

PAST MATTERS

CAMPERDOWN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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Tuesdays & 1st Sunday of
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3pm or by appointment.

In this issue:

- P1. From the Heritage Centre
- P2. President's Report
- P3-4. Coming Events – AGM & Special Event "Budj Bim"
- P 5. HC Jottings & News
- P 6. Historical Hospital Records & Kilts
- P7-8. Burns Lecture Series overview & Burns Festival Photos

Hello to all our members,

Gillian Senior, Editor of our Newsletter since October 2011, has decided to step back a bit so this edition of **Past Matters** has been taken over by an Editorial Committee consisting of Gillian, Rob Wuchatsch and Angela Preiss.

After thirty-two editions, Gillian feels **Past Matters** could do with the input of a couple of new minds with different ideas and suggestions, so be prepared for a few changes.

Gillian has recently taken on the task of writing the biography of an old friend who has had a very interesting life – from escaping Communist Hungary in the sixties to creating The Titanic Restaurant in Williamstown – with many adventures along the way. As there is only so much time in every day and finding time for research and writing a book has become very difficult, she is very grateful for the assistance offered by Rob and Angela. However, she is still doing a lot of other things with the C&DHS, so you will still see her around the Heritage Centre.

Rob Wuchatsch,
President



From the Heritage Centre

New Display Cabinet in use.

See article HISTORIC HOSPITAL RECORDS Page 6.



President's Report

As we approach our Annual General Meeting on Tuesday 13 August 2019, we can look back on another very successful year. The Camperdown & District Historical Society is very fortunate to have an enthusiastic and hardworking group of dedicated volunteers who serve on our committee and/or work at the Camperdown Heritage Centre.

Highlights for 2018/19 include:

- Very successful Robert Burns Festival lecture series, arranged as usual by Bob Lambell, featuring speakers Stewart McArthur AM, Dr Iain Buckland, Dr Raymond Madden and Dr Ben Wilkie.
- Other Burns Festival contributions included Saturday and Sunday openings of the Heritage Centre and a Scots Exhibition; provision of displays and information sheets for the special opening of the Masonic Hall; and high input into the planning and coordination of the very successful Burns Festival Gala Dinner.
- Completion by Corangamite Shire of capital and maintenance works at the Heritage Centre, including construction of a new internal toilet block and demolition of the old and outdated external one. The supper room was also totally renovated to provide improved storage and display space.
- Facilitation of the donation of James Dawson's scrapbook by the Cole family to the State Library of Victoria, which has now digitised it to enable widespread public access.
- Very enjoyable visits to the historic pastoral properties of Marida Yallock (Mackinnon family) in December 2018 and West Cloven Hills (Cole family) in May 2019. We also had an interesting talk by Elizabeth O'Callaghan about her award winning book *Silent Lives* on Warrnambool's women.
- Donation by Camperdown Hospital of historic records dating back to the early 1900s along with a cabinet to house them at the Heritage Centre.
- Acclaim for our Camperdown founding Scots book and impressive sales figures.

Special thanks must go to all Heritage Centre volunteers for the many hours they put into historical research and the sorting, cataloguing and promotion of our collection. They also host numerous visits by school and other groups.

Thanks also to Bob Lambell, Heritage Centre Coordinator; Maree Belyea, Research Manager; Jan Whamond, Treasurer; Gillian Senior, Communications Officer (for producing our quality newsletter and managing our popular Facebook site); Ray Watson, Photography; and Angela Preiss, Web Design and Computer Services.

Our membership remains very healthy at 147. We sincerely appreciate the continued support of our loyal members whose subscriptions and donations enable us to research, record and promote the Camperdown District's diverse history.

Rob Wuchatsch,
President

Executive Committee: Wednesday, 18th September, 9.30 am – Meeting at Heritage Centre

Coming Events: August – October, 2019

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING Tuesday 13th August 2019 7.30 pm at the Heritage Centre, 241 Manifold Street Camperdown

Following our AGM, our guest speaker, Rob Wuchatsch, will talk about the former 'Stony Rises Hotel' (Half Way House) at Stonyford - its history, publicans and other residents.

