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

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Member Groups

at March 2024

Arapiles (Natimuk) Ararat
 Balmoral Barham-Koondrook
 Birchip Boort Camperdown
 Carisbrook Casterton
 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 Horsham
 Hopetoun Inglewood Kerang
 Koroit Landsborough
 Lake Boga Flying Boat Museum
 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)
 Wycheproof

President's Post

Communication is vital to maintain contact between us and enhance our activities. Decades ago, when this Association and most of our member societies were established, most communication was done by hand writing or typing a letter, folding it and placing it in an envelope addressed to a street or post office address, placing a stamp on the envelope, walking or driving to the nearest post box to 'post' the letter and then waiting for it to be delivered to the addressee. Most young people would be battling to understand what I have just written! It even sounds quaint to me.



They seem just as mystified by a dial phone, let alone one with a handle on it to call attention to the operator and ask to be connected to the person you wish to speak to. At least the operator at the local manual exchange could sometimes advise you that the person you were calling was away on holidays. That was perhaps an improvement on our modern voice mail system where you leave a message and hope that someone will return your call.

It seems as though new communication systems are being invented every day, many of them of questionable improvement. They often require increasingly more steps to achieve any communication via these methods, whilst usually telling us that they are easy and time saving to use.

WVAHS at least has a website and Facebook page and we probably need more, but who has the time and inclination to set them up and maintain them? I note that some societies have websites that seem to have not been updated for years, or Facebook pages with no recent posts.

We all need to try and improve the information that we make available to the public and spread the word about our activities as much as we can. Wider knowledge of our existence may attract more enquiries about our collections, more donations to enhance them and hopefully some more members to keep the organisations functioning.

Michael Menzies, President

61st W.V.A.H.S. AGM

The Annual General Meeting will be held in Nhill on

Saturday, 6 April 2024

hosted by the Nhill Silo Heritage Project.

Venue:

Nhill Senior Citizens Clubrooms, 6 Campbell Street, Nhill

10 – 10.30 a.m. - Arrival and Registration

Zone Meetings

Lunch and Executive Meeting

AGM

Short tours

Dinner

Sunday 7 April

Bus Tour 10-11.30 a.m.

Nhill Aviation Heritage Centre and John Rethus Vintage Collection

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

Click on the hyperlinks to go to the sites.

Websites

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

Facebook pages

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

See page 13 for information about the Royal Historical Society of Victoria's upcoming event in May hosted by the Mortlake and District Historical.

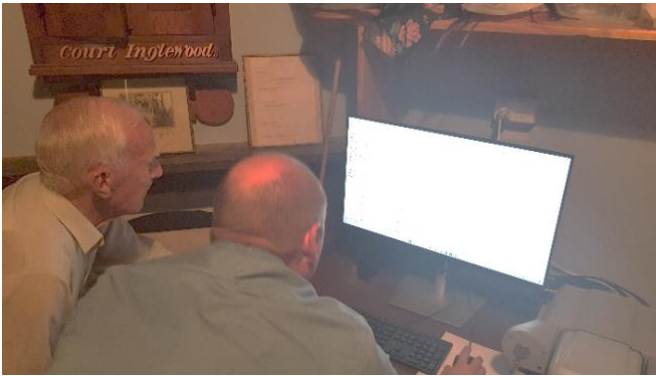
Around the Groups

Inglewood & District Historical Society Inc.

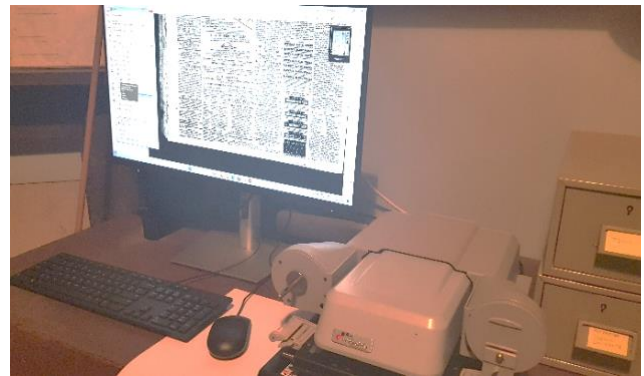
Read All About It!

In May 2023 the Inglewood & District Historical Society was successful in obtaining a \$4,000 grant from the Inglewood District Community Enterprise Limited (IDCEL) board of the Bendigo Bank to purchase a digital microfilm reader and to digitise 50 microfilm rolls of the Inglewood Advertiser covering the full 100 years of the paper. Our Society put in \$10,000 of our own money. We were fortunate that through a few connections we were put in contact with Baden Coakley who had just finished some of his own research and was looking to sell his almost new machine. He was also willing to digitise the *Inglewood Advertiser* microfilm. This new machine will allow our Research Officers the ability to search 100 years of *Inglewood Advertiser* articles with a push of a button and print off any finds of interest. Currently our Research Officers either painstakingly hand write articles or take grainy photos from the old microfilm reader screen. The time saved will be appreciated (and hopefully lead to fewer distractions taking our Research Officers down rabbit holes!) We will now be able to provide more thorough information for those researching their family histories, produce more detailed publications and hold *ad hoc* talks about particular topics based on 'fun facts' or 'interesting titbits' found.

