

CAMPERDOWN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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

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NEWSLETTER

January, 2015

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Johnelle Kennedy
Bob Lambell
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Gillian Senior
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Hello to all our members,

As this is our first opportunity to greet you all (apart from our Facebook members), let us welcome you to an *almost* brand new year – 2015.

Historically, it's quite a special year, as it's the 100th Anniversary of the Gallipoli Landing and the focus of a lot of attention all around Australia. As part of those commemorations, the CDHS will be putting together displays remembering Camperdown's participation in World War I. Photographs, records and exhibitions centred on the young men who enlisted and community efforts in support of them are being researched and recorded. There will be displays of wartime artefacts such as gas masks, tin helmets, medals, etc. and we will be offering facilities for research into your own family histories of the war. To assist the general public with this, Maree Belyea is holding a special information session, explaining how you can do your own searching on the internet (See next page). Maree is a top expert in this field and for anyone interested in family history, this is a golden opportunity to learn from one of the best. All members and friends are welcome.

Two Life Memberships were awarded at our Christmas function and the recipients, Bob Lambell and Sue Cole, are featured on Page 3.

As a little lightening of the sober wartime stories, on Page 5 we include an excerpt from an old School Reader featuring a story of bravery of a different kind.

Hope you enjoy catching up with our latest activities, and welcome to new members, Lloyd Sadler and Dianne McMillen.

Gillian Senior Newsletter Editor

Camperdown Heritage Centre

241 Manifold Street
Camperdown 3260

Opening hours

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

**From the Heritage Centre Collection:
ROLL OF HONOUR
Camperdown and Terang – 1914-1919**



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This framed Roll of Honour is one of the many documents we have at the Heritage Centre which is being used for our World War One research.

It is very difficult to read, having such small print, but there is an enlarged version available in our files for anyone to examine.

COMING EVENTS: FEBRUARY - APRIL 2015



Tuesday 10th February
7.30 pm at the
Camperdown Heritage Centre

Exploring War Service Records

For our first meeting of the year, our head researcher Maree Belyea will show us how to explore war service records on the internet.

Members: please bring a plate of supper

Tuesday 10th March, 10.30 am: Executive meeting at the Heritage Centre



Special Event

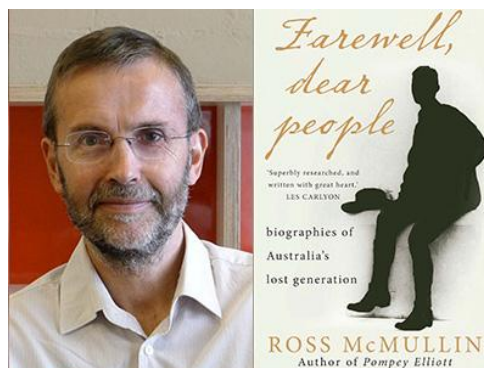
Saturday 11th April, 2.00 pm
at the RSL hall
14 Pike Street Camperdown



Guest speaker;
Dr. Ross McMullin

"Farewell, dear people"

On the eve of the 100th anniversary of ANZAC landings at Gallipoli, we are very fortunate to have acclaimed historian and author, Dr. Ross McMullin, as our guest speaker.



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Ross McMullin's latest book, "Farewell dear people", contains detailed biographies of ten extraordinary men whose loss in WW1 was devastating to the nation, as well as to their families. His illustrated presentation will examine the remarkable stories he has uncovered

Also on the day;

- **Special commemorative displays**
- **Afternoon tea provided**

\$10 / person, payable at door

RSVP by Friday 4th April

Ray Watson, Ph. 0487 261 048 Email: camperdowndhs@gmail.com

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

NEWS FROM THE HERITAGE CENTRE

Most of our activities are reported on Facebook as they take place and we find that we are regularly reaching 250 to 350 people each time we post there. However, for the rest of our members who don't check our Facebook page, we need to repeat a couple of these so you know what's been going on since our last newsletter.

Our Christmas breakup was celebrated with more than forty members and friends joining us for High Tea at the **Historical Village Tearooms at Purrumbete**. The event also included a look at the Main Hall in the homestead where we were able to conduct a very special presentation.

Life Memberships.

Sue Cole and **Bob Lambell**, both of whom have a long history of involvement with the group, were VERY surprised to find they are now Life Members.

Frank Rose spoke of Bob's long years of dedication and work with CDHS, his two Presidencies, each of seven years, during which time he was instrumental in modernising the Museum and making it a valuable resource centre for research – hence the new title of Heritage Centre as well as Museum. His involvement with the Willingham "Heritage Study of Camperdown" and with the Robert Burns Scottish Festival also contributed greatly to the recorded history of the town.

