

CAMPERDOWN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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 Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/camperdownhistory>

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NEWSLETTER

April, 2015

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Hello everyone,

Have you had a look at our Anzac/WW1 Exhibition at the Heritage Centre yet? The volunteers have put a lot of work into this display and we've had some very nice comments from visitors. We'd love to see members and other Camperdown residents come in and learn about our local boys. Some of them didn't return and some came back to a long and fulfilling life. Signalmen Alex Robertson was demobbed from the Navy in 1919 and spent many years in service to the Camperdown community. The Exhibition will be remaining at the centre until at least July.

We are sorry to report that Russell Pollock has had to resign from Committee due to ill health and we wish him a speedy recovery.

Planning is underway for our contribution to the Robert Burns Festival. This year the dates are 26th to 28th June.

One of our volunteers has taken on a course of study into Museums and Family History, gaining knowledge which promises to be of great help to the society, now and in the future. There's an excerpt from her first assignment concerning our own history in this newsletter.

There's no large historical research item in this edition – instead, we look at modern technology, how we are using it and where the Society may be heading in the future.

We welcome new members: Ken Skene, Gary O'Neil, Bradley Clements, Jennifer Rowan, Jennifer Rabach and Anthony Meechan and look forward to meeting you soon.

Gillian Senior Newsletter Editor

Camperdown Heritage Centre

241 Manifold Street
 Camperdown 3260
 PO Box 243
 Camperdown.

Opening hours

Tuesdays and 1st Sunday
 of month, (Market Day)
 10am-3pm
 Or by appointment

**From the Heritage Centre Collection:
 THE 'GREEN TIN TRUNK'**



This is the 'Green Tin Trunk' referred to in our major article by Jan Whamond describing the early days of the Camperdown and District Historical Society.

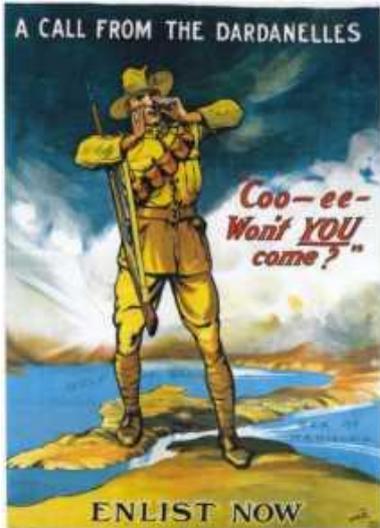
It lives on the floor under one of our display cases and contains a lot of papers that have not been properly sorted or catalogued – yet! That's just another one of the myriad jobs on our list of 'things to do'.

In this issue:

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- P.6-7** Using the Latest Technology.

COMING EVENTS: MAY – JULY 2015.

Tuesday 12th May, 10.30 am: Executive meeting at the Heritage Centre



Sunday, 14th June

2.00 pm at the
Camperdown Heritage Centre

A Gallipoli Experience

Displays and discussion about Gallipoli will be the focus of an informal afternoon at the Heritage Centre.

Our special guests will include Judith Murfitt and her mother Verna Regan, who were at Gallipoli for the commemoration of the centenary of the ANZAC landings. While over there, Judith and Verna also visited the battlefields of the "Western Front".

Members: please bring a plate of afternoon tea.



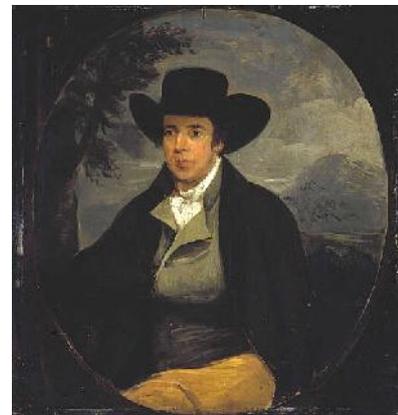
Camperdown Robert Burns Scottish Festival

Friday 26th to Sunday 28th June, 2015.

