



Issue 252

September 2026

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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.wvahs.com.au/>

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

Individual subscribers: \$15.00 (PDF emailed)

Editor: Craige Proctor wwahsinc@gmail.com

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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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Member Groups

at September 2026

Arapiles (Natimuk) Ararat
 Balmoral Barham-Koondrook
 Birchip Boort
 Camperdown Carisbrook
 Charlton Golden Grains Museum
 Cobden Cohuna Colac
 Coleraine Dimboola Donald
 Derrinallum/Lismore Dunkeld
 East Loddon (Mitiamo)
 Echuca Edenhope
 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
 Wycheproof
 Wimmera Mallee Pioneer
 Museum (Jeparit)

President's Post



On 14 August I gave two presentations at the RHSV HSSC 'Nuts & Bolts' Seminar Day in Melbourne. One of these was on succession planning for historical societies. The other – 'Cultivating hope for historical societies' – allowed me to draw upon the many initiatives and projects being undertaken by a significant number of our groups.

When we ask historical societies to send their newsletters to WVAHS, this is not just to archive digital copies but to enable us to appreciate the many 'new ways of doing things' within our huge network. In preparing for these presentations I worked through previous issues of *Western Historian* and put the spotlight on some of our groups: collaborations with other societies and Councils; honours conferred; unusual tours; successful grant applications etc. There is indeed cause for 'cultivating hope' among historical societies. The 50 people attending the RHSV Seminar were thus able to have a glimpse into what 'we in the West' are achieving in the regions. I hope to give a précis of my two presentations in the December issue of our newsletter.

I am having a lovely time travelling around to various groups and attending the occasional meeting. I was recently guest speaker for the Ballarat Historical Society which was a good opportunity to talk about 'the West'. I have also recently visited Nhill and Dimboola Societies and in the coming months I will be presenting at Horsham, Dimboola, Lancefield, Donald and even Port Melbourne (a return visit!)

While I am unable to attend the Wimmera Mallee Zone and Executive Meetings at Nhill in October, I will be attending the Southern and North Central Zone Meetings at Glenthompson and Donald and hopefully many groups will be represented at these. They are always very worthwhile.

Craig Proctor, Jeparit and Mortlake

Spring Zone and Executive Meetings

Wimmera Mallee Zone and Executive Meetings:

Sunday 4 October, 11 a.m.

hosted by Nhill and District Historical Society at Nhill

Southern Zone Meeting:

Sunday 11 October, 1 p.m.

**hosted by Glenthompson Historical Group at
Glenthompson**

North Central Zone Meeting:

Saturday 24 October, 1.30 p.m.,

hosted by Donald History Society at Donald

Further details will be communicated via email.



RHSV Awards of Merit, 2026

The W.V.A.H.S. community extends congratulations to [Evelyn King](#) (Dimboola and District Historical Society), [Lynda Tieman](#) (Port Fairy Historical Society), [Mary Archbold](#) (Donald History Society), [Carolyn Olive](#) (Charlton Golden Grains Museum) and [Steve Pentreath](#) (Swan Hill Genealogical and Historical Society) on being recipients of Royal Historical Society of Victoria Awards of Merits, announced at the RHSV AGM on 26 May.

Evelyn King received her Award at a special meeting in Dimboola on 1 July while Steve Pentreath was presented with his Award by Dr Rosalie Triolo OAM FRHSV at Swan Hill on 12 July. Dr Peter Yule FRHSV and RHSV Councillor presented Lynda Tieman with her Award at Port Fairy on 8 July. Mary Archbold and Carolyn Olive have chosen to receive their Awards at our North Central Zone Meeting in Donald in October.

The Awards of Merit for services to history in Victoria have been conferred since 1988. Previous recipients from societies within the WVAHS Network have been: [Helen Curkpatrick](#), Stawell, and [Michael Menzies](#), Geelong (2024), [Bob Lambell](#), Camperdown (2023), [Craig Proctor](#), Mortlake (2022), [Merle Pole](#), Ouyen (2020), the late [Elizabeth O'Callaghan](#), Warrnambool (2019), [Diana Cowan](#), Colac (2017), [Bill Attrill](#), Stawell, (2002), the late [Les O'Callaghan](#), Warrnambool (2001), the late [Ron Falla OAM](#), Donald (1989) and the late [Norma Wynd](#), Camperdown (1988). The full citations for all recipients over the last thirty-eight years, can be read at [RHSV Awards of Merit](#).

Also at the RHSV AGM James 'Bim' Affleck OAM, a long-time member of the Warrnambool and District Historical Society and a prolific researcher and writer of local history, was conferred with an RHSV Associate Fellowship. We extend our sincere congratulations to James on this considerable honour. You can read the citation for Jim's honour [here](#).

Any Historical Society may nominate a member for an Award of Merit and the WVAHS Executive strongly encourages all societies to consider doing so. Nominations close in April of each year; these should be under way by February/March, ideally. Any society is encouraged to contact Craig Proctor initially who, as a representative of the RHSV, can provide detailed guidelines and advice on submitting a nomination.

Photos of the presentations to Mary Archbold and Carolyn Olive will appear in our December issue.



Evelyn King being presented with her Award by Yours Truly at the Dimboola and District Historical Society on 1 July.