Besides being our Historical Society President, Rob is an accomplished history researcher and the author of several highly acclaimed books.



Former 'Stony Rises Hotel Stables', half way between Colac and Camperdown

CORRECTION AND APOLOGY

"Past Matters" regrets that sometimes errors creep into our reporting and here's one that has been corrected by the current owner of "Wuurong" Dr. John Menzies.

In our article about the Camperdown Gentlemen's Club, we stated that "The old original wooden club-house eventually found its way to the Wuurong property in the 1970s where it was incorporated into the homestead and much modified in the process." (Not quite correct!)

This is the correct information:

In 1958 the Pike St. Clubrooms were moved to the yard of builder, J.E. Robinson at 1 Cressy St., where the business used the Billiard Room as a joinery workshop.

Dr. Menzies saw it there and, in 2004 he bought it and had it moved to Wuurong where it was incorporated into the central part of the cottage on that property. It is now the venue for the very popular Musical Afternoons held there.

SPECIAL EVENT

Walk with the Gunditjmara People at their recently proclaimed World Heritage site
"BUDJ BIM"

Spend two and a half hours on country with traditional owners
looking at different types of fish and eel traps at Tyrendarra (near Portland).

THURSDAY, 24th OCTOBER.

Depart by bus from the Camperdown Heritage Centre at 8.30 am
BYO lunch

Approximate cost (depending on numbers): \$75.00/person (includes bus)



The site we will visit is older than the pyramids, the Acropolis and Stonehenge
and has recently been added to the World Heritage list.
It was created about 6,600 years ago by the Gunditjmara people and is considered
one of the world's oldest freshwater aquaculture systems.

READ: "Age" article by Tony Wright about Budj Bim:

<https://camperdownhistory.org.au/research-documents/>

BOOKINGS:

Gillian Senior: Ph. 5593 1592
Maree Belyea: Ph. 0415 352 987
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Firm bookings must be made by Tuesday 1st October.

NOTE: Tour involves some longish but easy walking on good tracks

HERITAGE CENTRE - Jottings and News

LINK FOR NEWS LETTER FOR BURNS LECTURE SERIES TRANSCRIPTS - On CDHS website.

<https://camperdownhistory.org.au/burns-festival-2019-lecture-series/>

REFERENCE BOOKS CATALOGUED

At last this job is finished! It looked so easy, just to list and sort all our reference books, but it turned out to take much more time and energy than we thought. Missing books had to be tracked down, books we didn't know we had needed to be added, and those never found had to be deleted. But now – they are all sorted and findable.

The catalogue is now available on our website so that researchers can check what books we have and make arrangements to access them. Contact us by email at camperdowndhs@gmail.com if you want to access a particular book or books.

LINK FOR REFERENCE BOOKS - On CDHS website

https://camperdownhistory.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Ref_Bks_Alpha15.05.2019.pdf

BUDJ BIM:

No doubt many, or most of us, will have read about the recent addition of Budj Bim (Mt Eccles) to UNESCO's World Heritage list.

This area of ancient Aboriginal settlement has been on our list of "must go" places for a long time and at last we have managed to organise it.

For those who would like to know more about it before our visit, we have obtained permission from Tony Wright of the Melbourne Age to publish his recent article on the subject on our Website.

You can read it <https://camperdownhistory.org.au/research-documents/> or by going to our Website and clicking on Research Documents.



CLOCKTOWER PIPE MYSTERY

During the re-paving of the square in front of the Clocktower, a mystery pipe was discovered. A posting on Facebook asking if anyone knew what it was for came up with an answer: it was for a big Christmas Tree which was erected by Apex.

Rob Van Den Eynde commented: *I was the one who applied to the shire for permission to put it there to host a Christmas tree every year. Lasted 1 year, tree was too big to handle.*

CDHS wonders if anyone out there has a photo of this tree?



