

**CAMPERDOWN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.**

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

**Volume 25 - No. 4**

**NEWSLETTER**

**October, 2015**

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Heather McDowell  
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**Treasurer**

Frank Rose

**Committee**

Gillian Senior  
 Ray Watson  
 Jan Whamond  
 Rob Wuchatsch

Hello to all members (and anyone else who happens to read this newsletter),  
 It's been a busy month or two for your Newsletter Editor who has been otherwise occupied with some other writing – something about a Cabaret in the town.

This is a sort of excuse for not having a major new historical subject – just a little snippet of information about the Society's early presence on the internet. This was in 2008, when using the World Wide Web was quite a new experience for local societies or clubs.

There's also a bit more about the history of the Lake Bullen Merri Beaches which has come from information and photographs sent to us since our articles in the last Newsletter. This time we extend into the 1960s.

Frank Rhodes was a local photographer, whose wife passed on to the CDHS a box of glass negatives from his old studio. These have given us some very interesting pictures from the 50s and 60s.

Our major event for members and friends this quarter was a very successful visit to "Stony Rises", the property owned by member Rob Wuchatsch which is also the site of the old Rabbit Factory. A report, together with a couple of photos appears later in the newsletter.

We seem to have had quite a lot of visitors to the centre recently including extra visits by groups from out of town. This is very encouraging for our volunteers who love chatting with locals and travellers alike about our Museum and our research facilities.

New members welcomed are Frances Hatchett, Dorothy Hunter, Leon & Peter Morrissey, and Clark & Judy Roycroft.

*Gillian Senior* Newsletter Editor

**Camperdown Heritage Centre**

241 Manifold Street  
 Camperdown 3260  
 PO Box 243  
 Camperdown.

**Opening hours**

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

**In this issue:**

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- P2.** Coming Events
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- P.4-7** Lake Bullen Merri - More news and photographs.

**From the Heritage Centre Collection:  
 Little & Owens Menswear, 169 Manifold St., Camperdown.**



**The window from Little & Owens shop  
 and an advertisement for  
 "The Luxor Suit, Exclusively tailored for Little & Owens.  
 A HITONE PRODUCT" c.1950**

## COMING EVENTS: NOVEMBER 2015 - JANUARY 2016

Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> November, 10.30 am: Executive meeting at the Heritage Centre

### Christmas Breakup 2015

A visit to

**TIMBOON HOUSE (FORMERLY THE "LAKE INN")**

**Tuesday, 8<sup>th</sup> December**



Moira and Gerald Ryan, the owners of Timboon House, have kindly agreed to allow us to have a picnic tea in the gardens of their beautiful old bluestone house on the Old Geelong Road, north of Camperdown.

They have done extensive work in the gardens and house and are happy to share their story and the history of the building and its stables. Since its construction in 1856, Timboon House has been used as a hotel, then a private residence and most recently for "Bed and Breakfast" accommodation.

The Timboon House website has lots of information and photographs.

<http://timboonhouse.com.au/>

**Departing 6pm from the Camperdown Heritage Centre**

**(Share cars)**

**BYO picnic tea and chair or rug.**

**Bookings:**

**Heather McDowell, Ph. 0487 261 048**

***NOTE: This is a members only event.***

Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> January, 10.30 am: Executive meeting at the Heritage Centre

# NEWS FROM THE HERITAGE CENTRE

## 2000 YEAR OLD WOOD

In our last Newsletter, we mentioned that tree stumps found at the edges of Lake Bullen Merri had been carbon dated at 2000 years old. CDHS member, Laurie Clementson, then brought in to show us a couple of items he had made from this timber. We posted a picture of them on Facebook and this attracted 2,447 views – and quite a few compliments. Laurie told us that when he had the timber on his lathe, it was pitch black in colour and peeled off like coal.



## CAMPERDOWN AGRICULTURAL SHOW

We had a stall at the Show this year where we displayed



photos, brochures, news items and had copies of the CDHS Notable Scots books for sale. Visitors were interested in the old photos and a number promised to visit us at the Museum/Heritage Centre.



It WAS a little bit noisy where we were – at the end of the Poultry Pavilion, where many roosters were vying with each other as to who had the loudest crow!! We wondered whether the organisers were trying to tell us something about “old chooks”!

## VISIT TO STONY RISES

The Sunday after the Agricultural Show, 27 members from CDHS and another 14 from the Stonyford Group gathered at Rob Wuchatsch's property “Stony Rises”. Meeting under the back verandah of the Homestead, Rob gave us the history of the property and we then walked to the old Rabbit Factory where he gave further information about the rabbit canning industry. Established in the old woolshed on the property in 1885, in its first



*Outside the old Rabbit Factory*



*One of the causeways - VERY impressive!*

season, the factory produced 186,000 cans for export ‘each tin weighing 2 lb., containing a rabbit and three quarters’. The skins were dried and exported as well. More than 50 men and boys were employed in the factory, supplied by 150 trappers. The factory is believed to have operated until about 1895.

