

# PAST MATTERS

CAMPERDOWN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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**Opening Hours:**

Tuesdays & 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of  
month (Market Day) 10am-  
3pm or by appointment.

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Hello to all our members,

Our new masthead (above) has received plenty of approval from you all so we offer many congratulations to Ray Watson for his design.

We've also had a very satisfying reaction to our new publication, "Scotland to Australian Felix". There's a full report on Page 8.

"Past Matters" is a bumper edition this quarter owing to an extended obituary for long serving member, Jock Hay as well as an extra page for a Nomination Form for our Committee.

Of course, that means the Annual General Meeting is coming up and, apart from the actual meeting, there's a fascinating DVD to be shown that night. We do encourage members to come along and have their say at our meetings. Most members of the Committee are prepared to stay on but we do need a nomination for President as Bob has held the position for more years than he initially intended and he's due for a break. We also need a Treasurer, which is not an onerous job since Jan Whamond has used her experience and expertise as an Accountant to set up the whole process so that it practically runs itself. Our meetings are held bi-monthly and are more of a friendly gathering where we get lots of work done very quickly!

Our current membership stands at 139 and that includes new members Joan Mahony and Deb Hanchett. Welcome to you both; we hope you enjoy your membership and your first copy of "Past Matters".

*Gillian Senior*, Newsletter Editor

## From the Heritage Centre

### Bookaar School 1936

Our dear friend and long-time member, Jock Hay is celebrated in this newsletter, so here's just a little more. He is in this 1936 photo of Bookaar School, No.3578. Can you pick him? The answer is on the next page.



## COMING EVENTS: AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2018

### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> August 2018

7.30 pm at the Heritage Centre,  
241 Manifold Street Camperdown

Following our AGM, we will view an ABC documentary titled "*The Prime Minister is Missing*"

In 1967, Australia's Prime Minister Harold Holt disappeared without a trace - an event unparalleled in the history of western democracy.

This excellent documentary tells the story of the Prime Minister's secret world in the months before he disappeared.... a world of betrayal, blackmail, political treachery, a poisonous feud and mounting physical and mental strain.



Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> September, 9.30 am: Executive meeting at the Heritage Centre

**Answer to "Where's Jock?"**

He's the handsome one in the back row, 7<sup>th</sup> from the left, wearing a dark coat.



**RONALD STEWART 'JOCK' HAY**  
**4.12.1923 – 18.5.2018**  
**“Mayor of Bookaar”**

For a man whose close family consisted of a sister-in-law and two nephews, the attendance of 100 or more at his funeral on 4<sup>th</sup> June at Darlington and Bookaar is surely an indication of Jock's popularity and influence during his long life of 94 years.

He was born in Nurse Yates' Private Hospital in Walls Street, Camperdown to Herbert Cecil Hay of Cobden and Jane McClure of Airdrie, Scotland, and he would often boast that he had convict ancestry. He lived and worked on the Bookaar family farm all his life, at one stage, breeding and showing prize-winning poultry including, according to a story told at his funeral, a couple of winners he'd already sold and 'borrowed' back for the show. It seems the 'borrowed' ones never found their way home again!

His Scottish ancestry was a source of great pride and he loved to tell of his visit to Scotland with his mother in 1925 when he was two years old to meet his grandparents. One of his very favourite photographs was as a young lad dressed in full Scottish regalia.



CDHS records state that at the age of 18, Jock was a member of the Bookaar Bush Fire Brigade and at various times held the positions of 6<sup>th</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Lieutenant.

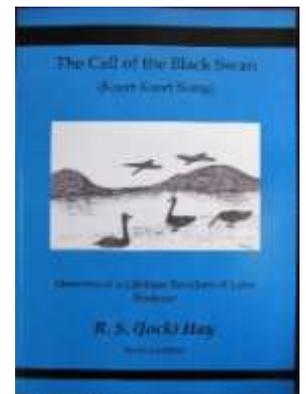
He was Hon. Treasurer of the Kilnoorat Cemetery Committee of Management since its inception in 1999 and retired from that position only last year.

He was recognised by the Corangamite Shire with a Citizen Award in 2010 – much of the reason for this being a project establishing walking tracks and a native plant reserve at the Bookaar School on the banks of Lake Bookaar.



