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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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Please email your report or any other contributions for publication as Word documents with images as jpgs to Craig Proctor, wvahsinc@gmail.com

Member Groups

as at June 2025

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)
 Edenhope
 Geelong & South Western
 Rail Heritage Society
 Glenthompson
 Goldfields (Dunolly)
 Halls Gap and Grampians
 Harrow Heytesbury
 Hopetoun Horsham
 Inglewood 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

Having assumed the mantle of W.V.A.H.S. President at our AGM in April, my first duty is to express gratitude to Michael Menzies for helping to steer the 'Western Vic' ship for nine years. Michael has always travelled to events and acquitted his role with geniality and good humour. As Immediate Past President, Michael will remain on our Executive Committee.



As you probably know by now, in January I took on the role of Chair of the RHSV Historical Societies Support Committee following Dr Rosalie Triolo relinquishing the role to become President of the Federation of Historical Societies. Rosalie and I continue to collaborate in different ways and I know she hopes to continue being involved with W.V.A.H.S. events when she can.

The roles of HSSC Chair and W.V.A.H.S. President complement each other as both involve networking, event planning and sharing of information with member groups and other organisations. I already envisage considerable overlap.

We welcome to the Executive Committee Colleen Forbes of the Nhill and District Historical Society. Colleen and her team are doing great things at Nhill, as are *all* of our Committee Members in their respective Societies.

In the short term I will continue to produce our newsletter even though I am now also producing the FAHS newsletter. Being Newsletter Editor is the best way of staying informed about what our member groups are doing and achieving as I read all reports submitted and marvel at what the groups do and initiatives they continue to implement. For example, I note that Glenthompson hopes to organise some RHSV-inspired Cataloguing Clinics in the south-west so watch this space! Remember that our newsletter strives to inform all member groups of what is happening in and beyond their own areas.

At the AGM a number of issues were raised and it is my hope that we can bring some goals to fruition. For example, I would like us to consider staging perhaps every two years a conference to provide area-based sharing and learning opportunities. Ideally each such event would be held in a different Zone but I cannot help but feel that these would attract interest from members in other Zones as well. So who's interested?! Can we make this happen? See my report of the AGM on page 4 for a fleshing out of these ideas.

Another issue raised at the AGM was making use of some of our organisation's funds to actually *do* something each year or two. I will also elaborate on this proposal in my report on the AGM.

Finally, wouldn't it be good if those among us adept at using Zoom to attend meetings remotely offered support to those without the confidence to use it? Could we implement an informal network to achieve this?

Now, get stuck into reading this bumper issue of our newsletter and *please remember to forward it on to your members* and interested people.

Craig Proctor

W.V.A.H.S. Member Groups' online presence

Click on the hyperlinks to go to the sites.

Websites

<u>Arapiles (Natimuk)</u>	<u>Geelong South West Rail</u>	<u>Port Fairy</u>
<u>Barham Koondrook</u>	<u>Heritage Society</u>	<u>Pyramid Hill</u>
<u>Birchip</u>	<u>Goldfields (Dunolly)</u>	<u>RHSV History News</u>
<u>Camperdown</u>	<u>Halls Gap & Grampians</u>	<u>St Arnaud</u>
<u>Charlton Golden Grains Museum</u>	<u>Harrow</u>	<u>Stawell</u>
<u>Colac</u>	<u>Hopetoun</u>	<u>Swan Hill</u>
<u>Derrinallum Lismore</u>	<u>Horsham</u>	<u>Terang</u>
<u>Dimboola</u>	<u>Macarthur</u>	<u>Warracknabeal</u>
<u>Donald</u>	<u>Maryborough Midlands</u>	<u>Warrnambool</u>
<u>Dunkeld</u>	<u>Mount Rouse (Penshurst)</u>	<u>Wedderburn</u>
<u>Edenhope</u>	<u>Nhill Silo Heritage Project</u>	<u>WVAHS</u>
	<u>Ouyen</u>	

Facebook pages

<u>Arapiles (Natimuk)</u>	<u>East Loddon (Mitiamo)</u>	<u>Nullawil</u>
<u>Ararat</u>	<u>Edenhope</u>	<u>Ouyen</u>
<u>Balmoral</u>	<u>Glenthompson</u>	<u>Port Fairy</u>
<u>Barham Koondrook</u>	<u>Halls Gap & Grampians</u>	<u>Pyramid Hill</u>
<u>Boort</u>	<u>Hopetoun</u>	<u>Rainbow</u>
<u>Camperdown</u>	<u>Inglewood</u>	<u>RHSV</u>
<u>Carisbrook</u>	<u>Kerang</u>	<u>St Arnaud</u>
<u>Charlton Golden Grains Museum</u>	<u>Koroit</u>	<u>Swan Hill</u>
<u>Cobden</u>	<u>Landsborough</u>	<u>Terang</u>
<u>Cohuna</u>	<u>Maryborough Midlands</u>	<u>Warrnambool</u>
<u>Colac</u>	<u>Minyip</u>	<u>Wimmera Mallee Pioneer</u>
<u>Donald</u>	<u>Mortlake</u>	<u>Museum Jeparit</u>
<u>Dunkeld</u>	<u>Mount Rouse (Penshurst)</u>	<u>WVAHS</u>
<u>Goldfields (Dunolly)</u>	<u>Nhill Silo Heritage Project</u>	

AGM, Zone and Executive Meetings Geelong, 5 April 2025

Thirty-two people attended our AGM at Geelong's National Wool Museum on Saturday 5 April with representatives from Donald, Ararat, Stawell, Mortlake, Charlton, Jeparit, Swan Hill, Nhill, Ouyen, Nullawil, Warrnambool, Colac, Maryborough Midlands, Camperdown and Nhill Silo Heritage Project. Apologies were received from Wedderburn, Barham Koondrook, Pyramid Hill, Minyip, Dimboola, Warracknabeal, Boort, Cobden, Macarthur, Arapiles, Koroit, Horsham and Inglewood. This issue of the newsletter includes reports provided by most groups attending and by others who were apologies.

Following Michael Menzies' decision to step down after nine years as President, [Craigie Proctor](#) (Mortlake and Wimmera Mallee Pioneer Museum, Jeparit) assumed the role of President (and continues as Newsletter Editor) while [Helen Curkpatrick](#) continues in the role of Secretary/Treasurer for which we are all very thankful. [Brett Leslie](#) (Landsborough) continues in the role of Vice President. Our Executive Committee saw [Colleen Forbes](#) of the Nhill and District Historical Society being nominated and accepted. Colleen joins [Carolyn Olive](#) (Charlton), [Robin Parker](#) (Carisbrook), [Robert McLaren](#) (Mortlake), [Kate van Dyck](#) (Stawell) and [Tracey Potatau-Wright](#) (Glenthompson).

Our dinner was at the Great Western Hotel in Newtown with the atmosphere being most convivial. Rob McLaren gave a memorable post-dinner talk on what studying local history and storytelling over many years has meant for him personally. On the Sunday morning Rob led around twelve of us on a fascinating tour of historic inner Geelong, focussing on churches, schools, land use, the railway and the port which was an eye-opener even for those of us who have lived in the Geelong area for many years. Rob had put a great deal of thought and effort into preparing for this engaging tour.

As always, we acknowledge Helen's sterling and meticulous efforts over months to 'make things happen' and extend our thanks to Michael Menzies for initiating holding the AGM in Geelong.

AGM Discussion points

The Executive Committee discussed whether or not WVAHS should earmark a small proportion of our available funds for special purposes and this proposal was taken to the members attending. Suggestions included establishing some form of a bursary to help to support someone studying a history course at university or to provide small grants to member groups to assist in achieving a certain goal. While nothing specific was decided on, these and several other ideas are on the table. It was also suggested that we try to establish a sub-committee overseeing how to drive this initiative.

WVAHS Conference?

As incoming President, I offered several other suggestions which members attending considered worthwhile. The Association of Eastern Historical Societies (outer metro Melbourne areas) stages a conference every two years run along similar lines to the RHSV's seminar days. The Central Highlands Historical Association would like to run its own conference with guest speakers offering attendees 'take aways' for their own member groups and the CHHA President contacted me recently for suggestions about how this might run. I see much merit in WVAHS staging a conference every second year, separate from our AGM and Zone Meeting days which occur later in the year. The WVAHS stable comprises a large number of people with vast reserves of knowledge and expertise across different areas; many of us have been doing what we do for decades. Surely there is scope for this body of experts to come together and actively showcase these skills among their peers? The conference would run for just one day in a reasonably central location. Alternatively, each year one Zone could stage its own mini-conference but open to members in other Zones. Guest speakers and presenters could obviously include local specialists and achievers in the field of history or collection management etc. and people from the RHSV perhaps but ideally these would be people from within our own organisation, speaking on *their* achievements and giving attendees 'how to' ideas to take away. I have no doubt this could provide considerable value adding to what we all do. The sense of collegiality at our AGMs – not to mention the passionate discussion – suggest this is worth tapping into in a more structured way.

WVAHS Speakers List?

A variation on this idea is for us to create our own Speakers List, along the lines of the RHSV HSSC's Speakers List with which many of us are familiar i.e. a list of people willing to be guest speakers at member group events and AGMs or other meetings. Surely, with the expertise within our own network, we could put together an impressive – and inspiring – list from which groups could select speakers? By the time this issue of the newsletter goes out at the end of May I hope to have sent an email to all member groups canvassing interest in and support for this initiative. As someone who is already on the RHSV's Speakers List and who knows how useful it can be – more and more I am being invited to speak at events – I look forward to creating our *own* WVAHS Speakers List.



Work.....



Learning.....



.....and conviviality



Setting off for our Sunday morning tour of historic Geelong.

All photos courtesy of Tracey Potatau-Wright of Glenthompson. More photos on page 31.

Spring 2025 Zone and Executive Meetings and 2026 AGM, Zone and Executive Meetings

WHO WILL HOST?

The AGM and WVAHS Executive Meetings normally rotate between each of the three Zones. The 2026 AGM is scheduled to be hosted by a Society in the North Central Zone.

2026 meetings:

AGM and Zone Meetings in April at ? (NC Zone)
Wimmera Mallee Zone Meeting at ?
Southern Zone Meeting at ?
North Central Zone and Executive Meetings at ?

2025 meetings:

AGM and Zone Meetings at [Geelong](#), 5 April
Wimmera Mallee Zone Meeting at [Wimmera Mallee Pioneer Museum, Jeparit](#), Sunday 28 September
Southern Zone and Executive Meetings at [Cobden](#),
North Central Zone Meeting at [Pyramid Hill](#) in October

2024 meetings:

AGM and Zone Meetings at [Nhill](#) (Nhill Silo Heritage Project) on Saturday 6 April and Sunday 7 April
Wimmera Zone Meeting and Executive Meetings at [Minyip](#) on Saturday 14 September
Midlands Zone Meeting at [Birchip](#) on Sunday 15 September
Southern Zone Meeting at [Colac](#) on Saturday 12 October

2023 meetings:

AGM and Zone Meetings at [Charlton](#) on Saturday 15 & Sunday 16 April
Midlands Zone and WVAHS Executive Meetings: [Nullawil](#) on Sunday 24 September
Southern Zone Meeting: [Camperdown](#) on Saturday 21 October
Wimmera Zone Meeting and 60th Birthday lunch: [Horsham](#) on Wednesday 27 September

2022 meetings were to be held (all but the AGM were cancelled due to floods *):

AGM and Zone Meetings at [Warrnambool](#) on Saturday 2 & Sunday 3 April
Midlands Zone and WVAHS Executive Meetings: [Nullawil](#) on Saturday 29 October *.
Southern Zone Meeting: [Camperdown](#) on Saturday 22 October *
Wimmera Zone Meeting: [Dimboola](#) on Saturday 22 October *

2021 meetings were to be held (all but the AGM were cancelled due to Covid-19 *):

AGM and Zone Meetings at [Stawell](#) on Saturday 10 & Sunday 11 April
Southern Zone Meeting: [Warrnambool](#) on Saturday 16 October *
Midlands Zone and WVAHS Executive Meetings: [Donald](#) on Saturday 30 October *
Wimmera Zone Meeting: [Dimboola](#) on Sat. 23 Oct. *

2020 meetings were to be held (all cancelled due to Covid-19 *):

AGM and Zone Meetings at [Ararat](#) on Saturday 28/Sunday 29 March *
Midlands Zone and WVAHS Executive Meetings: in September/October *
Southern Zone Meeting: in September/October *
Wimmera Zone Meeting: in September/October *

2019 meetings:

AGM and Zone Meetings at [Swan Hill](#) on Saturday 30/Sunday 31 March
Wimmera Zone Meeting: [Natimuk](#) on Sunday 22 September
Midlands Zone Meeting: [Serpentine](#) on Saturday 26 October
Southern Zone and WVAHS Executive Meeting: [Derrinallum](#) on Sunday 20 October

2018 meetings:

AGM and Zone Meetings at [Port Fairy](#) on Saturday 21/Sunday 22 April
Southern Zone Meeting: [Colac](#) on Saturday 13 October
Midlands Zone Meeting: [Carisbrook](#) on Saturday 20 October
Wimmera Zone and WVAHS Executive Meeting: [Warracknabeal](#) on Saturday 27 October

2017 meetings:

AGM and Zone Meetings at [Stawell](#) on Saturday 29/Sunday 30 April
Southern Zone Meeting: [Warrnambool](#) on Saturday 21 October – cancelled due to low numbers
Midlands Zone Meeting: [Charlton](#) on Saturday 28 October
Wimmera Zone Meeting: [Rupanyup](#) on Sunday 19 November

Thus, between 2017 and 2025 our AGMs have been at Nhill, Charlton, Warrnambool, twice at Stawell, Swan Hill, Port Fairy and Geelong.