Steve Pentreath received his Award from Dr Rosalie Triolo OAM FRHSV in Swan Hill on 12 July.



Dr Peter Yule, RHSV Councillor, presented Lynda Tieman with her Award in Port Fairy on 14 July.

RHSV Award of Merit Citations

Evelyn King

Dimboola and District Historical Society

Evelyn initially became involved with the Dimboola and District Historical Society in 1995 when moves were afoot to 'wind up' the organisation. Evelyn was pro-active in preventing this from happening. She has been a committee member for 30 years and a diligent and thorough Secretary of the Society for over 25 years.

Evelyn has played the major role in the presentation of historical displays throughout the courthouse and at other sites around the town including Dimboola Print Museum, Westerfeld's Garage and the Victoria Hotel. As a result of Evelyn's diligence, there is a professional and engaging 'vibe' at the Society's Museum and her group clearly relishes Evelyn's ability to delegate tasks to others capably.

She has been consistently involved in projects promoting the significance and role of history within our community, welcoming various community groups to the courthouse and speaking at other groups' meetings. Evelyn engages consistently with and takes on an advocacy role with Hindmarsh Shire Council chiefly in regard to the preservation of local heritage sites.

Evelyn not only has the enthusiasm and drive to keep history alive, she has a passion for items on display and the organisation and presentation of these displays in the courthouse complex are testament to this.

Evelyn was determined the Society should have the two, rare film projectors from the Star Theatre; she negotiated for the Society to buy, dismantle and reassemble them in the Courthouse and has pushed for other members to provide their history and to find appropriate silent movies to project in the Courthouse.

Evelyn has enlisted the support of Wimmera Print & Design to work with the Society to enhance its Print Museum exhibits and to provide displays of appropriate photographs. She also lobbied strenuously to obtain cases which are now being refurbished to enhance the Museum's displays.

She has represented the Society in various community projects such as the Nine Creeks Wetland, Walking and Cycling Track project, the Town's 150th Celebration Committee and the Railway Station Refurbishment Group. She has also regularly represented the Society at regional history meetings and conferences especially at Western Victorian Association of Historical Societies (WVAHS) events twice-yearly, reflecting Evelyn's commitment to heritage bodies beyond the town.

Evelyn has long been supportive of the WVAHS in contributing advice and offering to chair meetings or take minutes. WVAHS Secretary/Treasurer Helen Curkpatrick has commented: "Since I became involved with the WVAHS in 2010, I have had the pleasure on many occasions of collaborating with Evelyn. There are many capable historians in my life and I am very pleased to acknowledge Evelyn King as one of them."

Evelyn's contagious enthusiasm for local history is reflected in the support the Society receives from the local community.

Pam Cupper OAM, Dale Conway

Dimboola and District Historical Society

Helen Curkpatrick

Secretary/Treasurer, Western Victorian Association of
Historical Societies

Lynda Tieman

Port Fairy Historical Society

Lynda joined the Port Fairy Historical Society in 1993. Lynda and Judith Kershaw had a baptism of fire when the person setting up a large exhibition suddenly died. They agreed to take over responsibility for the display. This experience stood Lynda in good stead for future exhibitions.

Lynda became Collection Manager/Curator in 1994. This involved the huge task of cataloguing the previous 'piecemeal' collection, adding to it and mounting exhibitions, large and small.

Lynda soon began working on seeking accreditation with Museums Australia. PFHS was in the first group of Societies accredited in 1998 and Lynda, along with Judith Kershaw, has maintained the Museum's accreditation ever since. Lynda has attended many MAP and RHSV in-services and continues to participate in meetings with MAP representatives.

One of Lynda's skills is her ability to establish effective teams of volunteers who bring together exhibitions, Lynda meeting with these teams twice weekly. While the teams do the 'hard yards' in terms of staging displays, it is Lynda who has oversight of the exhibitions from the outset. Lynda encourages others in the Society to 'get things done'. As Collection Manager Lynda has undertaken a tremendous amount of work in uploading many of the Society's items to Victorian Collections and has also tasked others with continuing this process.

Lynda has become responsible for all technology and communications for the Society. While the Society has a Publications Committee, Lynda has input into all decisions made and publications produced.

In addition to her long association with the Port Fairy Society, Lynda served twice as Secretary/Treasurer of the Western Victorian Association of Historical Societies under Judith Kershaw's presidency. In that role Lynda visited many societies and museums throughout Western Victoria and always returned to Port Fairy with new ideas.

In 2025, despite being stretched in her many commitments to the Society, Lynda embraced the organisation of an RHSV seminar weekend in Port Fairy – *Preserving and presenting our stories* – by setting the program, sourcing all presenters and overseeing all elements of the weekend to ensure it was a well-run and worthwhile event for all attendees and participants.

Lynda has been an integral member of the Society for 33 years, responsible for many initiatives and loyal and supportive of others in the roles she has held, as well as a good friend to 'history buffs' far and wide.

Margaret Whitehead OAM

President, Port Fairy Historical Society

Judith Kershaw

Past President, W.V.A.H.S.

Carolyn Olive

Charlton Golden Grains Museum

We are pleased to nominate Carolyn Olive for the Royal Historical Society of Victoria Award of Merit in recognition of her outstanding and sustained contributions to our local history and heritage preservation.