In 2008, the Bookaar School, which was closed in 1992, celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary with a reunion of many past pupils. Like everything that happened in Bookaar, Jock was heavily involved, and it was at this celebration that his community involvement and friendship with everybody was honoured by declaring him “Mayor of Bookaar” complete with flowing blue robe, chain of office and medal. Typically, Jock graciously accepted this as his due.

Always interested in the history of the area, Jock published his book “The Call of the Black Swan” in 2009. It contains many details of properties and families in the district as well as historical and geographical information. It was a labour of love and a culmination of over twenty years research and hard work. It was typed on many old typewriters. When one stopped working, a trip to the op shop would supply the next one and he would use that until it either stopped working or needed a new ribbon.



Jock tried manfully to master computers but the leap from two-finger typing to the digital world eluded him. Members of the CDHS would try to help, but it was difficult to explain the world of computing to him. One day he brought in a laptop, asking for help because it had stopped working. When asked what had happened, he explained that he couldn't get a disc out, so he had tried to pry it out with a screwdriver. It didn't do the laptop much good!

His memory was amazing and any Tuesday he could be found at the Heritage Centre reading any research left lying around. He would correct dates and names if they were wrong and would call on his vast knowledge of local history if ever asked about who owned certain properties, who married whom and when, and how many children they had. We always called him 'our consultant' and valued his contributions to our research.

Jock was a very practical man. He had already purchased a plot for himself at the Darlington Cemetery and had given his brother the one next to him – as a Christmas present. In 2002, he decided it was time to have his grave set up the way he'd like it, so with his friend, Roger Cumming he set about the job. He took along a large bluestone block and set it at the head of where he intended his grave to be and, on 4<sup>th</sup> June this year, a special sheaf of flowers was prepared by Sue Cole and laid there – as he had intended.



*Setting the bluestone block in place.*



Everyone there agreed that Jock would have thoroughly enjoyed the funeral and the gathering in the Bookaar School. There was a wonderful spread of all his favourite foods prepared by his friends, a tree was planted in the School garden in his memory and many stories and anecdotes were told about Jock's unexpected visits for cups of coffee, his local knowledge, his faultless memory and his often eccentric ways – all with humour and love.

When we posted the news of his death on Facebook, an old friend of his contacted us with the following letter and poem – which seems a fitting way to end our reminiscences about our sadly missed friend, Jock Hay.

**Julie Paige**

Hi, I've just been told of Jock's passing. I was a friend of Jocks & I was the one who encouraged Jock to join your society & share his wealth of knowledge of the district. During my time in Darlington, Jock used to call & have dinner with us most Saturday nights. My family gave Jock his first ever birthday party. He was 70. I wrote a poem that I sent with invitations to all Jocks friends & thought I'd share it with you & hopefully bring a smile to the faces of everyone feeling a bit sad right now.

There is two kinds of R.S Hay,  
 One's wet stuff in a paddock.  
 The other ones a real nice bloke.  
 Whose charm is automatic.

He's lived in Bookar all his life  
 and raises dairy cattle.  
 No money, no power, no car, no wife  
 Early days were quite a battle.

Back then his love was raising chooks.  
 Light Sussex were his pride.  
 Now his love is buying books.  
 And there's not much room inside.

He used to drink and used to smoke  
 Like most the locals do.  
 Hard to believe of this nice bloke.  
 So perhaps it isn't true ?

He's fond of local history.  
 He knows it all by heart.  
 For someone who's been around so long,  
 he's really very smart.

Now we look forward to Saturday.  
 When his car turns in the track.  
 Here he comes, It's Ole Jock Hay  
 with his dog Joe in the back.

We have some tea and talk a while  
 And play some solitaire.  
 He always leaves us with a smile.  
 And some chewy 'neath the chair.



