

CAMPERDOWN & DISTRICT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

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Volume 21 - No. 4

NEWSLETTER

October 2011

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Hello everyone,

Firstly, let me introduce myself. I'm a relatively new member with a background as a playwright and children's book author. I have recently been given the honour of editing the Society's newsletter.

A number of new members have joined since our last newsletter in early July. We are happy to welcome: Chris and Greg Farmer, Denise Muir, Terry and Ruth Brain, Margaret Poole, Robert Hess, Beth Codling, Johnelle Kennedy, Nicole Lewer and Mignonette Wright. We hope you enjoy and value your membership.

A reminder to all members that subscriptions are now due. They can be paid either by posting a cheque, by Direct Deposit online, or in person at the Heritage Centre any Tuesday between 10 am and 3 pm.

In this edition we feature the life of pioneer settler John Walls, and also, "Random Recollections", an article written by an unnamed contributor to the Camperdown Chronicle in 1934. He recalls his teachers, school discipline, sports days and children's games, as well as the planting of Finlay Avenue and many more events of his childhood. As the writer was around 70 years of age when he wrote the article, it's a wonderful ramble through Camperdown's past right back to the 1870s.

As this is the last newsletter for 2011, we take this opportunity to wish you all a great Christmas and a wonderful new year to come.

Gillian Senior

Newsletter Editor

Camperdown Heritage Centre

241 Manifold Street
Camperdown 3260

Opening hours

Tuesdays and 1st

Sunday of month,

10am-3pm

Or by appointment

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From the Heritage Centre Collection:

Cattle or horse registration tag, c.1880



In Camperdown's early days, cattle and horses from various owners often grazed together on roadsides and commons. Who owned which animal was very much an issue.

To help trace ownership, Councils set up registration systems. The brass tag pictured was registered to a Camperdown (C.DOWN) owner and was probably forged locally. It would have been secured around the neck of the animal with a chain or sturdy rope.

This identification system was far from foolproof. Tags were often lost, snagged on trees and fences, and cattle and horse duffers could easily swap tags from one animal to another.

COMING EVENTS: NOVEMBER 2011 - JANUARY 2012

**Tuesday 1st November
7.30 pm at the Killara Centre
Historic Turkey and Italy**

Bob Lambell and Barry Muirhead will talk about, and show photographs of the historical aspects of their recent trips to Turkey (Bob) and Italy (Barry).



Istanbul, Turkey

**Tuesday, 15th November at 7.30 pm.
Executive Committee meeting at the Heritage Centre.**

**Tuesday 6th December
7.30 pm at the Killara Centre**

**Film night:
“Living Melbourne, 1895-1910”**

From the *National Film & Sound Archive*, comes this rare and wonderful film footage of Melbourne around the time of Federation.



Boer War parade, Swanston St. 1900

**Tuesday, 17th January at 7.30 pm.
Executive Committee meeting at the Heritage Centre**

CAMPERDOWN'S PICTURED PAST Westcamp Service Station c.1960



Pictured is the former BP Westcamp Service Station, situated next door to the Masonic Lodge building in Manifold Street. Judging by the cars, the photograph was taken in about 1960. The Service Station closed many years ago and the empty building has fallen into disrepair.

From the collection at the Camperdown Heritage Centre

OPEN GARDEN

STONY RISES HOMESTEAD

**2020 Princes Highway,
Pirron Yallock, Vic.**

12 -13 November 2011

10.00 am - 4.00 pm each day

Entry \$6 Children U16 Free

**Fundraiser towards the
National Trust's restoration
appeal for Camperdown's
Robert Burns Statue**



Stony Rises Homestead owners Rob and Gaye Wuchatsch, in association with the Camperdown and District Historical Society and Camperdown Garden Club, have arranged an Open Garden as a fundraiser towards the restoration of Camperdown's historic Robert Burns Statue.

During the 1880s and 1890s, the Stony Rises Homestead, along with 13,000 acres of the Stony Rises, was owned by Robert Inglis, a great-great-great grandson of the Rev. William Inglis, of Dumfries in Scotland. Robert Burns attended services conducted by Rev. Inglis *'because Mr Inglis preaches what he believes and practises what he preaches'*. Rev. Inglis later attended Robert Burns on his death-bed.

The Stony Rises Homestead is believed to have been built around 1863-64 by the McVean family. By the late 1870s, the Stony Rises had become so overrun with rabbits land there was almost worthless. In 1884, the Stony Rises Estate was purchased by a syndicate of Melbourne businessmen, led by Robert Inglis. They set about eliminating the rabbits by establishing a rabbit canning factory in the old woolshed and building rabbit-proof dry

stone walls. The factory operated from 1885-92 and in some years as many as 1,000,000 rabbits were canned and exported to England (1 and 3/4 rabbits to a 2 lb can).

