetings are held on the fourth Monday of the month. We currently average between 10 and 15 members attending. Our Museum is open on the third Sunday of the month. We have a working bee every Thursday and our Museum is open by appointment.

We are currently sorting through lots of photos which have been donated pertaining to our Debutante Balls, sporting events and wedding photos. We have discussed the idea of producing a book of wedding photos.

Another project in the pipeline is naming the laneway between the pharmacy and the Josie Black Centre the 'Montgomery-Bradshaw Right of Way'. We have approached Council which has been 'positive' in saying that we can 'give it a go'. Lots of work needs to be done in collating historical evidence.

We have nearly finished our Windmill project. We have had a security light installed and now all we need is some information put onto the plaque which sits at the base of the windmill. We are also hoping that we might put an 'agricultural' feel around to the windmill, focusing on the agricultural industries within our area. A couple of cow and sheep sculptures have been recommended.

We also have at the end of our meetings a 'Show and Tell' session which is usually a highlight of the night. Members enthusiastically bring along items of historical interest.

**Penny Lourey, Secretary**

## Boort Historical Society (NC)



It has been a bit quiet this year for doing projects at the Boort Historical Society, although we have had a steady stream of family research enquiries to keep members busy. We have also started to catalogue our archive centre which will be a long job. There has been a continual run of donations of artefacts and memorabilia coming into the Museum. We are very thankful for these donations to add to our collections.

Our membership remains small but all of our members are very keen and are willing to help within the Museum. The reason we can still function with a small group of members is that we all have enthusiasm for the preservation of our local history.

My sincere thanks to all members for the constant work they do to keep the Historical Society running smoothly, from taking on a seat or even two on the committee, to doing duty each Friday or opening the Museum out of hours for someone to view. We couldn't do it without the help from our members.

Of course, our work will never be completed and we all look forward to the year ahead.

Gayle Huggett, President