We thank the IDCEL board of the Bendigo Bank for the grant but cannot thank Baden enough for his contribution towards the project. This is a significant project for our Society and will have wide ranging benefits.



Baden showing Research Officer Kevin the buttons.



All set up ready to begin the search.

Wendy Murphy, President, Inglewood & District Historical Society

Nullawil Historical Society

Nullawil Heritage Museum's expression of interest in the Australian Museums and Galleries Association Victoria Collection and Community Resilience Program was successful and Maxine Holden from AMAGA worked with us for the six-day program. Topics included policy and disaster management issues along with cataloguing and digitising our collection. We learnt special photographic techniques required to upload images of our items to the Victorian Collections website. Maxine showed us the specialised techniques required to care for delicate fabrics, precious documents and other items.

We shared our learning with members of the Berriwillock community. We all enjoyed working with Maxine. She freely shared her vast knowledge and experience with us all. Now our work begins!



Allison Watson and Maxine Holden

Find out more about our hosts for the AGM on April 6-7:

[Nhill Silo Heritage Project](#)

[Nhill Silo Heritage Project Facebook page](#)

Koroit and District Historical Society

In October 2023 KDHS held its AGM at the old Railway Precinct in Koroit. This meeting was very well attended so much so we didn't follow on with a general meeting. Cynthea Wellings, current owner of the Koroit Convent, was our guest speaker and gave us a wonderful insight to what is and has been happening at the Convent, especially the renovations. We are all excited about the day we are able to visit. Margaret Trotter was nominated President, Gerard Gleeson as Vice President, Dianne Fary as Secretary and Brian Trotter as Treasurer. A shared supper and great fellowship followed on from the meeting.

The Lake School Celtic and Song and Music comes to Koroit each year in early January for one week. They have their annual photo shoot in front of our building with the Irish flag flying.

The last weekend in April is a huge weekend in Koroit with the annual Koroit Irish Festival. Our Society will be involved with displays, Open Days and having a stall promoting the book *A Green and Pleasant Land*, which we have had reprinted, and old photos.

Dianne Fary, Secretary

Swan Hill Genealogical and Historical Society

GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE (GRO) UK - Makes Birth and Death Records available via Digital Image Download.

Civil birth and death registration records for England and Wales from selected years are now available as instant-access digital images via the General Register Office website:-

<https://www.gro.gov.uk/gro/content/>

Birth records from 1837 to 2021 and death records from 1837 to 1957 and 1984 to 2021 are indexed on the GRO website. Previously family historians had the option of ordering records as either a print record for £11 with a GRO index reference supplied, or a PDF for £7. These took up to four working days for orders to be despatched. However with the new scheme, births from 1837 to 1922 and deaths from 1837 to 1887 will be available as digital images. These images cost £2.50 each and are available to view immediately after purchase.



We have had an interesting few months with many enquiries and visitors. Allow us to share a few of the major points with you.

- Sales of our 2024 Calendar have exceeded the numbers of previous years' sales. The theme this year is images from the Panorama of Stawell created from photos from The Holterman Collection taken in 1874. We have had 1- and 2-metre copies created for sale. The number of Calendars sold so far is 415, exceeding 304 of our 2023 Hotel-themed calendars.
- Thanks to a generous Grant from Stawell Gold Mines we are taking delivery of a defibrillator. Installations of defibrillators in places of Public Access are becoming the norm. Once it has arrived, a local paramedic is coming to provide a demonstration and training session on the correct use.
- Stawell Primary School 502 has recently replaced the original timber spire on the front of the school with a steel one due to condition. The original spire has been donated to us for repair and display. This will be restored and erected by two of our members and will be installed in the garden area adjacent to the old Courthouse.

Are you interested in the rich history of Stawell? Keep up to date via our Facebook page and articles in *The Stawell Times News*. Better still, come and visit our Research Centre and Museum. Here are just a few interesting facts about our beautiful town:

- Home to The Stawell Gift, the richest Amateur Foot Race initiated in 1878 by a group of local businessmen in the backroom of Carter's Boot Shop.
- The first regional town in Victoria to have a Tourism and Visitor Information Centre in the 1960's.
- In the late 1870s Stawell was noted as having the deepest Gold Mine shaft in Australia owned by The Quartz Reef Mining Company and considered part of Stawell's Golden Mile and the western-most point of The Golden Triangle.
- Pleasant Creek (as Stawell was then known) Courthouse was built in 1860. This operated as the main Courthouse for the entire Wimmera Region and also operated as the Mine Warden's Office. This has housed our Museum for some years.
- Remember Duffle Coats? The fabric for these famous coats was woven and produced at Stawell Woollen Mills (also famous for its beautiful woollen blankets). It eventually passed to Aunde Textiles which manufactured car seat fabric for Holden and Mitsubishi as well as airline seat covers for Qantas and Ansett. It no longer operates and the vast premises have been bought by Thomas Foods (formerly Frew's Abattoirs)
- We now have 101 financial Members and a very active team of Volunteers.