Carolyn joined the Charlton Golden Grains Museum in 2006, bringing with her not only enthusiasm, but exceptional skills in computing, publishing, and creative design. For nearly two decades she has applied these talents to enhance the museum and support numerous community organisations.

In the aftermath of the devastating 2011 floods, which destroyed approximately 30% of our museum's collection, Carolyn helped secure funding and worked tirelessly alongside fellow volunteers to resurrect and rejuvenate the museum. Subsequently her service was recognised, when in 2012 she was a finalist in the National Museums Volunteer Excellence Awards. Then in 2013 the team effort was recognised when the museum received an Australian Museums and Galleries Association Victoria Award for Excellence.

Carolyn is a prolific local historian, having researched, written, and published six significant books on Charlton and district history (including sporting clubs, schools, churches, and wartime service), as well as several informative booklets.

Her expertise in grant writing has secured funding for the restoration of local heritage buildings, digitisation of news-papers and photographic collections, as well as professional development training courses for volunteers in cataloguing, conservation, and digital archiving. Most recently, she obtained funding for a National Significance Assessment of our museum collection.

A visionary leader, Carolyn drove the restoration of the historic Charlton Courthouse, now a thriving community hub for arts and cultural activities. She also has a strong interest in local Aboriginal history and, with the support of the Dja Dja Wurrung community, created a display of local artefacts and initiated the Aboriginal Art Trail along the Avoca River.

Carolyn has served as our museum Curator and Secretary for 18 years, and as an executive member and Webmaster for the Western Victorian Association of Historical Societies for more than 15 years. She has also published our town's monthly 30–40 page Community News for nine years and developed engaging interpretive storyboards throughout the museum and township.

Her efforts contributed to the museum achieving a National Standards Award and Museums Accreditation in 2021 – a rare accomplishment for a small rural museum.

Another vision Carolyn implemented was establishing, in our 1876 Wesley Chapel, a display of the 145-year history of faith in the district. The "Keeping the Faith" permanent exhibition was recognised in 2024 as one of three finalists in the Victorian Museums and Galleries Awards for Volunteer Project of the Year.

Carolyn's contributions have been further recognised by her being named Citizen of the Year in 2013 and awarded Life Membership of the museum in 2024.

We believe that Carolyn's vision, dedication, and significant contributions to the preservation of our community's history make her a worthy recipient of this Award of Merit.

Diane Wood

President, Charlton Golden Grains Museum

Anne Kenny

Volunteer Co-ordinator, Charlton Golden Grains Museum

Steve Pentreath

Swan Hill Genealogical and Historical Society

Steve has been a member of Swan Hill Genealogical and Historical Society for nearly thirty years. He has held most positions on the committee including president and is currently Research Coordinator. He has a keen interest in all things historical, has written many historical articles for the local Swan Hill Guardian newspaper, organised trips to places of historical interest for our group and has attended and held committee positions within the regional WVAHS network.

Steve wrote and published the history of Swan Hill Apex Club, has spoken many times on ABC and Smart FM about local history, organised well-attended local cemetery and street walks and produced a Historical Walk of Swan Hill leaflet which was widely distributed.

Steve is passionate about raising awareness of the history of Swan Hill and district, using his wide knowledge to help achieve State Heritage listing for Tyntynder Homestead and the oldest of our Water Towers, as well as the preservation of the Moreton Bay Fig Tree and the White Swan Hotel façade. He coordinated the 2011 Flood Reflections Project, producing both a book and DVD.

He has been the driving force behind our local *Guardian* newspaper being digitised and has spent many hours researching and writing grant applications to help this and other improvements happen. He is also our “go to” person for all things digital, helping to train us in using Excel, research software, and digital cameras and micro-phones as well as compiling our computer indexes. He is also very interested in war history and the people involved, especially at a local level, and has organised a number of guest speakers for our group on this topic, all of which have been most informative.

In the community Steve has helped with local Church of England records and Hospital records and memorabilia, been involved in the 150th Celebrations of the Burke and Wills Expedition, the 175th Anniversary of Major Mitchell’s naming of Swan Hill Exhibition, organised a “Home is Where the Hall Is” photo exhibition (with 69 halls participating) and a school essay competition and with the local library has organised a number of local historical displays. He is a leading member of the Friends of Tyntynder Home-stead group which works to preserve the building with the aim of reopening it to the public. He also helped with the 50th anniversary of the City of Swan Hill Declaration reunion dinner.

Steve is known for his knowledge of local history and for his willingness to share this knowledge with the community. He is a past recipient of Swan Hill Citizen of the Year and gives freely of his time as a guest speaker.

Leone Walbran

President, Swan Hill Genealogical and Historical Society

Mary Archbold

Donald History Society

Mary has been an active member of the Society since 1993. She has been responsible for managing our large collection of photographs and for many years has led the committee which has organised our annual program of speakers and excursions.

She has reprinted many items from our collection of historical booklets to meet public demand and has served as our Acquisitions Officer for many years.