Camperdown Heritage Centre:

Special Exhibitions:

- Robert Burns Portrait from the National Gallery of Scotland: the model for the Camperdown Statue.
- The Story of the Statue in Pictures – Continuous Slide Show.
- Notable Scots of Camperdown and district: Maps of where they came from in Scotland, and where they settled in Corangamite Shire.
- Robert Burns Memorabilia



Special Opening Hours:

Friday	1pm – 4pm
Saturday	9am – 5pm
Sunday	9am – 4pm

Also during the Festival:

CDHS member and noted Historian, Allan Willingham, will speak about the history of Camperdown's Robert Burns statue, and its donor, William Andrew Taylor.

Allan has extensively researched the history of the statue and the Taylor family, both here and in Scotland. He has unearthed a wealth of remarkable information.

For Festival information: www.camperdownburnsfestival.com

Tuesday 14th July, 10.30 am: Executive meeting at the Heritage Centre

NEWS FROM THE HERITAGE CENTRE

Ross McMullin

Our joint sponsorship with the Camperdown R.S.L. of guest speaker, Dr. Ross McMullin, was an extremely successful occasion. More than sixty people gathered at the RSL Hall to hear the moving stories of young men whose lives exemplified "Australia's gifted lost generation of World War 1".

Typical of these was Captain Clunes Mathison, a medical doctor and researcher whose obituary in the British Medical Journal reads: "For the School of Medicine in Melbourne, for the science of medicine throughout the world, the loss is irreparable." The plaque illustrated here is at the Walter & Eliza Hall Institute, Melbourne.



Extra Opening



The centre was open an extra couple of days especially for the Anzac Centenary – the day after Ross McMullin's talk and Anzac Day itself. We are pleased to report that quite a number of people took advantage of this and paid us a visit. We also gained a couple of new members at those times, so we feel that all our work has been worthwhile.



Moving Pictures – In both senses of the word.



A lot of our Anzac Exhibition depends on pictures – pictures of the young men, pictures of the Gallipoli terrain and pictures of diaries, maps, letters, etc. And yes, many of them are very moving to see and read.

We are also using our computers and TV screen to show continuous slide shows of more pictures – 'moving pictures' of a different sort. Some are accompanied by songs of the period: "Over There", "Mademoiselle of Armentiers", "Keep the Home Fires Burning" and many more that some of us will recognise.

Camperdown Rotary

A number of Rotary members as well as a couple of visitors from Terang visited our World War 1 Exhibition a week or so ago. Our Treasurer, Frank Rose, was the host and reported to us that they were all very interested and commented on the excellence of the displays. Our volunteers can all 'take a bow'!

STUDYING HISTORY AND MUSEUMS

One of our hard-working volunteers, Jan Whamond retired from full-time work a little while ago and, after some travelling around Australia and volunteering, she has now decided she needs a bit more brain activity in her life. To this end, she has taken on a three year Post Graduate Degree of Local, Family & Applied History. The first subject she is doing is "History and Museums".

This seems to us to be very good news! Eventually we will have our very own expert to help us manage the Heritage Centre and hopefully, present ideas for our future development and direction.

Part of Jan's first major assignment was "***What are the key challenges facing local history museums and how are they being addressed?***" This has meant delving into the formation and development of local museums in general and our own in particular. She has now completed this assignment and has very kindly allowed us to use parts of it in our Newsletter. Even for members of many years' standing, it's great to have the history of the Society laid out so clearly and it's doubly valuable for newcomers.



Jan Whamond

So, on the next page you will find:

Part I – the history

Formation



*Our home since
1984.*

The Camperdown & District Historical Society was formed in 1960 and for the first few years the entire collection was carried around in a green tin trunk. In 1970 the Camperdown Town Council (now part of Corangamite Shire) made available one room in the Mechanics Institute building for use by the historical society. Then in 1984, the Council offered the IOOF Hall, built in 1896, to the CDHS for use as a museum.

In the early days of the museum, there was little targeted collecting - items just dribbled in over the years and none of them were catalogued. Records suggest that members attended clearing sales from local estates where more items were acquired. As local businesses, schools and other organisations closed, their records and memorabilia were donated to the museum. Until 2007 anything offered to the museum was accepted, regardless of provenance or relevance. At this stage every surface in the museum was overflowing with artefacts and visitors were amazed at the number of items stored there.