Kate van Dyck on behalf of SHS

Maryborough Midlands Historical Society

VICTORIAN COMMUNITY HISTORY AWARDS Maryborough author commended

The 2023 Victorian Community History Awards were presented at the Arts Centre Melbourne on the 2nd of February 2024.

Presented by Public Record Office Victoria in partnership with the Royal Historical Society of Victoria, the Victorian Community History Awards are held annually to celebrate the people involved in community history projects who are dedicated to telling local stories which help all Victorians to better understand their past.

MMHS member Craig Roberts' *Quartz Hill*, entered in the *Small History Publication Award*, was one of three books awarded a Commendation in that category.

The book brings to life the colourful and dramatic history of the town's most prominent landmark. Between 1859 and 1905 thousands of tons of quartz were extracted from the many mine shafts that dotted the hill.

Bristol Hill (formerly Quartz Hill) is situated on Maryborough's western boundary and forms the area's highest elevation. Quartz-reef gold mining was conducted at Bristol Hill between 1859 and 1905 under 205 separate registered claims and leases. The heavy, gold-studded quartz had to be extracted from underground reefs and brought to the surface before being crushed to the consistency of sand to allow the gold to be retrieved.

When mining ceased Bristol Hill was left riddled with deep shafts and denuded of vegetation.

In 1924, following collaboration between several government departments to replant many of the abandoned mining areas, Bristol Hill's native ironbark and grey box varieties were restored.

In the 1930s, the local council took advantage of the government's depression era sustenance labour program to fill Bristol Hill's mine shafts which had become a danger to the local population and livestock.

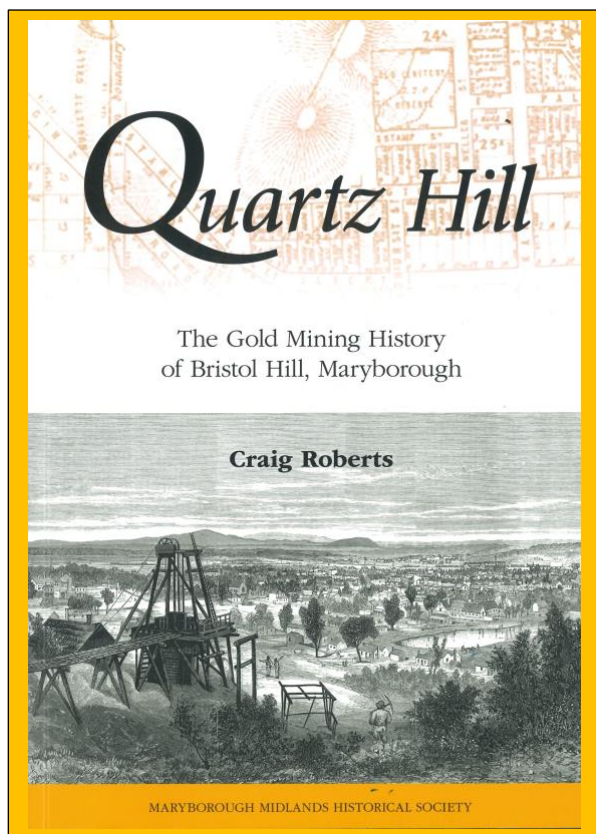
As Bristol Hill gradually morphed into a bushland reserve, its history as a site of industrial scale gold mining began to slip from the minds of the population.

In 1994 a government survey concluded that Bristol Hill's sites had little historical integrity due to the mining relics having been removed or destroyed. No buildings, foundations, or equipment survived.

While the remaining ridge-line trenches still reveal the extent of past mining activity, many of the town's residents are largely unaware of Bristol Hill's original and significant mining history. *Quartz Hill* tells that story.



Craig is presented with his award by Judy Maddigan



Glenthompson Historical Group

Memories from Yesteryear

We started 2024 with a collaborative Australia Day celebration. The Glenthompson Community Group and the Glenthompson History Group got together to run a different variation on our usual celebrations.

This year we invited a number of older and former residents to attend and share some of their memories of growing up in and around Glenthompson.

The afternoon started with an awesome BBQ provided by the Community group, then we had the oldest community member, 94-year-old Mr Ian Heard, raise the flag. After this we all sat back while five people delighted us with memories of growing up.

Of one lady, referred to as Auntie Ada Fraser, who was so deaf she would seriously rev her old Ford car up before moving and how the local boys would have to put a rock under her back wheel to stop the car rolling away. This old lady used a trumpet to hear. She almost caused an accident one time when she stalled in the middle of the road. This poor man in a Pontiac was bearing down on her, with a look of horror on his face as he tried to stop. In the end he was able to stop only just short of her car. She didn't even look at him and drove off as if nothing had happened.

Stories of riding bicycles to school, wagging school, of climbing trees to gather bird eggs which they'd then blow to create a collection. The tale of one of the boys having a cigarette at school and discarding it when they were called into class. Shortly after a teacher was looking out the window and apparently the toilets were on fire, caused by the cigarette. The story of burying the teacher's strap, of using kero to run their car due to petrol rationing and the cloud of white smoke it created. How one of the student trouble makers would be put off the school bus and made to run alongside until the driver would stop and allow him back on. Of a fatal accident when a driver hit some gumtrees and the white cross which someone made with the quote "Here he lies arse up". How the headmaster would ensure the streets were clear of kids by around 4pm and if they weren't off the streets, they would cop a strap at school next day.