She is also responsible for organising each year the production of bound copies of the *Buloke Times* to maintain our library of this local primary source. Mary has organised our extensive archive collection which includes material from a wide range of local Organisations which are no longer operating. Through her diligence, research and local know-ledge as well as her oversight of our collection, Mary is frequently able to assist others in identifying the subjects of photographs which is of considerable benefit to researchers.

She has regularly attended W.V.A.H.S. Zone and Annual meetings as a representative of the Donald History Society and gives a detailed report at our subsequent meetings which have been a valuable source of ideas for us. Helen Curkpatrick, Secretary of the W.V.A.H.S. has commented: “While Mary has always worked quietly in the background of the group, she has always been so willing to assist me – particularly when the W.V.A.H.S. has been planning a meeting, whether it be a Zone or Annual General Meeting. I have always been able to rely on Mary to organise members from Donald to attend and boost the numbers. Mary has even booked a community bus for them all to travel together, giving members an additional incentive to attend. There are many committed and capable historians with whom I work and I acknowledge Mary Archbold as one of them.”

Mary has made a major contribution to the successful running of the Donald History Society in a variety of roles over more than thirty years and the Society would be delighted to see this formally recognised with an Award of Merit for Mary.

Brian Brasier

Secretary, Donald History Society Inc.

Helen Curkpatrick

Secretary/Treasurer,

Western Victorian Association of Historical Societies

<https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/recognition/awards-of-merit/>

Citation for James 'Bim' Affleck OAM on being awarded an RHSV Associate Fellowship

James 'Bim' Affleck OAM has been a member of the Warrnambool and District Historical Society for many years and a committee member for the last five years. He has been involved in all aspects of the Society's operations: writing articles for our journal *Warnimble*, contributing constructively at committee meetings, attending working bees and handling general and research enquiries.

Bim's passion is research and writing, most of which he does in our research centre. From his position on the computer closest to the entrance, he cheerily welcomes all visitors and is quick to offer cups of tea. Our centre is officially open four days per week but Bim is a near permanent fixture, often working out of normal hours and he deals effectively with all enquiries. So, beyond holding formal offices, he has been the unofficial welcomer, guide and mentor at Warrnambool HeritageWorks for many years, giving many hours of assistance to beginner local historians. From basic research techniques to unlocking the treasures of Trove, Bim is happy to share his vast experience.

Bim Affleck was born in Warrnambool in 1949. He served as a conscript in Vietnam in 1970/71 before returning to the family farm. After retiring from the land, his interest turned to history, initially primarily military history. He has now had fifteen books published:

Geelong Grammarians at the Great War, 1999
Geelong Grammarians at World War Two, 2002
Geelong Collegians at the Great War (including the Anglo-Boer War), 2007
Geelong Collegians at the Second World War and Subsequent Conflicts, 2010
In the Footsteps of Pompey: Service of Ballarat and Clarendon Collegians in the wars, 2012
Stories Untold and Faces Forgotten: Great War enlistments from Koroit, Port Fairy, Macarthur, Penshurst and surrounding hamlets, 2015
For King and Country: Great War Enlistments from Warrnambool and District (with Ron Blair), 2016
Woolthorpe Primary School and Soldier Settlement (Settlement part of the publication)* 2017
Soldiering On: Caramut and the Soldier Settlement Movement, 2018*
Tarrone Estate: Soldier Settlement – Rocks, Rabbits and Reptiles, 2019*
From Tents and Tin Huts to Timber Houses and Tiger Snakes: Soldier Settlers Stories from Hawkesdale, Macarthur and Penshurst, 2021*
Settling amongst the Red Gums in the Shadow of Mount Sturgeon, 2022*
Yalla-y-Poora on the Fiery Creek: When the cannons' roar stilled, 2023*
A Tale of Two: Injemira and Maes-y-Porth, 2024*
Faithful Unto Death: Christ Church Great War Memorial Tablet Warrnambool, 2025. *Soldier Settlement series

Bim Affleck's body of published work is truly impressive. The research is prodigious and, for an amateur, the organisation, analysis and writing are remarkably good.

In all his books he is looking to reveal the human stories behind the events. One of his titles, *Stories Untold and Faces Forgotten*, encapsulates his approach; his aim is to give identity to those who served and particularly those who died. His books on First and Second World War enlistments are far more than just lists with short but eloquent and moving biographies of all those who served. Establishing accurate figures for First World War enlistments in the Western District has always been a challenge ever since the first memorials were erected soon after the war but the research behind Bim's books is immaculate and his figures are now generally accepted as the best we will ever get.

In 2011 Bim was awarded an OAM 'for services to veterans and their families, particularly through the writing of military biographies.' This must be a unique citation and it reflects the remarkable impact of his work, well beyond the usual audience for local history books. As one of the best-known community figures in Western Victoria, Bim has been a wonderful ambassador for the history movement, particularly in his work with Legacy, the RSL and the various soldier settler communities. He even managed to fill Christ Church Warrnambool to capacity for the launch of his book on the church's war memorial.

