



CAMPERDOWN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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NEWSLETTER

July, 2017.

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Opening hours
Tuesdays and 1st Sunday of
month, (Market Day) 10am-
3pm

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Hello to all members

There's quite a bit extra in our Newsletter this quarter: the Notice of Annual General Meeting and Nomination Form as well as a full report of our very successful trip to Meningoort.

There's also NAIDOC Week and our Heritage Centre Jottings.

Past events such as the Burns Festival and the Launch of our "Inspiring Women" booklet went really well and were very well attended. We particularly should mention the Lecture Series part of the Burns Festival because it was wholly arranged by our President Bob Lambell and it was manned over the two days by members Maree Belyea and Jan Whamond. Congratulations all! Audience attendance was more than satisfactory but getting up the stairs to the old Council Chambers proved a bit much for some of the older patrons, so new venue is being investigated for next year.

The AGM is a date we'd like you to put in your diary, particularly as this year a very important subject will be discussed - Membership Fees! Expenses keep rising and, for the past five years, these have been absorbed without change to our fees. However, our printing costs, and our internet costs (which will increase once the NBN is established) have become the trigger for the Treasurer to propose an increase. This will be discussed at the meeting and we welcome our members' thoughts and ideas.

Our Facebook page is being updated regularly and has lots of followers with good feedback on many posts. You can see us at: [facebook.com/camperdownhistory](https://www.facebook.com/camperdownhistory).

And STOP PRESS NEWS about the opening of our new Dairy Exhibition! It's all there on page 8 and should be quite an event. Put it in your diary!

New Members: Bev Fleming (rejoined) and Amanda Manifold - welcome!

Gillian Senior Newsletter Editor



From the Heritage Centre Aboriginal Grinding Stone

In keeping with the theme for NAIDOC Week, we're featuring one of our Aboriginal grinding stones to celebrate the Aboriginal history of the district.

We have a number of grinding stones and stone axes in our collection, all found locally. We often put one of these on our touch-table for school visits, together with some wheat or similar grains for the students to grind into flour. It always

creates a great deal of interest, even the teachers having a turn to experience the hand-grinding of grains.

COMING EVENTS: AUGUST - OCTOBER, 2017

Annual General Meeting
Tuesday, 1st August,
7.30 pm at the
Camperdown Heritage Centre

Following our AGM, Mortlake Historian Florence Charles will talk about her forthcoming book about the history of Darlington and its pioneers.

Also on the night, check out our new display featuring the local Dairy Industry.

Members: please bring some supper



Elephant Bridge Hotel, Darlington, 1934

Wednesday 9th August, 10.30 am: Executive meeting at the Heritage Centre

A visit to
"LAKESIDE", at Pomborneit
Sunday, 1st October



Lakeside, c1910

Ruth and Brian Amst, the owners of Lakeside, have kindly agreed to allow us to visit their historic home at Pomborneit.

Lakeside was built in 1908 to a design by Camperdown Architect, Michael McCabe, best known for designing Camperdown's famous Clock Tower. Lakeside is considered McCabe's finest residential property. This is a rare opportunity to visit this wonderful home.

Depart from Camperdown Heritage Centre at 1.30 pm.

BYO afternoon tea

Bookings:

Maree Belyea, Ph. 0417 352 987

Email: camperdowndhs@gmail.com

RSVP by Tuesday 26th September

NOTE: This is a strictly members only event

HERITAGE CENTRE - Jottings and News

We launched the women and had a good afternoon

We had a great turn up for the launch of our Inspiring Women booklet. Around 25 members and friends were there and the two speakers, Gillian Senior and Jan Whamond, got quite a few gasps and laughs from their audience when sharing the stories of the two Mrs. Glens (Janet and Rachel) and Mrs. Daniel Curdie (Frances). Mayor, Jo Beard, spoke of how she found the stories totally inspiring and very relevant to her position in our society today, that of being a woman in public life as against the struggles of the early pioneering wives and daughters.



Long-time member, Margaret Murrhy shared with us information that her great uncle, John Meningoort Evans, was the Manager at "Rivernook", a holiday guest house at Princetown, during the time it was a popular holiday destination for the second Mrs. Glen. His second name came about because he was born at Meningoort, where his father was working at the time. Very topical considering our visit to Meningoort, reported later in this newsletter.