[Southern Zone Meetings](#) have been at Camperdown, Warrnambool, Derrinallum and Colac.

[Wimmera \(now Wimmera Mallee\) Zone Meetings](#) have been at Horsham, Dimboola, Natimuk, Warracknabeal, Rupanyup and Minyip.

[Midlands \(now North Central\) Zone Meetings](#) have been at Nullawil, Donald, Serpentine, Carisbrook, Charlton and Birchip.

Zone Reports

Pyramid Hill and Districts Historical Society (NC)

[Facebook page](#)

[Museum webpage](#)

At Pyramid Hill we are continually refurbishing the Museum by updating and re-designing our displays. This ensures visitors can enjoy the full potential of the Museum and understand the rich history of Pyramid Hill and surrounding districts.

Over the last six months we have had many visitors and enquiries from people residing in Melbourne and beyond seeking information on relatives to complete their family histories.

We received a donation from the Friends of the Descendants of Rats of Tobruk Association which consists of individual portraits of the 17 Rats of Tobruk from Pyramid Hill. These were installed in the RSL Hall where our Military History is on display in time for Remembrance Day, the service being held in front of a large gathering and the Portraits unveiled.

Recently we have had two further donations of interest:

- A leatherbound edition of *The Complete Works of Tennyson* which was presented to Miss Knox, a teacher at Mincha West, when she left the school in 1897 and has now found its way back to Pyramid Hill.
- A former resident has donated a glass display cabinet with her collection of Antique Dolls to create further interest for our visitors.



Cheryl Jones, Archivist

Warracknabeal and District Historical Society (WM)

[Website](#)

With Easter fast approaching we are preparing for our 56th Annual Vintage Machinery Rally.

This year's feature is Caterpillar and American machinery. We are fortunate to have the Caterpillar Antique Owner's Club supporting the Rally. We should have a very good display of Caterpillar tractors. Chaff cutting, baling, axe handle making and stationary engines are some of the displays. On the Sunday we will again hold a Music Festival on the redeveloped grounds with food stalls to cater for the crowd.

The Society has had a very successful year. We have themed some of our meetings - Australia Day, Anzac Day and Kitchenalia - providing extra interest for members. Christmas was celebrated with an excursion to Woods Heritage Museum at Rupanyup.

There have been several milestones in the area. The Primary / Elementary School was 150 years old and the High / Secondary School was 100 years old. Unfortunately, celebrations were very limited as they had just moved into new premises and time did not permit a major function. The Church of Christ also celebrated 100 years. It is now a privately owned holiday home. Our unique Ladies Rest Rooms was listed on the Victorian Heritage Council Register.

The Historical Centre is always busy with many research requests coming in. Two of our members have spent many hours combining research and obituary records to make future research easier. We continue to file photos - a never-ending job! We have also placed several more plaques on businesses in Scott Street.

The Warehouse continues to be very popular with locals and visitors. We have had a small change in staff with a couple of people retiring and several new people volunteering to work.

The Warehouse supports the work done at the Museum and always make generous donations to not-for-profit organisations in the town.

The redevelopment of the grounds at the Museum is almost complete and looking great. The shelter is in place with the BBQ almost ready for use. The children's play area is still in need of some equipment and most of the landscaping is complete. A watering system has also been installed and will provide a great place for the Music Festival at Easter.

We again had a successful potato harvest using the old potato digger. Baked potatoes will be on the menu for the Rally. Beans were planted south of the Museum producing an average yield. Oats were also planted and have been cut to make chaff at Easter. The workshop skillion now has a wonderful concrete floor thanks to the Volunteer Grant. (No more nuts and bolts lost in the dirt!) Our members have attended many Rallies over the past six months. They also took several tractors to the Longerenong Field Days to be in the Tractor Parade.

Lesley Stephan

Mortlake and District Historical Society (S)



[Facebook page](#)

The MDHS has been active within the community over the past six months. Following on from the launch of Florence Charles' book, *Darlington Revisited 2023*, the MDHS was busy with follow up sales. At this time all copies have been sold and pre-orders are being taken to enable us to ascertain the viability of a second print run of this book.

In November 2024 the MDHS joined with other Mortlake Community groups to celebrate the centenary of the Thomas Montgomery Pavillon which is located in the Mortlake Gardens. The MDHS provided the historical information on the Pavilion and arranged for signage to display this information. Our members helped run the day as well. While the attendance on the day was below what was hoped, it was a successful event. The Montgomery Pavilion had a clean-up and refresh, a significant local benefactor of the Mortlake community was remembered and finally, the local community was made aware of or reminded of this valuable space that is available to all to use in the Mortlake gardens.

Research enquiries often are resolved quickly and the MDHS moves onto the next project. A recent research enquiry from the USA, however, was also to provide additional information on the Ballangeich district which is part of our area of interest. It was an excellent reminder for the MDHS on how one external enquiry can open doors to new knowledge and learnings. The enquiry resulted in linkages between district families being established, greater knowledge of a church extension and an insight into the legal system of the 1880s in Victoria.

A successful excursion was organised for February 2025 with a car tour of the Ballangeich district twelve miles south of Mortlake. A goal the MDHS set for 2025 was to be more visible in our community. This was an outstanding success when over 50 people gathered at the old Ellerslie bridge on the Hopkins River. It showed the level of interest in local history within our community.

It was a valuable reminder to the MDHS of the important role that we fulfill at Mortlake. From the day we gained new members, donations of documents long held by individuals and much new information as people throughout this day contributed to the stories of old Ballangeich. Plus, the pre-work for the day also rejuvenated the links between the MDHS and the Ballangeich community.

A number of other smaller projects are continuing for the MDHS. Old water troughs in the Mortlake township are in need of maintenance and our Society is trying to facilitate this work to be undertaken.

Digitisation of the *Mortlake Dispatch* is another project for which some groundwork to ascertain processes to achieve this have been worked through. The next challenge is to obtain the funding required to progress this project to the next level.

The lease of The Ark, our home base in Mortlake, has finally been updated after an extended period of waiting for paperwork from the owner of our site. Plus some plumbing issues in the Ark have also been addressed, a leaking pipe over the Christmas period being the catalyst for this work being completed.

At the start of 2025 Craige Proctor, a longtime member of the MDHS committee, was appointed as Chair of the Historical Societies Support Committee (HSSC), which is under the auspices of the Royal Historical Society of Victoria. This is a significant achievement for Craige and is due reward for his work over many years in the local history arena. Craige will attempt to make time for his interest in both the Mortlake and Jeparit Historical Societies, as he is a member of both.

Another task for Craige Proctor in his 'spare' time was being approached by Cooinda Terang to research and compile a book for the 70th anniversary of this organization. The book has been completed and will be launched in early April 2025. Cooinda Terang has been a leader in the disability field and the book is a celebration of all that has been achieved. In the completion of this book, Craige has stated that he is in awe of achievements of the Cooinda organisation and community support that it has been able to garner through the decades since it began in 1955.

Finally, the MDHS Newsletter has a new editor as of October 2024. Sue Potter, after a long period in this role, has handed over to Kimberley Parker. As with all editors, Sue brought her own style to the newsletter and in particular focused on buildings and people of Mortlake. Kim has taken on the role with energy and has made changes to the look of the newsletter which has been well received.

Robert McLaren, President



Donald History Society (NC)

[Website](#)



[Facebook page](#)

Since our last zone meeting the huge task of transferring our Museum's cataloguing sheets to a FileMaker program is well underway.

Jim Balmer, who had decided to stay in Donald for six weeks after travelling in his motor home for some time, asked to visit the Courthouse Museum. He is a self-taught violinist who plays mostly Irish and Scottish jigs and he loves the opportunity to play for an audience so we booked him for two recitals at the Courthouse Museum. It proved an ideal venue for his informal performance and all who attended really enjoyed Jim's repertoire and style of playing.

Two couples travelling from different parts of the state to the Patchewollock Music Festival met at Donald and travelled on together. They decided to view the Courthouse Museum and, while being shown through, Gaye Fox from Apollo Bay played "Abide With me" on an organ donated by the Coats family. It played very well but plenty of training would be needed to pump the pedal fast and long enough.

Our October guest speaker was Gavin Young, principal of Donald State School. Gavin spoke of the difference between teaching in the past compared with the present day. This was followed by members exchanging stories of their school days. Thanks to the Courthouse Museum and our comprehensive photograph collection, an excellent display was provided for the State School's 150th year celebrations in November.

Members of the Meyer family travelled to Donald in November for our annual luncheon held at the Jeffcott Hotel. Our guest speaker, Vivienne Davidson, spoke on the role her ancestors, Johann August Meyer and his wife Charlotte, played in the development of the Donald township. Following lunch an information board erected at the front of the Courthouse Museum telling the story of these pioneers was unveiled by descendant, John Meyer. His generous donation allowed us to erect both this board and another at the memorial cairn located at the site of Meyer's original "shanty".

We managed to keep the archives open Tuesdays and Fridays 10am to 4pm and Wednesdays 9am to 3pm over December and January and they will be the new times for this year. The archives have been kept busy with a variety of inquiries. We have had several new homeowners come in wanting to know the history of their house and Ann Walsh's books "Now & Then" Volume One and Two, have proved invaluable.

Our February guest speaker, Dougal McAlister, a young farmer from Banyena, spoke on Regenerative Agriculture, a conservation and rehabilitation approach to food and farming and in March Isabelle Flett spoke on the history of St Andrew's Church which turned 100 on 19th March.

Due to the last moment cancellation of the Esoteric Festival at Donald in March, our Op-shop benefited from festivalgoers taking time to shop in town.

Plans are underway to have some overdue painting and renovations done at our Archives. Not sure we are looking forward to moving furniture and the many old photos and certificates from the walls! Hopefully we can find a few younger volunteers to help.

Ann Dunstan

Horsham and District Historical Society



[Website](#)

Horsham Historical Society was saddened by the death in February of former *Wimmera Mail Times* photographer Ian Ward. Ian was also a Society member and his extensive body of work is still being catalogued by the Society for accessing by future generations.

The monthly guest speaker series continues and a recent highlight was *Wimmera Mallee News* principal David Ward's presentation detailing the history of print news in Horsham and the Wimmera which David and his family are central to. HHS is about to resume a monthly presence in the revamped *Wimmera Mail Times* which now incorporates *The Horsham Times*.

And 2025 is finally the year in which the Society expands its footprint with discussions between us and the Horsham Rural City Council almost at a conclusion so that we may occupy more space in the Mechanics' Institute building to showcase various artefacts which are currently out of sight.

Stuart Hall, President

Wimmera Mallee Pioneer Museum, Jeparit (WM)

[Facebook page](#)

The Wimmera Mallee Pioneer Museum at Jeparit is constantly exploring options for enhancing its profile beyond Jeparit and to attract visitors. It has become a member of the new Grampians Wimmera Mallee Tourism body and we hope this will promote our Museum more widely.

Being on a 10-acre site with a vast array of mechanical artefacts and being a community asset of the Hindmarsh Shire Council, we are constantly having to comply with OH&S requirements which is challenging and time-intensive, especially in regard to maintenance of our facilities but we accept that this is essential.

During its 55 years as a tourist attraction various attempts have been made to document the collection of farm machinery but also the items in our eleven heritage buildings. Obviously this is a vast undertaking. We have enlisted financial support from Hindmarsh Shire Council towards providing curatorial support but the groundwork for this is still being laid. Part of this initiative is developing our first Collections Policy and we have found the RHSV's monthly Cataloguing Clinics via Zoom a very useful tool for helping us navigate this.

We are also attempting to engage with a wider and younger audience, specifically the Hindmarsh Shire Youth Council. Our goal is to encourage younger community members to see themselves as future volunteers and even historians but also to enlist their support with technical skills such as film making and database management.

We continue to produce storyboards to enhance the visitor experience and feedback on these has been very positive. We are also attempting to develop an Education Kit for younger visitors in different age groups, something other similar facilities have developed.

We have been surprised by the success of our new line of 'merch', jigsaws of the Museum but also of the local community and landscapes. These are produced in Ballarat and we encourage other Societies to consider this 'easy' and cost effective means of fundraising.

We continue to broaden our volunteer base as much as we can and have staged two social events for the community, encouraging them to visit the site for a free barbecue and 'meet and greet'. Like most other groups we are constantly having to rethink how we maximise interest in our asset.

'New ways of doing things' has become our mantra although this can be challenging and needs to be packaged sensitively for the community and other stakeholders.

Craige Proctor, Secretary



Minyip and District Historical Society (WM)

[Facebook page](#)

At our recent Annual Meeting the following individuals were elected to fill vacancies:

President - Wayne Jackson

Vice President – Rae Talbot

Secretary – Chris Niewand

Treasurer – Sue Korrel

Committee members – Narelle Funcke, Gillian Heintze

Our major project for the next twelve months will be working with the Minyip Lions Club to collate material to be used in the creation of a memorial to the original selectors and settlers of the area. The memorial will cover the parishes of Dunmunkle, Nullan, Laen, Rich Avon West and parts of Lallat, Rupanyup and Ashens.

We are continuing work to digitise as much historical material held in vertical files as we can along with the transfer of microfiche material, also to digital form. This is a time consuming process and with limited personnel will be ongoing.

The lack of space in our present center (the Minyip Guardian Office) remains an issue and considering the estimated cost to extend the building we will need to consider all possible alternatives.