*Two years old, with his grandparents in Scotland.*



*BBQ on the dry lake - 2006. Jock's 83rd birthday.*

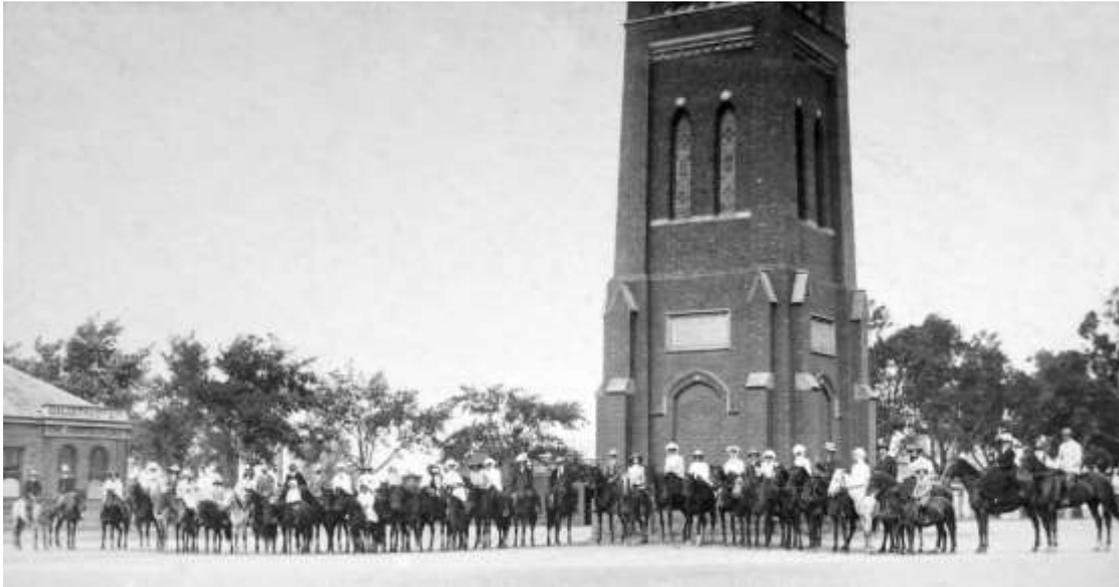


*Citizen's Award, 2010.*



*"The Mayor of Bookaar" 2008*

## A PAPER CHASE FOR THE GENTRY OF CAMPERDOWN



It is 1909 in Camperdown on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> February. It is a boiling hot day and about 40 riders meet at the clock tower to begin a 'paper chase' or "Hare and Hounds".

CDHS is fortunate to have two letters describing this event in some detail as well as two very good photographs of the large gathering at the clock tower.

One letter is to 13-year-old Gordon McArthur (later Sir Gordon McArthur) from his uncle Colin McArthur of Puunyart. when Gordon when was away at boarding school. The other is to Gordon from his Aunt Isla of Warwarick.

The letters are interesting as, apart from the atmosphere of enjoyment from this event, they include the names of local people and a description the Camperdown Gardens in 1909. Close examination of the photographs gives us information about businesses active that year such as "A. Martin, Practical Tailor" and "Dalgety Co. Ltd" in the bluestone building on the corner opposite the clock tower. There is also a poster advertising the screening of a film of the World Championship fight between Tommy Burns and Jack Johnson in Rushcutters Bay, Sydney in December, 1908.

### WHAT IS "HARE AND HOUNDS"?

At the start of the chase, one person is designated the 'hare' and everyone else in the group are the 'hounds'. The 'hare' starts off ahead of everyone else, dropping behind him a trail of paper shreds which represent the scent of the hare. Just as scent can be carried away on the wind, so too can the bits of paper, sometimes making for a difficult game. After a short designated wait, the hounds chase after the hare and attempt to catch him before he reaches the ending point of the race.

**PUUNYART,  
CAMPERDOWN  
25.3.09**

*My dear Gordon,*

*We had a great day on Saturday. About 30 riders met at the clock tower and had a paper chase commencing at the Butter Factory and, after going round by Timboon (House) and Gnotuk, they finished up at the Park where we all had afternoon tea provided by Miss Jean M'Arthur. You should have been there. It was great fun. Marjorie and Mildred Manifold were the first to finish. If you had been there you would have led all the way. On Monday we all went over to Gnotuk. It was a very hot day, but better out than in.*

*I have been very busy lately thrashing (sic) the oats. I have had about twenty men on at it. It was very hot here on Tuesday, 102 in the shade. (38.9°C)*