Come in and spend \$10 to buy a copy of our book at the Heritage Centre or at the Local Newsagent or the Information Centre. Printed by our local WD News, it's a beautiful production.

Local Businesses Support our Society.

A New Display Unit It's great that local businesses think of the voluntary groups in the town. Newsagents, Noela and Shane McCann have passed on to us the unit shown here. Having a smart way to display our books has already resulted in increased sales and we're very grateful for the support.

A Welcome Donation Laff's are another local supporter and we're very grateful for being the recipient of their Sales Donation of \$86 for the month of April this year. Thank you LAFF'S & Kim!



Camperdown College Students Visit



In early May, 32 students from Grades 3 & 4 visited the Heritage Centre as part of their Indigenous Studies subject. Students were interested and engaged and asked many questions; and the teachers were very impressed with President, Bob Lambell's presentation. They also noted the many other resources we have that could be of benefit for a number of their community based subjects.

We always try to encourage local schools to take advantage of our collections and knowledge for their studies. We hope this will be the first of more visits to come from other year levels.

Wombee Puyuun- also known as Camperdown George.

Colongulac House in Balwyn?



Some of our readers may have already seen this photo in the Warrnambool Standard in early May. Our research has found that the house at 11 Luena Rd, North Balwyn was built in 1892 by Robert W. Cerutti and, after having several other owners, was bought by Alexander William Adeney of Camperdown in the early 1900s. It was given the name "Colongulac" after the Lake of that name which adjoined the Adeney family's land.

We are still working on identifying the family. Is it an Adeney family group or perhaps one of the previous owner's? Any assistance would be welcomed.

NAIDOC WEEK IN CAMPERDOWN - 2017

NAIDOC Week at Info Centre



Every year, National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee celebrates Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history, culture and achievements. This year the week of celebrations began on Sunday, 2nd July. It provides an opportunity to recognise the history and the contributions that Indigenous Australians make to our country and our society.



Your society's contribution this year is a display of local Aboriginal history in photographs and information at the Courthouse. As this newsletter goes to print, the display is still there and we hope you'll pop in and see what we have put together in the main display area. Reports are that it has been very favourably received by many visitors.

NAIDOC Flag Raising at Mt Leura

At 10am, on the very cold morning of Monday, 3rd July, about 30 people gathered at the base of Mt Leura for a ceremony which was the first of its kind in Camperdown. It was jointly instigated by the Management Committees of Mt Leura and Mt Elephant and was the first of week-long local celebrations in honour of NAIDOC.



NAIDOC is the National Aborigines and Islanders Day Observance Committee and the event on Monday took the form of an acknowledgement of the first peoples of Australia and the raising of the Aboriginal flag. Guest of Honour was local Aboriginal representative, Vicki Couzens who, after an introduction by President, Graeme Arkinstall, told us a little of her background and spoke very movingly of the slow development of Aboriginal recognition.

A prominent artist and Gunditjmarra Kirrae Wuurong woman from the Western Districts of Victoria, Vicki plays an active role in promoting the culture of her people. She has served on the boards of the Koorie Heritage Trust Inc and the Victorian Corporation for Aboriginal Languages.

Born in Warrnambool herself, Vicki's great grandmother was born in Camperdown in 1857. She was a contemporary of Wombeetch Puyuun (also known in the town as Camperdown George) and other local Aborigines whose names and stories were recorded by James Dawson of Wuurong.

Vicki told us some of the history of her people in our district, about some of the important meeting places – Kielambete and Mt Elephant. We learnt that the languages spoken by the various clans of the south-west shared around 85% of their language which meant that trading, friendships, marriages could be conducted between these groups.

She spoke of the long process of acceptance in Australia – of the missions, the referendum in 1967 which saw Aboriginal people removed from the flora and fauna lists, the granting of Native Title and the Mabo judgement – all of which has taken many years of working slowly towards reconciliation. Her message was that we are now, more and more, able to work together – with a shared love of the country and a shared recognition that we need to look after the environment and “The need to look after our mother.”

Rather than raise the flag herself, something usually done by an Aboriginal representative, Vicki passed the job over to a representative of the white community in recognition of our shared future together. And so, Alex Gordon, a member of the Friends of Mt Leura, did the honours. He also spoke movingly about his understanding of the need to know and recognise the history of the first people in Australia.