Andrew Rahles-Rahbula spoke about Sue's long involvement with the Society, dating back to the 1960s and her various roles on Committee, including President, Secretary and general committee member on many different occasions. In the early days, as Sue related in her reply, the collection of memorabilia was small enough to be kept in one box and it was this collection which began the whole collection we have here today.



FOR THE ANZAC CENTENARY YEAR:

The CDHS will be putting together a display of the involvement of local families in World War I and the Gallipoli campaign in particular.

Sadly, notices such as the one below, as well as the official Casualty Lists, were a regular feature of every Chronicle published during those war years. For further details of servicemen, such as Unit name, enlistment date, memorial information and much more, the AIF Project online is accessible and very easy to use. If you have no computer or are unable to search for yourself, come to the Heritage Centre and we may be able to do it for you.

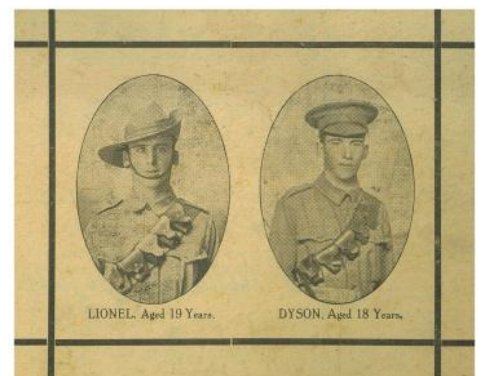
From Camperdown Chronicle, Thursday, 26th August, 1915.

Australian Casualties.

LATE PRIVATES DYSON AND LIONEL COLE.

On Friday last, a telegram from the Minister for Defence to Mr William Cole, of Cobrico (per Rev. A. Davies) announced the death in action at the Dardanelles, of two of his sons, Privates Dyson and Lionel Cole. The two young heroes were aged respectively 18 and 19 years, and left for Egypt with the second Australian contingent early in the year. A brother ("Bunty") is at present serving in the trenches, and at latest advice, has escaped injury; while a fourth son of Mr Cole, Allywn, is at present in camp at Seymour, and will shortly leave for the front. The deceased soldiers were fine samples of young manhood, and two very popular boys in this district. The dual bereavement, occurring simultaneously, came as a great blow to their father and other members of the family and their grief is shared by a very large circle of relatives and friends. On Sunday last an intercession service was conducted at the Cobrico Church of England, at which the Rev. C. Randall made touching reference to the lamentable death of the brothers.

Yet, it was pleasing to know that they had done their little bit for their King and country. There is no death; they have gone to be forever with the Lord. Both boys were educated at the Cobrico State School, and as a mark of respect the head teacher (Miss Dignam) hoisted the flag half-mast at the school on Monday.



Chronicle photographs taken from Mrs. Collie's Scrapbook.

A SPECIAL NAVAL DISPLAY

The inspiration for this display comes from an item we keep very carefully in our safe – the actual Signals Log Book kept by Signalmans Alexander Robertson of Camperdown from June, 1917 until December, 1919. The display will include other memorabilia kept with the Log Book, such as business cards from stops, concert programs, telegrams and newspaper articles. The whole exhibit is being researched and put together by Maree Belyea who has contributed the following article.

Frederick Alexander Robertson (known variously as F.A., Alex and Alec Robertson), was born in Camperdown on 4th June, 1901 to John Brownlie and Caroline Louisa (nee Germaine) Robertson.

He joined the Royal Australian Navy on 22nd January, 1916 as “Boy 2nd Class” at 14½ years of age and a height of 5’4”. Promotions to “Boy 1st Class” in September, and two weeks later to “Signal Boy” were made during training undertaken on HMAS Tingira, a training ship moored permanently at Rose Bay, Sydney. From March 1917 a further six weeks training was received at HMAS Cerberus.

F.A. Robertson’s Signal Log commences as follows:

“Diary of the cruise of the Australian Flotilla consisting of Parramatta, Yarra, Warrego, Swan, Torrens and Huon commencing from June 9th 1917, on which day they left Sydney for the war zone”

The daily entries are professional and detailed – as, of course, expected in the navy – and describe action in the Pacific as well as the Mediterranean. A particularly notable one, on a significant date is:

11th November 1918 –At sea. Arrived at Famagusta and anchored inside reef. Expect to leave again today. Very windy and we are rolling considerably. Left again at 11:30 to escort Theseus (transport) to Port Said. At 10:30 we received wireless to the effect that Armistice had been signed at 6am and at 10:45 another to say that hostilities were to be suspended and submarines were not to be attacked. Great joy on board here, watch below turned out and came on deck and had a concert. No more Adriatic patrols, etc.