Report from the University of Melbourne

In 2007 Heritage Victoria carried out a Collections Conservation Support Project in south west Victoria and the Camperdown & District Historical Society decided to participate. The review of the museum was carried out by The Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation at The University of Melbourne and the overview of the Project sets out some of the management issues:

Before addressing specific conservation issues at the CDHS, collection management processes need to be fine-tuned and re-focussed. This will help clarify the direction of the Society and allow it to better utilise its scarce resources.

Development of a formal mission statement and collection policy and procedures for the organisation, as well as the setting of goals with associated timelines and resources, will help the Society achieve improvements in its operation. Development of a significance assessment of the collection will assist in this process.

To improve the visitor experience, exhibitions need to be redeveloped into well-researched themes with effective labels and supporting text.

Lack of space and resources, both human and financial, are typically the issues faced by historical societies. The CDHS has a strong team of volunteers but space is a critical issue for them.

The solution to the overcrowded storage is not immediately obvious and could be a combination of a number of approaches: de-accessioning, off-site storage, allocating some existing display space to storage.¹

Challenges

I have been a volunteer at The Camperdown Heritage Centre for about 18 months and for this assignment I interviewed Bob Lambell, past president of the Camperdown & District Historical Society Inc. Bob guided the Museum through the period of change after the review by Heritage Victoria. He identified the current challenges as:

- Appropriate collection and disposal policies
- Documentation of the collection
- Making the collection accessible to the public
- Involving as many people as possible
- Attracting visitors - people not being interested in a generalised museums and static displays.²

From my own observations I would add several more -

- The physical state of the building
- Lack of disabled access
- Attracting new volunteers

¹ Heritage Victoria, Collections Conservation Support Project, South West Region Pilot, *Priorities for Preventive Conservation and Management of the Collection*. Prepared by The Centre for Cultural Materials Conservation, The University of Melbourne, 2007, P6.

² Interview with Bob Lambell, past president of Camperdown & District Historical Society Inc, 3rd March 2015

From “Museum” to “Heritage Centre” – research services developed.



The Society is responsible for keeping Council Rate Books, Copies of local newspapers, maps, etc. These are stored behind the stage.

The CDHS embarked on a programme to improve the storage, display and promotion of the collection and to provide up-to-date facilities for family and local history research. To reflect the change to a more interactive use of the collection, the Museum was renamed Camperdown Heritage Centre in late 2007.

This has been a very successful strategy and many of the Societies' activities now revolve around the provision of research services.

Cataloguing, filing and storage

Since 2007, collection and disposal policies have been developed and an active programme is in force to de-acquisition all items that do not directly relate to Camperdown and district. This has been an on-going process, which is now nearly completed. This has helped reduce the space pressures and allows the permanent display of much of the artefact collection. Cataloguing of the collection on display has been completed, but there are some items in the back storage area still to be done. The recording of the photographic collection is an on-going process, as the collection is constantly increasing.

Paper records are more problematic. Where a large quantity of related documents exists, they are filed in numbered and named archive boxes, the rest have been filed alphabetically in hanging files. As yet, no attempt has been made to index the paper records. This is such a big project that it is unlikely to be undertaken in the foreseeable future, given the range of projects and research already being carried out by the volunteers.



Filing cabinets, shelves of photographs, archive boxes, etc. in the Archive Room.

Renovations and Computers

Renovations have been carried out with a front room and the stage area of the building being equipped to store documents and photographs. The other front room has been converted to a “Research Room”, equipped with computers, the latest cataloguing software, broadband internet and other IT (information technology) equipment.³ The Historical Society was successful in obtaining grants to pay for the IT equipment and software and have been able to add to their range of equipment by accessing annual community grants provided by Corangamite Shire.

Significance Assessment

A Significance Assessment of the collection was carried out in 2009 by historian Lesley Alves, who recommended guidelines to further strengthen and direct the collections policies of the Society. She identified the collection as a whole as being of “Importance to the course, or pattern, of Victoria’s cultural history.”⁴ One item, a World War 1 Diary, was found to be of National significance and several other items were found to be “of uncommon, rare or endangered aspects of Victoria’s cultural history.”⁵

Social Media – Web Page and Facebook.



Our Website - front page.