Garden

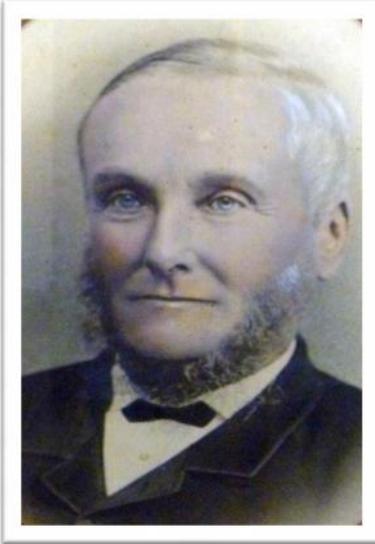
The restored house and garden are the work of Dorothy (Dora) Cuolahan (1940-2005). Dora, whose family purchased the Stony Rises Homestead in 1936, undertook a remarkable restoration of the old homestead and established a large stone-walled garden. Since moving to the Stony Rises Homestead in January 2006, Rob and Gaye have worked hard to keep up Dora's garden and build on her incredible work. They have installed a bore, planted more roses and added a fernery, wisteria arbour and new flower and vegetable beds.



Enquiries: 03 5235 4220

JOHN WALLS, 1824-1898

Pioneer settler, John Walls, was arguably Camperdown's most influential citizen ever. He made an outstanding contribution to the development and progress of Camperdown and district.



John Walls was born on 18th August 1824 at Blairlodge, Perthshire, Scotland, son of Robert Walls and his wife Mary, nee Foggo. Though born in Perthshire, he grew up in Clarkmannanshire. He learnt his trade as a blacksmith and coachbuilder at Blairlodge. From there he went to Aberdour by the Firth of Forth, where he started in business as a saw-miller.

In 1842 he married Mary Gibson at Clarkmannanshire, and it was from there in 1852 that he and his wife and six children set out for Australia. During the voyage their youngest child died and was buried at sea. A shipmate on the voyage was Mrs Mary McPherson. She was coming out to join her husband David, who managed a store at Lake Timboon for her brothers Duncan and Donald McNicol. Lake Timboon was a small village situated about a mile and a half north of the present town of Camperdown. At that time, the site of Camperdown had only recently been surveyed and no dwellings had yet been built.

For reasons unexplained, John and Mary Walls gave permission for Mrs McPherson to take their eldest son Robert with her to Lake Timboon. When John wrote home to his mother about this, she wrote back demanding that John go and get him back. As it took six months each way for a letter to go to and from Scotland, it was twelve months later when John Walls arrived at Lake Timboon. In the meantime he had been conducting a saw-milling business in Melbourne.

When John Walls and his family travelled to Lake Timboon in 1853, there was no road through the Stony Rises. They followed the road from Melbourne to Geelong and Cressy, then followed a rough track southwards "between the lakes" to Lake Timboon. When they arrived, the Blackwood (Lightwood) trees were flowering profusely, especially around Mt Leura. John and his family were so impressed with the scenery and vegetation of the area that they decided to stay. In those early days, good tradesmen were scarce and the demand unending for blacksmiths and wheelwrights. John Walls quickly established a blacksmith business. In 1854 John relocated his business to the fledgling town of Camperdown. He purchased land at the western end of Manifold Street where he built a house and workshops. Within a year or two, he expanded his blacksmith business to coach-building.



John Walls' shop - c.1870

For seven years John Walls combined the duty of post-master with his other tasks, relinquishing it upon the establishment of a post and telegraph office in Camperdown in 1863. John also became the town's first undertaker. It seemed natural in those days that the leading coachbuilder would construct a hearse and conduct an undertaking business. He took on a partner by the name of John Horne and they traded under the title of Walls and Horne Funeral Directors. John carried on the funeral director business until his death.

In 1857 John Walls was elected a member of the Hampden and Heytesbury District Roads Board. When the Roads Board gave way to the Hampden Shire in 1863, he was elected a member of that body and served as a Councillor for thirty years. President of the Shire twice, it was during one of his terms in office that Sir Henry Lock, then Governor of the colony, visited Camperdown and was entertained by the Council.