WEST CLOVEN HILLS – 26th May, 2019

As you can see from the way everyone is rugged up, it was a VERY cold day – with wind and rain to add to the mix. Despite the weather, about 30 members braved the cold and it turned out to be a very successful and most enjoyable trip. We were welcomed by Nicholas Cole, (the fifth Nicholas of the dynasty) who shared lots of interesting information about his pioneer ancestor, the first Nicholas Cole, and the current developments taking place on the property.

The afternoon finished in the enormous woolshed – just as the rain began pelting down outside – where Nick told us many stories about the building and the wool industry. Tea and coffee and refreshments were there waiting to warm us up before heading home. A great afternoon event despite the weather.

HISTORIC HOSPITAL RECORDS

At the end of May, Camperdown Hospital was undergoing some refurbishing and, in the process, the Society was given the opportunity to be 'keeper of the records'. Heaps of stuff arrived at the Heritage Centre and, after putting the information on Facebook, we now have found a couple of enthusiastic members who are busily listing it all before starting the big job of cataloguing.

Jennifer Rabach is the instigator of this project. She is a Registered Nurse, has a Master of Education, is a researcher into the history of perioperative nursing in Australia, has jointly published and presented at conferences internationally on the history of nursing, and is a sessional lecturer at several universities. (And that's a brief summary of her experience!) She has recruited Helen Booth (a qualified midwife and archivist) to join her in this endeavour and we feel very fortunate to have this assistance from both of them.



ADMISSION REGISTER
ALTHOUGH THE HOSPITAL OPENED ON 16TH MARCH 1909, THE FIRST PATIENT APPARENTLY WAS NOT ADMITTED UNTIL 26TH MARCH, EXCEPT IN EMERGENCIES, PATIENTS HAD TO BE RECOMMENDED FOR ADMISSION BY A CONTRIBUTOR. THIS REGISTER REMAINED IN USE UNTIL 1929, BY WHICH TIME 2,987 ADMISSIONS HAD BEEN RECORDED.



ALL THE KILTS – THANK YOU!

We sent out a call on Facebook for kilts to borrow back in May and were suddenly inundated!

Some were on loan and some were gifted and we put them carefully away until the Burns Festival. The week before the festival we had lots of fun dressing up our Spanish Buccaneers as well as some mannequins kindly lent by Ronlyn Tranter from Affordable Elegance.

Our visitors were generally most impressed!



Our Scottish-Spanish Buccaneers!

A Burns Festival welcome to the Heritage Centre

2019 Robert Burns Scottish Festival Lectures

The Camperdown & District Historical Society's 2019 Burns Festival Lecture Program was very successful with an average attendance of 50-60 people at the four lectures.

Below are brief summaries of the first three lectures. Transcripts of these lectures are available on our website <https://camperdownhistory.org.au/burns-festival-2019-lecture-series/> and we hope to include a summary of Dr Ben Wilkie's lecture *A Poet for every occasion: The many faces of Burns in Australia* in our next newsletter.

Stewart McArthur AM.

The Scots Tradition, the McArthurs' 180 years at Meningoort.



A fourth generation descendant of Peter McArthur, one of Camperdown District's founding Scots, Stewart's property *Meningoort* has been held by the McArthur family since 1839.

Stewart spoke about Peter McArthur's origins in Scotland; his emigration to Australia and pastoral beginnings in the Western District, initially in partnership with Nicholas Cole; and the successful establishment of *Meningoort*. Peter and his wife Margaret (née McLean) had ten children and eldest son John Neil McArthur inherited 6,000 acres in 1897. A former Member of Victoria's Legislative Assembly, he was not a good manager, being more interested in racehorses. Although he left a 'eye-wateringly large debt' when he died in 1917, his brother Stewart 'took over the reins' in 1918 and 'set about the long haul of managing *Meningoort* back to prosperity'.

Applying 'the Scots virtues of frugality, good sense, breeding better sheep, and a capacity to live within his means' Stewart 'ensured that *Meningoort* improved and passed to the next generation.' When Sir Stewart McArthur died in 1936, having been a Supreme Court judge for 14 years, his son Gordon took over. A World War 1 veteran who lost a leg at Ypres in Belgium in 1917, Gordon was an engineer and barrister who became a member of Victoria's Legislative Council in 1931. He served for 34 years, including as a minister in the Bolte Government. Gordon became President of the Legislative Council in 1958 and was knighted the same year.