HMAS Warrego



F.A. Robertson returned safely to Camperdown where he married and raised his family. He had on-going involvement in all aspects of the life of the town, being, among other things, Scout Leader, Hospital Secretary and President, School Committee member as well as ongoing contributions to clubs, churches and service organisations. He was also a Councillor from the inception of the Town of Camperdown in 1953 through to his retirement in September 1970. During these 17 years he served as Mayor seven times –1954,1959,1960,1963,1964,1965,1969.

The photograph is of Princess Alexandra being farewell by the Mayor of Camperdown, Cr. F. A. Robertson at Camperdown Railway station in 1959.

Frederick Alexander Robertson was awarded an OBE in 1963.

YOUR OWN MEMORABILIA?

As well as mounting our own displays, we are also asking local people to contact us if they have any special family memorabilia or items of special interest that they would like to loan us for display in the Heritage Centre. We are looking for items which have definite local connection and would be of importance to be recognised and recorded for future generations. They would, of course, be well cared for and returned to the owners after the period of this centenary.

A POSTER FOR YOUR FRIDGE! (Print it and display it!)

Attached to the end of this newsletter is a full page poster for our very special event in April: a presentation by **Dr Ross McMullin**, whose visit is jointly sponsored by CDHS and the Camperdown RSL. Dr McMullin, historian and biographer, has two other very well reviewed biographies to his credit: the War Artist, Will Dyson and Major General “Pompey” Elliott who was *“renowned for never sending anyone anywhere he was not prepared to go himself.”* His latest book was the winner of the 2013 Prime Minister’s Literary Award for Australian History. The RSL hall holds many more people than we can accommodate at the Heritage Centre but **we urge you to book your place early for this event as it promises to be very well attended.**

A display of WWI artefacts is already well underway at the RSL and is being masterminded by Alan Fleming and other RSL members. It will be a highlight of Camperdown’s Anzac Centenary remembrances.

WHAT THE CHILDREN LEARNED ABOUT ANZAC

A recent enquiry at the Heritage Centre about the very early “Victorian Readers” started us looking at articles published about Gallipoli for school children in those days. The readers were published from 1928-30 and were used for many years – gradually being replaced when the “John and Betty” series was produced in 1947.



Lindsay.

Our search produced some accounts by the British poet, John Masefield, written in 1916. These, however, do not always give the Australian perspective but a further search revealed a poem written in 1916 by a young Australian poet, Leon Gellert.

As a Lance Sergeant with the 10th Battalion, Gellert was twenty-three when he landed at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. Wounded by shrapnel, and suffering from septicaemia and dysentery, he was evacuated to Malta in July and thence to London.

This poem appears in the Eighth Book of Victorian Readers. It is from Gellert's collection of poems, “*Songs of a Campaign*”, written around the time of his convalescence and published with illustrations by Norman

The Last To Leave

*The guns were silent, and the silent hills
Had bowed their grasses to a gentle breeze
I gazed upon the vales and on the rills,
And whispered, "What of these?" and "What of these?"
These long forgotten dead with sunken graves,
Some crossless, with unwritten memories.
Their only mourners are the moaning waves,
Their only minstrels are the singing trees;
And thus I mused and sorrowed wistfully.*

*I watched the place where they had scaled the height,
The height whereon they bled so bitterly*

*Throughout each day and through each
blistered night.*

*I sat there long, and listened - all things
listened too.*

*I heard the epics of a thousand trees,
A thousand waves I heard; and then I knew
The waves were very old, the trees were
wise:*

*The dead would be remembered evermore-
The valiant dead that gazed upon the skies,
And slept in great battalions by the shore.*

The theme of bravery was often featured in the early School Readers and this one is one some of us may remember from those days. This is from the Fourth Book.

A BRAVE AUSTRALIAN GIRL

That a girl could save between forty and fifty people from death by drowning seems hardly possible, and yet that is what Grace Bussell did. Her deed has gained for her the title of the Grace Darling of Australia*.

Grace Bussell's parents were early settlers near Cape Leeuwin in Western Australia; and Grace grew up on the farm, taking her share in most of the work that had to be done. She learned to ride well, for she had often to be on horseback. The farmhouse was a long distance from any town. No other farmhouse could even be seen from it.

It happened, one day in September, 1876, that a vessel, the Georgette, was wrecked off the coast, about eight miles from Mr. Bussell's house. It had sprung a leak, which let in water far more rapidly than if could be pumped out. The captain had done his best to reach a harbour, but was unable to do so. He had, therefore, run the vessel aground; but the sea became rough, and the waves began to wash over the deck and loosen the timbers.