Always a devoutly religious man, John Walls was one of the founders of the Presbyterian Church in Camperdown and was an elder for many years. He performed great work among the young at the Sunday school and the Band of Hope organization. His strong convictions upon religious matters were further manifested when he resigned his seat on the directorate of the Camperdown Butter Factory Company owing to a decision to separate milk on Sundays.

From boyhood John Walls was a total abstainer, and being a strong temperance advocate, was a one of the founders of the Total Abstinence Society. He also took an active part in the movement, which resulted in the erection of the Temperance Hall, of which he was a trustee until the time of his death.

Displaying the true pioneering spirit, in 1865 John Walls with fellow Councillor Dr. Daniel Curdie forced a track through the previously impenetrable Heytesbury forest to the coast near Port Campbell. Several months later, after the track had been properly cleared using special Government Grant money, the Hampden Shire Council held an official picnic in celebration of Walls and Curdie's major feat.

Early in 1884 John Walls, with several other members of the Camperdown Railway Extension League, arranged for and escorted a party of dignitaries from Ballarat on an excursion down through the Heytesbury forest to Port Campbell. All were favourably impressed, not only with the scenery but also with the luxuriant crops, fruitful gardens and the potential of local timber for railway sleepers. They promised to help in any way they could. Unfortunately, the railway extension did not eventuate.

John Walls was on the school committee from its earliest days and worked hard for better conditions for both teachers and pupils. John became a Justice of the Peace for his bailiwick and took his share of judicial work in the Camperdown Court for many years. He was one of the founders of the local tent of The Independent Order of Rechabites, which was established in Camperdown in 1865. John was also one of the original trustees of the Camperdown Public Park and the Cemetery.

John Walls' integrity and honesty of purpose were never questioned and he was a conspicuous example of a man who practised what he preached. He died on 18th July 1898 aged 74 years and was survived by his wife, two sons and five daughters. He was buried in the Camperdown Cemetery.



John Walls' shop – 2011

From the *Camperdown Chronicle*, Saturday 27th January, 1934.

RANDOM RECOLLECTIONS

By an early Camperdown school pupil.

I was speaking to an old Camperdown resident on the stand at Flemington recently and he said: "I have read some of the old-time specials in the *Chronicle*" – so old time recollections were our subject.

I said: "do you recollect the trees being cut down on the Cressy road" (not Lismore road in the old days). "Too right," he replied. "I will never forget it. Your brother brought his cow home and did not bring mine so I gave him a quilting. I was busy up-ending a branch when I got a clip on the ear from your father that I'll never forget."

Speaking of these trees reminds me of a lightwood tree opposite Fullarton's where it was generally stated that an aboriginal was buried. Then again, Jack the Frenchman did a Blondin act on a piece of fencing wire stretched from tree to tree and again on one of these trees –

a dead one – was hung an effigy of "Dismal Jimmy", the name given to a noted journalist, at the time the editor of the *Chronicle*. His name was James Allan and, after leaving Camperdown, he was a lead writer on *The Age*. His final leading article in the *Chronicle*, which was ultra conservative in those days, stated that he always wrote against his convictions in its columns. Allan had two sons, Willy and Jimmy. The former was accidentally shot whilst duck shooting on the Leura marsh. The *Chronicle* had some very capable men on its staff, one of the compositors afterwards being a prolific writer of poetry in the *Bulletin* (Farrell was his name).

I started school with a Mrs McElwain whose husband was a policeman, and lived in a small cottage opposite the Church of England in Church Street. I think the place was removed when Dr Desailly's residence was built. At the age of four I went to the Common School. I think the head was named Scott, but shortly afterwards John Hilliard was appointed. In those days we had to take our fees every Monday morning. A Miss Matthews taught the infant's class and she afterwards married a man called Treacy. I can now remember distinctly the big ball frame on which we were taught to count. Our songs were "Ring the Bell, Watchman," and another about "Mrs Slipper Slopper and the Fox". When I got to



Teacher, John Hilliard. 1870

the third class Miss Walls (Mrs Fussell) was the teacher. I remember her describing the money signs to be remembered as "Father Sullivan's Donkey". John Hilliard was a great teacher of English and arithmetic, a strict disciplinarian and a great believer in the cane, of which he was well stocked. I saw in the paper the other day about a teacher being fined for using a strap on a boy. Hilliard used his cane to such perfection that each stroke raised a blood blister, and I know – he removed a wart off my thumb.