*Well good-bye Master Gordon,*

*Your Aff. Uncle,  
C. M'Arthur.*



## WARWARICK

Feb. 28th '09

Dear Gordon,

*Auntie Jean had a riding party and paper chase on Saturday. It was lovely fun there were about 70 people altogether and about 40 riders. We met at the clock tower and caused quite a disturbance in Camperdown there were such a crowd of us. Ted was the hare and came out resplendent in his lovely white riding pants!! and looking an awful toff!! & of cause (sic) frightfully pleased with himself. We gave him about a quarter of an hour's start while we dawdled round and got baked and had our photographs taken, then the wild chase began. I am sure we went quite six miles (9.6 km) as we went out to the railway gates and back in a very roundabout way and galloped at a hard gallop the whole way, Mildred leading of cause, as Mummie said, whether she wanted to or not!*

*Of cause it was a boiling day, and by the time we arrived at the park for tea we were just about boiled and the ponies were about exhausted as we hadn't had a walk the whole way, but of cause it was lovely fun. Bobbie and Dodie and Meg rode but of cause they didn't "follow the hounds" but were only at the "meet". When we got there everybody was purple in the face. The park is very stylish now as they have got three new tea houses on just the park; one where we had tea for the moonlight riding party and one between there and the park.*

*We had Harry and Leonard for lunch and for tea we had Doug and Stanley, Harry and Leonard and Coonie and we danced on the verandah until about 10 o'clock.....  
I forgot to tell you, at the riding party Gwen was riding Steam, so Cooe, who, as you know is very fond (?) of Steam, so Douglas bought a bit of red ribbon on her tail to mark her dangerous, so that she wouldn't cause any accidents in the kicking line.*

(The letter goes on to other subjects and is signed:

*Best love, write soon, Isla.*



*Puunyart Homestead*

## The Letters of Corporal 'Joe' Bell

"I'd like to have my grandfather's letters typed but it's really hard to read his writing," said Jarrod Bell of 'Snout in the Trough' Restaurant, Camperdown. It was this chance conversation that brought us a long-term job of transcribing seventy-four handwritten letters from the Middle East and Tobruk during WW2.

As it happened, we had a newish volunteer at the Heritage Centre who had said to us: "I don't know anything about computers and I don't want to know!" However, we were running out of non-computer jobs for her and, being 'of a certain age', we knew she would be able to read the writing. A little persuasion eventually got her to 'give it a try' and now, almost two years later, she has finished the marathon job of typing up all seventy-four letters.

She also found the job really interesting. The letters were written mostly to his mother and stories about the desert camps and the battles – one of which was at El Alamein – were fascinating. Joe also discussed news from home, talking about his family and friends and some of those names were very familiar to our transcriber who had grown up in the same area as the Bells.

Judy Gilbert is now an expert computer typist!

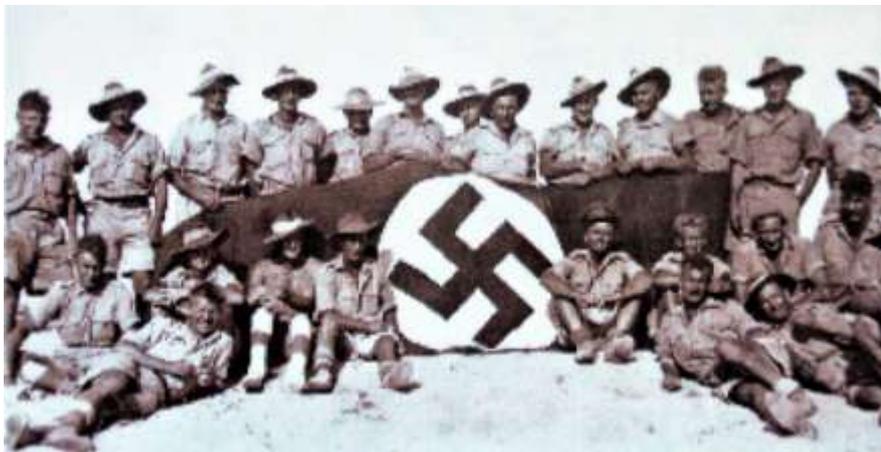
We also have permission to keep the digital records of these letters and they will be a valuable resource for historians and researchers in the future.