We are averaging around eight to our monthly meetings which is reasonable but we continue to seek new members (as do most like groups).



Wayne Jackson, President

Ouyen District History & Genealogy Centre (WM)

[Facebook page](#)



The Ouyen District History & Genealogy Centre has been researching our records for various enquires via our website and Facebook. We had a visit from David Spencer of England. David migrated to Ouyen with his family in March 1964 and stayed until July 1966 and he went to Ouyen Primary School. A newspaper article was found in the North West Express of Wednesday, March 25, 1964 'Migrant family has quick change.' The family were from Leicester and were sponsored by the Underbool Methodist Church 'Bring out a Briton Committee.' David was very happy to find photos, maps, articles from the archive and school records. Mr Spencer (David's father) was employed at the North West Express as a printer.

Our most recent request was began late last year from Mr Ross Hailes of Canada who wished to return two World War 1 commemorative medallions to Underbool or if that was not possible, to our Ouyen centre. These medallions belonged to Ross's great-uncle Gordon Cotter, a storekeeper in Underbool and who had served in World War 1. Gordon Cotter's parents were Joseph and Mary Cotter. Joseph Cotter first operated his store from a tent in the railway yard at Underbool. One medallion was presented by the Citizens of Underbool and the other from his family. These medallions were held together with a lock of Jennie Cotter's hair (Gordon's sister and Ross's grandmother). Ross and his family are members of the Salvation Army and they decided to walk from Renmark where his grandmother Jennie is buried, raising money for the Salvation Army for disadvantaged and abused women. They walked to Mildura and raised \$10,500.00 which they handed to the Salvation Army in Mildura. They then walked to Ouyen and visited the Ouyen History Centre where we had found records of another branch of the family. Elizabeth May Cotter had a store next to our Centre in Ouyen which they were unaware of. An enjoyable morning tea was held with Ross and family members.

We joined them the next day in Underbool where the medallions were presented to the Underbool Progress Association at the Underbool/Linga Hall where they have a display of World War 1 and 2 memorabilia. There was one other medallion given to another soldier of the First World War by the citizens of Underbool. This story was in our *North West Express* newspaper of 27 March 2025 and part two the following week. The family walked some 290 kilometres and covered the areas that the early pioneer family had traversed.

We also received a MRCC Community Grant for \$692.30. Part of this was used to frame a silk parochial roll of World War 1 soldiers which was found in a cupboard at All Saints' Anglican Church, a digital projector and screen and several A4 and smaller display stands.

Sue and Colin Willox

Koroit and District Historical Society (S)



[Facebook page](#)

Although a small group, Koroit and District Historical Society continues to be busy as we open the Museum on the second Sunday of each month or by appointment and for special events held at Victoria Park where our headquarters are situated.

Although we have visitors from far and wide, our donation box does not reflect this as most people don't carry coin in their pockets anymore. If there is a group with secure, easy to use and not expensive card donation systems, we would love to hear from you.

We opened for the Lake School of Music and Dance photo session in early January as well as for the Truck Show later in the month. We opened in February for the Koroit Agricultural/Field Day and during the Sheep Dog Trials. We opened for the Koroit Car Show and Swap Meet in March. A new poster display was created for these openings with the Topic being "Times Gone By".

Members also researched the history of the Koroit Croquet Club and made a display of 100 years of Croquet in Koroit.

There are always research questions about families, houses and clubs asked for on open days as well as by email.

At present there is a researcher looking at Koroit in 2003.

I thank Kathy, Gerard, Trevor and Sue for finding answers to these enquiries.

We are now preparing to take part in the Koroit Irish Festival on 25th-27th April.

As with other groups it would be great to have more volunteers.

Best Wishes to all other Societies,

Margaret Trotter, President

If any Society can share their experience with and advice relating to an electronic donation platform, please contact the Koroit and District Historical Society. Ed.

Birchip Historical Society (NC)

Website



Our work with P12 Students on some pioneers was added to their 2024 School magazine which was very gratifying. Our Archivist Elaine has also had the first group of students for this year visit our museum looking at World War 1 exhibits and for information. She was able to suggest some useful sites for them as well.

Our new display features some photos and artefacts about the two men whose important life changing events of 1969 are depicted on our new Wall Art in the town. Frank Hunt, Vietnam veteran and Ray Naughton, the man who beamed signals from the Moon from his home-made parabolic dish in his own backyard, managing to receive signals before NASA in America. Ray, a radio ham and electrician with an electrical and white goods business in town, also made television towers and antennae before the Moon venture. On that same day in 1969 Frank Hunt was badly injured when one of his platoon stepped on a mine in Vietnam. The song "I Was Only 19" tells the story of both events. Our display also includes school photos of 1969 students, buildings and clothing from that era. The Wall was unveiled in our recent town "Mali Heart" celebration weekend, when family members of both men were able to be present. Our museum members were able to research the information and find pictures for MAHA, the artist.

Our Bills' Trough has been refurbished and restored by talented stone mason Jim Petrie and returned to its place of honour. New signs will be made for it and the wall. Our Centenary clock is well on the way to being restored and returned to the main street too.

The Cemetery renovations involved some of our members when iron markers were lifted and new concrete rows were added to replace individual plinths. Our archives were invaluable for ensuring all were in correct places as well as vase blocks added to the correct plots.

Members worked with the RSL, CWA, Lions Club and Landcare and Collectable Cars to help with their stalls and displays for the Mali Heart Festival in March as well as having the Museum open for visitors.

Our President was able to finally sell an old truck we have had in storage for a long time and no longer had a suitable place to store.

We finally managed to find homes for several beautiful framed painted embroideries made by a former resident, a 101 year-old lady. She asked to have them hung in prominent places so they are now in our Museum, the Library and the Hospital.

Our new printer/scanner has been set up and is proving to be good value.

A good deal of family research and sporting research has been done by members and we received a box of books from the former Apex Club which included some useful Minute books. We also received several daily radio diaries from Ray Naughton's estate including one with some plans for his parabolic dish for the Moon bounce and letters to other radio enthusiasts.

Our Historical Society hosted the last Zone meeting and the highlight was the presentation from RHSV to our Archivist Elaine McCallum of an Award of Merit for her research and archival work for many years. Family members were present for the award presentation by Rosalie Triolo of the RHSV.

Maureen Donnellon, Secretary

Carisbrook and District Historical Society (NC)

Carisbrook is going well with our diligent members beavering away with the history of our area, each member working together. We have finished our Index of the Births, Deaths and Marriages from the Maryborough Advertiser up until 2025, that we have been able to access. Our Scan Pro hit a bad patch and now it's up and going thanks to Mark Petts. Plans are afoot for our ANZAC Day Commemoration, and despite us all being in the hands of doctors etc., we are getting back to work.

The new technology has made inroads into the way we work and all are learning the changes made by the Boffins and Nerds. We have to find ways to sell ourselves in this new world as many of us have had many birthdays and must bring our work up to date so all the effort is not lost.

With the changes that have been thrust upon us, I find it hard to access most groups, and find that, even though the groups have Facebook pages, there is a lack of contact phone numbers to contact them with a simple social question. Perhaps members will find the time to discuss my thoughts, and offer a solution, as we are all working for the same end, to keep our group solvent, cohesive and helping each other to enjoy our work.

Wishing everyone a happy and successful future and may you find many treasures regarding your history and future plans.

Judith Healey, Vice-president

Nhill and District Historical Society (WM)



It is a pleasure to be part of the WVAHS and to know that we are not alone in our endeavours to keep the Society going by having a support group and when we call for help there is always someone from WVAHS who can point us in the right direction.

The NDHS Committee has had new blood at the helm of our Society since our AGM last year: -

President: Helen Woodhouse-Herrick; Vice President: Wendy Rethus; Treasurer: Tricia Alexander and Secretary/Researcher: Colleen Forbes plus the other four General Committee members: David Brown; Irene Colbert; Maralyn Lowe and Daryl Meek.

We have hit the ground running, setting out the 2025 meeting schedule and activities for the public.

The General meetings are now tri-monthly starting with our first meeting in February. Committee meetings are held before each activity to organise member participation and before a general meeting so we can report on the activity and what has been done since the last meeting. Also, the Committee is emailed as a group about any day-to-day business that requires Committee approval as need be.

It has been a real learning curve for most of us but with the guidance of Helen Curkpatrick and Craige Proctor we are getting there.

By all accounts the Committee is doing a marvellous job, getting our members to come in and give a hand with some of the many jobs which need to be done.

We have gained six new members and have gone from two people volunteering at the Society weekly to nine: David Brown – creating indexes for family tree books; Irene Colbert and Kay Scott – stocktaking by ensuring every item in our collection has a catalogue number; Tricia Alexander (Treasurer) – is working on the photo collection, adding a stamp to each photo; Colleen Forbes (Secretary/Researcher) - research and day-to-day running of the office; Wendy Rethus (Vice President) – Cemetery record updates and photographing headstones; Ian Muller – recently going through Nhill College photos and adding names; now he is going through copies of the Nhill Free Press and scanning all the weddings for our files & later on a book of some sort; Lorraine Pilgrim –

is constantly bringing in photos from her private collection for us to scan and name them.

Joan Bennett is our latest addition to the volunteer list and has taken on a mammoth task of going through our large collection of books in the main hall bookcase that has not been touched since being put there and sorting the books that are significant to our collection from the books every organisation has.

And of course, Helen (President) who brings the cake on Thursdays to make sure everyone is doing ok and asking if we need anything.

On top of all that we have had one guest speaker in February, our most talented Craige Proctor talking about his book on Nhill-born author “Lindsay Russell”.

The Society members have helped the Hindmarsh Shire Council with stories and photos for a project they have for around Nhill Lake.

The NDHS has joined with the National Trust’s “Australian Heritage Festival – UNEARTHED” We thought this appropriate because of the theme and because of Wendy’s work on updating the cemetery records.

So, we are conducting two Nhill cemetery walks during this festival on Sunday 20th April and 4th May. Yvonne Gladdis has stepped up to guide the walk, as she did at the “Back to Nhill” in 2009 but that is not all as Yvonne is also going to be a guest speaker of Saturday 3 May at 10am in the Senior Citizens rooms, speaking on how she came to Nhill and all the things she has accomplished since arriving here. I have read her notes and Yvonne has done a great deal and I am looking forward to hearing her speak.

Plus, we have Craige Proctor lined up for Nhill’s Heritage weekend in October for another guest speaker gig on Saturday the 25th at 1.30pm in the Senior Citizens rooms.

We haven’t managed to sign anyone up yet for the first Saturday in July or August. We would have liked a female teacher to talk about the changes in the school system and how it affected women over the years.

People in the Nhill community have commented that they are so glad the Society is working again, most of them having thought the Society was dead. So we are really humbled to have this sort of feedback from the Nhill Community.

I would like to say that all and all we had a rough start to the year but I think we have ironed out some wrinkles and look forward to a smoother running in the second half of the year.

Helen Woodhouse-Herrick, President

Both Helen Curkpatrick and I attended the Nhill Cemetery Walk on 20 April. Cemetery walks are always great opportunities for a Society to share interesting stories about a district. Congratulations to NDHS for this worthwhile initiative. Ed.

Landsborough and District Historical Group (WM)



[Facebook page](#)

It has been a very busy time for the Historical Group with plenty to report over the past six months.

Our Pyrenees Rail Heritage Signage Project has progressed with all seven signs designed and completed and a couple of weeks ago they were placed on the various sites with thanks to a Landsborough local Daryl Leslie (and his son) Trent who did a wonderful job. As there was considerable expense with the installation, we applied for a further grant from the Pyrenees Shire as part of Capital Works and we received very good news that the application was successful. We have also produced and printed 1,000 booklets to support the Heritage Signage Tour as part of the original funding from Pacific Blue Wind Farms. The booklets will be distributed freely at the various information centres, post offices and other business outlets around the district including Avoca, Beaufort, Ararat, Amphitheatre, Elmhurst, Landsborough and Navarre. We are going to place a booklet holder on each sign so people can also grab a copy at the various sites. The next and final stage is an official launch and plans are in place for a Sunday in May, possibly the 18th or 25th, at the Crowlands Hall - depending on the availability of people including the local MP the Hon. Martha Haylett, Megan Phelan our ward Councillor for the region as well as representatives from Pacific Blue, Land Care groups and the Councils who so generously offered their support for this exciting project. It was not a simple task dealing with three separate councils in which the locations fall, with five of the seven signs falling just outside the Pyrenees Shire Boundary, but we got there in the end with thanks to a real spirit of cooperation and a shared view of the benefits this project can deliver in terms of increased tourism to the area.

Another book has just been completed, with thanks to long-time member Phil Waring who has already authored some excellent books on Hotels in the area including those in Avoca, our own Landsborough book (and more in the pipeline). This one is on our legendary bushranger Jane Valentine and it is a fascinating story tinged with a touch of sadness – and is hot off the presses at a cost of \$20.

In collaboration with the Stawell Historical Society and other smaller groups in the area including Navarre, we are updating and producing a series of booklets covering all the district Cemetery records. It includes a full updated listing of all the burials where possible (given some original records were lost including those at Landsborough prior to 1913) and photos of the surviving headstones, plaques and memorials. Work has been completed for Barkly, Navarre, Landsborough (amongst a number of others in the Stawell area) and Crowlands is in progress. Thanks to the support from the team at Stawell we are progressing well with this.