The lifeboat which the vessel carried was lowered, but it leaked, and eight people who had ventured into it were drowned. The rest of the crew clung to parts of the ship. Though the shore was near, no one cared to try to swim to it, for the surf ran fiercely.



Drawn by John Rowell.]

"She caught sight of the vessel in distress."

No house was in sight, but help was near, though they knew it not. Grace Bussell, attended by a black servant, was riding along at a short distance from the shore, looking for some cows that had strayed. She caught sight of the vessel in distress, and, in a moment or two, had turned her horse's head and was galloping towards it.

When she reached the sea, without pausing to think of the risk she was running, she rode her horse into the angry surf. The blackfellow followed her. Urging her horse with whip and voice, she kept on till she came almost to the side of the vessel.

With some difficulty, a child was handed to her, and she placed it before her on the saddle. Then, with two or three people clinging to the saddle, she set out for the shore. She gained it in safety, and returned. Grace and the faithful blackfellow went backwards and forwards for four hours, till all were safe on land.



Drawn by John Hewitt. "She set out for the shore."

Wet and tired as she was, she still had something more to do. The people whom she had saved from death were much in need of food, and ought to be provided with shelter before night came on. So Grace, without giving herself time to rest, rode home for help. By the time she had gone the eight miles, she was so worn out that she fainted, and it was fully half an hour before she could give an account of what had taken place.

As soon as she had done so, however, her sister got some food and a quantity of wraps together, and then started off in a buggy to the shipwrecked people. The next day they were all taken to Mr. Bussell's house.

Grace and her brave servant well deserved the Royal Humane Society's medal, which was presented to each of them on the 8th January, 1878. Writing of the event, a Western Australian bishop says, "Strange to say, she and her family just think that all they did was the most natural thing in the world."

**Grace Darling was an English lighthouse keeper's daughter. On 7 September 1838, at the age of 22 years, she and her father rescued nine people in a strong gale and thick fog from the wreck of the Forfarshire, which had run aground on Harcar Rock. The story of the rescue attracted extraordinary attention throughout Britain and made Grace Darling a heroine who has gone down in British folklore.*

Remembrance Day 2014

A special event was held at the Camperdown College Junior Campus on Tuesday, 11th November 2014 to which the CDHS were honoured to be invited. It was the Official Opening of the Memorial Gates at the Junior Campus in Brooke St. Recently restored and reinstated with new pillars, the moving ceremony – remembering those ex-students who had lost their lives in battle – involved all the students and staff, members of the RSL and other community representatives.



IN MEMORY OF
EX STUDENTS WHO MADE
THE SUPREME SACRIFICE
IN THE 1939/45 WAR.
Lest we forget.



Special Event

The Camperdown & District Historical Society and the Camperdown RSL, invite you to attend a special event to commemorate the centenary of the ANZAC landings at Gallipoli in 1915

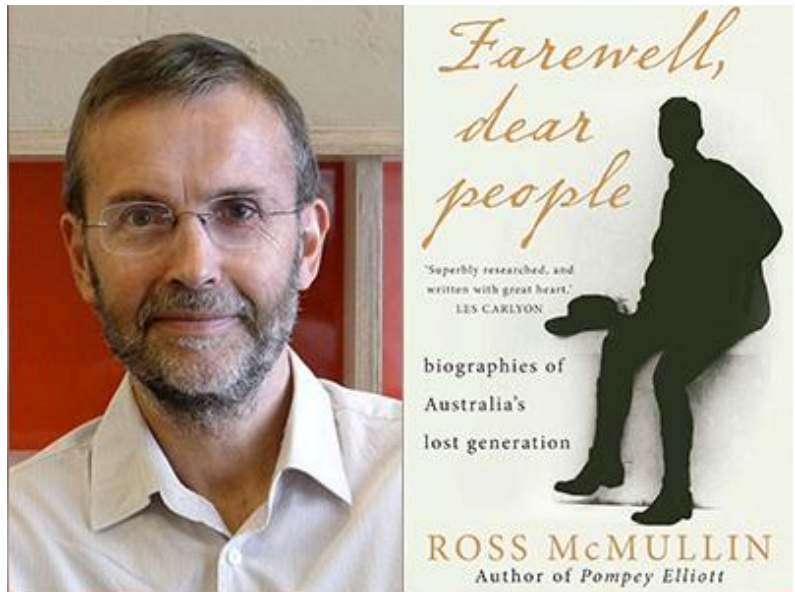
Saturday 11th April, 2.00 pm

**at the RSL hall,
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Camperdown**

**Guest speaker;
Dr. Ross McMullin**

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