Bim's series of seven books on soldier settlement estates in the Western District forms a remarkable body of work. Based on oral histories and underpinned by solid primary source research, taken together they form a comprehensive and invaluable history of soldier settlement in the Western District. Bim seems to know everyone in the Western District and is the friendliest and most down-to-earth person imaginable which has enabled him to work very closely with each community he has researched. His books all have the feeling of being written by someone with an intimate knowledge of the community but also a deep understanding of the wider context of the history of soldier settlement. They will be standard reference books for many decades to come. And more will follow. Recently the Warrnambool Society hosted a visit by Mortlake Historical Society members and one asked Bim 'When are you going to do the Mortlake soldier settlements?' Phone calls and visits from soldier settler families began almost immediately and Bim's research is now well under way.

Bim's books have all been written in close collaboration with historical societies across the Western District and Warrnambool, Hawkesdale, Macarthur, Penshurst, Dunkeld and Koroit societies have all benefited financially from sales of the books, some of which are into second and third reprints. A remarkable feature of his work has been the community spirit they have engendered. Several communities had almost ceased to exist when he began researching them but the networking involved in his work, tracking down the families of settlers and culminating in book launches that have all been reunions on a grand scale, have led to a dramatic revival. Few people knew where the Cooramook hall was before hundreds descended on it for the book launch in 2024. This was entirely Bim's doing – and reflects administrative and leadership skills of a high level.

<https://www.historyvictoria.org.au/recognition/associate-fellows/associate-fellow-james-bim-affleck-oam/>

New publications

<https://colacherald.com.au>

NEWS

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Book details butchers' history

BY ASHLEIGH WYSS

Before the butcher, baker and greengrocer were stocked together under the roofs of the same supermarket giants, Colac's local butchers traded quality cuts and banter with their community.

Author and historian Alan Doyle's new book *The Butchers of Colac 1846-2026* serves as a two-century long record of the city's butchering industry, tracing about 30 businesses as they changed hands across generations of local families and workers.

"Butchers are one of those quiet industries you don't hear much from," Alan said.

"Everyone knows their butcher, everyone knows their baker, but once they're gone, they're gone. And it's only after things are gone, people go, 'oh, we should have recorded it'."

"We all go and buy our meat there and overnight it could easily fold up and we just move on to Coles and you've lost that snapshot of time of someone operating their life occupation."

Alan, who lives in the Melbourne suburb of Croydon, said his book was inspired by an interest in

discovering his own family history, leading to the story of his maternal grandfather Ern Thomas, a butcher who set up shop near what is now Colac's RSL alongside his cousin JJ Hills.

His research then spiraled, Alan said, with his mammoth five-year investigation aided by the Colac and District Family History Group and Colac and District Historical Society.

The Family History group supported Alan's research by organising special morning teas he described as a "big family reunion of butchers", bringing together workers and owners from the early 1950s to 1970s.

While the domination of supermarkets like Woolworths and Coles beginning in the 1960s, and the removal of angled parking on Colac's Murray Street majorly displaced many local businesses, Alan said Colac was lucky to still have five butchers.

The history of Colac's butchers is speckled with camaraderie between businesses who banded together against the opening of industrial abattoirs, disruptions from commitments to military service as well as some unique and enterprising characters.



RESEARCH: Author Alan Doyle has completed his book detailing the history of Colac's butchering industry.

Coming from a trade background and understanding the hard work demanded across industries, Alan said he had developed an even deeper respect for butchers throughout the course of

authoring his book.

"They didn't need to go to the gym," he said.

"It was a hard job; to put things through band saws and you can imagine the accidents."

"You had to get up early,

get your stock in, have it presented in the window and the window was not just chucked together, it was actually presented."

"Then you had the day's work, which is banter at the counter with customers

to try and upsell them, offer suggestions of cooking methods of the particular cuts that you're selling, and then at the end of the day, you've had to shut down everything and then repeat it all again the next day."

Gu talamh a' gheallaidh

To the Country of Promise

By Robert McLaren

In July 1838 the *St George* sailed out of Oban, Scotland bound for Sydney in the British Colony of New South Wales. Aboard the vessel were 321 Scottish Highlanders. The majority came from the district around Aviemore in the Highlands and had gained a free passage to Australia under an Emigration Scheme organised by Lord Glenelg of the British Government and Governor Bourke of New South Wales.

Within twelve months many of the emigrants had moved to the newly opened district of Port Phillip, which offered opportunities to these men and women from Scotland. This book follows a number of these emigrants and concentrates on two groups: those who settled in and around Campbellfield near Melbourne and those who journeyed west to the district of Portland Bay which included the south-east corner of South Australia.

By the 1850s the first arrivals had sponsored and/or successfully encouraged family members still in Scotland to make the long journey to Australia. The Portland Bay families were the Davidson, Hector MacDonald, MacKenzie, Robertson brothers and Smith. Those who settled in the Port Phillip district were the Cameron, two Grant families, Guthrie brothers, John MacDonald, Muirson brothers and sisters and Tolmie families.

Gu talamh a' gheallaidh

To the Country of Promise



The Story of the *St George* Emigrant Vessel, 1838
Oban, Scotland to Sydney, New South Wales



Robert McLaren

If you are interested in purchasing a copy of this book the price is \$55 plus postage if required. Contact Robert McLaren on 0407530030 or by email mclaren55@bigpond.com. Or contact the Mortlake and District Historical Society: mortlakedhs@gmail.com

Anzac Day 2026 in Albany

Submitted by Steve Pentreath, Swan Hill

It is customary for Lois and me to visit a different Anzac Day ceremony each year. In 2026 our place of choice was Albany, Western Australia. Our previous visit to Albany had been almost 20 years ago with perfect weather. However, we had been advised to expect cold and windy conditions in Albany.