We were not taught the many subjects on the syllabus of today but we were taught handwriting. By that I mean the forming and spacing of letters correctly. Afterwards a boy naturally adopted a business hand when quickness was required. Nowadays, they try to teach a business hand from the start with little regard to the shape of the letters or the manner of holding a pen. It would make an old-timer weep to see the cramped handling of a pen or pencil by the present day children. We got one hour every day for arithmetic and, if the set work was not finished, half hour was taken off the lunchtime. Then it was a case of running home and back,

because Hilliard would have his eye down the hill when he blew the whistle and if you did not run well, there was the cane.

English was an everyday subject and Morrell's grammar was the standard and it was so grafted into us that today, after 53 years, I know them by heart. Frank Rae was assistant and brought up under Hilliard. He was also fair and just, had not much faith in corporal punishment and always gave detention writing prose lines. I got them so often that I can repeat Pitt's reply to Walpole even now. Hugh ---- once accused Hilliard of favouritism when getting the cane. Rae backed him up and on a vote of the upper classes it was sustained.



Camperdown State School, 1858

Under Hilliard bad language was a very serious offence. Hilliard had a mixture to wash out filthy mouths and for cleanliness reasons this mixture was administered outside the school. When a boy was receiving too much of the cane he was taken to the book room, divested of his clothes and the strap administered. Looking back I consider Hilliard was a great teacher, but he made an excessive use of the cane, and I got my fair share. I think payment of teachers must have been by results, as before an inspector was due, for at least two months we got extra instructions, never leaving school until 5pm and having a good 2 ½ hours' homework to do, and on the day of the exam the mentally deficient were told not to attend.

We got a school picnic every year before the break-up. In the early years it was in the Werna paddocks and when the lightwood trees were felled for cultivation purposes, we used the near corner of the Rennie Hill paddocks, which was heavily timbered with lightwood. We all assembled at the school with our mugs (I don't mean the facial ones) and marched four abreast to the site and had great games: Jolly Miller, Kiss in the Ring, Twos and Threes, foot-running, etc, a treat we always looked forward to. Each year there was always a distribution of prizes in the Mechanics' and, prior to that hall being built, in the Temperance Hall. So that all children should attend, the prize winners were not announced until the distribution. The late Dr. Curdie did the presenting, and gave us a heavy discourse beforehand. Hilliard also addressed us, and from his remarks you would think we never got the cane; he always quoted from "Love of Country". Sometimes special children were chosen to give recitations, etc. I know, as I was on the schedule one time and had to be prompted from start to finish, yet today I know it.

In my time we attended a few public functions in a body, the planting of Finlay Avenue in Manifold Street, at which all children got a tree to plant, at least we held them whilst the Council employees did the work, the holder's name being booked up. I saw the plan* in the engineer's office at Camperdown about 15 years ago. Another function was the laying of the foundation stone of the Mechanics'. I think it was laid by Mr Picken, solicitor, but as the hall was recently rebuilt, the contents under the stone would show if that was right.

Looking back we had a great staff of school teachers – good teachers all – and if in my school days I bore them any ill will, I have often thanked them for the knowledge I gained.

Well, I started out with the felling of trees. I suppose all the boys of my age or over will remember the felling of the big gum tree at the Court House corner.

My earliest recollections of Manifold Street are:

North side, Jones, butchers and hay and corn store; Harrison, plumber; Parker baker and boarding house, two small rooms on the front verandah, one occupied by Rachael Cohen, a brother of the late Maurice Cohen, and the other by a snob. Then Brannelly's boot-maker, where Armstrong is; Kirk, blacksmith; William's fruiterers. *Chronicle*, McCrae and Fullerton; whilst Pike had a butcher's shop in the bluestone building which was afterwards the Bank of Victoria. The Post Office occupied the same site as today. The staff of the P.O. was Capt. Duigan and Jack Smith, and Smith's father was line repairer. The service window was about 18in. wide and we boys used to annoy Duigan by calling for mail every day. That small opening was the delivery window for many years afterwards, and even when a boy was employed on the mail delivery.

(*The plan is now in the Camperdown Heritage Centre)



Manifold Street, Camperdown. c.1870

On the South side of Manifold Street was a bluestone shop now occupied by Picone and Pitcher, Fred Clarke had it for a butcher's shop; then John McCabe, a stone-mason by trade had a cottage; then Jim Moodie had the stables just erected about the time he got married. Previously Henry Chandle, another stonemason resided there. Finlay Munro had a hay and corn store, then came Paton's private residence and store, and the Leura. I remember distinctly the building of the Commercial Hotel. Paton's residence was afterwards taken into the store and they removed to a house in Scott Street. This house is still there, set well back from the street. Bishop lived in a house in the store yard when the store was run by Paton and Bishop. I mentioned previously the planting of Finlay Avenue. The street got replanted out about 2 feet taken from the south side between the Commercial and the Leura Hotels, the stone culvert opposite Morrison's Store was removed and the place where the trees are was filled in. Dozens of tree stumps were removed from the street and formed part of the filling.