To enable the society to reach out to members and the wider community a website and blog was set up in 2009. The webpage is an important avenue for advertising the Heritage Centre’s collections and the services offered. The blog has not lived up to expectations and about twelve months ago the Society started a Facebook page to keep members and others up to date with current activities at the Heritage Centre. To date, this has a reach of 560 people.

Jan’s assignment continues, discussing the building, the volunteers, membership numbers and the possible future for the Society. We will publish the second half in our next newsletter.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ Lesley Alves, *Significance Assessment, Camperdown Heritage Centre*, December 2009, P27.

⁵ *Ibid*, P28.

HOW THE SOCIETY IS USING THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY

Because the article above has mentioned our use of internet technology (i.e. computers), it seems a good idea to let members know just what the Society owns and how we are using it.

Computers and Printers

There are two computers in the main office (one desktop and one lap-top) both used for administration, research and emails; and three in the main hall. One is exclusively for cataloguing, another is exclusively for photographs and the other is for general use.



Front Office: Reference Library, two Computers and two Printers.

There are four printers: one exclusively for photographs and the others for general use. All computers are linked by wireless to the main printer in the front office.

We also have a large TV with linked player in the main hall for displays, illustrated talks, etc.

How we use them

To those who are already 'computer savvy', it will be clear that there are many ways we can make use of this technology but it might be of interest to others to read about the many different ways we can put these machines to work.

Cataloguing



One of our old catalogue files.

Once upon a time cataloguing was either a list of entries from A to Z in a book, or perhaps a box containing a separate card for each item – also kept in alphabetical order.

Not any more. The CDHS uses a computer program called Maxus, which was developed by Museums Victoria and is perfect for all our cataloguing needs.

Items are entered into the program with an allotted number, a photograph, a description of the item, where it is to be found in the museum, and a list of possible subjects that may be used to search for the item. So if I go to the computer and search for "honour board", the screen shows me a number of different honour boards.



"Maxus" results on computer screen.

I can then select the one I'm looking for and learn where it is, read the list of names on it and even print out the photo if I want to. Much quicker and more efficient than the old way.

Research

As a research tool computers are absolutely invaluable. The history of our local WW1 veterans would not have been possible without the resources which are now available online. The Australian War Memorial, State Library of Victoria, National Archives of Australia and many more sites are all available at the click of a button. Searching various sites can discover war records, personal accounts, letters, photographs – an amazing wealth of information impossible to find in any other way.



Births, deaths and marriage records are also available for those researching family history, land titles, council or shire records, coroner's reportsthe list goes on and on.

Digital Storage

A couple of months ago, we had a visit from the Mechanics' Institutes of Victoria Inc. who took away all the old minute books of the Camperdown Mechanics' Institute which we had in storage and copied them onto a CD for us. We now have all the information from four large, handwritten books easily available on computer – much quicker and easier than handling old, heavy and dusty books.



Four old books - one CD.

Where to next?

Who knows the answer to that question? New programs are always being developed and some will turn out to be useful to us and will be incorporated into our systems.

There is also the use of computers for publicity – our Website (<http://www.camperdownhistory.org.au/>) tells people who we are, what we do, how to become a member and how to contact us; our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/camperdownhistory>) has up-to-date news once or twice a week to keep watchers informed of our activities; and, of course, our Newsletter is written on a computer, sent out by email or printed by our printer for posting.

Who can use a computer?

Even though a lot of us are of 'more mature' years(!) some members have been using computers for thirty years. After all, computers went into the schools and businesses in the mid-eighties and some of the regular users have developed their skills as computers have changed and improved – which of course, continues to happen. Sometimes it's a little difficult to keep up but we can always ask our grandchildren for help!

Volunteers – we need you!

We do sometimes have volunteers who come in and say: "I don't know anything about computers and I don't want to!" That's fine, because we have plenty of non-computer work that has to be done. Strangely though, quite often they find themselves looking over someone's shoulder and asking: "How do you do that?" or "Well, I *can* use a typewriter." So they often find they are learning things despite themselves!

Of course, we'd love to have more volunteers who do have computer skills, but don't let that stop you from offering your services – you will still be warmly welcomed.