The significance of Albany to World War I was that the first convoy of ships leaving Australia and New Zealand converged in King George Sound prior to their departure for Egypt then Gallipoli. This is the last sight of Australian land many soldiers were to see.

With Anzac Day being on Saturday, we decided to arrive on the Friday and visit the 2014 built National Anzac Centre. The weather was perfect as it was for three days until we left Albany. Upon entry to the Centre we were greeted by a stunning view overlooking Princess Royal Harbour which took our breath away. We then received a handheld audio device and a card that was dedicated to a World War I serviceperson – Lois received a nurse and I received a soldier – and their stories could be listened to as we walked around.

Exhibits in the museum included authentic artefacts, films, photographs and audios imitating service personnel that, when swiping our audio device, gave the story of that person. These audios were very easy to use and the stories quite comprehensive with many taken from diaries of that person.

What was just as impressive was the magnificent view from a quiet area overlooking King George Sound; somewhere we could listen to the story of our selected service personnel.

Our self-guided tour took about 4 ½ hours and we could have gone back for more.

On Anzac Day we gathered at the Albany Entertainment Centre at 03:45am to board a shuttle bus up to the cenotaph on Mt Clarence for the 5:30am service. The MC welcomed and organised the massing audience. He advised that an expected crowd of 5,000 people would be in attendance and that the dawn service would start when all buses had arrived. His opinion was that, if people were dedicated enough to come from New Zealand, the US or the UK, he'd wait! The service was also broadcast to additional venues in Albany.

The ceremony went without a hitch as did the return to the gun-fire breakfast at the Entertainment Centre. Later in the morning there was a well patronised march through the street to Albany Peace Park. This was attended by dignitaries from Australia and New Zealand.

At the end of the service those service personnel and community organisations leading the march marched out with the same acknowledgement they had received earlier.

Of the ceremonies we have been to I think Albany's gave the most recognition to New Zealand (Woorinen would be close) which was really insightful. We found the experience of being in Albany for Anzac Day very moving and extremely interesting and would highly recommend the visit.



Photo: Steve Pentreath



[Link to Albany's National Anzac Centre](#)

[Destination WA - The Anzac Centre YouTube video](#)



*Woorndoo State School 1001
History Centre
A fantastic place to visit!*

OPEN
EVERY 3RD SUNDAY
OF THE MONTH

OPENING HOURS: 2PM-4PM
(by appointment for private viewing)



- Tea & Coffee Available
- Come and relive your school days and see the memorabilia

📍 Recreation St, Woorndoo 3272 ☎ 0409 558 448

If you or your group is looking for something unusual but very rewarding to do one Sunday afternoon, consider visiting the Woorndoo State School History Centre, midway between Mortlake and Lake Bolac.

Established in 2017 in the old Woorndoo State School, a small band of local, passionate people has filled the premises with school memorabilia, original school registers, many local history items and ephemera, photos, text books and bric-a-brac but also created a welcoming environment for a quiet cuppa in unusual surroundings. There is so much to see and you will come away heartened by what an enthusiastic group of people have achieved with so few resources. A lack of funding has been overcome with tremendous commitment! The History Centre is not a historical society nor affiliated with one but recently members of the Mortlake and District Historical Society visited the Centre and were amazed by what they saw.

The Centre is open on the third Sunday of the month, 2-4 p.m. or by appointment. Phone Carmel O'Brien on 0409 558 448 for further details.

Children of Carapooee Mural



On 16 July the Pebble Church Heritage Association Inc. at Carapooee near St Arnaud held the official 'opening' of its 'Children of Carapooee' mural which promises to be a major drawcard for tourists visiting the region, especially those following the Silo Art Trail.

The mural, in two panels, was funded via a Tiny Towns Grant through Victorian Regional Development. St Arnaud muralist and oil painter Kyle Torney was commissioned to undertake the project, transforming two unattractive water tanks into a dramatic narrative of the Pebble Church's construction in 1869. Children on the diggings helped to carry pebbles from the gold workings to the site and so the committee resolved that children should be a prominent feature of the two mural panels.



Martha Haylett, MP for Ripon, officially 'launched' the mural. Martha paid tribute to the local community for its enthusiastic support of the project. Kyle Torney provided a description of both the consultation with the PCHAI committee and the artistic process.

If you're travelling in this region do consider including Carapooee and its innovative new artwork on your itinerary!

[Pebble Church
website](http://www.pebblechurch.com.au)

Congratulations to the Camperdown and District Historical Society for once again co-ordinating and staging the History Talks component of the Robert Burns Celtic Festival on 27 June. It was a rich and varied program of four stimulating presentations.

Dr Chris Gouramanis, Research Fellow in Earth Sciences at the ANU in Canberra helped us understand how the beds of nearby volcanic lakes Gnotuk, Bullen Merri and Keilambete give clues and evidence, through sediments and fossils, of climate change in the deep past, long before today. It is noteworthy that the water levels and salinity of these three nearby lakes differ significantly and tell different stories about the ancient volcanic eruptions and impact of earlier climate changes. Attendees probably won't see the local landscape in quite the same way following Chris' presentation.