The largest order our local brickworks received was for repaving streets in Adelaide as these bricks were the closest in colour to the original brick. Sadly, the brickworks are now closed due to bureaucratic reasons, such as wanting a pit, which took 100 years to create, filled in (with what and from where), and the road was too close to the pit. Seriously? The pit was there first.

They talked of businesses long gone, such as the rabbit chiller which once sat on the site of our celebrations that day, the local Lion's Park. Apparently, it was the largest in the world at one point. The kids would go rabbiting and sell the rabbits to the chiller. The owner was paying the adults a shilling a pair but the kids were only getting sixpence which the kids weren't happy about. So, to get back at the owner, the kids locked him in the chiller. He eventually got out but the kids had no idea how. How the kids would throw stones up on people's roofs. The local postmaster, Mr. Fred Anderson, would set his dog "Thumper" to try to find the kids but they would have taken off on their bikes in a hurry by then.

It was wonderful to hear of these and many other things. We got a great laugh from these reminiscences and got many people chatting for some time after. These memories were recorded and will be transcribed and kept at the History Centre. We shared many of the photos taken on the day (not of the actual talks – too busy recording) and we invite you to view them on our Facebook page ([Glenthompson Historical Group Inc](#)). We are very grateful to those who shared their memories with us.

Our AGM is in late March and we hope we can encourage a few new members to join. I'm looking forward to catching up with many of you in April in Nhill for the WVAHS AGM.

Tracey Potatau-Wright
Secretary
Glenthompson Historical Group

Swan Hill Genealogical and Historical Society



Photo: Steve Matthews, Lake Boga Silo Committee

The town of Lake Boga, with a population of just under 1,000 people, once played a vital role as a repair and service depot for flying boats during WWII.

The latest GrainCorp art project, led by local group 'Lake Boga Incorporated', has been completed after 5 years of planning how best to tell this story.

Painted in October 2023 by Tim Bowtell, the silos showcase the historic Catalina Flying Boat and George Urquhart Allan (known as "Scotty" Allan) who had a remarkable career as an aviator with a rich history.

Set against a picturesque Lake Boga sunset, the artwork portrays the region's history and environment while also highlighting the various recreational activities like water skiing and sailing along with a prominent pelican.

The project was funded by the Foundation for Regional and Rural Renewal (FRRR) in partnership with the Swan Hill Rural City Council.

For further information go to

<https://www.australiansiloarttrail.com/lake-boga>

Also from Stawell...

Stawell's rich Gold Mining History celebrated

(Article published in *Stawell Times News*)

How easy it is to forget the origins of the town you live in. 2024 sees 171 years of gold mining in and around Stawell with the first discovery at Pleasant Creek (as Stawell was known) in 1853.

The history of gold mining across Victoria has seen a renewed interest drawing visitors from far and wide who are keen to explore the historic sites. This has largely been thanks to the passionate work of filmmakers and historians sharing their experiences on social media and websites.

Representatives from Stawell Historical Society and Stawell Gold Mine recently hosted Michelle from Goldfields Guide who produces fascinating videos on YouTube exploring the long-forgotten goldfields in Victoria. Hours were spent researching our large collection of the old mine sites, early maps, stories, books and verbal history as well as taking her on a tour of the old sites and remnants of the mines from the 1800s. Michelle is currently creating a video of the amazing history of the riches that enabled Stawell to be recognised as one of the major sites from its beginnings to today with Stawell Gold Mine being one of the largest operational gold mines in Victoria.

The history of the success of gold mining in Stawell can also be seen in some of the magnificent buildings that line the streets.

Keep your eyes on YouTube in the coming weeks for this interesting story. Visit [Goldfields Guide](#) for Michelle's video and visit The Stawell Historical Society for additional stories, photos and history and if you are visiting or new to town make sure you get out and about to experience this history first hand.

Kate van Dyck

Ed.: Do check out the amazing variety of videos by Michelle on the [Goldfields Guide YouTube Channel](#) !

Macarthur & District Historical Society

An initiative by the Society:

OFFICIAL OPENING OF ELECTRIC LIGHT AT EDENHOPE, 1933

Submitted by Geoff Langsworth, President,
Edenhope and District Historical Society

The electric light plant installed by Messrs. Ronaldson Bros & Tippett of Ballarat for Mr. A. J. Bird, the proprietor of the Central Garage Edenhope was officially set in motion by Cr. A. F. Carracher, the President of the Shire of Kowree at the power house on Thursday night and at the Mechanics' Hall where a dance was subsequently held jointly in aid of the Mechanics' Institute and the Bush Nursing Hospital Lighting Funds.

After the official opening a number of visitors and residents were entertained at dinner by Messrs. Ronaldson Bros. & Tippett.

Official Turning On.