Also present was a group of Kinder Kids from the Banana Splits Chile Care Centre in Camperdown. The kids were great and quietly listened during the speeches. Then they came inside and played with some of the special stones and nature play organised for families as part of the celebrations.

Councillor Ruth Gstrein spoke as a representative of the Shire, photos were taken, and an enthusiastic (but very cold!) group retreated to the Education Centre for hot cups of tea or coffee and some delicious morning tea.

The Possum Skin Cloak which Vicki brought to show us (and which she happily wore while outside!) was made by her as part of the statewide Possum Skin Cloak project in 2006. It is made of possum skin, waxed linen thread, and the design is wattle seed sap, ochre and poker work design. The traditional knowledge of cloak-making was shared with Indigenous communities



A GREAT DAY OUT AT MENINGOORT

On the sunny afternoon of 4th June, about 20 Society members car-pooled their way out to Meningoort at the invitation of host, Stewart McArthur.

Jim Wilson, a life member of CDHS and historian extraordinaire, as well as being a life-long friend and neighbour of Stewart McArthur, sent his apologies. He also expressed his concern that his friend “do everything correctly on the tour” – as Jim did on all such occasions! I think we can assure Jim that Stewart, with his assistants, did a fine job!

Having arrived and parked our cars, we enjoyed two and a half hours of information, entertainment and exercise!

The exercise component consisted of walking between various working areas of the property where there were displays of farming equipment, some from days past right up to the present. The entertainment was provided by Stewart’s interesting and light-hearted descriptions of the many different activities of farming life. He also had a couple of great double-acts with his brother, Jock McArthur and with neighbour, Nick Cole. Together and singly the three of them covered topics as diverse as sheep and wool production, shearing and shearers, the breeding and racing of horses, woodcutting for heating and cooking and the introduction of motorised vehicles instead of horse and cart – all interspersed with anecdotes. We had brought the Historic Society’s small public address system with us and the portable microphone



allowed the speakers to be easily heard by all.

We began in the Cart Shed where, for 80 or more years, the station hands had gathered first thing in the morning to get their orders for the day. We admired the shingle roof (now covered and protected with corrugated iron) and learned about the repairs and strengthening of the shed. Stewart told us about the need to collect and harness the horses to drays or spring cart before the work of the day could be started, and the advent of the first truck on Meningoort in 1956 – a 3-ton Bedford. A red-letter day indeed!

This prompted Nick to tell of the first tractor on Cloven Hills in 1962 – a grey Fergie which was only allowed one 44 gallon drum of fuel per year!



We saw the Harness Room (pictured) where the head groom looked after the leather harnesses and awaited his orders for the buggy to be despatched.

We visited the bluestone stables and admired the tuck pointing, saw the accommodation upstairs where up to eleven shearers plus regular workmen lived and slept. There was also the cottage where the farm manager lived – quite roomy and very pleasant accommodation.

Part of the workforce was kept employed simply to provide the meat, milk and heating for all the workers as well as for the family. This involved continuous cutting and collecting of wood for the fires, as wood was the only fuel available. The only implements were crosscut saws and axes.

If the shearing team had completed their year’s work, finishing up at Cloven Hills and Meningoort, they would often spend another month wood-cutting and stockpiling for the winter ahead before heading back to Queensland to begin the shearing season again.

The Chaff Room contained the enormous Hornsby engine which provided power for the saw-bench and chaff-cutter. This was also where a couple of beautiful old buggies were stored. (illustrated) The horses, we were told, were able to travel long distances drawing these as they were light and there was no weight on the horses’ shoulders.





A Museum set up in the old Carpentry Workshop contains a fascinating display of farming and household implements and artefacts. Rabbit traps, cross-cut saws, scythes, branding irons, hand-shears, mail-bags..... all set out and labelled on the original workshop table which dates back to 1870. At the end of the room another display



of many items used on the farm and in the homestead and, taking pride of place, George Stevenson's Malvern Star bike. It seems that on his day off George would get dressed up in suit and tie and ride into Camperdown where he visited a number of establishments for a drink or two. In the wee small hours he would ride his bike back to Meningoort – and no one was quite sure how he managed it after all his 'refreshments'! George had his own hut on the property, which we visited, and he lived there in comfort for 40 years, working for the McArthurs until his retirement.