A wonderful display of old mementos and household items from the late Pat Vendy, donated by her daughter Monica (and descendants of one of the old pioneering Landsborough families), had been in storage for many years but, thanks to our Events Group, we finally had all the material removed and placed on display in a shed in which we had shelving custom made some years ago (before Covid hit) – it will be known as the “Vendy Room” and we hope to get some of the family to visit prior to Easter as part of an unveiling. The set up looks terrific and thanks to Zoe, Jane and the team at the Events Group for the wonderful job they did with this.

Late last year the Pyrenees Shire arranged a workshop at Lexton with the various Historical Societies in the area (Landsborough, Avoca, Beaufort, Snake Valley and the Moonambel Arts & History precinct) in order to provide support and discuss the challenges we all face as Historical Societies – we had some guest presenters including Rosalie Triolo who gave a wonderful presentation about WW1 and how Victorian State Schools coped at that challenging time. Thanks so much to Ned and Sheena at the Council for arranging this excellent day which was very informative and helpful.

Brett Leslie, President



Dimboola and District Historical Society (WM)



[Website](#)

Dimboola's activities over the past months pretty much deal with the general overhaul of the museum's displays. We seem to be perpetually re-arranging everything at once and this was no exception. Firstly, what started innocently enough with a generous donation of two display cases earmarked for our sports room, escalated when we were asked by Council to house the Gerang Kiata Football and Netball Club memorabilia including trophies, jumpers, written histories, Premiership flags and other bits and pieces. We already hold the Gerang Kiata Cricket Club sporting items so we believed it all should be kept together. The reason for the request in the first place was because the items had been displayed in the Gerang Hall for many years after the Clubs disbanded, and the hall is up for auction this month: another casualty of decreased community use and Council budget restraints for ongoing maintenance. Coinciding with these acquisitions we also received several items for a Dimboola Brass Band exhibit complete with mannequins, uniforms and instruments. Creating exhibits for these items in a compact area required some thought, resulting in the courthouse museum being closed to the public now for over a month while we shuffle things around.

Dimboola Masonic Lodge members no longer use the Masonic temple in Dimboola, owing to the ongoing deterioration of the building, and are conducting their meetings in Horsham. Again, in order to preserve our Masonic history we have acquired three very important masonic Pillars, namely, the Corinthian, Ionic and Doric Pillars, representing Wisdom, Strength and Beauty. They have milk glass light shades and stand about 120cm in height. The symbolic relevance of the pillars to Free Masonry is fascinating but too lengthy for this report. A big old table, also from the Masonic Hall, was acquired for our archive room and a very large ornate framed certificate in recognition of services of former Grand Master W. K. Grimes, 1903. The Masonic building is also earmarked to be sold along with our Senior Citizens Hall. It can only be hoped that whoever the new owners will be that these buildings will be re-purposed and not demolished.

Horsham Mitre 10 owner Chris Jones has purchased the former hardware store in Dimboola and will be soon opening it as a smaller Mitre 10. We are very excited, moreso because with the purchase of the shop and sheds another little sad old brick building is included. In poor condition, we thought the worst, that was, until Chris popped in to inquire about its history. We were able to tell him the building dated from the late 1800s and was used in the early 1900s as a billiard room.

He was thrilled and already bricklayers are working on restoration. Fabulous outcome.

Research requests have slowed a little and we are thankful for the lull. We have a very quiet achiever in member Graham Douglas who has now completed transcribing our entire card index into a database of over 7,570 individuals. He is also working on a database of police records of men who served locally, some 90 individuals so far. As well as all this, another database of over 702 local railway men has been achieved so far but with many more to go. This is indeed excellent work by one individual.

The Wimmera Steampunk event on April 12th is another reason we are under the pump to have things in order. The courthouse museum and print museum are included in the programme to open from Thursday through to Sunday. We are conducting a large book sale each day in a gazebo erected in the garden. The books have come to us from many sources. Fiction, non-fiction, some general history (not from the archive) etc. will be available. A steampunk tractor display will be set up in the meeting room, along with repurposed sewing machines which have been converted using anything available to make these little tractors by member Raymond King. Our courthouse will have a circus theme and should be very colourful externally. The last Steampunk event attracted over 450 people through the two museums, free of charge.

I made a quick trip down to Williamstown a few weeks ago to attend one of the talks hosted by the Williamstown Historical Society. I was born there and have always loved the rich maritime history of the area. The talk by historian Brian Haynes was about the floating prison hulks that were moored at Point Gellibrand in Hobsons Bay from around the 1840s right up to the 1860s. The particular time period of 1850 to 1860 was when the ships were used for female prisoners. Around 1,500 females were housed on the hulks, "Success" and "Sacramento" and unfortunately not a great deal has been written about them. Most were short term sentences for vagrancy, prostitution, indecent language, destitution, stealing and so forth. Interestingly, once sentenced, some with babies and children, life on the hulks was portrayed as far better than on the streets where the majority of women came from. Food was plentiful, children had school on board and sentences included sewing, cooking and other homely skills. Needless to say, there was a lot of re-offending. The Irish were very well represented followed by the English then Scottish.

Male prisoners were formerly housed on the hulks then sent to the old Melbourne Gaol after it opened in 1845. Their story is very different as the wardens during that time were brutal which led to revolt and murder. Williamstown Historical Society have an event Calendar on their web page with some very good talks coming up and visitors are always welcome. The lovely historic Town Hall upstairs Council chambers was the venue. As a little kid I was taken by my grandmother to community singing in a big room somewhere inside this huge building and where the words to the songs appeared on a screen and we sang along. I remember clearly that everyone seemed really, really old, and I wasn't too fond of being there. Times have changed.

Evelyn King, Secretary

Camperdown and District Historical Society (S)



[Website](#)

[Facebook page](#)

On the first Tuesday in November we had a shared luncheon and sweep for Committee Members and Volunteers who were able to make it to the Centre.

More food and fellowship with our Christmas Breakup when we visited Committee member Rob Wuchatsch's and Sue's *Stony Rises Homestead*. The homestead had, in poorer times, on the side operated a Rabbit Factory for preserving and canning rabbits.

Currently we have a number of displays at the Centre with one now set up to display the work of local Commercial Artist, Nurse and Landscape Painter Enid Cummins, 1917-2014.

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.

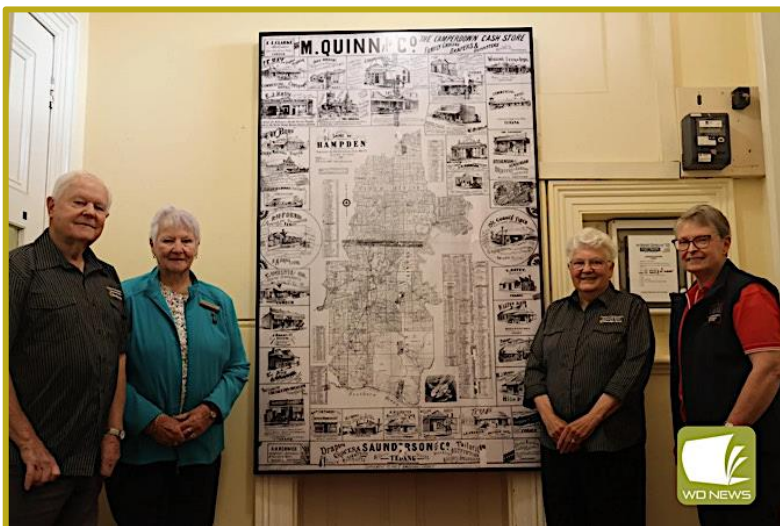
We are again presenting four history talks (28th June) as part of the Robert Burns Celtic Festival to be held in Camperdown from 27 to 29 June 2025 with planning now completed.

An upcoming visit to *Yellangip Homestead*, Darlington on 27th April continues our work to visit local historic properties of interest.

A project of quite a few months' gestation came to fruition in the unveiling of a Shire of Hampden 1891 Map. The large map was a supplement in the *Camperdown Chronicle* of 31st July 1891 and most likely other newspapers throughout the Shire. A framed copy hangs in a meeting room of the Corangamite Shire offices. With permission, we had the map photographed professionally and, after investigation of various reproduction methods, it was decided to use a Melbourne business, Print 2 Metal. The finished product is 20% larger than the original and measures 1.2 metres by 1.9 metres and is lightweight. All rural properties, as at 1891, are shown and numbered with an index of names for each parish listed to the side. Outer edges of the map contain beautiful lithographs advertising various businesses throughout the Shire. Due to the cost of the project we applied for sponsorship from our banker, Cobden & Camperdown Community Finance Ltd (Bendigo Bank) and received \$1,500, covering 50% of the overall cost. Three Community Bank board members attended the launch and shared morning tea.

We also now have a very high-res file of the map which we are willing to share with other societies within Corangamite. If interested, please visit to check out the map and bring a USB if you would like a copy.

Lyle Tune, President



Camperdown and District Historical Society Secretary Maree Belyea (right) with representatives from the Camperdown and Cobden Community Banks in front of the 1891 map. Photo: *Camperdown Chronicle*, WDNews, 10 April 2025.

CAMPERDOWN ROBERT BURNS CELTIC FESTIVAL 2025 - HISTORY TALKS

Saturday 28th June, 10.30 am – 3.45 pm,
Killara Centre, Camperdown
SERIES TICKET: \$25.00 - BOOKINGS:
TRYBOOKING.COM/CXRJT

PROGRAM:

10.30am – 11.30am Honorary Associate
Professor John Sherwood:
'Camperdown's Explosive Past'

11.30am – 12.30pm Emeritus Professor
Richard Broome:
"'Who'll Take a Glove": Aboriginal Tent
Fighters'

1.30pm – 2.45pm Dr Ruth Pullin and Dr
Thomas A. Darragh:
'Camperdown & Kangatong: von Guérard's
Berlin Letters & What They Reveal'

2.45pm – 3.45pm Robert McLaren:
'The Rev. Kay: Front Row Seat to a Changing
World from 1850 to 1880'

Charlton Golden Grains Museum (NC)



[Website](#)

[Facebook page](#)

Our museum has had another productive six months.

We have made great progress with photographing our collection although there is a long way to go. We use Adobe Lightroom to process the images.

We are also making progress uploading our catalogue onto Victorian Collections. We still use a paper catalogue sheet to begin with as it's quicker and easier for our volunteers to do each week. We are enlisting home typists to upload the details and images in the comfort of their own homes and will provide training. We have done this in the past with other activities which don't require being on-site.

We have a Glenloth and district bus tour planned for 4th May which will include afternoon tea at the historic Cobham Hall located in Teddywaddy, one of the original pastoral station homesteads.

We also have a Childhood Treasures and Collectables Day planned for the July school holidays. Displays will include childhood toys of yesteryear plus model ships, planes, trains and automobiles. Children's activities coordinated by the Youth Group will include making pipe-cleaner bubble wands, hopscotch, quoits, hoola hoops, jumping ropes, Lego and a children's train set.

We have had another room in the Wesley Chapel renovated. Once painted, it will house our extensive medical collection. We have five showcases funded by

an AMaGA grant and will incorporate several story-boards. Two of our volunteers are former Matrons of the hospital so we have some qualified help.

As part of our accessibility we now have a second doorbell which can be reached by people in wheelchairs to alert us they are there. We can then direct them to the ramp at a side entrance. We are also getting new locks on doorhandles on all our doors to enable easier access and the convenience of only one key for four different doors.

Our fundraising has been boosted significantly via the Container Deposit Scheme. Eligible containers are dropped off at our local depot (the Charlton News-agency) and we are one of the listed groups to receive donated funds.

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 has featured Dr Mary DeGaris, the daughter of a Wesleyan minister and who was born in Charlton in 1888. She was a World War 1 doctor and a pioneer in obstetrics and was recently immortalised on a Serbian postage stamp.

Carolyn Olive



Glenthompson History Group (S)



Our little group has had a bit on since the last AGM.

We had someone question the placement of some time capsules which sent us on a quest to try to find these elusive creatures. We made use of the local town newsletter, our own Facebook page, our town Facebook page and word of mouth and were stunned by the feedback. Firstly, we had people saying "I remember putting one down while I was at school and it went in....." This has led to over five different areas of the former school grounds being suggested as sites to investigate. Then there is the one that is supposed to be at the former Uniting Church. None of these have been located as yet. Then there is the one under our Millennial Arch. It was filmed so we know exactly where it is and it's due to be raised at the 2026 Australia Day celebrations. And yet another time capsule is recorded by the Anglican Church. They were very smart and actually have a marker for theirs but it's not due up for quite a few years to come. The lesson to take away from this.....if you know of anyone who plans to lay a time capsule for any reason, strongly encourage them to record the date, reason for the capsule and exact location of its resting place, then ensure that information is in that group's minutes or is passed on to your local history group so that, when it's due to be opened, people will know where to find it.

We have also had two groups visit our history centre. The first was a group of gents from a Day Centre at Terang. They thoroughly enjoyed their visit with the highlight being a visit to our Goods Shed section where most of our large farm items are. Some of the gents were able to educate me on what some of the items were (I'm no farmer) and shared their memories of using these items when they were growing up. The next group was from the Macarthur Historical Society. They made a huge day of it, first visiting the Light Horse Museum and having morning tea in Dunkeld, before coming to Glenthompson. Once

here, we met at the cemetery where they gave a talk about two brothers who are buried there but had lived in Macarthur. The brothers were both Doctors and one had brought Bubonic Plague samples back from India with the hope of creating a vaccine but the Government confiscated it instead. It was quite the scandal at the time. Some family members of these two Doctors were in attendance and both shared information and learnt something more about their forebearers. Their visit then saw them tour our Anglican Church to hear the story behind the murals on its inside walls, then across the road to enjoy our Art Show and afternoon tea before finishing off at the History Centre. All in all, a huge day enjoyed by all. The Macarthur group also gifted us with some photos, a book and some information sheets pertaining to the Doctors.