At the official "switching on", Cr. Carracher said he wished to congratulate Mr. Bird upon his enterprise. It was a big undertaking, which he said he felt sure would be successful with a man of Mr. Bird's push and energy. He had often wondered why Edenhope had not had electric light earlier. The other townships in the Shire, Apsley, Goroke and Harrow – had had it for some years. Possibly the explanation was that Edenhope was waiting for something good and from all appearances they had superseded in getting it. Not that for one moment did he suggest that the plants in the townships mentioned were not quite good and efficient but the current Edenhope plant was on a much more excessive scale and reflected great credit on the makers, Messrs. Ronaldson & Tippett which was an Australia firm, using Australian materials and employing Australian labour.

Mr. Bird thanked Cr. Carracher for his remarks. Messrs. Ronaldson & Tippett had a good reputation as manufacturers of machinery and in running the plant, he hoped that their high reputation would be sustained. However care and attention would be given with the view of supplying satisfactory service to consumers.

Mr. J. Ronaldson thanked those present for their attendance. He appreciated the complimentary remarks made concerning the products of the firm he represented and he also appreciated Mr. Bird's in placing the order for the plant with them. Mr. Bird's enterprise would supply to the people of Edenhope one of the greatest conveniences of modern life.

The Dinner.

The Shire President presided at the dinner and opened proceedings by proposing the health of the King. The toast of the Shire of Kowree was proposed by Mr. S. E. Clutterbuck who said the Council occasionally came in for some criticism on such matters as dogs and wandering cows, but in encouraging the installation of electric lights, the Councilors were on the right lines.

In response, Cr. Cranage said that it was always the aim of the Council to give everyone a fair deal, and

the matter of electric light, the Councilors had been unanimous in supporting it. He congratulated Mr. Bird on his enterprise and Messrs. Ronaldson Bros. & Tippett for their excellence of the plant. In the matter of dogs and cows, he had as much to say as anyone. He considered cows camping in the street were both a nuisance and a danger and he was pleased to see that he was getting a little support, by an anonymous support in the local press. There had been a lot of argument with regard to dog registration but he thought the present system was giving satisfaction to everyone.

In proposing the toast of the township of Edenhope, Mr. Ronaldson said that this was probably the most important toast of the evening, as without the people, the installation would not have been possible. They had shown wonderful appreciation of Mr. Bird's enterprise. It was the extent of this appreciation that had been responsible for some of the delay in establishing the plant. They had ordered a plant to cope with the work which appeared in sight at the time, but so many more orders came in afterwards, that they found it necessary to substitute a much larger plant.

In proposing "Australian Industries", Mr. W. G. Laidlaw said that he considered the Australian industry was turning out work to any imported. For some considerable time after building his house he made shift with kerosene lamps and candles while he was investigating various light plants. He finally installed a Ronaldson & Tippett 32-volt plant. This had now been in commission for four years and although it had nothing done to it, it was still in perfect order. There were many advantages, both to the country and to the purchaser, one of which was that the purchaser had the makers to fall back upon, whereas with imported plants, there was only the agent.

In supporting the toast Cr. W. T. Moore said that Mr. Bird had chosen wisely in obtaining his plant from Ronaldson & Tippett. He had had no personal experience with their machinery, but some of his neighbors had and spoke very highly both of the quality of their work and of the service rendered by the firm, which was of great importance to the owner.

Cr. R. C. Dixon congratulated Messrs. Ronaldson & Tippett on the excellence of the plant and Mr. Bird on his enterprise. A few more street lights would be an advantage and he hoped that in the near future the council would be sufficiently financial to install them.

Mr. Barry Kent of Little Kent & Co, Casterton said that the support of home industry could not be over emphasised. He had been preaching for it for the last 10 years. People need fear nothing by supporting local industry, as they always had the makers to fall back upon. He congratulated Mr. Bird. The appearance of the township at night was vastly improved with better light.

Mr. J. A. Ronaldson, in reply said he very much appreciated the complimentary remarks of the speakers. His was an Australian firm which fully realised its responsibility to primary producers in the making of machinery and plants.

They realised that the primary producer was passing through a very lean period and he felt it was up to the secondary industry to do what was possible to tide them over. There was a tendency in some quarters to keep the primary and secondary industries apart but he felt that success lay in close co-operation of the two. Primary producers were beginning to realise what the secondary industries of Australia can do, and it was their aim to justify the confidence thus shown.

In proposing the toast of Mr. Bird's health, Cr Dixon said that he felt that the street lighting for the past 10 or 15 years was a disgrace and but for Mr. Bird's enterprise, would still be in that condition.

Mr. Hughes, salesman for Ronaldson & Tippett, said that he had conferred with Mr. Bird throughout the transaction and they had many difficulties to overcome and only a stouthearted man would have persevered with the scheme.

Mr. W. F. Cranage said that Mr. Bird had not arrived at a hasty decision and wished him every success.

The toast was also supported by Cr. Cranage, Mr. Kent, Cr. Moore, Messrs Ronaldson, J. T. Lowndes, H. G. Hill, Thomas (Naracoorte), Dr J. C. Craig, Cr. Carracher and Mr. Montgomery.