Afternoon tea at the homestead followed where visitors were able to enjoy the garden that Rob and Gay had established during their time together there.

The party then drove through Terry Riggs' paddocks and walked to two large drystone causeways built across a deep gully – dodging snakes as they went. (A couple were spotted but caused no actual harm to anyone!).

Terry and Rob were thanked for their hosting of a very interesting trip and everyone left for home.

## VALE MARILYN RIPPON



The Society was very sad to have to say farewell to our long-serving member, Marilyn Rippon who died tragically in August this year. Marilyn had been a member of Camperdown & District Historical Society from the early 70s and was on the Executive Committee for many years. She was a regular attendee at all our functions and particularly enjoyed the social chit-chat afterwards.



## EARLY DAYS OF THE INTERNET

In 2008, A Website had been set up by the Victorian Government under the title “My Connected Community” and the CDHS contributed to ‘History Victoria e-news’. An article by Mary Hay was published online on 1<sup>st</sup> September, 2008 and described the setting up and modernising of the current Museum/Heritage Centre. This is a quote from her article:

**“Where do you start? Drawers, filing cabinets, suit cases and cardboard boxes full of photographs and papers. The Camperdown and District Historical Society has been collecting information for over 50 years.”**

The article describes the enormous amount of work done by the volunteers, including painting all the internal walls, the purchase of computers, the cataloguing process, building and arrangement of shelving, and much, much more. There’s also an article by Ray Watson describing the construction of a ‘light box’ for digital copying of photographs.

It wasn’t until April, 2009 that the society developed its own website [www.camperdownhistory.org.au](http://www.camperdownhistory.org.au). This now our major online access point where people can download membership or research forms, order photographs or send us a direct email. The society continues to develop its online presence with the link to our Facebook page (via ‘Latest News’ on the Website) which anyone can access – whether or not they are members of the Facebook community.



*Ray's light box*

## RAY'S LIGHT BOX

Ray's light box is still put to regular use but one of its special uses was after the discovery of a cardboard box containing glass negatives. They had come from Frank Rhode's estate after his death in 1984 and no one at that time had known what to do with them. Frank Rhodes had his photographic studio in Manifold St. and had photographed many local people and events over his years in Camperdown. He had come to the town in 1946 and was a Councillor of the Town of Camperdown from 1953 until 1962.



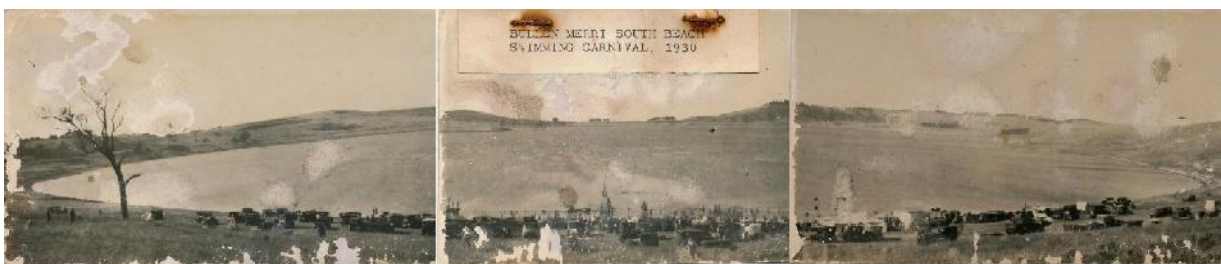
*Norma's three brothers*

When Ray discovered this box of glass negatives, it was very dusty and half buried under many different items on the old stage area. When he showed then President of CDHS, Norma Wynd, one of the first negatives he photographed and processed, she was delighted to discover it was a studio photograph of herself in her wedding dress. Another early one was a photograph of Norma's three brothers in uniform which she or the family had never seen before. Naturally, many copies were made and sent all around her family.

## MORE ABOUT LAKE BULLEN MERRI

We made a request in our last Newsletter for any further information about the swimming beaches at Lake Bullen Merri and quite a bit more has come in.

Three new pictures were discovered in our collection and, with the magic of computers and the skill of Ray Watson, we now have three pictures turned into one – and vastly cleaned up as well!



*Bullen Merri South Beach Swimming Carnival, 1930*



A great photo sent to us by Lillian Greaves shows South Beach in the 1930s Pictured are Cliff Treloar with Evelyn and Elsa Gazzard in a canoe. They are in front of the diving platform and a spring board structure is on the right. Looks like a fun place in those days.