Ironically, Gordon McArthur bred the champion mare Chiquita, which came second in the 1950 Melbourne Cup and also won the Oaks and Alister Clark Stakes. Her 16 victories did much to turn around the family's fortunes.

On Sir Gordon's death in 1965, Stewart McArthur took over as custodian of *Meningoort* and remains so today. His initial challenges were probate payments, the 1967-68 drought and the collapse of the wool industry in 1970-71. Thankfully, there was a wool boom in 1972-74, but cattle prices reached a catastrophic low in 1975 leading many farmers to shoot and bury them.

In 1984, Stewart stood for and won the Federal seat of Corangamite, holding it for 23 years. His wife Beverley was recently elected to the Legislative Council as a member for Western Victoria.



Dr Iain Buckland.

From Land o'Cakes to Camperdown – the immigrant food experience for the Western District settlers from Scotland.

Dr Buckland has a Doctor of Philosophy in Food History and this was the third time he had spoken at our Robert Burns Lectures. This year he spoke about

Scotland's distinctive cuisine and asked the question 'What did the immigrants who came from Scotland to Camperdown eat and drink?' Did they 'continue their culinary traditions when they arrived at their destination?'

Given familiar foods from immigrants' home countries 'are a comforting reminder and an enduring link with the past' Ian examined whether this was so with the Western District's Scots. However, apart from special occasions such as Burns' birthday or Hogmanay, they do not appear to have featured in the regular daily diet of our Scots or their descendants.

Dr Buckland researched online issues of the *Camperdown Chronicle* for recipes for Scottish foods such as shortbread, haggis, oatcakes, sheep's head broth and Scotch broth but found few references. He also examined cookbooks and family documents, but concluded that Scottish born Margaret Fulton's cookbook, first published in 1968, has probably had more influence on Australian cuisine than any nineteenth century Scottish immigrants. He concluded 'Good quality, cheap ingredients made many of the Scottish dishes irrelevant and, in the minds of many immigrant families, these meals were probably too closely connected with their previous lives of poverty and deprivation. The Scots in Victoria quickly adapted to the culinary practices of their fellow countrymen and women. The key exception to this practice was with regard to Scottish celebrations such as Hogmanay, St Andrews Day and Burns Night.'



Dr Raymond Madden

James Dawson: Advocacy and Antipathy in Colonial Western Victoria.

Dr Madden is a Senior Lecturer in Anthropology at La Trobe University. He spoke about his studies of James Dawson's Scrapbook, a fascinating collection of newspaper clippings and assorted manuscript material recently donated to the State Library of Victoria by Camperdown District's Cole family.

James Dawson's name 'looms large over the colonial history of western Victoria'. As a resident of the Camperdown District from the 1870s-1900 he formed close relationships with local Aboriginal people and was appointed a Local Guardian of Aborigines. He assisted his daughter Isabella in recording the customs and cultures of various dialect groups he came in contact with in western Victoria and in 1881 they published *The Australian Aborigines: the languages and customs of several tribes in the Western District of Victoria, Australia.*

James Dawson was a complex and contradictory character. His scrapbook is a record of his activism and advocacy in Victoria, yet while he was 'highlighting injustice and exploding myths and misinformation that were promulgated about Aboriginal people by his fellow colonists' he made 'a series of viciously anti-Irish statements that are at such odds with the tolerance and enlightenment shown to Aboriginal people that it warrants some attention'.

In his thought provoking lecture, Madden argued that while Dawson differed 'from his peers on Aboriginal issues' he 'was of a man on Irish issues.' His conclusion from reading the scrapbook is that the way Dawson 'was ahead of his time on Aboriginal issues and determinedly of his time in relation to Irish peasantry reinforce the portrait of him as a complex character'.

Rob Wuchatsch

View Photos from Camperdown Robert Burns Scottish Festival 2019: Concerts, Lecture Series, Heritage Centre Display & Masonic Lodge on;

<https://camperdownhistory.org.au/picsvids/>