In reply, Mr. Bird thanked the speakers for their expressions of goodwill, Messrs. Ronaldson & Tippett for the assistance they had given to him, the Shire Council and the people of Edenhope for their support, which had been much greater than he had expected. He also wished to thank Mr. Cameron, the electrician, and his garage staff, all of whom had worked hard to establish the scheme. He felt sure the plant would give little trouble, as the best of material had been used and every connection had been tested by the Electricity Commission. He expected to provide a service which would be satisfactory to the consumers.

Other toasts honored were Mr. Harry Cameron, the electrician, proposed by the Chairman, the Press, proposed by Mr. Ronaldson and responded to by Mr. Gazzard (*Casterton News*) and Mr. H. G. Hill, representing the *Kowree Advocate* and the *Hamilton Spectator*, and the Chairman proposed by Mr Thomson."

Source – The *Kowree Advocate*, 31st May 1933 and the Edenhope and District Historical Society Inc.

She's back! Helen Curkpatrick returns to the ABC Wimmera airwaves



My return to the ABC Horsham studios was after a two-year break which happened due to 're-programming'. Up until then the schedule for the history programme was changed from 7.20 a.m. to a new timeslot of 9.20 a.m. each Wednesday morning which I felt was a waste of time as most listeners have had breakfast by 9.00 a.m. and heading to work, shopping, etc. So a break and change are good!

While it is just one on-air session of about ten minutes, I believe it is an important part of promoting history and many of the benefits history has to offer to everyone.

For those who would like to either participate and/or listen in, the segment it will go to air **the first Wednesday of each month at around 7.40 a.m.** The interviews are either live to air or pre-recorded which, of course depends on the interviewee. The next scheduled interview is Wednesday 6 March 2023.

The interview with Rebekah on 7 February covered the basics including how my interest in history comes in many forms: musical bands, cemeteries, genealogy, local historical societies, railways and the National Trust and how these groups need volunteers to keep doing the amazing work they do; for people to appreciate their local buildings and churches (stained glass windows and facades, etc.); plus we gave a call out to listeners if they would like anything historical mentioned to phone ABC Reception.

There are many W.V.A.H.S. members who have kindly participated in the history program over the years and I urge everyone to consider being involved.

Just like the *Western Historian* quarterly newsletter, we need your input.

I thank all those listeners who have acknowledged the history program – may it continue to create lots of interest with ongoing effects.

Helen Curkpatrick

Skipton Cemetery's Lost Register

Way back in 1928 there was a house fire that consumed all the records of the Skipton Cemetery Trust, a long-lasting event with repercussions to the present day!

Enter the 21st century and the rise of 'Trove' and the Internet. Whilst it was practical to create a roll call of burials earlier than this, it is now all so much easier. Delving into older resources first, namely the 'Digger' genealogical product, I started by extracting "Skipton deaths", thence on to deceased persons born at Skipton as the place of death does not appear on the index entries until about 1880.

A minor complication arises for early times when Skipton was administered from Chepstowe, twenty kilometres away. Also, a number of deaths occurred at nearby pastoral stations and the Mt Emu Creek. So, the search criteria needed to widen accordingly.

The ensuing spreadsheet data is then checked by a similar exercise using the Justice Department's website: <https://www.bdm.vic.gov.au/research-and-family-history/search-your-family-history>

Then back to 'Digger' to extract all the inquest data, to be checked against the PROV website. The PROV also provides probate data to add to the mix: <https://prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/online-collections>

It's then time to add in all the existing memorials at the cemetery which, incidentally, covered about half the individuals concerned.

Hours then spent dredging through 'Trove' extracting death events for locals and, along the way, discovering quite a few buried at Skipton who died elsewhere. Or, sometimes confusingly, only memorialised here: <https://trove.nla.gov.au/search/advanced/category/newspapers>

The only way to verify all this data is to obtain the death certificate for each person - an expensive exercise - very generously funded by Corangamite Shire, Pyrenees Shire, Skipton Progress Association and the harVFEST group along with other Skipton Associations and individuals. While we don't know the actual burial site for many of those discovered, we are still much better informed than we were. The death certificates also give a hint as to immigration date which can be followed up on line at the PROV:

<https://prov.vic.gov.au/explore-collection/online-collections>

It is worth noting that one certificate records a burial place that is obviously incorrect, so they are not infallible!

The results of these efforts are freely available on line at [The Skipton Cemetery](#)

A very useful text based database of Victorian BDM index data is online at <https://web.archive.org/web/20230228000633/http://bdmabbreviations.steveparker.id.au/vicbdmfree.htm>

As there will always be a new source to explore, like the elusive 'Abstract of Accounts' submitted yearly by the Cemetery Trust to Melbourne and possibly hiding in the PROV also, the burial places of the partners of those interred here, the research will be ongoing. To date 395 interments have been discovered dating to before the fire, with 208 of these previously unknown. The exercise has also highlighted a couple of grazier families which did not always see fit to inform the local registrar of a death in their family; it was a long way to town on horseback way back then, no doubt.