It has been a big year for donations. The items which have been gifted to the History Group have been many and varied, from an unwanted full-sized mannequin from the Colac and District Historical Society to Red Cross awards and badges and its Centenary book for our region, World War 1 postcards and AIF instruction books, a Centenary book of our local Football/Netball league, a milk bucket and award certificates from both CWA and local Floral type events and more. Some of these items are from estates, passed on by family members, while others are brand new items recording some part of our local history. Now to the big job of documenting and cataloguing everything.

We currently have four people on our Centrelink Volunteer list who are busy with researching to meet some of the many requests we receive. Someone noted recently just how much work goes into this research and yet sometimes how little there is to show for that time. But we all appreciate that excluding things is just as important as the things we find. We would love feedback from other groups as to how they manage people who make research requests and then complain when asked to pay for it. Do you require partial pre-payment, do you refuse to pass on the info or do you take it on the chin and just be thankful for the extra information for your collection?

We are hoping to run a cataloguing clinic in the near future and would love to hear from any people and/or groups who might be interested in attending. This would help us both in arranging a suitable venue and in the person from the RHSV feeling that it's worth the trip to the middle of nowhere.

Tracey Potatau-Wright, Secretary



Macarthur Historical Society (S)

Our Cataloguing grant finished last year (thank you AGL Macarthur Windfarm). There are now hard and soft catalogues of about 1,000 items in our Courthouse Museum. During this collating, we discovered items not pertaining to Macarthur's history. Various 1929 *Weekly Times* supplements featuring football teams and local identities of Wangaratta, Corowa, Port Fairy and Portland have now been donated to the relevant Societies. They have been particularly pleased to receive these as the photographs easily identify local people from the 1920s and are in good condition. Something to ask when donating goods to Historical Societies: Is the item relevant to that Society? Do they already have the item? Is it in good condition? I visited Wangaratta Museum to deliver their supplement donation and out the front of the Museum is a Bills water trough similar to Macarthur's. 700 were produced by George and Annis Bills for the working horses transporting goods around Australia. They were installed in the 1930s at a cost of £13 each. Look out for them in country towns as many are still on display. And spare a thought for this philanthropic couple whose estate went on to purchase land in East Burwood and set up the RSPCA, a continuing legacy of George and Annis Bills.

Our end of year trip November 2024 was to Glenthompson History Centre. We stopped off at the Light Horse Museum at Dunkeld. Dave Tyson gave an evocative talk on the Light Horse charge. This is a privately run free Museum, open daily.

Simone Dalton and I gave a talk on the Haydon brothers at the Glenthompson Cemetery, the Haydon graves having a Macarthur connection. Dr Gerald, a Macarthur doctor and Dr Leonard, a global career doctor, had his Bubonic plague bacteria destroyed in Macarthur and the subsequent 1898 court case had interesting comparisons to recent global vaccine pandemic issues. Thanks to Simone for making the journey from Horsham.

A big thank you to Tracey who gathered descendants of the Haydon family graveside and organised the visit to take in the Glenthompson Art show and High Tea, a talk on the murals at the Anglican Church and perusal of the collection at the Glenthompson History Rooms.

Sadly, we lost two active members, Lorna Mary Junck, in November and Beccie Christie in February. Lorna played a pivotal role in setting up the Barber's Shop room. Her donated scrapbooks continued the tradition of recording Macarthur social life. She will be missed. Beccie was instrumental in photo identification.

This year I intend to visit similar small Historical Societies and Museums to discuss strategies for continuation. It is difficult to find the next generation to transition from our octogenarian membership. We are facing the prospect of going into recess if a new Secretary doesn't materialise at the AGM.

Come and visit our Courthouse Museum which is open by appointment. Our website <https://macarthurmuseum.org.au/>
Contact us by email. 3286mdhs@gmail.com

Wendy Black, President

Port Fairy Museum and Archives (S)

In November we commemorated the sinking of the *T.S.S. Coramba* at the Museum by inviting Des Williams to speak. Des has had a lifetime interest in the *Coramba* and the families who were affected by the loss of their loved ones. Des had written a book called *The ship the sea swallowed*. He was one of the crew of the group who found the final resting place of the shipwreck in 2011 and wrote with another member of the crew *The Ship the Sea Returned*, documenting the search. We arranged for a plaque in remembrance to be attached to the *Casino* cairn as many of the crew survived the sinking of the *Casino* only to die on the *Coramba*.

Volunteer Mondays and Thursdays continue with many being requests regarding the history of the town being answered, items added to files and donations accepted.

Scanning of negatives received from the *Gazette* office has now been completed. The next project is to catch up with all of the physical photographs which have been added to our collection in the last couple of years so that they are all able to be accessed by digital means.

Small booklets are still being printed by the publishing committee. The latest being *Toolong State School No 9595*. We are also about to publish another small publication called *Now and Then*, this time using coloured photos of the town taken in the late 1950s and pairing them with a photograph taken now from the same place. This will help us more effectively use the colour quota from our photocopier each month.

Our newsletter is now being put together by a group of four so they have taken the pressure off Richard Patterson who provided so many interesting articles over the last few years. We are not sure how often we will print it but there will be another edition at the end of April.

The Consolidated school celebrated its 150 years and our members provided much information from our archives and photos and a great exhibition at the school was the result.

Two new exhibitions will go up at the end of April, one featuring two brothers' war experiences through the tropics and into Japan during the occupation and the other 'The Streets where We Played' about the games children played and of course the streets they lived in.

We have offered to host a RHSV Weekend Seminar in October. We are pleased to be able to bring one to our end of Victoria. Having attended one myself I think it is very worthwhile for those enthusiastic about the museum sector and hoping to encourage more people to join us in saving the past.

Lynda Tieman, Collection Manager

Arapiles Historical Society (WM)



[Website](#)

Introduction

The past 12 months have been a period of significant progress and engagement for the Arapiles Historical Society (AHS). Our ongoing projects and events have contributed to the preservation and promotion of local history, enhancing community involvement and historical awareness. This report outlines the key activities, achievements and future plans for the society.

Key Achievements

1. Five-Year Planning Workshop

- Conducted a strategic planning workshop to outline the society's goals for the next five years.
- Key focus areas included museum expansion, digital engagement, community outreach and financial sustainability.
- AHS gathered input from members and the community stakeholders to refine the vision for the future.
- Commenced a roadmap for achieving major milestones including the implementation of the museum expansion and technological upgrades.

2. QR Coding of Heritage Trail Videos

- Successfully completed phase 2 of the QR coding project, integrating video content with 26 key heritage sites now covered.
- Improved the AHS website to effectively host and display these videos.
- Promoted the heritage trail through social media and local tourism networks to increase engagement.

3. Community and Public Events

- Hosted a successful Open Day, attracting a strong turnout from the local community.
- Conducted historical talks and a presentation at local Australia Day event to foster a deeper appreciation for local history.
- Participated in regional history group meetings and events to strengthen partnerships.

4. Intergenerational Day

- Partnered with Natimuk Bush Nursing Home and the local primary school to host an Intergenerational Day.
- Seniors were able to share their life experiences and historical knowledge with students.

- The children with their senior buddies had to complete a word search where they needed to identify the items within the museum then find the name within a word search document.
- Strengthened community bonds by fostering interactions between different generations and promoting local history appreciation.

5. Museum Expansion Planning

- A detailed plan is being developed for the museum expansion to accommodate our growing collection.
- Proposed new frontage reflecting the original Woolmers building, featuring a settler mural.
- Planned additional features including:
 - o An auditorium for presentations, meetings and events.
 - o A commercial kitchen to support event catering.
 - o A shop space with a sitting area for potential café operations.
 - o Improved accessibility including a mezzanine level, lift access and expanded exhibit space.
- Currently securing preliminary support from local community and council to proceed.

6. Website and Digital Engagement

- Reviewed and updated the AHS website to enhance usability and accessibility.
 - Increased online interaction by sharing historical articles, digital exhibits and video content.
- ##### Financial and Membership Growth
- Increased membership by 42% (55-78) over this financial year through targeted outreach efforts.
 - Secured funding and grants to complete stage 2 of the historical video project and Lighting upgrade of the garage museum thanks to HRCC and FRRR Future Goals (April 2025 – March 2026)
 - Complete stage 3 of QR-coded heritage trail videos.
 - Advance the museum expansion project including finalizing funding sources.
 - Host more interactive historical events, workshops and exhibitions.
 - Strengthen partnerships with other historical societies and educational institutions.
 - Continue improving our digital presence to engage a wider audience.

Conclusion

The Arapiles Historical Society has made significant strides over the past year in preserving and promoting our region's history. With continued dedication and community support, we look forward to further expanding our reach and impact.

We appreciate the ongoing collaboration with the Western Victorian Association of Historical Societies and value the shared commitment to historical preservation.

Pat Ford, President

Inglewood and District Historical Society (NC)



[Facebook page](#)

We continue to have good membership but only a proportion of them are active and attend meetings. Our Facebook page has 1,400 followers and is our main form of engagement.

In April we were very fortunate to be informed by a (now ex) worker at Maxwell Mine of its closure and an online auction of everything on site. We were able to save many documents and maps and were then provided with another four boxes of documents relating to Inglewood from the closure of the Bendigo Mining Company at Kangaroo Flat.

Also in April we had a visit to the Court House from the Ballarat South Probus Club where we had four Inglewood Primary School Grade 6 students and a father perform two court reenactments for them. I then gave a talk on the history of Inglewood to them.

Family history enquiries have been our primary income stream. We have carried out approx. 10-15 enquiries. We charge \$30 for family history research.

We have had several donations including a Licensing Court of Inglewood and District stamp, a Miner's Right record book from the 1880s, Bailiff's Return Book from the 1860s-1870s, Martin Family item donations and a music book from Wodetzki family. In March we worked with the Inglewood and Bridgewater Men's Shed to restore an old Bridgewater Railway Station luggage trolley which we then gave to the Inglewood Eucalyptus Museum to use as part of its display. It looks great so get along and have a look!

In May we contributed to the Zeller 'Welcome To Inglewood' video. Link is:

<https://www.myzeller.com/communities/inglewood>

In August President Wendy did an interview on ABC radio on the sad burning down of the historic Jennings Store building in Brooke St. The rubble is yet to be removed with the owner working with the Loddon Shire and EPA.

President Wendy met with the researchers for the ABC's Restoration Australia program and provided information and photos for an episode on 'Nimmitabel' referred to as 'Tivey's Mansion' which aired on the ABC on 3/4/25.

In November we held a 'Life In 3 Pictures' event as part of the Inglewood Alive Festival. We invited people to send in three photos that epitomised growing up, visiting or what they remember of Inglewood and district from their perspective. Six people contributed photos and memories. Twenty people came through the door on the day.

November was special. Members Wendy and Howard attended the Inglewood Primary School to talk about aspects of the history of Inglewood and answered questions the students had. The Inglewood Primary School had a company called the Story Players working with them to develop a play on the 'Untold History of Inglewood.' This included filming students at the Inglewood Court House. The play was performed at the Inglewood Golf Club to an audience of 40-50 people.

In January we saw the reprint of 'A Brief History of Inglewood' book which we had sold out of. We sought permission from the family of the author to do the reprint which they were happy to provide.

We are developing a few ideas of future events including History Month in May and something again for Inglewood Alive Festival in November.

Wendy Murphy, President



Nimmitabel. Source: Reddit (Ed.)

[Link to ABC News report on the restoration of Nimmitabel](#)

Stawell Historical Society (WM)



[Website](#)

Stawell Gold Mine is developing a new website to include the SUPL Project (Underground Physics Laboratory). They have approached us for permission to include historical images from our Collection showing credit to us. Permission granted.

Our collection of original photos continues to be digitised and uploaded to Victorian Collections for public access.

Digitisation of our Newspaper Collection 1857 – 1961 continues. Digital copies are taken from old microfiche files which stop in 1961. Digitisation of the Cemetery records is well advanced.

Progress with installing the old Butcher's Cart in the grounds has halted at present as Council is asking us to supply plans and engineering reports along with installation costs at our expense. This is a very costly exercise. One of our new Councillors with a passion for the local history has offered to take this to a Council meeting.

A portrait of John Glover, Artist and Teacher at Stawell High School, now the Secondary College, has been donated.

Further to our new Councillor's interest in local history, I raised an issue with him about the damaged and abandoned historical graves in our Cemetery. Without authority or family connections, our group is not able to carry out repairs under their ordinance. These headstones represent so much of Stawell's history and like many other regional towns there are no known descendants with the legal right of interment. This includes the Jewish Cemetery which has the grave of two boys murdered at Carr's Plains in the late 1800s. It appears that the Funeral Director and a Council Employee (Cemetery Trust) are at loggerheads over graves, repairs and even digging.

We continue to receive many family research enquiries and Museum visitors including from overseas.

Our newspaper and Facebook articles continue to get good responses and interest.

Books donated to us were listed and emailed to all member Societies. A new list of some still available will be forwarded.

Now that the dreadful Grampians and Little Desert fires are over, we are again marketing to Tour Coach companies to encourage them back to the area. As a result we have two coach loads visiting in June for a Museum and Town Tour and Morning tea.

Stawell Cemetery is undergoing new work. There is an area that contains the graves of stillborn babies with no markers and no records. Contractor's trucks have been seen driving over this area.