In his talk on the origins and evolution of Scottish Country Dance – distinct from Highland Dancing – **Dr Iain Buckland** took us on a journey through hundreds of years of Scottish and French history and even showed us some of the principal steps and footwork which characterise this dance. Iain explained that the tradition of Scottish Country Dance has an emphasis today on promoting physical and mental health benefits of social dance.

Dr Yoolongteeyt Vicki Couzens, currently Director of Yoongama First Nations Transdisciplinary Research Cohort at RMIT University but a citizen of the Keerray

Woorroong Gunditjmarra, presented on 'Mother Tongue: revitalisation of Gunditjmarra Aboriginal Language'. Vicki explained the complexities of reconstructing and rebuilding – and then teaching – the Gunditjmarra language through an immersion program with the aim of encouraging speakers to become fluent over time. Family clans participate in 'camps on Country' to engage with creative cultural practice experiences through which language is also acquired and practised. The aim of revitalising the language is to support oral traditions of knowledge sharing and transfer. With my own background being in language and linguistics I found this particularly thought-provoking.

Princetown-raised **Dr Bob Bowker**, former Ambassador to Jordan, Egypt and Syria and a UN official in Gaza and Jerusalem, presented on 'Dr Daniel Curdie and the exploration of family history'. Bob shared not only the story of his ancestor Daniel Curdie, a prominent figure in Camperdown's history, but highlighted the challenges of writing family history including separating fact from fiction. Bob explored the themes of migration, exploration, the gold rushes, shipwrecks, bankruptcy, marital successes and failures, alcoholism, rabbit plagues and other issues which shaped the telling of his family's story.

The program and the speakers were diverse and engaging. Well done to Lyle Tune, Bob Lambell, Maree Belyea and their team for overseeing CDHS's very worthwhile contribution to yet another successful Festival.

Craig Proctor



The Federation of Australian 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 FHRVS is President of FAHS and your *Western Historian* editor also produces the FAHS newsletter – four issues annually – which anyone can sign up to receive free of cost.

Two WVAHS member groups – Jeparit Historical Society and Charlton Golden Grains Museum - have become FAHS Associate Members (\$33 annually). For information, go to the FAHS website:

FAHS website

Something unusual!



*Goldfields
Historical and
Arts Society Inc.*

TOUR OF DUNOLLY'S BROTHELS

On Monday 14th September and Saturday 19th September we will be running a tour of Dunolly's brothels. This was a tour we ran in 2013 which proved very popular. We have had many new members join since then so it is time to repeat it.

Travel will be by private car; bring your own lunch which will be at Gordon Gardens. All proceeds to Dunolly Museum.

\$10/\$20

Booking is online at Humanitix.

Tour Booking Link



Nhill & District Historical Society's Annual General Meeting

The Nhill & District Historical Society (NDHS) held its Annual General Meeting on Sunday afternoon, 12 July, with members gathering for what proved to be a warm and enjoyable occasion.

The Society expressed its appreciation to the outgoing Committee for their dedication and progressive work over the past year. The retiring office-bearers were Don Keam (President), Wendy Rethus (Vice President), Tricia Alexander (Treasurer), Colleen Forbes (Secretary), Lorraine Pilgrim, Merrilyn Lowe and Vienne Rocher.

The incoming Committee for the year ahead was then confirmed: Wendy Rethus (President), Don Keam (Vice President), Tricia Alexander (Secretary/Treasurer), Colleen Forbes, Yvonne Gladdis, Jeff Muller and Lorraine Pilgrim.

The Society thanked all members who have stepped forward to serve, acknowledging their commitment to keeping the organisation active and ensuring the district's history continues to be preserved for the community.

The NDHS Committee would like to thank Craige Proctor for chairing the AGM. He later entertained the group with another well-researched family history, *Put Them to Music*, on Troy Knight, a renowned music man in the Wimmera, and his family troupe.



Tricia Alexander, Secretary/Treasurer, Craige Proctor, President of WVAHS and Wendy Rethus, President (photo by Helen Woodhouse-Herrick).

NDHS hosts Writing Family History Short Course 11-13 September 2026

IMELDA CRIBBIN

IS HERE TO HELP

Imelda Cribbin is a long-time lover of family history and genealogy. A recently retired freelance editor, she continues to be a member of the Institute of Professional Editors (IPEd) and Life Stories Australia and has helped many clients write or refine their stories. Imelda gives presentations on life writing and family history topics, teaches at neighbourhood houses and historical societies and is about to self-publish her third book.

Writing your family history

You've had fun doing the research but what's next?
Simple: have fun writing the story!

This short course aims to give you the tools and confidence to start writing your family history. I'll help you focus on a family history project; consider your audience; try different writing techniques; discuss what research, images and data to include; consider copyright, privacy and permissions; and look at some referencing techniques.

Website: www.imeldacribbin.com.au

NDHS is hosting Writing your family history weekend course
with an introduction evening on
Friday 11 September, 7 p.m.
on **Saturday 12 and Sunday 13 September, 2026**
commencing at **10.30 a.m.** each day.