Bob Thornton
Secretary,
Skipton Cemetery Trust
skipton.cemetery.au@gmail.com

2024 Milestones for Victorian railway lines

During 2024, there are a number of railway lines in Victoria which will celebrate the centenary (or other significant dates) of their official opening. I have listed lines in the part of the state covered by WVAHS. Local historical societies may wish to recognise some of these events by holding relevant displays, etc.

Michael Menzies

100 YEARS

Red Cliffs to Werrimull, 11.4.1924. Line closed 1988.

Annuello to Robinvale, 5.6.1924, Services suspended on this line beyond Manangatang.
Kerang to Murrabit, 20.12.1924. Services suspended beyond Murrabit to Stony Crossing in 1943 as a wartime measure, but never resumed. Services suspended between Kerang and Murrabit on 20.4.1961, after a bridge failed under a train. Line closed 20.12.1961.

110 YEARS

Chillingollah to Manangatang, 28.1.1914. Currently open.

Ben Nevis to Navarre, 28.5.1914. Closed 24.2.1954 – 70 years ago.

Rainbow to Yaapeet, 26.6.1914. Services suspended on this line beyond Bow Hill.

Sea Lake to Nandaly, 29.6.1914. Services suspended on this line beyond Sea Lake.

130 YEARS

Beulah to Hopetoun, 6.3.1894, Currently open.
Dimboola to Jeparit, 19.6.1894. Currently open.
East Natimuk to Goroke, 31.7.1894. Closed 1986.

140 YEARS

Mitiamo to Pyramid Hill, 12.2.1884. Currently open.

Branxholme to Henty, 15.2.1884. Closed 12.9.1977.

Henty to Casterton, 1.9.1884. Closed 12.9.1977.

Pyramid Hill to Kerang, 25.10.1884. Currently open.

150 YEARS

Castlemaine to Maryborough, 7.7.1874. Services suspended between Maryborough and Moolort, closed between Moolort and Maldon Junction (near Castlemaine).

Ballarat to Creswick, 7.7.1874. Currently open.

Ballarat to Beaufort, 11.8.1874. Currently open.

Maryborough to Dunolly, 6.10.1874. Currently open.

Creswick to Clunes, 16.11.1874. Currently open.

Note: Clunes to Maryborough opened 2.2.1875, providing a second connection to Maryborough (via Ballarat) after the route via Castlemaine opened in July 1874.

160 YEARS

Bendigo to Echuca, 19.9.1864. Currently open.

Upcoming Events



Geelong Museum Association Inc.

2024 'Last Sunday Series' at the National Wool Museum

1.30 pm - 3 pm

Free entry. Afternoon cuppa provided; gold coin donation.

Details of talks are updated on the Geelong Museum Association Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/geelongmuseum>

Sunday 24 March (Sunday before Easter)

They Once Raced Here - The lost racecourses of Victoria. Many years of research have been devoted to locating documentary records and physical evidence of the once numerous racecourses scattered around Victoria. Some were relatively short lived but many others survived for decades until racing rationalisation and economics resulted in their closure.

Chris Ganly has researched and written about a number of Geelong based topics. This project has spread his activity to all corners of the state. He has so far published two volumes as a result of his racecourse research. The first volume included racecourses in our district and the second in the Loddon, Campaspe and Mallee regions. Copies of these books will be available for purchase after his talk.

Sunday 28 April

Otway Hotels and Wine Shanties. The provision of drinks, meals and rest has been the function of hotels and wine saloons since the early days. In the Otway region south of Colac to the coast there developed a network of ten hotels and six wine shanties dispensing community comforts. These businesses varied from the full monty hotel with 28 bedrooms down to the humble wine saloon in a roadside paddock. Their fortunes went up and down according to the health of the local economy and population density. All but five of them have long vanished. This presentation looks at the history of all of this.

Norman Houghton OAM has written extensively on the Otways, covering hotels, sawmills and the timber industry, railways, churches and the small settlements of Beech Forest, Forrest, Gellibrand, Carlisle River, Barongarook and Banool.

Sunday 26 May

Woollen mills of Geelong. Geelong was for over 100 years a centre of wool processing. Many large industrial facilities were built to house wool scouring, spinning, dyeing and weaving establishments. Most have closed during recent decades, but some remain and their buildings and chimneys are prominent sites around Geelong. Their history and the lives of their numerous employees is a fascinating story.


Colin Mockett is a writer, historian, broadcaster, entertainer, editor and tour guide. He's a graduate of both Geelong's Gordon Institute and Deakin University. He regularly hosts walking tours of the Geelong Waterfront and is a step-on guide to coach parties visiting the Geelong region. He writes and produces monthly Morning Showtimes for the CoGG's Potato Shed venue and co-presents *The Sustainable Hour* weekly podcast and radio program.

June-November events will be promoted in subsequent issues of *Western Historian*.

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Easter Weekend



JOHN DEERE JOHN DEERE

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Machinery Rally
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34 Henty Highway,
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It's all happening in the Wimmera, it
seems, but....

Remember!


These pages are reserved each issue for Member Groups to promote upcoming events, whatever they are. You never know who might be interested in coming along to your group's event!