One of the great events was the arrival of the circus. Burton and Taylor's have my first recollection and the show always finished with Dick Turpin's ride to York. Later on St. Leon's was the great show. They stopped where the power breaking down stand is now. The performers and horses in performing trappings paraded the town before erecting the tents. The last time I saw Gus he was a clown in a small circus. We school boys used to meet the circus down the Colac road and get a ride back with them. Of course we were late for school and got the inevitable cane. Speaking of shows my earliest recollection was of Lynch Family Bellringers, when they first started out from Geelong; Chang, the Chinese Giant and Tom Thumb; Nutt and Minnie Warren in the Temperance Hall, and a local minstrel troupe, Jack Coward, a local aboriginal horse-breaker, employed by Moodie, and Andy Bent, a brother of the renowned Horace Bent of that time, also a horse-breaker, were the corner men. Andy Bent was killed off a horse at McKinnon's bridge.

Camperdown had five hotels at one time, a brewery, and a flourmill. One hotel in Manifold Street was burnt and not rebuilt; the other still stands in Scott Street with the verandah on the street front. If my memory serves me right, Trautwain was the occupier and his son now owns many hotels in Sydney. The advent of the railway closed the mill and brewery. Dr. Austin had a residence in Scott Street, and it and the consulting and chemical rooms are still on the verandah. James Tait had a store in Scott Street where Tonkins now reside. He did most of the dispensing until Dr. Pettigrew arrived, when he did his own. Tait's lane was fenced off and opened by Tait. As long as I can remember it was there, the object being to have easy access to the store. Tait had a good fruit garden as also did Lamb in the stone cottage over the railway line. Boys always knew the best fruit gardens. Jim ---- went to the Grammar School conducted by Weiss and boarded at Tait's and was a great assistance to the fruit riflers by giving the OK (sic) when the coast was clear.

Up to 55 years ago kangaroos were plentiful at Mt Leura. Lamb rented the paddock from Manifold Bros. and burnt off the bracken every summer, which also accounted for the destruction of many fine trees on the mount. Adolphus Clarke was the first to use a reaper and binder in the district on a crop where the gravel pits are now. The position was then known as between the first and second cuttings. The Leura property was overrun with rabbits and of course they were in the crop and we boys could catch them in the stubble or the burrows were easy digging and the rabbits could not get along on the stubble.

The Manifolds sold Mt Leura to Finlay Bros. of Glenormiston and they let out the place to farms. Fred Wright is the only one left of the early tenants. There was very heavy clearing at the start and the tenants had to burn all timber on the ground. I think the terms were rent-free until the land was ready for the plough. A few years after, Manifolds re-purchased this property. The first sale was the cause of the severance of business relations between an accountant and the Manifolds, and the valuation for land tax purposes was the cause of a split up in a religious congregation.

Reverting to newspapers, Rossiter ran a paper in Scott Street in a building afterwards occupied by Harrison, plumber. This building was a few years ago burnt down. Rossiter went to Gippsland and his sons have newspapers at Yarram and Leongatha. The *Hampden Guardian* was run by Williams. He lived in what we called Snipe Street, now Fergusson Street. Suspecting a neighbour of visiting his wood heap he proved it when his neighbour's fireplace was blown up. When Williams left Camperdown, the *Chronicle* bought the business.



The football ground was on the reserve near the railway station, and you can judge of the fastness of the game when Billy Wiggins was the umpire. He carried his walking stick around with him and used to stick it in the clay when he threw the ball over his shoulder. I saw a match between the cricket club and the football club and some of the cricketers came in leggings. Bill Brambley was the champion all-round athlete, a good cricketer, footballer and runner. Gus Ellerman a college student, whose father was Presbyterian minister at Lismore, played football with Camperdown. I met Gus a few years ago and he remembered all the old players. Gus was a retired bank manager then. I think all the old boys remember the various characters who visited the town every week. One of them we used to remove the saddle from his horse and place back to front. After getting on his horse and finding he was facing the wrong way it used to take him about twenty minutes to discover what was wrong. Another always blamed K----- for the jokes played on him. K---- bore a lot of the blame of the pranks of other boys, but in spite of Hilliard's cane and the prophecy that he would hang, later on filled a responsible government position.

These of my early recollections may cause some of the older residents to give other recollections, or to find fault with mine, and in that spirit I send them on to you.



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POSTAGE
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