The 1896 timber racing stables were our next destination. These stables were constructed by Camperdown's J. M. Evans for John Neil McArthur who was the eldest son of pioneer settler, Peter McArthur, and whose passion was race-horses.

The stables were where Jock McArthur came into his own. This is where we learnt about the famous annual 'race day' at Meningoort and the breeding and racing of cup-winning horses. Jock's

knowledge and memory of horses, races, race winners and riders is phenomenal and, as Stewart prompted him with leading questions, the two of them provided great entertainment.

We learnt about J. N. McArthur's most famous winner, Marmont, who won the Victoria Racing Club Grand National Hurdle and the Victorian Amateur Turf Club Australian Hurdle in 1903, and the Australian Cup in 1904. Another winner, Peveril, won two Warrnambool Grand National Steeple Chases in 1896. His other well-performing horse was Kildalton, which won the South Australian Derby in 1913.

John Niel McArthur loved his horses much more than sheep or cattle – which apparently didn't help the Meningoort overdraft!



There were many more stories of the race track and histories of famous horses such as Chicquita



which was owned by Sir Gordon McArthur from 1946. Chicquita won 16 races, including eight in succession in Melbourne including the Thousand Guineas, Wakeful Stakes, VRC Oaks and Edward Manifold Stakes and in the spring of 1950 she was second in both the Caulfield Cup and the Melbourne Cup. She also bred a number of prize winning horses and she is buried at Meningoort, not far from her home stables, having died in 1953.

There were also anecdotes about local Olympic riders, Bill Roycroft and his sons Barry, Wayne and Clark, who won gold medals at three Olympic Games, 1960, 64 and 68.

What Jock didn't mention was his own fame as a rider and owner/trainer.

The history of the stables, written by Stewart McArthur and displayed on the wall at the entrance, is a valuable record of horse-breeding and training at Meningoort as well as documenting Jock's involvement in the industry.

"Jock McArthur was a well-known Point to Point rider in his younger days. He rode in the Warrnambool Grand Annual Steeple and rode as an amateur over jumps and on the flat. He has trained between 200 and 400 horses from these stables between 1963 and 1997. He was an owner/trainer and used the famous McArthur colours, blue and pink sash, originally used by J. N. McArthur. Jock McArthur is a legend on country race courses throughout Victoria and especially during the Melbourne Cup Carnival week in November."



The enormous old Shearing Shed was our last stop. The photograph is of the shed around 1875 and it has had considerable additions since then. Stewart gave us a wonderful picture of the shed in its heyday with up to 15,000 to 17,000 sheep being shorn by a team of 11 shearers.

Sadly, this beautifully constructed shearing shed is no longer in use. Up until 1996 the property had run mainly Corriedale sheep but at that stage, the money had gone out of wool and the owners turned to breeding Angus cattle.

We walked the length of the shed to the shearing pens where Stewart began to demonstrate the use of the old hand-shears until Nick moved in and took over! Nick explained that the hand shears are sharpened to such a fine edge that they can be swept through the sheep's wool just like a haberdasher slicing off a length of silk. Nick still uses a set of hand-shears to shear his rams so that they are evenly cut for presentation in a sale.

Stewart then demonstrated dragging a sheep (a bag of wheat) out of the pen, bending over it and using a hand-piece – which he had set up to demonstrate mechanical shearing – all the while holding the animal still, and then having to stand it up and push it down the chute. Ian Urquhart is pictured being coerced into the experience!



Stewart and Nick both talked about the weight of the sheep and the fact that every shearer would be shifting a total of about 2 tons of sheep over an 8-hour day.

Stewart and Nick gave us the story of the property from 1839 when the original pioneers, Nicholas Cole, aged 28 and Peter McArthur, aged 20, first settled on the run as partners. They amicably split the partnership in 1842 with Nicholas Cole dividing the area into two equal portions and Peter McArthur, making the choice of portion. McArthur selected the southern portion of 13,000 acres now known as Meningoort and Cole retained the northern portion of 21,000 acres now known as West Cloven Hills.