Wimmera Mallee
PIONEER
MUSEUM

15th VINTAGE RALLY





June Long Weekend
8 - 9 June, 2024
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Dimboola Road, Jeparit

Working machinery – Heritage Buildings & Displays – Tours & Talks –
Demonstrations – Horse works – Heritage Cars – Entertainment – Food Stalls –
Crafts & Plants – Kids' Activities

Something for everyone!

Hindmarsh
Shire Council

Adults: \$15 Concession/Students: \$10
Family: \$30 Children 12 & under: Free



Save the Date!

18 – 19 May 2024

Royal Historical Society of Victoria Regional Seminar Weekend

Hosted by Mortlake and District Historical Society Inc. at Mortlake

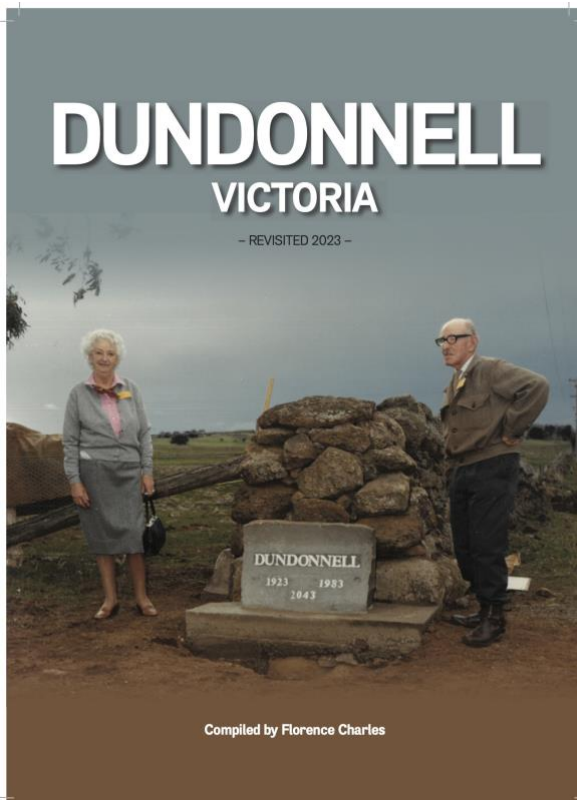
Saturday 18 May: Afternoon Heritage Walk and Talk; Evening Pub Meal

Sunday 19 May: Seminars 10.00 a.m. – 4.00 p.m. at the Mortlake R.S.L. Hall

Further details and registration information will be disseminated via the RHSV in due course and will also appear on the WVAHS Facebook page and come through the WVAHS email account.



Publications



Dundonnell, Victoria, Revisited 2023 compiled by Florence Charles

This book contains *Dundonnell, Victoria, A History of the District*, compiled by the Back to Dundonnell Committee in April 1983. It has now been updated to include newspaper articles, photos and contributions by local and past identities up until 2023.

The village of Dundonnell once contained a Public Hall, school, church, Post Office and Telephone Exchange. The Public Hall, the last surviving public building, was demolished in 2023 to make way for a new state-of-the-art Fire Station (yet to be completed) to include a community room to accommodate 50 people. Today at Dundonnell there are 80 wind towers in full operation, spread over approximately 4,500 hectares, the project hosted by twelve local landowners which was commenced in 2016 by Tilt Renewables.
200 pages

Enquiries: Mortlake and District Historical Society
mortlakedhs@gmail.com

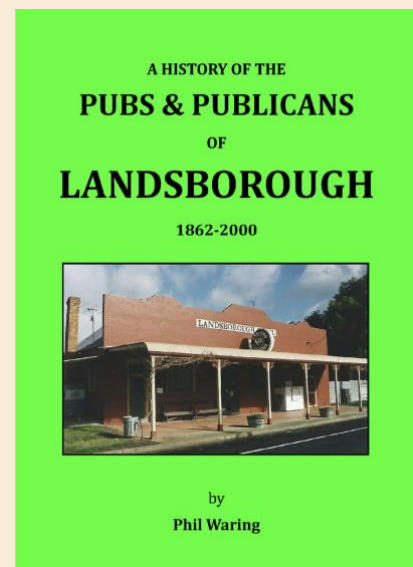
Landsborough and District Historical Group

[L&DHS Facebook page](#)

Pubs & Publicans of Landsborough 1862 – 2000 by Phil Waring

We are pleased to announce the publication of our latest book with thanks to Phil Waring who has spent many years researching and compiling the information which has culminated in the release of this wonderful piece of early Landsborough History. Full of anecdotes and stories, there is much to enjoy here as a snapshot of life in Landsborough including the early days of the rush when there were dozens of pubs operating. Of course only one pub now remains and there is a detailed history covering all the publicans and licensees up to the 2000s.

The book is 73 pages and the cost is \$20.00. Postage can be arranged to anywhere in Australia for \$5.20.



A History of Landsborough 1862 – 2022 (Landsborough Historical Group)

Other titles still in print:

Lost Railway Stations of the Pyrenees (Revised edition) \$45.00

Landsborough Hall – A History \$5.00

Lost Schools Of The Pyrenees \$30.00 (only one copy left)

School On The Hill (History of Landsborough State School) \$20.00

No Honey No Money (Max Jeffery) \$15.00 (limited stock)