Kate van Dyck

Colac & District Historical Society (S)

[Website](#)

[Facebook page](#)



At the November meeting, member Alan Doyle spoke on the 'Butchers of Colac' which he has been researching diligently and publishing regular articles about in our quarterly newsletter.

We also enjoyed a bus excursion to the historic Noorat property 'Dalvui' with its wonderful 'Guilfoyle' garden.

Despite closure of the History Centre to the general public for much of December and January, there was much activity.

A grant from the Colac Otway Shire enabled the purchase of seven tambour cabinets which provide much better access and utilisation of available storage space. To achieve this result, most of the non-displayed relics and hardcopy collection of the *Colac Herald* had to be transferred to the main display area, reclassified and returned to controlled atmosphere archives room.

The New Year started with several members having serious accidents or major surgery which has played havoc with our opening hours' roster and caused a last minute change to our February meeting.

Two of our members attended a Victorian Collections workshop held in Colac by AMaGA and it is now our intention to catalogue more of our collection in this way as the proper cataloguing of gifted material in recent times has been somewhat neglected!

Book sales have been a boost to our finances and we have reprinted the book *Dreeite* written by member Dawn Peel.

Research enquiries are ongoing but greater sharing of our resources with co-tenant Colac Family History Group is providing a more comprehensive outcome for both groups.

A highlight has been the quality window displays being prepared by three of our members which are often commented on by patrons at COPACC.

Robert Missen, President

Warrnambool and District Historical Society (S)



[Website](#)

[Facebook page](#)

It is with deep sadness that we note the passing of our life member, mentor and brains trust and committed supporter of WVAHS, Elizabeth O'Callaghan who passed away in February. It will definitely take a village to replace her work. She was across all the tasks of our operation and we are now trying hard to cope without her, finding that each of the roles which she filled will now take a team of people.

In November we were very excited when the first batch of *Warrnambool Standards* became available on Trove, these covering the period 1872 – 1879. We have had quite a bit of positive feedback from members, some reporting that they have managed to resolve some of their long held research questions. We have now proceeded with stage 2 and a few weeks ago put the decade of the 1880s - all 130,000 - pages into the queue for scanning. We are hoping that Trove prioritises large batches. If so, they should be up by the end of the year.

Our AGM, held at the end of October, was very well attended, in fact, members and visitors packed the Mozart Hall to hear our guest speaker Annabel Brayley talk about her most recent book *Our Vietnam Nurses* and the development of a permanent photographic exhibition devoted to the nurses at the Morven Museum in western Queensland.

In November we continued our barnstorming of halls with a visit to the Cooramook Hall for the launch of James Affleck's book *A Tale of Twos: Injemira & Grasmere*. This is the seventh book in the series.

Our search for a new home continues. Following our pitch to Warrnambool City Council in mid-2023 we have been in regular discussions to explore possibilities. Council officers have a clear understanding of our needs: how much space we need and other factors such as location and archival considerations. In the meantime we follow the guidelines set – no night meetings or activities, no group visits.

Our monthly activity in the library – Exploring our Past – has been running since 2021 and is quite popular. This year we have moved to every second month. The next one, 23 April, is also our National Trust Heritage festival event the theme of which is 'Unearthed' so we are calling the session Digging Up the Past. In July we will be taking part in the Storytelling Festival.

The work of our dedicated collections committee members and the Vic Collections cataloguing newsletter and publications teams is constant. It may sound as if there is a large number of people involved, but that is not the case.

Janet Macdonald

Nhill Silo Heritage Project (WM)

Now in its fourth year, the Nhill Silo Heritage Project (NSHP) continues with its purpose to protect, preserve and restore the historic environs formerly known as Noske's Flour Mill and to promote the complex as an Australian cultural icon.

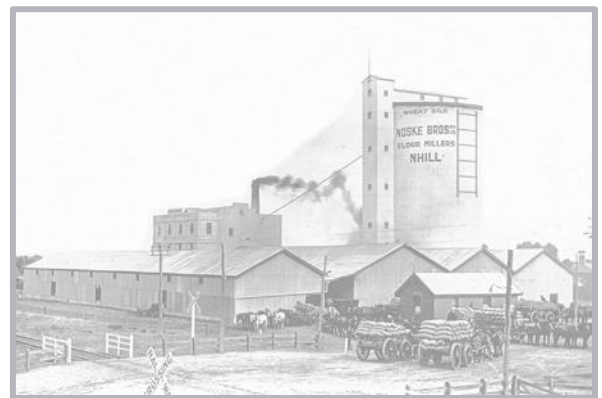
The NSHP is committed to not only retaining strong local and individual support but in encouraging more individuals, businesses and groups to participate, along with the dedicated committee and volunteers, to breathe life back into this iconic structure.

A recent review of our Master Plan identified both strengths and weaknesses encountered in the previous two years. Strategies have been developed to address any noted issues and priorities in the short and long term re-examined.

We were fortunate to be successful in the 2024/2025 PROV grant process. \$3,300 was awarded for the acquisition of resources suitable for the storage and preservation of donated materials and archives obtained from the Noske Mill in Murray Bridge. The Noske archives consisted of hundreds of plans and blueprints from the many Noske Mills and included the original ledger book from the Noske Flour Mill in Horsham dating back to 1906.

The pending gift of the original four-storey flour mill and 75 metre storage shed is nearing completion. Ahrens have completed the land survey and we are waiting for final approval of the boundary realignment. Hindmarsh Shire has also given approval to a permit application for the establishment of a museum precinct within the complex.

The Davis Avenue frontage will soon be transformed by the erection of a post and rail fence extending the full width of the site. Supporters of the Silo Project will be encouraged to purchase sections of the fencing and have their contribution permanently recorded into the timber.



[Website](#)

[Facebook page](#)

Daryl Meek, Vice President

Maryborough Midlands Historical Society (NC)

[Website](#)



[Facebook page](#)

Our program is gradually returning to normal following the extensive renovation period of the past few years (both garden and buildings) and visitors are returning in greater numbers to visit our facilities and displays. The year 2024 was a significant one for the town, not only for the 170th anniversary of the official naming, but for many other local societies and sporting clubs whose origins lie in the gold rush era.

A number of objects from our Society's Tilly Aston collection featured in a National Trust exhibition at Como House in South Yarra from August to October 2024. Tilly's birthday book, her special pocket watch (with raised numbers), her doll, a tiny beadwork chair that she assembled plus a signed copy of her book of poems entitled "Songs of Light" were loaned to the National Trust.

The Central Goldfields Art Gallery is currently hosting an exhibition of gold jewellery items on long term loan from the National Gallery of Australia under the "Sharing the National Collection" initiative. The items date from the mid-nineteenth century gold rush period and relate to the Maryborough area. Images from our Society's photographic collection form part of the information display for "*The Art of Gold*"

The film maker documenting the transformation of the Fire Brigade Station into the Central Goldfields Art Gallery spent many hours researching in our archives. We also contributed to the 150 Years of Rail celebration at the Maryborough Station.

Our quarterly newsletter *Diggings* continues to chronicle aspects of Maryborough history such as the 150th anniversary of the naming of the town by Assistant Gold Commissioner James Daly, the town's industrial heritage, the Charlie Farr Pioneer Portrait project - Farr photographed many of the town's pioneers to celebrate the 50th anniversary - biographies of significant local identities and heritage issues.

One of our Society's aims is to promote interest in local history and to record and preserve local heritage. We therefore look forward to the presentation of the recent Heritage Review report (carried out by *Extent Heritage*) for consideration by Central Goldfields Shire Council. It's encouraging to note that many of our town's older houses and commercial buildings are under renovation rather than demolition. Many new owners seek information from us.

While many people think "Victorian" in town building styles, Maryborough also possesses a fine collection of Art Deco buildings, for example the swimming pool entrance. It's disappointing to note that not everyone in town values its heritage. The newly restored Bristol Hill Tower, originally built as a monument to the town's pioneers, was recently vandalised - a huge setback to the volunteers who have contributed their time and money.

The information and displays in our exhibition spaces such as Worsley Cottage and the Squatters' Hut are being updated. For example, two sisters whose family lived in the Cottage in the 1950s have recorded their memories. Their father kept a horse in the back yard so that he could ride to work.

Thanks to a grant from Central Goldfields Shire Council, a specially built museum-standard display cabinet will soon house some of our more historic documents and objects.

We're kept busy responding to family history enquiries. Some of our researcher visitors are descendants of significant Maryborough citizens such as Thomas Casey, respected businessman, Councillor, Mayor and longtime fire brigade captain. Many contribute biographical material to our archives.

We're also fortunate that many local residents now consider donating historically important material to our archives rather than opting for the "take it to the tip" method which has been so prevalent in years past. Recent acquisitions range from an archive of extensive research into local primary schools to an early twentieth century German-manufactured syringe set which was used locally.

The dedicated and hard working members of our Garden Committee braved the winter then the prolonged hot summer to plant, weed and water the newly renovated garden. They've also undertaken brick cleaning, weed control, pruning and garden design. Much of the cost of the garden renewal has been covered by a grant from The Bendigo Community Bank. The Garden Committee has also raised money by staffing the Rotary Sausage Sizzle stall.

None of the above could happen without the valuable input of our committee members. We thank them.

Barb Nielsen, President

Nullawil Historical Society (NC)



[Facebook page](#)

The Nullawil Historical Society Annual General Meeting was held in October 2024. Our President Wendy Spry was re-elected. The Secretary's position is a joint one with Julie Morrison taking on the role of Minutes Secretary and Kaylene James the General / Electronic Secretary. Barry James was re-elected as Treasurer; we extend a huge thank you to Ian Marquis, our outgoing Secretary, who has held the role for numerous years. Ian's dedication to his position has been exemplary.

In December we held our children's service where the children dress as the nativity. This service was followed by something to eat and then we moved to the Winston Church to partake of some Christmas carols. The Estey organ, over 110 years old, plays beautifully and it is always a treat to hear the music emanating from within.

We were to start the 2025 year with a visit to Ted and Lois Goddard's where they have a vintage collection. This was postponed due to extreme heat. The start of 2025 has been very slow due to the heat. We have held very few working bees until after the March long weekend.

Members will attend the Museum and just work quietly along with projects they are enthused about. This has led to the painting of a shelter shed and a resurrected sign placed in front of it.

The Hayes family property is located between Nullawil and Culgoa. Peter Hayes contacted the Society and asked if the Museum would like a wagon owned by his grandfather. This wagon had been shedded and is in immaculate condition. There were also numerous other items at this farm that we have had the benefit of being given. This led to many visits to the farm to collect items and then place them in appropriate places in the Museum.

The Mural on the Room of Remembrance is due to be started and we are hoping it will be completed for our Open Day on Sunday April 27th.

One of our members completed a grant application to frame three very important flags that flew during the war. We were lucky enough to be successful and await the funds into our bank account so we can complete this project.

We had our first group of visitors for the year on Monday March 31st. They were called Boort Men on the Move. There were 15 in the group including four assistants. They seemed to really enjoy their day. The NHS men started a steam engine and a bulldog tractor which created a lot of interest. We have had terrific feedback.

The cataloguing and digitisation of our collection is moving very slowly. We are starting to get a number of inquiries online which require attention. We are realising we don't have a printer and that is something we need to look at purchasing.

Our finances which had been looking very healthy at one stage have dwindled as there is always something to buy for the upkeep of our buildings and the slowdown of groups visiting has affected our income greatly.

We are hoping our Open Day on 27 April will help and that more groups will book in as the year progresses. We will start the day with a pleasant Sunday sing-a-long in the Winston church on the beautifully restored Estey organ.

We have been labelling our buildings and we wish to acknowledge a couple of founding member families who have helped shape the Museum into what it is today. A stable that has been painstakingly shifted from the Bartram farm and recreated on the Museum site is to be named after the farm and shall be known as "The Grange" stable. The collection of old harvesters, steam engines, tractor, hay rack and other numerous farm implements were donated to the Museum with the request that they be housed in the one spot. This our members have diligently done and gave them the impetus to create the Museum. We have labelled this shed, the Eddie Abraham Display.

Kaylene James



Photos of Nullawil Historical Society's Farm Museum taken by C. Proctor, September 2023. This is a wonderful facility of which NHS should be very proud!



Ararat and District Historical Society (WM)



[Facebook page](#)

Our Society operates the Langi Morgala Museum in Ararat.

Over the past twelve months we completed repairs to the building damaged during a break in. We were grateful to the Gum San Chinese Heritage Society committee for contributing to the repair of one of the cabinets damaged. We also upgraded the security on the firearms cabinet and got approval from VicPol to return the historical firearms for display.

Ararat Rural City Council is the owner of the museum building and they agreed to fully enclose the wall on the east side, making the building more secure and hopefully preventing any further incidents. A new modern security system was also installed by one of our volunteers.

The winter months were pretty quiet in 2024 but we were pleased to welcome a school group from Geelong in August.

We have circulated two quarterly newsletters put together by one of our new volunteers. Another volunteer painted the kitchen, which looks terrific. Ararat Rural City Council gave us some second-hand carpet tiles when the library was refurbished and they will be used for the kitchen floor,

During the year there were a few special displays including the Russell Rachinger Antarctic Expedition and a tribute to Ararat's Jailhouse Rock Festival.

A hat display and a free afternoon tea were held during Seniors Week and the Golden Gateway Festival in October. It was a great success and was attended by more than 40 people.

Committee member Marion McAdie has spent many hours cataloguing the Museum's extensive photographic collection. They are now saved onto a number of hard drives for ease of use in the future.