## OCEAN WAVE?

Another mystery – solved by our researcher Maree Belyea – was the question: What is/was the “Ocean Wave” which was donated in 1939 by Mr. S. A. Errey for the enjoyment of the children at South Beach?

There were all sorts of ideas bandied about as to what an ‘ocean wave’ could have been in the lake, but It turns out to be a land-based ‘ocean wave’, as illustrated here. Who remembers playing on one of these?



## THE DIVING BOARD AT NORTH BEACH

There were queries as to what had happened to North Beach and why was it not as popular as South Beach but, sadly, there had been a fatal accident there in 1934, which had caused the removal of the diving board.

This is from the Camperdown Chronicle of 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 1934.

## THE LAKE FATALITY

### INQUEST HELD AT CAMPERDOWN YESTERDAY.

*Before Mr. E. O. Screen, J.P., Deputy Coroner, at the Camperdown Court House yesterday, an inquiry was held into the circumstances surrounding the death of Urban Hugh Rodgers, at Camperdown, on March 1. First Constable C. C. Ivey appeared to assist the coroner. Dr. Jack Morlet, medical practitioner, of Camperdown, said that on February 28, about 4 p.m., he was called to the north beach of Lake Bullen Merri and there saw Urban Hugh Rodgers, who had gravely injured his spine by diving in shallow water. Witness attended him until the next day, when he died in the Camperdown Hospital.*

*There was no one near the deceased when he went off the springboard. The depth of the water where he entered it would be no more than 3 feet and the bottom was a solid sandy one.*

However, not everyone was pleased that the Diving Board was then removed:

**CORRESPONDENCE**  
**FACILITIES AT NORTH BEACH.**  
 (To the Editor.)  
**FACILITIES AT NORTH BEACH.**  
 (To the Editor.)  
 has its frequenters.—Yours, etc.,  
 “FAIR GO.”  
 Camperdown, 14/3/34.  
 Dear Sir,—It is very regrettable that the lake has receded to such an extent on the north side that the diving board constituted such a danger that a fatal accident occurred there recently, but it would seem that there was no reason for the diving boards to be removed altogether on that account. Although I have not actually been to the bathing cove on the north side to find out if this is correct, I am authoritatively informed that the boards have been taken away and that it is the intention of the Bullen Merri Sports Association not to re-erect them this season. In

not to re-erect them this season. In face of the fact that they are considering further improvements at the south beach, it does not seem quite just and fair that they should leave the north side without facilities of any kind, for the few who do frequent the north side are surely entitled to a little consideration. If it comes down to “tin tacks,” those who go to the north side are those who are not fortunate enough to have means of transport to the further distant south beach and who cannot rely on anyone providing them with car rides to the more popular spot. In most cases, they have to “pad the hoof” to the lake and it is rather discouraging to them to find that there is nothing there for their entertainment except the lake itself. I hope that the Lake Bullen Merri Sports Association will reconsider their decision in regard to the north side of the lake, especially when they have shown a very substantial balance from their recent carnival. Out of that amount, surely they could afford to spend £5 or £10 to provide a diving board in

surely they could afford to spend £5 or £10 to provide a diving board in a safe position at a place that still has its frequenters.—Yours, etc.,  
 “FAIR GO.”



## SCOUTS AT THE LAKE

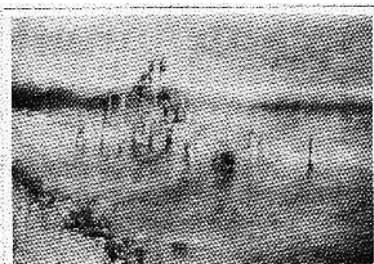
Another group which made regular use of the lake in the 1930s was the Camperdown Scout Troop. We received some copies of Log Book entries, including photos, which make really great reading.

### FIELD DAY 24<sup>th</sup> September, 1938.

This turned out a great day and attendance was very good numbering 18 in all and the two Scouters. All being in full uniform this made a good photograph.

This over, the Eagles and Owls set off in charge of "Jonny" Cummins and made straight to the Henderson St. Gate at the Park. From there they set a trail.

The other Patrols, Kingfishers and Magpies, picked up the trail here and followed through the scrub on the north side of the park, picking up a piece of white paper here and there – showing we were on the right road. A note was found near the swing reading to the effect that they had gone directly to the kiosk near the Lake.



**"Minus Togs"**

*This photo has been intentionally smudged in the original entry – no doubt to preserve decency!*

Prior to starting, all had arm bands tied on, the idea being that on the following side meeting the others, a battle would be staged until everyone had lost their band.