We then moved on to the display of a traditional wool bale in a jute pack. The bale has the station property's name, i.e. Meningoort, a description of the wool i.e. AAAMX and each bale is numbered. The wool is classed according to the fibre diameter of the fleece. It is believed that the wool bale design and size emerged from two wool packs that

would sit comfortably on a camel in the old days, 'at the back of Burke'. The design has not changed for 100 years.

Bob Lambell brought up the question of how many settler families were still on their original property 170 years after settlement as are the McArthurs and the Coles. No one knew the exact answer but it was agreed that there would be no more than 5 or 6 families in all of Victoria. As to two families being neighbours since those days – it would be very difficult to find another two who had been adjacent for so long without one or the other selling up and moving on.



It was also asked why, through all those years, the two families had never intermarried. Nick Cole's response was that "the McArthurs were not up to standard!"

And what kept these families on the properties? Stewart's answer was that they were 'committed to holding on' despite devastating drought and fires, despite Soldier Settlements and probate, and despite the horses costing more money than they brought in.

There is a quote at the end of Stewart's story of the stables which seems an appropriate ending to this article:

***"The old timers say: Sheep always, cattle sometimes, horses never.
Fast women, slow horses equals poverty."***



Chicquita's grave under the Cypresses at Meningoort

The steaming urn called us to a welcome cup of tea or coffee, a delicious afternoon tea and a MOST welcome place to sit and rest our legs and backs!

It was a very full afternoon but one that would make a great destination for any group – if Stewart is willing to do it all over again!

Shooting at Meningoort

One of the entertaining anecdotes Stewart shared with us at Meningoort was the day that Maisie O'Meley, the shearers' cook, shot George Woods.

On looking up the *Camperdown Chronicle* records of March, 1948, we found a long, detailed report of the trial. It appears that Maisie and George had been sharing a few drinks in Maisie's kitchen and George had begun to anger Maisie - either through demanding more alcohol or making 'improper suggestions' (the stories of the two involved varied considerably). Maisie insisted she had been holding the gun only to frighten George and it 'went off accidentally'. ***Bursting into tears, accused dramatically cried, "I had no intention of shooting him."***

Intentional or not, Woods ended up with ***"gunshot wounds to the thighs, buttocks and lower part of the back."*** After retirement of an hour, the jury acquitted Maisie of 'malicious wounding' and she was able to get back to Meningoort.

As Stewart told us - "there was no one else to do the cooking for the shearers, so she had to be acquitted!"

Post Script: Life Member of CDHS, 92-year-old Jock Hay (who has a wonderful collection of stories of old Camperdown) related that for weeks after that episode, when George Woods came into town, he was still picking pellets out of his thighs. Ouch!!

Grand Opening of New Dairy Exhibition Gardiner Foundation Grant



Last year, some researchers who were doing work for the Gardiner Foundation visited Camperdown looking for history about the Dairy Industry in this district. Your Society was able to offer considerable help with our records, photographs and newspaper references, which was much appreciated by the researchers.

Coincidentally, following this visit, the Executive Committee of the CDHS found the Gardiner Foundation mentioned on a website listing available grants to volunteer societies. They suddenly had a "flash of inspiration" and decided to apply for a grant from the Foundation to establish a semi-permanent exhibition celebrating the importance of the dairy industry to Camperdown and the surrounding district. Subsequently our application was approved and so the work of preparing the exhibition began.

Costs such as special printing, production of signs and banners, as well as new display boards and tables have been covered by the grant and we are now ready to officially invite the public.

An opening ceremony is planned for Tuesday, 8th August at 2pm and invitations will soon be going out to representatives of the various interested bodies.





CAMPERDOWN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

PO Box 243, Camperdown 3260

ABN 54 877 430 900 Inc No. A0020588V

Nomination Form for the election of Office Bearers, 2017 - 2018

Positions to be filled: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and a minimum of three ordinary Committee Members.

Nomination of Office Bearers

Position:

Name of nominee:

Signature of Nominee:

Nominated by (name):

Signature:

Seconded by (name):

Signature:

Please post or email this nomination form to the Secretary, by Friday 28th July:

Camperdown & District Historical Society

PO Box 243

Camperdown 3260

Email: camperdowndhs@gmail.com