At the end of last year committee members participated in a planning workshop focusing on public relations, marketing and the many opportunities available for improving the Museum over the next five years.

A highlight of the past year was the installation of an iconic Ararat vehicle, the famous "Southern Cloud" in December. The project was a collaborative effort between the Museum and the family and friends of the late Eric 'Whirley' Wilson. The uniquely amazing vehicle delighted young and old for decades when it featured in

Annual Golden Gateway Festival parades. Affectionately known as the "Old Bomb", the fascinating car featured in the 1964 Moomba Parade, winning the Moomba Best Country Novelty Award whenever it appeared.

A Christmas Lunch was held for volunteers last year at the RSL to acknowledge their contributions to the Museum throughout the year.

Finally, we recently received an Ararat City Council Grant to run a project engaging specifically with school children from Years 5-12. Titled 'Linking Our Future and Our Past', the project aims to raise the Museum's profile and attract members and volunteers of the future.

Kerrin Gellie, President

Swan Hill Genealogical and Historical Society (NC)

[Website](#)

[Facebook page](#)

The past year has seen our group continue with a variety of guest speakers, mainly sourced from our local community. They included a talk on the Commemoration of the *Vyner Brooke* and Bangka Island tragedies in World War 2, information on the use of DNA, the experiences of our Town Hall Function Manager, information on how to use the 'Find a Grave' site for both information and photos, a talk about travelling to China for family history research and the experiences of one of our local councillors and retired member of the police force. All have been informative and enjoyable in many different ways.

Last September saw the celebration of the 40th birthday of the group. This was held at 'The Hub' and our committee put in a lot of work to ensure that the day went off success-fully. It included lunch, memorabilia, a few competitions with prizes and a speaker, both of these with a Scottish theme. It was a great day and for once we were fortunate to also get coverage in the *Swan Hill Guardian* with some great photos. We celebrated the end of the year with a low-key but very enjoyable Christmas-themed lunch at the Swan Hill Club.

Our librarians have been busy with the many items that have been donated and some changes have been made to our room to make access to some items easier. It is becoming even harder to find a place for the items that we receive and we are conscious of the fact that the library archive room is having similar problems. Our work on community organisations, both current and now folded, is continuing. We are aware of the many groups that have folded in recent times and are hopeful that we can collect information on these while there are still people around with the knowledge. We have spent some time researching sound systems/microphones to be used for events and for guest speakers and have recently made a purchase and are looking forward to its use in upcoming events. Another task that has recently been completed is the scanning of our scrapbooks of death and funerals notices from the *Swan Hill Guardian*. These are now on the computer and after many hours of work these are able to be searched by

Name. Our researchers continue to receive many and varied requests and do their best to answer them. Mostly we are able to find some information but occasionally it is not possible, especially if there are adoptions involved, or the person concerned was simply a law abiding citizen who did not do anything notable enough to appear in newspapers and the like. As always, our volunteers do an amazing job and we

have had a couple of new faces appear who are wanting to help, so this is very encouraging.

We are planning a number of events for Heritage week: a Nyah Cemetery walk as part of Nyah West Centenary celebrations on Anzac weekend, a Swan Hill evening street walk and a Swan Hill Cemetery walk highlighting war veterans. There will also be an Open Day at Tyntynder Homestead in May.

Leone Walbran, President

Facial Recognition Technology

Taken from the Goldfields Arts and Historical Society (Dunolly) *Tailings* newsletter, May 2025, provided by John Tully.



This photo shows the Dunolly Fire Brigade outside the burnt out shop at 107 Broadway in January 1899. There are fourteen men in fire brigade uniforms and four others. They are not named on the photo.

From the Dunolly Fire Brigade report of fires, we have the names of the fourteen firemen who attended this fire.

Four months later a series of photos were taken of the fire brigade members. These are named.

By using a facial recognition program comparing the photos, it has been possible identify the firemen in this photo. The program (Face Comparison ToolPie) identified half of them straight away. One or two of these were obvious and the others accepted once they were pointed out. Another one was matched because of his officer's uniform, which the computer program does not do. This left six to identify.

Each of the six were compared with the six named photos. The program gives a percentage match. It then becomes a mathematical issue of deciding which ones have the highest percentage.

Facial recognition might become a very handy tool for all historical societies.

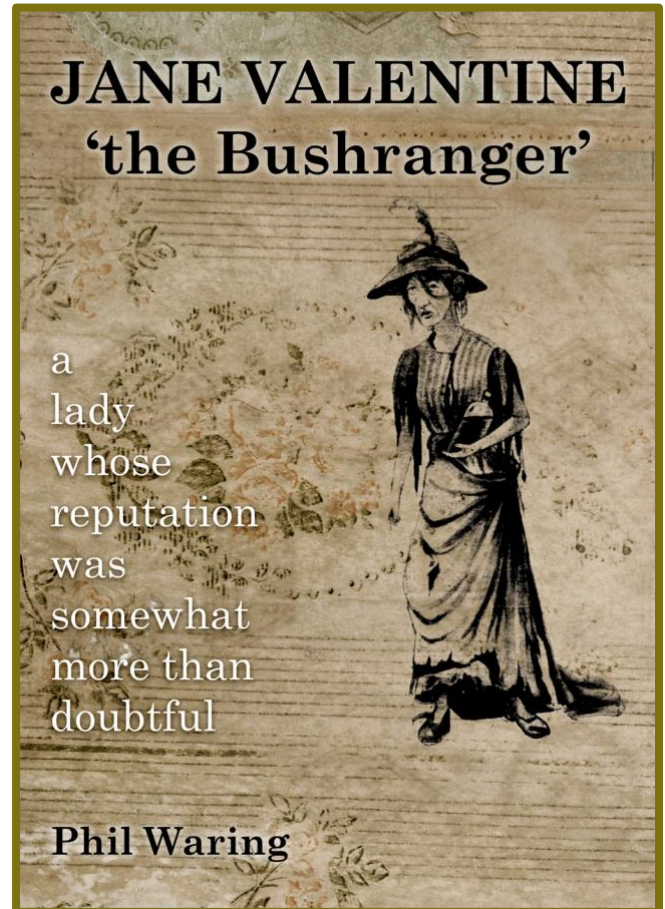
Standing l to r: 1 Andrew Cairns, Secretary, 2 Abe Kashow Lieutenant, 3 Laurence Skelley, Appliance Officer, 4 G Wills, 5 Alfred Gathercole, 6 Edwin Pryor, 7 William Bullock, 8 Horrie North, 9 Henry Droscher, 10 probably G Rowland shopkeeper, 11 George Cumper, Captain.

Kneeling l to r: 1 Frederick Williams, 2 unknown, 3 E Peters, 4 Alfred Downs? 5 unknown, 6 unknown, 7 John Downs? foreman.

JANE VALENTINE: BUSHRANGER

Submitted by Brett Leslie, Landsborough Historical Group

Given her lifetime of crime and run-ins with the law, there has long been a fascination in the district with Jane Valentine, also known as the Bushranger, a title not usually associated with a woman. Although there has been plenty of mystery surrounding Jane, she was a real person although her actual surname was never determined. The first link she had to this country was as a 7 year-old child when she made the trip to Van Dieman's land (Hobart) way back in 1847 as the daughter of a convict, her mother having been imprisoned in County Galway, Ireland. On board the ship "The Waverley" were 129 female convicts, 32 of their young children and 39 free females joining their husbands who had already made the long voyage. Jane's mother had been sentenced to seven years' transportation but her crimes were unknown and in those times young children would accompany their mother which in effect meant Jane had been sentenced to transportation as well. The convict women who left the ship were allocated to residents of Hobart and other places and to farmers as general servants and, as a class, they were generally looked down upon. Even at such a young age Jane would have most likely been put to work fetching, carrying, scrubbing and washing. It was unlikely that she ever attended school as this was long before the education of children became compulsory. A girl's role in society was as a mother or a domestic servant and Jane certainly started out with little chance of living a normal or decent life. Many of those people in Van Dieman's land made their way to Victoria's shores - particularly after the discovery of gold in 1851 - but it is uncertain when Jane made the trip although it may well have been independently of her mother and could have been any time between around 1854 and the mid-1860s. To leave the stigma of convict origins behind, many people changed their names and although Jane was probably her first name, her surname appears to have been adopted as 'Valentine' - with 'Ballantyne' also used in later years along with 'O'Donnell' and 'Varney'. A few different scenarios have emerged as to her movements in Victoria, one being a Jane Valentine, also known as 'Waverley Jane' who gave birth to four children while in Chiltern then Geelong in the late 1850s with their father, a Peter Gunning, recorded as having been married to Jane in 1860. A second scenario puts her in the city of Melbourne where she a witness in a court case for Ann Thorpe who was accused of stealing from Jane in 1860 although the case was dismissed. The most likely scenario was that Jane was following the gold rush around Victoria from the early 1860s, reliant on miners splashing their money around and, being one of few women on the diggings, her presence would have been a welcome sight with Jane able to procure both alcohol and a place to sleep in return for performing basic chores like cooking and washing while the miner was at work. A definite record of Jane's next move was to the Tarnagulla goldfields in 1864 where she was working as a dressmaker. By now



she was 24 years of age and her brush with the law came in 1865 when she appeared in the Police Court charged with stealing from William Willcox, a miner with whom she had resided since moving to the area and she received 14 days' imprisonment with hard labour. The Tarnagulla watchhouse recorded her as "Jane Varney".

THE LANDSBOROUGH GOLDFIELDS

By the time Jane reached the Landsborough goldfields in 1866 she found it very difficult to stay out of trouble. The description in the court records show her as being born in Galway, Ireland in 1840. Married, height 4 ' 10 ", fresh complexion, dark hair, hazel eyes, flat nose, medium mouth and round chin. The bridge of her nose had been broken. The court of petty sessions record books contains the following - **a/ 3rd May 1866** John Jones vs Jane Valentine - Stealing flannel shirts from the dwelling of John Jones at Emu Flat (Cambrian Lead) diggings. She admitted to taking the clothes but states she did so to protect herself from the cold and she was drunk at the time. Sentenced to 2 months' imprisonment at Ararat Gaol. **b/ 9th May 1867** - Jane Valentine vs William Woolcock - Cambrian Lead diggings - Wilfully damaging wearing apparel to the value of £7. Jane claimed William had often burned her clothes and, on 26th April, he put some clothes of Jane's besides the fire and threatened

to put her in the fire too. She claimed she was “neither drunk nor insulted him”. She has since left the defendant and moved in with another man. Complaint dismissed. **c/ 1867** - Undocumented trouble at Native Youth Creek **d/ 4th June 1868** – Jane now at Paul’s Lead diggings near Landsborough. Sen. Constable Dennis Cahill vs Jane Valentine alias “The Bushranger” – charged with being an idle and disorderly person having no lawful visible means of support. Jane claimed she was being supported by a man named Henderson and another miner living close by claimed Jane was “in the habit of bringing strange men to her tent at night and using disgusting language”. Constable McKay on oath stated he frequently saw Jane drunk in the street and soliciting prostitution. Ordered to be imprisoned in Ararat Gaol for 6 months with 48 hours added for contempt of court (Jane had become violent and disorderly upon hearing her sentence). **e/ 30th December 1868** – Sen. Const Dennis Cahill vs Jane Valentine – Andrew Wood swore that Jane followed him into his tent and robbed him of 18 shillings. When he tried to get the money back she became violent and seized a bucket and beat him around the head with it, following up with the same treatment from a candle box. Then a few days later a Timothy Folan was given drink by Jane upon which he “became insensible” and he was robbed of his purse containing £2. An article in the “Avoca Mail” dated 2nd January 1869 described the court hearings and referred to Jane as a “noted character” well known in the Pyrenees as “Jenny The Bushranger”. In the light of Jane’s general bad character and two previous convictions, she was ordered to be imprisoned in Ararat Gaol for twelve months which took her away her freedom for 1869 - which coincided with the rush in Landsborough quietening down. Interestingly, Timothy Folan was found dead in Navarre only two weeks after the court case, believed to having been struck by lightning.

Upon Jane’s release from Ararat Gaol in late 1869 she found that the rush had moved onto Percydale near Avoca and she was living in an abandoned tent in that area, which attracted council rates which she naturally failed to pay, pleading poverty. She remained in arrears for a number of years. In 1870 she was charged with riotous and disorderly behaviour at Percydale and was sentenced to three months’ imprisonment at Maryborough gaol, a change from her familiar surroundings at Ararat. She was next heard of in a court case in Moonambel in 1872 - this time not as a defendant but a witness - but her statements were described by the editor of the *Avoca Mail* as “A miserable kind of charge, made none the less so by the voluntary exclamations of something in petticoats called the Bushranger”. Newspaper reporters today would never get away with using such an expression. Jane’s next destination was Avoca and her life continued to spiral out of control with endless drunken sprees and convictions. The number of times she was found drunk and disorderly on the streets of Avoca was legion, and not all the reports made the local newspapers, although many did. By 1885 a warrant was issued for her arrest in Avoca but she moved on to

Melbourne and assumed the name of Jane O’Donnell but it was not long before she was arrested there as well. Eventually she moved onto Maryborough in 1891 where she was arrested again on outstanding warrants dating back to 1885, mainly relating to drunken and disorderly conduct. Further misconduct in the form of thefts of items took place mainly clothing to keep her warm and, by 1892, she had chalked up 27 court appearances, eventually reaching around 40 convictions and subsequent gaol and lockup attendances, believed to have been some sort of world record for the times. One court case involved a Chinaman, Ah Toy of Avoca Lead, who had been charged with sly grog selling (including to one of her best customers none other than Jane Valentine) saw Jane giving evidence that she had visited Ah Toy at least a dozen times for the same purpose. She knew the hour from looking at the clock at his place. When asked by the court “what time did it say” Jane’s response was “it did not speak” – to much laughter from the gallery and a scowl from the magistrate. Her final employer, a shepherd John Hann from Lamplough near Avoca, had employed Jane as a housekeeper from mid-1896, for which he housed her, fed her and paid her £1 every three months. When paid Jane would often go on a drinking spree for days at a time.