However, on looking from the top of the hill, the trackers could see that all the others were occupying the top of the diving tower but between splashing threats and several wet feet they were brought down and a great tussle resulted. That over, several decided they wanted a swim so they braved the winter water in their birthday suits. After that they retreated to the kiosk and devoured what they had for afternoon tea. They came home the same way, collecting *en route* bamboos and such things, much likening them to a tribe of blacks – with white skins.

**Attendance:** I. Norman, A. Ball, P. Potter, G. Gunner, K (or C.) Virtue, B. Boyle, H. Cummins (SM), R. Middleton (ASM).

### WEEKEND LAKE (North Side) 29-30<sup>th</sup> October 1939

This weekend Alan Buck obliged by transporting luggage and camping equipment to the Lake where we spent the night under canvas.

All except Manx went up about 2.30 with Alan but he cycled up after tea as he had to do a spot of work beforehand. We had stew for tea after which three of the lads were invested. Alan Burke, Ivan Carlan and Jack Porter were the new recruits and did the job well.

Of course we had one "soda" as usual.

Skeets goes and slices half his finger off. A couple of us went for a walk round the lake a bit to work up a good sleep while Jonny doctored Skeets up. After his strenuous ride, Manx had a dip before bed and after having a bit of a snack each before bed we all finally turned in about 10.

The early night proved very good but eventually turned to a light rain and when in the morning about 5, the boys got up, the day was rather bleak and damp.

Then a remarkable thing happened (never been know before in the history of the troop) – a morning snack was served by the lads to Jonny, Manx and Skeets in bed.

The rest of us got up early, lit a fire and cooked breakfast. The menu stood at steak and eggs and was enjoyed by all.

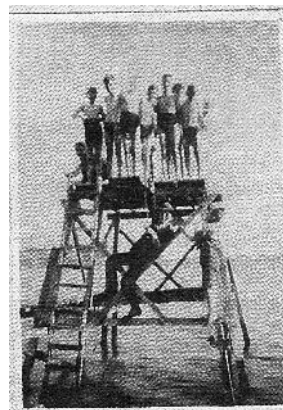
We went for a walk round the lake a bit to look out a boat but found it gone so we came back and had a dip. Then the fun began: dinner menu – flapjacks, result – flour everywhere.

These, as they were cooked by some, flattened the boys for quite a while.

When everybody recovered we packed up and waited for Alan, meanwhile having a swim and a visit from Cyril Rose and Jim Fitzwilliam.

After that Ginge gathered some "twirple-berries" and we went home – tired.

**Attendance:** I Norman, J. Porter, R. Hyde, A. Burke, I. Donlan, H. Cummins (SM), R. Middleton (ASM).  
**(Anyone know what "twirple-berries" are? – Ed.)**



# Camperdown Aquatic Club – 1961

We now move on about 20-30 years to the 1960s.

Many thanks to Camperdown girl, Norma Fenton (nee Gordon). Norma now lives in Ocean Grove and has sent us lots of photos and newspaper cuttings from her time as a water skier on Lake Bullen Merri. Looks like a very busy and happy time. The newspaper cuttings are all from the Camperdown Chronicle under the pen-name 'Aquarius'? We're pretty sure 'Aquarius' was Stewart Ferguson.



**SKI EXHIBITIONS**  
 Members of Camperdown Aquatic Club's water ski group gave three exhibitions at the regatta.  
 Peter Lillie and Trevor Ludeman showed considerable skill at barefoot ski-ing and exhibitions of trick and novelty ski-ing were given by Rhonda Dennis, Norma Gordon and Rosemary Duplex.

The ski jump followed this was won by B. Adams of Warrnambool, with P. Lillie, of Camperdown, 2, and D. Donahue, of Warrnambool, 3. Spectators were surprised at the graceful evolutions performed on the skis in the water ballet by Miss N. Gordon and Mrs. R. Duplex of Camperdown.

*Graceful evolutions!  
 Water ski Ballet etc.  
 Norma G. Rosemary D.  
 Rhonda D.  
 Speed Boat Racing Day  
 Lake Bullen above  
 Camperdown Vic.*



**Norma Gordon, Rhonda Dennis, Rosemary Duplex**



**The boat "Esther" belonged to Arch Ferguson from Boorcan. It was a clinker boat with an Everingham V8 Side Valve Engine.**



**Stan Simmons!**



*Camperdown  
 AQUATIC Notes  
 CLUB 1961*

**SKI EXHIBITIONS**  
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 Peter Lillie and Trevor Ludeman showed considerable skill at barefoot ski-ing, and exhibitions of trick and novelty ski-ing were given by Rhonda Dennis, Norma Gordon and Rosemary Duplex.  
 Bob Wettenhall, of Melbourne, successfully negotiated the six-foot ski jump several times, and Peter Murphy, of Camperdown, tried the jump but broke a ski.