Costs:

Friday: \$5 donation at the door (for those not attending the course)

Full weekend course: \$65

Optional: Lunch/morning/afternoon tea for the weekend: \$25

Booking is essential: nhillhistorical@gmail.com

Port Fairy Museum and Archives



In addition to Lynda Tieman (centre) receiving her RHSV Award of Merit at Port Fairy on 14 July, two other valuable members of Port Fairy Museum and Archives were also acknowledged for their contributions to the group: Lyn Brown (left), Family Research Officer, and Carol Heard, Social Media Manager and Photograph Collection Team Manager.

Camperdown and District Historical Society

Audio QR codes for historic sites

Camperdown and District Historical Society is proud to have worked with Corangamite Shire on this innovative project. Having simple QR code inks to spoken descriptions of our Heritage sites is a very exciting way of promoting them. Congratulations to Corangamite Shire for this important initiative. Society committee members provided scripts to be produced by ACE Radio announcers.

The 'Scan to Listen' QR codes are attached to related heritage signs or can be accessed at tinyurl.com/corangamite-stories

CAMPERDOWN ECHOES OF HISTORY

Discover Camperdown's history like never before with our new audio tour series.

SIX STORIES, SIX LANDMARKS

- Camperdown Clock Tower
- Theatre Royal
- Finlay Avenue
- Soldiers Memorial
- Courthouse
- Post & Telegraph Office

SCAN • LISTEN • EXPLORE

Scan the QR code or visit tinyurl.com/corangamite-stories to hear the tales behind some of our most iconic locations.

ace radio-audio-create

CAMPERDOWN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY

CORANGAMITE SHIRE

Upcoming RHSV Seminar Weekend

Saturday 3 October – Sunday 4 October

Exploring the foundations of rural Victorian townships: a focus on Kilmore and Lancefield

Co-hosted by Romsey-Lancefield and Kilmore Historical Societies at Lancefield

Presentations include:

Brian Clancy: The Catholic Church in Kilmore

Dr Rosalie Triolo OAM: State Schools in the region

Craige Proctor: Telling the stories of pioneer women: a framework

Paul Fearon: Bringing the railways to country Victoria

Further details and registration:

[Event program and booking page](#)

Coleraine Historical Society



New opening hours from 28 July:
Wednesdays 9 a.m. – 12 noon

[**Coleraine Historical Society**](#)

President: Clare Durst

Secretary/Treasurer: Donna Hutchins



Geelong Museum Association Inc.

'Last Sunday Series'

National Wool Museum, Geelong, 1.30 p.m. - 3.00 p.m.

Free entry. Afternoon cuppa provided; gold coin donation.

Sunday 30 August

The rise and fall of an Industrial Giant: the history and progress of International Harvester over 200 years.

There have been few greater shocks to Geelong's economy over time than the closure in 1982 of the International Harvester Company at North Shore. The plant had opened in July 1939 and was shortly afterwards commandeered by the Australian Government, primarily for the manufacture of war materials. The Company had a long history from its establishment in the USA in the mid-nineteenth century.

Speaker: Ron Medson spent 25 years with International Harvester at North Shore and continued to run annual reunions for past employees for a further 20 years after the Plant closed in 1982. He is the Founder and Inaugural President of the International Harvester Club of Australia. The Club looks after a memorabilia collection at the Geelong Showgrounds.

Sunday 29 November

Independent Cement and Lime. The story of an Australian cement company.

Speaker: Jacqui Lane is a Corporate Historian and Founder of the Book Advisor. She has written 54 company histories so far and published over 200.

Sunday 27 September

A Life Journey in Fashion

An inspirational story of a "self-made" Dressmaker and Designer. A lady who with a lot of courage, skill and determination went on to compete on dance floors across Victoria, "Dress" bridal parties of the Western District and beyond and challenge the best from interstate in "Fashion on the Field".

Brenda Fraser will tell us how her story began and how she was able to accomplish her achievements.

Sunday 25 October

The Light on the Hill: an updated history of the Australian Labor Party.

The story is told through the people who made it. All Labor's prime ministers feature – Watson, Fisher, Hughes, Scullin, Curtin, Chifley, Whitlam, Hawke, Keating, Rudd, Gillard and Albanese. The sweeping story-telling blends their governments' achievements and tribulations with those of the ALP State branches, conflict over organisation and policy, emotional highs and lows and intrigue and intimidation behind the scenes.

Acclaimed historian and biographer **Ross McMullin** has combined prodigious research and narrative flair to produce this updated history.

Current details for talks are updated on the [GMA Facebook page](#)

Expression of Interest for the role of Western Historian Newsletter Editor

If there is someone in your organisation who may be interested in taking on the role of Newsletter Editor from January 2027 – or earlier – please let us know!

Perhaps this role could be shared between two or even three people across the WVAHS network?

wwahsinc@gmail.com

A new logo?

WVAHS
Western Victorian Association
of Historical Societies Inc.

WVAHS
Western Victorian Association
of Historical Societies Inc.

If anyone has ideas for a new WVAHS logo, we would be keen to have your thoughts and, even better, some samples!

wwahsinc@gmail.com

Contributions for the December issue of *Western Historian* should be submitted by **15 November**, please. As usual the December issue will include member groups' reports to the Zone meetings in October.