JANE’S DEATH AND A REFLECTION

On the evening of 24th July 1897 it was a typically cold Pyrenees evening at Avoca Lead with the crescent moon sinking towards the top of the ranges. Around 7.00pm in the darkness a miner found Jane drunk, doubled up on her side and under a tree on the Maryborough Road, around 200 yards from the All Nations Hotel. He unsuccessfully tried to rouse her but had to summon Constable James Boxhall from Avoca who arranged transport in the form of a two-wheeled horse-drawn cart to Amherst Hospital, 10 miles away. The men lifted Jane’s body into the back of the trap and covered it with a blanket. Jane was moaning fitfully in the back and they continued for a few miles, checking regularly until Jane fell silent still some distance from the Hospital. They determined that she was now dead so turned back to Avoca where an inquest was held the following morning. A post-mortem examination determined that Jane had died of exposure and heart failure under the influence of an excess of alcohol. Although the official BDM records show her name as Jane Ballantyne and an age of 51, she was actually 57 years old upon her passing. She was interred in a public (pauper’s) grave at the Avoca Cemetery on 29th July 1897 as a Government Burial at a cost of 12s 6d and the site was unmarked and remains so to the present day. The location remains undetermined at this stage.

Jane Valentine’s story is certainly tinged with a touch of sadness; she lived in a time of little support for single women - no charity, no unemployment or health benefits and, without a husband or partner to support her, no one to turn to. She was laid to rest with no funeral, no-one to reflect on her life, no known family or descendants and little recognition that she had ever lived in the first place. It is time to rectify that.

One of the founding and long serving dedicated members of Landsborough’s Historical Group, Diane Western, had compiled plenty of research material on Jane Valentine

over many years, as has Rhonda Parton - and in December 1998 the old Landsborough lock-up, a place where Jane would have spent many nights waiting for her next court appearance prior to being jailed in Ararat, was returned to its Landsborough home in the old police precinct from its temporary home in a Bendigo Pioneer Village. As part of the celebrations involving the Police Historical Unit and Brass Band, a re-enactment involving the arrest and lockup of Jane took place with retired local policeman Bob Jolly then officially unveiling the old lock-up. An enjoyable afternoon was had by all who attended.

Thanks to a new publication from Landsborough Historical Group member Phil Waring (author of a series of wonderful books on the history of Hotels in the region including Landsborough) and with the assistance of Diane, the life of Jane Valentine is covered in much detail in a book of 34 pages with illustrations and some photos. It is available from the Landsborough Post Office for \$20 and can also be purchased via the Historical Group.

Email: dwestern3@gmail.com

The establishment of Horsham's first volunteer Fire Brigade, 150 years ago

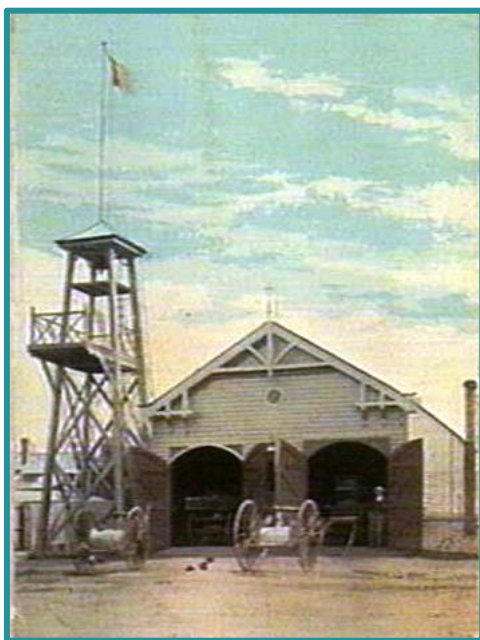
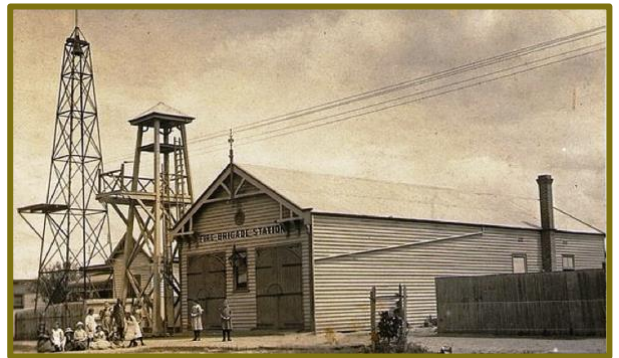
By Janet Allan, Horsham and District Historical Society

Many of Horsham's first buildings were made of wooden boards with hessian and paper wall coverings and, added to this the fact that lighting was either kerosene lamps or candles, building fires were numerous.

The fires were fought by well meaning, but untrained, volunteers. Many fires were spectacular and attracted crowds of up to 2,000 which was about the same as the population of the whole borough. The local newspaper, *The Horsham Times*, describes in detail many of these fires.

The Volunteer Fire Brigade was officially established on November 15th, 1875, when a meeting was called by Con Dougherty in the parlour of the Union Hotel. On the motion of Mr G. Young and Mr G. Wood the fire brigade was formed. Mr Bill Bennett was the first captain although the brigade's first minutes showed no nomination for him as captain.

As stated in *The Horsham Times* on Tuesday 8th December, 1925 at the Fire Brigade Jubilee: "The brigade's first equipment consisted of three leather buckets, four ladders, six small fire hooks and a light cart for the conveyance of the brigade property, whilst in the following year second-hand equipment was purchased at a cost of £80 from Sebastopol brigade."



In February 1919 there were discussions about purchasing a motor tender for the fire brigade so a fund was set up to raise money for this. It was reported in *The Horsham Times* on 22nd October, 1920 that the motor tender had finally arrived in Horsham. The article goes on to say "The tender was built by L. E. Cutter and Co. of Ballarat and is beautifully finished in every detail. It is one of the most up to date in the State, developing 25 horsepower and carries 1,000 feet of hose with all the necessary equipment, chemical fire extinguisher, first aid box, etc, and is manned by six men. With the addition of this up-to-date motor to the local brigade's equipment and the borough being encircled with street alarms, it makes Horsham one of the best equipped places in the State from a firefighter's point of view."

In 1927 a motor pump was added to the fire engine and so began the change to more sophisticated equipment and, hence, more technical training was required for the volunteers.

I do remember, when I was a child, there was a number of street alarms in the central shopping area. You had to break the glass and press the button to alert the fire brigade.

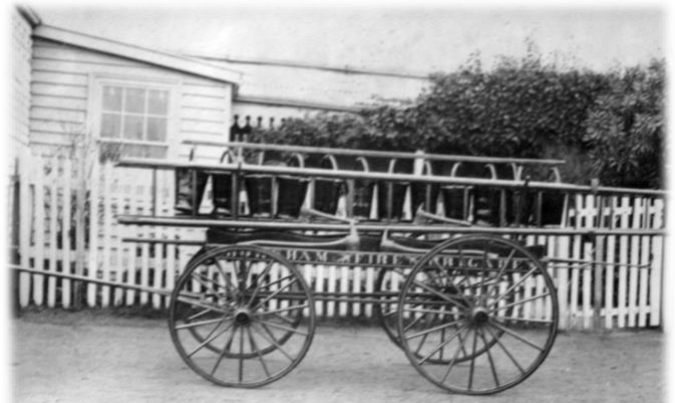
Horsham Centenary 1950.



1891 Engine
 1892 Engine
 1901 Engine
 1902 Engine
 1894 Wagon
 1878 Engine

23

More photos of the Horsham Fire Brigade courtesy of Wendy Donald and Stuart Hall, Horsham Historical Society

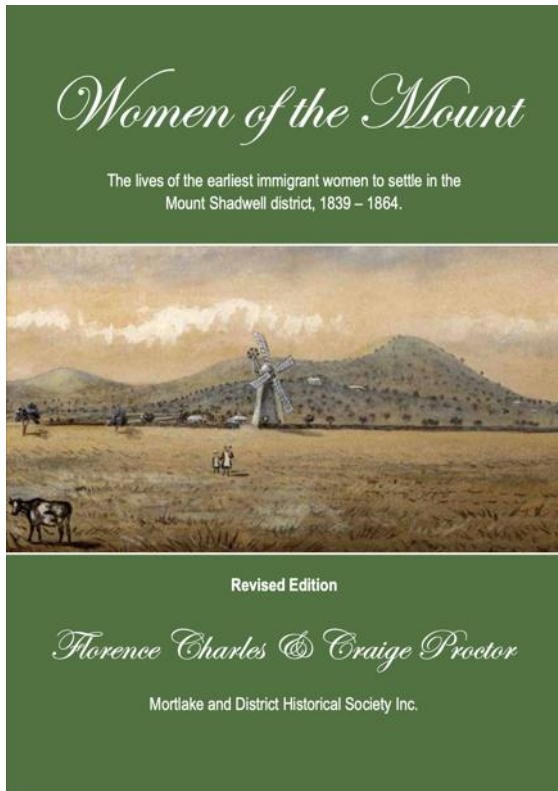


More photos of our time in Geelong on 5 April. Photos courtesy of Tracey Potatau-Wright of Glenthompson.



Please submit any items for publication in the September issue of Western Historian by mid-August.

Publications



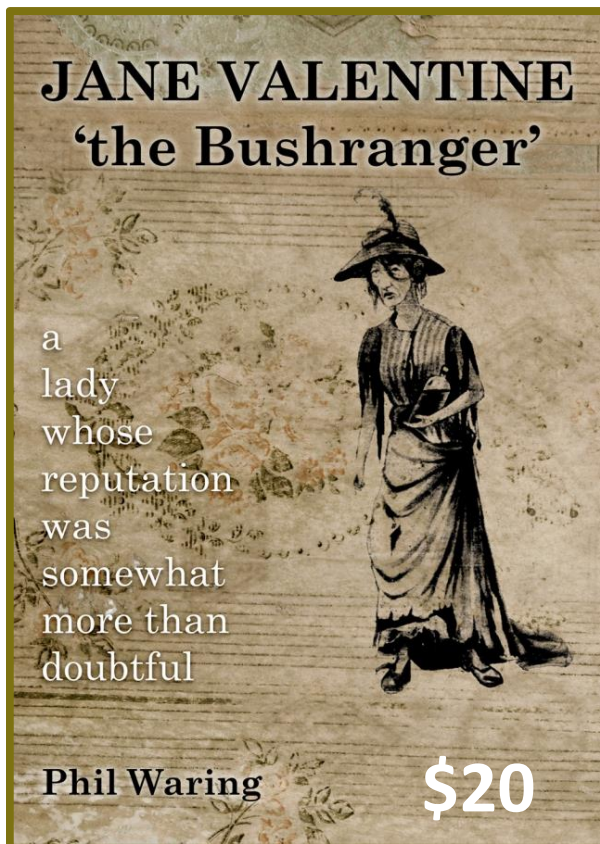
The Mortlake and District Historical Society has republished its 2009 book *Women of the Mount* which proved highly successful following its launch fifteen years ago.

Fifty of the district's pioneer women who arrived in the area between 1839 and 1864 are profiled through detailed stories. The book also captures snapshots of many other women settlers.

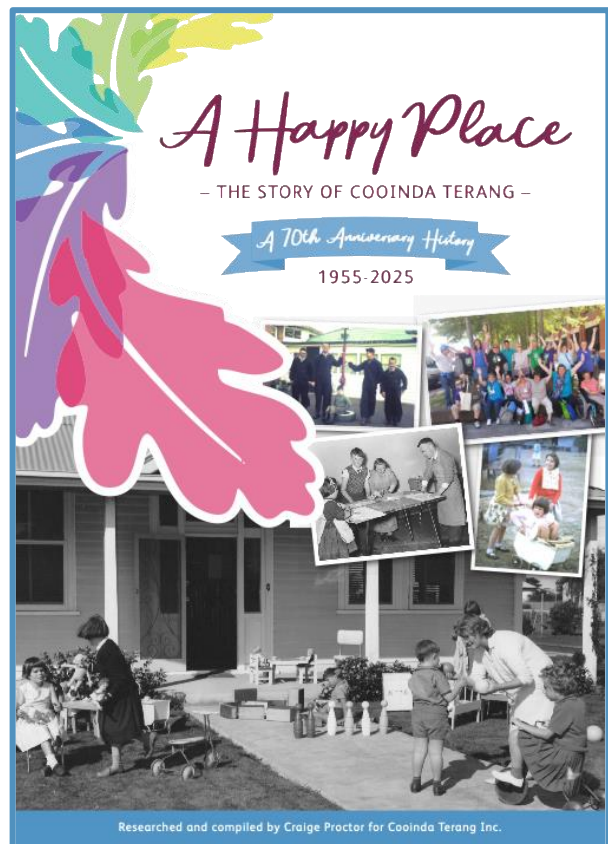
These are the stories of entrepreneurial women who became property owners in their own right, wives of small farmers and tradesmen, dairy maids and shepherds' wives, businesswomen and some women who had commenced their lives in Australia as transportees to Van Diemen's Land.

\$40
plus P&P

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