*Cpl. 'Joe' Bell, c.1941*



*Letter paper was supplied to the troops by the Australian Comforts Fund and the YMCA as well as other support organisations.*



*The Swastika flag was captured at the Battle of El Alamein in November, 1941 and proudly displayed by the 2nd 24th Battalion.*

# HERITAGE CENTRE - Jottings and News

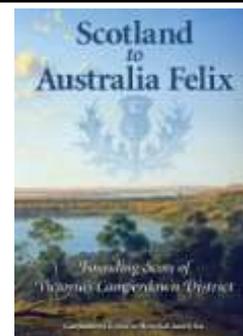
## SCOTS BOOKS SELLING LIKE HOT CAKES!

Well, we haven't tried selling hot cakes recently, but we're happy to announce that we now have only two-thirds left of total books printed – and we're pretty happy with that. We had a great turn-up at the launch during the Burns weekend where we sold lots and they've been moving along really well since then.

### Availability is from three places:

1. At the Heritage Centre every Tuesday and 1st Sunday of the month – 10am to 3pm.
2. Online from [camperdownhistory.org.au](http://camperdownhistory.org.au), where you can fill in a form and send it online or print the form and fill it in and post.
3. From McCann's Camperdown Newsagent in Manifold Street.

Cost is \$35 per book and postage is \$15 – which covers one book or even up to four books. (That's how Australia Post has it worked out).



## SENDING GOOD WISHES TO A COUPLE OF SICKIES

Two of our valuable volunteers are on the sick list at present:

Frances Hanchett had a nasty fall here on 5<sup>th</sup> June. She hit her head and suffered a broken wrist, all of which sent her off to Warrnambool Hospital for a week or so. She's now home again where some of our members have caught up with her and report that she's now recovering well. We look forward to seeing her back on duty before too much longer.

Ray Watson, photographer and Photoshop expert, is currently suffering (and we mean 'suffering') with a very painful attack of shingles. He is staying inside and keeping out of this cold and miserable weather we've been having lately and hoping it all goes away very soon. As do we all, Ray. Come back soon.

The good thing is, we haven't docked their pay! (It's hard to dock something from nothing!)

## INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR MAREE BELYEA!



Those wonderful historical street signs around Camperdown have been recognised globally with a prestigious award from Lions Club International. Of course, Maree reminds us that the project was the work of the whole Camperdown Lions Club and the medal belongs to them all. However, we at Camperdown & District Historical Society know the amount of work that she, personally, put into the research and historical accuracy of the signs and don't doubt that she's the right person to have received the honour. Well done Maree!

And thanks to the Camperdown Chronicle for publicising this very special event.

## HISTORY IN THE KIMBERLEY



Tunnel Creek

While we've all been working very hard and suffering Camperdown's wet and windy winter, our esteemed President, Bob Lambell has been tramping around the Kimberleys for a couple of weeks – where the weather was consistently warm and pleasant (except at night, when it was freezing!). He was not only tramping but camping as well with a group of like-minded adventurers and has come back with some wonderful stories and even more



Windjana Gorge

wonderful photos. They visited gorges, swam in waterfalls, camped in the Bungle Bungles, flew in helicopters and saw wonderful rock art and distant vistas.

One of the areas the group visited was Tunnel Creek and Windjana Gorge, the site of many battles between the local Aborigines, the Bunuba Tribe, and the white settlers. Jandamarra was the leader of the resistance and he managed to hide out in this area for a long time. For historians, it's always of great interest to learn background stories when visiting new places and try to understand why things happened the way they did.



# 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, 2018-2019

Positions to be filled: President, Vic 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 send this nomination form to the Secretary, by Friday 17th August***

***Secretary,  
Camperdown & District Historical Society  
PO Box 243  
Camperdown 3260***

**Email:** [camperdowndhs@gmail.com](mailto:camperdowndhs@gmail.com)

**Web:** [www.camperdownhistory.org.au](http://www.camperdownhistory.org.au) **Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/camperdown history](http://www.facebook.com/camperdownhistory)

#### HERITAGE CENTRE

241 Manifold Street, Camperdown, Vic. 3260

Open: Tuesday and 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of the month 10.00 am – 3 pm or by arrangement.